



D&D

# BALDUR'S GATE DESCENT INTO AVERNUS

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Diabolical dangers await in this adventure  
for the world's greatest roleplaying game

BALDUR'S GATE™  
**DESCENT INTO AVERNUS™**

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## ON THE COVER

The symbol of Bhaal fills the sky over Avernus as the River Styx seethes below. Illustrator Tyler Jacobson shows the archdevil Zariel reaching for her sword—a reminder of her angelic origins—as her evil henchman Haruman follows her into damnation.

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Perkins, Christopher, Will Doyle, and Steve Winter. *Tomb of Annihilation*. 2017.

Vanthampur Villa was inspired by a building design by Dean Turner.

*Disclaimer: This adventure is a work of fiction aimed at providing you and your friends with many hours of fantastic entertainment. Although devils and the Nine Hells play prominent roles in this story, the evil they represent is meant to be fought and overcome. Wizards of the Coast fully endorses the kicking of evil's butt. Let darkness fall and light prevail! We strongly advise that you not play this adventure backward, lest Asmodeus appear in a puff of smoke to talk politics, as archfiends are wont to do.*



## ON THE ALTERNATIVE COVER

The flame-ringed skull of Bhaal, bound on either side by Zariel's angelic sword, adorns the front cover. On the back cover, the archdevil of Avernus herself graces us with her fiendish presence. Both covers were created by Hydro74.



# CONTENTS

<b>Pronunciation Guide</b>	4	Uldrak's Grave.....	109	<b>App. C: Magic Items</b>	223
<b>About the Adventure</b>	5	Arkhan's Tower.....	110	<b>App. D: Creatures</b>	228
Adventure Overview	5	Monument to Tiamat.....	112	Amnizu.....	228
Adventure Background	7	Bel's Forge.....	113	Baphomet.....	229
Roleplaying Devils	8	Sibriex.....	116	Bulezau.....	230
Life in the Nine Hells	9	Wrecked Flying Fortress.....	118	Crokek'toeck.....	230
<b>Ch. 1: A Tale of Two Cities</b>	10	Other Locations.....	122	Cultists of the Dead Three.....	231
Fall of Elturel.....	10	Stygian Dock.....	123	Fiendish Flesh Golem.....	236
Evil in Baldur's Gate	11	Styx Watchtowers.....	124	Hellwasp.....	237
Running This Chapter	11	Sundered Chains.....	126	Hollyphant.....	237
The Basilisk Gate	12	The Wandering Emporium.....	126	Merregon.....	238
Elfsong Tavern	16	Zariel's Flying Fortress.....	130	Narzugon.....	238
Dungeon of the Dead Three	20	Roaming Encounter: Smiler the Defiler.....	133	Nupperibo.....	238
Low Lantern	28			Redcap.....	240
Vanthampur Villa	32	<b>Ch. 4: Sword of Zariel</b>	134	Tressym.....	240
Under the Villa	37	Approaching the Citadel.....	134	White Abishai.....	241
Final Encounters in Baldur's Gate	42	The Scab.....	134	Yeenoghu.....	242
Journey to Candlekeep	43	Entering the Citadel.....	139	Zariel.....	243
Candlekeep	45	Idyllglen.....	140	<b>App. E: Infernal Rapture Menus</b>	244
Getting to Avernus	50	Claiming the Sword.....	145	<b>App. F: Story Concept Art</b>	246
<b>Ch. 2: Elturel Has Fallen</b>	52	<b>Ch. 5: Escape from Avernus</b>	146	<b>App. G: Infernal Script</b>	256
Running This Chapter	52	Who Should Rule Avernus?.....	146	<b>Maps</b>	
Arrival in Elturel	52	Will Elturel Be Saved?.....	150	1.1: Baldur's Gate.....	13
High Hall	58	Endgame in Elturel.....	154	1.2: Elfsong Tavern.....	17
Grand Cemetery	64	<b>Baldur's Gate Gazetteer</b>	158	1.3: Dungeon of the Dead Three.....	21
Escaping the Siege	71	History of Baldur's Gate.....	158	1.4: Low Lantern.....	29
<b>Ch. 3: Avernus</b>	74	Baldur's Gate Today.....	159	1.5: Vanthampur Villa.....	33
Running This Chapter	74	Government.....	161	1.6: Under the Villa.....	37
What Is Avernus?	75	Citizenry.....	164	2.1: Elturel.....	56
Features of Avernus	76	Economy and Trade.....	165	2.2: High Hall Cathedral.....	61
Using the Poster Map	79	Religion.....	166	2.3: Hall High Cathedral, Choir Level.....	62
Fort Knucklebone	80	Dangers in Baldur's Gate.....	170	2.4: High Hall Catacombs.....	63
Raggadragga Attacks!	87	City Landmarks.....	174	2.5: Grand Cemetery Chapel.....	67
Warlords of the Averni		Upper City.....	176	2.6: Grand Cemetery, Ossuary Level.....	69
Wastelands	90	Lower City.....	184	3.1: Avernus.....	79
Quest for the Sword	92	Outer City.....	194	3.2: Hellwasp Nest.....	95
Haruman's Hill	92	Beyond Baldur's Gate.....	201	3.3: Crypt of the Hellriders.....	101
Hellwasp Nest	94	Baldur's Gate Character Backgrounds.....	202	3.4: Bone Brambles.....	108
Path of Demons	96	Dark Secrets.....	208	3.5: Bel's Forge.....	114
Spawning Trees	96	<b>App. A: Diabolical Deals</b>	212	3.6: Wrecked Flying Fortress.....	120
Tower of Urm	97	Infernal Contracts.....	214	3.7: Stygian Watchtower.....	125
Obelisk	98	Archdevil Charms.....	215	4.1: Side View of the Scab.....	137
Mirror of Mephistar	99	<b>App. B: Infernal War Machines</b>	216	4.2: Idyllglen.....	141
Pit of Shummrrath	100	Stat Blocks.....	216	The Sword Coast.....	160
Crypt of the Hellriders	101	Rules.....	216	Baldur's Gate.....	172
Arches of Ulloch	103	Fiendish Variations.....	221	Players' Map of Elturel.....	Poster Map
Kostchtchie's Maw	104	Chases on Avernus.....	222	Players' Map of Avernus.....	Poster Map
Path of Devils	106				
Demon Zapper	106				
Bone Brambles	107				

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# PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

This guide shows how to pronounce many of the non-English names that appear in this adventure.

Name	Pronunciation	Description
Abishai	AB-ish-eye	Devil loyal to Tiamat that exists outside the Infernal Hierarchy
Amnizu	am-NEET-zoo	Greater devil that guards gateways to the Nine Hells
Amrik Vanthampur	AM-rik VAN-tham-per	Second son of Duke Thalamra Vanthampur of Baldur's Gate
Arkhan the Cruel	AR-kawn	Evil dragonborn champion of Tiamat
Asmodeus	az-moh-DAY-us, or az-MOH-dee-us	Archdevil, greater god, and Lord of the Nine Hells
Baphomet	BAF-oh-met	Demon lord worshiped by minotaurs
Balarystul	bah-lar-RISS-tul	Ancient copper dragon that has infiltrated the Wandering Emporium
Bazelsteen	BAY-zel-steen	Horned devil that oversees flying fortress repairs at the Stygian Dock
Belynne Stelmane	beh-LIN STEL-mane	One of four dukes on the Council of Four that governs Baldur's Gate
Bhaal	BAWL	Mortal god of murder, and one of the Dead Three
Bulezau	BOO-leh-zow	Horned demon with rotting flesh
Crokek'toeck	CROW-kek-toe-ick	Gargantuan demon that carries other demons inside it
Dillard Portyr	DILL-erd por-TEER	One of four dukes on the Council of Four that governs Baldur's Gate
Falaster Fisk	FAL-ass-ter	Helpful spy imprisoned in the dungeon under Vanthampur Villa
Fhet'Ahila	fett-AH-lah	Amnizu that runs From Here to Avernus in the Wandering Emporium
Gabourey D'Vaelan	gah-BUR-ee duh-VAY-lan	Cook who works at Vanthampur Villa in Baldur's Gate
Gargauth	GAR-gawth	Pit fiend imprisoned in the <i>Shield of the Hidden Lord</i>
Haruman	HAIR-oo-man	Fallen paladin of Elturel, now a narzugon devil loyal to Zariel
Jhessa Brightstar	JESS-ah	Priest of Lathander in Idyllglen
Kaejil Orûnmar	KAY-jil oh-ROON-mar	Tax collector imprisoned in Vanthampur Villa
Klim Jhasso	JAH-soh	Member of the Jhasso patriarch (noble) family of Baldur's Gate
Kostchtchie	koss-CHEE-chee	Demon lord worshiped by some frost giants
Laraelra Thundreth	lah-RAIL-rah THUN-dreth	Proprietor of the Low Lantern, a tavern in Baldur's Gate
Liara Portyr	lee-AR-ah por-TEER	Commander of the Flaming Fist recalled to Baldur's Gate
Lulu	LOO-loo	Hollyphant suffering from memory loss
Matalotok	mah-tah-LOH-tok	Magical hammer stolen from Kostchtchie by Zariel
Mordenkainen	mor-den-KAY-nen, or mor-den-KIGH-nen	Famous archmage who inhabits the Tower of Urm in Avernus
Mortlock Vanthampur	MORT-lock VAN-tham-per	Third son of Duke Thalamra Vanthampur of Baldur's Gate
Myrkul	MER-kul	Mortal god of death and necromancy, and one of the Dead Three
Nariangela	nar-ee-AWN-jeh-lah	Erinyes bridge officer aboard Zariel's flying fortress
Nupperibo	nuh-pur-REE-boh	Least devil common throughout the Nine Hells
Olanthus	oh-LAN-thee-us	Fallen paladin of Elturel, now a death knight sworn to obey Zariel
Pherria Jynks	FAIR-ee-ah JINX	Acolyte of Torm in Elturel's High Hall cathedral
Reya Mantlemorn	RAY-ah MAN-tul-morn	Hellrider sworn to protect and defend Elturel
Satiir Thione-Hhune	sah-TEER thee-AWN-hewn	Member of the Hhune patriarch (noble) family of Baldur's Gate
Shaleen Zoraz	shaw-LEEN zor-AHZ	Sewer maintenance supervisor imprisoned in Vanthampur Villa
Sibriex	SIB-ree-ex	Demon that looks like a bloated sack of pustulent flesh
Sylvira Savikas	sil-VEER-ah sah-VEE-kas	Tiefling archmage and expert on the Nine Hells
Thalamra Vanthampur	thah-LAM-rah VAN-tham-per	One of four dukes on the Council of Four that governs Baldur's Gate
Thavius Kreeg	THAY-vee-us KREEG	Former cleric of Torm and High Overseer of Elturel
Thurstwell Vanthampur	THURST-well VAN-tham-per	First son of Duke Thalamra Vanthampur of Baldur's Gate
Tiamat	TEE-ah-mat	Five-headed queen of evil dragons trapped in the Nine Hells
Trantolox	TRAN-toe-lox	Nalfeshnee encountered outside the Bleeding Citadel
Traxigor	TRAX-eh-gor	Archmage transformed into an otter
Ulder Ravengard	UL-der RAY-ven-gard	Grand Duke of Baldur's Gate and leader of the Flaming Fist
Yael	YAY-el	Deceased defender of Elturel, now a ghost in the Nine Hells
Yeenoghu	yee-NO-goo	Demon lord worshiped by gnolls
Zariel	ZAR-ee-el, or ZAIR-ee-el	Archdevil and ruler of Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells

# ABOUT THE ADVENTURE



ESIGNED FOR AN ADVENTURING PARTY OF four to six 1st-level characters, *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus* is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure that begins in the city of Baldur's Gate and ends in Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells. By the end of the adventure, the characters should be 13th level or higher. To run this adventure, you need the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*.

Use the first session of the game to help your players create their 1st-level characters. As part of this process, the players can choose their party's dark secret (see page 208).

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The holy city of Elturel has disappeared from the Forgotten Realms and descended into Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells. This event came about as the result of an infernal bargain between the archdevil Zariel, who rules Avernus, and the treacherous High Overseer of Elturel, Thavius Kreeg. Zariel is capturing cities and using their citizens as fodder in the ongoing conflict between demons and devils known as the Blood War. Next on Zariel's list of cities is Elturel's neighbor, Baldur's Gate. The characters can be the heroes who descend into Avernus, save Elturel from certain destruction, and prevent a similar fate from befalling Baldur's Gate.

### TROUBLE IN BALDUR'S GATE

Chapter 1 begins in the independent city of Baldur's Gate, where the characters find themselves trapped behind the city's walls after the gates are sealed to keep out hundreds of refugees from the neighboring land of Elturgard. However, the gates can't hold back news that Elturgard's capital has fallen, and that Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard of Baldur's Gate is missing—lost on a diplomatic mission to Elturel. The fact that Elturel's misfortune coincided with Ravengard's visit has left Baldurians wondering whether Baldur's Gate will suffer Elturel's fate.

The characters are drafted by the Flaming Fist, the army of mercenaries tasked with protecting Baldur's Gate. Without Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard to lead them, the Flaming Fist mercenaries are little more than glorified thugs. The characters' orders are to help maintain peace by rooting out and destroying followers of Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul—evil gods collectively known as the Dead Three. These vile priests, assassins, and necromancers are murdering city folk at random, and the Flaming Fist is too distracted and disorganized to hunt them down and find their lair. In the course of their investigation, the characters learn that the Dead Three cultists are secretly being financed by Thalamra Vanthampur, one of three remaining dukes who preside over the government of Baldur's Gate, using money stolen from the hoard of Tiamat, the evil queen of dragons imprisoned in the Nine Hells.

With Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard out of the way, Thalamra is paying the Dead Three to shatter confidence in the Flaming Fist so that all payments to the decapitated organization can be cut off. Thalamra, a devout disciple of the archdevil Zariel, has brokered a deal that will enable her to claim the role of grand duke once the Flaming Fist disbands, paving the way for the city's descent into Avernus. To accomplish this last goal, Thalamra needs an artifact called the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*, imprisoned in which is a pit fiend named Gargauth. Until recently, the shield was sealed in a tomb under the city, but Thalamra's sons recently stole it and transported it to the dungeon below their villa. So corrupt is the shield that its mere presence in Baldur's Gate has contributed to the city's moral decay for decades.

To keep Baldur's Gate from falling into Zariel's clutches, the characters must take the shield far away from the city. Reya Mantlemorn, a young knight from Elturel, suspects that the Vanthampurs are sheltering Thavius Kreeg at their estate and offers aid. Characters who storm Duke Vanthampur's villa find Thavius hidden in the dungeon below it. Thavius is helping Thalamra Vanthampur use the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* to bring about the fall of Baldur's Gate, in much the same fashion he used the Companion (see page 7) to doom Elturel. If the characters slay Thavius, his soul travels to the Nine Hells and re-forms as an amnizu devil on Avernus (see page 132).

### VISIT TO CANDLEKEEP

In the course of dealing with Thavius Kreeg and the Vanthampur family, characters are likely to acquire the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* as well as an *infernal puzzle box* that they can't open. They might also liberate a spy imprisoned in Duke Vanthampur's dungeon who works for Sylvira Savikas, a tiefling expert on the Nine Hells. Determined to thwart devil worshipers in positions of power throughout the Western Heartlands, Sylvira operates out of the library of Candlekeep and has spent years monitoring devil activity in Baldur's Gate, Elturel, and the surrounding region. Her spies are after the puzzle box, which is believed to contain a copy of the fiendish contract Thavius signed to seal Elturel's doom.

If the characters wish to help Baldur's Gate further, they must journey to the Nine Hells and rescue Ulder Ravengard from what's left of Elturel. The characters are urged to seek out Sylvira Savikas in Candlekeep. Sylvira knows the secret to unlocking Thavius's puzzle box. She can also facilitate the characters' descent into Avernus and provide them with a map (albeit an unreliable one). Sylvira advises characters to leave the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* in her custody. However, there are benefits to taking the shield with them, for Gargauth can guide them through the Nine Hells in ways others cannot. With or without the shield, the characters depart Candlekeep and visit Sylvira's friend, Traxigor, a wizard who can use the *plane shift* spell to get them to Elturel. At this wizard's tower, they meet a hollyphant (see page 237) named Lulu.

## CHAPTER 1: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

For characters of levels 1–4

Pressed into service by the Flaming Fist, the characters seek out and destroy Dead Three cultists who are threatening Baldur's Gate. As the machinations of the Vanthampur family come to light, the characters have a chance to confront Thavius Kreeg, the architect of Elturel's downfall, before traveling to Candlekeep to unlock a mysterious puzzle box and gain safe passage to the Nine Hells.

## CHAPTER 2: ELTUREL HAS FALLEN

For characters of levels 5–6

After befriending a hollyphant named Lulu, the characters help survivors in Elturel, a city anchored by chains above the River Styx on the first layer of the Nine Hells, and search for Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard of Baldur's Gate.

## CHAPTER 3: AVERNUS

For characters of levels 7–10

The characters venture across the wastelands of Avernus in search of allies, face off against warlords and fiends, and search for a way to destroy the Companion or break Elturel's chains.

## CHAPTER 4: SWORD OF ZARIEL

For characters of levels 11–12

The *Sword of Zariel* might be the key to Elturel's salvation, but to get it, the characters must find the Bleeding Citadel—a little slice of heaven trapped in hell. After they unlock Lulu's memories and claim the sword, the characters must decide who is fit to wield such a powerful weapon of good.

## CHAPTER 5: ESCAPE FROM AVERNUS

For characters of levels 13 and higher

The characters use the treasures they've acquired and the deals they've made to free themselves and Elturel from Avernus. Will they use the *Sword of Zariel* or strike an infernal bargain to free the planetar trapped in the Companion? Will they coax a demon into breaking Elturel's chains? Or will they cut a deal with the archdevil Zariel?

## TO THE NINE HELLS!

Chapter 2 opens with the characters' arrival in Elturel, which is anchored by enormous chains and trapped under the baleful light of the Companion. If the characters do nothing, the city will be pulled down into the River Styx and bound to the Nine Hells forever. Lulu tries her best to serve as the party's guide in Avernus, but the hollyphant's memories are fragmented. It becomes clear, however, that Lulu has a personal connection to Zariel, dating back to the archdevil's former angelic existence.

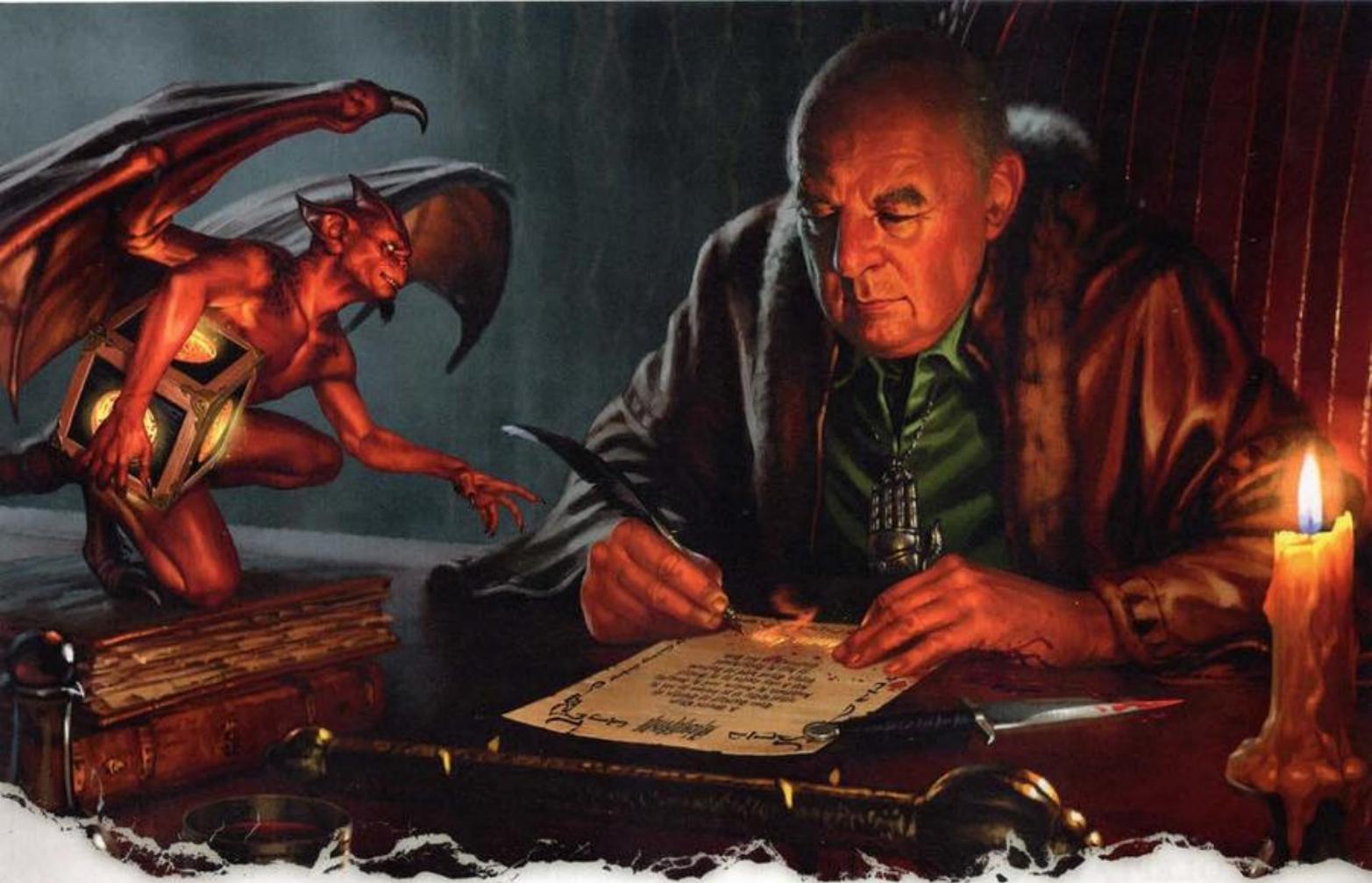
After scouring Elturel for survivors and clashing with the denizens of Avernus, the characters encounter the valiant Ulder Ravengard, who has been placed in the most unusual situation of defending a city he has long opposed. The beleaguered Ravengard urges the characters to do whatever they can to free Elturel and return what's left of it to Faerûn. To do so, they must scour Avernus for the means to destroy the Companion or break the enormous chains that shackle that city, as described in chapter 3.

Avernus has long been a battlefield in the never-ending Blood War. Apart from clashing demons and devils, petty warlords scour the Averian wastelands in search of treasure, salvage, and fuel for their infernal war machines. Characters who forge an alliance with one warlord risk alienating the others. By acquiring an infernal war machine, characters can travel quickly across Avernus—a domain rife with tortured souls, warmongers, and devils eager to tempt would-be heroes into soul-corrupting deals.

The more time she spends with the characters, the more Lulu begins to remember long-lost memories of the *Sword of Zariel*, an angelic weapon with the power to destroy the Companion. After Zariel's fall from grace, the sword was hidden in a stronghold called the Bleeding Citadel—a celestial sanctuary trapped in Avernus. The quest for the sword forms the crux of chapter 4, leading to the revelation that Zariel can be redeemed.

The characters' success doesn't hinge on acquiring the *Sword of Zariel* or helping Zariel find redemption, as Gargauth is quick to point out should the characters consult with him. There are other ways to free Elturel, but only if the characters are willing to cut deals with Avernus's most evil denizens. The characters might broker a deal with the deposed archdevil Bel, who longs to supplant Zariel and regain his title as ruler of Avernus. They might stoke the rage of a horrific demon called Crokek'toeck and trick it into gnawing through Elturel's chains. They might come to terms with an evil dragonborn paladin named Arkhan the Cruel, using him to broker a deal with Tiamat. By returning her stolen treasure, characters can convince Tiamat to break Elturel's chains.

As tempting as such pursuits can be, the characters must be careful, for devil deals, demon lords, and Tiamat's rage number among the multiverse's greatest threats. Also, Zariel herself might become cross with the characters for daring to meddle in her diabolical affairs. How the adventure concludes depends on the choices the characters make, the chaos they foment, and the deals they forge, as discussed in chapter 5.



## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

On the plane of Mount Celestia, the angel Zariel chastised her peers for not getting involved in the Blood War. She felt that it was the responsibility of the angelic host to destroy evil in the multiverse, rather than stand back and watch demons and devils annihilate one another, destroying vast swaths of the multiverse in the process. In defiance of her superiors, Zariel left Mount Celestia and went to Elturel, where she rallied an army of warriors and trained them to fight in the Blood War. She promised them that when they were ready, she would lead them into battle on Avernus.

Zariel led her army out of Elturel amid a throng of cheering well-wishers and proud citizens in 1354 DR. In an epic charge known as the Ride, Zariel's army entered Avernus and took the fight to the archdevil Bel and his infernal legions. Many of Zariel's warriors fought bravely, but for others, the horrors of the Nine Hells proved too great. They fled back through the portal, sealing it behind them and never revealing their shameful retreat and betrayal. The Hellriders, as they were called, would wear this badge of shame to the grave.

### ZARIEL'S FALL

Zariel lost more than her army on Avernus. She also lost a hand, which was severed in battle. As her sword fell to the ground, Zariel ordered Yael, her most devoted general, to take the weapon and hide it, so that the devils would not destroy or corrupt it. Yael took the sword and fled, along with Zariel's faithful hollyphant companion,

Lulu. Zariel's other two generals, Olanthius and Haruman, refused to leave Zariel's side. All three were captured and sent to Nessus, the lowest of the Nine Hells. There, Zariel was brought before Asmodeus, who welcomed her with open arms. The Lord of the Nine commended Zariel for her battle prowess and the strength of her convictions. He offered her rulership of Avernus, much to Bel's chagrin. By swearing fealty to Asmodeus and the Nine Hells, Zariel could bring her rage to bear against the demons and continue to fight in the Blood War, with legions of devils under her command. Zariel accepted Asmodeus's terms, completing her fall from grace. Haruman followed his master into damnation willingly and was transformed into a narzugon devil, while Olanthius, who took his own life rather than bow before Asmodeus, was brought back to serve as a death knight under Zariel's burning gaze.

### THE COMPANION

Zariel never forgot her betrayers—those who ran from the battlefield. She kept a close eye on Elturel, waiting for the day when she could enact her revenge. That day came in 1444 DR, when Elturel was conquered by a vampire lord. A priest of Torm named Thavius Kreeg appealed to any power to help him save his holy city. In that instant, Zariel emerged from a pillar of fire and offered him a deal, which Thavius readily accepted.

In the sky over Elturel, a radiant sphere called the Companion appeared, blazing like a second sun. Powered by a planetar imprisoned within it, the Companion bathed Elturel and the surrounding countryside in holy

light which sent the vampire lord scrambling for the shadows and laid waste to his undead army. Thavius Kreeg, who took credit for summoning the Companion, was hailed as the savior of the city and rose to become its high overseer. Under Kreeg's decades-long rule, Elturel embarked on a path to becoming not just a holy city but the holy nation of Elturgard.

## THAVIUS'S BETRAYAL

Thavius was told the exact time when the Companion would cease to protect Elturel. In the weeks leading up to this fateful hour, Thavius urged Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard of Baldur's Gate to visit Elturel, to help settle some longstanding disputes between the two cities. Facing political pressure at home, Ravengard reluctantly acceded. After greeting Ravengard's delegation, Thavius Kreeg fled Elturel in secret and watched from a safe distance as the Companion transformed from a radiant sun into a black orb awash with crackling energy. It ripped Elturel from the Material Plane, transporting it and all its inhabitants to Avernus. A few other city folk managed to escape before Elturel disappeared. Where it once stood, only a crater remains.

Disguised as a refugee, Thavius Kreeg was one of the first of his people to arrive at Baldur's Gate with news of Elturel's "destruction." He slipped through the city's gates with the help of his influential friend, Duke Vanthampur, and took refuge in her home.

## ROLEPLAYING DEVILS

As the DM, you can play devils as humorous, aloof, bombastic, conniving, or scatterbrained, but a general rule to follow is this: devils have no desire to do good. When dealing with mortals, devils are constantly figuring out how to exploit and corrupt them, often behind thin smiles of feigned concern and false charm.

### IMPORTANT REFERENCES

This adventure features the Nine Hells, which is described in chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Devils, being the primary inhabitants of the Nine Hells, play prominent roles in this story. Before running the adventure, it's worth taking the time to familiarize yourself with the "Devils" entry in the *Monster Manual*, which not only describes the most common types of devils but also explains their hierarchy, how they behave in accordance with their lawful evil alignment, what pleases and enrages them, and why they're scared of dying on their home plane.

**Stat Blocks.** The *Monster Manual* contains stat blocks for most of the monsters and nonplayer characters (NPCs) found in this adventure. Whenever this adventure presents a new monster or NPC, you'll find its stat block near the encounter in which it appears, or in appendix D. When a creature's name appears in bold type, that's a visual cue pointing you to the creature's stat block in the *Monster Manual*. If the stat block appears elsewhere, the adventure's text tells you where to find it.

**Spells and Magic Items.** Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the *Player's Handbook*. Magic items are described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in appendix C.

A devil that successfully corrupts a mortal gets the infernal equivalent of a gold star and can eagerly expect a superior to take notice and give it the promotion it so richly deserves. Meanwhile, when that mortal dies, its soul will find itself condemned to the Nine Hells where it twists into the form of a lemure (unless it's used for some other morbid purpose). The devil doesn't care what becomes of the souls it corrupts; it just wants to be promoted to a superior form of devil. That's how, over ages, a lemure might become a pit fiend.

But devils do more than corrupt. They also fight in the Blood War. Asmodeus attests that serving in his infernal legion is a holy honor, for in so doing a devil helps protect the multiverse from demonic destruction. While that sounds impressive, most devils partake in the Blood War only to distinguish themselves among their peers and move up the chain of command. Endlessly fighting demons isn't what most devils signed up for.

If a devil dies somewhere other than the Nine Hells, it re-forms in the Nine Hells and is therefore not truly killed. However, a devil that is killed in the Nine Hells is dead forever; not surprisingly, that's why devils tend to be more cautious in their dealings at home than abroad.

### DEVIL TRAITS

Common traits among devils include the following:

**Charm.** Devils are consummate charmers. Like

humans, some are better at it than others. The good ones savor the exchange of pleasantries, speaking in measured sentences or noticing pleasant details about the environment or a character's clothing.

**Patience.** Devils are rarely in a rush to make a deal or sign a contract. As masters of the long con, devils make genuinely good deals with mortals to buy appreciation and trust that can be leveraged during more consequential dealings later on.

**Civility.** Devils like to pretend that they run by the same rules and obey the same social conventions as mortals. Devils have no problem appearing and acting in whatever manner they need to achieve their end goal—usually a contract for services or a soul. They've learned that more can be gained from behaving in a civilized manner than reacting angrily or violently.

**Deviousness.** Devils don't age, so there's rarely a sense of urgency with a devil as it plots its conquest or corruption of a soul. This allows for winding schemes that are rarely what they seem on the surface. For minor devils, a simple acceptance of an evil gift is enough, while greater devils enjoy tangling up characters in choices that compromise their values.

**Unscrupulousness.** Being evil and soulless, a devil cannot be embarrassed or shamed, doesn't feel guilt or remorse, and is prepared to do the most heinous acts to get what it wants.

**Fear of Demotion.** A devil that disappoints a superior can be demoted, whereupon it's instantly transformed into a lesser form of devil. The greater the devil, the more it fears demotion and the loss of its power. Thus, a devil takes great pains to hide its failures or pin them on someone else.

## LIFE IN THE NINE HELLS

Much of the adventure takes place on the first layer of the Nine Hells. This is not, to put it mildly, your run-of-the-mill D&D setting. The following tips and tricks can help you make the characters' stay in Avernus a remarkable one.

### EVERYONE'S UNHAPPY

The Nine Hells is a place of abject misery where no one is happy. Weaker devils are exploited and tormented by their superiors. Stronger devils live in constant fear of being passed over for promotion or demoted. Even when something seems to go right, joy is fleeting and only fuels suspicion that things are about to get much worse. Such inescapable pessimism leads many creatures to become apathetic and spiteful. They take perverse delight in spreading their unhappiness like a contagion.

You can remind players that the Nine Hells is a place of misery and suffering in the following ways:

- In conversations with the characters, natives of the Nine Hells like to bemoan their misfortune and blame others for their horrible lives.
- When a character accomplishes something, you can undercut that success in some small way. For example, the character's belt might snap, or a hellish insect might sting the character on the neck and leave a welt.
- If a character rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll made with a nonmagical weapon, you can decide that the weapon breaks.

### EVERYTHING'S AWFUL

Avernus is insidious in the way it fosters greed and makes visitors pay or barter for the things they need to survive. Most of the wildlife on Avernus is not edible to mortals, and most sources of water are poisonous or otherwise tainted. The rarity of edible food and drinkable water encourages hoarding behavior.

You can remind players about the awfulness of Avernus in the following ways:

- Any food or drink the characters bring with them or conjure by magic retains its nutritional value but tastes awful when eaten or imbibed on Avernus. The food tastes like ash, the water tastes like bile, and the wine tastes like spoiled milk.
- If the characters want something that tastes good, they must buy it from licensed sellers such as Mahadi the rakshasa, who runs a restaurant called Infernal Rapture (see page 129). The price of a good-tasting meal is always a bit too high.
- If a character commits a selfish act, you can reward that selfishness by granting that character inspiration (as described in chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook*). Unlike regular inspiration, the benefit can't be transferred to another creature.

### PARADISE LOST

Before the Blood War reduced it to a blasted wasteland, Avernus was a honey trap created by Asmodeus, a paradise of infinite delights designed to lure and enrapture mortals. Fragments of this lost paradise still plunge

from Avernus's sky as burning meteors, and the land is dotted with the ruins of palaces and idyllic gardens that were obscenely beautiful in eons past.

Fleeting reminders of this ancient paradise can come to the characters in the following ways:

- While traveling across Avernus, the characters glimpse a fantastic mirage: a grand palace or garden oasis that vanishes when they get within 100 feet of it.
- A random character hears beautiful music or laughter, catches the scent of flowers or perfume, or experiences a gentle caress. The sensation has no discernible source and fades after a few moments.
- The characters find a relic that survived the fall of paradise, such as a beautiful vase or toppled statue. The first character to touch the relic experiences a fleeting moment of pure joy.

### ANYWHERE IS EVERYWHERE

Geography warps at the whims of the Nine Hells. One of the liberating aspects of this planar feature is that you don't need to be fastidious about keeping track of where locations are in relation to one another.

While the spatial distortion can be unsettling to visitors, it affords you the following benefits as a DM:

- You can decide how long it takes for characters to get from one place to the next. For example, the characters might need to travel 6 miles to get from Fort Knucklebone to Haruman's Hill, and 60 miles to get from Haruman's Hill back to Fort Knucklebone.
- If the characters are in a rush to get somewhere, an imp could appear out of nowhere and, for the price of a *soul coin* or other valuable item, show them a shortcut that halves the distance the characters must travel to reach their destination.
- The Wandering Emporium (see page 126) can show up almost anywhere in the Nine Hells, at any time. If the players don't know where to go or what to do next, or if you want to surprise them with fun roleplaying opportunities, have the Wandering Emporium arrive at the party's location, regardless of where they saw it last.

### THAT PERSONAL TOUCH

There are simple ways in which you can tailor the adventure to make Avernus an even more hellish place for your particular band of adventurers. Consider using the following methods to customize your party's experience:

- Learn what scares the characters. At the start of the adventure, ask each player to provide you with a note of three things their character fears. Save these until the party reaches the Nine Hells, then use them to customize the terrors that populate Avernus.
- Keep a list of the flaws that the players selected when they first created their characters, so that you can remind the players of these faults when situations arise to test them. For example, a character with the Folk Hero background might have the flaw, "I'm quick to assume that someone is trying to cheat me." Let the player wrestle with this flaw during negotiations with devils and other denizens of Avernus.



## CHAPTER 1: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

B

ALDUR'S GATE BEGAN AS A HARBOR TOWN where traders would meet with "ghost lighters"—folk along the Sword Coast who used lights to lure fogbound ships to shore. When those ships ran aground, the ghost lighters would scavenge the wrecks and haul their plundered goods to Baldur's Gate, nestled on the north shore of a bend in the River Chionthar, and sell their booty. In the years since, Baldur's Gate has grown into a walled city. Today, its foggy streets run red with the blood of unfortunates who fall prey to evil opportunists, many of whom count themselves as nobles, traders, pirates, and assassins. An army of mercenary soldiers called the Flaming Fist keeps order in the city, and these soldiers answer to Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard. The members of the Flaming Fist don't care about justice; they crave power and coin, nothing else. But despite the Fist's reputation for cruelty, the Grand Duke is widely regarded as an honorable and reasonable man.

The city of Elturel, capital of Elturgard, is located much farther inland along the River Chionthar. Whereas Baldur's Gate has a well-earned reputation for being a nest of vipers, Elturel is seen as a beacon of faith, order, and high culture. The two cities have endured a long, bitter rivalry that originated when Baldur's Gate began stealing cargo and coin from ships heading to and from Elturel, stifling that city's sea trade. Though the conflicts between Baldur's Gate and Elturel have always fallen short of open warfare, relations between the cities have been tense for a long time—too long, some would say.

### FALL OF ELTUREL

A tenday ago, Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard left Baldur's Gate with a company of Flaming Fist soldiers on a diplomatic mission to Elturel, accepting a formal invitation from Elturel's High Overseer, Thavius Kreeg. Ravengard did not go eagerly, however. It took months of persuasion by his fellow dukes—the other three members of Baldur's Gate's ruling Council of Four—to convince him to accept Elturel's invitation and leave the city in their capable hands. Duke Thalamra Vanthampur was especially convincing, having gathered petitions from the nobility as well as leaders of the common rabble.

Not long after Ravengard arrived in Elturel, the city was dragged down into the Nine Hells—wiped off the map. Given the distance between the two cities, it's no surprise that the residents of Baldur's Gate didn't hear of Elturel's fate until refugees from Elturgard starting arriving in droves. Rumors concerning Elturel's disappearance spread like wildfire, stoking fears that Baldur's Gate might be next. At the same time, panic swept through the ranks of the Flaming Fist, which suddenly found itself without a strong leader.

In the grand duke's absence, the government of Baldur's Gate continues to function under the three remaining dukes—Belynne Stelmane, Dillard Portyr, and Thalamra Vanthampur. Duke Portyr has gone so far as to recall his niece, Liara Portyr, from her post as commander of the Flaming Fist at Fort Beluarian in Chult, in the hopes that she can keep the Flaming Fist in check. However, it will take time for her ship to arrive.

Meanwhile, refugees from Elturgard continue to arrive with dire claims that nothing remains of Elturel except a crater in the ground.

Among those fleeing Elturgard are several Hellriders—paladins who have sworn oaths to defend Elturel. Those warriors escaped the city's fate only because they weren't in Elturel when it fell, and the Flaming Fist has taken to arresting them on sight, lest they try to stir up trouble in Baldur's Gate. The Hellriders are not going quietly, however, leading to violence and bloodshed.

## EVIL IN BALDUR'S GATE

Without Ulder Ravengard to stay their hand, Flaming Fist captains are brutally exercising their autonomy under the veneer of maintaining order. They've closed the outer gates to keep Baldur's Gate safe from the refugee "threat," effectively trapping Baldurians behind their own walls. With the Flaming Fist distracted by the refugee crisis, city folk are being hunted and murdered in the streets by cultists of the Dead Three—the evil gods Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul. Without the Flaming Fist to curtail them, these cultists have grown bold and now move freely within the city, their activities financed and supported in secret by Duke Thalamra Vanthampur.

Among the first refugees to arrive at Baldur's Gate was none other than Thavius Kreeg, the architect of Elturel's doom. Duke Vanthampur is sheltering Kreeg in the dungeon beneath her villa until such time as Baldur's Gate suffers the same fate as Elturel. Like Kreeg, the Vanthampur family is firmly in debt to Zariel, the archdevil of Avernus. Using money purloined from Tiamat's hoard by Zariel's minions on Avernus, Duke Vanthampur hired Dead Three cultists to stir up trouble while her sons stole the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* from a tomb beneath the city. Using the power of this magic shield, Duke Vanthampur and Thavius Kreeg believe they can bring about the downfall of Baldur's Gate in much the same way the Companion was used against Elturel. The shield binds the essence of a powerful devil named Gargauth, whose presence in Baldur's Gate has fomented much of the evil that lurks in the hearts of the city's residents.

To save Baldur's Gate, the adventurers must defeat the Dead Three cultists, track down their evil financiers, wrest the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* from Duke Vanthampur, and pursue Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard into the Nine Hells.

## RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

Diagram 1.1 is a flowchart that presents the key events of this chapter in sequence. The adventurers begin as 1st-level characters, advancing to 2nd level if they survive the encounter in Elfsong Tavern (page 16) and 3rd level after conquering the dungeon of the Dead Three (page 20). The challenges they must overcome at the Low Lantern (page 28) and Vanthampur Villa (page 32) are great enough to advance them to 4th level. After conquering the sewer complex below the villa (page 37) and obtaining valuable information at Candlekeep (page 45), the characters advance to 5th level before entering the Nine Hells in chapter 2.

### THE BASILISK GATE

For characters of level 1

Shortly after their arrival at the Basilisk Gate, the adventurers are drafted by a Flaming Fist captain and instructed to seek out and destroy Dead Three followers responsible for a murder spree.

### ELFSONG TAVERN

For characters of level 1

The adventurers question a spy named Tarina. In exchange for their help, she tells them where the Dead Three followers are hiding.

### DUNGEON OF THE DEAD THREE

For characters of level 2

The adventurers corner the Dead Three followers and one of Duke Vanthampur's sons in a dungeon before a chance encounter with Tiamat's cultists.

### THE LOW LANTERN

For characters of level 3

The characters confront another of Duke Vanthampur's sons at a wharf-side tavern called the Low Lantern. There, they meet a fugitive Hellrider named Reya Mantlemorn.

### VANTHAMPUR VILLA

For characters of level 3

Armed with evidence that Duke Vanthampur is a clear and present danger to Baldur's Gate, the adventurers attack her villa and acquire an *infernal puzzle box* from the last of her three sons.

### UNDER THE VILLA

For characters of level 4

In the dungeon and sewers beneath Vanthampur Villa, the adventurers encounter Thavius Kreeg and find the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*.

### CANDLEKEEP

For characters of level 4

The adventurers take Thavius Kreeg's *infernal puzzle box* to a tiefling sage at Candlekeep. To save Elturel, she gives them a map of Avernus, a way to reach the Nine Hells, and a hollyphant guide.

DIAGRAM 1.1: CHAPTER 1 FLOWCHART

# THE BASILISK GATE

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to your players to begin the adventure:

Welcome to Baldur's Gate, a veritable nest of rats and vipers clinging to the rocky slopes overlooking the Chionthar River. From their high perches in the Upper City, the local nobles—known as patriarchs—gaze down with veiled contempt upon the common rabble in the grimy Lower City, which hugs the foggy harbor. The whole of Baldur's Gate reeks of blood, crime, and opportunity. One can easily fathom why pirates and traders are drawn to this place like flies to a carcass.

Following the river farther east would eventually lead you to Elturel, capital of the holy land of Elturgard—or at least that was the case until a few days ago. The flood of refugees from Elturel has gotten worse since news first arrived that the city has fallen. Everyone is saying Baldur's Gate is next, but no one truly knows who or what has claimed Elturel.

The patriarchs pay a mercenary army called the Flaming Fist to protect their interests in Baldur's Gate, and by extension, the city itself. The Flaming Fist has gained even more power since their charismatic leader, Ulder Ravengard, claimed the title of Grand Duke a few years ago. Apparently, Ravengard is missing. In his absence, the Flaming Fist has sealed the city's gates to staunch the flow of refugees. No one is allowed in or out.

All of this was brought to your attention shortly after you were drafted by the Flaming Fist to help defend the city. Your orders are to speak to Captain Zodge at the Basilisk Gate, which pierces the city's eastern wall and takes its name from the various statues that rest in its niches and perch atop its battlements. Unseen beyond the sealed Basilisk Gate, a dirt road stretches through the Outer City slums to the bridge known as Wyrm's Crossing, then to distant realms beyond.

Dozens of Flaming Fist soldiers are trying to control an angry mob of commoners eager to leave the city. Armed with only a vague description of Captain Zodge—a tall man with long black hair and a leather eye patch—it takes you a while to find him. A fight breaks out between soldiers and commoners, and you finally spot the one-eyed captain as he wades into the fray and begins throwing punches. Just another day in the City of Blood.

An influx of Elturgardian refugees coupled with uncertainty regarding the fate of Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard has convinced Captain Darmin Zodge, a lawful evil human **veteran**, to prove himself worthy of leading the Flaming Fist—lest some rival seize the opportunity in the days ahead. Zodge also knows that Liara Portyr, who commands the Flaming Fist stronghold of Fort



FLAMING FIST  
COAT OF ARMS

Beluarian in Chult, has been recalled to Baldur's Gate by her uncle, Duke Dillard Portyr. Zodge hopes to impress Commander Portyr with his ability to maintain the peace in Baldur's Gate until her arrival.

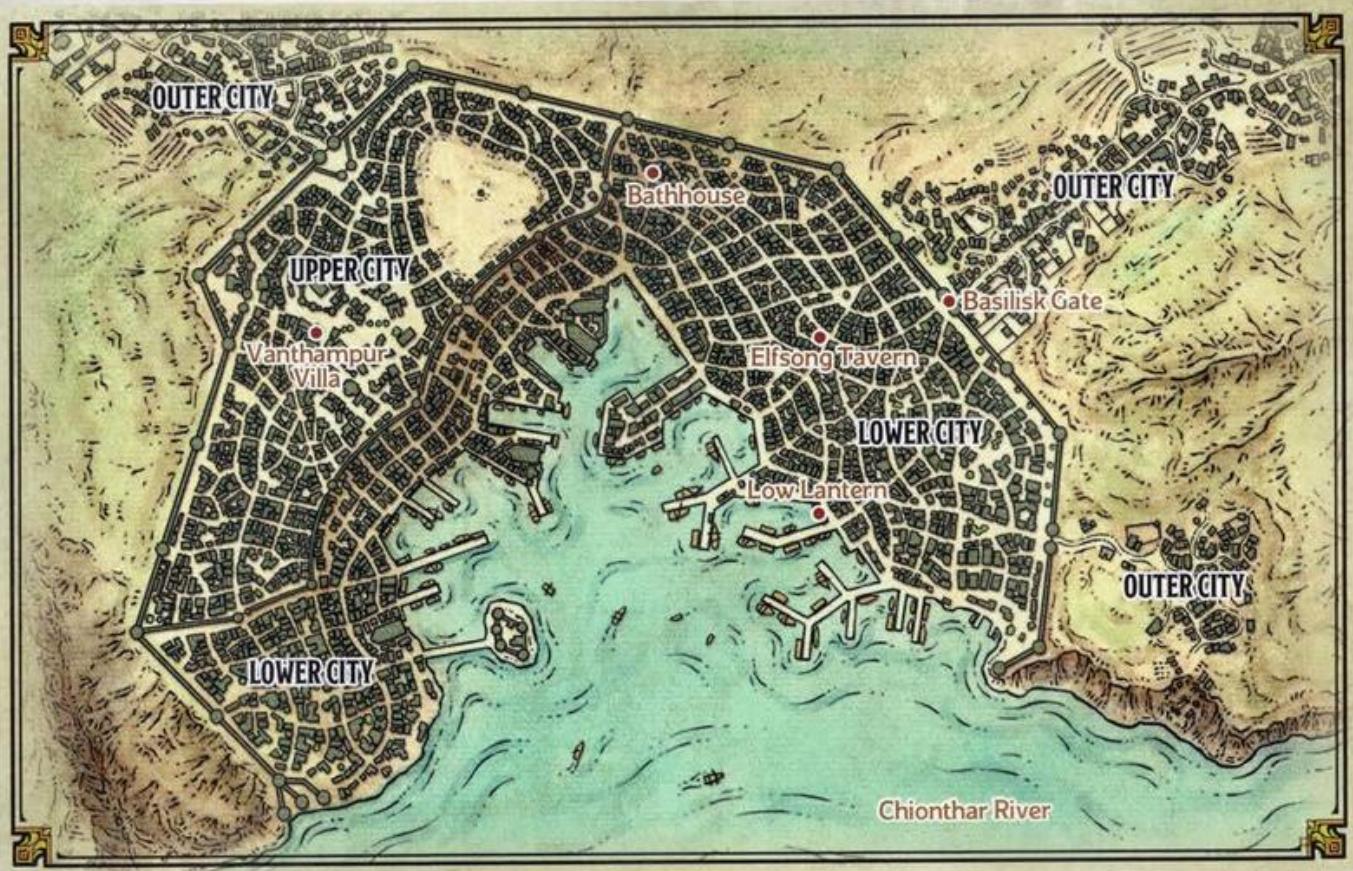
Although Zodge lacks common decency, he cares for the well-being of the soldiers who serve under his command. Angry mobs can be dangerous, and Zodge is quick to take out the instigators so that the mob's anger turns to fear quickly. No one is arrested during the fracas the characters observe, but several commoners are beaten and robbed of their money pouches after a brief skirmish with Zodge and his soldiers. Express to the players that their characters would not be surprised by Zodge's handling of the situation. Flaming Fist captains have tremendous latitude when it comes to keeping the peace in Baldur's Gate, especially in the Lower City.

It's widely known that the best way to deal with Flaming Fist soldiers is to bribe them. Those who can afford to pay a bribe of 10 gp or more (instead of the usual gate fee of 2 cp) are allowed passage through a gate after a bit of haggling.

## MEETING CAPTAIN ZODGE

Captain Zodge is expecting the characters. If they choose not to speak with him, he tracks them down eventually. The Flaming Fist has contacts throughout the city, so hiding from Zodge is difficult unless the characters know someone who can shelter them. Zodge keeps six Flaming Fist soldiers (human **veterans**) near him at all times. Their names are Issio, Minaqua, Nelestree, Oliver, Soltus, and Thalkara.

When he's not flexing his military muscle or taking bribes, Captain Zodge presents himself as a forthright,



MAP 1.1: BALDUR'S GATE

level-headed man who treats others with the respect he demands in return. When the characters are ready to hear what he has to say, read the following boxed text aloud to the players:

"The refugee crisis," says Captain Zodge, "has stoked fears that Baldur's Gate might suffer the same fate as Elturel, of which nothing remains but a hole in the ground, apparently. Our grand duke, Ulster Ravengard, was visiting Elturel on a diplomatic mission when the city was destroyed. Coincidence? I think not.

"The knights of Elturgard call themselves Hellriders. A few of them escaped the destruction and think we're somehow to blame for Elturel's downfall. What a bunch of self-righteous rabble-rousers! We're arresting them on sight, but that's left us shorthanded to deal with another problem. For that, I need your help."

Captain Zodge won't accept any refusal of his offer. The Flaming Fist is empowered to draft adventurers in times of emergency. He can execute them on the spot for refusing to help, though he would rather they accept. He gives each character a copper badge that bears the Flaming Fist's coat of arms. These badges give the characters license to act in Zodge's name.

Read the following boxed text aloud when the characters are ready to hear more:

"Baldur's Gate has long been plagued by followers of the Dead Three—the gods Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul. I thought we had wiped them out, but apparently not. These purveyors of fear and death are taking advantage of the current crisis to commit murder sprees throughout the city. As my appointed deputies in this matter, you'll have license to kill these wretches on sight. Find their lair, and wipe it out. Eliminate anyone who gets in your way, and don't worry about collateral damage.

"If you do what I say, I'll see that you each receive two hundred gold pieces in addition to my gratitude, which is worth considerably more.

"A few blocks from the Basilisk Gate is Elfsong Tavern. A spy named Tarina hangs out there, gathering rumors for the Guild. She owes me a favor, so tell her you work for me. Ask her what she knows about the Dead Three. And, for the love of Balduran, be nice. Tarina has dangerous friends."

When a tenday passes without any reports of attacks by followers of the Dead Three, Zodge secures the funds to pay the characters, upholding his end of the agreement. He collects their badges before paying them.



WHEN THE FOG CLEARS, BALDUR'S GATE SHINES  
ON THE SHORES OF THE CHIONTHAR RIVER.



# ELFSONG TAVERN

The characters can either visit Elfsong Tavern in accordance with Captain Zodge's wishes or do whatever else they please. Their goals at the tavern are to make contact with a spy named Tarina and find out what she knows about the Dead Three.

Zodge has spies who keep him informed on the characters' progress. If the characters don't visit Elfsong Tavern within forty-eight hours of receiving their orders, Zodge sends a squad of six Flaming Fist **veterans** and one **flameskull** to escort the characters to the tavern, kill anyone who refuses to go, and report back to him. If the characters destroy or escape this squad, Zodge mobilizes two more squads to hunt them down.

## ABOUT THE TAVERN

Elfsong Tavern's location is marked on map 1.1 (see page 13), while map 1.2 shows its interior.

From time to time, the disembodied voice of a female elf fills the tavern with a melancholy song, giving the establishment its name. The ballad isn't loud enough to disrupt conversation, but most patrons stop speaking when the elfsong begins, then resume only after it ends. Many customers frequent the tavern in the hopes of hearing it. Those who speak Elvish can understand the lyrics, which lament an unnamed lover lost at sea. No one is sure how the spirit came to haunt the tavern, just as no one can predict when it will sing again.

### TAVERNS IN BALDUR'S GATE

No wise person walks the streets of Baldur's Gate or enters one of its taverns without a weapon or an armed escort. Anyone who has lived in the city for more than a tenday knows this from experience. Taverns might appear safe at a glance, but they are among the most dangerous places in Baldur's Gate—full of alcohol, tempting coin, and unscrupulous people. Volothamp Gedarm, a notorious raconteur known for his tavern reviews, encapsulates his Baldur's Gate experience as "hard on the stomach, especially when someone sticks a knife in there." Customers are expected to look after themselves when fights break out, and one shouldn't expect any help or sympathy from the Flaming Fist. Tavern murders are common, and usually end with the poor victim being dragged away and either left in an alley (to be picked clean by urchins, then eaten by rats) or tossed in the harbor.

**Baldur's Bones.** Baldur's Bones is a popular dice game in the taverns of Baldur's Gate. Each player requires several six-sided dice. The rules are as follows:

- Each player puts the agreed ante in the pot.
- Each player rolls three dice. Play then proceeds clockwise around the table, with the host of the game going last.
- On their turn, a player can choose to "stand" or "roll." If the player stands, the next player can take a turn. A player who rolls takes an additional die and rolls it. If the total of their dice exceeds 21, they "bust" and are out of the game. Otherwise they can keep rolling additional dice until they either stand or bust.
- After everyone has had a turn, the highest point total (excluding players who busted) wins the game and takes the pot.

Alan Alyth, the tavern's current owner and proprietor, is a neutral half-elf **commoner** with darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. Alan recently turned seventy-five years old and has run the establishment for decades. His elven blood through his half-elf mother has kept him alive this long, and keeps him looking better than most full-blooded humans his age. He runs a moneylending business on the side, offering loans to customers he trusts. He rarely gives loans to adventurers, knowing how flighty they can be, but he might offer them a free glass of elverquisst wine if he thinks it'll keep their swords sheathed (see the "Taverns in Baldur's Gate" sidebar).

## TAVERN PATRONS

If the characters come to Elfsong Tavern in search of Captain Zodge's contact, Tarina, they find her playing cards upstairs in area E7. Among the dozens of other patrons, they notice a few rats scurrying around as well as the following noteworthy NPCs, who play no part in the adventure but can be brought into the story as you see fit:

- Skrawldar Fane (neutral human **commoner**), a punch-drunk shipwright with no eyebrows
- Lala Stout (neutral evil lightfoot halfling **spy**), a scar-faced burglar flipping a coin
- Oloric Witmirth (neutral good human **commoner**), an impoverished playwright who scribbles his private thoughts and observations in a small book
- Whaul Nightley (neutral half-orc **thug** with darkvision out to a range of 60 feet), a jovial, strong-jawed rat-catcher with a bellowing laugh
- Rahima Sajressa (lawful neutral human **acolyte** of Savras, god of divination and fate), a gregarious astrologer who loves to gamble
- Willow Brownbug (neutral good strongheart halfling **druid**), a snooty apothecary wearing a colorful cape

If the characters need help finding Tarina, a tavern regular, they are directed to the second floor (see "Dealing with Tarina," page 18).

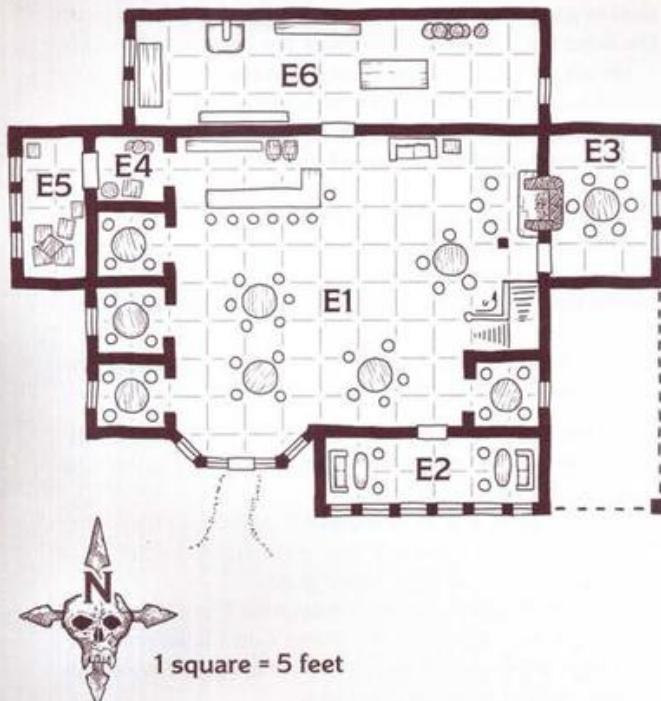
## TAVERN LOCATIONS

The following area descriptions are keyed to map 1.2.

### E1. TAPROOM

Alan Alyth tends bar while two young men (human **commoners**) named Falten and Yimiur take orders, deliver drinks and food to tables, and joke with the clientele. Flanking the entrance are two bouncers: a suit of **animated armor** called Klank and a gruff female **half-ogre** named Skoona. Both are here to protect the other staff members, not the patrons, and won't break up a fight unless a staff member is involved.

Well-armed patrons (**commoners** and **thugs** mostly) huddle around tables in the main room and in private booths. Three padded chairs are angled toward a fireplace on the east wall, underneath the creaky wooden staircase that climbs to the second floor. Some drunk is usually passed out on the couch against the north wall. Next to the couch sits a wooden sea chest that contains an assortment of games (Dragonchess boards, well-used decks of Three-Dragon Ante cards, and so on).



MAP 1.2: ELFSONG TAVERN

### E2. LOUNGE

Although smoking is allowed anywhere in Elfsong Tavern, this lounge is a favorite hangout for members of a local smokers' club called the Puffer Fishers. Most of the club members are local fishers and crab catchers.

### E3. PRIVATE DINING ROOM

This room is called the Green Dragon Room for the mounted head of a young green dragon that hangs on the south wall.

### E4. STORAGE ALCOVE

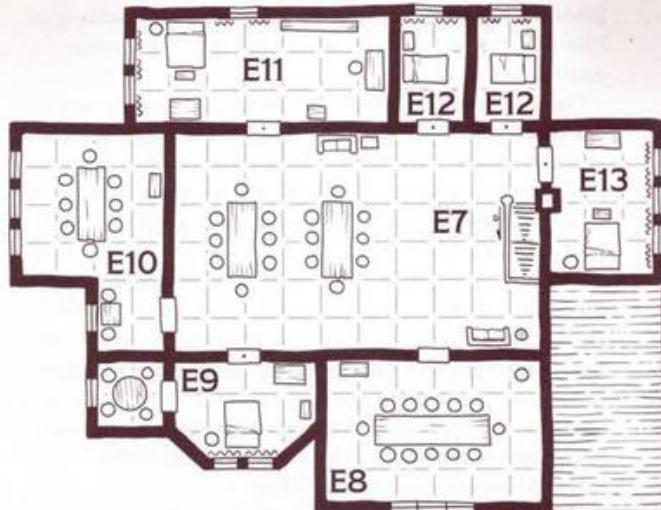
Crates of fruit, barrels of fresh water, and casks of syrup and oil are kept here.

### E5. STOREROOM

This room contains crates of foodstuffs and spices, in addition to cleaning rags, brooms, broken chairs, and tools for repairing furniture.

### E6. KITCHEN

Alan Alyth employs three cooks (**commoners**) to prepare meals: a cheery strongheart halfling executive chef named Chenna Fatrabbit, a testy human sous chef named Azar Valsheem, and a blind human pastry chef named Klav Martilmur. They work from highsun to midnight. Their specialties are fish cakes, crab cakes, a thick cheese-and-potato soup, and loaf pudding soaked in syrup and decorated with lightly salted almonds.



### E7. UPSTAIRS DINING ROOM

Lit lanterns hang from the rafters in this windowless room. Rugs cover the wooden floor and help dampen the noise from drunken patrons gathered around two large tables, eating and playing games of Baldur's Bones (see the "Taverns in Baldur's Gate" sidebar).

One of the individuals seated at the table nearest the stairs is Tarina, the NPC whom the characters seek (see "Dealing with Tarina," page 18).

### E8. PRIVATE DINING ROOM

This room is called the Umber Hulk Room after the mounted head of an umber hulk hanging on the east wall.

### E9. FANCY GUEST SUITE

This room is currently unoccupied, and its door is locked. In addition to a key he loans to guests, Alan has a master key that unlocks the door. Picking the lock requires thieves' tools and a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

The richly appointed room contains velvet curtains, framed paintings of ships, a canopied bed, a night table, a sea chest, and a wardrobe. The door to the west opens up to a private dining room.

### E10. PRIVATE DINING ROOM

The mounted head of a displacer beast hangs on the east wall near a small armoire to inspire this area's name: the Displacer Beast Room.

## E11. LARGE GUEST ROOM

This room contains an unusual guest: a **sahuagin priestess** named Oshalla. She wears a cloak made from fishing nets, and speaks Common and Sahuagin. She was exiled from the depths for plotting a coup against her king.

Oshalla keeps to herself and has her meals brought to her three times per day. The door to her room is locked, and she wears the key on a cord around her neck. Alan has a master key that also unlocks the door. Picking the lock requires thieves' tools and a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

In addition to a bed, night table, and chest, this room contains a desk, a chair, several paintings of coastal and underwater scenes, a portable bathtub, and a ten-foot-long, eight-foot tall bookcase that holds Oshalla's collection of trinkets collected from the ocean (shells, barnacle-covered skulls, and the like). Oshalla doesn't allow the tavern staff to clean her room or refresh the water in the tub, so both are filthy.

**Treasure.** Characters who search the desk drawer find a sharkskin pouch containing 66 gp and 49 sp, which Oshalla uses to pay for food and shelter. Resting against the south wall is a small wooden chest that contains a shrine to Sekolah, the shark god worshiped by sahuagin. The chest's interior is lined with shark teeth and contains a 5-pound coral sculpture of Sekolah with red pearls for eyes (worth 250 gp as an art object).

## E12. PLAIN GUEST ROOMS

The doors to these two rooms are locked. In addition to keys he loans to guests, Alan has a master key that unlocks both doors. Picking either lock requires thieves' tools and a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

Each room contains a cozy bed, an empty wooden chest, and curtains on the window.

## E13. ALAN'S BEDROOM

Alan carries a master key that unlocks the door to his private bedroom. Picking the lock requires thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

Alan's room contains a bed with an ornate iron frame, a claw-footed chest, a night table, and a wardrobe. Splayed out on the floor in front of the wardrobe is a **rug of smothering** that attacks anyone other than Alan who steps on it or opens the chest.

**Treasure.** The chest's interior is divided into three equal-sized compartments containing 91 gp, 176 sp, and 288 cp, respectively. Alan uses this money to pay his staff and maintain the tavern.

## DEALING WITH TARINA

Tarina is a chaotic evil human **bandit** with a conniving mind. She plays regular games of Baldur's Bones (see the "Taverns in Baldur's Gate" sidebar, page 16) with a coterie of local dimwits at a table in area E7. Her fellow gamblers don't realize she cheats.

"Tarina" is not a real name, of course. Before retiring to Baldur's Gate, Tarina was a pirate known as Rhonda Thunderbell (also not her real name). After serving Captain Murosko Sessprin of the *Uncivil Serpent* faithfully for months, she stole loot from her fellow pirates and

fled before they could stop her. Most of that loot has been spent in recent years, though Tarina has enough squirreled away to ensure she never goes hungry. She's also in good standing with Nine-Fingers, guildmaster of the local thieves' guild, who gives her occasional work.

Tarina recently heard a rumor that her former shipmates had tracked her to Baldur's Gate. She agrees to help the characters if they stay at Elfsong Tavern to see if the pirates to show up, then kill them all.

## KILLING TIME IN THE TAVERN

Exactly when Tarina's former associates arrive is up to you, but the characters should have a bit of free time before they appear (as described in "With Friends Like These," page 19). Characters who loiter in the tavern can overhear patrons talking about the current happenings in Baldur's Gate and the rumors from Elturel:

- "I'll bet my last copper piece that those so-called refugees are advanced scouts for an army that's preparing to attack Baldur's Gate!"
- "The Flaming Fist is decapitated. The captains have already started bickering over who should be in charge with Ulder Ravengard gone."
- "With Ravengard out of the way, who'll be the next grand duke, I wonder? My money's on Thalamra Vanthampur. Practically born in the sewers, she was, and more vicious than a swarm of rats."

## ELFSONG

At some point before Tarina's associates arrive, the tavern is filled with the ghostly lamentation of the elf spirit known to haunt the place. However, on this one occasion, the spirit sings not of a long-lost lover but of Elturel. This surprises everyone, including Alan Alyth, who has never heard the spirit change its tune. Characters who understand Elvish can translate the lyrics:

*O sing a song of Elturel  
Of water, woods, and hill  
The sun dawns on her ruddy cliffs  
And fields green and still.  
This land of long-abiding joy  
Home of the strong and brave  
Renowned by all, across the realms,  
And never once a slave.*

*O sing a song of Elturel  
When foes are at her door  
Her fields torn by cloven feet  
From some infernal shore.  
Arise the mighty Hellriders  
Take up your swift, keen swords  
Then charge into the hellish fray  
And scatter devil hordes.*

*O sing a song of Elturel  
And when the night does fall  
Sleep safe beneath Companion's light  
Until the dawn does call.  
We're bound by mortal covenant  
That only ends with death  
And so we'll sing of Elturel  
Until our final breath.*

Any character who has been to Elturel or who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check knows that “the Companion” referred to in the song is the name given to the artificial sun that burns over Elturel, protecting the city and its surrounding lands against undead.

Characters who speak to Alan after hearing the song can ask him about it, since he speaks Elvish in addition to Common. However, he was so surprised by the change in lyrics that he remembers only parts of it. The spirit will sing the song a second time, but only if an elf or half-elf pleads with it to do so and succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

One word from the song sticks in Alan’s memory: “Hellriders.” Characters might recall Captain Zodge using the term to describe the knights of Elturel. Alan and most other residents of Baldur’s Gate use the word similarly. Any character who has been to Elturel or who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check recalls that the Hellriders were so-named long ago when they descended into the Nine Hells on horseback to fight devils. Most of them never returned. It’s possible that one of Alan’s other patrons knows this bit of history.

## WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE

Characters who wait for Tarina’s pirate friends find their patience rewarded in due time. Read the following to the players when it’s time for the pirates to arrive:

Eight motley humans saunter into the tavern. The leader is a brawny man with a cloudy right eye, a cruel sneer, and a pirate’s swagger. The others are an unsavory, rowdy bunch who act as if they own the place.

“We’re looking for an old friend of ours,” says the dead-eyed man. He sniffs the air. “Goes by the name ‘Tarina,’ or so I’m told. Loves to cheat at Baldur’s Bones.”

Captain Murosko Sessprin was killed during a mutiny six months ago, leaving his ship—the *Uncivil Serpent*—under the command of Sessprin’s treacherous first mate, a scoundrel named Lekard “Dead-Eye” Cadavrus. Dead-Eye is a neutral evil **bandit captain** whose cataract-clouded right eye inspires his nickname. He doesn’t like to bathe, and his breath smells like rotting fish. He’s joined by a gang of seven **bandits** who share his evil disposition.

Dead-Eye offers a tall glass of ale to anyone with information on Tarina’s location, and several tavern patrons are quick to accept the offer. Characters can confront the pirates if they wish, but Dead-Eye won’t let them stand between him and his revenge. Two pirates watch the exit to make sure Tarina can’t escape while the others attack anyone who gets in Dead-Eye’s way.

Dead-Eye tries to kill Tarina on sight. Neither Alan nor the bouncers intervene in the fight unless one or more staff members become involved in it. Other patrons stay out of the fight as much as possible, though a character can attempt to bribe one friendly or indifferent NPC to join in as an action. With a successful DC 15

Charisma (Persuasion) check—or a Charisma (Deception) check if the offer is not genuine—the NPC accepts the bribe, rolls initiative, and joins the fray on its next turn, siding with the characters until the fight ends. The check is made with advantage if the promised payment is worth 10 gp or more. Dead-Eye can use the same tactic, swaying tavern patrons to his side with coin.

The characters can try to bribe Dead-Eye into leaving the Elfsong Tavern without his vengeance satisfied, but he demands 5,000 gp in coins or goods for his trouble. If characters claim to have the money or goods elsewhere, he laughs at them and says he doesn’t place any stock in their words. He’s far too suspicious to be fooled by so obvious a deception, and he can’t bring himself to believe that anyone would value Tarina’s life so highly.

## TREASURE

Tucked in Dead-Eye’s vest is a pouch containing 32 gp and 15 sp. He also wears two gold necklaces (25 gp each) and a blackened gold ring with a white pearl set in it (125 gp). Each of the other pirates carries a pouch containing 1d6 sp.

Dead-Eye’s ship, the *Uncivil Serpent*, is moored at the end of a dock on the east side of the harbor. Eleven **bandits** guard it, and no treasure is kept aboard. If the characters dispose of all the pirates, the ship is theirs for the taking, though it requires a crew of twenty to sail, and half or more of the crew must have proficiency with water vehicles.

The *Uncivil Serpent* has the statistics of a sailing ship (see chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*). If you need a deck plan, use the ship map in appendix C of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*. Although the ship is worth 10,000 gp intact, no one in Baldur’s Gate wants to buy it because of its infamous reputation.

## WHAT TARINA KNOWS

Once her pirate friends are dealt with, Tarina shares the following information with the characters:

“Several blocks northwest of here is a public bathhouse with a walled garden and frolicking nymphs carved into its front gates. Followers of the Dead Three have been seen coming and going from the bathhouse, and I’m told there’s a secret door inside that leads to a dungeon. That’s where the killers are hiding.”

If Tarina is killed, the characters can deliver her body to Captain Zodge, who makes arrangements with a priest to cast *speak with dead* on the corpse. Once the corpse reveals what it knows, Zodge gives that information to the characters.

With the knowledge provided by Tarina or her corpse, the characters can head to the bathhouse and search for the dungeon hidden below it. Make sure the characters advance to 2nd level before continuing the adventure. When the characters arrive at the bathhouse, proceed with the “Dungeon of the Dead Three” section.

# DUNGEON OF THE DEAD THREE

Before running this part of the adventure, read the information on the Dead Three in appendix D. Stat blocks for the Dead Three's followers can be found there as well.

The Dungeon of the Dead Three is hidden below a bathhouse that's secretly owned and operated by the Vanthampur family. One member of the family, Mortlock Vanthampur, is in the dungeon helping to coordinate the Dead Three cultists' attacks in the city. These attacks are meant to demonstrate to the citizens of Baldur's Gate that the Flaming Fist can't protect them.

## ARRIVAL AT THE BATHHOUSE

When the characters arrive at the bathhouse, read the following boxed text aloud to the players:

The bathhouse is a one-story stuccoed building with stained-glass windows and clay roof tiles. Ten-foot-tall walls enclose a large courtyard outside the southeast corner of the building. The closed wooden doors to the courtyard are engraved with images of smiling nymphs dancing and frolicking in water.

There's nothing outwardly suspicious about the bathhouse, which features one of the most sophisticated plumbing systems in the city. The doors leading to the courtyard (area D1) are unlocked and unguarded. The bathhouse closes at midnight and reopens at dawn, and city residents come and go here throughout the day and into the evening.

## BATHHOUSE LOCATIONS

The following area descriptions are keyed to map 1.3.

### D1. COURTYARD

Describe this location to the players as follows:

This L-shaped courtyard features a trimmed lawn and nicely manicured shrubbery. The yard is decorated with white marble benches and stone fountains, each in the form of a smiling nymph tipping a jug that spills water into a circular stone basin.

An invisible **imp** is perched on the southeast fountain. If the characters look as though they intend to cause trouble, the imp observes them quietly until they enter the bathhouse, then flies to Thurstwell Vanthampur, the oldest of Duke Thalamra Vanthampur's sons. Thurstwell instructs the imp to return to its post but takes no further action, hoping that the characters dispose of his brother, Mortlock.

### D2. BATHS

From dawn to midnight, characters can expect to find 1d6 human **commoners** bathing here at any given time.

From midnight to dawn, three female human **night blades** (see page 233 for their stat block) stand guard near the pools and attack trespassers on sight. If a fight breaks out here, the **necromite of Myrkul** in area D4 joins the fray in the second round of combat.

Describe this location to the players as follows:

The walls of this twenty-foot-high pillared chamber are adorned with frescoes of bathing royalty. Natural light streams through stained-glass windows, creating colorful patterns on the tiles of polished blue marble that cover the floor. Three shallow, sunken pools contain scintillating perfume-scented water. White marble benches bearing stacks of dry towels are situated near the pools, each of which comes equipped with a pair of brass faucets.

The faucets draw warm and cold water from pipes that run underneath the floor. A tight-fitting stone plug at the bottom of each pool keeps its water from draining out. Numerous tiny drain holes near the tops of the sunken pools prevent them from overflowing.

### D3. SOUTH MASSAGE ROOM

This room contains a massage table draped in clean towels. Bottles of perfume stored under the table are used to scent the pools in area D2. Natural light enters through a stained-glass window set into the south wall.

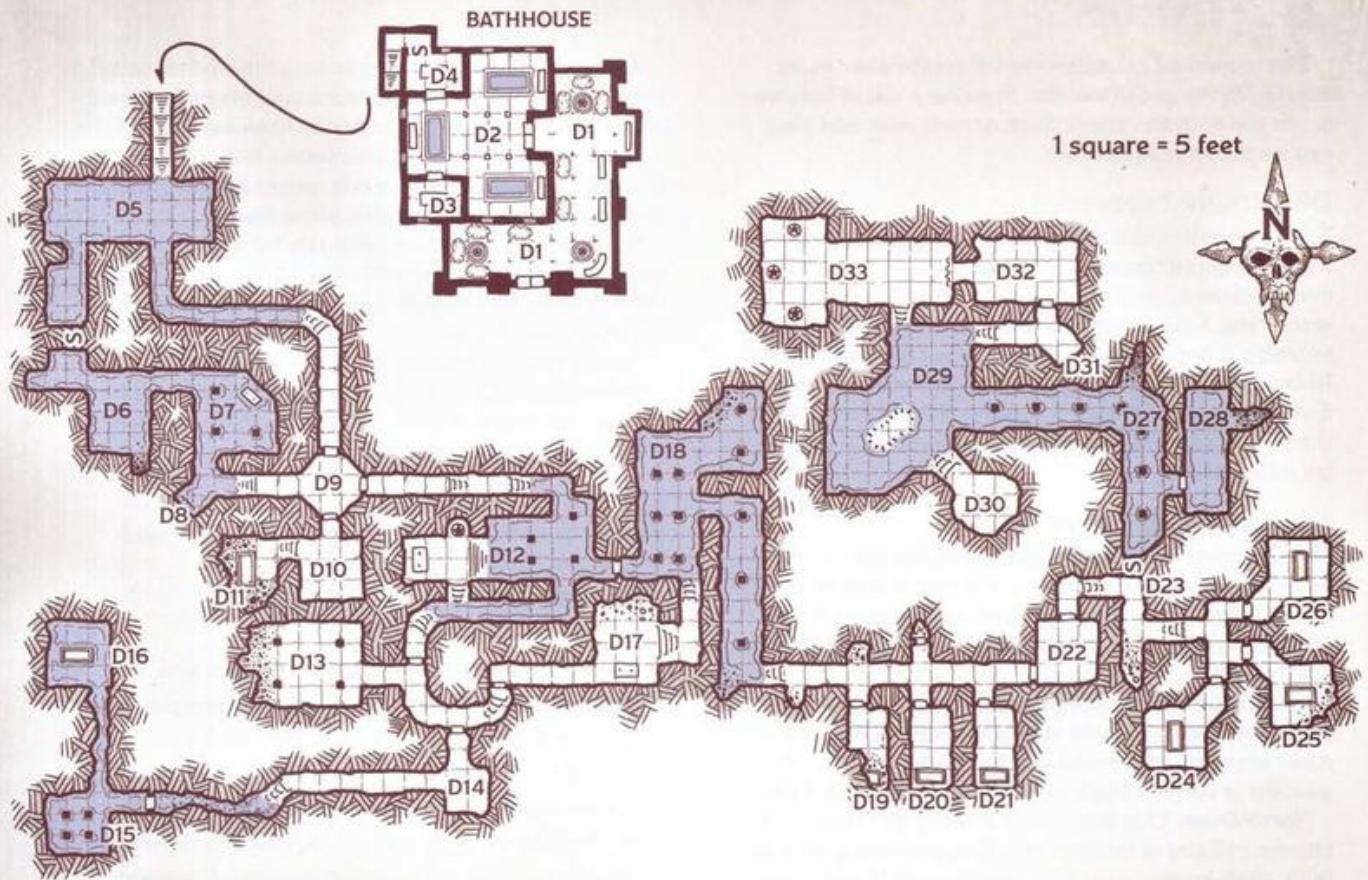
During the hours in which the bathhouse is open, an androgynous human masseuse (neutral good **commoner**) named Jabaz works here. Jabaz knows that the bathhouse is owned by Duke Thalamra Vanthampur and run by her brutish son, Mortlock.

Mortlock has given Jabaz strict orders not to hang around the bathhouse after hours. Jabaz suspects that Mortlock is running some sort of shady business on the side, and that he's using the establishment as a front to conceal his dark dealings without the duke's knowledge. Jabaz knows the location of the secret door in area D4 but won't volunteer that information, fearing Mortlock's retaliation. Jabaz doesn't know what lies beyond the secret door.

### D4. NORTH MASSAGE ROOM

From midnight to dawn, a male human **necromite of Myrkul** (see page 234 for his stat block) guards this room unless he's drawn to area D2 by sounds of battle there. During the hours in which the bathhouse is open, a female human masseuse (neutral good **commoner**) named Qurmilah works here. She knows the same information as Jabaz in area D3 and behaves similarly.

This room is furnished in the same fashion as area D3, with the additional feature of a secret door in the north wall. A character who searches the north wall and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the secret door, which swings inward when pushed. A foul, sewer-like stench greets anyone who opens the secret door. Behind the door, a staircase descends 20 feet to area D5, featuring smooth stone steps and brick walls. Two sputtering torches in wall sconces illuminate the staircase, but the dungeon below is dark.



MAP 1.3: DUNGEON OF THE DEAD THREE

#### D5. WELCOME TO THE DUNGEON

Duke Vanthampur became aware of this ancient dungeon while she was managing the city's water utilities and sewer system. She built the bathhouse to hide it.

The chamber at the bottom of the staircase is empty, unlit, and flooded with foul-smelling water to a depth of 2 feet (see "Dungeon Features" below for more information).

**Dungeon Features.** The Dungeon of the Dead Three has the following recurring features:

- The dungeon's rooms, corridors, and staircases are hewn from limestone and unlit unless the text states otherwise. (Followers of the Dead Three carry torches or rely on darkvision to see in the dungeon.)
- The 5-foot-wide corridors throughout the dungeon have 8-foot-high ceilings. Rooms have 9-foot-high ceilings, often braced with wooden beams. Each beam is a Large object with AC 15, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Destroying all the beams in an area has a 25 percent chance of triggering a roof collapse. Each creature under the collapsing roof must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area remains open but is difficult terrain thereafter.
- Regular doors are made of soft, rotting wood. Each door is a Medium object with AC 15, 5 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Secret doors are carved to look like the surrounding limestone walls and require a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Per-

ception) check to locate. Once located, a secret door pushes open easily.

- Certain areas of the dungeon (as shown on map 1.3) are flooded with murky water to a depth of 2 feet to make them difficult terrain. The water seeps into the dungeon from nearby sewers through cracks in the limestone. It carries a foul stench and is undrinkable.

#### D6. BLOATED CORPSE

Floating face-down in the middle of this flooded room is the bloated corpse of a shirtless male human with knife wounds in his back. The corpse was once a Bhaal worshiper named Hiskaal, who was killed by his cultist peers for allowing a target to escape during a recent attack in the city. Any character who inspects the corpse and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check concludes that the man has been dead for two days.

#### D7. BHAAL'S ALTAR

Describe this location to the players as follows:

Three wooden beams brace the ceiling of this flooded chamber, which features a stone altar covered with entrails in the northeast corner. Hanging on the wall above the altar is a three-foot-tall steel mask cast in the form of a frowning human skull.

The steel skull mask represents the visage of Bhaal and has no magical properties.

The humanoid entrails were left on the altar as an offering to the god of murder. Pouring a vial of holy water on the entrails causes them to melt away and also causes the altar to smolder.

#### D8. MOLDY TAPESTRY

The back wall of this dry alcove is hung with a 5-foot-wide, 7-foot-tall tapestry. It depicts a grisly scene of four faceless figures ripping apart a fifth figure, who is screaming. Characters who inspect the tapestry without touching it notice yellow mold growing around its edges. In fact, a 5-foot-square patch of yellow mold (see chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) clings to the back of the tapestry and releases its deadly spores if the tapestry is disturbed.

#### D9. THE DEAD THREE DOORS

This chamber is empty but not bereft of decor. Carved into each of its three doors is a full-figure depiction of one of the Dead Three. A character recognizes all the figures with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check.

**East Door.** The face of this door bears a carving of Bane, the lawful evil god of tyranny, who is depicted as a tall, armored man wearing a bucket helm. His right gauntlet is painted black and clutches a set of shackles.

**North Door.** This door bears a carving of Bhaal, the chaotic evil god of murder. He's depicted as a powerfully built, skull-headed man with long, curved blades where his hands should be.

**South Door.** This door bears a carving of Myrkul, the neutral evil Lord of Bones. He is portrayed as a cloaked figure whose face is hidden under a cowl. In his skeletal hands, he clutches a screaming human skull.

#### D10. NECROMITES' ROOM

The creatures here watch area D9 through a crack in the door, and any sign of the characters approaching lets them set up an ambush of sorts. Read the following boxed text to describe the room to the players:

Lying on the floor of this otherwise empty room are the pale bodies of three humans in filthy black robes, arranged in a triangular formation. A lit torch lies between them. A rough-hewn staircase to the left leads down to another torchlit chamber.

These three **necromites of Myrkul** (see page 234 for their stat block) are playing dead. They conceal their skull-headed flails underneath their robes. Any character who watches the bodies carefully can determine that they're alive with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

The necromites leap to their feet and attack when any character enters the room, or if they are attacked first. They fight to the death to guard the treasure in area D11.

#### D11. PARTIALLY COLLAPSED CRYPT

This chamber has partially collapsed around a stone sarcophagus that was opened and looted long ago.

**Treasure.** The necromites in area D10 hid three spellbooks beneath the dust and humanoid bones in the sarcophagus, having stolen the books from murder victims.

Spellbook 1 is bound in red leather and contains the following spells: *burning hands, detect magic, disguise self, fog cloud, ray of sickness, silent image*.

Spellbook 2 has the personal rune of its previous owner burned into its umber cover. This book contains the following spells: *charm person, find familiar, identify, magic missile, sleep*.

Spellbook 3 is bound in scaly black reptile hide and contains the following spells: *cloud of daggers, darkvision, detect magic, feather fall, mage armor, magic missile, Tasha's hideous laughter*.

#### D12. BANE'S ALTAR

Unless the characters take special care to approach quietly and without light sources, they alert the room's occupants. Describe this area to the players as follows:

The eastern part of this room is unlit, flooded, and braced with floor-to-ceiling wooden beams. Rough-hewn steps rise out of the murky water to the western portion of the room, which is dry and lit by two torches in sconces that flank a stone altar. Shackled to the wall behind the altar is a sickly man in a loincloth with a burlap sack over his head. An alcove in the north wall contains a freestanding suit of plate armor missing its helm.

Standing before the altar are two grim figures: a powerfully built woman clutching a mace, and an even bigger man wearing a bucket helm. The helmed man is jabbing the prisoner with a spear, causing him to twitch. Both figures are clad in chain mail, and the woman carries a wooden shield with a leering skull painted on it.

The two armored figures are Kazzira, a female human **fist of Bane** (see page 232 for her stat block), and Yignath, a male human **iron consul** (see page 232 for his stat block). Yignath is torturing the prisoner for fun while Kazzira watches. Both attack intruders but prefer to remain on dry ground. The skull on Kazzira's shield has been painted in fresh blood. Hanging from Yignath's belt is an iron key ring with seven keys—one for the shackles above the altar, two for the shackles in area D22, and four that unlock the chests in area D30.

The prisoner hanging on the west wall is Klim Jhasso, a male human noble captured in the Lower City two days ago after his bodyguard was slain. Klim is a neutral evil **noble** with 1 hit point remaining. He is unarmored (AC 10) and weaponless. He speaks Common and Elvish, but has no useful information to share. Klim guarantees that his family will pay a generous reward for his safe return to their estate in the Upper City—but the noble is lying. His mother is dead, his patriarch father is ailing, and his three younger siblings crave their inheritance, which they would rather split three ways than four. The trading coster that the family part-owns is struggling and can't afford to pay any large reward or ransom.

Klim's shackles have AC 19, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

The suit of armor is welded together and is harmless, but its gauntlets are detachable. Both gauntlets are animated objects statistically identical to **flying swords**, except they deal bludgeoning damage instead of slashing damage. The gauntlets detach from the armor and attack anyone who disturbs them or frees the prisoner from his shackles.

#### D13. MORGUE

Unless the characters approach this room quietly and without light sources, they alert the occupants here. Describe the area to the players as follows:

This partially collapsed room has three wooden beams bracing its ceiling. Situated between the beams is a scorched wooden table with a human cadaver resting atop it. A frighteningly thin woman in a black robe is studying the corpse, her face largely hidden under a cowl. Around her feet creep a swarm of skeletal rats.

The necromancer looming over the corpse is Flennis, a female human **master of souls** (see page 234 for her stat block) and the highest-ranking follower of Myrkul in the dungeon. Use the **swarm of rats** stat block in the *Monster Manual* to represent Flennis's skeletal rats, which are undead instead of beasts. The swarm can be turned by any character with the Turn Undead feature, but spells that target beasts have no effect on it.

Flennis is preparing to make a zombie out of the corpse on the table, but the *animate dead* spell takes 1 minute to cast, which means she must deal with the characters first. Her skeletal rats attack the nearest foe, and she casts spells while using the table for cover.

**Treasure.** In addition to her robe and her flail, Flennis carries a dusty spellbook that contains all the spells she has prepared. The book has black leather covers and sports a tiny, skull-shaped locking mechanism. Flennis has the key to the lock stuck in her hair. A character can also pick the lock with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools.

The first time a creature other than Flennis opens the book, a wisp of black smoke rises from its pages and coalesces into a skull that cackles madly for a few seconds before dissipating. The creature holding the book when the smoke appears must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed for 24 hours, during which time the creature has vulnerability to necrotic damage. A *remove curse* spell or similar effect ends the curse on the creature.

#### D14. HUNGRY RAT

An ordinary **rat** scurries around this room, looking for scraps of food. If the characters use a *speak with animals* spell or similar magic to communicate with the rat, it can share its knowledge of the dungeon with them. It warms to characters who offer it food.

The rat's knowledge is limited to places it has visited—specifically areas D5 through D26. It doesn't know the

location of secret doors, so it's unaware of areas D27 through D33, which are hidden behind the secret door in area D23.

#### D15. FLOODED ROOM

The flooded, rubble-strewn tunnels leading to and from this room narrow to a width of 2½ feet in places. Four rotting wooden beams rise from the murky water to brace the ceiling here. Rubble piled in the northwest corner contains nothing of interest.

#### D16. FLOODED CRYPT

Murky, foul-smelling water surrounds an open stone sarcophagus resting in the middle of this crypt, its stone lid lying broken in three pieces under the water north of it. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of evocation magic around the sarcophagus. Characters who pull the lid fragments out of the water see that the lid was carved in the likeness of a screaming, axe-wielding barbarian.

Exposure to the dampness has rotted the bones in the sarcophagus, reducing them to black sludge.

**Trap.** If the contents of the sarcophagus are disturbed, a ghostly battleaxe appears above the sarcophagus. The battleaxe is created by magic similar to a *spiritual weapon* spell and is treated as a 2nd-level spell effect for the purpose of dispelling it. The ghostly battleaxe can't be harmed, can't leave the room, and targets only creatures, acting on initiative count 20. On each of its turns, it moves up to 10 feet and makes a melee spell attack (+5 to hit) against an available target, dealing 6 (1d8 + 2) force damage on a hit. The effect ends when there are no longer any creatures in the room, and the trap resets after 24 hours.

#### D17. MYRKUL'S ALTAR

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players when their characters first enter the room:

This dry, partially collapsed room contains a stone altar with humanoid skulls and bones piled around it. The top of the altar is covered with dozens of half-melted candles made of black wax, all currently unlit.

If one or more of the black candles on the altar are lit, they shed a green light that reveals black writing on the walls. The writing, which is not visible otherwise, says in Common, "RISE AND BE COUNTED!" If these words are spoken aloud within 5 feet of the altar, the words vanish as bones hidden under the debris at the north end of the room rise up and knit together, forming three animated human **skeletons**. The skeletons are evil undead, but they obey the commands of whoever spoke the words that raised them, serving that individual until they're destroyed or their master is killed.

#### D18. GAS BUILDUP

The ceiling of this flooded room is supported by numerous wooden beams. The air here smells like rotten eggs, a putrid stench that carries beyond the room. Any character approaching this area who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check realizes that the stench is

an indicator of flammable gas in the room. This gas disperses before reaching other areas of the dungeon, and the Dead Three cultists extinguish their torches before moving through this area.

Bringing a lit torch or other open flame into the gas-filled room triggers an explosion that fills the chamber. Creatures fully immersed in the water take no damage, but all others must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. All the wooden beams that support the ceiling are destroyed in the explosion, which could cause a roof collapse (see "Dungeon Features" in area D5). The explosion also burns away the gas, which builds up slowly and becomes dangerous again after 24 hours.

#### D19. PARTIALLY COLLAPSED CRYPT

Much of this room has fallen in, with the debris field mostly burying a stone sarcophagus that was looted years ago. Nothing of interest remains.

#### D20. HALF-PLUNDERED CRYPT

An open sarcophagus stands at the back of this dusty crypt, its heavy stone lid lying on its side between the sarcophagus and the south wall. The north-facing side of the sarcophagus bears faded frescoes of spear-wielding warriors charging across golden plains on horseback.

**Treasure.** A casual search of the sarcophagus turns up nothing but dust and a few scattered humanoid bones. Any character who conducts a thorough search realizes that the sarcophagus has a false bottom made of inch-thick plaster. Smashing through this plaster layer reveals a cavity below that contains a human mummy floating in a shallow pool of red brine. The mummy has two moonstones (50 gp each) embedded in its eye sockets and a *bag of beans* where its heart would normally be. Characters must intentionally tear open the mummy's chest to find the hidden bag. The mummy is inanimate and doesn't protest the theft.

#### D21. ZOMBIE CRYPT

Characters who listen at the door to this room hear faint humanoid moans in the room beyond. Describe the area to the players as follows:

Six moaning humans with rotting flesh shamble about this dusty crypt, which reeks of death. An open stone sarcophagus rests against the back wall, its shattered lid lying in pieces on the floor around it.

The shambling corpses are six **zombies** created by Flennis (see area D13) from the remains of the Dead Three cultists' murder victims. The zombies obey only their creator and attack all others, including other members of the Dead Three cult.

Carved into the north-facing side of the sarcophagus are ghastly images of human cannibalism. The sarcophagus was plundered long ago, and a search of its interior yields up only a jawless human skull and a few bone fragments.

#### D22. TORTURE CHAMBER

Followers of Bane torture and interrogate prisoners here. Describe this room to the players as follows:

The walls and floor of this room are covered with streaks and splashes of dried blood. Two dangling bodies are shackled to the east and south walls. One is an elderly male human; the other, a young female tiefling. Both are covered in bloody gashes, and neither is moving. In the middle of the room is a sturdy wooden chair with a bloody whip draped over it. A bucket half filled with salt sits on the floor nearby.

The followers of Bane rub salt into the wounds of the prisoners they torture here. Yignath the iron consul (see area D12) carries the keys to both sets of shackles, which have AC 19, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A character with thieves' tools can unlock a set of shackles with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

The male human is dead. He was Effinax Zalbor, a caravan coordinator employed by the Jhasso patriarch family, which is part-owner of a trading coster that operates throughout the Western Heartlands (see area D12).

The female tiefling has 0 hit points, and is unconscious but stable. She is Vendetta Kress, a neutral **commoner** who speaks Common and Infernal. She has resistance to fire damage and darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. Vendetta distributes wine and spirits for the Oathoon patriarch family of Baldur's Gate, and was attacked in the Lower City, knocked unconscious, and brought here to be tortured. Under interrogation, she gave her captors information regarding the Oathoons and their security arrangements. She also witnessed the interrogation and death of Effinax, who was questioned at length about the Jhasso family.

If set free, Vendetta stays with the characters until an opportunity to escape presents itself. Before that, though, she shares the following piece of information with her liberators. During her incarceration, she heard what sounded like a heavy stone door scraping open and closed from time to time, accompanied by the sound of splashing footsteps. The noise came from the north. This information might lead characters to search for a secret door in that direction (see area D23).

If Vendetta survives her ordeal in the dungeon, she spreads tales of her harrowing escape through her web of contacts in Baldur's Gate, which includes just about every tavern proprietor in the city.

#### D23. SECRET DOOR AND SENTRY

This flooded tunnel has a secret door in the north wall that swings open into area D27. Standing in the water south of the secret door, holding a lit torch and watching the west stairway, is a male **fist of Bane** (see page 232 for his stat block). On his first turn after seeing the characters, he withdraws to area D25 and pounds on the door to wake his fellow cultists, yelling "Intruders!" at the top of his lungs to alert the occupant of area D26.

#### D24. MYRKUL'S REST

Followers of Myrkul use this plundered crypt as a place to rest. Describe it to the players as follows:

Four flickering torches in wall sconces illuminate this crypt, the middle of which is occupied by an open stone sarcophagus. The sarcophagus bears no carvings or other ornamentation, but is full of humanoid skulls and bones. Six dusty bedrolls lie on the floor around it.

The Myrkulites filled the sarcophagus with skulls and bones found throughout the dungeon, creating an altar of sorts to the Lord of Bones.

#### D25. BANE'S REST

Slumped against the walls of this plundered, partially collapsed crypt are four sleeping **fists of Bane** (see page 232 for their stat block). All are fully armored and have their weapons nearby. If awakened by loud noises or the guard in area D23, they grab their weapons and quickly mobilize to repel any intrusion.

The room is lit by two sputtering torches in sconces on the north and west walls. A stone sarcophagus in the middle of the room stands empty, its lid half buried under rubble on the floor behind it.

#### D26. BHAA'L'S REST

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text when the characters enter this area for the first time:

Four flickering torches in wall sconces light this partially collapsed crypt. An open sarcophagus in the middle of the area is filled to the rim with blood, with spillage streaking the sides of the sarcophagus and pooling around its base. The sarcophagus lid lies half buried under rubble behind it.

Bhaal worshipers like to bathe in the human blood that fills the sarcophagus. A female **reaper of Bhaal** (see page 233 for her stat block) lurks behind the sarcophagus, drenched in blood from head to toe. At the first sign of intruders, she uses a *disguise self* spell to appear as a frail old woman named Nebra. In this guise, she claims to be a florist who was captured by the Dead Three and brought to the dungeon as a slave. If the characters fall for the act and bring Nebra with them, she claims to know the location of a secret door (area D23) and tries to lead them through it to area D29, where she hopes to find reinforcements. If she leads the party to a location occupied by other cultists, she drops the disguise and attacks. She also attacks if her spell ends before then.

#### D27. ECHOES OF BATTLE

This ten-foot-wide flooded passage is braced at regular intervals by wooden beams. Old torch stubs float on the murky water. At the point where the tunnel bends west toward area D29, the characters hear echoes of a battle unfolding in that location.

#### D28. OLD CELLAR

This flooded room was once a cellar, with the collapsed eastern passage marking a staircase that formerly led up to a residence in the city. Hidden under the murky water are four animated human **skeletons** that rise up and attack anyone who crosses the room.

#### D29. MORTLOCK VANTHAMPUR

The sounds of combat intensify as the characters approach this area. Describe the scene to the players as follows:

Beyond the hall, a flooded chamber opens up with rough-hewn steps climbing to the south, north, and northeast. The floor buckles up above the water line in the middle of the room, forming a small island. Corpses and doused torches float in the water around the island, atop which two men circle each other with weapons bared. One of the men—a tall, unarmored brute with a greatclub and a scarred face—towers above his opponent but is gravely wounded. The smaller figure is muscular and bare-chested. He clutches a bloody dagger in one hand and a torch in the other, and has no flesh covering his skull.

The man with the greatclub is twenty-nine-year-old **Mortlock Vanthampur** (see page 26 for his stat block), who has 30 hit points left. His opponent is an uninjured **death's head of Bhaal** (see page 233 for his stat block) named Vaaz. Four other Dead Three cultists lie dead in the water, their skulls caved in by Mortlock.

Mortlock is tolerated by his mother, Duke Thalamra Vanthampur, and despised by his older brothers, Thurstwell and Amrik, who view him as a simpleton and an abomination. Half of Mortlock's face was scarred by fire when he was a child, and his disfigurement gives him a fearsome countenance. He was sent to the bathhouse dungeon by his mother to help the followers of the Dead Three coordinate attacks against the city. When it became clear that the Dead Three cultists could function without Mortlock's support, Thurstwell and Amrik conspired with several Bhaal cultists to assassinate Mortlock without their mother's knowledge.

Mortlock and Vaaz stop fighting when the characters arrive. Believing them to be Mortlock's associates, Vaaz disengages from the fight on his next turn and withdraws to area D33, where he makes his final stand. Vaaz takes his torch with him. Rather than pursuing, Mortlock tries to forge an alliance with the characters. If they come to terms with Mortlock, he gives them the following information in exchange for a promise of amnesty:

- “I was betrayed. These assassins conspired with my brothers to kill me. If you hadn't come along, I'd be dead. I owe you my life.”
- “My family is paying the Dead Three cultists to murder people in the city. Our goal is to prove that the Flaming Fist can't do its job. Once the city stops paying them, the Flaming Fist will have less of a reason to stay in Baldur's Gate. With them gone, no one can stand in the way of my mother becoming the city's



## MORTLOCK VANTHAMPUR

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Athletics +6, Intimidation +5

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Indomitable (2/Day).** Mortlock can reroll a saving throw that he fails. He must use the new roll.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Mortlock makes two attacks with his greatclub.

**Greatclub. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage, plus 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage if Mortlock has taken any damage since his last turn.

**Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

next grand duke. If she gets her way, Baldur's Gate will share Elturel's fate and get dragged down into the Nine Hells."

- "My mother is one of the three remaining members of the Council of Four, which governs Baldur's Gate. She was instrumental in convincing Ulder Ravengard to travel to Elturel and meet with its high overseer, Thavius Kreeg. With Ravengard gone, the Flaming Fist is leaderless and vulnerable."
- "The Dead Three cultists receive regular payments from my brother, Amrik, who runs his own moneylending business out of a tavern called the Low Lantern. My mother doesn't expect much of me, but she thinks the world of Amrik. He's always been her favorite."
- "My oldest brother, Thurstwell, uses imps as spies throughout the city. He has the bathhouse under surveillance and probably knows you're here. He's very sickly and seldom leaves our mother's estate."
- "If you've made it this far, you've killed most of the leaders of the Dead Three cult. Without them, the cult will break up. The cultists keep their treasure nearby." (Mortlock points toward area D30.)

If the characters let him go, Mortlock hides in the city until he can book passage on a ship and leave Baldur's Gate. He has no intention of ever returning.

Mortlock is afraid to confront his mother or his brothers. That said, a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince him to help the characters capture or kill Amrik at the Low Lantern (see page 28). After doing so, Mortlock leaves the city as quickly as possible to escape his mother's wrath.

### D30. TIAMAT'S STOLEN TREASURE

A short flight of stairs climbs to a circular chamber with four padlocked wooden chests piled in the middle of it. The chests are locked, but characters might have wrested the keys from the iron consul in area D12. A character can also use thieves' tools to pick a padlock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

**Treasure.** Each chest weighs 25 pounds empty, and all four contain loot stolen from Tiamat's hoard on Avernus. This treasure was brought to Baldur's Gate by devils in league with Zariel, and was given to the Dead Three cultists by Amrik Vanthampur on behalf of his mother, Duke Thalamra Vanthampur. The contents of each chest are described below.

Chest 1 holds 4,500 cp and two red crystal vials with gold stoppers (25 gp each). Each vial contains a *potion of fire breath*. With the coins and vials inside, the chest weighs 70 pounds.

Chest 2 contains ten eye agates (10 gp each) scattered amid 1,250 sp. With the coins and gemstones inside, the chest weighs 37 pounds.

Chest 3 contains a delicate porcelain dragon mask (25 gp) resting on a bed of 2,400 cp and 500 sp. With the coins inside, the chest weighs 55 pounds. The mask weighs 1 pound.

Chest 4 contains a bronze crown with five spires (250 gp). Each spire is shaped and painted to resemble one of the five kinds of chromatic dragons (black, blue, green, red, and white). The crown weighs 2½ pounds.

### D31. TORCHES

A wooden crate is stored in this otherwise empty alcove. The crate can hold sixty torches, but is in need of re-stocking. Only five torches remain.

### D32. STOLEN GOODS

Nine wooden crates are scattered throughout this room. Scurrying among them are six harmless **rats** like the one encountered in area D14.

**Treasure.** Six of the crates are empty except for packing straw. The other three contain stolen goods that the cultists have not yet disbursed, including ten days' worth of rations, a bag of twenty caltrops, three flasks of alchemist's fire, six sets of manacles, four tinderboxes, nine daggers, and four *potions of healing* in glass vials.

### D33. COVENANT OF THE DEAD THREE

If Vaaz fled area D29, he's standing in front of the statues in the west section of the room, his sputtering torch lying on the floor near his feet. Describe the room to the players as follows:

Burned torch stubs litter the floor of this hall, the western end of which is occupied by three six-foot-tall, painted wooden statues. Each statue stands atop a two-foot-high block of red stone, making it look taller and foreboding.

The center statue resembles a heavily armored man whose face is hidden behind the fearsome visor of his helmet. He's painted red except for his right gauntlet, which is black. Clutched in this gauntlet is a blood-red spear, pointed upward. The statue to the north depicts a purple-garbed male noble wearing a harlequin mask and holding a dagger behind his back. The statue to the south portrays a black-robed skeleton with its jaw opened wide and its bony hands outstretched.

Banites, Bhaalites, and Myrkulites convene in this room to plan attacks against the city above. These meetings are often contentious, though the followers of Bhaal and Myrkul usually bend to the whims of the more strategically minded Bane worshipers.

Each statue is solid wood and weighs 150 pounds. A statue can be knocked off its pedestal with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Bane Statue.** The statue of the armored man represents Bane. Its spear is real but nonmagical. The first time any humanoid comes within 5 feet of this statue, it must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or be compelled to kneel. While kneeling before the statue, the creature can't move or take actions or reactions. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Bhaal Statue.** This statue's harlequin mask is a separate piece that can be unhinged and removed, revealing Bhaal's ghastly, skull-like visage underneath.

**Myrkul Statue.** Anyone who desecrates this statue is cursed by the Lord of Bones. Until the curse is ended with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic, the offender gains no benefit from magical healing.



ULTISS, CULTIST OF TIAMAT

### SURPRISE! DRAGON CULTISTS!

If the characters rid the dungeon of the worshipers of Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul, any remaining followers of the Dead Three avoid the dungeon and the bathhouse once they realize those locations are no longer safe.

As the characters exit the dungeon and leave the bathhouse, they have one final encounter in the courtyard (area D1). Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to set the scene:

As you emerge from the bathhouse, five figures leap down from the top of the courtyard wall to confront you. In addition to their black leather armor, they wear strange masks and cloaks that give each of them a vaguely dragon-like appearance. All five brandish curved steel blades reminiscent of dragon claws.

The figures are four human **cultists** of Tiamat led by a male human **cult fanatic** named Ultiss. These chaotic evil worshipers of Tiamat have been sent by Arkhan the Cruel (see chapter 3) to retrieve the treasure stolen from the dragon queen's hoard on Avernum by agents of Zariel—treasure given to Duke Vanthampur and her sons to buy the loyalty of the Dead Three followers.

Guided by visions sent to them by Tiamat, the cultists know when they're within 1,000 feet of her stolen loot. If the characters took any of the treasure from area D30, the cultists attack them to get it back. Otherwise, the cultists demand that the characters stand aside and not meddle in their business. Once they secure the dragon queen's lost treasure, the cultists plan to hunt down and kill the Vanthampurs and anyone else in Baldur's Gate considered to be an agent of Zariel. Cultists who survive this encounter can show up at a later time to help or hinder the characters, at your discretion.

If it's present when the cultists of Tiamat confront the characters, the invisible **imp** in area D1 quietly observes the interaction before reporting back to Thurstwell Vanthampur at his family's villa.

## WHERE NEXT?

Convinced that his two older brothers conspired to kill him, Mortlock Vanthampur urges the characters to capture or kill Amrik at a dockside tavern called the Low Lantern. The adventure assumes that the characters visit this location next. If the characters require an additional incentive to go after Amrik, Mortlock assures them that his mother values Amrik's well-being enough to negotiate for his release if the characters capture him. He suggests that it would be most unwise to oppose a duke of Baldur's Gate without leverage. If the characters decide to attack Vanthampur Villa instead, skip to the "Vanthampur Villa" section (page 32).

Having conquered the Dungeon of the Dead Three, the characters should advance to 3rd level before they head off to the Low Lantern or Vanthampur Villa.

### MORE DEAD THREE ENCOUNTERS

Characters who clear out the Dungeon of the Dead Three might encounter more servants of Bane, Bhaal, or Myrkul in other parts of Baldur's Gate. These villains (see appendix D) usually operate as mixed groups of Banites, Bhaalites, and Myrkulites. Here are a few appropriate encounters for a party of four or five characters of 3rd to 5th level:

**Abduction Squad (for 3rd-level characters).** Four fists of Bane, three night blades, and two necromites of Myrkul try to capture one or more city residents, in the hopes of torturing or ransoming them.

**Murder Squad (for 4th-level characters).** An iron consul with two fists of Bane as bodyguards uses three night blades as scouts and assassins to pick off random passersby. A skull lasher of Myrkul provides magical support, casting darkness spells to confound foes and facilitate escape.

**Revenge Squad (for 5th-level characters).** A black gauntlet of Bane comes after the characters with two reapers of Bhaal and a master of souls, who commands an undead force of six skeletons or four zombies.

## LOW LANTERN

The Low Lantern is an aging, three-masted merchant ship permanently docked on the east side of the harbor. Far past the point of being seaworthy, the vessel was converted into a tavern and gambling house that is open all day and night. The dice game Baldur's Bones is just as popular here as in other taverns throughout Baldur's Gate (see the "Taverns in Baldur's Gate" sidebar, page 16).

### ABOUT THE TAVERN

The Low Lantern's location is marked on map 1.1 (page 13), while map 1.4 shows its interior. Describe the tavern to the players as follows:

Fog obscures the Low Lantern until you get within a hundred feet of it, whereupon its tall masts and creaking bulk come into view. The converted ship has rigging but no sails, and is anchored to the wharf by thick chains. A wooden staircase climbs from the wharf's edge to the main deck. A lantern at the bow casts an eerie green light to signify that the tavern is open for business.

The Low Lantern is quiet during the day, with just a few patrons drinking and gambling below decks. The place comes alive at night, and is a popular site for conducting clandestine meetings with some of the city's least scrupulous inhabitants, including pirates and off-duty Flaming Fist mercenaries.

The owner and proprietor is Laraelra Thundreth, a middle-aged female human **mage** known as "the Captain" to her staff and regular patrons. Laraelra is neutral and doesn't concern herself with the private affairs of her clientele, nor does she mind when visitors get rowdy or turn violent—as long as they're willing to pay for damages afterward. In public, Laraelra is often seen with her **crab** familiar perched on one shoulder. From dawn till noon, she retires to her cabin (area L4) to eat, rest, and read her spellbook.

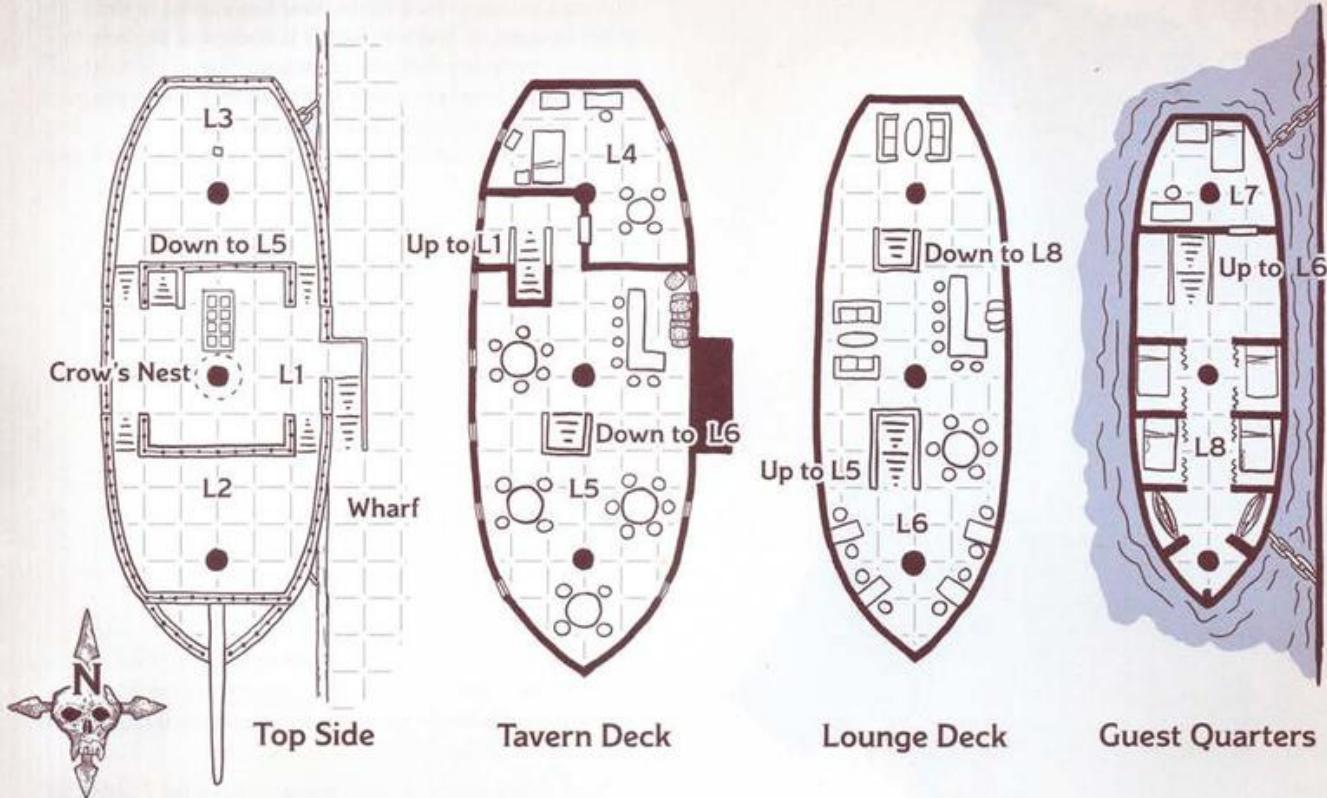
The Low Lantern serves drinks and snacks, but no meals. At any given time, the staff includes two **kenku** bartenders and six bouncers (human **thugs**). The staff operates in three eight-hour shifts, with one group leaving as the next shift arrives.

### TAVERN PATRONS

The Low Lantern attracts the city's least affluent residents, as well as foreign merchants and sailors with coin to lose. Patrons who are present during the characters' initial visit include the following:

- Grimboot (lawful evil **duergar**), a gruff, cross-eyed leg breaker who collects debts for the local thieves' guild
- Hitoshi Jade (neutral human **commoner**), a drunken sailor from a merchant ship called the *Golden Gull*, owned by the Irlentree patriarch family
- Jorunn Nighbury (neutral human **commoner**), a shy horse breeder employed by the Belt patriarch family but burdened by gambling debt

1 square = 5 feet



MAP 1.4: THE LOW LANTERN

- Skadric Salakar (neutral evil human **veteran**), a lazy Flaming Fist soldier who was suspended for a tenday without pay for dereliction of duty
- Prynne Derringwhistle (lawful neutral strongheart halfling **commoner**), a spectacles-wearing barnacle scraper who likes to belt out old sea shanties
- Aerith and Beldan (chaotic good **drow**), awkward and inseparable twins who left the Underdark in search of adventure on the surface

Amrik Vanthampur runs his own business out of the Low Lantern with Laraelra's consent. Characters looking for him are directed to area L6.

## TAVERN LOCATIONS

The following area descriptions are keyed to map 1.4.

