

Session 10: Help Me

 **Music**

Placeholder — session song / soundtrack to be added after the recap is approved.

 **Images**

Image placeholders. The attached source images can be uploaded to BookStack and inserted here.

- **Varang Flashback:** the corrupted singing tunnel and broken death mark.
- **Opening / Establishing Image:** the party's first view of Gracklstugh and its immense forges.
- **City Reference:** Gracklstugh map.
- **Combat:** the two-headed giant restrained in the Blade Bazaar.
- **Aftermath:** the giant fallen into the fountain as the party prepares to disappear north.

? Trailer

Placeholder — cinematic session trailer to be added later.

? Campaign Arc

Campaign	Out of the Abyss
Dungeon Master	Reuben / Rewrock
Session Number	10
Session Title	Help Me
Date	2026-09-23
Setting	Gracklstugh, the Darklake District and Blade Bazaar; flashback to Varang's home tunnels
Player Attendance	All five active player characters present

? Previously On...

Session 9 brought the travellers within reach of Gracklstugh, but not without another brutal cost. In an abandoned dwarven mine near the city, the group confronted an adult red dragon. The creature was eventually defeated, but Sarith Kzekarit was killed by its fire. The survivors left the mine carrying fresh treasure and the consequences of another companion lost on the road.

With Sarith gone and the party now reduced to five player characters accompanied by their remaining former-prisoner allies, Gracklstugh offered something the road had rarely provided: walls, merchants, supplies, and the possibility of temporary shelter. It also offered laws, clan politics, slavery, invisible duergar, and an entirely new collection of ways to get into trouble.

? Overview

The session opened away from Gracklstugh in a memory belonging to Varang the Ash-Mender. Deep beneath his home, Varang found a death mark split cleanly through the centre, black sap bleeding from the fracture while pale, sickly mice moved through blue fungus twisted into unnatural spirals. The tunnels had been reported to be “singing wrong.” As Varang moved closer, the sound gathered into layered tones and began matching his heartbeat. When he touched the stone it became painfully warm, then the singing stopped as though the tunnel had noticed him. Varang returned to the elders with a simple conclusion: this was not ordinary decay. Two evenings of discussion followed before the elders declared an Ash Vigil — both an honour and an exile — and sent Varang into the deep with a bone vial of his teachers' ashes, a black mace, a fungus lamp, red paint, and two unnamed companions.

Back in the present, Buppido prepared the group for Gracklstugh. He described a city divided by clans, trades, law, old rivalries, slavery, and the constant possibility of unseen duergar spies. Foreigners were tolerated mainly within the Darklake District, and the party was warned to stay together, avoid drawing attention, and not assume that privacy meant nobody was listening. Rather than arrive openly through the main approaches, the group chose a quieter route. Buppido led them to an old fish market, where he negotiated with local fishermen. The normal entry tax had risen to thirty gold per foreigner; the boatmen instead agreed to carry the party's twelve travellers for fifteen gold each, a total of 180 gold. Unknown to the characters, Buppido quietly palmed another five gold during the handover. The same fishermen made a regular fish run at ten each morning, giving the group a possible route back out.

The boat delivered them to the Darklake Docks at roughly seven in the evening. From there Buppido led the party into the **Blade Bazaar** and pointed out two shops still open: the **Gilded Gryphon** and **Dwarven Supplies**. The group spent roughly an hour restocking and reorganising. Varang purchased four *Potions of Healing* for the party and later acquired a **Healer's Kit**, **Forgery Kit**, and **Disguise Kit** together for forty gold. He also sought a diamond of roughly three hundred gold value, but **Thoric** could not provide one and instead directed him toward a duergar smith. Iragon commissioned a fitted suit of plate armour from the Gilded Gryphon, paying a 735 gold

deposit with another 735 due when the armour was ready on the seventh day of Kythorn. The party also sold its unused +1 club for 250 gold, while the jade statuettes, gemstones, paintings, and other accumulated valuables remained unsold.

