



# PALACE OF THE EFREETI

*A young Mulmaster nobleman attempts to revive the Cult of Eternal Flame by seeking out the patronage of a powerful being. His relatives have hired you to stop his plans and bring him home, even if you must chase him across the planes and over the Sea of Fire to do so.*

A four-hour adventure for 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> level characters

**Y. MICHAEL ZHANG**

**Author**

**Adventure Code: CCC-ODFC02-02**

**Optimized For: APL 8**

**Version: 1.0**

**Producer:** James Winfield

**Convention Adventurers League Organizer:** Darion Smith

**Editing:** Ken Beckman, Richard Gejji, Robert Holliday, Martín "Rented Mule" Rodriguez

**Cartography:** Y. Michael Zhang

**Art:** Creative Hat / Shutterstock.com, tomertu / Shutterstock.com

**Organized Play:** Chris Lindsay

**D&D Adventurers League Wizards Team:** Adam Lee, Chris Lindsay, Mike Mearls, Matt Sernett

**D&D Adventurers League Administrators:** Bill Benham, Lysa Chen, Claire Hoffman, Greg Marks, Alan Patrick, Travis Woodall

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2018 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Palace of the Efreeti*, part of the D&D Adventurers League and the Convention Created Content program. This adventure premiered at 1d4Con 2018, a local gaming convention in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

**This adventure is designed for three to seven 5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> level characters, and optimized for five characters of 8<sup>th</sup> level.** Characters outside of this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

*Palace of the Efreeti* features NPCs that were first introduced in *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance* and there are additional story tie-ins for characters who have played that adventure. However, knowledge of *Black Heart of Vengeance* is not necessary to understand and enjoy this adventure.

## ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (round an average level of X.5 or greater up, otherwise round down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very Weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 Characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. **Adjustments other than "☠ – For Extra Challenge" suggestions are not cumulative.** If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

## BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in combat. Familiarize yourself with the appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure – such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, other passive skills, etc.)
- ☠ **For Extra Challenge:** Suggestions marked this way are options for experienced DMs with players who can handle very difficult encounters. Be careful using them, especially in a time-limited setting.
- **WARNING: Monsters in this adventure use spells from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.** If you do not have the book, be ready to swap their prepared spells for appropriate substitutes.

## PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role – facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

**You're Empowered.** Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

**Challenge Your Players.** Gauge the experience level of the **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

**Keep the Adventure Moving.** When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling - play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*“The noble efreet consider toying with one’s opponent an art form, and their ability at playing ‘cat-and-mouse’ is remarkable.” – Secrets of the Lamp*

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

House Peytir (first seen in *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance*) is a noble family of Mulmaster that was brought low by the activities of the Cult of Black Earth, and then further devastated when Mulmaster was undone by the final cultist attack that ruined much of the city. Their family has little left save some beleaguered business holdings, their noble name, and Cora Peytir’s title as one of the twenty-nine Blades of Mulmaster. That title is now in jeopardy from their family’s weak finances and the Thayan-dominated politics of the city.

Compounding their troubles is the fact that Ardet Peytir, Blade Cora Peytir’s cousin, has fallen in with the remnants of the Cult of Eternal Flame, which is now renamed the Cult of Reborn Flame and led by a mysterious new leader looking to resurrect the cult from the ashes. Ardet had previously been kidnapped by the Cult of Black Earth during the events of *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance*. That experience, coupled with his family’s declining fortunes, have instilled in him a sense of nihilism and a hatred of Mulmaster that made him susceptible to the propaganda of the Reborn Flame.

At the Cult’s behest, Ardet led a group of Reborn Flame cultists through a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire. There, they seek out the palace of Razim the Incandescent, a noble efreeti and one of the six efreet pashas who rule the efreet of the Prime Material Plane in the name of the Sultan. Pasha Razim holds sway over efreet in the entire Moonsea area and beyond, and Ardet is approaching him in the hopes of forming an alliance that can reverse the fortunes of the once-powerful cult. Unbeknownst to Ardet, Pasha Razim has no intention of allying with such puny and desperate mortals, but he has no qualms about leading them on for his own twisted amusement.

## NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

**Blade Cora Peytir (CORE-uh pie-TEER).** Female human, Blade of Mulmaster, hires party to stop Ardet’s plans and bring him back if possible.

**Ardet Peytir (ARE-det pie-TEER).** Male human, noble turned cultist of the Reborn Flame.

**Captain Zehind (ze-HIND).** Male azer captain of the *Pyreblade*, a ship that sails the Sea of Fire.

**Pasha Razim the Incandescent (ra-ZEEM).** Male efreeti, one of the six efreet pashas in charge of the efreet on the Prime Material Plane.

**Amira Kessara the Enchanted (kess-SAR-uh).** Female efreeti, daughter of Razim.

**Old Bunderoth (BUN-der-roth).** Male dragon turtle. A truly massive creature that swims in the Sea of Fire.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure is divided into five parts.

**Part 1 – A Cloak and a Blade (20 minutes):** Blade Cora Peytir gathers the characters in a Mulmaster basement and hires them to chase her cousin Ardet through a portal into the Elemental Plane of Fire.

**Part 2 – The Sea of Fire (40 minutes):** Once they’re through the portal, the characters must find their way across the Sea of Fire, either through their own magic, or by booking passage with a crafty azer captain.

**Part 3 – The Sunscorched Palace (35 minutes):** The characters meet with Razim, Kessara, and Ardet. They learn that Razim wants the two groups to compete in a literal trial by fire, and they behold the power of his *crown of wishes*.

**Part 4 – Trial of Strength and Cunning (80 minutes):** The competition is on! The characters must navigate a logic puzzle where every additional clue causes lava to pour into the room. If they solve the puzzle, they must defeat the monsters that fall from the ceiling.

**Part 5 – Redemption by Flame (65 minutes):** The cultists have escaped with the *crown of wishes*! The characters must confront them on the back of a great turtle, and finally decide Ardet’s fate.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure begins in Mulmaster several months after its devastation at the hands of various cults of elemental evil.

For each character, choose the most appropriate hook for them based on their relationships and past experiences.

### A BLADE IN NEED

Most characters are here because Blade Cora Peytir has quietly put out word that she's looking for a couple of brave and discreet individuals to assist her in an urgent matter. Interested parties are interviewed by her steward and then led out to the Zhent Ghettos.

### BROTHERHOOD OF CLOAKS

Senior Cloak Rastol Shan directly contacts characters who are members of the Cloaks. Shan commands them to assist his burgeoning political ally Blade Peytir in her efforts to find her missing cousin. He directs them to the Zhent Ghettos where they're to meet with her. Shan warns them that more than anything else, they must keep the operation secret from the Thayans who now infest Mulmaster.

Due to the secretive nature of their mission, Cloak characters will not be able to secure the usual benefits of being a Cloak in Mulmaster (spellcasting services, spell scrolls, etc.), but Shan promises that he will find some way to compensate them.

### BLACK HEART OF VENGEANCE

Characters who have previously played *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance* are well-known to the Peytir family for having rescued Ardet once before. They receive personal letters from Blade Cora Peytir herself, asking them to help her family once more. This is a matter of discretion, so the characters are asked to make their way to the Zhent Ghettos without attracting attention.

### FACTION ASSIGNMENT (LORD'S ALLIANCE)

Lioncrown Cornelius Darnell has issued a message to free agents of the Lord's Alliance near Mulmaster to report to Blade Cora Peytir at her estate for an important and sensitive assignment. The Lord's Alliance must defend the good name of a noble family who has tirelessly fought against the influence of Thay. Alliance members who arrive at the estate are interviewed by Cora Peytir's steward and eventually led out to the Zhent Ghettos.

### DDEX2-15 BLACK HEART OF VENGEANCE

This adventure follows up on several NPCs from *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance*.

In that adventure, Ardet Peytir was kidnapped by the Cult of Black Earth because of his opposition to the Phlan Liberators led by Aleyd Bural. The cult also destroyed his manor and led several attacks on Peytir family businesses. As a result, Blade Cora Peytir hired a group of adventurers to investigate the attacks and find out what happened to Ardet. Those adventurers discovered that the Liberators were colluding with the Cult of Black Earth. They ultimately defeated Aleyd Bural and rescued Ardet along with many other prisoners.



# PART 1. A CLOAK AND A BLADE

**Estimated Duration:** 20 minutes

The adventure begins in the burnt-out ruins of the Zhent Ghettos in Mulmaster.

## STORY BEAT

The characters receive their mission after speaking with Blade Cora Peytir and Cloak Kethrina in the Zhent Ghettos. Once they're ready, the characters head through the portal into the Elemental Plane of Fire.

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Mulmaster is full of reminders of the recent Devastation brought on by the Elemental Cults, but no section of the city bears more prominent scars than the Zhent Ghettos. As you stride past the broken walls of the Ghettos, you can see the remnants of a great fire storm that left nearly every building of the Ghettos burnt or destroyed.

Ahead of you, a group of rotting figures, overseen by a tattooed woman in red robes, work to rebuild a storefront. Your guide, a servant of the Peytir household, hurries you into an alleyway out of sight of the red wizard. He leads you into a burnt-out building, opens a well-disguised trapdoor, and climbs down the shaft into a cramped basement.

The most prominent feature of this small basement room is the brilliant red portal floating in the center. The surface of the portal is hazy, but a rocky, ashen landscape can be glimpsed on the other side. The portal emanates heat, making the air shimmer around it.

Two figures: a sharp-featured noblewoman and a half-elven woman in a black cloak, stand at the edges of the room. The noblewoman speaks first. "Thank you for coming. I am Blade Cora Peytir. Once again, my family faces potential ruin from a traitorous cult. I sincerely hope you can help us out of this mess."

The half-elf introduces herself as Kethrina, a member of the Brotherhood of Cloaks. Have the group introduce themselves as well. After introductions, Blade Peytir relates the following information:

- House Peytir was once a wealthy and powerful noble family before the devastation of Mulmaster, but despite some of its recent business ventures in the Cormanthor forest, the family's fortune and influence has yet to recover from the sabotage caused by the Cult of Black Earth (see the events of

*DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance*, summarized in the adventure primer).

- Recently, the Cloaks, led by Peytir's friend and political ally Rastol Shan, found signs that the Cult of Eternal Flame is once again active and recruiting in Mulmaster. While that's troubling enough, Cora's cousin Ardet Peytir is missing and feared to have fallen under the cult's sway. The Cloaks found Ardet's journal as well as some of his belongings in this very basement which they believe was used as a cult hideout.
- Ardet has not been the same after he was rescued from the Cult of Black Earth; he grew morose and nihilistic, and his demeanor grew darker as House Peytir fell into decline. He disappeared two months ago, and Cora is worried that he may have done something foolish. She never imagined he would join up with one of the filthy cults, but from his journal, it seems that the Cult of Reborn Flame has sent him through the portal to seek the patronage of a powerful being.
- The Peytir family has already suffered greatly; if word gets out that a member of Cora's family is working with a Cult of Elemental Evil, the entire house would be ruined. Rumors of Ardet's betrayal must not be allowed to spread.
- The adventurers are asked to follow Ardet, stop the cult's plans, and prevent Ardet from further disgracing the Peytir family name. Hopefully, they can convince Ardet to renounce the cult and return home to his family. But if he refuses to repent, then there is no choice but to slay him for the good of House Peytir, and the good of Mulmaster of course. Cora is willing to pay 300 gp to each adventurer for either outcome.

## TREASURE

Cora will personally thank characters who previously played *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance* for answering her call once again. She gives a *potion of heroism* to each of those characters as a token of her appreciation. Despite its financial straits, House Peytir remembers and rewards its friends.

## FACTION ASSIGNMENT (LORD'S ALLIANCE)

Cora passes a sealed letter into the hands of the Lord's Alliance members in the party, telling them that she was asked to deliver this on their faction's behalf. Give Lord's Alliance members **Player Handout 1**.

## ROLEPLAYING BLADE CORA PEYTIR (CORE-UH PIE-TEER)

Long before the Devastation, the Peytir family accumulated a sizable fortune through lumber and bought their way to nobility and into the Tower of Blades. During her time as a Blade, Cora used ruthlessness and savvy political maneuvering to keep her family prosperous and strong. However, the machinations of the Cults of Elemental Evil and the rise of Thayan Influence in Mulmaster have severely weakened her family's fortune and standing.

Now Cora is doing her best to cling onto relevance with the same ruthlessness that kept her family in power for so long. She has taken a strong stance against Thay and brought her family in closer alignment to other Mulmasterites of a similar inclination (including Rastol Shan). She cares about Mulmaster, and she cares about her family members, but her primary loyalty lies with the Peytir family name. Nothing is more important than making sure that House Peytir lives on and regains its former glory.

**Voice:** Noble, dignified, reserved, careful with words

**Quote:** *"I pray for my cousin's safe return, but if Ardet must die so that House Peytir can live, that is a price I would not hesitate to pay."*

## A CULT ABOVE THE REST

After Blade Peytir finishes her briefing, she drapes a modest brown shawl over herself and begins climbing up the shaft. "I'm afraid I can't stay long; if I'm seen in the Zhent Ghettos, that only invites more rumors. The Cloak here will fill you in on the rest. Ardet is a foolish young man who has caused much headache for me, yet I still care for him as a member of my family. I pray that you can make him remember his duty to his city and his house."

Cora Peytir leaves, with her servant close behind her.

Cloak Kethrina steps forward and delivers the following details:

- The Cloaks have analyzed the portal and determined that it leads to the Elemental Plane of Fire. The aftermath of the Devastation left many similar portals scattered across the Zhent Ghettos.
- They learned from Ardet's journal that the Cult of Eternal Flame has a new leader and are now calling themselves the Cult of Reborn Flame. Ardet was tasked with leading a group of cultists through the

portal to meet with an efreeti pasha named "Razim the Incandescent."

- With a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, a character knows that a pasha is one of the six efreet nobles assigned dominion over efreet on the Prime Material Plane in the name of the Sultan. If their check is 20 or higher, they also know that Razim lives in a great mansion called the Sunscorched Palace on the Sea of Fire, and he's in charge of efreet in the Moonsea area and beyond. He has a reputation for being bloodthirsty and duplicitous.
- Efreet nobles have access to mighty armies and devastating magic. An alliance between the cult and an efreeti noble would not bode well for Mulmaster. Ardet must be stopped from reaching the Pasha if possible, but if that fails, then the characters should use diplomatic means to prevent an alliance between them. Above all, the characters must not antagonize the Pasha on the efreet's home plane. Such a move would likely prove suicidal.
- The Plane of Fire is a difficult place for mortals to survive in. Appropriate to its name, the Plane of Fire is very hot. Those walking around in bulky armor might want to wear something more comfortable, at least for the initial journey. Kethrina can lend sets of studded leather armor to characters that want to take off their medium or heavy armor before entering the portal.