### L1. MAIN DECK

Describe this area to the players as follows:

The main deck of the old ship features wooden steps that climb to the forecastle and aftcastle, and another set of stairs descending into the ship. A padlocked wooden hatch fitted with windows acts as a skylight for the deck below—the tavern proper, visible through the hatch's glass panes. Four dead seagulls lie on the deck and two ravens squawk at you from the crow's nest, a forty-foot climb up the ship's rigging.

The ravens are two **imps** in shapechanged form. Thurstwell Vanthampur (see page 34) uses the imps to keep an eye on his brother, Amrik. The imps take malevolent delight in killing any seagulls that happen by, and the tavern staff can't figure out why the decks are always littered with seagull carcasses. A character who examines a dead seagull and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check ascertains that the bird was stung to death.

If the imps see Amrik leave the ship, they trail him to make sure he isn't being followed. If they realize Amrik is in danger, they swoop down to attack whoever appears to be threatening him. The imps otherwise avoid combat and turn invisible to avoid capture or death.

### L2. FORECASTLE

This deck is littered with the corpses of  $1d4$  dead seagulls (see area L1 for more information). Hanging off the end of the ship's bow is the green-pained lantern that indicates the tavern is open for business. A staff member crawls to the end of the bow to douse the lantern, refill it with oil, and relight it at highsun every day.

On warm, clear nights, Laraelra moves tables, chairs, and lanterns onto this deck so that clients can drink and gamble under the stars.

### L3. AFTCASTLE

The captain's wheel and rudder are gone, leaving holes and empty fixtures where they used to be. As with area L2, Laraelra sometimes moves tables, chairs, and lanterns onto this deck so that clients can be outdoors on nights when the weather is nice.



## AMRIK VANTHAMPUR

Medium humanoid (human), lawfully evil

Armor Class 17 (leather armor, Charisma modifier)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +3, Deception +6, Insight +6

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

**Suave Defense.** While Amrik is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, his AC includes his Charisma modifier.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Amrik makes three dagger attacks.

**Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

**Smoke Bomb (1/Day).** Amrik hurls a smoke bomb up to 20 feet away. The bomb explodes on impact, creating a cloud of black smoke that fills a 10-foot-radius sphere. The area within the cloud is heavily obscured. A strong wind disperses the cloud, which otherwise remains until the end of Amrik's next turn.

## L4. LARAEHLA'S CABIN

The lock on Laraelra's cabin door has rusted to the point of being useless, and she hasn't bothered to replace it. Consequently, her cabin is unlocked. One of the bouncers in area L5 keeps an eye on the door and roughs up anyone other than Laraelra who tries to open it.

Describe the cabin's features to the players as follows:

This cabin is full of mismatched wooden furniture, including a bed with posts carved to resemble mermaids, a nightstand, a wardrobe, a writing desk with a fur-draped chair, and a small dining table surrounded by four plain chairs. Near the foot of the bed rests an ornately carved sea chest sealed with a padlock.

Laravelra hides the key to the chest in the adjacent bedpost, whose top unscrews to reveal the hidden compartment where the key is sequestered. The chest's padlock can otherwise be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools.

In addition to the items described under "Treasure" below, the chest contains four flying daggers that attack anyone other than Laraelra who opens the chest. Use the **flying sword** stat block to represent the daggers, but make these changes:

- Each flying dagger is a Tiny construct with 7 (3d4) hit points and a challenge rating of 1/8 (25 XP).
- Each flying dagger deals 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage on a hit.

**Treasure.** The chest contains a nice pair of boots, a bottle of fine wine (10 gp), a bundle of letters from an unnamed admirer, and Laraelra's spellbook, which contains all the spells she has prepared plus *identify*, *gust of wind*, *magic weapon*, *send*, *sleep*, and *tongues*.

## L5. TAPROOM AND GAMBLING HALL

This is the busiest and noisiest part of the ship, and it reeks of sweat, cheap ale, rotting timbers, and old vomit. Three bouncers (**thugs**) position themselves so they can see everything that happens here. If Laraelra is not in her cabin (area L4), she is seated at the short end of the bar with her crab familiar on her shoulder.

Laravelra greets newcomers with a rehearsed speech:

"Well met! My name is Laraelra Thundreth, but folks around here call me the Captain. If you're thirsting for a beverage or looking to gamble, you've come to the right place, but watch your step. Things can get pretty messy around here."

Use the "Tavern Patrons" section earlier to flesh out the occupants of this area as needed. There's always someone eager to play Baldur's Bones here.

The tavern is lit by hanging oil lanterns and whatever natural light slips through the glass hatch and the ship's grimy portholes. Those portholes are 1½ feet in diameter, with rusty latches on the inside that hold them shut.

## L6. TAVERN LOUNGE

This tavern lounge fills an entire deck and is lit by oil lanterns hanging from the 8-foot-high ceiling by 1-foot-long chains. The windowless deck contains a bar, couches, coffee tables, and tables where patrons can socialize and gamble. Three of Laraelra's bouncers (**thugs**) stand in plain view across the deck.

**Amrik Vanthampur** (see the accompanying stat block) has turned a pair of couches and a coffee table near the aft wall into his personal office. He runs a moneylending business from this location, and many of his regular clients are down-on-their-luck gamblers who can't cover their debts. In exchange for this space, Amrik pays for the wine that is delivered to the Low Lantern, making Laraelra's business profitable.

Thirty-three-year-old Amrik sits alone on the starboard couch, his feet on the table and his eyes on the room. He keeps the port couch open for clients and employs two bodyguards. Kasharra, a **spined devil**, perches on the back of Amrik's couch. Vhaltus, a sleepy-eyed lawful evil human **thug** with red hair in a ponytail, sits at the closest end of the bar. Vhaltus carries a small sack containing 150 gp, which Amrik loans to clients. If he thinks his life is in real danger, Amrik detonates a concealed smoke bomb before fleeing up the stairs, leaving his bodyguards to cover his escape.

Amrik loves to exchange pleasantries over drinks before conducting business. He has trained Laraelra's staff to recognize a variety of innocuous hand gestures that signal them to deliver drinks to the table. If he wants poison added to his clients' drinks, he has a secret sign for that. Hidden behind the bar is a small bottle containing four doses of torpor (see "Poisons" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), which the kenku bartender can use to spike drinks when Amrik gives the signal.

## L7. GUEST CABIN

This guest cabin is not currently occupied. Its furnishings include a bed, a wardrobe, an empty desk, and a chair. An oil lantern hangs from a rusty hook bolted to the mast.

The lock on the cabin door has rusted to the point of being useless, but the desk chair can be wedged under the doorknob to keep the door from being opened. If the chair is so used, opening the door requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check and makes a lot of noise.

## L8. SLEEPING QUARTERS

This area is prone to leaks, as the ship's hull is mostly submerged at this level. Puddles of water collect in areas where the floor has bowed, and the whole space reeks of vomit and urine.

Four alcoves here are set with cheap cots where drunks can sleep off their hangovers. In the bow are four hammocks that serve a similar purpose. At any given time, 1d4 unconscious **commoners** can be found throughout this area, sleeping off the effects of a too-wild night. If the characters wish to rob them, each commoner has a belt pouch containing 1d6 sp and 2d6 cp.

## DEALING WITH AMRIK

Unless the characters attack him at once, Amrik assumes they've come to him for a loan. He is more than happy to provide one, up to a limit of 150 gp (the amount currently carried by his bodyguard Vhaltus). Amrik's terms are simple: he expects repayment in a tenday and charges 25 percent interest on the loan. As a member of the influential Vanthampur family, Amrik has plenty of muscle he can bring to bear against anyone who defaults on a loan, and his family's influence extends beyond Baldur's Gate.

The characters might try to secure a loan, with or without the intention of paying it back. Characters who plan to rip off Amrik must succeed on a Charisma (Deception) check contested by Amrik's Wisdom (Insight) check, as described under "Contests" in chapter 7 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Characters can try to interrogate Amrik for information, but he's a practiced liar who won't incriminate himself or any family member he fears, including his mother and older brother. If the characters mention Mortlock, Amrik accuses that "scar-faced hulk" of consorting with the lowest of the low in Baldur's Gate to bring ruin to their family. Amrik's utter disdain for his younger brother is palpable, though he won't admit to his participation in a conspiracy to assassinate Mortlock. If the characters level accusations against him, Amrik tries to shift the blame to Mortlock. Failing that, he invokes his mother's name and reputation as a shield, hoping the characters will think twice about offending or harming the favored son of Duke Thalamra Vanthampur.

Amrik never battles to the death, and he surrenders if he can't fight, talk, or slither his way out of a perilous situation. If the characters defeat Amrik's bodyguards and take him prisoner, he does what he's told until an opportunity to escape presents itself. The staff of the Low Lantern do not intervene.

If the characters kill Amrik aboard the Low Lantern, Laraelra warns them that his death will incur the wrath of Duke Thalamra Vanthampur. She suggests that they flee Baldur's Gate at once—before they end up as fish food at the bottom of the harbor.

## REYA MANTLEMORN

Before the characters leave the Low Lantern, a new arrival greets them. Read the following to the players:

A cloaked figure approaches, armor clanking with each step. One gloved hand rests on the hilt of a longsword. The other pulls back a cowl to reveal the face of a teenager with brown skin, red hair, and a haunting gaze.

The cloaked figure is Reya Mantlemorn, a lawful good female human Hellrider (use the **veteran** stat block). Reya speaks Common.

Born in the land of Turmish, Reya came to the holy city of Elturel to train as a Hellrider when she was twelve. As a faithful follower of Torm, Reya is prepared and has trained to sacrifice herself for the greater good.

## REYA'S TALE

Reya was training a few miles north of Elturel when the city vanished. She watched in disbelief as the Companion's light went out, turning black as the city appeared to crumble and sink below the horizon—a horrific image that Reya has been unable to get out of her mind. She returned to Elturel to find a crater where the city once stood, then took it upon herself to lead a group of fearful refugees west to Baldur's Gate. Before the Flaming Fist closed the city gates, Reya and a handful of others managed to sneak inside, but they didn't get far before a group of Flaming Fist soldiers confronted them. The refugees scattered, and Reya soon found herself cornered by a Flaming Fist thug. She wounded the soldier with her longsword, fled down an alley, and stole a cloak to better conceal her armor and weapons. She's been a wanted fugitive ever since.

Reya hasn't been in Baldur's Gate long, but she's quickly concluded that the city is a cesspool of corruption with death lurking around every foggy corner. She's investigating a rumor that Thavius Kreeg, the high overseer of Elturel, is in the city. Reya hasn't confirmed whether the rumor is true, but reports say that Kreeg was seen in the company of four guards employed by the Vanthampur family. The Vanthampur estate is located in the Upper City, beyond her reach, but she has learned that Amrik Vanthampur runs a business out of the Low Lantern. She aims to question him about the veracity of the rumor.

Reya knows nothing of Thavius Kreeg's treachery. She simply wants answers regarding what happened to Elturel. If it's possible to save the city, the Hellrider is prepared to do whatever it takes to do so. As for Baldur's Gate, she could care less what happens to it. "I hope the rats eat it," she says scornfully.

If the characters appear valiant and forthright, Reya takes a liking to them immediately. Once she realizes that her quest parallels theirs, she asks to join them as they prepare to visit Vanthampur Villa.

If the characters reveal that they're working for the Flaming Fist, Reya draws her longsword in a panic, expecting to have to defend herself. Characters can allay her fears by saying they have no intention of arresting her. In the interests of full disclosure, Reya admits that she's being hunted by the Flaming Fist for an "unfortunate altercation" that wasn't entirely her fault.

## IF REYA JOINS THE PARTY

Reya is willing to join the adventuring party if the characters let her. She has no friends in Baldur's Gate, and she can't reach Vanthampur Villa in the heavily guarded Upper City without help. She does her best to aid the party, as long as the characters' actions and decisions lead her closer to discovering the truth of what happened to Elturel. Once the city's fate becomes known to her, Reya leaps at any chance to rescue the city from the Nine Hells.

As an NPC, Reya falls under the DM's control. But if running her becomes too much of a burden for you, see if one of the players wants to run Reya as a secondary character. You can provide the consenting player with a copy of the **veteran** stat block in the *Monster Manual*.

## VANTHAMPUR VILLA

Vanthampur Villa is located in the Upper City, which is populated by the wealthiest residents of Baldur's Gate and heavily patrolled by the Watch. The villa's location is marked on map 1.1 (page 13), while map 1.5 shows its interior. The villa connects with the dungeon and sewer complex shown on map 1.6 (page 37).

The characters might want to visit Vanthampur Villa after leaving the Dungeon of the Dead Three or paying a visit to Amrik Vanthampur at the Low Lantern. If they take Amrik prisoner, they can count on Reya Mantlemorn to keep a close eye on him.

## GETTING TO THE VILLA

Twenty **guards** of the Watch vigilantly are posted at every gate to the Upper City. If the characters present the badges given to them by Captain Zodge, the Watch members let them pass through the gates, even if they are accompanied by a prisoner or a known fugitive such as Reya Mantlemorn. Any character without a badge is questioned and required to pay a gate toll of 2 cp.

If the characters have Amrik as their prisoner, he does nothing to provoke a confrontation with the guards at the gate, fearing he might be hurt.

## THE VANTHAMPUR FAMILY

Thalamra Vanthampur is a cunning, devil-worshiping beast of a woman in her late sixties who can stare down a hell hound without flinching. She is barrel-bodied, with strong hands and forearms that speak to her beginnings as a manual laborer. Her youth was spent in the cellars and sewers of Baldur's Gate, repairing pipes and clearing out the city's filth. Thalamra rose from such lowly work to become the minister of the city's sewers and waterworks. Now she dresses in the finery that suits her station as a duke of Baldur's Gate.

Thalamra orchestrated the disappearance of Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard to fulfill her ultimate goal of becoming the new grand duke of Baldur's Gate. When not engaged in political matters, she conducts her most secret business in the dungeon complex below her villa.

Thalamra is a widow three times over, and each of her dead husbands was kind enough to give her a son. Her oldest boy, Thurstwell, is a pale and sullen recluse in his forties. A veritable shut-in, he uses imps to spy on his brothers, Amrik and Mortlock. Thurstwell resents both of them—Amrik for being their mother's favorite, and Mortlock for being a monstrous dolt.

Thurstwell's real problem is that his mother doesn't see him as her successor, and is grooming Amrik to fill that role. Despite his jealousy, Thurstwell would never visit harm upon Amrik for fear of incurring his mother's wrath. Mortlock is a different matter, as it's been made abundantly clear that Thalamra would disown him had she not agreed to the dying wish of her third husband to look after Mortlock despite his countless imperfections.

The last member of the Vanthampur family is Slobberchops, a mean-looking tressym (winged cat) with a bob-tail and numerous battle scars. Characters who encounter Slobberchops can try to befriend it (see area V5).

1 square = 5 feet



Tower



Second Floor

MAP 1.5: VANTHAMPUR VILLA

## ABOUT THE VILLA

Vanthampur Villa is a stately stone edifice with a detached stable house. Both buildings have sloped rooftops covered with red clay tiles. A 12-foot-high stone wall encloses the villa. Lanterns hanging along the wall's interior are lit at dusk and extinguished at dawn to illuminate the yard and villa at night. The wall features three wooden gates—the main entrance and a coach gate to the south, and a postern gate to the north.

The villa's wooden doors and lead-framed windows aren't locked, and the Vanthampurs employ guards to patrol the yard (see area V1). The guards live elsewhere and change shifts every six hours.

### SERVANTS

The Vanthampurs employ four full-time live-in servants (all neutral human **commoners**):

- Fendrick Gray, a decrepit seventy-year-old butler
- Sarvinder Peck, a salty fifty-two-year-old groundskeeper and stable master
- Gabourey D'Vaelan, a fussy thirty-five-year-old cook
- Ambra Fallwater, a plainspoken nineteen-year-old maid

Ambra is a recent hire to replace the previous maid, whom Duke Vanthampur threw down the stairs for breaking a vase.

### VILLA LOCATIONS

The following area descriptions are keyed to map 1.5.

### V1. YARD

Nine lawful evil human **guards** patrol the yard in three groups of three. When the characters first arrive, these groups are located at the points marked "V1" on map 1.5, and are circling the yard counterclockwise.

The guards attack anyone who trespasses onto the estate without the consent or prior notification of Duke Vanthampur or one of her sons. If the characters have Amrik or Mortlock with them, they can convince either of the duke's sons to talk them past the guards. Otherwise, the characters need to kill the guards or sneak past them. The guards are too well paid to accept bribes, and they have no respect for the Flaming Fist. To sneak past a group of guards, each character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. This check is made with advantage at night or in fog.

### V2. STABLE HOUSE

This stone building contains stables for four **draft horses**, plus a fully equipped smithy with an anvil and a hearth. Sarvinder Peck (see "Servants" above) can be encountered here, making and fitting new shoes for the horses.

**Trapdoor.** A 3-foot-square flagstone in the southwest corner of the stable doubles as a hidden trapdoor in the floor. Any character who searches the area finds the trapdoor with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The stone covers a brick-walled shaft and a wooden ladder that descends 15 feet to area V27 of the dungeon. If the Vanthampurs need to flee the dungeon, they can use the trapdoor to reach their horses quickly.



## THURSTWELL VANTHAMPUR

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 5 (2d8 – 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Skills Deception +3, Insight +5, Perception +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

**Dark Devotion.** Thurstwell has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Spellcasting.** Thurstwell is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, sacred flame* (see "Actions" below), *thaumaturgy*

1st level (3 slots): *command, detect evil and good, sanctuary*

### ACTIONS

**Sacred Flame (Cantrip).** Flame-like radiance descends on one creature Thurstwell can see within 60 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d8) radiant damage, gaining no benefit from cover.

## V3. FOYER

If the characters knock on the front doors, the butler, Fendrick Gray (see "Servants," page 33), makes his way here from area V10 to greet them. He ushers them in if they are expected, but turns them away otherwise.

Describe this area to the players as follows:

Apart from the main entrance, this room has two exits. A plaster shelf lined with ornate vases circles the room at a height of nine feet. Spread across the flagstone floor is a ten-foot-wide, fifteen-foot-long rug of exquisite design, depicting a royal coronation. Two tapestries hanging on the walls depict a dragon flying over a ship and pilgrims on camels, respectively.

Four invisible **imps** lurk among the vases on the high shelf, one in each corner. The imps swoop down to attack anyone they perceive as intruders, including characters who have Mortlock or Amrik as a prisoner.

**Treasure.** The vases, rug, and tapestries are valuable art objects, though they don't go well together. Each of the sixteen vases weighs 2 pounds and is worth 25 gp. The rug weighs 50 pounds and is worth 250 gp. Each of the two tapestries weighs 5 pounds and is worth 75 gp.

## V4. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

This undecorated room contains four single beds and a dining table for the manor's servants. The servants keep spare uniforms and other personal belongings in drawers under their beds. Nothing of value is kept here.

## V5. KITCHEN

Pleasant aromas fill this area throughout the day as cook Gabourey D'Vaelan (see "Servants," page 33) prepares meals for the Vanthampurs and their staff. Gabourey doesn't like other people in the kitchen while she works.

Pots, pans, and cooking utensils dangle above three wooden preparation tables in the middle of the room, and shelves are lined with bowls, platters, herbs, spices, and dried goods. A dumbwaiter with a manually operated rope-and-pulley system allows meals to be delivered to Duke Vanthampur's bedroom (area V17). A tiny bell near the dumbwaiter rings whenever the duke wants food sent up to her.

Slobberchops the **tressym** (see page 241 for its stat block) prowls the kitchen, killing rats and eating whatever Gabourey drops on the floor. Slobberchops has no loyalty to the Vanthampur family, and detests Thurstwell and his imp spies. The tressym befriends any character who feeds it, following that character around the house and using its Detect Invisibility trait to warn of invisible imps nearby.

## V6. PANTRY

Food and drink is stored on shelves in this musty room.

## V7. STAIRS DOWN

This room contains a barrel of fresh water and a brick-walled staircase that descends 15 feet to area V20.

## V8. PARLOR

While entertaining visitors in this room, the duke likes to sit in an austere, high-backed chair facing a pair of padded couches and a coffee table. A hidden compartment in the left armrest of the duke's chair contains a silvered dagger. A character who examines the chair can locate the hidden compartment with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Thin drapes cover the windows to diffuse the natural light, and the walls are lined with framed paintings of the duke, her three dead husbands, her three sons, and the family's winged cat, Slobberchops.

**Treasure.** A tapestry hanging on the north wall depicts burning angels falling from the sky into a pit of fire. The tapestry weighs 5 pounds and is worth 150 gp.

## V9. DINING ROOM

Thalamra Vanthampur and her sons gather here once a tenday for an always-tense family dinner. Read the following when the characters can see this area:

An iron-wrought chandelier hangs above a black oak dining table surrounded by eight high-backed chairs carved to look like devils. A fireplace dominates one wall, flanked by red-curtained windows. A handsome, glass-doored wine cabinet stands against one wall.

Perched on the chandelier are three invisible **imps** that behave like the imps in area V3. A rope-and-pulley mechanism allows the chandelier to be lowered and raised. The rope is tied around a hook mounted on the east wall near the wine cabinet.

**Treasure.** The cabinet contains a set of eight red crystal goblets (25 gp each) and sixteen bottles of wine. Fifteen of the bottles contain fine wine (10 gp each). The last bottle is laced with midnight tears, a tasteless poison (see "Poisons" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). This tainted bottle is set aside for guests whom the duke intends to eliminate.

## V10. GALLERY

Black curtains are drawn over the windows to the south, keeping this hall dark and cool. Unless otherwise occupied, Fendrick Gray, the venerable butler, paces the hall with a lantern while the maid, Ambra Fallwater, dusts (see "Servants," page 33). A wooden staircase at the north end of the hall climbs 15 feet to area V11.

This gallery contains an eclectic collection of tapestries, paintings, and alabaster busts on pedestals meant to impress guests. The duke bought the pieces thinking them to be valuable art objects, but all are knockoffs acquired from dubious sources. The haphazardly assembled collection is a testament to bad taste.

**Wax Statue.** A 6-foot-tall wax statue in one corner depicts Duke Thalamra Vanthampur cradling the family pet, Slobberchops, in her arms. The tressym has a wax rat in its mouth. Visitors who enter the gallery from the foyer (area V3) are often startled by the statue because of its location just inside the door and its lifelike appearance.

## V11. UPSTAIRS HALL

Lanterns hang from the rafters of this drafty hall. The staircase to the north descends 15 feet to area V10.

Five lawful evil human **guards** stand watch here—one by each door. They attack anyone not accompanied by a Vanthampur family member. If they hear trouble elsewhere, the guards can't be surprised, but they stay put unless ordered to move by a member of the family. Combat here alerts Thurstwell Vanthampur in area V13.

## V12. BALCONY

A crenelated stone battlement encloses this balcony overlooking the front yard. It's a 15-foot drop from the balcony to the ground.

## V13. THURSTWELL'S BEDROOM

Drab curtains cover the windows of this plain room, which contains a bed, a padlocked iron chest, a claw-footed iron bathtub, and a fireplace. Standing in the middle of the room is **Thurstwell Vanthampur** (see the accompanying stat block), a frail and hateful forty-two-year-old man clutching an *infernal puzzle box* (see "Treasure" below). If alerted to intruders, Thurstwell has locked the puzzle box in the iron chest and tucked the key into his robe pocket.

Thurstwell commands several imp spies who enter and leave his room through the chimney, but only one such creature is present when the characters arrive. This **imp** is invisible, lurks in the fireplace, and attacks anyone who threatens Thurstwell.

Thurstwell greets intruders in the most uncivil fashion—by casting *sacred flame* at the nearest one. On the same turn, he casts *sanctuary* on himself as a bonus action and uses his movement to cower behind the bed while the imp defends him. If taken prisoner, he whines about the failure of his guards to protect him and bides his time, hoping his captors get in over their heads and afford him a chance to escape. If interrogated, he offers the following information in exchange for his release:

- His mother, the duke, is in the dungeon below the villa with Thavius Kreeg. She and the former high overseer of Elturel are plotting to seize control of Baldur's Gate.
- He and his brothers recently stole the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* from a crypt under the city. A powerful devil named Gargauth is trapped in the shield, and has vowed to help the Vanthampurs conquer Baldur's Gate if released. Thavius Kreeg is confident that he can devise a way to release Gargauth from the shield.
- Thavius arrived in the city a few days ago with the puzzle box. The duke insisted that Thavius let the family safeguard the item while he studies the shield.

**Treasure.** The *infernal puzzle box* is a new magic item described on page 224. Each puzzle box is unique in its design. This particular box belongs to Thavius Kreeg and was entrusted to Duke Vanthampur for safekeeping. Curious to know what's inside the box, the duke gave it to Thurstwell—supposedly her smartest son—to see if he could open it, but he's had no luck so far. Thurstwell can be threatened into relinquishing the box, or it can easily be taken from him. However, opening the box is beyond the ability of any of the characters. Falaster Fisk,

a spy imprisoned in the dungeon (area V29), can advise the characters that taking the box to Candlekeep is their best bet for learning what it contains (see page 45). The box holds a copy of the contract Thavius forged with Zariel to doom the city of Elturel.

The padlock on the chest can be picked by a character with thieves' tools who succeeds on a DC 15 Dexterity check. The chest weighs 50 pounds and contains a jumble of wrinkled garments, red wax candles, quills, blank sheets of parchment, and jars of ink. It also holds an unlocked wooden coffer containing 73 gp, 120 sp, and a *potion of healing*, as well as a black-covered tome titled *Apocalypso*—a poetic prophecy by an unknown author envisioning the end of the multiverse (worth 50 gp).

#### V14. MORTLOCK'S BEDROOM

This dark room contains a bed, a wooden chest with clawed feet, and a night table. The chest weighs 25 pounds and contains a few drab garments made for a man of Mortlock's size, a few worthless personal effects, and a stuffed troll doll from Mortlock's childhood.

#### V15. AMRIK'S BEDROOM

This tastefully appointed room contains a bed, a side table, a claw-footed iron bathtub, a fireplace, and an iron-banded wooden chest. A three-foot-wide, six-foot-tall mirror is mounted to the east wall opposite the fireplace. The mirror's varnished wooden frame is carved with images of rats, ravens, and spiders.

**Treasure.** Amrik's chest contains neatly folded and tailored apparel to fit a slender noble, and a jewelry box carved from bone (10 gp). This tiny box contains a gold signet ring (5 gp) bearing the Vanthampur motto, "Stone hearts never bleed."

#### V16. DUKE'S POWDER ROOM

This room contains a vanity topped with a framed oval mirror, bottles of perfume, brushes, cosmetics, needles, and spools of thread. Other furnishings in the room include a folding wooden partition adorned with a bird of prey rendered in gold leaf, a tall black wardrobe filled with corsets and fine clothes, and a decorative gold rug laid out in front of three unlocked wooden chests. One chest is full of shoes, another contains three old bridal gowns, and the third contains seasonal hats.

**Treasure.** The vanity holds six bottles of fine perfume (20 gp each), a silver hairbrush inlaid with lapis lazuli (100 gp), and a wooden jewelry box with electrum filigree (75 gp) holding a pearl necklace (250 gp), a platinum cameo shaped like a winged cat (50 gp), and two *potions of healing* in thin crystal vials.

#### V17. MASTER BEDROOM

Duke Vanthampur retires to this chamber when she needs to rest or shake off a headache. She also takes most of her meals here. Food is delivered via a dumb-waiter in the southwest corner (see area V5 for details), which has a cord that rings a bell in the kitchen. Other features of the room include a canopied bed with a gossamer shroud for keeping insects at bay, a freestanding wooden privacy screen, a cast-iron bathtub with clawed feet, a fireplace, and a padlocked iron chest. The padlock is cast in the shape of a horned devil's scowling visage.

Thalamra Vanthampur carries the key to the padlock (see area V28), which can be picked by a character with thieves' tools who succeeds on a DC 17 Dexterity check.

**Treasure.** The chest weighs 65 pounds and is trapped (see "Trap" below). It contains three thin, black-covered ledgers with entries written in Infernal (records of Duke Vanthampur's legitimate business dealings), a set of calligrapher's supplies (15 gp), a poisoner's kit (50 gp), a coin pouch made from a sheep's bladder (containing 22 pp, 85 gp, and 113 sp), and *pipes of the sewers*.

**Trap.** The chest has a false bottom underlaid with metal springs. The combined weight of the items in the chest holds the false bottom down, but if three or more items are removed, the false bottom rises and pulls the cork out of a thin glass vial hidden underneath it. The uncorked vial releases a cloud of poisonous gas that fills a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on the chest. The cloud is stationary and lasts for 1 minute, or until it's dispersed by a strong wind. Any creature that starts its turn in the cloud must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage.

#### V18. DUKE'S STUDY

An oak writing desk angled to face the middle of the room has a matching chair behind it and two black candlesticks atop it. Other furnishings include three bookcases and a freestanding suit of black plate armor topped with a bucket helm and equipped with a long-sword and a shield. A wrought-iron spiral staircase leads up to area V19.

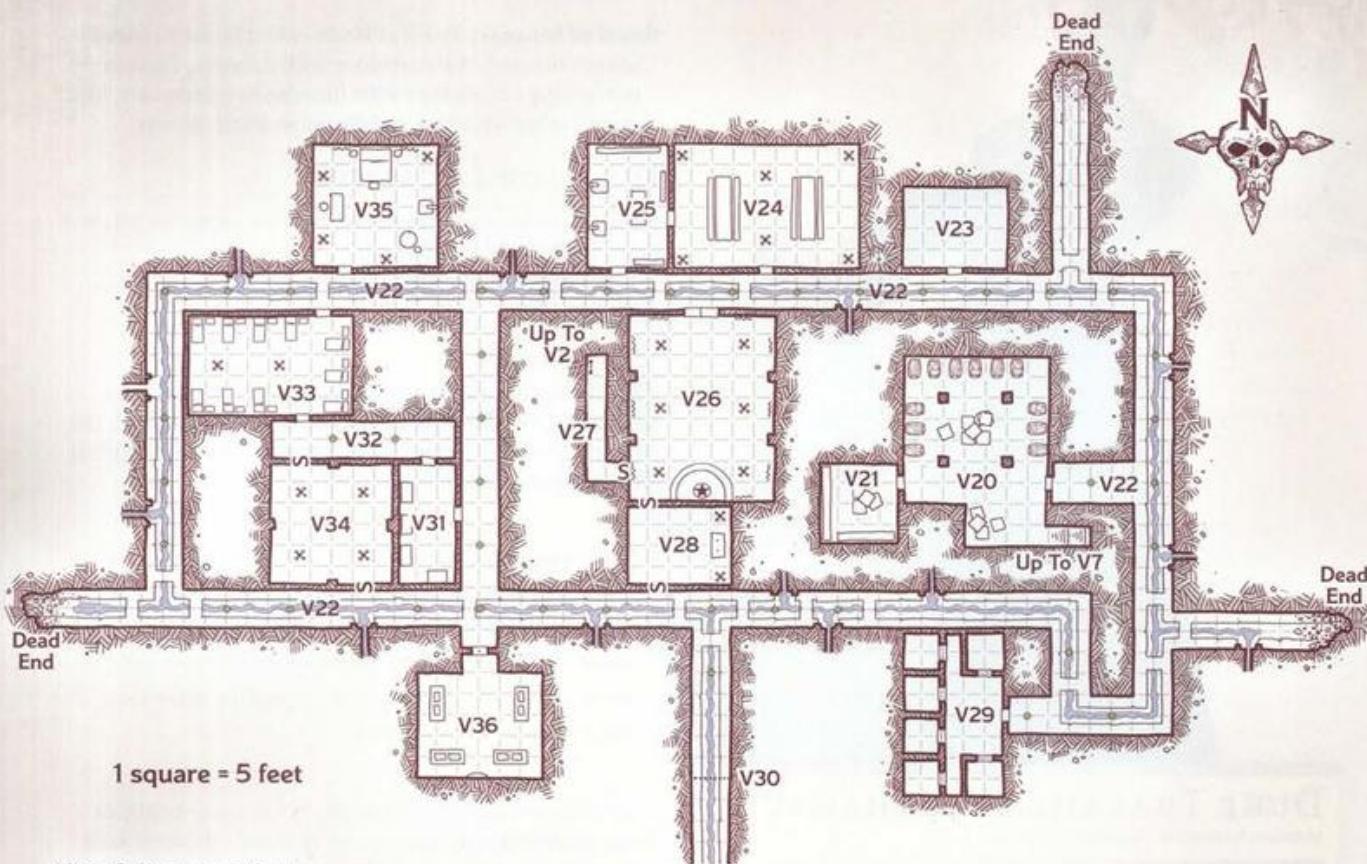
The suit of armor is a **helmed horror** that was fashioned on Avernus. The construct understands Infernal but can't speak, and it is immune to the following spells: *fire bolt*, *sacred flame*, and *shocking grasp*. The only creatures permitted in this area are Duke Vanthampur and her sons. If any other creature enters the room unescorted, a fiery orange light fills the helmed horror's hollow interior as it attacks. The helmed horror pursues intruders beyond the room, returning here only after the trespassers leave the villa or are hacked to pieces.

**Bookcases.** Duke Vanthampur abhors reading but keeps a modest library of fine literature for the sake of appearances. Her study contains two hundred books. A character who spends 1 hour sifting through the collection can find twenty rare first editions (25 gp each). The remaining books are worth 5 gp each to interested buyers, except for a worthless book titled *Last Charge of the Hellriders*. A cavity cut into its pages holds a small iron ring with two keys hanging from it. These keys unlock the cages in area V19.

#### V19. TOWER PEAK

If the characters climb the wrought-iron spiral staircase from area V18, describe this room as follows:

The spiral staircase climbs fifteen feet to a square room with crisscrossing rafters ten feet overhead and a peaked roof above that. An empty bookcase dominates the west wall, and two filthy padlocked cages stand on the floor. Each cage holds a human prisoner and a chamberpot.



MAP 1.6: UNDER THE VILLA

The keys to open the cages' padlocks can be found in area V18. A character with thieves' tools can also pick a lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. The locks can't be picked from inside the cages.

Perched atop the cages are two invisible **imps**. When no one else is around, the imps torment the prisoners with idle threats and taunts, and the prisoners know not to speak or cry out lest the imps sting them. The imps avoid combat with well-armed intruders. If anyone tries to free a prisoner, the invisible imp closest to that prisoner slips through the bars of the cage and stings the prisoner to death, turning visible as it does so. On its next turn, the imp turns invisible and takes refuge above the rafters.

**Prisoners.** The prisoner in the northern cage is Shaleen Zoraz (neutral female human **commoner**), a sewer maintenance supervisor who was backing an effort to extend the Lower City's sewer system into the underground space occupied by the Dungeon of the Dead Three (see page 20). Duke Vanthampur plans to hold Shaleen for a few days before letting her go. The imps have so terrorized Shaleen that, if freed, she intends to abandon her expansion plans and never say an unkind word about the Vanthampurs for the rest of her life.

The prisoner in the southern cage is Kaejil Orùnmar (neutral evil male human **commoner**), a tax collector who has been giving the Vanthampurs a hard time. Once Duke Vanthampur is satisfied that no one important will miss him, she plans to kill Kaejil and feed his remains to the rats in the city sewers. If freed, Kaejil plans to leave Baldur's Gate and never return.

## UNDER THE VILLA

As the minister responsible for the city's sewer system, Thalamra Vanthampur cordoned off the sewers beneath her villa, creating a private dungeon complex where she could conduct religious ceremonies and harbor guests who share her devotion to the archdevil Zariel.

### DUNGEON FEATURES

The dungeon is remarkably clean and kept in excellent condition. Its common features are summarized here.

**Lit Tunnels.** Tunnels are 9 feet high and have curved ceilings. Oil lanterns fitted with thick panes of green-tinted glass hang at regular intervals on 1-foot-long iron chains. Each lantern sheds dim light in a 10-foot radius.

**Iron Doors.** Doors are made of riveted iron plates, with iron handles and well-oiled hinges. Some doors have locks or barred windows set into them, as noted in the text. A character can use thieves' tools to pick a door's lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check, or force open a locked door with a successful DC 24 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Surfaces and Secret Doors.** The dungeon has brick walls and stone-tiled floors. Rooms have 10-foot-high plaster ceilings. Secret doors blend in with the surrounding walls, but a character with darkvision or sufficient light can find a secret door with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.



## DUKE THALAMRA VANTHAMPUR

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +5, Intimidation +6, Religion +3

Senses passive Perception 13; see also "Devil's Sight" below

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

**Dark Devotion.** Thalamra has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Devil's Sight.** Thalamra can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, out to a distance of 120 feet.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Thalamra uses *eldritch blast* twice or makes two unarmed strikes.

**Eldritch Blast (Cantrip).** Ranged Spell Attack: +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) force damage.

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 bludgeoning damage.

### REACTIONS

**Hellish Rebuke (1st-Level Spell; 2/Day).** When Thalamra is damaged by a creature within 60 feet of her that she can see, the creature that damaged her is engulfed in hellish flames and must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Smell of Incense.** Pairs of black-robed human **cultists** march through the corridors with censers, constantly perfuming the sewers with incense to counteract what would otherwise be a mildly nauseating stench.

## DUNGEON LOCATIONS

Before the characters descend into the dungeon, allow them to advance to 4th level.

The following area descriptions are keyed to map 1.6 (page 37).

### V20. CELLAR

The characters might enter this cellar by descending the stairs from area V7, or they might enter through the eastern door. Read the following boxed text to establish what they see from either direction:

Four stone pillars brace the ten-foot-high vaulted ceiling of this dry cellar, the walls of which are lined by a dozen barrels on wooden braces. Half the barrels have brass spigots tapped into them. The room also contains two stacks of wooden crates—one in the middle of the room and another by the south wall.

The topmost crate in the middle of the room contains three **spined devils** that spy on this area through knot-holes in the crate's sides. These devils burst forth and attack intruders on sight. The other crates in the middle of the cellar contain dried meat, loaves of bread, wheels of cheese, and other assorted foodstuffs—enough to sustain the Vanthampurs and the cultists in the dungeon for a month. The crates by the south wall contain candles, oil flasks, incense, and rat traps.

Six of the barrels contain drinking water, and six contain ale.

### V21. WINE CELLAR

More than two hundred corked bottles of wine are displayed in seven-foot-tall wooden racks that span the west and south walls. Empty wooden crates are stacked in the middle of the room.

**Treasure.** Seventeen of the bottles contain fine wine (10 gp per bottle). The remaining wines on display are common vintages (1 sp per bottle).

### V22. SEWER TUNNELS

The dungeon's denizens make frequent use of these lit tunnels. The thick smell of incense hangs in the air (see "Dungeon Features" above).

Smooth stone trenches cut into the floors channel water and waste toward area V30. These trenches are 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep, with arching stone bridges spanning them at irregular intervals. The ledge on either side of a trench is 3 feet wide.

**Wandering Monsters.** Ordinary rats occasionally enter the dungeon through the open pipes in the walls. The cultists lay traps to catch and kill these rats while they perfume the dungeon with incense. As the characters make their way through the tunnels, they might encounter these cultists.

A typical encounter consists of two lawful evil human **cultists** dressed in black robes, each carrying a censer and wearing a thin, golden mask shaped like a devil's face (and worth 25 gp to an interested buyer). The censers contain burning incense. A devil mask covers its wearer's whole face except for the eyes, nostrils, and mouth. No two masks look exactly alike.

If this encounter occurs in a tunnel that has a sewer trench running down the middle of it, the two cultists are walking on opposite sides of the trench, moving in the same direction while swinging their censers gently. You can make the encounter harder by replacing the cultists with **cult fanatics**, or adding one or more invisible **imps** as escorts.

If any wandering cultists are defeated, reduce the number of cultists encountered in area V33 accordingly. If the characters make no effort to hide the bodies of the cultists they defeat, someone stumbles upon them eventually and warns the **barbed devil** in area V26. Assuming it hasn't been defeated already, the devil scours the dungeon for trespassers once notified of their presence.

### V23. COLD STORAGE

The Vanthampurs store animal carcasses and other fresh meat in this room. Hanging in the middle of the room from the 10-foot-high ceiling are six 3-foot-long chains, each ending in a hook. Flayed boar carcasses hang from four of the hooks, while the remaining two hooks are bare.

### V24. DINING ROOM

The cultists dine here, though none are present when the characters first arrive. Two wooden trestle tables with benches stand in the middle of the room, which is brightly lit by six tall wrought-iron candlesticks spaced along the walls. Each candlestick stands six feet high and has nine lit candles at the top of it.

### V25. KITCHEN

The cultists prepare their meals here, though no cultists are present when the characters first arrive. The kitchen is uncomfortably warm and contains a pair of brightly burning cast-iron stoves with piles of wood next to them. Other furnishings include a wooden trestle table where food is prepared, as well as shelves lined with plates, mugs, pots, utensils, and jars of ingredients and spices.

### V26. TEMPLE OF ZARIEL

The iron double door leading to this room has Infernal runes carved into its arched door frame. A character who understands Infernal can translate these runes as follows: "That which falls can rise again."

A character who listens at the double door or one of the secret doors leading to this room hears a half dozen humanoid voices chanting in Infernal. Characters who

#### DISGUISED CHARACTERS

Characters can disguise themselves using masks and robes taken from defeated cultists. While disguised in this fashion, characters have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks made to fool devils and cult members in the dungeon under Vanthampur Villa.

listen to the chants and understand that language can discern praise heaped upon the archdevil Zariel for her tireless effort to win the Blood War.

When the characters enter the room, set the scene by reading aloud the following boxed text:

Two rows of tall wrought-iron candlesticks light this vaulted chamber, each one bearing nine flickering candles. A seven-foot-tall statue of an angel with white glowing eyes and a longsword stands atop a dais to the south. A six-foot-tall fiend bristling with spines stands west of the statue, glaring at four black-robed cultists who kneel and chant in the middle of the room, their faces hidden behind golden devil masks. Nine tapestries depicting the layers of the Nine Hells adorn the walls.

The spined fiend is a **barbed devil** named Odious. Sent by Zariel to serve Duke Vanthampur, the devil answers only to those two. The chanting figures are four lawful evil human **cultists** wearing black robes and golden devil masks similar to those worn by the cultists in area V22. The devil and the cultists attack intruders on sight, but can be duped by characters wearing disguises (see the "Disguised Characters" sidebar).

**Statue.** The statue represents Zariel in her angelic form. It's a Large object with AC 17, 33 hit points, and immunity to fire, poison, and psychic damage. Toppling the statue with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check causes it to shatter on the floor.

**Treasure.** The statue's head and neck are hollow. Lodged in this cavity is a +1 mace that can be removed only if the statue is destroyed. The head of the mace sheds bright light in a 5-foot-radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet. The wielder of the mace can extinguish or ignite its light as an action. (This light is what causes the statue's eyes to glow.)

### V27. ESCAPE TUNNEL

Hidden behind a secret door, this tunnel has a wooden ladder at its north end. The ladder climbs a 15-foot-high shaft to a trapdoor that opens into area V2.

### V28. SECRET SHRINE

This room is hidden behind secret doors (see "Dungeon Features," page 37). The scraping noise either door makes when opened is loud enough to alert the room's occupant. Read the following when the characters enter:

This room is lit by a pair of tall wrought-iron candlesticks in the northeast and southeast corners. Nine candles burn atop each one, casting flickering light across a claw-footed altar carved from a single block of obsidian, and which has a small angel-shaped flame erupting from its top. A gray-haired woman kneels before the altar.

**Duke Thalamra Vanthampur** (see the accompanying stat block) kneels before the altar. She wears fine

clothing fit for a noble of her stature and carries no weapons. However, she possesses magical powers bestowed upon her by Zariel, her infernal patron. Any intrusion is greeted with hostility, and the duke is not squeamish about smashing foes with her bare hands if she finds herself in melee. Don't forget her Hellish Rebuke reaction, which she can use twice per day (but only once before her next turn).

If she is reduced to fewer than half her hit points, Thalamra tries to escape through the nearest secret door that isn't blocked. She either moves to area V36 or attempts to flee via area V27. Proud to a fault, she would rather die than surrender or be taken prisoner—and she happily watches any of her sons die before consenting to ransom demands. When death finally takes her, Thalamra's dying words to her killers are, "See you in hell."

Thalamra keeps two keys in a pocket of her dress. One key unlocks the chest in her bedroom (area V17); the other key unlocks the door to the vault (area V36).

**Obsidian Altar.** The black altar weighs 800 pounds and has tiny Infernal runes carved in a ring around the nine-inch-tall, angel-shaped flame erupting from its top. This flame bears only a vague resemblance to Zariel. Defacing any of the altar's runes extinguishes the flame and causes the altar to crack in two.

## V29. PRISON

Read the following boxed text when the characters open the door to this room:

A broad-shouldered figure with purple skin and a beard of writhing snakelike tentacles stands in the middle of a room lined by iron doors, tightening its grip on a glaive as it glares at you through the darkness. Each door is set with a small barred window, and a ring of keys hangs from the creature's belt.

The prison guard is a **bearded devil** named Thoss, which attacks anyone it perceives as an intruder or a threat. Characters disguised as cultists can try to dupe Thoss into allowing them to interrogate or release prisoners (see the "Disguised Characters" sidebar on page 39). The keys dangling from the devil's belt unlock the cell doors.

Two of the cells (your choice) contain prisoners. The other four cells are empty, though captured characters might end up here (see the "Imprisoned Characters" sidebar). If you need to introduce a new party member to replace one who died, that character can begin the adventure locked in one of the empty cells.

**Falaster Fisk.** The first prisoner is a short, lean, erudite male human in his fifties named Falaster Fisk. Originally from Calimshan, Falaster is a neutral **spy** with no weapons. He speaks Common and Infernal, wears an ankle-length caftan, and has dark hair. His neatly trimmed goatee beard is dyed crimson.

Falaster works for Sylvira Savikas, a tiefling expert on the Nine Hells currently based in Candlekeep. When Thavius Kreeg arrived in Baldur's Gate a few days

ago, it didn't take Falaster long to hear rumors that the Vanthampurs were sheltering him. Falaster tried to find out why and was caught. He can provide his rescuers with the following useful information:

- "Sylvira Savikas is a sage who operates out of Candlekeep. A good friend of mine! She's been monitoring devil activity in Baldur's Gate and Elturel for months."
- "Sylvira is convinced that Thavius Kreeg struck a bargain with an archdevil, and that a copy of the contract he signed is hidden inside a magic puzzle box. She asked me to help her obtain proof of Kreeg's crimes."
- "Sylvira is no friend of Thavius Kreeg's. She thinks she can open his puzzle box, and is willing to pay for it—in gold or magic items."

If released, Falaster helps the characters as best he can while staying out of harm's way. Expecting that he might be caught, he obtained and memorized a floor plan of the dungeon under Vanthampur Villa. He can thus lead his rescuers to secret rooms (areas V28 and V34) and the Vanthampurs' vault (area V36).

**Satiir Thione-Hhune.** The second prisoner is a fit, aristocratic human woman in her seventies named Lady Satiir Thione-Hhune. Born into the rich and politically powerful Hhune patriarch family, Satiir is a neutral evil **noble** with no weapons or armor (AC 11). She was kidnapped by the Vanthampurs to be used as leverage in the event that the Hhunes find out who stole the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* from their family's crypt.

Unknown to the Vanthampurs, Satiir is a member of a secret evil order whose members call themselves the Knights of the Shield, and who are the self-appointed guardians of the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*. Satiir doesn't speak of the shield. Instead, she tells her rescuers that the Vanthampurs were planning to use her to keep the Hhunes from opposing Duke Vanthampur's bid to become the new grand duke. If Satiir is allowed to escape, she informs her family and associates that the Vanthampurs stole the shield, destroying Duke Vanthampur's political future in Baldur's Gate. The characters might encounter more of Satiir's friends on the way to Candlekeep (see "Knights of the Shield," page 44).

## V30. BARRIER OF IRON BARS

This sewer tunnel slopes down gradually toward the south, channeling water and sewage into the city's sewer system. The tunnel is blocked by a 10-foot-square barrier composed of vertical iron bars with 6-inch gaps between them—enough room for a rat to saunter through, but too narrow for normal-sized characters to squeeze through. The bars are embedded deep into the stone of the floor and ceiling.

### IMPRISONED CHARACTERS

If the characters are defeated in Vanthampur Villa or the dungeon below, you can have the bad guys stabilize dying party members, strip them of their gear (which is stored in area V28), and lock them in the prison (area V29). This alternative to a "total party kill" scenario affords Duke Thalamra Vanthampur and her cultists the opportunity to interrogate the characters and find out what they know. It also sets up the possibility of a prison break.

A character can bend the bars with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check, creating a gap wide enough for a Medium or smaller humanoid to squeeze through.

### V31. VESTRY

Four wooden wardrobes stand against the walls in this area. The cultists store their robes and masks in these wardrobes before leaving the dungeon and returning to the city above. The wardrobes along the west wall stand empty. Characters who search the wardrobe on the south wall find four sets of black robes and four gold devil masks, as worn by the cultists encountered elsewhere in the dungeon.

### V32. CONNECTING TUNNEL

The dim light from two of the cultists' green-glass lanterns doesn't reach the ends of this corridor, creating pools of darkness there. Two lawful evil human **cult fanatics** guard the tunnel, one at each end. Characters with darkvision or their own light sources spot the fanatics. Otherwise, the fanatics surprise the characters. Each fanatic wears a black robe and a thin gold devil mask similar to those worn by cultists in other areas.

Sounds of combat here alert the cultists in area V33, who arm themselves but stay where they are.

### V33. CULTISTS' QUARTERS

This room is lit by two tall wrought-iron candlesticks each topped with nine flickering candles. Around the room's perimeter are ten wooden bunk beds, next to which are unlocked footlockers containing ordinary clothes belonging to the cultists.

Ten **cultists** gather here, minus any cultists defeated in area V22. These cult members are lawful evil humans wearing black robes and thin gold devil masks. Some have dozed off, while others are sitting on their beds, sharing rumors regarding Thavius Kreeg's hand in the fall of Elturel and Duke Vanthampur's plans for Baldur's Gate. These cultists show intruders no quarter.

Sounds of combat here alert the cult fanatics in area V32, who investigate immediately.

### V34. RITUAL CHAMBER

This room is hidden behind secret doors (see "Dungeon Features," page 37), and its features are as follows:

This ten-foot-high vaulted chamber has a plaster ceiling painted with images of terrifying winged devils looking down on a symbol embedded in the room's floor: a circular disk of black stone inscribed with a nine-pointed gold star. Four wrought-iron candlesticks bristling with unlit, half-melted red candles surround the circle.

The cultists use this chamber to perform diabolical rituals that duplicate the effect of a *divination* spell, except that the spell's contact is a devil that manifests as a pillar of smoke above the symbol on the floor. The images on the ceiling are pit fiends, recognizable by any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check.

### V35. THAVIUS KREEG'S QUARTERS

Describe this room to the players as follows:

Wrought-iron candlesticks topped with flickering candles light this room, which is heated by a cast-iron stove with clawed feet. Across from the crackling stove is a modest desk with a matching chair. Other furnishings include a small table and chair for dining, a bed, an iron chest resting at the foot of the bed, and two tapestries: one showing spirits rising as lemure devils from the River Styx, and another depicting a dead man dangling like a marionette from hooked chains.

**Treasure.** Thavius keeps a holy symbol of Torm (a silver pendant shaped like a right-handed gauntlet on the end of a silver chain) in the chest. The holy symbol is worth 25 gp. The chest contains nothing else.

### V36. VANTHAMPUR VAULT

The door to this room is locked (see "Dungeon Features," page 37), and Duke Vanthampur has the only key. The door can be unlocked from the inside without the key.

When the characters open the door to the vault, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to set the scene:

This room contains four wooden tables with two small wooden coffers atop each one. Hanging on the wall opposite the door is a beautiful golden shield. Standing in front of the shield is an old man in plain garments, carrying a lit candlestick. As he turns to face the door, you see that his shadow on the far wall doesn't match his form, but appears to be the shadow of a pudgy, horned fiend with small wings.

The man is **Thavius Kreeg** (see his stat block on page 42), the former high overseer of Elturel. Formerly a priest of Torm (god of courage and self-sacrifice), he lost his spellcasting ability when he abandoned his faith and now only pretends to worship that deity. The shield hanging on the wall behind him is the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*, which is depicted and described in appendix C. Thavius has been speaking to Gargauth, the fiend imprisoned in the shield, and has concluded that the shield is responsible for much of the rampant avarice and malice in Baldur's Gate. Given time, Thavius thinks he can use the shield to drag Baldur's Gate down into Avernus.

Thavius craves power and the appreciation of his hellish masters. However, he abhors violence and avoids combat whenever possible. He sheds crocodile tears for Elturel, claiming that he was visiting a parish a few miles outside the city when it disappeared, and expressing horror in response to the city's fall. Neither story holds up under scrutiny.

Thavius also lies about his relationship with Duke Vanthampur. He claims the duke's guards captured him shortly after his arrival in Baldur's Gate, and that the

duke needs his help to ascertain the magical properties of the celestial shield, which her family “acquired” from a crypt under the city. Despite being a practiced liar, Thavius has no lie to explain his diabolical shadow.

If she’s with the party, Reya Mantlemorn is awestruck in the presence of the high overseer, and won’t allow the characters to harm Thavius as long as she believes he’s innocent of wrongdoing. His altered shadow is not damning enough evidence. Convincing Reya that Thavius is corrupt can be accomplished by forcing a confession out of him with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check, or by proving that he has lost his spellcasting abilities. If the characters kill Thavius, they can encounter him again in chapter 3, after his soul is turned into a devil.

**Shield of the Hidden Lord.** The devil Gargauth is bound into the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* and wants to escape from it. The fiend believes it can break out once the shield is taken to the Nine Hells—and it needs the characters’ help to get there.

Gargauth senses the presence of the characters when they enter the room and telepathically contacts one of them at random. Referring to itself as the Hidden Lord, the devil claims to be a celestial being and vows to help the characters rescue Elturel, provided they take the shield with them into the Nine Hells. The Hidden Lord also warns that a secret society is after the shield, and that it’s only a matter of time before its evil members find it. Gargauth claims that this secret society doesn’t want the shield’s powers to be used for good, which is the truth.

Duke Vanthampur and Thavius Kreeg have promised to help Gargauth break out of the shield, provided the fiend spreads corruption throughout the city by uniting the patriars behind the duke—and, by extension, behind the archdevil Zariel. Only then can Baldur’s Gate suffer the same fate as Elturel. However, Gargauth is happy to take advantage of a more expedient means of returning to the Nine Hells if the characters offer it one. The Hidden Lord has no loyalty to anyone but itself.

## THAVIUS KREEG

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Medicine +6, Persuasion +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

**Shadow of Guilt.** Thavius’s shadow is that of a pudgy, horned devil with small wings.

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

**Treasure.** The eight coffers are unlocked and contain money belonging to the Vanthampur family, as well as treasure stolen from Tiamat’s hoard on Avernus. Duke Vanthampur plans to use this combined treasure to bribe the city’s patriars and government officials into supporting her bid to become the new grand duke.

Coffer 1 contains 30 electrum ingots (10 gp each) belonging to the Vanthampur family.

Coffers 2, 3, and 4 each contain 100 gp belonging to the Vanthampur family.

Coffer 5 contains two pieces of a broken ceremonial dagger stolen from Tiamat’s hoard: a curved ivory blade bearing Draconic runes that spell out “Fang,” along with a bone hilt wrapped in leather strips and studded with gemstones. A *mending* cantrip can make the nonmagical dagger whole again, restoring its value (250 gp).

Coffers 6 and 7 each contain 100 pp belonging to the Vanthampur family.

Coffer 8 contains twenty azurite gemstones (10 gp each) stolen from Tiamat’s hoard.

## FINAL ENCOUNTERS IN BALDUR’S GATE

If the characters fail to locate Thavius Kreeg’s *infernal puzzle box* (see area V13) or the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* (see area V36), an NPC such as Reya Mantlemorn or Falaster Fisk recommends a more thorough search of the Vanthampur estate. As a Hellrider, Reya might be able to sense the presence of the celestial shield and urge the characters to retrieve it, lest it fall into evil hands. Similarly, Falaster loathes to leave the puzzle box behind for someone else to snatch up.

If Slobberchops the tressym (see area V5) is with the party, it can lead characters to the puzzle box. Captured villains can also lead characters to the puzzle box or the shield, as needed. Once these items are found, Falaster strongly urges the characters to deliver them to Sylvira Savikas at Candlekeep.

If invited to join the characters on their journey to Candlekeep, Reya and Falaster readily accept. Falaster has a modest dwelling in Little Calimshan, a walled neighborhood in the Outer City, and suggests making a brief stop there so he can equip himself with weapons before continuing the journey to Candlekeep.

## REPORTING TO CAPTAIN ZODGE

Once the characters wipe out the Vanthampur family and its devil-worshiping cult, they can return to Captain Zodge to deliver their report, surrender their Flaming Fist badges, and receive any payment owed to them.

Zodge is gratified to learn that the Vanthampurs are no longer his concern. If the characters report that one or more family members are still alive, Zodge promises to hunt them down and punish them for their crimes.

## COMMANDER PORTYR

As the characters conclude their business with Captain Zodge, the meeting is interrupted by the arrival of a higher-ranking member of the Flaming Fist. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

Your meeting with Captain Zodge is interrupted by the arrival of several Flaming Fist soldiers clad in plate armor. From behind this wall of swords and steel steps an armored woman with a white cloak and graying hair. "Are these the maniacs who've stirred up every nest of rats in this gods-forsaken city?"

"Commander Portyr!" says Zodge. "I was told you wouldn't be in Baldur's Gate for at least another tenday."

"That's what the city's government wanted you to think, captain," she replies. Turning to you, she says, "I trust you've been adequately compensated?"

Until recently, **Liara Portyr** (see her accompanying stat block) commanded a Flaming Fist outpost called Fort Beluarian on the distant tropical peninsula of Chult. Her uncle is Duke Dillard Portyr of Baldur's Gate, one of the city's two remaining government leaders (assuming Duke Vanthampur did not survive). Duke Portyr summoned his niece to take command of the Flaming Fist in Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard's absence. Her trip home was expedited by magic.

Liara aims to assert herself as Ulder Ravengard's natural successor but clings to the hope that he's still alive. If the characters think they have any chance to rescue Elturel—and Ravengard along with it—Liara strongly urges them to pursue that quest. Her experiences in Chult have taught her to respect adventurers and their ability to get things done.

If the characters didn't find Falaster Fisk in the dungeon under Vanthampur Villa, Liara Portyr can be the one who urges them to travel to Candlekeep and seek out Sylvira Savikas, a renowned expert on the Nine Hells. Sylvira can help them unlock the *infernal puzzle box* and the mysteries of the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*.

After making sure the characters receive their promised reward, Liara thanks them for doing their part to help Baldur's Gate. Although she must focus her efforts on various threats to the city's security, she makes it possible for the characters to leave Baldur's Gate when they're ready, going as far as to secure a riding horse or pony for each party member to expedite their journey to Candlekeep. She can also provide a mule-drawn cart laden with food, drink, and other supplies.

## JOURNEY TO CANDLEKEEP

When the characters are ready to leave for Candlekeep, read the following boxed text to the players:

As the Basilisk Gate opens, Flaming Fist soldiers hold back the tide of Elturgardian refugees. You cut a path through these wretched souls, whose wails intensify as the Basilisk Gate closes behind you. The dirt road cuts through the slums of the Outer City, past the walled neighborhood of Little Calimshan, to the great span of Wyrm's Crossing.



### LIARA PORTYR

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +4

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +5, Insight +4, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

**Brave.** Liara has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

**Flaming Fury.** Once per turn, when Liara hits a creature with a melee weapon, she can cause fire to magically erupt from her weapon and deal an extra 10 (3d6) fire damage to the target.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Liara makes three melee attacks.

**Battleaxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage when used with two hands.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

If Falaster Fisk is with the party, he leads them to his residence in Little Calimshan. In addition to grabbing weapons, he also brings along an old book of Calishite recipes to trade for admittance into the great library of Candlekeep (see "Entering Candlekeep," page 46).

## WYRM'S CROSSING

The characters must cross this landmark to reach the Coast Way, which heads south to Candlekeep. Read the following to describe the scene:

Two great bridges meet at a tall, rocky island that rises from the middle of the Chiontar River. Buildings and merchant stalls line the sides of both bridges, making it impossible to see the river from the narrow, congested roadway that cuts between those structures.

Wooden drawbridges connect the two bridges to a keep situated atop the island. The flags of Baldur's Gate and the Flaming Fist wave proudly above this fortress.

Wyrm's Crossing is a cutpurse's paradise, and every traveler here runs the risk of being pickpocketed. As the characters make their way from one end of Wyrm's Crossing to the other, have each player roll a d20. (Don't roll for NPCs traveling with the party.) The character or characters with the lowest roll are targeted by a pickpocket (use the **bandit** stat block).

Use a character's passive Wisdom (Perception) score to determine whether a theft made against that character is successful. If the character's score is 11 or higher, the theft is detected and thwarted. Otherwise, the thief makes off with one item weighing 1 pound or less (such as a coin pouch or potion) and disappears into the crowd before the theft is noticed. If a character is robbed, ask the player what small items the character is carrying, then decide which of those items was stolen.

## KNIGHTS OF THE SHIELD

The following encounter occurs only if the characters have the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*. Otherwise, skip ahead to the "Tale of the Hellriders" section. Read the following to set the scene:

As Wyrm's Crossing and Baldur's Gate disappear from view, you find yourselves heading down the Coast Way, a dirt road that leads to such distant lands as Tethyr, Amn, and Calimshan. Candlekeep lies some one hundred and fifty miles south and west—a five-day journey.

Coming up the road toward you is a human farmer riding on the front of a hay-filled wagon pulled by two draft horses. The farmer gives you a friendly wave as the wagon draws near.

The farmer is Kaddirus, a lawful evil **cambion** using the *alter self* spell to conceal his true form. Hiding under the hay are the cambion's evil accomplices: three human

veterans who speak Common and Infernal. Their names are Falar and Zaroud al'Ryshal, and Nulra Black-saddle. When the cambion gives the order in Infernal, the veterans leap out of the hay and attack. Meanwhile, the cambion assumes his true form, flies up into the air, and targets creatures with his Fire Ray attack. The two **draft horses** are ordinary beasts but don't spook easily.

Kaddirus and the veterans are members of a secret society known as the Knights of the Shield (see area V29, page 40). Their goals are to kill the characters and take the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* back to the Hhune patriarch family in Baldur's Gate. If the veterans are killed or incapacitated, Kaddirus flies back to Baldur's Gate to report to his superiors. If the cambion escapes, the characters might encounter him again in Candlekeep, in the guise of a monk. The next time he encounters the party, Kaddirus fights to the death to claim the shield.

## TALE OF THE HELLRIDERS

If Reya Mantlemorn is with the characters, she shares the following tale over a campfire at some point during the characters' five-day journey to Candlekeep:

"It was over a century past that the great troubles began. Fiends roamed the lands to the north and west of Elturel. Fields were despoiled, livestock slaughtered, homes razed, and people dragged off to a terrible and unknowable fate. Terror gripped the hearts of all.

"The city's cavalry rode across the land, striking down fiends wherever they found them and suffering fearful losses. But it was never enough. For every fiend they destroyed, it seemed as though two more appeared elsewhere. The ruler of Elturel, the High Rider, asked his people to pray to the gods for aid. To everyone's astonishment, a mighty angel entered the city the next day. Her name was Zariel, which means Companion of Light. The prayers of Elturel had been heard, and help had come.

"Zariel located the gate through which the fiends were entering the natural world, on the Fields of the Dead west of the city. Zariel declared that she would lead the cavalry into Avernus, destroying the infernal host that was amassing there, and striking a great blow against the forces of darkness.

"The High Rider sent out the riders of Elturel, now numbering many thousands, with Zariel at their head, riding a golden mastodon. With a great cry, Zariel and her army charged through the gate. The legions of Avernus trembled and buckled, but did not crumble. Zariel was defeated, and the remnants of her army returned to Elturel, overcome with grief at the loss of their glorious general but confident that the lords of the Nine Hells would think twice about threatening Elturel again.

"There were great celebrations to honor the valiant knights of the cavalry, who became known as Hellriders from that day on."



## CANDLEKEEP

Candlekeep is a fortress perched on a spur of rock overlooking the Sea of Swords. It is reached by a single road, the Way of the Lion, which branches west off the Coast Way.

Candlekeep is always open to visitors and boasts one of the finest libraries in Faerûn. The monks of Candlekeep also preserve the predictions of Alaundo the Seer, a singular sage whose prophecies have proved correct over long years. Upon the seer's death, Candlekeep became a haven for both the veneration of his prophecies and the accumulation of all knowledge. If there's a secret to be learned, the clues to finding it can probably be found in Candlekeep.

The encounters in Candlekeep focus on social interaction and exploration. The following events unfold here:

- The characters arrive at Candlekeep, where the price of admittance is a book—specifically one not already contained in the monks' library.
- The characters meet with Sylvira Savikas, a tiefling sage who knows the secret to unlocking Thavius Kreeg's *infernal puzzle box*.
- Sylvira advises the characters to leave the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* in her custody, but Gargauth makes a good case for taking the shield with them.
- Sylvira makes arrangements to send the characters to Elturel, and gives them an unreliable map of Avernus. Reya Mantlemorn offers to go with the characters, while Falaster Fisk chooses to stay behind.

## THE WAY OF THE LION

Read the following boxed text to describe the characters' final day of travel to Candlekeep:

Over the past four days, the weather on the Coast Way has gradually worsened. Dark clouds release heavy rain until the road runs thick with mud, yet you trudge on, passing by friendly merchant caravans heading north.

On the morning of the fifth day, the rain subsides but the dark clouds remain. Ahead, you see a path branch from the wider road, heading to the sea. A raven perches solemnly on a leaning post bearing two signs that point like arms toward the west. One says "The Way of the Lion." The other says "Candlekeep."

Characters who head west along the Way of the Lion arrive at Candlekeep by mid-afternoon. You can show the players the illustration of Candlekeep, and can describe the view to them by reading the following:

The afternoon sun shines through the clouds to illuminate the gray walls and pale spires of a timeworn fortress that stands majestically atop a rocky promontory overlooking the sea. The trail leads straight to it.

## ENTERING CANDLEKEEP

Although some visitors travel to Candlekeep by air, most arrive on foot or on horseback. When the characters arrive at the gatehouse, read the following boxed text to the players:

At the gatehouse, you are greeted by three monks in purple robes: a human, a shield dwarf, and a sun elf. Around their necks hang holy symbols of Deneir, god of writing, whose symbol is a lit candle above an open eye.

"Welcome to Candlekeep," says the elf in Common. "A gift is required from those seeking admittance. You must donate a book or scroll that isn't already in the library's archives. Please present your gift for inspection."

All three monks are neutral good **priests** of Deneir. (Apply racial traits to their statistics as needed.) The monks study any book or scroll that's handed to them, the holy symbols around their necks glowing faintly as they do.

The monks are happy to accept either *Apocalypso* (the black-covered tome found in Vanthampur Villa; see area V13, page 35), Falaster Fisk's book of Calishite recipes, or a spellbook for admittance to Candlekeep. One such gift is enough for the whole party to be able to enter the library. If a character wants to offer up some other book or scroll, you decide whether the monks accept it as a gift.

If the characters try to sneak or force their way into Candlekeep, the fortress's defenses are brought to bear as described in the "Candlekeep Defenses" sidebar.

Once allowed inside, the characters are free to go where they please and stay as long as they wish. The outermost buildings include private dormitories for the monks and public quarters for visitors, as well as amenities one would expect to find in a self-sufficient settlement (bathhouses, clothiers, granaries, gardens, and so forth). Candlekeep even has a pub called the Hearth.

### THE HEARTH

In Candlekeep's pub, guests and monks can enjoy each other's company and a good meal. Read the following boxed text to describe the Hearth:

The pub has a low ceiling supported by massive wooden crossbeams and narrow, shuttered windows. A large fire pit in the middle of the room is surrounded by a half dozen tables and matching benches.

Thirty people can dine here comfortably at any time. The Hearth is always open, and the fire is never permitted to go out. A dozen patrons typically occupy the pub during the day, with more during lunch and supper.

When the characters first show up, one patron stands out among the rest: a chaotic good **ogre** wearing a *headband of intellect*. He sits by himself in a corner, reading a book titled *The Sum of Theology* by Saint Vetheera, a servant of Oghma (god of knowledge).

A few years ago, the ogre was like others of his kind—brutish and cruel. He met a halfling adventurer wearing the shiny gold headband and killed the puny runt for it. When the ogre attuned to it, the headband grew in size, allowing him to don it. As a genius, the ogre felt compelled to learn the error of his ways and seek out a better life. He adopted the name Little One, to honor the poor halfling whose life he cut short.

Shunned by polite society, Little One came to Candlekeep hoping to learn as much as he can. He's a quiet but popular fixture in the fortress, and the monks are always saying hello to him and recommending new books for him to read.

## SYLVIRA SAVIKAS

When the characters are ready, they can make their way toward the main keep, a towering edifice housing hundreds of monks and wizards, and thousands of books and scrolls. As they meander through the keep, helpful monks stop to offer them directions. If Falaster Fisk is with the party, he already knows the way to Sylvira's laboratory, located in one of Candlekeep's spires. When the characters arrive there, read the following:

The walls of this circular tower chamber are punctuated by arched windows that are currently shuttered. Bookcases filled with eldritch volumes stand between the windows, while tables are crowded with specimen jars, alchemical equipment, and other clutter. Engraved into the floor of the chamber is a large, nine-pointed star.

A middle-aged tiefling dressed in wizardly robes stands by one of the windows, caught in a fugue of intense contemplation. Perched on the corner of a table nearby is a spindly little demon with warty green skin, buggy eyes, thin black horns, and a whip-like tail.

"I can't tell you how pleased I am to see you," says the tiefling. "What have you brought me?"

Sylvira Savikas, a lawful neutral tiefling **archmage**, is one of Candlekeep's foremost sages, and specializes in knowledge pertaining to the Outer Planes. In addition to her other skills, she has Investigation +13. She speaks Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, and Primordial. Her **quasit** familiar, Jezebel, adds just the right amount of mischief and chaos to her life. In the unlikely event that Sylvira becomes embroiled in combat, remember that tieflings have resistance to fire damage and darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

If the characters don't have Thavius Kreeg's puzzle box with them, Sylvira is disappointed but tries not to

### CANDLEKEEP DEFENSES

Attacking Candlekeep would be foolhardy. Although most of the monks are simple scholars, a few are powerful spellcasters. If any trouble occurs, an **archmage** and 1d4 **mages** investigate immediately. If they can't bring the situation under control in short order, an additional 1d4 **archmages** arrive to lend assistance.

show it. If they present the box to her, she snatches it out of their hands and studies it closely. She takes similar interest in the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* (which she calls "the Shield of Gargauth"), but avoids touching it.

### THAVIUS AND THE PUZZLE BOX

Sylvira has this to say about Thavius Kreeg and his *infernal puzzle box*:

"I've been suspicious of the High Overseer of Elturel for a long time. But no one wanted to hear my concerns, because Thavius Kreeg was widely regarded as a hero who saved his city from an undead scourge, giving rise to the holy nation of Elturgard."

"Hailed as a savior, Thavius made all citizens of Elturel swear an oath called the Creed Resolute, which binds them to defend the nation of Elturgard. I met him years ago, and my instincts told me he was a charlatan. Afterward, I grew to suspect that he had cut a deal with one or more powerful devils, using the Creed Resolute to bind all Elturel to his dark deal."

"I wish to prove my theory, and I believe the evidence is locked inside the puzzle box."

Sylvira is an expert on magic puzzle boxes, having made and sold a few herself. If the characters give her the *infernal puzzle box*, she examines it, asks Jezebel to fetch her a flask of dark liquid, and pours a small amount into the mazelike troughs carved into the box's surface. She then tips the box so that the liquid flows in certain directions through the mazelike patterns—until the box's horn inlays pop loose and it breaks apart.

Inside the box is a stack of nine chain-linked plates, each three inches on a side, cast of dark iron, and stamped with Infernal runes. Anyone who understands Infernal can translate the runes as follows:

Be it known to all that I, Thavius Kreeg, High Overseer of Elturel, have sworn to my master, Zariel, lord of Avernus, to keep the agreements contained in this oath.

I hereby submit to Zariel in all matters and for all time. I will place Her above all creatures, living and dead. I will obey Her all my days and beyond with fear and servility.

I recognize the dispensation of the device called the Solar Insidiator, hereafter called the Companion. In my capacity as High Overseer of Elturel and its vassal territories, I acknowledge that all lands falling under the light of the Companion are forfeit to Zariel. All persons bound by oath to defend Elturel are also considered forfeit. I further recognize that this dispensation will last fifty years, after which the Companion will return whence it came, taking Elturel and its oath-bound defenders with it, if that is Zariel's wish.

All this is my everlasting pledge.

If Reya Mantlemorn is with the party, she is so stung by the revelation that she collapses onto the floor and weeps for Elturel. Bound to the city by the Creed Resolute, she feels the imperative to return to it. "If Zariel wants my soul," says Reya, "she's welcome to try to take it."

### GARGAUTH AND THE SHIELD

Sylvira has this to say about the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* and the devil imprisoned within it:

"This shield is a symbol of good's triumph over evil. Gazing at such beauty, one can easily overlook the terrible force bound within it. Gargauth is, I believe, its name, though it calls itself the Hidden Lord. It was a pit fiend sent by Asmodeus to corrupt mortals on the Material Plane, and there it amassed such a following as to rival that of gods. In that way, Gargauth became a sort of demigod, and having worshipers increased its power exponentially. My, how the mighty have fallen!"

"This shield has the power to corrupt everything around it. The Hhune family of Baldur's Gate has kept it for years now. Doubtless they'll want it back, but this shield should not be taken to any place where thousands of mortals reside. It needs to be locked away in an extradimensional space, away from corruptible souls."

If the characters consider leaving the shield with Sylvira, Gargauth telepathically contacts the character with the most influence in the party and suggests an alternative course of action:

"Take me to the Nine Hells, and I'll swear to serve you faithfully as both a guide and an advisor."

Gargauth's offer is genuine, for the fiend desperately wants the shield taken to the Nine Hells. It believes (incorrectly) that it will be able to escape the shield there. Sylvira leaves it to the characters to decide what to do with the shield. A small part of her is relieved if the characters decide to take it with them, as she knows the evil Knights of the Shield will never stop looking for it.

### POSTER MAP OF AVERNUS

If the characters intend to save Elturel, Sylvira can provide them with a map of Avernus—the only such map known to exist in Candlekeep. Unfold the poster map of Avernus at this time and let the players study it. Sylvira then gives the characters a word of caution:

"This map might not be entirely reliable," warns Sylvira. "Its creator went mad making it."

More information about how to use the poster map can be found in chapter 3.





THE CONTENTS OF THAVIUS KREEG'S MYSTERIOUS  
PUZZLE BOX ARE REVEALED.

## GETTING TO AVERNUS

Although Sylvira can prepare the *plane shift* spell, there's no point, as magical wards placed on Candlekeep prevent creatures from using such means to go to or from the library. Instead, she presents an alternative plan for sending the characters to the Nine Hells:

"A wizard named Traxigor lives in a tower twenty miles from here. I've loaned him a spellbook or two, so he owes me a favor. I can have you delivered safely to his tower, and he can use a *plane shift* spell to take you straight to Elturel. Even more importantly, Traxigor is looking after an old friend of mine—someone with a history of battling devils in the Nine Hells. I think you'll enjoy her company very much. Her name is Lulu."

Characters need not leave for Traxigor's tower at once. If they wish to remain in Candlekeep for a while, Sylvira is happy to accommodate them. However, Reya Mantlemorn becomes more impatient the longer they stay. Falaster Fisk parts company with the characters at this time, choosing to remain at Candlekeep for a few days before returning to Baldur's Gate.

Characters can use Candlekeep's library to learn more about the Nine Hells. Chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* contains lore on all nine layers, which the characters can learn once they've spent a day or two researching the plane. Characters can also research devils to learn everything that's said about them in the "Devils" entry of the *Monster Manual*.

Once they're ready to leave for Traxigor's tower, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Sylvira ushers you to a crescent-shaped landing platform with a stunning view of the sea. Waiting for you atop this platform are several griffons with saddles, their handlers standing nearby to help you. "The griffons have instructions to fly you to Traxigor's tower," says Sylvira. "Don't worry, it's safe!"

The handlers standing ready can help the characters mount the **griffons**. Each griffon can carry one rider plus gear. Once all the characters are mounted, read:

The griffons take flight and head out to sea, flying just below the clouds. Candlekeep looks no less majestic from the air but grows smaller as the griffons soar westward. Large, rocky islands pass below you, and beyond them lies the open sea. After a long journey, you see a windowless, doorless stone tower—which somehow floats in the sky ahead. The griffons pass through jagged holes riddling the tower's conical peak to land on the top floor below, which has a spiral staircase leading down.

## TRAXIGOR'S TOWER

Once the griffons land, characters are free to dismount and descend the stairs into Traxigor's tower. After delivering the party safely to the tower, the griffons take a short rest before flying back to Candlekeep.

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players when the characters descend into the tower:

One level down, you see a cluttered chamber illuminated by various objects upon which *continual flame* spells have been cast. Scurrying around the room is an otter dressed in a tiny red cassock. The otter mumbles to itself in Common, mentioning something about a tuning fork. Suddenly, it takes notice of you and stands upright. "Lulu! Wake up! Our guests have arrived!"

At the sound of her name, a small elephant with golden fur appears from under a pile of blankets near a table strewn with alchemical equipment. The elephant takes to the air on feathery wings and lets out a pleasing trumpet sound.

Traxigor was polymorphed into an otter years ago, and decided he preferred the new form to his original one (that of a wizened old man). His otter form was made permanent by a *wish* spell. He uses the **archmage** stat block, but is a Tiny beast with a Strength of 3. His alignment is chaotic good, and he speaks Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Gnomish, Halfling, and Troglodyte. He has the *plane shift* spell prepared instead of *teleport*, and is searching for the tuning fork he needs to cast the spell. What little he knows about the characters has been communicated to him by *sending* spells, sent by Sylvira Savikas in advance of their arrival.

Characters can help Traxigor search for his missing tuning fork, which is keyed to the Nine Hells. Whoever rolls the highest on a Wisdom (Perception) check finds the tuning fork. Whoever rolls the lowest finds a random trinket, determined by rolling on the Trinkets table in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*. Traxigor doesn't care if the character keeps the trinket or not, and doesn't remember how or when he acquired it.

## LULU THE HOLLYPHANT

Lulu is a **hollyphant** (see page 237 for her stat block) who has lost most of her memories, as well as her Innate Spellcasting trait. (This has no effect on her challenge rating.) She regains her Innate Spellcasting trait gradually over the course of the adventure, as follows:

- In chapter 2, Lulu regains the at-will ability to cast *light* when she arrives in Elturel for the first time.
- In chapter 4, Lulu regains her 2/day spells (*bless*, *cure wounds*, and *protection from evil and good*) when she arrives at the Bleeding Citadel.
- In chapter 5, Lulu regains her 1/day spells (*banishment*, *heal*, *raise dead*, *shapechange*, and *teleport*) once she helps reunite Zariel with her sword.

## LULU'S BACKGROUND

While studying a portal to the Nine Hells located in the Fields of the Dead west of Elturel, Sylvira found Lulu and befriended her. Lulu stayed with Sylvira at Candlekeep for a while but didn't get along with the tiefling's quasit familiar, Jezebel. Sylvira decided Lulu would make a better companion for Traxigor, given his eccentricity and good nature. Lulu is integral to the characters' future success, though they shouldn't know that yet.

Lulu can speak Celestial but prefers to use telepathy, which allows her to talk to one creature at a time. If a character asks Lulu about her history battling devils in the Nine Hells, she shares the following information:

"I was with the angel Zariel when she assembled her army of Hellriders to attack Avernus. Through the gate we went, tearing through devils like a song through air. Victory was within our grasp until some of the Hellriders betrayed us. They retreated through the gate and sealed it behind them.

"Before she was captured, Zariel told me to hide her sword so that it wouldn't fall into evil hands. Someone helped me hide the sword, but I don't remember who. We found a place to hide it, but I don't remember where. I escaped Avernus, but I don't remember how. Most of my memory is gone, and I don't remember why."

Lulu's memory was badly damaged by events she can't remember, but a summary of those events is presented here for your benefit.

Lulu was more than Zariel's traveling companion. She was the angel's friend and war mount, with the power to shapeshift into a golden-furred mammoth with wings. Their friendship stretches back centuries.

When defeat on Avernus appeared inevitable, Zariel entrusted her sword to Yael, her most loyal general, and ordered Lulu to help Yael find a way to hide the weapon. Lulu and Yael blundered into a mob of demons led by the demon lord Yeenoghu, but narrowly escaped. Yeenoghu's pet—an enormous demon named Crokek'toeck—chased Yael and Lulu across Avernus. Before it could devour them, Yael plunged Zariel's holy blade into a stone as Lulu poured every ounce of her celestial being into it. A fortress sprang up around the sword, hedging out all evil. The effort so taxed Lulu that she became disoriented and flew away, leaving Yael behind.

Lulu wandered Avernus for months until she came upon a traveling market called the Wandering Emporium. A rakshasa named Mahadi tricked her into thinking he was her friend, only to splash her with a tiny bit of water from the River Styx, leaving her in a feeble mental state and stripping away her spellcasting powers. Mahadi then gave Lulu to a group of devils as a gift for the archdevil Zariel. Zariel could not abide Lulu's presence—but nor could she bring herself to harm her former friend. Zariel had Lulu sent back to Faerûn with her mental faculties restored. Unfortunately, the damage to Lulu's memory was not so easy to repair.

## LULU'S MEMORIES

### d6 Memory

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | "I used to be able to shapeshift into a golden mammoth. In this form, I served as Zariel's war mount."  |
| 2 | "Zariel's most loyal Hellrider, Yael, took the sword and plunged it into a rock. I called on every ounce of goodness in my heart to raise a shield around it—a fortress against evil."                        |
| 3 | "The demon lord Yeenoghu wants to destroy Zariel's sword. He hates it as much as he hates her. We fought him once, but I don't remember where."   |
| 4 | "I wandered Avernus for a while, then hid in a place called the Wandering Emporium. I made a friend there. His name was Mahadi. Maybe he can help us."  |
| 5 | "The Zariel I knew is gone, replaced by a devil with a halo of fire and vengeance. 'This is who I am,' she told me. 'When demons die, they cry out my name in terror.' Those were Zariel's last words to me." |
| 6 | "It was Zariel who sent me back here. I don't know why. Maybe—just maybe—there's a tiny little spark of goodness deep down inside her still."   |

## RESTORED MEMORIES

Friendship is important to Lulu in ways both physical and spiritual. Her growing friendship with the characters causes the hollyphant to remember things long forgotten. For the remainder of the adventure, Lulu can regain lost memories whenever you wish. Ideally, these memories come back to her one at a time at moments when her friendship with the characters feels important. Any remaining memories return at once when Lulu regains all her spellcasting abilities.

When the time comes for Lulu to recall a lost memory, roll a d6 and consult the Lulu's Memories table to see which memory comes back to her, or just pick one. If you roll for a memory that has come up before, roll again or choose a different memory.

## ROLEPLAYING LULU

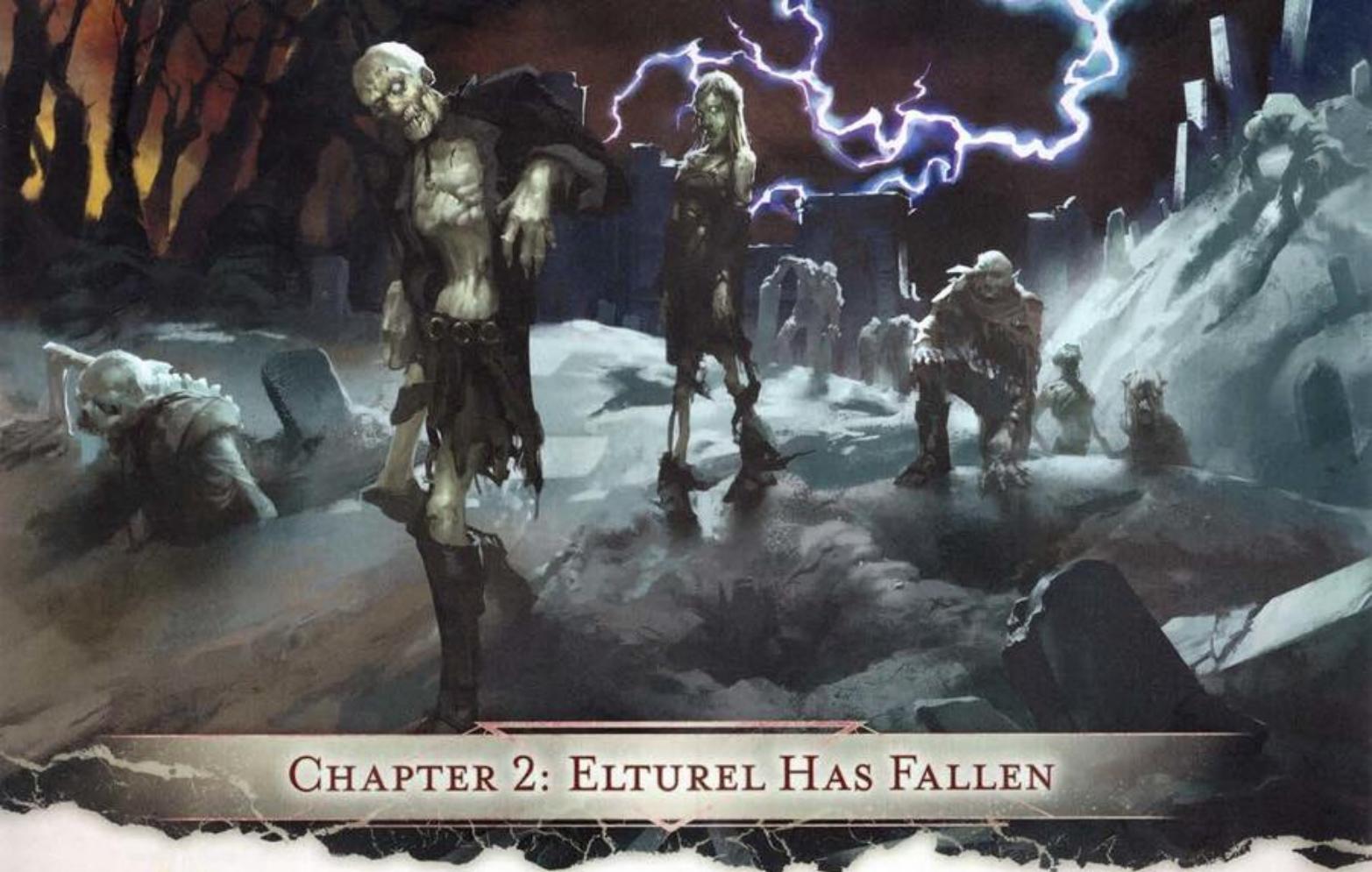
Lulu doesn't have a mean bone in her little body. She believes in the power of friendship and looks forward to kicking evil's butt with the characters by her side.

If Lulu becomes too much of a burden for you to run as an NPC, see if one of the players wants to run the hollyphant as a secondary character. Provide the consenting player with a copy of Lulu's stat block (page 237), noting that Lulu has presently lost her Innate Spellcasting trait. As she regains memories and the use of certain spells, notify the player of these changes to her character.

## PLANE SHIFT

The characters should advance to 5th level before leaving Traxigor's tower. When they're ready to be sent to Avernus, read the following boxed text aloud:

As you stand together in a circle, Traxigor taps the tuning fork on the floor and casts his *plane shift* spell.



## CHAPTER 2: ELTUREL HAS FALLEN

**E**NCE A HOLY CITY WHOSE FOLK VENERATED Lathander, Torm, Helm, and Tyr, Elturel is now a site of doom and despair tethered some five hundred feet above the River Styx. Eight great chains bind the city to jagged posts of infernal iron, which stick up out of the ground like gargantuan spikes. (See "Climbing Down" at the end of this chapter for a full description of the infernal chains.) The bottoms of those spikes are guarded by scores of devils, making escaping the city by climbing down an arduous task. The Companion, the second sun that provided so much solace and protection to the city for years, now glares down on Elturel like a baleful eye—a black void crackling with lightning.

One circumstance has saved the city from being overrun by devils: a massive surge of demons attacking the devils' positions on the ground. Forced to fend off these demonic hordes, the devils must bide their time until they have the resources to send troops to subjugate the remaining citizens of Elturel. Even so, random demons, devils, and other creatures have infiltrated the city. The characters have time to learn about Elturel's situation and enact a way to save the city before it is lost.

Even as the characters get their bearings, they hear a cacophonous tumult taking place far beneath the city. An endless stream of demons crawls forth from the murky waters of the River Styx, to be met by the ordered forces of Avernus attempting to drive them back. This battle continues for the entirety of the characters' stay in Elturel.

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### RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

Diagram 2.1 is a flowchart that presents the key events of this chapter in sequence.

The adventurers should be 5th level when they arrive in Elturel. They begin on the east side of the city, where the immediate danger is greatest. With or without Reya Mantlemorn to guide them, the characters make their way toward the High Hall cathedral. Once they rid the cathedral and its catacombs of fiends, the adventurers should be 6th level.

NPC survivors cowering in the crypts under the High Hall cathedral urge the characters to locate Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard of Baldur's Gate, who has emerged as Elturel's unlikeliest savior. This quest leads the characters to the chapel in Elturel's grand cemetery, where Ulder Ravengard has fallen into a psychic coma after coming into telepathic contact with the demon lord Baphomet. After seeing Ravengard safely back to the High Hall and ridding him of his malady, the characters should be 7th level and ready to leave Elturel in search of the means to free the city from its chains and return what's left of it to Faerûn.

### ARRIVAL IN ELTUREL

A *plane shift* spell transports Traxigor the wizard and up to eight other creatures to Elturel, including Lulu the hollyphant and Reya Mantlemorn if she's still with the party. When the group arrives in Elturel, read the following boxed text aloud to the players:

A hot, stinging air assaults your senses. The city street in which you stand is lined with buildings that are crumbling, if not already collapsed. The ground shudders beneath your feet. In the red, smoky sky, a 400-foot-diameter sphere of darkness discharges strokes of bluish-white lightning that strike the city at irregular intervals. Perched atop a distant bluff, overlooking the rest of the city, is a crumbled fortress.

Traxigor gazes up at the black orb nervously, utters a few arcane syllables, and disappears in the blink of an eye.

Traxigor casts *time stop*, giving him time to flee using his *fly* spell. He's long gone before the *time stop* ends and the characters can react. Any character who succeeds on a DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check deduces how Traxigor made his escape. The party doesn't encounter Traxigor again unless you want him to reappear later in the adventure. Traxigor has no interest in saving Elturel or picking sides in the Blood War. After finishing a long rest, he can cast *plane shift* again and return to his tower on the Material Plane.

The characters and any remaining NPC companions have a few minutes to acclimate to their new surroundings before facing their first threat in the city (see "Unwelcome Party" below). See the "Elturel Hazards" sidebar (page 55) for more information about the earthquakes and other dangers.

Upon her return to Avernus, Lulu the hollyphant regains her at-will innate spellcasting ability: *light*. In terms of her memories, she can at first only recognize that the surroundings feel familiar, albeit in a terrible way. The sounds and scents of Avernus trigger memories of Zariel's fall and the angel's earliest days as a denizen of the Lower Planes. Lulu's time spent in Avernus and key interactions with specific NPCs slowly trigger the memories that help put the characters on a path to save the city.

Reya Mantlemorn is disheartened by what she sees around her—Elturel in shambles—and is more determined than ever to try to save her city from destruction. She offers to lead the characters to the High Hall cathedral, where she hopes to find someone in charge.

If the characters brought the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* with them, Gargauth the pit fiend tries to escape from its prison and fails miserably. Although characters are unaware of Gargauth's escape attempt, the pit fiend grows increasingly despondent and impatient as they explore Elturel. Gargauth urges the characters not to tarry in the city, lest they get pulled down into the River Styx with it. Secretly, the pit fiend hopes that another means of escape will present itself once the characters leave Elturel and explore Avernus.

## UNWELCOME PARTY

The characters' first encounter in Elturel is a gruesome one. A number of innocent residents of the city have been in hiding to avoid the devils patrolling their streets, but a lack of food and water has forced one group to

## ARRIVAL IN ELTUREL

*For characters of level 5*

The adventurers arrive in what's left of Elturel and make their way toward the High Hall cathedral with the help of Lulu the hollyphant, and possibly Reya Mantlemorn as well.

## HIGH HALL

*For characters of level 5*

The adventurers encounter fiendish invaders in the High Hall cathedral and discover survivors hiding in the crypts below the cathedral.

## GRAND CEMETERY

*For characters of level 6*

The adventurers search for Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard of Baldur's Gate in Elturel's cemetery, encountering undead and more fiends.

## ESCAPING THE SIEGE

*For characters of level 6*

After bringing Ulder Ravengard back to the High Hall and restoring him to consciousness, the adventurers make plans to leave Elturel in search of the key to saving the city: the *Sword of Zariel*.

DIAGRAM 2.1: CHAPTER 2 FLOWCHART

abandon their refuge. Spotted by devils, these citizens are about to come under attack, and the characters are their only hope of survival.

Read the following boxed text to set the scene as the characters arrive in Elturel:

Around the corner of a still-standing structure runs a woman with two toddlers, one on each arm. In her wake amble three infernal monsters with glaives and snakelike beards. The fiends are laughing darkly.

Three **bearded devils** named Blass, Nodd, and Thunn have infiltrated the city and are looking to wreak havoc. Harkina Hunt and her young twin boys, Ezo and Brask, were out searching for provisions when the three devils spotted them. The chase has progressed into this street, 30 feet from the location of the characters' arrival.

Unless the characters intervene, the bearded devils reach the innocent humans within a few rounds, then quickly capture them. Once captured, all three will be sold into slavery at the Wandering Emporium (see page 126), in exchange for favors or goods that can help the devils advance in power.

As the characters take in this scene, everyone rolls for initiative. On their turns, Lulu and Reya see the three humans about to be attacked by the devils and immediately move to defend them, regardless of what the characters do. Lulu is hesitant to use her trumpet for fear of hurting the family or attracting other fiends, but does so as a last resort.

Members of the Hunt family reduced to 0 hit points by the devils are knocked unconscious rather than killed, as the devils are hoping to take them prisoner. These devils don't offer that same courtesy to the characters or their NPC companions.

#### AFTERMATH

If the characters save the Hunt family, Harkina expresses her undying gratitude. Although a **commoner**, she carries a longbow with which she is proficient. She uses it to protect her family. In addition to her longbow, she carries a quiver with forty arrows, twenty of which are silvered.

Harkina can relay the following information regarding the current situation in the city:

- Many of Elturel's citizens died when the city was drawn to this terrible place. Still more have died in the days since, from the attacks of terrible creatures, a lack of food and water, and the collapse of many of the city's buildings.
- Harkina and the boys have been hiding in the basement of a tavern that had enough reserves of food and water to keep them alive for a time. When those provisions ran out, the family was forced to creep from safety to search for more.
- The city has been split in two. Harkina has heard from other survivors that this side of Elturel (formerly the eastern part of the city) is the worse off. The High Hall—the great castle that is home to Elturel's leaders—is where she was planning to take her boys to find safety.

#### HANDLING NONCOMBATANTS

The characters have the opportunity to rescue survivors in the eastern part of Elturel, with all those survivors desperate to have the party escort them to relative safety in the western part of the city. When new fights break out with vulnerable NPCs in tow, it's up to you how you want to handle those NPCs in combat.

The easiest option is to have the NPCs stay back and out of the way, limiting their options to following the characters or hiding from enemies. During fights, you can effectively forget about those NPCs, assuming that the most capable among them are dealing with minor threats in the background while the adventurers handle the potent foes. You can also have combat-worthy NPCs join the fight, if you're up for running them. Have all NPCs act on the same initiative count, and focus their actions on assisting the characters in combat, rather than engaging in side fights of their own.

If the characters bring NPCs along, it increases the chances of having an encounter as the party moves from one location to another. Whenever you roll the d20 to determine random encounters (see "More Encounters in Elturel"), an encounter takes place on a roll of 9 or higher.

- High Overseer Thavius Kreeg is the leader of the city, and Harkina hopes that he is working on a plan to rescue survivors and drive away the devils. If he's still alive, Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard of Baldur's Gate is probably at the High Hall as well.

If the characters capture and interrogate a bearded devil, or any other devil encountered in Elturel, it reveals the following information in response to a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check, assuming the characters agree to release it:

- The demon attacks from the River Styx intensified when the city appeared in the sky.
- The demons are trying to climb the binding posts or fly to the city, but the devils constantly push them back. The devils are also trying to figure out how to best use the city to their strategic advantage.
- Slowly and erratically, the spiked posts that bind Elturel are being drawn into the ground, pulling the city down toward the River Styx. (The devil doesn't know how long that process will take.)
- The only reason the city is not already under the control of devilish forces is the demon attacks. Stemming that abyssal tide is taking all the devils' resources.
- The devil assumes the city was brought here by Zariel, the ruler of Avernus.

#### MORE ENCOUNTERS IN ELTUREL

After their initial encounter with the Hunt family and the bearded devils, the characters are likely to want to get to the High Hall as quickly as possible to locate Grand Duke Ravengard. If you haven't done so already, unfold the poster map with the Elturel side facing up so players can get a sense of the city's layout and where they must go to reach the High Hall. Map 2.1 on page 56 is a shrunk-down version of this side of the poster map.

Whenever the party moves from one named location to another, roll a d20. A roll of 11 or higher indicates an encounter while the characters travel within the city. For example, as the characters travel to a bridge, make an encounter check. Then after crossing the bridge and moving toward the High Hall, make another check. Also make checks if the characters wander the streets or go off in search of other survivors.

If an encounter is indicated, roll on the Encounters in Elturel table or choose an encounter you like. Each encounter can occur only once. If you roll an encounter that has already occurred, reroll on the table or select a different encounter. These encounters are described in the sections that follow the table.

#### ENCOUNTERS IN ELTUREL

d10	Encounter	d10	Encounter
1	Collapsed building	6	Imp sales pitch
2	Cry for help	7	Narzugon cavalier
3	Ghastly meal	8	Spouts of hellfire
4	Ghoul pack	9	Vrock philosophy
5	Hateful patrol	10	Zombie horde

## COLLAPSED BUILDING

A quake rocks the city, and a building collapses in the distance. The characters hear cries for help emerging from the rubble.

To keep the trapped victims from suffocating or being crushed, the characters must succeed on a total of six ability checks to rescue them before incurring three failures. The base DC for these checks is 10. Possible checks could include Strength (Athletics) checks to remove debris, Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to squeeze into tight places, Intelligence (Investigation) checks to determine the best place to dig or support the structure, or Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice dangerous areas threatening to collapse further. You might also decide that magic or other abilities could result in automatic successes.

During the rescue, the commotion might attract devils (see "Hateful Patrol" below) or other unwelcome attention.

If the characters succeed in the rescue attempt, they pull out three lawful good shield dwarves from beneath the collapsed building: Strovin Ironfist, Kartra Boulderstern, and Velkora Ashenwell. Strovin and Kartra are laborers (use the **commoner** stat block), but Velkora is a mason and an **acolyte** of the dwarven god Moradin. Her healing powers would be a welcome resource at the High Hall. All three dwarves speak Common and Dwarvish, and have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. They also have resistance to poison damage and advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

## CRY FOR HELP

The characters hear a voice shouting for help. If they follow the voice, they find a male human under attack by two **bulezaus** (see page 230 for their stat block) that slipped past the devils and climbed the infernal binding posts to Elturel.

If the characters save the man, he introduces himself as Orin Ragron, a blacksmith who had a shop in Elturel. Orin is actually an **incubus** in disguise named Faltrax. The incubus is trying to gain information on the defenses of Elturel, which it then plans to sell to the highest fiendish bidder. If the characters discover Faltrax's true nature, the incubus flees.

## GHASTLY MEAL

The characters catch of glimpse of four cloaked figures sneaking out of an alleyway and into a residence, as if trying not to be seen. If the characters enter the residence, they see four **ghasts** standing around a table eating the remains of a human family that perished here during the trip to Avernus. The ghosts reek of death and decay.

When the ghosts are dealt with, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns a faint crying coming from a cupboard. Inside is a young girl called Shorah Hevrin. A noncombatant, she immediately attaches herself to the first character who is kind to her. Shorah insists on accompanying the characters until she feels safe. If they can get her to the High Hall, each character gains inspiration, and the survivors there can see to Shorah's care.

## GOHUL PACK

Seven **ghouls** roam the streets of Elturel, looking for their next meal. Their leader, formerly an adventuring rogue, wears magical studded leather armor that increases its AC to 13 (see "Treasure" below). These former citizens of the city died when Elturel was drawn into Avernus. Their souls were corrupted by the terrible power of the plane, leaving them in these undead forms.

**Treasure.** The ghoul leader wears +1 studded leather armor, carries an explorer's pack, and sports a belt pouch holding a potion of invisibility.

## HATEFUL PATROL

A **merregon** (see page 238 for its stat block) leads three **spined devils** through the streets, looking for mortal survivors or demons that have slipped past the devilish forces below the city. The spined devils grumble in Infernal, unhappy about being up here when they could be fighting demons in the battle below. The merregon takes their insolence in silence.

## IMP SALES PITCH

As the characters pass an alleyway, they notice an **imp** talking with a halfling. The two are focused on each other, making it easy for characters to get close enough to overhear the conversation in Common. The halfling, a baker (**commoner**) named Pilster Pebblehuck, has been hiding with his family in the basement of their bakery. They are running out of food, so Pilster has braved the streets to search for provisions. The imp, Perchillux, is offering Pilster a month's worth of food for the low price

## ELTUREL HAZARDS

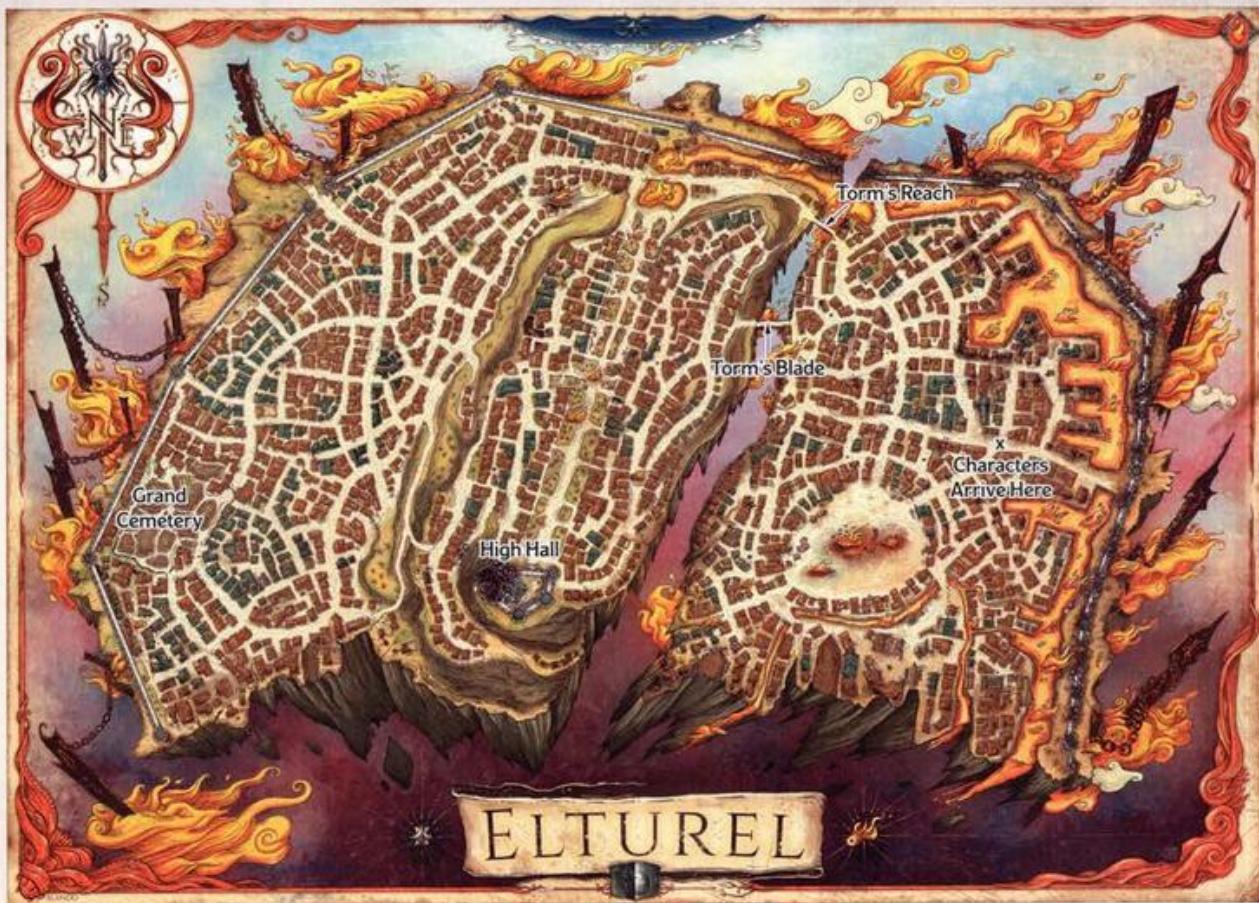
In addition to the threats they'll face from fiendish creatures and undead in Elturel, the characters quickly become aware of the threats presented by the city itself.

**Falling.** Any creature that falls from Elturel's location high above Avernus plummets 500 feet into the soul-shattering waters of the River Styx, taking 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall. The memory-wiping effects of the river are described on page 76. However, characters who plunge into the Styx or the battle raging around the river are likely killed immediately, with their bodies beyond recovery.

**Lightning.** Lightning from the Companion strikes the city every minute or so. The odds of the characters being harmed by the lightning are slim, but you can use it to reinforce a sense of urgency as the lightning damages a rooftop, triggers a building collapse, or strikes the ground nearby.

**Quakes.** Every so often, the entire city lurches from side to side as the great posts binding it to Avernus sink farther into the ground. This results in the same kind of damage that would be caused by an earthquake on the Material Plane: loose objects fall, buildings are damaged, cracks form in the ground and the streets, and creatures fall prone.

When Elturel shifts, creatures standing on any surface in the city must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. In addition, you can describe other damage and drama resulting from a shift. Perhaps a building collapses, forcing any creature close enough to be struck by falling debris to succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.



MAP 2.1: ELTUREL

of his soul. Pilster is preparing to sign the contract as the characters come upon the pair.

The contract is written on parchment made of halfling skin. If any character interrupts the signing and asks to read the contract, the imp tells them this is none of their business. Pilster welcomes the interruption, however, since he is having second thoughts about the deal, and he hands the contract to the characters. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check penetrates the dense and convoluted text of the contract—which will give the imp the souls of Pilster’s entire family if Pilster signs it.

If the characters attack the imp, it turns invisible and attempts to escape as quickly as possible. If the characters save Pilster from selling his soul, he thanks the characters and begs them to get him and his family to safety. His wife, Merrywile, and their three children are nearby.

**Treasure.** In addition to the contract, the imp carries a *soul coin* (see page 225) from a previous interaction that it plans to give to its master.

#### NARZUGON CAVALIER

A **narzugon** (see page 239 for its stat block) patrols the streets of Elturel on the back of a **nightmare** equipped with *infernal tack* (see page 224). The devil has orders to hunt down and destroy any demons that might have slipped past the battle on the ground below and gained access to the city.

When Lulu sees the creature, she tells the characters that it is very powerful and should not be confronted.

#### SPOUTS OF HELLFIRE

The characters see a charred humanoid corpse in the middle of the street, clutching a silvered longsword in its hand. When any creature moves within 5 feet of the corpse, a gout of hellfire erupts from it. Any creature within 5 feet of the corpse must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Treasure.** If the corpse is examined further, an intact vial is found in its charred belt pouch. The vial contains a *potion of giant strength* (frost).

#### VROCK PHILOSOPHY

A **vrock** fled the battle and flew up to the city to ponder its role in all things. As long as the characters leave it alone, it doesn’t attack. If they approach, it speaks with them, using its telepathy to communicate with one character at a time if none of the characters speaks Abyssal.

The vrock pontificates on the vagaries and possible meanings of existence. If the characters treat it nicely, indulge it in its ponderings, and succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, they can get it to do them one small favor. If they attack it, the vrock repays their hostility in kind.

Favors from the vrock might include providing information about what’s happening beneath the city, about what forces guard the bridges between the city’s east and west sections, or about the demons’ plan to use a portal to enter the city (see area G12 on page 69), although it doesn’t know where that portal is.



ANCHORED BY THE CHAINS OF AVERNUS, THE CITY OF ELTUREL IS DOOMED TO DROWN  
IN THE RIVER STYX UNLESS SOMEONE FINDS A WAY TO SAVE IT.

## ZOMBIE HORDE

As the characters pass a building, they hear a pounding coming from the front door. The door is stuck but not locked, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check to force it open. If the characters do this, twelve **zombies** burst from the building as an avalanche of undead bodies, burying anyone standing near the door in the pile. This leaves those characters and the zombies prone at the start of combat.

If the characters deal with the zombies and search the building, they discover that it was a school. Five casks each holding three gallons of fresh water are stored in the basement.

## TORM'S BRIDGES

Two bridges that once spanned a ravine in the city are now all that connect the east and west sections of Elturel over the great rift that has fallen away beneath them. The north bridge is called Torm's Reach, while the south bridge is named Torm's Blade. Unless the characters can fly or teleport, they must use one of the bridges on their trek toward the High Hall.

When the characters approach either bridge, they can make out the initial details of the rift and can see the guards blocking the path. Read the following to set the scene:

A rift in the earth divides Elturel into two sections. The riotous din of the battle taking place far below the city is louder here, echoing up and through the jagged open chasm.

A bridge twenty feet wide and more than a hundred feet long spans the chasm. Holy runes etched into the stonework of the bridge indicate that the structure has been consecrated in the name of Torm, god of courage and self-sacrifice. Six infernal creatures stand guard at the center of the bridge, scanning in all directions.

Each bridge is guarded by an infernal force tasked with cutting off any assistance between the east and west sides of the city. Each group consists of two **bearded devils** and four **spined devils**. Unsubtle brutes, these creatures have parked themselves in the middle of each bridge to maintain a vigilant watch. Taking them on is a tough fight, but the characters might have a trick up their collective sleeves.

## HOLY RUNES

Any character trained in Arcana, History, or Religion recognizes that the runes etched into the stonework of each bridge can be activated to produce a radiant energy harmful to fiends and undead. A character touching the bridge who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check as an action can speak the proper prayers to Torm to activate the runes for 1 minute. While the runes are active, any fiend or undead creature that starts its turn in contact with the bridge takes 22 (4d10) radiant damage. When this effect ends, the runes cannot be activated again for 1 hour.

## HIGH HALL

Although the forces of Avernus are occupied driving back the demonic attack from the River Styx, a few teams of devils have been ordered to infiltrate Elturel, sow chaos among the surviving citizenry, reap the souls of any mortals they find, and test the city's defenses. The members of some of those advance teams have noted that the High Hall appears to be the center of the city's defenses and survival efforts. As such, they have decided to mount a quick and decisive strike against it.

As the characters approach the High Hall, they see that a devilish assault on the fortress's cathedral is underway. The characters can enter the fray, defeat the perpetrators, and help bring temporary stability to the situation. After defeating the devils, the characters learn from the survivors that Grand Duke Ravengard was at the High Hall, but left recently. He took a contingent of soldiers with him to the city's cemetery, hoping that an ancient relic found there might help save the city.

## HIGH HALL OVERVIEW

The High Hall is a grand alabaster castle dedicated to Torm, the god of courage and self-sacrifice. It houses many of Elturel's religious and political leaders—or at least it did when the city was in the mortal realm.

Shortly after Elturel was pulled into Avernus, a meteor hurled through the High Hall, collapsing the offices and residences of those who could best organize a defense of the city. Most of the leaders of Elturel were killed by the meteor, but Grand Duke Ravengard of Baldur's Gate and his retinue were spared the devastation. Ravengard immediately took control of the situation, marshaled Elturel's remaining forces, and set out a plan to protect the city. Ravengard's forces couldn't save the eastern part of the city, and more frequent demonic and devilish incursions have worn away at their control of the western portion.

The survivors here—including the last of the city's leadership—have taken up residence in the cathedral part of the High Hall, perhaps the most secure and sturdy edifice left in Elturel. Yet even the cathedral is under assault, and without the characters' assistance, its defenders are sure to fall.

## APPROACHING THE HIGH HALL

When the characters approach the High Hall, read the following boxed text to describe the scene:

This clifftop castle was once the crowning architectural jewel of Elturel. Only three of its five watchtowers still stand, though they appear abandoned. The wooden gates that once led into the castle grounds have been shattered, leaving a gaping hole in the wall.

The west side of the castle has been reduced to a pile of smashed brick and broken wood. The surviving buildings are blackened by soot. At the center of the castle grounds, the High Hall cathedral stands defiant.



No threats reveal themselves to the characters as they enter the castle grounds. Once inside, they spot two humans in plate armor lying dead on the ground near the shattered gate, blood still oozing from their bite wounds.

As the characters approach the center of the courtyard, they see two **hell hounds** standing guard in front of the cathedral doors. These fiends have been instructed by their devil masters to prevent any mortal creatures from entering or leaving the cathedral.

The characters must defeat the hell hounds to gain access to the cathedral. Have them make a DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to find cover amid the rubble as they move. If half or more of the characters succeed on their individual checks, the group check is successful, allowing the characters to reach the base of the cathedral steps without being noticed by the hell hounds. This grants the characters surprise when the fight begins.

## CATHEDRAL ASSAULT

Four groups of devils and their allies are moving through the cathedral. These groups are spread out to cause as much havoc as possible, and have orders to kill everyone in their path.

As the DM, you can decide where the characters encounter each of these groups. These encounters are meant to be run separately, although running two encounters back-to-back with no chance for the characters to rest or heal can be a good challenge for a powerful party.

If you want to keep these encounters simple and straightforward, you can have them take place in locations with no strange effects or hazards. If you want to make an encounter more interesting, have the combat take place during a quake (see the “Elturel Hazards” sidebar, page 55). If you want a fight to go easier for the characters, have some of the foes withdraw or have some NPC survivors assist the characters.

