

# Spies

## BELOW THE MOONSEA



# House of Webs

An Adventure for Characters of 5th to 10th Level



Adventure Series by Andrew Bishkinskyi

# House of Webs

## A Spies Below the Moonsea Adventure



The simmering conflict between the freedom fighters of House Tor'Erhyl and the Lolth-serving slavers of House Ouss'Nassath has reached its boiling point. Following the recent assassination of a sword dancer, Matron Tor'Erhyl makes a bold plan to strike back where it hurts most – the slave shipments. Yet this not merely a mission of vengeance – it's one of mercy and liberation.

A Two- to Four-hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

By Andrew Bishkinskyi

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CCC-MTL-03 House of Webs

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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*“It is the charge of the chosen of the Dark Dancer to free at least one soul from the Spider Queen’s web each moon. Make this the night of a hundred moons!”*

— Matron Meriele Tor’Erhyl

This section provides the adventure’s background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your players’ characters to the action.

## ABOUT THE SERIES

This adventure is part of the *Spies Below the Moonsea* series of adventures that deal with the **Zethlentyn Protectorate** – a city-state in the Underdark. Adventures in this series can be played without knowledge of the others and in any order. Chronologically, this adventure follows the events of *House of Moonlight* and *House of Revengeance*.

## BACKGROUND (GENERAL)

Dedicated to the good goddess **Eilistraee**, the drow of **House Tor’Erhyl** are working to end slavery in Zethlentyn. To this end, they are building an alliance with powers on the surface. Adventurers have previously traveled to the Underdark to lay the groundwork for this association. It can be assumed that the drow of House Tor’Erhyl have sufficiently proven themselves as allies.

## EVENTS DETAILED IN HOUSE OF MOONLIGHT

Seeking an alliance on the surface, House Tor’Erhyl sends a cryptic message to the surface, intended to prevent a slave-taking raid by the Lolth-worshipping **House Ouss’Nassath**.

The raid is thwarted by adventurers with the help of **Kayleth Tor’Erhyl** – a skilled sword dancer, who then escorts them to the Underdark in the hopes of forging an alliance.

## EVENTS DETAILED IN HOUSE OF REVENANCE

As revenge for foiling their slaving raid, House Ouss’Nassath assassinates Volana, a sword dancer of House Tor’Erhyl and Kayleth’s partner. Adventurers retrieve Volana’s body, returning to Castle Tor’Erhyl, where **Matron Tor’Erhyl** promises that revenge against house Ouss’Nassath is already being planned.

## EPISODES

- **Episode 1: Freedom and Vengeance.** Characters are called to Castle Tor’Erhyl, where Matron Tor’Erhyl enlists them in a bold plan to attack a House Ouss’Nassath slave shipment.
- **Episode 2: The House of Webs.** Characters make a plan and ambush the slaver convoy. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: Passage to Light.** Having liberated the slaves, characters must escort them safely to freedom on the surface. This is **Story Objective B**.

## BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure includes two bonus objectives.

- **Bonus Objective A: Crazy Enemy of My Other Crazy Enemy.** Ahead of their ambush, characters have an opportunity to gather intelligence and gain an ally. This objective is found in **Appendix 3**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Witnesses.** While escorting the liberated, the characters come across a neutral party. This objective is found in **Appendix 4**.

## 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. The bonus objectives may only be taken at specific points in the adventure.

**Bonus Objective A** takes place after the Call to Action in Episode 1 and prior to Episode 2.

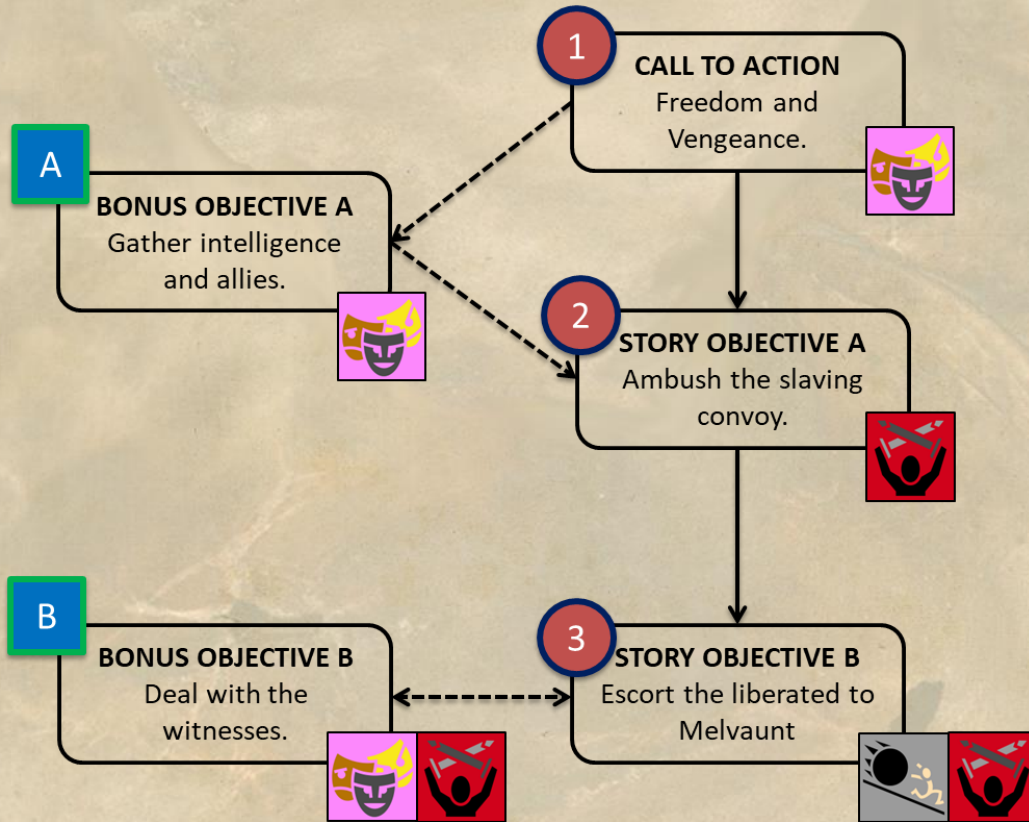
**Bonus Objective B** takes place during Episode 3, after Story Objective B has been completed.

## GENERAL UNDERDARK EFFECTS

Refer to **Appendix 10** for details on the Faerzress, Madness and teleportation restrictions.

# EPISODE FLOWCHART

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



# EPISODE 1: FREEDOM AND VENGEANCE (CALL TO ACTION)

*Estimated Duration: 15 Minutes*

## SCENE A. PLOTTING BY MOONLIGHT

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Spies Below the Moonsea (First adventure).** If this is the characters' first Spies Below the Moonsea adventure, they should be informed that the good-aligned drow of House Tor'Erhyl have contacted the Lords Alliance representative in Melvaunt and sought out an alliance. These drow helped prevent a surface slave-taking raid and have invited adventurers to the Underdark to continue their collaboration. Part of the mission is to learn about the different drow houses.

**Spies Below the Moonsea (Continuing adventures).** Characters that have played *House of Moonlight* or other *Spies Below the Moonsea* adventures are familiar with House Tor'Erhyl and their goals. For them, the adventure starts right in the Underdark. Other than temples to surface deities, all amenities are available within the Zethlentyn Protectorate.

**Eilistraee's Faithful.** Worshippers of Eilistraee may have heard of an alliance with a house dedicated to her and traveled to Melvaunt or subsequently to Zethlentyn.

**Slave Liberation.** Characters with a special interest in liberating slaves may have been recruited for this mission for this reason.

### SURFACERS IN ZETHLENTYN

Why don't the Zethlentyn drow kill the characters on sight? Earlier this year, a band of adventurers led by a renegade drow brought down a major drow house within the Zethlentyn Protectorate. This event has greatly raised the interest of other houses in the use of surface mercenaries and explains the recent tolerance for surface adventurers, and various levels of curiosity about them.

### UNDERDARK JOURNEY AND CASTLE TOR'ERHYL

The initial meeting takes place at Castle Tor'Erhyl. The following description of House Tor'Erhyl is the same as *House of Moonlight*. If this is the characters' first visit, they have been escorted here from the surface by Kayleth Tor'Erhyl - a highly skilled drow sword dancer.

If characters have visited House Tor'Erhyl previously, skip to **The Language of Lolth** section below.

### AREA INFORMATION

Castle Tor'Erhyl is an extraordinarily large construction that extends out from a cavern wall and incorporates several large stalagmites seamlessly into an otherwise chaotic design of brick walls and towers. The castle's unique feature is the massive shining disc that resembles the moon itself. In reality this is a large translucent window built into the side of a tall rear stalagmite. Inside it, a large garden of particularly brightly glowing mushrooms is kept expertly cultivated to create the glow. This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** No map is required for this scene. The greater area map can be found in **Appendix 5**.

**Lighting.** Castle Tor'Erhyl is located within the greater area of Zethlentyn Prime. Streets and common areas are dimly lit with cultivated fungus and magic lights. The light on the grounds of the castle is somewhat brighter and resembles moonlight.

### DEVELOPMENT

Prior to setting foot on castle grounds, Kayleth stops to explain that within Zethlentyn, adventurers should always be cautious when they cross onto house grounds. While the sald'iar - the protectorate's internal defense force - ensure (often brutally) that no mischief happens on public grounds, once one crosses onto house territory, they are entirely at the mercy of that house. Kayleth assures the adventures that they are safe on Tor'Erhyl grounds.

### EXCERPT FROM SIGHTS BELOW THE MOONSEA: A GUIDE TO THE ZETHLENTYN PROTECTORATE

To allow each of the member houses their opportunity to pursue power, the laws of the protectorate do not actually protect the houses from each other, nor do they restrict any activities that those houses may participate in. To these ends, the protectorate has two prime laws, of which the law of internal conflict is the first:

- The law of internal conflict: Protectorate ground - protectorate business. House ground - house business.
- The law of external threat: All serve the protectorate.

The essence of the first law is that anything goes, so long as it happens on the grounds of one of the houses and not on the common ground of the protectorate.

## THE LANGUAGE OF LOLTH

Once inside the castle, the characters are led to a war room. Characters may note that Kayleth – their escort – is particularly humorless and pre-occupied. This is due to her partner Volana having been recently killed. Volana’s body has been recovered, though no decision has yet been made as to whether she will be resurrected.

The war room of House Tor’Erhyl is empty of furniture. The floor is decorated with a vast map of the nearby area of the Underdark. Bright silver light shines through a huge translucent white disc in the ceiling. No markers or army tokens typically used on such maps are present.

Two drow sit cross-legged in the corners of the room, each playing a slow march small decorated drums on their laps. **Matron Meriele Tor’Erhyl** paces excitedly across the map.

As the Matron addresses the party, dark lights – courtesy of the *dancing lights* spell – gather in a small dark cloud on a section of the map.

*“We of House Tor’Erhyl choose to dwell in the darkness so that we may fight the darkness that reigns within others of our kin; so that we may give them the message of Eilistraee; so that we could bring them to the light.*

*Yet there are those among the worshippers of the Spider Queen who are deaf to the message of salvation; those who choose violence as their only language.*

*We too speak this language and we speak it well.”*

As she pauses, a small beam of moonlight strikes down dramatically and destroys the cloud of darkness.

## CREATURES/NPCs

**Meriele Tor’Erhyl – Drow Female, Matron of House Tor’Erhyl of the Zethlentyn Protectorate, CG.**

Meriele Tor’Erhyl looks young (early 20s in human terms) but is over 200 years old. She smiles brightly and speaks excitedly. Her mannerisms mask a cunning and calculating mind, and though the deception is not entirely malicious, neither is it incidental.

**What Does She Want?** One of House Tor’Erhyl’s goals is to establish a way to smuggle slaves – oft rescued from other Houses – out of Zethlentyn



and to give them their freedom and a new life. To this end, they seek allies on the surface.

**What Does She Know?** House Tor’Erhyl’s anti-slavery stance is no secret in Zethlentyn, but as is often the case, one drow house’s pursuit of something that other houses find distasteful is far from unusual.

Recently, House Tor’Erhyl – with adventurer assistance – disrupted the Lolth-worshipping House Ouss’Nassath’s slave-taking raid on the surface, saving many people. In retribution, one of House Tor’Erhyl elite sword dancers – Volana – was assassinated.

Now, House Tor’Erhyl’s sources have obtained reliable intel that a slave-trading convoy of House Ouss’Nassath is en route back to Zethlentyn with three dozen prized slaves.

This presents a perfect opportunity not only to strike at the enemy, but to also liberate the slaves.

Typically, the placement of liberated slaves is the biggest issue, but with the characters’ assistance, they can be taken to the surface and out of harm’s way.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The convoy must be ambushed prior to reaching Zethlentyn’s borders, otherwise there is risk of both reinforcements and interference from other houses. (Showing the map in **Appendix 5** may be useful when explaining these details).
- The plan for the ambush is to have two forces – one dedicated to drawing away the House Ouss’Nassath troops and engaging them in battle, while the other liberates the slaves with minimal casualties. The worshippers of Lolth would rather see the slaves dead than free.
- They have the route info, but not the exact speed of the convoy, so the final plan will be finalized once they get there and know the terrain.
- After the slaves are liberated, there will once again be two tasks – one to lead them to the surface and one to cut off reinforcements from reaching them.

