



STOPPED AT THE GATE

An Avernus Rising Adventure

It's been a long, arduous trip, but you're finally here—Baldur's Gate. You're not out of peril yet, however, even if you're leaving the lawless wilds behind you, the streets of the Gate still run red with blood. But you quickly find that arriving at the city wasn't the biggest challenge at all, now you must convince the city's rulers to grant asylum to you and those in your charge.

Part One 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

Cities always teem with evil and decay. Let's give it a good shake and see what falls out!

—Minsc

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 city of Baldur's Gate, located on the Sword Coast of Faerûn.

BACKGROUND

Generations ago, mortal paladins had accompanied the angel **ZARIEL** into the **NINE HELLS** to battle the demons of the **ABYSS**. As hope dwindled, a number of the paladins abandoned the fallen angel and returned to the material plane, settling in the city of **ELTUREL**—the **HELLRIDERS**. Now, believing that the time of Zariel's vengeance is at hand, her faithful have begun slaying the descendants of the original Hellriders.

In the great city of **BALDUR'S GATE**, the mysterious figure **G HARIZOL** has set minions upon this bloody task. Most recently, a common dressmaker **HARWIN LAMLIN** has been magically compelled to murder fellow tradesman **MARKUS HALLGATE**, the descendant of a Hellrider. This murder occurs the same night that the characters arrive outside of Baldur's Gate, escorting a caravan of over two dozen **ELTURGARDIAN REFUGEES** who hope to find sanctuary in the city.

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: Welcome to Baldur's Gate.** The characters arrive with refugees in tow, but the guards deny them entry to the city. The characters must appeal to the Flaming Fist.
- **Part 1: An Eye for the Fist.** The characters request that the Flaming Fist makes an exception to get refugees safe within the city's walls. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Part 2: What Falls Out.** The Flaming Fist tasks the characters with investigating a recent murder. This is **Story Objective B**.
- **Bonus Objective A: A Cult Following.** The characters are attacked by a mysterious figure. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 1**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Courtside for Murder.** Another murder occurs, and the characters themselves are suspects. This bonus objective is described in **Appendix 2**.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in this adventure.

Caravan's Keepers. The adventures have signed on to protect the refugees as the caravan travels to Baldur's Gate. It is important to get the players invested: allow every character to explain how and why they've ended up helping the refugees. Characters who have completed *DDAL09-01 Escape from Elturgard* may have already faced some dangers and potentially dealt with a murderer among the refugees, a cultist named Vollis Foote.

Faction Agent (Order of the Gauntlet). The Order had notable members in Elturel, and the city's disappearance is of interest not only to the characters but to the organization as a whole.

Faction Agent (The Lords Alliance). Baldur's Gate is part of the Lords Alliance and the disappearance of a major city in the area has attracted the notice of the faction's operatives.

Elturgardian Characters. Characters from Elturel and the surrounding areas have personal reasons to safeguard their brethren and learn the truth behind the disappearance of the city.

THE REFUGEES

As part of introducing the adventure hooks, provide the players with the list of refugees in handout **Appendix 4**. Not all of the refugees are featured in this adventure, but players may find it useful to know who is present.

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.





WELCOME TO BALDUR'S GATE

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

BEFORE THE BASILISK

The characters arrive at Baldur's Gate by the way of the Great Trade Way, a large road that stretches all the way north to Waterdeep, passing through Elturel on its way.

The journey hasn't been without hardship, and reaching the city is a relief to the tired refugees. The streets are full of people, all rushing about their business and slowing road travel to a crawl.

BALDUR'S GATE AND THE OUTER CITY

The grand city of Baldur's Gate is a wealthy port on the Sword Coast of Faerûn. The famous port was named after the seafaring adventurer Balduran, and lies on the Great Trade Way that winds south from Waterdeep.

The city, sometimes known simply as "the Gate," is protected by large walls punctuated by gates, which are locked overnight. The gates leading into the Lower City are watched by the Flaming Fist, while those leading into the more prestigious Upper City are manned by the Watch.

The populated areas outside the city's gates are referred to as the Outer City. These busy neighborhoods have little in the way of law enforcement.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Outer City's dark alleys teem with malevolence—driving the refugees to huddle together near their carts and look to the characters for reassurance.

Light. The characters and the accompanying refugee caravan arrive in the Outer City in the early afternoon on an overcast day.

Sound. The Outer City is filled with the whimpering of pack animals, shouting of guards, and sounds of hundreds of conversations in a myriad of languages, all forming an incessant, loud hum of civilization moving at a brisk pace.

CREATURE INFORMATION

A cadre of Flaming Fist guards (mostly LN and N **veterans** and **guards**) are here, questioning those seeking entrance

into the city. Dara, her companions, and the refugees accompany the characters.

What Do They Want? The Flaming Fist is charged with keeping the peace in Baldur's Gate. To that end, they're very selective about who they admit. The guards are loath to allow the refugees in under the best of circumstances, and it's certainly not happening with carts, pack animals, and a lack of authorization.

What Do They Know? Refugees are a contested issue in Baldur's Gate and the guards have standing orders not to let in large groups without special permission. Those who contest their refusal are free to take it up with the Fist leadership and plead their case for entry. The guards give the characters a bit of parting wisdom:

"Watch yer purses whilst in Blackgate, eh! Ye never know what be slitherin' about there."

WHAT OF VOLLIS FOOTE?

Characters who participated in *DDAL09-01 Escape from Eltrugard* and apprehended Vollis Foote are relieved of their charge as the guards take her into custody—leading her into one of the gate's towers. The guards are also a bit quicker to suggest that the characters speak to the Fist leadership regarding the refugees.

DEVELOPMENT

It isn't difficult to locate a place to leave the caravan in the Outer City, though it should be clear from this experience that the streets are dangerous and unsavory, and that getting into the city is critical.

Some of the refugees agree to stay and watch the caravan, while the more enterprising ones offer to go look for ways to sell or stow the carts and pack animals while the characters go back to the gate to plead their case.

CALL TO ACTION: SEEK OUT THE FLAME

The characters are turned away at the gate and told to speak with **Flame Daryn Falburn** if they want to find shelter for the refugees.



PART 1: AN EYE FOR THE FIST

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

A. BRIGHT FLAME

The characters are escorted to the office of **Flame Daryn Falburn**, located on the second floor of the Basilisk Gate. As the characters arrive, Flame Daryn Falburn is cleaning her gear after having returned from a patrol.