Most of the survivors currently in the cathedral are preparing for a last stand in the main crypts (area H16), so that area should be free of devils unless the characters arrive there just as the devils do.

### GROUP 1: ABISHAI AND CULTISTS

This group is led by the mastermind behind the raid on the cathedral: Victuusa, a **white abishai** (see page 241 for its stat block). Victuusa serves both Tiamat and Zariel in an attempt to gain the most favor, and is presently searching for the leaders of the Elturel resistance. It wants nothing more than to deliver the heads of those leaders to Zariel personally. Victuusa leads six lawful evil human **cultists** devoted to Zariel.

### GROUP 2: CRAB ATTACK

A **barbed devil** named Dreb marshals a pack of eight **giant crabs** through the cathedral. These crabs look and act like normal giant crabs, except for the spines protruding from their shells and the vile brimstone smell they exude. The clacking of the crabs' claws on the marble floors of the cathedral makes it impossible for this group to sneak up on anyone.

### GROUP 3: DEVILISH BRIGANDS

A **spined devil** leads three human brigands (use the **bandit captain** stat block to represent them) on a rampage. The brigands were driven mad by the journey to Avernus, and have now pledged themselves to their spined devil master. Their madness causes them to bellow and gibber as they move through the cathedral. The spined devil roars at them as it uses its telepathy to order them to focus. This lack of caution and discipline makes ambushing or sneaking up on the group easy, granting advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to do so.

### GROUP 4: HELLISH HUNTERS

A **merregon** (see page 238 for its stat block) oversees a mangy pair of **hell hounds**. The devil uses the hounds to sniff out survivors who might be hiding.

## HIGH HALL CATHEDRAL

Three levels make up the High Hall cathedral: the cathedral level (areas H1 through H6), the choir level (areas H7 through H9), and the catacombs level (areas H10 through H17). These locations are keyed to map 2.2 (page 61), map 2.3 (page 62), and map 2.4 (page 63), respectively.

### HIGH HALL CATHEDRAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the High Hall cathedral has the following recurring features.

**Art.** Once decorated with beautiful paintings, statues, and other works that depicted the strength and valor of Elturel's people, the cathedral was magically transformed when Elturel was pulled into Avernus. Now its artwork is a testament to the devils' superiority and strength, showing scenes of mortals succumbing to temptation, dying at the hands of fiends, and suffering eternal torture. When viewed, those images shift and swirl unsettlingly. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the frescoes, mosaics, paintings, and tapestries of the cathedral radiate auras of illusion magic. These effects end if Elturel is freed from the chains of Avernus.

**Dimensions.** Each of the three levels of the cathedral is set 20 feet higher than the one below it. Rooms in the cathedral are 15 feet high, and have 8-foot-high doorways connecting them.

**Doors.** The doors of the cathedral are made of iron. Each door is a Large object with AC 19, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If a door in the cathedral is locked, it can be unlocked with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check with thieves' tools, or forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Illumination.** Areas within the cathedral are brightly lit by *continual flame* spells cast on wall sconces.

**Walls.** Climbing the outside walls of the cathedral without equipment requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Windows.** Most of the cathedral's windows were shattered during the descent into Avernus, but the windows are covered by defensive shutters that are latched from within and swing outward on iron hinges. A successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check or DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools opens a shutter from the outside. Each shutter is a Large object with AC 19, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Most of these descriptions highlight what the areas contain if a devil attack has not taken place there. Based on the encounters provided in the "Cathedral Assault" section above, you can adjust the text to describe what is happening in an area and what it looks like during or after a devil attack.

### H1. HALL OF HEROES

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

At the top of the stairs leading up to the cathedral, an archway opens into a long hall containing eight columns. Some of the columns have been carved to represent Torm, but the infernal magic of Avernus has warped the others to represent likenesses of a winged female devil wielding a luminous sword.

The devil represented in the magically altered columns is Zariel.

The wooden doors leading into the grand foyer have been broken open by the invading devils (see "Cathedral Assault," page 59) and remain ajar. Four guards lie dead in the doorways, eviscerated by one of those devil-led groups.

### H2. GRAND FOYER

The foyer holds two circular stairwells, each leading up to area H7 on the choir level. Decorated pillars here depict symbols and scenes representative of Torm. Curtains, some of them shredded by weapons and claws, separate this area from the heart of the cathedral.

### H3. CENTRAL ALTAR

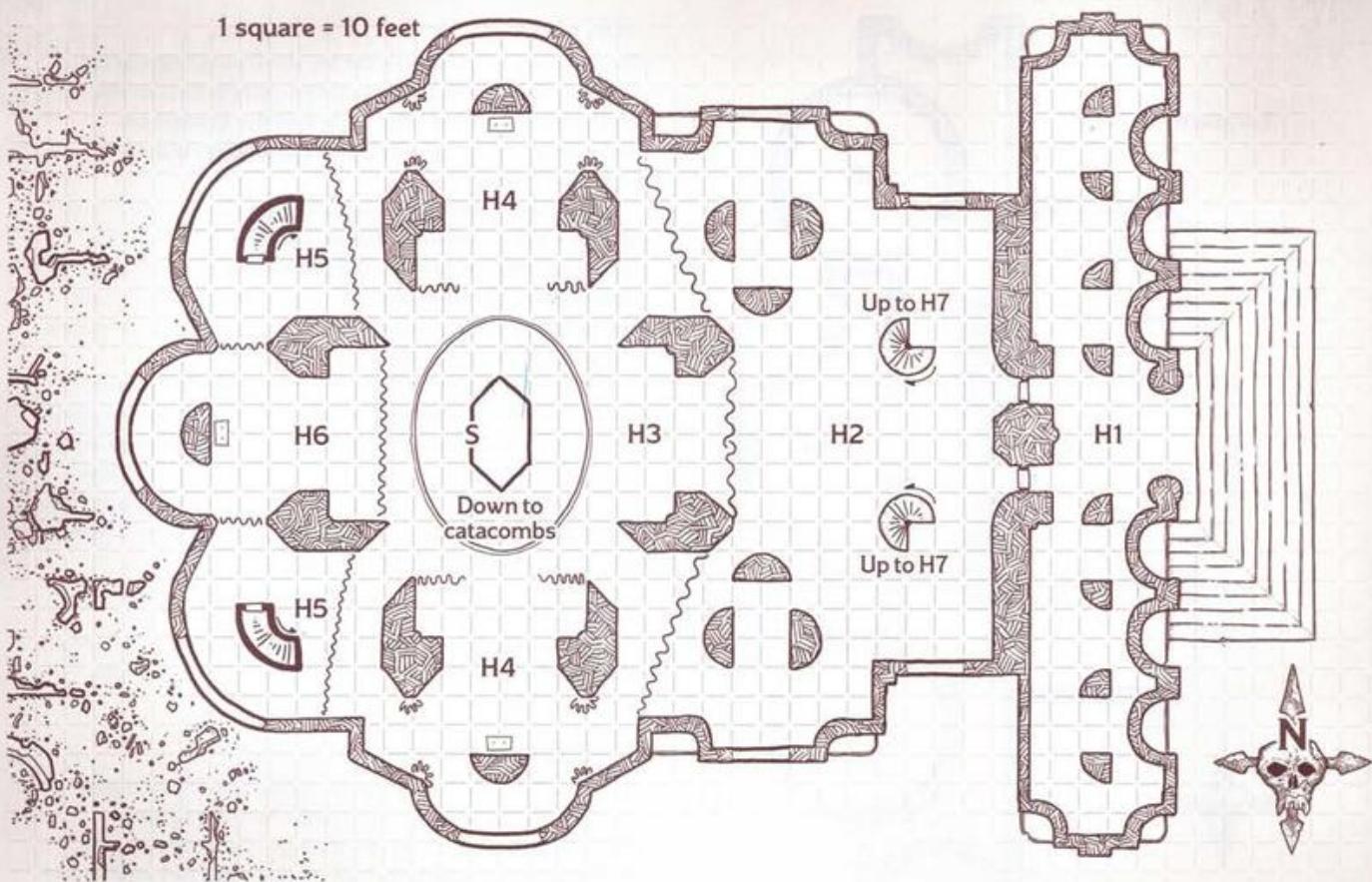
Read the following as the characters enter this area:

An altar rests on a raised dais in this broad hall. Made of beautifully polished teakwood, it takes the shape of a gauntleted hand clenched into a fist. A large lever stands next to the altar, suggesting that it has some sort of mechanical function.

The lever can be pulled to open the hand, so that offerings to Torm or bodies undergoing rituals can be placed upon it.

**Activating the Altar.** Even with all that has happened in the city, this altar remains consecrated to Torm. A creature that touches the altar and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Religion) check regains all its hit points. This check can be attempted only once for any creature. Though the power of the altar works for any creature, it is specifically attuned to those dedicated to Torm. Clerics and paladins of Torm have advantage on the check.

**Secret Door.** Any character who searches the altar while the hand is opened and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check detects a large secret panel in the palm of the hand. The panel opens easily, revealing a concealed staircase descending into the central portion of the catacombs level, just west of area H15.



MAP 2.2: HIGH HALL CATHEDRAL

#### H4. PRIVATE CHAPELS

These areas can be curtained off for small private ceremonies. Each of these chapels contains the bodies of dead guards, as well as the foul remains of infernal creatures that died during the initial attack on the cathedral. The columns at the north and south ends of each area have stone altars set before them.

**Survivor.** Seltern Obranch, a druid dedicated to Silvanus, was here when the attack took place. After being knocked down in the melee, he feigned his demise to trick his attackers. If the characters search the bodies, they notice Seltern open his eyes.

If the characters treat him kindly, Seltern tells of how forces of devils assaulted the cathedral. He knows nothing of the current state of the place, but can tell the characters that all in the cathedral knew to flee to the main crypts (area H16) in case of an attack.

Seltern has been using the *goodberry* spell to help keep those in the cathedral alive. However, his connection to his beloved nature grows weaker by the day, and he fears he may soon be unable to cast spells at all. Though he is not truly in danger of losing this ability (his resolve is simply shaken), this can provide a role-playing opportunity for the characters to boost his spirits and strengthen his faith.

#### H5. STAIRS TO RESIDENCES

These circular stairs once led to residences and offices. They are now choked with rubble, as the sections that housed those spaces were destroyed.

#### H6. DESECRATED ALTAR OF TORM

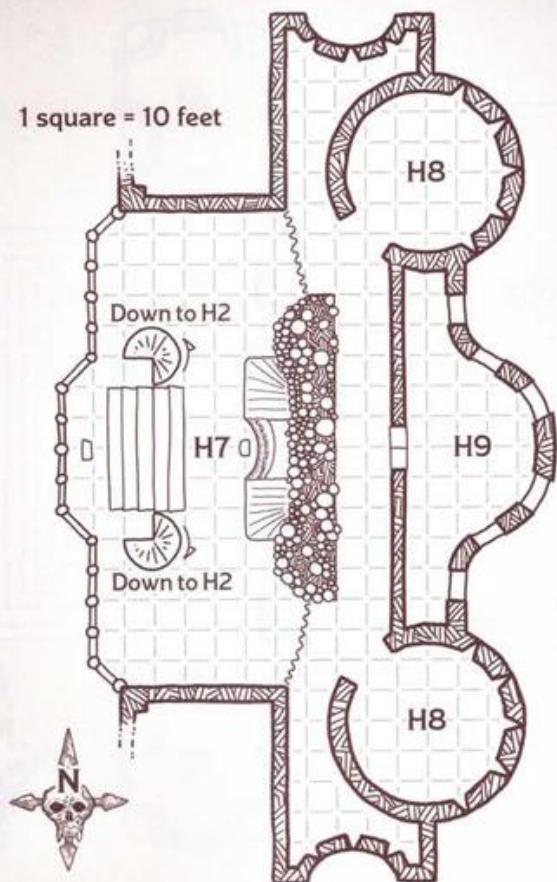
Read the following as the characters enter this area:

This private chapel holds a desecrated altar with a decidedly fiendish air. Once dedicated to Torm, the altar's features have been defaced with blood, ichor, and torn strips of flesh lashed together with sinew and intestines.

This private chapel is similar to those of area H4. The devils currently rampaging through the cathedral defaced the holy altar to Torm. Any creature that doesn't actively worship or swear fealty to Zariel that starts its turn within 20 feet of the profane altar gains vulnerability to all damage, accompanied by the sensation of their bones becoming brittle and their skin feeling dry and cracked.

The altar can be restored and its profane effect ended in the following ways:

- A character who kneels before the altar, prays to Torm for 1 minute, and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check at the end of the prayer causes Torm's power to wash over the altar and wipe clean the blood and other desecrating elements.
- Splashing at least three flasks of holy water on the altar destroys the desecrating elements and purifies the altar.



MAP 2.3: HIGH HALL CATHEDRAL, CHOIR LEVEL

## H7. PIPE ORGAN

The circular stairs from area H2 lead up to this area. Read the following boxed text aloud to the players when their characters arrive here for the first time:

Situated atop this balcony is a magnificent pipe organ. Its ivory keys practically glow, even as its ebony keys seem to absorb all light.

The balcony looks out over area H3. Any character who sits down at the pipe organ can feel that it is enchanted with powerful magic, and a *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of enchantment magic around it.

A character who plays the organ and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check can play a powerful song that resonates throughout the cathedral. This song grants a bonus die, a d8, to every other player character who can hear it. A character can only receive this benefit once, and the d8 can be added to one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw made by the character in the next 24 hours.

If the Charisma (Performance) check fails by 5 or more, a screeching, hellish tune erupts from the organ instead. Inspired by this cacophony, each devil the characters face in the next combat encounter in the cathedral has advantage on attack rolls during its first turn.

## H8. DEFENSES

Two defensive turrets decorate the front of this area, looking down over the courtyard. Arrow slits in the walls of each turret offer a view of the ground below, but are too narrow for even Small creatures to squeeze through.

The north turret contains a traumatized male human **guard** named Trevick Thantorme. The other guards here ran downstairs when the attack started, only to quickly fall. The panicked Trevick remained here, and now sits curled up and whispering to himself that everything's going to be okay.

A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check restores Trevick's courage, as does a *calm emotions* spell or similar effect. If the characters allow it, Trevick vows to accompany them on their hunt for the devils. However, the first time he takes any damage, he curls up in a ball again, requiring another check made as an action to get him back in the fight.

## H9. BALCONY

The doors leading out onto this balcony are locked from the inside. The balcony is 30 feet above the outside courtyard below.

## H10. RECESSED MAUSOLEUMS

These areas are the final resting places of esteemed priests, warriors, and other dedicated servants of Elturel. For each of these areas the characters enter, roll a d6. On a 1, the characters discover 1d4 frightened **commoners** in hiding (if the devils haven't found them) or a number of mangled bodies (if the devils did).

As the DM, you determine the fates of these commoners. If the characters are dawdling because the players don't appreciate the gravity of the threat to the survivors in the cathedral, coming upon deceased commoners can help underline that threat. Having the players understand that these deaths might have been prevented if they had acted more quickly is a good way to inspire the characters to act with a little more urgency.

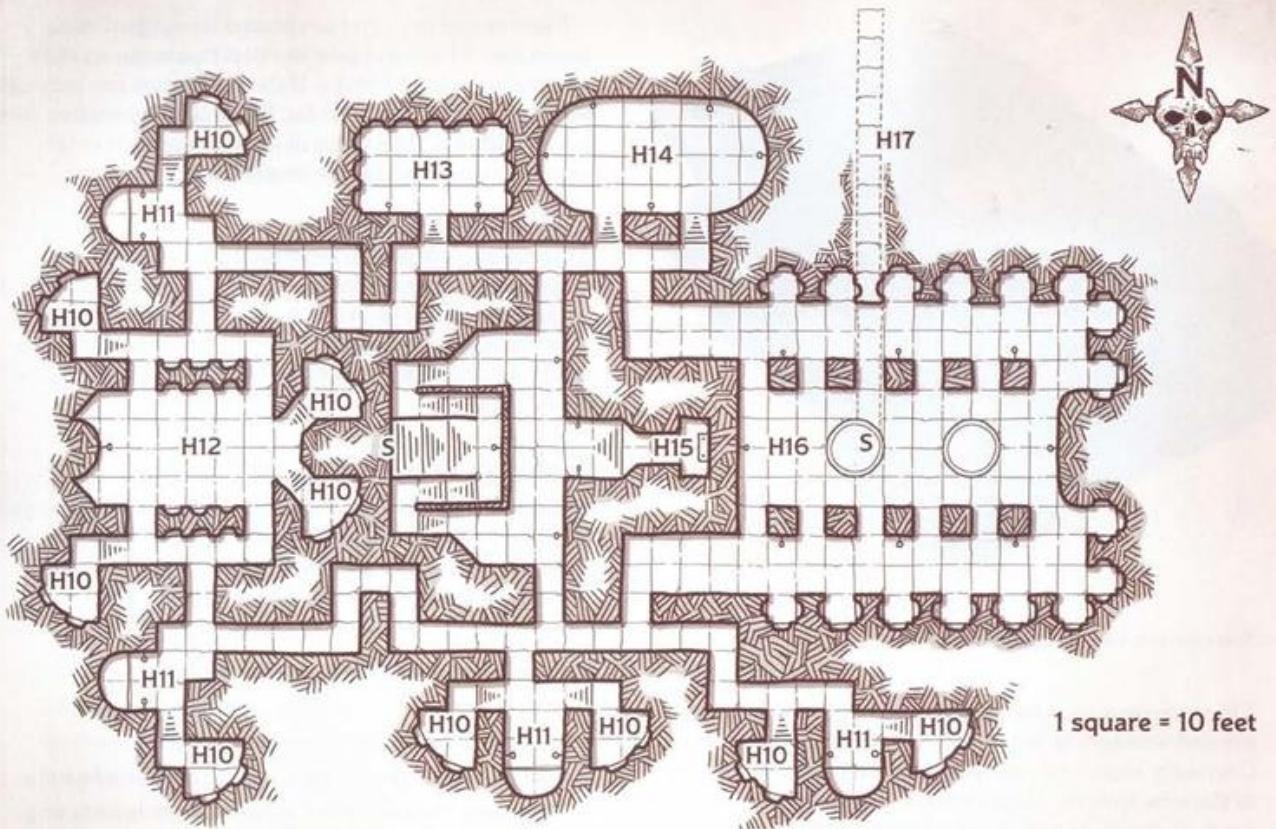
## H11. VAULTS

These vaults are used for holding bodies waiting to be interred in some other part of the cathedral, or in Elturel's cemetery. The only bodies presently here are people who died as the city was drawn to Avernus.

## H12. TEMPLE OF THE HIGHEST

This large temple was used for private ceremonies involving the most powerful and respected figures in Elturel. Each of the semicircular alcoves here contains an elaborate, upright sarcophagus holding the body of a former high priest of Torm. A sarcophagus can be opened with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check by a character proficient with thieves' tools. Eleven of the sarcophagi contain partially decomposed bodies. The twelfth sarcophagus holds a **mummy**, which attacks as soon as its coffin is opened.

**Treasure.** Each sarcophagus contains personal effects, but the sarcophagus with the mummy also contains *bracers of defense* and a yellow diamond *elemental gem*. (The mummy does not use these items in combat.)



MAP 2.4: HIGH HALL CATACOMBS

### H13. HALL OF SCHOLARS

This crypt holds the bones of those who served Torm and Elturel through their knowledge instead of magic or skill at arms: teachers, engineers, sages, and other public servants. Plain stone shelves in the eleven alcoves each hold one set of remains.

**Treasure.** A rogue who worked in the cathedral used this room to hide her stolen goods. Behind the bones on one shelf are nine red amethysts (50 gp each) and a *potion of greater healing*.

### H14. CHAMBER OF TORM'S COUNCIL

A large oval table made of fine red oak fills the center of this room, and is surrounded by forty comfortable chairs. This chamber was used for meetings with individuals chosen to provide counsel to the high priests.

### H15. UNKNOWN HERO

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

This small, isolated tomb opens up at the end of a flight of broad stairs off the open central area of this level.

The body of a young woman lies on the bier, a gleaming greatsword at her side.

Years before the Companion appeared in the sky, a young red dragon made life miserable for the residents of Elturel. It ate livestock, burned crops, and demanded tribute. Then one day, a scruffy-looking, unarmored

woman wielding a greatsword marched up to the dragon and hacked at the beast with mighty swings. Before the stunned creature could fly away, she slew it. A startled and overwhelmed populace rushed toward the woman to thank and reward her for her bravery. As they approached, however, she fell dead. The unknown woman was laid to rest in this special place in the cathedral, and her body has never decomposed. Her nonmagical greatsword was placed at her side. Rumors suggest that she was an incarnation of Torm, or that Torm's essence filled the woman and inspired her to defeat the threat.

Any devil that enters the stairs or the alcove leading to this area is struck with intense pain, imposing disadvantage on its attack rolls while it remains in this area.

### H16. MAIN CRYPTS

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

This large crypt area is presently home to over a hundred frightened people. They cower behind sarcophagi and in alcoves, their eyes red and their cheeks stained with tears. Standing before a large font is a haggard woman, her gray hair matted with sweat. With one arm, she clutches a leather-bound tome to her breast. In the other hand, she wields a ceremonial mace that would probably shatter if it struck anything harder than a pillow.



TOME OF THE CREED RESOLUTE

These crypts house the remains of numerous worshippers and servants of Torm interred over the past century. Currently, more than one hundred frightened survivors of the attack on the High Hall are in hiding here, waiting for their doom. Standing between them and death is a lone **acolyte**, Pherria Jynks. With all the cathedral's priests dead and no one of higher authority to help her, she does her best to keep people calm and quiet. A simple sage and an expert on possession and exorcism, she is only just starting her career as a servant of Torm.

**Tome of the Creed Resolute.** The book in Pherria's possession is titled *Tome of the Creed Resolute*. Written on the first page of this book is the oath that all citizens of Elturgard take when they're old enough to read, swearing to defend Elturel body and soul. The rest of book is filled with signatures, all of which look like they were written by the same hand. When a citizen of Elturgard places a hand on the book and recites the oath, its name magically appears in the book as a signature. The book can magically gain new pages as needed to accommodate new signatures.

Pherria took the *Tome of the Creed Resolute* from the cathedral to safeguard it. The book is merely a record of everyone who has taken the Creed Resolute oath. Its destruction doesn't break the agreements that bind the souls of Elturel's people to Avernus.

**Holy Water Fonts.** The two wide fonts here contain water that has been blessed by priests, enough to fill fifty flasks with holy water.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices odd details in the stonework around one of the fonts, which covers a secret tunnel (area H17).

**Development.** Pherria tells the characters that Grand Duke Ravengard took a group of guards to the city's grand cemetery to investigate the proliferation of undead in that area. As well, Ravengard was hoping that a holy relic in the cemetery chapel called the Helm of Torm's Sight might provide some awareness into Elturel's dire circumstances and possible salvation.

Pherria and the others expected Ravengard back hours ago. Pherria is now worried that some terrible fate has befallen the duke. If the characters are in rough shape from their trials so far, Pherria suggests that they get a good rest, then go as quickly as possible to the cemetery to search for Ravengard and his retinue.

### H17. ESCAPE TUNNEL

This tunnel, accessible from beneath one of the holy water fonts in area H16, leads from under the cathedral catacombs and away from the High Hall. The tunnel now ends at a gaping hole in the floating earthmote to which Elturel clings, some five hundred feet above the River Styx.

## GRAND CEMETERY

Before the characters search for Grand Duke Ravengard in Elturel's cemetery, they should advance to 6th level.

As the characters approach the cemetery, read the boxed text below to describe its current state:

The ten-foot-high brass fence that once surrounded Elturel's cemetery has fallen in numerous places, and a wide gate allowing access to the grounds has been torn from its hinges. Severed humanoid body parts adorn the spikes atop the fence posts. Some of the body parts wriggle and writhe as if undead, twitching in concert with the lightning flashes of the Companion.

Cracked gravestones and crumbling monuments are scattered across the cemetery grounds, whose center is occupied by a chapel dedicated to Lathander, Torm, Helm, and Tyr. That once-holy structure now glows with a fetid purple radiance.

Elturel's grand cemetery was once a beautiful memorial to those who had passed into the realms beyond. Picturesque flowers and grass framed the graves, statues, and mausoleums that were once respectful reminders of the dead.

When Elturel was pulled into Avernus, the cemetery's flowers wilted and its stone monuments cracked. Then Gideon Lightward, a priest loyal to Zariel, used the dark energy of the Companion to raise the city's dead as his minions. At the same time, a magical effect in the ossuary level beneath the cemetery's chapel gave demons access to an intermittently operational portal they could use to enter the city. So far, only a few demons have arrived, but more will come if it's not closed soon.

Grand Duke Ravengard is one of many people who know of a relic of Torm kept beneath the cemetery chapel. The Helm of Torm's Sight is said to give a worthy soul the ability to commune directly with that noble god. The duke and his guards came to the cemetery to assess the threat of its undead and to search for the relic, but were waylaid by both demons and devils. When the characters find him, Ravengard is locked in a life-and-death struggle with a demonic force in the vault of ascendance (area G12).

## GIDEON LIGHTWARD

Gideon Lightward was a priest of Lathander who served Elturel and his deity proudly. Zariel saw that his fervor could be an asset to her, so she sent devils to corrupt him in the months leading up to the fall of Elturel. The devils posed as angels, offering Gideon increased power if he would dedicate himself to fighting the ever-present threat of demons.

Gideon slowly gave up his sanity and free will to the devils, leaving him corrupted by Zariel and fully serving her in the months leading up to Elturel's fall. He died during the destruction wrought as the city was drawn to Avernus, but the priest rose as an undead creature. Even as an undead, Gideon remains his mistress's most loyal servant in Elturel. He sees his cause as a noble one—fighting the demons whose chaos marks the end of all things. But his mind is broken and filled with hatred for those who refuse to follow his commands.

Because of his obsession with destroying demons, the characters might be able to temporarily ally with Gideon to deal with the threat posed by the demon portal. Unfortunately, unless they can trick him completely, the undead priest won't let the characters leave the cemetery without a fight.

## DEMON PORTAL

Years ago, a wise and humble acolyte of Torm named Opallita the Devout wanted to speak directly to her god. Through decades of constant prayer in the crypts beneath the chapel, she created a direct link between the ossuary and the celestial essence of Torm, as her prayers made the chamber that she prayed in sensitive to psychic connections between mortals and higher powers.

When Elturel was drawn to Avernus, the link between the chamber and Torm was corrupted. This corruption was sensed by the demon lord Baphomet. Seizing upon that link, Baphomet used it as an anchor point to slowly and methodically send demons through to the city. Even now, the demon lord and his minions work to widen and strengthen the connection, hoping to eventually allow entire armies of demons into Avernus by way of Elturel.

## GIDEON LIGHTWARD

Medium undead, lawful evil

**Armor Class 11**

**Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)**

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Con +7, Wis +7

**Skills** Insight +7, Religion +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14



**Languages** Common  
**Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)**

**Regeneration.** Gideon regains 10 hit points at the start of each of his turns. If he takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. Gideon is destroyed only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Gideon attacks twice with his fists.

**Fist. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Withering Gaze.** Gideon targets one creature he can see within 60 feet of him. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## EXPLORING THE CEMETERY

The section describes locations in the city's cemetery—both the chapel and the areas around it (areas G1 through G6), and a subterranean ossuary level beneath the chapel (areas G7 through G12). The descriptions of the areas in this section are keyed to map 2.5 (page 67) and map 2.6 (page 69).

Several graves have been dug up, leaving pits in the earth that are 6 feet deep, 2 feet wide, and 7 feet long. A number of stone mausoleums stand vacant, their doors hanging open. The interior of a mausoleum is dimly lit when its door is open and shrouded in darkness when the door is closed.

As the characters investigate the cemetery, they observe dozens of **skeletons** and **zombies** moving about the grounds. These undead, wandering aimlessly and without direction, pose no threat to the characters on their way into the chapel. However, if the characters fail to deal with Gideon before leaving Elturel, the priest has time to coordinate the efforts of the undead, turning them into a potent threat against the city.

### APPROACHING THE CHAPEL

As the characters draw near the chapel, they are accosted by three **minotaur skeletons**—slain servants of Baphomet stripped of flesh and animated by Gideon using the power of the Companion. These skeletons attack any intruders on the cemetery grounds.

When the minotaur skeletons are disposed of and the characters get their first close look at the chapel, read the following to set the scene:

The city's descent into Avernus has taken its toll on this once beautiful chapel. Nearly all the stained glass windows along the outside walls have been smashed, and the main doors hang open. No sign of any other creatures in or around the building can be seen.

Characters can easily force their way into the chapel through any of its broken stained-glass windows, or can enter through the main entrance at area G1 or the unlocked back door into area G3.

### G1. WALK OF BRAVERY

Read the following as the characters approach this area:

Carved pillars resembling heroes of Elturel's past decorate this white marble patio leading into the main chapel. The dark mahogany doors are ajar, and the remains of the patio's windows have spread shattered stained glass everywhere.

With a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check, a character can remember the name of one of the heroes represented by the carved pillars, with another name remembered for each point by which the check total exceeds 10. The names of the heroes are Agnithar, Zokel of Torm, Bertra Zomes, Yevina Druen, Ca'sar, Xivik

Looren, Dopp Hoosser, Whrenk the Bloody, Laveil deNue, and VanLancer Eagletalon.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check made to study the carved pillars reveals that a pillar can be empowered with radiant energy if the name of the hero it represents is spoken aloud as an action. Any undead creature that moves within 5 feet of an empowered statue for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 5 (1d10) radiant damage.

Each pillar is hollow and houses an incorporeal undead creature: four **shadows** and four **specters** in total. Seven of the undead emerge from the pillars to attack any character who attempts to enter the chapel. The specter closest to the priest quarters (area G5) instead attempts to move to that area and warn Gideon of the intruders. If warned, Gideon quickly moves to area G4 and prepares to defend the chapel, while the specter returns to join the fray.

### G2. CHAPEL OF LIGHT

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

The once-beautiful main area of the chapel is littered with broken furnishings and splintered chairs. The stained-glass windows have all been smashed, though one remains mostly intact where it's fallen whole to the floor. It depicts a representation of the god Torm placing a golden helm on the head of a man kneeling before him.

Out of the shadows step four minotaur skeletons clutching bloody greataxes.

A squad of Baphomet's minotaurs attempted to overrun the chapel, but Gideon and his servants slew them. Gideon then turned them into four **minotaur skeletons** that attack as soon as any character enters this area. The minotaur skeletons attempt to charge characters, knocking them through the smashed windows. A creature pushed through a smashed window takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage.

**Stained-Glass Window.** The window lying mostly whole on the floor is cracked and has been trodden on, but the scene it shows is still recognizable. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History or Religion) check allows a character to recognize the scene as showing Torm presenting the Helm of Torm's Sight to Lannish Fogel, a revered hero of Elturel's past and a dedicated paladin of Torm. The helm pictured in the stained glass is the relic Grand Duke Ravengard came to the chapel in search of.

### G3. CHAPEL OF MOURNING

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

The smashed remnants of fine furniture and the remains of stained-glass windows are strewn across this area. Sections of one huge stained-glass window remain intact, enough so that its subject can still be made out. The window once portrayed Lathander standing amid fallen soldiers, holding his hands aloft as the spirits of the dead rise to stand at his side.

This area of the chapel was used for funeral services for esteemed political and military leaders of Elturel.

If a creature kneels before the damaged window and says a prayer to Lathander, then succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Religion) check made to determine the sincerity and strength of the prayer, a glowing weapon appears before the supplicant. Devout followers of Lathander succeed on the check automatically.

**Treasure.** The weapon that appears is a +2 weapon. This item takes the form of whatever weapon the character is wielding or wearing at the time, and would be most useful to the supplicant in battle. Only one such weapon can be gained by the characters in this way.

#### G4. VESTMENT CHAMBER

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

Three curtained archways connect this chamber to the other areas of the chapel. Shattered wardrobes and dressing tables, as well as a number of smashed mirrors, suggest that this was once where priests prepared for their daily services. Spiral stairs leading down are guarded by two creatures with insectoid features. Each one is armed with a wicked trident.

The stairs lead down into the workshop (area G7) on the ossuary level. Two **mezzoloths** guard the stairs. **Gideon Lightward** (see page 65 for his stat block) is also present here if one of his undead servants warned him of the characters' intrusion. Otherwise, the characters encounter Gideon in area G5.

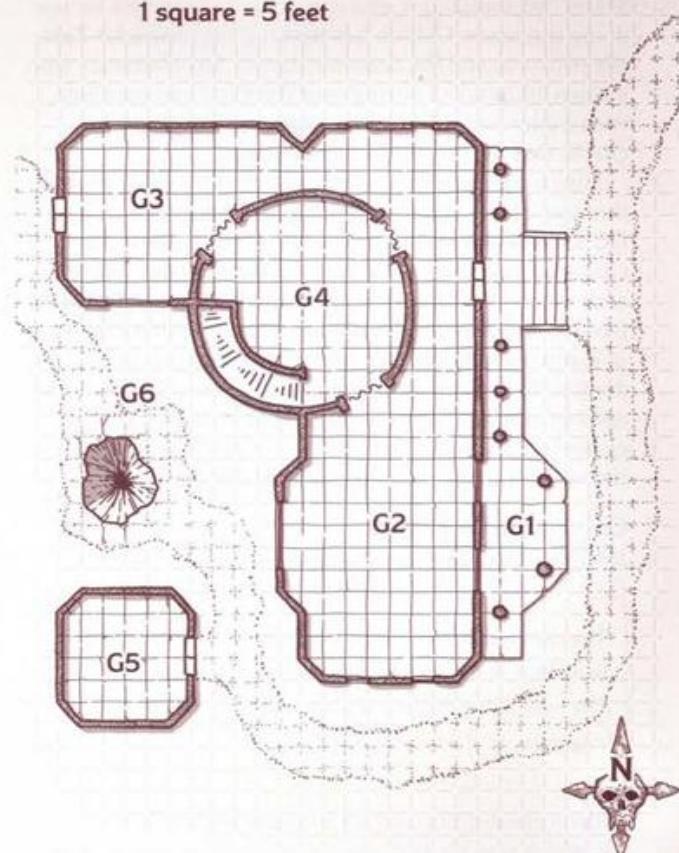
Just as the characters are about to face off against the fiends, a cacophony erupts from below, and six creatures rush up the stairs: a fiendish **giant scorpion** trailed by five **dretches**. In response, the mezzoloths (and Gideon, if present) ignore the characters completely, focusing all their attacks on the scorpion and the demons. If Gideon is present and the characters refrain from attacking him after the first round or two, they have advantage on checks to parley with him after the battle. Otherwise, they have disadvantage on those checks.

**Parley.** If Gideon is present, he lowers his weapon after all the demonic creatures are dead. If he is not here at the start of the fight, he arrives from his quarters during the battle or after the demons are defeated. He speaks to the characters, thanking them for any assistance in defeating the demonic intruders. He makes it clear that his singular focus is stopping the demonic incursion of Elturel—at all costs.

If the characters ask about Ravengard, Gideon tells them that an armed group of humans entered the ossuary level earlier. Since they were not demons, he allowed them to pass, but with demons now coming from that area, Gideon angrily assumes that the humans are in league with the demons.

A successful DC 12 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check allows the characters to earn Gideon's trust. If they can convince him that they are here only to slay demons, he allows them to enter the crypt—and even provides them with the service of one mezzoloth

1 square = 5 feet



MAP 2.5: GRAND CEMETERY CHAPEL

if either of those creatures survived. Gideon doesn't accompany the characters, wanting to guard the chapel against demon attacks.

#### G5. GIDEON'S QUARTERS

This small building was Gideon Lightward's living quarters when he oversaw the chapel and the maintenance of the cemetery. Read the following boxed text aloud when the characters enter this area:

This simple building contains a bed, a desk, a dresser, a table, and chairs. Much of the furniture has been destroyed, with decorations and other items strewn haphazardly around the room, including holy symbols of Lathander, Torm, Helm, and Tyr. A large tome appears to have survived the destruction. It sits open at the center of the partially collapsed desk.

See area G4 for information on roleplaying Gideon if the characters first encounter him here.

**Gideon's Testament.** The book is a testament written by Gideon in the months leading up to Elturel's fall. It pontificates about the evil of demons, instructing the reader to be ever vigilant against their incursions, and expounding that the demonic threat must be defeated at all costs. It praises the devils that stoically stand against

the unending demonic tide, while chastising Helm, Torm, Tyr, Lathander, and their angelic servitors for not doing the same. Gideon has nothing but praise for Zariel's efforts to end the demonic threat. Any character who spends 10 minutes poring over the tome can conclude, with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, that it's the work of a madman.

Any character who continues to read the book beyond that basic level of understanding must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed check, the character is cursed with a particularly intense hatred of demons. A creature cursed in this way takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage if it can see any demon within 60 feet of it and ends its turn not having attempted to attack a demon. This curse can be removed with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. At the end of each long rest, a cursed creature can make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## G6. UNDEAD PIT

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

The path around the chapel has been sundered by a deep hole in the ground, filled with a putrid purple mist. The haze filling the hole blocks any sense of how deep it might be, or of what might lie within.

Gideon creates his undead servants in this 30-foot-deep pit, which was formed when a piece of the meteor that struck the High Hall splintered off.

**Necromantic Mist.** The mist is formed by necromantic energy emitted from the corrupted Companion. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check made to study the mist reveals that it pulsates in sync with the crackling energy of the corrupted Companion.

Any creature that enters the mist for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage. Climbing the sides of the pit without equipment requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Whenever Gideon directs his minions to toss a dead body into the pit, an undead creature crawls forth one hour later. Newly created undead patiently wander the cemetery grounds until Gideon gives them orders.

One undead creature appears during the time the characters investigate the pit, and more can appear if they leave this area, then return again while Gideon is still at large. Use the Undead Creation table to determine what kind of undead creature is created.

### UNDEAD CREATION

d20	Undead	d20	Undead
1–4	Skeleton	13–15	Choul
5–7	Zombie	16–17	Ghast
8–10	Shadow	18–19	Wight
11–12	Specter	20	Wraith

## G7. WORKSHOP

The stairs from area G4 curl down to an unlocked door and a workshop beyond. Read the following boxed text when the characters enter this area:

This workshop appears to be where priests and acolytes prepared dead bodies for final interment. The place has been ransacked, with knives, saws, piping, and tubes littering the floor. Acid and embalming fluid pool everywhere, amid a field of shattered flasks and jars.

The double door to the north leads to stairs that descend to areas G8, G9, and G11.

**Tracks.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals the tracks of multiple demons in the detritus spread across the floor. Amid those tracks, signs can be seen of a single group of booted humans moving down the stairs. These bootprints, trailing embalming fluid, lead all the way to area G11, then back toward area G12.

## G8. OSSUARY OF THE FAITHFUL

Those who could not afford the expense of a cemetery plot above ground were respectfully laid to rest in this area and area G9. Read the following as the characters enter this area:

The walls of this chamber are lined with funerary shelves, each set with dusty humanoid bones. Relics and holy symbols of Lathander, Torm, Helm, and Tyr have been set prominently on a number of shelves.

The bones marked by holy symbols are the remains of honored priests and acolytes who worked in the chapel, and who requested to take their final rest alongside the poor they served.

The holy symbols in this area once channeled the blessings of their gods, but that trace magic has been corrupted by the passage of Elturel to Avernus, and by the presence of the abyssal portal in area G12. If any holy symbol is touched, or if any creature not a fiend or undead lingers in this area for more than 1 minute, all the holy symbols unleash a pulse of necrotic power. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This hazard resets in 1 hour as long as the portal in area G12 is active.

## G9. MAIN OSSUARY

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

This huge chamber is lined by funerary shelves along the stone walls above six bare daises, creating a display of dusty humanoid bones rising from floor to ceiling.

A **quasit** named Ophurkh was the first demon to come through the portal in area G12, acting as a scout. A steadfast servant of Baphomet, it remains in this area to provide instructions for other demons as they arrive through the portal and prepare to enter Elturel.

Ophurkh remains invisible and keeps quiet as the characters pass through this area. If it is able to elude notice, it follows the characters, waiting for a chance to use its Scare ability to try to drive them from this level. If unsuccessful, it goes invisible again, then waits and attacks alongside the minotaurs that emerge from the portal when the characters reach area G12.

If captured, the self-serving quasit can be coerced into providing information about the portal and the plans of its demonic masters (see “Demon Portal,” page 65) with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check.

#### G10. MEDITATION CHAMBER

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

This area is set with cushions and low stools of brown oak. Above an empty dais, the wall is covered with a mosaic shaped from colored chips of bone, artfully arranged to depict scenes of funerals, the migration of souls, and the celestial realms. Lettering along the bottom of the mosaic reads: “Contemplate life. Death comes soon enough.”

Any character with proficiency in Religion recognizes this area as one in which priests dedicated to dealing with the dead would meditate to help them endure the dark nature of their work.

#### G11. VAULT OF HONOR

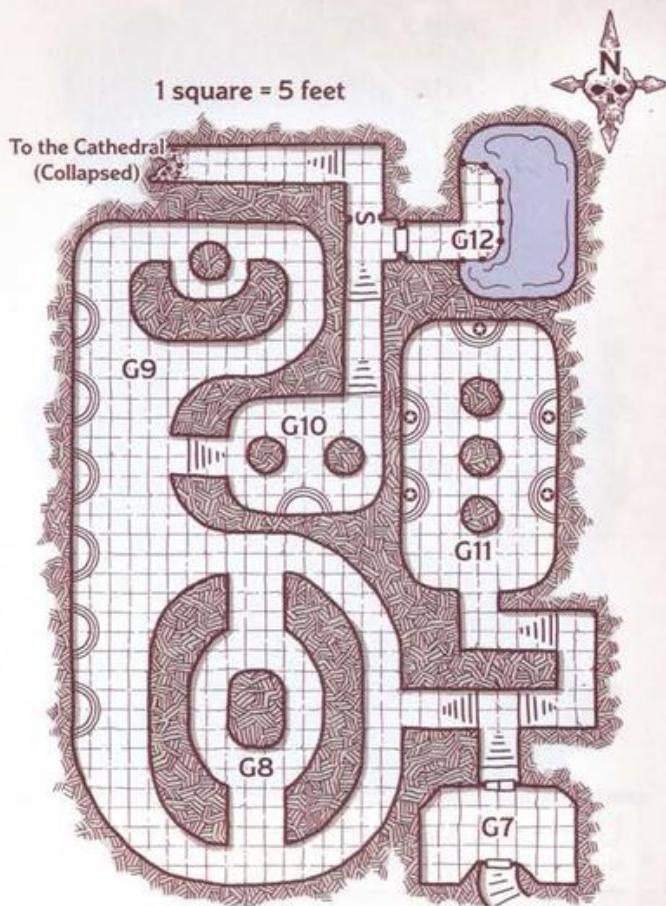
This vault once housed the Helm of Torm’s Sight, but no longer. Read the following boxed text to the players as the characters enter this area:

This rubble-strewn vault contains five marble statues atop daises. Four of the statues are unrecognizable, as their features have been badly marred by rock fallen from the cracked ceiling. The fifth is a finely carved statue of a kneeling man.

The recognizable statue depicts Lannish Fogel, as seen in the stained-glass window in area G2. Any characters who saw the window recognize that the two depictions are the same man. If none of the characters recognized Lannish Fogel in area G2, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History or Religion) check allows a character to recognize the statue.

Any inspection of the statue reveals that its head has been sculpted as if it was meant to wear a separate helm, but no such helm is present.

**Tracks.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals more demonic tracks passing through this area, as well as the tracks of booted humans leading on to area G12.



MAP 2.6: GRAND CEMETERY, OSSUARY LEVEL

#### G12. VAULT OF ASCENDANCE

Read the following as the characters enter this area:

A shallow meditation pool fills this room, set off from a broad landing edged by a low wrought-iron railing. Wondrous frescoes along the walls depict souls gaining the blessings of Lathander, Torm, Helm, and Tyr. The frescoes on one wall have been twisted into abyssal forms surrounding a shimmering portal.

The pool is littered with the mutilated bodies of humans wearing the uniforms of Baldur’s Gate and Elturel. The swirling water of the pool roils with shadow, and is shot through with patches of black ichor where demons have fallen here. An armored man with a shield slung over his back crouches among the bodies, writhing in pain. His eyes are closed, and his hands clutch at a gold helm on his head as if trying in vain to claw it off. Unintelligible words spill from his lips, some sounding saintly and solemn, while others resonate with a cruel hissing.



## ULDER RAVENGARD

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +3

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Ulder makes three melee attacks, only one of which can be with his shield.

**+1 Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage when used with two hands.

**Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and Ulder pushes the target 5 feet away from him. Ulder then enters the space vacated by the target. If the target is pushed to within 5 feet of a creature friendly to Ulder, the target provokes an opportunity attack from that creature.

### REACTIONS

**Guardian Strike.** If an enemy within 5 feet of Ulder attacks a target other than him, Ulder can make a melee attack against that enemy.

This chamber was a place for the most devout of Torm's followers to touch the mind of their god in search of answers and solace. The water in the pool is only 1 foot deep. A benign magical effect within the pool causes the water to flow slowly in a clockwise direction. Though tainted with abyssal power, the water presents no hazard to creatures that enter it, and is not difficult terrain.

The east wall of this area is a roiling field of abyssal energy, marking the portal where Baphomet has used this area's corrupted link to Torm to connect the Abyss to Avernus, by way of Elturel.

**Ulder Ravengard** (see the accompanying stat block) found the Helm of Torm's Sight in area G11 and donned it. The helm is a nonmagical item through which Torm can send visions. Ravengard was beginning to establish a connection with Torm when a disturbance in this room brought him and his guards into combat with demonic creatures sent through the portal by Baphomet. Ravengard was subjected to a psychic attack that drew his mind into a connection with Baphomet. Now the helm can't be removed, and he is locked in a mental battle with the demon lord. Ravengard is stunned until the helm is removed. The helm can't be removed from him while he is alive—at least, not yet.

As the characters observe the struggle taking place within Ravengard, three wild-eyed **minotaurs** come through the portal. They charge into battle with the characters but avoid Ravengard because of the demonic presence they feel within him.

Any character who understands Celestial or Abyssal can recognize some of the words escaping Ravengard's lips. He alternates between the two languages as both Torm and Baphomet speak through him. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check reveals that the psychic struggle taking place within Ravengard's mind is between some divine higher power and a terrible, demonic entity. The power of the portal is now tied into the helm, and to Ravengard. The same check also reveals that no simple spell can break this hold—but that a more involved ritual might free Ravengard and shut down the portal by allowing the power of Torm to sanctify this area once more.

Characters who spoke to Pheria back at the cathedral remember that she was a sage who specialized in exorcism and possession. As such, she might be able to help.

**Treasure.** Searching the bodies of the fallen guards turns up three wet but usable *spell scrolls* (*mass healing* word, *remove curse*, and *tongues*).

In addition to the Helm of Torm's Sight, Ravengard wears a bloodied suit of plate armor emblazoned with the emblem of the Flaming Fist. His shield, which also bears this emblem, is slung over his back. The grand duke's *+1 longsword* is sheathed at his side.

### LEAVING THE CHAPEL

Once the characters defeat the minotaurs, they can carry Ravengard back to the High Hall. If Gideon has not been destroyed, he might question the characters as they leave the chapel or the cemetery. See area G4 for information on roleplaying Gideon.

Hearing Ravengard mumbling in Abyssal, Gideon might need convincing that Ravengard is not some sort

of demon or demonic ally. A good explanation—that Ravengard is actually a great demon hunter, that he has trapped a demon the characters plan to kill, and so forth—alongside a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check prompts Gideon to let them pass.

## ESCAPING THE SIEGE

When the characters arrive back at the High Hall cathedral with Grand Duke Ravengard in tow, they can consult with Pherria to find a way to remove the Helm of Torm's Sight without killing Ravengard. Doing so involves a ritual that the characters can help carry out. If the ritual is successful, the stunned condition ends on Ravengard, and he recalls the visions he experienced that hint at how to return Elturel to Faerûn. These visions trigger some of Lulu's memories. She sees a path forward, but it involves the characters leaving the city to brave the terrible landscape of Avernus.

Characters wishing to leave Elturel must find a way to avoid the River Styx and the host of devils and demons waging war below the city. Only then can the characters make their way to the outpost known as Fort Knucklebone, where the next leg of their adventure starts (as described in chapter 3).

## RETURN TO THE CATHEDRAL

The characters can make their way back to the relative safety of the cathedral in the High Hall. If they helped defeat the devils that attempted to take the cathedral earlier, the trip should be uneventful. Alternatively, to keep the tension high, you can roll for random encounters in the western portion of the city (see "More Encounters in Elturel," page 54). An encounter or two while the characters protect Duke Ravengard could make for memorable play.

## RITUAL OF RETURNING

Upon returning to the High Hall cathedral with Ulder Ravengard, the characters are greeted by Pherria Jynks and the druid Seltern Obranch, who rush to aid them in getting the grand duke to a safe resting place. If the characters failed to save the people in the cathedral, they must find a safe place to rest or forge ahead without assistance. They can search the rest of the city for secure locations, or look for other survivors who might have skills or information that can assist them. Lulu might also regain memories that grant her insight into where to go next.

If the characters failed to ascertain the story behind Ravengard's stunned state, Pherria can assist them in putting things together. Working with the acolyte, the characters (especially those who have proficiency in Arcana and Religion) determine how to move forward. The demonic essence intertwined with Torm's presence by way of the helm can be cast out with the proper ritual.

### RITUAL PREPARATIONS

Pherria outlines what's needed for the ritual:

- The altar of Torm in area H6 must be cleansed and the ritual performed before it. The altar of Torm can

be restored as described in area H6 (see page 61). Pherria suggests that the characters splash the altar with holy water taken from the font in area H16.

- A creature standing within 5 feet of the restored altar must recite a special prayer to Torm. Only this prayer can break evil's hold on Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard's mind.
- A powerful symbol of courage and self-sacrifice is needed to empower the ritual. Pherria suggests the greatsword of the Unknown Hero in area H15. (The characters can use a different object that symbolizes courage and self-sacrifice, at your discretion.)

### PERFORMING THE PRAYER

Pherria warns the characters that she has never attempted this particular ritual before, and that they should be ready to step in and help her—or to fight off any evil forces that might try to disrupt the process.

The ritual prayer takes 30 seconds to recite. Pherria knows the prayer by heart, but another creature can invoke a suitable prayer with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check. While the prayer is being spoken, one character must spend the next 5 rounds gently resting the sword of the Unknown Hero on the Helm of Torm's Sight. While the prayer is being spoken, the one holding the sword must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of their turns or take 10 (3d6) force damage.

Immediately after the character holding the sword makes their first saving throw, the potent magic of the ritual attracts demonic spirits loyal to Baphomet, which emerge from the helm as two **will-o'-wisps** that attempt to disrupt the ritual by attacking the individuals reciting the prayer and holding the sword.

When the character holding the sword makes the last saving throw, the ritual is complete. The will-o'-wisps are banished, and Ravengard comes to his senses.

### HELM OF TORM'S SIGHT

You can simplify the encounter with Ulder Ravengard by allowing the characters to remove the Helm of Torm's Sight from his head, whereupon Ravengard quickly regains his senses. At that point, he can tell them about his visions, which provide the information they need and trigger Lulu's memories. He then lets them plot a path forward in their quest to save Elturel.

Alternatively, Ravengard can fall unconscious when the helm is removed, even as the character who removes it feels an almost overwhelming urge to don it. A character who dons the helm feels at peace and sees visions of troops in gleaming armor marching across a grassy plain with military precision. In the next breath, the character sees massive groups of disfigured monsters loping across a blighted landscape, tearing at screaming enemies. The character wearing the helm can't remove it until they receive a *bless* spell from a worshiper of Torm. (Pherria fits this description.) In the meantime, as the adventuring party travels back to the cathedral with the still-unconscious Ravengard, the character wearing the helm experiences the same visions that Ravengard was having, as described in "The Path Forward" (page 72). Ravengard then awakens after 1 hour, no worse for wear.

## THE PATH FORWARD

With the forces of evil defeated, Grand Duke Ravengard regains his faculties and can relay the story of the spirit journey he undertook while wearing the Helm of Torm's Sight. Torm has shown him a path forward, but the visions were clouded and warped by the demonic essence channeled through the portal. Ravengard shares the following information:

- In his spirit journey, Ravengard saw a bloodied woman in armor—a soldier wearing the colors and crest of Elturel—grasping a longsword fit for an angel. Fresh blood streamed from a nasty cut on the woman's cheek.
- Flying next to the woman was a small, golden elephant with rapidly fluttering wings. (If Lulu is still with the party, Ravengard identifies her as the creature he saw in his vision.)
- As an enormous, loping demon threatened to devour the woman, she plunged the sword into the ground while the winged elephant made a trumpet sound with its trunk. The demon was hurled back as an alabaster palace rose up around the sword. The winged elephant fled and took to the red sky of Avernus, where it watched as a bloody scab grew up from the ground to engulf the palace and the enormous demon.
- The winged elephant fled and wandered in a delirium before coming upon two odd, birdlike humanoids dressed in patchwork armor and standing next to a strange infernal vehicle. The bird creatures were equipped with odd weapons and tools.

As Ravengard recounts the vision, Lulu remembers helping one of the Hellriders plant Zariel's sword in the ground and raise an impenetrable fortress around it. Lulu remembers the Hellrider's name if that memory has already been unlocked (see the Lulu's Memories table on page 51). Both Ravengard and the hollyphant are convinced that the *Sword of Zariel* is the key to saving Elturel. Any character who dons the Helm of Torm's Sight and experiences Torm's vision feels the same way.

Ravengard remembers nothing more of his vision, but Lulu flaps her wings in excitement at the final part of his story as she remembers meeting a pair of "bird folk" named Chukka and Clonk. Based on descriptions furnished by Lulu and Ravengard, the characters can conclude that Chukka and Clonk are kenku. Lulu remembers that the kenku took her to a junkyard called Fort Knucklebone, where they built and repaired infernal vehicles designed to move quickly across the blasted wastelands of Avernus. Lulu doesn't remember who ran the fort or what other creatures she met there.

Lulu quickly flies to the top of the cathedral and looks out over the blasted landscape of Avernus below Elturel. After trumpeting loudly, she returns to report that she can see Fort Knucklebone, and estimates it to be no more than ten miles away.

## NEXT MOVES

Ulder Ravengard insists on remaining in Elturel to help organize survivors to fight off the devils, demons, and undead scouring the city. Though he's willing to die fighting in Elturel's defense, it's up to the characters to help Lulu find the *Sword of Zariel*.

If she's still alive, Reya Mantlemorn decides to stay in Elturel and help Ravengard protect the city, fighting back tears as she bids farewell to the characters.

## LEAVING ELTUREL

Inventive characters have a number of different options to reach the surface of Avernus from Elturel, but none of those options is without risk.

### CLIMBING DOWN

The jagged posts and enormous chains of infernal iron that hold Elturel are the only physical connection between the city and the ground. Each chain link is 30 feet long and 20 feet wide, and is formed of a welded loop of infernal iron that is 5 feet thick. See chapter 5 for more information on breaking these infernal chains.

The chain links are covered in 1-foot-long iron barbs that make them relatively easy to move along. The posts of infernal iron that anchor Elturel to the ground likewise offer numerous handholds for climbing. If the characters navigate the chains and the posts carefully, no ability checks are needed to prevent a fall while climbing across the chains or descending the posts at normal speed. Any character who tries to move or climb more quickly during a turn must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check or fall.

Fiendish magic within the posts and chains makes prolonged contact with them unbearable. Once per minute, any creature in contact with the infernal iron must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw must then succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or slip from the chain or post and fall.

Any character within reach of a falling creature can, with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, grab the falling creature and swing it back onto the chain, provided the falling creature is light enough for the character to carry.

Creatures that fall from Elturel or one of the chains take damage from the fall and land in the Styx (see page 76 for the river's effects). Those that fall off one of the anchoring posts take damage from the fall and land amid clashing devils and demons, where they are brutally killed if they survived the fall.

### FLYING

Lulu has the ability to fly, and one or more characters might also be able to do so. Whether they possess wings or have access to magic such as a *fly* spell or a *potion of flying*, characters who take to the air can easily get clear of Elturel. However, flying creatures might attract the attention of winged devils and demons in the area, at your discretion.

## IMPROVISED EQUIPMENT

Enterprising and creative players might want their characters to find or create equipment to assist them in their descent. Parachutes, gliders, and hot-air balloons are just a few of the off-the-wall ideas players might come up with. If they do, be prepared to improvise. Raw materials for putting together such equipment can be found in the shops and warehouses of Elturel.

Once the characters have collected the necessary resources, you can decide which ability checks might come into play as they create their improvised equipment—and to determine how well that equipment works. Use the following guidelines:

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to figure out the mechanical setup of a piece of equipment.
- A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check spots any flaws in construction.
- A successful DC 10 Dexterity check and an appropriate tool proficiency can guide the delicate construction or adjustment of a piece of improvised gear.

Keep in mind any backgrounds or tool proficiencies the characters might have that could be useful in the creation of improvised equipment.

Unless the characters completely botch their ability checks to the point where creating the intended piece of improvised equipment is clearly impossible, you should allow such equipment to work as intended, even if not perfectly. For added drama, allow the characters to get most of the way to safety, then throw in a complication when they are within 50 feet of the ground. Call for more ability checks like the ones above as the characters attempt to quickly spot and fix problems—or call for Dexterity saving throws if their improvised equipment fails and sends them hurtling toward the ground.

## BATTLE OF ELTUREL

Legions of devils camped on the shores of the River Styx below Elturel are the biggest threats for characters attempting to flee the city. Characters who fly, glide, or balloon over the siege can avoid the main body of the devils' army, but come under attack by forces to the rear. Adjust the boxed text below accordingly as you read it to the players to set the scene:

Armored legions of devils encircle the enormous posts of infernal iron that anchor Elturel to the rocky ground. Squads of demons fighting ten deep in some places hurl themselves into the devils' ranks. Most of those abyssal troops are lowly manes and dretches, who die quickly in vain attempts to drag down devils so that stronger demons behind them can strike killing blows.

A dark river cuts a path across the blasted landscape and flows directly beneath the city. Floating on the river are demonic barges being assailed by squadrons of winged devils under the command of a terrifying pit fiend wearing an eyeless helm and clutching a battle standard.

The demons and the devils are too focused on one another to concern themselves with adventurers who keep their distance. The devils are commanded by Lucille, Zariel's most loyal **pit fiend**. If the characters come to Lucille's attention, the pit fiend sends twelve **spined devils** to dispose of them.

Characters who hurl themselves into the fiendish conflict are as good as dead, but circumstances might necessitate one or more characters moving unseen through the ranks of devils and hordes of demons. Such a plan might include causing a distraction that moves the battle in a different direction, waiting for a demon surge (or creating one) to disturb the stalemate enough to sneak through, or magical disguises that would allow characters to pass themselves off as fiends of a sort. Particularly clever plans should be allowed to automatically succeed. Otherwise, you can call for ability checks to determine how well a plan is executed; use the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to set appropriate DCs for these checks. In the event of total failure, or no plan at all, the characters might end up having to fight their way through the fiendish battle, which is no small task.

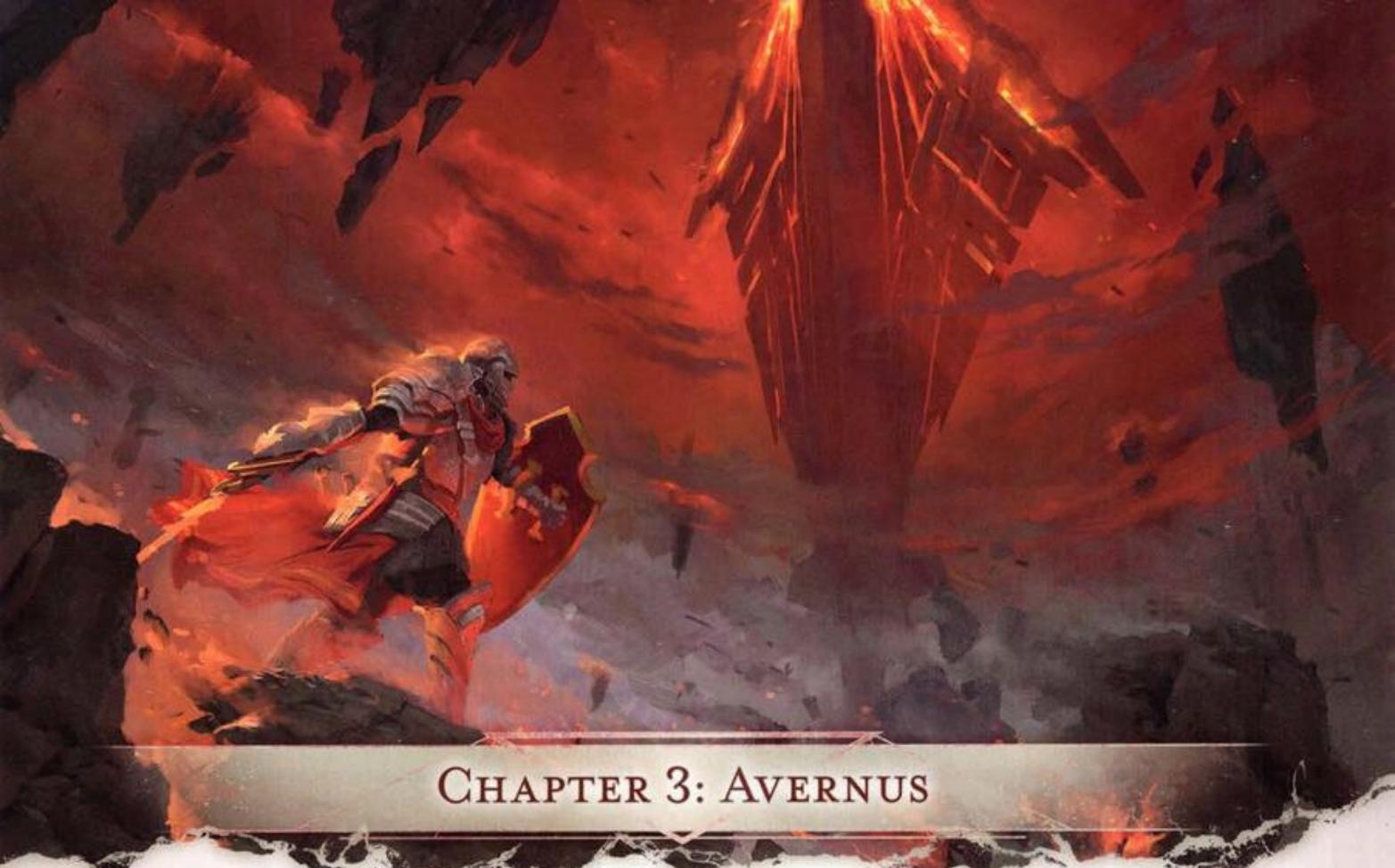
**Treasure.** Lucille wears a *helm of devil command* and carries a *battle standard of infernal power* (see appendix C for descriptions of these magic items), neither of which the pit fiend gives up willingly.

**Development.** The characters encounter Lucille again at the end of the adventure when they return to liberate Elturel (see "Endgame in Elturel," page 154).

## TO FORT KNUCKLEBONE!

Once they escape from Elturel, the characters must begin the ten-mile trek to Fort Knucklebone. If the characters move quickly and carefully, they can make the journey without running into any more trouble. Let them advance to 7th level before beginning chapter 3.





## CHAPTER 3: AVERNUS



GUIDED BY LULU THE HOLLYPHANT AND discoveries made in Elturel, the characters trek across Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells, to recover the *Sword of Zariel* and free Elturel from its chains. Navigating the wastelands of Avernus might seem like a difficult proposition, but thankfully the characters have the map given to them by Sylvira Savikas in chapter 1. For more information on how to use the Avernus poster map, see "Using the Poster Map" (page 79).

Elturel and Fort Knucklebone aren't marked on the poster map, as Elturel was not present when the map was drawn, and the cartographer who drew the map never encountered Fort Knucklebone. You can situate Elturel anywhere along the River Styx, and Fort Knucklebone anywhere within ten miles of Elturel.

### RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter opens with information about Avernus that you need to run the encounters and adventure locations that follow.

The story picks up where it left off in chapter 2, with the characters embarking on a quest to save Elturel while Ulder Ravengard and Reya Mantlemorn stay behind to organize survivors and defend the city. Lulu guides the characters to Fort Knucklebone, home to a pair of kenuk junk scavengers named Chukka and Clonk, whom Lulu thinks can provide assistance. Mad Maggie, the night hag who runs the fort, oversees the

construction and repair of infernal war machines. If the characters agree to make a deal with the night hag, they can acquire one or more of these vehicles. Mad Maggie can also help Lulu unlock some of her forgotten memories.

From Fort Knucklebone, Lulu guides the characters to the place where she thinks the *Sword of Zariel* is hidden: Haruman's Hill. There, they meet Jander Sunstar, a vampire with some information. They also meet Jander's torturer, Haruman—a fallen Hellrider and one of Zariel's infernal generals. Lulu eventually realizes she's made a grave mistake and led the characters to the wrong place. She suggests two possible paths going forward: the Path of Demons and the Path of Devils. Each path features a number of locations across Avernus that the characters must visit in sequence to learn where Zariel's sword is hidden.

At any time during their exploration of Avernus, the characters and Lulu might encounter the Wandering Emporium, a marketplace that wanders Avernus on the backs of giant infernal war machines. The Wandering Emporium provides a good place for the characters to rest and gather supplies that are otherwise hard to find in Avernus.

At the conclusion of this chapter, the characters learn that the *Sword of Zariel* is hidden in a place called the Bleeding Citadel. If she's still alive, Lulu helps them get there. See chapter 4 for details about the Bleeding Citadel.

## WHAT IS AVERNUS?

Avernus serves as the front line of the great clash between the evil forces of chaos and law known as the Blood War. Demons from the Abyss use the River Styx to enter Avernus, where they hurl themselves against infernal legions of devils.

Avernus was not always the blasted, war-torn battlefield it is today. Long ago, it was a plane of lush gardens and bucolic beauty created by Asmodeus to tempt mortals. The intrusion of the River Styx followed by endless waves of slavering demons destroyed this paradise, leaving layer upon layer of bones, ruins, and shattered war machines. Pieces of cities stolen from other planes, tiny remnants of Avernus's lost beauty, evidence of destroyed celestial armies, and tombs of ancient travelers all dot the Averian wasteland.

Avernus is not a place expressly for the punishment of evil souls; instead, it represents a "next level" for evil souls after the end of their wicked lives as mortals. The Nine Hells allows souls to exist in a concentrated form, where they can work through their spiritual bondage to express their dark desires such as cruelty, covetousness,

the need to control, the craving for power, and uncontrolled greed. Hell offers an eternity of fulfillment from the most insignificant desires to the seven deadly sins. Every shred of evil is used in the Nine Hells, and each layer specializes in some way to accommodate and exploit the vices and weaknesses of mortals. The devils of Avernus seek to exploit pride and wrath, promising the aggrieved, enraged, and egotistical the power to fulfill their darkest obsessions. Such fulfillment, however, comes at a price.

Anyone entering Avernus finds a battlefield unlike anywhere else in existence. Evidence of past carnage, such as the ruins of enormous war machines and fields of bleached bones, stretches across the horizon. Through it all, the River Styx winds its way across the plane as knots of demons and devils skirmish along its fetid banks.

Most devils in Avernus serve Zariel, though other Lords of the Nine send forces here to help repel demonic invaders. Devils who are not part of Zariel's legions serve as emissaries from the other layers or as spies for archdevils seeking signs of weakness that they can exploit to further their dreams of power.

### FORT KNUCKLEBONE

*For characters of level 7*

The adventurers question Chukka and Clonk, a pair of kenku junk scavengers. A night hag named Mad Maggie runs this outpost, overseeing the construction and repair of infernal war machines.

### HARUMAN'S HILL

*For characters of level 7*

After Mad Maggie helps restore some of Lulu's memories, the hollyphant leads the adventurers to where she thinks the Bleeding Citadel is, but ends up at Haruman's Hill, a place of great evil.

### THE WANDERING EMPORIUM

*For characters of levels 7 and higher*

This traveling market visits all corners of Avernus. Adventurers who happen upon the Wandering Emporium can rest, trade goods, and dine at a restaurant run by a rakshasa named Mahadi.

### HELLWASP NEST

*For characters of level 7*

After a hellwasp attack atop Haruman's Hill, the adventurers must rescue Lulu when she's abducted and taken to a nearby hellwasp nest.

### PATH OF DEMONS

*For characters of levels 8–10*

If the adventurers choose this path to finding the *Sword of Zariel*, a series of encounters leads them to the demon lord Kostchitche and a showdown with Olanthus, a fallen Hellrider.

### PATH OF DEVILS

*For characters of levels 8–10*

If the adventurers choose this path to finding the *Sword of Zariel*, a series of encounters leads them to Bel, the pit fiend who ruled Avernus before Zariel unseated him. Bel helps them for a price.

DIAGRAM 3.1: CHAPTER 3 FLOWCHART

## VISITORS TO AVERNUS

Extraplanar travelers come to Avernus from time to time. Such visitors include war profiteers looking to get rich trading weapons and armor, mad wizards who want to test their latest spells, clerics on missions from their gods, treasure hunters searching for lost artifacts, grim-faced merchants who deal in slaves, smugglers of *soul coins*, and scholars seeking firsthand knowledge of the machinations of the diabolical realms. Adventurers come here to negotiate with powerful fiends, meddle in the Blood War, and free poor souls trapped in the Nine Hells.

## ZARIEL'S WAR

By bringing Elturel to Avernus and potentially gaining a choke hold on Baldur's Gate, Zariel aims to capture as many evil mortals as she can, turn them into devils, and swell the ranks of her battle-depleted legions. Through Thavius Kreeg, Zariel found a way to exploit the gullible nature of mortals by appealing to their need to follow a leader who proclaims spiritual power. Because of Kreeg, the residents of Elturel are bound by the Creed Resolute to fight and die for Zariel in her endless war.

## ZARIEL'S STRUGGLE

In some ways, Zariel is a jewel in Asmodeus's crown—a former angel, now an archdevil, in his infernal service. Given her origin, Zariel has more than the normal share of devils plotting to overthrow her, the first among them being the pit fiend Bel, whom she displaced. By Asmodeus's decree, Bel now serves Zariel as an advisor, though the two can barely stand to be in each other's presence.

Despite the conflict within the diabolical ranks, Zariel runs a tight ship and instills fear in her legions. Retribution against those who attempt to betray her is swift and terrible.

## WAR FOR SOULS

Souls are the most prized commodities in the Nine Hells. The Blood War taxes Zariel's armies, so she must ensure a fresh supply of souls as replacements. To this end, Zariel looks for evildoers in the mortal realms who can deliver more souls to her.

### INFERNAL ORDER OF BATTLE

Whereas demons attack in disorganized mobs, relying on shock and overwhelming numbers to carry the day, devils organize into a basic unit called a legion. Each legion contains one thousand devils organized as follows:

- 1 legion = 10 cohorts, commanded by a legate
- 1 cohort = 10 lances, commanded by a signifier
- 1 lance = 10 devils, commanded by an optio

Ranks of miserable lemures and nupperibos compose the base of dred legions, while bearded devils and merregons make up the bulk of regular legions. Each legion sports a unique name, usually denoting its purpose and numerical designation. Examples include the following:

- 5th Infantry Legion, "Infernal Absolution"
- 13th Cavalry Legion, "Bel's Fury"
- 47th Dred Legion, "Piteous Fodder"

Because devils can't simply walk out of Avernus and step onto the Material Plane, they must rely on minions such as cultists and evil wizards, who can contact them and do their bidding in exchange for wealth and power. A select group of devils and mortal followers who seek to cause strife and destabilize harmonious communities serve as Zariel's chief corruptors. By funding evil groups, making and distributing weapons, and causing random acts of violence in the name of some enemy to ignite the spark of war, devils swell the capacity for mortals to commit acts of evil, corrupting souls by the thousands and thus ensuring the legions of devils are full of diabolic soldiers for the Blood War.

## YOKE OF EVIL

Under constant pressure from both the Abyss and her infernal peers, Zariel and her high-ranking vassals work to keep her armies constantly in the fight. Zariel's wrath and pride have limits, however, and this offers her an opportunity for redemption. Zariel has, in a twisted way, achieved her dream as an angel—to fight face-to-face against the demon hordes in the Blood War. But the burden is a heavy one, and if given the chance, Zariel could be convinced to set it aside, release Elturel, and return to the light with a completely transformed perspective.

## FEATURES OF AVERNUS

The hellscape of Avernus sits under hideous clouds that obscure the vault of the sky, from which the occasional meteor streaks before crashing into the ground. Ambient light continually swells up from just below the horizon as though lit by nine setting suns, yet no actual celestial bodies fill the sky—no sun, moons, or stars. This constant twilight makes it difficult for the denizens of Avernus to track the passage of time.

The atmosphere reeks of brimstone and burning tar, and hot gusts of wind shriek across the hellscape to scour the land below. Sometimes these winds swirl into immense sandstorms, which can strip flesh from bone and plunge everything into darkness.

Biting flies, hellwasps, and blood-sucking stirges patrol the air, hunting for any source of blood to feed on. Swarms of them can grow so large that they blacken the sky and deafen the ears with the sound of their wings. On the ground, wandering bands of nupperibos—blind, bloated castaways of the damned—move in the thousands like living lakes of groaning flesh in their agonizing search for food. Bone fields, quicksand, bubbling tar pits, lakes of lava, canyons of wailing souls, and salt flats made from the tears of the damned all await those who wander the hellscape.

## RIVER STYX

The River Styx courses through the Lower Planes, frustrating every attempt to map it or predict its course. Getting lost while sailing the Styx isn't the only danger the river presents. Simply tasting or touching its waters can shatter a creature's intellect and personality, as well as strip away its memories. Certain fiends are immune to the river's effects, but most creatures have no defense against it.

Unless immune to the river's effects, a creature that drinks from the Styx or enters the river is targeted by a *feeblemind* spell (save DC 20). A creature must repeat the saving throw whenever it starts its turn in the river, until it fails the save. A feebled-minded creature can drink from the Styx and swim in its waters without suffering any additional deleterious effects.

If a creature fails its saving throw and remains under the spell's effect for 30 consecutive days, the effect becomes permanent (no save) and the creature loses all its memories, becoming a near-mindless shell of its former self. At that point, nothing short of a *wish* spell or divine intervention can undo the effect.

Water taken from the River Styx loses its potency after 24 hours, becoming a harmless, foul-tasting liquid. However, arcanaloths, night hags, and other fell creatures might know rituals that can prolong the water's potency, at your discretion.

## ALTERATIONS TO MAGIC

Avernus is the entrance to the Nine Hells, a battlefield drenched in eldritch energy. The magic of the Weave works differently here, manifesting in unusual ways.

### COSMETIC SPELL MODIFICATIONS

At your discretion, a spell can be modified cosmetically to enhance the corrupting nature of Avernus. Here are some examples:

*Bigby's Hand*. The conjured hand is a fiendish claw.

*Find Familiar*. The familiar is an **imp**.

*Find Steed*. The steed is a **nightmare**.

*Find the Path*. An **imp** appears and begrudgingly guides the caster to the desired location while complaining the whole time, disappearing when the destination is reached or the spell ends.

*Fog Cloud*. Moaning faces appear and fade in the yellow fog that smells like sulfur.

*Hellish Rebuke*. The cackling of imps accompanies the fire unleashed by this spell.

*Mage Hand*. The summoned hand is shaped like a claw.

*Rary's Telepathic Bond*. Characters linked together by the spell can hear vague, infernal whispering in the background, but can't make out what's being said.

## TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATIONS

Archdevils can eavesdrop on communication spells such as *message* and *sending* sent from or within the Nine Hells. Because of this, those engaging in telepathic communication always have the feeling that they are being listened in on or watched by some infernal presence, even if an archdevil isn't eavesdropping on their communication.

Telepathic communications via magic items such as *sending stones* or a *helm of telepathy* can be overheard by an archdevil as well. Communicating with a *serpentine owl*, an *orb of dragonkind*, or a sentient weapon also runs the risk of being overheard in Avernus. *Rings of mind shielding* work the same in Avernus as they do on any other plane and are highly valuable items in the Nine Hells, coveted by all fiends to avoid the prying minds of their masters.



## DEMON ICHOR

Demon ichor is what remains behind after a demon dies. It's a reduction of demonic blood, viscera, and bodily fluids with the consistency and odor of bile.

Enough demons die in Avernus that their ichor forms pools and small lakes. Although the ichor is harmless on most planes of existence, it can warp creatures on the Lower Planes. Devils and other creatures have found ways to use demon ichor in rituals and to improve the performance of infernal war machines (as described in appendix B).

When a creature comes in direct contact with demon ichor in Avernus, it must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. Fiends, oozes, plants, and undead automatically succeed on the saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is magically warped by the ichor, as determined by rolling on the Flesh Warping table. A spell that removes a curse ends all ichor-related warping effects on a creature.

### ICHOR-COATED WEAPONS

Demon ichor is sticky enough to adhere to most weapons. A creature in Avernus that takes damage from a weapon coated with demon ichor suffers a flesh-warping transformation if it fails its saving throw (as described above). After hitting its target, the weapon is no longer coated with demon ichor.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Wisdom (Survival) checks to forage in Avernus are made at disadvantage. Water exists, but it tastes foul and is hard to find. Food can likewise be scrounged, but the flora and fauna taste revolting no matter the manner of preparation. Even rations brought to Avernus taste bitter and ashen.

## RESTS IN AVERNUS

There are no "days" or "nights" in Avernus, but time should still be tracked in hour increments. Thus, the characters can take long and short rests as they do normally.

## OPTIONAL RULES

Here are some optional rules that you can use to reinforce the flavor of adventuring in Avernus.

### COMMERCE

When it comes to the souls of mortals, the Nine Hells is always open for business. In Avernus, the business is war, making sure the front lines of the Blood War are continuously replenished with fresh troops, weapons, armor, and war machines. The main drivers behind this infernal commerce are treasure and *soul coins*.

Treasure is only valuable to devils because of its efficacy in tempting and twisting mortals (humans in particular) toward lives of corruption, ultimately leading them to forfeit their souls. Because gold has been used for millennia in the Nine Hells, adventurers can find gold coins from civilizations long lost to history.

Silver is harmful to devils. Nevertheless, devils trade silver to those wishing to eliminate rivals in their path.

## FLESH WARPING

### d100 Effect

01–05	The color of the target's hair, eyes, and skin becomes blue, red, yellow, or patterned.
06–10	The target's eyes push out of its head on the end of stalks.
11–15	The target's hands grow claws, which can be used as daggers.
16–20	One of the target's legs grows longer than the other, reducing its walking speed by 10 feet.
21–25	The target's eyes become beacons, filling a 15-foot cone with dim light when they are open.
26–30	A pair of wings, either feathered or leathery, sprout from the target's back, granting it a flying speed of 30 feet.
31–35	The target's ears tear free from its head and scurry away; the target is deafened.
36–40	Two of the target's teeth turn into tusks.
41–45	The target's skin becomes scabby, granting it a +1 bonus to AC but reducing its Charisma by 2 (to a minimum of 1).
46–50	The target's arms and legs switch places, preventing the target from moving unless it crawls.
51–55	The target's arms become tentacles with fingers on the ends, increasing its reach by 5 feet.
56–60	The target's legs grow incredibly long and springy, increasing its walking speed by 10 feet.
61–65	The target grows a whiplike tail, which it can use as a whip.
66–70	The target's eyes turn black, and it gains darkvision out to a range of 120 feet.
71–75	The target swells, tripling its weight.
76–80	The target becomes thin and skeletal, halving its weight.
81–85	The target's head doubles in size.
86–90	The target's ears become wings, giving it a flying speed of 5 feet.
91–95	The target's body becomes unusually brittle, causing the target to gain vulnerability to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
96–00	The target grows another head, causing it to have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, or stunned.

## BARGAIN-BASEMENT DEATH SAVES

Whenever a character fails a death save in the Nine Hells, an archdevil may contact that character telepathically and offer its assistance. The character must agree to perform a task for the archdevil afterward. The nature of the task is not revealed until the character agrees to these terms.

A character who agrees to the archdevil's terms automatically rolls a 20 on their next death save. At the same time, the character falls under the effect of a *geas* spell (no saving throw allowed). If this spell ends prematurely, the character immediately drops to 0 hit points and is dying. The task that the character must complete



MAP 3.1: AVERNUS

is usually simple and straightforward, and always for the benefit of the archdevil who struck the deal. Sample tasks include delivering a *soul coin* to one of the archdevil's minions, refusing to help someone the character is fated to meet in the future, or destroying something the archdevil abhors (such as a holy symbol).

#### EXHAUSTION

Avernus's combination of oppressive heat and supernatural malevolence weighs on the bodies and souls of those who are not evil. A non-evil creature treats normal travel through Avernus as a forced march and must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour of travel. The DC is  $10 + 1$  for each hour of travel. On a failed saving throw, a creature suffers one level of exhaustion.

#### PERVASIVE EVIL

Evil pervades the Nine Hells, and visitors to this plane feel its influence. At the end of each long rest taken on this plane, a visitor that isn't evil must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's alignment changes to lawful evil. The change becomes permanent if the creature doesn't leave the plane within 1d4 days. Otherwise, the creature's alignment reverts to normal after one day spent on a plane other than the Nine Hells. Casting the *dispel evil and good* spell on the creature also restores its original alignment.

## USING THE POSTER MAP

The poster map depicts a region of Avernus, a wasteland of dizzying proportions that has been warped by eons of demonic invasion. Travelers face a hellscape that disorients the senses and defies attempts to map it accurately.

Standard cartographic methods are useless, since distances in Avernus are impossible to gauge and locations sometimes shift supernaturally. As such, the map shows pictorial impressions of locations that only hint at their distances from one another. It is by no means something that can, or should, be taken literally.

No scale is marked on the map, and the placement of locations is based on the memories of an intrepid yet

#### MAPPING AVERNUS

Celestials and demon lords alike wish for a working map of Avernus, but attempts to map the layer have consistently met with failure.

If a character attempts to map Avernus, madness begins to set in. After each mapping session, the character must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the character contracts a random form of madness determined by rolling on the Short-Term Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If the character fails this saving throw a second time, roll on the Long-Term Madness table instead. If the character fails a third time, roll on the Indefinite Madness table.

insane cartographer. Distances and travel times between locations cannot be determined by studying the map and can change with each journey, at your discretion. Your players should never feel like they understand Avernus geographically, providing an unsettled and disorienting feeling as they roam the hellscape.

The poster map is riddled with strange imagery and unique iconography. These are the cartographer's artistic impressions of Avernus, and their meanings, for the most part, remain a mystery. While exploring Avernus, the characters discover a peculiar property of the map: it talks! Whenever they arrive at one of the locations described in this chapter, the voice of the cartographer emanates from the map to reveal a clue. The map speaks only to utter its clues, so the characters can't query it or engage it in conversation. The cartographer's mad ramblings precede the description of each adventure location marked on the map. If queried about a location not drawn on the map, the cartographer mumbles incoherently, screams madly, or whimpering in despair.

## CHARTING A COURSE

Using the map to chart a course from one location to another is unreliable at best. It helps if the characters have visited a destination before, but even that is no guarantee they'll end up where they intended.

When charting a course through Avernus, ask the player whose character is overseeing navigation to roll two dice:

- Roll 2d4 if the characters are traveling to an unvisited destination marked on their map.
- Roll 2d8 if the characters are returning to a destination they've visited previously.
- Roll 2d10 if a native guide is leading the characters to their destination.

If the rolls of both dice don't match, the characters arrive at their destination as intended. If the dice match, they wind up somewhere else: pick one of the other locations.

### AREAS OF FORT KNUCKLEBONE

The main feature of the fort is the hand-shaped hill, between the fingers of which are caves where Mad Maggie oversees repairs to several infernal war machines (see appendix B for infernal war machine rules and stat blocks). Around this hill is a ring of debris that serves as a crude rampart. This barrier is 15 feet thick, and its height averages 20 feet.

Built into the rampart is a ramshackle gatehouse (see "Entering the Fort," page 81). One of the redcaps that guards the gatehouse stands next to an iron gong that can be struck to warn of impending attack. A 15-foot high, 20-foot-wide, entryway passes through the gatehouse. A wall of junk on rollers can be pushed in front of the entryway to seal it in case of attack.

Within the rampart, surrounding the hill, are hovels made of junk and scrap metal. These quarters are mostly empty except for a few cots, since only the kenku require food, drink, and sleep. They are used when members of Mad Maggie's gang need privacy. Amid the hovels are the plundered wrecks of several infernal war machines that have been picked clean for parts.

## FORT KNUCKLEBONE

After leaving Elturel, the adventurers head to Fort Knucklebone, a junkyard stronghold on the edge of a desolate expanse of Avernus ravaged by rival gangs of scavengers. Fort Knucklebone doesn't appear on the poster map of Avernus, as the map's cartographer never found or visited this location.

Fort Knucklebone provides shelter to a gang of wasteland marauders called the Knucklebones, serving as a garage where they build and repair infernal war machines. The Knucklebones answer to Mad Maggie, a night hag warlord who has an agreement with Zariel: the archduke of Avernus leaves Fort Knucklebone alone as long as Mad Maggie keeps the other warlords in the area in check.

Lulu believes that the kenku from the visions reside in the fort and may be able to help, which is partially true. They can bring Lulu and the characters to Mad Maggie, who can in turn provide them with assistance.

### ARRIVAL AT THE FORT

When the characters get within sight of Fort Knucklebone, describe the location as follows:

A fortified compound sits atop a low plateau that rises out of a crater-pocked landscape. At the center of the compound is a hill of rust-colored stone that resembles a hand clawing out of the ground, with gaps between the fingers. A jagged wall made of rock, bones, and metal debris surrounds this hand-shaped hill. Other highlights visible from this distance include a gatehouse, atop which stands a half-dozen small figures on watch.

When the characters are ready to approach the fortress, see "Entering the Fort" below. First, however, review the following summary of how to run this scene to maximum effect.

### RUNNING THE FORT

In this part of the adventure, the characters must carefully tread the social milieu of a night hag and her cadre of crazed followers.

This scene revolves around a factor essential in any negotiation: leverage. Mad Maggie possesses several things the characters could use, including infernal war machines, provisions, temporary shelter, and information. The characters have something Mad Maggie desires greatly: Lulu's memories.

One way to run a complex social encounter like this one is to imagine a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the worst possible outcome and 10 the best. The characters start at 5, and as they progress through the scene, they may move up or down the scale. Positive and helpful interactions move them up the scale, and antagonistic or unfriendly exchanges lose them points, as you determine. Where they end determines the consequences of the encounter. For example, if the characters end at a 10 on the scale, they get everything they want from Mad Maggie: one or more vehicles to



expedite travel across Avernus, all the information they need, monetary or magical gifts, and provisions. If they end at a 1 on the scale, they anger Mad Maggie and get nothing. They might even have to fight their way out of Fort Knucklebone. As long as the characters still have a path forward, a spectacular failure can be just as memorable as success.

The following sections detail the important NPCs and creatures within Fort Knucklebone. Included in these descriptions are the personalities and goals of the NPCs, as well as what they have to offer the characters. These descriptions also allow you, as the DM, to determine how the characters can gain leverage in the negotiations and get what they want or need.

Use the 1-to-10 scale as a barometer for rating the overall success of the characters in dealing with the strange, intriguing, and dangerous world of Mad Maggie and the Knucklebones. Let the characters' decisions, insights, knowledge, roleplaying, successes, and failures move the slider up or down the scale as you see fit.

## ENTERING THE FORT

The gatehouse serves as the entrance to Fort Knucklebone. Six **redcaps** (see page 240 for their stat block) stand guard atop it. One redcap yells down at the characters as they approach, asking for the password. After a few moments, a different redcap says, "We don't have a password!" All the redcaps fall over in peals of mirth.

The redcaps on guard duty give the characters a difficult time, asking them to do ridiculous things to gain entrance. After a few minutes, when the characters get fed up with the nonsense, the redcaps tell them to quit standing around like idiots and come inside.

### SEEING THE KENKU

When the characters enter, they see the following scene within the fortress:

The area enclosed by the rampart is littered with trash and mechanical parts, some put together in a way that resembles a vehicle. Ramshackle structures, built from the same junk as the outer wall, provide shelter.

A platoon of small fey creatures mills about, all looking like feral gnomes. Several them sport tall red caps, some of which drip with vile ichor.

A pair of kenku examine one of the strange vehicles, chattering to each other in high-pitched squawks. These kenku carry an assortment of strange tools. When they see you, they turn and stare in wonder.

The kenku Chukka and Clonk instantly recognize Lulu, since they've met her previously. Before the characters can act, Clonk squawks at them:

One of the kenku waves in your direction as if telling you to remain where you are. "What a deal! Patience is a virtue! Can't keep the boss waiting!" He runs off into one of the trash structures.

Moments later he returns, leading a tall creature wearing a long, tattered shift covered in mud, blood, mold, and worse. The hag's eyes seem to move independently of each other as she approaches, her straggly brown hair hanging in front of them. Resting on each shoulder are red-eyed ravens that scrutinize your group. Behind her, a hulking creature built of disparate fiendish parts trudges, moaning and hopping as it walks.

Then both of the hag's eyes focus keenly on your group, and on Lulu specifically. "My goodness!" the hag croaks, spittle dribbling from her mouth. "Where did you find such a treasure?"

The characters can explain their predicament, and Mad Maggie can offer to unlock Lulu's memories, joyfully telling the characters about Lulu's possible relationship to Zariel. Before she does that, however, Mad Maggie tells the characters she needs to gather supplies for the ritual of memory unlocking. This gives the characters a chance to interact with the other members of Mad Maggie's gang and maybe earn some good will with them as mentioned under their individual descriptions below.

MAD MAGGIE  
AND MICKEY



## MAD MAGGIE

While Zariel's attention is focused on the Blood War, power-hungry warlords of the Avernian wastes cobble together heavily armed gangs and lead packs of infernal war machines in brutal combat, carving out vicious fiefdoms for themselves. Mad Maggie is one such warlord.

Mad Maggie is a **night hag** with the demeanor of a kindly grandmother, but her warm smile masks a cruel cunning. In addition to her *heartstone*, the hag carries a black *soul bag* (see the "Night Hag" entry in the *Monster Manual* for more information on this magic items. The bag contains nine *soul coins* (see page 94), which Mad Maggie uses to power her infernal war machines.

Years ago, a thirst to experience the ultimate misery brought the night hag to the first layer of the Nine Hells. Followed to Avernus by scores of bloodthirsty redcaps, Maggie found pieces of a beautiful tapestry that chronicled the fall of Zariel. It recounted the angel's descent into Avernus, her betrayal at the hands of the Hellriders, and her submission to Asmodeus, which led to her becoming an archdevil worthy to rule Avernus. Mad Maggie is obsessed with Zariel's cataclysmic saga and scours the wastelands of Avernus for more such relics. In the crucible of the Avernian wastelands, Mad Maggie has risen to become a respected warlord.

### MAGGIE'S GOALS

Driven by her lust for misery and her delight in the corruption of the valiant, Mad Maggie seeks to collect more artifacts tied to Zariel's fall from grace. When she becomes aware of Lulu's relationship to Zariel, the night hag tries to dig up Lulu's lost memories, believing they might hold the most exquisite emotional records of Zariel's descent. As the characters assist Maggie in this endeavor, they gain favor with—and leverage over—the hag.

### MAGGIE'S OFFERS

Maggie has the means to unlock the memories Lulu struggles to remember. Once the memories are retrieved, the characters learn the destination of the next step of their journey.

Maggie also can furnish the characters with one or more infernal war machines, which would make their trip across the wastelands more manageable. Additionally, if the characters have no means of creating provisions, Maggie can supply them with food and water as well. Maggie could also offer information about the dangers the characters might face in the wasteland, including other gangs, if the characters gain enough leverage and delight Maggie with their offerings.

## THE KNUCKLEBONES GANG

Maggie's band consists of Chukka, Clonk, a fiendish flesh golem named Mickey, a pair of conniving imps, a flameskull, and a host of murderous fey creatures.

CHUKKA AND CLONK



### CHUKKA AND CLONK

These two **kenku** are loyal, longtime associates of Mad Maggie's. She refers to them as the Magpies. Clonk, the bigger of the two kenku, is the strong, silent type who sometimes drives Mad Maggie's infernal war machine. Chukka is animated, irritable, and takes care of repairs around the fort.

Chukka and Clonk lost their weapons and replaced them with the following weapons salvaged from infernal battlefields:

- Chukka wields a silvered pike (+2 to hit) that has a reach of 10 feet and deals 5 (1d10) piercing damage on a hit.
- Clonk wields a *hellfire warhammer* (+2 to hit) that deals 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage on a hit, or 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage when used with two hands. For more information on *hellfire weapons*, see page 223.

**Chukka and Clonk's Goal.** The kenku live to build, fix, and drive infernal machines. At some point during their visit, the characters see the kenku angrily hammering on a nonfunctional Demon Grinder (see page 219 for the vehicle's stat block). It isn't working, and they can't figure out why. They would be very grateful to anyone who could help them discern the problem.

**Helping the Kenku.** One of the parts in the Demon Grinder—a spiky gear—is disrupting the flow of infernal energy through the vehicle. The gear, comprised of spikes from a hezrou demon, surges with demonic energy to cause the malfunction. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) by a character who spends at least 10 minutes examining the vehicle reveals which part is to blame.

Chukka and Clonk appreciate the help in identifying the problem. Characters can further assist by finding a way to remove the demonic essence from the gear. Spells such as *dispel magic* or *protection from evil or good*, or other methods that the characters might imagine, could make the part usable. If the characters help the pair get the infernal machine running, the kenku express their pleasure to Mad Maggie, who becomes even more likely to help the characters in their quest.

### MICKEY THE FLESH GOLEM

Shortly after arriving in Avernus, Mad Maggie created Mickey, a **fiendish flesh golem** (see page 236 for its stat block) comprised of fiendish body parts scavenged from the battlefields of Avernus. Mickey is a sweet, dumb brute who follows Mad Maggie's orders.

**Mickey's Goal.** Unknown to anyone else at Fort Knucklebone, Mickey has a large piece of a destroyed bone devil lodged in his foot, which makes walking difficult for the brute. Unable to speak, he moans as he walks and does a bit of a hopping dance. The madcaps and redcaps think this is wonderful, and they occasionally accompany him in a vile song and dance. Characters who witness this and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check realize Mickey's plight. They can then attempt to remove the bone fragment without permanently inhibiting Mickey's stride. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check allows for the successful removal of the bone. After that, Mickey can walk without moaning or hopping, making Mad Maggie more amenable to assisting the characters. The redcaps and madcaps, however, become angry that they can no longer "do the Mickey."

## PINS AND NEEDLES

Mad Maggie cut a deal with a pit fiend to secure the services of two shrewd but lazy **imps** named Pins and Needles. Mad Maggie treats them with such kindness that the imps can't imagine wanting to work for anyone else. In Mad Maggie's presence, the imps usually assume the forms of ravens that nest in her hair or perch on her shoulders.

When not loitering around Fort Knucklebone, Pins and Needles keep tabs on the Blood War and spy on Mad Maggie's rivals. Unlike most devils, Pins and Needles aren't gunning for promotions. They shun the infernal hierarchy and crinkle their noses in disgust when anyone tries to foist more responsibility onto them.

**The Imps' Goals.** As much as they love their lives at Fort Knucklebone, the imps have a problem. They foolishly played a prank on one of the madcaps, Wazzik. Now they fear that Wazzik and a small group of his irrational friends are plotting revenge. The imps don't want to tell Maggie because she warned them not to pick on the madcaps, so they see the characters as a potential solution to their situation.

**Helping the Imps.** As events play out in Fort Knucklebone, the characters notice that Pins and Needles lurk about at a distance, whispering to each other and staring at the characters. If confronted, the imps make a big deal of revealing a secret. Of course they lie, telling the characters that a madcap named Wazzik is planning to kill Lulu and urging them to take care of this threat first.

A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the imps are lying. If called on the lie, the imps reveal the truth about why they want Wazzik dead. They tell the characters exactly when and where to find Wazzik alone, and they promise to put in a good word with Maggie if the characters kill the madcap.

The imps' information is sound, and the characters can take care of the problem quickly and quietly. However, if anyone witnesses the murder, the characters might have to deal with consequences and complications. Fortunately for the characters, Maggie cares little for the madcaps and ignores the death, although it might lower the characters in her esteem a bit when it comes time to reward them.

## BARNABAS THE FLAMESKULL

Barnabas, once a powerful wizard, had his crypt defiled by an evil nemesis who stole his skull and turned it into a **flameskull**. Mad Maggie struck a bargain with this rival wizard and took Barnabas as payment. Now he's a part of her gang.

Barnabas is forgetful and a bit pompous, but every now and then he has amazing ideas and remembers remarkably useful things from his arcane past.

**Barnabas's Goal.** The redcaps like to hurl things at Barnabas, and after getting hit in the jaw with a loose gear, Barnabas lost one of his teeth. He saw a redcap, Grubba, grab it and run off. Barnabas is too embarrassed to tell Mad Maggie about it, though she suspects something is amiss because Barnabas has started whistling when he speaks.

He quietly asks the characters to help him find his missing tooth. He points out Grubba the redcap but admits that all the little sly creatures look similar to him.

**Helping Barnabas.** Characters can question the redcaps, starting with Grubba, to find out who has the tooth. Each time they question a redcap, there is a 50 percent chance that the redcap gets angry and attacks the characters, backed up by 1d4 additional redcaps.

The redcaps believe the tooth is a lucky charm, so they frequently pass it from one to the next to keep Barnabas from finding it. Because of this constant transfer of the tooth, there's little hope of the characters finding it by confronting one redcap at a time. However, a character who quietly observes the redcaps for 10 minutes can attempt a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character sees one redcap passing a bloody pouch to another redcap, who tucks it in a pocket. This pouch contains Barnabas's tooth.

A character who moves within reach of the redcap can attempt to pick its pocket and obtain the pouch without its knowledge, doing so with a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

No redcap relinquishes the pouch willingly, though it can be magically charmed into doing so. The redcap attacks any character who tries to take it by force, and twelve other redcaps join the fight on the next round. Mad Maggie won't break up such a fight unless the characters have done something nice for her, although if the dreamscape ritual has not taken place yet, she won't allow the redcaps to kill a character.

## REDCAPS AND MADCAPS

Redcaps are murderous fey creatures that soak their caps in fresh blood. Madcaps are redcaps that drench their caps in demon ichor instead. Mad Maggie currently commands sixty redcaps and thirty madcaps, although a third of them operate outside the fort, patrolling the areas of the wasteland controlled by Mad Maggie. As battles deplete this force, Mad Maggie has new redcaps delivered to her from the Feywild, courtesy of powerful fey with whom she has struck bargains. For this reason, the night hag has no concern for the well-being of her redcap and madcap minions. See appendix D for more information about redcaps and madcaps.

**Redcap and Madcap Goals.** These creatures don't have many goals, being mad fey creatures that revel in chaos and slaughter. Their interactions with the characters should reflect that. One might offer a character a severed finger as a token of friendship, then accuse the character of stealing it afterward. Only their love and fear of Mad Maggie keeps the creatures under a loose sort of control.

Mad Maggie understands the nature of these beings and she does not hold it against the characters if they kill them, especially when acting in self-defense.

## MAD MAGGIE'S INFERNAL WAR MACHINES

Fort Knucklebone contains the hulls of infernal war machines in varying states of disrepair and cannibalization. Of the lot, two appear relatively intact. The smaller one is a Devil's Ride, the bigger one a Tormentor (see page 94 for both vehicles' stat blocks). The wheels of



MADCAP

the Devil's Ride are missing. The Tormentor is missing its harpoon flinger, and its armor plating is corroded as though eaten by acid, reducing the vehicle's AC to 15.

If the characters earn enough gratitude from Mad Maggie, one or both of these war machines might be gifted to them. Chukka and Clonk can attach wheels to the Devil's Ride and a weapon to the Tormentor, if Mad Maggie instructs them to. Replacing the armor on the Tormentor can be done as well, but only after efforts are made to salvage scrap metal from the battlefields of Avernus. Any such salvage operation is likely to attract unwanted attention from other warlords (see page 90).

In addition to the war machines described above, Mad Maggie has several infernal war machines in drivable condition that are undergoing regular maintenance and upgrades in her garage under the hill. These vehicles are not for sale or trade, though brazen adventurers might try stealing them. These vehicles include two Devil's Rides, three Tormentors, the aforementioned Demon Grinder (which Chukka and Clonk have been trying to repair), and a Scavenger that Mad Maggie uses for salvage operations.

## LULU'S DREAM QUEST

Before they can retrieve the *Sword of Zariel*, the characters must learn the location of the Bleeding Citadel, which is trapped in Lulu's hidden memories. When Mad Maggie becomes aware of the characters' interest in accessing these hidden memories, she offers to perform a ritual that creates a dreamscape in which the hollyphant's memories can be perceived. For Mad Maggie, the ritual is its own reward, as the hag longs to know everything Lulu knows about the fall of Zariel.

After making some preparations, Mad Maggie creates a fiendish circle on the ground, and arranges several comfortable black cushions at the center. She orders Lulu to rest on the cushions, which the hollyphant does with a bit of trepidation. Maggie then places two skulls on the circle, noting that she's sure her sisters won't care if she picks their brains about this problem.

The hag instructs Lulu and the characters to take up places within the circle. Mad Maggie tells the characters to close their eyes and keep them closed, that the ritual should last about ten minutes, and that during the ritual all within the circle will be joined by a telepathic bond. If anyone leaves the circle, the ritual is interrupted and she'll be forced to start over. An incomplete ritual yields no insight into Lulu's memories.

As the hag initiates the ritual, the characters sense the telepathic bond forming between themselves, the hag, and Lulu. Their eyes still closed, the characters sense a brilliant flash of light, then darkness. A tingling sensation sweeps over the characters' bodies as vibrant rainbows appear within their minds and they see Lulu's first dream unfold. Mad Maggie isn't in the dreamscape with them, though characters can hear the hag's disembodied voice whenever she speaks.

Within this conjured dreamscape, characters can take psychic damage from hostile dream-creatures and other effects. A character reduced to 0 hit points by this psychic damage is unconscious but stable, and unable to proceed to the next dream in the sequence. If all the characters fall unconscious, the dream quest ends. Mad Maggie can start over once the characters have regained consciousness and recovered from the ordeal.

### DREAM 1: RAINBOW ANGELS

Read the following boxed text when the characters first enter Lulu's dreamscape:

As the rich, radiant light of a hundred dancing rainbows slowly dissolves, warm sunlight fills the area. Within that space, Lulu flies lazily in a lush meadow at the shoulder of a beautiful, blindfolded angel. As the pair strolls through the tall green grass, the voice of the hag fills your mind, "Push through this vision. It only represents what Lulu wishes was true. We need to see more."

Each character must make a DC 10 Intelligence saving throw. If one or more of the characters succeed, the sunny meadow fades to black as the dream sequence progresses toward the next dream.

If all the characters fail the saving throw, each character takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage, and all of them must attempt the saving throw again. If at least one character succeeds the second time, this dream fades and the next one begins. If everyone fails the save again, all the characters take the psychic damage again. This process continues until at least one character succeeds or everyone falls unconscious.

## DREAM 2: BETRAYAL!

Characters who are conscious when the first dream ends proceed to the second dream:

A flame-encircled battlefield appears on a barren hellscape. At the center of the circle, Lulu and the angel lie unconscious and prone, horribly injured. You see yourselves standing in defense of Lulu and the angel, facing outward as six small, spine-covered devils creep closer. In the distance, a formation of battered and retreating human warriors disappears through a portal.

"The devils!" hisses the hag's disembodied voice. "You must defeat those devils!"

The characters must defend Lulu and Zariel from the six **spined devils**. At this point, the characters and the devils should roll initiative. The dreamscape combat that follows pits the characters against the dream-devils. The characters begin combat at full hit points, minus any psychic damage taken in the previous dream. All damage dealt by the dream-devils converts to psychic damage. The devils let out dying screams and fall dead when reduced to 0 hit points.

This dream ends when half of the spined devils are reduced to 0 hit points. When the dream ends, the battlefield fades to black as the dream sequence proceeds with the next dream.

## DREAM 3: DEVIL DEAL

Characters who are conscious when the second dream ends proceed to the third dream:

A landscape filled with thick, black smoke and the smells of death and decay expands to encompass everything. The small devils that survived the previous dream kneel before you and offer to serve you if you spare their lives.

If the characters agree to accept the devils' terms, the devils take the sky and fly away, returning to help the characters in the next dream. Otherwise, the devils fade away into nothingness and don't reappear later on.

Once the characters make their choice, this dream ends and fades to black as the dream sequence continues with the next dream.

## DREAM 4: DESOLATION

When the fourth dream begins, read:

You wander a vast, barren landscape of utter devastation. Black sludge rises rapidly out of the ground, enveloping your feet and gripping you tightly, overwhelming you with a horrible sense of loss.

"Don't let the sludge consume you!" says Mad Maggie's disembodied voice. "You must push through her defenses. She must look!"

Have the characters roll initiative for their dream-selves. Each character is restrained by the black sludge. On its turn, a character must use its action to try to get free of the sludge, doing so with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If at least one character accepted the devils' terms in the previous dream, spined devils swoop down from the sky to help the characters pull free, granting advantage on each character's ability check.

A character who gets free of the sludge rises up into the air and quickly shakes off the sense of horrible loss. For the rest of this dream, the freed character can do nothing except use the Help action on each of its turns to assist another character still trapped in the sludge.

A character who fails the initial check to escape the sludge must repeat the check at the start of each of its turns. With each failed check after the first, the character takes 22 (4d10) psychic damage as the sense of horrible loss intensifies. If a character is reduced to 0 hit points by this psychic damage, its dream-self becomes completely submerged in the sludge and is lost.

The dreamscape can continue into the final dream provided at least one character's dream-self escapes from the sludge.

## DREAM 5: REVELATION

Characters who are conscious when the fourth dream ends proceed to the fifth and final dream, which is as follows:

Lulu rests on a black cushion at the center of an inky void. She is unconscious and alone, a beam of brilliant white light shining down upon her. Next to Lulu, a large gleaming brass spyglass rests atop an ornately carved tripod.

Lulu awakens and looks peacefully around her. Seeing the spyglass, she approaches it, pressing one eye against the eyepiece. Lulu then steps back suddenly, eyes wide, mouth open, her face alight with excitement. She cries out, "The sword, the sword! I know where it is!"

As the dream ends, the characters and Lulu wake up in the ritual space. Lulu can barely contain her joy at rediscovering what she believes is the location of the Bleeding Citadel, and she impatiently begs the characters to start the next leg of their journey.

If none of the characters' dream-selves made it to the end of the dreamscape, Mad Maggie is eager to repeat the ritual. Conversely, Lulu might regain enough of her memory to lead characters on the next leg of the journey without having to endure the ritual a second time. Mad Maggie is unhappy if she doesn't get to see the whole dream, and is less likely to help the characters get to where they need to go if they refuse to see the dream sequence through to the very end.

If the characters made it to the end of the dreamscape, then Mad Maggie did as well. Experiencing the agonies of such pure suffering, the hag oozes contentment. As long as the characters have done nothing to displease

her during their stay at Fort Knucklebone, Mad Maggie provides them with one or more of the available infernal war machines. If they have assisted her troops in other ways, she can provide any or all of the following as well:

- As many as three *soul coins* (see page 94), which the characters need to fuel their infernal war machines
- A silvered weapon of the characters' choice, to assist in battles with devils and lycanthropes
- Two weeks of rations per character (the rations taste awful but retain their nutritional value)
- Warnings about other warlords (see page 90), plus the name of someone who might help them (see "Roaming Encounter: Smiler the Defiler," page 133)

## FAREWELL

The manner in which the Knucklebones bid farewell to the characters depends on how pleased Mad Maggie is with the characters. This attitude ranges from a near-tearful goodbye if they gave Maggie and her gang everything they wanted, to being chased away by rabid madcaps if everything went wrong.

## VENGEFUL PURSUITS

If the characters take one or more infernal war machines from Fort Knucklebone without Mad Maggie's consent, the night hag organizes a posse to run them down and get back what's hers, plus "interest." Mad Maggie chases after them in her Scavenger, with Mickey in the passenger seat behind her while she drives. Barnabas the flameskull operates the Grappling Claw with his *magic hand* spell, Chukka and Clonk operate the Harpoon Flingers, and six madcaps cling to the outside hull, ready to leap onto enemy vehicles. If Chukka and Clonk got the broken Demon Grinder working, that vehicle comes after the characters as well and is manned entirely by redcaps and madcaps.

## RAGGADRAGGA ATTACKS!

As the characters reach a half-mile or so away from Fort Knucklebone, trouble comes looking for them in the form of an enemy warlord:

A plume of red dust billows in the distance, created by a large infernal war machine barreling in your direction. Its crew consists of boar-headed and rat-headed humanoids, all wearing goggles.

The incoming infernal war machine is a gore-spattered Demon Grinder (see page 219 for its stat block) with gnashing metal teeth at the front and a wrecking ball swinging behind it. As it moves to intercept the characters, the vehicle is not trying to be stealthy.

If the characters have one or more infernal war machines, they can try to outrun, outmaneuver, or destroy the approaching enemy vehicle. If they are on foot, they must find a way to disable the vehicle and defeat the creatures inside. If they do so, they can claim the Demon Grinder for themselves.



RAGGADRAGGA

The Demon Grinder is driven by the warlord Raggadragga, a **wereboar** with 120 hit points. He leads the Goreguts Gang, which consists of two other **wereboars** named Jibbs and Oozywog (who operate the vehicle's Chomper and Wrecking Ball stations) and two **wererats** named Finnik and Yeegha (who operate the vehicle's Harpoon Flingers). Avernus has no moons, so the Goreguts Gang isn't beholden to lunar cycles. Its members prefer their hybrid forms.

If he defeats the characters, Raggadragga gets whatever information he can out of them before attempting to ransom them back to Mad Maggie. The night hag may or may not pay for them, depending on her disposition toward the characters when they left Fort Knucklebone.

If the characters defeat the Goreguts Gang, they can take possession of the Demon Grinder, which burns through its remaining fuel in 6 hours.

**Treasure.** Raggadragga carries three *soul coins* (see page 94) that he uses to fuel the Demon Grinder. He also carries a *circlet of blasting*, which he can don and use to make ranged attacks. The other members of the Goreguts Gang have no treasure.





THE WARLORDS OF AVERNUS CONQUER THE HELLISH WASTELANDS IN  
INFERNAL WAR MACHINES POWERED BY SOULS.

## WARLORDS OF THE AVERNIAN WASTELANDS

As the characters cross the wastelands of Avernus, they will likely run afoul of petty warlords scavenging for *soul coins* and scrap metal to fuel and repair their infernal war machines. Mad Maggie and Raggadragga are two warlords whom the characters meet early on. The following sections describe three other warlords who prowl the Avernian wastes: a wingless horned devil named Bitter Breath, a human necromancer named Feonor, and a chain devil named Princeps Kovik. These warlords are as cruel and merciless as the hell they inhabit. All share a “survival of the fittest” mentality.

In Avernus, a warlord’s power is measured by the strength and size of its gang, and the threat posed by its infernal war machines. As one warlord bites the dust, another inevitably rises to take its place. Bitter Breath, Feonor, and Princeps Kovik are merely the latest in a long series of warlords to plague the Avernian expanse. If Zariel wasn’t so busy fighting the Blood War, she would rid Avernus of these roaming pests; as things stand, she’s content to let the warlords wipe each other out instead.

If you need to add some excitement to the adventure, have one of these warlords show up to challenge the characters. One warlord might be after *soul coins* to fuel its infernal war machines, while another might be eager to forge an alliance with a capable band of adventurers against a greater foe. With the exception of Mad Maggie, these warlords have no lairs, so they can be encountered anywhere at any time.

Avernus has more warlords than the ones described here. You can create new ones, each with their own gangs and infernal war machines. Don’t worry about throwing too many infernal war machines at the characters. You can curtail the characters’ reliance on infernal war machines by restricting their access to *soul coins*, which the vehicles burn as fuel. A typical warlord has 2d6 *soul coins* and 2d6 flasks of demon ichor (see page 78) at any given time.

### INFERNAL WAR MACHINE COMBAT

All the warlords described in this adventure use infernal war machines to strike fear into their rivals, fend off demons and other threats, and flee from Zariel’s devil patrols. The rules for infernal war machines in appendix B are meant to help you adjudicate situations that arise during encounters, but combat involving infernal war machines works best with “theater of the mind”-style play, where it’s more important to capture the emotion of a chase than know the exact location and orientation of every vehicle on the battlefield.

If a situation arises that the vehicle rules don’t cover, fall back on the core rules. For example, if a character wants to leap from one moving vehicle to another, determine whether the character succeeds or not with a Strength (Athletics) check, setting the jump’s DC based on the distance between the two vehicles (as well as other factors, as appropriate). Keep it fun and fast-paced, and push the rules aside when they get in the way.



### BITTER BREATH

Bitter Breath is a resentful, vindictive warlord that fell prey to the cutthroat politics of Avernus. Formerly a pit fiend named L’zeth, it strove to undermine Zariel while courting Bel. Shortly after claiming rulership of Avernus, Zariel demoted L’zeth to a **horned devil**.

For a while, L’zeth nursed its damaged pride. Eventually, the despondent devil reignited its ambitions and became involved in a plot to overthrow Zariel. The arch-devil’s spies learned of the plot. As further punishment, Zariel removed L’zeth’s wings and cursed the horned devil so that it could no longer enter into deals. Any document that L’zeth signs melts away, and any words it utters turn to smoke in its mouth. Thus did L’zeth become known as Bitter Breath.

### BITTER BREATH’S MARAUDERS

Zariel has declared that no other devil may associate with Bitter Breath. However, Zariel’s decree hasn’t stopped the fiendish outcast from joining forces with a gang of marauding hobgoblins under the command of a battle-hardened **hobgoblin warlord** named High Graj Karkajuk.

