



Consumption



After the death of a local historian, adventurers discover that no one is safe within the walls of Hillsfar. Will you they able to stop the culprits before the city is consumed from within?

A Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

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Adventure Primer

“I do not love men: I love what devours them.”
— André Gide, Prometheus Illbound

Background

Jubilex is known to gift those oozes closest to him with knowledge and intelligence rare amongst his followers. After travelling alongside Jubilex for several hundred years, **THE COLLECTOR** awoke with an idea to expand Jubilex’s empire: consume not only creatures, but vast troves of knowledge. **THE COLLECTOR** left Jubilex’s side to begin gathering knowledge for his master, using a **HELM OF TELEPORTATION** he had picked up during previous centuries of travel to gather information and quickly report it back to Jubilex.

THE COLLECTOR took up residence in the forgotten chambers beneath **HILLSFAR’S CENTRAL LIBRARY** and began deploying tiny oozelets into the library to amass knowledge. The oozelets were able to slowly devour the knowledge contained in each book by consuming the ink itself, and then travelling below the library to deliver the information to **THE COLLECTOR**.

Trouble arose when citizens began checking books out of the library- books that contained oozelets. One of these oozelets killed **BRETT BELLINGTON**, and **GUARD CAPTAIN JASON LEE SCOTT** sends the adventurers to investigate. After several harrowing encounters, the adventurers piece together the clues, and travel to **HILLSFAR’S CENTRAL LIBRARY** to confront **THE COLLECTOR**.

Episodes

The adventure is spread over three to five episodes that takes approximately two to four hours to play. These episodes are initially introduced by a Call to Action Episode.

If you’re planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you’ll want to revisit the Call to Action each time you play.

- **Episode 1: Apple Strudel & Adventure.** Guard Captain Jason Lee Scott meets the adventurers at M&T Pastries. After informing adventurers of Brett Bellington’s demise, Guard Captain Scott asks adventurers to investigate. This is the **Call to Action**.
- **Episode 2: Muffins & Murder.** The adventurers travel to Brett Bellington’s house. After investigating, adventurers return to M&T Pastries to report their findings to Cpt. Scott. Their

discussion is interrupted when oozes attack M&T’s owners. This is the **Secondary Objective**.

- **Episode 3: Lamingtons & Libraries.** After gathering more information from M&T, characters travel to Hillsfar’s Central Library to investigate further. After speaking with the heading librarian and library intern, characters discover a passageway to the forgotten chambers beneath the library, where they confront The Collector. This is the **Main Objective**.

Bonus Objectives

This adventure includes two bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning additional **advancement checkpoints** (but no treasure checkpoints) in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure’s appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: Cannoli & Cats.** Adventurers encounter a Gamma Ooze and her cat. This could be an opportunity to gather information, or a taste of the combat to come. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 3: Cannoli & Cats (Bonus Objective A.)**
- **Bonus Objective B: Brownies & Books.** En route to the library, adventurers are waylaid when a series of oozes erupt from the picture books of a group of schoolchildren. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 4: Brownies & Books (Bonus Objective B.)**

Episode Sequence

Depending on your time constraints, play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

How Will You Play?

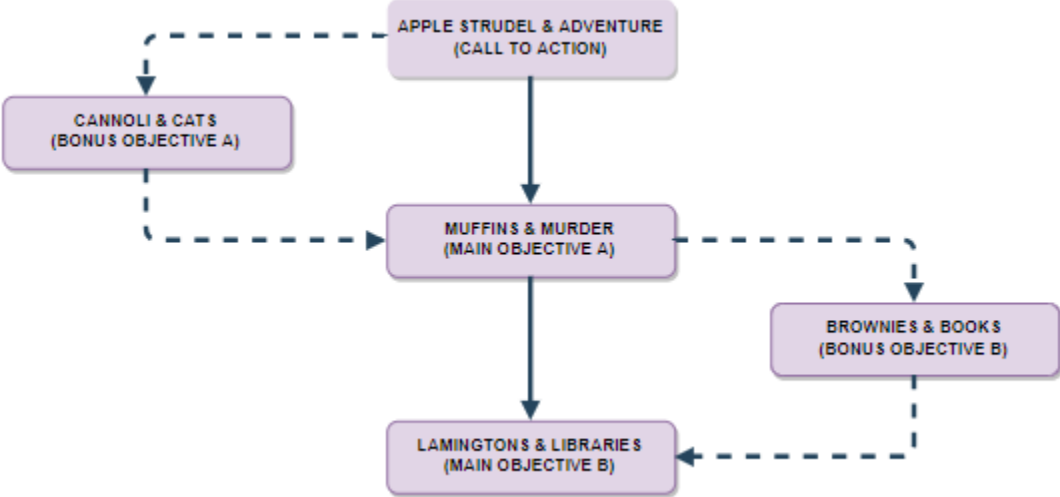
The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

Main Objective Only. To complete the adventure’s main objective, the characters participate in Episodes 1 through 3 in order, however, you may include the opportunity to pursue bonus objectives.

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by one or two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives.

These can occur between any of the episodes, but fit most naturally between the Secondary Objective and the Main Objective. They are most naturally added when the characters are moving between locations.

