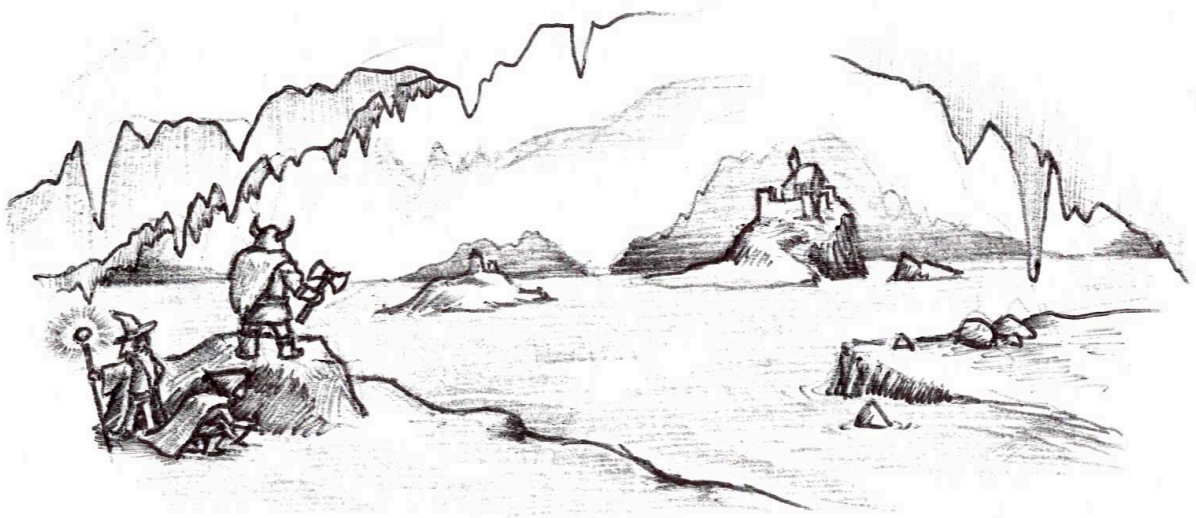


Illithid Castle



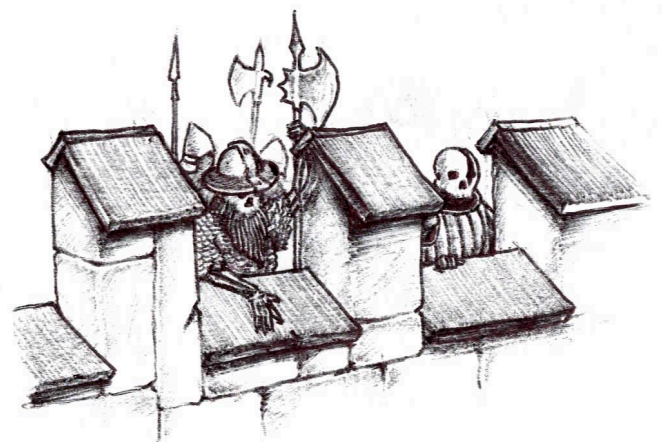
Note: This dungeon was designed to be put somewhere in or near the Underdark, but putting it somewhere else can be easily done with just a few changes. It can either be used as a part of a quest or just a site somewhere in the world for the players to discover.

Dungeon

A small fort stands eerie and silent, built out of dark, jagged rock and curse-ridden wood. This is the castle of Zasadon, an Illithid necromancer that was cast out by the elder brain for his arcane abilities. He managed to escape his former brethren and soon started to raise himself a small army of undead duergar to construct a keep. Since then, Zasadon sits in his keep, sending his undead out to find him brains to feed on.

Courtyard

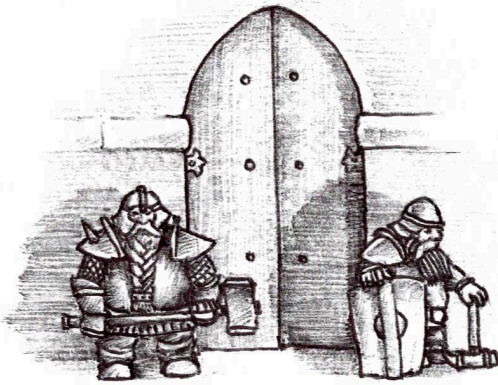
Zasadon's fort stands in an underground landscape of jagged rocks and little vegetation. A small, protective wall is built around the fort and patrolled by his undead servants. The front gate is always heavily guarded, but with enough effort, one might find a small mistake in the wall of the fortress, allowing medium and smaller creatures to pass through. The courtyard is almost as barren as the wastes surrounding it.