Bitter Breath drives a Tormentor that has an Infernal Screamer (see page 221) instead of a Harpoon Flinger. **Hobgoblins** round out the Tormentor’s crew. High Graj Karkajuk drives a Devil’s Ride and commands a pair of Scavengers driven by **hobgoblin captains** and crewed by ordinary **hobgoblins**. See appendix B for the vehicles’ stat blocks.



## FEONOR

Feonor is a willowy, neutral evil **archmage** with milky-white eyes and a parasol made of bones and human flesh. Her rivals know her as a powerful necromancer. They suspect that she fled the Material Plane to escape some horrible fate, but the truth is she was invited to Avernus by Mahadi, the rakshasa master of the Wandering Emporium (see page 126). During a visit to Feonor's world, Mahadi fell head-over-heels in love with her zombie-like indifference. Not long after arriving in Avernus, Feonor grew bored of Mahadi's attempts to impress her. Without so much as a farewell, she took to the Averian wastes on one of the rakshasa's infernal war machines and never looked back. Years later, Mahadi still refers to her as "the one that got away."

The scowl on Feonor's face hints at her constant annoyance with the multiverse around her. She prefers not to speak, and when she does, it's typically only in whispers, her short sentences interspersed and punctuated with frustrated sighs.

### GOLDEN DOOM

Feonor rides around in a Demon Grinder called *Golden Doom*, so named because Mahadi fitted it with gilded death armor (see page 222). The vehicle is driven by a **ghast**, and its other stations are operated by **ghouls**. She also commands a force of ten **crawling claws**. A pair of Tormentors crewed by **mezzoloths** provide escort. See appendix B for the vehicles' stat blocks.

## PRINCEPS KOVIK

This particularly cruel **chain devil** commanded the Nine Hells' 8th Infantry Legion, "Terror Incarnate," which was crushed on the banks of the River Styx by the demon lord Kostchtchie. Blaming its superiors for the defeat, Princeps Kovik gathered the surviving members of its legion and formed the Eighth Remnant, a marauding gang of devils no longer beholden to the infernal hierarchy.

The devils that serve under Kovik do so willingly because the chain devil has earned their trust. Newly disenfranchised devils regularly flock to Kovik's banner. The chain devil's emblem is the numeral 8 made out of iron chain on a crimson field. Kovik aims to gather enough strength and infernal war machines to do what no archdevil has been able to do: drive the demons back to the Abyss for good.

### THE EIGHTH REMNANT

The Eighth Remnant chases down any potential source of *soul coins*. Targets who give up their *soul coins* freely are allowed to continue on their way without further harassment, provided there are no demons lurking among them.

Kovik has a Devil's Ride and travels with two **bearded devils** on similar vehicles. The rest of the gang consists of four **barbed devils** on a Tormentor and eight **bearded devils** on a Demon Grinder (see appendix B for vehicle stat blocks). Members of the Eighth Remnant never use demon ichor in their vehicles.



## QUEST FOR THE SWORD

Lulu's dreams lead the characters on a wild goose chase to Haruman's Hill in search of the *Sword of Zariel*. Realizing that the Bleeding Citadel isn't where she remembers it, the hollyphant offers the characters a choice of paths. Both paths eventually lead to the Bleeding Citadel, but only through a combination of deal making, daring, and dumb luck.

Diagram 3.2 (page 96) and diagram 3.3 (page 106) are flowcharts that show the two paths characters can take through Avernus to reach the Bleeding Citadel: the Path of Demons and the Path of Devils, respectively. Neither is literally a "path," but rather a sequence of locations that the characters must visit in order. If the characters wander off these paths, use optional encounters to pull them back (see "Other Locations," page 122, and "Roaming Encounter: Smiler the Defiler," page 133).

Each encounter location tied to a path has a recommended character level, as noted in diagram 3.2 or 3.3. If your group's average character level is lower than the recommended level of their destination, introduce some random encounters or reroute them to another location first to raise their level.

Allow characters the opportunity to explore locations on the poster map of Avernus in any order they please, or let them jump back and forth between the paths as they see fit.

## HARUMAN'S HILL

BEHOLD! ZARIEL'S DOG CRUCIFIED THOSE WHO betrayed his mistress in battle.

—The Cartographer

Haruman's Hill is marked on map 3.1 (page 79). When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Wrought iron trees line a trail that leads to the summit of a steep hill. Anguished knights are impaled on the trees' metal branches, their bodies writhing in torment as bloated stirges feast on their blood.

Haruman, a human paladin of Helm, was one of Zariel's most devoted Hellriders. He crucified deserters to Zariel's cause on "Coward's Way," a line of tortured souls leading to this desolate hill. Each soul is pinned to a barbed, metal tree. Inscriptions above their heads attest that most of them were mortal knights who abandoned Zariel during her assault into Avernus. Flocks of **stirges** buzz between the branches, feasting hungrily on the screaming, crucified victims. The stirges attack the characters only if they try to free the captives (see "Haruman's Arrival," below). Roll 2d4 to determine the number of attacking stirges.

## JANDER SUNSTAR

Near the summit of the hill, the **vampire** Jander Sunstar is impaled on one of the largest iron trees. This elf warrior, cursed to an eternity of undeath, tried to redeem his corrupted soul by swearing to hunt down his own kind. Later, he volunteered to join Zariel on her crusade into the Nine Hells. Stirges now swarm back and forth from Jander's body, preserving his existence by injecting him with the blood of his traitorous companions.

Jander pleads for the characters to cut him down so that his soul can move on from this accursed place. He reveals the following information:

- Jander and Haruman were both part of a host of warriors who joined the angel Zariel in her assault on the Nine Hells.
- After charging through the portal into Avernus, Jander panicked and fled back to Elturel. He betrayed his braver comrades by sealing the portal behind them.
- Jander and his fellow deserters never revealed their shameful retreat and betrayal of Zariel. It was a badge of shame that the Hellriders, as they were came to be known, would wear in secret until the grave.
- After years of anguish, Jander chose to face the sun and throw himself on Lathander's mercy. The prayer fell on deaf ears, and his soul was condemned to the Nine Hells to suffer for his sins.

When she beholds Jander impaled on the iron tree, Lulu's memories of him return. She remembers his betrayal of Zariel and gives him a pitiful look. She then admits to the characters that she's made a mistake leading them here and needs to ponder her dreams in more detail to discern the Bleeding Citadel's whereabouts.

## HARUMAN'S ARRIVAL

If the characters free Jander or any of his companions, their bodies crumble to dust in grateful release. In response, twenty **stirges** attack the group. When the second round of combat begins, any crucified souls remaining on the trees wail in terror as Haruman, a **narzugon** (see page 239 for his stat block), swoops down from the sky on his **nightmare** steed to punish the interlopers. He begins the encounter 300 feet away and orders the nightmare to close the distance between him and the adventurers as quickly as possible. As Haruman attacks, a **hellwasp** (see page 236 for its stat block) appears from a nearby nest and tries to grab Lulu and fly off with her (see "Development" below).

If a character damages Haruman with an attack, a fresh tree bearing the character's name sprouts from the ground nearby, listing the character's crime as "assaulting an officer." Any character who sees their name on a tree for the first time must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of Haruman for 1 minute. A character who fails this saving throw can repeat it at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on them on a success.

## TREASURE

Haruman uses *infernal tack* (see page 224) to ride his nightmare.



HARUMAN

## DEVELOPMENT

If the hellwasp abducts Lulu, it takes the hollyphant to its nest. If the characters wish to rescue Lulu, they must storm the nest (see "Hellwasp Nest," page 94).

If the characters thwart the hellwasp's abduction of Lulu, the hollyphant is grateful and apologizes for leading them to the wrong place, admitting that her memory of the Bleeding Citadel is hazier than she initially realized. Having pondered her dreams further, she says that two sites in Avernus seem important to finding the Citadel: a place where demons manifest (see "Spawning Trees," page 96), and another where demons are destroyed (see "Demon Zapper," page 106). Lulu has no preference which to investigate first, so she points out both locations on the characters' map and leaves the decision to the characters. Each of these locations opens a different branch of investigation that ultimately leads to the Bleeding Citadel. See diagram 3.2 (page 96) and diagram 3.3 (page 106) for overviews of the two paths—the Path of Demons and the Path of Devils.



## HELLWASP NEST

FALLEN ANGELS ARE MEAT FOR HELLWASPS. STEER CLEAR,  
lest you nourish their young with your flesh.

—The Cartographer

Throughout Avernus, aggressive hellwasp colonies shape enormous nests from the cocooned carcasses of slain angels and other fallen celestials. Such structures are magically buoyant and must be tethered by chains to the surface of Avernus. The cocooned angels writhe unpleasantly from the motion of the larvae gorging on their insides, creating the false impression that they still live. Because of this, the mere sight of a hellwasp nest has been known to drive mortals mad. This entry describes a typical nest, such as the one Lulu is carried to from Haruman's Hill.

When the characters encounter their first hellwasp nest, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A gigantic sac of wet, papery material floats high above the surface of hell. Angelic figures with feathery wings stick to its surface like flies in amber, their bodies struggling futilely underneath layers of gunk. Iron chains at the bottom of the structure tether it to the hellish landscape.

A typical hellwasp nest contains eight **hellwasps** (see page 236 for their stat block), although twice this number are typically out hunting when the characters arrive. If they paralyze every character in the party with their stings, the hellwasps move them to their larder at the top of the nest (area N4) to be used as food for their larvae.

### ENCOUNTERS IN THE NEST

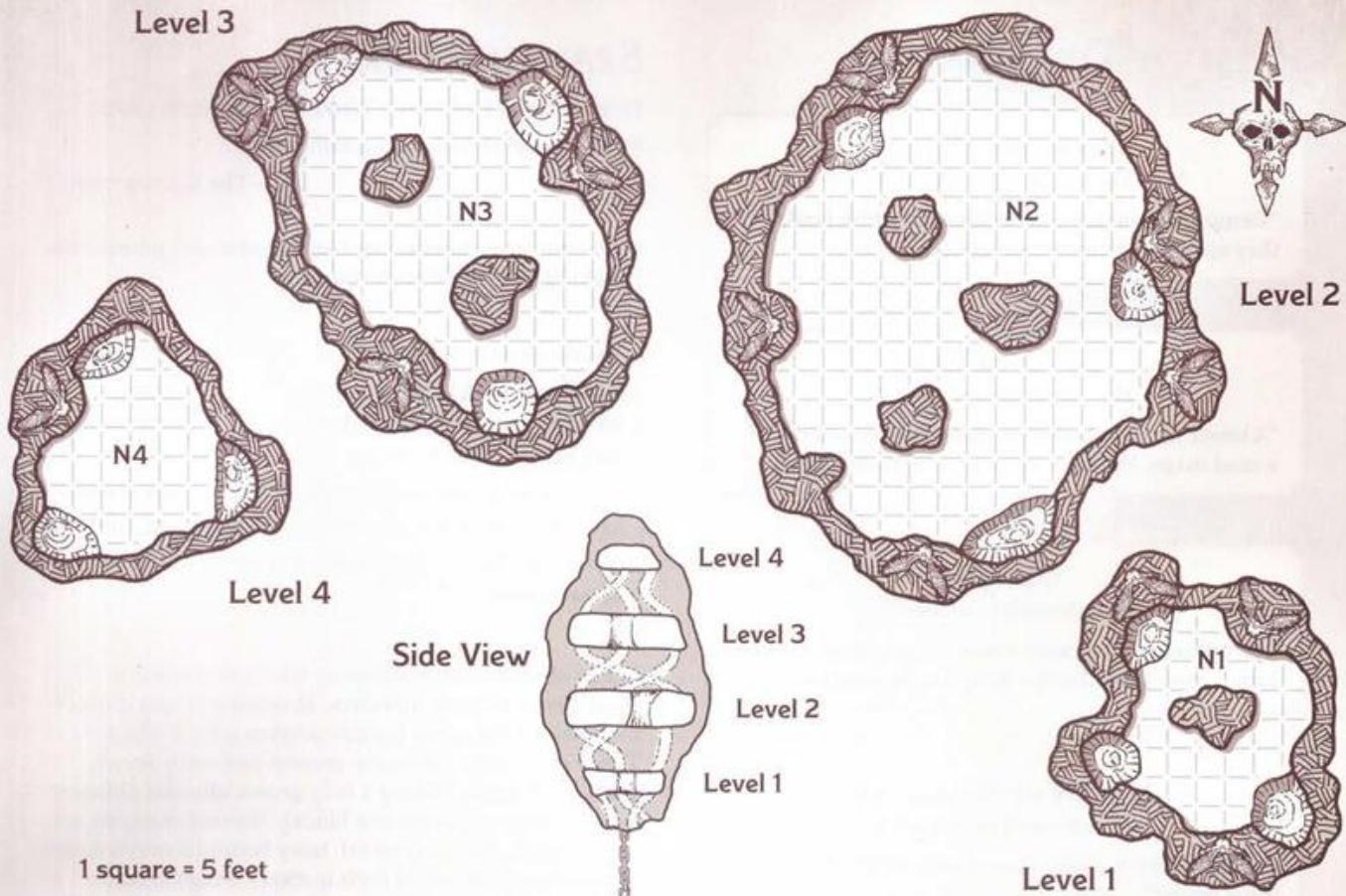
The following descriptions correspond to the areas marked on map 3.2. A hellwasp nest has no stairs, so the characters must fly or use climbing gear to traverse between levels. Each level of the nest is basically one large chamber. Map 3.2 includes a side view of the nest that shows how the various levels stack atop one another.

Map 3.2 shows where dead angels are entombed in the hellwasp nest's translucent walls. The angels' well-preserved corpses, which are visible to creatures inside the nest, keep the nest aloft. Removing them from the walls causes the nest to slowly sink to the ground.

#### N1. ENTRY LEVEL

The nest's entrance is on its underside, where one or more heavy chains tether the nest 100 feet above the surface of Avernus. The hellwasps keep this level mostly clear to avoid blocking off the hatcheries above. Even so, discarded gear accumulates here among the gory effluvia expelled from the wasps' devoured captives.

**Treasure.** Anyone searching through the junk finds a backpack containing five healer's kits and a fully charged *wand of magic missiles*.



MAP 3.2: HELLWASP NEST

**Development.** Too much noise here alerts the hellwasps in area N2. Creatures rooting through the junk must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check or alert the wasps. Once the colony is placed on alert, call for initiative rolls. All the hellwasps act on the same initiative count. At the start of each of the hellwasps' turns, one **hellwasp** (see page 236 for its stat block) arrives from area N2 to defend the nest until all three appear. The rest of the colony remains on high alert for two hours.

#### N2. DRONE CELLS

This level is honeycombed with octagonal cells crafted by the hellwasps from a regurgitated mulch of bone, sand, and fat. Three **hellwasps** (see page 236 for their stat block) are here unless they were drawn to area N1 by the characters' intrusion.

#### N3. HELLWASP LARVAE

This level of the nest is always on high alert and contains three **hellwasps** (see page 236 for their stat block).

Hellwasp larvae are incubating inside the angel carcasses on this level. If a character takes piercing or slashing damage within 15 feet of an angel carcass or moves within 5 feet of one, the carcass explodes and releases 2d6 hostile hellwasp grubs (use the **giant centipede** stat block to represent them).

#### N4. LARDER

The hellwasps gum their victims to the walls of this level using the same regurgitated bile that forms their nest. Two **hellwasps** (see page 236 for their stat block) are stationed here at all hours.

If Lulu was abducted and brought to the nest, the characters find her here, stuck to a wall (see "Development" below). Any creature that ends up gummed to the walls can use an action to try to free itself, doing so with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. A character can also make this check to pull free a companion within its reach.

**Treasure.** Ruined gear belonging to previous abductees is scattered across the floor. Characters who search through the gear find three *soul coins* (see page 94) and a *helmet of telepathy*.

**Development.** If the characters free Lulu, she admits that her memory of the Bleeding Citadel is hazier than she initially realized. Having pondered her dreams further, she says that two sites in Avernus seem important to finding the Citadel: a place where demons manifest (see "Spawning Trees," page 96), and another where demons are destroyed (see "Demon Zapper," page 106). Lulu has no preference which to investigate first, so she points out both locations on the characters' map and leaves the decision to them. Each of these locations opens a different branch of investigation that leads to the Bleeding Citadel. See diagram 3.2 (page 96) for an overview of the Path of Demons and diagram 3.3 (page 106) for an overview of the Path of Devils.

## PATH OF DEMONS

### SPAWNING TREES

*For characters of level 8*

"Demons beget demons. Where their filth lands, they spawn even more corruption."

### TOWER OF URM

*For characters of level 8*

"A tower tumbles between planes on the whims of a mad mage. Where it goes next, nobody knows."

### OBELISK

*For characters of level 8*

"An unknown man with unknown purpose. Assist him at your peril, lest he drag you into madness."

### MIRROR OF MEPHISTAR

*For characters of level 8*

"Mirror, mirror, made of ice—look within, but at what price?"

### PIT OF SHUMMRATH

*For characters of level 8*

"Here you find a sticky situation. Poor Shummrath isn't the fiend it used to be."

### CRYPT OF THE HELLRIDERS

*For characters of level 9*

"Zariel's fallen companions cannot rest. No one can in this nightmare hellscape."

### ARCHES OF ULLOCH

*For characters of level 9*

"Only fools step through Ulloch's gates. They lead to nowhere a wise person wants to go."

### KOSTCHTCHE'S MAW

*For characters of level 10*

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend, but does the same hold true for fiends?"

## SPAWNING TREES

DEMONS BEGET DEMONS. WHERE THEIR FILTH LANDS,  
they spawn ever more corruption.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive here, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Treelike growths cluster along the shoreline of a lake of bubbling, black goo. Each growth is formed from the same ichor as the lake and has writhing, membranous sacs budding from its limbs.

Five bearded fiends heap coals around the trunk of one of the trees. As they hurl more coals onto the pyre, four of their number cruelly poke and tease the fifth member of their group.

Lakes of demonic ichor appear where demons are slaughtered in great numbers. Malformed trees grow on their shorelines, their branches laden with fleshy sacs. These eventually flop to the ground and wetly break open, each one releasing a fully grown **abyssal chicken** (see the accompanying stat block). Abyssal chickens are carnivorous, temperamental, tasty bottom-feeders native to the Abyss. They beat their leathery wings to scare predators and to help them run faster, and they taste like fatty chicken.

With your permission, a character who casts the *find familiar* spell can henceforth choose to conjure an abyssal chicken instead of a raven.

## DEVILISH WORK CREW

Zariel dispatched infernal cleanup crews to scour the lake shores for the trees and destroy them before they become thickets. When the characters arrive, they encounter a work crew of five **bearded devils** in the process of raising a pyre around a tree to incinerate it. Four of the devils tease the fifth, whose name is Krikendolt. A vrock savaged Krikendolt's skull during one of the many battles of the Blood War, leaving him with terrible scars and a brain injury that has turned his alignment to chaotic good. Krikendolt's comrades learned that he pities the abyssal chickens, and they are now goading him into slaughtering the chickens on pain of death. Secretly, Krikendolt keeps an **abyssal chicken** named Earwax in his sack.

The devils are likely to attack on sight unless a character can convince them to parley with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The devils won't forgive their comrade for his compassion, but the characters could persuade them to release Krikendolt into their care if they offer the right price. Krikendolt knows Avernus well, so he makes a good traveling companion and guide. The characters can cure Krikendolt of his disorder using a *heal* spell or similar magic, which restores his lawful evil alignment.

DIAGRAM 3.2: PATH OF DEMONS

The devils don't know where the Bleeding Citadel is, but they do know someone who could help. For the price of a *soul coin*, the devils direct the group to a mysterious outlander (see "Development" below). If the characters are unable to pay, they must return later with the coin and track down the fiends on the lake shore.

#### TREASURE

The fiends carry five *soul coins* (one each, see page 94) and three vials of demon ichor (see page 78).

#### DEVELOPMENT

The fiends tell the characters about a powerful mage who visits Avernus from other planes and often pays yugoloths for their protection. If anyone knows where to find this Bleeding Citadel, it's surely Mordenkainen! The fiends mark the location of the wizard's tower on the players' map of Avernus. Following this lead takes the group to the Tower of Urm.

### TOWER OF URM

A TOWER TUMBLES BETWEEN PLANES ON THE WHIMS OF  
*a mad mage. Where it goes next, nobody knows.*

—The Cartographer

The Tower of Urm jaunts across the multiverse. It is present in Avernus only if the characters arrive here after speaking to the fiends in the cleanup crew (see "Spawning Trees," above).

If the characters arrive when the Tower of Urm is present, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

An iron tower rises atop an island on a lake of boiling blood. No windows penetrate the tower's walls, and its only visible door opens onto a high balcony. Red lightning crackles constantly between two horns of metal on the tower's roof.

Mordenkainen, a chaotic neutral human **archmage**, often sojourns to Avernus to study how the Nine Hells affect the schools of magic. This archmage of Oerth leads a powerful group of adventurers called the Circle of Eight and has authored several planar tomes. He has also crafted many renowned spells.

Mordenkainen takes the tower with him when he leaves Avernus. Its empty iron foundations remain behind to mark the site, and when the tower returns, it locks itself into place with a satisfying clunk. Mordenkainen pays yugoloths to carry out his bidding in Avernus. His wages are so attractive that these fiends have taken to gathering outside his tower. There are nine **mezzoloths** and three **nycaloths** present here at any time. The fiends aren't looking for trouble, since they're more interested in landing a lucrative contract with the mage.

Two of the nycaloths—Torgrazk and Shraal—are loyal to Zariel and have been sent here to assassinate Mordenkainen. If they overhear his discussions with



### ABYSSAL CHICKEN

*Tiny fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 10 (3d4 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (see Bad Flier below)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands Abyssal but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Bad Flier.** The abyssal chicken falls at the end of a turn if it's airborne and the only thing holding it aloft is its flying speed.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The abyssal chicken makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

the characters, the assassins decide to alter their plans. Both fiends turn invisible and follow the party in hope of an opportunity to kidnap one or more characters and deliver them to Zariel. If they succeed, Zariel invites the rest of the group to her flying fortress to negotiate terms for their comrades' release (see "Zariel's Flying Fortress," page 130).

## TALKING TO MORDENKAINEN

Mordenkainen is a stern, bald man with a neatly trimmed black goatee beard and a penetrating stare. When his tower arrives in Avernus, Mordenkainen steps out onto the balcony to address the fiends gathered below. Fights frequently break out between the yugoloths as they jostle for his attention.

Zariel's assassins often lurk here, so Mordenkainen presents a *simulacrum* of his true self that disintegrates into a pile of snow if it is destroyed. The real archmage remains deep inside his tower and swiftly shunts the building to another plane in times of danger.

If the characters make themselves known to Mordenkainen's simulacrum, he demands to know their reasons for visiting. The archmage doesn't know the location of the Bleeding Citadel, nor does he care to find it. Even so, he claims that "balance will be maintained in the universe" by giving the characters directions to a lesser mage who also studies the workings of magic in Avernus—specifically, a "mage of no renown" who haunts the site of an obelisk. The yugoloths recently told Mordenkainen about this stranger and his guidance has an ulterior motive: if the characters end up slaying the mysterious mage, Mordenkainen has one less rival to contend with in Avernus.

## OBELISK

AN UNKNOWN MAN WITH UNKNOWN PURPOSE. ASSIST him at your peril, lest he drag you into madness.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A thirty-foot-tall obelisk ringed by seven smaller standing stones rises from the crest of this hill. A tall man wearing tattered robes strides between the standing stones, gesticulating wildly and screaming curses into the wind.

The pit fiend Bel imprisoned the **barlgura** demon Ubbalux inside this circle of standing stones. To torment his adversary, Bel revealed that the secret to escaping the prison was hidden in the arcane runes etched across the standing stones. Ever since, the tormented demon has tried futilely to solve the riddle and escape. The figure pacing the standing stones is Ubbalux masquerading in human form using a *disguise self* spell. The magic of the obelisk prevents the demon from leaving the circle and stops any form of divination magic from affecting the stones or targeting a creature inside their perimeter.

Ubbalux appears as a tall human wizard. The demon stole this appearance from the last visitor to stray into his stones (after Ubbalux ate him). If the characters approach, the "wizard" greets them eagerly and is keen to divulge details of his studies, but his conversation often trails off on confusing tangents. The following information can be gleaned by speaking with the false wizard:

- The wizard claims that he no longer recalls his name or place of origin.
- If asked about the Bleeding Citadel, the wizard promises to direct the characters to "someone who can help," provided they help him solve the enigma of the obelisk first.

Ubbalux can truly help the characters find the path to the Bleeding Citadel, but the demon hopes to manipulate the characters into releasing it from its prison first. If they become aware of its ruse, the demon admits to the deception and pleads for their help (see "Development" below).

## A WIZARD'S THEORY

The wizard claims that each standing stone is keyed to one of the eight schools of magic (abjuration, conjuration, divination, enchantment, evocation, illusion, necromancy, and transmutation). His theory suggests that the central obelisk grants a boost in arcane power to mages across the cosmos, and he urges the characters to aid him in empowering it. In truth, Ubbalux has concocted this theory to dupe the characters into testing his latest escape plan. Characters who examine the standing stones and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check discern that the arcane runes do indeed relate to the eight schools of magic.

The wizard requests that each character places a hand upon a different stone, to "assist in channeling the streams of magic." When their hands are in place,

## STANDING STONE EFFECTS

School	Effect
Abjuration	You gain a +2 bonus to AC for the next 24 hours.
Conjuration	A monodrone appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you and follows you around until it's destroyed. It is indifferent toward all creatures, including you.
Divination	You gain the benefits of a <i>true seeing</i> spell for the next hour.
Enchantment	The standing stone casts <i>confusion</i> on you (save DC 15). The spell lasts for 1 minute.
Evocation	The standing stone casts <i>magic missile</i> , targeting you with five missiles.
Illusion	An illusory swarm of harmless bats or pigeons (DM's choice) flutters over your head for the next hour. A <i>dispel magic</i> cast on the swarm ends the effect.
Necromancy	You also take 30 necrotic damage from the standing stone.
Transmutation	Your skin turns blue for the next 24 hours. A <i>remove curse</i> spell ends the effect on you.

Ubbalux begins to chant. The air fills with ozone as lightning courses over the standing stones. Each character who participates in the experiment takes 22 (5d8) lightning damage and suffers an additional effect based on the school of magic associated with the standing stone that the character touched, as noted in the Standing Stone Effects table. Ubbalux's latest attempt to escape his prison has failed.

## DEVELOPMENT

Dropping its disguise, the barlgura demon implores the characters to seek out Mephistopheles and return with an answer to his puzzle. The barlgura then gives them directions to a magic mirror (the Mirror of Mephistar) that can be used to gaze into Cania and contact the archdevil. If the characters win over Mephistopheles, Ubbalux promises to guide them to someone who can help them find the Bleeding Citadel.

## MIRROR OF MEPHISTAR

MIRROR, MIRROR, MADE OF ICE—LOOK WITHIN, BUT AT  
what price?

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A giant slab of ice is wedged at the end of this craggy ravine. Through its surface, you glimpse a glacial landscape draped in snow.

Anyone who gazes into the surface of this 20-foot-tall mirror of ice sees their reflection as soulless, haggard, and encrusted with rime. This apparition stands in a frozen tundra, desolate save for a tower of ice far in the distance. Characters who succeed on a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognize the tower as Mephistar, lair of the archdevil Mephistopheles.

Any character who witnesses their reflection in the mirror must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute. As they gaze stunned into their reflection's eyes, Mephistopheles gains access to all their thoughts, fears, and knowledge, learning of their mission to retrieve Zariel's sword and free Elturel (see "Development" below).

## THE EMISSARY

Shortly after arriving here, the characters see one of Mephistopheles's emissaries in the mirror: a **cambion** named Rigorath. The emissary, only visible in the icy world beyond the mirror, swoops down from the direction of the tower. His skin is cadaver-blue, and his face is frozen in a scream. Rigorath holds a kettle of steaming water in one hand. Before speaking, he pours the boiling water over his face to thaw it out. After each utterance, the ice spreads over his face again, freezing into an expression of pained anguish.

Rigorath can perceive the characters through the mirror but can't pass through its surface, nor can the characters pass through the mirror or target Rigorath with spells or attacks. Rigorath tries to broker an infernal pact with the characters on behalf of his master Mephistopheles, offering them knowledge and power in return for their assistance:

- To fulfill their end of the bargain, the characters must dam the flow of the River Styx where it spills into a nearby slime-filled chasm (see "Pit of Shummrath," page 100).
- If the characters fulfill their side of the bargain, Rigorath grants them rare knowledge: a secret they desire and a permanent +1 increase to each character's Intelligence or Wisdom score.
- Characters who came here from the Obelisk (see page 98) can bargain with Rigorath for the means to release Ubbalux from the standing stones. In this case, his terms are the same.

Rigorath refuses to explain why Mephistopheles wants the River Styx dammed. His master is wary of angering Zariel and refuses to grant directions to the Bleeding Citadel. If the characters agree to Mephistopheles's pact, Rigorath etches the terms onto the surface of the mirror. The words form into chunks of ice on the group's side, which Rigorath instructs them to chisel off, melt, and then drink to seal the bargain.

To aid the characters with damming the River Styx, the emissary crafts an **imp** out of snow, which hops through the mirror to join them. This imp has immunity to cold damage and carries a sling bag containing five shattersticks (see the "Shattersticks" sidebar) that it can use to demolish the riverbank. The imp is focused on his task, dislikes procrastination, and spits shards of ice when annoyed. The imp can guide the characters to the chasm of the Pit of Shummrath.

## DEVELOPMENT

If Mephistopheles learns of the *Sword of Zariel*, the archdevil orders the imp to follow the group invisibly after it completes its demolition work and report back when they've located the Bleeding Citadel. At that point, Mephistopheles sends an **ice devil** into Avernus with orders to murder the characters and steal the sword. If he gets the sword, Mephistopheles plans to use the artifact as leverage against Zariel in future dealings.

### SHATTERSTICK

A shatterstick is a nonmagical, 12-inch-long, 4-pound stake made of blue-tinged infernal iron mined on Cania, the eighth layer of the Nine Hells. When embedded in earth or pounded into solid rock, the stake emits a seismic vibration in a 20-foot radius centered on itself for 1 minute, shaking the ground in that area for the duration. When the effects ends, the shatterstick breaks apart, becoming useless, and all structures within 20 feet of it take 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage.

# PIT OF SHUMMRATH

HERE YOU FIND A STICKY SITUATION. POOR SHUMMRATH isn't the fiend it used to be.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A deep rift slashes across the surface of Avernus for as far as the eye can see. The canyon is over a mile deep and filled with a lake of green slime that undulates as though breathing. From a nearby cliff, a tributary of the River Styx cascades down into the slime.

Dangling from a bent iron crane that leans out over the chasm is an iron cage containing a hairless, green-skinned humanoid wearing shackles on its ankles. The crane lowers the cage by a chain into the slime, immersing the creature in the goo for a minute before hoisting it back out. This dunking continues again and again, and the trapped creature seems helpless to stop it.

Long ago, Bel imprisoned a rival pit fiend named Shummrath at the bottom of this deep chasm. Over the years, Shummrath has been reduced to a fetid lake of slime. Ancient regenerative properties maintain some semblance of life within the sludge, allowing visitors to communicate with Shummrath telepathically. However, a tributary stream from the River Styx has spilled into his canyon and polluted the devil's mind. Shummrath now only retains thirty seconds of memory and conveys a single thought repeatedly.

Those who establish communication with Shummrath discover that the devil repeats the same thought over and again: it failed to show proper deference to Bel and will have its revenge. Shummrath can talk to the characters telepathically, but his mind unerringly loops back to this same vengeful thought.

## IMPRISONED ULTROLOTH

When the characters arrive here, they spot an **ultroloth** imprisoned in the iron cage suspended over the chasm. The iron crane has a magically powered winch mechanism that repeatedly dunks the cage into the goo, nearly drowning the prisoner with each submersion. The ultroloth, Baazit, is bound by *dimensional shackles* that prevent it from teleporting away.

Baazit contacts the characters telepathically as soon as they're in range. The ultroloth was imprisoned by a pit fiend for stealing *soul coins*. Baazit promises to show the characters how to form magical servants from the goo if they free it. Baazit can also direct the group to Bel's forge (see "Bel's Forge," page 113).

A character can jam the crane's winch with a crowbar or similar tool, preventing it from lowering or raising Baazit's cage. Once the cage stops moving, a character can try to use thieves' tools to unlock the cage door,

doing so with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check. A *knock* spell or similar magic also unlocks the cage door.

## CREATING A HOMUNCULUS

Characters can follow Baazit's instructions to scoop out a handful of the slime and spend an hour molding it into a tiny humanoid shape. At the end of this time, the slime animates as a loyal, lawful evil **homunculus** made of dripping green jelly. Each character can only have one of these servants active at a time. If a character makes a second homunculus, the first one melts into a sticky puddle of inanimate goo.

## TREASURE

Characters who free or slay Baazit can claim the *dimensional shackles* that restrain it.

## DAMMING THE STYX

If the characters are traveling with the ice imp (see "Mirror of Mephistar," page 99), it leads them to the narrowest point of the Styx's tributary river and sets about hammering its five shattersticks into the rocky ravine walls (see the "Shatterstick" sidebar on page 99). The imp asks the characters to stand guard while it works. As the imp places the shattersticks, eight **spined devils** swoop down and attack. One minute after the last shatterstick is activated, the combined seismic activity of all the shattersticks triggers a huge rockfall that fills the gully, creating a dam.

With the polluted River Styx cut off from the chasm, Shummrath slowly starts to regenerate its mind and reform its body. After 48 hours, Shummrath reforms as a **pit fiend** and flies off to wage war on his rival, Bel. If the characters visit Bel's forge later in the adventure (see "Bel's Forge," page 113), they find it under siege from Shummrath's hastily mustered forces. The attackers are quickly overwhelmed, forcing Shummrath to retreat to some far corner of Avernus to escape Bel's wrath.

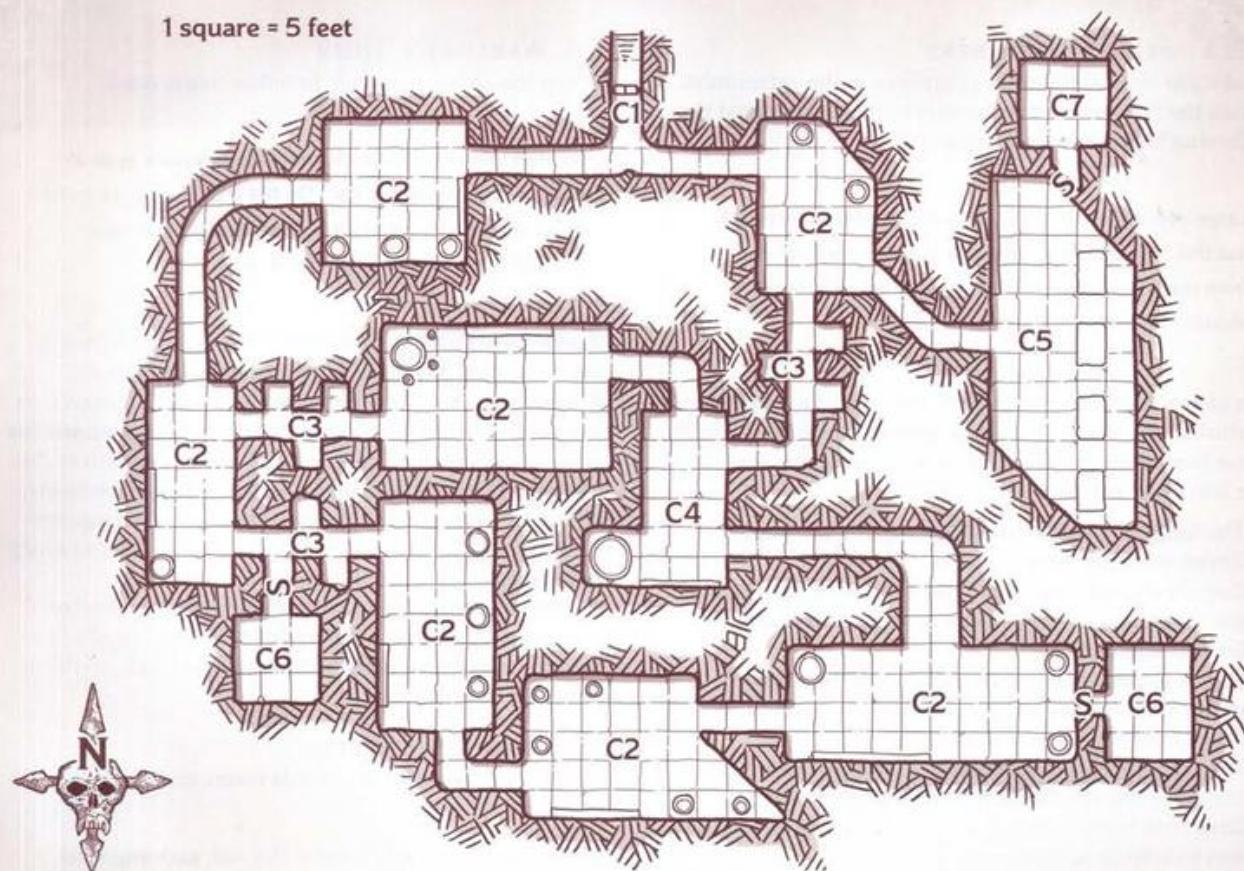
## DEVELOPMENT

If the characters successfully dam the River Styx, they can return to the Mirror of Mephistar to claim recompense. Rigorath the cambion tells them that Ubbalux must swear fealty to Mephistopheles to escape the standing stones. If Ubbalux does as Rigorath suggests, swearing its undying fealty to Mephistopheles, the archdevil makes it possible for the barlgura to escape.

If the characters return to the obelisk with the news, Ubbalux begrudgingly accepts these terms and reveals the location of the Crypt of the Hellriders on the players' map. Ubbalux says that the death knight Olanthius, guardian of the tomb, knows the secret location of the Bleeding Citadel. The demon also reveals that "For Glory" is the pass phrase to open to the catacombs, where many of Zariel's fallen comrades are interred.

As the characters leave the obelisk, they witness Ubbalux swear fealty to Mephistopheles, whereupon black ice forms around the standing stones and causes them all to crack at once. Ubbalux is able to leave the ring of standing stones at that point, crying "Finally! I am free!" into the howling wind.

1 square = 5 feet



MAP 3.3: CRYPT OF THE HELLRIDERS

## CRYPT OF THE HELLRIDERS

ZARIEL'S FALLEN COMPANIONS CANNOT REST. NOBODY can in this nightmare hellscape.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Arid smog swirls around a barren hill, rising from which like giant tombstones are a pair of leaning monoliths, each soaring more than fifty feet into the smoky red sky. Dozens of armored knights kneel in motionless reverence before the monoliths, between which a set of onyx steps leads down under the hill.

The onyx steps descend into catacombs containing the remains of Hellriders who died fighting at Zariel's side. Their restless spirits yearn for peace yet are doomed to haunt this place until once more called to arms.

Dozens of dead knights kneel before the monoliths, their foreheads resting on the pommels of their swords. The knights' armor serves as caskets for their bones, yet their corpses stay upright as though in prayer. Each knight wears the faded regalia of Elturel.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE CRYPT

The following descriptions correspond to areas marked on map 3.3. The entire crypt is terribly cold and wreathed in ankle-deep mist. All rooms and passages in the crypt are 10 feet tall and hewn from solid rock.

### C1. SEALED GATES

When the characters descend into the catacombs, read:

A pair of basalt doors block the passage ahead, their surfaces engraved with a relief of a knight locked in combat with a devil. Both wield burning swords.

The doors do not have visible handles, locks, or bolts, and they are magically locked, hardened, and enchanted to resist magic. Any spell cast to unlock, damage, or remodel the doors automatically fails. Characters can use *dimension door* or similar magic to get past the doors. They can also slip through the cracks between the doors if they have the magic to do so (such as the *gaseous form* spell). Otherwise, they'll need to speak the pass phrase "For Glory" to proceed any farther. Characters can learn the pass phrase from Ubbalux the barlgura (as discussed in the "Pit of Shummrrath" section, page 100).

If a character speaks the pass phrase aloud within 10 feet of the doors, the doors slowly grind open. The doors close on their own after 1 hour unless they are held or wedged open.

## C2. FUNERARY CHAMBERS

There are several funerary chambers in the catacombs. When the characters enter one of these rooms, read the following boxed text to the players:

Large iron burial urns are positioned reverently throughout this hall, each engraved with a noble coats-of-arms from the city of Elturel. Polished swords, lances, and shields hang from racks on the walls.

If a character says respectful words over the urns or disturb them in any way, three **ghosts** of Zariel's knights arise from their remains. The ghosts solemnly reveal the following information:

- The knights fought and died alongside the angel Zariel when she waged war in Avernus.
- Zariel's crusade ended in failure. Most of their generals, including the angel herself, fell to evil and transformed into fiends.
- One of Zariel's generals, Olanthus, killed himself rather than embrace tyranny. Zariel raised him as a death knight to ensure his loyalty.
- The knights' souls are cursed to remain here. They yearn for the afterlife, but the oath they swore to Zariel binds them to her service. They beg the characters to help them find rest.

If the characters promise to help the ghosts achieve their final rest, the ghosts provide the following additional information:

- Olanthus despises Zariel but is supernaturally bound to her service. The ghosts suggest there is still good in him.
- Olanthus keeps quarters here in the catacombs. His rooms may contain evidence of his humanity that the characters can use to appeal to him.

Once summoned, the ghosts remain by their urns until the characters leave the catacombs or free their souls. If a character defiles any remains, the ghosts use their Possession powers to drive the trespassers from the catacombs.

## C3. KNIGHTS' CASKETS

When the characters approach one of these areas, read:

Recesses in the walls hold iron burial caskets. Each casket has a single, healthy red rose resting on its lid.

Each of these corridors contains six caskets arranged in stacked pairs.

Being entombed in Avernus has corrupted the spirits of these knights. Each casket contains a single **wraith** magically held at bay by the rose laid on the casket. If a character removes a rose from a casket, the flower immediately withers and dies, and the wraith arises from the casket to attack any living creature or fiend that it sees. A wraith can't touch any of the roses on the other caskets.

## C4. WARLOCKS' TOMB

When the characters peer into this room, read:

An iron urn heaped with human bones squats in an alcove at one end of this hall. On the wall nearby, a carved relief shows a column of mounted knights charging through a portal into a fiery hellscape.

Zariel's warlocks helped build the Crypt of the Hellriders to gain infernal power in their mortal world. When they died, their cursed bodies were dragged into Avernus to guard the tomb for eternity. Eight **mummies** now lurk inside this chamber and guard the path to the memorial steles. If the undead hear the characters elsewhere in the catacombs, they hide inside the large urn to the west. When the characters enter, they try to creep out silently and ambush them.

**Treasure.** One of the mummies carries a *wand of secrets*, and another wears a *necklace of fireballs*. If the characters defeat the undead, they can claim these items for themselves.

## C5. MEMORIAL STELES

When the characters enter this room, read:

Four memorial steles stand in this hall, each engraved with hundreds of names. A legend etched at the top of each stele reads, in Common: "Here lie the fallen. May their souls echo here until the end of time."

Adorning the wall across from the steles is a carved relief showing a solemn, blindfolded angel on the back of a mammoth with feathered wings. The mammoth is reared up on its hind legs, and the angel holds her sword high. All around them are the broken bodies of fallen knights and devils.

Characters who use *detect magic* or similar magic to examine the steles discern a strong aura of necromantic magic emanating from the engraved names.

While the steles remain empowered, necrotic energy lashes out at anyone who touches them. A creature touching a stele must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the soul-bound parchments in both ritual rooms (area C6) are destroyed, the steles deactivate. The characters can then free the warriors' souls by striking their names from the stone. As the names are removed, the knights' ghosts fade from view with gasps of relief. If all the names are struck from the stele, each character gains the benefit of a *bless* spell that lasts for 24 hours.

## C6. RITUAL ROOMS

These two rooms are hidden behind secret doors. Characters with passive Wisdom (Perception) scores of 15 or higher spot a secret door within 5 feet of them. Otherwise, a secret door can be found by a character who

examines the surrounding wall and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

These rooms are magically shielded against undead creatures, such that undead can't enter either room or even perceive its presence. Each ritual room appears to contain nothing more than ankle-deep mist. However, any character who explores a ritual room disturbs the mist enough to see features hidden underneath it:

As you disturb the ankle-deep mist, it parts to reveal a ritual circle daubed in blood on the floor. Hundreds of slivers of parchment are arranged within it, each tiny strip bearing a name written neatly in blood.

The papers name every warrior interned in this place. Any character who has seen the steles in area C5 can, with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check, discern the papers' purpose: they bind the warriors' souls to the steles and compel them to serve Zariel in undeath by the terms of their original oath to her. By destroying the papers, the characters deactivate the memorial steles and can release the knights' souls from servitude (see area C5 for details).

#### C7. OLANTHIUS'S RETREAT

This room is hidden behind a secret door. Characters with passive Wisdom (Perception) scores of 15 or higher spot the secret door once they get within 5 feet of it. Otherwise, it can be found by a character who examines the surrounding wall and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the characters open the secret door, read the following boxed text to the players:

A stack of eight leather-bound journals rests atop a large writing table in this cramped chamber.

The journals belong to Olanthius the death knight and are written in Common. Characters who spend a short rest poring over the journals learn the following information:

- Olanthius never recovered from Zariel's capitulation to Asmodeus and subsequent transformation into a devil. He blames himself for not seeing warning signs of Zariel's fall from grace early on—her single-minded determination to slay demons at all costs.
- Olanthius took his life rather than face damnation, but he was transformed into an undead monster by Zariel to serve her forevermore.
- Olanthius describes Haruman, his one-time comrade in arms, as a heartless man bereft of compassion—now a devil bent on punishing anyone who stands in Zariel's way.
- Olanthius mourns the deaths of his fallen warriors and feels powerless to help them.
- Olanthius speaks well of General Yael, whom he clearly respects and secretly adores. In one journal, Olanthius hints that he knows where Yael hid the *Sword of Zariel* but fails to note the location.

## OLANTHIUS RETURNS

If the characters desecrate any of the tombs or disturb the journals in area C7, Olanthius the **death knight** returns to the crypt on a chariot pulled by two **gorgons**. Olanthius is bound to protect the crypt and can be summoned from anywhere in Avernus to fulfill his duties. He descends below ground to hunt down intruders and interrogate them, leaving the gorgons and chariot outside.

As Olanthius moves through the catacombs, he compels any ghosts he encounters to fight at his side. Any ghosts that the characters summoned from the urns in the funerary chambers (area C2) transform into **specters** under Olanthius's command and join him on his hunt.

Olanthius is an extraordinarily powerful foe for 9th-level characters. Fortunately, the characters can avoid combat with the death knight once they realize he's willing to help them.

## DEVELOPMENT

Characters who parley with Olanthius can gain a valuable ally in the fight against Zariel. To stand any chance of swaying the death knight to their cause, the characters must have read his journals and learned of his hatred for Zariel. Otherwise, he tries to annihilate them for their impudence.

Olanthius is willing to reveal the Bleeding Citadel's location only if the characters create a diversion to distract Zariel. The characters must seek out the demon lord Kostchtchie, who is imprisoned in Avernus and whose hammer Zariel stole. If freed, the demon lord is sure to want its weapon back, which should create the diversion that Olanthius needs.

The Arches of Ulloch can transport the characters to Kostchtchie's Maw, where the demon lord is being held, provided the characters have a clear destination in mind as they pass through the arches. Olanthius provides directions to the Arches of Ulloch and can point to that location, as well as the location of Kostchtchie's Maw, on the characters' map.

Once Kostchtchie is released, the characters can report back to Olanthius at the Crypt of the Hellriders, whereupon he reveals the Bleeding Citadel's location.

## ARCHE OF ULLOCH

ONLY FOOLS STEP THROUGH ULLOCH'S GATES. THEY lead to nowhere a wise person wants to go.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Two ornate, black arches dominate the scorched landscape for miles, each one rising two hundred feet into the stiflingly hot air. Every inch of stonework is engraved with images of devils waging war against demons.

In forgotten times, archdevils used these twin arches to transport entire regiments to other planes of existence. The arches' magic has waned significantly, but there's still enough magic left in each one to transport creatures to another location in the Nine Hells. Characters who use a *detect magic* spell or similar magic to examine the arches discern a powerful aura of conjuration magic around each one.

When a creature approaches within 100 feet of either arch, the stonework emits a loud, resonant hum that grows louder and higher in pitch as the creature draws closer. As a creature passes through an arch, a roaring sheet of flame fills the archway, teleporting the creature to another location in the Nine Hells. Any creature or object that passes through the arch while the portal is open is transported to the same destination. Each arch is wide enough to accommodate infernal war machines.

To travel to a specific destination, a creature must have visited it before or be able to point to its location on a map. Characters who point to Kostchtchie's Maw on their map as they pass through an arch are teleported to the top of the demon lord's prison-chasm.

If the characters fail to pick a destination, determine it randomly. Ask a player to roll a d20 on the poster map of Avernus. The location closest to where the die rests becomes the destination. If the die rolls off the map, the DM chooses a destination.

The portal remains open and fixed to the same destination for 10 minutes, after which it deactivates as the arch that created it crumbles and falls to the ground.

## KOSTCHTCHIE'S MAW

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND, BUT DOES THE same hold true for fiends?

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A dark chasm gapes between grumbling volcanoes that spew lava and smoke into the hateful sky. The air trembles with the bellowing of some monstrous creature in the dark depths of the chasm.

The demon lord **Kostchtchie** (see the accompanying stat block) resembles a squat hill giant with short, bandy legs and a grossly shaped head.

Frost giants who forsake their gods and turn to demon worship can summon Kostchtchie with bloody offerings left on altars of hewn ice. If the demon lord chooses to answer the giants' call, he hunts and fights alongside them for a time, infecting the frost giants with savage madness and bloodlust before disappearing back to the Abyss. Kostchtchie's favored weapon is *Matalotok*, a warhammer forged by the frost giant god Thrym (see appendix C for more information about this legendary magic item).

On his most recent visit to the Nine Hells, Kostchtchie was defeated by the archdevil Zariel, who took his hammer and chained him at the bottom of this chasm, knowing that killing him would simply cause him to reform on his icy layer of the Abyss. Without *Matalotok*, Kostchtchie's immunity to cold damage becomes resistance to cold damage.

Shackled by ever-tightening magical chains that prevent him from casting spells, Kostchtchie squats in a 10-foot-deep, 80-foot-diameter pool of black tar in a cavern at the bottom of a chasm, his hands chained behind him. His unholy screams and vile epithets can be heard for miles. Characters who attempt to communicate with the demon lord are met with guttural cries of anguish and frustration. In sporadic moments of lucidity, Kostchtchie glares at a character and bellows, "FREE ME!" or "BRING ME MY HAMMER!" in Giant first and Abyssal second. If that fails to garner the desired reaction, Kostchtchie resorts to using telepathy to contact the nearest character, demanding its immediate release while offering nothing in return.

## THE CHASM

The chasm descends to a depth of 500 feet. Although there are abundant handholds and footholds, the route to the bottom is steep and treacherous. Characters who can't fly must make DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks to ascend or descend the chasm without climbing gear. If a check fails by 5 or less, the character makes no progress on their turn. If the check fails by more than 5, the character falls to the bottom of the chasm.

## PRISON GUARDS

A **chain devil** named Mazer and four **hell hounds** guard the demon lord. If they detect intruders, the hounds pounce down from high caves as the devil emerges from the tar pit.

Mazer keeps Kostchtchie's chains tight at all times. Hidden in the tar pit are dozens more chains (each 100 feet long) that Mazer can use its *Animate Chains* action to animate. Mazer uses these loose chains to bind enemies or drag them into the tar pit, which is difficult terrain.

If the chain devil dies, Kostchtchie's chains loosen enough for the demon lord to break free of them. Once free of its chains, the demon lord regains his spellcasting abilities.

## DEVELOPMENT

If Kostchtchie is freed, he cries out to Zariel (in Giant) that he's coming for his hammer and swears to crush her with it. He then casts *wind walk*, which turns him into a cloudy form with an astonishingly fast flying speed of 300 feet. In this form, he travels with great haste across Avernus, determined to get his hammer back. Characters swift enough to follow in his wake are led to Zariel (see chapter 5).

With Kostchtchie freed, the characters can return to the Crypt of the Hellriders, where Olanthius dutifully reveals the location of the Bleeding Citadel (see chapter 4). As the characters leave the catacombs, he asks them to give his love to Yael when they see her.



## KOSTCHTCHIE

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 243 (18d10 + 144)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	12 (+1)	27 (+8)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +9, Con +16, Wis +14

Skills Intimidation +12, Perception +14, Survival +14

**Damage Resistances** fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** cold, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage that is nonmagical

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

**Languages** Abyssal, Giant, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 25 (75,000 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Kostchtchie fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Kostchtchie has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Kostchtchie's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *command, darkness*

1/day each: *dispel evil and good, gate, harm, telekinesis, teleport, wind walk*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Kostchtchie makes two melee attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (1d6 + 10) piercing damage.

**Matalotok (Warhammer).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage, or 21 (2d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage when used with two hands, and the weapon emits a burst of cold that deals 10 (3d6) cold damage to each creature within 30 feet of it.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Kostchtchie can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kostchtchie regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Attack.** Kostchtchie makes one melee weapon attack.

**Charge.** Kostchtchie moves up to his speed.

**Curse (Costs 2 Actions).** Kostchtchie curses one creature he can see within 60 feet of him. The cursed creature gains vulnerability to all damage dealt by Kostchtchie until the end of Kostchtchie's next turn.

## PATH OF DEVILS

### DEMON ZAPPER

*For characters of level 8*

"The purest of souls lures fiends into a hellish trap. Zap! Zap!"

### BONE BRAMBLES

*For characters of level 8*

"Your future is written in your blood. She'll open your veins to paint the story hidden in your heart."

### ULDRAK'S GRAVE

*For characters of level 8*

"A fallen titan or a wimp with delusions of grandeur? I'll leave that one for you to decide."

### ARKHAN'S TOWER

*For characters of level 9*

"He wears the hand of evil, yet his goal remains just beyond his fingertips."

### TIAMAT'S MONUMENT

*For characters of level 9*

"Draconic devils roost in a giant skull, through which the dragon queen speaks with five tongues."

### BEL'S FORGE

*For characters of level 9*

"An ousted archduke sulking in a volcano, eager to reclaim his stolen throne."

### SIBRIEX

*For characters of level 10*

"A breeder of horrors and a hoarder of secrets, a sibriex is said to be as old as the Abyss."

### WRECKED FLYING FORTRESS

*For characters of level 10*

"A weapon made for an archdevil, ravaged in battle and ripe for plunder."

## DEMON ZAPPER

THE PUREST OF SOULS LURES FIENDS INTO A HELLISH trap. Zap! Zap!

—The Cartographer

When the characters approach this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Radiant light cascades from a rusted metal monument shaped like the upraised mandibles of a giant beetle.

The light cascades from a **unicorn** named Mooncolor, who is trapped inside a 10-foot-diameter sphere of magical force that prevents any matter from passing into it and blocks any spells cast into or out of it. The sphere is suspended between the zapper's spines, 50 feet above the ground. This light lures demons like moths to a flame, annihilating them when they get close. While trapped in the sphere, the unicorn can't use any of its magical abilities.

The sphere targets the nearest fiend that moves within 100 feet of it, discharging a beam of radiance that forms a line 5 feet wide and up to 100 feet long, extending to the target. Any creature in the line that has 100 hit points or fewer disintegrates into a pile of ash. Creatures with more than 100 hit points in the line must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 260 (40d12) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the demon zapper has fired, it must recharge for 1 minute before it can fire again.

To free the unicorn, the characters must destroy the rusted metal structure around it, which has AC 14, 250 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The structure crumbles when it drops to 0 hit points, causing the sphere of force to slowly sink to the ground and fade away. If the characters free the unicorn, it accompanies them if they are of mostly good alignment.

## RALZALA THE DAO

A **dao** named Ralzala defends the demon zapper. Ralzala swore loyalty to Zariel to gain revenge against a rival dao who tried to ruin her. The dao regrets the arrangement and wants to break her pact with the archdevil.

Ralzala hides under the ground at the base of the zapper. If the characters damage the zapper, Ralzala emerges from the ground, casts *tongues*, and offers them a deal. She reveals that the deposed archdevil Bel would gladly aid the characters in overthrowing Zariel. If the characters help Ralzala break her pact with Zariel, the dao promises to direct them to Bel's Forge and write them a letter of introduction.

Ralzala knows an oracle named Red Ruth, who could surely divine a solution to her problem. Being bound to the demon zapper, Ralzala is unable to seek out this oracle herself, but the characters could do so in her stead. She tells them to speak with Red Ruth in the corrupted forest nearby and follow her instructions to break the pact. This leads the players to the Bone Brambles.

DIAGRAM 3.3: PATH OF DEVILS



## BONE BRAMBLES

YOUR FUTURE IS WRITTEN IN YOUR BLOOD. SHE'LL OPEN  
your veins to paint the story hidden in your heart.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A maze of warped trees and bonelike vines stretches before you. Calcified corpses merge with the trees, covered in fungal pods that feed on the blood oozing through the undergrowth. Here and there, narrow paths wend deeper into the wood.

In a bygone age, the night hag Red Ruth corrupted a community of dryads by fouling the roots of their trees with mind-bending poison. As the dryads fell to evil, their forest was wrenched from the Feywild into Avernus. Those dryads who resisted the poison died trying to merge back into their trees. The rest crumbled to ash and became restless, tortured spirits akin to banshees. Contented, Red Ruth made her home at the heart of the twisted wood.

The characters can venture into the wood out of curiosity or to find the oracle that Ralzala hopes can break her pact with Zariel.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE BRAMBLES

The following descriptions correspond to areas marked on map 3.4 (page 108).

### B1. ENTRANCES

Characters who circle the tangled stretch of woodland uncover five separate paths leading into its interior. Impassable brambles choke the woodland outside these trails and even grow overhead to blot out the sky.

To avoid getting lost in the wood, the characters must succeed on a DC 15 group Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, the characters locate Red Ruth's lair at the heart of the woodland (area B3). If they fail, they blunder into one of the dead ends listed below (area B2) and must make the check again when they move on. Once all four dead ends have been explored, the group automatically locates Red Ruth's lair.

### B2. DEAD ENDS

If the characters get lost in the brambles, roll on the Dead Ends table to determine where they end up, or choose a result that they haven't encountered yet.

### DEAD ENDS

d4	Dead End
1	Dead traveler
2	Dryad spirits
3	Shambling mounds
4	Thorn trap



MAP 3.4: BONE BRAMBLERS

**Dead Traveler.** The corpse of a drow rests at the end of the path, her flesh impaled by hungry vines and her face twisted in an expression of horror. The traveler wears a *bag of devouring* on a strap.

**Dryad Spirits.** Three cursed dryad spirits (use the *banshee* stat block to represent them) approach the characters and demand to be reminded of the “wonders of life.” At your discretion, a character can mollify the spirits with a sweet story, a kiss, a song, or anything else that reminds the dryads of home. If the characters fail to satisfy them, the three spirits attack.

**Shambeling Mounds.** Three **shambeling mounds** arise from the brambles and attack the characters.

**Thorn Trap.** The characters spot a hawthorn staff entangled at the end of the path, buried behind a 15-foot-deep thicket of thorns. Each 5-foot-square section of thorns counts as difficult terrain and has AC 11, 15 hit points, immunity to psychic damage, and vulnerability to fire damage. If damaged but not destroyed, the thorns magically regrow to full health after 24 hours. The thorns restrain any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of them. Any creature that starts its turn restrained by the thorns takes 22 (4d10) slashing damage from the writhing barbs. Once a creature is entangled, it can break free only if all the thorn bushes within 5 feet of it are destroyed.

The staff at the center of the maze is a decoy and crumbles to ashes in the hands of whoever claims it.

### B3. RED RUTH'S LAIR

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A cave-like hovel lies at the center of the maze. Hundreds of bones and body parts hang by twine from the entrance, and the ceiling is strung with garland made of bloody entrails. The air buzzes with flies.

Red Ruth, a **night hag**, makes her lair inside this gory den. She wears a dress made from stitched-together bones. Strings of infants' skulls hang around her neck and chatter nursery rhymes incessantly (and in different languages) as she talks.

Evil visitors from all over the multiverse travel to Avernus to hear Red Ruth's divinations and sample her mystical brews. If the characters talk to Red Ruth about the dao's curse, she offers them a deal for her assistance (see “Hold the Fort” below).

Red Ruth sells potions brewed from blood, which she gladly trades for *soul coins* (see page 94) as listed on the Red Ruth's Bargains table. Each potion imparts an unpleasant but harmless side effect when imbibed: flatulence, boils, hair loss, or any other ghastliness you can conceive. Her divinations replicate the effects of a *commune* spell, although Red Ruth provides the answers to the questions without needing to appeal to a divine being.

## RED RUTH'S BARGAINS

Goods	Price
Potion, common or uncommon	1 soul coin
Potion, rare	2 soul coins
Commune spell	3 soul coins

## HOLD THE FORT

Red Ruth says she knows how to free Ralzala the dao from her pact, but she won't tell the characters until they've performed a favor for her first. The hag explains that she's long overdue for her bath—it's been a couple of centuries at the very least since she last washed. She asks the characters to arrange and pay for a pampering session at Infernal Rapture in the Wandering Emporium (page 126). She warns the characters of one other condition before they decide: they must watch over her grove while she's gone. If the characters attack or threaten Red Ruth during this negotiation, she simply slips away into the Ethereal Plane and doesn't return until they leave.

The night hag can divine the location of the Wandering Emporium by spilling some of her own blood on the ground and studying the pattern that the blood makes. Red Ruth can then point to a location on the character's map of Avernus. (The location can be anywhere you choose.) When the characters arrive at that location, they encounter the Wandering Emporium just as the night hag predicted. Although Red Ruth knows that the owner of Infernal Rapture is a rakshasa, she doesn't share this information with the characters, expecting them to figure it out on their own.

Characters who return from the Wandering Emporium with confirmation of Red Ruth's appointment must watch over the grove for a few hours while the hag leaves to take her bath. During this time, the cursed spirits of the dryads arise to destroy Red Ruth's lair as punishment for her crimes. This force consists of two dryad spirits (use the **banshee** stat block) and a walking, undead tree (use the **treant** stat block, except the tree is undead and has resistance to necrotic damage).

If the characters defeat the undead, Red Ruth fulfills her end of the bargain when she returns. Otherwise, the undead tree collapses the entrance to Red Ruth's hovel. The night hag is not pleased and uses her Ethereality trait to walk through the collapsed entrance of her cave, disappearing into her lair without so much as a goodbye.

## TREASURE

The dryad spirits have no treasure, but the undead tree has a dead gnome skeleton lodged in a hollow cavity in its trunk. The skeleton wears a witch's hat (actually a *hat of disguise*) and clutches a +1 wand of the war mage.

## DEVELOPMENT

To honor her end of the deal, Red Ruth reveals that Ralzala must drink the blood of a titan to free herself from Zariel's pact. The night hag says that Uldrak might be able to help but warns "he's not what he used to be." If the characters show her their map, she identifies Uldrak's location. This sends the group to Uldrak's Grave.

## ULDRAK'S GRAVE

A FALLEN TITAN OR A WIMP WITH DELUSIONS OF *grandeur?* I'll leave that for you to decide.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

The cracked helm and sword of a titan lies half buried in the ash of Avernus. A spherical stone set into the sword's pommel still gleams with scarlet radiance.

The empyrean Uldrak quested into the Nine Hells to slay Tiamat and win glory for his deity, Surtur, but he was beaten handily by the dragon queen. The empyrean wasn't slain; instead, Tiamat cursed him for his impudence by transforming him into a **spined devil**. This wretched creature now hides inside the helmet that he once wore. For millennia, Uldrak has dwelled in this spot, forlornly plotting to restore his true form.

## DEALING WITH ULDRAK

Uldrak is a bitter creature who barely remembers his past. Long ago, he learned how to remove his curse, but the solution was so beyond him that he consigned himself to failure. Now, he's more interested in scrabbling to survive than trying to escape the Nine Hells.

Uldrak's empyrean heritage still lingers in his voice. He understands all languages, and when he speaks, he randomly switches language to Giant. Millennia of isolation have unhinged his mind, so he argues with himself often, even in front of strangers.

Uldrak reveals his sorry tale to any who ask him about the empyrean's whereabouts. Characters who came here to extract Uldrak's blood (see "Bone Brambles," above) can make a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check when they learn that Uldrak is now a fiend. On a success, they hypothesize that the blood must be drawn from his titan form to break the dao's curse. Thankfully, Uldrak has a plan (see "Development" below).

**Treasure.** The sphere set into the pommel of Uldrak's sword is an *orb of dragonkind*. This item is vital to Uldrak's plan to free himself from his curse.

## DEVELOPMENT

To regain his true form, Uldrak must spill some of Tiamat's blood on the ground of Avernus. Fighting Tiamat in his present form would be madness, but Uldrak has learned that a dragonborn named Arkhan the Cruel carries some of Tiamat's blood in a reliquary around his neck. Uldrak reveals that the "gem" glowing on the pommel of his old sword is in fact an *orb of dragonkind*—an item sure to be of interest to Arkhan. He urges the characters to trade the orb to Arkhan for the reliquary and then return here. If the characters agree, Uldrak gives them directions to Arkhan's Tower.

## ARKHAN'S TOWER

HE WEARS THE HAND OF EVIL, YET HIS GOAL REMAINS  
just beyond his fingertips.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A dark tower looms on the horizon, its black spire rising hundreds of feet, its ramparts bristling with charred skulls mounted on iron spikes. The tower's apex splits into five narrower spires that jab at the sky like clawed fingers. Circling above the tower's peak is a great white dragon stained with ash and soot.

As you get closer to the tower, you notice figures shuffling atop its ramparts—undead guards in various states of decay.

Arkhan the Cruel has claimed this tower as his base. Here, with the help of a tortle death-priest of Tiamat named Krull, the dragonborn warrior researches ways to assert his will over the artifact known as the *Hand of Vecna*, so he can use its secrets to free the evil dragon queen Tiamat from the Nine Hells. Arkhan has traveled to a nearby monument to commune with his goddess, leaving Krull behind.

Dragons tore the obsidian rocks of Arkhan's tower from the fiery volcanoes of Avernus. Fifty **skeletons** and thirty **zombies** stand ready to defend the tower, which is also guarded by the **adult white dragon** Obatala. When it detects intruders, the dragon roars to alert **Krull** (see



### KRULL

Medium humanoid (tortle), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +8, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +4, Medicine +8, Nature +4, Survival +8

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

**Hold Breath.** Krull can hold his breath for 1 hour.

**Inescapable Destruction.** Necrotic damage dealt by Krull's spells ignores resistance to necrotic damage.

**Spellcasting.** Krull is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, mending, resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, detect evil and good, false life, inflict wounds, ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, gentle repose, hold person, ray of enfeeblement, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, magic circle, speak with dead, spirit guardians, vampiric touch*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, blight, death ward, divination, locate creature*

5th level (2 slots): *antilife shell, cloudkill, contagion, greater restoration*

6th level (1 slot): *create undead, true seeing*

7th level (1 slot): *divine word, regenerate*

### ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

**+1 Maul.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

**Shell Defense.** Krull withdraws into his shell. Until he emerges as a bonus action, he has a +4 bonus to AC and has advantage on Strength and Constitution saving throws. While in his shell, Krull is prone, his speed is 0 and can't increase, he has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, he can't take reactions, and the only action he can take is to emerge from his shell.

the accompanying stat block), who emerges from the tower to greet new arrivals. Krull, whose shell is carved with Draconic runes that spell out prayers to Tiamat, is joined by four **ghouls** that serve as his assistants. The ghouls gnaw on bones and eye the characters hungrily as Krull negotiates with them. Under no circumstances does Krull allow intruders to enter the nine-story tower and disturb his experiments or Arkhan's chambers.

Krull is willing to lead the characters to Arkhan if they have something valuable in their possession, such as the *orb of dragonkind* recovered from Uldrak's Grave or the unicorn rescued from the demon zapper (page 106). Otherwise, the turtle instructs the characters to leave at once or die.

In addition to its undead defenses, the tower has four smaller dragons living inside it: a **young black dragon** named Slarkas, a **young blue dragon** named Vistalancer, a **young green dragon** named Vermilius, and a **red dragon wyrm** named Flash. These dragons attack characters who invade the tower and fight to the death to defend it.

**Treasure.** Krull wields a +1 maul and carries five potions of healing and two soul coins (see page 94) in a sling bag. The tower is filled with laboratories, morgues, and dragon hatcheries that might contain other treasures protected by magical wards, at your discretion.

## ARKHAN THE CRUEL

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), lawful evil

Armor Class 23 (*obsidian flint dragon plate, shield*)

Hit Points 221 (26d8 + 104)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Wis +5, Cha +9

**Skills** Athletics +10, Deception +9, Intimidation +9

**Damage Resistances** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft. (can see invisible creatures out to the same range), passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Aura of Hate.** While Arkhan isn't incapacitated, he and all fiends and undead within 30 feet of him deal 4 extra damage whenever they hit with a melee weapon attack (already factored into Arkhan's attacks). This extra damage is of the same type as the weapon's damage type.

**Hand of Vecna.** The Hand of Vecna has 8 charges and regains 1d4 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. Arkhan can cast the following spells from the hand by expending the specified

## DEVELOPMENT

If the characters convince Krull to lead them to Arkhan, the tortoise guides them safely to the Monument to Tiamat (page 112). The characters could also stake out Arkhan's tower and await the dragonborn's return. Arkhan reacts here as he does at the Monument to Tiamat, except that he can't summon Asojano the chimera.



number of charges (spell save DC 18): *finger of death* (5 charges), *sleep* (1 charge), *slow* (2 charges), and *teleport* (3 charges).

**Innate Spellcasting.** Arkhan's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). He can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *animate dead*, *branding smite* (at 4th level), *revivify*  
1/day each: *geas*, *raise dead*

**Special Equipment.** Arkhan wields *Fane-Eater* (see page 223) and wears a suit of *obsidian flint dragon plate* (see page 224). The armor gives Arkhan advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to avoid or end the grappled condition on him.

## ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Arkhan makes three weapon attacks.

**Fane-Eater (Battleaxe).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (1d8 + 12) slashing damage, or 17 (1d10 + 12) slashing damage when used with two hands, plus 9 (2d8) cold damage. If the target is a creature and Arkhan rolls a 20 on the attack roll, the creature takes an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, and Arkhan regains an amount of hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, plus 4 piercing damage and 9 (2d8) cold damage if the javelin was used to make a melee attack.

# MONUMENT TO TIAMAT

DRACONIC DEVILS ROOST IN A GIANT SKULL, THROUGH  
which the dragon queen speaks with five tongues.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A colossal dragon's skull leans against a mountainside, surrounded by bones the size of houses. Acrid smoke rises from the skull's maw. A military tent has been pitched among the bones, and parked next to it is a two-wheeled infernal war machine.

Gathered around this tent are a dozen chattering, reptilian humanoids with gleaming swords, white scales, and white, leathery wings.

A tunnel at the back of the skull leads to Tiamat's lair. The devils nesting within the skull, the abishai, are believed to carry out her bidding—or perhaps guard over her prison on orders of Asmodeus.

From the depths of her lair, Tiamat can hear the prayers and pronouncements of faithful servants who call out to her from the maw of the colossal dragon skull. If the dragon queen chooses to reply, her five hissing voices issue from the darkness, amplified by the skull as they give commands and finish each other's sentences.

It would be madness to assault this location without

an army. Abishai of all colors nest in the sulfurous caves behind the skull, and scores of **white abishai** (see page 241 for their stat block) pour forth to counter any assault or invasion.

The infernal war machine parked next to the tent is a Devil's Ride (see page 94) belonging to Arkhan the Cruel's minotaur bodyguard, Torogar Steelfist.



## TOROGAR STEELFIST

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 168 (16d10 + 80)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +9

Skills Athletics +11, Deception +7, Intimidation +7, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

**Goring Rush.** Immediately after using the Dash action, Torogar can make one melee attack with his horns.

**Labyrinthine Recall.** Torogar can perfectly recall any path he has traveled.

**Rage (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** As a bonus action, Torogar can enter a rage that lasts for 1 minute. The rage ends early if Torogar is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and

he hasn't attacked a hostile creature or taken damage since his last turn. While raging, Torogar gains the following benefits:

- He has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- He deals an extra 3 damage when he hits a target with a melee weapon attack.
- He has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

**Special Equipment.** Torogar wears *gauntlets of flaming fury* (see page 223) and a *belt of fire giant strength*. Without the belt, his Strength is 21. He also carries a *soul coin* (see page 225).

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Torogar makes three attacks: two with his scimitars and one with his horns.

**Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack:** +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage, or 17 (2d6 + 10) slashing damage while raging, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage from the *gauntlets of flaming fury*.

**Horns. Melee Weapon Attack:** +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d8 + 7) piercing damage, or 19 (2d8 + 10) piercing damage while raging.

## ARKHAN THE CRUEL

The dragonborn **Arkhan the Cruel** (see page 111 for his stat block) is in the tent along with his **manticore** companion, Chango, and **Torogar Steelfist**, his savage minotaur bodyguard (see the accompanying stat block). Arkhan visits the monument to commune with his queen and report on his ongoing battle of wills to master the *Hand of Vecna*, which came into his possession during a brief excursion to the world of Exandria.

If the characters approach Arkhan's encampment, the twelve **white abishai** (see page 241 for their stat block) at the camp rush forward to intercept them. Characters accompanied by Krull the tortle (see "Arkhan's Tower," page 110) or who have something Arkhan might consider valuable are permitted to approach his camp.

Arkhan believes he can use the *Hand of Vecna* to unlock the means of freeing Tiamat from her prison in the Nine Hells, but only if the hand doesn't kill him first. The hand is slowly corrupting Arkhan's flesh and decomposing his body on one side. To stave off this decline, Arkhan needs to use the *Hand of Vecna* to snuff the life out of good-aligned creatures. If the characters try to cut a deal with Arkhan—for a vial of Tiamat's blood or help contacting the dragon queen herself—Arkhan demands the sacrifice of a good-aligned creature in exchange. Lulu is an ideal candidate, as is the unicorn Mooncolor (see "Demon Zapper," page 106). Sacrificing such a creature to Arkhan is an evil act.

In battle, Arkhan uses *branding smite* to channel the radiant power of Tiamat into his weapon attacks. If a fight turns against him, he uses the *teleport* power of the *Hand of Vecna* to return to his tower with as many allies as possible. Should one or more of his comrades fall in battle, Arkhan uses *revivify* and *raise dead* spells to bring them back to life as soon as possible.

If Arkhan finds himself overwhelmed with opposition, he orders the abishai to attack. Arkhan can also use a bonus action to call forth Asojano, a **chimera** lairing in the depths of the colossal dragon skull. This evil monster in the service of Tiamat considers Arkhan a friend and ally.

## DEVELOPMENT

The characters most likely come here to bargain with Arkhan for a vial of Tiamat's blood in his possession. If they acquire this reliquary, they can return Tiamat's blood to Uldrak and use it to break his curse. Uldrak excitedly splashes the vial's hissing contents onto the ground at his feet. Moments later, he sheds his fiendish skin and grows back into his true form, that of a lawful evil **empyrean**. Laughing gleefully, Uldrak yanks his sword from the ground and gladly provides the characters with a gallon of his blood so they can break the curse on Ralzala. When this is done, he casts *plane shift* to return to the realm of his deity, Surtur.

Returning to the demon zapper, the characters find that Ralzala also honors her word. After gulping down the empyrean's blood to free herself from her pact, she etches her letter of introduction to Bel onto a basalt tablet and directs the characters to his volcanic lair. The adventure continues in Bel's Forge.

## BEL'S FORGE

AN OUSTED ARCHDUKE SULKING IN A VOLCANO, EAGER to reclaim his stolen throne.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A gargantuan volcano dominates the horizon. Clouds of fire and ash spew from its caldera, and the air trembles with its angry grumblings. A vast, multilayered fortress has been hewn into the volcano's rocky slopes.

Bel, one of the Nine Hells' greatest military minds, dwells in this iron keep. From this bastion, Zariel's second-in-command and the former lord of Avernus oversees the forges that furnish weapons and armor for the Blood War.

An army of devils guards Bel's fortress, and his dark magic alerts him to intruders within its walls. Strangers who venture too close are assaulted by a strike team of two **horned devils** leading ten **bearded devils**. If the intruders survive and linger in the area, a whole army of devils descends upon them.

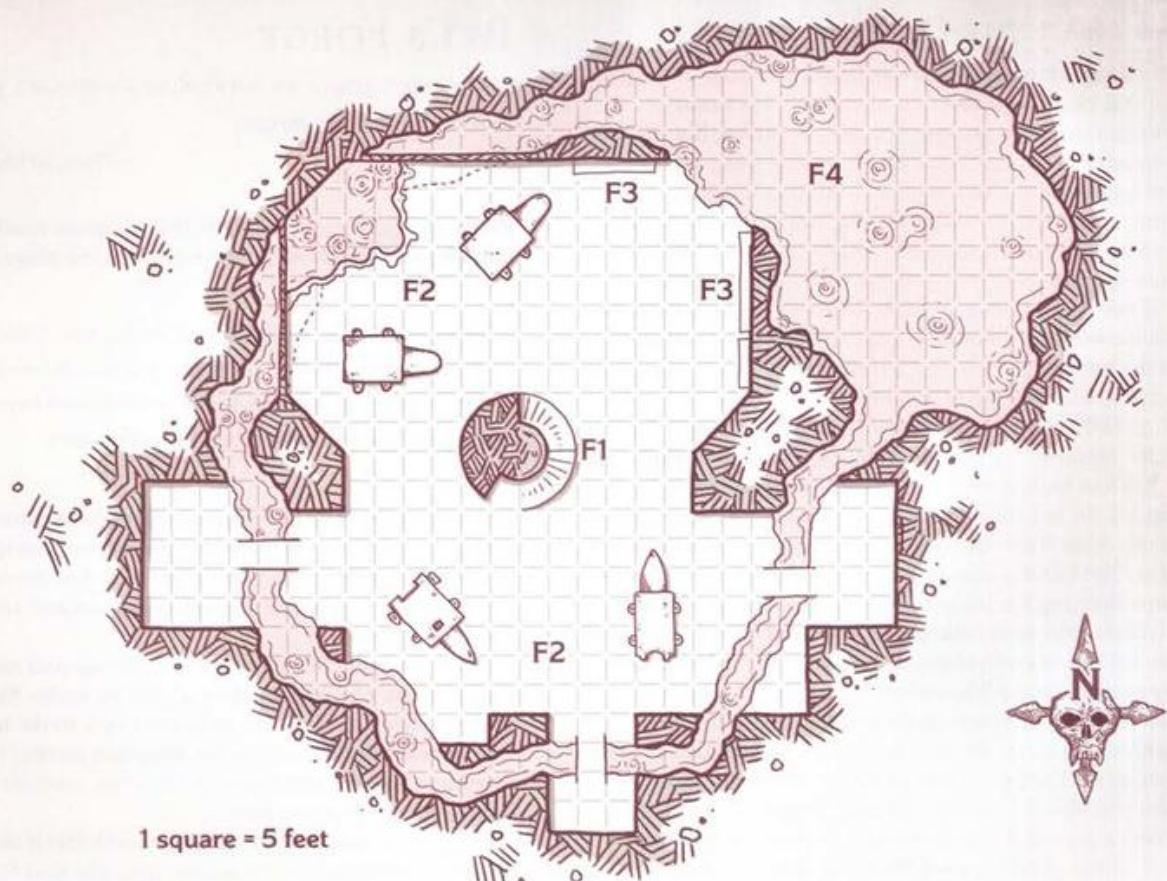
Characters can gain an audience with Bel if they have a letter of introduction (available from the dao Ralzala), or if they're captured or killed by Bel's forces. Bel delights in raising his enemies from the dead to interrogate them, especially if they appear to be outlanders. Infiltrating Bel's fortress is possible, but only if the characters have magical means of shielding themselves from his divinations. If they befriend Olanthius (see "Crypt of the Hellriders," page 101), cut a new deal with Red Ruth (see "Bone Brambles," page 107), or perform a quest for Mephistopheles (see "Mirror of Mephistar," page 99), they could feasibly infiltrate Bel's fortress by smuggling themselves in with any tribute their ally brings before Bel. Whether the characters smuggle themselves inside, arrive with a letter of introduction, or get taken into custody, they eventually arrive at the lowest level of Bel's fortress, where Bel lairs.

## FORGE FEATURES

Bel's forge is carved out of volcanic rock and has soaring, 50-foot-high ceilings throughout. Other features of the forge are summarized below.

**Heat.** Bel's forge is unbearably hot, with an ambient temperature of 130 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit. The extreme heat has detrimental effects on creatures not acclimated to such environments (see "Extreme Heat" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

**Lava.** Open rivers of lava are channeled through the forge to smelt ore and soften metal. Any creature that enters the lava for the first time on its turn or starts its turn in it takes 33 (6d10) fire damage. Increase the damage to 99 (18d10) fire damage if the creature is fully immersed in the lava.



MAP 3.5: BEL'S FORGE

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE FORGE

The following descriptions correspond to areas marked on map 3.5.

### F1. DESCENT TO THE FORGE

Read the following boxed text to the players when their characters reach the lowest level of Bel's fortress:

A wrought iron spiral staircase descends into a cavernous forge. Channels of bubbling lava wind through the complex, casting fiery light over huge anvils. Chained giants with coal-black skin and fiery orange hair hammer out weapons under the malignant gaze of a pit fiend seated in a flying throne. Throughout the forge, sparks fall like rain.

The pit fiend is Bel (see "Roleplaying Bel" below). Only he can control his Large flying throne, which has a flying speed of 15 feet and can hover.

### F2. FIRE GIANT BLACKSMITHS

Four **fire giants** in chains are using enormous hammers and anvils to craft infernal weapons and armor under Bel's watchful eye. A clutter of giant-sized objects surround each giant's anvil: iron buckets containing oily water, coils of greasy chain, mounds of iron filings, and more.

The fire giants' names are Drumra, Jalt, Rosska, and Zrakorn. While chained, the giants have a walking speed of 10 feet. The giants despise Bel but are bound by magic to do as he demands. The chains that bind them can't be broken or unlocked except by Bel.

### F3. WEAPONS RACK

These racks contain weapons awaiting delivery to the front lines of the Blood War. Most of them are too big for Small or Medium characters to wield effectively.

**Treasure.** Among the larger weapons are three magic weapons sized for Small and Medium characters: a pair of *hellfire javelins* and a *hellfire greatsword* (see page 223).

### F4. POOL OF MAGMA

Inside this cavern, steel pylons and gantries keep a huge and terrible new machine suspended above a pool of magma. The machine is Bel's secret weapon in his cold war to overthrow Zariel. When the characters arrive here, the infernal machine is still under construction and far from complete.

## ROLEPLAYING BEL

**Bel** (see the accompanying stat block) oversees the manufacture of weapons and armor for the Blood War. Though Asmodeus has instructed Zariel to accept Bel as her advisor, Bel and Zariel loathe each other and invent distractions to keep them apart. When Bel learns

of the characters' intentions, he decides to use them as pawns to tarnish and ultimately overthrow Zariel.

Bel outwardly plays the role of Zariel's loyal vassal. Secretly, he uses telepathy to hatch a treasonous plot with the characters. Bel's plan is as follows:

- Bel wants the characters to retrieve nine adamantine rods that were stolen from his forge by Zariel's spies. Once all nine rods are returned to him, Bel is willing to divulge the location of the Bleeding Citadel.
- Bel suggests that the characters speak to a sibrex that was recently captured by his spies. Sibrexes are hoarders of forbidden lore, and this particular one has been a good source of information for Bel. It might know where Zariel's spies hid the adamantine rods.
- To help the characters reach the sibrex, Bel offers to provide them with a barge they can use to ply the River Styx.

Bel doesn't tell the characters that the Companion (what he calls the Solar Insidiator) was built in his forge, nor does he reveal that it has a planetar trapped inside it. Bel also fails to mention that the nine adamantine rods are the keys to unlocking the device and freeing the planetar. If the characters ask what the rods are for, Bel says, "That's not really any of your business. This is the best deal you'll get in Avernus. I suggest you take it."

## BEL

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 364 (27d10 + 216)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)	25 (+7)	19 (+4)	26 (+8)

**Saving Throws** Dex +9, Con +15, Wis +11

**Skills** Arcana +14, Deception +15, Insight +11, Persuasion +15

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 25 (75,000 XP)

**Fear Aura.** Any creature hostile to Bel that starts its turn within 20 feet of him must make a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw, unless Bel is incapacitated. Unless the save succeeds, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Bel's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Bel's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 23). Bel can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic, fireball*

3/day each: *dispel magic, hold monster, mirror image, mislead, raise dead, teleport, wall of fire*

1/day each: *imprisonment, meteor swarm*



**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Bel fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Bel has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Bel's weapon attacks are magical.

## ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Bel makes three attacks: two with his greatsword and one with his tail.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that is not being held or worn, it catches fire.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Bel can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Bel regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Fireball.** Bel casts *fireball*.

**Tactical Edge (Costs 2 Actions).** Roll a d6 for Bel. The number rolled on the die is subtracted from the next attack roll made against Bel or an ally of his choice within the next minute.

**Summon Ice Devil (Costs 3 Actions).** Bel magically summons an ice devil with an ice spear (as described in the ice devil's entry in the *Monster Manual*). The ice devil appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of Bel, acts as Bel's ally, and can summon other devils if it has such power. The ice devil remains until Bel dies or until he dismisses it as an action.

If the characters become belligerent or demanding, Bel sighs and snaps his fingers, causing the infernal chains to fall off the fire giants. He promises freedom to any fire giant that kills an intruder, prompting the giants to attack the characters without mercy. Bel then steeples his fingers and watches the battle unfold. In battle, the fire giants hurl buckets, tools, and heavy chains instead of boulders. They also try to shove enemies into channels of molten lava.

If the characters defeat the fire giants, Bel commends their victory and offers them the same deal as before. If the characters refuse him a second time, Bel smiles and says, "A pity. All those poor people in Elturel were counting on you." He then offers to teleport them out of his fortress, so they can be on their way. Gracious host that Bel is, he won't attack the characters directly unless they attack him first, in which case he casts *imprisonment* on a party member (Lulu being his first choice). If the spell works, Bel vows to release his prisoner once the nine adamantine rods are found and returned to him, no questions asked.

## DEVELOPMENT

When the characters are ready to leave his forge, Bel teleports them back to the surface. If the characters agreed to Bel's terms, an **imp** named Balakros is waiting for them when they return to the surface. Bel instructs the imp to help the characters reach the sibriex. The imp has performed this task before and knows, without having to be told, that its orders include reporting back to Bel and whispering everything the sibriex said into its master's ear.

If characters refuse to let Balakros accompany them, the imp bids them farewell, turns invisible, and follows them at a respectful distance.

## RIVER TRAVEL

Balakros offers to lead the characters to an iron barge moored on the shore of the River Styx. An iron road leads from Bel's volcano to the barge, and it's patrolled by **bearded devils** that won't attack the characters as long as Balakros is leading them. Lashed to the sides of the barge are demon skulls and bones. Characters who travel by barge must pass underneath the Stygian Dock (see page 123) on their way to the sibriex.

The barge is 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, and sturdy enough to transport up to two Huge infernal war machines. Twelve **merregons** (see page 238 for their stat block) under the command of a **bone devil** named Krinjak operate the barge's oars. Krinjak's instructions are to take the characters where they need to go. Although it professes loyalty to Bel, Krinjak is secretly a spy for Zariel. After taking the characters as close to the sibriex as the River Styx allows, it flies off to warn Zariel that the characters are working for Bel.

## OVERLAND TRAVEL

If the characters would rather travel to the sibriex in some other fashion, Balakros the imp offers to serve as their overland guide, since it knows where the sibriex is. It can also point to the sibriex's location on the characters' map of Avernus.

# SIBRIEX

A BREEDER OF HORRORS AND A HOARDER OF SECRETS, A *sibriex* is said to be as old as the Abyss.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at this location, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Spiky chains lash a fifteen-foot-diameter, floating blob of quivering flesh to a 20-foot-tall wrought-iron scaffold. Two fiends wrapped in chains stand atop the scaffold, torturing the bloated creature's flesh by tightening its chains. Demon ichor oozes from its wounds, forming a shallow pool around the scaffolding.

A third, jackal-headed fiend uses a bronze horn to yell loudly at the bloated prisoner in multiple languages. It sits cross-legged about half-way up the scaffolding.

Bel's fiends captured a **sibriex** (see the accompanying stat block) and have been torturing and interrogating it for quite a long time now. The sibriex is restrained by infernal chains from Bel's forge that also prevent it from using its spells or actions to escape.

The demon ichor that pools around the scaffolding smells terrible but can be easily avoided. For more information on demon ichor, see page 78.



Two chain devils named Shalok and Jank are torturing the sibriex under the guidance of Fetchtatter, a cruel **arcanaloth** who signed an infernal contract with Bel, guaranteeing the arcanaloth's loyalty to Bel in exchange for magic items and spellbooks. All three fiends are immune to the sibriex's Warp Creature power.

Fetchtatter uses its speaking horn to address the sibriex, treating it like an idiot child. The arcanaloth's declarations typically begin with, "Tell me everything you know about . . ." and end with a long pause as it waits for the sibriex to answer. The sibriex has grown increasingly obstinate, much to Fetchtatter's chagrin. The arcanaloth offers three *soul coins* to the characters if they can make the sibriex talk, but it has no intention of honoring this agreement.

#### TREASURE

Fetchtatter wears a *ring of x-ray vision* on its right hand. In the pockets of its bile-stained robe are two *potions of greater healing* and six *soul coins* (see page 94). The arcanaloth also carries a grimy spellbook bound in chasme flesh. Fetchtatter's spellbook contains all the spells the arcanaloth has prepared.

## SIBRIEX

*Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 150 (12d12 + 72)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	3 (-4)	23 (+6)	25 (+7)	24 (+7)	25 (+7)

**Saving Throws** Int +13, Cha +13

**Skills** Arcana +13, History +13, Perception +13

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23

**Languages** all, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP)

**Contamination.** This sibriex emits an aura of corruption 30 feet in every direction. Plants that aren't creatures wither in the aura, and the ground in it is difficult terrain for other creatures. Any creature that starts its turn in the aura must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) poison damage. A creature that succeeds on the save is immune to this sibriex's Contamination for 24 hours.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The sibriex's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *command*, *dispel magic*, *hold monster*  
3/day: *feeblemind*

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the sibriex fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** The sibriex has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

## INTERROGATING THE SIBRIEX

Before it was captured by Bel's fiends, the sibriex wandered throughout Avernus, amassing information from every location it visited. At your discretion, the sibriex could have knowledge of other locations shown on the characters' map of Avernus. It gives up what it knows only if the characters use magical methods of interrogation. It doesn't know anything that can help the characters find the *Sword of Zariel*, but it knows where Bel's nine adamantine rods are located.

The sibriex uses its telepathy to contact the first party member who comes within 120 feet of it, offering information in exchange for its freedom. The character with whom the sibriex is speaking telepathically can detect the insincerity of the sibriex's offer with a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check. Contrary to its claim, the sibriex doesn't plan to help the characters.

A character can, with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, convince the sibriex to share one bit of useful information as a show of good faith. If asked about the adamantine rods, the sibriex claims to have seen all nine rods in the wreck of a crashed flying fortress. The sibriex won't reveal the

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The sibriex uses Squirt Bile once and makes three attacks using its chain, bite, or both.

**Chain. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.  
Hit: 20 (2d12 + 7) piercing damage.

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: 9 (2d8) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage.

**Squirt Bile.** The sibriex targets one creature it can see within 120 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) acid damage.

**Warp Creature.** The sibriex targets up to three creatures it can see within 120 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, a creature becomes immune to this sibriex's Warp Creature. On a failed save, the target is poisoned, which causes it to also gain 1 level of exhaustion. While poisoned in this way, the target must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns. Three successful saves against the poison end it, and ending the poison removes any levels of exhaustion caused by it. Each failed save causes the target to suffer another level of exhaustion. Once the target reaches 6 levels of exhaustion, it dies and instantly transforms into a living *abyssal wretch* (see page 118 for its stat block) under the sibriex's control. The transformation of the body can be undone only by a *wish* spell.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The sibriex can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The sibriex regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Cast a Spell.** The sibriex casts a spell.

**Spray Bile.** The sibriex uses Squirt Bile.

**Warp (Costs 2 Actions).** The sibriex uses Warp Creature.

# WRECKED FLYING FORTRESS

A WEAPON MADE FOR AN ARCHDEVIL, RAVAGED IN BATTLE  
and ripe for plunder.

—The Cartographer

wreck's location, but Balakros the imp knows where the wreck is and can lead the characters there if told about it. Lulu might also suddenly remember the wreck's location, at your discretion.

## RELEASING THE SIBRIEX

Fetchtatter and the chain devils attack characters who try to free the sibrex. Breaking three of the six chains that bind the sibrex allows it to slip free, whereupon it flies into the air and tries to get as far away from the iron scaffold as possible. Each chain has AC 19, 33 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to fire, poison, and psychic damage.

## FLESH WARPING

When a creature fails a saving throw against the sibrex's Warp Creature effect, you can roll percentile dice and consult the Flesh Warping table (page 78) to determine an additional effect, which vanishes when Warp Creature ends on the creature. If the creature transforms into an **abyssal wretch** (see the accompanying stat block), the effect becomes a permanent feature of that body.

A creature can willingly submit to flesh warping, an agonizing process that takes at least 1 hour while the creature stays within 30 feet of the sibrex. At the end of the process, roll once on the Flesh Warping table (or choose one effect) to determine how the creature is transformed permanently.

## DEVELOPMENT

After tricking or magically compelling the sibrex to divulge the location of Bel's adamantine rods, the characters can set out to recover the rods from the wrecked flying fortress.

## ABYSSAL WRETCH

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Abyssal but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

To reach the wrecked flying fortress, characters must cross a hot, windswept plain wracked by magical fire storms. Flying characters and fast-moving infernal war machines can easily avoid these fire storms.

Characters traveling on foot must succeed on a DC 20 group Wisdom (Survival) check as they cross the fireswept plain. On a failed check, a fire storm filling a 60-foot cube sweeps across the ground and engulfs as many party members as it can. The storm then attaches itself to one randomly determined party member, staying centered on that creature for 1 minute. At the end of the duration, the storm detaches from that creature and moves off in a random direction. The storm must remain in contact with the ground at all times. If it becomes separated from the creature to which it has attached itself, the storm moves off in a random direction and ceases to endanger the party.

Any character that enters a fire storm for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The fire storm ignites flammable objects that aren't being worn or held. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 18) cast on the storm causes it to flame out and disappear.

## ARRIVAL AT THE WRECK

When the characters arrive at the wreck, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A towering wreck rises from the scorched hellscape. It looks like a giant sword blade, tilted to a twenty-degree angle and partly buried underground. Much of its exposed hull is rusted and torn asunder. Hot wind screams as it tears through the hollow structure, and six giant vultures circle high above it.

After demons crippled this fortress in battle, Zariel abandoned it and left it to rust. The fortress is 150 feet tall, but the lower third of it is buried underground. All the lower decks have been picked clean, but the command deck at the top still holds promise. Characters can scale the wreck's torn outer hull to reach this deck, which is 80 feet off the ground at its lowest point. Climbing the outside of the wreck without proper gear requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Characters who can fly have no trouble reaching the command deck.

The "giant vultures" circling above the wreck are six **vrocks** that attack anyone who gets within 50 feet of the command deck. If three vrocks are killed, the remaining ones flee and don't return.

## LOWER DECKS

The lower decks are riddled with holes, allowing easy access to the fortress interior. Characters can ascend to the command deck without needing to make ability checks simply by moving up through the ruins of the lower decks, but the wreckage inside the fortress makes the ascent arduous.

### BONE WHELKS

Bone whelks are large mollusks that excrete an adhesive to attach skulls, bones, and other detritus to their bodies for protection. These slugs scour the wreck for organic matter to feed on, clinging to torn sections of wall, floor, and ceiling while taking shelter from the searing winds and hungry vrocks. Characters who try to make their way up through the interior of the wreck are attacked by five **bone whelks** (see the accompanying stat block). Too slow to mount an effective escape, the bone whelks fight to the death.

When a bone whelk dies, it emits a scream that has a 50 percent chance of attracting the vrocks, which attack other creatures (including bone whelks) indiscriminately.

### SOUL INTAKE

Deep inside the wreck is a 5-foot-diameter, cylindrical pipe made of iron that runs almost the full height of the fortress. This pipe was designed to siphon tormented souls from the River Styx, feeding them into a 10-foot-diameter cistern below the command deck to power the fortress. The pipe can be accessed by a hatch on every deck except the command deck. Nesting inside the cistern at the top of the pipe is a monster resembling a 30-foot-long centipede that exudes necrotic sludge. If it hears one of the hatches open, it slinks down the pipe to devour any creatures it sees. This creature uses the **remorhaz** stat block, with these changes:

- Whenever the monster would deal fire damage, it deals necrotic damage instead.
- It has immunity to necrotic damage instead of cold damage.

## COMMAND DECK FEATURES

The command deck, shown on map 3.6 (page 120), has the following features:

**Iron Surfaces.** The floor, walls, ceilings, and doors are made of iron that has been twisted, bent, and ruptured in places. Ceilings throughout are 15 feet high.

**Light Sources.** Areas that are exposed to the outdoors are dimly lit by the hellish red sky of Avernus. Beyond that, the only light sources are harmless showers of sparks that periodically rain down from gashes in the ceiling.

**Slant.** Like the rest of the fortress, the command deck leans at a twenty-degree angle, with area W5 being the lowest part of the deck and area W8 being the highest. The sloped metal floor is difficult terrain.



### BONE WHELK

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d10)

**Speed** 15 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

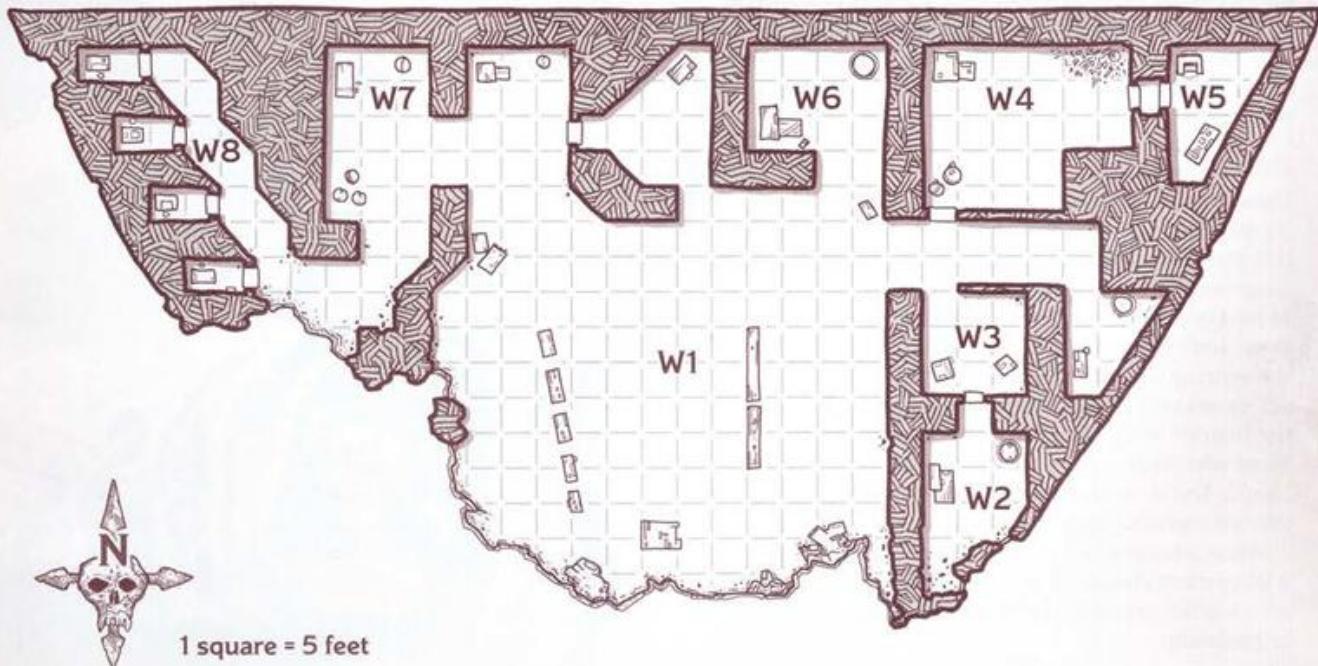
**Adhesive.** The bone whelk can cause Medium or smaller objects to adhere to it. A Medium or smaller creature that touches the bone whelk is grappled by it (escape DC 10).

**Death Scream.** When the bone whelk dies, it emits a blood-curdling shriek that can be heard out to a range of 120 feet. This shriek causes nonmagical, organic material within 10 feet of the bone whelk to rot. Each creature within 10 feet of the bone whelk when it dies takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

**Spider Climb.** The bone whelk can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage.



MAP 3.6: WRECKED FLYING FORTRESS, COMMAND DECK

## COMMAND DECK ENCOUNTERS

The following descriptions correspond to areas marked on map 3.6.

### W1. BRIDGE

Unless they've been defeated elsewhere, the six **vrocks** flying above the wreck swoop down to attack characters as they explore this area.

Sparks rain down from gashes in the ceiling of what used to be the bridge, much of which is open to the sky. The room has been picked clean, though rows of stripped-down consoles and a few dangling chains remain.

None of the consoles are operational, though characters can salvage them for wires and other metal components.

**Development.** As the characters explore this location, they hear several loud infernal war machines approaching. Through holes in the wall, they can see three vehicles screaming across the hellscape toward the wreck:

- Two Devil's Rides, one driven by Chukka and the other by Clonk (see page 83). Each kenku carries a small bag containing three *soul coins* (see page 94).
- A Tormentor crewed by Barnabas the **flameskull** (using its *mage hand* spell to drive) and three **redcaps** (see page 240 for their stat block). Clinging to the vehicle's outer hull are six **madcaps** (see page 240).

Mad Maggie has sent this force to search the wreck for machine parts and other valuables. The Tormentor and the Devil's Rides have 12 hours of fuel remaining before they need more *soul coins*.

If the characters left one or more infernal war machines parked outside the wrecked fortress, Chukka and Clonk search those vehicles while Barnabas leads the redcaps and madcaps into the lower decks of the wreck in search of treasure. If the characters left Fort Knucklebone on good terms with Mad Maggie, the flameskull and the kenu won't give the party too much trouble. However, the madcaps might try to steal one of the characters' infernal war machines or inadvertently release the monster lurking in the soul intake pipe (see "Soul Intake," page 119).

### W2. ALARM CONSOLE

Characters can access this room from the deck below by climbing up through a hatch in the floor. They can also enter this room through an iron door. Describe the room to the players as follows:

Jagged gashes in the outer wall allow the hellish sky of Avernus to light this room. An open hatch in the floor leads down to the lower decks, and a metal console is plugged into one wall.

Any character who flips the switches on the console while it's plugged into the wall creates one or more

of the following sound effects, which can be heard throughout the wrecked fortress:

- A blaring alarm klaxon
- Loud, discordant instrumental music with screaming vocals
- A soothing, female-sounding voice saying “Aj ta noss iz’lech’iz ta kraj-ka-nok Asmodei das,” which is Infernal for, “You are important. Promotion is your destiny. Asmodeus loves you.”
- A deep, devilish voice saying “Chy’gwa urnossk!” (“Abandon ship!” in Infernal) over and over

### W3. DAMAGED MACHINERY

Describe this area to the players as follows:

Sparks rain down from torn holes in the ceiling, falling onto a pair of rectangular machines that have been torn from the walls. The machines now stand in the middle of the room, their loose wires sticking out like bad hairdos.

Each machine resembles a metal file cabinet covered with switches and dials that no longer do anything. A character who spends at least 1 hour taking apart a machine can discern its original purpose with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check:

- The larger machine was used to transmit messages to other flying fortresses. (Messages were sent by speaking into the machine’s glass bell.)
- The smaller machine was used to broadcast messages throughout the flying fortress. (One could broadcast a message by speaking into the machine’s glass bell.)

### W4. RECORDS ROOM

Characters who listen at the iron door to this room hear an inhuman cackling sound beyond. They need darkvision or light sources to see into the room.

Crouched on a pile of humanoid bones in the far, lowest corner of this room is a hunched gnoll that looks underfed. It gnaws on a bone while cackling maniacally to itself. Near its nest is another iron door.

Lying on the floor near you are a pair of glass, bell-shaped horns attached to some loose wires. They look like they were removed from a pair of tall, slender, metal machines standing against the wall opposite you.

The gnoll is a shapechanged **death slaad** under the effects of a *feeblemind* spell. While fighting alongside Yeenoghu’s demon hordes, the slaad fell into the River Styx, leaving it in a feeble-minded state. In five days, it gets a new saving throw to end the effect. Any character who examines the gnoll and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes that some sort of magical effect has reduced it to a witless nincompoop.

While the slaad is feeble-minded, its Intelligence and Charisma scores are 1, and it can’t cast spells, activate magic items, understand language, or communicate in any intelligible way. It’s not even self-aware enough to revert to its normal form. It eyes characters suspiciously

but doesn’t attack them. It has no weapons but can use its action to bite someone on its turn:

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
**Hit:** 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Casting *greater restoration*, *heal*, or similar magic on the hapless creature restores its mental faculties, whereupon the slaad assumes its true form and attacks. As a creature of pure chaos and extreme malice, it delights in wanton destruction.

**Machinery.** The bell-shaped horns lying on the floor attach to the fronts of the two machines standing in the corner, neither of which is operational. Each machine resembles a vertical file cabinet covered with switches and burnt-out lights. A character who spends at least 1 hour taking apart a machine can discern its original purpose with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check:

- The larger machine was used to transmit messages to other flying fortresses. (Messages were sent by speaking into the machine’s glass bell.)
- The smaller machine was used to broadcast messages throughout the flying fortress. (One could broadcast a message by speaking into the machine’s glass bell.)

The larger machine is damaged beyond repair, but a character proficient with tinker’s tools can spend 1 hour attempting to repair the smaller machine using parts scavenged from other machines on the command deck, doing so with a successful DC 15 Intelligence check. Once the machine’s glass bell and a few wires are replaced, the device can be made to function for 24 hours. During this time, characters can use the device to transmit their voices throughout the wrecked fortress.

### W5. ADAMANTINE RODS

This chamber is at the lowest point of the command deck. Describe the room to the players as follows:

This dark room contains a metal console that has torn free of the wall to your right. Pinned between the console and another wall is a small, desiccated, winged devil that looks like it was crushed to death. In another corner stands a 3-foot block of infernal iron—a locked safe with clawed feet and a three-dial mechanism built into its thick door. Each dial bears numerals written in Infernal.

The safe is stuck to the floor with *sovereign glue* and can’t be moved. It’s also airtight, watertight, and impervious to damage and thieves’ tools. To unlock it, the characters need the three-digit combination. When the dials are set to #·#·# (“6-6-6” in Infernal), the safe door unlocks. Three *knock* spells are needed to force it open, as the safe has three separate locking mechanisms.

After three unsuccessful attempts to open the safe with the wrong combination, an alarm klaxon sounds throughout the command deck. The alarm is loud enough to startle any vrocks still circling above the wreck, but the alarm attracts no one. The alarm stops after 1 minute.

The safe contains nine adamantine rods, each one weighing 3 pounds and engraved with runes that spell out the words "Solar Insidiator Lock" in Infernal, followed by a number from 1 to 9. These are the rods that the characters are searching for. Characters familiar with Thavius Kreeg's infernal contract recall that "Solar Insidiator" is another name for the Companion. Armed with this knowledge, a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check can conclude that the rods were designed to unlock the Companion, suggesting that it might contain something.

**Dead Devil.** A spined devil was operating the console when the fortress crashed into Avernus. The console tore free of one wall and pinned the devil against another wall, crushing it to death. The console is nonfunctional, and its original purpose can't be ascertained.

## W6. BLACK BELL

Once per minute, a hollow "ka-clunk" sound emanates from this room, which contains the following:

This room contains two rusty iron crates in one corner and an iron, bell-shaped contraption bolted to the floor in the opposite corner. The bell is nine feet tall and painted black, with several dents and dings in it. Every so often, the bell emits a loud "ka-clunk" sound.

Each crate contains twenty iron flasks of demon ichor (see page 78).

A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of transmutation magic around the bell-shaped contraption. Any character who examines the bell and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check can ascertain its purpose: it kept the fortress aloft and level with the ground. The noise it makes is a rhythmic malfunction caused by the fact that the fortress is leaning to one side.

## W7. STIRGE NEST

Describe this area to the players as follows:

This chamber contains a stripped-down metal console and several rusty pipes that extend from floor to ceiling. One of the pipes has a two-foot-long gash in it.

The console's original purpose can't be determined.

Ten **stirges** nest in the pipe with the gash in it. If the pipe is jostled or otherwise disturbed, the stirges fly out and attack.

## W8. SIGNAL DESKS

This hall has four doors leading off it. Behind each door is a closet with a miniature console and chair bolted to the floor. These consoles have keys and function like Infernal typewriters. An imp stationed at each console would type orders from superiors on small slips of paper before delivering them to their intended recipients. Rigged above each desk is a long, slender horn through which bridge officers could dictate their orders.

## DEVELOPMENT

As the characters prepare to leave, a warband arrives to scavenge the wreck. This warband is led by one of the warlords described in the "Warlords of the Avernian Wastelands" section on page 90. The characters have a few rounds to hide, set an ambush, or return to their vehicles before the enemy warband arrives.

Each warlord has a different reason for visiting the wreck, as outlined below.

**Bitter Breath.** The horned devil is thinking about turning the wreck into a base and wants to inspect it.

**Feonor.** The archmage heard a rumor that someone has been stockpiling demon ichor inside the wreck, and she plans to steal it.

**Princeps Kovik.** Kovik's spies in Bel's Forge have told the chain devil about the adamantine rods.

Kovik plans to sell them to Mahadi (page 126) for soul coins.

## RETURNING THE RODS TO BEL

Bel isn't really expecting the characters to return the nine adamantine rods to him, and he looks positively disappointed if they do. ("We didn't even sign a contract!" he laments.) Rather, he hoped they might use the rods to unlock the Companion, thereby freeing the planetar trapped within it and potentially ruining Zariel's plans for Elturel. Bringing the nine rods back to Bel merely implicates him in the plot to free the planetar. After uttering a few choice curse words, he strongly encourages the characters to take the rods to Elturel, stick them in locks along the Companion's equator, and see what happens.

Happy to let the characters keep the rods, Bel makes good on his promise to reveal the location of the Bleeding Citadel. He tells the characters that the *Sword of Zariel* is a good-aligned artifact that Avernus itself has long sought to destroy. Bel urges them to find the sword quickly, before the Bleeding Citadel is swallowed up by Avernus and the sword is lost forever. If Lulu is still with the party, she urges the characters to recover the sword before heading back to Elturel.

## OTHER LOCATIONS

Some locations marked on the players' map of Avernus lie outside the two quest paths. Others, like the Wandering Emporium and Zariel's Flying Fortress, move around. These locations are summarized below and described in the sections that follow.

**Stygian Dock.** A river dock where flying fortresses can undergo repairs while siphoning souls from the Styx.

**Styx Watchtower.** One of several fortifications along the River Styx used by devils to guard against invasion.

**Sundered Chains.** Broken chains of Avernus that tried and failed to bind other cities before Elturel.

**The Wandering Emporium.** A mobile marketplace built atop infernal war machines.

**Zariel's Flying Fortress.** Zariel commands her legions from this mobile headquarters.



## STYGIAN DOCK

THE FLYING FORTRESSES OF AVERNUS NEED FUEL, AND  
*what better fuel than the souls of the damned.*

—The Cartographer

Zariel's flying fortresses are serviced and repaired at this rusting repair dock. When the characters arrive here, read the following boxed text to the players:

A massive iron structure that appears to be a pair of docking arms straddles the River Styx and extends out over it. Hefty clamps, chains, and bars are fixed to the docking arms to lash large vessels between them.

If the players arrive here after meeting Bel, Zariel's flying fortress is present (see "Zariel's Flying Fortress," page 130). If so, read the following boxed text to your players:

A gigantic basalt citadel shaped like a sword blade is moored at the dock. The flying fortress thrums as screaming souls from the River Styx are drawn up into it.

The Stygian dock is a 100-foot-high service platform protruding from the rocky cliffs of the River Styx. The clamps, chains, and bars fixed to the upper arms of the dock hold flying fortresses in place.

A **horned devil** named Bazelsteen manages the dock for Zariel but yearns for the freedom to carry out its mechanical experiments. To earn its aid, visitors must first serve as test pilots for the devil's latest contraption.

Twelve **barbed devils** patrol the dock in groups of three devils each. If Zariel's flying fortress is present, three **bone devils** also circle overhead. Intruders are attacked or warned away. If the characters try to negotiate with the devils, Bazelsteen swoops down to deal with them personally.

### DEALING WITH BAZELSTEEN

Engine oil covers this horned devil, which constantly chews on a shard of smoking, red hot coal. Bazelsteen is more interested in machines than creatures and is willing to repair or modify any infernal war machine that the characters currently use. See appendix B for possible weapon replacements, armor upgrades, and magic gadgetry. Instead of payment, the horned devil requires that they help it complete a test (see "Test Run 221," page 124). If the characters perform this task well, Bazelsteen agrees to fully repair their infernal war machines. He also offers one free weapon swap, armor upgrade, or magical gadget.

## TEST RUN 221

If the characters accept Bazelsteen's terms, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Bazelsteen takes you to a rusty barge anchored on the River Styx a few hundred yards from the dock. Hanging from the barge's loading crane by a rusty chain is a ten-foot-diameter, spherical diving bell made of iron and glass. Suction tubes protrude from the diving bell's lower hemisphere like flimsy arms.

Bazelsteen built the experimental bathysphere to dredge the bottom of the River Styx for silted souls. He needs to test it, but he's unwilling to risk his devils. Bazelsteen's bathysphere is a Large object that can fit up to four Medium creatures inside it. The hatch is located in the bathysphere's upper hemisphere. Bazelsteen assures the characters that the device is airtight and watertight.

