

Beastmaster's Daughter



An adventure for the world's
greatest roleplaying game

One-shot | Level 3

DAVE B STEVENS

Beastmaster's Daughter

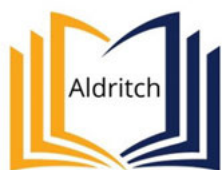


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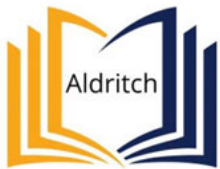
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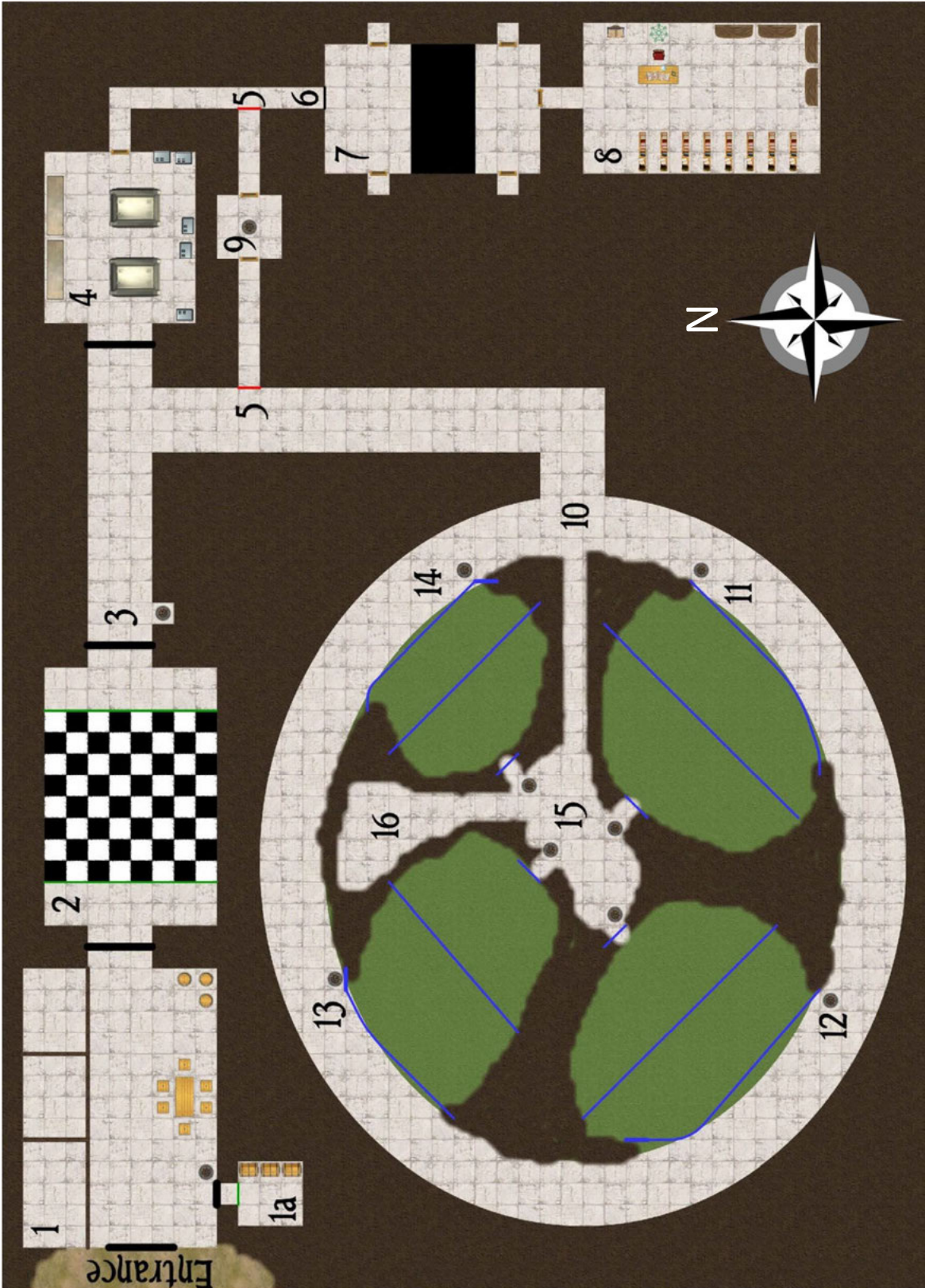
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Research Centre Map



Also by Dave B Stevens

The Beastmaster's Daughter adventure is set in Dave's fantasy world of Centris, which is the setting for Fifth Edition (5e) compatible adventures for the world's greatest roleplaying game including:

Black Hand Rising Campaign (Early 2019 release)

Dave is also writing a fantasy novel about the Edrassan invasion of Hilt Island and the first chapter is available for free from www.DaveBStevens.com

He has planned a series of free fantasy short stories which will be published on his website as they are released.

You can follow Dave on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DaveBStevens.Author> to receive notifications when the above are published.

www.DaveBStevens.com

Why this is Free

I am giving away my first adventure in the hope that you will enjoy it and:

- Tell your friends
- Write a positive review on www.DriveThruRPG.com (where you downloaded it)
- Like my Facebook page www.facebook.com/DaveBStevens.Author
- Read my other free material online at www.DaveBStevens.com, and
- Perhaps one day buy an adventure or book that I've written.

The Book & Campaign

What makes this adventure unique is the link with the novel and campaign. The novel complements play by immersing players into the setting and story. If the players enjoy this adventure they can play the entire Black Hand Rising campaign.

The first chapter of the novel is available as a free download.

There are no spoilers in the novel for the adventures.

For more information visit www.DaveBStevens.com

Party Level

This adventure is optimised for a party of four to six adventurers of Level 3. A different sized party or average level can be accommodated by adjusting the combat encounters and some suggestions are included.

Background

The party left Carlin Town and is travelling west along a road whose only destination is the Aldritch Research Centre and Zoo. To the south is The Fen, a hostile swamp land.

The research centre and zoo is owned and operated by the Wizard Aldritch, a very old and powerful mage who is extremely well-connected politically. His daughter Raven Aldritch runs the day to day operations which includes arranging the capture of new specimens.

Raven loves all creatures. Her mother died in childbirth and she was brought up by her wet nurse who died a few years ago. Her father is often away on business and when he is around he is very aloof, so she does not know him well.

The Wizard Aldritch carries out experiments on the more exotic beasts and creatures captured from the forests and swamps hereabouts.

You can learn more about **Wizard Aldritch** and **Raven Aldritch** in Appendix B: Non-Player Characters on page 29.

The magical shields that keep the specimens in their enclosures failed during the recent massive lightning storm and the Research Centre is over-run with monsters trying to get out. Wizard Aldritch is away and Raven has to deal with the crisis herself. She is looking for a group of adventurers to help her solve the problem. She doesn't want the specimens killed, simply put back in their enclosures. Her Father has an amulet that will re-initiate the shields but it's in his Inner Sanctum which she is magically barred from entering.

Timing

This adventure is designed to take less than 6 hours. This can be reduced to less than 5 hours by eliminating the Capture the Moulder section. Estimated timing is given for each major section of the adventure within the text. If your players are happy to run the adventure over two sessions then ignore this timing section, otherwise you may wish to keep things moving so as to complete the adventure within the time you have available.

Starting the Adventure

Player Introduction

You may wish to advise the players:

- The objective is to have fun and create a memorable and enjoyable adventure together.
- The life of an adventurer is a dangerous one and there is a genuine risk of your character dying, particularly if poor decisions are made.
- The party knows each other and will start the adventure together.
- Go around the table and have the players introduce themselves and their character.

