

SUNLIT HANDS, EPISODE 2: **DUG TOO DEEP?**



You found what was causing the bad luck in Easthaven and realized it went much farther than that one part of Ten Towns. With the luck-depriving object in tow, you aim to return it to its rightful owners: a kobold tribe that runs a gem mine near Termalaine. When the people you mean to give it to show up, they are acting strange, confused, and hostile. You are now tasked with figuring out what has happened to the kobold tribe.

A 4-hour adventure for 1st-4th level characters, APL 2.

Adventurer's League Season 10, Plague of Ancients. Seed: In Too Deep.

Credits

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Module Guide

Adventurer's League

This is a Dungeons and Dragons Adventurer's League adventure. It adheres to Season 10 and Plague of Ancients rules. Explanations of those rulesets, limitations, and reward structures are available from Wizards of the Coast:

https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general

The adventure itself is aimed at around 4 hours in length and is Tier 1, meaning it is meant for players levels 1-4.

Markers and Organization

Sections of this module are organized with a (hopefully) sensible pattern, section by section.

"Parts" are larger sections, possibly with multiple scenarios for players to roll dice and play their characters.

Named Subhead

The named subheads (if viewing this in color, the headings are light blue with red letters) are parts within a Part. They represent different challenges, location changes, or combat scenarios.

Combat

"Combat" headers (tan background with black lettering) will start by explaining the combat scenario's enemies. Further explanation of mechanics will follow. Stat blocks or maps will be relegated to the Appendix sections for ease of use.

Appendices

The Appendix section will be separated by Part, and will contain creature stat blocks and maps. At the end of the module, further appendices will also contain the rewards, necessary legal attributions, and credits.

Separate Files

If this module is part of a downloaded folder, there will be separate maps and notes for ease of printing.

Party Level Guidance

This module is APL 2.

- APL 1 is a **Weak Party**
- APL 2 (3-4 players) is a **Standard Party**
- APL 3+ (or more than 4 players at APL 2) is a **Strong Party**

Adventure Preview

DM Notes

This adventure follows up after Sunlit Hands, Episode 1, but does not need any knowledge of that previous module. Characters may get something extra out of having taken part and will be familiar with some NPCs, that is all.

This module is designed mostly for Theater of the Mind, meaning there are no maps except for the final encounter, only stat blocks and descriptions. This is due to the constantly shifting nature of where the characters can be, and maps for some sections would have had to be so large as to be unfeasible to print or draw.

Important People

Eight

Female human, Eldritch Knight, around 60 years old.

Smart, capable, and respected, she is the only member of the Sunlit Hands currently stationed in the town, Sunlit, and is the town's attuned handler. While she is tight-lipped about her fellow Hands, she wears her badge openly.

Eight is genuine about her simple desire to help as she can around Ten Towns, her nature clearly selfless. Though she is 60 years of age, she carries herself with the vigor and strength of someone much younger.

Ash, Dash, and Mash

Icewind Kobolds, gender open to interpretation.

These three Icewind Kobolds are working with Eight Tides and Sunlit. While their origin is unclear, they are obviously deeply respectful of Eight.

The three of them helped find the piece of the Bad-Bad Rock stolen a week ago, then helped return other goods stolen they found alongside it.

Starry-Eyed

Male dwarf, age unknown but at least 120, artificer / wizard

Starry-Eyed is a clever student of the arcane and a proud member of Clan Battlehammer that's been assigned to Hardright Mine as a scribe and assistant administrator. He is very familiar with the mine, its history, its workings, and the people within.

Important Places

Sunlit

Sunlit is a town that is also a demi-plane and able to travel all over the world, taken to places its currently attuned handler is familiar with. The strange town is made invisible by a magical border, and anyone who enters seems to disappear.

No matter where it is in the world, the temperature is comfortable, and at least one of its elite guard, the Sunlit Hands, keeps it safe.

Hardright Mine

This gem mine is run and worked by a tribe of kobolds. That smartest of those kobolds handle the standard business dealings of a mining operation. For some reason, no one that is not guided to the mine by a kobold of that tribe can ever seem to find it, making Hardright both profitable and completely safe from intruders.

Part 1: Late to the Party

Outside Kobold Mine

Recently, a merchant from Easthaven named Werth stole a magical artifact that could imbue objects and people with bad luck. He further used it to steal from many people in Ten Towns.

A group of adventurers hired by a knight named Eight Tides stopped Werth and handed the criminal over before returning goods from his purloined cache to their rightful owners.

Now it's time to return the luck-ruining artifact to the kobold tribe it belongs to. Near Termalaine, a hidden gem mine run by that tribe is where the handoff is to take place.

You are there now, with Eight, but the kobolds are long overdue. In a region as dangerous as Icewind Dale, that doesn't bode well.

Players can now introduce themselves.

With the adventurers are Eight Tides and three kobolds names Ash, Dash, and Mash. In addition, the party has several Crag Cats with them as travel mounts. The meeting mentioned in the boxed text above passed by an hour ago, and Eight is getting worried and suspicious.

Eight decides to take Sunlit, her magical moving town, closer to the gem mine. She asks that the adventurers join her and finish their tasks as escorts.

The adventurers must follow Eight to continue their assigned duties, and she assures their safety as she disappears into an invisible barrier.

Beyond the barrier is Sunlit, a mildly warm demi-plane where the sun is shining through thin clouds. About three dozen humanoids of a great variety of races are here, all doing work to finish up three residential structures that are early in their construction.

- If no player at the table has dealt with Sunlit or Eight in the previous adventure, the knight quickly explains:
- Sunlit, her town, is a demi-plane under a veil, and can travel the material plane.

Before Eight can do anything however, someone yells "Thief! Thieves, maybe!"

Behind the party, four new kobolds dressed in mining equipment have rushed into Sunlit's barrier. They only pay attention to Eight as they rush toward the knight, wobbly on their feet and glassy-eyed.

They accuse her of stealing...something.

- These kobolds are extremely confused and will accuse anyone of stealing something or other, even something that the newcomers are *still wearing* like a miner's helmet or a pickaxe.
- They may also accuse the adventurers of stealing things like the weapons they are carrying, their hairstyles, their singing voices, anything and everything at DMs discretion.
- **DC 10 Persuasion, Deception checks**
 - Any of the four new kobolds can be convinced that nothing was stolen or that something else was stolen instead.
 - They will forget what they were convinced to believe within seconds, and just go back to accusing someone of stealing something else.
- **DC 12 Insight check**
 - The kobolds wholeheartedly believe anything they say and also anything they are convinced of to believe for the few seconds prior to becoming confused again.

