Rivermont: Drama and Beyond - Revised Edition

Dungeon Master's edition

The characters arrive as Rivermont's arena announces three public challenges and Inspector Doyle Lestrade investigates disturbed graves. They might be competitors, hired escorts, local witnesses, or acquaintances of Hakkar.

Overview

Original campaign by bandolek. Revised edition for D&D Fifth Edition, 2014 rules. This module presents local Rivermont campaign canon, not an official cosmology claim.

Rivermont's arena hides a trade in stolen souls. Its records lead from Hakkar, a wounded investigator carrying Bahamut's trace, to a celestial tribunal, an infernal registry, and Asmodeus's sacrifice chamber.

For **four characters beginning at level 5 and reaching level 11 before the final rescue**. Original player characters provide optional connections.

• **Length:** approximately 53-57 hours, usually 14-18 sessions of 3-4 hours.

• **Structure:** ten core scenes in *Drama in Rivermont*, followed by ten in *Beyond Rivermont*.

• **Play:** civic investigation, three arena challenges, dungeon exploration, negotiation, a competitive battlefield, and an astral escape.

• **Advancement:** milestones; combat, negotiation, and bypass earn equal advancement.

• **Rules:** SRD 5.1, 2014 rules. Additional mechanics are marked campaign homebrew.

• **Visibility:** private DM material. Distribute player-safe materials at the acquisition points listed under **First-Session and Finale Preparation**.

The campaign includes coerced bargains, imprisonment, religious betrayal, threatened sacrifice, and death. Establish boundaries before play. Use bells, extinguishing light, and closing vessels to convey sacrifice.

DM Introduction

Carthain, Rivermont's arena administrator, has turned old funeral-recording tools into a soul-trafficking chain. He classifies living competitors as abandoned property, sends bodies and records through the Armory on High to an abandoned temple, and sells the claims to infernal buyers. Chevkos, the arena mage, understands enough to know the devices are wrong and protects the system until evidence of living victims threatens his own name. Hakkar stole part of the ledger, was captured, and survived extraction only because Bahamut intervened, leaving a divine trace in his wounded soul. That leakage animates corpses at the river quay and gives the party a visible first lead.

Part I follows evidence: the quay token points to Tharna, Tharna points to Chevkos, the arena challenges reveal transfer records and witnesses, the armory names the temple route, and the temple holds Hakkar, prisoners, and the ledger. The Mystic Wood can quiet the machine's lingering command but does not cancel Hakkar's claim. Lestrade's hearing decides what Rivermont does with the proof: public prosecution, supervised reform, quiet settlement, or referral to Northwatch if his repaired office creates a conflict. Each choice changes who is protected, who remains dangerous, and what help follows the party.

High Priest Oren Vahl then offers treatment at Eastwatch while concealing a murder. He serves Bahamut but believes divine advantage excuses sacrificing Hakkar and, if available, anyone tied to Tiamat. Veritas, Aequitas, and Mortus knowingly accepted his mandate before the party arrived. The characters can expose the hidden terms, fight, surrender Vahl to lawful custody, or refuse entry entirely. Refusal does not summon replacement attackers; Bandolek's disclosed formula still opens the voluntary crossing to Moradin's Desk.

At the Desk, Bahamut and Moradin disclose the real planar stakes. Asmodeus needs Hakkar's conduit to Bahamut and Cthugothotal's separate Io potential; the rite requires both actual souls in vessels. Cthugothotal's devotion to Tiamat does not make him property. Saving Hakkar never requires Cthugothotal's death or renunciation. Drachma can carry the party to the infernal city. Dimitri can identify the three orders, the registry, and practical entrances, but he bargains for copies and asylum rather than souls.

Part II turns records, agreements, and timing into a rescue. The registry can cancel Hakkar's claim, free six named souls, and reveal the sacrifice chamber. The Trials offer public audience and delay, not the only path. In the chamber, only souls actually held can be consumed; projections, signatures, remote claims, and sympathetic likenesses fail. Protecting either subject, destroying a pylon, releasing a vessel, or winning a legal delay can prevent the harvest. Use **Running Souls, Crossing, and Return** for individual states, then apply **Resolution Paths** for the resulting endings.

Hook

The characters arrive as Rivermont's arena announces three public challenges and Inspector Doyle Lestrade investigates disturbed graves. They might be competitors, hired escorts, local witnesses, or acquaintances of Hakkar.

Before disappearing, Hakkar sent Tharna Shavres one warning: **"They have entered the dead twice."**

CONNECTION	ACCESS GRANTED
Former arena competitor	Recognition by Chevkos and admission to competitor areas
Friend or correspondent of Hakkar	His room, personal notes, and a reason to search
River traveler	Captain Kanarr Talan's assistance and waterfront knowledge
Civic investigator	An initial interview with Lestrade and supervised access to public records
Religious petitioner	Recognition of Bahamut's platinum-scale emblem and introductions at Eastwatch
Associate of Cthugothotal or Bandolek	A personal connection to the second part without compulsory loyalty

A player may choose Cthugothotal or Bandolek as a character. Otherwise, each remains a supporting character with the limited role described in the scenes.

Opening Read-Aloud

READ-ALOUD

The evening queue stretches across Rivermont's river bridge beneath arena banners. A bell rings from the customs shed. Below, a coffin strikes a stone pier and splits. A mailed skeleton stands in the shallows with a brass arena token between its teeth. On the quay, a dockworker struggles to lift a child onto a mooring post as another shape moves under the water.

DM Prompt: The nearest stair leads down to the quay; the customs bell rope hangs beside it.

Stakes

Rivermont: the arena treats signatures, bodies, and souls as interchangeable property. The party can dismantle the trade, expose its beneficiaries, bargain for limited reform, or leave it intact.

Hakkar: rescue, bodily survival, freedom from the infernal claim, and removal of Bahamut's trace are separate accomplishments.

Cthugothotal: his faith neither makes him an enemy nor obliges him to accept anyone's interpretation of Io.

The gods: Bahamut wants Hakkar saved and the infernal plan understood. Moradin offers judgment with consent. Neither knows every infernal detail.

The dead: six named souls in the registry can be freed even if the larger rescue fails.

Opposition clocks

Track each clock separately; advance it only on its stated trigger.

Rivermont concealment, 0-4

START AND ADVANCE: Starts after Scene 1. Advance once after a conspicuous assault on arena staff, a public accusation without protection for witnesses, or each two full days spent after discovering the temple connection. Maximum once per day.

OBSERVABLE CHANGE: 1: documents move; 2: Carthain seeks protection; 3: temple prepares evacuation.

AT COMPLETION: At 4, Carthain flees to Eastwatch with copies. Physical evidence, captives, and the infernal ledger remain discoverable.

Hakkar's wound

START AND ADVANCE: Begins when found in Scene 8. Each seven days before his claim is severed reduces his hit point maximum by 1, to a minimum of 1.

OBSERVABLE CHANGE: His platinum emblem fades and his voice occasionally echoes.

AT COMPLETION: The wound alone cannot kill him. Severing the claim restores the lost maximum after a long rest.

Infernal decree

START AND ADVANCE: Announced during Scene 11: Trials on the fourth following dawn; sacrifice at sunset on the sixth day.

OBSERVABLE CHANGE: Posted notices, faction invitations, and Drachma's timetable repeat the dates.

AT COMPLETION: The rite uses only souls actually held. Missing subjects cause a failed harvest and renewed search.

City pursuit, 0-3

START AND ADVANCE: Starts at 0. Advance for a witnessed violent escape, exposed forged credential, or public attack on an infernal official. Maximum once per scene.

OBSERVABLE CHANGE: 1: descriptions circulate; 2: gates inspect travelers; 3: a warrant names the party.

AT COMPLETION: Sets the alert state under Scene 18's Pursuit entry table; enemy rosters remain finite.

Decree extension

A successful court order or Trials victory can suspend the decree for **24 hours**. Only one extension applies; they do not stack.

Factions

GROUP	GOAL AND LEVERAGE	WHAT CHANGES ITS BEHAVIOR
Rivermont civic officers	Lestrade wants admissible evidence; Kanarr wants the river open. They control warrants, boats, and public testimony.	Two independent pieces of evidence secure witness protection. Unsupported accusations produce scrutiny, not immediate imprisonment.
Arena administration	Carthain wants profit and deniability. Chevkos wants the arena preserved and his complicity minimized.	Carthain bargains with names and documents. Chevkos defects when shown that living competitors are being transferred.
Bahamut's divided servants	Hakkar's rescuers seek healing; Vahl seeks a sacrificial advantage over Tiamat.	Exposing Vahl separates his followers from him. Bahamut does not endorse the betrayal.
Moradin's hall	Bandolek wants every petitioner to hear the terms. The hall offers protected crossing, custody of bodies, and conditional return.	Each service requires consent.
Contractus	Adherents wear large square gold rings bearing a C. They seek enforceable soul holdings and advantageous precedent.	Defective title can force a settlement; public embarrassment matters more than moral appeal.
Usuporiis	They demand seven layers of the Hells and organize themselves in seven rigid ranks. Mortal wizard contacts give them access.	They trade help for records discrediting rivals. Some will free souls; others want to own the operation.
Asmodites	Enforcers of the present order. Some also belong to Contractus; others would abolish both rival organizations.	A superior's authenticated order can redirect them. They abandon a compromised collection if its ritual apparatus is destroyed.
Tiamat's claimants	They seek Cthugothotal's Io potential and Hakkar's divine trace.	Religious affiliation confers no ownership. Their limited pursuit force appears in Scene 19.

Faction bargains impose only their stated consequences. They do not change a character's alignment.

Cast

Portrait clothing, insignia, and carried objects help players recognize NPCs; they are not secret clues.

• **Inspector Doyle Lestrade:** a middle-aged human in plate and a dark judicial cloak. He wants a case that survives political pressure and fears becoming an arena patron's weapon. He repeats the last important noun: "A signature. Whose signature?" He provides warrants and safe custody but initially conceals that Carthain financed his office's repairs. Evidence wins him; threats make him demand neutral witnesses.

• **Captain Kanarr Talan:** a weathered human river captain with a short beard. He wants his crew paid and his vessel released from arena debt. He speaks in distances: "Two oar lengths. Then decide." He knows the boat challenge's mechanisms and offers river passage. He hides having transported sealed temple crates. The corpse tokens persuade him to testify.

• **Scarlet Jax:** a red-haired human swashbuckler who wants the crowd to believe her victories are honest. She fears becoming replaceable spectacle. "If the audience can't see the bargain, it's cheating." She knows where the reserve archers wait and who ordered the hydra's punishment collar. She will not sacrifice herself or her followers for Carthain.

• **Tharna Shavres:** a mature human wizard with tightly braided hair and ink-marked hands. She wants Hakkar found and her stolen apparatus recovered. She distinguishes observation from inference aloud. She can decipher the ledger and sponsor arena entry. She conceals having designed the legitimate funeral-recording device later adapted into the extractor.

Rivermont civic cast

Top row, left to right: Inspector Doyle Lestrade; Captain Kanarr Talan. Bottom row: Scarlet Jax; Tharna Shavres.

Rivermont soul cast

Top row, left to right: Hakkar; Cthugothotal. Bottom row: Bandolek Boltaire; Chevkos.

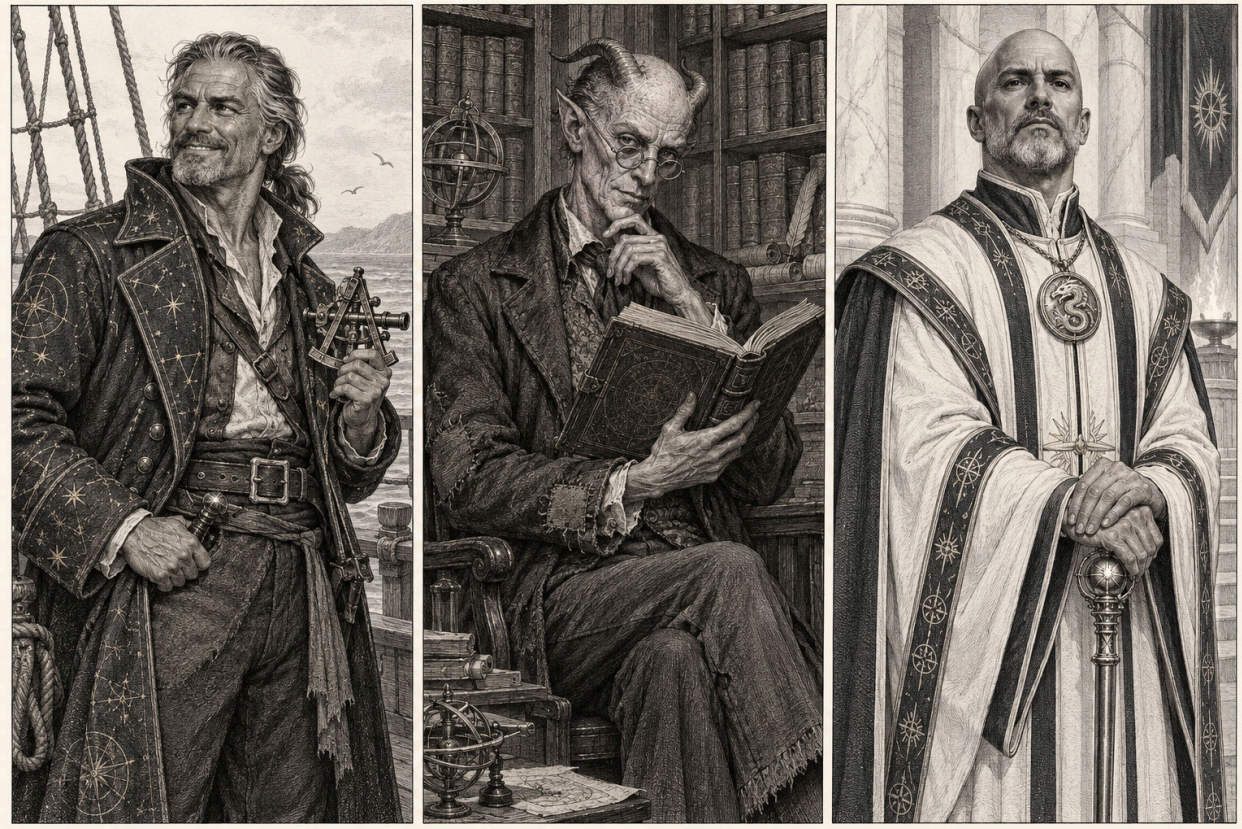
• **Hakkar:** a bronze dragonborn in traveling robes with a fading platinum-scale emblem. He wants the disappeared named before anyone calls him a hero. "Read the next name." He knows the trafficking chain, can identify Carthain's transfer marks, and remembers Bahamut's intervention as warmth and an offered hand. He hides his worsening condition until asked directly, then gives practical answers rather than martyr speeches. If rescued, he asks to testify, to sever the claim, and to choose any conduit-removal rite for himself. He never consents to sacrifice.

• **Cthugothotal:** a dark-scaled dragonborn warrior, 6 feet 8 inches tall and 320 pounds, in heavy armor with subtle five-colored accents. His saved history describes a fighter developing paladin traits and records him as 32 at a later campaign stage; this adventure requires neither age nor progression. He wants sovereignty over his future. "My faith is mine. So is my soul." As an NPC, he stays outside the adventuring party unless needed for escort, testimony, or a specific offer the party makes. He accepts protection without renouncing Tiamat, refuses plans that treat him as bait, and will state under oath that affiliation is not consent.

• **Bandolek Boltaire:** an elderly dwarf cleric with a white braided beard and a practical hammer; his saved sheet records age 111. He wants no one condemned by an undisclosed rule. "First the truth. Then the price. Then your answer." He sponsors the crossing but cannot pardon infernal claims by declaration.

• **Chevkos:** a tiefling arena mage with swept horns and embroidered gloves. He wants his work admired and his mistakes treated as technical failures. "The device behaved exactly as commissioned." He knows every arena control. Evidence of living victims cracks his defensiveness; an opportunity to correct the record publicly can win his testimony.

Rivermont planar cast



Left to right: Captain Drachma, Dimitri, High Priest Oren Vahl.

• **Captain Drachma:** a lean older human astral sailor in a star-chart coat. He wants passengers aboard before a promise becomes a rescue mission. He states departure times twice. His ship can disguise itself as a diabolical vessel but cannot conceal an open battle.

• **Dimitri:** an ancient, thin, horned devil in worn scholar's clothes, with spectacles and books. He wants knowledge preserved and Asmodeus denied the satisfaction of erasing him. "Knowledge is power. Ownership is a clerical error." He claims to have coined the saying and hints that some tieflings descend from him; neither claim is confirmed history. He knows infernal institutions, not Hakkar's current cell. He requests copies, never souls.

• **High Priest Oren Vahl:** a stern human in blue-white robes. He wants divine advantage through a sacrifice he knows the victims would refuse. His speech conceals agents: "A passage must be opened." Exact questions provoke lies. Defeated, he bargains with the crossing formula, which Bandolek also provides.

The three celestial officers

Left to right: Veritas, Aequitas, Mortus.

• **Veritas:** lightly armored, carrying a gold bow. Wants statements entered into the record, repeats exact words, and can be stalled by contradictory evidence.

• **Aequitas:** blind, in the aspect of Lady Justice. Wants orders to satisfy their own terms and demands that hidden conditions be read aloud.

• **Mortus:** enclosed in iridescent plate shifting gold, white, red, and black, carrying a massive two-handed sword. Wants the execution completed. Speaks only names and sentences.

All three knowingly accepted Vahl's concealed sacrificial mandate before the party arrived. Scene 11's **Stopping the mandate** can stop them; it does not retroactively change their allegiance or culpability.

Former PCs and the hall's clerk

The cast's motives and scripted behavior apply only when those characters are NPCs. Players control any adopted former PC. If Bandolek is a PC, **Dorrin**, Moradin's gray-browed dwarf clerk, handles every hall service, letter, formula, payment, and promise otherwise assigned to Bandolek; use Dorrin's name for those communications unless the player chooses to author them. No scene dictates PC Bandolek's attendance or actions. Dorrin uses **Priest** statistics and serves as the hall's clerk in either version. He keeps asking which column should hold a living petitioner, then admits the form is at fault. Spare pallets supplement D1's six couches when needed.

