

# THE PRICE OF A SOUL



AN ADVENTURE IN THE NINE HELLS

MICAH WATT



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## INTRODUCTION

This adventure, continues and expands upon both the events of the adventure; *Temple of the Opal Goddess*, and *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*. The adventure can be run as a one shot, without having played either of these adventures, but using these resources allows for a deeper story to be told. Two other resources – the *Bloodwar Bestiary* and *Heroes of Hell* – are referenced and recommended, but all required material is reproduced in this product.

This adventure, for 3-6 characters, can be run at either tier 2 (character levels 5-10) or tier 3 (character levels 11-16). Alterations and advice for each tier is denoted by the text color change – **Green** for tier 2 and **Blue** for tier 3.

### BACKGROUND

Lashpera, the Opal Goddess, was a mortal whose tyrannical acts to achieve power earned her the attention of the demon lord Fraz-Urb'luu. Her possession of an opal artifact allowed her to consolidate power, but she was eventually overcome by adventurers, and her soul was claimed by the demon lord, who twisted her into a unique demon slave. After serving her master and biding her time, she escaped back to the mortal world and tricked a young nobleman into launching an expedition to regain her opal. After being captured by an orc tribe, adventurers were dispatched to rescue them. In the ensuing events, Lashpera was able to reclaim her opal and her lost power. These events are played out in *Temple of the Opal Goddess*.

### SYNOPSIS

After establishing herself as a player in the Baldur's Gate underworld, Lashpera turned her attention to a personal matter. While in disguise and attempting to reclaim her lost power, she seduced the orc shaman Suthrain, and quickly became romantically involved with her. Upon the shaman's death, Lashpera learned that her new lover's soul was consigned to Hell, after making a deal with one of the layer's archdevils – though she's unsure of which one. Lashpera is now seeking adventurers to locate and liberate the lost soul.

The characters become involved with the adventure; hired by an outside party to infiltrate The Dark Delight, Lashpera's house of entertainment, and retrieve (and optionally replace) an enchanted sensor used for information gathering.

Regardless of the outcome of the heist, the

characters come to the attention of the house mistress, who offers them another job; one that will take them into Avernus, seeking the whereabouts of Suthrain's soul. She has a skull that has "escaped" from the Pillar of Skulls – a devilish repository of knowledge. She proposes the characters return the skull as payment for the knowledge of the whereabouts of Suthrain's soul, and then retrieve it. The skull is in a cage, is sentient, and objects to this course of action. The characters enter Avernus via a portal, appearing in a base camp under Lashpera's control. Depending on the outcome of the initial heist, the characters are provided with resources and assistance. They then set off across Avernus.

The skull – Morte – proposes an alternative payment for the Pillar, and where to obtain it. The Pillar is kept "moist" with the blood of creatures; the more exotic, the more desirable. Morte knows where there's a wounded angel, and suggests they take, or bargain for, its blood. The characters decide if they want to take on the side mission or not. The angel resides in a ruined fortress, having warded the place against fiendish incursion. However, three groups contest the site, seeking the angel for their own desires. The characters can defend the wounded celestial, or try to use the ensuing melee to abscond with some of its blood. They can choose to bargain with it, as everything in Hell, even a creature's blood, has its price.

Arriving at the Pillar of Skulls, the characters pay the pillar (in a fashion of their choice) and learn that the soul was taken to Processing Station #1522, one of many in a multitude of locations, designed to correctly identify and transfer claimed souls. They can glean the location of the center easily enough.

Processing Station #1522 is a nightmare of red tape and bureaucracy. The party will have to bribe, intimidate, or slaughter their way past the red tape to speak to the correct processing supervisor that has that information. A bribe gives them the information they desire. The soul was processed and claimed by the ice devil (gelugon) factor of Levistus, residing in a tower on the frigid layer of Stygia.

At the heart of the tower, the heroes are confronted with the image of Levistus in a magical ice mirror, who offers them a bargain. The soul in return for taking a chunk of enchanted ice back to the prime material plane, and tossing it into the bay of Baldur's Gate. They can either bargain or fight, obtaining the soul in either case, but must contend with the consequences of their actions.



## CHAPTER 1: A CLANDESTINE JOB

The characters are approached in one of several ways for a clandestine job. Choose one of the following, or create a hook appropriate to your group:

- If the characters are part of the Harpers faction, or are known to the faction through a mutual contact, Beldren approaches them directly as an agent.
- If the characters have generated a reputation either as heroes of good moral standing, or have skills in clandestine entry (i.e. breaking and entering), they are approached more cautiously by Beldren, who does not reveal his Harper allegiance unless it later becomes relevant.
- If the party is actively making it known they are looking for work, they are approached as hirelings.
- If the party played through *Temple of the Opal Goddess* and are not directly allied with Lashpera, the Harpers have uncovered many of the details of that excursion – hence the attempted scrying (see below) – and know the characters have a connection to the demon.

The characters are approached at their usual hangout (or

are invited by their contact to a local tavern or similar place) by a well-dressed gnome in a gray suit, pink shirt, and highly polished black boots. He carries a small cane, tipped with a stylized, silver dragon head, and his black hair and beard are cut short, and smoothed down. His name is Beldren the Adroit (he uses the appellation with aplomb). After the obligatory pleasantries and introductions, he gets down to business.

*There is a tavern and gambling hall down by the docks called The Dark Delight. It is an entertainment establishment of less than stellar repute, which rumours suggests is a hub for illicit dealings and plots. It is run by a mysterious woman known as Lashpera. Perhaps you have heard of her?*

*I represent a certain group that keeps tabs on criminal activity, and was tasked with gathering information on any such dealings within the establishment. My first foray got me marked by one of their people – a sharp eyed halfling woman who serves as the hostess. I then tried to smuggle in a crystal decanter scrying focus. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, it was shipped in but never unpacked.*

*What I would like is for you to infiltrate the establishment,*

*find the decanter, and place it in an area where it could be used to spy on clandestine dealings – a meeting room or some such place. The common bar areas are too busy and noisy to make a good location. Failing this, if you cannot place the decanter without detection, you are to retrieve it for me so that I might find another means to smuggle it in.*

*I'd do it myself, but I fear I'd be recognised. Will you consider the job?*

Beldren initially offers 50 gp per character, but will go as high as 100 gp each if bargained with (half upfront, and half on completion). He can give the characters a description of the decanter (half gallon, square crystal decanter, brass rimmed stopper) and a general layout of the common areas (Areas 1-3, and 6-8 of Map 1), and that aside from the regular barstaff, there are at least two leather clad bouncers protecting the halfling hostess at all times. He himself has not seen Lashpera (and is unaware of Cassius, who was not a part of the establishment when he was). He needs the task completed within the week, and can make himself available at this or any other location of the party's choosing, for the exchange.

Assuming the characters agree, or at least attend The Dark Delight, the adventure moves forward.

### HEIST AT THE DARK DELIGHT

The Dark Delight's location, and descriptions of relevant NPCs, are presented after the details of the heist and subsequent outcomes. The infiltration and heist encounters should be allowed to play out, with the result affecting the disposition, trust, and resources allocated to the party by Lashpera and the Veil. No matter how clever or stealthy the heroes are, their actions will dictate how they are discovered.

Possible means of detection include:

- Discovery by various staff, by means of Perception (if using Stealth), or Insight (if using Deception or misdirection) - see sidebar for various staff statistics.
- Alerting staff/patrons to their activities by starting a fight within the public places of the establishment, or anywhere they might be realistically overheard (such as with the mimic in the storeroom).
- Lingering more than 10 minutes in any unused private areas, as the staff regularly check and clean these areas.

### Stealth and Deception

The staff at The Dark Delight are not naive, and the place is, by design, a hot spot for criminal activity and clandestine plotting. As such, the staff are always on alert for treachery, or information they can turn to advantage. Fooling them is not an easy task. When attempting Dexterity (Stealth) or Charisma (Deception) checks, characters must pit their skills against the Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Insight) skills (respectively), of nearby individuals;

- The staff and general patrons have +0 in both checks.
- The staff in the gambling area have +3 in both checks for T2, and +4 in both for T3. These staff were specifically chosen for their ability to spot thieves, cheaters, and confidence scams.
- Malice and Spite have +3 in both for T2, and +4 in both for T3.
- Xia has +4 in both for T2, and +5 in both for T3.
- Cassius has +5 in both for T2, and +6 in both for T3.
- Lashpera herself has +6 in both at either Tier, as well as Truesight to 60ft.

If the characters are having too easy a time of it, feel free to spice things up with the following complications, or one or more of your own:

- An amorous pair (or trio) of patrons or staff members enter the vicinity of the characters, seeking a few moments of privacy.
- An "independent contractor" thief (VGtM p. 216) happens to enter the same area as the characters, leading to a tense stand-off.
- A slightly drunken patron approaches one or more of the characters, convinced that he knows them from somewhere, and can't quite place them. He loudly and repeatedly insists that they allow him to buy them a drink and reminisce. Whether a true acquaintance, or simply a case of mistaken identity, is up to the DM. Alternatively, if the characters have played through *Temple of the Opal Goddess*, the patron is none other than the young Lord Antivar Ravenguard, who has fallen on hard times socially

(but still has plenty of money), since his ill-fated adventure ended in his social embarrassment. He has no clue that his ex-paramour owns the establishment.

#### GETTING CAUGHT - ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

Eventually the characters come to Lashpera's attention. In truth she is already aware of them, at least peripherally, either by reputation as adventurers, or due to direct contact from any exploits in the *Temple of the Opal Goddess*. Lashpera has been making enquiries into hiring mercenary adventurers.

If they are caught in The Dark Delight, but do not instigate violence, they will be in the process of being "escorted" from the premises by Malice and Spite, when they are diverted upstairs by Xia at the behest of Lashpera. If they do incite violence Lashpera herself intervenes before the characters can do too much damage to her valued servants (who are criminals, not warriors), and politely, but sternly, asks them to desist, before matters get out of hand. If they do so, she invites them upstairs. If not, or they slay any of the Veil members, she attacks with full force and regardless of the outcome the adventure is over.

If they make it outside and away from the establishment, they are free to meet up with Beldren the Adroit and receive the remainder of their reward. At the conclusion of that meeting (after Beldren departs), Xia materializes out of nowhere and politely invites them to return to The Dark Delight to meet her mistress, who appreciates skill and has a job offer.

If the characters have played through *Temple of the Opal Goddess*, they will already be familiar with Lashpera, and she with them. It is possible that they have an amicable (or at least not antagonistic) relationship with her. At worst, they slew her in the temple. While she is not pleased about this, it does demonstrate strength, and since she can't be permanently slain on the prime material plane, she is willing to put aside any enmity for the sake of a mutually beneficial endeavor.

Assuming they are prepared to take the meeting, they are to return to The Dark Delight and join Lashpera in her private meeting room (Area 14).

#### THE OFFER

After settling in and being offered wine or other refreshments, Lashpera gets to the point quickly.

*"I am seeking mercenaries to track down something of interest to me. I'm after a specific mortal soul, consigned to Hell upon its death for its allegiances in life. I know the soul is in Hell. I do not know where exactly, but I have the basic means to track it down. What I desire is a group to undertake the task. You would be required to enter Avernus, the first layer of Hell, and traverse it on the trail of this soul, then retrieve it from its owner by force or bargain, and return it to me."*

*"Are you up to the task?"*



*Lashpera, in the guise of a proprietress of a festhall*

Lashpera offers 500 gp to each character willing to undertake the task (100 upfront, 400 upon successful return). She can be negotiated up to 750 gp each (still only 100 gp upfront) by a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, or by compelling roleplay (DM's Discretion).

Lashpera will not comment on how they get to Hell, the method of tracking, or their bargaining chips for the soul, until they agree in principle to take the job, save that she has access to all three.

#### THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

Once the characters are committed, Lashpera reveals that she has a portal to Avernus in her basement (Area 20), and magical keys to open two-way transport between both locations.

She will give them a key to return from her staging area on the other side. Travel on Avernus is likely to be up to them to arrange, though she can impart basic information about the plane, and travel upon it (see Avernus Sidebar in Chapter 2). If the characters performed well in the original heist, there are more resources at their disposal (see "Impressing Lashpera" below).

Lashpera explains that the soul she seeks is that of an orcish shaman named Suthrain, but she does not disclose why she wants the soul. In order to bargain for the soul, she gives the party 2 *Soul Coins*, each holding a condemned soul to offer as a two-for-one exchange. She also hands over two official scrolls (duplicates) authorizing 10,000 gp to be transferred from the Church of Waukeen to a location/institution of the signatory's

choice, in exchange for the soul (the soul owner is to indicate the choice and sign the documents, one of which is to be brought back to her for transfer). If this proves to be ineffective, she suggests the characters get "creative".