I would appreciate it if you would:

- Tell the players about the Book and Campaign (refer to previous page).
- If they enjoy this adventure ask them to show some symbol of support for the time I spent developing this free adventure. They might:
 - Post on social media to spread the word about this free adventure.
 - Like my [Facebook](#) page.
 - Visit my [website](#) (refer to the previous page for full web addresses).

The Adventure Begins

Sections of text with [Grey background](#) should be read to the players:

You are on the large island of Hilt which is part of the Temple Empire. The island is currently a battleground after being invaded by the Edrassan Kingdom. The party was in Carlin Town which is in the southeast of the island and occupied by the Edrassans.

Looking for adventure that doesn't involve taking sides in the conflict, you are responding to an advert you saw at the local tavern. You are currently walking west along the road from Carlin town towards the Aldritch Research Centre and Zoo. There is some sort of unspecified trouble there and rich rewards to be had (according to the advert).

You camped overnight and then continued walking west along the road. There is a forest to the north and a swamp called The Fen to the south. About mid-morning you see your destination ahead.

A large sign straddles the road: "The Aldritch Research Centre and Zoo". Beyond the sign is a large yard with a single storey wooden building. Under the sign is a guard hut and two guards step out into the road and motion you to stop. They are wearing khaki uniforms with the coat of arms for the research centre on the tunic. The closest guard says, "This centre is not open to the common folk."

If the party explains they are responding to the advert then one **Guard** escorts them to the wooden building in the middle of the large yard and tell them to wait outside while he knocks and enters. After a minute or so he re-appears and beckons the party to enter. He leads them to a room where **Raven Aldritch** is tending to a sick white tiger cub on an examination table. She hands the cub over to an assistant (human **Commoner** female).

Game Master Tip: names in **bold** have stats and descriptions in Appendix A or B depending on whether they are Monsters or Non-Player Characters.

Raven is a pretty woman in her mid-twenties. She is dressed in khaki trousers and a smock with multiple pockets.

What Raven is willing to communicate to the party:

- She placed the advert in Carlin Town which the party is responding to.
- She runs the Zoo and keeps an eye on the Research Centre when her father, The **Wizard Aldritch**, is away.

- Raven does not know where **Wizard Aldritch** is at the moment but it is not unusual for him to be gone for long periods of time without contact.
- She has an important and lucrative task for the party to complete but first she must be sure that they can look after themselves and so she has something of a test task for them to complete. It is still important and carries a reward. She won't give them the main task first as it is too important to entrust to just anyone.

The First Task

- A Moucher has been reported in the swamp close by (it is a **Gibbering Moucher** but Raven is not aware of this fact).
- It will make a good research subject and she would like the party to capture it.
- The **Wizard Aldritch** conducts research on various beasts, aberrations and monstrosities in order to improve their strengths or minimise their weaknesses. It is something of a hobby for him.
- Historically the research centre has permanent staff to capture test subjects but these wranglers got caught up in the war. One went to fight for the Templites and the other was hanged when he tried to passively resist the occupying Edrassan army (he staged a sit in demanding that the Edrassan's withdraw from the island. The sit in was violently broken up and several people were hanged as an example to others).
- Capturing the Moucher alive earns a 100gp reward (or if the party negotiate well Raven could be convinced to go up to 150gp with a DC15 Persuasion check). Once completed Raven will then reveal the main task and reward.

This is a test to see if the party has the skills needed to assist with the main problem and whether they can be trusted.

Capture the Moucher

Raven tells the party that the **Gibbering Moucher** is reported to be in The Fen which is the swamp to the south of the road on which the party approached the research centre. If the party retraces their steps on the road to Carlin Town, until the swamp to the south nearly touches the road, they will find a game trail entering the swamp.



Photo Credit: Kyle Glenn on Unsplash.com

As the party enters the swamp the sun is dimmed by the scraggly overhead foliage. There is a horrible stench of rotting vegetation and insects bite at exposed skin. The trail is narrow and boggy and care is needed not to trip over exposed creepers and roots.

If the party follows the trail looking for tracks, have them make a DC12 Perception check to spot where a humanoid recently crashed through the underbrush and ran north back up the trail to the road (the way

the party have come). A successful DC12 Survival check will indicate that the person was running blindly and possibly being chased by a second creature which has left a slime trail. It appears the slimy creature gave up the chase when the humanoid arrived at the trail. A DC12 Nature or History check would reveal that Mouthers sometimes leave slime trails.

If the party fails to spot the tracks you may wish to give them another chance further down the track. If they still fail to spot the slime trail then they will continue into the swamp. Roll a d20 for every hour of travel to see if they encounter a random monster (on a result of 17 or more). Determine the type of encounter using the following table (1d8):

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1-4 | Giant Poisonous Snake x 3 |
| 5-6 | Constrictor Snake x 4 |
| 7 | Gray Ooze x 2 |
| 8 | Phase Spider x 1 |



An encounter does not necessarily mean combat. The monster(s) may cross the path without noticing the party or may notice them but ignore them at your discretion.

After four hours travelling south the party will reach the edge of the swamp which is hard up against the cliffs on the southern coast of Hilt Island. If they make it this far suggest they retrace their steps.

Difficulty:- A party of 4 or more characters should have no significant difficulty dispatching or capturing any random monsters encountered.

If the party finds the slime trail:

The slime trail heads southeast into the swamp and can be easily followed on the muddy ground.

After half an hour the ground becomes submerged under one foot of water and the slime trail is lost. There is an island straight ahead which rises about three feet above the murky water. It is approximately oval and about 60 feet across. It is surrounded on all sides by 30 feet of murky water, one foot deep. The island has several small trees which have fallen or been pushed over, forming a crude shelter.

The **Gibbering Moulder** is hiding in the centre of the island and watches the party approach from its crude shelter. It remains still, and blends well with the foliage and fallen trees. It will require a DC25 Perception check to see it without entering the water as it will be about 60 feet away at that point. Once a character is halfway to the island the Perception check drops to DC20.

When the first character steps foot on the island the **Gibbering Moulder** attacks. If the party has not seen it then it will receive a surprise round before the characters can react. The Moulder will be 30' from the water's edge when it attacks.

The objective is to capture the Moulder and it can be subdued with a melee weapon and rendered unconscious rather than being killed (by reducing its HP to 0).

If the party are clever enough to use missile weapons to deal with the Moulder they will still need to render it unconscious using a melee weapon (such as the flat of a sword or a hammer) unless they can convince you that their missile weapon can render something unconscious without killing it.

Difficulty:- A party of 4 or more characters should have no significant difficulty dispatching or capturing the Gibbering Moulder. 3 characters may find it a challenge if they all rush into melee combat with it. In that situation the Game Master will need to act with caution.

Tension & Excitement:- the Mouter's special abilities should mean there is plenty of tension and excitement in this combat.

If the party does not find the slime trail:

If they can't locate the Mouter but bring back something else (a randomly encountered monster) then they will need to convince Raven that despite this failure, they can do the job (DC15 persuasion check). If they fail to convince Raven they will have to go back and find the Mouter. If this occurs then Raven would send her tracker Seth (**Commoner**) with them and he will spot the slime trail automatically. He then leaves them to it.

If the party killed the Mouter in error:

They will need to convince Raven that despite this failure that they can do the job. Have them make a convincing argument and roll a persuasion check DC15. If they pass then provide the agreed reward. If they fail then she is annoyed and provides no reward. Although she feels that they have not met the demands of the task, she has limited options and at least knows they are able to handle themselves in combat so reluctantly accepts their help anyway with the main task. Raven leads the party to the Holding Room (location 1 below).

