

Session 00: Before the Descent

Session Summary

Session 0 was the group's first gathering for the **Out of the Abyss** campaign. No in-game adventuring began during this session; instead, the group focused on campaign expectations, Foundry VTT setup, character creation, party composition, scheduling, and the opening premise of the campaign.

The confirmed attendees for the first get-together were **Kennith, Robb, Moose, Rework / Rewrock** as Dungeon Master, **James**, and **Justin**. After Session 0, **Michael** also confirmed that he was keen to join the campaign, though his character details were not yet established.

Rework introduced the campaign as a dark Underdark survival story. The world beneath the surface was described as vast, alien, dangerous, and hostile: a realm of endless caverns, fungal forests, underground seas, ancient civilizations, scarce food, precious light, and strange powers. The group was warned that the campaign would not always assume fair fights or easy solutions. Survival, caution, judgement, and knowing when to run would matter.

The party will begin at **level 3** as captives in the Underdark. The characters have been taken prisoner by drow, and each player was asked to explain why their character was in the Underdark and how they ended up captured. This became the main character backstory prompt after the session.

Campaign Setup Decisions

Topic	Decision / Current Status
Campaign	Out of the Abyss
Dungeon Master	Rework / Rewrock
Starting Level	Level 3
Opening Situation	The party begins as captives in the Underdark, held by drow.
Ruleset	Use 2024 / 5.5e options where available. Older 5e material may be used where appropriate, but players were told to avoid accidentally using legacy versions when a 2024 option exists.

Stats	Rolled stats using the Discord dice bot. Players may roll twice and choose one full set. No mixing between sets.
Starting Gear	Starting equipment is not a priority because the party begins in captivity. Spellcasting focuses and material components may become an early problem for casters.
Session Cadence	Biweekly / every three weeks was the winning preference in the Discord poll.
Likely Session Time	Sunday nights were discussed as the preferred option for several players.
Safety Tool	An X-card is available in Foundry if a subject or scene becomes uncomfortable and needs to be skipped or moved past.

Players and Known Characters

Player	Character	Known Build	Known Backstory / Role
Justin	Aeris Nailo	Male Wood Elf Druid, Circle of the Land, Guide background, Magician Primal Order	Aeris was once a surface woodland guide and grove-warden. He followed signs of corruption beneath his home forest, including strange fungal growths, sickened animals, and unnatural tremors. He entered the Underdark to investigate, was ambushed, and was taken captive.
James	Iragon Midsommar	Paladin / Warlock concept, melee tank	Iragon is tied to Titania and the Spring Court. He followed signs of shadow and danger into Faerûn and eventually into the Underdark, where he was overwhelmed and captured by drow. He believes his presence below may still serve Titania's purpose.

Moose	Varang, the Ash-Mender	Cleric-style healer; Divine Order: Protector was mentioned during setup	Varang is a healer from the Cinderborn, a hidden enclave of Chthonic Tiedflings living in volcanic tunnels and Underdark border-caves. Their healing is harsh, ritualistic, and tied to ash, fire, pain, fungus, and the cycle of life and death. Varang was captured by drow slavers while returning from the Ash Vigil.
Robb	Unknown	Wizard, likely Abjurer	Robb settled on playing a Wizard after the group discussed party balance. Backstory was still pending at the end of the available notes.
Kennith	Unknown	Unknown	Character details were not yet clearly confirmed in the transcript or follow-up notes.
Michael	Unknown	Unknown	Michael confirmed after Session 0 that he was keen to join the campaign. Character details are still pending.
Rework	N/A	Dungeon Master	Rework ran the setup session, introduced the campaign, explained Foundry, handled technical issues, and asked players to prepare their character reasons for being captive in the Underdark.

Character Backstory Prompt

Every player was asked to answer the central campaign question:

“ Why is your character in the Underdark, and how did they become a captive?

Rework gave several possible examples. A character might have been exploring, might have been part of a party that was killed, might have been dragged below from the surface, or might have been captured directly by drow. The important point is that each character begins the campaign already imprisoned in the Underdark.

Confirmed Character Backstories So Far

Aeris Nailo

Aeris Nailo is a male Wood Elf Druid, formerly a guide and grove-warden from the surface. He was used to reading tracks, weather, animal signs, and old forest paths. Before his descent, he noticed signs that something beneath the world was poisoning the land above: strange fungal growths, sickened animals, and unnatural tremors.

He followed those signs into forgotten caverns, intending to scout the source of the corruption and return with a warning. He never made it back. Somewhere below, Aeris was ambushed, overwhelmed, and taken captive. He is now trapped far from the open sky, cut off from the forest he once protected, and forced to adapt his instincts to a stranger, darker ecosystem.

Iragon Midsommar

Iragon Midsommar was born beneath the ever-blooming boughs of the Spring Court, where Titania rules with radiant grace. Drawn to his compassion and resolve, Titania accepted his oath and bound him as one of her knights. Through her blessing, Iragon became a paladin of renewal, sent wherever hope struggled to survive.

When Titania whispered of shadows festering in Faerûn, Iragon followed the call. His path eventually led him into the Underdark while tracking raiders. There he was overwhelmed and captured by drow. Shackled in darkness, he does not believe he has been abandoned. He believes the Archfey do nothing without purpose, and that spring cannot truly be caged.

