

CCC-SQC 03-03



Toxicity



Humans and nonhumans are dying of poison across Hillsfar. As old tensions flare up in the Senate, can you bring the mysterious mastermind to justice before civil war erupts in the streets? A Two Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

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Adventure Primer

"Professor, without knowing precisely what the danger is, would you say it's time for our viewers to crack each other's heads open and feast on the goo inside?"

– Kent Brockman, *The Simpsons*.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in Hillsfar.

Background

HILLSFAR is a more welcoming place since the end of the Great Law of Humanity, but that hasn't made it any less dangerous. Adventurers have had to repel a coup attempt against new First Lord Vuhm Yestral (HILL 1-1 to 1-3), the arrival of the Red Wizards, and the assassination of a Red Wizard (SQC 02-01). Citizens are constantly on edge.

In this new era for Hillsfar, an old threat has re-emerged. The demon lord **JUIBLEX** sent "**THE COLLECTOR**" to Hillsfar in an attempt to gather knowledge about how turn the multiverse in to a playground for oozes (SQC 03-01). When killing the Collector was not enough to stop demonic madness from spreading outside town, adventurers joined with mind flayers and a talking mushroom to fight a mutual enemy (SQC 03-02).

Meanwhile **GOURMAND (elder oblex)**, a hyper intelligent ooze, has developed a new poison to transform humanoid organs to ooze. Early tests were highly successful. After heroes stopped Juiblex's other minions, Gourmand panicked and framed **BERT THE GOBLIN**, a senator and Hillsfar's leading alchemist, with a plot to kill all humans. Bert's main rival on the Senate, **SIR ARDEM ROHAN**, takes the bait and has Bert arrested.

Years of following Juiblex have taken their toll on Gourmand's sanity. The mastermind would rather hunt their pursuers and consume their memories than get away with the perfect crime!

Overview

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **2 hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play.

- **Part 1: Poison Bubbles Up.** After seeing a poisoning, characters are recruited to investigate "Bert's" lab in the Underdark during the **Call to Action**.
- **Part 2: Raiding the Lab.** Characters look for clues that Gourmand left behind in the faerzress lab in **Story Objective A**.
- **Part 3: Trial of the Century!** The characters testify, then can roleplay as Bert's lawyers. Gourmand challenges their wits by assuming the identity of the prosecutor, unless they uncover the ruse and start combat. Defeating Gourmand somehow is **Main Objective B**.
- **Bonus Objective A: Find the Poison.** The characters follow one of many leads to Patrin, a warlock of Juiblex. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 1**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Develop a Cure.** The characters pursue various leads to discover the magical properties of Gourmand's poison. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 2**.

Adventure Hooks

All characters know to meet Bert at the Hydra's Den to talk about poisonings. How they know and why they care can vary considerably.

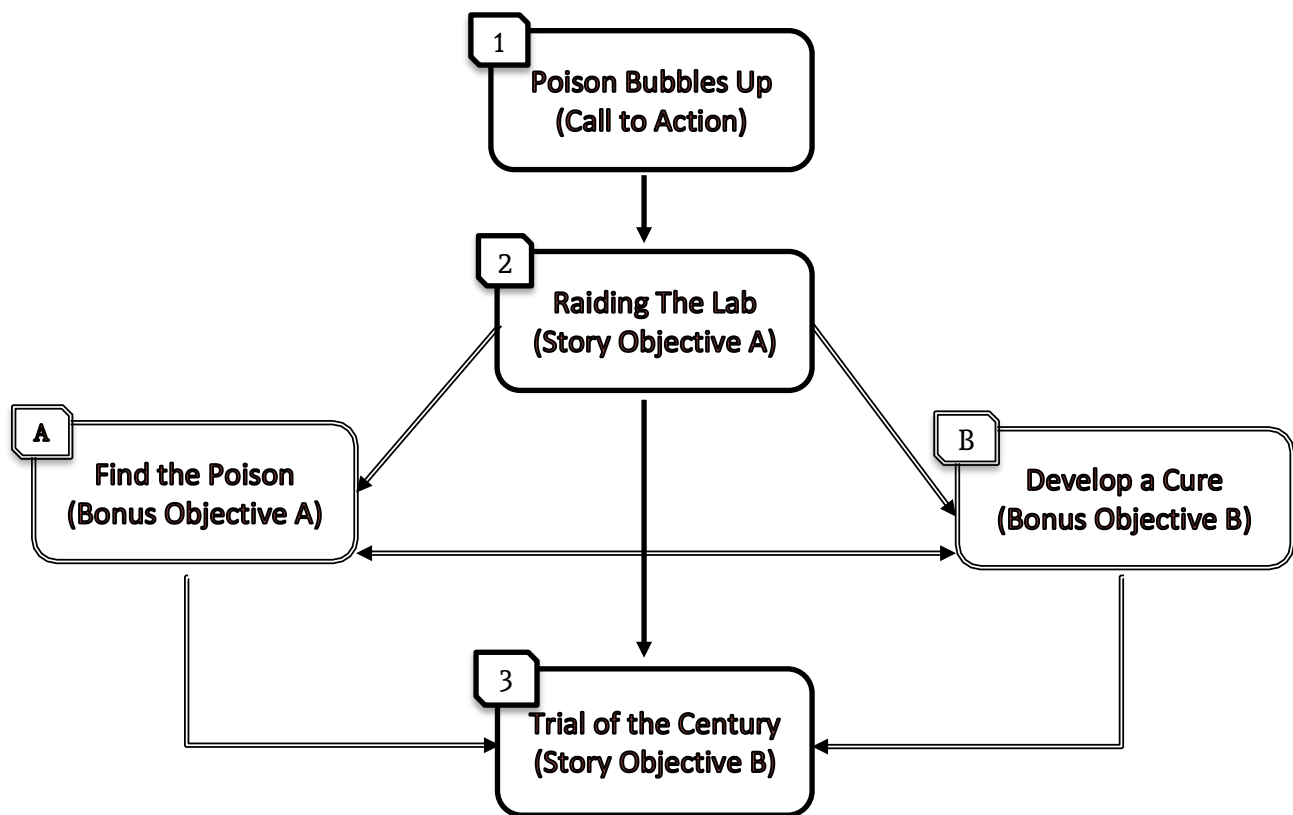
Played Previous Adventure: Characters know about a strange faerzress poison and another Juiblex cult leader. Bert asks them to stick around and keep helping Hillsfar.

Racial Tension: Poisoning victims are mainly human. Any human, elf, or halfling would know this could provoke retaliation unless solved.

Cult Activity: Rumors of the Juiblex cult are widespread. Paladins and clerics may want to smite demons! Other adventurers may see demon hunting as a particularly lucrative job.

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.



Part 1: Poison Bubbles Up (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration: 15

1. Drop Dead

Bert the Goblin, an alchemist and Hillsfar Senator, is supposed to meet with adventurers at the Hydra's Den tavern to investigate a recent wave of poisonings. However, Bert has been arrested and tavern owner Brendon Tamesford is foaming at the mouth after drinking a poison!

That's Not a Questgiver!

As adventurers enter the Hydra's Den, please read or paraphrase the following:

The tavern is conspicuously quiet. One quick look around seems like enough to confirm that Bert the Goblin is running late. Suddenly there is a loud crash as Brendon Tamesford, owner of the Hydra's Den, collapses and starts foaming at the mouth. A human yells out in a gruff voice: "IS ANYONE HERE A CLERIC?"

Give players a chance to think of creative solutions. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine or Herbalist's Kit) or Intelligence (Nature) check allows a character to find some goat milk that absorbs the remaining poison. Magic that removes poison works too. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) check suggests the poison is magical. *Detect magic* shows transmutation.

If the characters are stuck, **Sir Ardem Rohan** (see below) glares at any nonhumans in the party, then grabs the goat's milk himself.

Creatures/NPCs

Brendon Tamesford sits down at a barstool, like an aging warrior in desperate need of a rest. **Sir Ardem Rohan**, a towering warrior wearing purple robes of nobility over his full plate, stares down at the floor with a grin on his face.

Objectives/Goals. Sir Ardem had his chief rival Bert arrested earlier today. After months of plotting revenge, the most vocal advocate for bringing back Hillsfar's humans-only law got his opportunity. Traces of a new poison matching the victims were found in Bert's store this

morning. Even better, the poison Brendon just drank came from Bert's shop! Brendon is trying to piece together how he got poisoned.

What Do They Know? Brendon has lingering shoulder stiffness from his adventuring days. He was meeting Bert to get a restoration potion when Sir Ardem arrested him. A vial shard lying next to Brendon has Bert's iconic grin. The bar owner has no idea if it's the vial he drank from.

Sir Ardem knows a poisoning victim was found in Bert's lab, along with poison samples in vials. He insists the vial shard is proof of Bert's guilt. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms Sir Ardem is seeing what he wants to see from ambiguous evidence.

Any character getting the mind flayers' help in SQC 03-02 knows the Juiblex cultists were planning to frame a potion maker.

Development: Bert's Secret Lab?

Another Red Plume named **Patrin** runs in to the tavern, leaning on his red-tipped wand to catch his breath. He is a Mage's Guild apprentice and secretly warlock of **Juiblex**, currently serving as **Gourmand's lieutenant**.

Objectives/Goals. Patrin wants to ensnare the adventurers in Gourmand's broader scheme by sending them to the Underdark lab. Juiblex cultists have already cleaned the lab, planting more evidence to incriminate Bert.

What Does Patrin Know. Patrin knows the most plausible lie is that Bert would try to hide his criminal acts from his legitimate business. If adventurers see through Patrin's sudden arrival, he smirks and says the only way to stop the poisonings is to investigate the lab.

Call to Action

Adventurers must discover who is behind the poisonings and ensure justice is dealt.

Treasure & Rewards

Special Rewards. Players can keep the vial shard with Bert's logo for later use.

Part 2: Raiding The Lab (Story Objective A)

Estimated Duration: 50

Setting Description

In this episode, the characters investigate the Faerzress alchemy lab. **Gourmand the mastermind Oblex** has manufactured enough fake evidence to make Bert look guilty. However, Gourmand's obsession with consuming adventurers' memories means they left incriminating evidence as well.

Prerequisites

As characters traveled an hour to the lab, they saw three umber hulks, all killed by repeated stabbings to the lower legs.

Story Objective A

Characters are supposed to **gather all the evidence**, to use at Bert's upcoming trial.

Area Information

The lab was built in an area of faerzress, a form of magical radiation found in the Underdark, to try and create new potions using chaos magic. Characters succeeding a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check know the effects of faerzress. Gloomstalkers and any race native to the Underdark automatically succeed on the check.

Travel to the Lab. Characters notice the tracks of several creatures. A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals goblin footprints going to the lab and human footprints walking back.

Dimensions & Terrain. Securely built in to a cave, with only one entrance and exit. See **Appendix 3** for a map.

Ceilings. 20 feet high.

Lighting. Fungi along the walls glow green and purple, providing dim light.

Faerzress Effects on Magic. Faerzress has several effects on magic, particularly divination and teleportation (taken from DDEX 3-11). Any time someone casts a spell in this Episode, the caster must roll a d20. On a 1, the spell is tainted by Demon Lord and triggers a Wild Magic Surge, according to the rules found in chapter 3 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Creatures in this area have advantage on saving throws against any divination spells. If a divination spell doesn't allow a saving throw, the caster must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to cast the spell. Failing this save means the spell is wasted and has no effect.

Any creature attempting to teleport into, within, or out of a *faerzress*-suffused area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d10 force damage and the teleportation attempt fails.

