Starts at: Temple of Kor

Ends at: halwa

**Important NPC’s:**

**al-Nassr Khatri:**

**Orana dal-Salaam**: her face is only partially visible, curling hair falling down. She is wearing the most beautiful blue garments, flowing behind her. Her arms filled with golden bracelets adorned with many different gems. She is an ethoist of Selan, goddess of beauty, and she was sent to ask you for help.

**Orim Sa’ri Haimii**: A suspicious drow elf. He has a skin black as night, and silver hair. He wears dark blue robes, complementing his skin, and beautiful crystal bracelets. A master of whispers, and collector of unusual artefacts. He will not disclose his information unless he gets something for it in return (mostly gold). He is hard to bargain with, but his artefacts are always real, just as the information he gathers.

**Other NPC’s:**

Caliph Haytha al-Ry: the lord of Halwa. A man of short demeanor and focus on trade to make his city grander. He has a square face, with long white hair and dark blue eyes. He wears colourful robes, and wields a beautifully gem-adorned scimitar on his belt.

**Bektakats Khimaksa:**

**Locations in Halwa:**

The Guildhall: an ornate stone-walled building, decorated with finely carved blue geometric details. It contains a large meeting hall and several smaller rooms, shared amongst local merchant guilds. The guild hall handles different working guilds, merchant stands, permissions, … Any request must go through one of the receptionists.

Al-Mee’s armaments: the workshop of a female dwarf weaponsmith named Hala al-Mee, known for her intricate scimitars.

The Fool and Flask: a heroic adventurer’s inn, kept by a bronze dragonborne named Ninaba. Her scales make her seem like a golden statue.

The underground market: A shady underground hall, with skeevy types everywhere. The only natural light here flows in from windows at the top, and is mostly lit by torches on the walls. In contrast with the rich scents of above, almost no scent lingers here, and if any, it’s mostly likely from a sewer. Despite its description, the underground market is still visited by many, and has its own guards. Getting caught stealing here means losing your hands.

The Guildhall: an ornate stone-walled building, decorated with finely carved blue geometric details. It contains a large meeting hall and several smaller rooms, shared amongst local merchant guilds.

**Stores:**

**General goods:** Can be collected all over the marketplace.

**Potions:** Marketplace, in Borodin’s Potion Galore. As with everything, haggle to get better prices.   
Borodin is a red fire genasi in black-brown robes, accentuating his bright red color.   
Potions for sale:

* Oil of slipperiness: 100-75G: This sticky black unguent is thick and heavy in the container, but it flows quickly when poured. The oil can cover an up to Medium creature, along with al its equipment. Applying it takes 10 minutes, and gives the benefits of a freedom of movement spell for 8 hours.   
  Alternatively, pour it on the ground, where it covers a 10ft square, duplicating the effect of a *grease* spell in that area for 8 hours.   
  *Freedom of movement:*  Movement is unaffected by difficult terrain, magic can’t reduce your speed, nor cause you to be paralyzed or restrained. You can also spend 5ft of movement to automatically escape from nonmagical restraints, such as manacles or a grapple. In addition, being underwater imposes no penalties on movement or attacks.

*Grease:* Terrain becomes difficult, in addition: when the grease appears, or if in enemy enters the area or ends its turn there, it must make a Dex Saving Throw or fall prone.

* Philter of Love: 200-150G: A rose-hued, effervescent liquid in a heart-shaped bottle. It contains one easy-to-miss bubble shaped like a heart. The next time you see a creature within 10 minutes after drinking this philter, you become charmed by that creature for 1 hour. If the creature is of a species and gender you are normally attracted to, you regard it as your true love while you are charmed.
* Potion of Climbing: 100-75G for 10 charges: The potion is separated into brown, silver and gray layers, resembling bands of stone. When you drink this potion, you gain a climbing speed equal to walking speed, as well as advantage an Athletics for climbing, both for 1 hour.
* Potion of Bravery: 100-75G for 5 charges: This blue potion moves around in its bottle. For 1 hour after drinking it, you gain 6 temp hit points. You cannot gain this effect within the hour.
* Potion of deserts heat resistance 25G : In addition to granting fire resistance for an hour, it protects against the glaring heat effects of the sun in the deserts and very heated locations for the rest of the day. It looks like the brightest water possible, and is cold when drinking it.