Episode Flowchart



Episode 1: Apple Strudel & Adventure (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration: 15 - 30 minutes

"Tuesday was one of the days on which she rose before dawn to bake brioche, scones, cinnamon rolls, and [...] a coffee cake rich with cardamom, orange zest, and grated gingerroot: a cunningly savory sweet that left her work kitchen smelling like a fine Indian restaurant, a brief invigorating change from the happily married scents of butter, vanilla, and sugar."
-Julia Glass, *The Whole World Over*

Scene A. Bakery Beginnings

Characters arrive at M&T, a new start-up bakery owned by local Hillsfar couple Mia and Tia Thorent, after being summoned by Guard Captain Scott. Captain Scott informs adventurers of the recent death of Brett Bellington. Captain Scott asks them to investigate Brett's house for clues and then report any findings back to him.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The main area of M&T is a spacious 30 x 30 foot room, with white tile floors and walls of purple wood. At the front of the store, an orange tabby cat (Cinnamon) sleeps lazily on the windowsill. Several tables with crisp tablecloths fill the space; a couple are occupied by patrons. At the back of the store is a large countertop and display case filled with a variety of pastries, with prices displayed on the back wall (**Appendix 5: M&T Bakery Menu (Player Handout 1)**). Behind the counter are Mia and Tia, eager to serve new customers. A door leading to the kitchen is visible behind the counter.

Lighting. The interior is well lit, with stylish candles on each table and plentiful sunlight streaming in from floor-to-ceiling windows at the front of the shop.

Other Features. The room smells of warm, fresh baked bread, cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg waft out from the kitchen. The room is warmer than it is outside. There is a comfortable, calm atmosphere.

Creatures/NPCs

Objectives/Goals. Mia and Tia are excited and eager to serve customers. While they don't intentionally add magic into their dishes, and can't tell characters how it happens, they may suggest characters try some of the more interesting desserts.

What Do They Know? Mia and Tia both know quite a bit of local gossip, but do not know anything about the ooze incursion.

Guard Captain Scott.

Objectives/Goals. Guard Captain Scott wants characters to investigate the recent death of Brett Bellington.

What Does He Know? Captain Scott can tell characters that Brett Bellington, a local historian, was reported dead earlier this morning by his neighbor, Ms. Ethel Hallowon, an elderly widow. No apparent signs of injury were found on the body and they have no suspects. Beyond this, he doesn't have much detail, and encourages characters to go take a look for themselves.

Treasure & Rewards

Several pastries are available for purchase while characters are at M&T. Refer to Player Handout 1 for the full list. Certain pastries are infused with wild magic and have special properties. Unused pastries spoil after this adventure and lose their magical properties.

- **Granny's Apple Strudel.** Cost: 7 sp. Limit: 2 per adventure. Eating this strudel causes the user to *polymorph* into a squirrel for 10 minutes. Use the *cat* statistics from the MM.
- **Barovian Brownies.** Cost: 8 sp. Limit: 2 per adventure. The user experiences sounds of distant wolves howling and the flutter of bat wings for 5 minutes. No one else can hear these sounds.
- **Rainbow Cannoli.** Cost: 6 sp. Limit: 7 per adventure. Eating this cannoli causes the character's hair to become rainbow-colored. This effect lasts for 1d4 days.
- **Good Berry Muffin.** Cost: 9 sp. Limit: 4 per adventure. Eating this muffin takes an action and restores 2 hit points.
- **Lemon Lamington.** Cost: 8 sp. Limit: 1 per adventure. Eating this lamington causes the character's lips to turn bright yellow for 1d4 days.

Call to Action

- The objective of this adventure is to investigate recent ooze attacks and locate and defeat The Collector, the ooze mastermind behind it all.

Episode 2: Muffins & Murder (Secondary Objective)

Estimated Duration: 60 – 90 minutes

“A monster that refused, sometimes, to behave like a monster. When a monster stopped behaving like a monster, did it stop being a monster? Did it become something else?”

-Kristin Cashore, Graceling

Setting Description

Brett Bellington’s house is a 10-minute walk away from M&T. On a quiet street, this 1-story building is unassuming, with a small, well-tended garden out front. Another house sits to the right, with window boxes of colorful flowers, and lace curtains in the windows.

Prerequisites

Complete Call to Action, having spoken with Captain Scott.

Objectives

Investigate Brett Bellington’s death, and return to M&T to update Captain Scott. Defeat the oozes that attack Tia in M&T’s kitchen.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Brett Bellington’s house is a small, 25 foot square house, with a full-sized bed in one corner and a kitchenette. A large, unadorned desk sits beneath one window, with papers strewn across it. A large bookcase dominates the opposite wall, with a well-used chair adjacent to it. Brett’s slumped corpse sits in the chair, eyes shut, a closed book fallen to the floor next to him.

Lighting. The interior is unlit, though the unshuttered windows provide dim light. Several unlit lamps are set around the room.

Brett Bellington checked out a book, *In the Eye of the Beholder*, from the Hillsfar library. Unknown to him, this book contained an oozelet that had already begun devouring the ink. When Brett sat down to read, the oozelet slipped beneath his fingernails as he turned the pages of the book, and devoured his brain entirely. The ooze then moved on to the large bookcase nearby, devouring all of the ink, before slipping under the floorboards and into Brett’s neighbor’s house, Mrs. Hallowon. The ooze possessed Mrs. Hallowon, transforming into a Gamma Ooze (oblex) from the knowledge it had consumed, and using her body as a simulacrum.

Scene A. Bellington’s Demise

Investigating Brett’s body:

- A **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals there are no outward injuries.
- A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals that, upon opening his eyelids, Brett’s eyes are filled with swirling black tendrils. In addition, remnants of the same black goo can be found beneath the fingernails of his right hand. A DC 15 Nature check reveals these to be ooze particulates.
- When combined with a successful Nature check, a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that Brett died when his brain was consumed internally by the ooze.

Investigating the books:

- A **DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the book on the floor to be empty- all of the text is missing, aside from the name which is emblazoned on the cover (not in ink).
- A **DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation)** check on the book reveals there is a library card attached to the cover, though there is are no markings on it.

