



THE HARROWING OF HELL

A Dreams of the Red Wizards Adventure

King Hekaton's soul is trapped in the Nine Hells—and the characters must brave trials on Avernus, Acheron, and in the mind of the storm giant king to win it back from the Lord of Lies.

Part Six of the *Storm King's Descent* series of adventures.

An Eight-Hour Adventure for Tier 4 Characters.

Optimized For: APL 18



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

Harrowing [har-oh-ing]

1. *adj.* extremely disturbing or distressing; grievous
2. *n.* archaic. a descent

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 17th- to 20th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 18**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure starts off in the Nine Hells, with the characters adventuring across Avernus before being drawn into the mindscape of King Hekaton, pulled to Asmodeus's citadel on Nessus, and sent to the endless battleground of Acheron.

BACKGROUND

In previous adventures in the “Storm King’s Descent” storyline, **KING HEKATON**—ruler of **MAELSTROM** and lord of the storm giants—was assassinated by the **CULT OF THE DRAGON** and animated into a death knight by the **RED WIZARDS OF THAY**. The cult of the Dragon also stole Hekaton’s **WYRMASKULL THRONE**, turning it into a phylactery for the newly risen dracolich **IYMRITH**.

In her father’s absence, **PRINCESS SERISSA** assumed control of Hekaton’s court and became interim queen of the storm giants. With the aid of **ZEHIRA DERYAN**—a Turmishan noble-turned-privateer and protagonist from previous *Dreams of the Red Wizards* adventures—Serissa ordered expeditions to find her father and the *Wyrmskull Throne*.

Recently, Hekaton’s death knight body was either captured or destroyed by Serissa’s forces. Iymrith has been slain, and her soul was removed from the *Wyrmskull Throne* when it was safely recovered (see *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*). Unfortunately, while Hekaton’s body was on the Material Plane performing evil acts as a death knight, his soul was imprisoned somewhere in the **NINE HELLS**. While his soul remains there, Hekaton cannot be resurrected, nor can he ascend to **STORMHOLD**, the storm giant afterlife. Serissa has thus summoned Zehira and a number of trusted adventurers to her court in Maelstrom, tasking them with finding Hekaton’s soul and giving the storm giant king the redemption he deserves.

OVERVIEW

The adventure’s story is spread over **four parts** and takes approximately **eight hours** to play. The adventure begins with a “Call to Action” scene.

Call to Action: Serissa’s Summons. At Maelstrom, Princess Serissa asks the characters to find her father’s soul and free it.

Part 1: Where in the Nine Hells is Hekaton? The characters journey to Avernus and pay a visit to the Wandering Emporium to learn the whereabouts of Hekaton’s soul. This is **Story Objective A**.

Part 2: Mirror Maelstrom. The characters break into Mirror Maelstrom, Hekaton’s hellish prison, where they must deal with numerous threats and liberate Hekaton’s soul from the fiends that guard it. This is **Story Objective B**.

Part 3: Parting the Clouds. The characters travel into Hekaton’s mind, needing to convince him of his worth after reliving pivotal moments from his life. This is **Story Objective C**.

Part 4: A Liar’s Bargain. Asmodeus, Lord of the Nine Hells, snatches the characters away to Nessus, the ninth layer of his domain. From there, he sends them to Acheron for one more battle before they can leave with Hekaton’s soul. This is **Story Objective D**.

Wrap-Up: Coronation. Serissa becomes the new queen of the giants, and appoints Zehira and any willing party members to her court.

MODULAR ADVENTURE

While this adventure has distinct parts, each section is designed to be played on its own over approximately two hours, if you are at a store, convention, or public event with a shorter than eight-hour play time available.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Harrowing of Hell follows directly from *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*, concluding Serissa’s quest to save her father. If the characters didn’t play the previous adventure or any others in the Storm King’s Descent saga, the following hooks provide possible ways to involve them in the scenario.

A Trusted Ally. Characters who have met Zehira—a recurring ally throughout the *Dreams of the Red Wizards* storyline—receive a *sending* spell from her, asking them to accompany her to the storm giant court for a special mission.

Once More into the Breach. Characters who played in the *Storm King’s Thunder* adventure have helped Serissa save Hekaton once before. Now she sends them an invitation to her court to aid her and her father again.

Adventurers of Renown. Serissa knows that rescuing her father will be no easy task, so she’s asked around for the toughest adventurers she can find. Trusted contacts have told her impressive tales of the characters, inspiring her to invite them to her court to beseech their aid. If any of the characters have been to the Nine Hells before, Serissa might have sought them out specifically due to their familiarity with that plane.

RELEVANT STORY AWARDS

As the capstone to the *Dreams of the Red Wizards: Storm King’s Descent* storyline, and as a crossover with NPCs from previous Adventurers League storylines, the characters’ past story awards matter significantly in this adventure.

Because of how frequently this adventure calls on the DM to check story awards, you might want to do so for all awards before you start play.

DREAMS OF THE RED WIZARDS: STORM KING’S DESCENT

“A Costly Ride” Legacy Event (DDAL-DRW04). This affects the cost of Khyree’s spellcasting if the characters choose to seek his aid in the call to action.

“Code Breaker” Legacy Event (DDAL-DRW06).

Characters who have spent downtime days to successfully crack the code gain a new ability while in Hekaton’s mindscape (part 3 of the adventure).

“The King’s Fate” Legacy Event (DDAL-DRWEP02).

If the characters have destroyed death knight Hekaton’s body, the encounters become more difficult in his mindscape during part 3.

SEASON 9: AVERNUS RISING

“No Exceptions!” Story Award (Assorted Season 9

Adventures). Characters who have broken Mahadi’s rules in previous adventures are barred from entering the Wandering Emporium in part 1 of the adventure.

“Holy Protector” Story Award (DDAL09-08). This story award gives Dara her unicorn companion, Zhalruban, in part 1 of the adventure.

“Plague of Plagueshield” Story Award (DDAL09-06).

This story award determines Duracles the pit fiend’s primary targets in part 2 of the adventure, and also informs the devils of the characters’ general abilities and defenses.

“You Let Dara Die!” Story Award (Assorted Season 9

Adventures). This story award determines the number of *potions of vitality* Dara can bestow upon the group in part 1, and which abilities she has lost if they take her along during part 2 of the adventure.

DM NOTE: RUNNING TIER 4

Writing an adventure for tier 4 characters is as much an attempt to see the future through a brick as it is an ordered process with firm rules. This is made even more difficult by the nature of organized play and the varied players you might encounter as a DM. The authors can only guess at the random assortment of abilities and magic items that are most likely to be present in your game, so it falls to you as the DM to make liberal use of the rule of fun. Adjust the challenges as necessary so as to not overwhelm or underwhelm the party. This adventure is meant to be the capstone of a story that challenges and excites our most invested players—so if the characters at your table fall outside the bounds of the authors’ limited prognostication, we trust you to do what needs to be done without changing the general story.

THE ILTKAZAR SCEPTER

Zehira Deryan is present with the characters throughout this adventure, unless there’s a strong reason for her not to be. As the primary quest giver and sidekick, she has a vested interest in all that happens in the storyline. Zehira is also the wielder of the *Iltkazar* (ILT-kah-zar) *Scepter*—one of the ten Ruling Scepters of Shanatar, forged by the dwarven gods and given to the ruling houses of that ancient dwarven empire.

The *Iltkazar Scepter* is an intelligent artifact-level magic item that is bonded to Zehira. It takes the form of a tapered mithral rod as thick and long as a dwarven forearm, with a small platinum knob at the bottom and a rounded disk adorned with a ring of seven tiny red gems at the top. A wielder attuned to the scepter has access to these properties:

- They gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this scepter, which can be wielded as a magic club.
- They can make the scepter appear nonmagical at will, as if it were under the effect of the *Nystul’s magic aura* spell.
- They can use the properties of the *Wyrmskull Throne*. Additionally, the scepter has 10 charges, and it regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges at dawn. The wielder of the scepter can use these charges to access the following properties:
 - If the wielder is underground or underwater, they can use an action to expend 1 charge to determine the distance to the surface.
 - As an action, they can expend 2 charges to cast the *sending* spell from the scepter.
 - As an action, they can expend 3 charges to cast the *teleport* spell from the scepter. If the destination is within 60 feet of the *Wyrmskull Throne*, there is no chance of a teleport error or mishap occurring. (Because the *teleport* spell takes the caster to a location, not an object, the wielder must know the location of the *Wyrmskull Throne* in order to teleport to it.)

The *Iltkazar Scepter* has additional properties that manifest throughout this series of adventures.

Though Zehira is a close ally of the characters, she does not allow anyone else to use the scepter, and the scepter cannot be attuned to another creature. If Zehira is incapacitated or killed and the characters attempt to claim the artifact, it teleports away from them, taking Zehira with it.



CALL TO ACTION: SERISSA'S SUMMONS

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

The adventure begins in Maelstrom, the enormous underwater citadel of the storm giants. Located a few hundred miles off the Sword Coast, deep in the Trackless Sea, Maelstrom is home to Princess Serissa, interim ruler of the storm giants. Serissa has summoned the characters back to her throne room to discuss saving her father's soul.

The characters must teleport down to Maelstrom, either from their current location or from a ship above the citadel. If they do not have the means to do so, Serissa arranges for a storm giant sorcerer to meet the characters' ship.

MAELSTROM

Leading with any of the hooks in the prior "Adventure Hooks" section, or simply segueing from *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*, the characters and Zehira start this adventure in Serissa's court.

You've arrived at the royal court of Maelstrom, the underwater stronghold of the storm giants. Princess Serissa—interim ruler of the storm giants—sits upon the newly restored *Wyrmskull Throne*. It is clear that a weight has been lifted off her shoulders in recent days, and with the throne returned, she looks much more at ease. And yet she still wears a somber expression.

AREA INFORMATION

Maelstrom's throne room has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. The throne room resembles an enormous amphitheater fit for giants. The 50-foot-high ceiling and oversized furnishings make non-giant characters look tiny by comparison.

The Wyrmskull Throne. Serissa sits upon the *Wyrmskull Throne*, a wondrous artifact of immense power. This rune-engraved obsidian throne floats a foot off the ground, its legs made of four ancient dragon skulls.

SERISSA

By this point in the story, Serissa is no stranger to the responsibilities of leading the storm giants. Between her father's disappearance in *Storm King's Thunder* and his death in the previous installments of the *Storm King's Descent* adventures, Serissa has had plenty of time to hone her strengths as a ruler. While the characters speak with her, she should come across as prudent and experienced.

Serissa has a long relationship with Zehira, who is a seasoned adventurer and the protagonist of earlier *Dreams of the Red Wizards* adventures. If the characters have played in any of those adventures, Zehira is a close ally. Either way, she accompanies them to Maelstrom and stays at their side for the rest of this adventure. Zehira should act as a helpful, capable member of the party, while not stealing the limelight from the characters. See the "Key

NPC Statistics" section toward the end of the adventure for Zehira's updated tier 4 stat block.

PRINCESS SERISSA

Chaotic good storm giant

The youngest daughter and chosen successor of King Hekaton, Serissa is cool and calm in her ongoing effort to hold the giant court together.

What They Want. Serissa knows deep down that the chances of resurrecting her father are slim. But even if she can't return him to the world, she wants to see his soul ascend to Stormhold where it belongs. She knows that her father was a good and worthy figure, and will do anything to save him from an afterlife of torment in the Nine Hells.

Experienced Leader. Serissa's previous experience ruling during Hekaton's absence (during the events of *Storm King's Thunder*) allows her to remain cool and levelheaded in the face of extreme uncertainty. She is prudent, compassionate, and optimistic, believing that all folk are innately good at heart.

CALL TO ACTION

Following the events of *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*, the characters or other heroes captured (or inadvertently destroyed) death knight Hekaton. Unfortunately, when the Red Wizards of Thay transformed his body into a death knight, they consigned his soul to imprisonment in the Nine Hells.

Princess Serissa asks the characters to find her father's soul. She hopes that he can either be brought back from the dead or redeemed, so that his soul may pass on to be judged by the All-Father, ascending to the storm giant afterworld of Stormhold.

MEETING WITH THE PRINCESS

Serissa is pleased to see the characters and is thankful for any work they did to put an end to Szass Tam's control of her father's body, as well as any part they played in returning the *Wyrmskull Throne* to Maelstrom. Unfortunately, she has one last task still to be performed. All of Serissa's attempts to resurrect her father have proven unsuccessful, and her research has told her that Hekaton's soul is currently imprisoned in the Nine Hells.

Read or paraphrase the following at some point during the characters' conversation with Serissa:

"I've done all I can to try to resurrect my father, or at least to determine his soul's whereabouts. Unfortunately, it would seem that when the Red Wizards animated the king into a death knight, they safeguarded his soul somewhere in the Nine Hells. If we find it, we have at least a hope of being able to resurrect him. But even if that fails, his soul will be able to ascend to Stormhold, where the All-Father can appraise him and give him the afterlife he deserves."

Serissa can also provide the following information to the characters:

- Following the events of the battle for the Tower of Skulls in Ormath, the Red Wizards fled the cathedral of Kelemvor. They have made no attempts so far to take back the *Wyrmskull Throne* or to interfere with Serissa's attempts to resurrect her father. From what Serissa gathers, their forces were greatly damaged, and they're biding their time for now.
- If the death knight Hekaton was not destroyed during *Wings of Death*, the undead is currently caged in the lower levels of Maelstrom, heavily guarded by **storm giant** sentinels. In his current state, he poses no threat to the citadel. Unfortunately, interrogating him has proven a waste of time. Magic has confirmed that the death knight has almost none of Hekaton's memories and has no knowledge of the whereabouts of Hekaton's soul.
- The information that King Hekaton's soul is in the Nine Hells comes from the Red Wizard zulkir Dar'lon Ma, who knows much about the intricacies of Thayan necromancy and who has been in contact with the storm giant court. This information was confirmed by Kelemvorite doomguide allies of Serissa, all experts in the ways of death (and seen in *DDAL-DRW07 Moment of Peace*).

As the characters plan their excursion to the Nine Hells, Zehira recommends the Wandering Emporium in Avernus as a good place to start. Controlled by a rakshasa named Mahadi, this traveling bazaar holds secrets of all kinds, and Zehira hopes that knowledge of Hekaton's whereabouts might be found there. Serissa supports this plan, but there's not a moment to waste. From what her loremasters tell her, every additional day that Hekaton's soul spends in the Nine Hells will make it that much more difficult to free him.

IF DEATH KNIGHT HEKATON WAS KILLED

This adventure assumes that the characters or other adventurers captured death knight Hekaton during the events of *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*. If the characters instead killed him, adjust Serissa's dialogue accordingly. She doesn't hide her distress over the characters killing the death knight, as her loremasters had warned her against that outcome. She informs the characters that it should still be possible to free Hekaton's soul, but that resurrecting her father is no longer possible. As well, she warns the characters that their mission will be harder than if they had captured her father, since some part of Hekaton's soul is likely to remember their violent acts.

GETTING TO THE WANDERING EMPORIUM

Tier 4 characters most likely have the means to travel to the Nine Hells using magic such as *plane shift* or *gate*. However, if the party lacks such means to travel to the Avernus, they have a few options.

PLANAR PORTAL

The storm giants of Maelstrom have discovered a planar portal to Avernus a few dozen miles away, deep in the thermal vents of the Trackless Sea. With the party

magically equipped to travel underwater, a character who succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check can lead the group using the storm giants' directions to locate the portal. Each time the check is failed before an eventual success, each character gains one level of exhaustion from the time spent scouring the bottom of the ocean. A ranger with the Horizon Walker subclass can use their Detect Portal feature to automatically succeed on this check.

Traveling through the portal brings the characters straight to Avernus, about a mile west of the Wandering Emporium.

KHYNREE THE MAGE

Zehira can get in touch with Khyndree, a Turmishan wizard friend of hers, who can cast *plane shift* to send Zehira and the party to Avernus for 1,000 gp. If any of the characters have the **A Costly Ride** legacy event (from *DDAL-DRW04 Foreign Affairs*), Khyndree triples this price.

Because Khyndree knows little about the Wandering Emporium, his casting of *plane shift* puts the characters on Avernus but a sizable distance away from the traveling bazaar. From their arrival point, the characters can either use standard teleportation to get to the Wandering Emporium, or they can attempt DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) checks to locate it. If any character succeeds, the characters locate the bazaar. For each failed check, each character gains one level of exhaustion as the party deals with murderous devils and harsh terrain.



PART 1: WHERE IN THE NINE HELLS IS HEKATON?

Estimated Duration: 1 hour 40 minutes

On Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells, the characters must carefully navigate the politics and intrigue of Mahadi's Wandering Emporium to learn the location of King Hekaton's soul. At the same time, they have a chance to interact with some of the characters traveling with the emporium, including Dara, a Chosen of Ilmater, and the interplanar merchant Fai Chen.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Learning the whereabouts of Hekaton's soul is **Story Objective A**.

THE WANDERING EMPORIUM

The Wandering Emporium is a marketplace and bazaar that travels constantly across Avernus, featuring gigantic infernal war machines carrying its merchants and wares across the blasted landscape. When the emporium's denizens find a good place to set up shop, the war machines create a horseshoe-like perimeter around their many tents and stalls, shielding them from Avernus's hot winds.

AREA INFORMATION

The Wandering Emporium has the following features:

Terrain. The terrain of the emporium is the reddish-orange heat-baked ground of Avernus, atop which colorful tents and stalls are bordered by infernal war machines.

Light. Avernus's sky burns with a sunless light at all times, creating conditions of bright light in all outdoor areas. Most of the emporium's stalls and tents have lanterns to light up their dark interiors.

Sounds and Smells. The Emporium is a place of constant chatter and bartering. The smells of foods from across the Nine Hells and other planes—many of them revolting—pervade the air.

NEUTRAL TERRITORY

Mahadi, the rakshasa master of the Wandering Emporium, strictly enforces the rules written on the banner hung over the entrance to the bazaar: "All are welcome. No fighting! No spellcasting! No exceptions!" Any violence or use of spells in the emporium, even for benign ends, breaks these dictates and brings down the wrath of Mahadi on those foolish enough to tempt fate. Anyone caught fighting or casting spells (and magic placed over the emporium to detect spellcasting ensures that they will) is banished from the emporium by Mahadi and earns the **No Exceptions!** story award.

Ordinarily, those who resist Mahadi's ban are beset by the rakshasa and his forces. Of course, by tier 4, the characters are likely powerful enough to sidestep anything the Wandering Emporium can throw at them, and Mahadi recognizes that. Characters who ignore his banishment don't suffer any immediate punishment ... but take note of their transgression for later. Such characters receive their comeuppance in part 4 of the adventure when they meet Asmodeus.

OLD FRIENDS, NEW ALLIES

When the characters arrive at the entrance to the Wandering Emporium, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you spreads a large horseshoe-shaped cluster of infernal war machines, clusters of brightly colored tents spread between them across the otherwise barren landscape of Avernus. You can hear chatter, laughter, and banter coming from inside the perimeter. As you draw close, you notice a banner hanging across an open entranceway, somehow readable in all languages:

"No fighting! No spellcasting! No exceptions!"

Check to see if any characters already have the **No Exceptions!** story award from an Adventurer's League season 9 adventure. If a character with this story award tries to enter the emporium, magical wards that cannot be dispelled alert Mahadi, who appears and orders that character to leave.

FAI CHEN'S BARTER

Shortly after they enter the Wandering Emporium, the characters see a possibly familiar face.

A smiling human in dusty monk's robes waves at you emphatically from a wooden cart, a blue faerie dragon poking its tiny head out from one of his sleeves. Even his draft mule seems pleased to see you.

This friendly figure is Fai Chen, a renowned interplanar merchant—or at least a clone of him (see the "Fai Chen" sidebar). He remembers any characters who interacted with him in any season 9 adventures, but recognizes the party as powerful heroes nonetheless, welcoming them to the Wandering Emporium. Fai Chen is accompanied by his mule, Gary, and his blue faerie dragon, Drandel dew.

FAI CHEN

Shou human

A Shou man apparently in his late thirties, Fai is known for the magic items and rarities he bargains and sells. He trades magic items only for other magic items, but takes coin for consumables and appreciates the value of *soul coins* (over and above their worth as magic items). He is always accompanied by his mule, Gary, and a blue faerie dragon, Drandel dew.

What They Want. Fai Chen keeps an eye out for Dara, but his other motivations for remaining with the Wandering Emporium are less certain. He clearly enjoys bantering and bartering with the emporium's clientele, as well as his contentious relationship with Mahadi.

