SIX STRIKING SWORDS

A 4-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters

A mysterious resident has taken over an abandoned castle along a perilous trade route. Now, strange happenings have the traders spooked and there is concern about the economic fallout. Adventurers are dispatched to make a deal with the paranoid and potentially unstable occupant. This is the second adventure of the *Swords Below the Moonsea* saga.

By Andrew Bishkinskyi

Six Striking Swords

Second adventure of the *Swords Below the Moonsea* saga

Adventure Code: CCC-HAL-02
Optimized For: APL 8

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Introduction

Welcome to *CCC-HAL-02 Six Striking Swords*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and Community Created Content Program.

This adventure takes place in the Moonsea region.

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

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

"Sometimes to make things right you have to do things wrong. I'm willing to do those things. I've always been willing to do them."

                     - Rorschach

Adventure Background

The *Swords Below the Moonsea* Saga

The saga consists of three adventures, of which this is the second. The first adventure in the series is CCC-PHA-01 *Six Summoned Swords* which serves a stand-alone prelude. The series' conclusion is *Six Swords Unbound.* It is not required or expected that players would have played *Six Summoned Swords*, although doing so grants a measure of familiarity with some of the characters. CCC-HAL-03 *Six Swords Unbound* takes place immediately following this adventure and serves as the series' conclusion. It's recommended that players play it shortly after this one.

Events detailed in CCC-PHA-01 *Six Summoned Swords*.

Deception, betrayal and foul magic – these are the implements of the drow. When drow houses fight, these deadly tools become playthings in the arms of the power-hungry and the ambitious.

Deep in the Underdark, the Noble House Vith'tyl betrays and usurps the smaller House Axcelon, leaving only a single survivor of the bloodline.

The last of her house, Axcelia Axcelon flees. Desperate but not powerless, she performs a dangerous summoning ritual that calls forth the marilith demon S'sheneth'rah to serve her. Axcelia's binding ritual is interrupted by Shintyrr Vith'tyl and his assassins.

The marilith slaughters the assassins but Shintyrr manages to escape and eventually makes his way to the surface. There he hires a group of powerful adventurers and attempts to return to the Underdark only to be ambushed and viciously killed by the demon.

With the binding ritual unfinished, Axcelia's control of the marilith is incomplete. Instead, she and the demon are in a half-bound state that strains their very sanities.

Pursued by a House Vith'tyl war party led by Shintyrr's sister Lemethra, Axcelia makes a last ditch attempt to complete the binding ritual and escapes to plot her revenge. [Adventurers were able to participate in the Axcelon-Vith'tyl confrontation in different ways, but all ended with Axcelia escaping – with or without the adventurers' help.]

Passage of Time

Due to the complex passage of time as it relates to individual characters in Adventurers League Play, it is purposely left ambiguous as to how much time has passed since Axcelia first reached the surface. It has certainly been over two years and long enough for her existence to have been mostly forgotten in the Underdark. It is recommended that no specifics are used so as to avoid individual character conflicts.

Story Tracking from *Six Summoned Swords*

If any of the adventurers have played *Six Summoned Swords*, make note of their 3-letter story code from that adventure. Write all participants codes one underneath the other, so as to be able to easily spot differences. The key to the letter codes is provided as **Appendix C** and the adventure contains further specifics throughout as to where adjustments should be made.

Note that characters that have earned the **Student of Swordplay** and **Tail to Tell** temporary effects during *Six Summoned Swords* may continue taking advantage of those effects.

Current Situation (DM Only)

Years have passed since Axcelia's escape from the Underdark. Her initial plan to return and exact revenge upon house Vith'tyl has not come to fruition. The constant mental strain of controlling the powerful yet willful marilith has taken an immense mental toll and driven her to paranoia and mistrust.

Having taken up residence at an abandoned castle in a remote area of the Moonsea, Axcelia has spent her considerable energies building up a web of magical defenses to protect her from Vith'tyl assassins who she feels certain are coming.

Joining her in seclusion are the marilith S'sheneth'rah and a half-drow apprentice who goes by the name Silver. Silver is actually Axcelia's daughter, though Axcelia has not shared or even acknowledged the origin of her lineage.

Passing not far from the castle is the caravan trade route that stretches its way from Melvaunt to Glister.

In recent tendays, several animals have found their way into Axcelia's magical web, resulting in strange and gruesome deaths. Without any response from the castle, the events have spooked the caravaners and now trade has ground its way to a halt, much to the chagrin of the several of the factions.

Hoping to deal with the situation swiftly and quietly, the Zhentarim have dispatched a trio of mercenaries – mercenaries who have not reported back.

Adventure Overview

Part 1. Characters investigate strange occurrences at a remote castle and attempt a dangerous rescue. Eventually they make contact with a powerful drow mage and are sent on a mission.

Part 2. Teleported into the Underdark, the party encounters unexpected opposition.

Part 3. Characters proceed on their mission to deactivate the wards around a drow teleportation device. They also send an infiltrator to obtain an item from the well-guarded House Vith'tyl Manor.

Part 4. With the teleportation device activated, the party is ambushed and must escape.

Playing the Pillars

This adventure contains two **Exploration** sections, one **Social Interaction** and one **Combat**. In addition, there are two optional sections, of which the runtime only allows for one. At the start of the adventure, it should be decided – either by the DM or based on player wishes – whether to play an additional **Social Interaction** OR **Combat** encounter. The optional sections are as follows:

Social Interaction. During **Part 1** of the adventure, the characters have the opportunity to spend time interacting with the disgruntled members of the caravans and learn hints about what they will face. The expanded version of this session can be found in **Appendix D.** If this is skipped, the interaction is assumed to have happened, but is covered in a short descriptive summary.

Combat. In **Part 2**, as the characters arrive at the Vith'tyl complex, they have the opportunity to fight some of the "helltouched" Vith'tyl guards. If this is skipped, the guards are downgraded and can be assumed to have been easily overcome by the party.

Tricks of the Trade

When deciding which of the two options to use, consider player preferences. Note that aside from the optional combat, the only tactical combat of the adventure takes place at the very end.

If playing with a regular group and no time constraints, consider not only running both optional encounters, but also preparing the first part of the next adventure – *Six Swords Unbound* – as it begins immediately after this one concludes.

Player Character Motivators

Prior to sharing the adventure hooks, discuss with each player which of the following adventuring "**motivators**" is closest in theme to their character. Each of these roughly corresponds to several of the **ideals** that players may have chosen as part of their background. While their background ideal can be used as a guideline, it's not required to match.

Balance (*Fairness, Logic* and *Nature* ideals)
You have no trouble seeing multiple sides of an argument. Seeing the big picture and/or maintain neutrality has allowed you to make many unique acquaintances as well as to serve as mediator.

Challenge/Achievement (*Aspiration, Glory, Master, Might, Power, Retribituion* and *Self-Improvement* ideals)
Your greatest motivation is to prove and better yourself. Whether it's for your own satisfaction, for others or for glory, you take on challenging tasks and come out better and stronger.

Exploration (*Beauty, Change, Creativity, Free Thinking, Knowledge* and *Self-Knowledge)*
Whether you're a wandering free-spirit or a studious researcher, the drive to explore and discover new things is what makes you seek adventure.

Freedom (*Freedom, Independence* and *No Limits)*
You may not be driven by a set goal or motivation, but that's how you like it. You value the right to do what you wish. If anything is worth defending, it's this.

Greater Good (*Charity, Community, Friendship, Generosity, Greater Good, Honesty, Honor, Nation, Noble Obligation, People, Redemption, Respect, Responsibility, Sincerity, Tradition, Faith)*
You are the proverbial hero. Not for glory or for wealth, but out of a deeper desire to help and to make things better.

Wealth (*Greed*)
It's simple really: you're in it for the coin.

Tricks of the Trade

Shortly after the adventure begins(not yet!), each character will receive an update letter from their acquaintance or employer with some additional information. Familiarize yourself with these and consider casually mentioning these acquaintances during the hook phase. The source of the letter depends on the character's motivator as chosen above or Faction if they have the Faction Agent background.

The letters can be found in **Player Handout 1**. For example, a character with the Explorer motivator will eventually receive a letter from their old acquaintance in the Harpers, so it may be worth mentioning that this acquaintance is how they found out about this job in the first place.

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Adventure Hooks

When sharing the hooks, consider the above character motivators and work them into the hook. For example, while it's a fact that all the adventurers have been hired for the job, those motivated by **Wealth** or **The Greater Good** likely have vastly different reasons for taking it.

The trade must flow [Required Hook]. A trade stoppage on the route from Melvaunt to Glister has the factions concerned. The adventurers have been hired on to investigate and resolve the trade stoppage. Depending on the characters' individual ideals and reasons for adventurers, they came to this job for one of several reasons.

They're to head out and will receive additional information en route.

Abductions around the Moonsea. The Moonsea is home to many dangers and disappearances of loved ones are an unfortunately common occurrence. In their travels, characters inevitably come across many "MISSING" posters with pictures or descriptions of lost loved ones. It's not uncommon for adventurers to make note of these. Characters that are prone to making such notes would have made note of the poster in **Player Handout 2.**

Diamonds are for payment. Characters that participated in *Six Summoned Swords* found themselves having been ambushed by anonymous assassins at the end of that adventure. The only clue left by the assassins was that they had been paid in two small diamonds, worth 50g each. These diamonds were of the same colour and clarity as those that had been given to them by Shintyrr Vith'tyl prior to his death. Various contacts have passed along rumours that purchases using similar diamonds have been connected to the mysterious occupant of an old castle on the Melvaunt-Glister trade route.

Location and NPC Summary

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs, locations and entities feature prominently in this adventure. Portrait cards for main NPCs are provided in Appendix A.

Axcelia Axcelon (Axe-sell-ya). Female drow mage, last surviving member of House Axcelon.

House Axcelon. A lower house of the Zethlentyn Protectorate. Worshippers of Lolth and until recently the purveyors of a large diamond mine, a joint-venture with House Vith'tyl. Prior to mining diamonds the house was known for arcane research.

House Vith'tyl. The 7th house of the Zethlentyn Protectorate. This house does not worship Lolth. Instead, they draw their power from summoning and/or enslaving devils.

Lemethra Vith'tyl (Le-meth-ra). Female Drow War Priest of House Vith'tyl of the Zethlentyn Protectorate that appeared in *Six Summoned Swords*.

Silver. Young female apprentice of Axcelia, she has drow features but pale white skin.

Shintyrr Vith'tyl (Shin-teer). Drow Assassin of House Vith'tyl – brutally killed by S'sheneth'rah at Axcelia's bidding.

S'sheneth'rah (Shae-net-RAH). A marilith demon summoned by Axcelia.

Three Sisters. Bounty hunters of the Sisterhood of the Blade, associated with the Zhentrarim. The three sisters are females of different races: a tabaxi named Misty, a kenku named Donna and a dark-skinned human named Bleak.

Zethlentyn Protectorate. A geopolitical alliance of drow houses. The protectorate is religion-agnostic and allows houses of different faiths to co-operate in trade and mutual protection from external threats.

Elven, Drow and Other Deities

This adventure makes reference to a number of deities, mainly from the elven and drow pantheons. Further information on Correllon Larethian, Eilistraee, Ghaunadaur, Lolth, Kiaransalee, Selvatarm, Vhaeraun and Zinzerena can be found – among other, older sources – in *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes.* Gruumsh is an Orc deity known to elves mainly for his failed attack on Correllon Larethian.

NPCs and Combat

While there are stat blocks provided for the NPCs in the adventure, unless they are in confrontation with the players, it is recommended that their parts in battles are told as a story rather than played out with rolls and stats. This both simplifies combat and gives more play time to the players over the DM. Encounters assume that NPCs are not assisting the party unless specifically stated.

Difficulty Adjustments

While care has been taken to provide appropriate scaling for different parties, it is not possible to scale to every level of player skill and experience. This adventure contains a number of powerful creatures that can overwhelm the party if used in unexpected ways. DMs are encouraged to consider not only the party's level and numbers, but their skill, equipment and experience when scaling.

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The Vith'tyl Helltouched Drow

House Vith'tyl has a strong association with the powers of the Nine Hells and many – though not all – of their number draw their magical powers from these.

Other than slaves and devils, all members of House Vith'tyl are drow. For those enemies that do not already have the drow racial traits, the following should be added to their statistics:

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.
- **Senses**. Darkvision 120ft
- **Innate Spellcasting**. The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (Spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
  At will: *dancing lights*
  1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*
- **Sunlight Sensitivity**. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Whenever the enemy's name is listed as "Helltouched", the following adjustments should also be made to their statistics:

- **Devil's Sight.** The Helltouched are able to see 120ft in magical and non-magical darkness.
- **Reduced Life.** The Helltouched have 10% less hitpoints. The 10% are taken off after any other encounter adjustments for party strength have been taken into consideration.
- **Devilish.**   The Helltouched are susceptible to any abilities that affect fiends or devils such as divine smite. They are, however, native to the material plane.
- **Reduced Spell List.** (Helltouched Warlock only) Helltouched Warlocks do not have access to their *1/day spells.*

Part 1. At the Service of Trade

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Story Beat: The adventurers are sent to investigate strange occurrences at a distant castle and must deal with its magical defenses in order to conduct an impromptu rescue.

Faction Interests

The adventure can begin in Melvaunt or any major Moonsea settlement, where adventurers are given their adventure hooks. This is the time to conduct any regular shopping as the wild trade route through Thar is unlikely to feature any supplies.

Wagon Woes

As the party travels to the mysterious castle, they come across an area where several caravans have setup a temporary camp.

If you have chosen to run the **optional** social interaction scene, it is found in **Appendix D** and should be inserted here.

Otherwise, read or paraphrase the following summary instead:

> A quick stopover at the traders' camp yielded little useful information. A mostly lazy, drunken and superstitious crew regaled you with tales of a dead moose, a petrified chicken and a beautiful six-armed woman that disappeared into thin air. Yet, at least some of the more capable – and sober! – hands seemed to confirm the presence of treacherous magic in the area, so that is something.

Updates on the Road

As the party travels from the caravan camp to the mysterious castle, each character receives an update based on their **motivator** as selected during the hook stage. (**Player Handout 1).** It's important to note that these aren't necessarily extra missions, but rather advice on how to approach the situation.

The Chaos Web

The party arrives at the castle without incident and is immediately thrown into a dire situation. A member of the previously sent mercenary party is caught in a magical trap and dies in 6 rounds without intervention. See sidebar for details of the Chaos Web and **Map 5** for suggested layout.

> A seemingly open field leads up to the castle. In several spots there poles have been hammered into the ground with a crudely drawn red X drawn on them. A stone's throw into the field, held somehow in mid-air is a humanoid form, its features twisted in pain.

Caught in the Web

Unbeknownst to other factions, the Zhentarim had sent three mercenaries to deal with the situation at the castle. Unless adventurers had killed them during the events of *Six Summoned Swords*, the operatives are the bounty hunters known as the **Three Sisters** (See Roleplaying sidebar.) One of the three is caught in the web and visibly bleeding, a second is haphazardly bandaged and out of commission. The third one has been tending to the second and ask for the party's assistance.

> #### Roleplaying the "Three Sisters"
>
> The three sisters are members of a Bounty Hunting organization called The Sisterhood of the Blade. The organization is loosely associated with the Zhentarim and does a great deal of work for them. The Sisterhood typically dispatches groups of three for important or lengthy assignments.
>
> Unless they were killed during the Events of *Six Summoned Swords* (verify story code), the bounty hunters are three females of different races – a Tabaxi, a Kenku and a Human. They are name Misty, Donna and Bleak respectively.
>
> The Tabaxi – Misty – is in charge and does most of the talking for the party.
>
> If it is not these specific three sisters, they are three female halflings named Petras, Gragold, and Dakubla.
>
> Neither set of sisters are actually family, yet they inevitably address each other as "sister", despite the lack of any physical resemblance or relation.
>
> The Three Sisters are old-timers in the bounty hunting and mercenary business and are on a mission for the Zhentarim. They conduct themselves with self-assurance and skill.
>
> **Fate**: The ultimate fate (life or death) of the Three Sisters is not important to the main storyline.

The sisters reveal the following:

- They arrived a day ago and attempted to contact the resident without any luck.
- There seems to be a magical field or series of traps protecting the approach to the castle. One of them got struck by magic they tried to approach and ran out. They had attached rope to one of the trees and were hoping to circumvent traps by air, but when climbing across, their (now trapped) companion fell off the rope (actually was teleported by the chaos web), then was struck by

something before became stuck in their current condition. Their companion is badly hurt and slowly bleeding out.

