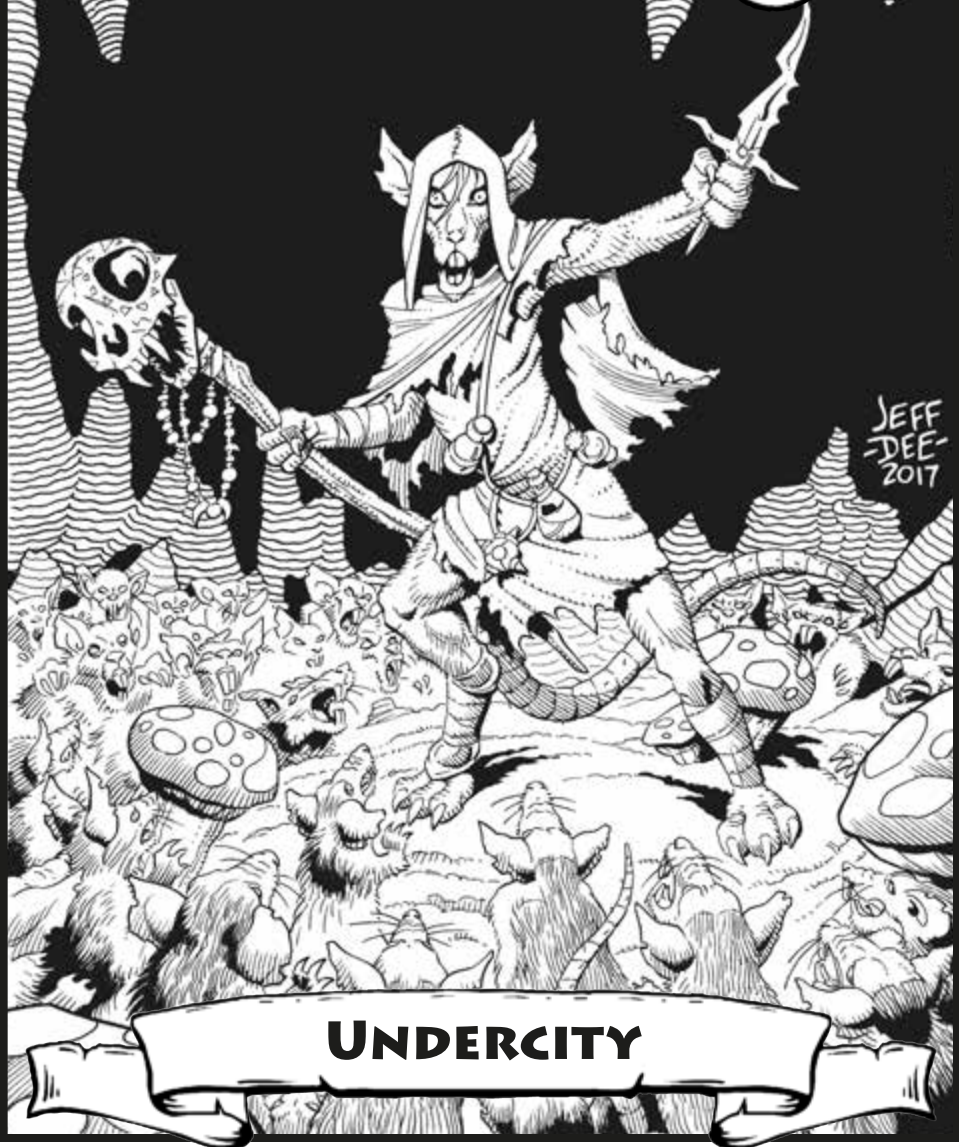


WARLOCK

3



UNDERCITY

WARLOCK

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CREDITS

Design: James J. Haeck, Ben McFarland, Brian Suskind,
Peter von Bleichert, Shawn Merwin

Development & Editing: Scott Gable

Art Director & Graphic Design: Marc Radle

Cover Art: Jeff Dee

Cartography: Dyson Logos

Interior Art: Pedro Potier, Karl Waller

Publisher: Wolfgang Baur

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FONTS OF POISON AND POWER

by James J. Haeck

Beneath the streets of Zobeck, deep in the darkness of fabled Old City's subterranean chambers, strange waters bubble up through unused water pumps and trickle down from the ancient stones. These springs flow not just with water but with the primordial and unpredictable magic of the earth. Explorers of the Old City curious enough to dip their cup into the waters of these enchanted fonts and drink deep of their magic may be rewarded with incredible power—or cursed for their failure to judge the fountain's unfathomable dangers.

Of course, magic fountains can appear in any fantastic location, not just ancient subterranean ruins like the buried Old City. The springs in this article are particularly well-suited to ancient cities but can be adapted to any dungeon environment.

Magic Fountain Details

Every fountain has a unique appearance, which is described in boxed text you can read or paraphrase when the characters discover it.

When a creature takes its first drink from a magic fountain, it must drink at least four ounces of water to gain the fountain's effects. Drinking any less has no effect and drinking more in one gulp has no further effects. If a character begins drinking more after the first drink, the fountain may have different effects.

Note also that enchanted water is no substitute for a potion. All magic disappears from a fountain's waters 30 seconds after it is removed from the fountain.

Magic Fountains

Below are a collection of sample fonts, each with an appearance, lore, and magical effects that any drinker can experience.

THE ADVENTURER

A chipped and weathered statue of a triumphant humanoid stands in the middle of this fountain. Its features have been utterly worn away—any sign of its race or its profession have been lost to the elements, but its pose and build suggest it was some kind of adventurer.

The GM chooses the type of adventurer this statue was dedicated to: Fighter (Strength), Rogue (Dexterity), Barbarian (Constitution), Wizard (Intelligence), Cleric (Wisdom), or Bard (Charisma). Use the adventurer's associated ability every time "ability check" or "ability score" is referenced in this fountain's description.

First Drink. The drinker must succeed on a DC 10 ability check with that score. A character of the same class as the statue has advantage on this check. On a success, the drinker's ability score increases by 1. On a failure, nothing happens.

