

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: A Friend in Need is where we sow the seeds for the main plotline of **Waterdeep: Dragon Heist**, and get our intrepid adventurers acquainted with the distinct culture, atmosphere and politics of the City of Splendors.

The goal of this document is to provide you, the Dungeon Master, with tools and thoughts that will help you make Chapter 1 of **Waterdeep: Dragon Heist** more exciting for your players and easier for you to run. It's strongly recommended that you read through the chapter before reading these resources. And remember: all advice is optional. You know best what works at your table. In this document you'll find:

Before We Begin. First, a quick look at some of the things to consider before starting the adventure.

Enhancing Chapter 1. Second, you'll find ideas on how to enhance the events and encounters of Chapter 1.

DM's Resources. Third, you're given a single page of condensed DM's notes for reference at the table, as well as statblocks for each encounter your party is likely to face.

Maps. Fourth, you'll find a map for The Yawning Portal by Elven Tower, as well as maps for the Zhentarim Hideout and Xanathar Guild Hideout.

BEFORE WE BEGIN...

Waterdeep: Dragon Heist has one of the longer 'Introduction'-chapters we've seen – and with good reason. Even without going into minute details with **Waterdeep** (that's saved for **Chapter 9: Volo's Waterdeep Enchiridion**), there's a lot you need to have a reasonable grasp on before starting the campaign. While this information is generally presented very well and is easy to digest, there are two points you should take an extra look at: your choice of villain and the Zhentarim.

CHOOSING A VILLAIN

One of the first things we're told when we open up **Waterdeep: Dragon Heist**, is that we have to choose a villain. Now, since the villain dictates which encounter chain you run in Chapter 4, it's not exactly an insignificant choice. But, it's important to understand that it's not a permanent one.

If we take a look at the rest of the book, it's only *really* in chapter 4 that your choice of villain becomes visible. You have plenty of time – three whole chapters – to make a final decision. It's likely to be much easier making a choice after playing through the first three chapters than before your very first session.

But, since you can't start without choosing a season (and each villain is tied to a specific season) aren't you forced to choose now? Yes and no. While villains and seasons are linked, they're not so strongly linked that you can't run any villain in any season. So, pick the season (and the villain) you like the most at a cursory glance, knowing that you'll be able to change your mind later without too much difficulty. We've included a brief review of each villain here, and will go in more depth with how to choose and change your villain in our resources for **Chapter 4: Dragon Season**.

XANATHAR

The big bad beholder crime lord, hiding deep underneath the city. Xanathar is in many ways the obvious villain for the campaign. It's inherently evil and is involved with the *Stone of Golorr* from the start. Xanathar has an interesting lair, a lot of fun little quirks and deep ties to **Waterdeep**. Simply put, you can't go wrong with Xanathar.

CASSALANTERS

The Cassalanter have an interesting story and present a tough moral dilemma. They're also deeply entrenched in **Waterdeep's** history and nobility, which might make them more interesting villains for characters who are either nobles or dislike nobles. And, if you want the campaign to end with the party stealing the gold back from a villain's lair, the Cassalanter have probably the most entertaining premise for an end-of-campaign heist!

JARLAXLE

The mercenary leader is a charming, witty and daring swashbuckler. His winning personality and more benevolent motivation makes him easier than the other villains to handle for the party – they might be able to find common ground in the decision to hand the gold over to the city in the end.

However, Jarlaxle is also the villain that is most likely to have a direct connection to the party, if any characters join Bregan D'aerthe. While conflicting loyalties can seem fun on paper, they require mature players to pull off at the table.

MANSHOON

Like the Xanathar, Manshoon is an obvious villain. He's involved with the story from the start, and he's a classic bad guy. Since there's no chance your players get through the adventure without running into his goons, you'll quickly get the feel of a recurring villain. Because of their similarities, choosing between Manshoon and the Xanathar probably comes down to personal preference more than anything else.

UNDERSTANDING THE ZHENTARIM

Since your characters are in contact with the Zhentarim from the very start, it's a good idea to be aware of the dual nature of the organization in **Waterdeep** – especially if you think characters will join the faction. Here's a quick rundown.