Initiative should be used to track rounds and character actions, unless they do not wish to help. The trapped sister is too weak and can't take actions, but has an initiative of 0 for the purposes of death saves. All additional checks from this point on require their normal action economy to undertake.

Accessing the castle. In addition to being subject to the *guards and wards* spell, the castle is warded against intrusion and cannot be teleported into, except for a specific unwarded zone in the cellar, which adventurers have no way of knowing about. **It should be clear to adventurers that their goal is the rescue and not getting into the castle!**

The Chaos Web

Complex Trap (level 5-10, variable threat)

The Chaos Web occupies an area of 160ft every direction (including vertical) around the castle. Each 5ft square of the Chaos Web triggers an individual trap. It can only trigger once per round and resets at the start of the next round unless the effect is on-going. If the effect is on-going, that square does not activate again until the creature under the effect has left the square. The Web is three-dimensional and consists of 3 "belts" of effects that become more severe closer to the center. The belt closest to the castle is Red (40ft across), the next after it is Yellow (40ft across) and the outer belt is Purple (80ft across). To help speed up play, **Appendix E** provides prerolled results for the Chaos Web's effects.

Trigger. A creature is subject to the web's effect upon entering a square for the first time on a turn – this includes involuntary movement or teleports – as well as when starting its turn in the square. **Inanimate objects** and **unconscious creatures** do not trigger the web's effects. The effects are determined by a D100 roll each time.

Effects: Purple Belt (Moderate Threat)
76-100: The creature is teleported 10ft in a random direction. (See direction guide below). This triggers the web effect in the square that the creature arrives into. If the creature ends up falling as a result of the teleport, it triggers the effects of any squares it passes through.
51-75: The creature rises 10ft, not triggering any additional web effects and is suspended midair as if under the effects of the l*evitate* spell. The levitation effect lasts as long as the creature remains in that square – even if the creature falls unconscious. This is considered to be an on-going effect for that square.
26-50: The creature is hit by a 1st level *ray of frost* spell.
1-25: The creature is hit by a 1st level *chaos bolt* spell.
Effects: Yellow Belt (Dangerous Threat)

76-100: Same as Purple Belt
51-75: The creature rises 10ft, not triggering any additional web effects and is suspended midair as if under the effects of the l*evitate* spell. The levitation effect lasts as long as the creature remains in that square – even if the creature falls unconscious. This is considered to be an on-going effect for that square. If conscious, the creature is also subject to the *Hold Person* spell (DC15) at the start of each of their turns.
26-50: The creature is hit by a 5th level *firebolt* spell.
1-25: The creature is hit by a 2nd level *chaos bolt* spell.
Effects: Red Belt (Deadly Threat)
76-100: Same as Purple Belt
51-75: The creature is subject to the *flesh to stone* spell (DC17)
26-50: The creature is hit by an 11th level *chill touch* spell.
1-25: The creature is hit by a 3rd level *chaos bolt* spell.
Determining random direction
Step 1. Roll a D6. On a 1-2, the direction is diagonal down. On a 3-4, the direction is on the same plane. On a 5-6, the direction is diagonal up. (In the event that the creature is on the ground, treat down as same plane).
Step 2. Roll a D8 for direction, with 1 being straight ahead and 2-8 being all the other squares clockwise.
Embracing the chaos
  Wild Magic Sorcerers. If the chaos web's *chaos bolt* hits a Wild Magic Sorcerer, trigger a wild magic surge on the sorcerer. If a Wild Magic Sorcerer uses Tides of Chaos to gain advantage on a saving throw against any of the chaos web's effects, trigger a wild magic surge on the sorcerer.
Dead Spaces
  Each belt of the web has 4 dead (or safe) spaces. These spaces are always on the ground level of the web and are marked on the chaos web map. They can only be seen by someone that has the appropriate senses as described below or as gaps by someone using the *detect magic* spell.
Countermeasures
  The web itself is invisible and has no corporeal form, it can be perceived visually through the *see invisibility* spell or truesight. When viewed thusly, the web's strands are purple in the outer belt, yellow in the middle and red in the inner belt. Ability to see the web is not expected to deal with it.
  The *detect magic* spell picks up a myriad of evocation, conjuration, enchantment, divination and transmutation magic as well as "pure chaos".
  A successful DC15 Intelligence (Arcana) check by a character with either *see invisibility*, truesight or *detect magic* allows that character to notice the dead strands (safe areas) in the web within the range of that spell.
  Dispel magic disables individual squares of the web for 1 minute. For the purposes of dispelling, squares are considered 2nd level effects in the purple belt, 4th level effects in the yellow belt and 6th level effects in the red belt. A DC15 Intelligence (Arcana) check after casting *dispel magic* on any part of the web allows the caster to determine the dispelling requirements for all parts of the web and also that the web eventually repairs itself.

Rescuing the Trapped Sister

The following mechanics apply to the trapped sister (the party's knowledge of these depends on appropriate checks):

- The sister is unconscious and held mid-air (as per *levitate*) and bleeding. Even if somehow healed, she lacks the strength to perform any actions on her own.
- Her injuries are so severe and complex that magical healing from a distance is not sufficient to stabilize her.
- At the end of her 2nd, 4th and 6th turns in initiative, the trapped sister automatically fails a death saving throw.
- Taking any damage results in an additional failed save.
- Magical healing from a distance removes one death fail, but does not stabilize.
- Magical healing or a successful DC15 Wisdom (Healer's Kit) check from with 5ft results in the sister being considered stable.

For actions that require a "willing" target, approval can be gained from her companions.

- A successful DC13 Wisdom (Medicine or Perception) check ascertains that the trapped sister is on her last legs and will bleed out imminently. The injuries are so severe, that distant magical healing is insufficient to properly address them. A result of 20 or higher gives the group the exact time limitation of 6 rounds. Otherwise, they believe it'll take "3-10" rounds. Either way, they must act.
- A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the second injured sister is also hurt, but is stable. A result of 15 or better reveals that she suffered would form a variety of damage types (acid, fire, lightning and potentially others).
- As long as some attempts at trial & error have been made, a successful DC15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that inanimate objects such as rope do not trigger the web. Anything that is classified as a creature does trigger the web.
- Refer to the Chaos Web sidebar for checks related to the nature of the web.

Additional Events

Certain additional events take place while the party is interacting with the web. These all occur on **initiative count 0** during their designated round:

Round 1. Noticed by anyone with a passive perception of 15 or higher.

A sudden rustling is heard coming from a nearby tree as though signaling the approach of a beast. Emerging atop one of the branches is a small create with reddish fur. It rises on its hind legs and sniffs the air. You are able to identify this creature as a common squirrel.

The squirrel looks toward the castle and at a shorter tree located inside the marked off area. It takes a running start on all-fours and makes a spectacular leap toward the other tree.

As it sails majestically through the air and over makeshift "do not cross" sign, there is a crackle of white energy and the squirrel falls to the ground as a frozen chuck of ice.

- **Round 3.** Noticed by anyone with a passive perception of 15 or higher.
  Nearer the castle, a bird dives and drops suddenly to the ground. On the ground can be seen several stone birds.
- **Round 5.** Noticed by anyone with a passive perception of 15 or higher.
  The previously fallen bird has now turned to stone.
- **Round 6.** Noticed by anyone not distracted. Can be prevented party actions.
  The trapped sister dies and drops to the ground.

Development

The adventurers are expected to risk their lives and use their skills and ingenuity to rescue trapped sister. Due to the very nature of the chaos web, the results can range from quick and easy to disastrous.

Allow the scenario to develop naturally and then wrap up under the following conditions:

- The trapped sister is rescued.
- The trapped sister dies.
- A player character reaches 2 failed death saves or becomes petrified.
- Half or more of the player characters become trapped (subject to one of the on-going effects) in the chaos web.

Once one of the above occurs, the half-drow mage **Silver** appears and speaks to the party. Note that she is able to save those in the web. If this is required, work her offer of assistance into her dialogue.

Roleplaying Silver

As seen from afar, one might easily assume that Silver's unmistakable waist-long, snowwhite mane of tangled hair belongs to a drow elf. Her thin, athletic frame is also of a match. It is the pale, almost white skin that gives the woman who calls herself Silver away as something less – or perhaps more – than a pureblood drow.

Whether due to her clear youth or a face that is as yet not accustomed to deceit, the expressions of her sharp features also betray her as someone different. There is a curiosity and – if not kindness – perhaps a lack of cruelty about her.

In truth, Silver's name is an unpronounceable string of harsh old Undercommon syllables that roughly translates as "of all the goddesses". She calls herself "Silver" by choice.

Silver serves as the apprentice and confidant to Axcelia Axcelon. These are Axcelia's terms and they are kind. Another, might use terms like "daughter" or "heir", but in Axcelia's mind Silver is but a coldly calculated "creation" that might one day become "an achievement".

Born with natural predisposition to magic, Silver loves the boundless possibilities and inherent mischief of her magical powers.

Having been subjected to Axcelia's increasing paranoia, Silver has begun to worry about the matron. It has become clear to her that Axcelia's bond with her demon is driving them both insane. Something must be done and soon.

Silver sees the capable adventurers as an opportunity.

From behind a nearby tree four thin figures in grey, tight-fitting robes emerge. Snowwhite hair falls down to the waist from within their hoods. Their sleeved arms are crossed on front of their waists, creating a serene, almost clerical appearance. They speak as one and as they do, it is with a calmness and clarity and in your native tongue. The voice that rings out as one is soft and feminine: "Have you come to see the Matron? She is not welcoming of those she hasn't summoned. Tell me, why have you come?"

Development

Silver starts the conversation with *mirror image* cast, as much for protection as out of whimsy and the pure pleasure of using magic. She is not looking to deceive the party and refers to herself in the singular. If they remark on the images, she performs some random hand gesture while watching the mirrors do the same – "magic, isn't it wondrous?"

She introduces herself as a ward to the Matron Axcelia Axcelon. She answers questions matter-of-factly. She does not deceive the party, nor does she go into a great deal of details and simply ignores questions that are too in-depth or complex. She shares the following:

- Matron Axcelia Axcelon is the occupant of the castle. She is in exile from the Underdark and has many enemies.
- Axcelia has spent her considerable energies creating a web of wards too keep said enemies out. Warning signs had been placed around.
- If the party shows any displeasure about the defenses, Silver simply points out that if one does not trespass, one is not harmed.
- **Silver is able to either de-activate parts of the web or use the *teleport* spell to help rescue anyone trapped.** For those needing a *resurrection* or *greater restoration* she says that the Matron may be able to assist. She also explains that many parts of the defenses are very powerful and can only be permanently dismissed by the Matron herself (they remain if she is killed.)
- Silver asks why the party is here. If the party is sufficiently forthcoming with their desires to have Axcelia leave and remove the enchantments, Silver – hesitantly – shares that Axcelia's ambition was once to return to the Underdark and exact her just revenge for the unprovoked slaughter of her house. Axcelia had initially summoned a great fiend – a marilith! – to assist in this task, but assassins had accosted her during the summoning and somehow broke the binding ritual. Further attempts to repair the ritual have not been as successful. The fiend continually struggles for control –a fact that had forced Axcelia to retreat here. But instead of planning her return, she has become paranoid, spending her time making traps, wanting to be "ready when the enemy strikes". Yet it has been a years and no one has come.
- **DM Tip:** Drop enough information to have the party themselves come up with the idea that they should help the matron get revenge as a way of convincing her to leave. If the party does not come up with this plan, Silver subtly suggests it.
- Silver offers or grants the party an audience with the matron. If anyone in the party is in possession of **Weave** (Axcelia's helmet acquired during *Six Summoned Swords*), Silver is in awe of it and asks to use it to transport them inside. If allowed, she promises to use her own energies for the party's benefit. Otherwise, she casts *teleport* herself.
- Prior to teleporting, Silver warns the party that Axcelia responds best when spoken with in Undercommon and offers to cast *tongues* on one person in the group.

An Audience

Axcelia's castle is under the permanent effect of the *guards and wards* spell. Axcelia, Silver and S'sheneth'rah are the only ones designated as not affected by it.

When the party arrives via teleport, they hear a few arcane words and find themselves in a stonewalled room and encased within a dome created by a *wall of force* spell. Seeping through the walls outside the dome, is a greenish mist (this room is subject to the *stinking cloud* effect of *guards and wards*). Directly ahead is a staircase leading up that is entirely filled with thick spider webs. Silver – who ended up outside the *wall of force* – walks into the webs as though they do not exist and disappears from sight (she takes **Weave** if she had it).

"You told them too much, child," comes a voice in Undercommon from within the web. A moment later, Axcelia emerges from the web (holding **Weave** if it was present – its legs twitch like a live spider in her hand). The noxious cloud continues seeping out from the walls. She runs her hand over the dome and says "this will keep you safe from the castle's defenses. So long as I deem it worthwhile to maintain it. Talk then, why have you come? Has my web outside not made it sufficiently clear that intruders are not welcome?"

Before the party has a chance to answer, the marilith S'sheneth'rah teleports into the room, feral and with her swords at the ready. If the party had met her during *Six Summoned Swords,* they find her form somehow more worn, diminished. "At lassssst, a battle! Thissss waiting isss intolerable!" she hisses in Abyssal. Axcelia bites back in Undercommon "How I despise your cursed tongue. No! Return to your sanctum. I will call for you if I need you." A successful DC13 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Axcelia and S'sheneth'rah are clearly displeased with each other.

Roleplaying Axcelia.

Axcelia Axcelon is a powerful Drow mage and a faithful servant of Lolth. Having been betrayed and seen her entire house slaughtered at the hands of House Vith'tyl, her sole drive in life is vengeance.

Unable to fully bind the marilith S'sheneth'rah, Axcelia is beginning to lose her mind – or rather, her mind and S'sheneth'rah's are beginning to somehow meld, with unpredictable and dire results. She is far too proud to ever willingly sever the binding – nor is she sure that it can even be done without killing herself in the process.

Axcelia's calling in life is magic. She has always had a strong connection to the weave so learning and manipulating spells came easy. All that drove her up to the point her house's fall

was study and desire for stronger, more powerful magic. It was to this end that she had decided to give birth – not to a drow, but to something even more powerful – yes, even parenthood was a magic experiment to her and so was born her half-blood daughter.

Hate as she may the surface world, Axcelia is fully in control of her new surroundings. She feels protected, but at the same time that old yearning for revenge is a powerful force. **Important:** Throughout the party`s interactions with Axcelia, it`s important to pepper in some mild hints of madness that is slowly taking her – it generally manifests in demonic utterances in Abyssal, eyes glowing or hissing. These signs are evidence of her consciousness being invaded more and more by the marilith. In this adventure these signs should not be so extreme so as to totally alienate the party. Some suggestions are provided throughout.

Development

Axcelia has been without outside company (other than Silver and S'sheneth'rah) for a long time and now that she has guests, she relishes the opportunity. If the party wishes to chat, they can learn much from the mage. If the adventurers wish to cut straight to business, proceed straight to **Convincing Axcelia**. Otherwise, some or all of the following can be revealed in conversation.

- **The fall of House Axcelon.** Axcelia's house was one of the lesser houses within the Zethlentyn Protectorate. Their business was mining diamonds. As the mining operation grew, they took on a patron, in the larger house Vith'tyl. After many years of mutually profitable co-operation, the larger House – in a bid to gain sole possession of the highly profitable mines – turned on them. Struck with no warning, house Axcelon was overwhelmed and swiftly slaughtered. *"They killed every pureblood member of the house, even the guards and the handmaidens! Only the slaves were left untouched, but of course slaves care not who they belong to."* It was only due to her recent experiments with teleportation – which is highly unreliable and dangerous in the Underdark – and her possession of a magical helm that she was able to escape. Knowing what had happened, she attempted to summon and bind a powerful fiend. The summoning was successful beyond her wildest dreams and she was able to bring forward S'sheneth'rah – a marilith! Vith'tyl assassins were on her trail however and had interrupted the ritual. Her hope had been to complete the ritual and wreak vengeance upon those that had wiped out her kind. Yet attempts to finish the ritual were met with mixed results and while she was able to

defeat some of the Vith'tyl forces (at this, her eyes change to a greenish glow and she speaks in a deeper voice, eerily similar to the marilith's "*I can still taste their blood on my swords*," then changes to normal) the total Vith'tyl combatants had proven too many and she was forced to retreat.

