



The Clock that Didn't Tick

Disappearing shipments, missing alchemists—and proven musical acts whose rehearsals sound terrible! Instead of showing off Thentia to potential trading partners and giving the locals something to celebrate, the pall over this year's Magic and Gold Festival threatens to drive business to Melvaunt and give the locals a reason to riot.

A Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 3 Characters. Optimized for APL 13.

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Adventure Primer

None of my good deeds goes unpunished.

—Etana

Background

Long ago, before anyone remembers, the young wizard **ETANA** and his wife had their only child by obtaining magical herbs from a mountaintop tree, aided by an “aarakocra” whose “hunter’s trap” Etana opened.

Unfortunately for Etana, the “trap” was actually Dimensional Shackles and the “aarakocra” was actually an arcanaloth who had gone back on a deal with Levistus. When Levistus learned that the arcanaloth had been set free, he cursed Etana’s child, **BARTHOLOMEW**, with an incurable disease that would take his life when he turned 10.

Etana came to the Moonsea looking for healing at the Temple of Selûne, but the priests there could not help Bartholomew. The two retreated into an extradimensional space he created behind a cliff wall near Thentia, where Etana initially put his son into a state of suspended animation and began working on a cure.

As the decades turned into centuries, Etana figured out how to manipulate time in his extradimensional space, but he did not figure out a cure. The previously Lawful Good Etana began to obsess, and he began taking moral shortcuts. He first traveled around Faerûn stealing books he thought might help his studies. Then he started stealing scholars and alchemists, bringing them to his time-warped world. When they failed him, he cast them out. And as they left the extradimensional space, time caught up with

their bodies. Lately, as Etana has grown even more powerful and desperate, his warping of time began to affect the surrounding area.

Episodes

The adventure’s story is spread over three **story episodes** that take approximately four hours to play in total.

If you’re planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the **Call to Action** once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you’ll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play.

- **Episode 1: A Matter of Percussion and Purloining.** Tired from their last adventure, the characters have all come to Thentia to unwind at the annual Magic and Gold Festival. They witness some unusual events and are recruited by **KELL FASTFINGERS**, the new-to-her-job head of the Fastfingers trading family to investigate disappearances of goods and workers. This is the **Call to Action**.
- **Episode 2: A Matter of Perspective.** The party interacts with various merchants and families, follows clues (possibly including an NPC) to a cliff outside of town that is the center of the disappearances—and of an anomaly in time. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: A Matter of Priorities.** The party goes through the gate in the cliff to an extradimensional space (where time is definitely abnormal) and finds a sick youth, a wizard obsessed with a cure, and a moral dilemma. This is **Story Objective B**.

Episode 1: A Matter of Percussion and Purloining (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration: 40 minutes

Scene A. A Dropped Beat

In this brief scene, the party enters the biggest hotel in Thentia, site of the annual Magic and Gold Festival, ready for a rest. The Fest begins in two days.

One of the headlining bands is rehearsing as the characters head to their rooms, and they hear an argument break out among the band. The argument centers on **ARTHUR** (a **commoner** with Charisma (Performance) +4), the drummer and **FAGAN** (a **commoner** with Charisma (Performance) +4), the singer. Arthur's bandmates say he keeps messing up the beat, leading them to get out of sync and sound awful—and Fagan is out of patience.

Any character with a musical background can tell that Fagan and the band are correct, but if the character tries to keep time, they are likewise unable to keep a steady tempo.

The scene ends before any serious conflict breaks out when the night manager buys everyone a drink and rehearsal ends.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Gallardo is a larger hotel than a town the size of Thentia should have. This is in part because of the annual Magic and Gold Festival, but also because the trading families that run the town draw traders and sailors by undercutting the prices of the inns of nearby Melvaunt. The lobby is also the bar, and the band is practicing in a hall just off the lobby. A large tent is set up outside for the upcoming Fest.

Lighting. Oil lamps light the inside of the inn and its courtyard. The large tent outside is unlit.

Other Features. The Gallardo and the town are just beginning to fill up for the festival, but it is still relatively quiet as most visitors won't arrive for another couple of nights. The huge, clean tent outside and others like it nearby set the tone that something big is about to happen.

Creatures/NPCs

Arthur is an accomplished drummer, known throughout the Moonsea region. He has never had a problem keeping time before. Fagan is likewise a well-known singer, though she has a reputation for being short-tempered.

Objectives/Goals. All of the band just want this performance to go well. They've played together for

several years, but this is the first time they've been at a big festival.

What Do They Know? Arthur has never had trouble keeping time before. It started tonight. If pushed a little, Fagan and the other musicians will admit that they felt a little "off" as well.

Scene B. Missing Cargo

The party learn that the beat is not the only thing that's gone missing. As they look around the Gallardo, two things catch their collective eye: a tired looking half-orc bartender, and a swishing beaded curtain that a well-dressed human has just disappeared behind. The sound of rolling dice and cheers comes from behind the curtain.

Luck Be A Lady KELL QUICKFINGERS is in the back room of The Gallardo, on a bad losing streak. The noise of the crowd draws the party's attention. When Kell sees them, she withdraws to talk to the party and meets them in the main room.

Of All The Gin Joints If the party chooses to hit the bar instead, after a few minutes with **EKISH GREYTI**, the bartender, Kell will enter and get right down to business.

Area Information

This area features: the bar and the gambling room

Dimensions & Terrain. Behind the bar is a half-orc bartender, Ekish. Patrons crowd the bar, some more drunk than others, resulting in difficult terrain within a 10-foot radius of the bar. It's hard to hear each other.

The gambling room (calling it a "casino" is to overstate it) is smoky and small (large enough for a crowd of 30, currently holding more than that), and clearly a refurbished storeroom. Gaudy colors adorn the tables, and dim, multicolored lights string overhead.

Features. The lighting over whole area is slightly lowered, and the bar itself is well-polished and slightly sticky to the touch. Think a classic noir feel to the place.

Creatures/NPCs

Kell Quickfingers is a well-dressed, diminutive human **swashbuckler** in her early twenties. She's

clearly well educated, and highly diplomatic no matter what the characters say.

Ekish, the half-orc **commoner** bartender, is tall and in surprisingly good shape. Her hair is up and out of her face, and she stays cool under the pressure of running a busy bar.

Objectives/Goals. Kell wants the party to deal with the rash of thefts that has been plaguing her company. She's desperate to prove herself as the new head of the family, and the missing supplies aren't helping her reputation. Despite this, she's still a shrewd businesswoman.

Ekish mostly wants to get a good tip, but she's concerned that all of the thefts and kidnappings are going to drive people to do business in Melvaunt.

What Do They Know? Ekish knows of a rash of spice thefts (which actually prevented her from mixing some of her signature drinks). She also knows of the disappearances of sages, alchemists, and the occasional young winner of the magic competition at the annual Magic and Gold Festival, but that's been going on for generations.

Kell knows that her shipments have been sporadically stolen, mostly spices and incense but also glass beads and silver trinkets, and even far more radical things like snake's tongues and gems. She also mentions in passing that talented alchemists and sages have been disappearing as well, but her focus is solely on the material loss.

