



HUNGRY SHADOWS

An Avernus Rising Adventure

Bodies continue pile up, and the Flaming Fist still has nothing but a name. Thankfully, the perpetrator of the murders has slipped up and the Flaming Fist has captured one of their underlings, in turn, has revealed the presence of a cult hideout in the sewers beneath the city. The Flaming Fist has asked that you investigate. Are you up for the task?

Part Two of the *Betrayal is in the Blood* series of adventures.

A Two-to-Four Hour Adventure for 1st through 4th Level Characters.

Optimized For: APL 3



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

"The setting is a worthy one, if the devil did desire to have a hand in the affairs of men."

— The Hound of the Baskervilles

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st- to 4th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in the Lower City area of Baldur's Gate on the Sword Coast of Faerûn.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In an act of horrible revenge upon the city whose **HELLRIDERS** abandoned her during a failed invasion of the **NINE HELLS**, the archdevil **ZARIEL** has torn **ELTUREL** from **FAERÛN** and cast it down to **AVERNUS**, the first of the Hells. With aid from a brave adventuring party, a small group of refugees have managed to escape **ELTURGARD** and reach the relative safety of **BALDUR'S GATE**.

Even as the refugees find sanctuary in their bustling and colorful new home, a series of savage murders spreads across the city, striking down descendants of the **HELLRIDERS**. Only one clue exists as to who is orchestrating these savage slayings: the name **GCHARIZOL**.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **two hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. It also contains **two optional bonus objectives**, each taking **one additional hour** to play.

- **Call to Action: Murder Scene Secrets.** The Flaming Fist ask the characters to investigate a grisly and brutal murder which took place in a locked dwelling.
- **Part 1: Murder Under Lock and Key.** The characters learn of a hidden temple of Zariel beneath the murder scene, investigate the dwelling for clues, and find the secret entrance to the temple. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Part 2: Zariel's Temple.** Once inside the temple, the characters discover evidence that **Gharizol** is a devil in service to Zariel, summoned to the Material Plane by cultists and bent on exacting revenge upon refugees descended from the Hellriders.
- **Bonus Objective A: Treachery.** Based on a tip from **Flame Daryn Falburn**, the characters follow the corrupt Manip Benn Hithlin to a meeting with a cultist to secure proof of his treachery. This **bonus objective** is described in **Appendix 1**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Devilry.** Uncovering additional chambers branching off the main temple complex, the characters confront numerous cultists and a devil. They must capture or eliminate the evildoers. This **bonus objective** is described in **Appendix 2**.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Characters that participated in DDAL09-02 *Stopped at the Gate* are already investigating the gruesome murders occurring within Baldur's Gate. As the killings continue, the Flaming Fist asks the party to extend their investigation into who's behind the horrible deaths and what common thread motivates the otherwise disconnected killings.

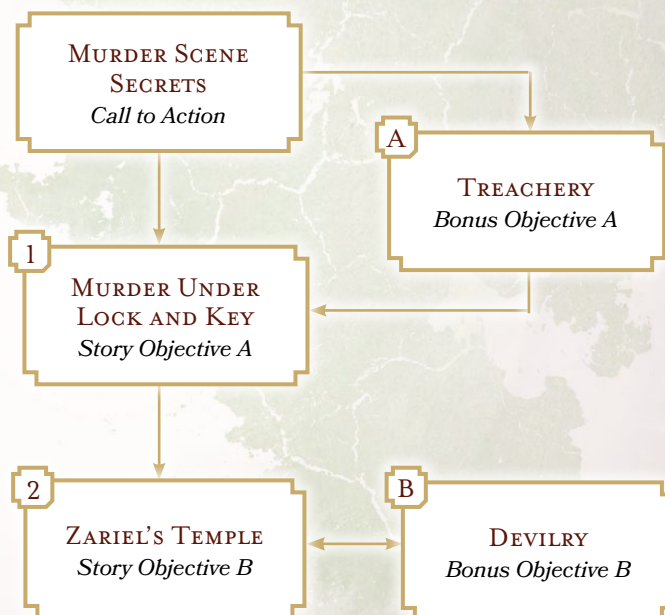
Continuation from Stopped at the Gates. These characters are already engaged in helping the refugees and are likely motivated to protect the descendants of the Hellriders targeted by this murder spree. Otherwise, adventure hooks can draw on the characters' backgrounds, classes or alignments.

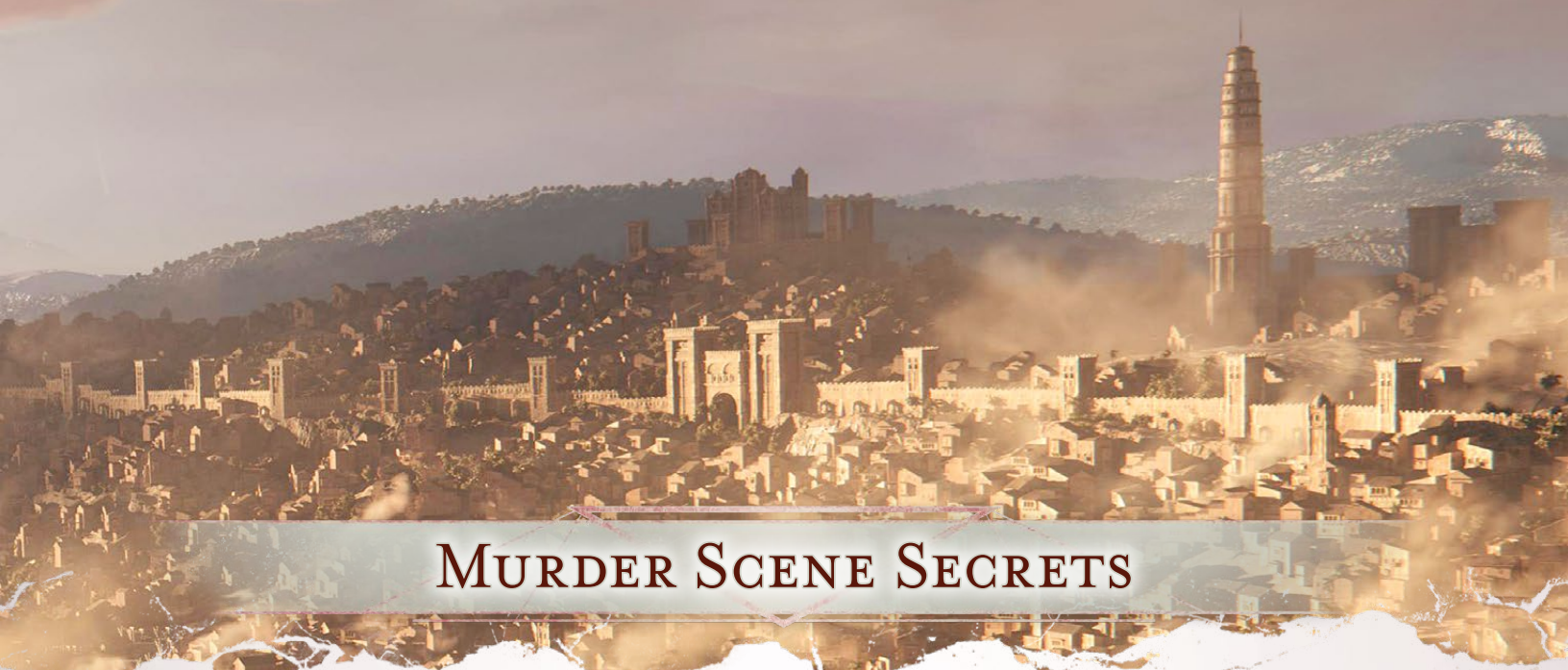
Background. Characters with the City Watch (Investigator) or Urban Bounty Hunter backgrounds may find the prospect of solving a serial murder mystery an irresistible challenge.