At this point a loud, abrasive bell begins to chime in Sunlit. The construction workers stop what they are doing and rush to grab weapons and gear.

Eight explains that that is an arcane alarm, and only goes off when a powerful magical item or creature that she has not sanctioned is within 100 feet of the town. She asks the adventurers to take their Crag Cats back outside to check it out while she handles these odd new kobolds.

Outside, the party is nearly run over by a horse-drawn open wagon. The wagon's dwarf steward yells for the adventurer's to "Get out of the bloody way!" as the wagon careens forward at high speed.

On the cargo wagon, two dwarves with great axes are doing battle with a *medium* creature that has wings, long spindly arms, very dark red skin, bat-like wings, and a bulbous head.

- **DC 12 Arcana check**
 - The creature the dwarves are fighting is a *berbalang*, a knowledge-obsessed aberration from the astral plane.
 - DC 15 Arcana: a *berbalang* is highly intelligent and possibly extremely dangerous.

The characters can now climb onto Crag Cats and join the fray.

Roll Initiative!

Combat: Berbalang
Combat Encounter: Berbalang
Any Party: 1x <i>berbalang</i>
Weak Party: The Guard on the wagon starts with a free attack, then has a turn at the top of the order. The <i>berbalang</i> will make one of its two attacks against the dwarf Guard if it lives.
Standard Party: The Guard has a turn in initiative. The <i>berbalang</i> makes a single attack against the Guard, then focuses on the party.
Strong Party: The party fights the <i>berbalang</i> alone, and the enemy focuses on them.

This combat encounter is done on the run, while the characters ride Crag Cats and rush to save the dwarves.

Movement

- Due to the speed of the wagon, the Crag Cats will always take the mounted action Dash, helping the characters move at 80 ft. per round.
- The damaged dwarf wagon will always move at 60 ft. per round and is 80ft from the characters as the battle begins.

The Wagon

- The wagon is 5 ft. wide, 10ft. long, and has no cargo.

Complications

- If there is a party member with proficiency in Arcana, the DM may have them roll a free Arcana check the first time the *berbalang* makes any attack.
- **DC 12 Arcana check**
 - The *berbalang*'s attack did psychic damage that only looked like piercing or slashing.
 - This means that this *berbalang* is a Spectral Duplicate of the original, and the real creature is elsewhere.

Once the *berbalang* is bloodied (Weak Party) or down to 10 hit points (stronger than Weak Party), it attempts to flee from the wagon. This provokes opportunity attacks. If the *berbalang* is killed, it vanishes into nothing due to being an illusion.

- When the fighting is done, a **DC 12 Arcana check** can be done to gain the same information from the pre-combat check.
- **At DC 15 Arcana**, any and all of the previous information about the aberration can be given to the players.
 - If any previous check to gain information on the *berbalang* succeeded, this additional check can be done at Advantage

DM Note: Due to limitations placed on Plague of Ancients creatures that can be used, the Guard has some slightly different statistics that normally expected of a dwarf. As appendix creatures cannot be edited, these stats are correct.

Combat ends when the *berbalang* illusion is destroyed or disappears.

Part 2: The Gem Mine

Dwarves?

When combat ends, the characters and dwarves are safe and within view of the entrance to the gem mine.

The dwarves thank the adventurers for saving them. They have no idea what that creature was or why it attacked them, but they need to deliver what they have to the mine and report. The dwarves will be happy to show the heroic adventurers some hospitality.

At the mine entrance, Eight is already here and speaking to two dwarf guards in front of a large metal and wood gate.

The guards stop speaking to Eight and greet the other dwarves heartily, then tell the eldritch knight that she was right about their sudden arrival. The wagon riders tell the guards of the heroic adventurers and want to show them some hospitality and give them respite for their act of kindness on the road.

Eight meets the adventurers before they enter.

- Astute adventurers that ask about why there are dwarves here instead of kobolds can do a fairly easy check for the information.
- **DC 10 History check**
 - Kelvin's Cairn was left by the dwarves of Clan Battlehammer 136 years ago
 - **DC 14 History:** those dwarves set themselves up in Mithral Hall and never returned.

To the party, Eight suggests taking the dwarves up on their offer of safety and finding out what happened to the kobold tribe that ran this mine literally the previous day. That tribe had been here for decades, it is highly unlikely they disappeared overnight. She also mentions that she senses someone strange and arcane nearby, though she cannot tell where.

Eight will keep those confused kobold miners safe and out of sight while the adventurers explore.

The party can now enter the gem mine, and the guards will happily let them in.

It is immediately apparent the dwarves completely control this mine instead of the kobolds and may have for some time. The entry chamber has the name of the mine carved in both dwarvish and common into stone on the ground, the letters filled with yellow resin to keep the floor flat. It reads: *Hardright Mine*.

There are also two signs with the name is marked with 2 of signs in dwarvish for the 2 paths available.

- Left: Administration
- Right: Mine Entry

A few dwarves are visible and the sounds of a busy mine echo faintly into the entranceway. The dwarves from the wagon celebrate their safety with a small handful of others of their kind here, slapping shoulders and promising to tell stories of their harrowing fight.

There are two other dwarves in the room, talking about the two strange tunnel collapses or closures. No one heard anything, no one was hurt, but those tunnels are like no one dug them out at all. That conversation is not quiet and any adventurer can hear it.

At this point, the second the party members are not talking to dwarves, the following boxed text occurs.

The moment your eyes are not on the entry room or a dwarf, even for the tiniest fraction of a second, even to blink, there is a silence so sudden and so deep that it hits like a hammer.

There is no sound, no echoes, no noise, no revelry. Nothing. You find the entry you are in empty, the dwarves you saved minutes ago and all others have disappeared. There are no echoes of mining coming from deeper in, either, and you are certain of this one thing: this mine is suddenly completely empty.

Hardright Mine, Admin Level

The party can now explore at will. The map in the appendix, while not entirely necessary for this exploration section, may be useful in helping the table know what there is to explore. The map is marked with the following locations:

- Administrator Office
- Supply Room
- Defense Station
- Sales Rep
- Dwarven Resources

Passive Perception and Investigation can be used freely here to speed up the investigative process.

1. Administrator Office

This is an office with dwarf-sized stone and wood furnishings, including stone crevices in the wall where bureaus are crammed in.

