

HEROIC

1-10

SLIVER'S CALL

A Chaos Scar Adventure

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The wizard Casaubon hires a group of adventures to help him achieve his destiny. The characters must confront mercenaries, warlocks and an ancient evil as they unseal the final barrier imprisoning this powerful treasure.



“Sliver’s Call” is a short adventure for five 2nd-level characters that takes part in the Chaos Scar, near the King’s Wall. The characters become entwined in the rivalry of a pair of arcane scholars searching for a long-lost treasure. Both rivals are under the influence of psionic commands from a sliver of the Chaos Meteor that compel them to uncover it.

The wizard Casaubon is on the verge of finding the sliver and hires a group of adventures to help him achieve his destiny. The characters first confront a mercenary force hired by his rival, then come upon her with her warlock associates as they unseal the final barrier imprisoning the sliver. Finally they must contend with the ancient evil as it takes control of their employer.

If you’re not playing a Chaos Scar campaign, you can still use this adventure by integrating the Cave of Dark Whispers into any existing campaign, in a stretch of wilderness where a meteorite fragment fell long ago. If you use the adventure somewhere other than the Chaos Scar, you’ll need to invent your own explanation for the sliver’s malign influence.

For details on the Chaos Scar and its environs, read the [\[link\]](#) Chaos Scar introduction [\[/link\]](#) and check out the map of the entire valley.

BACKGROUND

The promise of riches and adventure has called many to the Chaos Scar over the centuries, but other voices literally summon the gullible and the greedy with sinister and seductive words.

Five years ago, the half-elf wizard Casaubon heard one of those voices in an unlikely place. While a student at the renowned White Lotus Academy of the arcane arts, the mage stumbled upon a githzerai

memory crystal in a forgotten corner of the academy’s Lost Secrets Library.

Casaubon read the memory crystal’s contents, which described the final days of Xor-Souf, a long-dead githzerai. Xor-Souf had spent the last part of her life chasing a strange meteor streaking through the heavens toward the world—the same one that ultimately carved the Chaos Scar. She knew the cosmic stone was an artifact of evil and rightly feared it, but she was also drawn by its immense power—and by a psionic call issuing from it. As she followed the rock’s path, she stayed ever vigilant for a sliver of the main mass—the one issuing the psionic call—to break away. Foolishly, she believed that she could harvest some of the meteor’s power from such a shard without succumbing to its evil.

When the meteor made landfall, a fragment did break away to embed itself in the ground not far from the main impact site. The next-to-last memory stored within the crystal was of Xor-Souf landing her planar vessel near the Chaos Scar and leaving it to excavate the shard.

MEMORY CRYSTALS

These psionic crystals come in many sizes, but none larger than a short sword. Creatures trained in Arcana can access the crystal as a standard action and then scan its memories, much like reading a book. The smallest crystals hold one to ten pages’ worth of information; the largest can contain the equivalent of 10,000 pages. Memory crystals can serve as both ritual books and as scrolls.

The crystal’s last entry was a disjointed and confusing jumble of emotions and thoughts. Some of them were Xor-Souf’s, but others came from an indescribable being wielding potent psionic power. The telepathic voice raged that Xor-Souf was and unsuitable vessel for its gift. It called out to Casaubon by name to come to the Chaos Scar, find the sliver, and claim true power.

A brilliant but flawed scholar, Casaubon was instantly seduced by the sliver’s call. Xor-Souf had died hundreds of years before his birth, yet the voice spoke his name. He became convinced he found his true destiny, one written in the stars long ago—maybe even before the Dawn War.

In other words, Casaubon took the first steps toward delusion, obsession, and insanity.

The half-elf academic’s obsession with the sliver grew each day. He spent every moment of free time researching the Chaos Scar, Xor-Souf, and the meteor. His studies developed into plans for an expedition, and those grew into a conspiracy with a fellow student—an earthsoul genasi swordmage named Ediza.

Ediza came from a family of means, unlike Casaubon. He struck up a romance of convenience with the genasi, leading her on with the promise of power in return for funds and materiel to supply his expedition. Although he was careful not to share all his secrets with Ediza, in the end Casaubon was the one manipulated. His evasiveness piqued the genasi’s curiosity. She eventually found and read Xor-Souf’s memory crystal, but the strange voice in the crystal’s last entry called her name, not Casaubon’s.

This revelation hit Ediza like a punch in the gut. Not only was she being used for her wealth (which she had always suspected), but Casaubon wanted to

cheat her of her rightful destiny. Ediza secretly left the academy and mounted her own expedition to the Chaos Scar. Now, nearly a month later, Casaubon is struggling to catch up to her.