- **Paranoia and the Chaos Web.** Eventually, Axcelia found her way to the surface and took residence in this abandoned and out of the way castle. She has been making sure that no one can assault her here. She feels fully within her rights to protect herself and her territory. She is quite paranoid about her defenses. "*Even now, my web outside repairs itself, prepares itself. A great deal of pain awaits anyone that comes to this castle looking for trouble.*"

- **Revenge.** If asked about why she has not gone back to take her revenge, Axcelia's paranoia comes back again. "*That is what they want! They want me to go to them! To reveal myself! To catch me off-guard. But I will be prepared. I am learning. Learning and building. Traps and spells and demons! The time will come for my return to the Underdark and they will all pay for what they had done! But not yet. It is not yet time. I must make more. I must be more ready!*"

- **Silver.** If asked about Silver, Axcelia says little other than "*she may yet become my greatest achievement*" (At this, her eyes change briefly to a fiendish colour and she blurts out in a deeper voice speaking abyssal "*she is nothing!*", then goes back to normal.)

- **The Fiend.** A successful DC13 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals some manner of struggle for control between Axcelia and S'sheneth'rah. Axcelia is able to regain control easily, but it seems that some of the fiend's personality is bleeding over into her.

- **The Slaves.** Slavery is a fact of life among the drow and Axcelia shows neither remorse nor care on the matter. If asked about the Elf slaves, she does not remember most of them but does know that House Axcelon had over three dozen, most of whom would have been taken in the raid and now belong to House Vith'tyl. If shown the "**Taken by the Drow**" poster or Naivara Firahel's brothers, Axcelia says "*Surely you do not expect me to remember every slave's name? But yes, we did have a few elven males. Perhaps they were these.*" She is being truthful.

- **DM Tip:** The possibility of rescuing slaves can be used as extra incentive to align with Axcelia. This is something that can be communicated in-character by Axcelia or Silver if needed.

Convincing Axcelia

When the time is right, Axcelia cuts to the chase. Read or paraphrase:

> "Let us dispense with social graces and cut to the point. You have not come here to learn drow history or to offer your undying servitude to the dark mother. You are here – whether of your own volition or the behest of your betters – to get rid of me. As you have no doubt sussed out by now, you will not be accomplishing this by violence – the magics of this place dance to my will alone – and I have no interest in leaving my sanctuary. So, what is it that you believe you can offer?"

- Axcelia scoffs at any attempts to intimidate her: "*Even now, the barrier I have summoned is the only thing even keeping you alive.*"

- The party should be allowed to help convince her that returning to the Underdark to seek revenge is her best course of action. If the adventurers have not come to this idea themselves, Silver suggests it.

- This is a group Charisma (Persuasion) check, with advantage being given for good logical arguments and the use of Axcelia's history. The mention of pleasing Lolth is also advantageous. Characters that had taken Axcelia's side during the events of *Six Summoned Swords* (see **Appendix C**) can take a result of 20 on this check. Note the average result of the group check. While Axcelia is convinced regardless of the result, it determines the degree to which she assists the efforts and trusts the adventurers later on.

- The idea of rescuing the slaves is of no interest to her whatsoever. All members of her actual house are dead and slaves do not count. She may, however, use the idea of slave rescue to help entice the adventurers to do her bidding later on!

Tricks of the Trade:

This conversation and Persuasion check should ideally be played out as a back-and-forward, with Axcelia slowly coming around to the idea. The adventurers should note that they've sent her mind racing with different ideas until she finally concocts a plan.

Having each of the players state their case for vengeance can also help secure their own stake in this adventure and the next.

Checks and listing specific facts are less important here than establishing a good flow of conversation. This is an opportunity to engage with the story and everyone should be encourages to speak!

The Mission

Axcelia's eyes light up with and she paces back and forward excitedly. She twirls her long slender fingers as she walks and small puffs of magical mist appear and disappear around her hand as she does. It's almost hypnotic. Suddenly, she snaps her fingers and straightens out her palm.   On it is an odd-looking blue and white spider. It crawls its way along her palm to the very tip of her middle finger and then in a flash, it is gone and just as suddenly re-appears on her wrist.   It sits there momentarily and again disappears and re-appears on the tip of her finger.   She twirls her hand in a dismissive gesture and it is gone.   Axcelia`s demeanor calms and she smiles knowingly. "Yes, there is a way," she says "perhaps a way for us all to get what we want."

- Once the adventurers commit to helping Axcelia get her revenge, she agrees to (subsequently) leave here and to either dispel the Chaos Web or provide instructions on how it can be done. The mission does eventually involve attacking House Vith'tyl.   If the adventurers are concerned about this, Axcelia pushes their buttons by mentioning the slaves: "*You care about surface slaves, yes? You would have a chance to obtain some of these.*"
- Axcelia tells the adventurers about the perils of teleportation in the Underdark. Chief among them being the Faerzress, which commonly results in teleportation going disastrously wrong.   Drow houses oft take advantage of this by building their strongholds near areas of strong Faerzress, so as to prevent unwelcome guess from teleporting in. The Vith'tyl Manor is built in such a way.
- Prior to their full-on foray into diamond mining, her house was well known for their Arcane research, including the study of teleportation in the Underdark. The helmet *Weave* is an example of their work.   She had spent a great deal of time studying the histories and arcane research tomes of her house (She was able to escape with much of House Axcelon's library using a *secret chest* spell).
- Much of the research was abandoned when all house efforts switched to mining, however, she has discovered that her ancestors had created a special teleport aplifier.   She believes that this artifact can be used to allow a party to teleport straight into the Vith'tyl House Manor.
- This is where the adventurers' assistance comes in. She will teleport them to safe teleportation circle known to her – on former Axcelon grounds. From there they will need to complete two tasks.

- The majority of the party will need to travel on foot to the hidden Axcelon research archive, where they are to find and activate the secret teleportation amplifier.
- One individual – best suited to deception – will need to infiltrate the House Vith'tyl grounds and obtain a suitable object from the manor. The object in question is to be used to enhance teleportation accuracy. The value of the object is insignificant; though the longer it's been associated with the manor, the better. It matters not whether it's a work of art or a brick from the foundation, only that it is known to belong there. (See the *teleport* spell for details of "associated object").
- Axcelia will not accompany the adventurers – she and S'sheneth'rah will join them as soon as the teleport portal is active. She will, however, send Silver along. Silver is trained in the arcane arts and speaks Undercommon.   While Axcelia does not know what kind of wards are in place at Axcelon archive, Silver should be of use in helping access the place.
- Axcelia asks which of the characters plans to undertake the stealth mission and provides them with details on the House Vith'tyl Manor **(Player Handout 5)**. She also gives them the *dark mother's ring of spell storing (*Player Handout 3).** The ring has been set up for the mission. It allows one to speak Undercommon and has the following spells cast stored: *disguise self, silence, spider climb.* "S*ucceed in your mission and the ring is yours to keep,*" she says to the party.
- Axcelia gives characters a pair of warnings – one is to avoid teleportation outside of the designated areas. The Faerzress is like to interfere and – at best –the spell will be wasted. The second warning is about the local denizens – "*Be warned that you have no friends there. There is no one there that won't betray or murder you at the first chance. Stay silent and out of sight.*"
- If the group wishes to rest, they can do so outside the castle.   If the group was in possession of *Weave*, Axcelia returns it to Silver, who in turn returns it to the party.

Part 2: Never Scream Ever Again

Estimated Duration: 15-30 minutes

Story Beat: The adventurers are teleported into an old Axcelon storehouse, which they find isn't quite abandoned.

Time Check

This encounter at the Axcelon Storehouse is the second **optional** part of the adventure. It can serve break from mostly Exploration & Roleplay focused nature of the adventure. If Part 1 of the adventure has taken the group more than 90 minutes, it is strongly recommended that this encounter be skipped and the storehouse is found abandoned (proceed to the **Let's Split the Party! s**ection below.)

The Mouths of Babes

The group is teleported into the Underdark equivalent of a barn, which stands near to what used to be an Axcelon storehouse. Two **giant lizards** are housed at the barn. The storehouse itself has been repurposed as a Mine Supervisor's Office for House Vith'Tyl. The office is closed when the characters arrive, but it is guarded day and night by a rotating contingent of Vith'tyl guards who reside in part of the complex. Serving the Vith'tyl guards is one slave – a duergar child.

The slave child happens to see the adventurers teleport in and is standing 40ft away in a doorway leading away from the barn when they arrive. The slave is completely indoctrinated by its cruel masters and screams at the top of its lungs to alert them as soon as it's able. Due to its size and a half-opened barn door, the child has three-quarters cover.

The encounter with the child can be resolved with or without initiative. If not using initiative, determine via roleplaying who in the group would act first and what their action would be.

If using initiative, roll initiative prior to revealing the child or surroundings to the group. The child automatically goes **third** in initiative. Resolve as required.

When the child screams, this spooks the **giant lizards** that cause a ruckus and attack the players. They're trained as battle mounts and smart enough to know the adventurers as not being their masters. If the child screams, the lizards can only be calmed through magical means or special abilities dealing with animal interaction (an Animal Handling check on its own is not sufficient.)

If the slave child is successfully prevented from screaming, the lizards are a little bit spooked, but can be calmed with a DC13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. If they're not, they attack and cause enough noise to alert the guards.

Adjusting the Encounter

If they are not calmed, two **giant lizards** attack the characters. Their presence does not impact how the remainder of the encounter is adjusted.

Very Weak: 1 **drow elite warrior** and 1 **vith'tyl helltouched warlock**

Weak or Average: 2 **drow elite warriors** and 1 **vith'tyl helltouched warlock**

Strong or Very Strong: 2 **drow elite warriors** and 2 **vith'tyl helltouched warlock**

Tactics: If alerted, the drow do not rush mindlessly to investigate. They cast darkness at the entrance of the barn and use cover to snipe at adventurers.

Treasure

The guards have good quality mundane armor and clothing adorned with insignias of House Vith'tyl - these can be identified by either Silver or from Axcelia's descriptions**.**

Let's split the party!

If the guards were alerted (and either killed or incapacitated), Silver warns the adventurers that they are likely to be discovered within a few hours, making it somewhat time-sensitive to depart.

From this point on, the party is free to set off on their dual missions. It's recommended that the party be split for this. More information follows in Part 3.

Part 3: For Drow Eyes Only

Estimated Duration: 60-90 minutes

Story Beat: The adventurers must unlock the secrets of the Axcelon Teleportation Research Facility and also retrieve a vital teleportation component from the House Vith'tyl Manor.

Recommended DM Approach to Part 3

The centerpiece of this section – and the adventure as a whole – is the multi-layered puzzle located at the Axcelon archive. The puzzle is intended to be investigated and solved in stages, with possibilities to progress via skill checks, player problem-solving as well as trial and error. The party should be given plenty of time to work on the puzzle and to progress through it in various ways.

To keep the game moving while the party takes needed "think breaks" at the puzzle, it is suggested that the single-character mission of infiltrating the Vith'tyl Manor is undertaken concurrently with the remainder of the party solving the puzzle. The idea is to give the puzzle group their information, let them evaluate it and during that time to go back to the character that is at the Vith'tyl Manor and so on – back and forward.

Silver casts the *telepathy* spell on herself and the chosen infiltrator. This allows the split-off character to be aware of the party's progress, stay in touch and eventually catch up.

For the purposes of keeping all the players engaged, once the party splits and until they start investigating the written passages in *The Glory of Lolth*, the character doing the infiltration can interact with the party through Silver (see **Player Handout 6**). Once the party is given some of the puzzle handouts inside the archive, they can be left to ponder them and the action can switch over to the infiltration, then back and forward between the two.

The pace of the Manor mission is easily adjustable on the fly and is likely to wrap up in half the time of the puzzle solving. The character then joins the rest of the group in time to activate the portal.

Part 3A: Retrieving the Component

The massive Vith'tyl Manor is very well guarded. There is, however, plenty of hustle and bustle in and around the area and traffic to and from the grounds. While there are plenty of guards and others around, there is no expectation of either attack or infiltration.

This section of the mission is intended to allow for open-ended play in choosing the approach. It is up to the DM and the player how this plays out. It could be a stealthy approach that attempts to avoid notice or a head-on infiltration that works through disguise and deception.

Unbeknownst to the player, the odds of them getting caught are virtually nil, so long as they make minimal efforts. DMs are encouraged to build tension, but ultimately allow the infiltration to succeed even if rolls are bad (good luck does exist!). The important part of this mission is not its given success but the choices made – where do they get the component from and what other information they choose to obtain. These determine the group's options for attacking the manor in the follow-up adventure.

A rough map of the manor is provided by Axcelia as **Player Handout 5**. **Map 1** shows the Manor from the DM perspective, including areas currently inaccessible. Successes during the mission (as determined by the DM) can lead to **some** of the following additional information being discovered:

- **Location of the slave quarter** on the lower level(though it is currently inaccessible – saving the slaves during this adventure is not possible).
- **Confirmation of the presence of elven slaves** (should be sufficiently difficult social checks. The slaves are not currently present, but can be confirmed as being alive and usually at the manor).
- **Vith'tyl relations with devils and the fact that a strange new devil was recently summoned and is being negotiated with**. It looks somewhat draconic in nature (it's a Black Abishai)
- **Vith'tyl general ambition and lack of remorse for destroying other houses**. They laugh about "squashing" Axcelon without mercy. "I was there the night we finally took the Axcelon Mansion. Stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Esephile Vith'tyl herself as she slaughtered all the heirs. It's all a façade you know – the Lolth fanaticism - the little spider punks squealed like the children that they were as she put them out of the misery. I sure hope we go after another house soon. Moving up the food chain has its privileges."
- **Information on the age of certain items in the Manor is also available.** Most items have been in the Manor for a long time and thereby it is trivial to confirm that an item works as the required component for Axcelia.
- Using guile, spying or other social interactions within the manor, you may allow characters to obtain locations of several other key areas of the manor. Knowledge of these locations may provide the players with additional benefits during the final

adventure of the trilogy. They are, however, not accessible during this adventure. You may roll a d4 to determine how many they find out about, or just give them out based on social interactions.
- o **The armory** is on the main floor and is the very northeast room.
- o There is a nobles' **pleasure dungeon** somewhere underneath the east wing.
- o **Slave quarters** are mostly underneath the west wing.
- o Conjurer Aberteth oversees the **summoning rooms** located beneath the east wing.
- A component item can be obtained from one of the following areas and the specific area should be noted:
  - o Anywhere from the walls of the manor or one of the towers.
  - o One of the main floor offices.
  - o Any other location on the west side of the first floor.
  - o Any other location on the east side of the first floor.
- Finally, if the character infiltrating the mansion has been particularly good at it, they can find treasure in the form of a *scroll of mass cure wounds.* Place this as you see fit for them to find.

Part 3B: The Axcelon Archive

Blessing of the Dark Mother
The Axcelon Archive lies about an hour away. It is hidden within a massive stalactite high above the ground (Refer to **Map 2**). When the party arrives in the area beneath it, they find a small altar hidden within a natural alcove on the ground. There is a small spider-shaped basin carved right into the rock. Silver takes out a vial of Axcelia's blood and pours a small amount into it. "*Only those of pure Axcelon blood can activate this,*" she explains. Several tiny spectral spiders appear and encircle the basin. "*This is a Blessing of Lolth,*" she continues. "*We must accept it to go inside. Place your hand in the basin like this.*" She places her own hand on it and one of the spiders crawls on top of it and then suddenly she's gone and appears in flash on a ledge in the stalactite high above the party. Placing a hand into the basin results in one of the spectral spiders crawling onto it, then the person is instantly teleported onto a small ledge near the middle of the stalactite. If the person is wearing gloves, the spider phases through to the inside. Once teleported, the transportee notices a spider bite on their hand.   This is the Blessing of Lolth.   The

Blessing of Lolth lasts for 3 hours, but can be removed earlier through the use of a Remove Curse or Greater Restoration spell. The blessing has no direct effect in itself; it affects how the archive wards react to the character. **Once the characters receive the blessing, start tracking the party's time inside.** It's not necessary to track individual rounds of play, only time spent casting spell that take more than 1 minute and activities designated to take a specific amount of time.
  The ledge contains several corpses and skeletons of Underdark wildlife in various stages of decay. Those with the blessing see an ornate doorway leading inside. Those without the blessing see only rock.   A character reaching this point without the blessing is subject to the effect of the *synaptic static* spell (DC15) immediately and at the start of each of their turns that they remain on the archive grounds, so long as the **archive wards** are up. They are overwhelmed by feeling of intruding and being unwelcome. Leaving the area is as simple as jumping off the ledge, but it is 100ft down. "*Jump down if you want to live!*" Silver may venture.   She may also cast *feather fall* if the characters have been nice.
  Proceeding without the blessing is not a viable option.

