MONSTERS' GUIDE
TO COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

*For Dungeon of the Mad Mage
Level 2: Arcane Chambers*

by Ruslan Kim

BEST SILVER SELLER

About this Guide

Combat is one of three main pillars of the game, apart from exploration and interaction. And it takes a lot of time to prepare and run good combat encounter. The goal of this guide is to help DMs who are running Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage adventure to get better understanding how to run combat encounters, make them coherent, memorable and fun!

Preparation process divided into 3 steps:
1. Determining Encounter Difficulty.
2. Determining Surprise.
3. Determining Creatures' Tactics.

First step will give you general understanding about how difficult combat encounter could be for your player characters. Each level of WDMM is designed for PCs of particular level. I use a guideline from Encounter Building section in Xanathar's Guide to Everything (XGE, p. 88) to evaluate how many PCs of corresponding level should be in the party to overcome the encounter. Math is simple. If you have the same number of PCs – it is good fight. If you have more PCs (2/3 of number of PCs is needed) – they will pass it with ease, but it still be challenging. If you have less PCs (3/2 of number of PCs is needed) – encounter will be hard, but still winnable. Also, I put notes about combat difficulty, which I think is important. Depending on this information you can adjust the encounter for your group, skip it entirely or think about possible defeat consequences.

Second step is always up to DM, so you should be prepared in advance. General guidance is written in Player's Handbook (PHB, p. 189). Basically, you should determine who is surprised when the first round of combat begins. To do so, you should know answers for these questions:
Are creatures trying to hide? They roll Stealth. Are they successful? Compare results to PC's Passive Perception score.
Are PCs trying to hide? They roll Stealth. Are they successful? Compare results to creatures' Passive Perception score.

Based on the results, you will understand who will take actions in the first round of combat and who will not. I also put my notes for the encounters when circumstances may differ from the standard procedure.

Third step will help you to understand how to use creatures in combat. Where should they stand? What course of action will be most efficient and logical depending on the lore? Who do they need to attack? Will they fight to the death? Will they flee or surrender? I also put more detailed explanation on how some creature's abilities and traits work. Enjoy your fights!

Abbreviations and Font Styles
The following abbreviations are used throughout this guide:

PHB = Player's Handbook

MM = Monster Manual

DMG = Dungeon Master's Guide

SCAG = Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide

XGE = Xanathar's Guide to Everything

VGTM = Volo's Guide to Monsters

MTOF = Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes

WDMM = Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage

WDH = Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

PC(s) = Player Character(s)

AC = Armor Class

DC = Difficulty Class

CR = Challenge Rating

hp = hit points

gp = gold piece(s)

AoE = Area of Effect

RAW = Rules as Written

The following font styles are used throughout this guide:

Bold style is used for the creatures' names

Italic style is used for the Spells.

Bold Italic style is used for the Abilities and Traits.

Level 2: Arcane Chambers

This level is designed for four 6th level PCs. If you have more than 4 PCs, you can add more creatures to make combat encounters more challenging. If you have less PCs, then you can decrease the number of creatures in combat or use less optimal tactics. All creatures in Encounter Difficulty section are compared to 6th level PCs.

Area 1b

Encounter Difficulty
7 **Goblins** (CR 1/4, MM, p. 165) = 1 PC
   Note. These creatures are not going to fight.

Surprise
The **Goblins** are not going to surprise anyone.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise these creatures.

Creatures' Tactics
Goblins are the race of small and tyrannical slavers. According to VGTM, all goblinoids believe that their god Maglubiyet is the only true god and they hate servants of other gods. You can make them focus on paladin or cleric PCs. Goblins are able to negotiate in Common and Goblin, flee, surrender and take captives.

According to the book the **Goblins** flee to [Area 1d](#) if they are attacked.

If the combat occurs, spread the **Goblins** across the market area to avoid AoE spells. Use their *Shortbow* attacks and focus-fire on less armored PCs. Note that without shields **Goblins'** AC is 13.