If the party brings the unconscious Mouter to Raven:

When the party returns to the Research Centre Raven will congratulate them and lead them to the Holding Room (location 1 below).

The Zoo

From the large main yard (with the single storey wooden building where the party met Raven) there is a trail to the northwest which leads to the Zoo. The trail is regularly patrolled by two **Guards**.

The Zoo only contains common beasts (panthers, boars, badgers, owls, etc). In addition to animal enclosures the zoo compound includes; Raven's house, a barracks that houses 20 **Guards** (6 of which are in attendance during the day as the others patrol the grounds), various sheds and store rooms.

There is nothing of interest to the adventurers in the Zoo. It is a private display for the lords and ladies of Hilt Island and is not open to the common people. If the party insists on exploring it, make it clear there is nothing of interest. If necessary guards or Raven can guide them back to the Research Centre.

The Research Centre

Refer to the Research Centre Map on page 3 for the layout of the numbered locations.

Here the Wizard Aldritch conducts research cross-breeding all sorts of monstrosities. His daughter assists with the capture and care of specimens in addition to her duties running the Zoo and caring for its inhabitants.

1. Holding Room

Time Elapsed:- In testing it took the party about 1 hour to reach this point. This should be considered a guide only. Your party will take as long as it takes them to get to this point. However, these timing guidelines are provided for your reference in case you have limited time for your game. If that is the case you may wish to limit the time the party spends on tasks you do not consider core to this adventure.

From the main yard the Research Centre is accessed via a large 15' square door built into the side of a hill to the east. There is a single **Guard** on duty.

Raven holds her palm to a 6" square silver entry plate which is set into the wall next to the door. There is a hum and the door magically slides sideways into the hill. Beyond the door is a warehouse which contains a number of large empty cages on the north wall as well as feedstock in sacks and crates along the south wall. Straight ahead on the east wall is another 15' square door with a square silver entry plate next to it.

The ceiling has magical lighting panels which Raven explains are throughout the centre for the convenience of the staff.

Raven tells the party to deposit the Mouter in one

of the empty cages. She then gives it a quick examination and checks its vital signs. Satisfied that it will regain consciousness in due course she locks it in the cage and invites the party to sit with her at a wooden table on the south wall.

Raven produces the 100gp reward (or whatever was agreed). She then looks each party member in the eye. Satisfied with what she sees, Raven reveals the difficult task ahead:

- A number of the research specimens are powerful monsters and so are confined in their enclosures by magical shields.
- Some monsters are so large that they barely fit through the 15' square doors throughout the centre.
- A violent lightning storm occurred about a month ago and the research centre was hit by lightning multiple times. This caused the magical shields restraining the creatures to fail.
- The research centre was overrun with specimens trying to get out.
- Wizard Aldritch is away and Raven has to deal with the crisis herself. She is looking for a group of adventurers to help her solve the problem.
- She doesn't want the specimens killed, just put back in their cages. This is very important to her.
- Her Father has an amulet that will re-initiate the shields but it's in his Inner Sanctum (location 8 below) which Raven is magically barred from entering.
- Raven explains how the shields work (refer to page 20).
- Raven is prepared to offer the choice of either 1,000gp or a magic item for each party member which they may choose from a range of items available. With good negotiation the party may be able to convince Raven to provide both the items and some of the money (DC15 persuasion). Raven makes it clear that if the party kills specimens they will not receive any magic items.

- If the party asks then Raven will let them see the items and money in The Safe (location 1a).
- Raven does not have any information on the current specimens. Specimens come and go and she leaves their day to day care to others.
- If the party asks she can tell them the basic layout of the Specimen Enclosures (locations 10 and above). She can also describe up to location 4 but she has never been in locations 5-9 (Daddy likes his privacy).

1a. The Safe

At the west end of the southern wall of the Holding Room (location 1) is a heavy iron door. Raven has the key. After opening the safe door a green magical shield prevents entry to the room beyond although the party can see through the shield.

The shield can only be lowered with the Shield Amulet from the Inner Sanctum (location 8). To the left of the door is a round pedestal. Place the amulet in the hexagonal slot in the top of the pedestal and turn ninety degrees anti-clockwise (de-activating shields is always anti-clockwise). The shield will disappear.

A Detect Magic spell will detect the abjuration magic of the shield and can faintly detect through the shield that a number of the items in the safe are magical but the shield prevents more detailed information. There is also 3,000gp worth of coins in various denominations stacked on shelves.

The safe contains the following magic items:

- Circlet of Blasting (Bracelet)
- Cloak of Protection (Cloak)
- Dust of Disappearance (Pouch)
- Eyes of Minute Seeing (Crystal Lenses)
- Gloves of Missile Snaring (Gloves)
- Headband of Wisdom (Headband)
- Javelin of Lightning (Javelin)

The party members may each select one magic item once they are successful.

A DC8 Insight check on Raven will show that she is telling the truth about the reward and that she will provide it once the party is successful.

2. Quarantine Room

When the party are ready to proceed, Raven places her palm on the silver entry plate to the right of the door to location 2 and it magically slides to one side. Whenever a door has a silver entry plate then any character may open or close the door by placing their palm on the plate. She accompanies the party into the room.

This room quarantines the Holding Room from the rest of the research centre.

It is normally a blank room but because of the crisis the magical wards put in place by the Wizard Aldritch have activated and this room now quarantines the facility, preventing the creatures from leaving and making entry a risky process.

From the entry door there is a 10' gap and then a shimmering transparent curtain of air with a faint green tinge. The magical green shield has large magical writing on it: "Research Centre Under Quarantine – Do Not Enter".

Beyond the curtain is what looks like a giant chess board with each square 5' on a side. At the other end of the board is a second green shield, then a 10' gap to the closed 15' wide exit door. The exit door has a square silver plate on the wall next to it which you assume may open the door.

Stepping through the curtain gives a tingling sensation of magic. The first character to step through the curtain and place both feet on a square triggers a magical hologram of Wizard Aldritch who says:

"Aaaah, not one to heed warnings aye? Well I see you've selected a <knight, bishop, rook, king or queen, depending on which square they stepped onto>."

The corresponding piece <knight, bishop, etc> appears directly opposite the character. Roll initiative.

If you don't have access to a chess set then make pieces by writing the name of the piece on a 1" square of paper or card.

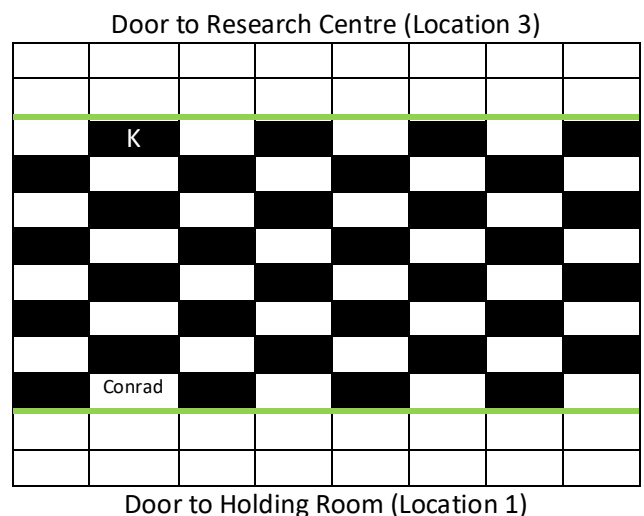
The hologram then disappears. Although if you wish you may make the hologram remain in place and have it taunt the party during the game saying things like: "Foolish move" or "Are you trying to get yourself killed? Mmmmm?" NB: this is a semi-interactive recording and not Wizard Aldritch live.