Faerzress Effects on Resting. Any character who attempts a long rest must succeed on a DC 8 Wisdom save afterwards or gain a level of madness, as they dream of being consumed by the native fungus (taken from DDEX 3-11).

Ending a Trilogy With a Mystery

This adventure has a different structure than some mystery adventures in *Adventurers League*. Players are given all the clues they need, plus a few red herrings. They must to put the puzzle together themselves during Episode 3, while Gourmand challenges their arguments. Please consider the following:

- Players who have played CCC-SQC 03-01 or 02 have an advantage in the investigation because they know the Juiblex cult is the main villain of the trilogy. Gourmand is not a loyal follower of Juiblex, so take advantage of players' paranoia and subvert their expectations.
- In most investigations, the investigator doesn't know what the picture looks like until they get most of the pieces. This adventure is more of a sandbox to give players that feeling of discovery. **The goal is to reward players' skill and creativity instead of just rolling high on skill checks, but it can be frustrating.**
- DMs are encouraged to celebrate every clue the players find, even if they don't fully know what to do with them all.
- Many clues are based on asking the right questions and using Insight, both to look for lying and to read NPCs' disposition. If players only look for physical clues, they are likely to struggle in Episode 3 and may prefer the combat track.

1. Half Size Heroes

Characters encounter a party of goblin adventurers charmed in to guarding the lab entrance on Bert's behalf.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A 60' by 50' opening with hardened mushrooms that provide half cover to medium sized creatures and 3/4 cover to small creatures.

Creatures/NPCs

A goblin **enchanter**, a goblin **warlock of the archfey**, and three goblin **swashbucklers** stand guard outside the entrance. They are an adventuring party of Chaotic Good Batiri goblins called the Half Size Heroes. Gourmand cast *mass suggestion* to use them as guards.

Objectives/Goals. The Half Size Heroes want to retire from dungeon crawling. They are in awe of Bert, but met Gourmand instead. The oblex suggested that if the goblins "guard the entrance for a day and stop anyone who doesn't give you the password, Bert will hire you."

Shelly, the warlock, **asks for a password**. She assumes it's nonverbal, but lets characters try one verbal password first. Guessing is funny, and a way to test visitors' knowledge of Bert.

The Half Size Heroes are persistent about not letting any unauthorized visitors in the lab, but they are not aggressive.

What Do They Know? Gourmand played a cruel trick on the goblin party. He never told them the password. As a result, the Half Size Heroes assume that **Bert's iconic logo is the password**. They can also pose like his icon!

The Half Size Heroes don't know Bert has been arrested. They insist he would never poison someone – he doesn't sell weapons! However, they haven't entered the lab and don't actually know what is being made inside.

If the characters bring up Bert's arrest, the Half Size Heroes' insistence on staying in the Underdark to protect him seems less and less rational. At this point, a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) or DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms they are under the effect of a spell.

If the enchantment is broken on one goblin (*dispel magic* requires a DC 16 check), that goblin can dispel or slap the others out of the unreasonable *suggestion*.

Any goblin who is no longer under the *mass suggestion* can explain that a tiefling cast the spell on them and point to the **spell scroll**. They don't recognize Zepar and don't know he has been fully assimilated by Gourmand.

Adjusting the Scene

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

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **enchanter**.
- **Weak:** Remove the **warlock of the archfey**.
- **Strong:** The enchanter pre-casts *haste* on a swashbuckler.
- **Very Strong:** Replace two **swashbucklers** with **gladiators**.

Goblin Adjustments

- **Darkvision:** The Half Size Heroes all have 60' darkvision.
- **Nimble Escape:** Goblins can hide or disengage as a bonus action.
- **Small:** Goblins are small, not medium sized.

Playing the Pillars

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

- **Combat.** The Half Size Heroes are used to fighting as a unit and disengage in order to focus on a single target. They use their mobility to dart behind mushrooms and get cover.
- **Exploration.** Any character who gets close (DC 15 Dexterity Stealth check) can hear the Half Size Heroes chatting about how they fought a group of ghouls last week. Shelly assumes non-native animals like owls are familiars and opens fire.
- **Social.** Clever players can try to convince the Half Size Heroes they work with Bert. If they explain Bert has been arrested, the Half Size Heroes insist on staying here to protect the lab while other adventurers should mount a rescue.

Treasure & Rewards

Special Rewards. The used spell scroll of *mass suggestion* can be used as evidence during the trial.

2: Main Lab Area

Adventurers find evidence that the poison has some connection to chaos magic.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. Another large cavernous room, roughly 45 feet by 45 feet, with four 10-by-10 foot alchemical vats.

Light. Faerzress concentrated along the west wall emits bright light, not dim light.

Potion Crates. Adventurers see a crate of hastily dumped potions on the east side of the room, stamped with Bert's seal. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check confirms a large number of people left in a hurry, causing a mess.

Corner Brewing Vats. The southwest vat is full of acrid liquid. Anyone proficient in Arcana or Alchemists' Supplies recognizes this as an attempt to bottle chaos magic.

The northwest vat has a squirrel lying on its back. The first character to see **The Eldritch Squirrel** must make a DC 15 Wisdom save. On a failure, that character becomes convinced the squirrel is telepathically aiding their quest.

Bonus Objective A

If you are using Bonus Objectives, then the vats near the center of the room are nearly empty! Adventurers need to find the poison. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature or Poisoner's Kit) check lets characters harvest a sample. If bonus objectives are not used, the vats are half-full but their contents are inert.

Treasure & Rewards

Characters can bottle the chaos magic. These potions **lose their magical potency** at the end of the adventure. One player can keep The Eldritch Squirrel as a pet (see story awards).

Chaos Potions

Characters can gather up to 10 potions from the southwest brewing vat. Drinking one of these potions triggers a wild magic surge, as described in the *Player's Handbook*. Any character drinking multiple chaos potions in an eight hour period must succeed a DC 15 Constitution save or gain a level of madness as they start hallucinating.

3: Zepar's Office

Gourmand forged evidence implicating Bert and left a clue about their role in Adrie's murder.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A calcified mushroom serves as the door to this 25 by 30 foot room. Adventurers see a workbench to the right, a desk and a medium-sized cot to the left.

Signed Portrait. Zepar left a small portrait on his desk, depicting a red-skinned male tiefling holding a thin vial and a female wood elf carrying a picnic basket. The portrait is signed "Zepar & Adrie, one beautiful year together!" See **Bonus Objective B**.

Forged Prank Plans. On the desk there is a note, supposedly from Bert to Zepar. Give **Player Handout 1**. A DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check suggests this is a forgery.

Slimy Basket. Adrie's picnic basket from the painting lies next to the cot, with a small strand of sulfurous slime inside. Characters examining it closely have advantage spotting it in Part 3.

Secret Door to Gourmand's Lair. Anyone standing next to the workbench in Zepar's office sees a shimmer of an iron ring, as if there's an obscured door to the basement. The shimmer is not visible from any other spot.

Only one character can try to open the door at a time. They must make a DC 15 Strength check. On a success, they rip the door open. On a failure, the door doesn't budge, and the character who attempted to open it hears the rest of the party laughing at them. They suffer one level of madness.

Characters can attempt to open the door as often as they want until someone succeeds.

Bonus Objective B

If you are using Bonus Objectives, Zepar's desk is locked. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check unlocks the desk. A DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check forces it open. On a failed athletics check, they break the desk, suffering 21 (6d6) slashing damage as the desk opens.

Inside is a letter, hinting that Zepar's research could lead to a cure for Gourmand's poison. Give **Player Handout 2**.

4: Gourmand's Portal

Characters break in to Gourmand's secret lair, only to realize this is what the devious mastermind wants.

Prerequisites

One character passed the madness save and opened the secret door in Scene C.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The Demon Lord Juiblex's influence is much stronger in this 15 by 20 foot room. The ladder down, walls, and even the floor feel like they are made of semi-solid violet ooze. Hardened blue ooze on the far end of the room serves as a desk with a cabinet.

Prior Adventures. Any character who has played CCC-SQC 03-01 or 02 immediately recognizes the influence of Juiblex in this room. Other characters need to pass a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check to get this information.

Trapped Journal. Gourmand's journal lies on the desk. It requires a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find the *glyph of warding* cast at 5th level on the journal.

If the journal is opened, the closest humanoid within 60 feet must make a DC 18 Wisdom save against the *dominate person* spell held inside. Adventurers cannot use *mage hand* to open the journal without being valid targets for the glyph.

Gourmand wants to intimidate and be entertained. Someone failing the save is commanded to sing for a turn. Then Gourmand orders them to eat ooze from the semi-solid wall. Anyone watching an ally suddenly eating ooze from The Abyss must make a DC 15 Wisdom check or gain a level of madness. At the end of the minute, Gourmand demands the character start reading their journal.

Gourmand's Journal. Gourmand set their plot in motion because they heard the Hillsfar Senate was hiring adventurers to investigate a unique poison that converts bodies to ooze. Gourmand wants the characters to catch them. However, their journal is intentionally ambiguous about whether Bert is in on the plot. Give **Player Handout 3**.

Gourmand describes humanoids solely based on whether their memories make a desirable meal. Bards' well-rounded experience is best, then other adventurers. Racists like Sir Ardem must be poisoned instead of eaten.

New Recruit Handbook. Next to the journal, characters see a stack of papers. Most of the text is smeared in red ooze, but a few phrases stand out:

- "For Patrin and Bert" on the top.
- "Report directly to me. The head boss doesn't understand the value of working with humanoids. He may just kill you. When the time comes, only I can protect you."

Development: One Last Taunt

Once characters find everything in the lab, they hear Gourmand's distorted voice coming from the semi-solid wall: "Congratulations on finding all the clues. And the extra ones I left for you. Can't wait to see you lovely morsels at the trial."

Treasure & Rewards

Magic Items. Characters who can pry open the cabinet of Gourmand's ooze "desk" with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or suitable magic find a *potion of acid resistance*.

Special Rewards. Gourmand's journal is clearly going to be useful during Bert's trial.

Playing the Pillars

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

- **Combat.** Gourmand could try to use the *glyph of warding* or the *dominate person* spell it holds to cause damage or get detailed information about adventurers' combat abilities. However, Gourmand would rather taunt and intimidate the party.
- **Exploration.** A familiar could open the journal without triggering the glyph. Give advantage to any Investigation check to find the glyph with a familiar's aid.
- **Social.** If *dominate person* is triggered, this is the first time Gourmand can interact with a PC. They enjoy the opportunity, using the new telepathic connection to taunt the dominated character about how tasty their memories will be

5: Patrin is Dead?

As the party leaves the lab, Kenna questions the adventurers. The paranoid investigator could be a useful ally, particularly if the Bonus Objectives are being used.

Prerequisites

The adventurers have decided they are done investigating the Faerzress lab and have returned to Hillsfar.

Area Information

Passage of Time. It is night by the time adventurers return from the Underdark. A foot of fresh snow obscures all tracks from others leaving the lab.

Creatures/NPCs

Kenna, a warlock with a red feather plume sticking out of her purple hair, is waiting breathlessly for the adventurers as they emerge.

“Finally, the Senate’s “brave heroes” emerge. Patrin is dead. The Juiblex cult got him. And now they’re coming for ME! I guess I have to trust SOMEONE if we’re going to survive!”

Objectives/Goals. Kenna thinks the Senate betrayed her by bringing in adventurers to do her job. Kenna suspects everyone is a potential cultist, but she’s desperate enough to make new allies. If for some reason adventurers attack, she uses *dimension door* to flee.