Varang, the Ash-Mender

Varang, also called the Ash-Mender, was born among the Cinderborn: a hidden enclave of Chthonic Tieflings living in volcanic tunnels and old Underdark border-caves, far from surface kingdoms. The Cinderborn survive through ritual, discipline, secrecy, and an unflinching respect for the cycle of life and death.

To the Cinderborn, death and life are part of the same furnace. A body dies. Bone becomes ash. Ash feeds earth. Earth births life again. To heal someone is not to bless them with soft light; it is to

drag them back through the fire before death can claim them.

Varang trained as a healer, learning to mend flesh through ash rites, pressure, pain, fire, fungus, and whispered prayers to the Ember Below. Their magic is not gentle or golden. It burns, seals, cauterises, and drags the dying back from the dark.

As part of the Hermit's Ash Vigil, Varang left their people to survive alone in the deep places. There they gathered grave ash, rare fungal medicines, and omens from forgotten death-shrines. During the vigil, Varang found signs that something was deeply wrong below: corrupted growths, broken death-marks, fleeing creatures, and tunnels that felt sick with madness.

On the return journey, weakened and half-starved, Varang was ambushed by drow slavers. They fought with mace, spell, tooth, and curse, but were eventually overwhelmed and taken captive. Now trapped in the Underdark, Varang intends to survive, escape, and discover what is poisoning the deep cycle beneath the world.

Foundry VTT Setup

A major part of Session 0 was spent learning the Foundry VTT setup. Rework demonstrated how character sheets work, how to drag in classes, species, backgrounds, spells, weapons, and features from the compendiums, and how to use rolls directly from the sheet.

The group was shown how to roll checks, attacks, and damage; how to use advantage and disadvantage; how to use the hotbar; how to right-click tokens for quick actions; how to use initiative; how to perform group checks; and how to adjust music and dice settings.

Rework also showed several quality-of-life features, including turn order display, token notes, detachable character sheets for multi-screen setups, custom dice, quick-access actions, and calendar/time tracking. Foundry was presented as the main campaign hub, while Discord would be used for between-session discussion, character updates, and planning.

Foundry Issues and Fixes

Issue	Status
Orc darkvision was not appearing correctly.	Rework manually added darkvision under senses.
Divine Order: Protector was not correctly applying heavy armour and martial weapon proficiency.	Rework fixed the issue for Moose.
Some 2024 spells were missing or showing only legacy versions, including Blade Ward and Armor of Agathys.	Rework re-imported spells and added the missing entries.
Some older backgrounds may not automatically grant an origin feat.	Players were warned to check this manually and add an origin feat if needed.

Dice tray add-on was temporarily broken due to Foundry update compatibility.

Players were shown alternate dice rolling options.

Party Composition Discussion

The group spent time discussing possible roles and class choices. Early ideas included Druid, Cleric, Paladin, Warlock, Barbarian, Wizard, Ranger, Monk, Bard, Rogue, Sorcerer, and Fighter. Rework noted that the party was initially leaning heavily toward melee and warned that the group may want some ranged damage, arcane utility, scouting, and broader magical support.

By the end of the available notes, the party appeared to have the beginnings of a broad spread: Aeris as a Druid focused on survival, scouting, and nature magic; Iragon as a Paladin / Warlock melee tank; Varang as a harsh Underdark healer; and Robb leaning into Wizard. Kenneth and Michael's final character choices were still unknown.

Table Tone and Expectations

Rework made it clear that this campaign will not always be balanced around the party winning every direct confrontation. The Underdark is dangerous, and the players may need to judge whether a situation is worth fighting, avoiding, fleeing, or returning to later. The group was warned that even starting at level 3 does not mean they are prepared for everything below.

The tone is expected to include survival, darkness, danger, strange environments, alien creatures, scarce resources, and difficult choices. At the same time, the group's table humour was already alive and well, with jokes about fear of spiders, fear of the dark, dangerous levels of melee enthusiasm, and the timeless D&D strategy of touching the cursed-looking thing just to see what happens.

Current Open Tasks Before Session 1

- Confirm Kenneth's character concept, class, species, and reason for being captured.
- Confirm Michael's character concept now that he is joining the campaign.
- Confirm Robb's Wizard backstory and final subclass choice.
- Confirm Moose's final mechanical build for Varang.
- Finish spell selections for all casters.
- Check that all characters have correct 2024 / 5.5e versions of their class, species, background, spells, traits, and origin feat.
- Confirm any Wild Shape forms Aeris expects to use so Rework can prepare Foundry actors and tokens.

- Rework to review completed characters for missing proficiencies, traits, senses, spells, and automation issues.
- Confirm the date for Session 1.

Closing State

Session 0 ended with the campaign technically and narratively ready to begin. The players had learned the basics of Foundry, settled the broad campaign expectations, agreed on a level 3 start, and began forming the party. The campaign's first true scene will begin not with a tavern, a quest board, or a heroic march into danger, but with the characters already trapped in the dark as prisoners of the drow.

The next step is simple, ugly, and very Underdark: survive captivity, find a way out, and work out what is wrong beneath the world before the dark decides to keep them.

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