There should be a lot of places where goblins can use Hide action. Thanks to *Nimble Escape* trait they can do it as Bonus Action. Hide before the attack to get Advantage. If PCs approach to melee range use *Nimble Escape* to Disengage as Bonus action, run away and attack with *Shortbow* from the distance.

Area 1d

Encounter Difficulty
22 **Goblins** (CR 1/4, MM, p. 165) = 3 PCs
   Note. These creatures are not going to attack PCs.

Surprise
The **Goblins** are not going to surprise anyone.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise these creatures.

Creatures' Tactics
See [Area 1b](#).

Area 1e

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Goblin Boss** (CR 1, MM, p. 165) = 1 PC
4 **Bugbears** (CR 1, MM, p. 33) = 2 PCs
10 **Goblins** (CR 1/4, MM, p. 165) = 2 PCs
   Note. These creatures are not going to attack PCs without reason.

Surprise
These creatures are not going to surprise anyone.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise these creatures.

Creatures' Tactics
Bugbears are born for battle and mayhem. Fight for bugbears is kind of religious service. They fight ferociously, they love the slaughter, and retreat is a big shame for them, but still is an option. Like all goblinoids, bugbears hate clerics and paladins, so you can make them focus on such PCs first. They can negotiate in Common and Goblin languages.

The **Bugbears** are good frontliners. Use *Morningstar* against less-armored PCs, and use *Javelin* only if there is no chance to attack in melee.

See for the information about **Goblins**.

According to the book the **Goblin Boss** fight only in self-defense. You can use Dodge action and put several **Goblins** in front of him to get half-cover (PHB, p. 196). The **Goblin Boss** can also use *Redirect Attack* as Reaction.

Area 2c

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Specter** (CR 1, MM, p. 279) = 1 PC
4 **Flying Pots** (CR 1/4, MM, p. 20, with changes) = 1 PC
   Note. This encounter is fun but not very challenging. You can skip it to save some time.

Surprise
As DM you can rule that emerging **Specter** makes party surprised.

It is also up to DM if PCs are able to surprise the **Specter**.

Creatures' Tactics
Specters hate all the living and won't negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

The **Specter** has only *Life Drain* attack option. Don't forget, that maximum hit points reduction lasts until long rest is finished.

You can roll all attacks of **Flying Pots** against one PC at once to save some time.

Area 2d

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Mage** (CR 6, MM, p. 347) = 5 PCs

Surprise
As a DM you can decide that appearing **Mage** makes party surprised.
It is also up to DM if PCs can surprise the **Mage**.

Creatures' Tactics
The **Mage** is mad, so he won't negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

Cone of Cold is the most damaging spell the **Mage** has, so it is a good start for the combat.

You can also use *Fireball* with 5th level slot if you can target more PCs within its AoE. As a DM you can even make the **Mage** so mad that he burns the whole room targeting all PCs and himself in the process. The room is 30 ft. x 30 ft. and *Fireball* has 20 ft. radius, so it covers all the room easily. Fire spreads around corners, so you can catch some PCs in Area 2c.

The **Mage** won't live for long without pre-casted *Mage Armor*, but it is up to DM if **Mage** is able to cast it in his pocket dimension.

Use **Mage's** reaction to cast *Shield* against attacks or *Counterspell* against harmful spells. Note that you can use *Counterspell* on **Mage's** own turn against PC's *Counterspell*. Don't forget that the **Mage** is Poisoned (PHB, p. 292), so he has Disadvantage on ability check required to cancel higher level spells.

Alternatively, you could start the fight with *Greater Invisibility*. It will protect the **Mage** from lot of spells that require seeing and give Disadvantage to attacks against him. Personally, I don't think that the mad and drunk **Mage** should focus on defense, but it is up to DM how the madness affects tactics.

Area 7b

Encounter Difficulty
6 **Ghouls** (CR 1, MM, p. 279) = 3 PCs

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics

Ghouls are undead creatures driven by insatiable hunger. They won't negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

The **Ghouls** are intelligent enough to focus-fire nearest less-armored non-elf PC.