Mysterious and Resourceful. Fai Chen always seems to know more than he's telling, but only rarely offers to share information. In a pinch, though, he's willing to lend a hand to those who need it.



HAVE WE MET?

Fai Chen is an NPC from multiple adventures in season 9 of the D&D Adventurer's League and earlier. He is a friendly, well-mannered, keenly perceptive, and well-traveled Shou human merchant in his late thirties. As the characters interact with Fai, use the following information from his background to color the conversation:

- Fai started his life as a temple monk, but soon entered into indentured servitude at Mahadi's Wandering Emporium.
- To pay off his debt while continuing to explore the world, Fai Chen studied some of the more obscure ki arts, and managed to create duplicates of himself that share all his memories and knowledge. Through this loophole, he was able to continue his trade and pay off Mahadi's otherwise insurmountable debts. He is the only mortal to ever get out of a contract with Mahadi.
- Fai and Mahadi's relationship is complex. The rakshasa resents Fai for finding a way out from under his control, yet he can't help but admire the merchant's resourcefulness. Fai keeps at least one of his clones around the Wandering Emporium for the fun of it, and to pick up on new rumors or leads.

Fai Chen can direct the characters to Mahadi if they speak of their mission to locate Hekaton. He can also provide the following updates on the recent state of Avernus during his conversation with the characters:

- Elturel has been returned to the Material Plane thanks to the daring efforts of a group of noble adventurers.
- The demonic army plaguing the Wandering Emporium was successfully repelled.

SALES PITCH

Fai Chen recently acquired a *chime of opening* that he doesn't particularly need. He's willing to trade it to the characters if they think it might aid them in their current quest, but only in exchange for a magic item of their own. Fai Chen loves to barter, and he offers up his own magic in exchange for one nonconsumable magic item of any rarity.

Fai Chen has seen plenty of magic items in his time, and it takes something special to really catch his eye. He's thus more in the mood to hear a winning sales pitch than anything else. He wants to know what makes the magic items the characters offer up really special? The more a character hypes up a useless item, the more impressed Fai Chen becomes—though if the item is only of common rarity, a character needs a *really* good sales pitch.

If the players would rather roll instead, a character must succeed on a DC 30 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to win over Fai Chen. Decrease the difficulty by 5 for each rarity category above uncommon. Characters can reroll as often as they like to try to win the *chime of opening*, if they can think of a new angle or have a new item to pitch.

TREASURE

When a character has rolled or roleplayed a sales pitch that's appropriately convincing or grandiose, Fai Chen accepts the exchange and hands over the *chime of opening*.

CHEERING UP DARA

At some point, any conversation with Fai steers toward Dara, a human teenager who is a Chosen of Ilmater and a major NPC from season 9. The characters might notice Fai looking around while he's talking to them, as if keeping an eye out for somebody, or the merchant might ask them specifically for help.

Fai confides that Dara has not been herself lately, but whether it's just typical teenage broodiness or something more is difficult to tell. Either way, her spirits could certainly use some uplifting, and Fai thinks that her meeting the characters might do the trick. He tells them that he last saw Dara getting a haircut at Burney the Barber's, and he can also direct them to the young woman's tent.

If the characters don't know Dara or are worried about a side trek interfering with their primary mission, you can raise the stakes by having Fai instead explain that Dara went missing just a few hours before, and the last place he saw her was Burney's. If the characters can find Dara, Fai promises to arrange a meeting for them with Mahadi.

BURNEY THE BARBER

To most onlookers, Burney looks like a cheerful Calishite woman of middle age. In truth, she is a shapechanged **ancient copper dragon** named Balarystul, who has a passion for haircutting. She's also a barber in the medieval sense of the word, performing dentistry and minor surgeries for anyone in need. She charges 1 gp for most services, and never accepts *soul coins*. Burney can also provide spellcasting, though she charges more for that. (The list of spells she can cast and their costs can be found in the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*. Burney has permission to cast these spells as part of her deal with Mahadi to work in the emporium.

If the characters ask, Burney remarks that Dara did get a haircut earlier that day—a nice bob, stopping just above the shoulders. She can also share the following information:

- Dara lives in a small tent of her own, over on the far side of the Wandering Emporium's camp. (Burney can provide directions to the tent.)
- When Dara came in, she said she needed a change of pace, but that a haircut would have to do. She seemed to have a lot on her mind. Burney doesn't know where Dara went after the haircut.

If Burney is familiar with any of the characters—to the extent that she trusts them with knowing her true identity—she also adds the following information:

- Dara asked Burney some philosophical questions regarding the barber's faith and loyalty to the god Bahamut. How did Burney know the path she had walked was right? How could she be sure that Bahamut was proud of her, spending so much time so far removed from his heavenly Upper Planes? Burney answered as best she could, but couldn't get any information from Dara about why she was asking.

BURNEY THE BARBER

Shapechanged copper dragon

Burney appears as a polite and friendly Calishite woman. She is always happy to tell stories (often with a moral message), and willing to provide cosmetic or medical treatments as well as spellcasting services.

What They Want. Burney is actually an ancient copper dragon named Balarystul, and is keeping an eye on events in Avernus on behalf of Bahamut. She wants to ensure that any goodly folk trapped in the Nine Hells have a chance to walk away with their lives and their souls, as long as she can keep her cover intact. Her stories can direct good-aligned characters toward help.

Talented Healer. Burney is treated as having the Healer feat and proficiency with a herbalism kit and a healer's kit, and has a +10 bonus to relevant rolls. All her non-spellcasting services cost 1 gp, and she refuses to even consider *soul coins* as payment.

DARA, CHOSEN OF ILMATER

Talking with Burney can lead the characters to Dara's abode, a humble-looking gray tent out along one edge of the Wandering Emporium's camp. (Characters who know Dara from any season 9 adventure recognize that the tent is smaller and less grandiose than it was when Mahadi was trying to tempt her.)

AREA INFORMATION

Dara's tent has the following features:

Dimensions. Dara's gray tent is 20 feet on a side and 10 feet tall at its highest point. Its entry flaps have been painted with the symbol of Ilmater: two hands bound at the wrist with red cord.

Light. A lamp shedding heatless light from a *continual flame* spell hangs from the tent's pointed ceiling, bathing the interior in a bright glow.

Mattress. Dara sleeps on a plain mattress whose blankets are neatly folded. A small locket set on top of her pillow bears the symbol of Ilmater, and can be opened to reveal a small length of red string. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check, a character recalls that all accomplished clerics of Ilmater are given this red string upon completion of their training, and that such clerics are meant to carry the string with them at all times as a reminder of their faith.

Desk. An unassuming, collapsible writing desk stands in the corner of the tent. An open journal sits atop it, along with a writing quill and inkwell.

SEEKING DARA

Dara's journal is open to its most recently scribed page, where she muses over her role as Ilmater's chosen, then speaks of needing to take a walk outside the Wandering Emporium.

The method the characters use to find Dara is up to the players. *Scrying* might work, and if she is contacted by way of a *sending* spell by a character she recognizes, the young woman gladly divulges her location. However, the characters all understand that spellcasting within Mahadi's camp is forbidden and detectable via magical wards, meaning they'll have to leave the camp's perimeter before casting. Mahadi also knows which way Dara went (see "A Favor for Mahadi" below).

Searching for Dara on foot without any kind of information (for example, learning from Mahadi that she went off in the direction of the River Styx) requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check. Rather than a single character leading the search, multiple characters can also make this check as a group check. If the characters can get a bird's-eye view of the nearby landscape, grant them advantage on the check. On a failed check, the characters still end up finding Dara, but they pass by the modron camp first, and might get caught up with the constructs there. See "Modron Bureaucracy" later on in part 1.

"Appendix 1: Wandering Emporium Overland Map" provides a DM's view of Dara's whereabouts in relationship to the Wandering Emporium and the modron camp.

BESIDE THE RIVER STYX

Some two miles away from the Wandering Emporium, the characters can find Dara sitting alongside a tributary of the River Styx.

Sitting cross-legged at the water's edge is a young, brown-haired girl in her early teens. Her heavy robes seem to swallow her up, wide sleeves concealing her hands. Her face looks tired beyond her years as she gazes down at her reflection in the shimmering surface of the water.

If the characters have the **Holy Protector** story award (from *DDAL09-08 In the Garden of Evil*), Dara is also accompanied by Zhalruban, her magical unicorn protector.

DARA'S STORY

Dara is an NPC from multiple season 9 adventures. She was ten years old during the events of season 9, and is now in her early teens. Already wise and knowledgeable beyond her years at the age of ten, she hasn't changed in that regard.

The following aspects of her background can help you roleplay Dara:

- Dara was raised by priests of Ilmater in Amn. She found and read from the legendary artifact *The Book of Exalted Deeds*—which bestowed upon her great wisdom and the powers of a full-fledged cleric of Ilmater.
- As a Chosen of Ilmater, she embarked on a holy mission into Avernus to rescue the souls of lost angels and mortal Hellriders who accompanied Zariel during her original journey into the Nine Hells.
- After accomplishing that goal, Dara spent the last few years traveling with the Wandering Emporium and awaiting further instructions from Ilmater. No word from the deity has yet come.

Dara was a Chosen of Ilmater who completed her god's divine mission at the age of ten (see the events of Adventurer's League season 9, and the "Dara" sidebar here). A few years have passed since then, and a life without purpose has led the young woman to question herself and her faith.

Dara is presently struggling with a number of issues that can come up as the characters speak to her:

- She accomplished a quest given to her by a god at ten years old. Where else does she go from here? How can she ever measure up to that again?
- Ever since she accomplished Ilmater's divine mission, the god's presence has been quieter in Dara's mind. She worries that now that he's done with her, Ilmater will discard her like a tool that has outlived its usefulness.
- Even if Ilmater were to call upon her again, she's not sure if she would have the strength to answer. What kind of a life is a life spent in service to someone else's whims?

Dara is wise beyond her years. Though it might be tempting to lean into the "angsty teen" trope while portraying her, it's better if her concerns and self-doubt come across as valid and mature. (This scene should foreshadow the internal struggle Hekaton feels in part 3 of the adventure.)

DARA

Lawful good human Chosen of Ilmater

This human in her early teens was raised by priests of Ilmater in Amn. There, she found and read from the *Book of Exalted Deeds*, triggering her transformation into a Chosen of Ilmater.

What They Want. Having completed her holy quest to find the Hellriders, Dara feels aimless now. She wants to find a purpose for herself, but whether that's a return to her faith or a complete departure from it remains to be seen.

Wise Beyond Her Years. Dara often sounds much more knowledgeable and mature than her years would suggest.



Let the characters have a conversation with Dara without making any dice rolls. By the end of the conversation, she should not be completely convinced one way or the other. After all, troubling questions like these can't be solved overnight. But she is appreciative of the characters for taking the time to talk with her and help her work through her dilemmas. She asks what brings them to Avernus, then offers them magical aid to help in their quest (see "Treasure" below).

Dara noticed the modron camp on her way to the River Styx, and can point it out to the characters if they haven't already stopped there.

TAKING DARA

It's possible that the characters might try to inspire Dara by encouraging her to come with them on their quest to find Hekaton's soul. Because Dara doesn't feel a personal call to action as she did when she was aiding the Hellriders, she is hesitant to come along. More importantly, because she is particularly weak compared to the characters, bringing her along should be considered only if the party is equally weak (in which case, they can make use of her for additional healing) or particularly strong (in which case, you can make use of the additional challenge of the characters needing to protect her).

If you decide that Dara should come along, it's important that she not take any of the spotlight off the characters. Either way, her status as a Chosen of Ilmater prevents her from being pulled into Hekaton's mind (in part 3 of the adventure) or being pulled to Nessus by Asmodeus (in part 4).

TREASURE

Dara normally has three *potions of vitality* that she offers to the party. However, if the characters have the **You Let Dara Die!** story award from any season 9 adventure, her power has waned accordingly. Subtract one *potions of vitality* for each time Dara died. (If different characters in the party have different death counts for Dara, average them.)

A FAVOR FOR MAHADI

If the characters don't get the information from Fai Chen or Dara, any of the patrons and vendors of the Wandering Emporium can tell them where to find Mahadi at his office—a small but ostentatious tent emblazoned with the words “Infernal Rapture.” This restaurant and spa is one of the most unusual features of the emporium.

If you had Fai Chen promise to arrange a meeting with Mahadi for the characters, he escorts them through the Infernal Rapture personally. Otherwise, they can navigate it on their own.

AREA INFORMATION

The Infernal Rapture has the following features:

Exterior. The 10-foot-square tent that bears the Infernal Rapture's sign is actually just the entrance to the restaurant and spa. Mahadi's establishment exists in its own demiplane, and peering in through the tent's entry flaps reveals only a misty fog. A character who pushes past the fog is instantly transported to the demiplane.

Dimensions and Terrain. The Infernal Rapture is a vast spa and restaurant with dozens of visible rooms, and infinitely many more rooms that can spring into existence upon Mahadi's request. Despite the site being a demiplane, Mahadi's “No fighting! No spellcasting! No exceptions!” rule remains in place here.

Light and Ambience. The air here is warm, and a refreshing mist permeates the entire establishment. All rooms are dimly lit by partially covered lanterns.

Spa Rooms. These rooms are found down hallways leading off the main dining area, with each featuring a pool of warm water. Attendants give backrubs and manicures to various patrons within. Some of these rooms are hotter than saunas, intended for fiends and other creatures accustomed to dangerously warm environments.

Dining Rooms. Nine dining rooms in the Infernal Rapture each feature decor based on a different layer of the Nine Hells, from the bogs of Minauros to the wintry climes of Cania. Waiters—many of them cambions—lead dining parties to sit upon pillows, cushions, and divans, then take their orders. An abyssal chicken platter is one of the house specialties, but all the food is decadently delicious—a welcome respite from the horrid quality of food consumed elsewhere in Avernus. All meals on the menu grant the effect of a *heroes' feast* spell to those who eat them, but partaking of a meal here creates a guilty feeling in the conscience of any good-aligned character. Those who eat the food also have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made against Mahadi.

Payment. A meal and light spa services cost one *soul coin*, which is collected by imp attendants. Other services can be had for additional *soul coins*.

MAHADI'S OFFICE

Characters who ask for an audience with Mahadi are led to his office by imps. Read or paraphrase the following:

On the other side of a plain door, you find a spacious, high-ceilinged office. Seated at a mahogany desk is a well-dressed Turmishan man scrutinizing a long scroll. He gives you a glance when he hears you enter.

Mahadi is a rakshasa who serves Asmodeus, and who normally takes the guise of a well-dressed Turmishan. The rakshasa recognizes any characters who have interacted with him before (most likely in a season 9 adventure or in *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*). He's currently looking over an infernal contract, but is happy to spare a moment or two for the characters.

WHAT HE KNOWS

Mahadi knows the location of King Hekaton's soul. Though he didn't oversee the soul's confinement directly, as a servant of the Lord of the Nine Hells, he hears things. Apparently, a number of Thayan Red Wizards came to Avernus themselves to make sure the containment job was done right. Mahadi can tell the characters where King Hekaton's soul is ... in exchange for a favor. If the characters speak to him before seeking out Dara, Mahadi can also share the general direction the young woman was heading when she left the emporium.

WHAT HE WANTS

Mahadi has had some modron auditors from the lawful neutral plane of Mechanus breathing down his neck recently. Yesterday, they went so far as to come to Avernus and ask to see a few centuries' worth of his infernal contracts. The loss of potential souls from Asmodeus's collection is unacceptable, so the modrons must be convinced to leave for at least a few years so that Mahadi can come up with a better solution. The rakshasa would prefer a nonviolent approach, as the modrons have a marut bodyguard with them and combat could get ugly.

Mahadi tells the characters that they can find the modron squadron at their own camp about a mile from the Wandering Emporium. (The modron camp's whereabouts in relationship to the Wandering Emporium and the River Styx can be seen in “Appendix 1: Wandering Emporium Overland Map.”) Mahadi has told the modrons to wait there while he “collects the necessary documentation.” This was, of course, just a bluff to stall for time, but they are expecting his imminent arrival.

Asmodeus's Revenge. As high-powered adventurers, the characters might have the means to magically extract the information they need from Mahadi, or to simply beat it out of him, ignoring his rules against spellcasting and violence. If they choose this easy way out, let them do so—but take note of it. Groups that brute-force Hekaton's whereabouts from Mahadi face consequences from his boss Asmodeus in part 4 of the adventure.

MAHADI

Lawful evil rakshasa

Appearing as a brown-skinned Turmishan merchant lord, Mahadi is a rakshasa in service to Asmodeus. He is completely dedicated to, and open about, his policy of neutrality when dealing with customers of the Wandering Emporium.

What They Want. Mahadi serves his master by collecting information on the Wandering Emporium's customers—and he collects plenty of souls and debts for himself while doing so. The rakshasa cannot bear to relinquish a single contract from his collection.

Charismatic Host. Mahadi is more than willing to act as a negotiator and broker for all kinds of creatures in Avernus ... except if his soul collection is involved. His adherence to rules makes him appear a reasonable figure to bargain with, and often endears him to those he spies on for Asmodeus.

MODRON BUREAUCRACY

Following Mahadi's directions leads the characters straight to a camp of modrons spread out in the Avernian wastes. The squadron consists of a **pentadrone**, four **quadrones**, and a **marut**. When the characters arrive, the marut is keeping its modron companions cool by shading them with a mechanical umbrella. Seemingly useless gears on the umbrella whir and tick every so often.

When the constructs first see the characters, the quadrones hop into combat formation like the well-oiled machines they are. The pentadrone does most of the talking—loudly—as its programming makes it the best communicator in the group. Its name is A0-515.

"GREETINGS," says the starfish-shaped mechanical creature standing before you, its five beady eyes staring at you intently. "I AM A0-515. MY CHRONOLOGICAL GAUGES INDICATE THAT WE WILL BE SHORTLY REACHING THE END OF OUR HOST'S DESIGNATED WAITING PERIOD. I MUST REQUEST THE CONTRACTS, AS PER OUR PREVIOUS DISCUSSION." The creature extends one of its five appendages in a manner reminiscent of an expectant hand.

WHAT THEY KNOW

The modrons interacted with Mahadi (who they refer to as "the host") 2.89 hours ago, when he told them to wait in their camp while he compiled the necessary documents for the audit. Being modrons, they have taken his statement at face value, but their patience is growing thin.

The modrons also noticed Dara walk past a few hours before, and can point the characters in her direction along the River Styx if they haven't already found her.

WHAT THEY WANT

As the wardens of law for the multiverse, the modrons want to audit the last few centuries of infernal contracts held by Mahadi. This involves collecting his records of those contracts and bringing them back to their home plane of

Mechanus. The modrons will not accept any alternative that goes contrary to this programming. Violence is a last resort for them, but if necessary, they engage the characters in combat to get their way.

Clever characters might be able to think of ways to get around the modrons' programming, and to convince them to return to Mechanus without the real contracts. Such feints might include any of the following:

- Fooling the modrons by presenting them with convincing fake contracts or illusions.
- Making use of mind-control magic.
- Confusing their logic circuitry with legal loopholes or paradoxes. Characters with the Infernal Contract Lawyer background (available as a prize for donations to Extra Life) have advantage on any related checks.

Reward other creative strategies as you see fit. This area is outside the laws of Mahadi's emporium, but violence is still only an absolute last resort for the modrons. If combat does break out, six additional quadrones leap out of a compartment in the marut's chest during the second round of combat on initiative count 20. Avoid using the marut's Justify action unless you're willing to derail the session for a while with a detour to Sigil, and unless characters not taken to Sigil have the means to pursue captured comrades, and then to get back to the Wandering Emporium.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party. This is an optional combat, so be wary of adjustments that will increase its length.

- **Very Weak:** Halve the **marut's** starting hit points. The additional **quadrones** no longer leap out of the marut.
- **Weak:** Halve the **marut's** starting hit points.
- **Strong:** The **marut** can use *dimension door* at will as a bonus action.
- **Very Strong:** The **marut** can use *dimension door* at will as a bonus action, and its Blazing Edict action no longer needs to recharge. An additional **pentadrone** arrives in the second round with the quadrones.

RETURNING TO MAHADI

When the modrons have been successfully dealt with, the characters can return to Mahadi. Read or paraphrase the following:

Mahadi smiles and leans forward at his desk, interlacing his fingers. "Well done. As promised, I'll tell you where Hekaton's soul is being kept. But I must warn you ... you're not going to like it."

Proceed to part 2 of the adventure.