## CALL TO ACTION

Matron Tor’Erhyl would like the party to assist in the raid to liberate the slaves (**Story Objective A**) and in escorting them safely to the surface (**Story Objective B**). For this, proceed to **Episode 2**.

## BONUS OBJECTIVE A

If the adventure is being played in a 3- or 4-hour time slot, **Bonus Objective A** can be included here, ahead of **Episode 2**. This objective supposes that characters have a few hours to covertly gather information in Zethlentyn prior to departing.

Matron Tor’Erhyl tells them as much and allows them to go prepare. Proceed to **Appendix 3**.



# EPISODE 2: THE HOUSE OF WEBS

**Estimated Duration: 45 minutes**

## SCENE A. AMBUSHING AMBUSHERS

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene after **Episode 1** or after completing **Bonus Objective A**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters must decide which role they want to play in the ambush.

### AREA INFORMATION

This scene is split between two non-specific locations. Matron Meriele likely gives her final instructions outside Castle Tor'Erhyl and Kayleth briefs the characters partway through their journey.

### DEVELOPMENT

Matron Tor'Erhyl gives a few last-minute instructions and informs characters that Kayleth will lead the Tor'Erhyl forces for the mission. After several hours of travel through the Underdark, just prior to reaching their destination, Kayleth receives updated intel on the ambush site.

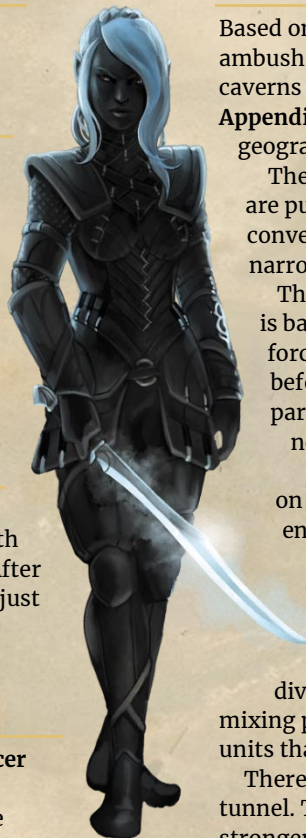
### CREATURES/NPC'S

**Kayleth Tor'Erhyl – Drow Female, Sword Dancer of Eilistraee, CG.**

Kayleth is a high-ranking member of the house Tor'Erhyl. Extremely independent, Kayleth was chosen as the one to make contact with the surface, and to prevent the most recent slave-taking raid – a mission that was a great success. Kayleth had also been tasked with guiding surface adventurers safely down to Zethlentyn. Kayleth was very close to the slain sword dancer Volana.

**What Does She Want?** Still grief-stricken after the death of her partner, Kayleth has found new focus after Volana's body was recovered by adventurers. Her mind is now clear and the opportunity to strike back at Ouss'Nassath is one she relishes.

**What does she know?** Kayleth is ready to do whatever it takes to see this mission through. Though she is excited for an opportunity to avenge Volana's death, she knows that the real goal is saving the slaves. Having seen the adventurers in action, she is ready to trust them to decide how they're best used.



### LATEST INTEL

Based on the latest information from scouts, the ambush site has been chosen to be spread among two caverns connected by a smaller tunnel. The Map in **Appendix 6** is helpful for explaining the general geography.

The convoy consists of five Underdark carts that are pulled by steeders. The carts are designed to be convertible and can be packed and taken through narrow passages or up walls.

The particular passage between these two caverns is barely 5ft wide and 50ft long, so the Ouss'Nassath forces are expected to unload the slaves on one side before proceeding through. They're likely to send part of their force ahead to scout the tunnel and next cavern for predators.

The plan is to have one part of the force to wait on the unloading side of the tunnel, while the rest engage and cut off the scouting party.

### CHOICE OF ROLE

The characters must choose which side of the tunnel they want to be on. Kayleth's division takes the other side. Kayleth is against mixing parties as she believes better coherence among units that have worked together before.

There is expected to be fighting on both sides of the tunnel. The scouting/forward force is expected to be stronger than the rear guard, but those engaging the rear guard must contend with keeping the slaves safe.

- If the characters choose to take on the scouts/forward force, proceed to **Scene B**.
- If the characters choose to take on the rear guard/slaves, proceed to **Scene C**.

### RAGER'S GONNA RAGE!

If **Axehead Moontunnel** is accompanying the party as per **Bonus Objective A**, his fate is to die heroically in the combat. The manner of this death entirely up to the DM – but should be epic and worthy of a battlerager! Axehead, despite his raginess, does not undermine the party's ambush plans. If the party plans something particularly non-violent, he asks to join the other battle unit and dies "off-screen".

Axehead's assistance can have a mechanical benefit to the fight – such as taking out one of the drow soldiers, saving several slaves or one of the player characters.

## SCENE B. CONVOY AMBUSH – FORWARD FORCE

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene only if the characters have been directed here from **Scene A**.

### DEVELOPMENT

Both the characters and Kayleth's forces arrive at the cavern which is to serve as the ambush site. The only exit from it is a narrow 5ft tunnel.

Kayleth informs the party that there are likely to be a total of 10-15 Ouss'Nassath drow with the convoy. She gives the party a sending stone that allows for up to 3 messages to be sent (these sending stones belong to House Tor'Erhyl and are **NOT** an obtainable magic item in the adventure).

It's the characters' mission is to wait for at least 5 drow to get to this side, if it's possible to get 6 or 7, even better.

Once the drow are through, the party is to draw them away from the passage way or to block the passage in some way. Kayleth's forces will also attempt to block the passage on their side, perhaps trapping some in the middle. Kayleth advises that the passage should not be blocked in any permanent way – just long enough to force the Ouss'Nassath drow to engage separately rather than joining up with the rear guard.

### AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** At its widest point, this cavern is 80ft north to south and slightly larger from east to west. Refer to the map in **Appendix 6**.

**Lighting.** There is no natural light in this cavern.

**Natural Features.** The cavern is fairly open, with stalagmites scattered throughout. The only notable larger feature is a 10-15ft tall natural hill in the northwest section.

**The Passage.** The passage that leads to the next cavern is on the far east side of this one. It's about 8ft in

diameter and snakes its way for 50ft before reaching the larger cavern. It is made of hard stone. Collapsing it may make it permanently impassible.

### PLAYING OUT THE AMBUSH

Refer to the **Playing the Pillars** section below for ideas on prep. Give players up to 10 real-time minutes to create their plan.

Eventually, characters receive a message that the convoy have arrived and – as expected – are sending a scouting party ahead. As the second update, **Kayleth** tells the party that 5 drow have gone into the tunnel and “maybe one more” is going in.

The Ouss'Nassath forces are led by a **Drow Arachnomancer** and **Drow Priestess of Lolth**. The arachnomancer is a formidable opponent and is not encountered by Weak or Very Weak parties.

(Only) If the party is of average strength, they are given the option to fight him by Kayleth – who sends a 3<sup>rd</sup> message saying “it looks like the leader is heading for the tunnel. He may be too much for you, do you want us to block the tunnel? Decide now!” If they agree, they get the Priestess instead.

**Note:** if the party fails to block the tunnel on their side, the Kayleth's forces are able to do it on the other.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

**Very Weak:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 5 drow,

**Weak:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 2 drow elite warriors, 3 drow

**Average:** 2 drow elite warriors, 3 drow and EITHER 1 drow priestess of Lolth OR 1 drow arachnomancer

**Strong:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 1 drow arachnomancer, 2 drow elite warriors, 2 drow

**Very Strong:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 1 drow arachnomancer, 4 drow elite warriors.

**All versions:** the drow arachnomancer does not have access to the *etherealness* spell.

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

The Ouss'Nassath scouts are on high alert when they exit the passage, so surprising them is near impossible.

If attacked at the opening without the passage being cut off, they attempt to use the passage as cover.

### EXPLORATION

Characters have no more than 15 minutes of in-game time to set up for the ambush. They should be encouraged to come up with the best plan for drawing out the drow and blocking off the tunnel. Use appropriate DC15 checks with tools or Deception for anything unusually or creative.

### SOCIAL

If the characters can come up with a sufficiently convincing ruse, the Ouss'Nassath scouts can be fooled into approaching without calling for backup. Evaluate the nature of this ruse carefully – if it's threatening, it may spook them into retreating into the tunnel early.

## SCENE C. REAR GUARD & SLAVES – PREPARATION.

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene only if the characters have been directed here from **Scene A**.

### DEVELOPMENT

Both the characters and Kayleth's forces arrive at the cavern which is to serve as the ambush site. The only exit from it is a narrow 5ft tunnel. This is the tunnel splitting the two halves of the ambush site.

Kayleth leaves most of her force behind to set up and leads the party through the tunnel into a larger cavern, bringing one of her casters along. Here, she briefs the party there are likely to be a total of 10-15 Ouss'Nassath drow with the convoy. She gives the party a sending stone that allows for up to 3 messages to be sent (these sending stones belong to House Tor'Erhyl and are **NOT** an obtainable magic item in the adventure).

It's the characters' mission to wait until some of the drow have gone down the passage to scout and to let Kayleth's force know how many have passed through.

Once the drow are through, Kayleth's force on the other side will draw the scouts away and block off the passage. Once Kayleth gives the signal, the party must ambush the remainder of the drow and free the slaves. The Ouss'Nassath forces won't hesitate to kill or otherwise use the slaves for leverage, so it's critical to deal with them quickly and decisively.

### AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** At its widest point, this huge cavern is 120ft north to south and stretches far to east. **Refer to Map in Appendix 6.**

**Lighting.** There is no natural light in this cavern.

**Natural Features.** The cavern is fairly open, with stalagmites scattered throughout. There is a 5ft-10ft tall set of stalagmites that can provide cover.

**The Passage.** The passage that leads to the next cavern is on the west side of this one. It's about 8ft in diameter and snakes its way for 50ft before reaching the

smaller. It is made of hard stone. Collapsing it may make it permanently impassible.

### DEVELOPMENT

Kayleth has a couple of capable spellcasters in her contingent. She suggests that the party could hide behind the stalagmite set and one of her mages could cast *hallucinatory terrain* to make it seem as though the stalagmite and the area behind it are actually part of the cavern wall. In addition to *hallucinatory terrain*, Kayleth's casters can provide the party with one casting of (each) *seeming* and *pass without trace*, and provide everyone with the *tongues* spell.

Characters have no more than 15 minutes of in-game time to prepare their ambush – this includes the casting of spells by Kayleth's casters.

### PLANNING THE AMBUSH

Kayleth's *hallucinatory terrain* plan is a solid one. There is not a lot of time to figure out something else, but if players want to get creative – let them! Allow up to 10 minutes of real time to the players to plan out the ambush.

#### DM TIP

Be sure to review the following scene to ensure that the party's plan is functional. Kayleth can be used to provide guidance on how to adjust the plan to be feasible.

The characters suspect that the drow likely have magic and may endanger the slaves. They may want to prepare for this eventuality.

It's important that the adventures understand their part of the plan and that taking on ALL the drow is likely to lead to deaths all around.

Once the party is set, the Ouss'Nassath convoy emerges in the distance, and Kayleth and her aids move to the other side of the tunnel for their part. **Proceed to Scene C2.**



## SCENE C2. REAR GUARD & SLAVES – AMBUSH

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene only if the characters have been directed here from **Scene B**.

### OUSS'NASSATH CONVOY

The convoy approaches without incident. While the drow are on alert, this cavern is fairly open and they're not expecting a sophisticated assault with help from illusions.

The convoy consists of 5 carts being pulled by a **female steeder** each. There are no drivers. The drow accompaniment walk alongside the carts. Each of the 5 carts contains 8 slaves – their hands are shackled and attached to the floor of the cart by a chain.

The following events take place in sequential order:

1. The convoy stops 30ft ahead of the passage.
2. 6 drow separate from the convoy and begin heading toward the passage.
3. 2 of the remaining drow go up to different steeders and begin unlatching the attached wagons while 2 others go to one of the wagons and begin unlocking the slave chains from the wagon, so as to unload them.
4. The drow scouting party reaches the entrance of the tunnel.
5. Kayleth's message comes through the sending stone that the drow have reached the other side and that they're ready to spring the ambush – IT'S GO TIME! (Kayleth's message is quiet enough to not be heard more than 20 feet away).
6. (3 rounds later) If the characters have not yet sprung their trap, shouts are heard from the tunnel and the drow by the slaves become alert and all cast their innate darkness around the wagons – this is considered to happen ahead of initiative.

The Ouss'Nassath forces are led by a **Drow Arachnomancer** and/or a **Drow Priestess of Lolth**. The arachnomancer is a formidable opponent and is not encountered by parties of average strength or lower.

#### COMBAT

The drow are adept at fending off ambushes and make use of cover and positioning. They are unlikely to break ranks or leave the convoy unless they have the upper hand. The arachnomancer is an exception, they are brash and may venture out to hunt.