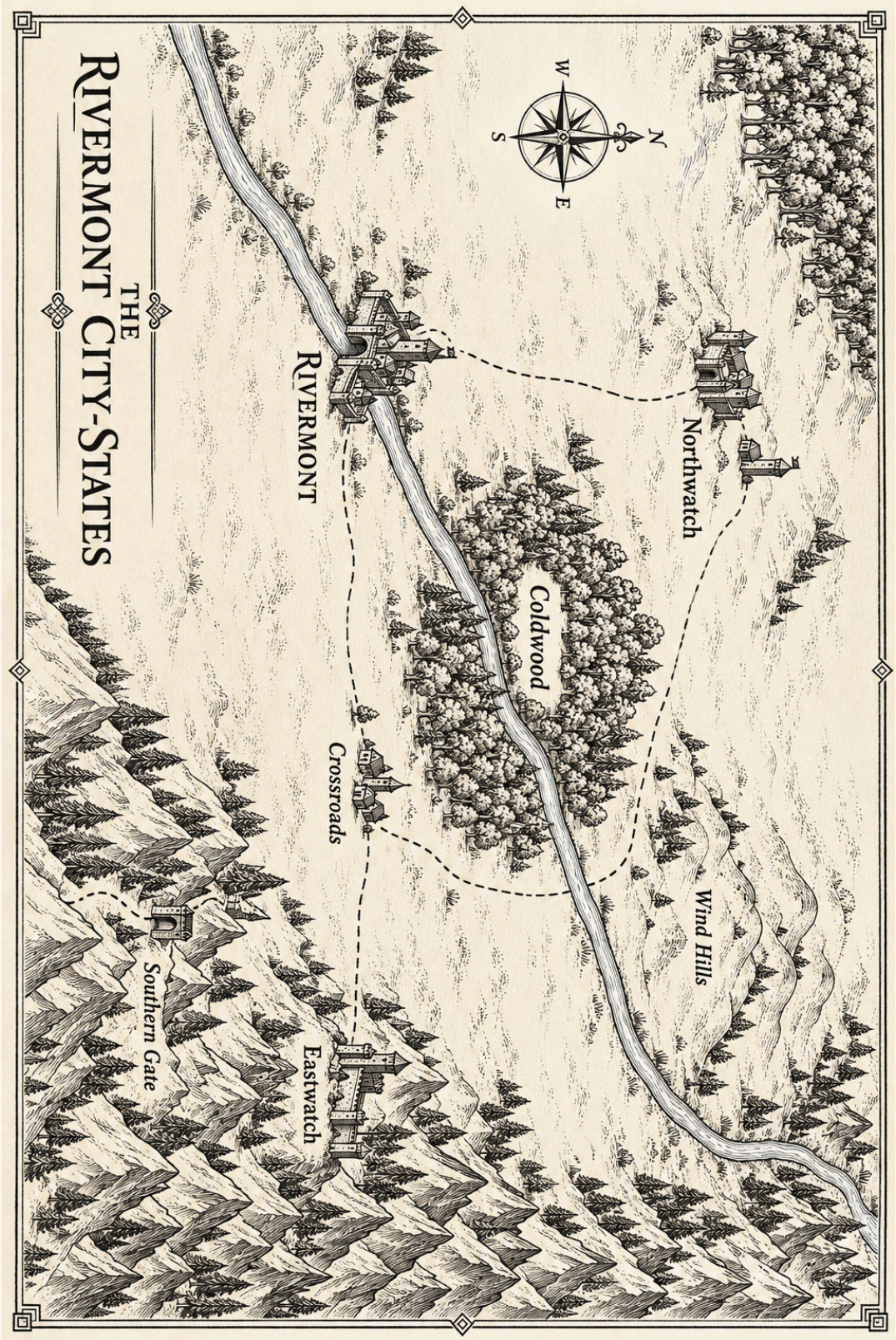
Supporting statistics

Use these SRD 5.1 entries without alteration unless a complete homebrew profile appears below.

PERSON	COMBAT STATISTICS IF NEEDED
Lestrade	Knight
Kanarr, Scarlet Jax	Bandit Captain, each a separate individual
Tharna	Mage; avoids adventuring combat and spends her magic protecting witnesses
Carthain	Noble
Bandolek	Priest; the hall's crossing is a site ritual, not a spell in this block
Drachma	Bandit Captain
Dimitri	Imp, appearing as an elderly human-sized devil; retain Small mechanical size, with robes exaggerating his stature
Vahl	Cult Fanatic, a humanoid priest
NPC Cthugothotal	Veteran; this supporting profile does not reproduce the former PC's full sheet

Dimitri relies on caution, information, and escape to survive.

Locations



The river runs southwest to northeast through Rivermont. Northwatch lies north, Coldwood surrounds the central river, Wind Hills lie northeast of the woods, Crossroads lies east, and the eastern mountains hold Eastwatch and Southern Gate.

Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

The map is player-safe. **Use the travel table for distance**, not the image scale. Northwatch, Coldwood, Wind Hills, Crossroads, Eastwatch, and Southern Gate are adaptation names for uncertain labels.

Regional travel

A normal travel day covers **24 road miles in 8 hours**, or **16 miles through Coldwood or the Wind Hills**. Use SRD travel-pace rules for fast and slow travel; mounts do not automatically increase a full day's sustained distance. Riverboats cover **24 miles upstream or 40 miles downstream per day** here.

ROUTE	DISTANCE AND TERRAIN	ORDINARY TIME	PERSON, ACCESS, OR DECISION
Rivermont-Northwatch	18 miles, road	6 hours	Safe lodging costs 1 gp per person; the watch accepts Lestrade's warrants.
Rivermont-Coldwood edge	12 miles, road	4 hours	A charcoal burner points out the temple track.
Coldwood edge-Temple of Doom	4 miles, woodland	2 hours	The cart track is visible; no tracking check.
Temple-Mystic Wood clearing	8 miles, woodland	4 hours	Hakkar's rubbing or Tharna's directions identify the turning.
Coldwood edge-Wind Hills	16 miles, woodland and hills	8 hours	A shorter ridge route risks exposure to the optional dragon.
Coldwood edge-Crossroads	24 miles, road	1 day	Wagoners carry arena rumors and Eastwatch notices.
Crossroads-Eastwatch	36 miles, mountain road	1½ days	Vahl's invitation waives the 5 gp group gate toll.
Crossroads-Southern Gate	24 miles, minor road omitted from the regional illustration	1 day	Ask at Crossroads for the signed southern approach; it joins the mountain trail at Southern Gate.
Southern Gate-Eastwatch	24 miles, mountain road	1 day	Adds half a day compared with the direct route but avoids northern gate inspection.
Rivermont-Coldwood landing	24 river miles upstream	1 day	Kanarr charges 10 gp for the party or carries witnesses free.

Travel procedure-campaign homebrew.

1. Choose destination, route, pace, and road watcher.
2. Pay normal food and lodging costs or forage under SRD rules.
3. Once per travel day, choose one relevant rumor, roadside choice, or optional regional scene.
4. Roads require no navigation check. Off-road shortcuts require DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) per day. Failure adds 2 hours and reveals a recognizable landmark.
5. Long rests are possible in settlements, secured boats, or concealed camps. State visible threats before the party commits.

Authoritative site geometry

Each named position is a distinct space. Unless specified otherwise, rooms have 15-foot ceilings, doors are 5 feet wide, passages are 10 feet wide, and Medium creatures occupy 5-foot spaces. Outdoor walls provide total cover; crates and benches provide half cover.

Connector distances run **between room boundaries**. Keep doors and controls accessible. Scaling additions begin in reserve at an entrance, never within another creature's footprint.

KEY	GEOMETRY, CONNECTIONS, AND STARTING POSITIONS
R1 River Quay	60 × 40 feet, long side along the river. North stair to street; west ramp to warehouse. Water borders south, 5 feet below quay, 10 feet deep. Two 10 × 10 crate stacks stand 10 feet from the west and east ends. PCs enter north; dockworker and child start at east mooring; undead enter from three separate 10-foot sections of the south edge.
R2 Tharna's Studio	60 × 40 feet. South public door; north 10-foot double door to courtyard. A central 20 × 10 workbench leaves 10-foot aisles on both sides. Tharna starts behind it; visitors begin south; intruders enter north.
A1 Maze	Entry M0, 20 × 20; west pen M1, east pen M2, and dais M3, each 30 × 30. M0 connects to M1 and M2 through separate 20 × 10 corridors; M1 and M2 each connect to M3 through 30 × 10 corridors. A 40 × 10 cross-corridor connects M1-M2. Walls are 15 feet high, open above. One Large minotaur starts in each pen; Chevkos starts on M3's north dais. Pen gate controls stand beside the outgoing corridors.

KEY	GEOMETRY, CONNECTIONS, AND STARTING POSITIONS
A2 Boat Basin	Basin 100 × 60 feet, water 10 feet deep. Two 40 × 15 boats lie parallel, 15 feet apart, each with a 5-foot gangway to its nearest bank. A 5-foot bridge joins their middle decks. PCs begin on the south boat's western 20 feet; Kanarr and one sailor occupy its eastern 20 feet. Jax and one sailor start on the north boat. Two reserve archers wait behind a north-bank screen, 20 feet from that boat.
A3 Suspended Ring	A 70 × 50 floor lies 20 feet beneath a 40 × 40 platform suspended by four corner chains. A 10-foot-wide stair reaches its south side. A Huge hydra occupies the central 15 × 15 area, leaving a 10-foot clear perimeter. Release controls stand at the southwest and southeast corners. Nets cover the entire floor beneath the platform.
H1 Armory on High	A 50 × 50 roof chamber atop a 60-foot tower. Stairs enter southwest; a north 10-foot loading hatch opens to a winch platform. Three 10 × 5 weapon racks run north-south with 10-foot aisles. The Armory Eye begins 10 feet above the center; two ghouls occupy separate north aisles. A giant spider occupies the exterior winch platform and enters only if that route is disturbed.
T1 Temple Forecourt	70 × 50, roofless. South gate joins the woodland track; north stair descends 20 feet to T2. Six 5-foot-square pillars form two rows; aisles are at least 10 feet wide. Two fanatics start beside the north stair; six cultists occupy the side aisles.
T2 Extraction Hall	70 × 40, ceiling 20 feet. West stair from T1; east service exit joins a 200-foot forest passage. A central 20 × 10 extraction table holds Hakkar restrained on its north side. Collector stands east; three imps occupy ceiling ledges. Control cabinet stands south, 10 feet from the table. Four prisoner cells line the north wall.
W1 Mystic Clearing	Circular, 60-foot diameter, with west and east trails. A 15-foot stone ring surrounds a shallow central pool. Three standing stones stand 15 feet from the pool at north, southeast, southwest. Two wisps begin among trees at opposite eastern edges; shadow slime lies in the pool.
R3 Civic Hall	60 × 40. South public doors; east witness exit; west holding-room door. A 20 × 10 dais occupies the north wall. Lestrade stands at the dais; two subduers wait west; Kanarr, if present, sits east. All exits have clear 10-foot approaches.

KEY	GEOMETRY, CONNECTIONS, AND STARTING POSITIONS
E1 Eastwatch Shrine	70 × 50, ceiling 30 feet. South double doors; east vestry exit. Central 20-foot-diameter ritual circle; Hakkar begins at its north edge if present, Vahl at the east lectern. Three angelic entry marks stand along the north wall, 15 feet apart. Carpet covers the circle's center; skylight above. Crossing controls stand beside the west wall, 20 feet from the circle.
D1 Moradin's Desk	80 × 60 hall. South arrival arch; north desk, 30 feet long. East alcove holds six body couches; west arch leads to astral quay. No concealed exits or combat hazards.
S1 Drachma's Ship	Main deck 80 × 25. Stern helm occupies aft 10 feet; central mast has a 5-foot footprint. Forecastle is 5 feet higher with two 5-foot stairs. Rails are 3 feet high. Port and starboard boarding ladders amidships; hold hatch 15 feet forward of mast. Movement lanes are at least 5 feet wide.
I1 Infernal Market	Street 100 feet long, 20 feet wide. Dimitri's 30 × 30 shop lies behind a south doorway at midpoint; its 5-foot-wide rear book passage exits 40 feet farther east. Registry entrance stands at the street's east end.
I2 Registry	L lobby, 40 × 30; C court, 40 × 40, north of L through a 20 × 10 corridor; V vault, 50 × 40, east of L through a 30 × 10 corridor; P furnace gallery, 40 × 30, north of V through a 20 × 10 corridor. A concealed 5-foot service passage runs 40 feet from C's east wall to P's west wall. Six soul vessels occupy separate plinths along V's north wall, leaving a clear 10-foot aisle.
I3 Trials Field	90 × 190. South staging is 30 feet deep; the north goal is 40 feet deep. Three 20-foot-wide, 120-foot-long lanes lie between them, separated by two solid walls 15 feet wide and 15 feet high. Towers occupy 10 × 10 spaces at each lane's north end, leaving 10-foot bypasses. A Huge, 15 × 15 nexus occupies the north goal with clear 10-foot approaches on every side. Lanes connect only through staging/goal bands or over walls.
I4 Sacrifice Chamber	90 × 60, ceiling 40 feet. South audience doors; west service door to registry road; east dock passage. Three 5-foot-square pylons stand north of center, 15 feet apart, with clear 5-foot approaches. Two 10 × 5 couches stand south of them, separated by 10 feet, with vessel sockets at their heads. Beleth begins north of the center pylon; two bearded devils stand beside opposite couches. Speaking mirror on north wall.

KEY	GEOMETRY, CONNECTIONS, AND STARTING POSITIONS
I5 Dock Route	Four 120-foot legs: chamber passage → furnace bridge → customs square → warehouse lane → pier. Each is 20 feet wide except the railed, 10-foot-wide bridge. Square is 50 × 50; warehouse lane holds two 10 × 10 crate stacks with a 10-foot passage between. Pier is 80 × 20 and meets S1's port ladder.
S2 Astral Debris Reach	S1 travels a 300-foot channel between floating stone masses. Clear channel is 60 feet wide; three 20-foot-wide gaps permit lateral escape. Boarding enemies approach from opposite sides, 60 feet away. Distances apply while vessels share the reach; the astral horizon is not a tactical boundary.

Play schematics

Use **Authoritative site geometry** for dimensions, furniture, and starting positions.

Maze-player view

```
            M3 DAIS
           /       \
         M1---------M2
           \       /
            M0 ENTRY
```

Temple-player view

```
WOODLAND TRACK
      |
  T1 FORECOURT
      |
    stairs
      |
T2 EXTRACTION HALL ---- service passage ---- FOREST
```

Distribute only after the service exit is discovered.

Registry-DM view

```
          C COURT ...... P FURNACE
             |              |
             L LOBBY ------ V VAULT
             |
           MARKET

...... concealed service passage
```

Registry-initial player view

```
          COURT
            |
          LOBBY ------ VAULT ENTRANCE
            |
          MARKET
```

Add the furnace and concealed passage only as discovered.

Trials-public view

```
            NORTH GOAL: NEXUS
      +-------------------------+
      |                         |
      | TOWER | TOWER | TOWER   |
      |       |       |         |
      | WEST  |CENTER | EAST    |
      | LANE  | LANE  | LANE    |
      |       |       |         |
      |       |       |         |
      +-------------------------+
            SOUTH STAGING
```

Sacrifice chamber-DM view

```
            SPEAKING MIRROR
          PYLON  PYLON  PYLON
            |      |      |
           COUCH        COUCH

SERVICE DOOR              DOCK PASSAGE
            AUDIENCE DOORS
```

The player view labels the furnishings **pillars**, **couches**, and **mirror**. Omit hidden soul contents, ritual progress, occupants, and control functions.

Encounter Matrix

Read-aloud describes an initial visit. On return, use the ledger's current occupants and conditions. When listing everyone visible, describe the selected encounter roster; an opener may focus on one member of a larger group. Place scaled creatures before play. In the hags' scene, the two sisters argue over the kettle when both are present.

Times include investigation, decisions, and combat. Add **6-10 hours across the campaign** for travel choices, rests, shopping, and character conversations.

SCENE / ENCOUNTER	CORE SITUATION	LEVEL	EXPECTED TIME	PRINCIPAL EXITS
1	Undead at the quay	5	90 min	Studio, civic records
2	Wizard meeting	5	90 min	Arena sponsorship, stolen plans
3	Gladiatorial maze	5	150 min	Public victory, control-room evidence
4	Boat gladiator	6	150 min	Kanarr/Jax testimony, supply route
5	Suspended hydra	6	120 min	Armory warrant or loading route
6	Armory on High	6	180 min	Temple manifest
7	Temple of Doom: forecourt	7	150 min	Stairs or service route
8	Temple of Doom: extraction hall	7	150 min	Hakkar, ledger, woodland remedy
9	Mystic Wood	7	120 min	Stabilized conduit, testimony
10	Inspector Doyle Lestrade	7	150 min	Civic settlement, Eastwatch
11	Priest and three angels	8	150 min	Victory, refusal, crossing
12	The Desk of Moradin	8	90 min	Informed mission, bodily return
13	Captain Drachma	8	90 min	Infernal harbor
14	Dimitri and the three orders	8	150 min	Registry access, faction choice
15	Contracts and captives	9	210 min	Rescue warrant, infiltration route
16	Time of Trials	10	270 min	Audience, service route, withdrawal
17	The paired sacrifice	11	180 min	Rescue, sabotage, partial loss
18	Running to the docks	11	120 min	Ship departure
19	Astral escape	11	120 min	Moradin's harbor
20	Return and reckoning	11	90 min	Campaign resolution

Milestones and rests

MILESTONE	NEW LEVEL
Resolve the maze and secure its evidence, through competition or another route	6
Recover the armory manifest or equivalent proof of the temple operation	7
Settle Rivermont's investigation and choose what happens to its witnesses	8
Learn the three orders' positions and identify the registry holding the claims	9
Resolve the registry operation and obtain access to the sacrifice site	10
Finish the Trials or complete Scene 16's alternate preparation	11

Skipping an arena challenge does not remove that challenge's clues, testimony, or advancement.