PART 2: MIRROR MAELSTROM

Estimated Duration: 2 hours

In this part of the adventure, the characters must figure out how to get to the resting place of Hekaton's soul—a well-defended prison at the bottom of Kostchtchie's Maw, a great chasm on Avernus now filled with the water of the River Styx. Hekaton's soul lies shackled within, guarded by fiends and Red Wizards.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Reaching Hekaton and defeating the guards in his containment chamber is **Story Objective B**.

HEKATON'S WHEREABOUTS

Mahadi relates the following information about Hekaton's whereabouts to the characters:

- The imprisoned demon lord Kostchtchie was once trapped on Avernus at the bottom of an enormous chasm called Kostchtchie's Maw. This chasm has since been repurposed into a special prison for Hekaton, called Mirror Maelstrom. A number of Thayan Red Wizards have traveled to Avernus specifically to help oversee the prison's construction.
- The entire chasm has been filled with water from the River Styx. At the bottom sits a black iron fortress built in the architectural style of Maelstrom, its rooms filled with breathable air. The prison is a warped mockery of Hekaton's great fortress, with the storm giant king's soul trapped inside.
- The prison is primarily guarded by devils, along with a small number of Thayan mages and yugoloth mercenaries.
- The entire fortress is under the effect of magical Thayan wards that prevent teleportation or divination magic from reaching into the complex from outside, though such effects work normally inside the fortress.

Mahadi allows any characters in good standing with him to take a short rest in the Wandering Emporium if they need it, but he cautions against taking a long rest. If the characters want to save Hekaton's soul, time is of the essence.

GETTING TO MIRROR MAELSTROM

In exchange for the characters' service with the modrons, Mahadi lets them borrow a scavenger—an infernal war machine with room for eight—to help them get to the chasm. The vehicle lacks any of the weaponry of a typical war machine, but is a fast and safe way to travel across Avernus's blasted wastes. If the characters are hesitant to accept this gift, Mahadi promises that there are no strings attached, and that the characters will be doing a service to all those who don't appreciate Thayan meddling in Avernus.

Using the scavenger, Mahadi's clear directions allow the characters to arrive at the chasm with no complications.

If the characters travel to the chasm via other mundane means (including going on foot), each character must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw against the effects of traveling the dangerous terrain. A character takes 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

MIRROR MAELSTROM

Mirror Maelstrom sits at the bottom of a vast chasm filled with water from the River Styx. The chasm is some 200 feet wide, 1,000 feet long, and 200 feet deep. However, the murky water conceals its true depth, blocking all vision (including darkvision) beyond 30 feet.

See "Appendix 2: Mirror Maelstrom Map" for a map of the prison.

Zehira can cast *water breathing* on any characters who plan to swim to the bottom of the chasm. However, this does nothing to nullify the detrimental effects of the waters of the River Styx on a character's mind (see the "Swimming in the Styx" sidebar). Each character swimming to the bottom of the chasm on their own must also succeed on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check or gain one level of exhaustion.

SWIMMING IN THE STYX

Any creature other than a fiend that tastes or touches the water of the River Styx must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be affected as if by a *feblemind* spell. This saving throw is repeated each turn as long as the character is in contact with the water, or until the check is failed. If the effect is not removed within 30 days, it becomes permanent, and the creature loses all its memories. Only a *wish* or divine intervention can restore memories lost to the river's water. Any water removed from the river—which must be accompanied by a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw to avoid contact—loses its potency after 24 hours.

The players should be able to come up with a variety of workarounds to help the characters pass through the Styx's treacherous waters. The *mind blank* spell grants immunity to the Styx's memory-altering effects, and the special *bowl of commanding water elementals* from *DDAL09-07 The Diabolical Dive* can be used to summon an elemental that can safely carry creatures through the Styx. An *apparatus of Kwalish* or other underwater travel device that protects the characters from making contact with the water will also work.

Teleportation magic can't take characters into Mirror Maelstrom because of the site's magical wards. However, it could potentially take them up to the front doors, mitigating the amount of time they spend exposed to the Styx. Additionally, two castings of the *lower water* spell causes the Styx to drop enough that the characters can safely enter.

Especially in some convention settings, a party's options might be limited. Don't forget that the characters have all Avernus from which to recruit or make a deal for help. Ultimately, reward creativity.

Once the characters are close enough to see the fortress, read or paraphrase the following:

Through the murky water, a massive black iron structure comes into view—a structure that looks unsettlingly familiar. Barnacles made of cooled magma encrust its sharp spires, and bits of black scrap metal form the foundations of warped formations of coral. This fortress is a twisted mockery of Maelstrom, the storm giant stronghold that Hekaton once called home.

AREA INFORMATION

Mirror Maelstrom has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. Ceilings in Mirror Maelstrom are 40 feet high unless otherwise stated. The floors are made of solid metal, and the 3-foot-thick black iron walls are encrusted with iron barnacles. These walls are impervious to damage and to spells such as *passwall* that would create passages through solid objects. The citadel has no windows.

Magic Wards. Starting at the south door to area M1 and extending through the rest of the fortress, Mirror Maelstrom is safeguarded against any teleportation or divination magic reaching into the fortress from outside. The teleportation circle in area 1 is exempt from the teleportation ban, but its sigil sequence is known only to the Thayans.

Light. Torches along the walls cast bright light throughout all areas of the fortress.

Doors. The doors in Mirror Maelstrom have been specially reinforced against intruders. Each door is airtight, has 19 AC and 180 hit points, resistance to damage from spells, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A door can be broken down with a successful DC 30 Strength (Athletics) check. Unless otherwise stated, doors in the fortress are locked, but have no keyholes. When guards need to leave their stations, they call upon one of the Thayan mages to cast *knock* for them, or have a door opened remotely from the control room (area M6).

Sounds and Smells. The entire fortress smells faintly of brimstone and is mostly quiet. However, a character flat up against a door might hear creatures moving or speaking on the other side. Any loud noises (such as getting into combat or breaking down a door) alerts the fortress's denizens to the presence of intruders.

M1. ANTECHAMBER

The southeast door connecting this chamber to the water in Kostchtchie's Maw is unlocked. It automatically slides up to open when any creature draws within 5 feet of it. After 1 round, the door slides shut and all water in the room empties back out into the chasm via special drains in the floor.

The northwest door is locked. After the room has drained, Lysander Sallowbone speaks to the characters from the control room (area M6). See that area for details on the Thayan mage, and how he sees and interacts with the characters.

As the last of the water drains away, the section of wall above the door begins to twist and warp. Black iron breaks apart into the semblance of a mouth, with teeth like cooling lava and a red-hot magma tongue.

Lysander demands to know what business the characters have in entering Mirror Maelstrom, and tries to deny them entry as a matter of course even if they have a cover story. Characters disguised as devils, yugoloths, or Red Wizards might be able to persuade him to unlock the northwest door with suitable roleplaying and a successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check. Otherwise, Lysander laughs smugly as he shouts for the guards to go on high alert for intruders. As the mouth melds back into the wall, the southeast door locks and the room refills with water from the Styx in 1 round.

TELEPORTATION CIRCLE

A teleportation circle is set into the floor in this area. The circle is exempt from Mirror Maelstrom's wards against teleportation magic, and the Red Wizards use it to enter and exit Mirror Maelstrom. Only they know its sigil sequence.

LYSANDER'S TAUNTS

As the characters travel throughout the fortress, Lysander taunts and mocks them from the control room (area M6). As the characters get closer to his position, his voice becomes increasingly less confident. Use the following taunts for Lysander, or as inspiration for taunts of your own:

- "I daresay, who sent *you* lot to orchestrate a prison break? My childhood nanny could've done this better in her sleep!"
- "For the sake of the Nine Hells, try not to bleed on the floor. I just had it buffed!"
- "You fell for *that*?! Oh, you poor simpletons."
- "Read my lips!" (His fortress mouth then blows a raspberry.)
- "I ... erm ... I have to hand it to you, you've been quite persistent. There's no need to progress further, you've proven your mettle."
- "N-no, really, I mean it! Nobody's home. Pay no attention to the person at the control desk."

M2. WALL OF FIRE

A floor-to-ceiling wall of fire (visually identical to that created by a *wall of fire* spell) appears to block off the north end of this room. The wall is actually a permanent *prismatic wall* spell (DC 20) disguised with high-level illusion magic to look like a *wall of fire*. The illusion can be dispelled (treat as a 9th-level spell for the purpose of *dispel magic*), but the *prismatic wall* cannot be (aside from its violet layer, as usual).

Six **chain devils** stand guard in this room between the south door and the "wall of fire." These elite guards have been outfitted with adamantine chains that modify their chain attack as follows:

Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if the devil isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 14 (14d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.

The devils' orders are to attack any intruders on sight. If a fight breaks out, they also try to open the door to area M3 so that the **hellfire engine** stationed there can join the fray.

Lysander has the power to deactivate the *prismatic wall* spell from his control room, but ordinarily does so only for creatures he perceives to be his allies.

LIFT

A circular lift is set into an alcove at the north end of the room, beyond the prismatic wall. It can carry four Medium creatures (treat two Small creatures as one Medium creature), and is mentally activated as an action to take characters between this area and area M7 on the fortress's second floor.

The east door is closed but unlocked.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **chain devils**. The chain devils no longer try to open the door to release the **hellfire engine**.
- **Weak:** Remove two **chain devils**.
- **Strong:** The walls are lined by six adamantine chains, each of which has been animated by a chain devil.
- **Very Strong:** The walls are lined with twelve adamantine chains, with each chain devil controlling two.

M3. HELLFIRE HALLWAY

A **hellfire engine** sits at the east end of this hall, advancing to attack intruders on sight. It has no qualms about catching chain devil allies with its attacks, or running them over.

The north and south doors are both locked.

M4. LAVA TRAP

From the control room, Lysander can lock the door into this area and fill the room with lava. If the characters have had trouble with the other doors in the fortress, he waits until they enter this area to do so, using his fortress mouth to laugh haughtily all the while. The lava pours down from vents high up along the walls, filling the 15-foot-high room at a rate of 5 feet per round. To escape, characters must break the door down, unlock it with magic, teleport out, or find some other workaround.

A creature that starts its turn partially submerged in lava takes 55 (10d10) fire damage. A creature that starts its turn fully submerged in lava takes 99 (18d10) fire damage and might suffocate.

If the characters have demonstrated that they can easily get through locked doors, Lysander instead fills this area with lava while the party fights in area M2. He then opens the door when characters are in front of it, causing lava to spill out for 20 feet to a depth of 5 feet. Characters in the area of the lava take damage as above, but can attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. With a success, a character takes only half as much damage.

M5. FLAMING OBSTACLE COURSE

A solid path of cooled black lava crosses a bubbling pool of red-hot liquid lava through this area, which fills the air with smoke. Any character with a Passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 23 or higher notices that the walls and ceiling are dotted with small holes. Lysander can activate these holes to shoot jets of lava at anyone attempting to cross the room.

When a creature enters the room for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the lava jets, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more is also pushed by the jets into the lava pool. Creatures in the lava take damage as noted in area M4.

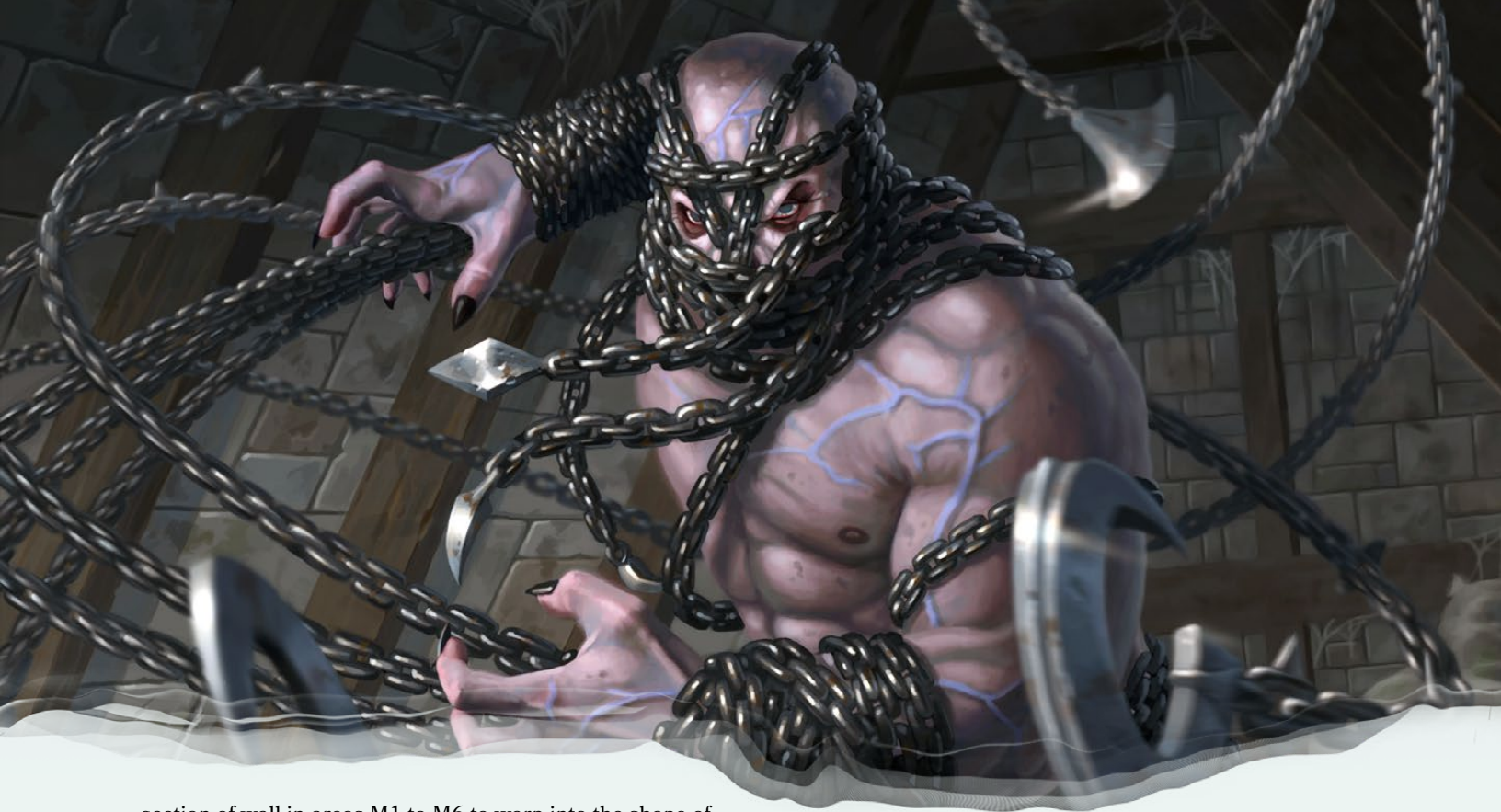
The door to area M6 is locked.

M6. CONTROL ROOM

A desk made of black iron spans the south wall of this room, covered in buttons, levers, and ruby-red gems. Panes of glass mounted to the walls light up with red-tinted images showing the fortress's chambers.

Lysander, a **Red Wizard zulkir**, sits in a chair at the control desk. The desk was made specifically for him, and responds only to his influence. While at the desk, he can see and hear every creature in every room of the fortress's ground floor. The glass panes provide a view of each room as if looked at with truesight, and the ruby gems provide clear audio. While seated at the control desk, Lysander can also cause any 5-foot





section of wall in areas M1 to M6 to warp into the shape of a mouth, which he can speak through.

Lysander's **canoloth** companion, named Leech, sits at his side like an obedient pet dog.

LYSANDER THE NOT-SO-BRAVE

Lysander is a coward, and he quickly submits to the will of any characters who reach the control room. If they ask, he reveals that he's in Avernus on Szass Tam's orders. He and a number of other Red Wizards worked with the devils of Avernus to construct this fortress, making sure that no one could ever get at Hekaton's soul—and thereby ensuring that Szass Tam's death knight would endure forever.

Lysander can deactivate the *prismatic wall* in area M2 for the characters, and shows them areas M1 to M6 by way of the glass panes if they ask. He does not have visuals on area M7 and beyond, as those rooms are under the sole jurisdiction of Duracles (the pit fiend with whom Lysander jointly oversees Mirror Maelstrom; see area M7). From what he understands, Hekaton's containment chamber lies behind the prismatic wall, and barracks for dozens of chain devil guards lie beyond that. If pressured to join the party in confronting Duracles, Lysander turns against the characters at the first opportune moment.

LYSANDER SALLOWBONE

Red Wizard Zulkir

Lysander Sallowbone is a Thayan Red Wizard zulkir sent by Szass Tam to oversee the construction of Hekaton's prison, as well as the subsequent protection of Hekaton's soul.

What They Want. Lysander's orders are to guard Hekaton's prison indefinitely, and he's become somewhat bored by the task. He thus delights in lording his power over intruders and those he deems less than him.

Haughty As Can Be. Lysander comes from the upper end of Thayan aristocracy, and a life of wealth and privilege underlines every word he speaks.

TREASURE

Mounted on the east wall is a bow made of blackened, cooled lava, its string glowing as if red-hot. This is an *oathbow* gifted to Lysander as a token of alliance by Duracles. He cannot use the bow, but views it as a fine status symbol.

M7. HEKATON'S PRISON

An enormous chair built of twisted scrap metal hangs in the center of this cavernous room, suspended from hundreds of adamantine chains attached to the walls. Strapped to the chair is Hekaton, the once-mighty king of the storm giants. His head hangs low, and his bedraggled hair conceals his face. A pool of bubbling lava simmers beneath him.

Duracles the **pit fiend** uses its wings to soar through the room, 30 feet off the ground. It is accompanied by two **chain devils**, both of which stay 40 feet away from each other. (Like the chain devils in area M2, these chain devils have been outfitted with adamantine chains that modify their chain attack as follows:

Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if the devil isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 14 (14d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.

Each chain devil has also animated four of the chains along the walls. Two **Red Wizard zulkirs** riding two **canoloths** stand at the south end of the room, so that any intruders coming up the lift enter this area surrounded.

A sadistic smile creeps to the lips of the pit fiend as it sees you rise atop the lift. “A challenge. I thought this day would never come,” it muses to itself, cracking its tail like a whip. “Soon you, too, will hang here like your beloved king. Let us begin.”

While Lysander is all about appearances, Duracles truly means business and is raring for a fight. The pit fiend attacks intruders at once, showing no mercy.

If any of the characters have the **Plague of Plagueshield** story award (from *DDAL09-06 Infernal Insurgency*), Duracles addresses the characters directly, acknowledging their infamous status among fiends, and focusing on those characters in combat unless there are other clearly more optimal targets. The devils all know the likely tactics and defenses of characters who have this story award, and choose their attacks accordingly.



DURACLES

Lawful evil pit fiend

Duracles is a pit fiend sent by Asmodeus to watch over the imprisoned King Hekaton's soul.

What They Want. Duracles is always raring for a fight, wanting nothing more than to display its strength and power.

Devil On Hekaton's Shoulder. Duracles has a knack for finding out what gets under peoples' skin. Since Hekaton's soul arrived in Avernus, the pit fiend has spent its time taunting and mocking the storm giant king, using his every doubt and insecurity against him.

BALCONY

Metal stairs lead up from the main floor to a 20-foot-high catwalk balcony that arcs around the north half of the room. Three levers are mounted on the balcony, each of which can be used to shut the door beneath it (see below), requiring an action and a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

REINFORCEMENTS

Three doors open up off the north half of this area, leading to chain devil barracks. On initiative count 20 each round, one **chain devil** outfitted with adamantine chains joins the fight from each of the open doors. (These chain devils do not use their Animate Chains action.) Once the respective lever above a door has been pulled, the door shuts and chain devils cease to enter through that door. After the fourth round of combat, the flow of chain devils halts regardless of whether the doors were closed or not.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

- **Very Weak:** The north doors are already closed when the fight begins. Remove the **canoloths**. Use the **archmage** stat block for the Red Wizard zulkirs.
- **Weak:** Remove the **canoloths**. Use the **archmage** stat block for the Red Wizard zulkirs.
- **Strong:** Give Duracles the **pit fiend** three uses of Legendary Resistance.
- **Very Strong:** Give Duracles three uses of Legendary Resistance. Add four more **chain devils** to the room at the start.

THREAT ENDED

After Duracles's forces have been dealt with and all three north doors have been closed, continue to part 3 of the adventure. With the doors closed, the characters can safely take a short rest in this area, but not a long rest. The reinforcements in the rest of the fortress will find a way in sooner or later, and time is of the essence.