STORY OBJECTIVE A

Negotiating with the Flaming Fist to secure entry for the refugees is **Story Objective A**.

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 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).

AREA INFORMATION

The office has the following features.

Dimensions. The office is 30 feet square.

Light. The room is brightly lit by afternoon sunlight filtering through the open windows.

Sound. The Outer City is filled with the typical noise and commotion of urban life.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Flame Daryn Falburn (LN human female **veteran**) stares at a document-covered desk with a worry-streaked face. Her voice has a tinge of pragmatic cynicism to it:

"Welcome to Baldur's Gate. Is it everything you've hoped for?"

What Do They Want? Flame Falburn is one of the few members of the Flaming Fist leadership still actively trying to maintain order in the city. The refugee caravan is just one of a vast number of problems within the busy city and it's very low on her list of priorities.

What Do They Know? Flame Falburn has some sympathy for the refugees, but many seek entrance and the city's welcome is limited. She provides a list of disqualifications that preclude the refugees' admittance (though she implies that the characters can remedy them). If they think of an idea or measure to account for each point, she agrees to see them again in the morning with their proof.

- A full accounting of each refugee with their name, occupation, age, and criminal record.
- Carts and pack animals aren't permitted within the city—everyone must enter on foot.
- Confirmation from a cleric or lay-healer that resides within Baldur's Gate confirming that each refugee is free of any disease.

- Arrangements must be made with inns, temples, or relatives that are willing to house the refugees. They can't sleep on the streets.
- The refugees must have some arrangement to do work for the benefit of the city.

As the characters return to the caravan to organize these things, it soon becomes apparent that securing reliable lodging and work offers for twenty-seven separate refugees in one day is impossible.

Some of the refugees pool their money and suggest that they attempt to pay their way past the Flame during the morning meeting.

YOU CAN CERTAINLY TRY!

The characters may have time to try and satisfy the list, but they may eventually realize that doing so is nothing but a futile attempt to navigate the city's bureaucracy. Some tasks are simple (the refugee list can be resolved by just doing a head count and asking a few questions, and the carts and animals require finding a livery and a wagonwright). Other tasks, however, may require a bit more work (the characters may have a bit more trouble finding a cleric in the Outer City with the time and will to systematically check each refugee). Use your discretion, but keep this section short—even if it includes allowing the characters to bribe their way through the gate—spending a lot of time here may leave players feeling cheated out of success.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A. If utilizing this additional content, the characters are attacked by cultists (allies of **Vollis Foote**) after leaving Flame Falburn's offices. This attack is another reason to gain admittance into the city as soon as possible. However, Flame Falburn left for the day before the attack occurs, so the matter must wait until morning. This objective is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

DEVELOPMENT

The following morning, Flame Falburn summons the characters once again, this time demanding to see the list of the refugees she had previously asked for. If they don't have it, Vasha Hall (the refugees' de-facto leader), can provide one.

When the characters arrive, Flame Falburn reveals that another murder was committed during the night and that the victim had a letter addressed to Segren Hall, something that struck Flame Falburn as suspicious. She meets the characters with a concerned look and immediately asks to see the list of refugees. Upon confirming that Segren Hall is on the list, she demands to speak with him.

If the characters tell Falburn that Segren has been unconscious since they left Elturgard, she offers the characters a deal: she'll allow the refugees entry if the characters find the murderer. Further, she instructs that the characters must bring the murderer in alive—it's clear that the victim had some connection to Elturel and the murderer may be the only one who knows what it is.

If the characters agree, she gives them the letter found on the victim of the most recent murder (**Appendix 3**) and orders a pair of guards to escort them to the crime scene.

B. THE LETTER

The letter is written on a sheet of oil-stained parchment. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the letter itself was written a couple of tendays ago. This is evident both from the worn envelope it was in, as well as from the fact that it clearly predates Elturel's disappearance, since travel to the city is largely impossible now.

If they wish, the characters can visit Vasha Hall and see if she can provide any additional information about the letter and who wrote it. She can be found with the rest of the refugees.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Vasha Hall (LG female human **noble**) is either watching over her husband or helping the other refugees.

What Do They Want? Vasha is concerned for her husband and safety of the refugees. If there is anything she can do to help, she will.

What Do They Know? Vasha didn't know Markus Hallgate, but she knows of his family—they once resided in Elturel and were related to the Halls, but they all moved to Baldur's Gate some 30 years ago. They added "-gate" to their last name, following the example of others who have come to Baldur's Gate wishing to leave their roots behind. Since then, they've been largely forgotten in Elturel, so Vasha knows only a little. The only reason that she's even heard of them was because Segren had once taken her to their old farmstead and mentioned their departure from Elturgard.





PART 2: WHAT FALLS OUT

Estimated Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

THE LOWER CITY

This section takes place mostly in the Lower City district of Baldur's Gate. Most of the city's crafters and laborers have their homes and business in this area.

THE LOWER CITY

The Lower City forms a distinct crescent shape around the city's harbor. The best way to visualize the lower city is to imagine a set of horseshoes stacked on top of each other, not unlike the steps of a vast amphitheater.

Houses, bridges, and haphazard structures crisscross each other in a chaotic maze of cobblestone streets that are home to the majority of the city's working-class population.

STORY OBJECTIVE B

Discovering who murdered Markus Hallgate is **Story Objective B**.

AREA INFORMATION

The Lower City has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Lower City's narrow cobblestone streets are busy during the day and typically filled with a myriad of people.

Light. The characters begin their task early in the foggy morning, though by the time they get to the crime scene, the sun is out and shines brightly for the rest of the day.

Sounds. Like the Outer City, the Lower City is filled with the hustle and bustle of daily commerce.

Slick Streets. The cobblestones of the Lower City are frequently moist and slippery, making it easy to trip. The frequent fog, shade created by tightly built houses, proximity to the river, and general humidity all contribute to this effect.

A. UNSUBTLE SIGNS

From the Black Dragon Gate, the characters are escorted by an Upper Watch guard through the morning crowds towards the scene of the crime in the Lower City. The trip takes an hour and a half in total.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Velnar (LN male dwarf guard), a member of the Watch, bars passersby from the crime scene until the characters arrive.

What Do They Want? Velnar's main concern is to get the body removed as soon as possible after the characters have had a chance to look, so he constantly hurries them to get it done.