Once the characters are ready, they can step through the portal and enter the Elemental Plane of Fire.

## FACTION ASSIGNMENT (CLOAKS)

Before they leave, Kethrina gathers together characters who are part of the Brotherhood of Cloaks and tells them that Rastol Shan has a special job for them. Give members of the Cloaks **Player Handout 2**.

## TREASURE

Rastol Shan has requisitioned some supplies on behalf of the Cloaks in the party. Kethrina provides each member of the Cloaks a *spell scroll* of their choice of a level less than or equal to their rank in the Cloaks, up to a maximum of 5<sup>th</sup> level for rank 5 or higher Cloaks.

## PART 2. THE SEA OF FIRE

**Estimated Duration:** 40 minutes

The characters step through the portal and arrive in the Cinder Wastes on the edge of the Sea of Fire.

### STORY BEAT

The characters must figure out where Ardet's cultists have gone by speaking to an azer. Then, they must travel across the Sea of Fire using their own magic, or by negotiating passage with that azer. The saving throws against extreme heat provides a constant reminder of the need for quick action.

## BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL

### GENERAL FEATURES

The Elemental Plane of Fire has the following general features:

**Terrain.** This part of the plane is primarily composed of two major landscapes: The Cinder Wastes, and the Sea of Fire. The Cinder Wastes are filled with great expanses of black cinders and embers forming a rugged wasteland of ash marred by rivers of lava. The Sea of Fire is a huge ocean of lava with occasional islands of obsidian and basalt jutting up out of the molten rock.

**Light.** A blazing sun rests atop a golden sky, waxing and waning on a 24-hour cycle. It ranges from white hot at noon to deep red at midnight. Luckily, the characters arrive at dusk on this plane, so the sun is not blindingly bright yet.

**Lava.** Any creature that touches lava or ends its turn touching lava takes 33 (6d10) fire damage. Lava is very dense, so most creatures falling into lava would not sink into it.

**Weather.** The wind is strong and nearly constant, occasionally blowing with it a cloud of thick ash or burning cinders. Considering the rolling ashes and strong winds, it is impossible to find tracks here.

**Extreme Heat.** At the end of each hour, any creature not native to the plane must make a Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. The DC is 5 for the first hour and increases by 1 for each additional hour until they get out of the heat. Characters wearing medium or heavy armor have disadvantage on this saving throw, while creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeed on the saving throw. Because of this intense heat, characters who aren't resistant or immune to fire can't rest.

A gust of thick ash and scorching heat blasts into your face as you step through the portal. You stand upon a hill made of black ash and cinder, your portal hovering invitingly behind you. A blazing red sun hangs in the golden sky, lighting up the hellish landscape below.

Before you is an endless wasteland of ash, much like the hill upon which you stand. The wasteland is cut only by a flowing river of lava that twists through the monochrome plains, emptying into a vast sea of molten liquid that roils and churns.

Ported on an obsidian dock down the shore waits a huge ship made of brass, with four immense metallic sails and dozens of oars jutting from the sides. The top deck of the brass ship is filled with bright figures that look like dwarves with bronze skin and fiery hair. One of those figures has noticed you and is shouting with excitement.

The dwarf-like creatures are **azers** on a trading voyage to various islands in the Sea of Fire. Their ship, named the Pyreblade, is tied off and conducting final preparations before entering the open sea. It has spent the last few days sailing down the river of lava across the Cinder Wastes. The azers are led by Captain Zehind, a curious and opportunistic being who is always looking for a new chance at profit. The characters are obviously not from this plane, and Zehind is eager to learn why a group of Primes have come to the Plane of Fire.

Captain Zehind approaches and greets the party in Ignan, but if none of them speaks Ignan or Primordial, he switches to heavily-accented Common. His primary goal is to learn why the characters have come to the Plane of Fire and to get some news of the Prime Material Plane ("Didn't I hear something about Tiamat a while back? How did that turn out?"), but he is willing to share his own knowledge in exchange. In relation to the characters' mission, Zehind knows the following:

- The characters are on the edge of the Cinder Wastes on the shore of the Sea of Fire. They are far to the south of the City of Brass.
- Zehind has not seen any other humanoids around here. He has been sailing down rivers to the Sea of Fire for the last few weeks.
- Efreets are nasty slavers to be avoided as much as possible. Azers and efreets have not gotten along for as long as anyone can remember.
- Razim the Incandescent is a high-ranked efreeti noble who lives at the Sunscorched Palace, which is on an island in the Sea of Fire about 15 miles northwest of here. Zehind doesn't know much about

efreeti politics or ranks, but he has heard that Razim is arrogant even for an efreet.

### ROLEPLAYING CAPTAIN ZEHIND (ZE-HIND)

Captain Zehind is best described as an honorable rogue. He has an amazing knack for sniffing out opportunities for profit, and he's willing to take risks that other captains would not dare. He loves wealth, especially in the form of gems, and he's willing to do a lot for the sake of profit, but he has his own code of honor and a strong sense of fair play. He would never cheat someone who did right by him, but if he thinks he's being insulted or cheated, he's willing to be devious and deceitful to get what he rightfully deserves.

**Voice:** Folksy, curious, warm, light-hearted

**Quote:** *"I swear, by Imix's fiery beard: nobody cheats this captain and gets away with it!"*

Once the characters learn where Razim's palace resides, they know where Ardet can likely be found. However, traveling across the Sea of Fire is no easy matter. If they have magic that would allow them to circumvent the lava (such as *wind walk* or *teleport*), Zehind's directions are good enough to guide them on the right course. To estimate the time it takes to reach the Sunscorched Palace which is 15 miles away, consider that a character with a flying speed of 30 feet can fly 4 miles per hour. There are numerous islands along the way if the characters need to land for any reason, such as to switch mounts.

#### XP AWARDS

If the characters manage to reach the Sunscorched Palace without booking passage from the Azer, award each character 750 XP.

## HOW TO WIN FIENDS AND INFLUENCE

### ELEMENTALS

If the characters cannot reach the palace on their own, Captain Zehind is willing to provide them passage... for a price. Zehind allows the characters to pay whatever they think is fair. If they ask about the return trip, he says that he has no desire to wait for them near an efreet stronghold, but he's confident that they can find their own way back.

A character can make an Intelligence (History or Religion) check to get an idea of what payment would be fair. On a 15 or higher, a character knows that prices on the elemental planes are generally much higher than prices on the Material Plane due to greater abundance

of precious metals. On a 19 or higher, a character knows that a short voyage on the Sea of Fire usually costs a few hundred gold pieces or so depending on the number of travelers.

Once the characters determine how much they're willing to pay, Zehind happily accepts that payment, no matter how meager it is, so long as they pay the full price up front. Though he doesn't show it, Zehind does take offense if the payment doesn't live up to his expectations. The base price that Zehind considers fair is 50 gp per creature that needs passage. Tiny creatures (like most familiars) don't count in this regard, but Large or larger pets (like horses) count for 100 gp each. However, Zehind discounts those prices based on his interactions with the characters:

- If any of the characters has 17 or higher passive Persuasion, subtract 10 gp per creature.
- If any of the characters has the Ship's Passage background feature (from sailor background), subtract 10 gp per creature.
- If the characters have primarily spoken to him in Primordial or Ignan, subtract 10 gp per creature.
- Feel free to modify the price further if Zehind had a particularly good or bad interaction with any character.

For example, from a party that has a warhorse and four humanoids, one of whom has the Ship's Passage feature and one of whom has 17 passive Persuasion, Zehind expects 30 gp per humanoid and 80 gp for the horse, so he expects a total of 200 gp.

Regardless of what they offer, Zehind accepts their gold up front and invites the characters aboard the Pyreblade.

#### XP AWARDS

If Zehind is satisfied with the characters' offer, award each character 500 XP.

## I'M ON A BOAT

The Pyreblade is a flat galley-like ship about 150 feet in length, with four masts on deck and twenty-five oars on either side, made almost entirely of brass and other metals. The characters are kept on the poop deck at the rear of the ship, away from most of the masts, oars, and azer sailors. Even here, on the highest deck of the ship, the characters can still feel the extreme heat emanating from the sea of lava below.

While sailing, the characters frequently spot other strange beings sailing on, swimming in, or flying over the Sea of Fire, including salamanders, other azer ships,



red dragons, and even a massive spiked turtle that they first mistake for an island.

It takes three hours for the Pyreblade to reach the Sunscorched Palace. If Captain Zehind was not satisfied by the party's payment, he covertly orders the sailors to sail at a more leisurely pace, taking four hours to arrive instead of three hours. Each hour of sailing means another saving throw against heat exhaustion.

After one hour of sailing, or two hours if the ship is sailing more leisurely, read the following:

The Pyreblade suddenly jerks to a halt as a dozen molten red tentacles rise out of the Sea of Fire and wrap themselves around the ship. Azer sailors shout out in alarm and rush to grab axes even as some of the azers are plucked up by writhing tentacles. Captain Zehind looks up at your group and bellows out a single word in Common: "Kraken!"

A lava kraken is trying to tear the Pyreblade apart with its tentacles. The azers are battling tentacles on the rest of the ship, but four **molten tentacles** sprout up around the rear deck and attack the characters. Use **Appendix: Pyreblade Battlemap** if you wish to use a map for this fight. The tentacles are very long; they're connected down below to the lava, but the main part of each tentacle can move up to 15 feet onto or above the deck of the ship, allowing them to reach the characters.

At the end of each round, fire shoots out of the tentacle suckers, forcing each creature within 15 feet of any molten tentacle to make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. It doesn't matter if a character is within range of multiple tentacles; each character only needs to make this saving throw once per round. A creature takes 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

If the characters have not yet defeated the tentacles by the start of the fourth round of combat, the azers finish fighting off the tentacles on the rest of the ship and arrive to help. They quickly destroy the remaining tentacles and stabilize any unconscious party members.

#### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Remove a **molten tentacle**. The end of round fire deals 10 (3d6) fire damage instead.
- **Weak:** Remove a **molten tentacle**.
- **Strong:** Add a **molten tentacle**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **molten tentacles**.
- ☠ **For Extra Challenge:** Each **molten tentacle** has a +7 bonus to hit instead of +5, and the end of round fire deals 21 (6d6) fire damage instead.

#### BALLISTAE

There are two loaded metal ballistae on the poop deck. As an action, a character can fire an adjacent ballista at a target within 120 ft. of it, making a ranged weapon attack at +7 to hit for 33 (6d10) piercing damage. However, the ballistae are mounted in such a way that they cannot turn more than 90 degrees in either direction unless a character spends a bonus action to make a DC 8 Strength check to force it around, or a DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools or tinker's tools to reconfigure the firing mechanism. There is no extra ammunition nearby, so characters won't be able to reload a ballista for a second shot.

#### TACTICS

The tentacles spread out and each attack a different target if possible. They have a reach of 15 feet, allowing them to opportunity attack at a significant distance. Tentacles **do not** attempt to pull or drag characters over the side of the ship. Instead, they attempt to slide further onto the ship to keep a tighter grip on it.

#### DEVELOPMENT

Once the tentacles are defeated, the azers rush to their oars and row away as fast as they can. Characters are treated to the sight of a huge red kraken maw poking out of the lava as the Pyreblade retreats safely into the distance.

Captain Zehind comes to the characters and thanks them for helping defeat the lava kraken. That type of danger is not uncommon here on the Sea of Fire. If the characters defeated their tentacles before the fourth round of combat (and thus didn't need to rely on azer help), Zehind offers them a potion as thanks for their service (see **Treasure** section below). If the characters have further complaints, he is even willing to refund their original payment if they succeed on a DC 21 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check.

The remaining two-hour trip passes without incident. Remember that characters need to make saving throws against heat exhaustion each hour, and characters who are not at least resistant to fire can't rest here.

#### TREASURE

If the characters defeated their tentacles without azer help, Captain Zehind thanks them with two *potions of fire resistance*, telling them that they'll probably need it more than he ever will.

# PART 3. THE SUNSCORCHED PALACE

**Estimated Duration:** 35 minutes

By their own power or with Captain Zehind's help, the characters arrive at the entrance to the Sunscorched Palace, home to Razim the Incandescent.

## STORY BEAT

The characters see the wonders of the palace and meet Razim, his daughter Kessara, and Ardet. They witness the power of the *efreeti crown of wishes* and must prepare for the trial ahead.

## GENERAL FEATURES

The Sunscorched Palace has the following general features:

**Light.** The outside of the palace gleams with the light of the perpetual sun. Inside, the rooms are lit with gemstone chandeliers, magic braziers, and floating orbs, most of which provide light in a variety of colors.

**Occupants.** Efreet and fire myrmidons stand guard at every important doorway. Devils and hell hounds patrol the halls. Humanoid and azer slaves attend to chores and noble needs. It's nigh-impossible for a guest to go unnoticed where they're not welcome.

**Magical Protection.** The palace is protected by numerous spells and wards. There are spells that protect against theft, causing stolen valuables to teleport away while triggering an alarm. There are spells to guard the palace from teleportation and dimensional travel, preventing creatures from teleporting through walls, floors, or ceilings (so it's impossible to teleport or plane shift into the palace from outside, or from one room to another, but it's still possible to teleport within the same room). Finally, the walls, floors, and ceilings are infused with gorgon blood, preventing ethereal travel or spells like *passwall*.

**Temperature.** Because of Razim's frequent dealings with Primes thanks to his position as a pasha, his palace is enchanted to provide cooling comfort to those that need it. The inside of the palace feels comfortably cool for non-natives of the plane.

**Mood.** This palace is meant to evoke a sense of otherworldly wonder. The majesty and opulence of the dwelling, combined with the great and varied hosts that serve the Pasha, should give an idea of just how wealthy and powerful efreet nobles are.

Before you, upon a jagged island of obsidian that bulges out of the Sea of Fire, sits a palace beautiful and majestic beyond that of any royal dwelling on Faerûn. The palace itself is colored entirely in gold, with pale golden marble composing its walls and minarets, and golden metallic plates covering its numerous statues, domes, and archways.

The central minaret of the palace has a great dome that towers above you to dizzying heights, with a spike at its top appearing to pierce the very sun itself. Countless other towers flank the central dome on all sides, and the entire palace shimmers and glows with the reflected light of the evening sun.

## CATCHING UP WITH ARDET

Ardet and a small group of Reborn Flame cultists came through the portal three days before the adventure started. They obtained passage across the Sea of Fire on board an efreet ship, and they've spent the last few days taking advantage of Razim's hospitality and trying to convince him and his daughter Kessara to aid the Cult of Reborn Flame.

