

THE ABYSSAL DEPTHS

◆ AN ADVENTURE MODULE ◆

DESCENT INTO THE UNKNOWN

READ ALOUD

The grand, rune-inscribed staircase spirals seemingly endlessly into the dark bedrock beneath the continent. The air grows stale and incredibly cold, carrying the sharp scent of ozone and decaying fungus. The sound of dripping water echoes off the slick, algae-covered stone walls in an unnerving, arrhythmic tempo. You feel an oppressive, physical weight pressing against your mind the deeper you travel into complete blackness.

The deep dungeon is not simply a subterranean structure; it feels like a massive, living, breathing entity. The architecture here pre-dates human civilization by eons, carved out by the mad, alien minds of aberration lords who retreated underground millennia ago. The sheer geometry of the tunnels frequently defies non-Euclidean logic—corridors twist back upon themselves, stairs seem to lead both up and down simultaneously, and the darkness actively recoils from mundane torches, attempting to smother any source of light.



DENIZENS OF THE DARK

The aberrations that dwell here are entirely hostile to all life from the surface world. They possess intellects vastly superior to most mortals, viewing humanoids as nothing more than cattle, crude bio-

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

GM NOTES

Due to the inherently alien nature of the dungeon's geometry and the constant psychic interference, resting is incredibly difficult. Any character attempting a short rest must roll a d20. On a 1, their rest is violently interrupted by horrifying psychic visions—granting no benefit and causing 1d10 psychic damage.

The walls are not entirely stone. In places, the rock systematically gives way to organic, pulsing tissue that bleeds a viscous black ichor when struck. Strange fungal growths emit a pale, sickening bioluminescence, providing extremely dim, unnatural light throughout the lower tunnels. This ambient glow often warps perception, making stalactites appear as descending fangs.

THE MIND-WARP

The psychic pressure increases logarithmically the further the party travels towards the planetary core. The walls seem to visibly shift when not directly observed, rearranging the dungeon layout behind the party's backs.

SKILL CHECK

DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) to realize the architecture is actively shifting to create an infinite loop, allowing the character to conceptually "break" the illusion and locate the true path forward natively. A failure results in 2 hours of wasted travel.

logical experiments, or convenient vessels for their horrid offspring. There is no negotiating with these entities; their goals are unfathomable, and their methods are purely destructive.

DEEP CAVERN ENCOUNTERS

D8	ENCOUNTER	THREAT LEVEL
1	1d4 Marrow-Gaunts, hunting by the noise a waking mind makes.	Deadly
2	An ambulatory colony of sentient, necrotic fungi.	Medium
3	A stalactite that is not a stalactite, and has been patient for years.	Hard
4	A drifting memory-shroud, feeding on everything its prey can still recall.	Hard
5	A stable, humming portal to the dreaded Outer Dark.	Hazard/Deadly
6	A creeping sheet of blood-warm rot that digests anything it touches.	Hazard
7	Escaped, starving pit-fighters from the tyrant's arena, long past reason.	Social/Hostile
8	A Choir-Mind projecting itself into the corridor, demanding absolute submission.	Deadly

THE ABERRANT TYRANT

The deepest, most warped caverns are universally ruled by megalomaniacal tyrants who command legions of charmed thralls and engineered mutants. The most feared and unpredictable among these are the robed, hovering horrors known as Gaze Tyrants. Absolute paranoid lords of the deep, a single Gaze Tyrant can dominate an entire subterranean ecosystem through sheer terror and unparalleled magical destruction.

GM NOTES

Gaze Tyrants are incredibly paranoid to the point of clinical insanity. Their lairs are uniquely designed with plunging vertical shafts, sheer cliffs, and false floors to perfectly exploit their ability to hover while simultaneously trapping terrestrial intruders in devastating magical kill-zones. If the players wake the sanctum's ward-runes by casting a spell within 500 feet of the central chamber, the tyrant will immediately be alerted to their presence, preparing traps and positioning thralls defensively.

protections against cold and pressure suffers 2d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d6 cold damage every minute they spend in the lower chambers unprotected.

Furthermore, the lair is littered with the corpses of ancient subterranean leviathans, whose massive ribcages form the structural foundation of the tyrant's domain. These bones are highly sought after by necromancers and weaponsmiths, as weapons forged from leviathan bone automatically bypass non-magical resistances. Extracting them, however, risks awakening the parasitic deep-dwelling worms that burrowed into the marrow millennia ago.