Example of How this Room Works

Say there are 4 party members;

- Conrad the Cleric
- Ferd the Fighter
- Marvin the Mage
- Deg the Druid

Say Conrad steps through the green magical curtain onto the second square from the left which would normally be occupied by a Knight in a game of chess. A Knight appears opposite Conrad as shown below (squares are 5'):



For your reference — Chess pieces that correspond to each square:

R	K	B	Q	Kg	B	K	R
---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---

(R=Rook, K=Knight, B=Bishop, Q=Queen, Kg=King)

Chess Pieces / Moves Explanation

If you haven't played chess before here's a brief explanation of how they move:

R = Rook (Castle) – The rook moves in a straight line either horizontally or vertically through any number of unoccupied squares, until it reaches the end of the board or it is blocked by another piece.

K = Knight (Horse) — The knight is the only piece on the board that may jump over other pieces. The knight moves two squares horizontally or vertically and then one more square at a right-angle. The knight's move is always shaped as an "L".

B = Bishop — The bishop moves in a straight line diagonally on the board. It can move as many squares as wanted, until it meets the end of the board or another piece.

Q = Queen — It can move any number of squares in a straight line — either vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

Kg = King — The king can move to any adjacent square. That is, it can move one square in any direction: horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

Back to our example: both Conrad and the Knight may only move like a Knight in a chess game. The Knight will have the stats, abilities, spells and spell slots of Conrad and his face can be seen dimly on the stone chess piece.



Photo Credit: Syed Hasan Mehdi from Pexels

Record which player spawned which enemy chess piece when they step through the magical curtain and any key stats you may wish to remember. You don't need to write down everything and can ask the

players for their character sheets whenever you wish:

Player Name Entered Board	Chess Piece They Spawned	Chess Piece's Key Stats
Eg: Conrad the Cleric	Eg: Knight	Eg: HP23 AC16

This example is for the Game Master only. The players will have to figure out the rules of the room for themselves.

Combat on the Chess Board

- Roll Initiative for all players as soon as the first player enters the chess board.
- Each chess piece has the same initiative roll as the player that spawned it and will always take their turn after that player. Eg: Conrad continues his turn after entering the board and then it's the Knights turn.
- The player inherits the movement characteristics of the chess piece they spawned. Eg: Conrad must move like a Knight does in chess. A player may make a move on the chess board after they step through the curtain.
- Players normal movement distance is not used when on the chess board. They have the movement of the chess piece they spawned. Players may Dash in order to move again in their turn.
- Players and chess pieces may use missile attacks and spells (if they have them) as normal in their turn but missiles and spells cannot pass through the green magical curtains in either direction.
- Players and chess pieces on adjacent squares may make melee attacks as normal and normal combat rules apply.
- An exception to normal combat is that characters and chess pieces may not move through squares occupied by other

characters or chess pieces except for the Knight which jumps over intervening players/pieces.

- No square may have more than one player or piece occupying it at once. ie; characters and pieces may not share a square. Not even a Knight may move to an occupied square.
- If a character falls unconscious on the chess board and all of their party members are either unconscious on the chess board, or have exited the chess board, then the unconscious player(s) will be teleported off the chess board and will appear where they started, between the magical green curtain and the door to the Holding Room (location 1). Raven Aldritch is waiting there and will use her veterinary skills to bring the character back to consciousness with 1HP. If this occurs the corresponding chess piece will be removed when the character is teleported. If they re-enter the chess board then a new piece will spawn depending on the square they enter the chess board on.

Exiting the Chess Board

When a character exits the chess board by moving through the magical green curtain towards the Preparation Room (Location 4), the chess piece they spawned is removed. Eg: when Conrad exits the chess board the Knight he spawned will disappear. The characters movement immediately returns to normal.

Once all party members have exited the chess board the exit door unlocks and the door may then be opened by touching the silver plate on the wall next to the door. If no party members exit and all fall unconscious on the chess board then they are all teleported (see Combat on the Chess Board above).

The Magical Green Curtains

Raven Aldritch cannot pass through the magical green curtains. Her father does not want her in the facility because of the quarantine. She will remain behind once the party exits this room.

The magical green curtains only allow creatures and objects to move in one direction ie; they allow creatures to enter the facility but not to leave. So once a character has moved through the first green curtain onto the chess board they cannot go back (unless they fall unconscious and the chess board teleports them – see above).

Missile weapons and magic cannot pass through the green curtains.

Green curtains cannot be dispelled.

Representing the Board

You can draw the room or you can use a chess board.

Moving to the next location

Once the door unlocks (see Exiting the Chess Board above) the characters may open the door and move into the corridor beyond.

Difficulty:- This encounter is self-balancing for any sized party.

Experience

Every character that makes it across the chess board earns 300XP regardless of whether they fought the chess pieces or not. Killing the chess pieces provides no additional experience.

3. Other Side of the Quarantine Exit Door

The corridor contains a dozen human bodies. Some have been ripped into pieces, others burned, and some look like they've been turned to stone! They all wear the remains of khaki uniforms with insignia of the research centre.

In an alcove on the south wall is a pedestal similar to the one in front of the Safe (location 1a).

Searching the bodies turns up a few coins totaling 10gp.

See Adventure Conclusion for how the pedestal works.



4. Preparation Room

Time Elapsed:- In testing it took the party about 2 hours and 15 minutes to reach this point.

A silver plate on the wall opens the door, which is not locked.

This room looks like a cross between an operating theatre and a laboratory. It has room to work on two specimens at once on large metal tables.

The Preparation room is where **Wizard Aldritch** works on his specimens. On metal tables along the walls are medical implements which look like scalpels, saws, tubes with large needles attached, large silver spoon devices, and other medical instruments. They are all oversize and not useful for working on humanoids. Total value 100gp in the Carlin Town market but Raven would probably not appreciate the party taking these when they are being so well paid. There is nothing else of interest to the party in this room. If the party try to sneak these items out past Raven you could have her make a perception check to catch them out.

The wooden 5' door on the east wall is not locked. It is probably the first 5' door the party has seen except for the Safe door at location 1a.

5. Red Shields

Refer to the map on page 3 for the location of the Red shields. These Red shields look and feel like stone walls and are indistinguishable from the rest of the corridor. Anyone holding the Shield Amulet from location 8 (and anyone touching that person) can see

through the shields into the corridor beyond as if the shields aren't there. The holder of the Shield Amulet (and anyone touching them) can walk through the shields as if they aren't there.

The shields can be detected with a Detect Magic spell (Abjuration) but cannot be dispelled.

6. Talking Door

The Door to the Cupboards of Doom room (location 7) is a magical talking door.

The corridor is blocked by a stone door with a carved stone face and the word "Spawn" (in Common) chiselled into its forehead.

"Hello there," says the door in a friendly tone of voice.

The door is very friendly and while it would be happy to answer questions it honestly doesn't know anything. The doors face can be quite animated.

The door doesn't know how to open itself as it has the attention span of a goldfish and doesn't remember the last time it was opened. However, if the door can be made to say the word "Spawn" out loud then the door opens. When it opens, the door is very surprised and isn't sure what's happening (it doesn't remember having opened before and the motion is quite disconcerting for it).

One of the party will probably eventually ask the door why it has a word on its forehead. The door is unaware of this fact. If they tell the door it has the word "Spawn" on its forehead, you may like to have the door repeat what the character said eg: "Really? I have the word Spawn written on my forehead?" and because the door said "Spawn" out loud the door will open.