Always use *Claws* instead of *Bite,* even despite damage difference, because *Claws* have a higher bonus to attack rolls. *Claws* have a chance to inflict Paralyzed condition (PHB, p. 291) which grants Advantage to all attacks, and all hits from 5 ft. become Critical hits.

Area 7c

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Flesh Golem** (CR 5, MM, p. 169) = 4 PCs
1 **Flameskull** (CR 4, MM, p. 134, with changes) = 2 PCs
   Note. This encounter could be very tough for the party, especially if weapon-dependent PCs don't have magical or adamantine (XGE, p. 78) weapons yet.

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
The **Flameskull** is mad. It won't negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

Golems are elemental spirits bound into material form by powerful magic. They blindly obey any commands given them by their creators. They don't feel pain and don't afraid of death. When golem's body is heavily damaged the elemental spirit tries to break free causing golem to go berserk. Golems can't communicate, flee, surrender or take captives.

Fire damage decreases the **Golem's** combat effectiveness a lot because of *Aversion of Fire* trait. Make it focus on PCs who deal fire damage.

If the **Golem** goes *Berserk,* and several creatures are at the same range, you can roll a die to determine random target.

Let the **Skull** stay in the air, out of melee reach of PCs. Ceiling in this area is 40 ft. high. Don't forget to use *Shield* spell when appropriate.

According to the book the **Skull** spends its actions either to electrify the floor or to calm down the **Golem** if *Berserk* trait activates. As DM you can use *Lightning Bolt* spell targeting some PCs and the **Golem,** to make encounter more challenging. Thanks to *Lightning Absorption* trait, this spell would heal the **Golem**. It is up to DM if the **Golem** is able willingly fail its saving throw against this spell.

Area 7d

Encounter Difficulty
3 **Ghasts** (CR 2, MM, p. 148) = 3 PCs

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
A ghast is stronger version of a ghoul, so you could follow the guidance described in Area 7b.

Any PC who starts turn adjacent to the **Ghast** and isn't immune to *Stench* yet must make DC 10 Constitution save or become Poisoned (PHB, p. 292).

Area 9a

Encounter Difficulty
2 **Bugbears** (CR 1, MM, p. 33) = 1 PC
   Note. Fight in this area will warn creatures in Area 9b.

Surprise

The **Bugbears** ask pass phrase, so they won't surprise PCs.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise the **Bugbears**.

Creatures' Tactics

If the **Bugbears** have a chance, they should join their forces with the rest of the gang in Area 9b.

See Area 1e for **Bugbear's** tactics in combat.

Area 9b

Encounter Difficulty

1 **Drow Elite Warrior** (CR 5, MM, p. 128, with changes) = 4 PCs
2 **Intellect Devourers** (CR 2, MM, p. 191) = 2 PCs
7 **Thugs** (CR 1/2, MM, p. 350) = 2 PCs
   Note. This encounter is very tough to overcome via combat, especially with the help of the **Bugbears** from Area 9a and Area 9d. According to the book, the **Drow** prefers to take captives, so take a look to Knocking a Creature Out rule (PHB, p. 198).

Surprise

These creatures are not going to surprise PCs. They have an offer for the party.

It is impossible for PCs to surprise these creatures, because of **Intellect Devourer's** *Detect Sentience* ability.

Creatures' Tactics

According to MM and MTOF, drow are selfish, cruel and treacherous creatures, who believe in their supremacy to all other. They especially hate surface elves, so you can focus on elf or half-elf PCs in combat. Drow are intelligent enough to negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

Thugs and bugbears obey drow's commands. As intelligent creatures they can negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

There is not so much information about intellect devourer's tactics from the lore point of view. Apart of Monster Manual, you can find some additional information about this creature in published books (WDH, p. 212 and VGTM, p. 77) but there are no clues of how it fights. Intellect devourers have alien intelligence, so it is up to DM if they will negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

If fight occurs, the **Drow Elite Warrior** calls for the **Bugbears** from Area 9d. It will take 2-3 rounds for them to reach this area, because they are sleeping.