There's two branches of the Zhentarim in **Waterdeep**: Manshoon's Zhentarim and the Doom Raider Zhentarim. Manshoon's Zhentarim are painted as bad guys throughout the adventure, while the Doom Raider Zhentarim can become allies to the party as one of the joinable factions. The differences between the two are subtle, but shouldn't be underplayed. While both seek money and power, Manshoon's goal is to rule **Waterdeep** with an iron fist as the Open Lord. Much less brazen, the Doom Raiders seek influence within **Waterdeep's** current power structure. And where Manshoon's Zhentarim are more than willing to cause chaos and carnage to reach their goals, the Doom Raider Zhentarim are more careful and methodical. They can be ruthless when needed, but prefer to work in legal grey areas.

In summary, Manshoon's Zhentarim operate like a drug cartel ('Manshoon Escobar' has a nice ring to it), while the Doom Raiders feel like a mix between an investment bank and a security firm, as they work to secure power and money without much regard for ethics, but (mostly) within the law. To make sure your party understands this nuance, you can have Davil Starsong (or another Doom Raider) explain it to them, if they come into contact with him. You can also make the difference visible. Perhaps the Doom Raider Zhentarim (from the Doom Raiders themselves to their low level goons) dress in fancier clothes in hues of black and green and with the Zhentarim symbol (a black winged snake) on the shoulder or chest, while Manshoon's Zhentarim are dirtier, dressed in all black and carry hidden snake tattoos instead of visible insignia. This tells your players not only which branch of the Zhentarim any Zhent they meet belong to, but also hints at the key differences between the two branches.

The Zhentarim are covered in more depth in our product **Zhentarm - Faction Missions and DM's Resources**.

ENHANCING CHAPTER 1

We'll preface this by making clear that there's nothing inherently wrong with this chapter. It's already fairly interesting and pretty straightforward. You have a nice, simple mystery, a three-point investigation and some interesting NPC's, encounters and challenges along the way.

However, that doesn't mean that there isn't room for improvement. Below we'll go over a few ideas on how to improve and enhance your players' experience as they play through **Chapter 1: A Friend in Need**.

THE YAWNING PORTAL

This is where the adventure starts. In a tavern. There's no points earned for originality, but the adventure does get off to a quick start when Xanathar and Zhentarim get into a fistfight - and a stirge-bitten troll join the fray. This double encounter does two things: establishes enmity between two important factions and tells the characters that the big hole in the floor is not to be tampered with! Yet, at least...

However, we can still do more to tie things together and ensure that the characters actually care about the fights.

Friendly Faces. As suggested in the campaign book, you can show the players the pictures of 'Yawning Portal Friendly Faces' in **Appendix C** and have them choose a friendly acquaintance, if they want. Use these acquaintances to draw them into the encounters, as described below.

Race to the Bottom. Before throwing the characters into the tavern brawl, consider setting a more memorable scene. You can add the following description before the one given at the start of Chapter 1:

It's a special evening at the Yawning Portal. The noisy taproom seems even more full than usual and patrons are brimming with excitement. A small crowd of well-wishers have gathered around the party of heroes who've chosen this night to brave the tavern's namesake. The small band of would-be-heroes are carefully checking and securing their equipment, mundane and magical alike. As they begin their descent into the large hole in the middle of the tavern, the taproom fills with loud cheers and excited huzzahs. Behind the bar, Durnan, the grizzled proprietor of the Yawning Portal, shakes his head and smirks under his moustache.

Tavern Brawl. When the tavern brawl breaks out a short while later, the chances of the characters getting involved are higher if one of them chose Yagra Stonefist as an acquaintance. Also, remember that Yagra is a member of the Doom Raider Zhentarim - which in fact aren't involved in the gang war with the Xanathar Guild. You can have the half-orc explain as much to the party, if they speak to her after the fight.