A discerning character may wish to read the card’s contents by feeling indentations in the paper, creating a wax imprint, etc. These DC 15 checks are made at disadvantage, unless proficient in the Forgery kit or cartographer’s tools, in which case checks are made at advantage. Characters who are blind (and know braille) automatically succeed at this check. Refer to Player Handout 2 for the contents of the card.

- A **DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation)** check on the bookshelf reveals that these books are also empty.

Investigating the room:

- A **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival or Perception)** check notices small patches of black ooze in cracks in the floor, leading between Brett’s body, the bookcase, and the right wall of the building, where it appears to sink into the floorboards/foundation of the building.

Scene B. Bakery Fiasco

After investigating Brett's house, characters return to M&T to update Captain Scott on their findings. Captain Scott listens intently to their report and agrees with any accurate suspicions they may have. As the conversation is coming to a close, characters hear the sound of a pan clattering to the floor, as Tia screams in terror. Mia immediately rushes into the kitchen.

The kitchen is a mess, a tray of fondant roses scattered across the floor, as a large black ooze emerges from one of the bread proofing vats and looms over Tia, who is frozen in fear. As the characters rush in, they see Mia menacing the ooze with a large frying pan, shouting insults at it. A bright-blue squirrel (Mia's pet Celia) throws a wooden spoon at the ooze, which lodges firmly in its side, but does not dissolve. Mia and Tia are both treated as **Commoners**. Tia is in a state of shock and frozen in place and may require encouragement to get out of the thick of battle. Mia is prepared to fight the ooze, but likely will not fare well in battle. One **black pudding** is engaged with Mia when characters enter. On their initiative, two more **black puddings** emerge from nearby vats.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Remove 2 **black puddings**, add 1 **ochre jelly**.
- **Weak:** Remove 1 **black pudding**.
- **Strong:** Add 1 **black pudding**.
- **Very Strong:** Add 2 **black puddings**.

Scene C. Cleaning Up

In the aftermath of the battle, Tia is incredibly shaken, requiring a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check to calm down. Tia can recount that she was working on a set of new rose decorations, when she heard a strange sloshing sound from one of the vats. When she opened it, the black pudding attacked. Investigating the kitchen:

- A **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check on Mia's workstation reveals a large cookbook (From Faezres Fritters to Brown Mold Butter: A Satyr's Guide to Exotic Cooking) is currently open, but the page it is open to is blank. Further investigation of the book reveals the pages at the front are blank, but the back are still intact. A library card can be found at the back of the book.
- A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation)** check on the cookbook reveals a small black globule (the oozelet) moving across the page, with ink disappearing wherever it moves. Studying the oozelet closely reveals that it is devouring the ink in the book and growing slightly larger with each word devoured.
- If questioned, Mia can confirm she checked the book out from the Hillsfar public library yesterday afternoon. She didn't notice anything odd about the book.
- A **DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals several of the bread proofing vats are tainted with black ooze. Characters will need to find a way to dispose of this to prevent further black pudding development. Reward creative solutions!

If they fail to investigate the kitchen, another **black pudding** will finish growing and emerge from a bread proofing vat after 1d4 minutes and attack.

- A **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check or a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check on Tia shows she has a small piece of black pudding in her hair. If left unchecked, this ooze will crawl into her ear and begin devouring her after 1d10 minutes.

If the black pudding is not found in time, Tia begins to clutch her head and scream, falling to the floor and writhing in pain. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals the cause (a **black pudding** has entered her skull and begun devouring her brain). Characters must act quickly to save her, or she will die after 1d4+2 rounds. Roll into initiative and allow each character to take actions.

Because the ooze is trapped inside Tia's head, it will take a light touch to remove the ooze without harming her. Reward creativity with lower DC checks or automatic success. Use the **black pudding** statistics to determine damage or condition resistances/immunities for the ooze. After removing the **black pudding**, character may fight it or, if running short on time or more appropriate to their actions, you can say that it was destroyed during the process of removal.

If characters fail to save her, her screaming abruptly stops. After a few seconds, she looks around and blinks confusedly, asking what happened. Tia has been transformed into a Gamma Ooze (**oblex**), which tries to escape that party's detection. She says that she needs to lie down, and attempts to go upstairs, while Mia supports her. Characters can tell something is off with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check**. If characters previously fought Mrs. Halloween and discovered she was a Gamma Ooze, they have advantage on this check. Once transformed into a Gamma Ooze, only a high-level spell such as Regenerate and Raise Dead or Wish can restore Tia, as her brain has been entirely consumed by the ooze.

If characters are able to save Tia, or prevent the incident from occurring in the first place, and help clean up the bakery after the attacks, Mia offers them her favorite wooden spoon (a **wand of secrets**) as a thank you. Additionally, if one of the characters help or protect the squirrel during the battle, they earn the story reward **Celia the Squirrel**.

Treasure & Rewards

Wand of Secrets. Shaped like a wooden spatula, this wand emits the scent of freshly baked bread and cinnamon when used. If used to stir or prepare food, the wand enhances the natural flavors of the food making it more delicious. This item can be found in **Appendix 7: Magic Item**.

Celia the Squirrel. This intelligent squirrel is native to the Feywild, evidenced by its bright blue fur and penchant for wild magical effects. If killed or reduced to 0 hit points, the squirrel can be recalled via find familiar, and uses the statistics of a cat from the Monster Manual.

Episode 3: Lamingtons & Libraries (Main Objective)

Estimated Duration: 45 – 60 minutes

“What is a secret? It is much more than knowledge shared with only a few, or perhaps only one another. It is power. It is a bond. It is a sign of deep trust, or the darkest threat possible. [...] All men desirous of power should become collectors of secrets. There is no secret too small to be valuable.”