Bazelsteen asks the characters to secure themselves inside the diving bell while he uses the crane to lower them into the river. Their job is to use the suction arms to scoop up silted souls from the bottom of the river, which lies 40 feet below the barge. The diving bell is attached to 50 feet of chain—more than enough length to reach the river's bottom. There are four "suction stations" inside the diving bell, each one equipped with a chair and some metal control levers.

Bazelsteen knows that the diving bell has enough air to sustain one occupant for 1 hour (or four occupants for 15 minutes each). To be on the safe side, he plans to keep the diving bell submerged for only 10 minutes.

If multiple characters participate in the experiment, Bazelsteen taps on the bathysphere before lowering it into the water and tells its occupants, "Whichever of you sucks up the most silted souls gets a soul coin."

Tortured souls coursing through the River Styx claw and scream at the bathysphere as they pass by. Once the bathysphere is lowered to the river bottom, characters inside it can use its siphoning tubes to suck up the silted souls that lie there. At the end of each minute, a character operating a suction station makes a Dexterity check. The number of silted souls that the character siphons is equal to the check result. The silted souls are stored in tanks attached to the bathysphere's underbelly, and dials on the tanks track the number of silted souls in each one.

Fiends dine on silted souls like ambrosia. Silted souls can also be formed into lemures once they're "rescued" from the river's depths.

### DEMON ATTACK

Ten minutes after the bathysphere is lowered into the river, ten **vrocks** swoop down from the sky and attack the Stygian dock. Bazelsteen is lured away by the attack, leaving the barge and its crane unattended. When Bazelsteen leaves, have the characters roll initiative. Characters in the bathysphere have no idea what's happening on the barge, or vice versa, and the River Styx is so dark that visibility in the water is reduced to 10 feet.

Any character left on the barge can take control of the unattended crane. While seated at the crane's controls, the character can use an action to try to figure out how to operate them, doing so with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If the check fails by 5 or more, the character accidentally drags the bathysphere 2d10 feet across the river bottom, dealing 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage to all creatures inside it. It takes three consecutive, successful checks to bring the bathysphere back onto the barge.

After the characters each take a turn, a **glabrezu** lands on the barge and rolls initiative. On each of its turns, the demon uses its action and one of its pincers to try to snip through the bathysphere's rusty chain, doing so with a successful DC 20 Strength check. If the chain breaks, the bathysphere falls to the bottom of the River Styx and remains there until salvaged. Once the glabrezu has taken three turns, Bazelsteen returns and scares the demon away if it hasn't been defeated by then. If the bathysphere's chain breaks, Bazelsteen dubs Test Run 221 a failure and leaves the sunken party members to their doom. Otherwise, the horned devil uses the crane to hoist the bathysphere back onto the barge, dubs the experiment a success, and rewards a *soul coin* to the character who suctioned up the most silted souls.

Characters in the bathysphere begin to suffocate once its air supply is depleted. Opening the hatch while the bathysphere is submerged causes the River Styx to flood the compartment, exposing its occupants to the river's effects (see page 76).

## STYX WATCHTOWERS

THE STYX IS THE DEMONS' GATEWAY INTO THE NINE Hells. *The devils keep a watchful eye on its shores!*

—The Cartographer

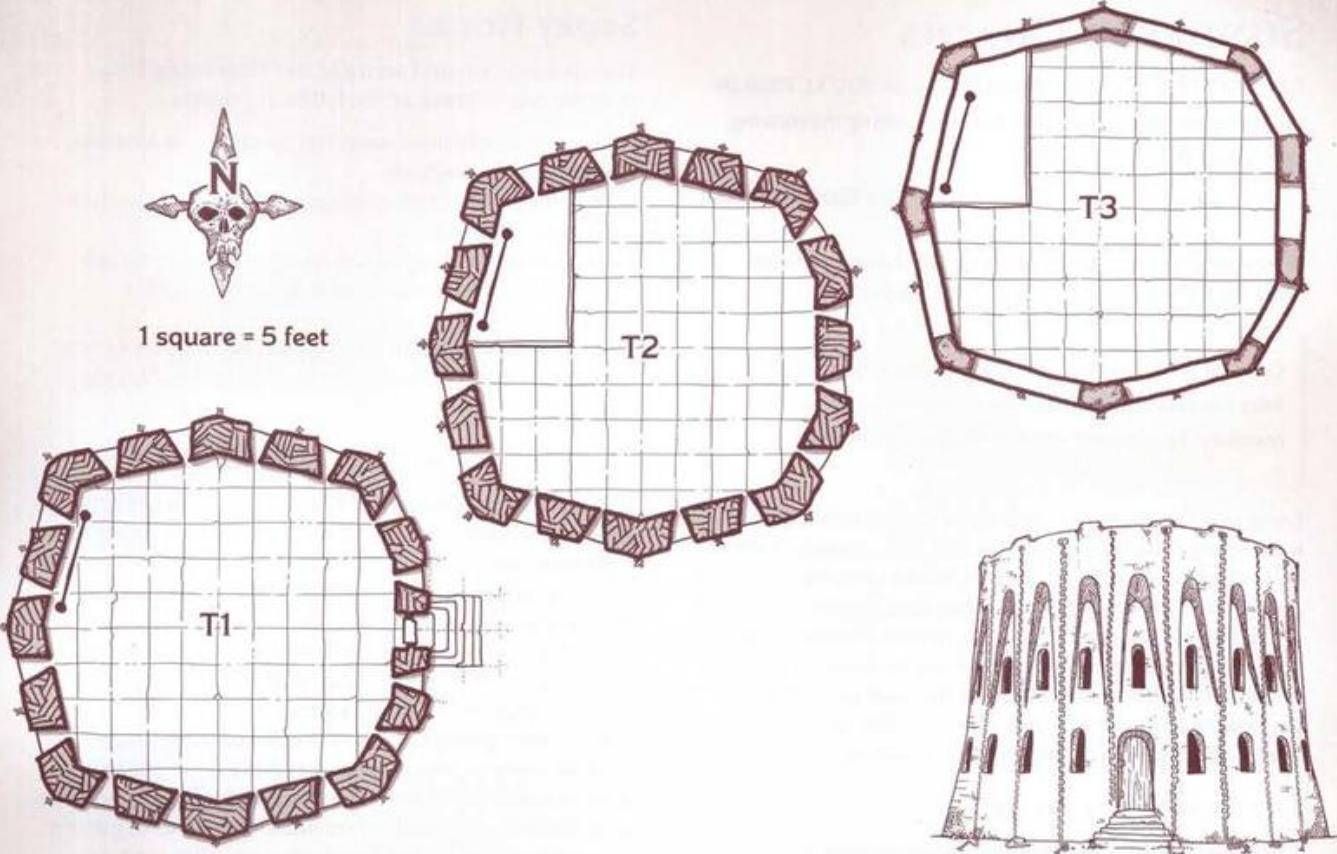
Along the banks of the River Styx stand guard towers spaced such that no demonic army can enter Avernus without being spotted. Each tower outpost is within sight of two others, and neighboring troops can quickly arrive to aid in crushing an incursion should demons emerge from the river. Zariel's devils garrison these outposts, but in lean times when the souls of Avernus are dwindling, some of these structures remain vacant. Also, the mutable landscape of Avernus leaves outposts isolated from time to time.

### WATCHTOWER FEATURES

A typical watchtower is a squat, 30-foot-tall, open-topped structure made of black basalt. Its other features are summarized below.

**Garrison.** Unless it has been abandoned, the tower is staffed by an **amnizu** commander, a **chain devil** subcommander, ten **bearded devils** (each one with a **hell hound** on the end of a short chain), and two **spined devils** (see "Watchtower Locations" for how these devils are deployed).

**Bugles.** Each devil on watch duty is issued an iron bugle. Blowing the bugle is a bonus action that blasts a hideous drone audible within 300 feet.



MAP 3.7: STYX WATCHTOWER

**Exterior Grounds.** The ground is free of cover in a 60-foot radius around the tower.

**Wall Chains.** Barbed iron chains hang at 10-foot intervals down the exterior walls. These chains are part of the tower's defense, as the chain devil subcommander can animate them using its *Animate Chains* ability. Climbing a chain requires a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check.

## WATCHTOWER LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to map 3.7.

### T1. GROUND FLOOR

The door at ground level is a stone slab secured from within by an iron crossbar that lifts away easily but requires a DC 23 Strength (Athletics) check to break from the outside.

This level of the tower is drab and unadorned save for a plain, rectangular stone table set with a pair of stone benches. Spare polearms and scale armor, suitable for five Large and ten Medium devils, are stored in racks along the walls.

Ten **bearded devils** and ten **hell hounds** occupy this floor. There is a 30 percent chance that half of the bearded devils and hell hounds are out patrolling the

perimeter at any given time, returning 1 minute after combat starts unless the fighting remains very quiet.

An iron ladder rises through a hole in the northwest corner wide enough to accommodate Large creatures.

### T2. SECOND FLOOR

The tower's **amnizu** commander and a **chain devil** subcommander reside here. These commanders enjoy having one or more sentient beings on hand to torture, to help alleviate boredom.

The floor of this room is strewn with hooked chains, and manacles are bolted to the walls. In the middle of the room, a spiked iron chair is bolted to the floor. The chair's armrests and legs are fitted with iron shackles. One corner of the room has gaping holes in the floor and ceiling, through which passes a large iron ladder leading to the tower's ground floor and rooftop.

The devils like to chain prisoners to the walls and use the spiked chair for interrogations. The chain devil can use its *Animate Chains* ability to animate the chains.

### T3. ROOF

Two **spined devils** roost on the roof and act as lookouts and scouts. An opening in one corner grants access to the tower's interior, with an iron ladder leading down to areas T1 and T2.

## SUNDERED CHAINS

AS CLOSE TO A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE AS YOU'LL FIND IN this *accursed place*. A beacon to those seeking the missing link or looking for a way out.

—The Cartographer

When the characters arrive at one of these locations, read the following boxed text to the players:

Colossal spiked chains extend across the hellscape, their links partially buried under the ash and large chunks of masonry. Each broken chain is roughly a mile long.

Long ago, these giant chains tethered an abducted city to Avernus. That city somehow tore free, leaving behind its broken bonds and scattered chunks of masonry. The chains are similar to the ones that bind Elturel.

Characters who examine a chain can tell that some intense, supernatural force caused one or more of its links to sunder. Although the cause of the damage can't be ascertained, characters can conclude that breaking the chains of Elturel is not beyond the realm of possibility.

## INFERNAL PILGRIM

Chain devils often make pilgrimages to these sites. The first sundered chain the characters happen upon has a **chain devil** named Zartar performing a ritual atop it.

Zartar believes that the sundered chain can bestow great strength upon any chain devil that stands atop it while chanting prayers to Asmodeus. The chain devil is guarded by two **bearded devils**, Narg and Yangor. If the characters make any noise near Zartar, they disturb the chain devil's concentration, causing all three devils to attack with fury.

## THE WANDERING EMPORIUM

MAHADI'S WANDERING EMPORIUM HAS A KNACK FOR showing up when you least expect it.

—The Cartographer

A traveling bazaar winds its way across Avernus—a wandering menagerie of merchants, artisans, and misfits who ply their respective trades and sell their wares under the direction of Mahadi, a rakshasa that claims Asmodeus as his patron.

Most merchants in the Wandering Emporium are indentured to Mahadi's service until they pay off their soul debts. In many cases, the terms of repayment are vague enough to keep them in Mahadi's employ for as long as he deems them necessary to the operation of the Wandering Emporium.

## STORY HOOKS

The characters could arrive at the Wandering Emporium for one or more of the following reasons:

- The characters need supplies, weapons, or even an infernal war machine.
- The characters need a safe place to rest and perhaps get a good meal.
- The characters might have heard that they can sell demon ichor to a crazed wizard in the Wandering Emporium.
- The characters might have collected more *soul coins* than they feel comfortable carrying and need a place to spend them.

## MAHADI, EMPORIUM MASTER

**Mahadi the rakshasa** (see the accompanying stat block) appears as a wealthy merchant lord. Though extremely powerful, Mahadi doesn't believe in taking unnecessary risks, particularly in the Nine Hells where he can be permanently slain. Mahadi acts as the eyes and ears of Asmodeus in Avernus. As a deal broker and moderator, he's privy to all manner of dealings that might otherwise escape the attention of his patron.

In his role as the master of the Wandering Emporium, Mahadi has received special dispensation from Asmodeus to travel freely between the Material Plane and the Nine Hells to operate his business, as well as to pursue information and broker contracts and other such arrangements as needed.

In addition to managing the Wandering Emporium, Mahadi is also the proprietor and host of Infernal Rapture, a restaurant and spa. Since the establishment exists within a demiplane, patrons can comfortably visit it at any time, even while the caravan is on the move. As long as they can pay for services rendered, guests need not fear being trapped within, since Mahadi is very serious about maintaining the contract between host and guest. Each guest must agree to this formal arrangement prior to gaining entrance.

Mahadi has a special collection of named *soul coins*, each of which harbors the soul of an enemy the rakshasa vanquished in the past. Mahadi consults with these souls individually, forcing them to provide insight on all manner of subjects.

### ROLEPLAYING MAHADI

Outwardly, Mahadi presents himself as a charismatic and gracious host. He makes each guest of Infernal Rapture feel as though they're the most important person in all the planes of existence, catering to their every whim and desire. While he is equally cordial to all guests of the Wandering Emporium, those entering his establishment fall under a special contract and therefore rank most highly in his esteem.

Of course, guests leaving Infernal Rapture are expected to pay their bills in full prior to departure. If a guest cannot pay for whatever reason, the contract they signed on entry clearly stipulates their soul is forfeit. They're required to pay off their debt through service. All such individuals fall under the effect of a *geas* cast as a 9th-level spell, which cannot be willingly broken by the



## MAHADI THE RAKSHASA

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 195 (23d8 + 92)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +9, Cha +10

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +10, Insight +9, Perception +9

Damage Vulnerabilities piercing from magic weapons wielded by good creatures

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Infernal; can read all writing

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

**Limited Magic Immunity.** Mahadi can't be affected or detected by spells of 6th level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Mahadi's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He

can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts, disguise self, mage hand, minor illusion*  
3/day each: *charm person, detect magic, dispel magic, hellish rebuke, invisibility, major image, speak with dead, suggestion*  
1/day each: *banishment, demiplane, dominate person, fly, forcecage, geas, plane shift, true seeing*

**Magic Weapons.** Mahadi's weapon attacks are magical.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Mahadi makes four claw attacks.

**Claw. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage, and the target is cursed if it's a creature. The curse takes effect whenever the target takes a short or long rest, filling the target's thoughts with horrible images and dreams. The cursed target gains no benefit from finishing a short or long rest. The curse lasts until it is lifted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**Summon Erinyes (1/Day).** Mahadi summons Ilzabet, an erinyes bound to him by an infernal contract. The erinyes appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of him, acts as his ally, and can't summon other devils. The erinyes remains for 10 minutes or until Mahadi dismisses it as an action. If the erinyes dies, Mahadi loses this action option.

affected individual until their debt is paid in full. What Mahadi does with such defaulters depends on their capabilities. Some become indentured servants, working at Infernal Rapture. If they possess a talent for sales, they might eventually obtain a business to run within the Wandering Emporium.

If adventurers inform Mahadi (and by extension Asmodeus) about Arkhan's possession of the *Hand of Vecna*, Mahadi does everything he can to strike a deal with them, offering any of the gifts listed under "Mahadi's Deals" in exchange for the artifact. This is in lieu of the terms normally offered by Asmodeus.

#### MAHADI'S DEALS

Mahadi has the power to make deals at the direction and with the authority of Asmodeus as if he were an archdevil (see appendix A). All such deals must be presented to the other party without alteration, and they are not negotiable. In all such agreements, Asmodeus wants one thing only: a character signing one of these contracts gives up their soul forever. After the signing character reaches 17th level, if at any point they die, their death is permanent, with no chance to return from the grave. Asmodeus takes their soul and makes them a pit fiend, in his service for eternity.

Mahadi can offer the following gifts in exchange for a soul contract:

**Magic Item.** Asmodeus gifts the adventurer with a *rod of lordly might*, to which only the recipient and its direct descendants can attune.

**Resurrection.** Asmodeus sends one of his loyal priest followers to cast *true resurrection* on a deceased character.

**Tiefling Transformation.** Asmodeus transforms the character into a tiefling with a direct infernal bloodline to him. Substitute the character's racial traits with tiefling racial traits.

#### MAHADI AND ZARIEL

Zariel relies on Mahadi's services to provide supplies, magic items, and other items of value necessary for continuing her campaign in the Blood War. Infernal Rapture has also been known to host meetings or high-ranking devils as a neutral and private space.

Mahadi is bound by contract with Asmodeus to not stage a coup in Avernus or directly assist others to do so. Nothing in the contract, however, states that Mahadi can't indirectly assist others in attempting to overthrow Zariel or whoever else is in control, either by imparting information or selling goods.

#### MAHADI AND LULU

When Lulu arrives at the Wandering Emporium, its tantalizing sights, sounds, and smells are dimly familiar to her. Mahadi seems more familiar to Lulu than anything else in the emporium, but she can't remember why.

Although Lulu has no memory of any prior visit to the Wandering Emporium, Mahadi is happy to remind her that he sheltered Lulu for a while after she became lost in Avernus. What Mahadi fails to mention is that, after earning her trust, he splashed Lulu with water from the River Styx to strip her of her spellcasting abilities and

memories. Mahadi then sold Lulu to some devils who, in turn, delivered her back to Zariel.

Mahadi is surprised to see Lulu again but tries not to show it. He initially suspects that the hollyphant has come seeking revenge for the memory loss he inflicted upon her. Once he realizes that her intentions are benign, Mahadi pretends to be her friend once more.

### APPROACHING THE WANDERING EMPORIUM

The Wandering Emporium travels on the backs of nine Huge infernal war machines similar to Demon Grinders (see page 219), but with Flamethrowers and Styx Sprayers instead of Chompers and Wrecking Balls.

When Mahadi finds an adequate location to set up shop, he orders his drivers to form a horseshoe-shaped defensive perimeter. As the infernal war machines grind to a halt, their crews (comprised of indentured humans, duergar, hobgoblins, salamanders, succubi, incubi, and assorted other creatures) disembark and begin unpacking tents and whatnot. All shops are open within the hour and remain open for business until Mahadi decides it's time to pack up and move elsewhere.

If the characters come upon the Wandering Emporium while it's open for business, describe it to the players as follows:

A collection of brightly colored tents stands clustered together, creating an oasis of comfort amid the dread landscape of Avernus. Huge infernal war machines form a horseshoe about the tents, with curtains made of small, rectangular iron plates and lamps dangling from chains strung between them. Soft, lilting music and wondrous smells drift across the hot winds, inviting a closer look.

The Wandering Emporium provides a haven for all who enter and is considered neutral ground for those that might otherwise initiate a conflict. A sign posted at the entrance, strangely understandable in all languages, simply states: "All are welcome here. No fighting! No spellcasting! No exceptions!"

Mahadi greets all visitors, directing them toward whatever establishments interest them the most while reserving the highest praise for his own beloved restaurant and spa, Infernal Rapture. There, he fulfills their every desire in an attempt to place them in his debt. If this doesn't work, he isn't averse to offering payment in exchange for services rendered. The characters are welcome to stay as long as they wish, until such time as Mahadi decides it's time to pack up and go elsewhere. Characters indebted to Mahadi can stay on with the Wandering Emporium, but only as his servants.

### WANDERING EMPORIUM BUSINESSES

The characters are free to visit any establishment in the Wandering Emporium. You can create your own businesses and add them to those presented here.

## INFERNAL RAPTURE

As the owner and host of Infernal Rapture, Mahadi takes his responsibilities very seriously. Every patron that enters the demiplane that houses his establishment must sign an infernal contract. It presents a very simple arrangement stipulating that patrons must pay for everything consumed and all services used before they leave.

Mahadi employs many servants, each of them under the effect of a *geas* spell to provide the best service they possibly can and appear happy while they work. Most of these individuals are former patrons.

Upon entry into Infernal Rapture, guests are escorted to a private chamber where they may lounge on pillows, cushions, and divans as they place orders for extravagant dishes from across the planes of existence and enjoy a variety of spa services that range from the simple and mundane to the exotic and bizarre.

Since Infernal Rapture exists in a demiplane, it doesn't technically reside in the Nine Hells. If someone wanted to meet with creatures unable or unwilling to travel to the Nine Hells (or even just Avernus), this establishment provides a possible meeting location. Of course, entrance to the demiplane must be negotiated with Mahadi, with the promise of appropriate payment.

Each chamber that exists inside Infernal Rapture is created for a specific purpose. When that purpose ends and the occupants of the chamber leave, that room ceases to exist unless Mahadi deems otherwise.

**Dining Services.** The dining menu at Infernal Rapture changes daily, providing a fixed-price selection. Sample menus are provided as player handouts in appendix E. A full meal costs one *soul coin*. Unlike food consumed elsewhere in Avernus, which is uniformly terrible, the food at Infernal Rapture tastes delicious.

Special food requests can be filled, but they must be made weeks in advance and can be costly. Mahadi charges from five to ten *soul coins* for an exotic request, depending on the difficulty involved in fulfilling it. Consuming a meal at Infernal Rapture has the same benefits as a *heroes' feast* spell, with the added effect that those who eat the food have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made against Mahadi.

**Spa Services.** Infernal Rapture offers a variety of spa services. Light spa amenities (body, foot, and hand treatments, massage therapy, skin care, general grooming and bathing) are included along with the standard dining menu at no additional expense.

Specialty services include dream therapy, whole body restoration, and longevity therapy, as well as a host of services for every appetite, both wholesome and degenerate. Each of these services costs an additional *soul coin*. Mahadi consistently and laboriously upsells further services to clients at additional expense. He seeks to take possession of such individuals and make them permanent residents of Avernus.

## FIRENAKE FORGE

This establishment is run by three **salamanders** named Rassh, Skids, and Slagg. The salamanders owe Mahadi a debt for taking them in and secreting them away after a bold escape from Bel's Forge. They operate as indentured servants, maintaining Mahadi's infernal war

machines while also crafting wares for sale to visitors. From time to time, Mahadi sends them abroad to procure parts to refurbish the caravan. Nine **magmins** and eight suits of **animated armor** assist the salamanders with their work.

The salamanders' infernal war machine has been cobbled together from a half dozen others. At a moment's notice, the vehicle can separate into three smaller infernal war machines, each piloted by one of the salamanders. Treat these smaller vehicles as Tormentors (see page 218).

**Weapons and Armor.** All metal armor and weapons listed in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook* are available for sale at this shop, at a 150 percent markup.

**Infernal War Machine Repair.** The salamanders can repair a damaged but functional infernal war machine at a cost of 50 gp per hit point restored.

## BURNYE THE BARBER

Burney appears as a cheerful, well-kept Calishite woman. She provides all services any proficient barber might, up to and including medical attention for those with injuries or ailments. For healing purposes, treat Burney as though she has the Healer feat as well as proficiency with both the healer's kit and the herbalism kit.

While she works, Burney tells all manner of stories, making them up as she goes along, but always with a moral at the end. Burney's stories might point toward an achievable objective, if the customer is of good alignment and inclined to take direction from the chatty barber.

Burney is, in fact, an **ancient copper dragon** named Balarystul. Burney resides in Avernus on direct assignment from Bahamut, keeping an eye out for signs of increased activity among Tiamat's followers. After the last time the queen of evil dragons tried to escape the Nine Hells, those who oppose her are taking no chances. Burney is particularly interested in any information about the activities of Arkhan the Cruel (see page 111).

Burney has received several blessings in her service to Bahamut:

- Unless Burney decided otherwise, once any creature less powerful than a deity has taken three steps from her, they can no longer remember her or having interacted with her specifically.
- Burney is under the effect of a permanent *mind blank* spell, and cannot be detected by magical or mundane means unless she wishes it. In exchange for this blessing, Burney can take no direct action against the denizens of the Nine Hells, though she can certainly enlist the help of those who can.
- Burney always knows the location of the Wandering Emporium and can transport herself there as though by a *word of recall* spell. This explains why Burney simply seems to appear amid the fully deployed marketplace each morning it is active to provide service and tell stories.
- Once each day, when Burney so desires, she can instantly transport herself to the court of Bahamut via a powerful blessing akin to the *plane shift* spell.

**Barber Pricing.** Burney charges 1 gp for each service involving grooming. Burney can provide some small amount of magic healing, but only does so for good-aligned creatures, and at no cost.

If someone offers Burney a *soul coin* for any reason, she looks extremely disappointed and turns it down. She refuses even to touch one.

#### FROM HERE TO AVERNUS

Fhet'Ahla, an **amnizu** (see page 228 for its stat block), provides **imps** as couriers as well as a variety of spell-casting services for transmitting information over long distances. The more secure the means, however, the more expensive the service. Additionally, Fhet'Ahla acts as an exchange for *soul coins*, offering 100 gp in coins or gemstones for each *soul coin* delivered, and can serve as an official notary for the signing of infernal contracts.

Fhet'Ahla failed a critical mission at some point in the past and gained the disfavor of Asmodeus. As a punishment, Asmodeus posted him with Mahadi. While Fhet'Ahla doesn't owe Mahadi any kind of debt, he is on the wrong side of Asmodeus and has no idea how many centuries this service will last. The amnizu is also forbidden from challenging Mahadi's authority in all matters pertaining to the operation of the Wandering Emporium or any other special assignments the rakshasa receives from Asmodeus.

**Delivery Pricing.** Fhet'Ahla charges a single *soul coin* for parcel deliveries weighing 5 pounds or less. For a larger parcel (up to 50 pounds), he charges two *soul coins*.

**Notary Pricing.** Fhet'Ahla charges a single *soul coin* for notary services and collects a single *soul coin* for exchanges that don't involve the soul of a celestial. If a celestial is involved, he collects ten *soul coins*.

#### ICHOR'S AWEIGH!

Elliach, a lawful evil human **mage**, collects and sells flasks of demon ichor (see page 78). Exposure to demon ichor has warped Elliach in the following ways:

- Elliach's arms have become tentacles with fingers at the ends, increasing his reach by 5 feet.
- Elliach's ears sprouted wings and flew away. Consequently, he is deaf. He relies on lip-reading and hand gestures.

Elliach met Mahadi while on the run from debt collectors. Mahadi saw the value in paying off Elliach's debts and bringing him to Avernus to work in the Wandering Emporium. Thought to be insane by many of the other vendors, Elliach uses demon ichor in a host of magical experiments, none of which seem to have the intended results.

**Demon Ichor Prices.** Elliach sells demon ichor for 100 gp a flask and buys demon ichor for 25 gp a flask.

#### Z'NETH'S LARVA FARM

Z'neth is a bitter, old **hobgoblin warlord** who buys and sells **larvae** (see chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for statistics). Mahadi facilitated Z'neth's rise to power, helping him destroy entire kingdoms on the Material Plane. Z'neth's conquests eventually caught the eye of the mighty god Maglubiyet, who offered Z'neth

a command on the battlefields of Gehenna. Before he could wrack up his first victory on that plane, however, Mahadi collected on Z'neth's debt and bore him away to Avernus, where he languishes in obscurity, far from the planar battlefield he had hoped to die on.

Z'neth procures larvae from yugoloths and sells them at marked-up prices to hags and other interested buyers, giving half his proceeds to Mahadi in exchange for food and other necessities. Z'neth's wares are of little interest to adventurers. However, Z'neth is fond of using his profits to hire assassins to kill Mahadi, which the rakshasa finds endlessly amusing.

If the characters pay his establishment a visit, Z'neth offers them nine *soul coins* (all he has) for Mahadi's head. A geas spell prevents the hobgoblin from divulging Mahadi's true form. Mahadi greets Z'neth's would-be assassins with a smile and is more than happy to accept Z'neth's *soul coins* as payment for goods and services at his fine restaurant.

**Larvae.** At any given time, Z'neth has 2d6 larvae trapped in cages. He charges one *soul coin* per larva.

## ZARIEL'S FLYING FORTRESS

This 450-foot-tall structure is mobile and therefore doesn't appear on the poster map of Avernus or on map 3.1. From this flying fortress, Zariel oversees the defense of her infernal realm.

Attempting to infiltrate the fortress while it's on the move proves lethal due to the hundreds of devils onboard. While undergoing repairs and refueling at the Stygian Dock (see page 123), Zariel and most of her crew aren't present, leaving the fortress with a skeleton crew that consists of the following hostile forces:

- An **erinyes** named Nariangela, who guards the bridge on the command deck (the fortress's topmost deck)
- Eighteen **bearded devils** in plate armor (AC 18), patrolling the lower decks in pairs
- Three **bone devils**, circling above the fortress

#### INFILTRATING THE FORTRESS

Characters can enter Zariel's flying fortress using any of the following routes.

#### ROOFTOP HATCH

Characters capable of flight can enter the flying fortress through an unlocked, 10-foot-square hatch on the flat top of the flying fortress. The hatch is watched by the bone devils that fly above the fortress and leads to a corridor just outside the bridge on the command deck. The corridor is not guarded while the flying fortress is moored at the Stygian Dock.

#### SIGNAL VENTS

Tiny hatches in the hull connect to 1-foot-diameter chutes that ascend to the vessel's command deck. During battle, Zariel's imp couriers use these chutes to enter and exit the flying fortress. Characters reduced to Tiny size or in gaseous form can navigate these narrow chutes to reach the command deck.

### SOUL INTAKE PIPE

Souls from the River Styx are drawn up into the flying fortress through a grilled vent at the bottom end of the fortress. This vent leads to a 5-foot-diameter, iron pipe that ascends through the body of the flying fortress to a 10-foot-diameter, spherical iron cistern directly below the command deck. The pipe is 400 feet long from top to bottom and has access hatches leading to each of the lower decks, but not the command deck.

Necrotic energy floods the soul intake pipe and cistern while the flying fortress is docked above the River Styx. While the pipe is siphoning souls out of the Styx and storing them in the cistern, any creature that enters the pipe or cistern for the first time on its turn or starts its turn in either location takes 16 (3d10) necrotic damage.

### MOVING THE FORTRESS

Characters who defeat the erinyes on the bridge might try to commandeer the flying fortress. However, there are no controls for moving or steering the fortress, as its movements are controlled telepathically by Zariel, and only while she's aboard. No one else can move the flying fortress.

### SABOTAGING THE FORTRESS

Characters can sabotage the fortress by disabling or destroying a bell-like contraption on the bridge. This contraption is identical to the one in area W6 on the wrecked flying fortress (see page 122), except that it's not making any strange noises beyond a low, barely audible hum. This device keeps the flying fortress aloft and level. Encasing the giant bell in an antimagic field or destroying it causes the fortress to crash. The contraption is a Large object with AC 19, a damage threshold of 10, 45 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Crashing the fortress destroys it. Any creature aboard the flying fortress when it crashes takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage plus 70 (20d6) fire damage, and falls prone amid the twisted wreckage.

### STOWING AWAY

Characters can stow away inside the flying fortress while it's moored at the Stygian Dock, provided they sneak aboard without being detected. When the flying fortress is repaired and refueled, Zariel returns with the rest of her crew and takes the flying fortress to the front lines of the Blood War.

Whenever Zariel is aboard the flying fortress, its crew complement consists of hundreds of devils—too many for characters to defeat without an army behind them. Deck patrols are bolstered by erinyes using truesight to search for ethereal and invisible enemies, making it unlikely that stowaways will stay hidden for long.

If the characters allow themselves to get caught, they are hauled before Zariel on the command deck, where she is joined by a **pit fiend** general and six **erinyes** bridge officers, including Nariangela. A dozen **bearded devils** in plate armor (AC 18) stand guard. For advice on roleplaying Zariel, see chapter 5.





## POOR DEVIL: THAVIUS KREEG

If the characters killed Thavius Kreeg in chapter 1, his soul ends up in the Nine Hells, where it emerges from the River Styx as a lemurine. Zariel instantly becomes aware of Thavius's fate and retrieves him. After promoting Thavius to an amnizu devil for his faithful service, Zariel confines him until Elturel's destruction. The characters find Thavius trapped in a cell aboard Zariel's flying fortress, feeling sorry for himself.

Characters who search the lower decks of Zariel's flying fortress hear sobs coming from an unguarded cell-block. If they investigate the sobbing, read the following boxed text to the players:

Through the bars of a cell, you see a sobbing figure huddled in the shadows. It appears to be a paunchy devil with small wings and horns, bound by shackles to the far wall. The walls of his cell are covered with blasphemous runes that glow with an infernal red light.

The pitiable figure in the cell is Thavius Kreeg, now an **amnizu** (see page 228 for his stat block). If the characters met Thavius when he was human, they recognize him in his devil form with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. The locked cell door can be forced open with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check, or a character can use thieves' tools to try to pick its lock, doing so with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check.

Thavius poses no threat to the characters in his current predicament, and his shackles aren't long enough to let him get close to the cell door. Characters can kill him at range without even entering the cell, if they wish, by launching attacks through the bars. However, Thavius screams in agony whenever he takes damage, which might attract nearby patrols of bearded devils, at your discretion.

Once Elturel is pulled down into the River Styx, Thavius believes Zariel will set him free, but until then he's content to wallow in self-pity. He didn't expect to end up in the Nine Hells so soon. See chapter 5 for more information on how to roleplay the devil Thavius.

### SYMBOLS AND SHACKLES

The symbols on the walls prevent creatures from teleporting into and out of the cell. For example, a creature can't use *misty step* or *dimension door* to enter or leave the cell. However, the cell does not prohibit creatures from entering or leaving via altered forms. For example, a creature in gaseous form can slip between the bars to enter or leave the cell, as can any creature thin enough to pass between the bars.

Only Zariel can unlock Thavius's shackles, though a creature can break them with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. The shackles can also be attacked; they have AC 19, a damage threshold of 15, hp 20, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine.



## ROAMING ENCOUNTER: SMILER THE DEFILER

Characters can encounter Smiler the Defiler anywhere in Avernus. Where and when he appears is up to you.

This eladrin adventurer from the Feywild became stranded in Avernus after his companions abandoned him. He has spent the past seventy years roaming Avernus, making deals with fiends to survive. Smiler eventually sold his soul to a pit fiend, who gave him the means to topple a nycaloth warlord named Yarrasto. Smiler took control of the nycaloth's warband and their infernal war machines. Smiler's gang came to be known as Smiler's Defilers, and their ferocity terrified the other warlords of Avernus for a while.

Three of Smiler's rivals—Bitter Breath, Feonor, and Princeps Kovik—joined forces to wipe out Smiler's Defilers. Smiler escaped and tears around Avernus on a Devil's Ride (see page 94), looking for adventurers willing to help him get revenge on the warlords who ganged up on him. Mad Maggie (page 82) remains his only ally, though he refuses to join her gang.

When the characters first encounter Smiler, read or paraphrase the following:

You see an two-wheeled infernal war machine parked next to a large rock. Standing atop the rock, peeing into the hot wind, is a slender elf-like figure.

Smiler has an unnerving smile—hence his name. When he sees the characters, his smile widens as he leaps down to greet them.

A more apt name for this eladrin would be Smiler the Beguiler, as he's constantly trying to intoxicate others with his relentless optimism and shocking recklessness. Smiler thinks he can accomplish anything with a positive attitude and some death-defying stunt. Although he admits others might end up getting killed by his actions, he believes he can bend the multiverse to his whims if he tries hard enough. He's really quite insane.

One of Smiler's favorite antics is to use a *hallucinatory terrain* spell to create a little bit of the Feywild in Avernus: a beautiful woodland glade in which to lose himself for a few hours while he meditates and plots.

### TREASURE

Smiler wears +2 leather armor. He carries seven *soul coins* (see page 94) in a bag and a +1 shortsword.

## SMILER THE DEFILER

Medium fey (elf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (+2 leather armor)

Hit Points 165 (22d8 + 66)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)

**Skills** Deception +7, Persuasion +7

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Fey Step (Recharge 4–6).** As a bonus action, Smiler can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that he can see or to the empty seat of his infernal war machine.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Smiler's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

3/day each: *confusion*, *enthral*, *suggestion*

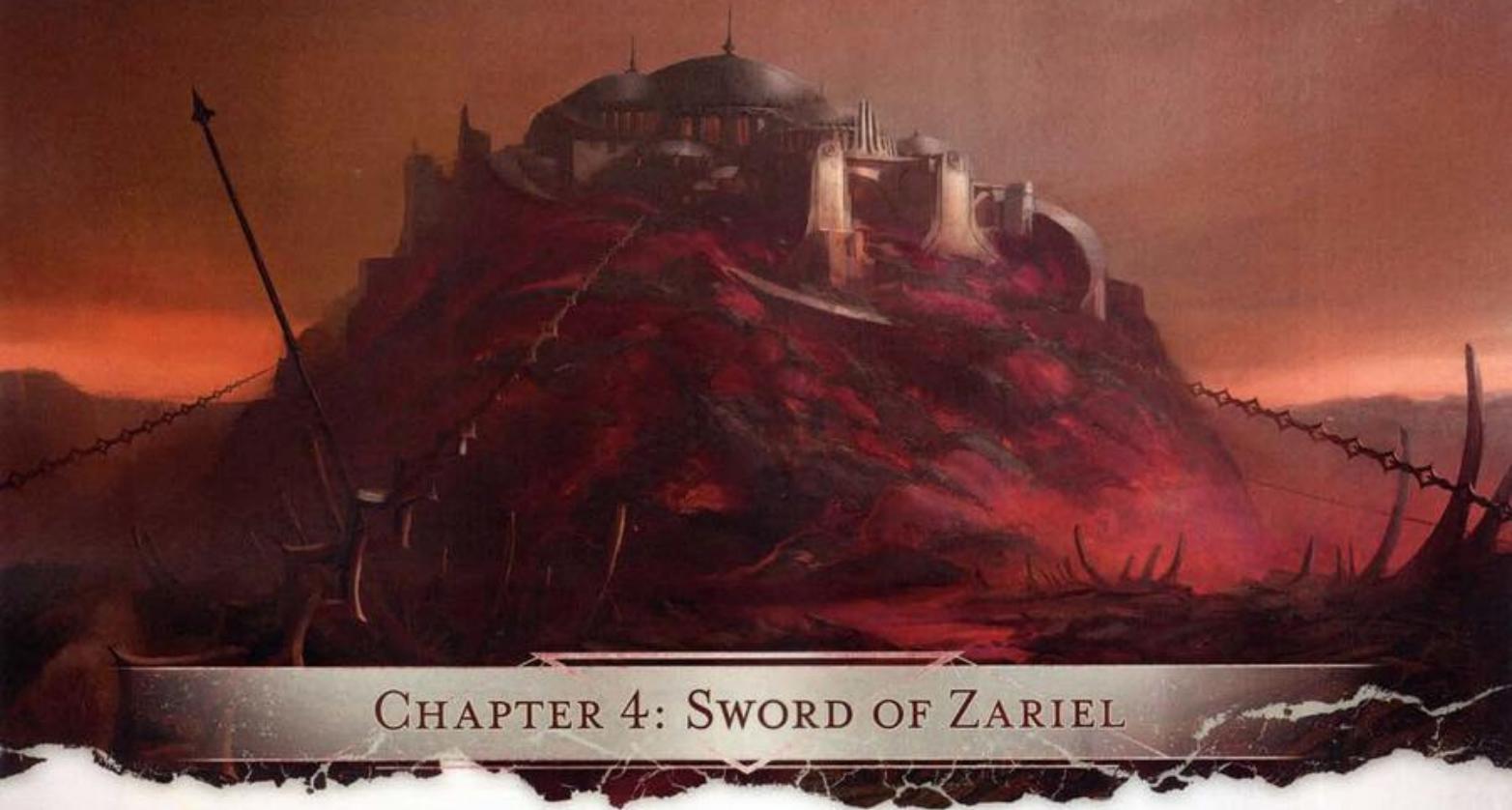
1/day each: *hallucinatory terrain*, *Otto's irresistible dance*

**Magic Resistance.** Smiler has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Smiler makes two weapon attacks. He can cast a spell in place of one of these attacks.

**+1 Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage.



## CHAPTER 4: SWORD OF ZARIEL



HE CHARACTERS SHOULD BE 11TH LEVEL BY the time they discover the location of the *Sword of Zariel*. The weapon awaits them in a cathedral formed out of positive energy. Avernus abhors the structure and has surrounded it in a bloody scab, earning it the name the Bleeding Citadel. This scab has also engulfed a demon named Crokek'toeck that was sent by the demon lord Yeenoghu to devour the blade. The holy power of the citadel resists the scab's attempts to fully engulf it and make it one with Avernus, leaving the top of the citadel visible. The characters get directions to this location from Bel or Olanthus in chapter 3.

Yeenoghu's demons carve tunnels through the scab as they search for a way to free Crokek'toeck and break into the Bleeding Citadel, which is otherwise impenetrable. A nalfeshnee named Trantolox oversees this force.

### APPROACHING THE CITADEL

As the characters approach the Bleeding Citadel, read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

A great, disgusting scab the size of a large hill rises up from a stinking swamp of blood. The domed top of an alabaster temple pokes through the scab. Many black iron chains of Avernus converge on the building, attaching within the grotesque mound.

The exposed portions of the Bleeding Citadel are impenetrable and indestructible. If Lulu is with the characters, she shares her fear that the scab will eventually cover the entire structure, whereupon the citadel will be absorbed into the Nine Hells and the *Sword of Zariel* lost forever. She also tells the characters that the only entrance to the citadel is covered by the lower portion of the scab.

Yeenoghu's demons have dug tunnels and chambers throughout the scab. Unless otherwise noted, Yeenoghu's forces attack characters they notice and fight until destroyed.

### THE SCAB

The scab is 300 feet high. The lower 100 feet of the scab is hard as rock, and each 5-foot cube of hard scab has AC 17, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The upper 200 feet is newer, softer growth covered in weeping wounds. This part of the scab has a spongy consistency and is much easier to destroy. A 5-foot cube of soft scab has AC 9, 10 hit points, and immunity to psychic damage. Damage to the soft scab causes reeking blood to flow from the wound.

### ENTERING THE SCAB

The most obvious way to enter the Scab is through a hole near the top of the Scab (area S1). Climbing a chain or the outer surface of the scab to reach this hole requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Once inside the Scab, Lulu can sense the distance and direction of the Bleeding Citadel's entrance (area S14), and guide the characters toward it.

## INTERIOR FEATURES

Map 4.1 shows a cross-section of the scab interior, the features of which are as follows:

**Darkness.** The scab contains no light sources unless the text states otherwise. The demons infesting the scab rely on darkvision to see.

**Interior Surfaces.** All tunnels and chambers were dug out by demons using their claws or, in some cases, their teeth.

**Pools of Blood.** Pools of blood fill the areas shown on map 4.1. The pools are difficult terrain. Any humanoid that enters or starts its turn in a pool must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains the flaw, "I am cruel and uncaring toward others," for the next 8 hours. This flaw overrides any conflicting personality trait. A *dispel evil and good* spell or similar magic removes the flaw.

**Tunnel Dimensions.** Unless noted otherwise, tunnels are 10 feet wide. At various points, the ceilings are so low that Medium characters must crawl to pass underneath them.

## SCAB LOCATIONS

The following encounters are keyed to map 4.1 (page 137). Because the scab wraps around the Bleeding Citadel, a creature can move off the left-hand side of the map onto the right-hand side of the map, or vice versa.

### S1. Oozing Entrance

This entrance to the scab is a tube-shaped tunnel with a 20-foot radius. As the characters approach the entrance, read the following boxed text to the players:

A circular gaping wound near the top of the scab forms a tunnel that descends into darkness.

The tunnel tapers as it descends toward area S2.

### S2. Angelic Window

Demons digging in this tunnel exposed a 20-foot-tall, 5-foot-wide window:

The scab on one side of this narrow passage is stripped away, partially revealing one of the citadel's stained glass windows. The opaque blue and yellow panes depict the contemplative face of a beautiful angel.

A *detect magic* spell reveals that the window radiates an aura of abjuration magic. The window is unbreakable, and no one can enter the citadel from here. Any creature of good alignment that touches the window gains 20 temporary hit points. A creature affected by the window's magic cannot be affected by the window again for 24 hours.

## THE SCAB

For characters of level 11

The adventurers try to enter the Bleeding Citadel, which gets its name from the weeping, scabrous growth that engulfs most of it. Tunnels carved by demons lead to the citadel's entrance.

## ENTERING THE CITADEL

For characters of level 12

After making their way through the tunnels of the scab, the adventurers enter the Bleeding Citadel and first lay eyes on the *Sword of Zariel*.

## IDYLLGLEN

For characters of level 12

The adventurers are swept into one of Lulu's memories and travel to the past, where they are tested in a conflict between Zariel and Yeenoghu.

## CLAIMING THE SWORD

For characters of level 12

After their sojourn to Idyllglen, the adventurers return to the Bleeding Citadel, where the *Sword of Zariel* waits for one who is worthy to claim it. Whoever claims the sword is changed forever.

DIAGRAM 4.1: CHAPTER 4 FLOWCHART

### S3. DROWNED HAG

When the characters enter this 30-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

A pool of blood fills the center of this chamber. Five goat-headed demons reeking of rot crouch along the edges of the pool, staring at a corpse floating in it.

Five **bulezaus** (see page 230 for their stat block) drowned a night hag in the pool. The hag, Yiggleblight, was working with Trantolox to find Crokek'toeck until the nalfeshnee suspected the hag was secretly plotting against it. Trantolox ordered the bulezaus to kill the hag. They plan to eat her once the corpse bloats, but the characters make excellent appetizers.

**Treasure.** If the characters search the hag's tattered robes, they find a belt pouch containing a diamond worth 5,000 gp and small flask of water from the River Styx. The flask magically preserves the water (see "River Styx," page 76, for effects).

### S4. Bloody Downpour

When the characters enter this 40-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

Blood streams down from a gaping wound in the ceiling, filling a large pool that covers the floor of this chamber. A hunk of scab floats in the blood.

Three invisible **barlguras** cling to the walls of this chamber, their claws digging into the soft walls. The demons wait for prey to enter the room before attacking. They hungrily pursue more elusive prey.

The barlguras tore the floating chunk of scab from the center of the ceiling, causing blood to pour out of the wound. A character who expends five uses of a healer's kit and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check bandages the wound effectively enough to stop the downpour. This process takes 5 minutes and exposes the character to the blood's effects (see "Interior Features," page 135). A *cure wounds* spell or similar magic cast on the wound closes it, stanching the blood flow.

## S5. FOOD FIGHT

When the characters enter this 30-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

Two fiends resembling scaly, 9-foot-tall, bipedal toads stand waist-deep in a pool of blood, bellowing as they claw at each other. Floating near them is the half-eaten corpse of a bearded devil clutching a glaive. The pool is 20 feet wide and 40 feet long, with a horseshoe-shaped ledge around it.

Two hungry **hezrou**s fight over the devil's tasty corpse. Unless they notice the characters, the demons battle until one of them is killed. If the characters allow the fight to play out, one hezrou emerges victorious with 30 hit points remaining. Characters have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to sneak past the hezrous while the demons fight each other.

**Treasure.** The half-eaten bearded devil clutches a +1 *glaive*.

## S6. TORTURE CHAMBER

When the characters enter this large, 30-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

Two iron chains attached to the ceiling end in hyena skulls that bite into the flesh of a screaming devil with sharp spines covering its thin, man-sized body. Jabbing the chained fiend with their long proboscises are three droning flies as big as horses.

The chained fiend is Alazub, a **barbed devil** with 25 hit points remaining. The giant flies are three **chasmes**. Characters who enter the chamber are susceptible to the chasmes' Drone trait. The chasmes cease their torture of Alazub to attack intruders.

Trantolox caught Alazub sneaking around the scab and wants to know if the devil knows anything about the citadel that could help the demons break into it. Unfortunately for the barbed devil, it knows nothing that the nalfeshnee would consider useful.

**Chains.** The two chains that bind Alazub hold the barbed devil 25 feet above the floor. Each chain has AC 19, 15 hit points, and immunity to cold, fire, poison, and psychic damage.

The hyena skull at the end of each chain grips Alazub by one arm, biting into the devil's flesh. A character can use an action to rip a skull from Alazub's flesh, but doing so deals 7 (2d6) piercing damage to the devil. This damage is considered magical and therefore ignores Alazub's resistance to piercing damage. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check removes the skull-tipped chain from the devil without harming it.

**Roleplaying Alazub.** Alazub came to the scab to spy on Trantolox's progress for Zariel. If Alazub is freed, a character who makes a successful Charisma (Deception) check against Alazub's Wisdom (Insight) check can convince the devil that Zariel sent the characters to save it. If convinced that the characters are on its side, a character who makes a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Alazub to share the following information:

- Demons under the command of a nalfeshnee named Trantolox have found the entrance to the Bleeding Citadel but can't break in (see area S14).
- A shadow demon has found Yeenoghu's lost pet, the great demon Crokek'toeck, in the hard part of the scab. It leads the crew of demons that is digging out the enormous creature (see area S9).

If the characters refuse to free Alazub, the barbed devil tries to make a deal. It can offer the information it knows or anything else within its power in exchange for freedom. If Lulu is with the characters, she urges the characters not to make any deals with the devil and grows despondent if her advice is ignored. Lulu refuses to do anything but the bare minimum to help the characters until her confidence in their good judgment is restored.

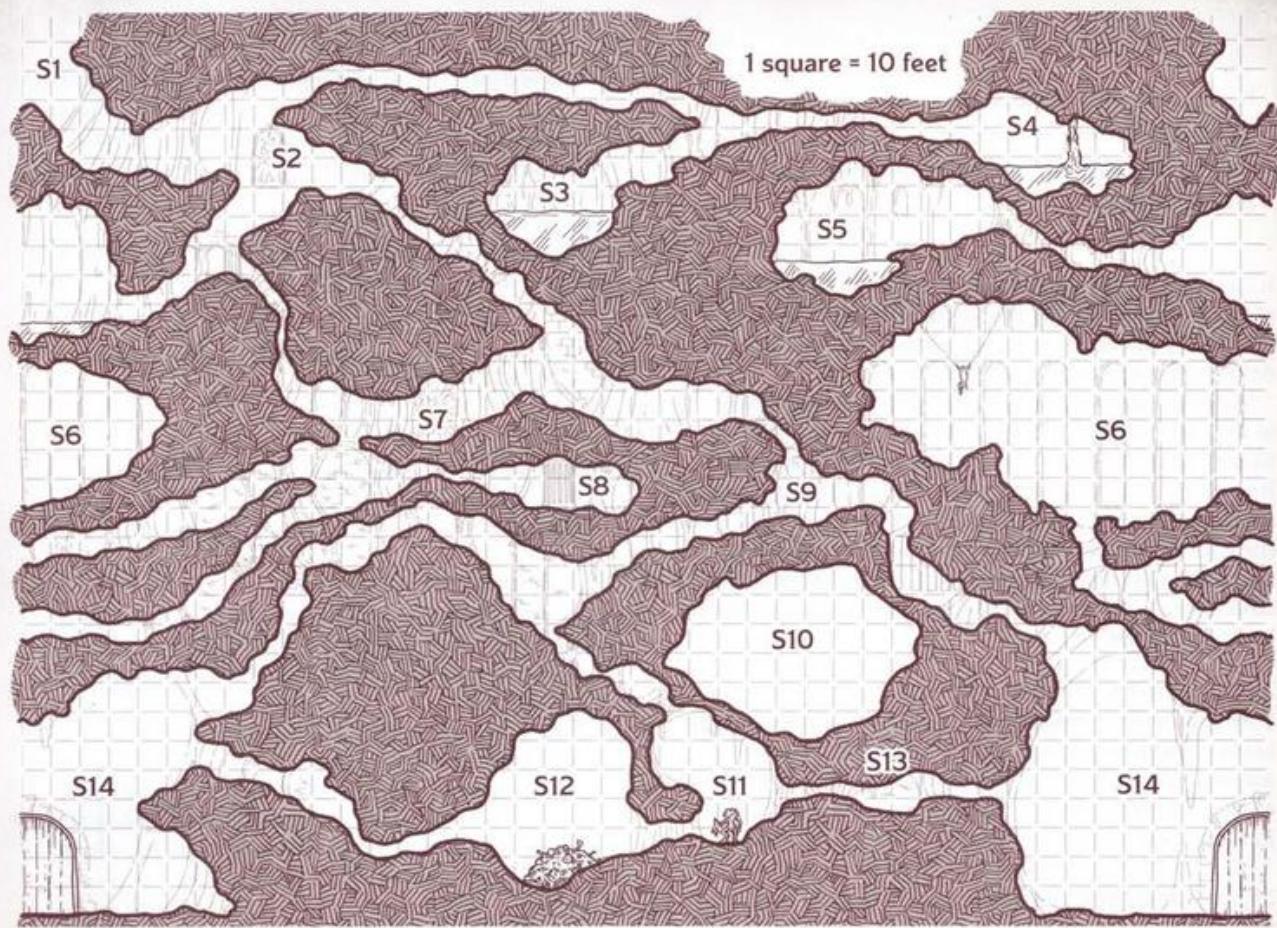
If the characters mention their interest in the *Sword of Zariel*, Alazub realizes they are Zariel's foes and makes reporting that information to Zariel a priority. After being freed and talking with the characters, the barbed devil leaves the scab.

## S7. TRANTOLOX'S LARDER

When the characters enter this 20-foot-wide cavern, read the following boxed text to the players:

Hordes of hellish flies buzz around this dark chamber, which is strewn with mutilated devil corpses and gnawed bones. A hole in the floor reveals another dark cavern below this one.

Close examination of the mutilated corpses reveals that they include three bearded devils, two barbed devils,



MAP 4.1: SIDE VIEW OF THE SCAB

and a bone devil. All of the corpses are torn to pieces and, in some cases, partially eaten.

The first time a creature that isn't a fiend tries to cross this room, the flies gather into four hostile **swarms of insects**. Replace the swarms' climbing speed with a flying speed of 30 feet.

#### S8. HAG'S LAIR

The tunnel leading to this cave narrows to a height of 2 feet, requiring Medium characters to crawl through it. As the characters peer into this 20-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

The floor of this dark cyst is strewn with bones and dotted with weeping sores. Shallow niches gouged into the scabby walls hold an assortment of stoppered flasks, polished black orbs, humanoid skulls, and other curios.

Yiggleblight the night hag used this chamber as a lair until she was rudely disposed of (see area S3).

**Treasure.** A *detect magic* spell reveals six magic items in the niches, including a black sack made of stitched flesh, a lustrous black gem shaped like a human baby's fist, an *iron flask* containing a berserk **fiendish flesh golem** (see page 236 for its stat block) that can't be controlled, and three *soul coins* (see page 225). The sack is Yiggleblight's *soul bag*, which is of no use to the characters. The black gem is the night hag's *heartstone*.

(For more information on these two magic items, see the "Night Hag" entry in the *Monster Manual*.)

Yiggleblight also kept a collection of poisons in six small, stoppered tubes made from human finger bones. Each flask holds a single dose of a different kind of poison: burnt othur fumes, carrion crawler mucus, essence of ether, malice, oil of taggit, and torpor (see "Poisons" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the effects of each). A character with a poisoner's kit can use it to take tiny samples of each poison for analysis. After spending 1 minute analyzing a poison, the character can identify it and its effects with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check. The character's proficiency bonus applies to the check if the character is proficient with the poisoner's kit.

The only other valuable items are three 3-pound orbs of polished obsidian (100 gp each) that can be used as arcane focuses for spellcasting.

Other curios include an empty casket sized for a human infant, a copper cowbell, a rope noose, a nothic's shriveled claw on the end of a black cord, a soot-stained wooden coffer containing three teeth from a red dragon wyrmling, a dead tomato plant in a ceramic pot adorned with images of dancing cherubs, and nine gnoll skulls.

#### S9. DIGGING DEMONS

At this point, the scab transitions from being soft and spongy to hard as rock.

When the characters enter this 20-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

Ten small, snarling demons covered in matted gray fur claw and bite a hole into the hard, scabby floor. A demon made of shadow flies over the smaller fiends, screaming at them in Abyssal.

If Lulu is with the characters, she senses the presence of Crokek'toeck nearby (see area S10). She tells the characters about Yeenoghu's pet and speculates that the demons are trying to free Crokek'toeck.

Vatilan, a **shadow demon**, directs seven **dretches** to dig their way toward area S10. The shadow demon found Crokek'toeck while scouting the scab using its Incorporeal Movement trait. If the characters attack, the shadow demon leaves the dretches behind as it passes through the nearest wall and heads to area S14 to warn Trantolox that intruders are near. Vatilan remains by the nalfeshnee's side until convinced that the intruders have been dealt with.

#### S10. CROKEK'TOECK'S PRISON

Yeenoghu's pet, **Crokek'toeck** (see page 230 for its stat block), is tightly packed into this cavity, incapacitated and restrained. If at least 20 feet of the scabby walls that encase Crokek'toeck are destroyed, the monster is able to move its body again and breaks free of the scab.

If Crokek'toeck breaks out of the scab, it leaves a 30-foot-radius passage in its wake. The fiend is hungry and tries to consume any creature that crosses its path. It then leaves to find its master, Yeenoghu.

If Crokek'toeck is freed, Trantolox and the rest of the demons in area S14 investigate. The nalfeshnee attempts to control Crokek'toeck, but Yeenoghu's pet answers only to the Gnoll Lord. After Trantolox tries to control Crokek'toeck for 3 rounds, the nalfeshnee and the other demons retreat back to area S14.

#### S11. STATUE OF YEENOGHU

When the characters enter this 40-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

A nine-foot-tall statue of a hulking biped with clawed hands and feet stands on the floor of this chamber. Three vulture-like demons and six gnolls cackle as they dance around the statue.

Three **vrocks** and six **gnolls** dance around the statue, reveling in their evil madness. The vrocks are quick to use their spores, even if it means infecting their gnoll allies. The demons and gnolls fight to the death.

The statue is carved out of hardened scab. A *detect magic* spell reveals that it radiates an aura of evocation magic. Any demon or gnoll with at least 1 hit point remaining that starts its turn within 30 feet of the statue regains 10 hit points.

If Lulu is with the characters, she recognizes that the statue is a crude likeness of Yeenoghu and encourages the characters to destroy it.

The statue is a Large object with AC 17, 60 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the

statue is destroyed, it explodes. Each creature within 30 feet of the exploding statue must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

#### S12. TRANTOLOX'S CHAMBER

When the characters enter this 30-foot-wide chamber, read the following boxed text to the players:

A massive pile of bones and offal sits in the middle of this otherwise empty chamber.

Creatures who examine the bones and offal closely notice a stoppered bottle in the pile.

**Treasure.** The bottle is a *eversmoking bottle*.

#### S13. CACKLING GNOLLS

Characters hear the cackling of gnolls as they enter this corridor. They can surprise the gnolls by dousing their lights and succeeding on a DC 10 group Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Targ Nar, a **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu** with 100 hit points, is here with a gang of fifteen **gnolls**. Targ Nar obeys Trantolox, who has ordered him to guard the corridor. To pass the time, the gnolls are tossing around the severed head of one of their fellow gnolls, whom Trantolox decapitated on a whim.

#### S14. ENTRANCE TO THE BLEEDING CITADEL

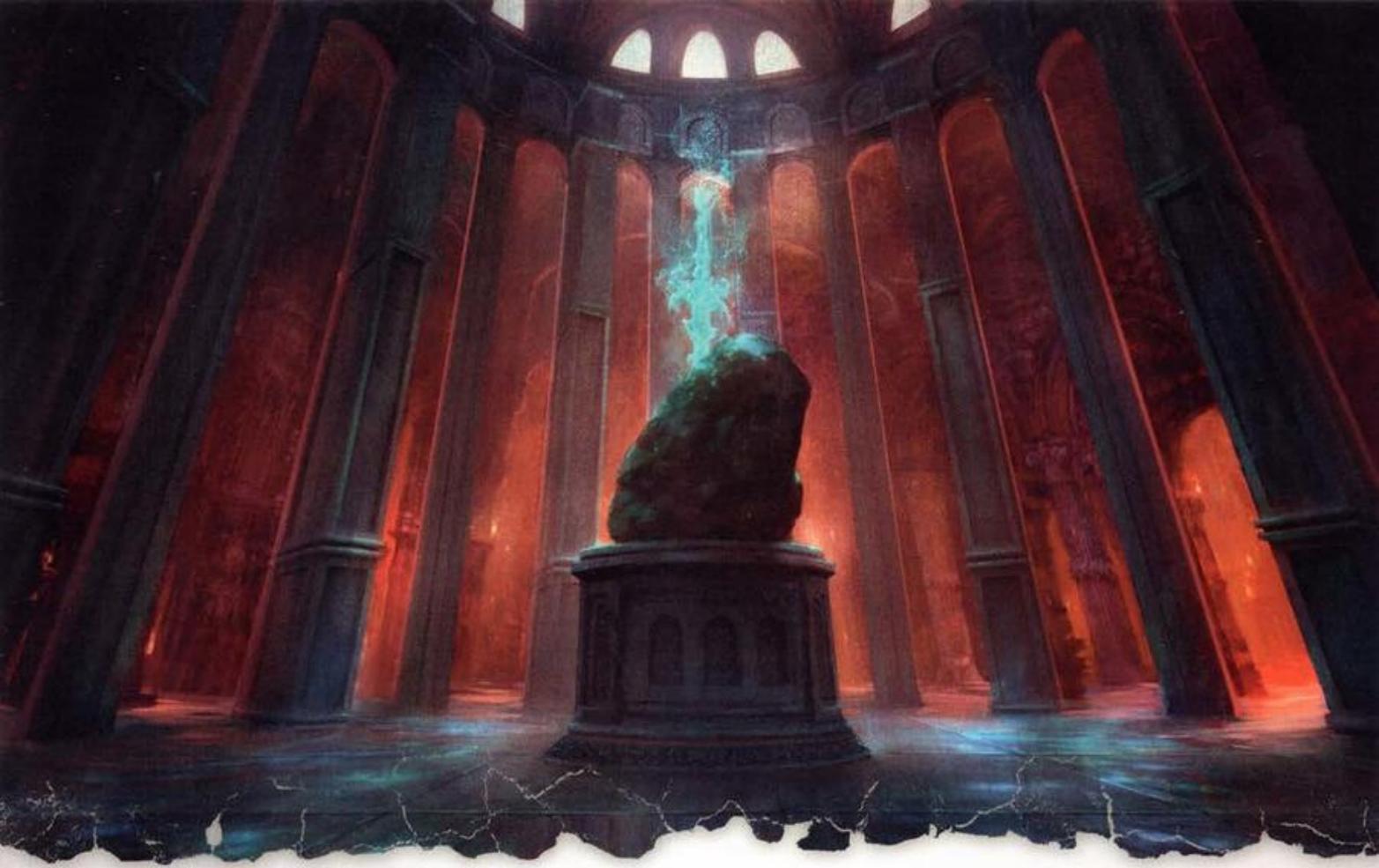
When the characters arrive at this 40-foot-wide area, read the following boxed text to the players:

Brass double doors stand exposed in the wall of the scab. A relief image on the doors depicts a blindfolded angel wielding a sword, and carved into the door frame are beautiful, gold-inlaid runes. Three goat-headed demons with barbed tails throw themselves against the door as a corpulent, ape-like fiend with tusks and tiny wings kicks at them, roaring commands in Abyssal.

Trantolox, a **nalfeshnee**, is commanding three **bulezaus** (see page 230 for their stat block) to force open the double door that leads into the Bleeding Citadel. The nalfeshnee is desperate to get inside to claim the *Sword of Zariel* for Yeenoghu. Despite the bulezaus' best efforts, the doors refuse to budge (see "Doors" below).

The nalfeshnee doesn't attack the characters right away if it thinks it can trick them into opening the doors for it. The nalfeshnee suggests an alliance and an "equal split" of whatever treasure is hidden inside the citadel. If Lulu is with the characters, she strongly advises them not to trust the demon. Trantolox has no intention of honoring the deal and claims to know nothing about the *Sword of Zariel*. In battle, the nalfeshnee fights until reduced to 60 hit points, then tries to flee the scab and report back to Yeenoghu. The insane bulezaus fight to the death.

**Doors.** The doors, like the citadel itself, are indestructible. The runes around them say, in Celestial: "Against



evil, we stand united. Only the pure of heart can part these holy gates."

A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of abjuration magic around the double door, which can be opened only by a creature of good alignment while Lulu is within 60 feet of the door. Lulu herself can open the doors, if need be. If Lulu is alive but not present when the characters try to enter the citadel, the doors remain locked. The characters receive a telepathic message from an unfamiliar female voice, saying, "Bring Lulu here, and I'll let you inside." Only when the characters return with Lulu can the doors be opened. If Lulu died earlier in the adventure, she's waiting for them inside the citadel, just beyond the doors.

When the doors open, a bright white light pours out, filling area S14. Any fiend or undead that enters or starts its turn in the light must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Fiends and undead can't pass through the doorway of the citadel even while the doors are open.

**Character Advancement.** Allow players to advance their characters from 11th to 12th level before they enter the Bleeding Citadel.

## ENTERING THE CITADEL

The characters should be 12th level by the time they enter the Bleeding Citadel. The citadel has one purpose: to keep the *Sword of Zariel* out of evil hands.

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players when the characters enter the Bleeding Citadel:

A bright white light burns away the blood and grit staining your clothes. Restorative energy brings life to numb muscles as the glow softens to reveal the interior of a sun-kissed cathedral. How light passes through the scab and into the stained glass windows is a mystery only magic can answer.

Pillars line a path from the door to a raised dais carved with Celestial runes. Embedded in a stone atop the dais is a glowing longsword.

If Lulu died earlier in the adventure, add the following:

Fluttering just inside the doorway is a golden hollyphant that greets you with a pleasing trumpet sound.

Lulu has all her hit points if she's restored to life by the citadel's magic. However, she has no memories between the time the characters last saw her and now.

The holy power of the citadel restores the characters, and they gain the benefits of a long rest. If a creature gained a flaw from a blood pool or similar effect, the flaw is removed. Casting *detect magic* in the Bleeding Citadel reveals that the whole structure radiates auras of abjuration and evocation magic.

The interior of the citadel is one large alabaster chamber brightly lit by magically created sunlight shining through windows. The sword atop the dais is the *Sword*

of Zariel (see page 226). The carvings on the dais read, in Celestial, “The hero who becomes one with this blade exists no longer.”

The characters can’t claim the sword until they complete the Idyllglen memory (see “Idyllglen” below).

## Yael’s Ghost

If the characters move toward the *Sword of Zariel*, the ghost of Yael appears before them and pulls the characters into one of Lulu’s forgotten memories to see if they are worthy of possessing the weapon. Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

The translucent image of a woman in her thirties wearing plate armor and bearing a thin scar on her cheek appears before you. As she points toward the hollyphant, Lulu’s eyes turn pure white. A whisper fills your ears and says, “I remember!” A wave of radiant energy erupts from Lulu’s body and in that blinding flash the ghostly warrior, the hollyphant, and the Bleeding Citadel disappear.

The solace of the cathedral is replaced by havoc, screams of panic, and acrid smoke. You stand at the edge of a small town of burning cottages, fields, and trees. A broken sign on the ground reveals the settlement’s name: Idyllglen. Shrieking townsfolk run from cackling, snarling demons and gnolls.

The characters are transported into Lulu’s memory of Idyllglen near the west edge of Idyll Road (area I1 on map 4.2).

## Idyllglen

Yael pulls the characters into Lulu’s memory of Zariel’s final battle against Yeenoghu in Faerûn. The characters experience a series of events in Idyllglen before returning to the Bleeding Citadel, where they can finally claim the *Sword of Zariel*. While the characters are in Idyllglen, Lulu is not with them, though she does make an appearance as a winged mammoth in “Event 7, Zariel’s Arrival” (page 144).

## Idyllglen History

Any character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (History or Religion) check recalls the following information about Idyllglen:

- Ages ago, Idyllglen was threatened by gnoll tribes. As the gnolls raided the town, Solndor Brightstar, a cleric of Lathander, led the people in prayer to his god for aid. Lathander was moved by the people’s bravery and sent the angel Zariel to defeat the gnolls. After driving off the gnolls, the people erected a statue of Zariel to honor her.
- Generations later, the gnolls returned to Idyllglen, this time with demons in their ranks and Yeenoghu himself leading the war band. Zariel and the Hellriders came to the Idyllglen’s aid, but not before the town was mostly destroyed.

## Idyllglen Features

The town of Idyllglen has the following general features.

### Borders

The characters are confined to the part of Idyllglen shown on map 4.2. Beyond the edges of the map, everything is engulfed in a smoky haze. Characters who fly or levitate to an altitude of 120 feet or higher find themselves engulfed in a similar smoky haze.

A creature that enters or starts its turn in the haze must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Burning Buildings

The unlabeled buildings on map 4.2 are homes and businesses that the gnolls have set ablaze. The buildings’ supplies were taken by fleeing townsfolk or ransacked by Yeenoghu’s horde. Each building is one or two stories tall (DM’s choice) and 10 feet high per story. The interior rooms of the buildings have 9-foot-high ceilings with 8-foot-high doorways connecting them. A character can climb the walls of a building without equipment by succeeding on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

A creature that starts its turn in or on a burning building must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Burning Trees

Each tree depicted on map 4.2 is 1d6 + 10 feet tall and on fire. No ability check is required to climb a tree. However, a creature that starts its turn in a burning tree must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Townsfolk

Like Idyllglen itself, the townsfolk are figments created from Lulu’s memory. Most residents of Idyllglen flee for their lives or hide in terror. If the characters try to get information out of these townsfolk, the most anyone can offer are a few quick words about demons and gnolls coming out of nowhere to ransack the town.

The characters have opportunities to save Idyllglen’s people from Yeenoghu’s hordes and other dangers. Townsfolk saved from certain death give a quick show of gratitude before running toward the hazy borders of Lulu’s memory and disappearing.

### Character Death

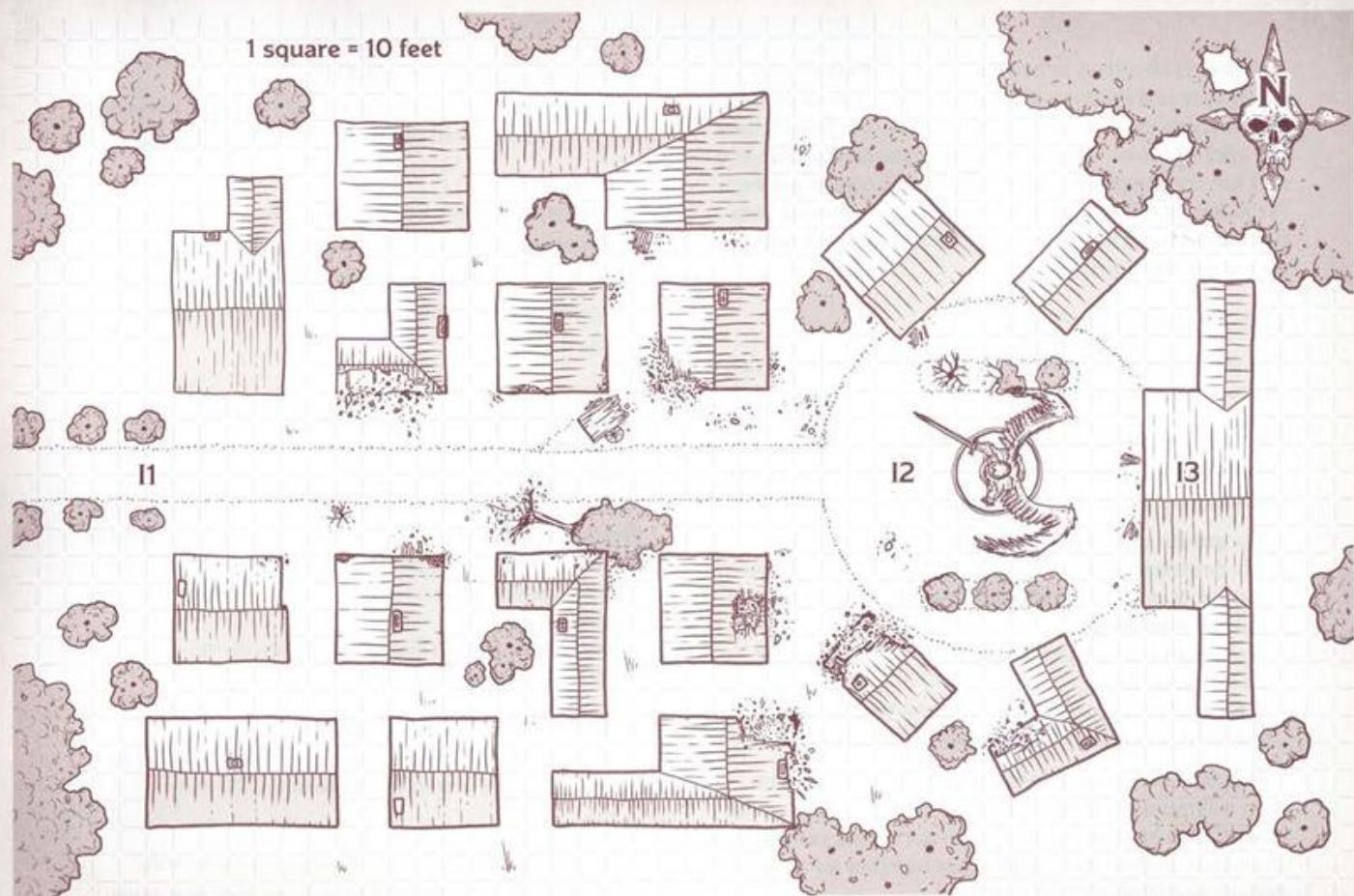
The Idyllglen memory is as real to the characters as any location, and they can die here.

## Idyllglen Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 4.2.

### I1. IDYLL ROAD

Idyll Road is the only paved street in Idyllglen. It leads from the west edge of the town to the statue of Zariel (area I2). The street is strewn with broken carts, debris, and corpses.



MAP 4.2: IDYLLGLEN

## 12. STATUE OF ZARIEL

This 30-foot-tall, white marble statue stands atop a 2-foot-high raised dais and depicts an armored, blindfolded angel in a calm, protective stance, with her sword drawn and wings unfurled. The dais is carved with the following words, in Common: "Zariel, guardian of Idyllglen. Offer prayers to Lathander, and his light will shield thee."

This statue of Zariel is a Gargantuan object with AC 17, 300 hit points, a damage threshold of 15, and immunity to poison, psychic, and radiant damage. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the statue radiates an aura of abjuration magic.

Any fiend that starts its turn within 15 feet of the statue causes it to flare with radiant energy. Each time the statue flares, every fiend within 30 feet of it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Any character who touches the statue and uses an action to offer a prayer to Lathander gains the benefit of a *protection from evil and good* spell for 1 hour. A character can gain this benefit only once while in the memory.

## 13. TEMPLE OF LATHANDER

This two-story, white stone temple carved with images of the sun on its exterior walls is the largest building in the town. Iron shutters cover the building's windows, and its doors are made of oak. The temple's occupants and features are discussed more below.

**Occupants.** Jhessa Brightstar, a neutral good female human **priest** of Lathander, leads a congregation of fifty townsfolk (**commoners**) in prayer on the first floor. If forced into combat, the commoners take the Dodge action. The townsfolk are terrified of Yeenoghu's forces and grateful for any aid the characters provide.

**Illumination.** Torches burning in sconces brightly light the temple's interior.

**Barred Entrance.** An oak double door serves as the temple's entrance and is barred from the inside. A creature can use an action to try to force open the doors from the outside, doing so with a successful DC 22 Strength (Athletics) check. A character can also convince the congregation to open the doors by shouting through the doors and succeeding on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

**Shuttered Windows.** All windows are covered with locked iron shutters. The iron shutters are latched from the inside and have AC 19, 25 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A character with thieves' tools can try to unlock a window's shutters, doing so with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

**Roleplaying Jhessa Brightstar.** Jhessa is a pious priest of Lathander and a descendant of Solndor Brightstar (see "Idyllglen History," page 140). The soft-spoken woman in her forties leads her flock in a prayer to Lathander, begging the Morning Lord to send Zariel to protect the people of Idyllglen once more.

Jhessa is steadfast in her faith that Lathander hears the prayer and believes it's just a matter of time before Zariel appears. If she meets the characters, Jhessa uses her spells to heal and bolster them, hoping they can protect her congregation long enough for Zariel to arrive. If the forces of Yeenoghu enter the temple, Jhessa puts herself between any threat and the commoners within, giving her life if necessary.

## IDYLLGLEN EVENTS

The following events occur in sequence as soon as the characters arrive in Idyllglen.

### EVENT 1. CHARACTERS' ARRIVAL

When the characters arrive in Idyllglen (at area I1), the following encounters occur simultaneously:

- Six **gnolls** surround and attack the characters.
- Six **dretches** on Idyll Road (area I1) claw at an overturned cart covering Ella Deepwell, a neutral female human **commoner**.
- A **giant hyena** attacks a **mastiff** near the statue of Zariel (area I2).
- A **hezrou** pounds on the door to the temple of Lathander (area I3), trying to force its way inside.

Have the players roll initiative for their characters, then roll initiative for the gnolls, dretches, giant hyena, mastiff, and hezrou. All the gnolls act on the same initiative count, and all the dretches act together as well. Ella doesn't participate in the combat.

**Gnolls.** The gnolls fight to the death, cackling maniacally all the while.

**Cart and Dretches.** The cart is a Large object with AC 15, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A creature can use an action to attempt to lift the cart, doing so with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

If the dretches destroy the cart, they attack Ella Deepwell. If she dies, the dretches attack the characters.

If the characters attack the dretches, the dretches turn to fight them, ignoring the cart. Once the dretches are destroyed, Ella emerges from the cart, thanks the characters, and flees to safety.

**Giant Hyena and Mastiff.** If the characters don't intervene, the giant hyena turns its attention to the characters after killing the mastiff. If the characters attack the giant hyena, it ignores the mastiff and turns to face the bigger threat, fighting to the death.

The mastiff stays with the characters if they rescue it, using the Help action to distract enemies in combat. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can convince the mastiff to stay out of the fight and find shelter.

**Hezrou.** On its turn, the demon tries to force open the temple doors, doing so with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. If the hezrou forces open the doors to the temple, it begins attacking the people inside on its next turn. If the characters attack the hezrou or it kills all the creatures in the temple, it turns its attention toward the characters.

**Next Event.** When only one of the characters' enemies remains, proceed with event 2.

### EVENT 2. YEENOGHU'S CHAMPION

This event overlaps with the end of the previous event. When it begins, read the following to the players:

A chorus of screams rises up as people, sheep, and pigs scamper through the town, chased by a demon with the lower body of a great serpent and the upper body of a six-armed gnoll clutching a wicked sword in each of its clawed hands.

The terrified animals and townsfolk dart through Idyllglen, chased by Garoknul, a unique demon in the service of Yeenoghu. Use the **marilith** stat block to represent Garoknul. The fleeing beasts and townsfolk disappear when they reach the edge of the map. Garoknul stops its chase to battle the characters. If reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, Garoknul uses its next action to teleport away.

**Next Event.** When Garoknul leaves the area or dies, proceed with event 3.

### EVENT 3. MADNESS REIGNS

This event begins as the previous one ends. Read the following boxed text to the players:

Five guards wielding spears advance from the north. Splattered head-to-toe with black ichor, they gaze at you with hungry eyes.

The five human **guards** are named Caladra Telmaster, Esselyn Xharn, Jai Wen, Tal Hannefar, and Yaerklos Summerlast. Their armor is covered in the ichor of Yeenoghu's demons. The ichor has driven the guards mad, making them hunger for humanoid flesh. When they notice the characters, the guards attack.

If a character kills a guard, Lulu's mind attempts to punish the character. That character must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain 1 level of exhaustion as Lulu's mind saps the character's energy.

A guard's madness can be cured with a *dispel evil and good*, *greater restoration*, or *remove curse* spell. Guards who are cured of their madness thank the characters and explain that they were battling demons in the fields when they suddenly felt an overwhelming desire to consume humanoid flesh. These guards are eager to return to the battle in the fields, disappearing as they pass through the hazy border.

**Next Event.** After the characters deal with the guards, proceed with event 4.

### EVENT 4. UNSETTLING CALM

This event begins with Yael telepathically contacting the characters:

A woman's voice enters your mind. "Nice work. Take a break. You've got an hour before the really bad stuff happens."



The characters can spend the next hour interacting with Lulu's memory of Idyllglen. They can explore the town, extinguish fires, speak to Jhessa Brightstar in the temple of Lathander (area I3), or take a short rest. During this time, the fields continue to burn, and the occasional scream is heard in the distance beyond the hazy border.

**Next Event.** As this event approaches its end, the characters hear cackling laughter far off in the distance. This laughter gets closer and louder, heralding the arrival of more of Yeenoghu's troops. Proceed with event 5.

#### EVENT 5. RENEWED ASSAULT

This event begins as the previous one ends. Read or paraphrase the following boxed text to the players:

Six demons appear on the western edge of Idyllglen—a hulking, ape-like brute and five small, doglike creatures with rubbery gray bodies and big ears. Cackles in the distance signal more enemies on the way.

A **barlgura** and five **dretches** appear on the western edge of map 4.2. If these demons notice the characters, they attack. If they don't notice the characters, they attack the temple (area I3), hoping to kill everyone within. At the start of the second round of combat, a **gnoll pack lord** and six **gnolls** join the fray from the south. At the start of the third round of combat, a **vrock** swoops down from the sky to join the battle.

**Next Event.** When only three enemies remain or after six rounds of combat, whichever comes first, proceed with event 6.

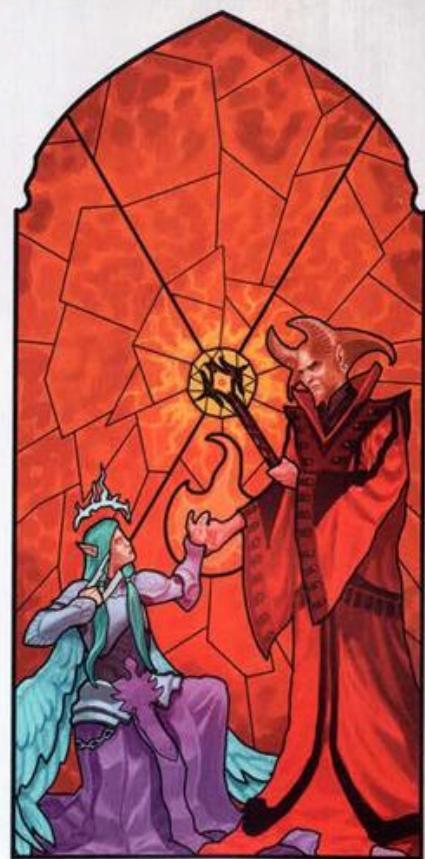
#### EVENT 6. YEENOGHU

This event overlaps with the end of the previous one. Read the following boxed text to the players:

A wild, hideous laugh pierces the air and cuts through the din of battle. A giant gnoll covered in matted, blood-stained fur and swinging a three-headed flail charges out of the haze from the west. Gore drips from his red maw, open in a violent laugh.

**Yeenoghu** (see page 242 for its stat block) attacks any creature not allied with him that he notices. If Yeenoghu doesn't notice any enemies, he attacks the statue of Zariel (area I2) before moving on to the temple (area I3).

**Next Event.** Event 7 begins after three rounds of combat with the demon lord or when Yeenoghu is reduced to 100 hit points or fewer.



LEFT TO RIGHT: CHARGE OF ZARIEL AND THE HELLRIDERS, THE WAR ON AVERNUS, AND ZARIEL'S SURRENDER TO ASMODEUS

### EVENT 7. ZARIEL'S ARRIVAL

This event overlaps with the end of the previous one. Read the following boxed text to the players:

The cackling demon lord shuts his maw and narrows his eyes, gazing up toward the sky as a beam of radiant light pierces the haze. A powerful angel streaks down from above, followed by a gold-furred mammoth with feathered wings. The angel slashes her sword across Yeenoghu's chest and utters a spell. A portal opens behind the demon lord as the mammoth rams its head into Yeenoghu. The demon lord is sent tumbling through the portal, which quickly closes behind him.

The angel is Zariel (use the **solar** stat block), and the winged mammoth is Lulu the **hollyphant** (see page 237) in shapechanged form. After ridding Idyllglen of Yeenoghu, Lulu and Zariel introduce themselves to the characters, healing them as best they can. While these introductions happen, the original Hellriders (**knight**) appear on **warhorses** and kill any remaining demons and gnolls. One of these Hellriders, a woman in her thirties with a fresh, deep cut on her cheek, thanks the characters and introduces herself as Yael. She gives a wink before lining up to join the rest of the battalion. The characters might also recognize Olanthus, Haruman,

and other original Hellriders they have come across during their travels in Avernus.

Zariel can cast the *resurrection* spell up to three times. She uses this magic to resurrect as many dead characters as she can.

As Zariel prepares to lead her forces through the portal into Avernus, all other creatures except for her, Lulu, and the characters stop moving and responding as if frozen in time. Zariel turns to the characters and says, "Yeenoghu slaughtered those I swore to protect. I can stop him and others like him. I might have to give up all I stand for, but I could stem the tide of chaos and save many lives from the demonic terrors of the Abyss. Were you in my place, would you risk it all to save others?"

Zariel lets each character answer her question in turn. She thanks them for their responses, then utters a blessing to Lathander over the characters. Characters who answered that they would risk it all as Zariel did each gain a *charm of vitality*. Characters who answered that they would not risk it all to stop the demon lords each gain a *charm of restoration*. (See "Charms" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the benefits of these supernatural gifts.) Characters who can't or won't answer the question receive nothing.

Once Zariel bestows her supernatural charms, Lulu's Idyllglen memory ends. A flash of light brings all the characters (including dead ones) back to the Bleeding Citadel so that one of them might finally claim the *Sword of Zariel*.



LEFT TO RIGHT: HARUMAN EMERGING FROM THE STYX, OLANTHUS TRANSFORMED INTO A DEATH KNIGHT, AND BOTH BY ZARIEL'S SIDE

## CLAIMING THE SWORD

When the characters return to the Bleeding Citadel from Lulu's memory of Idyllglen, read the following boxed text to the players:

You stand before the dais, atop which glows the *Sword of Zariel*. Also before you are Lulu and the ghostly warrior, Yael. The hollyphant is the first to speak. "I remember everything now. Idyllglen was the last straw. We followed Zariel to Avernus, but the evil there proved to be too much for us. Asmodeus appeared and promised Zariel infernal legions to end the Blood War, but she had to give the Lord of the Nine Hells her fealty. She accepted and became an archdevil, but not before Yael and I took her sword, hoping it could redeem Zariel someday. I gave up my magic and memories, and Yael gave her life to construct this place to protect the sword."

Yael's ghost says, "You have faced many trials to claim the *Sword of Zariel*. I'm sorry to say, you face one more. As the inscription on the dais says, 'The hero who becomes one with this blade exists no longer.' Which of you is brave enough to draw the blade and be gone forever?"

Any character who survived Lulu's memory of Idyllglen can pull the *Sword of Zariel* from the dais. Characters who died in Idyllglen are not able to remove the sword from the stone.

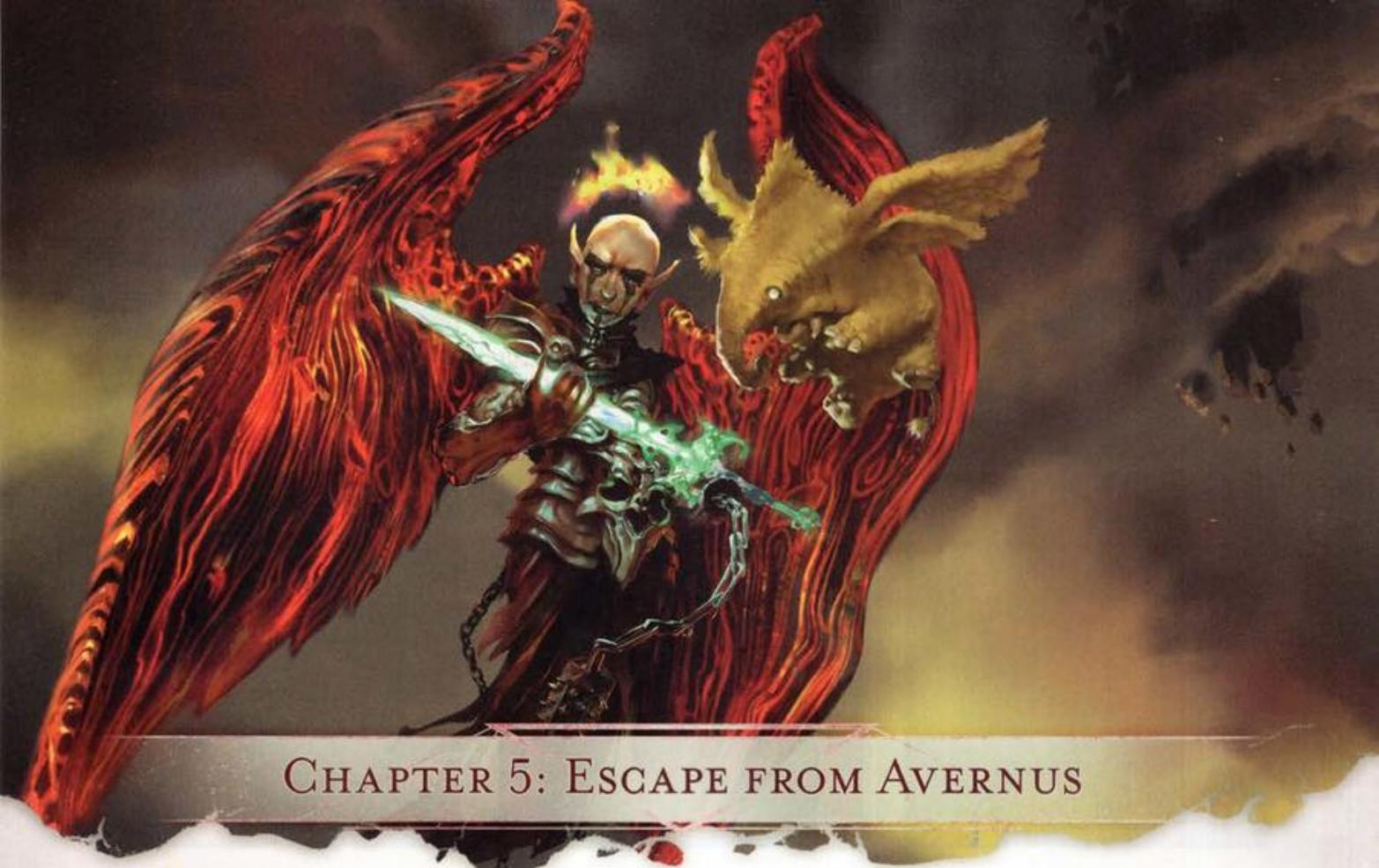
Once the sword is removed from its stone, a character can attune to it immediately if the sword deems that character worthy, and attuning to the sword changes the character irrevocably (see the item's description on page 226). When a character attunes to the sword, the citadel and the scab around it explode outward in blinding rays of light. Creatures in the scab take 110 (20d10) radiant damage and are hurled 1,000 feet away from the sword. Any demons that survive the explosion limp off to lick their wounds. Creatures inside the Bleeding Citadel are unharmed by the explosion and find themselves suddenly under Avernus's red sky.

Once a character claims the *Sword of Zariel*, Yael's work is done. Her ghost bids the party good luck and fades away as her soul passes into the afterlife.

The destruction of the Bleeding Citadel restores all of Lulu's memories, which she can share with the characters. Lulu continues to travel with the characters and encourages them to use the sword to redeem Zariel.

## CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

The characters should be at least 13th level before heading into chapter 5 of the adventure.



## CHAPTER 5: ESCAPE FROM AVERNUS

**A**LL ADVENTURES MUST END, BUT THE BEST ones end with a bang. The climax of *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus* comes when the characters try to redeem Zariel, save Elturel, or both. This chapter sets out some of the most likely ways for these events to happen. As with all DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures, a host of other outcomes are possible, so feel free to let the story evolve beyond the suggested endings outlined in this chapter.

If the characters don't want to save Elturel, they don't need to. However, if they intend to save Elturel, the players should be aware that this is a twofold task:

- Elturel must be freed from the chains that bind it to Avernus.
- Elturel must be returned to the Material Plane.

Though some of the actions the characters can take will accomplish both these tasks at once, others will solve only half the problem.

### WHO SHOULD RULE AVERNUS?

The characters could give Zariel more power to rule Avernus, or they could support one of the archdevil's enemies in a bid to unseat her. They could also try to destroy Zariel, creating a power vacuum that throws Avernus into disarray. Whatever the outcome, the characters are poised to help write cosmic history.

#### REDEEMING ZARIEL

In this outcome, the adventurers entreat the archdevil to redeem her angelic soul and take up her celestial mantle once more. Even though Zariel has fallen, there remains a faint glimmer of hope for her salvation. A fragment of the devil's former self still lingers within her sword, but inspiring Zariel to reverse the course of her destiny is not as easy as simply handing her the blade.

#### PRESENTING THE SWORD

To redeem Zariel, the characters must possess the *Sword of Zariel*. Bringing the sword within 10 feet of Zariel causes the weapon to glow brighter, then levitate to hover before her. Confronted with the last fragment of her angelic spark, Zariel faces an internal struggle. In this moment, the characters have a chance to help the archdevil return to the light.

One of the characters must present Zariel with the argument to rejoin the celestial host, then make a DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check is successful, Zariel is convinced to grasp the sword and accept its angelic spark back into her soul. The DC of this check is reduced by 5 for each of the following NPCs that are present when the characters try to redeem Zariel:

**Lulu.** If Lulu is with the characters, the hollyphant regains all of her spellcasting abilities and weeps for what Zariel has become. Zariel feels sorrow as she remembers Lulu's friendship. If Zariel is redeemed, Lulu once again serves as Zariel's friend and mount.

**Olanthus.** If the characters made an ally of Olanthus, the death knight kneels before Zariel. Seeing him fills Zariel with shame for leaving her loyal friend to a horrific fate. If Zariel is redeemed, she turns the death knight to dust, letting his soul rest at last.

If the Charisma (Persuasion) check succeeds, continue with “Zariel’s Redemption” below. If the check fails, proceed with “Zariel’s Wrath” (page 148) instead.

#### ZARIEL’S REDEMPTION

If Zariel is convinced to accept the angelic spark, she grasps the *Sword of Zariel*. Read or paraphrase the following boxed text out loud when this happens:

Zariel’s trembling hand reaches toward the gleaming hilt of her sword. Her fingers brush against it, and she grimaces as radiant light sears her flesh. As her grip tightens, she gasps in pain, then speaks an oath through tears of confusion, sorrow, and dawning joy.

“I, Zariel, supplicate myself before the holy light of justice. If it should accept me, I vow to take up this blade once more in its service.”

The archdevil’s words hang in the air for a silent moment, and she glances upward in agonized uncertainty. Then Zariel is bathed in a brilliant wash of radiant light. Her fiery halo disappears, and feathers burst from her leathery wings. All of her diabolical features vanish as her angelic form is restored. At the sight of this blessed transformation, Lulu gasps in delight—and transforms into a celestial mammoth with golden fur, feathered wings, and gleaming tusks.

All mortal creatures that witness Zariel’s apotheosis are surrounded by twinkling wisps of the same light that transformed her, and are infused with a *blessing of health* (see “Other Rewards” in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*).

Returned to her full celestial glory, Zariel takes on the task of saving the besieged city of Elturel. If Zariel must travel some distance to reach Elturel, make sure the characters have the ability to keep up with the angel, or have her bring them along by magical means.

Zariel first soars above Elturel to within reach of the corrupted Companion. She closes her eyes, raises her sword above her head, takes a deep, centering breath, and brings the blade down. The Companion then explodes in a flash of light and sound, as described in “Shattering the Companion” later in this chapter.

With the destruction of the Companion, the people of Elturel are freed from infernal bondage. The planetar imprisoned within the Companion raises the city out of the Nine Hells and returns it to Faerûn (see “The Planetar’s Power,” page 154). Zariel accompanies the city until she is satisfied that Elturel is safe.

The characters can return to the Material Plane with Elturel if they so choose, or they might wish to stick around Avernus to see who rises to become its new ruler (see “Ruling Avernus,” page 149).



If the characters return with Elturel to the Material Plane, read or paraphrase the following:

The Chionthar River shines like a golden road stretching from Elturel to Baldur’s Gate, and to the sea beyond. The scent of morning dew cuts through the odor of smoke, brimstone, and rot that clings to Elturel’s stones.

Slowly, the people of the city make their way out from their hiding places to stand in the light of the mortal world once more. All eyes focus on Zariel where she stands, sword in hand. The planetar that raised Elturel out of Avernus kneels before her. Lulu nudges Zariel, then gestures toward you with her trunk. Zariel strides toward you, bowing her head in solemn gratitude. “This dark chapter has at last come to an end, and it is a brighter end than I ever dared to hope for. Thank you. Your selflessness will live on in my memory forever.”

“And in mine!” Lulu says, beaming.

Zariel’s tone turns more somber as she says, “You have made an enemy of Asmodeus this day. We have that in common now. I wish you strength and good fortune—and if ever you have need of my power, hold this feather aloft and invoke my name. I shall come to your aid.”

Zariel pulls a single golden feather from one of her wings and hands it to the character closest to her. A creature that holds this feather can cast *planar ally* as an action, calling Zariel and Lulu only, after which the feather dissolves into a ray of sunlight. If the two are called to aid the characters, they do so for up to 1 hour, with no payment asked for in return.

With her gift given, Zariel inclines her head, unfurls her wings, and soars into the sky. Lulu turns to wrap you all up in a massive hug with her trunk. When she lets you go, she smiles warmly and says, "We'll see each other again. Someday."

The golden mammoth then flaps her wings and soars into the sky. You watch her silhouette dwindle until it is swallowed by sunlight.

Characters who return with Elturel can find plenty to do in the city, aiding survivors and helping restore order in the aftermath of so much death and destruction. In addition to the leadership and magic the characters can lend to the people of Elturel, the planetar once bound within the Companion remains in the city for as long as it is needed, using its ability to raise the dead to restore as many of those lost to the destruction as it can.

In the longer term, the characters might also have loose ends in Baldur's Gate to take care of, especially if any villains in chapter 1 were left alive to continue their dark plots.

Even if the tale of the two cities has been successfully completed to the characters' satisfaction, the events of the adventure continue to play out in Baldur's Gate and Elturel after the fact. In particular, if Grand Duke Ravengard survives and returns with Elturel, the survivors of the city will be greatly in his debt. Ravengard's efforts to defend the city should dramatically change the political landscape of Baldur's Gate and Elturel, ushering in an era of detente, if not full friendship and alliance, between the two cities.

## ZARIEL'S WRATH

If the characters fail to redeem Zariel and don't make a deal with her (see "Making a Deal with Zariel," page 153), she attacks. Her first goal is to destroy the adventurers who dared insult her, after which she means to erase from existence all those whom she once loved.

At this grim juncture, the characters' only hope is to defeat Zariel or to bend the knee in fealty. Killing Zariel frees the citizens of Elturel from infernal bondage. The characters might choose this endgame intentionally, or they could be forced to fight Zariel if they fail to redeem her.

Defeating Zariel is easier said than done. At her full power, the archdevil is more than a match for most mortals. Adventurers who hope to lay her low must scheme like a devil. Forging an alliance with a powerful, supernatural being such as Bel, Gargauth, Tiamat, or one of the demon lords besieging Avernus could grant the characters the power necessary to cast down Zariel.

## BAPHOMET, KOSTCHTCHIE, OR YEENOGHU

Baphomet and Yeenoghu are fighting to claim Avernus for themselves, and Kostchtchie (assuming the characters released him in chapter 3) wants his hammer back. None of them can be trusted. Demon lords are savagery incarnate, and they take orders from no one.

The extent to which Baphomet, Kostchtchie, and Yeenoghu are present in Avernus makes it easy for characters to commune with any of these demon lords using *contact other plane* spells or similar magic.

## BEL

Bel rankles at Zariel's rulership of the layer of the Nine Hells that was once his, but he won't challenge her directly as long as he thinks Asmodeus supports Zariel.

Bel's aim is to let the characters try to redeem Zariel by helping them retrieve her sword. Bel knows Zariel's redemption is a long shot, which is why he also gives characters a means to unlock the Companion. Freeing the planetar trapped within the Companion denies Zariel her latest prize—the city of Elturel—and makes her look inept, which is the best Bel can hope for.

## GARGAUTH

The pit fiend Gargauth would like nothing more than to be released from its prison and replace Zariel as Lord of Avernus. If the characters possess the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*, they can free Gargauth as described in the item's description (see page 225).

If released, Gargauth thanks the characters through tears of mirth. The pit fiend's first act is to produce a contract out of thin air, claiming that it will aid the characters in their quest to destroy Zariel if they sign it. The contract is full of convoluted text, and is summarized in its final clause: "I, the undersigned, agree to form a compact with Gargauth, joining with it to destroy the archdevil Zariel. While bound by this compact, no intentional harm shall befall either party by the other party's hand, without voiding this agreement."

Gargauth takes joy in subverting ill-worded contracts and betraying those bound by them. Notably, the contract presented lasts only until Zariel is destroyed, after which point Gargauth intends to tear the adventurers limb from limb. Clever adventurers can subvert the pit fiend's betrayal by ensuring Zariel's capture, banishment, or some other nonlethal defeat.

In that event, though, Gargauth has left itself an easy out. The only consequence for harming an ally under the terms of the contract is the contract's immediate negation—leaving Gargauth free to do whatever it sees fit. The pit fiend hopes that it can sneak this ruse through unchallenged, and argues fiercely if the characters spot this tricky phrase and demand its removal from the contract.

## TIAMAT

The queen of evil dragons is mighty and aloof, and she rarely acts unless her triumph is assured. Challenging an archdevil directly is risky, and Tiamat stands to lose a great deal if Zariel prevails. Fortunately, Tiamat has a champion she can send in her stead: **Arkhan the Cruel** (see page 111 for his stat block).

The adventurers can't communicate with Tiamat directly, but they can approach Arkhan at his tower (see "Arkhan's Tower," page 110). Arkhan is preoccupied with trying to find a way to free Tiamat from the Nine Hells while also staving off the physical deterioration caused by the *Hand of Vecna*. He won't entertain thoughts of vanquishing Zariel unless there's something in it for him and his dark queen.

While the head of Zariel would be a grand trophy, a trophy isn't enough to sway Arkhan. The characters must convince him that he can rule Avernus in Zariel's stead, with Tiamat by his side and armies of abishai and infernal dragons at his back. After contemplating this notion, Arkhan raises the *Hand of Vecna* and boasts, "With this hand, I shall tear Zariel's head from her shoulders and rule Avernus with my queen at my side."

Arkhan declares that he will muster an army and depose Zariel in ten days. Exactly ten days later, two hundred **white abishai** (see page 241 for their stat block) fly from Arkhan's tower toward Zariel's current location, with Arkhan leading the charge on the back of Asojano the **chimera**, and **Torogar Steelfist** (see page 112 for his stat block) by his side, carried on the back of Chango the **manticore**. Arkhan's army is bolstered by five chromatic dragons—one adult dragon of each color—sent by Tiamat to help ensure victory. If they so choose, the characters can join Arkhan. The abishai and the dragons engage Zariel's legions while Arkhan, Torogar, and the characters challenge the archdevil herself. This battle can play out as part of the "Endgame in Elturel" section described at the end of this chapter.

## SERVING ZARIEL

The characters might decide after meeting Zariel that they wish to serve her, joining her army and smiting demons in the Blood War. They also might wind up serving her if they fail to redeem her and wish to live.

### SOULS ARE FORFEIT

Characters who choose to serve Zariel must sign a contract (see appendix A) forfeiting their souls to the archdevil. She then returns such characters to the Material Plane to do her bidding. Zariel has numerous schemes spinning at any given time, but the adventurers are particularly well suited to preparing Baldur's Gate to meet the same fate as Elturel. As a sign of favor, she bestows a charm upon each character (see "Archdevil Charms," page 215).

Characters who die in Zariel's service are reborn as lemures from the River Styx. They lose all memories of their previous lives, and their alignment changes to lawful evil. If a character pleased Zariel with their loyalty in life, she might allow them to keep their memories as she promotes them to an NPC devil of your determination.

### ZARIEL'S SWORD IS DESTROYED

With no one to sway Zariel from her path to absolute damnation, Zariel demands that the characters give her the *Sword of Zariel* if they possess it. After she claims

the sword, Zariel holds it aloft and shatters it (see "Relinquishing the Sword," page 152).

## LULU FALLS

For Zariel to fall beyond redemption is the worst outcome for Lulu. This unimaginable tragedy shatters the hollyphant's mind, leaving Lulu insane. Roll or choose the specific effects of her madness from the Long-Term Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but this madness can be overcome only by a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

## RULING AVERNUS

If Zariel is redeemed or killed, the first layer of the Nine Hells falls into chaos. You can decide which of the many powerful figures in Avernus make a play to replace Zariel, but any new ruler immediately faces enemies on all sides. The invading armies of Baphomet and Yeenoghu are wreaking havoc and threatening to tear Avernus apart. Moreover, dozens of ambitious greater devils will gleefully try to supplant their new and untested ruler.

Ruling a layer of the Nine Hells as a mortal is effectively impossible. None of the devils of Avernus will knowingly serve anyone but a superior devil. However, Asmodeus admires ambition. The Lord of the Nine Hells might see a brash and powerful mortal as a worthy replacement for Zariel, offering to transform the character into an NPC archdevil that can rule Avernus. Alternatively, the characters might attempt to claim Avernus on their own terms.

Idealistic characters seeking to destroy the Nine Hells from the inside out might see this power vacuum as an opportunity to strike a mortal blow to Asmodeus's reign. This might be the only time in cosmic history that such a blindly idealistic cause could succeed. But even if the



WHITE ABISHAI

party can wrest Avernus from Asmodeus's control, this ultimately serves to unite the remaining archdevils, aligning them toward the common goal of reclaiming Avernus—which works to Asmodeus's advantage.

## WILL ELTUREL BE SAVED?

Unless the characters intervene, Elturel is inevitably dragged into the River Styx. The memories of its inhabitants will be wiped clean, and their souls will be made into devils—fodder for the front lines of the Blood War.

The characters have several ways to save the city at its most desperate hour (see “Endgame in Elturel,” page 154). To save Elturel without redeeming Zariel, the chains binding the city to the infernal iron posts sinking into Avernus must be severed, and the city must be returned to the Material Plane.

### FORGING THE BLADE OF AVERNUS

At some point after the destruction of the *Sword of Zariel*, Zariel gives her servants (including the characters if they have taken on that role) the task of forging a new blade for her. This endeavor comes with the following objectives:

- If Bel is still in Zariel's service, she calls on him to forge the blade. Otherwise, her servants must scour the cosmos for a worthy weaponsmith, such as an efreeti from the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire.
- Zariel needs at least ten pounds of metal or material to make the blade of the sword. Adamantine would do, or a talon from Tiamat.
- To grant the blade its power, the freshly forged weapon must be quenched in the blood of a celestial, a demon lord, and an archdevil. Zariel can supply her own blood, but her servants must collect the other two sacrifices.

Zariel names this new artifact the *Blade of Avernus*. This longsword is an artifact that requires attunement, and which has the following properties.

**Magic Weapon.** The *Blade of Avernus* is a magic weapon that functions as a *vorpal sword*.

**Random Properties.** The sword has the following randomly determined properties, as described in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*:

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 1 major beneficial property
- 1 major detrimental property, which is suppressed while the sword is attuned to an archdevil

**Ruler of Avernus.** As an action, you can point this sword at one devil you can see within 60 feet of you. That devil must succeed on a DC 22 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by you for 1 hour. While charmed in this way, the devil follows your orders to the best of its ability. If you command the devil to do something it perceives as suicidal, the effect ends and you can no longer use this power of the sword against that devil.

**Infernal Recall.** As an action, you can use the sword to cast *word of recall*. Creatures transported by this spell appear in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the current ruler of Avernus, or a sanctuary you designate if you rule Avernus.

**Destroying the Sword.** The sword can be destroyed by casting it into the River Styx or melting it down in the forge that created it.

## BREAKING THE CHAINS

Eight chains of infernal iron anchor Elturel to its binding posts, and each of those chains must be broken to free the city. If all the chains are broken, Elturel remains floating above Avernus and is no longer drawn toward the River Styx. However, the characters must still find a way to return the city to the Material Plane.

Each chain link is 30 feet long and 20 feet wide, and is formed of a welded loop of infernal iron that is 5 feet thick. A chain link is a Huge object with AC 19, 250 hit points, a damage threshold of 30, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. See chapter 2 for information on moving along the chains and climbing the infernal iron posts they connect to.

### IRE OF TIAMAT

Tiamat's divine power is mighty enough to break the chains that bind Elturel. Arkhan the Cruel is willing to commune with his goddess to this end, but only if the characters offer him a suitably potent gift. In an inscrutable twist, Tiamat decides to aid the characters, and tells Arkhan as such. Read or paraphrase the following:

A shroud of confusion passes over Arkhan's face, dissolving his bravado. He mutters to Tiamat under his breath, “Is that wise, my queen?” Then his eyes darken as his body hangs limp like a puppet cut from its strings. After a moment, Arkhan stands up straight, his eyes glowing with prismatic light. A hungry smile crosses his face, and five voices echo from his mouth, each resonating with the ire of an imprisoned goddess.

“I will aid you,” Tiamat growls. “If your power is enough to threaten Zariel's ambitions, then I have nothing to fear. I can destroy the chains binding Elturel, but you must be present to bear witness to my majesty. Now go. I will know when you are there.”

When the characters next set foot in Elturel, **Tiamat** (see the accompanying stat block) bursts forth from her distant lair and blazes like a meteor across the sky of Avernus. Appearing above the city, she swoops down and focuses her breath weapons on one chain at a time, dealing 67 acid damage, 88 lightning damage, 72 cold damage, and 91 fire damage—more than enough to destroy the chain's links. Once all eight chains are destroyed, Tiamat roars in triumph and departs.

### JAWS OF CROKEK'TOECK

If the demon Crokek'toeck is freed from the scab encasing the Bleeding Citadel, it begins wandering Avernus and devouring all in its path. Though the demon consumes indiscriminately, it hungers most for divine blood. As such, the essence of a good-aligned god, the blood of a good celestial, or even the blood of a good paladin draws Crokek'toeck's attention from miles away. If the adventurers slather a chain link in blood from such a source, Crokek'toeck picks up the delicious scent and gallops across Avernus toward it.

## TIAMAT

Gargantuan fiend, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 25 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 615 (30d20 + 300)

**Speed** 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	10 (+0)	30 (+10)	26 (+8)	26 (+8)	28 (+9)

**Saving Throws** Str +19, Dex +9, Wis +17

**Skills** Arcana +17, Perception +26, Religion +17

**Damage Immunities** acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 240 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 36

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Infernal

**Challenge** 30 (155,000 XP)

**Discorporation.** When Tiamat drops to 0 hit points or dies, her body is destroyed but her essence travels back to her domain in the Nine Hells, and she is unable to take physical form for a time.

**Innate Spellcasting (3/Day).** Tiamat can innately cast *divine word* (spell save DC 26). Her spellcasting ability is Charisma.

**Legendary Resistance (5/Day).** If Tiamat fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Limited Magic Immunity.** Unless she wishes to be affected, Tiamat is immune to spells of 6th level or lower. She has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Tiamat's weapon attacks are magical.

**Multiple Heads.** Tiamat can take one reaction per turn, rather than only one per round. She also has advantage on saving throws against being knocked unconscious. If she fails a saving throw against an effect that would stun a creature, one of her unspent legendary actions is spent.

**Regeneration.** If Tiamat has at least 1 hit point, she regains 30 hit points at the start of her turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Tiamat can use her Frightful Presence. She then makes three attacks: two with her claws and one with her tail.

**Claw. Melee Weapon Attack:** +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 24 (4d6 + 10) slashing damage.

**Tail. Melee Weapon Attack:** +19 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of Tiamat's choice that is within 240 feet of Tiamat and aware of her must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Tiamat's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Tiamat can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Tiamat regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Tiamat's legendary action options are associated with her five dragon heads (a bite and a breath weapon for each). Once Tiamat chooses a legendary action option for one of her heads, she can't choose another one associated with that head until the start of her next turn.

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +19 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target.

Hit: 32 (4d10 + 10) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) acid damage (black dragon head), lightning damage (blue dragon head), poison damage (green dragon head), fire damage (red dragon head), or cold damage (white dragon head).

**Black Dragon Head: Acid Breath (Costs 2 Actions).** Tiamat exhales acid in a 120-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 67 (15d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Blue Dragon Head: Lightning Breath (Costs 2 Actions).** Tiamat exhales lightning in a 120-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 88 (16d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Green Dragon Head: Poison Breath (Costs 2 Actions).** Tiamat exhales poisonous gas in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 27 Constitution saving throw, taking 77 (22d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Red Dragon Head: Fire Breath (Costs 2 Actions).** Tiamat exhales fire in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 91 (26d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**White Dragon Head: Cold Breath (Costs 2 Actions).** Tiamat exhales an icy blast in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 72 (16d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The creature must bleed willingly upon a chain link. Either it or an ally can use an action to wound the creature for 5 (1d10) piercing or slashing damage. This damage can't be negated or reduced, and the infernal energy within the chains causes the creature's hit point maximum to be reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken until the creature finishes a long rest. Lulu is willing to make at least part of this sacrifice of blood if the characters ask her.

Crokek'toeck appears near Elturel within 1 hour of the first drop of blood being shed. All nearby devils immediately try to slay the demon, while nearby demons leap to its defense. As the two opposing forces clash, Crokek'toeck slips past the devils. The demon can gnaw through a bloodied chain link in 1 minute.

## BREAKING THE CONTRACT

Voiding the infernal contract between Zariel and Thavius Kreeg causes the hellish chains binding Elturel to crumble to ash. This can be accomplished by either killing Zariel or by destroying the original contract. Zariel can use an action to summon the contract, which appears in her one hand. The contract is otherwise hidden in a secret place known only to her. Getting Zariel to call forth the contract takes guile, as the archdevil can't be charmed. Destroying the original copy of Thavius Kreeg's contract frees Elturel while leaving Zariel's other contracts intact.