The Research Library
The Axcelon Archive is composed of two areas, located one below the other. The lower area is a library and supply room. It contains various research tomes on teleportation and various experiment journals. While most tomes are in Undercommon, a few general tomes are Faerunian works in other languages – Elvish, Common and Netherese are represented.   Characters are able to ascertain the following from examining the items and tomes in the room:
  If the party spends 10 minutes and any character succeeds on a DC15 Intelligence (History) check, they're able to learn that the majority of the tomes here deal with teleportation and complications in teleporting within the Underdark, they also learn these have not been touched for a long time.   The check also reveals that learning anything useful would take more time spent studying the journals.
  A total of 1hr (including the initial 10 minutes) must be spent to learn the specifics of what was being done. A successful DC15 Intelligence (Arcana) check is required from every character wishing to contribute their time to the research. At least one character participating must be able to read Undercommon. 1hr of successful research reveals the following:

- The drow of House Axcelon had indeed created a special teleport gate that allowed for the use of the teleport spell to reach it from anywhere, so long as one knew the specifics of the gate.
- Their research in overcoming the Faerzress with teleportation had led them to a breakthrough in "teleport amplification".   By tuning the gate to specific Faerzress resonance, they were able to teleport into places hitherto blocked by the radiation.
- Secretly, the researchers had already tuned the gate to function with several specific locations of interest to House Axcelon. These locations include the grounds of the Axcelon Mansion, the Axcelon Mine and most notably, an area where the Vith'tyl Manor currently stands.
- The specifics of how to tune the gate to a new location are unfortunately not found in the notes.

The Archive Wards

A winding stair leads up from the research room and into a large two-tier circular chamber. The lower level of the chamber holds a pool of dark water roughly shaped as a spider. Surrounding it are what look to be six cells.

  Matching ramps lead up to the upper level of the chamber. An ornate gate stands on the far side of the upper level, looming down from a height of almost 20ft above the floor. (**Map 3a** provides the to-scale dimensions of this room, while **Map 3b** provides a three-dimensional view and can be used as a player handout and reference).

Tricks of the Trade

Solving the arcane puzzle of the wards is main challenge of the adventure. Players should be given as little information as possible to start and allowed to learn how different parts of the wards work.   There are multiple possible ways to make progress to the solution and different groups are likely to move through the puzzle in different ways. A number of hints are provided, however, they should be given out sparingly and only after the party has become stuck. After each hint is given, allow the party time to re-trace their steps and work out the solution.

DO NOT give away the solution to the puzzle under any circumstances.   If the party fails to solve the puzzle, they are still able to progress and complete the adventure. Not knowing the solution leaves them the opportunity to solve the puzzle again the next time that they play through the adventure.

  Of significance in the room are the five areas: ceremonial pool, "cells" that surround the pool, a bookshelf, a desk and the inactive teleportation gate.

- ***The Ceremonial Pool.*** The pool is dark due to having a black bottom. It contains harmless water. It is lined by eight "platforms" with the two at the far side having spider statues on them.
  o A successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that one of the spider statues is slightly taller than the other and has thinner legs.
  o The pool is activated by House Axcelon blood. (This is not obvious from the pool itself. The desk holds this clue and Silver carries Axcelia's blood). The pool remains clear until activated by the blood. It radiates divination magic if detected.
  o When activated by Axcelon blood, the pool displays one of eight deity symbols determined at random. A Successful DC15 Intelligence (Religion) check is required to identify the symbol. No check is required if the character actually recognizes the symbol due to prior knowledge. Any elf recognizes the symbol of Correllon Larethian. Any character of drow lineage recognizes Eilistraee. Any character of Orc lineage recognizes Gruumsh. A character of drow lineage has advantage on the checks for Vhaeraun, Selvetarm and Ghaunadaur.

Ceremonial Pool Activated

When activated, the pool displays one of eight symbols determined at random from the following chart. The symbol remains until the wards are disabled, an incorrect spider is summoned or 1 hour has passed – whichever of the three comes first. It is possible for the same symbol to re-appear.

DM Tip: Players should not be aware of the DM making this roll, as it provides a clue as to its random nature – a clue that the characters do not have.   Roll several D8s before or after this part and record the results in sequence for later use.

1: Several silver rings upon a slender dark hand (Kiaransalee, PH009, correct sequence 5,4,3,6,2,1)
2: A drape concealing a sword (Zinzerena, PH013, correct sequence 3,2,6,4,5,1)
3: A dark half mask with glowing blue eyes (Vhaeraun, PH039, correct sequence 2,6,3,5,4,1)
4: A lithe female form with a sword, silhouetted against a white circle (Eilistraee, PH134, correct sequence 3,2,1,4,5,6)
5: A spider atop a crossed mace and sword (Selvatarm, PH167, correct sequence 3,4,6,5,1,2)
6: An eye of pure blackness with a purple pupil (Ghaunadaur, PH204, correct sequence 3,4,6,2,1,5)
7: A silver crescent moon (Corellon Larethian, PH244, correct sequence 3,6,5,2,1,4)
8: A scarred eye socket with no eye (Gruumsh, PH278, correct sequence 1,5,6,3,4,2)

- ***The Spider Cells.*** The six "cells" have a clear crystal screen and each has a large spider inside. Some of the spiders look different from others.

- o A successful DC15 Intelligence (Nature or Arcana) confirms that all the spiders are actually different kinds but ONLY a character of Underdark lineage would also know that each of the spiders has a specific name in Undecommon. The names of the spiders are provided in **Player Handout 4**.
- o A successful DC15 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the cells reveals no discernable way of opening the cells (they can't be breached). However, near one of them, visible in the dust is a spider icon. An identical icon is actually present near every cell, however, all the others are covered in dust and impossible to spot without wiping it away. All other icons require cleaning off (by hand or with another method) to locate. Touching a spider icon activates that spider (see **Disarming the Wards** sidebar.**)**

- *Bookshelf .* To the right of the entry staircase is a small bookshelf with a number of books. A successful DC15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that most of the books show little use. One particular book has an exquisite silken cover and a silver symbol of Lolth on the cover. The tome is relatively small in size, yet its thin silky pages easily number into the hundreds. It is written in Undercommon script, but the language is archaic – a character of Drow lineage or that knows Undercommon can identify it as Old Undercommon, a mostly ceremonial dialect, rarely used. The title is easily translated as *The Glory of Lolth*. A 10 minute examination of the book by someone who can read Undercommon, accompanied by a successful DC13 Intelligence (Investigation or History) check reveals the following additional information:

  The Glory of Lolth. The pages inside are written in verse, though each page varies dramatically. The pages are not numbered and the amount, direction and form of the text on each page are different. Any character proficient in Religion concludes that the chaotic form of the content is an attempt to please Lolth.
  - o The tome contains poetry on a seemingly endless number of topics that all somehow involve the veneration of the spider queen or her deeds. These are written from different perspectives and in different styles.
  - o Due to the combination of the archaic language and the poetics employed by the author, translation for full poems would be time – consuming. Translating each page takes approximately 10 minutes. There are more than 300 pages, so translating the entirely of the work is not realistic given the time constraints.

It is expected that characters attempt to translate parts of the text or locate specific passages. Performing either or both of these tasks requires knowledge of Undercommon and 10 minutes per page. If no one in the party can translate, Silver does it. Each time that the party attempts to translate or locate a page, they must specify what they are looking for and upon the completion of the task, the party receives one of the pages from **Player Handouts 009-299.** The 8 handouts correspond directly to poems about the deities as per the **Disarming the Wards** sidebar. In the event that the characters (incorrectly) ask to translate a page on a subject that is not relevant to the deity symbol in the pool, it's possible to say that "no poem seems to be entirely dedicated to [requested subject], however, there is this one" and provide which one of the handouts that is closest in subject matter.

- *Desk.* To the left of the entry staircase is a small ornate desk. It is made of strange and hard material which feels like a combination of leather and treebark. A successful DC13 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies it as roper skin (this fact has no special significance.) The desk's drawers contain a small and ornate folding stand, a small silver-coloured spider figurine and a dagger.
  - o **Ornate Foldable Stand.** The small stand has a spiderweb motif and unfolds so as to be able to support something. A successful DC13 Intelligence (Investigation or History) check identifies this as being the right size for a book. If the party has investigated the various books present on the bookshelf, a DC13 Wisdom (Perception) identifies the stand as being just about the perfect size to hold *The Glory of Lolth* – this requires no check if they simply try placing it.
  - o **Spider Figurine.** So long as any character handles spider figurine they are able to tell that it feels especially heavy for its size. A closer examination identifies it as being made of platinum. The figurine's two forelegs protrude forward and to the sides at an odd angle and have unnaturally flat ends – as though they were meant to lean against something flat. (The figurine is actually a weighted bookmark used to hold pages of the Glory of Lolth open.)
  - o **Small Dagger.** The dagger is small and ornate, but without any gems. Its pommel is adorned with the same spider motif as the *Blessing of Lolth* basin outside. Carved into the flat of the blade are the crest of House Axcelon on one side and the symbol of Lolth on the other. A successful DC15

Intelligence (Investigation) identifies this as a ceremonial blade. Any character proficient in martial weapons can identify the blade as not having been built for combat without a check by simply examining it.

The Gate. The ornate gate on the top level has a multitude of runes but is completely inactive. Any character proficient in Arcana is able to determine that it is likely being kept dormant by the wards than had been mentioned to the party. The gate contains no traps or anything to interact with.

Disarming the Wards

The wards in the room were created with practicality in mind, allowing those with knowledge to disable them quickly when required, yet to brutally rebuke unwelcome visitors.

Two steps are required to disable the wards:

1. Blood from a pureblood member of House Axcelon must be spilled into the ceremonial pool.
2. Six spiders from surrounding enclosures must be summoned in the correct order – the order is based on the symbol in the pool.

There are 6 different spiders. Each spider has a name in Undercommon. A character that is able to read Undercommon also knows how the name is written. If they wish to reference this, given them **Player Handout 4.**

Names of the spiders in the chambers are (clockwise):

1. Whitespine Phaser
2. Twin-leg Phaser
3. Phalanx
4. Nightvenom
5. Blightsting
6. Redbite

- A spider can be summoned by interacting with the associated spider icon beside the appropriate cell. Upon interaction, a spider phases from the inside of the cabinet and into a random empty platform around the pool.
- If the summoned spider is the correct one in the sequence, it remains there and dormant. If an incorrect spider is summoned, it and any other summoned spiders immediately attack their summoner(s). They take their turn immediately upon turning hostile and have advantage on attacks within the archive. Use the **Giant Wolf Spider** for statistics.
- When a spider is defeated or disappears, a new spider of the same type re-appears in its original cell.

Damaging spiders is an act of blasphemy against Lolth and each time anyone deals damage to a spider, all those under the *Blessing of Lolth* take 1 psychic damage. The damage increases by 1 point for each subsequent time that **any** spider

is dealt damage within the archive, up to 10 – this effect is cumulative and does not reset with new spiders.

If a spider is left unharmed, it disappears after taking its second turn. When a spider disappears this way, everyone under the *Blessing of Lolth* must make a DC13 Intelligence Saving Throw and suffers 1d6 psychic damage on a fail or half on a success. The damage increases by 1d6 with each subsequent spider. When the damage reaches 8d6, the affected are instead subjected to the effects of the *Synaptic Static* spell (DC15) and the damage stops increasing. If multiple spiders were summoned simultaneously, they disappear simultaneously and only deal or increment 1d6.

Putting the Clues Together

The clues and trials in the room lead to individual discoveries.

The Pool Must Be Activated. Once the characters find the dagger and ascertain that it's ceremonial, Silver chimes in that "of course, more blood is required", she then draws the vial of Axcelia's blood and confidently pours some into the pool. The pool activates.

Player Hint 1: If the players do not investigate the desk, Silver pokes around, finds the dagger and remarks that the desk is fascinating due to its material.

The Book is the Key. Both the book's description, as well as the presence of a perfect stand and bookmark can help figure out that the *Glory of Lolth* is significant.

Player Hint 2: If the players do not figure this out, Silver remarks on the unusual nature of the book and how it must be important.

Spiders Must Be Summoned. The presence of the spider statues "in place" as well as (potentially painful) experimentation with the spider buttons should provide enough clues for the characters to figure out that they must be summoned in sequence.

Player Hint 3: If the players do not figure this out, have Silver remark on the two spider statues and how they are actually statues of different spiders. "*I have read of these: this one is called Vek'ra – webdancer, this other one is Ra'oh – the little death.*"

Getting the Combination (DM Only!).
Step 1. Activate the pool and identify the symbol.
Step 2. Turn to the corresponding poem in *The Glory of Lolth.*
Step 3. The first letter of each of the first six lines of the poem corresponds to the first letter in the name of one of the spider types.

The Solution (DM Only!)

The real solution to the puzzle is figuring out that the Drow created the combination for themselves and for simple and quick access. As such, the translated-into-common verses and their meaning are completely useless. The real clue is that the first six letters in each of the poems – in the original Old Undercommon – are the same among all the relevant poems. The names of the spiders – in Undercommon – are not present anywhere in the archive as they are elementary knowledge to any Drow. These can only be provided by someone with knowledge of Underdark creatures or drow lineage. Silver can provide this if the players ask, but it's up to them to figure out they need it.

Player Hint 4: Silver remarks: "*These wards, they were not created to require complex removal. They were created so as to be removed daily. The combination would be something that is easily accessible, something that a knowing researcher that worked here would be able to easily reference. How would you conceal a password in plain sight?*"

Player Hint 5: A successful DC20 (pure) intelligence check allows a character to realize that "*the drow would not be working in common or using translations*".

No More Hints: Absolutely no more hints should be provided aside from the ones listed here. If the party is unable to solve the puzzle, Silver eventually has a "eureka!" moment and activates the correct spiders.

(**IMPORTANT:** if running concurrently, ensure that by this point the **Retrieving the Component** section has been completed and that character has joined the party in the archive.) Silver does not share how she got the solution with the party. "A lucky guess," she remarks if asked. A successful Wisdom (Insight) check tells that she is lying but not maliciously – she is simply proud to have figured it out when others have not.

DM Tip: Share the Solution?

If the players do not solve the puzzle, it is up to the DM as to whether Silver shares the solution with them. Consider discussing with the players whether they are likely to play the adventure again and potentially try to solve it next time. Be sure to take into consideration any players that do not wish to know the solution and share only with those that do.

The Gate Activates

With the wards removed, the gate activates. Characters also feel that they are no longer under the *Blessing of Lolth.* **Proceed to part 4.**

Part 4: Die Another Night

Story Beat: With the Axcelon teleport gate active, Axcelia and her retinue teleport in. But the House Vith'tyl is aware of the machinations and ambushes the party with their own gate.

Reunification

Once the gate is activated in **Part 3b,** Axcelia and her bound marilith S'sheneth'rah teleport through. Along with them is a female drider – which the party quickly learns is Axcelia's personal guardian (Guardian of Lolth).

Axcelia is very pleased and congratulates the party on not being completely worthless after all. She examines the gate and walks over toward the party. She suddenly stops in alarm and looks up to the ceiling – where a Vith'tyl scrying device had been hidden – "*No! They could not have known! They waited! Ready yourselves!*"

As she yells, a white shimmer in one of the upper walls and Vith'tyl forces begin teleporting in. They only had a couple of hours to muster, so this is not a fully ready trap, but the forces are still significant.

> "We are ambushed!" yells Axcelia. Silver is calmer and contemplative: "The wards matron, if we re-activate them, they will perish without the blessing!" This pleases Axcelia: "Do it! To the wards! I must have time to attune to the gate. Buy me time and we may all yet live! S'sheneht'rah – strike!" At this, the marilith gleefully teleports toward the enemy forces and it takes but a moment for a bloody severed limb to come flying out of the melee as her swords go to work. Yet there are more than even she alone can handle!

All Hells Break Loose

Story Beat. The party must hold out as well as activate the wards while Axcelia attunes to the gate to let the party escape.