Expected long rests are available after Scenes 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Short rests are available after Scenes 4 and 7 and between the Trials' lanes. Scenes 17-19 form a pressured sequence with one possible short rest aboard ship.

For **three characters**, apply each encounter's reduction and reduce hostile homebrew save DCs by 1. For **five**, apply its addition. Add no reinforcements beyond the listed reserves.

Optional cuts and alternate routes

• Arena challenges permit competitor, staff-investigation, and civic-authority approaches. Preserve their signature situations even when the party declines competition.

• To shorten Part I, combine Scene 5's ending with the armory visit, and have Tharna stabilize Hakkar using the woodland instructions instead of running Scene 9.

• To shorten Part II, combine the court hearing and soul-vault access into one registry visit, and run only two dock obstacles.

• Parties skipping the Trials use Scene 16's alternate preparation and still reach level 11.

• Flight crosses maze walls and trial barriers normally. Teleportation bypasses physical entrances. Divination locates things or exposes lies within the spell's limits. These abilities save time and reduce exposure; evidence, captives, and opponents stay where the scene places them.

Running Souls, Crossing, and Return

These **local campaign homebrew rules** supplement ordinary death and resurrection. Disclose them before a character consents.

Distinct states

STATE	MEANING AND AVAILABLE ACTION
Living and present	Ordinary creature; normal damage, unconsciousness, death saves, healing, and resurrection rules apply.
Living under protected crossing	Body rests at Moradin's Desk; a tangible projection adventures with the same statistics and resources.
Dead, soul free	Ordinary resurrection is possible if its requirements are met. The soul may voluntarily accept the hall's summons.
Dead, soul confined	Held in a vessel. Resurrection requiring a free soul fails until release; the spell determines whether resources are consumed.
Soul released but unembodied	Can speak softly and perceive within 60 feet of its vessel or willing carrier. Cannot attack, scout beyond that radius, or manipulate objects.
Soul consumed by the completed rite	Unavailable to ordinary resurrection and the return rite. Reversal requires a future campaign undertaking.

A ledger entry creates a claim and tracking connection. It cannot move, kill, compel, or capture the named creature.

Protected crossing

Bandolek's formula, available through Tharna's recovered instructions or directly at Eastwatch, opens a two-way threshold to D1 after **10 uninterrupted minutes**.

• Each participant hears the terms and consents individually.

• Living participants and their possessions physically reach D1 before projecting. Bodies rest in guarded couches; the hall is not attacked during this adventure.

• Projections begin with current hit points, abilities, equipment, spell slots, and conditions. Manifested equipment cannot be sold as a duplicate. Using ammunition, charges, or consumables spends the original resource.

• Normal unconsciousness and death saves apply. Three failed death saves disperse the projection, leaving its body stable at 0 hit points with one level of exhaustion. It cannot project again until completing a long rest. No capturable soul remains where it dispersed.

• A conscious participant can return from D1 or aboard Drachma's ship through a **10-minute rite**, not an action-speed escape.

• Ending one person's crossing cannot extract another prisoner or carried soul remotely. Bring them to the ship or D1.

• Genuine death before crossing remains death.

• Protection cannot be secretly revoked. Relinquishing it requires an explicit explanation and voluntary choice and is never necessary.

Hakkar's wound and the soul lantern

The soul lantern

Track Hakkar's deterioration under **Opposition clocks**. Destroying or lawfully canceling his master claim in Scene 15 ends it. Removing the divine trace is a separate, voluntary rite at D1 in Scene 20.

Bandolek supplies **one soul lantern**, a campaign homebrew wondrous item:

• No attunement; weight 2 pounds.

• Opening or closing the shutter takes an action.

• An open lantern receives a **willing, free, unembodied soul within 30 feet**. No check can force acceptance.

• Capacity: **eight souls**, enough for Hakkar, Cthugothotal, and the six registry captives if all need carriage.

• It cannot capture living creatures, steal confined souls, consume souls, or grant control over occupants.

• Occupants hear nearby speech and communicate quietly. They cannot cast, act through the bearer, or grant bonuses.

• AC 15, 20 hit points; immune to poison and psychic damage. At 0 hit points it breaks and releases occupants within 5 feet. They may remain with a willing carrier under **Distinct states**.

• It has no charges or resurrection ability. Repair takes an hour, smith's tools, and 25 gp of silver fittings.

• At D1, occupants may leave for judgment, await resurrection, or seek an eligible return.

Part I: Drama in Rivermont

Scene 1: The Quay Gives Up Its Dead

Runtime: 90 minutes. **Objective:** protect the quay and identify the arena connection. **Stakes:** a dockworker, a child, and a horse are trapped between water and warehouse cargo.

READ-ALOUD

A skeleton climbs the quay ladder, water streaming from its armor. A broken coffin lid drifts through the shallows. Beside the warehouse, an overturned cart blocks the ramp. Its horse struggles against the harness, scattering sacks and wet boards.

Encounter 1: Undeadly Introduction

Site and trigger: R1; begin when a character reaches the stair or helps from the bridge.

Opposition: four **Skeletons** and one **Ogre Zombie**, SRD 5.1. The zombie resembles a horned arena brute. Two skeletons have harmless red furnace light in their rib cages.

Starting state: two skeletons climb the south edge; two emerge at the end of round 1. The zombie rises at the western water edge on round 2. All five are present from the start; some are submerged.

Quay rescue

1. Shifting the overturned cart takes an adjacent action and DC 12 Strength (Athletics), or two characters working together without a roll.

2. An action at the eastern mooring helps both dockworker and child onto the quay. A rope lowered from above also works.

3. At the end of round 3, an unrescued horse breaks its harness and flees; the cargo is lost. At round 4, the dockworker falls into the water and swims with the child at half speed.

4. Skeletons attack the nearest standing creature. The zombie approaches the customs bell. Ringing it elsewhere redirects the zombie until damaged.

Investigation: the undead carry arena tokens with readable batch numbers. DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) reveals fresh filing over an older mortuary number. Failure costs 10 minutes before the customs clerk supplies a matching receipt. Tharna independently recognizes the heat-scored runes.

Alternatives: blockade ladders, lure the zombie into an empty warehouse, turn the undead, or break line of sight and rescue people from above. Guards can later destroy contained undead.

Morale: the undead neither surrender nor pursue beyond the quay and customs shed.

Scaling: three PCs: remove one starting skeleton. Five PCs: add one skeleton at the south edge on round 2.

Success: civilians survive; the party gains a token and receipt.

Fail-forward: lost cargo angers its owner, but the clerk retains the receipt and a token. After a retreat, guards contain the quay within an hour; the wounded dockworker can testify.

Transition: the receipt names Tharna's workshop as the original brass-plate supplier. Lestrade requests a statement without delaying the visit.

Scene 2: Tharna's Unwelcome Visitors

Runtime: 90 minutes. **Objective:** distinguish the inventor from the current operators. **Stakes:** Carthain's agents seek Hakkar's letter and the original design.

READ-ALOUD

Rubbed brass sheets hang above a long workbench. A woman holds one to the window while uniformed visitors wait beside the courtyard doors. On the bench lies a sealed letter, a platinum scale drawn hurriedly across it.

Encounter 2: The Wizard Meeting

Site and trigger: R2. Once the party shows its token, the visitors demand Tharna surrender "arena property."

Opposition: one **Veteran** and two **Cult Fanatics**, SRD 5.1, posing as an exile officer and firequench specialists. Their spells remain unchanged, and their titles grant no fire resistance. They carry Carthain's seizure order.

Discovery: Tharna points out that the order covers brass plates, not correspondence. Protected, she explains without a check that her design records names rather than extracting souls. Hakkar's letter directs her to investigate disappearing contestants; give **Handout 2**.

Negotiation: citing the order's scope delays seizure. DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion), Intelligence (Investigation), or an appropriate legal argument persuades the veteran to inventory the plates and leave. Lestrade's receipt grants advantage. Failure makes the agents insist on taking the letter; combat is not automatic.

Combat: the veteran blocks the courtyard exit while the fanatics seize the letter and withdraw. Tharna protects papers and evacuates through the south door rather than attacking.

Escalation: on round 3, a fanatic holding the letter attempts to burn it. An adjacent character can snatch it with an action and contested Dexterity check.

Morale: the veteran offers surrender at half hit points; fanatics flee if the veteran falls or abandons them.

Scaling: three PCs: one fanatic. Five PCs: add one **Guard** at the courtyard gate.

Success: Tharna supplies the letter, sponsors arena entry, and identifies Chevkos as the current controls' designer.

Fail-forward: stolen or burned papers leave an impression on the brass-covered workbench; Tharna reconstructs the batch number in an hour. Her memory and the original design preserve the lead. The seizure order links Carthain to the attempt.

Transition: enter Scene 3 publicly or use a civic warrant to inspect A1 during rehearsal, with the same creatures and controls present.

Scene 3: The Maze and Its Keeper

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** cross or inspect the maze and recover its transfer record. **Stakes:** Chevkos is classifying defeated contestants as abandoned property.

READ-ALOUD

Two broad passages leave the entry chamber, each ending at an iron gate. Hoofprints score the sand beyond. Above the walls, spectators lean over a railing. On the far dais, a horned man raises an embroidered glove.

Encounter 3: Gladiatorial Maze and Fight

Site: A1. **Opposition:** two **Minotaurs**, SRD 5.1, named **Left Horn** and **Broken Horn**; **Chevkos** uses his homebrew profile if attacked or caught destroying evidence.

Arena terms: win by reaching M3 and ringing its bell, obtaining both minotaurs' surrender, or publicly proving that Chevkos is misclassifying living competitors. Entrants receive wooden tokens identifying them as living competitors. A character who asks why the tokens matter learns from an usher that dead or abandoned property uses brass plates instead.

Maze controls

- Each pen has an open entry gate to M0 and a closed goal gate to M3. The cross-corridor stays open.
- An action at the lever beside a goal gate opens it without a check. **RELEASE** is readable from 10 feet.
- Chevkos can close one gate with an action at his dais. A creature in the threshold chooses either adjacent space and is not crushed.
- Closed gates: AC 17, 25 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage. An action and DC 18 Athletics lifts one until the end of the lifter's next turn.
- Flight bypasses gates. Rough walls require DC 12 Athletics to climb; failure spends movement but causes no fall unless already above the floor.

Tactics and negotiation: Left Horn follows noise in M1; Broken Horn guards M2's lever. Neither perceives through walls. Each yields below one-quarter hit points if offered survival. Promising to expose their coerced service wins passage with DC 14 Persuasion, or automatically with Hakkar's letter. If the party treats them as witnesses instead of obstacles, one minotaur delays Chevkos by blocking his view of the slate while the other names a competitor carried away breathing.

Evidence: M3's transfer slate marks earlier living competitors "unclaimed." Chevkos calls these unpaid fees unless confronted with a living witness, Hakkar's letter, or the wooden competitor tokens. A character who compares the slate to a token understands the fraud without a roll: the arena recorded a living entrant in the category used for property.

Escalation: after the first gate opens or after a public accusation, Chevkos attempts to erase the slate over three actions. Ten minutes' examination reveals erased indentations. Stopping him before the third action preserves a legible original; Lestrade accepts it without the disputed-witness check in Scene 10. No reinforcements arrive.

Scaling: three PCs: Chevkos offers terms and never attacks. Five PCs: each minotaur gains 15 hit points, its only modification.

Success: victory, testimony, or seizure of the slate grants level 6.

Fail-forward: opponents use nonlethal melee attacks where possible; arena healers stabilize fallen contestants. A surviving ally or Tharna can challenge their classification before transport.

Transition: the slate lists river deliveries authorized by Kanarr and a bonus for Scarlet Jax. Both appear in the next challenge.

Scene 4: The Boat Gladiator

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** secure the shipping record and recruit or defeat the rival crew. **Stakes:** Carthain wants the match to become a public feud that silences Kanarr.

> READ-ALOUD
>
> Two boats rock in a stone-sided basin, joined by a narrow bridge. Bow ropes lead to a raised capstan. A red-haired duelist tests the bridge with one boot. Across from her, a bearded captain turns an arena token in his hand.

Encounter 4: Captain, Duelist, and Hidden Archers

Site: A2.

Opposition: Kanarr and Scarlet Jax, each a **Bandit Captain**; two **Bandits**, one per captain; two **Scouts** behind the north-bank screen. All SRD 5.1. Kanarr's hit points and allegiance persist between scenes.

Terms: carry the north boat's stern pennant to the south bank or persuade both captains to halt the match.

Water and rigging: falling into the water deals no damage. Ladder climbing costs 10 feet of movement; an unladdered hull requires DC 12 Athletics. Cutting a bow rope-AC 11, 5 hit points-rotates its boat at round's end, removing the central bridge without capsizing. If a rope remains, an action at the capstan restores alignment in two rounds.

Leverage: the altered mortuary token makes Kanarr call a halt on his next turn and withdraw his sailor; he wants his debt cleared, not a public killing. Jax accepts a witnessed bargain allowing her to keep the legitimate prize in exchange for manifest testimony. DC 14 Persuasion resolves her doubts; honest proof of Carthain's covert reinforcement order succeeds automatically. If the party backs Kanarr against Jax without showing the token, he later testifies but remains ashamed and asks them not to hide his sealed-crate work.

Reserve trigger: if Jax is the last active boat adversary and has not agreed to terms, a horn sounds. Her two scouts appear on the north bank at the next round's start. They target ropes and armed opponents, never helpless swimmers. They stay out if she yields. Revealing the horn order before it sounds lets Jax turn on Carthain's rigging instead of on the party.

Morale: sailors surrender with their captains. Jax and hostile Kanarr offer terms below half hit points. Nobody pursues swimmers beyond the basin.

Evidence: Kanarr's waterproof case holds the manifest; a duplicate rests at the capstan. A dock clerk also remembers its destination: the Armory on High. Kanarr can explain the route; Jax can explain why the arena wanted reserve archers ready.

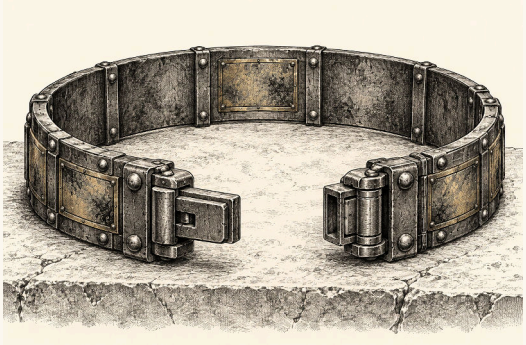
Scaling: three PCs: remove both bandits and use one scout. Five PCs: add one bandit on the north boat.

Success: gain passage, testimony, or the manifest. Apply the boat prize under **Reward ledger**. If Jax publicly receives the purse, note it now; she will defend the party's honesty in Scene 10.

Fail-forward: defeat creates no soul claim. Kanarr trades the manifest for help clearing his debt; Jax sells a copy for 25 gp but refuses future help unless the party also exposes the reserve order.

Transition: the manifest lists the hydra's punishment collar and an armory collection scheduled after its challenge. Kanarr's route testimony and Jax's rigging testimony count as independent links only if both are actually secured.

Scene 5: The Suspended Hydra



The hydra's two-clasp punishment collar

Runtime: 120 minutes. **Objective:** stop the rigged spectacle and recover the collar's maker mark. **Stakes:** the punishment collar drives the hydra into a frenzy above a netted service floor.

> READ-ALOUD
>
> Four chains suspend a broad platform above a netted pit. A many-headed reptile presses against the rail, necks crowded through an iron collar. The collar flashes; a head snaps toward a corner post. A brass handle stands at each southern corner of the platform.

Encounter 5: Flamekiss on the Chains

Site: A3. **Opposition:** one **Flamekiss Hydra**, homebrew.

Immediate information: Chevkos, Jax, or the safety placard explains the lowering controls. The collar flashes before each breath.

Platform and collar controls

1. Each control takes an action and locks after use. The first lowers the platform 10 feet; the second lowers it to the floor.

2. The hinged south stair follows the descending platform, maintaining a safe retreat without harming the hydra.

3. Each visible collar clasp takes an adjacent action and DC 14 Dexterity with thieves' tools or DC 16 Athletics to release. Failure deals 1d6 fire damage to the operator and changes no other state.

4. Opening either clasp prevents **Collar Breath**, as specified in the hydra's profile. Once both are released, the hydra stops attacking after one full round unless attacked again.

5. *Dispel magic* against DC 14 suppresses the collar for 10 minutes, allowing it to be calmed and removed.

Food and DC 14 Animal Handling permit an approach without provoking a bite. On a failure, the hydra warns and pulls back; another approach remains possible.

Net: falling from the platform deals **1d6 bludgeoning damage** and restrains the creature until it spends an action climbing out, without a check. The net covers the full fall area. Cutting it is visible and requires three separate cuts against sections with AC 11 and 10 hit points each.

Tactics: while collared, the hydra stays on the platform and attacks nearby armed creatures. It does not pursue into the audience.

Scaling: three PCs: 90 hit points and three heads. Five PCs: 145 hit points, still four heads and unchanged breath.

Success: free, subdue, or kill the hydra; recover its collar stamped with the armory loading mark.

Fail-forward: withdrawal ends the match. Jax demands lowering the platform, or a civic complaint opens a machinery inspection. Carthain attempts to move the collar that evening.

Transition: the mark and manifest support an H1 warrant. The loading hatch offers unauthorized access.

Scene 6: Armory on High

Runtime: 180 minutes. **Objective:** trace the extraction equipment's destination. **Stakes:** the guardian treats records, crates, and specimens as weapons inventory.

> READ-ALOUD
>
> Weapon racks divide the tower room into aisles. A brass-and-flesh sphere floats above them, several small eyes turning toward the door. Metal scratches inside a cabinet below it. The loading hatch stands open to the sky.

Encounter 6: The Eye and the Inventory

Site: H1.

