

Theronauts

Consolidated printer-friendly DM reference — 44 sessions

How to use: Print this file (enable background graphics). Each sheet is labeled in the *upper right* with the session title and that session's page number (usually 1–4). Order matches the site index (recommended level, then title; completed adventures last).

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Maenad Midnight

A level 8 civic escort through a god-touched midnight riot.

Style: Urban escort under ecstatic pressure, built for restraint, disguise, and mercy.

Win: Deliver the prince to the dawn treaty, keep the revelers alive, and prove the city can honor Dionysus without becoming his casualty.

Lose: The prince breaks sobriety or dies, the riot becomes a massacre, and the god's mask follows the party into future feasts.

Maguffin: Dry Cup of Ariadne · **Ally:** Thyia, Exhausted Maenad · **QG:** Prince Lykon the Unwined

"A clay cup sealed with wax and ivy. Inside is dry air, not wine; it rings softly when a lie is toasted nearby."

Major Beats

1. The palace wants quiet extraction; the street wants every secret sung aloud.
2. Thyia proves the revelers are victims, witnesses, and obstacles at once.
3. The prince is tempted with one perfect cup that would make every fear vanish.
4. Dawn judges restraint as much as speed.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 6
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Raise key enemy HP ~+25% and damage +1 per attack die; social/skill DCs +1–2. Boss legendary actions as written or +1/round.
Easier	APL 4–5: –1 enemy/wave; DCs –1; ally auto-recruits if approached peacefully.
Harder	APL 7–8: use Library Standard (6×L8).

Prince Lykon the Unwined hooks the party. Maguffin Dry Cup of Ariadne pays off in the finale against Midnight Chorus of Dionysus . Recruit Thyia, Exhausted Maenad along the way. Escort a sober prince through a Dionysian riot without killing the god-touched revelers.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Ivy-Mad Revelers	med · hard · CR 4 · Hazardous crowd, charm pressure, and moral constraint
Panpipe Trickster	med · hard · CR 6 · Fey misdirector and stealth antagonist
Bacchic Bull-Mask	med · hard · CR 7 · Possessed champion blocking narrow streets
Midnight Chorus of Dionysus	med · hard · CR 11 · Boss swarm-avatar of divine revel, not the god himself
Thyia, Exhausted Maenad	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 6:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 6.
- **Easier:** APL 4–5: –1 enemy/wave; DCs –1; ally auto-recruits if approached peacefully.
- **Harder:** APL 7–8: use Library Standard (6×L8).

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Maguffin detail

Dry Cup of Ariadne

- Appearance: A sealed clay kylix painted with a black ship, ivy, and a sleeping crown.
- Handout. "Drink nothing. Spill nothing. Break me only when the dance forgets the dancer."
- Enc. 1–2. The sealed cup grants advantage on one save against charm, frenzy, or intoxication; it also exposes disguised wine.

Ally snapshot

Thyia, Exhausted Maenad

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — Masks at the Palace Gate

Servants, guards, and masked celebrants crowd the palace gate as Prince Lykon must leave unseen for the dawn treaty house.

- Non-combat path: build a cover identity with three DC 15 Deception, Performance, or Insight checks.
- The Dry Cup identifies wine traps and one false servant.
- Recruit Thyia by protecting a reveler from guard brutality or returning her ribbon.
- If the prince is publicly named, Encounter 2 begins with the crowd alerted.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide who remembers tomorrow
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — The Alley That Keeps Dancing

The route bends through streets that rearrange under fey music, forcing the escort to choose between speed, secrecy, and mercy.

- Non-combat path: 6 successes before 3 failures using Stealth, Acrobatics, Performance, or Religion.
- Spend a success to rescue civilians and lower the final boss's starting hp by 20.
- Panpipe illusions can be broken by silence, counter-melody, or the Dry Cup's ring.
- Violent crowd control gives advantage now but adds a retaliation wave in Encounter 3.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide who remembers tomorrow
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — The Sober Hush

At the treaty amphora, the Midnight Chorus surrounds the prince with ecstatic doubles and dares the party to win without turning celebration into slaughter.

- Hard fight: crowd zones restrain, shove, and block line of sight each round.
- Use nonlethal damage, music, vows, or divine respect to spare possessed mortals.
- Maguffin payoff: break the Dry Cup to create a sober hush and reveal the true prince.
- Victory requires the prince sober and alive when the dawn bell rings.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide who remembers tomorrow
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Thyia, Exhausted Maenad** — AC 15 | HP 68 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide w
- **Ivy-Mad Revelers** — AC 13 | HP 60 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Hazardous crowd, charm pressure, an
- **Panpipe Trickster** — AC 16 | HP 82 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · Fey misdirector and stealth antagon
- **Bacchic Bull-Mask** — AC 17 | HP 110 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 7 · Possessed champion blocking narrow
- **Midnight Chorus of Dionysus** — AC 17 | HP 205 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 11 · Boss swarm-avatar of divine revel,

Additional DM notes

- Motivation:** Reach the dawn parley sober so his signature is valid and his war-weary city can stand down.
- Secret:** He once mocked Dionysus as a foreign god and fears the riot is personal judgment.
- Hard rule:** He refuses to authorize lethal force against citizens who may be innocent by sunrise.
- Appearance:** A sealed clay kylix painted with a black ship, ivy, and a sleeping crown.
- Handout:** "Drink nothing. Spill nothing. Break me only when the dance forgets the dancer."
- Enc. 1–2:** The sealed cup grants advantage on one save against charm, frenzy, or intoxication; it also exposes disguised wine.
- Enc. 3:** Breaking the cup at the revel's heart creates a 30-foot sober hush for 1 round, ending fey glammers and opening the route to the prince.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Inside guide who remembers tomorrow
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2):** Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Thyia, Exhausted Maenad

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide who remembers tomorrow

AC 15 | HP 68 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Thyrsus +7 to hit, 2d6+4 bludgeoning; can shove without damage.

Ivy-Mad Revelers CR 4

Medium Creature · Hazardous crowd, charm pressure, and moral constraint

AC 13 | HP 60 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Treat as nonlethal unless the party escalates; dispersed by music or truth.

Attack. Grappling surge +6 to hit, restrained; no damage unless trampled.

Panpipe Trickster CR 6

Medium Creature · Fey misdirector and stealth antagonist

AC 16 | HP 82 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Prefers illusions, swapped masks, and splitting the escort.

Attack. Reed knife +7 to hit, 2d6+4 piercing plus 2d6 psychic if target is charmed.

Bacchic Bull-Mask CR 7

Medium Creature · Possessed champion blocking narrow streets

AC 17 | HP 110 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. The mortal inside survives if reduced to 0 by nonlethal damage.

Attack. Horned mask +8 to hit, 2d10+5 bludgeoning; DC 15 Wis save or frightened.

Midnight Chorus of Dionysus CR 11

Large Creature · Boss swarm-avatar of divine revel, not the god himself · Boss

AC 17 | HP 205 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. Defeat by sobering, dispersing, or out-singing; do not kill a god.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Many-voiced command +9 to hit, 4d8 psychic; target must move or dance 10 ft.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- 6 PCs level 8; escort must reach dawn treaty.
- Do not reward killing god-touched revelers.
- Enc 1/2 support social, stealth, and mercy solutions.
- Enc 3 is Hard; break Dry Cup for sober hush.
- Win: prince sober, citizens alive, treaty signed.

Maguffin

Dry Cup of Ariadne

- The sealed cup grants advantage on one save against charm, frenzy, or intoxication; it also exposes disguised wine.
- Breaking the cup at the revel's heart creates a 30-foot sober hush for 1 round, ending fey glamours and opening the route to the prince.

NPC / ALLY**Prince Lykon the Unwined**

- Reach the dawn parley sober so his signature is valid and his war-weary city can stand down.
- He refuses to authorize lethal force against citizens who may be innocent by sunrise.

Thyia, Exhausted Maenad

- Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2: Return her lost thyrsus-ribbon, promise not to shame the revelers, or let her name the safe alleys.
- AC 15 · HP 68 · Thyrsus +7 to hit, 2d6+4 bludgeoning; can shove without damage.

Remember

- Deliver the prince to the dawn treaty, keep the revelers alive, and prove the city can honor Dionysus without becoming his casualty.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Weight of Hope

One-Shot · 6 Players · Level 6 · ~3.5 Hours · Greek Mythology

Style: Mythic Quest · Roleplay, Investigation & Combat | **Win Condition:** Seal Pandora's Jar and free the Isle of Anemos — Pandora need not die | **Setting:** Aegean Sea → Isle of Anemos: rocky shore, ruined temple courtyard, underground sanctum.

Zeus — disguised as a salt-weathered sailor named "Dios" — hands the party a sealed clay amphora and cryptic note before they disembark. Pandora has spent centuries haunted by the evils she once loosed; the Jar that began it all stands open in her sanctum, bleeding shadows. Armed with a fragment of divine hope, the party must seal it — by cunning, compassion, or force.

"The gods have wept long enough. What was loosed from that jar has festered for an age. Find the island. Seal the jar. What you carry will tell you how — when the time is right." — "Dios" (Zeus in disguise), aboard the trireme

Major Beats

- Zeus/"Dios" hands over the Amphora of Elpis with its sealed note, then departs before the trireme sails.
- Aboard ship, blind seer Phaedon shares his prophecy: "The jar does not need a conqueror. It needs a witness."
- The Siren Shore:** Sirens lure the trireme from the sea-craggs — skill challenge to pass, or fight.
- Acantha, an Ash Nymph bound to the isle, emerges on shore, offers the Sprig of Asphodel, and warns of the warden ahead.
- The Keeper's Gate:** Kyros (a cursed scholar-Minotaur) bars the temple with a riddle — solve it, show the Amphora, or fight through.
- Pandora's Sanctum:** Three Sealing Circles pulse around the open Jar. Pandora attacks, summoning Shadows/Specters — activate the circles, use the Amphora, or persuade her through her grief.
- Resolution:** The Jar seals; Acantha's curse breaks; a golden eagle descends; Zeus reveals himself.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Enc.	Easy	Med	Hard	Notes
Siren	1	2	3	4	Skippable via skill challenge
Kyros the Warden	2	—	1	1	Bypassed with riddle/RP/Amphora
Empousai Guard	2	—	2	2	Stand down if Kyros satisfied
Pandora	3	—	1	1	Boss; multi-path — need not die
Shadow	3	2	3	4–5+	Summoned; dismissed by Amphora
Specter	3	1	2	3	Summoned; dismissed by Amphora

Difficulty Scaling

Encounter	Easier	Harder
1 — Siren Shore	2 Sirens; challenge DCs –2; Song DC 11	4 Sirens; trireme drifts toward rocks each round unless redirected (DC 14 Intimidation)
2 — Keeper's Gate	Empousai only join if attacked directly	Kyros 114 HP; Empousai get 2 uses of Beguiling Flames
3 — Sanctum (Boss)	Pandora 80 HP, Shadows only, Circle DCs 11, Persuasion DC 13	2 pre-summoned Shadows + 1 Specter at start; Circle DCs 17; Persuasion needs 4 successes

Note tied to the Amphora (20 words): "What was last to leave the jar awaits return. Do not open until you stand before the source."

World detail: The Jar pedestal inscription (DC 16 History, or read freely by Phaedon): "First to leave were Pestilence and Pain. Last to remain was Hope. The jar closes when hope returns." Zeus cannot intervene directly under divine non-intervention law — he arranged the mission because the gods gave Pandora curiosity and never warned her; he owes her a resolution he cannot personally deliver.

Encounter 1 — The Siren Shore

Medium, skippable · ~25–30 min · ~3–4 rounds if combat | **Terrain:** Rocky coastal approach, 80×60 ft (trireme deck + sea-crags)

3× Sirens sing from the sea-crags as the trireme rounds the cape. **Win:** silence or escape the Song and reach shore.

- **Skill Challenge (3 successes before 3 failures):** each PC attempts one check: **DC 14** WIS save (ear-plugs = advantage), **DC 15** Performance, **DC 14** Arcana (must have cast a spell this session), **DC 12** Athletics (row), **DC 15** Persuasion (divine appeal). 3 failures → combat begins (prior successes not wasted).
- **Song (combat):** round start, DC 13 WIS or Charmed (must close distance); repeat save at turn end, success = 24 hr immune. Blocking ears = immune but disadvantage on Perception. *Silence* on a Siren ends its contribution (all 3 needed).
- **DC 16** Performance suppresses Song 2 rounds without a kill. 2 of 3 Sirens down → third flees.
- **Passed:** *clean landing, short rest available; Acantha impressed on arrival.*
- **Failed & unresolved:** *no short rest; Pandora is alerted — she starts Enc. 3 with 2 Shadows pre-summoned.*

Encounter 2 — The Keeper's Gate

Hard if fought, entirely avoidable · ~20–30 min | **Terrain:** Ruined temple courtyard, 50×50 ft

Kyros (a cursed scholar-Minotaur) poses a riddle before any blow is struck. 2× Empousai Guards wait in shadowed pillars. **Win:** pass through the gate.

- **Riddle** (DC 10 History to read the script): "Born from a god's first gift to humanity... containing all suffering and one salvation — what am I?" → Pandora's Jar / the Pithos.
- **Bypass:** **DC 14** History/Arcana/Religion (advantage w/ Acantha or Phaedon); **DC 15** Persuasion (advantage w/ Phaedon); showing Amphora = auto-pass; Acantha's Sprig = auto-pass; **DC 15** Deception is risky (Kyros has +5 Insight — fail grants him advantage).
- If fought: Kyros Charges if a PC is within 20 ft. Below 30 HP he offers the riddle again mid-fight. Empousai flee via Misty Step if Kyros falls.
- **Peaceful pass:** *Kyros gives the Amulet of the Labyrinth + a free hint about the Sealing Circles.*
- **Defeated in combat:** *Amulet drops but no Circle hint — party discovers the mechanic on their own.*

Encounter 3 — Pandora's Sanctum (Boss)

Hard · ~45–60 min · ~5–7 rounds · **Four win paths — Pandora need not die** | **Terrain:** Underground sanctum, 60 ft diameter, dim light

Win A: activate all 3 Sealing Circles. **Win B:** use the Amphora at the Jar. **Win C:** 3× DC 15 Persuasion. **Win D (last resort):** reduce Pandora to 0 HP.

- **Circles** (1 Action each): Pestilence NE, **DC 14** Medicine — Shadows attack w/ disadvantage. Despair NW, **DC 14** Arcana — disables Legendary Action Shade. Strife S, **DC 14** Athletics — Specters lose Incorporeal Movement. All 3 → Vessel of Sorrows suppressed, Lamentation Phase forced, Persuasion DC drops to 12.
- **Amphora** (1 Action, within 30 ft. of Jar): dismisses all summons; Pandora DC 16 WIS save — fail: Stunned 1 rd then non-hostile (Persuasion DC 12); success: Lamentation Phase triggers, summons still dismissed. Amphora shatters after use.
- **Persuasion:** 1st success (DC 15) skips her Legendary Actions that round; 2nd (DC 15) skips her turn; 3rd (DC 15, or DC 12 in Lamentation/all Circles sealed) → she relents, Jar closes. Fail → she uses Jar's Ward or a Legendary Action on the speaker. Phaedon grants advantage once/encounter.
- **Lamentation Phase** (≤30 HP first time, all Circles sealed, or Amphora used): *stops direct attacks but may still summon unless suppressed; Persuasion DC 12 for the rest of the fight.*
- Pedestal AC 13/25 HP — destroying it dismisses summons but deals 4d10 psychic burst (30 ft.) to everyone.

Resolution A/B/C: Pandora closes the Jar herself, weeping; Acantha's curse breaks; Zeus reveals himself; each PC gains the Blessing of Elpis (advantage on one save, declared before rolling, within 24 hrs).

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

ENC 1

- **Terrain:** Rocky coastal approach — 80×60 ft (trireme deck + sea-crags)
- **Beat:** As the trireme rounds the final cape toward the Isle of Anemos, unearthly voices rise from the sea-crags — three Sirens perching on the rocks, their song pulling at every mind aboard. The party has one round before the s
- Style: Skill challenge (primary) / Combat (fallback)
- Win Condition: Silence or escape the Siren Song and reach the shore
- Each PC contributes 1 check per attempt
- Any prior successes reduce rounds needed

ENC 2

- **Terrain:** Ruined temple courtyard — 50×50 ft
- **Beat:** At the entrance to Pandora's ruined temple, a stone archway inscribed in ancient Greek bars the path. Kyros — a scholar cursed into the body of a Minotaur centuries ago — stands before it, greataxe resting on the flagsto
- Style: Puzzle / Roleplay (primary) — Combat (last resort)
- Win Condition: Pass through the temple gate
- Solve the riddle (History / Arcana / Religion)
- Show the Amphora of Elpis (auto)

ENC 3

- **Terrain:** Medium Humanoid (Divinely Crafted), Chaotic Neutral · CR 7 (2,900 XP)
- **Beat:** The sanctum is a circular underground chamber lit only by the cold glow of the open Jar of Pandora on its central pedestal. Three rune-circles — Pestilence (sickly green), Despair (deep blue), and Strife (burning red) —
- Style: Boss fight with layered environmental puzzle
- Primary Win Condition: Seal the Jar by any means — circles, amphora, persuasion, or force
- Preferred Resolution: Pandora relents and closes the Jar herself (full narrative payoff)
- A. Activate all 3 Sealing Circles

Creature Stat Blocks

Siren

Medium Monstrosity, CE · CR 2 (450 XP)

AC 11 | HP 38 (7d8+7) | Speed 20 ft., Fly 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 9 (–1) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 15 (+2) · — Perception +2, Performance +4

Luring Song. 300 ft, DC 13 WIS or Charmed (moves toward Siren); repeat save each turn, 24 hr immune on success. Requires BA to sustain.

Multiattack. Claws +3 (6, 2d4+1 slashing) + Piercing Cry +4, 60 ft, 7 (2d6) thunder (+4/1d8 psychic if target Charmed).

Kyros, the Labyrinth Warden

Large Monstrosity (Cursed), LN · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 14 | HP 78 (12d10+12) | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 11 (+0) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 12 (+1) · **Saves** CON +3 | Skills: History +3, Insight +5, Perception +5

STR 18(+4) WIS 16(+3) — Insight +5, Perception +5. Darkvision 60 ft.

Charge. 10+ ft. + Gore: +9 (2d8) piercing, DC 14 STR or prone. *Guardian's Challenge:* riddle before attacking; below 30 HP offers it again. *Relentless* (1/day): 0 HP → DC 10 CON save, success = 1 HP.

Multiattack. Gore +6 (13, 2d8+4) + Greataxe +6 (17, 2d12+4). Reaction: *Intercept* — redirects an attack from a designated ward to himself (move 10 ft, no OA).

Empousai Guard

Medium Fiend (Shapechanger), NE · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 13 | HP 52 (8d8+16) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 17 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 16 (+3) · **Saves** WIS +3, CHA +5 | Skills: Deception +7, Stealth +5, Perception +3

DEX 17(+3) CHA 16(+3) — Deception +7, Stealth +5. Resist: Cold/Fire/Lightning/nonmagical B-P-S. Immune (cond.): Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned.

Shapechanger. Polymorphs into Small/Medium humanoid; reverts to true form on death. *One Leg of Brass:* disadvantage on Stealth in true form.

Multiattack. 2× Claw +5 (8, 2d4+3 slashing). **Enthralling Touch** +5, DC 13 WIS or Charmed 1 min (moves toward her). **Beguiling Flames** (recharge 5–6) 15 ft cone, DC 13 WIS or 14 (4d6) psychic + Frightened.

Pandora, the Opened One

Medium Humanoid (Divinely Crafted), CN · CR 7 (2,900 XP)

AC 15 | HP 112 (16d8+48) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 22 (+6)

CON 16(+3) WIS 14(+2) CHA 22(+6) — Persuasion +9, History +6. Resist: Psychic. Immune (cond., while Jar open ≤30 ft): Charmed, Frightened. Truesight 30 ft.

Vessel of Sorrows. BA: summons a Shadow/Specter within 30 ft while Jar open (suppressed if all 3 Circles sealed). *Sorrow's Embrace:* advantage on saves while a summon is visible. *Relentless Grief:* first ≤30 HP → Lamentation Phase.

Multiattack. 2× Lament Bolt +9, 90 ft, 11 (2d10) psychic, DC 16 WIS or Frightened; or 1 Bolt + a spell ≤2nd level. Spellcasting DC 16, +9 (Charm Person, Hold Person, Bestow Curse, Banishment, etc).

Reaction: *Jar's Ward* redirects attacks to a nearby summon. Legendary (2/rd): Lament (1), Shade (1, disabled if Despair sealed), Wail of Ages (2) — 30 ft, DC 16 CON, 7 (2d6) psychic + disadvantage on saves.

Shadow / Specter (Summons)

Medium Undead, CE · CR 1/2 & CR 1 (100 / 200 XP)

STR 6 (–2) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 6 (–2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 8 (–1)

Shadow: AC 12, HP 16. Vulnerable Radiant. *Strength Drain* +4, 9 (2d6+2) necrotic, STR –1d4 (0 = death); disadvantage if Circle of Pestilence sealed.

Specter: AC 12, HP 22, Fly 50 ft (hover). *Incorporeal Movement* (suppressed if Circle of Strife sealed). *Life Drain* +4, 10 (3d6) necrotic, DC 10 CON or max HP reduced until long rest.

Both: Resist Acid/Cold/Fire/Lightning/Thunder/nonmagical B-P-S; Immune Necrotic/Poison; Sunlight Weakness (disadvantage in daylight).

Key Items

 Amphora of Elpis

Wondrous Item (single use) · Divine Artifact · Given by Zeus

Note (20 words): "What was last to leave the jar awaits return. Do not open until you stand before the source."

In the Sanctum: uncork within 30 ft. of the Jar — dismisses all summons; Pandora DC 16 WIS (fail: Stunned then non-hostile, Persuasion DC 12; success: Lamentation Phase). Destroyed after use.

Outside the Sanctum: flash of light removes Frightened + advantage on WIS saves (1 min) for all within 30 ft.

Enc. 2 shortcut: shown to Kyros = automatic bypass, no check.

 Sprig of Asphodel

Wondrous Item (single use) · Given by Acantha

Presented to any guardian/undead/oath-bound entity = recognized as divinely escorted. This session: automatic bypass of Kyros's riddle; Empousai stand down 1 min. Wilts after use.

Passive (before use): advantage on saves vs. Charmed from undead sources.

 Amulet of the Labyrinth

Wondrous Item (requires attunement) · Given by Kyros

Awarded on peaceful riddle-solve; found on the ground if Kyros is defeated in combat.

Attuned: advantage on saves vs. Charmed/Frightened. *Never Lost* (1/day, dawn reset): 1 hr, always know direction to a named location/exit within 1 mile.

Loot Summary

Paths A/B/C: Blessing of Elpis (advantage on one save, declared before rolling, within 24 hrs) + possible divine boon.

Path D (0 HP): Divine Favour (advantage on one attack roll, within 24 hrs) instead — weaker reward, somber tone from Zeus.

Sealed Jar: non-magical trophy afterward, worth 500 gp to a collector.

NPC Quick Reference

 Zeus / "Dios"

Medium Celestial (God in Disguise) · Quest Giver

Disguise: stocky, grey-bearded sailor, calm grey eyes, faint smell of ozone. *Tell:* eagle birthmark on left forearm — DC 16 Perception/Insight.

Role: hands over the Amphora + note at harbour, departs without answering questions — cannot intervene directly (divine non-intervention).

Secret: chose Pandora's plight as cosmic shame — the gods gave her curiosity and never warned her; he owes a resolution he can't personally deliver.

Reveal (Paths A/B/C): appears in golden form or as a voice + descending eagle; thanks each PC by name; may grant a boon.

 Acantha, the Ash Nymph

Small Fey, NG · CR 1 (200 XP) · Ally

AC 11 | HP 22 (4d6+8) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 18 (+4)

CHA 18(+4) — Nature +4, Perception +4. Darkvision 60 ft.

Isle-Bound: can't leave while the Jar is open — sealing it frees her curse (she is quietly desperate for this but won't say so).

Soothing Presence: allies within 10 ft. advantage vs. charm/fear. *Gift of the Grove* (1/day): Sprig of Asphodel.

Vine Lash. +3, 4 (1d6+1) slashing. **Entangle** (1/day) DC 12 STR.

Role: guides shore → gate, won't descend into the sanctum. Freed and may join the party after the Jar seals.

 Phaedon, the Blind Seer

Medium Humanoid, LN · Non-combatant

AC 10 | HP 4 | Speed 25 ft. (staff)

History +7, Insight +6, Religion +5. Reads all languages incl. Ancient Greek.

Apollo's Sight: can't be deceived by illusions/shapechangers; speaks only in cryptic metaphor. *Prophecy* (1/day): DM reveals one hidden DC/mechanic/secret.

Seer's Vouching: grants advantage on the Kyros Persuasion check, and once/encounter on a Persuasion check against Pandora.

Background: placed on the trireme by Apollo; has "walked this path in visions." Will not fight — retreats if combat reaches him.

Aftermath

Clean seal: Zeus reveals himself fully and speaks to each PC by name; the "Dios" persona is acknowledged with a knowing smile.

Phaedon's blindness lifts for one moment — he sees the party clearly — then returns to peaceful blindness.

Acantha, now free, may return to the trireme with the party if invited.

The Mill of Midas

For 6 level 8 PCs, 3 to 3.5 hours, 3 encounters. Cure the king if possible.

- Style:** Urban curse investigation where greed, panic, and quarantine are more dangerous than blades.
Win: Midas is cured or contained, the millstone is cracked, and the market keeps enough food and trust to recover.
Lose: The golden touch becomes a civic plague; bread, coin, and bodies turn beautiful and useless.
Maguffin: Clay Loaf of Pact-Breaking · **Ally:** Philon the Coin-Shaver · **QG:** Queen Damodice

"A flour-dusted receipt stamped with a gold thumbprint and a list of missing bakers."

Major Beats

1. A child tries to trade a golden apple for bread no one can eat.
2. Midas speaks through a door with both hands tied in linen.
3. A market bell turns to gold mid-ring and keeps vibrating.
4. The millstone whispers prices for every heroic compromise.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 7
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Slight bump: elite HP +15–20%, one extra minion in Enc. 1 or 2, DCs +1. Enc. 3 as written is near-parity.
Easier	APL 5–6: –1 elite; boss loses one recharge attack.
Harder	APL 8–9: +1 elite; boss recharge improves by 1 step.

Queen Damodice hooks the party. Maguffin Clay Loaf of Pact-Breaking pays off in the finale against Avarice in the Millstone . Recruit Philon the Coin-Shaver along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Gilded Panic Mob	med · hard · CR 4 · Hazardous crowd
Auric Homunculus	med · hard · CR 3 · Curse scout
Goldmask Bread Wardens	med · hard · CR 5 · Elite quarantine enforcers
Avarice in the Millstone	med · hard · CR 9 · Boss, possessing curse engine
Philon the Coin-Shaver	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 7:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 7.
- **Easier:** APL 5–6: –1 elite; boss loses one recharge attack.
- **Harder:** APL 8–9: +1 elite; boss recharge improves by 1 step.

Ally snapshot

Philon the Coin-Shaver

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — Quarantine at the Saffron Gate

Navigate guards, frightened merchants, and gold-touched evidence without turning the street into a riot.

- Run a 4-success DC 15 challenge with Persuasion, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, or Stealth.
- Failures increase the Riot clock; at 3 marks the Gilded Panic Mob surges.
- Clay Loaf reveals curse-tracks from touched bread to the royal mill.
- Recruit Philon by protecting civilians or using him as a guide instead of a scapegoat.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Fence, street guide, and reluctant public witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — The Counting House Crawl

Slip through seized ledgers and guarded flour stores to learn how the curse spreads through trade.

- Three clue nodes: contaminated flour, Midas's sealed apology, and coin dust from the millstone.
- Stealth can bypass Wardens; social proof can convert them into a noisy distraction.
- Auric Homunculi flee toward the mill unless boxed in by clever positioning.
- A cursed object touched barehanded requires DC 15 Constitution save or disadvantage on Dexterity checks until cleansed.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Fence, street guide, and reluctant public witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Midas at the Grinding Stone

Contain the living curse while Midas begs not to touch anyone and the millstone tries to crown him forever.

- Midas is a protected objective: if isolated and spoken to, he spends his turn resisting the curse.
- At initiative 20, the millstone golds one object, exit, or 10-foot floor patch unless disrupted.
- Maguffin payoff: feed the Clay Loaf into the stone or Midas's hands to make the curse vulnerable for 1 round.
- Victory can be cure, containment, or shattering the possessing Avarice; murdering Midas counts as a bitter loss.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Fence, street guide, and reluctant public witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Fence, street guide, and reluctant public witness

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Philon the Coin-Shaver** — AC 14 | HP 52 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Fence, street
- **Gilded Panic Mob** — AC 12 | HP 88 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Hazardous crowd
- **Auric Homunculus** — AC 16 | HP 44 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Curse scout
- **Goldmask Bread Wardens** — AC 17 | HP 95 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Elite quarantine enforcers
- **Avarice in the Millstone** — AC 18 | HP 172 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 9 · Boss, possessing curse engine · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation:** Save her husband and the market quarter without starting a riot or inviting a coup.
- Secret:** Midas ordered the mill reopened after the first warning because the city needed bread.
- Hard rule:** She will not sanction murdering Midas while a cure remains possible.
- Appearance:** A heavy gray loaf that smells like rain, ash, and honest work.
- Handout:** "Gold cannot eat. Gold cannot knead. Feed the king what wealth refuses."
- Enc. 1–2:** Absorbs one minor golding effect or reveals fresh curse-tracks as dull clay footprints.
- Enc. 3:** Pressed into the millstone or Midas's hands, it gives the party one round to redirect the curse into earth.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Fence, street guide, and reluctant public witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2):** Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Philon the Coin-Shaver

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Fence, street guide, and reluctant public witness

AC 14 | HP 52 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Dagger +6 to hit, 6 piercing; Help as bonus action for Stealth, Investigation, or street Persuasion.

Gilded Panic Mob CR 4

Medium Creature · Hazardous crowd

AC 12 | HP 88 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Can be calmed; reducing to 0 means dispersal, not massacre.

Attack. Crush and grab, DC 15 Strength or Dexterity save or 18 bludgeoning and restrained.

Auric Homunculus CR 3

Medium Creature · Curse scout

AC 16 | HP 44 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Carries traces back to the cursed millstone.

Attack. Gold needle +6 to hit, 8 piercing plus DC 14 Constitution save or slowed by stiffening gold.

Goldmask Bread Wardens CR 5

Medium Creature · Elite quarantine enforcers

AC 17 | HP 95 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Will stand down if shown the queen's signet or proof of the true source.

Attack. Two spear attacks +7 to hit, 10 piercing each; net toss restrains on DC 15 Dexterity.

Avarice in the Millstone CR 10

Large Creature · Boss, possessing curse engine · Deadly · Boss

AC 18 | HP 210 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. It wants Midas alive as its hand, not dead.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Grinding aura and gold shards; DC 16 Constitution save or 28 force/radiant and partial golding.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Default: 6 PCs level 8; 3 encounters; 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Enc. 1/2 support social, stealth, and investigation solutions.
- Midas is best cured or contained, not murdered.
- Gilded creatures are restrained or cursed, not automatically dead.
- Maguffin payoff exposes the curse engine in Enc. 3.

Maguffin

Clay Loaf of Pact-Breaking

- Absorbs one minor golding effect or reveals fresh curse-tracks as dull clay footprints.
- Pressed into the millstone or Midas's hands, it gives the party one round to redirect the curse into earth.

NPC / ALLY**Queen Damodice**

- Save her husband and the market quarter without starting a riot or inviting a coup.
- She will not sanction murdering Midas while a cure remains possible.

Philon the Coin-Shaver

- Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2: Protect his sister's stall, expose a profiteer, or promise amnesty for his quarantine smuggling.
- AC 14 · HP 52 · Dagger +6 to hit, 6 piercing; Help as bonus action for Stealth, Investigation, or street Persuasion.

Remember

- Midas is cured or contained, the millstone is cracked, and the market keeps enough food and trust to recover.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Sibyl's Last Page

A burning oracle-run through the caves of Cumae.

Style: Claustrophobic prophecy chase for 6 level-8 PCs with investigation, hazards, and a hard escape finale.
Win: Recover the last page, interpret its true route, and escape before the cave seals in sacred smoke.
Lose: The page burns unread; Rome's future becomes a weapon for whoever controls the surviving ash.
Maguffin: Laurel-Ash Phial · **Ally:** Amelia the Younger Voice · **QG:** Lucius Varron of Mithaven

"When the seventh door exhales, carry the page through water, not flame, and believe the older voice."

Major Beats

1. Lucius admits the mission is political only after the first false page crumbles.
2. The caves answer lies with doors that open onto the party's memories.
3. Amelia's young voice contradicts the official masks.
4. The finale asks whether the future must be saved whole or carried as ash.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 7
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Slight bump: elite HP +15–20%, one extra minion in Enc. 1 or 2, DCs +1. Enc. 3 as written is near-parity.
Easier	APL 5–6: –1 elite; boss loses one recharge attack.
Harder	APL 8–9: +1 elite; boss recharge improves by 1 step.

Lucius Varron of Mithaven hooks the party. Maguffin Laurel-Ash Phial pays off in the finale against Cumaean Pyre-Voice . Recruit Amelia the Younger Voice along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Smoke-Warden Acolyte	med · hard · CR 3 · Ritual guard
Bronze Mask of the Old Kings	med · hard · CR 4 · Possessing puzzle foe
Ember-Lamia Archivist	med · hard · CR 6 · Prophecy thief
Cumaean Pyre-Voice	med · hard · CR 9 · Boss hazard spirit
Amelia the Younger Voice	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 7:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 7.
- **Easier:** APL 5–6: –1 elite; boss loses one recharge attack.
- **Harder:** APL 8–9: +1 elite; boss recharge improves by 1 step.

Ally snapshot

Amelia the Younger Voice

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Choose her living interpretation over the bronze masks' official version.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — Seven Doors Under Cumae

Track the page through smoke-carved doors while false futures try to split the party.

- Investigation challenge: 5 successes before 3 failures at DC 15 finds the real smoke trail.
- Each failure costs 5 minutes and animates a Smoke-Warden patrol.
- The Laurel-Ash Phial reveals one hidden verse and cancels one false-door consequence.
- Non-combat route: cite the correct verse to make the acolytes kneel and open Door IV.

Encounter 2 — The Masked Interpretations

Bronze masks recite mutually exclusive futures while Amelia begs the party to trust the living voice.

- Debate or fight three interpretations; Insight/Religion DC 16 identifies the one that eats the future.
- Recruit Amelia by defending her reading for one full round or giving her the laurel scrap.
- A Bronze Mask can possess a PC until splashed with channel water or beaten on a contested Charisma check.
- Correctly ordering three lines opens the niche without adding heat to the page.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Cave-born oracle fragment
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Choose her living interpretation over the bronze masks' official version.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — The Last Page Burns Forward

Carry, read, and protect a burning prophecy while the Pyre-Voice collapses the escape route.

- Burn clock starts at 6; at initiative 20 reduce it by 1, or by 2 after a failed group save.
- The Laurel-Ash Phial freezes the clock for 2 rounds or reveals which exit matches Amelia's verse.
- Win by reading the true future aloud at the moon well, bargaining with the Ember-Lamia, or escaping with preserved ash.
- Killing the Pyre-Voice only buys 1 round; the cave still seals unless the prophecy is resolved.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Cave-born oracle fragment
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Choose her living interpretation over the bronze masks' official version.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Cave-born oracle fragment
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Choose her living interpretation over the bronze masks' official version.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Cave-born oracle fragment

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- Smoke-Warden Acolyte** — AC 15 | HP 67 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Ritual guard
- Amelia the Younger Voice** — AC 13 | HP 54 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Cave-born orac
- Bronze Mask of the Old Kings** — AC 17 | HP 82 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Possessing puzzle foe
- Ember-Lamia Archivist** — AC 16 | HP 124 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · Prophecy thief
- Cumaeen Pyre-Voice** — AC 17 | HP 178 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 9 · Boss hazard spirit · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation.** He wants the final Sibylline page delivered before rival augurs declare a false destiny.
- Secret.** His patron already owns six forged pages and needs the real one to expose them.
- Hard rule.** No page may leave unread; an unopened prophecy curses its bearer with borrowed years.
- Appearance.** Glass tear of gray ash and green sparks tied with red wool.
- Handout.** "Dust to dust is lazy magic; ash remembers the shape of every fire."
- Enc. 1–2.** Sprinkle to reveal hidden verse, granting advantage on one Investigation or Religion check.
- Enc. 3.** Cast into the page-fire to freeze the burn clock for 2 rounds or reveal the safe exit door.
- 14 (+2)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**10 (+0)**INT**11 (+0)**WIS**10 (+0)**CHA
- Note.** Drops a key phrase if captured or out-argued.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA

Pacing helpers

- Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Amelia the Younger Voice

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Cave-born oracle fragment

AC 13 | HP 54 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Choose her living interpretation over the bronze masks' official version.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Echo bolt +7 to hit, 16 thunder; reaction grants +1d6 to a prophecy skill check.