The sliver saw in Casaubon the ideal qualities for a servant but was content to lead Ediza on to hasten its release. Once Casaubon arrives at the excavation site, the sliver moves to embrace its chosen one.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Casaubon approaches the characters with a plan to explore a site in the Chaos Scar known as the Cave of Dark Whispers.

Outwardly the half-elf seems an eccentric and slightly befuddled wizard looking for some long-lost bit of arcana. Insightful characters might suspect that Casaubon is not being entirely honest about his quest, or even gain a clue as to his true mental state.

If the characters take the job, they accompany the wizard to the Chaos Scar and eventually approach the Cave of Dark Whispers. There they encounter Ediza's mercenaries, who are guarding the excavation. Casaubon urges bloody battle, but if the characters defeat the mercenaries by other means, they can learn more about Ediza, Casaubon, and the history of the cave.

Beyond are the lower ruins, once the temple and base of operations for the long-dead Cult of Dark Whispers, dedicated to the malevolent sliver. The characters find Ediza and a pair of halfling warlocks attempting to open the final seal on the sliver's resting place. Once they open the door, the swordmage and warlocks are aided by sliver wraiths, servants of the whispering shard, but only until the wraiths are destroyed. Then their essence empowers the whispering sliver's true chosen, Casaubon, to help him defeat his rival.

Once the characters reach the inner temple, they are attacked by more wraiths—as well as by Casaubon, who has bonded with the sliver and does not intend to share its power with anyone.

DUNGEON TILES

All of this adventure maps were constructed with one set each of the following **D&D Dungeon Tile** sets: *Halls of the Giant Kings* (DU1), *Caves of Carnage* (DU3), and *Sinister Woods* (DU5).

The map for encounter W1 uses tiles from the *Caves of Carnage* and *Sinister Woods* sets. The maps for encounters W2 and W3 draw on the *Halls of the Giant Kings* and *Caves of Carnage* sets.

Parcel 1: Two *potions of healing* and 190 gp (carried by Casaubon)

All encounters

Parcel 2: One level 3 magic item (carried by a mercenary)

Mercenaries at the Mouth

Parcel 3: 100 gp gem (amber) and 70 gp (carried by a mercenary)

Mercenaries at the Mouth

Parcel 4: One level 5 magic item (carried by Ediza or one of the warlocks)

The Sealed Doorway

Parcel 5: One 250 gp art object (buried in the rubble in the old temple)

Call Heeded

TREASURE

"Sliver's Call" uses the treasure parcel system described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The characters should earn a total of five treasure parcels in this adventure. Listed below are the most likely places to find treasure and what each parcel should contain. (When placing magic items, you should consult your players' wish lists, if any).

If appropriate, you can have a monster use a magic item in an encounter, making changes to its stat block as needed to reflect the item's abilities.

GETTING STARTED

"Sliver's Call" starts when the characters meet Casaubon. The circumstances of the meeting depend on the current needs of your campaign. The mage introduces himself.

"I'm Casaubon, a wizard and explorer. I recently finished my apprenticeship and, as a parting gift, my master gave me a scroll detailing the location of an ancient—and likely undisturbed—treasure trove in the Chaos Scar. I hired a group of adventurers to help me procure it, but I was betrayed. Their leader, a treacherous genasi named Ediza, stole the scroll and left me for dead. I seek help to continue searching for the treasure, as well as to get revenge on those who betrayed me. I'm willing to pay well."

Casaubon's behavior can give the characters a clue that the situation is not quite as it seems.

Insight DC 12

The wizard fidgets and looks away when he talks about Ediza and her treachery. You get the impression that he's holding something back.

Arcana DC17

In addition to fidgeting, Casaubon exhibits odd tics that suggest symptoms of prolonged psionic suggestion. Such exposure often causes insanity, usually in the form of delusions of grandeur, but it can manifest as full-blown sociopathic behavior.

If the characters ask for any payment up front, Casaubon tries to delay them. In truth, he is broke and has been for weeks, though he has some residuum and alchemical reagents at his disposal. (Over the years spent studying the memory crystal and planning the expedition, he carefully stole small quantities of ritual components from the academy's stores.) Since Ediza's betrayal, Casaubon has been using the

CASAUBON

Casaubon is not unattractive, but he is by no means handsome. A tall and lanky man with dark blond hair, curly on top and shorn at the sides, he is often sullen, sometimes terse. The wizard wears long blue robes and usually keeps his face hidden under a voluminous hood. He displays a number of strange physical habits, such as twiddling his fingers and rubbing his face.

Though he insists on coming along, Casaubon does not participate in encounters unless forced. The wizard stays at the back of the party, providing light and verbal guidance, but he stays out of combat unless the characters get into serious trouble. In such a circumstance, he provides token spellcasting (typically *magic missile* or *misdirected mark*), but if the situation gets too hot, he uses *expeditious retreat* to flee, returning only when the coast is clear.