Opposition: one **Armory Eye**, homebrew; two **Ghouls**, SRD 5.1, named Rack One and Rack Two. A **Giant Spider**, SRD 5.1, occupies the exterior loading platform.

Approaches: stairs with a warrant, exterior climbing with equipment, flight to the platform, or an inventory command from Chevkos.

Guardian command: an authentic arena plate and "inventory discrepancy" make the Eye demand a correction. Presenting contradictory manifests permits an action and DC 15 Investigation or Persuasion. Two successes, not necessarily consecutive, make it open the cabinet and send the ghouls to their racks. Each failure triggers one Warning Ray, after the Eye announces that consequence.

Combat: the Eye uses cover above the racks and targets cabinet approaches. Ghouls attack anyone in their aisles. The spider attacks intruders on its platform or web; once driven off, it does not join the interior fight.

Pressure: on combat round 4, the Eye starts using **Inventory Beam** on the manifest. It needs two consecutive actions; opening the cabinet and taking the paper, disabling the Eye, or blocking the beam prevents destruction.

Leads: the cabinet contains the temple manifest, crate brands identify the forest cart track, and an armorer hiding below can name the courier. Any one leads to T1.

Morale: the Eye accepts a corrected inventory. Ghouls do not surrender. The spider retreats off the tower below half hit points.

Scaling: three PCs: one ghoul. Five PCs: a third ghoul enters from the stair landing on round 2.

Success: recover the destination and reach level 7.

Fail-forward: burned records leave the crates and armorer. Driven away, the party can intercept a courier after six hours' watch. Advance concealment only under **Opposition clocks**.

Transition: follow the temple route in **Regional travel**. Tharna identifies a woodland cleansing diagram in the manifest's marginal notes.

Scene 7: Temple of Doom, Above

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** enter the temple and preserve the prisoner list. **Stakes:** cultists prepare to abandon their mortal partners.

> READ-ALOUD
>
> Roots have split the temple's outer stair. Between broken pillars, workers load sealed jars onto a cart as irritated orders drift from the descending passage. A paper strip covered in names hangs from the cart rail.

Encounter 7: The Forecourt's Last Shipment

Site: T1.

Opposition: two **Cult Fanatics** and six **Cultists**, SRD 5.1. Two cultists are frightened clerks carrying knives.

Trigger: hostile entry, a failed inspection bluff after warning, or interference with the list.

Evidence: jars contain ash and personal effects. The list distinguishes "body received" from "claim entered"; the mismatch requires no roll.

Alternatives:

• Pose as collectors using the manifest: DC 14 Deception, with advantage from a real arena seal.

• Offer clerks safe conduct and a witness statement: automatic if the party controls an exit; otherwise DC 13 Persuasion.

• Observe for 20 minutes to see a courier use T2's forest exit.

• Enter through that service route. Bypassed forecourt occupants remain in place until their trigger occurs.

Pressure: a fanatic who sees the list taken uses an action to ring the stair bell. Scene 8's collector becomes alerted and guards Hakkar's restraints; no creatures are added.

On round 3, a clerk tries to burn the list at the north brazier. T2's cabinet holds a duplicate; losing this copy costs evidence against individual cultists.

Tactics: fanatics use pillars and printed spells; cultists defend the cart and stair. They do not chase into the woods.

Morale: cultists surrender when all present fanatics fall or when offered clear escape. Fanatics retreat downstairs below half hit points. Those reaching T2 cower in a cell and fight again only if attacked; retain their current hit points and resources.

Scaling: three PCs: one fanatic and four cultists. Five PCs: add two cultists at the south gate.

Success: secure the list and approach T2 with the prisoners' names.

Fail-forward: the bell makes an unnoticed approach harder; the service passage and cabinet remain available.

Transition: a voice below asks someone to read the next name.

Scene 8: Temple of Doom, Below

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** free Hakkar and the surviving prisoners. **Stakes:** the collector can destroy evidence while the extraction machine waits for another cycle.

READ-ALOUD

Copper hoops arch over a long table. A bronze dragonborn is strapped beside it, his robe torn around a pale scale emblem. Small wings rustle in the chamber. Beyond the table, a barbed figure closes a ledger.

Encounter 8: The Pain Collector

Site: T2.

Opposition: one **Barbed Devil**, called the Pain Collector, and three **Imps**, SRD 5.1. The title adds no pain aura.

Prisoners: Hakkar and three living commoners. Two cells contain personal effects.

Initial state and narration: the collector stands at the table. If T1's bell rang, two imps guard Hakkar and only the remaining selected roster occupies the ledges; with three PCs, both imps guard him and the ledges are empty. Without the alarm, all imps in the selected roster begin on the ledges. Describe those positions after the opening.

Extraction controls

The machine is between cycles. Extracting a helpless living subject's soul takes **10 uninterrupted minutes** of operation. Ordinary combat damage interrupts its operator.

The south cabinet has three labeled switches: **CLAMP**, **DRAW**, **GROUND**. Its labels and the manifest diagram supply the safe sequence: **DRAW off → GROUND on → CLAMP off**.

• Operating a switch takes an action within reach.

• Releasing CLAMP first deals 2d6 lightning damage to the operator and Hakkar, then grounds the machine. Its capacitor discharges only once.

• Breaking the cabinet-AC 15, 15 hit points-grounds the machine but leaves restraints locked.

• The collector's key opens the restraints. Alternatively, each attempt takes an action and DC 14 thieves' tools or DC 18 Athletics. Failure costs only the action.

• If Hakkar dies while the machine remains powered, its visible glass receiver catches his soul. Grounding and opening it releases him under **Distinct states**, permitting later lantern carriage or ordinary resurrection.

Leverage: the collector exchanges prisoners and ledger for safe passage if below half hit points or shown manifests proving defective title. It refuses surrender for later execution.

Tactics and morale: imps harass control operators and flee through the service passage when the collector yields. The collector retreats at 20 hit points. Escaped enemies do not return as fresh guards.

Scaling: three PCs: two imps. Five PCs: four imps.

Success: free Hakkar and recover the ledger and cleansing instructions. He confirms that his wound followed divine intervention and that Cthugothotal is a different person.

Fail-forward: resolve Hakkar's death under **Extraction controls**. If the party withdraws entirely, the collector moves him to Eastwatch after one day; Kanarr's shipping contacts identify the convoy.

Transition: take the woodland instructions to W1 or return to Tharna for interpretation.

Scene 9: Mystic Wood

Runtime: 120 minutes. **Objective:** relieve Hakkar of the machinery's lingering command. **Stakes:** the wood repeats the extraction plate's last instruction.

READ-ALOUD

Silver threads run through three stones around a shallow pool, joining carvings of an open hand and a broken chain. Pale light flits between the trees. A dark shape folds beneath the water.

Encounter 9: The Pool That Repeats

Site: W1.

Opposition: one **Gray Ooze**, called the shadow slime, and two **Will-o'-Wisps**, SRD 5.1; no altered statistics.

Clue: the stones depict opening the hand, breaking the chain, and turning the face toward dawn. Hakkar's rubbing shows the same sequence.

Woodland cleansing

1. Place a metal extraction plate in the pool; one action.

2. Rotate the southwest stone's hand outward; one action and DC 12 Athletics, or two people without a roll.

3. Turn the southeast chain stone's carved gap toward the pool; one action.

4. Turn the north face stone east; one action.

Correct steps chime. Wrong rotations vibrate dully and can be reversed freely, with no accumulating damage. Ten inactive minutes reset unfinished work; completed cleansing remains.

Completion restores Hakkar to his current hit point maximum and ends nightmares and involuntary echoes. His registry claim, wound clock, and divine trace remain.

Threats: the ooze attacks anyone entering the pool. The wisps leave the ritual alone if offered carriage of their names to a grave marker. **Eda** and **Venn** are legible on the north stone.

Attacked wisps use their printed abilities. Before attempting Consume Life, they circle a fallen creature to signal the threat. Allies can drag that creature outside the trees or drive the wisps away.

Bypasses: *dispel magic* against DC 15 grounds the plate for 24 hours, allowing Tharna to complete the procedure at her workshop over one day. Flight avoids the ooze but does not operate the stones.

Scaling: three PCs: one wisp. Five PCs: add one Gray Ooze in the pool.

Success: Hakkar testifies clearly and identifies Vahl as a reputed specialist, not a personal friend.

Fail-forward: take the rubbing to Tharna for cleansing.

Transition: Lestrade convenes a hearing on the arena records.

Scene 10: Inspector Doyle Lestrade

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** settle Rivermont's response. **Stakes:** Carthain offers money and partial disclosure for silence.

> **READ-ALOUD**
>
> Lestrade has cleared the witness table for the brass plates. An officer waits by the holding-room door. A sealed document case rests on the table across the aisle.

Encounter 10: A Case That Can Stand

Site: R3.

Carthain's whereabouts: if concealment reached 4 and he was not subsequently caught, he remains in Eastwatch at the Lantern House beside E1. His unarmed advocate (**Commoner**) delivers his signed settlement offer and can accept its written terms. Otherwise Carthain attends and sits beside the case. Apply his room actions only if present.

Opposition if violence occurs: Lestrade, **Knight**; two subduers, **Veterans**; Carthain, **Noble**. Kanarr retains his **Bandit Captain** statistics, current hit points, and allegiance. All SRD 5.1.

Evidence standard

Establish any **two independent links**:

- altered corpse token and mortuary receipt;
- living competitor's testimony and transfer slate;
- Kanarr's shipping record;
- armory manifest;
- temple ledger;
- Hakkar's testimony;
- collector's signed release.

Authentic, mutually supporting evidence needs no check. DC 14 Insight, Investigation, or Persuasion can support a disputed witness; failure leaves only that piece contested.

Carthain's offer: surrender the temple contact and pay the civic reward in exchange for keeping the arena open and avoiding prison. Lestrade asks whether those terms can protect witnesses.

Choices:

- **Public prosecution:** detain a present Carthain, or issue a warrant for an absent one; pause arena operations for a month. Lestrade places witnesses in the west holding room, Kanarr receives debt protection, and workers need temporary support. At Eastwatch, presenting the warrant to two gate guards obtains their assistance: they serve it at the Lantern House and escort him into custody. He submits unless the party attacks him, in which case use his Noble statistics and resolve any escape. Until served, the warrant changes no custody state.
- **Supervised reform:** remove Carthain's contract authority and require restitution. Chevkos must testify, submit all devices for inspection, and teach Tharna or a city engineer how to distinguish recording from extraction. Arena matches continue only after public contracts are rewritten.
- **Quiet settlement:** immediate payment and safe passage without public precedent. Carthain names the temple contact and gives copies, but witnesses receive no official shield unless the party separately arranges it. Arena workers know the party accepted compromise, and Jax will not call the arena honest until a later public rule change.
- **Expose civic complicity:** Lestrade admits Carthain funded the repairs, recuses himself, and sends the evidence to Northwatch's magistrate. This adds two days but preserves the case. During the delay, Tharna can house witnesses and Kanarr can move them upriver if the party asks.

Pressure: threatening witnesses or destroying records prompts officers to attempt nonlethal arrest. They stop

when weapons are lowered and an advocate accepts custody.

Morale: officers do not follow fugitives into a lethal ambush. During violence, a present Carthain flees through the east exit carrying copies, not sole evidence. His advocate surrenders immediately and has no authority to resist arrest.

Scaling: three PCs: one subduer. Five PCs: unchanged.

Success: settle the case, secure the civic reward, and reach level 8.

Fail-forward: a mistrial leaves the party free on Tharna's guarantee unless they committed an unrelated serious crime. Their copies support a Northwatch hearing.

Transition: Vahl's invitation arrives with Bandolek's note: **"Ask what happens to the body. Accept no answer that speaks only of the soul."**

Part II: Beyond Rivermont

Scene 11: The Price the Priest Concealed

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** obtain help and expose the concealed sacrifice. **Stakes:** Vahl intends to kill Hakkar to open a passage.

READ-ALOUD

A round carpet lies beneath the shrine's open skylight. Beside it, a priest waits at a lectern with his sleeves pinned clear of his hands. Three empty niches face the carpet. A brass panel on the west wall bears a hammer beside an open doorway.

Encounter 11: Veritas, Aequitas, and Mortus

Site: E1.

Opposition: Vahl, **Cult Fanatic**; Veritas, Aequitas, and Mortus use their homebrew profiles.

Arrival branches:

• **Hakkar alive and present:** Vahl asks him to stand beside the covered circle; Hakkar refuses unless a player persuades him the circle has been inspected and made safe. His refusal is audible evidence.

• **Hakkar dead and carried:** Vahl requests the vessel and must physically obtain it. A covered or hidden vessel is not detected automatically.

• **Hakkar elsewhere:** Vahl asks for his location; the rite cannot reach him remotely, and he will not start it without a subject or vessel in the shrine.

• **Party refuses entry:** Bandolek's open-door symbol on the external wall supplies the voluntary crossing. No substitute attackers appear, and Vahl cannot begin this rite from inside the shrine against absent targets.

Evidence before danger: Vahl refuses to explain the blood channel beneath the carpet. Direct examination finds it without a roll. DC 14 Insight reveals evasions about bodily survival. *Zone of truth*, appropriate divination, or an acolyte's testimony can expose the rite. One frightened acolyte knows: "the subject must cease breathing." Hakkar's own refusal, Bandolek's note, and the carpet channel are three independent proofs that consent was concealed.

Trigger and timing: Vahl attacks only when he has a subject or vessel within reach and the party rejects his demand, or when exposed and prevented from leaving with evidence. Roll initiative. His first hostile action is an ordinary dagger attack or an attempt to seize a visible receiver, using normal opposed checks if held. At that turn's end, the three officers appear on the north marks and roll initiative for the next round. Refusal outside the shrine does not trigger this encounter.

Stopping the mandate

• Shown the carpet or told consent was withheld, Aequitas demands the terms aloud. One action exposing the hidden clause and another presenting Hakkar's refusal, Bandolek's note, or the acolyte's testimony stop her attacks.

• Veritas stops when shown Vahl's claim of consent and a conscious subject's contrary statement, or a written instruction that contradicts Vahl's spoken terms.

• Neither condition requires Persuasion. Exact evidence matters more than eloquence.

• Mortus continues until Vahl revokes the order, incapacitated Vahl is countermanded by Aequitas, or Mortus is defeated. His persistence proves culpability; stopping him does not absolve him.

Circle receiver: an unprotected creature dying inside the circle has its soul caught in the visible receiver beside the west panel: AC 13, 10 hit points. An action opens its latch; opening or breaking it releases the soul safely. If Vahl physically reaches the east exit carrying it, the receiver reaches the infernal chamber on decree day 3. Record its holder and current hit points.

Custody after surrender: Vahl surrenders at 8 hit points. If Lestrade's warrant exists or the party requests lawful custody, Eastwatch guards confine him in the Lantern House until Rivermont or Northwatch officers arrive. If left free and unguarded, he leaves for I4 before decree day 3 with any receiver he actually holds. Restraints, guards, unconsciousness, or a confiscated receiver prevent that departure or transfer until he overcomes them through ordinary actions. Veritas and Aequitas offer testimony when the mandate breaks. Mortus accepts surrender only after revocation and can otherwise be reduced to 0 normally.

Scaling: three PCs: Veritas observes and attacks only if attacked. Five PCs: add two **Cultists** at the vestry exit.

Success: save Hakkar or release his soul, expose Vahl, establish custody or pursuit, and decide whether to cross.

Fail-forward: acolytes stabilize unconscious survivors after Vahl leaves. Free souls of the dead may accept Bandolek's informed summons. If Vahl escapes without a receiver, his correspondence still announces the decree but cannot substitute for actual possession.

Transition: give **Handout 4** before using **Protected crossing** for the voluntary ten-minute threshold. Vahl's correspondence announces the fixed dates under

Opposition clocks. Record the announcement date now. The decree's dates remain fixed even if both subjects are safe; the rite can affect only subjects or vessels physically present in I4.

Scene 12: The Desk of Moradin

Runtime: 90 minutes. **Objective:** learn the mission and choose its terms. **Stakes:** Bahamut, Moradin, and the hall must disclose their intentions.

> READ-ALOUD
>
> Six stone couches with clean linen line the hall. A gray-browed dwarf clerk arranges chairs before the broad desk, where an unfinished ledger lies open.

Encounter 12: Judgment Held Open

Site: D1. **Opposition:** none unless the party initiates unrelated violence.

Present: Dorrin, NPC Bandolek if used, and manifestations through which Moradin and Bahamut speak. PC attendance remains the players' choice. The manifestations have no combat statistics and leave no treasure-bearing bodies.

Disclosures:

1. Bahamut's intervention during the first extraction left his trace in Hakkar.
2. Cthugothotal's separate Io potential belongs to him.
3. Bahamut considered taking that potential to deny it to Tiamat, then rejected the act. The party may challenge him about that consideration.
4. The gods know the rival interests but need infernal records to learn the exact sacrifice procedure.
5. The hall offers **Protected crossing**.
6. Saving Hakkar requires neither Cthugothotal's death nor renunciation of his faith.

Consent: confirm each player has received **Handout 4** and individually agrees to the journey. Refusal grants material return without condemning the others. A replacement or new PC may be a voluntary petitioner already here.

Bargains: the hall provides the soul lantern, honest answers, and Drachma's passage on request. It refuses an army because invading the city would endanger captives; this is a political decision, not a magical prohibition.

Hakkar: if safe, he asks the party to sever his claim and free the other prisoners. He may remain at D1, beyond the sacrifice's reach.

Cthugothotal: as an NPC, he accepts sanctuary unless offered a specific alternative. As a PC, his player chooses. Protected projections cannot supply the rite's required soul.

Success: depart with an agreed mission, lantern, and protection.

Fail-forward: declining the expedition preserves Rivermont's victory. The campaign may continue locally while allies seek the records at uncertain cost.

Transition: the west arch opens onto Drachma's berth.

Scene 13: Captain Drachma's Terms

Runtime: 90 minutes. **Objective:** establish a cover and return plan. **Stakes:** passengers and documents must make the ship's disguise believable.