Smoke-Warden Acolyte CR 3

Medium Creature · Ritual guard

AC 15 | HP 67 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Drops a key phrase if captured or out-argued.

Attack. Censer chain +6 to hit, 11 bludgeoning plus 7 fire.

Bronze Mask of the Old Kings CR 4

Medium Creature · Possessing puzzle foe

AC 17 | HP 82 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Cannot cross running water cut into the cave floor.

Attack. Commanding gaze DC 15 Wis or forced 20 ft toward a false door.

Ember-Lamia Archivist CR 6

Medium Creature · Prophecy thief

AC 16 | HP 124 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Wants the page intact, so she bargains if the burn clock is low.

Attack. Scroll lash +8 to hit, 18 slashing plus 9 fire.

Cumaeen Pyre-Voice CR 9

Large Creature · Boss hazard spirit · Boss

AC 17 | HP 178 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Defeat by naming the true prophecy and escaping, not by killing the Sibyl's echo.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Future flare DC 16 Dex, 31 fire/radiant and one failed death save on a downed target.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Amelia - AC 13/HP 54 - echo aid to prophecy checks
- Smoke-Warden Acolyte - AC 15/HP 67 - censer fire chain
- Bronze Mask - AC 17/HP 82 - forced false-door movement
- Ember-Lamia Archivist - AC 16/HP 124 - scroll lash thief
- Cumaeen Pyre-Voice - AC 17/HP 178 - burn clock pressure

Maguffin

Laurel-Ash Phial

- Sprinkle to reveal hidden verse, granting advantage on one Investigation or Religion check.
- Cast into the page-fire to freeze the burn clock for 2 rounds or reveal the safe exit door.

NPC / ALLY

Lucius Varron of Mithaven

- He wants the final Sibylline page delivered before rival augurs declare a false destiny.
- No page may leave unread; an unopened prophecy curses its bearer with borrowed years.

Amelia the Younger Voice

- Recruit Enc. 2: Choose her living interpretation over the bronze masks' official version.
- AC 13 · HP 54 · Echo bolt +7 to hit, 16 thunder; reaction grants +1d6 to a prophecy skill check.

Remember

- Recover the last page, interpret its true route, and escape before the cave seals in sacred smoke.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

Arena of the Labors

Six labors reborn on sacred sand — without the hero who first won them.

Style: Stadium · 6 waves · reuses Hydra / Stymphalian / Boar centerpieces · no Heracles
Win: Clear six labors (capture/pen OK)
Lose: Dragged out or Chant Clock 3
QG: Melanthios · **Ally:** Thaleia · **Maguffin:** Olive-Resin Club

"Not the hero's name — the sand's..."

Waves

- 1. Nemean Lion — hide / pin
- 2. Lernaean Hydra — heads + fire (tracker)
- 3. Mares of Diomedes — recruit Thaleia
- 4. Stymphalian Birds — thunder / nets
- 5. Erymanthian Boar — capture preferred
- 6. Cretan Bull — Hard · stake club

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
Easier	3-head hydra; fewer mares/birds; rest before Gate III
As Written ★	6×L8
Harder	Overlap Bull with Boar still up

Through Misthaven mist into Archon Melanthios 's Labor Games. The demigod who first beat these monsters is not present and must not be summoned. Six gates: Nemean Lion → Lernaean Hydra → Mares of Diomedes → Stymphalian Birds → Erymanthian Boar → Cretan Bull . Hydra, birds, and boar intentionally echo other library set pieces — staged here as arena waves.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Nemean Lion	1 · 1 · Wave 1 · Labor I
Lernaean Hydra	1 · 1 · Wave 2 · Labor II · heads
Mare of Diomedes	2 · 3 · 4 · Wave 3 · Labor VIII
Bronze-Beaked Stymphalian	4 · 6 · 8 · Wave 4 · Labor VI
Erymanthian Boar	1 · 1 · Wave 5 · Labor IV
Cretan Bull	1 · Wave 6 Hard · Labor VII
Stadium Gate-Hoplite	0–2 · 2–4 · Optional
Thaleia of the Bit	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 2

DM Tips

- As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Lion → Hydra (5 heads) → 3 mares → 6 Stymphalians → Boar → Cretan Bull. Short rest only before Gate II.
- Easier:** Hydra starts at 3 heads / no double-regrow. 2 mares; 4 birds. Boar HP 120. Bull HP 160, no Pivot Charge. Short rest before Gate III.
- Harder:** Hydra max 10 heads. 4 mares; 8 birds. Bull enters while Boar still at 25% HP.

Encounter 1 — Gate I: Lion & Hydra

🦁 Terrain Stadium floor · 80×80 ft sand · 10-ft wall · four gates · two sand-pit traps (DC 14 Dex or prone) · braziers at each gate (lit; fire for cauterize) · mural ring of the Twelve Labors. · Two waves, 2–3 minute gate-reset (no short rest). Nemean Lion first, then the Lernaean Hydra — same multi-head puzzle the library uses elsewhere, compressed for the sand.

- Win: 0 HP, pin (3× Athletics DC 16 after bloodied), or drive through North gate.
- Hide ignores mundane non-bludgeoning; Olive-Resin Club ignores once/encounter.
- Chant Clock: hush demigod-name shouts (Intimidation/Persuasion DC 14).
- Start 5 heads. Sever on 25+ damage hit (or called shot). Multiattack = number of heads.
- Cauterize stump with fire/acid same round (torch from brazier, spell, or club + flame) or it regrows two heads at end of hydra's turn (max 8).
- Win at 0 heads or 0 HP after final head. Handlers flood the sand if the fight exceeds ~8 rounds.

Encounter 2 — Gate II: Mares & Stymphalians

Short rest (~10 min) before Gate II. Mares from the East chute; then a Stymphalian flock from the open sky (same bronze-beak threat as Stymphalian Storm). Thaleia is chained at the bit-rack during Wave 3.

- 3 mares (Hard: 4). Free Thaleia to recruit (or vow to pen, not slaughter).
- Skill path: drive 3 through West gate (shove / lariat / Animal Handling DC 16).
- Mare reaches stands → Chant Clock +1.
- As written: 6 birds (Easy 4 / Hard 8). Flyby + Dive Bomb. Thunder/gongs impose disadvantage.
- Skill path: 4 successes before 3 failures (Performance, Athletics gongs, Survival herding, Arcana weather DC 15) drives the flock into the West pen netting — ends the wave with half the remaining birds captured.
- Thaleia nets: Ready vs dive. Combat win: reduce flock to ≤2 or force a scatter (all bloodied + one gong success).
- *Tip*: Medium Humanoid (human), Neutral Good · Recruitable Ally · Stablewright
- *Tip*: RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Free her from the bronze bit-rack before any mare is killed, or promise the mares will be driven to the holding pens rather than slaughtered for the crowd.

Encounter 3 — Gate III: Boar & Bull (Boss)

Tusk Sweep (Recharge 5–6). Each creature within 10 ft. DC 16 Dex save or 18 (4d8) slashing and prone. · Water and a cheer only — no full rest. Erymanthian Boar (Calydon-scale quarry energy, capture-preferred labor) then the Cretan Bull Hard finale.

- Charge + Relentless. Preferred win: capture/pen while bloodied (3× Athletics/Animal Handling DC 16 + portcullis).
- Club: once, brief plant → advantage on next shove/grapple vs boar.
- If the boar fight exceeds 5 rounds, Melanthios may release the Bull early (overlap — brutal).
- Legendary actions. Charge / Sandstorm Bellow / Earth-Shatter Hooves.
- WIN — MAGUFFIN: Plant Olive-Resin Club (action, DC 14). Next charge hits stake or 4d10 + prone.
- Pen track while bloodied, or slay. Chant Clock 3: bull heals 40 once + extra legendary that round.
- Portcullis or 0 HP → mortal olive crown; murals of the absent hero look away.
- *Tip*: Medium Humanoid (human), Neutral Good · Recruitable Ally · Stablewright

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid (human), Neutral Good · Recruitable Ally · Stablewright
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Free her from the bronze bit-rack before any mare is killed, or promise the mares will be driven to the holding pens rather than slaughtered for the crowd.
- Horse-Sense. While recruited, allies within 10 ft. have advantage on saves against the mares' Panic Whinny and on Animal Handling checks to drive the Erymanthian Boar.
- Medium Humanoid (human), Neutral Good · Recruitable Ally · Stablewright

STAT BLOCKS

Thaleia of the Bit

Medium Humanoid (human), Neutral Good · Recruitable Ally · Stablewright

AC 15 | HP 72 | Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 13 (+1)

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Free her from the bronze bit-rack before any mare is killed, or promise the mares will be driven to the holding pens rather than slaughtered for the crowd.

Horse-Sense. While recruited, allies within 10 ft. have advantage on saves against the mares' Panic Whinny and on Animal Handling checks to drive the Erymanthian Boar.

Net Hand. Carries 2 hunting nets. Can Ready a net against a diving Stympthalian (DC 14 Str save or restrained).

Lariat Whip. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing. On a hit against a Mare of Diomedes, the mare is restrained until end of Thaleia's next turn (escape DC...

Lernaean Hydra (Arena Echo) CR 8

Huge Monstrosity · Wave 2 · Labor II · Library centerpiece

AC 15 | HP 172 | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 2 (−4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 7 (−2)

Multiple Heads. While it has more than one head, advantage on saves vs. blinded, deafened, stunned, and charmed. Sever a head when a single hit deals 25+ damage, or a called shot after bloodied (DM fiat)...

Reactive Heads. One reaction per head — usually opportunity attacks.

Wakeful. While it has at least 2 heads, it cannot be surprised.

Regrow (unless cauterized). At the end of its turn, if a head was severed since its last turn and the stump was not dealt fire or acid damage (or a club cauterizing strike), it grows two heads (max 8). Same gimmick...

Mare of Diomedes CR 4

Large Beast · Wave 3 · Labor VIII

AC 14 | HP 76 | Speed 60 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2)

Pack Hunger. Advantage on attacks against a creature if another Mare is within 5 ft. of it.

Panic Whinny. When a Mare drops to 0 HP, each other Mare within 30 ft. can use a reaction to move half Speed without provoking, or make one bite against a creature that damaged the fallen mare.

Attack. Bite +7 to hit, 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing plus 5 (1d10) necrotic. Target creature: mare regains 5 HP.

Trample. Move up to Speed through enemy spaces (Medium or smaller). DC 15 Str/Dex save or 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning and prone.

Nemean Lion (Arena Echo) CR 6

Large Beast · Wave 1 · Labor I

AC 17 | HP 136 | Speed 50 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 4 (−3) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 10 (+0)

Hide That Will Not Cut. Immune to damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't bludgeoning. Magical piercing/slashing deals half. Bludgeoning, force, and the Olive-Resin Club ignore this trait.

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and hits with a claw, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength save or be knocked prone. Bite as a bonus action.

Arena Echo. Slayable labor-echo. Same iconic threat as other lion hunts in the library — Heracles is not present.

Attack. Bite +9 to hit, 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing plus 7 (2d6) thunderous roar damage, or Claw +9 to hit, 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing. Multiattack: two claws or one bite.

Session reminders

- Lion — AC 17 / 136
- Hydra — AC 15 / 172 · 5 heads
- Mare — AC 14 / 76
- Stympthalian — AC 15 / 45 · flyby
- Boar — AC 17 / 168
- Bull — AC 18 / 210 · legends

Maguffin

Olive-Resin Club

- Ignore lion hide; cauterize hydra stump with flame
- Boar grapple adv; Bull stake redirect

STAT BLOCKS (cont.)

Bronze-Beaked Stymphalian CR 3

Medium Monstrosity · Wave 4 flock · Labor VI · Library centerpiece

AC 15 | HP 45 | Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 4 (−3) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2)

Flyby. Does not provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of reach.

Bronze Plumage. Resistance to nonmagical slashing. Thunder or loud noise: disadvantage on attacks until end of its next turn.

Flock Tactics. Advantage on attacks if another Stymphalian is within 10 ft. of the target. Same bird threat as Stymphalian Storm — staged here as an arena wave.

Attack. Bronze Beak +6 to hit, 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing, or Razor Feather +6 to hit, range 60/120 ft., 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing.

Cretan Bull (Arena Echo) CR 9

Huge Beast · Wave 6 boss · Hard · Labor VII

AC 18 | HP 210 | Speed 50 ft.

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 9 (−1) · **Saves** Str +10, Con +9 · — **Saves** Str +10, Con +9

Siege Beast. Double damage to objects and structures.

Charge. If it moves ≥20 ft. straight then hits with gore, +18 (4d8) piercing and DC 18 Str save or pushed 15 ft. and prone.

Earth-Shatter Hooves. Sand within 10 ft. is difficult terrain for others.

No Demigod. Win: 0 HP, pen while bloodied (3× Athletics/Animal Handling DC 16 + portcullis), or club-stake setup. Heracles does not appear.

Erymanthian Boar (Arena Echo) CR 8

Large Beast · Wave 5 · Labor IV · Library centerpiece kin

AC 17 | HP 168 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2)

Charge. If it moves ≥20 ft. straight then hits with gore, +13 (3d8) piercing and DC 16 Str save or pushed 15 ft. and prone.

Relentless (1/day). If reduced to 0 HP by an attack dealing ≤30 damage, drops to 1 HP instead.

Capture Labor. Mythic labor was capture alive. Preferred win: restrain / net / pen while bloodied (3 Athletics or Animal Handling DC 16) then drop the North portcullis. Same big-boar energy as Calydon —...

Arena Echo. Heracles absent. Slayable if the crowd demands blood.

Stadium Gate-Hoplite CR 2

Medium Humanoid · Optional reinforcement

AC 16 | HP 45 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Crowd Control. Open pens / shield walls on Melanthios's order. Enter sand only if a beast breaches the stands.

Attack. Spear +5 to hit, 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing, or Shield Bash +5 to hit, 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning and DC 13 Str save or prone.

NPC / ALLY

Archon Melanthios

- No naming Heracles · Chant Clock

Thaleia of the Bit

- Recruit during mares · lariat / nets

Remember

- Heracles never appears. Labors I, II, VIII, VI, IV, VII.
- Hydra / birds / boar may echo other Theronauts guides — fine to reuse.

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Bellerophon's Bargain

For 6 level 8 PCs, 3 to 3.5 hours, 3 encounters. Drive off the Chimera; pride is the trap.

Style: Mythic mountain chase about humility, teamwork, and staying mounted while fire fills the sky.
Win: Pegasus trusts mortal riders, the Chimera is driven from Lycia, and Bellerophon keeps his pride in check.
Lose: The hunt becomes a trophy boast; Pegasus bolts, the Chimera survives, and Lycia remembers vanity before rescue.
Maguffin: Humble Bridle · **Ally:** Half-Tamed Pegasus · **QG:** Melanippe of the Bridle Shrine

"A moon-silver bridle tag etched with 'borrowed wings return heavier than stolen ones.'"

Major Beats

- 1. Pegasus watches from a ridge and judges every hand movement.
- 2. Bellerophon smiles like a hero one compliment away from ruin.
- 3. The Chimera's three heads argue over which rider smells proudest.
- 4. The best victory is loud in the sky and quiet at the feast.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Melanippe of the Bridle Shrine hooks the party. Maguffin Humble Bridle pays off in the finale against Chimera of the Bragging Crag . Recruit Half-Tamed Pegasus along the way. Ride a half-tamed Pegasus to drive off a Chimera without claiming the kill for pride.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Goatfire Cultist	med · hard · CR 3 · Ranged fanatic
Ash-Mane Lion	med · hard · CR 5 · Pouncing brute
Serpent of the Thermal Vents	med · hard · CR 6 · Terrain controller
Chimera of the Bragging Crag	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss, three-headed aerial terror
Half-Tamed Pegasus	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Ally snapshot

Half-Tamed Pegasus

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Bridle Shrine

Earn the shrine's blessing, find Pegasus's tracks, and learn why this bargain punishes vanity.

- Recruit Pegasus with 4 successes before 2 failures using Animal Handling, Religion, Acrobatics, or Persuasion.
- Drawn weapons or trophy talk impose disadvantage until someone makes a sincere apology.
- The Humble Bridle may be offered, not forced; forcing it starts a chase instead of recruitment.
- Cultists spy from the rocks and flee if exposed without bloodshed.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Lessons Above Lycia

Practice shared riding, rescue shepherds, and map the Chimera's thermals before the final ascent.

- Each aerial stunt needs DC 15 Acrobatics, Athletics, Animal Handling, or Arcana to use wind safely.
- Failure separates a rider, costs Pegasus 10 HP, or lets an Ash-Mane Lion threaten civilians.
- Saving shepherds gives the route to the Bragging Crag and a safe landing zone in Enc. 3.
- Bellerophon shadows the party; humbling him now prevents a dangerous boast in the finale.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — The Bragging Crag

Battle the Chimera amid volcanic updrafts while denying it the boast that feeds its legend.

- At initiative 20, choose a vent: lift 30 feet, fire burst 14 damage, or smoke lightly obscures a lane.
- Mounted PCs can trade an action to steady another rider and prevent a fall.
- Maguffin payoff: refuse the killing blow with the Humble Bridle to let Pegasus drive the Chimera off.
- If someone boasts ownership of the kill, the Chimera heals 25 HP and Pegasus demands a DC 17 apology check.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- Half-Tamed Pegasus** — AC 16 | HP 104 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount,
- Goatfire Cultist** — AC 14 | HP 49 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Ranged fanatic
- Ash-Mane Lion** — AC 15 | HP 102 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Pouncing brute
- Serpent of the Thermal Vents** — AC 16 | HP 118 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · Terrain controller
- Chimera of the Bragging Crag** — AC 17 | HP 188 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss, three-headed aerial terror ·

Additional DM notes

- Motivation.** Make sure the Chimera is stopped by disciplined heroes rather than another glorious fool.
- Secret.** Bellerophon has already been warned that claiming the kill will cost Pegasus's trust.
- Hard rule.** She refuses to bless any plan that treats Pegasus as loot or a god-given siege engine.
- Appearance.** Plain leather with a moonlit bit that grows lighter when thanked.
- Handout.** "Hold with open hands. Ask before ascent. Return before applause."
- Enc. 1–2.** Grants advantage on one Animal Handling, Acrobatics, or Persuasion check involving Pegasus.
- Enc. 3.** If a rider refuses the killing blow while holding the bridle, Pegasus can force the Chimera to retreat.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role.** Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2).** Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.

Pacing helpers

- Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Half-Tamed Pegasus

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Aerial mount, proud ally, and moral compass

AC 16 | HP 104 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Hooves +8 to hit, 13 bludgeoning; wing burst lets one rider move 40 feet without provoking.

Goatfire Cultist CR 3

Medium Creature · Ranged fanatic

AC 14 | HP 49 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Wants a hero to boast so the Chimera's legend grows.

Attack. Fire javelin +6 to hit, 9 piercing plus 7 fire.

Ash-Mane Lion CR 5

Medium Creature · Pouncing brute

AC 15 | HP 102 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. A Chimera-spawned omen; can be driven away with water, thunder, or superior high ground.

Attack. Bite +7 to hit, 15 piercing; pounce knocks prone on DC 15 Strength.

Serpent of the Thermal Vents CR 6

Medium Creature · Terrain controller

AC 16 | HP 118 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Coils around vents that launch flyers upward or burn grounded creatures.

Attack. Venom bite +8 to hit, 12 piercing plus 14 poison; vent flare recharges on 5-6.

Chimera of the Bragging Crag CR 10

Large Creature · Boss, three-headed aerial terror · Boss

AC 17 | HP 188 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. It can be slain as a monster, but best victory drives it off without a pride-claim.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Bite, horns, and claws; fire breath recharges on 5-6 for DC 16 Dexterity, 45 fire.

Advance (1). (*Legendary Actions*) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Default: 6 PCs level 8; 3 encounters; 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Recruit Pegasus in Enc. 1/2; do not treat it as equipment.
- Enc. 3 is Hard and includes aerial movement hazards.
- The Chimera can be driven off instead of killed.
- Maguffin payoff requires humility at the finishing moment.

Maguffin

Humble Bridle

- Grants advantage on one Animal Handling, Acrobatics, or Persuasion check involving Pegasus.
- If a rider refuses the killing blow while holding the bridle, Pegasus can force the Chimera to retreat.

NPC / ALLY**Melanippe of the Bridle Shrine**

- Make sure the Chimera is stopped by disciplined heroes rather than another glorious fool.
- She refuses to bless any plan that treats Pegasus as loot or a god-given siege engine.

Half-Tamed Pegasus

- Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2: Approach without weapons drawn, free it from thorn snares, and promise not to claim the kill.
- AC 16 · HP 104 · Hooves +8 to hit, 13 bludgeoning; wing burst lets one rider move 40 feet without provoking.

Remember

- Pegasus trusts mortal riders, the Chimera is driven from Lycia, and Bellerophon keeps his pride in check.

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Judgment at Delphi

For 6 level 8 PCs, 3 to 3.5 hours, 3 encounters. Do not kill Apollo.

Style: Sacred courtroom mystery that turns into a temple siege when the lie sheds its human voice.
Win: The false oracle is exposed, Apollo's shrine remains intact, and the Python-spawn is slain or banished as a monster.
Lose: Delphi accepts a counterfeit judgment; pilgrims riot, priests vanish, and the temple closes under living coils.
Maguffin: Sunlit Tripod Shard · **Ally:** Ion the Archive Acolyte · **QG:** Theoxena, Senior Pythia

"A wax tablet with two prophecies: one in clean hexameter, one with the same mistake repeated."

Major Beats

- Two prophecies rhyme until one word stains the wax black.
- A pilgrim begs for judgment while hiding a knife under laurel leaves.
- The tripod shadow points at a wall that starts breathing.
- The false voice uses the party's names before anyone speaks them.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Theoxena, Senior Pythia hooks the party. Maguffin Sunlit Tripod Shard pays off in the finale against Python-Spawn of the False Voice . Recruit Ion the Archive Acolyte along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Laurel-Knife Zealots	med · hard · CR 3 · Fanatic infiltrators
Vapor-Script Daemon	med · hard · CR 5 · Illusion and clue corrupter
Temple Coil Guardian	med · hard · CR 6 · Grappler defender
Python-Spawn of the False Voice	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss, prophetic serpent monster
Ion the Archive Acolyte	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2

DM Tips

- As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Ally snapshot

Ion the Archive Acolyte

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Pilgrim Docket

Interview petitioners, compare prophecies, and keep the queue from becoming a faction riot.

- Find 3 clue categories: repeated meter error, bribe route, and smoke residue on forged tablets.
- Use Insight, Religion, History, Investigation, or Performance at DC 15.
- Public accusations without proof mark the Riot clock and empower zealots.
- Recruit Ion by trusting his archive pattern and shielding him from senior-priest suspicion.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Nervous researcher and witness handler
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Trial of the Crooked Verse

Present evidence before priests, pilgrims, and rivals while the false voice tries to rewrite testimony.

- Run a 5-success DC 16 debate using Persuasion, Religion, Insight, History, or Arcana.
- Each failure lets a Vapor-Script Daemon alter one memory until challenged by hard evidence.
- The Tripod Shard turns one forged statement into a visible crooked shadow.
- If the party wins the debate, civilians evacuate before Enc. 3 and Theoxena blesses one save each.
- Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Nervous researcher and witness handler
- Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.
- Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Coils Around the Omphalos

The false oracle reveals its serpent body and seals the inner temple while the party fights for the true tripod.

- At initiative 20, a coil seals a path, grapples a target, or crushes a pillar for falling debris.
- Apollo is absent but sacred law remains: defiling the tripod gives the boss advantage for 1 round.
- Maguffin payoff: place the Shard into the tripod to reveal and pin the boss's true head.
- Slaying the Python-spawn ends the seal; exposing it first prevents blame falling on Apollo's priests.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Nervous researcher and witness handler
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Nervous researcher and witness handler

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- Ion the Archive Acolyte** — AC 13 | HP 46 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Nervous resear
- Laurel-Knife Zealots** — AC 15 | HP 58 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Fanatic infiltrators
- Vapor-Script Daemon** — AC 14 | HP 90 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Illusion and clue corrupter
- Temple Coil Guardian** — AC 16 | HP 125 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · Grappler defender
- Python-Spawn of the False Voice** — AC 18 | HP 196 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss, prophetic serpent monster · B

Additional DM notes

- Motivation:** Restore true prophecy before the city condemns innocents under a stolen voice.
- Secret:** She has not heard Apollo clearly for three nights and fears the silence is her fault.
- Hard rule:** She will not permit violence against pilgrims or claims that Apollo himself is the enemy.
- Appearance:** A warm bronze triangle that casts noon shadows even at dusk.
- Handout:** "Set false words in true light. The shadow will point where the voice is hiding."
- Enc. 1–2:** Reveals contradictions in testimony or makes forged prophecies cast crooked shadows.
- Enc. 3:** Set into the cracked tripod to pin the Python-spawn's real body for 1 round.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Nervous researcher and witness handler
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2):** Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.

Pacing helpers

- Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Ion the Archive Acolyte

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Nervous researcher and witness handler

AC 13 | HP 46 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Bronze lamp +5 to hit, 5 bludgeoning; once per scene, cites a record for advantage on Religion or History.

Laurel-Knife Zealots CR 3

Medium Creature · Fanatic infiltrators

AC 15 | HP 58 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Believe the false oracle is an older, purer voice than Apollo's priests.

Attack. Curved knife +6 to hit, 8 slashing plus 7 poison.

Vapor-Script Daemon CR 5

Medium Creature · Illusion and clue corrupter

AC 14 | HP 90 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Dies into readable smoke if exposed by the Tripod Shard.

Attack. Smoke lash +7 to hit, 13 psychic; prophecy blur imposes disadvantage on one check.

Temple Coil Guardian CR 6

Medium Creature · Grappler defender

AC 16 | HP 125 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Animated scale and stone shed by the buried Python-spawn.

Attack. Constrict +8 to hit, 18 bludgeoning and grappled; bite adds 10 poison.

Python-Spawn of the False Voice CR 10

Large Creature · Boss, prophetic serpent monster · Boss

AC 18 | HP 196 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. May be slain as a monster without harming Apollo or his office.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Bite and constrict; oracle venom recharges on 5-6 for DC 16 Wisdom or stunned by false visions.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Default: 6 PCs level 8; 3 encounters; 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Enc. 1/2 are proof-gathering and social judgment paths.
- Do not kill Apollo; the enemy is a Python-spawn monster.
- Public accusations without evidence worsen the Riot clock.
- Maguffin payoff pins the true boss body in Enc. 3.

Maguffin

Sunlit Tripod Shard

- Reveals contradictions in testimony or makes forged prophecies cast crooked shadows.
- Set into the cracked tripod to pin the Python-spawn's real body for 1 round.

NPC / ALLY

Theoxena, Senior Pythia

- Restore true prophecy before the city condemns innocents under a stolen voice.
- She will not permit violence against pilgrims or claims that Apollo himself is the enemy.

Ion the Archive Acolyte

- Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2: Protect him from blame, validate his archive clues, or let him question a priest under supervision.
- AC 13 · HP 46 · Bronze lamp +5 to hit, 5 bludgeoning; once per scene, cites a record for advantage on Religion or History.

Remember

- The false oracle is exposed, Apollo's shrine remains intact, and the Python-spawn is slain or banished as a monster.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

Karkinos at the Keel

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 8 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Single trireme · Sharks / Octopus / Nymph / Karkinos

Style: Beasts → Fey parley → Crab boss | **Win:** Defeat or drive off Karkinos (0 HP or ≤30 HP after Horn)
Ship: 40×50 +15 +25 = **90 ft** · mast · 15 ft ram · **no second ship**.

"When the sacred crab climbs for blood that is not the sea's, sound this horn — hunger hears the true feast." — **Coral Feast-Horn**

Major Beats

- 1. Nereid herald + Coral Feast-Horn aboard mist-trireme.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** 3 sharks + octopus on oars.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Thalassa parley / recruit (+ dolphin omen).
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Karkinos climbs the ram; Horn payoff.

Creature List

Creature	E/M/H	Mini
Hunting Shark	2/3/3	×3
Giant Octopus	0/1/1	×1
Thalassa (Nymph)	—/1/1	Sea nymph
Sea Spirit	0–5	×5
Karkinos (Boss)	1	Cancer the Crab

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

A Nereid herald boards through Misthaven mist with the Coral Feast-Horn . Blood-chum in the water has drawn a sacred crab mad. All three encounters play on and around one hull — no enemy ship. Main deck 40×50 ft · raised bow +15 ft · raised stern +25 ft · 90 ft total length (tapered ends) · center mast/sail · 15 ft ram at bow. No second ship — water, sky, and creatures only. Place shark/octopus minis in water adjacent to hull; Karkinos climbs the ram or stern in Enc. 3.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Hunting Shark	2 · 3 · 3 · Enc. 1
Giant Octopus	0 · 1 · 1 · Enc. 1
Thalassa	1 · 1 · Enc. 2 recruit
Sea Spirit	0–2 · 0–3 · 0–5 · Optional
Karkinos	1 adj · 1 · 1 · Boss

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Encounter 1 — Blood in the Oar-Wash

Enc. 1–2. Action: blow once (1/short rest) — sharks or octopus within 30 ft. make a DC 13 Wisdom save or end their next turn moving away from the hull. · 3× Hunting Sharks and 1× Giant Octopus boil up from chum-stained water. Win: clear the beasts; keep oars usable (≥2 oar banks intact).

- Oar banks: 4 zones (AC 12 / HP 12). If ≥3 destroyed → Short Rest only before Enc. 2; else Long Rest.
- Non-combat: Coral Feast-Horn + Animal Handling/Religion group challenge — 3 successes before 3 failures (DC 13) drives sharks off; octopus still must be cut free or contested Ath DC 14.
- Overboard: Ath DC 12 to climb ram/oar-ports; sharks get OA.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Encounter 2 — The Nymph's Shoal

Thalassa rises with 3× Sea Spirits . She demands the false feast-horn the poachers used — the party has the true one. Calm her, return a pearl-net tangled on the ram, or fight briefly.

- Non-combat path: Show Coral Feast-Horn + Persuasion/Religion DC 14 (Insight DC 12 for advantage) → she believes you. Return pearl-net (Investigation DC 12 on ram) drops DC to 10.
- Combat path: Thalassa + spirits for 2 rounds or until she hits ½ HP, then flees.
- RECRUITMENT: Peaceful resolution → Thalassa aids Enc. 3; Delphinus arrives as omen.
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT. Spare her shoal / return a stolen pearl-net (skill path) → she joins Enc. 3: once casts healing word and can use Help to expose Karkinos's underbelly.
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT. If not attacked: Persuasion DC 12 → one spirit warns when Karkinos will surface (party cannot be surprised in Enc. 3).
- *Tip:* Poseidon's omen — appears if Thalassa is recruited or horn blown in Enc. 2

Encounter 3 — Karkinos Climbs (Boss)

Soft Underbelly. While prone, restrained, or after Coral Feast-Horn success: attacks have advantage; its AC is 15 until start of its next turn. · Karkinos heaves onto the bow via the 15 ft ram, then scuttles toward the mast. Optional: 1 shark remains in water (if Enc. 1 leftover).

- Win: 0 HP or ≤30 HP after a successful Coral Feast-Horn blow this fight (it plunges away).
- Horn payoff: incapacitate 1 round + soft underbelly (see item card).
- Ally: Thalassa Help / healing word; Delphinus rescues overboard PCs.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT. Spare her shoal / return a stolen pearl-net (skill path) → she joins Enc. 3: once casts healing word and can use Help to expose Karkinos's underbelly.

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- RECRUITMENT. Spare her shoal / return a stolen pearl-net (skill path) → she joins Enc. 3: once casts healing word and can use Help to expose Karkinos's underbelly.
- RECRUITMENT. If not attacked: Persuasion DC 12 → one spirit warns when Karkinos will surface (party cannot be surprised in Enc. 3).
- Poseidon's omen — appears if Thalassa is recruited or horn blown in Enc. 2

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Hunting Shark** — AC 12 | HP 45 (6d10+12) | Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft. · Large Beast, Unaligned · CR 2 · Mini ×3
- **Giant Octopus** — AC 11 | HP 52 (8d10+8) | Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft. · Large Beast, Unaligned · CR 1 · Mini ×1
- **Thalassa (Sea Nymph)** — AC 14 | HP 58 (9d8+18) | Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft. · Medium Fey, Neutral · CR 3 · Mini: Sea/Water Nymph ×1
- **Sea Spirit (Lesser Nereid)** — AC 12 | HP 22 (5d8) | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft. · Medium Fey, Chaotic Neutral · CR 1/2 · Mini ×5
- **Delphinus (Dolphin Ally)** — AC 12 | HP 27 | Speed 0 ft., swim 60 ft. · Medium Beast, Neutral Good · CR 1/2 · Mini ×1
- **Karkinos, Sacred Crab of Poseidon** — AC 18 (natural) | HP 168 (16d12+64) | Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft., climb 20 ft. · Huge Monstrosity, Neutral · CR 9 · BOSS · Mini: Cancer the C

Additional DM notes

- ****Non-combat:**** Coral Feast-Horn + Animal Handling/Religion group challenge — 3 successes before 3 failures (DC 13) drives sharks off; octopus still must be cut free or contested Ath DC 14.
- 18 (+4)**STR**13 (+1)**DEX**15 (+2)**CON**1 (–5)**INT**10 (+0)**WIS**4 (–3)**CHA
- Senses:** blindsight 30 ft. · Blood Frenzy: adv vs. creatures missing HP
- Hull Circler.** Can make opportunity attacks against creatures that leave the water within 5 ft. of the hull or ram.
- 17 (+3)**STR**13 (+1)**DEX**13 (+1)**CON**4 (–3)**INT**10 (+0)**WIS**4 (–3)**CHA
- Skills:** Stealth +5 · Hold Breath 1 hour on land
- Appearance:** small coral trumpet, warm and faintly pulsing
- Handout (22 words).** "When the sacred crab climbs for blood that is not the sea's, sound this horn — hunger hears the true feast."
- Enc. 1–2.** Action: blow once (1/short rest) — sharks or octopus within 30 ft. make a DC 13 Wisdom save or end their next turn moving away from the hull.
- Enc. 3.** Action adjacent to Karkinos or at the bow rail: sound the true feast (once). Karkinos must succeed DC 15 Wisdom or be incapacitated until end of its next turn and lose Legendary Actions that round; soft underbelly exposed (attacks vs. it have advantage until it moves).

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.

STAT BLOCKS

Hunting Shark CR2

AC 12 | HP 45 | Swim 40

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 1 (−5) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 4 (−3)

- Blood Frenzy · Bite +6 (2d8+4)

Giant Octopus CR1

AC 11 | HP 52 | Reach 15

STR 17 (+3) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 4 (−3) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 4 (−3)

- Tentacles +5 grapple DC 16 · Oar Grapple · Ink R4–6

Thalassa CR3

Sea Nymph · recruitable

AC 14 | HP 58 · Spell DC 14

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

- 2× Tidal Dart +5 · Charm 1/day · Enc3 Help/heal

Sea Spirit CR1/2

AC 12 | HP 22

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

- Hide in spray · Recruit Pers DC 12 → no surprise Enc3

Karkinos CR9 BOSS

AC 18 | HP 168 | Climb 20 · LR 2

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 4 (−3) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 6 (−2) · **Saves** Str +10, Con +8

- 2× Claw +10 · Crush · Deck Slam · LA Scuttle

Delphinus

AC 12 | HP 27 | Swim 60

- Rescue Breach reaction · Ram +4

KEY ITEM / NPC

Coral Feast-Horn

- 1/SR: sharks/octopus ≤30 ft Wis **DC 13** or move away next turn.
- Finale once: Karkinos Wis **DC 15** → incapacitate 1 rd + soft underbelly.