Neither Razim nor Kessara has any intention of helping them, but the cultists have such palpable desperation about them that the efreet can't help but try to take advantage of them. The game began with Kessara befriending them, supposedly behind Razim's back. Since then, the two efreet have been brainstorming ways to dispose of the cultists in the most amusing way possible; the player characters' arrival seems to provide just such an opportunity.

## ARRIVAL BY SEA

If the characters arrive by sea, they come ashore upon a single stone pier that juts out of the obsidian cliffs. The grand entrance to the Sunscorched Palace lies on the plateau above the cliffs, nearly 100 feet higher than the level of the pier, but there doesn't seem to be an entrance or staircase connecting this pier to the clifftop. If Captain Zehind brought them here, he will wave and wish them good luck before sailing off; as an azer, he has no wish to linger near an efreet stronghold.

A lone salamander is curled up and resting at the end of the pier. When she notices the character's arrival, she makes an idle gesture and calls out "Visitors" in Ignan, causing the characters to feel a hot wind swirling around them. The wind lifts them off their feet and carries them all the way up the cliffside, dropping them on top of the plateau. This levitation effect is caused by

invisible air elementals bound by Razim to act as an elevator. Servants at the top of the plateau can also command the elementals to carry people back down to the pier.

## ARRIVAL BY SKY

If the characters arrive through some means of flight, they can see a large open courtyard in front of the palace that provides a good landing spot. If they try to fly on top of the palace, perhaps to land on a minaret or rooftop, they find themselves blown back by winds that gently but firmly guide them to the front courtyard. The palace is well protected from winged creatures attacking from above.

## AN ENCHANTED EVENING

Humanoid and azer servants scurry about the courtyard, attending to chores and ignoring the characters. A pair of efreet warriors stand guard in the courtyard next to a set of massive golden steps leading to the grand archway at the front of the palace. Golden statues of dancing efreet stand to either side of the archway; these statues animate into iron golems should the palace ever come under attack.

As you take in the scene before you, an efreeti woman approaches you. She is clearly beautiful and wealthy, with fiery red hair, coal-black skin, and wearing jewelry of ruby and gold all over her body. "Greetings, honored visitors. I am Amira Kessara the Enchanted, daughter of Pasha Razim the Incandescent. I welcome you to our resplendent abode. What brings you to the Sunscorched Palace? Do you seek an audience with my father?"

Kessara has the *tongues* spell active so she can speak and understand all languages. She realizes that the characters likely have some relation to Ardet's group. Once the characters explain their presence, Kessara invites them into the palace proper to wait for Razim's arrival. She is very interested in the characters and she is happy to answer any questions regarding the palace or her family, but she will quickly insist that they follow her into the palace to speak more comfortably. When the characters are ready, Kessara leads them in.

### ROLEPLAYING AMIRA KESSARA THE ENCHANTED (KESS-SAR-UH)

Kessara is outwardly a young, innocent, and friendly efreeti who enjoys talking to guests of the Sunscorched Palace, but beneath that outward appearance is a

devious mind that would not hesitate to manipulate others to their own ruin for the sake of her amusement. Like Razim, Kessara finds life in the palace quite dull, so she is quick to latch onto new sources of entertainment, such as the characters' conflict with Ardet. Kessara has her own ambitions, and she's willing to show that ambitious side to convince others of her willingness to aid them or betray her father. But in truth, she is fiercely loyal to her family and willing to follow her father's lead when it counts.

Kessara is a very adept liar, and any attempt to see through her mask requires a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check to get vague hints about her manipulation, and a DC 22 Wisdom (Insight) check to sense more clearly who she really is and what she is trying to do.

**Voice:** Young, refined, noble, friendly, excited

**Quote:** "I've been cooped up in this palace my whole life. It must be so exciting to travel to other planes and see the multiverse like you do!"

Kessara leads you up the steps to the Sunscorched Palace. Together, you make your way through the grand archway and catch your first glimpse of the interior of the palace.

The massive open room is even taller than it is wide, with five balcony levels making up the upper parts of the chamber. Countless entrances lead out of the chamber to the innumerable wings and halls of this palace, and two golden staircases on either side spiral toward the upper floors. The walls and ceilings are covered in frescos depicting efreet battling all sorts of other beings, including azers, marids, and djinn. Numerous efreet, salamanders, and fiery elementals wearing jagged metal armor stand guard at the entrances around the chamber.

Best of all, as soon as you step into the palace proper, the heat becomes much more bearable. It's not that the air is cooler inside, but rather it feels as if you have suddenly become acclimated to the heat and no longer feel discomfort from it.

Kessara leads the group through a few hallways into a waiting room where she orders servants to bring exotic foods and wines for the guests. During this time, she also secretly orders a servant to fetch Ardet using code phrases; a character who understands Ignan can figure out that she's giving coded messages to the servants with a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check, but it's impossible to know exactly what she's trying to say. A pair of efreet stand guard here, one just outside watching the

hallway, while the other one keeping watch inside by the door.

Kessara is fascinated by the characters and is quick to ask their purpose here. She brings up Ardet's group if they don't, asking if they know about the other guests from the Prime Material Plane and whether the two groups are related. Ardet has already mentioned to her the possibility of the Hawks or the Cloaks sending adventurers to assassinate his cultists, so Kessara assumes they're here to kill Ardet and his companions. If the characters try to lie to her about their purpose at the palace, she pretends to believe them, but insists that they should meet her friend Ardet since "You seem to have a lot in common."

### AGAINST THE CLOCK

Roleplaying scenes have a high potential to run longer than expected with some groups. If time is limited, you can have Ardet arrive almost immediately to cut the initial conversation with Kessara short. Similarly, Razim can arrive a little after Ardet. Try to balance between having enough time to get to know these characters and ensuring that the game ends on schedule.

Soon afterwards, Ardet arrives:

"You wanted to see me, Amira Kessara?" A young human man walks into the room. He suddenly pauses, shocked, as he beholds your group gathered around this waiting room. "These must be the assassins I told you about! I knew they would come for me eventually! Please, keep them away from me!"

Kessara responds calmly, "Don't worry, my friend. We're all guests of my father here, so let's all talk as friends. I'm sure these fine visitors would not be so discourteous as to bring violence into these halls." As if to underscore her words, a second efreeti guard comes into the room behind Ardet and stands by the door keeping watch. Ardet reluctantly comes into the room and stands by Kessara's side, his eyes darting quickly between all of you.

Kessara tries to foster a conversation among everyone here. Ardet is convinced that this group of armed humanoids must have come after him; no amount of deception can convince him otherwise. If the characters try to convince Ardet to give up the cult, he is quick to act indignant and spout cultist talking points, such as the following:

- Mulmaster is hopelessly corrupt.
- The city has failed its people time and time again.

- Its structures must be purged with fire and rebuilt from the ashes.
- Adventurers are just hired thugs with a license to kill. They cannot be trusted.
- Ardet shall be reforged as one of the new leaders of Mulmaster after it falls to the Cult of Reborn Flame.
- The Black Phoenix shall light the way.

A DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check allows a character to sense that Ardet is partially putting on an act and trying to convince himself.

If a character tries to redeem Ardet and persuade him against the cult, they can attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. They have advantage on the check if they have played *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance* or if they appeal to his sense of duty towards his family. On a success, Ardet's demeanor softens, and he seems more hesitant and doubtful. On a failure, Ardet sneers and says that Mulmaster and his family have failed him, so why should he still care about them? In either case, this success or failure counts for attempting to redeem Ardet in **Part 5**, and characters cannot persuade Ardet any further until then.

### ROLEPLAYING ARDET PEYTIR (ARE-DET PIE-TEER)

Ardet is deeply bitter about his kidnapping and House Peytir's subsequent decline. He believes (not unjustly) that his family despises him, they didn't try very hard to rescue him, and his cousin Fedosia Peytir wants him gone so she can inherit his wealth and property. After Ardet was rescued by adventurers, the family did little to help rebuild his manor, and they seem to regard his kidnapping as his own fault, blaming him for bringing the wrath of the Cult of Black Earth upon House Peytir's businesses.

Similarly, Ardet was once a fervent patriot of Mulmaster, but he could only watch in disgust as the soldiers and Cloaks of Mulmaster allowed their enemies (the Liberators) into their gates and then failed to defend the city against the cultists who brought about the Devastation. He thinks that this new cult, the Cult of Reborn Flame, can purge Mulmaster of its foreigners and weak elements (the Cloaks, the Hawks, the noble families) and install a new leadership that will make Mulmaster strong again. Ardet still bears a lot of doubt, but he suppresses them as his leadership position in the cult is giving him renewed purpose.

**Voice:** Indecisive, frightful, occasional stutter

**Quote:** "House Peytir and Mulmaster have failed me. The Cult of Reborn Flame is the only hope I have left."



If the characters try any violence, Kessara warns them that her father's guards would not take kindly to such actions, nor would she. There are at least three **efreet** in the room (Kessara and two guards), another **efreeti** right outside the door, and more guards within shouting range. **Ardet Peytir** is also capable of defending himself. Any combat here would go very poorly for the characters.

Remember the general features of the palace prevent teleportation or planar travel. If the characters don't heed Kessara's warnings, let them suffer the full consequences of their actions. Guards do try to knock characters unconscious with melee attacks and they're willing to accept surrender, but they're not going to go out of their way to avoid killing characters with *wall of fire* and the like if combat is ongoing.

### XP AWARDS

If the characters succeed in their Charisma (Persuasion) check against Ardet, award each character 500 XP.

## TRIAL BY FIRE

Horns blare as a salamander servant enters the room. She announces, "I present to you Razim the Incandescent, Pasha of the Third Prime, Forger of Chains, Sublime Keeper of the Tomb of Okhran al-Kabus, Slayer of Caliph Naazzin of the Putrid Waters, Bane of Azer-kind, Conqueror of al-Hubam, and Loyal Subject of the Great Sultan of the City of Brass."

Behind her floats an efreeti wearing more jewelry than perhaps you've ever seen in your entire life. Golden armbands, emerald-studded scimitar, gem-studded vest, a dozen necklaces on his neck, multiple rings on every finger as well as every spike jutting out of his head and back. Most impressive of all is the golden crown resting upon his head, which smolders in green flames and bears numerous diamond stars each of which gleams with its own light. Razim is draped in wealth for all to see, yet his demeanor makes the display of wealth seem stately and dignified rather than superfluous or gaudy.

Kessara speaks up, "Father, these are the—"

But Razim cuts her off: "Quiet! When will you learn your manners, fool girl? I will ask the questions here." Kessara stops and casts her eyes downward. "Why has yet another group of mortals come to take advantage of my hospitality? Is one group of leeches not enough?" He glares towards Ardet as he says that, then turns to you. "Tell me truthfully why you are here, or I will have you tossed into the Sea of Fire."

The animosity between Razim and Kessara is purely an act, and one that they are well-practiced in. A character can make a DC 22 Wisdom (Insight) check to realize that Razim doesn't seem quite so hostile towards Kessara as he first appears. If the result is between 13 to 21, the character sees Kessara give a subtle glare towards her father before looking down.

Razim demands to know why the characters have come to his palace. If they come up with a story, Ardet is eager to interrupt, saying that they're undoubtedly sent by Mulmaster to assassinate him. Razim doesn't act very warmly towards Ardet either, and if the characters mention their real goal, Razim seems to consider the request. During the conversation, the crown atop his head continues to smolder in flames, with the color of the flames shifting according to Razim's mood. Kessara stays quiet unless she's directly involved in the conversation.

### ROLEPLAYING PASHA RAZIM THE INCANDESCENT (RA-ZEEM)

Razim has been alive for a long time. He is one of the wealthiest and most powerful efreet nobles in existence, and he knows it. His arrogance is truly immense. However, he is also bored. In centuries past, Razim was at the forefront of the Sultan's armies, fighting azers, marids, djinn, and whatever else the Sultan fancied killing. But the wars ended, and now Razim spends his days in his palace, his every need attended to except his need to be truly challenged or entertained.

Razim has spent centuries mastering the art of manipulation. It takes a DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) check to sense that something is off when he is attempting to manipulate or deceive a character, and it takes a DC 24 Wisdom (Insight) check to get a good grasp on his true feelings or intentions when talking to him. Razim's position as a pasha gives him prominence among the efreet, but his duties keep him from being able to exercise his talents in the City of Brass at the forefront of efreet politics and intrigue. With the arrival of the cultists and then the characters, Razim leaps at the chance to enjoy the old blood sport of intrigue once again.

**Voice:** Deep, angry, imperious, self-important

**Quote:** "I have hunted dragons, beasts, and mortals alike. In every hunt, no excitement quite matches that of the moment when you set your hellhounds loose and watch them pounce upon your prey. This time, you were my hounds, and you served your master well."

Once it becomes clear that the characters and Ardet are working at crossed purposes, Razim proposes a contest to see who is worthy of his favor. He shall create a Trial of Strength and Cunning to test the resolves of both groups. The group that manages to withstand the heat and overcome their trial first is the victor. If the cultists win, Razim swears to aid them in their vendetta against Mulmaster and make the player characters his slaves. If the characters win, Razim promises to reward them with spectacular wealth and hand the cultists over to their mercy.

Ardet looks very nervous at the prospect of the trial, and is initially hesitant, but after taking a glance at Kessara and getting an encouraging look, he accepts the challenge. If the characters hesitate, Razim tells them that they're free to leave if they refuse, but he would ally with Ardet by default and destroy their pesky city. He refuses to answer any questions about the contents of the trial, saying only that it will test their intellect as well as their skill at arms.

Once the characters accept, or if they hesitate, Kessara interjects and says, "Surely, father, you don't mean to subject these brave heroes to the trial before allowing them a chance to recuperate from the journey? Allow me to tend to their wounds with the crown, so that they'll be at their best when attempting the trial ahead." Razim reluctantly agrees, and once the characters accept the challenge, he hands Kessara the burning crown before heading out, telling the characters that they have one hour to get ready before the trial. Ardet is led back to the cultist quarters.

## THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

Kessara takes the golden, diamond-studded crown that her father handed her, admires its beauty for a moment, and places it gently upon her own horned head. As soon as the crown touches her head, green flames erupt from the crown, and the diamonds set in gold shine with silvery-white light. Kessara smiles, and says, "This is the *efreeti crown of wishes*, an ancient artifact that my family has handed down for generations. This is the method by which ancient efreet were able to grant the wishes of mortals. Allow me now to wish your wounds healed and your bodies ready for the trial ahead."

Kessara presses her hand upon the crown, closes her eyes, and concentrates. A moment later, your wounds are mended, your aches and pains are gone, and you feel strong and refreshed.

