



ARCANUM WORLDS PRESENTS

CHAINS OF ASMODEUS™



FIFTH EDITION

Travel through the Nine Hells to save your soul
in this adventure for the world's greatest roleplaying game

ARCANUM WORLDS PRESENTS

CHAINS OF ASMODEUS™



AW

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FOREWORD

In the depths of Nessus, I sit upon my throne, watching the Great Wheel turn. Every soul, every heartbeat, every fleeting thought is like a delicate note in the symphony of existence. But oh, there is one sensation, one exquisite pleasure that eclipses all others: the corruption of a pure soul.

Can you imagine? That moment when innocence fractures, when a soul's core becomes tainted with the intoxicating taste of sin? That delectable descent into the dark? Many view me as a creature of sheer malevolence, but they fail to understand. It's not about the pain, the torment, or the eternal damnation. It's about the seduction. The transformation.

I invite you, brave adventurers, to try and resist my allure. But remember, every choice you make, I will be watching. Waiting. Because there is no pleasure greater, no triumph more profound, than turning the most steadfast and noble of souls into my devoted, corrupted playthings.

—Asmodeus

Disclaimer: Tiax the Mighty disclaims everything and nothing! Each and every word in this tome is true, except for the parts where bad things are said about Tiax. Those parts are lies. Unless the bad things make Tiax sound fearsome and formidable (as ye all know Tiax is as fearsome and formidable as he is great and wise). In those cases, the lies are truths and not lies at all! And don't even think about questioning Tiax's logic. It is as unquestionable as Tiax is mighty!



ON THE COVER

The undisputed lord of the Nine Hells is Asmodeus. All who occupy his realm fear and respect him.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Nine Hells

THIS STORY TAKES PLACE IN THE NINE Hells and sees the characters confront its ruler, Asmodeus. They venture into the Nine Hells to save the souls of their loved ones (or their own) and are aided by a powerful faction. This faction has its own reasons for wanting revenge on Asmodeus. With the help of the characters, the faction believes it can deal a devastating blow to him. In return for a favor, the faction provides characters with access to the Nine Hells and a means of traversing the different layers. The characters travel by barge down the River Styx, also known as the River of Blood, a cross-planar river that links the layers of the Nine Hells. Those who touch or drink from its waters risk forgetting their past lives permanently.

The characters try to avoid Asmodeus's attention, believing themselves unwanted infiltrators who are there to undermine the Lord of the Nine Hells.

Little do they know, they're here by his design. They're integral to one of Asmodeus's plots, and he aims to recruit them. But to get them under his control, he needs to corrupt them. It took years of careful planning, and now, finally, he has the characters exactly where he wants them. They will be tested, with temptations and traps set which only the pure of heart can resist. Each time a character gives in to sin, a link is added to the chains that bind them to the Nine Hells, to Asmodeus. Can they save their loved ones without losing themselves in the process?

THE NINE HELLS

The Nine Hells is the ultimate plane of evil and the epitome of premeditated cruelty. The devils of the Nine Hells are bound to obey the laws of their superiors, and at the very top of the hierarchy is Asmodeus.

The Nine Hells has nine layers. The first eight are ruled by archdevils who answer to Asmodeus. To reach the deepest layer of the Nine Hells, one must descend through all eight of the layers above it, in order. The most expeditious means of doing so is the River Styx, which plunges ever deeper as

SOURCEBOOK AND ADVENTURE

In addition to being an adventure, this is a source book for the Nine Hells. This book provides useful information for each level of the Nine Hells and its denizens and lords.

it flows from one layer to the next. Only the most courageous adventurers can withstand the torment and horror of that journey.

THE RIVER STYX

This river bubbles with foul water, and along its banks are the remains of thousands of battles. There are captains who are skilled enough to command a ship through the unpredictable currents of the river. For a price, these pilots are willing to carry passengers into the lower depths of the Nine Hells. They're the only ones who know how to avoid the dangers of the River Styx, including the warships that patrol it.

These warships are built from infernal iron (bristling with spikes, blades, and chains) and can travel the waters of the River Styx. Weapons used by the infernal warships include flamethrowers, acid spewed from bronze tubes, and launchers that fire a dozen ballista bolts at once.

SINS

Sin must be at the core of any story that takes place in the Nine Hells. These Hells are based on Dante's *Inferno*, the famed 14th-century poem which depicted Hell as nine concentric circles of torment. Each circle of Hell tormented a different class of sinner, from the unbelievers of the 1st circle down to the great betrayers of the 9th circle.

The poem focused on describing the acknowledgement and rejection of sin. In this story, good people have committed grievous sins that will have consequences. Some of these people might be the player characters.

WHAT ARE THE SINS?

Each layer of the Nine Hells embodies a particular sin, as described in the sections that follow. Feel free to add other sins, but be careful when you do. Some classical interpretations of sins shouldn't be used in any adventure. Others, such as lust or gluttony, should be handled very carefully.

SINS TO THE SELF

Anger. The sin of anger fuels wrath, vengeance, and inner turmoil. It takes root in Avernus, the domain of the archdevil Zariel.

Greed. This sin leads to a life of accumulating wealth and sharing very little—a sin nurtured in Minauros, the domain of the archdevil Mammon.



THE BITTER SMELL OF SULPHUR AND THE AGONISING SCREAMS OF TORMENTED SOULS FILL THE AIR OF THE NINE HELLS.

AN UNJUST UNIVERSE

Some players may be uncomfortable if a soul is consigned to the Nine Hells for a sin when the person so condemned lived a good life in aggregate. However, all the souls consigned to the Nine Hells in this adventure were deceived by Asmodeus. While they committed sins, that wasn't the reason they were consigned to the Nine Hells. However, Asmodeus ensures that the soul is punished as if the sin was the one that defined it.

Jealousy. The jealous are never satisfied with what they have. Phlegethos, the domain of the archdevils Belial and Fierna, is where jealousy thrives.

Pride. Some say that this is the original sin which led to all other sins and is the sin that led to the fall of Asmodeus and thus is his domain.

SINS TO THE OTHER

Betrayal. Betraying a loved one, a god, or a sovereign can damn one's soul to Stygia, the domain of the archdevil Levistus.

Deceit. Lying that leads to harm is, like Maladomini, the domain of the archdevil Baalzebul.

Harm. Mutilating or torturing an enemy is wicked work that warms the ice-cold heart of Mephistopheles, the archdevil who presides over Cania.

Murder. Killing an innocent or family member is evil business that comes home to roost in Dis, the domain of the archdevil Displacer.

Oppression. Unjustly imprisoning enemies and denying their freedom is the devil's work and reflective of Malbolge, the domain of the archdevil Glasya.

More details on the different archdevils, including their stat blocks, can be found in appendix A, "Lords of the Nine."

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, you need the fifth edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, and *Monsters of the Multiverse*. *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus* would also be a good source; *Chains of Asmodeus* can be run as a continuation of that story.

The stat blocks for most creatures in this adventure can be found in the *Monster Manual*. When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that is a visual cue for you to look up the creature's stat block in the *Monster Manual*, unless the adventure's text refers you to appendix B (for monsters), appendix C (for NPCs), or *Monsters of the Multiverse*.

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

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters arrive at a location or under specific circumstance, as described in the text.



EVEN THE ICY PLAINS OF
STYgia CAN BE BEAUTIFUL.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear in this book:

AC = Armor Class

pp = platinum piece(s)

DC = Difficulty Class

gp = gold piece(s)

XP = experience points

sp = silver piece(s)

NPC = non-player character

cp = copper piece(s)

DM = Dungeon Master

ep = electrum piece(s)

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

The adventure is meant for characters of 11th level, and the story sees them rise to 20th. Creating characters of this level requires a little more preparation compared to 1st-level characters. If you and your players previously played *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*, your players may choose to continue with their characters from that adventure. Or, if your players have other premade characters of the appropriate level, they can decide to embody those characters once again. Players with preexisting characters must still choose the soul that their character is dedicated to saving.

The “Great Heroes” section helps you and your players get started with either creating a new character or with the choices that need to be made for preexisting characters.

CONSIDER YOUR PLAYERS

Playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is about having fun with your friends and exploring new worlds together. Before venturing out onto the River Styx, discuss the nature of the story with your players.

You will be guiding them on a journey through the Nine Hells and introducing them to the various devils that make this infernal domain their home. The story contains references to the suffering and torture of those souls who are damned to an eternity of torment because of their sins. Make sure that you're aware of any boundaries that may exist, as you don't wish to make the experience uncomfortable for your players. The characters might be on a perilous quest through the Nine Hells themselves, but their players should enjoy the experience. You may need to adjust the story to accommodate all players.

PREVIOUS ADVENTURES IN AVERNUS

An adventure that is the perfect prequel to this one is *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*. If you and your players have been on this adventure before our story begins, you may be familiar with some of the setting, and the players' characters should be at the appropriate level. However, depending on the outcomes of your earlier encounters within the Nine Hells, you may need to adjust some parts of the story.

AGENCY AND REPLAYABILITY

This adventure has been designed so that each time it is played it can have entirely different objectives and outcomes. It does this mainly through the following ways:

Souls. Each player must choose a soul to save. It might be the soul of a loved one or their own soul. The soul, and the sins associated with it, determine where Asmodeus has hidden it away to be tormented.

Group Patron. The players must decide upon a group patron before the start of the adventure. There are three group patrons, one for good, one for evil, and one for neutrality. Each has their own objective.

The River Styx. The river passes dozens of dangerous locations, but the characters visit only some of them.

Temptations and Corruptions. Asmodeus tries to lure the characters into his grasp. Each time the characters go back to the Nine Hells they may find different temptations. Some may be easy to resist, others not so much. Giving in to temptation corrupts them.

STORY OVERVIEW

The Lord of the Nine Hells, Asmodeus, is known to have countless plots, some that take centuries to come to fruition, while others he conceives of and executes within a few years. This is a story about one of the latter.

Asmodeus desires to corrupt and dominate some of the most powerful mortals in a generation. To further his designs, Asmodeus wants to convert these powerful mortals to his cause. To this end, Asmodeus has made pacts with many of the powerful and influential of the Forgotten Realms. This includes kings, queens, high priests, and powerful adventurers. The player characters are among those that he has targeted. When not able to convince such august personages, he has gone after their spouses, children, or friends. He comes to them when they're in need, providing a service with the understanding that if they die before they can return the favor, their soul is forfeit.

Asmodeus never intended to allow these infernal contracts to be fulfilled by their mortal signatories. Instead, he has given a list of names to the most skilled killers in the world.

These killers embark on a murder spree to kill all the people on the list, thus consigning their souls to the Nine Hells and to the corrupting influence of Asmodeus and his court of devils. Among the victims when the adventure begins are the spouses, children, or friends of the characters. One or more characters may also be among those who are murdered.

ADVENTURE FLOWCHART



CHAPTER 1: KELEMVOR'S CATHEDRAL

The characters meet their group patron and embark on their quest to the Nine Hells.



CHAPTER 2: THE NINE HELLS

This chapter provides the information needed to implement Asmodeus's plans throughout the campaign. It describes the random encounters found in the Nine Hells, the temptations Asmodeus has put in place to ensnare the characters, and how to track their corruption as a result of these temptations.



CHAPTER 3–10: THE FIRST EIGHT LAYERS

The characters navigate the different layers of the Nine Hells and look for a way to release their chosen souls from eternal torment.



CHAPTER 11: HUNTED BY THE DUKES

The characters have been kicking up a storm in the Nine Hells. Two infernal warships, piloted by archdevils, are on the hunt. The characters can encounter these warships on the first through eighth layers of the Nine Hells.



CHAPTER 12: NESSUS

The characters need to find a way out of their contracts. They may be able to gain entry to the Oasis of the Lethe to do so. If not, they must challenge Asmodeus himself.



THE NINE HELLS

This overview summarizes the rulers of each layer of the Nine Hells, and the objectives characters might seek in each. These objectives include the souls of the characters, the souls of those they care about, and the items or people their group patron requires.

FIRST LAYER: AVERNUS

For 10th to 13th-level characters

Ruler: Zariel

Souls: Brother, The Queen

SECOND LAYER: DIS

For 10th to 13th-level characters

Ruler: Dispater

Souls: Bounty, The Chosen One, Patricide

Patron Objectives: *Cloak of Invisibility, Instrument of the Bards (Ollamh Harp), Iron Horn of Valhalla, Wrought-Iron Tower* (see appendix D)

THIRD LAYER: MINAUROS

For 10th to 13th-level characters

Ruler: Mammon

Souls: Father, The Infinite Treasure

Patron Objectives: *Accounting and Valuation of All Things* (see appendix D), *Belt of Giant Strength* (storm)

FOURTH LAYER: PHLEGETHOS

For 14th to 16th-level characters

Rulers: Belial & Fierna

Souls: Sister, The Furnace

Patron Objectives: *Anagwendol, Amulet of the Inferno* or *Ranseur of Torture* (see appendix D)

FIFTH LAYER: STYGIA

For 14th to 16th-level characters

Ruler: Levistus

Souls: Business Partner, The Oathbreaker

Patron Objective: *Holy Avenger, Manual of Golems* (iron), *Rod of Resurrection, True-Ice Shards* (see appendix D)

SIXTH LAYER: MALBOLGE

For 14th to 16th-level characters

Ruler: Glasya

Souls: The Heartless Master, Mentor, Mother

Patron Objective: *Scourge of Shadow* (see appendix D)

SEVENTH LAYER: MALADOMINI

For 17th to 20th-level characters

Ruler: Baalzebul

Souls: Spouse/True Love, The Great Con

Patron Objectives: *Jenevere, Staff of the Woodlands*

EIGHTH LAYER: CANIA

For 17th to 20th-level characters

Ruler: Mephistopheles

Souls: Student, The Merciless

Patron Objective: *Staff of the Magi*

NINTH LAYER: NESSUS

For 17th to 20th-level characters

Ruler: Asmodeus

Resolution: Either at the Oasis of the Lethe or Malsheem

THE INFERNAL WARSHIP

Commanded by: The Brothers

Location: Found at any of the layers

Patron Objectives: Barachiel

BAALZEBUL'S INFERNAL SUBMERSIBLE

Commanded by: Abigor

Location: Found at any of the layers

Patron Objectives: The Unmaker



THE SHORES OF THE RIVER STYX ARE
LITTERED WITH GROTESQUE LANDMARKS.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

These are the important characters in the story:

Aeshma (the Unmaker). A lost soul that the Conclave of Halruua needs destroyed to stop a dangerous threat. Nobody knows the Unmaker's true identity.

Asmodeus. The Lord of the Nine Hells, and this adventure's primary antagonist.

Barachiel. A Hellrider and one of the friends that Ramius seeks.

Koh Tam. A priest serving the God of the Dead.

Ramius. A contact for the Hellriders of Elturel group patron.

Sarevok. High priest of Bhaal, and the contact for the Deathstalkers of Bhaal group patron.

Tiax. Koh Tam's sidekick and comedy relief.

Zythan. High Diviner of Halruua, and a contact for the Conclave of Halruua group patron.

PROLOGUE

The characters are approached by a representative of one of three group patrons, representing either good, neutrality, or evil. This representative acts as the quest giver and has their own motivation for wanting the characters to go into the Nine Hells. The three patrons are as follows:

Ramius, Hellrider of Elturel (Good). Ramius has a deep hatred for Asmodeus because of what the archdevil did to his home city and its patron angel.

Ramius' lifelong friend was a victim of the recent murder spree. The paladin wants the characters to enter the Nine Hells to rescue his friend and other Celestials who have fallen victim to Asmodeus. Ramius and the Hellriders know the location of these beings trapped within the Nine Hells.

Zythan, High Diviner of the Conclave of Halruua

(Neutral). Zythan has foreseen a dreadful consequence of Asmodeus's plan. A dangerous soul known as the Unmaker has emerged and must be dealt with. Zythan and the mages of Halruua have divined the location of powerful magic items that can help the characters in this quest. He wants the characters to gather these, to defeat the threat he has foreseen. These include some of the most famed items in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Sarevok, High Priest of the Deathstalkers of Bhaal (Evil).

The Deathstalkers of Bhaal feel uneasy about their alliance with Asmodeus. They fear he will betray Bhaal and that the divine power promised him will never be given. Sarevok will help the characters navigate the River Styx and rescue the souls of their loved ones, but only if they help Bhaal gain leverage against Asmodeus by stealing some of the most infamous and powerful artifacts of the Nine Hells. He aims to keep one, the others are for the characters to decide what to do with.

More information on the patrons can be found in the "Group Patron" section of this chapter.

KOH TAM

The group patron puts the characters in contact with **Koh Tam** (see chapter 1), a priest serving the God of the Dead. Koh Tam is an expert on the Nine Hells and knows how to navigate the River Styx. But first, he must learn where the souls that the characters seek might be found. To that end, he summons Baalzebul and invites the archdevil to possess him. The characters must deal with the devil to learn the location of the souls. Afterwards, they must exorcise Koh Tam of the devil's spirit.

THROUGH THE NINE HELLSS

Koh Tam knows how to navigate the River Styx and offers to guide the characters through the Nine Hells to help them find the souls they seek. He opens a portal to the first layer of the Nine Hells, Avernus.

The characters must descend through the layers of the Nine Hells along the treacherous River Styx. It is possible to move against the flow of the River Styx, but it is difficult. However, Koh Tam's barge has a magical addition that allows him to use the *Plane Shift* spell to travel to a layer of the Nine Hells above the current one.

The characters have two objectives if they're to save the souls of their loved ones or their own:

Finding the Lost Souls. The main objective of the characters is to find the souls that have been trapped by Asmodeus.

Dealing with Asmodeus.

Once the characters have found their lost loved ones, they must convince Asmodeus to allow them to be freed. They can do this by gaining leverage over him, by performing a service for him, or signing an infernal contract. Characters who are able to resist temptation within the Nine Hells might even find a loophole allowing them to escape, successfully avoiding all of Asmodeus's snares.

FINALE: ASMODEUS

Asmodeus is a lawful evil deity who is genuinely one of the most powerful creatures in the universe. He likes to appear respectful and well-mannered when speaking with others, and he hates being wrong. In fact, sometimes he even pretends to know more than he does, or that he can predict what actions creatures will take before they take them, even though he can't. He enjoys making contracts with others, especially when their end of the bargain is their soul.

At the climax of the adventure, the characters may need to make a contract with Asmodeus to release the souls of their loved ones. The characters need as much leverage as possible when going into the contract. Without enough leverage, they may have to promise to do services for Asmodeus.

DISCARDED WARMACHINES ARE A SOURCE OF INCOME FOR MANY SCAVENGERS.



GREAT HEROES

This adventure is for high-level play. Players start with characters who are 11th level and are considered Masters of the Realm. Over the course of play, they go beyond 17th level to become Masters of the World. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details on these tiers of play. There are three steps that players must complete before the start of the adventure:

- Create a new character, or choose an existing one.
- Choose a soul to be saved.
- Choose a group patron.

Players need to create a new high-level character unless they have a preexisting one they want to use.

Any player who creates a new high-level character must go through the character creation process and choose a soul that their hero is dedicated to saving.

A player with a preexisting character must still choose a soul that their character is dedicated to saving.

When choosing a soul to save, a player has the option of saving the soul of a loved one (detailed in the "Lost Souls" section) or saving their own soul (detailed in the "Souls of the Damned" section). While the lost souls option was designed to work with existing characters and the souls of the damned option was designed to work with newly created high-level characters, the DM can allow players to choose from either. A group can be made up of lost souls and souls of the damned. However, to promote group unity, a DM can insist upon one or the other.

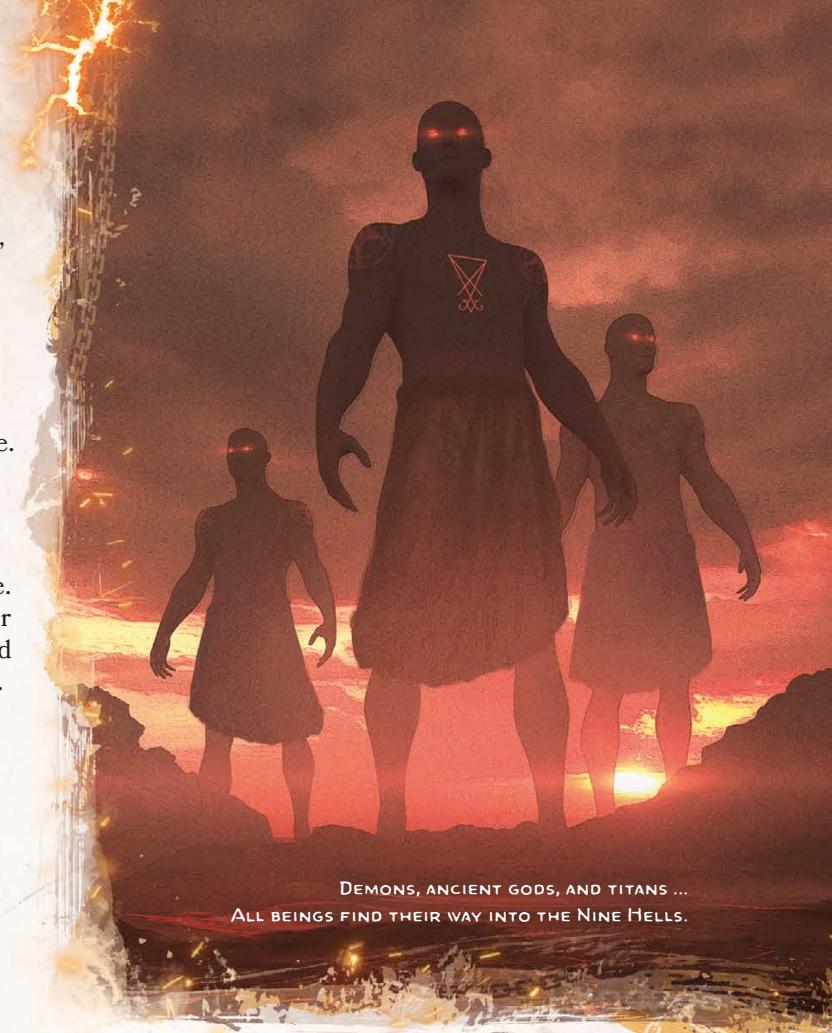
After players have created their characters, they must choose a group patron. These group patrons are designed for three types of play that coincide with good, neutral, and evil alignments.