#### EXPLORATION

The steeders can be spooked into running and spilling out the untethered drow. They can also be handled using *animal handling* and any spell or ability that typically works on beasts (DC15). Shackle locks can be picked with thieves' tools or broken with athletics (DC13).

#### SOCIAL

A DC15 (Charisma) Deception may be used to draw some of the drow away from the wagons, so long as it's done in the 3-round window before **Kayleth's** forces engage on their side.

More elaborate plans can be accommodated with additional DM adjudication.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

**Very Weak:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 5 drow,

**Weak:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 2 drow elite warriors, 3 drow

**Average:** 2 drow elite warriors, 3 drow and 1 drow priestess of Lolth

**Strong:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 1 drow arachnomancer, 2 drow elite warriors, 2 drow

**Very Strong:** 1 drow priestess of Lolth, 1 drow arachnomancer, 4 drow elite warriors.

**All Versions:** The Drow Priestess does not summon.

### COMPLICATIONS & SLAVES

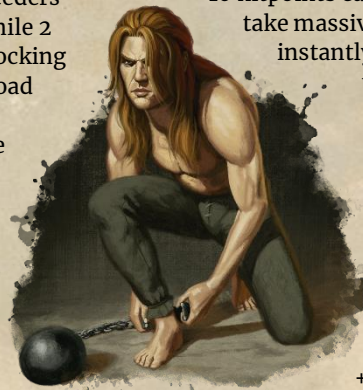
Use **Appendix 13** to keep track of all the slaves during this combat! There are 40 **commoner** slaves, they have 10 hitpoints each and go last in initiative. Unless they take massive damage, the slaves do not die instantly when knocked unconscious, instead they get 1 death saving throw with disadvantage and die upon failing.

**Round 1.** During the first round of combat, all the drow are in exposed (regular) positions.

**Round 2.** Starting this round, the drow realize they're being ambushed and jump into the slave carts for cover. As long as there are at least 2 slaves alive in their cart, drow get

+2AC vs ranged attacks and any ranged attack that misses them has a 50% chance of hitting a slave instead.

**Round 3.** Starting this round, the drow in the slave carts are actively using the slaves to shield themselves. As long as at least 2 living slaves remain in the cart, the drow now have +5AC vs. ranged attacks and any ranged attack that misses them hits a slave. They also have +2AC vs. melee attacks and any melee attack that misses them hits a slave.



## SCENE D. AMBUSH WRAP-UP

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this only if the characters have completed their part of the ambush in either **Scene B** or **Scene D**.

#### MISSION FAILURE

If less than 10 slaves survived, the first objective is considered to have failed and the only possible reward for the characters is the unlock of Axehead's Coat.

### DEVELOPMENT

- If characters did the slave rescue (**Scene C2**), Kayleth's crew joins them in the larger cavern having slaughtered the scouts.
- If the characters did the scout ambush, they venture through the passage and join up with Kayleth's forces there. The battle here was not without casualties as only 30 of the 40 slaves survived.

### TREASURE

- Characters recover the **Slippers of the Arachnomancer** from the bodies of the drow. Refer to **Appendix 9** for details.
- If Axehead had been with the party and died heroically in his fury, the party also recovers **Axehead's Coat of Beaks**. Refer to **Appendix 9** for details.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters must pick their next task in getting the liberated slaves safely to Melvaunt.

### AREA INFORMATION

As per **Scene C**.

### DEVELOPMENT

With the ambush successful, it is now time to deliver the slaves safely to the surface. The best route to the surface takes several days and goes past an Ouss'Nassath outpost. An outpost that is likely to send reinforcements.

The plan is to once again divide and conquer – with one group leading the slaves and the second group riding away to cut off the potential reinforcements or a patrol. The two forces would then reconvene farther up the road.

The characters once again have a choice of whether to be the ambush party or the escort party. Kayleth shares some details about the two missions.

- The slaves' ultimate destination is the surface, so it makes sense for the characters to take the **escort** mission as they'll eventually be the ones to take the liberated to the surface and Melvaunt.
- At the same time, the Underdark is home to a variety of diverse dangers and drow would be more adept to spotting them.
- The potential **reinforcements ambush** is fairly straight forward mission that either contingent should be able to handle.
- Kayleth refers to some of the party's specific strengths here to point out how they might be well suited for both missions (not so much as to make the choice for them).
- There might also be treasure on the drow at the ambush but likely nothing to find in the Underdark.

The characters get a long rest ahead of taking on either mission. This takes place away from the ambush tunnel, but prior to reaching either of areas for this mission.

If the characters choose the **reinforcements ambush**, proceed to **Episode 3 – Scene A**.

If the characters choose the **escort** proceed to **Episode 3 – Scene B**.

# EPISODE 3: PASSAGE TO LIGHT (STORY OBJECTIVE 2)

**Estimated Duration: 60 Minutes**

## SCENE A. ANOTHER AMBUSH

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene if the characters have chosen the **reinforcements ambush** during the wrap-up of **Episode 2**.

### OBJECTIVES

To protect the convoy of the liberated, characters must cut off the Ouss'Nassath reinforcements.

### AREA INFORMATION

The directions toward the outpost eventually brings characters to the **Giant's View Cavern** – a massive 150ft high cavern that stretches east to west. Characters enter the massive cavern from the west side, along the bottom. This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The cavern seems to stretch eastward forever (more than 300ft) and is 150ft wide. Refer to Map in **Appendix 7**.

**Lighting.** The cavern is dark. Be sure to take darkvision range into account when exploring.

**The High Path.** 80ft to the immediate north of the entrance the characters come in through is a high ledge for which the cavern is named. It is located 60ft up and with no easy access from the ground.

### DEVELOPMENT

Kayleth has briefed the group that no matter which path reinforcements take, they'll need to come through this cavern. They'll take either low or the high path.

Two rounds after the characters enter the cavern, the drow reinforcements begin to approach from 400ft away. Given vision limitation and darkness, they are likely not seen, but may be heard. The DC to hear the approaching drow is 14, and +1 for every 100ft of distance between them and the perceiving character.

The drow are mounted on riding lizards and traveling at 60ft per round (dashing) along the northern wall of the cavern. They are traveling on the vertical surface of the wall, 30ft up and are headed toward the high path.

### THE NEGOTIATION OPTION

The drow outpost received a message that their convoy had been ambushed. They can't be convinced to turn back, but can potentially be deceived into a conversation – drawing them to the ground prior to combat.



### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

The drow party consists of 6 riders each atop a **giant riding lizard**. All the riders are adept at mounted combat and have the following adjustments while they are mounted and aren't incapacitated:

- They have advantage on melee attack rolls against any unmounted creature that is smaller than their mount.
- They can force an attack targeted at their mount to target them instead.
- If their mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Very Weak:** 5 **drow** (24 hitpoints), 1 **drow elite**

**Weak:** 4 **drow** (24 hitpoints), 2 **drow elite**

**Average:** 4 **drow** (24 hitpoints), 1 **drow elite**, 1 **priestess of Lolth**

**Strong:** 3 **drow** (24 hitpoints), 2 **drow elite**, 1 **drow house captain**, 1 **deep dragon breath attack\***

**Very Strong:** 4 **drow elite**, 1 **drow house captain**, 1 **drow priestess of Lolth**, 1 **deep dragon breath attack\***

**All Versions:** The **drow priestess of Lolth** does not summon.

\* **Ithradinax**, a **young deep dragon** of House Ouss'Nassath is following 100ft behind the drow party. She uses the stats of a **young red shadow dragon** with the following adjustments: her color is actually a deep purple and her "shadow breath" is replaced with "disintegration breath" and instead does force damage. Replace Necrotic resistance and Fire immunity with Force and Cold respectively.

**Purpose and preparation:** For this encounter, **Ithradinax** has a very specific purpose and creatures reduced to zero hitpoints by her breath are knocked unconscious rather than transformed to shadows. The cavern's air currents provide extra speed for her swoop-in and grant her advantage on all saving throws during the first round of combat.

**Ithradinax** is not willing to risk fully engaging the characters. For strong and very strong parties, she swoops in and unleashes her breath once before flying off. Weaker parties simply see her flying away in the distance. She is not intended to be engaged and flees after using her breath. **Ithradinax** is the spawn of **Matron Ouss'Nassath** (who is capable of shapeshifting between her drow and dragon forms and procreating in both).

Proceed to **Scene C** upon completion.

## SCENE B. TRAVERSING OF MADNESS

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene if the characters have chosen the **escort** during the wrap-up of **Episode 2**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters must escort the convoy of the liberated on a journey of several days through the Underdark.

### SCENE TEMPLATE

This scene allows the DM to craft a unique storyline of a perilous escort journey through the Underdark.

#### DM TIP

This section requires extra improvisation or preparation from the DM. **Appendix 10** includes a detailed example of how this it might play out. Change up these rules if you need to!

Travel to the rendezvous point with the Tor'Erhyl forces takes 3-4 days. As such, this scene should play out (differently) 2 or 3 times. If there are time constraints, the third day should be skipped. The storyline of this journey is that of the party traveling through an area heavily infused with Faerzress, resulting in a variety of madness effects that must be dealt with. **Appendix 10** contains additional tables used in this scene.

Designing each day consists of 6 components:

1. **Determine Adventurer Prowess.** The characters make 4 skill checks that represent them performing various tasks throughout the day. Every failure increases the number of the liberated that succumb to madness.
2. **Determine Madness Spread.** The number of the liberated affected by madness each day is 3, plus an extra 1 for every failed check on the day.
3. **Determine Madness Effects.** On **Day 1** of the journey, roll on the **short-term madness** table for each of the affected NPCs– this is the characters' initial introduction to dealing with madness. On Days 2 and/or 3, roll on the **long-term madness** table.
4. **Determine Obstacle.** Roll on the **obstacle table** in **Appendix 10** or choose one. The obstacles provided are trivial to navigate by a sane and composed party, however, they turn deadly when faced with madness.
5. **Set the scene and resolve the day.** Based on the random elements and madness, it is up to the DM to set the scene for the day and allow the players to apply their skills and ingenuity to resolve the

situation. Madness can be cured using the methods detailed in **Appendix 10**, however, it is expected that there are not enough resources to cure all.

Allow the characters to take whatever actions they wish and set a check of DC15 or higher for success. The liberated are weak and in the Underdark, the consequences of mistakes are deadly. When checks are failed, some of the liberated likely die. See the **consequences** table in **Appendix 10** for suggestions on how to resolve – don't hold back!

6. **Determine Madness Effect on Characters.** At the end of the day – prior to rest, every character must succeed on a **Wisdom** saving throw or finish their rest with a flaw taken from the **indefinite madness table**. Each character can only gain one of these flaws during the adventure. The DC of the check is 15 + the number of liberated that died that day.

### ADVENTURER PROWESS SKILL CHECKS

Having been given directions (and potentially a guide), characters escort their liberated charges through the Underdark. The journey has a number of challenges – finding safe places to rest, finding food and water for the entirety of the party, maintaining order among the liberated, and protection from predators. The activities can either ALL be done as a group, or the characters may designate specific people to each task, in the latter case, no character can partake in more than 2 tasks.

Once characters have been designated, perform A group (if multiple participants) or individual check for each task. Add the results and use the average. The DC of all checks is 15.

- **Scouting** – Wisdom (Survival)
- **Foraging** – Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) – character choice.
- **Leadership** – Charisma (Any) – character choice.
- **Protection** – Constitution (Perception)\* this is a special check that represents the ability to remain vigilant over a long period time.

If a character wishes to use spellcasting to substitute one of these checks (as with the *summon food and water* spell), they instead use their spellcasting modifier to make the check – on a failure, the spell is considered cast, but has odd results due to the Faerzress interference. Characters should be made aware of potential spell mishaps before casting.

### CONCLUDING THE JOURNEY

The journey can be ended at any time by introducing the arrival of the Tor'Erhyl forces and proceeding to **Scene C**.

## SCENE C. RENDEZVOUS

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene once the characters have completed either **Scene A** or **Scene B**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters meet up with the Tor'Erhyl forces and set off for the safety of the surface.

### DEVELOPMENT

Characters meet up with Kayleth and her forces. Kayleth is distraught at presence of a deep dragon among the Ouss'Nassath forces. She shares that while it's always been rumored that Matron Ouss'Nassath can turn into a dragon, the fact that she seemingly has others at her command is unsettling. But that is a worry for another day.

From here, it is only a safe day-long journey to the surface and the characters must proceed on their own.

### BONUS OBJECTIVE B.

If there is no time for **Bonus Objective B**, the remainder of the party's journey to the surface is uneventful.

Proceed to the adventure's conclusion in **Wrap: Concluding the Adventure**.

**Bonus Objective B** can be undertaken at this point after the characters part with the Tor'Erhyl forces. It takes approximately 1 hour and is detailed in **Appendix 4**.





## WRAP-UP: CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Characters manage to make their way to the surface and back to Melvaunt.

In Melvaunt, **Liana Tuffletackle** stakes charge of the liberated and promises to get them integrated into free society.

Both her and many of the liberated themselves offer heartfelt gratitude for the rescue.

House Tor'Erhyl – the representatives of which are not present – is greatly praised. It would seem that there are some good drow after all and that this alliance may yet lead to great and even more slaves set free.