Fool's Gold ritual (*Arcane Power*, page 155) to fund the more expensive parts of his expedition, traveling in disguise to different towns so as to avoid pursuit by bilked merchants. He has 50 gp worth of ritual components left, which he can use to create 500 gp of illusory gold. Since the ritual takes only a minute, and the fake gold lasts for only 4 hours, the wizard prefers to hand it over only after reaching the Cave of Dark Whispers. He insists on accompanying the party to the excavation site.

With a successful DC 24 Arcana or Perception check, a character can identify the gold as false.

DIGGING DEEPER

The characters might not trust Casaubon, especially if they notice his odd behavior. The unexplained holes in his story and his insistence on coming along should be red flags. Cautious characters might research Casaubon or the excavation site to learn more about both before they join the wizard's expedition.

Before they leave town, the PCs can ask the locals about the cave and its history. Townsfolk point them to the shrine of Ioun, the god of knowledge, skill, and prophecy.

SCRIBERS OF IOUN

The shrine is little more than a small library tucked into an alleyway near the town's marketplace. It is run by two aged human brothers named Peer and Poul Revet. Identical twins, the two are hard to tell apart. Both have shaggy gray hair tucked under scribe's caps; they wear the same color, style, and cut of robes; and they speak in the same low grumble. The only obvious difference between them is in the style of the handlebar mustaches that both affect: Peer wears his curled upward, while Poul's curls down.

Casaubon		Level 3 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf		XP 300
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +0; low-light vision	
HP 88; Bloodied 44		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 14		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 1 damage.		
☞ Magic Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Implement		
Ranged 20; +6 vs. Reflex; 3d4 + 4 force damage.		
✂ Misdirected Mark (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked by an ally of Casaubon's choice within 5 squares of him until the end of his next turn.		
✂ Light (minor; at-will)		
Ranged 5; targets one object or unoccupied square; the target sheds bright light that fills the square and all squares within 4 squares of it. The light lasts 5 minutes and can be put out with a free action. Casaubon can have only one light active at a time.		
✂ Maze of Mirrors (standard; encounter) ♦ Illusion, Implement		
Area burst 1 within 10; +6 vs. Will; until the end of Casaubon's next turn, the target is immobilized and takes a -4 to attack rolls.		
Expeditious Retreat (move; encounter)		
Casaubon shifts twice his speed.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic	
Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +6, History +10		
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 13 (+2)	Wis 9 (+0)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 18 (+5)	Cha 16 (+4)
Equipment robes, dagger, wand, spellbook		

The twins can provide some useful information in response to the characters' inquiries. They frequently interrupt each other, each finishing the other's sentences as though sharing his thoughts.

What can you tell me about Casaubon?

"We have heard the name. An earthsoul genasi woman warned us he might be coming this way. We think they are rivals or maybe more—" one adds with a wink—"if you know what I mean."

What did Ediza want?

"She came in looking for information about the Cave of Dark Whispers. We warned her about its danger, but we don't think she was listening. It is a terrible place better left alone."

What is the Cave of Dark Whispers?

The brothers let out a sigh in unison. "Long ago, before we were born, the cave was home to a cult that revered a whispering thing said to dwell in its depths. At the cult's height, half the town was under its sway. Its sole purpose seemed to be to locate some 'chosen one.' Eventually the enemies of the cult crushed it and caved in its subterranean temple, but some folk say they can still hear dark whispers from beneath the earth. The cave is dangerous and should remain buried."

If the characters ask for advice, the brothers suggest finding out what the wizard is up to. If Casaubon or Ediza plans to uncover the Cave of Dark Whispers, finding out why might let the characters halt any threat that might be awakened. Such research might involve retracing the wizard's movements, which could reveal the existence of the memory crystal and its disappearance from the academy's library.

APPROACHING THE CAVE OF DARK WHISPERS

Casaubon leads the characters to the ruins at the mouth of the cave. The area is guarded by a group of Ediza's mercenaries.

At the far end of the clearing, crumbling walls front a cliff face. Strange symbols are carved into the weathered gray stone of the ruins. Beyond is a recently excavated cave mouth, its newly cleared passage stabilized by wooden scaffolding.

In front of the cave mouth sits a motley group of five humans eating around a fire. Most wear simple leather jerkins and carry maces, but one large lout is clad in bear furs and hefts a greataxe over his shoulder. He bullies the others aside to grab chunks of venison.

Above the humans, a cloak-garbed dwarf perches atop a ruined wall, watching the clearing with a loaded crossbow at his side. His gray clothing and skin almost blend into the crumbling stonework.

"They are the genasi's hirelings. We must kill them," Casaubon whispers.