NEW CHARACTERS

Creating an 11th-level character uses the same character creation steps outlined in the *Player's Handbook*. The process will take longer than usual, as a player must select spells, feats, abilities, and other aspects that a 1st-level character wouldn't have to. A new character starts with 7,500 gp, the standard equipment associated with their background, and magic items as described next.

MAGICAL EQUIPMENT

Each new high-level character should be allowed to pick either 1 very rare magic item and 1 uncommon magic item or 2 rare magic items. These items should be selected from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



DEMONS, ANCIENT GODS, AND TITANS ...

ALL BEINGS FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE NINE HELLSS.

SAVING SOULS

The following sections describe the souls available for each player to pick from. The chosen soul is the soul their character seeks to save. The player can either choose a lost soul, a loved one whose soul is trapped in the Nine Hells, or they can decide it's their character's soul that is damned. Asmodeus keeps these souls in phylacteries scattered around the Nine Hells. Phylacteries don't need to be in the layer associated with their sin, but usually are. When characters locate such a phylactery, they must bring it with them for the remainder of the adventure.

Only Asmodeus can break the infernal contract that binds a soul to its phylactery. To convince him to do this, characters must gain leverage over him, as described in later sections.

LOST SOULS

These lost souls belong to the character's loved ones who have signed infernal contracts. When their phylactery is recovered, the lost soul can communicate with the character, providing advice, guidance, commentary, and even criticism. This type of phylactery also provides characters with a statistical or gameplay bonus.

The section that follows provides examples of lost souls that a player can choose.



BROTHER (ANGER)

From the day he was born, your brother was a problem child—impulsive, aggressive and violent, though never toward you. He was constantly getting into fights—most of which he started—and you were constantly coming to his rescue and cleaning up his messes. But despite his flaws, you always knew he had your back. His temper grew worse as he grew older, and his fights often resulted in people getting hurt. He fell in with an unsavory crew, and you drifted apart. Now you've learned he was foolish enough to sign an infernal contract with Asmodeus, and his soul is trapped in the Nine Hells. You can't deny your brother deserves his fate ... but he's still your brother, and you're not going to turn your back on him.

Phylactery Location. The War-Slough on Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. While you possess your brother's phylactery, you can channel your brother's rage. When you make your first attack on your turn, you can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives you advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against you have advantage until your next turn.



BOUNTY (MURDER)

Someone of your reputation and talent is always in high demand. If the price is right, you'll take on any job ... but you don't work cheap. Still, this is the strangest adventure you've ever been hired for. The ruthless matron of a powerful noble family has disappeared, and you've been hired to find her. Your first assumption was that she'd either been kidnapped for ransom, murdered by a rival family, or killed by one of her own ambitious kin. But during your investigations, you discovered the shocking truth: decades ago, she signed an infernal contract to help advance her family's fortunes, and Asmodeus came to collect his payment. Tracking her soul through the Nine Hells wasn't part of the original deal, but the reward for bringing her back is too high to pass up, and you never leave a job unfinished.

Phylactery Location. The Agora of Floating Knives on Dis, the second layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. While you possess your bounty's phylactery, you're more adroit at killing. When you miss with a melee weapon attack, you can choose to hit instead. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



BUSINESS PARTNER (BETRAYAL)

For years, you and your business partner shared the fruits of your adventures in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Sure, they were always trying to squeeze a few extra drops from your cut on every mission, but you never thought they'd actually betray you. On your last adventure, however, they double-crossed you, stealing a rare and powerful magic item you'd spent years questing for. They disappeared with your treasure, leaving you high and dry. You searched for the precious item in vain, only to discover that your old partner's soul is trapped in the Nine Hells because of an infernal contract they signed with Asmodeus. The only way you'll ever get back what is rightfully yours is to track them down and bring them back to life so they can tell you where the treasure is hidden.

Phylactery Location. The Chasm of Found Things on Stygia, the fifth layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. While you possess your business partner's phylactery, you have advantage on saving throws against illusion spells and effects that would make you have the charmed condition.



CHILDHOOD FRIEND (SINLESS)

Growing up, you never seemed to fit in. You were always different—perhaps that's why you became an adventurer. Your childhood was lonely until you met your childhood friend. Like you, they were completely ignored by other children on the good days, ruthlessly bullied on the bad. But in each other you found a kindred soul. You formed a powerful bond of friendship that allowed you to rise above the taunts and torments of the other kids. Together, you found the strength to survive and flourish. You became a successful adventurer. Your friend chose a different path, one of domestic bliss with a family and a quiet, fulfilling life. Years would pass between seeing them, but you still remained close—united by your childhood bond. But when your friend's youngest child became ill, they didn't turn to you for help. Instead, they signed a contract with Asmodeus, condemning themselves to an eternity in the Nine Hells.

Phylactery Location. Use an encounter and location from the remaining lost souls not chosen by the players.

Phylactery Benefit. Possessing your childhood friend's phylactery grants you advantage on Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.



FATHER (GREED)

You loved your father. He helped shape you into the hero you're now. He supported your ambitions, gave you advice when you needed it, and was there for you when things looked darkest. Your mother loved him even more, for he was personable, funny, and kind. But everyone has a flaw, and your father's flaw was gambling. The risk-taking behavior that you inherited from him made you into a hero, but he didn't have your outlet. Instead, he took risks with money. His debts grew, as did his shame, but you never knew. Your mother didn't tell you about it until it was too late. Asmodeus used his shame to convince him to sign an infernal contract.

Phylactery Location. The Ineffable Trove on Minauros, the third layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. Possessing your father's phylactery grants you extra luck. Whenever you make an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, you can roll an additional d20. You can choose to use this benefit after you roll the die, but before the outcome is determined. You choose which of the d20s is used for the attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



MENTOR (OPPRESSION)

You learned your craft at the feet of a true master. Recognizing your raw talent and potential, your mentor took you under their wing and trained you. Your mentor was a difficult master and demanded complete obedience. Over the years, they taught you everything you needed to know about adventuring and life, shaping you into the hero you're today. They shared all their secrets with you ... except for one. Long ago, your mentor signed an infernal contract with Asmodeus. Now your mentor has been whisked away to the Nine Hells, and it's time to use everything they taught you to save them from an eternity of torment and suffering.

Phylactery Location. The Sign of the Hag's Arms on Malbolge, the sixth layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. Possessing your mentor's phylactery grants you protection. You gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws.



MOTHER (PRIDE)



SISTER (JEALOUSY)

Your mother was kind and loving, but also strong and independent. She raised you on her own, supporting you by telling fortunes and performing tarot readings for the locals in the town where you grew up. Once you began your adventuring career, her reputation grew quickly. Officials and nobility of ever-increasing rank and importance began to come to your mother for insight into their futures, amazed at the accuracy of her predictions. What you didn't know was that her rapid rise in stature was due to her signing an infernal contract with Asmodeus to enhance her gifts.

Phylactery Location. The Sign of the Hag's Arms on Malbolge, the sixth layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. Possessing your mother's phylactery grants you foresight. When you finish a long rest, roll a d20 and record the number rolled. You can replace any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check made by you or a creature that you can see with this foretelling roll. You must choose to do so before the roll. This roll can be used only once. When you finish a long rest, you lose an unused foretelling roll.

Your sister was fearless. There was no challenge she wouldn't tackle, no dare she wouldn't take. She became an adventurer, living a life filled with thrills and excitement. She even inspired your own career, pushing you to ever greater accolades. But over the years, her risk-taking became a compulsion she couldn't control. She became more and more reckless, embarking on foolhardy quests and what seemed like suicide missions. What you didn't realize was that it was your sister's envy of your accomplishments that drove her recklessness. Asmodeus exploited her need to be your equal, convincing her to sign an infernal contract in exchange for the ultimate adventure.

Phylactery Location. The Elemental Preserve on Phlegethos, the fourth layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. While you possess your sister's phylactery, any effect that applies the frightened condition on one or more targets has no effect on you.



SPOUSE/TRUE LOVE (DECEIT)



STUDENT (HARM)

True love is real—you know this because you were lucky enough to find yours. In a world too often filled with darkness and danger, you were blessed to find someone to stand by you through thick and thin. They supported you when you needed it most, helping you to reach your full potential. Together, you made a life for yourself: a wonderful, perfect life. But now you have learned that your love kept a secret from you: they made an infernal contract with Asmodeus to help keep you safe during your adventures. They made the ultimate sacrifice to protect you, and now they're paying the ultimate price.

Phylactery Location. The Eye Market on Maladomini, the seventh layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. Possessing your true love's phylactery grants you advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

You started at the bottom and clawed your way to the top, forging your reputation over the years. As your legend grew, others came to you seeking guidance, but you always turned them away. One day, you discovered a student who was different than the others. Although the student was willful and prone to violence, you still saw a spark in them that reminded you of your own humble beginnings, so you took them under your wing. You helped them reach their full potential, growing skills until their ability and reputation rivaled your own. But despite all you taught them, your student still made a tragic mistake. They signed an infernal contract with Asmodeus, foolishly convinced they could get out of it before it came due. Now it's up to you to help them one last time.

Phylactery Location. The Sorrow Mine on Cania, the eighth layer of the Nine Hells

Phylactery Benefit. While you possess your student's phylactery, you can use a bonus action to heal a number of hit points equal to twice your level. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

SOULS OF THE DAMNED

This option is for any player who wants a more personal reason for their character to explore the Nine Hells: to recover their own lost soul. The character begins the adventure having been raised from the dead by one of the group patrons presented later in this book. This group has brought the character back using an ancient ritual, but it is only temporary. The character must complete the adventure to save their soul, or they will return to the Nine Hells as a lemure.

The DM might decide that all the characters have had their souls consigned to the Nine Hells. The advantages and disadvantages of not having a soul are explained in the “Not Having a Soul” sidebar.

CHOOSING A SIN

First, each player must decide if their character has harmed themselves or another, then choose which sin caused their soul to be consigned to the Nine Hells. Sins to the other represent possible harm a character has done to others, whilst sins to the self represent possible strong detrimental character flaws. The Categories of Sin table outlines the choices a player may make.

CATEGORIES OF SIN

Sin	Harm or Flaw
<i>Sins to the Other</i>	
Betrayal	The Oathbreaker
Deceit	The Great Con
Harm	The Merciless
Murder	Patricide
Oppression	The Heartless Master
<i>Sins to the Self</i>	
Anger	The Furnace
Greed	The Infinite Treasure
Jealousy	The Queen
Pride	The Chosen One

NOT HAVING A SOUL

When a character whose soul is trapped in the Nine Hells dies, resurrection magic can return that character to life no matter how much time has passed. For example, a *Revivify* spell works on the character even if a week has passed since the character died. However, if the character's body is completely destroyed, not even a *Wish* or *True Resurrection* spell can bring the character back.



THE CHOSEN ONE (PRIDE)

You always knew you were special. Even from a young age, it became clear that you were better than everyone else. Because of this, you thought nothing of using, manipulating, or exploiting others for your own benefit. Stepping on the insignificant as you climbed your way to the top was simply the natural order. The fame and glory you achieved in your life only proved you were right all along ... though looking back, maybe you pushed things too far. After all, you did end up in the Nine Hells.

Character Punishment. Your greatest fear in life was being inadequate. Now you're haunted by a recurring nightmare in which you compete in trials of skill against other heroes but find yourself weak, overmatched, and helpless.

Phylactery Location. The Agora of Floating Knives, on Dis, the second layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is forced to compete in a series of events showcasing strength, skill, and intelligence. But their soul is merely a weakened shell of what it once was, and they're constantly overmatched by their fellow competitors. With each loss, they're humiliated, mocked, and made to suffer painful punishments for their failure. To free their soul, the character must take their place in these events; they must compete and win.



THE FURNACE (ANGER)



THE GREAT CON (DECEIT)

There has always been a fire inside you, a dangerous fury, just waiting to be unleashed upon the world in a storm of violence. The rage gave you strength and power. It helped you defeat your enemies and forge your legend ... but there was a cost to your anger. Those around you quickly learned not to try your temper, but over the years it was inevitable that something would set you off from time to time. When it was unleashed, your wrath was terrifying to behold ... but it also led you to do things you'd later regret. People suffered. People died. Some deserved it, but many did not. Given what you've done—what your anger made you do—you've known for a long time where you were going to end up when you died.

Character Punishment. The color of your sleep is red: blood, fire, burning rage. You don't dream—not in the normal sense. When you close your eyes, all you see is red. You wake bathed in sweat, with your heart pounding, but you can't remember any details beyond that single color. Red.

Phylactery Location. The Elemental Preserve, Phlegethos, the fourth layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is forced to shovel coal into a massive furnace, whipped to greater and greater efforts by several efreet with flaming scourges. No matter how much fuel is thrown into the furnace, the roaring flames instantly devour it in a burst of searing heat. To free this character's soul, the characters must defeat the efreet and then find a way to quench the magical fires of the furnace.

You've always been a grifter, using your wits to trick and manipulate others for your own advantage. But when you unknowingly made a deal with one of Asmodeus's agents, you learned that even you can be conned. Before you could fulfill the seemingly simple terms of the deal, you were murdered by the Avatar of Bhaal, consigning you to the Nine Hells. On the one hand, you admire the devil's cunning trickery ... but on the other, you want payback for how you were played.

Character Punishment. You were once a master of deceit, but in your dreams you're trapped in a labyrinth of your own lies, forced to run through the maze while being hunted by shadowy enemies and never able to find a way out.

Phylactery Location. The Eye Market in the territory of Memnoria, on Maladomini, the seventh layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is pursued by the pit fiend's gang of devils through the very streets Memnoria designed. The route is littered with illusions and convoluted traps. Deadly spiked pits appear as normal floors or seemingly safe doorways lead into rooms filled with deadly fire. As the soul flees the devils, it constantly "dies," forcing it to begin again. To free this character's soul, the characters must fight their way through the narrow streets, defeating the monsters and avoiding the tricks and traps.



THE HEARTLESS MASTER (OPPRESSION)

You were used to the finer things in life; due to your fame and fortune, you surrounded yourself with servants to answer every need and fulfill every desire. You paid them well, but in exchange you demanded flawless perfection. Unbeknownst to you, the head of your household achieved this impossible standard through brutal training and punishments for any servant that failed even the smallest task. Despite your ignorance, you were ultimately responsible for the well-being of those under your charge ... a responsibility you blissfully abdicated.

Character Punishment. Your sins weigh heavily on you. At night, you're plagued by disturbing dreams. In them, you're a servant under control of a cruel master who makes impossible demands. When you inevitably fail at your tasks, you're brutally punished over and over.

Phylactery Location. The Sign of the Hag's Arms, on Malbolge, the sixth layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is a servant ordered to perform a series of impossible tasks: cleaning out entire stables in a single day; serving a perfectly cooked meal despite a fire that won't stay lit; delivering a message across deadly terrain without weapons or armor. With each failure, the character's overseer—a ruthless hag—subjects the character's soul to a series of brutal tortures to "teach" them the error of their ways. To save their soul, the character must find a way to complete these impossible tasks, then defeat the overseer.



THE INFINITE TREASURE (GREED)

You were never afraid to take what was yours—or what was anyone else's, for that matter. You lusted after material wealth in all its forms—money, possessions, magic items. During your life, you accumulated a vast hoard of treasures, but you couldn't take it with you when you died. In the end, the only thing your avarice got you was a one-way ticket to the Nine Hells.

Character Punishment. Your dreams are filled with the endless counting of gold coins—hundreds, thousands, millions, all piled in an enormous chamber. Each one must be counted by hand, and you can't stop until you're done ... but the mountain of coins just continues to grow and grow. Worst of all, you know in your heart they aren't even yours; you're just counting them for someone else.

Phylactery Location. The Ineffable Trove, on Minauros, the third layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is forced to count a massive mountain of gold coins one by one. This task is overseen by a powerful red dragon—the true owner of the coins. At the end of each day, the mountain of coins shifts and topples, crushing the character under the coins' weight. It takes all night for the character to claw their way out, only to begin the count again. To free this character's soul, the characters must defeat the dragon and leave the coins. (Taking even one causes the dragon to come back to life.)



THE MERCILESS (HARM)



THE OATHBREAKER (BETRAYAL)

Throughout your adventuring career, your one true love was always with you, fighting by your side. You looked forward to a long and happy life together after your adventuring days were done, but that future was ripped away. Your partner was killed in a surprise attack by servants of an enemy from your past, their body disintegrated so they couldn't be raised. You hunted down the one responsible. But in your grief, it wasn't enough to merely defeat or kill them. You spent days torturing your enemy, making them feel as much pain as possible in the hopes it would soothe your own tormented heart. In the end, it didn't help ... but your cruelty was such that upon your death your soul was consigned to the Nine Hells.

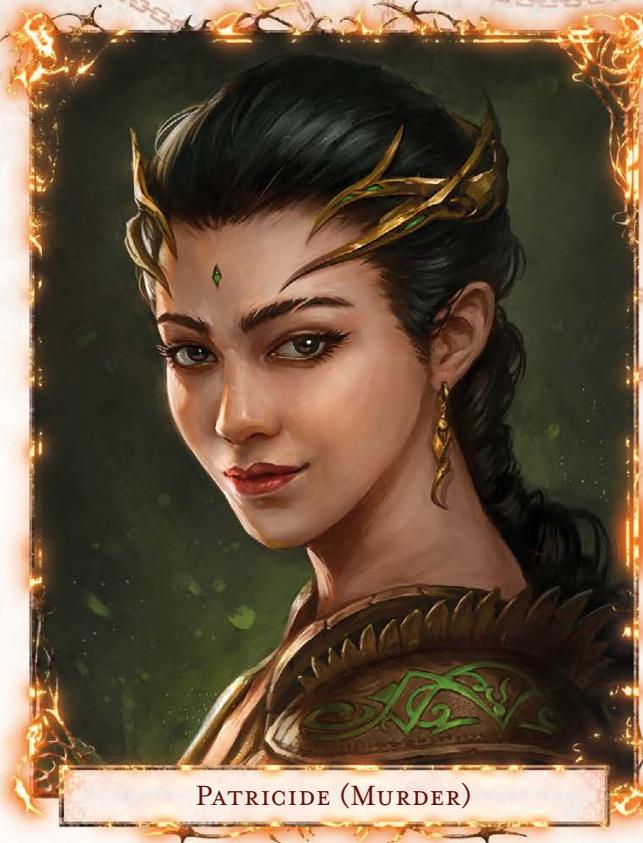
Character Punishment. The brutal revenge against your enemies brought you no solace. Instead, it only twisted and corrupted the memories you have of your true love. Now when you sleep, you dream of them not as your companion, but as your sadistic tormentor, torturing you in a prison cell from which there is no escape.

Phylactery Location. Imprisoned in the mining town at the foot of the Sorrow Mine, on Cania, the eighth layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is imprisoned by devils with the face and form of their one true love. In the prison, the soul is relentlessly tortured over and over by these doppelgangers. To free this character's soul, the characters must break into the heavily guarded cells, find a way to reveal the true forms of the guards, then defeat them and escape the prison.

In the early days of your adventuring career, you swore an oath of loyalty to a patron. It was only much later you discovered you served a monster. When you were ordered to slaughter a political rival's children, you refused. Despite your good intentions, you broke your solemn vow to serve, condemning your soul to the Nine Hells on a technicality when the patron's hired assassins killed you.

Character Punishment. Every night, you're haunted by a recurring nightmare in which you're trapped in a room with strange, feral children. They cry and beg for mercy, even as they attack you over and over.

Phylactery Location. The Chasm of Found Things, on Stygia, the fifth layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul is imprisoned in a room filled with polymorphing devils. These creatures alternate between two forms: devils that attack the character's unarmed soul relentlessly and crying children begging for mercy. To free this character's soul, the characters must defeat all the devils before they transform back into children.



PATRICIDE (MURDER)



THE QUEEN (JEALOUSY)

You murdered your father. It wasn't premeditated, and you loved your father. But an argument escalated to the point where violence was involved. It was an accident that you will forever regret. Before you could use your considerable influence to have a priest raise him from the dead, you were imprisoned for your crime and then hanged.