-Robin Hobb, Fool's Quest

Setting Description

Prerequisites

Defeat the oozes at M&T and gather enough clue to suggest the root of the ooze problems may be in Hillsfar's public library.

Objectives

Investigate the library, interact with Jeff, the library intern, discover the way down to the Collector's lair, and defeat the Collector.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The library is a large stone structure, 200 x 150 ft. It is packed with stacks of books. Reading nooks line the walls of this library, with several reading rooms in the back corners.

Lighting. The interior is well lit by light filtering in through windows.

The Library

The library has been thoroughly infiltrated by oozes. Over the last 10 days, oozelets have been collecting knowledge from the stacks and ferrying them underground to the Collector. Normally staffed by 5-7 librarians daily, the library is currently empty, except for Jeff, the lazy library intern. The other librarians have slowly been possessed or killed by the oozelets through their work at the library. The Collector is living in a cellar under the library, which can be accessed by a secret door in one of the study rooms.

Scene A. Silence in the Library

As characters enter the library, they find it abnormally empty. Characters with PP 14 or higher notice that it is abnormally silent, as if the library was entirely abandoned. After a minute of quiet contemplation, Jeff, a bumbling library intern, pops up from behind the entrance counter, and greets the characters.

Investigating the library:

- Characters investigating the library find that it is abnormally empty. The majority of the books here are empty, but there is a 20% chance a book opened by a character will contain an oozelet. If so, the oozelet falls out of the book, and starts slowly oozing towards the secret door at the back of the library (1 ft per round).
- Investigating the library catalogues shows that they are partially destroyed, but still legible (Player Handout 3). Characters recognize Brett and Mia's names in the catalogue, as well as several other individuals (potential victims).

Investigating the study room:

- In the far left corner of the library, this study room contains a small desk and chair, with a blank book resting atop it. An unlit pipe rests on top of the book (*Pipe of Smoke Monsters*).
- A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a corner of the carpet which is stained with black ooze. Upon closer inspection, the carpet can be peeled up to reveal a wooden trap door beneath. The trap door is sturdy, but the hinges have rusted shut, requiring a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Thieves Tools)** check to open.

Creatures/NPCs

Jeff is a library intern, with a laid-back attitude and no interest whatsoever in books.

Objectives/Goals. Jeff wants to spend his day chillaxing in the library; it's like a vacation without his boss here!

What Does He Know? Jeff knows that several librarians have been playing hooky over the last few days, and no one else has shown up today. He doesn't think anything odd about it, and doesn't offer this information up to the characters unless asked. He hasn't noticed anything odd with the books, since he hasn't been handling them. He knows the location of the library catalogue and can assist characters in finding which books were recently checked out.

Treasure & Rewards

- **Pipe of Smoke Monsters.** This pipe has an acrid flavor that oozes over the palate before slowly fading away. This item can be found in **Appendix 7: Magic Item.**

Scene B. The Collector's Lair

The trapdoor leads down a long 60 ft stairway, with walls made of white stone, before levelling off and ending at a large white stone door. Signs of black ooze trails contrast with the white stone walls and floor.

Beyond the door, the Collector (**Ooze Master**) sits at the back of a large, unadorned stone chamber. A crowd of oozelets surrounds him, moving forward one at a time to be absorbed into his amorphous form. The Collector conversationally greets the characters and talks at length about anything they wish to discuss. He will explain his plans if they show interest, but is more interested in hearing from the characters and gathering their knowledge. If attacked, or once the Collector grows bored of the conversation, the **Ooze Master** fights to the death. A **white maw** uses its False Appearance to blend into the stone hallway the characters enter through. When combat begins, it drops on top of the party using its Amorphous Form, focusing spellcasters and others at the back of the party.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Remove 1 **white maw**.
- **Weak:** Remove 1 **white maw**, add 2 **black puddings**.
- **Strong:** Add 3 **black puddings**.
- **Very Strong:** Add 1 **white maw**.

Creatures/NPCs

The Collector is a powerful ooze, gifted higher intelligence by Jubilex himself. He uses a genuinely interested and conversational tone to milk characters for information, before striking.

Objectives/Goals. The Collector cares most about gaining more knowledge, which can be ferried to Jubilex. He will happily talk with the characters, trying to milk them for information about anything and everything, and will only engage in combat when he thinks he has learned all he can from the characters. He is not eager to fight, but will not let the characters leave alive.

What Does He Know? The Collector is the mastermind behind this plan, and knows how the oozelets and knowledge consumption work, having invented the concept himself. He has knowledge about anything in the city of Hillsfar, provided the oozelets could have acquired that information and brought it back to him. He knows that Jubilex is located in the Abyss, but not exactly where he is, and will not divulge information that would endanger Jubilex under any circumstances.

Adventure Rewards

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement Checkpoints

The characters receive one advancement checkpoint for each objective completed:

- **Secondary Objective:** Defeat the Bakery Ooze.
- **Main Objective:** Kill the Collector.

The characters earn an additional advancement checkpoint for each **bonus objective** they complete.

Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive a treasure checkpoint for completing **both main objectives** or **both bonus objectives**.

Magic Item Unlock

Characters completing adventure's **main objective** unlock this magic item.

Pipe of Smoke Monsters. This pipe has an acrid flavor that oozes over the palate before slowly fading away. This item can be found in **Appendix 7: Magic Item**.