> READ-ALOUD
>
> Points of light show through a narrow ship's gray sails as they stir against the quay. A lean captain marks a chart with two fingers. Beside the gangplank, a painted devil's figurehead waits to be fitted over another face.

Encounter 13: A Ship from a Higher Layer

Site: S1. **Potential opposition:** one **Bearded Devil** customs officer and two **Imps**, SRD 5.1.

Passage and pickup

Bandolek pays passage. The party chooses a cover-soul auditors, faction couriers, or visiting contestants-and one spokesperson.

Drachma returns to the same infernal dock **at each local sunset**, waiting **one hour**. A chalk hammer inside his mooring post, left before that sunset's pickup ends, requests an additional one-hour pickup at the following dawn; Drachma checks the post before departing. Record the arranged window and give **Handout 8**.

Between pickups he waits at a sheltered anchorage **600 feet beyond the pier**, before the S2 debris channel. His rescue launch remains chained beneath the pier, with its quick-release pin reachable from the lowest step.

- Removing the pin and boarding take two rounds.
- The 20 × 8-foot launch carries ten Medium or Small passengers and up to 3,500 pounds total.
- It has AC 13, 40 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.
- One able rower's action moves it 30 feet toward the anchorage: twenty rowing actions reach the ship.
- Once the launch is clear of known pursuers, summarize the remaining journey.

Drachma marks the launch route on the party's copy of Handout 8.

Ship disguise

The figurehead casts a visual illusion over hull and sails, not passengers or documents. It ends when Drachma dismisses it or the figurehead breaks: AC 15, 25 hit points. *Dispel magic* against DC 15 suppresses it for 10 minutes.

Inspection: the officer asks origin, cargo, and purpose. A consistent cover with an authentic arena or registry document passes automatically. Otherwise, DC 14 Deception or Persuasion avoids inspection.

Options: allow inspection while hiding the lantern in the hold, pay the published 25 gp inspection fee, disclose a legitimate petitioner's purpose, or fight. The lantern is not automatically detectable through walls.

Combat: the officer boards by the port ladder; imps remain near the figurehead and retreat if the officer falls below

half hit points. No reinforcements arrive on open water. Killing the officer advances pursuit once.

Scaling: three PCs: one imp. Five PCs: three imps.

Success: enter without increasing pursuit and receive Dimitri's address.

Fail-forward: failed inspection seals the cargo hatch. Passengers may disembark; later breaking the seal advances pursuit. Flight to an unguarded quay remains possible.

Transition: Drachma points out the market and repeats tomorrow's departure time.

Scene 14: Dimitri's Books and the Three Orders

Runtime: 150 minutes. **Objective:** identify the registry and choose an access route. **Stakes:** each sponsor expects something in return.

READ-ALOUD

Gold rings flash over the market's counting tables. Across the street, petitioners wait in seven straight ranks before a black doorway. A horned bookseller lifts one shutter, revealing spectacles and a finger pressed to his lips.

Encounter 14: Knowledge Is Power

Site: I1.

Potential opposition: one **Barbed Devil** Contractus factor, one **Bearded Devil** Usuporiis representative, and two **Veterans** of the Asmodite watch. They arrive separately, never as a mandatory combined fight.

Dimitri's information: give **Handout 5** and relevant information under **Factions**. Some devils belong to none of the three orders. I2 holds Rivermont's claims; the party must tell Dimitri Hakkar's current state because his advice differs for a living witness, a confined soul, and a protected projection. He does not know Hakkar's current cell unless the party has already learned it.

His bargain: Dimitri asks for a copy of the transfer authority or, if the party has not seen it yet, a sworn promise to bring him one after I2. In exchange he gives the court schedule, a public entrance credential, and the shop's rear-exit location. He requests copies only, refuses custody of souls, and will not fight for the party in the street. Before they leave, he asks whether Drachma might carry one more passenger after the rescue: "A book can leave this city. I would like the same privilege." If they discuss passage, record invited, refused, or unanswered, along with any pickup time they disclose. Passage permits a petition at D1; it does not grant asylum.

PATRON	OFFER	PRICE AND LIMIT
Contractus	Court sponsorship and entry to C	Prove a rival's title defective. The sponsor wants a public ruling, not necessarily ownership.
Usuporiis	Service-worker papers and knowledge of P	Copy the furnace authority seal; no harvesting or destruction of souls required.
Asmodites	Inspection warrant for L and V	Show unauthorized extraction. The watch accepts certified copies of surrendered records.
No patron	Public petition and Dimitri's map	Four hours in queues; no faction debt.

Information checks: DC 14 Insight reveals a representative's unstated preference; failure leaves it uncertain. Read the contract regardless. None secretly transfers a soul.

Pressure: a second public argument or exposed forgery brings a watch demand to leave. It costs two hours or a 10 gp administrative fine, without automatic combat. If the party refuses Dimitri's bargain, he still sells a crude route sketch for 5 gp and a true story about Rivermont; it omits the rear book passage.

Morale: attacked representatives withdraw. The watch attempts arrest, then retreats to report if one veteran falls. Dimitri hides behind shelves and escapes through the rear passage if violence enters the shop.

Scaling: unchanged.

Success: identify the registry, choose a sponsor or public route, and reach level 9.

Fail-forward: public notices name the court and Trials. Dimitri trades directions for an ordinary book or truthful account of Rivermont. Refusing his information bargain does not remove the public route or his separate passage request.

Transition: approach I2 with warrant, petition, service papers, or burglary plan. Record what Dimitri is owed; the debt affects his cooperation, not the party's souls.

Scene 15: Contracts and Captives

Runtime: 210 minutes. **Objective:** sever Hakkar's claim, free six souls, and uncover the rite. **Stakes:** court action can authorize the rescue; theft may save captives without protecting the rescuers.

READ-ALOUD

The registry lobby has three doors and no chairs. Pens scratch beyond one doorway; glass rings softly beyond another. Above the desk, a brass notice reads: "Possession does not establish title. Title does not establish consent."

Encounter 15: The Registry's Contradiction

Site: I2.

Opposition: one **Barbed Devil** registrar in L; two **Bearded Devils**, one in V and one in P; four **Guards**, two in L and two in C. All SRD 5.1. The court clerk uses **Commoner** statistics.

Prisoners: separate vessels contain **Asha the ferrier, Bel the mason, Corin the singer, Dessa the midwife, Emon the apprentice, and Fara the carter.**

Where the records are

A 5-foot-square document cabinet stands in V's southeast corner, outside the aisle to the soul plinths. Visible drawer labels identify every record below. The registrar carries its key. A court warrant requires the guard to unlock it; a burglar can use an action and DC 15 thieves' tools. Failure rings the existing bell in L. Breaking the cabinet (AC 15, 15 hit points) opens it without damaging the papers. Taking a document from an open drawer is an object interaction. A ten-minute transcription preserves a complete copy.

RECORD	CUSTODY AND USE	DESTRUCTION OR REMOVAL
Hakkar's master claim	V cabinet, drawer H. The original vellum folio sustains the wound connection.	An action tears or burns it, canceling the claim and ending the wound clock immediately. Taking it intact does not cancel it; D1 can void it after delivery. Copies carry no binding power.
Six forged blood pacts	V cabinet, numbered drawers 1-6. Compare their visible ink and identifying marks with Rivermont's ledger.	Burning them loses this physical proof, not any captive's soul. Witnessed copies remain usable evidence.
Transfer authority	V cabinet, drawer AUTHORITY. Contains Handout 7, the decree, and I4's plan. A certified duplicate is in L's unlocked reception-desk drawer, labeled DUPLICATES.	Either copy or a full transcription satisfies Dimitri's bargain. Destroying it does not cancel Hakkar's separate claim.
Furnace book	P, chained to a reading stand beside the blue stop lever. Dates and Rivermont batch marks can be read or copied there; the chain affects removal only.	Contains the six-month transfer entries used in court. The chain has AC 15, 10 hit points; the registrar's key releases it.

Furnace custody: the burn tray initially holds loose forged transfer receipts. None of the four records above is automatically in it. Any creature moving a record to the furnace must physically collect it, travel to P, place it in the tray, and operate the red lever with its normal actions. Burning the original master claim cancels it even if a devil does the burning. The registrar tries to retain the claims rather than destroy their power.

Evidence:

- Supposedly old "blood pacts" share the same fresh ink, visible in ordinary light when compared.
- The furnace book dates transfer six months ago, not six centuries.
- Rivermont's ledger contains the same six identifying marks.
- Court rules require two independent grounds to cancel a disputed title.

Court route: a hearing takes one hour. Two authentic contradictions win without a roll. With only one, DC 15 Investigation or Persuasion secures inspection of the furnace book. Failure causes a two-hour recess, leaving time for the service route.

A favorable ruling releases the six souls, cancels Hakkar's master claim, and issues a sacrifice-chamber inspection warrant. The registrar obeys while witnesses remain.

Service route: DC 14 Investigation in C finds passage scuffs; Usuporiis papers identify the route automatically. Failure costs 20 minutes and attracts the clerk, who reveals it in exchange for safety.

Registry vessels and furnace

Vault vessels: each has a latch and numbered seal. A warrant or the registrar's key permits opening with an action. Otherwise, DC 15 thieves' tools opens it; failure rings a bell in L without harming the soul. Breaking a vessel-AC 13, 10 hit points-also releases its occupant.

Furnace: its red lever starts a **three-round burn** of records in the tray. Stop it with an action at the blue lever, water poured into the open tray, or tray removal. Reaching into an active tray deals 2d6 fire damage once per turn. Emptying the fuel bin prevents reset. Nearby souls are not automatically fed into it.

Combat movement: a bell brings P's devil to V after two rounds. The registrar enters V after three rounds only if violence is still audible. Guards flee when either devil in their room falls. Move the existing roster; add no replacements.

Revelation: the transfer authority identifies the two subjects and the requirement for both actual souls; give **Handout 7**. It also gives the six-day decree and chamber floor plan.

Scaling: three PCs: remove P's devil and two guards. Five PCs: add one Bearded Devil in C, entering V no earlier than round 4.

Success: cancel or destroy Hakkar's master claim, free captives, obtain access information, and reach level 10.

Fail-forward: escape with recovered souls and documents. A stolen master claim can be canceled at D1; theft alone does not stop Hakkar's wound clock. The public Trials award notice also gives the chamber address.

Transition: choose the Trials or Scene 16's alternate preparation.

Scene 16: Time of Trials

Runtime: 270 minutes, usually two sessions. **Objective:** win access or prepare another approach to I4. **Stakes:** the contest grants privilege and publicizes the hunt for Cthugothotal.

READ-ALOUD

Three walled lanes lead toward a northern court. A tower blocks each lane's end, leaving a narrow passage beside it. Beyond the towers, an iron giant waits with both hands on the ground. A red banner promises the victors an audience.

Encounter 16: Red Coins and the Nexus

Site: I3. **Party level:** 10.

LANE	EXACT ROSTER	STARTING ARRANGEMENT
West	Two Lemures, two Skeletons, one Ogre called the Corrupted Glutton, one Gladiator called Arantor, one Dispater Tower	Minions at entrance; glutton 40 feet north; Arantor 80 feet north; tower at end
East	Two Lemures, two Skeletons, one Barbed Devil Veteran using Barbed Devil statistics, one Trial Advocate called the Passion Devil, one Dispater Tower	Minions at entrance; veteran 40 feet north; advocate 80 feet north; tower at end
Center	Two Lemures, two Skeletons, one Frost Probationer, one Dispater Tower	Minions at entrance; probationer 60 feet north; tower at end
North goal	One Trial Nexus	Center of goal band

Standard creatures use SRD 5.1. Skeletons remain undead. The Frost Probationer is a lesser custom ice devil, not the SRD Ice Devil. It, the advocate, towers, and nexus use **Homebrew Creature and Device Statistics**.

Entire roster: twelve minions, five champions, three towers, one nexus. No replacements.

DM plan for the Trials

1. Before initiative, explain the public map, surrender signal, coins, tower releases, and **eight-hour contest limit**.

2. Let the party choose a lane. Other lanes' enemies stay put unless attacked or the party enters the north goal.

3. Entrance minions and the nearer champion engage first; a farther champion advances when attacked or when characters pass the midpoint.

4. Allow a short rest once the lane's tower is disabled and champions are defeated, bypassed, or bargained past. Officials do not interrupt.

5. Track surrender, death, bypass, movement, and resources on a roster card.

A typical route uses two short rests and 40-70 combat rounds across several fights, plus planning. Faster approaches keep their advantage. Towers attack only within 60 feet and line of sight; walls block their fire, and flight can reach releases from behind.

Winning and bypassing

Each tower has a visible release wheel at its base.

• An adjacent action and DC 15 Athletics, Arcana, or thieves' tools earns one success. **Two successes** disable the tower and retract its linked shield; failure does not remove successes.

• Failure deals 1d6 lightning damage to the operator. Each tower can cause feedback only **twice** before its capacitor empties.

• Reducing a tower to 0 hit points also disables it.

The nexus activates when a hostile creature enters the north goal and cannot leave that band. Its **Tower Shield** reduces each damage instance by **10 per active tower**, after resistance, minimum 0. With all towers disabled, an adjacent action at its exposed chest seal shuts it down without a roll. Destroying it also wins. Its complete combat profile appears under **Trial Nexus**.

Champion bargains:

• Arantor yields for a public promise to petition for his release.

• The advocate yields for a copy of Scene 15's forged-title ruling.

• The barbed veteran honors an inspection warrant if the party uses the side passage without attacking it.

• The glutton accepts two days' rations and room to leave.

• The probationer honors a formal duel to first blood, ended by either contestant's first successful damaging hit.

Bargains receive combat-equivalent victory credit.

Red coins-campaign homebrew

Each of the **twelve minions** carries one marked coin, claimable after defeat, surrender, or formal bypass through an accepted lane bargain. Each minion yields only once.

• **Supply:** 12.

• **Carrying limit:** 3 per character. Excess stays on the ground or in a visible staging-area team bowl.

• **Transfer:** an action hands any number to an adjacent willing creature.

• **1 coin, bonus action:** regain 2d8 + 2 hit points; maximum twice per character during the Trials.

• **2 coins, bonus action:** move up to speed without opportunity attacks; maximum twice per character during the Trials.

• **3 coins, action:** recover one expended spell slot of level 3 or lower; maximum once per character during the Trials.

• **One purchase per turn.** Coins provide no permanent bonuses, extra actions or turns, or class-feature recovery.

• Coins function only for registered contestants inside I3 and become inert glass when the contest ends. Recovered hit points and slots remain recovered.

Trial surrender and time limit

Raise both empty hands and declare withdrawal. At the current turn's end, officials escort that contestant to staging; opponents cease targeting them. The contestant cannot act in the contest or reenter and leaves carried coins in the team bowl. Teammates may continue.

If everyone withdraws, or eight hours expire without victory, officials halt attacks and stabilize reachable fallen contestants. Existing damage remains. Defeat grants no audience and transfers no one to the sacrifice.

Scaling: three PCs: remove one minion per lane, Arantor, and the advocate; announce **9 coins**. Five PCs: add one Skeleton per lane; announce **15 coins**. Carrying limits and tower/nexus control counts do not change.

Success: winners receive the purse, audience access, and the optional **Decree extension**.

Fail-forward: withdrawal leaves warrants, service access, and Dimitri's route available.

Alternate preparation: decline the spectacle

Complete three tasks over **eight hours total**:

1. Survey the west service door from a public workshop and learn the two bearded devils' shift.

2. Authenticate registry evidence with Dimitri and a neutral clerk, preventing dismissal as simple forgery.

3. Build an insulated grounding rod from 50 gp of available components. An adjacent action disables one I4 pylon without a check, irreparably for that encounter; the rod burns out.

No combat is mandatory. At pursuit 3, the survey requires DC 15 Stealth or 25 gp workshop rental. Failed Stealth preserves the information but alerts the guards: mark **Service door alerted** and use Scene 17's stated starting positions.

Milestone: a committed Trials attempt, won or lost, or all three alternate tasks grants **level 11**.

Transition: use audience, inspection, service access, or assault to reach I4. A long rest before the decree deadline is normally available.

Scene 17: Asmodeus's Double Sacrifice

Runtime: 180 minutes. **Objective:** remove victims and stop the harvest. **Stakes:** the rite can consume only souls actually held in I4.

> **READ-ALOUD**
>
> Three humming pillars stand behind two narrow couches, each with a glass vessel at its head. A horned official waits between the pillars; an armed guard watches a side door. In the mirror above them, a seated figure slowly turns a ring around one finger.

Arrival: consult **Campaign-State Ledger** before placing either subject. The scheduled start is sunset on decree day 6, shifted by the single **Decree extension** if earned. Missing subjects do not move that deadline; an empty chamber cannot consume an absent soul. Describe empty vessels and couches when their subjects are safe or absent, and any bodily captive visibly. Vahl's escaped receiver fits into Hakkar's socket without replacement: retain its AC 13, maximum 10 hit points, current damage, and simple action-open latch from Scene 11. The socket grants no extra protection. Living captives retain normal hit points and death saves; protected projections cannot fuel the rite.

Encounter 17: The Two Names on the Order

Site: I4.

Opposition: Beleth, using **Horned Devil** statistics, and two **Bearded Devils**, SRD 5.1.

Service door alerted: if the Scene 16 survey failed, the bearded devils begin inside I4 within 15 feet of the west service door, in separate spaces, instead of beside the couches. They demand credentials before allowing entry. Use ordinary initiative and surprise rules; the flag grants no free attacks or additional guards. Beleth remains by the central pylon.

Speaking mirror: Asmodeus converses remotely. The mirror has AC 13, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Breaking it ends communication.

Audience leverage: Asmodeus offers delay for a promise to retrieve Cthugothotal. The written promise creates a bounty on the party's future capture if broken, not a soul claim. Read it aloud. A court injunction delays the rite 24 hours, subject to **Decree extension**. If neither required actual soul is present, Asmodeus offers information or a bounty rather than pretending the harvest can succeed.