Mia and Tia Thorent (CCC-SQC 03-01) have vouched for anyone with the **Discerning Taste** story award. Kenna tests other adventurers, using *detect thoughts* in her interrogation (but claiming she is casting *protection from evil and good* to ward off possession). Any character who calmly answers Kenna’s questions or criticizes the Senate earns her trust. She respects adventurers who maintain suspicion of her. A DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check can be used too.

What Kenna Knows. Patrin was beaten to death while the characters were in the Underdark and Bert was in custody. Patrin started telling Kenna about the cult’s activities

five days ago. Kenna swore she’d never reveal her source. A DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms she is holding something back.

Bert’s trial is tomorrow. He doesn’t show the telltale hunger of Juiblex cultists. Kenna forgets to tell characters about this unless they calm her paranoia. The warlock switches from vocalizing to *awakened mind* telepathy without realizing it.

She also knows if the adventurers broke Gourmand’s spell on the Half Size Heroes.

Trust No One!

Players will probably have meta knowledge that Kenna cast *detect thoughts* at some point. If they continue to treat her at face value and never suspect she is hiding something, they may prefer combat in Part 3.

Bonus Objectives

If you are using Bonus Objectives, they must be completed **before beginning Part 3**. Kenna has some additional information.

- Kenna does not know about the missing poison. She encourages characters to investigate immediately while she checks with her “contacts” (her warlock patron). Under no circumstances will Kenna disclose her contacts!
- Adventurers could make contacts that a Red Plume cannot. Kenna screams at anyone who thinks investigation is just about finding physical clues, then uses *awakened mind* to tell a savvier character (ideally someone who looks feminine) that the Rogues’ Guild does smuggling.
- Characters can follow Kenna back to her safehouse. She notes anyone who does not succeed a DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check, but doesn’t react if she spots someone
- Trusted parties get an invite to meet at the M&T Bakery (from CCC-SQC 03-01) in one hour.
- Yazven, a male drow refugee, works in the Red Plume morgue and is researching an antidote. However, he’s had little success so far. Zepar and Bert may have been working on it too?

Part 3: Trial of the Century! (Story Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 55

Setting Description

In this episode, the characters start by testifying at Bert's trial. Little do they know that Gourmand is the prosecutor. Characters then roleplay as Bert's defense lawyers or go straight to combat.

Story Objective B

Defeat Gourmand, either at trial or in combat.

To Fight or Not to Fight?

Part 3 can be resolved by winning the trial through a combination of social interaction and exploration, or combat. Use this guide to provide the best experience for your group:

- **Scenes 1 to 3 (Roleplay, 15-25 minutes):** Sets up the trial, lets PCs testify. Use scene 2 to determine how much more roleplay your players want. Start tracking trial successes with **Appendix 4**. Players should feel challenged when testifying, like this is a boss fight.
- **Scene 4 to 7 (Roleplay, 0-30 minutes):** PCs take over as Bert's lawyers. Then other key witnesses testify.
- **Scene 8 (Exploration, 0-10 minutes):** A guide for how DMs should handle PCs who want to sneak around for clues.
- **Scene 10 (Combat, 20-45 minutes):** Once combat starts, the party cannot go back to additional roleplay scenes.
- **Scene 9:** Verdict of the trial, giving a second chance to hop on to the combat track if the party loses.

Scenes 4 to 8 are a relatively open-ended sandbox, letting the trial unfold in a variety of ways. Here are some examples of how Episode 3 can play out:

- **We Love the Trial:** If players enjoy the roleplay in the first three scenes, consider skipping scene 4. Run scene 5 with Sir Ardem or Scene 7 with Bert, then the other, and Scene 6 or 8.
- **We Hate the Trial:** If players don't enjoy the roleplay in Scene 3 or don't care about Bert, consider going straight to combat (Scene 10). Gourmand gets bored and uses *dominate person* to attempt an ambush.
- **We're Not Sure:** If you can't read the table, it is easiest to run the Scenes in order through Scene 4, then decide.

Area Information

A large courtyard in Hillsfar Castle is used for the trial. **Vuhm Yestral** sits in a throne, acting as the judge. Every member of Hillsfar's Senate sits in the gallery. **Bert the Goblin** sits at a 10 by 5 foot desk with his lawyer **Drax**, 40 feet away from everyone.

Gourmand is hidden in a 10 foot by 20 foot "evidence box" next to the prosecutor's desk. Prosecutor **Rosalind Liadon** never opens it. Gourmand controls Rosalind as a simulacrum, with a slimy tether connecting them.

Hillsfar Law. Vuhm Yestral knows he is making new law. DMs are free to improvise, with the following guidelines:

- Vuhm Yestral refuses to act as the jury, for fear of losing face with other nobles.
- Vuhm condemns anyone supporting the Great Law of Humanity as a personal affront.
- Bert is entitled to a defense attorney (or party of them). Let all the players participate.
- If Bert is conspiring with Gourmand to assassinate Sir Ardem, they are both considered "guilty."
- **The trial can be played as serious and terrifying, campy humor, or some combination.**

Creatures/NPCs

Most NPCs defer to the rules of the court and avoid interjecting. Here are some guidelines:

Bert the Goblin. Struggles to take the trial seriously. Has inappropriate reactions.

Vuhm Yestral. Tries to make everyone happy with logical rulings. Use his authority to end any squabbles. Wary of racial scapegoating.

Sir Ardem Rohan. Gets demonstrably upset if characters make good arguments. Use Sir Ardem's frustration to reward characters for small victories.

Kenna. Can telepathically give hints if she likes the characters, or taunt them for mistakes.

1: Anarchy in the Streets

Kenna escorts the party past a crowd of angry humans and in to Hillsfar Castle for the trial.

Area Information

Passage of Time. Characters get a long rest at the start of Part 3, if they haven't taken one yet.

Creatures/NPCs

Kenna approaches characters in the morning, warning them of a riot outside their tavern and helping them prepare for the trial.

Objectives/Goals. Kenna started investigating demons and cults so she wouldn't have to waste her talents enforcing the xenophobic Great Law of Humanity. Regardless of what she thinks of the adventurers personally, she needs them to prove Bert's innocence to prevent more racial violence in Hillsfar.

What Does Kenna Know? Kenna spent last night investigating a dozen murders. Most were humans killing elves and halflings, but a group of wood elves killed two humans in a bar fight. Hillsfar's more xenophobic residents are using Bert's arrest as a pretense for violence.

If Bert is found guilty, Hillsfar may become more dangerous for everyone. Kenna suspects this is the Juiblex cult's goal. The only way to bring peace to Hillsfar is to find the cultist behind the poisonings. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that despite Kenna's paranoia, she understands the stakes of the trial better than anyone else in town.

Kenna knows any ground rules the DM has set for the trial. Most importantly, she knows characters will have to figure out who Gourmand is and prove Bert knew nothing of the poisoning plot.

Why Have a Trial?

If you are using the bonus objectives, some players may feel like they have accomplished their main goal already. Use this scene to remind them that the Juiblex cult could always cause more problems unless stopped here and now.

2: We Actually Have Laws

Vuhm Yestral, eager to show his interest in justice, explains how he has secured the court from outside interference.

Warded Evidence Box

The First Lord commissioned the Mage's Guild to place two *glyphs of warding* on the evidence box. Both store *Otiluke's resilient sphere* and are plainly visible.

One glyph is triggered by anyone trying to pry the box open without Vuhm Yestral's consent. It takes a successful DC 17 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being trapped.

The second glyph is triggered by anyone trying to damage the box or its contents. This version of the spell has been modified to cover the box and anyone standing next to it.

Gourmand hid a third glyph on the box, holding *dominate person* for anyone trying to open it. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check spots the glyph, and a DC 17 Wisdom save resists the spell. Any affected character is commanded to admit their crime and beg the court for forgiveness.

Creatures/NPCs

Vuhm Yestral explains wards against magical intrusion, including divination.

Objectives/Goals. The First Lord wants every aspect of the trial open to the public, to prevent any accusations of "secret justice." All evidence has already been placed on display.

What Do They Know? Racial unrest and rumors of cultists are a toxic combination, brewing discord in Hillsfar. Secret magic could make things worse!

Enough faerzress from the lab has been placed on the evidence desk to give all creatures advantage on any divination spell requiring a save. Other divination spells require the caster to pass a DC 15 Constitution save or the spell is wasted.

Anyone casting *detect thoughts* makes contact with the demon lord Juiblex instead of their intended target. They must immediately make a DC 18 Wisdom save or gain a level of madness. (This limits Gourmand and PCs).

3: Star Witnesses

The characters testify. Gourmand, disguised as prosecutor Rosalind Liadon, knows the party doesn't have enough evidence to prove Bert's innocence and tries to poke holes in their story.

Area Information

Gourmand's Tether. Gourmand killed half-elf prosecutor Rosalind Liadon this morning and is using her body as a simulacrum. She has largely human features, along with a wood elf tribal tattoo on her left hand. A thin layer of slime drips from her right leg to the evidence box containing Gourmand.

Anyone standing next to Rosalind can attempt a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they realize the slime on her leg matches Adrie's picnic basket. Grant advantage if characters harvested the slime in Part 2.

Creatures/NPCs

Gourmand starts to poke holes in the characters' stories, disguised as Rosalind.

Challenge the Players

Gourmand has 22 Intelligence, 18 Charisma, +10 in all relevant knowledge skills and +8 in Deception. Gourmand should knock the players back on their heels in this scene, just like bosses do in the beginning of combat encounters.

It does not matter whether Hillsfar law presumes Bert is innocent until proven guilty. **Gourmand should end this scene with the upper hand** unless characters are incredibly cunning or find a way to change the rules of the court.

Objectives/Goals. Gourmand wants to calmly convince the Senate that Bert is guilty of the poisonings and should be sentenced to death.

They also want to challenge the adventurers in a battle of wits, testing who is worthy enough to eat. Ideally adventurers will bring up the mysterious mastermind "Gourmand," causing further panic as Senators wonder who Bert is really working with.

Anyone with a Passive Perception of 18 or higher notices "Rosalind" can't help but salivate over a battle of wits with the adventurers. This behavior gets more obvious if an adventurer is particularly clever.

What Do They Know? Every piece of evidence that the characters could have could be a sign that Bert is actually working for Gourmand. **Players – not to mention their characters** – may be surprised to realize their accusations and explanations are not accepted at face value.

The prosecutor claims everything in the "evidence box" was taken from Bert's store. No one says otherwise unless the characters can persuade Bert to testify (see **Scene 7**).

Gourmand also knows the slimy tether to

Rosalind is a liability. "Rosalind" says she was attacked by Gourmand but survived. The tether hurts, but it will heal. Removing it is far more dangerous.

If one of the adventurers has the "Murderer" story award from SQC 03-02, Gourmand knows. Rosalind accuses that adventurer of murdering Patrin too.

Rosalind was well known in Phlan for her honor, civility, and sensitivity to racial tensions. Characters know this with a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check.

But We Don't Want to Do The Trial!

Everything after this scene is a sandbox! If players are enjoying the trial, you can run scenes in order, or cut ones that are less appropriate for your group.

If your group wants to fight now, Gourmand gets bored with them and attempts to cast *dominate person*, looking for a large warrior type without an obvious holy symbol. Gourmand is smart enough to know how typical paladins dress, but doesn't know all PC capabilities.

- A dominated character is commanded to attack a spellcaster with the element of surprise. Then roll for initiative and go to **Scene J**. Bear in mind this makes the combat considerably more difficult!