Drinking More. The DC for each subsequent drink increases by 5. A character of the same class as the statue has advantage on this check. On a success, the drinker's ability score increases by 1. On a failure, the drinker's ability score permanently decreases by 1 and must roll on the Primordial Magic Surge table.

Lore. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers faded writing on the base of the statue. It tells the class that the statue once was: "This water holds the memories of a hero who longs to meet a worthy pupil."

THE SHADOW QUEEN

Carved into the unhewn rock of the cave wall is an artistic rendition of a glamorous woman in flowing robes. Two great butterfly wings extend from her back and a pair of ram's horns curl from her temples. Water pours gently from the engravings into a small pool beneath the carving.

First Drink. The drinker gains a warlock cantrip of the GM's choice. It fades from the drinker's memory after 1d4 hours.

Drinking More. The drinker gains the ability to cast a 1st-level warlock spell once. The next drink, the drinker gains the ability to cast a 2nd-level warlock spell once, and so on. All spells learned in this way fade after 1d4 hours. After each drink, the drinker must make a Charisma saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + the spell level. On a failure, the drinker loses one spell slot for the day (if any) and must roll on the Primordial Magic Surge table.

Lore. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check recalls a legend of a cult of warlocks that sacrificed their own spells to grant power to the Queen of the Shadow Fey. They worshiped the Shadow Queen at cave carvings like this.

THE DRAGON

A small gargoyle in the shape of a dragon emerges from the wall. Water flows from its mouth into a basin of tarnished copper held by its stone tail.

The GM chooses a type of chromatic dragon: black (acid), blue (lightning), green (poison), red (fire), or white (cold); or a color of metallic dragon: brass (fire), bronze (lightning), copper (acid), gold (fire), or silver (cold). Use the dragon's damage type whenever "damage" is referenced in this fountain's description.

First Drink. If the drinker is a dragonborn, half-dragon, or Draconic Ancestry sorcerer and their heritage matches the dragon statue's type, the drinker transforms into a young dragon for 1d4 hours. If the drinker is not one of the above, the drinker takes 3 (1d6) damage and rolls on the Primordial Magic Surge table.

Drinking More. If the drinker is a humanoid, they grow draconic wings, granting them a fly speed of 60 feet, and rolls on the Primordial Magic Surge table. These wings last for 1d4 hours.

Lore. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines that this spring's water contains traces of dragon blood linked to the type of dragon represented in the fountain.

THE PRIESTESS AND THE BATHING DEVIL

An overgrown fountain sits in the center of a ruined chapel. A statue of an angel stands in the middle of the fountain, and water flows into a basin in three stages. Water flows steadily from the angel's cupped hands, then into a jug held by stone cherub, then into a basin at the angel's feet. A statue of an imp sits in the basin, "bathing" in the water.

First Drink. The drinker regains $4d4 + 4$ hit points.

Drinking More. On the second drink, the drinker regain $8d4 + 8$ hit points. On the third drink and every drink thereafter, the

drinker must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking $12d4 + 12$ poison damage and becoming poisoned for 1 hour on a failed save or taking half as much damage on a successful one.



Lore. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check recalls an old parable of the Giving Angel and the Bathing Devil. In this story, a traveling priest of Ninkash gave pure water freely to the people of a poor neighborhood in Old Zobeck and made many friends. The next month, she returned with even more clean water, and all her friends brought their friends as well, and all shared in her generosity.

The third month, she returned to Zobeck with her greatest supply of pure water, but when she began to give it away, a flock of vandals and murderers snuck into her cart and poisoned the water, and all the people who drank from her cart died. Horrified, she checked her cart for signs of intruders, and all she saw was a vile imp cackling and bathing in her casks of water.

Primordial Magic Surge

1D10	WILD MAGIC EFFECT
1	You take 22 (4d10) cold damage and your movement speed is reduced by 10 for 1d4 hours.
2	You take 12 (5d4) psychic damage and are deafened for 1d4 hours.
3	You take 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and are blinded for 1d4 hours.
4	You take 7 (2d6) poison damage and are poisoned for 1d4 hours.
5	If the fountain's effects require rolling dice, roll twice as many. If not, nothing happens.
6	The duration of the fountain's effect is doubled. If permanent, nothing happens.
7	All numerical effects of the fountain are doubled.
8	The spirit of the fountain (water elemental) forms from the water of the pool. You may make a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. On a success, the elemental follows you as an ally for 1d6 × 10 minutes. On a failure, the elemental attacks until it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, then flees back into the fountain. If you do nothing and retreat from the fountain, the spirit returns into the fountain.
9	Your blood is infused with the magic of the spring. The effects of the magic fountain are extended for 1d6 × 10 minutes. During this time, any creature that makes a successful Bite attack against you or drinks your blood is affected as if it drank from the fountain.
10	You become a creature of pure water for 1d6 hours. While in this form, you gain the elemental type in addition to the humanoid type, the water form and freeze traits of a water elemental , and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks. Your body is still solid enough to hold your equipment.

THE CLOVEN NINE OF ZOBECK

by Ben McFarland

One of the more powerful gangs to emerge after the Great Revolt, the Cloven Nine are a band of criminals led by tieflings and infernal- or abyssal-blooded sorcerers, each with their own crew. Supposedly, they possess links to the Consul, Lord Greymark, and to the various Kariv clans which frequent Zobeck or maintain permanent populations, particularly the diabolist clan of the Heph. Started by Akad the Elder, they initially existed as just a gang of rabble-rousers and posers, the third sons and illegitimate children of merchant houses who played at organized crime and intrigue.

They gathered at the Broken Seal, extorted businesses and barge captains, ran private gambling events, and offered devil-fueled magics and divinations to any willing to pay in silver or blood. Of the larger nefarious groups in Zobeck, they seemed both casual and potent, at least until Akad's murder. The brazen, cold-blooded assassination of the Nine's founder in the heart of the Broken Seal served as the catalyst event that reforged their enterprise from a dalliance of privilege to a razor sharp endeavor of power and ambition. While they still maintain their regular haunts of the Broken Seal, the Silk Scabbard, or the Wheatshaf, their relaxed demeanor is gone, replaced by cruel and merciless criminal sensibilities.