PART 3: PARTING THE CLOUDS

Estimated Duration: 2 hours

To free King Hekaton from his captivity, the characters must enter the storm giant's mindscape, allowing them to experience moments from his past. However, the time Hekaton has spent in the Nine Hells has warped his memory and self-esteem, to the point that he no longer considers himself worthy of any fate other than eternal damnation. The characters must convince him of his value and inherent worth, giving him the strength to come back.

If Dara was with the characters in part 2 of the adventure, she does not make the transition into King Hekaton's mindscape. (What happens to Dara will be revealed at a later point.)

STORY OBJECTIVE

Reliving Hekaton's life experiences and successfully convincing him of his worth is **Story Objective C**.

ENTERING HEKATON'S MIND

When the characters reach Hekaton in his chair, he is unresponsive. His head hangs low, his eyes are glazed over, and his limbs are limp. A twisted version of his former crown, this one made of infernal iron, rests on his head. Any character looking into his eyes sees the semblance of a storm swirling there. The character then feels a slight tug at their consciousness, beckoning them to touch Hekaton's crown.

If the characters are dead set on escorting Hekaton out of Mirror Maelstrom before interacting with his crown, they're free to do so, but they will have to carry the massive giant king. Unfortunately, any attempts to take him from Avernus (most likely using the *plane shift* spell or similar magic) fail, as his soul isn't willing to leave. Furthermore, Hekaton's condition seems to worsen once he is removed from Mirror Maelstrom, and the characters cannot take a long rest in the meantime for fear of missing their shot at helping him.

When any of the characters touches Hekaton's crown, read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as you make contact with the storm giant king's rough crown, a wave of energy ripples out from it, washing over you like a cold stream. Hekaton's eyes snap open, glowing moon bright. The room begins to fill with white light, and you feel a strange sensation that suggests you are leaving this plane. Then, as the light subsides, you find yourself treading water and coughing up salty ocean spray.

Proceed to "Memory 1: Day of the Leviathan."

RULES OF THE MINDSCAPE

While the characters are within King Hekaton's mind, the following rules apply:

- Characters cannot gain the benefit of a short or long rest while in the mindscape.
- Damage taken and resources expended in the mindscape persist upon returning to the real world. Items and creatures native to the mindscape cannot leave the mindscape. (The trinkets at the end of the first and second memory and the *potion of storm giant strength* in the third memory are the only exceptions to this rule.)
- Magical attempts to contact creatures outside the mindscape fail.
- No matter how long the characters spend in a given memory, the time of day remains the same. Inhabitants of the memories do not notice this abnormality, nor do they tire.
- Characters who attempt to journey far outside the scene of a memory find themselves pulled back as they walk, as if by a gentle tide. It's a disorienting feeling, which leaves them back where they were before they know it.
- Memories repair themselves in the face of significant changes made by the characters. For instance, if Finback village in memory 2 is destroyed by a *meteor swarm* spell, it is reassembled minutes later, its inhabitants unaware that anything happened.

CODE BREAKER

If any characters in your group have the **Code Breaker** legacy event (from *DDAL-DRW06 Thimble Rigging*) and spent downtime days to successfully crack the code, that means they've made a copy of a book called *Death of the Mind* and understand its contents. Among other things, this book examines techniques for manipulating minds and souls, making the characters immediately recognize that they are in Hekaton's mind.

Anytime a character or Zehira makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw within the mindscape, a character with the **Code Breaker** legacy event who successfully cracked the code can spend three of their own hit dice to grant a single reroll. This ability cannot be used more than once on the same roll, and the second roll always replaces the first roll. This represents the Code Breaker character uttering an incantation and attempting to manipulate the mindscape to rewrite whatever happened. Characters who have earned this ability become aware of it as soon as they enter Hekaton's mind.

THE KING'S FATE: DEATH KNIGHT DESTROYED

If any of the characters have the **King's Fate** legacy event from *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*, check to see if the count for "destroyed" exceeds the count for "captured." If so, the characters destroyed Hekaton's death knight body in that adventure instead of capturing it. A part of Hekaton's mindscape recognizes this and resists their intrusion.

In this case, refer to the "Death Knight Destroyed" sidebars for each memory. These sidebars indicate adjustments to make certain moments in that memory more punishing or difficult as a consequence of the characters' folly.

MEMORY 1: DAY OF THE LEVIATHAN

Upon touching Hekaton's crown, the characters and Zehira immediately find themselves treading water, with no sense of where they are or how they got there. Read or paraphrase the following:

Around you is nothing but ocean as far as the eye can see, and a cloudy sky above. Then suddenly, the view shudders and blinks. An enormous galleon appears, made of coral, covered with barnacles, and flanked by a pod of killer whales. The ship quickly draws close and alongside you, and a rope ladder made of thick, knotted seaweed is thrown over the side.

AREA INFORMATION

This part of Hekaton's mindscape has the following features.

Open Sea. The mindscape recreates the open expanse of the Trackless Sea. There is little in the way of wind or waves, making for smooth sailing.

Hekaton's Galleon. Hekaton's galleon is 60 feet wide and 240 feet long. The main deck stands 50 feet above the water's surface. The entire ship is made of tough coral, encrusted with seaweed and barnacles. Three killer whales flank the ship on each side. Hekaton's galleon has the ability to travel underwater, but moves faster on the surface.

Wyrmskull Throne. The *Wyrmskull Throne* sits on the main deck of the ship, levitating a few inches in the air. Hekaton sits atop the throne, with the *Korolnor Scepter*—the symbol of his rule—hanging around his neck on a loop of braided kelp.

Ballista. A giant-sized ballista is mounted at the ship's forecastle. See the sidebar for details.

Ship's Wheel. The ship's wheel sits on the quarterdeck, and is currently operated by a **storm giant** sailor. Handling the wheel to direct the ship's course requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Light. The exterior of the ship is brightly lit by day. The lower decks of Hekaton's galleon are dimly lit by bioluminescent algae.

GIANT BALLISTA

Gargantuan object

Armor Class: 15

Hit Points: 100

Damage Immunities: Poison, psychic

This giant-sized ballista is a massive crossbow that fires heavy bolts. Before it can be fired, it must be loaded and aimed. It takes one action to load the weapon, one action to aim it, and one action to fire it. Each action requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Bolt. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 250/1,000 ft., one target. *Hit:* 49 (9d10) piercing damage.

VISIONS OF THE PAST

The crew of the manifested ship consists of King Hekaton, his younger brother Emperor Uthor, and four sailors, all of whom use the **storm giant** stat block. Uthor greets the characters as soon as they climb aboard, saying that it was he who noticed them adrift in the water and who persuaded Hekaton to order the ship to rescue them. Hekaton watches from the *Wyrmskull Throne*, seemingly distrustful of the characters.

If the characters or Zehira have met Uthor or Hekaton in previous adventures, neither of them recognize the characters now. Additionally, any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 20 or higher notices that Hekaton and Uthor both look younger than they should in the present day.

As the characters speak with them, Uthor (and occasionally Hekaton) can share the following information:

- Uthor and Hekaton are on their way back to Maelstrom after a diplomatic meeting with a frost giant clan in the North. Hekaton brought his *Wyrmskull Throne* along in case the frost giants gave them any trouble. Luckily, the negotiations were cordial, with the frost giants seeking aid with trade shipments that Hekaton was happy to provide.
- The galleon is approximately two hundred miles from Maelstrom at present. Once it draws closer to the citadel, the ship will submerge for the last leg of the journey. Though traveling on the surface leaves the ship more vulnerable to attack, it is faster for long-distance journeys.
- The year is 1401 DR. Hekaton has two young daughters named Mirran and Nym. He and his wife, Neri, have a third child on the way.

Once the current year is known, one of the characters might think to ask the exact date: Tarsakh 17. With a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check, a character recalls the significance of that date. (If no character thinks to ask, or if no character succeeds on the check, Zehira can share the following information.)

Tarsakh 17, 1401 DR, is a day well known to the storm giants. While returning to Maelstrom, Hekaton's ship was attacked by two leviathans—relics of ancient plots of an evil elemental order, the Cult of the Crushing Wave. Giant historians talk of how Hekaton bravely defended the ship and drove the creatures away.

If the characters share what they know in a way that Hekaton can hear, the storm giant king reacts strangely.

A look of recognition suddenly flashes in Hekaton's eyes. Then suddenly, his gaze glazes over, just as you saw it in Mirror Maelstrom. His hands grip the armrests of the *Wyrmskull Throne*, his knuckles turning white.

If the characters don't confide what they know to Hekaton, the storm giant king slips into the same semiconscious state as the galleon comes under sudden attack.

A thunderous crash shakes the ship, as two huge watery snake-like creatures erupt from the water, one on each side. As if in response to the creatures' appearance, the sea around the ship suddenly begins to roil as if in the midst of a gale.

"It's the leviathans!" Zehira shouts, running over to Hekaton to try to wake him from his stupor. "I should be able to bring him back to this memory," Zehira says to you. "But I need you to buy me some time. Hold them off!"

KING HEKATON

Chaotic good storm giant

The once-mighty king of the storm giants has been broken by the time he's spent in Mirror Maelstrom, subjected to Duracles the pit fiend's relentless taunts and mockery.

What They Want. When the characters find him, Hekaton appears devoid of emotion, battered to the point of numbness by Duracles' mind games. He believes he is not worthy of any afterlife other than being chained up in Mirror Maelstrom forever.

Time to Pass on the Torch. Even after the characters save him, Hekaton recognizes that his time on the Material Plane has come to an end, and he does not seek resurrection. His time has come, and he welcomes the afterlife with open arms. He is sure that Serissa will make a formidable queen in his stead.

LEVIATHAN BATTLE

This fight against the two **leviathans** takes place over the course of three rounds. A deck plan for the ship can be found in "Appendix 3: Hekaton's Galleon Map."

Assume that three of the storm giant sailors are working the ballista throughout the fight, performing the three actions required to fire it each round. One storm giant remains at the ship's wheel, and Uthor focuses on adjusting the sails to try to keep the ship from capsizing. As long as the characters focus on them, the leviathans do not target any of the giants.

DEATH KNIGHT DESTROYED

If the characters destroyed Hekaton's death knight body in *DDAL-DRWEPO2 Wings of Death*, apply the following changes to this fight:

- The Strength (Athletics) check to turn the ship's wheel is DC 20 instead of DC 10.
- The ballista breaks at the start of the fight, and the storm giants waste their turns trying to unjam it instead of firing it.
- Characters take double damage if the galleon capsizes.

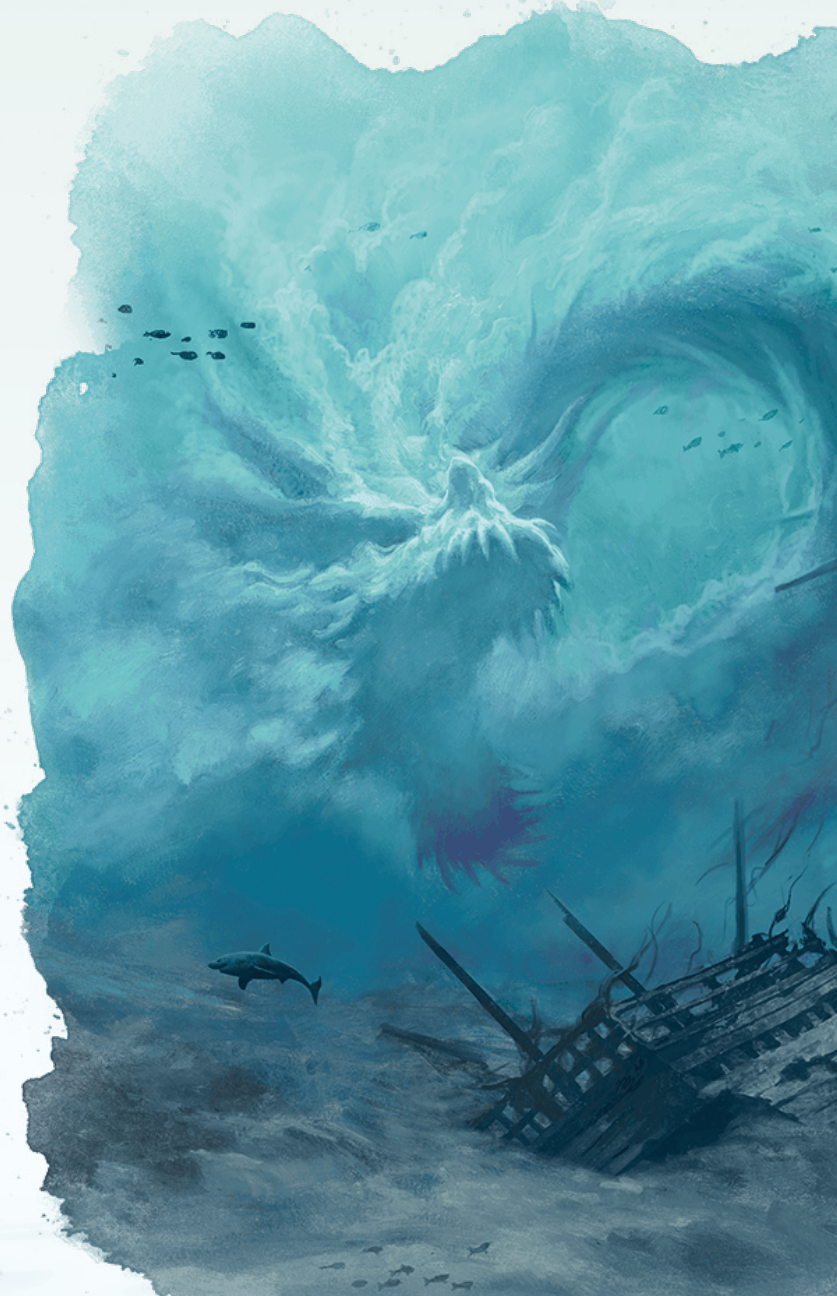
Zehira spends each of her turns next to Hekaton at his throne. Trying to snap him out of his stupor takes three rounds. A character can assist Zehira and decrease this time with a successful DC 25 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check made as an action. With a successful check, Hekaton snaps out of his stupor at the end of round 2, and acts on an initiative count 19 in round 3 instead of at the end of the round.

STORM WARNING

On initiative count 20 of round 1, a 30-foot-high wave slams against one side of the ship. Each character standing on the deck must succeed on a DC 20 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and pushed 15 feet toward the other side of the ship. If characters go into the water and can't call on magic to get back on board, you can improvise ability checks to let them do so.

On initiative count 20 of round 2, a wave rushes over the quarterdeck and sweeps the storm giant at the wheel overboard. The characters all understand that one of them must go to the wheel to keep the ship from capsizing (or Zehira can alert them). A character within 5 feet of the wheel can use an action to make a Strength (Athletics) check or a Strength check using proficiency with water vehicles to control the wheel. On a success, the ship stays righted.

On initiative count 20 of round 3, if the wheel has not been successfully attended to in the previous round, the ship capsizes. Each character takes 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage and 14 (4d6) cold damage from the freezing-cold waves. The capsized galleon then begins an uncontrolled dive into the depths. (If the ship capsizes, whatever damage Hekaton takes leaves him alive.)



At the end of round 3, Hekaton snaps out of his trance and into action. If the ship has capsized, the *Wyrmskull Throne* rises from the water in response to his mental command. If both leviathans have been defeated, have a third leviathan rise up from the depths as you read or paraphrase the following:

The haze disappears from Hekaton's eyes, and the *Korolnor Scepter* begins to glow. A controlled whirlwind lifts the *Wyrmskull Throne* into the air with Hekaton atop it, bringing him face to face with the leviathan as its snakelike heads advance to devour him.

As Hekaton focuses the power of the *Wyrmskull Throne*, the spectral form of an ancient blue dragon shimmers into existence around him. At his command, the spectral dragon roars—and the leviathans retreat back into the water. The storm suddenly calms, and all is quiet.

If the ship has capsized, Hekaton descends beneath the water. A short while later, the galleon breaches with Hekaton at the wheel, and the characters and the giants in the water can clamber on board. The storm giant king thanks the characters for their aid, but focuses on the welfare of the storm giant crew, tending to any injured sailors himself.

In the aftermath of the fight, the character who succeeded on the Intelligence (History) check earlier (or Zehira) recalls the full significance of what the characters have just witnessed.

Known among the giants as the Day of the Leviathan, these events became legendary for the way King Hekaton and the power of the *Wyrmskull Throne* stood firm against the wrath of some of the Trackless Sea's most fearsome creatures. That bravery, and his dedication to helping his injured crew, helped Hekaton solidify his position as lord of giantkind.

Even as the importance of the attack becomes clear, the vista around the characters begins to shimmer with white light. Before the scene fades away, though, the characters see two trinkets appear before them: a small leviathan statuette and a roll of medicinal bandages. These trinkets (and the similar trinkets at the end of the next memory) represent a tangible connection to Hekaton's memories, and will play a part in the characters' final efforts to convince the storm giant king of his worth. The characters must choose one trinket to claim for the party, after which they are whisked away to the next memory.

MEMORY 2: THE WHALEBONES

As the characters are drawn into the next memory in King Hekaton's mindscape, read or paraphrase the following:

You stand on an empty beach, the wide ocean lapping lazily against the shore. A few neighboring islands can be seen out across the water. A cool ocean breeze blows, and a few crabs scuttle past you. In the distance, you can just barely make out a number of yellowish-white objects along the sand.

This memory takes place in the Whalebones—an archipelago west of Waterdeep on the Trackless Sea.

AREA INFORMATION

This part of Hekaton's mindscape has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. The characters are on Finback Island, one of the largest islands of the Whalebones at ten miles across. Its sandy beaches give way to trees and mountains toward the island's center.

Light. A perpetual midday sun casts bright light over the island. (As with all the memories of Hekaton's mindscape, the time of day does not change.)

Sounds and Smells. Seagulls squawk and waves break against nearby cliffs. The ocean breeze smells of sea salt.

Whale Skeletons. The yellow-white objects in the distance are giant whale skeletons, dozens of which litter the beach. With a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check, a character seeing the skeletons can infer that they must be on one of the islands of the Whalebones.

WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Near the closest whale skeleton, two Illuskan human **scouts** are hiding behind rocks: a blonde man and a red-haired woman. They reveal themselves if the characters approach the skeleton, or will advance toward characters who stay put on the beach, wanting to assess their threat. Arth and Emfrey Brighttide have been tasked with guarding the skeleton on behalf of Finback Village. They warn the characters not to get any closer to "the goods," and tell them that more villagers stand guard at other whale skeletons farther down the beach.

WHAT THEY KNOW

Arth and Emfrey can confirm where the characters are if they haven't yet figured it out. Like most inhabitants of the Whalebones, they believe that the whale skeletons littering the beach bring the islands good luck, and they guard them on the orders of King Branchwick, ruler of Finback Island.

If the characters speak of King Hekaton in the course of wondering why they've been brought to this place, Arth and Emfrey don't know that name, and they assume from his title that he must be one of the many rival monarchs on the other islands of the Whalebones. If they're told Hekaton is a giant, they do recall "two large gray people" emerging from the water earlier that day to meet with King Branchwick at Finback Village.

WHAT THEY WANT

Arth and Emfrey offer to lead the characters to Finback village for a meeting with King Branchwick—but only if the characters first swear fealty to the whale skeleton with a ritual dance. The two execute a series of complicated dance

steps, and the characters must succeed on a group DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check to replicate the moves. On a success, Arth and Emfrey are convinced of the characters' good intentions and lead them to Finback village. On a failure, let the players come up with an alternative method for the characters to convince Arth and Emfrey, or allow them to make ability checks to locate Finback village on their own.

ECHO OF THE PAST

As the characters travel to Finback village, they see a vision of what came to pass earlier that day. Hekaton and his wife Neri appear as spectral forms that cannot be interacted with, echoing what happened a few hours earlier. Arth, Emfrey, and any other figments of Hekaton's mindscape do not perceive the echoes.

As you walk, the translucent images of two storm giants fade into view ahead of you, appearing as spectral ghosts. One of the giants is instantly recognizable as Hekaton, but this is a younger Hekaton, as in the earlier memory aboard the galleon. The other storm giant is a woman around the same age. Her hair is set into two thick braids that fall to her ankles, and she walks with a regal poise.

"Neri," says Hekaton in an angry tone. "If you had let me, I'd have struck those smallfolk dead where they stood for speaking to us like that. I—"

Neri interrupts him. "I'm well aware, Hekaton. That's why you needed to come here."

Then as suddenly as they appeared, the two images flicker and vanish.