When the party agrees to the mission, Kell will also offer up the following information:

- She knows that only some shipments have things taken—even shipments of gold bars have gone unmolested.
- The sailors on her fleet have told many different stories, but they all contain one key point: everyone fell asleep and when they woke up the supplies were gone. Nobody has been harmed.
- Some things are stolen directly from ships at the docks, while others disappear during their brief stay in warehouses.
- Whoever the thief is, they're very selective in what they take.
- She really isn't the best one to ask for information. Instead, she suggests the party talk to **CAPTAIN EBBE** or some of the sailors who have had things go missing from their ships.
- The Quickfinger sailors wear a specific uniform—a silvery-grey vest and maroon pants that mimic the colors of the Quickfinger crest.

Treasure & Rewards

Kell offers some gold to make the thefts stop.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

No combat is likely here. If the party decides to start combat, they will likely vanquish any foes easily. This will, however, activate the local mages' guild, which will send emissaries powerful enough to help the character(s) see the error of their ways.

EXPLORATION

The hotel is almost palpably buzzing with excitement over the festival, which starts tomorrow. Characters might choose to learn the rules of various gambling games.

SOCIAL

The NPCs are generally friendly, and none has an interest in provoking such obvious adventurers as the characters. Even the bandmates cool their argument when the customers enter.

Episode 2: A Matter of Perception

Estimated Duration: 80 minutes

Setting Description

Thentia is a portside town which relies on the docks for the vast majority of its commerce. The recent thefts have the community a bit on edge—and an air of suspicion lingers.

Story Objective A

The players need to gather information on the rash of thievery and history of kidnappings. Through the course of this episode, they will find the cliff face containing the gate to Etana's demiplane.

The party may visit from 2-4 scenes but ultimately will end on Scene F, which leads them to Episode 3.

Area Information

Thentia's docks are a maze, with all manner of ships swaying in the waves. People of every race bustle around, and seabirds wheel overhead. To the east and the east stretch massive limestone cliffs, craggy and unforgiving. To the west, what may have once been cliffs look to have tumbled into the Moonsea, resulting in visible hazards for one of the harbor's approaches.

Dimensions & Terrain. The docks themselves are massive, with big creaking ships every way you turn your head. The Quickfinger fleet has its own dock, clearly marked over the entrance.

Lighting. The sunlight here is harsh, reflecting off the sea and beating down on the docks. The dockworkers are all sweating, despite a faint cool breeze from off the ocean.

Scene A. Watchers

As the party passes, they overhear a group of three old men, clearly sailors, recounting stories of brave pilots who tried to navigate the eastern approach to the harbor.

Creatures/NPCs

CLIVE is a short and thin human **pirate bosun** with surprisingly muscled arms and leathery pale skin. Liver and sun spots dot his arms and face, but his face belies a keen intelligence.

NALOS is a portly triton **pirate bosun**, with a large gut and a sea-beaten mullet.

BILL is the oldest of the three. A human **pirate captain**, he says very little other than to grunt in agreement.

Objectives/Goals. This group of men gets together for coffee every week to relive old times and solve the world's issues better than the kids today could. If any PC is older than middle-aged, they will offer them a cup as well and treat them as part of the group. They'll tell stories of their glory days to just about anybody who'll listen.

What Do They Know? The old salts don't know much about the thefts and kidnappings, but they do know about the eastern approach to the harbor, which causes ships to run aground at night. Back when they ran ships, they'd go the extra distance to come in on the other side of the bay to avoid it.

- Even the most experienced captains could not navigate safely at night, inevitably running aground on unseen rocks.
- These days, most ships come into port during the day.
- If asked about the eastern cliff, they will point out a path from town to get to the top, noting that it was a popular place for the young people to go back in their day and may still be today.

Scene B. Sneakin'

If the party chooses to mount a stake-out to see if they can catch the culprit, play this scene. It can occur on a ship or in a warehouse, whichever is better for your story.

Captain Ebbe (human **pirate captain**) to whom Kell sent the party is supervising the unloading of his ship into a large warehouse in the middle of the dock. He and his clerk very carefully check off the cargo as it leaves the ship and enters the 300-foot by 30-foot warehouse.

This scene plays very differently depending on characters' abilities. If the characters do not spot the thief at any point, move quickly to another scene.

The **NIMBLEWRIGHT** is hiding invisibly behind boxes. Characters who thoroughly inspect the area must make a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the nimblewright. Those without the ability to see invisible creatures make the check at disadvantage. Those with truesight make the check at advantage.

If the party does not spot the nimblewright earlier in the night, on the second watch, it will make its move while still invisible. It moves quietly to a crate containing small boxes of spell components, grabs the crate, and uses its *cape of the mountebank* to cast *dimension door* all in one round. (It teleports to its safehouse under the docks nearby.)

Have the nimblewright make a Dexterity (Stealth) check (with advantage unless the character(s) on watch can see invisible creatures). Compare that with the passive Perception of the character or characters on watch. If any character's passive Perception beats the nimblewright Stealth result, roll initiative. Otherwise, the character is surprised. What they see is the crate being lifted slightly, followed by it disappearing into a puff of smoke.

If one or more of the PCs spot the nimblewright, it will attempt to use its *cape* to *dimension door* to the safehouse. If it is unable to do that, it will attempt to flee on foot, taking the Dash action (and giving the PCs tracks that require a successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check to follow). It will only attack if no other options remain. If it flees and believes it is unobserved, it will make its way to the cliff face (Scene F). If pursuers are close, it will flee to the safe house (Scene D).

If somehow captured and questioned, see below for objectives and what it knows.

If killed, a small, glowing speck rises from the Nimblewright and floats back to the foot of the Cliff (Episode 3). The Nimblewright's *cape of the mountebank* catches the characters' eyes.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. If the encounter takes place in the hold of a ship, it is stacked to the top with crates and barrels. The floor is the flat bottom of the ship, sloping gently upward at the edges. Access is via a ladder through a hatch in the deck above. A small crate serves as a makeshift desk for the clerk who checks off the cargo as it goes.

If the encounter takes place in a warehouse, the shipment containing the crate of interest is mixed with other shipments in a large, low warehouse. There is a standing desk at one end with a shipping ledger.

A DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a near-invisible *glyph* on the underside of the crate/standing desk. It radiates conjuration magic. Characters who inspect the desk but fail to notice the *glyph* or who for another reason trigger the *glyph* summon an **air elemental** which will fight to the

death anyone who did not trigger the *glyph*. (This is the emergency alarm installed by the mages' guild to fight off thieves.)

Lighting. The only source of light in the ship's hold is the hatch. In the warehouse, there are a handful of high, shallow windows.

Creatures/NPCs

Objectives/Goals. The Nimblewright is sentient, moreso than most constructs as a result of its long lifespan and powerful creator, and while it obeys the orders of Etana unquestioningly it has developed an almost fiercely protective instinct for Bartholomew, Etana's son.

What Does It Know? The Nimblewright knows where Etana's portal is, why Etana is doing what he's doing, and how to get in. It will die before doing anything that would help someone do Bartholomew harm, but it will not lie. It cannot speak, but understands Common, both orally and written, and it can write. If it does write, it writes in flowery, archaic language.