The characters earn the **Knowledge of House Ouss'Nassath** story award.

### CREATURES/NPCs

**Liana Tuffletackle** (“of the Waterdeep Tuffletackles!”) – Female Halfling Noble, Lords Alliance, NG. (Liana

Tuffletackle previously appeared in *Six Striking Swords*, where she had been charged with resolving the trade stoppage on the route to Thar.)

#### *What Does She Want?*

Liana is a low-ranking member of the Lords Alliance who has been posted to Melvaunt to look after the surging trade interests there. It's not a great post – especially with the many dangers in nearby Thar.

Liana is business-savvy and intelligent, but not much use in the field.

Liana serves the Lords Alliance interests: prosperity of trade and safety of the region are her top priorities – things she takes very seriously indeed!

*What Does She Know?* Allies in the Underdark are invaluable.

### STORY AWARD

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

#### *Story Award. Knowledge of House Ouss'Nassath.*

You have gained some insight or secret of a drow house. Other houses of the Zethlentyn Protectorate may find this valuable. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.



# ADVENTURE REWARDS

## ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

The characters receive 2 advancement checkpoints and 2 treasure checkpoints for each story objective that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective A:** Rescue at least 10 Slaves from the Ouss'Nassath convoy.
- **Story Objective B:** Escort the liberated safely to Melvaunt.

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each bonus objective that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A:** Gather intelligence on the convoy.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Deal with unexpected drow encounter.

## PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn the following player rewards for completing the adventure:

### MAGIC ITEM UNLOCKS

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

*Slippers of the Arachnomancer* (Slippers of spider climbing with the War Leader minor property)  
*Wondrous Item, Uncommon, Requires Attunement, Table F*  
The bearer can use an action to cause his or her voice to carry clearly for up to 300 feet until the end of the bearer's next turn. When used in this manner, the bearer's voice gains a tinge

*Armor of Gleaming (spiked armor),  
Armor, common*

Once belonging to the battlerager Axehead Moontunnel, this armor is of his own strange design and crafted from parts of Underdark creatures. The softer parts are made of boiled roper skin and the spikes are beaks taken from various Underdark horrors. The mask features heads of two small axes strapped together to form a sort of visor. Though made of unpleasant materials, the armor never seems to get any dirtier than it already is – blood runs right off it! The wearer of this armor feels as though they can take on any opponent.

## STORY AWARDS

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

**Story Award. Knowledge of House Ouss'Nassath.**

Characters have gained some insight or secret of a drow house. Other houses of the Zethlentyn Protectorate may find this valuable. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.

## DUNGEON MASTER 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 &

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure

## MERIELE TOR'ERHYL (MERRY-ELLE TOR-AY-HILL) – DROW FEMALE, MATRON OF HOUSE TOR'ERHYL, CG

**Personality.** Meriele Tor'Erhyl looks very young (early 20s in human terms) but is over 200 years old. Typically, she smiles brightly and speaks excitedly. Her mannerisms mask a cunning and calculating mind and though the deception is not entirely malicious, neither is it incidental.

**Ideal:** Change. We must help bring to life Eilistraee's vision for our race.

**Bond:** I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

**Flaw:** Responsibility weighs heavily upon me and avoid forming deep bonds because of it.

## KAYLETH TOR'ERHYL (KAY-LETH TOR-AY-HILL) – DROW FEMALE, SWORD DANCER OF EILISTRAEE, CG

**Personality.** Kayleth is a high-ranking member of the house Tor'Erhyl. Extremely independent, Kayleth was chosen as the one to make contact with the surface and prevent the most recent slave-taking raid – a mission that was a great success. Kayleth had also been tasked with guiding surface adventurers safely down to Zethlentyn.

**Ideal:** Freedom. Chains are meant to be broken, as are those who would forge them.

**Bond:** I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

**Flaw:** Once I pick a goal, I become obsessed with it to the detriment of everything else in my life.

## LIANA TUFFLETACKLE, NG

**Personality.** Liana is part of a minor noble family in Waterdeep and a low ranked Lords Alliance member. She wasn't thrilled to be sent to the backwater town of Melvaunt, but has decided to make the best of it by improving trade and looking out for Lords Alliance interests.

**Ideal:** Responsibility. It is my duty to respect the authority of those above me, just as those below me must respect mine.

**Bond:** I will face any challenge to win the approval of my family.

**Flaw:** I put on a brave face, but am actually quite afraid of violent conflict and getting hurt.

## AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL, CN

**Personality.** Axehead is driven by grief, drink, and a quest for vengeance against the Ouss'Nassath drow.

**Ideal:** Strength. I will train to become as strong as my brother once was.

**Bond:** One day I will avenge my brother's death.

**Flaw:** I have lived alone for a long time and do not believe anyone is my friend or ally.

## TALABASTE AUVRYMTOR, LE

**Personality.** Talabaste is highly intelligent, learned, and almost unwaveringly calm. She knows when to speak, what to say, and when to keep quiet. She very much believes that information is power and shares only when it is in her interest to do so. House Auvrymtor does not worship Lolth and is known for their ability to bind devils into service. The nature of their ability to do so is a mystery.

**Ideal:** Power. Knowledge is the path to power and domination.

**Bond:** I sold my soul for knowledge and intend to make the best of the deal.

**Flaw:** Most people scream and run when they see a demon. I stop and take notes on its anatomy.

# APPENDIX 2. CREATURE STATISTICS

## AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL (GLADIATOR)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 16 (Studded Leather, Shield)

**Hit Points** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** STR +7, DEX +5, CON +6

**Skills** Athletics +10, Intimidation +5

**Senses** Passive Perception 11

**Languages** Any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Brave.** The gladiator has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

**Brute.** A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the gladiator hits with it (included in the attack).

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gladiator makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Spear.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Shield Bash.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** The gladiator adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the gladiator must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

## COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Senses** Passive Perception 10

**Languages** Any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

## DROW

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 13 (3d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	11 (0)	11 (0)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Language** Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

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

**Hand Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

**Source:** *Monster Manual*

## HELLTOUCHED

Where the adventure calls for a Helltouched version of this monster, refer to Scene C of Bonus Objective B for adjustments.

## DROW ARACHNOMANCER

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (Studded Leather)

**Hit Points** 162 (25d8 + 50)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving** Throws CON +7, INT +9, CHA +8

**Skills** Arcana +9, Nature +9, Perception +7, Stealth +8

**Damage Resistances** Poison

**Senses** Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 17

**Languages** Elvish, Undercommon can speak with spiders

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Change Shape (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The drow can use a bonus action to magically polymorph into a giant spider, remaining in that form for up to 1 hour. It can revert to its true form as a bonus action. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. It can speak and cast spells while in giant spider form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying in humanoid form melds into the giant spider form. It can't activate, use, wield, or otherwise benefit from any of its equipment. It reverts to its humanoid form if it dies.

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The drow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: dancing lights

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate (self only)*

**Spellcasting.** The drow is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It

regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*  
1st–5th level (3 5th-level slots): *conjure animals (spiders only)*, *crown of madness*, *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *fly*, *giant insect*, *hold monster*, *insect plague*, *invisibility*, *vampiric touch*, *web*, *witch bolt*

1/day each: *dominate monster*, *etherealness*, *eyebite*

**Spider Climb.** The drow can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.  
**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Web Walker.** The drow ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drow makes two poisonous touch attacks or two bite attacks. The first of these attacks that hits each round deals an extra 26 (4d12) poison damage to the target.

**Poisonous Touch (Humanoid Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (8d6) poison damage.

**Bite (Giant Spider Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 26 (4d12) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Web (Giant Spider Form Only; Recharge 5-6).** Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Hit: The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 15 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

## DROW ELITE WARRIOR

Medium humanoid (Elf), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 18 (studded leather, shield)

**Hit Points** 71 (11d8+22)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Con +5, Wis +4

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +10

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception: 14

**Languages** Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drow makes two shortsword attacks.

**Shortsword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

**Hand Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** The drow adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

**Source:** *Monster Manual*

### HELLTOUCHED

Where the adventure calls for a Helltouched version of this monster, refer to Scene C of Bonus Objective B for adjustments.

## DROW HOUSE CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (Chain Mail)

**Hit Points** 162 (25d8 + 50)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws:** DEX +8, CON +6, WIS +6

**Skills:** Perception +6, Stealth +8

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

**Languages:** Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Battle Command.** As a bonus action, the drow targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see or hear the drow, the target can use its reaction to make one melee attack or to take the Dodge or Hide action.

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

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

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drow makes three attacks: two with his scimitar and one with his whip or his hand crossbow.

**Scimitar.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

**Whip.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is an ally, it has advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

**Hand Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** The drow adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

**Source:** *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

## DROW PRIESTESS OF LOLTH

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (Scale Mail)

**Hit Points** 71 (13d8 + 13)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** CON +4, WIS +6, CHA +7

**Skills** Insight +6, Perception +6, Religion +4, Stealth +5

**Senses** Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

**Languages** Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

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

At will: dancing lights

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate (self only)*

Spellcasting. The drow is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The drow has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *poison spray*, *resistance*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *detect poison and disease*, *ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *protection from poison*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals (2 giant spiders)*, *dispel magic*

4th level (3 slots): *divination*, *freedom of movement*

5th level (2 slots): *insect plague*, *mass cure wounds*

Sunlight Sensitivity. *While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drow makes two scourge attacks.

**Scourge.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 17 (5d6) poison damage.

**Summon Demon (1/Day).** The drow attempts to magically summon a yochlol with a 30 percent chance of success. If the attempt fails, the drow takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage. Otherwise, the summoned demon appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of its summoner, acts as an ally of its summoner, and can't summon other demons. It remains for 10 minutes, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

## GIANT RIDING LIZARD

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 19 (3d10+3)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

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

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Source:** *Out of the Abyss*



## ITHRADINAX – YOUNG DEEP DRAGON (YOUNG RED SHADOW DRAGON)

Large dragon, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 18 (Natural Armor)

**Hit Points** 178 (17d10 + 85)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+26)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** DEX +4, CON +9, WIS +4, CHA +8

**Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +8

**Damage Resistances** Necrotic

**Damage Immunities** Fire

**Senses** Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Living Shadow.** While in dim light or darkness, the dragon has resistance to damage that isn't force, psychic, or radiant.

**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, the dragon can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the dragon has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

**Claw.** Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

**Shadow Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The dragon exhales shadowy fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The shadow is under the dragon's control.

## TALABASTE AUVRYMTOR (DROW SHADOWBLADE)

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (Studded Leather)

**Hit Points** 150 (20d8 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+1)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws:** DEX +9, CON +7, WIS +6

**Skills:** Perception +6, Stealth +9

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

**Languages:** Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

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

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate (self only)*

**Shadow Step.** While in dim light or darkness, the drow can teleport as a bonus action up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. It then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drow makes two attacks with its shadow sword. If either attack hits and the target is within 10 feet of a 5-foot cube of darkness created by the shadow sword on a previous turn, the drow can dismiss that darkness and cause the target to take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The drow can dismiss darkness in this way no more than once per turn.

**Shadow Sword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage. The drow can then fill an unoccupied 5-foot cube within 5 feet of the target with magical darkness, which remains for 1 minute.

**Hand Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

**Source:** *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

### HELLTOUCHED

Where the adventure calls for a Helltouched version of this monster, refer to Scene C of Bonus Objective B for adjustments.

# APPENDIX 3. BONUS OBJECTIVE A

## SCENE A. A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

### PREREQUISITES

Taking place at the end of **Episode 1** and before **Episode 2**. This objective takes approximately 1hr to complete.

### OBJECTIVES

Matron Tor'Erhyl suggests that the characters may spend an evening in Zethlentyn Prime – familiarizing themselves with the area and perhaps learning rumors. Characters must then do covert research into the Ouss'Nassath convoy.

### WHERE TO GO

This objective presents an opportunity for the characters to learn more about Zethlentyn if they wish. If they are interested in finding out more about the Protectorate in general, its brief history can be found in **Appendix 11**.

The history can be relayed in a variety of ways – by members of House Tor'Erhyl, encounters in the trade district, or simply by providing them with the handout.

#### ZETHLENTYN PRIME: THE TRADE DISTRICT

As a result of a strange turn of historical events, the Trade District of Zethlentyn is not considered “common ground” and as such is subject to first Prime Law that denotes anything that happens there as “house business”.

This does not quite make it a lawless place, however. The district is technically territory of House Quiltrin, who are responsible for running the majority of Zethlentyn's trade.

In addition to their security force, they employ a number of House Claddatar warriors to help keep the peace.

While there is not a judiciary system in place, the general rule is “do not disrupt trade or make a nuisance of yourself”. Those who find themselves on the wrong end of this main rule are thrown out of the district – not always alive.

In large part, the peace is kept by the fact that not even the most powerful houses want to make an enemy of House Quiltrin. They control the trade and no one wants to be left out.

Petty crime that doesn't disrupt greater trade is largely left to the individuals to sort out. This includes everything from tavern brawls to minor theft.