- **DC 12 Perception check**
 - The office is clean, well-appointed, and there is no sign of fighting.
- **DC 14 Nature check**
 - There is no sign of kobold-like fur anywhere in here, only the occasionally loose beard hair
- **DC 12 Investigation check at the bureaus**
 - The papers contain contracts, work notices, schedules, and so on

- It is all dated, and the dates go back anywhere between a day and several years.
- **DC 15 Investigation:** There are vaguely coded markings on work orders suggesting dates or references that go back decades.

2. Supply Room

The supply room is decked out with standing racks that contain mining tools of all kinds, helmets, gloves, overalls, boots, ropes, and first aid supplies.

- **DC 14 Perception check**
 - There is a potion of climbing behind one of the tool racks.

3. Defense Station

There are weapons here on standing racks, separated by one-handed and two-handed varieties. There are also several sets of dwarf-sized armor and a corner dedicated to broken weapons and armor that need repaired.

- **DC 12 Perception check**
 - There are 2 sign-out sheets, one near the good supplies and one near the broken ones.
 - The good one has several dwarves with in and out times, and sometimes supervisor signatures for people taking out multiple weapons at once.
 - The list near the broken supplies is filled with assignments for blacksmiths or when more complex items will be returned to Kelvin's Cairn for repair and refit.

4. Sales Rep

This is a small, well-appointed office. The furniture is nice, clean, and cushioned in a way that many dwarves might dislike but others may appreciate. Everything in this room is extremely organized. The only thing of interest here is a leather-bound ledger with a lock.

- **DC 16 Sleight of Hand with Thieves Tools**
 - The ledger is in an extremely good hand entirely in the common language.
 - Sales and purchases are featured here, with dates going back almost fifty years and references to several speakers from Ten Towns, the Longsaddle wizards, Clan Battlehammer, and many more private citizens.
- The previous check, if successful, is concrete proof that the dwarves have been here this whole time, no matter how strange it is that the kobolds were, too.

5. Dwarven Resources

This room is small with a desk and two chairs in it. On the wall are three posters.

- 1: A heroically posed miner next to a heroically posed blacksmith. Underneath are the words "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work."
- 2: A kind-looking dwarf with a benevolent expression wearing a cardigan takes up the entire poster. Underneath are the words "I'm here to listen, even if you yell."
- 3: An image of a red-bearded dwarf with a crown holding a two-handed hammer. Underneath are the words "Battlehammer Strong, Day In and Day Out!"
- **DC 14 History check**
 - The dwarf with the crown is King Bruenor Battlehammer, who helped save Ten Towns from barbarian invasion 137 years ago and left for Mithrall Hall 136 years ago.

Lantern (Magic Item)

In one of the rooms there is a Lantern of Tracking (Aberrations) (*Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, pg. 314) inside a very obvious open box.

The DM can decide on a check for this item, but as it will be important later, it is advised to make this discovery very obvious. If the players do not explore and therefore cannot find the lantern, an NPC will also have it later on.

Detect Magic will reveal that it glows with divination energy.

The description of the item is in the end-of-module Appendix: Magic Items, but this is the same description for ease of the use:

- This hooded lantern burns for 6 hours on 1 pint of oil, shedding bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.
- While the lantern is within 300 feet of any creature of the Aberration type, its flame turns bright green. The lantern doesn't pinpoint the creature's exact location, however.

There is a note attached to the lantern:

From Kelvin's Cairn to Hardright Mine Admin.

Deliver directly to Admin. Assistant Starry-Eyed. We have no idea what this is, and it's probably magical nonsense, so DON'T TOUCH IT UNLESS YOU HAVE TO!

If you tell us your beard got burned to a crisp for your "curiosity" you're not getting hazard pay.

There is nothing else of interest in this section, and the adventurers can go into the mine itself.

Entering the Mine Level

As soon as all the characters are down the short steps into the mine proper, they can once again hear some commotion a little farther ahead.

This area, however, is already different from the level above and seems abandoned instead of just empty. Cobwebs line the edges of the ceiling, there is a mild musty odor, and a thin layer of dust is kicked up as the characters move.

A groaning comes from ahead and grows. The groans and moans increase by the second, and two sets of glowing red eyes show up deep down the main path. Then, another set shows up to the right, and another to the left, and finally two more sets behind the party. The adventurers are surrounded.

Roll Initiative!

Combat: Skeletal Surprise

Combat Encounter: Skeletons

Weak Party: 4 skeletons at rear, 2 in front, 1(one) to the left, 1(one) to the right
Standard Party: 4 skeletons at rear, 3 in front, 1 to each side
Strong Party: 5 skeletons at rear, 3 in front, 2 to the side

This section is part combat and part exploration.

The way back up to the entrance level is now blocked with many more skeletons than there are ahead. The party can choose to stay and fight, but the side paths are not as well-defended.

On the map are several different paths that the party can take and a few important locations, explained below.

1: Old Room

This room looked to have previously held some sort of supplies, but it is full of nothing but cobwebs, dust, and a decrepit wooden table.

2: Fence with Note

A fence blocks what looks like an entrance to a room. A slow-burning candle with a blue flame lights up this location as if for attention. The note reads:

Go around, stay safe.

3: Digging Paths

These paths looked to have been part of the mining effort, but are empty of miners. There is at least one skeleton at the end of each of the 4 paths.

4: Fences

There are two fences blocking the way out from the south.

The southmost fence is as tall as the ceiling and made of an incredibly strong metal, making it impossible to break.

The fence with a key icon blocking a set of stairs down has three huge padlocks on it.

This spot is a dangerous dead end, but the NPC Starry-Eyed will hear any party member arrive at either fence. The dwarf will open his door and yell for the adventurer and anyone with them to get into the room he's in as soon as possible.

5: Safe Room

This room is where Starry-Eyed has barricaded himself.

At DMs discretion, more and more skeletons may show up from the top floor and deeper into the mine to force the players to run away.

- After two rounds, one adventurer at random will receive a telepathic message at the top of the turn order telling them to head to the east tunnel via the north path for safety
- **DC 10 Insight check**
 - The message deliverer is honest
- The character can choose to relay this message to their comrades or not.

- If so, the party can immediately pick the right direction and head that way.
- If not, the party must continue exploring while slowly being surrounded by more and more skeletons.
- If the adventurers listen to the message and decide to head or when any party member gets within ten feet of the eastern door, the door opens.

Combat ends when all characters enter Starry-Eyed's room.