It's important to make it clear to the party that their role is to hold out. Axcelia tells them that she "only needs a few moments", which can be explained to the party as meaning "several rounds" in game terms. It takes 3 rounds for Axcelia to attune to the gate. Activating the wards requires pressing the buttons on the spider cells in one of the sequences, however, it must be done by a spellcaster and takes an action and a successful DC17 Arcana check. Silver automatically succeeds on this check and performs it once a round.

Adjusting the Encounter

Regardless of Difficulty, the initial enemy wave consists of 3 **Drow Elite Warriors**, 1 **Helltouched Warlock of the Fiend** and 1 **Helltouched Drow House Captain.** One of the Drow Elite is immediately slain by S'sheneth'rah as her action. A second remains with her. The other 3 enemies engage the party.

Very Weak or Weak Party: The **Helltouched Drow House Captain** has minimum HP (75).
Average Party: no adjustment required
Strong party: Add a **Helltouched Drow Shadowblade** to 2nd wave.
Very Strong Party: Add a **Helltouched Drow Shadowblade** to 2nd wave. The **Helltouched Warlock of the Fiend** and **Helltouched Drow House Captain** both have max HP of 120 and 220 respectively.

Vith'tyl reinforcements. Each round after the first, on initiative 20 (winning ties with PCs), 3 additional Drow Elite Warriors teleport in. Two of these engage S'sheneth'rah for the rest of the encounter. The third goes in Axcelia's direction, but engages the party if they are in the way or make any attempt to intercept them. Their exact teleport/arrival location can vary.

Six striking swords. S'sheneth'rah's bloodlust knows not no limits. Each round, on initiative 20 (going right after the Elites appear, but before they act), she kills one of the Elites engaged with her. *Berserk frenzy*: as she does this, she uses all her attacks. Any character within 5ft of her takes damage as though struck by one of her swords. Any character within 10ft of her must making a DC15 Strength Saving throw or be knocked prone as her tail whips around. This does NOT make her hostile toward the PCs and Axcelia tells them to stay back.

NPC Assistance. The party's interactions with Silver and Axcelia throughout earn the party certain assistance in this fight. Beyond this, the NPCs are considered to be busy with their stated tasks.

Silver. Once during combat Silver can cast ONE of 3 spells: *Counterspell, Dispel Magic, Daylight.* The spell is cast at 6th level and can't be counterspelled. During **Part 1**, if the party had not required Silver's assistance in freeing the trapped people OR did not require her to cast teleport, Silver can ALSO cast Chain Lightning once at 6th level.

Axcelia. Axcelia's Guardian of Lolth protects Axcelia and fights the Vith'tyl forces that are near her. During the **convincing Axcelia** section of the adventure, the group had the opportunity to prove that they are trustworthy. Refer to the result of that group check. If the average result was 11 or higher, she casts one spell for them during combat - it's their choice of either *cloudkill* or *vitriolic sphere (7th level).* If the result was 16 or higher, Axcelia can **instead** be convinced to cast a beneficial spell – the group's choice of: *mass cure wounds, greater restoration or dispel magic (7th level)*
Note: Axcelia and Silver have access to these spells despite them being omitted from their stat blocks.

Escaping

Starting at the top of the initiative in Round 4, the party is able to escape provided that the following three conditions are met:

1. Axcelia is alive and free to act.
2. Silver is alive and free to act.
3. 5 of the 6 spider wards have been activated.

If all these are in place, Axcelia readies to teleport the party out. Silver then activates the final ward – resulting in an immediate scream of pain from any Vith'tyl forces. The characters start to feel a sting of pain, but the teleport goes off just as they do. The party is not required to be within 10ft of Axcelia to be teleported out.

Epilogue: Tomorrow Never Comes Soon Enough

Estimated Duration: 5min

Story Beat: The epilogue sets up the concluding adventure in the series – Six Swords Unbound.

The teleport brings the party back to the cellar of Axcelia's castle. She thanks the party for recovering the teleport component. She says that the time to strike is now. If they assist her in the final assault on the Vith'tyl manor, she will leave the surface world behind and remove the blight of the chaos web from it. She suggests that while there is not much time, there is enough for a quick rest and to formulate a plan before striking. The attack on the Vith'tyl manor takes place immediately after this and is detailed in the follow-up adventure **Six Swords Unbound.** If running the adventurers back-to-back, the party does get the benefits of a long rest in between.

Note: If the party is worried about Axcelia dying or not keeping her end of the bargain, Silver makes thorough promises to create suitable contingencies so that the party receives their reward once they fulfill their part of the bargain.

Adventure Rewards

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

This is a 4 hour, Tier 2 adventure. As such, characters may receive up to 4 advancement and treasure checkpoints for completing this adventure. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League* Dungeon *Master's Guide*) for more information. No additional checkpoints are granted for completing optional content.

Magic Item Unlock

With their actions in this adventure, characters may be able to unlock this magic item:

Dark Mother's Ring of Spell Storing
Wondrous Item, rare (Requires Attunement)

This ring is made of mithral and looks to have been made by the same artisan that crafted the helmet *Weave*. It looks like a silvery spider wrapping its legs around one's finger when worn.
  While wearing this ring, the wearer can speak and understand Undercommon.
  If worn by a female, the ring subtly pushes the wearer to believe that males are incompetent. If worn by a male, the ring subtly pushes the wearer to praise females and defer to their better judgment.
  These effects are not strong enough to override existing character traits.

Consumables

With their actions in this adventure, characters may be able to gain the following consumable:

Spell Scroll of *Mass Cure Wounds*
Spell Scroll, rare

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

Potion of Greater Healing
Potion, Uncommon

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

Story Awards

There is no story award for this adventure. However, similar to the "story tracking code" in *Six Summoned Swords, t*his adventure provides the characters with another, separate code. This code is not an in-character story award, but should be noted the characters' log sheet. The final adventure in the series advises the DMs of the appropriate adjustments to make.

First Letter – Rescue of the trapped sister

- A – if players rescued the trapped sister.
- B – if the trapped sister died.

Second Letter – Acquired object`s location (add more than one letter if multiple objects are obtained)

- A - Anywhere from the walls of the manor or one of the towers.
- B - One of the main floor offices.
- C - Any other location on the west side of the first floor.
- D - Any other location on the east side of the first floor.

Additional Numbers – Vith'tyl manor locations Discovered (Add one number for every location discovered)
- 1 - Armory
- 2 – Nobles Pleasure Dungeon
- 3 - Slave quarters
- 4 – Summoning rooms

Example: if the party rescued the trapped sister, obtained an object from one of the offices and discovered the locations of the armory and slave quarters, everyone in the party would record their code as "AB13".

DM Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.
  However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League* Dungeon *Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

Monster/NPC Statistics

Axcelia Axcelon (Drow Archmage)

Medium humanoid (Elf), Lawful Evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 99 (18d8+18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6
Skills: Arcana +13, History +13
Senses: darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 12
Damage Resistances damage from spells; non magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from stoneskin)
Languages Undercommon, Common, Elvish, Abyssal, Infernal, Draconic
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Magic Resistance. Axcelia has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Spellcasting. Axcelia is an 18th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She can cast **disguise self** and **invisibility** at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, identify, mage armor*, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, mirror image, misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, fire shield, stoneskin**
5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold, scrying, wall of force*
6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*
7th level (1 slot): *teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**
9th level (1 slot): *time stop*
* The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat

Actions

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.
Source*: Monster Manual*

Drow Elite Warrior

Medium humanoid (Elf), neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (studded leather, shield)
Hit Points 71 (11d8+22)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +5, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +10
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception: 14
Languages Elvish, Undercommon
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.
Innate Spellcasting. The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: dancing lights
1/day each: darkness, faerie fire, levitate (self only)
Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The drow makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Reactions

Parry. The drow adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.
Source*: Monster Manual*

Drow House Captain

Medium humanoid (Elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Chain Mail)

Hit Points 162 (25d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws DEX +8, CON +6, WIS +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Battle Command. As a bonus action, the drow targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see or hear the drow, the target can use its reaction to make one melee attack or to take the Dodge or Hide action.

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

Innate Spellcasting. The drow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The drow makes three attacks: two with his scimitar and one with his whip or his hand crossbow.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is an ally, it has advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

Reactions

Parry. The drow adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Source*: Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

> Helltouched
>
> Where the adventure calls for a Helltouched version of this monster, refer to page 7 for adjustments.

Drow Shadowblade

Medium humanoid (Elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws DEX +9, CON +7, WIS +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +9

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

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

Innate Spellcasting. The drow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

Shadow Step. While in dim light or darkness, the drow can teleport as a bonus action up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. It then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The drow makes two attacks with its shadow sword. If either attack hits and the target is within 10 feet of a 5-foot cube of darkness created by the shadow sword on a previous turn, the drow can dismiss that darkness and cause the target to take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The drow can dismiss darkness in this way no more than once per turn.

Shadow Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage. The drow can then fill an unoccupied 5-foot cube within 5 feet of the target with magical darkness, which remains for 1 minute.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

Source: *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

Helltouched

Where the adventure calls for a Helltouched version of this monster, refer to page 7 for adjustments.

Giant Lizard

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d10+3)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

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

Source: Monster Manual

Giant Wolf Spider

Medium beast, unaligned
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Source: *Monster Manual*

Guardian of Lolth (Shield Guardian)

Large construct, unaligned
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 142 (15d10+60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	10 (0)	3 (-4)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands commands given in any language but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Bound. The shield guardian is magically bound to an amulet. As long as the guardian and its amulet are on the same plane of existence, the amulet's wearer can telepathically call the guardian to travel to it, and the guardian knows the distance and direction to the amulet. If the guardian is within 60 feet of the amulet's wearer, half of any damage the wearer takes (rounded up) is transferred to the guardian.

Regeneration. The shield guardian regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit. point.

Spell Storing. A spellcaster who wears the shield guardian's amulet can cause the guardian to store one spell of 4th level or lower. To do so, the wearer must cast the spell on the guardian. The spell has no effect but is stored within the guardian. When commanded to do so by the wearer or when a situation arises that was predefined by the spellcaster, the guardian casts the stored spell with any parameters set by the original caster, requiring no components. When the spell is cast or a new spell is stored, any previously stored spell is lost. (Axcelia's Guardian has *dispel magic* stored)

Actions

Multiattack. The guardian makes two fist attacks.
Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Shield. When a creature makes an attack against the wearer of the guardian's amulet, the guardian grants a +2 bonus to the wearer's AC if the guardian is within 5 feet of the wearer.

Source: *Monster Manual*

Silver (Diviner)

Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 67 (15d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws INT +7, WIS +4

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Undercommon, Elvish, Abyssal

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The diviner is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The diviner has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, message, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic,* feather fall, mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts,* locate object,* scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance,* fly, fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye,* ice storm, stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Rary's telepathic bond,* scrying**

6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion, true seeing**

7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball, teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *maze*

*Divination spell of 1st level or higher

Portent (Recharges after the Diviner Casts a Divination Spell of 1st Level or Higher). When the diviner or a creature it can see makes an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check, the diviner can roll a d20 and choose to use this roll in place of the attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

Actions

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

Adjustments

Silver's spell list differs from the one presented here. Specific adjustments are noted in the text where required.

S'sheneth'rah (Marilith)

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 189 (18d10+90)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +10, Wis +8, Cha +10

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

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

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

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

Magic Weapons. The marilith's weapon attacks are magical.

Reactive. The marilith can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

Actions

Multiattack. The marilith can make seven attacks: six with its longswords and one with its tail.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. Hit: 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, the marilith can automatically hit the target with its tail, and the marilith can't make tail attacks against other targets.

Teleport. The marilith magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Reactions

Parry. The marilith adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the marilith must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Source: Monster Manual

Adjustments

S'sheneth'rah "planebound" state prevents her from being forcefully dismissed from the material plane. She also has legendary resistance 3/day.

Three Sisters (Swashbuckler)

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral
Armor Class 17 (leather armor)
Hit Points 66 (12d8+12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (0)	15 (+2)

Skills: Acrobatics +8, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6
Senses: passive Perception 10
Languages: Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lightfooted. The swashbuckler can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of its turns.
Suave Defense. While the swashbuckler is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The swashbuckler makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its rapier.
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.
Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Source: *Volo`s Guide to Monsters*

Warlock of the Fiend

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws: Wis +4, Cha +7
Skills: Arcana +4, Deception +7, Persuasion +7, Religion +4
Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Damage Resistances: slashing damage from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Languages: any two languages (usually Abyssal or Infernal)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The warlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:
At will: *alter self, false life, levitate (self only), mage armor (self only), silent image*
Spellcasting. The warlock is a l7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:
Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, fire bolt, friends, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st-5th level (4 5th-level slots): *banishment, burning hands, flame strike, hellish rebuke, magic circle, scorching ray, scrying, stinking cloud, suggestion, wall of fire*
***Dark One's Own Luck** (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).* When the warlock makes an ability check or saving throw, it can add a d10 to the roll. It can do this after the roll is made but before any of the roll's effects occur.
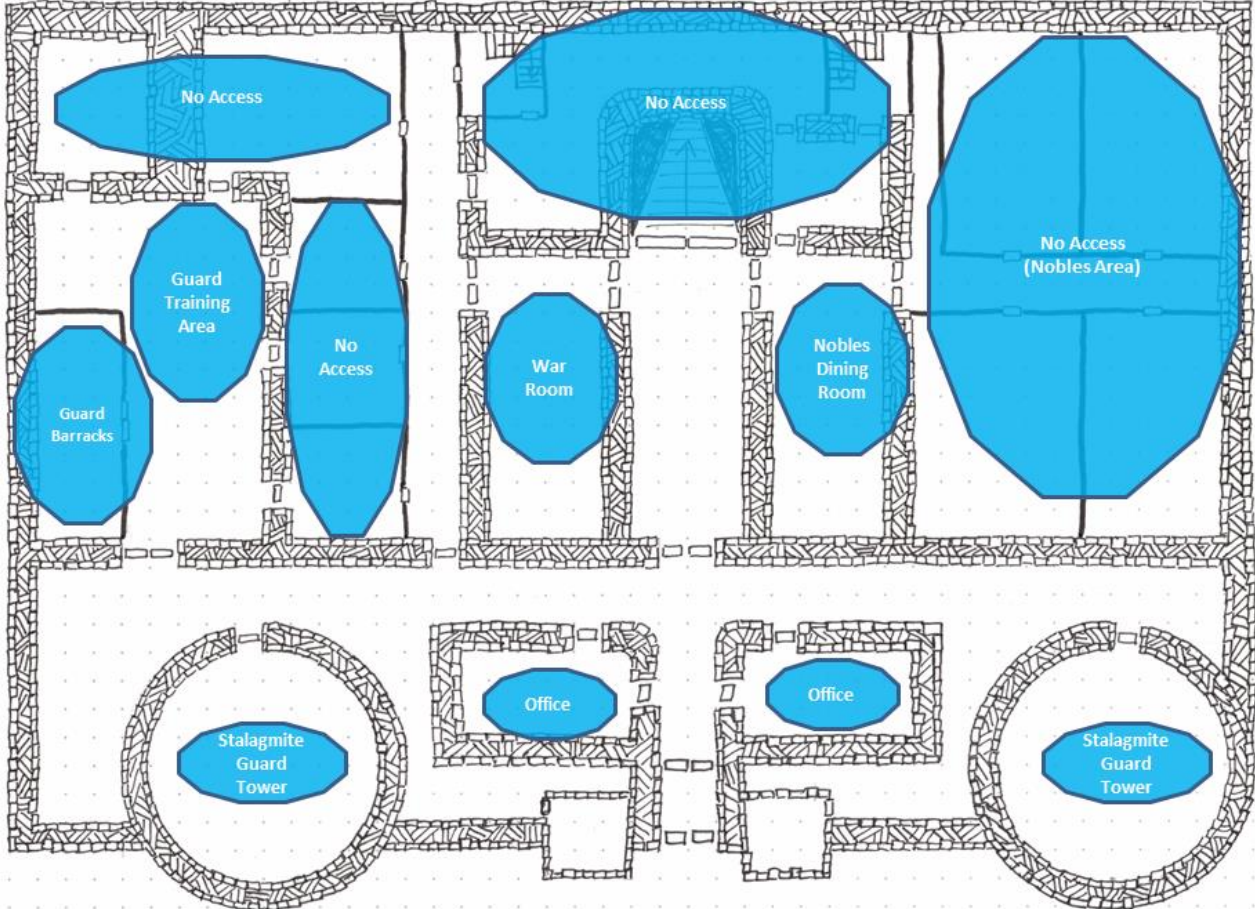
Actions

