

DUNGEON OF THE WEEK #8: THE TREACHEROUS CHASM

The Treacherous Chasm is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for **four characters of 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 8th level**. This document notes how to scale the adventure according to the average party level. The characters discover the Treacherous Chasm. Explorers brave enough to explore the caverns containing the chasm will discover incredible secrets—but only if they can cross the chasm, of course.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. You can access a free basic ruleset from the official source if you don't have a copy.

Read aloud or paraphrase text that appears in a box like this when the characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

The core manual for players describes *spells* and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure. The core manual for gamemasters describes *magic items*. The text notes any items created for this adventure, pointing you to the appropriate appendix or sidebar.

LEVEL SELECTION

Before play, know the level you wish to run the adventure. Overall, the adventure's locations and descriptions remain unchanged throughout the levels. However, most encounters, hazards, traps, and treasures scale with each level of the adventure. The keyed locations will present the differences between each level.

Also, the adventure works for more than just the listed levels. If you wish to run this adventure for levels other than the 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 8th level, the

CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

Design and Writing. DMDave

Editing and Layout. Tony Casper

Cartography. DMDave with Forgotten Adventures

Artwork. Nacho Lazaro, Matias Lazaro, Midjourney

chart below shows you which version of the adventure you should select for each level. We don't recommend running this adventure for characters with an average party level of more than 10, as it may not pose much of a challenge.

Scaling the Adventure

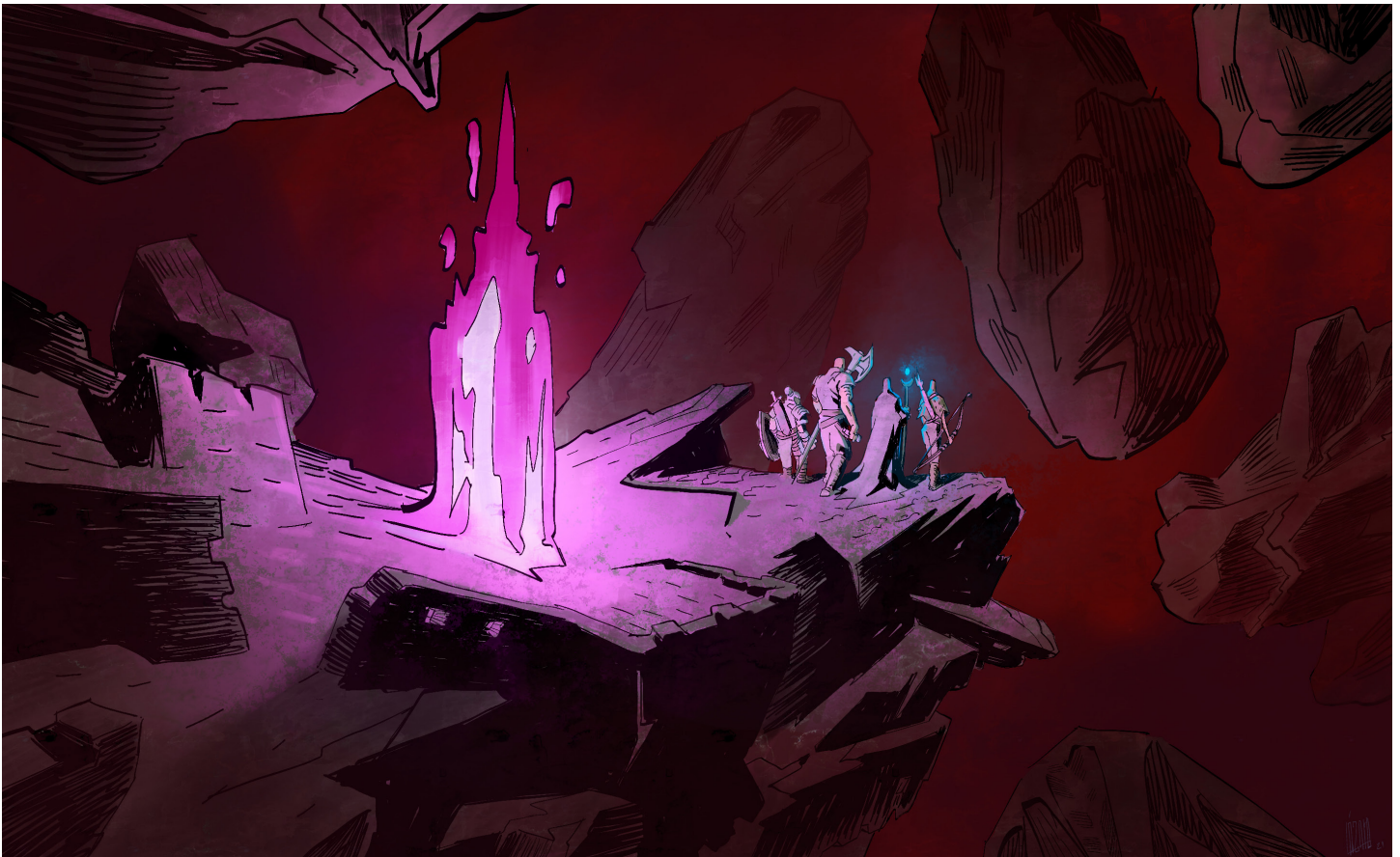
Average Party Level	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
1	1st-level	Hard
2	1st-level	Medium
3	3rd-level	Hard
4	3rd-level	Medium
5	5th-level	Hard
6	5th-level	Medium
7	5th-level	Easy
8	8th-level	Hard
9	8th-level	Medium
10	8th-level	Easy