Troll and Friends. Proceed as the campaign book dictates, having the troll arrive a few rounds into the tavern brawl (or whenever you think appropriate). But, to increase tension as it appears, it could be gnawing on the arm of one of the adventurers who went down the chute earlier and have it immediately grab on to one of the characters' friendly acquaintances in the tavern.

That should work to tie the scene together a little better, as well as properly motivate the characters to get involved - plus hopefully scare them away from going down into the Undermountain themselves!

BLOOD IN THE STREETS

While looking for Floon, the characters come by a crime scene being investigated. This is a fine little encounter that sets the tone for the city's gang war between the Xanathar Guild and Manshoon's Zhentarim. But we can improve upon it by involving the characters a bit more and introducing City Watch captain Hyustus Staget, who is likely to become a recurring NPC. You can add the following description as the characters are leaving the scene:

As you are turning to leave the closed street, you suddenly hear a loud shout: "Get him!" You see three of the City Watch guards frantically scrambling to catch one of the bandits who has sprung to his feet and is swiftly making his way out of the cordoned off street - and right past you!

Each character has a chance to catch the fleeing gang member before he dashes past them (if they want to!). A single successful Acrobatics or Athletics check contested by the **bandit's** +1 Acrobatics check is enough to trip or grapple the bandit before he gets away. If the characters draw weapons, a guard quickly shouts: "Don't kill him!"

If the characters manage to stop the Zhent, he looks hatefully at them before saying: "We'll remember that!" The guards quickly drag the bandit back to his mates and throw him forcefully down on the cobblestones. Here's an opportunity to introduce City Watch captain Hyustus Staget (who'll also appear in the Zhentarim Hideout later in this chapter). The **veteran** captain thanks the party for their assistance, but also gives a stern warning: "Good reflexes there. Thank you for the assistance, but a word of advice: keep those weapons locked securely at your hip, and try not to get more of a reputation with these Zhentarim scum. Let us deal with them. Move along now."

THE SKEWERED DRAGON

The characters will eventually reach The Skewered Dragon, a dilapidated tavern in the Dock Ward. The campaign book dictates that a Charisma check or a bribe will have the patrons spilling their guts, but if you want to flesh it out a little more, there's some suggestions below.

Solomil Silverfingers. One of the regulars is a brash dwarf CN **thug** named Solomil Silverfingers, apparently for the flashy rings adorning his fingers. If the characters start asking questions, he shoos away the other patrons:

A broad-shouldered dwarf with a smoothly oiled black beard and a multitude of different silver rings on his stubby fingers approaches you. He sticks his chin out and plants two fists on the table in front of you. "Ain't none of these durned fools 'ere going to tell ye nothin' ye can believe. If ye wanna know about that skinny boy and his pompous buddy, ye'll have to win it from me. So waddaya wanna lose – ye coins or ye consciousness?" the dwarf asks, his deep voice slurring.

Solomil wants to either fight a party member or play a game of Sava for the information. If the characters try to bribe him, he'll accept it as "a good start," but still insist on competing against one of the characters.

Fighting. If a character chooses to fight with Solomil, it's a fistfight without armor and weapons. As a **thug**, an unarmored and unarmed Solomil has AC 10, 32 hit points and an unarmed attack of +4 for 3 (1 + 2) bludgeoning damage. Luckily for his opponent, the dwarf is drunk and thus has disadvantage on all of his attacks. If he loses, he'll tell the characters about Floon, Renaer Neverember and the Zhentarim Hideout when he regains consciousness. If he wins, he'll also give the information – if his opponent fought cleanly and well – but he'll take 10 gp for his trouble.

Gambling. If a character accepts Solomil's invitation to play a game of Sava, you can find the rules for Sava in the sidebar. Solomil borrows an old and dusty Sava game from the barkeep, sets it on a table and cracks his fingers. He asks that his opponent puts up 10 gold against the information. The volatile dwarf is proficient with Sava (+2 on Intelligence (Sava) checks), but has a +0 in both Charisma (Deception) and Wisdom (Insight). If Solomil loses, he tells the characters what they want to know. If he wins, he'll give his opponent a rematch, telling the characters what they want to know regardless of whether he wins or loses the next game.