What Do They Know? Velnar knows that the body was discovered last night by passersby at around three bells. He doesn't know where Markus works, but does have Markus's home address. The murder actually occurred as Markus was on the way home from his shop.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

The Body. The body of Markus Hallgate is located in a small alley just off a busy street, covered by a tarp. Markus was the proprietor of a nearby leather goods shop. A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine) check suggests that the murder took place a couple of hours before midnight (though it's of little significance). Though the murder weapon isn't found on the scene, it's clear that Markus was stabbed to death by a slender, pointed instrument. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check finds exit wounds, suggesting that the weapon was long enough to pass all the way through the body. A *speak with dead* spell or similar magic reveals the same information.

Infernal Symbols. The Infernal writing surrounding the body was written by someone with slender fingers—there are no marks that indicate they were painted with a brush. If none of the characters are proficient in Infernal, a proficient passerby (such as a tiefling) may be willing to translate the writing, or the characters can copy the symbols to have it translated later.

The writing reads “**FOR THE FALLEN.**” In addition to the writing, another, larger symbol was also drawn, but was later smudged (likely by the act of draping the sheet over the body), rendering it unidentifiable. If the characters apprehended Grant Yoreling during **Bonus Objective A**, they recognize that this is the same symbol that he bears.

Footprints. There are a number of footprints in the area outlined with dried blood. Anyone investigating the footprints that succeeds on a DC 9 Wisdom (Survival) check determines that they're likely those of the murderer, since they were made when the blood was fresh and have since dried. Judging by the size of the footprints, they were likely left by a narrow-footed Medium humanoid.

B. ALL ABOUT THE HALLGATES

After investigating the murder scene and potentially finding a translation for the note, the characters eventually hit dead ends in their investigation until they speak to Markus Hallgate's wife, **Bolnata**, who can be found at their home. Markus's leather goods workshop is closed and locked up; even if the characters force entry, they quickly find that it contains no clues.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

The Hallgates' Home. The Hallgates live in a comfortable single-story house.

Light. Where there are windows, the curtains have been drawn, but daylight still filters inside.

The Bedchamber. If Bolnata doesn't give the characters the box (see **Treasure**), it can be easily found here. A strikingly exquisite dress is also laid out carefully upon a nearby armchair. It wouldn't be out of place in a noble's wardrobe, but seems lavish for Bolnata.

The Dress. This dress was recently made by a local dressmaker named Harwin, to encourage Bolnata to go dancing. If the dress is mentioned, or if Bolnata notices the characters examining it, she explains:

“Harwin always says I should go dancing more, so he made me this beautiful thing.”

CREATURE INFORMATION

Bolnata Hallgate (NG female human **commoner**) meets the characters and ushers them into her home. She's composed, but it's clear that she has been crying.

What Do They Want? Bolnata wants to help with the investigation, but also wants to grieve. While distraught, she is relieved that she won't have to leave Baldur's Gate.

What Do They Know? Bolnata had been out dancing last night and ended up staying with a pair of friends (something that the two women confirm if the characters pursue this lead). When she learned of her husband's death this morning, she ensured that his shop was closed and returned home. She knows Harwin Lamlin as a skilled (and utterly harmless) dressmaker; his shop is close by.

Over the last six months, two of Markus's friends died under mysterious circumstances, and he'd become increasingly fearful and frequently suggested moving to Elturgard or further abroad—an idea that Bolnata, as a native to the Gate, vehemently opposed. Another of Markus's friends, an Upper City guard named Dovia Tobergate, knows more. Bolnata refuses to entertain any suggestions that Markus was involved in any cults. If shown the Infernal writing from the crime scene, she fetches Markus's family heirloom from the bedroom, an old box made of dark, polished wood (see **Treasure**).

TREASURE

This old wooden box is inlaid with silver Infernal runes at the bottom of the closet. The inscription reads: “**HELL AND BACK AGAIN.**”

Inside is a pair of *eyes of the eagle*, made of leather with lenses of dark red crystal. The frame is emblazoned with the emblem of a horse's head on a sunburst. A character who succeeds on a DC 11 Intelligence (History) check knows that this symbol is the heraldry of the Hellriders. Elturgardian characters or those with the Soldier background make this check with advantage.

PROCEEDING TO THE NEXT SCENE

After talking with Bolnata, the characters are likely to seek out Dovia Tobergate in the Upper City, or Harwin Lamlin at his shop. If the characters choose to see Dovia first, he's at his post by the Heap Gate (**Scene C**). If they choose to go to Harwin's shop first (**Scene D**), they end up encountering Dovia before they get there—he's heard of the murder and came to give his old friend's widow his condolences.

C. WATCHING THE WATCHMAN

If the characters search for Dovia, they find him at his post near the Heap Gate. Otherwise, he finds the characters, calling out to them as they head to Harwin's shop—having been given their description by Flame Falburn.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Dovis Tobergate (LG male human **veteran**) has a stern yet concerned expression when he first meets the characters.

What Do They Want? Dovis's primary task is to keep the peace at the Heap Gate, but he's heard word of Markus's death and feels a duty to help look into the matter personally.

What Do They Know? Dovis didn't put much stock into the deaths of a couple of other local Elturgardians, but Markus was quite concerned. The first, a man named Nagurt, was killed six months ago, according to Dovis:

"He was attacked by some sort of large animal in the night. Very bloody, but not particularly suspicious."

The animal was never found. The second victim, an old woman named Mirna, was killed a month ago. She had been cut up and her blood smeared over a nearby wall—so much blood that you could still see the smears even after a long, hard rain:

"Someone must've truly hated her."

Neither victim had any local relatives and their investigations were closed. Dovis is very sad about Markus' death:



"Seems like the Companion's light wanes a bit more every day that passes in Baldur's Gate."

Dovis is insulted if he's accused of being involved in his friend's death. He knows who Harwin is but has never paid any mind to the "mousy little fella." If the characters haven't already, he's able to identify the emblem on the *eyes of the eagle* as the heraldry of the Hellriders.

D. HARWIN'S SHOP

The characters should eventually make their way to **Harwin's Garments & Knits** shop. The majority of the information at the shop come from questioning Harwin's apprentice Zook. If the characters wish to visit Markus's shop while in the area, they find nothing of interest.