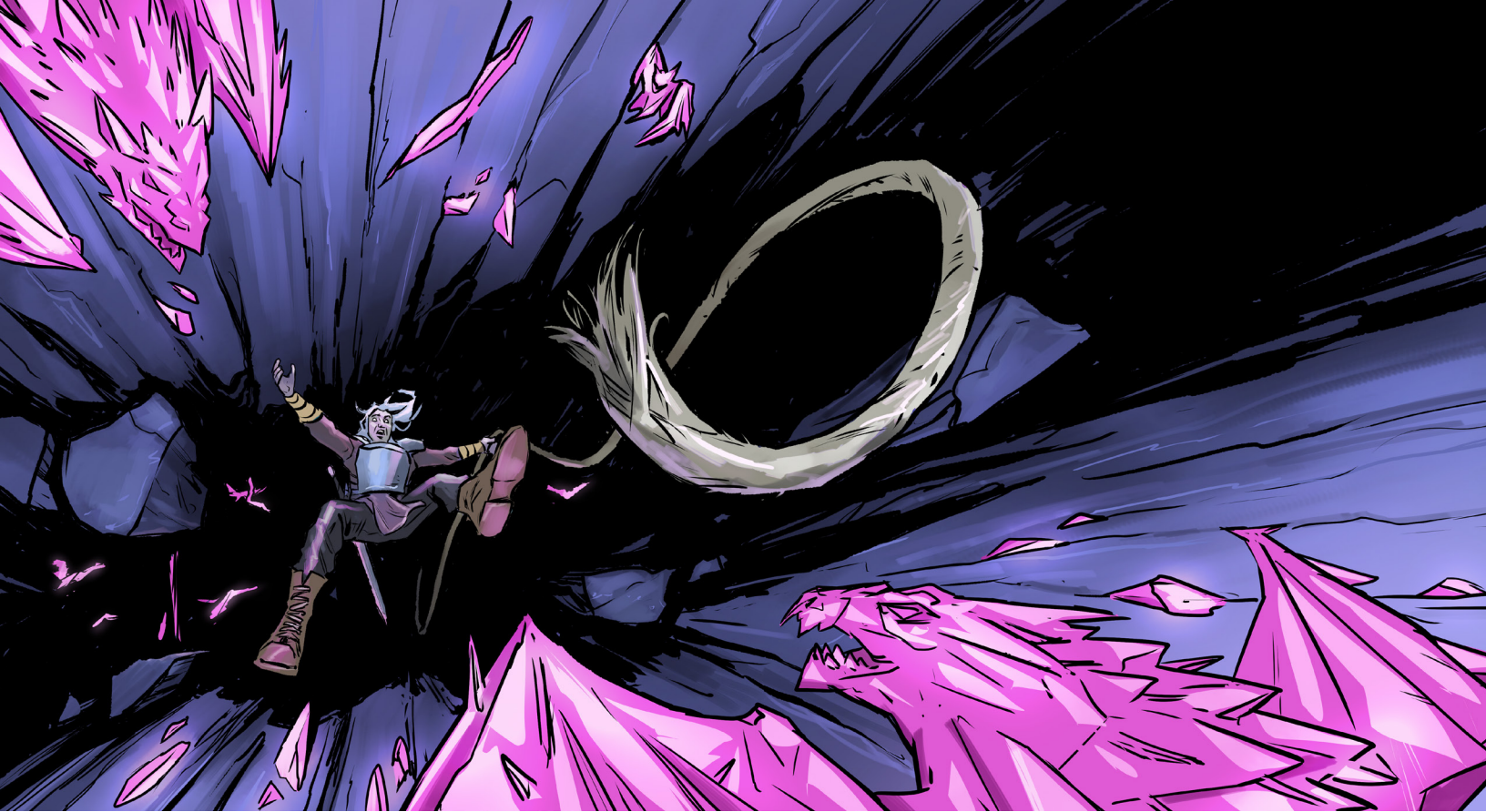
ADVENTURE HOOKS

The table below offers some ideas if you don't have a reason for the characters to investigate the Treacherous Chasm. Roll a d8 or choose the one you like best. If you need to motivate the party with a monetary reward, their patrons offer 500 gp per level of the adventure.

Treacherous Chasm Adventure Hooks

d8	Patron	Adventure Hook
1	Academy	The characters must collect samples of the antimagic crystals found throughout the caverns and return them to the academy. The academy will only accept those that still function; they recommend that the characters speak with Zinjo, a troll who lives in the area. She might know how to collect the crystals without rendering them useless.
2	Ancient Being	Magic doesn't work near the Treacherous Chasm. The characters' patron wants to know why.
3	Aristocrat	Long ago, a wealthy noble named Flavius stowed a dangerous artifact somewhere in the Treacherous Chasm (see area 3b). The characters must recover the artifact and bring it to their patron.
4	Criminal Syndicate	The criminal syndicate wants the aid of the magma creatures that live at the bottom of the Treacherous Chasm. They send the characters to negotiate with them. See area 5a for details.
5	Adventuring Guild	The characters' adventuring guild wants to find a safe, nonmagical way across the chasm. They send the party to explore the chasm and find a way across.
6	Military Force	The mephits that haunt the Treacherous Chasm stole a chest filled with silver from a local merchant. The characters must enter the mephits' domain and return the chest. See area 4c for details.
7	Religious Order	Zinjo is a well-known scholar of ancient religions. However, she is a hermit. The characters' order wants them to find her in the caverns and earn her trust. See area 5b for details.
8	Sovereign	The characters' patron wants them to enter the caverns and find King Bruce, a <i>rod of rulership</i> . Their patron believes that the rod could help them increase their power. See area 3b for details.





THE TREACHEROUS CHASM

The Treacherous Chasm is just that—a treacherous chasm. Not only does the 300-foot-deep hole offer a deadly hazard for creatures who approach it, but antimagic crystals surround it. Spellcasters who hope to use magic to cross the chasm are short on luck.

FINDING THE CHASM

The caverns that contain the chasm have three egresses—a corridor at the west end, a tunnel that descends into darkness in the southeastern end, and a mysterious rusted hatch in the north part of the westernmost chamber. These exits let you combine the caverns with another dungeon adventure (or *Dungeon of the Week* adventure, as it were), or you may let it stand on its own. If you choose the latter, the party must discover the chasm's entrance (**area 1**).