Bregan D'aerthe. If the players like the braggadocious dwarf, you can make him a recurring NPC. He'll work fine as a contact to Jarlaxle and Bregan D'aerthe if you later need someone to facilitate contact between Jarlaxle and the party.

TRACKING FLOON

After the characters have cleared the Zhentarim hideout of **kenku**, rescued **Renaer Neverember** and talked with the arriving City Watch, it's time to track down Floon. If they have managed to interrogate a **kenku**, they'll know to look for yellow signs in the sewer. If they haven't, the campaign book calls for a simple Intelligence (Investigation) check or a bribe.

However, you could instead use the characters' bewilderment to introduce an NPC that might come into play later in the campaign. If they have no clue where to go next, Renaer Neverember may suggest that they visit either Mirt – a retired adventurer and Harper contact – or Vajra Safahr – a powerful wizard and the current Blackstaff of Waterdeep.

Sava

This odd version of chess is a drow invention. Two players play against each other using ebony pieces resembling drow warriors, mages and priestesses. The goal of the game is to destroy the other player's 'noble house'. It is a game of skill, deception and insight. A game of sava takes roughly 30 minutes. To determine who wins the game, each participant makes three rolls:

- An Intelligence (Sava) check.
- A Charisma (Deception) check.
- A Wisdom (Insight) check.

Compare the combined totals of the three rolls to determine the winner of the game (on an equal result, the game is a draw).

Mirt. Visiting Mirt in his sprawling mansion should be a nice little break after a combat encounter. Mirt is happy to help the fledgling adventurers. If the characters seek him out for help, he'll ask his Harper contacts about a Xanathar Guild hideout near Castle Lane through a *Stone of Sending*. While waiting for the answer, he'll ask the characters questions about their motivations and backgrounds. This is an opportunity for your players to put their characters into words, and for Mirt to ferret out potential Harper prospects.

After a short while, he receives word back through the *Stone of Sending* and can confidently tell his visitors: "There's a Xanathar Guild hideout in the sewers close to Castle Lane. Just follow the yellow markings when you're down there. Good hunting – and I hope the poor fellow is still breathing!"

Vajra Safahr. Waterdeep's current Blackstaff, Vajra Safahr, lives in Blackstaff Tower in the Castle Ward. She is both the overseer of the Force Grey, as well as a Harper affiliate. When the characters come to her for aid, she uses a *sending* spell to contact her spies, asking for the location of a Xanathar Guild hideout near Candle Lane, where a young man would have been taken recently. Meanwhile, she'll ask the characters about their backgrounds and motivation, to determine if any is suitable to join the Gray Hands (and, later on, possibly Force Gray).

When you think appropriate, the wizard closes her eyes and exclaims: "The place you're looking for is in the sewers under the docks. Just follow the yellow markings when you're down there, and you should find the hideout easily. Be careful – Waterdeep needs all the heroes it can get!"

XANATHAR GUILD HIDEOUT

The Xanathar Guild's hideout is a nice little dungeon to finish off the Chapter. There isn't much that needs to be changed, but there is something it's good to be aware of: the **intellect devourer**. It has a deceptively low CR when you consider that it has two Actions that can instantly end an adventurer's career.

If a character succumbs to the intellect devourer's Devour Intellect-action, a *Greater Restoration* spell can fix it. You can have Floon, Volo or Renaer foot the 100 gp bill at the nearest temple. But, if a character fails against the Body Thief-action, only *reincarnate* or better spells can fix it. That's extreme at 1st level. Consider not having the intellect devourer use this action and maybe put an extra **bandit** in the room instead.

DM's NOTES

Below you'll find abbreviated DM's notes. They are meant as quick reminders of the events covered in **Chapter 1: A Friend in Need**, ready to use at the table.

YAWNING PORTAL

- Five Xanathar **bandits** attack **thug** Yagra Stonefist.
- Party arrive as Krenz has 3 hp and Yagra is ready to strike. Pulling Yagra away requires a Strength check vs Yagra.
- In the third round, a **troll** with 44 hit points and three **stirges** come through the shaft. **Durnan** attacks the troll, tells the party to kill the stirges and set the troll on fire.
- After the fight, **Volothamp Geddarm** tells the party that Floon Blagmaar has been missing since they drank together two nights ago in the Skewered Dragon on the docks. He gives 10 gp to find him, promises 100 gp more.

