

V2
LVL5

D. COLEMAN
Edited by Rico Gilbert



No Laughing Matter



A fifth edition dungeon adventure to take
a party from 5th to 6th level.

Dungeons
ON DEMAND

No Laughing Matter

Tips for the Game Master

- This is *your* dungeon adventure. If you don't like how something works, change it. If you think an item or NPC from your campaign world works better than an item or NPC presented here, make the switch. If a puzzle is too hard or an encounter is too easy, drop some hints or add some monsters - do whatever is best for your game. You're the master of your gaming world, this packet is just a guide to help you. It will present hints and opportunities for you to customize, but ultimately everything is up to *you*. You don't need permission to break the mold.
- The encounters listed within this packet were designed by the book - but by the book isn't always the most practical for every party of adventurers. You may need to give a monster fewer hit points, fudge some dice rolls, or just plain ignore some of the rules if you think an encounter is a risk of killing the entire party.
- This adventure will work best when you take the time to read through the packet first, so you're familiar with everything that's going on. Sometimes the monsters that lie in wait to ambush the party, traps that are hidden from sight, or the clues to a puzzle may be glossed over if you're not prepared.
- The goal of each adventure is to give the party enough experience points to advance one level. This depends on a lot of things however - the party needs to complete most of the encounters and be of the appropriate size and level for that to work out. Ultimately, you might want to go without experience points altogether, and simply allow the players to advance to the next level once they're finished the dungeon. This means a lot less record-keeping on you part!
- The ultimate goal is to have fun! If you're having fun while playing, then you're playing correctly.



Contents

Introduction.....	4
Dungeon Overview Map.....	6
Adventure Hooks.....	8
Prelude.....	8
Encounters.....	9
Wrapping Up.....	28
Appendix A: New Monsters & NPCs.....	29
Appendix B: The Obelisks.....	32
License.....	33



Dungeons On Demand are designed with Game Masters in mind, created to be instant adventure sites a GM can wholly customize to fit his or her campaign. Unlike lengthy, full scale published adventures, *Dungeons On Demand* can often be played in a single gaming session, requires little planning beforehand aside from reading the packet, and gives plenty of options to make the dungeon fit seamlessly within the owner's campaign. Each dungeon has enough encounters and challenges to advance the party playing through it by one level.

No Laughing Matter is designed for a party of 4 to 5 5th-level adventurers. If your game has more or fewer players, you can adjust the number of monsters present in each encounter to fit the proper difficulty.

Dungeon Background & Information

The southern stretches of the *Vaesnir Badlands* are especially harsh. There, travelers find an uncultivated desert canyon – dry, hot, and barren year round. Along this stretch is *Laughter's Gorge*, a part of the canyon named for the shrieks of maniacal laughter that rise from its trenches on occasion. The unnerving bouts of laughter range from short fits to long episodes, its voice genderless and vaguely human. Some laughs are low and muffled while others are loud enough to be heard miles away.

The source of the unsettling laughter is largely unknown and widely disputed. Some claim the sound is a trick caused by the wind blowing through the gorge's valley; others believe the laughter to belong to the ghosts of adventurers that died exploring the valley. Whatever the reason, *Laughter's Gorge* is cautiously avoided by anyone traveling the area.

The *Arid Route* is a well-traveled road that runs north and south through the badlands, parallel to the canyon and *Laughter's Gorge*. It's not uncommon for those traveling the route to report the haunting laughter echoing throughout the wastes. Recently, however, travelers have been reaching their destinations in fits of spontaneous giggles, which eventually devolve into long spells of horrible laughter.

Only those that have heard the laughter rising from *Laughter's Gorge* seem to be plagued by these spells, although anyone spending too much time with the infected soon found themselves chuckling uncontrollably as well. Within the same span of time, travelers who crossed the *Arid Route*, and still had their wits about them afterwards, reported frequent gnoll attacks on their caravans!

With these new dangers rising in the badlands, authorities on either end of the *Arid Route* had no choice but to close their gates to travelers. They have taken measures to quarantine the laughing victims until they can cure the mysterious ailment, but until then, anyone making the journey through the badlands does so at their own risk.

The PCs are assumed to arrive in the *Vaesnir Badlands* shortly after travelers have become infected with this laughing sickness. They can learn from authorities on either end of the *Arid Route* about the conditions in the badlands and the circumstances that led them to closing their gates. The following developments are what have occurred in the weeks preceding the PCs' arrival, and should be kept secret from the players at this point.

Developments

Divine Comedy

The stretch of the canyon known as *Laughter's Gorge* is actually the grounds of *Olidammara's Jest* – a holy site to the eponymous deity hidden within the canyon's walls.

The *Jest* was constructed eons ago, and its existence is almost entirely unknown to the populace. Whatever its ancient purpose, an old magic is still firmly present there. *Olidammara's Jest* magically creates the audible bouts of laughter heard coming from *Laughter's Gorge*. While unnerving, this effect is usually benign – it's only been recently that those hearing it have started laughing uncontrollably as well.

It's difficult to guess what this holy site was originally intended for. *Olidammara* is a god of trickery and revelry, preferring to indulge in japes and merriment above all else. Perhaps this is why the *Jest* magically creates this laughter, a seemingly appropriate enchantment for a god of mirth.

[CUSTOMIZE] – If your campaign uses a different pantheon than the *Greyhawk* setting, change *Olidammara's Jest* to be a holy site for an appropriate deity, and the name accordingly. Non-good deities with the Trickery domain suggested in the *PHB* typically work best.

A Joke Gone Wrong

The laughter created by *Olidammara's Jest* caught the attention of the thullithin *Xullibesk Lu-Pral* (**Appendix A**). *Xullibesk* had recently come into leadership of a gnoll war pack led by war chief *Dagnyr Bristlebone*. After dominating *Dagnyr*, enslaving the war lord to his bidding, the thullithin was able to dictate the war pack's actions through his new thrall. He instructed *Dagnyr* to lead his gnolls to *Laughter's Gorge* so he could investigate what was causing the laughter, intending to use the gnolls as guards (and on occasion, consuming their thoughts).

Xullibesk discovered what still remained of *Olidammara's Jest* hidden within the canyon, and much more interestingly, a ring of earthen pillars called the *Rune Henge*. Each pillar of the *Rune Henge* had strange markings carved into them, and *Xullibesk* spent weeks tucked away in the gorge translating the glyphs, studying them to learn their purpose.

At first, *Xullibesk* believed the *Rune Henge* to be the place of a mighty spell, but he ultimately discovered the truth – the strange glyphs etched into the pillars weren't the makings of a spell at all. Instead, when translated, they told one long, elaborate joke. The punch line was lost on *Xullibesk*, as it didn't "translate" well to the thullithin's sense of humor, and left him incredibly dismayed. He commanded *Dagnyr* to prepare the gnolls to leave *Laughter's Gorge* the next day.

Before they could set out, *Xullibesk* noticed a few of the gnolls in the war pack sniggering much more often and maniacally than usual. Their fits soon devolved into steadied bouts of uncontrollable laughter. The thullithin discovered these laughing gnolls to be



incredibly susceptible to his *dominate* ability; their minds weakened and malleable from whatever malaise forced their laughter. These infected gnolls could be controlled without any additional focus; Xullibesk realized he could use this laughing sickness to his advantage to build a veritable army of thralls.

Through Dagnyr, the thullithin directed the gnolls to raid the nearby roads and caverns, in an effort to attract the attention of strong creatures he could lure to Laugher's Gorge to enslave. Xullibesk discovered that nearly any intelligent creature who heard the laughter generated from Olidammar's Jest, or the laughter of an infected creature, eventually succumbed to the laughing sickness itself – at which point Xullibesk was all too happy to dominate it.

Currently, Xullibesk has collected several prizes. In addition to his gnoll war chief Dagnyr Bristlebone, he has enthralled a human warrior, a sand-troll, and even a young copper dragon. The thullithin only selects the strongest creatures the gnolls lure back to Laugher's Gorge, subduing them and waiting patiently for them to surrender to fits of laughter before bending their wills to his own.

Contagious Laughter

Though he may not have realized it while he did it, when Xullibesk finished the joke inscribed at the Rune Henge, he completed an awful and ancient blessing to Olidammar. With its completion, the laughing generated from the holy site carried with it *cackle fever*, a highly contagious disease that causes shrieks of uncontrollable, hideous laughter upon its victims.

All it takes is for a creature to hear the laughter coming from Laugher's Gorge, or hearing the laughter of another infected creature to risk becoming infected with cackle fever. Note that this module uses a variant on the disease cackle fever presented in the *DMG*. For more information, refer the sidebar *Cackle Fever*.

Rewriting the Joke

Not all hope is lost for those infected with cackle fever. Within the halls of the Olidammar's Jest are five *obelisks*, each keyed with the ability to "rewrite" the great joke inscribed at the Rune Henge. If the joke is entirely rewritten, the audible laughter randomly created by the temple will cease to carry the disease, and infected creatures will no longer be contagious. However, those afflicted with the disease will still be subject to its effects.

Xullibesk is aware of the obelisks, but he hasn't concerned himself with them. He's aware of their general nature and purpose, but the thullithin is all too happy with the locals becoming infected with cackle fever – all the easier it is for him to create slaves. He's left his minions to guard the chambers the war pack has unearthed, and instructed them not to meddle with the obelisks themselves.

NOTE: It's important you understand how these obelisks are activated and their effects, as they'll play a central role in the events of *No Laughing Matter*. For more information, refer to *Appendix B: The Obelisks*.

Cackle fever can be cured – even among those in the worst stages of the ailment. A rare plant called *solemnage* can be ground into a medicine and used to treat the disease. However, finding *solemnage* is a risk in and of itself, as the plant is indigenous only to Laugher's Gorge, and only near water. Given the barren landscape, creating this medicine would be quite an endeavor.

Exploration

Mixed Progression

The encounter areas accessible from Laugher's Gorge and Olidammar's Jest can generally be accessed in any order – although some must be entered before others. Regardless of how the party progresses, they'll need to explore the dungeon until they locate each obelisk to stop the effect of cackle fever being infused in the magical laughter generated by the site. It's possible for a party to skip one or more encounters and still complete their objectives.

Variable Light

Most of the monsters roaming Olidammar's Jest and Laugher's Gorge have *darkvision*, and the majority of encounter areas are unlit as a result. Natural light illuminates the trench occupying Areas A and B at the bottom of the canyon. Depending upon the time of day these areas are either well lit or dimly lit. The party will need light sources in other encounter areas if they are unable to see in darkness.

Magic Detection

Several magic items can be found in Olidammar's Jest and the caves of Laugher's Gorge. The earthen and stone walls of the areas are thick enough to prevent players casting *detect magic* to detect these items without being in the same room, however.

Haunting Laughter

Magical laughter can be heard throughout the gorge and within Olidammar's Jest. It occurs sporadically, at different volumes and for varied lengths of time. This effect is planned to occur when the party enters different encounter areas, but will occur more often if the party stops to rest in the dungeon.