All the characters are restored to full hit points and cured of exhaustion, ostensibly because Kessara is wishing upon the crown. In truth, the crown is merely a trinket that burns with the color of the wearer's emotions, usually green because of Razim and Kessara's amusement at their trickery. Anyone who looks upon the crown with *detect magic* can detect an aura of illusion magic around it. Since her goal is to show off the crown's supposed powers, if none of the characters are exhausted or injured, she instead replenishes their food and drink with magic (ostensibly using the crown).

Kessara is a divine soul of Hastsezini, a god of cruel and destructive fire, and she is subtly casting healing and restoration spells without using verbal or somatic components. A DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check gives the sense that something seems to be off about her demeanor when wishing upon the crown, but the character gets nothing more than vague hints unless their Wisdom (Insight) result is 22 or higher. Kessara refuses to wish for anything else, using the excuse that her father would not approve, and she absolutely does not allow any character to touch the crown.

Kessara wants the characters to believe that the crown is powerful in order to motivate them to chase after Ardet's group later once she convinces the cultists to steal the crown and escape during the Trial of Strength and Cunning. This grand charade is a way for Kessara and Razim to force an entertaining show from the characters and the cultists, and the more emotion they can elicit from their targets, the greater the entertainment value for the efreet.

Once Kessara has showed off the crown's powers to an adequate extent, she bids the characters good luck in the trial ahead and takes her leave. The characters have one hour to short rest or otherwise prepare for their trial. At no point are characters allowed to go anywhere outside of this room or the adjoining privy; three **efreet** guards keep careful watch over the only exit, two inside and one outside the door.

After the hour is up, a servant arrives to take the characters to the Trial of Strength and Cunning.

## PART 4. TRIAL OF STRENGTH AND CUNNING

**Estimated Duration:** 80 minutes

Now that they are rested up and prepared, the characters must compete in the Trial of Strength and Cunning against Ardet's cultists to win Razim's favor.

### STORY BEAT

The characters must solve a logic puzzle which causes the room to fill up with lava as they ask for more clues. Once they solve the puzzle, they must fight creatures of fire inside the lava-strewn chamber of their creation in order to claim the banner of victory.

Razim floats before you, his presence imposing and majestic even without a crown upon his head. He says in a booming voice, "The Trial of Strength and Cunning shall now begin. Each of these chambers hides a banner that proclaims your victory. The first group who retrieves their banner and brings it to me shall prove themselves worthy of my favor. You will need might and ingenuity to even survive this trial, much less find victory."

Razim claps his hands together, causing a thunderous bang, and the two massive metal doors on opposite sides of the hallway slam open. "Get in, and look around all you like. When you're ready to start, just press the button. And try not to die too quickly."

Ardet stands on the other side of the hallway amid a half-dozen figures in robes and armor. He stares back at your group for a moment, looking uncertain, before turning around and marching into his trial chamber. The other cultists march in behind him.

You step forward into your chamber, and as the last of you enter the room, the heavy metal doors slam closed behind you. The chamber you find yourself in is an inverted pyramid, with terraced steps descending towards a depressed square at the center of the chamber. Right above that square is a stone obelisk sticking out of the ceiling with its tip pointing down.

### AN APPEAL TO LOGIC

The characters find themselves at the top terrace of a huge, multi-layered chamber with a ceiling 15 ft. above them. Use **Appendix: Trial of Strength and Cunning Battlemap** to represent this location. There is currently no lava in the room. The room is designed so that as the

pillars spray more lava, the lower levels of the chamber steadily fill up and become inaccessible. The features of the room are described further below.

### GENERAL FEATURES

The trial chamber has the following general features:

**Terrain:** The terraces have rough sides that are very easy to climb, requiring no check. A creature can carefully jump down to a level that is 10 ft. lower without taking damage.

**Light.** Magical light shines down from tiny cracks in the ceiling, covering the room in bright light.

**Lava.** As the characters ask for more clues to the logic puzzle, the room steadily fills up with lava. The lava here is dulled by magic and not quite as lethal as the lava found outside the palace. Any creature that touches lava or ends its turn in lava takes 16 (3d10) fire damage. That damage can change for weaker parties (see **Adjusting the Encounter** below). This lava is also not as dense as usual, allowing creatures to swim or wade through it, and it's transparent enough that creatures can see up to 5 ft. through the lava. Any creature completely submerged in lava has resistance to cold damage.

**Doors.** The doors to the chamber will open if a character carrying the banner of victory touches the door. Otherwise, it's impossible to open those doors from inside.

**Magical Protection.** The trial chamber is protected from teleportation and dimensional travel, preventing creatures from teleporting or plane shifting out of the room, though they can still teleport around the chamber. The walls, floors, and ceilings are infused with gorgon blood, preventing ethereal travel or spells like *passwall*. Finally, a powerful ward prevents characters from dying in this chamber; see the **Ward Against Death** sidebar below for details.

**Temperature.** Unlike the rest of the palace, this chamber is not protected by the same charm that keeps non-native creatures cool. As the characters ask for more clues, the room gradually heats up, causing considerable problems for creatures not suited to the heat. See **The Air is Also Lava!** sidebar below for details.

### AGAINST THE CLOCK

The trial chamber is a complex locale used for both a puzzle and a battle. Having an accurate map here is vital to making this scene work. If you're running in a time-limited setting, please have this map prepared ahead of time if possible.

## WARD AGAINST DEATH

Razim wants to test the characters and have them put on a good show for him. Since they are still necessary for the next part of the entertainment (dealing with Ardet), he does not want them to die yet. Whenever a character fails a death saving throw inside this chamber, whether it's from rolling the save or taking damage while unconscious, they are instantly teleported out of the chamber and stabilized at 0 hit points. They remain unconscious until the rest of the group succeeds at the trial or until all of them are teleported out in the same way. This teleportation bypasses the chamber's magical protection against teleportation.

When a character is teleported out in this fashion, do not let any of the players know what happened until after they finish the trial. The previously-dying character is still unconscious, and the other characters only notice that an orange glow surrounded that character and then their body vanished. Giving this protection away too early can ruin the tension and suspense of the scene. This act of mercy is also not without cost; Razim expects his kindness to be repaid with interest (see the **Total Party Failure** and **Partial Party Failure** sections below for details).

The ward only applies to player characters. Pets, minions, hirelings, and the like do not get the same courtesy. Razim wants the important adventurers alive to deal with Ardet; he doesn't care about their hired help.

The characters' first task is to solve a logic puzzle. The basic information for the logic puzzle is as follows (this information is also found on **Player Handout 4: Altar Inscription** which the players can get by examining **Area B**):

"There was once a town dominated by four societies: The Society of Strength, the Society of Intellect, the Society of Wisdom, and the Society of Wealth. Each member of a society has a rank from 1 to 5, indicating how influential they are within their own group; the higher their number, the greater their rank.

One day, the mayor decides to host a meeting between all four societies. She invites a single representative from each of the four societies to come to her mansion for the conference, and she decides that all four representatives should be of different ranks.

Who are the four representatives, and in what order do they arrive? It takes deduction and logic to uncover the truth."

The four societies and their members are as follows:

- The Society of Strength
  1. Avenger
  2. Paladin
  3. Soldier
  4. Mercenary
  5. Myrmidon
- The Society of Intellect
  1. Transmuter
  2. Diviner
  3. Enchanter
  4. Abjurer
  5. Elementalist
- The Society of Wisdom
  1. Monk
  2. Missionary
  3. Healer
  4. Shepherd
  5. Druid
- The Society of Wealth
  1. Swashbuckler
  2. Philanthropist
  3. Trader
  4. Merchant
  5. Guild Member

The society members can be represented using Tarokka Cards from *Curse of Strahd*; the four societies correspond to the four suits of the Tarokka deck, and the members correspond to the first five cards of each suit. If you do not have a deck of Tarokka Cards, you can cut out the cards from **Appendix: Appeal to Logic Tarokka Cards** to substitute. The cards provide an important visual aid for players when they attempt to solve this logic puzzle, and they can retrieve the cards in **Area A**.

The players must figure out who the four invited representatives are and what order they arrived in. They get clues to solve the puzzle by pressing the button on the pillar in **Area D**. The characters can ask for as many clues as they need to solve the puzzle, but each time they ask for a new clue, the obsidian pillars spray out lava to cover up more of the room. This danger means that characters want to solve the puzzle with the fewest number of clues necessary.

There are three different versions of this puzzle: versions A, B, and C. If one of your players has already played the adventure before, you can choose a version of the puzzle that they have not solved yet. Otherwise, pick whatever version you like. The answers to the different versions are as follows:



- Version A:
  1. Druid (5 of Wisdom)
  2. Paladin (2 of Strength)
  3. Enchanter (3 of Intellect)
  4. Merchant (4 of Wealth)
- Version B:
  1. Shepherd (4 of Wisdom)
  2. Soldier (3 of Strength)
  3. Elementalist (5 of Intellect)
  4. Swashbuckler (1 of Wealth)
- Version C:
  1. Philanthropist (2 of Wealth)
  2. Healer (3 of Wisdom)
  3. Mercenary (4 of Strength)
  4. Transmuter (1 of Intellect)

Each version has its own set of clues in **Appendix: Appeal to Logic Clues Version A, B, or C**. Make sure to cut out those clues before play so they can be distributed to players during the game. If possible, print and cut out two or more sets of the same clues so that players on different sides of the table can look at the clues simultaneously. The clues are numbered in the order that you should present them to the players as they ask for clues; the last couple of clues are obvious enough to solve the entire puzzle on their own, but they only arrive when the entire chamber is flooded with lava and the characters have taken a lot of damage.

Refer to **Appendix: Trial of Strength and Cunning Battlemap** for the locations of the following features of the room:

### **A. TAROKKA CARDS**

A circular table rests on the right side of the initial platform. Four stacks of stone Tarokka cards sit on top of the table. When characters collect these cards, provide the players with all twenty Tarokka cards.

### **B. ALTAR OF ANSWERS**

A long altar rests at the end of the walkway which overlooks the center of the chamber. The altar bears an inscription in the front that describes the parameters of the logic puzzle. When a character inspects the altar, give them **Player Handout 3: Altar Inscription**.

On top of the altar are four rectangular depressions, each of which fits a single stone Tarokka card. Carved into the stone depressions are, from left to right, the Ignan words “First,” “Second,” “Third,” and “Fourth.”

A character can easily place Tarokka cards into these slots or take them back out. This altar acts as the device by which characters can submit answers to the logic

puzzle, with the leftmost slot designated for the representative who arrives first.

Whenever four Tarokka cards are placed into the four slots, the altar glows with magic and considers the submission. If the chosen cards are correct and in the right order, proceed to the next section, **Fire and Fury**. If the chosen cards are incorrect or not in the right order, the Lava Level rises by 10 ft. (see **The Floor is Lava!** sidebar below for details). Each correct card that is in the correct slot remains in the depression, while incorrect cards are softly ejected from the altar.

### **C. OBSIDIAN PILLARS**

Eight pillars of obsidian go from floor to ceiling. There is a hidden nozzle on each pillar that points towards the center of the room. Whenever the Lava Level increases, the nozzles gush out enough lava for the lava in the room to surge up to the Lava Level in altitude (so if the Lava Level is 15 ft., lava covers all the areas of the map that are lower than +15; see **The Floor is Lava!** sidebar below for details).

The pillars are rough enough to be climbed with a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. The pillars are impervious to damage, and the lava will burn through most mundane attempts to block them off. But if the characters spend resources trying to halt the flow of lava, reward their efforts without completely negating the threat. For example, if the characters manage to block off half the pillars with spells like *wall of force* or *stone shape*, perhaps the Lava Level rises at half the usual rate.

### **D. PILLAR OF INQUIRY**

This pillar rises 5 feet above the terrace that it rests on. There is a glowing button on top of that pillar etched with the Ignan words for “Acquire Knowledge”. The characters immediately recognize that this is the button Razim said to press when they are ready to start.

Whenever the button is pressed, the Lava Level rises by 5 ft., and then a floating sphere of golden energy falls from the ceiling and lands in a random square on the map (the map is labeled so that you can roll 2d20 to figure out where the sphere lands; reroll if it lands outside the walls). The sphere always hovers just above the surface that it lands on (including the surface of lava).

Whenever a creature comes within 10 ft. of a sphere, that sphere vanishes in a harmless explosion of color and loudly pronounces the next clue to the logic puzzle. Each time you present a clue this way, hand your

players one or more copies of the written clue so they can keep track of it.

If the Lava Level is 45 or more, it is high enough to completely cover the knowledge button. A character can still access the button using magic like *mage hand*, or they can swim down to press it, taking damage from lava as usual.

Once the button has been pressed fifteen times, it sinks into the stone pillar and can no longer be pressed.

### **E. STONE BRIDGES**

Four bridges of stone traverse the trenches that reach the four corners of the room. The bridges are only 5-ft. thick from top to bottom, allowing lava to flow freely underneath them. They allow characters to navigate the room even as the lower levels are filling with lava.

#### **THE FLOOR IS LAVA!**

The Lava Level represents how high the lava is at any given moment. Each time the characters press for a clue or submit the wrong answer, the Lava Level increases (by 5 ft. for a clue and 10 ft. for a wrong answer). If the Lava Level is 25 ft., for example, all surfaces in the room that are lower than +25 in altitude are covered in lava. If possible, mark on the map the areas covered in lava as it rises. **The Lava Level can never go above 75 ft.**

The rising lava makes it trickier for characters to navigate their way around the chamber (which they need to do to access clues and ask for more) and sets the stage for the combat that comes after solving the puzzle.

#### **THE AIR IS ALSO LAVA!**

Falling in lava is not the characters' only worry. As the room fills with lava, it also grows exceedingly hot, dealing damage to each creature in the chamber every two minutes of **real time**. Use a watch, phone, or hourglass to keep track of time and inflict the damage after each interval. The damage inflicted depends on the Lava Level as follows (also modified by party strength; see **Adjusting the Encounter** below):

- **Lava Level is 5 or lower:** 0 fire damage
- **Lava Level is 10 to 15:** 1 fire damage
- **Lava Level is 20 to 25:** 2 fire damage
- **Lava Level is 30 to 35:** 3 fire damage
- **Lava Level is 40 or higher:** 4 fire damage

Since real time activity has in game consequences, special care must be taken to maintain suspension of disbelief. As characters move around the map, use

deliberate motions to move their miniatures along the path that they are taking to simulate the passage of time. Similarly, if the characters do something that would take some time in game (like cast a ritual spell), be deliberate with your descriptions or focus on a different area for a while. However, don't worry too much about in-game time; you don't need to roll initiative or track actions or anything on that level of detail. If a player wants to drink potions or cast spells that don't have long casting times, just let them do it.

The two-minute interval for damage is only a suggestion. If you're a fast DM and you have players who are very good at puzzle solving and have strong characters, perhaps damage every one minute is appropriate. Conversely, if you're not the fastest DM, or if your players are slower at solving puzzles, maybe every three minutes fits better. You can even switch intervals during the game if you feel the need.