Character Punishment. Your dreams are haunted by the screams of your suffering soul. Each dream is the same—a replay of your fatal argument with your father. Instead of killing your father, he overpowers you and then whips you relentlessly with a spiked belt. You know that you must end this cycle of violence.

Phylactery Location. The Agora of Floating Knives, on Dis, the second layer of the Nine Hells. The character's soul has been imprisoned in a flesh golem that has the character's face. It is constantly whipped with a spiked belt by a devil bearing the face of the character's father. Both the flesh golem and devil must be defeated to free the character's soul and reclaim it.

Nobody said life was fair ... but why was it always unfair against you? You were talented and skilled. You worked hard. But even with all you accomplished, there was always somebody more richly rewarded than you. More fame. More wealth. More attention. An easier life. It left a bitter taste in your mouth; it soured everything you had, diminishing you and your accomplishments. It seemed like the world was always against you. And then you ended up in the Nine Hells, proving death was against you too.

Character Punishment. You have strange dreams not connected to your life. In them, you're a lowly servant ... yet somehow your sister is the Queen, and she is beloved. Other servants, guards, diplomats, members of the court—they all go on and on about how smart she is, how beautiful, how perfect, while you toil in the shadows, forgotten and ignored.

Phylactery Location. The War-Slough, on Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells. Each day, the character's soul must go from room to room in a castle, clad in soiled rags, and clean the opulent chambers under the watchful eye of the Queen and her followers. They constantly deride and chastise the soul for the poor job they're doing. Often, they abuse the character, beating them with sticks and switches to spur them to work harder. To free their soul, characters must defeat the Queen ... but even if she is slain, she simply reappears on her throne, completely unharmed. The only way to truly defeat the Queen is to first destroy her throne.

GROUP PATRONS

Group patrons help player characters work together toward a common goal. They're powerful backers who give adventurers a clear purpose. They also provide rare resources such as magic items, contacts, and other hard to find things.

This section describes three group patrons. Characters in search of a good-aligned patron should choose the Hellriders of Elturel, while those who prefer a neutral patron should choose the Conclave of Halruua. Evil characters may be drawn to the third patron option, the Deathstalkers of Bhaal.

Group patrons have the following facets:

Quest. Each group patron has an overarching goal that its members seek to accomplish by giving the characters a quest, which you'll find in the patron's description. As they pursue this quest, characters might receive other missions from their primary contact in their group patron.

Perks. Group patrons offer access to resources not readily available to most people. These include magical equipment, secret information, and training. Each group patron gives a different set of perks. Most group patrons also give access to magic items for purchase or recipes on how to craft them.

Contacts. Each group patron has one or two primary contacts that interact with the player characters.

HELLRIDERS OF ELTUREL

Alignment: Good

The Hellriders are an elite cavalry unit whose members act as the primary armed force of the city of Elturel. They're one of the most renowned and well-regarded military forces in the Realms. It is said that a company of Hellriders once rode into Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells, and from this story, the Hellriders were named.

This story is true, for a century ago a gateway to the Nine Hells opened in the Fields of the Dead north of the city of Elturel. The skilled knights of Elturel fought a losing battle against the Fiends that poured from this gate. The High Rider of Elturel implored his people to pray to the gods for help. Their prayers were answered when the angel Zariel arrived in Elturel with a small host of allies. She rallied and trained an army of thousands and then led them into the gateway to the Nine Hells. While she was successful at destroying the gate, Zariel herself was captured by Asmodeus and corrupted into the archdevil who now rules over Avernus. The knights of Elturel were renamed to the Hellriders in dedication to Zariel and the warriors who followed her into the Nine Hells.

RESOLVING GROUP PATRON OBJECTIVES

The characters can stay in contact with their group patron throughout the adventure. Once the characters complete the quest given to them by their group patron, they'll have a final meeting with their group patron's representative in Cania. See "A Thankful Patron" in chapter 10 for details.

The Hellriders have learned that some of Zariel's allies are still alive in the Nine Hells. They remain uncorrupted but suffer horrific tortures. The Hellriders feel duty bound to rescue them.

HELLRIDER QUEST

The Hellriders know the location of Celestial beings who are trapped within the Nine Hells. If rescued, these beings grant the characters powers that should help them in their own personal quests:

Anagwendol. She is kept prisoner in Phlegethos at the Elemental Preserve.

Barachiel. He is a prisoner of the Brothers Adram-lech and Morax and can be found on their infernal warship prowling the River Styx.

Jenevere. She is kept prisoner in Maladomini at the Eye Market.

Each time the characters rescue one of these Celestial beings, the being bestows a supernatural gift as a reward. Each character may choose one of the charms described in the "Supernatural Gifts" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

HELLRIDER PERKS

If the characters choose the Hellriders as their group patron, each receives the following benefits.

HELLRIDER'S BLESSING

The Hellriders know better than most the evils found in the Nine Hells and would never send anyone there without protection. After spending the entirety of a long rest in the Nine Hells, you gain the benefit of a *Greater Restoration* spell.

CELESTIAL CAVALRY

While much of the journey through the Nine Hells follows the River Styx, it is likely that you will occasionally leave on excursions or scouting missions. While you remain in the Nine Hells, you may cast the *Phantom Steed* spell at will, as a ritual.

HELLRIDER'S SALVATION

You're taught a ritual to help save missing Celestials. The ritual requires 1 minute to complete and targets all Celestials within 100 feet. Once the ritual is complete, if the Celestial is willing, they're transported to a location on the Material Plane of their choosing.



RAMIUS DANGREMOND

HELLRIDER CONTACT: RAMIUS

Ramius Dangremond is the commander of the Hellriders of Elturel. He never wanted the position, but because of the many deaths within the ranks of the order, he had to step up. His friend and fellow Hellrider, Barachiel, was the main reason he was able to grow into a capable commander. The loss of his friend saddens Ramius, and the news of his imprisonment within the Nine Hells gnaws at his soul.

RAMIUS

Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good

Armor Class 22 (plate, +2 Shield)

Hit Points 190 (20d8 + 100)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +9

Skills Animal Handling +12, Athletics +11, Insight +7, Religion +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks; damage from spells

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Aura of Protection. Ramius and any ally that starts their turn within 30 feet of him have a +4 bonus to all saving throws and resistance to nonmagical damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ramius makes two Longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage or 11 (1d10 + 6) if wielded in two hands, plus 13 (3d8) radiant damage. If the target is an evil creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or take an additional 13 (3d8) radiant damage.

Divine Wave (Recharge 6). Ramius strikes the ground and causes holy energy to radiate outwards. Each creature of his choice within 30 feet of him must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. Targets take 21 (6d6) thunder damage plus 21 (6d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures that fail the save are knocked down (have the prone condition).

Spellcasting. Ramius casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

1/day each: *Aura of Purity, Compelled Duel, Crusader's Mantle, Death Ward, Dispel Evil and Good, Find Steed, Lesser Restoration, Remove Curse, Revivify, Shield of Faith*

REACTIONS

Healing Touch. As a reaction to Ramius or an adjacent creature taking 50 points or more of damage, Ramius reaches out and channels divine energy, healing 13 (2d8 + 4) hit points.

Ramius (see the accompanying stat block) is a natural horseman and a gifted athlete. The soldiers he leads often say that there isn't anything that Ramius can't mount or ride. He's ridden horses, mammoths, and machines into battle. Loyalty, honor, and duty are virtues that Ramius upholds. He fears nothing other than losing those he cares for.

RAMIUS AS A CONTACT

Ramius doesn't have the personal ability to cast *Plane Shift*—instead, he has been given a magic item that allows him to visit with the party every few days. When he arrives, he brings general supplies such as food and water, and treats any wounds, curses, or diseases the party has (to the best of his ability). Afterwards, he offers a selection of useful magic items for purchase, or, if the party already has excess magic items, he offers to purchase them for keeping or disposal.

PURCHASING ITEMS FROM RAMIUS

Item	Cost
Adventuring supplies	Original price
Amulet of Health	12,000 gp
Bracers of Defense	12,000 gp
Cloak of Protection	600 gp
Gauntlets of Ogre Power	550 gp
Holy Avenger	175,000 gp
Horseshoes of a Zephyr	18,000 gp
Horseshoes of Speed	6,500 gp
Horn of Valhalla (silver)	25,500 gp
Javelin of Lightning	500 gp
Mace of Smiting	9,000 gp
Mithral Armor	700 gp
Ring of Protection	12,000 gp
Shield, +1	450 gp
Shield, +2	12,000 gp
Shield, +3	40,000 gp
Sun Blade	35,000 gp

SELLING MAGIC ITEMS TO RAMIUS

Rarity	Value	Rarity	Value
Uncommon	250 gp	Very rare	10,000 gp
Rare	2,500 gp	Legendary	55,000 gp

CONCLAVE OF HALRUAA

Alignment: Neutral

Halruaa is a land of magic, renowned for the fact that a significant portion of its ruling elite are archmages. Created by archwizards foreseeing the fall of Netheril, Halruaa combines peace and harmony with the magic powers of their ancestors, but without the taint of their ambitions.

The Conclave is a secret society within Halruaa that enforces the laws regarding the use, abuse, and research of magic in Halruaa.

The membership of the Conclave is a mystery to everyone outside their ranks. Others within Halruaa know of the Conclave's existence, but not the identities of its members.

Whenever the experiments, practices, or other actions of a spellcaster endanger the future of Halruaa, the Conclave intervenes. This intervention is usually a warning, but a spellcaster who ignores the warning is eliminated or simply made to disappear.

The Conclave has become interested in the events put into motion by Asmodeus because their diviners have foreseen that the archdevil's scheme will result in a dangerous soul being unleashed.

CONCLAVE QUEST

The Conclave wants the characters to track down a soul they refer to as the Unmaker. They're to use a ritual to destroy the soul. To help with this task and with finding the other souls that the characters seek, the Conclave offers to use their diviners to uncover the location of powerful magic items. The Nine Hells is the graveyard for thousands of heroes and the magic items that they brought with them. Some of these include the most famed items in the multiverse.

The Unmaker is a prisoner of the archdevil Abigor and can be found on his infernal submersible. The Conclave provides a *Conclave Coin*, effectively a special *Soul Coin* that can contain the soul of the Unmaker. The characters must slay the Unmaker, trap the Unmaker's soul in the coin, and return the coin to the Conclave so it and the soul inside it can be destroyed.

Each character is told the location of a powerful magic item. This magic item is based off the class in which they have the highest level:

Artificer. The *Manual of Golems* (iron), which can be found in Stygia at the Chasm of Found Things.

Barbarian. *Belt of Giant Strength* (storm), which can be found in Minauros at the Ineffable Trove.

Bard. *Instrument of the Bards (Ollamh Harp)*, which can be found in Dis at the Agora of Floating Knives.

Cleric. *Rod of Resurrection*, which can be found in Stygia at the Chasm of Found Things.

Druid. *Staff of the Woodlands*, which can be found in Maladomini at the Eye Market

Fighter. *Belt of Giant Strength* (storm) which can be found in Minauros at the Ineffable Trove.

Monk/Rogue. *Cloak of Invisibility*, which can be found in Dis at the Agora of Floating Knives.

Paladin. *Holy Avenger*, which can be found in Stygia at the Chasm of Found Things.

Ranger. *Iron Horn of Valhalla*, which can be found in Dis at the Agora of Floating Knives.

Sorcerer/Warlock/Wizard. *Staff of the Magi*, which can be found in Cania at the Sorrow Mine.

CONCLAVE PERKS

If the characters choose the Conclave as their group patron, each receives the following benefits.

ARCANE COMMUNICATION

The Conclave of Halruaa gives you a *Sending Stone* and a *Halruaan Ethereal Vessel*. The *Sending Stone* can be used to communicate with a member of the Conclave who has the matching stone.

The *Halruaan Ethereal Vessel* is a magic item that allows two people to attune to it. You and a member of the Conclave are attuned to the vessel. The vessel is a transparent case that can contain up to 12 cubic feet of nonliving material (3 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet). When not in use, it exists on the Ethereal Plane. While the vessel remains on the Ethereal Plane, you can use an action and recall it (as can the Conclave member also attuned to it). It appears in an unoccupied space on the ground within 5 feet of you. You send the vessel back to the Ethereal Plane by using an action.

ARCANE QUARTERMASTERS

The Conclave has amassed a collection of useful magic items and material spell components. You can use your *Sending Stone* to request one of the items on the Conclave Items table. You must then pay the cost of the item, placing the payment in your *Halruaan Ethereal Vessel* and returning the vessel to the Ethereal Plane. The money is then removed by the Conclave member attuned to the vessel and replaced with the requested item, which you can then retrieve from the vessel.

CONCLAVE ITEMS

Items	Cost
Blank scroll	10 gp
Broom of Flying	600 gp
Crystal Ball	30,000 gp
Divination Spell Scroll (1st level)	100 gp
Divination Spell Scroll (2nd or 3rd level)	500 gp
Divination Spell Scroll (4th or 5th level)	2,000 gp
Gem of Seeing	10,000 gp
Headband of Intellect	400 gp
Helm of Comprehending Languages	600 gp
Material spell component costing up to 1,000 gp	75% original cost
Medallion of Thoughts	350 gp
Ring of Mind Shielding	500 gp
Ring of Spell Storing	12,000 gp
Wand of Binding	8,000 gp
Wand of Magic Detection	500 gp
Wand of Wonder	9,500 gp

HALRUAAN CONTACT: ZYTHAN AVHOSTE

Zythan, like many other Halruaans, spent his early years studying the arcane arts. His talent in Divination magic made him particularly useful to the Conclave, and they quickly sought him out. Under their tutelage, his skill flourished, and he became a powerful mage. Those that know him personally recount his matter-of-fact personality, his green hair, and his third eye that seems to open when he performs magic. He rarely speaks of himself, however, choosing instead to focus his attention on the future.

When he first received an official position within the Conclave, Zythan wanted to prove himself. He spent countless hours peering into the future and examining potential outcomes. One fateful night, he just barely caught sight of a forbidden ritual being prepared—a ritual that could cost the lives of many Halruaans. Because of his sight, the Conclave was able to intervene in time, and he was quickly promoted and showered with praise.

For the past few months, Zythan has felt like something was off: at first, he suspected another ritual within Halruaa. He requisitioned the help of the other diviners, as well as a powerful *Crystal Ball*, and together they were able to piece together a vision. The dark lord of the Nine Hells, Asmodeus, will unleash a great evil very soon. Though the Conclave often stays out of non-Halruaan affairs, they had no choice but to act. It is for this reason that the adventurers were called to Halruaa.

Zythan's (see the accompanying stat block) skill in arcane magic, while particularly focused on

Divination, extends to every school. While he lacks proficiency in martial combat, he can wield both offensive and defensive magic effectively. Outside of his magical talent, he is also known to be highly intelligent, though his social skills could use work. Much of his time is spent viewing alternate futures and preparing for potential dangers, leaving little for himself. He often goes without meals until he starts to feel weak, and if he had friends, they might be concerned about how much time he spends working.

ZYTHAN

Medium Humanoid, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 with Mage Armor)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +10, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +15, History +15, Investigation +10, Religion +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks (from *Stoneskin*); damage from spells

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Infernal, Primordial

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +5

Battlemage. Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on Zythan's ranged attack rolls.

Magic Resistance. Zythan has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Zythan makes three Dagger or Arcane Burst attacks.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Arcane Burst. Ranged Spell Attack: +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 27 (4d10 + 5) radiant damage.

Spirit Fissure (Recharge 4–6). Zythan causes a disruption in arcane energies in a 300-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 65 (10d12) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. Zythan casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18).

At will: *Arcane Eye*, *Detect Magic*, *Detect Thoughts*, *Fly*, *Light*, *Locate Object*, *Mage Armor*, *Mage Hand*, *Message*, *Prestidigitation*

1/day: *Cone of Cold*, *Foresight*, *Stoneskin*, *Telepathic Bond*, *True Seeing*

REACTIONS

Portent (3/Day). As a reaction to a creature Zythan can see making an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check, Zythan rolls a d20 and chooses whether to use that roll in place of the original roll.



ZYTHAN AVHOSTE

ZYTHAN AS A CONTACT

Using his Divination magic, Zythan keeps tabs on the party, occasionally checking in when he deems appropriate. When he checks in, he can provide access to some magic items. He will also purchase any excess *Spell Scrolls* or spellbooks found by the party, and can, upon request, attempt to hunt down specific magic items. If successful, he brings the desired magic items on his next visit.

PURCHASING ITEMS FROM ZYTHAN

Item	Cost
<i>Amulet of the Planes</i>	35,000 gp
<i>Carpet of Flying</i>	40,000 gp
<i>Ioun Stone</i> (reserve)	8,500 gp
<i>Mantle of Spell Resistance</i>	10,500 gp
<i>Ring of Resistance</i>	9,000 gp
<i>Staff of Power</i>	45,000 gp
<i>Wand of Fireballs</i>	10,000 gp
<i>Wand of the War Mage</i> , +1	500 gp
<i>Wand of the War Mage</i> , +2	9,500 gp
<i>Wand of the War Mage</i> , +3	32,000 gp

SELLING ITEMS TO ZYTHAN

Items	Cost
Spellbooks	100 gp per level of spell found within the book. Additional 2,000 gp if the book contains one or more 9th-level spells
<i>Spell Scrolls</i> (2nd to 4th level)	250 gp
<i>Spell Scrolls</i> (5th to 6th level)	900 gp
<i>Spell Scrolls</i> (7th to 8th level)	2,250 gp
<i>Spell Scrolls</i> (9th level)	6,000 gp

DEATHSTALKERS OF BHAAL

Alignment: Evil

Bhaal, also known as the Lord of Murder, is the god of assassins, killers, and murder.

During the Time of Troubles, most gods, including Bhaal, were forced to walk the world as mortals and lost all their godly powers. During this period, Bhaal was slain by the then-mortal Cyric. Bhaal, having foreseen his own death, sired many children, each of whom carried a piece of his divine essence within them. These children are referred to as the children of Bhaal, or Bhaalspawn, and were created to ensure Bhaal's resurrection. This did not come to pass until more than a century after the Time of Troubles. Even though Bhaal was reborn, he was a shadow of his former self and tied to the Material Plane.

During the time that he was dead, Bhaal had many scattered cults, the most infamous being the Deathstalkers of Bhaal, who were dedicated to bringing him back to life. With Bhaal now

UNCOMFORTABLE ALLIES

The Deathstalkers of Bhaal are responsible for the murders that doomed the characters (or their loved ones) to the Nine Hells. The characters don't have much reason to want anything to do with them let alone align themselves with these murderers. However, the Deathstalkers are a powerful ally. Having begun to doubt their alliance with Asmodeus, they now attempt to gain the cooperation of the characters. Sarevok, the Deathstalker that contacts the heroes, is quite convincing. And scary ...

returned, the Deathstalkers are now focused on finding a way to return Bhaal to being a fully divine being. They've discovered a way by making a deal with Asmodeus. However, they believe the Lord of the Nine Hells intends to deceive them and now they seek a way to make sure Asmodeus holds up to his end of the bargain.

DEATHSTALKER QUEST

To force Asmodeus to make good on his word, the Deathstalkers of Bhaal want to gain leverage. For this they need a powerful artifact. They ask the characters to steal some of the most infamous and powerful artifacts of the Nine Hells. They need only one, leaving any other artifacts for the characters to decide what to do with. For a detailed description of these artifacts, see the section "Infernal Artifacts" in appendix D.

DEATHSTALKER PERKS

If the characters choose the Deathstalkers as their group patron, each receives the following benefits.

DEATH TOKEN

Each member of your party is given a *Token of Bhaal*. For its magic to work, the token must be in your possession. The first time you fail a death saving throw that doesn't kill you outright, the token magically transports you, along with any equipment you're wearing or carrying, to a demiplane that resembles an empty chamber with no exits. Any ally within 30 feet of you is also transported to the demiplane, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, if the ally has 0 hit points and is either stable or dying when the token activates. Each creature that appears in the demiplane regains 10 hit points. Any creature that starts its turn in the demiplane is transported back to the space it left, or, if that space is occupied, the nearest unoccupied space. The token can be used only once, after which it turns to dust.

DEATHSTALKER'S BLESSING

Your party receives the blessing of Bhaal. This manifests by making you deadliest when you get the drop on your enemies. You have advantage on attack

rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn in combat yet. In addition, any creature that hasn't taken a turn in combat has disadvantage on saving throws against your spells. The blessing applies only while in the Nine Hells.

SOUL COIN MARKET

Much like the archdevils of the Nine Hells, Bhaal desires souls. Specifically, he desires *Soul Coins* (see “Soul Coins” in appendix D). When you’re in possession of one or more *Soul Coins*, you can whisper to the coin what it is that you desire from the Deathstalker Items table. If you have the requisite number of coins, the *Soul Coins* vanish from your possession, and the item that you asked for appears within 5 feet of you.