Class/Alignment. Clerics, paladins, or lawful good characters may be deeply motivated by the chance to drive supernatural evil out of the city and put an end to a murderous rampage of unholy revenge.

ADVENTURE FLOWCHART

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.





MURDER SCENE SECRETS

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

MYSTERY WITHIN A MYSTERY

Flame Daryn Falburn (from DDAL09-02 *Stopped at the Gates*) has issued a summons for the characters and asks them to investigate another mysterious death in Baldur's Gate.

CREATURE INFORMATION

When the characters arrive, Flame Daryn Falburn (LN female human **veteran**) is speaking to Manip Benn Hithlin (NE male dwarf **knight**) about a recent murder in the thriving Lower City merchant neighborhood of Bloomridge.

What do They Want? Flame Falburn is under increasing pressure to get to the bottom of a growing number of seemingly related murders and to end the spree before general panic grips the city. She's long suspected Manip Hithlin of disloyalty, but she needs definitive proof to act upon her suspicions. **Manip Hithlin** wants his meeting with Falburn to end quickly and without incident—he fears that she has grown suspicious and may accuse him.

What do They Know? Flame Falburn knows any of the characters who have worked with her before by name. Though she doesn't reveal or act without definitive proof, she also suspects that the cult is being fed information by someone within the Flaming Fist, since crimes tend to occur in under-guarded areas or during shift changes. **Manip Hithlin** is paid well by the Cult of Zariel to turn a blind eye to their activities and to ensure that his underlings do so as well. He's responsible for coordinating the shift schedules and general orders for the soldiers under his command.

FLAMING FIST

The Flaming Fist are a massive mercenary company with operations as far away as Chult. The Fist has a contract with the dukes of Baldur's Gate to act as the city's army and police force. Soldiers of the Flaming Fist are drawn from many regions and all walks of life.

The six ranks recognized within the Flaming Fist are: Fist (private), Gauntlet (corporal), Manip (sergeant), Flame (lieutenant), Blaze (major), and Marshal (general).

THE FLAME'S REQUEST

Haggard from stress and lack of sleep, Flame Falburn asks the characters to investigate a second mysterious and hideous murder (or third, if the characters completed DDAL09-02 Bonus Objective B). A body has been savagely mauled by animals within a locked dwelling in the respectable Bloomridge district of the Lower City. Initial investigations revealed no signs of entry or exit by whoever perpetrated the killing.

Short of staff she can trust, Falburn wants the characters to meet with **Manip Tradran Foremantle** (who oversees the investigation) for a briefing at the murder scene and then to search for evidence of the identity of Gharizol.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

If utilizing this additional content, the characters report to Falburn's office just as she's berating Manip Hithlin about vital paperwork he neglected to complete on the latest murder, insisting that it be filled out immediately. Then, on the pretext of asking the characters for information about the Elturgardian refugees, Flame Falburn asks them to stay behind when Hithlin is dismissed.

Motioning the characters closer to her desk, Falburn quietly shares her suspicions that Hithlin is a mole feeding information to the Cult of Zariel. She asks them to secure definitive proof of his misdeeds, advising them to avoid direct contact with Flaming Fist gauntlets and fists in league with the corrupt Benn Hithlin, all of whom wear black kerchiefs about their necks.

TREASURE

If the characters ask for a reward or an advance to pay for supplies, Flame Falburn may give them a small amount of silver, but she's notoriously tight-fisted.

PROCEEDING TO PART 1

If utilizing **Bonus Objective A (Appendix 1)**, insert it here as an event that takes place prior to the investigation at the animal mauling murder scene. Otherwise, proceed to **Part 1**.



PART 1: MURDER UNDER LOCK AND KEY

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

The characters investigate the most recent murder scene while avoiding contact with Hithlin's Flaming Fist guards.

STORY OBJECTIVE A

Locating the secret entrance to the hidden temple hideout is **Story Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This encounter takes place in a building where the most recent murder occurred, the home of Sands Korek, a successful merchant and a high-ranking member of the cult of Zariel and the murder victim. His home (**Appendix 7**) has the following features.

General. The murder scene is a two-story structure with wooden floors, 9-foot ceilings, two locking wooden doors and eleven locking windows. While the building was locked up tight when the investigators arrived, the two main entrances are now unlocked, but guarded. Locked interior doors can be unlocked with found keys (see **Clues**) or picked with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Office. This angled room by the front door was Korek's commercial office, where he received clients and conducted business.

Sitting Room. Four leather chairs and a low wood table near the hearth provided a more comfortable space for Korek and his clients to have longer conversations and interviews.

Storage. A long, narrow room just off the sitting room provides sample storage for the range of products handled by Korek's business.

Kitchen. The north end of the first floor contains a kitchen and dining area. Spiral stairs lead from this space to the second floor.

Stairs. Narrow spiral stairs lead from the kitchen and eating area on the first floor to a second-floor hallway.

Study. An L-shaped study is in the northeast corner of the second floor. It has two windows, a desk, two chairs, two bookshelves and a small wood stove for heat. The door from the hall is locked when the characters arrive.

Murder Scene. The door to this room, decorated for entertaining, has been smashed open and deep gouges scar the doorway. The shape of the victim's body is outlined in blood spatters on the floor, which is also deeply gouged. Any character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check will determine that both sets of gouge marks were made by repeated clawing and biting by a powerful animal.

Bedroom. The northwest corner of the second floor was Korek's bedroom.

Trapdoor. Any character near the spiral stairs on the first floor who succeeds on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a secret trapdoor in the floor (see **Clues**). It can be unlocked with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Tunnel. Beneath the trapdoor lies an unlit earthen tunnel, 5 feet wide and 5 feet tall. The tunnel extends 40 feet south and opens into a 5-foot-diameter stone-walled sewer.

CREATURE INFORMATION

When the characters arrive at the scene, three fists (LG, LN, and N **guards**) are positioned at the front and rear entrances. **Manip Tradran Foremantle** arrives shortly after the characters and is anxious to brief them with the latest news.

What Do They Want? The **guards** are all Manip Benn Hithlin's men and wear black kerchiefs around their necks. Their prime motivation is to stay on Hithlin's good side.