In terms of tracking down the soul, she proffers a small magical cage that holds a floating human skull inside it by means of a force effect. It can be deactivated by pressing a stud on its top, but the item becomes non-magical. Once released, the skull can't be returned to the cage. The skull has human-like eyeballs, slightly elongated canines, and hovers sullenly, casting glances at all involved, but saying nothing. Lashpera explains;

*There is a place on Avernus known as the Pillar of Skulls. It is – as described – a pillar made of skulls. These skulls are special. They retain their souls and act as a repository of knowledge that the fiends can access. The hundreds of skulls hold countless facts and secrets of the multiverse, including how souls are processed and allocated, and the up-to-date records of such tidings. The pillar personalities are evasive, but will abide bargains. There are many ways to trade with them, but one of the surest is to trade on their spite. This skull – Morte – was once part of the pillar, but was removed. Returning it will no doubt be sufficient to get the location, and owner of the soul I seek. Ensure you strike a bargain before you return Morte. And beware – the skull speaks – incessantly if you allow it. Do not trust anything it says. It will promise you anything to secure its freedom.*

Despite Lashpera's claim, the skull does not say anything at this time, but it's clearly listening to the exchange. Once all arrangements have been made, she leads the party down to Area 20, giving them an activation crystal for the Avernus gate, and seeing them on their way.

#### IMPRESSING LASHPERA

If the characters managed to pull off the original heist (retrieving or replacing the decanter) without getting caught or resorting to bloodshed, they have impressed Lashpera, who will offer greater resources to the rescue effort, as she believes the characters may be worth the risk. She hands the characters 2 extra *Soul Coins* and says they have permission to take "The Crawler", which Veronika can arrange once they get there. If asked to elaborate she'll simply smile.

If the characters have played through *Temple of the Opal Goddess* and left with Lashpera "owing" them, or at least left on good terms, she offers this regardless of their heist success. If they slew her, she will not offer this, even if the heist was successful.

#### THE DARK DELIGHT

The Dark Delight is an entertainment establishment in the Lower Docks area on the waterfront, surrounded by warehouses, salvage yards, and light industrial maritime businesses (shipping yards, sailmakers, smithies etc). The building itself appears to be nothing more than a shabby, two-story warehouse, with no external windows.

Within lies a complex dedicated to providing entertainment for the right clientele, and provides private rooms for parties, games, or as neutral ground for clandestine meetings. It is a hotspot for information gathering and criminal activity.

Secretly, it is the lair of Lashpera the Opal Goddess, a disguised, nascent demon lord, and the base of the Veil; her criminal organization, specializing in illusion and subterfuge. The Veil deals in artifacts, information, and on occasion, the darker trade of mortal souls.

It is worth noting that Lashpera has the ability to cast *mirage arcane*, and thus The Dark Delight can actually appear as she pleases; changing themes and colors, and even making it seem as though doors are walls. The below descriptions are the true look of The Dark Delight, assuming Lashpera has not used the spell.

#### The First Level

**1) Street Entrance.** A carved wooden door, its vaguely demonic design worn and chipped in places, provides entry to The Dark Delight. Two lanterns light the portal at night, casting dancing shadows across the doors.

**2) Foyer.** A dim foyer acts as a transition space between the various areas of the establishment. A well-worn red carpet covers the floor, and a dozen bronze antique frames line the wall, displaying paintings of raucous and carousing partygoers. Wooden doors, carved with similar demonic motifs as the street entrance, lead off in all directions, while a wooden stairway leads up to a balustraded balcony above.

A hulking androgynous bouncer, bedecked in black leather and a black-hooded mask, lurks in the shadows, a knife and club clearly visible on their belt (either **Malice** or **Spite**, depending on who drew door duty). Questions or queries are met with stony silence, while directions to people or places are silently conveyed by pointing.

The doors to the Taproom (Area 3), Gambling Den



I

First Level

# The Dark Delight



Open to  
Below

Second Level

(Area 6), and the Festhall (Area 7), are unlocked and free to access. The door to the Basement is locked (AC 15, Damage Threshold 3, HP 18, DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open, DC 18 Strength check to break), and only Lashpera and Cassius carry keys.

**3) Taproom.** This large taproom is a generally cheery and lively place, with minstrels playing and drinks flowing. The walls, fittings, and furniture are all worn wood, chipped and dented with hard use. The bar is tended by young and attractive service staff of all races, who weave through the crowd, flirting outrageously with anyone who seems receptive, ensuring cups stay full. Public doors lead to outside and to the Festhall, while the service staff can access the Storeroom (Area 5) and a Secured Alley (Area 4).

**4) Side Alley.** Beside the establishment is an alley, secured by locked wrought iron gates (AC 19, Damage Threshold 4, HP 20, DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves'

tools to open, DC 20 Strength check to break). The alley tends to accumulate refuse, and serves as a very discreet meeting point for clandestine activities. Secretly, the trash houses a small colony of **cranium rats** that have come to a mutually beneficial arrangement with Lashpera, spying on her behalf in exchange for "delicacies" such as fiend and angel flesh, gleaned from the battlefields of Avernus (see Area 18).

**5) Storeroom.** This area is filled with barrels, casks, crates, and supplies for the various bars throughout the establishment. The two outer doors are locked (AC 15, Damage Threshold 3, HP 18, DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open, DC 18 Strength check to break), but most of the employees on the lower floor have keys. The primary items stored here are various forms of alcoholic beverages such as ale, as well as a range of wines and spirits.

The room has three features of interest:

Firstly, there is a fine looking keg labelled "Calishite Brandy," which is actually a **mimic** (MM p.220). The creature has been enticed here as a guard over the stores with regular food, and has been instructed not to attack the staff (which it can recognize) or anyone with them. Anyone entering without a staff member is fair game. The mimic, dubbed "Cally", has become something of a pet amongst the staff, who sneak it food from time to time.

Secondly, concealed in the base of a crystal serving decanter, is a magical scrying focus, placed there by a local Harper wizard - Beldren the Adroit. It currently sits there unused, in with the rest of the serving ware. **This is the focus of the heist.**

Thirdly, one of the barrels of ale has been poisoned by a local thieves' guild - the Sable Blades - in retaliation for The Dark Delight failing to pay its dues in their territory. Anyone drinking from the barrel takes 1d6 poison damage and is poisoned for the next 24 hours. A successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw halves the damage, and negates the poisoned condition.

**6) Gambling Hall.** This area has games of chance and wagering running at all times; either run and staffed by the house (roulette, cards, or odds based wagering games) or facilitated by patrons (cards, dice, or snooker). The bar here carries significant coin, but is protected by an intimidating suit of **animated armor** (MM p.19), that



is occasionally commanded by the bar staff to perform basic tasks, reminding patrons of its existence. There is also a large gong on the rear wall that magically sounds alarms throughout the complex, bringing both Spite and Malice running, and alerting Lashpera and Xia.

**7) The Theater.** Named the Theater, this area sports a stage and a few tables, but generally accommodates "standing room only" patrons. The stage is raised 4 feet above the floor, has a set of fold-down stairs on the side closest to the bar, and a ladder leading up to a trap door in the ceiling in the far corner. The Theater has constantly changing attractions, including dancers, local or traveling minstrels, theatrical oration, illusionists, novelty acts of political or religious speeches and debates, and even patron karaoke. The Theater provides these acts three nights a week, and the continued variation draws patrons as much as any other service The Dark Delight provides. On off nights, when no acts are scheduled, this acts as an overflow bar. Cassius wanders most of the lower areas, but is always found here on show nights.

## The Second Level

**8) The Lounge.** This area, lit with a gothic candelabra, overlooks the foyer below, and enjoys wait service from the Taproom, making it one of the more popular places in the establishment for those that want to see and be seen. The other of the two hulking, black leather-clad bouncers, lurks here, and makes patrols of the upper floor (this is considered the better of the two assignments between them).

**9) Private Rooms: Large.** These four rooms are able to be hired (from the Gambling Hall bar) for private functions or meetings. Each is lit by lanterns, and decorated in fiendish themes, with tapestries, paintings, and exquisitely detailed carved art, hung on the walls. The largest contain trunks of assorted items, including serving ware and scribing tools.

Each room can be accessed by a very well-concealed secret door. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the door. Sounds from each room carry into the secret hall, allowing listeners to record what is said. If these doors are discovered, Lashpera herself speaks to the aggrieved parties, seeking to turn it to her advantage. If her agents have learned anything incriminating, she may resort to blackmail, but just as often, she tries to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. If discovered

listening in on a meeting of two less-than-amicable parties, Lashpera implies that one party knew about and paid for the spying service, and then she seeks a way to gain from the inevitable fallout.

**10) Ablutions.** There are four washrooms and two cloak rooms in The Dark Delight, ensuring the comfort of all patrons.

**11) Private Rooms: Intimate.** There are three smaller private rooms that may be hired for personal meetings (also through the bar in the Gambling Hall). These have comfortable chairs, decanters of various liquors, scribe's tools, and shuttered lanterns to facilitate any client needs. All are infernally decorated, but these are more subtly themed toward places of influence and power – such as devilish courts.

While no secret halls lead into these rooms, there is a crawlspace in the ceiling above them where stealthy listeners are able to record details. Xia is also able to enter each room through cunningly concealed removable panels in the ceiling, to "silence" any occupants, should Lashpera deem it necessary.

**12) Performer Dressing Room.** This room is set aside for the staff and theater performers, and is opulently appointed with beautiful art and decoration, and ample lamp lighting. There are three vanities and a washstand, along with numerous chests and containers for any personal belongings of the entertainers. Lashpera lavishes praise and coin on entertainers, particularly those who are popular.

**13) The Wardrobe.** The Wardrobe contains thousands of articles of clothing hung against the walls, packed in so tightly, it is hard to navigate. The outfits are of all types; ranging from full theatrical costumes to staff uniforms. All garments are laundered and maintained, and anyone using anything from this wardrobe to enhance an act or disguise themselves, gains advantage on any applicable rolls.

The secret door is both well made, and concealed behind the clothing, making it extremely difficult to find (DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) check).

**14) Lashpera's Receiving Room.** This room is gaudy in its opulence. A crystal chandelier casts light in scintillating colors across the chamber. Fine art, in gold-gilded frames, line the walls, all displaying rulers passing

judgement on their inferiors. Two deep-red velvet chairs face each other over a silver table set with liquor. Exotic plants and flowers rest in a planter in the far corner, filling the room with an intoxicating scent. The door to Lashpera's personal quarters is locked (AC 16, Damage Threshold 3, HP 25, DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open, DC 20 Strength check to break), and only she has a key.

Lashpera holds meetings with significant individuals in this room, which has been carefully and craftily created, to flagrantly project the image of wealth and power. The alcohol is the finest money can buy, and the plants are actually specimens from the Garden of Delight in Dis, the Second Layer of Hell, that inhibit the judgement of anyone who inhales their spores (Lashpera is immune to their effects). Anyone in the room must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, otherwise they make all Wisdom ability checks with disadvantage whilst in the room. If a subject is potentially dangerous, Lashpera conducts the meeting using a *major image* of herself in the room, while she spies on the location through a peephole from her personal quarters (Area 15).

**15) Lashpera's Personal Quarters.** Lashpera's personal quarters are well presented, and the furnishings are high quality, but do not reflect the over-the-top opulence of her receiving room. In contrast to the image presented without, Lashpera desires comfort without empty ostentation. The vanity, chest, and wardrobe are all made of polished wood, but lack ornamentation. The bed is plush and draped with silk and warm hides, but is plainly constructed. The bath is deep, but of plain porcelain. Lashpera's outfits vary from utilitarian to ostentatious and formal, and are worth a total of 1,000 gp if stolen and sold. There is a range of jewelry worth 4,000 gp, and a small coffer of coins (100 pp, 543 gp, 135 sp, and 56 cp) in her chest.

The secret door is not as well concealed from this side (DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover).

**16) Stage Props Storage.** This room holds the various props for the stage that can't be kept in the Theater. They include stands and stools, musical instruments, various flat, wooden scenery "cutouts", backdrops and carpets, ropes and pulleys, and more. A trap door in the floor opens to a ladder onto the stage below, and a block and tackle has been set up above it to lower heavy items. While most of the items in here are well made but low value stage props, unbeknownst to anyone, a "prop"

broom in one of the corners is actually a *broom of flying*. Somehow this valuable magic item was accidentally stored with mundane items and escaped the staff's notice.