4: You Killed My Cousin

Bert's lawyer has PTSD over seeing adventurers. Adventurers must calm the court by acting as replacement lawyers. If they refuse, Gourmand attacks from surprise.

Prerequisites & Timing

The adventurers have completed Scene 3. **If players are already interested in defending Bert, feel free to skip this scene!**

Creatures/NPCs

Drax, one of Bert's loyal goblin retainers, appears to be Bert's lawyer. He is convinced the adventurers are goblin killers, just like every other adventurer.

Objectives/Goals. Drax's cousin Smax was killed by adventurers. Now Drax wants the adventurers to admit that they have killed goblins at some point in their career, making them the *real* criminals who should be put on trial. He gets increasingly irrational, shouting until Vuhm Yestral orders him removed from the court. Adventurers' main challenge is to avoid making tensions worse.

What They Know. Drax knows Bert has a strict no weapons policy. He was ordered to keep his dagger at home to make a good impression.

Bert Needs a Lawyer – Or a Party of Lawyers

Once Drax is removed from the court, Gourmand is afraid that Vuhm Yestral will delay the trial. This would accidentally thwart Juiblex's invasion plan. In disguise as Rosalind, Gourmand asks the adventurers to step in as Bert's lawyers. "Everyone needs an advocate, particularly nonhumans."

5: Sir Ardem's Accusation

Gourmand uses Sir Ardem to act as a star witness against Bert, but few people in court can stand Sir Ardem's xenophobic attitude.

Prerequisites & Timing

The adventurers have finished testifying. **DMs are encouraged to run this scene as soon as it looks like Bert may be found innocent.**

Creatures/NPCs

Sir Ardem Rohan testifies, leaping from his seat in the Senate's juror's box to accuse Bert if he isn't called upon!

Objectives/Goals. Sir Ardem wants to be rid of his rival Bert once and for all. He also wants to use the trial to try and convince the people of Hillsfar that being more welcoming to non-humans was a mistake. He tries to appeal to lofty ideals of "order" and "civilization," no matter how absurd the trial becomes.

Gourmand needs Sir Ardem to testify about the vial, but can barely stand to look at the racist Senator. Anyone passing a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check can sense Gourmand is using Sir Ardem.

Vuhm Yestral wants lawyers (i.e. the player characters) to complain about Sir Ardem's racist rants, allowing Vuhm to "impartially" affirm the complaint instead of lodging it himself.

What They Know. Sir Ardem knows Brendon Tamesford drank from a vial with Bert's seal (during the Call to Action), and then collapsed. Sir Ardem's racism is so strong that he assumes Bert must have filled the vial, attempting to poison another human. A DC 15 Intelligence (Insight) check confirms Sir Ardem's lack of direct evidence against Bert. Vuhm Yestral knows that Sir Ardem is tied to the old human-only politics of Hillsfar's Red Plumes and looks for reasons to object to the noble's behavior.

Gourmand knows they are using Sir Ardem, planting the evidence for his accusation. However, Sir Ardem never doubts Gourmand's acting as Rosalind.

6: Kenna Testifies

Kenna could support the party's case against Gourmand, or testify about their criminal behavior.

Prerequisites & Timing

The adventurers have finished testifying. This scene is **strictly optional**. It makes the most sense if characters broke in to her safehouse during Bonus Objective A and have to pay the consequences.

Creatures/NPCs

Kenna testifies, with colorful hair peeking out of her Red Plume helmet.

Objectives/Goals. Kenna's first priority is to warn the court about the Juiblex cult, regardless of how she feels about the adventurers. She doubts Bert is involved, but knows she doesn't have enough evidence to fully defend him.

Kenna accuses the adventurers of being criminals if she has any evidence they acted against her. She supports anyone who has acted on her behalf or has the "Discerning Taste" story award from SQC 03-01.

Gourmand recognizes Kenna as a threat, so they try to drive a wedge between her and the adventurers. Kenna has to hide her warlock pact with Tharizun, the patron of spreading madness, so she can't quite explain her magical powers or why she knows so much.

What They Know. Kenna knows most if not all of the information found at the Faerzress lab. She knows a lot of what the Juiblex cult was doing because Patrin was her informant. She assumes the mysterious "Gourmand" is working with Juiblex. Kenna also knows she has made a lot of powerful enemies, limiting how far she can go to exonerate Bert.

Gourmand learned Patrin was giving information to Kenna after killing Patrin and absorbing his memories. Gourmand does not know Patrin was animated as an undead and is shocked to hear this! (Only applicable if you are doing Bonus Objective A.)

7: Surprise Witness

The party talks Bert, Ishtana, or the Half-Sized Heroes (if alive) in to testifying.

Prerequisites

The adventurers have finished testifying.

Creatures/NPCs

Bert could testify next, if adventurers get him on the stand.

Objectives/Goals. Bert wants to put on a good show and play pranks with Sir Ardem. He's not interested in testifying unless adventurers talk him in to it. This requires a clever argument or a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check.

Gourmand wants everyone in court to think it's a logical move from Bert brewing potions to brewing poison. They are happy to accuse Bert of working with other conspirators to undermine Hillsfar.

What They Know. Bert knows he has never brewed poison. He doesn't know anything about the poisoning plot. However, all his pranks make it a little harder to claim innocence now. Bert also knows Sir Rohan is out to get him.

Gourmand knows Bert knows nothing. They use Bert's reputation and evidence of the Half Sized Heroes guarding the Faerzress lab to frame Bert.

The Trial Goes On?

Players may consider calling the **Half Sized Heroes** and/or **Ishtana Ro** (depending on how they resolve Bonus Objective A) to testify.

- The Half Sized Heroes, if alive, can defend the adventurers' reputation for non-violence and testify someone is trying to frame Bert. They saw Zepar (the tiefling alchemist assimilated by Gourmand) cast a spell on them.
- Ishtana Ro either promotes the characters' heroism or accuse them of conspiring against Hillsfar, based on how they resolved Bonus Objective A.

8: Exploring the Court

One or more adventurers want to look around the courtroom for clues during the trial. Describing the entire castle is beyond the scope of this adventure. Guide sneaky explorers to Rosalind's corpse.

Prerequisites

The adventurers have finished testifying.

Area Information

Comings and Goings. After Sir Ardem testifies, people start moving around the court to discuss backroom deals. A DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) or Charisma (Deception) check allows characters to go anywhere they want in Hillsfar Castle.

Rosalind's Quarters. The doorframe is sealed by a layer of ooze, which blends in to the door. A DC 15 Intelligence (Sleight of Hand) check is needed to burn the ooze away without starting a bigger fire in the room.

Three walls of the sparse 10 by 15 foot room are covered in ooze. The fourth has the word "DELICIOUS" written in Rosalind's blood. There are no signs of a struggle. Gourmand absorbed her body.

Gourmand's Tether. Rosalind moves a bit during the trial. Any character with a Passive Perception of 18 or higher notices the tether expands and contracts as she moves. If a character can figure out a way to get closer to the prosecution desk without drawing too much attention, let them make an active Wisdom (Perception) check and lower the DC to 15.

9: We Have a Verdict

Characters have rested their case and await a verdict.

Prerequisites

Players feel they have completed the trial and done enough to ensure Bert is found not guilty.

Area Information

Comings and Goings. Vuhm Yestral bangs his magic gavel, which reverberates throughout the castle. Nobles rush back to the court.

Counting the Votes

DMs should use the Trial Tracker in Appendix 4. Describe the appropriate trial resolution based on whether the players had more successes or failures.

Bert is Found Guilty!

If Gourmand gets more successes than the adventurers, then the Hillsfar nobles find Bert guilty of developing the poison.

- **Failure:** If players leave the courtroom as Bert is carried off to prison, Gourmand escapes through an abyssal vortex. Players **fail the main objective. They do not get the magic item unlock from Bert.**
- **Last Chance:** If the party tries to stop Gourmand, go to combat in Scene J. The portal is operational.

Bert is Innocent!

If the players get more successes, Bert the Goblin is found not guilty. Rosalind sulks in her seat while Sir Ardem starts sobbing uncontrollably. Bert pulls out a vial to gather some of Sir Ardem's tears, then tosses it to Rosalind. Gourmand is so terrified of consuming just one of Sir Ardem's tears that they open a portal to The Abyss to get away.

- **Case Closed!** Characters do not need to kill Gourmand to **complete the main objective.**
- **Hey, Get Back Here!** Players may want to kill Gourmand. In this case, go to combat in Scene J. The portal is not operational and Gourmand has disadvantage on initiative.

10: Gourmand Strikes!

Gourmand gets reinforcements as Juiblex's army strikes!

Prerequisites

Players have initiated combat or shown that they are tired of social interaction in the trial. Once combat starts, the social interaction part of the trial is over.

Area Information

Abyssal Vortex. At the start of combat, the demon lord **Juiblex** opens a gate to the courtroom. He wants his two **black pudding** minions to take over Hillsfar, but is ambivalent about whether **Gourmand** deserves to stay as his lieutenant

- **Party was Winning Trial:** Juiblex turns off the portal, taunting Gourmand for their elaborate plots and picky eating habits. The elder oblex **gets no additional reinforcements** from the portal once initiative starts, just a chance to escape.
- **Party was Losing Trial:** The portal is active. Starting at the end of the first round, the vortex absorbs an innocent bystander and turn them in to an ooze **martial arts adept** (cosmetic changes only, not mechanical ones). Created ooze adepts act on initiative count 1.
- The vortex can be deactivated by dealing damage to it (AC 15, HP 85, immune to poison, necrotic and acid damage).

Creatures/NPCs

Gourmand fights the characters while two **black puddings** advance. Other NPCs scatter, searching for other vortexes as part of a broader invasion.

Objectives/Goals. Gourmand tries to use delaying tactics to let the vortex's reinforcements overwhelm the adventurers. The elder oblex feels betrayed by Juiblex's violent arrival and is willing to turn on the demon lord in exchange for safe passage out of Hillsfar. The black puddings mindlessly attack the closest target. Martial arts adepts coordinate attacks.

What They Know. Gourmand knows to dominate or hypnotize opponents. However, **in combat the mastermind's hunger and arrogance can overwhelm their cunning.** If the party is weak, Gourmand relies more on brute force than spellcasting. Even if the party is strong, the oblex refuses to disable more than half the party at a time. Fresh memories taste better!

All other creatures mindlessly attack the nearest humanoid. They refuse to collaborate with Gourmand on strategy.

Adjusting the Scene

Gourmand is starting to fall sway to the demon lord Juiblex's influence, losing a bit of their tactical acumen while growing in durability. Use the following adjustments for a standard party:

- **Hit Points:** Gourmand has 135 hit points.

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

- **Very Weak:** Replace the **black puddings** with **martial arts adepts**. Gourmand uses *eat memories* until succeeding once, then recoils from the adventurer's lack of experience and refuses to use it again. The vortex has 60 HP and only operates on even turns.
- **Weak:** Replace the **black puddings** with **martial arts adepts**. Gourmand savors memories they consume when *eat memories* succeeds, refusing to use it on their next turn. The vortex has 75 HP and does not operate on the first turn.
- **Strong:** Gourmand has maximum (170) hit points and acts second in initiative order, unless they won the roll. The abyssal vortex has AC 16 and 125 HP.
- **Very Strong:** Gourmand has maximum (170) hit points and acts second in initiative order, unless they won the roll. The abyssal vortex has AC 16 and 140 HP. Add two **martial arts adepts** to the start of combat.