For each hour the party spends resting, roll 1d20. On a 19 or higher, the haunting laughter occurs. For each hour the effect does not occur, reduce the result needed by 1 cumulatively until the laughter happens, at which point future checks reset.

Unless magically protected or somehow deafened, each party member that hears the laughter must make a save against cackle fever, or risk becoming infected with the disease (or slipping deeper into its effect). See the sidebar *Cackle Fever* for more information.

Random Patrol

The majority of monsters on the dungeon site are gnolls – either infected with cackle fever, enthralled to the thullithin Xullibesk, or both. In the event you need a random encounter in encounter areas, you can use the following monsters:

Random Encounter: gnoll pack ★★☆☆
3 gnolls (*MM* pg. 163) 300 XP
2 gnoll cacklers (*Appendix A*) 2,200 XP



No Laughing Matter

Legend:

- Hostile Creature(s)
- Trap
- Plot Driver
- Treasure
- NPC
- Puzzle

1 square = 5 feet

Indicates the location of a secret door.



☼ Cackle Fever ☼

The threat of catching *cackle fever* looms large during the events of *No Laughing Matter* – it is likely most of the party will be infected and go through stages of the disease as they progress. This makes it all the more urgent that they discover how to stop the disease from spreading and find a cure during the adventure.

Cackle fever is similar to the disease of the same name described in the *DMG*, but its mechanical effect has been altered to better suit this adventure. Refer to the following effects for creatures infected with cackle fever.

Catching Cackle Fever

Creatures with an Intelligence score of 6 or higher that hear the laughter generated by Olidammara's Jest, or the laughter of another infected creature, run the risk of catching cackle fever. Such creatures must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature suffers 5 (1d10) psychic damage and becomes incapacitated for one round with a fit of maniacal laughter. The creature is infected with cackle fever until the disease is cured.

Infected creatures gain the following action:

Cackle (Recharge 6). This creature suffers 5 (1d10) psychic damage and becomes incapacitated for one round in a fit of laughter. Creatures susceptible to cackle fever that can hear this creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, target creatures are infected with *cackle fever*. If an infected creature rolls a natural 1 for an attack roll or ability check, it fails the action, and uses *cackle* instead.

Additional Exposure

Once a creature catches cackle fever, it starts sliding into deeper stages of the disease. Infected creatures are still required to make saving throws each time they would be exposed to the disease, although they do not suffer the effect of failure described under *Catching Cackle Fever*. Instead, track the number of failed saving throws for each player. When players accumulate enough failed saving throws, they gain new effects of the disease. These effects are described under *Stages of Cackle Fever*.

Stages of Cackle Fever

As a creature's cackle fever worsens with more exposure to the disease, its effect grows more dramatic. When a creature fails the indicated number of saving throws against cackle fever, they gain the following effects:

1 Failed Saving Throw

The creature is infected with cackle fever (see the effect for *Catching Cackle Fever*).

3 Failed Saving Throws

The creature has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws while it is infected with cackle fever.

7 Failed Saving Throws

The creature cannot take reactions. If it fails an attack or ability check by a result of 10 or more, it uses its cackle action instead.

11 Failed Saving Throws

The creature has disadvantage on all saving throws. If it fails an attack or ability check by a result of 5 or more, it uses its cackle action instead.

15 Failed Saving Throws

Other creatures have advantage on attack rolls against the infected creature.

The effects listed are cumulative. If a creature is cured of cackle fever, the next time it fails a saving throw is considered its first failed saving throw.

These effects are primarily used for the PCs during their time spent here. You don't need to track these for individual monsters.

Curing Cackle Fever

Cackle fever is a magical disease, although it can still be cured by *lesser restoration*, a paladin's *lay on hands* ability, an *elixir of health*, and similar effects. Effects that protect creatures from diseases, such as *divine health* or *purity of body*, prevent cackle fever as well.

Additionally, cackle fever can be cured using a rare flower called *solemsage*, which grows exclusively in Laughter's Gorge. Given an hour, a character that has proficiency with an herbalism kit can turn the flower into one dose of medicine. Once consumed, one dose of the medicine cures the effects of the disease entirely after a long rest.

Portraying Cackle Fever

Throughout the events of *No Laughing Matter*, you'll be tasked with role-playing many different creatures infected with cackle fever. How the party perceives this ailment will largely be based upon your portrayal of it - so it's important to give special attention to those infected with the disease.

Creatures in the early stages of cackle fever are aware of their symptoms, but otherwise still have their wits about them. They may occasionally giggle while talking or trying to concentrate, grimace as they try to stifle the laughter, or laugh into their hands or arms as one would do a sneeze.

Those in the later stages of the fever (11 or more failed saves) are more maniacal and open with their ailment. They may choose to cackle more frequently, even at the risk of their own safety, to infect other creatures.

You can encourage good role-playing for players that become infected with the disease by awarding Inspiration to those that embrace these aspects. It's not necessary, but helps to build the atmosphere of the game.



Adding *No Laughing Matter* to Your Campaign

No Laughing Matter is designed to be played by a party of 5th-level characters. You can increase the difficulty of the encounters by adding more monsters for higher level players. If you're unable to come up with a reason as to why the party would be at the adventure site, consider using one or more of these hooks:

Hook 1: A Cure for the Shrieks

The heroes are at one of the towns on either end of the Arid Route (use a town or city suitable for your campaign). They get word that the town has recently closed its gates to travelers after several have arrived infected with cackle fever (which the townsfolk call "the shrieks.")

Authorities have quarantined the infected, but the only known cure for the ailment must be crafted from solemsnase – a plant known to grow only in Laughter's Gorge. The PCs will need to head to the canyon in the badlands to seek out this plant.

[CUSTOMIZE] – To make things a little more personal, you can have one of the PCs become infected with cackle fever (possibly by running into one of the infected that has avoided quarantine). The party must make the medicine now to save their comrade!

Hook 2: Gaining Entrance

With the outbreak of cackle fever and increased gnoll activity in the badlands, the Arid Route is a dangerous place, and towns on either end of it have closed their gates to travelers. The PCs arrive at such a town only to be told they're not welcome!

In order for the party to gain entrance, they'll need to handle the gnoll incursion and deal with the mysterious laughing sickness themselves – only then will the towns reopen their gates!

Hook 3: Getting the Last Laugh

The party is already making a trek through the Vaesmir Badlands when they hear the mysterious laughter from Laughter's Gorge in the distance, right before they're ambushed by gnolls! Use the monsters listed for the random encounter for this optional encounter. The gnolls are under orders to lure the party to the gorge so that the thullithin Xullibesek Lu-Pral can turn them into new slaves; they quickly flee the combat in hopes that the party chases them!

Prelude: Beginning the Dungeon

Begin by allowing the party to venture towards the badlands and the events of *No Laughing Matter* to begin. If you're using one of the adventure hooks provided, allow the characters to learn of the gnoll raids on travelers in the badlands, the laughing sickness travelers have developed, and the stories about Laughter's Gorge itself.

If the players are in one of the towns on either end of the Arid Route, they can gather information and gossip about the events that have transpired from NPCs there. Refer to the *Gossip* sidebar for more information.

Eventually the party will learn enough information to head towards Laughter's Gorge. This trip will take them through the badlands along the Arid Route until they reach that area of the canyon. It's generally assumed to be a few days march from any one end of the town to the gorge.

Exploring the Vaesmir Badlands

The badlands are dry, hot, and barren. The trip from any one town or city at its borders to the canyon isn't far, but the party will still need to bring plenty of water (at least 5 days worth per party member). Laughter's Gorge is identified along the Arid Route, so it's easy to find even when the laughter isn't present.

Entering the Gorge

The depths of Laughter's Gorge lie 400 feet below the surface of the badlands where the party must approach from. The canyon has natural ridges that allow the party to descend to the bottom – but these paths are too steep and narrow for horses or other conventional mounts to traverse. No checks are needed to enter the gorge or to exit it if these paths are taken, although the process does take about an hour's time both ways.

The party must decide whether they'll access Laughter's Gorge from the **north** or **south** – both points of entry will lead the party to Area A. More information about entering the gorge is presented in the description of that encounter area.

— Gossip —

If the party is able to glean information about recent events from NPCs in a town or city in the area, you can use the following lines when interacting with the players:

People coming in from the badlands have developed the shrieks – some strange ailment that causes contagious laughter. They rounded up all the infected and quarantined them, and now the gates are closed to anyone coming in. Can't be a coincidence with them coming past Laughter's Gorge... can it?

I know what you mean about the laughing sickness. One of the travelers had a lass with'im who couldn't stop laughing herself, and last I

heard the whole lot of 'em have been quarantined. I know they say laughter is contagious, but this is downright dangerous.

First the laughter over the canyon, next travelers coming down with the shrieks, now gnoll raids in the badlands? I don't blame 'em for closing the town gates. It's dangerous along the Arid Route these days, and anyone heading out there is a fool.

Laughter's Gorge is known to have frightful laughter coming out from it, but nothing like this has ever happened before. I suppose we don't get much folk that head to the canyon to investigate, but we never needed to before.



Area A: The Gorge's Depths

The ravine formed at the bottom of Laughter's Gorge is described by this encounter area (with the exception of the Rune Henge, which is detailed in Area B). The canyon walls are pockmarked with caves that lead into underground caverns and the remaining areas of Olidammara's Jest.

The party can approach the ravine from either the **north** or **south** section of the canyon, although the description of the area is the same.

Parties that approach from the north will quickly run into a band of gnoll guards that patrols the length of Laughter's Gorge. Those that approach from the south will meet *Nezira Darkscale*, a dragonborn warlock.

Regardless of which location the party chooses to descend into the gorge from, you can read the following aloud to the players when they reach the bottom:

You've worked up quite a sweat, but the trek down to the bottom of the canyon was otherwise uneventful. The area at the bottom is rocky and narrow, although thankfully cooler than it was at the top. At first you're a little unsure you're in the right place, but then it happens; echoing throughout the ravine is an unsettling laugh that sends a shiver down your spines.

Save Against Cackle Fever

Each susceptible party member must make saves against cackle fever at this point. Don't worry too much if all (or none) of the players fail their checks. For players that fail, see *Portraying Cackle Fever*.

Approach from the North

The northern reach of this area is patrolled by a group of gnolls, aided by an immense mammoth that usually serves as the pack's beast of burden. As the party heads southward into Laughter's Gorge, the group will be obvious.

As the party enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

Striding in your direction is a beast from another age – resembling an elephant, but covered entirely in long, woolly fur and sporting a massive pair of curved tusks. It's being spurred along by a pack of six gnolls. Two of the gnolls are seated atop the beast, guiding it with crudely fashioned reins and occasional prods with their spears. It doesn't look like they've noticed you yet, but they're heading your way.

The gnolls are fortunate enough to have resisted cackle fever so far, and too weak to garner any interest from Xullibesk into dominating. Rather, they patrol the ravine on orders from Dagnyr when they're not sent on raids.