## The Basement

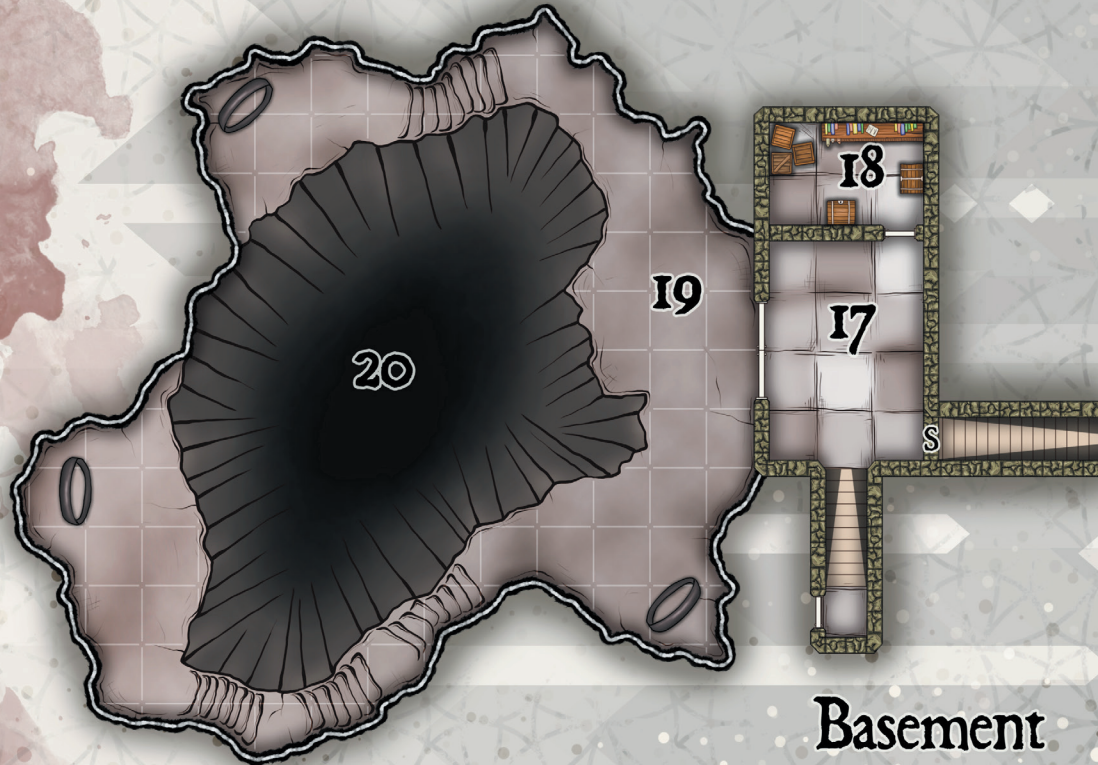
**17) Antechamber.** This room is unlit unless characters bring their own light source. It has an oppressive feel to it, and gothic style bas-relief in the stonework that creates a palpable sense of descending into a fiendish underworld. The doors on the left are cast bronze and show mortal souls burning in hellfire. They are unlocked, but extremely heavy, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to open. The door to the Vault (Area 18) appears to be iron, its bas-relief showing mortals tortured in an infernal prison. The door is locked (AC 20, Damage Threshold 5, HP 30, DC 22 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open, DC 25 Strength check to break), and only Lashpera has the key.

The secret door, DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover, is hidden in a section of bas-relief of a mortal being eaten by a demon, and leads to a section of the sewers. It cannot be opened from the other side, and is intended to be an emergency escape route.

**18) The Vault.** The Vault is under constant effects of a *mirage arcane* spell (Lashpera can have up to 10 such effects at a time). This effect changes just a few minor details, hiding secrets within the treasure that has been left out in the open.

This vault has several chests and crates within in, and a set of shelves against the far wall. The majority of The Dark Delight's funds are here in one of the chests, including 548 pp, 4,589 gp, 3,497 sp, and 248 cp. The organization is vastly wealthier than this meagre sum suggests, but most of the funds are tied up in investments, or plots-in-motion that have yet to pay off. There is also a range of various jewelry and other objects of value (DM's discretion as to specifics) totalling 4,000 gp. These are generally unsuitable as display objects (holy relics, overly recognizable stolen objects, etc). There are a number of magic items here, including a +1 *heavy crossbow*, +1 *greatsword*, a +1 *battleaxe* (actually a *berserker axe*), a *circlet of blasting*, and a *stone of good luck*, as well as a case of 7 potions (5 *potions of greater healing*, and 2 *potions of poison*).

There is a long, low box that contains 12 crystals, roughly cut into 4-inch-long cylinders. Three are blue (Avernus),



## Basement

1 Square = 5 ft.

4 are red (Abyss), and 5 are clear (unattuned). These are keys that open the gates in Area 19. The 5 clear crystals are intended for the unfinished gate. The box has spaces for 20 crystals, and given the groupings, it appears 5 blue and 3 red are missing (these are either in the hands of agents or have been lost).

The shelf contains a number of books and scrolls, mostly various treatises on the planes, planar creatures, and magic, though there are some historical tomes as well as a few works of fiction. All of the books are worth 300 gp, including several unique tomes penned by Lashpera herself (which hold greater value as trade to Candlekeep—for access to the libraries there—which is actually her intent).

If the characters can see through the *mirage arcane*, one of the books with a spine marked A History of Cormyr, circa 1273-1356 DR is actually The Dark Delight's ledgers, detailing significant criminal transactions with a number of prominent citizens, criminal gangs, and what appears to be several creatures from the Lower Planes. The details are left to the DM, but are highly incriminating for all involved. Of even more interest is another book labeled A Treatise on Calishite Politics, which is actually hollowed out and contains 7 *Soul Coins* (see Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus). These are the souls of 7 individuals that Lashpera is personally interested in (but again the details are left to the DM).

**19) Gate Chamber.** This chamber is oppressive due to

the low seeming ceiling, which is 20 feet high near the entrance, 15 feet high in the north, and barely 10 feet high in the west. It is lit with torches, but the light doesn't reach into the deep darkness of the pit. Three stone rings, 10 feet in diameter, sit upright in places around the chamber. Each has an inscription in Infernal on it, proclaiming its destination for those that can read it. The south gate reads "Avernus," the north reads "Abyss," and the west reads "Mechanus," though it is clear that the west gate is only partially complete, with large sections missing from the ring, giving it a slightly jagged look. If a creature touches an attuned crystal to a completed ring (see Area 18), the portal flares to life, opening a window to its destination that stays open for 1 minute, or until the crystal is touched to the ring again (or its counterpart on the other side). During that time, creatures can pass freely across the connected planes.

If a creature doesn't have a crystal key, the gates can be identified (though not activated) with a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check, but doing so activates the golems in the pit.

**20) The Pit.** The Pit is under a constant *mirage arcane* spell. It appears to be bottomless, as light doesn't reach its bottom. Any objects dropped in vanish instantly. In reality the pit is only 5 feet deep on the east side, and up to 15 feet deep on the west. Two iron golems lie motionless in the pit under the *mirage arcane* spell. They spring forth to attack any creature that either touches one of the rings, or enters from a portal, unless they (or a member of the group) bears one of the crystal keys.

## THE VEIL

The Veil is Lashpera's criminal organization, dedicated to her and her goals. The Veil consists of four primary members other than the Opal Goddess herself, as well as other peripheral associates.

### Cassius Vellander

Cassius is a darkly handsome human, with olive skin and brown hair. He wears the finest clothing, tailored in bardic traditions, and has a ready smile, and a friendly manner, that puts patrons at ease. He speaks eloquently and lightly, seemingly incapable of offense, or being offended. He acts as The Dark Delight's manager, moving through the patrons, keeping the peace with a joke and a wink.

Behind that friendly façade lies a dark mind. Cassius is ambitious; always seeking advantage and ascension. Currently he works for Lashpera, but is the least loyal of her close retainers — not that he's interested in betraying her. At least not until a better opportunity comes along. Of course, the opportunity would have to be staggeringly good, as he recognizes that Lashpera's star is on the rise, and he plans to advance in her wake.

Cassius handles the information gathered in The Dark Delight and from its agents, ensuring it is all catalogued and organized; with appropriate connections made, and context given, before sharing it with Lashpera. He knows she's keeping tabs on him, which serves him just fine, for now.

Cassius uses the statistics of a **bard** (VGtM p.211), but has a 16 Intelligence, and changes to Perception as noted on the sidebar of page 5.

### Xia Amberwell

Xia is a fairly average looking halfling woman of indeterminate years, the kind passersby wouldn't look at twice. Around The Dark Delight she acts as one of the many servers and hostesses.

Her true role is known only to Lashpera, Cassius, Malice, and Spite. She is a ruthless assassin and spy, and serves the Veil in that capacity. She is utterly loyal to Lashpera, who freed her from infernal servitude.

Xia uses the statistics of an **assassin** (MM p.343), but with changes to Perception as noted on the sidebar of page 5.

### Malice and Spite

Malice and Spite stand out amongst the other thugs



and bashers the Veil employs. Tall and powerful, these otherwise androgynous twins, wear complicated leather armor and hoods that hide all but the barest sliver of pale skin around dark, soulless, eyes. They do not speak, communicating to each other through complex sign language, and others via curt gestures.

Malice and Spite assume the roles of bouncers in The Dark Delight, and as muscle and enforcers for anything else the Veil needs.

Malice and Spite use the **thug** stat block (MM p.350) but with changes to Perception as noted on the sidebar of page 5, carrying clubs and daggers in The Dark Delight, and the standard mace and heavy crossbow when out on a job.

### Associates

The Veil is a small organization, and at the moment contracts out a lot of its menial tasks.

The Veil employs a half a dozen special “servers”, who are subtle and intelligent, acting as information gatherers, specializing in overhearing conversations, and reporting the content to Cassius.

When the occasion warrants it, there are a half dozen local toughs that Cassius uses to back up Malice and Spite when conducting blackmail, standovers, and the occasional lesson to rival organizations.

The Dark Delight employs two dozen servers of various sorts—bar and tavern servers, games hosts, and the like. All are smart, motivated, and understand Cassius rewards good customer service, and gives bonuses for any interesting gossip overheard in the establishment. Most of the staff assume a low level of corrupt activity, as would be appropriate for such a business, but have no notion of the true extent of the organization.

### Plots & Hooks

In addition to the events of this adventure, there are any number of plots and plans being hatched in and around The Dark Delight that can be used to expand the campaign:

**The Planar Portals.** Lashpera created the gates to serve her interests.

- The gate to the Abyss is less of a desire, and more of a necessity. She created it as a means of escape if she is banished back to the Abyss (which happens if she is slain on any other plane). She is deathly afraid of falling back under the sway of her former master, the demon lord Fraz-Urb'Luu, and has arranged for Xia to open the portal and seek her in the Abyss, if she ever goes missing for more than a few days.
- The portal to Avernus is her first planar foray for wealth and power. Avernus is in turmoil at the moment, and she is determined to get her stake of the opportunities. Once she has achieved her first desire of retrieving Suthrain's soul, she will continue to hire adventurers to go forth and retrieve certain Soul Coins and items of note, that can be bartered to the right beings, for the right price.
- The portal to Mechanus is something of a mystery to her. She is driven to connect to the plane of Ultimate Law, but she doesn't know why. She secretly hopes to find something on that plane that will sever her ties to the chaotic Abyss, and be free of the shadow

of her former master forever. As soon as the portal is complete, she begins funding expeditions into Mechanus.

**The Sable Blades.** Despite their fine-sounding name, the Sable Blades are a loose association of local thieves that are also aware of some of the Veil's activities, and are looking to send a message by poisoning their customers. Most think this will be an overt lesson that cows the new outfit, and will return the neighborhood to the status quo. The mastermind is an older thief, Valen Elden, who is secretly a member of the Zhentarim, and knows their plan will likely provoke a swift and lethal response from the Veil, and that the Sable Blades' days are numbered. He hopes that by provoking the Veil, the Zhentarim can gauge their true strength. A bloodbath is about to occur in the district.

**The Odd Dancer.** Currently The Dark Delight are sponsoring a troupe of dancers; exotic in both origin and style. Among them is a dancer that has begun to act oddly; noted by his compatriots, and discussed within earshot of Cassius—who plans to investigate this suspected infiltration. It is an infiltration, but not what he suspects. A rogue doppelganger replaced one of the troupe, and is hiding out from its former tribe. It has knowledge of their plans to replace a major merchant in the city. Unfortunately for it, the tribe has tracked it here and are blending in amongst the establishment's patrons. Once they sight their treacherous member, the doppelgangers plan to attack, unconcerned with any incidental casualties they may cause.

**The Fortune Cursed Noble.** A young nobleman by the name of Antivar Ravenguard, has begun to frequent The Dark Delight in the company of his thrill-seeking friends. Nephew of the Grand Duke, Ulder Ravenguard (one of the four Rulers of Baldur's Gate), the young man was recently and humiliatingly, rescued from an ill-fated exploration in the Wood of Sharp Teeth (a tale covered in *Temple of the Opal Goddess*). Unbeknownst to him, his former paramour is none other than Lashpera herself, who will be less than pleased to discover him here. Fearing a plot or discovery, Lashpera sends some local toughs to silence him (if some heroes don't intervene). If they do, she'll resort to more drastic measures.



## CHAPTER 2: AVERNUS

Avernus is a blasted wasteland of broken rock and desolation, as far as the eye can see. Thick rolling clouds obscure an orange sky, split only by the occasional lightning strike, or streaking ball of fire. The air is thick with heat and acrid fumes, making breathing an unpleasant chore.