Wrapping Up

One way or another, the biggest trial in Hillsfar's history is over.

Party Won The Trial

Whether the adventurers defeated Gourmand in a legal trial, a trial by combat or both, Vuhm Yestral bangs his magic gavel and declares the trial is over. Bert the Goblin is free to go.

Players complete the main objective.

- Bert offers to make copies of his favorite prank bag for each of the foolhardy adventurers who risked their lives to save him. Everyone in the party unlocks the **Bag of Tricks (Rust)**.
- Kenna thanks the party for helping quell xenophobic unrest in town, giving them her **Horn of Silent Alarm**.
- Bert offers to cure any madness characters suffered in this adventure. Kenna says madness makes them stronger, offering her aid in the future to anyone suffering from madness. Kenna contacts any adventurer who

refuses Bert's offer or completed Bonus Objective A, using her *dream* spell. Those characters gain the **My Dreams Taste Like Raspberries story award** – Kenna's favor for a future adventure.

Party Lost The Trial

Adventurers lost to Gourmand in the legal trial, then wandered away, letting Gourmand escape. If players could not redeem themselves in a trial by combat, they **do not complete the main objective**.

- In this unlikely circumstance, characters **do not unlock the Bag of Tricks (Rust)**.
- Characters can unlock the **Horn of Silent Alarm**, but Kenna does not make friends and give her story award.

Treasure & Rewards

Characters can unlock Bert's prank bag (***Bag of Tricks (Rust)***) and Kenna's eldritch ***Horn of Silent Alarm***. See **Handout 6**.

Rewards

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

Player Rewards

The characters can earn the following rewards:

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

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

- **Story Objective A:** Investigate the lab
- **Story Objective B:** Drive Gourmand from Hillsfar

The characters earn one advancement checkpoint and one treasure checkpoint for each **bonus objective** they complete.

- **Bonus Objective A:** Find the Poison
- **Bonus Objective B:** Develop a Cure

Magic Item Unlocks

The characters unlock the following magic item(s) for **completing the adventure**. Note that if characters lost the trial and Gourmand escaped in Scene 3-9, they do not unlock the Bag of Tricks (Rust).

Bag of Tricks, Rust. “Bert’s Bag of Pranks” looks like an alchemical pouch and has the pungent smell of an alchemists’ workshop. Creatures pulled from the bag will continually sniff at it then look at its owner, confused by their unnatural state, until given orders. This item can be found in **Appendix 11**.

Horn of Silent Alarm. This horn plays an otherworldly eldritch scream when activated, instead of a traditional horn sound. You can only imagine why Kenna loves it. This item can be found in **Appendix 11**.

Consumable Magic Item

Potion of Acid Resistance. Potion, uncommon. When you drink this potion, you gain resistance to acid damage for 1 hour.

Story Awards

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

My Dreams Taste Like Raspberries. You bonded with Kenna one way or another, and now she always seems to know when you are in town. Any time you rest in Hillsfar, you have surreal dreams of tracking pie demons that always end in a scrumptious dessert. Kenna also pledges more tangible aid, should you need it in a future adventure. More information can be found in **Appendix 12**.

The Eldritch Squirrel. You found an adorable squirrel playing in a vat of harmless ooze in Gourmand’s lair. This squirrel likes to play pranks and stare in to space, acting like it is seeing through your eyes. It uses the statistics of a cat from the *Monster Manual*.

The character who earns the squirrel can name it, and becomes convinced the squirrel can telepathically communicate its feelings and desires. More information can be found in **Appendix 10**.

Dungeon Master Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement** and **treasure checkpoints** for the characters’ completion of objectives, above.

You may complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master’s Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Gourmand (GORE mah-nd).** Elder Oblex behind the poisonings in Hillsfar. Frames Bert to enflame xenophobia, divide and conquer Hillsfar. Loves baiting adventurers to see if they can solve the case. They/them.

Personality: *Cunning, manipulative, bored*
“Getting away with the perfect crime isn’t worth it!”

Ideal: *Humanoids are there to be used.*

Bond: *Anyone who can unravel my plot is worth eating. Unless they are xenophobic.*

Flaw: *“I am what memories I consume.”*

- **Rosalind Liadon (ROE sah lind).** Female half-elf lawyer, assimilated by Gourmand and controlled as a simulacrum in Episode 3. Alias for Gourmand to interact with adventurers.

Personality (of Gourmand playing Rosalind): *Patient, waits for others to trip up. Hides aggression to fool others.*

Ideal, Bond, Flaw: *As Gourmand.*

- **Kenna (keh nah).** Warlock of Tharizun. Red Plume investigating the Juiblex cult. Replaced on the case by adventurers. She may get over her frustration, she may not.

Personality: *Cunning, relentless, manic*

Ideal: *“Anyone could be a cultist. Or worse, a politician. They never put the people first.”*

Bond: *“I was here before you adventurers, and I’ll be here when you are gone.”*

Flaw: *Paranoid, self-loathing, goes it herself*

- **Bert the Goblin (BURT).** Playful, mischievous alchemist framed for brewing poison. Joke candidate won Senate seat. Struggles to focus on winning his trial. He/Him.

Personality: *Jovial prankster, self-promoter*

Ideal: *I sell potions, not weapons.*

Bond: *Playing jokes on Sir Ardem Rohan*

Flaw: *I can’t take anything seriously.*

- **Sir Ardem Rohan (ser ARR dem ROH han).** Human male senator who blames non-humans for every problem in Hillsfar.

Personality: *Aristocratic, combative, humorless*

Ideal: *Non-humans should be kicked out of town.*

Bond: *My father served the glorious humans only regime.*

Flaw: *Blind hatred makes him easy to manipulate.*

- **Ishtana Ro (eh-shh tah na ROE).** Senator and leader of Hillsfar’s Rogues’ Guild. Willing to help adventurers for a price.

Personality: *Ambitious and calculating. Forces others to follow her schedule.*

Ideal: *“Always good to have people owe me.”*

Bond: *“My guild always comes first.”*

Flaw: *“Every relationship has winners and losers.”*

- **Patrin (pah TREEN).** Warlock of Juiblex. Ordered to feed information to adventurers, then murdered by Gourmand. Animated by Juiblex as an undead in Bonus Objective A.

Personality: *Clueless minion when alive. Slavishly loyal in undeath.*

Ideal: *“I will do anything for magical power.”*

Bond: *Put others before Juiblex and paid dearly.*

Flaw: *Always blindly follows someone else.*

- **Hillsfar.** More welcoming than ever, but Gourmand’s plot could enflame old wounds and crack the city from within.

Personality: *Bustling mercantile hub, but the poisonings are causing paranoia.*

Ideal: *We need a strong, inclusive government to keep society from crumbling.*

Bond: *We can’t forget what happened under the old regime. Can other people really forgive?*

Flaw: *When things go wrong, it’s awfully tough to trust people outside of our group.*

Creature Statistics

Allip (Adrie)

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 6 (-2) | 17 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal (languages it knew in life)

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The allip can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Actions

Maddening Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6+3) psychic damage.

Whispers of Madness. The allip chooses up to three creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or it takes 7 (1d8+3) psychic damage and must use its reaction to make a melee weapon attack against one creature of the allip's choice that the allip can see. Constructs and undead are immune to this effect.

Howling Babble (Recharge 6). Each creature within 30 feet of the allip that can hear it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 12 (2d8+3) psychic damage, and it is stunned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage and isn't stunned. Constructs and undead are immune to this effect.

Banshee

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 58 (13d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 (-5) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) |

Saving Throws Wis +2, Cha +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Detect Life. The banshee can magically sense the presence of living creatures up to 5 miles away that aren't undead or constructs. She knows the general direction they're in but not their exact locations.

Incorporeal Movement. The banshee can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Actions

Corrupting Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (3d6+2) necrotic damage.

Horrorifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the banshee that can see her must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the banshee is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the banshee's Horrorifying Visage for the next 24 hours.

Wait (1/day). The banshee releases a mournful wail, provided that she isn't in sunlight. This wail has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 30 feet of her that can hear her must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature

drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Bargura

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 7 (-2) | 14 (+2) | 9 (-1) |

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

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

2/day each: *disguise self*, *invisibility (self only)*

1/day each: *entangle*, *phantasmal force*

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the bargura can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Running Leap. The bargura's long jump is up to 40 feet and its high jump is up to 20 feet when it has a running start.

Actions

Multiattack. The bargura makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its fists.

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

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) bludgeoning damage

Black Pudding

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

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

Damage Immunities acid, cold, lightning, slashing

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

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

Languages --

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

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

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage. The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

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

Actions

Pesudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Reactions

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

Deathlock (Patrin)

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +5

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal, Abyssal (languages it knew in life)

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The deathlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *detect magic, disguise self, mage armor*

Spellcasting. The deathlock is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 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*
1st-3rd level (2 3rd-level slots): *arms of Hadar, dispel magic, hold person, hunger of Hadar, invisibility, spider climb*

Turn Resistance. The deathlock has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Actions

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

Deathlock Mastermind (Patrin, VS)

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) |

Saving Throws Int +5, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Perception +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft. (including magical darkness), passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal, Abyssal (languages it knew in life)

Challenge 8 (3900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The deathlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *detect magic, disguise self, mage armor*

Spellcasting. The deathlock is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 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 (2 5th-level slots): *arms of Hadar, blight, counterspell, crown of madness, darkness, dimension door, dispel magic, fly, hold monster, invisibility*

Turn Resistance. The deathlock has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Actions

Deathly Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6+3) necrotic damage.

Grave Bolts. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one or two targets. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or become restrained as shadowy tendrils wrap around it for 1 minute. A restrained target can use its action to repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Elder Oblex (Gourmand)

Huge ooze, lawful evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 115 (10d12 + 50)

Speed 20 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +10, Cha +8

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

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone

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

Languages Common, Abyssal, Draconic, Elvish, Goblin, Gnomish, Infernal

Challenge 10 (5900 XP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The elder oblex makes two pseudopod attacks and uses Eat Memories.

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

Eat Memories. The oblex targets one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or take 44 (8d10) psychic damage and become memory drained until it finishes a short or long rest or until it benefits from the greater restoration or heal spell. Constructs, oozes, plants, and undead succeed on the save automatically.

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

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

Enchanter

Medium humanoid, any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Goblin, Elvish, Draconic

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Spellcasting. The enchanter is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The enchanter has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person**, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *invisibility*, *suggestion**

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *haste*, *tongues*

4th level (2 slots): *dominate beast**, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *hold monster**

*Enchantment spell of 1st level or higher

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Instinctive Charm (Recharges after the Enchanter Casts an Enchantment Spell of 1st level or Higher). The enchanter tries to magically divert an attack made against it, provided that the attacker is within 30 feet of it and visible to it. The enchanter must decide to do so before the attack hits or misses.

The attacker must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature closest to it, other than the enchanter or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target.

Gladiator

Medium humanoid, any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather armor, 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 Common

Challenge 5 (1800 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. or 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 target. *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.

Martial Arts Adept

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) |

Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the adept is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The adept makes three unarmed strikes or three dart attacks.

Unarmed Attack. *Melee Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the adept can choose one of the following additional effects:

The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (adept's choice).

The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the adept's next turn.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, the adept deflects the missile. The damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + 3. If the damage is reduced to 0, the adept catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one hand and the adept has a hand free.

Ooze (Stone) Defender

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 19 (+4) | 10 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 3 (-4) | 10 (+0) | 1 (-5) |

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Abyssal but does not speak

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

False Appearance. While the stone defender remains motionless against an uneven earthen or stone surface, it is indistinguishable from that surface.