Hostile creatures: gnoll patrol ★★★★★

6 gnolls (*MM* pg. 163) 600 XP

1 mammoth (*MM* pg. 332) 2,300 XP

Area A
North



Area A
Central



Area A
South





Combat

The party has an opportunity to get a surprise round if they hide – there are plenty of outcrops and large boulders within the ravine that can conceal them while the gnolls approach. The gnolls are loyal warriors, but they're poor guards. They don't expect to encounter anyone in their location. (Use their passive Perception scores while on patrol.)

If the party surprises the guards, the mammoth rears back during the surprise round in terror, forcing the two gnolls that ride it to fall to the ground. They each suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage and begin their turns prone.

If the party makes no effort to hide, or if they hide so poorly the gnolls spot them, initiative is rolled normally. The gnolls mounted atop the mammoth begin peppering the party with shots from their longbows while the remaining four gnolls charge to engage in melee.

The gnolls enter a blood frenzy during combat, and fight in a blind rage until they're slain. They've helped themselves to a lot of stolen coins from raided travelers and Olidammara's Jest. Their bodies can be looted for 40 gp pieces each.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- The gnolls may fight until they're killed by the party, but the mammoth is much less passionate. Once reduced to 25 or fewer hit points it will attempt to flee. However, it's too large to flee southward where the canyon walls bottleneck right before entering Area B – it will flee northward instead.
- If combat reaches Area B, Xullibesk's thralls there are alerted. They're under orders to guard the Rune Henge and won't leave their posts, but they'll alert the thullithin telepathically.

Approach from the South

The southern part of this area consists of the winding path of the ravine that heads northward to Area B. There are no hostile creatures here currently – the gnolls that patrol the ravine are at the northern portion of the area or inside one of the caves accessible here.

Nezira Darkscale, a dragonborn warlock, has found herself in this part of the canyon. She followed the gnolls here after they raided her traveling party a few days ago, and she's come here in pursuit. Nezira has thus far managed to resist catching cackle fever, thanks to her periapt of health, but finds herself overwhelmed with the amount of hostile creatures in Laughher's Gorge.

When the PCs arrive, Nezira has cast invisibility on herself while she waits on a ledge along the canyon wall. Her raven familiar, Majeus, has been scouting the area for her. If the party has defeated the hostile creatures anywhere near Laughher's Gorge she's aware of it.

When the party reaches the central part of the area (indicated by the NPC icon on the area map), you can read the following aloud to the players:

The narrow ravine widens into a larger gap here, its expanse continuing on the opposite side and to a cave leading into the eastern portion of the canyon. A raven caws as you approach – you see it perched upon a ledge at eye level, looking at you. From it you hear a female voice:

"Keep your voices low. I get the feeling we may be friends."



Nezira Darkscale (via Majeus, her Raven Familiar)

Nezira speaks through her familiar Majeus (she's able to do so thanks to her *voice of the chain master* ability). She's physically several hours south of the party's location, exploring the canyon. Majeus scouted ahead on her behalf before spotting the party, which attracted her attention.

The warlock's goal is to learn as much as she can about the gnoll activity and to put an end to whatever has been causing the spread of cackle fever. She's anxious to catch up to the party's location.

Nezira would like to have Majeus tag along with them during their time in the canyon if possible. She can see through her familiar's eyes, and offers advice through Majeus when needed. She'll ask the party if they'd be amenable to that.

If they agree, Majeus accompanies the party throughout the events of *No Laughing Matter*. The raven stays out of harm's way during combat encounters – either flying overhead or tucked safely behind cover. Nezira can interact with the party through Majeus and vice versa.

You can refer to the sidebar *Role-playing Nezira* for more information about the dragonborn warlock.

NOTE: After the party defeats the hostile creatures in Area B, Nezira will introduce herself to them through Majeus.

CAUTION: It's possible the party will be suspicious of Nezira since she is not present herself. If the party decides to simply wait for the warlock to arrive on scene, consider running some random encounters to discourage them staying too long in one place.

If the party can arrange to meet up with the warlock, or wait for her to arrive, you should consider Nezira joining them for the adventure. *No Laughing Matter* assumes the dragonborn is absent for the time the party spends in the dungeon, only to arrive at its conclusion.

Nezira's Thoughts

If the party agrees to let Majeus accompany them, Nezira offers her thoughts and insights throughout their time in Laughher's Gorge. This information is presented in a sidebar for each relevant encounter area.

Nezira Darkscale ★★☆☆☆

Nezira Darkscale (**Appendix A**) 700 XP



— Role-playing Nezira —

The majority of the time, the party will only know Nezira through her raven familiar Majeus. Nezira can speak through the raven at will though, and the party can communicate with the warlock by talking to Majeus as well.

Nezira is cautious, and prefers strategy and planning over brute force and ignorance. She recognizes that the party is the best chance for her to learn what's going on in the gorge, and she'll need their help.

While interacting with Nezira, you can use the following lines as part of her conversation.

My name is Nezira Darkscale, Herald of the Stars Beyond the Darkness. The raven I speak to you from is Majeus, my faithful servant. It is indeed an unusual situation how we meet, I agree, but I'm several hours on foot out of your location. If you'll indulge me a few moments, I'd like to discuss the events going on in this canyon.

I came here two nights past. I was traveling with a small company heading north along the Arid Route, when we were attacked by a gnoll raiding party. I managed to put a few gnolls in the ground, but the savages escaped. I've been miles up and down this canyon looking for clues to their hideout... and it looks like you've stumbled upon it before I could myself. Thankfully Majeus was able to spot you.

The laughing sickness that seems to be spreading from this canyon is more appropriately named "cackle fever," and my condolences if you've found yourself infected with it. I'm fortunate to have protections from such ailments, but the disease is highly contagious. I can offer you solace though, it can be cured. But before we worry about that, I must find out what's causing it in the first place.

Nezira will eventually ask the party to allow Majeus accompany them as they explore Laughter's Gorge.

If you have no quarrel with it, I'm going to have Majeus accompany you throughout this area while I approach on foot. It'll take me longer, while I'm looking through his eyes, but at least that way I can lend you my counsel. Majeus is trained to avoid danger, and we'll be able to communicate through him without issue... although, I would ask you light a torch in dark places for him.

If the party agrees Nezira will point them towards the cave leading into Area C.

Before you arrived, I spotted gnolls entering and exiting from the eastern cave to the north. That might be a good place to start. There's caves up and down this stretch of ravine, I imagine.

If the party disagrees, Nezira won't press the issue.

As you wish. If you reconsider, return to this area and call for me. Majeus will be sure to find you.



Area B: The Rune Henge

The *Rune Henge* is formed by five stone monoliths, arranged in a circle in the widest part of the chasm. Each monolith bears part of a great “joke” inscribed as a blessing to Olidammara.

Xullibesk has stationed two of his thralls here, a sand-troll and a human gladiator. Both are infected with cackle fever, and thus the thullithin has a steady grip over their wills, beyond the typical range of his power.

When the party enters this area, you can read the following aloud:

Five standing stones, each at least thirty feet tall, form a ring in this expanse of the ravine. You can see strange markings covering their inward facing sides, and large strokes carefully carved into the earth beneath them, joining them together.

In the middle of the stones is an odd pairing. A sand-skinned troll, and a dark human female stand at the circle's center. Their shoulders are slightly hunched and their eyes vacant. You can see their stifled laughter as they clench their jaws, and their stomachs occasionally quiver.

Hostile creatures: laughing thralls ★★★★★

1 sand troll* (**Appendix A**) 1,700 XP

1 gladiator* (**MM pg. 346**) 1,700 XP

*This creature is affected by cackle fever and gains the action *cackle* as described in the *Cackle Fever* sidebar. Its XP value has been adjusted accordingly.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a very strong aura of abjuration magic emanating from the pillars.



The Rune Henge

The stones that make up the Rune Henge are immense, ranging 10 to 15 feet in diameter and 20 to 30 feet in length. They are protected by a magical ward that prevents them from being destroyed, moved, or sent to another location. This effect cannot be dispelled.

The inner-facing side of each stone is covered top to bottom with markings. These glyphs are made up of several alphabets, and when examined do not immediately appear to make any sense. Even casting *comprehend languages* and similar effects fails to immediately reveal their purpose, although it does allow small fragments to be taken out of context and translated.

If any creature attempts to read the glyphs inscribed on the Rune Henge, they must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or suffer 11 (2d10) psychic damage. A creature that succeeds on its save is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours, although its thoughts are filled with the ultimate futility of life, the great emptiness of the cosmos, and its own insignificance in the great scheme of things (which is, in the end, all part of the great joke).



Combat

If the party encountered the gnolls in the northern part of the ravine, the thralls are aware of them and cannot be surprised. Initiative is rolled normally.

The party can get a surprise round against the thralls if they sneak up on the area undetected. Though dominated, the thralls do their best to guard the area, and treat the PCs as hostile if they detect them.

As soon as the first thrall's turn occurs, you can read the following aloud to the players:

Both the troll and the human convulse, their eyes rolling into the backs of their heads, each raising their right hand and pointing towards you. In unison, they speak to you:

“Ahh, I see the gnolls have found more slaves. Welcome to my humble abode. I hope to share many laughs with you!”

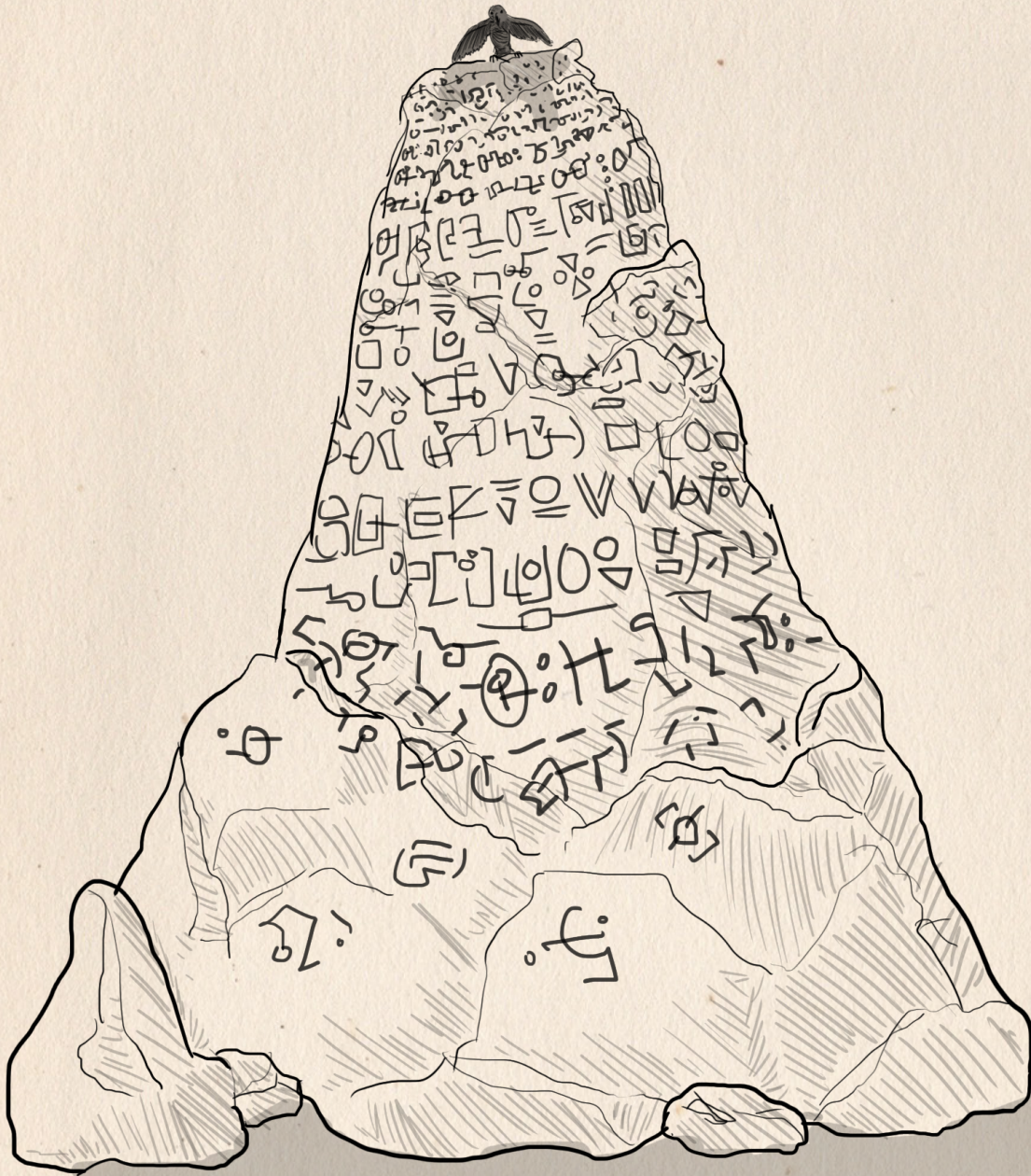
This is Xullibesk speaking through his thralls. When he finishes, the thrall whose turn it was uses its *cackle* ability to force the party to make another round of saving throws against cackle fever.