Doors

- Dark wooden door (ENTRANCE)

- Large Gate (OUTSIDE)



Entrance

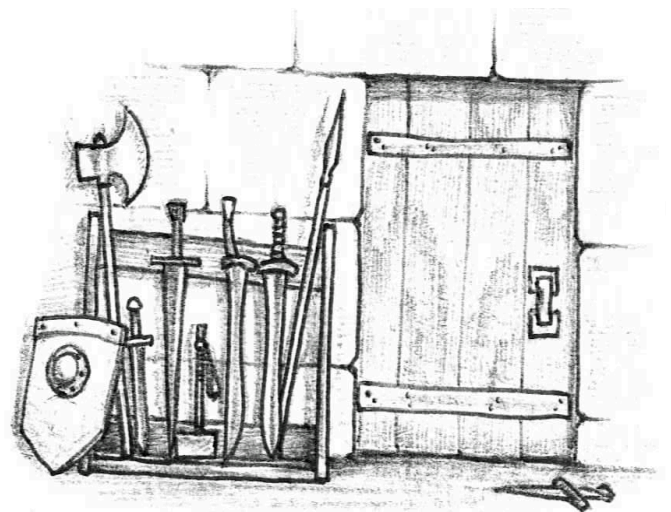
The entrance to the inside of the keep is a simple, wooden door. It is slightly beatdown, presumably from unsuccessful attempts other people trying to escape the undead forces outside. The door leads into a hallway with two winding stairs leading up at the end. Two doors can also be found on the walls of the hallway. The air is stale with a faint metallic smell, and the corridor is only dimly lit by a few strange, torch-like contraptions mounted to the walls.

Doors

- Dark wooden door (COURTYARD)
- Reinforced wooden door (PRISON)
- Wooden door (GUARDROOM 1)
- Large winding staircases (THRONE ROOM)

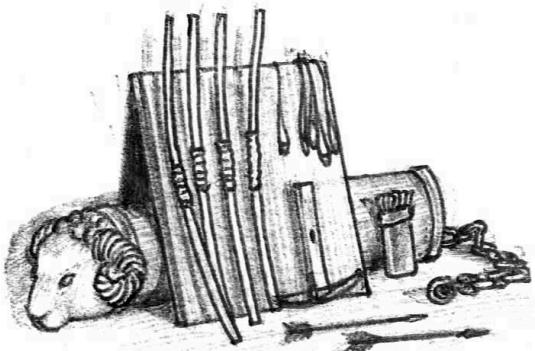
Guardroom 1

This small, rectangular room houses armor and melee weapons for the undead thralls that guard the castle. It is dimly lit by the same contraptions that can be found in the entryway corridor, and in addition to the metallic smell that permeates the air all over the castle, there is a slight smell of rot and decay. The equipment is very varied, as it originates from raided settlements and ill-fated adventurers that crossed the Illithids path.



Doors

- Wooden door (ENTRANCE)
- Doorframe (GUARDROOM 2)



Guardroom 2

This rectangular room, much like the other, smaller one, houses more equipment for the undead servants of Zasadon. This room is full with ranged weapons such as crossbows, slings and longbows and a lot of ammunition. A large portion of the room is also filled

with various more specialized equipment, such as a large battering rams and barrels of tar.