Scene C. Fight

The party stumble on a fight that's about to break out on the docks. Other sailors and dockworkers have cleared a wide circle. **ROLLIN**, a sailor for another fleet, is sure that **SOBEK**, a Quickfinger sailor, kidnapped his nephew **FLINTAN**.

Sobek has a strong alibi and Rollin has no evidence other than this distrust of chromatic dragonborn. If a fight breaks out, make it clear to the players that Sobek is innocent. If they defuse the situation, Sobek thanks the party for their help and gives them information.

Creatures/NPCs

Rollin is a half-elf **pirate first mate** with tattoos on every visible inch of his body.

Sobek is a green-scaled dragonborn sailor (use **bandit** statistics) with an ornate prosthetic arm and leg. The prosthetics are enchanted to move with full control.

Objectives/Goals. Rollin wants someone to blame for the disappearance of his nephew, and he's found Sobek. Rollin himself is unsure whether Sobek is to blame, but he's an easy scapegoat. Sobek wants to prove himself innocent and escape a beatdown.

What Do They Know? Rollin knows his nephew is missing, and that as an alchemic prodigy he was at high risk for a kidnapping. Sobek knows that he's innocent, but he witnessed a kidnapping a few months back. If he is protected by the party in the

encounter, or if they defuse the situation, he will divulge the following information:

- He was in the dockside market when he saw a kidnapping three months ago
- The victim was a kitchen witch named Trill who ran a bakery stall
- The kidnapping occurred around midnight
- He heard the sound of footsteps, but they were a little... off somehow. (DM note: Nimblewrights are made of wood)
- The kitchen witch was grabbed by someone invisible, struggled for a few seconds, and then disappeared in a puff of smoke.

Scene D. Safehouse

Prerequisites

If the party follows the nimblewright to the safehouse or extensively explores the easternmost side of the pier, play this scene. **Alternatively**, as the party explores a finger-pier at the eastern side of the docks, a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 15 or above spots fresh footprints in the sand below, disappearing under the pier.

The footprints lead to a fishing shack which has a metal trapdoor, which unlocks with a successful DC 15 lockpick check and leads to a ladder.

If he hears them coming, the nimblewright is prepared and will hide on the opposite side of the room. Characters can attempt Intelligence (Investigation) checks (DC 16) to spot the 2 two explosive *glyphs of warding*, with the check being made with advantage after the first *glyph* is triggered. A creature triggering a *glyph* takes 6d8 lightning damage.

If possible, the nimblewright will hide. If discovered, he will Disengage and Dash up the ladder (see Scene F: Chase). If questioned, see below for objectives and what it knows.

If killed, a small, glowing speck rises from the nimblewright and floats back to the foot of the Cliff (Episode 3). The nimblewright's *cape of the mountebank* catches the characters' eyes.

Area Information

The safehouse is small and highly utilitarian. A map of the docks and cliffs is pinned to one wall, with markings circling the warehouses that have been targeted.

Dimensions & Terrain. The safehouse is under an old fishing shack tucked under the easternmost pier. Around it is a sandy beach. The shack under the pier is full of rotting rope, broken oars, and tattered nets.

The safehouse is accessed by a trapdoor and is only a single room of 10'x12'.

Lighting. Small flickering orbs provide just enough light to see, although reading would be hard.

Creatures/NPCs

The nimblewright is here.

Objectives. The nimblewright is sentient, moreso than most constructs as a result of its long lifespan and powerful creator, and while it obeys the orders of Etana unquestioningly it has developed an almost fiercely protective instinct for Bartholmew, Etana's son.

What Does It Know? The Nimblewright knows where Etana's portal is, why Etana is doing what he's doing, and how to get in. It will die before doing anything that would help someone do Bartholomew harm, but it will not lie. It cannot speak, but understands Common, both orally and written, and it can write. If it does write, it writes in flowery, archaic language.

Scene E. Clifftop

Prerequisites

If the party explores the clifftop near where the ships can't navigate at night, play this scene.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The path to the clifftop begins on the eastern side of Thentia farthest from the bay, climbing through grassy foothills and up a rocky path to a plateau at the top of the cliff. The plateau itself has long grass and bushes, with many paths branching off the main path. The cliff face is sheer at the top, with a small beach 150 feet below at the bottom.

Lighting. Moonlight or sunlight, depending on time of day.

Creatures/NPCs

If the party visits the cliffs at night, there is 50% chance that any spur off the main trail will lead to a pair of young Thentians staring at the stars together.

Objectives/Goals. The young people (**commoners**) do not want their parents to find out they were out here. They also want to be left alone.

What Do They Know? A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check will have the young person reveal that, if you look long enough, you will see the stars move, sort of like vision gets distorted when intense heat rises off

an object. If the party has seen the beach below the cliff, the young people will say that nobody goes there because there are so many rocks offshore that you can't swim or take even the smallest of boats. With a DC 20 Persuasion, they will reveal that about once per generation someone has tried to get there, but nobody has made it back alive.

A passive Wisdom (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) score of 15 or greater will cause the characters to notice an unusual shimmering of stars, in which whole bands of stars seem to gently wave. If the party have been told of this phenomenon by the young people, the DC is 10.

A character who inspects the beach below with a spyglass will see unusual footprints and strangely dressed bodies.

If the party attempts to rappel down the cliffs, they are buffeted by wind and enter Episode 3, Scene A.

Scene F. Chase

Prerequisites

This scene is triggered either in specific circumstances outlined above, when the party has hit a dead end in their exploration, or when there is **fifteen minutes** real-world time left in this episode.

The party spot the nimblewright carrying a small crate. Unless something specific has happened to override this, the nimblewright will be 250 feet ahead of the closest party member. Use the chase rules on pages 252-255 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Characters who follow the nimblewright far enough move on to Episode 3, Scene A.

If the nimblewright is killed, a small, glowing speck rises from the nimblewright and floats back to the foot of the Cliff. The nimblewright's *cape of the mountebank* catches the characters' eyes.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The chase may begin in the narrow alleys of Thentia, then continues out of town and along shallow water for 300 feet along a cliff face to a beach area. This shallow water is rocky, slippery and never less than knee-deep. The beach is sand as it joins the water but has trees and shrubs where it joins the cliff face.

Lighting. Moonlight or sunlight, depending on time of day.

Creatures/NPCs

Objectives. The nimblewright is sentient, moreso than most constructs as a result of its long lifespan and powerful creator, and while it obeys the orders of Etana unquestioningly it has developed an almost fiercely protective instinct for Bartholomew, Etana's son.

What Does It Know? The Nimblewright knows where Etana's portal is, why Etana is doing what he's doing, and how to get in. It will die before doing anything that would help someone do Bartholomew harm, but it will not lie. It cannot speak, but understands Common, both orally and written, and it can write. If it does write, it writes in flowery, archaic language.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The entire episode can succeed without combat. If the party encounters the scene with the two almost-fighting sailors, neither of them wants to provoke seasoned adventurers. Similarly, when the characters spot the nimblewright, it chooses combat last.