Magic Resistance. The stone defender has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage and if the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is knocked prone.

Reactions

Intercept Attack. In response to another creature within 5 feet of it being hit by an attack roll, the stone defender gives that creature a +5 bonus to its AC against that attack, potentially causing a miss. To use this ability, the stone defender must be able to see the creature and the attacker.

Ooze (Sword Wraith) Warrior

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 6 (-2) | 9 (-1) | 10 (+0) |

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

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Abyssal (languages it knew in life)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Martial Fury. As a bonus action, the sword wraith can make one weapon attack. If it does so, attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage or 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

Swashbuckler

Medium humanoid, any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

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 darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lightfooted. The swashbuckler can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Suave Defense. While the swashbuckler is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The swashbuckler makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its 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.

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

Warlock of the Archfey

Medium humanoid, any alignment

Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) |

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +2, Deception +6, Nature +2, Persuasion +6

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

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

At Will: *disguise self*, *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*, *speak with animals*

1/day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. The warlock is an 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 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): *dancing lights*, *eldritch blast*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *blink*, *charm person*, *dimension door*, *dominate beast*, *faerie fire*, *fear*, *hold monster*, *misty step*, *phantasmal force*, *seeming*, *sleep*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Misty Escape (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest).

In response to taking damage, the warlock turns invisible and teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. It remains invisible until the start of its next turn or until it attacks, makes a damage roll, or casts a spell.

Wraith

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 6 (-2) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) |

Damage Resistances acid; cold; fire; lightning; thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Appendix 1: Find the Poison (Bonus Objective A)

Estimated Duration: 60

Setting Description: Night Before the Trial

In Part 2, the adventurers learned that Gourmand has moved all their poison from the Faerzress lab. In this **bonus episode**, the characters track down the poison.

Bonus Objective A

Secure the poison Gourmand brewed.

Prerequisites

Characters have completed Part 2. Once Part 3 starts, Bonus Objectives are no longer available.

Organizing the Bonus Objectives

The two bonus objectives are written as a sandbox. Players leave the Faerzress Lab with six possible leads: Zepar, Adrie, Bert, the Rogues' Guild, Patrin and Kenna.

Ask players which person they wish to pursue first.

Some players may be confused because their leads are people and not locations.

DMs who want a more linear progression should introduce a messenger from First Lord Vuhm Yestral, begging them to find the poison first. This messenger points characters to Scene A if they are on friendly terms with Kenna, and Scene B if they are not. Bonus Objective A is linear after finding a starting point. Then go to Bonus Objective B.

DMs more comfortable with a sandbox should ask players which person they want to follow up on first. See the sections "Finding Patrin" and "Investigating Juiblex's Cult" for more.

Setting Information

Bert's upcoming trial is the talk of the town. You can invent innkeepers, gossips, and people arguing to give players background information.

Goblin Senator? Bert was elected as a joke write-in candidate, largely by inverting all of Sir Ardem's positions. Sir Ardem hates him.

Lingering Xenophobia. Adventurers can overhear a prejudiced human talking about how it was a mistake to trust a goblin with a position of power. Make sure to consider the sensitivities of everyone at the table before emphasizing xenophobia.

Cultists on the Loose. If players are new to the trilogy, they hear people discussing farmers recently afflicted by Juiblex's madness (CCC-SQC 03-02).

Finding Patrin in a Sandbox

If the adventurers made friends with **Kenna**, she invited them to brunch. Run **Scene 1**. If the party stealthily followed her home at the end of Part 2, skip the first two scenes and run Scene 3. To run the investigation as a sandbox, use the following guidelines:

Tracking: Anyone looking for tracks can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, they realize the stench of poison has been masked by someone familiar with investigation techniques and magic (i.e. Patrin). Patrin lined his entire safehouse with lead three days ago to block divination spells, following Kenna's advice (and paranoia).

Word on the Street: Anyone asking around for leads on the poison or **Kenna** can make a DC 15 Charisma (Investigation) check. On a success, they find **Ishtana Ro**. On a failure, someone from the Rogues' Guild finds them. Go to **Scene 2** and alter it based on the check.

Other People: Anyone looking for **Bert's** store, **Adrie** or **Zepar** home finds them immediately. Anyone asking for the Red Plumes goes to the **morgue**. See **Appendix 2**.

Investigating Juiblex's Cult

Characters may charge after the poison as quickly as possible. Savvy characters may realize Gourmand left evidence of disloyalty and use this when confronting Patrin later.

- A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion or Nature) check reveals poison doesn't fit Juiblex's philosophy of making everything ooze.
- A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check suggests Gourmand's use of poison shows disloyalty to Juiblex.

1: The Brunch Bunch

Kenna meets adventurers she likes, helping them find Patrin and the poison.

Prerequisites

Characters have completed Part 2. They impressed Kenna then or completed Bonus Objective B already and helped Yazven.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The main area of M&T is a spacious 30 x 30 foot room with white tile, floors and walls of purple wood.

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

Other Features. The room smells of warm, fresh baked bread, cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg waft out from the kitchen.

Creatures/NPCs

Kenna is eating a rainbow pastry, and her hair has gone from purple to rainbow. She offers to buy each character a rainbow pastry.

Objectives/Goals. Kenna wants to help the characters secure the poison for safe disposal. She trusts very few people, and sometimes uses *awakened mind* instead of vocalizing. Mia and Tia are used to Kenna's disability, don't call attention to it, and gently ask others not to judge their friend. Kenna relaxes if anyone compliments her about her new hair.

What They Know. Now that Kenna feels a bit safer, she burned a spell slot to cast *clairvoyance* on Patrin's house to see if Juiblex cultists ransacked it. She was shocked to see her former informant had risen from the dead and was guarding poison. (Kenna never told Patrin that some of her divination magic could bypass lead.)

Kenna also suggests adventurers talk to her friend Yazven at the morgue (a lead for **Bonus Objective B**).

Treasure & Rewards

Special Rewards. Location of Patrin's house, allowing them to complete Bonus Objective A.

2: Costly Favors

With no leads about where to find the poison, the party begs Ishtana Ro for help. She tells them to break in to Kenna's safehouse.

Prerequisites

Characters have not completed Scenes 1 or 3 in Bonus Objective A.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The Rogues' Guild has elegant décor: dark wood, warm paint tones, exquisite tapestries and luxurious furniture to wine and dine potential business partners.

Creatures/NPCs

Ishtana Ro makes the characters wait 15 minutes before receiving them, to prove a point.

Objectives/Goals. Ishtana Ro never used to worry about Kenna focusing her investigations on Ishtana's Rogues' Guild. Now that Patrin is dead, Ishtana fears that there is a new ruthless mastermind in Hillsfar. She's willing to take a risk and have someone break in to Kenna's safehouse on her behalf.

The leader of the Rogues' Guild loves making deals with the desperate, and characters meeting her in this scene may be desperate. Ishtana wants characters to investigate the eldritch focus Kenna uses to amplify divination magic. If the Rogues' Guild tracked down the PCs, Ishtana also demands that they steal Kenna's journal as well.

What Ishtana Knows. Ishtana has seen Kenna and Patrin talking. If characters have moral objections to Ishtana's proposal, she insinuates that Kenna's warlock pact means she can't fully be trusted. Ishtana assumes Kenna's safehouse is trapped, which is why she wants someone other than her Guild members to break in.

For the most part, Ishtana is surprisingly direct in sharing what she knows. She thinks she has leverage over the adventurers.

Treasure & Rewards

Special Rewards. Location of Kenna's safehouse, unlocking scene C.

3: Pie Fight

Characters break in to Kenna's safehouse to find Patrin's address. Several traps can drive the party mad and hide that she is a warlock of Tharizun.

Prerequisites

Characters have found Kenna's safehouse, either by following her or getting information from Ishtana Ro.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. 20 feet wide by 40 feet deep, with one door and no windows. Every exterior surface is covered in lead. The bookcase along the left wall is trapped. The bookcase along the far wall is not. See

Appendix 5.

Lighting. There is no light inside the safehouse. Kenna uses *devil's sight*. Characters must bring light or keep the door open.

Locked Door. Anyone proficient in Thieves' Tools can pick the lock. A familiar can enter the chimney and find a spare key.

Door Trap. A tiny ear is carved in to the brass doorknob. Characters reaching for the door without inspecting it need a passive Perception of 20 to notice the ear. Any character opening the door without specifically covering the ear or whispering an ode to Tharizun triggers the trap. A slot opens above the door, dropping a staining blood pie on that character (no save). That character also hears several pies being launched at the trapped bookcase. Despite their horrifying appearance and texture, the pies all taste like raspberry sorbet.

Trapped Bookcase. This bookcase contains Kenna's journal, along with several other books suggesting she is a warlock:

- Can I Play With Madness? A Guide to Elder Evils of the Far Realm
- How to Tell Your Partner About Your Pact
- Apologizing to Familiars For Dummies

If a character set off the door trap, the outside of Kenna's journal is coated in blood pie, but the actual contents are intact. See **Player Handout 4.**

There is a *glyph of warding* on this bookcase. It can be revealed with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, but this check is made at disadvantage if the door trap was triggered. The glyph is set to trigger if someone uses the spells *prestidigitation* or *mage hand* within 10 feet of the bookcase. When triggered, the glyph releases a stored variant of an *enlarge / reduce* spell, creating a 10 foot cube of blood pie. Any character in the cube can make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to toss Kenna's journal away from the glyph before it gets ruined.

Secondary Trap. If Kenna caught a character spying on her, that character hears a taunting voice in their head upon entering the safehouse. They must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or suffer a level of madness.

Fractured Map. The bookcase in the back of the room has a fractured map of Hillsfar in plain sight. When someone approaches, the map pulses with dark purple runes, matching Kenna's hair. Anyone touching the device must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw as they contact Tharizun, the patron of madness. On a failed save, they get a level of madness and must try again. This trap can be re-attempted until players succeed. Success allows them to review Kenna's last *clairvoyance*, where they see the poison at Patrin's house, and puts his house on the map.

Treasure & Rewards

- **Special Rewards.** Location of Patrin's house, allowing them to complete Bonus Objective A.

4: Patrin's Alive?

Juiblex has brought Patrin back from the dead to guard the poison with his life.

Prerequisites

Characters obtained Patrin's location.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A 50 by 30 foot room with one door. On the inside, Patrin has moved his bed to help provide cover. See **Appendix 5**.

Windows: Hastily boarded up with new thin lead panels. Familiars can squeeze inside and scout with a successful DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Toxic Fumes. When the poison vat lid is open, each creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of their turn or take 7 (2d6) poison damage. The lid can be opened or closed as an action. If an adventurer tips or severely damages the vat (20 points of damage), the fumes do 14 (4d6) damage and cannot be stopped.

Patrin –murdered just hours ago – stands next to a large vat. His face is pale, but he seems fully aware of his surroundings as he speaks. “My TRUE master brought me back for one purpose. Let this poison consume you!” He opens the vat lid, filling the room with toxic fumes.

Creatures/NPCs

Patrin has been reanimated as a **deathlock**. He guards the poison with an **ooze defender** and two **barlguras**. (Any oozes are just cosmetic re-skinning of other undead and a construct, carrying obvious weapons.)

Objectives/Goals. Patrin is completely bound to Juiblex's will. He has been commanded to defend the poison with his life, ensuring Juiblex and not Gourmand is in control. Patrin would love to get revenge on Gourmand, but only if this further serves his demonic master.