The door has a very faint line around it which is the gap to the surrounding wall. It has no handle or visible hinges. Brute strength can be used but the door has 100 HP and is immune to slashing and piercing damage from non-magical weapons.

As background: When the Wizard Aldritch wishes the

door to open he speaks the password “Doth Kalidus” and the door opens and the protections in the Cupboards of Doom room are disabled. Of course the party has no way of knowing this.

Raven has never been past this door as the door has been instructed to ignore her and anything she may say. Her Father does not want her to enter. This is simply background as Raven is still in the Quarantine Room.

Experience

If the door is opened or bypassed without smashing it down then each party member gains 150 XP. If they smash it they receive no experience as they haven’t learned anything!

7. Cupboards of Doom

Time Elapsed:- In testing it took the party about 2 hours and 35 minutes to reach this point.

This long room is separated into two halves by a large crevasse (about 13’ wide). There are two doors on this side of the crevasse (one on each side wall). There are also two doors on the other side of the crevasse (one on each side wall). There is a door in the centre of the opposite wall. All doors are 5’ wide and wooden.

The crevasse is 60’ deep and any character falling into it will take 6d6 falling damage.

The 4 doors with 5’ square cupboards behind them are where the undead spawn. Doors open into the room and automatically close after an undead creature exits the cupboard.

Once the room is described and the party has a plan to get across the crevasse, but before they try it, a magical hologram of the Wizard Aldritch appears in the air over the crevasse and says:

“I’ve been notified that you are trying to gain access to my inner sanctum. Either you’ll die trying, which I guess is bad for you, or I’ll be forced to return and deal with you which you’ll find to be infinitely worse. You have 6 seconds to leave!”

- Roll for initiative immediately.
- If the party doesn’t leave in the first round of combat then at the beginning of the second round of combat the 4 doors open and undead come out.

Each turn of combat a random undead creature comes out of each of the four doors. Roll 1d6 on the following table four times (roll them all at once and allocate the undead to the cupboards as you see fit):

1-3	Skeleton
4-5	Zombie
6	Ghoul *

* Maximum of one Ghoul arrives per turn. If you roll more than one Ghoul then replace with a Zombie.

Difficulty:- The above assumes a party of 4 player characters. If the party has 3 characters only roll for 3 of the doors rather than 4. If the party has 5 or 6 characters then ignore the one Ghoul maximum per turn.

Ghouls and Zombies will tend to spawn on the side of the crevasse closest to the Talking Door and will try to enter melee combat with the party.

Skeletons have bows and short swords so have no preference of spawning location.

If a zombie or ghoul comes out on the side of the crevasse closest to the Inner Sanctum, and no characters are on the same side of the crevasse, then they might attack each other or try to jump the crevasse to get at the party (50/50 random chance). Zombies and Ghouls have only just enough strength to try a running jump to get over the crevasse and so will land right on the edge and will need to make a DC12 Dexterity Saving Throw to not fall backwards into the crevasse. Zombies will rarely make it due to their awful dexterity and this can provide some opportunities for amusing descriptions of undead acrobatics!

This is a battle of attrition. There is an unending supply of undead and unless the adventurers block the cupboard doors, or jam them shut to prevent them opening, or cross the crevasse and exit the

opposite door, then they are probably going to be in deep trouble!

Cupboard doors:

- Are wooden and open into the room so they can be jammed closed with a piton, dagger or similar, wedged under the door.
- It is difficult for the undead trapped in a cupboard with a jammed door to break out and they will need to pass a DC18 strength check to do so.
- If the party destroy or remove the doors this does not stop new undead from spawning.
- If a character enters a cupboard and an undead spawns next to them the undead will try to grapple the character in their turn.

Jumping

Characters that wish to jump the crevasse must have Strength of 13 or better and must move at least 10' in a straight line before the jump. If the character has a Strength of exactly 13, have them make an Athletics or Acrobatics check (their choice) on a DC 12 or they fall into the crevasse. Characters with 14 or higher strength clear the crevasse sufficiently to not require the check.

Pitons can be hammered between the stone floor tiles to anchor a rope.

As background, if the correct password (Doth Kalidus) is spoken to the Talking Door then the undead are suspended and a magical bridge over the chasm appears. Of course this won't happen because the party won't know the password. Therefore the room's defences will be fully active to protect Wizard Aldritch's Inner Sanctum regardless of how the party went through or bypassed the Talking Door.

If the party is having difficulties remind them that they can always retreat, regroup and try again. If all of the party exit the room through the Talking Door and close it behind them then the undead will not follow them and will simply disappear. The room will be reset ready for when the party return, so if they are being overwhelmed this is a good option.

Undead will not leave this room voluntarily. If they are forced to leave the room (for example, if a Cleric uses Channel Divinity: Turn Undead) then they will turn to dust as soon as they leave the room.

Exit

The wooden door to the Inner Sanctum is not locked. Once the entire party exits the room (either into the Inner Sanctum or back through the Talking Door) the undead will disappear and the room will reset.

Experience

In addition to any experience earned for killing undead, characters also gain 150XP each for gaining access to the Inner Sanctum.

For ease of reference during what is almost certain to become a large combat, the Ghoul, Skeleton and Zombie stats are repeated together below.

Ghoul

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

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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 understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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.

Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude: If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Slam: Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

8. Inner Sanctum

The wooden door to this room is not locked.

When the party enters this room and closes the door the Cupboards of Doom room resets and all undead disappear.

This large room is the study of the powerful Wizard Aldritch.



Photo Credit: Ann Marie Ludlow from Pexels

This large room is two stories tall with an arched ceiling. The right half of this room contains floor to ceiling bookshelves with thousands of books (reached by ladders).

These books cover all manner of topics: history, medicine, religion, sociology and psychology. These are non-magical texts.

On the left side of the room there is a large desk with three books open to pictures of three different large monstrous creatures. There is parchment, a quill and various coloured inks. A half-finished drawing of a creature is in the centre of the desk. It appears to be a combination of the three pictures in the three books.

Four large glass cabinets contain all manner of items. They have many shelves and drawers.

The three books on the desk show pictures of creatures not of this plane of existence and so the party do not recognise them. Wizard Aldritch is

looking at innovative ways to combine these creatures into one very powerful monster.

The glass cabinets contain any spell component a Wizard might require for all spells of Level 1-9 (including all of those with gold piece values). Characters can take these and use them during the adventure but Wizard Aldritch will take them back at the end (see Adventure Conclusion on page 23).

Along the wall behind the desk there are three items (from left to right): a pedestal on which sits a heavy leather bound book, a pedestal on which sits an amulet with a large blue hexagonal gem, and a wooden rack for holding a large staff (the rack is currently empty).

Heavy Leather Bound Book

This book includes fine metal scroll work on the cover. It is a backup copy of Aldritch's spell book. He has spent more than one lifetime collecting spells and studying magic. The book includes all Wizard spells of Level 1 to 9.

If the book is opened a magical mouth appears above and behind the book and says in an English accent:

- "Oi! Now see here. Who the blazes are you?"
- The book likes to talk and will do so constantly when the book is open. It will ask questions such as;
 - "Who are you then?" and
 - "What are you doin' in my guvna's study?"
 - and will tell the party they shouldn't be here.
- It will not provide any information to the party unless they threaten to destroy the book.
- Closing the book will stop it speaking.