A DC 15 Intelligence (History) check allows a character to recall that Hekaton's wife Neri used to visit the islands of the Trackless Sea frequently, reveling in the company of smallfolk. Though Hekaton initially disapproved of her outings, he became more accepting over time, and even reluctantly joined her on a few such excursions. The details of what changed the storm giant king's feelings for the smallfolk is unknown—though it's clear that after Neri's death, Hekaton reverted to his old ways.

FINBACK VILLAGE

Finback Village is a humble collection of log cabins surrounded by gardens, located in an area of forest about two miles from the water's edge. The village is self-sustaining, with its folk living on what they grow locally and catch from the sea. Sculpting is a great pastime here, but sculpting whales is considered sacrilegious. Finback's inhabitants thus sculpt rocs instead, as the giant birds are plentiful on the island's mountains.

KING OF THE ISLAND

As the characters near the edge of the village, they see a giant pile of whale bones—upon which sits a living **roc** treating the pile of bones as a perch. A group of humans are dragging a deer carcass toward the roc, under the command of a balding middle-aged man wearing a gray cloak and a crown of bones, and who has a wild look in his eyes. This is King Branchwick (use the **swashbuckler** stat

block), the ruler of Finback Island. Branchwick's followers are currently feeding Worldeater—his grandiosely named pet roc—her lunch.

What Branchwick Wants. Branchwick is willing to talk with the characters and recount his meeting with Hekaton and Neri earlier that day—but only if they first prove themselves to be pure of heart. He insists that his pet roc can smell evil intentions as easily as rotting meat, and he will speak only with a character who "gains Worldeater's approval."

Worldeater squawks loudly and snaps her beak at any strangers who try to get too close. A character can gain the roc's approval with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, allowing them to pet or feed Worldeater, and causing the roc to make a quiet cooing sound. Branchwick subsequently speaks with that character—and only that character. No amount of roleplaying or additional Persuasion checks can convince the addled leader otherwise.

What Branchwick Knows. King Branchwick spoke with Hekaton and Neri when they came to Finback Island earlier that day. He's on good terms with Neri, who often emerges from the sea carrying huge oysters and handfuls of seaweed for the smallfolk to feast upon, in exchange for nothing more than conversation. Before her most recent visit, Branchwick and his people decided to repay Neri for her generosity by gifting her a crown made of sacred whale bones. Neri graciously accepted the crown, though her husband seemed appalled. After speaking a while with the smallfolk, the two giants headed toward the Blue Cove, a local landmark some four miles from Finback Village. Branchwick hasn't seen the giants since.

KING BRANCHWICK

Human swashbuckler

This megalomaniac human is one of many rival "monarchs" who rule over the individual islands of the archipelago known as the Whalebones.

What They Want. King Branchwick wants to assert his dominance over each and every other humanoid in his domain. The only creature he defers to is Worldeater, his pet roc, who Branchwick legitimately believes has the power to eat the world.

King of Finback. Branchwick might seem a little off to outsiders, but the villagers of Finback genuinely view him as their rightful king. They see him as a genius, a hero, a leader—basically, believing everything he's told them about himself.

QUEEN NERI'S KINDNESS

Any of Finback Island's inhabitants gladly tell the characters stories of Neri's generosity toward them. Only Branchwick knows her by name, however. The others simply refer to her as "She Who Is Gray Like the Whale." Here are some of the acts of kindness that the folk of Finback can recall:

- "One year we were in a famine, and she brought extra food up from the ocean to sustain us while we waited for good harvests to return."
- "When my daughter went missing, She Who Is Gray Like the Whale went into the forest and brought her back home safe and sound."
- "The other islands' leaders can be ruthless. They want nothing more than to steal our precious whale bones. During an invasion, she not only defended us from our enemies, but also helped forge a peace treaty between Finback and the neighboring isles."



BLUE COVE

Any of Finback Village's inhabitants can give the characters directions to Blue Cove. Failing that, Neri and Hekaton's giant footprints are easy to track. Blue Cove is a recessed cavern facing the ocean, hollowed out of cliffs by ancient erosion. As the characters enter the cove, they see another echo of Hekaton and Neri, this one from just after the two left Finback Village.

Even as you enter the cove, another vision of Hekaton and Neri appears before you, only more solid this time. The two giants are sitting by the rocks, speaking with each other.

"You don't plan to wear that ... thing back at Maelstrom, do you?" Hekaton says. "You'll make us the laughingstock of our kind, Neri. The queen of the giants, wearing smallfolk craftwork for a crown. And to think you would have me speak to them as equals."

"You still don't understand, do you?" says Neri. "I brought you here to share this world with you. These people are as family to me. Their village is beautiful. Can you not see that?"

Hekaton looks off into the distance. "Beautiful? No. Does it have potential? Yes. If we can find out how that so-called king was able to tame that roc, every member of Maelstrom's guard could have its own flying steed."

"Of course," Neri says dryly. "Hekaton the ruler, Hekaton the general, Hekaton the heroic. I don't know why I expected anything else."

The conversation then ends abruptly, but Neri and Hekaton's images don't fade away. Rather, they freeze in place as if stopped in time, and fiendish whispers fill the air.

The characters can easily infer that there should be more to this vision, and that something is blocking Hekaton's mind from remembering it. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 20 or higher recognizes the fiendish whispers as the voice of Duracles the pit fiend, offering up taunts regarding Hekaton's heartlessness and worthlessness—and contradicting Neri as the whispers argue against trusting the smallfolk.

The characters' knowledge of Hekaton's life means that all of them understand how Hekaton and Neri's close bond was a cornerstone of his being, and that it can't be allowed to shatter. The characters must fight back to overcome Duracles's words and allow Hekaton to recall the rest of this memory. Call for a DC 15 group Intelligence check. If the players add to the check with effective roleplaying, especially making appeals to Hekaton's mind that are focused on his love for Neri, give all characters advantage on the check.

On a failure, each character takes 28 (8d6) psychic damage, but the DC for a followup check is decreased by 3. On a success, the characters break through to Hekaton's mind and the fiendish whispers fade away. Neri and Hekaton's spectral forms unfreeze and the scene continues.

DEATH KNIGHT DESTROYED

If the characters destroyed Hekaton's death knight body in *DDAL-DRWEP02 Wings of Death*, the group Intelligence check starts at DC 20. A long silence passes during which Hekaton considers Neri's words, the two of them staring out to sea. Then he reaches for her hand. When he speaks again, there's an earnestness in his voice.

"Neri. I apologize. I might not understand the way you feel about the smallfolk. But at the very least, I can try. I wish to continue accompanying you when you visit them. I want to learn."

As Hekaton's words fade away, the view of the cove begins to shimmer with white light. As before, two trinkets appear in front of the characters: a statuette of a whale skeleton and a small replica of Neri's whale-bone crown. The players must decide on one trinket for the party to claim, after which the characters are spirited away to the third and final memory of Hekaton's mindscape.

MEMORY 3: NERI'S FUNERAL

This memory takes place in the throne room of Maelstrom. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene.

You find yourselves in the throne room of Maelstrom—but not as you have most recently seen it. The walls are hung with dark shrouds, and an open coffin stands at the center of the room. A dozen storm giants are in attendance, all somberly dressed. King Hekaton sits on the *Wyrmskull Throne*, three younger giants beside him. His face is set with anguish and rage.

AREA INFORMATION

This part of Hekaton's mindscape has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. The throne room resembles an enormous amphitheater fit for giants. The 50-foot-high ceiling and oversized furnishings make non-giant characters look tiny by comparison.

Sounds. Though the characters can speak to each other, this scene is completely absent of sound.

The Wyrmskull Throne. Hekaton sits upon the *Wyrmskull Throne*. His two eldest daughters, Mirran and Nym, sit on smaller thrones made of coral and giant seashells. Serissa stands beside her father.

Coffin. The coffin at the center of the room is open, but the characters need to move closer to it to see what's inside.

MOURNERS

None of the giants in this memory notice the characters, nor can the characters hear what the giants are saying as they speak among themselves. If the characters try to interact with any of the mourners in this dream, they simply phase through each other like ghosts.

Imperator Uthor. Looking much closer to his current age than he did in the first memory, Hekaton's brother Uthor stands next to the coffin. He appears to be delivering a eulogy to the audience, his expression pained.

Hekaton. The king of the storm giants sits on the *Wyrmskull Throne*. He stares straight ahead at the coffin, his teeth gritted.

Mirran and Nym. Hekaton's eldest daughters sit on smaller thrones on either side of him. Mirran is in tears, and even Nym's usual stony countenance seems unsettled.

Serissa. Hekaton's youngest daughter stands at his side, her eyes puffy and red.

Other Giants. The other mourners are all storm giants, mostly members of Maelstrom's court. Hestia and Thellan—Serissa's current advisors, though merely Hekaton's wards at this point in history—are among them.

PRAYERS FOR NERI

The players likely already have an idea of what the characters will find in the coffin. Any character who approaches sees Neri's body, wrapped up to the neck in black kelp and adorned with beautiful jewelry.

Each character understands instinctively that offering prayers or performing quick rites for Neri will help strengthen their connection to this memory. The first character to succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check for doing so feels something appear in their pocket suddenly—a *potion of storm giant strength*. Apart from the trinkets at the end of the previous memories, this is the only item the characters can take from Hekaton's mindscape back into the real world. (A subsequent successful check still makes for a perfectly acceptable prayer, but does not earn additional potions.)

DEATH KNIGHT DESTROYED

If the characters destroyed Hekaton's death knight body in DDAL-DRWE02 *Wings of Death*, the Intelligence (Religion) check to offer rites for Neri is DC 25.

A character who played in the *Storm King's Thunder* adventure, or who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, understands the significance of this event. Neri's death at the hands of smallfolk caused Hekaton to fly into a rage, and rumors speak of how he came close to declaring war on the entire Sword Coast. But Serissa was able to calm her father down, persuading him to investigate Neri's death more closely. It was eventually revealed that the Kraken Society—a secret order of smugglers, slavers, and assassins—had killed Queen Neri, and Hekaton's retribution was stayed.

HEKATON'S RAGE

At a point of your choosing, the scene around the characters changes. Read or paraphrase the following:

The view around you suddenly shifts, Neri's coffin and the mourners fading away. A whirlpool of shadow has formed around you, Hekaton standing alone at its center, his fists clenched with unbridled fury.

Serissa is there, pushing her way into the whirlpool to stand next to her father. She speaks to him earnestly for a moment, and he listens. The whirlpool slows from a furious flow to a lazy spiral as Hekaton nods, his fists slowly unclenching. Then Serissa flickers away.

The storm giant king turns to all of you, as if noticing you for the first time. His eyes are hazy again.

"You came all this way to find me," he says quietly, his voice almost numb. "But it's no use. Just leave me here."

CONVINCING HEKATON

The characters face their most difficult challenge. They must convince Hekaton of his inherent value and worth, so that he can leave the Nine Hells and ascend to the storm giant afterlife.

WHAT HEKATON BELIEVES

King Hekaton believes that he is unworthy of any afterlife besides eternal damnation. Duracles the pit fiend has spent uncounted days torturing and mocking him, using the king's every doubt and insecurity against him. As a result, Hekaton is now consumed by his own worst fears.

Use the following points as guidelines for roleplaying King Hekaton in this section:

- Hekaton always considered himself to be a wise and just king, but he never had a connection with the smallfolk the way Neri did.
- When Neri died, Hekaton felt real rage. Not just anger, but a pure, seething hatred. His brother Uthor was the one who found Neri's body on a cluster of rocky islands known as the Purple Rocks, clearly murdered by smallfolk. After Neri's funeral, Hekaton wanted to declare war on the entire Sword Coast. Luckily, his daughter Serissa was there to talk him back to his senses, but the rage Hekaton felt in that moment haunts him to this day.

- When Annam the All-Father shattered the ordning, it was because of the giants' own complacency in the face of Tiamat. So many lives were lost in the subsequent fighting, and Hekaton believes he could have prevented it all if he had just confronted Tiamat, as the king of giants should have.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

No one piece of evidence in favor of Hekaton's worth will be enough to sway the storm giant king on its own. Instead, the characters must spend time presenting different arguments and debating Hekaton from different angles, using any approach the players come up with. Characters who played *Storm King's Thunder* can also leverage any knowledge



gleaned from their interactions with Hekaton during that adventure. If such a character succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, feel free to offer them specific hints on how to move forward (see “The Ordning” sidebar).

You can decide whether to run this part of the adventure as straight roleplaying, or to have the characters make Charisma checks at key points. The approach the characters take while engaging with Hekaton might include any of the following:

Hekaton's Bravery. As king of the storm giants, Hekaton was known for his bravery. The characters can help him focus on this by recalling how he bravely faced the ocean's most powerful creatures during the Day of the Leviathan, putting his own life on the line to save his crew.

Hekaton's Compassion. Though lauded for his bravery, Hekaton was known as a caring ruler as well. The characters can help him remember how he tended to the crew of the galleon in the wake of the leviathans' attack.

Hekaton's Family. Hekaton was a loving husband and father, and the rage he felt after Neri's death was borne of his love for her. The characters might try to convince Hekaton that his true character lies not in the emotions he felt, but in the restraint he subsequently demonstrated. Furthermore, his connection to family is as strong as ever. His daughter Serissa wholeheartedly believes in his worth and goodness, and wants to see him either return to the world or ascend to the storm giant afterlife of Stormhold.

Hekaton's Faith. The characters might decide that they don't have the authority to convince Hekaton whether he's a worthwhile person or not. They might not even believe it themselves. But at the very least, they can make the case that he should ask for judgment from Annam the All-Father. After all, it would be presumptuous for Hekaton to assume he knows his worth better than the god of giants.

ROLEPLAYING HEKATON

Be sure to roleplay Hekaton with care during this section. His internal struggle should come with gravitas, in the same manner as Dara's struggle in part 1. Rather than depicting the storm giant king as whiney or mopey, try playing him as numb to emotion. His memories are shattered, and his esteem has been beaten down by abuse at the hands of Duracles. He has nothing left to feel. Then, as the characters remind him of his past, he can start to come across as more lifelike.

TRINKETS

Presenting the trinkets claimed at the end of the first and second memories in this section can help the characters focus Hekaton on the lessons of his past. The leviathan statuette and the medicinal bandages can symbolize Hekaton's bravery and selflessness. He sees the whale skeleton statuette and Neri's crown as reminders of how Neri was a better person than he, and how she tried to change him.

THE ORDNING

Some of Hekaton's self-doubt has to do with the events leading up to *Storm King's Thunder*. If the players want to lean into those events but you're unfamiliar with that book, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Giants adhere to a divine social structure called the ordning, passed down from Annam the All-Father. Storm giants sit at the top of this ordning, and must rule over and protect the other giants.
- Some years ago, the Cult of the Dragon threatened to release Tiamat upon the world. Giantkind and dragonkind have long been enemies, and yet Hekaton and the other giants were too busy dealing with internal affairs to take on Tiamat's threat.
- Angry with the giants' complacency, Annam broke the ordning and sent giantkind into chaos. They wreaked havoc across the Sword Coast, and Hekaton was kidnapped by servants of a cult called the Kraken Society. Luckily, a group of adventurers rescued him and helped put an end to the chaos, restoring him to his throne.

RESTORING HEKATON

Each time a character brings up a memory or a personality from Hekaton's past, he blinks and some of the haze starts to disappear from his eyes. By reminding him of the past and persuading him of his virtues, Hekaton slowly begins to remember himself once more.

When you determine that the characters have done enough to restore Hekaton's mind, the haze clears from his eyes and the flow of the shadow whirlpool around him and the characters slows to a halt. Hekaton thanks the characters for not giving up on him, and agrees to take them out of his mindscape and back to Mirror Maelstrom so that they can free him from his chains and help him ascend to Stormhold.

If any discussion of being resurrected is made, Hekaton is thoughtful but declines. He can tell that his time on the Material Plane has come to an end, and the All-Father beckons him. He has full faith in Serissa to rule the giants wisely in his stead.

NOT SO FAST!

As Hekaton touches his crown, the world around the characters is transformed to white light again. But the fate of the storm giant king is not settled yet.

A thudding sound surrounds you, and the white ground beneath you shifts. Hekaton looks around in confusion. The sound grows louder, the shifting of the ground threatening to knock you off your feet. Suddenly, a gargantuan crimson hand with black fingernails bursts up from below you, closing around Hekaton like the storm giant king might be a doll in its clutches. Then the hand drags Hekaton down into the hole it has ripped through the storm king's own memory—a chasm filled with red-hot flame and unearthly screams.



If the characters don't follow Hekaton at once, they are quickly drawn toward the hole by some unseen force. Any character with proficiency in the Religion skill recognizes that Asmodeus is the entity behind the storm king's capture, as does any character with extensive knowledge of the Lord of the Nine Hells. No power or magic available to the characters can stop them from following Hekaton now.

As you plunge into the rift, the screams grow louder, and scouring flame rushes past you in a blur. You are seemingly in free fall, dropping ever deeper, faster and faster. Then everything goes black.

Proceed to part 4 of the adventure.

PART 4: A LIAR'S BARGAIN

Estimated Duration: 2 hours

Hekaton and the characters have been drawn to Nessus, the ninth and lowermost level of the Nine Hells. There, they must parley with Asmodeus, lord of that fearsome realm, for the freedom of Hekaton's soul—and enter into an infernal bargain that might cost them everything.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Earning Asmodeus's favor and winning back Hekaton is **Story Objective D**.

MALSHEEM, CITADEL OF NESSUS

Malsheem is Asmodeus's pride and glory—an enormous stronghold resembling a gigantic hollowed-out stalagmite that rises from one of the deepest trenches of Nessus. The largest known citadel in all the Outer Planes, Malsheem's highest spires stretch miles above the ground. The citadel is home to Asmodeus and his infernal court, but millions of lesser devils reside here as well—waiting to fulfil some purpose known only to the Lord of the Nine Hells.

AREA INFORMATION

Malsheem has the following features.

Dimensions. The citadel is many miles wide and just as tall, but its fiendish nature defies accurate measurement. Even visual estimates from those who have seen Malsheem vary wildly, but the site is the largest citadel in all the Outer Planes by far.

Interior. The halls and chambers within Malsheem are a testament to Asmodeus's penchant for luxury. Every area of the citadel sparkles with decadent gold, and the staggering number of rooms in the place make mapping it a high-impossible task.

Light. Wall lanterns and chandeliers bathe all areas of Malsheem in bright golden light.

Sounds. Dozens of empty rooms separate most of Malsheem's points of interest from each other, and these empty chambers are eerily silent. But if one stands perfectly still and listens attentively to that silence, the faint wails of countless imprisoned souls can always be heard.

Teleportation and Scrying. No creature can teleport into, out of, or within Malsheem, nor can any creature be scried upon inside its walls, unless Asmodeus wills it.

GOLDEN LOUNGE

When the characters wake up, they find themselves lying comfortably on soft divans in a lavish waiting room. Zehira is with them, but Hekaton is not. The characters have an instinctive understanding that they are no longer in Hekaton's mindscape, but are back in the Nine Hells.

Decorative marble moldings inlaid with gold line this room's high ceiling. There's no shortage of intricately crafted furniture and low tables, each sofa and divan more comfortable than the last. Shimmery curtains made of gold chiffon are drawn across tall windows, rippling gently. Imps flit around the room, carrying bunches of grapes and goblets of wine.

The six **imps** offer grapes and wine to the characters, to help pass the time while they wait for "their appointment." Both are delicious, but eating or drinking here creates a guilty feeling in the conscience of any good-aligned character.

WAITING GAME

The imps know where the characters are, but enjoy being coy. They do not refer to Asmodeus by name, but only as "His Lordliness." According to the imps, the characters have one hour until their appointment. Until then, they want nothing more than for the characters to make themselves feel at home.

In the hour before their appointment, the characters can take a short rest. (If the party is particularly weak or low on resources, you can allow them to take a long rest instead.)

DOORS AND WINDOWS

The room features a set of tall, locked double doors, which cannot be broken down or opened by any means without Asmodeus's consent. The walls are impervious to damage, and no creatures can pass beyond the windows. Characters who part the curtains can see the cracked maroon plains of Nessus extending in all directions, as well as the rift from which the citadel rises, which fades into darkness below.

THE APPOINTED TIME

When the hour has elapsed, the double doors swing open to reveal a well-dressed **amnizu** valet. The devil graciously escorts the characters down a long hall lined with exquisite paintings of the Nine Hells' various archdevils. They then stop before another set of double doors, respectfully informing the characters that they should kneel when they meet His Lordliness, and stand up again only when told to do so. Without further ado, the amnizu pushes open the double doors and beckons the characters into Asmodeus's throne room.