Lawful Entry and Refusal: an audience or inspection warrant admits the party without combat. Before the scheduled start, or during a valid extension, they may inspect, negotiate, refuse Asmodeus's offer, or leave; refusal alone starts neither combat nor the rite. An inspection warrant permits observation, not possession of captives. Attacking guards, freeing a captive against their resistance, or damaging equipment starts ordinary initiative. At the scheduled time, Beleth announces the rite and orders it on his first available turn if at least one actual captive or confined soul is present; then use **Ritual procedure**. If combat began early, keep its initiative order and begin the progress track only on that order. With no actual captive or soul present, he guards the apparatus and seeks a bargain; no substitute victim appears.

Beleth's priority: preserve the apparatus and present subjects before killing intruders. He will retreat with a charged receiver or record if he cannot complete the harvest, but he cannot conjure an absent soul into a vessel.

Ritual procedure

Display two visible tracks: **Pylons** and **Victims**. The rite's progress is a **0-6 progress track**; living captives use the separate damage timing below. Keep the tracks separate; progress is not automatic death.

1. Roll initiative when Beleth orders the rite. At initiative 0, advance by 1 only if **all three pylons are active**.

2. Disabling a pylon pauses progress without resetting it.

3. An adjacent action and DC 16 Arcana, Religion, or thieves' tools disables a pylon. Failure deals 2d6 lightning damage to the operator, once per turn.

4. Each pylon has AC 16, 25 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Destroying one prevents completion for the rest of this adventure.

5. An adjacent devil may spend an action and DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) to reactivate an intact pylon, using its Intelligence modifier if untrained. Maximum one attempt per pylon per round.

6. Scene 16's grounding rod disables one pylon automatically and prevents its repair for this encounter.

7. At progress 6, the rite consumes souls confined in the two connected vessels. It does not automatically kill living captives.

Living victims: while restrained on a connected couch, a captive takes 3d6 necrotic damage at initiative 0 on rounds **2, 4, 6, and 8**, provided all three pylons are active. Death saves occur at initiative 10. This damage gives an unconscious captive one failed death save, not an automatic critical hit. Removing the captive from the couch ends this damage until a devil restrains that captive again with normal actions.

Death on a couch while all pylons are active captures the soul in that couch's vessel. If progress reached 6 without an available soul, it stalls there; a newly caught soul is consumed at the **next initiative 0** with all pylons active, leaving intervening turns. If only one connected vessel holds a soul at completion, only that soul is consumed and the paired harvest fails.

Restraints: an action with Beleth's key, DC 16 thieves' tools, or DC 18 Athletics opens one. Each has AC 17 and 15 hit points; breaking it does not harm the captive. A freed captive can be carried, escorted, healed, or placed in cover; no rule forces them to remain in I4.

Vessels: native I4 vessels open with Beleth's key or two successful DC 16 thieves' tools actions. Failure sounds a gong without changing soul state. Each native vessel has AC 15 and 20 hit points. If Vahl's receiver is present, use its retained AC 13, current hit points out of 10, and one-action latch instead; its socket adds no lock. Breaking either kind safely releases its occupant. An open lantern within 30 feet can receive a willing soul; otherwise use **Distinct states**. A closed, carried vessel remains a physical object that can be stolen only through ordinary positioning, incapacitation, surrender, or adjudicated disarmament.

A stored divine trace

If Hakkar is consumed while Cthugothotal's soul is absent, the emptied Hakkar receiver fills with gold light: Bahamut's released trace, not Hakkar's soul.

The receiver remains in Hakkar's couch socket and weighs 2 pounds. It retains its actual identity, AC, current hit points, and latch under **Vessels**; consumption does not repair it. An adjacent action detaches and takes the whole sealed receiver. Opening or breaking it dissipates the trace without restoring Hakkar; breaking a pylon does not break the vessel. The trace cannot enter the soul lantern or substitute for Hakkar in a new paired sacrifice.

Record its holder. Beleth takes it with an action if within reach before retreating; otherwise it stays until physically collected. Only a receiver carried toward the ship can be intercepted in Scenes 18-19.

Combat: Beleth uses his printed attacks, flight, and fire against armed intruders and must approach pylons to repair them. Bearded devils guard couches and grapple rescuers. Ritual actions use their normal actions.

Morale: once a pylon is destroyed and victims removed, Beleth offers passage in exchange for leaving his office intact. Below 30 hit points he retreats west. His guards surrender if he leaves and neither holds a captive.

Scaling: three PCs: one bearded devil; pylons have 20 hit points. Five PCs: add one bearded devil beside the west door.

Success: rescue bodies or souls and destroy a pylon; carry out any records previously recovered from I2.

Partial loss: one consumed subject cannot complete the paired harvest. Apply the corresponding outcome under **Resolution Paths**; both consumed can produce **The dark future**.

Fail-forward: both side doors permit retreat. Souls already freed remain free; pylons cannot recapture them remotely.

Transition: legal departure may reach the docks without pursuit. Violent rescue increases pursuit once and starts Scene 18 at its first leg.

Scene 18: Running to the Docks

Runtime: 120 minutes. **Objective:** reach Drachma with rescued people and evidence. **Stakes:** delay can expose the ship and separate passengers.

READ-ALOUD

The passage opens above a furnace canal. Beyond its narrow bridge, the customs square leads downhill between warehouse roofs. The harbor lies beyond.

Arrival narration: pursuit 0 leaves the lamps white; pursuit 1-3 turns them red. During an arranged pickup window, add the horn and visible star-gray sail. Otherwise, describe the empty berth and the launch beneath its pier.

Encounter 18: Four Roads to One Pier

Site: I5.

Pursuit roster: three pairs of **Bearded Devils**, SRD 5.1: **Bridge Pair**, **Customs Pair**, **Warehouse Pair**. Maximum six. A following Scene 17 guard retains its identity and hit points and replaces one Bridge Pair member.

Pursuit entry

PURSUIT	STARTING STATE
0	A quiet, lawful departure. Gates stand open and no pair intercepts. Reach the pier without obstacle checks; still respect the pickup window.
1	Start 30 feet before the furnace bridge. Use the four obstacles as written; each pair remains out of contact until its trigger.
2	Start 30 feet before the bridge with its maintenance gate already shut. Opening it needs two successful listed actions instead of one; flight or teleportation still bypasses it. Failure brings the Bridge Pair once.
3	Start 30 feet before the bridge. The gate is shut as at 2, and the Bridge Pair visibly blocks its far end. Roll initiative if approached without a warrant or accepted parley. A successful barrier bypass leaves the pair behind; mark it bypassed unless it can follow using its actual movement. A failed check does not create another pair.

When pursuit is at least 1, run the four obstacles in order. Success bypasses the listed interception; continue along the route after any fight. At pursuit 2-3, the shut gate requires both successful actions before its pair is marked bypassed.

LEG	OBSTACLE AND CHOICES	FAILURE
Furnace bridge	Descending maintenance gate: DC 15 Athletics to hold it, thieves' tools to jam it, or flight/teleportation. One successful action opens passage for all, except at pursuit 2-3.	Bridge Pair arrives at far end.
Customs square	Show a warrant, create a diversion with DC 15 Deception/Performance, or take roofs with group DC 13 Athletics/Acrobatics.	Customs Pair blocks dock exit.
Warehouse lane	Find Drachma's chalk hammer with DC 14 Perception/Investigation or follow Scene 13's directions without a roll.	Warehouse Pair reaches the lane during the search.
Pier	Release moorings with two actions at separate posts or one DC 15 Athletics action breaking the weakened crossline.	Departure takes two extra rounds, exposing the ship to surviving pursuers. No new combatants.

Group checks require at least half the participants to succeed; a natural 1 does not automatically fail the group.

Interceptions: devils grapple, attack, or interact with objects to seize the lantern or block passage; theft is never automatic. At round 3's end, the **next unencountered pair** arrives only if its obstacle has not been bypassed. Remove it from its later position. Spent or bypassed pairs never regenerate, and no fourth fight is added.

Boarding at the pier

Consult the recorded window under **Passage and pickup**.

Dimitri's departure: if alive, free, and told the pickup plan in Scene 14 or later, Dimitri walks to I5 and waits beside the warehouse with his books. He cannot know an undisclosed change of berth or follow a ship already gone. An invited Dimitri asks to board; an explicitly refused Dimitri stays ashore. With passage unanswered, he may try to stow away only while S1 is actually docked: make one check using his printed Imp Stealth against the passive Perception of creatures watching the gangplank. If noticed, he asks permission before boarding and accepts refusal. A barred hold or a deliberate search prevents concealment; he reveals himself rather than fighting. Outside the pickup window, he must openly request a place in the launch and occupies it as an ordinary passenger. Record ashore, openly aboard, or hidden aboard. Nothing here creates a spare launch or moves him across the Astral Sea.

During pickup: Drachma lowers the ladder after two rounds of combat at the pier and waits until everyone has boarded or explicitly chosen another course. He does not close the window on visible passengers approaching the ladder. Use the mooring obstacle for his ship.

Outside pickup: Drachma waits at the anchorage and provides no horn, ladder, or combat assistance at the pier. Replace the mooring obstacle with **Passage and pickup**'s launch procedure: two rounds to release and board, then twenty rowing actions to the ship. Only surviving, unbypassed pursuers can follow, using their existing movement and attacks; this adds no interception.

Morale: a pair retreats when one devil falls and the lantern is beyond reach. They do not leap into the Astral Sea.

Scaling: three PCs: one devil per pair. Five PCs: add one **Imp** to the Bridge Pair only.

Success: board with passengers, lantern, and records.

Fail-forward: a separated character can fly or climb a rope thrown by an ally within reach. The launch remains available only at its recorded location; taking it leaves none beneath the pier for a late passenger.

Transition: once the party reaches S1 at the pier or anchorage, Drachma takes aboard the launch if present. Board all desired passengers before entering S2.

Scene 19: Across the Astral Sea

Runtime: 120 minutes. **Objective:** reach Moradin's harbor with the rescued souls. **Stakes:** Tiamat's agents target people, vessels, trace, and evidence still within reach.

READ-ALOUD

The harbor falls behind the stern. Broken stone drifts across the channel ahead. Wingbeats echo among the fragments. Drachma braces against the helm.

Arrival narration: describe one herald high to port for three PCs; otherwise add the second low to starboard. Show the ship's current appearance under **Ship disguise**; a broken or suppressed figurehead is not replaced.

Encounter 19: The Mother's Claim

Site: S1 within S2.

Opposition: two **Pursuit Heralds**, using the Veritas and Mortus profiles respectively. Change only creature type to fiend, languages to Infernal and Draconic, and appearance to Tiamat's winged servants. They are distinct individuals, not the celestial officers from Eastwatch.

Demands: Hakkar's free or confined soul, unprotected Cthugothotal, a charged trace receiver actually aboard, or the paired-sacrifice records. A visible charged receiver takes priority over records. If both souls are at D1 and no charged receiver is aboard, the heralds seek records and may accept a convincing copy. A receiver left at I4 is beyond their reach here.

Passage clock

Reach safety after **six rounds** with Drachma at the helm.

• Grappling or incapacitating Drachma pauses that round's progress.

• A character can steer with an action and DC 14 water-vehicle proficiency check, or Wisdom (Survival) if untrained.

• Failed steering adds no progress and causes no crash.

• *Control water* has no applicable water here. Wind, flight, teleportation, and barriers affect creatures and sails within their spell texts.

Boarding: the Veritas-profile herald starts 60 feet to port; the Mortus-profile herald, if present, starts 60 feet to starboard. They must move to the ship. They target bearers of visible captives or the charged receiver; hidden cargo is not automatically located. Taking a carried receiver requires the bearer's surrender or incapacitation followed by an ordinary object interaction.

Debris: on rounds 2 and 4, a fragment threatens the bow. A forecastle character can spend an action and DC 14 Athletics to push it with a spar or deal 15 damage to it: AC 12, immune to poison and psychic damage. Failure deals **2d6 bludgeoning damage** to forecastle creatures, DC 14 Dexterity save for half, and breaks an intact disguise figurehead. The ship remains afloat.

Hull: AC 15, 100 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage. At 0 it becomes a disabled floating platform. Three successful steering actions propel it through the final gap, or passengers may transfer to the intact rescue launch **only if it is actually aboard**. Either option adds three escape rounds. If the launch was left behind or destroyed, use the steering escape; no new boat appears.

Parley: withdrawal requires authentic proof that both subjects' actual souls are unavailable and the apparatus is destroyed. If a charged trace receiver is aboard, the heralds additionally demand its surrender or visible destruction; they never demand an absent receiver. Surrender transfers only the trace. Without the required proof, or while the party refuses to surrender or destroy a receiver actually aboard, pursuit continues. Alternatively, DC 16 Deception buys two rounds while they inspect a false lantern; failure exposes the ruse without damage.

Morale: each withdraws below one-quarter hit points. If one falls, the other seeks escape with seized records. Neither dies for an empty vessel.

Scaling: three PCs: only the Veritas-profile herald. Five PCs: each gains 15 hit points, no extra attacks.

Success: reach the harbor with rescued passengers.

Fail-forward: a stolen lantern remains intact with the retreating herald and can be pursued. Record any rescue abandoned to secure the others' return.

Transition: D1's quay appears. Consult Dimitri's recorded boarding state from Scene 18. If hidden aboard, he emerges, apologizes, and requests asylum; if openly aboard, he makes the request without a surprise. If ashore, he remains in the infernal city and no Dimitri appears at D1. He has no hidden control over the ship.

Scene 20: Bodies, Names, and Home

Runtime: 90 minutes. **Objective:** resolve each traveler's state and return to Rivermont. **Stakes:** each rescued person chooses a destination.

READ-ALOUD

The ship settles beside the pale quay. Through the arch, the stone couches stand as you left them. A clerk lays blank name cards beside the ledger. The clerk pulls another chair to the desk.

Encounter 20: No One Returns by Accident

Site: D1. **Opposition:** none.

Review: reconcile **Campaign-State Ledger** with **Distinct states** before resolving returns. Read each unresolved name aloud at the table: body, soul, holder, claim, and choice. This is a procedure, not a judgment of the players' morality.

Living travelers: ending projection returns them to their own bodies with current resources and conditions. They may rest normally; ancestry, appearance, personality, and alignment remain unchanged.

Hakkar: if free and willing, he can have Bahamut remove the conduit in a ten-minute rite, preventing its use in this plan. Ask Hakkar before the rite; he agrees only after hearing whether his claim is canceled and what happened to the registry six. The rite does not destroy Bahamut or change Hakkar's ownership of himself. Removing the conduit does not cancel his master claim. If its original folio was brought intact from I2, Dorrin voids it in ten minutes; use the wound-restoration rule under **Opposition clocks**. If it remains intact elsewhere, the bounded wound clock continues after return. Record its location and the unfinished rescue obligation.

Cthugothotal: learns the truth about Io and chooses whether to pursue it. No transformation is imposed. If he is

an NPC, he asks for a private answer from Bahamut and then tells the party only what he chooses to share: whether he wants sanctuary, travel, testimony, or distance from every claimant.

Conditional return-campaign homebrew

The hall grants **six returns for this expedition**, one per willing soul, for creatures that died within the previous **30 days**.

• The soul must be free, willing, and unconsumed.

• It chooses restoration to an intact original body or incarnation in a new adult body of an SRD 5.1 playable ancestry. A PC's new appearance and ancestry require the player's agreement.

• Class levels, memories, ability scores, background, and alignment remain. Replace only ancestry traits if ancestry changes.

• Each rite takes one hour and restores full hit points, removing exhaustion caused by death or projection collapse.

• It does not restore spent spell slots, charges, or consumed equipment; subsequent rests follow normal rules.

• Bodies are living. There is no service contract or alignment requirement.

• Grants cannot become transferable items; unused grants expire when the expedition's petition closes.

• Ordinary resurrection remains separately available.

The registry six died months ago and are **ineligible for this 30-day rite**. Tell them before promising bodies. They may choose judgment, contact with descendants, or another eligible means of return.

Dimitri: if he arrived aboard, he accepts Moradin's asylum terms forbidding coercion and soul ownership. The party may sponsor or oppose his petition, or abstain, including questioning his attempted concealment. Sponsorship gives them a difficult correspondent who answers written questions about infernal institutions; opposition leaves him under Dorrin's supervision without party access. He gains no right to a soul or future passage. If he stayed ashore, record his last known location; no asylum hearing occurs here.

Civic closeout: before the final threshold, choose who carries copies of the registry ruling, Vahl testimony, and any arena settlement. These papers determine whether Rivermont receives public prosecution, supervised reform, or only a private rescue story.

Success: resolve individual choices, close the lantern, and return through the material threshold.

Fail-forward: missing or confined souls remain future rescues. Name the holder and the next known lead instead of ending on uncertainty alone.

Transition: apply **Resolution Paths** and update the civic settlement.

Optional Regional Scenes

These travel complications and relationship opportunities do not award advancement. Apply **Regional travel** and the **Reward ledger**.

Optional Scene A: The Hags' Funeral Toll

Runtime: 60-90 minutes. **Recommended level:** 5-7. **Site:** a 50 × 40 clearing beside the Coldwood road, crossed by a 10-foot path; two 10 × 10 brush patches provide total cover.

> **READ-ALOUD**
>
> Shallow graves line the road, each marked with a household tool. Beneath a patched awning, a woman mutters over a kettle, then points her spoon toward a grave. Something beneath it knocks.

Encounter 21: Two Sisters, Six Graves

Opposition: two **Green Hags**, without coven spells, and six **Skeletons**, SRD 5.1. Two skeletons rise at the end of rounds 1, 3, and 5 unless their graves are consecrated or the hags yield.

Goal: pass and recover the dead's names. The hags demand memories of travelers' families; refusal has no automatic effect.

Graves: initials on the tools match names on the temple list without a check. Speaking a name and placing its tool upright takes an action, preventing that skeleton's rise or collapsing it if already risen.

Alternatives: give 10 gp of provisions, expose the sisters' false claim to be mourners, or take a one-hour road detour.

Morale: a hag below half hit points uses her printed escape abilities. Neither dies for her sister.

Scaling: three PCs: one hag is absent and four skeletons exist. Five PCs: unchanged.

Success: recover names and free the road. **Failure:** retreat adds one hour; no soul is lost. **Transition:** the tools identify a temple supplier or confirm existing evidence.