Nereid Herald

- **Motivation:** Stop sacred crab frenzy from poachers’ chum.
- **Secret:** True horn reverses hunger; false horns caused this.

Ship Reminder

- 90 ft deck · 15 ft ram · **0 extra ships** · water ring for beasts.

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Lightning on Dead Oars

One-Shot · 6 Players · Level 8 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Ghost Galley Boarding · Undead & Storm Constructs

Style: Undead boarders → Storm constructs → Shade admiral | **Win:** Destroy Admiral Lysander’s Shade and break the ghost ship’s hold
Ship: Main 40×50 + bow 15 + stern 25 = **90 ft · 15 ft ram** · 2nd ship ghost galley (~80×30) to port · optional Charybdis under both.

"Drive this nail into dead wood that still rows — lightning loses its master, and bones remember the grave." — **Lodestone Nail of Auster**

Major Beats

- 1. Navigatör Rhea + Lodestone Nail; mist clears mid-sea with ghost galley already to port.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Bone rowers + lochagos board the party deck.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Storm knights + Tempest Effigies — persuade or smash.
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Admiral’s shade on ghost stern; optional Charybdis pressure.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Med	Hard	Mini
Bone Rower (Skeleton)	4	6	9	×9
Bone Lochagos	1	1–2	2	×2
Storm Knight	1	2	3	×3
Tempest Effigy	2	3	4	×4
Admiral Shade (Boss)	adj	1	1	Captain + crown staging
Lesser Charybdis	—	opt	1	×2 (use 1)

Difficulty Scaling

Tier	Adjust
Easy	Fewer skeletons; 1 knight; Admiral HP 110, no Mast Arc
Medium ★	As written; Charybdis optional rd 3+
Hard	All 3 knights; Charybdis from rd 1; Admiral LR 3

Navigatör Rhea delivers the Lodestone Nail . A storm-cursed galley runs silent under blue lightning. Dead rowers board; empty storm-hoplites still think they serve a living admiral. Drive the nail — and end Lysander’s shade. Main deck 40×50 ft · raised bow +15 ft · raised stern +25 ft · 90 ft total length (tapered ends) · center mast/sail · 15 ft ram at bow. Board supports up to 2 additional ships . Ghost galley (~80×30) to port, often grappled. Optional whirlpool under both if Charybdis escalates.

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin detail

Lodestone Nail of Auster

- Iron nail that sings in storm
- Handout (22 words). "Drive this nail into dead wood that still rows — lightning loses its master, and bones remember the grave."
- Enc. 2–3. Action: hammer into ghost-galley deck or a Tempest Effigy — target construct/undead ship-zone: disadvantage on attacks 1 round + 15 lightning (friendly to storm knights? no — grounds them). Once per short rest.

Encounter 1 — Bone Boarders

6× Bone Rowers + 1× Bone Lochagos leap from the ghost rail. Win: clear the party deck.

- Oar Gang +1 AC. Non-combat: Religion DC 14 turn attempt as group (3 successes) drives half back once.

Encounter 2 — Knights of Empty Thunder

Thunder Step (1/day). Teleport 30 ft.; each within 5 ft. of start/end Dex DC 13 or 2d6 thunder. · 2× Storm Knights + 3× Tempest Effigies teleport/board amidships.

- Non-combat: Insight/Persuasion DC 15 to convince one knight the admiral is dead — that knight becomes inert armor (remove from fight).
- Lodestone Nail into an Effigy: grounds it (see card).
- *Tip*: Wondrous Item (maguffin)

Encounter 3 — Admiral of Dead Oars (Boss)

Mast Arc (1/day). Line 60 ft. along mast/boom; Dex DC 16; 36 (8d8) lightning. · Admiral Lysander's Shade on the ghost stern + remaining captain + 2× Effigies + 3× skeletons (reuse minis).

- Win: Shade 0 HP. Mast nail placement suppresses knight auras if any remain.
- Optional: Round 3+, Lesser Charybdis pulls — pilot checks or fight a second threat. Prefer escape/drive-off over kill if pressed for time.

Quick combat reference

- **Bone Rower (Skeleton)** — AC 13 | HP 13 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Undead · CR 1/4 · Mini ×9
- **Bone Lochagos (Skeleton Captain)** — AC 15 | HP 52 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Undead · CR 3 · Mini ×2
- **Storm Knight (Zeus-Touched Hoplite)** — AC 18 | HP 68 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Construct/Humanoid · CR 4 · Mini ×3
- **Tempest Effigy (Storm Spirit Construct)** — AC 15 | HP 40 | Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover) · Medium Construct · CR 2 · Mini ×4
- **Admiral Lysander's Shade** — AC 17 | HP 142 | Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover) · Medium Undead · CR 9 BOSS · Uses Skeleton Captain staging +
- **Lesser Charybdis** — AC 14 | HP 126 | Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft. · Huge Monstrosity · CR 8 · OPTIONAL pressure · Mini ×2 (use 1

Additional DM notes

- 10 (+0)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**15 (+2)**CON**6 (−2)**INT**8 (−1)**WIS**5 (−3)**CHA
- 14 (+2)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**10 (+0)**INT**11 (+0)**WIS**12 (+1)**CHA
- **Non-combat:** Insight/Persuasion DC 15 to convince one knight the admiral is dead — that knight becomes inert armor (remove from fight).
- 16 (+3)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**16 (+3)**CON**10 (+0)**INT**12 (+1)**WIS**14 (+2)**CHA
- Lightning Aura.** Start of turn: creatures within 5 ft. take 3 (1d6) lightning.
- Misguided.** Believe they still serve a living admiral — Insight DC 13 reveals emptiness.
- 14 (+2)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**3 (−4)**INT**10 (+0)**WIS**1 (−5)**CHA
- Grounded by Nail.** Lodestone Nail in it: speed 0, aura off, vulnerability to bludgeoning.
- Handout (22 words).** "Drive this nail into dead wood that still rows — lightning loses its master, and bones remember the grave."
- Enc. 2–3.** Action: hammer into ghost-galley deck or a Tempest Effigy — target construct/undead ship-zone: disadvantage on attacks 1 round + 15 lightning (friendly to storm knights? no — grounds them). Once per short rest.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1*: End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2*: Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3*: Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip*: Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Bone Rower CR1/4

AC 13 | HP 13

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 8 (−1) · CHA 5 (−3)

- Oar Gang +1 AC · Shortsword/bow +4 · Vuln bludgeoning

Bone Lochagos CR3

AC 15 | HP 52

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

- Marshal +1 atk to skeletons ≤30 · 2× Longsword +4 · Rattle Order R5–6

Storm Knight CR4

AC 18 | HP 68 · Immune lightning

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

- Aura 1d6 lit · Spear +6 (+1d6 lit) · Thunder Step 1/day

Tempest Effigy CR2

AC 15 | HP 40 | Hover 20

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 1 (−5)

- Slam +4 (+ lit) · Static Burst R5–6 Dex DC 12 · Nail grounds

Admiral Shade CR9 BOSS

AC 17 | HP 142 | Fly 30 · LR 2

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

- 3× Spear +8 · Raise Rowers · Mast Arc · LA Spear/Order/Gale

Lesser Charybdis CR8

Optional pressure

AC 14 | HP 126 | Swim 40

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 6 (−2)

- Whirlpool init 20 · Bite +9 · Engulf Surge R5–6

KEY ITEM / NPC**Lodestone Nail of Auster**

- 1/SR: hammer into ghost deck or Effigy — target has disadv on attacks 1 rd + 15 lightning.
- Finale: drive into ghost mast → suppress storm-knight lightning auras while nail remains.

Navigator Rhea

- **Motivation:** Intercept storm-cursed ghost ship before next port loses a crew.
- **Arrival:** Mist clears mid-sea; ghost galley already to port.

Ship Reminder

- 90 ft deck · 15 ft ram · ghost galley to port · ≤2 extra ships · Charybdis optional under both.

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Stymphalian Storm

For 6 level 8 PCs, 3 to 3.5 hours, 3 encounters. Enc. 3 is Hard.

Style: Heroic lake-clearing hunt with noisy tools, risky improvisation, and a final airborne brawl.
Win: The flock breaks, the lake reopens, and the last bronze feathers are claimed before they seed a wider plague.
Lose: The birds scatter into farms and roads; the lake survives, but every nearby roof and field becomes a target.
Maguffin: Thunder-Net of Stymphalos · **Ally:** Itys of the Whistling Reeds · **QG:** Alkippe Reed-Warden

"Three thunderstones, two weighted nets, and a bad sketch of a reed island marked 'queen nest?'"

Major Beats

- 1. A bronze feather punches through a shield like a thrown spear.
- 2. Villagers argue for fire while children hide under reed mats.
- 3. Thunder answers at exactly the wrong moment.
- 4. The matriarch's shadow turns the whole lake black.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Alkippe Reed-Warden hooks the party. Maguffin Thunder-Net of Stymphalos pays off in the finale against Storm Matriarch . Recruit Itys of the Whistling Reeds along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Bronze-Beaked Stymphalian	med · hard · CR 3 · Fast skirmisher
Razor-Feather Flock	med · hard · CR 5 · Area denial swarm
Nest Sentinel of Ares	med · hard · CR 6 · Armored bruiser
Storm Matriarch	med · hard · CR 9 · Boss, aerial controller
Itys of the Whistling Reeds	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Ally snapshot

Itys of the Whistling Reeds

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — Reeds Under Siege

Evacuate fishers, learn why the flock returned, and choose bait, thunder, or stealth for the hunt.

- Run a 4-success DC 15 group challenge using Nature, Survival, Athletics, Persuasion, or Animal Handling.
- Every failure costs a skiff, a cache of nets, or 10 HP split among exposed villagers.
- Finding the stolen Ares-bronze grants advantage on one Enc. 2 lure or bait check.
- Recruit Itys by saving his skiff or accepting his reed-maze shortcut despite Alkippe's anger.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Local net-runner and bird-call mimic
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Thunder, Nets, and Bad Ideas

Cross the lake under aerial harassment while setting a storm lure before the flock can scatter.

- Need 5 successes before 3 failures at DC 16 to herd the flock toward the rookery.
- Good bad ideas count: drums, reflected sunlight, tied shields, spell thunder, or fake carrion.
- On a failure, a Razor-Feather Flock attacks for 2 rounds or destroys one prepared lure.
- Spending the Thunder-Net here prevents the easiest Enc. 3 payoff but removes one enemy from the finale.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Local net-runner and bird-call mimic
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — The Bronze Rookery

At initiative 20, wind shifts: DC 15 Strength or Dexterity save or slide 10 feet toward water or spikes. · Fight across a rocking nest-island as the matriarch calls lightning and tries to launch the rookery skyward.

- At initiative 20, wind shifts: DC 15 Strength or Dexterity save or slide 10 feet toward water or spikes.
- Egg mounds are hazards; destroying them ends adds but worsens Alkippe's settlement politics.
- Maguffin payoff: anchor the Thunder-Net during thunder to ground the boss for 2 rounds.
- If the boss falls below 35 HP, a successful DC 16 Intimidation or Animal Handling check can break the flock without slaughter.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Local net-runner and bird-call mimic
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Local net-runner and bird-call mimic

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Itys of the Whistling Reeds** — AC 15 | HP 58 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Local net-run
- **Bronze-Beaked Stymphalian** — AC 15 | HP 45 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Fast skirmisher
- **Razor-Feather Flock** — AC 14 | HP 92 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Area denial swarm
- **Nest Sentinel of Ares** — AC 17 | HP 110 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · Armored bruiser
- **Storm Matriarch** — AC 18 | HP 168 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 9 · Boss, aerial controller · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation:** Reopen the lake before hunger and panic make the townsfolk burn the marsh.
- Secret.** Her brother looted Ares-bronze from the shore and drew the flock back with it.
- Hard rule.** She will not allow the party to poison the lake or torch nesting reeds with families hiding nearby.
- Appearance:** A tarred hemp net threaded with blue wire and small bronze bells.
- Handout.** "Throw only when the sky answers. Pull only if you like keeping both arms."
- Enc. 1–2.** Can capture a scout bird, block a dangerous dive lane, or grant advantage on one flock-control check.
- Enc. 3.** If spread across the nest spire during thunder, grounds the boss for 2 rounds and strips its reaction.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Local net-runner and bird-call mimic
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2).** Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Itys of the Whistling Reeds

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Local net-runner and bird-call mimic

AC 15 | HP 58 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Reed spear +6 to hit, 7 piercing; once per fight, mimic call imposes disadvantage on one bird dive.

Bronze-Beaked Stymphalian CR 3

Medium Creature · Fast skirmisher

AC 15 | HP 45 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Use in pairs or as minion flights during dives.

Attack. Bronze beak +6 to hit, 10 piercing; flyby avoids opportunity attacks.

Razor-Feather Flock CR 5

Medium Creature · Area denial swarm

AC 14 | HP 92 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Disperses for 1 round if hit by thunder damage.

Attack. Feather storm, DC 15 Dexterity save or 21 slashing in a 20-foot burst.

Nest Sentinel of Ares CR 6

Medium Creature · Armored bruiser

AC 17 | HP 110 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Guards eggs and stolen bronze rather than fighting to the death.

Attack. Two talon strikes +7 to hit, 12 slashing each; shriek frightens on DC 15 Wisdom.

Storm Matriarch CR 9

Large Creature · Boss, aerial controller · Boss

AC 18 | HP 168 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. Bloodied at half HP, she tries to lift the whole nest into the storm.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Multiattack with beak and two wings; lightning screech recharges on 5-6 for 36 lightning/thunder.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Default: 6 PCs level 8; 3 encounters; 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Enc. 1/2 can resolve without lethal combat through evacuation, lures, and bird handling.
- Enc. 3 is Hard; boss is last in enemy list.
- Thunder damage disperses flocks for 1 round.
- Maguffin payoff grounds the Storm Matriarch in Enc. 3.

Maguffin

Thunder-Net of Stymphalos

- Can capture a scout bird, block a dangerous dive lane, or grant advantage on one flock-control check.
- If spread across the nest spire during thunder, grounds the boss for 2 rounds and strips its reaction.

NPC / ALLY

Alkippe Reed-Warden

- Reopen the lake before hunger and panic make the townsfolk burn the marsh.
- She will not allow the party to poison the lake or torch nesting reeds with families hiding nearby.

Itys of the Whistling Reeds

- Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2: Save his skiff, forgive his theft of bronze bait, or let him lead the reed-maze route.
- AC 15 · HP 58 · Reed spear +6 to hit, 7 piercing; once per fight, mimic call imposes disadvantage on one bird dive.

Remember

- The flock breaks, the lake reopens, and the last bronze feathers are claimed before they seed a wider plague.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Atlantean Toll

One-Shot · 6 Players · Level 8 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Trireme + Enemy Galley · Atlantean Boarding

Style: Elemental skirmish → Galley clash → Deep-beast boss | **Win:** Break the false toll; defeat or drive off the Keto-Spawn
Ship: Main 40×50 + bow 15 + stern 25 = **90 ft · 15 ft ram** · 2nd ship Atlantean galley (≈70×25) starboard, 5–10 ft gap / grappled.

"Show the true bronze when false kings claim the wave — the deep-beast bows to the stamp, not the spear." — **Bronze Tithe-Token**

Major Beats

- 1. Clerk of the Blue Tithe + Tithe-Token; mist onto trireme mid-crossing.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Steam mephits boil from oar-ports as the galley signals.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Boarding — Atlanteans + Brine-Touched; recruit Wave-Caller via Token.
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Keto-Spawn climbs the ram onto the bow deck.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Med	Hard	Mini
Steam Mephit	2	4	4	×4
Atlantean (Sahuagin)	2	4	4+wave	×4
Brine-Touched (Kuo-toa)	2	3	4	×4
Triton Wave-Caller	—	1	1	Caster ×1
Triton Guard (allies)	0	0–2	0–2	from ×10
Keto-Spawn (Boss)	adj	1	1	Deep-sea monster

Difficulty Scaling

Tier	Adjust
Easy	2 mephits; 2 Atlanteans; Keto HP 100, no LA
Medium ★	As written
Hard	Full mini caps; Keto HP 170; swallow recharge 5–6

A Clerk of the Blue Tithe delivers the Bronze Tithe-Token . Atlantean reavers demand a sea-tax Poseidon never blessed. Their galley runs alongside the party trireme; a deep hybrid beast is their enforcer. Authenticate the bronze — or feed the ram. Main deck 40×50 ft · raised bow +15 ft · raised stern +25 ft · 90 ft total length (tapered ends) · center mast/sail · 15 ft ram at bow. Board supports up to 2 additional ships . Place Atlantean galley (≈70×25 ft) starboard, 5–10 ft gap / grappled.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Steam Mephit	2 · 4 · 4
Atlantean	2 · 4 · 4+wave
Brine-Touched	2 · 3 · 4
Wave-Caller	1 · 1
Keto-Spawn	adj · 1 · 1

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Encounter 1 — Steam on the Water

4× Steam Mephits boil up from the oar-ports as the Atlantean galley signals. Soft opener; fog + scalding. Win: clear mephits; spot the galley (Perception DC 12). · 4× Steam Mephits boil up from the oar-ports as the Atlantean galley signals. Soft opener; fog + scalding. Win: clear mephits; spot the galley (Perception DC 12).

- Death bursts threaten sail (fire). Create Water / gust helps.
- Non-combat: Contests with buckets (Athletics DC 12 group) vent steam without full combat.

Encounter 2 — False Kings of the Wave

Grappling hooks. 4× Atlanteans + 3× Brine-Touched + Wave-Caller (hostile until Token shown).

- Non-combat: Brandish Tithe-Token + Religion/Persuasion DC 14 → Wave-Caller orders a parley pause; cultists may still attack.
- Combat: Blood Frenzy Atlanteans. Cut 3 grapple lines (AC 12/HP 8) to separate ships.
- RECRUIT: Token authenticity → Wave-Caller + 2 Triton Guards aid Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT. If the party shows the Tithe-Token as authentic Poseidon seal (Religion DC 12), the Wave-Caller switches sides in Enc. 3.

Encounter 3 — Keto-Spawn at the Ram (Boss)

Thrash (2). Each creature within 5 ft. Dex DC 15 or 10 (3d6) bludgeoning and prone. · Keto-Spawn climbs the 15 ft ram onto the bow deck. Optional: 2 remaining Atlanteans snipe from their galley.

- Win: Beast 0 HP or driven to flee at ≤25% HP if Tithe-Token branded successfully this fight.
- Bow deck = raised 15 ft zone; shoving it off (Str contest DC 15 while bloodied) deals 3d6 fall into its own thrash.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin)

DM Callouts

- RECRUITMENT. If the party shows the Tithe-Token as authentic Poseidon seal (Religion DC 12), the Wave-Caller switches sides in Enc. 3.
- Wondrous Item (maguffin)

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Steam Mephit** — AC 10 | HP 21 | Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. · Small Elemental · CR 1/4 · Mini ×4
- **Atlantean Reaver (Sahuagin reskin)** — AC 12 | HP 22 (4d8+4) | Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Lawful Evil · CR 1 · Mini: Sahuagin ×4
- **Brine-Touched Cultist (Kuo-toa reskin)** — AC 13 | HP 27 (5d8+5) | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral Evil · CR 1 · Mini: Kuo-toa ×4
- **Triton Wave-Caller** — AC 14 | HP 65 (10d8+20) | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid (Triton), Neutral · CR 4 · Mini: Triton cast
- **Keto-Spawn (Deep-Sea Monster)** — AC 16 | HP 136 (16d10+48) | Speed 20 ft., swim 50 ft. · Large Monstrosity, Neutral Evil · CR 8 · Mini: Deep-sea angl
- **Triton Guard** — AC 13 | HP 27 | Speed 30/swim 30 · Medium Humanoid (Triton), Neutral · CR 1 · Mini ×10 (use ≤4

Additional DM notes

- ****Non-combat:**** Brandish Tithe-Token + Religion/Persuasion DC 14 → Wave-Caller orders a parley pause; cultists may still attack.
- ****RECRUIT:**** Token authenticity → Wave-Caller + 2 ****Triton Guards**** aid Enc. 3.
- 14 (+2)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**10 (+0)**INT**11 (+0)**WIS**9 (−1)**CHA
- Limited minis.** Only 4 figures — use waves off-board if needed, or elite the four.
- 13 (+1)**STR**10 (+0)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**11 (+0)**INT**10 (+0)**WIS**8 (−1)**CHA
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**15 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- RECRUITMENT.** If the party shows the Tithe-Token as authentic Poseidon seal (Religion DC 12), the Wave-Caller switches sides in Enc. 3.
- Enemy default.** Begins as Atlantean ally / hostage-priest on their galley.
- Keto-Spawn** climbs the 15 ft ram onto the bow deck. Optional: 2 remaining Atlanteans snipe from their galley.
- 20 (+5)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**17 (+3)**CON**4 (−3)**INT**12 (+1)**WIS**6 (−2)**CHA

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Steam Mephit CR1/4

AC 10 | HP 21 | Fly 30

- Claws +2 · Breath R6 Dex DC 10 (1d8 fire) · Death Burst 5 ft

Atlantean (Sahuagin) CR1

AC 12 | HP 22 | Swim 40

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 11 (+0) · CHA 9 (−1)

- Blood Frenzy · Bite + Spear +4 · Cap ×4 figures

Brine-Touched (Kuo-toa) CR1

AC 13 | HP 27

STR 13 (+1) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 8 (−1)

- Spear +3 · Net · Slime Slap Con DC 11

Triton Wave-Caller CR4

Recrutable · Mini: Triton caster

AC 14 | HP 65 · Spell DC 13

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)

- Fog / Gust / Tidal Wave 1/day · Trident +4 · Lightning Lure

Triton Guard CR1

AC 13 | HP 27

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

- Spear +4 · Conch Net DC 12 · Optional Enc. 3 allies (≤2)

Keto-Spawn CR8 BOSS

Deep-sea angler/shark hybrid

AC 16 | HP 136 | Swim 50

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 17 (+3) · INT 4 (−3) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 6 (−2)

- +9 Bite (grapple DC 15) + 2 claws · Swallow R6 · LA Thrash Dex DC 15

KEY ITEM / NPC

Bronze Tithe-Token

- Enc. 2: advantage Intimidation/Persuasion vs Atlanteans once.
- Enc. 3: brandish → Wis **DC 15** frighten + climb-lock 1 rd (once).

Clerk of the Blue Tithe

- **Motivation:** Stop false sea-tax collected by Atlantean reavers + deep-beast.
- **Hook:** Mist onto trireme already underway; enemy galley suddenly alongside.

Ship Reminder

- 90 ft deck · 15 ft ram · Atlantean galley alongside · ≤2 extra ships total.

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The Boar of Calydon

A level 8 wilderness boss-hunt for six Theronauts.

Style: Mythic wilderness hunt with rival patrons, broken oaths, and a brutal quarry.
Win: Stop the boar, expose the curse feeding the hunt, and leave the Calydonian claimants alive enough to accept a shared trophy.
Lose: The hunters turn on each other, the boar scatters the villages, and Artemis marks the party as oath-breakers.
Maguffin: Moon-Black Bristle · **Ally:** Atalanta, Unwanted First Spear · **QG:** King Oeneus of Calydon

"A bristle black as fired iron is tied with red wool. When moonlight touches it, the shadow points toward the hunter who lied most recently."

Major Beats

- 1. Oeneus asks for heroes while hiding the divine insult that caused the hunt.
- 2. Atalanta sees the true trail before the court agrees she is allowed to speak.
- 3. The boar kills selectively, proving the quarry understands pride and politics.
- 4. The final trophy must become a peace bond or Calydon bleeds after victory.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide’s baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

King Oeneus of Calydon hooks the party. Maguffin Moon-Black Bristle pays off in the finale against Calydonian Boar . Recruit Atalanta, Unwanted First Spear along the way. Join a prideful hunt that turns on itself when the quarry starts choosing victims.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Razorback Sounder	med · hard · CR 3 · Skirmishing beasts and living alarms
Pride-Drunk Hunter	med · hard · CR 5 · Rival elite with a fragile oath
Calydonian Boar	med · hard · CR 11 · Boss quarry, curse engine, and terrain breaker
Atalanta, Unwanted First Spear	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Maguffin detail

Moon-Black Bristle

- Appearance: A hand-length iron bristle wrapped in red wool and smelling of wet leaves.
- Handout. "Hold me to moonlight and pride will cast the longer shadow. Hold me to blood and the forest will remember the wound."
- Enc. 1–2. Reveals false trails and social lies: advantage on one Survival, Insight, or Persuasion check tied to the hunt.

Ally snapshot

Atalanta, Unwanted First Spear

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Feast Before the Blood

The party enters a loud lodge where Meleager, Atalanta, uncles, priests, and trophy-seekers argue over who deserves command before the first horn sounds.

- Non-combat path: mediate three rival claims with DC 15 Persuasion, History, or Insight.
- Discover Oeneus's omitted altar with DC 15 Investigation or Religion.
- Recruit Atalanta by defending her right to first blood or asking for her read of the tracks.
- Failure starts the hunt with one rival hunter secretly hostile in Encounter 2.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Hunter ally and truth-teller
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — The Quarry Chooses

A false trail leads the hunting line through farms, sacred groves, and ravines while the boar begins isolating the loudest hunters.

- Non-combat path: run a 5-success skill challenge before 3 failures to rescue stragglers.
- Use the bristle to identify one false trail or one hunter marked by the boar.
- Rival hunters attack only if shamed, exposed without mercy, or abandoned to danger.
- Each failure costs a hunter, burns supplies, or gives the boss a lair advantage.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Hunter ally and truth-teller
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Tusks in the Sacred Mire

At the moonlit mire, the Calydonian Boar bursts from reeds, using fallen hunters, sucking mud, and pride-curses to split the party.

- Hard fight: the boar charges through reed walls and creates difficult terrain lines.
- Pride curse: a PC who refuses aid or glory-sharing has disadvantage on the next save.
- Maguffin payoff: plant the Moon-Black Bristle in the old wound to suppress curse aura.
- Mercy option: saving rivals mid-fight removes one legendary charge or grants Atalanta an opening.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Hunter ally and truth-teller
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Hunter ally and truth-teller
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

STAT BLOCKS

Atalanta, Unwanted First Spear

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Hunter ally and truth-teller

AC 17 | HP 76 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Longbow +8 to hit, 150/600 ft., 2d8+4 piercing; marks one trail sign.

Razorback Sounder CR 3

Medium Creature · Skirmishing beasts and living alarms

AC 14 | HP 45 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Use as pressure, not slaughter; they flee if bloodied and uncornered.

Attack. Tusks +6 to hit, 2d8+4 slashing; DC 14 Str save or knocked prone.

Pride-Drunk Hunter CR 5

Medium Creature · Rival elite with a fragile oath

AC 16 | HP 78 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Can be talked down by naming their oath and offering public credit.

Attack. Spear +7 to hit, 2d6+4 piercing plus 1d6 if an ally threatens the target.

Calydonian Boar CR 11

Large Creature · Boss quarry, curse engine, and terrain breaker · Boss

AC 18 | HP 218 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. It chooses proud targets first and cannot be appeased by flattery.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Gore +10 to hit, 3d10+6 piercing; charge adds 4d8 and pushes 20 ft.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- 6 PCs level 8; 3 encounters; 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Enc 1/2 can resolve through social play and rescue skills.
- Enc 3 is Hard; boss last.
- Maguffin payoff: suppress boar curse for 1 round.
- Win requires stopping the hunt from becoming civil murder.

Maguffin

Moon-Black Bristle

- Reveals false trails and social lies: advantage on one Survival, Insight, or Persuasion check tied to the hunt.
- Driven into the boar's old wound as an action, it suppresses the boar's curse aura for 1 round and prevents a regeneration surge.

NPC / ALLY**King Oeneus of Calydon**

- Save his fields and heirs without admitting that his neglected sacrifice invited divine anger.
- He will not order the death of any named hunter; if pressed, he demands a public trial after the boar is stopped.

Atalanta, Unwanted First Spear

- Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2: Back her claim to the first blood or help her save a rival who insulted her.
- AC 17 · HP 76 · Longbow +8 to hit, 150/600 ft., 2d8+4 piercing; marks one trail sign.

Remember

- Stop the boar, expose the curse feeding the hunt, and leave the Calydonian claimants alive enough to accept a shared trophy.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Bronze Heart of Crete

One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 8 · Greek Mythology · ~3.5 hrs / 3 Encounters

Style: Infiltration & Shutdown-the-Colossus | **Win Condition:** Reach the Ichor Heart inside Talos and complete the shutdown sequence before the colossus reaches the harbor | **Setting:** The port village of Amnisos, Crete, and the animated interior of the Bronze Talos.

The party's trireme makes landfall at Amnisos just as the bronze colossus **Talos**, guardian of Crete, lurches to life and begins rampaging toward the coast. A disguised smith warns them its ichor-heart has been corrupted, and only someone who can reach the valve inside its chest can shut it down without destroying it forever.

"You smell the forge before you see the man — soot to the elbows, a burn-scarred grin. 'Kadmos,' he says, extending a hand like tempered iron. 'The giant on the ridge is not attacking Crete. Something is hurting it, and it doesn't know how to scream except with its fists. I need someone small enough to climb inside its chest and quiet its heart before it reaches the harbor.'"

Maguffin — The Aegis Pin: Kadmos presses a cold bronze nail into your palm, etched with spiraling script. Attached is a scrap of hide reading: "Seek the ichor-valve at heart or heel. Turn the pin thrice. The bronze giant will sleep, not die." (Full card, Page 4.)

Major Beats

1. Trireme lands at Amnisos; party meets **Kadmos** (Hephaestus in disguise) at the dockside tavern, the Drowned Anchor.
2. Kadmos explains Talos's ichor-heart has been corrupted and hands over the **Aegis Pin**.
3. **Encounter 1:** Amnisos village is under attack by a rampaging Chalkotauros (bronze bull sentinel); scholar **Ikara** is trapped under rubble.
4. Villagers point the party toward Talos's fallen heel-hatch, ground into the shoreline by its own weight.
5. **Encounter 2:** Party climbs the internal clockwork shaft from heel to torso, past Bronze Sentries and steam hazards; may free the bound construct **Kyros**.
6. Party reaches the torso access hatch and descends into the Ichor Heart chamber.
7. **Encounter 3 (Boss):** Party defends the Ichor Valve from Legionnaire constructs and the Talos Overseer for 3 shutdown successes within 8 rounds.
8. **Success:** Talos kneels and powers down on the shoreline, intact but dormant — Crete is safe, and legend gains a new chapter.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	CR	Encounter	Notes
Chalkotauros (Bronze Bull)	4	1	Avoidable via DC 15 Arcana/Investigation shutdown
Bronze Sentry	2	2	x2 (x3 at Hard scaling); avoidable via valve puzzle
Bronze Legionnaire	2	3	x2 standard soldiers
Keraunos Legionnaire (Lightning)	3	3	Discharge reaction at half HP
Pyrikaus Legionnaire (Fire)	3	3	Cinder Breath recharge 5–6
Talos Overseer	5	3	Mini-boss; buffs Legionnaires, Overcharge Core

Difficulty Scaling (APL 4 / 6 / 8[baseline] / 10)

Encounter	APL 4	APL 6	APL 8 (Baseline)	APL 10
1 — Bull in the Streets	Bull HP 55, no Trampling Charge	Bull HP 70	As written (HP 85)	Add 2nd bull at half HP
2 — Clockwork Ascent	1 Sentry only	2 Sentries	As written (2 Sentries)	3 Sentries + 1 elite Sentry
3 — Ichor Heart (Boss)	Remove Overcharge Core; drop 1 Legionnaire	Drop Pyrikaus Legionnaire	As written (Hard)	+1 Bronze Legionnaire; Overseer HP +30

Encounters

Encounter 1 — The Bull in the Streets

Style: Skirmish w/ Non-Lethal Option | **Win Condition:** Stop the Chalkotaurus and free Ikara | **Difficulty:** Moderate | **Terrain:** Amnisos village street, 80×60 ft; overturned carts/nets = difficult terrain & half cover; collapsed well pins Ikara.

- **Creatures:** 1× Chalkotaurus (Bronze Bull), CR 4 (see Page 3).
- **Non-combat option:** Adjacent creature spends an action on a **DC 15** Arcana or Investigation check to locate the neck-rune and power the bull down instantly (provokes an opportunity attack).
- **Combat option:** Standard fight — watch for Trampling Charge (Recharge 5–6).
- **Rescue:** **DC 13** Athletics to clear rubble off Ikara, or **DC 12** Medicine to stabilize her once freed. Each failed rescue attempt while the bull is active draws its aggro.

Success — Bull disabled/destroyed and Ikara rescued: she joins as an ally (advantage on Investigation/Arcana in Encounters 2–3; skips one hazard in Encounter 2).

Partial — Bull defeated but Ikara not freed within 3 rounds: she survives but only gives info, does not join.

Encounter 2 — The Clockwork Ascent

Style: Environmental Hazard + Avoidable Guardian Skirmish | **Win Condition:** Reach the torso access hatch | **Difficulty:** Moderate | **Terrain:** Vertical gear shaft, 40 ft spiral gantry; steam vents erupt every 3 rounds (init count 20) — **DC 13** Dex save or 2d6 fire; rotating gear-plate floor sections are difficult terrain.

- **Creatures:** 2× Bronze Sentry, CR 2 each (see Page 3).
- **Non-combat option:** 3 valve stations along the gantry; **DC 14** Investigation/Arcana at each (1 action, splittable among party). Succeeding at 2 of 3 sets Sentries to dormant standby, bypassing combat entirely.
- **Combat option:** Shoving a Sentry into an active gear-plate (contested Athletics/Acrobatics or a successful shove) destroys it instantly.
- **Recruit:** A gear-locked alcove holds **Kyros**, a small bronze owl construct. Freeing it costs a **DC 12** Sleight of Hand or tinker's tools check.

Aftermath — Kyros freed: joins the party; in Encounter 3 it can auto-succeed one shutdown check (once) or grant advantage on the reaction vs. Overcharge Core. Sentries bypassed via valves: party gets a surprise round entering Encounter 3.

Encounter 3 — The Ichor Heart (Boss)

Style: Defend-the-Ritual | **Win Condition:** 3 cumulative shutdown-check successes at the Ichor Valve using the Aegis Pin within 8 rounds | **Difficulty:** Hard | **Terrain:** Circular vault, 60 ft diameter; rotating gear-plates (init 20, **DC 12** Dex save or slide 10 ft); ruptured wall conduits deal 1d8 fire or lightning (DM's choice by color) on touch; central dais holds the Ichor Valve.

- **Creatures:** 1× Talos Overseer (CR 5), 2× Bronze Legionnaire (CR 2), 1× Keraunos Legionnaire (CR 3), 1× Pyrikaus Legionnaire (CR 3). Full cards Page 3.
- **Shutdown check:** A PC adjacent to the valve spends an action for a **DC 13** Arcana or tinker's tools check; max 1 success per round; 3 successes required to complete.
- **Overcharge Core (Overseer, Recharge 6):** Undoes one banked shutdown success unless a PC reacts with a **DC 15** Arcana check to stabilize the valve.
- **Gearlock Sync (Overseer trait):** At the start of its turn, grants one Legionnaire within 30 ft resistance to all damage until the Overseer's next turn — focus the Overseer to strip this buff.
- **Ally assist:** Ikara grants advantage on shutdown checks if present; Kyros can auto-succeed one check (once).

Success — 3 successes land within 8 rounds: Talos kneels and powers down on the shoreline, dormant but intact. All constructs go inert immediately.

Failure — 8 rounds elapse: Talos completes its lurch into the harbor, destroying the party's trireme and part of the docks. Party must flee the collapsing chamber — **DC 13** Dex save each round or take 2d6 bludgeoning from falling debris. No deaths required, but stakes escalate for any sequel.