New Order of the City

Over the last ten years, the Cloven Nine have avenged Akad's death and tightened their grip on their illegal operations. The body left impaled on the spikes of the Puffing Bridge

left no question as to what happened to those who attempted to cross them. They discovered a spy within their ranks who had collaborated with the elder's assassin and ritually sacrificed him, using his soul to power a curse which caused the left ring finger of his immediate family to wither and fall off. What began as a loose circle of disaffected children of rich families is now a cabal of bloodthirsty and ambitious magic-wielders intent on carving personal empires out of the flesh of Zobeck.

They consolidated their tavern hangouts into true bases of operation, securing public and private spaces where they could still dabble in activities like gambling or extortion but also allow them to expand into bookmaking and drug dealing. Their access to the Cartways from the Silk Scabbard meant the Nine could occasionally smuggle contraband as well as people, and a shift from revenge-based diabolic magics to purer divination meant they could better know where the Watch and rivals might be lying in ambush. This has allowed them to grow their wealth, which they have reinvested into securely built personal homes, reinforced cellars with casting spaces and Cartways entrances, and bribed low-level officials who keep them aware of raids and inspections.

Changes in the political landscape have meant changes in the gang's status among the elite as well. The now openly present shadow fey ambassador at Winter's Kiss appreciates their attitudes and methods. He has found them to be effective agents when he wants something done somewhere in Zobeck but doesn't wish to use his own

assets. This has also drawn the attention of Lady Marack, commander of the Praetors of the Blue House, and by extension, the new Lady Mayor. The mayor and the leader of the secret police believe the Cloven Nine might be utilized to the greater benefit of Zobeck, acting as agents abroad in exchange for tacitly turning a blind eye to the gang's lesser activities, so long as those crimes don't affect the more respectable citizens of the Free City. The gang has only completed one such task for the Praetors, and the new relationship remains probationary.

Structure of the Nine

The Cloven Nine functions as a council of gang captains led by Izachar, aka "Eyebite" (LE male tiefling fighter 4/warlock 9).

These captains are all sorcerers, diviners, or warlocks with devilish heritage, and each one leads a crew of fellow rogues, generally assisted by a trusted lieutenant and including Kariv, local thugs, and various street urchins. They bring in random extra muscle when necessary, usually when they expect a situation to get violent, knowing new recruits are often eager to prove themselves and earn a permanent place as a trusted member and so take the greatest risks.

The assassination also caused the Nine to adjust their tactics and operations. Now, operational security is essential. Jobs and plans are never discussed in public spaces or while out drinking.

Members who do so receive a single warning before losing their left ear as a final reminder that the world is listening for a chance to spill their blood. A third violation means death or expulsion and exile from Zobeck. While a couple of slow-learning members have already been warned and one has lost an ear, the rest of the crews seem to have gotten the message and no one else has needed a lesson.

The Nine's crews use extended observation, shifting graffiti marks, and dead drops to plan and coordinate focused heists targeting large scores of goods which can be easily sold to an outgoing smuggler, or offloaded at the Cartways Black Market to one of the visiting subterranean merchants. No jobs occur randomly or without a crew leader's permission, and the Cloven Nine keep the



gang's confidences. The memory of Akad's murder ensures they remain loyal to each other. Additionally, they have expanded their magical research, searching for ways to clandestinely track and identify the hideouts, safehouses, and homes of their targets and rivals. They use these new magics to mark their targets, allowing them to escape, and then surreptitiously follow the individuals, noting the destinations for whatever future unpleasanties the Cloven Nine deems necessary. The first few uses of these tactics have been quite effective, catching the recently arrived gnomish gang of the Blue Barbers unaware and allowing the Nine to negotiate a detente.

Spells of the Cloven Nine

In order to gain an edge against their enemies, the Cloven Nine developed a series of spells which aid them in efforts to locate rivals and keep their own trails and safehouses hidden.

ORDER OF REVENGE

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a broken knife)

Duration: 1 hour/caster level

You touch a weapon or a bundle of 30 ammunition, imbuing them with spell energy. Any creature damaged by a touched, affected weapon leaves an invisibly glowing trail of their path until the spell expires. The caster may see this trail by casting *revenge's eye* or *see invisible*. Any other caster may see the trail by casting *see invisible*. Casting *dispel magic* on an affected creature causes that creature to stop generating a trail, and the trail fades over the next hour.

At higher levels. When you cast the spell using a slot of 4th level or higher, you can target one additional weapon or bundle of ammunition for each slot level above fourth.

REVENGE'S EYE

2nd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a pinch of silver, a fragment of knife blade)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a creature's visual organs and grant them the ability to see the trail left by creatures damaged by a weapon you cast *order of revenge* upon.

The targeted creature can distinguish between multiple affected creatures without effort. If you lose a trail due to a creature's sudden shift in location, like jumping or teleporting, you may concentrate as a move action, which does not provoke opportunity attacks. This reveals the direction and distance to where the trail resumes, so long as it is on the same plane. The trail remains visible if a creature flies or swims. It only stops if the creature dies, becomes the target of *dispel magic*, leaves the plane of existence, or the *order of revenge* spell expires.

This spell does not help the target discern illusions, does not identify magically altered or concealed creatures, nor see invisible creatures; it only reveals trails left by those affected by *order of revenge* also cast by the spellcaster.

At higher levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target +1 creature for each slot level above second.

VAGRANT'S NONDESCRIPT CLOAK

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a pinch of crushed obsidian, a scrap of rag)

Duration: 1 hour

You touch a creature. The creature is warded against the effects of *faerie fire*, *hold person*, and *order of revenge* for the duration of the effect, granting them advantage on the

saving throw against the effect and a saving throw each round they are affected by the spells. If the warded creature is the focus of *locate creature*, the caster may determine if the affected creature is within 1,000 feet but cannot determine the direction to the target of *vagrant's nondescript cloak*. If the creature is already affected by one of the warded spells, then both the effect and *vagrant's nondescript cloak* end immediately.

At higher levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of third level or higher, you can target +1 creature for each slot level above second.

Story Seeds

There are many ways the player characters might become entangled with the Cloven Nine in the streets and alleyways of Zobeck.