THE DOCKS

- The party comes by a crime scene where three Zhentarim **bandits** have been arrested.
- One Zhentarim tries to escape. An Acrobatics or Athletics check vs the **bandit's** Acrobatics check to stop him.
- City Watch captain Hyustus Staget thanks the party if they stop him and sends them on their way.
- Before reaching the Skewered Dragon in the docks, they also pass by Old Xoblob Shop (a purple building with a stuffed beholder in the window).

OLD XOBLOB SHOP

- Lavender-scented purple smoke, violet-painted knick-knacks and purple walls.
- Xoblob (deep gnome, Xanathar spy, purple robes).
- The party can purchase trinkets (PHB p. 160) for 1d6 gp.
- If the party gives purple item or succeeds on DC 13 Charisma check, Xoblob tells them he saw two guys jumped by thugs outside the shop. One had a snake tattoo.

THE SKEWERED DRAGON

- Ruined, windows smashed, ship's anchor in the roof.
- The drinking dockworkers gives information if the party succeeds on DC 13 Charisma check or bribes them. Or...
- A dwarf thug named **Solomil Silverfingers** challenges the party to a fistfight or a game of Sava. He wants 10 gp if he wins, he'll give the info if he loses.
- Information: Floon and Renaer were drinking, five men followed them out, the men usually frequent a warehouse on Candle Lane with a winged snake symbol on the door.

ZHENTARIM HIDEOUT

- Ramshackle warehouse on Candle Lane, fenced yard.
- Three entry points: front door, warehouse loading door and painted-over window. DC 10 Thieves' Tools or Athletics to open.
- If the characters make noise outside, the **kenku** hide inside (Passive Perception 16 hears this).
- **Z1. Main Room** - tables and chairs all around. Corpses of a dozen men along the wall. Five Zhent corpses with snake tattoos, seven Xanathar corpses with Xanathar symbol. Four **kenku** inside, they fight until two die, the rest try to flee. A captured kenku can be interrogated with DC 10 Intimidation check and says the following: Deep voice, orcish accent: "Xanathar sends its regards." Thin, nasally voice: "Tie up the pretty boy in the back room!" and "Follow the yellow signs in the sewers." Scratchy voice: "No time to loot the place. Just get him to the boss."

- **Z2. Storage Closet** - Smell of sour fish and vinegar. Filled with trash. **Renaer Neverember** hides here. Explains that the Zhentarim think his father embezzled a lot of gold and hid it in the city. They want to find the Stone of Golorr and think that Renaer could help them find it (he can't). The Xanathar interrupted and mistook Floon for Renaer, while he hid in here. Renaer arms himself and helps party.
- **Z3. Secret Room** - DC 15 Perception to find. Triggers small bell in Z5 above. **Treasure.** Four paintings of Luskan, Neverwinter, Silvermoon and Baldur's Gate worth 75 gp each. 15 silver trade bars worth 50 gp each.
- **Z4. Balcony** - stacked with crates and worthless junk.
- **Z5. Offices** - office rooms. Rats. Bell rings if door to Z3 is opened. **Treasure.** An unused paper bird inside.
- **The Watch Arrives** - City Watch captain Hyustus Staget arrive with guards. Interrogate the party and Renaer. Gives them the Code Legal and tell them not to meddle.
- **Finding Floon.** If the party didn't get directions to the Xanathar Guild Hideout from a kenku, they can make a DC 15 Investigation check or use a 5 gp bribe to find out where he was dragged to. Alternatively, Renaer takes them to either Mirt (from the Harpers) or Vajra Safahr (from the Gray Hands) who helps find the hideout.