Creature Stat Blocks

Chalkotauros (Bronze Bull)

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 1 (−5)

Large Construct, Unaligned · CR 4

AC 17 | HP 85 (10d10+30) | Speed 40 ft

STR 20(+5) DEX 12(+1) CON 18(+4) INT 3(−4) WIS 10(+0) CHA 1(−5)
Resist bludgeoning/piercing/slashing (nonmagical); Immune poison, psychic, exhaustion, charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned; Darkvision 60 ft
Siege Monster. Deals double damage to objects/structures.

Multiattack. Two Gore attacks.

Gore. +8 to hit, reach 5 ft, 18 (2d10+7) piercing; Medium or smaller target: **DC 16** Str save or knocked prone.

Trampling Charge (Recharge 5–6). Moves up to speed; adjacent creatures in its path take a bonus Gore attack.

Shutdown: Adjacent creature, action, **DC 15** Arcana/Investigation disables it (provokes OA).

Bronze Sentry

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 8 (−1) · CHA 1 (−5)

Medium Construct, Unaligned · CR 2

AC 16 | HP 45 (6d8+18) | Speed 30 ft

STR 16(+3) DEX 12(+1) CON 16(+3) INT 3(−4) WIS 8(−1) CHA 1(−5)
Resist bludgeoning/piercing/slashing (nonmagical); Immune poison, psychic, exhaustion + conditions; Darkvision 60 ft

Multiattack. Two Bronze Fist attacks.

Bronze Fist. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, 8 (1d10+3) bludgeoning.

Standby: Set dormant via valve puzzle (**DC 14** Investigation/Arcana, 2 of 3 valves).

Bronze Legionnaire

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 17 (+3) · INT 5 (−3) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 1 (−5)

Medium Construct, Unaligned · CR 2

AC 17 | HP 60 (8d8+24) | Speed 30 ft

STR 16(+3) DEX 13(+1) CON 17(+3) INT 5(−3) WIS 10(0) CHA 1(−5)
Resist bludgeoning/piercing/slashing (nonmagical); Immune poison, psychic, exhaustion + conditions

Multiattack. Two Xiphos Strikes.

Xiphos Strike. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, 9 (1d10+3) slashing.

Shield Bash (Bonus, 1/turn if it hit this turn). Target: **DC 13** Str save or pushed 10 ft and knocked prone.

Keraunos Legionnaire (Lightning)

Medium Construct, Unaligned · CR 3

AC 17 | HP 70 (10d8+25) | Speed 30 ft

As Bronze Legionnaire; Resist lightning

Multiattack. Two Charged Blade attacks.

Charged Blade. +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, 10 (1d10+4) slashing plus 7 (2d6) lightning.

Discharge (Reaction, when reduced below half HP). 10-ft radius burst; **DC 14** Dex save, 14 (4d6) lightning (half on success).

Pyrikaus Legionnaire (Fire)

Medium Construct, Unaligned · CR 3

AC 16 | HP 65 (9d8+27) | Speed 30 ft

As Bronze Legionnaire; Resist fire

Multiattack. Two Molten Fist attacks.

Molten Fist. +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, 9 (1d8+4) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) fire.

Cinder Breath (Recharge 5–6). 15-ft cone; **DC 14** Dex save, 18 (4d8) fire (half on success). Ignites flammable objects.

Talos Overseer (Mini-Boss)

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

Medium Construct (Animus Core Avatar) · CR 5

AC 18 | HP 110 (13d8+52) | Speed 30 ft, hover 10 ft

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

Skills Arcana +5; Immune poison, psychic, exhaustion + conditions

Gearlock Sync. Start of turn: one Legionnaire within 30 ft gains resistance to all damage until Overseer's next turn.

Overcharge Core (Recharge 6). Undoes one banked shutdown success unless a PC reacts with **DC 15** Arcana.

Multiattack. Two Arc Lash attacks.

Arc Lash. +7 to hit, reach 10 ft, 12 (2d6+5) force.

Command Legionnaires (no action cost, 1/round). One Legionnaire within 30 ft makes one weapon attack as a reaction.

Kyros, the Bronze Owl (Ally)

Tiny Construct, Unaligned · CR 1/2

AC 14 | HP 10 | Speed 10 ft, fly 40 ft

Skills Perception +6

Scout. Can fly ahead and report hazards/enemy positions.

Shutdown Assist (1/session). Auto-succeeds one shutdown check at the Ichor Valve in Encounter 3.

Item & NPC Reference

Key Item

The Aegis Pin

A cold bronze nail etched with spiraling script, given by Kadmos at the outset.

- **Note attached:** "Seek the ichor-valve at heart or heel. Turn the pin thrice. The bronze giant will sleep, not die."
- **Function:** Required to attempt shutdown checks at the Ichor Valve in Encounter 3. Without it, the valve cannot be engaged at all.
- **Secondary use:** Can also disable a single lesser construct (Bronze Sentry or Legionnaire) instantly if inserted into its back-panel port as an action — usable once per encounter.

NPC Quick Reference

Kadmos (Hephaestus in disguise)

- **Role:** Quest giver, dockside smith at the Drowned Anchor tavern in Amnisos.
- **Motivation:** Wants Talos disabled, not destroyed — he forged it and refuses to let it be slain like a common beast.
- **Secret:** He is Hephaestus in mortal disguise; reveals this only if directly confronted with divine-detecting magic or if the party succeeds a probing **DC 18** Insight check.
- **Roleplay notes:** Speaks plainly, undersells his own power, deflects gratitude with dry humor. Will not fight alongside the party — "a god's hand is heavier than it looks."
- **Stat line (if forced to act):** Treat as a CR 10 humanoid with resistance to fire and an at-will *heat metal*-like touch; he will avoid combat whenever possible.

Ikara of Knossos

- **Role:** Rescuable artificer-scholar, descendant of Daedalus's workshop apprentices; recruit from Encounter 1.
- **Motivation:** Obsessed with proving her lineage's worth by saving Talos rather than watching it be destroyed.
- **Secret:** She has partial, half-remembered schematics of Talos's interior — the source of her Encounter 2/3 assistance bonuses.
- **Roleplay notes:** Anxious, talks fast when nervous, lights up when given a technical problem to solve.
- **Mechanical benefit:** Grants advantage on Investigation/Arcana checks related to Talos's mechanisms in Encounters 2–3 if rescued.

The Clashing Gates

A boarding battle between rocks that hate ships.

Style: Kinetic trireme gauntlet for 6 level-8 PCs, mixing helm checks, boarding fights, and hard navigation choices.
Win: Thread the Symplegades with the ship intact enough to sail and the Titan-kin boarding rite broken.
Lose: The rocks learn the ship's name, crush the route shut, and leave survivors stranded on living stone.
Maguffin: Bronze Dove of Phineus · **Ally:** Kyane the Blue Oar · **QG:** Captain Philon of the Mist Trireme

"Send the dove first, count the heartbeat second, and trust the oar that pulls when the stones inhale."

Major Beats

1. Philon's confidence cracks when the rocks answer the trireme's old name.
2. The first omen is useful but not complete.
3. Boarders attack the ship's timing more than its crew.
4. The finale rewards choosing exactly when to fight and when to row.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Captain Philon of the Mist Trireme hooks the party. Maguffin Bronze Dove of Phineus pays off in the finale against Brontes Gate-Heir . Recruit Kyane the Blue Oar along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Rock-Grappler Raider	med · hard · CR 3 · Boarding skirmisher
Tide-Ogre Bosun	med · hard · CR 5 · Deck breaker
Stone Scion of the Gates	med · hard · CR 6 · Titan-kin controller
Brontes Gate-Heir	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss boarder
Kyane the Blue Oar	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 1

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Ally snapshot

Kyane the Blue Oar

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — Dove Before Oars

Approach the breathing rocks, test the current, and decide whether to trust omen, crew, or speed.

- Navigation challenge: 5 successes before 3 failures at DC 15 using vehicles, Athletics, Perception, or Survival.
- The Bronze Dove grants advantage and tells which rock will move first.
- Recruit Kyane by honoring her cadence; she grants one ship-check reroll per later encounter.
- Failure damages a ship zone or starts Encounter 2 with Rock-Grapplers already aboard.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower and boarding repeller
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Boarders From Both Stones

Titan-kin leap from both cliffs to pin the trireme in place while the gates start closing.

- At initiative 20, choose: rocks close 20 ft, a ship zone takes damage, or two raiders board.
- Non-combat option: beat the Tide-Ogre's cadence with Performance/Athletics DC 16 to stall one bridge.
- Repairing an oar bank takes an action and tools or Strength DC 15; Kyane makes it a bonus action once.
- The Bronze Dove can identify the Stone Scion sustaining the anchor chant.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower and boarding repeller
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — The Count Between Clashes

Run the final gap while Brontes lands on deck and the stones try to remember the ship forever.

- Seven-count clock: each round PCs assign helm, oars, repairs, and boarder control before the rocks move.
- Spend the Bronze Dove to cancel one rock-clash or reveal the anchor-chain's weak link.
- Win by cutting the anchor-chain and clearing the gap, forcing Brontes overboard, or bargaining with his honor.
- If the ship reaches 3 broken zones, it still escapes only if PCs jettison cargo or beach on a living rock.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower and boarding repeller
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower and boarding repeller
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower and boarding repeller

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Kyane the Blue Oar** — AC 16 | HP 83 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower
- **Rock-Grappler Raider** — AC 16 | HP 74 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Boarding skirmisher
- **Tide-Ogre Bosun** — AC 15 | HP 118 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Deck breaker
- **Stone Scion of the Gates** — AC 17 | HP 132 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · Titan-kin controller
- **Brontes Gate-Heir** — AC 18 | HP 210 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss boarder · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation.** He must prove a safe western route before the fleet commits to the passage.
- Secret.** He once lost a crew here and still hears their oars in the fog.
- Hard rule.** He will sacrifice cargo before crew, but not the ship's dove unless convinced it saves everyone.
- Appearance.** Palm-sized bronze dove with one real white feather in its throat.
- Handout.** "If it returns with clipped wings, row. If it returns whole, pray faster."
- Enc. 1–2.** Launch it to scout currents, granting advantage on one vehicle (water) or Perception check.
- Enc. 3.** Its wingbeat names the safe count; spend it to cancel one rock-clash or expose the Titan-kin anchor.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role.** Champion rower and boarding repeller
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1).** Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Kyane the Blue Oar

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Champion rower and boarding repeller

AC 16 | HP 83 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Oar-staff +7 to hit, 14 bludgeoning; grants one reroll on a failed ship check.

Rock-Grappler Raider CR 3

Medium Creature · Boarding skirmisher

AC 16 | HP 74 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Falls inert if shoved into open water between clashes.

Attack. Stone hook +6 to hit, 13 piercing and pulls target 10 ft toward a rail.

Tide-Ogre Bosun CR 5

Medium Creature · Deck breaker

AC 15 | HP 118 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Can be distracted by a shouted cadence contest.

Attack. Anchor maul +8 to hit, 20 bludgeoning and damages a ship zone.

Stone Scion of the Gates CR 6

Medium Creature · Titan-kin controller

AC 17 | HP 132 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Maintains the anchor chant that teaches the rocks the ship's name.

Attack. Shard hymn DC 16 Con, 24 thunder and speed halved.

Brontes Gate-Heir CR 10

Large Creature · Boss boarder · Boss

AC 18 | HP 210 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Victory can be cutting his anchor-chain and outrunning him through the clash.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Titan hammer +9 to hit, 24 bludgeoning plus 10 thunder to the deck.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Kyane - AC 16/HP 83 - ship check reroll
- Rock-Grappler Raider - AC 16/HP 74 - rail-pull hook
- Tide-Ogre Bosun - AC 15/HP 118 - deck-damaging maul
- Stone Scion - AC 17/HP 132 - anchor chant controller
- Brontes Gate-Heir - AC 18/HP 210 - titan hammer boss

Maguffin

Bronze Dove of Phineus

- Launch it to scout currents, granting advantage on one vehicle (water) or Perception check.
- Its wingbeat names the safe count; spend it to cancel one rock-clash or expose the Titan-kin anchor.

NPC / ALLY

Captain Philon of the Mist Trireme

- He must prove a safe western route before the fleet commits to the passage.
- He will sacrifice cargo before crew, but not the ship's dove unless convinced it saves everyone.

Kyane the Blue Oar

- Recruit Enc. 1: Let her call cadence during the first crush, or beat her honest in a rowing contest.
- AC 16 · HP 83 · Oar-staff +7 to hit, 14 bludgeoning; grants one reroll on a failed ship check.

Remember

- Thread the Symplegades with the ship intact enough to sail and the Titan-kin boarding rite broken.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Debt of Antaeus

A level 8 borderland boss-hunt against earthbound strength.

- Style:** Borderland arena survival where clever terrain control matters more than raw damage.
Win: Separate Antaeus from the earth long enough to break the cult's debt rite, freeing captives without claiming Gaia as an enemy.
Lose: The party is pinned into the soil, the cult collects another oath-debt, and the border road becomes a graveled arena.
Maguffin: Sky-Shackle Chain · **Ally:** Nesra, Caravan Wrestler · **QG:** Dymas of the Salt Caravan

"A clay debt tablet lists names in wet script. When lifted from the ground, the newest name fades; when set down, it rewrites itself."

Major Beats

- The road itself seems to enforce the cult's crooked contracts.
- Nesra reframes wrestling as leverage, position, and honor rather than damage.
- Every clue says the giant's strength is conditional: feet, soil, debt, repeat.
- Victory is the moment Antaeus has no ground to borrow from.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Dymas of the Salt Caravan hooks the party. Maguffin Sky-Shackle Chain pays off in the finale against Antaeus, Giant of the Debt-Ring . Recruit Nesra, Caravan Wrestler along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Debt-Ring Grappler	med · hard · CR 5 · Cult wrestler and pin specialist
Clay-Blood Priest	med · hard · CR 6 · Ritual support and terrain controller
Earthbound Ogre Debtor	med · hard · CR 7 · Heavy bruiser with reluctant loyalty
Antaeus, Giant of the Debt-Ring	med · hard · CR 12 · Boss wrestler empowered by earth contact
Nesra, Caravan Wrestler	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2

DM Tips

- As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Maguffin detail

Sky-Shackle Chain

- Appearance: Seven blue-black chain links that drift an inch above any surface and hum in open air.
- Handout. "Debt belongs to the ground. Judgment belongs to the open sky. Bind only what you can lift."
- Enc. 1–2. Can hoist one buried captive, wagon, or stone slab; advantage on one check to lift, drag, or separate something from earth.

Ally snapshot

Nesra, Caravan Wrestler

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — Names in the Road-Dust

At a half-buried toll shrine, travelers are forced to wrestle for their freedom while clay tablets record debts no one agreed to.

- Non-combat path: challenge the debt rite with Law, Religion, or Performance before a crowd.
- Use the Sky-Shackle to lift a captive or tablet without triggering earth-script.
- Recruit Nesra by freeing her and respecting ring rules.
- Winning by ring-out earns safe approach; killing cultists alerts the boss shrine.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Grappling ally and captive advocate
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — The Pit That Pulls Back

The cult tests the party in a sinking practice pit where every fall feeds the ground and every lifted stone reveals a captive.

- Non-combat path: free captives and rig lifting points with 5 successes before 3 failures.
- Each raised platform becomes safe ground in Encounter 3.
- Clay-Blood rites can be interrupted by removing bowls, tablets, or feet from soil.
- The reluctant ogre can be turned by showing his name remains on the debt tablet.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Grappling ally and captive advocate
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — No Ground Beneath the Giant

Antaeus enters the debt-ring laughing, healing through his soles whenever he touches earth and demanding the party's names for the clay tablet.

- Hard fight: Antaeus heals and gains advantage while both feet touch earth.
- Win condition: lift, suspend, ring-out onto stone, or otherwise separate him from soil.
- Maguffin payoff: Sky-Shackle suppresses earth-healing during a successful lift or grapple setup.
- Saving captives during the fight denies the cult hostage leverage and grants crane assists.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Grappling ally and captive advocate
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Grappling ally and captive advocate
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

STAT BLOCKS

Nesra, Caravan Wrestler

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Grappling ally and captive advocate

AC 16 | HP 84 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Clinching throw +8 to hit, 2d8+5 bludgeoning; target is grappled or moved 10 ft.

Debt-Ring Grappler CR 5

Medium Creature · Cult wrestler and pin specialist

AC 15 | HP 82 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Cannot regain morale if publicly thrown out of the ring.

Attack. Earthlock +7 to hit, 2d8+4 bludgeoning; target grappled, escape DC 15.

Clay-Blood Priest CR 6

Medium Creature · Ritual support and terrain controller

AC 16 | HP 95 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Break concentration by lifting their clay bowl off the ground.

Attack. Mud brand +7 to hit, 3d6 necrotic; target's speed reduced by 10 ft.

Earthbound Ogre Debtor CR 7

Medium Creature · Heavy bruiser with reluctant loyalty

AC 15 | HP 130 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Can be turned by proving the cult will never release its debts.

Attack. Stone maul +8 to hit, 3d10+5 bludgeoning; pushes target prone in dirt.

Antaeus, Giant of the Debt-Ring CR 12

Large Creature · Boss wrestler empowered by earth contact · Boss

AC 18 | HP 235 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. Win by lifting or separating him from earth, not by simple attrition.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Titan clinch +10 to hit, 3d12+6 bludgeoning; grappled target is restrained.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- 6 PCs level 8; border arena and lifting puzzle.
- Antaeus cannot lose while feet touch earth.
- Enc 1/2 allow legal, social, and rescue routes.
- Enc 3 is Hard; Sky-Shackle enables separation.
- Win by lifting/separation, not divine slaughter.

Maguffin

Sky-Shackle Chain

- Can hoist one buried captive, wagon, or stone slab; advantage on one check to lift, drag, or separate something from earth.
- Fastened around Antaeus during a successful grapple or terrain maneuver, it suspends his earth-healing and makes him vulnerable until he touches ground again.

NPC / ALLY**Dymas of the Salt Caravan**

- Recover his caravan crew and cancel the impossible debts forced onto travelers at the giant's shrine.
- He will not leave the buried captives behind, even if abandoning them would make the fight easier.

Nesra, Caravan Wrestler

- Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2: Dig her out, refuse to mock her loss, or beat a cultist by ring-out instead of bloodshed.
- AC 16 · HP 84 · Clinching throw +8 to hit, 2d8+5 bludgeoning; target is grappled or moved 10 ft.

Remember

- Separate Antaeus from the earth long enough to break the cult's debt rite, freeing captives without claiming Gaia as an enemy.

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The Ferry Overfull

For 6 level 8 PCs, 3 to 3.5 hours, 3 encounters. Charon is not a kill target.

- Style:** Underworld disaster escort where the hardest fight is keeping order on a boat that must not sink.
Win: The living are turned back or delivered lawfully, Charon's ferry stays balanced, and the dead keep their road.
Lose: The barge capsizes into Styx; living names wash from memory while undead opportunists steal the crossing.
Maguffin: Balanced Obol Ledger · **Ally:** Myrto with the Blue Lantern · **QG:** Charon, Overworked Boatman

"A damp manifest with too many living names and only one column marked 'return fare.'"

Major Beats

1. A living mother offers Charon every coin she has and the name of her last enemy.
2. The dead mutter that the living always think grief is a ticket.
3. The barge tilts when someone lies about who belongs aboard.
4. A stolen name drips from the boss's hook like black ink.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Charon, Overworked Boatman hooks the party. Maguffin Balanced Obol Ledger pays off in the finale against The Fare-Thief in the Wake . Recruit Myrto with the Blue Lantern along the way. Hold Charon's barge steady while too many living souls try to buy a one-way crossing.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Desperate Living Petitioners	med · hard · CR 4 · Crowd hazard
Coin-Drowned Dead	med · hard · CR 5 · Boarding undead
Styx Memory-Eel	med · hard · CR 6 · River control monster
The Fare-Thief in the Wake	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss, undead smuggler
Myrto with the Blue Lantern	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Ally snapshot

Myrto with the Blue Lantern

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Queue That Should Not Breathe

Sort the living from the dead, spot forged fares, and keep panic from rushing the gangplank.

- Run triage as 5 successes before 3 failures using Insight, Persuasion, Religion, Medicine, or Intimidation.
- Each failure adds 1 to the Overfull clock; at 3, passengers surge onto the barge.
- The Balanced Ledger reveals one forged fare or rightful return with each strong clue.
- Recruit Myrto by recovering her name-token from a living petitioner using it as false fare.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Dead guide, crowd mediator, and honest witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Midstream Weight

Keep Charon's barge balanced while living souls bargain, dead souls object, and the Styx starts listening.

- Balance clock starts at 0; failures move it toward capsizes, successes move passengers to lawful places.
- Useful checks include Athletics at the pole, Persuasion at the benches, Religion with rites, and Perception in fog.
- Charon rows and judges; he helps clear one lawful order but never becomes a damage solution.
- Coin-Drowned Dead board if forged fares are burned without naming the thief first.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Dead guide, crowd mediator, and honest witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Too Many Names in the Wake

Fight the undead smuggler and river horrors while holding the ferry steady and protecting passengers.

- At initiative 20, roll a ferry event: list, passenger fall, fog wall, or Styx surge.
- A PC can spend an action to stabilize the barge, rescue a passenger, or command a lawful seating shift.
- Maguffin payoff: place the Balanced Ledger on the prow to reveal the Fare-Thief and reset the Balance clock once.
- Charon cannot be killed for victory; if attacked, he stops rowing and the river becomes the real disaster.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Dead guide, crowd mediator, and honest witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Dead guide, crowd mediator, and honest witness

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Myrto with the Blue Lantern** — AC 13 | HP 55 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Dead guide, cr
- **Desperate Living Petitioners** — AC 12 | HP 90 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Crowd hazard
- **Coin-Drowned Dead** — AC 15 | HP 98 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Boarding undead
- **Styx Memory-Eel** — AC 16 | HP 121 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 6 · River control monster
- **The Fare-Thief in the Wake** — AC 17 | HP 184 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss, undead smuggler · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation:** Keep the crossing lawful, paid, and afloat despite living petitioners forcing their way aboard.
- Secret:** Someone forged return fares with ink made from stolen memories.
- Hard rule:** He will not abandon the dead, waive the oldest laws, or let the party kill passengers to simplify the load.
- Appearance:** Black reed-paper pages sewn with coin-bright thread and damp thumbprints.
- Handout:** "One fare, one name, one shore. Cross out a lie before it learns to row."
- Enc. 1–2:** Identifies forged fares, calms one passenger group, or reveals who belongs on the return shore.
- Enc. 3:** Balanced on the prow, it stabilizes the barge and exposes the undead smuggler boss for 1 round.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Dead guide, crowd mediator, and honest witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2):** Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Myrto with the Blue Lantern

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Dead guide, crowd mediator, and honest witness

AC 13 | HP 55 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2). Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Lantern flare +6 to hit, 10 radiant to undead; grants advantage on one social check with dead passengers.

Desperate Living Petitioners CR 4

Medium Creature · Crowd hazard

AC 12 | HP 90 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Should be persuaded, restrained, or redirected; do not frame them as kill fodder.

Attack. Surge, DC 15 Strength or Charisma save or 16 bludgeoning and the Balance clock worsens.

Coin-Drowned Dead CR 5

Medium Creature · Boarding undead

AC 15 | HP 98 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Climb over the sides when forged fares are exposed.

Attack. Cold hands +7 to hit, 13 necrotic; stolen obol forces DC 15 Wisdom or frightened.

Styx Memory-Eel CR 6

Medium Creature · River control monster

AC 16 | HP 121 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Targets anyone overboard or leaning over the rail with the ledger.

Attack. Bite +8 to hit, 16 piercing plus 10 psychic; memory shock recharges on 5-6.

The Fare-Thief in the Wake CR 10

Large Creature · Boss, undead smuggler · Boss

AC 17 | HP 184 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. It forges living passages to overload Charon's law and steal the wreckage.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Oar-hook +8 to hit, 18 necrotic; name-theft gaze DC 16 Charisma or lose reactions and identity cues.

Advance (1). *(Legendary Actions)* Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Default: 6 PCs level 8; 3 encounters; 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Enc. 1/2 are social triage and escort skill challenges.
- Charon is not a kill target; keep the ferry lawful and afloat.
- Living petitioners are hazards and moral pressure, not monsters to slaughter.
- Maguffin payoff stabilizes the barge and exposes the boss in Enc. 3.

Maguffin

Balanced Obol Ledger

- Identifies forged fares, calms one passenger group, or reveals who belongs on the return shore.
- **Balanced on the prow, it stabilizes the barge and exposes the undead smuggler boss for 1 round.**

NPC / ALLY**Charon, Overworked Boatman**

- Keep the crossing lawful, paid, and afloat despite living petitioners forcing their way aboard.
- He will not abandon the dead, waive the oldest laws, or let the party kill passengers to simplify the load.

Myrto with the Blue Lantern

- Recruit Enc. Enc. 1 or Enc. 2: Find her missing name-token, defend her place in line, or let her speak for frightened shades.
- AC 13 · HP 55 · Lantern flare +6 to hit, 10 radiant to undead; grants advantage on one social check with dead passengers.

Remember

- The living are turned back or delivered lawfully, Charon's ferry stays balanced, and the dead keep their road.

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The Ford of Twin Spears

One-Shot · 6 PCs · Level 8 · Amazon–Spartan Border · ~3–3.5 hrs · Enc. 3 has 3 branches

Style: Faction crisis → Parley → Branched Hard finale | **Win:** End the war without executing **Atalanta** or **Leonidas** | **Setting:** Misthaven mist → sacred ford between Amazon hunt-camp and Spartan column.

Sister Eirene gives the **Twin-Seal of the Ford**. Enc. 1 scout collision; Enc. 2 expose **Mask of Discord**; Enc. 3 = Amazons / Spartans / Peace+construct.

"When bow and spear both cry injustice, bind crescent to lambda at the ford-stone — or gift the face you trust in battle." — **Twin-Seal** (23 words).

Major Beats

- 1. Misthaven — Eirene + Twin-Seal; mist to fordlands.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Amazon vs Spartan scout ambush; de-escalate; recruit Myrto and/or Doulos.
- 3. Audiences with Atalanta & Leonidas.
- 4. **Enc. 2:** Proof hunt; expose Mask; **lock Branch A/B/C**.
- 5. **Enc. 3:** One finale only (see page 2).

Finale Branch Unlock

Branch	Unlock	Enc. 3
A Amazons	Pledge to Atalanta; no Spartan alliance	Party+Atalanta vs Leonidas host; Leonidas yields (nonlethal)
B Spartans	Pledge to Leonidas; no Amazon alliance	Party+Leonidas vs Atalanta host; Atalanta yields (nonlethal)
C Peace	Proof to both; expose Mask	Both allies vs Strife-Wrought Champion; seal bind

Creature List

Creature	E	M	H	Notes
Amazon Archer	3	4	6	Enc1 / Br B
Amazon Outrider	1	2	3	Enc1 / Br B
Spartan Hoplite	3	4	6	Enc1 / Br A
Spartan Lochagos	0	1	1	Enc1 / Br A
Atalanta / Leonidas	—	1	1	Iconic — no execute
Mask of Discord	1	1	1	Enc2
Strife-Wrought Champion	adj	1	1	Boss Br C

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide’s baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

At a sacred river ford claimed by both Amazon hunters and a Spartan march column, pride and forged insults are hours from open war. The party arrives as envoys with a twin-faced seal — and must decide whether to stand with Atalanta , with Leonidas , or to bind both faces before a third voice of Discord finishes the slaughter for them. Meets the party in Misthaven (or aboard a mist-bound trireme). Hands the Twin-Seal . Begs them to stop a war that would curse the ford for a generation.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Amazon Archer	3 · 4 · 6 · Enc. 1 / Branch B
Amazon Outrider	1 · 2 · 3 · Enc. 1 / Branch B
Spartan Hoplite	3 · 4 · 6 · Enc. 1 / Branch A
Spartan Lochagos	0 · 1 · 1 · Enc. 1 combat / Branch A
Atalanta	1 · 1 · Ally or oppose (nonlethal)
Leonidas	1 · 1 · Ally or oppose (nonlethal)
Mask of Discord	1 · 1 · 1 · Enc. 2 reveal / flee to Enc. 3
Strife-Wrought Champion	1 adj. · 1 · 1 · Boss — Peace branch

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Encounter 1 — Fordfall Ambush

🏹 Terrain & Features Wooded slope → ford road — 100×60 ft ; stream (difficult terrain), fallen cedar (½ cover), two game trails. · Mist clears on a wooded approach to the ford. The party walks into a three-way mistake: Myrto 's Amazon scouts and Doulos 's Spartan runners each think the other side's reinforcements have arrived — and the PCs look like hired blades.

- Style: Ambush / social de-escalation
- Win Condition: Reach the ford alive with at least one camp willing to hear envoys (seal shown), without massacring either scout party
- Show Twin-Seal immediately (action, visible): both sides pause 1 round; Persuasion or Performance DC 13 to freeze the fight (group check: 3 successes before 3 failures).
- Insight DC 12: neither group expected the other — someone lied about reinforcements.
- Raise empty hands + Medicine on a downed scout: automatic success toward that camp's trust.
- Initiative as normal; Amazons skirmish from trees, Spartans shield-wall the road.
- Nonlethal preferred — Eirene's mission fails socially if either scout leader dies.
- Dropping a side to 1 standing fighter ends their aggression if the seal is shown.

Encounter 2 — Parley at the Ford-Stone

🏹 Terrain & Features Ford-stone plaza — 80×80 ft shallow water, twin altars (crescent & lambda), rope bridges, spectator banks. · Both camps face each other across the sacred ford-stone. Atalanta and Leonidas trade accusations: burned tents, stolen standards, murdered scouts. The truth is the Mask of Discord — an Eris agent wearing both sides' faces. Enc. 2 is where the party gathers proof and locks the ...

- Style: Dual audiences + investigation; optional confrontation
- Win Condition: Obtain enough proof or firm pledges to enter dusk with Branch A, B, or C chosen
- Speak with Atalanta: Persuasion/Insight DC 14. She wants Spartan confession for the burned hunt-camp.
- Speak with Leonidas: Persuasion/Insight DC 14. He wants Amazon confession for the murdered helot runners.
- Twin-Seal shown: advantage once per camp.
- Need 4 successes before 3 failures (DCs 13–15). Skills: Investigation, Survival, Religion, Sleight of Hand, Arcana.
- Clue finds: forged orders (both seals), Amazon boots with Spartan mud, a smiling courier who changes eyes (Perception DC 15).
- Myrto/Doulos present: one free success if both recruited.

Encounter 3 — Three Paths at Dusk (Boss)

Ford 120×70 ft; shallow water DT; shield-wall starts on west bank. · Use the branch locked at the end of Enc. 2. All three are Hard. Remember: Atalanta and Leonidas are iconic — oppose to yield, never execute .

- Maguffin: War branches — gift the matching Twin-Seal face to your champion. Peace — bind both faces at the ford-stone.
- Foes: Leonidas + 4× Spartan Hoplite + 1× Spartan Lochagos
- Terrain: Ford 120×70 ft; shallow water DT; shield-wall starts on west bank.
- Win: Leonidas yields — 0 HP nonlethal, or aspis destroyed (AC 19 / 40 HP), or Persuasion DC 16 when he is bloodied and ≥3 hoplites are down.
- Token: Gift crescent-face to Atalanta → +2 attacks/saves 1 minute; she may Pinning Shot without recharge once.
- Failure soft: Party downed — Amazons extract; Spartans hold the ford (war continues; sequel).
- Foes: Atalanta + 4× Amazon Archer + 2× Amazon Outrider
- Terrain: Same ford; Amazons hold tree line & east bank; sniper nests (½ cover).

DM Callouts

- Recruiting both is possible and strongly sets up Branch C.
- RECRUITMENT. Heal her / spare her in Enc. 1 → she vouches to Atalanta (adv on first Amazon social checks).
- RECRUITMENT. Return his stolen lambda token / spare him in Enc. 1 → vouches to Leonidas.
- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Atalanta — Iconic

Medium Humanoid, CG · CR 8

AC 17 | HP 127 | Speed 40 ft. | DEX 20

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 20 (+5) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 13 (+1)
· **Saves** Dex +9, Wis +6

- 3× attacks: Longbow +9 (1d8+5 +2d6 psychic if target hit ally); Shortsword +9.
- Pinning Shot (5–6): restrain Str DC 16.
- LA: Move 20 / Shot / Call Hunt (2).
- **Oppose = nonlethal / banner / surrender only.**

Leonidas — Iconic

Medium Humanoid, LN · CR 8

AC 20 | HP 136 | Speed 30 ft. | STR 20

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)
· **Saves** Str +9, Con +8, Wis +6

- 3× Spear +9 (1d8+5); Shield Bash prone Str DC 17.
- Hold the Ford (1/rest): allies 15 temp HP.
- LA: Command hoplite / +2 AC / Counterthrust (2).
- **Oppose = nonlethal / aspis break / yield only.**

Amazon Archer

AC 15 | HP 39 | CR 2 · 2× Shortbow +5 (1d6+3)

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Skirmish Step 10 ft after ranged atk

Amazon Outrider

AC 14 | HP 52 | CR 3 · 2× Spear +4 · Trample Dex DC 13

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 11 (+0)

Spartan Hoplite

AC 18 | HP 45 | CR 2 · 2× Spear +5 · Shield Wall

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 11 (+0) · CHA 10 (+0)

Spartan Lochagos

AC 19 | HP 75 | CR 4 · 3× Spear +6 · Order Advance

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 14 (+2)

Mask of Discord

Medium Fey shapechanger · CR 5

AC 15 | HP 84 | DEX/CHA 18

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

- 2× Dagger +7 (1d4+4 +2d6 psychic).
- Discordant Whisper (4–6): Wis DC 15 attack ally.

Strife-Wrought Champion — BOSS

Large Construct · CR 9

AC 17 | HP 161 (120/200) | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 6 (–2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 8 (–1)

- Glaive +9 (2d10+5) ×2 + Shield-Slam prone Str DC 17.
- War-Cry (5–6): Wis DC 15 fear cone.
- LA: Advance / Glaive / Split the Line (2).
- Seal bind: lose LA + 30 psychic once.

KEY ITEMS

Twin-Seal of the Ford

- Faces: Amazon crescent / Spartan lambda; olive cord.
- Enc1–2: adv on one social check per camp.
- War finale: gift matching face → champion +2 atk/saves 1 min + special once.
- Peace finale: bind at ford-stone → boss loses LA + 30 psychic.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Sister Eirene — Quest Giver

- **Motivation:** Keep ford shrine unbloodied.
- **Secret:** Suspects a third framer.
- **Roleplay:** Calm, urgent; rewards proof over body counts.

Atalanta

- **Motivation:** Justice for burned hunt-camp; protect Amazons.
- **Secret:** Will accept truce if Spartan innocence proven.
- **If opposed:** yield conditions only — never execute.

Leonidas

- **Motivation:** Secure march route; avenge murdered runners.
- **Secret:** Respects lawful challenge and kept oaths.
- **If opposed:** yield / aspis break — never execute.

Myrto / Doulos — Scouts

- Myrto: Amazon boots on “Spartan” messenger.
- Doulos: forged wax on orders.
- Both recruited → free Enc2 proof success.

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The Isle of Stonegaze

One-Shot · ~6 Players · Average Level 8 · Greek Mythology · ~3–3.5 hrs / 3 Encounters

Style: Mythic Quest — Ship Combat / Marsh Skirmish / Cave Boss | **Win Condition:** Defeat Euryale (0 HP or pool self-petrify ×2) and retrieve the Eye of Medusa | **Setting:** Open sea aboard *Ariadne's Thread* → rocky shore → Mireweed Marsh → temple ruins → Cave of Euryale.

Scholarly merchant **Theron of Corinth** hires the party to recover the Eye from the Isle of Stonegaze. Midvoyage, harpies and compelled merfolk assault the trireme. On the island, survivors **Pyrrha** and **Old Lysander** guide the party through a cursed saltmarsh (recruit **Maren**), then into the cave of **Euryale, the Stone Queen**.

"Where serpents crown the stone queen, let her own gaze be her ruin — the still pool sees what mortal eyes dare not." — **The Scroll of Theron** (22-word handout; payoff = Still Pool in Enc. 3). Don't explain it — let players puzzle it out. Lysander confirms if shown (**DC 13** Insight).