BACKGROUND

Gharizol's clever magical influence over Harwin allowed him to convince the man to commit a gruesome murder, while believing that it was perfectly normal to do so. The same subtle influence convinced Harwin that he should then take a few days trip out to the countryside, to check on the shearing operations. As such, there's nothing extraordinary at the shop, and Harwin's apprentice Zook is entirely oblivious.

AREA INFORMATION

Harwin's shop has the following features.

The Shop. Harwin's Garments and Knits is located two doors down and across the street from Markus's leather goods shop. The ground floor of the house consists of two rooms: the shop-front room and a workshop. The shop is decorated with several mannequins, and roughly split into two halves—one featuring finely sewn garments such as dresses and vests, and the other displaying knitted wool items such as sweaters and hats. The owner clearly wanted to diversify his offerings.

The Apartment. Harwin's apartment is above his shop, accessible from a flight of stairs near the front door. Zook has a key to the locked door leading to Harwin's small second-floor apartment. Alternatively, the characters can also force their way up or try to enter unnoticed. Unlocking the door requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. However the characters end up getting in, Zook doesn't interfere and merely stares, wide-eyed.

Harwin's apartment is neat and humble. The bedroom is sparsely decorated with several tasteful drawings and trinkets. There is a small desk that contains designs for a number of garments. The small kitchen is also neat and tidy. The only thing out of sorts in the apartment is **blood-stained wash basin** in the small washroom.

The Bloody Basin. A character examining the basin that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check confirms that the blood is only a few hours old. A bloodied cloth rests on the ledge of the basin. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) reveals that the cloth is particularly fine and spotless except for the blood. The cloth is a polishing tool for knitting needles, and a character with a relevant Guild Artisan background (such as a tailor) can identify them as such. Zook is also able to explain what the items are.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Harwin's apprentice, Zook Pilwicken (N gnome **commoner**), is oblivious to the night's events and is busy organizing wares for sale when the party arrives.

What Do They Want? Zook is mainly concerned with keeping the shop tidy, since he's been left in charge! He likes Harwin, but he is a law-abiding citizen and is happy to help with the investigation.

What Do They Know? A couple of days ago, Harwin left to check on the shearing operations outside of town. This was strange; they had wool and Harwin didn't like the sheep. Harwin must have left before Zook got to the shop this morning, since the tea in Harwin's favorite mug was still warm. Zook believes that Harwin would be traveling with a caravan of other merchants:

"If you're quick out to Blackgate, you might still be able to catch them as they prepare to head out!"

Harwin has always been fond of Bolnata; he remarked that he enjoyed creating dresses for her more than many of the other ladies who frequent his shop. This seemed fairly innocent until Harwin suddenly decided to make Bolnata a free dress:

"He even used the last of our Theskian silk for it!"

Zook can identify the cloth as a polishing tool for knitting needles, of which Harwin owns an impressive amount:

"Master Harwin would like to have taken his brass needles for his journey. Always keeping himself busy, he is! But the blood, oh my!"

Zook has the key to the Harwin's apartment. While he is hesitant to do so, he can be convinced to let the characters into the apartment with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check.

DEVELOPMENT

By this point in the adventure, the party should suspect Harwin of the murder—even though everyone else believes him to be completely harmless. He's neither a strong nor passionate man, and his interest in Bolnata hasn't appeared to be obsessive or inappropriate, at least not until very recently.

Once they recognize that time is of the essence and they need to cross the city to reach the Blackgate neighborhood quickly, the characters must make haste. If they haven't realized that getting across the city is likely to be time-consuming, Dovia emphatically reminds them that the city is quite busy. Allow the characters to come up with ideas of how they plan to navigate the bustle of urban traffic. Let them use the opportunity to utilize ability checks and background features to their advantage here; don't let them rely on rolls to simply find a better route. Reward creativity.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B. If utilizing this additional content, **Dovia** gets separated from the group in their rush to the gate; he doesn't turn up no matter how hard they search. The characters may come across his body (see **Scene B**), so his absence during the encounter with **Harwin** is important to establish early. Once the characters finish with the **Wrap-Up**, proceed to **Bonus Objective B**.

E. SO LONG, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE HELLRIDERS

The characters catch up to the merchant caravan with Harwin just as it leaves Blackgate.

AREA INFORMATION

The area of Blackgate where characters finally reach the caravan is at the edge of town.

Dimensions & Terrain. The street is busy with traffic to and from Baldur's Gate, and the houses here are largely run-down.

Light. Bright sunlight provides bright light throughout the area.

Sounds. There is plenty of noise from other passersby, though it is definitely quieter than the endless chatter of the city proper.

The Caravan. The caravan is moving slowly through the busy main thoroughfare that eventually turns into the Great Trade Way.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The merchant caravan transporting Harwin consists of two simple covered wagons—each carrying four merchants (N **commoners**). Harwin (N male human **commoner**) is in the first wagon. The caravan is escorted by four hired **guards** and their leader, Thomar Belkis (N male dwarf **guard**).

What Do They Want? Belkis and the guards are being paid to protect the merchant caravan and are willing to use violence to do so. Harwin wants to leave town in order to visit the nearby sheep farms. However, once Gharizol's influence over Harwin fades and the weight of his actions begins to bear down on the dressmaker, he crumbles in horror and begins to weep uncontrollably.

What Do They Know? Harwin doesn't believe his recent actions to be anything but normal; he's confused as to why he'd be stopped and makes no effort to conceal his involvement in Markus' murder. He only knows that "His" voice told him that taking a trip is the right thing to do, just like "His" voice told him to make Bolnata a dress, to stab Markus repeatedly with his knitting needle, and to paint symbols in the man's blood. Harwin knows that "His" name is Gharizol, but doesn't know who or what he actually is.

The guards don't know much about the caravan or its merchants (including Harwin), and they don't really care—they're not paid to be meddlesome or nosy.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the adventurers have stopped the caravan or found another way to get **Harwin's** attention, he doesn't resist or try to flee, but instead looks out from his wagon and

greet the party. For a moment, his voice is overtaken by something else—something cunning and merciless. This is actually **Gharizol**, though of course he is not physically present here.

“Welcome to Baldur’s Gate,” says the thin man with gray hair and thick glasses. His voice is even, emotionless, and somehow distant. “Thank you for bringing them to me. You can have him now.”

The man’s voice changes to a softer, more worried tone and he nervously adjusts his glasses. “Yes, yes, I am Harwin. What’s this about?”