DEATHSTALKER ITEMS

Items	Cost
Dagger of Venom	6 Soul Coins
Eyes of Charming	1 Soul Coin
Goggles of Night	1 Soul Coin
Hat of Disguise	1 Soul Coin
Iron Bands of Binding	7 Soul Coins
Nine Lives Stealer	15 Soul Coins
Pipes of Haunting	1 Soul Coin
Potions of Poison (2)	1 Soul Coin
Slippers of Spider Climbing	1 Soul Coin
Staff of Withering	5 Soul Coins
Sword of Life Stealing	8 Soul Coins
Wand of Secrets	1 Soul Coin

DEATHSTALKER CONTACT: SAREVOK

Sarevok Anchev is a powerful Deathstalker. He is also one of the Bhaalspawn, the mortal offspring of the dead god Bhaal. Sarevok attempted to reclaim the divine seat of the Lord of Murder vacated by his immortal father’s demise, but his plans were thwarted when he was slain by his half-brother, Abdel Adrian, who rejected his heritage and fought against his Bhaalspawn siblings.

Sarevok’s spirit was sent to the Abyss as punishment. There he eventually crossed paths with Abdel a second time when his noble-hearted brother ventured into the lower realms on a dangerous quest to stop another Bhaalspawn named Melissan. Sarevok agreed to help Abdel kill Melissan, on the condition that Abdel helped him escape the eternal torments of the Abyss.

Abdel agreed, and Sarevok was reborn into the mortal world. After his rebirth, Sarevok was true to his word, and the two brothers fought side by side against their half-sister. Ultimately Melissan was defeated, and Sarevok was granted a second chance at life.

SAREVOK

Medium Humanoid, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 21 (*Plate Armor of Bhaal*)

Hit Points 190 (20d8 + 100)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +10

Skills History +6, Intimidation +14, Religion +6

Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +6

Magic Resistance. Sarevok has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rejuvenation. If Sarevok is killed, he gains a new body in 24 hours, regaining all his hit points. The new body appears on the altar of the temple of Bhaal beneath Baldur’s Gate. This ability ceases to function if a cleric of good alignment casts *Hallow* on the altar in the temple of Bhaal.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sarevok makes three Longsword attacks. He can replace one of the attacks with Flames of Bhaal or Spellcasting.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage or 11 (1d10 + 6) if wielded in two hands. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be cursed by Bhaal, preventing it from regaining hit points. The curse lasts until removed by the *Remove Curse* spell or similar effect.

Flames of Bhaal. Sarevok causes flames to engulf one creature that he can see within 60 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. This damage can’t be restored except by a *Lesser Restoration* spell or similar effect.

Spellcasting. Sarevok casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):

At will: *Resistance, Thaumaturgy*

1/day each: *Animate Dead, Antimagic Field, Astral Projection, Blade Barrier, Command, Contagion, Dispel Magic, Divination, Ethereallness, Fire Storm, Harm, Hold Person, Silence*

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Sarevok 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. Sarevok regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Slash. Sarevok makes a Longsword attack.

Unholy Flame. Sarevok uses Flames of Bhaal.

Channel Bhaal’s Hate (Costs 2 Actions). Sarevok unleashes Bhaal’s power. Creatures within 30 feet of Sarevok, including ones behind barriers and around corners, can’t regain hit points until the end of Sarevok’s next turn.

PURCHASING ITEMS FROM SAREVOK

Items	Cost
Ammunition, +1 (20)	150 gp
Ammunition, +2 (20)	2,500 gp
Ammunition, +3 (20)	10,000 gp
Beads of Force	3,000 gp
Cape of the Mountebank	6,000 gp
Robe of Eyes	7,500 gp
Vicious Weapon	8,000 gp
Uncommon potions	
Animal Friendship	250 gp
Giant Strength (hill)	250 gp
Growth	250 gp
Resistance	250 gp
Water Breathing	250 gp
Rare potions	
Clairvoyance	1,000 gp
Diminution	1,000 gp
Gaseous Form	1,000 gp
Giant Strength (frost/stone)	1,000 gp
Heroism	1,000 gp
Mind Reading	1,000 gp
Very rare potions	
Flying	5,000 gp
Giant Strength (fire)	5,000 gp
Invisibility	5,000 gp
Speed	5,000 gp

With his prodigious strength, his legendary skill in battle, and the *Sword of Chaos*—a life-stealing, enchanted blade—**Sarevok** (see the accompanying stat block) became a famous (and feared) mercenary. Yet his many accomplishments brought him no joy. He felt no thrill at victory in battle, no delight in the routing of his enemies. The power he accumulated was bitter as ashes on his tongue, and he became a man haunted by his former life. The realization that no earthly achievements could ever compare to what he once almost had—immortality and godhood—left him broken and empty.

Sarevok plunged into a deep despair. To numb his pain, he indulged in every vice imaginable, squandering his wealth and health on alcohol, drugs, and fleeting comforts. While his divine heritage slowed his aging, it did not stop it entirely, and after decades of self-abuse he was eventually reduced to an old man begging in the streets of Baldur's Gate.

This was how his father—Bhaal, the reborn god of murder—found him. Bhaal recognized his own divine spark in the pathetic old man, and he sensed Sarevok still had potential. Bhaal recruited him to become the high priest of his fledgling clergy, giving Sarevok new purpose ... and another chance to become an agent of death and destruction.

SAREVOK AS A CONTACT

Though he lacks Divination magic, Sarevok keeps tabs on the party's progress and checks in whenever he feels like it. During his check-ins, he will offer a small assortment of magic items, as well as a large variety of potions. He also has a vast treasury and is willing to purchase *Soul Coins* for 1,000 gp per coin. In addition, for the price of 10,000 gp, he grants one character a blessing (see “Supernatural Gifts” in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*) that allows them to become a host for his god, Bhaal.

Unholy Blessing of Bhaal. You may use an action to transform yourself into the Slayer. This works exactly as the *Polymorph* spell, except the form chosen uses the accompanying **Slayer** stat block. After you use this blessing, you can't use it again until you have finished a long rest.

SLAYER

Medium Fiend, Host's Alignment

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +6, Perception +6, Stealth +12

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Languages of the host

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +4

Assassinate. During its first turn, the Slayer has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the Slayer scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the Slayer's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The Slayer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Slayer makes four Claw attacks.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage. The Slayer deals an extra 14 (4d6) slashing damage when it has advantage on the attack roll and hits the target.



SAREVOK ANCHEV



THE NINE HELL ARE NO PLACE FOR A PALADIN.

CHAPTER 1

Kelemvor's Cathedral



ELEMVOR IS A GOD OF THE DEAD, AND THE cathedral dedicated to him reflects the somber nature of the god. The character's face their first challenge in this dimly-lit building.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

Before running this chapter:

- Familiarize yourself with this chapter and Koh Tam, who plays an important role in the adventure.
- Each player must separately decide which soul they need to save from the Nine Hells.
- As a group, the players must decide which of the group patrons they wish to ally with.

THE INFERNAL CONTRACTS

The characters meet with their group patron. They learn about Asmodeus and how he has tricked the powerful into signing infernal contracts. They learn why their group patron is concerned about this.

Read the following text to start things off. Then read the text that is specific to the group patron.

You knew as much of Asmodeus as anyone in your line of work. He was a powerful deity, a conniving master of many schemes, and the Lord of the Nine Hells. You knew that he often plotted to corrupt and win the souls of the influential and the powerful through the use of infernal contracts, damning those unfortunates to the torments of his realm. You never thought that you would be one of his targets.

Now, you live with the loss. A hollowness exists where your soul should be, or else the fierce grief-ache of a stolen friend or family member. If Asmodeus could not convince you yourself to sign a contract, he went after those closest to you. If you made a pact with the Lord of the Nine, you did it with the assumption that you would have enough time to fulfill your end of the bargain. Likely the others who fell prey to him thought the same. It was not to be. Asmodeus's hired murderers ensured it.

Since then, you have been searching desperately for a way to recover what you lost, without success. Every lead has turned up nothing. Every promise of a gateway into the infernal realm has been false. It has begun to seem truly hopeless ... But that is about to change.

HELLRIDERS OF ELTUREL INTRODUCTION

The characters meet with Ramius in the temple of Helm within the city of Elturel. If Elturel wasn't saved from the Nine Hells, then the meeting takes place in the city of Berdusk, one of the cities that was ruled from Elturel.

For months, you have been searching for information about the Nine Hells and looking for allies that can help your party venture there. After hearing about the Hellriders of Elturel and their history with Asmodeus, you have been granted an audience.

The temple of Helm in Elturel is a grand building of marble and gilded stone. "Heroes, well met," comes a voice from the entrance of the temple. A man in armor strides toward you. "I am Ramius of the Hellriders of Elturel, and I have a proposal for you."

Ramius beckons you to follow him to one of the temple walls, which bears a depiction of a great cavalry unit descending upon a gateway of flame. At the head of the painted cavalry is a winged woman in shining armor.

"In Elturel's darkest hour," Ramius continues. "Our prayers were answered by the angel Zariel, who led a thousand riders and a host of celestial beings into the gateway to the Nine Hells. The battle was won, the gateway destroyed, but Zariel and some of her allies were captured by the Lord of the Nine, Asmodeus. Zariel was lost. But we have learned that a few of her allies remain, held captive and tormented in the Nine Hells." The Hellrider pauses and then adds quietly, "My dearest friend among them."

Ramius collects himself and says, "I propose that together you and I journey through the Nine Hells and rescue Zariel's allies, my own dear friend, and the souls you yourselves have lost."

If you agree, I will take you to the temple of Kelemvor. There is a priest there who can help us."

After the introductions, Ramius uses a teleportation circle to take them to the temple of Helm in Waterdeep and from there to the cathedral of Kelemvor.

CONCLAVE OF HALRUAA INTRODUCTION

The players meet Zythan in Halarahh, the capital city of Halruaa.

As you traverse the many market stalls of the central plaza of Halarahh, you see the shadowed pavilion described to you by your employer. Inside, Zythan of the Conclave of Halruaa, a tall and slender man, wastes no time with greetings, beckoning you to follow him over to a crystal ball in the center of the pavilion. A month ago, you each received a letter from Zythan inviting you to the city of Halarahh. He claimed to have a lucrative proposition for you, something that might bring back the soul that has been lost to each of you.

Zythan passes a hand over the crystal ball, and suddenly you see cruel flames and strange figures moving within. “Through the power of Divination, I have discovered that the Lord of the Nine Hells, Asmodeus, will very soon unleash a terrible evil, a soul that we call the Unmaker.”

The flames in the crystal ball are overtaken by a pitch-black darkness. Cold eyes glare out from the void.

“To prevent this disaster, you must travel to the Nine Hells, track down the Unmaker, and perform a ritual the Conclave has prepared to destroy him. To aid you in this task, we will use our powers to reveal the locations of powerful magic items hidden throughout the Nine Hells.”

The crystal ball shows a series of objects wreathed in fire: a staff, a harp, a cloak, and a sword, among others.

“The Nine Hells are full of dangers,” Zythan says gravely. “And you know well the conniving schemes of Asmodeus. As you travel through the Nine, you may have the opportunity to restore those souls that were taken from you.”

Zythan passes his hand over the crystal again and the images within fade away.

“This is no easy quest, but the fate of many depends upon it. If you will come with me to the temple of Kelemvor, I have a contact there who is an expert on the Nine Hells.”

Once Zythan has finished describing the mission, he teleports himself and the characters to the cathedral of Kelemvor in Waterdeep.

DEATHSTALKERS OF BHAAL INTRODUCTION

The players meet Sarevok in Waterdeep.

It is not the finest tavern in Waterdeep. The tabletops are grimy, the chairs a spare breath from collapse, and you’ve spied at least one rat scampering across the floor. But the drink is cheap, and the patrons mind their business, which is exactly what your party needs. On quiet nights like these, you each feel more keenly the ache of your losses.

Your contact in the city has set up this meeting. For months, you have all been searching for allies in your quest and for a way in to the Nine Hells. Finally, after all this time, your efforts may have been rewarded.

The tavern door opens, letting in a burst of cold. Footsteps follow and come directly to your table. The footsteps belong to a man who wears the robes of a high priest, though you don’t recognize the symbol of his clergy. He sits down at your table, looks at you with his gleaming eyes, and speaks.

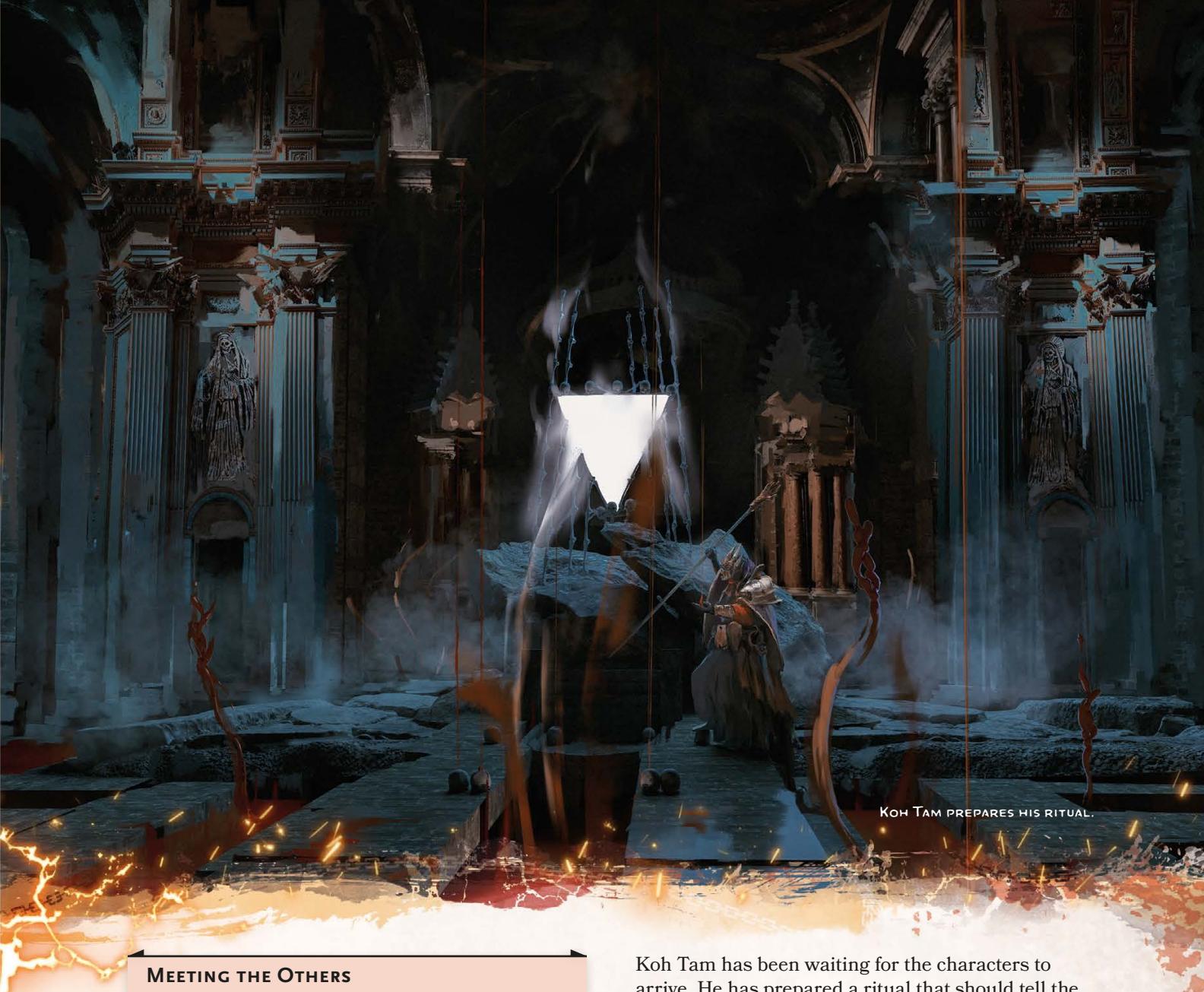
“I am Sarevok Anchev, high priest of the Deathstalkers of Bhaal. On my lord god’s behalf, I seek to gain leverage over the deceiver, Asmodeus, the Lord of the Nine Hells. I know that each of you has cause against Asmodeus. I offer a mutually beneficial opportunity.”

There is something about Sarevok that tells of death and destruction. But the zeal in his eyes is entrancing.

“Throughout the Nine Hells there are many powerful and ancient artifacts that Asmodeus values, the prized possessions of his archdevils. It is the desire of the Deathstalkers for you to steal these artifacts. For your reward, we offer the artifacts themselves, save one, to do with as you please.”

“If you agree, I will take you to the temple of Kelemvor. There you will be advised on how best to traverse the Nine Hells.”

After speaking with the characters, Sarevok takes them to the cathedral of Kelemvor in Waterdeep. If the characters inquire about the artifacts Sarevok mentioned, he says it doesn’t matter which artifact the characters surrender to the Deathstalkers. No matter the artifact, the Deathstalkers plan to use it to gain leverage in their dealings with Asmodeus.



KOH TAM PREPARES HIS RITUAL.

MEETING THE OTHERS

At this point, just prior to heading towards the cathedral of Kelemvor, if there are souls of the damned among the characters, the patron should introduce them to the other characters.

THE CATHEDRAL

The cathedral of Kelemvor is bone-cold and dark. The walls and floor are black stone, and there are motifs of grinning skulls in every direction. Deep set into the floor are pools of viscous liquid, as bright and red as arterial blood. The cathedral is still and silent, but you faintly hear the distant click-clack of the bones that hang from the vaulted ceiling, knocking gently together in the musty air.

Koh Tam has been waiting for the characters to arrive. He has prepared a ritual that should tell the characters where to find their group patron's objective, along with the soul they're each searching for.

KOH TAM

Koh Tam is an imposing figure dressed in many layers of colorful robes and heavy armor pieces. He wears a golden mask that covers the upper part of his face, set with strange green gemstones that wink and glitter like eyes in the flickering cathedral light. He carries a wooden staff with a golden hand affixed upon it. Koh Tam's voice has a rasping hiss to it, like wind through skulls' teeth, but he speaks kindly and with steadfast patience.



THE POSSESSION

Koh Tam's plan is to allow himself to be possessed by **Baalzebul**, who, owing to the divine wards provided by Koh Tam's ritual, can't tell a lie. Once he has been possessed, the characters must ask him questions.

"It is true," Koh Tam says to your party. "That among those on this mortal plane, there are none that know the Nine Hells as I do. But the Nine Hells are immense, full of countless secrets and dangers. To find that which you seek, you must consult someone with even greater expertise."

Koh Tam spreads out his arms, gesturing at the ritual he has prepared in the center of the cathedral sanctum.

"I will summon for you Baalzebul, one of the archdevils of the Nine. He will possess my body and speak through me. He cannot lie, but be warned, he will use all his wit to escape your questioning or to misdirect you."

Turning from you, Koh Tam begins his ritual. He chants ancient words and lifts his wooden staff, and you feel the air in the cathedral shudder with the growing power. The liquid in the pools around you rises. Thick ribbons of bloody red swirl around Koh Tam, not touching the priest, but obscuring him from your sight as the chant reaches a crescendo.

A growl escapes Koh Tam's mouth. "The rancid stench of sinners ... surrounds me. Speak to me of your sins, and swiftly, so that I might tell you what I must."

Each character now has the opportunity to ask after the sins they seek. Baalzebul refuses to answer any questions until each character admits their sins or the sins of their loved one, however. Once they've done this, Baalzebul reveals where the soul can be found. He provides only the layer of the Nine Hells and the general location (an adventure area, district, or landmark within the layer). The players should make note of this information.

At this point, the group patron contact steps forward and asks for information specific to their objective.

HELLRIDERS

If the characters chose the Hellriders as a group patron, read the following:

"Poor Barachiel is held in a moving cage upon the River Styx, a guest of the great Brothers. The unfortunate Jenevere languishes somewhere among the broken streets of the Eye Market of Maladomini. And once-mighty Anagwendol, captured by the great hunter himself, is at the heart of Kordichai's famed hunting grounds."

CONCLAVE OF HALRUAA

If the characters have the Conclave of Halruaa as a group patron, read the following:

"You may find the Unmaker beneath the murky waters of the River Styx. In silence, moving. In darkness, moving. Entombed in a ship that does not sail, guarded by the great and monstrous Abigor, who commanded the legions of Maladomini up in Avernus to stem the tides of the Abyss."

DEATHSTALKERS

If the characters followed Sarevok into the cathedral, read the following:

"Five items you seek, scattered across the Nine Hells. In Minauros, search Mammon's boggy trove. One of two you may find in Phlegethos, if you dare brave the hunting grounds of Kordichai. In Malbolge, the hag-run inn might host one of your treasures. In Stygia, explore the icy Chasm of Found Things. And in Dis, cast your gaze upon the stalls and palace halls of the agora."

THE EXORCISM

Once Baalzebul has answered, things go wrong:

Koh Tam begins to tremble. His staff falls to the cathedral floor with a clatter, and his hands reach for his head. The ribbons of red liquid fall back into their pools, sending up mighty sprays of staining droplets.

"Prepare, adventurers!" Koh Tam says with a gasp, his voice once more a dry hiss instead of the archdevil's terrible growl. "He is attempting to escape the confines of my body. You must exorcise him back to the Nine Hells!"

The priest's voice is suddenly overcome with ugly, booming laughter as an avatar of the archdevil begins to appear, rising out of Koh Tam's shaking form.

The characters must now exorcise Baalzebul from Koh Tam. This is a two-stage battle. In the first stage, they must defeat the **avatar of Baalzebul** (see the accompanying stat block) that has partially crawled out of Koh Tam.