Major Beats

- 1. Tavern briefing — Theron hires the party; Scroll of Theron handoff.
- 2. 3-day voyage (optional sea RP) aboard *Ariadne's Thread* under Captain Kleon.
- 3. **Enc. 1 — Harpies Over the Ariadne's Thread:** protect sails; free/recruit merfolk; Long vs Short Rest outcome.
- 4. Beach landing; meet Pyrrha (guide) and Old Lysander (scroll interpreter + Blindfolds).
- 5. **Enc. 2 — Mireweed Marsh:** lizardfolk patrol; recruit Maren for fire support.
- 6. Temple ruins (no combat) — scavenge Polished Bronze Mirror, Blindfolds, Stonechill vials.
- 7. **Enc. 3 — Cave of Euryale:** Lamia + Medusa Sentinel; Euryale enters round 3; Still Pool / mirror win path.
- 8. Retrieve Eye of Medusa; return to Theron (optional moral / epilogue hook).

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Med	Hard	Notes
Harpy	2	3	4	Enc. 1; Matriarch on Deadly
Corrupted Merfolk	3	4	5	Enc. 1; freeable / recruitable
Lizardfolk Warrior	3	4	4	Enc. 2 (Deadly: 5)
Lizardfolk Shaman	1	1	1	Enc. 2
Lamia	2*	2	1	Enc. 3 (*Easy: Lamias only, no Medusa)
Medusa Sentinel	0	1	1	Enc. 3 (Deadly: 2)
Euryale (Boss)	1 (adj.)	1	1	HP 100 / 140 / 168; Deadly 220
Maren	—			Recruitable ally Enc. 2 → Enc. 3

Difficulty Scaling — Session Overview

Encounter	Easy (APL 4)	Medium (APL 6)	Hard (APL 8 ★)
1 — Ship	2 Harpies, 3 Merfolk; sail HP 10; Song DC 9; harpies ignore sails until rd 3	3 Harpies, 4 Merfolk; sail HP 12; Song DC 11	4 Harpies, 5 Merfolk; full mechanics as written
2 — Marsh	3 Warriors, Shaman HP 38 (2nd-lvl only); Maren helps mid-fight	4 Warriors, 1 Shaman; Maren post-combat only	Baseline + Fire Flasks / Enc. 3 support on recruit
3 — Cave	2 Lamias only; no lair; Euryale HP 100, Gaze DC 13, enters rd 4	2 Lamias + Medusa; 1 LA/rd; HP 140, Gaze DC 15	1 Lamia + Medusa; full Euryale (168 HP, 3 LA, Gaze DC 17)

Deadly (APL 10): Enc.1 adds Harpy Matriarch (+2 atk/saves, HP 60, Song DC 13, 500 ft) + wave of 3 merfolk rd 4. Enc.2: 5 Warriors, Shaman 4th-lvl *wall of fire*, pre-cast Spike Growth. Enc.3: 3 Lamias + 2 Medusas; murky pool (clear: action, **DC 14** Ath/Inv); toxic statue dust; Euryale HP 220, 4 LA, enters rd 2.

Encounter 1 — Harpies Over the Ariadne's Thread

Medium · 45–60 min · 5–7 rounds | **Terrain:** Trireme deck 80×25 ft + sea surrounds

4× Harpies dive on sails while 5× Corrupted Merfolk board from both sides. **Win:** drive off/kill all harpies + defeat or free all merfolk.

- **Primary goal:** protect **3 sail sections** (each AC 11 / HP 15). Harpies prioritize sails unless a PC is in melee reach.
- **≥1 sail survives** → **Long Rest before Enc. 2. All 3 destroyed** → **row to shore, Short Rest only.**
- **Luring Song** (**DC 11** WIS): targets crew first; charmed crew block movement. Snap out: Action, **DC 12** CHA/Persuasion or **DC 12** STR drag.
- **Free merfolk** (Action, adjacent): **DC 15** Arcana / Insight / Religion → friendly ally. Recruit up to 3 to guard ship: **DC 14** Persuasion.
- **Kleon** (init 5): spear +4 (1d6+1) or lash rope — Athletics **DC 12**, restore 10 HP to one sail.
- **Overboard:** full move + Athletics **DC 13** to climb back. Merfolk knocked off retreat.

Resolution: Harpies gone + merfolk defeated/freed. Freed merfolk stop fighting automatically.

Encounter 2 — Mireweed Marsh

Medium · 50–60 min · 4–6 rounds | **Terrain:** Boggy marsh + ruined hut, 100×80 ft

After shore RP with Pyrrha/Lysander: 4× Lizardfolk Warriors + 1× Shaman attack on sight. Maren shelters behind her hut — recruitable. **Win:** defeat all lizardfolk; proceed to temple ruins.

- **Approach:** Perception **DC 12** → spot bogs/bridge early → advantage on initiative if ambushing.
- **Maren ID:** Insight/Perception **DC 12** (else she shouts on rd 2). Adjacent before fight ends → she Fog Clouds the Shaman (breaks concentration).
- **Recruit** (post-combat): Persuasion **DC 13**; Nature/Arcana **DC 10** = adv; mention Lysander's "marsh woman" → DC 8; sincere marsh-protection vow = auto.
- **Terrain:** 4× bog patches (15×15, DT for non-lizardfolk); 3× mangroves (½ cover, climb Ath **DC 12**); log bridge (Acro **DC 12**; fall = −15 ft move to exit); hut = ¾ cover.
- **Tactics:** Shaman opens Spike Growth on bridge/approach → Call Lightning; Warriors Bite+Javelin, Clamping Jaws OA (grapple, escape STR **DC 13**). Swamp Stride ignores shallow water DT.
- **Recruit rewards:** 3× Fire Flask; Enc. 3 ally (init 8: Flaming Sphere, Heat Metal, Cure Wounds); lore that fire breaks lamia concentration.

Resolution: Lizardfolk defeated → temple ruins scavenge (Mirror, Blindfolds, Stonechill vials) → cave descent.

Encounter 3 — The Cave of Euryale (Boss)

Hard · 60–75 min · 8–12 rounds | **Terrain:** Cave shrine 90×70 ft + 30 ft inner chamber

Petrified statues fill a green-brazier cave; Still Pool glows center. Baseline: 1× Lamia + 1× Medusa Sentinel; Euryale enters rd 3. Optional: Maren. **Win:** Euryale to 0 HP or pool self-gaze fail twice (fully petrified) → take Eye amulet.

- **Still Pool** (15×10 ft): reflection → adv on Petrifying Gaze saves. If Euryale ≤30 ft + LoS to pool: start of turn CON **DC 17** vs own gaze (overrides petrified immunity). Fail → restrained; 2nd consecutive fail → petrified.
- **Force her to the pool:** Deception/Persuasion **DC 15**, or Mirror BA Reflexion Sleight of Hand **DC 14**. She avoids via Legendary Move.
- **Statues:** 8–10 × ½ cover (AC 13 / HP 20). Shatter → 5 ft DT + DEX **DC 12** or 2d6 bludgeoning. Lamias may shatter near PCs.
- **Entrance (init 20, rd 3):** Euryale observes first turn (Serpent Strike only — no Gaze). Full Gaze from rd 4. Lair actions from rd 3.
- **Lair (init 20):** Serpent Surge (5 ft of wall, DEX **DC 14**, 2d6 pierce); Stone Dust Cloud (20 ft obscure); Cave Tremor (10×10 becomes DT).
- **Minion tactics:** Lamia — Intoxicating Touch on casters; Suggestion **DC 13** WIS away from pool. Medusa — ranged Gaze aura; melee only if cornered. Maren — Flaming Sphere / Heat Metal / Cure Wounds.

Failure: TPK / full petrification without pool win — Eye remains with Euryale; Theron's quest fails.

Resolution: 0 HP or pool-petrify → retrieve Eye of Medusa (dark gem, gold amulet, faint purple glow). Powers unclear until Theron — epilogue hook on his true motives.

Creature Stat Blocks

Harpy

Medium Monstrosity, CE · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 11 | HP 38 (7d8+7) | Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 7 (−2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 13 (+1) · PP 10 · Common

Multiattack. 2× Claws +3 (6, 2d4+1 slash).

Luring Song. 300 ft: **DC 11** WIS or charmed (incapacitated, must approach). BA each turn to continue. Re-save end of turn; ends if harpy incapacitated / out of range.

Corrupted Merfolk

Medium Humanoid (Merfolk), N (Compelled) · CR 1/4 (50 XP)

AC 11 | HP 22 (4d8+4) | Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

STR/DEX 13 CON 12 INT/WIS 11 CHA 12 · Perc +2 · Amphibious · Aquan, Common

Spear. +3, 5 ft or 20/60: 4 (1d6+1) / 5 (1d8+1) two-hand.

Free (Action, adj.): **DC 15** Arcana/Insight/Religion → friendly. Guard ship: **DC 14** Persuasion (≤3).

Lizardfolk Warrior

Medium Humanoid (Lizardfolk), N · CR 2 (450 XP)

AC 16 | HP 45 | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 7 (−2) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2) · Perc +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

Hold Breath 15 min. Swamp Stride: shallow water ≤3 ft not DT.

Multiattack. Bite +5 (1d6+3) + Javelin +5 (1d6+3, 30/120). Reaction **Clamping Jaws:** OA hit → grappled (escape STR **DC 13**).

Lizardfolk Shaman

Medium Humanoid (Lizardfolk), N · CR 4 (1,100 XP)

AC 13 | HP 52 | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 8 (−1) · Nature +4, Perc +6

Spellcasting WIS, DC 14, +6. Cantrips: poison spray, produce flame. 1st: fog cloud†, healing word, thunderwave. 2nd: spike growth†, hold person†. 3rd: call lightning†, conjure animals†.

Bite. +4 (1d6+2 pierce).

Lamia

Large Monstrosity, CE · CR 4 (1,100 XP)

AC 13 | HP 97 (13d10+26) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3) · , Ins +4, Stealth +3 · DV 60

Innate (CHA DC 13, +5): at will disguise self, major image; 3/day charm person, mirror image, suggestion; 1/day geas.

Multiattack. Claws +5 (14, 2d10+3) + Dagger +5 (5, 1d4+3); may replace either with **Intoxicating Touch** +5 — 1 hr: disadv WIS checks/saves; can't concentrate.

Medusa Sentinel

Medium Monstrosity, LE · CR 6 (2,300 XP)

AC 15 | HP 127 (17d8+51) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 15 (+2) · , Ins/Perc +4, Stealth +5 · DV 60

Petrifying Gaze. Start turn ≤30 ft seeing eyes: CON **DC 14**. Fail → restrained; next fail → petrified; success ends. Avert: no save, disadv attacks vs her.

Multiattack. Snake Hair +5 (4 + 14 poison; CON **DC 14** or poisoned 1 hr) + 2× Shortsword +5 (5, 1d6+2).

Euryale, the Stone Queen — BOSS

Large Monstrosity (Gorgon), LE · CR 12 (8,400 XP)

AC 17 | HP 168 (26d10+26) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 20 (+5) · **Saves** DEX+7 CON+6 WIS+6 CHA+9

Skills Dec+9 Ins/Perc+6 Stealth+7 · Resist Poison · Immune Petrified (except own reflection) · DV 120, Truesight 30

Petrifying Gaze (aura). Start of her turn: each ≤30 ft seeing eyes CON **DC 17**. Fail by 5+ = instant petrify; fail = restrained (next fail = petrified). Avert = disadv attacks.

Mirror / Pool Vulnerability. Sees own reflection ≤30 ft (bright light / Still Pool LoS) → CON **DC 17** vs own gaze (overrides immunity).

Multiattack. Snake Hair +7 (16 poison; CON **DC 16** or poisoned 1 hr) + 2× Longsword +5 (10/11), or Focused Gaze (CON **DC 17** disadv) + 2× Longsword.

Legendary 3/rd: Move (½ speed, no OA); Serpent Strike (1); Unleash Gaze (2) — force Gaze save. Lair: see Enc. 3.

Key Items & McGuffins

 The Scroll of Theron

Handout · Given at tavern · 22 words

"Where serpents crown the stone queen, let her own gaze be her ruin — the still pool sees what mortal eyes dare not."

DM: Don't explain. Still Pool is the payoff. Lysander confirms if shown (**DC 13** Insight to notice his reaction).

 Eye of Medusa

Session McGuffin · Worn as amulet on Euryale

Dark gem in golden setting; faint purple glow. Retrieved when Euryale is slain or pool-petrified.

Powers unclear until Theron evaluates — epilogue hook (he wants it to restore petrified daughter Callista).

 Polished Bronze Mirror

Wondrous · Common · 1 hand · Temple ruins (collapsed altar)

Indirect Viewing: observe without LoS exposure to gaze. *Gaze Deflection:* viewing via reflection → adv on gaze saves.

Reflection (BA): angle toward medusa ≤30 ft of Still Pool — Sleight of Hand **DC 14** → she saves vs own gaze. Pyrrha can point here (**DC 14** Persuasion).

Blindfold of Apollo ×3

Wondrous · Common · From Lysander

While worn: Blinded, but Blindsight 15 ft + **immune to gaze effects**. Remove = BA. Lysander gives freely if party will enter the cave.

 Fire Flask ×3

Improvised · From Maren on recruit

Action: throw 20 ft (+PB Dex) → 2d6 fire. **BA:** throw 10 ft → hit 2d6 / miss 1d6 splash. Sticky marsh-pitch flame; good vs lamia concentration.

Still Pool / Stonechill

Environmental · Enc. 3 center · 15×10 ft

Reflection = adv vs gaze. Gaze creature ≤30 ft + LoS → own-gaze save each turn start. Euryale avoids with Legendary Move.

Stonechill Water vials (urn near cave steps, per Pyrrha): Lysander once carried pool water out — flavor/loot; no separate combat stats.

NPC Quick Reference

Theron of Corinth

Questgiver · Neutral (suspected) · Tavern

Look: lean 50s, ink-stained fingers, merchant dress / scholar bearing.

Surface: wants Eye for academic study (reveals truths / pierces illusions).

Secret: daughter Callista petrified on a past expedition he funded — believes Eye can restore her. Won't volunteer this.

DC 14 Insight: hiding danger. **DC 16** Persuasion / **DC 13** Intimidation: admits "personal connection." **DC 18** Investigation (notes): sketch + name *Callista*.

Kleon, Captain

Trireme Captain · LN · Enc. 1 helper

AC 13 | HP 45 | Speed 30 · STR 15 DEX 13 CON 14

Role: init 5 — spear +4 (1d6+2) or sail repair Athletics **DC 12** (+10 HP to one sail).

RP: gruff, pragmatic, respects competence; no drama.

Pyrrha

Island Survivor · NG · Shore guide

Look: mid-30s, lean, scarred arm (lamia claws). Desperately wants off-island.

Knows: safe marsh route; Mirror (collapsed altar); Stonechill vials (urn by cave steps); "pool that glows like moonlight."

DC 12 Persuasion / rescue promise → guides marsh. **DC 14** → item locations + lizardfolk timing (adv init Enc. 2).

Old Lysander

Blind Priest of Apollo · NG · Shore hermit

Look: ancient, milk-white eyes (lost sight glimpsing Euryale in the pool 20 yrs ago). Apollo pendant, sun-ray staff.

Gives: Blindfolds of Apollo; confirms scroll; cave layout from memory.

Line (scroll shown): "The pool is the secret. She will not look at it willingly. But you can make her look." — "Because I looked into it myself. And it showed me her."

Maren, the Marsh-keeper

Druid Hermit · NG · Recruitable Enc. 2 → Enc. 3 ally

Look: 40s, marsh-stained robes, reed-charm staff. Grateful but wary; hates the curse on her wetland.

Recruit: Persuasion **DC 13** (Nature/Arcana **DC 10** = adv; "marsh woman" = DC 8; vow = auto). Mid-fight: Fog Cloud on Shaman if adjacent.

Provides: 3× Fire Flask; Enc. 3 init 8 — Flaming Sphere (2d6 fire/turn), Heat Metal, Cure Wounds; fire lore vs Stone Queen guardians.

Aftermath / Hooks

Return Eye to Theron — he may finally admit Callista's fate; moral choice whether to trust him with it.

Pyrrha / Lysander / Maren may want passage off-island. Freed merfolk (if any) guard the ship during Enc. 2–3.

Petrified statues in the cave = prior adventurers/sailors — some may be restorable with greater restoration (DM discretion).

The Kraken's Toll

One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 8 · ~3.5 Hours · Greek Mythology

SESSION SUMMARY

- **Style:** Maritime Mythic Adventure / Escape Sequence
 - **Setting:** Aegean trireme voyage — Port of Departure → Siren's Shoals → open sea → Isle of Threnoi
 - **Win Condition:** Survive the harpy assault, navigate the Siren's Shoals, and escape the Kraken's grasp with the trireme intact
 - **Players:** 6 × Level 8 · ~3.5 hours · Enc 1 Combat (Hard) · Enc 2 Social/Skill (avoidable) · Enc 3 Escape Combat (Deadly)
 - **Key Item:** Seal of the Deep — given at session start; critical payoff tool in Encounter 3
- Hired by a blind sea oracle to deliver a sealed clay amphora to the Temple of Poseidon on Threnoi. The sea does not yield its prizes without a toll — something vast beneath the waves has been watching since they left port.

"Three days east-northeast, past the Siren's Shoals — you cannot miss them, the rocks sing at dusk. Do not anchor near them. Deliver the amphora to the high priest, speak only your names, and leave before nightfall on the second day. Take this." [Presses the Seal of the Deep into the party's hands.] "This medallion kept my family safe for four generations. If the depths themselves rise against you — and I pray they will not — cast it into open water and call Poseidon's name. He will remember what it cost my grandfather to earn it." — **Kallinikos, at the docks**

Major Beats

1. **Port:** Kallinikos hands over amphora + Seal of the Deep with his warning — unhurried, certain they will need it.
2. **Day 1:** Smooth sailing. Captain Theron + 6-man crew introduced. Theron studies the Seal nervously (**DC 12** Insight) but won't explain unless pressed.
3. **Day 2, Midmorning:** Storm from nowhere. Harpies descend; Aello leads — goal is the amphora in the hold. (Enc 1)
4. **Day 3, Dusk:** Siren's Shoals ahead; helmsman's hands go slack; song drifts across the water. (Enc 2)
5. **The Warning:** Peaceful Siren parley → whisper: "The thing the old man gave you is not yours to keep. When the sea itself rises — debts repaid in kind make calm the deepest waters."
6. **Night 3:** Sea glassy still; stars vanish; first tentacle rises. (Enc 3)
7. **Escape or Sacrifice:** Sever tentacles + build Escape Progress — or sacrifice the Seal to end it. Either way, the debt is paid.
8. **Threnoi:** High priest opens amphora → Kallinikos's written oath of penance. Party was the instrument of a thirty-year promise.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Medium	Hard	Notes
Harpy	2	4	6	Enc 1 — swarm deck, lure crew overboard
Aello, Storm Harpy Queen	—	1	1 (buffed)	Enc 1 boss; flees below 25 HP
Siren of the Shoals	2	3	3	Enc 2 — fully avoidable; combat only if party triggers
Sea Hag	—	—	1	Enc 2 combat only (Hard); emerges if fighting starts
Kraken Tentacle	3	4–5	6	Enc 3; each active tentacle = +1 Grip Counter
The Kraken's Maw	—	Optional (Rnd 5)	Yes	Enc 3 — unkillable; drama + Seal payoff target
Sahuagin Raider	—	2+2	4+4	Enc 3 — boards rounds 2 and 4

Difficulty Scaling

APL	Enc 1 — Harpy Storm	Enc 2 — Siren's Shoals	Enc 3 — Wrath of the Deep
5–6	2 Harpies; Aello no Leg. Actions, flees <40 HP; crew Wis DC 9	2 Sirens; all DCs –2; no combat trigger; parley auto	3 tentacles (HP 30); no 6th; Sahuagin 1/wave; no Maw; Escape target 5
8	Baseline: 4 Harpies + Aello full	Baseline: 3 Sirens; Sea Hag on combat trigger	Baseline: Escape 6; Maw optional rnd 5
10	6 Harpies; Aello LR (2); hatch 12 HP; +2 Harpies rnd 4	Sea Hag boards rnd 1 always; Siren DCs +2; wrong riddle = combat	5 tentacles (HP 50); Sahuagin 3/wave; Maw rnd 3; Escape target 7

ENCOUNTER 1 — The Harpy Storm

Hard · ~50–60 min · ~5–6 rounds · Day 2, open sea | **Terrain:** Trireme deck 60×20 ft · Theron at stern steering oar

4× Harpies + Aello (Storm Harpy Queen) spiral from a clear sky. Aello tracked the ship since port — goal is the sealed amphora in the hold. **Win:** drive off/destroy Harpies and force Aello to flee. **Subgoal:** keep ≥3 of 6 crew alive/aboard; each lost sailor → Enc 3 rowing DCs +1.

- **Terrain:** Mast 25 ft (climb **DC 12** Athletics; atop = adv ranged vs fly / disadv melee; prone = fall). Oar benches = difficult terrain. **Cargo Hatch** AC 16 / 20 HP — Aello targets rnds 1–2; if opened she dives in next turn (10×10 hold). Strong headwind: ranged vs fly –2; Fly speed +10 ft.
- **Luring Song (group, top of round):** all humanoids within 300 ft **DC 11** Wis or charmed (incapacitated, full move toward nearest Harpy). Success = immune Harpy song 24 hrs. Aello's song (**DC 15**) is separate. **Ear plug:** Action; auto-immune (combat stress: **DC 10** Sleight of Hand). Theron Wis +1 each round; if charmed, ship drifts 45°.
- **Crew overboard:** charmed sailor at rail falls (no save). Recover: swim **DC 12** Athletics (full move). Grapple: Action, **DC 11** Athletics contest. Tie to bench: Action, **DC 8** Sleight of Hand. 4+ overboard → Theron demoralized; Enc 3 rowing DCs +2.
- **Aello:** Rnds 1–2 ignore PCs, claw hatch. Rnd 3+ if hatch open → dive hold. Flees <25 HP or all Harpies dead. Bound — cannot negotiate.
- **Non-combat:** Counter-Song **DC 16** Performance (charmed within 30 ft free Wis save; nat 20 = whole ship; draws Aello's wrath). Shiny 50+ gp overboard → 1 Harpy dives (**DC 12** Wis or skip turn). Address Aello **DC 20** Persuasion/Intimidation → hesitates 1 full round.
- **Easier:** 2 Harpies; no Gale Shriek; crew Wis DC 9. **Harder:** 6 Harpies; Aello LR refreshes once <50 HP; hatch 15 HP.

Resolution: Victory → standard Enc 3 DCs; Theron foreshadows. 1–3 crew lost → Enc 3 rowing DCs +1 each (max +3). **Aello takes amphora:** still sail to Threnoi empty-handed; Enc 3 Escape target 7; Maw surfaces rnd 4. Feather (80 gp): **DC 12** Arcana → tethered below; show to Sirens → Persuasion DCs –3.

ENCOUNTER 2 — The Siren's Shoals

Avoidable / Hard if combat · ~30–40 min · Day 3 dusk | **Terrain:** 200 ft approach corridor, narrows to 40 ft · dusk (Perception disadv beyond 120 ft)

3× Sirens on rocks; helmsman fails automatically. **Win:** pass without grounding — combat never required. **Trigger combat:** party attacks first, or fails all 3 phases and grounds. Seal or Aello's feather → auto-respectful attention / parley.

- **Terrain:** Rocks 5–10 ft (**DC 12** Athletics to clamber); Sirens 60 ft off path. Unsteered ship drifts 10 ft/round toward rocks. Collision: 2d10 structural; Enc 3 max Escape Progress –1 per collision; Theron morale breaks.
- **Rnd 1 — Song:** **DC 15** Wis or charmed (helmsman auto-fails). No PC at oar → +10 ft drift. Theron already has wax in ears.
- **Rnd 2 — Rocks loom:** Hold course **DC 12** Water Vehicles / Navigator's Tools (fail = +15 ft drift). Charmed crew at prow → **DC 11** Athletics grapple. Parley opens → Sirens pause song 1 round (only free interrupt).
- **Rnd 3 — Final:** Still drifting → **DC 14** Water Vehicles or Athletics emergency turn (fail = collision). Parley open → Siren offers guide for gift/deed. Neither succeeds → ground; combat on Sirens' terms (not surprised).
- **Open parley:** display Seal or feather (auto); or **DC 14** Persuasion/Performance/Arcana. **Exchange (pick 1):** **DC 14** Performance; answer riddle (auto); gift 50+ gp gems/pearls or personal item; **DC 16** Persuasion story. **Riddle:** "What is more powerful than Poseidon, older than the sea, and cannot be taken by force?" → *promise / debt / oath*. Wrong → 1 round full song, then retry.
- **Combat (optional):** 3 Sirens half-cover (+2 AC); rnd 2 Sea Hag boards port. Sirens don't pursue if sailing away. Kill all → no Seal warning; silvery comb 120 gp.
- **Easier:** 2 Sirens; Song DC 12; skill DCs –2. **Harder:** Sea Hag rnd 1 even pre-combat; Song deals 1d6 structural/rnd unaddressed.

Best: peaceful + warning (Seal payoff primed). **Grounded:** Enc 3 Escape target 5 (need 5 not 6). Combat done → pass, no warning.

ENCOUNTER 3 — Wrath of the Deep (Boss)

Deadly · ~60–75 min · Escape-based (no kill) · Night 3 | **Terrain:** Trireme 60×20 ft · lanterns only (dim beyond 20 ft)

4 tentacles wrap hull at start; +1 rnd 3; +1 rnd 5. Sahuagin board rnds 2 & 4 (2 each). **Win:** Escape Progress 6 (or 5 if grounded Enc 2). **Alt:** Sacrifice Seal → instant escape. Kraken cannot be killed.

- **Terrain:** Move >15 ft/turn → **DC 13** Dex or prone. Damaged hull (Enc 2): list port — move west → **DC 11** Dex or slide 5 ft. Mast climb **DC 12**; Tentacle 6 Seizes mast (Large object AC 15 / 30 HP). Overboard: pulled 30 ft down next tentacle turn (**DC 16** Str resist); swim up **DC 14** Athletics (disadv while any tentacle in water).
- **Grip Counter** = active tentacles (start 4). Progress check: 1 PC/round at oar/commands. Theron BA: +4 to check (+2 if demoralized Enc 1).

Grip	Status	Escape Progress Action
5–6 / 4	Held fast / barely held	No progress possible
3	Slipping free	DC 15 Water Vehicles or Athletics → 1 Progress
2	Almost free	DC 12 Water Vehicles or Athletics → 1 Progress
1	One remains	Auto 1 Progress; may DC 10 for 2nd
0	Free!	Auto 2 Progress/round; escape next round

- **Tentacles (init 20):** Hull-grapplers (1–4) Constrict 15 (2d8+6) to hull or Drag seized. Free tentacles (5–6) Slam/Seize PCs. Sever at 0 HP → Grip –1.
- **Sahuagin:** Rnd 2 port midship; rnd 4 starboard. Climb back **DC 12** Athletics. Blood Frenzy → lowest HP on deck.
- **Seal:** *Invoke* (Action, 1×) — one tentacle withdraws (Grip –1; cannot regrow). *Sacrifice* (Action) — all tentacles/Maw/Sahuagin withdraw; Seal gone forever.
- **Maw:** Surfaces rnd 5 or when 4+ tentacles severed. Place 5 ft off bow. Unkillable (HP ≥1). While up: Tentacle Surge regrows severed tentacles (pressure to sacrifice Seal).
- **Easier:** 3 tentacles start; no 6th; Sahuagin 14 HP / 1 per wave; no Maw. **Harder:** tentacles HP 50; Sahuagin 3/wave; Maw rnd 3; *Invoke* needs **DC 12** Cha.

Resolution: Escape 6 → free; Maw stares then sinks (a test passed). Seal sacrificed → instant calm. 2+ PCs overboard at escape → circle back; dragged PC **DC 14** Con or 1 exhaustion. Reward: 1,200 gp + Potion of Water Breathing each + Temple letter.

Failure notes: Amphora lost Enc 1 → priest disappointed but Seal "repayment enough." Escape target rises to 7 if amphora taken.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Harpy

Medium Monstrosity, CE · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 11 · HP 38 (7d8+7) · Speed 20 ft., Fly 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 7 (−2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 13 (+1)

Senses: Passive Perception 10 · Languages: Common

- **Multiattack.** Claws + Club.
- **Claws.** +3, 5 ft. 6 (2d4+1) slashing.
- **Club.** +3, 5 ft. 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning.
- **Luring Song** (BA maintain). 300 ft hear: **DC 11** Wis or charmed + incapacitated; move toward Harpy. Success: immune 24 hrs.

Aello, Storm Harpy Queen

Large Monstrosity (Harpy), CE · CR 5 (1,800 XP) · BOSS

AC 14 · HP 97 (13d10+26) · Speed 20 ft., Fly 60 ft.

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

Saves: Wis +4, Cha +7 · Skills: Perception +4, Performance +7 · Immune: Lightning, Thunder · DV 60 ft · PP 14 · Auran, Common

Flock Commander. Harpies within 30 ft adv vs charmed/incapacitated. *Legendary Resistance* (1/Day).

- **Multiattack.** 2× Talon +6, 10 (2d6+3) slashing.
- **Luring Song.** 300 ft: **DC 15** Wis or charmed + incap; move toward Aello; save end of turn. Success: immune 24 hrs.
- **Gale Shriek** (5–6). 30-ft cone: **DC 14** Con, 4d8 thunder + push 10 ft + prone (half, no push).
- BA: **Windborne Dash** 20 ft no OA. *Legendary* (2/rd): Talon Strike (1); Rally the Flock (2) — Harpy within 60 ft flies 30 ft + 1 Claw free reaction.

Siren of the Shoals

Medium Fey (Siren), CN · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 12 · HP 52 (8d8+16) · Speed 30 ft., Swim 40 ft.

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

Saves: Wis +4, Cha +7 · Perf +9, Dec +7, Perc +4 · DV 60 · PP 14 · Aquan, Common, Elvish

Amphibious. Alluring Presence. First attack vs Siren while seeing it: **DC 13** Wis or disadv.

- **Siren's Song.** 300 ft: **DC 15** Wis or charmed 1 hr; move toward water. Dmg = new save. Success: immune 24 hrs.
- **Coral Strike.** +4, 9 (2d6+2) piercing; disadv on next Wis save.
- **Bewitching Gaze** (5–6). 30 ft: **DC 15** Wis or stunned until end next turn.
- Reaction **Beguiling Deflection:** attacker **DC 13** Wis or disadv (before roll).

Sea Hag

Medium Fey, CE · CR 2 (450 XP) · Combat trigger / Hard only

AC 14 · HP 52 (7d8+21) · Speed 30 ft., Swim 40 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2)

DV 60 · PP 11 · Aquan, Common, Giant · *Amphibious.*

Horrific Appearance. First sight: **DC 11** Wis or frightened 1 min. Success: immune 24 hrs.

- **Claws.** +5, 10 (2d6+3) slashing.
- **Death Glare.** Frightened target within 30 ft that sees her: **DC 11** Wis or drop to 0 HP (success: 3 psychic).
- **Illusory Appearance.** Looks beautiful. Dispel DC 14; Insight vs Deception (+5).

Kraken Tentacle

Huge Appendage (Kraken), NE · CR 3 / segment (700 XP)

AC 12 · HP 40 each · Speed 0 ft.

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 8 (−1) · CON 12 (+1) · INT — · WIS — · CHA —

Resist: Cold; nonmagical B/P/S · Immune: all conditions · Blindsight 30 ft

Mindless Appendage. Init 20. 0 HP = sever; Grip −1. *Regeneration (Maw up):* Maw LA Cost 1 regrows at 20 HP; Grip +1.

- **Slam.** +8, reach 20 ft. 15 (2d8+6) bludgeoning; **DC 16** Str or prone.
- **Seize.** +8, reach 20 ft. 13 (2d6+6) + grappled (escape **DC 16**) + restrained.
- **Drag** (grappled). **DC 16** Str or dragged 20 ft toward sea (off edge = overboard).

The Kraken's Maw

Gargantuan Monstrosity (Partial Kraken), NE · Unkillable

AC 18 · HP 250 (cannot drop below 1) · Speed 0 ft. (head only)

STR 30 (+10) · DEX 8 (−1) · CON 25 (+7) · INT 22 (+6) · WIS 18 (+4) · CHA 20 (+5)

Saves: Str +14, Dex +3, Con +11, Int +10, Wis +8, Cha +9 · Immune: Lightning, Thunder, nonmagical B/P/S · Cond Immune: frightened, paralyzed, prone · Truesight 120 · PP 18

Unkillable. Escape is the goal. Seal sacrifice ends encounter. *LR* (3/Day). *Reactive* (3 Reactions/round).

- **Multiattack.** Bite + Thunderous Bellow.
- **Bite.** +14, reach 10 ft. 29 (3d12+10) piercing. 0 HP → swallowed (blind/restrained; 21 acid/turn start).
- **Thunderous Bellow.** 60 ft: **DC 19** Con, 4d8 thunder + deafened 1 min (half, no deafen).
- *Legendary* (3/rd): Tentacle Surge (1) regrow 20 HP / Grip +1; Crash Wave (2) deck **DC 16** Dex 2d8 + prone; Ink Cloud (3, 1/Day) 60-ft heavily obscured.

Sahuagin Raider

Medium Humanoid (Sahuagin), LE · CR 1/2 (100 XP)

AC 12 · HP 22 (4d8+4) · Speed 30 ft., Swim 40 ft.

STR 13 (+1) · DEX 11 (+0) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 9 (−1)

Skills: Perception +5 · DV 120 · PP 15 · Languages: Sahuagin

Blood Frenzy. Adv melee vs any creature not at full HP. *Limited Amphibiousness.* Must submerge 1 hr / 4 hrs or suffocate.

- **Multiattack.** Bite + 2 Claw, or Trident + Bite.
- **Bite / Claws.** +3, 3 (1d4+1) piercing / slashing.
- **Trident.** +3, 5 ft or 20/60. 4 (1d6+1); 5 (1d8+1) two-handed.

KEY ITEMS

Seal of the Deep

Wondrous Item (requires attunement) · Heirloom — Not for Sale · Given by Kallinikos

Palm-sized bronze medallion on fraying leather cord; trident encircled by waves. Always cool; smells of brine; hums near open water.

- **Warding Aura (Passive).** While attuned and holding; advantage on saves vs fear from aquatic creatures.
- **Invoke (Action — 1/Encounter).** Hold aloft, speak Poseidon's name. One Kraken Tentacle within 60 ft withdraws immediately — remove mini, Grip –1. Cannot be regrown by Maw Tentacle Surge.
- **Sacrifice (Action — Permanent).** Throw into open water, speak Poseidon's name. All tentacles release; Maw submerges; Sahuagin dive away. Encounter ends. Seal gone forever.
- **Lore:** Nereid's gift to Kallinikos's grandfather — unredeemed favor from Poseidon's court. Invoke = one mercy; Sacrifice = cancel the family's entire ancient debt. Kallinikos knew both options when he gave it away. Amphora contains his written oath of penance.
- **Siren hint (Enc 2 peaceful):** *"The thing the old man gave you is not yours to keep... debts repaid in kind make calm the deepest waters."* — tip to sacrifice, not merely invoke.

Aftermath Loot / Hooks

- **Reward:** 1,200 gp (delivery + temple bonus), Potion of Water Breathing per PC, formal letter of commendation from Temple of Poseidon.
- **Amphora intact:** priest reveals Kallinikos's handwritten oath — thirty-year debt settled via the party.
- **Amphora lost to Aello:** priest disappointed; says Seal was already "repayment enough."
- **Aello's feather** (if kept): 80 gp; vibrates near ocean creatures; **DC 12** Arcana → tethered to something below.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Kallinikos — Blind Sea Oracle & Questgiver

NPC · No combat block · Mid-70s harbormaster

- **Appearance:** White beard braided with sea-glass; clouded white eyes (blind 30 yrs); navigates docks by touch/smell; brine + old cedar.
- **Motivation:** Owes Poseidon's court — Nereid calmed a killing storm decades ago; half his crew died anyway. Amphora = written oath of penance. Kraken is Poseidon's test, not destruction.
- **Secret:** Knew the Kraken would come; said nothing lest the party refuse. Ashamed. If confronted after: "I am sorry. I knew." Does not defend himself.
- **Roleplay:** Measured, never raises voice. Nautical metaphors. Deflects with philosophy. "Some debts can't be reckoned until the tide turns."
- **Gives:** sealed amphora, delivery contract, Seal of the Deep.