Have the characters perform a skill challenge. A skill challenge simulates a task requiring more time and effort than a single ability check. In its simplest form, the characters make a series of ability checks to earn a required number of successes before accumulating a maximum number of failed checks—similar to how death saving throws work. This skill challenge consists of the following elements:

- ▶ **Goal and Context.** Learn the location of the Treacherous Chasm.
- ▶ **Difficulty.** Primary skill checks related to this skill challenge are made against DC 10. Secondary and repeat checks are made against DC 15.
- ▶ **Complexity.** Complexity is the total number of successes needed versus the number of failures

to succeed on the check. To succeed in this skill challenge, the characters must gain four successes before they suffer three failures.

- ▶ **Primary Checks.** When the characters partake in a skill challenge, they may commit any ability check they like to the skill challenge. Certain ability checks, however, lend themselves better to a successful outcome than others. These ability checks are primary checks and usually have a lower DC than their secondary checks. The primary checks for this skill challenge are: Intelligence (History) to recall information about the Treacherous Chasm and Charisma (Persuasion) to speak with locals about its location.
- ▶ **Secondary Checks.** Secondary checks represent all the skills the characters may use to participate in a skill challenge that aren't considered primary checks. The main reason for the disparity between primary and secondary is that primary checks are a little more "obvious" in their function.
- ▶ **Other Conditions.** If the characters make a successful Intelligence (History) or Charisma (Persuasion) check related to this skill challenge, they learn that the Treacherous Chasm contains crystals that exude an aura of antimagic. Wisdom (Survival) becomes a primary skill challenge (DC 10). The characters may repeat any primary ability checks without penalty.
- ▶ **Consequences.** If the characters suffer three failures before achieving four successes, they fail the skill challenge and must spend another week looking for the caverns. Otherwise, they find the entrance to the caverns (**area 1**).

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, the Treacherous Chasm's areas have the following features in common.

Architecture. The caverns are made from natural granite. Ceilings in chambers and corridors are as high as the room is wide.

Illumination. Some of the chambers are completely dark. However, the purple crystals found throughout the caverns emit dim purple light in a 20-foot radius.

Antimagic Crystals. The purple gems growing from the walls, ceilings, and floors throughout the caverns not only emit dull purple light, but they also exude a 20-foot-radius sphere of antimagic (as the *antimagic field* spell). Certain chambers, such as **area 4**, are completely consumed by the effect. A 5-foot cluster of crystals has AC 13, 75 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The antimagic aura ends if the crystals are removed from their spot in the ground or walls.

Difficult Terrain. With the exception of **area 1**, every chamber and corridor in these caverns are filled with sharp and treacherous rocks. Treat these areas as difficult terrain.

Cliffs. At regular intervals throughout the caverns, there are 10-foot-high cliffs. Climbing or descending a cliff requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. A character using a rope automatically passes the check.

Random Encounters. All manner of creepy and awful things lurk within the Treacherous Chasm, many of which crawled up from the chasm or one of its egresses. Every 30 minutes while the characters aren't in combat, roll a d20. On a result of 17 or higher, an encounter occurs. Roll a d6 and reference the level of the adventure on the Treacherous Chasm Random Encounters table below, or choose the one you like.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The map on page 6 shows the location of the following areas.

1 - Teapots

This big, empty cavern boasts 20-foot-high ceilings. A pool of shallow, brackish water dominates the



north half of the cavern. Dull purple crystals exuding dim purple light illuminate the eastern wall.

Hazard: Antimagic Crystals. The crystals are the antimagic crystals detailed in the General Features section.

Encounter: Mephit Tea Party. When the characters first enter the caverns, they are greeted by a pack of mineral mephits (see the appendix). Having recently snatched a picnic basket from a nearby forest, the mephits are doing their best to emulate a humanoid tea party. Although they are evil creatures, the mephits aren't interested in combating the characters—yet. The number of mephits present depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. When an encounter features earth elementals, the earth elementals appear 1 round after the start of combat.