**Al-Mee’s armaments:** the armors as described in the PHB, for the same fair prices. Other special armors are for sale:

* Glamoured Armor: armor+400G cost Strangely, in between all the sets of armor, a few nice robes and garments, seemingly looking as just normal clothes. These are Glamoured Armor, infused by the blood of Ghul-kin. You can use a bonus action to speak the armor's command word and cause the armor to assume the appearance of a normal set of clothing or some other kind of armor. You decide what it looks like, including color, style, and accessories, but the armor retains its normal bulk and weight. The illusory appearance lasts until you use this property again or remove the armor.

**Underground market:**

* A bulky minotaur sells many different weapons here. A selection of items:  
  Trident of Lightning
* A slender looking genasi offers to enchant some of their items, for some coin, of course. She can eerily sniff out interesting items to enchant. Insulting the owner in some way will make her also curse them on top. Enchantable items:   
  Shaya’s fan: 200G:Wind fan: While holding this fan, you can use an action to cast the gust of wind spell (save DC 13) from it. Once usec, the fan shouldn’t be used again until the next dawn. Each time it is used again before then, it has a cumulative 20% chance of not working andtearing into useless, nonmagical tatters.

Any weapon, except the glaive: 150G: Charge weapon with one d2 charges. Speaking the command word, the weapon has +1 to attack and damage rolls for 1 minute. The weapon is considered magical during this duration.

Daggers and other small weapons: 50G: Elementally charged: Charge weapons with 4 charges. As a bonus action, charge your weapon with one of the four elements, each offering another another effect. Each element can only be chosen once, and the effects cannot be stacked.   
Wind adds +2 to attack for the next attack.  
Fire adds +2 fire damage on the next hit.  
Water heals you for 1d6 on the next hit.  
Earth knocks the enemy prone on the next hit.

Any piece of clothing: Elemental resistance: 50g: For one d4 charges, you can use your reaction to give yourself resistance to a magical attack, except for force damage.

* A gnome with a devilish grin sells different artefacts, most pertaining to luck

All or nothing coin: a happy mask on one side, and a sad mask on the other. 60G: once per day, you can use this coin for any ability check, saving throw or attack roll. Happy: critical success, Sad: critical failure.  
(curse: fails really, really, really fail hard)

Coin of certainty: this coin is indistuingishable to any other coin, but it will always fall on heads. Curse: this only happens in situations where you want to sell this coin. Otherwise, it works as a normal coin. Costs 20G  
Spinning coin: this coin is indistinguishable to any other coin, but it will always fall on its side.

***Story***

The group sleeps in the Temple of Kor. After Shaya and Sirona have received the letter from their father, Shaya is once again haunted by visions.   
Description for the vision: You feel awake, but you are surrounded by pure darkness. You can blink your eyes, but no difference is visible. Slowly, the sight of a stone archway appears. You stand right in front of it. Light slowly reappears. You are in a circular hall, or more like a dome. The image of the archway is mirrored in the walls, a thousandfold times. In the corner of your eye, you manage to see a huge shadowed beaing disappear into a hallway. But smaller black creatures emerge from the shadows of the hall, slowly crawling towards you. As they come closer, the shadows of these creatures crawl upon you. You can feel your skin, it’s as if it is dissolving. More and more shadows cover you, yet you cannot move. Light disappears again as shadows cover your eyes and are left with nothing but blackness.