Manip Tradran Foremantle is extremely loyal to Flame Falburn and is under pressure to put an end to the murder spree as quickly as possible.

What Do They Know? The **guards** are under orders from Hithlin to stop anyone but him or his superiors from entering the structure. They also know Hithlin shares cult pay-offs with subordinates he trusts; those he doesn't trust tend to meet with "accidents." **Tradran Foremantle** knows that Falburn is suspicious of Hithlin and that a captured cultist has let slip crucial information about the murder scene.

BRIEFING

Foremantle dismisses Hithlin's subordinates immediately and takes the characters inside through the unlocked doors. He tells them that Sands Korek, the successful merchant who owned the home, was a high-ranking member of the Cult of Zariel suspected of providing fronts for the cult's illegal activities. If the characters didn't learn it on their own by successfully completing **Bonus Objective A**, Foremantle now shares that a captured cultist fanatic divulged that the room where the murder took place contains a secret entrance to a subterranean cult hideout accessed through the sewers.

TIME LIMIT

Allow the players no more than 20 minutes of real time to explore the murder scene and discover the hidden trapdoor at the foot of the stairs. This leaves 10 minutes for them to follow the trail, find the hidden entrance to Zariel's temple, and deal with a trap.

CLUES

Any character who searches one of the following rooms and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers or notices the following items of interest in that room.

Office. In a hidden compartment in the desk drawer, there is a set of brass keys which unlock the various doors in the home.

Sitting Room. Under the table, there is a freshly dislodged chunk of wood from the trapdoor at the foot of the stairs, which suggests that the trapdoor was recently flung open with great force.

Storage. Glass prisms are mounted in the floor of the storage room near the window. These gather and direct sunlight downward into the hidden tunnel below the storage room.

Kitchen. In the pantry, there is a small chest of unmarked glass bottles containing powdered substances. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the contents as ritual components.

Stairs. The creaking floorboards at the foot of the stairs, a down-pointing arrow scratched into the plaster near the stairs, a freshly dislodged hunk of wood from the flooring (see **Sitting Room**), and sensations of localized cold and damp above the secret trapdoor all suggest something unusual about this space, making it worthy of further attention (see **Trapdoor** under **Area Information**).

Study. In the bookshelves, there are tomes written in Infernal, singing the praises of service to Zariel. On the desk, there is a red journal in which Korek reveals his fears about controlling the dark powers he is studying (**Appendix 4**).

"Will the powers I am learning to summon serve me, or destroy me?"

TREASURE

Characters thoroughly searching the following rooms that succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check find something:

Bedroom. In the wardrobe on the east wall, the characters find scarlet cultist robes, red leather gloves, and a scarlet cloak. A *scroll of protection against fiends* is in a hidden pocket.

Murder Room. The characters find a hidden panel in the east bookshelf. The panel conceals a small vault which contains *gloves of thievery* and an ornate sheathed dagger. However, the panel is trapped. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools is required to disarm the falling blade trap. On a failed check, a character attempting to remove the gloves takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. The characters have been told by Falburn to avoid direct contact with Hithlin's fists and gauntlets (identified by the black kerchiefs around their necks). They would benefit from avoiding combat and waiting for the guards to be dismissed by Manip Foremantle.

Exploration. Making the effort to explore the rooms and features of the dwelling can reveal valuable clues to the secrets hidden in and beneath Sands Korek's seemingly ordinary merchant home, including valuable treasure that can aid the characters in facing the dangerous challenges that lie ahead.

Social. The characters may attempt to ply Benn Hithlin's guards for information using Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) checks, but under no circumstances should the guards knowingly allow the characters admittance to the murder scene until they are dismissed by Foremantle. To do so would be to risk their own lives, something the guards are not prepared to do.



TEMPLE ENTRANCE

Once they have discovered the trapdoor and the tunnel beneath the storage room, the characters must explore the tunnel and sewers to find the entrance to the cult's underground hideout.

AREA INFORMATION

This subterranean area has the following features (see **Appendix 8**).

Sewer Tracks. At the end of the tunnel lies a 5-foot-diameter, unlit stone-walled sewer running southwest to northeast. Characters with darkvision or a light source who succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notice fresh footprints in the mud leading northeast for 40 feet. The footprints reach an intersection with another unlit, stone-walled, mucky sewer running north-to-south. They then turn left and continue 55 feet to the north, where they suddenly stop. Any character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will notice a torn fragment of scarlet fabric snagged in a bit of stonework on the left, near where the footprints end.

Secret Entrance. Any character who searches the walls where the footprints end and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will find a 5-foot-wide secret door to the west. Opening the door requires simultaneously pressing two reddish stones to either side of the door. The secret door is **trapped** with a falling stone trap.

Trap. Finding the trap requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and disarming it requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Opening the secret door without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

Once triggered, the trap releases a 15-foot-long section of large stones from above. Any creature standing within 15 feet of the secret door when its opened must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they're struck by the falling stones, taking 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** 3 (1d6) damage from falling stones.
- **Weak:** 5 (1d10) damage from falling stones.
- **Strong:** 9 (1d10+4) damage from falling stones.
- **Very Strong:** 11 (2d10) damage from falling stones.

Hidden Temple Entrance. Beyond the trapped secret door lies another unlit 5-foot-by-5-foot earthen tunnel leading west for 35 feet, then turning right for 5 feet and opening onto a 5-foot-wide, 10-foot-tall stone corridor leading north.

Infernal runes are inscribed on the floor, walls and ceiling of the stone corridor's threshold. Any character who can read Infernal can translate the runes, and a character who records the runes can ask their meaning later from someone who knows Infernal. This is the entrance to the hidden temple of Zariel, the cultists hideout (**Appendix 5**). Translated, the runes read: "Enter here only the damned, exit here only their servants."



PART 2: ZARIEL'S TEMPLE

Estimated Duration: 1 hour 20 minutes

STORY OBJECTIVE

Uncovering the identity of **Gharizol**, the individual behind the recent string of vicious murders in Baldur's Gate, is **Story Objective B**.

EXPLORING THE TEMPLE

Now that they've reached the subterranean cult hideout, the characters must look for clues about Gharizol and deal with the cultists and creatures they encounter.

AREA INFORMATION

The torchlit underground corridors in the temple are 5 feet wide and 10 feet high and reek of burnt flesh. Rooms here are secured with locked doors. All locks can be picked with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools (or locked again with the same check). They have AC 10, 40 hit points, and immunity to psychic and poison damage (**Appendix 8**).

Sleeping Cells. This is a locked area where cultists reside. Each cell has a cot, a chair, and a storage chest. A common area accommodates meals and gatherings. Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the cells finds Sands Korek's storage chest, containing three books detailing the fall of Zariel and her betrayal in Avernus by the Hellriders, as well as a black journal (see **Treasure**).