LAST BEQUEST

The recent death of a former member of the Collegium has resulted in a large collection of books being donated to the library and faculty. It appears that many of these tomes deal with research on abjuration, divination, and enchantment, magical schools of great interest to the Cloven Nine. Ordinarily restricted to students of the Collegium, these new acquisitions are off-limits to outsiders, even if they are the talk of the arcane bar scene. The Cloven Nine intend to infiltrate the very heart of Zobeck's greatest educational institution, evade their guardians and spelltraps, and make off with the choicest manuscripts. Depending on the party's relationship to the Nine, they might be recruited to act as inside agents, part of the team committing the theft, or supplemental security when a Collegium magister's divination reveals a high chance the crime might happen tonight. How will they respond when the books in question literally fall into their hands as an over-eager apprentice is killed trying to hide them and all sides suspect a double-cross?

PICTURE PERFECT PARTY

A charity ball and auction is being held at the Old Stross Bathhouse, and the upper crust of Zobeck is all invited for what promoters swear will be a celebration for the ages. The usual décor of the bathhouse is being supplemented with great works of art by many popular contemporary and dead artisans of the region. One of these artisans' former students desperately desires the masterwork of a deceased mentor, and has hired the Cloven Nine to replace the one being displayed at the ball with a replica. Are the player characters part of the gang, bent on executing this heist? Are they part of the security, intent on thwarting the thieves? Or do they belong to another group altogether, trying to outsmart both groups and claim the artwork for themselves or their patron?

SEATS OF POWER

After a great deal of public unrest, the Free Council has decided to add two consuls to the board, both to be elected from the citizenry and serve for 10 years, offsetting the mayor's term. This has created quite a stir in folks as many merchants, laborers, and even kobolds seek to capture one of these offices. As sorcerers and diviners, the Cloven Nine believe they're in an excellent position either to sink an unacceptable candidate or to ensure their chosen hopeful wins. They approach the player characters, either thinking an individual might serve their needs or attempting to use the characters to engineer a series of events. How will the characters respond? Are they eager for a chance to engage the mighty gears of politics, or do they struggle to stop the Nine from interfering with the will of the people?



THE CRIMSON OUBLIETTE

by Brian Suskind

A 5e Adventure for 3rd-Level Heroes

Down a mostly forgotten passage of the Undercity, behind a partially cleared rockfall, lies the arched chamber containing the Crimson Oubliette. Once known as the Depths, this wretched prison of narrow-cell doors dotting the curving walls of a 500-foot-deep cylindrical shaft housed those who society wished to forget (including an entire tribe of scraggs). Then a ground tremor collapsed the passages leading to the entrance and emptied an underground lake into the Depths. Those on the surface simply abandoned the guards, prisoners, and staff alike and, in time, the prison itself was forgotten.

Merging with the murky water flooding the prison, the prison's semi-sentient ooze waste disposal system fed off of the imprisoned and perpetually regenerating scraggs and grew to fill the entire oubliette. Tribes of underground dwellers worship the ooze as a god and throw treasure into it as offerings. Others have also used the oubliette to dispose of dangerous items. For as the legend goes, the Jade Tome rests at the very bottom of the ooze-filled oubliette, thrown there by a dying paladin convinced it was too dangerous for mortal men. The Crimson Oubliette has claimed hundreds of would-be adventurers. Protected by potions of acid resistance or using fire to

hold the ooze at bay, adventurers continue to descend into the ooze, combating the twisted denizens that make their home there, risking death to delve to the bottom of the Crimson Oubliette.

Summary

The PCs arrive at the entrance to the Crimson Oubliette and interrupt a group of kobolds dumping an offering of silver into the opening of the pit. After dealing with the draconic worshippers, the PCs descend into the oubliette either via potions or by carrying fire to keep the ooze at bay. With glittering treasure lurking below, the PCs make their way down and soon encounter the degenerated ancestors of the original guards and traps designed to thwart prison breaks. Unfortunately, the arrival of the PCs also attracts the Deepclaw Scraggs who now act as extensions of the ooze's will. At the bottom of the Oubliette, the heroes must overcome a pair of constructs guarding the resting place of the Jade Tome.

Conditions in the Oubliette

Entering the ooze subjects a creature to the acidic nature of the ooze's innards. An immersed creature takes 7 (2d6) acid

damage at the start of each turn. Any item or effect that offers acid resistance or immunity negates this effect. Metal, stone, and items of similar hardness are not dissolved by the acid.

Additionally, the ooze is vulnerable to and afraid of fire. A simple torch forces the ooze to withdraw or pull back to a 30-foot radius. This allows would-be explorers to descend into the oubliette. Once below 30 feet, the presence of a torch creates a 30-foot-radius bubble around the source of fire. Luckily, the ooze is permeable to air so breathing within the pocket is not an issue.

The reddish liquid of the ooze acts in most respects like normal water in terms of movement. It is very dark once the PCs descend beyond 30 feet.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs are hired by Magister Varna, a noted archeologist, to recover the Jade Tome from the Oubliette.
- A foe of the PCs has stolen one of their prized possessions and thrown it into the ooze.
- To join an elite adventuring guild the PCs must descend into the ooze and bring back a prize.

1. INTERRUPTED OFFERING

The entrance to the Crimson Oubliette appears to be a 100-foot-wide shaft filled to the rim with a viscous red liquid.

The PCs arrive at the Crimson Oubliette just in time to see a small group of kobolds dumping two sacks of silver coin into the reddish liquid. The Kobolds are distracted, giving the PCs advantage in terms of surprising them.

A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots a lit torch lying on its side at the rim

of the oubliette. The presence of the flame has caused the ooze to pull back from it. This gives the PCs a hint about needing fire to descend. This can also be determined by a DC 15 Intelligence check.

KOBOLDS (5)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP each)

Hit Points 5 each (*Monster Manual*)

Treasure: A half-empty sack containing 2d20 silver pieces

2. THE CURVING STAIRS

A 10-foot-wide, rail-less stairway curves downward along the inside wall of the Oubliette with barred cell doors every 20 feet or so.