EXPLORATION

The docks and their environment are rough-and-tumble, full of interesting characters and seedy establishments. The nimblewright might be interesting to track as well. DMs should take care not to let exploration take too much time, though, so there is time for Episode 3.

SOCIAL

All of the clues in this episode can be garnered through social interaction and possibly some exploration. Of course, any social interaction with the nimblewright will be tense, awkward, and completely in writing. He will give away as little as possible

Episode 3: A Matter of Perspective

Estimated Duration: 2 hours

Story Objective

The party finds their way to Etana's world and must decide whether and how to solve a cursed mystery.

Scene A. Not Quite a Welcome Mat

The party may approach the eastern cliff face for various reasons. They may try to fly or rappel down from the clifftop. They may chase the nimblewright through the shallows. They may rent a boat or swim.

Regardless, the approach is difficult.

Characters who go towards the cliffs through the water must attempt a DC20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check for each round they are in the water. On a failed check, characters must attempt a DC18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage and being pushed 10 feet back on a failed save or half damage but maintaining position on a successful save.

Characters who are flying or rappelling down are caught in sudden wind gusts over that same stretch of water and must attempt a DC20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check for each round they are above the water or beach. On a failed check, characters must attempt a DC18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage and being pushed 10 feet back on a failed save or half damage but maintaining position on a successful save.

At the edge of the beach, each character must attempt a DC 18 Wisdom save against *compulsion*. On a failure, they walk away from the demiplane entrance. They fully rationalize their decision and are not aware that they were compelled.

When they get within 50 feet, they spot 8 corpses at the base of the cliff. If they examine them, a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check shows that the bodies have been dead from anywhere from a week to several years, and that they died of natural causes at a very, very old age. Their clothing is unusual. Anyone with proficiency in History knows that some of these bodies are dressed in clothes that were in style hundreds of years ago, including at least one of the bodies that seems to have died only recently. A *speak with dead* spell can work, and the corpse will answer very briefly but truthfully.

- In answering, Etana is referred to as “the master” and Bartholomew as “the poor boy”.
- They were working to find a cure for the poor boy.
- She/he/they doesn't remember much about life before the master.

- The last thing that she/he/they remember is the master setting them free.

After a round or two, the party spot the nimblewright (or its tracks) up a narrow path, entering a cave. Characters attempting the path on foot must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stay on the ledge. Those who score 18 or greater maintain their footing and reach the mouth of a cave that is hidden from below. Those who score 11-17 fall prone and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. Those who score under 10 fall prone onto the rocks below, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage, and must re-attempt the climb.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The sand at the cliff face is soft, and the cliffs stretch up 150 feet. The cliffs themselves are mostly sheer and slightly crumbly, made of an off-white limestone.

As the party approaches the cliff face, allow any Druids or Rangers in the party to notice that the plants here are not quite right—they're in the wrong season. If it's summer, they're already losing their leaves and putting out berries, if it's winter they're flowering, etc.

Lighting. If it's daytime, the sunlight beats down. If it's nighttime, all they have are the moon and stars. Characters can see basic shapes, but no colors or details. The cliffs are thrown into sharp relief by the moonlight and appear to almost glow. At night a passive Wisdom (Nature or Survival) score of 15 or greater will cause the characters to notice an unusual shimmering of stars, in which whole bands of stars seem to gently wave. If the party have been told of this phenomenon by the young people, the DC is 10.

Scene B. Into the Unknown

The steep path leads to an opening in the cliff that looks like an animal's cave.

Area 0. Cave and gate

As the first character enters a low opening, they see what appears to be an animal den with room for only a rag cat. The back wall is illusory, and as soon as an of the party pierces the illusion a spell is triggered, and a voice booms out “THIS PLACE IS NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH. TURN BACK IF THOU VALUEST THINE LIVES.”

Beyond the illusory wall is a 40' deep by 30' wide cave with runes forming an archway in the solid rock on the opposite wall, shimmering with arcane energy. Flanking the archway on either side are two statues (**stone golems**) seemingly carved out of the stone of the cave itself.

Any character going more than five feet past the illusory wall into the main cave on foot (including climbing) has a fifty percent chance to trigger a *glyph of warding* in the following order every 10 feet. Characters following directly behind each other will not set off additional glyphs. An Intelligence (Investigation) check with a DC of 18 will reveal the *glyphs* on the floor, walls, and ceiling, but there is no clear path to avoid them without flying or levitating.

- **Glyph 1** a defective *glyph of warding* that does 2 thunder damage to any creature in a 20-foot radius.
- **Glyph 2** a *glyph of warding* that does 6d8 lightning damage to any creature in a 20-foot radius, half on a successful DC 18 Dexterity saving throw.
- **Glyph 3** activates the **stone golems**.

Once past the glyphs on the floor, walls, and ceiling, activating the gate requires touching four of the arcane runes in a particular sequence. If the characters have observed the nimblewright activate the gate, they can remember the sequence. If not, the character who is attempting the sequence can attempt the sequence at random and will eventually succeed.

Characters with proficiency in Intelligence (Arcana) can easily see that two of the runes are glyphs of warding that each do 6d8 lightning damage to any creature within a 20-foot radius, half on a successful DC 18 saving throw. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals sawdust in the four runes used to open the gate.

Each glyph is triggered by being touched by anything other than a nimblewright or piece of wood.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The cave appears to be the sort of small cave an animal might choose to use as a den, but the back is created by an illusion that does not hold up to inspection. Once past the illusion, the party sees that it is large enough to stand in, with magical runes on an archway 40 feet away on the far wall. The space within the archway itself shimmers slightly, almost like silk in the sunlight.

Lighting. Only dim light from the cave mouth.

Area 1. Entryway

As the party enters the demiplane the air around them becomes thick and viscous, and they briefly

struggle for breath. The fountain ahead of them appears to be frozen mid-trickle. After just a few seconds, they breathe more easily and the water in the fountain resumes a normal pace, slowly at first and then quickly coming up to speed.

On the wall behind the fountain is a clock that appears to be stuck. Even the second hand does not tick. (Nothing the party does can “unstuck” the clock.)

There is a solid wall behind them, with no indication there had been an archway.

Area Information

This area stands in stark contrast to the cave the party has just left:

Dimensions & Terrain. The floor is white tile, with high ceilings and smooth white walls. The fountain in the center of the room is enchanted to run noiselessly, and illusory fish dart in its depths. The stopped clock is the only other feature in the room.

There is one visible door on the east end of the north wall. A secret door in the west end of the north wall can be spotted with a successful DC 21 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Lighting. The lighting is bright, almost clinical.

Area 2. Lounge

The secret door leads from the entryway to the Lounge.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A few mismatched chairs dot the room, and an artificial fireplace is sunken into one wall. There are bookshelves along the walls are full, and any Wizard will be able to tell that, much like everything else in here, the books range from ancient to practically new, modern bindings.

Many books deal with the healing arts and crafting of healing potions and poultices. Others deal with the nature of time.

Lighting. The lighting is softer, but still unpleasant.