Captain Theron — Trireme Captain

NPC · Veteran CR 3 if combat · Wis +1

AC 17 (breastplate + shield) · HP 58 (9d8+18) · Speed 30 ft.

- **Personality:** Gruff, practical, fiercely protective of ship/crew. Respects competence. Privately terrified of deep-ocean nights; bad dreams since leaving port.
- **Secret:** Sailed Shoals twice; once listened to Sirens ~2 seconds before catching himself. Never told anyone. Recognizes their song; avoids eye contact. **DC 13** Insight.
- **Enc 1:** At stern oar. Own Wis save each round vs Luring Song; if charmed, ship drifts.
- **Enc 3:** Commands rowers — BA grants +4 to one Escape Progress check/round (+2 if 4+ crew lost Enc 1 / demoralized). Fights Sahuagin near steering oar.
- **Combat:** Multiattack 2× Shortsword +5 (1d6+3). Reaction Parry +2 AC vs one melee hit.
- **Line (post Enc 1 victory):** "The sea doesn't send its children without a reason."

Crew (6 Sailors) — Quick Notes

Noncombat NPCs · Enc 1 stakes / Enc 3 rowing

- Start within 10 ft of oar benches. Charmed → all movement toward nearest railing; do not fight back.
- Overboard = drowning immediately. Keep ≥3 aboard for Enc 3. Each lost = Enc 3 rowing DC +1 (max +3); 4+ lost also demoralizes Theron (+2 flat to Enc 3 DCs).
- Surviving charmed sailor may mutter Aquan: "The deep toll must be paid."

Session Throughline

DM reminder · Debt & toll

- Every encounter tests whether the party pays the sea's toll — by skill, blood, or sacrifice.
- Seal is the intended climax tool; Siren warning rewards attentive tables; invoke alone is a partial answer.
- Kallinikos's apology (if they return) closes the moral loop: they were used, but the debt was real and Poseidon was watching.

The Shattered Pact of Ironstone Hills

One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 8 · ~3.5 Hours · Greek Mythology · 3 Encounters (branching A/B/C)

SESSION SUMMARY

- **Style:** Investigation / Roleplay / Combat — branching narrative
- **Setting:** Ironstone Hills — Road of Koros, contested grove/forge-road/centaur valley, Forge-Shrine of Koros
- **Win Condition:** Reach the Forge-Shrine, expose the true manipulator (Kephira), restore peace
- **Players:** 6 × Level 8 · 3–3.5 hrs · Enc 1 skill+optional combat → Enc 2 avoidable → Enc 3 boss (branching)
- **Branching:** Enc 1 outcome sets Enc 2 obstacle + Enc 3 boss. **A** Cyclopean Alliance → Satyr War-Chief · **B** Satyr Alliance → Cyclopean Warlord · **C** Neutral/Both Hostile → Medusid Sorcerer

An ancient divine truce between armored Cyclopean clans and wild Dwarf-Satyr tribes has kept the hills at peace for three centuries — until someone secretly stoked their hatred. **Kephira** (Medusid Sorcerer) forged letters and shipped sacred iron ore to each side; once both are weakened she will claim the Forge-Shrine’s divine fire and petrify the region. The **Bronze Pact Medallion** (from Lykaon) reacts violently to her sorcery.

*"The ancient pact between the Children of Kyklops and the Wild-Hoofed ones has kept these hills at peace for three hundred years — and something has poisoned that peace. Seek the source; it will not be where the anger points. Take this seal: it was struck in divine fire and carries Hephaestus's word as law. Let it speak where words fail you. And be wary — a serpent's tongue is sweetest when it tells you what you want to hear." — **Lykaon of Delphi***

Major Beats

1. **The Commission:** Lykaon briefs the party, hands over the Bronze Pact Medallion; "serpent's tongue" foreshadows Kephira (**DC 15** Arcana/History if asked).
2. **Crossroads Dispute (Enc 1):** Thrakos vs Aireen over "stolen" ore — skill challenge / side choice / combat sets branch A/B/C.
3. **Contested Path (Enc 2):** Unbefriended faction (or Centaurs) blocks the road — fully avoidable with roleplay or Medallion.
4. **Medallion Glows:** Near the Shrine the seal pulses warm gold — Kephira’s residue; payoff of Lykaon’s hint.
5. **Fury at the Forge-Shrine (Enc 3):** Boss + Rd 3 reinforcements; invoke Medallion to flip a duped boss or cripple Kephira.
6. **Aftermath:** Both elders alive + truth exposed → re-sign the Pact; else victorious faction claims Shrine. Lykaon rewards regardless.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	CR	Easy	Med	Hard	Notes
Cyclopean Warrior	1	2	3–4	5	Enc 1; Enc 2B; Enc 3B initial
Dwarf-Satyr	½	3	4–5	5+	Enc 1
Human-like Satyr	1	2	3	4	Enc 2A
Satyr Hoplite	2	1	2–3	3	Enc 2A; Enc 3A initial
Centaur	2	—	3	3	Enc 2C allies/obstacles
Cyclops (Brokhos)	6	—	1	1+	Enc 2B gatekeep
Agrios	½	—	0–4	4–8	Enc 3A/B optional minions
Minotaur Hoplite	4	—	4	4	Enc 3A Rd 3 reinf
Skeletal Minotaur	3	—	3	3	Enc 3B/C Rd 3 reinf
Skeletal Centaur	3	—	2	2	Enc 3C initial
Satyr War-Chief ★A	6	—	1	1	Enc 3 Branch A boss
Cyclopean Warlord ★B	7	—	1	1	Enc 3 Branch B boss
Medusid Sorcerer ★C	8	—	1	1	Enc 3 Branch C boss

Difficulty Scaling (baseline APL 8)

APL	Enc 1 — Crossroads	Enc 2 — Path	Enc 3 — Shrine
5–6	2 Warriors + 3 Satyrs; DCs –2; Thrakos never fights	A: –1 Hoplite, DC 11 · B: no Cyclops · C: 2 Qs, DC 11/12	Boss –25% HP; reinf Rd 4; no optional Agrios; Kephira no LA
8 ★	As written. Medallion meaningful. Branch C hardest — pre-plan Petrifying Gaze targets.		
10–12	4 War + 5 Sat + 1 Human-Satyr; Thrakos joins Rd 2; DCs +2	A: 4 H-Sat + 3 Hop · B: +Thrakos Warlord · C: +1 Minotaur guard; DCs +2	Boss +20 HP; reinf Rd 2; Kephira 4 LA; Branch A starts with 4 Agrios

ENCOUNTER 1 — The Crossroads Dispute

Skill Challenge / Medium if combat · ~30 min skill / ~45 min combat · 3–5 rds | **Terrain:** Hermes shrine crossroads 80×60 ft

Creatures: 3× Cyclopean Warrior + Thrakos (NPC) vs 4× Dwarf-Satyr + Aireen (NPC). Ore sacks center. **Win:** defuse (any Path A/B/C counts — path diverges, not difficulty).

- **Terrain:** Columns half cover (topple **DC 16** Ath; AC 12 / 20 HP) · Ore sacks half cover · Hermes altar: touch + **DC 10** Religion → Adv next Persuasion · N hillside: Kephira's spy (**DC 16** Perc spot; **DC 18** Stealth approach).
- **Challenge:** 3 successes before 3 failures; 1 check/PC/round. **DC 12** Perc/Inv — bootprints (not Satyr hooves) → Adv next Persuasion/Insight · **DC 12** Hist/Rel — quote Pact (auto if spoken; Medallion = free success) · **DC 13** Insight — Aireen confused not guilty · **DC 14** Pers/Dec — hold fire (Adv w/ bootprints) · **DC 14** Ath/Intim — buy a beat (fail = +1 failure) · **DC 15** Arc/Nature — Medusid gait ID (success + clue).
- **Combat fallback:** Declare side on init 20 Rd 1. Join Cyclopeans → Branch A (Thrakos = Warlord ally). Join Satyrs → Branch B. Fight both → Branch C (elders flee at half warriors). Mid-combat defuse: action **DC 16** Persuasion → Branch C partial.
- **Harder:** Thrakos enters Rd 2 if any Cyclopean bloodied; +1 Human-like Satyr in rocks. **Easier:** 2 War + 3 Satyrs; DCs -2.

Failure: Combat erupts; choose side or fight all.

Resolution: **A** — 3 Warrior escorts; Enc 2A; boss War-Chief · **B** — grove pass + 2 Satyr guides; Enc 2B; boss Warlord · **C** — no escort; Enc 2C Centaurs; boss Kephira. Loot: obsidian snake-shard (**DC 14** Arcana = scrying focus); bootprints → Adv Survival Enc 2. XP ~400 combat / 300 skill.

ENCOUNTER 2 — The Contested Path

Roleplay / Skill · Moderate if combat · ~20–30 min · combat fully avoidable | Medallion begins faint pulse (**DC 12** Arcana → petrification residue)

- **Branch A — Satyr Grove (60×40 ft):** 3× Human-like Satyr + 3× Satyr Hoplite. Dense trees half cover; ranged >30 ft Disadv; Hoplite Shield Wall + Brace; fallen tree high ground +1 AC. Avoid: Medallion auto 1st check · **DC 13** Persuasion · **DC 15** Deception (escorts "in custody") · **DC 14** Intimidation (escorts stay behind).
- **Branch B — Forge Road Gate (70×50 ft):** 2× Cyclopean Warrior + 1× Cyclops Brokhos. Arch AC 17 / 40 HP / force **DC 18** Ath; Brokhos half cover behind arch; Rock if combat. Avoid: Medallion auto vs Warriors · **DC 13** Pers Warriors (Adv w/ Medallion) · **DC 16** Pers Brokhos (flattery) · **DC 14** Dec (smiths; Brokhos Insight DC 8) · **DC 10** SoH throw food → 3 rd distract. Easier: Brokhos asleep, **DC 12** Stealth.
- **Branch C — Centaur Valley (100×60 ft):** 3× Centaur; violence = instant combat (subdue only). Q1 Intent **DC 13** Pers (Medallion auto) · Q2 "Who broke Pact?" **DC 14** Hist/Insight ("Neither — outsider") · Q3 Worth **DC 14** Survival / **DC 15** Arcana / show shard. **3 succ:** Centaur Charge allies Enc 3 (19 pierc, **DC 14** STR or prone, 1/PC). **1–2:** pass + intel "mirrors are her eyes." **0/violence:** wake 1 hr later, short rest, no allies/intel.

ENCOUNTER 3 — Fury at the Forge-Shrine (Boss)

Hard · Deadly (Branch C) · ~45–60 min · ~6–8 rds · reinf init 20 Rd 3 | **Terrain:** Forge-hall 90×60 ft

Medallion hot + golden pulse on entry. Shared: Forge-Pit 10×10 (difficult; fall 14/4d6 fire; forced move **DC 14** DEX) · 4 Brazier pillars (**DC 16** Ath → 10-ft fire 7/2d6) · 6 Obsidian Mirrors AC 11 / 5 HP (BA destroy) · Anvil ¾ cover · Barricade east door **DC 15** Ath (delay reinf 1 rd).

- **Medallion (Action, 1/day):** A/B — boss **DC 14** WIS or pause → **DC 14** Persuasion (Adv) ends aggression + redirects vs reinf. Trigger at <½ HP (A) or Skeletal Shock (B). C — Kephira loses Minor Illusion; Gaze DC -2 (to 12); Disadv next Conc; Mirror Gaze suppressed.
- **Branch A:** Pyrakios (War-Chief) + 2 Hoplite (+ opt 4 Agrios). Rd 3: 4× Minotaur Hoplite (Kephira mercs). Aura Frenzy (Satyr crit 19–20; ends <45 HP). Mirror sneak-attack BA spear 1/rd if mirror intact (**DC 14** Perc deny).
- **Branch B:** Molgos (Warlord) + 2 Warriors (+ opt 4 Agrios). Rd 3: 3× Skeletal Minotaur (Molgos horrified = Shaken 1 turn — Medallion trigger). Fire Resist; BA push Brazier free; Hurled Boulder rechg 5–6 (**DC 15** DEX, 27 dmg).
- **Branch C:** Kephira + 2 Skeletal Centaur. Rd 3: 3× Skeletal Minotaur (floor tremble Rd 2, **DC 12** Perc). Mirror Gaze: intact mirrors → 2nd target CON **DC 12** (restrained only). Targets casters/Medallion-holder. ≤30 HP + not restrained → LA Move retreat; seal door (**DC 16** Ath in 1 rd or partial victory). Centaur Charges ignore Undead Resilience.

Resolution: Full = both elders reconcile, re-sign Pact · Faction win = allied claims Shrine · Kephira escape = half Lykaon reward + sequel. Loot A/B: 800 gp + +1 Spear or Gauntlets of Ogre Power + 200 gp ore · C: spellbook + 3 shards + Stone Shape scroll · All: 500 gp + divine favour (Adv 1 check/save/atk within 30 days).

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Cyclopean Warrior

Medium Humanoid (Cyclops-Kin), LN · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 15 (chain, shield) | HP 32 (5d8+10) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 17 (+3) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 9 (−1) · CHA 7 (−2) · DV 60

Poor Depth Perception. Disadv ranged. Iron-Blooded. Adv vs frightened.

Spear. +5, 5 ft or 20/60, 7 (1d6+3) pierc (ranged Disadv). Shield Bash. +5, 5 (1d4+3); DC 13 STR or pushed 5 ft prone.

Dwarf-Satyr

Small Fey, CN · CR ½ (100 XP)

AC 13 (leather) | HP 18 (4d6+4) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 14 (+2) · Perc +3 Stealth +4 · DV 60

Magic Resistance. Adv vs spells. Bracing Ram. No move → Ram +1d4.

Ram. +2, 5 (1d10). Short Sword. +4, 5 (1d6+2). Panpipe Wail (R6): 20 ft hear DC 12 WIS or frightened until end next turn.

Human-like Satyr

Medium Fey, CN · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 13 (leather) | HP 32 (5d8+10) | Speed 35 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 15 (+2) · Perc +2 Stealth +5

Magic Resistance. Adv vs spells. Fleet-Hoofed. OA vs it at Disadv.

Shortbow. +5, 80/320, 6 (1d6+3). Short Sword. +5, 6 (1d6+3). BA Ram (moved ≥10 ft): +3, 3 (1d4+1); DC 12 STR or prone.

Satyr Hoplite

Medium Fey, LN · CR 2 (450 XP)

AC 15 (scale, shield) / 17 Shield Wall | HP 45 (7d8+14) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 11 (+0) · CHA 12 (+1)

Magic Resistance. Shield Wall. Adjacent ≥1 Hoplite → +2 AC.

Multiattack. 2× Spear +5, 8 (1d8+3) / 9 (1d10+3) 2H. Shield Slam. +5, 6 (1d6+3); DC 13 STR or stunned until end next turn. R: Brace — Spear vs creature entering reach.

Centaur

Large Fey, CG · CR 2 (450 XP) · Ally / Enc 2C

AC 12 | HP 45 (6d10+12) | Speed 50 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 9 (−1) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 11 (+0) · Perc/Surv +3

Charge. Move ≥30 ft straight + Pike hit → +10 (3d6) pierc; DC 14 STR or prone.

Multiattack. Pike +6, 10 ft, 9 (1d10+4) + Hooves +6, 11 (2d6+4).

Cyclops (Brokhos)

Large Giant, CN · CR 6 (2,300 XP) · Enc 2B

AC 14 | HP 114 (12d10+48) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 11 (+0) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 8 (−1) · CHA 7 (−2)

Poor Depth Perception. Disadv attacks >30 ft. Unstoppable (1/combat): 0 HP from B/P/S → DC 15 CON or drop to 1 HP.

Multiattack. 2× Greatclub +9, 10 ft, 19 (3d8+6). Rock. +9, 30/120, 28 (4d10+6). R: Rock Catch DC 10 DEX → no dmg.

Agrios

Medium Humanoid (Wild Man), CN · CR ½ (100 XP) · Opt Enc 3A/B

AC 13 (hide) | HP 15 (2d8+6) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 7 (−2) · CHA 10 (+0) · Intim +2 · DV 60

Aggressive. BA move speed toward hostile. Use orc minis (8 available).

Greataxe. +5, 9 (1d12+3). Javelin. +5, 30/120, 6 (1d6+3).

Minotaur Hoplite

Large Monstrosity, LE · CR 4 (1,100 XP) · Enc 3A reinf

AC 16 (plate, shield) | HP 76 (9d10+27) | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 17 (+3) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 9 (−1) · Intim +3 · DV 60

Charge. ≥10 ft + Gore → +9 (2d8); DC 14 STR or push 10 prone. Phalanx. Adv vs prone; +1 atk if adj to another.

Multiattack. Gore +7, 14 (2d8+5) + Battleaxe +7, 16 (2d10+5). BA Shield Wall: adj allies +2 AC vs ranged until next turn.

Skeletal Minotaur

Large Undead, NE · CR 3 (700 XP) · Enc 3B/C reinf

AC 14 | HP 58 (7d10+21) | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 8 (−1) · CHA 4 (−3) · Immune Poison/Exhaustion · Vuln Bludgeoning · DV 60

Bone Charge. ≥10 ft + Gore → +9 (2d8); DC 15 STR or push 10 prone. Mindless Aggression. Moves toward nearest creature each turn start.

Gore. +7, 13 (2d8+5). Greataxe. +7, 17 (2d12+5).

Skeletal Centaur

Large Undead, NE · CR 3 (700 XP) · Enc 3C initial

AC 14 | HP 52 (7d10+14) | Speed 50 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 4 (−3) · WIS 8 (−1) · CHA 5 (−3) · Immune Poison/Exhaustion · Vuln Bludgeoning · DV 60

Bone Charge. ≥30 ft + Lance → +7 (2d6); DC 13 STR or prone. Undead Resilience (1/combat): 0 HP non-bludgeon/fire/radiant → CON DC 5+dmg; success → 1 HP.

Multiattack. Bone Lance +6, 10 ft, 9 (1d10+4) + Trampling Hooves +6, 11 (2d6+4); DC 13 STR or prone.

Satyr War-Chief (Pyrakios) — ★A

Medium Fey, CE · CR 6 (2,300 XP) · Branch A Boss

AC 16 (scale, shield) | HP 91 (14d8+28) | Speed 40 ft.

STR 17 (+3) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 18 (+4)
· **Saves** Dex +6, Wis +5, Cha +7 · Intim/Perf+7 Perc+5

Magic Resistance. Aura of Frenzy. Satyr allies 30 ft crit 19–20; ends <45 HP. *Oath-Breaker's Fury.* Start: 1 creature 60 ft **DC 15** WIS or frightened 1 min.

Multiattack. 2× Pact-Spear +6, 10 (2d6+3) + Headbutt +6, 8 (2d4+3); **DC 14** STR or push 15. **Panpipe Dirge** (R5–6): 30 ft **DC 15** WIS or incapacitated until end next turn.
BA War Chant: Satyr allies Adv next atk. R Parry +4 AC.

Cyclopean Warlord (Molgos) — ★B

Large Humanoid (Cyclops-Kin), LN · CR 7 (2,900 XP) · Branch B Boss

AC 17 (plate) | HP 110 (13d10+39) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 17 (+3) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 13 (+1)
· **Saves** Str +9, Con +6 · Intim+4 Perc+5 · **Resist** Fire · DV 60

Poor Depth Perception. Disadv ranged >30 ft. *Forge-Sworn*. Fire Resist; immune frightened. *Indomitable* (2/day). BA push Brazier free.

Multiattack. 2× Warhammer +9, 15 (2d8+6) + Shield Bash +9, 11 (1d8+6); **DC 17** STR or prone. **Hurled Boulder** (R5–6): **DC 15** DEX 5-ft radius, 27 (4d10+5) + prone. BA Battle Roar: Cyclopean allies 30 ft move speed.

Medusid Sorcerer (Kephira) — ★C

Medium Monstrosity, NE · CR 8 (3,900 XP) · Branch C Boss

AC 15 | HP 105 (14d8+42) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 17 (+3) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 18 (+4)
· **Saves** Con +6, Wis +5, Cha +7 · Ins/Perc+5 · **Resist** Poison · DV 60

Petrifying Gaze. Turn start: 1 creature 30 ft seeing her **DC 14** CON. Fail <5: restrained until end next. Fail 5+: restrained, save again next start or petrified 1 min. Already restrained: Disadv. *Serpent Sense.* Auto-detect hidden/invis 30 ft. Spells DC 15/+7: at-will Minor Illusion, Poison Spray; 2/day Charm/Hold Person, Fear; 1/day Hypnotic Pattern, Dominate Person.

Multiattack. Gaze + 2× Snake Hair +6, 5 (1d4+3) pierc + 7 (2d6) poison; **DC 13** CON or poisoned 1 min. R Redirect Gaze: melee hitter **DC 14** CON or restrained. LA 3/rd: Move (½, no OA); Serpent Strike (1); Constricting Vision (2) — **DC 14** WIS or frightened + restrained until end her next turn.

KEY ITEMS

◆ Bronze Pact Medallion

Wondrous Item · Optional attunement · Given by Lykaon · Session McGuffin

Palm-sized dark bronze: Cyclopean eye one face, Satyr horns the other, Hephaestus lightning bolt between. Warm; goat-hair + copper cord.

Diplomatic Token (passive): Visibly held/worn — Cyclopean Warriors & Satyr-kind treat bearer as under the divine pact. Hostile of those types: **DC 12** WIS (**DC 15** if invoke aloud: "By the fire of Hephaestus and the wild of the Hills, I invoke the Pact of Ironstone") or indifferent until bearer attacks/deceives. Enc 1: showing grants free History/Religion success. Enc 2: auto-pass first avoidance check (A) / auto vs Warriors (B) / auto Q1 (C).

Serpent-Sense (detection): Pulses warm ≤200 ft of Kephira or active petrification magic; hot + gold glow ≤60 ft. Physical payoff of Lykaon's "serpent's tongue" warning.

Pact Invocation (1/day, Action): **A/B** — boss **DC 14** WIS or pause; then **DC 14** Persuasion (Adv) ends aggression + redirects vs reinf for rest of fight. **C** — Kephira: Minor Illusion off; Gaze DC –2 (to 12); Disadv next Conc; Mirror Gaze suppressed until end of combat.

Obsidian Snake Shard (Enc 1 clue)

Hidden false bottom of one ore sack. Faint snake glyph. **DC 14** Arcana → Medusid scrying focus. Auto-pass Centaur Q3 if shown. Trail NE toward Forge-Shrine.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Lykaon of Delphi — Questgiver

Human Seer · NG · Non-combatant · Divine messenger

Look: ~70, white hair, silver-grey irises; plain linen chiton + bronze sun-disc. Soft-spoken, precise.

Motivation: Restore the Pact. Suspects outside manipulation. Cannot approach Forge-Shrine — Kephira's petrification aura begins hundreds of feet out.

Secret: Knows Kephira exists and gave the Medallion specifically because it reacts to her — withheld full danger so the party would not refuse.

RP: Answers lore; will not fight. Clarify "serpent's tongue" → **DC 15** Arcana/History recall Medusids. Quote: "A serpent's tongue is sweetest when it tells you exactly what you want to hear."

Reward: 500 gp + divine favour (Adv one check/save/atk within 30 days). Half if Kephira escapes.

Thrakos, Clan-Father — Cyclopean Elder

Faction Leader · LN · Enc 1 · Combat: Warlord – Indomitable, HP 80

Look: ~8 ft, scarred empty socket (lost eye decades ago); ceremonial forge-hammer. Voice like millstones. Furious but principled.

Motivation: Protect sacred iron mine & forge-rights. Believes Satyrs violated a 300-year trust. Capable of deep remorse once shown truth.

Secret: Ore delivered by masked "Satyr envoy" — never saw the face (Kephira's spy). **DC 14** Insight: angrier at himself for being fooled than at Satyrs.

RP: "Iron does not lie. Contracts sealed in fire do not lie. Something here has lied, and I intend to find it." Path A → grants 3 Warrior escorts.

Aireen, Grove-Elder — Dwarf-Satyr Elder

Faction Leader · CG · Enc 1 · Combat: Dwarf-Satyr HP 26, Panpipe DC 14

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 11 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 14 (+2)

Look: Tiny, ancient; silver-white hair in ivy, golden hooves; cloudy but sharp eyes; crooked pipe that carves air-shapes. Speaks half-riddles that are literally true.

Motivation: Protect grove & spring feeding Shrine cooling channel. Restrain volatile young warriors. Privately terrified by visions.

Secret: Recurring vision of snake-haired woman at Forge-Shrine pressing palms to obsidian mirrors (= Kephira). Ask about visions/prophecy or **DC 12** Insight discomfort → she reveals it.

RP: "Ask what is older than both [grove and pact] — ask what benefits from forgetting." Path B → grove passage + 2 Dwarf-Satyr guides.

Branch Cheat-Sheet & Aftermath

A: Ally Cyclopeans → Enc 2 Satyr Grove → Boss Pyrakios + Rd 3 Minotaur Hoplit

B: Ally Satyrs → Enc 2 Forge Gate (Brokhos) → Boss Molgos + Rd 3 Skeletal Minotaurs

C: Neutral/both hostile → Enc 2 Centaur trial → Boss Kephira + Skeletal Centaurs + Rd 3 Skeletal Minotaurs

Full victory: both elders alive + truth exposed → re-sign Pact at Shrine; Lykaon witnesses; both factions reward. *Faction win:* allied claims Shrine; Pact unrestored but violence ends. *Kephira escapes:* partial victory, sequel villain.

The Theatre of Python

One-Shot · 6 Players · Level 10 · ~3–3.5 Hours · Rescue the True Pythia · Two-Phase Theatre Boss

Style: Sacred Way ambush → Oracle audience → Branching (Castalia ascent or Theatre trap) → Deadly two-phase boss.
Win: Rescue Kleodora (true Pythia) and defeat Python the Green Coil through its Shed-Bone phase in the Theatre of Delphi.
Lose: Kleodora dies or the Shed-Bone claims the omphalos — Delphi's prophecy falls silent under serpent-blood.
Maguffin: Castalian Coil-Charm · **Ally:** Philon · **QG:** Hierophant Menos / Kleodora

"Where Castalia's coil meets Apollo's light, bind the brood before the shed — or the navel drinks serpent-blood at dusk."

Major Beats

- Snake-cult ambush on the Sacred Way (Hard).
- Kleodora's prophecy: Python's blood returns; she urges Castalia.
- Revelation checks (DC 14–16) may reveal the brood already moves on the Theatre.
- Branch A:** Climb to Castalia → *plot reveal: empty shed skin* → race back.
- Branch B:** Trap the Theatre (materials / early Skene-Binders).
- Theatre finale: Green Coil sheds into Shed-Bone; protect the Pythia.
- Aftermath loot: Shedskin armor (fire/poison/acid resist) + bone/fang weapons; optional Iliada Jones' Whip gag.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10 · Enc 1–2 Hard (~10,800) · Enc 3 Deadly (~16,800)
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — reduce boss HP ~20–25%; cut one LA; DCs –1; drop one Enc. 1 wave
Easier	APL 8–9: Library Standard, then remove optional brood serpents in Enc. 3
Harder	APL 11–12: +1 LA each phase; Green Coil HP +20%; add 2 brood serpents

Creature / Enemy List

Pythonides = yuan-ti reskins (poison immune, magic resistance). Greek serpent-folk of Python's blood — not human cultists.

Creature	Notes
Pythonide Hierophant	Enc. 1 · CR 5–6 · Pythonide hierophant (yuan-ti)
Pythonide Coilborn ×4	Enc. 1 · CR 2
Sacred Way Adder Swarm ×2	Enc. 1 · CR 3
Cliff Viper / Pythonide Skopos	Enc. 2A · mountain pressure (yuan-ti)
Pythonide Skene-Binder	Enc. 2B · early theatre vanguard (yuan-ti)
Python the Green Coil	Enc. 3 Phase 1 · CR 11 · Huge living serpent
Python the Shed-Bone	Enc. 3 Phase 2 · CR 11 · bone-naga skeleton
Brood Coil-Serpent ×0–2	Enc. 3 optional Deadly padding

Maguffin reminder: Castalian Coil-Charm stages the shed and binds legendary actions. Branch B primes stage-weight, oil, and sun-mirror.

Encounter 1 — Sacred Way Coils (Hard)

Harbor → Sacred Way switchbacks. Python-brood cult turns pilgrim stalls into dens.

- **Roster:** 1 Pythonide Hierophant + 4 Pythonide Coilborn + 2 Adder Swarms (~Hard XP).
- **Non-combat:** Nature/Stealth DC 14–15 dens; Persuasion DC 14 pilgrims; Religion DC 14 brood marks.
- **Charm:** adv on one poison save / SR; show charm to clear one checkpoint (Persuasion DC 12).
- Victory → temple audience. Forced rush → short rest only.

Audience — Kleodora

- Prophecy: Python's blood returns; Castalia fouled; brood gestated on Parnassus.
- **Revelation (one success unlocks Branch B):** Investigation DC 14 theatre wagon scrapes; Insight DC 15 Kleodora flinches; Survival DC 15 scale trail leads downhill; Religion DC 16 Menos's silence.
- Two+ successes: adv on Branch B prep; Menos confesses.

Encounter 2A — Ascent to Castalia (Hard)

- Climb challenge: Athletics/Acrobatics/Survival DC 14–16; cliff vipers + brood scout.
- **Plot reveal — The Empty Shed:** Cave holds a Huge warm molt (+ smaller brood cast). Castalia was the dressing room, not the nest. Trail downhill to Theatre. Religion DC 13 hours-old; Nature DC 14 two molts; Survival DC 12 Theatre road; Investigation DC 15 Draconic omen: "The navel drinks at dusk."
- Harvest shed skin for 1–2 Shedskin items (craft after Enc. 3 unless smithing kit + short rest DC 15).
- **Race-back:** 4 successes before 3 failures DC 15. Success: Pythia sheltered. Fail: Pythia exposed + 2 Pythonides at Theatre start.

Encounter 2B — Trap the Theatre (Hard)

- Gather: stage-weights, Apollo sun-mirror, Castalian oil, bronze netting (skill obstacles or fight early Skene-Binders).
- Prep primes 2–3 Enc. 3 interactions (weight drop, oil zone, mirror).
- Stealth DC 15: learn Green Coil enters skene center door.

Encounter 3 — Theatre of Delphi (Deadly)

Orchestra (round stage + omphalos) · koilon seating 3 sides · 2-story skene with doors. Protect Kleodora.

- **Phase 1 — Green Coil:** CR 11 · HP ~220 · LR 2. Shed at 0 HP or ≤25% HP.
- **Phase 2 — Shed-Bone:** CR 11 · HP ~180–200 · necrotic · legendary actions. Same creature.
- Optional 2× Brood Coil-Serpents until Phase 2 for Deadly budget.

Environmental Interactions (no instakills)

1. **Collapse seating:** Athletics DC 15 → difficult terrain; Dex DC 14 or 3d8 + prone.
2. **Stage-weight drop:** Dex DC 16 or 6d6 + stunned 1 round. Branch B: ready R1.
3. **Orchestra oil:** difficult; Dex DC 14 prone. Branch B primed.
4. **Skene doors:** half cover / lure for advantage on next attack.
5. **Apollo sun-mirror:** Con DC 16 blind 1 round OR grant ally advantage.
6. **Orchestra stakes:** +1 AC vs constrict while on center stage (1 setup action).

STAT BLOCKS

Python the Green Coil — Phase 1

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 8 (−1) · **Saves** Str +10, Con +9, Wis +7 | Skills: Perception +7, Stealth +7 | Resistances: poison; Immunities: poisoned

Huge Monstrosity · CR 11 · AC 17 · HP 220 · Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR +8 · DEX +2 · CON +6 · WIS +2 · LR 2/day

Multiattack: Bite +12 (3d10+8 piercing + 3d6 poison) and Constrict +12 (3d8+8; grapple escape DC 18).

Coil Crush (Recharge 5–6): Grappled target 4d8 bludgeoning (Con DC 18 half).

Legendary (2): Detect (1); Tail Sweep 15 ft. Dex DC 16 or 2d8 + prone (1); Slither half speed (2).

Shed: At 0 HP or ≤55 HP, becomes Shed-Bone at full Phase-2 HP; drops shed skin (difficult terrain 10 ft.).

Python the Shed-Bone — Phase 2

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 12 (+1) · **Saves** Str +9, Con +7, Wis +6 | Immunities: poison, necrotic | Resistances: bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical

Huge Undead · CR 11 · AC 16 · HP 190 · Speed 40 ft.

Resist necrotic/poison; immune poison/exhaustion · LR 3/day

Multiattack: Bone Bite +11 (2d10+6 + 2d8 necrotic) and Rib Lash +11 (2d8+6).

Bone Storm (Recharge 5–6): 20-ft. radius Dex DC 17 or 5d8 necrotic + half speed until end of next turn.

Legendary (3): Detect (1); Rib (1); Rattle Fear 30 ft. Wis DC 16 or frightened 1 round (2).

Pythonide Hierophant · CR 5 · AC 15 · HP 97

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 14 (+2) · **Saves** Wis +5, Cha +5

Yuan-ti malison reskin (Pythonide). Magic Resistance; immune poison. Venom bolts +8 (2d8 poison); constrict staff; once/day summon Adder Swarm at 0 HP.

Pythonide Coilborn · CR 2 · AC 13 · HP 45

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

Yuan-ti pureblood: Magic Resistance; immune poison. Scimitar + fang dagger; pack tactics vs. poisoned targets.

Sacred Way Adder Swarm · CR 3 · AC 14 · HP 58

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 1 (−5) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 3 (−4)

Swarm poison; resistant to weapon damage while full HP.

Brood Coil-Serpent · CR 5 · AC 15 · HP 90

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 6 (−2)

Optional Enc. 3 adds; flee or die when Phase 2 begins.

NPC / ITEM

Kleodora, the Pythia — Rescue Objective

- True oracle (not the false oracle of Judgment at Delphi). AC 12 · HP 28 · noncombatant preferred.
- Secret: waking visions show Theatre (Insight DC 14). Persuasion DC 16: admits brood may already move on skene road.
- If she drops to 0 HP: death saves; party can stabilize. Failure = lose condition.

Hierophant Menos

- Wants Castalia purified by doctrine. Hid theatre shed-skin for 3 days (Persuasion DC 15 / Revelation).
- Assigns Philon + guards for Branch B.

Philon, Temple Guard Captain — Ally

- AC 16 · HP 78 · spear +6. Adv on first attack/round vs. Python spawn.
- Holds skene doors in Enc. 3 unless ordered otherwise.

Castalian Coil-Charm

- Enc. 1: adv on one poison save / SR.
- Enc. 3 Phase 1: action on shed — Green Coil loses 1 LR + 20 radiant.
- Enc. 3 Phase 2: once/fight force Shed-Bone to reroll one attack or save.
- **Keepable reward:** 1/SR reroll poison/constrict save for ally in 30 ft.; 1/LR bind Huge+ serpent (disadv attacks, no LAs until end of your next turn).

Remember

- No one-hit-kill traps — stun, advantage, chunky damage only.
- Both phases are one creature evolving (shed skin *and* flesh).
- Differentiate from Judgment at Delphi: true Pythia rescue, not false-oracle trial.

Python Loot & Crafting (20 + gag)

Harvest: Shed skin (Castalia and/or Green Coil shed) → up to 4 Shedskin armor/accessories with *Python's Hide* (resist fire, poison, acid). Corpse/skeleton → up to 4 weapons. Offer 1–2 ready finds; party crafts/commissions rest overnight at Delphi.