THE CRUSHING VOID

The deepest reaches of the lair are not merely physical locations; they are localized anomalies of planar pressure. The stone here is super-cooled, yet unable to freeze due to the immense magical friction generated by shifting tectonic plates below. Any creature without magical

THE TYRANT'S LAIR

The central chamber is a massive, perfectly spherical room hollowed out of the living bedrock by decades of patient, meticulous unmaking. Floating ominously in the absolute center, surrounded by petrified statues of previous adventurers, is the orchestrator of the dungeon's horrors.

READ ALOUD

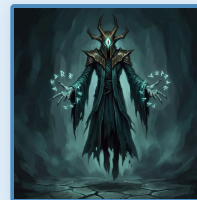
A robed shape unfolds from the dark and rises, drifting a foot clear of the stone. A single slitted eye set into its horned helm opens and fixes upon you, immediately radiating an aura of absolute nullification that snuffs out your magical light sources. Cold runes ignite around its outstretched hands, charging with crackling, deadly magical energy. "I have anticipated your pathetic arrival for seventeen years," a booming, multi-layered voice echoes perfectly inside your minds.



GAZE TYRANT

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class: 18 (warded plate and horn) **Hit Points:** 180 (19d10 + 76) **Speed:** 0 ft., hover 20 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws: Int +8, Wis +7, Cha +8 **Skills:** Perception +12 **Condition Immunities:** prone **Senses:** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22 **Languages:** the Hollow Tongue, Tunnel Cant, telepathy 120 ft.

Unwritten Sight. The single eye set in the tyrant's helm reads what a thing is made of rather than what it chooses to show. Illusions, disguises and invisibility afford no protection from it, and any creature it has looked upon this turn gains no benefit from cover against the tyrant.

Weight of Regard. At the start of each of its turns, the tyrant fixes its eye on one creature it can see within 120 feet. Until the start of its next turn that creature's speed is halved, it has disadvantage on Constitution saves made to hold concentration, and any magical light it carries gutters out. Breaking line of sight for a full round sheds the effect.

Revolving Sigils. Two rings of cold runes turn slowly about the tyrant's outstretched hands. In place of an attack on its turn, the tyrant may spend one lit sigil from either ring at a target within 120 feet; the spent rune goes dark and does not rekindle until the tyrant next rests in its sanctum.

- **Unstitch.** 8d8 force damage, halved on a successful DC 19 Dexterity save. A creature dropped to 0 hit points by it leaves behind only its equipment.
- **Silt Lung.** DC 19 Constitution save or the target's chest fills with cavern dust; it cannot speak, and therefore cannot cast with verbal components, for 1 minute.
- **Long Fall.** DC 19 Strength save or the target is flung 40 feet in a direction of the tyrant's choosing, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage on landing.
- **Second Thought.** DC 19 Wisdom save or the target repeats its most recent action on its next turn, against an ally of the tyrant's choosing.
- **Slow Stone.** DC 19 Constitution save or the target's limbs begin to calcify; its speed drops to 0 and it is restrained until it or an ally spends an action cracking the crust away.
- **Last Word.** DC 19 Charisma save or 6d10 necrotic damage, and the tyrant regains hit points equal to half the damage dealt.

Legendary Actions. The tyrant takes 2 legendary actions each round, choosing to drift 20 feet without provoking, move its Weight of Regard to a new creature, or spend a sigil.

Defeating a Gaze Tyrant entirely in its own specifically designed lair requires incredible tactical mastery, exploiting line-of-sight, and immense luck. They will vaporize intruders without a second thought. If the party successfully navigates the hazards, defeats the tyrant, and salvages the artifacts from its hoard, they will carry wealth and knowledge that has not been seen by mortal eyes since before the world was drowned in the First Calamity.

TREASURE

The Tyrant's Hoard

- *Wand of Stillness* (Carved from a petrified elven femur).
- *Ring of the Sealed Mind* (Currently housing the soul of a terrified paladin).
- 8,000 gp in ancient, untarnished platinum bars bearing long-forgotten crests.
- A heavily trapped, skin-bound spellbook containing 5th to 8th level aberrant rituals that drive readers slowly insane over time.