What Do They Know? Patrin knows Gourmand is obsessed with finding the perfect humanoids to assimilate. The elder oblex can't loyally follow a plan to get Juiblex in power.

Patrin also knows Gourmand killed him! Patrin and his allies are immune to the poison, so the defender stays back to guard him slinging spells and reopen the vat if needed.

Adjusting the Scene

Patrin is a fiend warlock, so consider giving him patron-specific spells like *fireball*, *hellish rebuke*, and *scorching ray* instead of the default spell list, following the suggestions in *Mornenkainen's Tome of Foes* (pg. 128).

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

- **Very Weak:** Replace the **barlguras** with **ooze warriors**. The poison only does 3 (1d6) damage on a failed save.
- **Weak:** Replace the two **barlguras** with three **ooze warriors**.
- **Strong:** Patrin is a **deathlock mastermind**.
- **Very Strong:** Patrin is a **deathlock mastermind**. Add a **barlgura**. The poison does 9 (2d8) damage on a failed save.

Resolving Bonus Objective A

It should be readily apparent that transporting it risks splashing toxic fumes throughout town. The party needs help to secure the safehouse while they look for a cure (see **Bonus Objective B** if players have not started it yet). Asking the wrong person for help can add complications:

- **Kenna is Friendly from Scene A:** Characters report to her, and she helps them Episode 3.
- **Ishtana is the Informant from Scene B:** The party reports to her or has disadvantage on checks to explore Hillsfar Castle in Episode 3. Kenna turns hostile unless the party reports to her instead, returns her journal if they stole it, and begs forgiveness with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- **We Just Broke In (Scene C):** Begging Kenna for forgiveness only takes a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check if characters show they were taking initiative, not following Ishtana.
- **Other Options?** Going to Sir Ardem, Bert's employees, or Vuhm Yestral angers both Kenna and Ishtana.

Appendix 2: Develop a Cure (Bonus Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 60

Setting: Before the Trial

In Episode 2, the adventurers learned that Gourmand has moved all their poison from the Faerzress lab. In this **bonus episode**, the characters help develop a magical solution to dilute the poison, making it inert.

Prerequisites

Characters have completed Part 2. Once Part 3 starts, Bonus Objectives are no longer available.

Bonus Objective B

Characters need to get **two of three clues** for how to dilute the poison.

Finding Help

Players enter the Bonus Objectives with an incomplete list of leads. Kenna and Patrin are central to Bonus Objective A. Bert, Zepar and Adrie play a bigger role in Bonus Objective B. Characters are also expected to do some commonsense investigation or possibly use contacts from prior adventures:

- **Bert's Store.** Easy to find. Currently sealed off by Red Plume Investigators. Run **Scene A**.
- **Zepar and Adrie.** Characters have Zepar's address. Adrie, an allip, waits for them. Run **Scene B**.
- **Morgue & Yazven.** Any characters who want to examine victims can talk to a Red Plume. This soldier directs the party to **Yazven**, a male drow, at the morgue. Run **Scene C**.

We Did Our Job, Right?

Some players may think that finding the poison and discovering an antidote is more important than bringing Gourmand to justice. Remind them that if the diabolical mastermind is not caught, they could always invent another poison!

1: Bert's Store

Commander Johan, a human male, leads a patrol of Red Plume soldiers stationed outside.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A 50 by 50 room with equipment strewn about from a prior investigation.

Alternate Entrance. Characters can get to the secret entrance with a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check. Opening the door requires a key or a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check.

Obscure Antitoxins. Once inside, a group DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation or Alchemists' Supplies) check uncovers a **cache of rare antitoxins** that can be used to help dilute Gourmand's poison. On a failed check, the party takes 20 minutes to find the cache, altering Commander Johan to suspicious activity.

Creatures/NPCs

Commander Johan and his patrol of seven Red Plume soldiers guard the main entrance. Two of Bert's employees, Ogz and Eezia, watch from the bookstore across the street.

Objectives/Goals. Commander Johan's orders are to secure Bert's entire lab as a potential crime scene. He is loyal, but could be convinced the adventurers outrank him with a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check.

Bert's goblin employees want help clearing Bert's name. Then can give adventurers a key to help sneak in the side entrance.

What Do They Know? Commander Johan doesn't know anything about alchemy or the investigation. The goblins know there is no poison inside their store, but the Red Plumes won't let anyone in to check.

We've Been Caught!

Give players a chance to talk their way out of their mistake or sneak away as the guards approach. This patrol doesn't stand a chance in combat. Adventurers have to answer for any "crimes" in Episode 3 when they testify in court.

2: Love You to Death

Adventurers try to track down Zepar, only to find the undead form of his partner Adrie.

Area Information

Dimensions. Zepar's apartment has two rooms, each 20 feet by 30 feet.

Lighting. The windows are completely boarded up. Oil lamps can be lit.

Sounds & Smells. Nothing has entered or left in a tenday. Dust covers everything.

Creatures/NPCs

Adrie, an **allip**, waits on the bed.

Objectives/Goals. Adrie is so traumatized that she has to share her burden with others, even though it will drive them mad. People must know the gruesome process of how Gourmand consumed her partner Zepar, and then formed a simulacrum of him. A DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check suggests a combination of benevolence and harmful intent.

If Adrie shares, characters must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer a level of madness. Anyone writing her story has disadvantage. Adrie can rest in peace if a character listens to her long enough to suffer indefinite madness.

What Do They Know? Adrie was bringing dinner and a bedroll for two when she caught Gourmand assimilating Zepar. Gourmand beat her to death using their new Zepar body.

Zepar was working on a way to use faerzress to enhance healing potions when he was killed. His **research notes in the desk** help the party neutralize Gourmand's poison. Characters can persuade Adrie that giving them the notes is the best way to honor Zepar and/or get revenge.

Combat

Adrie initiates combat if an adventurer opens the desk without her permission. If combat ensues, a **wraith** emerges from the closet:

Adjusting the Scene

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **wraith**.
- **Weak:** The wraith has 50 hit points.
- **Strong and Very Strong:** Add a **banshee**.

3: Drow Science

Adventurers go to the morgue and see bodies torn asunder by Gourmand's poison.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A 50 by 70 foot basement of a large Red Plume barracks.

Lighting. An excessive amount of oil lamps to cancel out the stench. Also blue *dancing lights*.

Sounds & Smells. Rotting corpses mixed with toxic poison fumes and lamp oil.

Creatures/NPCs

Yazven, a male drow, is writing research notes.

Objectives/Goals. **Yazven** is starting to realize he doesn't have enough for a cure just from examining bodies. Adventurers are free to experiment if they take proper precautions. "Your vomit will *contaminate my research!*"

What Do They Know? The victims are disproportionately human, but the poison affects all humanoids the same way. Bodies are ripped apart and dissolved from the inside, as if an ooze is slowly growing inside of them.

Research Puzzle

Characters trying to gather a sample from a corpse for their own studies see something wiggle around. They must make a DC 13 Constitution (Medicine) check to harvest an ooze sample without vomiting and contaminating it. On a failure, they get a level of madness and must try again.

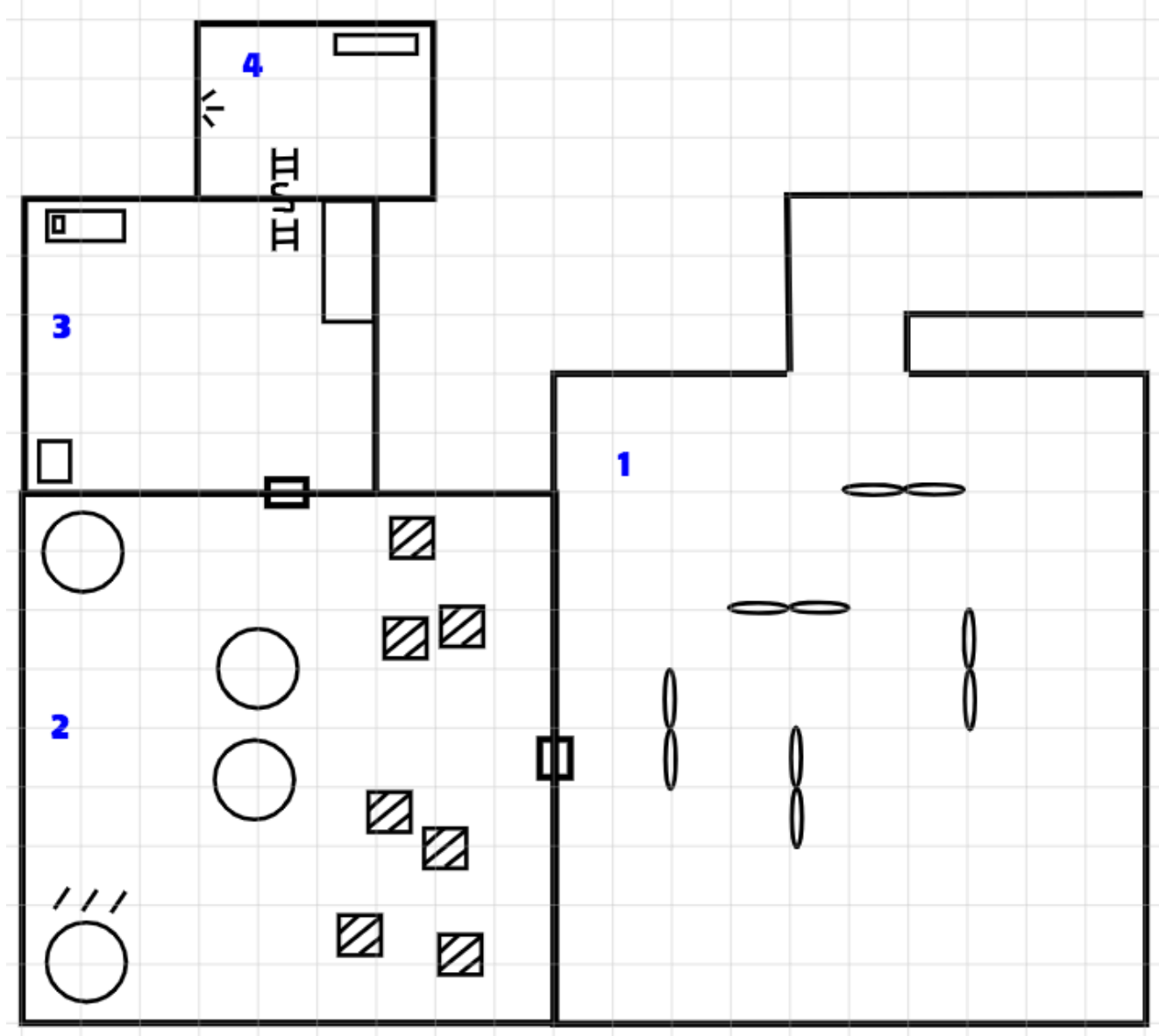
Characters can experiment with harvested ooze samples. Physically shaking a sample makes it form a more coherent body. Applying fire drives the ooze to run, then disintegrates it. Characters learn Gourmand's ooze poison, and possibly Gourmand, have an **aversion to fire**.

Allow stumped players to make a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check to solve the puzzle.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Poisoner's Kit) check reveals the poison is magical. *Detect magic* shows transmutation magic.

After solving the puzzle, a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check reminds characters of stories that some intelligent oozes can assimilate or impersonate humanoids.

Appendix 3: Faerzress Lab Map



Appendix 4: Trial of the Century Checklist

Use this checklist to determine whether the players have won the trial and defeated Gourmand via social interaction. Players who complete the full trial need more successes than failures to win. If you drop scenes, remember to include enough so players can recover from their early struggles on the witness stand. DMs should remember to **challenge the players**. Players should think they are in real danger of losing the trial to start, just like a boss fight involving combat.