XANATHAR GUILD HIDEOUT

- **The Sewers** - Completely dark. Yellow Xanathar-signs show the way. A hostile **gazer** attacks the party, fights till the death.
- **Q1. Central Hub** - A circular hub. Two arrow slits. Passage leading north and south. Ledge with stone door. If the characters make noise, two **goblins** in Q2a and Q2B awake and attack. DC 15 Perception to find secret door.
- **Q2. Watch Posts** - two goblins sleeping in each room. DC 9 Stealth to sneak past. **Treasure.** 1d6 cp each.
- **Q3. Messy Room** - Rusty weapons and dirty clothes.
- **Q4. Empty Sleeping Area** - Nothing of value, but characters can hear activity from Q5. Sleeping Area.
- **Q5. Sleeping Area** - Zemk (**duergar**) and Krentz (**bandit**) trying to barricade door to X6. Zemk fights to the death, Krentz surrenders or flees if possible.
- **Q6. Lavatory** - A **grey ooze** is here.
- **Q7. Boss Fight** - Nihiloor (**mind flayer**), **intellect devourer**, Grum'shar (**apprentice wizard**) and **Floon Blagmaar** are here. Nihiloor flees to the west, intellect devourer and Grum'shar attack the party. **Treasure.** Grum'shar has spellbook with *burning hands*, *disguise self*, *false life*, *shield*, *unseen servant*, and *witch bolt*. Small chest with two *potions of healing* and 16 gp, 82 sp and 250 cp.
- **Q8. Getaway Passage** - Looks empty, DC 10 Perception check finds hidden tunnel to Q9.
- **Q9. Private Cellar** - The Peabody's beer-brewing cellar.
- **Q10. Sleeping Quarters** - Straw pallets.
- **Q11. Back Door** - A stone pillar in the middle of the room carved with Xanathar Symbol. If Nihiloor's stone is pressed into middle of symbol, a black doorway appears, allowing transport to X22 in Xanathar's lair. Portal closes after 1 minute.
- **Q12. Hostel Cellar** - Narrow passage to hostel owned by halfling **wererats** called Shard Shunners. **Roscoe** guards the small passage.

REUNITING WITH VOLO

- Renaer, Floon and Volo are very grateful.
- Volo doesn't have the coin he promised, but instead gives the party the deed to the Trollskull Manor and takes the party to a magistrate, Klynne Silmerhelme, who wants 25 gp to officiate the transfer.

MONSTER STATS

TAVERN BRAWL

XANATHAR BANDIT

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)
---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Unarmed Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.

YAGRA STONEFIST

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)
---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Relentless Endurance (1/long rest). When reduced to 0 hit points, Yagra drops to 1 hit point instead.

Pack Tactics. Yagra has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of Yagra's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. Yagra makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Unarmed Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Giant
Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

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

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

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

STIRGE

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 2 (1d4 + 0)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Blood Drain. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the stirge attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the stirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points. The stirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

KENKU

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 13 (3d8 + 0)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +4, Perception +2, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Understands auran and common but speaks only through the use of its mimicry trait
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Ambusher. The kenku has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Mimicry. The kenku can mimic any sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

RENAER NEVEREMBER

Medium humanoid, chaotic good

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lightfooted. Renaer can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Suave Defense. While Renaer is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, his AC includes his Charisma modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. Renaer makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with his rapier.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage in melee, or 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage at range.

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

GOBLIN

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 7 (2d6 + 0)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Actions

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

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

GAZER

Tiny aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 13 (3d4 + 6)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Saving throws Wis +2
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Condition Immunities Prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the gazer can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Mimicry. The gazer can mimic simple sounds of speech it has heard, in any language. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Eye Rays. The gazer shoots two of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one or two targets it can see within 60 feet of it:

1. **Dazing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the start of the gazer's next turn. While the target is charmed in this way, its speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls.
2. **Fear Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of the gazer's next turn.
3. **Frost Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) cold damage.
4. **Telekinetic Ray.** If the target is a creature that is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be moved up to 30 feet directly away from the gazer. If the target is an object weighing 10 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, the gazer moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. The gazer can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a container.