ASMODEUS'S THRONE ROOM

The walls of this dizzyingly tall chamber are lined with hundreds of portraits, showing fiends and mortals alike. An enormous chandelier hangs from the ceiling, with hundreds of imps clinging to it like bats, crawling around and peering down at you with leering grins.

Sitting upon a gilded throne at the end of the room is a large crimson-skinned figure. His face is handsome, his goatee neatly trimmed. He wears a cloak encrusted with obsidian and ruby gems, and one of his hands holds a skull-tipped rod seemingly carved of solid ruby. Two curved horns adorn his forehead, and he has cloven hooves for feet.

“A pleasure to make your acquaintances,” Asmodeus says in a smooth, sultry voice. His subtle smile reveals teeth sharp enough to pierce flesh. “I trust you have enjoyed my hospitality.”

Asmodeus expects the characters to kneel before him as they introduce themselves, then beckons them to stand afterward. He cocks an eyebrow at any character who refuses to kneel, and asks why they do so. Any response elicits a cruel smile from the archdevil, but he simply notes the character's impudence.

WHAT ASMODEUS KNOWS

Over the course of their conversation with Asmodeus, the characters can confirm and learn the following:

- It was Asmodeus who snatched Hekaton and the characters from Hekaton's mind and brought them to Nessus. The characters are no longer in Hekaton's mind. Everything happening around them is very, very real.
- Asmodeus has been watching the characters' exploits on the Nine Hells. He's impressed, and commends them for their tenacity. However, he informs them that they have punishment owed them if they mistreated Mahadi in part 1 of the adventure (see the “Actions Have Consequences” sidebar).
- Asmodeus describes the characters as “rather arrogant,” in having assumed they could leave the Nine Hells with such a high-profile soul as Hekaton without having to seek his leave first.
- Hekaton is currently safe in one of Malsheem's many rooms. If the characters demand proof, Asmodeus snaps his fingers and one of the portraits on the wall changes to depict a magical image of Hekaton. The storm giant king is in a room not unlike the one the characters just left, slamming his fists futilely against the windows and screaming in silence.
- All the recent events surrounding Hekaton have been connected. The theft of the *Wyrmskull Throne* at the hands of the Cult of the Dragon. The storm king's reanimation as a death knight by the Red Wizards of Thay. Iymrith's resurrection. The fact that these events occurred so closely in tandem with each other was no coincidence.
- Asmodeus is willing to both release Hekaton's soul and reveal to characters the common thread that connects the actions of the Cult of The Dragon and the Red Wizards of Thay ... but they'll have to prove themselves to him first.

ASMODEUS

Lawful evil archdevil

Lord of the Nine Hells, God of Indulgence—whatever name he is known by, the archdevil Asmodeus is a force to be reckoned with.

What They Want. Asmodeus's intentions surpass any mortal's understanding, including the characters as they're caught up in his plots. In truth, he doesn't really care whether the characters free Hekaton or not. He simply wants to see them earn it. All of Asmodeus's dealings are but part of a larger contract, the details of which he keeps hidden.

Consummate Politician. Asmodeus is cool, collected, and always well spoken. Those who deal with him find it impossible to ever get a good read on him, as he seems always to be telling the honest truth. Asmodeus can make even the most dangerous plan of action sound like a joyride.

ASMODEUS'S POWER

Asmodeus isn't just any archdevil: he's also the lawful evil god of indulgence. As such, he has deific powers that far exceed those of even the most heroic mortals. Trying to fight him is futile—especially here in Nessus, where his powers are strongest.

In truth, the entity the characters interact with in this adventure is only an avatar of Asmodeus. His true form resides even deeper in Nessus, far from Malsheem. Still, any Insight check made against him or any attempt to read his mind with magic comes up unclear.

DEAL WITH A DEVIL

Asmodeus has a little favor that he needs taken care of. He tells the characters that despite the claims of those he describes as “religious charlatans on the Material Plane,” he always seeks to keep the multiverse's best interests in mind. Law and balance are important to him, as he explains:

- Each of the Outer Planes serves a purpose, including the Infinite Battlefield of Acheron. On this plane, the spirits of fallen warriors clash in endless wars. Acheron is a realm where order reigns supreme, so that no matter how well each army fights, none ever gains ground on the others.
- Enter Ygorl, the slaad lord of entropy. Ygorl's realm is the chaotic plane of Limbo, and the slaad lord is destruction incarnate.
- Ygorl has managed to invade Acheron with an army of slaadi, and is leaking Limbo's chaos into that lawful plane by using magic from a fragment broken off from the Spawning Stone that first gave rise to the slaadi.

Asmodeus asks that the characters travel to Acheron and put a stop to Ygorl's rampage, thereby restoring law to the Infinite Battlefield. Destroying the fragment of the Spawning Stone should stop the slaad lord from creating more slaadi in Acheron. If the characters ask for time to take another rest, short or long, or ask for additional aid from Asmodeus, he simply laughs.

As the characters watch, the Lord of the Nine Hells conjures up a large scroll with the terms of the agreement, and one of his imps delivers it to the characters with a quill for their signatures. Any Investigation check reveals that the terms of the contract appear to be in order, and contain no dangerous hidden clauses. Once the characters sign the scroll, Asmodeus thanks them, answers any last questions, then snaps his fingers and teleports the party directly to Acheron. Proceed to “Battle for Acheron” below.



If the characters refuse the terms of Asmodeus's contract, he threatens to have their souls and Hekaton's made into *soul coins* and fed into an infernal war machine's engines, thereby destroying their souls forever. It should be made clear to the players that trying to fight Asmodeus in his heavily guarded fortress will unequivocally result in the characters' deaths. If the characters refuse regardless, Asmodeus obliterates them, they gain the **Burn, Baby, Burn** story award, and the adventure ends.

ROLEPLAYING ASMODEUS

Asmodeus is the definition of a silver-tongued speaker. He never raises his voice, and always comes across as calm, charming, and charismatic. Around the characters, he behaves like an amused cat playing with a mouse. The characters should feel as though they're barely worth his time, even as powerful as they are.

Roleplaying any deity with the proper gravitas—especially a smooth-talking one like Asmodeus—can be a challenge for even the most seasoned DM. If you need some dialogue to fall back on while roleplaying the Lord of the Nine Hells, feel free to utilize any of the following.

- “Come, now. Would I lie to you? A devil's only as good as his word.”
- “Petulance will get you nowhere. Let's try to have a civil discourse, shall we?”
- “Ah, of course you distrust me. Mortals always do. But with time, they always come to realize that I only want what's best for the both of us.”
- “You're quite the eloquent orator. I do believe I see a bit of myself in you.”

ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

If the characters didn't play nicely with Mahadi in part 1 of the adventure—ignoring a banishment order, extracting Hekaton's location from the rakshasa with magic or force, and so forth—Asmodeus takes them to task during his conversation with them. He understands why they did what they did, but unfortunately, Mahadi is one of his most loyal servants—and actions have consequences.

Asmodeus points his ruby rod at all the characters (Zehira included) and momentarily envelops them in heatless black flames. Each character loses 35 (10d6) hit points, and each character who can cast spells has their three highest remaining spell slots expended.

BATTLE FOR ACHERON

When Asmodeus teleports the characters to Acheron, read or paraphrase the following:

The dull roar of battle surrounds you where you stand on a small island set in a lake of iridescent liquid. Other islands spread before you, along with a wide chunk of crystal half submerged in the middle of the lake, pulsing with purple light.

Along the lake's perimeter, hordes of warriors clash with armies of hulking toad-like entities—the slaadi—upon an endless expanse of smooth, polished obsidian. The flatness of the ground seems strange—until you glance up to see the dark sky filled with hundreds of enormous cubes. Some look smooth and barren, while others appear to be pockmarked with terrain, mountains—even cities. All are drifting slowly, just like the cube you stand on.

See “Appendix 4: Spawning Pool Map” for a map of the battlefield.

The lake surrounding the characters is a spawning pool—a byproduct of Ygorl's newfound influence on Acheron. With the fragment of the Spawning Stone brought here from Limbo, Ygorl is creating new slaadi from the bodies of those who fall in Acheron's endless battles. Cadaver collectors on this cube are native to Acheron, but Ygorl's presence has twisted their programming, forcing them to bring any corpses they acquire straight to the spawning pool.

When the characters teleport onto the scene, split them randomly into three groups, with each group arriving on a different starting island in the spawning pool.

As the characters orient themselves, three **cadaver collectors** emerge from the battle near the starting islands and wade into the water, corpses impaled on their spiky backs. Each shrugs off two corpses that slip beneath the iridescent liquid, instantly transforming them into six **death slaadi** that immediately race toward the characters.

SLAADI FIGHT

Death slaadi who reach the characters on their islands lay into them with bite, claw, and greatsword attacks. While approaching an island, or if prevented from reaching it, they make use of *fireball* and *cloudkill* to attack from range.

On each of its turns, a cadaver collector shrugs one more corpse into the spawning pool, which turns into a slaadi and rises from the pool at the end of the round. Each cadaver collector holds three corpses (not counting the ones shrugged off at the start of combat), which they dump into the pool over three rounds.

SPAWNING POOL

The spawning pool resembles a gigantic iridescent oil slick. It's 4 feet deep and counts as difficult terrain. Any creature that is not Ygorl or a slaad that enters the pool or starts its turn there takes 28 (8d6) psychic damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature suffers a flesh-warping effect from the Flesh Warping table (see appendix 5). This effect lasts for 10 minutes, during which time an affected creature automatically succeeds on saving throws against the lake's effect. Any effect that removes a curse ends all warping effects on a creature.

If you want to add an extra level of challenge to this battle, consider having some of the islands crumble. A crumbling island begins to shake on initiative count 20 of one round, and disappears into the iridescent liquid on initiative count 20 of the following round.

YGORL'S WRATH

On initiative count 20 of round 2, read or paraphrase the following:

A crescent-shaped rift suddenly appears in the air above the crystal at the center of the lake, as if reality had been torn open by a massive scythe. A large frog-like creature seemingly made of shadow crawls out of the rift, which closes behind it. The creature looks at you as it wields a scythe in its hands, its wicked grin stretching impossibly wide.

This is **Ygorl, Lord of Entropy**, who attacks the characters on sight. While the spawning stone is intact (see below), Ygorl has advantage on attack rolls.

YGORL

Chaotic neutral slaad lord

Ygorl was one of the first slaadi created after Primus unleashed the Spawning Stone upon Limbo. A powerful being suffused with entropic power, the Lord of Entropy delights in the act of unmaking and bringing chaos to any realm it visits.

What They Want. Ygorl doesn't desire anything in the traditional sense. It is simply driven to unmake, so that the resulting base elements of reality can fuel the multiverse's endless cycles of creation and destruction.

Slaad of Few Words. Ygorl typically does not speak at all. If it absolutely has to, it usually croaks out one-word absolute commands, such as "UNRAVEL," "DISSOLVE," and "UNDO."

SPAWNING STONE FRAGMENT

The spawning stone fragment is what allows the spawning pool to create new slaadi, and it must be destroyed for the characters to fulfil their bargain with Asmodeus.

Characters can easily stand on the stone, or can attack it from a distance. The stone has AC 18 and 300 hit points, resistance to damage from nonmagical attacks, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. It makes all saving throws with a +10 bonus. As it takes damage, small cracks begin to appear on the stone's surface.

When the stone is reduced to 150 hit points, it pulses with chaotic psychic energy. Each creature within 1 mile of the stone except Ygorl, the slaadi, and the tainted cadaver collectors must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Lawful characters have disadvantage on this saving throw. A creature that fails the save also falls under the effect of a *confusion* spell (save DC 15). The glow of the stone then shifts from purple to gray, and large cracks begin to appear on its surface.

When the spawning stone fragment is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes into shards. Each creature within 100 feet of it must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The spawning pool dries up instantly, and any surviving cadaver collectors stumble away from the fight, no longer under Ygorl's influence. Destroying the stone also ends any lingering *confusion* effects.

THE ENDLESS WAR

Across the face of the cube, warring humanoids and lesser slaadi fight as far as the eye can see, all the way up to the edge of the lake. Any creature except a cadaver collector that leaves the lake takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns as it's overwhelmed by the fray. Flying above the fight does not protect a creature from this damage, as arrows and projectiles fill the air. Trying to fight through the fray in an attempt to clear out a safe space is futile, as more warriors instantly push forward to fill in the gap.

ENDGAME

To win this battle, the characters must rout Ygorl and the remaining death slaadi at the spawning pool, and dry up the spawning pool by destroying the spawning stone fragment. Once they do so, they feel themselves drawn back to the Nine Hells by Asmodeus's magic.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

- **Very Weak:** Remove three **death slaadi** from the start of combat. The spawning stone has only 200 hit points, and does not trigger the psychic blast or the final explosion as its hit points are reduced.
- **Weak:** The spawning stone has only 200 hit points, and does not explode when destroyed.
- **Strong: Ygorl** can cast one spell on its turn in addition to taking any of its normal actions. Each **death slaad** can cast *fireball* at will.
- **Very Strong: Ygorl** can cast one spell on its turn in addition to taking any of its normal actions. Its "Call the Void" ability costs only 2 legendary actions. Each **death slaad** can cast *fireball* at will.



RETURN TO AVERNUS

After the characters finish their fight on Acheron, Asmodeus transports them back to the Nine Hells. But when the characters arrive there, they find themselves not in Nessus but back on Avernus, overlooking the Styx-filled chasm that holds Mirror Maelstrom. Asmodeus stands before them, with a shackled Hekaton at his side.

Asmodeus holds up his end of the bargain, and informs the characters of the following as he hands over the soul of the storm giant king:

- At the behest of another entity, Asmodeus's agents were the ones who revealed the coordinates of the teleportation circle in Maelstrom to the Cult of the Dragon and Szass Tam, allowing the cultists and the Red Wizards access to the fortress.
- It was also Asmodeus—again, at the behest of another—who inspired the arcanaloth Zexmanthass to create the phylactery-shifting ritual, and who gave Szass Tam's forces the ritual that allowed them to bring back Iymrith.

Asmodeus cannot reveal the entity for whom he performed these deeds, as his contract with that entity prevents him from sharing any more details. But the characters should now be aware that the storm king's descent was but the first chapter in a much longer story.

With a gesture, Asmodeus orders his imp attendants to free Hekaton from his shackles. As they unlock the storm giant king, a heavenly beam of light begins to shine down on him, tearing down through Avernus's hellish sky from somewhere high above.

Asmodeus breathes a deep, exaggerated sigh. "I do despise seeing hard-won souls go to waste," he says. "Though this was our bargain. Still, it doesn't mean I have to watch." With a whirl of his cape, the Lord of the Nine Hells is enveloped by a bonfire of black flame and is gone.

Hekaton and the characters have time to share a few last words before he ascends to Stormhold. As before, he has no desire to be resurrected, and can hear the All-Father's call within the light that seeks him. His time on the Material Plane has come to an end, and he's at peace with that.

Hekaton thanks the characters for defending the Sword Coast in his absence, and for not giving up on him even when he thought all was lost. He then asks them to tell Serissa that he loves her, and that she will be a queen that both he and Neri can take pride in. With that, the storm giant king rises into the air and travels along the beam of light. He looks upward with hope in his eyes, quickly vanishing from sight beyond the Avernian sky.

WRAP-UP: CORONATION

With their bargain fulfilled, the characters can return to Maelstrom using the *plane shift* spell or similar means. (If they do not have that spell available to them, Asmodeus can offer them one use of the spell as part of their bargain.) Upon their arrival, they are able to tell Serissa of their adventure, and can assure her that her father is with Annam the All-Father now.

STORM QUEEN'S ASCENT

In the days that follow, the storm giants prepare to officially crown Serissa as their new queen, and the characters are to be guests of honor at the ceremony. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

As the day of Serissa's coronation arrives, Maelstrom has been decorated as you've never seen it before. Garlands of white shells hang from every arch, and giants of all kinds are gathered for the event—along with many smallfolk.

The ceremony is an emotional affair, as all the assembled giants swear their fealty to Serissa, and pledges of peace and understanding are shared between giants and smallfolk. Then, even as the ceremony ends, Queen Serissa approaches all of you. She wears a crown of whale bones, fashioned after her mother's, as if it has always belonged atop her head. And as her first act as queen, Serissa makes you a surprising offer. She asks you all if you would join the storm giant court as her sworn emissaries and defenders. In her eyes, there are no folk more capable, and no folk she trusts more deeply.

Zehira immediately accepts Serissa's offer. Any other characters who do so gain the **Knight of the Giant Queen** legacy event. The players should feel free to come up with courtly titles for their characters if they so desire. And whether they accept Serissa's offer or decide to go their own way, the characters can all rest easy knowing that the Sword Coast is safe ... for now.

TREASURE

In addition to an award of gold, Serissa gifts the party with a magic necklace as a token of her eternal gratitude. The kelp necklace features a crab-shaped medallion made of coral, and functions as a *scarab of protection*.

REWARDS

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards:

ADVANCEMENT

A character participating in this adventure gains one level. Players must tick the box to show this reward has been claimed.

OPTIONAL: DECLINING ADVANCEMENT

Each player can decline advancement if they so choose, gaining potential benefits. It's possible that a player might want their character to not advance outside of an adventure's level range, meaning that they'd be unable to play the adventure as planned. Similarly, advancing too quickly means that a character won't earn as much gold as their peers.

Conversely, remind the players that the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited. Characters declining advancement might reach a point where they no longer earn gold.

GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically feature cues for where this treasure appears, but you can add it wherever you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

MAGIC ITEMS

The characters can keep the following magic items (described in "Appendix 6: Character Rewards") if they are found during the adventure:

- *Chime of opening*
- *Oathbow*
- *Potion of storm giant strength*
- *Potion of vitality* (up to three)
- *Scarab of protection*

LEGACY EVENTS

The characters can gain the following legacy events in this adventure.

Burn, Baby, Burn. Asmodeus has imprisoned your soul within a *soul coin* and fed it to an infernal war machine's engine, destroying your soul instantly. Not even divine intervention can resurrect you now. Your character is permanently retired.

No Exceptions! You've broken one of Mahadi's rules for the Wandering Emporium: "No fighting! No spellcasting! No exceptions!" You've been kicked out of the emporium, and are banned from ever entering it again.

Knight of the Giant Queen. You have sworn allegiance to Serissa, the storm giant queen, and have joined her court at Maelstrom. The vow you have sworn to her supersedes all other oaths.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, you earn a DM Reward. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

ASMODEUS

(az-MOH-dee-us) or (az-moh-DAY-us)

Lord of the Nine Hells, God of Indulgence—whatever name he is known by, the archdevil Asmodeus is a force to be reckoned with.

What They Want. Asmodeus's intentions surpass any mortal's understanding, including the characters as they're caught up in his plots. In truth, he doesn't really care whether the characters free Hekaton or not. He simply wants to see them earn it. All of Asmodeus's dealings are but part of a larger contract, the details of which he keeps hidden.

Consummate Politician. Asmodeus is cool, collected, and always well spoken. Those who deal with him find it impossible to ever get a good read on him, as he seems always to be telling the honest truth. Asmodeus can make even the most dangerous plan of action sound like a joyride.

BURNEY THE BARBER

(BUR-nee)

Burney appears as a polite and friendly Calishite woman. She is always happy to tell stories (often with a moral message), and willing to provide cosmetic or medical treatments as well as spellcasting services.

What They Want. Burney is actually an ancient copper dragon named Balarystul, and is keeping an eye on events in Avernus on behalf of Bahamut. She wants to ensure that any goodly folk trapped in the Nine Hells have a chance to walk away with their lives and their souls, as long as she can keep her cover intact. Her stories can direct good-aligned characters toward help.

Talented Healer. Burney is treated as having the Healer feat and proficiency with a herbalism kit and a healer's kit, and has a +10 bonus to relevant rolls. All of her non-spellcasting services cost 1 gp, and she refuses to even consider *soul coins* as payment.

DARA

(DAH-ruh)

This human in her early teens was raised by priests of Ilmater in Amn. There, she found and read from the *Book of Exalted Deeds*, triggering her transformation into a Chosen of Ilmater.

What They Want. Having completed her holy quest to find the Hellriders, Dara feels aimless now. She wants to find a purpose for herself, but whether that's a return to her faith or a complete departure from it remains to be seen.

Wise Beyond Her Years. Dara often sounds much more knowledgeable and mature than her years would suggest.