Rolling dice for skill checks is optional throughout the roleplay section. For DMs who want to incorporate more skill checks, suggested DCs are provided.

Scene C: Star Witnesses (PCs testifying)

- 1) Prove “Gourmand” is the Mastermind. (Difficulty: easy, DC 10 with evidence from the Faerzress lab)
- 2) Convince people Bert is completely innocent. (Difficulty: almost impossible, DC 25 since they lack evidence)
- 3) Withstand Gourmand’s questioning. (Difficulty: very hard, DC 20, or almost impossible if they are law breakers)

Scene D: You Killed My Cousin (Drax’s Diatribe)

- 4) Avoid making racial tensions worse during Drax’s meltdown (Moderate, DC 15)

Scene E: Sir Ardem’s Accusation

- 5) Debunk Sir Ardem’s accusation (Moderate, DC 15)

Scene F: Kenna Testifies

- 6) Get Kenna to say Bert is an unlikely accomplice (Difficulty: easy to almost impossible based on how much she likes party)

Scene G: We Have a Surprise Witness!

- 7) Get Bert to testify in his own defense and make him look good (Hard, DC 17)

Exploration (Guidelines in Scene H):

- 8) Alert someone to Gourmand’s tether (Hard passively, Moderate if party has a plan)
- 9) Discover murder scene in Rosalind’s Room (Moderate, DC 15)

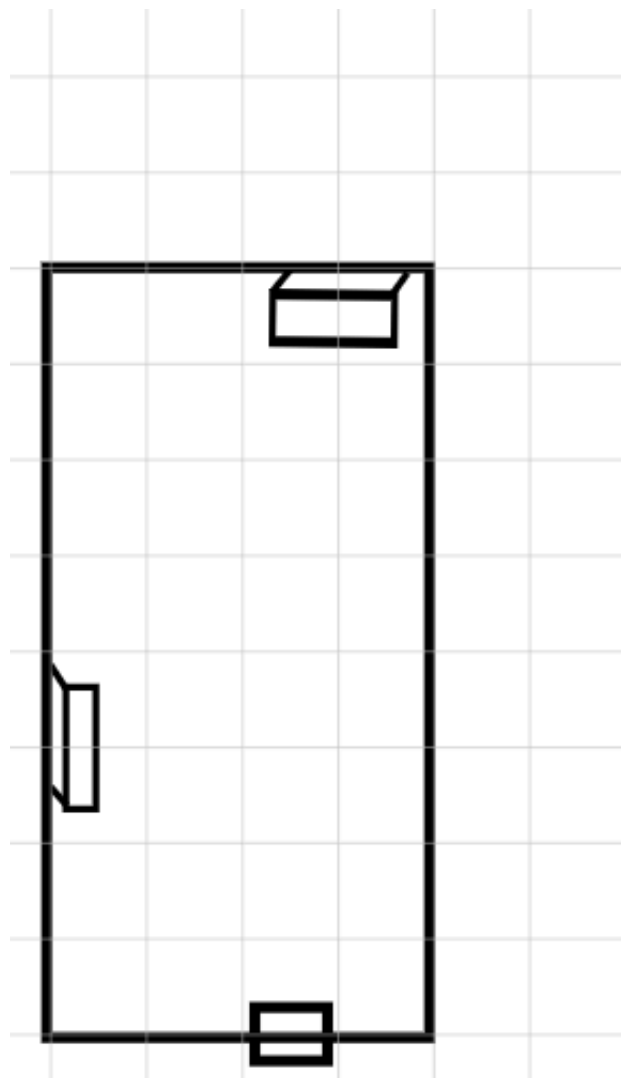
Party Successes: _____

Party Failures: _____

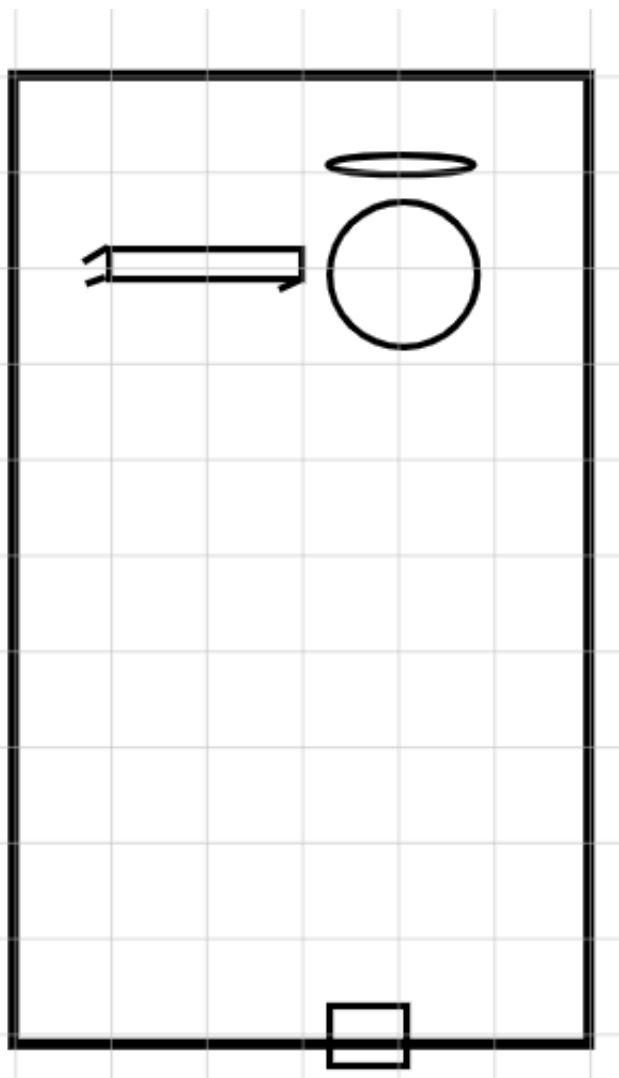
The party must get more successes than failures to win the trial.

Appendix 5: Maps For Kenna's and Patrin's Houses

Kenna's House



Patrin's House



Appendix 6: Player Handout 1 – Note to Zepar

Hey Zepar, remember when you cast that spell and all your hair fell out? That was amazing! Now you're working around chaos magic all the time. Why not bottle some of the faerzress and feed it to Sir Ardem? Just imagine that noble preening fool suddenly going bald. You're good enough to control that stuff, right? We might need to talk about expanding our business later...

- your favorite Goblin mentor

Appendix 7: Player Handout 2 – Note in Zepar's Desk

My sweet Adrie,

I know you wanted to come down here and be my test subject, but that was far too dangerous! My antidotes contain a bit of the poison, and you know my tiefling blood handles poison better than most. I couldn't ask anyone else to take the risk, most of all you.

But the hardest part is over now. The lab is safe for visitors. Bert is bringing supplies tomorrow, but all I want him to bring is you and your picnic basket. Join me down here, please! It will only be for a tenday. Then we can move from our tiny place by the docks in to the house you've always deserved. Besides, I don't have to work every hour of the day.

- Zep

Appendix 8: Player Handout 3 – Gourmand's Journal

That one Red Plume with the colorful hair is getting too close. How does she always seem to sneak up on us? She stole a sample of the poison. She knows we are slowly converting some of these awful humans to ooze. Why would she object to getting rid of these xenophobes? Now it seems like the whole Senate knows. They are probably sending adventurers here. We have to rush ahead with Operation Smirking Goblin. At least I will get to have fun with some adventurers. The Senate better hire a bard, not just a bunch of fools who grunt and swing a sword. Bards are scrumptious! And no more warlocks...they taste good but last time the aftertaste lingered for weeks.

Appendix 9: Player Handout 4 – Kenna's Journal

Uktar 11: Got report from a female elf, Adrie. Said her husband Zepar went off to a new job two days ago and hasn't come back. Maybe he's just dedicated?

Uktar 13: Still no sign of Zepar, the tiefling alchemist. And now a human is mysteriously poisoned? Are we getting more weird stuff from Brooklyn?

Uktar 15: Two more poisonings. Yazven saw...ooze from a body? Anyway he liked my rainbow hair. I should try that again soon.

Uktar 16: I thought Merla would understand. I've sacrificed so much for our city. How could she expect me to take a less dangerous job?

Uktar 17: Mía and Tía had such a scare! Had to apologize to Merla right away. I think she gets it now. But this case is getting worse.

Uktar 19: Getting reports that some farmers came down with the wrong kind of madness. Do we have two cults attacking at once?

Uktar 20: Caught Patrín speaking around the morgue, carrying ooze. He told me everything. The demon cult is back. I knew it! Knew I was right all along.

Appendix 10: Story Awards

Characters may earn the following story awards during the course of this adventure.

My Dreams Taste Like Raspberries

You bonded with Kenna one way or another, and now she always seems to know when you are in town. Any time you rest in Hillsfar, you have surreal dreams of tracking pie demons that always end in a scrumptious dessert. Kenna also pledges more tangible aid, should you need it in a future adventure.

The Eldritch Squirrel

You found an adorable squirrel playing in a vat of harmless ooze in Gourmand's lair. This squirrel likes to play pranks and stare in to space, acting like it is seeing through your eyes. It uses the statistics of a cat from the *Monster Manual*.

The character who earns the squirrel can name it, and becomes convinced the squirrel can telepathically communicate its feelings and desires.

Appendix 11: Magic Item Unlocks

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock these magic items.

Bag of Tricks, Rust (Table F)

Wondrous item, uncommon

This ordinary bag, made from rust cloth, appears empty. Reaching inside the bag, however, reveals the presence of a small, fuzzy object.

You can use an action to pull the fuzzy object from the bag and throw it up to 20 feet. When the object lands, it transforms into a creature you determine by rolling a d8 and consulting the table. The creature vanishes at the next dawn or when it is reduced to 0 hit points.

The creature is friendly to you and your companions, and it acts on your turn. You can use a bonus action to command how the creature moves and what action it takes on its next turn, or to give it general orders, such as to attack your enemies. In the absence of such orders, the creature acts in a fashion appropriate to its nature.

Once three fuzzy objects have been pulled from the bag, the bag can't be used again until the next dawn.

Creature Drawn

| d8 | Creature |
|----|------------|
| 1 | Rat |
| 2 | Owl |
| 3 | Mastiff |
| 4 | Goat |
| 5 | Giant goat |
| 6 | Giant boar |
| 7 | Lion |
| 8 | Brown bear |

This item is found on **Magic Item Table F** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

"Bert's Bag of Pranks" looks like an alchemical pouch and has the pungent smell of an alchemists' workshop. Creatures pulled from the bag will continually sniff at it then look at its

owner, confused by their unnatural state, until given orders.

Horn of Silent Alarm (Common)

Wondrous item, common

This horn has 4 charges. When you use an action to blow it, one creature of your choice can hear the horns blare, provided the creature is within 600 feet of the horn and not deafened. No other creature hears sound coming from the horn. The horn regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn. This item is found in the **Common Magic Item list** in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

This horn plays an otherworldly eldritch scream when activated, instead of a traditional horn sound. You can only imagine why Kenna loves this.

Appendix 12: Dungeon Master Tips

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

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

New to the Annual Storyline?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep>

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/waterdeep-adventures/>

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

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

your information is added at the end of the adventure session—whether the completed the adventure or not.

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

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

Adjusting This Adventure

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

Determining Party Strength

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