A wizard may copy spells from the book using the normal rules for copying spells. There are enough magical inks on the desk to copy 3 spells. Characters can take the book but Wizard Aldritch will take it back at the end (see Adventure Conclusion on page 23).

Blue Shield Amulet

The blue Shield Amulet is what the party has come to find. It is magical and controls the shield spells. It is hexagonal in shape and fits:

- the pedestal outside the Quarantine Room (to remove the quarantine) at location 3;
- the pedestal outside the Safe (location 1a); and
- the pedestal in the Shield Control Room (location 9) to re-initialise the shields in the Specimen Enclosures.

This room is a safe location to take a rest should the party wish to do so.

Exit

The only way out of the Inner Sanctum is back through the Cupboards of Doom which has been reset and there are no longer any undead in the room. Have the party roll initiative before they enter the Cupboards of Doom room from the Inner Sanctum.

At the end of the first round:

The magical hologram of the Wizard Aldritch re-appears in the air over the crevasse and he says "I see you made it into my private chambers. Well now you have to get out again. Of course if you succeed then I'll have to deal with you myself!"

Undead appear at the beginning of the second round of combat following the rules specified for location 7.

9. Shield Control

This room is protected by the Red Shields (location 5).

This 15' square stone room is devoid of furniture or decoration except for a waist height pedestal.

The pedestal in this room is the Shield Control Pedestal. It has a hexagonal slot in the top. If the party inserts the Shield Amulet into the slot and turns it clockwise there will be a blue pulse of light, a loud electrical buzzing and all exposed hair will stand on end for 2 seconds. This re-initialised all blue shields in the Specimen Enclosures (locations 10-15). A blue indicator light is now lit on the pedestal. The shields will remain down until individually raised from the control pedestals in the Specimen Enclosures. Unless initialized here the shields in the Specimen Enclosures will not work.

The Shield Amulet can be removed from the pedestal once the shields are initialized. Turning the amulet anti-clockwise will disable all blue shields and turns off the blue indicator light.

Specimen Enclosures

There are 4 specimen enclosures.

How the Shields Work

Each enclosure has a shield control pedestal at each entrance to the enclosure. The entrance from the main corridor is 40' wide while the entrance from location 15 is 5' wide.

If the shields have been re-initialised at Shield Control (location 9) then pressing each button activates / deactivates one shield as follows:

- The top button controls the blue shield that is furthest away from the pedestal ie: if you are using the pedestal at the 40' wide entrance then the shield furthest from you is across the 5' opening at the rear of the enclosure. But if you are at location 15 then the shield furthest from you is the 40' wide shield separating the enclosure from the main corridor.
- The middle button controls the blue shield that bisects the enclosure (refer to the map). This is used for containing specimens in half the enclosure for cleaning, feeding and maintenance purposes.
- The bottom button controls the blue shield closest to the pedestal.

No creature can pass through a blue shield once activated and shields completely fill the opening they are designed to block. Ie; you can't go over, under or around them. Trying to excavate rock or dig underneath the shield will not work as the shield will expand to fill the space created. Shields cannot be dispelled.

Shields will not activate if a specimen is in the way. We can't have the specimens cut in half by mistake now can we! The players will need to figure out why the shield failed to activate.

When shields activate or deactivate, an electric buzzing fills the air and everyone's hair stands on

end. There is a loud pop and a blue magical shield appears / disappears.

10. Specimen Enclosures Entrance

Time Elapsed:- In testing it took the party about 4 hours 30 minutes to reach this point.

The 15' wide corridor emerges into a giant natural stone cavern. Straight ahead a massive stalagmite rises up towards the roof more than 100' above. The stalagmite is circular as is the cavern. The roof of the cavern is luminous and gives off sufficient light so that the entire cavern is dimly lit.

A 15' corridor goes around the stalagmite to the left and right. Straight ahead a 5' tunnel has been carved into the stalagmite.

You can see two waist high pedestals in the shape of a cylinder which are about 3' in diameter each. One is to the left and the other is to the right. Both are about 25' away.

Squatting next to the pedestal to the left is a man dressed in the ragged remains of a handlers khaki uniform. About 30' beyond him is a dead creature – the top half is a large humanoid (the size of an ogre) and the lower half is a large serpent. The creature has been half devoured and in fact there is currently a massive monster chomping on one of its arms. This massive creature has 3 heads, although it looks like at one point it had 5. The two necks that used to have heads have been cauterised. Both the dead creature and the live one are in the corridor.

One head is chewing on the dead creature while the other two heads appear to be asleep.

The handler sees you enter the corridor and his eyes go wide with the hope of rescue. He stands up and runs toward you shouting, "Help me, please help me!" The monstrous creature's heads whip around and it charges towards the man who is running towards the party. Roll for initiative.

The handler is a human **Commoner** and he is 25' away. In his weakened state he can dash 20' per turn. His name is Lash and he has been living off

scraps and water in the enclosures for the past month. He has been driven crazy by constant fear and won't necessarily behave rationally. His only motivation is to escape.

The dead creature was a Gorgon. The living creature chomping on it is a **Hydra** which is 30' from Lash and 55' from the party.

The **Hydra** has taken damage from the other creatures it fought when the shields failed and the flame damage it has received could not be healed. The party may decide to try and lure it into an enclosure and seal it in, fight it or run away. If they run into the 5' corridor heading towards location 15 the Hydra is too large to follow although its heads can attack into the first 10' of the corridor.

The Hydra is looking for fresh food and although it was Lash's shout and movement that attracted its attention, it will attack the party as soon as Lash is dead or if the party attack.

Remember that Raven asked the party to re-capture the specimens and that if the party kills any specimens they will forfeit the magic items as reward (but will still receive gold). The Hydra is the only specimen left alive and capturing it will provide the magic items reward from Raven. When the shields failed the specimens fought and killed each other which is not the parties fault and Raven will understand.

Example of trapping the Hydra:

If the party can lure the Hydra into an enclosure then they can trap it using the shields, either from the corridor control pedestal or from the handler's room control pedestal, for that enclosure.

The Hydra will charge after any people or food it sees.

For example, if the party is at location 15 and the Hydra is at location 13 they could taunt the Hydra through the 5' opening to the enclosure from the Handler's Room. The Hydra would charge towards them and would then be in the enclosure itself (draw a line between location 13 and location 15 to see the

path the Hydra may take). The Hydra is too big to fit through the 5' opening, although its heads could attack through it to a distance of 10'. However, once the Hydra is in the enclosure it should be a simple task for the party to use the adjacent shield control pedestal to raise the shields, trapping the Hydra (refer to the heading 'How the Shields Work' page 20).

Alternatively they could do something clever with the cows in the Larder to tempt the **Hydra** (location 16).

Difficulty:- The above assumes a party of 4 player characters. If the party has 3 reduce the **Hydra** to 85 HP. If the party has 5 characters increase to 125 HP. For 6 characters give it 140 HP and 4 heads.

Tension & Excitement:- it is important that the party doesn't trap the **Hydra** too easily. It should be a tense situation where the perceived consequences of failure should be dire!

Once the party has contained the **Hydra** behind a shield, or killed it, then they have achieved the objective set by Raven Aldritch and may return to location 2 to claim their reward (see Adventure Conclusion on page 23).

