

THE CELESTIAL MAW



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW:

Title: *The Celestial Maw*

Theme/Genre: Cosmic Horror Fantasy

Tone: Dark and suspenseful with moments of looming dread, but heroically inspiring

Target Level: Level 5 (suitable for players familiar with basic mechanics)

Expected Duration: 2 hours

Player Focus Preferences:

- Combat: Medium
- Roleplay: High
- Exploration: High

BACKSTORY AND SETTING:

WORLD OVERVIEW:

In the world of **Eos**, the light of twin moons, **Veridian** and **Callath**, governs the tides and mystic forces. Recently, Callath has dimmed, casting regions into perpetual twilight. This is seen as the omen of the “Celestial Maw,” associated with ancient star-bound entities. Locals report shattered realities and alien voices haunting their dreams.

ADVENTURE SETTING — STARMEADOW VILLAGE:

Starmeadow, a remote town on hilltops encircling a crater known as “The Eye of Callath,” stands idyllic yet whisper-quiet. Its residents are scared by disappearances. They murmur of “the Caller”—a perceived agent of cosmic threat. Now, the once-vibrant sky is marred by a celestial breach protruding from the fading Callath.

RELEVANT HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

- *Ages Ago*, a cabal of warlocks summoned a celestial entity for power, planning betrayal. Fearing its world-consuming intent, they shattered its essence, imprisoning the fragments across planes. One fraction now stirs under Starmeadow, whispering through dreams.
- A shadowy cult, “The Seekers of Unity,” strives to reassemble the celestial fragment they believe will offer salvation, not annihilation.

IMPORTANT NPCs:

- **Eris Tallowstem** (*Human*): Starmeadow’s mayor, resolves to save her people despite a distrust of strangers, and reluctant to appear vulnerable.
- **Brother Kaelmire** (*Half-Elf*): A dedicated cleric of Selune and guardian of Starmeadow’s archives, concealing guilt over ignored celestial portents.
- **The Caller** (*Shifting Celestial Entity*): A humanoid form of the celestial fragment, beguiling mortals with distant and resonant tones to advance its cosmic agenda.

PLOT HOOK:

OPENING SCENE:

The adventurers arrive in Starmeadow summoned by **Eris Tallowstem**. They find vacant streets, silent except for Eris, illuminated in the ghostly glow of waning lamps at the town square. An unsettling breeze sweeps through the air.

Eris’s voice quivers as she greets the party: “The sky has cursed us. Nightly, people vanish, shadowed forms all they leave. Last night was a child... and voices, they’re always whispering now. Please, quell this madness. Save us.”

COMPELLING EVENT:

During the plea, a frantic villager rushes in, pale and trembling.

“The old well... inside, something speaks!” Just then, shadowy tendrils whip from the darkness, seizing the villager who vanishes amidst their screams.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

Unveil the truth behind the mysterious vanishing and nullify the supernatural threat facing Starmeadow.

KEY LOCATIONS:

LOCATION 1 – THE SLEEPING WELL (STARTING AREA):

Atmosphere:

A forsaken well, thick with moss and seems strangely unscathed amidst weathered cobblestones.

Features:

Descending to an outer cavern exudes whispers; eerie runes shimmer faintly.

Encounters:

- **Combat:** 2x *Starved Shadows* (HP 50, AC 14). Shadows unleash tendril attacks, attempting to drain living energy.
- **Clues:** Cultist letter shards speak of ritual sites atop Callath's Crater, offering vital insight.

LOCATION 2 – CALLATH'S RIDGE (INTERMEDIATE AREA):

Atmosphere:

Perched high, the ridge offers a full view of the crater, its terrain under celestial hues from the rift above, ritual relics increasing in intensity near the crater's brink.

Encounters:

- **Puzzle:** At the ridge stands a celestial altar demanding constellation alignment. The altar's runes offer guidance for correct alignment.
 - **Hint:** Stars must be aligned reflecting the cultist letter's verse: "Align thrice, chaos to harmony."
 - (Challenges require a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check).
- **Roleplay Opportunity:**
Mara Quill (Tiefling Sorcerer and cultist turnover) hides here. With the right persuasion, she provides a crater detour but requests a share of any reward.

LOCATION 3 – THE CELESTIAL MAW (FINAL AREA):

Atmosphere:

At the crater's depths, a fragment of cosmic origin thrums hauntingly; its shadowed ichor flows upward, strengthening the ritual. Cultists, under the Caller, nearly complete the process.

Encounters:

- **Combat:**
 - 3x *Riftspawn Cultists* (HP 35, AC 14, magical attacks).
 - **The Caller** (Final Boss): AC 16, HP 110, invokes *Shadow Mimics* (HP 20). Causes psychic disruption (DC 14 Wisdom save to avoid disadvantage). Entering a final phase, it attempts unification with the celestial fragment, thus magnifying its powers.
- **Trap:**
The celestial mass causes random energy bursts (roll a d6; targets players on 4-6, DC 14 Dex save or face 4d10 radiant damage).

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION: THE FINAL CHALLENGE:

Vanquish **The Caller** to interrupt the ritual. The fragment stands to bolster The Caller unless thwarted (interruption through Arcana/Religion checks—DC 17).

SUCCESS CONSEQUENCES:

The celestial shard shatters anew, collapsing its formed rift, dispersing shadow creatures. Starmeadow is delivered, yet the sky remains a foreboding twilight.

FAILURE STAKES:

Complete unification sees a celestial Maw fragment flood the world. Starmeadow succumbs leading to a potential cascade of doom.

REWARDS:

- **Loot:** *Starbringer's Shard* (Rare Magic Orb, +1 spell hit/DCs, plus a daily *Guiding Bolt*).
- **Story Rewards:** Amplified standing in Starmeadow; Brother Kaelmire grants access to celestial lore tomes.
- **XP:** Full engagement and successful execution award Level 6 through combat, puzzle-solving, and exploration.

SUPPORTING DETAILS:

CUSTOM STAT BLOCKS:

- **Starved Shadows**
 - HP: 50 each
 - AC: 14
 - Shadow Tendrils: Range attack that restrains players and regenerates vitality through leeching.
- **Riftspawn Cultists**
 - HP: 35 each
 - AC: 14
 - Attack: Magically fueled with cult-imbued power.
- **The Caller**
 - HP: 110
 - AC: 16
 - Powers: Invokes *Shadow Mimics* and maintains psychic echoes (DC 14 Wisdom save to avoid a disadvantage).
 - Phase transitions with potential celestial merger when unopposed.

TRAP MECHANICS:

- Celestial Burst (upon the cosmic shard's whim, area attack necessitating Dex save or sustained radiating damage).

MAPS & HANDOUTS:

- Crater illustrations featuring celestial disruptions.
- Cultist letter fragments offering cues to mysteries and celestial narratives.

SUGGESTED MOOD SETTING:

- **Music/Sound Effects:** Choose ambient tracks with deep percussion and ethereal overtones (*Dark Ambient Vol. 4* or *Ethereal Twilight*). Shift to tension-laden themes during combat (such as alien-ambient scores—*Celestial Unease*).

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES:

- Mara Quill might betray the party, or Brother Kaelmire may interfere if the party veers from altruistic paths.
- In case of failure, allow regrouping for further campaign arcs, potentially leading players to uncover what lurks beyond the cosmic veil.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP:

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- What were the standout moments?
- How effective was the tone and atmosphere?
- Would uncovering the further mysteries of the Celestial Maw intrigue you?

EPILOGUE:

Though the imminent danger subsides, celestial fractures remain—what adventures may await beyond the horizon's end?