Starry-Eyed

When the party is all safely in the room, a brown-haired dwarf quickly closes the door.

The new dwarf is as confused as any character if asked about what is going on. The NPC introduces himself as Starry-Eyed, a contract writer and artificer who is a member of Clan Battlehammer and works in Hardright Mine.

Starry-Eyed was following a strange arcane energy that was coming from further down the mine, and that energy suddenly spiked right before he was transported to another version of the mine. He ended up alone, surrounded by undead skeletons, and quickly set up safety fences. He's been stuck here for an hour.

Starry-Eyed can still sense an arcane energy further down, and there is only one more level to the mine. That's where they might need to go.

- **DC 11 Insight check on Starry-Eyed**
 - The dwarf is telling the truth
- **DC 12 Arcana check**
 - There is a slight energy in the air, just like the dwarf said.
 - **DC 15 Arcana check** reveals that the energy is a combination of divination, conjuration, and transmutation, which is why it is so difficult to pin down a direction other than "down" ©

Starry-Eyed has no more information for them, but can confirm the histories they discovered earlier in the Admin area. He doesn't know

anything about kobolds ever running a mine in this territory.

Starry-Eyed also realizes how much stronger the adventurers are than him alone, and offers use of his Psi Crystal (check the magic item appendix for details) to whoever might want it.

The party can take a short rest in the closed room if they need to. An adventurer has time to attune to the Psi Crystal if they wish to.

When the rest is over, the Starry-Eyed can unlock the fence blocking the way down and the party can reach Level 2.

Part 3: Hardright Mine, Level 2

Reaching Level 2

On the way down, the party hears the sound of many voices create a hard to discern white noise.

- DC 14 Perception or Passive Perception check
 - The white noise is in two languages, common and draconic
 - For those that speak draconic, the dialect is Yipyak, a kobold tongue

At the bottom of the stairs is a confused kobold looking at a wall. The confounded kobold turns at the sound of the adventurers arriving, immediately points at one of them, and accuses them of stealing something.

You Stone My...!

In this next section, the characters must navigate a Hardright Mine's second level by tricking, lying, convincing, or cajoling kobold miners that are constantly accusing them of having taken something.

- The characters will encounter kobolds along the way that block passages and prevent the party from proceeding.
- Each player must be accused at least once, and there must be 8 accusations in all during this scenario
- The adventurers must make a DC 10 check to proceed via talking their way out of the accusation
- Typically, Deception, Persuasion, Performance, Strength (Intimidation), or Charisma (Intimidation) work best
 - Checks can be aided by magic, other characters, or familiars for advantage.
 - All checks done with magic spells to aid have advantage.
- Starry-Eyed has access to prestidigitation, and the adventurers can ask him to help them get past the accusations.

At DMs discretion, anything and everything they wish to make the kobolds accuse the adventurers of is fair game. In addition, the players can also argue for other checks to succeed. This section is meant to be a socially open-ended challenge.

- DM rolls 1d20 and uses the chart below to describe what the kobold blockers accuses a player of.

Accusations

"You stone my..."

1	...Sense of adventure
2	...Hairstyle
3	...Shoelaces
4	...Big muscular neck
5	...Incredibly calves
6	...Kind eyes
7	...Lovely demeanor
8	...Superb fashion sense
9	...Desire to end the patriarchy
10	...Desire to end the matriarchy
11	...Favorite stuffed bear
12	...Excellent hearing
13	...Heavy metal lifestyle
14	...Mom's Bundt cake recipe
15	...Poofy shirt
16	...Toenail clippers
17	...Vitamin deficiency
18	...Icy glare
19	...Passion for the flute
20	...Rock hard abs

When 8 accusations have been made and passed, the party can move down to Level 3.

Part 4, Hardright Mine, Level 3

Chasing A Monster

This level of the mine is completely dark, and adventurers must provide their own way of seeing.

The first thing visible on this third level of the mine are three paths marked with signs in Dwarvish as "Tunnel A," "Tunnel B," and "Tunnel C."

To start, there is a forced skill check here.

- **DC 12 Arcana check**
 - A pass here can be interpreted as a character sensing arcane power, so much that it is difficult to gauge a direction.

The above check is automatically passed by Starry-Eyed, who says that the amalgam of power is what he started sensing a week before. The dwarf either mentions that he wishes he had that lamp he asked for or brings it out, depending on whether a player character found it at the Admin level.

If an adventurer has the lantern, Starry-Eyed will ask them to light it. If he has it, he will light it himself. When the lantern is lit, it hovers between yellowish light and bright green, the latter color meaning that there is an aberration nearby. Starry-Eyed will (or will ask someone) to get close to all three marked tunnels. At one of those tunnels, the light completely turns bright green. The other two tunnels have skeletons and are too dangerous to go into.

Starry-Eyed has an idea (if none of the players think of it first). They can check each tunnel with the lantern and carefully move around, using their own skills to help them aim for the next safe tunnel without having to reveal themselves to any undead. It shouldn't take too long to reach whatever aberration might be here.

The next exploration section uses the lantern to literally light the way through. The party must success on four team checks to pass and end at the final chamber.

Team Checks

- Characters can use different skills to pass these checks, each signifying their attempt to check a tunnel before they go all the way inside. find the tunnel that the lantern deems safe.
- The checks must total at least 11 if all numbers are added up and averaged, meaning the adventurers have a 50% chance to succeed at each round.
- **Perception**
 - The character hears the shuffling of skeletons and can advise on when to check the tunnels safely
- **Survival**
 - A character notices skeleton tracks and can confirm how new they are before they go check a tunnel
- **Stealth**
 - A character can sneak to the entrance of a tunnel and report back what they see inside without being spotted.
- **Arcana or Religion**
 - A character focuses on the necromancy around them to discover where that magic does not saturate the air to find a safe path.
- **Strength (Athletics)**
 - A character can boldly enter a tunnel
 - If there are enemies within, they can restrain the first one before more arrive while comrades check the other paths.

The Psi Crystal

- Whoever is attuned to the Psi Crystal can use it to communicate with fellow adventurers, making exploration faster.
- The Psi Crystal user adds a 1d6 to their check rolls.

Completing the Challenge

- At DMs discretion, the use of other skills or spells can be justified by a character
- Like the “You Stole My...” challenge, this is meant to be an open ended, fairly easy for players to use their own character strengths outside of combat.

Interplanar Intruder

After navigating the dangerous mine, the adventurers and Starry-Eyed read a dead-end chamber.