DURACLES

(DUHR-uh-cleez)

Duracles is a pit fiend sent by Asmodeus to watch over the imprisoned King Hekaton's soul.

What They Want. Duracles is always raring for a fight, wanting nothing more than to display its strength and power.

Devil On Hekaton's Shoulder. Duracles has a knack for finding out what gets under peoples' skin. Since Hekaton's soul arrived in Avernus, the pit fiend has spent its time taunting and mocking the storm giant king, using his every doubt and insecurity against him.

FAI CHEN

(fie chen)

A Shou man apparently in his late thirties, Fai is known for the magic items and rarities he bargains and sells. He trades magic items only for other magic items, but takes coin for consumables and appreciates the value of *soul coins* (over and above their worth as magic items). He is always accompanied by his mule, Gary, and a blue faerie dragon, Drandel dew.

What They Want. Fai Chen keeps an eye out for Dara, but his other motivations for remaining with the Wandering Emporium are less certain. He clearly enjoys bantering and bartering with the emporium's clientele, as well as his contentious relationship with Mahadi.

Mysterious and Resourceful. Fai Chen always seems to know more than he's telling, but only rarely offers to share information. In a pinch, though, he's willing to lend a hand to those who need it.

KING BRANCHWICK

This megalomaniac human is one of many rival "monarchs" who rule over the individual islands of the archipelago known as the Whalebones.

What They Want. King Branchwick wants to assert his dominance over each and every other humanoid in his domain. The only creature he defers to is Worldeater, his pet roc, who Branchwick legitimately believes has the power to eat the world.

King of Finback. Branchwick might seem a little off to outsiders, but the villagers of Finback genuinely view him as their rightful king. They see him as a genius, a hero, a leader—basically, believing everything he's told them about himself.

KING HEKATON

(HECK-uh-tawn)

The once-mighty king of the storm giants has been broken by the time he's spent in Mirror Maelstrom, subjected to Duracles the pit fiend's relentless taunts and mockery.

What They Want. When the characters find him, Hekaton appears devoid of emotion, battered to the point of numbness by Duracles' mind games. He believes he is not worthy of any afterlife other than being chained up in Mirror Maelstrom forever.

Time to Pass on the Torch. Even after the characters save him, Hekaton recognizes that his time on the Material Plane has come to an end, and he does not seek resurrection. His time has come, and he welcomes the afterlife with open arms. He is sure that Serissa will make a formidable queen in his stead.

LYSANDER SALLOWBONE

(lie-SAN-duhr)

Lysander Sallowbone is a Thayan Red Wizard zulkir sent by Szass Tam to oversee the construction of Hekaton's prison, as well as the subsequent protection of Hekaton's soul.

What They Want. Lysander's orders are to guard Hekaton's prison indefinitely, and he's become somewhat bored by the task. He thus delights in lording his power over intruders and those he deems less than him.

Haughty As Can Be. Lysander comes from the upper end of Thayan aristocracy, and a life of wealth and privilege underlines every word he speaks.

MAHADI

(muh-HAH-dee)

Appearing as a brown-skinned Turmishan merchant lord, Mahadi is a rakshasa in service to Asmodeus. He is completely dedicated to, and open about, his policy of neutrality when dealing with customers of the Wandering Emporium.

What They Want. Mahadi serves his master by collecting information on the Wandering Emporium's customers—and he collects plenty of souls and debts for himself while doing so. The rakshasa cannot bear to relinquish a single contract from his collection.

Charismatic Host. Mahadi is more than willing to act as a negotiator and broker for all kinds of creatures in Avernus ... except if his soul collection is involved. His adherence to rules makes him appear a reasonable figure to bargain with, and often endears him to those he spies on for Asmodeus.

PRINCESS SERISSA

(SAH-riss-ah)

The youngest daughter and chosen successor of King Hekaton, Serissa is cool and calm in her ongoing effort to hold the giant court together.

What They Want. Serissa knows deep down that the chances of resurrecting her father are slim. But even if she can't return him to the world, she wants to see his soul ascend to Stormhold where it belongs. She knows that her father was a good and worthy figure, and will do anything to save him from an afterlife of torment in the Nine Hells.

Experienced Leader. Serissa's previous experience ruling during Hekaton's absence (during the events of *Storm King's Thunder*) allows her to remain cool and level-headed in the face of extreme uncertainty. She is prudent, compassionate, and optimistic, believing that all folk are innately good at heart.

ZEHIRA DERYAN

(zeh-HEER-uh DAIR-yuhn)

Zehira is an experienced privateer, once the daughter of Turmishan merchants. She has keen dark eyes, olive skin, and black hair that she keeps in a tight braid.

What They Want. Zehira possesses the *Iltkazar Scepter*, and wants to make sure that this powerful relic does not fall into the wrong hands. She recognizes and respects Serissa, holder of the *Korolnor Scepter*, and seeks to aid her and the greater good.

Reckless at Heart. Zehira is intelligent and kind, but can be a little reckless in her pursuit of adventure.

YGORL

(ee-GORL)

Ygorl was one of the first slaadi created after Primus unleashed the Spawning Stone upon Limbo. A powerful being suffused with entropic power, the Lord of Entropy delights in the act of unmaking and bringing chaos to any realm it visits.

What They Want. Ygorl doesn't desire anything in the traditional sense. It is simply driven to unmake, so that the resulting base elements of reality can fuel the multiverse's endless cycles of creation and destruction.

Slaad of Few Words. Ygorl typically does not speak at all. If it absolutely has to, it usually croaks out one-word absolute commands, such as "UNRAVEL," "DISSOLVE," and "UNDO."

CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure.

AMNIZU

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 202 (27d8 + 81)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving throws Dex +7, Con +9, Wis +7, Cha +10

Skills Perception +7

Damage Resistance cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities Fire, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Infernal, Telepathy 1,000 ft.

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

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

Innate Spellcasting. The amnizu's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The amnizu can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person, command*

3/day each: *dominate person, fireball*

1/day each: *dominate monster, feebleshield*

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The amnizu uses Poison Mind. It also makes two attacks: one with its whip and one with its Disruptive Touch.

Taskmaster Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage plus 33 (6d10) force damage.

Disruptive Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 44 (8d10) necrotic damage.

Poison Mind. The amnizu targets one or two creatures that it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or take 26 (4d12) necrotic damage and be blinded until the start of the amnizu's next turn.

Forgetfulness (Recharge 6). The amnizu targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. That creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute. A stunned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the target is stunned for the full minute, it forgets everything it sensed, experienced, and learned during the last 5 hours.

REACTIONS

Instinctive Charm. When a creature within 60 feet of the amnizu makes an attack roll against it, and another creature is within the attack's range, the attacker must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker must target the creature that is closest to it, not including the amnizu or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target. If the saving throw is successful, the attacker is immune to the amnizu's Instinctive Charm for 24 hours.

ARCHMAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

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

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Any six languages

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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

Spellcasting. The archmage is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The archmage can cast disguise self and invisibility at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, identify, mage armor,* magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, mirror image, misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, fire shield, stoneskin**

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold, scrying, wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slot): *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**

9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

*The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

CADAVER COLLECTOR

Large construct, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (Natural)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages but can't speak

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

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

Summon Specters (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the cadaver collector calls up the enslaved spirits of those it has slain; 1d6 specters (without Sunlight Sensitivity) arise in unoccupied spaces within 15 feet of the cadaver collector. The specters act right after the cadaver collector on the same initiative count and fight until they're destroyed. They disappear when the cadaver collector is destroyed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cadaver collector makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 16 (3d10) necrotic damage.

Paralyzing Breath (Recharge 5–6). The cadaver collector releases paralyzing gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a successful DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A paralyzed creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

CANOLOTH

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Skills Investigation +3, Perception +9

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, Infernal, Telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

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

Dimensional Lock. Other creatures can't teleport to or from a space within 60 feet of the canoloth. Any attempt to do so is wasted.

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

Magic Weapons. The canoloth's weapon attacks are magical.

Uncanny Senses. The canoloth can't be surprised while it isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The canoloth makes two attacks: one with its tongue or its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (6d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) slashing damage.

Tongue. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15), pulled up to 30 feet toward the canoloth, and restrained until the grapple ends. The canoloth can grapple one target at a time with its tongue.

CHAIN DEVIL

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving throws Con +7, Wis +4, Cha +5
Damage Resistance cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The devil makes two attacks with its chains.

Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if the devil isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.

Animate Chains (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Up to four chains the devil can see within 60 feet of it magically sprout razor-edged barbs and animate under the devil's control, provided that the chains aren't being worn or carried.

Each animated chain is an object with AC 20, 20 hit points, resistance to piercing damage, and immunity to psychic and thunder damage. When the devil uses multiattack on its turn, it can use each animated chain to make one additional chain attack. An animated chain can grapple one creature of its own but can't make attacks while grappling. An animated chain reverts to its inanimate state if reduced to 0 hit points or if the devil is incapacitated or dies.

REACTIONS

Unnerving Mask. When a creature the devil can see starts its turn within 30 feet of the devil, the devil can create the illusion that it looks like one of the creature's departed loved ones or bitter enemies. If the creature can see the devil, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its turn.

ELITE CHAIN DEVIL PRISON GUARDS

The elite chain devils that serve as guards in Mirror Maelstrom wield adamantine chains that modify their chain attack as follows:

Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if the devil isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 14 (1d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.

DEATH SLAAD

Medium aberration (shapechanger), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 51)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +6, Perception +8
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Slaad, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Shapechanger. The slaad can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

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

Regeneration. The slaad regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

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

At will: *detect magic, detect thoughts, invisibility (self only), mage hand, minor image*
2/day each: *fear, fly, fireball, tongues*
1/day each: *cloudkill, plane shift (self only)*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The slaad makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws or greatsword.

Bite (Slaad Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws (Slaad Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

HELLFIRE ENGINE

Huge construct, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 216 (16d12 + 112)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +5, Cha +0
Damage Resistances cold, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands Infernal but can't speak
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The hellfire engine is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

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

ACTIONS

Flesh-Crushing Stride. The hellfire engine moves up to its speed in a straight line. During this move, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. A creature whose space the hellfire engine enters must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is pushed 5 feet to the nearest space out of the hellfire engine's path. On a failed save, the creature falls prone and takes 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage.

If the hellfire engine remains in the prone creature's space, the creature is also restrained until it's no longer in the same space as the hellfire engine. While restrained in this way, the creature, or another creature within 5 feet of it, can make a DC 18 Strength check. On a success, the creature is shunted to an unoccupied space of its choice within 5 feet of the hellfire engine and is no longer restrained.

Hellfire Weapons. The hellfire engine uses one of the following options:

Bonemelt Sprayer. The hellfire engine spews acidic flame in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) fire damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures that fail the saving throw are drenched in burning acid and take 5 (1d10) fire damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage at the end of their turns. An affected creature or another creature within 5 feet of it can take an action to scrape off the burning fuel.

Lightning Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 22 (5d8) lightning damage. Up to three other creatures of the hellfire engine's choice that it can see within 30 feet of the target must each make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Thunder Cannon. The hellfire engine targets a point within 120 feet of it that it can see. Each creature within 30 feet of that point must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (2d12) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

IMP

Tiny fiend (devil, shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Infernal, Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shapechanger. The imp can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a rat (speed 20 ft.), a raven (20 ft., fly 60 ft.), or a spider (20 ft., climb 20 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

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

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

ACTIONS

Sting (Bite in Beast Form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Invisibility. The imp magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the imp wears or carries is invisible with it.

LEVIATHAN

Gargantuan elemental, neutral

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 328 (16d20 + 160)

Speed 40 ft., swim 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	24 (+7)	30 (+10)	2 (-4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +10, Cha +9

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the leviathan fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Partial Freeze. If the leviathan takes 50 cold damage or more during a single turn, the leviathan partially freezes; until the end of its next turn, its speeds are reduced to 20 feet, and it makes attack rolls with disadvantage.

Siege Monster. The leviathan deals double damage to objects and structures (included in Tidal Wave).

Water Form. The leviathan can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The leviathan makes two attacks: one with its slam and one with its tail.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) acid damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (1d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) acid damage.

Tidal Wave (Recharge 6). While submerged, the leviathan magically creates a wall of water centered on itself. The wall is up to 250 feet long, up to 250 feet high, and up to 50 feet thick.

When the wall appears, all other creatures within its area must each make a DC 24 Strength saving throw. A creature takes 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

At the start of each of the leviathan's turns after the wall appears, the wall, along with any other creatures in it, moves 50 feet away from the leviathan. Any Huge or smaller creature inside the wall or whose space the wall enters when it moves must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or take 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage. A creature takes this damage no more than once on a turn. At the end of each turn the wall moves, the wall's height is reduced by 50 feet, and the damage creatures take from the wall on subsequent rounds is reduced by 1d10. When the wall reaches 0 feet in height, the effect ends.

A creature caught in the wall can move by swimming. Because of the force of the wave, though, the creature must make a successful DC 24 Strength (Athletics) check to swim at all during that turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The leviathan can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The leviathan regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Slam (Costs 2 Actions). The leviathan makes one slam attack. **Move.** The leviathan moves up to its speed.

MARUT

Large construct (inevitable), lawful neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 432 (32d10 + 256)

Speed 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	12 (+1)	26 (+8)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +12, Wis +10, Cha +12

Skills Insight +10, Intimidation +12, Perception +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages all but rarely speaks

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The marut is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Innate Spellcasting. The marut's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20). The marut can innately cast the following spell, requiring no material components.

At will: *plane shift* (self only)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the marut fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The marut makes two slam attacks.

Unerring Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* automatic hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 60 force damage, and the target is pushed up to 5 feet away from the marut if it is Huge or smaller.

Blazing Edict (Recharge 5–6). Arcane energy emanates from the marut's chest in a 60-foot cube. Every creature in that area takes 45 radiant damage. Each creature that takes any of this damage must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of the marut's next turn.

Justify. The marut targets up to two creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or be teleported to a teleportation circle in the Hall of Concordance in Sigil. A target fails automatically if it is incapacitated. If either target is teleported in this way, the marut teleports with it to the circle.

After teleporting in this way, the marut can't use this action again until it finishes a short or long rest.

PENTADRONE

Large construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +4
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Modron
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Axiomatic Mind. The pentadrone can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.

Disintegration. If the pentadrone dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pentadrone makes five arm attacks.

Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Paralysis Gas (Recharge 5–6). The pentadrone exhales a 30-foot cone of gas. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

PIT FIEND

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 300 (24d10 + 168)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)

Saving throws Dex +8, Con +13, Wis +10
Damage Resistance cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to the pit fiend that starts its turn within 20 feet of the pit fiend must make a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw, unless the pit fiend is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the pit fiend's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

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

Innate Spellcasting. The pit fiend's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21). The pit fiend can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic, fireball*
3/day each: *hold monster, wall of fire*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pit fiend makes four attacks: one with its bite, one with its claw, one with its mace, and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, the target can't regain hit points, and it takes 21 (6d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The poisoned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d8 + 8) slashing damage.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) fire damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (3d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

QUADRONE

Medium construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Modron
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Axiomatic Mind. The quadrone can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.

Disintegration. If the quadrone dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The quadrone makes two fist attacks or four shortbow attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Slam. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

RED WIZARD ZULKIR

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If a zulkir fail a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

Spell Secrets. When a zulkir cast a spell with a spell slot that deals acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, radiant, or thunder damage, the zulkir can substitute that damage type with one other type from that list.

Spellcasting. The zulkir is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The zulkir can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *shield*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *ice storm*

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *dominate person*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *true seeing**

7th level (1 slot): *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**

9th level (1 slot): *meteor swarm*

*The zulkir casts *mage armor*, *true seeing*, and *mind blank* on itself before combat

Tattoos of Absorption. A Red Wizard zulkir can use a reaction to absorb a spell that is targeting only the zulkir and not with an area of effect. The absorbed spell's effect is canceled, and the spell's energy—not the spell itself—is stored in the zulkir's magical tattoos. The energy has the same level as the spell when it was cast. The magical tattoos can absorb and store up to 20 levels. The zulkir's can cast spells using spell levels stored in this way.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Red Wizard zulkir can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Red Wizard zulkir regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cantrip (Costs 1 Action). The zulkir casts a cantrip.

First-level spell (Costs 1 Action). The zulkir casts a first-level spell.

Second-level spell (Costs 2 Actions). The zulkir casts a second-level spell.

Third-level spell (Costs 3 Actions). The zulkir casts a third-level spell.

Roc

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 248 (16d20 + 80)

Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +3

Skills Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Keen Sight. The roc has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The roc makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the roc can't use its talons on another target.

SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

STORM GIANT

Huge giant, chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)

Speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29(+9)	14(+2)	20(+5)	16(+3)	18(+4)	18(+4)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10, Wis +9, Cha +9

Skills Arcana +8, Athletics +14, History +8, Perception +9

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities lightning, thunder

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Amphibious. The giant can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The giant's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *feather fall*, *levitate*, *light*
3/day each: *control weather*, *water breathing*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (6d6 + 9) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Lightning Strike (Recharge 5–6). The giant hurls a magical lightning bolt at a point it can see within 500 feet of it. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

SWASHBUCKLER

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lightfooted. The swashbuckler can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Suave Defense. While the swashbuckler is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swashbuckler makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its rapier.

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

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

YGORL, LORD OF ENTROPY

Large aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 325 (26d10 + 182)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +14, Wis +10

Skills Arcana +6, Perception +8

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder

Damage immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 13 (50,000 XP)

Entropic Aura. Each creature that is not a construct or undead that ends its turn within 15 feet of Ygorl takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ygorl fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

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

Innate Spellcasting. Ygorl's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *blight*, *blink*, *chaos bolt*,* *darkness*, *detect magic*, *fly*, *shield*
3/day each: *circle of death*, *enervation*,* *phantasmal killer*, *symbol* (discord only)

2/day each: *finger of death*, *harm*, *mental prison*,* *power word pain**

1/day each: *power word kill*, *power word stun*, *symbol* (death only), *weird*

* Spell from Xanathar's Guide to Everything

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ygorl makes three attacks: two with its scythe, and one with its Entropic Touch.

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) slashing damage plus 19 (3d12) necrotic damage. Any creature reduced to 0 hit points by this attack dies, with its body and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, exploding into a cloud of ash. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a *wish* spell.

Entropic Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Summon Slaadi (1/Day). Ygorl summons 1d4 + 1 death slaadi. A summoned slaad appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of Ygorl, acts as an ally of Ygorl, and can't summon other slaadi. It remains for 1 minute, until it or Ygorl dies, or until Ygorl dismisses it as an action.

Teleport. Ygorl teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ygorl can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ygorl regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Scythe. Ygorl makes one attack with its scythe.

Teleport. Ygorl uses its Teleport action.

Call the Void (Costs 3 Actions). Each creature that is not a construct or undead within 30 feet of Ygorl must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw against the lord of entropy's attempt to unmake life, taking 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Ygorl then regains a number of hit points equal to half the total damage taken by all affected creatures.

KEY NPC STATISTICS

The following NPCs appear in this adventure.

DARA, CHOSEN OF ILMATER

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 20 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Skills Medicine +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Celestial, Common

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

Innate Spellcasting. Dara's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). Dara can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day: *aid, commune, healing word, lesser restoration*

1/week: *true resurrection*

Spellcasting. Dara is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Dara has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (3 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4–1) bludgeoning damage.

SAVING DARA

Even though she is a Chosen of Ilmater, Dara is particularly fragile, and characters who take her along for the excursion into Mirror Maelstrom will need to do all they can to protect her. Temporary hit points, buff spells, and smart tactics are all key. If Dara dies and the characters return her to life, her powers diminish, so deciding to not protect her in favor of simply bringing her back is a losing proposition.

Each time Dara dies, she loses one of the following features chosen randomly:

- Her damage resistances
- Her condition immunities
- Her Magic Resistance trait
- Her Innate Spellcasting trait

If she loses all four features, she no longer has any of her abilities as a Chosen.

If one or more characters have allowed Dara to die in a previous adventure, average the number of **You Let Dara Die!** story awards that the characters have to determine how many abilities Dara is missing at the beginning of this adventure.

ZEHIRA DERYAN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 19 (mariner's studded leather, shield +1)

Hit Points 113 (15d10 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Int +6

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +13, Insight +9, Perception +9, Persuasion +13, Stealth +10, Survival +9

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal, Primordial, Sahuagin, thieves' cant

Cunning Action. Zehira can take a bonus action on each of her turns to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Fancy Footwork. During her turn, if Zehira makes a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against her for the rest of her turn.