The purpose of this real time mechanic is so the players feel a pressure to solve the puzzle quickly rather than debate clues endlessly. The damage encourages speed of play but shouldn't be a major threat in and of itself. It serves an important purpose, but if you find the real time mechanic too much of a hassle, you can ignore this sidebar completely without losing too much.

#### **ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER**

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Lava deals 11 (2d10) fire damage instead of 16 (3d10). Heat causes half as much damage at each real-time interval.

#### **WHAT IF THE PLAYERS SUCK AT LOGIC PUZZLES?**

Puzzles can be a lot of fun, but they also have the potential for frustrating moments. Sometimes, the table can't figure out what to do or just doesn't like logic puzzles. In those situations, it can be miserable if they're slowly burning to death without feeling like they can solve the puzzle.

If your players spend too much time on this puzzle (>35 minutes) and are not getting close to a solution, or if they're clearly very stuck and not having fun, or if you know that they all hate logic puzzles, you can end the puzzle early or even avoid it entirely.

In that case, have the obelisk fall in a shower of lava, raising the Lava Level to 60 (if it's not currently higher) and skipping right to the next section **Fire and Fury**.

#### **XP AWARDS**

If the characters solve the logic puzzle, award each character 1,500 XP.

## FIRE AND FURY

As soon as you place the four cards into the altar, the altar flashes white for a moment, then all the stone cards disappear, and the room immediately feels cooler as if by magic. The entire chamber rumbles and shakes, and the obelisk that hangs over the center of the room falls from the ceiling, landing in the lava below with a mighty splash.

The walls of the obelisk unfold like flower petals. The inside is hollow besides the long pillar of rock holding up the middle. A few small dragons with red scales roar as they fly out of the hollow interior. The largest wyrmiling has a fluttering banner made of red silk tied to its neck.

The obelisk released two **red dragon wyrmlings** into the room. They are eager to devour the characters after being stuffed in a confined space for so long. One of those wyrmlings wears the banner of victory upon its neck; the characters must retrieve the banner to succeed and escape the room. The other wyrmiling is a smaller runt that only has 50 hit points. The stone pillar that remains on the obelisk bobbing in the lava is a **lava roper** that pretends to be inanimate rock.

Use the same map **Appendix: Trial of Strength and Cunning Battlemap** for this combat, with the lava at the same level as when the characters solved the puzzle. Heat protection magic once again envelops the room, keeping the characters from feeling the effects of heat in the air and preventing them from taking constant damage (though touching lava is just as painful as before). The Ward Against Death still applies.

### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Remove the weaker **red dragon wyrmiling**. The **lava roper** only has AC 17 and 75 hit points and can only make two tendril attacks with its multiattack. Lava deals 11 (2d10) fire damage instead of 16 (3d10).
  - **Weak:** Remove the weaker **red dragon wyrmiling**. The **lava roper** only has AC 17 and 75 hit points. Lava deals 11 (2d10) fire damage instead of 16 (3d10).
  - **Strong:** Add a **red dragon wyrmiling**.
  - **Very Strong:** Add two **red dragon wyrmlings**. One of them is a runt with only 50 hit points.
- ☠ **For Extra Challenge:** The banner-wearing wyrmiling has 110 hit points and can take lair actions.

## TACTICS

**Lava Roper:** The lava roper starts out hidden thanks to its False Appearance trait. It will try to grapple characters that are further away and pull them into the lava, eventually reeling them close enough to take a bite out of them.

**Red Dragon Wyrmlings:** The red dragon wyrmlings start out by looking for opportunities to use their breath weapons on as many targets as possible. If a dragon's breath weapon has not recharged, that dragon flies in to take a bite out of someone, preferably someone who is not wearing metal armor. They generally choose targets that are further away from the roper (to avoid competing for food).

## DEVELOPMENT

The characters' objective is to retrieve the banner of victory from the red dragon wyrmiling that is wearing it. If they can bring the banner to the entrance, they can open the main door and leave the chamber, successfully defeating the encounter. None of the monsters will pursue characters who leave the chamber.

## TOTAL PARTY FAILURE

If all the characters failed death saves and were teleported out, they wake up back in their waiting room miraculously alive, healed up to half their maximum hit points and suffering from a level of exhaustion. A salamander servant tells them that they live only because of the Pasha's generosity, and so they are now bound into the Pasha's service. All of them gain the **Servant of the Pasha** story award.

The servant tells them that they're lucky the cultists were so treacherous and cowardly as to escape during their trial. She refuses to elaborate except to say that they should rest up and prepare themselves; the Pasha will need their services soon enough. The characters can take a short rest. Proceed to **Part 5**.

## PARTIAL PARTY FAILURE

If one or more of the characters failed death saves and were teleported out, but the rest succeeded in their trial, the characters who were rescued wake up in the hallway outside the trial chamber, healed up to half their maximum hit points and suffering from a level of exhaustion. They wake just in time to see their companions leave the trial with banner of victory in hand. A salamander servant tells the rescued characters

that they live only because of the Pasha's generosity, and so they are now bound into the Pasha's service. These characters gain the **Servant of the Pasha** story award. Proceed to the following section **Passing the Test**.

## PASSING THE TEST

If characters succeeded in retrieving the banner:

Razim laughs as you make your way out of the trial chamber. "Congratulations, champions. You have surpassed my expectations and completed your trial far faster than those who covet my power. I promised you great treasure, and you now carry it with you. My vault and my treasure are in your hands." Razim points to the very banner of victory that one of you now holds.

He turns to the other side of the hall, looking at the door that the cultists stepped through. "Open the doors and bring out those defeated, or what's left of them. Our champions here shall have the right to decide their fates." Servants rush to his bidding and drag open the heavy doors leading to the other trial chamber. They look inside, and step back out a moment later. A salamander servant reports, "The chamber is empty, Resplendent One. There's nobody inside."

Ardet's trial chamber looks like an exact mirror of the one the characters fought in, except there's no lava and nobody around. Ardet and the cultists have long since disappeared from the chamber. Razim is furious and stalks off to find his *efreeti crown of wishes* so he can force the cultists back to face his judgment. A servant leads the party back to their waiting room with food ready, telling them to rest up while the Pasha investigates what happened. They can take a short rest.

### TREASURE

If the characters had successfully retrieved the banner of victory, they discover during their rest that the banner is actually a *portable hole* named the *vault of the efreeti*. Inside the extradimensional space is a small fortune in coins and gems worth a total of 1,500 gp.



## PART 5. REDEMPTION BY FLAME

**Estimated Duration:** 65 minutes

The characters, victorious or not, have rested up from the results of their trial and await Razim's return.

### STORY BEAT

The cultists have escaped with the *efreeti crown of wishes* and the characters must fly after them and force a confrontation in the Sea of Fire. They either redeem or slay Ardet before coming back and learning of the efreet's deception.

### THE GRAND MASQUERADE

Razim and Kessara are toying with the mortals. Kessara convinced Ardet to escape with her and the *efreeti crown of wishes* during the trial. She promised to help their cult using the full powers of the (useless) crown, but she has every intention of abandoning them to be slaughtered once the characters catch up to them.

Kessara hired Old Bunderoth the dragon turtle to carry the cultists off to safety, ostensibly summoning the turtle by wishing upon the crown, but in truth just calling in an old debt that the turtle owes her family. Escaping upon a massive dragon turtle is a showy display of power for the crown, yet it's also an inefficient method of escape that allows the characters to catch up easily, which is perfect for her purposes.

Razim knew all this from the start. He tries to get the characters to chase after and destroy Ardet's cultists, so he can scry the show from the comfort and security of his palace. While briefing the characters, Razim's words are mostly lies and his emotions are feigned, yet his peerless skill at manipulation makes the deception difficult to pierce. Characters can get hints that he's hiding something with a DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) check, but it takes a DC 24 Wisdom (Insight) check to realize the depths of his deceit and the laughter behind his eyes.

### AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

After an hour, Razim returns to visit the characters. A servant enters first and starts to pronounce his list of titles, but Razim interrupts her out of impatience. He tells the characters that Ardet's cultists have managed to escape the palace during their trial. Worse yet, Razim's fool of a daughter Kessara seems to have aided in their escape, and even stole his *crown of wishes* in

the process. He is incredulous that she would betray him after all he has done for her.

Razim wants the characters to chase after them and bring the crown back. Though he longs to fly out with his soldiers and slay them all himself, he fears having to fight his own daughter Kessara; even the efreet frown upon kinslaying. Instead, he would send his new champions (or servants, if they all failed at the trial) to bring it back in his stead. If they succeed in retrieving the crown, they would earn a truly wondrous prize. The crown is all-important; though Razim would like to see the cultists and his traitor daughter slaughtered mercilessly, their fate is up to the characters to decide.

Once the characters agree to catch Ardet and bring back the *efreeti crown of wishes*, Razim leads them to the courtyard outside the palace. He tells the characters that he has learned that Ardet's cultists are attempting to sail across the Sea of Fire on the back of a massive dragon turtle named Old Bunderoth. Kessara likely used the *efreeti crown of wishes* to control or bargain with the ancient beast in some way. Razim warns the characters that Old Bunderoth is a truly ancient creature, far beyond mortal capabilities to harm, much less defeat, but the old turtle is not likely to even notice the characters' existence unless provoked. Razim will deliver the characters to Old Bunderoth and bring them back once they have the crown; everything else is up to them.

### WHAT IF THEY REFUSE?

The characters should realize that working with Razim is the only real way to catch up to Ardet and complete their mission. Beyond that, one can only imagine what harm the cultists might accomplish back on Faerûn with the *efreeti crown of wishes* in their hands. Given their lack of options, this adventure assumes that the characters take up Razim's offer.

However, if the players refuse to assist Razim, and they figure out some way to continue without Razim's help (such as by using spells like *scrying* and *wind walk*), work with them to improvise a solution.

When the characters are ready:

Razim waves his hand and a hot wind swirls around you, lifting you quickly into the air. The warm wind carries all of you over the side of the island. You feel yourself accelerating faster and faster as you fly across the Sea of Fire towards the distant horizon.

Somehow, despite the smoke and steam flowing up from the lava underneath and the relentless sun beating

down from above, you feel no discomfort from the heat, though the flight is still far from comfortable. It's all too easy to imagine yourself slipping away and falling to certain death in the fire below.

After what felt like an eternity of flight, you find yourself rapidly approaching a jagged, rocky island that must be Old Bunderoth, the great dragon turtle that Razim spoke of. Even the individual spikes on its back dwarf the people riding it. The wind that swirls around you slows and descends just as the turtle lurches to a stop, and the people riding upon the turtle notice you for the first time.

Among those figures is Kessara, lounging near the neck of the beast, a golden crown blazing with green flame resting upon her head. She speaks loudly and clearly, "Looks like my father's new minions have come already, so it's time for our game to end. Goodbye Ardet, you were quite entertaining." She takes the crown off her head and casually tosses it forward into the air. As it flies, Kessara vanishes in shimmering blaze of fire and laughter.

Ardet runs forward and barely catches the crown. "Kessara, you coward, come back here!" He looks about frantically, then places the crown upon his own head and glares in your direction. "Begone!" he yells, and pauses. The crown glows with blue flame, but nothing else happens. "I wish we were far away from here!" Nothing happens. "How does this even work? It didn't look hard when the efreeti used it."

A half-orc woman wreathed in flame speaks up, "Forget it, Ardet. Let's just destroy these weaklings and figure out the crown later." Ardet closes his eyes and exhales slowly. As the swirling hot wind finally deposits your group onto the back of Old Bunderoth, Ardet pulls out his dagger. "Fine. Deal with them." His words are grim, but his demeanor looks uncertain.

## IT'S TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

### GENERAL FEATURES

The Sea of Fire has the following general features:

**Light.** A blazing sun rests atop a golden sky, waxing and waning on a 24-hour cycle. It ranges from white hot at noon to deep red at midnight. It is currently nighttime, so the sun is near its dimmest.

**Lava.** Old Bunderoth swims in the middle of lava, and lava surrounds the characters on all sides. Any creature that touches lava or ends its turn touching lava takes 33 (6d10) fire damage. Lava is very dense, so most creatures falling into lava would not sink into it.

**Temperature.** Since they're doing his bidding, Razim has allowed some of the palace heat protection to linger on the characters. For 24 hours, they don't have to worry about heat exhaustion from the plane.

**Old Bunderoth.** The battlefield here is on the shell of a massive, powerful dragon turtle. For all intents and purposes, treat the dragon turtle as a terrain element rather than a creature. He can't be killed or banished, he can't be affected by conditions, and he can't even be significantly hurt by the characters. He is currently stationary in the Sea of Fire.

**Spikes.** Old Bunderoth has several large spikes coming out of his back. The spikes range from 10 ft. tall near their edge to 20 ft. tall at their center.

**Shell Shock.** Once per round, whenever a part of Old Bunderoth takes damage (such as if an area spell includes part of its shell), the turtle feels mildly irritated and shakes his shell for a moment, forcing every land-bound creature to make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. Those that fail fall prone and slip 1d4 x 5 ft. towards the edge of the shell (potentially falling into lava if they were close enough). The cultists, having spent some time getting used to the turtle's motions, have advantage on this saving throw.

Use **Appendix: Old Bunderoth Battlemap** if you want to use a map for this combat. The characters start out on the back half of the dragon turtle, near its tail, while the cultists stand near the center and neck of the beast.

Kessara used *plane shift* to escape to the Ethereal Plane where she can watch the battle from safety. Characters who can access or see the Ethereal Plane (such as from spells like *see invisibility* or *blink*) might notice her presence or Razim's invisible scrying sensor.

The cultist force consists of **Ardet Peytir** (with *mage armor* pre-cast), **Shautha Firetouched** (with *mage armor* pre-cast and *fire shield* active from days ago), and three **eternal flame guardians**. This is where members of the Cloaks and Lord's Alliance can complete their assignments (capturing a cultist and redeeming Ardet respectively), so make sure to remind your players of those assignments.

### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Remove an **eternal flame guardian**. **Ardet Peytir** has no 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> level spell slots remaining and only one 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell slot remaining. **Shautha Firetouched** does not have *fire shield* pre-cast and spends her first turn casting *fire shield*.
- **Weak:** Remove an **eternal flame guardian**. **Ardet Peytir** has no 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> level spell slots remaining.

- **Strong:** Add a **fire elemental myrmidon**.
  - **Very Strong:** Add a **fire elemental myrmidon** and an **eternal flame priest** (with *mage armor* pre-cast).
- ✂ **For Extra Challenge:** The **fire elemental myrmidon** has the Sentinel feat. **Shautha Firetouched** has an extra 4<sup>th</sup> level spell slot and 8 sorcery points which she can spend on the Quickened Spell, Subtle Spell, and Twinned Spell metamagics.