The shopping ended when Varang noticed heavy rumbling approaching through the market. A two-headed grey giant smashed into the Blade Bazaar, scattering workers and crashing into the fountain. Its behaviour was immediately wrong: one head was panicked and repeatedly cried for help, while the other roared, attacked anything nearby, and later began frothing at the mouth. Edric stepped outside and cast Web, restraining the giant and giving the party the opening it needed. Vorgrath charged in raging, Eldeth and the other companions joined the fight, and Ront answered Eldeth being knocked unconscious with a brutal critical greataxe strike. Varang restored Eldeth with Healing Word while Prince Derendil tore at the giant with his claws and Iragon struck from range.

Aeris transformed the ground around the giant with Spike Growth, attempting to contain it without catching Eldeth. The spell worked against the battlefield but created a second disaster when a fleeing market worker crossed the hidden spikes and died. Vorgrath shouted for the thorns to be dropped. Before Aeris ended the spell, Vorgrath carved through the giant and severed its free hand. Aeris then dismissed the spikes, drew a hand crossbow, and fired the final bolt through the back of the giant's skull. The creature toppled head-first into the fountain.

With a distant whistle sounding somewhere through the streets and the shopkeeper urging them to head north, the party did not wait to explain itself to the city authorities. Aeris Wild Shaped into an ordinary rat and hid among barrels before Edric scooped him into a pocket. The group slipped north through the streets under stealth, Buppido guiding them to a tavern where rooms were available. At roughly eight o'clock on the fifth day of Kythorn, the survivors disappeared inside and the session ended.

????? Party Members

Character	Player	Class / Subclass	Race	Status	Notable Actions
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Aeris Naïlo 	Justin / Slitzer	Druid / Circle of the Land	Wood Elf	Alive	Cast Spike Growth around the restrained giant; unintentionally killed a fleeing market worker who crossed the hidden spikes; ended concentration when warned; killed the giant with a hand crossbow bolt through the back of its skull; Wild Shaped into a normal rat to help the party disappear from the scene.
Edric Faustin Valemont 	BaconBuff / Rob	Wizard / Abjurer	Human	Alive; Session MVP	Cast Web with his final spell slot, restraining the giant for most of the encounter and allowing repeated attacks with advantage; later damaged it with Toll the Dead; helped organise the escape north and carried rat-shaped Aeris in his pocket. The Web earned the session MVP vote.

Varang the Ash-Mender 	Ben / Moose	Cleric / Life Domain	Chthonic Tiefling	Alive	Was the focus of the opening flashback and the revelation of the living corruption beneath his home; bought four healing potions for the group and practical medical/forgery supplies; searched unsuccessfully for a suitable diamond; restored Eldeth after the giant knocked her unconscious.
Iragon Midsommar 	James / Sicareus	Warlock / Paladin	Eladrin	Alive; plate armour commissioned	Ordered fitted plate armour from the Gilded Gryphon for collection on the seventh day of Kythorn; tested Cause Fear against the giant before switching tactics; struck the restrained creature with an Agonizing Eldritch Blast during the market fight.

Vorgrath Kael 	Mike / MikeKong	Barbarian / Path of the World Tree	Orc	Alive	Charged the giant while raging, landed repeated greataxe blows while it was restrained, used his World Tree vitality to support Eldeth, severed the giant's free hand, and loudly ordered Aeris to drop the Spike Growth after the civilian was killed.
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? NPC Tracker

Portrait placeholder: reuse the established Session 9 companion portraits for Buppido, Prince Derendil, Eldeth, Jimjar, Ront, Fargus and Stool.

NPC	Role	Status	Session 10 Notes
Buppido 	Derro former prisoner; guide and informant	Alive; with party	Briefed the party on Gracklstugh, negotiated their boat passage, and led them through the Blade Bazaar and later to the tavern.
Prince Derendil 	Quaggoth who claims to be an elven prince	Alive; with party	Charged the restrained giant and struck it with his claws.