The **Drow's** goal is to capture PCs, so it is better to use *Hand Crossbow* attacks which have a chance to knock PC unconscious. Because of spider curse this **Drow** can move across the walls and even ceiling. You can make him shoot from there to stay out of melee reach.

You can make the **Thugs** and the **Bugbears** simply beat PCs to 0 hp and Knock them Out. But if you want to make fight more tense and interesting you can try to use Grapple (PHB, p. 195) to prevent fleeing, Shove (PHB, p. 195) to knock PCs down and get Advantage or optional Disarm (DMG, p. 271) to limit PCs' combat effectiveness. Poisoned condition from **Drow's** *Hand Crossbow* attack may help with related ability checks.

While inside the **Thug**, the **Intellect Devourer** can't use its own attacks. It teleports outside once the **Thug** is dead.

Intellect Devourer's *Multiattack* includes *Devour Intellect* action. From mechanical perspective it is represented just as Intellect saving throw and it is up to you how to describe this attack to your players. It may look as telepathic blast or some kind of hypnosis. *Devour Intellect* may inflict almost permanent Stunned condition (PHB, p. 292) because 6th level PCs usually don't have access to *Greater Restoration* spell. It is especially dangerous for PCs with low Intelligence score.

Stunned condition includes Incapacitated condition and allows the **Devourer** to use *Body Theft* next round after successful *Devour Intellect*. If PC will die because of *Body Thief* ability *Revivify* and even *Raise Dead* spells will not work, since they don't restore any missing body parts. The easiest way to bring PC back to life is *Resurrection* spell which is available for bards and clerics at level 13 earliest. Note, that *Body Theft* can be performed even in one round, if several **Devourers** focus on one target.

Area 9d

Encounter Difficulty
10 **Bugbears** (CR 1, MM, p. 33) = 5 PCs
   Note. Fight in this area will warn creatures in Area 9b.

Surprise
The **Bugbears** are sleeping so they can't surprise PCs.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs could surprise the **Bugbears**. Note, that at the first round of the combat encounter, surprised **Bugbears** can still be asleep (at least until their first turn starts, but it is up to DM). This means that they are Prone and Unconscious (PHB, p. 272). All attacks against them from 5 ft. will have Advantage and all hits are Critical hits. Also, they will fail all Strength and Dexterity saves automatically.

Creatures' Tactics
Follow the guidance described at Area 1e section.

The Bugbears can call for help of **Thugs** and **Drow Elite Warrior** from Area 9b. It will take 2 rounds for them to reach this area. As DM you can also decide that some or all of these creatures already wait for PCs in this area or in corridor, because **Intellect Devourers** noticed approaching party from 300 ft.

Area 10a

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Enlarged Gelatinous Cube** (CR 2, MM, p. 242, with changes) = 1 PC

Surprise
According to the book, PCs can notice the **Cube** if they have Passive Perception 15 or higher. Otherwise they are surprised. As a DM you can decide that only PCs occupying front rank in marching order can notice the threat. See Marching Order and Noticing Threats rules in Adventuring chapter (PHB, p. 182).

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise this creature.

Creatures' Tactics
According to the lore, oozes are unintelligent spawns of Demon Lord Juiblex. They won't communicate, surrender or flee. They just attack everything they can eat.

Transparent and *Ooze Cube* traits work in conjunction. If PCs didn't notice the **Cube** on their way, they try to enter its space and subjected to *Engulf* with Disadvantage to saving throw. Roll initiative. PCs who failed to notice the **Cube** are surprised.

Pseudopod is simple ability and you should use it only if you need to make an opportunity attack or there is no chance to use *Engulf*.

During *Engulf* attack the **Cube** moves up to 15 ft. and forces all PCs on its way to make Dexterity saving throws up to three times (once per 5 ft.). Note, that you can use **Cube's** regular 15 ft. movement to move closer to PCs, but this movement don't allow to enter PC's space. Don't forget that since PCs can't stop their movement at the space of another PC, they can be engulfed even with successful saving throw. At the beginning of each **Cube's** turns it deals 6d6 acid damage to every engulfed PC. If PC has 0 hp already, he or she gets 1 failed death save. If

damage on 6d6 exceeds PC's hp maximum, he or she dies (See Instant Death, PHB, p. 197).