If the characters question the wizard's bloodthirsty suggestion, he attempts to sway them with wild stories of Ediza's treachery. His claims are largely fictional but, in his madness, he has convinced himself they are true. A DC 14 Insight check allows a character to recognize the wizard's fabrications.

Tactical Encounter: W1. Mercenaries at the Mouth (page 67).

Beyond the cave mouth is a 100-foot-long winding tunnel, scaffolding lining its walls. The passage ends at a steep flight of stairs descending to the lower temple complex.

A DC 12 Perception check reveals signs of a larger labor camp not far from the entrance ruins. The camp was home to two dozen laborers camped there until very recently.

FINDING EDIZA

Beyond the stairs, the characters find the gateway to the inner sanctum of the Cult of Dark Whispers. The temple has been blocked by cave-ins for a century, and Ediza's team broke through the last barrier only a few days ago. Since then, she and her warlock assistants have been working to defeat the arcane seals on a door guarding the inner chamber, where the sliver lies. They are on the verge of doing so.

Little do the excavators know that their actions will release the remnants of souls ensnared by the shard that now seek to merge with its chosen servant.

Tactical Encounter: W2. The Sealed Doorway (page 69).

THE WHISPERING TEMPLE

Once the inner chamber has been breached, the characters have to deal with the power of the sliver and its servants, as well as an empowered Casaubon intent on keeping its power to himself.

Tactical Encounter: W3. Call Heeded (page 72).

VI. MERCENARIES AT THE MOUTH

Encounter Level 5 (XP 1,100)

SETUP

- 4 human bandits (H)
- 1 human berserker (B)
- 1 dwarf bolter (D)
- 2 gnome skulks (G)

The gnome skulks start hidden behind the crumbling walls. Do not place them on the map until they attack or a character notices them.

Perception DC 17

You catch a slight movement among the ruins from the corner of your eye. Small cloaked figures raising hand crossbows lurk amid the crumbling stone.

The mercenaries have been warned by Ediza that a wizard matching Casaubon's description might try to disrupt the excavation. They're also worried because they have not heard from the expedition's leader for some time. They are ready to defend themselves, but only to a point.

TACTICS

The mercenaries know the importance of a fortified position and take advantage of their superior terrain.

The humans start the battle behind the cover of the central collapsed wall. They throw daggers and handaxes at enemies in an attempt to draw them through the bottleneck, where the berserker lunges to attack. Once the characters close, the bandits use the terrain to gain combat advantage wherever possible.

The gnome skulks stay in fortified positions behind the walls, allowing the humans to draw enemies into the courtyard. They fire hand crossbows with combat advantage until melee is joined, then use *fade away* to disengage.

The dwarf bolter fires down from atop the ruined wall, preferring to target enemies that don't have cover. He has anchored himself to the wall with a leather strap, strengthening the effect of his *stand your ground* ability.

Dwarf Bolter (D)	Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 14	
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects	
Speed 5	
⊕ Warhammer (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.	
↘ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
Aimed Shot	
With ranged attacks against creatures that don't have cover, the dwarf bolter gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals 1d6 extra damage on a hit.	
Stand Your Ground	
When a dwarf is pulled, pushed, or slid, it can move 1 fewer squares. When an attack would knock the dwarf prone, it makes a saving throw to remain standing. See also <i>stabilizing restraints</i> .	
Stabilizing Restraints	
The dwarf bolter reduces forced movement by 2 squares instead of 1 and gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against any effect that would knock it prone. However, it is also immobilized. The bolter can release the restraints by taking a minor action.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Dwarven
Skills Dungeoneering +10, Endurance +7	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 16 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 11 (+2) Cha 10 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow with 20 bolts, leather strap	

4 Human Bandits (H)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1
HP 37; Bloodied 18	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 6	
⊕ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the human bandit shifts 1 square.	
⊕ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
⊕ Dazing Strike (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn, and the bandit shifts 1 square.	
Combat Advantage	
The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage with melee and ranged attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
Alignment Any	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers	

Human Berserker (B)	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2
HP 66; Bloodied 33; see also <i>battle fury</i>	
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 14	
Speed 7	
⊕ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d12 + 4 damage (crit 1d12 + 16).	
⊕ Battle Fury (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The human berserker makes a melee basic attack with a +4 bonus to the attack roll and deals 1d6 extra damage on a hit.	
↘ Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
Alignment Any	Languages Common
Skills Athletics +9, Endurance +9	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3) Wis 11 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment hide armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes	

2 Gnome Skulks (G)	Level 2 Lurker
Small fey humanoid	XP 125 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 34; Bloodied 17	
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 5	
⊕ War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11).	
↘ Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The gnome skulk deals 1d6 extra damage with melee and ranged attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome skulk takes damage; encounter) ♦ Illusion	
The gnome skulk turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.	
Reactive Stealth	
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to become hidden.	
Shadow Skulk	
A hidden gnome skulk that misses with a melee or a ranged attack remains hidden.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9	
Str 8 (+0)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 14 (+3) Cha 13 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, war pick, hand crossbow with 20 bolts	

SURRENDER IS AN OPTION

Ediza has paid the mercenaries well to this point, but her long absence has softened their resolve. For purposes of Intimidate checks to compel surrender, the bandits, bolter, and skulks are considered unfriendly (+5 Will defense modifier), and the berserker is hostile (+10 Will defense modifier).