Whether or not they're interested in general history, characters are told that the **Trade District** is where they should go to spend the evening. The two locations of interest to the characters are **The Luxarat Bazaar** and the **Food for Thoughts Tavern**.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN THE TRADE DISTRICT

- **Luxarat Bazaar**. It may be called that, but locals refer to it simply as “the glow”, on the count of merchants using particularly bright light sources at their stalls, making the overall market area visibly glow from far outside the city. This is the main market of Zethlentyn where one can either buy or make arrangements to buy everything from groceries to slaves.
- **Food for Thoughts Tavern**. Yes, it's a tavern run by an illithid. No, she is not dangerous. Well, yes, she is dangerous. But not to customers. It's a cool place, worth a visit.
- **Other Locations**. The Trade District has a number of other interesting buildings and locations, none of which are of significance to this adventure. All typically purchasable items from the PHB are available in this district.
- **Temples**. The only spellcasting services in the Trade District come from the Temple of Waukeen.

### ABOUT AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL

A possible ally for the party is **Axehead Moontunnel**, a dwarf who has apparently gone entirely insane after his brother was killed by slavers. Axehead should be mentioned to the party only casually – Matron Tor'Erhyl doesn't approve of him, though Kayleth is happy to give a chance to anyone that wants vengeance against House Ouss'Nassath. No one at house Tor'Erhyl has any idea of where to look for him.

### VISITING THE TRADE DISTRICT

Characters are pointed to and expected to visit either or both of the bazaar and the tavern – which can be done in any order. The bazaar is detailed in **Scene B** and the tavern in **Scene C**. If they end up finding information on Axehead, they can encounter him in **Scene C**.

## SCENE B. THE GLOW

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene if the characters wish to visit the **Luxarat Bazaar**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters are looking to obtain information on House Ouss'Nassath and possibly on Axehead Moontunnel.

### AREA INFORMATION

This scene takes place at the Luxarat Bazaar, more commonly known as “the glow”. No map is required.

**Dimensions & Terrain.** “The glow” stretches out for more than 500ft in every direction and consists of open-air stalls, booths, and small buildings housing shops.

**Light.** As its common name suggests, “the glow” is extremely well lit, with illumination coming from everything short of the sun. Each merchant's stall is lit by either mushrooms, torches, candles, magically enchanted globes, or some odd combination of all four. While the bazaar area is considered to be brightly lit, though there are occasional alleyways and side-streets that are dimly lit. One would be hard pressed to find a totally dark corner here.

### DEVELOPMENT

The market is full of all kinds of merchants and many types of goods. Allow the characters to decide how they'd like to approach their search for information. Plenty of people are socializing and chatting, so while the characters are initially noticed, they're not the only “tourists”.

#### COMBAT

Many armed guards intervene if the characters attempt to attack or openly threaten merchants. Combat is not a viable option here, though starting a brief fight as some sort of diversion can work.

#### EXPLORATION

Characters should use their various skills to prove interesting to merchants. It doesn't take much more than a DC10 check to make an adventurer interesting enough for the merchant to keep them talking.

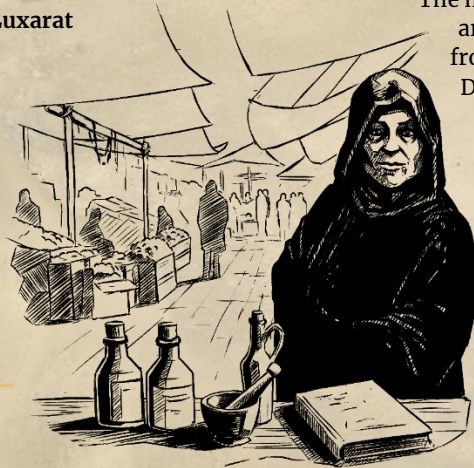
#### SOCIAL

If characters have clever ways of inquiring after information, they are able to gain it without too much effort. When such information is gained, it's typically in hushed tones and with an “oh, I shouldn't be telling you this”.

### CREATURES/NPCS

The majority of the merchants are drow, though there are some exotic merchants present as well – mostly from the Underdark races. There are Duergar, Derro, Deep Gnomes, and even a few Dwarves.

- **Drow.** Many of the drow merchants here are associated with House Quiltrin. These tend to be the more upscale sellers with better goods and shops. They are also more discreet with information.
- **Duergar.** The duergar merchants don't like anyone and pure greed tends to be their primary motivation.
- **Derro.** Derro often sell pieces of Underdark creatures. They talk fast and a lot of they say is irrelevant to the point of being gibberish.
- **Gnomes & Dwarves.** The gnomes and dwarves share a great distaste for slavery, but are also skittish and don't want to be known to divulge information. They have it hard enough keeping from ending up as slaves themselves.



### WHAT CAN BE LEARNED

With a combination of checks and social interactions, characters eventually learn the following:

- There are no slaves available for sale. Slave sales are rare and tend to happen as a special event.
- Rumor has it that there is a major slave shipment on the way. Apparently it's big enough to have warranted some high-ranking Ouss'Nassath nobles to accompany it – there could be a Priestess of Lolth or even an Arachnomancer along.
- Some of the derro sold several female steeders to House Ouss'Nassath not long ago. They're very proud of how well trained these are. They make excellent pack mounts that don't require a driver. They are very obedient if properly handled. These particular ones were trained to be docile and aren't a danger.
- Axehead Moontunnel used to frequent the Food for Thoughts Tavern.

## PLAYING THE PILLARS

## SCENE C. FOOD FOR THOUGHTS: ENTRANCE

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene if the characters wish to visit the Food for Thoughts Tavern.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters are looking to obtain information on House Ouss'Nassath and on Axehead Moontunnel.

### AREA INFORMATION

This scene takes place at the Food for Thoughts Tavern, which is located in the Trade District.

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Food for Thoughts is located a couple of blocks away from “the glow” on a busy through street.

**Entrance.** The tavern has a humorous – and clearly expensive – wooden sign that depicts the bust of a male humanoid holding a mug of beer. In the spot where the brain would be, a spinning piece of wood that turns with the wind has been installed. One side of the spinning piece depicts a brain and the other – in the same shape – depicts a roasted and delicious looking leg of some beast. The tavern’s name is also there for all to see.

The entrance door greets characters with a sign in multiple languages that reads “Mind your matters.”

**Light.** Both the exterior and the interior of the tavern are well lit, though shady corners do exist.

### DEVELOPMENT

When the characters arrive, they tavern is quite busy and there is odd-but-pleasant music coming from the stage where an intense derro with wild spiked hair is playing a leathery horn instrument.

Upon entry, every character that does not have their mind protected from telepathy (such as by a ring of mind shielding or a *mind blank* spell) hears a gentle feminine voice in their head that says:

*“Welcome to Food for Thoughts, where the name says it all!”*

If this is the character’s first visit to Food for Thoughts, the voice continues:

*“My name is Elthacnal'theel, though you may find simply Theel' easier to comprehend. Your private matters are safe, so long as you mind them. If you wish to avail yourself of our fine food and drink options, you need only think of it. If you would like to take advantage of the 'Food for Thoughts' exchange, I am here. I am always here. “*

The characters may continue telepathically conversing with Theel as they please. As they do this, a duergar server arrives and silently takes the characters to a table with the exact number of seats they need. If they want food or drink, he then brings them exactly what they want without ever speaking a word or asking (so long as their minds are not shielded, in which case they need to speak.)

### CREATURES/NPCs

**Theel(Elthacnal'theel).** Female illithid tavern keeper, N

Theel has run this tavern for many years and is a known-quantity in Zethlentyn, insofar as one can ever know an illithid.

Though Theel is not shy or scared, she rarely makes in-person appearances. She prefers to communicate telepathically from her well-secured office on the top floor of the tavern.

**What Does She Want?** Many years ago, after losing her hive – she doesn't talk about how it was lost – Theel realized that other

creatures' odd (to her) thoughts brought her quite a bit of pleasure to examine and interact with. Over time she found herself constantly disappointed that these delicious thoughts would end once she consumed the creature's brain. She spent some time exchanging various services for the opportunity to dive deep into others' thoughts without them dying. She found that enough were interested in such an exchange. Many of her clients at that time had been drow of Zethlentyn and eventually she worked out a deal to buy an old hotel, where should could read many thoughts.

Without prior agreement, Theel only reads surface thoughts, not intruding further. However, she always offers an opportunity to eat and drink free in exchange for letting her probe deeper thoughts.

Contrary to what one might assume, Theel does not always probe for deepest and darkest secrets. All kinds of thoughts – especially ones fraught with emotion – are interesting to her.

**What does she know?** Quite a lot actually. But she does not share private thoughts of her other clients. She can, however, point one in the right direction of who to approach. All for a price paid in thoughts.

**Theel's Employees.** Theel's employees are not enslaved or thralls. They do, however, allow her to control their minds while they are on shift as part of their employment (in the name of customer service!)



## SCENE C2. FOOD FOR THOUGHTS: AT THE TAVERN

### OBJECTIVES

Characters are looking to obtain information on House Ouss'Nassath and possibly on Axehead Moontunnel.

### AREA INFORMATION

As per Scene C1.

### TAVERN ATMOSPHERE

There are a two dozen or so patrons at the tavern, most are drow, but a few others are present. There are some merchants from “the glow” as well as others.

None of the drow are of particularly high station – perhaps such know better than to carry secrets into here.

While the serving staff are mostly silent, there are plenty of conversations between patrons and the party is able to engage them.



### FOOD FOR THOUGHTS EXCHANGE

The food and drink here are sold at standard PHB pricing and also include some finer options. A “Delicacies of the Underdark Sampler Platter” costs 10g and contains many exotic meats – expertly prepared. There is also a proprietary “Darkest Thoughts Stout” that is available for 2g a mug – it has a rich and creamy taste that compares favorably to even the finest dwarven ales.

One can obtain a single free meal and single drink here by opening their mind for Theel to look at their thoughts, if they are not hungry, two drinks for the price of one thought can be had. (These items cannot be resold.)

If a character wishes to take Theel up on the exchange, she probes deeper into their mind and learns of their emotional state, and something that looms large on their mind (such as something they worry over, love, or hate). A character can't lie to Theel, but they can somewhat direct her to look at a certain aspect of their thoughts. Theel is most interested in areas of strong emotional significance. This is a great opportunity for roleplay and allowing other players at the table discover more about each other's characters. Work with the players to have them reveal which thoughts Theel ends up probing.

If the characters do not want to exchange their thoughts for food or drink, they can also offer to

exchange them for information. Theel does not provide information herself (she is honest and upfront about this) but may direct them to others in the tavern who may be of interest.

### CREATURES/NPCs

There are two NPCs of significance in the tavern. Without Theel pointing him out, the characters are unable to identify the **drow mercenary**, though the drunk dwarf is fairly easy to spot.

- **Drow Mercenary.** One of the drow here is a houseless mercenary who does guard duty for various Underdark shipments. With a successful DC13 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check, he reveals that Ouss'Nassath slave transporters are trained to use slaves as cover in the event of an attack.
- **Drunk Dwarf.** There is a drunk dwarf of Clan Moontunnel here – he is passed out at a table in the corner. Once he is woken up and has another drink or two, he can be persuaded (DC12) to talk about Axehead.
- **Other NPCs.** Other NPCs in the tavern are of little use here, other than pointing them to the dwarf in the manner of “*that one's a moontunnel, maybe he knows*”.

### DEVELOPMENT

#### AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL: DRUNK DWARF'S STORY

Axehead's real name is **Bondar**. His brother **Boldar** was once a Clan Moontunnel warrior – a battlerager – “*those crazies used to clear out the tunnels of monstrocities by charging into lairs!*” Bondar (Axehead) himself wasn't much of a warrior, just an average mason.

One day, there was a misunderstanding with an Ouss'Nassath slave convoy and Boldar was killed. Bondar took his brother's armor and left the clan. He took to getting drunk and talking about revenge against Ouss'Nassath. The clan wanted no part of that trouble!

Eventually Bondar decided to honor his brother by getting drunk, putting on his armor and hunting whatever beasts he could find. He'd show up sometimes with odd pelts, eventually attached an axe to his helmet and grick beaks to his armor. He'd buy liquor and go off into the **Wild Tunnels** for weeks. Some say he had a hut out there, past **Bleak Lake**. Few people go into the Wild Tunnels – nothing there but wildlife.

If the character learn about Axehead's location, it is trivial for them to get directions to the Wild Tunnels and Bleak Lake. If they choose to visit there, this is detailed in **Scene D**.

## SCENE D. AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL: BATTLE!

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene if the characters have gained information Axehead's location in **Scene C**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters find and encounter the half-crazed battlerager Axehead Moontunnel.

### AREA INFORMATION

This scene takes the characters through an area of many narrow caves aptly called the Wild Tunnels and past a small subterranean body of water called Bleak Lake. The directions they were given are easy enough to follow and encounters with Underdark creatures in this area are trivial for a party of this experience level.

#### AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL: THE WHOLE STORY

Bondar's brother Boldar was a battlerager – a master of spiked armor fighting. His brigade was used to clear out Underdark monstrosities – and whatever else – in the areas where Clan Moontunnel was building.

One day, the battleragers killed some spiders that turned out to be of breeding stock for the Lolth worshippers of House Ouss'Nassath. These drow did not look kindly upon the matter and killed Boldar and several of his compatriots in response. This was a politically charged incident and was settled "diplomatically", meaning no real justice was served.