The ancient prison was well guarded against escape attempts and the stairs are trapped. Every 100 feet of stairs the following trap can be found:

Magic Missile Trap

Magic trap

When an intruder steps on a hidden pressure plate (20+ lb. of weight to activate), 1d4 magic missiles fire from a nearby hole in the wall, each targeting a random creature within 30 feet. The missiles function normally in water. Each creature struck takes 1d4+1 force damage. *Detect magic* reveals an aura of evocation around the opening (DC 13 *dispel magic* to destroy the trap). A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the pressure plate.

The GM can, of course, adjust the number of traps as desired.

3. PRISON CELLS

The doorway to each 15-foot-by-10-foot chamber is blocked by a cell door of steel bars.

Most of the cell doors are either locked (DC 15 Dexterity check) or simply stuck (DC 10

Strength check). To see what an individual cell holds, roll a d6 on the following table:

1. **Empty**
2. **Lurking Tribesman:** 1 scrag (see below)
3. **Guardians:** 1d3 former guards, now just animated armor (*Monster Manual*)
4. **Sad Remains:** skeleton chained to the wall
5. **False Storage Locker:** mimic (*Monster Manual*)
6. **Odd Pool:** 1d2 gray oozes (*Monster Manual*)

There is a 30% chance that a cell door is either open or unlocked. These creatures will attack on sight and fight to the death.

Treasure: At GM's discretion.

4. SCUFFLE WITH SCRAGS

This encounter can occur at the GM's discretion. It can happen once or repeatedly as needed. Though it is best placed after the PCs have investigated one or two cells.

.....
Suddenly, a pair of emaciated humanoid with greenish, rubbery hides, wicked looking claws, and enlarged lower jaws burst out of the side of the air pocket.
.....

(The description assumes the PCs are using fire to hold off the ooze. If they are exploring via a different method, adjust the text accordingly.)

LESSER SCRAG

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d10+12)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18(+4)	10(+0)	15(+2)	8(-1)	10(+0)	9(-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, Aquan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious: The scrag can breathe air and water

Regeneration: The lesser scrag regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it is in contact with water (or the Crimson Ooze). If the scrag takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the scrag's next turn. The scrag dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

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

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4)

Claws: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4+4)

The scrags make use of their swim speed to gain an advantageous attack on the PCs. They fight to the death.

Treasure: Each scrag has 1d20 gp.

5. GUARDIANS AT THE BOTTOM

Revealed by a glowing radiance from somewhere toward the middle of the area, the stairway ends on a 15-foot-wide, level platform that hugs the wall all the way around the circumference of the oubliette. The center of the chamber slopes downward toward a massive steel grating that must have once acted as drainage.

A pair of mechanical soldiers clad in acid pitted armor turn in your direction. Beneath their breastplate, gears tick and whirl.
.....

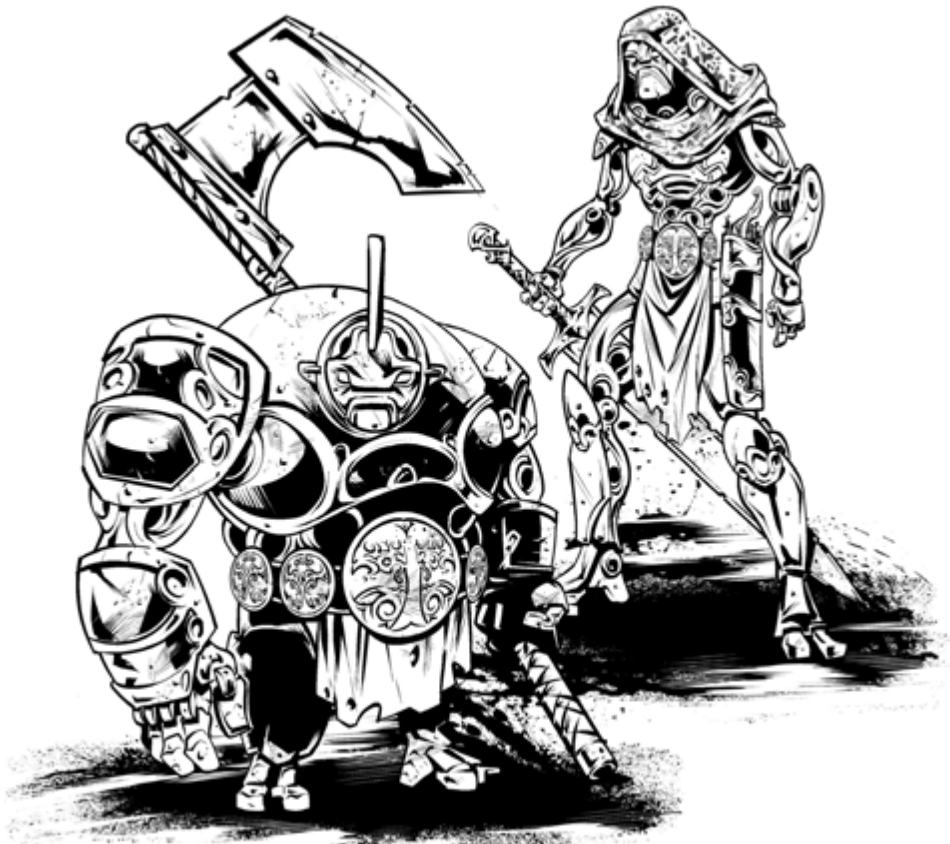
CLOCKWORK HUNTSMAN (2)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Hit Points 110 (*Tome of Beasts*)

Left to guard the Jade Tome, these clockwork huntsmen will fight until destroyed.

Treasure: A DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the huntsmen's eyes are fire garnets (worth 50 gp each).



6. The Treasure of the Oublette

Just below the metal grate at the center of the room is a glittering pile of gold and silver. A strange glowing light emanates from a green book resting in the middle of the treasure hoard.

Opening the grating requires a DC 20 Strength check (though PCs can work together to make it easier)

Treasure: Years and years of offerings from tribesmen and the loot from fallen explorers, the hoard includes:

- 800 gp
- 10,210 sp

- 25,300 cp
- 15 assorted gems (worth a total of 500 gp)
- +1 vicious longsword
- Metal cap of disguise
- The Jade Tome

The Jade Tome is a thick book with pages made entirely of carved jade plates bound with mithril wire. The exact nature of the forbidden knowledge inscribed within the tome is beyond the scope of this adventure, but GMs are encouraged to use the Jade Tome as a launching point for further quests.