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.
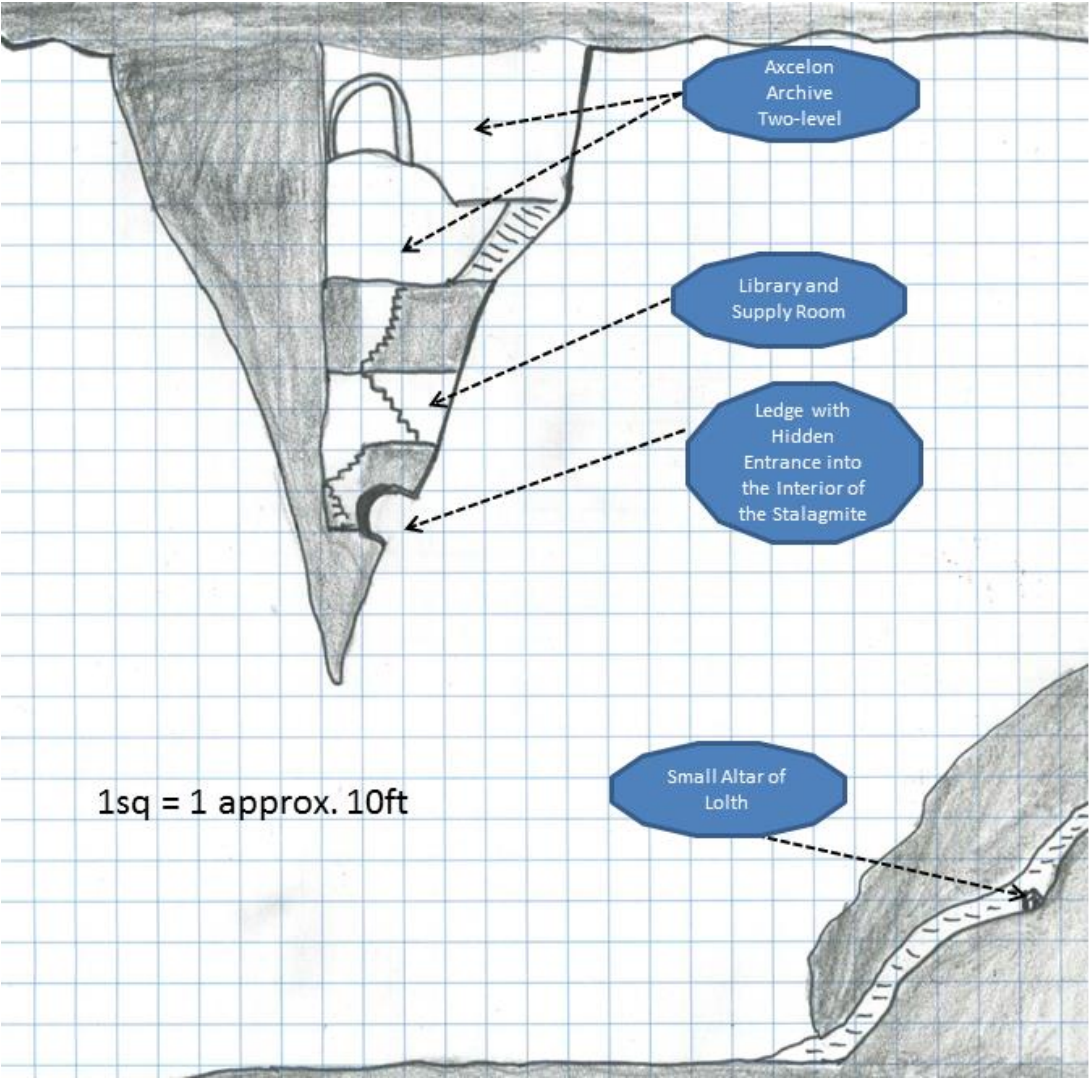***Source:*** *Volo`s Guide to Monsters*

Helltouched or Drow

Where the adventure calls for a Helltouched and/or Drow version of this monster, refer to page 7 for adjustments.
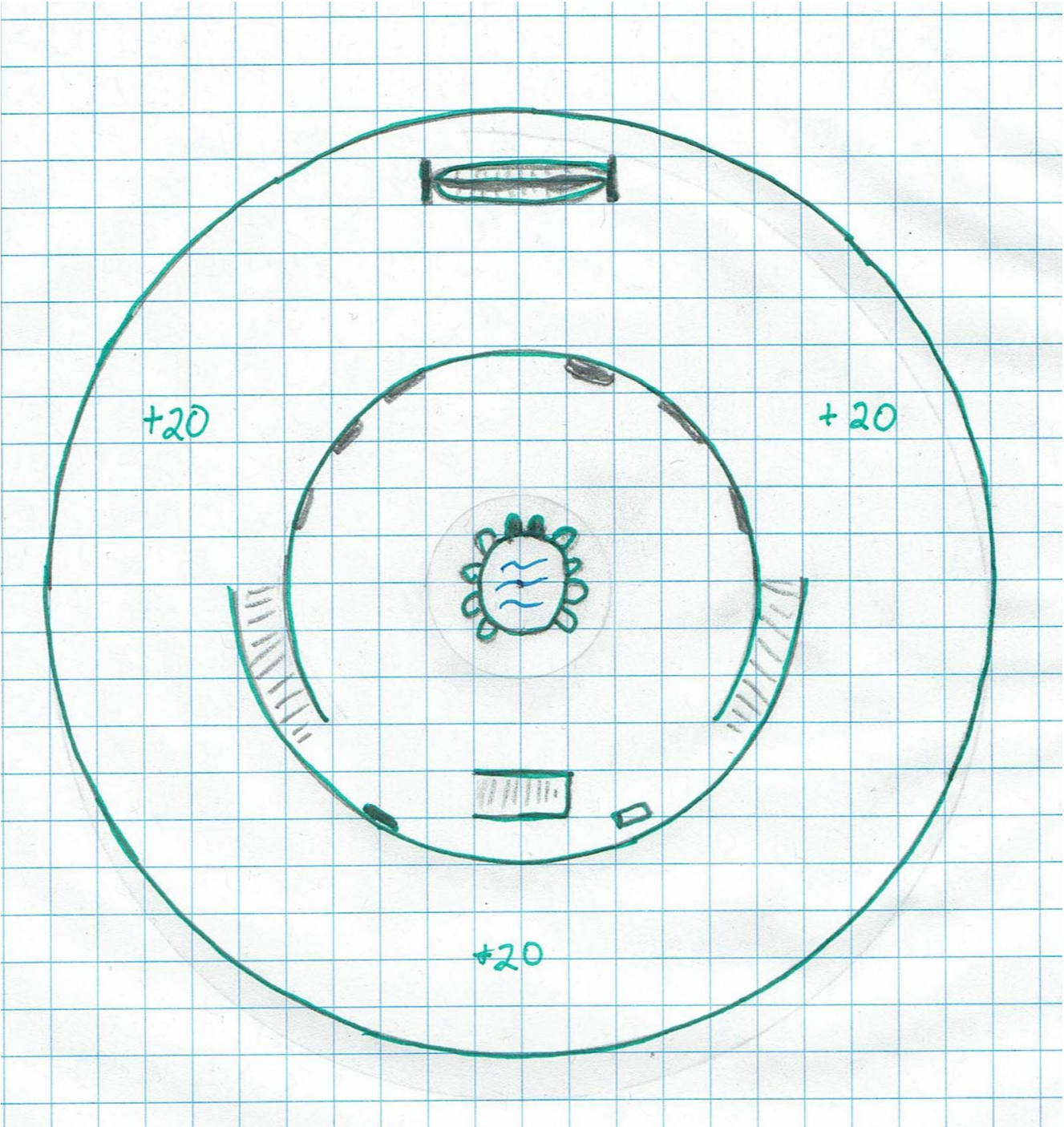
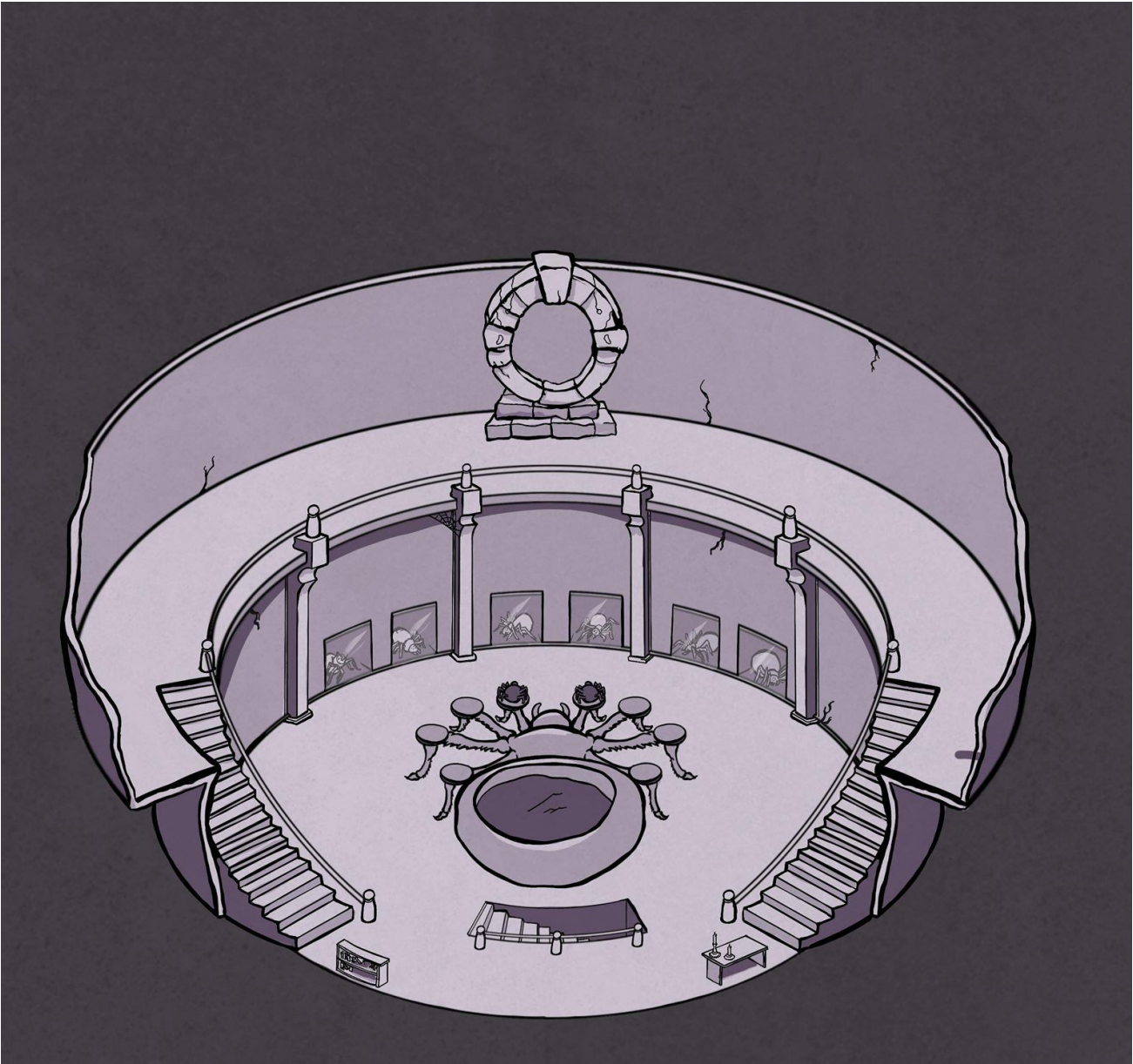# Map 1: Vith'tyl Manor (Upper Floor) – DM Version
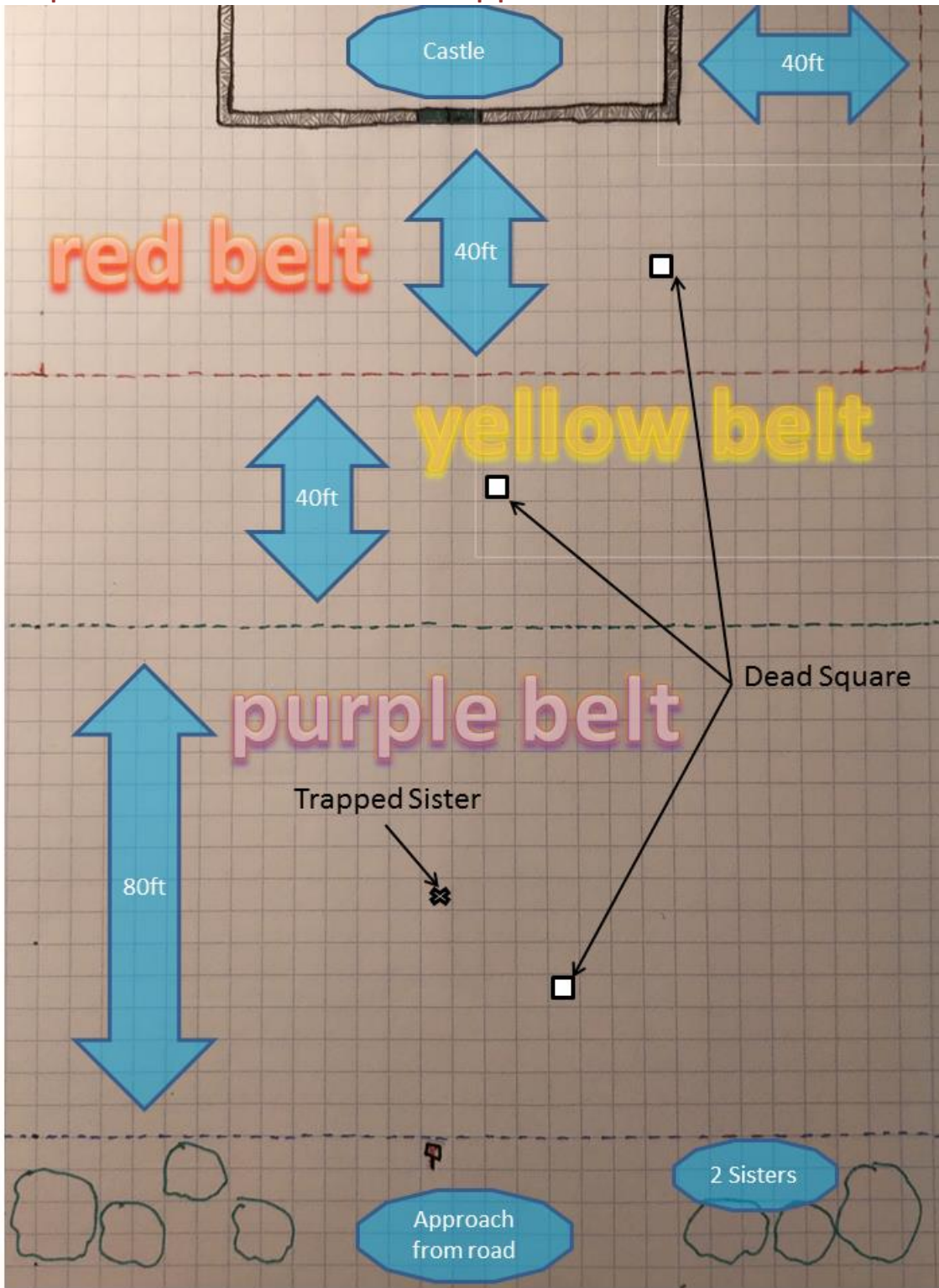
Map 2: Axcelon Archive – Exterior

Axcelon Archive Two-level

Library and Supply Room

Ledge with Hidden Entrance into the Interior of the Stalagmite

Small Altar of Lolth

1sq = 1 approx. 10ft

Map 3a: Axcelon Archive – Interior to Scale

Map 3b: Axcelon Archive – Interior for Player Reference

Map 4: Chaos Web – Castle Approach

Appendix A. NPC Tent Cards

Roleplaying Silver

As seen from afar, one might easily assume that Silver's unmistakable waist-long, snow-white mane of tangled hair belongs to a drow elf. Her thin, athletic frame is also too a match. It is the pale, almost white skin that gives the woman who calls herself Silver away as something less – or perhaps more – than a pureblood drow.

Whether due to her clear youth or a face that is as yet not accustomed to deceit, the expressions of her sharp features also betray her as someone different. There is a curiosity and – if not kindness – perhaps a lack of cruelty about her.