As the characters exit the magical portal, they find themselves in Lashpera's basecamp in Avernus; a small but heavily defended outpost, with a stone and wood palisade around a ramshackle camp.

*Around you is a camp of sorts, though it is as much scrapyard as dwelling. Piles of rusted metal in various shapes and sizes are scattered about, and strange vermin flit in and out of the debris. A number of tents made of scaled hide are spread across the compound, lines bearing clothing strung between them. A central fire pit appears to be the communal meeting place for the camp, though only the gods know why a fire would be desired in this burning land.*

*Several figures emerge from the tents as you exit the portal, approaching warily, weapons gripped tightly.*

The camp inhabitants are Lashpera's crew on Avernus – those that are native or otherwise suited to the conditions. They defend the portal and act as guides, negotiators, and anything else Lashpera desires.

The inhabitants include **bearded devil** mercenaries (6 for T2 or 12 for T3), a grizzled male dwarf with a bronze prosthetic arm and his imp companion (Throndek & Zizzixits), a mangy looking female tabaxi called Hell-Claws, and a **horned devil** named Veronika. The latter runs the camp and greets the characters, knowing they are likely here on Lashpera's orders.

### Veronika

Veronika is a veteran of several bloodwar campaigns, and is an intelligent and fierce combatant. She loves to reminisce and tell "war stories", and will take to any martial characters that have significant battle experience. She can give the characters some insight as to what to expect in Avernus. As mortals they are likely to be

preyed upon by denizens, and the environment is hostile. She can provide some basic subsistence gear (tents, rope, packs, cooking implements - all made from unidentifiable materials), and if they have been given use of "the Crawler", it turns out to be a Demon Grinder class infernal war machine, partially concealed under the leathery hide of an abyssal dinosaur (slain by Veronika on "campaign" as she tells it). See the side bar for statistics. Throndek the dwarf has been restoring it, and Hell-Claws can act as driver if they wish. It has no fuel, but the *Soul Coins* provided by Lashpera (or any the party already have or can obtain) will run it. Veronika commands the bearded devils, and cannot be convinced to abandon the camp. For **T2** groups, she only has 130 hit points (courtesy of an old, lingering war wound), while **T3** groups, she wears an *adamantine bresatplate* (immune to critical hits).

### Throndek and Zizzixits

Throndek is a treasure hunter, scrap dealer, and general adventurer. He has a devil's ride, and comes and goes as he pleases; being an associate rather than in Lashpera's direct employ. His most recent task has been getting "the Crawler" functioning after Veronika salvaged it from a nearby battle site. Throndek can be convinced to accompany the characters with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, or if they successfully suggest that there might be an opportunity to find rare materials or treasures on the journey, DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check to deduce that this might be a successful lure for the dwarf. Throndek is fully detailed in the *Heroes of Hell* supplement, but this product is not required to play this adventure.

### Hell-Claws

The Tabaxi is a scrounger and opportunist that came into Lashpera's employ recently, and mostly by accident. Having proven to be resourceful and tough, she is being offered an opportunity to join the Veil, but being carefully monitored in terms of her performance and trustworthiness. Lashpera is right to doubt. Hell-Claws has no loyalty to the demon, and seeks a quick profit before vanishing into Avernus. She wants the Crawler. If the characters have permission to take it out, she volunteers to drive it for them, planning on stealing it later. If they allow her to accompany them, she will drive away the first time they leave her alone with the vehicle. Hell-Claws uses the **assassin** statistics (MM p.343).

If they do not have permission, she tries to convince them



to steal it with her at the helm (planning to ingratiate herself with the party, and then ditch them later). She has a single *Soul Coin*, which she'll trade with the characters for a permanent magic item of rare quality or better.

### Morte the Skull

Silent under Lashpera's gaze, once the characters reach Avernus, Morte becomes very lively and very talkative. Despite being loud, pushy, and vaguely uncouth (and vocally lustful of the undead), Morte is charismatic and charming, and surprisingly forthcoming. He definitely does not want to go back into the pillar, and lists the ways he can be helpful to the characters:

- He claims to be an unparalleled guide to Avernus (partially true - he's an adequate guide).
- He claims he knows powerful beings that he could introduce the characters to (partially true - he's met a few powerful beings, including an immortal known as the Nameless, but he lacks the status and knowledge of their current whereabouts, to make such introductions).

- He claims that it's unlikely the denizens of the pillar will think he's worth the value of their question (false).
- He claims to know of a substance of value that the Pillar would be very interested in (true – see below).

Morte proposes a deal; in exchange for his freedom (and not being reintroduced to the pillar), he can offer the characters knowledge of something more valuable to the pillar than himself – angel blood.

*Ya' see, the Pillar is this nasty ole' mess o' skulls that grind against each other for eternity. Very uncomfortable, take it from me. They'd sell their own mother for some lubricant ta relieve that – the more exotic the better. Nothin' better than blood fer the pillar, and I knows where ta find some rare stuff I do. The rarest in fact. Angel blood. Right here on Avernus too. But we need to be quick afore some basher gets to 'im first eh?*

If the characters balk at the taking an angel's blood, Morte changes tack.

*Well 'ere's the dark of it. This angel is mortally wounded see. It's still alive. Might be that you can get the blood without hurting the cutter. Might be that you can help it eh? It has gotta be worth a whole lot to 'ave a celestial owe you one, right?*

Morte claims that this angel is not far, but wants his freedom in return for taking them there. He'll angle for immediate release, but he'll settle for after they arrive at the angel's location. It's up to the characters if they take this side quest or not. If released, Morte honors his word, and even assists where he can (without risking his non-existent skin).

#### TRAVELING AND ENCOUNTERS IN AVERNUS

Traveling in Avernus is affected by a strange distance dilation effect and thus, is hard to predict. Each "leg" of the journey should take between 12 and 24 hours (at the DMs discretion). Special attention needs to be paid to time if the characters are using an infernal war machine, as the fuel is limited.

If you have access to *Baldurs Gate: Descent into Avernus*, and wish to use the Optional Rules provided on pages 78-79, these can add flavor and further challenge to the adventure. It is recommended that the Pervasive Evil optional rule *not* be used, as it can affect player agency, but this is a matter of campaign taste.



The characters may encounter random creatures as they traverse the wastelands. Several are plotted out on the map, while others may be selected from the following suggestions:

#### Tier 2 Encounters (on foot)

Roll 1d4	Encounter
1	A flight of 6 <b>spined devils</b> on patrol.
2	A lost <b>hezrou</b> demon seeking easy prey.
3	A "stampede" of 20 <b>lemure</b> fleeing from a herding party of 4 <b>bearded devils</b> .
4	A pair of <b>barbed devils</b> looking for stragglers to conscript for a local legion.

#### Tier 2 Encounters (in the Crawler)

Roll 1d4	Encounter
1	A gang of 12 <b>bearded devils</b> in 4 <b>tormentors</b> (3 per vehicle) harass the crawler.
2	A <b>purple worm</b> tries to destroy the crawler as a rival entering its territory. It will retreat after suffering more than 50 points of damage, or if the crawler is destroyed (it ignores characters).



3 A "drive" of 2000 **lemures** stands between the party and its goal. The 20 **spined devil** herders flee, but as for the slow moving lemur.... (engine revs hard).

4 An infernal **roc** swoops in to tear open the Crawler and feast on its contents. Creatures on the outside of the Crawler may be carried off as easy prey.

### Tier 3 Encounters (on foot)

Roll 1d4 Encounter

1 A flight of 4 **vrock**s have escaped a battle and seek to wreak vengeance on "weak" creatures to assuage their frustration.

2 Four **bearded devils** on **devil's rides** harass and mock the characters for a few rounds, before riding off. They don't attack unless provoked.

3 A **bone devil** "inquisitor" approaches the characters, seeking demonic "spies". A successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to convince it of their innocence, otherwise it attacks.

4 A pilgrimage of 20 **cultists** and a pair of **chain devils** have arrived in Avernus from Jangling Hilt on Minauros (the third layer), bringing pamphlets and scripture on the Rapture of Flensing, seeking converts to their cause.

### Tier 3 Encounters (in the Crawler)

Roll 1d4 Encounter

1 Major Demonic Incursion! Portals open up, disgorging waves of demons into Avernus. The first wave begins with 40 **dretch** led by 5 **chasme**, and each round, more of the same continue pouring through. At the end of five rounds, 10 **barlgura** led by a **glabrezu** emerge, with more visible behind them. If the characters are still present at this time, it becomes clear they must flee or be inevitably destroyed.

2 A pair of mated **purple worms** try to destroy the Crawler and devour its contents.

3 A "drive" of 2000 **lemures** stands between the party and its goal. The 20 **spined devil** herders flee, but as for the slow moving lemur.... (engine revs hard).

4 A lost **goristro** is drawn by the sound of the crawler's engines.

### THE ANGEL ANGLE

Morte can direct the characters to a ruined fortification in an otherwise unremarkable plain of Avernus (see the Avernus map). He claims that the angel was wounded in a celestial foray into the bloodwar, and escaped to here but could go no further. Fiends can't seem to enter the place, and other creatures (often sent at the behest of fiends) never come out again. He assures the characters the angel is still there (truthfully he doesn't know for sure – but is gambling on the outcome).

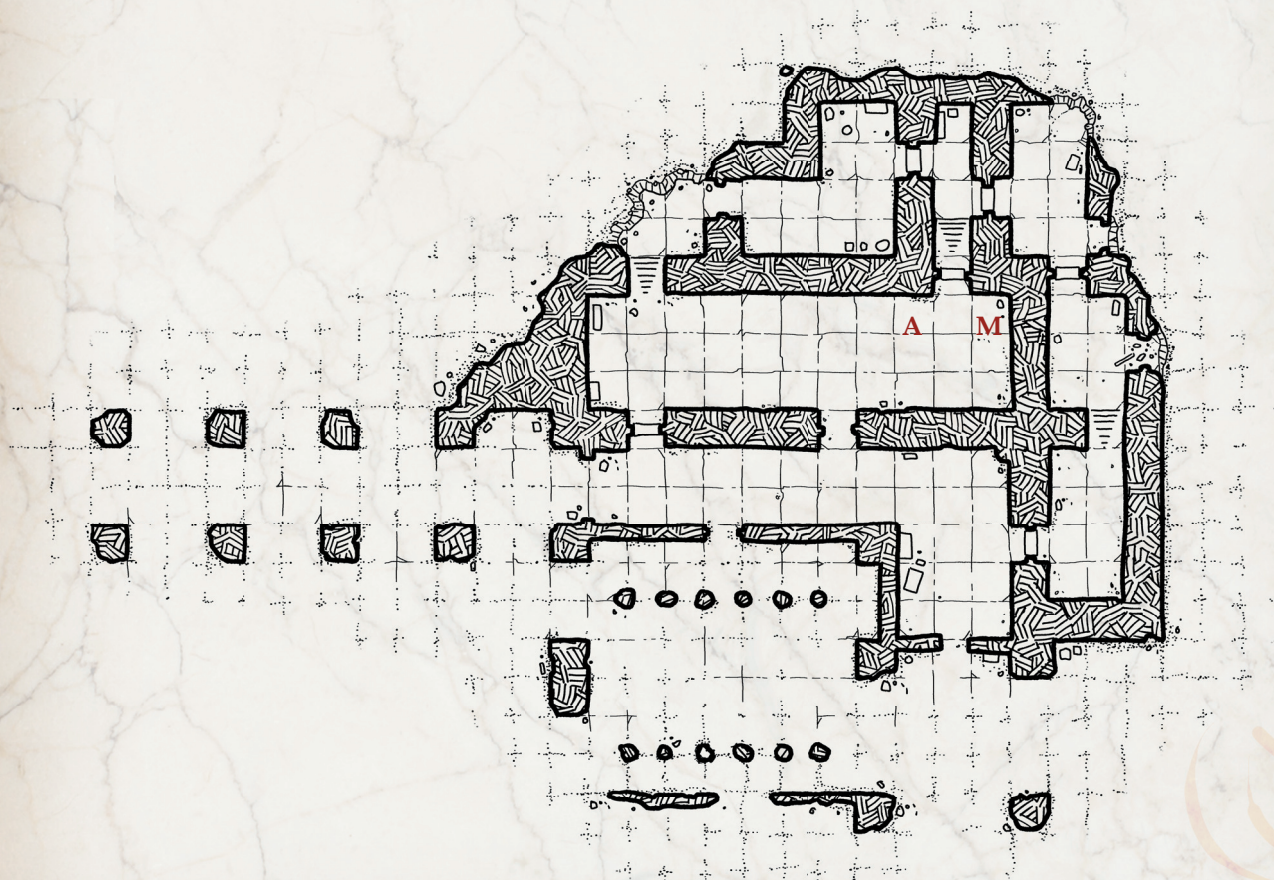
*The promised ruin slowly resolved itself out of the dusty plains of Avernus. An ancient fortress, now all but destroyed; its scorched stone walls crumbling and pierced by holes in numerous locations. Unfortunately you are not the only creatures in the vicinity. Several camps appear to be set near the structure.*

The camps are actually competing interested parties, which are in a bit of a standoff at the moment. One

camp holds fiends, who cannot enter the ruins, but are unwilling to let anyone leave should they prevail inside. A second camp belongs to a company of mortal crusaders bent on rescuing the angel (though they have suffered heavy casualties from a recent attempt). The final camp is a gang of gnolls riding devil's rides, milling just out of effective striking range, awaiting to see how the standoff plays out. The arrival of the characters tips the balance, and sets each group into action, one way or another.

