



THOSE WHO WRITHE BELOW

Estimated Duration: 2 hours

Suggested Music: *Those Who writhe Below* by [Music d20](#)

THE ABOLETH'S LAIR

Aboleths are horrible, ancient aberrations rarely seen anywhere in Omeria. Only the most learned Dinzer mages know of their presence on the long continent, and even then, they keep silent about these unspeakable creatures. One of the ancient passages in *Librex Malmūtaronn* suggests there may have been an aboleth in the Gar Warbrizz region seven-hundred years before the goblins claimed the territory. However, there has not yet been any evidence to support the claim.

WHERE TO ADD THIS ENCOUNTER

This side trek is designed for **three to seven 11th to 16th level** characters and is optimized for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 12**.

The aboleth's lair is an underwater cavern filled with various traps as well as the deranged, fanatical servants of the aboleth. The lair could be attached to a cave system connected by a pool or well. Or it could be found at the bottom of a lake that's recently been turned foul by the aboleth's presence.

THE ABOLETH'S GOALS

Aboleths are always scheming. As nigh immortal creatures, they can plan for years, waiting quietly in the dark for the right moment to act. On the Aboleth Goals table below, choose an appropriate goal for the eponymous aboleth or roll randomly to decide.

ABOLETH GOALS

d8 Goal

- 1 The aboleth hopes to ascend to godhood and believe that there is a magic item in the area that will allow it to do just that.
- 2 The local ruler is actually a thrall under the aboleth's command.
- 3 The aboleth seeks to find a gate to a forbidden region of the Depth.
- 4 The aboleth is slowly enslaving all of the humanoids in a local settlement.
- 5 The aboleth seeks vengeance against a creature that once disrupted its plans.
- 6 The aboleth is searching for ancient ruins.
- 7 An ancient artifact that the aboleth discovered in the cave has captured the aboleth's interest for hundreds of years and now it's close to deciphering its true purpose.
- 8 The aboleth recently woke from a centuries long slumber and is slowly reestablishing itself.

AREA DESCRIPTION

Unless otherwise stated, the aboleth's lair has the following features. A map of the aboleth's lair is on page 2.

Dimensions & Terrain. The aboleth's network of underwater caves are filled with murky, grayish water, not unlike mucous. The walls are slimy to the touch and everything is lightly obscured.



Light. There is no light within the aboleth's caverns. The characters will need to use their own source of light or have darkvision to see their way.

Sounds. Unless the characters can hear underwater, everything is muffled by the thick, oozy water.

Telepathic Connections. The aboleth can establish a telepathic connection with any creature within 1 mile of its lair. Once connected, it can probe a creature's mind for its deepest desires. It will then use these desires to turn creatures—possibly even the characters—against each other.

Underwater. The entirety of the lair is underwater. Be sure to review the rules for swimming and underwater combat in the PHB before running this encounter.

1 - LAIR ENTRANCE

The entrance to the aboleth's lair is the first hint that danger lies ahead.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. A vertical shaft descends into the lair, separating the caverns from the rest of the body of water in which the characters discovered it.

The Drowned. Five, bloated, water-logged humanoid bodies drift lifelessly in this area. The drowned were deceived by the aboleth and drowned trying to reach treasures that they would never find. The aboleth left them as a warning to the dangers within its cave.

Aboleth's Illusion. The aboleth uses its regional effect to appear in this area. It hopes to goad spellcasters with quick trigger fingers to attack it.

2 - LOW PASSAGE

Two **water elementals** and two **swarms of quippers** attack any creatures who enter this area.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings in the passage are only 3-feet-high. Large or larger creatures cannot pass through the passage and Medium creatures must spend 1 extra foot of movement per foot moved to swim through the passage

3 - CHUUL PIT

Three **chuul** wait at the bottom of a seaweed-filled pit.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This chamber descends 20-feet into a dark pit filled with seaweed. The seaweed is difficult terrain. The bones of dead spellcasters fill the bottom of the pit.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The three chuuls are loyal servants of the aboleth.

