

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1: XXIPHU TRANSFORMATION

A player should only receive this handout if his or her PC played SPEC3-3 *Dance of the Sun and Moon* and has story award **SPEC50 In the Clutches of the Sovereignty**. This handout is for those PCs who stayed behind in Sister Midnight's place at the end of SPEC3-3.

Your skin is a translucent membrane that allows you to absorb oxygen from the water that permeates your new home. Faint whispers of alien intellects fill your mind. You hear and understand – but you do not obey.

XXIPHU TRANSFORMATION

- You gain the aquatic keyword.
- You can breathe underwater. (You can still breathe air.)
- You do not suffer penalties to attack rolls when fighting underwater, and you gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls while fighting creatures in the water that do not have the aquatic keyword.
- You gain a swim speed equal to your normal speed.
- You are considered a native of the city Xxiphu, and as such much of its hazardous terrain does not affect you.
- You can speak and understand Deep Speech.

Each PC who has SPEC50 also receives one of the following mutations. Each character should get a different mutation. You can roll randomly, cut the mutation cards out and deal them to the players, or whatever other system seems appropriate. Not all mutations are ideal for all PCs, but that's part of the process. Each mutation includes a personality trait that is intended for roleplaying purposes only (player's decision how to apply it).

THE MASTER'S GAZE

Personality trait: Paranoia. You feel like some unseen entity is watching you all the time...

Encounter • Psionic

Minor Action Personal

Effect: If you make an attack this turn and hit with your first attack roll, the attack deals 1d8 extra damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to the AL. If the attack misses, or if you do not make an attack this turn, then you grant combat advantage and are deafened until the end of your next turn.

SLIGHTLY UNHINGED

Personality trait: Madness. You aren't completely bughouse crazy; you're just a little bit out there...

Trait

You gain a +2 bonus on saving throws against effects that daze, stun, or dominate you. However, if you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll or a saving throw, you are stunned (save ends). The stun effect cannot trigger more than once per encounter.

I CAN'T FEEL MY FACE!

Personality trait: Immunity to pain. Seriously, I can't feel a thing. Wait, is that my spleen?

Trait

You gain a +5 bonus on saving throws against ongoing damage. However, all ongoing damage that you take is increased by an amount equal to one-half the AL.

SAHUAGIN BLOOD TRANSFUSION

Personality trait: Bloodlust. You find it hard to resist the smell and the taste of blood, including your own blood.

Trait

Against bloodied creatures, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls. When you become bloodied for the first time during an encounter, you also suffer ongoing damage equal to the AL (save ends).

KUO-TOA BLOOD TRANSFUSION

Personality trait: Mumbler. You are constantly talking to yourself, sometimes in languages you don't even know.

At-Will

Move Action Personal

Requirement: You must be adjacent to an enemy.

Effect: You shift up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy. You grant combat advantage to that enemy until the start of your next turn.

EYESTALKS GRAFTED TO YOUR HEAD

Personality trait: Seeing things that aren't there. What was that? Over there! Right there! I saw it, I swear!

Trait

You have all-around vision. Creatures cannot gain combat advantage by flanking you. However, when you suffer a critical hit, you are blinded (save ends). The blinding effect cannot trigger more than once per encounter.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 2: UNDERWATER ADAPTATION

A player should only receive this handout if his or her PC does not have story award **SPEC50 In the Clutches of the Sovereignty** from *SPEC3-3 Dance of the Sun and Moon*. This handout is for those PCs newly arrived in Xxiphu during the course of this adventure.

Your skin bears a faint tracery of scales and has taken on a greenish, oily sheen. Thin webbing, like that of a duck or otter, extends between your fingers and toes. When you inhale, water flows into your lungs, yet in your new form this feels natural.

UNDERWATER ADAPTATION

- You can breathe underwater. (You can still breathe air.)
- You gain a swim speed equal to your normal speed.
- You do not suffer penalties to attack rolls when fighting underwater.

Note: despite your underwater adaptation, you do not gain the aquatic keyword. Therefore, creatures with the aquatic keyword still have an advantage against you in underwater combat.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 3: LORE

XXIPHU

The most feared sight in the Sea of Fallen Stars is the movable citadel Xxiphu. The city was roused from the drowned depths by prophecy, perverted priests, and unwise delvings. Because Xxiphu can change its location at will, its influence could conceivably stretch anywhere. No one knows where it might appear next, though most sightings of it are over or close to the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Xxiphu is a glyph-scribed obelisk wrapped in an eternal storm that soars over the surface of the world. Tentacles slither and crawl in cold rookeries encrusting the vast object's sheer sides. A writhing frieze carved on the age-worn exterior depicts thousands of interconnected images. The inscriptions constantly shift and change, as if invisible artists swarm across the stone face, inscribing atrocities to the beat of a mad drummer. The full meaning of the evolving inscription invokes concepts too ghastly for mortal minds to comprehend and remain sane.