DEVELOPMENT

Characters taking a closer look at the strange markings on the ruined walls notice a repetition of symbols related to Ihbar, a dark nebula revered by some star pact warlocks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Daylight illuminates the area. The mercenaries' campfire sheds bright light if they are encountered at night.

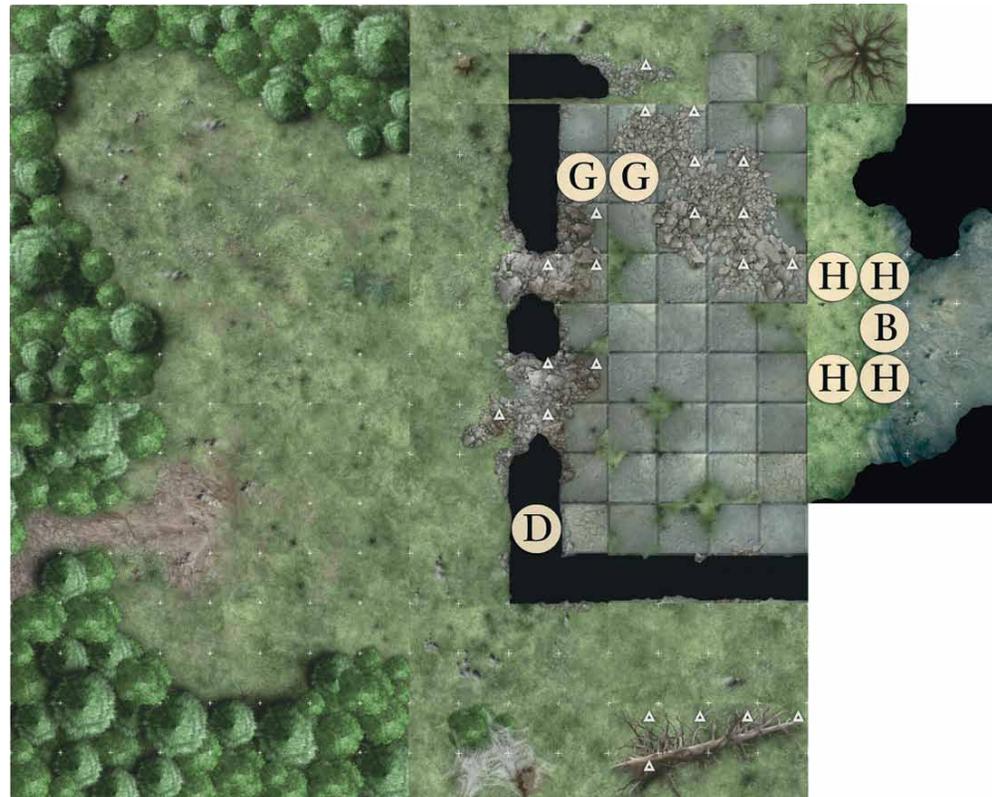
Campfire (Night Only): Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the campfire's square takes 1d6 fire damage.

Fallen Tree: A large tree has fallen to the side of the cliff. It provides cover, and its squares are difficult terrain.

Forest: Squares containing forest are difficult terrain and provide cover.

Rubble: Piles of rubble from the excavation litter the area. Squares containing rubble are difficult terrain.

Ruined Walls: The walls are 10 feet tall and 5 feet wide. A creature can climb to the top of a wall with a DC 20 Athletics check. It can walk along the top, treating those squares as difficult terrain.



W2. THE SEALED DOORWAY

Encounter Level 3 (XP 750)

These lower ruins once served as temple to the Cult of Dark Whispers. Rocks are piled almost to the ceiling, nearly blocking the passage to the chamber beyond. The characters can make their way through, getting a glimpse of the activity inside as they do so.

SETUP

Ediza (E), genasi swordmage (E)

Jargo (J) and **Reymol (R)**, halfling star pact warlocks

2 sliver wraith seekers

Do not place the sliver wraiths on the battle map initially. They are released once the seal is broken (see below).

When the characters get a look at the cleared chamber, read:

A pair of male halflings in robes—one bald, the other with short-cropped silver hair—intently study a large, iron-bound double door at the far end of the chamber. Behind them a female earthsoul genasi paces nervously.