It is up to DM, if PC who can't breathe is able to cast spells with verbal component. The other important thing is that PC can't regain hp, if he or she is dying because of Suffocating (PHB, p. 183).

Area 10c

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Ochre Jelly** (CR 2, MM, p. 243) = 1 PC
    Note. This is easy encounter and you can skip it to save some time.

Surprise
According to the book, PCs can understand that "mound of gold" is actually **Ochre Jelly** with successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check. It is up to DM if the **Jelly** freed from the stasis surprises PCs.

It is up to DM if PCs can surprise the **Ochre Jelly** somehow.

Creatures' Tactics
See [Area 10a](#) for roleplaying information about oozes.

Pseudopod is the only attack the **Jelly** has. It attacks nearest creature and you can roll a die to choose random target if several PCs are within the same range.

After PC makes successful attack with slashing weapon or with the spell that deals lightning damage the **Jelly** takes no damage. Instead, it can use its Reaction to *Split* if it has at least 10 hp. If it does so, two new **Jellies** appears. They are one size smaller. Since **Jellies** are new combatants, they also have Reactions available and can also use *Split*. Note, that the **Jelly** still has immunity to slashing and lightning damage even if it can't use *Split*.

Area 11b

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Priest** (CR 2, MM, p. 348) = 1 PC
9 **Living Unseen Servants** (CR 0, WDMM, p. 313) = 1 PC
    Note. If Halleth the Revenant is with the party, he tries to kill Midna.

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
Mirna is priestess of Shar – goddess of darkness, secrets and loss (see SCAG, p. 36). As an intelligent creature she can negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

The **Priest** lacks pure offensive power. You can make her use *Guiding Bolt* with 3rd level spell slot from the distance or use *Spirit Guardians* if several PCs are within 15 ft. range. Note, that the **Priest** can't exclude **Invisible Servants** from *Spirit Guardians* spell's AoE if she can't see them.

According to the book, the **Priest** stops a fight if her **Unseen Servants** are defeated.

Living Unseen Servants aren't a big threat for 6th level party. They attack with Advantage because of **Invisibility** trait. Note, that Invisible condition (PHB, p. 291) doesn't make the **Servants** unnoticeable.

Area 13a

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Gibbering Mouther** (CR 2, MM, p. 157) = 1 PC
    Note. This is very easy encounter. The hall is huge, and the **Gibbering Mouther** has very low speed and short attack range. Anyways, it is useful to introduce this terrifying creature to your players.

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
Gibbering mouthers are horrifying creatures created by foul sorcery. They are driven by madness and hunger. They don't communicate, flee or surrender. They don't take captives, they eat them.

When PC starts turn within 20 ft. of the **Mouther** let him or her make Wisdom save against *Gibbering*. If PC starts turn within 10 ft., let him or her also make Strength save against *Aberrant Ground*.

Gibbering Mouther attacks nearest creature, so you can roll a die to choose random target if several PCs are at the same range. Note, that killing blow from *Bites* attack consumes the body, which means that the party will need access to *True Resurrection* spell to get PC back to life. As a DM you can rule that dissolving inside the **Mouther** takes some time.

Use *Blinding Spittle* against any PC within reach. It is better to target several PCs at once.

Area 13e

Encounter Difficulty
4 **Nothics** (CR 2, MM, p. 236) = 4 PCs

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise. Note, that the **Nothics** have *Keen Sight* trait which grants them +5 to Passive Perception score (see Passive Checks, PHB, p. 175).

Creatures' Tactics
Nothics are cursed wizards, with no memory of their past lives, haunting arcane secrets. They are intelligent enough to communicate, flee, surrender or take captives. Nothics covet magic items, so you can make them focus on PCs who have it. Take a look on optional Disarm rule

(DMG, p. 271) if some of your PCs have magic weapons or shields.

These **Nothics** are insane and attack anyone they see, but can be cowed by displays of magic.