UNDER THE GULLET

by Peter von Bleichert

Zobeck's Undercity is vast and varied and ranges from natural, water-carved passages to purposeful conduits—such as infrastructural ones that move water, wares, and waste—as well as nefarious types, like the infamous Cartways. Collectively known as the “Sewers,” these different passages come together and intersect beneath all parts of Zobeck, including the Dock District.

Zobeck's Dock District is at the eastern edge of the free city, bounded to the north and west by the Citadel and its District, the Argent River to the east, and the College District lies south. Known as the Gullet, Zobeck's Dock District is the heart of Zobeck's commerce. Hard folk—dwarves, gearforged, humans, and kobolds, among others—work the Gullet's docks.

These folks work hard, drink hard, and fight hard. Goods arrive at the Gullet's wharves by barge, dugout, raft, and other shallow-draft riverboats. Then dockers (stevedores) get to work. Using clockwork cranes and conveyors, the dockers unload vessels, break down loads, and warehouse or transfer cargo to other river boats or to cart and mule trains that traverse the Great Northern Road and other land paths that cross within Zobeck's limits and just outside its walls and gates.

Under the Docks

The area west of the River Argent, where the Gullet now stands, was an ancient flood plain. This land was once similar to

the tilled pastureland that lies to the river's east. As Zobeck flourished and grew, and trade increased at the riverfront, the city built levees, though the temperamental river frequently topped the earthen works. Zobeck had to tame the sprawling Argent, so a river wall (or groynes) was constructed.

Comprised of crushed rock and clay sandwiched between wooden piles and horizontal planks, the groyne created an embarcadero that allowed vessels to dock and moor regardless of the Argent's mood. The construct stretched along the length of the river's west bank from the Greymark Warehouse to the Blackened Fish Tavern, and wrapped the small island—called the Kobold's Tail, or simply the Tail—that lies within the two forks of the Argent. Behind the groyne, the land was filled and raised, keeping valuable buildings and their contents well above the Argent's flood stage.

During this expensive and extensive work, old canals were covered or filled, and structures that once stood on spindly pilings were supported and, in some cases, stone-lined basements got installed beneath them. Successive mayors had the foresight to put in sewer works, including catch basins, junctions, pipework, and sump pits. Effluent from knacker yards, privies, and tanneries that once flowed through street gutters now went below ground, all the way to Puffing Bridge.

Discharged from outlets beneath the span, the pestilential pong flows into the Argent, turning the river's greenish water



brown. Caught by the current, the filth is carried downstream and toward the Ruby Sea, though not before offending many a Zobeckian nose. These subterranean works are the domain within which many of Zobeck's roughest characters operate.

Inside the passages beneath the Gullet, among carrion and rot, shenanigans and shady deals transpire. To engage in such transactions, a few moments under street level is required, but, more often than not, an extended stay: demanded.

Once folks venture beneath the Gullet, they change forever: they are said to be "Swallowed." To go Under-Gullet, one may be seeking back entrances to the Cartways or the Smuggler's Market or searching for the fabled Black Chamber to worship or, more likely, pillage its treasures. Most, though, are temporarily underground to lay low and escape enforcers, nervously watching through sewer grates as patrols pass, waiting for the unwelcome attention to wane. Others, however, check-in for an extended stay, disappearing into the wet darkness, joining the slithering things that call the Under-Gullet home.

Regardless of the time spent there, life soon turns from natural cycles (like sunrise and sunset) to an unnatural lineal punctuated only by smallish events, such as, "When I ate that rat," or "When that shadow appeared and shoved a blade in my face, demanding recompense for life spared." Despite the length of time spent Under-Gullet, one is certain to encounter the Swallowed.

The Swallowed

All Undercity dwellers are prone to thievery and brandish daggers or the like if confronted. The Swallowed are likely to know the location of concealed and secret doors and passages too and make use of them to escape, outflank, or steal. All such

folk are generally soiled, offending most senses, especially the olfactory, and tend toward, though are not limited to, assassin and thief archetypes of the rogue class. Otherwise, the Swallowed generally engage in one or more of the following roles:

GRUBBERS

Grubbers tend to congregate around drains, sewer grates, and sump pits where they scavenge waste materials such as bone, rags, or errant coins. Grubbers are territorial and defend their patch of Undercity. They recognize a hierarchy, however, and the Bone Grubber—the powerful and feared Gommage d'Os—lays claim to any subterranean area he so wishes.

When foraging does not produce, grubbers lurk near street level and reach out with a grubber claw—a pole topped with a sharpened hook that can snag or cut—and empty or steal pouches or purses from passersby. To accomplish such larceny, there are primitive underground hides with hatches concealed at street-level by cobblestones or false puddles. Grubbers use these ambushes to escape Black Lock assistants, Vigilant Blades, watchmen, or other freelance guardsmen and investigators and when grubbers and their ilk get hired to complete deadly deeds these hides facilitate stealthy dispatch of targets with poison weapons like darts, daggers, needles, and other hide-penetrating missiles.

MUDLARKS

The Gullet's groyne defines the river's course within the district, and the dry-docks and quays it sports are prevalent on the city's map. Within the Gullet and along the river, there are small beaches and rock piles. These places are the domain of the mudlarks.

Mudlarks emerge from pipes, tunnels, and water inlets to scour the thick, black muddy riverbank. They poke the soggy suck-muck of the shore to find items for barter or sale,

or they strip vessels of their brass, bronze, and copper fittings, reselling them to members of the Bargeman's Fellowship or melting them down into valuable ingots. Such activity can occur at any time and regardless of the Argent's condition, though it occurs most often during moonless nights and when the river is low. On days the river is not in a giving mood, mudlarks pilfer unattended cargo, often with the cooperation of the dockers, whom ask for a kickback.