Diabolicary. Cultists prepare for important rituals in this locked room. There are ceremonial garments, diabolical symbols, ritual implements, leather-bound tomes, and assorted weapons, including daggers and scimitars. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds an open book on a table describing the devil Gharizol and his savage exploits and conquests in service to the archdevil Zariel.

A statue of Zariel rests on the altar at the north end of the room. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check know that self-inflicting 2 (1d4) slashing damage by cutting their left forearm in front of the statue grants those who make such a sacrifice resistance to fire damage for 1 hour.

Ritual Chamber. This 35-foot-by-55-foot room is 20 feet high and features a 25-foot-diameter ritual circle used for cult ceremonies. The circle is marked with Infernal runes invoking the name of Avernus, the first level of the Nine Hells, and is littered with regularly spaced, charred remains of nine humanoids who were chained to the floor and burned beyond recognition. About the necks of these victims are iron pendants, each bearing the name of the devil Gharizol, written in Infernal. A charred parchment scroll rests at the center of the circle. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check will know that these are victims of a ritual to summon a devil.

Cells and Kennel. This locked area is divided between iron-barred cells for sacrificial victims and hexagonal iron cages for cult beasts.



If the characters unlock this chamber, they're immediately attacked by an uncaged **hell hound** housed within. If the characters don't unlock this room, the hell hound breaks down one of the doors and escapes—attacking the characters after they've finished exploring the other three rooms, or when time dictates.

TIME LIMIT

Allow players no more than 30 minutes of real time to explore the temple and secure evidence. Once the time has expired, the hell hound attacks.

CREATURE INFORMATION

There is a **hell hound** and an **imp** present in the temple kennel when the characters arrive. If **Bonus Objective B** is not used, they may be the only creatures the characters encounter here.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **hell hound** and add patrolling **cultists**, two more than the number of characters.
- **Weak:** Remove the **hell hound**, and add two patrolling **cultists** for each character.
- **Strong:** Add a patrolling **cultist** for each character.
- **Very Strong:** Add another **hell hound**.

What Do They Want? **Hell hounds** prefer to hunt in packs and feed on any creature that appears edible,

targeting the weakest prey first. **Cultists** in service to Zariel are sworn to protect the temple and keep its location secret. The **imp** has been tasked by Gharizol with minding the place, but boredom has spurred it to convince the hell hound to act up.

What Do They Know? The **hell hounds** are intelligent beasts in service to Gharizol with orders to kill all intruders on sight. They fight savagely to the end to obey these orders. **Cultists** patrolling the temple know that to fail Zariel in their duties means death by torture. The **imp** knows better than to betray Gharizol. If cornered, it turns invisible and flies away.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. Combat with the **hell hounds** and/or **cultists** should provide the climax to the temple encounter and take place regardless of whether the players enter the prison and kennel area or not. Bring the fight to the characters if necessary. Once the imp notices that someone is in the temple, it follows any intruders invisibly until they happen upon the hell hound, at which point it's likely to attack the least armored character it can find.

Exploration. The characters should spend the first part of this encounter thoroughly exploring the temple chambers and searching their contents for clues to the identity of Gharizol, finding some useful articles along the way.

Social. Ask the characters how they react and interact with each other upon discovering that the last murder victim summoned a devil from the Hells into this world.

TREASURE

The journal of Sands Korek documents the cultist's attempts to summon the barbed devil Gharizol from Avernus. It contains the following entry, along with a list of names of the descendants of Hellriders (**Appendix 6**).

"I have found the spell required to summon a devil to this world from Avernus and will use it when I have gathered the required materials. I am to be the vessel of Zariel's retribution! Gharizol will soon be at hand, wreaking vengeance on the traitorous descendants of the Hellriders who seek refuge in our city! I pray to Zariel that my powers of control are sufficient to protect me from this fiend I call forth."

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

If you are using **Bonus Objective B**, which is also a combat encounter, offer an opportunity for the characters to take a short or long rest before beginning the bonus objective.

When the characters are ready to proceed, anyone with a passive Perception of 11 or higher hears the faint screaming coming from behind the north wall of the Ritual Chamber. A character who investigates the north wall finds a secret door. Proceed to **Bonus Objective B (Appendix 2)** at this point, then return to **Wrap Up**, below, when the bonus objective is complete.

WRAP UP: THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

After completing **Part 2** (or **Bonus Objective B**), the characters have uncovered the identity of the devil Gharizol. They can depart the temple and meet Flame Daryn Falburn to report their findings. If the characters present Flame Falburn with proof of Manip Benn Hithlin's corruption, she displays grim satisfaction. Korek's journal listing Hellrider descendants and the contract book (from **Bonus Objective B**) with names of cult members are also of great value to her. But the news of the truly fiendish identity of Gharizol is far more unsettling and has a visible impact on Falburn.

Dropping heavily into a well-worn chair, Flame Daryn Falburn breathes a deep sigh. "Damned cultists. I was afraid of this." She slowly makes eye contact with each of you before speaking. "You're telling me that this Gharizol is an *actual* devil, brought here by the Cult of Zariel to wreak vengeance on the descendants of the Hellriders?" She shakes her head. "Well, we're about to find out if the saying is true: better the devil you know than the devil you don't."

REWARDS

The characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. Aside from advancement, these rewards are earned during the session.

CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards:

ADVANCEMENT

Upon **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind those that express an interest in this that they have a limit to how much gold they can earn per level; 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 9**.

- *Gloves of thievery*
- *Scroll of protection from fiends*

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, you gain a **DM Reward**. This reward can be redeemed for levels, magic items, and other season-themed things. See the Adventurers League DM Rewards document for more info.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Flame Daryn Falburn (*DE ryn FALL burn*).

Daryn is of the few members of the Flaming Fist leadership still trying to maintain order in the city. She is a strikingly tall human woman with bright red hair and piercing green eyes. Blunt and to the point in both word and deed, she is unwilling to waste time making friends.

- **What They Want.** Daryn is dedicated to her duties and to the city.
- **It's Not Personal.** Daryn doesn't let emotions or personal feeling cloud her judgment on Flaming Fist matters.

Tradran Foremantle (*TRAD ran FOR man tul*).

Tradran is a powerfully built male human with blonde hair and brown eyes. A manip in the Flaming Fist, he is loyal to Daryn Falburn, partly out of respect for her leadership and partly because of his personal feelings for her.

- **What They Want.** Foremantle lives to protect the people of the Lower City and to convince Daryn Falburn that he's a man she can count on when all hell breaks loose.
- **Protect and Serve.** Foremantle finds corruption intolerable and takes great pleasure in rooting it out wherever it appears.

Gharizol (*GARE iz OHL*). This devil in the service of Zariel has been dispatched to Baldur's Gate to exact the final elements of his mistress's revenge upon the city of Elturel.

- **What They Want.** Gharizol has been systematically hunting and killing descendants of Elturel's Hellriders.
- **Complete Contempt.** Gharizol is a megalomaniac and utterly contemptuous of mortals. During combat, he's prone to boastful statements such as, "Tremble, mortals, for I am Gharizol!"