The warlocks are having some difficulty with the last seal, but Jargo (the silver-haired halfling) is on the verge of cracking it.

Arcana or Religion DC 15

The halflings are studying a mass of melted silver, engraved with Supernal hieroglyphics, that seals the two doors together. Traces of six similar seals, now broken, line the seam between the doors. This last one appears to be giving the pair trouble.

If the characters hesitate, do not make their presence known, or wait to see what is going on, read:

“Eureka! I finally have it!” The silver-haired halfling shrieks. He then mumbles an arcane phrase, and the silver seal warps and cracks.

Reymol (R) and Jargo (J)		Level 1 Artillery
Small natural humanoid, halfling		XP 100 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +5	
HP 31; Bloodied 15		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 14		
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects		
Speed 6		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.		
⚡ Eldritch Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement		
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 3 damage.		
☞ Dire Radiance (standard; at-will) ♦ Fear, Implement, Radiant		
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 radiant damage, and if the target moves closer to this character on its next turn, it takes 1d6 + 3 extra damage.		
⚡ Arms of Hadar (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement		
Close burst 2; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares.		
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)		
The attacker must reroll the triggering attack and take the new result.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Arcana +8, Thievery +7		
Str 10 (+0)	Dex 14 (+2)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 16 (+3)	Cha 16 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, dagger, rod		

Ediza (E)		Level 2 Elite Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (earth), genasi		XP 250
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +2	
HP 74; Bloodied 37		
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 14		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
⚔ Swordsnare (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of Ediza's next turn. Ediza can use this power in place of a melee basic attack when charging or using her aegis of assault.		
☞ Lightning Lure (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Lightning		
Ranged 3; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 6 damage and Ediza pulls the target 3 squares to a square adjacent to her.		
⚡ Sword Burst (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Force		
Close burst 1; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 6 force damage.		
⚡ Aegis of Assault (minor; at-will) ♦ Teleportation		
Close burst 2; no attack roll; Ediza marks the target, and the target remains marked until Ediza uses this power on another creature or this mark is superseded by another mark. If a creature marked by this power makes an attack that does not include Ediza, is within 10 squares of Ediza, and hits the creature with the that attack, Ediza can, as an immediate reaction, teleport to a square adjacent to that creature, and make a melee basic attack against it.		
⚡ Earthshock (minor; encounter)		
Close burst 1; targets enemies in burst touching the ground; +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.		
Mythal Recovery (minor; encounter)		
Ediza makes a saving throw against one effect that a save can end.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Primordial	
Skills Arcana +9		
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 16 (+4)	Cha 13 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, longsword, githzerai memory crystal		

2 Sliver Wraith Seekers (S) Level 3 Controller

Medium aberrant humanoid (undead) XP 150 each

Hypnotic Form (Charm) aura 2; each enemy that ends its turn in the aura is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of its next turn.**Initiative** +4 **Senses** Perception +2**HP** 31; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14**Immune** dazed, disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial**Speed** fly 6 (hover); phasing⊕ **Maddening Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**
+5 vs. Will; 1d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone and can't stand up (save ends).↵ **Seeker's Calling** (standard; recharge [E]) ♦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; targets one creature in burst; +5 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage and the seeker slides the target 5 squares to a square either adjacent to the seeker or within its *hypnotic form* aura.**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Deep Speech**Str** 6 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+2)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+3)**TACTICS**

When the PCs make themselves known, Ediza moves to block them so that the halflings can continue working on the seal. She marks defenders or strikers in the group, and uses her *lightning lure* to pull in a leader or a controller (targeting Casaubon if possible). Her first priority is protecting the halflings; after they have opened the seal, she fights to the death, dealing as much damage as possible to all who dare get between her and her perceived destiny.

If the characters attack before the halflings have opened the final seal, they both continue their efforts as long as they are protected. Each round, each halfling adjacent to the door can attempt a DC 15 Arcana check as a standard action. On a success, the seal breaks. Once they are free to join the fight, the warlocks use *dire radiance* and *arms of Hadar* to support Ediza and keep the characters at a distance.

Once the seal is broken, the sliver wraiths phase through the door and scream into the room. They attack only the characters, apparently to aid Ediza.

Casaubon keeps out of the fight for the most part, although he takes action to defend himself against attacks from Ediza or the warlocks.

SLIVER WRAITHS AND CASAUBON

The wraiths' real goal is to fall in battle and have their dying essence meld with Casaubon, who has been chosen by the sliver.

When a sliver wraith drops to 0 hit points, read the following:

The strange wraith implodes into a mote of purplish light that streaks toward Casaubon, striking him square in the chest. The wizard stumbles at the impact but seems unharmed.