This is a simple stone cavern with a 20 ft. high ceiling, carved open and made safe by thick buttresses of strong wood and four fat load-bearing beams.

At the far end is a humongous, smooth, shiny black tear-drop stone 10 feet wide and tall. Near the stone is a berbalang and the corpses of three creatures, a kobold and two dwarves.

The berbalang is speaking to the dead kobold’s corpse.

Berbalang: “How long has this stone been here?”

Kobold: “Don’t know.”

Berbalang: “What is it made of?”

Kobold: “Don’t know.”

Berbalang: “What does it do for your people?”

Kobold: “It protects us, makes not-kobolds, not-magic-people have bad luck like walk around our mine.”

The berbalang pauses momentarily, thinks, and asks another question.

Berbalang: “What happens if I remove it?”

Kobold: “Cannot. We try. Can only break small pieces off, always grows back.”

When this short conversation is over, the dead kobold’s mouth stiffens, and it is fully dead again. The berbalang turns to study the party now, and does just that, staring at each adventurer in turn for a long moment.

- **DC 12 Perception or Intelligence check for the black rock in the chamber**
 - The black stone at the end of the chamber looks the same as the Bad-Bad Rock that Eight held and was waiting to deliver to the kobolds at the beginning of this adventure.
- **DC 12 Arcana check**
 - The amalgam of strange energies in Hardright Mine stems from that rock in the background
- **DC 12 Religion** for the way the berbalang talked to the kobold corpse, with **advantage for Clerics or Necromancers**
 - The spell was common necromancy magic, Speak with Dead.
 - As there is no incense burning and the creature does not seem to have a focus, this aberration can cast this spell at will.
- Free for anyone with interplanar travel in the background or personal history
 - The black shiny stone seems to be secreting energy that forces interplanar travel.
 - I might be moving the entire mine or portions of it back and forth for some reason.

The berbalang says nothing more, only studies the party intently once again. Any questions put to it are met with silence, any threats with a stoic stare.

Finally, the berbalang figures something out and comments that the adventurers all seem to be in one place only, while this gem mine is in three, and the stone in many, many more. The black stone wants to protect itself, to keep itself from being taken. Perhaps it sees the adventurers as allies, here to save it?

The berbalang says that it tires of speaking so much. It will take any more information it wants from their corpses, and attacks.

Roll Initiative!

Combat: Berbalang Finale

Combat Encounter: Berbalang

Weak Party: 1 berbalang, and Starry-Eyed helps.

Standard Party: 1 berbalang, and another appears in the room when the first is bloodied. The Bad-Bad Rock intervenes when the second enemy appears.

Strong Party: 1 berbalang, and another appears in the room when the first is bloodied.

In this final encounter, the berbalang is the real version, meaning it does mundane damage. However, the Bad-Bad Rock is trying to save itself and will use its power in the fight.

Starry-Eyed

The DM plays the dwarf, and his stats and spells are as the appendix states, though he has a few extra tricks for this combat.

As an artificer, Starry-Eyed has a few Experimental Elixirs at his disposal he kept for study, but will use on the party.

- **Healing (2 potions)**
 - The drinker regains a number of hit points equal to 2d4 +2.
- **Resilience (1 potion)**
 - The drinker gains a +1 bonus to AC for 10 minutes.
- **Boldness (1 potion)**
 - The drinker can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to every attack roll and saving throw they make for the next minute.

The Bad-Bad Rock

The magical stone artifact's ability to cause extreme bad luck comes into play here.

- For a standard party, the Bad-Bad Rock intervenes when the second berbalang shows up.
- The artifact banishes the weaker berbalang temporarily.
- The banished enemy returns after one full round, on its initiative
 - At DMs discretion, this can be two rounds if the party is having a rough time.
- The berbalang will be returned at its initiative.

Second Berbalang Arrival

At the arrival of the second aberration enemy, all of the party members receive a psychic message.

There is a message in the air, in your mind, concepts huddled together. The ideas of greed, collection, fear, safety, and pleading mingle with the images of aberrations, kobolds, Ten Towns commoners, and even you. It is a plea that you somehow understand:

"Another collector is here. Please, keep this place, this secret, safe from harm, away from their greedy hands. for your sake and those around you."

Psi Crystal

If an adventurer is using the Psi Crystal, they can send a message directly to the berbalang using a bonus action.

- This is a pseudo psychic attack
- The Bad-Bad Rock will work alongside the psychic message to force the next roll of a D20 made by the Berbalang to be made at disadvantage.

Ending the Fight

Combat ends when however many verbalangs are involved in the fight are killed.

Part 5: Conclusion

In Sunlit

The following boxed text can be summed up rather than read aloud.

With the verbalang gone, the Bad-Bad Rock is no longer in danger, and no longer needs to protect itself. The strange shifting of realities, of timelines and planes, falters, wavers, and then settles back to where it should be, and you are back where you belong.

Hardright Mine is once again filled with enterprising kobolds, all of whom feel ill thanks to the detrimental effects of the artifact trying to protect itself by shifting realities.

However, and strangely, Starry-Eyed is still here, not back in the reality in which he was a member of Clan Battlehammer. Not sure what to do now, he goes along with the party as they make their way back to the mine's entrance chamber and find Eight Tides waiting for them.

Eight greets the party and asks what happened to the dwarves. Once things are explained to her, she guesses that the Bad-Bad Rock simply wanted Starry-Eyed in this reality and made it so.

An artifact powerful enough to bend time just to keep itself safe cannot be revealed to the world. She'll likely have to find a way to keep it protected from scrying magics and have the kobolds bury it again.

Meanwhile, she will be happy to pay the adventurers their standard rate. Starry-Eyed also decides to pay back the party by letting them keep his aberration-finding lantern and the Psi Crystal he used to communicate with them telepathically.

Part 1 Appendix

Creatures, Part 1

Berbalang

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (Natural)

Hit Points 38 (11d8 - 11)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws DEX +5, INT +5

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +2, Perception +2, Religion +5

Senses Truesight 120 ft, Passive Perception 12

Languages all, but rarely speaks

Challenge 2

Proficiency Bonus +2

Spectral Duplicate (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the berbalang creates one spectral duplicate of itself in an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet of it. While the duplicate exists, the berbalang is unconscious. A berbalang can have only one duplicate at a time. The duplicate disappears when it or the berbalang drops to 0 hit points or when the berbalang dismisses it (no action required).

