



ESCAPE FROM ELTURGARD

A Baldur's Gate Adventure

Damnation! The entire city of Elturel—along with its denizens—have been drawn into Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells! While those fortunate enough to have been outside of the city's walls have been spared that fate, they're not yet out of danger! The refugees formed a caravan bound for the nearby city of Baldur's Gate. Can you keep them safe from devils, bandits, and one another until they reach safety?

Four, One-Hour Introductory Mini-adventures for 1st and 2nd Level Characters.

Optimized For: APL 1



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

“One can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only for one second without hope.”

— Charles Darwin

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st- to 2nd-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 1**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place on the outskirts of Elturel, the capital of Elturgard, which has recently been pulled into the Nine Hells.

BACKGROUND

The city of **ELTUREL** and its residents have been abruptly pulled into **AVERNUS**, the first layer of the **NINE HELLS** and one of the battlegrounds of the eternal Blood War. Though the current fate of the city and its inhabitants remains unknown, the event devastated the city's surroundings, drawing other small villages and farms into the Hells and plunging the area into chaos.

Many who lived in the outskirts of the city were spared from the hellish calamity. With little hope of survival on their own, these refugees have banded together to form a **CARAVAN** headed to the nearby city of **BALDUR'S GATE** where they hope to find aid and shelter from the surrounding evil.

Seeking to ensure the safety of the refugees, a young woman named **DARA** is looking for heroes to rescue nearby survivors and recover resources that are integral to the caravan's survival.

OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **five parts**: A **Call to Action** and four **1-hour mini-adventures**. The entire adventure takes approximately **4 hours** to play. If you're planning to play the whole adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time.

- **Call to Action: Evil Abounds!** The characters are asked to rescue refugees.
- **Part 1: The Smith.** The characters are tasked with recruiting a local smith and gathering whatever weapons and armor he's willing to lend. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Part 2: The Miller.** The characters are recruited to recover supplies from Ippon's Mill and to convince a reclusive poet to join the caravan. This is **Story Objective B**.
- **Part 3: The Innkeeper.** The characters must venture to an inn and rescue any survivors, then bring them back to the caravan. This is **Story Objective C**.
- **Part 4: The Liar.** A refugee is killed during the night and the characters must discover the culprit. This is **Story Objective D**.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

In addition to the characters' individual backgrounds, the following hooks are possible ways to involve the adventurers in the scenario.

Caravan Traveler. The characters were part of a caravan, perhaps as guards or merchants, while passing through Elturgard on the way to Baldur's Gate. After the disappearance of the city, their caravan is quickly converted into a makeshift haven for refugees.

Elturgardian Survivor. One or more of the characters are from Elturgard, either as a resident of Elturel itself or from one of the surrounding villages. The sudden devastation of their homeland should spur them into action.

Local Connections. The characters were on the way to visit a dignitary, family member, friend, or mentor who resides in Elturgard. The city and surrounding villages were pulled into Avernus moments before they arrived at the city gates. With their personal connection gone, they are left to piece together what happened while helping those who survived.





CALL TO ACTION: EVIL ABOUNDS!

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

When the adventure begins, the characters have just witnessed the city of Elturel being pulled into the Nine Hells. Read or paraphrase the following:

It all happened so fast. Before your eyes, the Companion, a shining orb that shed its holy light upon Elturel, turned black, bathing the city in darkness. After the briefest of moments, all that remains of the city is a massive crater.

With the remnants of Elturgard in disarray, the characters are called upon to locate the survivors and escort them to the nearby caravan.

MEETING WITH DARA

Take a couple of minutes (but no more than that) to describe what the characters see in the area as they wander and get their bearings. Before they can take any major action, they come upon an intact region of the city outskirts where they're approached by Dara and her two companions.

CALL TO ACTION

Dara hopes the characters can help her locate survivors in specific areas and escort them back to the caravan before it leaves for Baldur's Gate.

DARK TIMES AND DARKER FATES

Along with introducing the characters to the storyline's personages and upcoming events, this adventure sets the theme for the campaign storyline. The overall tone should be dark, gritty, and brimming with looming uncertainty. Hope is in extremely short supply, and there are times when the characters themselves may be the only ones who can inspire that hope to the people of Elturgard.

AREA INFORMATION

Elturel's surroundings have the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. Nothing remains of Elturel but a crater at the edge of the cliff that overlooks the river. The area surrounding the city is made up of rocky terrain which slopes unevenly to the west of where Elturel once stood. The turbulent Chionthar River flows along the southern shoreline.