## TACTICS

**Ardet Peytir:** Ardet has been given great power by the Black Phoenix, but he is hesitant to use it due to inexperience and his personal doubts. For the first two rounds of combat, he fights very defensively, shooting weaker spells and *Melf's minute meteors* from afar while using *counterspell* only to protect himself. If the characters fail to redeem Ardet (see the **Redemption of Ardet** section below) or they attempt significant harm on him, Ardet sheds his doubts and uses his full might to destroy the characters.

**Shautha Firetouched:** Shautha is the group's second-in-command. She is fearless and zealous, and she is not afraid to move into the center of a fight, trusting in her *fire shield* to punish attackers. She likes to cast *dragon's breath* before moving in to breathe on groups of enemies, and she prefers to save *counterspell* for enemy spellcasters who try to counter her spells.

**Eternal Flame Guardians:** The guardians engage in melee, but they are hesitant to move into the center of a cluster of enemies for fear of being *fireballed* by friendly casters. If the characters defeat all other foes, the eternal flame guardians quickly surrender.

**Fire Elemental Myrmidon:** The myrmidon moves to engage enemies in melee and keep martial characters occupied. It uses Fiery Strikes as often as possible and fights to the death.

**Eternal Flame Priest:** The priest is fanatical in his devotion to the cult. He tries to stay back from melee combat to cast spells like *fireball* and *scorching ray*. He is even willing to include allies or himself inside a *fireball* if it means hurting his foes.

## THE REDEMPTION OF ARDET

Ardet feels ashamed of himself for turning against his family and city, and Kessara's betrayal has only made him question his decisions more. This is the characters'

one and only chance to turn Ardet away from the Cult of Reborn Flame.

A character can try to redeem Ardet by spending an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check. **Make sure players are aware of this possibility.** They have advantage on the check if that character has played *DDEX2-15 Black Heart of Vengeance* or if they make a particularly strong argument that hasn't been made before. They have disadvantage if an ally has attempted to harm Ardet since Ardet's last turn. If the check succeeds, Ardet looks visibly troubled and hesitant, and he will act passively on his next turn. If the check fails, Ardet sneers at the argument and pays no heed. Make it clear that bad arguments only push Ardet closer to the cult.

If the characters succeed three times in convincing Ardet, he decides to renounce the Cult of Reborn Flame and return to his family. He will avoid combat and try to stay out of harm's way until the battle is over. If the battle is going poorly for the characters, he may even jump in on their side. On the other hand, if the characters fail three times in convincing Ardet, he stops listening to their words and fights his utmost to destroy them. The same happens if the characters do more than 25 damage to him or significantly harm him in some other way. Make it clear when it happens that he can no longer be reasoned with.

If the characters had attempted to persuade Ardet back in **Part 3**, that success or failure counts towards the limit of three successes or failures needed to redeem Ardet or push him away.

### XP AWARDS

If the characters manage to redeem Ardet and keep him alive to the end of the battle, award each character 1,000 XP.

### TREASURE

The cultists are carrying a total of 500 gp in coins. Even if Ardet is alive and redeemed, he is happy to give away the cult's ill-gotten gains. The characters also retrieve the *efreeti crown of wishes*.

### DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters have defeated the cultists and looted their bodies, they feel a mighty rumble beneath them as Old Bunderoth begins to submerge into the Sea of Fire. Just as that happens, the characters find themselves lifted and flown back to the Sunscorched Palace by the same wind that carried them before.

# CONCLUSION

## PALACE INTRIGUE

When the characters arrive at the Sunscorched Palace, a servant leads them to a grand audience chamber, where they see Pasha Razim and Amira Kessara seated side by side. Razim commends the characters for being such entertaining specimens. He admits that the trials and tribulations were all a sham; from the beginning, Razim had no intention of sullyng himself by helping the cultists, and he wanted to destroy them for having the audacity to make such a request. Kessara convinced him to wait until they could come up with the most amusing way to destroy the cultists; the characters' arrival provided just such an occasion.

The two of them created the myth about the *crown of wishes* to inspire greed in Ardet's cultists and drive the two groups into conflict. It amuses the efreet that mortals were so gullible as to believe a mere crown can grant wishes; that power comes from the sheer nobility of the efreet, not from some external ornament. They explain that the crown was just a trifling bauble they found in a vault. Razim did promise to reward the characters if they brought back the crown, so in his infinite generosity, he allows them to keep the *efreeti crown of wishes*. It may not be a powerful artifact, but it will likely sell for a good amount back in their world.

Kessara found the characters so much fun to play with that she invites them to come again whenever they wish, so long as they're prepared to repay hospitality with entertainment. She offers to have her wind servants carry the characters back to their portal. Razim is willing to let even characters who gained the **Servant of the Pasha** story award to go back to Faerûn to complete their mission; with the mark that Razim has placed upon them, they will be useful to him no matter where they go.

### XP AWARDS

For successfully retrieving the *crown of wishes*, award each character 500 XP.

### EFREETI CROWN OF WISHES

Though the two efreet purported it to be an artifact of great power, the *efreeti crown of wishes* is in truth just an expensive trinket with a quirky feature. It can be sold as treasure for 1,500 gp, but as a trinket with a fun trait, it is quite possible that a player would like to keep this crown after the adventure. Instead of selling the crown, one player character can elect to buy the crown

themselves, spending 1,500 gp and adding that amount to the party treasure (so the party will receive the same amount of treasure in the end, but that one character spends 1,500 gp to keep the crown). If more than one player is interested in purchasing the crown, determine the buyer randomly among them.

## HOME COMING

When the characters return to their home plane, they find the ghetto basement guarded by Cloaks, who immediately send for Blade Cora Peytir. She is eager to hear the characters' full report.

If Ardet was redeemed during the battle and the characters brought him back safely, Cora Peytir is thrilled by his return and commends the characters for their success. She will watch over Ardet and keep him on a tight leash, but she hopes that he can rejoin the family and forget about the cult business. Members of the Lord's Alliance succeed on their faction assignment and gain an additional renown. All characters gain the **Favor of House Peytir** story award.

If Ardet is dead, Cora Peytir is saddened by the loss, but commends the characters for doing what had to be done. She is glad that he can no longer jeopardize her family's good name with his foolishness. Lord's Alliance members fail their faction assignment.

If the characters brought Ardet back without redeeming him during the battle, he becomes stubborn and set in his views, refusing to renounce the cult or cooperate in any way. The Cloaks take him into custody, and Cora lets the characters know that she is deeply disappointed that they chose to return him alive despite his remorselessness. Alive, he still poses a threat to House Peytir; Cora implies to the characters that she will have to end the threat herself. Lord's Alliance members fail their faction assignment.

If the characters did not allow any cultist to escape and succeeded in capturing at least one cultist alive (other than Ardet), the Cloaks will take them into custody and question them about the Cult of Reborn Flame. Kethrina thanks the characters for their service, and all members of the Cloaks earn the **To Wear the Cloak** story award. The Cloaks eventually learn from the cultist that the Cult of Reborn Flame is led by a mysterious and supernatural figure named the Black Phoenix, who intends to purge Mulmaster in cleansing fire. The cult's sinister plans go into motion soon...

### TREASURE

Regardless of Ardet's fate, Blade Cora Peytir honors the agreement and pays 300 gp to each player character.



## REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

## EXPERIENCE (MIN/MAX XP: 4,500/6,000 EACH)

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

### COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe (Appears In)	XP per Foe
Ardet Peytir (3, 5)	3,900
Azer (2)	450
Efreeti (3, 4, 5)	7,200
Eternal Flame Guardian (5)	450
Eternal Flame Priest (5)	700
Fire Elemental Myrmidon (5)	2,900
Lava Roper (4)	1,800
Molten Tentacle (2)	200
Red Dragon Wyrmling (4)	1,100
Shautha Firetouched (5)	2,300

### NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Accomplishment (Appears In)	XP per Character
Cross Sea Without Azer Help (2)	750
Make Fair Offer to Zehind (2)	500
Persuade Ardet (3)	500
Solve Logic Puzzle (4)	1,500
Redeem and Save Ardet (5)	1,000
Retrieve Crown of Wishes (5)	500

## TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

### TREASURE AWARDS

Treasure Name (Appears In)	GP Value
Portable Hole Gold & Gems (4)	1,500
Cultist Coins (5)	500

Efreeti Crown of Wishes (5)	1,500
Cora Peytir's Payment (5)	300 per player

**Consumable magic items** should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

**Permanent magic items** are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### VAULT OF THE EFREETI (PORTABLE HOLE)

*Wondrous Item, rare*

This piece of fine red silk can be folded up into a handkerchief, scarf, banner, or cloak. When studied closely, the folds of silk seem to dance and flicker like fire. A character wearing or carrying this item can speak and understand Ignan. This item appears in Part 4, and its description can be found in **Player Handout 4**.

### EFREETI CROWN OF WISHES

*Trinket*

This beautiful golden crown is covered with diamonds each of which gleams with its own light. The crown resizes to fit the head of any wearer. Contrary to its name, the crown does not actually grant any wishes. Instead, when the person wearing it feels strong emotion of any kind, the crown sprouts harmless, colorful flames from its pinnacle, with the color of the flames based on the wearer's mood: red for anger, blue for sorrow, green for amusement, and so on. This crown can be sold for 1,500 gp. It does not count as a magic item and cannot be traded. This item appears in Part 5, and its description can be found in **Player Handout 5**.

### POTION OF HEROISM

*Potion, rare*

This item appears in Part 1, and its description can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### POTION OF FIRE RESISTANCE

*Potion, uncommon*

This item appears in Part 2, and its description can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### SPELL SCROLL

*Scroll, varies*

This item appears in Part 1, and its description can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn one or more of the following story awards:

**Servant of the Pasha.** You have failed the Trial of Strength and Cunning and would have lost your pathetic life were it not for Pasha Razim's magnanimity and mercy. In exchange, he has marked you as his servant, placing a magical tattoo somewhere on your skin. The tattoo spells out "Servant of Razim" in Ignan, and any efreet can spot the tattoo upon you no matter how you attempt to hide it (magically or otherwise). Efreet who see this mark are likely to treat you with contempt as befits a lowly servant, but they might also leave you alone for fear of angering your master. The tattoo can only be removed with a 9<sup>th</sup> level *remove curse* spell or at Pasha Razim's whim. This story award appears in Part 4 and its description can be found in **Player Handout 6**.

**Favor of House Peytir.** You have gained the favor of House Peytir, and with it, the approval of many of the anti-Thayan political factions in Mulmaster. Your Charisma checks to interact with Cloaks as well as Mulmaster nobles who are not aligned with Thay are made with advantage. This story award appears in Part 5 and its description can be found in **Player Handout 6**.

**To Wear the Cloak.** By capturing one of the Reborn Flame cult members for questioning, and silencing the rest of them, you have once again proved your competence and resourcefulness to Senior Cloak Rastol Shan. You gain one additional rank in the Brotherhood of Cloaks. This story award appears in Part 5 and its description can be found in **Player Handout 6**.

## PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn downtime and renown as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Members of the Lord's Alliance** earn **one additional renown point** if the party managed to persuade Ardet Peytir to change his ways and brought him back alive.

## DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*. For that purpose, this is a 4-hour adventure for APL 8.

# APPENDIX: NPC/MONSTERS

## AZER

Medium elemental, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Con +4

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Ignan

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Heated Body.** A creature that touches the azer or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

**Heated Weapons.** When the azer hits with a metal melee weapon, it deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage (included in the attack).

**Illumination.** The azer sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

### Actions

**Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

**Appears In:** Part 2

**Source:** Azer, *Monster Manual*

## MOLTEN TENTACLE

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 52 (8d10 + 8)

**Speed** 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+1)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Hold Breath.** While out of water, the molten tentacle can hold its breath for 1 hour.

**Underwater Camouflage.** The molten tentacle has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while underwater.

**Water Breathing.** The molten tentacle can breathe only underwater.

### Actions

**Tentacle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the molten tentacle can't use its tentacle on another target.

**Ink Cloud (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest.)** A 20-foot-radius cloud of ink extends all around the molten tentacle if it is underwater. The area is heavily obscured for 1 minute, although a significant current can disperse the ink. After releasing the ink, the tentacle can use the Dash action as a bonus action.

**Appears In:** Part 2

**Source:** Giant Octopus, *Monster Manual*

### MOLTEN TENTACLE ADJUSTMENTS

Molten tentacles have the following adjustments:

- **Alignment and Type.** Molten tentacles are chaotic evil aberrations instead of unaligned beasts.
- **Damage Immunities.** Molten tentacles are immune to fire damage.
- **Abilities and Actions.** Hold Breath, Underwater Camouflage, Water Breathing, and Ink Cloud all apply to lava instead of water.

## EFREETI

Large elemental, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 200 (16d10 + 12)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

---

**Saving Throws** Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +7

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Ignan

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

---

**Elemental Demise.** If the efreeti dies, its body disintegrates in a flash of fire and puff of smoke, leaving behind only equipment the efreeti was wearing or carrying.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The efreeti's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*

3/day: *enlarge/reduce, tongues*

1/day: *conjure elemental (fire elemental only), gaseous form, invisibility, major image, plane shift, wall of fire*

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The efreeti makes two scimitar attacks or uses its Hurl Flame twice.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**Hurl Flame.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) fire damage.

**Appears In:** Part 3, Part 4, Part 5

**Source:** Efreeti, *Monster Manual*

## RED DRAGON WYRMLING

Medium dragon, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

---

**Saving Throws** Dex +2, Con +5, Wis +2, Cha +4

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +2

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

---

### Actions

---

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

**Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6).** The dragon exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Appears In:** Part 4

**Source:** Red Dragon Wyrmling, *Monster Manual*



## LAVA ROPER

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 93 (11d10 + 33)

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

---

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +5

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the roper remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal cave formation, such as a stalagmite.

**Grasping Tendrils.** The roper can have up to six tendrils at a time. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 20; 10 hit points; vulnerability to cold damage; immunity to fire, poison, and psychic damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the roper, which can extrude a replacement tendril on its next turn. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check against it.

**Spider Climb.** The roper can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The roper makes four attacks with its tendrils, uses Reel, and makes one attack with its bite.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) fire damage.

**Tendril.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 4 (1d8) fire damage and is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and the roper can't use the same tendril on another target. The target takes 4 (1d8) fire damage each time it ends its turn grappled by the roper.