The duplicate has the same statistics and knowledge as the berbalang, and everything experienced by the duplicate is known by the berbalang. All damage dealt by the duplicate's attacks is psychic damage.

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

At will: *speak with dead*

1/day: *plane shift (self only)*

Actions

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

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

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

Guard

Medium dwarf, lawful good

Armor Class 16 (Chain Shirt, Shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8

Proficiency Bonus +2

Actions

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Crag Cat

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 34 (4d10 + 12)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages –

Challenge 1

Proficiency Bonus +2

Nondetection. The cat can't be targeted or detected by any divination magic or perceived through magical scrying sensors.

Pounce. If the cat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the cat can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Spell Turning. The cat has advantage on saving throws against any spell that targets only the cat (not an area). If the cat's saving throw succeeds and the spell is of 7th level or lower, the spell has no effect on the cat and instead targets the caster.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

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

Part 2 Appendix

Creatures, Part 2

Skeleton

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (Armor Scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Bludgeoning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages Common, but can't speak

Challenge 1/4

Proficiency Bonus +2

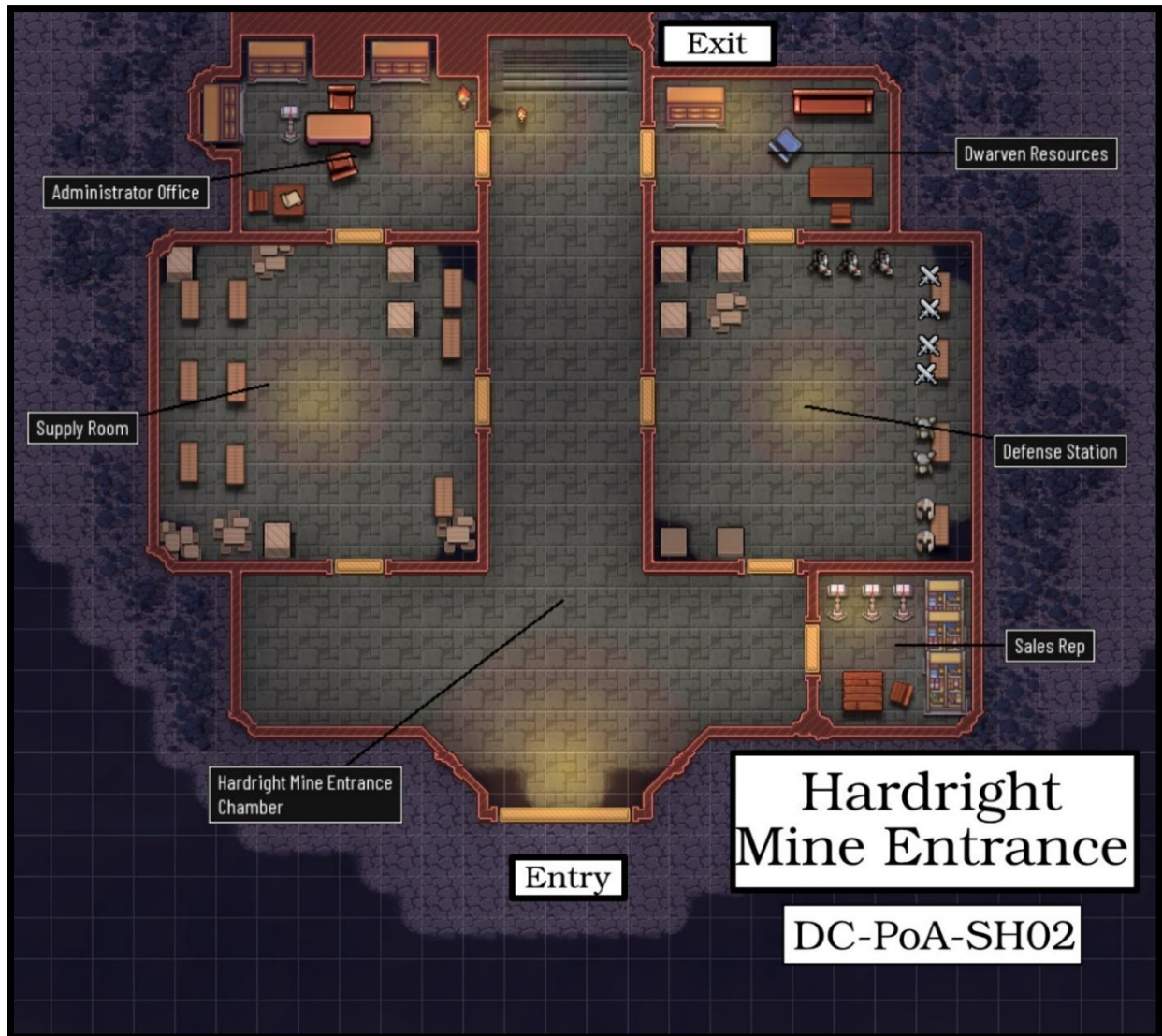
Actions

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Maps, Part 2

Hardright Mine Entrance



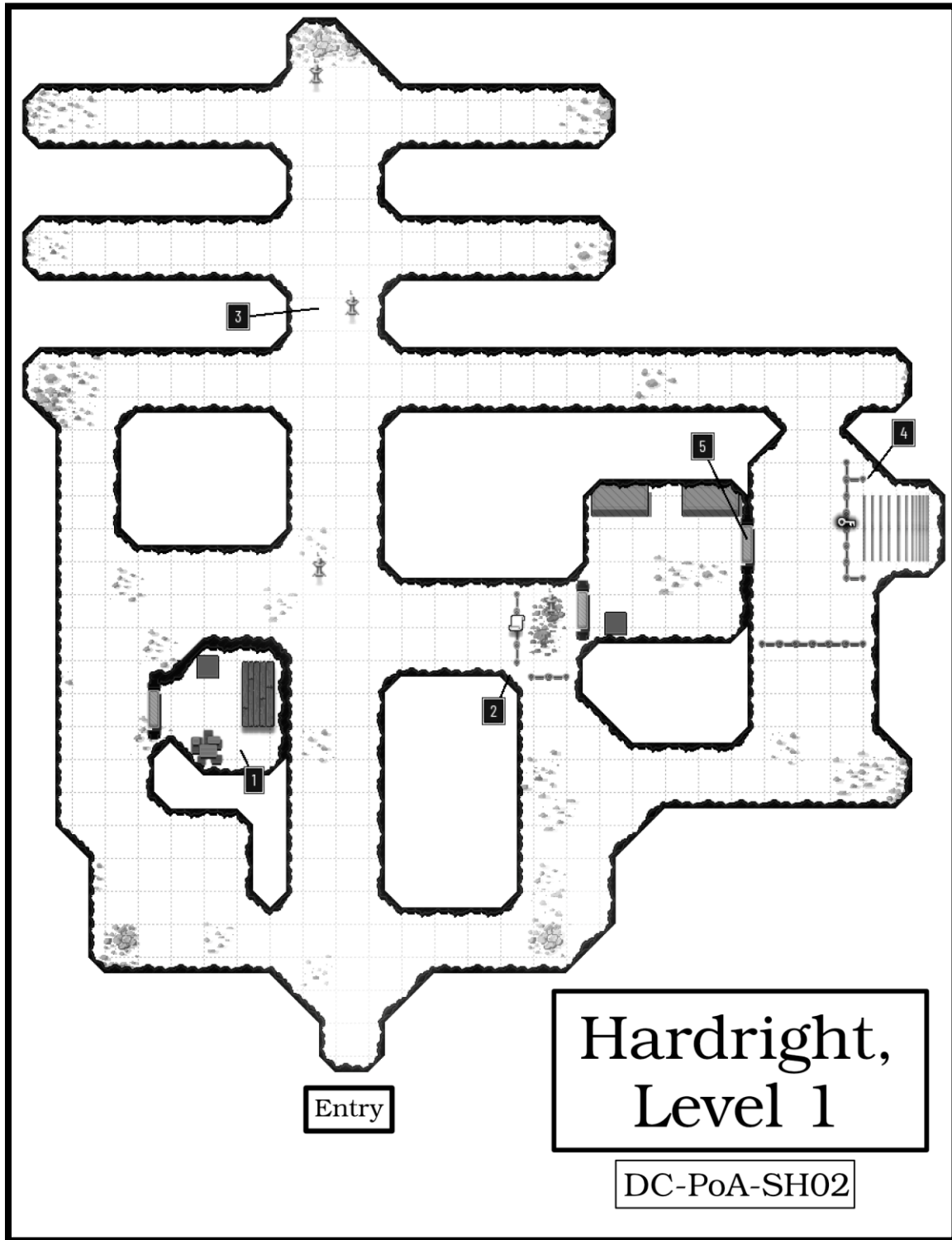
Hardright Mine Entrance, Monochrome



Hardright, Level 1 Color



Hardright, Level 1 (Monochrome)



Part 4 Appendix

Creatures, Part 4

(For **berbalang**, see Part 1 Appendix, for **Apprentice Wizard**, also see Part 2 Appendix)

Apprentice Wizard

Medium dwarf, lawful good

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4

Proficiency Bonus +2

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

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mending, prestidigitation*

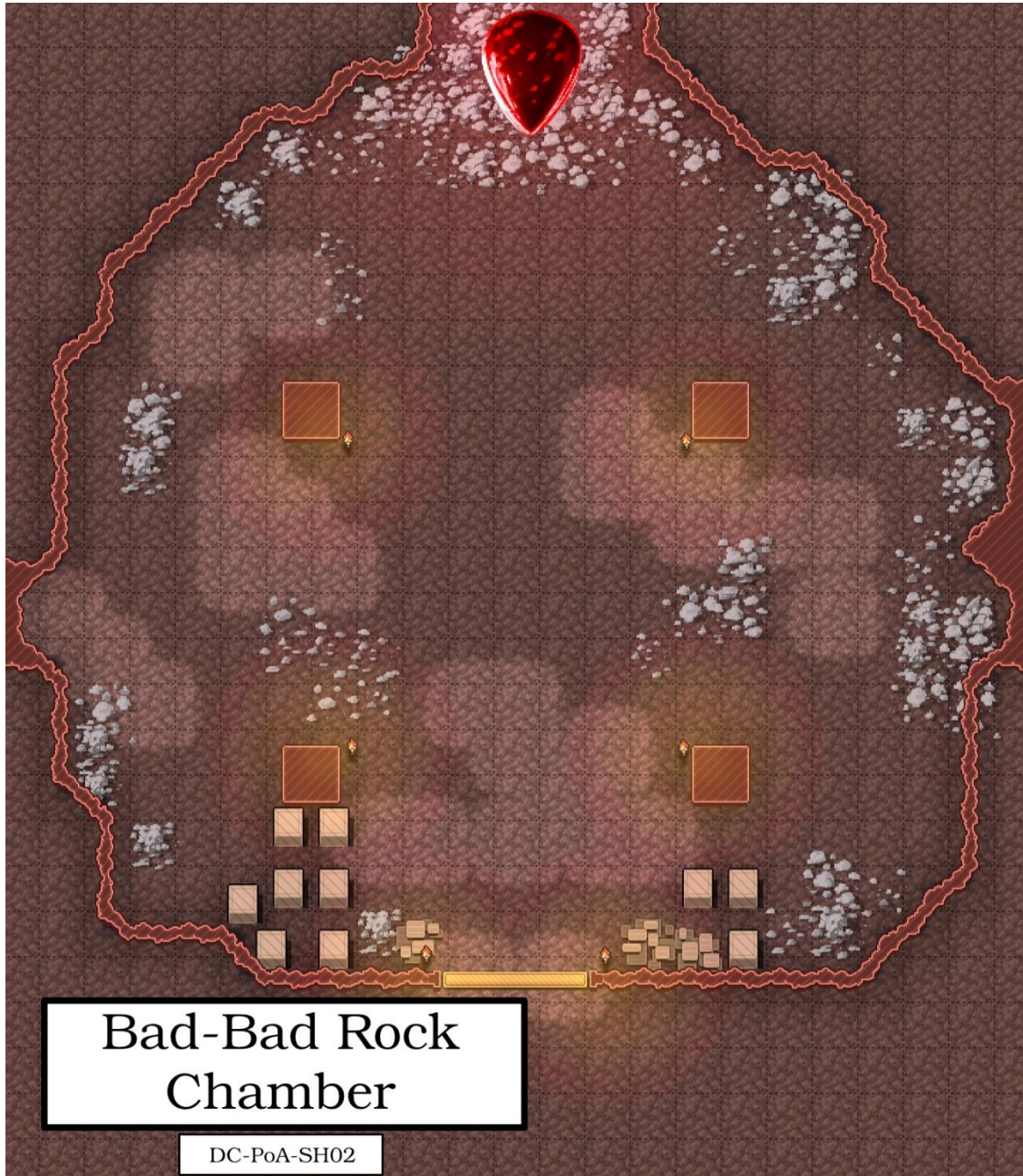
1st level (2 slots): *burning hands, disguise self, shield*