Doors

- Doorframe (GUARDROOM 1)

Prison

The prison is a large room with 5 cells. It is used to “store” mislead adventurers, failed experiments and people who unsuccessfully tried to breach the castle and end the horrible deeds done by Zastradon and his minions. It is rare that all the cells are full, because they’re mostly a temporary storage before the prisoners are either eaten or killed. The room has a strong stench of



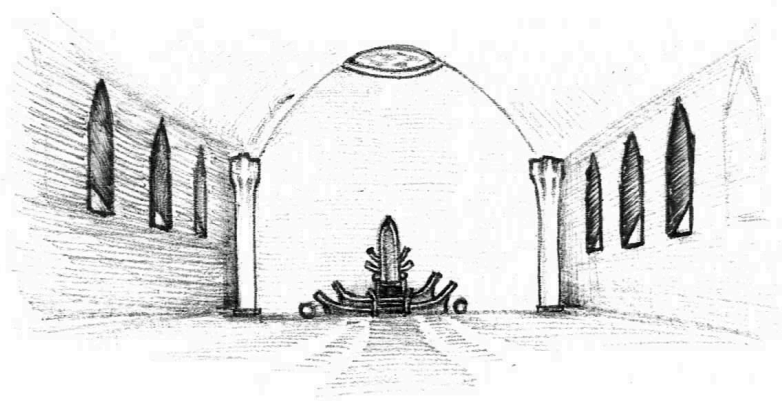
decay and blood, and some of the cells contain humanoid body parts or bones. A strange type of insect larvae has made its home in the corners of the room, building small hives out of their fecal matter and parts of bone and flesh.

Doors

- Reinforced wooden door (ENTRANCE)

Throne Room

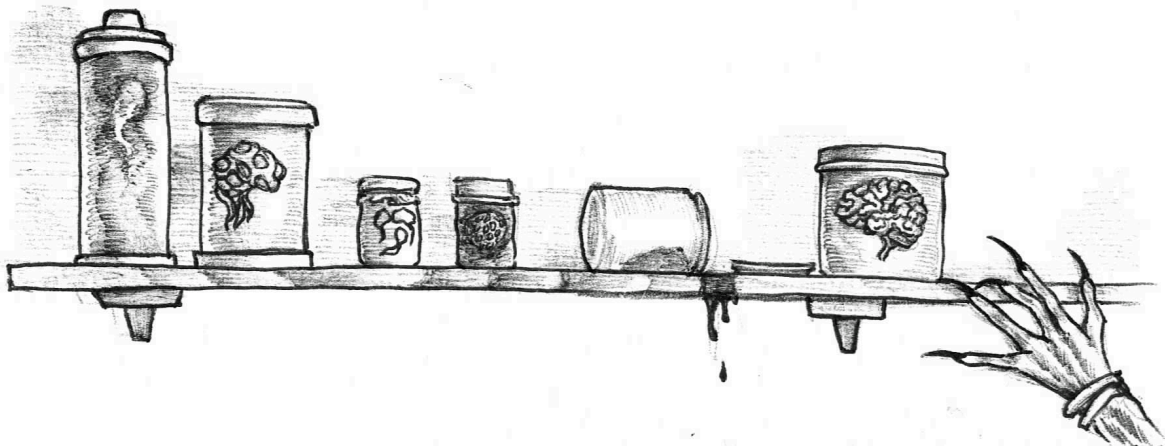
The throne room is a big, long rectangular room where Zastradon usually speaks to visitors and where he holds his twisted trials. It is mostly empty, besides a few doors on the walls and the large, dark throne that sits in the middle of the room. This wicked



chair glows faintly with blue light and is enchanted to cause fear to whomever gazes upon it for too long.

Doors

- Large winding staircases n(ENTRANCE)
- Dark iron door (CLEANSING CHAMBER)
- Locked massive dark iron door (THE VAULT)
- Slightly rusted dark iron door (TRANSFORMATION CHAMBER)
- Hollow tower (ZASRADON'S PRIVATE CHAMBER)
- Dark wooden door (BRAIN LIBRARY)



Brain Library

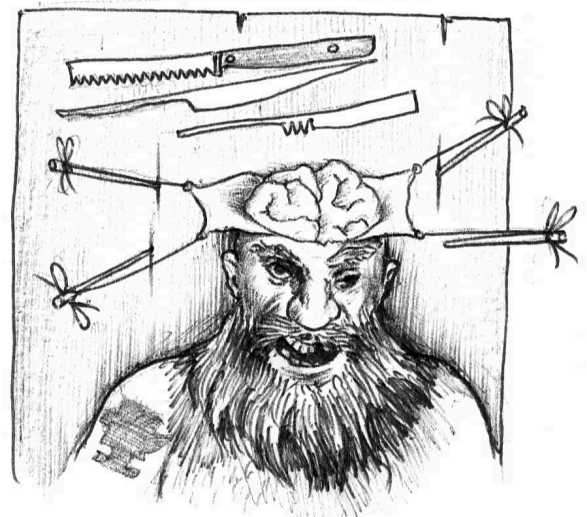
The brain library is a chamber where Zasradon keeps the brains of interesting people that crossed his path, which can then be used to extract information and secrets out of them. The room is filled with shelves that house large jars with brains of various species inside them. The most important pieces of the collection are the brains of a beholder, a stone giant and a powerful wizard, which are safely secured behind a thick layer of enchanted glass. The room is quite dark, and smells faintly of chemicals. A low whisper can be heard emanating from a few of the jars.

