



5E THAT WHICH LURKS BENEATH

FIFTH EDITION COMPATIBLE

Journey beneath the waves and battle with a cosmic horror in
this 7th-level adventure for the world's greatest roleplaying

That Which Lurks Beneath

That Which Lurks Beneath is intended for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 7. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach approximately halfway to 8th-level. An item of immense power has been located and the adventurers must journey underwater to claim it. This campaign takes place in Arden, although it can be set in your own world. Any party composition should be able to finish the adventure with intelligent play.

Background

Long ago, before the oceans receded, a great temple was built to worship a creature of immense power, an aboleth. When the oceans receded, the creature and many of its servants were trapped in the depths of the temple, unable to escape back into the open water. In the centuries since, a group of explorers located the top of the temple. Appearing to be nothing more than a ruin on a small island, it is in fact the entry point to a vast underground and underwater complex. As they explored further, many fell under the sway of the aboleth. Others were warped by the alien energies that filled the place. Now, the top of the temple is dominated by sahuagin and their chuul who worship the strange alien obelisk that can be found there. Beneath this, the explorers, driven mad and warped beyond recognition worship at the water's edge, seeking ways to get closer to their abberant master. Deeper still beneath the water lies the long forgotten temple itself, and inside, the aboleth and the treasure it guards, the Crown of the Deep.

Adventure Hooks

Treasure Lost and Now Found. The characters heard a story about a long lost temple with a powerful treasure inside. Seeking it out, they find themselves on a small island at the edge of the sea.

A Map to Follow. The characters came into possession of an ancient map detailing a temple near the edge of the sea that supposedly contains an item of great power. Now, they find themselves pulling ashore on a small island.

Called From the Deep. The characters have been having troubled dreams as of late. They see an alien form swimming in a cage begging for release. When they awake, they somehow know where to go, an island near the edge of the sea.

The Island Ruins

These ruins were once the top of the temple. The obelisk in the center stood as a beacon of power. Now, all that remains are three corner rooms and the obelisk itself.

1. The Obelisk

What appears to be a small stone fort stands here. Its construction seems both alien and ancient. Rising high above it in the center is an obelisk covered in strange glyphs. Chanting can be heard inside the courtyard.

The characters begin at the western edge of the map. The walls here are 30 ft. high. The obelisk in the center is 80 ft. tall.

Encounter: Alien Worship. There are six **sahuagin** and two **chuul** here worshipping the obelisk. They are facing away from the character when they approach and have disadvantage on their perception checks to notice them as they're wholly focused on the obelisk. They're fanatics and will fight to the death to protect their object of worship.

2. Ruined Barracks

This room contains the remains of what appear to be makeshift beds. A small desk rests against one of the walls.

The room was used as living quarters for the explorers who originally found this place. The desk contains a journal written by one of them. It details their excavations and the strange effect the obelisk is having on them. The person writing the journal fears he's losing his mind... and possibly his humanity.

3. Ruined Guard Tower

This collapsed structure probably once served as a guard tower. Inside, racks of unused weapons rest against the wall.

Treasure: Tools for the Job. The characters find one light crossbow, one heavy crossbow, six javelins, and 40 crossbow bolts.



4. Ruined Study

This small chamber appears to have been an office or study of some kind. A desk sits against the northeast corner of the room.

There is another journal here detailing more of the expedition. This one indicates that they found a secret door inside one of the structures that led deeper underground. The notes after this become strange and unintelligible.

Secret Door: Moldy Wall. There is a secret door in the southeastern corner of this room. It can be spotted with a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check and opened with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. When opened, the smell of mold and dampness is overwhelming.

The Underground Ruins

This area was once the upper levels of the temple. Now, it's full of mutated explorers warped by the alien energy present here. The easternmost room is partially flooded and contains stairs beneath the water leading further down.

General Features

Ceilings. The ceilings are made of moldy stone and rise 10 ft. above the floor.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of cracked tiled stone while the walls are made of a cobbled granite.

Doors. The doors are made of an unknown material similar to wood in composition, but with the appearance of stone.

Lighting. Small sconces line the walls each with a *continual flame* spell cast upon them

Unusual Features. The entire substructure here smells of mold and dampness. The floors are slick, and anyone who takes the dash action must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

Aberrant Subtype. Some creatures will have the aberrant subtype. This is indicated by having the word "aberrant" before their name. Aberrant creatures gain the following features.

- Their creature type becomes Aberration.
- They can breath underwater.
- They gain a swim speed equal to their normal speed.
- They make Wisdom saving throws with disadvantage.

1. Moldy Entryway

This room is mostly empty save for some old rusted dungeoneering equipment resting against the far wall. To the east, a door stands open slightly outward.