Actions

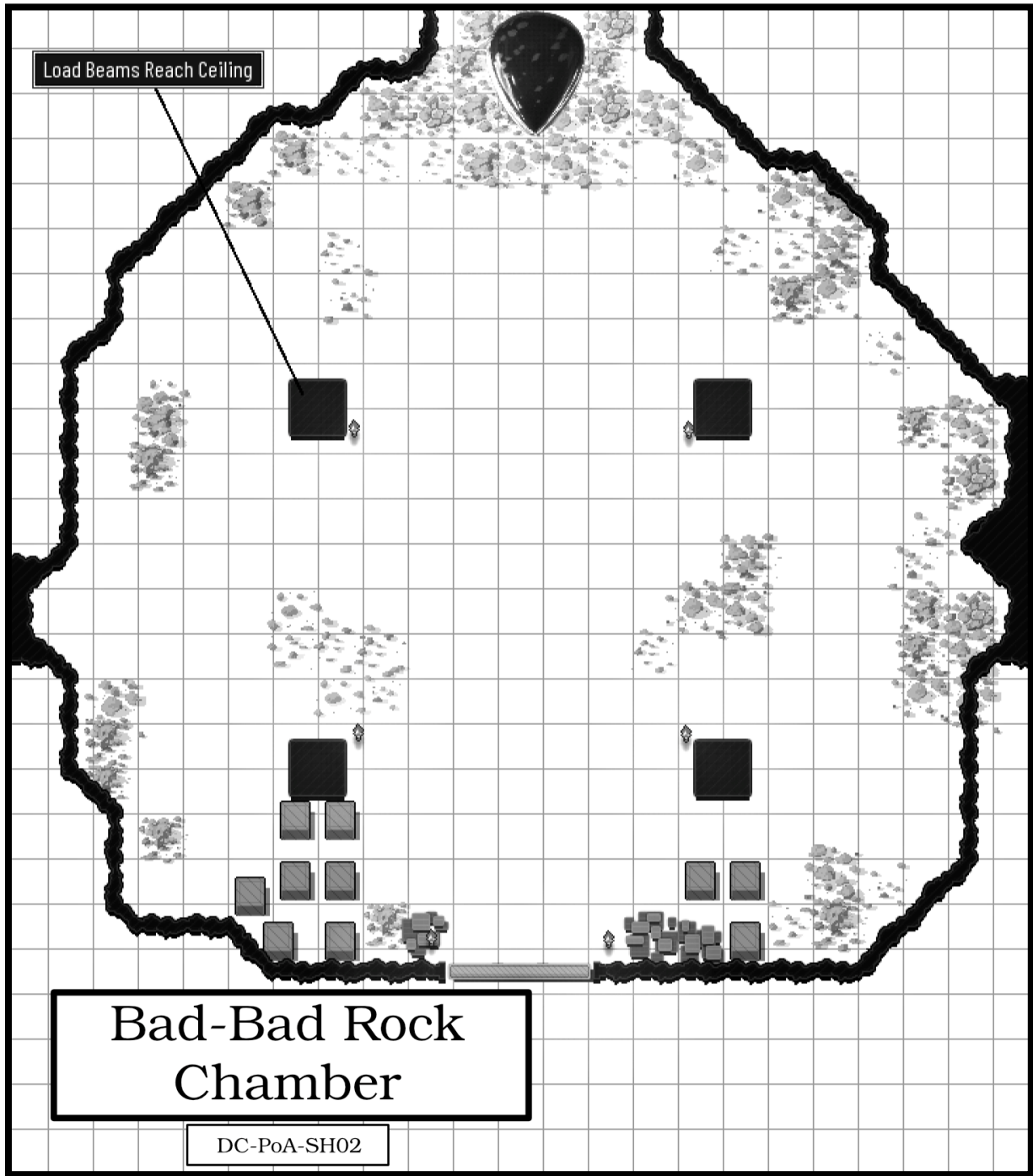
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage

Maps, Part 4

Bad-Bad Rock Chamber (Color)



**Bad-Bad Rock Chamber
(Monochrome)**



Module Appendix 1: Magic Item Rewards

Psi Crystal

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement by a creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher)

Rewarded to all players

This crystal grants you telepathy for as long as you remain attuned to it. See the introduction of the Monster Manual for rules on how this telepathy works.

The crystal also glows with a purplish inner light while you are attuned to it.

The higher your intelligence, the greater the light's intensity and the greater the range of the telepathy (see the Psi Crystal Properties table).

Psi Crystal Properties

Intelligence Score	Range of Telepathy	Light Intensity
<u>3–7</u>	15 feet	Dim light out to a range of 5 feet
<u>8–11</u>	30 feet	Bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet
<u>12–15</u>	60 feet	Bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet
<u>16 or higher</u>	120 feet	Bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet

Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden , pg. 315

Lantern of Tracking (Aberrations)

Wondrous Item, common

Rewarded to one player per table

This hooded lantern burns for 6 hours on 1 pint of oil, shedding bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

While the lantern is within 300 feet of any creature of the Aberration type, its flame turns bright green. The lantern doesn't pinpoint the creature's exact location, however.

Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden , pg. 314

Potion of Climbing

Potion, common

Rewarded to one player per table

When you drink this potion, you gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour. During this time, you have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks you make to climb. The potion is separated into brown, silver, and gray layers resembling bands of stone. Shaking the bottle fails to mix the colors.

Basic Rules , pg. 187

Module Appendix 2: Story Rewards

Sunlit Hands Auxiliary



After a job well done, Eight Tides is happy to let the adventurers use Sunlit as a camp of sorts if any of them wish to be auxiliaries of the Sunlit Hands. The reward comes with two boons.

- A small steel badge of the Sunlit Hands symbol (seen above) is given as a gift.
- A Crag Cat can be borrowed once for a total of 30 minutes for Plague of Ancients adventures.
 - The DM has the right to refuse this gift's use if it would be detrimental to an adventure.
 - The cat must be borrowed at the beginning of an adventure.

This reward can be collected up to three times, once for each Tier 1 Sunlit Hands module.

Module Appendix 2: Attributions

Maps

Software:

- "RPG Map Editor 2" from Deepnight Games