Area 1 Encounters

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	2 mineral mephits
3rd	6 mineral mephits
5th	1 earth elemental and 2 mineral mephits
8th	1 earth elemental and 6 mineral mephits

Treacherous Chasm Random Encounters

d6	1st	3rd	5th	8th
1	1 giant spider	1d3 giant spiders	2d4 giant spiders	1 drider and 1 giant spider
2	1d4 swarms of centipedes	1d6 + 1 swarms of centipedes	3d6 giant wasps	1d4 + 1 giant scorpions
3	1d2 gray oozes	1 ochre jelly	1d4 ochre jellies	1d3 black puddings
4	1 ankheg	1d2 ankhegs	1d2 + 1 ankhegs	1d4 + 1 ankhegs
5	1 grick	2 gricks	4 gricks	6 gricks
6	1d2 darkmantles	1d4 + 1 darkmantles	1d4 + 1 darkmantles and 2d4 stirges	1 roper and 1d4 + 1 darkmantles

2 - Cocktails

Huge rocks clutter this cavern. Scree and other smaller rocks make the floors here difficult terrain. The ceilings here are only 10 feet high.

Encounter: Doom Chickens. Cockatrices linger around the rocks of this chamber. The number of creatures present depends on the level of the adventure, as shown on the table below. Tired of eating ordinary rocks, the cockatrices leap at the opportunity to petrify and devour living creatures. Mineral mephits are detailed in the appendix.

Area 2 Encounters

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	1 cockatrice
3rd	2 cockatrices
5th	5 cockatrices
8th	5 cockatrices and 2 mineral mephits

Treasure: Loose Gems. A character who searches the area and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers uncut gems amid the scree. It takes ten actions to gather all the gems in this chamber. The value of the gems an action collects depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Area 2 Treasure

Adventure Level	Gem Value Per Action
1st	5 gp
3rd	10 gp
5th	100 gp
8th	150 gp

3 - Cafeteria

Like **area 2**, huge rocks and scree cover most of this large chamber, creating difficult terrain. The ceilings here are a little lower, only 5 feet high.

Encounter: Gobbler. Attracted by the smell of the gems in **area 2**, a hungry **xorn** emerges as soon as the characters enter this area. If the characters already collected the gems, it pesters them in Terrain to hand them over. In the 1st-level version of the adventure, it whines but doesn't attack. In all other versions of the adventure, it becomes aggressive. If the characters don't have the gems, it walks past them without a word.

Treasure: King Bruce. A character who searches the western portion of this cavern (**area 3b**) and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a magic item hidden among the scree. The item is a sentient *rod of rulership* named King Bruce. Bruce's last owner, an aristocrat named Flavius, left Bruce in the cavern, hoping no one else would discover the evil item.



King Bruce is lawful evil with an Intelligence score of 4, Wisdom of 11, and Charisma of 16. The rod communicates through emotion, often expressing a desire to dominate other creatures—including the other characters. King Bruce enjoys the psychological pain it inflicts on others when it dominates them. Each time a user dominates someone using Bruce, Bruce feels warm and comfortable to the touch, expressing its gratitude. In addition to its desire to dominate the minds of the weak, Bruce also wishes to return to the area of its creation, deep below the Treacherous Chasm (or in a location of your own creation). Bruce absolutely loathes chaotic and good creatures and refuses to work for such beings.

4 - The Treacherous Chasm

The eponymous chasm dominates this massive chamber. The ceilings are 30 feet above the lip of the chasm (**areas 4a, 4c, and 4d**). The same purple crystals seen near the entrance cover the walls, floors, and ceilings here, shedding dim purple light.

Hazard: Antimagic Crystals. The antimagic aura created by the purple crystals here makes casting magic virtually impossible.

Hazard: The Chasm (area 4b). The chasm is 300 feet deep. Any creature that falls into it takes 70 (20d6) damage from the fall and lands prone. A future installment of *Dungeon of the Week* will detail the bottom of the chasm. If you don't wish to use that installment, the chasm goes nowhere, ending in a rough, damp surface far below these caverns. Fortunately, the crystals lining the walls here make it easy to climb back up—without a rope, a character must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to scale the walls. Failing the check by 5 or more sends the climber tumbling into the chasm.