Aboleths freshly wakened from an age-long slumber creep within the obelisk's hollow interior along with their servitors. But many of these are as children compared to the few enormous elders that shamble within. These ancients do not think or plan as do other beings, and their altered consciousness is inimical to all creatures not part of their ancient Sovereignty. Reality bends in the city's vicinity, unfettering vast monsters of the deep to master the sky as they before hunted the sunless seas.

The aboleths of the Sovereignty are not like those previously known on Toril. The solitary aboleths of Faerûn's Underdark were startled by the appearance of this mythical city from their primeval past. In fact, a few skirmishes broke out between Faerûn's aboleths and the newcomers when Xxiphu first burst up from the Sea of Fallen Stars. Now an uneasy peace exists, in that the Underdark aboleths avoid those of the Sovereignty.

ABOLETHS

Aboleths are hulking amphibious creatures that hail from the Far Realm, a distant and unfathomable plane. They live in the Underdark, swimming through drowned crannies or creeping through lightless tunnels and leaving trails of slimy mucus in their wake. Malevolent and vile, aboleths bend humanoid creatures to their will, and more powerful aboleths can transform their minions into slimy horrors.

A fine haze of mucus suffuses the air around an aboleth's soft, gelatinous skin. Muscular tentacles sprout from this primeval slug's enormous, slime-sheathed body. A variable number of eyes, but always more than two, are scattered across its bulk.

Unlike aboleths of lesser lineages, those of Xxiphu can take to the air like fish swim in the sea.

KUO~TOA

In the sunless seas of the Underdark, the slime-scaled kuo-toas serve a dark madness only they can perceive. Their madness leads some kuo-toas to develop dangerous psychic abilities. These kuo-toa mumbler sow confusion and death among their enemies, and are found leading kuo-toa war bands or raiding parties.

The insanity inherent to their race inspires a mental and physical change in a few rare kuo-toas, transforming them into feral leviathans. Kuo-toa clans control and train such creatures as beast of burden and living war machines.

With Xxiphu's rise, ancient allegiances and bloodlines were reawakened. Many kuo-toas now serve the Sovereignty. Unlike other servitors, kuo-toas are able to infiltrate human society by interbreeding with humans. Some coastal and island cultures contain many such half-bloods, secret servitors of the Sovereignty who do not even know their own ancestry until blood eventually forces their allegiance.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 4A: FIRST FLASHBACK

Images race through your mind, brief snatches of memory, like the angular glimpses of a darkened room seen during a lightning storm.

A distended mass of flesh that might once have been a dwarf...

The mental picture of a fisherman's hook, baited with a worm that is actually a tiny person, and a distinct mental impression of a question being asked...

The face of Selsharra, her lips and hands moving in slow motion as she mouths eldritch words and inscribes a symbol in the air...

Deep blue infuses itself into you, there's a buzzing in your head, and –

The vision fades.

Note: this flashback is for PCs newly arrived in Xxiphu during SPEC4-1.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 4B: FIRST FLASHBACK

A haze of mucus surrounds you and seeps into your mouth and nose. Pain. Panic. Flailing. And then –

Memories. Our memories. All hail the dreams of the Eldest! Glacial thoughts crawl through millennia, observing....

Toril as it once was, mostly ocean, lush jungles covering the few islands. Creatures stir in the leaves, and we watch, unperturbed. They are no threat to us.

The oceans recede. Islands grow into continents. Jungle gives way to forest or grassland. Now the creatures walk on two legs. They are still no threat to us. Later, if they draw our interest, we will subjugate them.

But what is this? Cities in the Underdark. Purple skinned bipeds, their mouth tentacles waving, thoughts reaching out, stealing our slaves! We cannot remember where these... mind flayers... came from.

WHY CAN WE NOT REMEMBER?!

Note: this flashback is for PCs already present in Xxiphu because they were captured at the end of SPEC3-3.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 5A: SECOND FLASHBACK

Images race through your mind, so quickly they blur into a swirl of colors. The images slow and stutter until they resolve into a distinct memory.