The characters can attempt to sneak into the ruin, requiring a careful approach (without their infernal war machine) and a group Dexterity (Stealth) check of **DC 18 at T2**, or **DC 22 at T3**. If discovered, they tip off a four-way battle.

The adventurers may choose to approach and side with one of the groups, prompting the other two to attack those they ally themselves with. Even just being in the area precipitated a battle between the devils and the crusaders, with the gnolls attempting to slay the survivors and the characters. If the characters retreat or simply watch from



afar, the crusaders and devils are destroyed, along with a quarter of the gnolls. The remaining gnolls enter the ruin to confront the angel. If the characters delay, they may encounter a combat within, or they can watch, as eventually 1d4 gnolls escape, bloodied and in full retreat.

### Devil Contingent

*Motivation:* They seek to capture and enslave the angel for their own purposes – either trading it to a more powerful fiend for power and position, or entertaining themselves with its destruction if this proves too difficult.

**T2 - A barbed devil** commanding 3 **bearded devils** and 6 **cultists**.

**T3 - A bone devil** commanding 3 **barbed devils** and 12 **cultists**.

### Crusader Company

*Motivation:* They seek to free, and or heal, the angel and find a way off Avernus.

**T2 - A knight** commanding 2 **priests** and 12 **guards**.

**T3 - A knight** commanding 2 **priests**, 2 **veterans**, and 24 **guards**.

If you have access to *Heroes of Hell*, the crusaders could be led by Vasiir the Emancipator.

### Gnoll Gang

*Motivation:* Slay everything and salvage anything of worth, before riding off and onto the next score.

**T2 - A gnoll pack lord** on a devil's ride, commanding 14 **gnolls** on 7 devil's rides (riding tandem).

**T3 - A Gnoll Fang of Yeenoghu** on a devil's ride, commanding 2 **Gnoll Pack Lords** on a devil's ride and 14 **gnolls** on 7 devil's rides (riding tandem).

The devil's rides have enough power for another 12 hours before running out of fuel. The gnolls need this kill to fuel their next hunt.

Once the external groups are bypassed or destroyed, the characters may enter the ruin, though they may have to contend with the requirements of any alliances they made. The ruin itself emanates a serene peace and calm that belies the rest of the plane, and sets evil characters on edge. It is this aura that abjures fiends; preventing them from physically entering the ruin. The interior is littered with dried bloodstains, bones, scrapped weapons and armor, and a few broken statues and scraps of furniture.

The central room is occupied by a wounded angel, that appears to be connected to a strange infernal machine by

wires and flexible hoses, allowing it to shamble around the area. The celestial is a shadow of its former self; its lank hair and wings drooping. Blood splatters the floor as it moves, though it seems not to care.

The celestial's name is Aristial, though it has become corrupted by its wounds and its current reliance on the infernal machine. For **T2** it is a **deva** (MM p.16), while for **T3** it is a **planetar** (MM p.17). In both cases its alignment is lawful evil. It was injured by an aspect of Panzuriel, and the cursed wounds will not close while the angel remains away from Mount Celestia. Cut off from support and unable to escape, it sought refuge here, using devilish invention to sustain itself while it planned an escape. Knowing its use of the infernal device has compromised its ideals, Aristial fears that death would consign its essence to hell, rather than returning it to the heavens.



The infernal machine converts souls to life energy; a single soul adding to the energy store, and sustaining the angel for 2d4 days. The machine's current capacity is running low, having not been "fed" any souls recently. The angel has less than a handful of days remaining. Disconnecting from the machine would reduce this to 3d4 hours. The machine itself has an AC 20, Damage Threshold of 5, and 60 HP. It is fixed to the ruin and cannot be removed without destroying it.

If approached or spoken to, the creature regards the characters impassively, asking their business in an empty monotone. Aristial wants something the characters are unlikely to be able to offer – absolute certainty that it can be redeemed to the heavens. Short of this, it seeks an escape from the plane; or at least to add to the machine's capacity by adding soul energy. It will bargain with the characters, offering its blood and its ability to heal, for assistance. One *Soul Coin*, or living creature offered (which must be incapacitated or dying, which the machine creepily opens to absorb), gains them 1 vial of *angel blood* (to a maximum of 5 vials), or one use of its healing touch ability. One vial is sufficient to bribe the Pillar of Skulls (and Morte will say so) but additional vials may be of use. Attempting to take the blood without consent is fraught with peril. Firstly, the blood in the chamber is from numerous creatures, not just the angel, so anything taken from the ground is "contaminated", and any attempt to take blood from the angel is met with violence, as it decides to feed the impertinent characters to the machine. Slaying the angel can net the characters the equivalent of 10 vials of *angel blood*, and another 10 vials of *contaminated angel blood* if they choose to scavenge the battle scene. Both *angel blood* and *contaminated angel blood*, are detailed in **Magic Items**.

### Treasure

Among the scattered weaponry, there are any number of mundane weapons of exotic design that can be salvaged (DMs discretion), and one special one – a battle axe with a haft made of bone, and blades of an oddly heavy green metal, shaped to resemble demonic wings. The axe is a *battleaxe of sharpness*. Aristial has no interest in the weapons, nor claims ownership, and the characters may take them as they please.

### Development

If Throndek the dwarf is with the party, he covets the infernal machine as it's an invention he's never seen

before. He'll advocate for slaying the angel, and he may attempt to precipitate a fight if he thinks it's imminent. He won't recklessly throw his life away however, choosing to return at a later time if he can't elevate tensions.

### THE PILLAR OF SKULLS

Hidden in a small valley surrounded on all sides by sharp rocky crags, is a 30-foot tall pillar consisting of heads and skulls in various shapes, sizes, and states of decay. The Pillar slowly writhes as the heads seem to argue and jostle for position; a cacophony of voices emitting from the strange mass. A scattering of minor devils appear to converse with one or more of the heads, before flying away. Intermittently new devils arrive seeking knowledge.

The Pillar of Skulls consists of thousands of the decaying heads or skulls of once mortal creatures, consigned to hell. It is a special punishment for knowledgeable creatures who falsely used that knowledge to betray other creatures. Each skull has its soul bound to it, and retains awareness. As new heads are added to the top, the weight pushes the pillar lower into the earth, obscuring the weakest. The skulls continuously fight and jostle to stay above ground. Those that prove useful are often elevated by the fiends, and thus all the heads compete with each other. The skulls will trade their knowledge, but nothing in Hell is free. For each question asked, payment is expected – indeed, demanded – for the answer. The skulls will compete to give answers, but only by claiming their knowledge is superior, or that the other skulls lie. No skull will give knowledge freely.

If Morte is with the characters, and is to be the payment, he becomes highly agitated, increasing his pleas and promises of worth, including offering the characters his "services" for an extended period – up to a year or more. He offers introductions to powerful creatures; the pit fiend Bel, Gaziell (a Duke of Hell in service to Belial), the Nameless One, and even the Lady of Pain (it's up to the DM if Morte can actually provide these introductions). Even if Morte isn't intended to be bargained here (if the characters have the angel blood or another offering) he becomes nervous, and begins incessantly talking about various things to distract himself (and the characters).



When the characters approach the Pillar, they are assailed by questions, demands, and requests from dozens of heads. It requires forceful interaction to quiet the chatter enough to be able to converse. The Pillar heads tend to compete, as some trades do not affect the Pillar as a whole, and the skulls are eternally bored and tormented, and seek to alleviate this by competing with each other.

The offer of returning Morte is met with sadistic grins, and demands that he be placed back in at ground level, while the offer of *angel blood* results in a clamouring from the heads to be the one to assist the characters. Other things of value include a fresh offering of blood from the person asking the question, some obscure knowledge, or anything else the DM deems rare and worthy. Clever players should be rewarded if their offering represents a sacrifice or loss – which the sadistic pillar skulls enjoy.

When the PCs pose the question, several heads can answer – an ogre skull, a decaying elf head, or a strange, reptilian visage. Any can assist with the same answer, but demand the trade (ie *angel blood*), if it is personal to them. None of the skulls know of the owner, or location, of Suthrain's soul, but they do know where it was processed – Processing Station #1522. The revelation of the processing station and its location, constitutes a single answer.

Clever characters might seek to gain answers to other questions about the soul, or use the opportunity to further their own personal investigations. The knowledge of the skulls comes from their own personal experiences while alive, anything they've managed to glean in trade or overheard, or by seemingly random flashes of "insight" or "visions", the origin and veracity of which is unknown. Most insights pertain to information tied to Hell's bureaucracy, suggesting a link to the Pillar somehow. It falls to the DM to decide if the Pillar (collectively) can answer any given question. Further information pertaining to Suthrain's soul that the pillar skulls know include:

- The fiend that took custody of the soul is a unique Ice Devil (Gelugon) called Drezixilax.
- Drezixilax is known to be a mid-level factor and servitor in the court of Prince Levistus – Lord of Stygia (a frozen layer of Hell).
- In life, Suthrain was an orcish shaman in a tribe of little consequence from the world of Faerun.

### THE RIVER OF BLOOD

In order to reach Processing Station #1522, the characters must cross a tributary of the River of Blood. The eternal battlefield of Avernus is constantly slick with blood and viscera. Wending its way to low points in the plane, these rivulets combine into streams, as they make their way to combine with the River Styx.

On a direct route to the station, the river tributary is over 500 feet wide and over 60 feet deep. There is a stone bridge spanning it nearby, or the characters can attempt to cross it in other ways. If the characters are prepared to follow it "upriver" for several days (and risk encounters in Avernus), they can find a series of shallow deltas that allow for crossing on foot or by Infernal war machine.

### Immersion in the River of Blood

The river has a thick consistency, but flows like water. Creatures can swim in it with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, but are subject to drawing the attention of up to 2 (1d4-2) **avernian leeches**\* each round they remain within the putrid liquid. In addition, any creature that is wounded while in the river, or has the misfortune to swallow any of the blood (a failed swim check sees them flounder and go under), must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or suffer a blood based disease known as Blood Rot. Each round spent in the river with open wounds requires a new saving throw.

**Blood Rot:** Each day the disease persists, the creature's Hit Point maximum is reduced by 5; if reduced to zero, the creature dies. An afflicted creature is allowed a new saving throw at dawn each day, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### The Stone Bridge

The stone bridge is roughly cut from obsidian, is 40 feet wide, and spans the river in a slight arc clearing it by 20 feet at its highest point (and 5 feet at either end). Unfortunately, the carcass of an abyssal dragon lies draped over the bridge, blocking it. The corpse is swarming with a pack of scavengers called **exsanguinators**\* – strange dog-like aberrations that crave blood. If approached on foot, the dragon corpse can be climbed and bypassed, but the characters will have to deal with the exsanguinators. The dragon corpse can be carved up, requiring an hour's labor, and allowing passage of the Crawler.

\* New monster featured in the *Blood War Bestiary*, and reproduced in the **Bestiary**.

**T2** – 12 exsanguinators

**T3** – 24 exsanguinators

If the characters have the Crawler, they may attempt to ram their way through. This requires a land vehicles skill check using the player's choice of Intelligence (to calculate the best impact point) or Wisdom (to perceive or intuit a weak point). This is a **DC 14 check at T2**, or **DC 18 check at T3**. Success indicates that the Crawler rends the rotting carcass, sending the exsanguinators flying (dealing ram damage) into the river. Failure indicates an impact that deals ram damage to both the corpse (which has 150 HP) and the Crawler, but leaving the exsanguinators unscathed. The vehicle is also halted in momentum. Finally, a result of 5 or less causes a deflection that sends

the Crawler off the bridge and into the river. At the start of the next round, the Crawler bobs to the surface, but begins to slowly fill with blood, sinking in 1d4+1 rounds.

### Development

If Hell-Claws managed to steal the Crawler from the party prior to this point, the scene at the bridge is a little different. The Crawler is here, wedged against the dragon corpse (from a failed ramming attempt) and is teetering on the edge of the bridge. The Crawler has half the hit points it had when the characters last saw it, the hatch has been damaged and must be held closed from within. The exsanguinators are crawling all over the vehicle, seeking to breach it and get at the injured tabaxi inside (she has lost a quarter of her Hit Points). On initiative count 1 each round, the vehicle has a 10% chance of falling into the river. This increases to 20% if subject to powerful forces (such as AoE spells). If saved from the exsanguinators, Hell-Claws manages to stabilize the vehicle, and reluctantly returns the vehicle to the characters, throwing herself on their mercy.