Toshers

Toshers are both scavengers and hunters. Roaming the Under-Gullet, they take what they may and do not hesitate to kill when necessary. Feeding off rats and, in some cases, the flesh of their own kind (both human and kobold toshers have been known to engage in cannibalism), most toshers are thought to be unbalanced, with a few downright insane. The Undercity's damp dark may drive minds this direction, or it could be the style of life beneath ground that takes them there. Regardless, no one wants to run into these Swallowed as toshers do not negotiate or reason. When toshers are encountered... someone is going to die.

The Gullet's Portals

Besides known and guarded entrances to the Cartways, there are several rumored entrances to the rest of the Under-Gullet, such as in the buildings of the Bargeman's Fellowship or the Blackened Fish Tavern as well as beneath Puffing Bridge. Some even speak of a doorway in the Altar of Lorelei. Regardless, only a few of Zobeck's citizens know their true locations, and fewer still know the location of them all. Often, after an interloper finds a doorway, an accident occurs with the finder's fate delivered by trap or other dark method.

The Gullet's Reservoirs

The River Argent is part of Midgard's water cycle. Snow falls in the mountains, melts in the warmer seasons, and runs toward Midgard's seas. However, the gods do not always provide, and snowfall becomes a rarity. Crops and beasts die. Towns and cities grow thirsty. As such, Zobeck has come to store that precious resource that is water. Initially, during early droughts, the city built subterranean beehive-shaped cisterns. Later, as Zobeck grew and droughts became prolonged—sometimes lasting decades—the city installed larger reservoirs: vast vaulted underground spaces. Many such caches exist beneath the Gullet, though most of these reservoirs are abandoned or partially collapsed. With maps incomplete and often lost, these structures get forgotten. As other Undercity works proceed, the elaborate structures are breached and adapted to other purposes or become inhabited by unmentionable creatures and folk.

Conclusion

The Gullet's boarding houses, boardwalks, bordellos, chandler shops, rickety docks, half-collapsed warehouses and half-timbered houses, pungent flophouses, and smoke-filled taverns sit atop another world. This world is one of dark brick-lined or natural water-carved tunnels, a world of underground spaces that groan and moan under the weight of what lies above, though do their job and persevere, preserving and perpetuating a world beneath that should not otherwise exist. A pale reflection of that which is above ground, this place is, nonetheless, as much a part of the fabric of Zobeck as the city's sun-kissed segments. It is the dark reflection, the cloudy mirror image, of Zobeck.

LESSER GOLEMS: IT'S ALIVE!

by Shawn Merwin

The small creatures emerging from the alley first looked like dogs, but as they crept into the lamplight, their awkward, lurching movements showed they were animated constructs of hair, bone, glass, and other common materials found throughout the city.

While their larger and more dangerous cousins are made of clay, flesh, iron, or stone, the smaller members of the lesser golem varieties are made of more common and less expensive materials. The magic that gives them power is less monumental than their more exotic brethren, but they still contain enough arcane energy to pose a threat to inexperienced adventurers.

An Arcane Blueprint. Like other golems, the lesser golems cannot be created without a magical blueprint, typically found in an arcane tomb known as a manual of golems. Because lesser golems are less powerful and require less time, gold, and material than their larger counterparts, a *manual of the lesser golem* is easier to find and might be held in a scroll or other writing medium rather than an ornate and treasured tome.

Spirit-Driven Trash. After building the body of the lesser golem in accordance with the instructions provided in the *manual of the lesser golem*, the creator must perform the extensive (and sometimes costly) rituals to animate their creation.

The bodies of lesser golems need not be created with the same precision and expertise as other golems, which reduces the cost of making them. In fact, they

are usually fragile even in the best of circumstances, so practitioners of lesser golem creation generally spend little time crafting the physical forms.

Manual of the Lesser Golem

Wondrous item, rare

A *manual of the lesser golem* could be found in a book, on a scroll, etched into a piece of stone or metal, or scribed on any other medium that holds words, runes, and arcane inscriptions. Each *manual of the lesser golem* describes the materials needed and the process to be followed to create one type of lesser golem. The GM chooses the type of lesser golem detailed in the manual, or determines the golem type randomly.

To decipher and use the manual, you must be a spellcaster with at least one 2nd-level spell slot. You must also succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check at the start of the first day of golem creation. If you fail the check, you must wait at least 24 hours to restart the creation process, and you also take 3d6 psychic damage that can only be recovered through natural means (hit dice expended or after a long rest).

The lesser golems created via a *manual of the lesser golem* are not immortal. The magic that keeps them intact weakens until the lesser golems finally fall apart. Lesser golems last exactly twice the number of days it takes to create them (see below) before losing their power.

Once the golem is created, the power held within the manual is expended, making the writing worthless and incapable of creating another.

d20	Golem	Time	Cost
1–7	Hair	2 days	100 gp
8–13	Mud	5 days	500 gp
14–17	Glass	10 days	2,000 gp
18–20	Wood	15 days	20,000 gp

GOLEM, GLASS

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 40 (10d6 + 10)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	8 (–1)	1 (–5)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Resistances piercing and slashing

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

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

REACTIONS

Shatter. When a glass golem takes bludgeoning damage, it can make a shard attack against all adjacent creatures that it chooses.

GOLEM, HAIR

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	8 (–1)	1 (–5)

Damage Vulnerabilities slashing

Damage Resistances piercing

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 9 Dexterity saving throw or be tripped prone.

GOLEM, MUD

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	8 (–1)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mud golem makes two slam attacks.

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

Mud Ball. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is blinded until the start of its turn.

GOLEM, WOOD

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wood golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.



PECH: SERVANTS OF STONE

by Shawn Merwin

Natives to the Elemental Plane of Earth, the stalwart and humble pech often cross to the Prime Material Planes to escape threats in their homeland, seek valuable gems and ore, or serve masters in the formation of great stone creations. They also trade with topsiders to obtain new stoneworking equipment, and they have a strong affinity for the ale that they cannot brew themselves.

Physical Features. Pech are small in size, slightly taller and stronger than deep gnomes. Their long arms and legs are made of knotted muscles that appear chiseled from stone.

Slate grey eyes bulge from their angular heads. They rarely have hair on their heads or bodies. Those pech that do grow hair sprout thick strands as sharp and rigid as a metal brush.