Wand of Secrets. Shaped liked a wooden spatula, this wand emits the scent of freshly baked bread and cinnamon when used. If used to stir or prepare food, the wand enhances the natural flavors of the food, making it more delicious. This item can be found in **Appendix 7: Magic Item**.

Story Awards

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

The Pursuit of Knowledge. You chose to absorb knowledge rather than losing it to the Oozes. As a result, you infrequently have the feeling of something slithering underneath your skin and your blood appears midnight black.

Celia the Squirrel. This squirrel is native to the Feywild, evidenced by its bright blue fur and penchant for wild magical effects. This loyal pet may accompany you on adventures, but cannot participate in combat or provide any mechanical benefit.

DM Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure. Each NPC and location should have an entry with a phonetic pronunciation and information relevant to the adventure. **This shouldn't exceed a single page.**

- **Tia Thorent (mee-UH THOR-int).** Mia and Tia Thorent are human females in their early twenties. They are partners and live together in a loft over their newly opened bakery. Tia is a master chef and Mia is a master decorator, and combined they make some of the most delicious, and unusual, treats in the region, infusing each dish with a little bit of love, and possibly wild magic, though unaware of their magical gifts.

Personality: *Happy, free-spirited, and optimistic, Mia*

Ideal: *Creativity. Using any inspiration to make artistic and unique dessert decorations, icing, filling, and toppers. She is inspired by everything.*

Bond: *Mia Thorent. Has a soft spot for small animals.*

Flaw: *Overly optimistic and giving, she often expects the best in others and fails to see their flaws.*

- **Mia Thorent (tee-UH THOR-int).** Mia and Tia Thorent are human females in their early twenties. They are partners and live together in a loft over their newly opened bakery. Tia is a master chef and Mia is a master decorator, and combined they make some of the most delicious, and unusual, treats in the region, infusing each dish with a little bit of love, and possibly wild magic, though unaware of their magical gifts.
Personality: *Hardworking, reliable, emotionally strong, grounded.*
Ideal: *Perfection. i.e. Baking the perfect bread, buying Mia the perfect gift, having the perfect bakery.*
Bond: *Tia Thorent. Has a soft spot for feeding the hungry.*
Flaw: *Can be stubborn and slow to consider other people's opinions, if she believes she is right. Blunt.*
- **Cinnamon the Cat (SIN-na-mon).** Mia and Tia's cat Cinnamon is a large orange tabby, who enjoy napping on the sunlit windowsill, getting pets, and nibbling on leftover pastries. He is very friendly, and will rub on characters' legs and beg for treats (pieces of pastry).

Personality: *Open and friendly, will manipulate characters to get the treats and pets he wants.*

Ideal: *Getting more treats and naps.*

Bond: *Loves Mia and Tia.*

Flaw: *Can be impatient when he doesn't get pastries or attention.*

- **Jeff Calrev (JEFF CAHL-revv).** Jeff is a young human male who is interning at the library. With long, shaggy hair and a laid-back attitude, he is frequently seen with a half-tucked shirt, napping behind library stacks. Having accepted the internship (because it was the only one he was offered), Jeff has been enjoying the relaxed nature of the library, though he has failed to ever pick up a book and is disinterested in reading or learning as a general rule.

Personality: *Carefree, relaxed, chill, and unbothered*

Ideal: *Relaxation, being able to live unburdened*

Bond: *Freedom. Will stand up for others who are shackled, literally or metaphorically.*

Flaw: *Lazy, Unintelligent, Uninvested*

- **M&T Bakery**
Dimensions & Terrain. The main area of M&T is a spacious 30 x 30 foot room, with white tile floors and walls of purple wood. At the front of the store, an orange tabby cat (Cinnamon) sleeps lazily on the windowsill. Several tables with crisp tablecloths fill the space; a couple are occupied by patrons. At the back of the store is a large countertop and display case filled with a variety of pastries, with prices displayed on the back wall (Player Handout 1). Behind the counter are Mia and Tia, eager to serve new customers. A door to leading to the kitchen is visible behind the counter.

Half of the kitchen is well-organized, with a large oven, several vats for proofing dough, racks for cooling baked goods, and carefully arranged crates of baking supplies. The half of the kitchen looks like a glitter rainbow exploded on it. Pots of dyes are strewn around, with buckets of icing and fondant clustered around the base of a work bench. Drawings and paintings are affixed to the wall, creating a sort of collage. A small stairwell leads from the kitchen to Mia and Tia's second-story apartment.

Lighting. The front room's interior is well lit, with stylish candles on each table and plentiful sunlight streaming in from floor-to-ceiling windows at the

front of the shop, and skylights in the kitchen, which are partially open to let heat vent.

Other Features. The room smells of warm, fresh baked bread, cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg waft out from the kitchen. The room is warmer than it is outside. There is a comfortable, calm atmosphere.

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Gamma Ooze (Adult Oblax)

Medium ooze, lawful evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +7, Cha +5

Skills Deception +5, Perception +4, Arcana +7

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Abyssal, Elven

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Aversion to Fire. If the oblex takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The oblex's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

3/day each: charm person (as 5th level spell), color spray, detect thoughts, hold person (as 3rd level spell)

Sulfurous Impersonation. As a bonus action, the oblex can extrude a piece of itself that assumes the appearance of one Medium or smaller creature whose memories it has stolen. The simulacrum appears, feels, and sounds exactly like the creature it impersonates, though it smells faintly of sulfur. The oblex can impersonate 1d4 + 1 different creatures, each one tethered to its body by a strand of slime that can extend up to 120 feet away. For all practical purposes, the simulacrum is the oblex, meaning that the oblex occupies its space and the simulacrum's space simultaneously. The slimy tether is immune to damage, but it is severed if there is no opening at least 1 inch wide between the oblex's main body and the simulacrum. The simulacrum disappears if the tether is severed.