Harwin was so thoroughly convinced that everything he had done was perfectly normal, that he at first does not understand why he is being accosted.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter.

Combat. If the characters choose to accost the caravan violently or without explanation, the guards protect it, while all the merchants hide or flee. Blackgate—especially at the edge of town—is quite lawless, so the Fist doesn’t interfere in time.

Exploration. Characters may try to find a way to stop or block the caravan. This is a busy thoroughway and traffic jams are common, so this is not difficult to accomplish. Allow for creativity and let simple ability checks succeed.

Social. For the characters, getting to speak to Harwin can be as simple as approaching the caravan and explaining themselves. So long as they’re not aggressive, the caravan halts. Harwin himself doesn’t try to fight or flee (see “Development,” above).

WRAP-UP: RESULTS

The characters escort Harwin to the Flaming Fist headquarters and report to Flame Daryn Falburn. As they deliver their final report to Flame Falburn, a Flaming Fist soldier arrives with a note, which she reads, then sighs.

“It seems that our efforts were for naught. Another man has been killed and the same bloody symbol drawn on his remains. It only just happened, so it couldn’t have been this man.”

When the characters conclude their business with the Flaming Fist, Vasha is pleased to inform them that the refugees not been idle and have been able to procure a warehouse near the docks to house themselves. Everyone is safe and sound.

Bonus Objective B. If this additional content is being utilized, the note includes instructions asking the characters to investigate the scene of the most recent crime (see **Appendix 2**). The note also identifies the victim, a Watch guard named Dovia Tobergate (whom the characters met in **Scene C**, above).

TREASURE

At the adventure’s end, Vasha Hall provides the characters with payment in the form of gold, silver, and copper coins (it’s quite apparent that the refugees have all contributed to pay the characters) on the refugees’ behalf to thank the characters for getting them to the city.

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 5.

- *Eyes of the eagle*
- *Potion of healing*
- *Potion of poison*

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.

Vasha Hall. Vasha is the owner and proprietor of the Fabled Fawn, once a modest inn and tavern on the outskirts of Elturel. Since Elturel's disappearance, she's become the de facto leader of the refugees.

- **What They Want.** Vasha's main concern is the safety of the refugees.
- **Always Fussy.** Vasha seems to be perpetually busy doing something or other.

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!"

Bolnata Hallgate (BOLE nah tuh). Bolnata is a female half-elf who has been married to Markus for over twenty-two years. While the love had largely faded from their relationship some years ago, Bolnata still very much cared for Markus and is clearly distraught at his death. She is a well-dressed and well-spoken native of Baldur's Gate, easily mistaken for an Upper City lady. She's proud of how she and Markus built a good life for themselves.

- **What They Want.** Bolnata wants to help with the investigation, but she also longs to be left alone to grieve.
- **Genuine Grief, Shameful Relief.** Bolnata is truly heartbroken about her husband's death, yet there is some relief in knowing that she won't have to move out of Baldur's Gate as he had wanted.

Dovis Tobergate (DOE viss TOE burr gate). Dovis is in his late fifties, but still spry. His father and grandfather before him all served proudly in the Hellriders. Dovis is a man of few words, but he is devoted to protecting others. He was not very close friends with Markus, though Markus recently shared his concerns with Dovis.

- **What They Want.** Dovis thinks he could have done more to help Markus, so he wants to get to the truth now, even if it's too late.
- **Old School Soldier.** Dovis is a soldier from a long line of soldiers. He is responsible, stern and quiet.

Zook. Harwin's apprentice has worked at the shop for over ten years. Unlike Harwin, who lives upstairs, Zook comes in every morning. He's friendly, outgoing and always looking for ways to help improve the business. He was taken on at least in part to help balance Harwin's slightly aloof nature and make customers feel welcome.

- **What They Want.** Zook is happy to help the characters, but he wouldn't ever think to suspect Harwin of wrongdoing.
- **Service with a Smile.** Zook is courteous and accommodating.

Thomas Belkris (TOE mahs BELL kriss). Thomas is the leader of the hired guards for the merchant caravan. Experienced and calm, he knows the capabilities of those who serve him and is careful to not endanger them.

- **What They Want.** Thomas wants to do his job, get paid and get back home.
- **Safety and Reliability.** Thomas does what's necessary to uphold his reputation as a professional guard, but he doesn't take foolish risks.

Harwin Lamlin (HARR win LAM linn). Harwin is a thin, tall, grey-haired man in his early fifties. He is mild-mannered and unassuming.

Harwin has been friends with Bolnata and Markus for years. His fondness for Bolnata was innocent until Gharizol began to twist and manipulate it. The devil told Harwin that Bolnata would be his if he proved his talent to her, and if Markus was no longer in the picture. The voice pushed until Harwin was convinced that he had to kill Markus.

To Harwin, it then made perfect sense for him to kill Markus and to scrawl a message in Infernal, the meaning of which he didn't even understand. It also sounded reasonable to leave for a few days, allowing Bolnata to mourn and then return and take her for his own.

- **What They Want.** When Harwin's mind isn't clouded by Gharizol, he's a simple man, satisfied with his simple life and his shop.
- **An Unwitting Victim.** Before Gharizol's haze fades, Harwin believes everything that has transpired is perfectly normal. He makes no attempt to justify or hide it, but is consumed by regret and remorse.

CREATURE STATISTICS

This section details creatures that are encountered in this adventure.

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 (25 XP)

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.

BERSERKER

Medium humanoid (any race), any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the berserker can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing 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 (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.

NOBLE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

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

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

APPENDIX 1: CULT FOLLOWING (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

Estimated Duration: 1 hour

A. CULT FAVORITE

As the characters arrive in the Outer City and hand over Vollis Foote to the Flaming Fist, they're spotted by a member of the Cult of Zariel named Grant Yoreling. Grant is a higher-ranking cultist who musters his colleagues to ambush the party in the Outer City.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

This bonus objective consists of two sections, an initial combat encounter and a chase. Capturing Grant Yoreling is **Bonus Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following general features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ambush takes place on the busy streets of the Outer City. It is crowded and noisy, with plenty of side alleys between the closely packed buildings.

Lighting. There is ample afternoon light, with shadowy areas in the alleys.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Grant Yoreling (LE male human **cult fanatic**) and five **cultists** mix into the crowd and wait for their moment to strike. Any character with a passive Perception of 13 or higher isn't surprised when they attack.