Bondar was heartbroken and went mad with rage and lust for revenge. He took his brother's spiked armor and vowed to become a battlerager himself. In the two years since the incident, Bondar has gone feral – hunting and killing gricks and other smaller Underdark monstrosities, getting hurt, patching himself up, drinking, and doing it all again.

His brother's armor – which had been enchanted to never get dirty from all the blood and gore – now has patches of hard roper skin and is wildly adorned with sharpened grick beaks, some of which are still fresh enough to carry the beasts' stench. There is also a mask comprised of the heads of two small axes strapped together to form a sort of visor.

Eventually the characters make their way to a small cavern with an odd hut. The lower half of the building looks to be made of expertly cut stone, however, as it goes up to its irregular 10–12ft height, it becomes a mishmash of odd leathers, metal, bones, and other parts that look to be made of various pieces of Underdark creatures.

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Scattered around the hut are a number of rocks, several empty ale barrels, a fire pit, and a variety of random junk. No specific map is required for this encounter.

### CREATURES/NPCs

#### Bondar "Axehead" Moontunnel, Male dwarf battlerager, CN

**What Does He Want?** Axehead wants revenge against House Ouss'Nassath and will do anything to get it. He considers himself to be "in training" and is not used to friendlies. He goes into a rage and attacks anyone entering his area and must be subdued (likely violently) before he sobers up and becomes reasonable enough to talk.

**What does he know?** Despite his name, Axehead's not the sharpest tool in the shed and doesn't have anything in terms of strategically useful information. He does know that his head has been hurting quite a lot – "darn headaches!". All the head-butting has caused some damage. Once Axehead is subdued (or killed), proceed to **Scene D2** for further learnings from him and his recruitment into the party.

#### ENCOUNTER: AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL.

There are no difficulty adjustments for this encounter. Axehead uses the **gladiator** stat block, with a number of purely cosmetic adjustments below.

- **Spiked Armor.** Axehead is wearing spiked armor but no shield, resulting in no change to his AC of 16.
- **Multiattack.** Axehead's 3 attacks include his armor spike attack as listed below.
- **Beakhammer.** This attack has all the same properties as listed under **spear** but uses a crude hammer with a huge beak on the end.
- **Headblade Headbutt and Armor Spike Slam.** These attacks have the same properties as listed under **shield bash**.

**Drunk and Angry.** Strong spirits course through Axehead's veins. The special brew is equivalent to the combined effects of a *potion of heroism* and a *potion of invulnerability*. (An extra supply of these can be found in his hut – see below.)

### TREASURE.

Axehead's hut contains the ingredients of his special brew – two concoctions smell strongly of alcohol, but act exactly as a *potion of invulnerability* and a *potion of heroism*. He gives these to the party if they succeed in recruiting him, otherwise they find them in the hut after the battle.

## SCENE D2. AXEHEAD MOONTUNNEL: LEARNINGS AND RECRUITMENT

Once he is subdued and able to see reason, Axehead immediately agrees to assist the characters against the drow.

The opportunity to avenge his brother is all he lives for and he is thrilled to be getting it.

Even the most cursory Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that Axehead has serious head trauma that is well beyond repair. It's a miracle he's still alive. (DM Note: this foreshadows his heroic demise.)

### CREATURES/NPCs

**Bondar "Axehead" Moontunnel, Male dwarf battlerager** is still present.

#### HOUSE BRIZ'BELAR AND THE BIRTH OF CLAN MOONTUNNEL

One of the protectorate's oldest houses, House Briz'belar has – by drow standards – a strange history. For more than 50 years, the house toiled tirelessly at one seemingly foolish task – digging miles through solid rock in order to create a passage from Zethlentyn to the Moondeep Sea. The unusual part was that the drow themselves did much of the tunneling. This unfit work for their race garnered them nicknames such as a "dirters" and "moles". It also nearly bankrupted and ruined the house. It wasn't until they switched tactics and took a full clan of dwarves as slaves that the tunnel was finally completed.

Yet the history drew stranger still. Enamored with their creation and wanting to make it grander still, the dwarves made an unheard-of alliance with the drow. No longer slaves, and calling themselves Clan Moontunnel, the dwarves not only continue making lifelong improvements to the Moontunnel that they helped complete, but also provide high-end building services to the rest of the protectorate.

With the tunnel complete and their former slaves turned into staunch allies, the fortunes of House Briz'belar turned around. Ships to sail the Moondeep Sea were built and new avenues for trade became open and profitable.

### TREASURE

If the characters kill Axehead, they are able to recover his armor. (Otherwise, it can be obtained upon Axehead's death later in the adventure)

#### Axehead's Coat of Beaks

*Armor of Gleaming (spiked armor), common*  
Once belonging to Dwarven battlerager Axehead, this armor was modified from its original design and patched with from parts of Underdark creatures. The softer parts are made of boiled roper skin and the various spikes are made beaks taken from gricks and other Underdark horrors. The mask features heads of two small axes strapped together to form a sort of visor. The wearer of this armor feels as though they can take on any opponent.





# APPENDIX 4. BONUS OBJECTIVE B

## SCENE A. A LIGHT IN THE DARK

### PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene once the characters after the characters have parted ways with the Tor'Erhyl forces at the end of **Episode 3, Scene C** and prior to **Wrapping-Up the Adventure**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters encounter an unrelated drow scouting party and must decide how to best deal with them.

### AREA INFORMATION

This scene takes place in the **Cavern of Fallen Spikes**. Characters that participated in *Six Summoned Swords* likely remember this massive cavern having been home to their final confrontation in that adventure.

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Refer to map in **Appendix 8**. This vast cavern is 150ft wide and just as high in many places. It reaches farther than any creature's darkvision can see. The cavern floor is covered by a myriad of giant fallen stalactites that came crashing down from the ceiling long ago. Some of these broke while falling, while many others instead became embedded in the floor and now form a forest of platforms of different sizes and heights.

**Lighting.** The cavern is totally dark except for one light in the distance. About 300ft from the entrance, on top of the platforms is a flickering light of a bonfire, with shapes seen around it. Those who had visited the cavern previously recognize the direction as that of a makeshift camp they had once rested at.

**Fissures.** The cavern contains many 10ft deep fissures. The floors of the fissures contain very faintly glowing and odd-smelling fungi. A DC13 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that closer exposure to the smell may have adverse effects. You do not want to stop and smell these mushrooms! If a creature touches them or inhales the odor of the mushrooms from within 5ft of them, they must succeed on a DC15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Utilizing the campsite and high ground is a group of 5 **helltouched drow elite warriors of House Auvrymtor**, led by a high ranked noble **Talabaste Auvrymtor (helltouched shadowblade)**. One of the warriors is on



### HAVE WE MET?

The adventure *Dungeon of the Mad Mage* features the somewhat similarly named drow House Auvryndar. There is no relation between that house and House Auvrymtor.

watch, another and **Talabaste** are awake but not keeping watch.

**Talabaste Auvrymtor – drow arcanist (helltouched shadowblade), LE.**

**What Does She Want?** Talabaste and her party have no special interest in either the characters or the liberated slaves. They are interested in keeping themselves safe and – as always – in learning any secrets they can for future exploitation.

**What Does She Know?** Talabaste is here studying the history of the fall of **House Vith'tyl** – a house that was their secret ally before its destruction. The battle took place years ago, though there are still the dead and spirits that can be interrogated. To this end, her group has recovered a number of bodies from nearby graves and intend to attempt various necromancies to learn what they once knew.

Though the characters may wish to keep the slaves a secret, Talabaste too did not expect her presence here to be found out (though the characters do not know this).

### DM TIP: TALABASTE

While Talabaste is not known to the characters, nor her presence here of great significance, she has a larger role to play in the greater saga of the Zethlentyn Protectorate. A proper introduction and her survival/escape in the event of violence are important.

### DEVELOPMENT

Unless the characters are brandishing bright light, they spot the fire in the distance from the cavern's entrance 300ft away well before they themselves are spotted. The only way out is through this cavern and the characters know this. It should also be clear that they have an opportunity for stealth and scouting here. Allow them to consider their approach and to keep in mind that they have vulnerable liberated among them.

**Scene B** details the various non-combat approaches to the situation – including scouting, stealth and social interaction.

**Scene C** details the combat encounter to be used in the event that violence occurs.

## SCENE B. TALKING AND STALKING

### OBJECTIVES

Characters encounter a neutral drow scouting party and must decide how to best deal with them.

### EXPLORING THE CAVERN

If the characters wish to stealth or scout, play it out and be sure to include the liberated and consider sight limitations.

### STEALTH

For simplicity, consider the drow as having a single lookout with +6 on their perception rolls and disadvantage to notice anything by sight that is beyond 120ft and not lit. All the drow in this contingent are able to see in magical darkness.

A stealth check needs to be made for every turn of movement across the cavern by a group or individual.

On the first turn that any stealth check is failed, the drow lookout remains in place, but quietly sends a scout (**helltouched drow elite**) down below, who begins making her way – also stealthily – toward the source of the disturbance. Roll contested checks to resolve the scouting. If the scout finds the party, she attempts to stealthily return and alert her group.

### SCOUTING

A scout sent ahead – in addition to the number of drow, can learn additional information with successful checks (DC13) at appropriate locations.

- Fissures and fungi described in **Scene A** can be encountered and interacted with throughout the cavern.
- Near the center of the cavern, at the base of one of the larger fallen spikes, there are a number of dug out holes. A DC13 **Intelligence (Investigation, Nature or Religion)** check identifies these as makeshift graves. They seem to have been recently excavated and contents removed.
- While within 100ft of the camp and at elevation of 30ft or higher, a successful DC13 **Wisdom (Perception)** check confirms these drow do not bear any Ouss’Nassath insignias. A subsequent DC13 **Intelligence (History)** – check, identifies this as House Auvrymtor – who are not openly allied with any other major house.
- If the excavated graves had been found and identified, success on the above Perception check also spots a number of humanoid remains that have been piled unceremoniously on the side of the camp – these are

the contents of the graves. A DC13 **Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** shows that such remains can be used for various types of necromancy, and if the check succeeds, a subsequent DC13 **Wisdom (Insight)** hints that this is quite a far way to go just to get a simple undead to raise.

### NEGOTIATIONS

Regardless of how negotiations go, they should be played out as fairly tense. Talabaste may not be looking for a fight, but she is constantly evaluating the best course of action for her group. Use the negotiators’ passive **Wisdom (Insight)** scores to provide hints as to what’s motivating her questions.

If the characters are attempting some sort of deception regarding hiding or disguising the slaves, use the characters’ **Charisma (Deception)** or appropriate kit skills, contested by the drow’s **Wisdom (Insight)**.

In negotiation, **Talabaste** has two objectives: keeping the secret of what she’s doing here and learning what the characters are up to. If the characters don’t poke around or ask questions, and tell her the truth about the slaves and the attack, she lets them pass without incident.

If the characters ask questions, are seen investigating the graves or hiding something, **Talabaste** questions their motives and allegiance. DC15 **Charisma (any other than Intimidation)** checks are required to allay her concerns.

If the characters attempt Intimidation and get a result of 15 or higher, this quickly backfires. Talabaste is evaluating whether the characters are a dangerous enough threat to warrant combat, so convincing her that they are is the wrong move.

### NEGOTIATIONS

Aside from meeting Talabaste’s two conditions, there are no other set expectations for resolving this negotiation. The characters do not know the drow’s true purpose and have little known leverage. The drow are chaotic at the best of times and may act in unpredictable ways (including NOT attacking!).

Consider the time remaining in the session and use your best judgment to wrap up the negotiation in a way that best befits the end of this dangerous journey through the Underdark. If the result is combat, refer to **Scene C**, otherwise, the characters make it past the drow and proceed to **Episode 3 - Wrapping-Up the Adventure**.

## SCENE C. A DEEPER DARKNESS

### PREREQUISITES

Use the elements provided in this to facilitate combat with the drow if directed to do so in **Scenes A** or **B**.

### OBJECTIVES

Characters have chosen to fight **Talabaste Auvrymtor** and her minions in order to escape the Underdark.

### AREA INFORMATION

As per **Scene A**.

### THE AUVRYMTOR HELLTOUCHED DROW

House Auvrymtor has a strong association with the powers of the Nine Hells and many – though not all – of their number draw their magical powers from these.

Whenever the enemy's name is listed as "Helltouched", the following adjustments should be made to their statistics:

- **Devil's Sight.** The Helltouched are able to see 120ft in magical and non-magical darkness.
- **Reduced Life.** The Helltouched have 10% less hitpoints. The 10% are taken off after any other encounter adjustments for party strength have been taken into consideration.
- **Devilish.** The Helltouched are susceptible to any abilities that affect fiends or devils such as divine smite. They are, however, native to the material plane and cannot be permanently banished.
- **Reduced Spell List.** (Helltouched Warlocks only) Helltouched Warlocks do not have access to their *1/day spells* unless specifically noted.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter consists of **Talabaste Auvrymtor (helltouched shadowblade)** and five helltouched **drow elite warriors**.