Trap: Acid Flask. There is a container full of acid balanced precariously above the door. When a character walks through the door, they need to make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw taking 2d10 acid damage on a failure or half as much on a success.

2. Moldy Barracks

This room is covered in filth. What appear to be bedrolls lie scattered about. Six hulking figures can be seen milling about.

Encounter: Mutated Explorers. There are six **aberrant thugs** in this room. They attack anyone they see who isn't an aberration.

3. Cleansing Pool

The center of this room is dominated by a large glowing pool of green liquid.

Trap: Acid Bath. The pool is full of acid. Anyone who touches it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw taking 4d10 acid damage on a failure and half as much on a success.

Treasure: Magic Ring. There is a *ring of acid resistance* at the bottom of the pool. It can be spotted with a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.



4. Chamber of Worship

This large room is half flooded. Against the eastern wall, a statue can be seen that resembles an inhuman figure with tentacles where its mouth should be.

There is a submerged stairwell in this room that leads down into a wide open underwater chamber. This is how the characters must proceed. The water here is 10 ft. deep.

Encounter: An Alien Beast. There is an **aberrant chimera** in this chamber hiding under the water in the northeast corner of the room. It uses the **chimera** stat block (as well as the aberrant features) but with the following changes.

- Its breath weapon deals acid damage instead of fire.
- Any creature that can see the aberrant chimera when it starts its turn must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or else any attacks they make that turn are at disadvantage as the alien energies of the creature pull at their mind.

Treasure: A King's Weapon. The statue holds a *trident of fish command*.

5. Storage Chamber

Numerous crates and tools litter this room. Alcoves to the east and west contain various cloaks, amulets, and hats.

Treasure: Underwater Gear. There are a number of *caps of waterbreathing* here equal to the number of characters. There are also an equal number of amulets with the *continual flame* spell cast on them.

6. High Priest's Chambers

This room looks to have once been an opulent bedchamber, but it has fallen into complete disarray. Moving about beneath what remains of the bed is what appears to be a pile of flesh.

Encounter: Madness Incarnate. There is a **gibbering moulder** in this room. It was once the leader of the expedition, but remaining down here long enough turned him into an aberration. It attacks the characters as soon as they enter and pursues them if they flee.

The Submerged Chamber

This large underwater chamber was once full of worshippers waiting for a chance to see the almighty aboleth. Now, all that remains of the grand entrance to the temple are broken pillars and a single story ruin. Inside numerous aquatic creatures remain.

General Features

Ceilings. The ceilings are made of moldy stone and rise 30 ft. above the floor.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of cracked tiled stone while the walls are made of a cobbled granite.

Doors. The doors are made of an unknown material similar to wood in composition, but with the appearance of stone.

Lighting. The area is completely dark.

Unusual Features. The entire area is submerged underwater.

1. Sunken Hallway

There are five sets of doors leading out of this room. Above, a huge shark can be seen swimming.

Encounter: Shark Attack. There is a **giant shark** swimming near the ceiling of this room. It is very territorial and will attack anything that enters.

2. Sunken Great Hall

This large room appears to have once been a gathering place of some kind. There are currently two large merfolk-like creatures and two large sharks swimming about.

Encounter: Mer sharks! There are two **merrow** and two **hunter sharks** in this room. The merrow use the hunter sharks like attack dogs. They draw in a target with their harpoon and then let the sharks feast on it. The merrow won't fight to the death and will flee if able when they reach 15 hp or less. The sharks will enter a blood frenzy once combat begins and will not flee regardless of how hurt they are.



3. Sunken Quarters

This appears to have been living quarters of some kind. The remains of a desk and a bed can be seen against the wall.

Treasure: Keys to the Kingdom. There is a silver key in the shape of an octopus in the desk. It can be located with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. It unlocks the door to area 5.

4. Sunken Study

This room contains two large desks and shelving on which the remains of ancient scrolls sit. Above, a huge shark can be seen swimming.

Encounter: Shark in the Study. There is a **giant shark** swimming near the ceiling of this room. It is very territorial and will attack anything that enters.

5. Temple Entrance

A set of stone stairs lead deeper underground. They appear to go on about 60 ft.

Following these stairs leads the characters down to the temple below.



The Forgotten Temple

This is the bottom level of the ancient temple complex. This is where the most devote worshippers were allowed to go and seek an audience with the great and powerful aboleth. Now, it contains the aboleth's enslaved bodyguards who will die to protect their master.

General Features

Ceilings. The ceilings are made of moldy stone and rise 30 ft. above the floor unless otherwise specified.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of cracked tiled stone while the walls are made of a cobbled granite.

Doors. The doors are made of an unknown material similar to wood in composition, but with the appearance of stone.

Lighting. The area is completely dark.