Objectives and Goals. Grant's goal is revenge; he wants the characters to pay for Vollis Foote's arrest. Grant prefers to let others do the work, so he observes and provides guidance from a low rooftop nearby. Once spotted, Grant makes his escape, kicking off the chase. The other cultists are local brutes indoctrinated in the cult with promises of strength and purpose. They're all eager to provide themselves trustworthy.

What do They Know? Grant has been told that those responsible for the capture (or death) of one of the cult's own were en route to the city and should be punished. He knows only that his information comes from someone powerful named Gharizol and admits to nothing else besides his involvement in the Cult of Zariel. The other cultists don't know that Grant is a devotee of Zariel.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove three **cultists**; none of them have the Ferocious Surge trait; Grant Yoreling's 2nd level spell slots are spent when combat begins.
- **Weak:** Remove two **cultists**.
- **Strong:** Replace a **cultist** with a **cult fanatic** and a **berserker**.
- **Very Strong:** Replace three **cultists** with **berserkers**.

All of the cultists (but not the berserkers, if any) have the Ferocious Surge trait. Grant also has the Infernal Tactics trait:

- **Ferocious Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** When this creature hits with an attack that isn't a critical hit, it can turn the hit into a critical hit.
- **Infernal Tactics.** This creature has a keen eye for seizing a tactical advantage. Immediately after rolling initiative, it can choose itself and up to three allies it can see if it isn't incapacitated. It can swap the initiative results of the chosen creatures among them.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. As the cultists have been trying to stay inconspicuous before attacking, they are likely spread out and target different characters. Yoreling gives directions from afar. Once he's noticed or see a character move towards him, he takes off.

Exploration. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the symbol of the archdevil Zariel on Grant's amulet. Tieflings and warlocks with a fiendish patron make this check with advantage.

Social. The streets are crowded. Most bystanders prefer to stay out of the way of a fight, but a charismatic character might be able to inspire others to help. A successful DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check can be used to get a random NPC's assistance. This assistance is likely to come in the form of impeding an enemy's movement—such as tripping them—or aiding the character's movement—such as giving them a boost to perform some acrobatic maneuver.

B. CULT PURSUIT

Grant Yoreling takes off across the **Outer City**. He starts the chase 60 feet away from the party.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The characters are chasing Grant Yoreling. This encounter uses the chase rules in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Use the table below, which applies to each character involved in the chase. The chase has the following modifications:

Crowded Alleys. The crowd provides Grant total cover from anyone more than 30 feet away.

Just Beyond Reach. Even if Grant himself can't be seen, the characters can still see signs of his passage (upset stalls, shouting people, etc.).

CHASE COMPLICATIONS

d20 Complication

- 1 A vegetable merchant pushing a large cart of beets blocks your way. Make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) to avoid them. On a failed check, the merchant throws a beet at you, dealing 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.
- 2 A dozen burly farmers carrying chickens and rabbits in cages fill the path. Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) to make your way through the crowd unimpeded. On a failure, the crowd counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
- 3 You swerve and find yourself tumbling through a ramshackle house with rotting wooden walls. Make a DC 10 Strength saving throw to smash through it and keep going. On a failed save, you trip and fall prone.
- 4 You run into a narrow, labyrinthine alley. Make a DC 10 Intelligence check to get out of the alley. On a failed check, the maze counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
- 5 Poop. A huge, wet, stinking, slippery pile of fresh ox poop. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or slip and fall prone nearby. If you fail the check by 5 or more, you fall prone into the poop.
- 6 A spooked horse gets loose from a nearby stable. Make a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) to calm it. On a failure, you fall prone and take 1d4 bludgeoning damage.
- 7 You run into a brawl in progress. Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to get past the brawlers unimpeded. On a failed check, you take 2d4 bludgeoning damage, and the brawlers count as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
- 8 A beggar blocks your way. Make a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check to slip past the beggar. You succeed automatically if you toss the beggar a coin. On a failed check, the beggar counts as 5 feet of difficult terrain.
- 9 A gang member (bandit) mistakes you for someone who owes her money and threatens you. You need to slow to let her get a better look. If you move 20 feet or more on your turn, she makes an attack against you with a scimitar (+3 to hit; 1d6 + 1 slashing damage on a hit).
- 10 You run through an open-air smithy just as a dwarven blacksmith turns holding a red-hot horseshoe in his tongs. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to get out of the way. On a failed save, you are scorched and take 1d4 fire damage.
- 11-20 No complication.

ENDING THE CHASE

The chase ends if Grant Yoreling is:

Too Slow. If the characters catch up to Grant, he doesn't get away. He doesn't put up much of a fight, and surrenders if it looks like he'll lose.

Too Fast. If Grant Yoreling is at least 120 feet away from the closest pursuer for two rounds in a row, he gets away.

Too Far. If Grant Yoreling manages to traverse over 300 feet without being captured, he reaches a secret safehouse and escapes.

TREASURE

Grant carries a coin purse and a *potion of poison*, and wears an amulet with the symbol of Zariel.



APPENDIX 2: COURTSIDE FOR MURDER (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

Estimated Duration: 1 hour

A. ANOTHER MURDER

After reporting on their dealings with Harwin, the characters accompany **Flaming Fist** guards to the scene of the newest murder. Unbeknownst to them, Gharizol has sent his followers to frame the characters for murder. Before the characters arrive, identify which of them has a unique weapon or a fighting style easy to imitate. For example, if the rogue uses a rapier, the murder weapon could be a rapier. If any character used ammunition during the combat with the cultists, this could have been recovered and used to frame them.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

Surrendering themselves to the Flaming Fist and proving their innocence to the Magistrate is **Bonus Objective B**. Characters that are found guilty don't complete this bonus objective.



AREA INFORMATION

Dovis Tobergate's body is in a nondescript alleyway back in the Outer City.

Dimensions & Terrain. The small alley contains the body, a symbol of Zariel drawn on a wall, and the same writing in Infernal as was present at Markus's murder: "FOR THE FALLEN."

Light. There is plenty of light in the alley.

The Body. A successful DC9 Wisdom (Medicine) check identifies how the man was murdered (see "Another Murder," above). The specific character being framed has advantage on this check to recognize the work of their usual weapon.