Doors

- Dark wooden door (THRONE ROOM)
- Dark iron door (CLEANSING CHAMBER)

Cleansing chamber

This small chamber is used by Zasradon and his more intelligent minions to clean his victims before he extracts their brains. Their heads are shaven and they are thoroughly washed before being placed into a magically induced coma. The room is very clean and well lit, and a large metal table is standing in the middle of the room. Furthermore, there are many shelves filled with various



strange, alien surgery instruments. The room smells faintly of chemicals and blood.

Doors

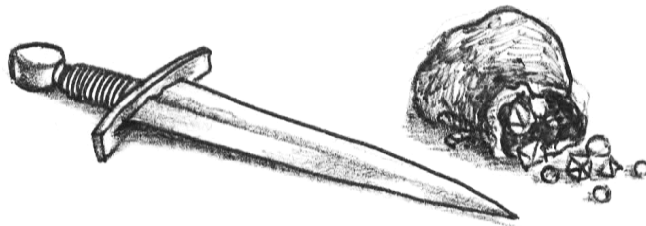
- Dark iron door (THRONE ROOM)
- Dark iron door (BRAIN LIBRARY)

Vault

The Vault is used by Zasadon to keep his valuables and his treasures safe. Illithids aren't interested in the usual material goods, so money is a rare find in this vault. The bulk of his treasure consists of rare spell components, gems of various shapes and sizes and magically enchanted items that he found or took from the many adventurers that were killed by his undead. The vault is secured by a large door that can only be opened with an Illithid tentacle.

Doors

- Locked massive dark iron door (THRONE ROOM)



Transformation Chamber

This chamber is the room where Zasadon experiments on and raises his victims to join his ever growing ranks of undead. The room has many resemblances to the cleansing chamber, but it is much less clean and many of the surgical instruments are much more disturbing and unsettling. There are two large metal tables in the middle of the dimly lit room, with a few shelves strewn



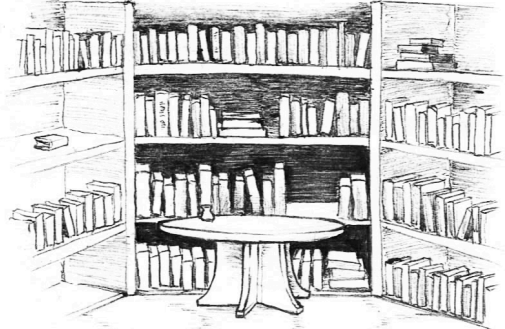
about. The room smells strongly of rot, decay and blood, and the same larvae that can be found in the prison inhabit the corners of this room. Upon further inspection, a failed experiment can be found crawling around the room in the form of a weird, slime-like rotting head. If it is approached, it begs whomever it sees first to end its misery.

Doors

- Slightly rusted dark iron door (THRONE ROOM)

Zasradon's Private Chamber

The private chambers of the illithid can only be reached by flying or levitating creatures. They are located on top of a high tower which is completely hollow, with very slick walls that are almost impossible to climb. The chamber itself is a large room with many bookshelves and a large desk. There is a weird organic pod located in the edge of the room, the place where the illithid rests.



Doors

- Hollow tower (THRONE ROOM)
-

Mechanics

Encounters

The fort is meant to be mainly populated by zombies of various races. Most of them are probably duergar and quaggoth, with a few other humanoids mixed in. The undead obey all of Zasradon's commands. There are a few more optional undead described below, for a bigger challenge or just for flavour.

The undead servants patrol the walls and grounds of the castle, and there is at least one stationed in pretty much every room.