It is expected that the group continues to Halwa for the information to search for the Mindflayer.   
They can do some new shopping if the group so desires. When inquiring about the passage to Huzuz, many people would disadvice it, since past the oasis town of Zarif, a Roc has been spotted, and the group could best travel with the guarded caravan in a couple of days.

In the city library, it is fairly hard to find any information on Mind Flayers. Here as well, are multiple scorched books and scrolls to be found. Again, ancient Midani texts are rare and damaged if found, rendered unreadable by anyone there. If asked if anyone here knows any of the languages on Kor’s letter, the gnome librarian will tell that he recognizes few of the words written on there, as it is in gnomish.

Despite the size of the library, there are no texts about the Underdark of Zakhara. Only mentions of caverns in the mountains, and a complex around the northern tip of the Vestige of Brass. There are some scrolls on Mind flayers to be found here (roll d20 on investigation, advantage if anyone else is helping, or time invested in the library. If a fifteen is rolled, they can still invest extra hours to find more info. Any roll still contains a search effort that cost an hour). For anything found here, there is more information to be found in Huzuz.   
1: A scroll pertaining to the conspiracy theory about Mind Flayers, how the current Great Caliph is a Mind Flayer, and how the Mind Flayers live underground. The way it is written feels like it does not contain any useful information.

5-10 or 1h: Psionic Commanders  
11-12 or +1h: +Hive Mind Colonies  
13-14 or +1h: + Hunger of the Mind  
15-16 or +1h: + Ceremorphosis  
17-18 or +1h: + Renegade Illithids  
19-20 or +1h: + Alhoon  
20+ or +1h: + Arcane Temptation  
Natural 20 or +1h: +Existential Fear and Dreadful Deliverance

It is also possible to find some papers about the ajami god Velsharoon, or with a religion check.  
1: Velsharoon was a jester at the court of the Grand Caliph, some 500 years ago. He died peacefully.  
5-14: or 2h: Velsharoon was a necromancer god from Faerûn.  
15-18 or +2h: Velsharoon was engulfed in the Azure Flames and died.  
19-20 or +2h: Velsharoon had a domain in Dweomerheart, part of the plane of Elysium.  
20+ or +1h: Velsharoon’s domain is called Death’s Embrace.  
natural 20 or +1h: Velsharoon had a flirtuatious relationship with Shar.

After expending X amount of time, a beautiful lady will approach those in the library. Her face only partially visible, curling hair falling down. She is wearing the most beautiful blue garments, flowing behind her. Her arms filled with golden bracelets adorned with many different gems. She introduces herself as **Orana dal-Salaam**.

She is an ethoist of Selan, goddess of beauty, and she was sent grant you help, as well as ask for help. She will ask them to gather the whole group and come to the temple of Selan in Halwa by nightfall, when the full moon shines. If the party goes to the temple earlier, then they are confronted by a closed gate, as well as many citizens of many different standings waiting. They are waiting for nightfall, for the gates to open and see the procession of the Diviner of Medina-Al-Afyal, **Bektakats Khimaksa.** They are one of the few people gifted with the power of precognition, and is deemed one of the greatest sorcerers of Zakhara, and has committed themself to Selan, the goddess of beauty.

The temple of Selan is combined into the grand palace of Halwa, in the south. A beautiful garden with small ponds leads in front of it. Palm trees rich with coconuts adorn the greens, as well as flowers of all colors, scenting the place with a pleasant rose smell. The palace itself is a grand reinforced sandstone building, with blue marbling decorating the walls and rooftiles. Large windows adorn the walls, allowing for a large amount of light to penetrate the sizeable building.

At night, the moonlight reflects on the ponds in a magical manner, refracting and lighting up the gardens as if it was lighted by bright lights. Many veiled people, from many races and statures, walk into the temple. If approached, they will tell them to gather in the hall, where they will be collected by Orana herself.

Many of the citizens have gathered in the gardens to see the beautiful procession, but only the veiled people are allowed inside, as well as our party. Inside, they are asked to give their weapons away at the armorer, and they can be recollected when leaving. This is, apart from a temple for Selan, also a diplomatic centre, and weapons are barred for everyone.