**Reel.** The roper pulls each creature grappled by it up to 25 feet straight toward it.

**Appears In:** Part 4

**Source:** Lava Roper, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

## FIRE ELEMENTAL MYRMIDON

Medium elemental, neutral

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 117 (18d8 + 36)

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

---

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Ignan

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Illumination.** The myrmidon sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light in a 40-foot radius.

**Magic Weapons.** The myrmidon's weapon attacks are magical.

**Water Susceptibility.** For every 5 feet the myrmidon moves in water, it takes 2 (1d4) cold damage.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The myrmidon makes three scimitar attacks.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Fiery Strikes (Recharge 6).** The myrmidon uses Multiattack. Each attack that hits deals an extra 5 (1d10) fire damage.

**Appears In:** Part 5

**Source:** Fire Elemental Myrmidon, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

## ARDET PEYTIR

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**Saving Throws** Dex +6

**Skills** Arcana +3, Deception +7

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Ignan

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

---

**Resilient (Dexterity).** Ardet Peytir is proficient in Dexterity saving throws (included in his stats).

**Spellcasting.** Ardet is a 9<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Ardet knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames\**, *create bonfire\**, *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *shocking grasp*

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots): *absorb elements\**, *mage armor*, *shield*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *scorching ray*

3<sup>rd</sup> level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *Melf's minute meteors\**, *thunder step\**

4<sup>th</sup> level (3 slots): *wall of fire*

5<sup>th</sup> level (1 slot): *telekinesis*

### Actions

---

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Appears In:** Part 3, Part 5

**Source:** Bastian Thermandar, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

## SHAUTHA FIRETOUCHED

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 105 (14d8 + 42)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

---

**Skills** Arcana +3, Intimidation +6, Religion +3

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Ignan

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

---

**Relentless Endurance (1/Day).** When Shautha is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, she can drop to 1 hit point instead.

**Spellcasting.** Shautha is a 7<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Shautha knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames\**, *fire bolt*, *minor illusion*, *shocking grasp*, *thunderclap\**

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *mage armor*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *dragon's breath\**, *hold person*, *misty step*, *scorching ray*

3<sup>rd</sup> level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*

4<sup>th</sup> level (1 slot): *fire shield* (see *Wreathed in Flame*)

**Wreathed in Flame.** For Shautha, the warm version of the *fire shield* spell has a duration of "until dispelled." The *fire shield* burns for 10 minutes after Shautha dies, consuming her body.

### Actions

---

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

**Appears In:** Part 5

**Source:** Flamewrath, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

## ETERNAL FLAME PRIEST

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

---

**Skills** Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Religion +2

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Ignan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

---

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames\**, *create bonfire\**, *fire bolt*, *light*, *poison spray*

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *misty step*, *scorching ray*

3<sup>rd</sup> level (2 slots): *fireball*

### Actions

---

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

**Appears In:** Part 5

**Source:** Eternal Flame Priest, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

## ETERNAL FLAME GUARDIAN

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 17 (breastplate, shield)

**Hit Points** 45 (7d8 + 14)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

---

**Skills** Intimidation +3, Perception +2

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

---

**Flaming Weapon (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** As a bonus action, the guard can wreath one melee weapon it is wielding in flame. The guard is unharmed by this fire, which lasts until the end of the guard's next turn. While wreathed in flame, the weapon deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage on a hit.

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The guard makes two melee attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Appears In:** Part 5

**Source:** Eternal Flame Guardian, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

## ☠ – FOR EXTRA CHALLENGE

### RED DRAGON LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the dragon can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Magma erupts from a point on the ground the dragon can see within 120 feet of it, creating a 20-foot-high, 5-foot-radius geyser. Each creature in the geyser's area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- A tremor shakes the lair in a 60-foot radius around the dragon. Each creature other than the dragon on the ground in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- Volcanic gasses form a cloud in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the dragon can see within 120 feet of it. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is lightly obscured. It lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round. Each creature that starts its turn in the cloud must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its turn. While poisoned in this way, a creature is incapacitated.

**Appears In:** Part 4 (☠)

**Source:** A Red Dragon's Lair, *Monster Manual*

### SENTINEL (FEAT)

You have mastered techniques to take advantage of every drop in any enemy's guard, gaining the following benefits:

- When you hit a creature with an opportunity attack, the creature's speed becomes 0 for the rest of the turn.
- Creatures provoke opportunity attacks from you even if they take the Disengage action before leaving your reach.
- When a creature within 5 feet of you makes an attack against a target other than you (and that target doesn't have this feat), you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against the attacking creature.

**Appears In:** Part 5 (☠)

**Source:** Feats, *Player's Handbook*

### METAMAGIC (CLASS FEATURE)

You can only use one Metamagic option on a spell when you cast it, unless otherwise noted.

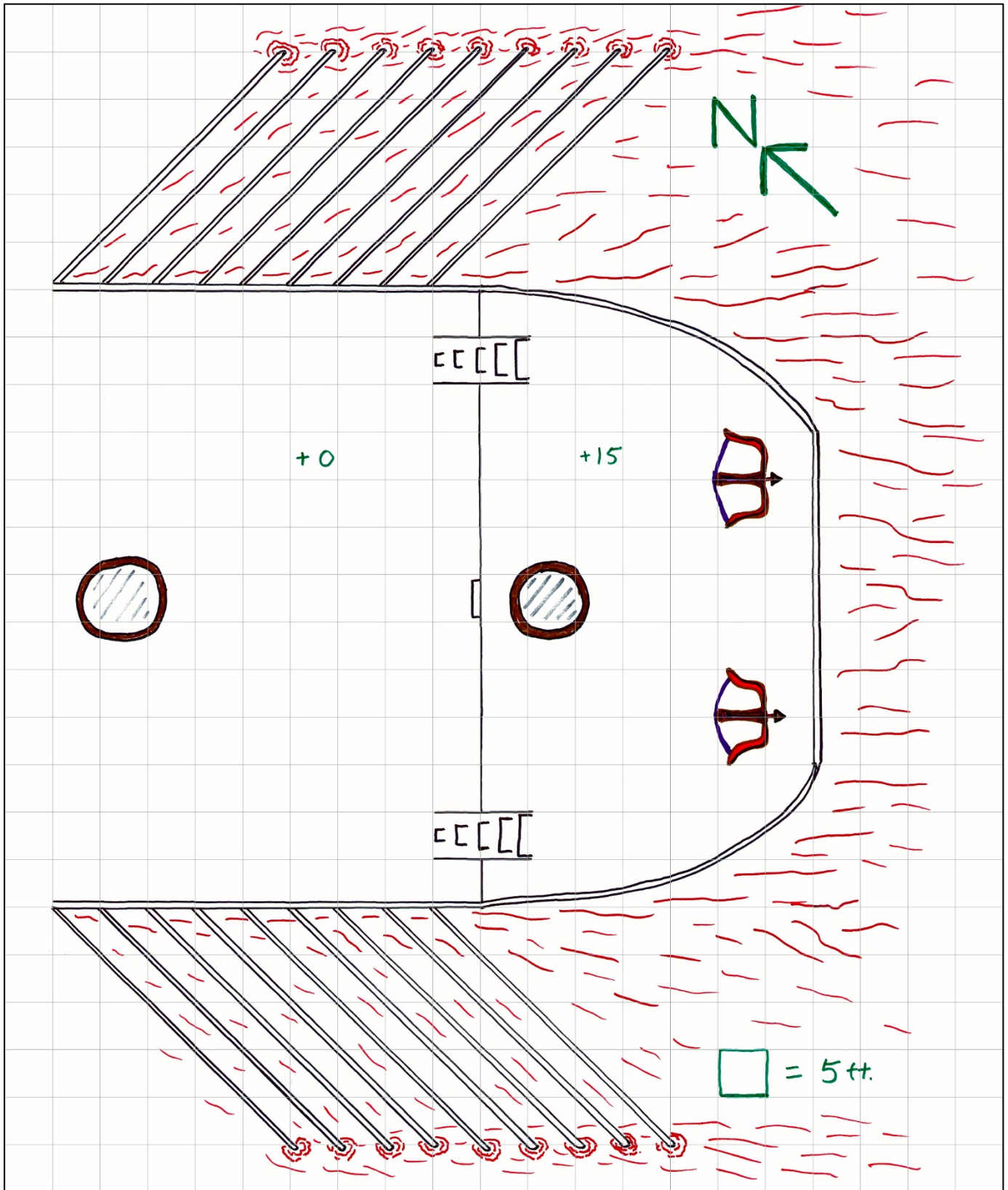
- **Quicken Spell:** When you cast a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, you can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.
- **Subtle Spell:** When you cast a spell, you can spend 1 sorcery point to cast it without any somatic or verbal components.
- **Twinned Spell:** When you cast a spell that targets only one creature, doesn't have a range of self, and is incapable of targeting more than one creature at its current level, you can spend a number of sorcery points equal to the spell's level to target a second creature in range with the same spell (1 sorcery point if the spell is a cantrip).

**Appears In:** Part 5 (☠)

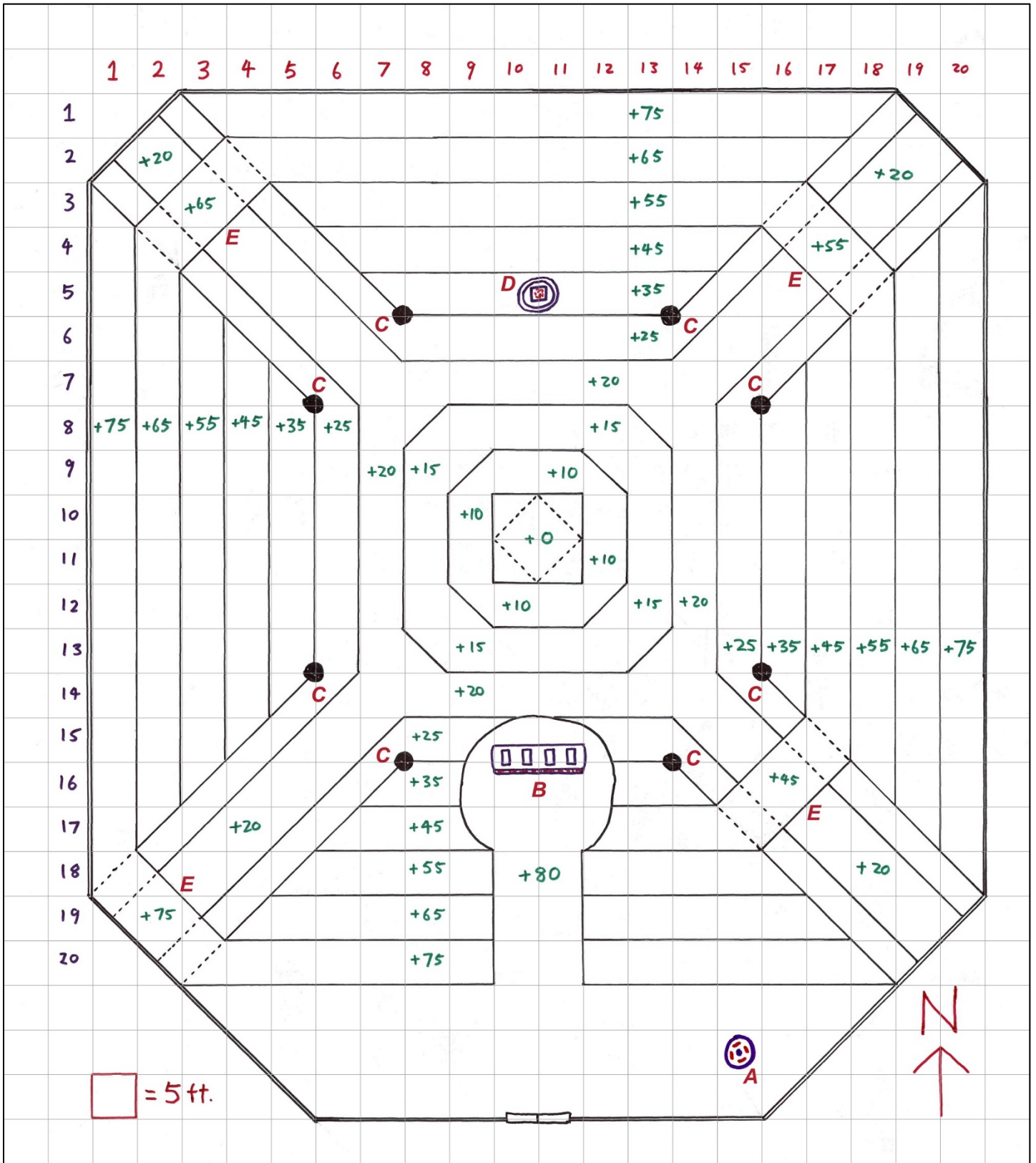
**Source:** Sorcerer Class Features, *Player's Handbook*