Area 3. Holosuite Lite

This is Bartholomew's recreation area.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The door opens up onto a forest glen with a cheerful brook passing through. Past the trees is a meadow, full of flowers and butterflies. Even characters without a proficiency in Nature will notice that nothing is dead or sick, and no mosquitoes or wasps are here, only butterflies and songbirds and perhaps a few small mammals. Those

with Nature proficiency notice and flowers that usually bloom in quite different seasons are in full bloom right next to each other. It is a sanitized version of nature.

Lighting. The lighting is dappled daylight, with a fake sun that never quite gets too bright to look at. It's pleasantly warm without getting too hot in the sun or too cold in the shade.

Creatures/NPCs

If the party has encountered him already, Bartholomew will excitedly follow them here and point out his favorite places to sit and play. If not, this is one good place to meet him and **TRILL**.

Objectives/Goals. Bartholomew is excited to see newcomers and wants to know all about how Thentia has changed since Trill got here. He wishes his father would talk to him more.

Trill wants the bakery back, but they also want to protect Bartholomew. They know that he isn't at fault for the sins of his father and will defend him against anyone who criticizes or threatens the poor boy.

What Do They Know? Bartholomew knows that his father created this space for him, but barely remembers what the real outside feels like. He knows he's sick and that his dad is trying to help him get better. He likes Trill better than his last babysitter.

Trill has only been here for one day of inside time. Despite this, **MARWYNN** has told them the basics of this area: it's a demiplane in which time passes differently than in the outside world, they cannot leave, and their only reason for being here is to cure Bartholomew. They also know that Bartholomew is fated to die, and that in his desperation the master created this place to try to reverse that fate. If asked, Trill knows the master's name is Etana. Any character hearing that name should make an Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Religion) check. On 12 or greater, give the players Appendix 4, Handout 2.

Area 4. Bedroom

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. Soft carpeting and the walls are a warm pale yellow. Stuffed animals overcrowd high up shelves that no child could reach, and an ornately carved bed sits opposite to the door. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals runes worked into the carving of the bedframe, and anyone with proficiency in Arcana or Medicine recognizes these as healing runes that take away pain.

A small teleportation circle is under the bed. Characters who specifically search under the bed may

spot it with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Its sigil sequence cannot be discerned.

Lighting. The lighting here is softer, with a warmer glow than the entryway outside. A gently swaying orb emits light from the center of the ceiling, which has been painted to look like the sky.

Creatures/NPCs

If Bartholomew is here, rather than Area 3, he is sitting on the floor, playing with his toys. He wears a soft-looking simple smock and looks up without fear at the party.

Objectives/Goals. He is excited to see newcomers and wants to know all about how Thentia has changed since Trill got here. He wishes his father would talk to him more.

What Do They Know? He knows that he's in a place that works differently than the rest of the world, but he doesn't understand the concept of a demiplane. He also knows he's sick but is unaware of the lengths to which his father has gone to try to cure him.

Area 5. Bathroom

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. A basic bathroom, with a toilet, sink and bathtub. The bathtub is recessed into the ground to make it easier for Bartholomew to get in and out, and the toilet has grab bars.

Lighting. The lighting is softer, with a warmer glow than the entryway outside. A gently swaying orb emits light from the center of the ceiling.

Area 6. Hallway

The single door that is visible from the entryway leads to this hallway.

Halfway down the hallway is a *glyph of warding* that can be spotted with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Characters who have triggered any of the glyphs in the cave make this check at advantage. If triggered, the glyph does 6d8 lightning damage, half on a successful DC 18 Dexterity saving throw.

At the end of the hall is a door to the kitchen.

Area 7. Kitchen

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. The kitchen would be almost cozy if it weren't so lonely. Patchwork

appliances crowd the walls, and an island in the center holds cutting boards and mixing bowls.

Lighting. Trill has placed cheese cloth over some of the lamps lighting the room, making it less harsh than the entryway.

Creatures/NPCs

If not encountered in Area 3, Trill is standing in front of the oven, baking biscuits. When they see the adventurers, their face falls, saddened by the assumption that Etana has claimed yet more victims.

Objectives/Goals. Trill wants to get back their bakery, but they also want to protect Bartholomew. They know that he isn't at fault for the sins of his father and will defend him against anyone who criticizes him.

What Do They Know? They've only been here for one day of inside time. Despite this, Marwynn has told them the basics of this area: it's a demiplane in which time passes differently than the outside world, they cannot leave, and their only reason for being here is to cure Bartholomew. They also know that Bartholomew is fated to die, and that in his desperation the master created this place to try to reverse that fate.

If asked, Trill knows the master's name is Etana. Any character hearing that name should make a DC 12 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Religion) check. On a success, give the players Appendix 5: Handout 2.

Area 8. Mage Lab

If the party goes through the kitchen, they come into the mage lab.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. Mismatched glassware covers every flat surface in this room, with diagrams of the human body pinned on walls.

Lighting. The lighting here is harsh, much like the entryway of the demiplane.

Creatures/NPCs

Marwynn is here, experimenting on a sample of Bartholomew's blood. She turns to see the party with an expression somewhere between exhausted and exasperated.

There are several (3d4) other human and elf **mages** at work here, but they barely look up when the party enters. Marwynn will intercede so the rest of them can keep working.

Objectives/Goals. Marwynn is fully committed to curing Bartholomew, but not for any humanitarian reason. She's always been hungry for knowledge and

has become fixated on solving the one problem she can: curing that poor boy. She also has more sympathy for Etana than any of the other NPCs.

What Do They Know? She's the longest surviving mage here aside from Etana and has the most knowledge about this place. If the players ask a question, she has the answer. **She also lets it slip that Etana is planning to kidnap all of the magic users at the Magic and Gold Festival in a desperate bid to save his son before time runs out.**

While Marwynn always refers to him as "the master", she knows his name is Etana. Any character hearing that name should make a DC 12 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Religion) check. On a success, give the players Appendix 5, Players' Handout 2.

Treasure

On a shelf is a *potion of vitality*.

Area 9. Bathroom

It's just another bathroom.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. Several toilets line one wall, and an enchanted waterfall faces them on the other as a makeshift shower and sink fixture in one.

Lighting. The lighting is uncomfortably bright in here.

Area 10. Sleeping Quarters

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. Seven beds are crammed into this room, three of which currently have bedding on them. There's just enough room to walk between the beds. Under Trill's bed, there's a sketchbook filled with drawings of their parents and childhood home as well as an *elixir of health*. Marwynn's bed is neatly made, and nothing of her old life remains. Flintan's bed is occupied by **FLINTAN**, who sleeps unless the party wakes him.

Lighting. The lighting here is softer, with a warmer glow than the entryway outside. A gently swaying orb emits light from the center of the ceiling, which has been painted to look like the sky.

Creatures/NPCs

Flintan sleeps under the covers on his bed, and when woken up he becomes scared. It has only been a few minutes since he was abducted, "inside time", and he is terrified.

Objectives/Goals. He wants to get out, by any means possible.

What Do They Know? He doesn't know much of anything other than the fact that he was abducted by the nimblewright and brought here.

Area 11. Clock Room

This room emphasizes Etana's fascination with time and links the rest of his lair to his office.