The thralls fight the party in an attempt to take them captive – after all, the thullithin desires the PCs to be turned into slaves. Because of their condition, they fight until slain.

Breaking Control

Xullibesk's *dominate monster* ability holds a tight grip on all his thralls, but it's not impossible to break. A successful DC 18 check is required with *dispel magic* to free a thrall from his control. If the party is able to free a thrall, it slumps to the ground and is unconscious until roused.





Majeus lands upon a monolith at the Rune Henge

Freed creatures are incredibly grateful, possibly going so far as to ally with the party to seek revenge against the thullithin. They are still infected with cackle fever, however, and the party will have to be wary of that.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- If the party hasn't met Nezira Darkscale via her raven familiar, Majeus yet, the warlock sends her familiar to introduce herself to them as soon as combat finishes. Read the following aloud to the players:

A raven swoops down, perching itself on one of the monoliths here. It eyes your party, and in a female voice you hear it say "Well done... I think we may have common cause here."

Nezira will introduce herself to the party and attempt to send Majeus with them as they explore the gorge. Refer to the section *Nezira Darkscale* in Area A for more information.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Thralls

Poor souls, but perhaps it was a mercy what you did. Their actions were not their own. Puppets to some greater force, but who was pulling their strings? Be wary.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Rune Henge

I know in my bones this structure here has had some part in the laughing sickness that spreads from this place... I just don't know how or why. I can't make out the markings without coming down with a painful headache.



Area C: Dig Site

When Xullibesk first discovered Olidammara's Jest within the caves of Laughter's Gorge, he set the gnolls to excavating the caves for entry ways into the site. This cavern is littered with many crude axes, picks, and shovels as a result, as well as with debris from walls the gnolls have torn down. This area consists of the **dig site** and an **obelisk chamber**.

No Light

The rooms in this area are unlit. Party members without darkvision will require a light source to see. Dim light from Area D does spill into the eastern end of the dig site however.

Dig Site

A small band of gnolls commanded by a gnoll pack lord maintains this area. They've recently torn down the walls to the areas of Olidammara's Jest, and are relaxing when the party arrives. They're fortunate not to have developed cackle fever yet.

The cave also serves as a lair for a roper native to the area. The gnolls took to feeding it hostages Xullibesk deemed too weak to dominate; taking sadistic glee as it fed upon the victims. As a result, the roper has learned not to bother the gnolls, and disguises itself as a stalactite suspended 10 feet overhead from the cavern's ceiling.

When the party arrives in the dig site, you can read the following aloud to the players:

As you enter this cave, you see it opens into a wider cavern. An arched wall of stone brick juts from the northern side of the cave. Propped up against it are several excavation tools – shovels, picks, axes, and rope. There's some rustling echoing throughout the area, the sound of footsteps coming from deeper within.

If the party is carrying a light source, the gnolls see them as soon as they enter, and cannot be surprised. Otherwise, the party will have to attempt Stealth checks to avoid detection.

Hostile creatures: digging crew ★★★★★

1 gnoll pack lord (MM pg. 163) 450 XP

4 gnolls (MM pg. 163) 400 XP

1 roper (MM pg. 261) 1,800 XP



Combat

The roper is located on the ceiling, 10 feet overhead, marked by the treasure icon on the area map. The rest of the gnolls are grouped together in the back of the dig site, marked by the combat icon on the area map.

As soon as the gnolls detect the party, they yip, laugh (innocuously), and charge into combat. The gnoll pack lord uses its *incite rampage* ability as often as possible, preferring to lead from the back of the group, taking shots with its longbow before heading into melee.

The roper moves into position during the first round of combat, avoiding detection. During the second round, it attacks as many party members as it can with its tendrils, then uses *reel* to draw them away from the gnolls and closer to bite. The roper's tendrils are long enough to easily cover the entirety of the cavern.



The gnolls, frenzied in battle, fight until slain. Their bodies can be looted for 45 gold pieces each. The roper will attempt to flee if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, although given its slow speed, it's likely the PCs will be able to kill it.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- In the (highly unlikely) event the roper escapes, it takes the treasure in its gizzard with it. You can remove the section *The Ropers Gizzard* from this section. The roper does not return to the encounter areas once it flees.



The Roper's Gizzard

The roper has swallowed an assortment of gems and coins that were carried on the recent victims fed to it by the gnolls. It's unable to digest these, and carries them in its gizzard until it can regurgitate them later.

When the roper dies, you can read the following aloud:

The monster sloughs to the ground in a spray of slime, ichor, and something else. Looking down, you see that it's coughed up a few coins and gemstones in its death throes.

The roper can be gutted to find two gemstones each worth 100 gold pieces, three gemstones each worth 50 gold pieces, and 15 platinum pieces (DMG pg.134).

A player who succeeds on a DC 14 Arcana check can identify the creature as a roper, and knows the value of its digestive fluids. A character with alchemist's tools can collect three flasks of the fluid, but the process will take an hour (and forces a check to see if the haunting laughter occurs). Each flask is worth 250 gold pieces.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Dig Site

What are the gnolls digging into? That's stone masonry... they've unearthed something old... and powerful, I fear.





Obelisk Chamber

The gnolls have torn down a portion of the wall that extrudes into the dig site to allow them access to the obelisk chamber. The gnolls don't concern themselves with this area, and it's largely empty when the party arrives – save for the collapsed portion of earth that fills the northern side of this particular chamber.

If this is the first time the party discovers an obelisk chamber, refer to the *Initial Discovery* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

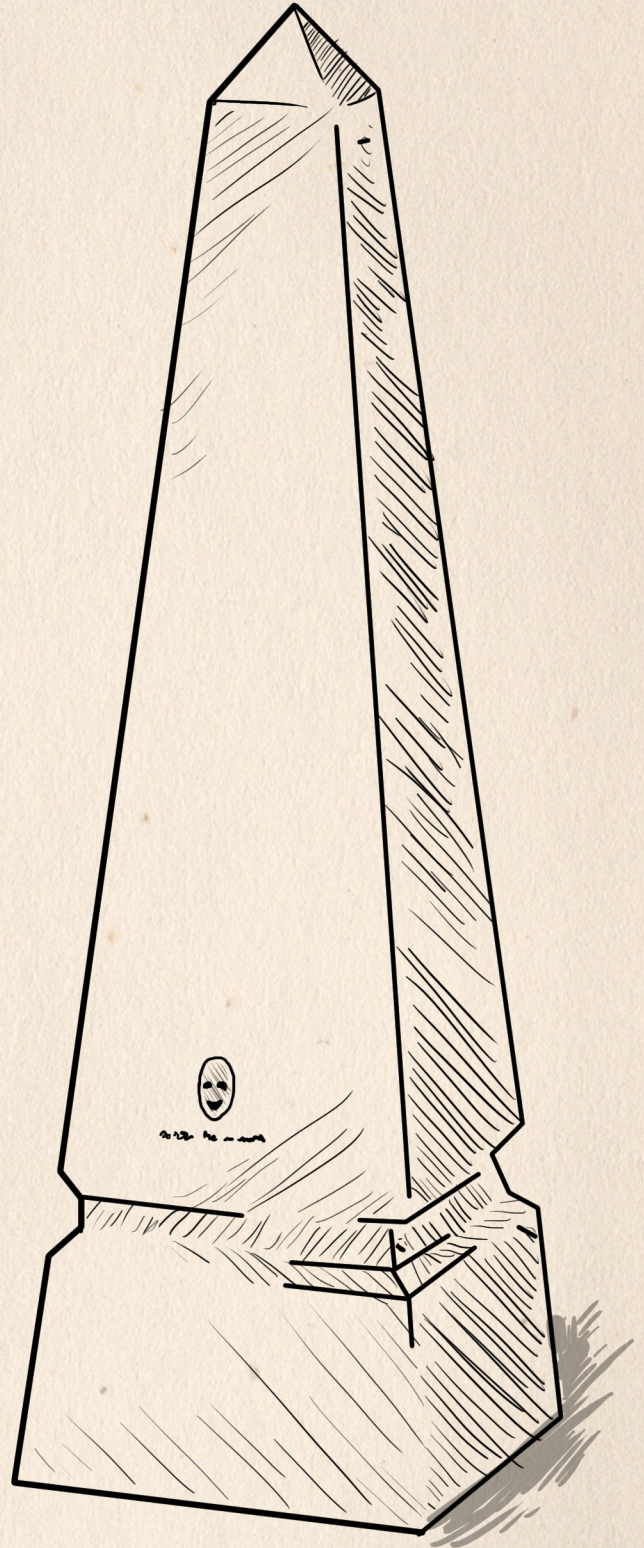
If this is the last of the five obelisk chambers the party has discovered, refer to the *Completing Activation* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

Cave In

Part of this room is covered with earth and the ruined remains of its architecture. The cave in isn't dangerous, but it does prevent further travel throughout the area.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Obelisk

I think you'll find humor isn't quite my strong suit. I've never had a chunk of rock ask to be told a joke before. I actually can't think of anything funnier than that at the moment.