### PROCESSING STATION #1522

*In the murky distance you can make out a massive fortress built from the ubiquitous black stone of Avernus. The gothic looking structure appears to be more intimidating than defensive, with numerous entrances piercing it. Long lines of filthy looking humanoids stand despondently, occasionally shuffling forward, under the cruel gazes of devilish guards.*

The processing stations are where damned souls of low to middling "value" are catalogued and dispatched to their final destinations in Hell. The souls have physical forms, but are sunken, sallow, reflections of the creatures they were in life, docile and hopeless. Thousands stand in lines awaiting processing.

There is a clear "front entrance"; a massive gate that is guarded by a squad of bearded devils (5 in **T2**, 10 in **T3**). As the characters are still alive, they may enter without waiting in the processing lines – a fact that any of the NPCs can tell them. If they do join a line, a nearby fiend laughingly derides their ignorance before setting them straight.

Inside, the characters find themselves in a vast hall, dimly lit with torches and braziers. It is uncomfortably hot and stuffy within the massive chamber, and hundreds of

creatures – mostly fiends, as well as a few other species – wait impatiently on rows of stone benches. A smartly dressed imp hands out small wooden plaques with numbers on them. The character's number is #2,745, 951 WX7. It shouldn't be long before the characters realise they aren't going to get anywhere waiting. There are several imposing desks at the front of the hall, but several are unmanned – having signs in multiple languages, that read; "Absent, returning presently". Several others are occupied by bored looking fiends (bone devils and one barbed devil), processing improbable stacks of parchment, with glacial slowness. Eventually a number is called "2,745, 951 WX6" (an impatient spined devil who proceeds to lodge a dispute notice over rights of an obscure courier route), followed an hour later by "2,745,952 WX6" (a night hag who wants to report a lost larva). If the party questions the system, it will be condescendingly explained they are in the WX7 index, so there are approximately 10 million tickets ahead of them (each index ticks over at the 9,999,999 mark to a new suffix code).

There are three ways to speed up this process; bribe the ticket dispenser (the well dressed imp), navigate the infernal bureaucracy, or slay enough fiends that they take a creature seriously.

The first generally requires a *soul coin*, though a vial of *angel blood* would suffice (*contaminated angel blood* will not). Other bribes may work at the DMs discretion.

The second option involves discerning that a "soul identification and verification request" is a *special* request, and thus a different process is required from "general enquiries". This requires a **DC 16** Intelligence check **for T2**, or a **DC 20** Intelligence check **for T3**. Characters with the Researcher Background, the Lawyer Background from *Heroes of Hell*, or any skills considered appropriate (as determined by the DM), gain advantage on this check.

The last option requires commencing combat, and creating enough of a threat to be taken "seriously". If the characters become disruptive or destructive, the squad of **bearded devils** from the front door attempts to subdue them, while the other ticket holders duck for cover. If the devils are defeated, the reinforcements (a **horned devil** and a squad of 3 **barbed devils**) approach cautiously but hold, allowing the ticket dispensing imp (Crisdexital) to negotiate. Demands to get seen are acquiesced, while the other ticket holders mutter about the "uncouth and

uncivilised" mortals disrupting the status quo.

In any case they are eventually seen by a bone devil clerk, who – for a "processing fee" of 1000 gp – can swiftly and inexplicably, find the contract for Suthrain's soul in a nearby filing cabinet. It indicates processing was completed, and Suthrain taken into custody by Drezixilax, a functionary of Prince Levistus. The contract states Drezixilax resides in a border tower called the Ashryn Spire, in the frozen wastes of Stygia. The clerk offers the use of the Processing Station's gate to Stygia if they fill out the necessary forms, and pay the 500 gp processing fee. If not, they suggest the PCs seek a Merrenoloth boatman on the banks of the River of Blood–or River Styx–and take the River Styx down to Stygia.

The gate to Stygia, if that option is taken, is found in one of several chambers of gates down one of the wings of the Processing Station. The clerk summons an imp to lead the party to the apparatus – a strange black metal ring that is activated by a chunk of ice the imp carries. On the other side, the characters see a bleak icescape lashed by sleet. The gate remains open for only a few seconds (1 round) and stepping through takes the party to Stygia.

### Development

The devils fail to mention the trip is one way unless the characters specifically ask. The return key is a chunk of obsidian, carved with an infernal rune (which translates as "top" or "highest"). The imp will sell the party one for 250 gp.

### A Boat Downriver

If the characters choose to take their chances with summoning a Merrenoloth, they will need to wander the banks of the Blood River until they discover a summoning horn – a wrought iron horn hanging from a chain affixed to a huge iron spike. Summoning horns can only be discovered by striding the banks, so driving by in a war machine will automatically miss them. Any of the devils or NPCs can advise the PCs of such, though the devils will expect a small gratuity for the information (10 gp).

Wandering the banks of the river risks encountering trouble before a horn is discovered. Roll on the following table;

## Tier 2 Encounters

Roll 1d20 Encounter

1-5	No encounter.
6-8	A slaving party of 3 <b>red slaad</b> .
9-12	A flight of 7 <b>spined devils</b> .
13-15	A <b>blood elemental</b> *.
16-20	A <b>wastrilith</b> lurking under the surface, trying to "fish" for victims using its <i>Grasping Spout</i> ability.

## Tier 3 Encounters

Roll 1d20 Encounter

1-5	No encounter.
6-8	A slaving party of 3 <b>green slaad</b> .
9-12	A flight of 4 <b>white abishai</b> .
13-15	A greater <b>blood elemental</b> *.
16-20	A <b>wastrilith</b> lurking under the surface, trying to "fish" for victims using its <i>Grasping Spout</i> ability. Anyone drawn into the water is immediately attacked by 4 <b>avernian leeches</b> * (4 leeches per character in the water).

\* New monster featured in the *Blood War Bestiary*, and reproduced in the **Bestiary**.

Summoning a merrenoloth by blowing the horn causes a skiff, large enough for 9 medium creatures, to appear out of the sanguine fog within a few moments. The ferryman requires 100 gp per passenger, or will accept 1 *Soul Coin*, 1 vial of *angel blood*, or 1 *rare* magic item, to ferry the entire party safely to Stygia. The skiff slips back into the Styx (a black, reflective flow) and through a haze from the burning plains of Avernus, into the frozen wasteland of Stygia, the trip taking approximately 1 hour (in which characters can safely take a short rest).





## CHAPTER 3: THE FROZEN WASTES OF STYGIA

Most of Stygia is a floating series of icebergs, on an endless bitter ocean, but the border forts are situated on one of the larger, mostly stable islands of ice; so large that it appears as a landmass – that is until a creature steps on a deceptively thin section and crashes through to the icy depths below.

The gate is located (and the skiff alighted from), near the border forts – after all what good are defences if they are easily bypassed. The gate is in a cave near the edge of the River Styx, in close proximity to a frozen summoning horn. Either method of travel drops the characters not far from their destination.

*The cold hits you like a hammerblow, after the oppressive heat of Avernus. An icy sleet rakes at you, weighing down your cloak and obscuring your vision. All around through the haze you can make out an icy wasteland of jagged ice fields and crags, the River Styx tributaries cutting through the landscape like black veins. At the limit of your vision you see an obsidian tower with jagged spires.*

The supernaturally arctic temperatures, especially after the scorching planes of Avernus, hits the characters like a frigid wave. For every hour the characters spend on this plane, they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. Creatures resistant or immune to cold, are immune to this effect.

### THE ASHRYN SPIRE

Ashryn Spire thrusts from the ice, a black crumbling edifice against the stark white surroundings. It is the residence of Drezixilax, who finds himself out of favor at Prince Levistus' court, banished to the fringes of the layer for minor indiscretions. The fiend seeks opportunities to redeem himself in the Dark Reaver's eyes. The characters present such an opportunity. Drezixilax is willing to be hospitable and negotiate if the characters are, even if they defeat some of the tower's defenders. Defeated fiends are weak fiends, and deserve their demotion after all.

The tower is not actually of infernal design. Like many of the limited structures of Stygia, this tower was once from another place, captured in ice and dragged into Hell. In the case of the Ashryn Spire, it was a human made watchtower on an island, originally off the coast of Luskan in the North of Faerun. When a harsh winter

freeze locked the inhabitants in the tower, their resulting desperation lead to betrayal, and ultimately, murder. The power of these acts caused the tower to be drawn into Stygia, where it has resided for several hundred years.

### Ground Floor

The front door is made of bronze, the hinges frozen solid. The door is not locked, but requires a DC 15 Strength check to open every time (refreezing of hinges is almost immediate). Opening the door is a very loud process that alerts the occupants, unless specific actions to conceal the noise are taken (ie casting a silence spell or muffling the hinges with cloaks, oiling the hinges etc). The door can be destroyed if the characters choose (AC 15, Damage Threshold 5, HP 50).

### A) Entry room

Beyond the door is a bare stone room, with only two features of interest. The first is a frozen wooden desk, complete with ledger and frozen quill. Looking over the ledger indicates something of the tower's origin, as it's

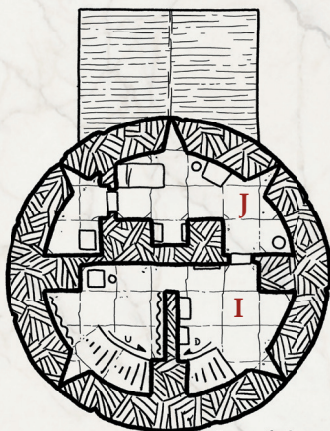
a ship sighting log, noting the ship's type and size, any flags, the ship's name, and if it stopped at the post. Each is accompanied by a date, and has almost a year's worth of entries, though the last was in 1216 DR – well over 200 years ago.

The second feature is a silver framed, frosted glass mirror affixed to the wall; over 6 feet high and 3 feet wide. It is a magical mirror, and if touched the image swims and distorts for a few seconds before resolving into the features of Drezixilax the Gelugon, who is answering his "mirror" on the third floor (an unanswered "call" runs for about 20 seconds, before returning the reflection to normal). If contacted, Drezixilax is surprised and suspicious, demanding the characters state their business, while surreptitiously signalling Ixnax (his imp) to summon the guards. Characters stating their intent to barter for a soul, are invited to wait for escorts to usher them up. The mirror is fragile (AC 10, HP 5), and if removed or damaged, it ceases to function.

## Ashryn Spire



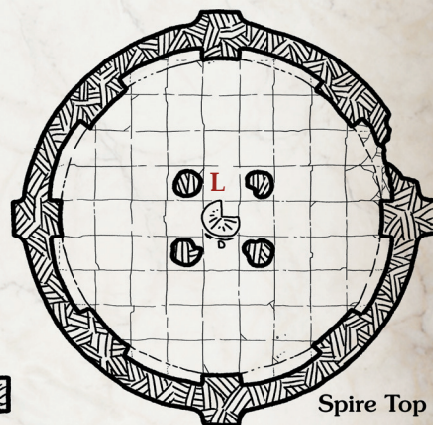
Ground Floor



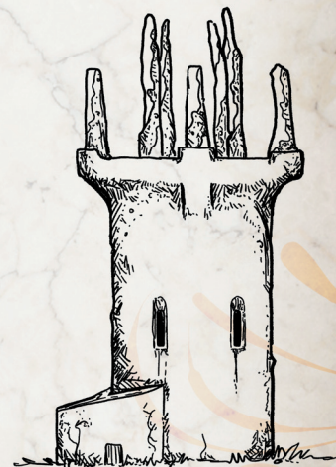
Level 2



Level 3



Spire Top



### B) Access

This stairway leads up to an inward swinging, unlocked bronze door (AC 15, Damage Threshold 5, HP 50) and though easier to open than the one below, still requires force and makes significant noise. With a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, observant characters may notice that there is a raised portcullis in the threshold above the door. If dropped, the iron portcullis represents a significant impediment (AC 16, Damage Threshold 5, HP 100, DC 20 Strength check to lift or bend the bars).

### C) Corpse Storage

This macabre room holds the hanging corpses of over a dozen creatures, in a state of frozen preservation, against the walls. It is clear each has been dissected and restitched; much like an autopsy. The creature corpses include a human, an elf, a dwarf, a tiefling, a dragonborn, a goblin, a strange androgynous, grey skinned, humanoid (a doppelganger), a shark, a black furred wolf, a large turtle, a giant crab, a giant squid, and an exsanguinator. Drezixilax considers himself a "scholar of biology", and conducts research on the anatomy of species it encounters. If the characters are slain in combat, and there is a suitably exotic one among them, they may end up in this chamber.

### D) Storage

This cramped storage room contains crates and barrels of junk that Drezixilax has collected, that he thinks may be useful one day. Much of it is preserved from the original tower occupants, and other trinkets were gathered from intruders, or from locations around the Nine Hells. The crates are old and brittle, and break if roughly handled.