Lighting. During the day, there is a clear view of the outskirts south of the city's elevated cliff face. However, dust and smoke hangs overhead, making the area dimly lit.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of smoke and ash combined with several unrecognizable—yet distinctly disturbing—odors drift throughout the area. Locals nearby are calling out for other surviving friends and family.

The Caravan. Several refugees have already begun to gather near a small collection of carts, tents, and wagons that form a makeshift caravan. However, the number of survivors who have made it here is sparse compared to those still dealing with the fallout in nearby areas. Dara approaches the characters here.



CREATURE INFORMATION

Dara is here. The elderly shepherd **Ghorin** stands protectively at her side, along with his goat **Clyde**.

What Do They Want? Dara is searching for others to accompany her to Baldur's Gate. In the meantime, she and Ghorin are gathering as many survivors as they can to make the trip to the city. Ghorin obeys the young woman unquestioningly and is willing to die to protect her.

What Do They Know? Dara knows that Elturel has been drawn into the Nine Hells, but doesn't know why or how. The young Chosen of Ilmater has been traveling for a long time en route to Baldur's Gate. She doesn't yet know the reason behind her pilgrimage, but is relieved to be nearing her destination. Clyde is disappointed in the quality of the grass to eat here.

Fiends Everywhere. Dara and Ghorin also speak of survivors who have seen devils roaming the area. They hope they have time to find and rescue more refugees before the fiends locate them.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Dara provides the characters with three tasks—each of vital importance. Once these missions are complete, the refugee caravan can begin its journey to Baldur's Gate before being discovered by the invading devils.

The missions can be completed in any order. Dara's requests are as follows:

- **Part 1: The Smith.** Head to **Wellum's Smithy**, recruit the local smith and recover as many weapons there as possible.

- **Part 2: The Miller.** Speak with Ghorin before venturing to **Ippon's Mill** to gather any tools and supplies that can be found there.
- **Part 3: The Innkeeper.** Journey to a nearby inn, the **Fabled Fawn**, and escort the inn's proprietor and patrons back to the caravan.

PROCEEDING TO PART 4: THE LIAR

Characters can't pursue **Part 4: The Liar** until they've completed **Parts 1, 2, and 3**, above.



DARA



GHORIN



PART 1: THE SMITH

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

With the long road to Baldur's Gate still ahead of them, the characters venture to Wellum's Smithy. Their goal is to gather weapons and materials to protect the caravan, and possibly even recruit the renowned smith himself.

A. WELLUM'S SMITHY

The journey to the smithy is uneventful, but the characters soon find that their task is far from over.

STORY OBJECTIVE A

Recruiting **Wellum Smith** and recovering his stolen weapons is **Story Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The smithy is an old building at the end of a dirt road bordered by a low stone wall. A wooden sign outside reads "Wellum's Smithy." The only other building nearby is a small shed with a missing door.

Lighting and Sounds. It is unusually quiet here. The typical noise one would expect in the vicinity of a smith's forge is curiously absent. The sky is filled with dust and smoke and the area is dimly lit.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Wellum (chaotic good male human **soldier**) is the local smith here, along with his assistant, Gordrick (lawful good male dwarf **scout**). The smithy was just looted by bandits, so Wellum and Gordrick are planning their next move, whispering in case the bandits return.

As you approach, a deep voice calls out from the building:
"If you've come back to steal more, you're going to have to go through me!"

After Wellum describes his predicament, a female half-elf named **Vollis Foote** arrives at the smithy, breathlessly seeking shelter from some bandits she's eluded in the area.

What Do They Want? With his livelihood gone, **Wellum** is beside himself and unsure of where to go next. He makes a point to complain about the bandits "making off with my stash of ale!" at least once. While he is willing to accompany the characters back to the caravan, he insists that they recover his wares from the bandits: "the caravan'll need all the help it can get!"

Vollis is actually a **cult fanatic** who has her own plans once she's joined the caravan that are revealed in **Part 4**, though the characters don't learn this until then; she's very careful to avoid any undue suspicion. If confronted, she admits that she has, in truth, been pilfering the homes left abandoned by fleeing residents in the area and offers a handful of coins and worthless baubles as proof.

What Do They Know? The bandits looted the smithy after Wellum went home to gather supplies after Elturel's destruction. The bandits tied up Gordrick (who is still rubbing a sizeable knot on the top of his head) and took all the weapons and tools, leaving nothing but scraps. Gordrick describes the bandits, who were wearing mottled green and black cloaks. They were long gone by the time Wellum returned.