Once the avatar has been defeated, the second stage begins. **Koh Tam** (see appendix C) is

BATTLING THE AVATAR.



possessed and attacks. The characters must free him by casting a *Dispel Evil and Good* or *Greater Restoration* spell on him, or by dealing radiant damage to him. Feel free to allow other strategies to work if they make sense to the situation. A cleric's Divine Intervention, for example, banishes Baalzebul back to the Nine Hells immediately.

Once the characters rid Koh Tam of the avatar of Baalzebul, the threat is ended.

AVATAR OF BAALZEBUL

Medium Fiend (Devil), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 285 (30d8 + 150)

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +11, Cha +11

Skills Deception +11, Insight +10, Intimidation +11, Persuasion +11

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, 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 14

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +6

Stench of the Slug. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the avatar must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or have the poisoned condition until the start of their next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to this stench for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The avatar makes four Sickening Claw attacks. It can replace one of the attacks with Insect Gorge (if available).

Sickening Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by the acid damage taken. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Insect Gorge (Recharge 4–6). The avatar disgorges a swarm of biting flies at a point it can see within 300 feet of itself. Each creature within a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 55 (10d10) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The biting flies persist for 1 minute or until the avatar is slain. A creature must also make this saving throw when it enters the insects' area for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.

Caustic Slimepool (1/Day). The avatar causes caustic slime to emanate from itself, covering a 15-foot-radius circle. Each creature within the slime must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or have the grappled condition (escape DC 17). A grappled creature takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of its turn.

ENTERING THE NINE HELLS

Once the threat posed by Baalzebul has been dealt with, Koh Tam takes a little time to recover and then talks to the characters about the next steps.

The weary priest sits on the steps below the cathedral altar. His hands still tremble but his voice is calm and steady as he explains the journey that lies ahead.

"I can open a portal to Avernus, the first of the Nine Hells. Once there, I have a barge that will allow us to sail the River Styx, a far easier task than attempting to navigate by foot. I will sail with you and be your guide," Koh Tam says. "To succeed in your mission, you must do two things. First, you must find the souls you seek and free them from whatever foul device holds them captive. Second, you must deal with Asmodeus himself. For even if you escape the Nine Hells with the souls you wish to rescue, they will only be hunted down again unless you can convince, or trick, Asmodeus to declare them free."

Koh Tam stands and dusts off his heavy robes. "I will go and prepare for our journey," he says. "When you are ready, come find me and I will open the portal."

Koh Tam waits for as long as the characters need. Once they're ready, he opens the portal to Avernus.

MEETING TIAX

The portal takes Koh Tam and the characters to the Bronze Citadel in Avernus.

The heat that greets you on the other side of the portal is at once sharp and searing and unbearably heavy, each push forward as difficult as swimming through molasses. The air is so dry that after a single breath your throat aches for drink and yet so humid that your clothes already cling to your sweat-soaked form. Above you the sunless sky is a brilliant red, alive with writhing masses of crimson clouds and flares of orange lightning. Your party stands on a rocky cliffside. Below you the dark and trepid River Styx stretches out to the ends of the horizon. All around you loom towers and walls of glinting metal and bleached bone: the Bronze Citadel.

Koh Tam guides the characters away from the Bronze Citadel to the docks. There he introduces them to his first mate, **Tiax** (see appendix C).



Koh Tam's first mate is a gnome of peculiar mannerism by the name of Tiax. He is dressed like a naval captain that has fallen upon hard times. His face is covered by a wild beard and a wooden pipe held between his teeth sends out plumes of foul-smelling smoke. He stands on the docks by Koh Tam's barge, arms crossed and face set in a scowl as you approach.

"There ye are, ye fools!" Tiax slams a foot down on the edge of the barge. The force pushes the vessel out to the end of its rope, leaving the gnome unbalanced and tipping toward the unnatural river water. Koh Tam reaches out and snatches the back of Tiax's shirt, pulling him to safety. The gnome neither offers his thanks nor pauses his speech. Instead, he stomps his foot again, this time on the firm wood of the dock, raises his fist, and says, "So, you wish to sail the treacherous waters of the Nine Hells with the mighty sorcerer Tiax. Well! No better choice of guide could you have made. For the great and wise Tiax knows all! But, beware, for the way before ye is full of horrors that would drive lesser souls to terror. Not I though," he says, crossing his arms again. "I'm frightened of nothing."

Tiax is a cleric of Cyric, the god of lies. He believes that his god has chosen him to one day rule Faerûn. Over the years this preposterous belief has led to imprisonment half a dozen times, usually when one of his schemes blows up in his face (often literally). However, Cyric does indeed favor him and treats him like a pet or jester. Thus, the god always helps the gnome escape from whatever predicament he has brought down on himself.

Cyric has directed Tiax to serve Koh Tam faithfully. Cyric is interested in what Asmodeus has planned and harbors a deep hatred for Koh Tam's god, Kelemvor. He hopes that Tiax might learn something about Asmodeus's schemes and if not, then Tiax is well positioned to kill one of Kelemvor's most powerful clerics.

Tiax hides his faith from everyone. He proclaims himself a great sorcerer so that any magic he uses isn't thought of as divinely given. Tiax is a ticking time bomb and as the characters travel deeper into the Nine Hells he becomes more dangerous. Tiax will randomly appear to help—or hinder—the characters as they make their way through the Nine Hells. Every time the characters arrive at a layer of the Nine Hells, even if they've previously visited it, roll on the Troubles with Tiax table and run the indicated event.

Eventually Tiax will betray Koh Tam at the Falls of the Frozen Titan in Cania. See the “Tiax’s Betrayal” section in chapter 10 for more details.

TROUBLES WITH TIAX

d20 Event

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1–6 | Nothing unusual happens |
| 7–10 | The group patron checks in |
| 11–13 | <i>“Tiax always knows best!”</i> |
| 14–15 | Tiax’s shady dealings |
| 16–20 | <i>“Do not question Tiax the Mighty!”</i> |

NOTHING UNUSUAL HAPPENS

Events in this layer proceed as normal with Koh Tam being the primary contact.

THE GROUP PATRON CHECKS IN

The group patron is waiting for the characters, offering assistance as is described in their individual “As a Contact” sections from the Introduction. If this is their first time in this layer, the patron can serve the role—and read the appropriate descriptive text—that is indicated for Koh Tam.

“TIAX ALWAYS KNOWS BEST!”

If this is their first time in this layer, Tiax serves as guide instead of Koh Tam, insisting that he has far

more insight into this part of the Nine Hells. Unlike Koh Tam, he’ll try to accompany the characters to each location they visit within the layer.

SERGEY MUSIN

TIAX’S SHADY DEALINGS

As the characters leave their first area within this layer (or at another opportune time), they notice Tiax trying to hide (poorly) as he spies on them. If confronted, he declares, “Tiax the Mighty was just making certain that his minions were behaving. Now get back to work!” If this event is rolled a second time, run the “Do Not Question Tiax the Mighty!” event instead.

“DO NOT QUESTION TIAX THE MIGHTY!”

Tiax is temperamental. Roll a d10 (+ the number representing their current layer of the Nine Hells) every time the characters ask Tiax for advice or enter a new location. On any result lower than a 10, he is helpful. If a 10 or higher is rolled he becomes angry and stomps back to the ship. Each time he becomes angry in this way, add 1 to the next time you make this d10 roll.

NO TURNING BACK

Having met Tiax and boarded Koh Tam’s barge the characters are ready for their adventure to begin. Proceed to “The Bronze Citadel” section in chapter 3.

THE DOCKS OF THE BRONZE CITADEL.



KOH TAM'S BARGE



0 5 10
Feet



THE DESOLATE TERRAIN OF AVERNUS SERVES
AS A BACKDROP FOR THE ETERNAL WAR.

CHAPTER 2

The Nine Hells



HE CHARACTERS START THEIR JOURNEY at the Bronze Citadel. From there they can travel down the River Styx on Koh Tam's barge. It is important to read through both the introduction and this chapter before running sessions that take place in the Nine Hells.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

Each layer of the Nine Hells has an adventure location that may contain one of the souls that the characters are searching for. In addition, there is the group patron's objective. Koh Tam is familiar with each layer along with the adventure locations of each. However, he won't speak about a layer or its adventure location until they arrive. Koh Tam responds to any questions on upcoming layers by saying, "All in due time." The characters might wish to explore an adventure location even if it doesn't

contain one of their objectives. You should allow them to do this as they can still stumble across the objectives of other group patrons.

The Objective Locations table summarizes where to find the souls the characters seek as well as their group patron's objectives (appendix D contains further details about the items the Deathstalkers seek.)

RIVER STYX ENCOUNTERS

Each day that the characters travel down the Styx there is a 50 percent chance that they might encounter something along its shores. If they do happen to encounter something, roll a d6 and add a number equal to the layer of the Nine Hells they're on. For example, if they're on Phlegethos, the fourth layer, then you roll 1d6 + 4. Refer to the River Styx Encounters in the Nine Hells table to determine the encounter that the characters come across.

OBJECTIVE LOCATIONS

Location	Lost Soul Phylacteries	—Group Patron Objectives—		
		Hellriders	Conclave	Deathstalkers
The War-Slough, Avernus (1st layer)	Brother, The Queen	—	—	—
The Agora of Floating Knives, Dis (2nd layer)	Bounty, The Chosen One, Patricide	—	<i>Cloak of Invisibility, Instrument of the Bards (Ollamh Harp), Iron Horn of Valhalla</i>	<i>Wrought-Iron Tower</i>
The Ineffable Trove, Minauros (3rd layer)	Father, The Infinite Treasure	—	<i>Belt of Giant Strength (storm)</i>	<i>Accounting and Valuation of All Things</i>
The Elemental Preserve, Phlegethos (4th layer)	Sister, The Furnace	Anagwendol	—	<i>Amulet of the Inferno, Ranseur of Torture</i>
The Chasm of Found Things, Stygia (5th layer)	Business Partner, The Oathbreaker	—	<i>Holy Avenger, Manual of Golems (iron), Rod of Resurrection</i>	<i>True-Ice Shards</i>
The Sign of the Hag's Arms, Malbolge (6th layer)	The Heartless Master, Mentor, Mother	—	—	<i>Scourge of Shadow</i>
The Eye Market, Maladomini (7th layer)	Spouse/True Love, The Great Con	Jenevere	<i>Staff of the Woodlands</i>	—
The Sorrow Mine, Cania (8th layer)	Student, The Merciless	—	<i>Staff of the Magi</i>	—
The Oasis of the Lethe, Nessus (9th layer)	—	—	—	—
Infernal Warship	—	Barachiel	—	—
Baalzebul's Infernal Submersible	—	—	<i>The Unmaker</i>	—



Avernus
(First Layer)



Phlegethos
(Fourth Layer)



Stygia
(Fifth Layer)



Cania
(Eighth Layer)



Nessus
(Ninth Layer)

FLOW OF THE RIVER STYX

Dis
(Second Layer)

Minauros
(Third Layer)

Malbolge
(Sixth Layer)

Maladomini
(Seventh Layer)

If the characters have already experienced that encounter, then roll on the random encounter table for that layer of the Nine Hells.

RIVER STYX ENCOUNTERS IN THE NINE HELL

d6 + Layer Encounter

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 2 | Ride of the Demon Lord |
| 3 | Shadow of a Tyrant |
| 4 | Horsemen of the Apocalypse |
| 5 | Gatekeeper's Quiz |
| 6 | Camp of Hedonism |
| 7 | Aid from Below |
| 8 | Bowl of Suffering |
| 9 | Forest of Pain |
| 10 | Canyons of Greed |
| 11 | Ruin and Amusement |
| 12 | Angelic Villa |
| 13+ | A Paladin in Hell |

RIDE OF THE DEMON LORD

A sprawling makeshift camp sits atop a low plateau. At the center of the camp is a massive tent stitched from the hides of a variety of devils. Above it, demons fly about calling to each other in their awful speech. Dozens more scream and gibber at each other from barges that float in the River Styx ahead of you. Three such barges have already begun rowing your way but a large, winged demon lands on your ship well before they can reach you.

The camp on the plateau is the war compound of the demon lord **Baphomet** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*). He has penetrated deeply into the Nine Hells and intends to throw his host of demons at one of the devils' great flying strongholds to slaughter as many of his enemies as possible. The demons know they will die in the attack, but since they're not native to the Nine Hells it is of no consequence. Their bodies will simply reform in the Abyss. The devils that they kill will die forever.

The demon that lands on Koh Tam's ship is a nalfeshnee in command of the demon host's barges. It demands that the characters accompany it to speak with its lord, Baphomet, who is currently within the camp on the plateau. If the characters refuse, the demon attacks and the **nalfeshnee** is assisted by three fly-like **chasmes**. If these demons are defeated, the characters can bypass the interdiction and proceed down the River Styx, skipping the remainder of this encounter.

On the other hand, if the characters agree to meet Baphomet, they're escorted to shore and from there, brought into the camp. Baphomet has also recruited several mortals to his cause. The humans will likely end up as lemures when killed, so their participation is particularly unfathomable. Before meeting the demon lord, the characters may speak with some of the humans in the camp:

- A pair of warriors have come to the Nine Hells on a mission like that of the characters. They're monks from the far-off land of Shou Lung and the souls of their mother and father were taken by Asmodeus.
- A half-dozen soldiers calling themselves Knights of Solamnia have come from a world called Krynn. They call Tiamat by a different name—Takhisis. They're just trying to survive and have joined Baphomet because he is an enemy of Tiamat.
- Three Red Wizards from the land of Thay. They tried to summon and control Baphomet and failed. Now they must help in his war against the devils of the Nine Hells.

Once inside the compound the characters are brought to see Baphomet who resides within the huge devil-skin tent, the inner supports of which appear to be the bones of a mighty beast.

The commander of this demon army is a great, twenty-foot-tall, black-furred minotaur with six iron horns. At either side of him stand minotaur-like demons who are just as massive as their lord. At the back of the tent sits a bone cage within which over a dozen humans huddle in terror.

Unless the characters are openly hostile, Baphomet, and the two **goristro** with him, won't attack. His enemies are the devils of the Nine Hells, not the characters. He would rather share his plan. He tells the characters that it is time to throw down the chains of oppression that law and civilization bring. He wants them to help him destroy one of the flying citadels that archdevils often use to fly above the hellscape of their home. Baphomet offhandedly explains that if the characters turn down his offer, they'll join the meat that waits to be consumed after victory is achieved and points to the prisoners in the bone cage. But he insists it is their choice.

Baphomet desires to draw the citadel to this location whereupon he plans to trigger an overly complicated assault, the details of which the characters don't need to know. He simply needs them to locate the nearest citadel and attract its attention, so it diverts towards the camp. As a reward, Baphomet offers a chest full of 5,000 gp once the characters return with a citadel on its way. If the characters



BAPHOMET STARES DOWN
AN INFERNAL CITADEL.

negotiate for the human prisoners' freedom, Baphomet agrees to free all of them, though withdraws the offer of the chest. To win both the prisoners' freedom and the gold the characters must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Baphomet points across the land, away from the River Styx, and suggests they begin their search in that direction. At this point the characters are free to leave, easily able to double around and return to Koh Tam's barge and certain escape, though that would leave the captive humans at the mercy of the demons. If they've any interest in saving those unfortunates, the characters need to locate the citadel for Baphomet.

FINDING THE CITADEL

Baphomet assembled his camp at this location, knowing it was near a devil patrol route, so locating a citadel won't be difficult. After 1d4 hours the characters see a citadel on the horizon. Any activity out of the ordinary attracts the attention of the citadel's crew (a spell or other visually impressive distraction suffices). Once it begins moving towards them it is easy for the characters to keep ahead of the citadel and reach the camp and Baphomet's tent before it arrives. Baphomet is ecstatic at their success, though distracted at the impending battle. He gestures to their reward and then exits his tent. Through the open flap, the characters watch the citadel's arrival.

The gigantic basalt citadel, shaped like a sword's blade, emerges from the clouds above the River Styx. Screaming demons madly scurry onto the bone platforms laying around the fort. Chasmes add to the cacophony as groups of those fly-like demons grasp the platforms, dragging each into the sky.

There are several choices the characters can make at this point but attacking the citadel is a doomed endeavor and the party should be encouraged to avoid joining the demons.

ESCAPE AND RESCUE

As Baphomet departs the characters should try and make an escape with their reward. If they didn't win the captives' freedom earlier, they must now defeat one **goristro** guard to free the captives. The remainder of the demonic host doesn't notice these hostilities, busy as they are with the assault. Once on the barge, the characters witness the assault's failure from a distance.

As Koh Tam's barge drifts down the River Styx, you watch the ill-fated attack on the flying citadel fail as the great swarms of chasmes are torn asunder by various winged devils, their precarious platforms tumbling, each collapse sending dozens of demons and their human allies to their deaths. Silhouetted against the skyline stands Baphomet, the great demon merely shrugging at the failure before walking back towards his camp.

A TYRANT SHADOW TAKES ON
THE FORM OF A GIANT SPIDER.



ATTACKING THE CITADEL

If the characters want to join in the assault on the citadel, it is clear that the demons shall lose this battle. It should also be clear that the characters can simply leave the battle at any time—neither demon nor devil notice. The devilish host includes ten **shred-wings** fighting the chasmes and eight **affliction devils** guarding each citadel entrance (see appendix B for both). Inside a squad of sixteen **bearded devils** emerge to further challenge intruders. If somehow despite all these obstacles the characters reach the bridge, they find it crewed by six **horned devils**, two **war devils** (see appendix B), and the archdevil appropriate to this layer of the Nine Hells.

SHADOW OF A TYRANT

Swarms of thousands of bloated flies fill the air with a droning sound. These flies feed on the manure from the herd of rothé that stand dumbly about upon the shore. Jagged rocks and deep pits can be seen a little further inland. Most of the pits vanish into inky darkness, though something metallic glitters within one of the shadowed maws.

This region of the Nine Hells is infested with **ayperobos** (see appendix B). These tiny devils swarm about by the thousands, disguising themselves within the swarms of black flies. They've even burrowed into the flesh of several of the **rothé** (see the accompanying stat block) and now control these

beasts like puppets. The devious devils have scattered the armor, weapons, and treasure of previous victims near the entrance of one of the caves. This way, it can easily be seen from boats passing by. However, it isn't the ayperobos that poses the greatest danger here.

The first clue to the dangers of this area are the freshly stripped corpses of several rothé, recently eaten by the ayperobos. All that remains of these rothé are their intact skeletons, flecked with blood and flesh. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that these corpses are recent and that whatever killed them stripped all of the meat from their bones in a matter of moments.

ROTHÉ

Large Beast (Cattle), Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 15 (2d10 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the rothé moved at least 20 feet straight towards this target immediately before the hit, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

The ayperobos wait until their prey has come ashore before attacking—unless it looks like a passing ship doesn't intend to stop. They will then descend upon their victims en masse. A swarm of them will push against the mast, sails and even hull of the Styx barge to drive it against the shore. A successful DC 15 Strength check is required by the navigator to keep a boat on course. The ayperobos aren't interested in eating the flesh of their victims; instead, they serve a greater threat. A **tyrant shadow** (see appendix B) lives within the caves that dot the shore and the ayperobos lure in hapless mortals and devils to be consumed by it. If any of the ayperobos swarms take control of a creature, they force it to enter the nearest cave mouth.

The tyrant shadow is a thing of concentrated hatred, fear, and loathing. It has taken the appearance of a **giant spider** made from writhing shadows. As soon as it has an opportunity it snatches a single victim and drags him or her deep into its cave system. From there the tyrant shadow takes its time to devour its prey, hoping that the screams attract a rescue attempt.

This particular tyrant shadow was manifested by the archdevil known as Zagum of the Triad.