The Weapon. If the murder was committed by a weapon, it isn't present at the scene.

The Symbol. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the symbol as that of the archdevil Zariel. Tieflings and warlocks with a fiendish patron make this check with advantage.

The Ring. Before his death, **Dovis** had taken off his glove, perhaps to wipe off blood, revealing a ring bearing the insignia of a horse upon a sunburst. A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check confirms that the ring is older than Dovis. Characters who discovered the *eyes of the eagle* in Markus Hallgate's home recognize the symbol as the heraldry of the Hellriders. Others can identify the symbol with a successful DC 11 Intelligence (History) check. Characters from Elturgard or with the Soldier background make this check with advantage.

CREATURE INFORMATION

As the characters are examining the scene, the six Flaming Fist guards (**veterans**) round up and question various passersby and vendors. Two **cultists** hide among the crowd and eventually accuse the characters of the crime.

What do They Want? The Flaming Fist is here to secure the scene, conduct a preliminary investigation, and make arrests as warranted. The cultists (one of which is an actual turnip vendor) want the Flaming Fist to suspect the characters. Once multiple people have accused the characters, the guards aim to take them into custody.

What do They Know? The guards know very little thus far, since they are just beginning their investigation. However, having more than one witness levy accusations against the characters is damning. The cultists know who perpetrated the crime (a third cultist who has left the area), but loudly accuse the characters:

"...Yes, that one there! Saw it clear as day I did, they was both runnin' and that one came from behind and stabbed 'im right in the back!"

It should be very clear to the characters that the Flaming Fist guards have no intention of hearing any pleas of

innocence and that fighting them would be deadly. If the characters wish to clear their names, they must submit for now.

B. ACCUSED OF MURDER

The characters' equipment is confiscated and they're each escorted to a small cell in the Basilisk Gate. They're told that they'll have an opportunity to plead their innocence "soon."

CREATURE INFORMATION

After hours of waiting, **Flame Daryn Falburn** appears, flanked by a pair of **guards**.

Objectives and Goals. While Falburn wants to know the truth of what's going on, she's here to tell the characters to prepare themselves for an audience with the magistrate in a few hours. If the characters try to explain themselves to her, she curtly interrupts them:

"Save it for the magistrate. I can do nothing for you."

What Do They Know? While Flame Falburn suspects that the characters are innocent, she knows her place. She trusts the magistrate's judgment; if the characters are innocent, justice will prevail, and she speaks honestly and objectively during the trial. She asks the characters to prepare their arguments and a list of any requested evidence or witnesses. The characters have time to ready their defense. Flame Falburn promises that all possible witnesses and evidence will be made available to them at the tribunal. They're being accused of Dovy's murder, but since his murder was so similar to Markus's, they may be suspected of that murder as well.

PREPARING FOR THE TRIAL

Allow the players 10 minutes to prepare the following three items among themselves:

- Their version of events and their whereabouts.
 - A list of witnesses they wish to be present.
 - A list of evidence they wish to be available.
- The lists need to be provided to Daryn before the tribunal, while the recounting of events is for their own purposes.

C. STANDING TRIAL

The characters are escorted to a courtroom built into the city wall near the **Basilisk Gate**.

AREA INFORMATION

The room contains several tables laden with a variety of evidence. Anything reasonable that the characters requested is here.

CREATURE INFORMATION

A dozen armed Flaming Fist **guards**, **Flame Daryn Falburn**, a court clerk (N female human **commoner**) and Magistrate Vitana Moore (LE female human **noble**) form the court contingent. A number of nervous-looking witnesses sit in chairs just outside the chamber. The Magistrate begins the proceedings once the characters are seated.

Objectives and Goals. Magistrate Moore wants to evaluate whether the characters are a threat to Baldur's Gate, and to demonstrate the power of the Flaming Fist to them, deterring them from appearing before the court again.

What do They Know? Magistrate Moore has been briefed on the events, but has not decided beforehand on the accused's guilt or innocence. However, the trial also offers an opportunity for the Flaming Fist to flex their authoritarian muscles. While the magistrate knows that only a single individual would have committed the crime, there is evidence that a conspiracy is afoot and thus the entire group is being tried.

DEVELOPMENT

Magistrate Moore formally begins the proceedings by reading from a scroll:

"You are hereby accused by the city of Baldur's Gate of the murder of Dovy Tobergate in the name of and on behalf of an unknown power. You are also suspected of the murder of Markus Hallgate in the name of and on behalf of the same unknown power. How do you plead?"

Ever observant of the laws of Baldur's Gate, the magistrate asks each character in turn how they plead.

The magistrate then asks a series of yes-or-no questions and insists that the characters answer them accordingly—cutting them off if they avoid doing so. The magistrate wants to hear from every character—both to corroborate the story and to understand everyone's involvement.

PLAYING OUT THE TRIAL

The trial is a roleplaying opportunity for the players to go over their knowledge of the key events from the adventure.

TIPS FOR PACING THE TRIAL

Courtroom drama can make for exciting roleplaying, but if the adventure has a time limit, it's important to keep the trial progressing. Here are some tips:

- Explain how the trial works, so that the players know what they need to accomplish.
- Magistrate Moore is there to hear arguments, but she doesn't have the patience of a saint. If a point has been sufficiently made, have her ask the characters to move on.
- Give inspiration for good arguments and ideas even if there isn't enough time to describe them in detail.

To convince the magistrate of their innocence, the group must accumulate **eight successes** during questioning. If they accumulate **three failures** before eight successes, they're found guilty.

Successes. Answering the magistrate's question in a way that supports the characters' innocence counts as a success. Presenting a piece of evidence or calling an appropriate witness counts as an additional success.

Failures. Failing to answer a question or answering poorly counts as a failure. Being caught in a lie also counts as a failure. Being rude to the magistrate, interrupting, or being held in contempt of the tribunal counts as a failure.



Questioning. The characters are asked about the following points. (Feel free to expand upon this list and to pepper it with legal-sounding jargon such as “Do you deny this?” and “Is this not true?”)

- Their presence at the scene.
- Their relationship with Dovia Tolgate.
- Their knowledge about the Infernal markings.
- The reason why multiple witnesses saw them rushing through the area near the scene.

While no check is needed to tell the truth, a character who lies must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check if they want to keep the magistrate from detecting the ruse. Refusing to answer or being caught lying in response to one of the magistrate’s questions counts as a failure, as does displaying contempt.