Benn Hithlin (*HITH lin*). Benn is an aging male dwarf and a manip in the Flaming Fist, though his first loyalty has always been to himself. His silver beard and gray eyes mirror his stony heart. His motto is "strike first and check for valuables while nobody's looking."

- **What They Want.** Hithlin seeks personal power, influence, wealth, and control in every situation, no matter the cost to others.
- **All About Me.** Hithlin joined the Flaming Fist ten years ago after watching a crooked gauntlet beat a merchant and make off with his gold. It's a career move he's never regretted.

Sands Korek (*KOR ek*). This plump, black-eyed, black-haired male half-orc joined the Cult of Zariel as a youth and slowly rose to a position of some power in the cult.

- **What They Want.** Sands wanted to rise in power within the Cult of Zariel, hoping one day to forge a deal with the archdevil herself to secure a place in her inner circle.
- **Expired.** Sands was learning summoning spells at the request of his superiors, but a lack of attention to detail proved fatal when negotiating his contract with Gharizol.

Lovet Utich (*LUV et OO tich*). A ruddy, auburn-haired human with gray eyes, Lovet is a junior cultist tasked with spying and running errands for more senior cult members.

- **What They Want.** Lovet sees service in the Cult of Zariel as an opportunity to shed the monotony of his family's import/export business and abandon their prudish values.
- **Danger Junky.** Lovet Utich craves assignments with a certain amount of unavoidable risk and palpable peril.

Eryn Xeph (*AIR in ZEF*). A slender, fair-skinned female elf with pale blue eyes and silver hair, Eryn is young for an elf and has only recently joined the Cult of Zariel.

- **What They Want.** Eryn Xeph will do anything to gain the trust of the cult's leaders and join their inner circle; she craves insight into wielding true power over the material realm.
- **Pain and Passion.** Eryn's intense passion for philosophical insight is balanced by an unexpectedly low threshold for personal pain.



CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures are encountered in this adventure.

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 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

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

CULTIST

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

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

CULT FANATIC

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

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

HELL HOUND

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 50 ft.

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

Skills Perception +5
Damage Immunities fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands Infernal but can't speak it
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The hound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The hound exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

SPINED DEVIL

Small fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Flyby. The devil doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Limited Spines. The devil has twelve tail spines. Used spines regrow by the time the devil finishes a long rest.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The devil makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its fork or two with its tail spines.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) slashing damage.

Fork. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Tail Spine. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.



APPENDIX 1: TREACHERY (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

Estimated Duration: 1 hour

During the **Call to Action**, the characters learn that Flame Falburn suspects that Manip Benn Hithlin is in league with the cultists. She seeks hard proof of his betrayal.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

Avoiding contact with Manip Benn Hithlin's gauntlets and fists while securing proof of his ties to the Cult of Zariel is **Bonus Objective A**. The characters can only pursue this bonus objective before beginning **Part 1**.

AREA INFORMATION

This encounter takes place between the Flaming Fist outpost in the imposing Seatower of Balduran and the adjoining merchant neighborhood of Bloomridge in the Lower City.

General Features. This fashionable district has narrow streets and alleys that hum with activity and are densely lined with cafes, flower shops, artisan boutiques, and an assortment of respectable taverns and pubs.

Patrols. The area is watched over by Flaming Fist patrols consisting of two fists or gauntlets who remain vigilant for signs of trouble.

The Narwhal Tavern. The meeting between Hithlin and his cultist contact takes place in a busy tavern. The cultist is seated near a large fireplace where a roaring fire is burning brightly.

CREATURE INFORMATION

After completing his paperwork for Falburn at Flaming Fist headquarters, **Manip Benn Hithlin** hurriedly makes his way to a rendezvous with a cultist contact, **Lovet Utich** (LE male human **cult fanatic**).

What Do They Want? **Manip Benn Hithlin** needs to get immediate word to the cult that the Flaming Fists are rapidly closing in on the identity of the murderer, and that any potential clues at the latest murder scene to the location of the secret cult hideout must be destroyed.

Lovet Utich wants the latest information from the Flaming Fist mole to assure the success of Gharizol's plans while avoiding capture himself.

What Do They Know? **Manip Benn Hithlin** knows that Falburn has suspicions about his loyalty to the Flaming Fist and that her investigation is perilously close to finding a secret cult hideout located beneath the latest murder scene. **Lovet Utich** knows that Hithlin can be trusted to pass on vital information about Flaming Fist activities and is also aware of the cult hideout beneath the murder scene. If he meets with Hithlin, Utich also knows the hidden entrance to the hideout may soon be discovered.



PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. The characters need to secure proof that someone within the Flaming Fist is passing information to the cult. To accomplish this without tipping off the traitor, non-lethal means of securing the required evidence may be most effective.

Exploration. Keeping up with Hithlin as he makes his way to the rendezvous with Lovet Utich provides opportunities to test the characters' skills at following a target through busy and unpredictable Lower City streets and alleys without being spotted.

Social. Once Lovet Utich has been found and detained, the characters can use Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) checks or other non-violent tactics to get information from the cultist.

THE TAIL

The characters follow Manip Hithlin as he leaves the Seatower of Balduran, but they face numerous challenges tailing him through the colorful streets and alleys of the Lower City (see the **Tail Complications** table). An average party must overcome 3 of these challenges to successfully follow Hithlin to his meeting with Utich in time to intercept him.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Must overcome 1 complication.
- **Weak:** Must overcome 2 complications.
- **Strong:** Must overcome 4 complications.
- **Very Strong:** Must overcome 5 complications.

TAIL COMPLICATIONS

d10	Complication
1	A patrol of two of Hithlin's black-kerchiefed fists come between him and the characters. They must make a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check to move past unseen. On a failure, the characters duck into an alley while the patrol passes, briefly losing sight of Hithlin.
2	A rolling beet wagon blocks the characters' path. Beatrice the beet-seller berates the characters for forcing her to stop suddenly, hurling beets as she does. They must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to reacquire Hithlin's trail.
3	Hithlin ducks into a shop. The characters must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot him again as he exits the shop and attempts to melt back into the crowd.
4	A tavern fight spills into the street. The characters must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to push past the crowds watching the fight and stay on Hithlin's trail.
5	Tiles clatter and fall from a rooftop overhead. The characters must succeed on a DC10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.
6	A spooked horse bolts into the midst of the characters. They must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to calm the creature and continue following Hithlin.
7-10	No complication.

If and when the minimum number of challenges is met, proceed to **Cult Rendezvous (Successful Tail)**. If the minimum number of challenges are not met, the characters lose Hithlin and arrive at the rendezvous late. They catch sight of Hithlin exiting the Narwhal tavern; proceed to **Cult Rendezvous (Failed Tail)**.

CULT RENDEZVOUS

The characters succeed if they tail Hithlin without his detecting them.