Specimen Enclosures Description

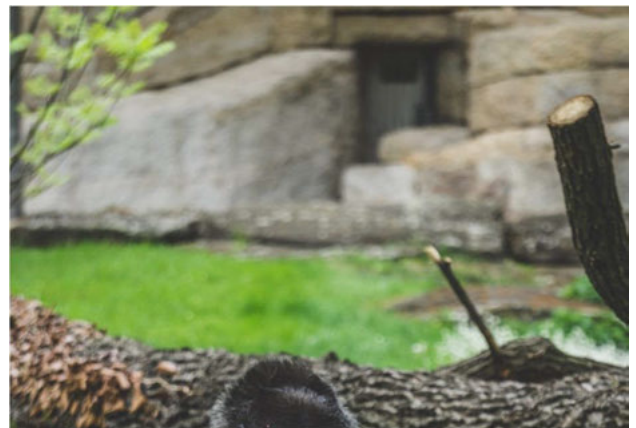


Photo Credit: Jack B on Unsplash

When the party first sees an enclosure, describe it as follows (assuming they are standing in the 15' wide circular corridor):

The massive stalagmite has been cut away to create a roughly semi-circular space about 40' wide and deep. It contains grass, plants, rocks and a shallow pool of water. Obviously this is a specimen enclosure. At the rear there is a 5' wide opening which seems to go deeper into the stalagmite.

In the corridor is a pedestal with a silver plate and 3 silver buttons (top, middle and bottom buttons).

11. Gorgon Enclosure

The Gorgon is dead and its body is in the corridor. The top half of the creature is a large humanoid (the size of an ogre) and the lower half is a large serpent. It has been half devoured.

12. Owlbear Enclosure

If this is the first specimen enclosure they have seen then read the description from the heading Specimen Enclosures Description on page 21.

There are two dead creatures in the corridor which have the body of a large bear and the head of a massive owl. One has been turned to stone and the other has been ripped to pieces and is covered in what looks like large bite marks.

The dead creatures were Owlbears, previously held in their enclosure. They were killed by bigger creatures when the shields failed.

13. Hydra Enclosure

If this is the first specimen enclosure they have seen then read the description from the heading Specimen Enclosures Description on page 21.

This empty enclosure used to hold the Hydra.

14. Chimera Enclosure

If this is the first specimen enclosure they have seen then read the description from the heading Specimen Enclosures Description on page 21.

This enclosure contains a large dead creature with the body and head of a lion but with two additional

heads, one a serpent and the other a goat. The creature had wings.

The dead creature was a Chimera.

15. Handler's Room

This room provides access to all of the specimen enclosures and from the human sized tools and gear on the walls looks like it might have been used by the specimen handlers for feeding and enclosure maintenance.

Each of the four specimen enclosures can be accessed via its own 5' opening. Next to each opening is a control pedestal for each enclosure. Each pedestal has three silver buttons.

There is a corridor to the north and one to the east.

Most of the handlers that would normally be here monitoring the specimens were all killed at location 3.

If the shields have been re-initialised at Shield Control (location 9) then pressing each button activates / deactivates one shield as described under the heading How the Shields Work on page 20. Remember the top button controls the blue shield that is furthest away – in this case between the 40' wide enclosure entrance and the corridor.

16. Larder

This room is full of dead cows, although the feedstock and water tank along one wall indicate that they would normally be alive. It looks like they all died of starvation without the handlers to care for them. The cows are behind a chest high gate that is not locked.

The characters may decide to lure the Hydra by showing it a dead cow which they could drag to an enclosure via area 15.

Game Master Tip: If you have more than one gaming session available then you may choose to increase the duration and difficulty of this adventure by returning one or more of the dead specimens to life. Refer to Appendix D on page 33 for suggestions.

Adventure Conclusion

Time Elapsed:- In testing it took the party about 5 hours 10 minutes to reach this point.

Once the party makes their way back to the Quarantine Room (location 2) they can open the sliding door (between locations 2 and 3) by touching the silver plate next to the door.

However, the green magical shields will still be in place as the centre is still under quarantine. To deactivate the quarantine use the Shield Amulet on the shield pedestal at location 3. The shield pedestal has a hexagonal slot which fits the amulet. Turning it anti-clockwise 90 degrees deactivates the quarantine and everything in the Quarantine Room disappears except for Raven, who is still there. If the party doesn't deactivate the quarantine then the green shields remain in place and they will not be able to move through them. Raven is still on the other side of the far green shield where they left her.

Once they've deactivated the quarantine and reported to Raven:

A magical hologram of the Wizard Aldritch appears in the air. This appears to be a real-time magic projection (rather than the recorded holograms you've previously seen). A great battle is being fought behind him between Templite and Edrassan forces. He says, "It's just as well that you used the amulet for its intended purpose — now give it to Raven."

If the party took anything else from the Inner Sanctum (spell components, his spell book, etc) then the Wizard makes an incantation and the items disappear from the party's possession and appear in the Wizard's hands in the hologram. He says, "Mine I think!"

If the party gives the Shield Amulet to Raven:

The Wizard Aldritch says, "I see now that you were trying to help my daughter. While you might expect me to be grateful for that, I'm not. I'm very unhappy that you violated my inner sanctum." He turns to Raven and says, "I'll deal with you, young lady, on my return — but for now I'm a little busy with the war." And he disappears.

If the party decides to keep the Shield Amulet then:

The Wizard Aldritch says, "Trying to keep my amulet would be very foolish. Not only will you not receive the reward that my daughter promised you, but you will become my enemy and that will likely go very badly for you!"

The party now faces a dilemma. Either hold onto what is potentially a powerful artefact and make an enemy of the obviously powerful Wizard Aldritch, or take the reward they've earned, receive Raven's gratitude and not make an enemy of the wizard.

If they choose to handover the Shield Amulet (the smart decision) then the Wizard gives the speech above under the section "If the party gives the Shield Amulet to Raven". Raven then leads them to the Safe Room (location 1a), uses the amulet to lower the shield, and gives them the agreed reward.

If they choose to keep the Shield Amulet then:

The hologram of the Wizard Aldritch makes an incantation and the amulet disappears from the hands of the party and appears in Wizard Aldritch's hands in the hologram. He says, "You have revealed yourselves as thieves. Be gone!"

The party must leave without any reward for their work. If the party discusses threatening Raven in order to get their reward you may wish to indicate to them that this would be an extremely bad idea. Wizard Aldritch is a very powerful magic user and could probably kill the party fairly easily if he wished.

If the party ignores this advice and threatens Raven in any way (or if they obtain their reward and then try to take the Shield Amulet from Raven) then Wizard Aldritch appears in the flesh to defend her. Roll for initiative. It is unlikely that the party would survive a full on battle. You may decide to have Wizard Aldritch render them unconscious instead. Perhaps this could be a lead in to their next adventure where they appear in a prison or have been sold into slavery, or they may just awaken in the forest or swamp (with or without their gear). The options are endless and I'll leave the fate of the party in your capable hands.

Experience

Every character that completes the adventure earns 300XP.

Time Elapsed:- In testing it took the party about 5 hours 30 minutes to complete the adventure.

Extra Flavour

Looking for something extra to give your players to draw them into the story? Check-out The Book & Campaign on page 5.

Forum and Feedback

I hope that you enjoyed reading and playing this adventure as much as I enjoyed writing it.

If you have any questions or feedback there is a forum on my website dedicated to this adventure. Or please don't hesitate to contact me on Facebook or via my website.

Website addresses are on page 5.

Happy adventuring!

Dave B Stevens

Appendix A: Monsters

Constrictor Snake

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

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

Constrict: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is Grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the creature is Restrained, and the snake can't constrict another target.

Ghoul

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Giant Poisonous Snake

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Gibbering Moulder

Medium aberration, neutral

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 10 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Condition Immunities Prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aberrant Ground: The ground in a 10-foot radius around the moulder is doughlike difficult terrain. Each creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Gibbering: The mouther babbles incoherently while it can see any creature and isn't Incapacitated. Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the mouther and can hear the gibbering must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Actions

Multiattack: The gibbering mouther makes one bite attack and, if it can, uses its Blinding Spittle.