Eldeth Feldrun 	Shield dwarf former prisoner ally	Alive; with party	Fought the giant at close range, was knocked unconscious by its club, and returned to the fight after Varang healed her.
Jimjar 	Deep gnome gambler	Alive; with party	Remained with the group through the city entry and escape.
Ront 	Orc former prisoner ally	Alive; with party	Charged after Eldeth fell and landed a critical greataxe strike against the giant.
Fargus Rumblefoot 	Halfling traveller and guide	Alive; with party	Remained with the group and intended to stay longer in Gracklstugh.

Stool 	Myconid sprout / former prisoner ally	Alive; with party	Still travelled with the group, though he had no major spotlight during the session.
Ragnor 	Merchants of the Gilded Gryphon	Alive	Sold and commissioned weapons and armour; accepted Iragon's plate-armour order.
Thoric 	Merchant of Dwarven Supplies	Alive	Sold healing supplies and kits, and directed Varang toward a duergar smith for the diamond he wanted.
Unnamed Fishermen	Boatmen working from the old fish market	Alive	Carried the twelve travellers into the Darklake District for 180 gold and made a regular ten-o'clock morning fish run.
Two-Headed Grey Giant 	Unidentified attacker	Dead	One head pleaded for help while the other behaved violently and later frothed at the mouth. The cause of its condition was not discovered.

? Key Locations

- **Varang's Home Tunnels:** The flashback site of the broken death mark, black sap, sickly blue fungus, singing stone, and the event that led to Varang's Ash Vigil.
- **Approach to Gracklstugh:** The party's first view of the enormous duergar city was marked by metallic air, constant smithing, massive stonework, and lava plumes feeding the forges.
- **Old Fish Market:** Buppido found fishermen willing to take the group by boat into the Darklake District rather than send them through the city's formal entry process.
- **Darklake Docks:** The party's discreet arrival point at roughly seven in the evening.
- **Blade Bazaar:** The market district containing the Gilded Gryphon and Dwarven Supplies, and later the site of the giant attack.
- **Gilded Gryphon:** Weapon and armour merchant where Iragon commissioned plate armour and the party sold its unused +1 club.
- **Dwarven Supplies:** General supplies, remedies, healing potions, kits, and local information supplied by Thoric.
- **Northern Tavern:** The party's refuge after leaving the giant's body and the dead civilian behind in the market.

? Session Highlights

- Varang's flashback established that the corruption beneath his home did not merely spread: the tunnel appeared aware of him, and his Ash Vigil was both an honour and an exile.
- Buppido warned the group that Gracklstugh's invisibility culture made unseen observers a normal part of life, while clan rivalries, slavery, corruption, and drow trade complicated the city's promise of sanctuary.
- The party avoided a thirty-gold-per-head formal entry cost by paying fishermen fifteen gold each for a twelve-person boat passage into the Darklake District.
- Iragon placed a 735-gold deposit on fitted plate armour, due for collection on the seventh day of Kythorn with another 735 gold remaining.
- Edric's Web restrained the two-headed giant for most of the battle and earned him the Session 10 MVP vote.
- A fleeing market worker died after crossing Aeris's Spike Growth; Aeris later killed the giant with a hand crossbow and immediately transformed into a rat for the escape.
- The group slipped north before authorities arrived and ended the night inside a tavern at approximately eight o'clock on the fifth day of Kythorn.

?? Key Scenes

The Tunnel Listens

Varang stood alone in a narrow basalt throat where a broken death mark bled black sap into sickly blue fungus. The tunnel's metallic singing gathered into several trembling notes until the rhythm matched his heartbeat. When his hand touched the stone, the rock became too warm, the singing stopped, and the silence felt less like absence than attention.