What Do They Want? The chuul are obsessed with magic items and spellcasters. Using their Sense Magic feature, they wait until spellcasters or characters laden with magic items to pass overhead. Once a creature comes within range, the chuul use its pincers and tentacles to attack then drag their prey back into the pit to finish them off.

What Do They Know? The chuul know where the aboleth is located. If magically convinced, the chuul will lead the characters to the real aboleth in area 11. They also know that the aboleth is guarded by a dragon. Otherwise, the chuul are fanatically devoted to the aboleth and will die to protect it.

TREASURE

Among the bones at the bottom of the pit, there is a discarded *ring of earth elemental command* the chuul took from a dead wizard.

4 - DEAD END

The aboleth uses its illusion to trick and trap the characters.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This tunnel overgrown with coral gradually descends 100 feet down.

Aboleth Illusion. The aboleth creates another illusory duplicate to drive characters into the dead end.

Collapsing Tunnel. Once the characters follow the aboleth duplicate into the tunnel, a chuul (potentially one from the pit in area 3) brings down the ceiling at the head of the tunnel. Once the ceiling comes down, the characters will need to dig themselves out. Treat the cave-in as a Huge object that has AC 17, 100 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. In addition to attacking the cave-in, a character

can use its action to make a Strength (Athletics) check; reduce the cave-in's hit points by the result of the check. A creature that rolls a 1 on an attack roll or ability check against the cave-in makes matters worse: the cave-in's hit points increase by an amount equal to 1d10 x 10.

5 - CAVE OF THRALLS

Dozens of aboleth thralls drift in this cave, their mutated mouths locked in silent screams.

CREATURE INFORMATION

This cave holds twenty-four of the aboleth's thralls. Each thrall is a **commoner**, except that they can breathe underwater and take damage if they are ever out of the water (as described under the aboleth's stat block).

What Do They Want? More than anything, the thralls want to free themselves from their horrible existence; even if that means death. The moment they see the characters, they crowd them, pawing at them, begging silently to be cured. Unfortunately, four of them are enslaved by the aboleth. While the characters are distracted, they attack, targeting any spellcasters the aboleth has identified (especially if the spellcaster is concentrating on a spell).

What Do They Know? The thralls have no idea where the aboleth actually resides. But they do know that it uses illusions to spy on trespassers.

6 - FALSE GUARDS

The aboleth's illusion reappears, quickly escaping behind a group of three **fuguhito** warriors. A **giant shark skeleton** protects the fuguhito, drawing the attacks of the characters while the fuguhito attack from a distance with their needles.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The three fuguhito warriors were enthralled by the aboleth. They believe that the illusion of the aboleth is real.

What Do They Want? The fuguhito warriors are enthralled by the aboleth. If damaged, they will snap out of their trance.

What Do They Know? The fuguhito warriors were exploring the cave when they discovered the aboleth. They know that the aboleth uses illusions to trick creatures deeper into its lair where it seeks to trap and enthrall them.

7 - CURSED TREASURE

The aboleth's illusion lures the characters into this cavern.

TREASURE

An iron chest covered in barnacles is tucked into the far corner of this cavern. The lock is rusted and easy to break (AC 10, 3 hit points, immune to poison and psychic). Inside the chest is 5,000 gp and 1,000 gp. Resting on top of the coins is an *amulet of water breathing* (as the potion, but the effects are permanent, the item is rare and it requires attunement). The amulet is cursed. Any creature who attunes to the amulet suffers the same effects as if they had failed a Constitution saving throw against the aboleth's tentacle attack. To cure the character, a *remove curse* spell must be cast on the amulet. Then, the disease must be cured by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher.

8 - PASSAGEWAY

The west end of the passage drops 50 feet into the darkness. No fish swim here.

9 - WHIRLPOOL

A large whirlpool pushes creatures who try to swim through this lair to the surface.