Unusual Features. The entire area is submerged underwater.

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- They can breath underwater.
- They gain a swim speed equal to their normal speed.
- They make Wisdom saving throws with disadvantage.

1. Antechamber

The massive chamber contains a bed of coral delicately carved along with two large statues on an elevated platform. Ahead, a barred gate blocks access to an ornate door. Milling about the chamber are two large crustacean-like monsters and two large merfolk. What appear to be slightly translucent humanoid can be seen performing menial tasks.

Encounter: An Army of Enslaved. There are two **chuul**, two **merrow**, and four **aberrant commoners** in this room. The chuul try to circle around the characters while the merrow try to drag them in with their harpoons. The commoners try to position themselves as shields between the characters and the merrow.

Obstacle: Missing Keys. The barred gate cannot be opened, lifted, or otherwise circumvented. Each of the elevated statues has a keyhole in it. If the characters find the keys and turn them at the same time, the bars slide into the ground allowing access to the door.



2. Western Chamber

This chamber contains four alcoves, each of which contains a statue of a warrior. To the south, a door can be seen.

Encounter: Men of Purpose. The statues on the west wall are actually kelp covered **aberrant veterans**. They wait until the characters move towards the southern door, then they attack. They're mindless slaves of the aboleth so they fight to the death.

Treasure: An Outsider's Relic. There is a *cloak of the manta ray* on the statue on the eastern wall.

3. Hall of Pillars

Seven large pillars dominate the center of this room. An alcove can be seen to the south down a flight of stairs.

Encounter: Water Snake. There is a **giant constrictor snake** coiled around the top of the middle pillar. It attacks as soon as someone moves beneath it.

Treasure: The First Key. In the alcove to the south is a small onyx chest. Inside is a key in the shape of a tentacle.

4. Eastern Chamber

A large pillar dominates the center of this chamber. On the southern side, a large face is carved into the stone.

Trap: Sunken Maiden. The face is part of a trap. When someone tries to open the door, if they don't have an innate swimming speed, the mouth of the face opens and they are pulled back into it. Inside, sharp spikes pierce the body of whoever is pulled in. They must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw to resist the pull of the trap taking 4d10 piercing damage on a failure.

5. Hall of Sand

A stone platform runs from north to south in this chamber. On either side, beds of sand can be seen.

Encounter: Pincer Attack. There are two **giant sharks** hiding in the sand. They wait for a character to move between them, then they rise and attack.

6. Shrine

This small room contains an onyx chest sitting on a raised platform.

Treasure: The Second Key. Inside the small onyx chest is a key in the shape of a tentacle.

7. The Inner Sanctum

This chamber is by far the largest so far. The ceilings rise up nearly 60 ft. and the center of the room dips 5 ft. down to a lower level. Swimming in the center of the chamber is a large, bloated, tentacled stingray type creature.

Encounter: The Aboleth. The creature is an **aboleth**. It is surrounded by a dozen **aberrant commoners**. They rush forward to try to shield their master from harm. The aboleth is incredibly smart and fights accordingly. It determines which character is least likely to resist enslavement and tries to overpower their mind with its *enslave* ability. It then targets the weakest remaining character in an attempt to even the odds. If injured, it will use its *physic drain* legendary action on one of its aberrant commoner slaves and to heal. The aboleth does not wish to die. If the fight goes poorly for it, it will telepathically speak with the characters and try to make a bargain. In exchange for its freedom it will give them anything they desire. It's lying, of course, and will turn on the characters the first chance it gets. If the characters manage to get it to the surface and into the ocean, it insults them, calling them fools, before fleeing into the deep ocean.



8. Collapsed Reliquary

This small chamber once held great treasures judging by the murals on the wall. Most of what was in here was destroyed when the ceiling partially caved in, but one ornate chest still remains untouched in the center of the room.

Treasure: The Fabled Crown. The chest is unlocked and contains the *crown of the deep*.

Crown of the Deep Wonderous item, rare (requires attunement)_ This diadem is shaped like multiple interlocking tentacles with a dark onyx gem at the front. Once attuned to it you gain the following traits.

- Your creature type becomes Aberration.
- You can breath underwater.
- You gain a swim speed equal to your normal speed.
- You make Wisdom saving throws with disadvantage.

The crown has 7 charges and regains 1d6+1 charges each dawn. You can spend the charges to cast the spells below. The save DC is 14.

- 1 Charge: *charm person, color spray, command*
- 3 Charges: *detect thoughts, hold person*
- 5 Charges: *hypnotic pattern*

Aftermath

With the aboleth dead, anyone who was enslaved by it regains control of their minds. These people will need help getting back to the surface. If they weren't dealt with, the merrow, sharks, and so on might prove to be an obstacle in this task.



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