First Sight of Gracklstugh

Buppido led Aeris to the edge of a vast cavern where Gracklstugh emerged through smoke and forge-glow. Massive stone structures crowded the distance, lava plumes burned behind the city, and the constant hammering of duergar industry carried through the hot metallic air. Buppido's warning about invisible watchers made the sprawling city feel occupied long before any guard approached them.

“Help Me”

Edric stepped out from the shop as the two-headed grey giant crashed into the market fountain. Thick magical webbing snapped across the creature and locked its limbs in place. One head strained against the strands, panicked and pleading for help, while the other roared hard enough to spray foam from its mouth and fought to tear itself loose.

Rat in the Pocket

With the giant dead in the fountain and a distant whistle carrying through the streets, Aeris collapsed into the shape of an ordinary rat and vanished among the market clutter. Edric scooped the tiny druid up, tucked him into a pocket, and followed the others north as Buppido hurried them away from the scene.

? Ongoing Threads & Plot Hooks

- **The Living Corruption:** Varang's flashback confirmed broken death marks, black sap, warped fungus, sick animals, and stone that appeared aware of him. The nature of the phenomenon remains unknown.
- **Varang's Ash Vigil:** The journey into the deep began as an honour-and-exile vow to gather grave ash, listen to the dead, and return with knowledge — or not return at all. The relationship between that vow and the corruption remains unresolved.
- **The Giant's Two Minds:** One head repeatedly begged for help while the other raged and frothed. The party killed the creature before learning what had happened to it.
- **Iragon's Plate Armour:** The armour is due on the seventh day of Kythorn. A second payment of 735 gold remains outstanding.
- **Varang's Diamond:** Varang sought a diamond worth roughly 300 gold but did not obtain one. Thoric directed him toward a duergar smith who might be able to supply it. Varang

did not state its intended purpose during the session.

- **Unsold Treasure:** The party still holds jade statuettes, gemstones, paintings, and other accumulated valuables that were discussed but not sold during the shopping trip.
- **Gracklstugh's Politics:** Clan rivalries, invisible duergar, slavery, corruption, drow trade, and restrictions on foreigners remain immediate hazards while the group stays in the city.
- **The Market Aftermath:** The party left behind a dead giant and a civilian killed by Spike Growth before slipping away. Whether the incident was witnessed, investigated, or connected back to them remains unresolved.

? Loot & Discoveries

Item / Transaction	Holder / Party	Description / Status
4 × Potions of Healing	Party	Purchased by Varang and distributed through the group so each adventurer could carry emergency healing.
Healer's Kit	Varang	Purchased as part of a three-kit bundle.
Forgery Kit	Varang	Purchased as part of the same bundle.
Disguise Kit	Party / unclaimed	Purchased in the three-kit bundle; Varang did not take it personally.
+1 Club	Sold	Sold to the Gilded Gryphon for 250 gold.
Fitted Plate Armour 	Iragon	Commissioned from the Gilded Gryphon. 735 gold paid as deposit; 735 gold remains due on collection on the seventh day of Kythorn.
Diamond, approximately 300 gp value	Not acquired	Varang attempted to source one. Thoric could not provide it and referred him elsewhere.

Noteworthy Discoveries

The Tunnel Was Listening: Varang's memory provided the clearest evidence yet that the corruption near his home was not behaving like normal rot or decay. The stone reacted to his heartbeat and appeared to notice his touch.

No Prize on the Giant: A quick check of the body found no obvious valuables worth taking before the party fled.

?? Cliffhanger

- The party ended Session 10 inside a tavern in northern Gracklstugh at roughly eight o'clock on the fifth day of Kythorn, having escaped the Blade Bazaar before anyone could formally question them.
- Outside, a dead two-headed giant and a civilian killed by Spike Growth remained in the market, while the source of the distant whistle and the city's response were still unknown.
- Iragon must return for his armour in two days, Varang still needs a suitable diamond, and the group has barely begun navigating a city where unseen duergar observers are considered ordinary.

Revision #2

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