THE TREACHEROUS CHASM

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Encounter: Mineral Mephits (areas 4a and 4d). More mineral mephits (see the appendix) lurk here in the chasm. When the characters arrive in **areas 4a** or **4d**, the mephits happily offer to help them across, recognizing that the purple crystals dull magic here. Of course, this is all a ploy—they want to watch with glee as the characters tumble into the pit. The number of mephits present depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Area 4 Encounters

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	2 mineral mephits
3rd	5 mineral mephits
5th	12 mineral mephits
8th	15 mineral mephits

Treasure: Mephit's Stash (area 4c). Goods that the mineral mephits steal from around the countryside eventually make their way here to the mephits' stash. Most items here are mundane items and trinkets, many of which are broken and useless. However, a few items are worth swiping, as shown in the table below.

Area 4c Treasure

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st or 3rd	2,500 sp, a bag containing 7 gems worth 50 gp each, 2 <i>potions of healing</i> , a <i>spell scroll of alarm</i> , and a <i>spell scroll of find familiar</i>
5th or 8th	25,000 sp, a bag containing 10 gems worth 100 gp each, 2 <i>potions of fire resistance</i> , <i>dust of dryness</i> , and <i>goggles of night</i>

5 - Barbecue

This large cavern has 20-foot-high ceilings. Loose rock covers most of the floor, creating difficult terrain everywhere. A tunnel cut into the southern wall (**area 5a**) leads further into darkness.

Encounter: Diplomacy. When the characters first arrive, they encounter two gangs of mephits in a (literal) heated discussion. The first gang of mephits consists of mineral mephits (see the appendix), and the second consists of magma mephits. The magma mephits crawled out of the Treacherous Chasm (see **area 4**) and now want to claim this area as their own, threatening to invite magmin, fire elementals, and other powerful enemies to take it forcibly if they must. The mineral mephits argue that the caverns are theirs and theirs alone, daring the magma mephits to do their worst. Unless the characters get involved, the mephits continue to argue and pay the party no mind. Inevitably, a fight breaks out between the two factions.

The total number of mephits present here depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Area 5 Encounters

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	2 mineral mephits vs. 2 magma mephits
3rd	3 mineral mephits vs. 3 magma mephits
5th	1 earth elemental and 4 mineral mephits vs. 1 fire elemental and 4 magma mephits
8th	1 earth elemental and 8 mineral mephits vs. 1 fire elemental and 8 magma mephits



Encounter: Watcher on the Hill (area 5b). High above the mephit debate, a 9-foot-tall giant keeps watch over the mephits through a spyglass. As soon as the characters notice her, she slips into a rusty steel hatch embedded in the cavern floor and locks it behind her. The watcher is actually a **troll** named Zinjo. Zinjo lives in a stronghold below the caverns; the stronghold will be detailed in a future installment of *Dungeon of the Week*. Alternatively, you may create a stronghold of your own design.

The hatch is the only way to access Zinjo's stronghold. The locked hatch requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock it, or a successful DC 22 Strength (Athletics) check to pry it open. Zinjo won't engage the party unless they chase her down into her stronghold.

WHERE TO NEXT?

There are three possible exits from these caverns, four if you count the entrance. The eponymous chasm itself leads 300 feet down below the caverns. Another passageway in **area 5a** leads into darkness. And Zinjo's hatch hides a secret stronghold in the cliffs of **area 5b**.

If you wish to continue the adventure, place another level or two below this one. You may use an adventure of your own creation or another one of *DMDave's Dungeon of the Week*. If you don't wish to continue this dungeon, have the ramp end abruptly in a rock slide or another dead-end. Ω

APPENDIX

The statistics for the mineral mephit are as follows:

Mineral Mephit

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of crystal shards. Each creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Earth Glide. The mephit can burrow through nonmagical unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the mephit doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

False Appearance. While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary cluster of crystals.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Glitterdust Breath. The mephit exhales sparkling crystal dust in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a target is blinded and outlined in golden glitter until the end of the mephit's next turn. A creature affected by the glitter can't benefit from being invisible.

Summon Mephit (1/Day). The mephit has a 25 percent chance of summoning 1d4 **mineral mephits**. A summoned mephit appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of its summoner, acts as an ally of its summoner, and can't summon other mephits. It remains for 1 minute, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

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