Vollis had been making her way toward the caravan but was ambushed by the bandits. She confirms Gordrick's description of mottled green and black cloaks. Vollis is a member of the Cult of Zariel operating in Baldur's Gate and has been tasked with killing very specific people that live in the outskirts of the city—though she doesn't reveal any of this, even under magical compulsion.

RUN TO THE HILLS

The characters can follow the bandits to recover the stolen weapons, but Wellum and Gordrick are reluctant to accompany them. Although Wellum may know how to swing a sword, neither he nor Gordrick are adventurers. While the characters leave to track the bandits to their hideout, the smith and his apprentice gather what remains at the smithy and head to the caravan. Similarly, Vollis points out the hideout's general direction, but follows Wellum and Gordrick to the caravan.

Following Vollis' directions, the party finds the hideout within the hour. Refer to **map 2.1** for locations.

B1. HIDEOUT ENTRANCE

Faded traces of an old dirt road lead to this building, an abandoned temple repurposed by the bandits.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The building is a single-story structure with the remains of a small statue garden beside it. A character that succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the symbology of Torm among the faded markings and old displays, suggesting that this place was once a temple to the god of duty and loyalty. One of the two wooden doors leading into the building is ajar.

Lighting. The sky is filled with dust and smoke and the area is dimly lit. The building is nestled close to a hillside which casts deep shadows throughout the day, the deepest of which might obscure any creatures lurking within.

B2. ENTRY HALL

Once adorned with tapestries and decorations, small bits of wood and shattered pottery are all that remain in this small chamber.

AREA INFORMATION

The entry hall has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This 20-foot-square room is dirty, dusty, and mostly empty. However, footprints in the dust indicate that there has been a lot of traffic passing through here recently. A set of bronze-bound **double doors** are set against the north wall. The doors lead nowhere, but they are **trapped** to alert the bandits on the floor to any intruders. A small **font** in the northeast corner is the only piece of décor left intact.

Lighting. There is enough natural light filtering through the windows and door from the outside to provide dim light in this area.

Trapped Doors. The double doors to the north are armed with a pulley trap that triggers when someone attempts to open them. The trap can be spotted with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check and disarmed with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. A failed attempt triggers the trap.

The 10-foot-wide area of the ceiling above the doorway collapses if the trap is triggered. Creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. In addition, the rubble knocks open the door concealed by the **font** and alerts the bandits and cultists in **area B3**.

Holy Water Font. A half-moon-shaped stone font is set into the east wall, near the double doors. The edges and interior of the bowl are stained with what looks like dried blood, and a small knife sits precariously on the rim of the bowl. The phrase "Offer and Pass Freely" is carved into the stonework above the font. Characters with a passive Perception of 13 or higher notice an increase of foot traffic in the dusty prints along the floor here—more so than by the nearby doors.

The font conceals a **door**, which can be found and opened with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Characters that noticed the footprints in the dust on the floor can make this check with advantage. The door is opened by pushing against the font.

The knife and bloody bowl are there in the hopes of distracting intruders toward the trapped door nearby. A character making an "offering" using the knife takes 1 slashing damage, but the offering does nothing.

WHERE'S THE DOOR?

If the characters are taking a long time in this area, or if they successfully disarmed the trap without finding the concealed door, you can choose to have them simply notice the outline of the concealed door around the font with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

B3. RITUAL CHAMBER

The bandits that dwell here are members of an infernal cult who are fascinated with the forces that drew Eturel into the Nine Hells. They are in the midst of a sacrificial summoning ritual. Beyond the concealed door, a flight of narrow steps leads into the ritual chamber below. Upon entering the chamber, read:

Atop a blood-soaked stone slab is a human, bound by chains and surrounded by humanoids wearing mottled green and black robes. One of them is in the process of carving a symbol in the man's chest with a jagged knife, while the others chant in haunting tones.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The walls of this 40-foot-diameter cavern are covered in infernal sigils and markings. A stone altar takes up the center of the room. The stairwell on the east wall leads up to area B2.

Lighting. Decorative braziers to the north and south ends of the chamber cast bright light throughout the area.

Smells and Sounds. There is a faint sulfurous smell in the cavern. Even when the cultists are no longer chanting, faint whispers seem to carry along the air, seemingly from nowhere. The man bound to the altar whimpers in agony.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Three **bandits** and two **cultists** are in the middle of a ritual sacrifice of a fellow **cultist**.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Weak:** The cultists don't conjure the **spined devil**.
- **Strong:** Replace a **cultist** with a **cult fanatic**.
- **Very Strong:** Replace the **weakened spined devil** with a **spined devil**.