The face of Selsharra looms before you. She mouths eldritch words and inscribes the Cerulean Sign in the air in front of you. The symbol flares, painfully bright, its afterimage burned into your brain.

“Heed well these instructions,” Selsharra says. “When you stand before the aboleth masters, turn their mental assault against them. You must do this!”

The vision fades. In your mind, you feel a slow pulse of blue energy, and you know that you are empowered to strike a mighty blow against Xxiphu.

For the remainder of SPEC4-1 *Cerulean Dreams*, you gain the power *psychic backlash*.

PSYCHIC BACKLASH

The tentacled monstrosity reaches out to assault your mind, which erupts with cerulean energy inimical to creatures from the Far Realm.

Daily • Psionic

No Action Close burst 10

Trigger: An aboleth hits or misses you with an attack power that would daze or dominate you.

Effect: Negate the daze or dominate effect (if the attack deals damage, you still take it). The triggering aboleth takes psychic and radiant damage based on the Adventure Level (AL) at which you are playing this adventure:

AL 2: 5 damage

AL 4: 10 damage

AL 6: 15 damage

AL 8: 20 damage

AL 10: 25 damage

Note: *Psychic backlash* can only be used during SPEC4-1 *Cerulean Dreams*; the knowledge of how to use it fades at the conclusion of the adventure. Under no circumstances can a PC use *psychic backlash* outside the confines of this adventure.

Note: this flashback is for PCs newly arrived in Xxiphu during SPEC4-1.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 5B: SECOND FLASHBACK

We must have more minds. More minds to sleep, to dream, that their dreams may provide the sustenance Xxiphu needs.

Each creature that arrives shall be taken to the Dreaming Vaults and placed before the tentacle clusters. The tentacles shall touch their flesh and evaluate their minds. Those whose thoughts are worthy of further study, we shall encapsulate and protect – forever.

For the remainder of SPEC4-1 *Cerulean Dreams*, you gain a +2 bonus to skill checks made to interact with the control panels in the Dreaming Vaults.

Note: this flashback is for PCs already present in Xxiphu because they were captured at the end of SPEC3-3.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 6: CONTROL PANEL PUZZLE

The control panel is a writhing clump of tentacles around a large slimy brain. Tubes connect it to the pods containing prisoners. To interact with the control panel, you must allow the tentacles to wrap around your arms, legs, or head. The control panel telepathically communicates with you, but you are only able to register its messages with images of geometric symbols. You must match two symbols together, three times to disable each control panel. Beware! If you identify two pieces that do not match, the control panel will protect itself by attempting to destroy your mind with a mixture of energy.

Goal of the Control Panel Puzzles

Find two symbols that match. Repeat twice more (three times total) for each control panel. Once you have made three matches on a given control panel, that control panel is disabled.

Your DM will tell you when you've found a match. Part of the puzzle is figuring out the criteria for making a match.

IMPORTANT! Once a control panel accepts a match, then you may be certain that the following things are true:

- only that match criterion can be used on that control panel, and
- different match criteria must be used on other control panels.

Rules of the Control Panel Puzzles

To interact with a control panel, you must be adjacent to it (including diagonally).

You can interact with a control panel as often as you like on your turn.

To interact with a control panel, either work the puzzle or make a skill check. Different PCs can use different options on the same control panel - for example, one works the puzzle while another makes a skill check.

Work the Puzzle

Minor Action: turn over two puzzle pieces, revealing their geometric pattern.

- If one or both pieces is an 'X', you take lightning and psychic damage equal to the AL. Turn both pieces face down.
- If neither piece is an 'X', the DM tells you if there is a match.
 - If there is a match, you are one step closer to solving this panel. Leave both pieces face up.
 - If there is no match, you take lightning and psychic damage equal to the AL. Turn both pieces face down.

Make A Skill Check

Special: If you have the psionic power source, you gain a +2 bonus to your skill check.

Minor Action (Moderate DC) or **Standard Action** (Hard DC): make one of the following skill checks.

- **Arcana:** you sense the magical aura around one of the images.
- **Insight:** you intuitively grasp the bizarre logic behind one of the symbols.
- **Perception:** you notice that some of the images glow slightly brighter than the others.
- **Thievery:** you poke and prod at the abolethic panel to get a clear image of one of the symbols.

Success: You may peek at one of the puzzle pieces. Turn it face down when you are finished. If the piece has an X on it, it is not triggered and you do not take damage.

Failure: You take lightning and psychic damage equal to the AL, and you may not peek at a puzzle piece.