The inside of the building is lavishly decorated, with many different tapestries adorning the floors and walls. There are large cushioned benches where one can rest, some already occupied by ethoists.  
One certain figure catches your eyes, as they are being guided inside. It is a tall figure, robed in a dark-reddish dress, with the sheens and feet visible. Behind the person flows a thin cape, like a scarf in the wind, which shines with the light of the moon trickling inside. As you watch them, their face gazes towards you for a split second. Inside the headscarf you catch the glimpse of two bright white eyes on a black face, with a golden diadem over their eyebrows. Only with a perception of over 18 they can see that the face was completely featureless apart from that description.

The person is guarded by a couple of strong looking, stern genasi guards, one of each element.  
Asking around about the person will inform them that the figure is the Diviner of Selan, tasked with the heavy burden of the future.

A while after the procession of many different figures, the group is gathered by Orana. She is the lead-priestess of this temple.

*Have you enjoyed the procession? Excuse me for my short-introduction before, I, Orana, am the head-priestess of this temple. The angelic diviner of Medina -Al-Afyal has told us to gather you here, and ask your help. But first, I must tell you a story.*

*It is believed that Selan has many different incarnations. Some might know her as Selûne, as people in the north do. The compassionate Hathor or Freyja.*

*In the beginning of time, the Two-faced Goddess was created out of the great nothing. They complemented each other, and brought order out of the chaos. They infused life in the heavenly bodies and this world, and bore Jisan. This universe was darkened by the hair and welcoming embrace of the Dark side, and illuminated by the cool radiant face of the light side. However, there was no fire or heat on any of the bodies. Jisan asked the Two-Faced Goddess for warmth. It is then that the two heads were divided, being of two minds on whether they should let there be more life on the worlds or not. It is then that the Two-Faced Godess was split in twine, and they started a never-ending struggle. Out of their war came many of the different first gods, and in a moment of advantage, she reached out the universe into the plane of fire, and brought forth the fragment of ever-living flame, the sun, to give warmth to her creation, an act that has greatly angered the dark-side of Sisters-who-were-One. As the Sisters fought, their essences combined and brought forth magic.*

*The light side of the Two-Faced Godess is who we worship. We know her as Selan, the zenith of beauty. She has many different names, such as Selûne, which you probably already know. Others know her as Hathor, Luna, Freyja, … Many different names, but all know of her compassion. But as the moon shines bright and illuminates everything it touches, so does the moon have its dark side.*

*The twin of Selan, a goddess ajami to us, but one you have already met: Shar. Ever since the Azure flames, we, the ethoists have felt her dark influence growing in our lands, in many different forms. And now, Bektakats has foreseen your role in all this. And your first task lies in finding the creature which has been haunting you.*

*But first, I must talk to one of you. She who claims to be a daughter of the moon. Come along.*

Orana leads Luna into one of the hallways. The rest is asked to stay in the reception hall of the palace. If anyone wants to follow, Orana will say that is a private matter.

Luna is led to some kind of round oratorium. Near the walls many ethoists in beautiful garments, handsome faces, pretty hairs are seated on stone benches, they all look eagerly at Orana and what she has to say.

*Please, my beautiful friend, tell these people who you are*

It’s expected that Luna will tell about herself to them. If she tries to lie, Orana will call her out, immediately exclaiming ‘*Lie!’* .