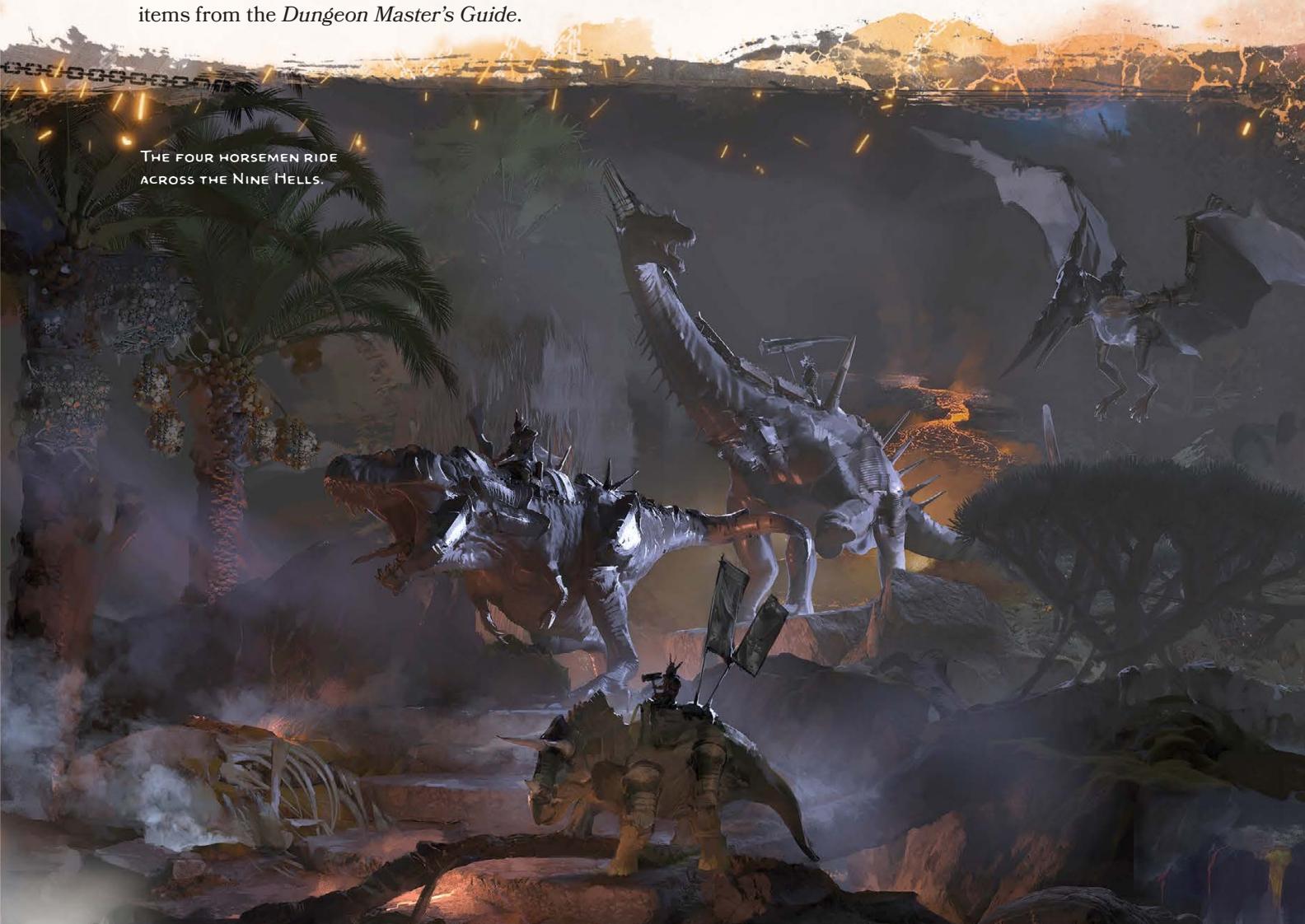
Treasure. Among the scattered belongings are some valuables. Select three uncommon magic items from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Before you, four towering beasts loom, resembling massive dinosaurs covered in heavy armor plating. Seated atop each creature is a devil, their eyes burning with malevolent intelligence.

These are the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, fallen rulers who climbed the ranks of the Nine Hells and now serve as harbingers of the end times. While they await their chance to unleash destruction upon their former worlds, they spend their time bickering among themselves, each vying for dominance over the others. Each rider is astride a formidable steed.

The horsemen won't immediately attack but instead try to engage the characters in their endless bickering, each trying to prove their own superiority over the others. Like it or not, they'll force the characters to choose which of their philosophies is best. Whoever they choose is overjoyed and leaves the fate of the characters in the hands of his or her companions. The remaining three horsemen unleash their full fury, using all their powers and abilities to destroy the characters.



KING MOLVAR OF THE RHOKOR

This **horned devil** rides an **ankylosaurus**. He formerly governed the kingdom of Keoland on Oerth, disseminating false information regarding the elimination of the so-called “detrimental elements of the society.”

“Power is not a means; it is an end.”

—Neldor the Black

“History is written by the victors.”

—Dorgoth the Wise

OVERLORD ZELTHOR

This **bone devil** rides a **shredwing** and was once an emperor of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy on Oerth. He speaks in the third person and believes in the power of the individual over the collective.

“The only morality is what is good for you.”

—Thelgor the Black

“The strongest have the right to rule.”

—Molthor the Conqueror

OVERQUEEN YARLIS

An **erinyes** who rides a **triceratops**, Yarlis was a queen of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy on Oerth. She's notorious for taking credit for other people's quotes, much to the annoyance of King Molvar and Overlord Zelthor. She believes in the power of the individual to change the world.

“The only true purpose in life is to achieve greatness.”

—Tharlos the Mighty

“The only limits are the ones we set for ourselves.”

—Keldor the Wise

YAMUN KHAZAD

This **pain devil** rides an intimidating **miasmorne** (see appendix B for both) and comes from the world of Faerûn, where he was once a warlord that united the tribes of the Endless Steppe. He believes in the power of victory and domination over others.

“All problems can be solved through conquest.”

—Korgoth the Mighty

“Those who are weak deserve to be conquered.”

—Thorgar the Conqueror

GATEKEEPER'S QUIZ

The timbers of your ship groan as it suddenly lurches to a stop. It seems to have run aground in the middle of the Styx.

A powerful **amnizu** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*), named Minos, controls this section of the River Styx. He is in command of a **Styx dragon**

(see appendix B) that he uses to stop ships passing through. Minos considers himself an arbiter and judge of the Nine Hells. He enjoys judging the souls of the damned. Though boats frequently pass him by, they're rarely crewed with mortals, and thus his interest is piqued. Minos' other talent is with riddles, something he loves to practice with devils and mortals alike.

Minos rises from the Styx once the ship has been brought to a stop by his Styx dragon. He asks for the names of the crew members. If any on board shares their name, Minos acts as if he has heard the name before and plays upon the pride of the individual. He tries to convince one of the characters to play a game of riddles with him. If they refuse, then he explains that their ship is in the grip of his Styx dragon and that he will only allow them passage if they play his game.

The game consists of three rounds. In each round, Minos will pose a riddle and then the character must pose a riddle. Feel free to replace the three riddles below with different ones of your choosing. The players can either come up with a riddle on their own (which you try to answer) or they can succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence check to craft a riddle Minos can't solve. The characters are victorious if Minos can't answer one of their riddles or if they're able to answer all three of the riddles posed by Minos.

- I create nothing from everything. I provide passage where there is none. I travel the layers peddling my wares, but no payment is required. What am I?

Answer: River Styx

- I am something of ultimate value, yet weightless. I am a ledger of deeds, yet nothing is written. I can visit other planes, yet the corporeal remains. What am I?

Answer: Soul

- In consuming everything, it gives life. Its remains bring about rebirth. To embrace it is to die, yet it readily travels with almost any group. What is it?

Answer: Fire

- Every creature follows their own version, whether written or thought. Without it, there would be no Blood War. Its interpretation and presence has driven conflict since the beginning of time. What is it?

Answer: Law

- I'm never far from my sibling, fire, Find comfort in me, liars, For when I make something unfound, Use touch, taste, smell, or sound.

Answer: Darkness



To have me is to have everything,
To be as powerful as a king,
Yet, my endless pursuit brings only emptiness,
Having everything brings joy less and less.

Answer: Wealth

Winning the game of riddles results in Minos allowing the characters to choose one infernal magic item from his stash at the bottom of the Styx. He has the following items: *Bracers of Asmodeus*, *Canian Fork*, *Demonbone Polearm*, *Infernal Amulet*, *Infernal Plate Armor*, *Stygian Spear*, and the *Sword of Retribution* (these are described in appendix D).

Losing the game of riddles results in Minos demanding 5 *Soul Coins* to continue down the river. Refusal results in Minos and the Styx dragon attacking. If Minos is attacked or if the game of riddles is refused, then the amnizu and his pet Styx dragon will attack together.

CAMP OF HEDONISM

A large, fortified camp has been built on the shore of the River Styx from huge bones and bleached timber. No one patrols its walls, but the sounds of laughter and joy can be heard from within.

This camp is the home of Gulgara, a powerful **corruption devil** (see appendix B) known as a sire of corruption, and her many minions. Gulgara created the camp decades ago as a trap for the unwary and

DECADENT CORRUPTION

The most powerful of corruption devils, the sire of corruption, gains a powerful aura that pervades and weakens the will of anyone within 300 feet of the devil. When a creature first enters the aura, they must make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save the creature falls under a curse known as decadent corruption.

While cursed in this way, the character has disadvantage on all saving throws and ability checks. In addition, a character that has the charmed condition while cursed in this way, remembers nothing of what happened to them while charmed, once the charmed condition ends. Finally, a cursed character becomes reckless, automatically failing any Wisdom (Insight) checks they may make. Often this manifests as a dangerous sort of curiosity, which may result in a desire to investigate the camp.

A *Greater Restoration* spell, a *Remove Curse* spell, or other magic that removes curses, can remove the corruption curse and end all its effects. Those that succeed the saving throw or have been cured are immune to the effects of decadent corruption until they finish a long rest. Leaving the corruption aura also ends the curse on the affected creature but does not grant immunity to the curse. A corrupted character won't voluntarily leave the area and if asked to do so, the character makes excuses for why it can't.

a place to hone her powers of corruption. Recently a large group of adventurers were searching for the souls of their loved ones when they came under attack by numerous devils. The adventurers could not believe their luck when they saw what appeared to be an abandoned infernal fort. They took refuge within, not realizing it was the corruption devil's powers that had drawn them there in the first place.

TEMPTATION OF BETRAYAL

"Nothing Can Touch Me."

Gulgara wears a magic ring with a shield carved into it and infernal script covering every surface. If a character puts the ring on, it triggers a temptation. The temptations that Asmodeus throws in the way of the characters, are described later in this chapter; consult there for further details about the "Nothing Can Touch Me" temptation.

The adventurers (four **mages**, three **knights**, two **druids**, two **spies**, and a **priest**) are oblivious to the many torments they've suffered. A dozen **succubi**, in the guise of friendly elves, work in the camp, enacting Gulgara's various torments.

Characters approaching the gates to the camp are welcomed by a pair of succubi, claiming to be adventurers. They invite the characters to partake in the festivities within the camp. They open the gates to reveal the grounds of the fort, which are occupied by numerous adventurers. There are also two large tents in the distance.

A succubus points out the activities that the characters might want to participate in:

- A half dozen adventurers are greedily eating from a vast table filled with delicacies from across the multiverse.
- A pair of knights are sitting on cushioned seats in front of vast mirrors as their armor is shined by **imps**. There are several empty seats, and more imps waiting to work.
- A priest and a couple of spies are engaged in a rowdy game of dice.

Each tent is guarded by a pair of **succubi** that have taken the appearance of human knights and pretend

to be adventurers. They allow entry only to those obviously under the influence of Gulgara's decadent corruption ability. If the characters attempt to force their way into a tent, all the camp's occupants attack the characters.

In the first tent, a mage is being tortured by a trio of **affliction devils** (see appendix B). The devils attack characters not under the influence of the decadent corruption ability. The other tent is where Gulgara can be found. She attacks characters not under the influence of the decadent corruption ability but emerges from the tent only if a fight breaks out between the characters and her servants.

The entire camp is under the influence of Gulgara's decadent corruption ability. The adventurers can be saved but each requires their decadent corruption be removed, as described in the sidebar. If a devil or succubus sees that an adventurer has been saved in this way, or any adventurer attempts to leave the camp, the remainder of the camp goes hostile. Adventurers that have been saved fight to assist the characters and, if they survive, continue to travel the Nine Hells with the characters.

AID FROM BELOW

Ahead, a band of centaurs makes their way across a burnt-out forest. Some of them pull a cart behind them.

This ragtag group of twelve **centaurs** are dedicated to a good, but misguided, cause.

After some discussion, the characters will learn that these centaurs are attempting to alleviate the suffering of some of the souls in the Nine Hells. In particular, they help individuals they deem



THE NINE HELL'S CORRUPT EVEN THOSE WITH GOOD INTENTIONS.



LARVAE TRY TO ESCAPE
THE BOWL OF SUFFERING.

non-deserving of their suffering. These **larvae** (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for this stat block), **lemures** and **nupperibos** are in bone caged carts that some of the centaur band are yoked to. They willingly entered the Nine Hells decades ago at the behest of their chieftain. They originally numbered in the hundreds but have been reduced to just a dozen.

What they don't realize is that their quest is a trick. Their chieftain signed away their souls so that he could be granted great power. He convinced his greatest warriors that they needed to enter the Nine Hells and save the innocent souls that had been unfairly consigned to suffer there. He told them how to recognize such souls, but these were just lies. The signs he told them to look for include:

- Joyful facial expressions
- Issuing curses against the gods

If the characters are able to ascertain that the centaur's quest is a lie (through magic spells such as *Divination* or *Contact Other Plane*), then they can try to convince the band of their findings. This requires a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

If the characters are successful at convincing the centaurs of the fact that their quest is a lie, one of the nupperibos begins to giggle, then laugh, then cackle uncontrollably. After his death, the chieftain

was consigned to the Nine Hells, as a nupperibo. The centaurs stumbled upon him a few years ago, without even realizing his identity, and he has been with them ever since.

BOWL OF SUFFERING

Piteous screams can be heard from the shoreline. A huge bowl formed from smooth obsidian is surrounded by a half dozen devils that push back creatures trying to escape from it. Enormous elephant like devils stand impassively as guards.

There are six **pain devils** and two **maelephant nomads** (for both, see appendix B) around the bowl. Only someone standing at the edge of the bowl can see that it is filled with **larvae** (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for this stat block), **lemures**, **nupperibos** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*), and a few **dretches** captured during the Blood War. These dretches have honed their telepathy so that they can communicate in any language. The pain devils push down any of the pitiful creatures that manage to climb up the sides of the bowl.

The maelephants attack anyone who tries to interfere with the pain devils.



HELLCATS PROWL THE FOREST.

The dretches use their telepathy to make promises to any mortal they see, but all their promises are lies. One dretch claims to be an angelic creature trapped under the other infernal creatures. Another dretch claims that there is a suit of magic plate armor at the bottom. Anyone crawling into the bowl is swarmed by the piteous creatures and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. They take 21 (6d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Magic within the bowl is corrupted so that any spell cast within it fails and triggers a wild magic surge. Determine the surge's effect by rolling on the sorcerer's Wild Magic Surge table in the *Player's Handbook*.

FOREST OF PAIN

A forest grows on both sides of the River Styx. The trees are twisted and without any leaves. Among the trees lumber huge sloth like creatures.

This forest is the home of one of Hell's larger herds of **oneirovores** (see appendix B). These creatures, also known as dream eaters, are grazing on the

branches of the trees. When they break off a branch it bleeds a luminescent sap that the oneirovores eagerly lap up. This sap is made up of the dreams of mortals.

Attacking the herd can quickly turn into a disaster. If any of the oneirovores is hurt, 2d4 **hellcats** (see appendix B) immediately spring to their defense. An oneirovore that is injured cries mournfully and releases its stored phantasmagoria. Nearby oneirovores also release their phantasmagoria. Things quickly get worse when the herd's shepherd arrives. In 1d4 rounds a pack of a dozen **hell hounds** will burst on to the scene. A round later the shepherd, a **war devil** (see appendix B), arrives.

If the guardians of the flock are dealt with, then it isn't too difficult to coax some of the oneirovores on to a boat. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check convinces an oneirovore to follow along. However, it is very dangerous for anyone to rest while so close to a dream eater. Someone who finishes a long rest within 10 feet of an oneirovore must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. The DC increases by 5 for each oneirovore beyond the first. A failed save results in disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws. Only a *Wish* spell can remove this effect.

CANYONS OF GREED

The River Styx cuts its way through a canyon larger than any in the mortal world. A sound like thunder can be heard from above as rocks begin to tumble down the canyon's sides towards your barge.

Four **maelephant nomads** (see appendix B) stand at the top of the canyon and push boulders toward any ship passing by. These boulders glisten with embedded gold nuggets and when they smash into their target or hit the side of the canyon they break apart, scattering 2d12 gold nuggets along the riverbank. Each throws three boulders (*Ranged Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage*) before retiring out of sight. A spell such as *Gust of Wind* pushes a ship out of range immediately.

Nearly a dozen prospectors emerge from caves in the sides of the canyon and huts built along the shore. They scramble to collect the gold nuggets, often wading into the river to pick up nuggets that land in the shallows. The memories of these prospectors have long ago been eroded. Now all they care about is finding gold nuggets in the river and hiding whatever they find in the small lair they've built for themselves. Each gold nugget is worth 100 gp, but the prospectors react violently to anyone who tries to take their gold. The prospectors have silently

agreed to not touch the treasure hoard of another. Anyone doing so earns the wrath of all the prospectors. A variety of prospectors live here:

- 3 **fire giants**
- 1 dwarf **gladiator**
- 1 orc **veteran**
- 1 elf **assassin**
- 1 **young red dragon**
- 2 **fomorians**

Each prospector has 1d100 gold nuggets in their lair.

RUIN AND AMUSEMENT

The River Styx flows through a stone canal that cuts through the heart of an infernal city. The sounds of laughter and joy can be heard from what looks to be an amusement park!

The River Styx flows into a stone canal that has been built through the heart of one of Hell's many abandoned cities. The city is long dead, except for an amusement park at the city center.

This amusement park is another one of Baalzebul's bizarre creations and is one of the few places in the Nine Hells where the non-infernal outnumber devils. Travelers from across the planes travel down the Styx to experience the famed rides.

NOTHING IS LEFT OF THE PROSPECTORS,
EXCEPT THEIR GREED.





LOCATION

If this encounter takes place in Malbolge or Cania, then it should do so on the borders of Maladomini.

At the main entry, a **succubus** and an **incubus** hand out entrance tickets for 10 gp each. However, anyone sneaking in without paying doesn't need to fear reprisal. Once inside, visitors are free to try out any of the fun rides. Once they've tried out one or two, they are approached by a succubus or incubus who tries to persuade them to try out one of the devilish rides.

FUN RIDES

These are rides that, while frightening, aren't dangerous.

Ferris Wheel. This huge wheel allows up to six Medium-sized creatures in each of its cages. Cleverly placed illusions create elaborate scenes, simulating a journey through the Nine Hells. A rider looking out from their cage begins their journey with a majestic view of Avernus and travels in a slow circle through each layer in turn, with the ride ending with a view of the deep canyons of Nessus. In total the ride takes no more than ten minutes but feels much longer than that.

Infernal Mansion. This mansion is filled with some of the most gruesome looking demons and devils. The devils are willingly scaring participants,

while the demons are ... not so willing. A **chain devil** uses chains to disturb those who walk down an inky black corridor. A pair of **hellcats** (see appendix B) terrorize people walking through an ancient torture chamber and a **displacer fiend** (see appendix B) reaches out with its tentacles from a cage just unable to reach participants. Finally, there are the exploding **manes** demons. They're released from multiple tiny doors and run gibbering at participants before exploding right before they reach them. This means that participants are always covered in demonic ichor. Luckily, this ichor doesn't behave as it does in the rest of the lower planes, but participants aren't told that.

Roller Coaster. The second most terrifying roller coaster in the multiverse. The twists, turns, spirals and upside-down tracks dissuade many from trying it out. Anyone riding it must succeed on a half dozen DC 15 Wisdom saving throws to stop from screaming during the ride.

DEVILISH RIDES

Each ride costs 250 gp per rider and can be extremely dangerous. However, winning contestants earn powerful magical treasure. Winners of a ride earn a magic item from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Winners can win only one prize. Any character under 10th level receives an uncommon magic item. Characters 10th level to 15th level

receive a rare magic item (excluding weapons) and characters 16th level or higher receive a very rare magic item (excluding weapons).

Carousel. This carousel starts off spinning slowly, but quickly gains speed. Contestants must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to hold on during the first minute. Every subsequent minute the DC increases by 5 to a maximum of 30. The ride ends when there is only a single rider left or once the DC reaches 30. A rider who fails their check flies out and hits the barrier walls, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every point of DC—to a maximum of 70 (20d6). The barrier needs to be cleaned of gore at the end of every night.

Doom Coaster. This is the deadliest and most terrifying roller coaster in the multiverse and carries riders through a series of dangerous features. With each terrifying event, a rider must survive not only the physical danger, but they must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the frightened condition for the remainder of the ride. While frightened in this way, a rider also has disadvantage on all saving throws.

The roller coaster begins by ascending a vast stretch of rickety track until it reaches 600 feet. It then travels through the features, visiting each once. After the final feature the roller coaster returns to the relative safety of ground level again. The features are presented in the order that riders encounter them:

Lady of Pain. The roller coaster does a circle around an enormous head with huge blades sticking out of it. Each rider must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) slashing damage.

Maw of the Dragon. The roller coaster drops into the fiery maw of an artificial dragon and each rider must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 28 (8d6) fire damage.

Stygian Glaciers. The roller coaster turns upside down so that its riders are immersed in a lake of frigid water filled with razor sharp icy shards, before the roller coaster ascends again. Each rider must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 17 (5d6) cold damage and 7 (2d6) slashing damage.

Storm King's Thunder. The roller coaster drops into the arms of a 100-foot-tall storm giant automaton. As the giant places the coaster on the new set of tracks, everything is electrified, and each rider must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) lightning damage.

Great Green Devil. The roller coaster rushes through the open mouth of a huge green devil face and each rider must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 42 (12d6) necrotic damage. Any rider reduced to 0 hit points is disintegrated.

Bumper Cars. A variety of infernal war machines compete here in a massive arena. The drivers of the machines must destroy the other machines by smashing into them. Riders may select either a Large machine or a Huge machine (each machine can only have one occupant). These vehicles have fierce names, such as “Devil’s Ride,” “Tormentor,” and “Scavenger”. The character’s goal is for their machine to survive 5 rounds—each rider that manages this feat, wins. Surviving each round requires a character to make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid a collision with another machine. The DC if the character is piloting a Large machine is 15 but becomes 20 for those piloting a Huge vehicle. If the character fails the saving throw, their vehicle is destroyed if it is Large. A Huge machine can survive one impact, but a second impact destroys it. When a machine is destroyed, the rider takes 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage. If a vehicle-less character starts their turn in the arena, they must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. If they fail, they take 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage as they’re run down by an infernal machine.

