

HANDOUT 1: LORE

XxIPHU

The most feared sight in the Sea of Fallen Stars is the movable citadel Xxiphu. The city was roused from the drowned depths by prophecy, perverted priests, and unwise delvings. Because Xxiphu can change its location at will, its influence could conceivably stretch anywhere. No one knows where it might appear next, though most sightings of it are over or close to the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Xxiphu is a glyph-scribed obelisk wrapped in an eternal storm that soars over the surface of the world. Tentacles slither and crawl in cold rookeries encrusting the vast object's sheer sides. A writhing frieze carved on the age-worn exterior depicts thousands of interconnected images. The inscriptions constantly shift and change, as if invisible artists swarm across the stone face, inscribing atrocities to the beat of a mad drummer. The full meaning of the evolving inscription invokes concepts too ghastly for mortal minds to comprehend and remain sane.

Aboleths freshly wakened from an age-long slumber creep within the obelisk's hollow interior along with their servitors. But many of these are as children compared to the few enormous elders that shamble within. These ancients do not think or plan as do other beings, and their altered consciousness is inimical to all creatures not part of their ancient Sovereignty. Reality bends in the city's vicinity, unfettering vast monsters of the deep to master the sky as they before hunted the sunless seas.

The aboleths of the Sovereignty are not like those previously known on Toril. The solitary aboleths of Faerûn's Underdark were startled by the appearance of this mythical city from their primeval past. In fact, a few skirmishes broke out between Faerûn's aboleths and the newcomers when Xxiphu first burst up from the Sea of Fallen Stars. Now an uneasy peace exists, in that the Underdark aboleths avoid those of the Sovereignty.

THE PLAGUECHANGED THING

A blob of rippling protoplasm fills more than a mile of caverns below the city of Westgate. The Plaguechanged Thing was once a dwarf excavator, but its extreme physical alteration has wiped away all vestiges of its former shape. The creature's mind has vastly expanded, giving it impressive psionic abilities, but its bulk is far too large for it to extricate itself or to affect things beyond its lair.

ABOLETHS

Aboleths are hulking amphibious creatures that hail from the Far Realm, a distant and unfathomable plane. They live in the Underdark, swimming through drowned crannies or creeping through lightless tunnels and leaving trails of slimy mucus in their wake. Malevolent and vile, aboleths bend humanoid creatures to their will, and more powerful aboleths can transform their minions into slimy horrors.

A fine haze of mucus suffuses the air around an aboleth's soft, gelatinous skin. Muscular tentacles sprout from this primeval slug's enourmouns, slime-sheathed body. A variable number of eyes, but always more than two, are scattered across its bulk.

Unlike aboleths of lesser lineages, those of Xxiphu can take to the air like fish swim in the sea.

KUO~TOA

In the sunless seas of the Underdark, the slime-scaled kuo-toas serve a dark madness only they can perceive. Their madness leads some kuo-toas to develop dangerous psychic abilities. These kuo-toa mumblers sow confusion and death among their enemies, and are found leading kuo-toa war bands or raiding parties.

The insanity inherent to their race inspires a mental and physical change in a few rare kuo-toas, transforming them into feral leviathans. Kuo-toa clans control and train such creatures as beast of burden and living war machines.

With Xxiphu's rise, ancient allegiances and bloodlines were reawakened. Many kuo-toas now serve the Sovereignty. Unlike other servitors, kuo-toas are able to infiltrate human society by interbreeding with humans. Some coastal and island cultures contain many such half-bloods, secret servitors of the Sovereignty who do not even know their own ancestry until blood eventually forces their allegiance.

HANDOUT 2: CONTROL PANEL PUZZLE

The control panel is a writhing clump of tentacles around a large slimy brain. To interact with the control panel, you must allow the tentacles to wrap around your arms, legs, or head. The control panel telepathically communicates with you, but you are only able to comprehend its messages as images of geometric symbols. You must find three pairs of matching symbols to deactivate each control panel. Beware! If you identify two pieces that do not match, the control panel will protect itself by attempting to destroy your mind with a powerful backlash of energy.

Goal of the Control Panel Puzzles

Find two symbols that match. You must find a total of three matching pairs of symbols to “solve” each control panel. Once you have made three matches on a given control panel, that control panel is disabled.

Your DM will tell you when you've found a match. Part of the puzzle is figuring out the criteria for making a match.

IMPORTANT! Once a control panel accepts a match, then you may be certain that the following things are true:

- only that match criterion can be used on that control panel, and
- different match criteria must be used on other control panels.

Rules of the Control Panel Puzzles

To interact with a control panel, you must be adjacent to it (including diagonally).

You can interact with a control panel as often as you like on your turn (as long as you have actions remaining).

To interact with a control panel, you may either **work the puzzle** or **make a skill check**. Different PCs can use different options on the same control panel - for example, one works the puzzle while another makes a skill check.

Work the Puzzle

Minor Action: turn over two puzzle pieces, revealing their geometric pattern.

- If one or both pieces is an 'X', you take lightning and psychic damage equal to the AL. Turn both pieces face down.
- If neither piece is an 'X', the DM tells you if there is a match.
 - If there is a match, you are one step closer to solving this panel. Leave both pieces face up.
 - If there is no match, you take lightning and psychic damage equal to the AL. Turn both pieces face down.

Make A Skill Check

Special: If you have the psionic power source, you gain a +2 bonus to your skill check.

Minor Action (Hard DC) or **Standard Action** (Moderate DC): make one of the following skill checks.

- **Arcana:** you sense the magical aura around one of the images.
- **Insight:** you intuitively grasp the bizarre logic behind one of the symbols.
- **Perception:** you notice that some of the images glow slightly brighter than the others.
- **Thievery:** you poke and prod at the abolethic panel to get a clear image of one of the symbols.

Success: You may peek at one of the puzzle pieces. Turn it face down when you are finished. If the piece has an X on it, it is not triggered and you do not take damage.

Failure: You take lightning and psychic damage equal to the AL, and you may not peek at a puzzle piece.