In truth, Silver's name is an unpronounceable string of harsh old undercommon syllables that roughly translates as "of a lithe goddess". She calls herself "Silver" by choice.

Silver serves as the apprentice and confidant to Axce'lia Axce'lon. These are Axce'lia's terms and they are kind. Another, might use terms like "daughter" or "heir", but in Axce'lia's mind Silver is but a coldly calculated "creation" that might one day become an achievement.

Born with natural predisposition to magic, Silver loves the boundless possibilities and inherent mischief of magical powers. Having been subjected to Axce'lia's increasing paranoia, Silver has begun to worry about the matron. It has become clear to her that Axce'lia's bond with her demon is driving them both insane. Something must be done and soon.

Silver sees the capable adventurers as an opportunity.

Fate: Silver is a key NPC in this and the following adventure and must survive.

Roleplaying the Three Sisters

The three sisters are members of a Bounty Hunting organization called The Sisterhood of the Blade. The organization is loosely associated with the Zhentarim and does a great deal of work for them. The Sisterhood typically dispatches groups of three for important or lengthy assignments.

Unless they were killed during the Events of Six Summoned Swords (verify story code), the bounty hunters are three females of different races – a Tabaxi, a Kenku and a Human. They are name Misty, Donna and Bleak respectively. The Tabaxi – Misty – is in charge and does most of the talking for the party.

If it is not these specific three sisters, they are three female halflings named Petras, Gragold, and Dakubla. Neither set of sisters are actually sisters by relation, yet they inevitably address each other as "sister", despite the lack of any physical resemblance or relation. The Three Sisters are old-timers in the bounty hunting and mercenary business and are on a mission for the Zhentarim. They conduct themselves with self-assurance and skill.

Fate: The ultimate fate (life or death) of the Three Sisters is not important to the main storyline.

Silver

Three Sisters

Roleplaying Axcelia

Axcelia Axcelon is a powerful Drow mage and a faithful servant of Lolth.

Having been betrayed and seen her entire house slaughtered at the hands of House Vitril'vil, her sole drive in life is vengeance.

Unable to totally bind the marilith S'sheneth'rah, Axcelia is beginning to lose her mind – or rather, her mind and S'sheneth'rah's are beginning to somehow meld, with unpredictable and dire results. She is far too proud to ever willingly sever the binding – nor is she sure that it can even be done without killing herself in the process.

Axcelia's calling in life is magic. She has always had a strong connection to the weave so learning and manipulating spells came easy. All that drove her up to the point her house's fall was study and desire for stronger, more powerful magic. It was to this end that she had decided to give birth – not to a drow, but to something even more powerful – yes, even parenthood was a magic experiment to her and so was born her half-blood daughter.

Hate as she may the surface world, Axcelia is fully in control of her new surroundings aboveground. She feels protected, but at the same time that old yearning for revenge is a powerful force.

Important: Throughout the party's interactions with Axcelia, it's important to pepper in some mild hints of madness that is slowly taking her – it generally manifests in demonic utterances in Abyssal, eyes glowing or hissing. These signs are evidence of her consciousness being invaded more and more by the marilith. These signs should not be so extreme so as to totally alienate the party. Some suggestions are provided throughout.

Fate: Axcelia is an important NPC throughout all 3 parts of Swords Below the Moonsea and must survive to see the conclusion of Six Swords Unbound.

Axcelia Axcelon
(axe-sell-ya)

Roleplaying S'sheneth'rah

S'sheneth'rah is a Marilith. She was summoned into service by Axcelia, but the binding ritual was interrupted and she managed to get away. She is now in a conflicted "half-bound" state the result of which is similar to having dual personalities.

The bound part of her tells her to serve Axcelia – to destroy all of the drow's enemies. She always hisses when she talks.

A Marilith is an evil creature by nature, but also one that is brilliantly intelligent and a master tactician. She is unable to directly attack Axcelia but yearns to be free of the bond.

During her attempt to free herself, S'sheneth'rah discovered that her life force is somehow bound to Axcelia's and that killing the drow mage might not work.

Over the years spent on the surface, the construct struggle for control with Axcelia has made S'sheneth'rah even more feral and desperate. Yet she obeys. Obeys and waits.

Fate: S'sheneth'rah is an important NPC throughout all 3 parts of Swords Below the Moonsea and must survive to see the conclusion of Six Swords Unbound.

S'sheneth'rah
(shae-net-rah)

Appendix B. Location and NPC SummaryLocation and NPC Summary

The following NPCs, locations and entities feature prominently in this adventure.

Axcelia Axcelon (Axe-sell-ya). Female drow mage, last surviving member of House Axcelon.

House Axcelon. A lower house of the Zethlentyn Protectorate. Worshippers of Lolth and until recently the purveyors of a large diamond mine, a joint-venture with House Vith'tyl.

House Vith'tyl. The 7th house of the Zethlentyn Protectorate. This house does not worship Lolth. Instead, they draw their power from summoning and/or enslaving devils.

Lemethra Vith'tyl (Le-meth-ra). Drow War Priest of House Vith'tyl of the Zethlentyn Protectorate.

Shintyrr Vith'tyl (Shin-teer). Drow Assassin of House Vith'tyl

S'sheneth'rah (Shae-net-RAH). *A fiend summoned by Axcelia.*

Three Sisters. Zhentarim bounty hunters. The three sisters are females of different races: a tabaxi named Misty, a kenku named Donna and a dark-skinned human named Bleak.

Zethlentyn Protectorate. A geopolitical alliance of drow houses. The protectorate is religion-agnostic and allows houses of different faiths to co-operate in trade and mutual protection from external threats.

Appendix C. Story Tracking Codes Reference

Based on their actions during *Six Summoned Swords*, characters were given a story tracking code. The 3-letter code can be interpreted as follows:

First Letter – Fate of the Three Sisters:

- A – if the players treated peacefully with 3 sisters
- B – if the players fought, but did not kill the 3 sisters
- C – if the players killed any of the 3 sisters

Second Letter – Final Underdark Confrontation:

- A – if the players sided with Axcelia during the battle in Part 4.
- B – if the players sided with Lemethra (against Axcelia) during the battle in Part 4.
- C – if the players died, quit, or killed all the NPCs.

Third Letter – Interactions with S'sheneth'rah:
Note: this letter may be different for different members of the party.

- A – if the player did not participate in either interaction
- B – if the player gained the "Student of Swordplay" temporary effect.
- C – if the player gained the "Tail to Tell" temporary effect.

Student of Swordplay

S'sheneth'rah has taught you how to strike more effectively with your sword. When you make a one-handed attack with a sword and that attack does not have advantage, the next one-handed sword attack that you make during the same round has advantage. **This effect is active only in the *Swords Below the Moonsea* set of adventures.**

Tail to Tell

Spending time in the company of a marilith has given you a certain appreciation of her. You gain inspiration. Additionally, whenever you see S'sheneth'rah in person and subsequently finish a short or long rest, you gain Inspiration at the end of that rest. If you already have inspiration, you instead gain inspiration at the end of the first turn after using it (once per rest). **This effect is active only in the *Swords Below the Moonsea* set of adventures.**

Appendix D: Caravan Interactions

> The scents of burning wood and cooking meat permeate the air as you come across a makeshift camp comprised of no less than 20 wagons set up in a rough circle around an area of tents.   The wagons have clearly been here for more than a few days as all the pack animals have been unharnessed and wander around picking at what grass they can find among the rocks.   Drying laundry hangs on several lines between the wagons and rambunctious laughter comes from a small table where several traders are playing dice.
>
>   At the sight of your approach, a female Halfling in a clean red cloak takes her hands off her hips and swiftly mounts a small pony with a bright blue saddle. She makes her way quickly toward you.
>
>   "Liana Tuffletackle's my name and this is quite the mess."

Liana tells the party that these three caravans have been so spooked by the events at the castle that they're unwilling to move until the situation is dealt with.   The party is able to gain individual pieces of information by talking to the various traders.

Characters and Tales at the Caravan Camp

The characters at the camp provide additional information about the castle and recent events.   They can't be convinced to get back on the road.   The traders share information freely, but DMs can add appropriate DC12 checks to more probing questions if it improves the flow of play.   Characters are also able to play dice if they wish (see **playing dice** sidebar for rules).

Liana Tuffletackle. Female Halfling noble. A member of the Lords Alliance, she has been sent from Melvaunt to get the caravans moving, but has had no luck. She is a low ranked LA member and is growing frustrated with the lack of progress.   The profits on the route are good and even thought caravans are sometimes attacked by orcs, their guards are typically enough to ward those off.

Sara Alkin. Sara is the commander of the caravan guards for Gos Fendhalian, who runs a caravan company through Thar.   She is not here with a caravan, but rather rode out from Melvaunt to see what's going on. As chief of security she thought it pertinent to come see what's going on. So far, she's not learned much herself, but can tell players that Naivara and Kicker are not the types to easily spook, so there must be something to it.   She is a short, swarthy and dark-skinned human. She is jovial, but takes her job seriously (Sara first appears in CCC-SCAR-01 Corrupted Artery by Phil Allison).

Zim Von Zeam. Human Male, leader of caravan 1. Zim is an experienced trader that has done this route countless times. He shares that the area around the castle has been getting weirder and weirder. At first they would just see occasional shimmering in the area, but recently he personally saw a moose fall over dead. He didn't go any closer, but is concerned that something is expanding toward the road and believes he is better safe than sorry.   Most of his caravan drivers and guards are extremely superstitious and have taken the animal death as a bad omen.   He's ready to go back once someone makes contact with the castle and is able to explain what has happened.

Naivara Firahel. Wood Elf female, a guard with caravan 1. Naivara is stoic and harsh. The only elf among the three caravans, she never lets down her guard is on watch even when she doesn't need to be. Years ago, her parents had been killed and her two brothers taken by a drow raid. Orphaned, she has taken up the adventuring life in the hope of one day finding some trace of her siblings.   She is the author of the "Taken by Drow" poster from **Player Handout 2**. She has no reason to expect any help from the adventurers, but she tells them the story much like she would to anyone that cares to listen. Asked about the castle, she mentions that she felt magic there and thinks there is more to it than just empty superstition.

Kicker Threebones. Half-Orc Female, leader of caravan 2. The smallest of the caravans, hers is comprised of only 3 wagons, though they are larger and sturdier than the others. Her staff consists of two other capable half-orcs and a trio of goblins who she is training to be hired out to other caravans as nightvision scouts.   Kicker is intelligent and astute, despite the many prejudices she faces as a result of her lineage.   Not easily scared off, she tells the party that she has never paid any heed to the castle or the superstitions around; that is until on her last trip, Bland – one of her goblins – had a chicken get away

from him and run toward the castle. The chicken first began to fly in a strange way and then suddenly turned to stone and dropped to the ground. Everyone in her caravan saw this and are now scared witless.

The Mugtopper Clan. Caravan 3. Led by Adik Mugtopper, these fun-loving Dwarves have established a brew and deliver operation that supplies their (very average quality) dwarven ale to the inhabitants of Melvaunt, Glister and everything in between. With Adik having taken a pony and gone off to check on brewing operations and the clan having never been shy about partaking in their own supply, none of the remaining dwarves are to be found even remotely sober. The senior of the bunch is named Delg and between the slurring and burping he swears that he saw the most beautiful woman "six arms she had and clad in glaming golden armor with and with full breasts that could feed a dozen newborns all at once! I was just about to make my introduction as she disappeared – just like that into thin air! Just me luck t'was!"

The other dwarves laugh at Delg and make jokes. They all agree that something is weird about that castle though and Adik was spooked enough to hold the caravan back. In any case, they've done a brisk business selling their ale to the stationary caravaners and don't feel too bad staying put for a while.

Those that participated in Six Summoned Swords may recognize the descrption as matching that of the marilith S'sheneth'rah. If asked about this, Delg confirms the description before becoming obsessed S'sheneth'rah's name and wandering off "oooh, S'sheneth'rah, yes, such a beautiful name!" (He is not under any magical effect, just drunk and infatuated.)

Playing Dice

Characters wishing to participate in the Dice Game can do as follows. A character must buy a token for 10g in order to play. Each character may buy a maximum of two tokens with their own gold, as the traders eventually wish to go back to their own game. (**Note that as per AL Season 8 rules, the party cannot earn additional gold from this activity!**)

Make a wager of at least 1 token.
Make an Intelligence (Dice Set) check.
On a die roll of natural 1 – regardless of your skill, you lose.
On a result of 9 or lower – you lose.
On a result of 10-19 – you get your wager back.
On a result of 20-24 – you win an amount equivalent to your bet (spend 1 token to bet, receive total 2 tokens back).
On a result of 25+ -- you win an amount double your bet (spend 1 token to bet, receive 1+2 tokens back).

On a die roll of natural 20 – you win triple your bet (spend 1 token to bet, receive 1+3 tokens back).

Cheating

Characters may try to cheat at the game.
Make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.
On a die roll of natural 1- regardless of your skill, you are caught and automatically lose the game. Additionally, anyone else trying to cheat has disadvantage on their Sleight of Hand check.
On a result of 1-14 – you are unable to alter the roll.
On a result of 15-19 – you are able cheat, but not perfectly. As part of your Dice Set check, roll two additional dice. You may choose which of the 3 dice you use, but can't pick the highest one (if two are the same, reroll one).
On a result of 20-24 – you are able to cheat. Roll with advantage.
On a result of 25+ or a natural 20 – you are able to cheat and can treat your Dice Set check die roll as a 19.

Rewards: Total up all tokens purchased by the party. If the party as a whole walks away from the game with more tokens than they had purchased, they are considered to not have lost any gold and should be given all the clues that would otherwise have been obtained by talking to the other caravaners (assuming the party had not talked to them). If they walk away with at least 4 more tokens than they had exchanged, the party also receives a **potion of greater healing**.

Development

Once the adventurers finish their time with the traders, they should set off toward the castle. If required, Liana can prod them along. No one from the camp is interested in accompanying them.

Appendix E. Chaos Web Preroll Tables

	Belt	D100 Roll	Effect	Direction 1	Direction 2	Damage	Type	Bounce?
1	Purple	15	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	9	Fire	no
2	Purple	94	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	1	NA	NA	NA
3	Purple	18	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	14	Lightning	no
4	Purple	39	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	6	cold	NA
5	Purple	59	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6	Purple	71	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
7	Purple	80	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	6	NA	NA	NA
8	Purple	42	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	6	cold	NA
9	Purple	63	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	Purple	75	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
11	Purple	5	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	17	Thunder	no
12	Purple	7	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	20	Thunder	yes
13	Purple	16	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	12	Psychic	no
14	Purple	2	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	8	Acid	no
15	Purple	37	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	3	cold	NA
16	Purple	91	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	3	NA	NA	NA
17	Purple	25	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	13	Lightning	yes
18	Purple	57	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
19	Purple	54	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
20	Purple	43	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	3	cold	NA
21	Purple	7	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	20	Thunder	no
22	Purple	60	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
23	Purple	41	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	1	cold	NA
24	Purple	34	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	8	cold	NA
25	Purple	86	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	5	NA	NA	NA
26	Purple	42	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	1	cold	NA
27	Purple	6	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	21	Psychic	no
28	Purple	39	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	3	cold	NA
29	Purple	31	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	8	cold	NA
30	Purple	90	10ft Random Teleport	Up	2	NA	NA	NA
31	Purple	34	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	3	cold	NA
32	Purple	18	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	11	Force	yes
33	Purple	8	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	8	Lightning	no
34	Purple	41	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	1	cold	NA
35	Purple	56	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
36	Purple	100	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	5	NA	NA	NA
37	Purple	75	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
38	Purple	74	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
39	Purple	45	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	8	cold	NA
40	Purple	56	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
41	Purple	39	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	6	cold	NA
42	Purple	36	Ray of Frost 1	NA	NA	8	cold	NA
43	Purple	9	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	11	Force	yes
44	Purple	62	Levitate 10ft up	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
45	Purple	77	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	8	NA	NA	NA
46	Purple	91	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	8	NA	NA	NA
47	Purple	85	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	8	NA	NA	NA
48	Purple	6	Chaos Bolt 1	NA	NA	7	Force	no
49	Purple	80	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	3	NA	NA	NA
50	Purple	92	10ft Random Teleport	Up	4	NA	NA	NA