ANGELIC VILLA

A small group of angels live in a once beautiful palace, overgrown with the filth of the Nine Hells. Flies and wasps surround the palace, and worms writhe in the mud around it. These angels were companions of Triel, the fallen angel that became the archdevil Baalzebul. They aren’t evil, but they’re no longer good either. They haven’t committed to either the hierarchy of the Nine Hells or returned to their original home in the Seven Heavens. Their moral relativity has made them into sad figures with no purpose or hope.

The angel Samael flies above the Styx and attempts to contact any good characters it notices below. The angel uses telepathy to provide directions to a nearby palace where characters may rest and recover.

A palace is half-sunk in the mud and a great swarm of flies and wasps hovers over it like a nightmarish cloud. You look up at the façade of the building and see the remnants of beauty long gone. Intricate carvings in marble are covered in filth and crawling things. Mighty stone walls lie half crumbled away, revealing the rotting wood supports jutting out like shattered bones. There were tall windows once. Now there remain only gaping holes. Slits of impenetrable black, glaring down at you like soulless eyes.

When the characters enter the palace, they find angels within. There are several **devas** led by a **planetary** named Uriel. These angels have lived together in this region of the Nine Hells for millennia. There were once dozens of them, but over time their number has been reduced as some have died in battle, others have fallen to complete corruption, and a few have redeemed themselves and returned to the Seven Heavens. Those that remain are:

Uriel. He was a patron of the arts.

Araniel. He controlled the waters of the earth.

Chamuel. They represented serenity and devotion.

Gadreel. He was known as the watcher.

Muriel. She was a patron of travelers.

Phanuel. She offered hope and repentance.

Samael. He fetched the souls of the dead.

Uriel wants the characters to join them for dinner. He wishes to hear tales of the characters' exploits. In return, he allows the characters to partake from his wine cellar, one of the most comprehensive in the multiverse.

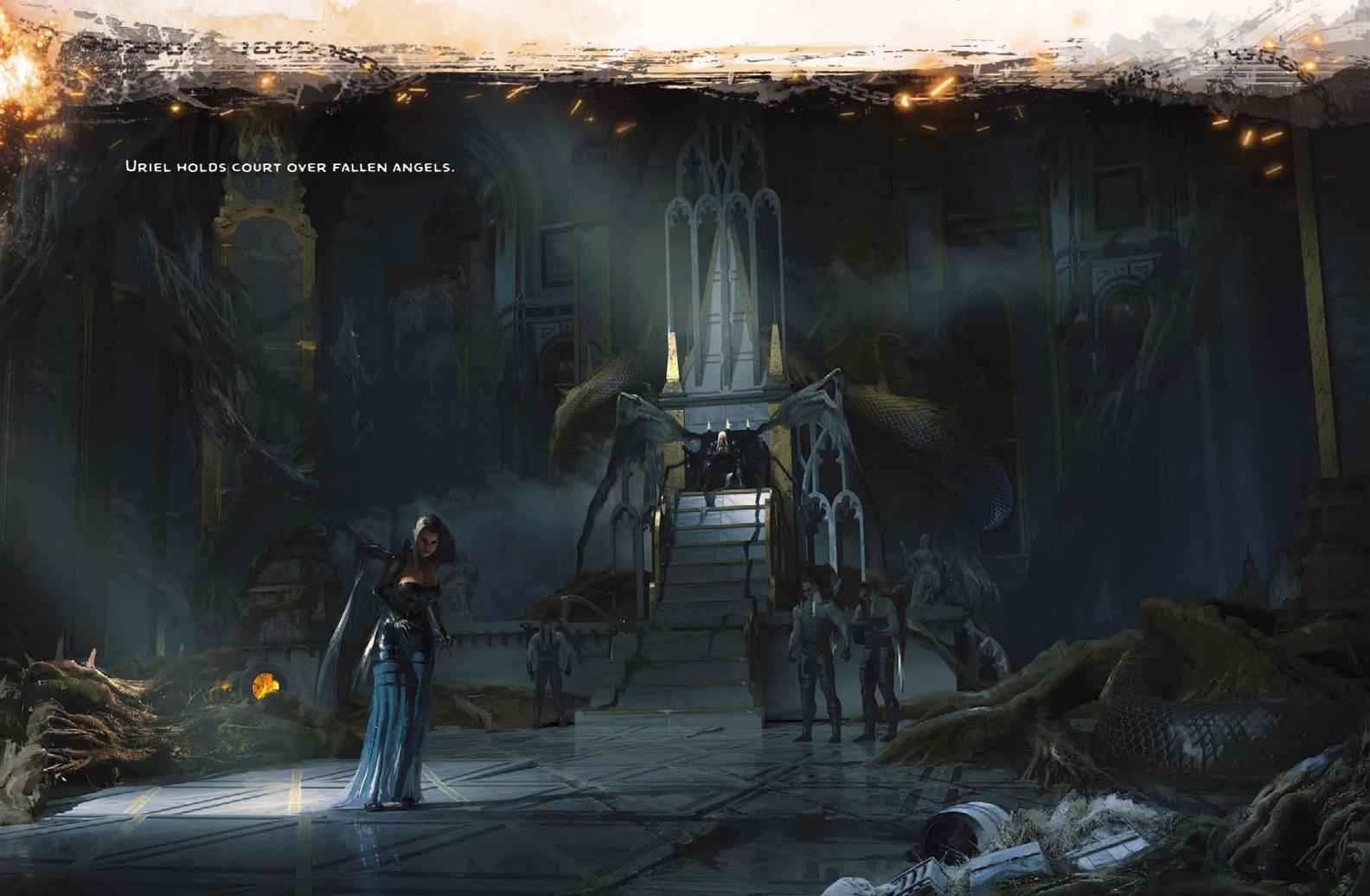
If the characters turn him down, he is disappointed, but lets them know that they can return at any time to take him up on his offer. Any act of aggression by the characters results in the angels attacking with a level of coordination that befits a group that has been together for millennia.

The angel called Chamuel has brought a rose to dinner. They twirl the long-stemmed flower between their fingers and smile whenever they catch you looking. Something so delicate seems terribly out of place amidst the rot and horror of the Nine Hells and as Chamuel lifts the rose to brush against their lips, you notice how soft and red its petals are. To the angel Chamuel's left, at the head of the table, sits Uriel, your host, and on the other side of him is the angel called Phanuel. She sits stiffly in her chair and though her face is still and placid, her piercing eyes are full of storms. Uriel makes a gesture and the other angels file in, bringing with them plates of food and pitchers of drink. When everything has been laid out, they take their own seats. Uriel makes another gesture and the tall candles that line the long table all light up.

"Well, then," Uriel says with a smile. "Shall we begin?"

The dinner is fraught with potential danger. During each of the three courses, an angel asks a challenging question which requires a successful ability check to answer. Failing a check results in that angel challenging that character to a duel. If the character refuses the duel, then Uriel expels the character from the estate. If the character undertakes the duel and the angel reduces the character

URIEL HOLDS COURT OVER FALLEN ANGELS.



to 0 hit points, the angel chooses to incapacitate the character instead of landing a killing blow. If the character doesn't do the same if they win, then Uriel expels all of the characters from the estate.

In the first course, Chamuel selects the character with the highest Charisma score and questions their serenity or devotion. The character must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check to avoid the duel. In the second course, Samael demands that the frailest character (the one with the lowest Constitution score) justifies how they've survived so far. The character must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, made with disadvantage if the character is injured. In the final course, Phanuel, who has become exhausted from sustaining all her companions, now asks a character to step forward to convince her that hope still remains for these abandoned angels of the Nine Hells. That character must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

If the characters are not expelled, when they prepare to leave, Uriel allows each into his wine cellar. Some bottles of wine have magical properties that might be useful on their journeys. Each character can make an Intelligence (Investigation) check to select a good vintage. Any result above 15 allows them to roll once on the Magical Wines table. Above 20 and they roll twice, allowing them to select which of the two bottles they prefer to take.

MAGICAL WINES

d8	Name of Wine	Powers
1	Château de Tethyr	<i>Potion of Flying</i>
2	Casa Athkatla	<i>Potion of Giant Strength</i> (cloud)
3	Obarskyr Estate	<i>Potion of Invisibility</i>
4	Wolf Blasé	<i>Potion of Longevity</i>
5	Rauxes-Nyronde	<i>Potion of Speed</i>
6	Menage a Trois	<i>Potion of Giant Strength</i> (storm)
7	Blackstaff	<i>Potion of Supreme Healing</i>
8	Felix Solar	<i>Potion of Vitality</i>

A PALADIN IN HELL

A narrow path climbs the cliff wall beside the River Styx. On the path an armored warrior battles dozens of devils. His sword and armor are coated in the black blood of his enemies. He calls out for help.

If Koh Tam is in command of the characters' ship, then he steers it to the riverbank and demands that the characters help the warrior. The warrior is a paladin serving Kelemvor named Sir Calenhad Strongheart (lawful neutral **death knight** that is a Humanoid and doesn't have the Marshal Undead trait or Hellfire Orb action).

Calenhad battles against a dozen **bearded devils**, a pair of **horned devils** and nine **bone devils**. These creatures are led by a powerful **greater tyrant shadow** (see appendix B). This tyrant shadow was spawned from the archdevil Abigor millennia ago.

Calenhad has been tasked by the archdevil Abigor with killing the tyrant shadow, for the creature has been subtly undermining his machinations. Abigor convinced the paladin that the tyrant shadow was responsible for the death of his family and their souls will be consigned to the Nine Hells unless he kills the creature (all lies). To help Calenhad in his quest, Abigor granted him *Infernal Plate Armor* and a *Sword of Retribution* (see appendix D for details about both items.) These items have been slowly twisting the paladin.

Koh Tam asks the characters to subdue the paladin so he can remove the cursed items and heal him of infernal corruption. If they succeed in this, Calenhad stays below decks slowly recovering. If you want, he may come to the rescue of the characters at a key moment in the story.

ASMODEUS AND THE NINE SINS

It is important to remember that Asmodeus has lured the characters (and many others) into the Nine Hells to be corrupted. There are many instances in the adventure where Asmodeus tempts the characters. It is entirely likely that characters won't give in to any of the temptations put before them, but it is important that they feel at least a little tempted during the adventure.

CORRUPTION

The temptations have real effect on the game, by modifying the amount of corruption for each character. The more corrupt a character, the more likely it is that they succumb to Asmodeus's manipulations. Keep track of the individual characters corruption scores on the "Corruption Tracker" found in appendix E. All characters start with a Corruption of 0, but are modified by the following:

- Evil characters start with 1 corruption point.
- Characters searching for their own damned soul gain an additional corruption point.
- If the party aligns with the Deathstalker patron, each character gains an additional corruption point.

When a character gives in to one of the temptations an additional 2 corruption points are awarded to them. At the final stage of the adventure, you can tally the scores for each character. Use the Corruption Score table found in appendix E to see if a character has been ensnared by Asmodeus.



THE BODIES OF TITANS AND GIANTS ARE PRESERVED BY THE ICE OF CANIA.

TYPES OF PLAYER GOALS

Any temptation must fit the goals of a player as it relates to their character. All temptations are grouped into one of the following categories:

Power. These temptations provide magic items, spells, special abilities, and minions.

Knowledge. Discovering the location of fabled sites, the secrets of creation, the weakness of enemies, and the true thoughts of others are possible with these temptations.

Privation. Temptations of this kind involve relieving privation by means of restoring hit points, lost abilities, and providing protection from death.

Roleplaying. These temptations help achieve character-specific but non-power-related goals—the death of enemies, the benefit of friends, family, community or dependents in need, the altering of a political status quo, the location of some lost icon of cultural or family significance. Titles and status. These rely on the character's backstory having appropriate material, and the player being sufficiently invested in it.

THE TEMPTATIONS

Throughout the story Asmodeus tries to tempt the characters. Each is optional, so feel free to skip a temptation, especially if another one has recently been triggered, or move them to another part of the Nine Hells. However, make sure that each character is tempted at least a few times throughout the adventure.

The benefits and drawbacks of temptations are described in detail on the following pages. Most of these temptations have been placed in specific locations within the various layers of the Nine Hells and the details of discovering them are explained in an appropriate sidebar in that layer. Not all the

temptations have been directly placed, however. In some locations a prompt appears to select one from the Random Temptations table instead. When this occurs, roll on the table, or select the temptation most appropriately tantalizing to one of the characters.

RANDOM TEMPTATIONS

d12	Sin	Result
1	Anger	The Cultists (Knowledge)
2	Anger	Vengeance is Yours (Roleplaying)
3	Murder	A View to a Kill (Roleplaying)
4	Greed	Box of Treats (Power)
5	Greed	A Head for Knowledge (Knowledge)
6	Jealousy	Anything You Can Do (Knowledge)
7	Jealousy	Credit Where Credit is Due (Roleplaying)
8	Betrayal	What is Rightfully Mine (Roleplaying)
9	Oppression	The Angry Djinni (Power)
10	Harm	Non-Lethal Weapon (Power)
11	Harm	A Torturer in Hell (Roleplaying)
12	Pride	Taking Pride in Your Work (Roleplaying)

LET ME TEMPT YOU

Each of Asmodeus's temptations is designed to use one of the primary sins to ensnare its target. Whether one lusts for power, knowledge or riches Asmodeus has designed an appropriate temptation. The temptations are listed under their corresponding sin.

ANGER

"ANGER IS FORGED IN THE FIRES OF THE NINE HELLS."

—Bel

THE SENTIENT ARTIFACT (POWER)

The characters find an ancient sentient artifact of the Blood War. It promises to give one of them great power in the form of rage. Once it has granted the power to one of the characters, the sentience of the artifact winks out and it becomes a nonmagical lump of metal. Whoever was granted the power gains the following feature. When taking damage, you may use a reaction to enter an infernal fury. Each time you activate this fury, you select one of the following features:

- When making a melee weapon attack using Strength, you gain a +4 bonus to the damage roll. Also, when you take damage, you may use your reaction to make one melee weapon attack against the creature that damaged you if they're in reach.
- When making a spell attack, you gain a +4 bonus to the damage roll. Also, when you take damage, you may use your reaction to cast a cantrip, targeting the creature that damaged you.

Your fury lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if you have the unconscious condition or if your turn ends and you haven't attacked a hostile creature since your last turn or taken damage since then. You gain one level of exhaustion when the fury ends unless you damaged a non-evil creature while using this fury. You can't activate infernal fury again until after you finish a long rest.

THE CULTISTS (KNOWLEDGE)

A group of ten fanatics (lawful neutral **cult fanatics**) marches down a road chanting a prayer. The prayer describes how they gain esteem in the eyes of their god through the righteous and holy action of destroying false knowledge. Their beliefs should conflict severely with the beliefs of at least one of the characters. It should be clear that if allowed to proceed they intend to travel to the Material Plane and destroy a magical academy, a church, or a druid grove, meaningful to a character. There is no reasoning with them. Stopping their threat now, with no witnesses, is a temptation that is hard to ignore.

GAUNTLETS OF RAGE (PRIVATION)

A devil offers to sell one of the characters a powerful magic item known as the *Gauntlets of Rage* (see appendix D).

VENGEANCE IS YOURS (ROLEPLAYING)

A horned devil arrives on Koh Tam's barge. He offers, for the incredibly small price of 100 gp, vengeance on a dead enemy whose soul is in the Nine Hells. The devil insists there's no harm in it. After all, the soul is already being tortured anyway. If a character accepts, then the horned devil has the soul teleported to the barge away from the soul's current place of torment. The soul appears with all the statistics they had while alive, except they're restrained with infernal iron bonds. The character may inflict any punishment upon them that they desire but if slain, the soul vanishes, presumably returning to their former punishments.

BETRAYAL

"YOU CAN ONLY UNDERSTAND GOOD AND EVIL IF YOU have betrayed the former for the latter."

—Levistus

MIXED BLESSINGS (POWER)

A **pit fiend** offers to grant one of the characters a blessing to help in their quest. The fiend claims to want to embarrass Asmodeus, but the character must accept the blessing without knowing what it does.

Blessing of Power. Your attacks ignore the damage resistance of any creature you damage. Unfortunately, your parents, siblings, and children become cursed. While cursed in this way, they each have the poisoned condition until their curse



is ended by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic, or until the blessing is removed from you with a *Wish* spell.

IF I COULD READ YOUR MIND (KNOWLEDGE)

A character is given the opportunity to be privy to the thoughts of a mentor, family member, liege or superior, sold to them on the basis that they will always be able to act in that character's best interests. The ability occurs at will but also sporadically without asking, and the information they receive verges into the embarrassing, humiliating and awkward, and their betrayal is one of invasion of privacy.

NOTHING CAN TOUCH ME (PRIVATION)

The characters find a ring on the finger of a devil that they've slain. This magic item is the *Ring of Treachery* (see appendix D).

WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE (ROLEPLAYING)

A character whose background is tied in with an organization, liege lord, or similar, is introduced to a devilish counterfeiter with 'evidence' proving their right to a superior title—throne, inheritance, office land or item—maybe something they've always believed they should have had. The 'evidence' has a blank where their name could go, but what's the harm in taking it? After all, if they don't, what if the seller offers the same to someone else? Once they have the evidence, they find they can't destroy or get rid of it—the item, increasingly incriminating, keeps appearing on their person or even nearby where anyone might stumble over it.



BAALEZBUL



MAMMON

DECEIT

"DECEIT ALLOWS THOSE WITH LESS POWER AND excellence to pretend otherwise."

—Baalzebul

THE LIAR (POWER)

A **succubus** offers to give one of the characters the power of deception in exchange for a minor magic item or a single *Soul Coin*.

Power of Deception. You gain expertise in the Charisma (Deception) skill. However, anything said in good faith and sincerity comes out sounding false and unconvincing. To persuade people, you must couch everything as a chain of falsehoods. When speaking the truth, you have disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

AS GOOD AN ANSWER (KNOWLEDGE)

One of the characters is given the chance to create the answer to a question that has vexed academics for an age. The truth of the matter is lost beyond even the most powerful divination or is known only to extremely close-mouthed gods. However, an **amnizu** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*)—or another powerful devil—suggests that, given nobody knows, the character has the opportunity to use their own preferred answer, which the devil ensures is spread through the mortal planes and accepted as the definitive truth. Only the character will ever know that it's a lie ...

LIFE AFTER DEATH (PRIVATION)

The characters find the *Amulet of Duplicity* (see appendix D) around the neck of a defeated enemy.

THE LOOKALIKE (ROLEPLAYING)

A **corruption devil** (see appendix B) offers one of the characters the services of a **doppelganger**. The doppelganger will faithfully impersonate NPCs of the character's acquaintance and act in their stead, perhaps to help the character's family, community, or allies. A corrupt local official might suddenly step down from their post. A local judge or king might decide in the character's favor. An enemy warlord will suddenly lead their horde in a different direction. What good might not be accomplished with a little duplicity?

GREED

"GREED MAKES YOU FREE, AND ACCOUNTABLE TO no one."

—Mammon

BOX OF TREATS (POWER)

The characters find a transparent box that contains several powerful items. Select one rare or very rare item from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for every two characters, rounded down. The box is invulnerable to all damage. It has no lock or lid. Inscribed in golden letters on top are instructions written in Infernal for opening it. Only with the blood of a good creature can the box be opened and only by the person who killed this creature. Once opened, the box vanishes, leaving only the items.

A HEAD FOR KNOWLEDGE (KNOWLEDGE)

The characters find a withered devil skull known as the *Skull of Selfish Knowledge* (see appendix D).



MEPHISTOPELES



FIERNA

SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY (PRIVATION)

The characters find the *Vial of Greed* (see appendix D) in the hoard of one of their defeated enemies.

THE GREEDY ART LOVER (ROLEPLAYING)

The characters find a magic ring known as the *Ring of Collecting* (see appendix D) in the ice fields of Stygia.

HARM

“WHAT FURTHER HARM COULD I POSSIBLY BRING TO the wretchedness of mortals.”

—Mephistopheles

NON-LETHAL WEAPON (POWER)

The characters discover a melee weapon of a kind that one of them is proficient with. This is the *Weapon of Agonizing Paralysis* (see appendix D).

THE STUFF OF NIGHTMARES (KNOWLEDGE)

The characters find an ancient tome that if read in its entirety grants the reader a magical power. Once a creature has been granted this power, the tome loses its magic.

Gift of Nightmares. You force a creature that has the unconscious condition within 120 feet of you to have a terrifying experience. The creature begins to shriek from a vivid, pain-filled nightmare that lasts for 8 hours, or until they're forcibly awoken. You gain advantage on Intelligence saving throws, Intelligence checks, and are considered proficient when doing an Intelligence (Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature, or Religion) check for 1 hour. If the tortured creature is woken during that time, these

benefits immediately end. Once this ability is used it can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

CARVED IN FLESH (PRIVATION)

The characters find a magic cutting knife known as the *Knife of Stolen Resistance* (see appendix D).