Successful Tail. On a successful tail, the characters see Hithlin enter the Narwhal Tavern and follow him inside, seeing him collide with a scarlet clad figure (Lovet Utich, a **cult fanatic**) seated near a large fireplace. Hithlin mutters "Your pardon, brother," grabbing the cultist as if to stop himself from falling, nervously laughing "I guess don't need that drink after all." Any character who observes the collision and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices Hithlin passing the cultist a small packet (see **Treasure**). Hithlin then nods to the bartender, turns and leaves the establishment.

Failed Tail. If the characters fail to tail Hithlin, they reach the Narwhal only to see him exit the tavern, glance over his shoulder, smile widely, and disappear in the crowd, quickly vanishing from sight.

If they enter the tavern, the characters see a scarlet-clad **cult fanatic** scan a bit of parchment, wad it up, and toss it into the dancing flames; hard proof of Hithlin's corruption goes up in smoke. If they do not enter the tavern, they spot the cultist as he exits. Bonus Objective A has been failed, but all is not lost.

Inquiries. The characters must now find a way to detain Lovet Utich and ascertain what information Hithlin has passed on to him.

If the tail was successful, any character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the note from Hithlin in Utich's cloak pocket. This is the hard proof Flame Falburn seeks (see **Treasure**).

Whether the tail succeeded or failed, when pressing Utich for information, any character who succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) check learns that the scene of the most recent murder contains a secret entrance to a cult hideout accessed from the sewers. On a failed check, or if Utich eludes detainment, no additional information is gained at this time.

TREASURE

Utich has some silver in a pouch and wears an iron symbol on a chain around his neck, beneath his tunic. The disk is inscribed on the back with the word "Gharizol" in Infernal.

The packet passed by Hithlin contains a slip of parchment with the following phrase hastily scrawled in Hithlin's own hand (**Appendix 3**):

"Flame approaching, burn the vessel's nest."

PROCEEDING TO PART 1

If the characters have successfully completed **Bonus Objective A**, they begin **Part 1** already aware that the murder scene contains a hidden entrance to a cult of Zariel hideout. If they fail this objective, Manip Tradran Foremantle (**Part 1**) provides them with this information when he briefs the characters.

APPENDIX 2: DEVILRY (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

Estimated Duration: 1 hour

After completing **Part 2**, characters playing this bonus objective discover a secret door as they investigate echoing screams of terror from beyond the ritual chamber.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

Uncovering additional chambers branching off the main temple and capturing or eliminating several cultists and a devil is **Bonus Objective B**. The characters can only pursue this bonus objective before beginning **Part 2**.

AREA INFORMATION

This encounter takes place in the three hidden chambers north of the **ritual chamber** (**Appendix 8**).

Prison Cells. These small, squalid, cells are currently empty, but one has been left unlocked. A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals bloody drag marks on the floor connecting the cells and the neighboring **conversion chamber**. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check detects a message in Common scrawled in blood on the floor of the opened cell: “I give myself willingly to Zariel-E.X.” A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that these cells hold captives awaiting conversion by torture.

Conversion Chamber. Equipped with countless complex torture devices, this blood-stained room is used to convert captives to cult service and to slowly end the lives of those who resist. At the center of the room, a large, leather-bound contract book sits on a small table (see **Treasure**). Here, those “convinced” to join the cult sign away their lives and fortunes in blood. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the name of Sands Korek in the book, as well as the most recent signature in blood of one Eryn Xeph, whose signature is still wet.

Devils’ Chamber. This black-walled room is where Gharizol and his subordinate devils reside when they are present in the temple, and where they receive sacrifices from devoted cultists seeking favor. A large, bloodstained, and gruesomely carved stone altar adorns the east end of the room and is fitted with heavy ropes.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The characters interrupt nine **cultists**, Eryn Xeph (LE human male **commoner**), and a **spined devil** performing a summoning ritual that involves Eryn’s unwitting sacrifice to Zariel.

What Do They Want? The **spined devil** is tasked with watching over the temple and reporting improprieties to Gharizol. The **cultists** also serve Gharizol and will follow the devil’s instructions to protect the temple from attack. **Eryn Xeph** is eager to be accepted fully into the newly joined cult of Zariel, or so she thinks.

What Do They Know? Craven by nature, the **spined devil** knows a ritual that, if completed properly, may allow him to summon second spined devil to help defend the temple. The ritual requires a living sacrifice. The **cultists** are aware of Gharizol’s plan to avenge Zariel by striking

down descendants of the Hellriders and will stop at nothing to support their patron. **Eryn** knows that the spined devil is looking for a volunteer to aid the cult in its hour of need and hopes to exploit the opportunity to her advantage.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. If the cultists and the spined devil successfully complete their ritual, there will be hell to pay, as other spined devils may arrive on the scene. Killing at least one cultist quickly can end the ritual.

Exploration. The sound of panicked screams calls the characters forward to explore all three rooms of the hidden portion of the temple, uncovering valuable evidence. The confrontation with the cultists and the devil takes place in the last of the three rooms that the characters explore.

Social. If the characters successfully free the sacrificial victim, they can attempt to persuade or intimidate her into helping the characters and perhaps arm her to fight for her life.

DISRUPTED RITUAL

As the characters enter the **devils’ chamber**, a **spined devil** stands behind the altar surrounded by a semicircle of cultists. On the altar, Eryn Xeph (a **commoner**) fights frantically against the ropes that bind her to the altar, clearly having second thoughts about serving the cult if it involves being a living sacrifice. As the characters advance into the room, the cultists attack immediately.

Rescue. For the ritual to summon another spined devil to be successful, one full round of combat must be completed with no cultist fatalities (see **Adjusting the Scene**) and Xeph must still be bound to the altar. If both these conditions are both met, Xeph is killed by the first spined devil and a second spined devil may appear on the altar in her place (see **Adjusting the Scene**). If the first spined devil is killed before the end of the first round of combat, the ritual fails and cannot be restarted.

Any character who reaches the altar before the end of the first round of combat and succeeds on a DC 11 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can free Eryn Xeph from the rope bindings. If Xeph is freed, the ritual fails.

If Xeph is freed, any character who succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check can convince the cultist to join forces with the characters to defeat the devil and its minions. On a failed check, Eryn Xeph is simply eager to escape the temple.

Dealing with a Devil. Before combat is completed, the first spined devil will attempt to invoke the terms of a contract it claims the characters entered into upon crossing the threshold of the temple. The devil quotes the text inscribed at the temple entrance (**Appendix 5**) and says that if the characters agree to submit to its will immediately, they are free to leave the temple unharmed, as servants of Zariel.



Any character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check or a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check knows that the devil is lying and that the inscription on the temple entrance is not a binding contract. A character who speaks Infernal makes this check with advantage.

Combat. If more than half of the cultists are killed, the rest will attempt to flee the scene and disappear into the sewers, and from there into the crowded streets of the Lower City (see **Adjusting the Scene**).

If the cultists withdraw or Eryn is successfully rescued, the first spined devil will abort the ritual and attempt to leave the temple. If Eryn is not rescued, the spined devil will simply attempt to kill her outright, even if the ritual has failed.