	Belt	D100 Roll	Effect	Direction 1	Direction 2	Damage	Type	Bounce?
1	Yellow	64	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	Yellow	31	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	9	Fire	NA
3	Yellow	46	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	12	Fire	NA
4	Yellow	31	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	10	Fire	NA
5	Yellow	20	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	17	Acid	no
6	Yellow	2	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	17	Force	yes
7	Yellow	34	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	12	Fire	NA
8	Yellow	63	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9	Yellow	5	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	24	Psychic	no
10	Yellow	39	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	11	Fire	NA
11	Yellow	19	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	15	Fire	no
12	Yellow	99	10ft Random Teleport	Up	3	NA	NA	NA
13	Yellow	95	10ft Random Teleport	Up	5	NA	NA	NA
14	Yellow	91	10ft Random Teleport	Up	6	NA	NA	NA
15	Yellow	55	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
16	Yellow	58	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	Yellow	17	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	16	Psychic	no
18	Yellow	13	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	7	Cold	no
19	Yellow	73	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
20	Yellow	92	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	8	NA	NA	NA
21	Yellow	18	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	11	Force	no
22	Yellow	58	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
23	Yellow	13	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	18	Force	no
24	Yellow	78	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	8	NA	NA	NA
25	Yellow	5	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	16	Acid	no
26	Yellow	10	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	11	Force	no
27	Yellow	45	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	13	Fire	NA
28	Yellow	20	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	13	Lightning	no
29	Yellow	65	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
30	Yellow	65	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
31	Yellow	88	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	6	NA	NA	NA
32	Yellow	50	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	6	Fire	NA
33	Yellow	95	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	7	NA	NA	NA
34	Yellow	96	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	3	NA	NA	NA
35	Yellow	64	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
36	Yellow	41	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	9	Fire	NA
37	Yellow	65	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
38	Yellow	90	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	5	NA	NA	NA
39	Yellow	28	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	14	Fire	NA
40	Yellow	97	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	4	NA	NA	NA
41	Yellow	53	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
42	Yellow	31	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	10	Fire	NA
43	Yellow	48	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	9	Fire	NA
44	Yellow	76	10ft Random Teleport	Up	1	NA	NA	NA
45	Yellow	98	10ft Random Teleport	Up	1	NA	NA	NA
46	Yellow	87	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	8	NA	NA	NA
47	Yellow	63	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
48	Yellow	51	Levitate 10ft Hold Person DC15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
49	Yellow	48	Firebolt 5	NA	NA	8	Fire	NA
50	Yellow	3	Chaos Bolt 2	NA	NA	9	Fire	no

	Belt	D100 Roll	Effect	Direction 1	Direction 2	Damage	Type	Bounce?
1	Red	12	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	18	Force	no
2	Red	94	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	6	NA	NA	NA
3	Red	38	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	14	necrotic	NA
4	Red	65	Flesh to Store DC17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	Red	26	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	11	necrotic	NA
6	Red	7	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	28	Poison	yes
7	Red	2	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	13	Lightning	no
8	Red	1	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	7	Acid	yes
9	Red	26	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	13	necrotic	NA
10	Red	3	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	22	Lightning	no
11	Red	80	10ft Random Teleport	Up	8	NA	NA	NA
12	Red	94	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	7	NA	NA	NA
13	Red	71	Flesh to Store DC17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
14	Red	14	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	18	Force	no
15	Red	11	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	20	Force	no
16	Red	78	10ft Random Teleport	Up	5	NA	NA	NA
17	Red	42	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	9	necrotic	NA
18	Red	21	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	15	Fire	no
19	Red	7	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	20	Lightning	yes
20	Red	22	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	29	Thunder	no
21	Red	55	Flesh to Store DC17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
22	Red	37	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	13	necrotic	NA
23	Red	88	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	2	NA	NA	NA
24	Red	97	10ft Random Teleport	Up	1	NA	NA	NA
25	Red	41	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	17	necrotic	NA
26	Red	24	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	20	Poison	no
27	Red	58	Flesh to Store DC17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
28	Red	21	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	13	Lightning	no
29	Red	39	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	20	necrotic	NA
30	Red	2	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	18	Force	no
31	Red	83	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	3	NA	NA	NA
32	Red	80	10ft Random Teleport	Down (or same plane)	7	NA	NA	NA
33	Red	21	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	17	Poison	no
34	Red	73	Flesh to Store DC17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
35	Red	3	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	31	Psychic	yes
36	Red	1	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	22	Thunder	no
37	Red	74	Flesh to Store DC17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
38	Red	25	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	22	Thunder	no
39	Red	8	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	18	Force	no
40	Red	38	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	6	necrotic	NA
41	Red	1	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	22	Lightning	no
42	Red	81	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	4	NA	NA	NA
43	Red	26	Chill Touch 11	NA	NA	17	necrotic	NA
44	Red	18	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	17	Force	no
45	Red	76	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	4	NA	NA	NA
46	Red	18	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	17	Poison	no
47	Red	8	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	20	Force	no
48	Red	78	10ft Random Teleport	Same Plane	1	NA	NA	NA
49	Red	23	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	18	Force	no
50	Red	23	Chaos Bolt 3	NA	NA	28	Poison	yes

Player Handout 1. Contact Updates

(Two copies of each are provided)

Balance (or any Emerald Enclave Faction Agent)

A missive from your acquaintance in the Emerald Enclave.

The corruption runs deep and must be undone. Those who speak to the elements report that the magic is very strong. If there is an opportunity to persuade the maker of the magic to unmake it, it must be taken. Else the chance may be lost.

Challenge/Achievement (or any Lords Alliance Faction Agent)

A missive from your employer.

Trade must flow. The last thing we need is a bunch of scared caravaners asking for danger pay and health insurance. If there are wards or magic traps they must be undone. If you can treat with whoever placed them, they may be persuaded to remove them. Surely there is something they want.

Exploration (or any Harpers Faction Agent)

A missive from your acquaintance in the Harpers.

We have heard song of the dark folk. The occupant of the castle is not unknown. She need not be your enemy. Helping her may yet show you new roads. Knowledge, after all, is the greater power.

Wealth (or any Zhentarim Faction Agent)

A missive from a shady acquaintance of yours.

I hear that you weren't the first ones hired. The agents that were sent ahead have failed to make contact. Perhaps a more diplomatic approach is needed. Also, the diamonds are high quality. Their origin is certainly of interest to us all.

Greater Good (or any Order of the Gauntlet Faction Agent)

A missive from your adventurer acquaintance in the Order of the Gauntlet.

We have received word that the resident of the castle is a drow exile. The information such a person might possess could prove invaluable for rescuing some of the good people of the Moonsea that had been taken as slaves. Do what you can to learn about raiding parties and ways into the Underdark.

Player Handout 2. Taken by the Drow Poster

Every town contains posters of missing loved ones. Few offer a reward, most aim to appeal to good nature and most lead nowhere. Still, people make them and sometimes adventurers pick them up and sometimes someone is even found. Making such posters is an act of hope in itself.

Player Handout 3. Magic Item

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

Dark Mother's Ring of Spell Storing

Wondrous Item, rare (Requires Attunement)

This ring is made of mithral and looks to have been made by the same artisan that crafted the helmet *Weave*. It looks like a silvery spider wrapping its legs around one's finger when worn.

  While wearing this ring, the wearer can speak and understand Undercommon.

  If worn by a female, the ring subtly pushes the wearer to believe that males are incompetent. If worn by a male, the ring subtly pushes the wearer to praise females and defer to their better judgment. These effects are not strong enough to override existing character details or flaws.

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

Player Handout 4. All about spiders

Names of the spiders in the chambers (clockwise):

𝔰𝔠𝔣𝔧𝔰	Whitespine Phaser
𝔷𝔠𝔧𝔣𝔣	Twin-leg Phaser
𝔠𝔠𝔠𝔠𝔧𝔰𝔯𝔣	Phalanx
𝔠𝔠𝔰𝔠𝔰𝔭𝔯𝔮	Nightvenom
𝔷𝔣𝔧𝔧𝔣𝔰𝔯𝔮	Blightsting
𝔯𝔷𝔠𝔣𝔰𝔯𝔠	Redbite

Player Handout 5. Axcelia's Map
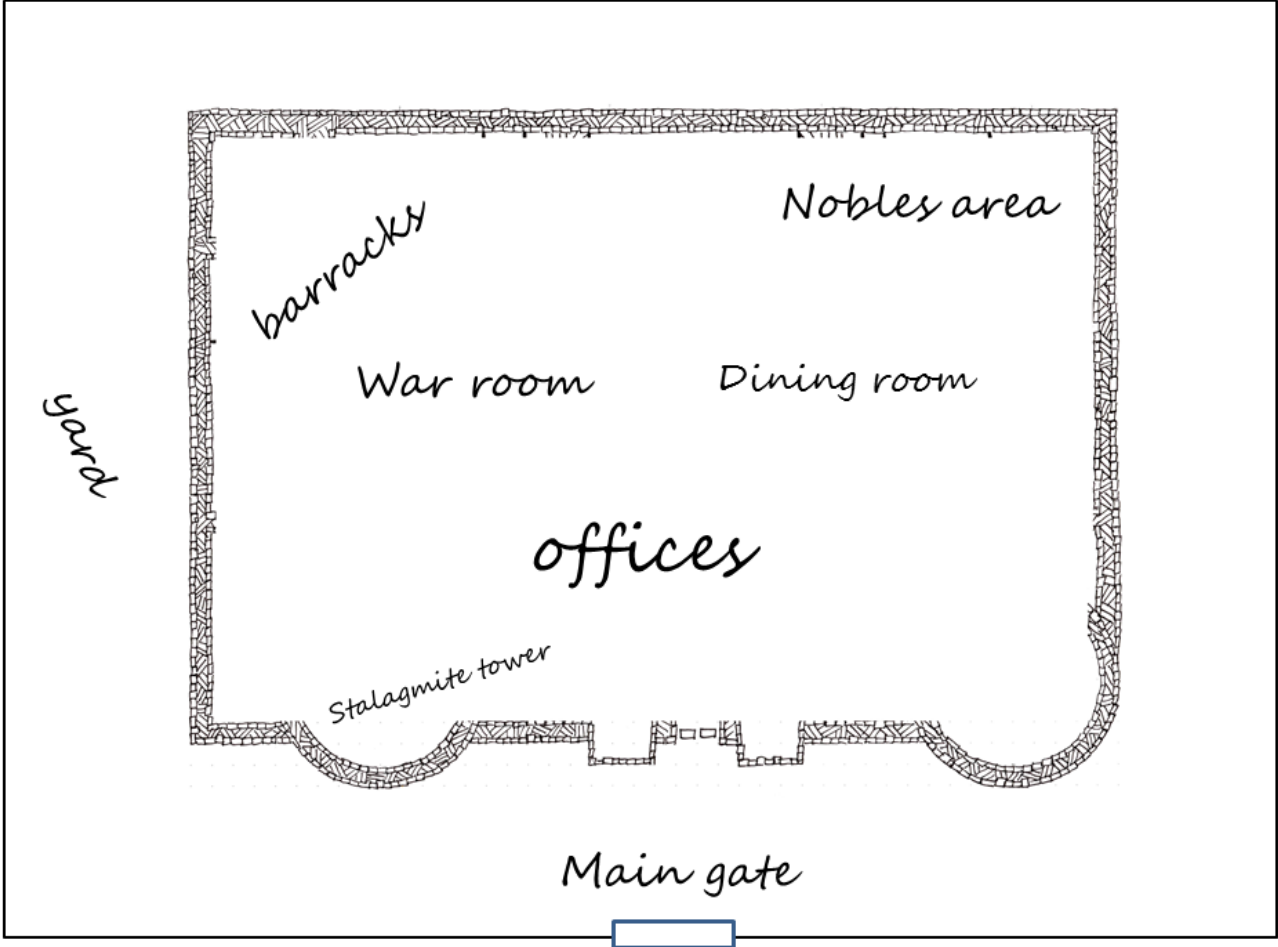
Player Handout 6. Playing Silver

For the Dungeon Master

This handout should be used by the player whose character has been designated for the infiltration mission and is separated from the party.

Despite player control, Silver remains an NPC and her actions are subject to DM oversight. The player has no control over Silver's combat abilities other than making saves and tracking hitpoints.

Special Knowledge and Hints. The **special knowlegle** below is known to the player and can be used at their discretion. The body of the adventure contains additional **hints**. When Silver shares these with the players, it can be done either by the DM or handed off to the player, but the hint phrase should be passed on verbatim**.**

For the Player

You have been given temporary control of Silver. As your character and Silver are linked telepathically, you have a sense of her skills and can ask her to perform knowledge checks or share knowledge. The control of Silver's combat abilities and spellcasting remains with the DM, although they may ask you do make Silver's saves and track her hitpoints.

Rather than roleplaying Silver, you can ask her to communicate the situation to your character and have them perform the relevant knowledge checks. Which of the two approaches you take is up to you.

Silver is an important character and as such, your actions with her should not be extreme or aimed to interfere with or dominate play.

Silver

Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (Mage armor)

Hit Points 120

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws INT +7, WIS +4

Skills

- Acrobatics +2
- Animal Handling +1
- Arcana +7
- Athletics -1
- Deception 0
- History +4
- Insight +4
- Intimidation 0
- Investigation +4
- Medicine +1
- Nature +4
- Perception +4
- Performance 0
- Persuasion 0
- Religion +4
- Sleight of Hand +2
- Stealth +2

Languages Common, Elvish, Undercommon, Abyssal

Special Knowledge

Altar of Lolth. Silver recognizes the altar of Lolth outside the Axcelon archive. She has been told by Axcelia that such things were typically used at hidden entrances and require pure Axcelon blood to activate. Upon activation, they bestow a blessing of Lolth upon the party. Proceeding without the blessing is likely to be dangerous. Silver has been given a couple of vials of Axcelia's blood for the purpose. Her own blood would not work.

Underdark Spiders. While Silver is instinctively aware that the spiders in the cells are different, she doesn't assign special significance to this. Once someone in the party (or Silver herself) succeeds on the Intelligence (Nature) check having to do with the spiders, she will point out that they are all different and have different names.

Player Handouts 9-299.

There are not actually 299 handouts in this adventure.

However, for the purposes of not spoiling any part of the puzzle, the eitht different pages available have been given numbers that correspond to their page number within *Glory of Lolth*. Note that the number of the handout has no in-character significance other than to demonstrate that there are many pages.

Each handout contains two parts – the original in Old Undercommon and the translation.

Important: To ensure that individual letters in the handouts are sufficiently clear for players to read, higher resolution versions of the handouts are included as a separate PDF with this adventure and should be the ones printed when possible.

Player Handout 009

[decorative script — untranscribable runic text]

[decorative script — untranscribable runic text]

to speak of vengeance and of death
your name was but a baited breath
a mighty hand to reach beyond the grave
yet ever you remain a slave

frail hand that reached beyond its grasp
a bid for greatness that would last
only to finally learn your place
and be forgotten in disgrace

[Decorative script — untranslatable glyphs]

the mother watched as you became
a fearsome grand and grander dame
your blade so quick and
never an expected trick!
that shroud of illusory night
brought out in every brutal fight.

such grace and style
brought to this game
That in her guile
she just took your name.

[text in unknown script]

a foolish boy, the mask your toy
you wasted on such ill intentions, 'What once held such potential
but mother understood betrayal even if on this scale
she knew that something so foolish, so frail, was just a weakness of the
male.

neutered and weak to strike at mother's heart
the boy instead attacks her chosen
yet even here does he fail
as much a fool as simply frail.

Player Handout 134

[decorative script text]

misled once , an arrow flies
fooled twice, a crescent breaks
so blind to so many lies
you'll never know what it takes.
see yourself a prancing faun
you're nothing but a simple pawn

Player Handout 167

[text in constructed script]

a mighty gift for you
now ever will I live for you
you spin the web and a
son's son
believes in you, and
for you lives

a mighty gift for you
now ever will I live for you
you spin the web and a
son's son
believes in you , and
for you kills

[decorative script text]

[decorative script text]

made of a mold older than old
now lurking where naught exists
you succumbed still to beauty's hold
For the mother of lusts no one resists

so strength of all that dwells beneath
will serve again chaos unleashed

[text in fictional script]

mired in distant radiance you hide
your children left to fend alone
sired in indifference and pride
for your misjudgment they atone

bound you I once around my finger
and Now banished to the dark
among your strongest heirs I linger
and feed them dreams of vengeance stark

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all brutal strength
        and seething hatred
you lost an eye
        and gained a purpose

an enemy's enemy
        you're no Friend
yet will be useful
        in the end.