An Obelisk



Area D: The Hall of Riddles

Many of the chambers of Olidammara's Jest were constructed in homage to the deity's capricious personality. The *Hall of Riddles* earns its namesake from four plaques in the room, each bearing a riddle upon it. Solving each riddle is necessary to open the door that leads to Area E. The northeast portion of this room is buried under its own ruin, but the majority of the chamber is open.

When the party enters this room from Area C you can read the following aloud to the players.

The walls of this square chamber are crafted entirely of stone bricks. Three stone columns stand floor to ceiling near each corner, except the room's northeastern section which is caved in. Along the southern wall is an alcove blocked by a giant stone slab. The chamber is dimly lit by a single brazier in the middle of the room. Light from it glints off four plaques that line the southern wall.

This section will test the players' wits, asking them to solve some riddles to continue forward. Xullibesk has already been through this chamber; long enough to position his thrall Dagnyr Bristlebone in the next hall. The room has reset since then.

Dim Light

This area is dimly lit by a brazier in the middle of the room.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects strong auras of transmutation magic emanating from the door and each plaque, and moderate evocation magic coming from the brazier (these effects cannot be dispelled).

Cave In

Part of this room is covered with earth and the ruined remains of its architecture. The cave in isn't dangerous, but it does prevent further travel throughout the area.

Brazier

The brazier in the middle of the room looks like it has been stoked recently, with several large pieces of kindling resting alongside it. These can be used as torches if the players wish.

The brazier is magical, but its fire is mundane. If the party extinguishes the fire in the brazier it magically reignites 5 minutes later.



Riddle Me This

Each of four plaques along the southern wall bears a riddle, the answers to the riddles being objects or elements already present (or capable of being present) in the room.

Each plaque is considered to have had its riddle "answered" when the appropriate object or element is touched to it. When the party does so, the words inscribed on the plaque magically swirl together to form the image of a laughing mask (or the holy symbol of whichever deity you've substituted for the dungeon). The plaque emits a dull, pink glow thereafter.

In the event the players are stumped, you can have them attempt a DC 15 Insight check. On a success, you can give the players a clue to the riddle's answer. Additionally, if Nezira is with the party, she knows the answer to one as well (see *Nezira's Thoughts* below).



Riddle One:

Feed me, and I'll live forever. But if you give me a drink, you end my life.

This riddle's answer is *fire*. Any source of fire touched to the plaque qualifies as an answer (such as a torch, etc.)

Riddle Two:

I'm as light as a feather... but no one can hold me for long.

This riddle's answer is *breath*. The riddle can be answered by a party member purposefully exhaling onto the plaque.

Riddle Three:

To write my name, you'll need five letters. But without the first two letters, only one will remain.

This riddle's answer is *stone*. Any rock touched to the plaque qualifies as an answer. The party can easily acquire such from the caved in portion of the room.

Riddle Four:

The more of me there is, the less of each other you'll see.

This riddle's answer is *darkness*, and the only way the party can "answer" the riddle is by extinguishing all light sources in the room (the glow from completed plaques does not interfere with this). The resulting glow from the plaque indicates the party's success.

Answering All the Riddles

When the party answers all four riddles the stone slab blocking entry to Area E slides aside. After an hour, the room resets and the stone slab moves back into block the entryway (it can be moved manually from the other side, however, so the party is not trapped behind it).

Nezira's Thoughts on One of the Riddles

Oh! This one's an old one, and one of my father's favorites. I'll give you the answer, but you'll owe me one!



Area E: The Hall of Caprice

This area is the largest among the recovered halls of Olidammara's Jest, and is mostly intact. It consists of the **Hall of Caprice** and two **obelisk chambers**.

Xullibesk has stationed his gnoll war chief slave, *Dagnyr Bristlebone*, in this chamber, along with a contingent of gnolls and giant hyenas to guard the obelisk chambers.

Hall of Caprice

When the party first enters this area, the haunting laughter occasionally generated in Olidammara's Jest occurs. You can read the following aloud to the players:

The door opens to reveal entry into a dimly lit room. Before you have a chance to think, a muffled laughter erupts from all around you, echoing throughout the corridors and causing you to feel uneasy.

Save Against Cackle Fever

Each susceptible party member must make saves against cackle fever at this point.

The Hall of Caprice is mostly an empty chamber. Dagnyr Bristlebone, the gnoll war chief, has been stationed here with orders to defend the obelisk chambers. The gnoll is thoroughly dominated thanks to his infection of cackle fever, and obeys his orders to the letter.

Entering into this massive temple chamber reveals a gnoll covered in war paint with something caustic dripping from its incisors. Two other gnolls stand to either side of it, each holding back a pair of overgrown hyenas. The one in war paint points a clawed hand at you, speaks a word, and his guards drop the leashes.

Dagnyr simply says "kill," in his native language of Gnoll (any party member who speaks Gnoll is able to understand him).

Hostile creatures: the war chief's pack ★★★★★

2 gnoll pack lords* (*MM* pg. 163) 800 XP

1 gnoll fang of yeenoghu* (*MM* pg. 163) 1,000 XP

4 giant hyenas (*MM* pg. 326) 800 XP

*This creature is affected by cackle fever and gains the action *cackle* as described in the *Cackle Fever* sidebar. Its XP value has been adjusted accordingly.

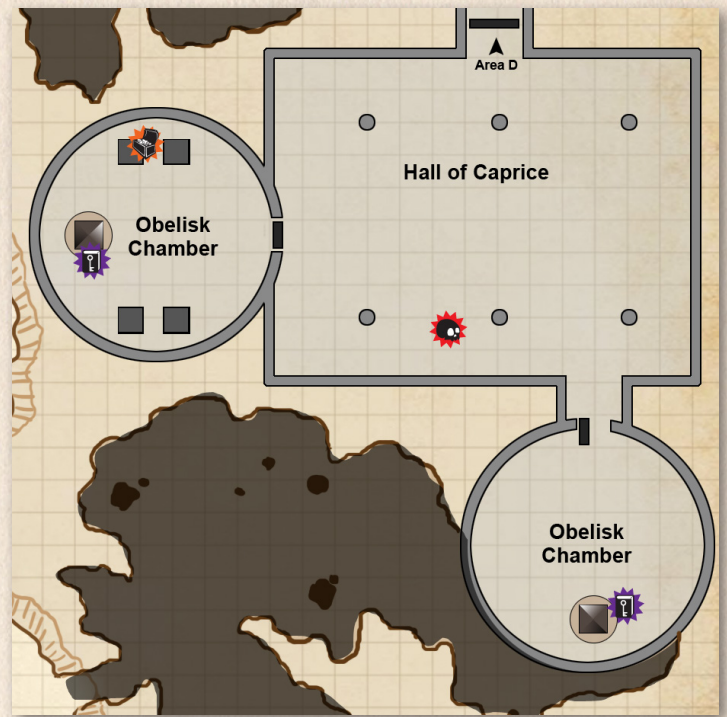
Dim Light

This area is dimly lit by sconces along the perimeter of the room. The gnolls can see in the dark, but the hyenas cannot, so they keep them lit.



Combat

The gnolls cannot be surprised – the process of opening the door to this area causes too much noise for them to be caught unaware. Dagnyr and the four giant hyenas charge the group to engage in melee. The pack lords stay back (near the combat icon on the area map) and fire their longbows at open targets, using their *incite rampage* ability as often as possible.



During the second round of combat, Xullibesk will speak to the party through his slave, Dagnyr (the Fang of Yeenoghu):

The gnoll in war paint contorts uncomfortably; its chin slouched upward as it speaks:

"Who are YOU to defy ME? Such bravado. If I cannot break your wills, I shall feast upon your thoughts!"

All the creatures here fight until they are slain. The pack lords' bodies can be looted for 87 gold pieces each, while Dagnyr can be looted for 192 gold pieces (money the gnolls have undoubtedly looted themselves from the dungeon).

Breaking Control

Dagnyr is under Xullibesk's *dominate monster* ability, and the thul-lithin is able to control the gnoll beyond its normal limitations. A successful DC 18 check is required with *dispel magic* to free the Fang of Yeenoghu from his control. If the party is able to free Dagnyr, he slumps to the ground and is unconscious until roused.

Once roused, Dagnyr goes berserk, attacking friend and foe alike until they are dead or until he has an opportunity to escape.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Hall of Caprice

Who would have thought a temple of this size was hidden within the canyon? Those gnolls being here is no accident. I don't think they're smart enough to solve the riddles to get in here... whoever is helping them is the obvious brains of the operation.



Obelisk Chamber

Two obelisk chambers are accessible from the Hall of Caprice. The gnolls have already forced open one of the doors – the one to the southern chamber – though the door leading to the western chamber remains shut. The doors are heavy, but they can be moved with a little effort from the party (no check required, but opening or closing a door requires 1 minute of time).



If this is the first time the party discovers an obelisk chamber, refer to the *Initial Discovery* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

If this is the last of the five obelisk chambers the party has discovered, refer to the *Completing Activation* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* in the western chamber detects a small, moderate aura of enchantment magic emanating from within one of the coffer.



Offerings to Olidammara

Four coffer entombed in the western obelisk chamber, dust-covered and untouched for ostensibly hundreds of years or more. Inside the coffer are 3,277 silver pieces, 938 gold pieces, and two jade statuettes carved in the shape of feathers, worth 250 gold pieces each.

One coffer also has a *jester's mask* within it (see sidebar).

Nezira's Thoughts on the Obelisk Chambers

My sister once told me a joke about a human male from the foreign land of Nan' Tukkit. I don't remember how it goes.

Jester's Mask

Wondrous item, uncommon

This colorful harlequin mask is adorned with feathers and bells, and bears the visage of a twisted half-smile, half frown. While wearing it, you have advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks made to entertain individuals or an audience. Once per day, you can use an action to target a creature with *tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 14). Using the power successfully causes the mask's face to show a full smile for the duration of the effect.



A Jester's Mask



Area F: Western Cave

The western side of the canyon is mostly uninhabited by Xullibes's forces. The thullithin only ventured as far south as the *Hall of Devotion* in Area G, so the remaining portions of Olidamma's Jest are unexplored.

The cave that leads to the Hall of Devotion has a naturally occurring pool of quicksand in it, which a few of Xullibes's gnolls discovered the hard way. As a result, the gnolls avoid this area.

You've entered a pitch black cave. It appears as if the path continues southward.

No Light

This area is unlit. Party members without darkvision will require a light source to see.



Quicksand

The quicksand here covers a 10 square foot area, marked by the trap icon on the area map, and is 10 feet deep. It's difficult to discern on the cavern floor (especially in the darkness). Its texture and coloration blends in well with the earthen ground.

Detecting the Trap

A party member succeeding on a DC 18 Perception check can make out the inconsistency of the surface of the quicksand. The cave is wide enough to simply walk around the pit once detected.

Triggering the Trap

A creature that enters the pool of quicksand immediately sinks 1d4 + 1 feet and becomes restrained. At the start of each of its turns, it sinks another 1d4 feet. As long as it isn't completely submerged, it can attempt a Strength check as an action to pull itself out, the DC is 10 plus the number of feet it has sunk into the quicksand. Once a creature becomes submerged, it begins suffocating.