A HOSTILE VENDOR

If you’ve still got time, and wish to up the drama, the magistrate calls the full-time turnip seller (and part-time cultist) **Melva** to testify, unless the characters have already done so. Once seated and sworn in, Melva calmly recounts having just set up with her turnip cart in the area and personally witnessing the accused murder Dovia.

She didn’t actually see the murder and has made up some details, so catching her in a lie isn’t terribly difficult. Asking her to describe the exact murder results in contradictory testimony. Similarly, trying to provide a detailed description of the weapon or the accused (she may identify different characters as the “murderer” at different times) quickly gets her flustered. If the characters are particularly clever in dealing with her, the magistrate eventually catches on. She remands Melva (who begins to howl in protest) into custody and instructs the recorder to strike her testimony from the record.

THE MAGISTRATE’S FINDINGS

Upon the conclusion of the tribunal, the magistrate yields a finding of innocence or guilt. While it’s possible different characters to have different verdicts, it is most likely the same verdict applies to the group:

- **Innocent.** The magistrate finds them **innocent** and releases them. Once they’re released, Dara (along with Ghorin and Clyde) await them outside the courthouse.
- **Guilty.** The characters are escorted back to their prison. The following morning, **Dara** (along with **Ghorin** and **Clyde**) secure their release. Characters that are found **guilty** don’t complete this **bonus objective**, and must each pay a fine of 50 gp. Those that can’t pay the fine are sentenced to 10 downtime days of hard labor. Those that can’t pay either can surrender a magic item (reducing their magic item limit by 1 per the rules found in the *Adventurers League Player’s Guide*).

TREASURE

If the adventurers are found innocent, Flame Falburn also meets them outside and apologizes for the misunderstanding. She gives them a *potion of healing* and a few silver ingots from the Flaming Fist stores.

APPENDIX 3: MARKUS HALL'S LETTER (PLAYER HANDOUT 1)

Segren,

I hope this letter finds you well.. It has been long since our grandfathers served together in Elturel, and seemingly just as long since we last visited.

I know you may find it cowardly that I would contact you after my father's decision to abandon Elturel and even our name, but he has been gone some two dozen years now and I feel that a return home is inevitable. I write to you to inquire about grandfather's old farm. Does it yet remain untended and in the family? Is there an opportunity for us to return and raise sheep there?

Truth is that we no longer feel safe here. Baldur's Gate is a great city and we always knew that it was a violent one. Yet, lately, tragedy has struck twice close to home and I feel at times scared to even walk home from the workshop.

I know that you owe us no kindness, but still, taken pity on your old kin and write back whether a return home would be possible.

Markus Hallgate

APPENDIX 4: THE REFUGEE LIST (PLAYER HANDOUT 2)

The following are notable NPCs that remain with the refugee caravan:

Dara (DAHR uh). Female human. Dara is a ten-year-old child who had been raised by priests of Ilmater, in Eshpurta, Amn. Perhaps as a result of this upbringing, she has a calm demeanor and often speaks of Ilmater's teachings. She travels in the company of Ghorin and his goat, Clyde.

Ghorin & Clyde (GORE inn). Dara's companion is an elderly man nearing seventy years of age. He's a dottering old man who wears dusty clothes worn thin from years of hard work. He walks with a stopped gait supported by a long, smooth yew staff. Despite his apparent age, he's still sharp as a tack, no nonsense, and has a story about everything. He's frequently accompanied by an equally old goat with grey fur who he refers to as Clyde.

Vasha Hall (VAH shuh). Female human. Vasha is the owner and proprietor of the Fabled Fawn, once a modest inn and tavern on the outskirts of Elturel. Since Elturel's disappearance, she's become the de facto leader of the refugees.

Segren Hall (SEH gren). Male human; Vasha's husband. He was kicked in the head by a horse in the aftermath of the Descent and has been unconscious since.

Ippon Waston (IP uhn WAY stunn). Female halfling. A miller who has taken to accounting for and guarding the supplies that the refugees salvaged from the ruins of their homes.

Pal Tithrin (TITH rinn). Male half-elf. Ippon's assistant. Competent, but contrasts Ippon's seriousness with his wildly inappropriate sort of gallows' humor. Despite this, he's charming and hard to dislike.

Wellum Smith (WELL uhm). Male human; Smithy from the same village as the Halls. He and Vollis are likely the only two refugees that are capable with a sword. A bit too fond of the drink.

Gordrick Ironarm (GORE drick). Male dwarf. Wellum's assistant. Has shaved his beard regularly since his exile from his home in the Spine of the World. Forlorn and prone to bouts of despondent depression.

Hastrine Leafender (HA streen). Nonbinary elf. A traveler that was passing through the area during the Descent. Furrier and herbalist by trade, they've joined the refugees in the hopes that their skills can be of some use. Speaks in cryptic rhymes.

Eighteen Other Members. The rest of the refugees are farmers and small-town artisans. Most of the able-bodied men and women ventured to the city proper in the hours preceding the Descent, and were either lost or are in Elturel, above. As a result, most of the refugees are the sick, the old, or the young.

APPENDIX 5: 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):

EYES OF THE EAGLE

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

These crystal lenses fit over the eyes. While wearing them, you have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. In conditions of clear visibility, you can make out details of even extremely distant creatures and objects as small as 2 feet across. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

These goggles are made of leather and have lenses of dark red crystal. Their frame is emblazoned with the emblem of the Hellriders: a horse's head superimposed upon a sunburst. Additionally, when looking through these goggles, tiny illusory flames can be seen dancing around the edges of the lenses when within 120 feet of a demon.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

You regain 2d4 + 2 hit points when you drink this potion. This item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*. The potion's red liquid glimmers when agitated.

POTION OF POISON

Potion, uncommon

This concoction looks, smells, and tastes like a *potion of healing*. However, it is actually a poison masked by illusion magic. An *identify* spell reveals its true nature.

If you drink it, you take 3d6 poison damage, and you must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. At the start of each of your turns while you are poisoned in this way, you take 3d6 poison damage. At the end of each of your turns, you can repeat the saving throw. On a successful save, the poison damage you take on your subsequent turns decreases by 1d6. The poison ends when the damage decreases to 0.

APPENDIX 6: 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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<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

NEW TO THE ANNUAL STORYLINE?

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/descent-into-avernus/>

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	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