If the characters triggered the trap in area B2, the cultists have had enough time to complete the summoning ritual. As the characters enter the area, the bound cultist dies as a **weakened spined devil** tears its way out of the corpse.

What Do They Want? The **bandits** and **cultists** are focused on their ritual. Unless the party approaches stealthily, the cultists notice the characters as they're descending the stairwell and attack while one of the cultists remains at the altar.

What Do They Know? The bandits and cultists are members of the cult of Dispater and are just as confused about Elturel's descent into the Hells as anyone else. The ritual sacrifice is intended to divine the cause of Elturel's fall, and to summon a powerful fiend to protect them.

TREASURE

In the south end of the room, covered in tarps, are boxes filled with Wellum's inventory of weapons and supplies. A small bag containing a *potion of healing* sits atop one of the small boxes. One of the cultists wears some modest silver jewelry, while others have gold and silver coins in purses.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. If the cultists haven't already summoned the spined devil, the bandits and most of the cultists attack the characters, while one of them stays behind to complete the ritual. If the cultist uses its action every round to plunge the sacrificial dagger into the victim, after two rounds they will kill the offering and conjure the devil, who appears at the end of the third round.

Exploration. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check made during combat spots the stolen weapons, hidden under tarps in the south corner of the room.

Social. If the **spined devil** is conjured during the fight, it is unsure why it was summoned. Moreover, if the cultist who summoned it is killed, a character that makes a successful DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check can persuade the fiend that there is no worthy bargain to be struck, after which the devil simply leaves. A character that speaks in Infernal makes this check with advantage. On a failed check, the devil suspects that the characters are trying to trick it and attacks them.

WRAP UP

Wellum rejoices at the recovery of his weapons. Even Dara cracks a smile. Wellum, Gordrick, and Vollis opt to join the caravan and help them on their way to Baldur's Gate.

From here, the characters can proceed to **Part 2: The Miller**, **Part 3: The Innkeeper**, or—if the characters have completed **Parts 1, 2, and 3**—to **Part 4: The Liar**.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this chapter. **Vollis Foote (VOE liss FOOT).** Female half-elf. Another out-of-towner, Vollis is a cultist of Zariel in the service of a devil named Gharizol. She's been dispatched from Baldur's Gate to hide among and spy upon the refugees.

- **What do They Want?** Vollis is secretly a cultist of Zariel in search for a specific sort of prey—descendants of Hellriders.
- **A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing:** Vollis is a perfect actor—skilled in guile and possessive of a silver tongue.

Wellum Smith (WELL uhm). Male human. Smithy from the same village as the Halls. He and Vollis are likely the only two refugees that are competent with a sword.

- **What do They Want:** Besides a drink? Wellum is eager to help the refugees get to Baldur's Gate and is willing to donate his wares to accomplish this. However, he does expect a bit of compensation once they get there.
- **Just a Nip to Take the Edge Off:** A bit too fond of the drink; the lack of booze has had him on edge, he's secretly stashed away a bottle of wine that he found.

Gordrick Ironarm (GORE drick). Male dwarf. Wellum's assistant. Has shaved his beard regularly since his exile from his home in the Spine of the World. Forlorn and prone to bouts of despondent depression since arriving as he feels he will die without having redeemed his family's honor. Tight-lipped about the circumstances behind his exile.

- **What do They Want:** Gordrick is eager to help the refugees, excited for the chance to visit Baldur's Gate for a good cause.
- **Path of Redemption:** Gordrick strives to redeem his family's honor but feels very much out of his depth in the current events. He hopes being with Wellum and the caravan can keep him from getting killed before he can find a way to return home.



VOLLIS



WELLUM



GORDRICK



CREATURE STATISTICS

This appendix details creatures that are encountered in this adventure.

BANDIT

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

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

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

CULTIST

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

CULT FANATIC

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

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

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

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

SPINED DEVIL

Small fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

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

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

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

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

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

VARIANT: WEAKENED SPINED DEVIL

This version of the spined devil has the following alterations to its stat block.

- Remove its Damage Resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered (it still keeps its resistance to cold damage)
- Remove the Magic Resistance trait.
- Challenge Rating is reduced to 1 (200 XP)

MAP 2.1: BANDIT'S HIDEOUT