Other creatures can assist a sinking creature within reach by using an action to attempt a similar Strength check. The DC is 5 plus the number of feet the target has sunk into the quicksand.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Western Cave

Curious that we'd find no gnolls in this cave. I wonder why? Majeus is uncomfortable in here... I have a bad feeling about this.



Dragon's Watch

The young copper dragon in Area G has been instructed to prevent intruders from accessing Olidamma's Jest. If the party draws too much attention to themselves, he'll enter from that area to attack them here.

Setting off the trap isn't enough to draw the dragon's attention, but any undue shouting or carrying on will. If the dragon hears the party and moves in to attack them, you can read the following aloud to the players, then refer to the *Combat* section of Area G for more information.

Coming down the earthen corridor is a dragon the size of a horse. It's small, by dragon standards, but intimidating all the same. Its scales are copper and glossy, and you can see its vacant eyes narrow in on you.

In one motion, it beats its wings back and charges in your direction.



Area G: The Hall of Devotion

The western portion of Olidammara's Jest is accessible here. This area contains the **Hall of Devotion** and, along the hallway past that, another **obelisk chamber**.

No Light

These areas are unlit. Party members without darkvision will require a light source to see.

Hall of Devotion

The *Hall of Devotion* may once have been ornately decorated with tributes to the god of trickery, but now this chamber is mostly vacant. Its northwest corner has crumbled, allowing access to and from the western cave as a result.

Xullibesk's gnolls managed to lure a young copper dragon back to Laugher's Gorge and, after infecting it with cackle fever, turned it into one of his most prized slaves. The thullithin has charged the dragon to keep intruders out of Olidammara's Jest, and the dragon obeys without question. If the dragon is still present in this area when the party arrives, you can read the following aloud to the players:

You've entered this stone room through an access in its northwest corner, you can see the debris left from its crumbling walls scattered on the ground. There's a large stone slab embedded in the wall on the far side of the room – but it's what's in front of you that has your attention. Poised upon the tiled floor is a dragon the size of a horse. Its scales are copper and glossy; it squints as its vacant eyes narrow in on you.

It's possible the young copper dragon detected the party in Area F and moved to attack them there (see Dragon's Watch described in Area F). If that's the case, this hall is empty when the party arrives, and you can read the following description instead:

You've entered this stone room through an access in its northwest corner, you can see the debris left from its crumbling walls scattered on the ground. There's a large stone slab embedded in the wall on the far side of the room. Other than that, this chamber is empty.

If the dragon is present it attacks immediately (see *Combat*).

Hostile creatures: dragon thrall ★★★★★
1 young copper dragon* (*MM* pg. 111) 2,600 XP

*This creature is affected by cackle fever and gains the action cackle as described in the Cackle Fever sidebar. Its XP value has been adjusted accordingly.

Stone Slab

The stone slab that blocks entrance to the area south of here is heavy, but can be pushed aside by the party. No check is required, but moving the slab requires at least 5 minutes.



Combat

Even if the party approaches this area silently, the dragon is aware of their presence once they're within 30 feet of its location thanks to its blindsight, and waits to surprise the party as they follow into the room.



It waits for as many party members as possible to enter the hall and then uses a surprise round to use its *slowing breath* on as many PCs as possible (if the dragon assaults the party at Area F, initiative is rolled normally).

After using its breath weapon, the dragon engages in melee with the party. It uses its *acid breath* the next time the ability recharges. If the dragon is forced to take the *cackle* action (as a result of rolling a natural 1), its laughter is hoarse and terrifying.

The ceilings in the areas are about 15 feet high. The dragon can take to the air if it needs to, but will still be within reach of the party due to its size. The copper dragon will not flee however, even if out matched, and fights until it is slain.

Nezira's Input

Xullibesk doesn't take an opportunity to speak through his thrall during the combat, but if Nezira is present via Majeus, she offers the following during the encounter:

Things are not what they seem, heroes! This dragon is being manipulated by some unseen force, its will is not its own!

Breaking Control

The dragon is under Xullibesk's *dominate monster* ability, and the thullithin is able to control the dragon beyond the spell's normal limitations. A successful DC 18 check is required with *dispel magic* to free the young copper dragon from Xullibesk's control. If the party is able to free the dragon, it slumps to the ground and is unconscious until roused.

Once awoken, the dragon questions the party as to the events that have transpired, and thanks them graciously. It still is infected with cackle fever, and chooses to leave the area to remedy itself before it seeks revenge against the thullithin.



Nezira's Thoughts on the Dragon

A pity that such a noble creature would find itself forced to act against its will. Be on your guard, heroes. Whatever could subjugate such a mind could easily do the same to us.



Obelisk Chamber

After passing through the Hall of Devotion, the party will find itself in a hallway with an intersection that leads east or south (there is a western path, but it's been blocked by a cave in). The obelisk chamber in this area is down the western path. Xullibes's forces haven't opened this particular door yet. It's heavy, but the party can manage to open the door to the chamber (no check needed, but the task does require 1 minute of time).

When the party enters this obelisk chamber, the laughter present from Olidammar's Jest occurs. Read the following aloud to the players:

The first step you take into this circular chamber is greeted with chilling, pervasive laughter that reverberates off the walls and down the corridor.

Save Against Cackle Fever

Each susceptible party member must make a save against cackle fever at this point.

If this is the first time the party discovers an obelisk chamber, refer to the *Initial Discovery* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

If this is the last of the five obelisk chambers the party has discovered, refer to the *Completing Activation* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Obelisk Chamber

If I wanted to pursue a career in comedy, I would have become a bard. I'm afraid I may be of little use here.



Area H: The Hall of Reflection

The thullithin and his forces haven't ventured this deep into Olidammara's Jest, leaving these parts of the temple undisturbed. The area contains the **Hall of Reflection** and an **obelisk chamber**.

Well Lit

No light source is visible for the room, but the area is well lit nonetheless (necessary for the mirror to be effective here). The players can assume a magical light illuminates the area.

Hall of Reflection

The *Hall of Reflection* earns its name from the massive mirror that stands in the middle of the room. The mirror serves two purposes – it presents a puzzle the party must solve in order to enter the obelisk chamber to the south. It also creates *twisted reflections* of any creatures that look upon it, that serve as a defense against intruders. These reflections become apparent immediately when the party first enters the area as they exit the mirror to attack the PCs!

Note: It's necessary for the PCs' reflections to be visible in the mirror in order to create the twisted reflections that challenge them. If for some reason they are invisible or otherwise concealed, the hostile creatures are not generated (refer to *Magic Mirror* for more information).

When the party enters this area, read the following aloud to the players:

The room you've entered is strangely well lit, even though you do not see any light source. The chamber is mostly empty, with the exception of an enormous, 10-ft wide mirror standing at its center, which casts your reflections as you approach. You don't think much of this, until your reflection steps out from the mirror, with a wicked grin on its face!

Hostile creatures: twisted reflections ★★★★★
4 - 5 *twisted reflections** (**Appendix A**) 2,800 – 3,500 XP

*The amount of *twisted reflections* that appear in the room is equal to the party size (one for each PC). These creatures do not begin in the room; they enter as the players arrive and their reflections appear in the mirror (see *Magic Mirror*).

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a very faint aura of evocation magic covering the entirety of the room. The mirror in the middle of the hall emits a very strong aura of necromantic magic. An aura of illusion magic emanates from the open southern door leading to the obelisk chamber (these effects cannot be dispelled).

Magic Mirror

The mirror in this room creates a *twisted reflection* of each humanoid's image that appears upon it (it does not create duplicate animal companions, familiars, and the like). This effect only happens once per creature, regardless of how many times the creature's reflection appears in the mirror. Invisible creatures, or creatures completely concealed (such as covered with a blanket, or crouching behind a shield) are unaffected. When a twisted reflection is created, it enters the room and attacks the creature that it is a reflection of.



While a creature has its twisted reflection in combat, its reflection no longer appears in the mirror.

The mirror is reflective on both of its sides. Though made of glass, the mirror is resilient to damage and does not break or shatter if struck.

Combat

The number of twisted reflections that appear depends on how many party members enter the room (this module assumes 4 to 5). These reflections are generated as the PCs arrive – so if one party member scouts into the room first, only one twisted reflection is created. Each reflection looks exactly like the creature that spawned it, except reversed (so if a PC is right-handed, the reflection is left-handed, etc.)

The reflections attack to the best of their ability – they may look like their PC counterparts, but they're not as diverse in combat. Because they're mindless creations, they fight until they are slain, at which point they vanish in a spray of sand, and the appropriate PC's reflection appears back in the mirror.





Reflected Path

The doors on the southern wall of the Hall of Reflection are open, but the way beyond them is blocked by an unseen force. If party members attempts to head down this corridor towards the obelisk chamber in this area, they find themselves stuck.

When viewed by an observer, the doors appear to open and close as the viewer turns to view the mirror's southern face. So, if a viewer were to stand facing northward, looking at the mirror, the doors appear to be open in the mirror's reflection. As they turn away from it, the doors in the mirror's reflection appear to close. Regardless of what happens in the mirror's reflection, these doors always appear to be open when viewed directly.

The corridor to the south can be accessed when a creature walks backward through the double doors, while watching its reflection do so in the mirror. Once a creature has solved this puzzle, it can enter and exit the area normally.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Solving the Mirror Puzzle

The corridor to the south is blocked, but I feel there's something you're missing. This mirror must serve another purpose, another trick. Let's start there.



Obelisk Chamber

The southern section of the Hall of Reflection leads to another obelisk chamber. Since the thullithin and his minions haven't ventured this deep into Olidammara's Jest yet, this chamber is undisturbed and its door is shut. It's heavy, but the party can manage to open the door to the chamber (no check needed, but the task does require 1 minute of time).

If this is the first time the party discovers an obelisk chamber, refer to the *Initial Discovery* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

If this is the last of the five obelisk chambers the party has discovered, refer to the *Completing Activation* section in **Appendix B: The Obelisks**.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* in this chamber detects a small aura of illusion magic emanating from within one of the coffers.



Always in Fashion

Four coffers entombed in the western obelisk chamber, dust-covered and untouched for ostensibly hundreds of years or more. Inside the coffers are 3,873 silver pieces, 1,029 gold pieces, and four rubies worth 50 gold pieces each.

One coffer also has a fool's cap within it. The cap is of green and red motley, with several points, each studded with bells that jingle as its wearer moves. It is actually a *hat of disguise*, and the bells do not make sound while its power is active.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Obelisk Chamber

I remember being told jokes that start by someone knocking on the door to your establishment or residence. Two firm knocks, actually. I forget how they go, but the gist of it is about not offering you bananas. How droll!



Area I: Eastern Grotto

The dark grotto here isn't used much by the gnolls that inhabit the area, if only in passing as they exit the southern cave at Area J. The gnolls have left a few of their victims' corpses here to rot, attracting a pair of black puddings to feast upon them.

This dark cave is thick with the smell of decay. A layer of moisture and slime covers most of the rocky surfaces from what you can see.