Actions

Multiattack. The oblex makes one pseudopod attack and uses Eat Memories.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (2d4) psychic damage.

Eat Memories. The oblex targets one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 18 (4d8) psychic damage and become memory drained until it finishes a short or long rest or until it benefits from the *greater restoration* or *heal* spell. Constructs, oozes, plants, and undead succeed on the save automatically.

While memory drained, the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from any ability check or attack roll it makes. Each time the target is memory drained beyond the first, the die size increases by one: the d4 becomes a d6, the d6 becomes a d8, and so on until the die becomes a d20, at which point the target becomes unconscious for 1 hour. The effect then ends.

When an oblex causes a target to become memory drained, the oblex learns all the languages the target knows and gains all its proficiencies, except for any saving throw proficiencies.

Black Pudding

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

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

Damage Immunities Acid, Cold, Lightning, Slashing

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

Senses Blindsight 60 Ft. (Blind Beyond This Radius), passive Perception 8

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding 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 or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage. The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved 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.

Reactions

Split. When a pudding that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new puddings if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new pudding has hit points equal to half the original pudding's, rounded down. New puddings are one size smaller than the original pudding.

Bulette

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 94 (9d10+45)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +6

Senses Darkvision 60 Ft., Tremorsense 60 Ft., passive Perception 16

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Standing Leap. The bulette's long jump is up to 30 ft. and its high jump is up to 15 ft., with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (4d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Deadly Leap. If the bulette jumps at least 15 ft. as part of its movement, it can then use this action to land on its feet in a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 ft. out of the bulette's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the bulette's space.

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: (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (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.

Commoner

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

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)

Skills Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Gamma Ooze Prime (Elder Oblex)

Huge ooze, lawful evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 115 (10d12 + 50)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +10, Cha +8

Skills Arcana +10, Deception +8, History +10, Nature +10, Perception +5, Religion +10

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Abyssal, Elven, Sylvan, Infernal, Dwarvish, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

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

Aversion to Fire. If the oblex takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The oblex's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (DC 18). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: charm person (as 5th level spell), detect thoughts, hold person

3/day each: confusion, dimension door, dominate person, fear, hallucinatory terrain, hold monster, hypnotic pattern, telekinesis

Sulfurous Impersonation. As a bonus action, the oblex can extrude a piece of itself that assumes the appearance of one Medium or smaller creature whose memories it has stolen. The simulacrum appears, feels, and sounds exactly like the creature it impersonates, though it smells faintly of sulfur. The oblex can impersonate 2d6 + 1 different creatures, each one tethered to its body by a strand of slime that can extend up to 120 feet away. For all practical purposes, the simulacrum is the oblex, meaning that the oblex occupies its space and the simulacrum's space simultaneously. The slimy tether is immune to damage, but it is severed if there is no opening at least 1 inch wide between the oblex's main body and the simulacrum. The simulacrum disappears if the tether is severed.

Actions

Multiattack. The oblex makes one pseudopod attack and uses Eat Memories.

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft. one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

Eat Memories. The oblex targets one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or take 4 (8d10) psychic damage and become memory drained until it finishes a short or long rest or until it benefits from the *greater restoration* or *heal* spell. Constructs, oozes, plants, and undead succeed on the save automatically.

While memory drained, the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from any ability check or attack roll it makes. Each time the target is memory drained beyond the first, the die size increases by one: the d4 becomes a d6, the d6 becomes a d8, and so on until the die becomes a d20, at which point the target becomes unconscious for 1 hour. The effect then ends.

When an oblex causes a target to become memory drained, the oblex learns all the languages the target knows and gains all its proficiencies, except for any saving throw proficiencies.

Ochre Jelly

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45 (6d10+12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

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

Damage Resistance Acid

Damage Immunities Lightning, Slashing

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

Senses Blindsight 60 Ft. (Blind Beyond This Radius), passive Perception 8

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

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

Actions

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

Reactions

Split. When a jelly that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new jellies if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new jelly has hit points equal to half the original jelly's, rounded down. New jellies are one size smaller than the original jelly.

Ooze Master

Huge undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 9 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12+60)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	1 (-5)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +7, Insight +4

Damage Resistances lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities acid, cold, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft.

Languages Common, Primordial, Thayan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Undead Nature. The ooze master doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the Ooze Master or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 9 (2d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon that hits the Ooze Master 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 that hits the Ooze Master is destroyed after dealing damage.

The Ooze Master can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

Instinctive Attack. When the Ooze Master casts a spell with a casting time of 1 action, it can make one pseudopod attack as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. The Ooze Master is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, friends, mage hand, poison spray

1st level (4 slots): charm person, detect magic, magic missile, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, Melf's acid arrow, suggestion

3rd level (3 slots): fear, slow, stinking cloud

4th level (3 slots): confusion, Evard's black tentacles

5th level (1 slot): cloudkill.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (3d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) acid damage.

Reactions

Instinctive Charm. If a creature the Ooze Master can see makes an attack roll against it while within 30 feet of it, the Ooze Master can use a reaction to divert the attack if another creature is within the attack's range. The attacker must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature that is closest to it, not including itself or the Ooze Master. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target. On a successful save, the attacker is immune to this Instinctive Charm for 24 hours. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect.

Remorhaz

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 195 (17d12+85)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities Cold, Fire

Senses Darkvision 60 Ft., Tremorsense 60 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Heated Body. A creature that touches the remorhaz or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: (6d10 + 7) piercing damage plus (3d6) fire damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the remorhaz can't bite another target.