Area Information

Dimensions & Terrain. This room is loud. Ticking sounds fill the room, and the walls are with clocks from all ages of civilization, all hooked up to each other in an amalgam of anachronistic chaos. Hourglasses power steampunk grandfathers that in turn power cuckoo clocks. In the floor is an embedded clock face that glows. The floor clock conceals a **teleportation circle**, which is easily spotted and activates merely by stepping inside of it.

Lighting. The lighting here is softer, emanating from the clock face in the floor.

Map 2. Etana's Study

When the party activates the teleportation circle in area 9, they are teleported to Etana's study and office. (See Map 2.)

When the party approaches, the "Etana" behind the desk (part of a *programmed illusion* triggered by anyone unknown to Etana using the teleportation circle) begins a speech. (As a programmed illusion, it will give this exact speech regardless of interruption.)

"So, you've found your way in. What do you think of my little hideaway? It's taken me many centuries to build what you see today. And yet despite my years I cannot do the one thing that matters most. See how little sand remains?" [He gestures towards an ornate hourglass carved with ancient Infernal runes. The top half is practically empty.]

"When the last grain falls, my little boy shall die and I shall wander the earth, truly as alone as Levistus had planned. My boy has done nothing to deserve that fate. You may brand me evil, kill me even, but spare my son."

After the speech, the Etana illusion looks down again at his bowl.

A character who interacts physically becomes aware of the illusion, as does a character with truesight. If the interaction is aggressive, Etana's simulacrum (heretofore hidden by the illusion) will

move to the edge of the 30 cube of the illusion and activate a *glyph of warding* that stores *prismatic spray*. (The *glyph* will not be seen as it is covered by the illusion.) The cone will center on the aggressive character.

If the characters do not act aggressively, Etana's simulacrum will emerge from the illusion after the programmed illusion has made its speech. He will not attack first, unless one of the party members insults or threatens his Bartholomew.

Should the players choose to examine the hourglass, give them HANDOUT 1, which contains the inscription. Etana will translate accurately if nobody in the group speaks Infernal. If one character tries to pick it up, it lifts but remains perfectly perpendicular to the floor no matter what. Two characters working as a team can cause it to budge slightly from its perpendicular orientation. (Etana himself (nor his simulacrum) cannot touch the hourglass without causing Bartholomew pain.)

A character who moves to enter the added room with the **time mechanism** without Etana's simulacrum will trigger a *glyph of warding* that stores a *wall of force* which completely covers the opening between the two rooms. (A character using their action to investigate will spot the *glyph* on a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.)

If the wall is activated, there is a fifty percent chance the character is pushed to the side of the wall with the **time mechanism** and a fifty percent chance the character is pushed into the main room.

If a character enters the time mechanism without Etana's simulacrum, they will encounter an **iron golem** which is charged with protecting the mechanism. (DM tip: this is intended to be a very difficult battle but not automatically deadly, so adjust the golem's hit points accordingly. If all but one character are on the opposite side of a wall of force, make this a **clay golem** instead.)

Dimensions & Terrain. This is a long, palatial hall, more like a cathedral than a room. It's 120 feet long and 30 feet wide, with an 35x35 added on area to the left of Etana's desk.

Etana's desk is at the far end of the room from the teleportation circle. It's got a huge, bright, stained-glass window behind it, so tall, intricate and bright that characters might at first miss the average-looking man seated at the desk looking at a scrying bowl. A large hourglass sits on a corner of the desk. Most of the sand has fallen to the bottom and the grains left in the top fall very slowly down.

The add-on room to his left contains the Rube Goldberg-esque clockwork time mechanism that stretches several stories up. Stairs wind in and out of

the mechanism, resulting in a 300-foot trek to get to the top.

Lighting. Desk lamps light one end of the room, and simulated windows bring in simulated sunlight. The stained-glass window behind the desk seems to be lit from behind with bright sunlight

Creatures/NPCs

A *programmed illusion* includes “Etana” sitting behind his desk watching a scrying bowl. In the scrying bowl is a vision of Bartholomew. He looks up at the party and folds his hands, greeting them.

The nimblewright, if not captured or killed earlier, is behind his master. However, he will not be visible due to the programmed illusion triggered when the party enters the room.

Objectives/Goals. Etana wants to cure his son, and he won’t let anything get in the way of that. He would love it if these adventurers would help him, but he’s fully prepared to eliminate them should they threaten Bartholomew’s life. If they threaten him, he will first try to persuade them to help but will respond with force if needed. In any event, the physical “Etana” in the room is actually a simulacrum of the real Etana, who scrys on his office from another part of the pocket dimension. If the party attacks the simulacrum, attempts to break the hourglass, or attempts to break the time mechanism, the real Etana will use a teleportation circle to get to Bartholomew’s side and then teleport away.

Treasure

In a desk drawer is *potion of invulnerability* and an *elixir of health*.

End Game

High-level parties will likely have creative “solutions” to the problem they are faced with. Generally, a benign solution will require teamwork and some skill. A more aggressive solution is also possible. Some examples follow:

Holding Bartholomew Hostage

Etana will stop at nothing if Bartholomew is threatened in any real way. The party will likely find themselves fighting the Etana simulacrum, Marwynn, Trill, and possibly Etana himself. (Etana would definitely bring his **iron golem** to any fight he is personally involved in.

Flipping the Hourglass

Three or more party members, working as a team, may flip the hourglass. Three successful DC 15 skill checks are required to flip the hourglass. Religion must be one of the checks, and it may only be used once. Two other checks may come from the following categories:

Arcana or History
Nature or Survival
Performance

Healing Bartholomew

Three or more party members, working as a team, may administer healing, restoration, or curse removal to Bartholomew. While no spell or class feature can eliminate the ages-old devil’s curse, in combination these spells and class features can cause some grains of sand to float back up into the top of the hourglass, temporarily extending Bartholomew’s life.

Damaging the Time Mechanism

If the party is somehow able to seriously damage the **time mechanism**, the pocket dimension will begin to collapse. At the end of five rounds, all who remain in the pocket dimension are expelled onto the beach. (The real Etana and Bartholomew will almost certainly have fled.) Anyone but the characters, Flintan, and Trill will immediately become withered corpses.

Defeating Etana

Etana is less a villain than a tragic corrupted hero—more Dracula from the Castlevania series than Dracula from Stoker. However, some parties may decide to attack. Generally, they will only have contact with the simulacrum, which of course they don’t realize isn’t the real Etana.

Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

If the party helps Bartholomew in some way, they earn Etana’s gratitude. He will allow them to leave peacefully, agree to stop kidnapping and stealing, and agree to move his pocket dimension with its time-warping side effects to another plane. If they haven’t taken the *Cape of the Mountebank* from the Nimblewright, Etana gives them one, along with a *potion of vitality*, a *potion of invulnerability*, and an *elixir of health* if the party has not stolen them already. He’s perfected the creation of these and is easily able to spare them for such helpful friends.

If the party waits for more than an hour, Etana will go forward with his plan and kidnap all of the magic users at the Magic and Gold Festival.

If the party angers or attacks Etana or his simulacrum, they will likely find themselves expelled from the pocket dimension and on the beach and spot a *Cape of the Mountebank* snagged on a bush. Etana will plan his next move and each member of the party will earn the Story Award: **Etana’s Enmity**.