The puddings depend on their blindsight to detect creatures, and are aware of the party as soon as it enters this area. They're not aggressive, but they've been conditioned to think they're getting a meal. If the party spends any more than a couple minutes in the area, they move in to investigate. Otherwise, they remain in the central area of the grotto marked by the combat icon on the area map.

Hostile creatures: black puddings ★★☆☆☆
2 black puddings (MM pg. 241) 2,200 XP

No Light

These areas are unlit. Party members without darkvision will require a light source to see.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* in the eastern area of the grotto detects a small aura of magic emanating from under the mud and debris. The aura does not have a school of magic associated with it.



Combat

If the party moves to investigate the mud and debris, or if they wait too long in the area, the puddings become hostile. They lack any semblance of strategy other than attacking the closest creatures.

While they're not particularly lethal, the black puddings can wreck havoc on the party's equipment. Their acidic bodies can easily destroy a PC's arms and armor (which may force the party either to return to town to re-equip themselves, or to improvise with looted equipment).

Being mindless, the puddings fight until slain, at which point they bubble and burst in a spray of ooze and slime.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

If the party lost weapons or armor during the fight, an alternative to returning to town may be using weapons looted from the gnolls or Xullibesk's thralls. You can also consider allowing a party member proficient with smith's tools to repair some or all of the damage (although this will take several hours).



What Remains...

The far side of this grotto is where the gnolls have piled the corpses of their victims that the thullithin deemed too weak to dominate. The puddings have thoroughly dissolved their remains, with the exception of one wand of the *war mage +1*, which was discarded with the bodies. It's lodged next to a rock in this area, covered in slime.



Nezira's Thoughts on the Eastern Grotto

Through Majeus I can smell death in this cave... but I don't see any corpses. Be on your guard.



Area J: Southern Cave

This large cave is where the majority of the war pack spends their time while not on patrol or sent on raids. A horde of gnolls are here when the party arrives.

When the party enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

This cave is immense – at least from what you can see of it, it's also pitch black. From deeper within, you hear the sounds of movement and occasional fevered laughter.

Hostile creatures: gnoll horde ★★☆☆☆
10 gnolls* (MM pg. 163) 1,750 XP

*Five of these creatures are affected by cackle fever; each gains the action *cackle* as described in the *Cackle Fever* sidebar. The XP value has been adjusted accordingly.

No Light

This area is unlit. Party members without darkvision will require a light source to see.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* in the direction of the secret door detects a very small aura of transmutation magic emanating from behind the cavern wall.



Combat

The gnolls can't be surprised if the party brings a light source into the cave – they'll notice it immediately and prepare to fight. In this instance initiative is rolled normally.

If the party approaches silently without a light source, they have an opportunity to surprise the monsters here. The gnolls aren't expecting visitors (use their passive Perception scores to detect the PCs if they approach in this manner). If they do not detect them, the party gets a surprise round.

Half the gnolls here have been infected with cackle fever, and at least one will choose to cackle each round provided the action is available.

In combat, the gnolls enter their typical blood frenzy which causes them to be vicious and reckless. They fight until slain. Their bodies can be looted for an average of 28 gold pieces each.

\$ Secret Door

A false wall has been constructed here, possibly planned with some other use in mind when Olidammara's Jest was built. It's been made to appear like the earthen cavern wall, although it's grown rusted and porous with age.

A party member with a passive Perception score of 16 or higher notices a faint draft and odor when passing through this area. A successful DC 18 Perception check reveals the seam along the secret door.



The door can be slid open by applying pressure and pushing it aside. A successful DC 15 Investigation check reveals this. There's no penalty for a failed check, but each attempt takes at least 1 minute of handling the door. If the party accesses the hidden area behind it, read the following description aloud:

You could have easily missed this small alcove beyond the cave wall. The area is mostly barren, however.

The only thing of interest in the concealed area is a small leather pouch discarded among the rocks (see *Storing Water*)



Storing Water

The grotto concealed by the secret door had a small pool of water in it at one time, but it's been absorbed by the effect of *dust of dryness*. If the party searches this area, they'll discover a pouch of *dust of dryness* with 1d6 + 3 pinches remaining in it. Also in the pouch is a pellet produced by its effect, containing 15 cubic feet of fresh water.

Nezira's Thoughts on the Southern Cave

This place reeks with the stink of gnolls. Let's not tarry too long here, friends.

Area K: Hidden Pool

The back part of this cavern is home to one of the precious few sources of water in the Vaesmir Badlands, and the last remaining spot where *solemn*sage grows naturally. Its entrance is blocked by a particularly large boulder, wedged precariously against a ridge that keeps it upright.

When the party enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

The cavern's walls come together to form a natural archway, with a large boulder blocking the path to the area on the other side. The boulder certainly looks out of place. In fact, you can see impressions on the ground where it's been dragged through the cave and ultimately propped up into the passage.

When Xullibesck discovered this area, he instructed the gnolls to block it off. They've done a haphazard job at best, and the boulder can be dangerous if the PCs act too rashly.

No Light

This area is unlit. Party members without darkvision will require a light source to see.



Unstable Boulder

The boulder here has been propped up against the ridge leading into the next room. It's top heavy, and can easily topple towards the PCs if disturbed. Even pushing the boulder away is unsafe, as the boulder's shape will cause it to rock forward once pressure is applied.

Detecting the Trap

A party member that succeeds on a DC 15 Investigation check can examine the boulder and identify the danger present. The character understands that too much pressure applied to the boulder will cause it to fall forward. The trap can be overcome by purposefully applying pressure at a distance (such as pushing against it with a polearm), but ranged weapon attacks and cantrips fail to apply enough pressure to jostle it.

Triggering the Trap

If force is applied to the boulder, it loses its stability and falls forward into a 10 foot long by 5 foot wide area in front of it. Creatures in the area may attempt a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being crushed by it, moving to a safe area away from the boulder on a success. Creatures that fail this save suffer 4d8 bludgeoning damage and are pinned beneath the boulder. A pinned creature can use its action to attempt to free itself from the boulder with a successful DC 20 Strength check. Up to three other free creatures can aid this attempt by succeeding on a DC 15 Strength checks. The pinned creature receives a +2 bonus for each successful check made to aid it.

Once the boulder falls, it can easily be climbed over to enter the area behind it, at which point you can read the following aloud to the players:

A pool of standing water occupies the back portion of this room, perhaps linked to some underground spring. It's a welcome sight, given the pervasive dryness in the canyon. Growing along the water's banks is local flora – sprigs budding with small, red flowers.



Solemn Sage

The plant that grows here is solemn sage, a necessary ingredient to the only known medicine for cackle fever. There's plenty of the plant available for the players to treat the infected victims, but gathering enough takes at least 10 minutes worth of work (and requires them to get wet).

Nezira's Thoughts on the Hidden Pool

The plant with the red flowers growing there is solemn sage, and right now it's the most valuable treasure you'll find in Laughter's Gorge. We can use that to treat anyone infected with the shrieks. Gather as much of it as you can!



Return to Area B: Xullibesk Arrives

Once the thullithin realizes what the party is up to, he's forced to return to the ravine to confront them. Xullibesk arrives just as the party activates the final obelisk, much to his dismay. He manages to claim a new thrall along the way, however, Nezira Darkscale (assuming she's available for him to capture).

When the party returns to this area after activating all the obelisks, you can read the following aloud to the players:

As you approach the expanse with the circle of stone pillars, you notice a new figure standing at their center. The creature is vaguely humanoid, if not for pale skin, noseless face, and pitch black eyes. A line of gnolls stands guard in front of him. He opens his mouth to speak, and knot of dark tongues twist forth, like the sound of a nightmares taking form.

If the thullithin captured Nezira, add the following:

Slouched to his side a black-scaled dragonborn female, her eyes distant, and posture telling – she's not in control of her actions.

Hostile creatures: Xullibesk Lu-Pral ★★★★★

Xullibesk Lu-Pral* (Appendix A) 2,900 XP

Nezira Darkscale** (Appendix A) 700 XP

4 gnolls*** (MM pg. 163) 400 XP

*The thullithin Xullibesk is immune to the effect of cackle fever. He has expended his use of *dominate monster* for the day.

**Nezira only arrives if she didn't directly accompany the party (she was captured by Xullibesk while en route to this location). She's actively charmed by Xullibesk, under the effect of the thullithin's *dominate monster* ability.

***These creatures are charmed by Xullibesk.



Combat

Xullibesk is in no mood to parlay any longer; as soon as the party is in sight he instructs the gnolls to charge them. Neither side can be surprised here, given the circumstances

Xullibesk lets the gnolls tie up the party, and instructs Nezira to attack with her *eldritch blast* from afar. He prefers to take his own actions over gaining precise control over hers.

Once the PCs are close enough, the thullithin opens with his *suppress minds* ability hoping to stun as many party members as possible, before moving in to attack in melee.

The thullithin fights confidently at first, but shows his true colors once the tables turn. When he is reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, Xullibesk will attempt to flee.

If slain, the thullithin can be looted for 50 platinum pieces, an ivory signet ring bearing his mark worth 10 gold pieces, and a dark amethyst worth 100 gold pieces. The gnoll bodies can be looted for 36 gold pieces each.



Breaking Control

Since Nezira is not infected with cackle fever, it should be much easier for the party to break the thullithin's *dominate monster* effect on her. By damaging Xullibesk, they can force the mind flaying to make concentration checks to maintain his control over her, freeing her with a failed save. A successful DC 18 check with dispel magic will end the effect on her immediately.

If free, Nezira falls to the ground unconscious until she suffers damage or a creature uses its action to rouse her. Once roused, Nezira joins in the fight against the thullithin immediately.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- If Nezira survives the encounter, she's incredibly grateful. She'll even agree to foot the bill for the magic necessary to raise any party member that died during the fight.
- If Nezira is slain during the encounter, her Raven familiar continues to accompany the party. Majeus caws loudly, keeping them awake at night, and occasionally delivering a peck or two at them until they address the situation. The party should be afforded to raise Nezira with the treasure they collected from the dungeon.

Defeating Xullibesk Lu-Pral ends the narrative arc of *No Laughing Matter*, but the party still has work to do! They'll need to gather the solemsage from Area K if they haven't already, and use the plants to help cure those infected with cackle fever.



Wrapping Up the Dungeon

As things are drawing to an end, refer to this information for anything left to wrap up in the dungeon:

Adventure Hooks

- By activating all the obelisks and defeating Xullibesk Lu- Pral, the players should be able to complete whichever adventure hooks you are using. Once this is done, those infected with cackle fever cease to be contagious.
- If the party discovered the solemsage growing in the hidden pool at Area K, they're able to turn the plant into medicine to cure those infected with cackle fever back at the towns on either end of the Arid Route. The process is slow but sure, and is completed in just over a week's time.
- With Laugher's Gorge secured, the towns on either end of the Arid Route reopen their gates to travelers. The occasional laughter will still generate from the canyon, however.
- Once the joke inscribed at the Rune Henge is completely rewritten, it cannot be invoked again for 100 years. For now, travelers through this part of the world have one less thing to worry about.