For weak and very weak parties, Talabaste does not engage the party at the start of battle. "Kill them, I will watch," she says. Once there are only two drow (any) left and one is below 50% hitpoints, Talabaste takes one turn attacking the character with the highest AC or HP in the party (DM choice). After she takes her turn, she offers for everyone to stop combat and walk away.

**Very Weak:** Replace three of the **helltouched drow elite** with **helltouched drow**.

**Weak:** Replace 2 of the **helltouched drow elite** with **helltouched drow**.

**Strong:** Replace one of the **helltouched drow elite** with a **helltouched drow house captain**.

**Very Strong:** Add one **helltouched drow house captain**.

For average and stronger parties, when half (rounding up) of her retinue are killed or Talabaste is reduced below 50 hitpoints, she flees, and at this point her forces do anything they can to let her escape. Her shadowstep ability helps enable this. Remember the sight limitations for targeting in the darkness.

**Tactics:** Talabaste and her forces are intelligent and experienced. Her party does everything they can to free her from being held or trapped.

# APPENDIX 5. MAP OF LOCATIONS IN THE UNDERDARK



# APPENDIX 6. MAP OF AMBUSH SITE



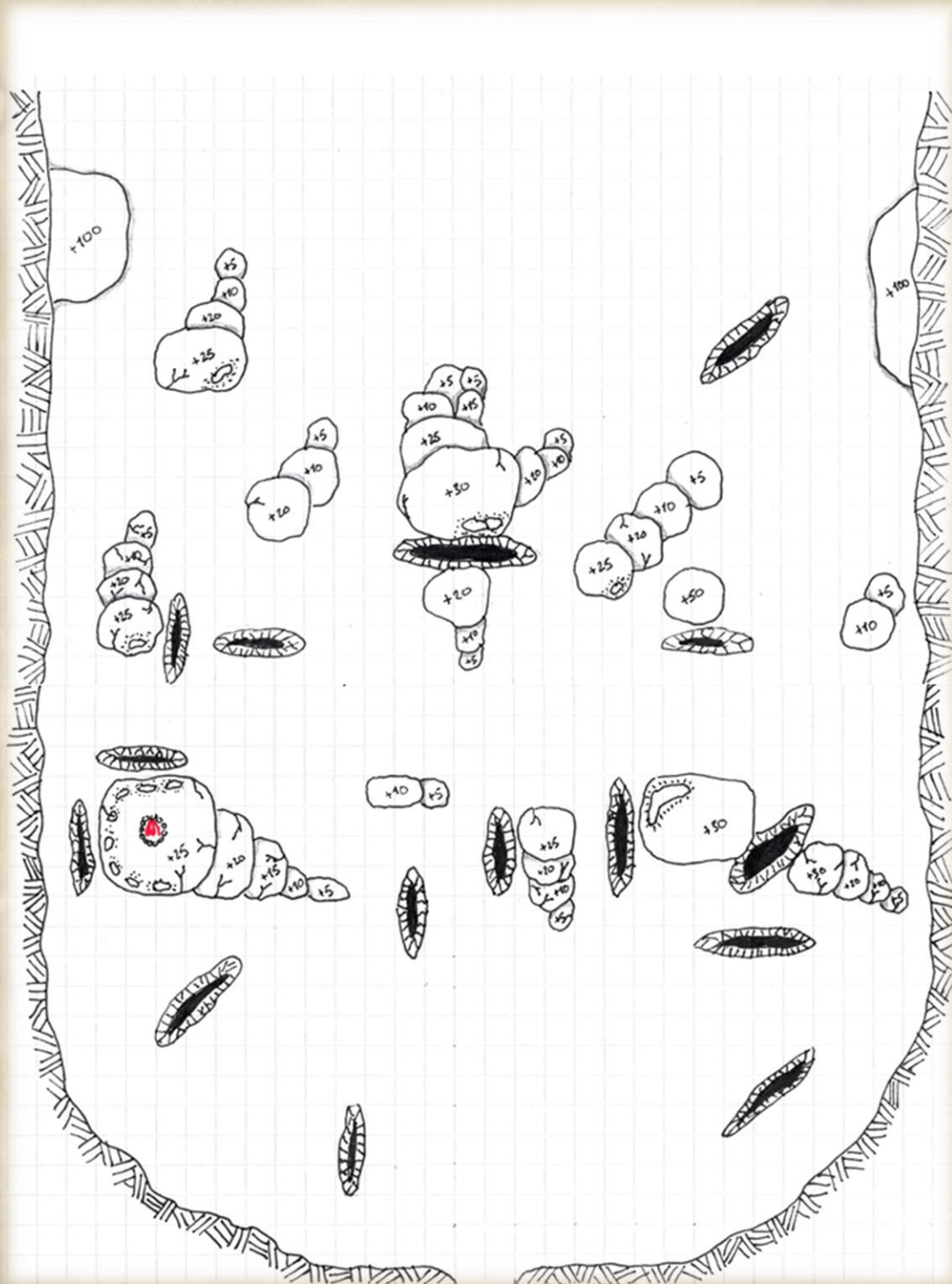
# APPENDIX 7. MAP OF GIANT'S VIEW CAVERN

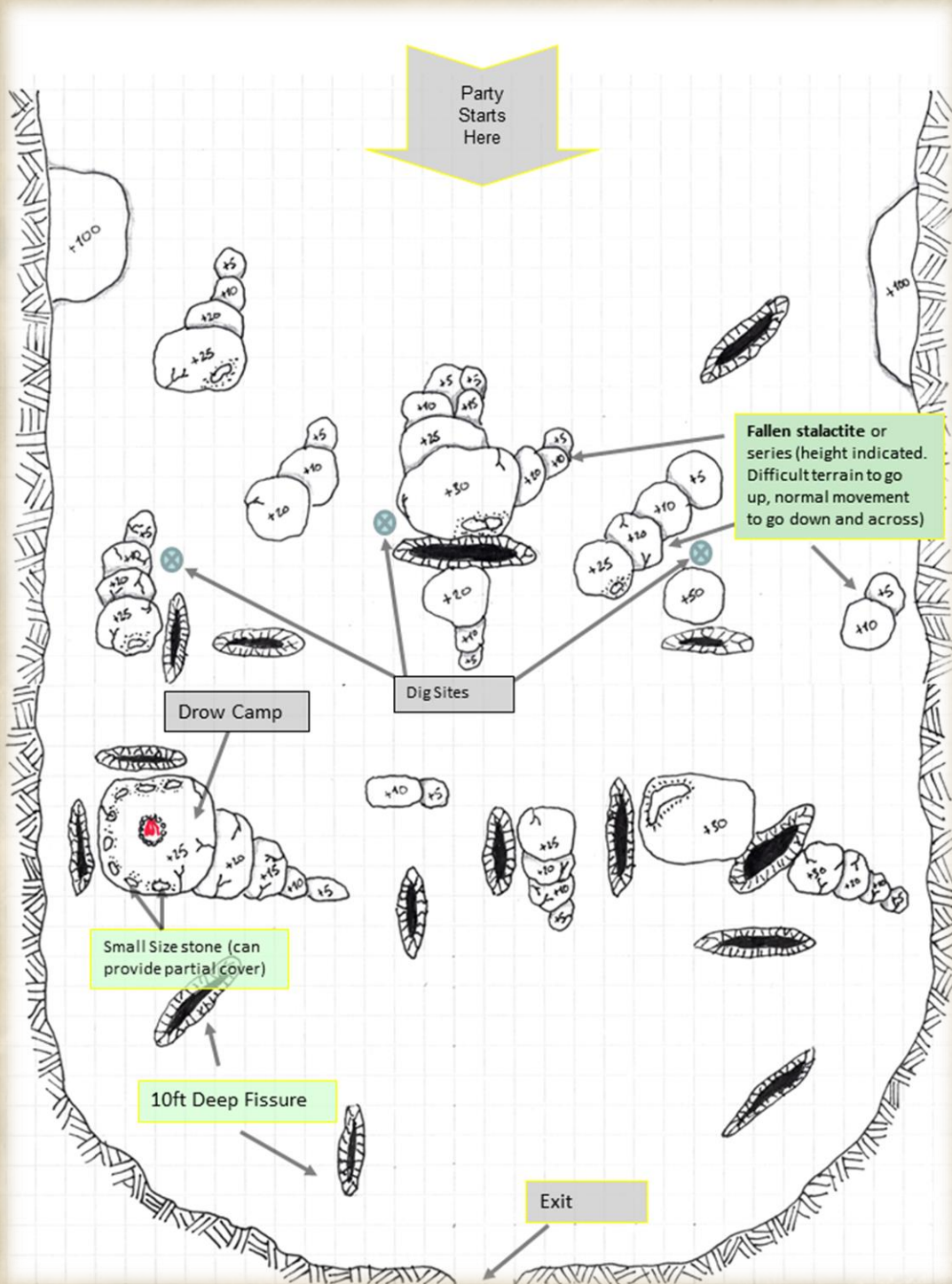
**Note on map:** the height of the cavern walls is not to scale. Each wall is approx. 00ft high and goes to the ceiling – there are no ledges to climb up on, except where the High View exit is.



# APPENDIX 8. MAP OF THE CAVERN OF FALLEN SPIKES

See next page for a version with a legend.







## APPENDIX 9. MAGIC ITEMS AND STORY AWARDS

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

### SLIPPERS OF THE ARACHNOMANCER

*Slippers of spider climbing with the War Leader* minor property

*Wondrous Item, Uncommon, Requires Attunement, Table F.*

The bearer can use an action to cause his or her voice to carry clearly for up to 300 feet until the end of the bearer's next turn. When used in this manner, the bearer's voice gains a tinge of malevolence regardless of what they say.

## AXEHEAD'S COAT OF BEAKS

*Armor of Gleaming (spiked armor).*

*Armor, common*

Once belonging to the battlerager Axehead Moontunnel, this armor is of his own strange design and crafted from parts of Underdark creatures. The softer parts are made of boiled roper skin and the spikes are beaks taken from various Underdark horrors. The mask features heads of two small axes strapped together to form a sort of visor. Though made of unpleasant materials, the armor never seems to get any dirtier than it already is – blood runs right off it! The wearer of this armor feels as though they can take on any opponent.

## STORY AWARD

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

**Story Award. Knowledge of House Ouss'Nassath.**

*You have gained some insight or secret of a drow house. Other houses of the Zethlentyn Protectorate may find this valuable. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.*

# APPENDIX 10. FAERZRESS AND UNDERDARK COMPLICATIONS TABLES

In addition to the tables provided here, the **Madness** tables from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 258-259) are provided later in this appendix.

## THE FAERZRESS AND THIS ADVENTURE

An unusual magical energy the drow call Faerzress pervades much of the Underdark. The origin of this mysterious arcane power is unknown. Drow and other Underdark creatures use the properties of areas suffused with Faerzress to protect their settlements.

Areas suffused with Faerzress can range in size from a few dozen feet across to several miles in diameter. These areas typically glow with dim light and interfere with divination and teleportation spells. Though Faerzress can't be dispelled, its effects are temporarily suppressed in the area of an antimagic field.

For the purposes of this adventure, the effects of the Faerzress are as follows:

- **Light.** While areas of strong enough Faerzress tend to have dim light everywhere, the areas traversed in this adventure are lit as noted.
- **Long-Range Teleportation.** Teleportation beyond line of sight fails when used in any of the Underdark areas where scenes in this adventure take place.
- **Short-Range Teleportation.** Teleportation to within line of sight requires the caster to succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d10 force damage and the teleportation attempt fails.
- **Madness.** Characters are only subjected to madness when specifically noted throughout the adventure.
- **Curing Madness.** A *calm emotions* spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a *lesser restoration* spell can rid a character of a short-term or long-term madness. A *greater restoration* spell or more powerful magic is required to rid a character of indefinite madness.

## LIBERATED COMPOSITION (1D6)

The liberated are composed of different races. At least half are surface humans and elves.

### 1d6 Race

1	Common Surface Races
2	Duergar
3	Dwarves
4	Gnomes
5	Orcs & Half-Orcs
6	Any exotic PC Race other than Dragonborn

## UNDERDARK OBSTACLES TABLE (1D4).

The obstacles do not require checks for the adventurers to navigate, but may pose issues for the liberated.

### d4 Obstacle

- 1 **A weak narrow bridge** over a chasm requires careful navigation one at a time.
- 2 **An underground river** has a moderate current and requires mindful crossing.
- 3 **Unstable Tunnel.** One of the claustrophobic tunnels between caverns has become unstable and requires calm and careful movement to avoid causing dangerous debris to fall.
- 4 **Gas Spores.** A cavern is home to a multitude of dangerous gas spores that explode if not carefully avoided.

## CONSEQUENCES TABLE (1D6).

The consequences here are suggestions. Feel free to come up with relevant consequences for the specific events at your table. The effect of failure is often harsh and deadly. Take care to adjust the gruesomeness of events to suit your group's comfort level.