Each time a sliver wraith dies and merges with Casaubon, it grants the wizard a benefit. These benefits might not have much effect as long as Casaubon avoids combat but become much more important in the final encounter. In addition, each sliver that merges with Casaubon counts toward his ultimate transformation (see page 72).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ceiling: 10 feet high.

Illumination: The excavators' lanterns shed bright light that fills the chamber.

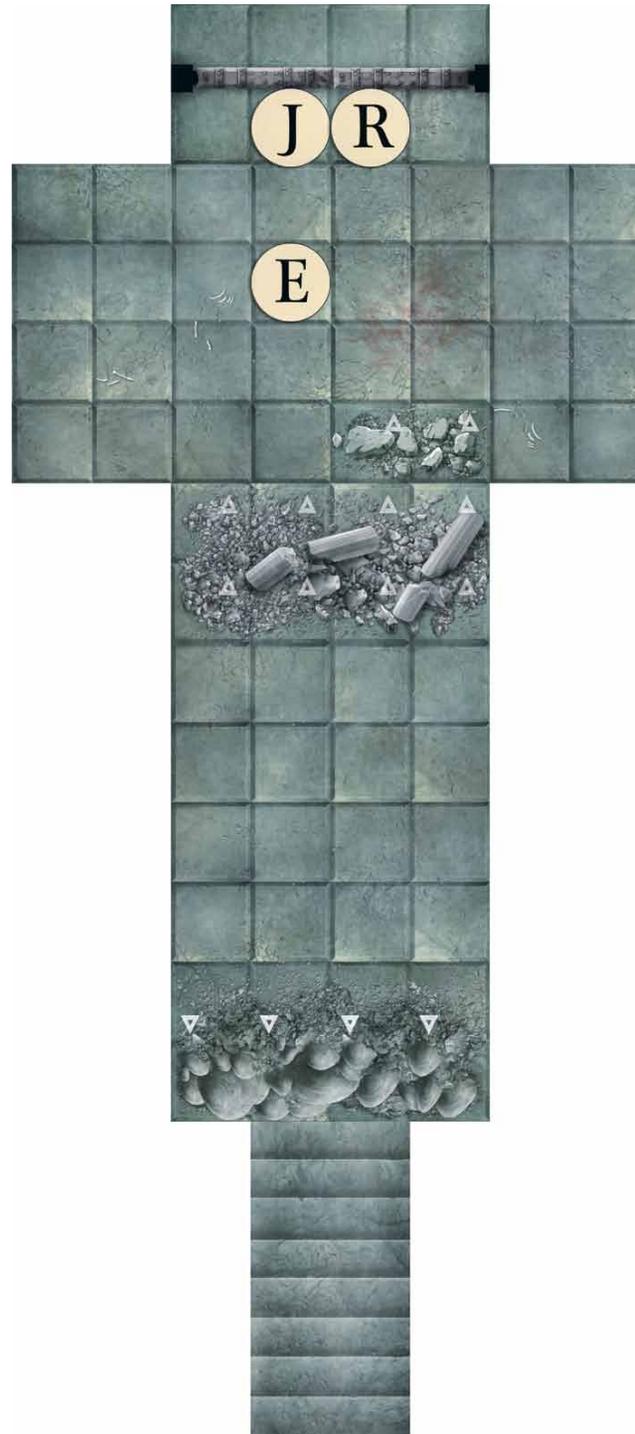
Fallen Rocks: Rocks fill the 2-square-wide area directly in front of the stairs. A character must climb up the rocks (Athletics DC 5), squeeze through the space they occupy, and then drop 8 feet to enter the main chamber. A creature gains cover while squeezing in squares filled with rocks.

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Sealed Door: The door is impossible to open, and the sliver wraiths cannot pass through, until all the seals have been defeated. If the halflings do not break the seal, the PCs can attempt to do so. This is a complexity 1 skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures) requiring DC 15 Religion or Arcana checks as standard actions while adjacent to the door. On a failure, all creatures within 5 squares of the door lose a healing surge. A failed skill challenge can be retried.

DEVELOPMENT

After Ediza is defeated, Casaubon searches her body and tries to pocket the memory crystal (Perception DC 12 to notice). If a character manages to retrieve the crystal and access its stored memories, he or she experiences the same thing that Casaubon and Ediza did. However, the psionic voice calls the character's name instead. Again, the sliver seeks release by any agent but prefers to merge with Casaubon as soon as the opportunity arises.



W3. CALL HEADED

Encounter Level 4 (XP 975)

SETUP

3 sliver wraith guardians (G)

2 sliver wraith seekers (S)

Once the doors are unsealed, Casaubon is eager to enter the inner temple where rests the object he seeks. It lies in the bottom of a pit dug though the years by the destructive energy of its own malice.