If the party makes Etana leave somehow, they will earn the Story Award: **Friend of Fastfingers** once a month goes by with no thefts.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Combat is not inevitable, but it is certainly possible. The stone golems that guard the entrance can be avoided if the glyph is not triggered. Inside the demiplane, no NPC is spoiling for a fight, but they will defend themselves and Bartholomew.

EXPLORATION

The approach to the cave was designed by Etana to keep curious people away, so exploring the area is actually as hazardous as the villagers say it is. The demiplane is designed to slowly reveal that Etana is messing around with time. Figuring out how to help Bartholomew AND keep the town safe should reward creativity.

SOCIAL

The party should meet some interesting NPCs in the demiplane. Bartholmew is intended to be a sympathetic innocent, and even Etana (through his simulacrum) is not a cardboard villain.

Rewards

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

Character Rewards

The characters earn the following rewards:

Advancement

Upon successfully **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players that the amount of gold that their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

Gold

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

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

Magic Item(s)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix 6**:

- *Cape of the Montebank*
- *Potion of Vitality*
- *Elixir of Health*
- *Potion of Invulnerability*

Dungeon Master Rewards

For running this adventure, one of your character gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

Tier	GP Earned
1	80 gp
2	240 gp
3	1,600 gp
4	6,000 gp

You may also complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

NPCs

- **Kell Quickfingers Swashbuckler** who has recently ascended to the leadership of the Quickfingers trade family in Thentia. a well-dressed, diminutive human **swashbuckler** in her early twenties. She's clearly well educated, and highly diplomatic no matter what the characters say, but Kell cloaks a spine of steel behind an easygoing manner. Sailors and dockworkers who have crossed her can attest to a side of her personality few have seen.

Personality: Stern, calm

Ideal: Get it done

Bond: Quickfinger trade family

Flaw: Doesn't forget an insult

- **Etana (Eh-TAH-nuh) Archmage** who has gone from generally lawful and good to more chaotic and neutral as he focuses solely on saving his son. He has no other priority, as he's been at it for 1,000 years. The ends justify the means for him, as he finds this quest infinitely more noble and meaningful than anything the people he kidnaps could ever hope to accomplish on Faerûn. The "Etana" that the party encounters is actually a simulacrum.

Personality: Calm, calculating

Ideal: The noble are to rule

Bond: His son

Flaw: The end justifies the means

- **Bartholomew (Bar-THAH-luh-mew)** 8-year-old kid (**commoner**) with papery skin and dark circles under his eyes, and brittle hair that looks almost feathery. He's still developmentally a child, even with all the things he knows from the various mages and alchemists his father has brought in over the years. Knowledge doesn't equal wisdom here. He has a limited understanding of how things work, and lots of questions for the party about the outside, with simplistic explanations and responses when questioned. Magical, vaguely steampunk leg braces allow for walking.

Personality: Smarty Pants

Ideal: Curiosity killed the cat

Bond: His Father

Flaw: Believes he already knows most things

- **Marwynn (MAR-win)** Human **evoker** who came into Etana's dimension about 500 years ago in "outside time". (DM TIP: you might consider using antiquated English to convey this) Seems tired and beaten down. Knows that the reason for all the new abductions is that several of the old team all tried to make a run for it roughly three and a half months ago outside time, and she hasn't seen them since. Knows a little of Etana's backstory and thus has more sympathy for him than the others. Also knows that the time inside the demiplane doesn't necessarily correlate linearly to the time outside the plane— i.e. one minute inside could be an hour outside, or a day.

Personality: Matter of fact, curt, and tired

Ideal: Knowledge is the key!

Bond: Work is everything

Flaw: Can't see beyond the goal of the work

- **Trill (TRILL)** The kitchen witch (**apprentice wizard**) that Sobek saw get abducted. A hill gnome, affectionate for the boy, but they don't trust Marwynn. Been there three months ago outside time, one day inside time. They've never seen Etana. Trill acts as a babysitter for the kid, knows that his favorite food is owlbear pancakes, and makes him little clay figurines out of flour.

Personality: Motherly and nurturing

Ideal: The rock of stability

Bond: Caring for Bartholomew

Flaw: Doesn't take no for an answer

- **Flintan (FLIN-tahn)** Rollin's abducted nephew, a young human **mage** older than Bartholomew by several years, but younger than all the other mages. Mostly just scared— he's the most recent abductee. For him, seems like just minutes since he was taken from the streets of Thentia and brought to the pocket dimension by the Nimblewright.

Personality: Curious and a jokester

Ideal: Everything now!

Bond: Rollin is like a father

Flaw: It is important to consider all the possibilities

Locations

- **Etana's Demiplane** Time here moves out of sync with the outside world, resulting in massive fluctuations in relative time.

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Air Elemental

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)

Speed 0 ft., fly 90 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poison, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft. Passive Perception 10

Languages Auran

Challenge 5

Air 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:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Whirlwind (Recharge4-6). Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 15 (3d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage and is flung up to 20 feet away from the elemental in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone. If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't flung away or knocked prone.

Apprentice Wizard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 1/4

Spellcasting. The apprentice is an 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mending, prestidigitation*
1st Level (2 slots): *burning hands, disguise self, shield*

Actions

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

Archmage

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

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

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Any six languages

Challenge 12

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

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

Cantrips (at will): *Fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *Detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor*,*
magic missile
2nd level (3 slots): *Detect thoughts*, *mirror image*,
misty step
3rd level (3 slots): *Counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *Banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin**
5th level (3 slots): *Cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*
6th level (1 slot): *Globe of invulnerability*
7th level (1 slot): *Teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *Mind blank**
9th level (1 slot): *Time stop*

*The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat.

Actions

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

Etana's simulacrum

Etana's simulacrum, whom the party will meet and believe to be Etana, is an Archmage with the following changes: It has 74 Hit Points and the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *Fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *Absorb elements*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *Detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *Counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *Banishment*, *dimension door*, *stoneskin**
5th level (3 slots): *Cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*
6th level (1 slot): *Globe of invulnerability*
7th level (1 slot): *Teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *Mind blank**
9th level (1 slot): *Time stop*

* The simulacrum will have cast these on itself before combat.

As a simulacrum, when it reaches 0 Hit Points it reverts to snow, which melts instantly.

Bandit

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 1/8

Actions

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 0

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage

Evoker

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Any four languages

Challenge 9

Spellcasting. The evoker is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The evoker has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt**, *light**, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost**

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands**, *mage armor*, *magic missile**

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

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

4th level (3 slots): *ice storm**, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's Hand**, *cone of cold**

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning**, *wall of ice**

*Evocation spell

Sculpt Spells. When the evoker casts an evocation spell that forces creatures it can see to make a saving throw, it can choose a number of them equal to 1+ the spell's level. These creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell. If a successful save means a chosen creature would take half damage from the spell, it instead takes no damage from it.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage or 3 (1d8 - 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Iron Golem

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances Fire, Poison, Psychic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 16

Fire Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

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

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 7) slashing damage.