Orana will calmly speak to Luna, in a comforting manner. However, at any point if she is interrupted, she will sternly say, “Speaking is silver, Silence is Gold, Luna”

*Now, you are in front of us, worshippers of beauty. We can simply see the shining light of the moon on your skin. You have come to our lands to beseech aid against the dragons. We, as followers of the moon, and all that is beautiful, could grant you this help. Beauty is found in all aspects of the great gods of Zakhara, and our words are influential in all regions.*

Orana leans in close, as to whisper in Luna’s ear: ‘*We could grant you an army, but we know of the darkness inside of you.’* Orana turns back away, and speaks angrily *‘That bitter, ugly darkness. Shar has already nested herself in you. You are not only a daughter of Selan, or Freyja, you are also a daughter of Shar. Their struggles continue inside of you. And we can see that Shar is getting the upper hand in you, acting out foul deeds.’* Orana turns to the spectators, raising her arms to get reactions

Some of the spectators start exclaiming:

A small figure yells: *Pride: She finds herself superior to other races, calling us pets!*  
An older figure yells: *Abusing Lust and her body for mere simple coins!*  
A fair woman yells: *Greed! Her absolute need for money endangers not only her, but her companions as well!*   
A veiled figure shouts: She’s as v*ain as a peacock! Floundering about her beauty, thinking she is as a goddess!*A man in robes similar to those of the Kor ethoists: *Mercilesness! I heard she cut of the ear of a hostage, for no reason!* Some of the spectators gasp at the atrociousness of your deed.

Orana turns back Luna. *‘We know of your dark deeds. And now it is up to you, Luna. Will you continue on your track towards Shar, or will you let in the light of the moon, and claim your birth right? You are at a turning point in your life.’* Orana waves the people away. As the last one leaves, she turns back to Luna *‘We cannot aid you until we are sure what side you have chosen. Prove upon us which side you are on, when shadows grasp is no more, and her claims to the sands have faltered. Ponder upon it here if you want. I am returning to your companions. And if you continue embracing Shar, you will lose even them.‘*

Orana leaves the oratorium, and continues to the entrance hall.

Meanwhile, the rest of the peculiars are treated with different foods, gifted by the ethoists. As the procession ends, a silence falls over the reception hall. While there are still noises coming from the direction the diviner went to, the rest has fallen silent. The few guards that are still there stand unmoving but vigilant.

At some point, a scream can be heard in of the other small hallways. None of the guards react to this. If asked by one of the guards about it, they will react with ‘it is none of your business’. They can choose to investigate it. They can go into the hallway. More suppressed pain-screams can be heard through one of the doors. If they open it, they will witness a woman sitting in front of a mirror. In the reflection they can see her cutting herself in her face. Her gazes catches yours, and she screams “GET OUT OF HERE!”. Orana appears as if out of nowhere. She pulls the door close, and says ‘Some make sacrifices to gain the admiration of Selan. Now, please return to the reception hall with me. ’

Back in the reception hall, Orana turns to them and starts telling

*‘Your friend shall return to you soon. I assure she is safe. I expect her to aid you on your quests in a more… helpful manner from now on. But now. You have felt the influence of Shar in these lands. You have seen the ruins of the buried city of Bryyo. It was once one of Shar’s strongholds in Zakhara, but the Great Gods had punished her for her transgression, and buried the city. But now, with the turmoils of the last 100 years, she has returned, and portals to her domain have opened once again. Rest be assured, though, even with your actions in Bryyo, the portal would have opened itself sooner or later anyways. And the creature which has been plagueing you has taken an old artefact of great power from Bryyo, one we must ensure that it won’t fall into the hands of Shar’s followers. This is why you must retrieve it from the creature. Do not engage it, for it is far too powerful at this moment, but locate it, and if possible, retrieve the artefact. Where it resides, I cannot tell, but one of you might already know who can provide you the answer. The information broker in the Undermarket.*

Orana turns to the siblings *‘Though the diviner does not understand how, why or what yet, she knows the dark beast you two track is central to it all.’*

If Luna has returned to the party: *‘Remember, Luna, When shadows grasp is no more, and her claims to the sands have faltered, you may return to us.’*

After all this, the palace falls still, with only a couple of guards left patrolling the perimeters. The group can go back to an inn to take a rest.