KRENTZ (BANDIT)*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil***Armor Class** 12**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)**Speed** 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10**Languages** Common**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)**Actions****Scimitar.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.**Light Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.**DUERGAR***Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil***Armor Class** 16**Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)

Damage Resistances poison**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10**Languages** Dwarvish, Undercommon**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)**Duergar Resilience.** The duergar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the duergar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.**Actions****Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the duergar is Large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the duergar lacks the room to become Large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.**War Pick.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, or 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.**Javelin.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.**Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The duergar magically turns invisible until it attacks, casts a spell, or uses its Enlarge, or until its concentration is broken, up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the duergar wears or carries is invisible with it.

GRAY OOZE

*Medium ooze, unaligned***Armor Class** 8**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +2**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8**Languages** —**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)**Amorphous.** The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.**Corrode Metal.** Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the ooze corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the ooze is destroyed after dealing damage. The ooze can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.**False Appearance.** While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock.

Actions

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

ROSCOE (WERERAT)

*Small humanoid (halfling), lawful evil***Armor Class** 12**Hit Points** 27 (6d6 + 6)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered**Senses** darkvision 60 ft. (rat form only), passive Perception 12**Languages** Common, Halfling, Thieves' cant (can't speak in rat form)**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)**Brave.** Roscoe has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.**Halfling Nimbleness.** Roscoe can move through the space of a Medium or larger creature.**Shapechanger.** The wererat can use its action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.**Keen Smell.** The wererat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). The wererat makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.**Bite (Rat or Hybrid Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.**Shortsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.**Hand Crossbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

GRUM'SHAR

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 9 (2d8 + 0)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Relentless Endurance (1/long rest). When reduced to 0 hit points, Grum'shar drops to 1 hit point instead.

Spellcasting. Grum'shar is a 1st-level spellcaster. Grum'shar's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Grum'shar has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *fire bolt*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*
 1st level (2 slots): *burning hands*, *disguise self*, *shield*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage in melee, or 2 (1d4) piercing damage at range.

INTELLECT DEVOURER

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Understands deep speech but can't speak, Telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Detect Sentience. The intellect devourer can sense the presence and location of any creature within 300 feet of it that has an Intelligence of 3 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a mind blank spell.

Actions

Multiattack. The intellect devourer makes one attack with its claws and uses Devour Intellect.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Devour Intellect. The intellect devourer targets one creature it can see within 10 feet that has a brain. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage. Also on a failure, roll 3d6: If the total equals or exceeds the target's Intelligence score, that score is reduced to 0. The target is stunned until it regains at least one point of Intelligence.

Body Thief. The intellect devourer initiates an Intelligence contest with an incapacitated humanoid within 5 feet of it. If it wins the contest, the intellect devourer magically consumes the target's brain, teleports into the target's skull, and takes control of the target's body. While inside a creature, the intellect devourer has total cover against attacks and other effects originating outside its host. The intellect devourer retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as its understanding of Deep Speech, its telepathy, and its traits. It otherwise adopts the target's statistics. It knows everything the creature knew, including spells and languages. If the host body drops to 0 hit points, the intellect devourer must leave it. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the body drives the intellect devourer out. The intellect devourer is also forced out if the target regains its devoured brain by means of a *wish*. By spending 5 feet of its movement, the intellect devourer can leave the body, teleporting to the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The body then dies, unless its brain is restored within 1 round.

MAPS

This download also includes a map of the Yawning Portal used in the Tavern Brawl Encounter. The map is made and licensed by Derek Ruiz at Elven Tower Cartography. Elven Tower makes excellent maps, which you can find [at their webpage](#) or on [the DM's Guild](#). You'll find a JPG version of this map included in your download.

The document also includes more elaborate versions of the Zhentarim Hideout and Xanathar Guild Hideout maps found in the campaign book, ready to use on your favorite virtual tabletops.

CONCLUSION

We hope you enjoy this document and find it worth your time and money. If you do, please leave a review and a rating - it helps us a lot. If you have any questions or suggestions, make sure to leave a comment as well.

And, most importantly, enjoy the adventure - and try not to suck the brains out of all your player characters in the first session.