There are sheets of canvas, ropes of various materials, crates of tools (some obviously recognizable, others intriguingly complex and unwieldy), a ship's figurehead of what appears to be a provocatively posed Illithid, various navigation tools and charts (some for Faerun, but some clearly not of that world), several ornate coffins (one with a preserved corpse staked through the heart), and other strange oddities.

Within the trash there are a couple of treasures. One intruder was carrying a bow, and though it was lost, the quiver of 19 *magical arrows* was not (+2 arrows for T2, or +3 arrows for T3).

A DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or a DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check, reveals that one crate filled with cloth, is actually a mimic in torpor. It will not

wake up in the Stygian cold, and can be easily slain if the characters wish. If the characters slew the mimic in The Dark Delight, this might be an opportunity to mend fences, but once the mimic leaves Stygia, it begins to rouse and must be managed accordingly.

### E) Kill Hall

This short corridor is designed to "bottleneck" invaders, creating a killing hall. The arrow slits allow defenders to attack with polearms and ranged weapons, with the protection afforded from three quarters cover (+5 AC and Dexterity saving throws). The heavy iron inner door is barred from the inside (no accessible lock), requiring it to be either destroyed, or magically bypassed (AC 16, Damage Threshold 6, Hp 120), to allow passage beyond.

### F) Guard Rooms

The guard rooms are where the tower's defenders congregate, rest, and recuperate (usually with gambling). Each room has a scattering of chairs and tables. The east wing holds the winch for the portcullis at Area B, while the west wing has a mirror device identical to the one in Area A.

There are generally 4 bearded devil guards (T2), or 4 barbed devil guards (T3), in a room. In addition to any normal armaments, each devil has a glaive and a heavy crossbow. Against T3 characters, one guard also has a *necklace of fireballs* with 3 remaining beads.

### G) Armory

Racks of weapons and armor line the walls of this chamber, orderly, and ready for deployment. The regimented devils keep this area pristine. There are 12 glaives, 10 heavy crossbows, 500 crossbow bolts, 5 greataxes, 6 battleaxes, 4 warhammers, 2 mauls, 6 shields, and 6 heavy helms. The racks are about two-thirds full.

The weapons are in good condition; though the axes and hammers show heavy scratching, as they are used to clear ice as much as assault foes.

### H) Ascending Chamber

This spartan room has a pair of frozen tapestries on its walls. The tapestries are faded naval scenes where ships plow the seas, but the icing on the threads transforms them into scenes of ships locked in a frozen ocean.

## Level 2

### I) Reception

Open windows admit the harsh conditions, and a layer of sleet covers this chamber. The wind that passes through into the next chamber causes an uncomfortable wailing sound, and carries a chilling sting. Several benches rest against one side, while shredded hangings and tapestries are frozen fast to the walls. Iron braziers in several places around the room, have their fuel frozen solid.

The western section has a brittle desk, more shredded tapestries, and stairs leading up to an area lit with a strange, green radiance.

### J) Guest Quarters

This room is cold, but not as cold as others in the tower, for despite its open windows and howling winds, a dozen braziers burn within, combating the cold to some degree. The room is as run down as the rest; though the heat has had a thawing effect on the contents, making it humid, and allowing an earthy, fetid, stench of rot to be released. The condensation soaked tapestries adorning the walls, along with an ornate, and filled, water font, ensure that the damp of the room is palpable.

All of this is more than fine with the room's sole occupant; Nuallarinia (Nua to her friends), the **succubus** emissary of Glasya, Ruler of Malbolge, to the court of Levistus. The two archdukes share a difficult past, with their relationship resulting in Levistus' current imprisonment in ice, a consequence of Asmodeus' displeasure. Nua was halted, and redirected to this outpost on the "edge" of the layer, to keep her from getting too deeply entrenched into the court, and causing trouble. Glasya anticipated this, and Nua's actual role is to try to turn, or further undermine, the out of favor Drezixilax.

The arrival of the characters offer's her this chance. If they seem amenable, she intercepts them on the way up; out of sight of the mirror. If they are being escorted by the guards, the guards delay, as they have all accepted her bribes, in return for "certain special treatment" – such as a few moments alone with intruders.

She urges any characters bent on harming or destroying the gelugon, and she will provide assistance in return for a small pledge of passage out of Avernus when they leave. This assistance is offered in the form of a potion of cold resistance. Characters that are open to



negotiation, are instead offered a Soul Coins (perhaps to sweeten the deal with Drezixilax) in exchange for the same passage out request.

In either case, she will remain here until their business with Drezixilax is concluded, joining them on the way out (if the PCs are destroyed or enslaved, she does not want to be seen siding with them).

If attacked, she attempts to flee, flying out via the windows. In addition to the potion and the Soul Coin, Nua has a chest full of expensive outfits (totalling 300 gp), 300 gp in coins, as well as 1000 gp in diamonds hidden in a secret compartment, requiring a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover.

### Level 3

This level is supernaturally cold; even beyond the frigid temperatures of Stygia itself. Anyone in the area takes 1d6 (at T2), or 2d6 (at T3), cold damage each round. Drezixilax can suppress this as a bonus action each round. If the characters invite him to negotiate, he uses this ability. If not, the effects take effect immediately.

### K) The Soul Chamber and Treasury

A sickly green radiance that is emitted from eight ice pillars in the center of the room, bathes this vast chamber. Within the icy pillars swim the distorted visages of dozens of trapped souls. A large, insectoid devil steps into view (at T3 it is followed by a half fiend in black armor).

The ice devil is Drezixilax, and (if present) the black armored half-fiend is his bodyguard Neldrinax (see Bestiary). If the characters are willing to negotiate, move on to "A Conversation with Levistus", below.

The ice pillars are receptacles that hold dozens of condemned souls. As a border outpost, there are no powerful or significant creatures kept here – all those stored here are categorized as "low priority, but vaguely interesting in one way or another". Communication with the souls is not possible, and only Drezixilax knows the full extent of those contained within. If a prism is used (see "the vaults") and the soul's name is known, the soul can be transferred in or out of the prism. If the pillars are shattered (AC 12, HP 20), all souls contained within are freed, vanishing back to Avernus for reprocessing. Suthrain's soul is in the northeast pillar.

The walls of the room are heavy with frost, more so here than anywhere else, due to the supernatural, cold aura of

the room. The tapestries that line the walls are actually a combination of metal weave and ice, sculpted into three dimensional art, depicting the variations of landscape and creatures in Stygia. These are masterful pieces, with minute detail that make use of color (both metal wire and paints) bringing the scenes to life. Unfortunately, they are sustained by the cold aura, any movement them causes them to crack, and removal from this level causes melting almost immediately.

In the northern end of the room, there is an enchanted ice mirror that can be used to communicate with the others in the tower, activated in the same way – by touch – and pronouncing the floor level desired (in Infernal). In addition, with a secret password, it can be used to conjure the presence of Levistus himself (see "A Conversation with Levistus" below).

On the stone pillars either side of the mirror, are a pair of small safes; the iron doors crusted with ice. Each has a keyhole (Drezixilax possesses the key) and can be picked with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Inside one safe is the treasury of the tower, including coffers of 500 gp, 200 pp, miscellaneous semi-precious gems worth 300 gp in total, a mithril ingot worth 150 gp, a Soul Coin, and a silver chalice inlaid with rubies valued at 300 gp. Inside the other safe is a single chunk of jagged



ice engraved with crawling green runes (around 1-foot in height, and 8 inches wide), and 4 small prisms in a rack, all of which are magical. If identified, the prisms act as a transfer container for souls – if touched to a "loose" soul, or a vessel containing a soul, speaking both the command word and the name of the soul, transfers it into the container. The soul can be transferred out using the same method. Once activated, the container lasts 10 days, and then shatters. If a soul remains within the prism when it shatters, the soul is set free. The chunk of ice is more complex; created from the arcane schools of both divination and conjuration. It is only of any use when its sister, the "activation" item, is activated, which opens a gateway between the two items. This chunk is the "termination" item. and cannot be activated at all.

### A CONVERSATION WITH LEVISTUS

If the characters are negotiating, Drezixilax uses the ice mirror to summon an image of Levistus.

*The swirling in the mirror fades and you see the image of a handsome devil locked in ice, an expression of frustrated agony etched on its frozen features. A voice echoes around the chamber, deep and sonorous, tinged with arrogance. While the devil's frozen image is unmoving, it becomes clear that the voice comes from him.*

*"I am Levistus, Prince among Devils, and Archduke of Stygia. What have you to say for yourselves mortals? Why do you interrupt my thoughts?"*

Levistus is secretly pleased that the characters are here to bargain, but acts as though they are an inconsequential annoyance. Suthrain's soul is of low value to him, being little more than a rustic shaman of an isolated orc tribe, but again, he acts as if she is precious, and releasing her would be a significant boon. He listens to the character's offer, and then counters that the payment is insufficient for such a precious commodity. His counter offer is that in addition to the character's offerings, they must take a chunk of Stygian ice back to their plane of origin, and throw it into the nearest ocean. If the characters balk, he suggests that "someone" will take the deal eventually, and that he is only offering it as a matter of convenience. He won't release the soul unless they agree. Once their business is concluded – one way or another – his image vanishes without another word.



If the deal is struck, Drezixilax provides both the soul (in a travel prism), and the ice shard from the vaults. If not, the characters can always try to take what they wish by force.

### Level 4

At this elevation, the frigid winds are strong and gusty. Anyone climbing to this level must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be dashed against the tower, suffering 1d6 bludgeoning damage, losing their grip, and falling the 40 feet to the hard ice below (for an additional 4d6 bludgeoning damage).

Flying characters must also make this saving throw (at disadvantage) but do not risk falling unless using a concentration spell and their concentration is broken. Flying above the parapets requires another saving throw at the start of each of their turns, being blown 2d4x10 feet in a random direction on a failed save.

### L) Battlements

Crowning the battlements, are eight stone pillars that rise high above the tower – four on the battlements themselves, and four in the center. These are heavily weathered and pitted, and are crusted with a green lichen, now frozen in time.

### Deal with Levistus

If the characters accept Levistus' terms, they – perhaps unknowingly – enter into a temporary bargain with him. Such bargains have power in Hell, and real repercussions if either party fails to deliver. As Levistus' end of the bargain is immediately fulfilled, he is exempt from repercussions. If the characters deviate from the bargain – by discarding the Ice Shard, or locking it away, they begin to suffer from a powerful curse.

Each 24 hours from the moment they abandoned the deal, each character permanently reduces their Constitution score by 1, until the bargain is fulfilled or the curse is broken. This reduction cannot be mitigated in any way. A creature whose Constitution score is reduced to zero, dies, and their soul becomes the property of Levistus. Such characters cannot be raised or resurrected. The curse is treated as a 9th-level spell for the purposes of removing it. Once the curse is broken or ended, the characters regain 1 Constitution point after each long rest. A *greater restoration* spell will remove all effects of the curse.

Strung between the central pillars by rusted chains is the battered, but still living, form of a **vrock** (MM p.64). The creature has 10 hit points remaining. It is guarded by a small squadron of **spined devils** (6 for T2 and 12 for T3). Each time the vrock moves, it is assaulted by the spined devils, and does not have the strength to break free. If the characters offer to free it, it pledges service to destroy the tower's master, which it'll honor only to the point of wanting to see Drezixilax slain. It has no issue with hitting its companions with its abilities (Stunning Screech and Spores), and knows if it is slain here, it will reform on the Abyss.

Freeing the vrock requires destroying the four chains in turn (each chain has AC 15, Damage Threshold 5, HP 10), or unlocking all four locks (DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools), or obtaining the key from Drezixilax. The spined devils (MM p.78) have trained for flight in these winds (their checks do not have disadvantage), and

will defend the tower (and their prisoner) from incursion.

### THE RETURN TRIP

The return trip is likely to be a reversal of the journey into Hell, with a few elements to consider;

- If Nua returns with them, she uses her *disguise self* ability to disguise herself as a non-descript adventurer, fitting in with the party dynamics. She will only assist in combat if her own life is threatened. She might (at the DMs discretion) attempt to charm on of the characters as "insurance", but only if it doesn't risk her place in the group. Ultimately, she feels her best utility to Glasya is on the prime material plane.
- If the characters used the gate from the Processing Station, but failed to procure a return gate stone, they will have to use a Merrenloth horn on the banks of the Styx and pay the toll, or find another method of exit. If uneducated in this process, Morte, Nua, or any devil (for a fee) can explain it.
- If the characters did not take pains or precautions to secure the Crawler before their trip to Stygia (such as paying some devils to watch it), it will be stolen and long gone by the time they return.
- If they stole the Crawler, they may face an irate Veronika when they return to the portal, assuming she wasn't slain in process of the theft. If the war machine is intact and returned, she is forgiving of the party if they are willing to "compensate" her for the stress (to the tune of 500 gp or a *soul coin*). If they've lost or destroyed the war machine, or are unwilling to pay her compensation, she attacks the party.