The original contract resembles the copy stored in Thavius's *infernal puzzle box*: nine square plates of infernal iron linked together by short chains, each plate inseparable from the others and inscribed with the terms of the contract written in Infernal. Casting the contract into the River Styx or immersing it in molten magma of one of Avernus's active volcanoes destroys it instantly.

Destroying Zariel voids all the active contracts she has made with beings across the multiverse. This causes no small amount of cosmic chaos.

## THE FATE OF THAVIUS KREEG

If the characters killed Thavius Kreeg in Baldur's Gate, he crawled out of the River Styx as a lemure. In accordance with the terms of their contract, Zariel promoted him to an amnizu (see page 228), then confined him in her fortress (see "Poor Devil: Thavius Kreeg," page 132). If Thavius dies in the Nine Hells as a devil, he is permanently dead—but this does not break the full terms of Zariel's contract. Even with the primary signatory dead, the people of Elturel remain bound to Zariel by the Creed Resolute.

**Killing Thavius.** Characters hoping for a climactic battle against a worthy adversary won't find one by fighting Thavius Kreeg. Despite the power he now possesses, the devil Thavius is a coward who would rather grovel than fight. Killing him marks a wretched end to a wretched life.

If the characters left Thavius alive in chapter 1, they must find a way back to the Material Plane to kill him. His location in Baldur's Gate (or the chance that he might have fled the city) is left to your determination, as is the process by which the characters can track down his devilish incarnation on Avernus after they return.

**Mercy for the Fallen.** If the characters threaten him, Thavius snivels and begs for his life. He also claims to know where the original contract that sealed Elturel's doom is hidden. This is a lie, the claim a desperate ploy to buy time and, hopefully, a chance to escape.

## THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

If the characters have no other options for dealing with Zariel, one or more of them might be willing to give up everything in order to save the innocent people of Elturel. When a good-aligned paladin or cleric of 10th level or higher performs such a selfless act, the power of that deed is eternally written upon their soul. To creatures that covet souls, this deed blazes like a bonfire in the darkness—and Zariel desires it. Such a character is likely destined to pass into the Upper Planes after death, and as such, they make a handsome prize for an archdevil to shape into a loyal servant of the Nine Hells.

If any of the characters fit that description, Zariel senses their power when the characters are in her presence. "Your soul shines bright," she says. "Brighter even than the beacon above Elturel. I would have it."

If the character willingly offers their soul in exchange for the souls of the people of Elturel, Zariel is taken aback by their selflessness. She furrows her brow and asks, "You would lay down your soul for these people? People whose cowardice and weakness have caused you nothing but grief?"

A character offering to sacrifice their soul can take advantage of this moment of uncertainty, making a Charisma (Persuasion) check with advantage to sway Zariel from the path of evil. Resolve a successful check as noted in "Redeeming Zariel," earlier in this chapter. Even if the check fails, though, Zariel accepts the offered soul in exchange for all the souls of Elturel. Unless you want to add additional challenges for the characters, the archdevil can free the city from its chains and return it to the Material Plane.

## RELINQUISHING THE SWORD

If the characters try to bargain for Elturel's release without the *Sword of Zariel*, Zariel considers their offer and produces a contract stating that she will release the city in exchange for the sword, delivered without any complications or deceit. Lulu rankles at the idea of the characters forging any sort of pact with the archdevil, but holds out hope that Zariel can be redeemed if the sword is brought before her.

If the characters present the sword to Zariel and either fail to redeem her or choose not to try, read:

Zariel grabs the sword by the blade and lets her fiendish blood cascade down its edge, snarling in pain. "With this final rite, I discharge my divine duty. Let my name be forever struck from the ledger of Mount Celestia." She tightens her grip, and the sword shatters. The angelic spark lodged within it dwindles, then dies.

Once destroyed, the *Sword of Zariel* can't be restored, ending any hope of redemption for the archdevil.



## MAKING A DEAL WITH ZARIEL

Characters out of other options might simply bow to Zariel's power. If the characters make a deal with Zariel to save Elturel, they must specify that the city is to be freed from its chains and returned to the Material Plane. Otherwise, Zariel will release the chains but leave Elturel in Avernus with no hope of salvation.

### TO DESTROY A DEMON LORD

Baphomet and Yeenoghu are both clear and present dangers to Avernus. Although Zariel would relish slaying either of them personally, she gladly draws up a contract agreeing to trade Elturel and the souls within the city for either demon lord's destruction. Delivering the glaive of Baphomet or the flail of Yeenoghu to her is sufficient to prove the characters' success.

If the characters agree to Zariel's terms, they learn that both demon lords have recently converged around Elturel. You can add either demon lord to the battle in "Endgame in Elturel," later in this chapter. If the characters freed the demon lord Kostchtchie in chapter 3, he can also make an appearance.

### SHIELD OF THE HIDDEN LORD

If the characters still possess the *Shield of the Hidden Lord*, Zariel blithely declares that she would consider trading Elturel for it. From within the shield, the pit fiend Gargauth begs and sobs and promises the world to the characters if they spare its life and find a way to restore the devil to its former glory. These are empty promises, though Gargauth's fear is real.

If the characters give her the shield, Zariel casts *dispel evil and good* on it. Her spell causes Gargauth to manifest as a miserable, malformed **pit fiend** at half its hit point maximum and with 4 levels of exhaustion. She commands the characters to destroy the wretch. If they succeed, she casually dismisses them and ignores any attempt by the characters to hold her to promises made without a contract.

If the characters press Zariel for a formal agreement before giving her the shield, she presents a fair contract. However, she refuses to both free Elturel and return it to the Material Plane, promising only one or the other in exchange for the shield alone.

## DEALING WITH THE COMPANION

The Companion that once warded Elturel against undead is powered by a planetar trapped inside it. Long thought of as Elturel's savior, the Companion was also its undoing, for it was the beacon that allowed the power of Avernus to drag the city into the Nine Hells.

The Companion is a nearly indestructible metal orb 50 feet in diameter. When it protected Elturel, it hung in the sky like a second sun and emitted sunlight so bright that the orb itself couldn't be seen. Now, lightning plays across the surface of the dull sphere, which is surrounded by a 400-foot-diameter, 10-foot-thick shell of impenetrable, magical darkness. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. If this darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 8th level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.



#### UNLOCKING THE COMPANION

The Companion is sealed by nine locks evenly spaced around its equator. These locks can only be opened by inserting nine adamantine rods into them. The rods are hidden in Zariel's wrecked flying fortress (page 118).

Inserting the nine adamantine rods into the nine locks of the Companion causes its upper hemisphere to open, freeing the planetar within.

#### SHATTERING THE COMPANION

The *Sword of Zariel* has the power to shatter the Companion and dispel the darkness around it. Striking the orb with the sword causes the Companion to ring like a bell and then shatter, sounding out an angelic tone that can be heard with perfect clarity across the infinite breadth of Avernus. Unless the sword is wielded by an angel of challenge rating 15 or higher, or a good-aligned cleric or paladin of at least 10th level, the unchecked power reverberates through the sword and shatters it.

Lulu knows that the sword possesses this power. However, she wants the characters to use the sword to redeem Zariel, not simply to save Elturel. As such, she conceals this fact unless it's clear that redeeming Zariel is an impossible task.

Alternatively, if the characters strike a bargain with a powerful entity such as Tiamat or a demon lord, that being can attack and shatter the Companion. For more information on allying with a supernatural power, see "Breaking the Chains," earlier in this chapter.

#### THE PLANETAR'S POWER

If the Companion is shattered or unlocked, the **planetar** inside it is released. The planetar's name is Nascius, and its power can help save Elturel, but only if the infernal chains that bind the city have been severed. If asked to save the city, the planetar takes a brief moment to recover its strength. It then swoops down below the fallen city, rises to set the earthmote on its broad shoulders, and raises Elturel out of Avernus and back to its rightful place in the Material Plane.

### ENDGAME IN ELTUREL

The material presented earlier in this chapter describes some of the ways the characters might accomplish the goals of redeeming Zariel and saving Elturel. Within the range of available options, you are free to determine the conditions under which those goals are met.

This section describes an epic event that can serve as the adventure's climax: Elturel being pulled down into the River Styx while Zariel and her forces battle an army of demons beneath the city. A demon lord—either Baphomet or Yeenoghu—has launched an all-out attack on Elturel before it's dragged into the River Styx. This section includes encounters that you can run to challenge the characters as they maneuver to confront Zariel. These encounters are suitable for a party of four 13th-level characters. If the party is weaker or stronger, adjust the encounters accordingly.

## EVENT 1: RIVER'S EDGE

Lulu guides the characters toward Zariel, finding her on the ground of Avernus beneath Elturel. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

Elturel hangs above you and the River Styx. The iron spikes that anchor the city have dragged it nearly to the river's banks. Within a few hours, Elturel will sink into the Styx.

Hordes of distant demons fly around the city like gnats, and a battle rages fiercely beneath it. Thousands of fiends clash in Elturel's shadow. And at their center stands a being wreathed in flame, striking down demons with tireless fury.

Lulu points at the figure with her trunk and whispers, "That's her. Zariel stands exactly where she always does—where the fighting is fiercest."

This encounter takes place on an open field bordered by the River Styx, with Zariel visible a mile away. Allow the characters a few moments to plan their next move. When they decide to act, two **horned devils** break toward them after a fleeing glabrezu, which is cut down and dissolves to ichor that flows into the Styx. The devils attack at range with Hurl Flame attacks. Each devil has 125 hit points remaining and fights to the death.

Between this event and the next, the characters might delve deeper into the melee, or could make their way up to Elturel by flying or climbing.

## EVENT 2: FIELD OF FLAMES

The front of Zariel's army has crashed into the flank of the demonic horde, whether on the streets of Elturel or on the battlefield below. Taking on both armies headfirst is impossible, but savvy characters might be able to use the battlefield's geography to avoid combat.

The characters must make three group Dexterity (Stealth) or Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate the battlefield, with each round of checks increasing in difficulty—DC 15, DC 17, and DC 19. Every time the group fails a check, each character must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) poison damage plus 22 (4d10) fire damage from the noxious gas and flames roiling across the battlefield.

After making these ability checks, the characters stumble into a battle between six **hezrous** and Lucille, the **pit fiend** general they spotted as they were leaving Elturel at the end of chapter 2:

A pit fiend wearing an eyeless helm clutches an infernal battle standard in one clawed hand while swinging a huge flaming mace in the other. The pit fiend is beset on all sides by six hulking, froglike demons that croak vile epithets as they tear the pit fiend's flesh with their claws.

Two **hezrous** break off from this melee to attack the characters. The other fiends continue fighting Lucille.

By the time the characters deal with the hezrous attacking them, Lucille has destroyed the remaining hezrous or sent them scrambling away in search of easier prey. Lucille turns toward the characters, gives them a curt nod, and takes to the air. Characters can attack the pit fiend, which has 175 hit points remaining. If they let it go, the pit fiend returns the favor by using its *helm of devil command* to issue orders to its troops that the characters are not to be harmed. As the characters make their way toward Zariel, demons that might otherwise cross their path are intercepted by devils, creating an avenue of safe passage for the characters.

**Treasure.** Lucille's *helm of devil command* and *battle standard of infernal power* are described in appendix C.

## EVENT 3: SHOWDOWN WITH ZARIEL

At some point, the characters get close to **Archduke Zariel of Avernus** (see page 243 for her stat block). When they do, Zariel is locked in combat with a hyena-faced **balor**—one of Yeenoghu's demons. A 100-foot-diameter circle has formed around Zariel and the balor, as other devils and demons stay clear of the destruction the two unleash. Unless the characters draw attention to themselves, the fiends pay them no mind.

If you don't want to roll dice to determine the outcome of this battle, Zariel reduces the balor to 0 hit points after 4 rounds of combat, causing it to explode in a great fireball. When the battle is over, Zariel has 450 hit points remaining and takes a round to collect herself as the eye of the storm that surrounded her dissolves once more into chaos.

If the characters released Kostchtchie from his prison in chapter 3 but lost track of him, the demon lord wades into battle and tries to get close enough to Zariel to wrest *Matalotok*, his hammer, from her clutches. Devils loyal to Zariel confound Kostchtchie at every turn, denying him his prize, and Zariel herself refuses to engage him. Still, the characters can count on Kostchtchie to create a distraction big enough to draw attention away from their activities, whatever those might be.

It is hard for insignificant mortals to gain the archdevil's attention, but if they anger Zariel, aid her in combat, or display Lulu or the *Sword of Zariel*, she stops what she's doing and gives the characters a chance to speak to her—or to challenge her.

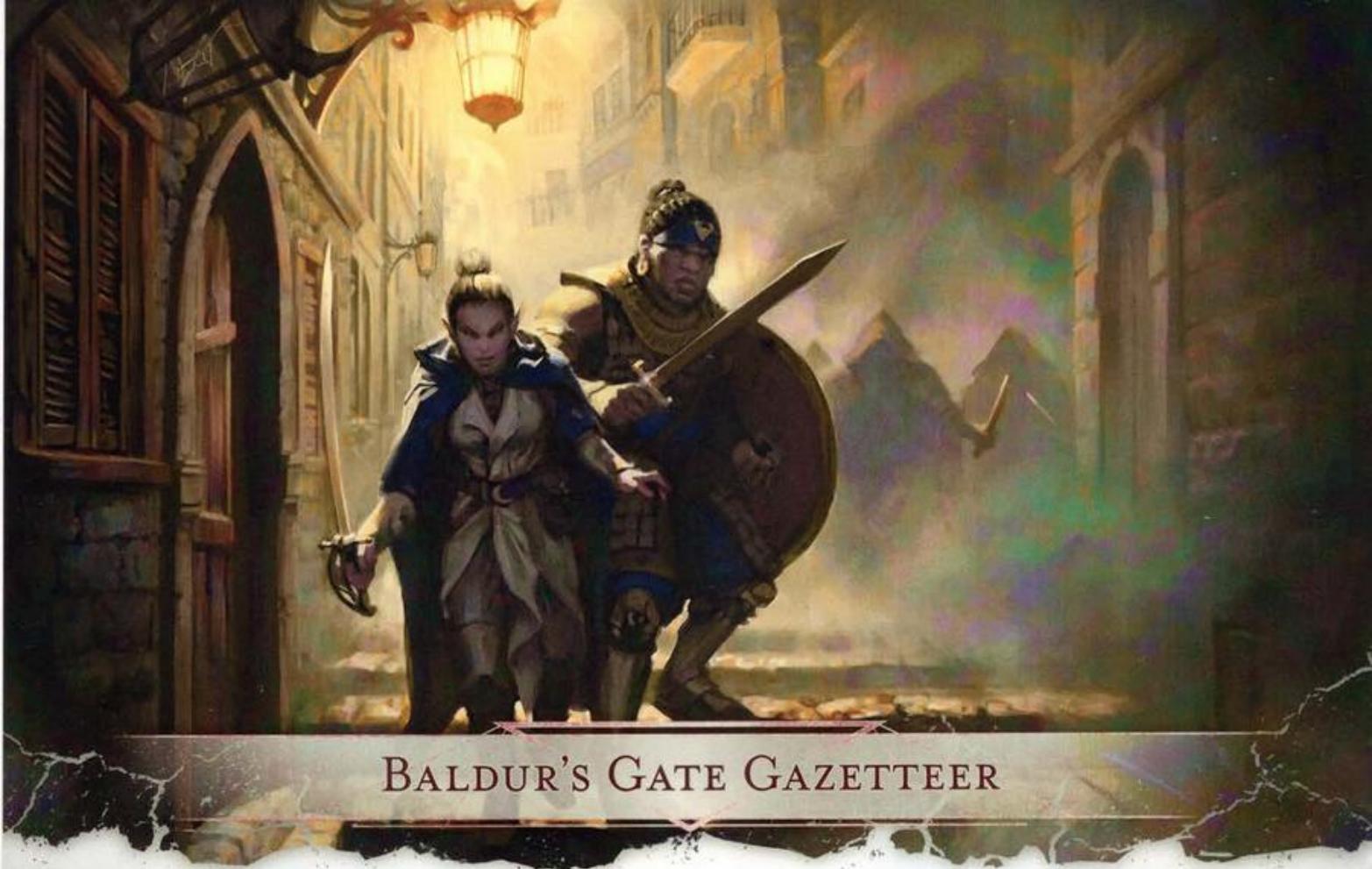
If the characters attempt to break the infernal chains binding Elturel to the posts that are slowly sinking into Avernus (see "Breaking the Chains," page 150), Zariel takes notice when the first chain is sundered or the planetar is released from the Companion. If the characters are making use of a demon to break the chains, Zariel attacks it and defeats it after 2d4 rounds if the characters don't come to the demon's aid. If Tiamat is the one destroying the chains, Zariel attacks the characters in the hopes that Tiamat will cease her attack once her accomplices are slain.

If Zariel is reduced to 100 hit points or fewer, she withdraws to the edge of the battle, taking refuge in her flying fortress if it's nearby and hasn't been destroyed (see "Zariel's Flying Fortress," page 130).





THE BLOOD WAR IS THE COSMIC STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE EVIL FORCES OF  
LAW AND CHAOS—A WAR THAT THREATENS TO TEAR THE MULTIVERSE ASUNDER.



## BALDUR'S GATE GAZETTEER



VEN THE MOST HARDENED ADVENTURERS watch their steps in Baldur's Gate, where lives hold prices in copper and greed proves deadlier than dragon fire. Baldur's Gate has a reputation for being a rough place, where crime and opportunity walk hand in hand, and where anything can be bought, sold, or seized at swordpoint. If something can be given a price, it's for sale somewhere in Baldur's Gate. Drugs and poisons sit on shelves alongside tinctures and remedies. Trade goods from Chult, mechanical wonders from Neverwinter, tomes of magic from Calimshan, and the most believable counterfeits of each can all be found in the city's stalls.

The Flaming Fist, a mercenary company paid for by the city, protects residents without the barest hint of civil delicacy. The Watch, the guardian force of the wealthy Upper City, exists only to serve the patriars—the city's detached upper class. Meanwhile, crime flourishes under the control of the Guild, which oversees almost every organized criminal act, from dockside gambling rings to blackmail at patriarch garden parties. Either under the Guild's auspices or in defiance of them, those who cut purses or throats make a decent living in the city, their talents traded as briskly—and often just as openly—as those of any other professional.

For all its shadows and dark dealings, Baldur's Gate is not without its lights. Some residents earnestly seek to make the city a safer place by banding together to make their own sort of imperfect but effective justice.

## HISTORY OF BALDUR'S GATE

Since its beginning as a quiet backwater community, Baldur's Gate has undergone a dramatic transformation, becoming the hub of danger and adventure it is today.

### FOUNDING BALDUR'S GATE

Centuries ago, the hero Balduran spent years questing in lands across the Sea of Swords and beyond. When finally he returned to his village of Gray Harbor, he brought fantastic wealth with him, much of which he gifted to friends and family. These boons greatly improved Gray Harbor's fortunes, launching businesses, expanding its docks, and seeing the creation of a defensive wall around the town. In honor of their heroic patron, the citizens came to call one of their new wall's passages Baldur's Gate. Within a generation, though, the gate became synonymous with the community, and the settlement known as Baldur's Gate began appearing on maps of the Sword Coast.

The city's surprising growth attracted all manner of people. Peasants affected by raiding and war, farmers rendered penniless by famine and drought, pirates seeking a neutral port—all types saw a chance to put their mark on the rapidly growing community.

### ORDER IN BALDUR'S GATE

As the city swelled, questions of law and taxation arose. The community's eldest families—largely those wealthy enough to afford homes within the city walls—came

to be known as patriarchs and grew wary of the influx of strangers settling beyond their walls. The creation of various additional taxes on trade and travel led to violence breaking out between the Upper City—behind the original walls of Gray Harbor—and the Lower City, built on the slopes leading down to the Chionthar River. Patriar houses were ransacked, family heirlooms were lost forever, and heirs were kidnapped, never to be seen again. Gold flowed like blood as families and guilds hired mercenaries to protect them. Only the election of a new group of rulers—known as the dukes and, collectively, as the Council of Four—put the matter to rest. These elected rulers have been a part of the city's governance ever since.

Another pillar of order in Baldur's Gate formed when the adventurer Eltan, a noted warrior raised in the area, returned home from exploits abroad. Seeing the chaos that had splintered his beloved city, Eltan united the city's independent mercenary companies under a single banner, that of the Flaming Fist. Eltan used the mercenaries to quash what pockets of disorder he found, punishing lawbreakers for their crimes. Though plenty of theft, blackmail, and assassination continued behind closed doors, the founding of the Flaming Fist marked a new chapter in the city's story.

## BHAALSPAWN

Over the years, Baldur's Gate has harbored countless evil schemes and conspiracies. Perhaps the most dastardly, though, was that perpetrated by Bhaal, god of murder, who foresaw his own death during the Time of Troubles. While in mortal form, Bhaal conceived multitudes of offspring, plotting to have them resurrect him. They actively hunted and slew each other, with the survivors collecting ever more of Bhaal's godly essence.

Sarevok, a Bhaalspawn and member of the Iron Throne merchants' guild, sought to spark war with the nation of Amn and become the new Lord of Murder. Another Bhaalspawn, aided by powerful allies, thwarted Sarevok's plan and brought stability, if not peace, to Baldur's Gate once more. Yet, Bhaal and his faithful have menaced the city ever since.

## BALDUR'S GATE TODAY

This chapter describes the independent city of Baldur's Gate as things are in 1492 DR.

The original wall ringing the Upper City still stands, and a second defensive wall now rings the Lower City. The Outer City, a collection of hastily made structures and shantytowns, runs along the River Chionthar.

While the Outer City might seem the most lawless, every district of Baldur's Gate has its own threats. In the Upper City, patriarch families and government officials jostle to secure their positions. Many are not above using private agents to acquire blackmail material, sabotage public appearances, or even frame innocents to secure power. The victims of these plots, and officials who want a fair and honest legal system, must resort to hiring their own agents to unearth conspiracies, break out unfairly imprisoned citizens, and obtain evidence the Flaming Fist cannot.



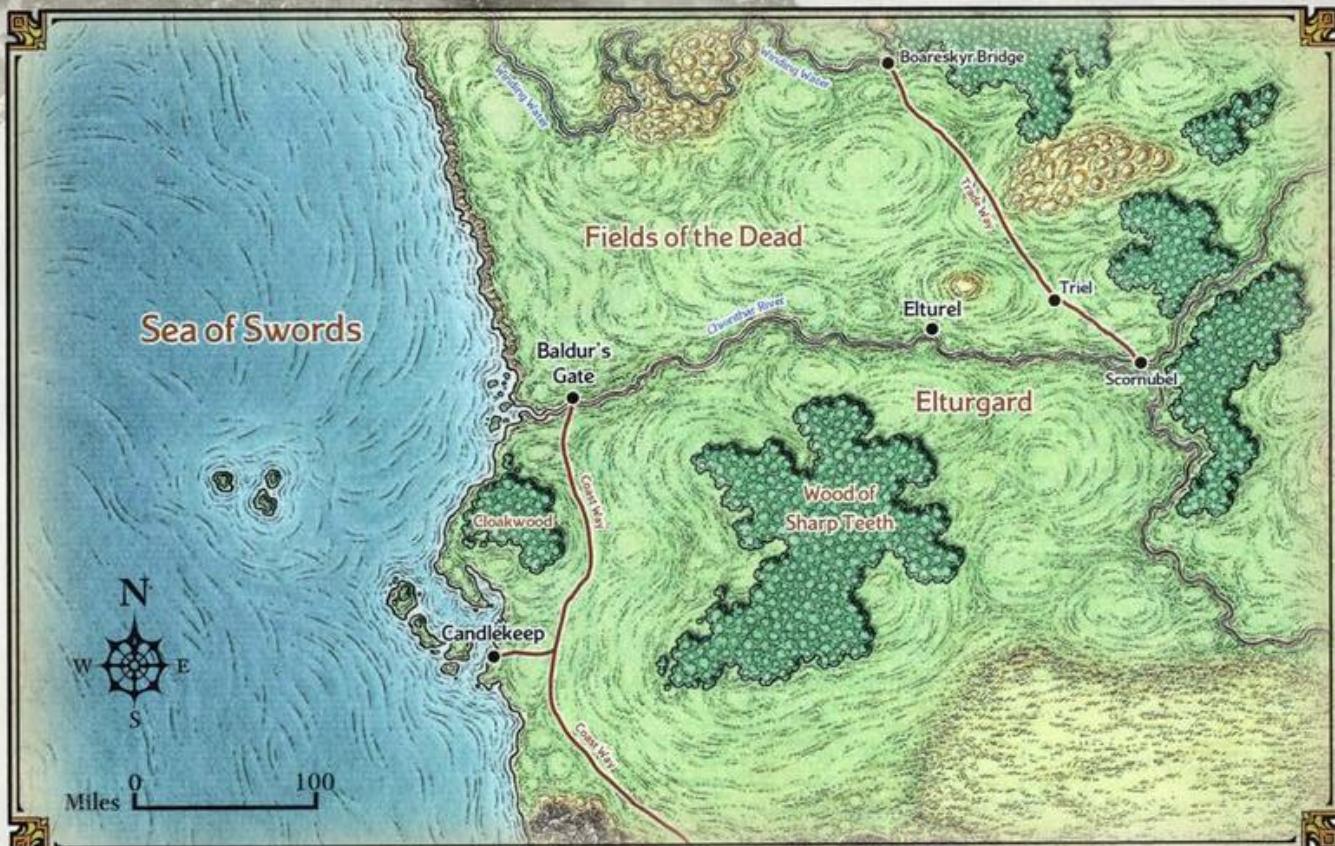
### BALDUR'S GATE AND ITS COAT OF ARMS

**Population:** 125,000 (predominantly humans)  
**Government:** Plutocracy, helmed by the Council of Four and Parliament of Peers  
**Defense:** Flaming Fist mercenaries, the Watch  
**Commerce:** Dyes, fish, imports from Chult, mercenaries, nautical supplies  
**Organizations:** The Guild, neighborhood crews, trade guilds  
**Religions:** Gond, Tymora, Umberlee, any other law-abiding faith, cults of the Dead Three

The Baldur's Gate coat of arms represents the city's role as a hub for river and ocean trade as well as nodding toward its namesake, the explorer Baldur. The symbol originated as a pirate emblem, though, and its components hold a double meaning today.

Originally, the alternating bands of water beneath the ship indicated the turbulent dangers of the sea, but also the rich rewards it can bring. The crimson flags of the ship referenced the brutal life of a pirate, blood spilled on the deck or in the water. The crisscrossing ropes and canted sail symbolized the web of secrets and intrigue that mark a pirate captain's life.

Today, some optimistic souls try to recast the seal, claiming its calm waters represent the city's desire to remain a peaceful power and the clear skies symbolize a prosperous future. But those who know the city's history see the cunning and violence underpinning the emblem. For many, the contradictory interpretations make the city's coat of arms all the more fitting.



The Upper City's political intrigues and the Outer City's violence spills over into the Lower City, the city's middle ground. Rampant crime, class grudges, foreign threats, and economic pressures leave many Baldurians feeling trapped within their own homes. Flaming Fist patrols react to threats with indiscriminate violence, doing little to make citizens feel safer. As a result, in recent years many citizens have started banding together in crews. These counter-gangs align along professional or neighborhood affiliations, doing their best to protect their territories. While this has given some of the city's people a way of feeling more in control of their lives, it's also increased the number of armed citizens on the streets. Whether the Lower City is actually safer after the formation of crews remains an open question.

In the Outer City, all the world washes against the city's gates. Here crime and poverty are contrasted by wonders from afar and the riches of cultures across Faerûn. The mix of wanderers and refugees remains in constant flux, with communities forming and disbanding on a monthly basis. None can possibly keep track of all the foreign traditions or the dangerous—sometimes outright evil—religious practices observed in the Outer City. As a result, Baldur's Gate has widely adopted a "do no harm" policy when it comes to faiths and organizations operating in the city. Any group is welcome to operate openly so long as the city's important citizens aren't harmed.

Beyond all its dangers, Baldur's Gate is an adventurer's city, a place where a sword-for-hire can find a rich

patron, join a secret guild, stalk killers for a bounty, or come to the aid of desperate citizens. Good-hearted champions fight against corruption and bring murderers to justice, while less moral mercenaries find a good price for their services. The city offers opportunities as well as the most reliable and ruthless market on the Sword Coast. Information, treasures, secrets, and souls can be bought or sold for the right price.

As a great hero of Baldur's Gate once said, "Watch your step in the shadows. Watch your back in the light. Win a prize beyond your wildest dreams or disappear into forgotten history. Every day your life is on the line. Every day you could become a legend. Welcome to Baldur's Gate."

## NEIGHBORS, RIVALS, AND ALLIES

Other cities and nations keep a watchful eye on Baldur's Gate, which is growing in wealth, power, and influence.

Baldur's Gate trades with the coastal cities of Waterdeep and Neverwinter to the north while contending with the aggressive mercantile nation of Amn to the south. Amn seeks to dominate trade on the Sea of Swords and views Baldur's Gate as a growing threat. Baldur's Gate joined the Lords' Alliance, a coalition of independent cities that includes Neverwinter and Waterdeep, largely because of disputes with Amn. Should Amn decide to attack Baldur's Gate, the city can count on the other members of the Lords' Alliance to come to its defense. This arrangement infuriates Amn, which is not prepared to test the alliance's resolve.

To the east, the nations of Elturgard and Cormyr view Baldur's Gate as a lawless cesspool that might have to be dealt with someday. These nations especially frown on the city's broad religious tolerance.

### CANDLEKEEP

To enter the great library of Candlekeep, one must furnish the library's monks with a book not already contained in the library's archives. Travelers on the way to Candlekeep often stop in Baldur's Gate, anticipating that they can find such a book in the city's markets. As such, Baldur's Gate does a small but bustling trade in rare books. Several merchants have a known policy of buying valuable books without question, selling them at a high markup. Travelers seeking a specific book also hire mercenaries or adventurers to venture into dungeons or ruins and bring back the prize.

If information can't be found in the whisper-markets of Baldur's Gate, then Candlekeep becomes a logical next stop. Adventurers are sometimes hired to guard a desperate traveler on the road south, or to guard the outrageously rare tomes scholars might carry to gain admission. The Guild knows the signs of a traveler headed for Candlekeep, and often dispatches robbers to steal books and resell them to the merchants of the city.

### ELTUREL

Prior to the events described in this adventure, the holy city of Elturel—the capital of Elturgard—sat upriver on the Chionthar. Whereas Baldur's Gate is a cutthroat city policed by mercenaries, Elturel was a lawful city of pious folk watched over by knights of Helm, Torm, Tyr, and Lathander. The two cities couldn't be less alike.

Whenever Baldur's Gate has tried to seize too much territory in Elturgard's eyes, Elturel has responded by imposing a heavy tax on shipments headed downriver. This sort of economic brinkmanship coupled with radically different religious viewpoints has created bad blood between the two cities, though neither city has been eager to test the military might of the other.

### PORT NYANZARU

Baldur's Gate serves as one of the main ports from which ships depart for Chult, a peninsula far to the south. Port Nyanzaru, located on the northern coast of Chult, enjoys a respectful and mutually beneficial trade relationship with Baldur's Gate, and both cities are united in their dislike for the nation of Amn.

Outside of Port Nyanzaru, Baldur's Gate maintains its own holdings in Chult. Fort Beluarian serves as a beachhead for the interests of the city, the Flaming Fist, and numerous patriarch families in Chult. This small military hub oversees much of the exploration (and exploitation) in regions of Chult claimed by Baldur's Gate. It also serves as a departure point for smuggling the region's treasures back the Sword Coast, as well as other ventures the Baldurians would prefer the native Chultans don't learn about. As a result, rarities from the depths of Chult, seen nowhere else on the Sword Coast, regularly trickle into the port and market stalls of Baldur's Gate.

The sea routes between Baldur's Gate and Chult are far from safe. Pirates, Amnian privateers, and sea monsters are common in these waters.

## GOVERNMENT

The Parliament of Peers, a group mainly composed of nearly fifty patriarch members, makes recommendations on issues of law and governance. Once the parliament comes to a majority decision on a matter, usually after much heated debate, it presents its position to the Council of Four. Three dukes and one grand duke make up this ruling council (see "Council of Four," below, for more information). The council also votes on matters, and in the case of a tie, the grand duke's vote counts as two.

Common belief holds that many parliament members, and possibly one or more of the dukes, can be bribed for their votes. Corrupt parliament members don't wish to be caught taking payments, usually not out of fear of legal reprisal, but of being perceived as incompetent among their peers. The perception is that one who can't be trusted to receive something as simple as a bribe likely can't be trusted to manipulate the city's intricate social web. Such leads to the common farce of officials buying cheap jewelry or fake art objects with their bribe money (usually in the form of platinum coins or jewels) hidden inside.

### COUNCIL OF FOUR

Comprised of four dukes, the Council of Four presides over the government of Baldur's Gate. Though the Parliament of Peers and the patriarchs hold a great deal of power, the Council of Four is the ultimate authority. It convenes in High Hall, a fortress in the middle of the Upper City, and controls the Flaming Fist, the navy, the tax collectors, and all public utilities, among other things.

### GRAND DUKE ULDER RAVENGARD

Ulder Ravengard is a fearless soldier who rose up through the ranks of the Flaming Fist to become its supreme marshal. Ravengard used his military position and influence to secure for himself a seat on the Council of Four. Following the deaths of two council members amid a cloud of corruption and scandal, he persuaded the Parliament of Peers to back his election to grand duke.

Upon ascending to the highest position in the city government, Ravengard refused to relinquish command of the Flaming Fist, making him the most powerful figure in the city by far. This decision has not endeared him to anyone, but Ravengard could care less about his popularity. His only concerns are the stability and prosperity of Baldur's Gate, and he doesn't trust any of the other dukes or anyone in the Parliament of Peers to put the city's interests before their own.

Ravengard rose to grand duke on a platform largely backed by idealistic commoners and enemies of the other established dukes. While he won election handily, Ravengard has struggled in performing his duties, finding his hands tied at every turn by both overt and invisible bureaucracy. Despite this, he's been a voice of reason and common sense on the Council of Four—if not the egalitarianism some hoped. He's also proven largely resistant to scandal and corruption, though

many of his fellow dukes and those in the Parliament of Peers still regularly outmaneuver him politically. One of his only obvious pleasures remains the surprise inspections he regularly visits upon the troops at Wyrm's Rock (see page 200).

Ravengard was recently tricked into attending a diplomatic summit in Elturel, unaware that his political enemies in Baldur's Gate orchestrated this meeting in a fiendish plot to remove him from power. In his absence, the Flaming Fist is leaderless, the council rudderless.

#### DUKE BELYNNE STELMANE

Once a vigorous and formidable politician, Duke Belynne Stelmane recently suffered a seizure that left her with a partially paralyzed face and slowed speech. In truth, a mind flayer provoked the duke's "seizure" when it took mental possession of her. Now Stelmane wages a silent war against the mind flayer's influence, biding her time until she can find a way to signal for aid or regain her will. Not even Stelmane's aides are aware of her secret struggle, though they cover for her as best they can.

Given her current situation, Duke Stelmane is in no position to oppose attempts by her fellow dukes to seize the reins of power in Baldur's Gate.

#### DUKE DILLARD PORTYR

Duke Dillard Portyr was once a respected businessman, but after a string of sour deals, he pulled back from his investments. Now he uses his time to enjoy the comforts that his wealth and title provide him. He lives alone in his manor, having outlived his two wives and three sons, and trades correspondence with his niece, Liara Portyr, who commands a Flaming Fist outpost on Chult known as Fort Beluarian.

Duke Portyr is conflict-averse and goes out of his way to avoid stress. He shows well in social situations, but is easily manipulated in the political arena. He is known for listening with concern, showing an earnest desire to help, making promises to look into things, and then doing nothing. As a result, a great deal of the citizenry's scorn lies heaped upon Duke Portyr's shoulders.

Duke Portyr expressed concern about Ravengard's diplomatic mission to Elturel, fearing what the Flaming Fist might do while Ravengard is away. If his worst fears come true and the Flaming Fist can't control itself, Duke Portyr plans to write a letter to his niece, urging her to return to Baldur's Gate and take command of the Flaming Fist in Ravengard's absence. It's literally the least he can do.

#### DUKE THALAMRA VANTHAMPUR

Acid-tongued, shrewd, and aggressive, Duke Thalamra Vanthampur is the matriarch of the Vanthampur family. Born with nothing, she spent years wallowing in obscurity, repairing and renovating the city's ancient sewer system. One promotion after another followed until she

#### GUARD ARRIVAL TIMES

District	Arrival Time	Force
Upper City	2d4 minutes	2d4 Watch guards
Lower City	4d6 minutes	2d4 Flaming Fist veterans
Outer City	6d8 minutes	2d6 Flaming Fist guards

was named Master of Drains and Underways. By then, she had been married three times and given birth to three sons. Her lifelong goal has been to lift herself and her family out of the sewers and into high society.

Years of political dealing, blame shuffling, and bribery paid off when Thalamra was elected to the Council of Four. Although she has served on the council for the shortest amount of time, Duke Vanthampur is easily the most politically savvy council member. She speaks little during meetings of the council, preferring to further her political agenda through meetings in her private offices and at her family estate. When she does choose to debate, she speaks with a strength beyond what it seems like her age should allow, and is known for leveling insults that land unsettlingly close to (supposedly) hidden truths.

#### MILITARY

Baldur's Gate boasts two military forces: the Flaming Fist and the Watch. Use the Guard Arrival Times table to determine how long it takes for the Flaming Fist or the Watch to arrive at a location after a crime or similar incident is reported.

##### THE FLAMING FIST

The red and gold symbol of the Flaming Fist mercenary company (depicted on page 12) has become emblematic of Baldur's Gate. The Council of Four funds the Flaming Fist, supporting it as the city's army. Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard is now its undisputed leader.

The Flaming Fist largely patrols the Lower City, though it holds nominal authority over the Outer City as well. The company has enough to do maintaining order within the city walls without straying too far from its gates, though the Fist has been known to hire independent agents when its ranks are spread thin.

Thousands of soldiers currently serve in the Flaming Fist: in Baldur's Gate proper, at the fortress of Wyrm's Rock on the Chionthar River, and at remote outposts such as Fort Beluarian in Chult. The Flaming Fist offers employment and a sense of belonging to any who can lift a sword and follow orders. Native Baldurians, immigrants, former criminals, and retired adventurers can all be found within the company's ranks.

##### THE WATCH

Watch officers can spend their entire careers within the Upper City. Bankrolled by the patriars, the Watch has a reputation as glorified bodyguards for the city's elite.

Orderly and regimented, the Watch maintains precise, predictable patrols. At dusk, the Watch clears the Upper City of everyone but residents, their household staffs, and guests bearing written invitations. Many Watch officers, born and raised in the city, pride themselves on recognizing every Upper City resident on sight.

The Watch operates out of the Citadel, a massive keep built into the Upper City's walls. In times of crisis, bells at the High Hall and the Citadel are rung simultaneously. If the pealing continues for more than a few minutes, every Watch member is required to rally at the Citadel or appointed guard posts. The function of the bells is common knowledge.

## GUARD REACTIONS

Use the following tables each time the party has a run-in with the Flaming Fist or the Watch and you're not sure how the encounter should play out. Such interactions occur often at the city's gates. Roll on the Gate Interactions table if you want to randomly determine the experience characters have as they attempt to pass through a gate.

If someone calls the Flaming Fist or the Watch, reference the Guard Arrival Times table (page 162) to see how long it takes for the authorities to show up. Then, roll on the Flaming Fist Reactions or Watch Reactions table as appropriate to determine how the guards behave when they arrive.

## GATE INTERACTIONS

### d8 Interaction

- 1 The guards thoroughly search packs and vehicles, questioning everything and everyone.
- 2 The guards force a line of travelers to wait for 6d10 minutes for no clear reason.
- 3 The guards refuse to admit anyone with animals, unusual weapons, or obvious magic items.
- 4 The guards don't let anyone through the gate. Those wishing to enter or leave must wait until the gate re-opens or try another gate.
- 5 The guards focus their attention on a suspicious traveler and wave a bunch of other people through without searching them or their belongings.
- 6 The guards clear the gate swiftly to let a patriarch's litter pass through.
- 7 The guards skip the search if a traveler pays 1 gp for "express gate" service.
- 8 The guards wave travelers through without a second look.

## FLAMING FIST REACTIONS

### d8 Reaction

- 1 The guards demand that everyone drop to the ground, bludgeoning those who don't comply immediately. After searching everyone for money, contraband, or other valuable items, they confiscate whatever they find before letting everyone go.
- 2 Exasperated, the guards just want everyone to disperse immediately.
- 3 The guards already have 1d6 **thugs** with them from a prior arrest and don't want to deal with another problem.
- 4 The guards make arrests, but are called away mid process and let everyone go.
- 5 The guards merely walk by, as they're already escorting a patriarch (**noble**).
- 6 The guards start a bribe bidding war to decide who gets arrested and who goes free.
- 7 An officer arrives with the group, insuring that any arrests are conducted by the book.
- 8 The guards are spoiling for a fight and attack anyone who looks like they might be guilty.

## WATCH REACTIONS

### d8 Reaction

- 1 The guards immediately arrest the poorest looking person involved and lock them in jail for 24 hours before letting them go.
- 2 The guards break up the situation, dispersing everyone without making any arrests.
- 3 The guards confiscate all weapons but make no arrests.
- 4 The guards watch circumstances unfold but take no action that might endanger themselves.
- 5 The guards have clearly been bought off by the richest person involved and do whatever it takes to help that person.
- 6 Believing themselves to be ill-equipped to handle the situation, the guards race away to get the Flaming Fist. (Roll on the Guard Arrival Times table to determine how long it takes for the Flaming Fist to arrive, and roll on the Flaming Fist Reactions table to determine how they behave.)
- 7 The guards try to bludgeon anyone not wearing jewelry, but make no arrests.
- 8 The guards arrest anyone who can't pay a 5 gp bribe.

## LAW AND ORDER

Everyone in Baldur's Gate is expected to follow common law. Murder, theft, assault, blackmail, and fraud all carry severe penalties. Patriarchs, the wealthy, and the well-connected are given much more leniency than commoners. A noble heir who steals from a shop might get away with a fine paid by a parent, whereas a commoner committing the same crime may be jailed or publicly flogged.

Both the Watch and the Flaming Fist have the right to dispense immediate justice, should they witness a crime in progress. In unclear situations, or when a person of influence is involved, the accused is jailed until a trial can be set. Patriarchs and other powerful individuals are usually placed under house arrest, except in dire circumstances. Commoners await their trial in jail. On occasion, a vigilante or hired mercenary will break an accused commoner out of prison in order to ensure the accused's safety until the trial date.

Minor crimes, such as creating a public disturbance, petty theft, or vandalism carry commensurate punishments. Time in the stocks, public humiliation, or a fine are the usual judgments. Some patriarch families consider petty crimes to be worse than major ones—they are a sign that one can't manage one's baser instincts. Patriarchs have been known to pay huge bribes or promise outsized favors to protect a rebellious heir from being charged with a minor crime.

Lawyers must belong to the Barrister's Guild to practice, and the associated fees means they prefer to represent wealthy clients. Poorer citizens often must throw themselves on the mercy of the courts, or scrape together what coin they can to hire an adventurer or mercenary to find evidence to support their plea.

# CITIZENRY

The citizens of Baldur's Gate include many races and ethnicities. Though prejudices can exist among certain residents, Baldur's Gate as a whole is a diverse and unprejudiced—if not welcoming—city.

Many of the patriarch families of Baldur's Gate can trace their lineage back for generations, but a significant portion of Baldurians were not born in the city. Most citizens began their lives in Tethyr, the North, the Western Heartlands, or other communities along the Sword Coast. Baldurians born in Amn, the High Forest, and nations bordering the Inner Sea are less common, but still present. Rarely, travelers from as far away as Chult, Mulhorand, or Luiren decide to follow the flow of trade and settle in the city.

## COMMONERS AND CREWS

Baldur's Gate can be a rough place for ordinary folk. Among the twisting streets of the Lower City, commoners have significantly fewer rights than patriarchs, with only the brusque mercenaries of the Flaming Fist to keep them safe. Even worse off are the poor residents of the Outer City, many of whom aren't recognized as citizens. With the Flaming Fist too eager to punish criminal behavior by drubbing both accuser and accused, it's important that common folk have someone to watch their backs. That's why the people of Baldur's Gate created crews—collections of likeminded folk who band together for mutual protection. Depending on the crew, this protection can range from taking someone's side in a tavern brawl or guarding each other's shops to price fixing or inter-crew loans.

### NOTEWORTHY LAWS

Of the city's nuanced and unreliably enforced laws, the following tend to be the most surprising to newcomers.

**Foreign Agents.** While traders and visitors to Baldur's Gate are always welcome, spies and saboteurs are not. Legitimate foreign agents, such as ambassadors, are required to report to the High Hall for an elaborate series of interviews and licenses. Visitors technically should do the same, but the law is rarely mentioned at the city's gates and even more rarely enforced. What distinguishes a visitor and a foreign agent can be unclear, and if an individual doesn't have a license marking them as one or the other, any duke or peer can unilaterally change a non-citizen's status, effectively sentencing them to imprisonment or worse.

**Livestock Restriction.** By tradition, Baldur's Gate bans animals larger than a peacock within the city walls. Visitors determined not to surrender their beloved pets (or valuable animals they intend to sell) sometimes arrive at the city with large peacocks in tow, to prove their furred companion meets the legal requirement. This has led to a burgeoning, noisy, and particularly cutthroat peacock-breeding industry in the Outer City.

Most travelers pay to stable oversize animals, either in Outer City liveries or at ranches outside the city. Some animals are simply surrendered at the gate, though, becoming property of the Watch (in the Upper City) or the Flaming Fist (in the Lower City), or sold during monthly auctions.

Crews were the first to institute the common practice of *burl*. Under this system, anyone seeking shelter and safety—usually those fleeing from the Flaming Fist or some other danger—can approach a house or shop and give three sharp knocks followed by a heavier one. The residents are then obligated to take that person in and hide them. This applies even to members of opposing crews, though anyone requesting sanctuary from a crew other than their own incurs a debt, both personally and on behalf of their crew. Abusing someone who's granted *burl* is grounds for immediate expulsion from one's crew, and such "drowners" are universally shunned.

The dozens of crews calling Baldur's Gate home are as different in attitude and approach as the city's residents. For instance, everyone in the Lower City knows that if you need cheap muscle, you hire members of the burly Porters' Union or Stonemasons' Guild, and not even the Flaming Fist would willingly pick a fight with the blood-spattered Butchers' Block or the mercenaries and "security consultants" of the Bannerless Legion. Other crews, such as the Scribes and Sages or the Honorable Order of Moneylenders, would never dream of getting their hands dirty, while the Apothecary Alliance and Brethren of Barbers don't need to throw a punch to strike fear into rivals. From carpenters to grocers, the Forgeworkers' Lodge to the Wisewoman Weavers, nearly every profession offers some access to a crew. And not just legal professions, either; the Revelers' Union, made up of night-workers who sell drugs, companionship, and other recreations, is one of the most powerful in the city, thanks to the information it gathers from its clients.

Some crews are simply neighborhood-based, their association based on territory rather than trade, such as the Right Pashas of Little Calimshan, the Crossed of Wyrm's Crossing, the Gravemakers of Tumbledown, or the Bloomridge Dandies.

By far the most important crew to travelers, however, is the Gateguides. Made up primarily of teenage lantern bearers, the Gateguides earn a living hiring themselves out to newcomers to show them the ropes of the city, help make connections with other crews, and offer some degree of collective protection.

## PATRIARS

Patriars are the elite upper class of the city, a rank defined largely by money and lines of vague, increasingly inconsequential heritage. Many nobles claim generations of lineage, dating to the earliest days of Baldur's Gate. Their money funds industries and lines political pockets, but their names allow them to wield influence throughout the city.

Some patriars are economically-minded individuals who rise early and spend their days in meetings and negotiations. They fund expeditions into dangerous locales and hire explorers to map uncharted territories. Other patriars manipulate the city's power players through diplomacy and intrigue. They spend their days flitting from theater performances to private balls, while quietly making and breaking the alliances that underwrite the city's structures.

Patriars live and work in the Upper City. Their manor homes employ dozens of servants, along with contingents of personal guards. The wall surrounding the Upper City as well as the constant presence of the Watch—which exclusively patrols that district—goes far toward assuring their security. As a side effect, it also means many patriars go months without engaging with the city's common folk, their insulation leading to the spread of divisive rumors.

Patriars know the danger of the other districts, where their wealth is a lure and their names carry no weight. Patriars who have to travel the Lower City always do so with guards, and still risk robbery or worse violence.

Many patriarch families hire proxies to carry out their business in the Lower City or Outer City. If circumstances force patriars to visit the Outer City personally, they typically travel in disguise, paying adventurers or mercenaries to protect them without drawing the attention of a uniformed personal guard.

Among the common folk and criminal element of the city, patriars have a reputation for callousness. Common wisdom holds that patriars are out of touch with everyday life and value citizens' lives cheaply. For some nobles, this assessment holds true. These patriars are class-conscious dilettantes who spend their money on frivolous bets, debauched entertainment, and risky business ventures. For this callous lot, the common people are nothing more than fools to be bilked, clods undeserving of comfort and wealth due to their lack of comfort and breeding.

For a few patriars, though, the inequality of Baldur's Gate is a serious concern. Blocked by a corrupt government and uncaring peers, these civic-minded nobles use unorthodox channels to distribute aid. They quietly fund vigilante action that protects the vulnerable groups. They stage robberies on their own property and secretly send the "stolen goods" to sick houses and charities. These patriars know that to act openly is to invite scorn from their peers, which may edge them out of alliances and deals that could strengthen their standing. Worse, it makes them targets for corrupt elite who prefer the city's divisions as they are.

Some good-hearted but naïve patriars have been known to venture into the Lower City and even the Outer City to volunteer with the disadvantaged or share their wealth. Even in disguise, though, these nobles are usually quickly identified and become targets of the Guild or other criminals. More than one patriarch on a mission of mercy has disappeared into the Lower City, never to be seen again.

## ECONOMY AND TRADE

With trade ways running north and south along the Sword Coast, a port on the Sea of Swords, and the Chionthar River leading inland, Baldur's Gate is perfectly situated for its role as a commercial hub. Craftspeople, merchants, traders, and smugglers all make a brisk living in the city, and many immigrants are drawn by the dream that anyone willing to work hard can be successful in Baldur's Gate.

Baldur's Gate has plenty of exports, notably fish, fish glue, and sea salt, but its main economic force is trade

itself. The city boasts multiple large and well-connected trade guilds and a marketplace where wholesalers can exchange goods before moving up or down the Sword Coast.

The number of ships in port and traders making their way north or south mean that Baldur's Gate boasts one of the most expansive markets in the west. Coin trumps morals in Baldur's Gate, with profit being the

### PROMINENT PATRIAR FAMILIES

Below are the names of and a few details about many of the other patriarch families in the city.

**Belt** owns horses for sale and exchange.

**Bormul** is related to the Bormul nobility in Amn and has interests in southern silver mines and vineyards.

**Caldwell** owns most of the city's art museums.

**Blusker** is nearly broke but maintains a textile mill in the Lower City and a few slaughterhouses in the Outer City.

**Durinbold** is related to Waterdeep nobility and owns large sheep herds.

**Eltan** has an ancestral link to the grand duke who formed the Flaming Fist, but sold its interests in the mercenary company to pay debts.

**Eomane** owns the most elite perfumery in Baldur's Gate as well as fish- and whale-oil processors that make lamp oil.

**Gist** controls much of the city's dye production.

**Guthmere** owns butchery and tannery facilities.

**Hhune** has ties to Tethyr nobility and the Knights of the Shield, as well as holdings in other major cities.

**Hlath** owns several cafes in the city and is awash in gambling debts.

**Hullhollyn** owns a merchant fleet and has a trade truce with the Irrentree family.

**Irrentree** owns a merchant fleet, has a trade truce with the Hullhollyn family, and has membership in the Merchants' League.

**Jannath** owns tin and copper mines.

**Jhasso** is part owner of the struggling Seven Suns Trading Coster, a long-standing trade organization.

**Linnacker** collects income from gem mines in Tethyr.

**Miyar** supplies and repairs wagons and caravans, and has membership in the Merchants' League.

**Nurthammas** invests in businesses involved in supplying ships for long voyages.

**Oathoon** imports wine and spirits.

**Oberon** owns most of the port's dry docks.

**Provoss** is nearly destitute after losses to its cattle herds.

**Ravenshade** trades in inks, dyes, gems, and jewelry.

**Redlocks** has secretly financed piracy and smuggling for a long time.

**Rillyn** runs a sword-wielding school, creating new generations of soldiers, mercenaries, and legbreakers.

**Sashenstar** owns shipping, mining, and textile operations, and has membership in the Merchants' League.

**Shattershield**, a family of shield dwarves, is the only non-human family among the patriars and was instrumental in building the city's original walls.

**Tillturn** owns and leases out many buildings in the city.

**Vammas** controls the majority of trade from Chult.

**Vannath** fled the city of Neverwinter after the eruption of Mount Hotenow and married into the patriars to elevate their status.

**Vanthampur** specializes in civic engineering under the purview of family matriarch Duke Thalamra Vanthampur.

**Whitburn** owns the slate quarry east of the city.

ultimate good. As a result, nearly anything can be bought and sold in the city's shops, whether it be rare jewels, magic weapons, secrets, alliances, or even murder. People visit the city seeking imports from Port Nyanzaru, verdigris-covered treasures dredged from the sea, blackmail information on political rivals, or custom-brewed poisons.

Though the city has laws regarding the sale of stolen property, smuggling, and contract killing, such crimes are rarely reported and even more rarely enforced. Unless the complainant is a patriarch or other powerful individual, law enforcement lacks the time and interest to pursue those engaging in mutually beneficial transactions. The unwritten law is do nothing that interferes with the city's economy and make your bargains in peace. Individuals who suffer due to morally questionable contracts must seek out private means of obtaining justice.

## PROFESSIONAL GUILDS

Craftspeople and merchants organize in professional guilds and follow official charters. Unofficial guilds are technically illegal, but in the Outer City, such informal guilds are common.

Most professional guilds operate in the Lower City, but prefer to provide their goods to the wealthy patriarchal families of the Upper City. Commoners grumble that they can't even buy from their own neighbors, with the choicest items and freshest food traveling up the hill. A laborer might toil all day at a fishmonger's shop, then be forced to take their pay to the Outer City and buy yesterday's catch from an unlicensed seller.

In many cases, guilds intersect with crews. Such groups take an interest in their members beyond a professional level, working to assure that they're safe on the streets and at home so they can return to work the next morning. Those who mistreat a guild member might find themselves ostracized by all members of that profession, or even find themselves cornered by members of the guild's associated crew, their most menacing tools of the trade in hand.

## RELIGION

Baldurians are permitted to worship whatever deities they wish, so long as they refrain from violent acts and practices that disrupt trade. While multiple temples rise within the city walls, hundreds of tiny shrines sit along the twisted streets of the Outer City.

In the city proper, worship centers around a handful of well-known and generally respectable deities. Most established temples, with clergy and daily rituals, are in the Upper City, which precludes commoners from worshiping after dark, when only residents are allowed to remain in the Upper City. Since most commoners work during the day, their faith usually becomes secondary in their lives. Ostentatious adherence to religious rituals is seen as a privilege of the wealthy. Some Baldurians even think outwardly displaying one's faith is a sign of pretentiousness and insincerity.

Among the many deities worshiped in Baldur's Gate, a handful hold particular prominence.

## DEAD THREE

Bane (the Lord of Tyranny), Bhaal (the Lord of Murder), and Myrkul (the Lord of Bones) make up the Dead Three. While these deities have lost much of their power, their faiths still command respect and fear throughout Baldur's Gate. While open worship of the Dead Three is frowned upon in Baldur's Gate, their worship is not illegal—so long as worship remains within the laws. Every now and then, rumors surface that a powerful political figure is a Bhaalspawn (see page 159). These claims almost always prove to be smear campaigns with no basis in truth—though, in some cases, such claims have actually raised a figure's standing in the public eye.

For more details on the Dead Three, see "Dangers in Baldur's Gate" (page 170).

## GOND

The High House of Wonders, located in the Upper City, serves as the city's temple of Gond, a god of innovation and invention. Within the walls of the temple, clergy members are permitted to brew experimental potions and elixirs, build and test mechanical constructs, and hire locals to participate in controlled experiments—all in the spirit of invention and innovation.

High-ranking members of Gond's clergy oversee a number of secret projects sponsored by wealthy patriarchs or the Flaming Fist.

## HELM

In a city as dangerous as Baldur's Gate, prayers to the Vigilant One are many. Members of the Watch and the Flaming Fist, mercenaries, bodyguards, and the fearful pray for Helm's protection at his shrine, the Watchful Shield, located in the Upper City. Patriarchs who see themselves as protectors of the common folk pray to Helm for guidance as well.

The Order of the Gauntlet, a good-aligned faction devoted to Helm, quietly sponsors vigilantes throughout Baldur's Gate. These self-styled "protectors of the innocent" leave Helm's holy symbol on the bodies of dead criminals, or carved into the flesh of live ones left at the Flaming Fist's doorstep.

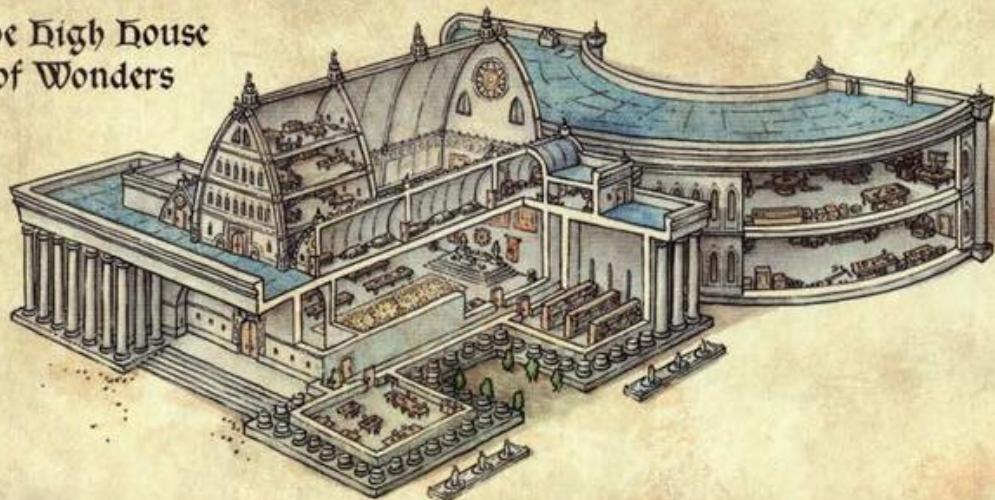
## ILMATER

Ilmater's humble shrine stands in a quiet square in Heapside. The Shrine of Suffering provides free meals and a few coppers to the poor and destitute.

Even in the Upper City, some citizens feel their existence is one of secret torment and suffering. The idea that pain has nobility to it—that there can be a divine reason behind the trials that face Baldurians—comforts many.

Some patriarchs spread word of Ilmater's faith not out of devotion, but to control their lessers. If people believe their suffering is worthy, they are less likely to demand safer conditions, higher pay, or more rights. In recent memory, cryptic notes have appeared on the gates of patriarch estates, warning that "those who falsely champion the Crying God will find their own suffering multiplied."

## The High House of Wonders



### OGHMA

An eye-catching, white marble pavilion in the Upper City known as the Unrolling Scroll serves as Oghma's shrine. Pilgrims on the road to Candlekeep often stop at the shrine to purchase or trade rare tomes. Adventurers looking for work sometimes linger nearby, waiting to hire on to missions intent on recovering lost books of magic.

### SIAMORPHE

Siamorphe, goddess of nobility and divine right, is not widely worshiped in Baldur's Gate, but her image looks out from the alcoves of weathered noble estates and from behind vines within patriarchal gardens.

Long ago, many nobles of Baldur's Gate worshiped Siamorphe. Legend tells that her temple was a wonder to behold, its nave decorated with crests of the most powerful ruling families of the time. A secret vault contained signet rings, family trees, and copies of important decrees, holding them in case of some calamity.

During one of the city's early uprisings, the temple became a target for rioters and was burned to the ground. Where the temple stood has since been forgotten. However, rumors persist that the temple's vault is likely hidden beneath a patriarchal home or even a different temple. Urban treasure hunters, desperate politicians, and disenfranchised nobles still sift through the unreliable records of ages past to find it.

### TYMORA

Adherents of the goddess of good fortune maintain her temple in the Upper City. Given the number of people in Baldur's Gate who rely on luck to make it through each day, her following thrives. Even cruel-hearted criminals

turn to Tymora for luck, hoping the goddess recognizes their boldness and daring. Evil-doers who work outside the Guild tip their hats to Lady Luck before going out on a job.

Citizens who must walk the Lower City at night, or who venture into the depths of the Outer City, usually whisper joint prayers to Tymora and Helm. They know that luck is almost as valuable as vigilance when it comes to staying alive in the city.

Tymora's temple unofficially serves as a gathering place for adventurers seeking dangerous quests. Citizens with bizarre problems or in overwhelmingly perilous situations come to the temple in hopes of finding the perfect aid to help them.

### UMBERLEE

No city as reliant on the sea as Baldur's Gate could do without a temple to Umberlee. Fisherfolk pray to the Queen of the Depths for good waters to ply their trade, and sailors beg Umberlee's mercy before embarking on their voyages.

Smugglers, too, pay homage to Umberlee. A great deal of illegal trade passes through the harbor in small crafts on moonless nights, and smugglers—particularly of dangerous beasts and kidnapped souls—know to drop a few coins into the water as they pass into the harbor to appease Umberlee.

Umberlee's adherents work out of the Water Queen's House, a magnificent structure on the city docks. They provide blessings to sailors and identify relics dredged up from the deep. When Umberlee is offended by the removal of an item from the sea, she expresses her displeasure to the clergy by sending them omens, urging the priests to advise the finder to return the plundered item to the depths at once—or else.





MURDEROUS SERVANTS OF THE DEAD THREE CORNER THEIR PREY NEAR  
THE STATUE OF MINS C AND BOO.



## NINE-FINGERS KEENE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 15 (leather armor)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Int +4

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Deception +5, Insight +6, Intimidation +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, thieves' cant

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of her turns in combat, Nine-Fingers can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Dagger Thrower.** Nine-Fingers adds double her proficiency bonus to the damage she deals on ranged attacks made with daggers (already factored into her attacks).

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Nine-Fingers attacks three times with her daggers.

**Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, plus 6 piercing damage if it's a ranged attack.

### REACTIONS

**Uncanny Dodge.** Nine-Fingers halves the damage that she takes from an attack that hits her. She must be able to see the attacker.

## DANGERS IN BALDUR'S GATE

Crime is a powerful force in the city. Fearsome creatures hunt along cobble streets, and the worship of evil deities continues to rise.

### THE GUILD

The organization known simply as the Guild unites cutpurses, loan sharks, killers, thugs, con artists, grave robbers, cat burglars, and every other type of criminal in the city. The Guild operates under the noses of the Watch and the Flaming Fist by adroitly keeping its illicit activities quiet.

Each city neighborhood falls under control of one or more kingpins, crime bosses who report to the head of the Guild. These kingpins style themselves as elite criminals, often adopting memorable nicknames and distinctively decadent dress. Scores of common criminals work beneath each kingpin, with the most competent and cutthroat members rising to favored status.

Some kingpins keep strictly to the shadows, but others operate more openly. Particularly in the Outer City, citizens often know their local kingpin. A kingpin might receive requests for help from citizens, asking for loans or dealing with unauthorized crime, such as a thieving neighbor. A kingpin tracks these favors and debts, calling them in when it suits them—often with interest.

Rivalries exist between kingpins, and their territorial borders shift constantly. As long as these internal feuds don't disrupt Guild business or draw the attention of the authorities, no one interferes. Recent rumors claim that an Outer City kingpin known as Straightstick is calling in all his favors to make a move on a Lower City turf. Crossing the wall is riskier than the average power play, and those in the know predict the coming conflict to be a bloody one.

Guild operations in the Outer City center on smuggling and gambling. Some violent crime and theft occur, but for the most part, Outer City residents are too poor to draw the attention of the Guild. Travelers and visitors do fall victim to pickpocketing, muggings, and assault, though. As the Flaming Fist rarely comes to the district, the Guild has long operated with impunity. In recent years, though, the interference of vigilantes and hired adventurers has been on the rise.

The Lower City serves as the heart of the Guild's operations. The locals here have enough money to make burglary and protection schemes worthwhile, and the Flaming Fist is spread too thin to address every instance of petty crime. The Guild's operations widen to numerous commercial ventures, such as gambling dens, animal fights, races, and brawling tournaments. Their traffickers also maintain routes into other districts, and guide individuals and illicit trade through them for a fee. Those who oppose the Guild—typically by going to the Flaming Fist—invite retaliation upon themselves and their neighbors. This makes most folk afraid to report crimes and pressures their neighbors to keep quiet as well.

In the Upper City, the Guild engages in burglary, extortion, blackmail, and confidence games. Patriarchs might even hire Guild members to gain (or plant)

information about their rivals, involving the Guild in Upper City politics.

Only the most talented criminals dare to burgle patriarch estates, but the lower ranks of a kingpin's operation often work as pickpockets or try to con residents of the district. Here, the Watch zealously monitors for Guild activities and targets anyone threatening the peace. Kingpins can often come to an agreement with the Watch, though, offering bribes so that Watch officers look the other way. Every month, the kingpin makes their payment to the Watch and selects a new safe word. Guild members caught by the Watch utter the safe word to avoid arrest. Rival kingpins and unaffiliated criminals looking to work in the Upper City pay well for the month's safe word, though any member of the Guild found selling the information faces harsh punishment.

### NINE-FINGERS KEENE

The current leader of the Guild, **Nine-Fingers Keene** (see the accompanying stat block), despairs flashy garb and illusion magic. She appears to the world as she is: an unassuming woman of middling age and build. Her forgettable looks have proven her greatest asset as a thief, as her victims have trouble recognizing her even when they meet her again face-to-face. Keene's leadership over the years earned her a reputation of thoughtful pragmatism. When necessary, she seeks revenge for offenses against the Guild—provided doing so is profitable. Her methods are vicious when necessary, and she is as feared as she is respected.

Keene has become increasingly intolerant of the populous tide turning against her organization. While the occasional rabble-rouser has always impeded criminal business, the rise of organized crews and vigilantes is interfering with Guild operations. After a carefully co-ordinated attack on a patriarch's estate fell to pieces when a vigilante clumsily alerted the estate guards, Keene declared open season on do-gooders of all stripes.

### THE DEAD THREE

The plots of patriars and the schemes of Guild operatives fill the gossip and whispers of Baldur's Gate. Yet, throughout the city, no names are as synonymous with dastardly acts as those of Dead Three. The demigods Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul walk among mortals, personally seeking followers to their cause. More than once, it's rumored, the trio has even trod the streets of Baldur's Gate.

Nefarious patriars whisper prayers to Bane when they seek to gain power through coercion, intimidation, and forceful exaction of the law. Gang leaders, evil mercenaries, and others who rely on fear and control, also pay homage to Bane. Those who want to evoke dominance and ruthlessness favor wearing black gloves—a nod to Bane's holy symbol.

Myrkul claims a following among those who wish to learn from or command the dead. Those who plunder tombs for lost knowledge, grim entrepreneurs who see business sense in undead servants, even pragmatic necromancers seeking to conjure secrets from the wealthy dead of Cliffside Cemetery all whisper prayers to Myrkul. Of the Dead Three, Myrkul's base of power

is the smallest. Residents of Baldur's Gate rarely fear death by old age—a grim fact of living in such a dangerous city. As a result, few desperate elders seek the blessing of the Lord of Bones. Those who do, though, tend to be both cagey and wealthy, which means that although Myrkul's worshipers are small in number, their resources have hidden depths.

Since the time when the Bhaalspawn Sarevok plotted to start a war between Baldur's Gate and Amn as a path to claiming Bhaal's power, awareness of the Lord of Murder's children has grown. Baldur's Gate maintains a grim draw for Bhaalspawn, whether due to some foul influence in the city itself, or merely because of Sarevok's lingering reputation.

At the same time, worship of Bhaal proves darkly popular in Baldur's Gate. Few openly admit to worshiping the Lord of Murder, but there is an unspoken assumption that anyone who benefits from violent death has some respect for Bhaal. Assassination and murder underpin many of the plots in the city, from the business of highly-paid killers on patriarch payrolls to slayings of opportunity committed by Outer City fanatics. Such bloodthirsty faithful rarely gather in numbers, but they typically mark themselves by carving a fresh gouge on their thumbs—spilling their blood in Bhaal's name while creating a subtle mark identifying that identifies them among allies. Despite the Lord of Murder's decentralized worship, some believe a temple to Bhaal exists

### PROMINENT GUILD KINGPINS

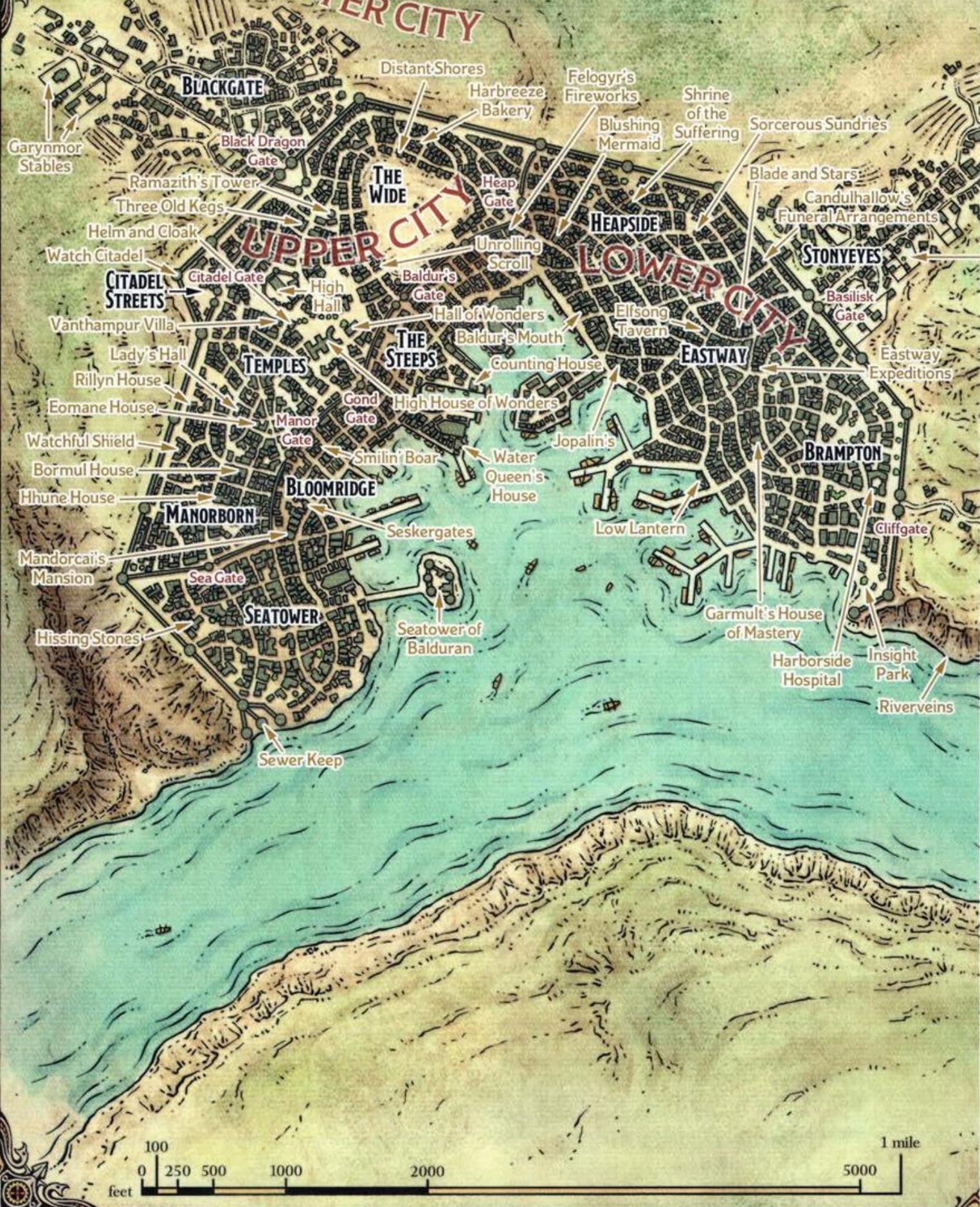
All Guild operations are overseen by kingpins, a handful of which are described below.

**Goblin Behnie.** Most are surprised to find Goblin Behnie looks nothing like his name or monstrous reputation suggest, the Bloomridge kingpin being a tall, polished-looking gentleman in his early thirties. The name comes from his ferocious ego, wild rages, and a propensity for biting off the fingers of those who disappoint him. Behind his viciousness, though, Goblin Behnie has a keen eye, making him and his forgers the city's best source of illicit Watch tokens (for passage into the Upper City), visitor licenses, and docking permits.

**Straightstick.** The kingpin of the Twin Songs Faithless runs one of the city's best smuggling operations, slipping goods into the city along the Chionthar River and over Dusthawk Hill. The seventy-year-old claims to have been attacked by the infamous (and doubtfully real) Ol' Cholms, a giant snapping turtle rumored to sleep at the bottom of Gray Harbor. To prove his story, Straightstick uses a splinted old ferry pole as a crutch. Recently, the kingpin has grown bitter about his position, believing he deserves a territory within Baldur's Gate proper. He's planning an attack on Brampton, the destination of much of his smuggling and the territory of his ex-wife, Diamond Urchin.

**The Whiskey Lady.** Few know that the last true heir of the Raddle patriarch family died several years ago. Despite this, "Dowager Raddle" continues to throw lavish social events at her estate, though she never personally attends. Instead, her supposed relative welcomes guests, engaging them with sharp wit, hard liquor, political gossip, and political opportunities of "gray" legality. No one seems to know their host's name, though—a faux pas none would ever admit. As a result, the Manorborn neighborhood's politically active Guild kingpin is known only as the Whiskey Lady.

# OUTER CITY



# Baldur's Gate



near or under the city, possibly in an ancient chamber beneath the sewers or carved into Dusthawk Hill. Rumor holds that eleven red crystals on the wall of the temple grow brighter with every murder committed, gathering power for either Bhaal or one of his future chosen. Some claim that Bhaal himself regularly visits the temple, his presence contributing to the city's high murder rate.

While the Dead Three occupy a prominent place in Baldurians' fears, their faiths currently have only the shallowest roots in the city. Followers of the Dead Three have done more to incite dread than faith. As a result, their numbers remain relatively small. Their sinister reputations outstrip their actual influence, though, with gossip spreading quickly whenever the deities' ominous symbols appear in graffiti or the Flaming Fist cracks down on overzealous fanatics. Despite public fears and resistance from law enforcement, the cults of the Dead Three persist, causing many to darkly wonder why the servants of Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul hold such interest in Baldur's Gate.

## MURDER

Blackmail and theft pay well, but murder is the preferred tool of the ambitious. Murder silences witnesses, disposes of enemies, and clears the path to power. Assassins never lack for work in Baldur's Gate.

In the Outer City, murder is practically a way of life. With neither the Watch nor the Flaming Fist to look after residents, criminals run free in the sprawling district. Criminals use murder to keep order among their ranks and remove threats to their organization. So-called "snuff streets" hold the bodies of the dead, dumped by their murderers in piles along the lane. The most desperate of Outer City residents prowl the snuff streets, hoping to find a missed copper piece or a salvageable boot to pawn. They strip the teeth from bodies, cut off hair that might fetch a coin, and sometimes—it is rumored—slice flesh from the corpses to stave off starvation. Recent reports of ghoul activity in the Outer City likely have their origins in these snuff streets.

In the Lower City, murder is less common but remains a threat. Long-time residents know to travel in groups after dark. Those looking to earn a few coins sometimes linger outside of taverns, hiring out as escorts for drunken patrons. Revelers can stay as late as they wish and still get home safely, provided they hire someone trustworthy to guard their trip home.

Most murders in the Lower City have reasons behind them. The merchant found with his throat cut and pockets emptied, the husband murdered so his wife can marry her young mistress, the tyrannical shop owner stabbed by a desperate underling—residents understand these crimes. What frightens people are the senseless murders. The man found ripped to pieces with his pockets still full of gold, the woman slaughtered so viciously that her grieving husband is sent to the asylum, the shop owner who suddenly strikes down his faithful clerk—these are the crimes that lead to panic and wild rumors.

Some commoners claim that something about the city itself sparks violence in its citizens. A popular theory is that the spirits of the vicious pirates that once sailed the

harbors still influence the city. Another is that the spirit of the long-executed serial murderer Alhasval Drenz, the Whitkeep Whistler, still stalks the city, possessing innocents to continue her unmatched killing spree. This adventure posits a third possibility: that the presence of the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* fuels the avarice and ambitions of evil-minded folk in Baldur's Gate. This magic item lies in a vault under Vanthampur Villa (see chapter 1) and has a pit fiend trapped inside it (see the item's description on page 225). Were the shield to be taken from the city, the murder rate might drop suddenly.

It's unclear whether the rise of Bhaal's faith in Baldur's Gate stems from the frequency of murders, or if the murders spring from the worship of Bhaal. The Flaming Fist suspects a group of Bhaal worshipers behind a spate of recent similar murders, the victims stabbed to death and their own blood dribbled like a crown around their heads. The Fist's investigations have not yet resulted in an arrest, but officers suspect the murderers to be commoners with seemingly unremarkable lives covering their true, bloodthirsty natures.

In the Upper City, murder brings results. Muggings and crimes of opportunity are rare here. The Watch keeps Upper City residents safe from criminals and riffraff. The biggest threat to patriars are other patriars.

Bribery and blackmail can secure votes or sway an allegiance temporarily, but murder permanently changes the makeup of the Parliament of Peers. Several elite assassins exclusively take on political targets. The Watch puts little effort into tracking down expert assassins, knowing that arresting one means possibly exposing a whole cadre of powerful patriars. The wrath that would fall on the Watch isn't worth putting one assassin in the cells.

## CITY LANDMARKS

Today, Baldur's Gate is split into three districts: the wealthy Upper City on the hills above the docks, the bustling Lower City around the harbor, and the lawless Outer City (which includes all neighborhoods outside the city walls). Regardless of what district one might be visiting, certain features are impossible to ignore, like the wash of Gray Harbor, the shadows of Dusthawk Hill, or the gates that contribute to the city's name.

Important landmarks are marked on the large map of the city (pages 172–173), which shows the entirety of Baldur's Gate and its immediate surroundings.

## THE GATES

Nine gates separate the districts of Baldur's Gate, providing the only points of entry to pass from the Upper City to the Lower City, or from the walled city proper to the Outer City and the wider world beyond. Baldurians, particularly if they do not wish to reveal a crew or family affiliation to a potentially hostile audience, often describe themselves by the nearest gate to their homes. Terms like "Gondgater" and "Dragongater" are widely understood as neighborhood identities, and are also understood as a way of eliding more troublesome connections.

The Watch guards gates leading to the Upper City, while the Flaming Fist oversees the rest. Guards assigned to Baldur's Gate and Black Dragon Gate stay at sharp attention and seldom accept bribes. Those assigned to the smaller and more secluded gates, however, can be less attentive, particularly when distracted by jingling coins.

Anyone entering the city must pay a nominal entry toll of 5 cp. While this is a small sum, it ensures that the truly destitute remain outside, consigned to the slums of the Outer City. Beggars and refugees crowd at the fringes of these slums, typically around Black Dragon Gate and Basilisk Gate, pleading for money to pay the toll and hoping that the guards won't drive them off for annoying more prosperous travelers.

When the city is not under lockdown, merchants pour through the external gates from morning till night, while peddlers, delivery carriers, and servants move in equally swift streams through the inner gates. Toll collectors work quickly but methodically to inspect incoming and outgoing trade goods, ensuring that commerce flows smoothly and the city gets its share at every turn.

The city gates are closed at night. At dusk, the Watch evicts anyone from the Upper City who is not a patriarch, bearing a patriarch's livery or permission letter, or carrying a Watch-issued token. The enforcement of this rule is one of the means by which the Upper City reinforces its snobbery over the other districts. More than one Lower City merchant visiting an Upper City restaurant or theater near sundown has been embarrassed by a Watch member's loud, public caution that the gates are about to close. While being seen hurrying toward the gates is an obvious embarrassment, being caught and escorted out would be far more bruising—both to one's ego and body.

The nightly closing of the gates ostensibly keeps the patriarchs safe. Closing off the Upper City pushes street crime into poorer neighborhoods, or out of the city altogether. In the Upper City, patriarchs can walk down alleys with relatively little fear, but beyond its well-lit streets and tightly watched gates, the other districts become much more dangerous after dark.

## GRAY HARBOR

One of the largest and deepest harbors on Faerûn's western coast, Gray Harbor is also one of the busiest. The city's independence and general laissez-faire attitude toward the types of goods and people flowing through its port—so long as the government gets its cut—means that the harbor throngs with both honest captains conducting forthright trade and pirate crews looking to fence their wares. Plenty of sailors also make their homes nearby in the Lower City.

The harbor's most immediately striking feature is its machinery, with dozens of enormous cranes and countless powered scoops and cargo carts dramatically accelerating the loading and unloading process. Though designed by the Church of Gond, these marvels are run by the Harborhands, the most powerful crew in the city

thanks to the dockworkers' ability to shut off the city's economic lifeblood with a strike. Managing the whole affair is Harbormaster Darus Kelinoth, a lawful neutral male human **noble** who runs the port's operations and taxation from a small, heavily fortified brick building set well apart from other structures.

The port itself is a tangle of piers, floating docks, and anchorages, from the massive Freighter's Finger pier catering to the heaviest barges to the more ordinary slips at Northtree or Commonsdock. Not actually attached to shore, the chaotic Flotilla is the city's cheapest long-term moorage option, where boats are welcome to raft together around common anchor buoys, and where some houseboats haven't moved in generations. A special division of the Flaming Fist called the Gray Wavers patrols the harbor, yet it's no secret that the more expensive docks are safer than the budget options. Sailors and even whole ships have been known to go missing in Gray Harbor, and while some assume such disappearances are the result of local shore-based pirates, others speak of Ol' Cholms, a mysterious sea beast capable of dragging ships down to the river's lightless bottom.

## DUSTHAWK HILL

East of the city, high above the scattered slums and cut-rate inns that stretch along the trade road, rises the steep yellow granite of Dushtawk Hill. This cliff-skirted hill is one of the last known refuges of the Chionthar dusthawk (use the **hawk** statistics), a once-common raptor whose numbers precipitously declined over the last century as regional turmoil and the ever-spreading slums outside Baldur's Gate consumed its habitat.

Local legend holds that the dusthawk was Balduran's favorite hunting bird, and that the Chionthar population is descended from his own personal hunting hawks. When the dukes of Baldur's Gate realized that the dusthawk was on the verge of extinction, they declared the hill, which included both the hawks' cliffside nests and their hunting grounds, to be off limits to unlicensed hunters. Despite the fences and cliffs that cordon off most of the hill, trespassers remain common, the demand for dusthawk hunting birds having exploded among the wealthy.

Many in the Outer City resent the hill being turned into private land. Several camps and slums were cleared as a result, their dwellers losing everything. The homeless resent the patriarchs for being willing to spend money giving hawks a home, but not them. Others resent the Flaming Fist guards who keep them from trapping on the hill. Stringy rabbits and scrawny quail made poor meals, but they were meals, and now many hunters have none.

Rumors hold that werewolves lair in the sea caves under Dushtawk Hill, pretending to be ordinary smugglers—or ordinary animals—while plotting against the city. Whenever a grisly murder captures Baldurians' imaginations, someone is always quick to claim that it must be one of the Dushtawk werewolves who did the deed.

## UPPER CITY

The Upper City, home to the patriarch aristocracy of Baldur's Gate, is a place of beauty and splendor, where magnificent public sculptures stand alongside historic manors, upscale theaters and boutiques, and tiny stone-walled gardens tucked among the streets like hidden jewels. Flowers bloom along the tree-lined streets, ushering away any stray miasma that escapes from the less fortunate quarters below. Silks and velvets, gold braid and mink, water-clear diamonds and luminous pearls: these are common sights in the Upper City, and hardly glimpsed elsewhere except as cheap imitations.

Everything in the Upper City speaks of privilege and wealth. Magical lights illuminate the clean-swept streets, some bearing enchantments that hold back the river fog. Most of the city's major temples are located in this district, flagrant evidence of how the faiths value the city's wealthy elite over congregants with shallower pockets. The finest wine shops, ateliers, and jewelers are all in the Upper City, where the Watch's nightly ritual of expelling all non-residents reinforces their air of luxurious exclusivity. Those without either Watch-issued tokens or a patriarchs' vouchsafe must leave at nightfall, without exception.

Residents of the Upper City feel great pressure to maintain outward appearances, and will keep their estate's facade finely maintained even at the cost of pawning everything within. Admitting to poverty in this district is admitting to shameful failure.

The patriarchs' unabashed snobbery fosters deep resentment among denizens of the Lower City and Outer City, who can see the good life enjoyed before their eyes but are excluded from all but the smallest tastes. The Watch is merciless about turning beggars and malcontents away from the gates, where an erratically enforced entry toll for non-residents and those without Watch tokens or escorts effectively bars the poor from setting foot within this district. A patriarch caught outside the Upper City after dark, therefore, is at high risk of robbery, beating, or worse.

## GATES

The Old Wall, built at Balduran's behest centuries ago, surrounds the Upper City. Six gates pierce it, channeling the district's visitors and commerce. Entering the Upper City requires either being a patriarch, having a patriarch's letter or livery, showing a Watch token issued to the Upper City's residents or licensed to its few inns for guest use, or paying an entry toll. Tokens and tolls are only accepted at Citadel Gate, Baldur's Gate, and the Black Dragon Gate, since the other gates are reserved for the exclusive use of patriarchs, their servants, and their guests.

**Black Dragon Gate.** Named for the dragon's head that a victorious knight once hung upon its arch, the Black Dragon Gate faces the road heading north toward distant Waterdeep. The original dragon's head is long gone, but a stone replacement snarls above the gate's arch. Local legend claims that the stone head will



## UPPER CITY RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| d20   | Encounter                              |
| 1–6   | No encounter                           |
| 7–10  | Harmless interaction (roll on table A) |
| 11–16 | Denizens (roll on table B)             |
| 17–20 | Threat (roll on table C)               |

## TABLE A: UPPER CITY HARMLESS INTERACTIONS

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| d12 | Interaction   |
| 1   | A pallid maid wearing the livery of House Bormul stumbles into a party, whispers “not ... shellfish,” and passes out.   |
| 2   | A smirking valet eyes the party, slips over, and hands them an elegant crimson envelope: an invitation to a gathering at Eomane House.  |
| 3   | A wide-eyed, fast-talking priest of Gond laments that a thief stole her designs for a “pocket clock.” She describes the thief as a tall, perfume-scented man in black wearing a red scarf.            |
| 4   | A chatty stranger, Ellyn Harbreeze, invites the party to tea at Harbreeze Bakery, eager to gossip with them.  |
| 5   | A merchant giving away samples of her wares offers each party member a free cigar.  |
| 6   | A street artist offers to sketch one of the characters for the modest fee of 3 copper pieces. The sketch isn’t particularly good.   |
| 7   | A priest of Tymora approaches the party, offering them a small sum to help do a good deed for a poor family at the Lady’s Hall.   |
| 8   | Ominous, disembodied whispers reach the party’s ears. The whispers lead to Hhune House.   |
| 9   | The wizard Lorroakan approaches the party, offering them pay and free waterproofing for their clothing if they help him clean out the cluttered upper floors of Ramazith’s Tower.                     |
| 10  | Yvandre Rillyn asks if a party member really knows how to use a distinctive weapon they carry. If so, she asks them to be a guest teacher at the Rillyn School.                                       |
| 11  | One random character is struck by a kite. The kite is being flown by a young boy belonging to a wealthy patriarch family. One of the boy’s nine bodyguards checks to make sure the character is okay. |
| 12  | A shady broker claims to know exactly what the party needs, leading characters to the Undercellar to show them a selection of interesting but shady goods.  |

magically spew acid at attackers if the city should ever fall under siege.

**Citadel Gate.** The only entrance to the Watch’s fortress, Citadel Gate nestles into the Upper City’s landward wall. The Watch maintains a small cavalry, nominally for defense and crowd control, but primarily for parades, honor escorts, and other ceremonial functions. Because of this, the Citadel maintains the only stable within the city walls.

## TABLE B: UPPER CITY DENIZENS

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| d10 | Denizens   |
| 1   | 2d4 Watch guards who demand to see strangers’ passage tokens                                     |
| 2   | 1d4 acolytes of Gond or Tymora   |
| 3   | 2d6 patriarch servants ( <b>commoners</b> ) on errands   |
| 4   | 1 patriarch (human noble) and 6 personal bodyguards ( <b>veterans</b> )                          |
| 5   | 1d4 + 1 entitled young patriars (human nobles), each with one personal bodyguard ( <b>thug</b> ) |
| 6   | 1d6 visiting dignitaries ( <b>nobles</b> ) and 2d4 <b>guards</b>                                 |
| 7   | 1d4 High Hall messengers ( <b>scouts</b> )   |
| 8   | 2d4 entertainers ( <b>commoners</b> )  |
| 9   | 1 Flaming Fist officer ( <b>knight</b> ) and 2d4 Flaming Fist soldiers ( <b>veterans</b> )       |
| 10  | 1d4 <b>commoners</b> who shouldn’t be in the Upper City  |

## TABLE C: UPPER CITY THREATS

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| d10 | Threat   |
| 1   | 1d4 imps disguised as ravens   |
| 2   | 1 gargoyle in the service of the Guild   |
| 3   | 1d6 giant centipedes from the sewers   |
| 4   | 1d4 suits of <b>animated armor</b> that escaped from the High House of Wonders       |
| 5   | 1 <b>ochre jelly</b> in a sewer grate  |
| 6   | Dead Three abduction squad (see the “More Dead Three Encounters” sidebar on page 28) |
| 7   | Dead Three murder squad (see the “More Dead Three Encounters” sidebar on page 28)    |
| 8   | 1d4 <b>doppelgangers</b>   |
| 9   | 1 serial killer ( <b>assassin</b> ) wanted by the Watch                              |
| 10  | 2d4 <b>kenku</b> muggers in league with the Guild                                    |

**Patriar Gates.** The four gates known collectively as the patriarch gates—Gond Gate, Heap Gate, Manor Gate, and Sea Gate—are smaller and are generally not accessible by the general public. They were built after the construction of the Lower City walls and were intended to offer patriars convenient access from their homes to their business concerns and back. Privately funded by the patriars, and thus serving as a display of their personal success, these gates are more ornate and tightly guarded than the public gates. Officially, none may use them without bearing a patriarch’s livery or letter of permission, although rumors persist that Guild kingpins and veteran servants among several patriarch staffs know exactly which guards to bend. Regardless, the visible double standard imposed at these gates is a constant gall to Lower City residents forced to take longer routes through the public gates because they cannot use the ones in their own neighborhoods.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

While most outsiders see only rampant luxury among the Upper City’s streets, the district’s residents perceive a wide spectrum of style and status. Wealth and taste as much as location serve to divide the Upper City into a variety of distinct neighborhoods.

**Citadel Streets.** The northern part of the Upper City is dominated by the Watch Citadel, where the Watch conducts training, maintains its barracks and stable, and keeps a few jail cells. Beyond the Citadel, this neighborhood includes many shops and the comparatively modest, though still grand, houses that belong to the few non-patriar residents of the Upper City.

**Manorborn.** The most palatial residences lie on the Upper City's west side. Most of the Parliament of Peers live here, as do the old, proud families who trace their lineages back to Balduran's day. Climbing gardens, fountained courtyards, and private orchards adorn many of these elegant homes.

**Temples.** Grand cathedrals and shrines shape the skyline in this central neighborhood, with Gond's High House of Wonders foremost among them. Priests in ceremonial finery and congregants dressed for the public eye are a common sight in this part of the city. Humbler petitioners are rare, though some come doggedly day after day, paying the tolls for hope each time.

**The Wide.** The primary market and largest civic space in Baldur's Gate is the Wide, where sellers set up their stalls and put out their wares each day at dawn. Street music and noisy performances are forbidden, and every night the sellers who are not Upper City residents must pack up and leave. Bustling by day, the Wide is desolate at night, except on holidays and when hosting grand celebrations.

## THE OLD WALL

The original wall built during Balduran's day, which encloses the Upper City and separates it from the Lower City, occupies an outsize place in the city's history and imagination. As the original relic of the city's first borders—and, more importantly for daily life, the physical embodiment of the division between patriars and ordinary citizens—the Old Wall is a symbol for much that Baldurians both admire and resent about their city.

Most of the Old Wall was rebuilt following revolts early in the city's history, then reinforced during every major period of tumult that troubled Baldur's Gate afterward. Each push for renewal saw a conflict between Gondan engineers advocating for new building techniques and materials, and patriars and preservationists striving to protect the original architecture. Meanwhile, smugglers and Guild agents bribed building crews,

### GREEN LIGHTS IN THE FOG

Baldur's Gate has a couple interesting features not mentioned elsewhere in this gazetteer.

**Fog.** One of the reasons why pirates find Gray Harbor attractive is the thick fog that shrouds the river, the docks, and most of the Lower City. The persistent fog makes it easy to conduct illicit business or commit a murder without anyone catching sight of the "interaction" through a spyglass. The fog sometimes creeps into the Upper City as well, but here it's much too thin to veil crimes.

**Green Lights.** In Baldur's Gate, lit lanterns fitted with panes of green glass are hung outside of permanent establishments to indicate that they're open for business. On foggy nights, these lanterns cast the city's lively taverns, brothels, dance halls, and festhalls in eerie green light.

altered blueprints, and otherwise put their fingers in the plans at every turn to steer reinforcement efforts away from their own secret passageways or induce builders to make new ones.

After centuries of such unreliable maintenance, the Old Wall stands proud and strong, but only outwardly so. In truth, the barrier is riddled with numerous secret holes through—or, more often, underneath—its stones. Knowledge of such secret passages' locations is jealously guarded, and the hidden ways are used only sparingly, for the risk of discovery is too great to use them routinely. Nevertheless, if the Old Wall were ever to be seriously tested, its defenders might find it far less impenetrable than it seems.

## PATRIAR MANORS

The great houses of the patriars are the wellspring of their pride and the center of high society. A manor stands as proof that the family held anchor in Baldur's Gate when the Old Wall was raised, and that its line has remained prosperous and unbroken since. Even on the rare occasion that a patriarchal manor changes hands entirely, the new owner generally goes to great lengths to prove—or fabricate—some connection, however tenuous, to the previous holder's line.

Most patriarchal manors are townhomes rather than free-standing mansions, for the Upper City has always been constrained by its walls, and even the wealthiest families are limited to narrow footprints. In general, patriarchal manors have only small courtyard gardens, and rely on vertical arrangements such as espaliered fruit trees, trellised roses and wisteria, and vines trained along the house's walls.

Because of the manors' storied pasts and small spaces, most manors are crowded with heirlooms and treasures accumulated across generations. Occasionally, however, a manor's grand facade hides destitution. Estates are expensive to maintain, and dynasties are prone to decline. Although no patriarch would ever openly admit to lacking money, quite a few are hunting marriages with wealthy outsiders who might bring an influx of capital and ambition to their moribund lines.

## UPPER CITY GAZETTEER

Despite its well-policed streets and decorous homes, the Upper City harbors secrets both marvelous and scandalous. Some of its most notable locales are described below in alphabetical order. These locations are also marked on the map of Baldur's Gate (pages 172–173).

### BORMUL HOUSE

Situated in the Manorborn neighborhood, Bormul House is an elegant three-story townhouse of yellow granite and slate with cream-colored roses climbing its garden walls. Last spring, a distant uncle came for a holiday visit, bringing a large load of baggage. The house servants acted strangely during his visit, though the Bormuls attributed this to a bout of shellfish poisoning that afflicted many households that spring. Days later, the uncle departed, leaving some of his curios behind. The Bormuls, lacking space to store these unwanted things

in the manor, moved them to the family crypt beneath the house. There they lie now, largely forgotten.

Not long after, shantytown residents in the Outer City began suffering brutal attacks by a silent murderer wearing an archaic, threadbare patriarch's cloak. Many have glimpsed this pale killer, but no one has ever been able to confront or follow the murderer to his lair, for he seems to melt into the city's fog after each slaying.

### DISTANT SHORES

Tendai and Khennen Shore (chaotic good human **commoners**) are a married couple that runs a successful business importing dried meats, spices, authentic cookware, and traditional recipes from Port Nyanzaru, where the rest of Tendai's family lives. Their pre-mixed assortments of ajwain, coriander, ginger, various curries, and colored salts have done much to bring Chultan delicacies to patriarch tables.

Despite their success, the Shores' business is straight forward and unpretentious, attracting attention from business prospectors interested in buying the couple out and expanding the business. The Shores have no interest in selling, despite numerous offers from patriarch families and anonymous buyers. As a result, in recent weeks Distant Shores has suffered vandalism and the owners have received threatening letters.

### EOMANE HOUSE

The four Eomane siblings are notorious throughout the Upper City for the scandalous masked revels hosted at their manor. Nysene Eomane, a lawful evil female human **noble**, likes to extend invitations to hopeful social climbers from other districts, intending to trap them at her parties. Lacking Watch tokens, Nysene's guests face a night in the Citadel's cells or worse if they're caught in the Upper City after dark. They therefore have little choice but to let her and her friends make cruel sport of them until they can escape at daybreak. As yet, none of Nysene's playthings have suffered any real harm, but her games grow ever bolder and more vicious, and it's only a matter of time until someone is seriously hurt.

While Nysene's siblings—Dolandre, Rusorra, and Trenteller—view this behavior as embarrassing and unworthy of her station, they also don't care enough to stop her, since the victims are social inferiors whose welfare isn't worth interrupting their own revels. It's also likely that her siblings are in denial about the true extent of their sister's sadism. Some of the city's evil faiths have begun to take notice of Nysene's games, however, with Bane's faith seeing a talent worth cultivating in Eomane House.

### HALL OF WONDERS

This large, stately building serves as a quasi-religious museum for the magnificent inventions wrought in Gond's name. Unlike the similarly named High House of Wonders, which serves as both temple and workshop housing working prototypes not yet ready for public view, the Hall of Wonders is meant to showcase Gond's perfected inspirations. It holds marvels ranging from lockboxes cleverly disguised as ordinary furniture to unparalleled wonders such as a steam-operated mechanical orchestra, a steam "dragon" powering a heavy

engine for moving immense weights, and elaborate orreries and nautical tools. Small cards posted beneath each display indicate the purpose of these curious tools and credit the inventors and lands of origin, where known.

Persistent rumors hold that a hidden treasure vault, guarded by clockwork monsters, lies beneath the Hall of Wonders. These tales are true: beneath the grand altar in the Hall of Wonders is a complex pressure-plate system that opens a secret passageway leading beneath the temple. One can follow this path to a series of saferooms secured by mechanical devices. Some saferooms hold treasures of the faith, while others are rented to wealthy individuals who wish to keep their prizes under the highest possible security.

### HARBREEZE BAKERY

Famous for its whimsically painted cinnamon cookies and sugarbread loaves, the Harbreeze Bakery is a cherished neighborhood institution. The shop makes good use of the vibrant commerce that runs through Baldur's Gate, showcasing rare spices in its wares and keeping a wide selection of exotic teas for its sophisticated clientele. It is a favorite place for patriarchs to gossip through the afternoon, and Ellyn Harbreeze, the plump redhead proprietor (a lawful neutral female human **spy**), knows about every significant development in her clients' social circles. Anyone seeking society gossip is well advised to begin at the Harbreeze Bakery.

### HELM AND CLOAK

The Helm and Cloak draws an unusual mixture of well-heeled but unpretentious patriarchs, traveling nobles, famed bards, and socially ambitious Lower City residents hoping to rub shoulders with the elite. The inn is unfussy, but conducts its service with flawless technique and the finest ingredients: it serves roast chicken rather than peacocks or partridges, and the fish never have that distinctive Gray Harbor film.

The establishment consists of two buildings joined as a single enterprise. The Helm is a rooming house with an entryway shadowed by an immense iron helm that supposedly belonged to a fire giant. The Cloak, slightly smaller, is signaled by the bright flutter of a Sunite cloak draped over its porch. Both buildings are decorated with adventuring trophies both exotic and mundane, including a bronze-horned marble unicorn bust in the Helm's common room. Its horn, which patrons often rub for good luck, is as shiny as the day it was made.

The Helm and Cloak has long attracted idealistic sons and daughters from patriarch families. For generations, these young romantics, taking the god Lurue as their inspiration, have called themselves the Knights of the Unicorn. Over time, what began as a light-hearted lark became a real force for good in the world, and several of the early knights achieved renown for their heroics. Today, the Knights of the Unicorn continue to call the Helm and Cloak their informal headquarters. The establishment is even run by two retired members, Vedren and Halesta (neutral good human **knight**s). The couple's presence shapes the inn's clientele significantly, and the unicorn bust in the Helm's common room honors their origins in this place.

## HIGH HALL

The High Hall is the center of almost all governmental activity in Baldur's Gate. The Parliament of Peers and the Council of Four meet here, and each of the four dukes has a sumptuous office and discreetly appointed meeting rooms. Criminal trials, tax counts, and professional guild meetings also take place in the High Hall.

Most criminal trials are presided over by a proxy judge appointed by one of the four dukes, and most are resolved as a simple administrative matter that proceeds from arraignment to sentencing within minutes. Unless an impartial witness or evidence of questionable circumstances is brought to the court's attention, the word of a Flaming Fist or Watch officer suffices to convict, and the judge has only to stamp a seal on the paperwork that the guards have already prepared. This results in a certain degree of corruption, naturally, which is compounded by the proxy judge's near-absolute discretion in deciding whether to accept a conviction or exonerate a suspect. Bribery and influence-peddling run rife through the courts, where honest judges are rare and widely feared.

In addition to hosting trials, the High Hall holds libraries containing all local laws and ordinances, summaries of judicial decisions and trial outcomes, deed records, guild charters, census tallies, and family genealogies for all the noble houses and sufficiently important commoners. The records go back to the city's founding, encompassing centuries of meticulously maintained documents. The libraries don't share a common index, and sorting through their overlapping and idiosyncratically organized holdings can be confusing, so most people opt to pay one of the resident librarians to locate what they need.

Finally, the ground floor of the High Hall's easternmost wing contains a museum to the history of Baldur's Gate and a mausoleum for its many dukes and heroes. Statues of ancient notables, including Balduran himself, loom over caskets containing their dusty bones—or, in Balduran's case, a glass casket containing all that lingers from the city's vanished founder: the age-cracked remnants of his cloak, longsword, shield, and favorite spyglass.

## HIGH HOUSE OF WONDERS

This vast workshop is the center of Gond's religion in Baldur's Gate. Every day, the anvils and worktables that fill the High House of Wonders ring with the clamor of hammer and saw. Under the scrutiny of the meticulous High Artificer Andar Beech, a neutral male human **priest**, inventors work alongside priests and acolytes beside masters of all disciplines. Because the creations in these workshops are largely experimental prototypes, they are not deemed fit for public view.

Gond's temple doesn't flourish in Baldur's Gate by simple happenstance. While there are certainly more industrious and academic cities along the Sword Coast, in few other places could Gond's faithful have access to more and rarer resources with less oversight. The city cares more about the clerics' innovations than the morality of those creations or how they came into being. Rumors claim that the High House of Wonders maintains a secret testing facility in or just outside the city.

Ostensibly, Gond's priests offer healing and other magical services to anyone willing to pay. However, priests often prove so caught up with their projects that they're reticent to attend to any but those with the most novel wounds and provocative ailments.

## HHUNE HOUSE

The power of the Hhunes waxes and wanes like the moon, but other patriarchal families maintain a healthy fear of them because the Hhunes have powerful connections up and down the Sword Coast that could make life difficult for would-be rivals.

The elderly widow Lutecia Hhune, a lawful evil female human **noble**, presides over this smallish manor. Lutecia has estranged siblings but no children, and faces the prospect of leaving her family home to a detested branch of the family when she dies. To prevent this, she has asked the librarians of the High Hall to search patriarchal genealogies for a more acceptable heir.

Lutecia's request was assigned to a Guild-connected librarian named Virmele, a lawful evil female human **spy** who is entertaining bribes from Lower City merchants and underworld figures to fabricate a link to the Hhune family. More than the patriarchal estate itself is at stake, for Lutecia's late husband was an avid map collector and antiquarian whose personal library holds many rarities from far-off lands. Should Lutecia be cheated out of finding a proper heir, it is likely that both her family's legacy and the secrets hidden in her late husband's collection will fall into unscrupulous hands. On the other hand, if Virmele's corruption were exposed, the Guild might be irritated at the loss of a profitable scheme.

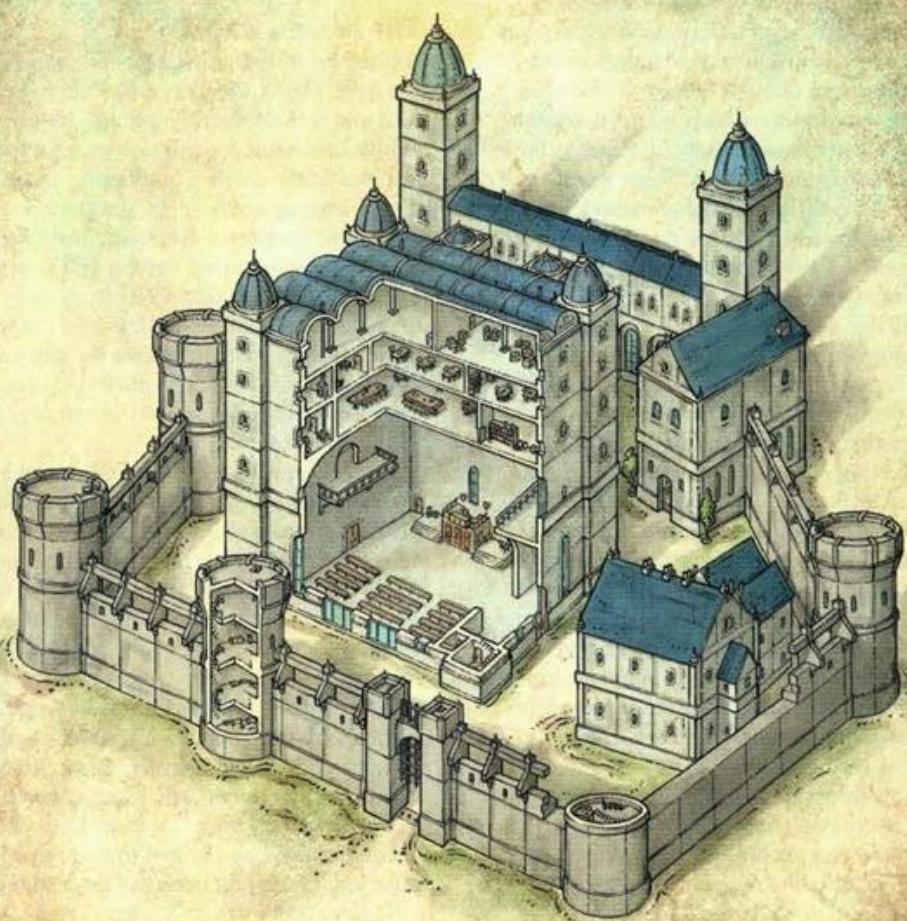
Lutecia's valet is Kaddrus, a **cambion** that takes the form of a strikingly handsome man half her age. Kaddrus was sent by powerful nobles in Tethyr to protect the Hhune family's secrets, which include a connection to the Knights of the Shield, a secret society tied to the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* (see page 225). This shield recently disappeared from the crypts under the Hhune estate, and Kaddrus is assisting efforts to get the shield back and punish those responsible for its theft. Lutecia is content to leave this task in his capable hands.

## LADY'S HALL

Tymora's temple in Baldur's Gate is made of local yellow granite, roofed with slate shingles, and inconspicuously blended into the surrounding architecture. Recently added to the structure are beautiful mosaics depicting souls prevailing against ill fortune at sea.

Other than holding formal religious observances—which most of Tymora's faithful only attend on major holidays—the primary purpose of the temple is to accept requests, and large donations, from petitioners seeking the temple's intercession. For countless reasons, Baldurians are reluctant to trust the Watch, the Flaming Fist, or the Guild. When they find it necessary to seek aid from an influential organization, such people often turn to Lady Luck for help. The Lady's Hall is there to hear their pleas, and to accept their offerings in exchange. While such intercession often takes the form of blessings, magical or otherwise, clergy moved by a tale of exceptional injustice might be swayed to petition

## The High Hall



the church elders to intercede. Such happens rarely, the church being unwilling to jeopardize its standing by pitting itself against every specific injustice laid at its doorstep. Yet, members of the clergy often anonymously reach out to the adventurers that congregate near their temple, sponsoring small acts of justice whenever they can.

### RAMAZITH'S TOWER

Six stories high and built of weathered red brick in a cylindrical, pagoda-style structure, Ramazith's Tower is considered a unique landmark by some and a regrettable eyesore by others. It was built nearly a century ago by the eccentric wizard Ramazith, a sailor from faraway Durpar who acquired a vast knowledge of the deeps—and equally vast wealth. Ramazith had not been known as either an exceptional mariner or an exceptional arcanist before he came into enough money to build his tower, and the source of his success remains a mystery.

Not long after the tower was completed, Ramazith died under suspicious circumstances. Some say he met his end after an ill-fated dalliance with a nymph, but rumors have always persisted that his death was linked to his unlikely ascent. One version holds that the nymph exacted revenge for some terrible crime Ramazith committed against her people to gain his power, while another rumor suggests his soul was itself the price of his bargain. Whatever the truth, Ramazith's tower stood empty for decades before it was acquired a few years ago by Lorroakan, a young and short-tempered mage known for having expensive tastes and a perpetual shortage of funds. Lorroakan hails from the city of Athkatla to the south, and local gossip holds that he's a disgraced Cowled Wizard who may even be a fugitive from the powerful House Selembrant in Amn.

Lorroakan, a neutral male human **mage**, makes his living by enchanting clothes to repel moisture and mildew, a practical but humble pursuit that suggests his mastery of magic is not extensive. This, in turn, might explain why he has not reopened the tower's upper floors, confining his own activities to the first and a small portion of the second floor.

Lorroakan's ever-pressing need for money has led the mage to begin looking for hired hands who might be willing to venture into the long-shuttered heights of Ramazith's tower and uncover the secret of the late wizard's wealth. That Ramazith's secret may have brought him to an untimely end, and that Lorroakan is himself no more skilled—and perhaps significantly less so—than the tower's previous master does not seem to concern him.

### RILLYN HOUSE

Though one of the most honorable patriarchal families in Baldur's Gate, the Rillyns fell into poverty a few generations ago. Only recently have they revived their fortunes, the credit for their newfound prosperity going squarely to Yvandre Rillyn, a neutral female human **veteran** who returned to Baldur's Gate after many years serving with the Flaming Fist and other mercenary companies—a career that began in rebellion against her stodgy family.

Realizing that her family needed a long term source of financial support, Yvandre opened a sword-wielding school in a guest house adjoining her family's estate. The Rillyn School is about to graduate its first class of students, all of whom have trained with Yvandre for at least five years and have won her approval with their skill. As Yvandre is a hard teacher, this is an impressive feat, and her students are justly proud. She hopes that they'll spread her name throughout the region and win acclaim for the school. In the meantime, she continues to enroll young students, keeping those with promise and weeding out the rest. Some of those who failed to make the cut, embittered by their perceived humiliation, nurse grudges against Yvandre and her house.

### THREE OLD KEGS

Named for its sign, three lashed-together barrels hanging from a pole, the Three Old Kegs is popular with current and retired members of the Flaming Fist. It serves simple and hearty meals, keeps a variety of good-quality but inexpensive wines and beers, and tolerates no rowdiness among its clientele. Rooms are available for both short- and long-term stays, and the Three Old Kegs offers laundry, mending, repair, and sharpening services to its guests. Its reasonable prices and welcoming atmosphere have led several retired Flaming Fist mercenaries to adopt the place as a full-time residence. These long-term regulars act as additional security, making the Three Old Kegs one of the safest places for visitors to stay in Baldur's Gate.

The proprietors, three wart-covered brothers in their late fifties known collectively as the "Three Old Toads," are named Alstan, Brunkhum, and Klalbrot Wintersides—all neutral good male human **commoners**. The Three Old Toads are known to be soft touches for a sob story. All the cooks and servers at the Three Old Kegs are Flaming Fist widows and orphans, and the tavern regularly hosts fundraisers for the families of those crippled or killed in service. However, the brothers' kindness is not matched by their discernment, and the Three Old Toads frequently fall victim to grifters. Several times, these con artists have stolen enough money to threaten the Three Old Kegs with bankruptcy, and the brothers have been forced to find outside help to recover their lost funds and keep the tavern solvent.

### THE UNDERCELLAR

Beneath the Wide is a maze of storage chambers, ale cellars, and cobwebbed tunnels known collectively as the Undercellar. Archways, many with iron-barred gates and rusty but functional locks, connect one cobbled chamber to the next. Some tunnels ascend to street-level buildings, while others open through grates and sewer covers to the streets themselves. At least two dozen ways into and out of the Undercellar exist, although only a few are widely known, and some are deliberately kept secret.

Most Baldurians know of the Undercellar as a seedy speakeasy and brothel. The Watch and the Flaming Fist never police the Undercellar, leaving it to a gang of masked toughs who call themselves the Cellarers to enforce order. This near-total absence of the law

makes the Undercellar a popular place of business for unsavory characters who would never risk being caught in the Upper City otherwise. Their "indulgence rooms" offer gambling, prostitution, exotic intoxicants, and pit fights between animals—such as giant sewer rats pitted against dog-sized spiders. Most ordinary citizens who venture into the Undercellar for a taste of danger keep to these areas.