Poison Breath (Recharge 6). The golem exhales poisonous gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Mage

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Any four languages

Challenge 6

Spellcasting. The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *Fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*

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

2nd level (3 slots): *Misty step, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *Counterspell, fireball, fly*

4th level (3 slots): *Greater invisibility, ice storm*

5th level (1 slots): *Cone of cold*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Pirate Bosun

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +3

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2

Cargo Hauler. The bosun has advantage on Strength checks.

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Actions

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

Hook. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, +5 to reach, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13).

Pirate Captain

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +4

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 2

Flourish. The captain adds its Charisma modifier to the damage roll for its longsword attacks (included in the attack).

Sea Legs. The captain has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes two attacks: one with its hand crossbow and one with its longsword.

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

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Shape Up, Ye Dog (2/Day). Whenever a friendly creature within 30 ft. of the captain that can hear it misses with an attack, the captain can yell perilous threats to allow that creature to reroll the attack roll.

Pirate First Mate

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 26 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +3

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The first mate makes two attacks with its longsword.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands. If the target is a creature, the first mate can choose to deal no damage with the attack to disarm the target. The target must succeed a DC 14 saving throw or drop one item it is holding on the ground.

Nimblewright

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish

Damage Immunities Poison

Challenge 4

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

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

Repairable. As long as it has at least 1 hit point remaining, the Nimblewright regains 1 hit point when a mending spell is cast on it.

Sure-Footed. The Nimblewright has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

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

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

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

Reactions

Parry. The Nimblewright adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Nimblewright must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Stone Golem

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (Natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances Poison, Psychic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 10

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

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Slow (Recharge 5-6). The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 ft. of it. Each target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, a target can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its

turn. In addition, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. These effects last for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Swashbuckler

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

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 3

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

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

Actions

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

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

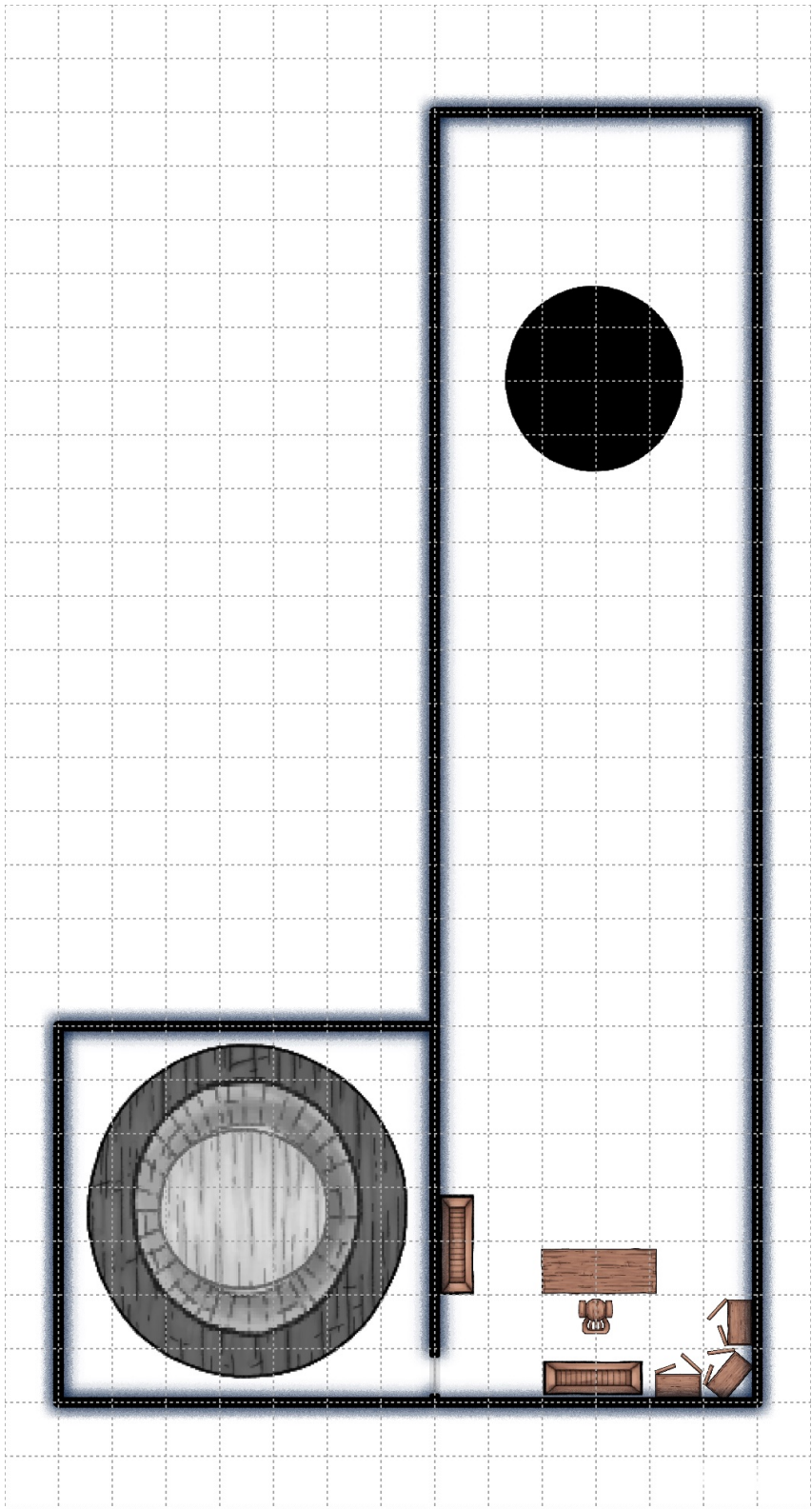
Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Appendix 3: Maps

Map 1—Etana’s Demiplane



Map 2—Etana’s Study



Appendix 4: Bartholomew's Curse (Player Handout 1)

The following is written in Infernal around the base of the hourglass. The rhyme scheme works in both Infernal and Common.

*Ye, arrogant of book and tome
Shall now be cursed alone to roam.
Frail symbols, songs, and holy boughs
You'll try in vain to save him now.
For some these items healing be;
True worth they find in unity.*

Appendix 5: The Myth of Etana (Player Handout 2)

Long ago, before anyone remembers, the young wizard Etana and his wife had their only child by obtaining magical herbs from a mountaintop tree, flown there by an “aarakocra” whose “hunter’s trap” Etana opened.

Unfortunately for Etana, the “aarakocra” was actually an arcanaloth who had gone back on a deal with Levistus. When Levistus learned that the arcanaloth had been set free, he cursed Etana’s child, Bartholomew, with an incurable disease that would take his life before he saw his second decade.

Appendix 6: Magic Item

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this magic item.

Cape of the Mountebank (Table G)

Wondrous item, rare

This cape smells faintly of brimstone. While wearing it, you can use it to cast the *dimension door* spell as an action. This property of the cape can't be used again until the next dawn.

When you disappear, you leave behind a cloud of smoke, and you appear in a similar cloud of smoke at your destination. The smoke lightly obscures the space you left and the space you appear in, and it dissipates at the end of your next turn. A light or stronger wind disperses the smoke.

This item is found on **Magic Item Table G** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Appendix 7: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 11th-16th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 13**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

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

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

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

feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

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

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

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

Determining Party Strength

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