Optional Scene B: Snornaugh's Bridge

Runtime: 60-90 minutes. **Recommended level:** 6-8. **Site:** a 40-foot-long, 10-foot-wide bridge over a 15-foot-deep ravine, with a 30 × 30 approach at each end.

> **READ-ALOUD**
>
> A troll sits on the bridge with one foot over the edge. A goblin lines up mismatched bowls before it. A painted sign lists tolls for wagons, goats, and "people who shout."

Encounter 22: Troll and Goblin

Opposition: Snornaugh, a **Troll**, and three **Goblins**, SRD 5.1. His distorted shadow has no mechanical effect.

Goal: cross without supporting the extortion. The goblins demand 15 gp for the party; Snornaugh wants food.

Negotiation: 5 gp of provisions and a promise not to mock the sign secure passage. DC 14 Persuasion reduces the cash toll to 5 gp; failure leaves 15 gp available.

Combat: bowls and bridge posts give goblins half cover. Snornaugh blocks the center. The bridge is sound. A shove over the side causes a 15-foot fall for 1d6 bludgeoning damage into a shallow stream. Rough banks allow half-speed climbing without checks.

Morale: goblins flee if Snornaugh burns or falls below half hit points. With regeneration suppressed, he accepts food and retreat.

Scaling: three PCs: one goblin. Five PCs: four.

Success: cross or negotiate an end to tolls. **Failure:** use an upstream ford, adding two hours. **Transition:** goblins recognize carts with the armory mark.

Optional Scene C: The Retired Gladiator's Test

Runtime: 60 minutes. **Recommended level:** 5-7. **Site:** Northwatch's 60 × 60 training yard, with three 5-foot-high platforms and open north and south gates.

READ-ALOUD

A scarred fighter plants a practice spear beside a chalk circle. A dire wolf lies beneath the spectator bench, watching her hands. She points to three platforms. "No killing. Reach the far gate with your flag."

Encounter 23: Wolves in the Training Yard

Opposition: one **Gladiator** and two **Dire Wolves**, SRD 5.1.

Objective: carry a cloth flag from the south gate to the north gate while allies occupy two platforms. Climbing costs 10 feet of movement; flight works.

Terms: melee attacks reducing a creature to 0 are nonlethal. Rejecting the terms or using lethal magic stops the exercise.

Procedure: wolves knock flag carriers prone; the gladiator blocks the direct route. An action and DC 14 Animal Handling calms one wolf for a round; a second success removes it from the test.

Morale: surrender ends the exercise.

Scaling: three PCs: one wolf. Five PCs: require the far platform occupied as well; no added creature.

Success: earn an introduction to Jax. **Failure:** receive criticism and another attempt after a rest. **Transition:** the trainer confirms Jax's dislike of covert interference.

Optional Scene D: The Minotaur's False Wall

Runtime: 60-90 minutes. **Recommended level:** 6-8. **Site:** a 60 × 40 abandoned arena storehouse with three freestanding walls, each 15 feet long and 10 feet high; aisles at least 10 feet wide.

READ-ALOUD

A robed minotaur measures chalk lines with a string while another holds a lantern. Beyond the freestanding walls, an open crate holds contestant tokens arranged in rows.

Encounter 24: A Maze Without an Audience

Opposition: one **Minotaur** and one **Cult Fanatic**, SRD 5.1. The fanatic appears as a minotaur but retains Medium size and the unmodified block.

Goal: obtain the token list. The pair shelter escaped contestants.

Clue: face-down tokens mark missing people; face-up tokens mark survivors. Asking reveals the pattern without a roll.

Pressure: an arena messenger arrives in 20 minutes. The party can hide, warn, or expose the pair.

Combat: they fight only when attacked or their refugees threatened. The fanatic covers an exit with spells; refugees stay out of combat.

Morale: each flees below half hit points.

Scaling: unchanged.

Success: gain independent witness names. **Failure:** the shelter empties, leaving a list scratched beneath a crate. **Transition:** present the names in Scene 10.

Optional Scene E: Dragon over the Wind Hills

Runtime: 90-150 minutes. **Recommended level:** 9-11 for combat, any level for negotiation. **Site:** a 100-foot-wide saddle between ridges; two 20 × 20 boulders give total cover beside a 15-foot trail.

READ-ALOUD

A red dragon sprawls across the ridge beyond a split boulder, one claw on an iron strongbox. Below, an empty wagon stands with its shafts pointed toward the road.

Encounter 25: The Price of a Road

Opposition: one **Young Red Dragon**, SRD 5.1.

Warning: scorched ground, retreating wildlife, and visible breath damage warn travelers before engagement.

Goal: recover the merchant's papers or reopen the road. The dragon demands tribute and recognition of its hunting territory.

Bargains: 100 gp, a map of unoccupied hunting ground, or a truthful promise to direct no livestock caravans through the saddle for a month buys the papers. Public concession of territory satisfies it; worship is unnecessary.

Combat: starts 80 feet away and uses boulders, flight, and breath normally. It need not land for melee opponents.

Morale: below one-third hit points, it abandons the box and retreats. If allowed to leave, it does not pursue beyond the saddle.

Scaling: three PCs: favor negotiation unless they knowingly choose combat. Five PCs: same dragon.

Success: recover papers and any purchased road agreement. **Failure:** a one-day detour remains. **Transition:** Eastwatch supply schedules in the papers grant advantage on Scene 16's service-door survey.

Homebrew Creature and Device Statistics

All profiles use **5E 2014 campaign homebrew**. Challenge ratings are encounter-planning estimates, not advancement awards. Each profile grants only its listed traits and actions.

Hakkar, Wounded Investigator

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), any alignment

AC 12; **HP** 33 (6d8 + 6); **Speed** 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1), **DEX** 12 (+1), **CON** 12 (+1), **INT** 14 (+2), **WIS** 14 (+2), **CHA** 13 (+1).

Skills Insight +4, Investigation +4, Medicine +4.

Senses passive Perception 12; **Languages** Common, Draconic.

Challenge ¼.

Dagger. Melee or ranged weapon attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Steady Testimony. While conscious, Hakkar can communicate remembered events. This does not detect truth magically.

Hakkar's wound suppresses ancestral breath. He favors Dodge, Disengage, and Help.

Chevkos, Arena Mage

Medium humanoid (tiefling), neutral

AC 14; **HP** 52 (8d8 + 16); **Speed** 30 ft.

STR 9 (−1), **DEX** 14 (+2), **CON** 14 (+2), **INT** 17 (+3), **WIS** 12 (+1), **CHA** 14 (+2).

Saves Int +5, Wis +3; **Skills** Arcana +5, Deception +4.

Resistance fire. **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11.

Languages Common, Infernal. **Challenge** 3.

Arc Bolt. Ranged spell attack: +5 to hit, range 90 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d8 + 3) force damage.

Binding Filament, 2/day. Action; one creature within 60 feet makes a DC 13 Strength save. Failure: restrained for up to 1 minute. It repeats the save at each turn's end, ending the effect on success. Chevkos concentrates as on a spell.

Dais Control. Action adjacent to A1's dais: operate one gate under Scene 3's **Maze controls**.

Reaction-Deflect, 2/day. When hit by a visible attack, gain +3 AC against it, potentially causing a miss. The bonus then ends.

Flamekiss Hydra

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

AC 15; **HP** 126 (12d12 + 48); **Speed** 25 ft., swim 25 ft.

STR 19 (+4), **DEX** 10 (+0), **CON** 18 (+4), **INT** 2 (−4), **WIS** 12 (+1), **CHA** 6 (−2).

Saves Con +7; **Skills** Perception +4.

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14. **Languages** -. **Challenge** 6.

Four Heads. Begins with four heads. Taking at least 25 damage during one creature's turn disables one head, to a minimum of one active head. Disabled heads recover after a long rest, not during this encounter.

Multiattack. One Bite per active head, maximum four.

Bite. Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Collar Breath, Recharge 5-6. Action replacing all bites; 30-foot cone, DC 14 Dexterity save. Failure: 21 (6d6) fire damage; success: half. Available only while both clasps remain fastened and the collar is unsuppressed.

Many Eyes. Advantage on sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks while at least two heads remain active. Only one reaction per round.

Armory Eye

Large aberration, lawful neutral

AC 15; **HP** 95 (10d10 + 40); **Speed** 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover).

STR 10 (+0), **DEX** 14 (+2), **CON** 18 (+4), **INT** 13 (+1), **WIS** 14 (+2), **CHA** 11 (+0).

Saves Wis +5; **Skills** Perception +5, Investigation +4.

Condition Immunity prone. **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 15.

Languages Common, Undercommon. **Challenge** 5.

Multiattack. Use two different rays, each targeting a visible creature or object within 60 feet.

Warning Ray. Ranged spell attack: +5 to hit. Hit: 13 (3d8) force damage.

Binding Ray. DC 14 Strength save or restrained until the target's next turn ends. An action and DC 14 Athletics also ends the restraint.

Repelling Ray. DC 14 Strength save or pushed up to 15 feet directly away, stopping at solid obstacles.

Inventory Beam. Action; two consecutive uses destroy an unattended paper record. Cover or removal interrupts and resets the attempt.

Bite. Melee weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

The Armory Eye has no antimagic cone, petrification, disintegration, legendary actions, or additional eye powers.

Celestial Officer: Veritas

Medium celestial, lawful evil while enforcing Vahl's mandate

AC 16; **HP** 60 (8d8 + 24); **Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1), **DEX** 18 (+4), **CON** 16 (+3), **INT** 14 (+2), **WIS** 16 (+3), **CHA** 14 (+2).

Saves Dex +6, Wis +5; **Skills** Insight +5, Perception +5.

Resistance radiant. **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15.

Languages Common, Celestial. **Challenge** 4.

Multiattack. Two Gold Bow attacks.

Gold Bow. Ranged weapon attack: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing plus 3 (1d6) radiant damage.

Binding Testimony, 1/day. Action; one creature within 60 feet that hears Veritas makes a DC 14 Wisdom save. Failure: speed 0 until its next turn ends. Speech, attacks, and teleportation remain possible.

Celestial Officer: Aequitas

Medium celestial, lawful neutral with compromised judgment

AC 16; **HP** 67 (9d8 + 27); **Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3), **DEX** 12 (+1), **CON** 16 (+3), **INT** 14 (+2), **WIS** 18 (+4), **CHA** 15 (+2).

Saves Con +5, Wis +6; **Skills** Insight +6, Religion +4.

Resistance radiant. **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., blind beyond; passive Perception 14.

Languages Common, Celestial. **Challenge** 4.

Chain of Office. Melee weapon attack: +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and DC 14 Strength save or restrained. Only one creature can be restrained this way. It ends if Aequitas releases the target, attacks another with the chain, becomes incapacitated, or the target spends an action and succeeds on DC 14 Athletics or Acrobatics.

Read the Mandate, 2/day. Action; end one charm or frightened condition on a perceived creature within 30 feet.

Reaction-Interpose Judgment. When a creature within 15 feet is hit by an attack she perceives, reduce damage by 7 (2d6). One reaction per round.

Celestial Officer: Mortus

Medium celestial, lawful evil while enforcing Vahl's mandate

AC 18; **HP** 85 (10d8 + 40); **Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4), **DEX** 10 (+0), **CON** 18 (+4), **INT** 10 (+0), **WIS** 14 (+2), **CHA** 12 (+1).

Saves Str +6, Con +6; **Skills** Athletics +6.

Resistance radiant. **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12.

Languages Common, Celestial. **Challenge** 4.

Multiattack. Two Greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Sentence, Recharge 5-6. Action; one creature within 30 feet that hears Mortus makes a DC 14 Wisdom save. Failure: frightened of Mortus until its next turn ends. Success: immune to this Mortus's Sentence for 24 hours.

Mortus's shifting armor colors confer no regeneration, invulnerability, reflection, or unlimited hit points.

Trial Advocate, "Passion Devil"

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

AC 15; **HP** 65 (10d8 + 20); **Speed** 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0), **DEX** 16 (+3), **CON** 14 (+2), **INT** 15 (+2), **WIS** 12 (+1), **CHA** 18 (+4).

Saves Wis +3, Cha +6; **Skills** Deception +6, Insight +3, Persuasion +6.

Resistances cold, fire; **Immunity** poison; **Condition Immunity** poisoned.

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11.

Languages Common, Infernal. **Challenge** 4.

Multiattack. Two Barbed Quill attacks.

Barbed Quill. Ranged spell attack: +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) psychic damage.

Tempting Pause, 2/day. Action; one creature within 60 feet that hears it makes a DC 14 Wisdom save. Failure: charmed until its next turn ends, with speed halved and no reactions. It forces no attack or movement.

Counteroffer, 1/day. Reaction when a creature within 30 feet hits it: offer that creature 5 temporary hit points, lasting 1 minute, in exchange for reducing the triggering attack's damage by 10. The attacker may refuse. Apply both effects only if accepted; the daily use and reaction are spent either way. This bargain works during the Trials and creates no red coins.

Frost Probationer

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

AC 16; **HP** 85 (10d10 + 30); **Speed** 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4), **DEX** 12 (+1), **CON** 16 (+3), **INT** 11 (+0), **WIS** 12 (+1), **CHA** 10 (+0).

Saves Con +5; **Skills** Athletics +6.

Immunities cold, poison; **Resistance** fire; **Condition Immunity** poisoned.

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11.

Languages Infernal, Common. **Challenge** 4.

Multiattack. Two Ice Spear attacks.

Ice Spear. Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Frost Strip, Recharge 5-6. Action; create a 20 × 10-foot patch of icy ground within 30 feet for three rounds. It is difficult terrain. A creature entering for the first time on a turn or starting there makes a DC 14 Dexterity save or falls prone, at most once per turn. The probationer is unaffected. Creating a new strip ends the previous one.

Dispater Tower

Large construct, unaligned

AC 16; **HP** 45; **Speed** 0 ft.

STR 18 (+4), **DEX** 1 (−5), **CON** 16 (+3), **INT** 3 (−4), **WIS** 10 (+0), **CHA** 1 (−5).

Damage Immunities poison, psychic.

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained.

Senses blindsight 60 ft., blind beyond; passive Perception 10.

Languages -. **Challenge** 2.

Iron Bolt. Ranged weapon attack: +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one visible registered opponent. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Fixed Device. Cannot move, make opportunity attacks, or act while disabled. Scene 16's **Winning and bypassing** governs releases and feedback. Disabling the weapon ends its nexus shield contribution.

Trial Nexus

Huge construct, unaligned

AC 17; **HP** 120; **Speed** 20 ft., confined by its track to the north goal.

STR 20 (+5), **DEX** 8 (−1), **CON** 18 (+4), **INT** 3 (−4), **WIS** 12 (+1), **CHA** 1 (−5).

Saves Str +8, Con +7.

Damage Immunities poison, psychic.

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

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11.

Languages -. **Challenge** 6.

Tower Shield. Reduce each damage instance by 10 per active tower, after resistance, minimum 0.

Multiattack. Two Slams.

Slam. Melee weapon attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Ground Pulse, Recharge 5-6. Action; grounded creatures within 15 feet make a DC 15 Dexterity save. Failure: 18 (4d8) thunder damage and prone. Success: half damage, not prone. Flying creatures are unaffected.

Exposed Seal. Once all towers are disabled, an adjacent action shuts down the nexus without a check.

Standard rules references

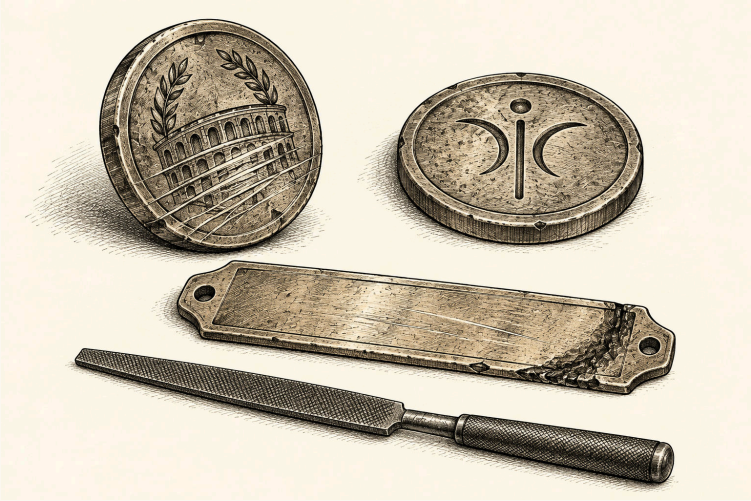
Use **System Reference Document 5.1, "Monsters,"** under each exact standard creature name. Use "Combat" for grappling, shoving, cover, nonlethal melee damage, underwater combat, and death saves; "Adventuring" for travel and rests; and exact spell entries for spell effects. Do not substitute 2024 rules.

Reference: Wizards of the Coast LLC, System Reference Document 5.1, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0. This campaign adapts those rules; custom profiles and procedures are marked homebrew.

Handouts

Detach each handout at its acquisition point. Visibility and acquisition labels are for the DM.

Handout 1: The Brass Receipt



Filed arena tokens and a mortuary brass plate

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: Scene 1.

PLAYER TEXT

Mortuary batch 17
Five bodies received. Five names recorded.
Brass plates supplied by Tharna Shavres.
Arena transfer entered on the following morning.

In a different hand:
Six contestants accepted. Fees outstanding.

Handout 2: Hakkar's Letter

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: Scene 2.

PLAYER TEXT

Tharna,

They have entered the dead twice.

The first entry records a body. The second pretends a person agreed to something after that body arrived. I found the same marks beside living competitors.

Ask who pays when a contestant disappears.

If I miss our meeting, begin with Chevkos's transfer slate. Do not let him explain away the names.

-Hakkar

Handout 3: The Grounding Diagram

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: Scene 6 or 8.

PLAYER TEXT

EXTRACTION CONTROL

1. Stop the draw.
2. Open the ground.
3. Release the clamp.

A stored charge discharges once if the clamp opens before grounding.