The information broker **Orim Sa’ri Haimii** can be found in the undermarket. He will always ask for gold for information. If threatened, he will calmly react, and state that threats aren’t worth any gold, and if he is hurt, wounded or killed in any way, they will not able to get the information they could need. If asked on information about the mindflayer, he will need some details. After some pondering, he will know what information he can give, for a ‘measly’ 50G.   
Rumour has it that some creatures are making havoc in the Vestige of Brass, this information is fresh from just a day ago. The reason this information cost so much, is that those who would even suggest that the **Efreet Sultan Nassirudeen Min Alnaar** doesn’t have absolute rule and order in his city, would see his tongue lost.   
Extra information can be purchased, depending on their questions:  
Shadow Caliph’s whereabouts: 300G. He resides in the old fortress of the everlasting, Sarahin, located far north in the Haunted Lands. They could get there in a week of nonstop travel, but then they would have to venture right through the Haunted Swamps, where almost none dare to go anymore. They could go around south, with the boat to Hiyal, and then travel through he Furrowed mountains, but this could take weeks to accomplish.   
About Vestige of Brass: 5S: A city controlled by the Efreet. It was established as a port-city towards the Elemental Chaos and the City of Brass, and located within a volcano, ‘gifted by the grand Sultan of the Efreet’. The city has been in decline ever since the four elemental planes have been restored, and its citizens are returning to the fiery planes they belonged to. It still exists as a handy portal and merchant city towards the Plane of fire, but it has lost its previous glory, especially since most denizens of Zakhara still fear the Efreet, only engaging the city for extremely luctrative business deals and contracts.   
About the Efreet: free, out of fear of losing clients: Whatever you do, do not talk to an Efreeti unless addressed. Flatter them as much as possible, and if possible, give them gifts. Whatsoever, do not make any attempt to make eye contact, only when signing a contract with an Efreet.

At the end, Orim will ask if his information was valuable or not to the gnome. If asked why, “it’s to be sure that my newest source is truthful.” If more info is inquired: “Hell, I was paid a large sum to specifically provide this information to you, my small friend.” If asked for the source: “Another 10G’s, my friends. It is someone who goes by the name Gandrayda. But I’m not sure if it is their real name, nor their real face. They were incredibly hard to read, but the money was real.”

The party will probably decide to go to the Vestige of Brass. Funny enough, it is basically the way back again. After the Temple of Kor, The group should take the way to the Golden Falcon Oasis, after which they can take the route to the Vestige of Brass. The trip could take roughly 4 days by camel.

***Appendix:***

5-10 or 1h: Psionic Commanders  
11-12 or +1h: +Hive Mind Colonies  
13-14 or +1h: + Hunger of the Mind  
15-16 or +1h: + Ceremorphosis  
17-18 or +1h: + Renegade Illithids  
19-20 or +1h: + Alhoon  
20+ or +1h: + Arcane Temptation  
Natural 20 or +1h: +Existential Fear and Dreadful Deliverance

***Psionic Commanders.*** Mind fiayers possess psionic

powers that enable them to control the minds of

creatures.

and ogres. Illithids prefer to communicate via telepathy

and use their telepathy when issuing commands to

their thralls.

When an illithid meets strong resistance, it avoids

initial combat as it orders its thralls to attack. Like

physical extensions of the illithid's thoughts, these

thralls interpose themselves between the mind

fiayer and its foes, sacrificing their lives so that their

master can escape.

***Hive Mind Colonies.*** Solitary mind fiayers are likely

rogues and outcasts. Most illithids belong to a colony

of sibling mind fiayers devoted to an elder brain- a

massive brain-like being near the center of a mind fiayer community.

From its pool, an elder brain telepathically dictates its desires to

each individual mind fiayer within 5 miles of it, for it is

able to hold multiple mental conversations at once.

***Hunger of the Mind.*** Illithids subsist on the brains

of humanoids. The brains provide enzymes, hormones,

and psychic energy necessary for their survival. An

illithid healthy from a brain-rich diet secretes a thin

glaze of mucus that coats its mauve skin.