Swallow. The remorhaz makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, that creature takes the bite's damage and is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the remorhaz, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the remorhaz's turns. If the remorhaz takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the remorhaz must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the remorhaz. If the remorhaz dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Tyrannosaurus Rex

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 136 (13d12+52)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The enormous wolf makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws. It can't make both attacks against the same target.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: (4d12 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the tyrannosaurus can't bite another target

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: (3d8 + 7) slashing damage.

White Maw

Gargantuan ooze, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 217 (14d20+70)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	1 (-5)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius)

Languages telepathy 50 ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Ooze Nature. White Maw doesn't require sleep.

Amorphous Form. White Maw can occupy another creature's space and vice versa.

Corrode Metal. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits White Maw 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 White Maw is destroyed after dealing damage.

White Maw can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.

False Appearance. While White Maw remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from white stone.

Killer Response. Any creature that starts its turn in White Maw's space is targeted by a pseudopod attack if White Maw isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 22 (4d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage. 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.

Appendix 3: Cannoli & Cats (Bonus Objective A.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

"We all have a Monster within; the difference is in degree, not in kind."

- Douglas Preston, *The Monster of Florence*

Setting Description

Ethel Hallowon's house is a 10-minute walk away from M&T. On a quiet street, this house has window boxes of colorful flowers, and lace curtains in the windows. A 1-story building sits to its left, with a small, well-tended garden out front.

Prerequisites

Complete Call to Action, having spoken with Captain Scott.

Objectives

Gather information from Ms. Hallowon and/or defeat the Gamma Ooze in combat.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Ethel Hallowon's house is a small, 20-foot square house. A relatively large kitchen takes up one corner of the house, with a rocking chair, small table, and comfortable couch forming a sitting area in the center of the space. A small bed is sits behind a closed curtain in the opposite corner.

Lighting. The interior is unlit, though the windows provide dim light. A single unlit lamp sits next to the bed.

Roleplaying "Ethel Hallowon"

Ethel Hallowon was a kind, grandmotherly character who always had a kind word and a snickerdoodle to cheer you up. Unfortunately, Ethel was killed by the same ooze that killed Brett, which then devoured her brain, transforming into a Gamma Ooze. This Gamma ooze now inhabits Ethel's body, acting as her new brain. The Gamma Ooze has all of Ethel's memories and acts like her, unless attacked. Discerning characters may notice something is off about Ethel's mannerisms.

Scene A. A Neighborly Welcome

Investigating Ethel's home:

- The kitchen has a large plate of freshly baked snickerdoodle cookies sitting on top of a

handmade decorative doily, consisting of patterns of intertwined leaves.

- A **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a few carefully arranged book on a small table in the living room, all of which are second-hand murder mysteries, starring a cat detective name Mr. Smeowgles. None of these books have a library card.
- A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check finds signs of black ooze freshly embedded into Ethel's rocking chair cushion.
- Searching Ethel's body, characters find a small bronze locket, the latch worn from use, with the picture of a young man inside. "For my sunshine" is clumsily etched into the inside of the locket. (This is an old picture of Ethel's husband, who died several years ago when his produce cart was struck by a horse and crushed him).

The Gamma Ooze

When an oozelet devours a sufficient amount of knowledge (in the form of written text or living brains), it transforms into a Gamma Ooze. A Gamma Ooze has the ability to devour and replace a human's brain, similar to an intellect devourer. It retains all of the information it has devoured over its lifetime.

Creatures/NPCs

Ethel Hallowon was a kind, grandmotherly character, who was unfortunately turned into a Gamma Ooze (**Adult Oblex**) earlier this morning.

Objectives/Goals. "Ethel" is willing to give characters whatever information they require and wants to be left in peace... unless a good opportunity comes along where she can get away with consuming an unwitting adventurer.

What Does She Know? Ethel found Brett's body before she was consumed by the ooze and retains all of her memories. However, the Gamma Ooze will not suggest ooze involvement unless specifically asked by characters, as it doesn't want to risk being discovered.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Strong or Very Strong:** Replace the Gamma Ooze (**Adult Oblex**) with a Gamma Ooze Prime (**Elder Oblex**).

Appendix 4: Brownies & Books (Bonus Objective B.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

"Everything you can imagine is real."

-Pablo Picasso

Setting Description

The streets of Hillsfar are packed during the early afternoon. People are bustling through the busy market streets, running errands and paying little attention to their surroundings. As characters move along the street, a small park can be seen off to the left of the road, with green grass, a small copse of budding trees, and a group of young schoolchildren (ages 4-7) sitting in a circle around Jeanine Swisher, a young schoolteacher, who holds up a picture book and reads aloud.

Prerequisites

Complete Primary Objective and be travelling to the library.

Objectives

Defeat the oozes and prevent any schoolchildren from being harmed.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. A small green park sits off to the side of a bustling street. The park

Lighting. The sun provides bright light to this area.

Scene A. A Day at the Park

As characters approach the scene, the pictures in the book begin to swirl and coalesce into shapes, as several picture-themed oozes burst forth from the book and attack the children. This happens before characters reach the group, unless a character identifies the book as a threat from afar and acts quickly. When the creatures begin pouring out, Jeanine panics and drops the book, where it lies open on the ground.

This book is *Cool Creatures and Where They Commune*. This is a library book that oozes have infiltrated; they have not only devoured the information, they have become the creatures whose images they consumed.

At the beginning of each round, a page is flipped by the wind, and the creature(s) on that page pour out of the book. On round 1, 3 **bulletes** emerge from the book. On round 2, a **chimera** emerges. On round 3, a **tyrannosaurus rex** emerges. On round 4, a **remorhaz** emerges. Roll initiative for each monster to determine when it acts.