Bites: Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 17 (5d6) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked Prone. If the target is killed by this damage, it is absorbed into the mouther.

Blinding Spittle (Recharge 5-6): The mouther spits a chemical glob at a point it can see within 15 feet of it. The glob explodes in a blinding flash of light on impact. Each creature within 5 feet of the flash must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be Blinded until the end of the mouther's next turn.

Gray Ooze

Medium ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous: The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrode Metal: Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the ooze corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the ooze is destroyed after dealing damage. The ooze can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.

False Appearance: While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock.

Actions

Pseudopod: Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage, and if the target is wearing nonmagical metal armor, its armor is partly corroded and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Hydra (Wounded) *

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath: The hydra can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Multiple Heads: The hydra has three heads. While it has more than one head, the hydra has advantage on saving throws against being Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Frightened, Stunned, and knocked Unconscious. Whenever the hydra takes 25 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, the hydra dies. At the end of its turn, it grows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn, unless it has taken fire damage since its last turn. The hydra regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Reactive Heads: For each head the hydra has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that can be used only for opportunity attacks.

Wakeful: While the hydra sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.

Actions

Multiattack: The hydra makes as many bite attacks as it has heads.

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Phase Spider

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ethereal Jaunt: As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.

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

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

Actions

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) 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.

A phase spider possesses the magical ability to phase in and out of the Ethereal Plane. It seems to appear out of nowhere and quickly vanishes after attacking. Its movement on the Ethereal Plane before coming back to the Material Plane makes it seem like it can teleport.

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 understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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.

Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude: If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Slam: Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

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Appendix B: Non-Player Characters

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Commoners include peasants, serfs, slaves, servants, pilgrims, merchants, artisans, and hermits.

Guard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

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 any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

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.



Raven Aldritch *

Medium human, neutral good

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack: Raven makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

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

Personality

Ideals: Protection of animals, even her father's specimens.

Bonds: To the animals in her care and to the staff of the Aldritch Research Centre and Zoo.

Desires: To please her father.

Flaws: Sometimes acts without thinking through the consequences.

Description: A very pretty woman in her mid-twenties with straight auburn hair that flows half way down her back. Athletic build. Wears khaki shirt and trousers with a lot of pockets and the logo of the Aldritch Research Centre and Zoo on the breast pocket.

Wizard Aldritch *

Medium human, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with Mage Armor)

Hit Points 150

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

Damage Resistance damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from Stoneskin)

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any six languages

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Magic Resistance: He has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting: He is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He 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 – reserved to Escape):

Teleport

8th level (1 slot):

Mind Blank*

9th level (1 slot):

Time Stop

* Wizard Aldritch casts these spells on himself before combat if there is time.

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).

Personality

Aldritch's passion is to cross breed monsters. He captures and studies them in his laboratory. He likes to create new and more powerful "pets". They are often matched against each other in the fighting pits (not at this location) for his entertainment and that of the nobles of Hilt Island.

Ideals: To seek power in all its forms.

Bonds: The only things he holds any affection for is his spell book and his "pets". His feelings for his daughter are complex but publicly he treats her like a senior member of staff, nothing more.

Desires: To rule Hilt Island, for starters. He enjoys creating complex puzzles and elaborate challenges for others to solve for his amusement (or die trying).

Flaws: Bloodthirsty and lacks compassion. He's a bit of a glutton and likes the finest food and drink. Although he over eats he uses magic to stop himself getting fat.

Description: Shorter than average height, dark hair, thick eyebrows, a profusion of ear hair, sharp nose, a face that rarely smiles. Difficult to tell his age but he appears to be over fifty (in reality he is many times that). Wears black robes.

Escape

If Wizard Aldritch is reduced to 50 HP or less then he will use the Teleport spell to transport Raven and himself to a place of safety. He will take his Shield

Amulet, spell book and any spell components the party took from his Inner Sanctum with him. Award the party 7,000 XP for getting the better of Wizard Aldritch. But they will have made a powerful enemy!

The War

Wizard Aldritch is currently backing the Edrassan's against the Temple Empire. Raven does not know this and would be appalled if she found out but would never betray her father.

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Appendix C: Magic Items

Circlet of Blasting

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this circlet, you can use an action to cast the scorching ray spell with it. When you make the spell's attacks, you do so with an attack bonus of +5. The circlet can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Cloak of Protection

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws while you wear this cloak.

Dust of Disappearance

Wondrous item, uncommon

Found in a small packet, this powder resembles very fine sand. There is enough of it for one use. When you use an action to throw the dust into the air, you and each creature and object within 10 feet of you become Invisible for 2d4 minutes. The duration is the same for all subjects, and the dust is consumed when its magic takes effect. If a creature affected by the dust attacks or casts a spell, the invisibility ends for that creature.

Eyes of Minute Seeing

Wondrous item, uncommon

These crystal lenses fit over the eyes. While wearing them, you can see much better than normal out to a range of 1 foot. You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks that rely on sight while searching an area or studying an object within that range.

Gloves of Missile Snaring

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

These gloves seem to almost meld into your hands when you don them. When a ranged weapon attack hits you while you're wearing them, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage by 1d10 + your Dexterity modifier, provided that you have a free hand. If you reduce the damage to 0, you can catch the missile if it is small enough for you to hold in that hand.

Headband of Wisdom *

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Your Wisdom score is 19 while you wear this headband. It has no effect on you if your Wisdom is already 19 or higher.

Javelin of Lightning

Weapon (javelin), uncommon

This javelin is a magic weapon. When you hurl it and speak its command word, it transforms into a bolt of lightning, forming a line 5 feet wide that extends out from you to a target within 120 feet. Each creature in the line excluding you and the target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 lightning damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The lightning bolt turns back into a javelin when it reaches the target. Make a ranged weapon attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes damage from the javelin plus 4d6 lightning damage.

The javelin's property can't be used again until the next dawn. In the meantime, the javelin can still be used as a magic weapon.

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Appendix D: Unused Monsters

Game Master Tip: If you have more than one gaming session available then you may choose to increase the duration and difficulty of this adventure by returning one or more of the dead specimens to life. For example; the Owlbears could be hiding from the Hydra in location 15 or 16. Or there may be a standoff between the Hydra and either the Chimera or Gorgon at location 13. If you would like to do this then you will need to be careful not to have a Total Party Kill (TPK) if the party is in combat with two of these monsters at once. Stats for the Gorgon, Owlbears and Chimera are included here should you wish to use them.

Chimera

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +8

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages understands Draconic but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack: The chimera makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its horns, and one with its claws. When its fire breath is available, it can use the breath in place of its bite or horns.

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Horns: Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Claws: Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6): The dragon head exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 31 (7d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Gorgon

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Condition Immunities Petrified

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Trampling Charge: If the gorgon moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked Prone. If the target is Prone, the gorgon can make one attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Gore: Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (2d12 + 5) piercing damage.

Hooves: Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Petrifying Breath (Recharge 5-6): The gorgon exhales petrifying gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target begins to turn to stone and is Restrained. The Restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is Petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Owlbear

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack: The owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak: Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws: Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

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Feeding time at the Zoo and you could be the main course!

Raven Aldritch, mysterious and beautiful, runs the Aldritch Research Centre and Zoo for her father, a powerful mage. He enjoys turning dangerous creatures into terrifying monstrosities.

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