However, those in search of more serious danger can generally find it. Several gray and black marketeers hold heavily reinforced, Guild-approved secure rooms in the Undercellar, from which they deal in weapons, illicit disguises, counterfeit Watch tokens, rare poisons, and other contraband. Access to these dealers requires Guild approval or significant bribes to the Cellarers.

In addition to harboring illicit businesses, the Undercellar is rumored to run throughout much of the Upper City. Its secret tunnels wind beneath numerous patriarchal manors, banks, businesses, and even the High Hall itself, connecting through false walls in wine cellars and basements throughout the district. Some of the walls are supposedly thin enough for an eavesdropper to overhear all manner of sensitive plans and scandalous liaisons.

A gaunt, bearded man named Heltur "Ribbons" Ribbond, a neutral evil male human **assassin**, rules the Undercellar with an oily, too-affable manner and a wide grin that only makes his scar-seamed face more menacing. Ribbons has never been seen to lose his temper, even when hurling knives and bottles with deadly accuracy at unruly guests. It's taken as an article of faith that he must be a kingpin or otherwise high-placed within the Guild.

#### UNROLLING SCROLL

Built of white marble, with an arched roof of vibrant red edged in gold leaf, the temple of Oghma stands out among the surrounding buildings. A wide reflecting pool rests in a deep basin under its roof, which is built with exceptional acoustics so that a speaker's words project clearly and effortlessly across the assembled audience. This has made the shrine a popular place for weddings, dedication ceremonies, and other oaths.

Legend holds that bards and artists who study their own reflections in the basin for half a day, opening their minds to Oghma's will as they do, behold a vision to inspire their next creation. The reflective period can be dawn to dusk, midnight to midday, or any other period. As the Unrolling Scroll stands in the Upper City, though, non-residents of the district are evicted after sundown.

#### VANTHAMPUR VILLA

Duke Vanthampur can't stand the rank gossip that hangs in the air of the Manorborn neighborhood. Thus, her estate lies in the Temples neighborhood of the Upper City, as far away from the other patriarchs as one can get while still being visible to them. For more information on this estate, see chapter 1.

#### WATCH CITADEL

The Upper City's guard force uses the Watch Citadel as training grounds, barracks, and organizational offices. A stable holds the Watch's warhorses, while a few jail cells

can host ordinary prisoners awaiting transport to trials in the High Hall or prison in the Seatower of Balduran.

High Constable and Master of Walls Osmurl Havanack, a lawful neutral male shield dwarf **veteran** with a deep loyalty to his constables and no taste for city politics, functions as the Watch Citadel's castellan. Havanack ensures that the Citadel is provisioned, that pay is correctly disbursed by the purse master, and that the Citadel and Old Wall are properly maintained. He also disciplines Watch soldiers accused of misdeeds—accusations that he takes very seriously and does his best to investigate. High Constable Havanack is known to have no tolerance for misconduct in his ranks, but he is only one person, and much escapes his notice.

From the Citadel, the Watch runs regular patrols through the Upper City and staffs the Old Wall, day and night. Many Watch officers are patriarchs themselves, hailing from families with a long and proud tradition of service to Baldur's Gate. As most live in the Upper City, members of the Watch are familiar with the city's patriarchs and possess a well-developed ability to spot pretenders. Many Watch members interact with citizens from the other districts only at the gates, and then usually under tense and stressful circumstances that foster jaundiced views.

Because few of its members have ever lived outside their privileged walls, the Watch tends to be blind to the day-to-day hardships of life outside the Upper City. Watch soldiers can be suspicious if not outright contemptuous of those whose lower-class mannerisms mark them as "of poor breeding." While most officers attempt to enforce a code of civility toward all Baldurians, a current of antipathy toward the poor runs deep through the Watch, though it more often manifests as condescension than outright hostility. Absent unusual circumstances, the Watch always gives the benefit of the doubt to a patriarch or Upper City resident, and never takes an Outer City denizen's word over anyone else's.

#### WATCHFUL SHIELD

Helm's shrine in Baldur's Gate consists of a small chapel flanked by wings at its door and a vigilant eye inscribed in silver above the lintel. The chapel's services are regularly attended by Watch members, Flaming Fist soldiers, bodyguards, and anyone else who feels the weight of responsibility to protect others.

When called upon by the Watch or the Flaming Fist, Helm's clergy aids in maintaining the city's walls and turning back those who would storm its gates. Although the God of Guardians and his faithful carry out their duties impartially and without concern for the city's politics, this role has nevertheless earned them considerable resentment in the Outer City.

Helm's clerics provide healing to any willing to make a donation in gold or arms. They uphold a long-standing tradition of waving this donation for those who suffer grievous wounds in the course of defending others. This leads to all manner of unlikely stories being told at the Watchful Shield's gates, explaining how roughed-up brawlers or Guild cutthroats actually suffered their wounds performing heroic acts.

## THE WIDE

By law, all commercial buying and selling not done in a licensed and taxed establishment must be conducted in the Wide, the city's most prominent civic space and public market. Every morning sees an influx of vendors setting up their stalls and taking deliveries from a small army of porters. Every sunset, vendors cart their unsold wares back out, or pay exorbitantly expensive warehouse storage fees.

In the hours between, the Wide hosts a vibrant, crowded market where fortune-tellers and con artists sit beside dealers hawking spices, fish, furs, perfumes, and every other luxury good to be found across the continent and beyond. Despite its crowds, the Wide is well regulated, the Watch keeping a sharp eye out for pickpockets. Street musicians are forbidden on pain of heavy fines and expulsion from the market, so the Wide proves more subdued than the chaotic markets of the Outer City. Quiet performers, such as puppeteers and sleight-of-hand tricksters, are common.

Jedren Hiller, the Bailiff of the Wide, is a lawful evil male human **bandit** who assigns stall placements to merchants each morning. Longtime regulars and merchants who reside in the Upper City get most of the prime placements, while those who are less established—or stingy with Hiller's expected bribes—get undesirable places in the less trafficked corners. The bailiff's corruption is legendary in Baldur's Gate, but few merchants see any alternative to greasing his palms, particularly as the profits from a good day's trade vastly outweigh the losses.

**Statue of Minsc and Boo.** For years the Wide hosted one of the city's most cherished landmarks: the Beloved Ranger, a statue of a powerful warrior in plate mail wearing a cheerful grin and cradling a hamster in his hands. Recently, though, the statue was revealed to be the Rashemi hero, Minsc, and his "miniature giant space hamster" companion, Boo, trapped under the effects of petrifying magic. When the magic was dispelled, it freed the heroes to walk the world once more but robbed the Wide of a bit of its charm. The merchants complained loudly, and a replacement statue of Minsc and Boo was promptly commissioned and set atop the pedestal where the actual heroes stood for years.

## LOWER CITY

A crescent of steeply sloping neighborhoods plays home to the common folk of Baldur's Gate. The Lower City is a chaotic tangle of conjoined, slate-roofed buildings, its narrow cobblestone thoroughfares spanned by bridges and buttresses designed to keep overflowing tenements from tumbling into the streets. As cramped and noisy as the Lower City can be during the day, bustling with business from a thousand shops, the district turns eerily quiet at night. Though lit by street lamps and traversed by hired lantern bearers, the darkened streets are far from safe, and those citizens not running taverns or other late-night establishments tend to lock their doors and bar their colorful window shutters as the river's dense fog rolls in.

Nearly everyone in the Lower City is engaged in some sort of trade. Crime of all sorts is rampant, from petty smuggling to outright robbery and murder. Though the city government tries to curtail this by paying the Flaming Fist to patrol the streets, the mercenaries sometimes seem more like an occupying army than a true police force, better suited to indiscriminate head-cracking than delicate investigation. As such, while most residents are happy to shout for the Fist when beset by obvious criminals, they also band together into local crews to better watch each other's backs and settle more subtle scores. In such an environment, laws are often treated as suggestions, and while most residents are just ordinary folks trying to get by, there's truth to the old adage that everyone in Baldur's Gate has a secret to keep.

## GATES

The three gates of the Lower City are ripe with logistical, historical, and metaphorical significance. Though tokens are not required to pass through the gates connecting with the Outer City, using any gate comes with a 5 cp entry toll and erratic investigation of cargo and suspicious individuals.

**Baldur's Gate.** The oldest and least impressive of the city's gates, Baldur's Gate nevertheless remains the city's heart. As the only gate allowing ordinary people through the Old Wall, Baldur's Gate embodies the power imbalance between rich Upper City patriars and Lower City commoners. Once the sole gate leading to the harbor, it's still the primary route by which the city's wealth flows from port to patriar.

**Basilisk Gate.** Piercing the city's eastern wall, this statue-lined gate connects the Lower City to the great Coast Way, stretching through the majority of the Outer City and then southeast toward Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan.

**Clifffgate.** This foggy minor gate grants access to the Tumbledown neighborhood and its graveyards. Many stories claim that Clifffgate is haunted by the spirits of former citizens seeking reentry to the city and passage back to their homes, but locals know that any mysterious disappearances are more likely the result of a quick mugging and a long fall to the river below.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

General wealth, predominant profession, and traditions divide the Lower City into several neighborhoods. These divisions foster stereotypes and rivalries between city residents, some comical, some age-old insults that can quickly turn violent.

**Bloomridge.** The wealthiest and most fashionable Lower City residents gravitate toward the commanding views of Bloomridge, where townhouses squeeze in among upscale boutiques and cafes, their rooftop gardens and tiled terraces creating explosions of cheerful color.

**Brampton.** The easternmost Lower City neighborhood, Brampton is notoriously poor, its location making it the worst for residents seeking to serve Upper City denizens—but the best for smuggling in untaxed goods from Rivington.



**Eastway.** Home to the Basilisk Gate, Eastway is the city's primary gateway to the Outer City and the world beyond, catering to travelers with its profusion of inns, porters, and caravan supplies, as well as to Outer City residents looking for reasonably priced Lower City luxuries. The flow of travelers and strangers through this neighborhood makes it one of the most dangerous parts of the city, as criminals prey on those unfamiliar with the city and without local ties to avenge them.

**Heapside.** A solidly middle-class neighborhood, Heapside has its share of shops but tends to be more residential, catering to the city's workforce with ancient but reasonably priced homes and only a moderate likelihood of being stabbed in the street.

**Seatower.** Everything in this neighborhood revolves around the Seatower of Balduran (see page 190). The best armorers and weaponsmiths in the city can be found here, along with residences for Fist mercenaries and their families. Dance halls, fighting dens, taverns, and other delights jockey for position near the fortress's causeway, hoping to be the first place a carousing mercenary stumbles into, and each Flaming Fist payday sees the neighborhood swell into the most boisterous corner of the city as soldiers celebrate with riotous good cheer and flagrant street brawls.

**The Steeps.** As the most direct route from the harbor to the Upper City via Baldur's Gate, the Steeps has a natural advantage in securing business from wealthy travelers, and many of the city's most successful merchants maintain lucrative storefronts along its

dramatically steep thoroughfares. This also makes it the Lower City neighborhood most likely to be visited by patriars, and thus the Steeps sees more than its fair share of patrols by the Flaming Fist.

## CREW TERRITORIES

The fact that city's numerous crews can be based on both geographical and professional communities means that their territories often overlap or stretch beyond the borders of any particular neighborhood. The Harborhands, for instance, can be found across the Lower City wherever a neighborhood touches the water, but would rarely try to flex its claim outside of the actual docks and piers. More common is the situation of groups like the Greengrocers' Guild or the Brethren of Barbers, who operate out of all corners of the city and therefore claim no physical territory at all, banding together only in the interests of their trade. For many such crews, there's often no need for a formal meeting place—they meet whenever and wherever necessary, in shop stockrooms or around kitchen tables, and have little interest in banners and sigils.

Still, there's no denying that certain crews dominate certain corners of the city. Sometimes this is the result of a community forming its own crew in a direct attempt to control and protect its neighborhood. Such is the case with the Bloomridge Dandies, wealthy merchant scions who loudly proclaim that the Flaming Fist isn't doing enough to protect their neighborhood, and who relish the opportunity to display their bravery by patrolling

## LOWER CITY RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Encounter
1–6	No encounter
7–10	Harmless interaction (roll on table D)
11–16	Denizens (roll on table E)
17–20	Threat (roll on table F)

## TABLE D: LOWER CITY HARMLESS INTERACTIONS

d12	Interaction
1	A band of crew members with purple armbands and fabulous eye makeup—the Bloomridge Dandies—stop the party to tell the characters they're watching them and to keep their noses clean.
2	A reporter from Baldur's Mouth waves the party over, hoping they'll help her get information for a story about some outrageous conspiracy.
3	A man offers to sell the party a glass eye. Later, a drunk stumbles away from the Blushing Mermaid tavern, searching every gutter for his missing eye.
4	An undertaker from Candulhallow's Arrangements approaches and asks if the party has considered undeath insurance, ominously warning about liabilities should their corpses commit post-death damages.
5	Scalm Shilvin of Eastway Expeditions mocks a party member's armor. She offers to apply "raptor repellent" at the discounted price of 10 gp.
6	A man with a dreadful fear of rats races down the street and slams into the party, having witnessed a bunch of rats feeding on a corpse in an alley.
7	The druid Torimesh offers one party member a strange symbol stained on a piece of bark. He tells the party that the Drawing Tree in Insight Park sent it as a message.
8	The city's sketchiest tea enthusiast invites the party into Jopalín's for a free cup of the café's special blend.
9	A rough-and-tumble woman gets chummy with the party and tells characters that Laraelra Thundreth is hiring bouncers at the Low Lantern.
10	A winding crack in the street shrieks when a specific party member steps on it. The crack runs for blocks, tracing back to Mandorci's Mansion.
11	Two drunk sailors invite the characters to join them in singing a well-known shanty called <i>Really Big Oysters</i> , but quickly forget the words and stumble away.
12	A reeking, damp "druid" flees from the direction of the Sewer Keep. If stopped, the panicked man claims "Something hatched in the yuck!"

neighborhood taverns wearing expensive swords and purple armbands. More often, physical territory is the result of a citywide crew having a natural local nexus, such as the Porters' Union and the Butchers' Block tending to dominate Eastway, as their members congregate near the Basilisk Gate for easy access to the stockyards and incoming caravans.

## TABLE E: LOWER CITY DENIZENS

d10	Denizens
1	2d6 gang members or pirates (both <b>thugs</b> )
2	1d4 + 1 crass merchants ( <b>commoners</b> )
3	1d6 <b>kenku</b> minding their own business
4	3d6 angry crew members ( <b>commoners</b> ) protesting the Flaming Fist's brutality
5	2d4 Flaming Fist soldiers ( <b>veterans</b> ) on patrol
6	1d4 Guild pickpockets ( <b>spies</b> )
7	1d8 beggars ( <b>commoners</b> )
8	1 Baldur's Mouth reporter ( <b>commoner</b> )
9	1d4 patriarchs ( <b>nobles</b> ) and 3d6 bodyguards ( <b>thugs</b> )
10	1 Guild kingpin ( <b>bandit captain</b> ) and 2d6 operatives ( <b>bandits</b> )

## TABLE F: LOWER CITY THREATS

d10	Threat
1	1d4 <b>swarms of rats</b>
2	1d4 <b>invisible imps</b>
3	Dead Three abduction squad (see the "More Dead Three Encounters" sidebar on page 28)
4	Dead Three murder squad (see the "More Dead Three Encounters" sidebar on page 28)
5	Press gang of 1d4 + 1 <b>half-ogres</b>
6	1d6 Guild operatives ( <b>spies</b> )
7	2d4 street brawlers ( <b>thugs</b> )
8	1d6 Flaming Fist mercenaries ( <b>veterans</b> ) who don't like the look of adventurers
9	1 <b>ghost</b> from Harborside Hospital
10	1d4 <b>mimics</b> posing as cargo

Unless there's active conflict between two crews, most members are content to work with members of other crews, and see little point in staking out physical turf. After all, a neighborhood needs many different professions to thrive—carpenters and cooks, grocers and apothecaries—and the fact that siblings and spouses often belong to different crews helps keep inter-crew conflict to a minimum.

## LOWER CITY GAZETTEER

Presented below in alphabetical order are some of the most noteworthy Lower City locations. These locations are also marked on the city map (pages 172–173).

### BALDUR'S MOUTH

Patronized by all levels of society, Baldur's Mouth is the city's primary news service and gossip rag. Utilizing a small army of lantern bearers, the Mouth spreads news both by selling broadsheets on street corners and by shouting summaries of top stories at passersby. From the slums of the Outer City to the finest manor house sitting rooms, the Mouth is where Baldurians go to be informed, incited, and pleasantly scandalized. While some of the news—such as word of new laws passed by the Council of Four or official election results—is handed down directly by the government, most comes from freelance journalists, and official pronouncements often

sit side by side with scathing editorials or unflattering political cartoons of those same officials.

Ettvard Needle, a chaotic good male human **commoner**, runs the operation from a surprisingly modest converted warehouse in Heapside. The son of an established Lower City tailor, he had always rankled at the way Lower City residents were treated by haughty patriars, and started Baldur's Mouth as a way to empower the city's poor via what he saw as the greatest weapon of social change: information. In the beginning, he simply paid local lantern bearers to shout his stories of upper-crust injustices, but as enthusiasm for the practice built and more people began bringing him information, he began writing the stories down for his distributors—teaching many of them to read in the process—and then selling the notes directly. Today, Needle prints his broadsheets by the cartload, aided by mechanical scribes purchased from the Hall of Wonders and funded by advertisements from merchants across the city.

Though beholden to advertisers and tacitly sanctioned by the city government, the Mouth has never lost its populist bent. Needle carefully ensures that the paper is useful enough to the government that it's never in their interest to shut it down, yet devotes the rest of the paper to news the government might prefer hushed up, from aristocratic scandal and evidence of corruption to straight talk about various threats to the city, always with a healthy dose of anti-elite rhetoric. His editorials have a particular soft spot for his friend Rilsa Rael, the Guild kingpin of Little Calimshan. While Needle loathes the Guild, he sees in Rilsa's egalitarian tendencies the potential for a hero of the people, and naively hopes she'll transform the Guild from a predatory criminal organization into a community police force serving the city's downtrodden.

Baldur's Mouth is a prime source of opportunity for adventurers in the city, as Needle is always looking to hire daring "investigative reporters" willing to investigate rumors of strange happenings or procure proof of corruption by the city's elite. Even just reading the broadsheet can present adventure opportunities via advertisements recruiting mercenaries, half-substantiated reports of monster attacks ignored by the Flaming Fist, and more. And of course, should adventurers succeed or fail in some high-profile venture, they might just find caricatures of themselves and stories of their exploits in the Mouth's latest edition.

#### BLADE AND STARS

This comfortable inn was named for its original sign, an enchanted wooden shield. Painted black, the circular shield displayed an image of a curved silver saber gripped by a pale, slender arm. An enchantment on the shield caused glimmering, starlike motes of light to sparkle along the saber's blade. The former innkeeper of the Blade and Stars, a chaotic neutral half-orc **bandit** named Aurayaun, used to insist that the illusory effect was the shield's only magic, and that it did exactly what she intended it to do: draw in business.

Still, it appears that there's more to the shield's story, for recently both Aurayaun and the shield disappeared. Since then, Aurayaun's worried wife Lupin, a chaotic

good female human **commoner**, has been running the inn and loudly expressing her belief that the disappearance is the result of foul play. What kind of foul play, she has no idea.

While Aurayaun was quiet about her past, she had no enemies that Lupin knew about. Lupin furiously rejects the Flaming Fist's conclusion that her wife simply abandoned her. A local vagrant claims to have seen Aurayaun climb up and remove the sign-shield late on the night she went missing, then vanish into an alley with a cloaked figure. Since then, though, Lupin has received parcels containing pieces of the shattered shield, each bearing a tiny constellation upon it. Lupin is convinced it's a map, but to where, and whether that destination is terrestrial or the heavens she doesn't know. She's willing to pay to find out, though.

#### BLUSHING MERMAID

Infamous up and down the Sword Coast, the Blushing Mermaid is known as the best tavern and inn in Baldur's Gate for those looking to get their teeth kicked in, or to kick in someone else's. Always one spilled drink away from a brawl, the bar is the sort of place most don't visit unless they're well-armed or with a lot of friends—preferably both. The place takes its name from the life-sized wooden mermaid hanging above the incongruous reception desk, a dozen blackened and withered hands nailed to its body—souvenirs left by those who refused to pay their bill.

Beyond the combination lobby and common room, the Blushing Mermaid is a confusing maze of wings and oddly interconnected floors, hiding dozens of small and shabby rooms and at least four levels of cellars. Few people bother to sleep at the Mermaid, due in part to its operators' loud pronouncement that they aren't responsible for any losses, including those of life and limb. Instead, its plethora of back rooms and antechambers act as de facto offices for the menagerie of shady characters who spend their days drinking here. Ostensibly retired sailors, the bar's regulars are in fact contacts for a variety of unsavory organizations, from smugglers and bandits to fences, drug dealers, and panderers. Some work for the Guild, others for operations all along the Sword Coast. Those looking to do business with the Gate's underworld find that a handful of silver in the Mermaid can open doors, but the wrong word can find you dumped unconscious in the alley out back. While the Mermaid's criminal aspects are an open secret, the place is well connected enough that the Flaming Fist traditionally leaves it alone.

#### CANDULHALLOW'S FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

For as long as anyone can remember, the moon elves of the Candulhallow family have managed the city's small fleet of corpse carts. Though family members rarely push carts themselves anymore, their terse agents are a constant sight around the city, picking up the dead and using hand-drawn wagons to haul their shrouded loads to the Shrine of the Suffering or outlying cemeteries, funded by city stipends and tips from grieving loved ones.

In secret, the Candulhallows have grown quietly rich off a variety of death-related scams. Chief among these is a secret smuggling arrangement with Nine-Fingers Keene to conceal contraband in corpses' funeral wrappings, which the guards and toll collectors never check. Even less savory is the harvesting and sale of corpses or their parts for the city's cultists and necromancers. Chief among these latter customers is the family matriarch, Leylenna Candulhallow, a neutral evil female moon elf **mage** who takes the choicest and rarest of the deceased for her experiments, replacing them with pauper's corpses and weighted coffins. Should any of the family's misdealing come to light, it would doubtlessly shock the city to the core and potentially force Leylenna to reveal the elaborate necromantic masterpiece—an evolution of both art and life—that she's been slowly patching together for months in her basement.

#### COUNTING HOUSE

This thick-walled fortress of commerce has been a center of trade in Baldur's Gate for centuries, acting as the primary location for banking and currency exchange.

As much a bunker as a bank, the Counting House squats on the waterfront, its two windowless upper stories heavily guarded. Most ordinary patrons never make it past the ground-level offices, yet the majority of the Counting House stretches below, extending down into the mud like a cylindrical stone taproot. Here are the building's legendary vaults, where the city's patriarchs and merchants from across the world store items too valuable to be trusted to lesser security. Only the most vetted of humanoid guards are allowed in the Counting House's depths. Instead, **stone golems** patrol the twisting lower corridors, while **water elementals** circle the outside in flooded channels, keeping thieves from tunneling into the magically warded vaults.

A lawful evil gold dwarf named Rakath Glitterbeard (**bandit captain**) acts as the bank's proprietor and key treasurer of the city's banking crew, the Honorable Order of Moneylenders. More importantly, he's also the Guild kingpin for the Steeps, controlling the lesser loan sharks and knee-cappers who cater to the city's more desperate credit risks, along with its outright thieves. Stolen treasures from innumerable heists reside in the Counting House's vaults alongside legitimate deposits, protected by the bank's walls and Rakath's web of political influence and predatory loans. Between the dwarf's sinister reputation and the bank's legendary security, few thieves would even contemplate trying to crack the Counting House—but anyone who succeeded would likely be set for life.

#### EASTWAY EXPEDITIONS

Eastway Expeditions used to buy dubious exploration and dungeon-delving gear on the cheap—often from hollow-eyed early retirees—before marking it up to sell to optimistic would-be heroes. Scalm Shilvin, a neutral female tiefling **spy**, is the shop's slick, tail-coat-wearing tiefling proprietor. She made a decent living from her business, but all that changed when Baldur's Gate forged a lucrative trade alliance with the merchant princes of Port Nyanzaru in Chult.

Shilvin quickly capitalized on the growing interest in Chult, outfitting droves of green adventurers and directing them aboard ships headed south. Most never returned—leaving her uncertain of whether any of her “jungle-proof” or “dinosaur-deterring” equipment worked as she'd marketed. Eventually the local government got involved after several overly ambitious patriarchs vanished on ventures hastily outfitted by Eastway Expeditions. Now Shilvin can sell her modest selection of goods and any jungle-related gear only after a ten-day waiting period, helping to ensure that fewer citizens rush off to Chult unprepared. To make up for the resulting loss of business, Shilvin has made connections with several trading (and piratical) ventures in regular need of crew. Eastway Expeditions has since gained a lowkey reputation for helping people get out of the city fast, so long as they don't care overly much where they go.

#### ELFSONG TAVERN

Despite its rough-and-tumble clientele, this tavern is one of the most popular in Baldur's Gate. At infrequent and seemingly random intervals, a disembodied elven voice cuts through the crowd, its song haunting enough to magically dim the room's lanterns and make even the bar's most hardened customers weep.

For more information about this establishment, see chapter 1.

#### FEOGYR'S FIREWORKS

This four-story stone structure constantly streams smoke of unusual colors from various vents and chimneys. From the elaborate showroom spanning the bottom two floors, alchemist Avery Sonshal (neutral male human **mage**) maintains his family's longstanding monopoly on *smokepowder* production in Baldur's Gate.

While *smokepowder* is reserved for the Council of Four and Gond's High House of Wonders, the shop sells a variety of lesser alchemical items to the public, from torches with colored flames to smoke grenades and fireworks, some of them enhanced with harmless illusions. While the windowless workshop filling the building's upper two stories is strictly off-limits, its stairwell blocked by a massive iron vault door and a **thug** hired from the Bannerless Legion, the mutton-chopped Avery is usually happy to chat with customers and other alchemical enthusiasts on the lower floors.

At the moment, however, Avery is visibly troubled. Recently, someone managed to break into the upper workshop while he was sleeping and steal four kegs of *smokepowder*. In their place, he found a drawing of a phoenix. Avery is terrified of what the thieves might do with the powder—he's all too aware that someone with that much *smokepowder* could blow up a portion of the High Hall, Wyrm's Rock, or any number of other fortifications. Yet as horrifying as he finds those possibilities, he seems more concerned about himself: *smokepowder* security is his responsibility, and he can't tell the city government about the theft without getting punished for negligence. Yet if he keeps quiet and the thieves use the powder, he'll obviously be implicated. The only solution is to hire someone discreet and trustworthy to track

down and recover the missing kegs of *smokepowder* before it's too late.

If *smokepowder* is set on fire, dropped, or otherwise handled roughly, it explodes and deals fire damage to each creature or object within 20 feet of it: 1d6 for a handful, 9d6 for a keg. A successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage. Casting *dispel magic* on *smokepowder* renders it permanently inert.

### GARMULT'S HOUSE OF MASTERY

Part school and part alehouse, this wide three-story building leans precariously over the street in Eastway. Run by an old, agender martial artist named Garmult (neutral good human **gladiator**), the House of Mastery offers both martial training of all sorts for the city's would-be warriors and a central hangout for the Bannerless Legion crew. Garmult assists crew leader Dezri "Guts" Lamouer in matching clients with mercenaries. They also hire members to teach classes in the building's open-air atrium while other members lounge on the overlooking balconies. At any given time, there's usually multiple veteran mercenaries here swapping stories and waiting for contracts.

While anyone can pay Garmult to study in the House of Mastery, only those who've earned membership in the Bannerless Legion are welcome to socialize and find work here. Those who come around looking for such things are challenged to a friendly sparring match in the atrium, usually with Garmult. If they impress Garmult, they're welcomed with a laugh and a firm handshake, at which point Garmult is happy to hook the new members up with bodyguarding contracts and other work, taking only a nominal finder's fee. Though not everyone in the Legion is as welcoming of new members, Garmult allows only consensual, nonlethal sparring within their establishment. Few members challenge Garmult's authority for risk of missing out on future contracts.

### HARBORSIDE HOSPITAL

Generations ago, an outbreak of extremely contagious dancing croup—a deadly plague that caused those afflicted to cough themselves to death even as their limbs thrashed uncontrollably—caused many Baldurians to rethink their approach to medicine. Requiring individual victims to seek out healing from their respective clerics accelerated the disease's spread as the infected traveled to different houses of worship throughout the city, overwhelming the facilities at each. In the aftermath, the Lower City decided to consolidate. While patriarchs might still be able to afford house calls and personal priests and physicians, commoners funded the building of a single large facility where everyone could come for treatment. Eager to no longer have every worship service interrupted by contagious congregants, several of the city's temples were only too happy to provide clerics to work in the facility. Of course, coin still determines one's quality of care, the clerics rarely work for free, and those without sufficient funds generally end up in the ominously stained basement with the surgeons-in-training—but at least those in need know where they can go for help. Chronically understaffed, especially in those wards catering to poor Outer City residents, the hospital

has constant security problems, from angry patients to spontaneously arising undead, unethical or experimental treatments by priests of non-good faiths, or excessive withdrawals from the stores of painkilling narcotics.

It perhaps says something about Baldur's Gate that city officials decided to build the hospital right next to Cliffgate, convenient to the graveyard and as far as possible from the wealthy neighborhoods.

### HISSING STONES

This low stone bathhouse in the Seatower neighborhood is one of the oldest buildings in the area. Built in the Chessian style, it features heated pools, echoing halls, and gorgeous tile mosaics.

The Hissing Stones hold a special niche in Baldurian politics due to its status as a neutral, safe, and private meeting place. Its longtime proprietor, a neutral female moon elf **spy** named Merilyn Allaryr, ensures that clients enter the baths bearing nothing but the thin robes she provides, leaving all weapons and other possessions with her. Merilyn's reputation, and that of her highly capable attendants, is formidable enough that even rival crews or businesses engaged in the tensest of negotiations never violate the house's rule against violence.

This establishment's commitment to discretion also makes the bathhouse the prime venue for paid companionship in the Lower City. Many of the most sought-after courtesans meet their patrons in the Hissing Stones' steamy private rooms, trusting to Merilyn's silence and the house's reputation for business meetings to deflect the suspicion of jealous spouses or gossipy wags. Unlike Merilyn, the Reveler's Union—the city-spanning crew of night-workers—isn't averse to selling secrets teased from the bathhouse's clients, and those looking to purchase such information need only whisper in the right ear here. Though this dichotomy keeps Merilyn herself from officially joining the Union, the crew uses the location as its de facto headquarters, regularly renting out and conducting meetings in its vast central pool.

### INSIGHT PARK

Forty years ago, an lawful neutral shield dwarf **druid** named Torimesh arrived home in the city after decades of adventuring abroad and purchased this small portion of the hillside. Too steep to build on, the area had long been an illegal junkyard, with locals standing atop a rocky promontory and dumping their refuse over the edge of the embankment. Instead of clearing the debris away, Torimesh used magic to nurture the local plants, causing a forest of green to grow up over the garbage, rusting away debris and creating soft lawns and thickets shot through with small recesses and tunnels where the old refuse had piled high. This revamped space he dedicated as a public park, arguing that the poor need to feel nature's touch just as much as rich patriarchs with their manicured gardens. Torimesh himself lives in a tiny hut backed against the jutting outcropping still known as Dumper's Rock.

The main appeal of Insight Park is the Drawing Tree. Planted by Torimesh and grown to full-size in a matter of days, the tree is of a species no one can identify, and Torimesh steadfastly refuses to say anything about its

origins, yet everyone knows its power. When properly entreated by Torimesh, the tree's red bark cracks and curls like parchment. Pulling it carefully away reveals a prophetic scene rendered in bloody sap. These arboreal visions of the future are often cryptic, yet inevitably come to pass. As much as the city's elite would love to harness this power, anyone else attempting to peel the tree's bark or force a prophecy reveals only bark and sends Torimesh into a near-murderous rage. For his part, the druid refuses to work for money, peeling off prophecies only according to the unspoken whims of the tree, or in exchange for bizarre and dangerous favors.

### JOPALIN'S

After taking over from his father, a neutral evil male half-elf **thug** named Jopalin transitioned this building from a seedy dockside tavern to a thriving, upscale teahouse. Many were shocked by the growth of such a sophisticated establishment among the port's lowbrow customers, but no one can deny the addictive nature of the half-elf proprietor's special blend. Jopalin includes sable moonflower leaves in his tea, creating a subtle, slow-building addiction among those who drink it. Many never realize what's happening, knowing only that they deeply crave his tea above all others, and for those who do uncover the scam, it's often too late, leaving them with no choice but to keep coming back. Jopalin personally watches over the customers and ensures that only those who seem vulnerable get the "special" tea, avoiding suspicion from any who might decide to fight back if the truth were to come out.

Jopalin also runs a more traditionally squalid moonflower den in the shop's damp basement, catering to ordinary addicts and those who've become so reliant on the tea that they can no longer pass as normal customers. These sad cases are shuffled in through an entrance in the building next door to avoid suspicion, where a group of thugs presides over several dozen filthy cots, collecting Jopalin's fees and dispensing his moonflower supply. The paranoid Jopalin himself lives in a lavish and heavily booby-trapped loft above the café.

### LOW LANTERN

This old, three-masted ship rocks gently in the water alongside Stormshore Street Dock on the harbor's eastern side. A notorious festhall and tavern, the ship is no longer seaworthy and is in desperate need of repair.

On warm days and evenings, respectable clients can sit at tables on the upper deck beneath hanging lanterns, smoking and drinking between wagers, while a more raucous crowd congregates around bars and gambling tables on the decks below.

For more information about this establishment, see chapter 1.

### MANDORCAI'S MANSION

The only blight in otherwise upscale Bloomridge, this mansion appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the night, taking over a previously vacant lot. Fully staffed with close-lipped servants, the imposing manse hosted a few lavish parties for the Lower City elite, presided over by an eccentric and brooding human wizard named Mandorcai. And then, just as suddenly as he had

arrived, Mandorcai shut the manor's doors and vanished from public life. Curious locals who peered through the windows reported a completely empty manor, its furniture looking as though it hadn't been touched in years. Yet soon thereafter, individuals around the city began to receive invitations to visit, written in silver on black paper folded into pentagons.

Those who entered the mansion for the requested appointments never emerged. After a handful of such disappearances, a Flaming Fist squad smashed its way into the building. Only two of its members emerged, babbling about shifting rooms and blood-soaked abattoirs filled with writhing hooks and chains. With no laborers willing to tear the place down, the Council of Four boarded up the doors but left the mansion standing. For decades now, no one has been observed going in or out. Whether the little black invitations that still occasionally appear on citizens' doorsteps are genuine or harmless pranks remains anyone's guess.

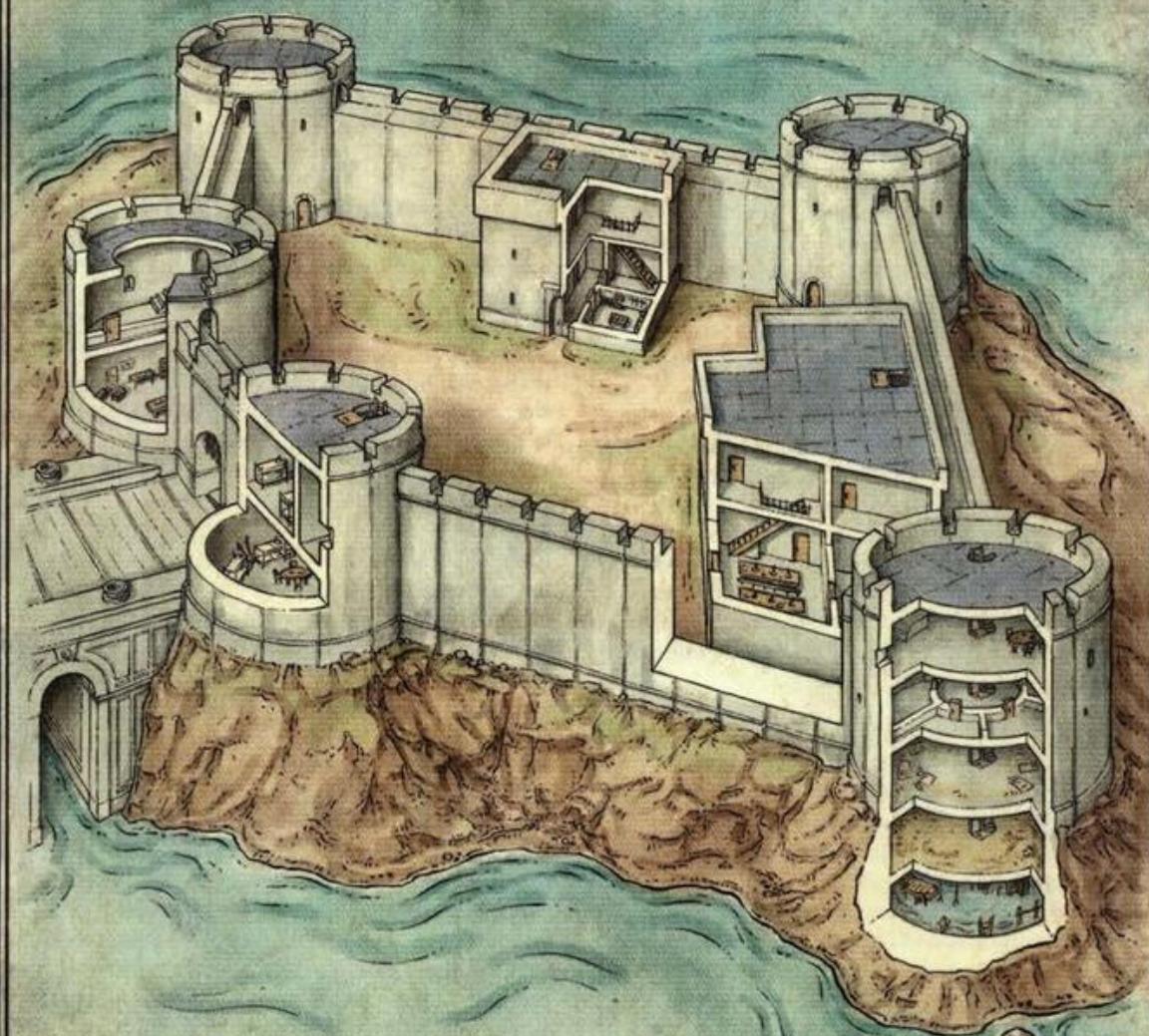
In truth, Mandorcai gained occult knowledge and his magical manor in a bargain with the obese twin **chain devils** Kyrix and Valisog. For years Mandorcai upheld his side of the contract by bringing the fiends mortal sacrifices, until an accidental breach of contract let the devils haul him screaming into the Nine Hells. Since then, the mansion's hungry traps and shape-changing powers have lain dormant. Recently, however, a group of **cultists** have broken into the house, seeking to harness its fell powers. Though they haven't yet figured out how to commune with the chain devils yet, when they do, it'll likely be without the safeguards Mandorcai managed to negotiate, potentially resulting in fiendish disaster for the whole neighborhood.

### SEATOWER OF BALDURAN

The headquarters of the Flaming Fist stands on a rocky islet in the harbor, its sheer walls erupting from the stone in such a way as to grant invaders from the sea few footholds. From the fortress's five stout towers, specially made Gondan trebuchets stand ready to hurl stones three times the distance of an ordinary siege weapon, giving the fortress command of not just the entire harbor but the opposite bank of the river as well. Any invading ships not intimidated by such death from above would also have to contend with the massive chain running from the Seatower to pilings under the easternmost wharf in Brampton. A capstan in the tower can raise the chain, stretching it across the harbor mouth and keeping anything larger than a rowboat from entering or leaving. As for land-based attacks, the 400-foot-long causeway connecting the Seatower's islet to the shore needs no gates or drawbridges, as any attackers foolish enough to charge along its length would be easy marks for the wall's archers.

Roughly a hundred Flaming Fist soldiers occupy the fortress at any given time, along with the residents of the Officers' Tower. In the central bailey, the organization's vast armory holds every weapon a mercenary company could need, along with trophies from campaigns abroad, a priceless library of war-related texts, and more. Rumors also speak of the Fist's treasury, kept in a lead-lined vault somewhere beneath the Officers' Tower

## The Seatower of Balduran



and surrounded by yards of solid stone, the secret doors leading to its vaults hidden by clever mechanisms and cleverer magic.

In addition to defending the city, the Seatower also serves as the local prison of Baldur's Gate. Three levels of dungeons extend beneath it, the lower two below sea level and integrating part of a naturally occurring cavern system. This both keeps the prison secure and pacifies prisoners, as any who act out know that they can always be moved from the dry cells to the dank lower levels. Particularly problematic inmates end up in the Swimming Hole—a flooded and lightless shaft where prisoners must constantly tread water or risk drowning, while also fending off the blind, biting shrimp that dwell there. Though long-term incarceration is rare in the city, there are always a few inmates rotting in these cells, ranging from petty criminals to political prisoners locked away on trumped-up charges.

Characters who run seriously afoul of the law in Baldur's Gate might wind up in the Seatower. While the Fist treats the prison as something of an afterthought, any trying to break in or out of the dungeons still have their work cut out for them. Only the upper cells have windows, and anyone trying to break through the walls of the lower cells risks catastrophic flooding. Sentries are constantly on alert for ships drawing suspiciously near the island, and no one is allowed through the fortress's gate without a reason and an escort. Cells themselves have heavy steel doors with high-quality locks, with the keys held by Jailer Albrecht Little, a lawful neutral male human **gladiator**, or his second, Jailer Cogrus Stonehammer, a lawful neutral female shield dwarf **knight**. Soldiers are often assigned to "cell duty" as a temporary punishment—while this generally means rougher treatment for prisoners, the regular turnover might present a sliver of opportunity for anyone attempting a rescue.

#### SESKERGATES

Once home to the Sesker merchant family, this tall, gaudy mansion was abandoned after the last member of the family died in it under mysterious circumstances several years ago. Shortly thereafter, a neutral evil human **mage** from Athkatla named Imbralym Skoond bought the place to use as his home and magical workshop, drawn there by stories of the structure's original builder, a smuggler who turned the place into a warren of secret passages, hidden rooms, false walls, and concealed entrances, most of which have now been forgotten.

Ambitious and thoroughly amoral, Skoond rose to prominence as the Council of Four's wizard, doing regular favors for the council to further his own plots. Though rarely home, he boards four alchemist lackeys in the building, along with several guards, using the secret passages to cover their comings and goings. Their only job is to uncover and map out as many of the building's secrets as possible—one of the histories Skoond read suggested that the building's original architect had died while smuggling a rare magical tome, leading him to suspect that it still lies hidden in the house's walls.

Unfortunately, Skoond's apprentices aren't the only ones searching. Drawn up through hidden tunnels by the magical auras of both the Tome and neighboring Mandorci's Mansion, a **nothic** lurks in the house's passages, using them to spy on the wizards and search for the treasure. So far, none of the residents have detected it—the last person to do so was the previous owner, killed by the nothic's rotting gaze. Though evil and unwilling to cede claim to the Tome—which it hasn't yet located—the nothic is full of secrets from both its spying and its weird oracular abilities, and might be willing to sell them for the right price.

#### SEWER KEEP

Like many port cities, Baldur's Gate has traditionally dumped its sewage downstream and let the river carry its problems elsewhere. As the city grew, however, this began to dangerously pollute the river, leading a coalition of druids and patriars to construct the Sewer Keep.

A series of three towers built into the walls at the western end of the Seatower neighborhood, the facility was intended to treat the sewage just before it enters the river, using vast enclosed holding tanks of magically augmented plants to purify the effluent. Though the facility was a marvel of magical ecological engineering, the public proved singularly unwilling to care about their waste, and funding quickly collapsed. Since then, the Keep has been a shadow of its intended glory, struggling to keep the worst of Baldur's Gate from the waterway.

Today, the facility still operates, but mostly as a headquarters and cover for the Sewerkeepers crew. Most of the "druids" and technicians running the plant are anything but—instead, they're a specialized thieving crew that uses the keep's position to pass unseen through the city's network of sewer pipes and cisterns. From this warren of tunnels, they can smuggle goods and conduct daring burglaries, as well as occasionally acting as subterranean monster-hunters and paid guides through the city's guts.

The Sewerkeepers' leader, Genamine Kopali (neutral evil female human **assassin**), also acts as the Guild kingpin for the Seatower neighborhood. Along with a spectrum of ne'er-do-wells, her crew also contains several actual **druids** who keep the facility running and control the crew's several guardian beasts, including a number of sweet-smelling **shambling mounds** that live in the tanks, churning them as part of the purification process. Mortlock Vanthampur (see page 26) pays Genamine to keep him apprised of strange activities in the sewers. Mortlock, in turn, reports whatever he learns to his mother, Duke Thalamra Vanthampur.

#### SHRINE OF THE SUFFERING

This simple stone shrine to Ilmater, god of martyrs and patient endurance, stands in a small, quiet square, the edges of its plaza thick with the pallets and meager belongings of the Lower City's homeless population. Here, poor Baldurians can come to receive free meals and enough coppers to pay their way through the city's gates, thanks to the ministrations of Brother Hodges, a lawful good male strongheart halfling **priest**. Supported by donations from all ranks of society and beloved by

their community, the halfling cleric and his adult children Hansen and Sissa (both lawful good strongheart halfling **acolytes**) can inevitably be found here chatting with the city's downtrodden, offering what healing and alms they can.

The church's only source of non-donation income is a twisting series of crypts that extends down from an entrance behind the altar, at several points piercing the city's sewers. For a small fee, anyone can have a corpse brought down into the cramped tomb, where hordes of sewer rats flood in to eat the flesh, leaving (mostly) clean bones to be interred in the attached ossuary by Ilmater's faithful. While a somewhat ignoble end, it's often the only holy-ground burial the city's poor can afford, and Brother Hodges does his best to bring quiet dignity to the practice. However, a fertile **carrion crawler** has recently slithered up from the sewers to feast on the corpses in the tomb, leaving a trail of squirming young wherever it passes. Brother Hodges is incensed by the desecration, but doesn't dare face the beasts himself, and the Flaming Fist has been slow to come to his aid. Though the church can't pay, he would gratefully offer free healing to anyone who dealt with the menace.

### SMILIN' BOAR

With its downright ribald menu of salaciously renamed breakfast foods, the Smilin' Boar was always intended to cause a stir in well-to-do Bloomridge. Yet the current buzz is more than owner Jentha Allinamuch, a chaotic good female strongheart halfling **commoner**, ever intended. For the past six months, bodies have been appearing in the alley just behind the halfling's café. More than a dozen have appeared so far, never with any witnesses as to how they go there. The victims have no apparent commonalities—being of all ages, races, genders, and social classes, and having disappeared from points all across the city—yet there's no question in anyone's mind that the same killer is responsible, as each is found with curved slices across their wrists and a heart-piercing wound. The whole district is astir over the murders, but so far the Fist hasn't been able to turn up any leads on what locals have fearfully dubbed the Sickle Man. With business plummeting, Jentha is as eager as any grieving family to find answers, and would happily pay independent investigators to help track down the killer. In fact, the killer is not one person, but a group of Dead Three cultists looking to spread fear in the city (see "Hamhocks Slaughterhouse," page 197).

### SORCEROUS SUNDRIES

A dome of stained glass roofs this tall, round shop, casting chaotic shafts of color down across several open-air floors that rise upon wooden pillars, connected by staircases and ladders. While the living quarters upstairs teem with rare plants and bookcases, the bottom floor acts as one of the most popular magic shops in the city. Inside its delicate-looking but magically warded walls, customers can buy and sell all manner of curios and common magic items from the eccentric shopkeeper, Rivalen Blackhand, a neutral male human **mage** with a withered right hand.

Blackhand almost always has *potions of healing* available for sale. He also typically has up to 500 gp on hand to buy items from those with interesting magical wares, though he's a savvy bargainer and rarely pays anything close to full price.

Currently, the wizard finds himself in the grip of an unusual protection racket. His supposed apprentice Gilligunn, a neutral evil female rock gnome **spy**, is actually a Guild member. Whenever Blackhand makes a sufficiently large transaction, Gilligunn secretly tracks the customer, leading an appropriately sized group of Guild toughs to ambush them days later, knowing they'll be carrying either a large sum of money or a valuable magic item they can sell back to Blackhand. Though the shopkeeper isn't happy with the arrangement, the Guild varies its patterns enough to keep suspicion away from him, and he has to admit it's a better deal than paying protection money himself.

### WATER QUEEN'S HOUSE

The oldest temple in Baldur's Gate, the Water Queen's House clings to its enormous pier like a monster of the deep, its stone walls trailing over the side and descending down beneath the waves and river mud. At the pier's tip, a huge fountain in the shape of a sinking ship sprays water high, reminding faithful of the price of failing to appease Umberlee.

The intimidating Allandra Grey, a chaotic evil female human **priest**, leads the temple's score of waveservants, most of them women widowed or orphaned by the sea. Ordinary Baldurians rarely see the waveservants, and never step inside the temple. When the faithful wish to make offerings, they must ring a bell by the door. Two waveservants (chaotic evil female human **acolytes**) answer the door, one accepting the offering inside while the other says a short prayer in the doorway. Once the prayer is spoken and the donation collected, they step back and close the door.

Though no outsiders know exactly how the temple's finances work, the dour waveservants buy little in the markets save essentials. The rest of the tithes are carried in solemn procession down crumbling, moss-covered stairs that cling to the outside of the temple and descend into the murky water. The waveservants disappear below the water for a few minutes, only to return empty-handed. What happens to the treasures is anyone's guess, with some suggesting they're hidden in underwater vaults. Others believe the gifts are borne away by Umberlee herself. In truth, the waveservants leave the treasures at the bottom of the staircase, where they are fetched within the hour by 2d6 **sahuagin** led by a **sahuagin priestess**. The sahuagin make the long trip from the Sea of Swords to obtain these treasures, and in exchange, they refrain from attacking the city, its harbor, and ships heading out to sea.

If the waveservants wish harm to befall a ship or its crew, they leave a clam with the treasure in the water. When the clam is opened, it magically recites up to 25 words in Common. This information helps the sahuagin identify the ship. The sahuagin priestess uses a *tongues* spell to translate the clam's words, then executes an attack on the ship during the next new moon.

# OUTER CITY

Dirty and uncouth, the Outer City holds everything the elite of Baldur's Gate resist allowing within their walls: the poor, refugees, tanneries and stockyards, and other industries that offend highborn sensibilities. Stretching forth from each of the city's external gates, the Outer City sprawls in a chaotic tangle of shanties and shops, carts and tents lining the roads in hopes of bleeding off enough city trade for their owners to survive. And indeed, much of the commerce in Baldur's Gate happens in these unregulated markets, with even patriars shopping from inside perfumed litters.

While smaller neighborhoods such as Tumbledown and Blackgate squat outside their respective gates, the majority of the Outer City runs along the Coast Way as it curves around the foot of Duskhawk Hill, between Wyrm's Crossing and the city proper. Residents of these neighborhoods are not technically citizens and receive no representation in the government, nor do they receive the benefit of the city's police forces. The Flaming Fist rarely patrols the Outer City, usually emerging only to pursue Outer City residents for crimes committed within the walls.

The Outer City's challenges lead to small, tightly knit communities, where a person's honor and social connections are the only things standing between them and a quick death.

## APPROACHING THE CITY

Visitors approaching Baldur's Gate by road first pass through the Outer City's ramshackle neighborhoods, their traffic hemmed in by cook fires, market stalls, and industries too noisy or repugnant for more genteel citizens. Here travelers must leave any sizable mounts or beasts of burden at one of countless stables and caravanserais before paying the fees to pass through the gates into the city proper. Travelers from the south are twice blessed in this regard, paying once for the bridge at Wyrm's Crossing and again once they've run the gauntlet of Outer City neighborhoods circling Duskhawk Hill.

Travelers arriving via the river wait in the center of Gray Harbor, under the watchful eye of the Seatower, until one of the harbormaster's agents approaches in a fast-moving skiff. Protected by coteries of Gray Wavers (Flaming Fist veterans), these customs officials assess the boat's cargo, collect taxes, and sell hourly berth assignments at one of the city's many docks and piers. Large vessels may also pay to make use of the city's marvelous mechanical cranes, dramatically accelerating their unloading process.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

The following neighborhoods make up the Outer City.

**Blackgate.** The Outer City settlement beyond the Black Dragon Gate, Blackgate serves those traveling to and from Waterdeep on the Trade Way. Huge stables cater to travelers' mounts, while a community of shield dwarf ironsmiths draws even residents of the Upper City with their skill.

**Little Calimshan.** This walled community's Calishite inhabitants fiercely guard their home from the Guild and the rest of Baldur's Gate. Little Calimshan is further detailed on page 197.

**Norchapel.** The quietest of the Outer City neighborhoods, Norchapel caters to those residents willing to pay more than the usual protection money to the Guild, in exchange for having their safety and security.

**Rivington.** This self-contained village of anglers and river-powered mills is the first neighborhood encountered by travelers approaching from the south. Dominated by a local gang called the Rivington Rats, it's also a haven for smuggling thanks to its river access.

**Sow's Foot.** Here, expatriates from dozens of far-flung nations mingle with races ranging from lizardfolk to svirfneblin among the scents of exotic food and the calls of strange animals, banding together against a city that views them as outsiders.

**Stoneyeyes.** Just outside the Basilisk Gate that gives it its name, this neighborhood is full of stables and stockyards. Many Outer City residents who work within the city live here to be as close as possible to their places of business. Among them is a significant community of half-orc porters.

**Tumbledown.** Off by itself overlooking the river, this perpetually foggy neighborhood hosts the Cliff-side Cemetery.

**Twin Songs.** Standing ready to welcome visitors as they cross the river, Twin Songs is renowned for its enormous diversity of shrines and places of worship, from tiny roadside altars and idols to home-based temples. While those in search of significant magic must still generally visit the larger temples in the city proper, no god is too foreign or obscure to be worshiped in Twin Songs' divine sprawl, where even non-criminal worship of fiends and the Dead Three goes unchallenged.

**Whitkeep.** This neighborhood takes its name from the white manor house at its center, which houses the city's largest enclave of gnomes. Free-spirited and home to hordes of artists, the neighborhood would likely attract trendy city folk and price out the resident radicals, if not for its odoriferous tanneries.

**Wyrm's Crossing.** This massive bridge crosses the Chionthar River. Shops and homes gird the bridge's edges. See page 200 for more information.

## OUTER CITY GAZETTEER

Dreams both flourish and die in the Outer City, which many say holds the best and worst of Baldur's Gate. The following are some of the best known and most infamous Outer City locations.

### BALDURAN LOOKS OUT TO SEA

Shortly after Balduran disappeared for the final time, this statue appeared on the cliffs of Tumbledown. Twice the size of the actual man, the statue bears an uncanny likeness to Balduran, squinting west over city and river. While its sudden arrival created something of a stir, most assumed it was simply a tribute to the great man—until one morning several months later when passersby noticed that one of the statue's hands had risen to shade its eyes. Scholars immediately began studying the

## OUTER CITY RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| d20   | Encounter                              |
| 1–6   | No encounter                           |
| 7–10  | Harmless interaction (roll on table G) |
| 11–16 | Denizens (roll on table H)             |
| 17–20 | Threat (roll on table I)               |

## TABLE G: OUTER CITY HARMLESS INTERACTIONS

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| d12 | Interaction   |
| 1   | A member of the Gravemaker crew from Cliffside Cemetery calmly asks if the party saw a woman in an old-fashioned dress pass by. If pressed for more details, he says she was "see-through."   |
| 2   | A priest from the Church of the Last Hope entreats the party to help find a patient who's wandered off.   |
| 3   | An obviously magical axe menaces passersby as it floats down the street. The proprietor of Danthelon's Dancing Axe gives chase (see "Danthelon's Dancing Axe," page 196, for more information).   |
| 4   | Ubis Garynmor of Garynmor Stables and Menagerie goes from alley to alley, hooting. If asked what he's doing, he grudgingly admits that something got loose from his stable.   |
| 5   | A gaunt half-elf, Jaemus Exheltarion from the Ham-hocks Slaughterhouse, openly admires a character's left ear and offers to buy it for 15 gp.   |
| 6   | A member of the Little Calimshan's Right Pashas tries to sell characters some fresh-made brownies, made with his grandmother's secret recipe, to raise money for a child's birthday party. The brownies cost 1 cp each and are delicious. |
| 7   | Jonas Goodnight, owner of the Oasis Theater, dramatically praises the party, inviting them to star in his next unbelievable stage production.   |
| 8   | A bleary-eyed astronomer stumbles into the party, while fearfully watching the heavens. If asked, she points toward the sky and whispers, "The stars aren't right. The dark times are coming."  |
| 9   | Several cackling, half-dressed gnomes are covered in body paint and drive a wheeled contraption down the street. The device is a mobile piece of art crafted at Whitkeep Hostel and titled "The Patriars."                                |
| 10  | A group of obviously drunk Flaming Fist officers stumble away from a Wyrm's Crossing bar. They ineffectually try to start a fight with the party, then apologize and wander off.  |
| 11  | A precocious member of the Gateguides asks the party if they want to earn a few quick coins. If so, he asks them to create a distraction so some Flaming Fist soldiers stop harassing a newly arrived family of refugees he's helping.    |
| 12  | A merchant and gate guard argue over how to accurately measure and compare the sizes of an unusually small donkey and an exceptionally large peacock. They ask for a passing party member's opinion.                                      |

## TABLE H: OUTER CITY DENIZENS

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| d10 | Interaction   |
| 1   | 2d4 Calishite <b>thugs</b> and 2d4 Tethyrian <b>thugs</b> curse at each other, ready to brawl                             |
| 2   | 1d6 gnome <b>commoners</b> from the Whitkeep Hostel throw tomatoes at passersby who flaunt their wealth                   |
| 3   | 1d4 <b>bandits</b> joyride on <b>riding horses</b> stolen from a corral   |
| 4   | 2d4 Flaming Fist <b>guards</b> , off-duty or headed elsewhere, ignore obvious crimes                                      |
| 5   | 1d4 patriarchs ( <b>human nobles</b> ) and 2d8 <b>guards</b>  |
| 6   | 1d4 barkers ( <b>spies</b> ) pass out handbills for the Oasis Theater   |
| 7   | 1d4 <b>commoners</b> herding 2d8 <b>goats</b> and one peacock (use the <b>vulture</b> stat block)                         |
| 8   | 2d6 beggars ( <b>commoners</b> )  |
| 9   | 1 Flaming Fist officer ( <b>knight</b> ) and 2d4 Flaming Fist soldiers ( <b>veterans</b> ) heading to or from Wyrm's Rock |
| 10  | 2d6 members of the Crossers or Gravemakers crew ( <b>commoners</b> ) on street patrol                                     |

## TABLE I: OUTER CITY THREATS

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| d10 | Threat  |
| 1   | 2d4 <b>giant rats</b>   |
| 2   | 1 <b>bandit captain</b> and 1d6 <b>bandits</b> demand a "street use" tax  |
| 3   | 1d6 Guild pickpockets ( <b>spies</b> )  |
| 4   | 1d4 <b>ghouls</b> picking at corpses left in the street   |
| 5   | 2d6 <b>skeletons</b> escaped from the Cliffside Cemetery  |
| 6   | A flying, double-bladed axe terrorizing passersby (the illusion-wrapped <b>stirge</b> from Danthelon's Dancing Axe) |
| 7   | 1 <b>cockatrice</b> that escaped from the Garynmor Menagerie  |
| 8   | 1d6 <b>stirges</b>  |
| 9   | 1d4 <b>jackalweres</b> that live in Little Calimshan  |
| 10  | Dead Three abduction squad (see the "More Dead Three Encounters" sidebar on page 28)                                |

statue, learning that at sunrise on the first day of each new year, the statue flickers, changing its position in an eyeblink. Though it always looks west, the precise line of its gaze can change by up to thirty degrees, and it may peer through a spyglass, stand with hands on hips, point with an open hand, and so on.

For centuries, the predominant theory was that Balduaran still lived somewhere far to the west, and the statue tracked his movements. Yet a generation ago, a knight of Oghma vowed to follow the line of the statue's gaze as far as necessary to learn the truth. His journey was shorter than expected. In a wood just a few miles west of the city, he came upon a cylindrical stone building, its open doorway revealing stairs leading down into the forest floor. Atop the building, a smaller statue of Balduaran stared back the way he had come. Prevented from entering by a pattern of magical lights he couldn't identify, the knight raced back to the city to gather additional scholars—yet when he returned, the structure was

gone. Since then, the forested structure—which popular stories now refer to as Balduran's Tomb—has been discovered three more times in the same fashion, each time in a different location, yet so far no one has been able to enter.

### CLIFFSIDE CEMETERY

The value of land and sheer population density in Baldur's Gate means only the wealthiest patriars can afford to bury their dead within the city, interring them in catacombs beneath the city's temples or in family crypts on their own grounds. For everyone else, there's the ignoble Shrine of the Suffering or the scattering of cemeteries outside the city. The largest of the latter is Cliffside Cemetery, located in the Tumbledown neighborhood and employing many local residents as gravediggers, stonemasons, morticians, and professional mourners.

Long ago, the graveyard was an empty estate owned by the mercantile Szarr family, with only a few family crypts near the cliffs. When a business rival murdered the entire family in their beds, no one was eager to move into their former manor, and the city decided to turn the estate into a single massive graveyard that acts as the primary repository for the city's dead.

The graveyard itself is a maze of crypts and monuments, its organization nearly impossible for outsiders to discern as the multi-chamber ossuaries of rich merchants and pirate lords loom over the simple plaques and rotting wooden holy symbols of the poor. Natural cavern systems have been expanded and shored up to create extensive crypts, yet over generations maps have been lost or poorly updated, and it's not uncommon for a gravedigger to find themselves striking the wood of a coffin where no coffin should be, or tumbling through into a forgotten stretch of tunnel. Rampant grave robbery by brigands and necromancy-obsessed followers of Myrkul only increases the chaos, as bodies get exhumed and reburied wherever it's convenient. Most significantly, a major landslide decades ago dropped a large portion of the cemetery's cliff into the river below, causing the remaining bone-houses and markers to shift and lean, while also exposing numerous crypts and tomb-tunnels to the air, prompting a fresh rush of grave robbing. Though Baldurians rarely bury their dead with valuables anymore, and many of the easier pickings have been taken, it's common wisdom that some of the greatest treasures of past centuries still lie entombed with their heroes, their headstones wiped anonymously clean by wind and rain.

Watching over all of this is the powerful Gravemakers crew. Far more than simply caretakers and laborers, the Gravemakers guard the dead—and Tumbledown—from threats. With so much death concentrated in one spot, undead are a constant problem. Skeletons and revenants regularly claw spontaneously out of their graves, while ghouls and ghosts burrow into crypts and catacombs, drawn by the scent of decaying flesh. Wights hide in their tombs by day, while ghosts and wraiths terrorize unsuspecting mortals. Putting down such threats before they can prey on citizens is the Gravemakers' primary job, and though rightfully proud of their

prowess, their leader Leone Wen, a lawful good female human **knight** and servant of Torm, is always looking for fresh recruits or contractors to join them in their crusade. The crew operates out of the half-burned old Szarr Mansion in the cemetery's center, its moldering halls reputedly still infested by the ghosts of the murdered Szarrs—though stories remain split as to whether the ghosts prey on the Gravemakers or aid them in their duty.

### CHURCH OF LAST HOPE

This combined chapel and asylum in the Twin Songs neighborhood has long offered sanctuary for the depressed and mentally ill. The few attendants ascribe to the faith of no particular god, but extol the virtues of meditation and whatever calm faiths visitors might bring with them.

Few seek the church's services on their own. Rather, most who come to dwell at the church either have a room rented for them by concerned family or receive a somewhat mysterious—and usually unexpected—invitation from the institute's superintendent, Mother Aramina, a lawful good female human **priest**. Aramina is a former Candlekeep scholar who's moved her lifelong study of psychology from the academic to the clinical. How Mother Aramina learns of individuals' distress and under what circumstances she offers free room and board in her facility is something of a mystery, but as of yet, none have discovered any sinister angle to her work. In fact, Mother Aramina has been known to hire empathic intermediaries to help extricate the needful from destructive conditions. Despite its charity, though, the Church of Last Hope is not universally loved. The Faithless, the Guild-associated gang in Twin Songs, see a trove of wealthy city-dwellers and wishy-washy non-priests in their midst, ripe targets for protection schemes, kidnappings, and all manner of other plots. Currently none of the Church's patients have been endangered, but Mother Aramina is cautiously looking for more permanent security solutions.

### DANTHELON'S DANCING AXE

This two-story shop sells everything an adventurer might need, from weapons and armor to rowboats and mobile monster cages. Presiding over the crammed shelves is Entharl Danthelon, a neutral good male shield dwarf **commoner** who claims to have been an adventurer once himself, as evidenced by the magical flying axe that guards his shop at night. Customers are inevitably treated to the story of the grateful elven princess who enchanted the axe for him as a reward for a daring adventure undertaken on her behalf.

In truth, Danthelon's "dancing axe" is actually a tame stirge wrapped in the illusion of a double-bladed axe, which Danthelon sets loose each night. The illusion is courtesy of Yssra Brackrel, a neutral female half-elf **mage** and brilliant hairstylist who rents out the shop's attic. Yssra's cantankerousness is as legendary as the shop's flying axe, and anyone seeking just her spellcasting is subject to a frank and unflattering critique of their current coiffure.

While Danthelon may never have been a real adventurer, he loves associating with them, and constantly keeps his ears open for rumors and opportunities, which he happily passes along to paying customers. At the moment, he's obsessed with reports of a group of smugglers who recently went missing in the Riverveins tunnels along with a chest full of valuable magic potions, and eagerly encourages his shoppers to investigate—and then return to tell him the story.

#### GARYNMOR STABLES AND MENAGERIE

As horses and other beasts of burden aren't allowed inside the city walls, the Outer City overflows with stables and hostlers, ranging from muddy pens to barns nicer than most inns. Of these, the largest is Garynmor Stables, which offers the unique benefit of operating locations in both Stonyeyes and Blackgate; those travelers passing through have the option of leaving their beasts on one side of the city and picking them up on the other, after grooms have ferried them around the outside of the walls. The stables are also unusual in their willingness to rent mounts to city residents in need of transportation, cutting down on the need of city dwellers to own their own horses. Yet the true gem setting Garynmor Stables apart is its menagerie.

A former world traveler, Ubis Garynmor (chaotic good male human **commoner**) has long had a fascination with exotic beasts, and having already developed the infrastructure to take care of large numbers of ordinary animals, he found it easy enough to expand the scope of his establishment. His menagerie in Stonyeyes contains a variety of rare creatures both mundane and magical, from an aged cockatrice and two wing-clipped hippogriffs to an owlbear. Always on the lookout for new attractions, he happily pays adventurers for healthy specimens of rare creatures, sometimes reselling the smaller and less dangerous species. While the menagerie is popular with city folk who pay a few coppers to view the creatures, many neighbors fear that Ubis doesn't take security seriously enough, and that his desire to coddle such dangerous beasts could lead to them breaking free and rampaging through the district.

#### HAMHOCKS SLAUGHTERHOUSE

This huge complex of pens, barns, and abattoirs is the largest slaughterhouse and knackery in Baldur's Gate. Located in the Stonyeyes neighborhood so as to be convenient to the city's butchers, the facility has a generally adversarial relationship with neighboring establishments, as other herders and hostlers claim the omnipresent smell of blood makes their animals nervous. Yet it's the citizens themselves who should be nervous, for the slaughterhouse recently came under new management.

Seeking to spread fear and chaos, cultists of the Dead Three have infiltrated the slaughterhouse and begun murdering people across the city, leaving the victims in an alley behind the Smilin' Boar in Bloomridge. To further fan the flames, the cult slices the corpses across the wrists and inflicts a heart-piercing wound, giving rise to rumors that the murders are the result of a supernaturally deadly serial killer.

Pasque Enrial, a **black gauntlet of Bane** (see page 232 for his stat block), is the cult's mastermind. He engineered the death of the slaughterhouse's former owner so that he could take over, figuring that constant blood, offal, and animal screams would provide a suitable cover for the cult's murderous activities. Since then, he's been slowly laying off existing workers and replacing them with cultists loyal to the group's mission. Assisting him are Corian Khee, a **death's head of Bhaal** (see page 233 for her stat block) who spends days crushing livestock skulls with a massive hammer and nights leading the cult's murderous field operations, and Jaemus Exheltarion, a half-elf **master of souls** (see page 234 for his stat block). Of the three, Jaemus is the least convincing in his role as the slaughterhouse's new accountant, as he greets customers with an eerie stare, openly reads strange-looking tomes, and spends entirely too much time in the cult's trophy locker, a cold-storage facility where he's using pieces harvested from victims and livestock to construct a ram-headed flesh golem.

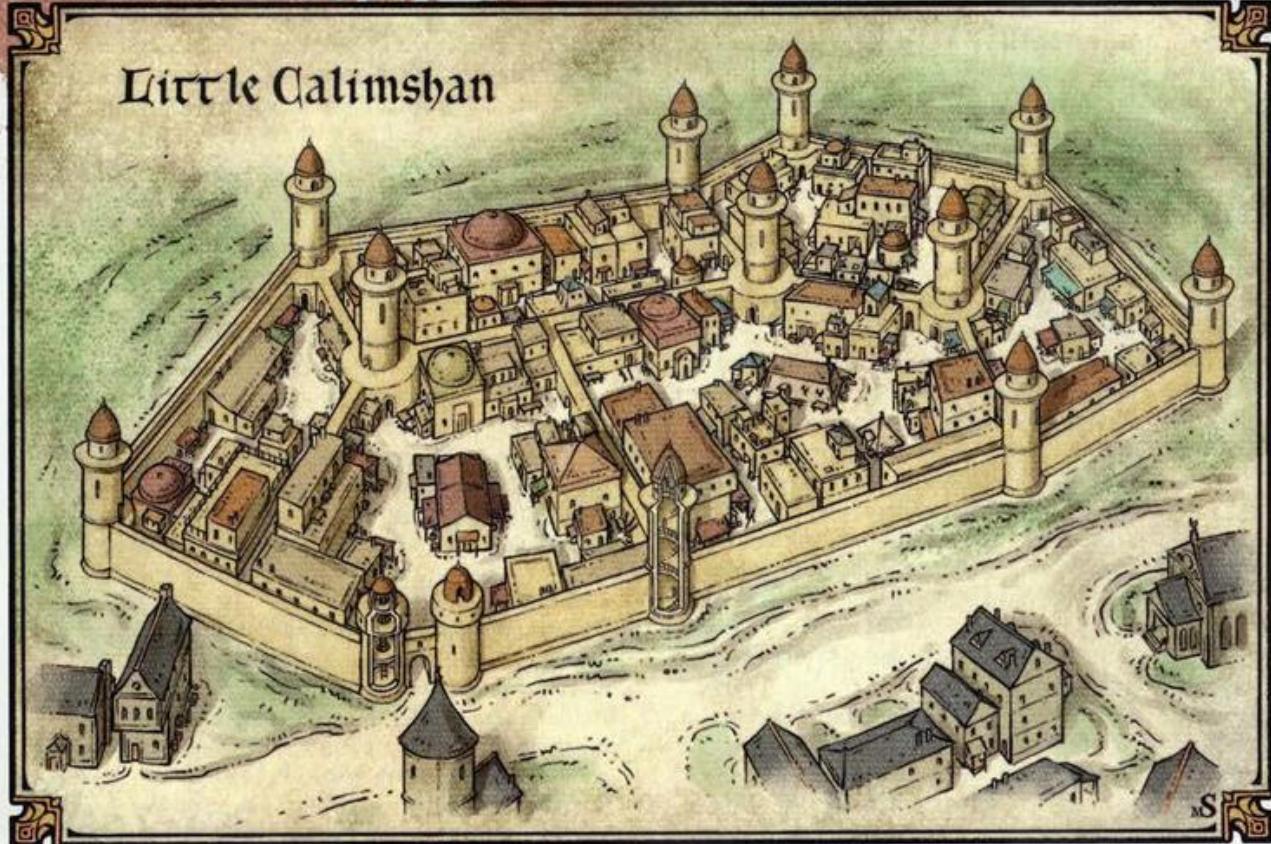
#### LITTLE CALIMSHAN

Generations ago, a fleet of Calishite refugees fleeing war in the south came sailing into Gray Harbor. Rather than opening their doors to the foreigners, the people of Baldur's Gate quickly hustled them out of the city, forcing them out the Basilisk Gate in the middle of the night and taxing them for the privilege. Desperate and weary, the refugees finally found succor in a caravanserai run by a fellow Calishite in the Outer City. There they used what little wealth they'd been able to bring with them to construct a new home—a traditional Calishite settlement that would be precisely as friendly to Baldur's Gate as the Baldurians had been to them.

Though much time has passed since that ignominious beginning, tensions remain high between Little Calimshan and the rest of the city, particularly with regard to those Baldurians living in the city proper. Unlike most of the Outer City, where neighborhoods blend into each other and no one can quite say where one ends and another begins, Little Calimshan is sharply defined by brick-and-plaster walls, 15 feet tall, 5 feet thick, and topped with minarets in the classic Calishite style. These walls don't simply surround the neighborhood, either. Little Calimshan is built like a traditional Calishite city in miniature, with its interior divided into multiple drudachs (neighborhoods). Each drudach is walled off and inhabited by a particular family or tribe, with its own religious site, inn or tavern, marketplace, and places of industry such as smithies, armories, tanneries, or mills. While such an abundance of walls might make Little Calimshan seem fractious and standoffish, in fact the opposite is true: the thick wall walks act as elevated streets, with locals able to look out over the layout from above and easily pick a path to their intended destination.

Second only to the Wide in the chaos and liveliness of its markets, Little Calimshan opens its gates to outsiders for just a few hours each day. Inside its warren of bazaars, local merchants have a near-monopoly on many southern imports, from silks and fine blades of Calishite steel to tomes of rare magical lore, thanks

## Little Calimshan



to exclusive trade agreements with various caravans. As soon as mid-afternoon arrives, however, shoppers are shuffled back out the arched gates, and the only non-Calishites still allowed within the neighborhood are those who've married into a Little Calimshan family or otherwise earned the sacred trust of a drudach's residents. While many residents of Little Calimshan venture into the larger city for business or pleasure, not even the Flaming Fist is able to force its way into the neighborhood-turned-fortress after hours except in the direst circumstances, and each drudach is instead patrolled by a militia of young unmarried warriors (**guards** with scimitars instead of spears) called amlakkars.

While Little Calimshan presents a unified face to the rest of the city, it has all the problems of any settlement. Income inequality is made all the more obvious by density, with paupers living literally side-by-side with wealthy genie-binders. Older isolationists clash with young folk eager for more interaction with the wider city. Yet by far the largest issue is the gang war currently ravaging Little Calimshan. Seeing the Guild as fundamentally an outsider organization, a Calishite gang called the Right Pashas seeks to oust Guild agents from Little Calimshan's underworld. The Guild's popular half-Calishite kingpin, **Rilsa Rael** (see the accompanying stat block), naturally objects to this insult, and each night residents bar their doors tight as a turf war of thugs and thieves rages across their rooftops.

Among Little Calimshan's most notorious locations is the Calim Jewel Emporium, widely regarded as the best jeweler in the city—and the best place to fence

stolen gems, as it's also the local Guild headquarters. In addition to hosting regular public forums in her shop, Rael tacitly oversees the Garden of Whispers, a maze of wood-and-paper screens where people from across the city can buy and sell secrets with Guild agents and each other, speaking through the barriers so as to maintain anonymity. Also popular are schools like the Lamp of Learning and the Verdashir Academy (also known as the Dervish Academy), which train spellcasters and warriors in the styles of their ancestral homeland, allowing only the most talented outsiders to access their archives or join in their lessons. And, of course, every patriarch in the city has visited the famous Oasis Theater, home of the city's most daring—and sometimes dangerous—productions.

### OASIS THEATER

Baldur's Gate plays home to a variety of small theaters and cabarets, but none can hold a candle to the epic spectacle of the Oasis. Theater owner and director Jonas Goodnight, a chaotic neutral male human **spy**, puts on shows even more outrageous than his magnificently crafted outfits. Productions involve everything from live monsters to powerful illusion magic, while also showcasing the most talented performers in the city. Actors and musicians perform their songs and monologues from atop flaming trapezes or human towers, while acrobats shock the audience with physical feats bordering on the supernatural.

Even lowbrow theatergoers unable to decipher Goodnight's artistic genius can appreciate his flagrant

breaking of taboos, with risqué burlesque and satirical scripts mocking everyone from the dukes to Nine-Fingers Keene herself. The fact that these performances sometimes go terribly awry, with monsters breaking loose or a broken piece of equipment sending a performer plummeting into the crowd, only adds to the excitement, and patriars and common folk alike vie for seats at the theater's afternoon-only performances. Ticket prices are decided capriciously and on the spot by Goodnight, varying wildly between any given individual.

While Goodnight is always looking for new performers, at the moment he needs more than just a talented bard or contortionist. The cost of putting on his outrageous shows has landed him deep in debt, and his compulsive need to roast every potential patron or ally in the city hasn't helped matters. With the Guild ready to step in and assume ownership if he doesn't start repaying his loans, he needs to either turn to outright crime or put on a show more amazing than anything he's done before. He's got an idea, but to pull it off, he'll need an experienced adventuring party willing to play the stars in the world's first live-audience adventure.

#### RIVERVEINS

Just east of the city, where Dushtawk Hill rises along the Chionthar River, eddies captured by outcroppings have bored into the stone, carving a maze of meandering tunnels and draining into subterranean aquifers. Though hardly diverting enough water to impact the river's flow, the web of submerged chambers has become a source of mystery and legend for locals.

While most of the tunnels are submerged, changes in river height over time mean that some of the tunnels and caverns are dry or only half-flooded for long stretches, making them favored hideouts for fugitives, smugglers, aquatic predators, and particularly adventurous trysting lovers. Though rumors whisper that some tunnels lead directly under Baldur's Gate, to date all mapped caverns are accessible only from the river, and even just climbing into a tunnel mouth or steering a boat inside can be deadly as the current attempts to smash vessels against the cliffs. Stories of ancient treasure in the flooded caverns are only enhanced by stories of Ol' Cholms, a river monster, prowling the tunnels. Many would-be fortune hunters have been disappointed to discover dry tunnels containing nothing more than crude graffiti, empty wine bottles, and flocks of bloodthirsty **stirges**.

#### WHITKEEP HOSTEL

In a city often thought to be dour and dangerous, the Whitkeep Hostel is a spark of light and levity. Built by a wealthy caravan operator who lost their fortune to monster attacks, this white-walled manor house was quickly overtaken by squatters, and has now spent most of a century as an all-gnome artist's commune. Though only gnomes are invited to rent one of the rambling manor's thirty-seven studio apartments, Baldurians of all races are welcome to socialize at the place's infamous surrealist parties or attend its concerts and offbeat art happenings. As such, the hostel has become the central gathering point for the city's radicals and revolutionaries, as well as many artists and dreamers.



#### RILSA RAEL

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Wis +2

**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Athletics +4, Deception +4, Perception +2, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, thieves' cant

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of her turns in combat, Rilsa can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Focus.** If Rilsa damages a creature with a weapon attack, she gains advantage on attack rolls against that target until the end of her next turn.

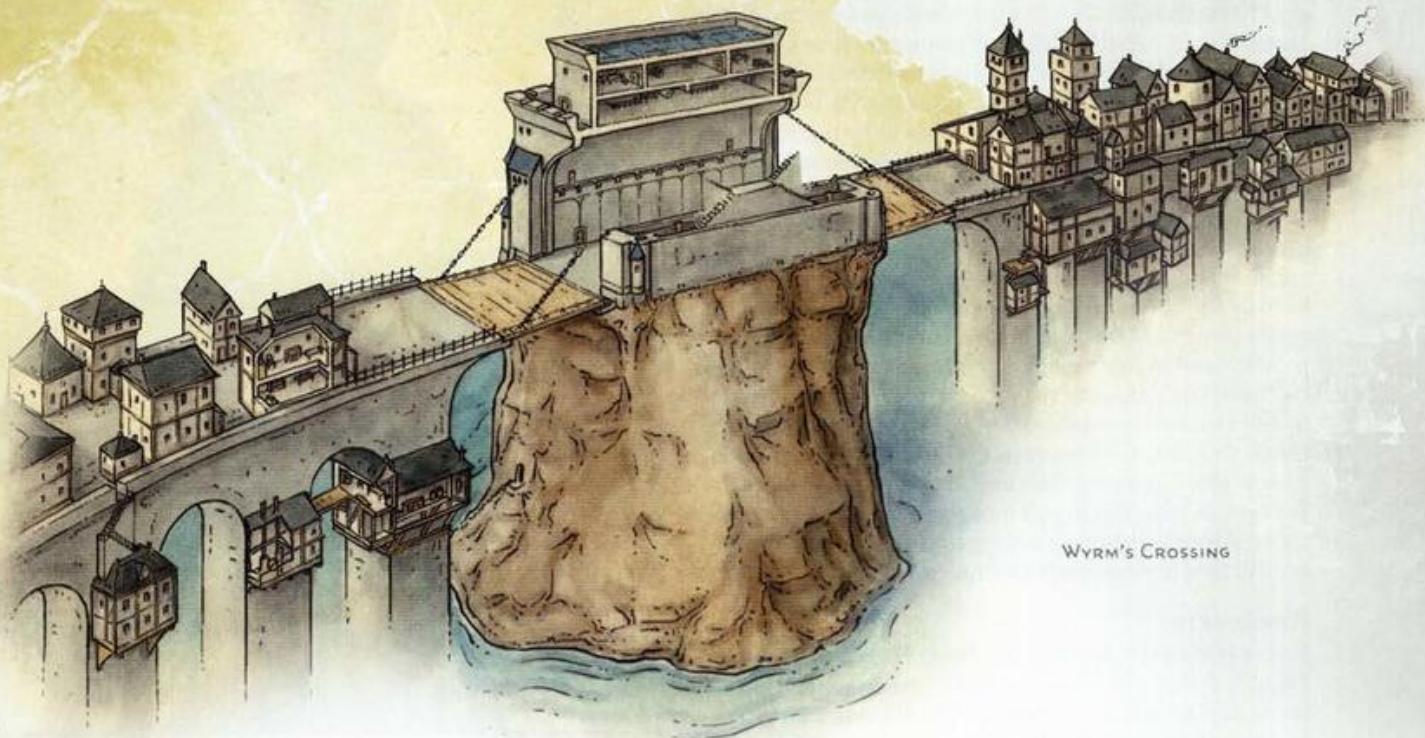
**Tactical Leadership.** As a bonus action, Rilsa chooses one creature she can see within 30 feet of her. The creature doesn't provoke opportunity attacks until the end of its next turn, provided it can hear Rilsa's commands.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Rilsa makes three weapon attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.



WYRM'S CROSSING

One of the neighborhood's more outspoken critics of the Gate's government, Pernilla "Prole" Cabrenock, a chaotic neutral female rock gnome **bandit captain**, has teamed up with an oddball inventor and arcanist named Ardryn Deagle, a chaotic good male rock gnome **mage**. Rumors spread by Prole herself suggest that they've almost completed a magical invention that will "finally strip away the bonds of capital and free the people to flourish," but security around the project has been unusually tight, keeping even many members of the commune in the dark. While most people assume this is merely some strange new critique of the city's patriars, both the Guild and the Flaming Fist would dearly love to infiltrate the revolutionaries' project and make sure it doesn't pose a threat to the status quo.

#### WYRM'S CROSSING

This neighborhood is actually two enormous bridges, each spanning half the Chionthar River and meeting at Wyrm's Rock, a tall, rocky islet in the center. While the Flaming Fist maintains a fortress on the island to tax travelers along the Coast Way and control city access in times of trouble, the bridges themselves are fair game for squatters. Ramshackle wooden tenements, taverns, and shops crowd both sides of the arched stone spans, leaning out over the narrow road between them. Even more cling to the sides of the bridges, anchored to each other or cantilevered over the water. The tendency of these latter structures to occasionally drop into the rushing river, pulling their neighbors down with them, is not enough to deter residents who hope to be the first to sell to travelers on their way into the city, or the last to pick their pockets on the way out.

Even among members of the Outer City, residents of Wyrm's Crossing have a reputation as rakes and riffraff, and the neighborhood specializes in seedy dive bars and gambling halls where belligerent drunks can be ejected directly out over the river. At the same time, it also has a large and tight-knit strongheart halfling community, whose low-ceilinged tenements and lighter weight are perfect for the neighborhood's precarious architectural style.

While the Crossing is renowned for cheats and criminals, the residents stick together, and a local crew called the Crossers ensures that all predatory practices are applied primarily to travelers, and never to fellow bridge-dwellers. For those who consistently refuse to play well with their neighbors, the answer is often Sweetjen's Spices, a precarious bridge-side shop whose halfling proprietor quietly sells some of the most potent drugs and untraceable poisons in the city.

#### WYRM'S ROCK

This formidable fortress rises from the center of the river on an algae-slick islet, its sheer walls nearly impossible to scale. Built by the Flaming Fist on a rock once said to have housed a bronze dragon, the fortress is the first checkpoint at which Baldur's Gate taxes northbound travelers. Anyone seeking to cross the river via the fortress's two massive bridges must pay the 5 cp toll and pass through the fortress via a long central tunnel riddled with arrow slits and murder holes. Between twenty-five and fifty Flaming Fist soldiers staff the checkpoint, which operates only during the day. After dark, the drawbridges on either side of the keep are raised, halting all traffic and forcing latecomers to take

shelter at one of the many bridge-top inns in Wyrm's Crossing until morning.

The fortress has four levels: the bridge level, taken up by the gauntlet tunnel and offices devoted to traffic management; a second-story armory full of oil, javelins, and everything the soldiers need to withstand a siege; a third story for soldier's quarters; and a high-ceilinged dungeon level below the bridges to hold temporary prisoners and the fortress's supply of small boats (should the garrison need to sally through heavily fortified river-level gates). Soldiers stationed in the fortress tend to fall into two categories: those disappointed at being stuck on toll-collection duty so far from the city, and those overjoyed at easy work and a chance to carouse in Wyrm's Crossing, with the latter ensuring that the Fist doesn't patrol their neighboring bridges too heavily.

The commander of Wyrm's Rock, an old brute named Skorpin Crane, died in his sleep recently. Foul play was ruled out, and Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard was in the midst of finding Crane's replacement when he was lured away on a diplomatic mission to Elturel. Until a replacement is found, the Mage Defender of Wyrm's Rock, a neutral evil shield dwarf **mage** named Gardak Horn, has taken command. The guards loathe Gardak because he uses a **homunculus** to spy on them.

## BEYOND BALDUR'S GATE

Use the following tables to determine who or what the characters might encounter on the roads leading to and from Baldur's Gate. Use these tables as often as desired.

### ENCOUNTERS ON THE ROADS

#### d20 Encounter

1–4 No encounter

5–14 Travelers (roll on table J, then roll on table K to determine the travelers' agenda)

15–20 Monsters (roll on table L)

**TABLE J: TRAVELERS AROUND BALDUR'S GATE**

#### d12 Travelers

- 1 3d4 local farmers or ranchers (**commoners**)
- 2 1d4 foreign merchants (**commoners**) and 3d6 guards traveling in a caravan
- 3 1d6 scholars (**commoners**)
- 4 3d6 migrants or refugees (**commoners**)
- 5 2d4 Flaming Fist soldiers (**veterans**)
- 6 Family of 1d4 patriarchs (**nobles**) in a coach pulled by two **draft horses**, with 2d6 guards on riding horses providing escort
- 7 2d4 mercenaries for hire (**thugs**)
- 8 1d6 religious pilgrims (**acolytes**)
- 9 1d6 Guild agents (**bandits**)
- 10 1 **archmage** accompanied by a **shield guardian**
- 11 1d6 entertainers (**commoners**)
- 12 1 **gladiator** leading an ox, which is hauling a prison wagon that contains a **medusa** wearing a burlap hood over her head and shackles on her wrists

**TABLE K: TRAVELERS' AGENDA**

#### d10 Heading to Baldur's Gate to ...

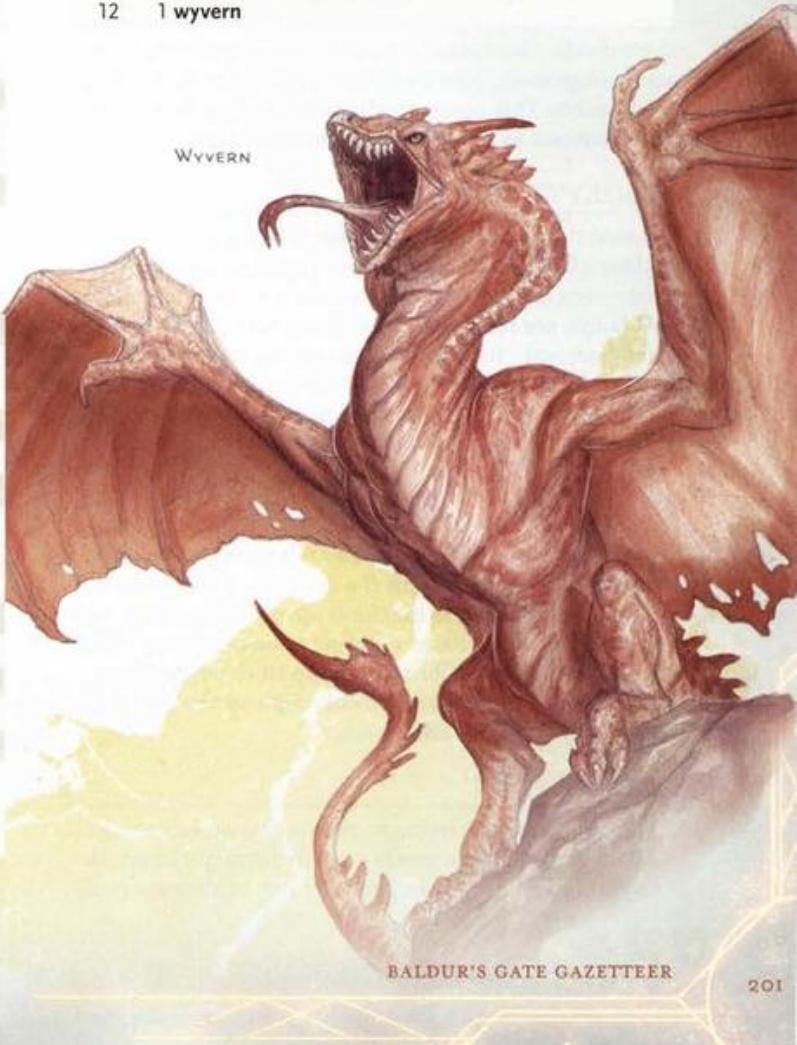
- 1 make money selling goods they consider exceptional
- 2 find a patron for a new artistic or business venture
- 3 warn the authorities of a possible threat to the city
- 4 seek innovations from the Church of Gond
- 5 buy goods that are illegal in other communities
- 6 resupply then head to a distant destination by sea
- 7 make money to travel elsewhere by land
- 8 start an innovative business venture
- 9 buy a rare text then travel on to Candlekeep
- 10 undertake a criminal venture with the Guild

**TABLE L: MONSTERS AROUND BALDUR'S GATE**

#### d12 Encounter

- 1 1d6 werewolves disguised as human beggars or a pack of wolves
- 2 2d4 **stirges**
- 3 1d4 **ettercaps** and 1d4 **giant spiders**
- 4 3d6 **kobolds**
- 5 1 **goblin boss** and 3d6 **goblins**
- 6 1 **dryad** and 1d4 **sprites** lurking in a tree
- 7 1d4 **ankhegs** that burrow up from the ground
- 8 1 **basilisk**
- 9 1d4 **jackalweres** disguised as human beggars, entertainers, or merchants
- 10 1 **hobgoblin captain** and 3d6 **hobgoblins**
- 11 1 **gnoll pack lord** and 3d6 **gnolls**
- 12 1 **wyvern**

WYVERN



# BALDUR'S GATE CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

This section presents new backgrounds suitable for creating characters from Baldur's Gate, along with notes on adapting characters who have backgrounds drawn from the *Player's Handbook*.

This material is meant to be a tool for you, the DM. Once players have decided on their characters' backgrounds, review the material here. Some backgrounds have at least one new variant feature that ties the background to a group in Baldur's Gate, provided to give characters an additional connection to the city. Characters may choose to replace the standard feature of their background with one of these variant features. Each background also includes a bonus feature that marks a character as a native of Baldur's Gate who's familiar with the city—both its streets and its scars. These additional features are referred to as "Baldur's Gate features." While a character's background features are broadly useful, the effects of a Baldur's Gate feature can be used only while the character is in Baldur's Gate—though, at the DM's discretion, they might have applicable effects in situations similar to those in Baldur's Gate. These location-based features do not replace other features; a character gains them merely for being familiar with Baldur's Gate. If a background presents multiple Baldur's Gate features, you gain all the features associated with that background, or as many of them as you wish to take.

The "Dark Secrets" section (page 208) presents a crime or sin that might force a party together or underlie their deeds. Once players have sorted out their individual backgrounds, give them the opportunity to choose a dark secret. This secret might have exciting or ominous ramifications as the party's adventures unfold.

## ACOLYTE

It's said that every faith in the world has a believer in Baldur's Gate. Not only are most established faiths tolerated—even if some of them, including most of the openly evil faiths, are relegated to the Outer City's Twin Songs neighborhood—but new ones arrive constantly, carried by travelers and proselytizers from far-flung lands. A character with this background might aspire to greater things, not for themselves, but for their faith.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

You're tightly connected with the religious community of Baldur's Gate. You know if a deity has a following in the city and any places that faith openly congregates and the neighborhoods those faithful typically inhabit. While this isn't remarkable for most of the city's larger faiths, keeping track of the hundreds of religions newcomers bring with them is no mean feat.

## CHARLATAN

Everybody's always trying to get a leg up on somebody in Baldur's Gate. One group's con artist might be another's revolutionary. Or maybe you're just in it for yourself.

In any case, characters with this background have a plan to hit the big time; all they need is audacity and a little time.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: LONG-LOST HEIR

You're well-versed in the mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of Baldurian patriars and other nobles, imitating them smoothly enough to convince even the snootiest family heads of your authenticity. You're skilled at posing as the long-lost heir to some imaginary or extinguished patriarchal lineage.

Because of your skill in passing yourself off as a patriarch, you have a Watch token that allows you alone into the Upper City of Baldur's Gate. You might be able to bluff others through with you, or even convince members of the Watch that you're a patriarch. However, any true test of your authenticity is likely to reveal your deception.

## CRIMINAL

No career criminal in Baldur's Gate operates without being aware of the Guild. Some studiously keep a low profile, carrying just the occasional smuggled load in with legitimate merchandise, or only breaking knees when it can plausibly be claimed as an act of personal revenge. Others join up with crews for protection, or with the Guild itself. A few former Guild members have been cast out of the organization due to incompetence or after offending a more powerful member, and now shuffle for scraps to survive.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: CRIMINAL CONNECTIONS

In Baldur's Gate, crime is just another business. As a result, you can arrange a meeting with a low-ranking operative of nearly any business, patriarchal family, crew, government institution, or—certainly—the Guild. This operative will hear you out and, at their discretion, take your information or request up their chain of command. These meetings almost always occur in shady venues.

## CRIMINAL ORIGINS

Criminals are pervasive in Baldur's Gate. If you wish, you may roll on the Criminal Origins table for an event that began your life of crime.

## ENTERTAINER

From the Oasis Theater's spectacular singers and acrobats to the pantomimes and shadow puppeteers of the Wide, Baldur's Gate hosts a colorful array of performers. Good acts can always find ready audiences, and the constant flow of travelers means that both new spectators and new spectacles are always passing through.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: BACKSTAGE PASS

You've learned that most of the real business of entertainment (or any other venture) happens behind the scenes. It's easy for you to case what sorts of audiences attend what venue—like how toughs gather at the Blushing Mermaid or how brash patriars congregate at the Helm and Cloak. After a successful performance, you may meet an enthusiastic member of the crowd—

## CRIMINAL ORIGINS

### d8 Origin

- 1 You crippled a Guild kingpin's cousin without realizing the connection. You got the Guild to back off demands for your death by offering to make amends by working for the criminals, but even so the kingpin still plots a personal revenge.
- 2 The Guild took over your family business, ran it into the ground, and burned the building for insurance money. You were driven into crime yourself, but you'll never work for the Guild. You take special joy in hitting its targets first, tipping off its con victims and otherwise frustrating its schemes.
- 3 It's always been about money. You're not paid what you're worth, working for someone who has more than they deserve. But the Guild offered you a way to fix that. You keep doing what you've always done—guard work, dock labor, business accounting—but what you learn you pass on to the Guild.
- 4 The inequality of Baldur's Gate has driven you to take matters into your own hands. You steal from patriars and rich Lower City residents, funneling the money through charitable fronts to help the needy.
- 5 You got into crime as a bored patriarch looking for excitement. Your family has no idea of your activities, and neither does the Guild. If either of them ever finds out, your life as you know it will be over.
- 6 A close friend or relative joined the Guild and vanished mysteriously. You've worked your way into the lower ranks hoping to find out what happened to them.
- 7 You've always wanted to be a member of the Guild. As a child, you looked up to the Guild members' swagger, their flashy dress, and their competence, which all marked them as different from the other adults you knew. As soon as you could, you joined the organization.
- 8 To you, this is just a way to earn a living. You go to work, do what needs to be done, and get paid. Anyone who pursues crime for thrill-seeking, to strike back at unjust authorities, or anything else are amateurs, and they're liable to get you arrested or killed with their idiocy.

someone of an occupation or social class that frequents the establishment. This contact is delighted to talk with you, and to listen.

## FACELESS (NEW BACKGROUND)

Being who you are, you could never be a hero. Whether due to your class, your people, your family, or your sins, something about you prevents you from effectively pursuing the path you've chosen. Even so, that doesn't stop you. You've left your old face behind, taking on a new persona, becoming something more.



Characters with the faceless background don a disguise—literally or otherwise—as they adventure. This persona might be dramatic or subtle. In a way, though, many characters have such larger than life personalities. Therefore, this background largely focuses on detailing the hero behind the mask.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Deception, Intimidation

**Tool Proficiencies:** Disguise kit

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** A disguise kit, a costume, a pouch containing 10 gp

## FACELESS PERSONA

A faceless character adventures behind the mask of a public persona. This persona is as natural to them as their hidden, true face, but it disguises their identity. Roll on the Faceless Persona table to determine your persona, or work with the DM to create a persona that's unique to your character and suits the tone of your game.

## FACELESS PERSONA

### d10 Persona

- 1 A flamboyant spy or brigand
- 2 The incarnation of a nation or people
- 3 A scoundrel with a masked guise
- 4 A vengeful spirit
- 5 The manifestation of a deity or your faith
- 6 One whose beauty is greatly accented using makeup
- 7 An impersonation of another hero
- 8 The embodiment of a school of magic
- 9 A warrior with distinctive armor
- 10 A disguise with animalistic or monstrous characteristics, meant to inspire fear

## FEATURE: DUAL PERSONALITIES

Most of your fellow adventurers and the world know you as your persona. Those who seek to learn more about you—your weaknesses, your origins, your purpose—find themselves stymied by your disguise. Upon donning a disguise and behaving as your persona, you are unidentifiable as your true self. By removing your disguise and revealing your true face, you are no longer identifiable as your persona. This allows you to change appearances between your two personalities as often as you wish, using one to hide the other or serve as convenient camouflage. However, should someone realize the connection between your persona and your true self, your deception might lose its effectiveness.

## SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

A faceless character usually plays their persona—the hero or extraordinary person they are every day. That's all a facade, though, or a part of them expressed to an extreme. To define a persona, feel free to choose characteristics from other backgrounds, particularly folk hero, hermit, or noble. For the person behind the persona, the one who truly strives to be faceless, consider a distinct set of faceless characteristics. As a result, those with this background have two sets of characteristics, one for their persona, and one for their faceless selves.

## FACELESS PERSONALITY TRAITS

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I'm earnest and uncommonly direct.
- 2 I strive to have no personality—it's easier to forget what's hardly there.
- 3 I treasure a memento of the person or instance that set me upon my path.
- 4 I sleep just as much as I need to and on an unusual schedule.
- 5 I think far ahead, a detachedness often mistaken for daydreaming.
- 6 I cultivate a single obscure hobby or study and eagerly discuss it at length.
- 7 I am ever learning how to be among others—when to stay quiet, when to laugh.
- 8 I behave like an extreme opposite of my persona.

## FACELESS IDEALS

### d6 Ideal

- 1 **Justice.** Place in society shouldn't determine one's access to what is right. (Good)
- 2 **Security.** Doing what must be done can't bring the innocent to harm. (Lawful)
- 3 **Confusion.** Deception is a weapon. Strike from where your foes won't expect. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Infamy.** My name will be a malediction, a curse that fulfills my will. (Evil)
- 5 **Incorruptibility.** Be a symbol, and leave your flawed being behind. (Any)
- 6 **Anonymity.** It's my deeds that should be remembered, not their instrument. (Any)

## FACELESS BONDS

### d6 Bond

- 1 I do everything for my family. My first thought is keeping them safe.
- 2 What I do, I do for the world. The people don't realize how much they need me.
- 3 I've seen too many in need. I must not fail them as everyone else has.
- 4 I stand in opposition, less the wicked go unopposed.
- 5 I am exceptional. I do this because no one else can, and no one can stop me.
- 6 I do everything for those who were taken from me.

## FACELESS FLAWS

### d6 Flaw

- 1 I am callous about death. It comes to us all eventually.
- 2 I never make eye contact or hold it unflinchingly.
- 3 I have no sense of humor. Laughing is uncomfortable and embarrassing.
- 4 I overexert myself, sometimes needing to recuperate for a day or more.
- 5 I think far ahead, a detachedness often mistaken for daydreaming.
- 6 I see morality entirely in black and white.

## FOLK HERO

Baldur's Gate is a city badly in need of heroes, and every so often, one rises from among its own. Ordinary people who rise to greatness are beloved in local history, but the popular imagination can turn on such champions almost as quickly as it anoints them.

## BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: SOCIAL VENGEANCE

You've lived your entire life in the Lower or Outer City of Baldur's Gate. You grew up seeing arrogant patriars flaunt their wealth while your hardworking neighbors struggled. As a result, you know how eager commoners in Baldur's Gate are to see any patriarch get what they deserve. While in a busy part of the Lower City or Outer City of Baldur's Gate, you can spend 2d10 minutes to convince 1d6 **commoners** to perform a non-illegal act

## FOLK HERO ORIGINS

### d6 Origin

- 1 You helped get healing for a sick child. Now the sick come to you, knowing you'll help them find a way to salvation.
- 2 You helped break a Guild protection racket afflicting a community of immigrants in the Outer City. Now, you can't travel through that part of the city without your dozen adopted grandparents inviting you in for a meal.
- 3 Seeing a lost patriarch after dark in the Outer City, you guided the wayward noble through back streets to safety. The patriarch repaid your help by paying for improved roofs and lamps in your neighborhood, causing the entire community to celebrate your deed.
- 4 Fueled by alcohol, you faced down a carrion crawler that slunk out of the sewer, knocking it out with a single punch. Since then, however, the ale you once credited with your heroism has drowned it, and even your most patient admirers are losing hope. You're hoping for one last chance to win back the goodwill you've drunk away.
- 5 You once defeated a raging bugbear with a hand mirror, a mounted deer's head, and two kicks to the groin. Later, you and the bugbear became friends.
- 6 Last winter, you dove into the frigid river to haul out a foundering fishing boat with your bare hands, saving all aboard. Now, everyone on the docks knows your name.

that inconveniences a member of the Watch or Flaming Fist, a patriarch, or some other wealthy looking individual.

## FOLK HERO ORIGINS

Folk heroes might rise from a variety of circumstances, or their origins might be a secret as they do their work anonymously. If you wish, you may roll on the Folk Hero Origins table for an event that started you down your heroic path.

## GUILD ARTISAN

Numerous guilds and professional associations exist in Baldur's Gate, covering every imaginable trade and discipline from gravediggers to moneylenders.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

You're familiar with the city's crews, their territories, and inter-crew politics. Choose one of the three districts of Baldur's Gate: the Upper City, the Lower City, or the Outer City. This is the district where you conduct most of your business. Whenever you need information about something in one of that district's neighborhoods, you can seek out crew members in that area and learn the local gossip. You can also gain unimpeded entry to nearly any bank, guild hall, place of business, workhouse, or crew meeting place in your district.

## HERMIT

While some might think it strange to find hermits in a bustling city, others know that sometimes the most profound solitude exists in the midst of a crowd. Baldur's Gate holds a handful of souls who manage to find isolation amid its tumult.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: THE REAL CITY

You know the Baldur's Gate most Baldurians ignore, the dog-eat-dog world of the homeless and unfortunate. You know where to go in the Lower City and Outer City for anonymity. In these slums and alley camps, you can get a damp bed and a bad meal, but also a degree of privacy and no questions asked. Living here isn't comfortable, but it's unlikely anyone will find you—and you can stay as long as you want.

### HERMIT ORIGINS

Any number of personal choices or ill-fated circumstances might have led you to turn away from society. You may, if you wish, choose or roll an origin event from the Hermit Origins table.

## HERMIT ORIGINS

### d6 Origin

- 1 You led an ill-fated expedition into the Riverveins. Your friends were swept away by flooding, and you've never been able to shake the guilt of causing their deaths over a frivolous lark. You've maintained a solitary vigil outside the cavern entrance ever since.
- 2 You crossed the Guild in a bad way. Fortunately, its members think you're dead. Less fortunately, maintaining that deception might require you to stay in hiding until you actually are.
- 3 You study the puzzles of mortal natures. You've seen followers of evil deities perform miracles for the helpless at Twin Songs, and you've seen patriarchs who worship good deities turn their backs on the poor daily. Bearing witness to such things, and meditating on their contradictions, fills your hours.
- 4 You tend to some part of the city's forgotten history: the unmarked graves in Cliffside Cemetery, the crumbling remains of dead patriarch families' manors, or a collection of religious texts stuffed into an attic and forgotten when a believer's patron deity died. In this solitary work, you've learned secrets no one else knows.
- 5 You killed a patriarch's scion in an illegal duel. The family swore revenge, and you fled to the slums rather than risk bringing their wrath down on your kin.
- 6 You aren't originally from Baldur's Gate. You came here seeking something else, only to learn that the quest that drove you had become impossible to fulfill—its object was destroyed or its purpose was negated by some superseding event. Suddenly directionless and unable to return to your homeland, you have lingered, adrift, in this wretched city.

## NOBLE

The patriarchs of Baldur's Gate live in the Upper City, where they host grand galas and flaunt cosmopolitan fashions, but are walled off from the poverty and squalor of the less fortunate districts and their neighborhoods. Although they might visit prosperous Bloomridge to try a fashionable restaurant or boutique, or watch a spectacle at the Oasis Theater, the patriarchs have little reason to venture into the dirtier, more dangerous parts of the city. If they do, it is generally as thrill-seeking tourists or enclosed by a retinue of armed guards, not as friends or neighbors. As a result, many patriarchs are at once acutely attuned to the nuances of royal courts half a continent away and shockingly ignorant of what life is like for the poor outside their own doorsteps.

This combination of worldly savvy and local blindness characterizes almost all the nobility of Baldur's Gate. As a result, for those who wish to play patriarchs, the Patriar feature below replaces the Position and Privilege feature of the noble background. Those who wish to use the background's standard feature might have gained their standing in Baldur's Gate from business rather than inheritance.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: PATRIAR

As a member of one of the elite families of Baldur's Gate, you may pass through city gates without paying tolls, mingle among the Gate's nobility unquestioned, and impress those on the lookout for wealthy patrons. You are welcome in the Upper City and may stay there after dark without being harassed or evicted. Your word is accepted over others' without question, and any corruption among guards or government officials tends to work in your favor, not against you—at least until you make some effort to expose it.

## OUTLANDER

Coming to Baldur's Gate might seem like a good idea for a spectrum of reasons. Profit, excitement, and cosmopolitan opportunities all present tempting prospects, but rarely does one start on the path to Baldur's Gate fully understanding the complex social morass that awaits. You enter the city an outsider, and it's likely that—no matter how long you spend in the city—you'll leave an outsider, if you leave at all.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Even after your short time in Baldur's Gate, you've learned the city holds more walls and gates than those the Watch and Flaming Fist patrols. You are known within the city's immigrant communities. Should you ever need to learn about a foreign land, people, tradition, or history, you know where to find someone with first-hand experience—likely somewhere in the Outer City.

### OUTLANDER ORIGINS

Foreigners of all kinds come to Baldur's Gate daily, drawn by countless reasons from countless lands. The Outlander Origins table provides ideas for how your character might have come to Baldur's Gate.

## OUTLANDER ORIGINS

### d6 Origin

- 1 Someone stole something precious from your people. You tracked the thief to the city gates, but finding clues in an urban environment is very different from tracking someone across the wilderness. You don't know where to go from here, but your people need you to succeed.
- 2 You've always been fascinated by the glitter and glamor of city life, so different from the slow pace of life in your homeland. Now you're here, ready to make your mark in the world, but unsure how to begin.
- 3 War, plague, famine, or a marauding monster ravaged your home, forcing you to flee for your life. You don't even know how many of your people survived or where to find them. Alone or accompanied by a handful of equally bereft survivors, you must navigate a new life that you never asked for.
- 4 You were captured by kidnappers and taken far from your home. The Knights of the Unicorn freed you and brought you here, but now you're on your own.
- 5 You were exiled for breaking a trivial-seeming taboo. For this seemingly minor transgression, you lost your friends, family, and homeland in one fell swoop, and were given little choice but to strike out on your own.
- 6 A peddler once brought something astonishing to your homeland—a Gondan clockwork, shimmering cloth of gold, a trained speaking bird, or some other small wonder—and told you that it came from Baldur's Gate. You've come to see the source of such wonders, and perhaps learn to create them.

## SAGE

Baldur's Gate has a modest academic community centered around the libraries of the High Hall and the various temples dedicated to gods of learning and innovation. Lecturers, researchers, and historians all participate with passing scholars from Candlekeep in a lively exchange of ideas, debating and collaborating in book-filled halls across the Upper and Lower City. The city is also rife with opportunities for arcane study, although its masters are dispersed across individual wizards' abodes and lack concentrated communities.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: RUMOR MONGER

Via your personal rumor mill and articles published in Baldur's Mouth, you can surmise a great deal about Baldurians' secrets—who's practicing necromancy, who's involved in spying or smuggling, who would purchase or craft dangerous magical wares without batting an eyelash. Whenever a noteworthy crime or mysterious happening occurs in the city, you immediately have a list of 1d4 suspects who, if they aren't involved, have a strong chance of knowing who is.

## SAILOR

Baldur's Gate was founded by sailors, and its harbor is still the city's beating heart. Several patriars are descended from captains of yore, the commerce of the Lower City is built on the port, and even the Outer City's rhythms are dominated by the ebb and flow of river trade. Because sailors are as fundamental and ubiquitous to Baldur's Gate as the cobbles on its streets, characters with this background are common.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: SMUGGLER'S SENSE

You're familiar with the docks of Baldur's Gate, the movement of inspectors and tax collectors, the way cargo and coin flows. As a result, it's easy for you to hustle a load of cargo ashore or see such a cargo onto a cooperative ship without attracting suspicion or taxation. You also know the movements of the Gray Wavers—the Flaming Fist harbor guards—and have a sense of how to operate the city's mechanized cranes.

## SOLDIER

Mercenaries, private guards, Watch soldiers, and members of the Flaming Fist number among just a few of the many soldiers on the streets of Baldur's Gate.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: CITY GUARD

You may choose to currently serve in either the Flaming Fist or the Watch. If you do, you have responsibilities related to your post. For as long as you perform these responsibilities, you gain benefits. If you stop performing your responsibilities, though, you lose access to the benefits and might suffer further fallout. Should you lose these benefits, you may regain them by having an unpleasant conversation with your commanding officer and fulfilling your responsibilities for a month.

**Flaming Fist.** If you serve in the Flaming Fist, once every ten days, you must report to the Seatower of Balduran for training, and you're required to take a regular shift patrolling either the Lower City or the Outer City. In return, you have access to the Flaming Fist's fortresses and a direct line of communication with Flaming Fist officers and other soldiers. You can also pass through the city's gates without question—although you can't bring guests into the Upper City as a member of the Watch might. Additionally, you're always welcome at the Three Old Kegs, where the Three Old Toads are glad to greet you with a smile and a mug of ale.

**The Watch.** If you serve in the Watch, you're required to conduct a regular patrol in the Upper City or take a regular shift at its gates, and must report for training in the Watch Citadel once every ten days. In return, you have access to the Citadel and a direct line of communication with Watch officers and officials. Your word carries considerable weight in the High Hall, and most establishments in the Citadel Streets neighborhood are happy to give you and your friends free meals. Additionally, you can escort people into the Upper City without question, regardless of whether they are patriars or have Watch tokens. Outside the Upper City, however, most people regard you with suspicion, and you generally get a chilly reception while in uniform.



### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: LOYALTY TEST

You've had enough dealings with crooked soldiers that you can spot the behaviors common to corrupt guards and military officers a mile away. While awareness of such corruption doesn't equate to evidence of it, and your sense certainly isn't foolproof, your instinct proves a useful starting point when determining who might take a bribe, who might turn a blind eye to a crime, or who might have criminal connections. You can also use this sense to get a feeling about who might fulfill their duties strictly by the book.

## URCHIN

Bands of orphans and runaways band together in the Outer City, running after passersby in ragged throngs to plead for scraps. In the Lower City, urchins are often recruited into the lowest echelons of the Guild or pressed into dirty and dangerous work by unscrupulous masters.

### BALDUR'S GATE FEATURE: GATEGUIDE CONNECTION

Even though you might not be a member of the Gateguides crew, you've associated with enough of them that you know their torch-based code. From the lighting, placement, and type of torch arranged on or near a structure, you can gather a great deal of information about those who live or do business there, particularly if they deal fairly with strangers, have Guild or government connections, or have either helped or denied the Gateguides in the past.