WOODLAND CLEANSING

Set the plate in still water.
Open the hand.
Break the chain toward the water.
Turn the face toward dawn.

Handout 4: Terms of the Open Door

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: before any voluntary crossing.

PLAYER TEXT

This passage does not require your death.

Your living body will rest under protection at Moradin's Desk. You may travel in a tangible projection using your own abilities and possessions.

A broken projection returns to its body, unconscious and exhausted. It does not leave your soul as property for another power.

This protection does not rescue someone else at a distance. Bring prisoners and freed souls to the ship or the hall.

You may refuse. You may ask questions. Neither answer forfeits your soul.

Handout 5: The Three Orders

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: Scene 14.

PLAYER TEXT

Contractus: look for square gold rings marked C. They value a claim that survives challenge.

Usuporiis: seven ranks, seven preferred layers, and many mortal wizard contacts. Rebellion has not made them informal.

Asmodites: the present order's enforcers. Some wear the C as well; others would abolish both rival organizations.

Ask what each document actually grants. An impressive seal cannot repair a missing term.

-Dimitri

Handout 6: Trial Rules and Coins

Trials coins and the single-use grounding rod

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: Scene 16.

PLAYER TEXT

Disable three towers and touch the nexus seal, or destroy the nexus.

Twelve marked minions carry twelve coins. A defeated, surrendered, or formally bypassed minion yields its coin once.

Carry no more than three coins each. Handing coins to an adjacent ally takes an action.

- **1 coin, bonus action:** regain 2d8 + 2 hit points; twice per contestant.
- **2 coins, bonus action:** move up to your speed without opportunity attacks; twice per contestant.
- **3 coins, action:** recover one expended spell slot of level 3 or lower; once per contestant.

One purchase per turn. Coins expire when the contest ends.

Raise both empty hands and declare withdrawal to end your participation. Leave your coins at staging; you cannot reenter. Your teammates may continue. If everyone withdraws, or eight hours pass without victory, the contest ends.

For party-size scaling, adjust the printed minion and coin total to 9 or 15.

Handout 7: The Transfer Authority

Visibility: player-safe after discovery. Acquisition: Scene 15.

PLAYER TEXT

Subject H: Hakkar. Distinct soul. Carries a residual conduit to Bahamut.

Subject C: Cthugothotal. Distinct soul. Exhibits Io potential. Religious affiliation does not constitute ownership.

Full harvest requires both subjects' actual souls, secured in separate vessels and joined through three active pylons.

Substitutions, projections, signatures, and sympathetic likenesses are insufficient.

Missing subjects are to be acquired before the final bell. Do not certify completion without possession.

Handout 8: Drachma's Return

Visibility: player-safe. Acquisition: Scene 13; repeat before Scene 17.

PLAYER TEXT

Same pier. Sunset. One hour.

Leave a chalk hammer inside the mooring post before the sunset pickup ends to request the next dawn's one-hour pickup.

Miss the window: release the launch beneath the pier and follow my marked route 600 feet to the sheltered anchorage. Two rounds to board, then twenty rowing actions. I wait there between pickups.

If the lamps turn red, use the furnace bridge, customs square, and warehouse lane. Look for the second hammer at the warehouse fork.

Bring everyone you intend to save.

-Drachma

Rewards and Equipment

All cash values below are **party totals.**

Reward ledger

SOURCE	OWNER AND ACCESS	QUANTITY/VALUE	ACCOUNTING
Lestrade's rescue grant	City emergency fund; protect or contain the quay and give a statement	100 gp	Once, regardless of kills
Maze prize	Arena purse; win, expose a rigged result, or obtain an adjudicated inspection settlement	200 gp	One award
Boat prize	Arena purse; win or publicly settle the rigged match	250 gp	If awarded to Jax by bargain, party receives 0
Hydra prize	Arena purse; resolve danger and preserve public safety	300 gp	Noncombat resolution qualifies
Civic investigation contract	Treasury and confiscated arena bond	600 gp total	100 gp advance after Scene 2; 500 gp remains
Armory recovered fund	Stolen competitor funds in H1	120 gp	Victims' property; keeping it forfeits restitution award
Witness restitution award	Arena bond, approved at Scene 10 if the 120 gp is returned	300 gp	Mutually exclusive with keeping the fund
Temple collector's coin	Operating cash in T2	180 gp	Seizure or release bargain
Vahl's personal coffer	His property, distinguishable from donations	240 gp	Lawful confiscation after exposure or loot
Registry compensation	Six refunded claim-cancellation fees	300 gp	Court ruling required; no theft-route refund
Trials purse	Contest treasury	1,000 gp	Winners only
Asmodeus's offer	Conditional contract	5,000 gp promised	Not paid in advance or counted as earned
Optional dragon strongbox	Merchant's property	400 gp	Returning earns 40 gp; keeping is theft, not an additional 440 gp
Other optional scenes	Introductions, passage, evidence	No fixed cash	No extra purses

Maximum lawful core cash: 3,470 gp, including all arena prizes, the full civic contract, restitution, lawful confiscation of Vahl's coffer, registry compensation, and Trials victory. It excludes the returned 120 gp and promised 5,000 gp.

Keeping the 120 gp instead of earning 300 gp restitution lowers the maximum to **3,290 gp.** Deduct costs, surrendered prizes, bribes, and missed awards. The optional merchant reward adds **40 gp.**

Lestrade secures the arena bond before the hearing; Carthain's flight does not remove it. Parties rejecting lawful process need a later settlement to obtain the remaining 500 gp contract payment and restitution.

Fixed useful equipment

• **Four potions of healing:** two from Tharna after Scene 2 and two from temple stores in Scene 8. SRD 5.1 **Potion of Healing**: an action to drink or administer, restores 2d4 + 2 hit points, consumed.

• **One +1 weapon:** a usable weapon from H1's marked prize cabinet; SRD 5.1 **Weapon, +1.** It belongs to the unawarded prize fund and can be awarded under the inspection settlement.

• **One soul lantern:** supplied at D1; see **Hakkar's wound and the soul lantern**. A transport tool, not a saleable prize.

• **One grounding rod:** available only through Scene 16's **Alternate preparation: decline the spectacle.** Use that section for its cost and single-use pylon effect.

• **Arena tokens and faction credentials:** mundane identifiers; no attunement or compulsion.

• **Red coins:** see **Red coins-campaign homebrew**; no cash value.

Recover physically present, undamaged standard weapons and armor under normal weight and resale rules. Natural weapons, conjured quills, celestial radiance, collar machinery, and built-in nexus parts yield no portable magic items. Veritas's bow and Mortus's sword become ordinary weapons when removed; special damage and abilities belong to their wielders.

Resolution Paths

Resolve civic and planar outcomes separately.

Rivermont reclaimed

Conditions: credible evidence reaches Lestrade or Northwatch, captives are freed, and extraction equipment is disabled.

• A detained Carthain receives imprisonment or exile under the settlement. An absent Carthain loses contract authority and remains wanted until his warrant is served.

• Chevkos becomes a supervised engineer and witness, or flees if refused cooperation.

• The arena bond settlement cancels Kanarr's debt.

• Fair treatment gains Jax's help establishing public match rules.

• Tharna retains her designs and requires explicit consent in future devices.

• The cleared temple stays cleared.

• The arena may reopen under worker management after one month.

Rivermont compromised

Conditions: a quiet settlement or removal of only the collector.

Grounding T2 stops immediate trafficking but establishes no public protection for future victims. A free Carthain remains politically dangerous. Witnesses remember their protectors, and the preserved ledger supports later reform.

Full rescue

Conditions: Hakkar and Cthugothotal remain free, Hakkar's master claim is canceled, a pylon is destroyed or the rite legally canceled, and rescued souls reach D1.

• Asmodeus gains neither conduit nor Io potential; Bahamut remains whole.

• Resolve Hakkar's trace, Cthugothotal's decision, the registry six's destinations, and Dimitri's asylum hearing under Scene 20. Hakkar may return to ordinary life; Dimitri may become a correspondent.

• Drachma retains his ship with its recorded damage.

• Claims canceled by the court stay canceled. Other disputed titles may prompt future pursuit, but cannot remotely recapture anyone or secretly undo a rescue. Destroying Hakkar's original master folio permanently ends that folio's wound connection.

Victory before the sacrifice

Conditions: Hakkar is saved at Eastwatch and protected at D1; Cthugothotal is also unavailable.

The paired sacrifice cannot occur during this expedition. Scene 17 offers destruction of the apparatus, exposure of the plan, and rescue of any other captives. Canceling the claims and withdrawing without assault preserves the principal victory.

Partial rescue

Conditions: some are saved while others remain confined or leave with an enemy, or everyone escapes but Hakkar's master claim remains intact and uncanceled.

An unresolved master claim continues Hakkar's bounded wound clock even after Bahamut removes the conduit. Recover or destroy the original folio, or obtain Scene 15's court ruling, to finish that part of the rescue. Physical escape and cancellation are separate accomplishments.

Record each missing person's holder and location. A stolen lantern confines its occupants only while physically held and closed. It does not consume them. Hakkar may survive and accompany the party even if the registry six are lost. Earlier rescues remain valid in every ending.

Hakkar consumed, Cthugothotal safe

Conditions: Hakkar's confined soul is consumed while Cthugothotal's is absent.

• Hakkar is unavailable to ordinary return.

• The conduit wounds Bahamut without automatically destroying him; the Io harness fails.

• Track the receiver under Scene 17's **A stored divine trace**. Tiamat obtains the trace only if a herald escapes with the charged receiver actually carried aboard.

• A receiver left behind remains with its recorded infernal holder. One delivered to D1 can be emptied safely by Bahamut.

Cthugothotal consumed, Hakkar safe

Conditions: Cthugothotal is consumed without Hakkar's conduit.

• Cthugothotal is unavailable to ordinary return.

• His stolen potential remains unstable and cannot complete the harness.

• Hakkar's survival preserves Bahamut's immediate safety.

• Destroying the apparatus dissipates the power without restoring Cthugothotal.

The dark future

Conditions: both actual souls are confined, all three pylons remain active through completion, and neither subject is freed or carried away in time.

• Asmodeus gains access to Io potential through Bahamut's conduit.

• Bahamut is gravely diminished; his surviving servants need protection and organization.

• Tiamat may try to seize the harness in a future conflict.

• Rivermont's liberation remains real; its people may become allies and refugees.

• Further adventures can confront Tiamat, Asmodeus, or the harness without assigning a character an alignment or destiny.

Refusing Vahl, losing the Trials, retreating, or declining reincarnation does not meet these conditions.

Campaign-State Ledger

Update this ledger before the party leaves each major site.

SUBJECT	RECORD
Hakkar	Alive/dead; body location; soul state and holder; wound reduction; claim canceled? conduit removed?
Cthugothotal	PC/NPC; actual location; protected crossing? soul free? voluntary involvement?
Registry six	Each name; released? lantern occupant? chosen destination?
Vahl	Exposed, surrendered, guarded or restrained and by whom, escaped, dead; receiver holder/location and current hit points out of 10; AC 13
Dimitri	Alive/free or otherwise; passage invited, refused, or unanswered; disclosed pickup; ashore, openly aboard, or hidden aboard; asylum result only if arrived
Veritas, Aequitas, Mortus	Each allegiance, relevant hit points, final disposition
Carthain	Location, records, sentence or bargain
Chevkos	Witness, fugitive, prisoner, or administrator
Kanarr and Jax	Allegiance, surviving crew, promised payment
Infernal factions	Sponsor, debt, warrant, exposed forgery, pursuit level
Trials	Minions resolved; coins generated/spent; champions remaining; towers and nexus
Sacrifice	Actual subjects; progress 0-6; each pylon; vessels and keys; trace receiver charged/dissipated and actual holder
Drachma's ship	Hull hit points, disguise, agreed pickup window, pier/anchorage location, launch location and passengers
Lantern	Location, hit points, named occupants; maximum eight
Return	Living bodies, genuine deaths, six grants available/used, individual consent
Money	Earned, promised, spent, returned, stolen; advance counted once

First-Session and Finale Preparation

Before the first session:

1. Establish boundaries and optional connections.
2. Prepare R1 notes for five undead, the dockworker, child, horse, and receipt.
3. Prepare Hakkar's letter and arena terms.
4. Decide whether Cthugothotal and Bandolek are PCs, known NPCs, or later introductions.
5. Show concealment advances through the events under **Opposition clocks**.

Before the Trials, prepare Scene 16's roster, the public map, Handout 6, and twelve coin counters-or the declared scaled total. Use **DM plan for the Trials** for the briefing, lane engagements, and rests.

Before the sacrifice:

1. Record Hakkar's and Cthugothotal's locations and soul/body states.
2. Mark occupied vessels, the six-step track, and three pylons.
3. Keep **Ritual procedure**, restraint, and vessel rules beside the map.
4. Prepare Scene 18's three pursuit pairs, replacing members with tracked survivors.
5. Reissue Handout 8 and confirm the lantern's occupants.

Player-safe materials are the regional map, public Trials map, discovered site schematics, and Handouts 1-8 when acquired. Keep adaptation notes, state ledgers, undiscovered routes, and resolution conditions DM-only.

Adaptation Ledger

ELEMENT	STATUS AND TREATMENT
Original authorship	Campaign by bandolek; revised edition. The original live listing and files remain a separate publication.
Source condition	Archive contains 112 files. Encounter XML supplies names, rosters, and occasional notes; much early narrative is absent. Recovered OneNote material contains revisions, truncations, and unresolved alternatives.
Two-part order	Preserved: *Drama in Rivermont*, then *Beyond Rivermont*.
Drama sequence	Preserved undead introduction, wizard meeting, maze, boat challenge, suspended hydra, Armory on High, two Temple of Doom encounters, Mystic Wood, and Lestrade.
Civic conspiracy	Reconstructed connective plot: arena records conceal trafficking; Hakkar discovers it; Carthain administers it. Revised edition additions clarify how each clue changes custody, testimony, or later access; they are adaptation structure, not newly recovered source text.
Carthain	Name preserved; role, motives, and wrongdoing reconstructed.
Lestrade / Valsath	Inspector Doyle Lestrade is the primary name. Valsath is the source-block alias.
Kanarr's duplicate roster entry	One persistent person; no duplicate or replacement captain.
Jax's reserve archers	Last-active-adversary trigger preserved; count and 2014 statistics adapted.
Flamekiss Hydra	Creature and suspended arena preserved; missing mechanics replaced by the four-head, collar-driven homebrew profile.
Armory beholder	Adapted into the Armory Eye, whose reduced profile does not reproduce the original creature's full powers.
Temple and woodland rosters	Rebalanced for four 2014 characters. Cosmetic reskins retain standard blocks; changed powers use complete profiles.
Hakkar and Cthugothotal	Distinct souls preserved: Bahamut conduit and Tiamat follower with Io potential, respectively.
Cthugothotal's identity	Physical details and former-PC status preserved; player identity, build, alignment, and destiny remain optional.
Bandolek	Dwarf cleric, saved age 111, and Moradin's Desk role preserved.
Priest	Unnamed treacherous priest preserved and named Oren Vahl here; outcome does not change his identity.
Three angels	Names and appearances preserved. Finite profiles and disclosed choices replace infinite health, compulsory killing, and retroactive allegiance.
Desk of Moradin	Judgment scene preserved; consent-based crossing and body custody resolve the source's death ambiguity.

Adaptation Ledger - continued

ELEMENT	STATUS AND TREATMENT
Drachma	Captain, disguise, daily return, and Dimitri referral preserved; ship geometry and escape reconstructed.
Dimitri	Old devil, knowledge bargain, hostility with Asmodeus, mortal-wizard associations, and possible tiefling ancestry claim preserved. The original stowaway discovery remains possible, now conditional on an actual boarding opportunity, detection and player refusal. Claims remain testimony.
Infernal organizations	Standardized as Contractus, Usuporiis, Asmodites. Rings, seven-rank rebellion, overlapping membership, and soul-power disputes preserved.
Time of Trials	Lanes, towers, nexus, red coins, audience preserved. Finite rosters and capped purchases replace unlimited accumulation and extra turns.
Paired sacrifice	Asmodeus's two-subject plan preserved; actual possession, decree timing, custody of Vahl's receiver, concurrent living-victim damage, pylon progress, and partial-harvest failure states made explicit. These clarifications preserve consent and custody mechanics.
Tiamat and Bane	Local campaign ambitions preserved, not official-cosmology claims.
Flight to docks	Short fights and skill-based movement preserved; three finite groups replace recursive reinforcements.
Return and reincarnation	Different-body return remains possible with consent; living travelers retain their bodies.
Dark future	Possible paired-sacrifice consequence, not compulsory and not an erasure of earlier victories.
Regional map	River direction and relative features preserved. Names and distances are adaptations, not certified readings of the original photo.
Portrait appearance	Veritas's bow, Aequitas's Justice aspect, and Mortus's plate and sword are recovered descriptions. Others follow supplied adaptation designs.
Level progression	Balanced anew for 2014 levels 5-11; no equivalence to original levels asserted.

Illustration Placement and Reading Key

Place portrait plates at approximately **6½ inches wide** and the regional map on a **full page, approximately 7 inches wide**, retaining its readable caption.

SUPPLIED ASSET	PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE	COMPOSITION AND CAPTION ORDER
assets/maps/rivermont-restored.png	Player-safe orientation beside Locations; black-and-white fantasy front matter	Southwest-northeast river; Rivermont crossing; northern settlement; central woods; northeastern hills; eastern village and mountain sites; no villain labels
assets/portraits/rivermont-civic-cast.png	Civic-investigation recognition	Lestrade, Kanarr, Scarlet Jax, Tharna
assets/portraits/rivermont-soul-cast.png	Recognition of central witnesses and subjects	Hakkar, Cthugothotal, Bandolek, Chevkos
assets/portraits/rivermont-planar-cast.pn g	Planar-cast recognition without allegiance disclosure	Drachma, Dimitri, the priest
assets/portraits/rivermont-tribunal.png	Distinguish celestial officers in negotiation and combat	Veritas, Aequitas, Mortus

The manuscript and handouts supply all critical clues, terms, distances, and control labels; no decision depends on lettering within an illustration.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.