An illithid experiences euphoria as it devours

the brain of a humanoid, along with its memories,

personality, and innermost fears. Mind fiayers will

sometimes harvest a brain rather than devour it, using it

as part of some alien experiment or transforming it into

an intellect devourer.

CEREMORPHOSIS

Mind flayers don't reproduce in the traditional sense.

Instead, they lay eggs from which hatch tadpole-like

creatures that are used to make more of their kind

through a process called ceremorphosis. First, a captured

humanoid is rendered docile by a blast of psionic

power. A newly hatched tadpole is inserted into the

victim's cranium, usually through a nostril or ear canal.

The tadpole grows as it devours the humanoid's brain,

attaching to the victim's brain stem and becoming its

new brain. Over the course of a week, the humanoid

body changes form, and a new mind flayer comes into

being. The emergent mind flayer often retains a few dim

memories from its previous form, but these vague recollections

seldom have any bearing on its new life as a

brain-eating monster.

RENEGADE lLLITHIDS

Sometimes a mind flayer that's away from its colony

breaks free from the elder brain. Perhaps it ran into a

situation where its bonds of obedience were broken, or

perhaps the colony was destroyed while it was away. In

such a case, the mind flayer becomes free-willed for as

long as it avoids contact with an elder brain.

A renegade illithid

likely sets about creating a sort of colony of its own,

the better to remain undetected. It gathers minions,

establishes a lair, and makes defense of its territory a

top priority. Unlike colonial mind flayers, rogue illithids   
develop a healthy respect for those not of their kind.

They treat especially powerful creatures and individuals

as equals, not adversaries, and seek to cooperate with

them. A renegade mind flayer might become a trusted

advisor or a powerful ally, so long as it is kept well fed.

**Any** alliance it makes, however, collapses if the mind

**flayer** falls under the sway of an elder brain once more.

***Arcane Temptation.*** Elder brains forbid mind flayers

from pursuing magic power aside from psionics, but it

isn't an interdiction they must often enforce. Illithids

brook no masters but members of their own kind, so it

isn't in their nature to bow to any god or otherworldly

patron. However, wizardry remains a rare temptation.

In the pages of a spellbook, an illithid sees a system

to acquire authority. Through the writings of the wizard

who penned it, the illithid perceives the workings of a

highly intelligent mind. Most mind flayers who find a

spellbook react with abhorrence or indifference, but for

some a spellbook is a gateway to a new way of thinking.

For a time, the study of such forbidden texts can be

hidden from other illithids and even from an elder brain.

Understanding of wizardry eludes the mind like a living

thing. Yet eventually, understanding comes, and a mind

flayer arcanist must accept itself as deviant and flee the

colony if it is to live.

***Existential Fear.*** Arcanist deviants that taste freedom

from the colony react in a variety of ways. Some prize

their privacy, others seek to commune with similar

minds, and still others seek to dominate a colony, elevating

themselves to the position of leadership normally

held by an elder brain. Regardless of the arcanist's personal

indinations, it faces the same stark fact: When it

dies, it will not join the host of minds in the elder brain.

Deviant minds are never accepted as part of the collective.

For it, death means oblivion.

***Dreadful Deliverance.*** Lichdom offers salvation and

the prospect of being able to pursue knowledge indefinitely.

Having feasted on the brains of people when

alive, a mind flayer has no compunction about feeding

souls to a phylactery. The only hindrance to a mind

flayer becoming a lich is the means, which is a secret

some mind flayer arcanists stop at nothing to discover.

Yet lichdom requires an arcane spellcaster to be at the

apex of power, something many mind flayers find is far

from their grasps.

Confronting this awful reality, a group of nine mind

flayer deviants used their arcane magic and psionics to

weave a new truth. These nine called themselves the

alhoon, and ever afterward, all those who follow in their

footsteps have been referred to by the same name.