Use *Multiattack* against less-armored PCs. Use *Rotting Gaze* only if there are no PCs within melee reach.

Area 13f

Encounter Difficulty
3 **Gibbering Mouthers** (CR 2, MM, p. 157) = 3 PCs

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
See .

Area 13g

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Mezzoloth** (CR 5, MM, p. 313) = 4 PCs
2 **Nothics** (CR 2, MM, p. 236) = 2 PCs
   Note. If Halleth the Revenant is with the party, he tries to kill Rex.

Surprise
These creatures are fighting already, so there is no place for surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
Mezzoloth, as any yugoloth (kind of mercenary fiends), can't be killed anywhere outside Gehenna, their home plane. It won't flee, surrender or take captives but can negotiate using *Telepathy*.

The **Mezzoloth** has *Blindsight* and *Poison Immunity* which allows it to fight inside *Cloudkill* AoE without consequences. Use this spell in the first round of combat and keep the **Mezzoloth**

inside. Since it is heavily obscured area the **Mezzoloth** gains benefits of Invisible condition (PHB, p. 291).

If concentration on *Cloudkill* is broken, the **Mezzoloth** can cast *Darkness* spell. Both the **Mezzoloth** and the **Nothics** can see through it.

See for **Nothics'** tactics.

Area 14

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Drow Mage** (CR 7, MM, p. 129) = 6 PCs
8 **Wererats** (CR 2, MM, p. 209) = 8 PCs
   Note. WDMM suggests making the **Drow Mage** pre-cast *Greater Invisibility* but the duration of this spell is 1 minute, which is not enough to have proper conversation. It is better to use *Alter Self* to appear as an elf or a human.

Surprise
These creatures are not going to surprise PCs. The **Drow** has an offer for PCs.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise the **Drow Mage**.

Creatures' Tactics
See for general information about drow. Wererats are humanoids cursed by lycanthropy. Both drow and his underlings are intelligent creatures so they can flee, communicate, surrender or take captives.

If fight occurs, make **Drow Mage** to cast *Greater Invisibility* if you didn't make it earlier. It is very good defensive spell, but it requires concentration which means **Drow** won't be able to use *Cloudkill* or *Evard's Black Tentacles*.

Don't waste **Drow's** action to summon useless **Quazit**, it is better to try summoning **Shadow Demon**. You can also cast *Misty Step* before or after **Summon Demon**.

Cast *Lightning Bolts* using 5th level spell slot and try to target as much PCs as possible.

Don't forget to use *Shield* and assume that *Mage Armor* was pre-casted before the encounter.

The **Wererats** have immunity to damage from non-magical non-silvered weapons. It is practical for them to focus on spellcasters. Use **Hand Crossbow** attacks to reach PCs who are dealing magic damage. According to MM, **Wererats** use **Bite** attack only to induct new members to their clan.

Area 17

Encounter Difficulty
2 **Rust Monsters** (CR 1/2, MM, p. 262) = 1 PC
   Note. These creatures are busy with helmet, so they ignore PCs for the first time.

Surprise
These creatures are not going to surprise PCs.

Follow the standard procedure to determine if PCs can surprise these creatures.

Creatures' Tactics
According to MM, **Rust Monsters** ignore creatures not wearing or carrying ferrous metals. They can't communicate or surrender but can flee.

Attack any PC wearing metal armor with **Antennae**. Hope in your campaign *Mending* cantrip can fix rusted weapons and armor.

Area 19d

Encounter Difficulty
5 **Giant Spiders** (CR 1, MM, p. 328) = 3 PCs
   Note. Webs Dungeon Hazard (DMG, p. 105) is present in this room.

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise. Note, that tugging or burning webs in Area 19c alerts the **Spiders** because of **Web Sense** trait.

Creatures' Tactics

Spiders are beasts, so they can communicate with PC under effect of *Speak with Animals* spell or similar ability. They won't surrender but they can flee.

Spiders attack nearest PCs. Roll a die to determine the target if several PCs are within reach. Use *Web* against PCs within 30 ft. if it is not Restrained already. Restrained condition (PHB, p. 292) grants Advantage to *Bite* attacks.