Effects

Throne

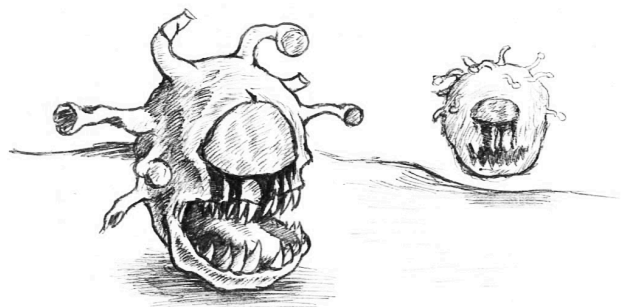
Every creature that starts its turn inside of 10 ft of the throne must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened by it for 1 minute. When they're frightened, all of their attacks also have disadvantage against whomever is sitting on the throne. Zasradon is immune to this effect.

Optional Undead

Zombie Beholder: (i'd advise using 1 or 2)

Zasradon has managed to raise one of the most feared denizens of the underdark from the dead: a beholder.

This large, undead creature roams the castle grounds and searches for intruders with its large, bloodshot



eye. If this creature is used, there might be a beholder-sized hole in the ceiling of the throne room so the creature can be used as a sentry.



Zombie Giant: (i'd advise using 1 - 3)

A stone giant took a wrong turn and ended up near the dark fort, where he was swarmed and defeated by the raging undead army, and later raised again by the wicked Illithid to serve as his bodyguards.

This looming undead protects Zastradon on his rare ventures outside the safety of his castle, and guards the gate when his master is home. If this creature is used, there might be marks of it climbing over the walls and large footprints in and around the castle grounds.

(Note: you can use any giant creature in place of a stone giant, such as fomorians and ogres)

Converting Creatures to Undead

Stats

- **Strength:** stays the same
- **Dexterity:** lower by 25%
- **Constitution:** lower by 1
- **Intelligence:** all Zombies have an intelligence of 3
- **Wisdom:** lower by 40%
- **Charisma:** all Zombies have a charisma of 5

Armor Class

For creatures with natural armor, lower it by 2.

HP:

Reduce the hit dice by one tier (d12 -> d10 -> d8 -> d6 -> d4) and recalculate

Abilities:

- Undead Fortitude
- Darkvision 60ft
- Immunities: poison, poisoned
- Languages: can't speak but understands the languages it knew in life

Attacks

If you want to, you can give the Zombie additional means to attack, such as a bite or claw attack, or maybe even a ranged spitting attack. Use existing creatures for reference and calculate the attack bonus with strength for melee and dexterity for ranged.

Weaknesses

If it isn't stated otherwise, undead are vulnerable to radiant damage. In addition to this, you can also give them Sunlight Sensitivity.

Loot

With Zasadon being an Illithid, the loot that the players might find won't be the usual coins and art objects. He doesn't have any use for coin and doesn't see the beauty in art objects, so he isn't interested in keeping them. Things the players might find are magic items of various rarities, equipment of adventurers that perished at the hands of the Illithid or his undead, and maybe also some rare spell components.

Lore and Characters

Zasadon

Zasadon is an outcast Illithid necromancer. He is ruthless and cunning, and he has a love for torturing and experimenting with living organic matter. While he mostly stays to himself in his castle, he is constantly planning to destroy his old elder brain and take control of his former brethren. He is a wizard, but instead of a spellbook he uses the brain of a powerful wizard that he has mounted to a large iron staff that also acts as his spellcasting focus.



He uses the stats of an Alhoon (Volo's Guide to Monsters, p. 171), but he has the following spells prepared:

- **Cantrips (at will):** chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, prestidigitation, toll the dead
 - **1st level (4 slots):** false life, magic missile, shield, inflict wounds
 - **2nd level (3 slots):** invisibility, blindness/deafness, scorching ray
 - **3rd level (3 slots):** bestow curse, counterspell, animate dead, vampiric touch
 - **4th level (3 slots):** shadow of moil, Evard's black tentacles, phantasmal killer
 - **5th level (2 slots):** negative energy flood
 - **6th level (1 slot):** harm, create undead
-

Notes

- The doors described under each room are just a recommendation, the rooms can be arranged in any way you see fit.