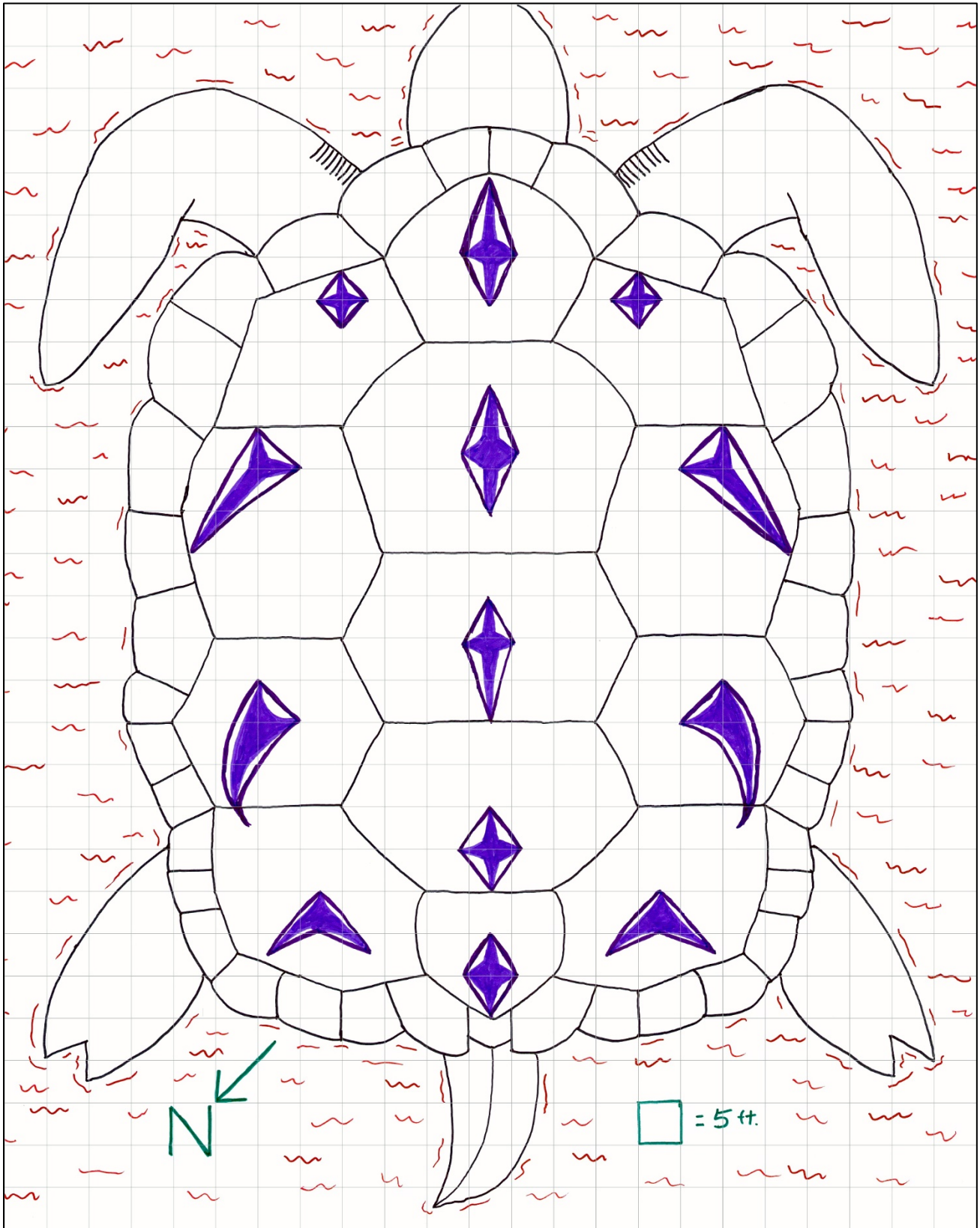
# APPENDIX: PYREBLADE BATTLEMAP



# APPENDIX: TRIAL OF STRENGTH AND CUNNING BATTLEMAP



# APPENDIX: OLD BUNDEROTH BATTLEMAP



## APPENDIX: APPEAL TO LOGIC TAROKKA CARDS PAGE 1

Swashbuckler 1 <i>WEALTH</i>	Philanthropist 2 <i>WEALTH</i>	Trader 3 <i>WEALTH</i>	Merchant 4 <i>WEALTH</i>
Monk 1 <i>WISDOM</i>	Missionary 2 <i>WISDOM</i>	Healer 3 <i>WISDOM</i>	Shepherd 4 <i>WISDOM</i>
Avenger 1 <i>STRENGTH</i>	Paladin 2 <i>STRENGTH</i>	Soldier 3 <i>STRENGTH</i>	Mercenary 4 <i>STRENGTH</i>



## APPENDIX: APPEAL TO LOGIC TAROKKA CARDS PAGE 2

Transmuter <b>1</b> <i>INTELLECT</i>	Diviner <b>2</b> <i>INTELLECT</i>	Enchanter <b>3</b> <i>INTELLECT</i>	Abjurer <b>4</b> <i>INTELLECT</i>
Guild Member <b>5</b> <i>WEALTH</i>	Druid <b>5</b> <i>WISDOM</i>	Myrmidon <b>5</b> <i>STRENGTH</i>	Elementalist <b>5</b> <i>INTELLECT</i>

## APPENDIX: APPEAL TO LOGIC CLUES VERSION A

<p><i>CLUE A-1</i></p> <p>The first to come is the representative of wisdom, who has the foresight to arrive early.</p> <p>1 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-2</i></p> <p>The last to come is the representative of wealth, whose time is precious and patience thin.</p> <p>2 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-3</i></p> <p>The second representative to arrive is the quietest and humblest one that night, for they have the lowest rank of the entire group.</p> <p>3 of 15</p>
<p><i>CLUE A-4</i></p> <p>The representative of intellect and the rank 4 representative arrives at nearly the same time, one immediately after the other.</p> <p>4 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-5</i></p> <p>One of the representatives is a noble paladin, who is not the only divine spellcaster among the group.</p> <p>5 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-6</i></p> <p>Only one of the representatives cannot cast spells, yet they outrank half the representatives here.</p> <p>6 of 15</p>
<p><i>CLUE A-7</i></p> <p>Because of some recent incidents involving property damage, the elementalists was not invited.</p> <p>7 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-8</i></p> <p>At least two of the representatives have a rank that match the order that they came.</p> <p>8 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-9</i></p> <p>The two most religious representatives spend some time discussing religious matters as they arrive one after the other.</p> <p>9 of 15</p>
<p><i>CLUE A-10</i></p> <p>The representative of intellect has sold numerous magical scrolls to the representative who came last, who then sold them for a profit.</p> <p>10 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-11</i></p> <p>The representative of wisdom knows the importance of humility despite being the highest-ranking member of their society.</p> <p>11 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-12</i></p> <p>The representative who comes first has a very close relationship with nature.</p> <p>12 of 15</p>
<p><i>CLUE A-13</i></p> <p>The representative who comes second lives to smite evil.</p> <p>13 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-14</i></p> <p>The representative who comes third likes to dominate others using magic.</p> <p>14 of 15</p>	<p><i>CLUE A-15</i></p> <p>The representative who comes fourth sees the world in a transactional light.</p> <p>15 of 15</p>

## APPENDIX: APPEAL TO LOGIC CLUES VERSION B

<p><b><i>CLUE B-1</i></b></p> <p>The mayor had a falling out with the churches in town, so none of the representatives are religious, nor are any of them divine casters.</p> <p>1 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-2</i></b></p> <p>The second representative to arrive is a member of the society of strength.</p> <p>2 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-3</i></b></p> <p>The last representative to arrive has a meager rank of 1.</p> <p>3 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE B-4</i></b></p> <p>None of the representatives has a rank equal to the order that they came.</p> <p>4 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-5</i></b></p> <p>The names of three of the representatives start with the same letter.</p> <p>5 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-6</i></b></p> <p>The last time he was invited to the mayor's mansion, the monk threw up all over the carpet. He was not invited this time.</p> <p>6 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE B-7</i></b></p> <p>None of the representatives has a rank of 2.</p> <p>7 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-8</i></b></p> <p>The third representative to arrive has a greater rank than that of the second and fourth representatives combined.</p> <p>8 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-9</i></b></p> <p>The mayor invited the swashbuckler to come after the latter swore that she would not swing on the chandelier.</p> <p>9 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE B-10</i></b></p> <p>None of the chosen representatives are particularly wealthy or greedy.</p> <p>10 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-11</i></b></p> <p>One of the representatives is a soldier who is the captain of the town guard.</p> <p>11 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-12</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes first has a mortal fear of wolves.</p> <p>12 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE B-13</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes second is always ready to fight.</p> <p>13 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-14</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes third is responsible for creating festive fireworks and snowfall during the event.</p> <p>14 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE B-15</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes fourth is a charming rogue.</p> <p>15 of 15</p>

## APPENDIX: APPEAL TO LOGIC CLUES VERSION C

<p><b><i>CLUE C-1</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes third is not from a society that values mental abilities.</p> <p>1 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-2</i></b></p> <p>The representatives who come first and second have a lot in common. They both want to help people and do good in the world.</p> <p>2 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-3</i></b></p> <p>None of the representatives are the highest ranked members of their society.</p> <p>3 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE C-4</i></b></p> <p>All of the representatives, except for the one who comes fourth, come in ascending order of rank (low to high).</p> <p>4 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-5</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes first is not the lowest ranked member of the group.</p> <p>5 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-6</i></b></p> <p>The mayor decided to invite the healer in case a brawl erupts, and someone gets injured.</p> <p>6 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE C-7</i></b></p> <p>The representative of intellect spends so much time thinking that they always show up last.</p> <p>7 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-8</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes third only works for gold, which is surprising considering they're not part of the society of wealth.</p> <p>8 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-9</i></b></p> <p>The representative of wealth is the only member of that society who has not asked the representative of intellect to turn lead into gold for them.</p> <p>9 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE C-10</i></b></p> <p>Half of the assembled representatives are capable in combat, but only one of them wears armor.</p> <p>10 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-11</i></b></p> <p>The representative of wisdom is among the first two guests to arrive.</p> <p>11 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-12</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes first is so wealthy they like to just give it away.</p> <p>12 of 15</p>
<p><b><i>CLUE C-13</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes second can bring others back from the brink of death.</p> <p>13 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-14</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes third sells his sword to the highest bidder.</p> <p>14 of 15</p>	<p><b><i>CLUE C-15</i></b></p> <p>The representative who comes fourth likes to transform one thing into another.</p> <p>15 of 15</p>



## PLAYER HANDOUT 1: LORD'S ALLIANCE ASSIGNMENT

*Associate,*

*The Peytir family may be down on their luck, but they are a legitimate and respected noble family of Mulmaster who contributes to the stability and prosperity of the city, and whose unwavering opposition to Thay is commendable. House Peytir has grown very friendly towards the Lord's Alliance in recent months, and it is in the faction's best interest to maintain Cora Peytir as a friend among the Blades. You must do whatever you can to convince Ardet Peytir of the error of his ways and get him to return to his family willingly. Show him that a noble scion should put his family first, and never act in a scandalous fashion. If you can redeem Ardet and return him to us safely, that would only bring House Peytir closer to our Alliance. But if Ardet refuses to renounce the cult, then there is no reason to bring him back alive.*

*- Lioncrown Cornelius Darnell*



## PLAYER HANDOUT 2: CLOAKS ASSIGNMENT

Fellow Cloak,

We know too little about this new threat that calls itself the Cult of Reborn Flame. We must rectify this ignorance and head off their plans before the Thagans find out about the cult and seize upon that threat as yet another way to discredit our brotherhood. Capture at least one of the cultists and bring them back for questioning, and make sure none of the other cultists escape the Plane of Fire alive. Ardet is the exception; kill him or return him as you see fit, but he can't be the one we question. Blade Cora Peytir is far too likely to object to our methods if we interrogate a member of her house in the usual manner.

- Senior Cloak Rastol Shan

## **PLAYER HANDOUT 3: ALTAR INSCRIPTION**

### **THE ALTAR**

There are four rectangular slots indented at the top of this altar. The front side of the altar bears the following words carved in Common:

**THERE WAS ONCE A TOWN DOMINATED BY FOUR SOCIETIES: THE SOCIETY OF STRENGTH, THE SOCIETY OF INTELLECT, THE SOCIETY OF WISDOM, AND THE SOCIETY OF WEALTH. EACH MEMBER OF A SOCIETY HAS A RANK FROM 1 TO 5, INDICATING HOW INFLUENTIAL THEY ARE WITHIN THEIR OWN GROUP; THE HIGHER THEIR NUMBER, THE GREATER THEIR RANK.**

**ONE DAY, THE MAYOR DECIDES TO HOST A MEETING BETWEEN ALL FOUR SOCIETIES. SHE INVITES A SINGLE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH OF THE FOUR SOCIETIES TO COME TO HER MANSION FOR THE CONFERENCE, AND SHE DECIDES THAT ALL FOUR REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD BE OF DIFFERENT RANKS.**

**WHO ARE THE FOUR REPRESENTATIVES, AND IN WHAT ORDER DO THEY ARRIVE? IT TAKES DEDUCTION AND LOGIC TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH.**

## PLAYER HANDOUT 4: VAULT OF THE EFREETI (PORTABLE HOLE)

During this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

### ***VAULT OF THE EFREETI (PORTABLE HOLE)***

*Wondrous item, rare*

This piece of fine red silk can be folded up into a handkerchief, scarf, or cloak. When studied closely, the folds of silk seem to dance and flicker like fire. A character wearing or carrying this item can speak and understand Ignan. It unfolds into a circular sheet 6 feet in diameter.

You can use an action to unfold a *portable hole* and place it on or against a solid surface, whereupon the *portable hole* creates an extradimensional hole 10 feet deep. The cylindrical space within the hole exists on a different plane, so it can't be used to create open passages. Any creature inside an open *portable hole* can exit the hole by climbing out of it.

You can use an action to close a *portable hole* by taking hold of the edges of the cloth and folding it up. Folding the cloth closes the hole, and any creatures or objects within remain in the extradimensional space. No matter what's in it, the hole weighs next to nothing.

If the hole is folded up, a creature within the hole's extradimensional space can use an action to make a DC 10 Strength check. On a successful check, the creature forces its way out and appears within 5 feet of the *portable hole* or the creature carrying it. A breathing creature within a closed *portable hole* can survive for up to 10 minutes, after which time it begins to suffocate.

Placing a *portable hole* inside an extradimensional space created by a *bag of holding*, *Heward's handy haversack*, or similar item instantly destroys both items and opens a gate to the Astral Plane. The gate originates where the one item was placed inside the other. Any creature within 10 feet of the gate is sucked through it and deposited in a random location on the Astral Plane. The gate then closes. The gate is one-way only and can't be reopened.

This item is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## PLAYER HANDOUT 5: EFREETI

### CROWN OF WISHES

During this adventure, the characters may find the following trinket:

#### ***EFREETI CROWN OF WISHES***

*Trinket*

This beautiful golden crown is covered with diamonds each of which gleams with its own light. The crown resizes to fit the head of any wearer. Contrary to its name, the crown does not actually grant any wishes. Instead, when the person wearing it feels strong emotion of any kind, the crown sprouts harmless, colorful flames from its pinnacle, with the color of the flames based on the wearer's mood: red for anger, blue for sorrow, green for amusement, and so on. This crown can be sold for 1,500 gp. It does not count as a magic item and cannot be traded.



# PLAYER HANDOUT 6: STORY

## AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn one or more of the following story awards. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

### ***SERVANT OF THE PASHA***

You have failed the Trial of Strength and Cunning and would have lost your pathetic life were it not for Pasha Razim's magnanimity and mercy. In exchange, he has marked you as his servant, placing a magical tattoo somewhere on your skin. The tattoo spells out "Servant of Razim" in Ignan, and any efreet can spot the tattoo upon you no matter how you attempt to hide it (magically or otherwise). Efreet who see this mark are likely to treat you with contempt as befits a lowly servant, but they might also leave you alone for fear of angering your master. The tattoo can only be removed with a 9<sup>th</sup> level *remove curse* spell or at Pasha Razim's whim.

### ***FAVOR OF HOUSE PEYTIR***

You have gained the favor of House Peytir, and with it, the approval of many of the anti-Thayan political factions in Mulmaster. Your Charisma checks to interact with Cloaks as well as Mulmaster nobles who are not aligned with Thay are made with advantage.

### ***TO WEAR THE CLOAK***

By capturing one of the Reborn Flame cult members for questioning, and silencing the rest of them, you have once again proved your competence and resourcefulness to Senior Cloak Rastol Shan. You gain one additional rank in the Brotherhood of Cloaks.