# DARK SECRETS

During character creation, once players have developed their own characters, they should collectively choose a dark secret shared by the entire party. Every member of the party is entangled in this dark secret, regardless of how new they are to the city or how incorruptible their morals. Maybe they're merely witnesses, maybe they're covering for a friend's crimes, or maybe they're deep in denial. Regardless, in the eyes of the law, they're guilty. Each dark secret shares a number of elements. Players should work with you, the DM, to customize these particulars to their group.

At least one NPC in Baldur's Gate knows the party's dark secret. Use the "Who Knows?" table to determine the identity of this NPC, or use another NPC of your choice. The NPC might use the information to blackmail the characters or push them toward a course of action.

## WHO KNOWS?

### d8 NPC

- 1 Captain Zodge (see page 12)
- 2 Duke Thalamra Vanthampur (see page 38)
- 3 Thurstwell Vanthampur (see page 34)
- 4 Amrik Vanthampur (see page 30)
- 5 Mortlock Vanthampur (see page 26)
- 6 Falaster Fisk (see page 40)
- 7 Nine-Fingers Keene (see page 170)
- 8 Ultiss (see page 27)

## CONSPIRACY IN BALDUR'S GATE

The characters are all that's left of a group that strove to change Baldur's Gate and failed. Now the city's leaders or other powerful figures seek to stamp out the last motes of their movement. Perhaps they were rebels, or members of a union or some clandestine organization. Regardless, their rivals didn't get where they are by being oblivious or merciful.

### CONSPIRACY DETAILS

Opportunities to subvert minds and deeds exist throughout Baldur's Gate. When an opportunity presented itself, the characters seized on one in particular. Define the particulars of their conspiracy, either by having the players craft their own or by rolling on the Conspiracy Details table.

### CONSPIRACY DETAILS

#### d4 Conspiracy Details

- 1 Working amid the High Hall's records, you came to realize just how little separated commoners from patriars. Slowly you worked to upend the old families' control over the city—but then someone noticed.
- 2 You knew something powerful lurked within Mandorci's Mansion. You and others sought the tools and rites to prod the power within, to draw it out and make it yours. But what lies within the mansion refuses to ever serve again.

#### d4 Conspiracy Details

- 3 Too long has the Guild monopolized control over criminal operations in Baldur's Gate. You sought to add a little competition and break the Guild's monopoly. It was going well after your last heist, too—until the Guild came for its cut.
- 4 You and the other revolutionaries of Whitkeep Hostel sought nothing less than a new, egalitarian future for Baldur's Gate—a future that neither the dukes nor the patriars can envision. Someone clearly had enough of your art and shouted slogans, though.

## ROLES IN THE CONSPIRACY

Each character plays a role in the conspiracy, determined by rolling on the Conspiracy: Character Roles table or choosing an appropriate entry.

## CONSPIRACY: CHARACTER ROLES

### d6 Character's Role

- 1 **Leader.** Yours was the voice the others followed, the call they heeded, following you to their end.
- 2 **Survivor.** You should have fallen with the rest of your group, but fate interceded. Now you're a loose end.
- 3 **Partner.** You knew little of the conspiracy, but your partner, family member, or associate did. Now they're gone, and you're next.
- 4 **Innocent.** You knew nothing of the conspiracy. That matters little to those stamping it out, though.
- 5 **Affiliate.** You worked with the conspirators but weren't a member—a detail that only matters to you.
- 6 **Witness.** You got a glimpse of what happened to your fellow conspirators and the fate that awaits you.

## CONSPIRACY CONSEQUENCES

Determine the challenge currently facing the characters by rolling on the Conspiracy Consequences table below or by having the players devise other grim consequences of their conspiracy.

## CONSPIRACY CONSEQUENCES

### d6 Conspiracy Consequences

- 1 The other members of your group were arrested, rightfully or otherwise. Now you're on the run.
- 2 Your group's meeting place burned, slaying all inside. Only by happenstance did you survive. You're sure it wasn't an accident, though.
- 3 The other members of your group have been murdered, slain in some distinctive way.
- 4 None of the other members of your conspiracy remember you or have any memory of being aligned with you.
- 5 The other members of your group betrayed you to save themselves.
- 6 The other conspirators vanished, disappearing one at a time and without a trace.

## MURDER IN BALDUR'S GATE

There's blood on the characters' hands. They all had a part to play in a murder—justified or not. Shared guilt, coercion, and fear keep the secret between them.

### MURDER DETAILS

Did they kill for justice or just for the thrill? Define the particulars of the murder, either by letting the players craft their own or by rolling on the Murder Details table.

### MURDER DETAILS

#### d6 Murder Details

- 1 She knew, which meant tomorrow every pastry-loving patrion in Baldur's Gate would too. The Upper City's most notorious gossip, Ellyn Harbreeze of Harbreeze Bakery, had to be dealt with. Who knew a bakery could be so dangerous?
- 2 Revenge will come for the sadistic Nysene Eomane eventually. You thought you'd have a hand in it—you exacted your plan perfectly. But your snare caught another. Now Dolandre Eomane lies dead, while the intended target yet lives.
- 3 Doctor Holk Thinstar jeopardized lives every night he worked at Cliffgate Hospital. Who knows how many were crippled on Thinstar's table or died under his inexpert knife. For them, you put an end to Thinstar's practice for good.
- 4 The first step to healing is admitting you have a problem. The second is seeing your abusive dealer bleeding out on the floor. Jopalin, of the teahouse of the same name, had it coming, and you haven't felt the moonflower itch since.
- 5 You were only protecting your own—in a way. Olten Grinn of Cliffside Cemetery's Gravemakers was going to put a mace through your grandpappy's skull. You put one through his first. It was the right thing to do. After all, grandpappy never asked to be a ghoul.
- 6 They should call it justice. Jedren Hiller, Bailiff of the Wide, had preyed on desperate business owners for years, growing fatter and richer every day. Fate gave you the opportunity. You're a hero, but no one cheered.

### ROLES IN THE MURDER

Each character plays a role in the murder, determined by rolling on the Murder: Character Roles table or choosing an appropriate entry.

### MURDER: CHARACTER ROLES

#### d4 Character's Role

- 1 **Murderer.** Via a blade, a shove, or deliberate inaction, you took a life.
- 2 **Bystander.** You could have prevented a death. You chose not to.
- 3 **Instigator.** You're the architect of someone's demise, your words spreading death.
- 4 **Liar.** You know what happened, but didn't tell.



### MURDER CONSEQUENCES

People are talking. Members of the Watch, the Flaming Fist, the Guild, or others are asking questions. If they find out what the characters did, their trial will be short and their deaths will be just. Determine the fallout of the characters' murderous deeds by rolling on the Murder Consequences table, or allow the players to create their own ominous stakes.

### MURDER CONSEQUENCES

#### d6 Murder Consequences

- 1 You're not sure who, but someone saw the murder and has turned your names over to the law. Now you're wanted fugitives, your faces and names plastered on posters throughout the city.
- 2 Someone associated with your victim wants revenge—the sort the law won't provide.
- 3 Your victim won't stay dead, having fought their way back from death to take vengeance.
- 4 Your victim was a member of a larger organization, such as the Guild. This organization refuses to let the killing go unanswered.
- 5 Somehow, your victim is still alive and knows what you did. Now you've got to figure out how to put them down a second time.
- 6 Your victim's death ignited a social spark. Now you're being sought by mobs seeking to bring new justice to Baldur's Gate.

## THEFT IN BALDUR'S GATE

The characters broke the law by stealing something valuable. The question is, did the characters perpetrate the theft because they needed or wanted something, or because they didn't want someone else to have it?

### THEFT DETAILS

Define the particulars of the party's theft, either by having the players craft their own or by rolling on the Theft Details table.

### THEFT DETAILS

#### d6 Theft Details

- 1 You did it for the prestige as much as the money. It took months to plan and even longer to get everyone into place. The High Hall is locked down tight every evening. Its crypts less so. Now a priceless treasure of the city, the spyglass of Balduran himself, is yours.
- 2 With the help of an inside man, you purloined money from the Counting House, the most secure bank in Baldur's Gate. With the bank's reputation at stake, you know the Honorable Order of Moneylenders won't rest until the money is returned to its rightful owners and the thieves are brought to justice.
- 3 Dangerous goods mean hazard pay. You stole four kegs of *smokepowder* from Felogyr's Fireworks and sold them to a gang of revolutionaries. Your pay is already spent, but the fireworks have yet to begin.
- 4 Stealing a night's worth of earnings from the Low Lantern, a ship-turned-tavern and gambling den, proved to be quite a feat. You didn't think you left any loose ends, but now a gang of kenku killers haunts your trail and your nightmares.
- 5 It seemed like buried treasure—a collection of strange, topaz-eyed statues hidden deep in the Riverveins. You absconded with them, but now the smugglers who stole them first want their booty back. They don't know who took them, but they know you're involved from a clue you inadvertently left behind.
- 6 Both the Guild and Little Calimshan's Right Pashas wanted it—such a little thing, a vial that could hold no more than a few perfume drops. It spoke to you, though. You could hear it in your mind. You knew it needed to be free. But now that it is, you can't bring yourself to open it.

### ROLES IN THE THEFT

Each character plays a role in the theft, determined by rolling on the Theft: Character Roles table or choosing an appropriate entry.

### THEFT: CHARACTER ROLES

#### d6 Character's Role

- 1 **Breaker.** Force is your specialty, whether your breaking through a wall or breaking bones.
- 2 **Burglar.** It was theirs, but all you had to do was reach out to make it yours.
- 3 **Distraction.** While all eyes were on you, your friends were making off with the goods.
- 4 **Lockpicker.** Every lock is just a puzzle to be mastered.
- 5 **Lookout.** Watching out for trouble is the best way to avoid it.
- 6 **Mole.** You knew the job inside out, particularly because you were on the inside all along.

### THEFT CONSEQUENCES

Determine how the characters' heist turned out by rolling on the Theft Consequences or having the players determine the consequences of their dubious enterprise.

### THEFT CONSEQUENCES

#### d6 Theft Consequences

- 1 The owner of what you stole got the authorities involved. Now they're offering a reward for your capture.
- 2 Another group of thieves is after you now, trying to claim what you stole.
- 3 What you stole wasn't what you thought. You want to get rid of it, but that's become a problem—especially since it's grown, hatched, or started talking.
- 4 Everyone wants what you have. Multiple dangerous groups have approached you to buy it, and will be offended if you sell to anyone else.
- 5 What you stole belonged to someone other than your intended mark. Now a deadly organization such as the Guild is after you.
- 6 You were caught! The owner demands their property's return, threatening death or worse, but it's already been taken from you.

## FAILED COUP IN BALDUR'S GATE

The characters schemed with others to seize power and failed, revealing their ambition and treachery. The dark deed can be something as small as attempting to gain control of a patriarch house, to something on a much grander scale, such as trying to unseat a duke, seize control of the Guild, or topple the Flaming Fist.

### FAILED COUP DETAILS

Define the particulars of the failed coup, either by having the players craft their own or by rolling on the Failed Coup Details table.

### FAILED COUP DETAILS

#### d4 Failed Coup Details

- 1 Your patriarch parents seemed like relics. Their days of leading the family and its business holdings were long past. With the help of their partners, you sought to seize your family's holdings, but you underestimated the cunning that comes with age.
- 2 A patriarch promised you riches or something else of value if you helped remove Duke Dillard Portyr from power, creating a vacancy on the Council of Four. Your plot to blackmail the duke into retirement backfired when a rival of the treacherous patriarch learned of the plot. Will the patriarch give you up to save themselves?
- 3 Nine-Fingers Keene thinks she has the Guild under her thumb, but various kingpins are plotting against her. The Guild will descend into violence unless it has a strong leader. You knew that Nine-Fingers wasn't going to step down willingly. Scaring her into retirement seemed like the only humane thing to do, but she refused to take the hint. Now she and the kingpins have it out for you.
- 4 The Flaming Fist is corrupt. You turned against your commanding officer, seeking to take the Fist in a new direction. Now you're branded a traitor.

### ROLES IN THE FAILED COUP

Each character plays a role in the failed coup, determined by rolling on the Failed Coup: Character Roles table or choosing an appropriate entry.

### FAILED COUP: CHARACTER ROLES

#### d6 Character's Role

- 1 **Facilitator.** You wouldn't benefit directly from the new power structure, but you'd benefit enough.
- 2 **Beneficiary.** This was your chance for glory. Your chance to rise above them all.
- 3 **Voyeur.** You should have prevented the power grab from happening. Your inaction makes you culpable.
- 4 **Opportunist.** You saw the opening and shared it with those who'd help you take advantage of the situation.
- 5 **Patsy.** You might have been tricked into helping, but you helped all the same.
- 6 **Traitor.** You'd been looking for chance to lay your ally or superior low. You thought this was it.

## FAILED COUP CONSEQUENCES

Those opposed to the attempted coup didn't take the characters' treachery lightly. Determine how the coup's intended target turned the tables on the characters by rolling on the Failed Coup Consequences table or crafting some worse situation.

### FAILED COUP CONSEQUENCES

#### d6 Failed Coup Consequences

- 1 You've been ousted by the same group you sought to subvert. They've taken everything from you, and they plan to take more.
- 2 The whole opportunity was a set-up! Now your former target is conducting a campaign of retribution against you.
- 3 You were a moment too late. A rival swept in and deposed your target. Now you're all that stands between them and total control.
- 4 Your target had allies you didn't realize—interests from outside the city that now seek reprisal.
- 5 Your efforts were rebuked handily. You didn't realize your target had such a weapon at their disposal, but now they're using it to hunt you down.
- 6 One of your own ratted you out. Now you're all being hunted, but one of you is a traitor among traitors.



# APPENDIX A: DIABOLICAL DEALS

A hallmark of devils is their delight in striking deals with mortals. These deals are more than mere agreements; they are cosmically binding exchanges in which a devil grants a mortal character some measure of power for a price. Once an agreement is reached, the deal is sealed with a binding contract, which both parties must sign.

A devil's ultimate goal is to claim mortal souls. If it can't get a mortal's soul in one fell swoop, the devil tries to take it one little piece at a time by encouraging the mortal to commit evil acts and thereby condemning the mortal's soul to the Nine Hells.

Infernal deals are enforced by the weight of the multiverse itself, by the very essence of the forces of Law and Evil. Devils channel this essence through the infernal hierarchy that governs their existence. Devils higher up in the hierarchy can leverage more potent deals and offer more enticing gifts.

Least devils can't enter into deals. Lesser and greater devils can enter into deals either for themselves or as an intermediary for their infernal superiors. Archdevils are the only devils able to freely deal with creatures outside the Nine Hells, usually when mortals invoke them to beg their favor.

## ENTERING INTO A DEAL

Despite their thirst for trapping mortal souls in binding contracts, devils can enter into deals only in specific circumstances. The easiest way for a devil to forge a deal is to do so within the Nine Hells, where it's closer to the infernal hierarchy and can more easily channel its power. Elsewhere in the multiverse, most devils are too removed from their power structure to enter into binding deals without some extraordinary circumstances.

A deal consists of a proposal that covers the terms each party expects, and a contract that seals the deal and makes it binding.

Lesser and greater devils can't freely make deals outside of their home plane, but there are ways it can be done. If a summoner on another plane knows a devil's true name or has its talisman (as described in "Devil True Names and Talismans" in the *Monster Manual*), instead of binding the devil into service, the summoner can create a ritual circle that allows the devil to forge a deal. Once the deal is sealed with a contract, the devil returns to the Nine Hells.

An archdevil who wishes to make a deal with a character can do so in person or send a minion to propose the deal and negotiate on its behalf. A character can also contact an archdevil by killing a chaotic- or good-aligned humanoid and praying to the archdevil over the course of 1 hour. The archdevil hears the character's prayer and can choose to respond in dreams or visions, or it can send a minion with the authority to make a deal on its behalf.

## INFERNAL HIERARCHY

Least Devils	Greater Devils
1. Lemure	10. Orthon
2. Nupperibo	11. Horned devil
	12. Erinyes
Lesser Devils	13. Narzugon
3. Imp	14. Ice devil
4. Spined devil	15. Amnizu
5. Bearded devil	16. Pit fiend
6. Merregon	
7. Barbed devil	
8. Chain devil	17. Duke or duchess
9. Bone devil	18. Archduke or archduchess

## PROPOSAL

Diabolical deals start with either the devil or the character broaching the subject and offering something. The terms of the deal require, at a minimum, the devil to offer a gift and the character to agree to a price. If the terms aren't acceptable to either party, they can negotiate and try to sweeten the deal by offering more valuable terms, or simply walk away. Not every deal is meant to be.

If the price is anything less than the character's soul, a devil often stipulates a penalty in the event the character fails to meet the deal's price.

Once both parties agree to the terms, they seal the deal with a physical contract, which can take one of many forms (see "Infernal Contracts," page 214).

## ABILITY CHECKS AND DEAL-MAKING

Most deals with devils can be resolved without rolling dice to determine the outcome. A Charisma check can't deceive or persuade most devils into a bad deal because the fiends are too clever and experienced in deal-making to be fooled. If devils do get involved in a deal that sounds too good to be true or is confusing, they're likely to pause negotiations while they ask smarter devils for their opinions on the deal.

The following ability checks can be made during deal-making:

- If a devil attempts to deceive a character at the deal-making stage, the devil can make a Charisma (Deception) check opposed by the character's Wisdom (Insight) check. If the character's check result is higher than the devil's, the character sees through the devil's deception.
- Devils like to slip extra clauses into the fine print of a contract. When this happens, a character who can read Infernal can make an Intelligence (Investigation) check opposed by the devil's Charisma (Deception) check. If the character's check result is higher than the devil's, the character detects the extra clauses in the fine print and can have them removed before the contract is signed.



## WHAT DEVILS WANT

A devil wants souls, as every soul that it acquires brings the devil one step closer to its next promotion. If a character wants something from a devil but isn't willing to trade their soul, the devil might ask the character to perform a service for it instead. Archdevils are also fond of making mortals swear fealty to them.

### SOULS

When characters give up their souls to devils, they are promising to serve in the Nine Hells as devils themselves after death. Once promised to a devil, a character's soul can't be claimed by another creature.

### SERVICES

A devil that can't claim a character's soul might demand a service by way of compensation. Such services drive the character toward committing evil or morally questionable acts designed to make the character more amenable to darker deals in the future. Here are a few examples:

- Without using magical coercion, the character must convince another mortal to enter into an infernal contract with the devil.
- The character is told about a plague, an invasion, or other calamity that the devil has orchestrated, but must do nothing to affect the outcome.
- The character must steal a holy relic from a good-aligned temple and deliver it to the devil or one of its subordinates.

### FEALTY (ARCHDEVILS)

Archdevils prize fealty almost as much as souls. One way in which a mortal can demonstrate fealty to an archdevil is to lead a religious cult devoted to the archdevil or perform heinous acts in the archdevil's name. A character can also enter into an agreement to serve the archdevil as a warlock. Such a character must take at least one level in the warlock class, choosing the Fiend (represented in this case by the archdevil) as their otherworldly patron.

## WHAT DEVILS OFFER

The limits of what a devil can offer are determined by its status in the infernal hierarchy. The Infernal Hierarchy table lists devils in ascending order of power, from lowly lemures to the mighty archdukes and archduchesses. (The orthon is included in this table for the sake of completeness, though orthons don't appear in this adventure or in the *Monster Manual*. You can find out more about them in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*.)

Devils like to tempt mortals with treasure and magic items. Magic items bestowed by devils usually have a devilish cast to them. They're made of infernal iron, bear Infernal script, give off faint wails of torment, smell of brimstone, or have some other telltale sign (see the What Quirk Does It Have? table in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for examples).

Devils might also agree to serve mortals for a time, acting as advisors and bodyguards.

## LESSER DEVILS

A lesser devil can offer any or all of the following:

- Up to 500 gp worth of art objects, coins, or gems
- An uncommon magic item
- Loyal service for a period not exceeding nine years

## GREATER DEVILS

A greater devil can offer any or all of the following:

- Up to 5,000 gp worth of art objects, coins, or gems
- An uncommon or rare magic item
- Loyal service for a period not exceeding nine days

## ARCHDEVILS

An archdevil can offer any or all of the following:

- Up to 50,000 gp worth of art objects, coins, gems, or property
- An uncommon, rare, or very rare magic item
- A valuable piece of information that can't be acquired by any other means
- A single task that the archdevil or one of its minions can complete within the next nine days
- A supernatural gift manifesting as a charm (see "Supernatural Gifts" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and "Archdevil Charms," page 215)
- The benefit of a *wish* spell (with no exhaustion for using an effect other than duplicating another spell)

## INFERNAL CONTRACTS

Once the devil and the character agree to the terms of a deal, the agreement must be sealed with a contract, which the devil can produce as an action. The contract often appears in some theatrical manner; for example, it might arrive in a puff of smoke, accompanied by a fiendish cackle or an imp waving a sparkler.

Contracts take a variety of forms, with the terms of the deal written out in Infernal, and are made binding in one of several ways, ranging from a simple signature to a revolting act. Once all concerned parties perform the actions necessary to enter the contract, the deal is struck. The character who struck the deal gains the benefits of the devil's gift and is bound to pay the price.

## BREACH OF CONTRACT

A character bound by an infernal contract who fails to pay the price specified in the contract immediately suffers a penalty for breaching the contract, as specified in the contract itself. Common penalties include the following:

- The character's soul is forfeit when the character dies (that is, the character is reborn in the Nine Hells as a lemure).
- The character loses all monetary wealth and property, or a powerful magic item (determined by the DM), to the devil.
- The character grows horns, a tail, or some other devilish features that can't be removed by any means short of divine intervention (though illusions or disguises can conceal them). As long as these marks persist, the character detects as a fiend when subjected to *detect evil* and *good* spells or similar magic.

- The character gains a new flaw. A character who exhibits behavior inconsistent with this flaw has disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws until the behavior changes to match the flaw.

## VOIDING A CONTRACT

Voiding an infernal contract releases all parties from its terms without penalty, as if the deal never happened. Any gifts or prices revert immediately, though some contracts might leave a scar or other lasting effect.

The devil and the character who signed the contract must both agree to void the terms of the contract. As an action, the devil magically produces the contract. When both parties state their agreement to terminate it, the contract crumbles to dust and is destroyed.

Devils require compensation in exchange for voiding a contract. Some cowardly devils might be willing to void a contract in exchange for their lives, but most would rather risk death than demotion to a lower form of devil and the scorn of its peers.

A devil might be persuaded to void a contract in exchange for one of the following:

- One or more *soul coins* (lesser devils will often settle for three, greater devils for nine, and archdevils have no interest in such a paltry alternative)
- An exorbitant sum of gold plus the sacrifice of many humanoids in the devil's name
- A powerful artifact, such as the *Hand of Vecna* or the *Sword of Zariel*

## CONTRACT FORMS

The Contract Forms table has examples of different forms of infernal contracts. The sections that follow the table describe the various contracts and the means by which they can be destroyed and voided.

### CONTRACT FORMS

#### d6 Contract Form

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Baby dolls        |
| 2 | Damned wretch     |
| 3 | Infernal scroll   |
| 4 | Lemure kiss       |
| 5 | Song of the devil |
| 6 | Written in stone  |

**Baby Dolls.** The devil produces two baby dolls made of dirty rags or rotting wood. The dolls recite the deal in high-pitched voices (in Infernal) and spew blood when they are hugged. To enter the contract, the devil and the character making the deal must each hug a doll. When the contract is finalized, the devil keeps one doll and the character keeps the other.

To void such a contract, each doll must be destroyed within 1 minute of the other. Failure to destroy the second doll in the allotted time causes the first doll to re-form after 1 minute. Each doll is a Tiny object with AC 9, 9 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

**Damned Wretch.** A portal opens, and a humanoid bound in chains with its eyes and mouth sewn shut stumbles through it. This individual is likely someone

who breached their own infernal contract and is now paying the price. The terms of the deal are carved into the poor wretch's skin. To enter the contract, the devil and the character who made the deal carves their names into the wretch, who is then promptly banished.

Use the **commoner** stat block to represent the wretch, who is blinded while its eyes are sewn shut. Once the contract is signed by both parties, the wretch no longer ages or needs food, drink, air, or sleep, and it gains immunity to all damage that isn't dealt by the devil or the character who made the deal. If the wretch dies, the contract is void.

**Infernal Scroll.** The devil produces a vellum scroll with the deal written on it in blood. To enter the contract, the devil and the character making the deal sign the scroll in their own blood, or that of a humanoid who has been dead for no longer than 1 minute. Immediately after it's signed by both parties, the contract vanishes to a secure location in the Nine Hells.

Burning the scroll voids the contract. It's immune to all other damage and harm.

**Lemure Kiss.** The devil summons a **lemure** with the deal printed in glowing runes on its lumpy flesh. To enter the contract, the devil and character making the deal must kiss the lemure. When that happens, the lemure is transformed into a stone statue with the deal visible on the surface. The statue then vanishes to the depths of the Nine Hells.

The statue is a Medium object with AC 17, 50 hit points, and immunity to all damage except radiant damage. No spell can turn it back into a lemure. Destroying the statue voids the contract.

**Song of the Devil.** The devil produces sheet music with the deal written on it. To enter the contract, the devil and the character making the deal must sing or play the discordant song, which remains stuck in their heads until the deal is fulfilled.

Soaking the sheet music in holy water destroys and voids the contract, and causes the character and the devil to lose the ability to speak. A *greater restoration* spell or similar magic ends the effect on its recipient.

**Written in Stone.** A swell of lava oozes from a crack in the ground and quickly cools into rock. The deal appears as glowing script on the hardening lava. To enter the contract, the devil and the character making the deal must each place their left hand into the lava, which doesn't harm them, and leave a hand-shaped imprint in the stone. The slab of cooled lava then vanishes to a place of safekeeping.

If the left hands of both the devil and the character who struck the deal are severed and placed into the handprints, the hands and the contract are destroyed, which also voids the contract.

## ARCHDEVIL CHARMS

Charms are supernatural gifts described in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Archdevils and their appointed vassals can bestow such gifts on mortals, usually to entice them into signing an infernal contract. This section describes several new charms that archdevils and their vassals can bestow.

### CHARM OF AGELESSNESS

While you have this charm, you don't age naturally, and your skin gains the waxy complexion of a doll. Magical aging still affects you, however. This charm vanishes from you when you die.

### CHARM OF DIABOLICAL INSPIRATION

You grow a short, vestigial tail when you receive this charm unless you have a tail already. When you make an ability check, an attack roll, or a saving throw, you can use this charm to gain advantage on the roll. Once used nine times, the charm vanishes from you, as does your vestigial tail.

### CHARM OF GREATER CONSCRIPTION

While you have this charm, you attract flies. As an action, you activate this charm to summon a **horned devil**. This devil appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of you, obeys your commands begrudgingly, and serves you under protest for 9 days or until it dies, whereupon it disappears. When the devil disappears, this charm vanishes from you.

### CHARM OF HELLISH REBUKE

A fiery halo appears above your head when you receive this charm. This charm allows you to cast the *hellish rebuke* spell (9th-level version) as a reaction. Once used nine times, the charm vanishes from you, as does the fiery halo.

### CHARM OF LESSER CONSCRIPTION

While you have this charm, you attract flies. As an action, you activate this charm to summon a **barbed devil**, two **bearded devils**, or three **spined devils**. All devils appear at once in unoccupied spaces within 30 feet of you. Each devil obeys your commands and serves you eagerly for 9 days or until it dies, whereupon the devil disappears. Once all devils summoned by this charm disappear, the charm vanishes from you.

### CHARM OF MANY TONGUES

You can speak and understand all languages, you gain proficiency in the Deception and Persuasion skills, and you can add double your normal proficiency bonus when using those skills. This charm vanishes from you when you die.

### CHARM OF THE ADAMANT

This charm has 9 charges. You can use an action to expend 1 charge from the charm to gain 30 temporary hit points. For the next hour, your eyes become voids of utter darkness, and you can't be charmed or frightened. Once all its charges have been expended, the charm vanishes from you.

# APPENDIX B: INFERNAL WAR MACHINES

Infernal war machines are vehicles built in the Nine Hells and fueled by the souls of the damned. Smaller war machines carry raiding parties or scouts. Larger, more menacing war machines can crush entire hordes of demons or deliver shock troops behind enemy lines.

Infernal war machines are made of infernal iron and bristle with spikes, blades, chains, and siege weapons. An infernal war machine's engine roars a bass, growling rumble with an undertone of agonized screams as its furnace burns souls for fuel.

This appendix includes stat blocks for infernal war machines, rules for running and repairing them, and guidelines for handling chases in Avernus.

## STAT BLOCKS

Stat blocks for four sample infernal war machines are presented in this appendix. An infernal war machine's statistics function like those for creatures, with the following additional considerations.

### CREATURE AND CARGO CAPACITY

Creature capacity describes how many creatures can ride the infernal war machine comfortably. More creatures can fit by squeezing or by clinging to the outside of the vehicle.

Cargo capacity specifies how much cargo the infernal war machine can carry.

### ARMOR CLASS

An infernal war machine is typically made of infernal iron and has an Armor Class of  $19 + \text{its Dexterity modifier}$ . While the vehicle is not moving, attack rolls made against it have advantage.

### ABILITY SCORES

An infernal war machine has the six ability scores and corresponding modifiers. Its size and weight determines its Strength. Dexterity represents its handling and maneuverability. A vehicle's Constitution reflects its durability and quality of construction. Infernal war machines usually have a score of 0 in Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

If an infernal war machine has a 0 in a score, it automatically fails any ability check or saving throw that uses that score.

### HIT POINTS

An infernal war machine's hit points can be restored by making repairs to the vehicle (see "Repairs," page 220). When an infernal war machine drops to 0 hit points, it ceases to function and is damaged beyond repair, and any souls trapped in the vehicle's furnace are released to the afterlife (see "Soul Fuel," page 217).

### DAMAGE THRESHOLD

Infernal war machines have bulk or armor that allows them to shrug off minor hits. A vehicle with a damage threshold has immunity to all damage unless it takes an amount of damage equal to or greater than its damage threshold value, in which case it takes damage as normal. Any damage that fails to meet or exceed the vehicle's damage threshold is considered superficial and doesn't reduce the vehicle's hit points.

### MISHAP THRESHOLD

If an infernal war machine takes damage from a single source equal to or greater than its mishap threshold, it must roll on the Mishaps table (page 220).

### ACTIONS STATIONS AND CREW

An infernal war machine doesn't have actions of its own. It relies on crew to occupy stations and use their actions to operate the vehicle's various functions. Any option that appears in the Action Stations section of an infernal war machine's stat block requires an action to perform.

### RULES

Rules for infernal war machines are summarized below.

### MAGICAL ELEMENTS

An infernal war machine's engine, furnace, and weapons are magical and become inoperable within an antimagic field. When the engine or furnace comes into contact with such an effect, the infernal war machine shuts down and can't be restarted until both the engine and the furnace are free of the field.

### OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

Infernal war machines provoke opportunity attacks as normal. When an infernal war machine provokes an opportunity attack, the attacker can target the vehicle or any creature riding on or inside it that doesn't have total cover and is within reach.

### ACTION STATIONS

A creature can use an action of the station it's occupying. Once a creature uses a station's action, that action can't be used again until the start of that creature's next turn. Only one creature can occupy each station.

A creature not occupying an action station is either in a passenger seat or clinging to the outside of the vehicle. It can take actions as normal.

### HELM

The helm of an infernal war machine is a chair with a wheel, levers, pedals, and other controls. The helm requires a driver to operate. An infernal war machine with no driver automatically fails Dexterity saving throws.

A driver proficient with land vehicles can add its proficiency bonus to ability checks and saving throws made using the infernal war machine's ability scores.



DEVIL'S RIDE



DEMON GRINDER



SCAVENGER



TORMENTOR

**Drive.** While the infernal war machine's engine is on, the driver can use an action to propel the vehicle up to its speed or bring the vehicle to a dead stop. While the vehicle is moving, the driver can steer it along any course.

If the driver is incapacitated, leaves the helm, or does nothing to alter the infernal war machine's course and speed, the vehicle moves in the same direction and at the same speed as it did during the driver's last turn until it hits an obstacle big enough to stop it.

**Bonus Actions.** As a bonus action, the driver can do one of the following:

- Start the infernal war machine's engine or shut it off.
- Cause the infernal war machine to take the Dash or Disengage action while the vehicle's engine is running.
- Insert a *soul coin* or pour a flask of demon ichor into the engine's furnace (see "Soul Fuel" and "Demon Ichor Boost" below).

#### WEAPON STATIONS

Each of an infernal war machine's weapons takes up a station on the vehicle.

One weapon can be replaced with another (see "Alternative Weapon Stations," page 221), provided the crew requirement needed to operate the replacement weapon is the same.

#### SOUL FUEL

The engine at the heart of every infernal war machine has a furnace fueled by *soul coins* (see page 225). Among the vehicle's helm controls is a narrow slot into which *soul coins* can be fed. *Soul coins* placed in this slot tumble into the furnace, which is two size categories smaller than the vehicle containing it.

An infernal war machine's furnace consumes a *soul coin* instantly, expending all the coin's remaining charges at once and destroying the coin in the process. The soul trapped in the coin becomes trapped in the furnace instead, powering the infernal war machine for a duration determined by how many charges the *soul coin* had when it was consumed: 1 charge, 24 hours; 2 charges, 48 hours; 3 charges, 72 hours. If it's still trapped in the furnace when this duration ends, the soul is destroyed. Not even divine intervention can restore a soul destroyed in this manner.

Regardless of its size, a furnace can hold any number of souls, their screams of anguish audible out to a range of 60 feet. Each new soul fed to the furnace adds more fuel to the vehicle, allowing it to run longer.

#### DEMON ICHOR BOOST

Pouring a flask of demon ichor into an infernal war machine's furnace increases the vehicle's speed by 30 feet for 1 minute. While the vehicle's speed is increased in this way, roll a d20 at the start of each of the driver's turns. On a 1, the vehicle suffers the Furnace Rupture result on the Mishaps table (page 220).

## DEVIL'S RIDE

A Devil's Ride is a two-wheeled infernal war machine that handles like a motorcycle. It has spiked wheels, a screaming engine, and a cowl shaped vaguely like a grinning devil's visage, with horns for handle bars. What the vehicle lacks in weapons, it makes up for with speed and maneuverability.

### DEVIL'S RIDE

*Large vehicle (500 lb.)*

**Creature Capacity** 1 Medium creature

**Cargo Capacity** 100 lb.

**Armor Class** 23 (19 while motionless)

**Hit Points** 30 (damage threshold 5, mishap threshold 10)

**Speed** 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	0	0	0

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

**Jump.** If the Devil's Ride moves at least 30 feet in a straight line, it can clear a distance of up to 60 feet when jumping over a chasm, ravine, or other gap. Each foot it clears on the jump costs a foot of movement.

**Prone Deficiency.** If the Devil's Ride falls prone, it can't right itself and is incapacitated until pulled upright.

**Stunt.** On its turn, the driver of the Devil's Ride can expend 10 feet of movement to perform one free vehicle stunt, such as a wheelie or a burnout. Before the stunt can be performed, the Devil's Ride must move at least 10 feet in a straight line. If the driver succeeds on DC 10 Dexterity check using the bike's Dexterity, the stunt is successful. Otherwise, the driver is unable to perform the stunt and can't attempt another stunt until the start of its next turn. If the check fails by 5 or more, the Devil's Ride and all creatures riding it immediately fall prone as the bike wipes out and comes to a dead stop.

### ACTION STATIONS

**Helm (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover).** Drive and steer the Devil's Ride.

### REACTIONS

**Juke.** If the Devil's Ride is able to move, the driver can use its reaction to grant the Devil's Ride advantage on a Dexterity saving throw.

## TORMENTOR

The Tormentor handles like a dune buggy and is designed for raiding and scouting. Bladed iron wheels drive the vehicle forward.

### TORMENTOR

*Huge vehicle (3,000 lb.)*

**Creature Capacity** 4 Medium creatures

**Cargo Capacity** 500 lb.

**Armor Class** 21 (19 while motionless)

**Hit Points** 60 (damage threshold 10, mishap threshold 20)

**Speed** 100 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	0	0	0

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

**Crushing Wheels.** The Tormentor can move through the space of any Medium or smaller creature. When it does, the creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the creature was already prone, it takes an extra 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage. This trait can't be used against a particular creature more than once each turn.

**Prone Deficiency.** If the Tormentor rolls over and falls prone, it can't right itself and is incapacitated until flipped upright.

**Magic Weapons.** The Tormentor's weapon attacks are magical.

**Raking Scythes.** When the Tormentor moves within 5 feet of a creature that isn't prone or another vehicle for the first time on a turn, it can rake the creature or vehicle with its protruding blades for 13 (2d10 + 2) slashing damage. A creature moves out of the way and takes no damage if it succeeds on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. A vehicle moves out of the way and takes no damage if its driver succeeds on the saving throw.

### ACTION STATIONS

**Helm (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Three-Quarters Cover).** Drive and steer the Tormentor.

**Harpoon Flinger (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover).** Ammunition: 10 harpoons. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Juke.** If the Tormentor is able to move, the driver can use its reaction to grant the Tormentor advantage on a Dexterity saving throw.

## DEMON GRINDER

A Demon Grinder is a bulky, armored coach that rumbles loudly as it crushes obstacles and enemies in its path with the help of a swinging wrecking ball. Iron jaws are mounted on the front of the vehicle, which handles like a garbage truck.

### DEMON GRINDER

Gargantuan vehicle (12,000 lb.)

**Creature Capacity** 8 Medium creatures

**Cargo Capacity** 1 ton

**Armor Class** 19

**Hit Points** 200 (damage threshold 10, mishap threshold 20)

**Speed** 100 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	0	0	0

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

**Crushing Wheels.** The Demon Grinder can move through the space of any Large or smaller creature. When it does, the creature must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the creature was already prone, it takes an extra 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage. This trait can't be used against a particular creature more than once each turn.

**Magic Weapons.** The Demon Grinder's weapon attacks are magical.

**Prone Deficiency.** If the Demon Grinder rolls over and falls prone, it can't right itself and is incapacitated until flipped upright.

### ACTION STATIONS

**Helm (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Three-Quarters Cover).**

Drive and steer the Demon Grinder.

**Chomper (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover). Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 25 (6d6 + 4) piercing damage. A target reduced to 0 hit points by this damage is ground to bits and spit out through pipes on both sides of the Demon Grinder. Any nonmagical items the target was holding or carrying are destroyed as well.

**Wrecking Ball (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover). Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. **Hit:** 40 (8d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Double the damage if the target is an object or a structure.

**2 Harpoon Flingers (Each Station Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover). Ammunition:** 10 harpoons per station. **Ranged Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 9 (2d8) piercing damage.

## SCAVENGER

The Scavenger handles like a small bus and is used to sift through battlefield detritus for scrap metal and other materials worth salvaging. Attached to the back of the vehicle is a swinging crane with an iron grappling claw fastened to the end of a winch and a 50-foot-long chain.

### SCAVENGER

Huge vehicle (9,000 lb.)

**Creature Capacity** 8 Medium creatures

**Cargo Capacity** 2 tons

**Armor Class** 20 (19 while motionless)

**Hit Points** 150 (damage threshold 10, mishap threshold 20)

**Speed** 100 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	0	0	0

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

**Crushing Wheels.** The Scavenger can move through the space of any Large or smaller creature. When it does, the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the creature was already prone, it takes an extra 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage. This trait can't be used against a particular creature more than once each turn.

**Magic Weapons.** The Scavenger's weapon attacks are magical.

**Prone Deficiency.** If the Scavenger rolls over and falls prone, it can't right itself and is incapacitated until flipped upright.

### ACTION STATIONS

**Helm (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Three-Quarters Cover).**

Drive and steer the Scavenger.

**Grappling Claw (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover). Melee Weapon Attack:** +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. **Hit:** The target is grappled (escape DC 12). If the target is a creature, it is restrained until the grapple ends.

The grappling claw can grapple only one target at a time, and the claw's operator can use a bonus action to make the claw release whatever it's holding.

**2 Harpoon Flingers (Each Station Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover). Ammunition:** 10 harpoons. **Ranged Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 10 (2d8 + 1) piercing damage.

## MISHAPS

Roll on the Mishaps table when one of the following occurs to an infernal war machine while it's in motion:

- The infernal war machine takes damage from a single source equal to or greater than its mishap threshold.
- The infernal war machine fails an ability check (or its driver fails an ability check using the vehicle's ability) by more than 5.

If a mishap has a repair DC, the mishap can be ended by making repairs to the vehicle (see "Repairs" below).

## MISHAPS

d20	Mishap	Repair DC
1	<b>Engine Flare.</b> Fire erupts from the engine and engulfs the vehicle. Any creature that starts its turn on or inside the vehicle takes 10 (3d6) fire damage until this mishap ends.	15 (Dex)
2–4	<b>Locked Steering.</b> The vehicle can move in a straight line only. It automatically fails Dexterity checks and Dexterity saving throws until this mishap ends.	15 (Str)
5–7	<b>Furnace Rupture.</b> The vehicle's speed decreases by 30 feet until this mishap ends.	15 (Str)
8–10	<b>Weapon Malfunction.</b> One of the vehicle's weapons (DM's choice) can't be used until this mishap ends. If the vehicle has no functioning weapons, no mishap occurs.	20 (Str)
11–13	<b>Blinding Smoke.</b> The helm station fills with smoke and is heavily obscured until this mishap ends. Any creature in the helm station is blinded by the smoke.	15 (Dex)
14–16	<b>Shedding Armor.</b> The vehicle's damage threshold is reduced by 10 until this mishap ends.	15 (Str)
17–19	<b>Damaged Axle.</b> The vehicle grinds and shakes uncontrollably. Until the mishap ends, the vehicle has disadvantage on all Dexterity checks, and all ability checks and attack rolls made by creatures on or inside the vehicle have disadvantage.	20 (Dex)
20	<b>Flip.</b> The vehicle flips over, falls prone, and comes to a dead stop in an unoccupied space. Any unsecured creature holding on to the outside of the vehicle must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be thrown off, landing prone in a random unoccupied space within 20 feet of the overturned vehicle. Creatures inside the vehicle fall prone and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.	None

## VEHICULAR EXHAUSTION

The harsh conditions of the Nine Hells can cause an infernal war machine to stop functioning properly, until it eventually breaks down. Such wear and tear can be represented using exhaustion, as described in appendix A of the *Player's Handbook*, with these modifications:

- When an infernal war machine reaches exhaustion level 6, its hit points drop to 0, and the vehicle breaks down.
- The only way to remove the effects of exhaustion on an infernal war machine is to repair the vehicle.

## REPAIRS

When an infernal war machine is damaged, suffers a mishap, or gains one or more levels of exhaustion, a creature can attempt to make repairs to the vehicle. The creature making the repairs must meet the following criteria:

- The creature can't operate the vehicle's helm or one of its weapon stations while making repairs.
- The creature must be within reach of the damaged area in need of repair.
- The creature must have the right tools for the job (smith's tools or tinker's tools, for example).

Before beginning repairs, a creature must decide whether the repairs are aimed at ending a mishap, removing a level of exhaustion, or restoring the damaged vehicle's hit points. Each option is discussed below.

### END A MISHAP

A creature can use its action to make an ability check based on the nature of the mishap (see the Mishaps table), with disadvantage if the vehicle is moving. The creature adds its proficiency bonus to the check if it's proficient with the tools used to make the repairs. A successful check ends the mishap. A mishap with no repair DC can't be repaired.

### REMOVE EXHAUSTION

If the infernal war machine has one or more levels of exhaustion, a creature can spend 1 hour or more trying to reduce the vehicle's exhaustion level. The vehicle must be stationary, and the creature must have spare parts to make the necessary repairs. After 1 hour of repair work, the creature makes a DC 15 Intelligence check, adding its proficiency bonus to the check if it's proficient with the tools used to make repairs. If the check succeeds, the vehicle's exhaustion level decreases by 1. If the check fails, the vehicle's exhaustion level remains unchanged, though the repair can be attempted again using the same replacement parts.

### RESTORE HIT POINTS

If the infernal war machine has taken damage but has at least 1 hit point, a creature can spend 1 hour or more trying to patch the hull and replace damaged parts. The vehicle must be stationary, and the creature must have the spare parts to make the necessary repairs. After 1 hour of repair work, the creature makes a DC 15 Dexterity check, adding its proficiency bonus to the check if

it's proficient with the tools used to make repairs. If the check succeeds, the vehicle regains  $2d4 + 2$  hit points. If the check fails, the vehicle regains no hit points, but the repair can be attempted again using the same replacement parts.

## CRASHING

When an infernal war machine crashes into something that could reasonably damage it, such as an iron wall or another vehicle of its size or bigger, the infernal war machine comes to a sudden stop and takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it moved since its last turn (maximum 20d6). Whatever the vehicle struck takes the same amount of damage. If this damage is less than the infernal war machine's damage threshold, the vehicle takes no damage from the crash.

Regardless of whether or not the infernal war machine takes damage, each creature on or inside the vehicle when it crashes must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet the vehicle moved since its last turn (maximum 20d6), or half as much damage on a successful save.

### CRASHING INTO CREATURES

An infernal war machine can crash into a creature by entering its space. The creature can use its reaction to attempt to get out of the vehicle's way, doing so and taking no damage with a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the vehicle slams into the creature and deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage to the creature for every 10 feet the vehicle moved since its last turn (maximum 20d6).

An infernal war machine that is at least two size categories bigger than the creature it crashed into can continue moving through that creature's space if the infernal war machine has any movement left. Otherwise, the vehicle comes to a sudden stop, and each creature on or inside the infernal war machine when it crashes must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet the vehicle moved since its last turn (maximum 20d6), or half as much damage on a successful save.

## FALLING

When an infernal war machine goes over a cliff or otherwise falls, the vehicle and all creatures on or inside it take damage from the fall as normal (1d6 bludgeoning damage per 10 feet fallen, maximum 20d6) and land prone.

## FIENDISH VARIATIONS

Devils work tirelessly to create new and more powerful engines of war to stem the demonic tides flowing out of the Abyss. In addition, infernal war machines can be equipped with more unusual weapons and armor.

### ALTERNATIVE WEAPON STATIONS

One weapon station can be switched for another, but the infernal war machine can't have more weapon stations than it normally has. A handful of alternative weapon stations are described in this section.

### ACIDIC BILE SPRAYER

This hose weapon is attached to demonic organs that produce an acidic bile that dissolves flesh on contact.

**Acidic Bile Sprayer (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover, Recharge 5–6).** Acidic bile sprays from a nozzle in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 40 (9d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage is dissolved, leaving behind any objects it was carrying or wearing.

### FLAMETHROWER

Although useless against demons, this weapon is great against flammable creatures and objects.

**Flamethrower (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover).** Fire shoots out of the weapon's nozzle in a 60-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The fire ignites any flammable objects in the area that aren't being carried or worn.

### INFERNAL SCREAMER

A writhing humanoid torso made of melting wax juts out from this station, with a barbed hand crank between its shoulder blades. The figure telepathically shrieks in agony when the crank is turned.

**Infernal Screamer (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover).**

The screamer's operator targets one creature it can see within 120 feet of the screamer. The target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 26 (4d12) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### STYX SPRAYER

This flexible hose is connected to a tank that holds 30 gallons of water from the River Styx. Each use of the weapon depletes 10 gallons of the water. Refilling the tank requires access to the Styx.

**Styx Sprayer (Requires 1 Crew and Grants Half Cover; 3 Uses).**

**Ranged Spell Attack:** +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. **Hit:** The creature is struck by water from the River Styx and targeted by a *Feeblemind* spell (save DC 20). An already feeble-minded creature is immune to this effect, as is a creature adapted to the River Styx. If the target fails its saving throw and the spell's effect on it is not ended within 30 days, the effect becomes permanent, whereupon the creature loses all its memories and becomes a near-mindless shell of its former self. At that point, nothing short of divine intervention can undo the effect.

## ARMOR UPGRADES

An infernal war machine can receive one armor upgrade. Sample upgrades are described below.

### CANIAN ARMOR

The infernal iron used to make the vehicle was mined on Cania, the coldest layer of the Nine Hells. An infernal war machine with Canian armor has an Armor Class of  $22 +$  its Dexterity modifier. While the vehicle is not moving, attack rolls made against it have advantage. The infernal war machine also has immunity to cold damage in addition to its other damage immunities, and it's immune to the effects of extreme cold.

## GILDED DEATH ARMOR

Gold stolen or bartered from the archdevil Mammon plates the vehicle's exterior. This gold can't be removed without destroying the vehicle and turns to dust when the infernal war machine drops to 0 hit points. Gilded death armor grants the infernal war machine resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

## SOUL SPIKE ARMOR

The vehicle is covered with spikes inscribed with blasphemous symbols. Luminous, ghostly figures impaled on these spikes wail and reach out in agony.

If a creature that isn't a devil dies within 30 feet of the infernal war machine, its soul (if it has one) is torn from its body and joins the wailing throng impaled on the spikes. As long as its soul remains trapped, a creature can't be raised from the dead by any means. A trapped soul is freed if the vehicle is destroyed, if the spike anchoring it is the target of a *remove curse* spell or similar magic, or if the spike is destroyed. Each spike is a Small object with AC 19, 15 hit points, and resistance to all damage except radiant damage.

## MAGICAL GADGETS

Devils like to bedeck their infernal war machines with fiendish gadgets to bedevil foes. Such gadgets are usually activated from the helm station.

### NECROTIC SMOKE SCREEN

The vehicle's driver can activate this magical device as a bonus action, causing the vehicle to expel a 30-foot cube of opaque smoke directly in front of it or behind it. The cloud is stationary and lasts for 1 minute. The area within it is heavily obscured. Any creature that enters the cloud for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. A strong wind disperses the cloud. This device needs 24 hours to recharge before it can be used again.

### TELEPORTER

The vehicle's driver can activate this magical device as a bonus action, causing the vehicle to teleport to an unoccupied space that the driver can see up to 300 feet away from the vehicle's current position. All creatures and objects in contact with the vehicle are teleported along with it. This device needs 24 hours to recharge before it can be used again.

## CHASES ON AVERNUS

Using the guidelines in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the Avernus Chase Complications table, you can build a chase that incorporates hazards unique to Avernus. Use an infernal war machine's Constitution modifier to determine how many times it can Dash during a chase.

When a chase complication forces the vehicle to make an ability check, or the driver to make an ability check using the vehicle's ability, a mishap occurs if the check fails by 5 or more (see "Mishaps," page 220).

## AVERNUS CHASE COMPLICATIONS

- | d20   | Complication  |
|-------|---|
| 1–2   | You drive past a creature native to Avernus, and it chases after you. The DM chooses the creature.  |
| 3     | A fire tornado, 300 feet high and 30 feet wide at its base, crosses your path. The vehicle avoids the tornado with a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Otherwise, the tornado envelopes the vehicle, and each creature on or inside it that doesn't have total cover must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 99 (18d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.   |
| 4     | A swirling cloud of dust envelopes the vehicle. Any creature on or inside the vehicle that doesn't have total cover is blinded by the dust until the start of its next turn unless it's using some kind of protective eyewear.  |
| 5     | Natural pillars of rock can grant cover as the vehicle swerves between them. The driver of the vehicle can make a DC 15 Dexterity check using the vehicle's Dexterity. On a success, the pillars provide three-quarters cover against attacks from other vehicles until the start of the driver's next turn.  |
| 6     | Your vehicle drives into a herd of lemures, manes, or other fiends. The vehicle must make a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (driver's choice) to plow through the herd unimpeded. On a failed check, the herd counts as 30 feet of difficult terrain.   |
| 7     | The vehicle drives off a 10-foot-high ledge and comes crashing down. Any unsecured creature on the outside of the vehicle must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or tumble off, taking normal damage from the fall and landing prone in an unoccupied space on the ground.  |
| 8     | Uneven ground threatens to slow your vehicle's progress. The vehicle must make a DC 10 Dexterity check to navigate the area. On a failed check, the ground counts as 60 feet of difficult terrain.  |
| 9     | Derelict infernal war machines dot the landscape, rusted beyond repair and half buried in the dust. If the vehicle uses Dash this turn, the driver must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity check using the vehicle's Dexterity or crash into one of the derelict infernal war machines (see "Crashing," page 221).  |
| 10    | Part of the ground gives way underneath the vehicle, causing it to roll over. The vehicle must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the vehicle rolls into an upright position and can continue moving. On a failure, the vehicle lands prone, either upside down or on its side, after coming to a dead stop. When the vehicle rolls, any unsecured creature holding on to the outside of it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or tumble off, landing prone in an unoccupied space within 20 feet of the overturned vehicle. |
| 11–20 | No complication.  |

## APPENDIX C: MAGIC ITEMS

This appendix describes new magic items that appear in the adventure and presents them in alphabetical order.

### BATTLE STANDARD OF INFERNAL POWER

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

This hell-forged battle standard is made of infernal iron and fitted with a small, unopenable cage containing a quasit. The trapped quasit is incapacitated, and its cage has AC 19, 10 hit points, and immunity to all types of damage except force damage. If killed or somehow released, the quasit disappears in a cloud of smoke, and a new one appears in the cage, provided the cage is intact.

While you hold the banner, your weapon attacks and those of all allied creatures within 300 feet of you count as magical for the purposes of overcoming damage immunities and resistances.

### GAUNTLETS OF FLAMING FURY

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

While you wear both of these steel gauntlets, any non-magical weapon you grasp with either gauntlet is treated as a magic weapon. As a bonus action, you can use the gauntlets to cause magical flames to envelop one or two melee weapons in your grasp. Each flaming weapon deals an extra 1d6 fire damage on a hit. The flames last until you sheath or let go of either weapon. Once used, this property can't be used again until the next dawn.

### FANE-EATER

*Weapon (battleaxe), legendary (requires attunement by an evil cleric or paladin)*

*Fane-Eater* is a battleaxe belonging to Arkhan the Cruel (see page 111).

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls with *Fane-Eater*. If you attack a creature with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, the creature takes an



BATTLE STANDARD OF INFERNAL POWER

extra 2d8 necrotic damage, and you regain a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage taken.

### HELLFIRE WEAPON

*Weapon (any), uncommon*

This weapon is fashioned from infernal iron and traced with veins of hellfire that shed dim light in a 5-foot-radius.

Any humanoid killed by an attack made with this weapon has its soul funneled into the River Styx, where it's reborn instantly as a lemure devil (described in the *Monster Manual*).

### HELM OF DEVIL COMMAND

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a creature that can speak Infernal)*

This bulky, eyeless helmet is made for a pit fiend but magically resizes to fit the heads of other wearers.

While wearing the helm, you can see out of it as though you weren't wearing it. In addition, you know the exact location and type of all devils within 1,000 feet of you. You can telepathically communicate with a devil within range, or you can broadcast your thoughts to all devils within range. The devils receiving your broadcasted thoughts have no special means of replying to them.



The helm has 3 charges. As an action, you can expend 1 charge to cast *dominate monster* (save DC 21), which affects devils only. (The spell fails and the charge is wasted if you target any creature that's not a devil.) If a devil can see you when you cast this spell on it, the devil knows you tried to charm it. The helm regains all its charges 24 hours after its last charge is expended.

If you are not a devil, using the helm's *dominate monster* property in the Nine Hells has a 20 percent chance of attracting a narzugon (see page 238), which arrives on the back of a nightmare mount in 1d4 hours. The narzugon tries to recover the helm, killing you if necessary to obtain it. If it gets the helm, the narzugon tries to deliver it to its infernal master.

### INFERNAL PUZZLE BOX

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

An *infernal puzzle box* is a cube-shaped container 5 to 6 inches on a side, composed of airtight, interlocking parts made from materials found in the Nine Hells. Most of these boxes are made of infernal iron, though some are carved from bone or horn. *Infernal puzzle boxes* are used to safeguard diabolical contracts signed between devils and mortals, even after the terms of these contracts are fulfilled. An empty *infernal puzzle box* weighs 3 pounds regardless of the materials used to fashion it.

When an object small enough to fit inside an *infernal puzzle box* is placed in it, the container magically seals shut around the object, and no magic can force the box open. The sealed box becomes immune to all damage as well. Every *infernal puzzle box* is constructed with a unique means of opening it. The trick to solving the puzzle is always mundane, never magical. Once a creature figures out the trick or sequence of steps needed to open a particular *infernal puzzle box*, that creature can open the box as an action, allowing access to the box's contents.

A creature that spends 1 hour holding an *infernal puzzle box* while trying to open it can make a DC 30 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If the check succeeds, the creature figures out the trick or sequence of steps needed to open the box. If the check fails by 5 or more, the creature must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### INFERNAL TACK

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)*

A narzugon devil binds a nightmare (described in the *Monster Manual*) to its service with *infernal tack*, which consists of a bridle, bit, reins, saddle, stirrups, and spurs. A nightmare equipped with *infernal tack* must serve whoever wears the spurs until the wearer dies or the tack is removed.

You can use an action to call the nightmare equipped with *infernal tack* by clashing the spurs together or scraping them through blood. The nightmare appears at the start of your next turn, within 20 feet of you. It acts as your ally and takes its turn on your initiative count. It remains for 1 day, until you or it dies, or until you dismiss it as an action. If the nightmare dies, it reforms



MATALOTOK, THE  
FROST FATHER

in the Nine Hells within 24 hours, after which you can summon it again.

The tack doesn't conjure a nightmare from thin air; one must first be subdued so the tack can be placed on it. No nightmare accepts this forced servitude willingly, but some eventually form strong loyalties to their masters and become partners in evil.

### MATALOTOK

*Weapon (warhammer), legendary (requires attunement)*

*Matalotok*, the Frost Father, is an ancient hammer fashioned by Thrym, the god of frost giants. The favored weapon of the demon lord Kostchchie, *Matalotok* is frigid to the touch and wreathed in mist.

You are immune to cold damage while holding *Matalotok*. Whenever it deals damage to a creature, the hammer radiates a burst of intense cold in a 30-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area takes 10 (3d6) cold damage.

### OBSIDIAN FLINT DRAGON PLATE

*Armor (plate), legendary*

You gain a +2 bonus to AC and resistance to poison damage while you wear this armor. In addition, you gain advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to avoid or end the grappled condition on yourself.



SHIELD OF THE  
HIDDEN LORD

### SHIELD OF THE HIDDEN LORD

*Armor (shield), legendary (requires attunement)*

The *Shield of the Hidden Lord* is of celestial origin and serves as a prison for the pit fiend Gargauth, whose mortal followers revere it as a god. Over time, Gargauth's evil has warped the shield's appearance, so that its celestial motif and designs have become twisted into a fiendish face that subtly moves in disturbing ways.

While holding this shield, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and resistance to fire damage.

**Sentience.** The *Shield of the Hidden Lord* is sentient as long as it imprisons Gargauth. While sentient, the shield has the following properties:

- The shield has an Intelligence of 22, a Wisdom of 18, and a Charisma of 24, as well as hearing and true-sight out to a range of 120 feet.
- The shield can speak, read, and understand Common and Infernal, and it can communicate telepathically with any creature it can sense within 120 feet of it. Its voice is a deep, hollow whisper.
- The shield has 3 charges. You can use an action to expend 1 charge to cast *fireball* or 2 charges to cast *wall of fire* from the shield (save DC 21 for each). The *wall of fire* spell lasts for 1 minute (no concentration required). The shield regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

- Anytime during your turn, the shield can choose to radiate an aura of dread for 1 minute. (This is not a power of the shield that you control.) Any creature hostile to you that starts its turn within 20 feet of the shield must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this power of the shield for the next 24 hours. Once the shield uses this power, it can't use it again until the next dawn.

**Gargauth's Personality.** Gargauth desperately seeks freedom but can't escape on its own. The pit fiend won't reveal its true nature, referring to itself only as the Hidden Lord. It drops hints and subtle suggestions that it is an angel trapped in an unholy prison. If released from the shield, the pit fiend honors the terms of whatever bargain it struck to facilitate its escape.

While trapped in the shield, Gargauth carefully steers the shield's current owner toward committing acts of cruelty and domination, hoping to condemn the individual's soul to the Nine Hells. Conflict occurs if the shield's owner does anything that would make it more difficult for Gargauth to escape its prison, such as leaving the shield in a place where others are unlikely to find it.

Gargauth doesn't know how to escape from the shield. The pit fiend believes (incorrectly) that it can break free of the shield if it's brought to the Nine Hells, for it's convinced that the shield's powers are weaker there.

**Freeing Gargauth.** Casting *dispel evil and good* on the shield has a 1 percent chance of freeing the pit fiend, or automatically succeeds if the spell is cast by a solar, a planetar, or an archdevil. A god can release the pit fiend by touching the shield and speaking Gargauth's name. When released, Gargauth appears in a random, unoccupied space as close to the shield as possible.

### SOUL COIN

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

*Soul coins* are about 5 inches across and about an inch thick, minted from infernal iron. Each coin weighs one-third of a pound, and is inscribed with Infernal writing and a spell that magically binds a single soul to the coin. Because each *soul coin* has a unique soul trapped within it, each has a story. A creature might have been imprisoned as a result of defaulting on a deal, while another might be the victim of a night hag's curse.

**Carrying Soul Coins.** To hold a *soul coin* is to feel the soul bound within it—overcome with rage or fraught with despair.

An evil creature can carry as many *soul coins* as it wishes (up to its maximum weight allowance). A non-evil creature can carry a number of *soul coins* equal to or less than its Constitution modifier without penalty. A non-evil creature carrying a number of *soul coins* greater than its Constitution modifier has disadvantage on its attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

**Using a Soul Coin.** A *soul coin* has 3 charges. A creature carrying the coin can use its action to expend 1 charge from a *soul coin* and use it to do one of the following:



SOUL COIN

**Drain Life.** You siphon away some of the soul's essence and gain 1d10 temporary hit points.

**Query.** You telepathically ask the soul a question and receive a brief telepathic response, which you can understand. The soul knows only what it knew in life, but it must answer you truthfully and to the best of its ability. The answer is no more than a sentence or two and might be cryptic.

**Freeing a Soul.** Casting a spell that removes a curse on a *soul coin* frees the soul trapped within it, as does expending all of the coin's charges. The coin itself rusts from within and is destroyed once the soul is released. A freed soul travels to the realm of the god it served or the outer plane most closely tied to its alignment (DM's choice). The souls of lawful evil creatures released from *soul coins* typically emerge from the River Styx as lemur devils.

A soul can also be freed by destroying the coin that contains it. A *soul coin* has AC 19, 1 hit point for each charge it has remaining, and immunity to all damage except that which is dealt by a *hellfire weapon* (page 223) or an infernal war machine's furnace (page 217).

Freeing a soul from a *soul coin* is considered a good act, even if the soul belongs to an evil creature.

**Hellish Currency.** *Soul coins* are a currency of the Nine Hells and are highly valued by devils. The coins are used among the infernal hierarchy to barter for favors, bribe the unwilling, and reward the faithful for services rendered.

*Soul coins* are created by Mammon and his greater devils on Minauros, the third layer of the Nine Hells, in a vast chamber where the captured souls of evil mortals are bound into the coins. These coins are then distributed throughout the Nine Hells to be used for goods and services, infernal deals, dark bargains, and bribes.

## SWORD OF ZARIEL

*Weapon (longsword), artifact (requires attunement by a creature the sword deems worthy)*

This longsword belonged to the angel Zariel before her fall from grace. Fashioned from celestial steel, it gives off a faint glow and hum. The weapon chooses who can attune to it and who can't. It desires a wielder who embodies bravery and heroism.

**Attunement.** The sword allows you to attune to it immediately, without having to take a short rest. The first time you attune to the sword, you are transformed into a heavenly, idealized version of yourself, blessed with otherworldly beauty and a touch of heaven in your heart. Neither magic nor divine intervention can reverse this transformation. Your alignment becomes lawful good, and you gain the following traits:

**Angelic Language.** You can speak, read, and write Celestial.

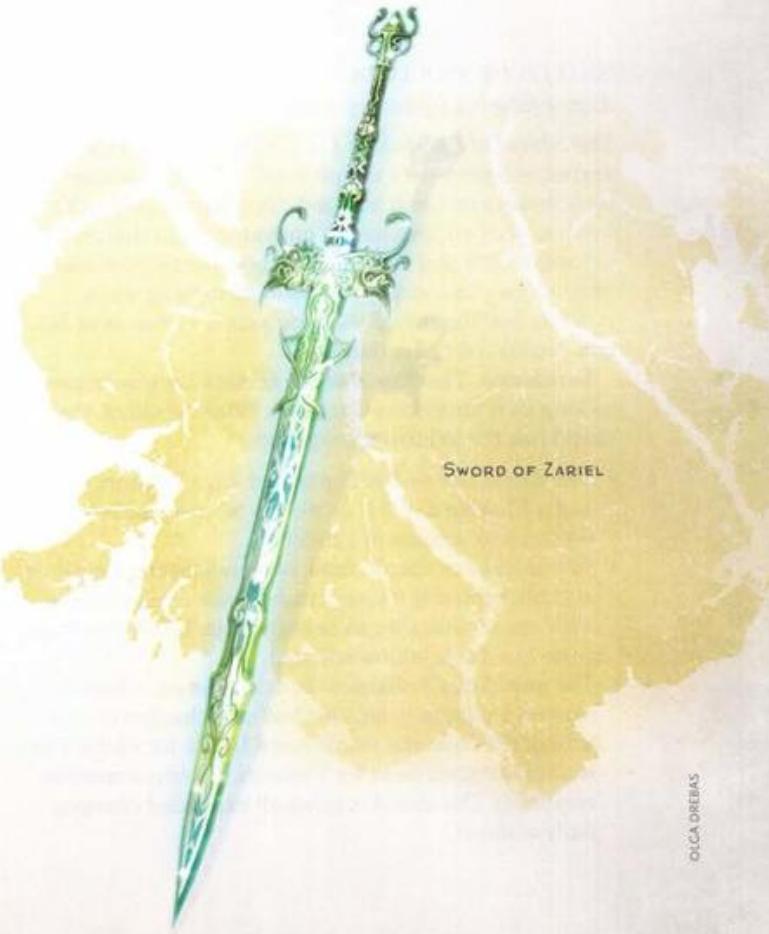
**Celestial Resistance.** You have resistance to necrotic and radiant damage.

**Divine Presence.** Your Charisma score becomes 20, unless it is already 20 or higher.

**Feathered Wings.** You sprout a beautiful pair of feathered wings that grant you a flying speed of 90 feet and the ability to hover. If you already have a different kind of wings, these new wings replace the old ones, which fall off.

**Truesight.** Your eyes become luminous pools of silver.

You can see in normal and magical darkness, see invisible creatures and objects, automatically detect visual illusions and succeed on saving throws against



them, perceive the original form of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic, and see into the Ethereal Plane, all within a range of 60 feet.

**New Personality.** You gain new personality traits, determined by rolling once on each of the following tables. These traits override any conflicting personality trait, ideal, bond, or flaw.

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I treat all beings, even enemies, with respect.
- 2 I won't tell a lie.
- 3 I enjoy sharing my philosophical worldview and experiences with others.
- 4 I cut right to the chase in every conversation.
- 5 I often quote (or misquote) religious texts.
- 6 I anger quickly when I witness cruelty or injustice.
- 7 My praise and trust are earned and never given freely.
- 8 I like everything clean and organized.

## IDEALS

### d6 Ideal

- 1 **Charity.** I always help those in need. (Good)
- 2 **Faith.** I choose to follow the tenets of a particular lawful good deity to the letter. (Lawful)
- 3 **Responsibility.** It is the duty of the strong to protect the weak. (Lawful)
- 4 **Respect.** All people deserve to be treated with dignity. (Good)
- 5 **Honor.** The way I conduct myself determines my reward in the afterlife. (Lawful)
- 6 **Redemption.** All creatures are capable of change for the better. (Good)

## BONDS

### d6 Bond

- 1 I have a favorite religious hymn that I constantly hum.
- 2 I must keep a written record of my beliefs and the sins that I witness. When finished, this book will be my gift to the multiverse.
- 3 I have cherished memories of Idyllglen, though I've only seen this bucolic town in dreams.
- 4 I would die for those who fight beside me, regardless of their faults.
- 5 I seek to honor the angel Zariel by destroying fiends and other evildoers wherever I find them.
- 6 The *Sword of Zariel* has chosen me. I shall not fail to wield it justly.

## FLAWS

### d6 Flaw

- 1 I am too quick to judge others.
- 2 I offer forgiveness too readily.
- 3 I will sacrifice innocent lives for the greater good.
- 4 Flaw? What flaw? I am flawless. Utter perfection!
- 5 I allow nothing to stand in the way of my crusade to eradicate evil from the multiverse.
- 6 I ignore those who do not support my plans, for my calling is higher than all others.

**Holy Light.** The sword sheds bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet. Fiends find the sword's light disconcerting and painful, even if they can't see it, and have disadvantage on attack rolls made within the weapon's radius of bright light.

As a bonus action, you can intensify the sword's light, causing it to shed bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet, or reduce its glow to its normal intensity.

**Random Properties.** The sword has 2 minor beneficial properties, each determined by rolling on the Minor Beneficial Properties table in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Searing Radiance.** The sword deals an extra 9 (2d8) radiant damage to any creature it hits, or 16 (3d10) radiant damage if you're wielding the weapon with two hands. An evil creature that takes this radiant damage must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

**Sentience.** The *Sword of Zariel* is a sentient, lawful good item with an Intelligence of 10, a Wisdom of 20, and a Charisma of 18. It has hearing and normal vision out to a range of 30 feet.

The sword communicates by transmitting emotion to the creature carrying or wielding it.

**Truth Seer.** While holding the sword, you gain advantage on all Wisdom (Insight) checks.

**Destroying the Sword.** Zariel can destroy the sword simply by grasping it. She couldn't bring herself to do so when she was an angel, but as an archdevil she has no compunction about ridding the multiverse of the weapon. The sword is also destroyed if it's used to shatter the Companion (see "Shattering the Companion," page 154), unless the blade is wielded by an angel of challenge rating 15 or higher, or a good-aligned cleric or paladin of at least 10th level.

If Zariel is killed for good (that is, if she dies in the Nine Hells), the sword becomes no harder to destroy than a normal longsword.

# APPENDIX D: CREATURES

Creatures that are not described in the *Monster Manual* but appear multiple times in the adventure are presented in this appendix in alphabetical order.

## AMNIZU

Amnizus are greater devils that lead infernal legions into battle and command guardians at the gateways to the Nine Hells. Amnizus are arrogant, bullying, and ruthless, but they're also highly intelligent tacticians and unfailingly loyal—qualities that archdevils value.

Some amnizus perform the critical task of watching over the River Styx from towers and fortresses along the river's blighted banks. For this reason, amnizus are also known as Styx devils.

### VARIANT: DEVIL SUMMONING

Some amnizus have an action that allows them to summon other devils.

**Summon Devil** (1/Day). The amnizu summons 2d4 bearded devils or 1d4 barbed devils. A summoned devil appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of the amnizu, acts as an ally of the amnizu, and can't summon other devils. It remains for 1 minute, until the amnizu dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

## AMNIZU

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 202 (27d8 + 81)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Con +9, Wis +7, Cha +10

**Skills** Perception +7

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 1,000 ft.

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP)

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede the amnizu's darkvision.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The amnizu's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The amnizu can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person, command*

3/day each: *dominate person, fireball*

1/day each: *dominate monster, feebatemind*

**Magic Resistance.** The amnizu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.



THAVIUS KREEG  
AS AN AMNIZU

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The amnizu uses Poison Mind. It also makes two attacks: one with its whip and one with its Disruptive Touch.

**Taskmaster Whip.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage plus 33 (6d10) force damage.

**Disruptive Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (8d10) necrotic damage.

**Poison Mind.** The amnizu targets one or two creatures that it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or take 26 (4d12) necrotic damage and be blinded until the start of the amnizu's next turn.

**Forgetfulness (Recharge 6).** The amnizu targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. That creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute. A stunned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the target is stunned for the full minute, it forgets everything it sensed, experienced, and learned during the last 5 hours.

## REACTIONS

**Instinctive Charm.** When a creature within 60 feet of the amnizu makes an attack roll against it, and another creature is within the attack's range, the attacker must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker must target the creature that is closest to it, not including the amnizu or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target. If the saving throw is successful, the attacker is immune to the amnizu's Instinctive Charm for 24 hours.

## BAPHOMET

The demon lord Baphomet, also known as the Horned King and the Prince of Beasts, rules over minotaurs and others with savage hearts. He is worshiped by those who want to break the confines of civility and unleash their bestial natures. Over time, Baphomet's cultists become tainted by his influence, gaining bloodshot eyes and coarse, thickening hair. Small horns eventually sprout from the forehead. In time, a devoted cultist might transform entirely into a minotaur—considered the greatest gift of the Prince of Beasts.

Baphomet appears as a great, black-furred minotaur 20 feet tall with six iron horns. A hateful light burns in his red eyes. He wields a great glaive called Heartcleaver, but sometimes casts this deadly weapon aside so that he can charge his enemies and gore them with his horns, trampling them into the earth and rending them with his teeth like a beast.

If Baphomet is killed anywhere other than the Abyss, he re-forms at full strength in the great, blood-spattered labyrinth that spans his layer of the Abyss.



## BAPHOMET

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 275 (19d12 + 152)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +15, Wis +14

Skills Intimidation +17, Perception +14

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing that is nonmagical

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

**Charge.** If Baphomet moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 16 (3d10) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 25 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Baphomet's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *dominate beast*, *hunter's mark*, *maze*, *wall of stone*

1/day: *teleport*

**Labyrinthine Recall.** Baphomet can perfectly recall any path he has traveled, and he is immune to the *maze* spell.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Baphomet fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Baphomet has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Baphomet's weapon attacks are magical.

**Reckless.** At the start of his turn, Baphomet can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Baphomet makes three attacks: one with Heartcleaver, one with his bite, and one with his gore attack.

**Heartcleaver.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d10 + 10) slashing damage.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d8 + 10) piercing damage.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d6 + 10) piercing damage.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of Baphomet's choice within 120 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. These later saves have disadvantage if Baphomet is within line of sight of the creature.

If a creature succeeds on any of these saves or the effect ends on it, the creature is immune to Baphomet's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Baphomet can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Baphomet regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Heartcleaver Attack.** Baphomet makes a melee attack with Heartcleaver.

**Charge (Costs 2 Actions).** Baphomet moves up to his speed, then makes a gore attack.



## BULEZAU

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge 3 (700 XP)**

**Rotting Presence.** When any creature that isn't a demon starts its turn within 30 feet one or more bulezaus, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 1d6 necrotic damage plus 1 necrotic damage for each bulezau within 30 feet of it.

**Standing Leap.** The bulezau's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

**Sure-Footed.** The bulezau has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

## ACTIONS

**Barbed Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease ends. While poisoned in this way, the target sports festering boils, coughs up flies, and sheds rotting skin, and the target must repeat the saving throw after every 24 hours that elapse. On a successful save, the disease ends. On a failed save, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by 4 (1d8). The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

## BULEZAU

Bulezaus are horned demons that lash foes with their spiky tails. Violent in the extreme, they gather in scrabbling mobs, wrestling and fighting among themselves until a better target comes along. Demon lords use bulezaus as footsoldiers in their undisciplined armies.

Disfiguring ailments plague bulezaus: crusted eyes, maggots wriggling in open sores, and a reek of rotten meat that follows them wherever they go.

## CROKEK'TOECK

Crokek'toeck is Yeenoghu's demonic pet. Resembling a giant mudskipper with the teeth, fur, ears, and laugh of a hyena, this unique demon can hold smaller demons in its gullet and disgorge them anywhere Yeenoghu wishes. Immune to the mind-shattering effects of the River Styx, Crokek'toeck is often used to transport smaller demons (and sometimes Yeenoghu himself) through the Styx's terrible waters.

## CROKEK'TOECK

Gargantuan fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 297 (17d20 + 119)

Speed 60 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	24 (+7)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Con +12, Wis +5

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing that is nonmagical

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Abyssal but can't speak

**Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)**

**Amphibious.** Crokek'toeck can breathe air and water.

**Magic Resistance.** Crokek'toeck has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Crokek'toeck's weapon attacks are magical.

**Secure Memory.** Crokek'toeck is immune to the waters of the River Styx as well as any effect that would steal or modify its memories or detect or read its thoughts.

**Standing Leap.** Crokek'toeck's long jump is up to 60 feet and its high jump is up to 30 feet, with or without a running start.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (10d6 + 9) piercing damage.

**Disgorge Allies (Recharge 6).** Crokek'toeck opens its mouth and disgorges 1d4 barlguras, 3d6 gnolls led by 1 gnoll fang of Yeenoghu, 6d6 dretches, or 1d3 vrocks (see the *Monster Manual* for these creatures' stat blocks). Each creature it disgorges appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of Crokek'toeck's mouth, or the next closest unoccupied space.

## CULTISTS OF THE DEAD THREE

The Dead Three are evil adventurers named Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul who long ago quested to become gods. They succeeded but grew even more ambitious. They tried to seize the *Tablets of Fate* from the overgod Ao and use them to rule over Faerûn and its gods. They failed and were slain during the Time of Troubles. Since then, a variety of contingency plans they had in place allowed them to be reborn.

While the Sundering saw the other gods of the Forgotten Realms withdraw their direct influence from the world, the Dead Three remained behind in mortal form as quasi-divine beings. While their power has diminished, they remain a formidable trio and play a malevolent role in influencing events on Faerûn.

### BANE AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Bane is a god of tyranny, and both he and his worshippers seek to rule the world. Bane grants power to those who strive to rule with an iron fist. By imposing order on the world, Bane's followers ensure that those who are clever, strong, and ambitious rise to the top while the weak languish in slavery.

Regardless of the form he takes, Bane is always marked by his jet-black right hand. He usually wears a gauntlet or glove over this hand to conceal his identity, revealing it only when the time has come to display his true power. He is always well-dressed, donning the fine clothing of a noble or wearing the armor and gear of a successful mercenary general. His preferred weapon is a mace.

Bane overpowers those who display any weakness, bullying them into submission or crushing them with his physical and magical power. His charisma is such that he can sway the mighty to pledge their loyalty to him in return for power over others. He finds the hunger for power that exists in every mortal heart and awakens it with carefully crafted promises and flattery. He is the mastermind of the Dead Three, the one whose ambitions drive the group's efforts.

Bane's devoted followers are warriors who seek to rule through martial strength and intimidation, cruel tyrants who use threats and gifts as needed to ensure loyalty. They enslave those too weak to resist them and shower the strong with gifts and promises of power to turn them into loyal vassals.

**Cruel Tyrants.** Whenever Bane's followers gain power, they institute draconian measures to ensure that their rule is unquestioned. They stamp out all opposition while richly rewarding those who swear fealty.

**Warrior Cult.** Cultists of Bane are warriors who wear heavy armor and wield maces, swords, spears, and crossbows. They paint the right gauntlet of their armor black in honor of their patron. Bane's clerics wield black maces with heads shaped to look like a closed fist.

**Cult Ranks.** Bane's cultists operate according to strict military hierarchies. The lowest rank consists of the fists of Bane, foot soldiers who obey all orders without hesitation. They are led by iron consuls, cunning field officers who excel at coordinating the fists in combat. The black gauntlets are the priests who command the consuls.

CROKEK'TOECK



SYMBOL OF BANE



## FIST OF BANE

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 18 (chain mail, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Tactical Discipline.** The fist of Bane has advantage on all ability checks and saving throws made during combat.

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

## IRON CONSUL

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 16 (chain mail)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Wis +4

**Skills** Intimidation +5, Perception +4

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Tactical Discipline.** The iron consul has advantage on all ability checks and saving throws made during combat.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The iron consul makes one attack with its spear and can use its Voice of Command ability.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage when used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Voice of Command.** The iron consul selects up to two allies within 90 feet of it that can hear its commands. Each ally can immediately use its reaction to make one melee attack.

## BLACK GAUNTLET OF BANE

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 16 (chain mail)

**Hit Points** 51 (6d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Wis +5

**Skills** Intimidation +7, Perception +5

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Aura of Terror.** When a hostile creature within 5 feet of the black gauntlet makes an attack roll or a saving throw, it has disadvantage on the roll. Creatures that are immune to the frightened condition are immune to this trait.

**Spellcasting.** The black gauntlet is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*  
1st level (4 slots): *bane, bless, cure wounds, guiding bolt* (see "Actions" below)

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hold person, silence*

3rd level (2 slots): *send self, spirit guardians*

**Tactical Discipline.** The black gauntlet has advantage on all ability checks and saving throws made during combat.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The black gauntlet makes two attacks with its mace.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.

**Guiding Bolt (1st-Level Spell; Requires a Spell Slot).** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 14 (4d6) radiant damage, and the next attack roll made against the target before the end of the black gauntlet's next turn has advantage. If the black gauntlet casts this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

## NIGHT BLADE

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Intimidation +4, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

**Aura of Murder.** As long as the night blade is not incapacitated, hostile creatures within 5 feet of it gain vulnerability to piercing damage unless they have resistance or immunity to such damage.

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## REAPER OF BHAAL

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Stealth +9

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

**Aura of Murder.** As long as the reaper is not incapacitated, hostile creatures within 5 feet of it gain vulnerability to piercing damage unless they have resistance or immunity to such damage.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The reaper's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day each: *charm person*, *disguise self*, *sanctuary*

### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** The reaper makes two dagger attacks and uses Shroud Self.

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

**Shroud Self.** The reaper magically turns invisible until the start of its next turn. This invisibility ends if the reaper makes an attack roll, makes a damage roll, or casts a spell.

## BHAAL AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Bhaal is a god of murder who lends power to those whose killings invoke fear and dread. The act of murder is only half the equation. The second half is the suspicion, paranoia, and fear that a seemingly unstoppable killer can evoke. Bhaal seeks to inspire fear by slaying those seemingly beyond the reach of death.

Bhaal always carries a red handkerchief somewhere on his person. He can take on an alternate appearance regardless of his current form, that of a hulking brute armed with a long, curved dagger that drips blood. In this form, he wears only a tattered loin cloth, is hairless, and is covered with bleeding wounds caused by a slashing blade. His face is a skull flayed of its flesh and surrounded by a halo of blood.

Bhaal is a vicious bully who enjoys killing people in gruesome ways. He's brought to heel only by the combination of Bane and Myrkul.

## DEATH'S HEAD OF BHAAL

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 76 (8d8 + 40)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Persuasion +6,

Stealth +11

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

**Aura of Murder.** As long as the death's head is not incapacitated, hostile creatures within 5 feet of it gain vulnerability to piercing damage unless they have resistance or immunity to such damage.

**Magic Resistance.** The death's head has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The death's head uses Stunning Gaze and makes two dagger attacks.

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

**Stunning Gaze.** The death's head targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

### REACTIONS

**Unstoppable (3/Day).** The death's head reduces the damage it takes from an attack to 0.

## NECROMITE OF MYRKUL

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Religion +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Skull Flail.** Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.

**Claws of the Grave.** Ranged Spell Attack: +5 to hit, range 90 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) necrotic damage.

## SKULL LASHER OF MYRKUL

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Skills Arcana +5, Religion +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The skull lasher is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, message, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, protection from evil and good, ray of sickness* (see "Actions" below), *shield*

2nd level (2 slots): *darkness, misty step*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The skull lasher makes two attacks with its flail.

**Iron Skull Flail.** Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the target has disadvantage on all saving throws until the end of the skull lasher's next turn.

**Ray of Sickness (1st-Level Spell; Requires a Spell Slot).** Ranged Spell Attack: +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of the skull lasher's next turn. If the skull lasher casts this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

## MASTER OF SOULS

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, Religion +6

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

**Grave Magic.** When the master of souls cast a spell that deals damage, it can change the spell's damage type to necrotic.

**Spellcasting.** The master of souls is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch* (see "Actions" below), *mage hand, message, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, detect magic, ray of sickness* (see "Actions" below), *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkness, misty step, scorching ray* (see "Actions" below)

3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead, fireball*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The master of souls attacks twice with its flail.

**Silvered Skull Flail.** Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and the target has disadvantage on all saving throws until the end of the master of souls' next turn.

**Chill Touch (Cantrip).** Ranged Spell Attack: +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 13 (2d8) necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the start of the master of souls' next turn. If the target is undead, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the master of souls for the same duration.

**Ray of Sickness (1st-Level Spell; Requires a Spell Slot).** Ranged Spell Attack: +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of the master of souls' next turn. If the master of souls casts this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

**Scorching Ray (2nd-Level Spell; Requires a Spell Slot).** Ranged Spell Attack: +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one target per ray (3 rays if a 2nd-level spell slot is used, 4 rays if a 3rd-level spell slot is used). Hit: 7 (2d6) fire damage per ray.



LEFT TO RIGHT: NECROMITE OF MYRKUL, BLACK GAUNTLET OF BANE, AND REAPER OF BHAAAL

Bhaal's cultists emulate their deity, carrying out gruesome murders to spread fear and horror. They are charming and disarming when they wish, but in combat their true, bloodthirsty nature comes to the fore.

**Bloodletters.** All cultists of Bhaal learn to call upon their god's power to leave their victims vulnerable to their long-bladed knives. When Bhaal's magic works its power, stab wounds erupt in terrible gouts of blood. Seemingly minor wounds plunge deep into a victim's body and cause terrible pain and bleeding.

**Killers from the Shadows.** Bhaal's followers are cunning murderers who kill to strike fear and thrive on sowing terror in the cities they inhabit. They can call upon their god's power to blend into the shadows with ease, or even turn invisible for a crucial moment.

**Cult Ranks.** Low-ranking cultists of Bhaal are called night blades, whom Bhaal blesses with darkvision and superior stealth. Reapers are the next rank up. They gain the ability to turn invisible and can use Bhaal's magic to evade suspicion. The highest rank are the death's heads, who can take on the skull-faced guise of their deity to terrify their prey. In combat, they intimidate foes by shrugging off the deadliest attacks with ease, showing that resisting Bhaal's schemes is futile.

#### MYRKUL AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Myrkul is the Lord of Bones, claiming power over corpses and souls. His cultists are those who seek to claim lore, power, and even fealty from the deceased.

Myrkul has the power to call forth the soul of any slain creature and bind it into a wax skull. Myrkul can use this ability only if he claims some part of a creature's

physical body, grinds it up, and creates a skull that includes the resulting dust. So long as the soul remains inside the skull, the skull's eye sockets burn with cold blue flames. While the skull is intact, Myrkul can compel the soul trapped within to answer his questions and share its knowledge. The skull degrades with each service rendered, eventually collapsing and releasing the soul. The soul can also be released by dousing the wax skull with holy water.

Myrkul is calculating, distant, and self-centered. He cares only for the acquisition of knowledge and finds that managing the daily affairs of life is at best a tedious distraction. He is happiest when surrounded by his tomes of lore and the undead he has called forth to do his bidding.

Those who follow Myrkul are either wizards or those who seek to master the necromantic arts.

**Delvers into Lore.** Cultists of Myrkul study rituals that allow them to force the souls of the dead into service, compelling them to answer questions and share forgotten lore. They seek out arcane secrets in ancient ruins, and attempt to steal spellbooks and other tomes from wizards outside of the cult.

**Cult Ranks.** A follower of Myrkul wields a flail that has a skull replacing the normal flail's striking head. Necromites are initiates who have not yet mastered arcane magic and rely on their flails in battle. Skull lashers are spellcasters who use magic to augment their combat abilities. The masters of souls delve deep into Myrkul's secrets, allowing them to animate the dead and perform other grave magic.

## FIENDISH FLESH GOLEM

A fiendish flesh golem is a particularly big flesh golem made of stitched-together body parts from devils, demons, yugoloths, and other fiends. As these parts can come from different creatures and be combined in different ways, no two fiendish flesh golems look exactly alike. Night hags guard the secret to making such golems, rarely sharing it with anyone else.

Some fiendish flesh golems have wings. However, the magic used to create these golems allows them to fly and hover even without wings.

### FIENDISH FLESH GOLEM

*Large construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 210 (20d10 + 100)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire

**Damage Immunities** lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine or silvered

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Berserk.** Whenever the golem starts its turn with 100 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points. If the golem's creator is within 60 feet of the berserk golem, the creator can try to calm it by speaking firmly and persuasively. The golem must be able to hear its creator, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the golem ceases being berserk. If it takes damage while still at 100 hit points or fewer, the golem might go berserk again.

**Immutable Form.** The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Lightning Absorption.** Whenever the golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

**Magic Resistance.** The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The golem makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.



## HELLWASP

*Large fiend, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d10 + 8)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Wis +3

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 300 ft. (with other hellwasps only)

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Magic Weapons.** The hellwasp's weapon attacks are magical.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hellwasp makes two attacks: one with its sting and one with its sword talons.

**Sting.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target is also paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Sword Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

## HELLWASP

A hellwasp is an intelligent, malevolent insect native to the Nine Hells. It has a thick protective carapace, thin metallic wings, and strong legs ending in swordlike talons. It uses its stinger to inject a chemical admixture similar to alchemist's fire into its victims. This same solution carries a paralytic enzyme that renders the victim helpless long enough for the hellwasp to grab its prey and flee.

Hellwasps thrive in hot weather, but extreme cold causes their shells to crack and their metabolisms to shut down. Consequently, they avoid the icy layers of the Nine Hells (Stygia and Cania).

**Nests.** Hellwasps spew a golden bile similar to amber, which they use to craft enormous nests riddled with chambers and passages. The hellwasps use these nests as communal shelters and food storage. A typical nest is large enough to support a commune of 1d10 + 10 hellwasps, with each hellwasp having an equal voice and role in the society.

**Hellwasp Telepathy.** Hellwasps communicate with one another via a form of telepathy perceptible only to their kind.

## HOLLYPHANT

Hollyphants are gentle, stalwart creatures native to the Upper Planes. Good-aligned deities and angels use them as messengers and helpers. Hollyphants treasure friendship and honesty.

A hollyphant looks like a miniature elephant with luminous gold fur and small, rapidly fluttering wings that

## HOLLYPHANT

*Small celestial, lawful good*

**Armor Class 18 (natural armor)**

**Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)**

**Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Dex +3, Con +4, Cha +6

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing that is nonmagical

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Celestial, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Aura of Invulnerability.** An invisible aura forms a 10-foot-radius sphere around the hollyphant for as long as it lives. Any spell of 5th level or lower cast from outside the barrier can't affect creatures or objects within it, even if the spell is cast using a higher level spell slot. Such a spell can target creatures and objects within the barrier, but the spell has no effect on them. Similarly, the area within the barrier is excluded from the areas affected by such spells. The hollyphant can use an action to suppress this trait until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).



LULU THE  
HOLLYPHANT

not only hold it aloft but also propel it at great speed. Although kind, a hollyphant won't bear witness to an evil act without punishing the malefactor. Its pearlescent tusks are far from formidable, but it can unleash trumpet blasts from its trunk that can deafen creatures or engulf evildoers in radiant sparkles of positive energy. A hollyphant is also blessed with powerful innate magic to help it combat evil and protect its friends.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The hollyphant's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *light*

2/day each: *bless*, *cure wounds*, *protection from evil and good*  
1/day each: *banishment*, *heal*, *raise dead*, *shapechange* (into a golden-furred mammoth with feathered wings and a flying speed of 120 ft.), *teleport* (with no chance of error)

**Magic Weapons.** The hollyphant's weapon attacks are magical.

### ACTIONS

**Tusks. Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
**Hit:** 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

**Trumpet (3/Day).** The hollyphant blows air through its trunk, creating a trumpet sound that can be heard out to a range of 600 feet. The trumpet also creates a 30-foot cone of energy that has one of the following effects, chosen by the hollyphant:

**Trumpet of Blasting.** Each creature in the cone must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 17 (5d6) thunder damage and is deafened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't deafened. Nonmagical objects in the cone that aren't being held or worn take 35 (10d6) thunder damage.

**Trumpet of Sparkles.** Creatures in the cone must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d8 + 4) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Evil creatures have disadvantage on the saving throw. Good creatures in the cone take no damage.



## MERREGON

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** understands Infernal but can't speak, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede the merregon's darkvision.

**Magic Resistance.** The merregon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The merregon makes two halberd attacks, or if an allied fiend of challenge rating 6 or higher is within 60 feet of it, the merregon makes three halberd attacks.

**Halberd.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Loyal Bodyguard.** When another fiend within 5 feet of the merregon is hit by an attack, the merregon causes itself to be hit instead.

## MERREGON

The souls of fallen soldiers, mercenaries, and bodyguards who served evil without reservation often find everlasting servitude in the Nine Hells as lesser devils called merregons. Every merregon has a metal mask bolted to its head that allows it to see. The mask can't be removed as long as the merregon is alive. Beneath it is a blank face with no eyes, mouth, or other features.

## NARZUGON

Paladins who make deals with devils and carry their twisted sense of honor into the afterlife are especially valuable to the archdukes of the Nine Hells. Narzugons roam across the infernal layers and other planes of existence to carry out the will of their masters.

Every narzugon claims a nightmare (described in the *Monster Manual*) as its mount. The nightmare is bound by *infernal tack* (see page 224) and must respond to summons and commands from the wearer of the spurs.

## NUPPERIBO

Mortals whose evil acts in life arose from carelessness and sloth are doomed to become nupperibos. These blind, bloated least devils shuffle mindlessly across the Nine Hells, groping for whatever scraps of fetid matter they can scoop into their groaning mouths.



NARZUGON RIDING A NIGHTMARE

## NARZUGON

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 20 (plate armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Con +8, Cha +9

**Skills** Perception +7

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Diabolical Sense.** The narzugon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to perceive good-aligned creatures.

**Infernal Tack.** The narzugon wears spurs that are part of *infernal tack*, which allow it to summon its nightmare companion.

**Magic Resistance.** The narzugon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The narzugon uses its Infernal Command or Terrifying Command. It also makes three hellfire lance attacks.

**Hellfire Lance.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) piercing damage plus 16 (3d10) fire damage. If this damage kills a creature, the creature's soul rises from the River Styx as a lemure in Avernus in 1d4 hours. If the creature isn't revived before then, only a *wish* spell or killing the lemure and casting *true resurrection* on the creature's original body can restore it to life. Constructs and devils are immune to this effect.

**Infernal Command.** Each ally of the narzugon within 60 feet of it can't be charmed or frightened until the end of the narzugon's next turn.

**Terrifying Command.** Each creature that isn't a fiend within 60 feet of the narzugon that can hear it must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or become frightened of it for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A creature that makes a successful saving throw is immune to this narzugon's Terrifying Command for 24 hours.

**Healing (1/Day).** The narzugon, or one creature it touches, regains up to 100 hit points.



## NUPPERIBO

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)

**Skills Perception** +1

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft. (blind beyond this radius),

passive Perception 11

**Languages** understands Infernal but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Cloud of Vermin.** Any creature, other than a devil, that starts its turn within 20 feet of the nupperibo must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. A creature within the areas of two or more nupperibos makes the saving throw with disadvantage. On a failure, the creature takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

**Hunger-Driven.** In the Nine Hells, the nupperibos can flawlessly track any creature that has taken damage from any nupperibo's Cloud of Vermin within the previous 24 hours.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.



## REDCAP

*Small fey, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class 13 (natural armor)**

**Hit Points 45 (6d6 + 24)**

**Speed 25 ft.**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Athletics +6, Perception +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge 3 (700 XP)**

**Iron Boots.** While moving, the redcap has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

**Outsize Strength.** While grappling, the redcap is considered to be Medium. Also, wielding a heavy weapon doesn't impose disadvantage on its attack rolls.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The redcap makes three attacks with its wicked sickle.

**Wicked Sickle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Ironbound Pursuit.** The redcap moves up to its speed to a creature it can see and kicks with its iron boots. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 20 (3d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

## VARIANT: MADCAPS

A madcap is a redcap that soaks its hat in demon ichor instead of blood. Contact with demon ichor makes the creature even more psychotic, causing it to brood over irrational hatreds. A group of madcaps will sometimes band together over a shared hatred of something, such as music, creatures with curly hair, the word "cool," or the color blue.

When a madcap drops to 0 hit points, its hateful existence comes to an end in spectacular fashion as it bursts into flames, reducing itself, its ichor-soaked hat, and its pants to ashes instantly while leaving behind its weapon and smoldering iron boots.

## REDCAP

A redcap is a homicidal fey creature born of blood lust. Although small, redcaps have formidable strength.

In the Feywild, or in places where that plane touches another plane at a fey crossing, one or more redcaps might appear where fresh blood soaks the ground. At first, new redcaps look like tiny, bloodstained mushrooms just pushing their caps out of the soil. When moonlight shines on one of these caps, a creature that looks like a wizened and undersized gnome with a hunched back and a sinewy frame springs from the earth. The creature has a pointed leather cap, pants of similar material, heavy iron boots, and a heavy bladed weapon. From the moment it awakens, a redcap desires only murder and carnage, and it sets out to satisfy these cravings. Even if a redcap wanted to be stealthy, its iron boots force it to take ponderous, thunderous steps.

To sustain its unnatural existence, a redcap must soak its hat in the fresh blood of its victims. If the blood isn't replenished at least once every three days, the redcap vanishes as if it had never been. A redcap's desire to slay is rooted in its will to survive.

## TRESSYM

A tressym is a mischievous winged cat as big as a house cat, with a wingspan of 3 feet.

Thought to be the results of wizardly experimentation on house cats, tressym are intelligent felines known to form strong friendships with humanoids, particularly rangers and wizards. Tressym get along well with others of their kind, but they rarely lair or hunt together. They peacefully ignore bats, faerie dragons, and the like, but they hate stirges and evil flying monsters such as manticores. They also enjoy teasing dogs.

Tressym feed on small rodents, birds, and insects, stalking and pouncing on prey as normal cats do, but with the added advantage of flight. Tressym don't, however, attack nestlings or despoil eggs.

Tressym mate with others of their kind, but they don't mate for life. A tressym can also mate with a normal cat, though only one out of every ten of their offspring will be a tressym; the others will be normal cats.

With the DM's permission, a person who casts the *find familiar* spell can choose to conjure a tressym instead of a normal cat.



SLOBBERCHOPS  
THE TRESSYM

## TRESSYM

*Tiny monstrosity, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class 12**

**Hit Points 5 (2d4)**

**Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 40 ft.**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +4

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Common but can't speak

**Challenge 0 (10 XP)**

**Detect Invisibility.** Within 60 feet of the tressym, magical invisibility fails to conceal anything from the tressym's sight.

**Keen Smell.** The tressym has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Poison Sense.** A tressym can detect whether a substance is poisonous by taste, touch, or smell.

## ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

## WHITE ABISHAI

Abishais stand outside the infernal hierarchy, having their own chain of command and ultimately answering to Tiamat. Other archdevils can command abishais to work for them but rarely do so, since it is never clear the extent of Tiamat's influence over the creatures.

There are five kinds of abishai, each one reflective of one of Tiamat's dragon heads (black, blue, green, red, and white). White abishais are the weakest. They fight with reckless fury on the battlefield.

## WHITE ABISHAI

*Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class 15 (natural armor)**

**Hit Points 68 (8d8 + 32)**

**Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Str +6, Con +7

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)**

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede the abishai's darkvision.

**Magic Resistance.** The abishai has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The abishai's weapon attacks are magical.

**Reckless.** At the start of its turn, the abishai can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

## ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** The abishai makes two attacks: one with its longsword and one with its claw.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

## REACTIONS

**Vicious Retaliation.** In response to taking damage, the abishai makes a bite attack against a random creature within 5 feet of it. If no creature is within reach, the abishai moves up to half its speed toward an enemy it can see, without provoking opportunity attacks.

## YEENOOGHU

The demon lord Yeenoghu, also known as the Beast of Butchery and the Gnoll Lord, appears as a battle-scarred gnoll towering 14 feet tall. He has matted fur covered with patchwork armor made from discarded shields and breastplates held together by chains and decorated by the flayed skin of his fiercest foes. His face is like a grinning predator's skull.

When Yeenoghu hunted across the Material Plane, packed of hyenas followed in his wake. Those that ate his kills became gnolls, emulating their master's ways. Few others worship Yeenoghu, but those who do tend to take on a gnoll-like aspect, hunched over, and filing their teeth down to points.

Yeenoghu wields a triple-headed flail called the Butcher, which he can summon into his hand at will, although he is as likely to tear his prey apart with his bare hands before ripping out its throat with his teeth.

If Yeenoghu is killed anywhere other than the Abyss, he re-forms at full strength in the mansion of rotting meat and bones he calls home on his desolate, canyon-pocked layer of the Abyss.



## YEENOOGHU

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 333 (23d12 + 184)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	16 (+3)	23 (+8)	15 (+3)	24 (+7)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +10, Con +15, Wis +14

**Skills** Intimidation +9, Perception +14

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing that is nonmagical

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

**Languages** all, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 24 (62,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** Yeenoghu's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *fear*, *invisibility*

1/day: *teleport*

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Yeenoghu fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Yeenoghu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Yeenoghu's weapon attacks are magical.

**Rampage.** When Yeenoghu reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on his turn, Yeenoghu can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a bite attack.

### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Yeenoghu makes three flail attacks. If an attack hits, he can cause one of the following additional effects, either of his choice or at random (each effect can be used only once per Multiaction):

1. The attack deals an extra 13 (2d12) bludgeoning damage.
2. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the start of Yeenoghu's next turn.
3. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the *confusion* spell until the start of Yeenoghu's next turn.

**Flail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d10 + 9) piercing damage.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Yeenoghu can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Yeenoghu regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Charge.** Yeenoghu moves up to his speed.

**Swat Away.** Yeenoghu makes a flail attack. If the attack hits, the target must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or be pushed 15 feet in a straight line away from Yeenoghu. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target falls prone.

**Savage (Costs 2 Actions).** Yeenoghu makes a bite attack against each creature within 10 feet of him.

## ZARIEL

Once a mighty angel charged with watching the tides of the Blood War, Zariel succumbed to the corrupting influence of the Nine Hells and fell from grace. Asmodeus admired Zariel's passion for war and offered her rulership of Avernus. She accepted his offer and was transformed by Asmodeus into an archdevil.

Zariel's "rise" came at the expense of Bel, her pit fiend predecessor. Zariel and Bel hate each other. To keep Bel busy and out of her sight, Zariel tasks him with forging weapons, armor, and gruesome demon-slaying machines.

To replenish her legions, Zariel needs the souls of mortals to create lemures, which she can then promote to higher forms of devils. Only by tempting mortals with power on the Material Plane and striking bargains with them can she bind them to her in the afterlife.

**Matalotok.** Zariel recently defeated the demon lord Kostchchie and took his hammer, *Matalotok*, which grants Zariel immunity to cold damage. Without this hammer, Zariel has resistance to cold damage instead.



## ARCHDUKE ZARIEL OF AVERNUS

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 580 (40d10 + 360)

Speed 50 ft., fly 150 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	24 (+7)	28 (+9)	26 (+8)	27 (+8)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Int +16, Wis +16, Cha +18

Skills Intimidation +18, Perception +16

Damage Resistances fire, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede Zariel's darkvision.

**Fiery Weapons.** Zariel's weapon attacks are magical. When she hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 36 (8d8) fire damage (included in the weapon attacks below).

**Innate Spellcasting.** Zariel's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 26). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self* (can become Medium when changing her appearance), *detect evil and good*, *fireball*, *invisibility* (self only), *wall of fire*

3/day each: *blade barrier*, *dispel evil and good*, *finger of death*

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Zariel fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Zariel has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Regeneration.** Zariel regains 20 hit points at the start of her turn. If she takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. Zariel dies only if she starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Zariel attacks twice with her flail and once with *Matalotok*. She can substitute Horrid Touch for *Matalotok*.

**Flail. Melee Weapon Attack:** +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d8 + 8) piercing damage plus 36 (8d8) fire damage.

**Matalotok (Warhammer).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage, or 19 (2d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage when used with two hands, plus 36 (8d8) fire damage. In addition, the weapon emits a burst of cold that deals 10 (3d6) cold damage to each creature within 30 feet of it.

**Horrid Touch (Recharge 5–6).** Zariel touches one creature within 10 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or take 44 (8d10) necrotic damage and be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target is also blinded and deafened. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Teleport.** Zariel magically teleports, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zariel can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zariel regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Immolating Gaze (Costs 2 Actions).** Zariel turns her magical gaze toward one creature she can see within 120 feet of her and commands it to combust. The target must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or take 22 (4d10) fire damage.

**Teleport.** Zariel uses her Teleport action.

## APPENDIX E: INFERNAL RAPTURE MENU

### • Ալյու •

#### Արքականիքնել

- Վանական պատրիարք Շահնշահ -

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#### Արքականիքնել

## *◦ Menu ◦*

### *Appetizers*

- Pickled vine blight salad ◦*
- Panfried myconid cap with garlic butter ◦*
- Spicy shredded stirge sliders ◦*

### *Main Dishes*

- Broiled quippers served in a port reduction ◦*
- Roasted wereboar seasoned liberally with pepper and paprika ◦*
- Twice-battered axe beak strips with a brandied plum sauce ◦*
- Deep fried miniature giant space hamster, seasoned to perfection with rosemary, basil, thyme, and tears ◦*

### *Desserts*

- Candied phase spider eyes in a raspberry liquor reduction ◦*
- Sweet apple tart with a celestial caramel drizzle ◦*
- Rare miniature stench kow cheese selection ◦*

### *◦ Coffee/JTea ◦*

## APPENDIX F: STORY CONCEPT ART

In the months before writing began on *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*, art director Richard Whitters invited a handful of concept illustrators to create characters, creatures, objects, and environments based on conversations with Adam Lee (the story lead) and other members of the D&D team. These artists included Aleksi Briclot, Daarken, Max Dunbar, Titus Lunter, Vince Proce, and Shawn Wood. Their illustrations helped inspire the writers and laid the groundwork for a story guide used by our licencing partners. This appendix showcases some of their excellent work.



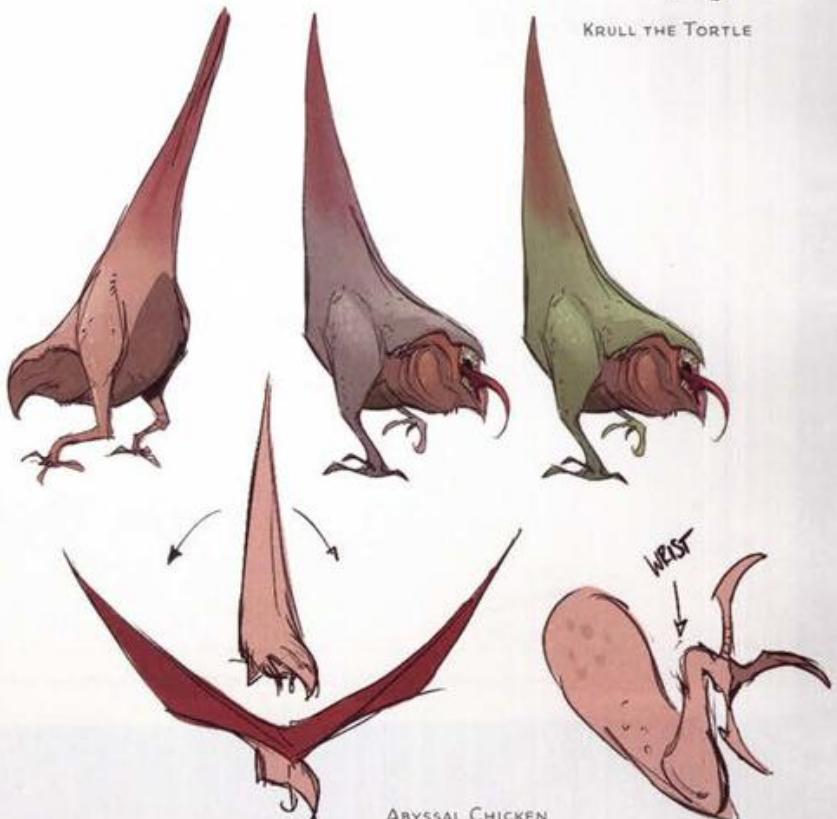
SALAMANDER MECHANIC



Z'NETH THE HOBGOBLIN



KRULL THE TORTLE

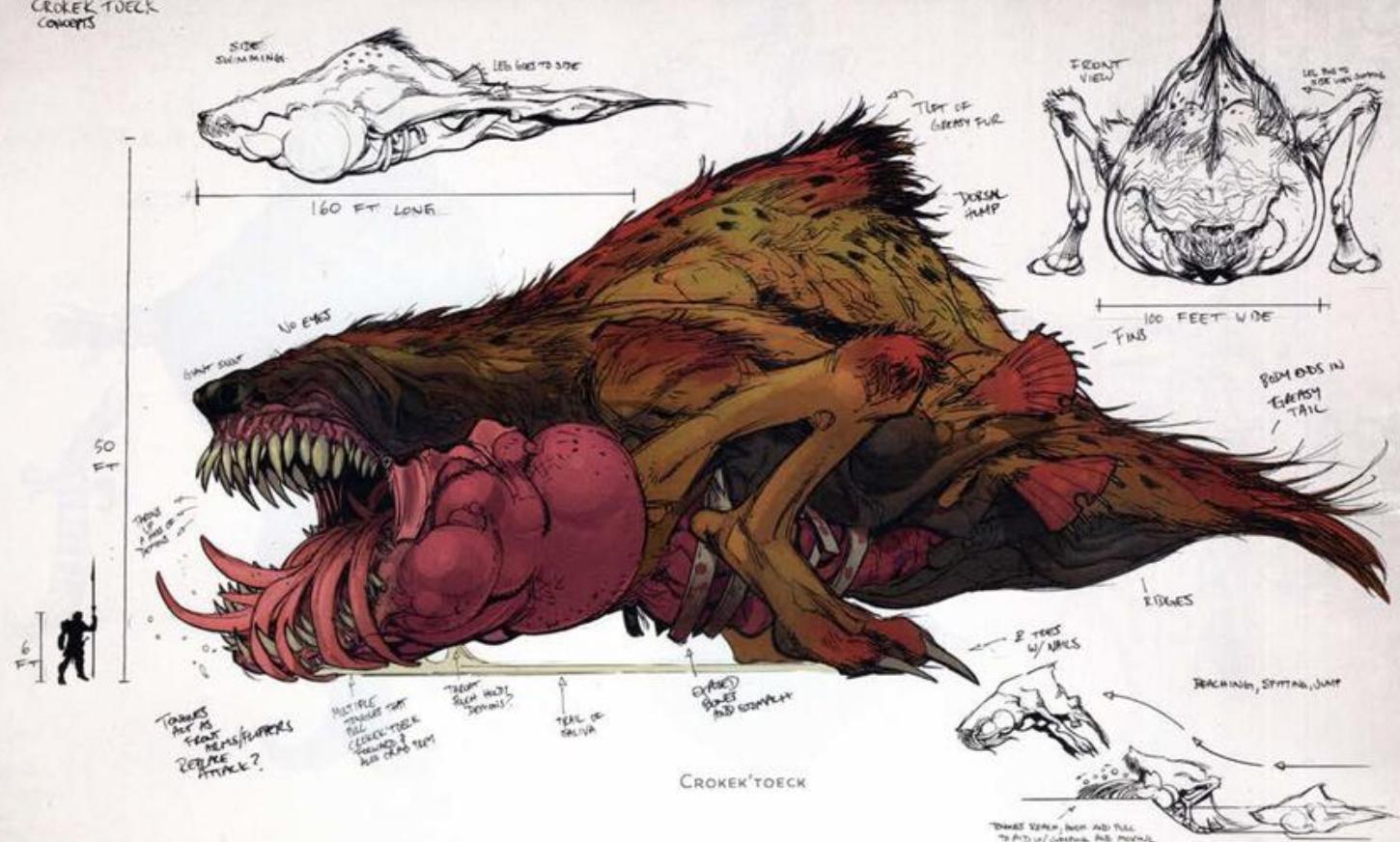


ABYSSAL CHICKEN



SLOBBERCHOPS

CROKEK'TOECK  
CONCEPTS



CROKEK'TOECK

SOUL COIN



MICKEY



BARNABAS



GULAH THE ONI  
(DELETED NPC)

SYLVIRA AND JEZEBEL



CHUKKA AND CLONK



MAD MAGGIE



LULU



MADCAPS



MARRENLOTH PLYING THE RIVER STYX



ZARIEL'S FLYING FORTRESS



Height  
450 ft.

TEAM  
YEENOGHUAU

YEENOGHUAU'S  
DEMONS



FALASTER FISK





BALOUR'S GATE, LOWER CITY, WITH GHOST CAT AND SHADOW CAT



AVERNUS



INFERNAL WAR MACHINES



MAD MAGGIE'S  
HAPPYMOBILE



ALEKSI

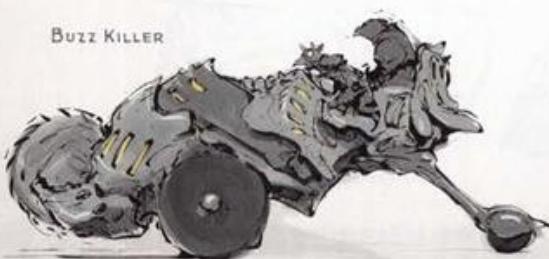


MERRY WIDOW

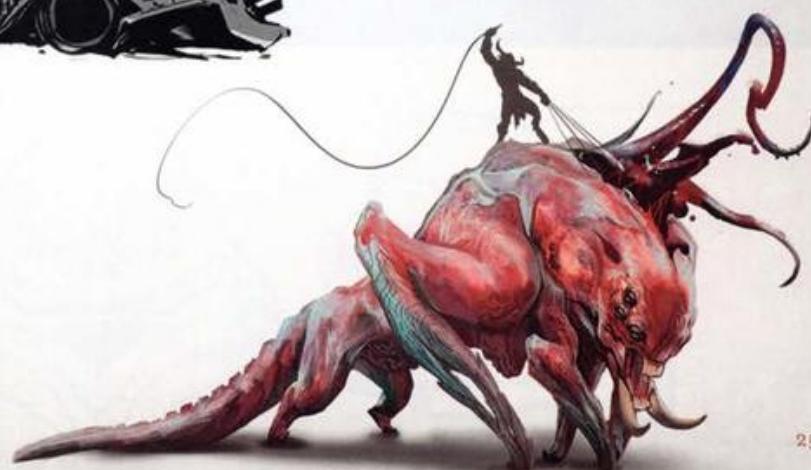
HELL'S BELLE



DEVIL RIDING AN ALEKSIPIUG



BUZZ KILLER





THAVIUS KREEG (AMNIUS)



## APPENDIX G: INFERNAL SCRIPT

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# ELTUREL

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