If the first devil escapes the temple, as it departs, it communicates telepathically to the characters, its deep voice invading their minds:

"You have not seen the last of the forces of Zariel! Her honor shall be avenged!"

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** The ritual requires three full rounds to pass with no **cultists** killed. A second **spined devil** doesn't appear (optional).
- **Weak:** The ritual requires two full rounds to pass with no **cultists** killed. A second **spined devil** doesn't appear (optional).
- **Strong:** Add two **cultists**; the cultists don't flee. Only four cultists need survive to complete the ritual.
- **Very Strong:** Add four **cultists**; the cultists don't flee. Only two cultists need survive to complete the ritual.

TREASURE

Each captured cultist has a scimitar, some gold or silver in a purse, and wears an iron symbol of devotion to Gharizol around their neck.

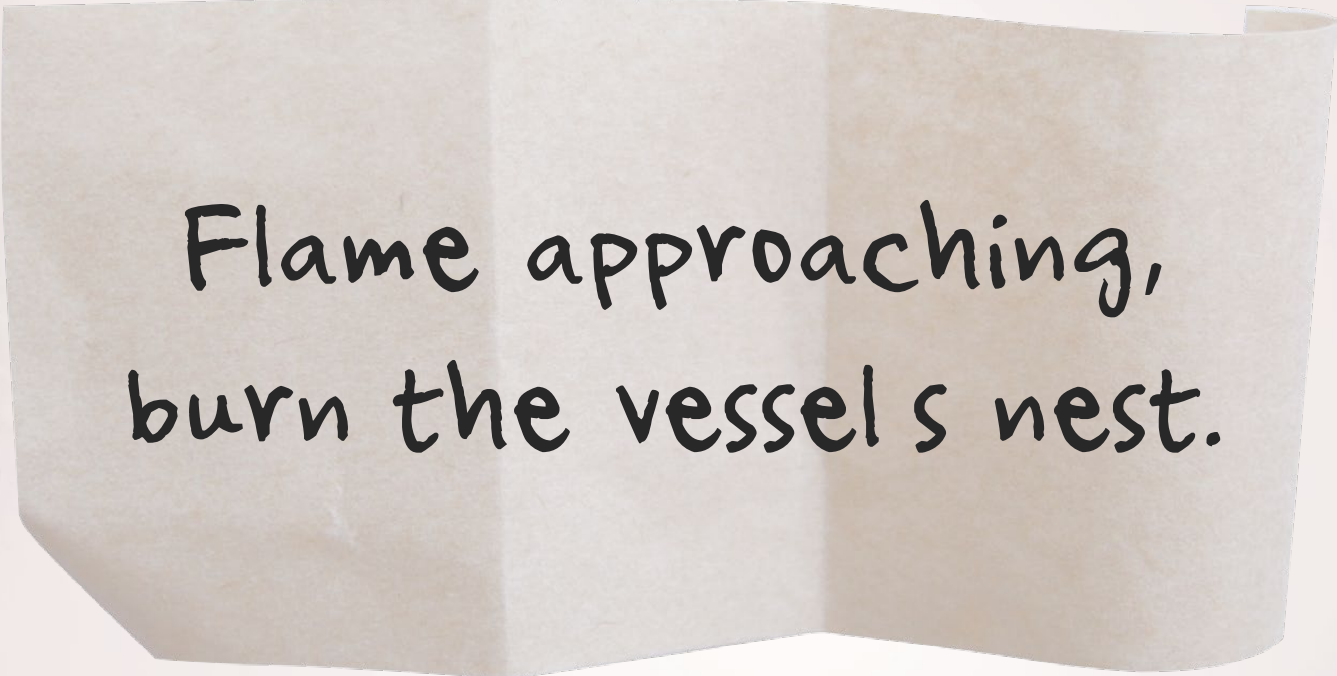
The contract book from the **conversion chamber** contains a list of names of citizens of Baldur's Gate who have sworn allegiance to Zariel, including Sands Korek and Eryn Xeph. Flame Daryn Falburn would likely pay a bit extra to possess this tome.

PROCEEDING TO WRAP UP

Whether or not the characters successfully complete **Bonus Objective B** (capturing or dispatching the cultists and the spined devil), they are now ready to wrap up this adventure (see **Wrap Up** in **Part**

APPENDIX 3: PLAYER HANDOUT – HITHLIN’S NOTE

This note is found on the cultist contact Lovet Utich in
Bonus Objective A:



Flame approaching,
burn the vessel's nest.

APPENDIX 4: PLAYER HANDOUT

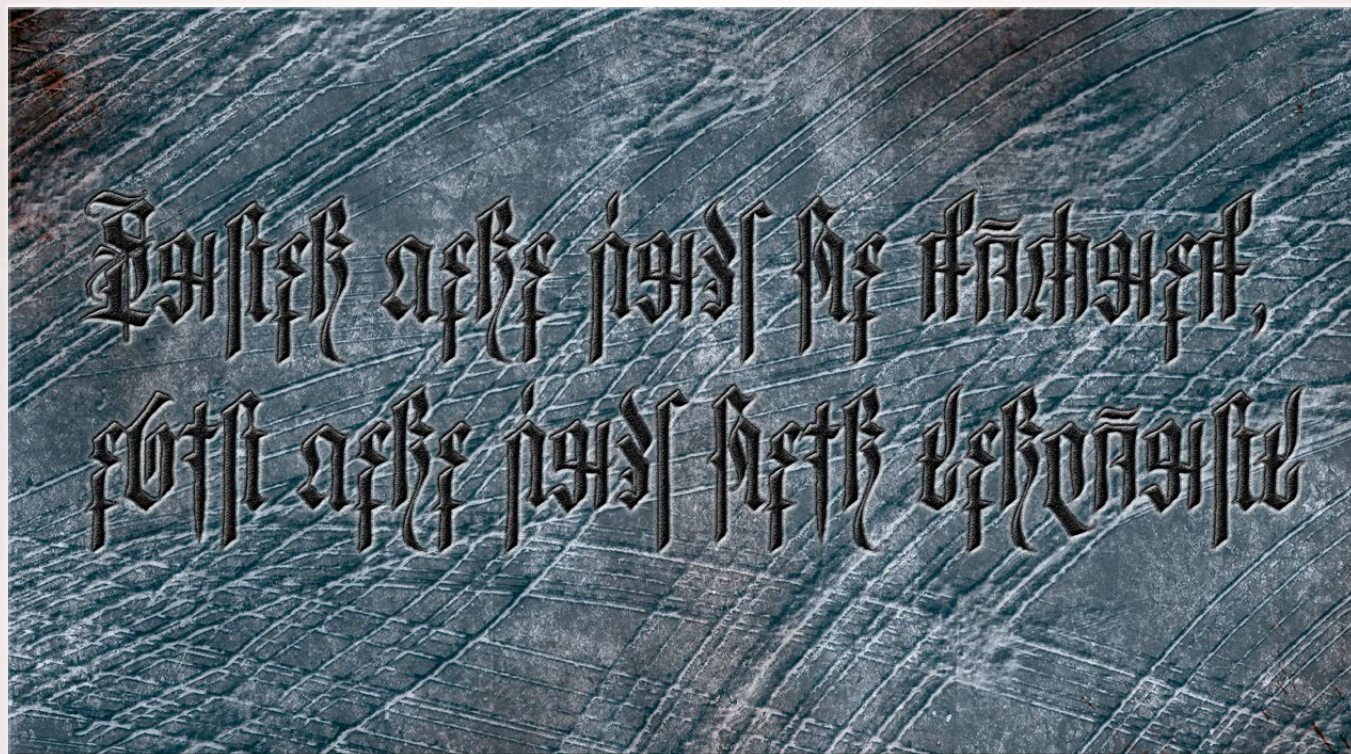
KOREK'S STUDY - JOURNAL

This passage is found in Korek's study in the red journal on his desk.