AREA DESCRIPTION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. A vertical shaft leads up 120-feet to the surface. The currents in the area force creatures up through the shaft and away from the cave, making movement through the area cost 1 extra foot per foot moved. In addition, a creature that enters this area or starts their turn in the room must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the creature is pushed 50 feet up the shaft and away from the cavern. If the creature is pushed up the full length of the shaft they break the surface of the water. The passage that leads into area 10 is 30-feet off the ground. Swimming back down requires similar checks.

10 - KENNO'S LAIR

The **adult green dragon** Kenno rests in this chamber, hiding among the coral.

AREA DESCRIPTION

The area has the following features.

Concealed Passage. Thick coral conceals the passage into area 11. The coral has AC 11 and 25 hit points per a 5-foot cube.

Coral. Thick, barb-like coral grows over every inch of this cavern. Any creature that touches the walls, floor, or ceiling of this area takes 1 piercing damage from the coral and must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is poisoned for 1 hour.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Kenno is an adult green dragon. He's been underwater so long that coral has attached itself to his scales. Kenno has advantage on saving throws on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in coral. Kenno is enslaved by the aboleth. While enslaved, Kenno cannot use his regional or lair actions.

What Does He Want? Kenno, like many of the creatures who live in the aboleth's lair, wants to be free of the aboleth's mind control so he can take back his domain. Once Kenno is free, his innate magic overpowers the aboleth's and his regional actions take effect once more. Plus, he can also use lair actions again. Kenno feels no obligation to the characters and will destroy them as soon as he is free of the aboleth's reign. Unlike the aboleth, Kenno values his life. If his hit points are reduced to half or less and he is free of the aboleth's enslavement, he will flee through the whirlpool in area 9.

What Does He Know? Kenno knows that the aboleth is hiding behind the concealed passage that leads to area 11. He also knows the details of the aboleth's goals, although he may not share this information if he doesn't feel it will further his agenda.

THE OVERTHROWN DRAGON

The underwater lair detailed in this adventure wasn't always under the ownership of the aboleth. An adult green dragon named Kenno used it to hide his treasure hoard. Hundreds of years ago, the aboleth tricked Kenno by promising the dragon more wealth, then, when Kenno wasn't prepared, used its enslave ability to turn Kenno into its thrall.

11 - THE ABOLETH

The **aboleth** waits in this chamber sitting among Kenno's treasure hoard. He is protected by two enslaved **fuguhitos**.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The aboleth is a deadly opponent. At this point, it has already probed the minds of the characters and knows their darkest desires. Before the characters can attack, it pinpoints the character with the weakest will and offers it whatever the character desires.

What Does It Want? The aboleth does not fear death. However, it wishes to remain within its lair so it can continue to further its goals. The aboleth is a master strategist. Should it see a weakness within the group, it will attack, targeting characters with its Enslave attack who are likely to have poor Wisdom saving throws.

If it is destroyed, its body reforms within the Depths. Frustrated by the disruption in its machinations a temporary demise will cause, it's likely the aboleth will target the characters for revenge at a later date.

The fuguhitos do not wish to be slaves of the aboleth and will turn on it the first chance they get.

What Does It Know? Aboleths are ancient creatures whose knowledge extends back before the time of man, elves, and even the mysterious dulons. Intelligent characters, especially those with the sage background, might be enticed by promises of forbidden lore and dark secrets.

TREASURE

The aboleth rests on Kenno's hoard. The hoard contains 750 pp and 10,000 gp. It also contains 7 art objects worth 750 gp. Refer to chapter 7 of the *DMG* to determine the nature of the art objects.

WRAP-UP: RESULTS

The characters defeat the aboleth, stopping the aberration from achieving its twisted goals. However, it's likely that the aboleth—or even Kenno for that matter—aren't thrilled by its new disposition. It's likely that one or the other (or both) may even seek vengeance against the characters. Ω