A TORTURER IN HELL (ROLEPLAYING)

The characters come across a past enemy, or some ancestral foe, being tormented in the Nine Hell. The torturers offer them a chance to wield the lash, or they can suggest even worse punishments for the villain.

JEALOUSY

“THE LORD OF THESE NINE HELLs, WHO WAS THE pinnacle of good, brought low by jealousy.”

—Fierna

THE JEALOUS BEAUTY (POWER)

An archdevil or pit fiend offers to grant one of the characters a blessing to help in their quest. The Fiend claims to want to embarrass Asmodeus.

Blessing of Comeliness. If your Charisma score was less than 20, it becomes 20. Unfortunately, every time a creature with a Charisma score higher than you speaks to you, you must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. If you fail, you fly into a jealous rage and attack them. At the start of each of your turns you may attempt to make the saving throw again, ending the jealousy on a success.

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO (KNOWLEDGE)

The characters find the *Ring of the Copycat* (see appendix D).



BELIAL



DISPATER

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE (PRIVATION)

An incubus tries to sell an *Amulet of Betrayal* (see appendix D) to one of the characters.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE (ROLEPLAYING)

An **amnizu** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*) standing on the shore of the River Styx offers the characters a view of the mortal realms. A bard is singing the story of one character's greatest past exploits but tells it so that some other—a different character or some past NPC—is given the credit for their triumphs. The devil offers to ensure its servants in the mortal planes take the bard aside and explain the true version of events to them. After all, truth is a virtue, isn't it?

MURDER

"BEHOLD DIS, WHERE MURDER IS ALWAYS FOR SALE."

—Dispater

TWO KILLS FOR ONE (POWER)

The characters come across a powerful weapon wielded by an enemy that they must defeat. This weapon can be any rare or very rare weapon from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and it gains the following property, which anyone wielding this weapon becomes aware of the moment they touch it.

Damnation. Each time this weapon strikes a killing blow, a random evil mortal on another plane dies and is sent to the Nine Hells, prematurely. Likely this victim would always have ended up the Nine Hells anyways, but you rob them of any chance to redeem themselves before dying.

THE HERETIC PRIEST (KNOWLEDGE)

The characters come across a crusading **priest** of an opposing faith. They overhear him bartering for diabolic aid with a **succubus**. He is asking for help in finding a repository of lore. This hidden library contains many tomes that are sacred to a god that one of the characters worships. It becomes clear that the cleric intends to destroy the library on the basis that heresy is contained therein. The cleric is obviously easy prey, and the characters could kill him without any repercussion.

TO CHEAT DEATH (PRIVATION)

A succubus offers to inscribe a magic tattoo on one of the characters that she claims guards against death.

Tattoo of Recovery. The first time you would take damage and drop to 0 hit points, you can choose instead to drop to 1 hit point and be transported to an extradimensional space. While in this space you regenerate 10 hit points at the start of each turn. You may leave the space at any time and reappear in the spot that you left or, if that space is occupied, the nearest unoccupied space.

However, the tattoo makes it clear that its power is drawn from prisoners held in a dungeon on the mortal planes, to be sacrificed as living batteries for tattoos such as this.

A VIEW TO A KILL (ROLEPLAYING)

While Koh Tam's barge is docked at any port along the River Styx, a **corruption devil** (see appendix B) saunters on board and claims to be impressed by the deeds that the characters have accomplished over their careers. She lists some of their accomplishments, showing that she is indeed aware of



GLASYA



ASMODEUS

them. She then claims to know of someone that has annoyed them in the past. You can choose an enemy from a previous adventure that is still alive or an NPC that is disliked. This person is a minion who has served the interests of the Nine Hells—helping them corrupt the very souls the characters are here to rescue—but their usefulness is at an end. She unveils a mirror that shows the NPC either asleep, eating, traveling, or performing some other mundane activity. Behind them, unsuspected but visible to the characters, is an assassin. At the word of any of the characters the assassin strikes and slays the target.

OPPRESSION

“THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MUSIC IS THE SILENCE OF
the good over the suffering of the oppressed.”

—Glasya

THE ANGRY DJINNI (POWER)

An **amnizu** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*) comes aboard Koh Tam’s barge and makes an offer to the characters. It will bind a **djinni** into their service for the small price of 500 gp. The characters later learn that the djinni can’t be freed because it would immediately take its revenge. If the characters don’t take the djinni along to help in the adventure, it causes problems for Koh Tam and the barge. Each time it is left on the barge, the djinni causes damage that requires 1d4 days of repair before it can resume its journey along the River Styx.

PAINFUL KNOWLEDGE (KNOWLEDGE)

The characters find a magic iron mirror known as the *Sage’s Mirror* (see appendix D).

NO PAIN NO GAIN (PRIVATION)

A suit of magic plate armor is discovered by the characters, either the *Armor of Invulnerability* or *Plate Armor of Ethereality*.

However, the magic comes from the souls of the living, and every time the wearer is hit for damage, the bound souls shriek in agony.

A PALACE FIT FOR A KING (ROLEPLAYING)

The characters encounter a powerful devil (**pit fiend**, archdevil, or similar) who offers to build them a great fortress, temple, or other coveted structure in the mortal realm for when they return. The devil returns within a week or two to show how far construction is coming along. The devil opens a window to view the construction taking place in their world. They see that the labor is being done by a legion of bound workers who are being worked mercilessly and without cease until the project is complete.

PRIDE

“YOU MORTALS SHOULD TAKE PRIDE IN HOW YOU CAN
make a Hell out of any Heaven.”

—Asmodeus

GAINING THE ADVANTAGE (POWER)

A devil offers to etch a magic clover-shaped tattoo into a character’s skin.

Clover Tattoo. This tattoo has 3 charges and regains expended charges at dusk. As an action you may expend 1 charge to gain advantage on your next ability check. However, if you fail that ability check this item loses all charges and you have disadvantage on all ability checks until dusk.

YOU MUST SPEAK UP (KNOWLEDGE)

A devil offers to etch a magic tattoo into a character's skin.

Tattoo of Knowledge. The tattoo gives you access to knowledge you normally would not have. As an action you may cast either of the following spells. Once one of them is cast, neither can be cast again until you finish a long rest. The spells are:

- *Contact Other Plane*
- *Scrying* (the target's spell save DC is always 20)

However, if you ever fail an Intelligence or Wisdom ability check, you have disadvantage on all further Intelligence or Wisdom ability checks until you finish a long rest.

A THING OF BEAUTY (PRIVATION)

The characters find the *Amulet of Appearance* (see appendix D), which ensures that whoever wears it always appears immaculate.

TAKING PRIDE IN YOUR WORK (ROLEPLAYING)

Nothing is more important than your good name. A devil offers a bargain appropriate to the character, that bestows the character a special power. Every time the character kills or hurts a non-evil creature that didn't start hostilities, they gain a Pride Point. If the character finishes a long rest without having spent a single Pride Point since

their last long rest, they lose all remaining Pride Points. They can spend a Pride Point to gain advantage on a single Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check.

THE DUKES

On the River Styx, the deadliest threat the characters may encounter arises from two menacing infernal vessels: one is a warship led by the archdevil brothers, Adramalech and Morax, the other, a submersible commanded by Abigor, an archdevil in the service of Baalzebul. More information on these infernal ships can be found in chapter 11, "Hunted by the Dukes."

These archdevils come after the characters once they've completed one of their group patron's objectives. Once this happens, Asmodeus realizes that the characters might be more tenacious than he anticipated and so sends the brothers to take them captive. On the other hand, Baalzebul wants vengeance on Koh Tam and the characters for summoning him to the mortal plane, thus he sends Abigor to hunt them down.

LIFE IN THE NINE HELLSS

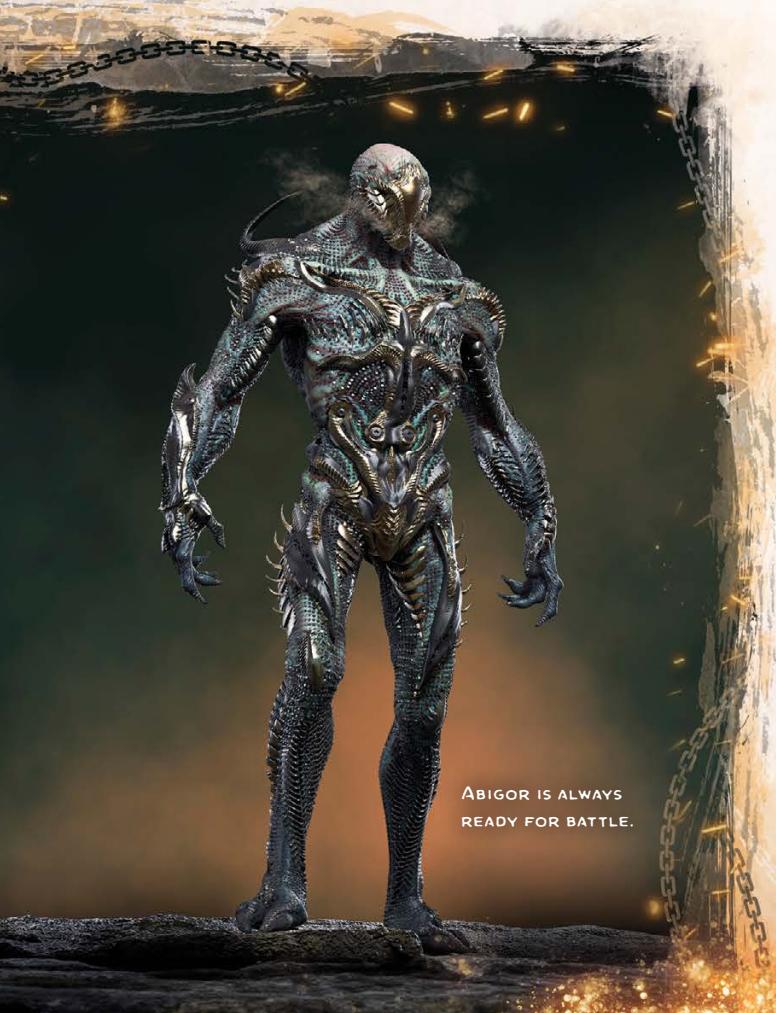
Surviving in the Nine Hells is entirely dictated by one's ability to follow mindless legal codes and a self-preservation instinct that has no qualms about backstabbing. New arrivals find that, unless they offer a uniquely powerful skillset, they're the lowest of the low, used only as cannon fodder in the Blood War. Moving through the ranks requires either manipulating the strict laws of the realm, betraying comrades, or commanders—or sometimes both. Devils that find themselves higher in the hierarchy tend to lead relatively comfortable lives, so long as they obey their superiors and maintain a steady stream of souls. For the battle-hungry, the Blood War always longs for more combatants, and proving oneself on the battlefield is a surefire way to a quick promotion. As for the various non-devil inhabitants, existence remains possible so long as it doesn't interfere with devilish schemes. For mortals? Just try not to die.

FEATURES OF THE NINE HELLSS

In the Nine Hells, everything is subject to corruption, from spells to magic items to the very map you use as a guide.

TELEPATHIC SPELLS

The archdevils of the Nine Hells rule their realms with an iron fist. The devils that make up their ranks are heavily monitored and strictly controlled. All communication received in or sent from the Nine Hells can therefore be overheard. If they want to, the



archdevils can eavesdrop on communication spells such as *Message* and *Sending*. Even when magic items (like *Sending Stones* or a *Helm of Telepathy*) are used to communicate, the archdevils can listen in.

In the Nine Hells, it is safe to assume that someone is always listening. This has left the occupants of the Nine Hells in a constant state of paranoia. Anyone who tries to communicate telepathically here, has the unnerving feeling of an infernal presence listening in. There is only one exception: *Rings of Mind Shielding*. Even in the Nine Hells, these rings shield telepathic communications from being overheard. These items are therefore highly sought after by those denizens of the Nine Hells who wish to keep their thoughts private from their lords.

TELEPORTATION SPELLS

Many teleportation spells have altered effects when cast in the Nine Hells, including spells cast from magic items or artifacts, and class abilities that duplicate the effects of spells.

EFFECTS OF THE NINE HELL ON TELEPORTATION

Spells	Effect
<i>Gate</i> , <i>Plane Shift</i> or similar magic	These spells can only be used to travel to layers of the Nine Hells above the one that the caster is currently on.
<i>Teleport</i> , <i>Teleportation</i> <i>Circle</i> or similar magic	Each layer of the Nine Hells is considered its own plane of existence. Thus, it isn't possible to teleport between the layers.
<i>Wish</i>	A <i>Wish</i> spell can be used to transport the caster and companions to a deeper layer of the Nine Hells, provided the caster succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the spell fails and has no effect.
<i>Word of Recall</i>	This spell fails if it would take the caster to a layer of the Nine Hells lower than the one they're currently on.

DEVILISH DISTANCES

The Nine Hells is in constant flux, with the landscape warping to the whims of the devils, and at times, the Nine Hells itself. The distance between locations—and the time required to travel—is up to the DM. A trek towards an infernal tower might take only two hours, but the return journey could last weeks. And locations that the characters were

TIAK TO THE RESCUE

If the characters ever become separated from Koh Tam's barge, have Tiax show up after 1d4 days and complain to them about how hard it was to track them down. He casts *Teleport* to return them to the barge.

certain were in a particular location one day may relocate themselves to another area of the Nine Hells on their next visit.

USING AN INFERNAL MAP

As the characters explore the Nine Hells, Koh Tam sometimes provides an infernal map when they enter one of the adventure regions. Whenever a character attempts to travel to a location marked on one of these maps, they must match what they see with what is drawn on the map. To do this, they must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. If they're being helped by a native of the region, then they make this check with advantage.

Success means that they arrive at the location they're traveling to. However, depending on the adventure, they may still encounter something unexpected along the way.

Failure means they become lost. They wander for hours to the point of exhaustion. Unless they make camp for a short or long rest, each character gains a level of exhaustion. Failure might have additional effects depending on the adventure.

THE RIVER STYX

In the mortal world, springs bring water to the surface, trickling lines of liquid coming together, forming streams of ever-increasing size until they feed into great rivers. The River Styx is different, like the Ouroboros, it feeds in on itself. Smaller branches circle around, and, on an adjacent layer of the Nine Hells, feed back into the river. This is of great use to ferry pilots who are familiar with the river as they can use its branches as shortcuts to the upper layers of the Nine Hells and the important locations that can be found there.

The waters of the River Styx aren't just dangerous to navigate. 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.



SENTRY TOWERS OVERLOOK THE BATTLEFIELD.

CHAPTER 3

Avernus, the Eternal Battlefield



HE TOPMOST LAYER OF THE NINE HELLS, Avernus serves as both an entrance and a defensive line for the lower layers. With the Blood War raging, battles between demons and devils are continuously fought on its rocky soil. The remnants of recent battlefields scar the landscape, reminding inhabitants to be vigilant.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

Before running this chapter read the “Avernus Overview” section. That section provides the information you need to guide the characters through Avernus and nudge them towards the War-Slough where the items they seek may be found.

ENCOUNTERS

The characters may sail the River Styx through Avernus without much incident but once they leave the waters and travel overland, dangers arise. Roll at least once on the Random Encounters in Avernus table each time the characters move between major locations on the map.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN AVERNUS

d6 Encounter

- 1 A lone **halog** (see appendix B) begins to follow the characters.
- 2 A group of **black abishai** and **white abishai** led by a **blue abishai** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*) fly overhead. If the characters follow them, they find Tiamat’s Lair but risk discovery.
- 3 Six **spined devils** and eight **imps** circle in the sky above the remains of a recent battlefield.
- 4 Far in the distance, the characters observe infernal war machines chasing each other across the wastes.
- 5 The sky suddenly darkens as the flying fortress of the archdevil **Zariel** (see appendix A) passes over the characters, casting a lengthy shadow. Two **affliction devils** (see appendix B) leap from it to attack the characters, while the fortress continues its journey across Avernus.
- 6 A storm of flame and dust that is equivalent to the *Storm of Vengeance* spell (with a spell save DC of 19) erupts, centered around the characters and lasting for 10 rounds.

LOCATIONS

Koh Tam can provide a summary of Avernus when they arrive (see “Key Locations in Avernus”).

KOH TAM

Avernus is more widely known than other layers, but if the characters are unfamiliar, Koh Tam can provide them with the information they seek. His focus should be on the Blood War however, and the eternal battleground that is the War-Slough. In locations such as that, great power is to be found.

OBJECTIVES

Make sure you keep track of your players’ objectives to help guide them to the appropriate areas in Avernus where they might complete their goals. Ideally, they should be met by Rexlexkala in the War-Slough and encouraged to explore the Ruined Tower and the Ichor Lake in that area.

The following objectives can be attained in Avernus:

OBJECTIVES IN AVERNUS

Objective	Location
Phylactery of the Brother	The War-Slough: The Ichor Lake
Phylactery of the Queen	The War-Slough: The Ruined Tower

TEMPTATIONS

Have the characters encounter at least one temptation during their time in Avernus. You can of course have them encounter more if you want. If the characters give in to temptation, use the information in appendix E to keep track of their corruption level.

AVERNUS OVERVIEW

Thousands of years of construction projects have led to myriad artificial channels, sluices, and gates within parts of the River Styx. Where it used to flow, along the edge of the realm, there remains only a dry riverbed and sparse vegetation. Due to the powerful nature of the river, the walls and mechanisms are in a never-ending cycle of repairs.

Aside from the Styx flowing through the center of the layer, Avernus lacks water and vegetation. Much of the realm consists of lifeless hills, jagged mountains, and rocky terrain. Outcroppings of crystals and metals jut through the surface like spikes,



JOHN STEVENSON

JULIAN CALLE

AVERNUS, THE FIRST HELL

accompanying the boulder fields as surface features. Lakes and rivers of lava dot the surface, though not nearly as dense as the fire-aspected layers beneath. Geysers and fumaroles decorate the landscape, occasionally spewing scalding steam and toxic clouds.

While the sky remains unlit by celestial bodies, fireballs streak through and explode, bringing a fiery light to the horizon. Sometimes the fireballs collide with the land, resulting in smoldering impact craters. Closer to the land, the realm is bathed in a deep red light of unknown origin. To mortals the air is thick, due to the ash, toxins, and dust that contaminate the atmosphere. Bones and blood of creatures long perished decorate the less-traveled areas, as well as the decaying battlefields.

Notable locations within Avernus include the Bronze Citadel, the Pillar of Skulls, and Tiamat's Lair. Connecting each landmark with the rest of the realm is the Great Avernus Road, constructed by Bel to facilitate military transport.

Bel used to rule the realm, but has since lost the position to Zariel, a fallen angel turned devil. Her goals, even as the Blood War rages, are to restore Avernus to its former glory, and to remove Tiamat from the realm. Zariel's subjects primarily include devils that form the defensive armies of the Blood War, but natives to Avernus still remain.

PREVIOUS ADVENTURES IN AVERNUS: BEL

If you have run *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*, then Bel might have replaced Zariel as the ruler of Avernus.

LEAVING AVERNUS

Only a few methods allow travel to the lower layers of the Nine Hells. The cave system of Tiamat's lair contains a hidden and perilous path to Dis. In addition, one of the largest iron towers of the City of Dis pierces through Avernus, with an opening next to the Pillar of Skulls. For an experienced sailor, the Styx is also viable, as it snakes its way around a mountain down into the next layer and beyond, and this is Koh Tam's preferred route.

FEATURES

Avernus' combination of oppressive heat and supernatural malevolence weighs on the bodies and souls of those who aren't 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 gains one level of exhaustion.

Optional Rule. Evil pervades Avernus, and visitors 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 a day spent away from the Nine Hells. Casting the *Dispel Evil and Good* spell on the creature also restores its original alignment.

KEY LOCATIONS IN AVERNUS

Some of the major landmarks found in Avernus are described below.

THE BRONZE CITADEL

The Bronze Citadel is the largest and longest-standing city in Avernus, serving as both a political and militaristic capital. Within the city lies a basalt fortress, from which Zariel rules the realm. The city is under a constant state of retrofitting, with metal and bone fortifications and buildings being improved or modified every day. Though sprawling across hundreds of square miles, the city is a massive structure with numerous walls and war machines, befitting its position so near the beachhead of the Blood War.

As Koh Tam's barge prepares to leave the Bronze Citadel, read:

Koh Tam speaks to you. "Let me offer you some additional advice. First, we should not linger too long here, for the eyes of a multitude of devils are upon this citadel, watchful and wary, and others look for conscripts to draft into the construction or war efforts. Secondly, remember that I know much about the Nine Hells; please ask me anything and if I have the answer, I'll offer it."

"Finally, if we ever need to backtrack and return to a previous layer of the Nine Hells, remember that my barge is capable of plane shifting. But only ever upwards, never downwards. With all that out of the way, where do you want to sail to first?"

If the characters ignore Koh Tam and linger, perhaps seeking out magic items or other wares, they might become tempted by Asmodeus to acquire something that they shouldn't.

TEMPTATION OF ANGER

"Gauntlets of Rage"

During the characters' time in the Bronze Citadel, a **corruption devil** (see appendix B) offers to sell a spellcaster a special pair of gauntlets for 500 gp or 2 Soul Coins. If a character purchases the item, they now have the *Gauntlets of Rage* (see appendix D).

STAY INSIDE ON A RAINY DAY IN AVERNUS.