Will the powers I am learning
to summon serve me,
or destroy me?

APPENDIX 5: TEMPLE INSCRIPTION

This text is inscribed in Infernal at the threshold of the Temple of Zariel in Part 1:



APPENDIX 6: PLAYER HANDOUT

KOREK'S SLEEPING CELL JOURNAL

This entry is found in the temple in the black journal of Sands Korek in Part 2:

I have found the spell required to summon a devil to this world from Avernus and will use it when I have gathered the required materials.

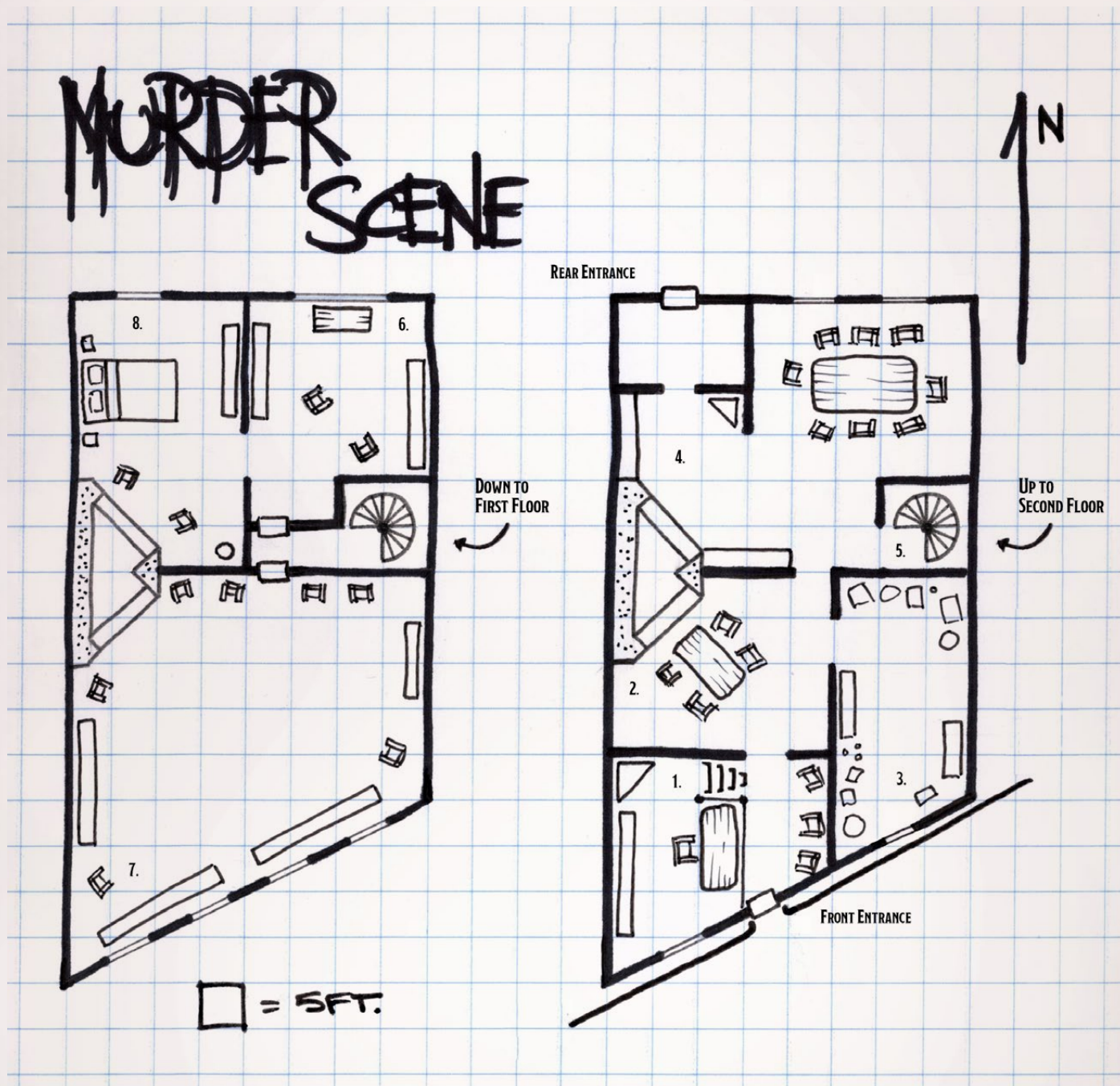
I am to be the vessel of Zariel's retribution!

Garizol will soon be at hand, wreaking vengeance on the traitorous descendants of the Hellriders!

I pray to Zariel that my powers of control are sufficient.

APPENDIX 7: MURDER SCENE MAP

This is a map of the location described in **Part 1**.



APPENDIX 8: TEMPLE OF ZARIEL MAP

This is a map of the location described in **Part 2** and **Bonus Objective B**.



APPENDIX 9: CHARACTER REWARDS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; it's suggested that you print off enough copies of this page to be able to give one to each of your players (crossing off rewards they didn't receive during the session):

GLOVES OF THIEVERY

Wondrous Item, uncommon

These gloves are invisible while worn. While wearing them, you gain a +5 bonus to Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks and Dexterity checks made to pick locks. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

These gloves are made of exquisite red silk with gold and silver embroidery along the fingers. The fabric at the fingertips is very thin, granting the wearer more sensitivity for more delicate work.

SCROLL OF PROTECTION FROM FIENDS

Scroll, rare

Using an action to read the scroll encloses you in an invisible barrier that extends from you to form a 5-foot-radius, 10-foot-high cylinder. For 5 minutes, this barrier prevents fiends from entering or affecting anything within the cylinder. The cylinder moves with you and remains centered on you. However, if you move in such a way that a fiend would be inside the cylinder, the effect ends. A fiend can attempt to overcome the barrier by using an action to make a DC 15 Charisma check. On a success, the fiend ceases to be affected by the barrier. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX 10: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see Adventure Primer). 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 if outside its level range.

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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 Perception score, and anything the adventures specifies as notable (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) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether the completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure 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

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