#	Name	Type	gp	Key stats / mechanics
1	Shedskin Shield	Shield	750	+2 AC; Python's Hide; 1/SR reaction disadv on melee hit
2	Shedskin Tunic	Clothing / Light	400	AC 11+Dex; Hide; wearable under armor (resist only)
3	Shedskin Jerkin	Light Armor	900	AC 12+Dex; Hide; adv Stealth in nature
4	Shedskin Cuirass	Medium Armor	1,800	AC 14+Dex(max2); Hide; auto-succeed vs poisoned condition
5	Shedskin Plate	Heavy Armor	3,500	AC 18; Hide; 1/LR negate one fire/poison/acid hit
6	Snakecharmer's Sash	Wondrous (waist)	1,200	Adv checks & attacks vs scaled enemies
7	Coilbracers of the Shed	Wondrous (arms)	800	Hide; +1 unarmed; 1/SR BA +2 AC
8	Python's Hood	Wondrous (head)	1,000	Hide; darkvision; adv smell Perception
9	Molted Mantle	Cloak	1,100	Hide; reaction escape grapple/restrain + 10 ft
10	Shedskin Greaves	Wondrous (feet)	650	Hide; climb = walk on stone; ignore rubble/oil terrain
11	Fang Dagger	1-handed dagger	500	+1; +1d6 poison; 1/SR DC14 poison
12	Bone Hammer	1-handed warhammer	750	+1; crit → stun DC15
13	Bone Club	1-handed club	250	+1; +1d6 vs grappled
14	Venom-tipped Javelin	Javelin	400	+1; +2d6 poison ×3 charges
15	Ribcage Spear	Spear	900	+1; 10-ft reach 2H; 1/SR pin
16	Vertebral Flail	1-handed flail	850	+1; ignores cover; denies shield AC 1 round
17	Serpentspine Longbow	Longbow	1,400	+1; +1d4 poison ammo; adv init vs scaled
18	Broodfang Scimitar	1-handed scimitar	1,000	+1; +1d8 vs poisoned/frightened; 1/LR frighten
19	Asp-Tooth Shortsword	1-handed shortsword	600	+1; double-hit → +2d6 poison + Con disadv
20	Poison-Gland Sling	Sling	350	+1; +1d4 poison + blind DC13; 6 doses

Gag — Iliada Jones' Whip (martial whip, 1,250 gp): +1 whip (1d4+1, finesse, reach). Proficiency while wearing a hat. *Thorn-Lash 3/day*: melee spell/weapon attack 30 ft, 2d6 piercing, pull Large– 10 ft. Utility as 30-ft rope/grapple (gaps, climb, rescue falling ally, snatch objects). *"I hate snakes..." ~Iliada Jones*

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The Weeping Maw

3.5-Hour Oneshot · 6 Players · Level 8 · Wilderness Crawl → Boss Fight

SESSION SUMMARY

- **Style:** Wilderness Crawl / NPC Recruitment / Boss Fight
- **Setting:** Frontier wilderness — dense forest → boggy marsh → rocky cave mouth; overcast, humid, rot & sulfur; late morning → dusk
- **Win Condition:** Slay the Marsh Hydra (cauterize stumps with fire to prevent regrowth)
- **Players:** 6 × Level 8 · ~3.5 hours

Village elder **Aldric Vane** hires the party to stop disappearances along the forest road. A Marsh Hydra has claimed a cave deep in the wild. Aldric gives the **Scroll of Splashfire Blessing** (maguffin; 1 PC may keep it) and a sealed note — show the note to Lysander for fire lore + 2× Fire Flask backup.

"Fire does not merely wound — it silences. What steel severs, flame must seal. Take the Splashfire Blessing — coat a bow before the cave. Ask the blind priest at the old shrine; he will know." — **Aldric Vane**

Major Beats

1. Aldric delivers the quest, **Scroll of Splashfire Blessing**, sealed note, and warning: "seek allies before they reach the cave."
2. **Enc. 1 — Thornwood Ambush:** Free Bryn & Cael from gnolls; recruit them for Enc. 3.
3. Party reaches overgrown frontier-shrine ruins under a grey sky; undead patrol the courtyard.
4. **Enc. 2 — Old Frontier Shrine:** Clear skeletal guardians; scavenge items; recruit Lysander (show note for fire lore, Splashfire coaching, + 2× Fire Flask).
5. Dusk at the cave mouth — bones, shuddering ground; the Hydra emerges.
6. **Enc. 3 — The Bilewyrms' Maw:** Activate Splashfire on a ranged weapon; sever heads; burn stumps same turn. Victory — **one PC keeps the scroll.**

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Medium	Hard	Notes
Gnoll Hunter	4	6	7	Enc. 1; 2 guard the bound hunters
Gnoll Pack Lord (Alpha)	1	1	1	Enc. 1; Easy: no Frenzied; Hard: Incite ASAP
Skeletal Hoplite	6	8	10	Enc. 2; Harder + Wave 2 (+4 on rd 4)
Skeletal Minotaur	1	2	3	Enc. 2; Easy HP 45
Marsh Hydra	1 (4 heads)	1 (5 / max 7)	1 (max 9)	Enc. 3 boss
Trail Hunters (Bryn & Cael)	Recruit Enc. 1			Allies Enc. 3 · Init 12
Old Lysander	Recruit Enc. 2			Support Enc. 3 · Init 10 · fire coverage

Difficulty Scaling

Encounter	Easy	Medium (baseline)	Hard
1 — Ambush	4 Hunters; Pack Lord no Frenzied	6 Hunters + Pack Lord	+1 Hunter; Incite Rampage immediately
2 — Shrine	6 Hoplites, 1 Minotaur (HP 45); no Reformation; no wave 2	8 Hoplites, 2 Minotaurs	10 Hoplites (+2 HP); +1 Minotaur; Wave 2 on rd 3
3 — Maw	4 heads; no poison condition; no Bog Lurker DT	5 heads, max 7	Max 9 heads; Mud Thrash 20 ft; poison on all bites

Maguffin: Scroll of Splashfire Blessing (from Aldric). BA 1/LR → coat a ranged weapon 10 min. Hit: target + creatures within 5 ft take **2d4 fire**. Miss: intended target takes **1d4 fire**. Counts for Head Regrowth. Quest reward: 1 PC keeps it.

Note payoff: Show Aldric's note to Lysander (Enc. 2) → full fire/regrowth explanation, Splashfire coaching, + **2× Fire Flask**. Without Lysander: scroll still works from Aldric's brief; discover *why* fire matters with **DC 15** Nature/Arcana (1/turn) mid-fight.

NPC recruitment impact (Enc. 3): Splashfire on a PC/Hunter bow usually covers fire even without Lysander. Unused scroll + 0 NPCs = hard (7-head risk). Lysander still best for healing/Bless + coaching.

Style: Wilderness Crawl / NPC Recruitment / Boss Fight · Win Condition: Slay the Marsh Hydra "Fire does not merely wound — it silences. What steel severs, flame must seal. Take the Splashfire Blessing — coat a bow before the cave. Ask the blind priest at the old shrine; he will know."

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Gnoll Hunter	4 · 4 · 4
Gnoll Pack Lord (Alpha)	1 · 1 · 1
Marsh Hydra	1 · 1 · 1
Skeletal Hoplite	8 · 8 · 10 · Enc 2 (Harder: 10)
Skeletal Minotaur	2 · 2 · 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

ENCOUNTER 1 — The Thornwood Ambush

Moderate · ~45 min · ~4–5 turns · 3,000 XP | **Terrain:** Forest Trail 80×60 ft

6× Gnoll Hunter + 1× Pack Lord mid-ambush; Bryn & Cael bound by overturned cart. **Win:** defeat gnolls, free hunters, recruit for Enc. 3.

- **Terrain:** 3× fallen logs (½ cover); 2× boulders (¾ cover); overturned cart (½ cover, blocks move); E undergrowth strip 10 ft DT; dappled light (no darkness penalty).
- **Free hunters:** **DC 12** Athletics or Dexterity to cut/untie, or 1 attack on ropes. Freed hunter joins next turn on own init. 2 Hunters guard cart — attack PCs adjacent to bound hunters.
- **Recruit (after combat):** **DC 12** Persuasion (duty/village/honor); **DC 14** Intimidation (comply but –1 attacks Enc. 3); **DC 11** Insight first → lost companion to the creature — address it = auto-Persuasion. No check if same guild/region/knows them.
- Pack Lord behind boulder directing; **flees ≤15 HP** if pack mostly dead. **Rampage:** gnoll that drops a PC can BA Bite again — watch unconscious PCs.

Failure: Hunters not recruited → Enc. 3 has no ranged DPS (~10–14 dmg/rd) and no Hunter's Mark.

Resolution: 2× Trail Hunter join Enc. 3 — boulder perch, longbow, init 12. Bryn uses Hunter's Mark on Hydra turn 1.

ENCOUNTER 2 — Ruins of the Old Frontier Shrine

Moderate · ~50 min · ~6–8 turns · 2,350 XP | **Terrain:** Ruined Shrine & Courtyard 120×90 ft

Baseline 8× Skeletal Hoplite + 2× Skeletal Minotaur (overview lists 10/3 for denser load). Pyrrha & Lysander shelter at outer wall. **Win:** clear undead; scavenge; recruit Lysander.

- **Terrain:** broken columns (½ cover); 3× fallen stonework DT; E vines **DC 13** Athletics climb/swing; collapsed altar inner courtyard; cave steps beyond inner temple.
- **Patrol:** 5 hoplites outer courtyard; 5 + 2 minotaurs near cave steps. **DC 12** Perception → notice pattern; ambush plan = adv. on initiative.
- **Shield Wall:** hoplites within 5 ft get +2 AC. **Reformation:** 0 HP → prone, rises next init with 5 HP unless radiant/fire/bludgeoning while prone. Learn via **DC 15** History/Religion.
- **Minotaur Charge:** **DC 14** STR or prone + pushed 10 ft. **Wave 2 (rd 4 / Hard rd 3):** +4 Hoplites from cave mouth.
- **Pyrrha:** **DC 14** Persuasion (or rescue) → Polished Bronze Mirror + Stonechill Water locations; patrol intel = adv. init.
- **Lysander + note:** **DC 13** Insight → fire lore + Splashfire coaching; aid **DC 8**; gives 2× Fire Flask. Without note: **DC 13** Insight → Blindfolds if entering the cave.
- **Scavenge:** Mirror; Stonechill ×2; Blindfold of Apollo ×3; Oil of Stonecleansing ×1; Fire Flask ×2 (note → Lysander). Maguffin scroll is already from Aldric.

Failure: No Lysander → no coaching/flasks; party may forget to activate Splashfire or not know why fire matters (**DC 15** Nature/Arcana mid-fight).

Resolution: Scavenge items for Enc. 3. Lysander joins Enc. 3 on init 10 (Sacred Flame, Cure Wounds, Bless, Splashfire callouts) if recruited.

ENCOUNTER 3 — The Bilewyrms' Maw (Boss)

Moderate · ~70 min · ~6–8 turns · 3,900 XP | **Terrain:** Cave Entrance 120×90 ft

1× Marsh Hydra (5 heads, HP 155) at cave mouth — not surprised (Wakeful). Optional allies: hunters (init 12), Lysander (init 10). **Win:** reduce Hydra to 0 HP; fire on final sever turn = permanent kill.

- **Terrain:** flanking cliff routes; cave mouth 30×25 ft (60 ft dark — Hydra won't retreat in); 4× boulders ¾ cover (hunter perches); 2× bog pools 20×20 DT; 2× bone piles 10×10 DT; N/S cliffs 30 ft, climb **DC 14** Athletics.
- **Bog Lurker:** 30 ft radius always DT; **DC 13** Dex or –10 ft speed.
- **Sever head:** ≥25 damage in one turn from one or more melee attacks. End of Hydra turn: +2 heads per severed since last turn (max 7) *unless any fire damage this turn*.
- **Fire sources:** **Scroll of Splashfire Blessing** (primary — 2d4 on hit / 1d4 on miss for 10 min); Lysander Sacred Flame 1d8/turn; Fire Flask ×2 (BA 10 ft / Action 20 ft). Unused scroll + no other fire → caps at 7 heads. Learn weakness: **DC 15** Nature/Arcana once/turn.
- **Reactive Heads:** +1 reaction/head beyond first (OA only), max +4. Reach 10 ft. **Mud Thrash** (recharge 5–6): 10 ft, **DC 15** Str or prone + restrained (**DC 13** Athletics escape).
- **Allies:** Hunters longbow +5 from boulders (~10–14 dmg/rd combined); Bryn Hunter's Mark +1d6 (1/enc). Lysander Sacred Flame + Bless + emergency Cure Wounds.

Failure / no fire: 7-head hydra for multiple turns — activate Splashfire early; flasks/Lysander as backup.

Reward: One PC keeps the Scroll of Splashfire Blessing after victory.

Victory: HP 0 ends fight. Fire on final head-sever turn cauterizes stump permanently. Aldric pays bounty on return; recruited NPCs stay as frontier contacts.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Gnoll Hunter

Medium Fiend · Chaotic Evil · CR 1/2

AC 13 · HP 22 · Speed 30 ft.

Rampage. Drop creature to 0 HP with melee → move ≤½ speed + Bite as BA.

- **Bite.** +4, 1d4+2 piercing.
- **Spear.** +4, 1d6+2 piercing (thrown 20/60 ft.).

Gnoll Pack Lord (Alpha)

Medium Fiend · Chaotic Evil · CR 5 · 1,800 XP

AC 16 · HP 110 · Speed 30 ft.

Rampage. Same as Hunter. Frenzied (≤55 HP). Extra Spear on Multiattack.

- **Multiattack.** Bite + 2× Spear (4 attacks while Frenzied).
- **Bite.** +7, 1d8+5 piercing. **Spear.** +7, 2d8+5 piercing.
- **BA Incite Rampage** (recharge 5–6). Up to 2 gnolls in 30 ft. use reaction to Bite.

Skeletal Hoplite

Medium Undead · Lawful Evil · CR 1/2

AC 14 · HP 26 · Speed 30 ft.

Shield Wall. +2 AC within 5 ft. of another hoplite. Reformation. 0 HP → prone; rises next init with 5 HP unless radiant/fire/bludgeoning while prone.

- **Spear.** +4, 1d6+2 piercing.
- **Shield Bash.** +4, 1d4+2; **DC 12** STR or prone.

Skeletal Minotaur

Large Undead · Chaotic Evil · CR 2

AC 12 · HP 67 · Speed 40 ft.

Charge. +2d8 piercing; **DC 14** STR or pushed 10 ft. and prone.

- **Multiattack.** Greataxe + Gore.
- **Greataxe.** +6, 2d12+4 slashing. **Gore.** +6, 2d8+4 piercing.

Marsh Hydra

Large Monstrosity · Unaligned · CR 8 (adj.) · 3,900 XP · Boss

AC 15 · HP 155 · Heads 5 (max 7) · STR 20(+5) · CON 20(+5) · Perc +6

Head Regrowth. +2 heads per severed at end of turn (max 7) unless fire damage this turn. Multiple Heads. Adv. vs. blinded/charmed/deafened/frightened/stunned/unconscious. Reactive Heads. +1 reaction/head beyond 1st (OA only; max +4). Bog Lurker. 30 ft DT; **DC 13** Dex or −10 ft. Venomous Bite. **DC 15** Con or +1d6 poison + poisoned.

- **Multiattack.** Bites = current head count.
- **Bite.** +8, reach 10 ft. Hit: 1d10+5 piercing + **DC 15** Con poison.
- **Mud Thrash** (recharge 5–6). 10 ft., **DC 15** Str or prone + restrained (**DC 13** Athletics escape).

Trail Hunter — NPC Ally

Medium Humanoid · Neutral Good · Bryn & Cael · Recruit Enc. 1

AC 14 · HP 38 · Init 12

- **Longbow.** Ranged +5, 150/600 ft. Hit: 1d8+3 piercing.
- **Shortsword.** Melee +5. Hit: 1d6+3 piercing.
- **BA Hunter's Mark** (Bryn, 1/enc). Mark Hydra; +1d6 per hit vs. marked.

Old Lysander — Blind Priest

Medium Humanoid · Neutral Good · NPC Ally · Recruit Enc. 2

AC 11 · HP 36 · Init 10 · Spell save DC 13

- *sacred flame* — 1d8 fire/radiant (+5) · reliable Enc. 3 fire coverage
- *cure wounds* — 2d8+3 · *blesst* — 3 creatures +1d4 attacks/saves
- Provides: 3× Blindfold of Apollo; 2× Fire Flask (if note shown); Splashfire coaching + fire/regrowth lore

KEY ITEMS

Aldric's Sealed Note

Handout · Given at session start

Text: "Fire does not merely wound — it silences. What steel severs, flame must seal. Take the Splashfire Blessing — coat a bow before the cave. Ask the blind priest at the old shrine; he will know."

Payoff (Enc. 2): Show to Lysander → he recognizes Aldric's hand, explains Head Regrowth, coaches Splashfire activation, gives 2× Fire Flask; recruitment aid DC 8.

Without Lysander: scroll still usable; DC 15 Nature/Arcana mid-fight (1/turn) to learn why fire matters.

Scroll of Splashfire Blessing

Wondrous Item (maguffin) · From Aldric · Quest reward (1 PC keeps)

Soot-edged scroll. **Activate (BA, 1/LR):** coat one ranged weapon for 10 minutes.

- **Hit:** Target takes extra 2d4 fire; each other creature within 5 ft. also takes 2d4 fire.
- **Miss:** Intended target still takes 1d4 fire.
- **Hydra:** Any Splashfire fire seals Head Regrowth that turn. Ideal on a PC archer or Trail Hunter bow.
- **Reward:** After victory, one character may keep the scroll.

Fire Flask ×2

Improvised Weapon · From Lysander (note shown) · Backup

Clay flask of marsh-pitch fat + striker-wick. Shatters; sticky flame.

- **Action:** Throw ≤20 ft (+PB Dex). Hit: 2d6 fire.
- **Bonus Action:** Throw ≤10 ft (+PB Dex). Hit: 2d6 fire; miss: 1d6 splash to target.
- **Special:** Any hit = fire damage to Hydra this turn → no head regrowth at end of Hydra's turn.

Polished Bronze Mirror

Scavenge · Collapsed altar (inner courtyard)

Gaze deflection via reflection. Bonus action to angle at reflective surfaces (DC 14 Sleight of Hand). Location unlocked via Pyrtha (DC 14 Persuasion / rescue).

Vials of Stonechill Water ×2

Scavenge · Cracked urn near cave steps

Throw range 20 ft.: target speed halved; disadvantage on next save vs. breath effects. Pyrtha reveals location (DC 14 Persuasion).

Blindfold of Apollo ×3

From Lysander · Freely given if party enters cave

While worn: blindsight 15 ft.; immune to gaze-based effects. Lysander carries them; offers freely if told the party intends to enter (or with note path).

Oil of Stonecleansing ×1

Scavenge · Dead adventurer, outer wall

Find with DC 14 Investigation. Reverses petrification (<24 hrs) over 1 minute.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Aldric Vane — Questgiver

- **Role:** Village elder; hook only (does not adventure).
- **Motivation:** Stop disappearances along the forest road; reopen the frontier route.
- **Gives:** Scroll of Splashfire Blessing + sealed note (Lysander / fire lore); warns to seek allies before the cave.
- **Aftermath:** Pays bounty; one PC may keep the scroll.
- **Stats:** Medium Humanoid · Village Elder · noncombat.

Bryn & Cael — Trail Hunters

- **Role:** Recruitable allies (Enc. 1 → Enc. 3 ranged DPS).
- **Motivation:** Grateful but shaken; cave has a dark reputation. One lost a companion to the creature (DC 11 Insight).
- **Recruit:** DC 12 Persuasion / DC 14 Intimidation (−1 att Enc. 3) / auto if Insight detail addressed or shared guild/region.
- **Enc. 3:** Init 12, boulder longbows; Bryn Hunter's Mark turn 1. Combined ~10–14 dmg/rd.
- **Stats:** AC 14 · HP 38 · Longbow +5 (1d8+3) · Shortsword +5 (1d6+3) — see p.3.

Pyrtha — Ruin Survivor

- **Role:** Item guide / scout intel at Enc. 2 (noncombat).
- **Motivation:** Shelters with Lysander at outer wall; wants the courtyard cleared.
- **Payoff:** DC 14 Persuasion or offering rescue → Mirror + Stonechill locations; patrol intel = adv. on initiative.
- **Stats:** Medium Humanoid · NG · no combat block.

Old Lysander — Blind Priest

- **Role:** Recruitable Enc. 2 support; Enc. 3 fire coverage + healing.
- **Motivation:** Old frontier-chapel contact of Aldric; knows cave layout; blind but keen.
- **Secret / lore:** With note — recognizes handwriting; explains fire seals severed heads; coaches Splashfire; aid DC 8. Without — DC 13 Insight, Blindfolds if party heads to cave.
- **Provides:** 3× Blindfold of Apollo; 2× Fire Flask (note); Splashfire coaching + regrowth lore.
- **Enc. 3:** Init 10; Sacred Flame; Bless; Cure Wounds. Still high-value — healing/Bless even if Splashfire covers fire.
- **Stats:** AC 11 · HP 36 · DC 13 — see p.3.

Recruitment Tracker (Enc. 3 difficulty)

- 0 NPCs + scroll unused: Hard — likely 7-head hydra for multiple turns.
- **Splashfire active:** Fire usually covered; Lysander still best for healing/Bless; hunters great scroll carriers.
- 2–3 NPCs + Splashfire: Moderate — tense but winnable.
- Hunters: Enc. 1 · DC 12 Persuasion (or alt). Lysander: Enc. 2 · DC 13 Insight / DC 8 with note.

Head Tracker Cheat-Sheet

- Start: 5 heads · Max: 7 (Hard: 9) · OA reactions = heads − 1 (max 4 at 5+).
- Sever: ≥25 melee damage in one turn (mark severed).
- End of Hydra turn: +2 per severed since last turn — cancel if any fire this turn.
- Kill permanent if fire on same turn as final head-sever + HP 0.

The Wilting Court

A Greek Mythology One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 8 · ~3.5 Hours · 3 Encounters

Session Summary

Style: Rescue & Redemption — negotiate, sneak, or fight your way to break a curse.

Win Condition: Reach Nyxantha in the Grotto and use Persephone's Tearstone to sever her shadowfire curse-bond, ending the Wilting Court's rampage *without* having to slaughter the nymphs.

Description: A tyrant's foremen defiled a sacred spring and clear-cut an ancient grove, and the grieving nymphs of the region banded together into a raiding gang — but their fury is being fed and amplified by a corrupted Lampad who has bound them all in underworld shadowfire.

"Please — they are not monsters, they are my sisters. Something in the dark has hold of them, and if you go in with swords alone, you will only free them into the grave. Take this, and take care."
— Elyria, a Naiad, pressing a warm red stone into a hand

The Hook: The party meets Elyria in Misthaven, a mist-wreathed tavern between worlds. She begs for help before the Wilting Court's raids escalate into open slaughter on both sides.

The Maguffin — Persephone's Tearstone: A polished garnet stone that can sever an underworld curse-bond when pressed to its source. Full item card on Page 4.

Major Beats

- Party meets Elyria in Misthaven; she explains the defiled spring/grove and the Wilting Court's rampage.
- Elyria reveals the deeper truth: Nyxantha, a corrupted Lampad, binds the sisterhood with shadowfire and feeds on their grief.
- Elyria hands over **Persephone's Tearstone** and marks the mountain pass route to the vale on a rough map.
- Encounter 1 (Mountain Pass):** Oreads have rigged a rockslide ambush. Diplomacy or proof of good intent (showing the Tearstone) can avoid the fight entirely.
- Optional: recruit **Petra**, a wounded Oread scout, as a guide.
- Encounter 2 (The Flooded Meadow):** Leimniades and Meliae guard captive mortal laborers and a bound Nereid. Persuasion, stealth, or combat can free them.
- Optional: recruit **Thalassa**, the freed Nereid, as an ally for the finale.
- Encounter 3 (The Grotto — Boss):** The full Wilting Court rallies around Nyxantha. Party must reduce her **Grief-Bound** stacks and press the Tearstone to her to end the curse.
- Resolution:** Curse broken — nymphs stand down, the vale begins to heal, Elyria's sisters are saved. The world remains intact; no iconic figures are destroyed.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	CR	Easy	Medium	Hard	Notes
Nymph Skirmisher (Oread)	3	2	3	4	Encounter 1; ranged Stone Fling + rockslide hazard
Nymph Skirmisher (Leimniad)	3	1	2	3	Encounter 2; entangling grass
Nymph Skirmisher (Meliae)	3	1	2	3	Encounter 2; ashfire lash
Nymph Skirmisher (mixed types)	3	1 active	2 active	2 active + reinforcements	Encounter 3; cycles Naiad/Dryad/Nereid/Oceanid
Nyxantha, the Grieving Torch (Lampad)	9	—	—	1 (boss)	Encounter 3 boss; see Grief-Bound mechanic

Difficulty Scaling (APL 6 / 8 / 10)

Encounter	APL 6	APL 8 (Baseline)	APL 10
1 — Mountain Pass	2 Oreads; rockslide DC 12 Dex, 2d6 dmg	3 Oreads; rockslide DC 14 Dex, 3d6 dmg	4 Oreads; rockslide DC 15 Dex, 4d6 dmg
2 — Flooded Meadow	1 Leimniad + 1 Meliae	2 Leimniades + 2 Meliae	3 Leimniades + 3 Meliae; add fire-aura zone
3 — The Grotto (Boss)	Nyxantha HP 120; reinforcements every 3 rounds; 1 active support	Nyxantha HP 168; reinforcements every 2 rounds; 2 active support; 3 legendary actions/round	Nyxantha HP 210; reinforcements every 2 rounds; 3 active support; 4 legendary actions/round

Encounter 1 — Mountain Pass Ambush

Medium–Hard · ~20 min · ~4 rounds · Avoidable via roleplay/skill checks

Terrain: Narrow switchback trail, 80×30 ft, boulder cover, one rockslide trigger zone spanning a 20-ft stretch of trail.

Creatures: 3× Nymph Skirmisher (Oread) — CR 3 each, positioned on high ledges (advantage on ranged attacks).

Avoid Combat: **DC 15 Persuasion** (proving you're not with the tyrant's foremen, e.g. showing the Tearstone or naming Elyria) OR **DC 13 Insight/Nature** to spot the ambush and call out peacefully before it triggers. Leaving a floral/wine offering grants **DC 12** instead.

Rockslide Trigger: If the party advances aggressively or is spotted as hostile, the rockslide fires round 1: all creatures in the 20-ft zone make a **DC 14 Dex save** or take 3d6 bludgeoning (half on success) and are knocked prone.

- Oreads fight from high ground; melee attackers must spend a move action (**DC 12 Athletics**) to reach the ledges or face disadvantage shooting up.
- If 2 of 3 Oreads drop below half HP, they call for parley instead of a fight to the death.
- **RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY:** The wounded Oread **Petra** can be spared and recruited (**DC 13 Persuasion** once below half HP) as a guide — grants advantage on Survival/Stealth checks approaching Encounter 2.

Resolution: Peaceful or victorious outcome grants a hint about the meadow's captive-cage layout ahead. Aftermath: short rest available either way.

Encounter 2 — The Flooded Meadow

Medium–Hard · ~25 min · ~5 rounds · Infiltration/rescue, avoidable via negotiation or stealth

Terrain: Waterlogged grove, 100×60 ft, mud/water = difficult terrain; three vine-cages hold 3 mortal laborers and the bound Nereid **Thalassa**.

Creatures: 2× Nymph Skirmisher (Leimniad), 2× Nymph Skirmisher (Meliae) — CR 3 each.

Avoid Combat: **DC 15 Persuasion/Performance** appealing to the nymphs' grief (invoking Elyria or the Tearstone) causes them to stand down without a fight. Alternatively, **DC 13 Stealth** to free all captives before the guards notice.

- Meliae ignite Ashfire Lash zones (recharge 5–6) dealing 2d6 fire in a 10-ft line.
- Leimniades cast Tangling Grass (bonus action, recharge 5–6): 10-ft radius, **DC 13 Str save** or restrained.
- Freed captives (once released) can assist with distraction, granting advantage on the next attack against a guard.
- **RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY:** Freeing Thalassa (cut her bonds, **DC 12 Sleight of Hand** or break the cage, AC 12/10 HP) recruits her for the finale — she knows Nyxantha's name-of-sorrow.

If Alarm Raised: If combat drags past 5 rounds or a guard escapes to warn the Grotto, Encounter 3 begins with Nyxantha already **Shadowfire Empowered** (see boss card) and no surprise round for the party.

Resolution: Quick/peaceful resolution (≤4 rounds, no alarm) grants a full short rest and Thalassa's aid; a rushed/loud resolution costs the short rest and alerts the Grotto.

Encounter 3 — The Grotto (Boss)

Hard · ~35–40 min · ~6–8 rounds · Combat with a non-lethal win condition

Terrain: Underground cavern-oasis, 90×70 ft, central pool, ash-tree stand, stalactite ledges. Each corner holds a "Court Zone" tied to a nymph type: *pool* (Oceanid — whirlpool), *roots* (Dryad — snares), *embers* (Meliae — fire motes), *stone* (Oread — tremors).

Creatures: Nyxantha (boss) + 2 active Nymph Skirmishers (cycling Naiad/Dryad/Nereid/Oceanid types) present from the start; the rest of the Court (one of every remaining type) act as ambient zone hazards, not full combatants.

- **Grief-Bound (3 stacks):** Nyxantha starts Grief-Bound 3. She loses 1 stack whenever a creature succeeds on a **DC 16 Persuasion/Performance** check invoking Elyria/the vale's grief, or when she takes radiant damage.
- **Reinforcement Cycle:** Every 2 rounds (3 rounds at APL 6), Nyxantha uses Summon Grief to call 1–2 new Nymph Skirmishers from the reinforcement pool, cycling type.
- Thalassa's name-of-sorrow (if recruited) can be spoken once as an action: Nyxantha makes a **Wisdom save (disadvantage) DC 16** or loses 1 Grief-Bound stack automatically.
- Court Zone hazards trigger on entry: Pool (**DC 14 Str** save or prone+pushed 10 ft), Roots (**DC 13 Str** restrained), Embers (2d6 fire, no save, on end of turn in zone), Stone (tremor, **DC 13 Dex** or fall prone).

Win Condition — Curse-Sever: A creature holding the Tearstone can use an action, while adjacent to Nyxantha, to press it to her **if she is at 0 Grief-Bound stacks OR below 25 HP**. This instantly ends the curse: Nyxantha and every Wilting Court nymph immediately stop fighting.

Partial Success: If Nyxantha is instead reduced to 0 HP without the Tearstone, the curse still breaks, but the surviving nymphs scatter in raw grief rather than being freed cleanly — a hook for a future session to fully restore the vale.

Scaling: Easier — drop reinforcement cycle to every 3 rounds, remove one Court Zone hazard. Harder — Nyxantha gains a 4th legendary action and Grief-Bound starts at 4 stacks.

Creature Stat Blocks

Nymph Skirmisher (Wilting Court)

Medium Fey (Corrupted), Unaligned · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 15 (natural) · HP 45 (10d8) · Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)

Skills Perception +4, Nature +3, Stealth +5. **Senses** darkvision 60 ft (underground types), passive Perception 14. **Languages** Sylvan

Fey Ancestry. Advantage on saves vs. being charmed.

Signature Trait (by type):

- **Naiad:** Healing Splash (recharge 5–6) — touch, ally regains 2d8 HP.
- **Dryad / Leimniad:** Grasping Roots/Grass (recharge 5–6) — 10-ft radius, **DC 13 Str** or restrained.
- **Oread:** Stone Fling — ranged spell atk +5, 20/60 ft, 2d8 bludgeoning.
- **Nereid:** Calming Tide (reaction) — ally within 10 ft gets advantage on next save.
- **Oceanid:** Riptide — 15-ft cone, **DC 14 Str** or prone + pushed 10 ft.
- **Meliae:** Ashfire Lash — melee spell atk +5, reach 10 ft, 2d6 fire.

Actions

Multiattack. Two Nature Bolt attacks. *Nature Bolt.* Ranged spell atk +5, 60 ft, 2d6+3 force. Plus one Signature Trait action per turn (recharge as listed).

Nyxantha, the Grieving Torch (Lampad)

Medium Fey (Corrupted), Chaotic Neutral · CR 9 (5,000 XP) — Boss

AC 17 · HP 168 (16d8+96) · Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 18 (+4) · CHA 20 (+5)

Saves Dex +8, Wis +8, Cha +9. **Skills** Perception +8, Deception +9, Insight +8. **Resist** cold, necrotic. **Vulnerable** radiant (only at 0 Grief-Bound stacks). **Senses** darkvision 120 ft. **Languages** Sylvan, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.

Grief-Bound (3 stacks). Loses 1 stack on a **DC 16 Persuasion/Performance** check invoking grief, or on taking radiant damage.

Shadowfire Bond. Reaction: redirect damage taken by an ally nymph within 60 ft to herself instead.

Torchbearer's Curse (Curse-Sever). A creature adjacent with the Tearstone may sever her curse (action) if she's at 0 Grief-Bound stacks or below 25 HP — ends the fight, all nymphs stand down.

Actions

Multiattack. Two Shadowflame Torch attacks. *Shadowflame Torch.* Melee or ranged spell atk +9, 2d10+5 fire/necrotic. *Summon Grief* (recharge 5–6): calls 1–2 Nymph Skirmishers.

Legendary Actions (3/round, 4 at APL 10)

Torch Flicker. Move half speed, no opportunity attacks. *Wailing Chorus.* Nymphs within 30 ft gain +1d6 on next attack.

Key Item

Persephone's Tearstone

Wondrous item, no attunement required

A smooth garnet-red stone, warm to the touch. While holding it, you have **advantage on Persuasion/Performance checks** against creatures bound by grief or dark magic (such as the Wilting Court).

Curse-Sever. As an action, press it to an incapacitated or Grief-Bound (0 stacks) fey to instantly sever any underworld curse-bond, ending magical compulsion. *Single use — crumbles to ash after severing one curse.*

NPC Reference Cards

Elyria (Naiad — Quest Giver)

AC 13 · HP 22 · Non-combatant (Create/Destroy Water 1/day)

Motivation. Wants her sisters' curse broken, not the sisters slain — desperate and pleading throughout.

Secret. She was bound by Nyxantha too but broke free weeks ago; guilt-ridden she didn't act sooner to stop it.

Roleplay Notes. Anxious, tearful, will beg the party not to kill any nymph if combat turns lethal. Gives the Tearstone and a rough map of the pass at the hook.

Thalassa (Nereid — Recruit, Encounter 2)

Use Nymph Skirmisher (Nereid) stats, ally, once freed

Motivation. Was captured trying to calm her sisters; wants everyone — nymph and mortal — to survive this.

Secret. Knows Nyxantha's name-of-sorrow, usable once in the finale to force an automatic Grief-Bound stack loss (see Encounter 3).

Roleplay Notes. Gentle and sorrowful; hums softly while healing allies. Freed via **DC 12 Sleight of Hand** or breaking her cage.

Petra (Oread — Recruit, Encounter 1)

Use Nymph Skirmisher (Oread) stats, ally, at half HP once recruited

Motivation. Protecting the vale; deeply distrustful of outsiders sent by the tyrant's foremen.

Secret. Knows a hidden tunnel shortcut to the Grotto that bypasses part of the meadow ambush.

Roleplay Notes. Gruff, tests the party's honesty before trusting them; recruited via **DC 13 Persuasion** after being spared below half HP.

The Witch of Aeaea

One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 8 · Greek Mythology · ~3.5 hrs / 3 Encounters

Style: Mythic Infiltration / Dungeon Crawl | **Win Condition:** Pour the Vial of Moly into Circe's Great Cauldron, or reduce Circe to 0 HP (she surrenders; cannot be slain by mortal hands) | **Setting:** Aeaea — a fog-shrouded island of black sand beaches, cedar forests, and a marble palace reeking of honey and rot.

Ships that sail too close to Aeaea do not return — only the animals swimming away hint at what became of their crews. A divine messenger gives the party one chance to end **Circe's** reign of transformations: a vial of moly sap that can destroy her power at its source.

"The stranger slides a clay vial across the table toward you — small, stoppered with black wax, a strip of papyrus tied round its neck. His sandals, you notice belatedly, barely touch the floor. 'Sailors are disappearing off Aeaea,' he says, as though remarking on the weather. 'They arrive. They do not leave. What comes back instead is worse.' He folds his hands. 'Pour the white sap in her fire. The gods are watching.'"