A pech's fingers and toes are long and thin, topped with long, sharp nails as hard as stone. These nails allow them to climb sheer rock walls, acting as pitons that a climber might use.

One with the Stone. Pech are born to work stone, live their lives with a pickaxe in one hand and a hammer in the other, and die with the understanding that their spirits will merge with the stone for eternity, forever surrounding their progeny.

Pech society is built around the notion that pure enlightenment can be attained by communing with the stone that surrounds them. The more one works the stone, the

closer one gets to becoming one with it: eternal, immovable, and ever-present.

Pech mine the valuable substances provided by the stone and train their minds to harmonize with the rock until they master certain techniques and become stonemasters. Stonemasters often lead a clan of pech. Truly talented and dedicated stonemasters that reach a higher level of enlightenment with the stone might become lithlords, who travel from clan to clan and teach the young pech the way of the stone.

Servants of the Giants. The pech sometimes come to the surface world to act as servants of the stone giants. Pech are sometimes tasked to bring enormous stone monoliths to the heathers and moors of otherwise stone-free land, which the stone giants can then use as places for their strange mystical ceremonies. Years later, humans walking through the flat fields can only wonder how these huge stone monoliths seemingly appeared out of nowhere.

PECH

Small elemental, neutral good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d6 + 12)

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3

Condition Immunities petrified

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Terran, Undercommon
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the pech has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

One with the Stone. As a bonus action, the pech can draw on the power of unworked stone, as long as it is in contact with the stone. Until the end of the pech's next turn, it gains resistance to piercing and slashing damage. This power recharges after the pech completes a short or long rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pech makes one melee attack with the pick and one melee or ranged attack with the hammer. If the pech hits the same target with both attacks, the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated until the start of its next turn.

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

Hammer. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 +3) bludgeoning damage.

PECH STONEMASTER

Small elemental, neutral good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d6 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +5

Condition Immunities petrified

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Terran, Undercommon

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the pech stonemaster has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

One with the Stone. As a bonus action, the pech can draw on the power of

unworked stone, as long as it is in contact with the stone. Until the end of the pech stonemaster's next turn, it gains resistance to all damage. This power recharges after the pech stonemaster completes a short or long rest.

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

At will: *thunderwave*

3/day: *shatter*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pech stonemaster makes one melee attack with the pick and one melee or ranged attack with the hammer. If the pech stonemaster hits the same target with both attacks, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.

Pick. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 +4) piercing damage.

Hammer. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 +4) bludgeoning damage.

PECH LITHLORD

Small elemental, neutral good

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 104 (16d6 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +7

Condition Immunities petrified

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Terran, Undercommon

Challenge 7 (2900 XP)

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the pech lithlord has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

One with the Stone. As a bonus action, the pech lithlord can draw on the power of unworked stone, as long as it is in contact

with the stone. Until the end of the pech lithlord's next turn, it gains immunity to all damage. This power recharges after the pech lithlord completes a short or long rest.

Innate Spellcasting. The pech lithlord's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). The pech lithlord can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *mending*, *thunderwave* (cast as a 3rd-level slot)

3/day: *shatter* (cast as a 3rd-level slot)

1/day: *meld into stone*, *stone shape*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pech lithlord makes one melee attack with the pick and one melee or ranged attack with the hammer. If the pech lithlord hits the same target with both attacks, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for

one minute. The target can attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of each turn to remove the stunned condition.

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

Hammer. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 +3) bludgeoning damage.

Communal Spellcasting

Given the pechs' affinity for and reliance on stone, as well as the magic they use to work with it, groups of pech can come together to perform greater feats of magic as a group. Even the lowliest pech miners, when in a large enough group, can bend the stone to their will.



Below is a list of powers that can be harness by a group of pech. All of the spells, powers, or abilities below use a 13 DC for spell saves and a +5 to any attack rolls.

4 pech: Four pech can each use an action in the same round to cast *thunderwave*. The damage on this spell is maximized. These pech cannot take part in any communal spellcasting until they finish a long rest.

6 pech: Six pech can each use an action in the same round to cast *shatter*. The damage on this spell is maximized. These pech cannot take part in any communal spellcasting until they finish a long rest.

8 pech: Eight pech can each use an action in the same round to cast *sanctuary* on themselves. In addition to the other effects of the spell, any creature failing a saving throw against the spell takes 5 (1d10) force damage. These pech cannot take part in any communal spellcasting until they finish a long rest.

10 pech: Ten pech (including at least one pech stonemaster) can each use an action in the same round to cast *conjure minor elementals*. If even one of the pech maintains concentration, the spell remains in effect. Any pech who is no longer concentrating can take part in another communal spellcasting.

12 pech: Twelve pech (including at least one pech stonemaster) can each use an action in the same round to cast *stone shape*. These pech cannot take part in any communal spellcasting until they finish a long rest.

15 pech: Fifteen pech (including at least one pech stonemaster) can each use an action in the same round to cast *conjure elemental*. If even one of the pech maintains concentration, the spell remains in effect.

Any pech who is no longer concentrating can take part in another communal spellcasting.

20 pech: Twenty pech (including at least one pech stonemaster) can each use an action in the same round to cast *move earth*. This casting can effect stone as well as the other materials. If even one of the pech maintains concentration, the spell remains in effect. Any pech who is no longer concentrating can take part in another communal spellcasting.

30 pech: Thirty pech (including at least one pech lithlord) can each use an action in the same round to cast *earthquake*. If even one of the pech maintains concentration, the spell remains in effect. Any pech who is no longer concentrating can take part in another communal spellcasting.

The Great Stone. Any community of pech that has a stonemaster overseeing it also has a powerful magic item at its center, referred to as the Great Stone. This stone can be made of anything from precious gemstone to simple granite. This stone is revered by the community, and in return, it offers its power and protection to the pech.

The Great Stone conveys the following benefits to the pech:

- Any pech adjacent to the Great Stone of its community has advantage on all saving throws.
- Any pech adjacent to the Great Stone of its community scores a critical hit on a weapon attack roll of 18–20.
- The one with the stone ability of pech becomes a Recharge 6 power when they start their turn adjacent to the Great Stone of their community.

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