The sliver is guarded by a pair of sliver wraith seekers and a trio of sliver wraith guardians. As in the previous chamber, the wraiths try to merge with Casaubon. After three of them do so (including those from the outer chamber), he is transformed into an aberrant servant of the sliver.

When Casaubon is transformed, read:

The wizard screams and falls to his knees; his hands clutch his head in pain. Then his right hand stretches grotesquely and begins to bubble with violet pustules, transforming within moments into a sickly purple tentacle. When the transformation is complete, the wizard rises, his eyes aglow with a weird green luminescence. He smiles wickedly.

"Fools! The sliver is mine," he hisses. "And I will share its power with no one."

TACTICS

The sliver wraiths dart forth to attack the characters. As in the outer chamber, they leave Casaubon alone until they are destroyed, then try to merge with him.

The seekers hover near or on the aberrant circles, hoping to lure characters into them with *seeker's calling*. By keeping them in range of their *hypnotic form* auras, the wraiths force the characters to provoke opportunity attacks if they try to leave a circle. The guardians protect the seekers, marking characters snared by *seeker's calling*.

Whenever a sliver wraith drops to 0 hit points, its essence melds with Casaubon. Once he has transformed, the wizard enters the fray on the wraiths' side. He attempts to grab one character with his *tentacle arm* while hurling spells at the others.

3 Sliver Wraith Guardians (G) Level 2 Soldier

Medium aberrant humanoid (undead) XP 125 each

Hypnotic Form (Charm) aura 2; each enemy that ends its turn in the aura is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of its next turn.

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2

HP 26; **Bloodied** 13

AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

Immune dazed, disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Dizzying Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

+5 vs. Will; 1d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is marked and grants combat advantage until the end of the guardian's next turn.

Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech	
Str 6 (-1)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 15 (+3)

2 Sliver Wraith Seekers (S) Level 3 Controller

Medium aberrant humanoid (undead) XP 150 each

Hypnotic Form (Charm) aura 2; each enemy that ends its turn in the aura is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of its next turn.

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2

HP 31; **Bloodied** 15

AC 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Immune dazed, disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Maddening Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

+5 vs. Will; 1d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone and can't stand up (save ends).

↔ **Seeker's Calling** (standard; recharge [1]) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 5; targets one creature in burst; +5 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage and the seeker slides the target 5 squares to a square either adjacent to the seeker or within its *hypnotic form* aura.

Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech	
Str 6 (-1)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 15 (+3)

Casaubon, Sliver's Servant Level 3 Elite Controller

Medium aberrant humanoid, half-elf XP 300

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision

HP 88; **Bloodied** 44

AC 18; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Tentacle Arm** (standard; only while not grabbing a creature; at-will)

Reach 2; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage and the target is grabbed. The target does not need to be adjacent to Casaubon for him to sustain the grab, but must be within Casaubon's reach. Casaubon can have only one creature grabbed at a time.

⊕ **Magic Missile** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Force, Implement**

Ranged 20; +6 vs. Reflex; 3d4 + 4 force damage.

⊕ **Soul Drain** (standard; only while grabbing a creature; encounter)

+6 vs. Fortitude; targets the grabbed creature; the target is dazed (save ends) and loses 1 healing surge.

↗ **Misdirected Mark** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Implement**

Ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is marked by an ally of Casaubon's choice within 5 squares of him until the end of his next turn.

✦ **Maze of Mirrors** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Illusion, Implement**

Area burst 1 within 10; +6 vs. Will; until the end of Casaubon's next turn, the target is immobilized and takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls.

Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic	
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Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +6, History +10

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 13 (+2) **Wis** 9 (+0)

Con 12 (+2) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Equipment robes, dagger, wand, spellbook

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ceiling: 10 feet high.

Illumination: The aberrant circles glow with eldritch power, dimly lighting the area.

Aberrant Circles: Any nonaberrant creature that ends its turn in a circle is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Rocks: Squares containing rocks are blocking terrain.

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Pit and Sliver: The pit is 15 feet deep, and at its bottom is the meteorite sliver. This black metal shard is about 2 feet long and radiates malignance. When any creature other than Casaubon ends its turn holding or carrying the shard, it takes 15 psychic damage.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters defeat Casaubon, they have to figure out what to do with the sliver. It's too dangerous to move, but given enough time and with help, they should be able to collapse the cavern once more. The party might also seek out arcane specialists or priests to reseal the temple's entrance.

About the Author

Born on a stormy Christmas day, in our nation's capital, during the Nixon administration, the stars were definitely wrong when **Stephen Radney-MacFarland** came screaming into the world. Spending most of his impressionable years as a vagabond and ne're-do-well, Stephen eventually settled in the Northwest to waste his life on roleplaying games.

Stephen teaches a class on roleplaying design for the Art Institute of Seattle, molding the minds of young and upcoming designers. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