Characters should make the connection that these creatures are emerging from the book. With a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check as a free action, a character can realize this is somehow connected to the oozes. A single character can attempt a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** check, **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** check, or a **DC 15 Painter's supplies** check to attempt to prevent the creatures from emerging from the book. This requires two successes and can only be completed by a single character per round (i.e. it will take a minimum of 2 rounds).

During this combat, there are several children in danger, as well as Jeanine, who may be hit by AOE attacks or otherwise damaged by rampaging monsters, in addition to the bustling street adjacent to the park. Make this clear to characters and include tokens for these individuals on the board if necessary.

Jeanine, a **commoner**, is unarmed and tries to move the children to safety. If a child is attacked by a monster, Jeanine will sacrifice herself to save them, throwing her body over them for AOE attacks or jumping in the way of melee attacks. Allow Jeanine to make death saving throws, if the characters are interested in saving her. Reward characters with inspiration for exceptional roleplay

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak/Weak:** Instead of having enemies emerge each round, have them emerge every 2 rounds. Encourage characters to take actions to deactivate the book, and lower DCs to do so by 5 if necessary.
- **Strong/Very Strong:** Add 1 extra monster per round.

Scene B. Just Another Monday

Option A: Jeanine Survives

Jeanine thanks the characters profusely for helping her and the children. She doesn't have much to offer them in way of an award, as she barely makes enough money to survive, but says that she will talk to the guard to see if characters can be awarded for their efforts.

Children can be calmed with Persuasion

Option B: Jeanine Dies

The children are in tears and inconsolable and have nowhere to go. Characters may choose to take them back to their school, the Temple of Oghma, which they can easily find directions to by asking the locals. When they arrive, the teachers begin sending messages out to their parents, so they can come pick the children up early. The characters are thanked for their service.

Calming the Children

Allow characters to roleplay and perform checks with a DC 13 using Persuasion, Performance, or any other skill that seems relevant. Grant advantage on the check and/or inspiration for excellent roleplaying. This is an opportunity in the adventure for characters to take a break, roleplay, and interact with the community. If this is part of a larger story arc, characters may interact with adult NPCs on the bustling street to hear rumors or foreshadowing for other adventures, or to meet upcoming key NPCs. Feel free to use this section to how it will best benefit the party and the story you are attempting to tell.

Appendix 5: M&T Bakery Menu (Player Handout 1)

<i>Mia & Tia's Pastries</i>	
<i>Granny's Apple Strudel</i>	<i>7 sp</i>
<i>Cinnamon Squares (4 pc)</i>	<i>2 sp</i>
<i>Barovian Brownies</i>	<i>8 sp</i>
<i>Rainbow Cannoli</i>	<i>6 sp</i>
<i>Mini Chocolate Puffs (2 pc)</i>	<i>4 sp</i>
<i>Empire Tart</i>	<i>5 sp</i>
<i>Fried Sugar Cake</i>	<i>4 sp</i>
<i>Good Berry Muffin</i>	<i>6 sp</i>
<i>Lemon Lamington</i>	<i>8 sp</i>
<i>Orange Biscuits (4 pc)</i>	<i>5 sp</i>

The bottom of the menu features two sets of decorative flourishes. Each set consists of a thick, dark purple, wavy line that curves upwards at both ends, with several thinner, lighter purple, wavy lines underneath it, creating a stylized, artistic representation of a flourish or a piece of pastry.

Appendix 6: In the Eye of the Beholder Library Card (Player Handout 2)

AUTHOR	Ariel Kernoff	
TITLE	In the Eye of the Beholder	
DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
3.21	Isabelle Duncan	3.25
4.17	Carl Glittergold	4.27
5.21	Jimjar Kernwell	5.28
5.25	Elizabeth Doomswallow	6.03
7.02	Richard Smith	7.15
8.22	Brett Bellington	
Bint's Printing Lmt.		Made in Brocklin

Appendix 7: Magic Item

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this magic item.

Pipe of Smoke Monsters

Tier 1, 2 treasure checkpoints

While smoking this pipe, you can use an action to exhale a puff of smoke that takes the form of a single creature, such as a dragon, a flumph, or a froghe-moth. The form must be small enough to fit in a 1-foot cube and loses its shape after a few seconds, becoming an ordinary puff of smoke.

This pipe has an acrid flavor that oozes over the palate before slowly fading away.

Wand of Secrets

Tier 1, 8 treasure checkpoints

The wand has 3 Charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its Charges, and if a secret door or trap is within 30 feet of you, the wand pulses and points at the one nearest to you. The wand regains 1d3 expended Charges daily at dawn. This item is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Shaped like a wooden spatula, this wand emits the scent of freshly baked bread and cinnamon when used. If used to stir or prepare food, the wand enhances the natural flavors of the food, making it more delicious.

Appendix 8: Story Awards

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

The Pursuit of Knowledge. You chose to absorb knowledge rather than losing it to the Oozes. As a result, you infrequently have the feeling of something slithering underneath your skin and your blood appears midnight black.

Celia the Squirrel. This squirrel is native to the Feywild, evidenced by its bright blue fur and penchant for wild magical effects. This loyal pet may accompany you on adventures, but cannot participate in combat or provide any mechanic benefit.

Appendix 9: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

About the D&D Adventurers League [link]

New to the Annual Storyline?

[insert title/link to appropriate story webpage]

New to Being the Dungeon Master?

[insert title/link to web article]

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than		Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent		Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than		Average
5 characters, APL less than		Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent		Average
5 characters, APL greater than		Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than		Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent		Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than		Very strong