Webs Dungeon Hazard works like this. Area filled with webs is difficult terrain. At the beginning of every PC's turn he or she must make DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become Restrained.

Area 19e

Encounter Difficulty

1 **Swarm of Spiders** (CR 1/2, MM, p. 165) = 1 PC
    Note. Webs Dungeon Hazard (DMG, p. 105) is present in this room.

Surprise

It is up to DM if bursting **Spiders** makes the party surprised, or if the party can surprise the **Swarm** inside cocoon.

Creatures' Tactics

See Area 19d for general information about spiders and Webs Dungeon Hazard.

Use *Bite* attack against nearest PC. Roll a die to determine the target if several PCs are within reach.

Area 20a

Encounter Difficulty

1 **Beholder Zombie** (CR 5, MM, p. 316) = 4 PCs
    Note. If PCs are wearing Xanathar's Guild symbol the **Beholder** won't attack. Combat in this area alerts creatures from Area 20b. It takes 1 round for them to reach this area.

Surprise

Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics

Zombies are mindless servants. They don't use any kind of tactics, communicate, flee, surrender or take captives.

The Beholder Zombie uses random *Eye Ray* against random target. It can be nearest PC, or that who did largest amount of damage. Roll d4 to determine which ray is used. Note that if PC will be killed by *Disintegration Ray,* only *True Resurrection* spell might bring him or her back to life.

Don't forget about *Undead Fortitude* if the **Beholder** gets killing blow.

Area 20b

Encounter Difficulty

1 **Berserker** (CR 2, MM, p. 344) = 1 PC
5 **Bugbears** (CR 1, MM, p. 33) = 3 PCs
5 **Thugs** (CR 1/2, MM, p. 350) = 1 PC
    Note. This encounter takes its place if PCs made their way through Area 20a without disturbing **Beholder Zombie**. It is up to DM if the **Beholder** will join and help these creatures.

Surprise

Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics

All these creatures are intelligence enough to negotiate, flee, surrender or take captives.

The **Berserker** can use *Reckless* trait to get Advantage on *Greataxe* attacks. Focus on the nearest less-armored PCs.

See Area 1e for **Bugbears'** tactics.

The **Thugs** gets Advantage on attack rolls if any of their allies are adjacent to their target because

of *Pack Tactic*. It is optimal for them to focus on one target. Use *Multiattack* against less-armored PCs.

Area 20d

Encounter Difficulty
3 **Bugbears** (CR 1, MM, p. 33) = 2 PCs
   Note. Very easy encounter, you can skip it.

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
See .

Area 22c

Encounter Difficulty
1 **Beholder Zombie** (CR 5, MM, p. 316) = 4 PCs

Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise.

Creatures' Tactics
See .

Area 22f

Encounter Difficulty
3 **Mimics** (CR 2, MM, p. 220) = 3 PCs

Surprise
Thanks to *False Appearance* trait the **Mimics** can easily surprise the party. It is up to DM if the party have a chance to surprise them.

Creatures' Tactics
Mimics are predatory monsters. They can't negotiate or surrender but can try to flee.

Wait for a curious PC to touch the **Mimic** and activate *Adhesive* trait. Roll initiative. Use *Bite* with Advantage granted by *Grappler* trait to deal as much damage as you can. According to the book, the **Mimics** fight together, so it is optimal for all of them to focus on Grappled PC.

Area 26a

Encounter Difficulty
2 **Owlbears** (CR 3, MM, p. 249) = 4 PCs
Surprise
Follow the standard procedure to determine surprise. Note that *Keen Sight and Smell* trait gives +5 to the **Owlbear's** Passive Perception score (see Passive Checks, PHB, p. 175).

Creatures' Tactics
According to MM hungry owlbears fear nothing. They won't communicate, flee, surrender or take captives.

Use *Multiattack* against nearest PCs. Roll a die if several PCs are within same reach. Alternatively, you can make the **Owlbear** attack PC who deal largest amount of damage if you want to add some unpredictability.