Rakish Audacity. Zehira adds her Charisma modifier (+2) to her initiative rolls. She doesn't need advantage on the attack roll to use Sneak Attack against a creature if she is within 5 ft. of it, no other creatures are within 5 ft. of her, and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Zehira deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated and Zehira doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll. Also see **Rakish Audacity**.

Spellcasting. Zehira is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Zehira has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, goodberry, zephyr strike*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision, lesser restoration*

3rd level (3 slots): *water breathing*

4th level (1 slot): *freedom of movement*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Zehira makes three attacks with either her club, dagger, or rapier.

Club +3. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage.

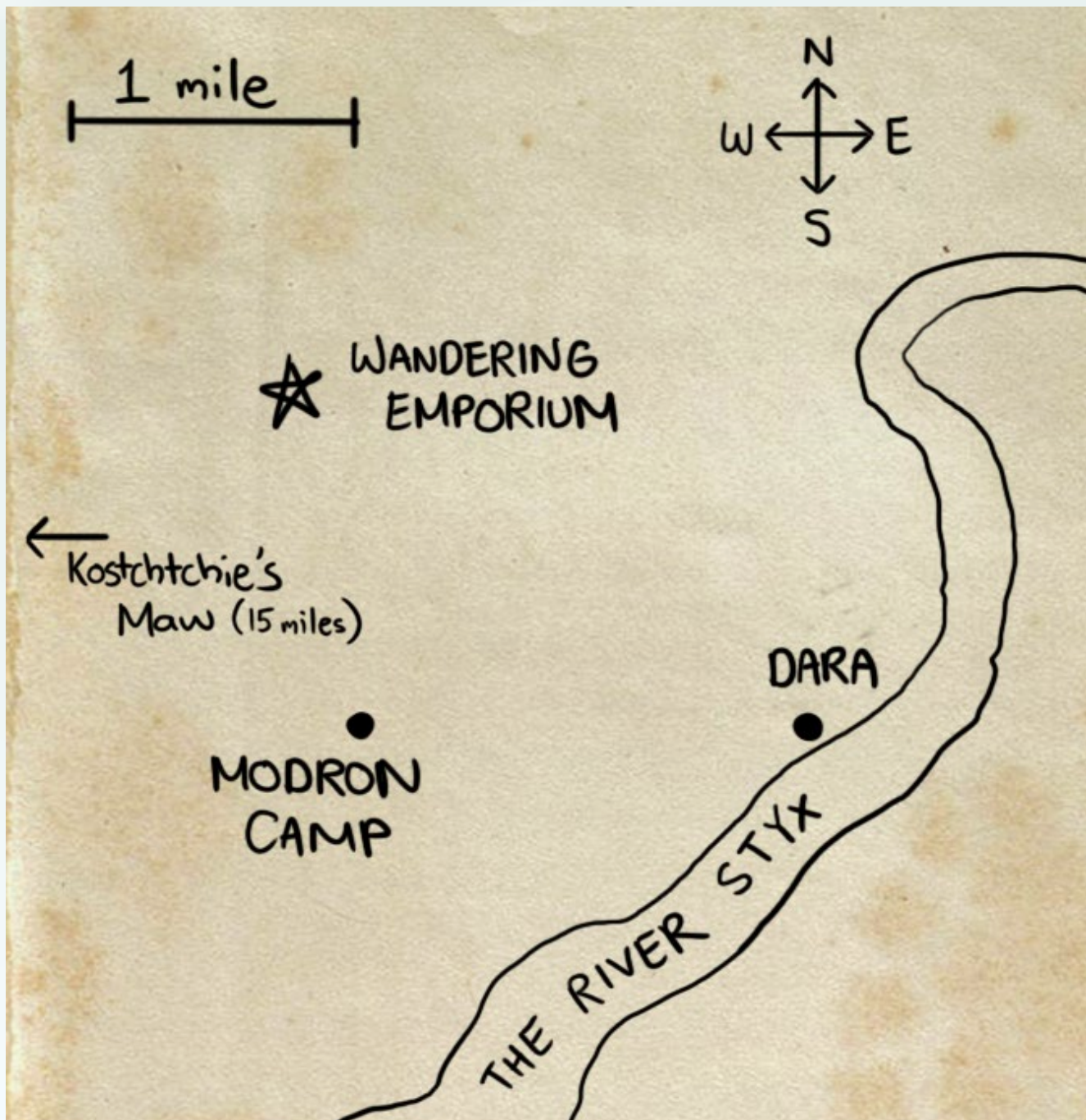
REACTION

Uncanny Dodge. Zehira halves the damage that she takes from an attack that hits her. She must be able to see the attacker.

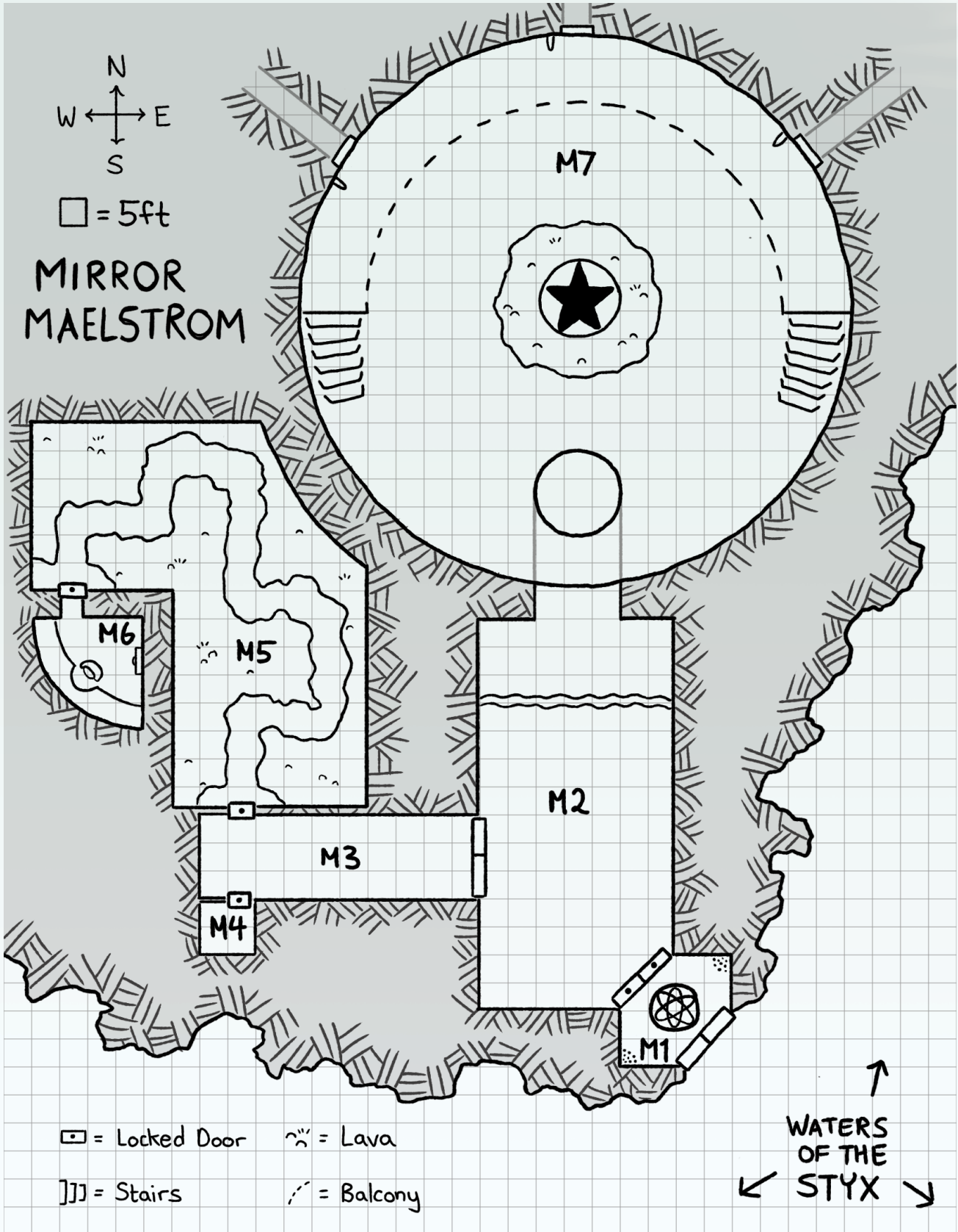
MARINER'S STUDDED LEATHER

While wearing this armor, Zehira has a swimming speed equal to her walking speed. In addition, whenever she starts her turn underwater with 0 hit points, the armor causes her to rise 60 feet toward the surface. The armor is decorated with fish and shell motifs.

APPENDIX 1: WANDERING EMPORIUM OVERLAND MAP

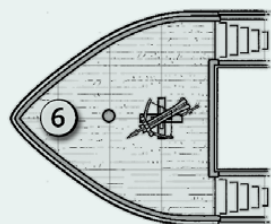


APPENDIX 2: MIRROR MAELSTROM MAP

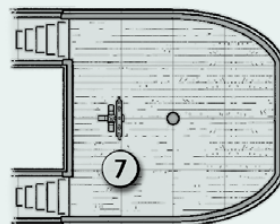


APPENDIX 3: HEKATON'S GALLEON MAP

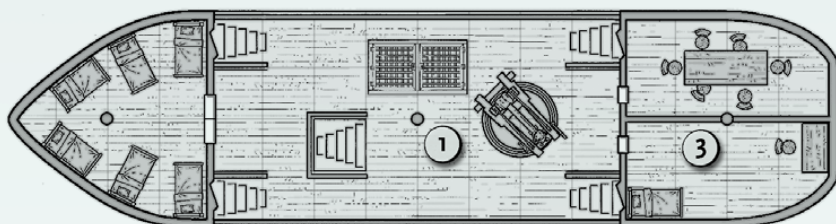
1 square = 5 feet



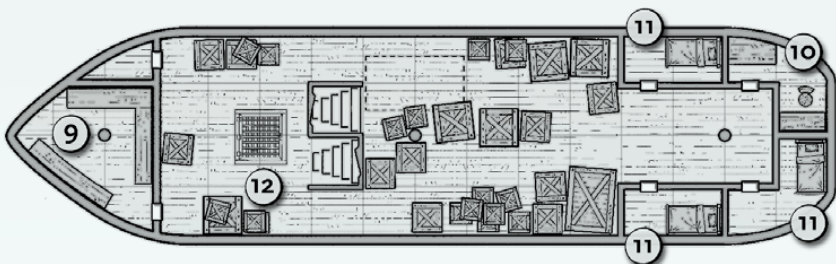
FORECASTLE



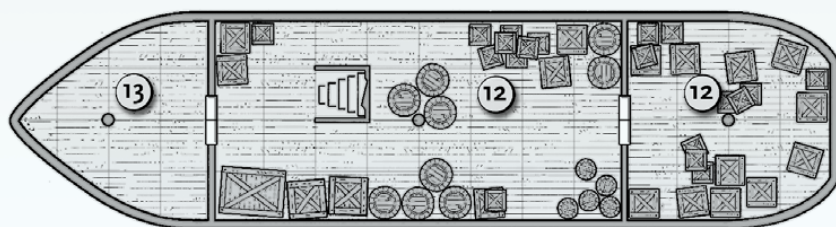
QUARTERDECK



MAIN DECK

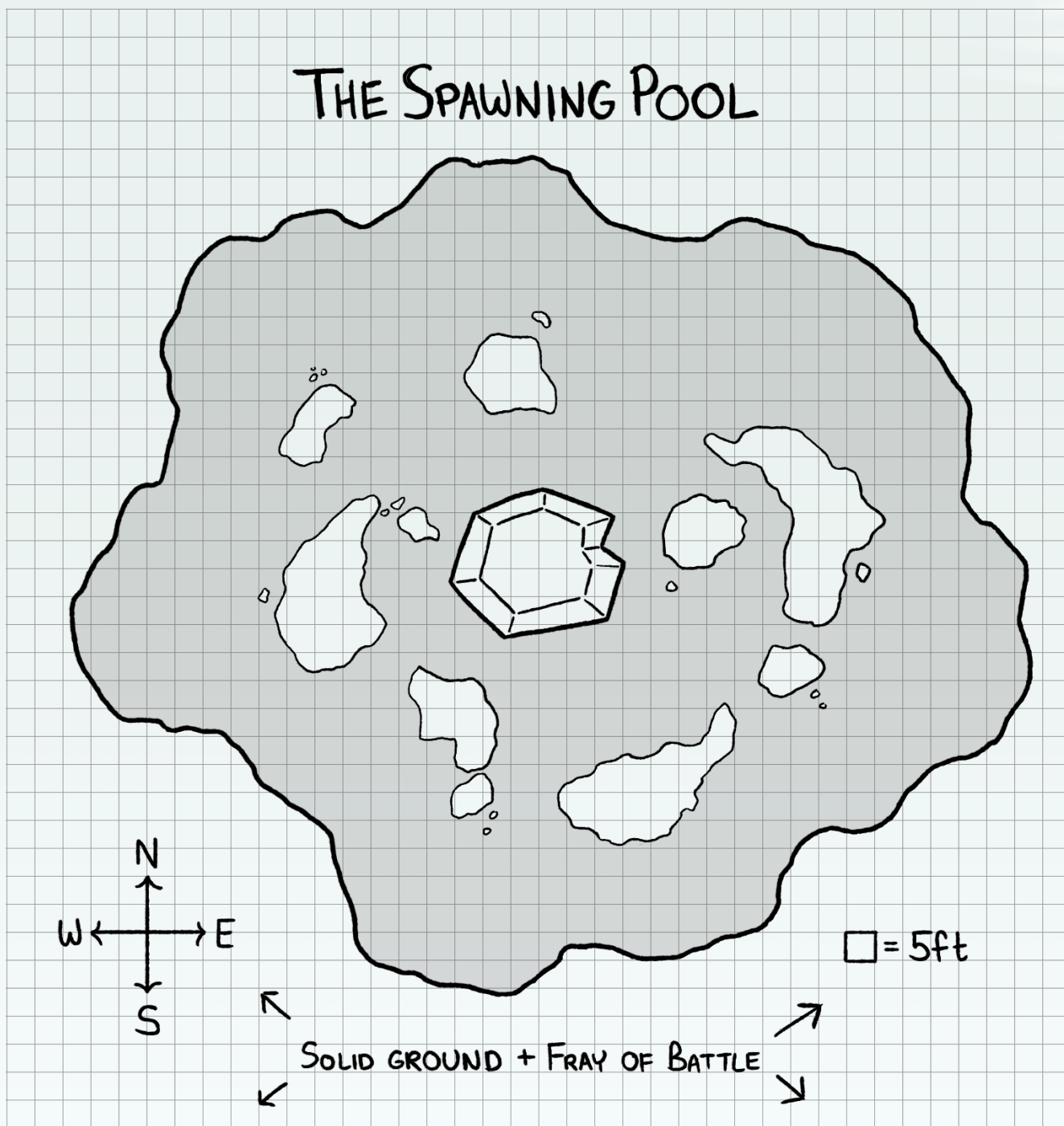


LOWER DECK



HOLD

APPENDIX 4: SPAWNING POOL MAP



APPENDIX 5: FLESH-WARPING TABLE

FLESH WARPING

d100	Effect
01–05	The color of the target's hair, eyes, and skin becomes blue, red, yellow, or patterned.
06–10	The target's eyes push out of its head on the end of stalks.
11–15	The target's hands grow claws, which can be used as daggers.
16–20	One of the target's legs grows longer than the other, reducing its walking speed by 10 feet.
21–25	The target's eyes become beacons, filling a 15-foot cone with dim light when they are open.
26–30	A pair of wings, either feathered or leathery, sprout from the target's back, granting it a flying speed of 30 feet.
31–35	The target's ears tear free from its head and scurry away, leaving the target deafened.
36–40	Two of the target's teeth turn into tusks.
41–45	The target's skin becomes scabby, granting it a +1 bonus to Armor Class but reducing its Charisma by 2 (to a minimum of 1).
46–50	The target's arms and legs switch places, preventing the target from moving unless it crawls.
51–55	The target's arms become tentacles with fingers on the ends, increasing its reach by 5 feet.
56–60	The target's legs grow incredibly long and springy, increasing its walking speed by 10 feet.
61–65	The target grows a whiplike tail, which it can use as a whip.
66–70	The target's eyes turn black, and it gains darkvision out to a range of 120 feet.
71–75	The target swells, tripling its weight.
76–80	The target becomes thin and skeletal, reducing its weight by half.
81–85	The target's head doubles in size.
86–90	The target's ears become wings, giving it a flying speed of 5 feet.
91–95	The target's body becomes unusually brittle, giving it vulnerability to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
96–00	The target grows another head, causing it to have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, or stunned.

APPENDIX 6: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters can keep the following magic items if they are found during the adventure. It is suggested that you print off enough copies of this page to be able to give one to each of your players, crossing out rewards they didn't receive during the session.

CHIME OF OPENING

Wondrous item, rare

This hollow metal tube measures about 1 foot long and weighs 1 pound. You can strike it as an action, pointing it at an object within 120 feet of you that can be opened, such as a door, lid, or lock. The chime issues a clear tone, and one lock or latch on the object opens unless the sound can't reach the object. If no locks or latches remain, the object itself opens.

The chime can be used ten times. After the tenth time, it cracks and becomes useless.

POTION OF VITALITY

Potion, very rare

When you drink this potion, it removes any exhaustion you are suffering and cures any disease or poison affecting you. For the next 24 hours, you regain the maximum number of hit points for any Hit Die you spend. The potion's crimson liquid regularly pulses with a dull light, calling to mind a heartbeat.

OATHBOW

Weapon (longbow), very rare (requires attunement)

When you nock an arrow on this bow, it whispers in Infernal, "Swift defeat to my enemies." When you use this weapon to make a ranged attack, you can, as a command phrase, say "Swift death to you who have wronged me." The target of your attack becomes your sworn enemy until it dies or until dawn seven days later. You can have only one such sworn enemy at a time. When your sworn enemy dies, you can choose a new one after the next dawn.

When you make a ranged attack roll with this weapon against your sworn enemy, you have advantage on the roll. In addition, your target gains no benefit from cover, other than total cover, and you suffer no disadvantage due to long range. If the attack hits, your sworn enemy takes an extra 3d6 piercing damage.

While your sworn enemy lives, you have disadvantage on attack rolls with all other weapons.

This particular *oathbow* is made of blackened, cooled lava, its string glowing as if red-hot.

POTION OF STORM GIANT STRENGTH

Potion, legendary

When you drink this potion, your Strength score changes to 29 for 1 hour. The potion has no effect on you if your Strength is equal to or greater than that score. This potion's transparent liquid has floating in it a sliver of fingernail from a storm giant.

SCARAB OF PROTECTION

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

If you hold this medallion in your hand for 1 round, an inscription appears on its surface revealing its magical nature. It provides two benefits while it is on your person:

- You have advantage on saving throws against spells.
- The scarab has 12 charges. If you fail a saving throw against a necromancy spell or a harmful effect originating from an undead creature, you can use your reaction to expend 1 charge and turn the failed save into a successful one. The scarab crumbles into powder and is destroyed when its last charge is expended.

This particular medallion is made of coral and shaped like a crab. It hangs on a kelp necklace.

LEGACY EVENTS

The characters might earn the following legacy events in this adventure.

BURN, BABY, BURN

Asmodeus has imprisoned your soul within a *soul coin* and fed it to an infernal war machine's engine, destroying your soul instantly. Not even divine intervention can resurrect you now. Your character is permanently retired.

NO EXCEPTIONS!

You've broken one of Mahadi's rules for the Wandering Emporium: "No fighting! No spellcasting! No exceptions!" You've been kicked out of the emporium, and are banned from ever entering it again.

KNIGHT OF THE GIANT QUEEN

You have sworn allegiance to Serissa, the storm giant queen, and have joined her court at Maelstrom. The vow you have sworn to her supersedes all other oaths.

APPENDIX 7: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To run an adventure as a DM, you must have three to seven players, each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see the "Adventure Primer" section at the start of the adventure).

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

NEW TO THE ANNUAL STORYLINE?

You can find out more about the Dreams of the Red Wizards storyline here:

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/dreamsof-the-red-wizards/>

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running it, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running the adventure, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battle maps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score; and anything the adventure specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, and flaws).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or Dungeon Master, but can do so only once with a specific character. Ensure that each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold, and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether the character completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days immediately, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party	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