### d6 Consequence

- 1 **Death by Obstacle.** An NPC may get washed away by a river, hit a poisonous spore or have sharp debris fall on its head.
- 2 **Lost.** Depending on the nature of their madness, an NPC may have wandered away from the group – never to be seen again.
- 3 **Killed or Injured by Another.** Madness brings out the worst in all – if there is a failure in leadership or watchfulness, the liberated may turn on each other.
- 4 **Found Dead.** An NPC could simply be found dead of disease, a predator or some other harm.
- 5 **Nuisance to Others.** If not handled properly, an NPC can prove a nuisance to others. As a result, 1 or 2 more of the liberated succumb to madness and must be dealt with.
- 6 **Disturbing Behavior.** The NPC's condition takes a toll on the party, all PCs must make an additional save against their own madness as per **Episode 3, Scene B.**

## AN UNDERDARK CAMPAIGN?

If you are including this adventure in a larger campaign that already features madness, you can adjust the conditions and effects here to be consistent with your campaign.

## MADNESS TABLES

### SHORT TERM MADNESS

#### **D100** EFFECT (LASTS 1D10 MINUTES)

01–20	The character retreats into his or her mind and becomes paralyzed. The effect ends if the character takes any damage.
21–30	The character becomes incapacitated and spends the duration screaming, laughing, or weeping.
31–40	The character becomes frightened and must use his or her action and movement each round to flee from the source of the fear.
41–50	The character begins babbling and is incapable of normal speech or spellcasting.
51–60	The character must use his or her action each round to attack the nearest creature.
61–70	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
71–75	The character does whatever anyone tells him or her to do that isn't obviously self-destructive.
76–80	The character experiences an overpowering urge to eat something strange such as dirt, slime, or offal.
81–90	The character is stunned.
91–100	The character falls unconscious.

### SHORT TERM MADNESS

#### **D100** EFFECT (LASTS 1D10 × 10 HOURS)

01–10	The character feels compelled to repeat a specific activity over and over, such as washing hands, touching things, praying, or counting coins.
11–20	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
21–30	The character suffers extreme paranoia. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks.
31–40	The character regards something (usually the source of madness) with intense revulsion, as if affected by the antipathy effect of the antipathy/sympathy spell.
41–45	The character experiences a powerful delusion. Choose a potion. The character imagines that he or she is under its effects.
46–55	The character becomes attached to a "lucky charm," such as a person or an object, and has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws while more than 30 feet from it.
56–65	The character is blinded (25%) or deafened (75%).
66–75	The character experiences uncontrollable tremors or tics, which impose disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws that involve Strength or Dexterity.
76–85	The character suffers from partial amnesia. The character knows who he or she is and retains racial traits and class features, but doesn't recognize other people or remember anything that happened before the madness took effect.
86–90	Whenever the character takes damage, he or she must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as though he or she failed a saving throw against the confusion spell. The confusion effect lasts for 1 minute.
91–95	The character loses the ability to speak.
96–100	The character falls unconscious. No amount of jostling or damage can wake the character.
d100	Effect (lasts 1d10 × 10 hours)

## SHORT TERM MADNESS

### **d100**      **FLAW (LASTS UNTIL CURED)**

01–15	“Being drunk keeps me sane.”
16–25	“I keep whatever I find.”
26–30	“I try to become more like someone else I know — adopting his or her style of dress, mannerisms, and name.”
31–35	“I must bend the truth, exaggerate, or outright lie to be interesting to other people.”
36–45	“Achieving my goal is the only thing of interest to me, and I’ll ignore everything else to pursue it.”
46–50	“I find it hard to care about anything that goes on around me.”
51–55	“I don’t like the way people judge me all the time.”
56–70	“I am the smartest, wisest, strongest, fastest, and most beautiful person I know.”
71–80	“I am convinced that powerful enemies are hunting me, and their agents are everywhere I go. I am sure they’re watching me all the time.”
81–85	“There’s only one person I can trust. And only I can see this special friend.”
86–95	“I can’t take anything seriously. The more serious the situation, the funnier I find it.”
96–100	“I’ve discovered that I really like killing people.”
d100	Flaw (lasts until cured)
01–15	“Being drunk keeps me sane.”
16–25	“I keep whatever I find.”
26–30	“I try to become more like someone else I know — adopting his or her style of dress, mannerisms, and name.”

## CURING MADNESS

A calm emotions spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a lesser restoration spell can rid a character of a short-term or long-term madness. Depending on the source of the madness, remove curse or dispel evil and good might also prove effective. A greater restoration spell or more powerful magic is required to rid a character of indefinite madness.

## AN EXAMPLE OF A DAY TRAVERSING THE MADNESS

This example is provided to help visualize how the section is intended to play out. Note that out of the 6 steps, steps 2, 3 and 4 are performed secretly by the DM, with the intent of helping create step 5 for the players.

### DM TIP

Those less comfortable with on-the-spot improvisation are encouraged to pre-roll or pre-select events for this section during prep, and then make only minor adjustments during the game.

This approach is also useful for those who wish to prepare terrain or maps. (Although neither is required for these scenes.)

**Step 1.** The DM lays out the 4 tasks that need to be performed by the characters:

*“Someone needs to be scouting, foraging, providing leadership to the liberated, and finally someone needs to be on defensive watch for several hours. Each task can be done individually or by multiple people, but all tasks need doing and no one can participate in more than 2 tasks. Who’s doing what?”*

Once assignments are taken on, the rolls are made to determine success. Total number of failures is tracked.

**Step 2.** The DM adds the total number of failures from step 1 to the 3 initially affected to get the total number of madness cases for the day. This example assumes there was 1 failure and the total number for this day is 4. This note is made by the DM and not yet communicated to the players.

**Step 3.** The DM rolls on the relevant madness table to determine what today’s effects will be. Here are two examples from the short-term madness table:

- The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
- The character falls unconscious.

**Step 4.** The DM determines the obstacle. The obstacle can be chosen from the table on the previous page or

improvised. The obstacle should be something that is typically easy to navigate – the challenge is doing it with madness! This example uses the first obstacle from the table on the previous page.

- A weak narrow bridge over a chasm requires careful navigation one at a time.

**Step 5.** Set the Scene and resolve. This is where the DM brings all the pieces together for the players to engage with.

*“Partway through the day, your convoy finds itself passing through a cavern that is split by a deep chasm. A narrow land bridge just barely wide enough for one person leads across. Sharp rocks can be seen protruding from the darkness far below it.”*

After allowing the characters to establish how they intended to get everyone across the chasm (who crosses first, who stays on which side to help out the liberated, etc.), the madness element from step 3 can be introduced.

*“One of the liberated – an old dwarf – steps carefully onto the walkway. Halfway across, he stops suddenly and stares blankly off to the side of the empty cavern. ‘Mother? Is that you?’ he says to the darkness. Then he turns, takes a step forward off the path and into the chasm.”*

At this point, a character within range may have a moment to intervene, or not. Such interventions should be very brief and subject to DM discretion. Additional checks can be made to learn that it was madness or another character can succumb. Once the 4 instances (as per step 2) of madness have played out, the day’s action is wrapped up.

**Step 6.** At the end of the day, the player characters make saves against their own madness – which is based not only on the Faerzress itself, but on spending the day dealing with it.

# APPENDIX 11. PLAYER HANDOUT – HISTORY OF THE PROTECTORATE

## **ZETHLENTYN – A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROTECTORATE**

Though the date of the original settlement of the area by the newly founded house Zethlentyn dates back over 400 years, it is only in the last 150 years that the protectorate has grown into what it is today.

The giant stalagmite that now represents the grand center of the protectorate known as Zethlentyn Prime was first discovered and used as an exploration base by House Zeth of Mendoberranzan. As political affairs and Lolth's dominance forced House Zeth out of the City of Spiders, they formed an alliance with another band of exiles in House Lenteen. Joining forces, they relocated to the Deep Wastes and founded their own small enclave, calling it House Zethlentyn.

Dissatisfied with the way that Mendoberranzan had a habit of eating its best and brightest, House Zethlentyn took a more accepting approach and even as various factions wanted to split off to form their own houses, they were encouraged to remain and settle in the area, forming an autonomous ally rather than an unpredictable enemy. Though of course with drow being drow, the latter were hardly in short supply.

While Zethlentyn grew with these small offshoot houses and occasional allied settlers, it wasn't until the Silence of Lolth caused massive upheaval in the majority of the great drow cities that Zethlentyn saw a true surge in population and power. Over the course of two decades after the silence, powerful refugees or exiles from Eryndlyn, Chad Nasad, Sschindylyrn and even Mendoberranzan itself arrived at Zethlentyn. They saw it as an opportunity for a new start free of their past. Several of these once refugee houses now prosper and form the high houses of today.

House Zethlentyn is located in the enormous stalagmite and while it is technically called Zethlentyn Prime, that name over the years has come to refer to not only the noble house, but the general metropolis of common grounds that has grown up around it.



# APPENDIX 12: NPC PORTRAIT CARDS

**Flaw:** Once I pick a goal, I become obsessed with it to the detriment of everything else in my life.

**Bond:** I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

**Ideal:** Freedom. Chains are meant to be broken, as are those who would forge them.

**Personality:** Kayleth is a high-ranking member of the House Tor'Erhyl. Extremely independent, Kayleth was chosen as the one to make contact with the surface to prevent the most recent slave-taking raid. While graceful and acrobatic in combat, Kayleth is often direct and serious when she speaks.

Sword Dancer of Ellistrae  
(Kay-leth-tor-ay-hill) – Drow Female

*Kayleth Tor'Erhyl*



**Kayleth Tor'Erhyl**

(kay-leth tor-ay-hill)

Sword Dancer

**Flaw:** Responsibility weighs heavily upon me and avoid forming deep bonds because of it.

**Bond:** I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

**Ideal:** Change. We must help bring to life Ellistrae's vision for our people.

**Personality:** Meriele Tor'Erhyl looks youthful (early 20s in human terms) but is over 200 years old. Typically, she smiles brightly and speaks excitedly. Her mannerisms mask a cunning and calculating mind and though the deception is not entirely malicious, neither is it incidental.

Drow Female, Matron of House Tor'Erhyl

(Merry-elle-tor-ay-hill)

*Matron Meriele Tor'Erhyl*



**Meriele Tor'Erhyl**

(merry-elle tor-ay-hill)

Matron of House Tor'Erhyl

**Talabaste Auvrymtor**  
(ta-la-bast ov-rim-tor)  
**Female Drow Arcanist, LE**  
**Personality.** Talabaste is highly intelligent, learned, and almost unwaveringly calm. She knows when to speak, what to say, and when to keep quiet. She very much believes that information is power and shares only when it is in her interest to do so. House Auvrymtor does not worship Lolth and is known for their ability to bind devils into service. The nature of their ability to do so is a mystery.  
**Ideal:** Power. Knowledge is the path to power and domination.  
**Bond:** I sold my soul for knowledge and intend to make the best of the deal.  
**Flaw:** Most people scream and run when they see a demon. I stop and take notes on its anatomy.



**Talabaste Auvrymtor**  
(ta-la-bast ov-rim-tor)

**Personality.** Axehead is driven by grief, drink, and a quest for vengeance against the Ouss'Nassath drow.  
**Ideal:** Strength. I will train to become as strong as my brother once was.  
**Bond:** One day I will avenge my brother's death.  
**Flaw:** I have lived alone for a long time and do not believe anyone is my friend or ally.

**Axehead Moontunnel**  
**Male Dwarf Battlerager in Training, CN**



**Axehead Moontunnel**

Proprietor of the Food for Thoughts tavern  
 Illithid female  
*Theel (Elthacnal'theel)*

**Personality:** Theel is calm and distant. Aside from her interest in thoughts and running the Food for Thoughts tavern, her motives and personality are inscrutable.



## Theel

Friendly Neighbourhood Tavern Proprietress

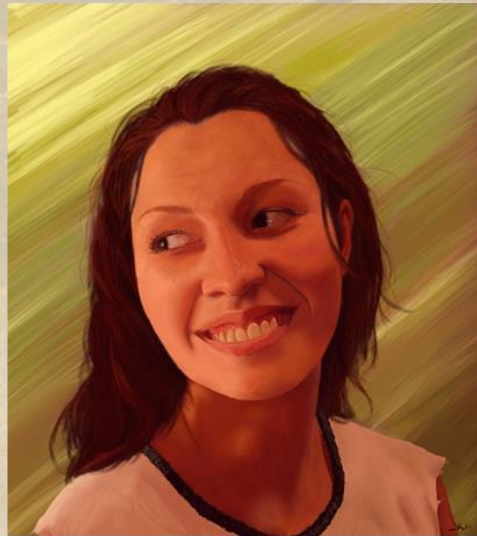
**Personality:** Liana is part of a minor noble family in Waterdeep and a low ranked Lords Alliance member. She wasn't thrilled to be sent to the backwater town of Melvaunt, but has decided to make the best of it by improving trade and looking out for Lords Alliance interests.

**Ideal:** Responsibility. It is my duty to respect the authority of those above me, just as those below me must respect mine.

**Bond:** I will face any challenge to win the approval of my family.

**Flaw:** I put on a brave face, but am actually quite afraid of violent conflict and getting hurt.

*Liana Tuffletackle*  
 Halfing Female  
 Lords Alliance (Melvaunt)



## Liana Tuffletackle

Lords Alliance (Melvaunt)