## CONCLUSION: THE PRICE OF A SOUL

The reception the party receives, rests entirely on their success in retrieving Suthrain's soul. Failing to return her incurs Lashpera's ire, which only compounds if the demon learns of any activities or actions by the party that negatively impact on her, or her operations. Characters that fail, are turned out of the festhall unceremoniously, warned never to return, and become the focus of a new wave of machinations by Lashpera, set to ruin their reputations, and frame them for crimes within the city. Lashpera avoids direct combat, but has sufficient time, resources, and an endless malicious will, to ensure the characters' lives are made unpleasant so long as they remain in Baldur's Gate.

Returning to Lashpera with Suthrain's soul is sufficient to earn pardon for any and all transgressions the characters may have committed - including slaying Veronika, stealing and/or wrecking the war machine, incurring debts or promises on her behalf, or bringing back a spy for Glasya into her midst (she instantly recognises Nua for what she is). All such things are considered acceptable losses - or in the case of Nua, seen as an opportunity to be turned to advantage. She pays the

characters the remainder owing on their contract, and if they have performed without flaw (not slaying, stealing, or damaging her servants, property, or prospects) she allows them to keep any remaining coinage from the allotment set aside for negotiation.

Despite her demonic nature, Lashpera loves Suthrain in her own selfish, possessive way, and seeks to restore her to life to continue their relationship. She seeks to conceal her personal interest, out of fear of her "weakness" for the orc being exploited.

The one concern Lashpera has, surfaces if the characters reveal they made a deal with Levistus, and carry the Ice Shard. She cautions the characters that it was an ill-considered bargain and the unforeseen price may be high, but that they had best discharge their agreed upon actions or they will suffer mightily. Lashpera - having suffered servitude under a demon lord - is sympathetic in her own way, though it is tinged with scorn at their "foolish choices". She can only guess at the implications of throwing the ice into the bay, and while it is likely to have ramifications for Baldur's Gate in the future, it will likely create exploitable opportunities as well.



## MAGIC ITEMS

### Angel Blood

*Potion, rare*

The shimmering crimson fluid in this container has a soft, sweet, scent and seems to resonate with holy life. After drinking it, you gain the benefits of a *lesser restoration* spell and you regain 10 hit points. If this exceeds your Hit Point maximum, you gain any excess as temporary hit points until you finish a short or long rest.

### Contaminated Angel Blood

*Potion, uncommon*

This dull, viscous, crimson fluid, reeks of death and decay. After drinking it, you regain 1d4 lost hit points, and the next spell or spell like ability you cast or use, has its DC raised by 1. However, you must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. Creatures immune to poison are immune this effect.

### Soul Coin

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

Soul Coins are detailed on page 225 of Baldur's Gate: Descent Into Avernus, and will not be replicated in this product.

If you do not have BG:DIA, the pertinent information on a Soul Coin for this adventure is that in addition to being currency, it can be used to power an infernal war machine for 72 hours. A Soul Coin used in this way is destroyed.

### The Black Blade

*Weapon (any sword), very rare (requires attunement)*

This gleaming, black metal blade seems to cut the very air on a strike; emitting a faint wail of despair when swung. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with this magic weapon. When you hit with this weapon, you deal an additional 1d6 necrotic damage.

## BESTIARY/NPCs

### BLOOD ELEMENTAL

*Large elemental, neutral evil*

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)  
Hit Points 142 (15d10+60)  
Speed 30 ft., swim 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18(+4)	14 (+2)	18(+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

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

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

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

**Languages** Aquan, understands Infernal but cant speak  
**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Coalesce.** If the elemental's maximum hit points equal or exceed 229, it turns into a greater blood elemental, gaining its statistics. Its current hit points do not change after the transformation.

**Coagulating.** When the elemental receives magical healing, it instead takes damage equal to the amount healed.

**Fluid Form.** The elemental 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 elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
**Hit:** 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The elemental's current and maximum hit points increase by an amount equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

## BLOOD ELEMENTAL, GREATER

*Huge elemental, neutral evil*

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 229 (17d12+119)

Speed 30 ft., swim 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22(+6)	14 (+2)	24(+7)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

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

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

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

**Languages** Aquan, understands Infernal but can't speak

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Coagulating.** When the elemental receives magical healing, it instead takes damage equal to the amount healed.

**Fluid Form.** The elemental 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 elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (3d8) necrotic damage. The elemental's current and maximum hit points increase by an amount equal to the necrotic damage dealt. If the elemental's hit point maximum reaches 330 as a result of this ability, it dies and explodes in a shower of necrotic blood. Each creature within 30 feet must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 27(5d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.



## EXSANGUINATOR

*Medium aberration, neutral evil*

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** bloodscent (see below), darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Infernal but cant speak

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Bloodscent.** The exsanguinator can sense the location of any blood-filled creature within 120 feet.

### Actions

**Lick.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) damage at the start of each of its turns due to blood loss. Each time the exsanguinator hits the target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 3 (1d6). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

This large quadruped has four clawed feet on spindly legs and a sleek body covered in a tough, grey hide. It lacks a neck and head, with a single large eyeball protruding from the front of its body above a rubbery proboscis. The creature lurches forward in furtive movements, seeming to test the air every few moments with its appendage.

Exsanguinators are pack hunters that roam Avernus feeding on the blood of their prey. While their favorite hunting grounds are near the banks of the River of Blood, they can be found all over the first layer and beyond.

Despite the availability of 'environmental' blood on the first layer, exsanguinators only drink freshly spilled blood, still warm from their target.

A single exsanguinator is a nuisance to most devils, but a large group can give even the most powerful fiends cause for concern.

Exsanguinators have razor sharp 'tongues' that cause vicious wounds, and their saliva has a powerful anticoagulant enzyme that causes free-flowing blood loss. The enzyme is so powerful, that in some cases it precipitates an expulsion of fresh blood from the target. Packs of exsanguinators seek to rush and overwhelm a foe, inflicting numerous wounds to generate massive blood loss, before a creature can mount a defense. If faced with significantly dangerous prey, they are patient enough to inflict a few wounds and wear their prey down, harrying them while their quarry slowly bleeds to death.

## MORTE

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (10d4+20)

Speed 0., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Arcana +5, Deception +5, History +5, Persuasion +5

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

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

**Languages** Common, Abyssal, Infernal

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

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

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Morte can make 2 Necrotic Bite attacks

**Necrotic Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. Morte regains a number of lost hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

## LASHPERA, THE OPAL GODDESS

*Medium fiend (demon), Neutral evil*

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 144 (17d8+68)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30ft.

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

**Saving Throws** Con +8, Wis +8, Cha +9

**Skills** Arcana +8, Deception +9, History +8, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +9

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-magic weapons.

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

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Orc, Telepathy 120ft.

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Abyssal Blade.** Lashpera can conjure a fiendish sword to her grasp as a bonus action. The weapon counts as magical, and deals 2d8 slashing damage and an additional 2d6 necrotic damage on a successful attack. If the blade is ever broken or leaves Lashpera's grasp it disappears.

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

**Nondetection Aura.** Lashpera is under a constant nondetection effect per the spell. She does not detect as a fiend to any abilities that detect fiends.

**Teleport.** Lashpera can magically teleport, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Lashpera's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Lashpera can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**At will:** *disguise self, friends, mage hand, minor illusion*

**3/day each:** *charm person, invisibility, phantasmal force, scrying*

**2/day each:** *major image, plane shift (self only)*

**1/day:** *mirage arcane*

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Lashpera makes three attacks in any combination.

**Abyssal Blade.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

**Radiant Beam.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) radiant damage.



## NELDRINAX

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 24 (+2 black plate, +2 shield)  
Hit Points 85 (10d8+40)  
Speed 30 ft.

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

**Saving Throws** Str +8, Con +8  
**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks  
**Damage Immunities** fire, poison  
**Condition Immunities** poisoned  
**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common, Infernal  
**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede Neldrinax's darkvision

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

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Neldrinax makes two Black Blade attacks.

**Black Blade.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage, plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. In addition, a struck creature must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or suffer one of the following effects of Neldrinax's choice;

- lose their reaction until the start of their next turn
- be knocked prone
- the next attack against it is made at advantage

Neldrinax wears +2 black plate, has a +2 black metal shield, and carries the *Black Blade*, a *very rare*, +2 black metal longsword that deals an additional +1d6 necrotic damage on a successful hit.

## THRONDEK THE ARTIFICER (T2)

Medium Humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)  
Hit Points 82 (11d8+33)  
Speed 25 ft.

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

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +5 (evasion), Intelligence +4  
**Skills** Athletics +5, Investigation +4, Intimidation +4, Perception +2, Sleight of Hand +5 (treat 9 or lower as 10)  
**Tool Proficiencies** smith's tools, thieves' tools, vehicles (land)  
**Damage Resistances** poison  
**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12  
**Languages** Common, Dwarvish, Infernal, Thieves Cant  
**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Cunning Action.** Throndek can take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action each round.

**Knack.** Throndek can *detect magic* by touch.

**Trash and Treasure.** Throndek adds +5 to Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks to discover hidden treasures.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Throndek adds 2d6 damage to a single attack if he has advantage on the attack, or if an ally is within 5 feet of the target. Throndek may apply this ability to a Fist Strike.

### Actions

**Fist Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage, plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

**Lightning Arc.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) lightning damage. Throndek has advantage to hit creatures composed of metal or wearing metal armor.

### Reactions

**Uncanny Dodge.** Throndek can use his reaction to halve the damage from any attack.

## THRONDEK THE ARTIFICER (T3)

Medium Humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (+3 leather armor)

Hit Points 150 (20d8+60)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +8 (evasion), Intelligence +6, Wisdom +3

**Skills** Athletics +6, Investigation +8, Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +8 (treat 9 or lower as 10)

**Tool Proficiencies** smith's tools, thieves' tools, vehicles (land)

**Damage Resistances** poison

**Senses** blindsense 10ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish, Infernal, Thieves Cant

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

**Cunning Action.** Throndek can take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action each round.

**Knack.** Throndek can *detect magic* by touch.

**Trash and Treasure.** Throndek adds +10 to Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks to discover hidden treasures.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Throndek adds 4d6 damage to a single attack if he has advantage on the attack, or if an ally is within 5 feet of the target. Throndek may apply this ability to a Fist Strike.

**Use Magic Device.** Throndek ignores all class, race, and level requirements on the use of magic items.

### Actions

**Fist Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 +5) bludgeoning damage, plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

**Lightning Arc.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) lightning damage. Throndek has advantage to hit creatures composed of metal or wearing metal armor.

### Reactions

**Uncanny Dodge.** Throndek can use his reaction to halve the damage from any attack.



## THE CRAWLER

Gargantuan vehicle (12,000 lbs)

**Creature Capacity** 8 medium creatures

**Cargo Capacity** 1 ton

**Armor Class** 19

**Hit Points** 200 (Damage Threshold 10, Mishap Threshold 20)

**Speed** 100 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18(+4)	0	0	0

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

**Crushing Wheels.** The crawler can move through the space of any Large or smaller creature. When it does, the creature must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the creature was already prone, it takes an extra 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage. This trait can't be used against a particular creature more than once each turn.

**Magic Weapons.** The Crawler's weapon attacks are considered magical for the purposes of overcoming damage immunities and resistances.

**Prone Deficiency.** If the Crawler rolls over and falls prone, it can't right itself, and is incapacitated until flipped upright.

### Action Stations

**Helm (Requires 1 crew and grants three-quarters cover).** Drive and steer the Crawler.

**Demon-Headed Ram (Requires 1 crew and grants three-quarters cover).** **Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 32 (8d6 +4) bludgeoning damage, and the creature must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Force Siege Cannon (Requires 1 crew and grants half cover, Recharge 5-6).** **Ranged Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 33 (6d10) force damage. Double the damage if the target is an object or structure.

**2 Harpoon Flingers (Requires 1 crew and grants half cover).** **Ammunition:** 10 harpoons per station. **Ranged Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage.



## BIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

Micah Watt has been described as three spinagons in a trench coat, and thinks Stygia is the ideal getaway destination, combining icy slopes with ocean swimming. He may or may not have been to Stygia - it's hard to tell after swimming in the Styx.

What he does remember is that he is the owner and lead designer of Pyromaniac Press, and has written and produced numerous bestselling titles such as *Faiths of the Forgotten Realms 1&2*, *Temple of the Opal Goddess* and the epic horror adventure path *What Lies Beyond Reason*.

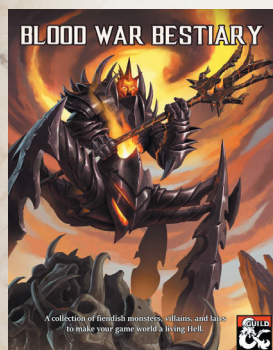
Also, one of his spinagons has wandered off...



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