Remaining Monsters

- If Xullibesk escapes, his attention turns to securing more thralls before he can enact vengeance upon the party. Without the aid of cackle fever weakening the minds of those in the canyon, he's forced to find powerful leaders and usurp their minions in that fashion.
- It's not likely the gnolls fled the dungeon, but if some did manage to survive they hold no grudge against the PCs. They return to a nomadic existence, moving on to the next war chief to lead them.
- If the party was able to dispel the dominate monster effect on any of the thullithin's thralls (with the exception of Dagnyr), these creatures may become powerful allies of the PCs, (even the troll). Each is grateful for its freedom, and attempts to repay the party with any advice or leads it can in the future. It will be up to you to come up with names and backgrounds for these NPCs!

Experience Points

- You can award each player 1,150 XP for successfully defeating Xullibesk and removing the effect of cackle fever from the laughter generated by Olidammara's Jest. This includes experience points for solving the puzzles necessary to navigate the dungeon.
- If Nezira survived the final encounter, you can award each player 200 XP. The dragonborn warlock becomes a friend of the PCs, and offers them advice and help in the future.
- You can award each player 200 XP for each trap the party successful detects and avoids or disarms.
- If a player had a particularly good joke to activate an obelisk, you may wish to award them bonus experience points at this time (no more than 50 XP).



Appendix A: New Monsters & NPCs

GNOLL CACKLER

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class: 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points: 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws: Con +4, Cha +4

Condition Immunities: frightened

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages: Gnoll

Challenge: 4 (1,100 XP)

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the gnoll takes 14 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The gnoll makes two attacks with its mace, and then uses its Cackle if it can.

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Cackle (Recharge 6). The gnoll creature suffers 5 (1d10) psychic damage and becomes incapacitated for one round in a fit of laughter. Creatures susceptible to cackle fever that can hear this creature must succeed a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, target creatures are infected with cackle fever.

NEZIRA DARKSCALE

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), chaotic good

Armor Class: 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points: 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws: Wis +2, Cha +5

Skills: Arcana +3, History +3, Religion +3

Damage Resistances acid

Condition Immunities disease (from *periapt of health*)

Senses: passive Perception 12

Languages: Common, Draconic

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Voice of the Chain Master. Nezira can communicate telepathically with her familiar, and perceive through her familiar's senses as long as it is on the same plane of existence as she is. While perceiving through her familiar's senses, she can also speak through her familiar in her own voice, even though it is normally incapable of speech.

Spider Climb (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Nezira can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check. This ability lasts until Nezira's concentration is broken, or for up to 1 hour.

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack. +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage when held in two hands.

Eldritch Blast. Ranged Spell Attack. +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) force damage. Nezira makes this attack twice. She can target the same or different target with each attack. She makes a separate attack roll for each attack.

Acid Breath (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Nezira exhales acid in a 30 foot long line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Nezira magically turns invisible until she attacks, until her concentration is broken, or up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Nezira wears or carries is invisible with her.

Equipment

Periapt of Health. While wearing this magical necklace, Nezira is immune to contracting any disease. The effects of disease Nezira may have already contracted is suppressed while this is worn.



SAND TROLL*Large giant, neutral evil***Armor Class:** 14 (natural armor)**Hit Points:** 84 (8d10 + 40)**Speed:** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	8 (-2)

Skills: Perception +1**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11**Languages:** Giant**Challenge:** 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

Sand Walk. The troll can move across desert surfaces, including deep sand, without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of sand doesn't cost it extra movement.

Actions

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

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

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

Sand trolls are cousins to regular trolls, although they make their homes in much hotter and dryer climates. As a result, the troll's regenerative ability is stifled by exposure to cold elements as opposed to fire. A sand troll looks like a normal troll, although they have ruddy, calcified skin ranging in color from yellow to umber. Sand trolls are also hairless.

TWISTED REFLECTION*Construct (size varies), unaligned***Armor Class:** 15 (natural armor)**Hit Points:** 52 (7d8 + 21)**Speed:** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Immunities: necrotic, poison**Condition Immunities:** charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned**Senses:** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 16**Languages:** understands and speaks the languages of the creature its image is a reflection of.**Challenge:** 3 (700 XP)

Reflection. The twisted reflection looks identical to a creature it is a reflection of; although reversed. A creature can tell the difference between a twisted reflection and the creature it is a reflection of with a successful DC 15 Insight check. The twisted reflection is the same size as the creature it is a reflection of.

Magic Resistance. The twisted reflection has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Otherworldly Perception. The twisted reflection can sense the presence of the creature it is a reflection of so long as that creature is within 30 feet of it. It can pinpoint such a creature that is moving, even if the creature is invisible or on the Ethereal plane.

Actions

Multiattack. The twisted reflection makes two attacks.

Reflected Weapon. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) damage. This damage is of the same type of the primary melee or ranged weapon the creature the twisted reflection is a reflection of carries.

Cantrip. The twisted reflection uses a cantrip known by the creature it is a reflection of.

Twisted reflections are the reflected images of humanoid given form through necromatic magic. A twisted reflection that is borne into the world has the singular purpose of hunting down the creature it bears the image of. If a twisted reflection is destroyed, it vanishes in a spray of sand and to the sound of glass breaking.



XULLIBESK LU-PRAL

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class: 16 (chain shirt)

Hit Points: 90 (15d8 + 22)

Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws: Dex +5, Int +7, Cha +6

Damage Immunities: psychic

Skills: Arcana +3, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6

Senses: darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages: Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge: 7 (2,900 XP)

Thrall Bodyguards. While within 5 feet of a target he has charmed, attacks against Xullibesk have disadvantage.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Xullibesk's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: detect thoughts

3/day each: *charm person*, *sending*

1/day each: *dominate monster*, *modify memory*

Actions

Mind Touch. Melee Spell Attack. +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be charmed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Consume Thoughts. Melee Spell Attack. +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one human target charmed or stunned by Xullibesk. *Hit:* The target takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the thullithin kills the target by completely removing its ability to think.

Suppress Minds (Recharge 5-6). Xullibesk magically contacts the minds of those within 30-feet of him. Each creature of his choice in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Thullithi are strange, hideous creatures, that possess the ability to control the minds of others by as much as a simple touch or thought. The thoughts of other creatures devoured by these menacing creatures to fuel this dark power.

A thullithin appears roughly humanoid, though they are slightly taller and more gaunt than humans. Their skin pales in color, rubbery and cold to touch. A thullithin's face heralds its aberrant origins: it lacks a nose and its eyes are black and pupiless. When one speaks, a nest of tongues pour forth from its mouth, producing only words of utter horror.

Thullithi are noted isolationists, striking out on their own to use their ability to warp the minds of others to attain as much wealth and power as possible. It is often said, behind every powerful sovereign is a thullithin pulling the strings, or one looking to do so.



Appendix B: The Obelisks

Five obelisks reside within the remains of Olidammara's Jest, each keyed to a separate pillar in the Rune Henge.

Initial Discovery

The first time the party discovers an obelisk, you can read the following aloud to the players:

Inside this circular room is a stone obelisk, black and glossy and just shy of 10 feet tall. Just above its plinth, carved into the obelisk, is the image of a laughing mask, with an inscription beneath it. It reads, "Tell me a joke."

NOTE: If you've substituted a different deity for Olidammara, describe that deity's holy symbol here instead of the laughing mask.

Each obelisk has the same description and appearance. Party members that pass a DC 10 Religion check identify the holy symbol and its connotation. (You may wish to make this more or less difficult if you're using a different deity).

Each party member can agree the inscription reads "Tell me a joke," although the inscription appears to each character in its native language.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a very strong aura of magic emanating from any obelisk. The aura seeming to be from several schools of magic, including abjuration, transmutation, evocation, illusion, and divination (these effects cannot be dispelled).

Cracking a Joke

Each obelisk asks for a joke from the party for it to be "activated." It's up to you as Game Master to decide whether or not a given joke suffices (see below). If the joke requires interaction from a participant (such as a "knock-knock" joke) the inscription changes in response (in such a case to say "who's there?")

The obelisks represent a rare opportunity for role-playing. There's no skill check required here, nor are there any hard and fast requirements – although you may wish to customize the experience. For instance, if you don't think the joke a player says is funny, the inscription may change to read "Tell me a joke... that's funny." Or, you might change the requisite joke to something more specific like "Tell me a joke about dwarves." In general, if they come up with something that makes you laugh, you should definitely allow them to succeed.

If the party is having a hard time coming up with a joke, you can instead allow the players to attempt a DC 14 Charisma check to come up with a joke to tell the obelisk.

Success

When the party submits a joke you feel satisfies the conditions asked for, you can read the following aloud to the players:

The obelisk shimmers for a moment. The inscription beneath the image carved above the plinth vanishes. For a moment, you each hear a disembodied voice in your head:

"Ha! That's a good one. Maybe I could use it somewhere..."

Once activated, the inscription does not return for 100 years.

Effect of Activating the Obelisks

Each time the party succeeds at "activating" an obelisk with a joke of their choosing, the writing on one of the pillars in the Rune Henge changes to reflect their new joke. The markings are still mostly unintelligible, but they are noticeably different. Anyone studying the changes and succeeding on the skill check discerns that parts of the jokes they offered the obelisks are now embedded on the stone pillars.

When the party activates one or more obelisks and passes back through the Rune Henge at Area B, you can read the following aloud to the players:

You immediately notice something is different here. The markings on one of the earthen pillars have changed. They still consist of a mishmash of glyphs from various alphabets and remain mostly unintelligible, but they're very obviously arranged in different sizes and positions. Perhaps this is related to the obelisk you just encountered?

Completing Activation

Once all five of the obelisks are activated, the Rune Henge has been completely "rewritten," and the haunting laughter occasionally generated by Olidammara's Jest no longer carries cackle fever with it, and those with cackle fever are no longer contagious.

Activating all five obelisks forces Xullibesk to return to the Rune Henge to confront the party (see **Return to Area B**). He's aware of their presence in the dungeon through his telepathic link with his thralls, but otherwise the thullithin isn't present until this condition is met.

If Nezira Darkscale has joined the party via her raven familiar Majeus, read the following aloud to the players when they activate the fifth obelisk:

The raven Majeus caws, and Nezira's voice fills the room.

"Well done! And perfect timing. I'm arriving towards your location now. I can see the henge in the middle of the canyon's ravine and the monoliths here seem to be taking... taking... WHAT IS THAT? By all the great old ones, RUN! I must... I must... I must... obey..."

This should clue in the players that the warlock has recently been dominated by the thullithin!



OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc (“Wizards”). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) “Contributors” means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) “Derivative Material” means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) “Distribute” means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) “Open Game Content” means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) “Product Identity” means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) “Trademark” means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) “Use”, “Used” or “Using” means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) “You” or “Your” means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, nonexclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder’s name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.



8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a
Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document 5.0
Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

No Laughing Matter
Copyright © 2016 Dan Coleman

END OF LICENSE

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, etc.), dialogue, plots, storylines, characters, artworks, and trade dress. (Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content are not included in this declaration.)

Open Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity (see above), the game mechanics of this Dungeons on Demand game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