Major Beats

- Misthaven Hook:** Emeron (secretly Hermes) hands over the Vial of Moly and vanishes into the mist.
- The Bewitched Shore:** Transformed beast-men prowl the tree line — fight, flee, or calm them. Alpha war-wolf Demetrios is recruitable.
- The Ritual Grove:** A transformation ritual is underway on 4 captive sailors; a 5-round timer runs. Stealth, disruption, or combat can resolve it. Philemon is recruitable if freed.
- The Palace Gates:** Circe's bronze doors open at a touch — she already knows the party is here.
- The Hall of Aeaea:** Final confrontation. Pour the moly, fight her down, or both — Circe surrenders or is weakened. All transformed sailors on the island revert.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	CR	Easy	Med	Hard	Encounter
Enchanted War-Wolf	1	2	4	6	1 (shore)
Enchanted Lion-Guard	2	1	2	3	1 (shore)
Ritual Naiad Sorceress	4	0	1	1	2 (grove)
Forest Nymph	1	2	3	4	2 (grove)
Circe, Enchantress of Aeaea	8	—		1	3 (boss)
Handmaiden Enchantress	3	1	2	2	3 (palace)

Difficulty Scaling

APL	Encounter 1 — Shore	Encounter 2 — Grove	Encounter 3 — Hall (Boss)
4–5	2× War-Wolves only; DCs –2	Remove Naiad; 2× Nymphs; 8-rd timer	Circe 90 HP, 1 Handmaiden, surrenders at 30 HP
6–8	Baseline as written	Baseline as written	Baseline; both allies strongly recommended
10+	+1 Lion-Guard; Demetrios HP 38	+1 Nymph; circle = Wall of Force; 4-rd timer	+2 Lion-Guards; Circe starts –1 Legendary Resist.

Papyrus Note (Vial of Moly, 17 words): "Against the witch's power: anoint thyself, pour the rest in her fire. The gods watch."

World detail: A corroded bronze signet ring found on a beast corpse (Enc. 1) hints Circe has been doing this for years. Circe's palace holds a library of transformation scrolls (Enc. 3 aftermath) — dangerous knowledge if looted. If asked, Circe offers one cryptic, accurate hint about a future danger as a hook for the next session.

Ships that sail too close to Aeaea do not return — only the animals swimming away from it hint at what became of their crews. A divine messenger has given the party one chance to end Circe's reign of transformations: a vial of moly sap, the gods' own antidote, which can destroy the power at its source if poured into her Great Cauldron.

"Against the witch's power: anoint thyself, pour the rest in her fire. The gods watch."

Stakes

- Style: Skill challenge / avoidable combat
- Win Condition: Drive off, destroy, or calm the beasts — or simply push past them and reach the forest path without lethal engagement
- Skip Condition: Party may bypass combat entirely with successful Animal Handling/Insight checks (see Mechanics)

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Enchanted War-Wolf	1 · 2 · 4 · 6 · 1 (shore); 3 (harder scaling)
Enchanted Lion-Guard	2 · 1 · 2 · 3 · 1 (shore); 3 (harder scaling)
Forest Nymph	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 2 (grove)
Ritual Naiad Sorceress	4 · 0 · 1 · 1 · 2 (grove)
Circe, Enchantress of Aeaea	8 · 1 · 1 · 3 (palace boss)
Handmaiden Enchantress	3 · 1 · 2 · 2 · 3 (palace)

DM Tips

- As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Encounter 1 — The Bewitched Shore

Medium · ~30–40 min (combat) / ~15–20 min (non-combat) · ~4–5 rounds | **Terrain:** Black Sand Beach, 90×60 ft

Beach landing; shapes emerge from cedar tree line — 4× War-Wolves, 2× Lion-Guards, circling rather than charging. **Win:** drive off/destroy/calm the beasts or push past to the forest path.

- **Terrain:** Driftwood barricade (half cover); tide pools (**DC 12** Athletics or prone); ship gangplank chokepoint (+2 AC).
- **Calm:** No-attack round → Animal Handling: **DC 13** wolf / **DC 15** lion (advantage w/ moly vial shown or **DC 12** Insight first).
- **Retreat:** Back onto ship 10 min → beasts withdraw; slip via tide pools (**DC 12** Athletics) — skips combat, no XP.
- War-Wolves use Pack Tactics, target the moly-holder unless calmed. Lion-Guards Pounce round 2. 3+ downed/calmed → survivors check **DC 14** WIS to flee.
- **Recruit Demetrios** (alpha wolf, broken sword-hilt scar): **DC 13** Insight to notice intelligence; **DC 13** Animal Handling (w/ Insight) or **DC 15** to calm. Fights as ally Enc. 2–3. Cannot calm if he took 10+ dmg.
- **Harder:** +1 Lion-Guard; Demetrios 38 HP.
- **Easier:** Lion-Guards removed, 3 wolves only; pack flees at 2 downed.

Encounter 2 — The Ritual Grove

Medium · ~35–45 min · ~4–6 rounds · 5-round transformation timer | **Terrain:** Moonlit Clearing, 80×80 ft

4 captive sailors bound to stakes mid-transformation; 1× Ritual Naiad Sorceress + 3× Forest Nymphs conduct the ritual. **Win:** free all 4 captives before the timer runs out, or down the Naiad (halts ritual).

- **Timer:** Each round Naiad is alive/conscious, one captive advances; round 5 = lost until Circe reverses. Downing Naiad stops timer; disrupting circle pauses 2 rounds.
- **Stakes:** AC 8/10 HP or **DC 14** Athletics to snap (frees 1 captive). **Altar:** AC 17/30 HP — destroying ends ritual but 20 ft. **DC 14** CON save or 6d6 psychic + Stunned (warned by **DC 15** Arcana).
- **Stealth:** **DC 13** group Stealth → undetected, surprise round. **Disrupt circle:** Action, **DC 11** per section, 4 sections pauses timer 2 rds (alerts Naiad).
- **Parley (risky):** **DC 20** Persuasion (**DC 16** invoking Hermes/showing vial) halts ritual — but ends the session's path to Encounter 3, use sparingly.
- Naiad stays at altar rounds 1–2 (disadvantage Perception), engages round 3. Nymphs drag PCs toward circle (disadvantage on enchant saves inside). 2+ Nymphs down → survivors flee.
- **Recruit Philemon** (northeast stake, 20% transformed): auto-joins if freed, fights improvised (–1 to hit) until armed. Grants party +2 to first WIS save/round within 30 ft. in Enc. 3.
- Sorceress-downed reward: bronze key to inner sanctum → surprise round in Encounter 3.

Encounter 3 — The Hall of Aeaea (Boss)

Hard · ~50–60 min · ~6–8 rounds · **Deadly without allies — recruit Demetrios & Philemon** | **Terrain:** Throne Room, 100×60 ft

Circe on her ivory throne, flanked by 2× Handmaiden Enchantresses, beside a 10-ft Great Cauldron. **Win (A):** reduce Circe to 0 HP (surrenders — cannot be slain). **Win (B):** pour Vial of Moly into the Cauldron (adjacency, full Action) — triggers Moly Vulnerability. Both combined is the most decisive resolution.

- **Terrain:** Cauldron AC 17/60 HP (destroying = 8d10 force, 30 ft, **DC 16** DEX — poured via vial instead = controlled, no explosion). Throne dais = half cover (Phase 1 only). Tapestries pullable (**DC 12** Athletics) for difficult terrain/restraint (**DC 14** STR escape).
- **Opening:** Circe speaks first (no roll) — PC hiding vial: **DC 14** Sleight of Hand vs. passive Perception 13, else she opens Transformation Curse on the vial-holder.
- **Phase 1 (Full → 65 HP):** Throne dais, ranged Wand + Legendary Actions, Shadow Step between sconces, stays within 10 ft. of Cauldron (DC 18 spell save vs. 16).
- **Phase 2 (65 → 0 HP):** Descends (loses cover), spams Cauldron Pulse (Cost 2). If moly poured: 10d10 psychic, loses Focus, can't re-use Transformation Curse; ≤30 HP → surrenders next turn.
- **Moly pour:** No check unless Circe adjacent w/ unused Reaction (Counterspell, contested CHA +9 — success knocks vial away, **DC 13** Athletics to retrieve).
- Demetrios (init 15): Bite + Pack Tactics, immune to re-transformation. Philemon (init 10): Shield Bash to prone Handmaidens; allies within 30 ft. get +2 first WIS save/round.

Resolution: 0 HP or moly-poured (or both) → Circe surrenders, releases all transformations island-wide, grants safe passage (will not swear off magic or leave Aeaea).
Reward: 5,300 XP combat / 2,650 XP moly-only.

Creature Stat Blocks

Enchanted War-Wolf

Medium Beast, Unaligned (enchanted) · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 13 | HP 26 (4d8+8) | Speed 40 ft.

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +4 | Senses: Darkvision 30 ft.

Pack Tactics. Advantage on attacks vs. a creature with a non-incapacitated ally within 5 ft.

Echo of Humanity. DC 12 Insight → advantage on DC 13 Animal Handling to calm; showing Vial of Moly also grants advantage.

Bite. +4, reach 5 ft. 7 (2d4+2) piercing. DC 12 STR or prone.

Enchanted Lion-Guard

Large Beast, Unaligned (enchanted) · CR 2 (450 XP)

AC 12 | HP 44 (8d10) | Speed 50 ft.

STR 17 (+3) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 8 (−1)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +4

Keen Smell. Detects Vial of Moly at 60 ft. Pounce. 20+ ft. charge + Claw hit → DC 13 STR or prone (Bite as bonus action if prone).

Echo of Humanity. DC 14 Animal Handling to calm (advantage w/ vial).

Multiattack. Claw +5 (7, 1d8+3 slashing) + Bite +5 (8, 2d4+3 piercing).

Ritual Naiad Sorceress

Medium Humanoid (Nymph), NE · CR 4 (1,100 XP)

AC 15 | HP 65 (10d8+20) | Speed 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 18 (+4)

Saves: INT +5, CHA +6 | Resist: Psychic

Ritual Focus. Disadvantage Perception while ritual active; damage → DC 12 CON or ritual interrupted.

Enchanting Presence. Init 20: 15 ft. DC 15 WIS or Charmed.

Multiattack. 2× Arcane Bolt +6, 60 ft, 12 (2d8+3) force. Charm Person (2/day) DC 15. Ritual Surge (recharge 5–6) 20 ft cone, DC 14 CON, 14 (4d6) psychic+Poisoned. Misty Step (2/day, BA) 30 ft.

Forest Nymph

Medium Humanoid (Nymph), NE · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 13 | HP 22 (4d8+4) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 14 (+2)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +5 (forest)

Forest Camouflage. Advantage on Stealth in forest terrain.

Thorn Lash. +5, reach 10 ft, 7 (1d8+3) piercing, pulls 10 ft. Glamour Gaze (recharge 5–6) DC 12 WIS or disadvantage next attack/save.

Circe, Enchantress of Aeaea

Medium Humanoid (Demigoddess), CN · CR 8 (3,900 XP)

AC 16 | HP 130 (20d8+40) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 18 (+4) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 20 (+5)

Saves: INT +8, WIS +7, CHA +9 | Immune: Poison, Charmed, Frightened | Truesight 30 ft.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). Sorceress's Focus: DC 18 within 10 ft of Cauldron, else 16. Moly Vulnerability: vial poured within 20 ft → 55 (10d10) psychic, loses Focus & Transform. Curse; ≤30 HP surrenders next turn.

Multiattack. 2× Wand +9, 60 ft, 16 (2d10+5) psychic, DC 16 WIS or Charmed. Transformation Curse (recharge 5–6) DC 16 WIS or pig 1 min. Enchanting Goblet (1/day) opposed CHA vs Ath/Acro, lose → pig 1 hr.

BA: Shadow Step 30 ft from sconce/Cauldron. Reaction: Counterspell (3/day). Legendary (3/rd): Whispered Hex (1), Command Thrall (1), Cauldron Pulse (2) — 20 ft, DC 15 WIS, 21 (6d6) psychic+Frightened.

Handmaiden Enchantress

Medium Humanoid (Nymph), NE · CR 3 (700 XP)

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

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 18 (+4)

Saves: WIS +3, CHA +6 | Resist: Psychic

Enchanting Aura. Start turn within 10 ft: DC 14 WIS or Charmed (can't attack her).

Multiattack. 2× Charming Touch +6, 9 (1d10+4) psychic, DC 14 WIS or Charmed. Slumber Draught (recharge 6) +6, DC 14 CON or Unconscious 1 min. BA: Disengage.

Key Item

◆ Vial of Moly

Wondrous Item · Session MacGuffin

Note (17 words, given at Mithaven): "Against the witch's power: anoint thyself, pour the rest in her fire. The gods watch."

Anoint (Bonus Action, no depletion): touch a willing creature, advantage on WIS saves vs. enchantment/polymorph for 24 hrs.

Calm Beast: holding it near enchanted beasts grants advantage on Animal Handling to calm them.

Pour into Cauldron (Action, depletes, adjacency): triggers Circe's Moly Vulnerability — see Encounter 3. All transformed creatures on Aeaea revert immediately; Cauldron cracks and goes cold.

NPC Quick Reference

 Emeron (Hermes in Disguise)

Quest Giver · Mithaven Tavern

Appearance: silver-tongued merchant; winged sandals that float above the floor; a caduceus-shaped walking stick that vanishes when he departs.

Secret: he is Hermes. DC 20 Insight or Religion notices the divine tells. He will neither confirm nor deny if pressed.

If confronted: "A merchant? Yes. That is what I am. Now — do you want the vial, or would you prefer to debate my footwear?"

Gives the party: the Vial of Moly, with the parting line "Pour the white sap in her fire. The gods are watching."

 Demetrios, Wolf-Bound Hoplite

Medium Beast (enchanted) · Optional Ally, Encounter 1

AC 13 | HP 32 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 15 (+2) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 8 (–1)

Motivation: a former Achaean hoplite (broken sword-hilt fused to a forepaw scar), unusually intelligent for the pack — recognized with DC 13 Insight.

Recruit: DC 13 Animal Handling (advantage w/ Insight or vial) — cannot calm if he took 10+ damage.

Traits: Pack Tactics; immune to re-transformation; Loyal Guardian (advantage on attacks + immune Charmed alongside his calmer). Reverts to human when Circe is defeated/cauldron destroyed.

Bite. +4, 8 (2d4+3) piercing, DC 12 STR or prone.

Aftermath: reverts to a broad-shouldered man in his forties, offering sincere tearful gratitude — little material reward.

 Philemon, Freed Hoplite

Medium Humanoid, NG · Optional Ally, Encounter 2

AC 16 (armed) / 12 (improvised) | HP 38 (7d8+7) | Speed 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 13 (+1) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 11 (+0)

Motivation: Athenian hoplite, only 20% transformed (slight hand fur) when freed — articulate, composed, visibly furious at Circe. Joins automatically once freed, no check needed.

Traits: Brave (advantage vs. Frightened); Grateful Resolve (advantage first attack/rd; allies within 30 ft. +2 first WIS save/rd).

Spear. +5, 6 (1d6+3) piercing (–1 if improvised). **Shield Bash.** +5, 5 (1d4+3), DC 13 STR or prone.

Aftermath: safely leaves Aeaea with any other freed sailors once the session resolves.

Session Aftermath & Hooks

Circe's palace holds spell components, rare herbs, and a library of transformation scrolls (DM discretion on loot — the knowledge is dangerous in the wrong hands).

If asked about other threats at sea, Circe offers one cryptic but accurate hint as a hook for a future session.

Reward totals: 5,300 XP (full combat resolution) or 2,650 XP (moly-only resolution), plus palace loot at DM discretion.

Weave of Arachne

A stealth descent into a temple where fate is woven wrong.

Style: Shadowed temple infiltration for 6 level-8 PCs, with curse pressure and a hard unweaving finale.
Win: Steal or sever the rewritten fate-thread and leave Arachne bound to her own pattern.
Lose: The new tapestry fixes the party's names into obedient futures and spreads the curse to Mithaven.
Maguffin: Moonbone Shuttle · **Ally:** Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice · **QG:** Nikarete the Unwritten

"Do not cut the shining thread first. Find the knot that taught it pride, and pull while nobody breathes."

Major Beats

- 1. Nikarete's missing future is visible as a blank space in every reflection.
- 2. The temple punishes names, pride, and careless cutting.
- 3. Melantho proves the cult has victims inside its guards.
- 4. Arachne can be beaten by craft, humility, and escape as much as by blades.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 8
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Identical to As Written — this guide's baseline is already 6 PCs at average level 8.
Easier	APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
Harder	APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Nikarete the Unwritten hooks the party. Maguffin Moonbone Shuttle pays off in the finale against Arachne, Queen of the Wrong Weave . Recruit Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice along the way. Infiltrate a loom-temple where a spider-queen is rewriting mortal fates in thread.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Silk-Vowed Adept	med · hard · CR 3 · Temple guard
Fate-Spider Swarm	med · hard · CR 4 · Alarm hazard
Loom-Golem	med · hard · CR 7 · Pattern enforcer
Arachne, Queen of the Wrong Weave	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss weaver
Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 2

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Ally snapshot

Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Spare her after she raises an alarm, then show her Nikarete's original poem.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Hem of the Temple

Enter through laundry tunnels, copied prayers, and webbed skylights without giving the temple a true name.

- Infiltration challenge: 6 successes before 3 failures at DC 15 using Stealth, Deception, Arcana, or Weaver's Tools.
- Speaking a true name aloud gives the Fate-Spider Swarm advantage when it appears.
- The Moonbone Shuttle lifts one alarm thread for an automatic success.
- Non-combat route: present a flawless false prayer to make Silk-Vowed Adepts escort the party inward.

Encounter 2 — Novices at the Pattern Wells

Search wells of reflected lives for Nikarete's stolen future while novices decide whether to betray the party.

- Investigation/Arcana DC 16 finds the true name-knot; each failure adds 1 curse mark to a PC.
- Recruit Melantho by sparing her and showing the poem, which lets her lower a bell-web.
- The Loom-Golem animates if two bell-webs ring or if a fate-thread is cut with a mundane blade.
- The Moonbone Shuttle can move a curse mark from a PC onto a blank spool.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Temple guide and curse-break witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Spare her after she raises an alarm, then show her Nikarete's original poem.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Arachne's Unfinished Tapestry

Confront the spider-queen at the great loom while the party's futures appear in unfinished thread.

- At initiative 20, Arachne weaves a doom line; 4 doom lines finish the curse unless disrupted.
- The Moonbone Shuttle carries Nikarete's true name through three crossings to sever the false fate.
- Win by completing the three crossings, binding Arachne in her own pride-knot, or escaping with the true thread.
- Killing Arachne leaves the tapestry thrashing; someone must still unweave or bear the curse.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Temple guide and curse-break witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Spare her after she raises an alarm, then show her Nikarete's original poem.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Temple guide and curse-break witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Spare her after she raises an alarm, then show her Nikarete's original poem.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Temple guide and curse-break witness

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Silk-Vowed Adept** — AC 15 | HP 68 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Temple guard
- **Fate-Spider Swarm** — AC 14 | HP 91 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Alarm hazard
- **Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice** — AC 14 | HP 62 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Temple guide a
- **Loom-Golem** — AC 18 | HP 152 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 7 · Pattern enforcer
- **Arachne, Queen of the Wrong Weave** — AC 17 | HP 188 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss weaver · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation.** She wants her stolen future back before her unborn child is woven into Arachne's service.
- Secret.** One stanza of her poem insulted Athena and invited the loom-temple's attention.
- Hard rule.** She will not accept a rescue that simply transfers her curse to another innocent name.
- Appearance.** White bone shuttle threaded with a hairline of moon-silver.
- Handout.** "Pass under, pass over, pass through the lie; the third crossing remembers the true name."
- Enc. 1–2.** Lets a PC lift one thread without touching it, granting advantage on Stealth or Arcana at a loom.
- Enc. 3.** Can carry the true name through Arachne's web, severing the rewritten fate without killing her.
- 14 (+2)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**10 (+0)**INT**11 (+0)**WIS**10 (+0)**CHA
- Note.** Will accept a perfect weaving sample instead of a fight.
- Note.** Tracks names spoken aloud in the temple.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Temple guide and curse-break witness

AC 14 | HP 62 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Spare her after she raises an alarm, then show her Nikarete's original poem.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Needle dagger +7 to hit, 10 piercing plus 7 poison; can lower one web alarm.

Silk-Vowed Adept CR 3

Medium Creature · Temple guard

AC 15 | HP 68 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Will accept a perfect weaving sample instead of a fight.

Attack. Spindle blade +6 to hit, 12 slashing and marks a thread.

Fate-Spider Swarm CR 4

Medium Creature · Alarm hazard

AC 14 | HP 91 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Tracks names spoken aloud in the temple.

Attack. Biting skein +6 to hit, 18 poison and disadvantage on next save vs curse.

Loom-Golem CR 7

Medium Creature · Pattern enforcer

AC 18 | HP 152 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Repeats the last action used against it unless the pattern is disrupted.

Attack. Warp beam +8 to hit, 22 force and restrains with thread.

Arachne, Queen of the Wrong Weave CR 10

Large Creature · Boss weaver · Boss

AC 17 | HP 188 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Preferred victory is unweaving the false fate, binding her loom, or escaping with the true thread.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Fate thread +9 to hit, 18 psychic plus 10 poison and swaps two creatures' positions.

Advance (1). (Legendary Actions) Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- Melantho - AC 14/HP 62 - lowers one web alarm
- Silk-Vowed Adept - AC 15/HP 68 - marks fate threads
- Fate-Spider Swarm - AC 14/HP 91 - name-tracking poison
- Loom-Golem - AC 18/HP 152 - restraining warp beam
- Arachne - AC 17/HP 188 - doom line weaving

Maguffin

Moonbone Shuttle

- Lets a PC lift one thread without touching it, granting advantage on Stealth or Arcana at a loom.
- Can carry the true name through Arachne's web, severing the rewritten fate without killing her.

NPC / ALLY**Nikarete the Unwritten**

- She wants her stolen future back before her unborn child is woven into Arachne's service.
- She will not accept a rescue that simply transfers her curse to another innocent name.

Melantho, Spider-Touched Novice

- Recruit Enc. 2: Spare her after she raises an alarm, then show her Nikarete's original poem.
- AC 14 · HP 62 · Needle dagger +7 to hit, 10 piercing plus 7 poison; can lower one web alarm.

Remember

- Steal or sever the rewritten fate-thread and leave Arachne bound to her own pattern.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

Wings Over the Wine-Dark Sea

One-Shot · 6 Players · Level 8 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Trireme Naval · Harpies / Sirens / Jelly-witches

Style: Aerial → Charm → Aberrant Boss | **Win:** Defeat Fog-Mother Lampetia (0 HP or sink fog-skiff + Conch pulse while she is aboard)
Ship: Main 40×50 + bow 15 + stern 25 = **90 ft** · center mast · **15 ft ram** · optional 2nd ship fog-skiff (30×15). Entirely shipboard.

"When wings blot the sail and the sea begins to sing, breathe this shell — deafness is mercy, and mercy is a blade." — *Conch of Relative Silence*

Major Beats

- 1. Mist-trireme: Thetis-touched envoy + Conch maguffin.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Harpies dive the sail (3 sections AC 11 / HP 15).
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Sirens (Mermaids) + merman consorts — song vs. steel / skill path.
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Fog-skiff; Lampetia + jelly-witches + harpies.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Med	Hard	Mini
Harpy	4	6	8	×10
Siren (Mermaid)	2	3	4	×4
Consort (Merman)	1	2	3	×3
Jelly-Witch	2	3	4	Jelly caster ×5
Lampetia (Boss)	1 adj	1	1	Boss jelly staging
Sea Spirit (optional)	0–2	0–3	0–5	×5

Difficulty Scaling

Tier	Adjust
Easy	Enc1: 4 harpies · Enc2: 2 sirens · Enc3: Lampetia HP 120, no LA, 2 witches
Medium ★	As written
Hard	Enc1: 8 harpies · Enc3: +1 witch; Lampetia LR 3; Dirge recharge 4–6

Through Misthaven’s mist the party is already aboard their trireme when a Thetis-touched envoy warns that a siren chorus — amplified by jellyfish fog-witches — is hunting sails. Optional sea spirits may aid or clutter the fog. All three encounters play on the wine-dark deck under wings and song. Main deck 40×50 ft · raised bow +15 ft · raised stern +25 ft · 90 ft total length (tapered ends) · center mast/sail · 15 ft ram at bow. Board supports up to 2 additional ships . Optional 2nd ship: a low fog-skiff (30×15 ft) carrying jelly-witches in Enc. 3.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Harpy	4 · 6 · 8 · Enc. 1 / 3
Siren	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 2
Siren Consort	1 · 2 · 3 · Enc. 2
Jelly-Witch	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 3
Lampetia	1 adj · 1 · 1 · Boss

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs –2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

Encounter 1 — Talons on the Sail

6× Harpies dive from fog. Win: drive them off; keep ≥1 sail section intact for a long rest before Enc. 2.

- Luring Song DC 11 targets crew first.
- Athletics DC 12 to climb rigging (½ cover).
- Non-combat: Performance DC 14 contest vs. song to confuse 2 harpies into leaving (1/encounter).
- ≥1 sail survives → Long Rest. All destroyed → Short Rest only (row).

Encounter 2 — The Sea Begins to Sing

Overview 3× Sirens + 2× Consorts approach the ram and stern. Fog banks roll in (light obscurement). ☠️ Terrain Trireme + water within 20 ft. Overboard: Athletics DC 13 to climb the ram or oar-ports. · 3× Sirens + 2× Consorts approach the ram and stern. Fog banks roll in (light obscurement).

- Non-combat path: Group challenge — stop ears / outing them (Performance/Religion/Conch) 4 successes before 3 failures (DC 14). Success: sirens withdraw; gain clue about Fog-Mother.
- Combat path: song + boarding. Conch pulses auto-succeed song saves in 10 ft for 1 round.
- RECRUITMENT: Spare a siren → Enc. 3 warning (adv Insight vs Lampetia's illusion fog).
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT. If spared after Enc. 2 and Persuasion/Performance DC 14, one siren may warn of the Fog-Mother (adv on Enc. 3 Insight).
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Encounter 3 — Fog-Mother Lampetia (Boss)

Chorus Nexus. While ≥1 Siren is within 60 ft., her Siren Dirge DC is 16 instead of 15. · A fog-skiff (2nd ship, 30×15) grapples the starboard rail. Lampetia + 3× Jelly-Witches + 2× Harpies .

- Win: Lampetia 0 HP or skiff sunk (HP 50) while she is aboard and Conch pulse used → she flees into the deep.
- Conch finale pulse: once, as item card.
- Persistence: no gods slain; Fog-Mother is aberrant, killable.

DM Callouts

- RECRUITMENT. If spared after Enc. 2 and Persuasion/Performance DC 14, one siren may warn of the Fog-Mother (adv on Enc. 3 Insight).
- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Harpy** — AC 11 | HP 38 (7d8+7) | Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. · Medium Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil · CR 1 (200 XP) · Mini ×10
- **Siren (Mermaid reskin)** — AC 13 | HP 45 (7d8+14) | Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft. · Medium Fey, Chaotic Neutral · CR 2 (450 XP) · Mini: Mermaid
- **Siren Consort (Merman)** — AC 14 (sharkskin) | HP 32 (5d8+10) | Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · CR 1 (200 XP) · Mini ×3
- **Lampetia, Fog-Mother of Sirens** — AC 16 | HP 161 (14d10+84) | Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover) · Large Aberration (Jelly-Queen), Chaotic Evil · CR 9 (5,000 X)
- **Thalassic Jelly-Witch** — AC 13 | HP 58 (9d8+18) | Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover, fog only) · Medium Aberration, Neutral Evil · CR 3 (700 XP) · Mini: Jelly
- **Sea Spirit (Lesser Nereid)** — AC 12 | HP 22 (5d8) | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft. · Medium Fey, Chaotic Neutral · CR 1/2 · Mini ×5

Additional DM notes

- ****Non-combat:**** Performance DC 14 contest vs. song to confuse 2 harpies into leaving (1/encounter).
- 12 (+1)**STR**13 (+1)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**7 (−2)**INT**10 (+0)**WIS**13 (+1)**CHA
- Skills:** Performance +5
- Luring Song.** 30 ft.; DC 11 Wisdom. Charmed + incapacitated, move toward harpy. Repeat end of turn. Ends if damage taken / deafened.
- Sail Priority.** On the trireme, harpies attack the sail unless a PC is in melee reach.
- ****Non-combat path:**** Group challenge — stop ears / outing them (Performance/Religion/Conch) 4 successes before 3 failures (DC 14). Success: sirens withdraw; gain clue about Fog-Mother.
- ****Combat path:**** song + boarding. Conch pulses auto-succeed song saves in 10 ft for 1 round.
- ****RECRUITMENT:**** Spare a siren → Enc. 3 warning (adv Insight vs Lampetia's illusion fog).
- 10 (+0)**STR**16 (+3)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**13 (+1)**WIS**18 (+4)**CHA
- Skills:** Performance +8, Persuasion +6 | ****Magic Resistance:**** adv on saves vs spells

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Harpy CR1

Medium Monstrosity · Mini ×10

AC 11 | HP 38 | Fly 40

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 7 (−2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 13 (+1)

- Song Wis DC 11 · Claws +3 (2d4+1) · Club +3 · Sail priority

Siren (Mermaid) CR2

Medium Fey · Mini: Mermaid ×4

AC 13 | HP 45 | Swim 40

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 18 (+4)

- Song Wis DC 14 · Magic Res · 2× Dagger +5 · Embrace 5–6 Str DC 13

Siren Consort CR1

Medium Humanoid · Mini: Merman ×3

AC 14 | HP 32 | Swim 40

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

- Trident +4 · Net 1/day Dex DC 12

Jelly-Witch CR3

Medium Aberration · Mini: Jelly caster ×5

AC 13 | HP 58 | Hover in fog

STR 8 (−1) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)

- 2× Tendril +5 (1d8+3 +2d6 poison, Con DC 13) · Fog cloud 2/day · Sting aura 1d6

Lampetia CR9 BOSS

Large Aberration · LR 2

AC 16 | HP 161 | Fly/Swim 30–40

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 18 (+4) · **Saves** Dex +7, Wis +7, Cha +8 | Resistances: lightning, psychic, BPS nonmagical | LR 2/day

- 3× Tendril +8 (2d8+3 +3d6 poison) · Dirge Wis DC 15 (R5–6) · Sow 2 witches 1/day · LA

Sea Spirit CR1/2

Optional ally clutter · Mini ×5

AC 12 | HP 22

- Hide in fog · Recruit Pers DC 12 → extinguish sail fire once

KEY ITEM / NPC

Conch of Relative Silence

- Wondrous Item (maguffin)*
- 1/SR: you + allies ≤10 ft auto-succeed song saves until end of your next turn.
 - Finale once: witches/sirens Con **DC 15** lose song/concentration 1 rd; 20 thunder to Lampetia ≤30 ft.

Thetis-Touched Envoy

- **Motivation:** Stop siren-queen song before next convoy dies.
- **Secret:** Song amplified by jellyfish-fog witches bound to the queen.

Ship Reminder

- 40×50 +15 +25 = 90 ft · ram 15 ft · ≤2 extra ships · fog-skiff optional Enc. 3.

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Apples of the West

A sunset orchard heist at the edge of Oceanus.

Style: Mythic island heist for 6 level-8 PCs, paced for 3 to 3.5 hours with stealth-first solutions.
Win: Escape the western orchard with three apples while Ladon remains asleep, bound, or misdirected.
Lose: Ladon fully wakes, the island folds into sunset, and the crew flees with a curse or no apples.
Maguffin: Sunset Shears · **Ally:** Aegle, Doubting Hesperid · **QG:** Mnestra of Misthaven

"Three sunsets, three fruits, three breaths: take only what the mist names, or the dragon remembers every thief."

Major Beats

1. Mnestra names the three fruits and the taboo against killing the guardian.
2. The island watches the party's shadows before it watches their bodies.
3. Aegle reveals one sister wants the theft blamed on her.
4. The final choice is speed, mercy, or bargaining under Ladon's waking eyes.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Dial back: reduce boss HP ~20–25%, cut one legendary action option or recharge breath to 6 only; Favor/track thresholds –1 where present; skill DCs –1.
Easier	APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
Harder	APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Mnestra of Misthaven hooks the party. Maguffin Sunset Shears pays off in the finale against Ladon, Hundred-Eyed Dragon . Recruit Aegle, Doubting Hesperid along the way.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Branchbound Watcher	med · hard · CR 3 · Patrol brute
Jealous Thorn-Nymph	med · hard · CR 4 · Social hazard and skirmisher
Dream-Moth Swarm	med · hard · CR 5 · Sleep alarm
Ladon, Hundred-Eyed Dragon	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss guardian
Aegle, Doubting Hesperid	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 1

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 10:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 10.
- **Easier:** APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
- **Harder:** APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Maguffin detail

Sunset Shears

- Appearance: Tiny bronze pruning shears warm as late afternoon.
- Handout. "Cut the stem, not the fruit; cut the shadow, not the throat."
- Enc. 1–2. Advantage on one Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Wisdom (Perception) check involving orchard wards.

Ally snapshot

Aegle, Doubting Hesperid

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Orchard That Notices

Land under a copper sunset and cross talking terraces before the island decides the crew are thieves.

- Run 6 successes before 3 failures using Stealth, Nature, Perception, Deception, or Performance DC 15.
- A failure wakes a Branchbound Watcher; two failures light a ward-lantern visible in Encounter 3.
- The Sunset Shears can quietly trim a ward-vine for one automatic success.
- Recruit Aegle by proving the tracks were planted or by swearing the three-apple limit.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide and alarm-saboteur
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Sisters at the Golden Bough

Negotiate, distract, or duel the Hesperides' court while the named apples ripen one at a time.

- Social route: 4 successes before 2 failures at DC 16 earns ten quiet minutes at the bough.
- Combat route uses Thorn-Nymphs and Dream-Moths; each thunder spell or fire burst adds 1 wake token.
- Aegle can erase one wake token if a PC spends an action protecting her from accusation.
- Each apple takes an action and DC 15 Sleight of Hand, or automatic success with the shears.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide and alarm-saboteur
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Ladon Opens One Hundred Eyes

The dragon stirs as the crew races from the bough to the surf with golden fruit burning in hand.

- At initiative 20, add a wake token; at 4 tokens Ladon acts at full strength.
- The Sunset Shears cut a dream-vine, removing 2 wake tokens or preventing a breath weapon once.
- Win by escaping with all three apples, binding Ladon for 3 rounds, or trading one apple for safe passage.
- If reduced below half HP, Ladon roars; every PC must save DC 16 Wis or drop an apple or treasured item.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide and alarm-saboteur
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide and alarm-saboteur
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide and alarm-saboteur

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Aegle, Doubting Hesperid** — AC 15 | HP 66 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide a
- **Branchbound Watcher** — AC 16 | HP 76 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Patrol brute
- **Jealous Thorn-Nymph** — AC 15 | HP 88 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Social hazard and skirmisher
- **Dream-Moth Swarm** — AC 14 | HP 95 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 5 · Sleep alarm
- **Ladon, Hundred-Eyed Dragon** — AC 18 | HP 205 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss guardian · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation:** She needs the apples to ransom sailors trapped in a winter that will not end.
- Secret:** Her map was bought from a Hesperid who wants one sister discredited, not harmed.
- Hard rule:** She forbids killing Ladon; a dead guardian calls Hera's whole gaze westward.
- Appearance:** Tiny bronze pruning shears warm as late afternoon.
- Handout:** "Cut the stem, not the fruit; cut the shadow, not the throat."
- Enc. 1–2:** Advantage on one Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Wisdom (Perception) check involving orchard wards.
- Enc. 3:** Cut one dream-vine on Ladon; it loses a legendary reaction and cannot awaken fully for 1 round.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Inside guide and alarm-saboteur
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1):** Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Aegle, Doubting Hesperid

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Inside guide and alarm-saboteur

AC 15 | HP 66 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Star-thorn bow +7 to hit, 9 piercing plus 7 radiant; can also dim one ward-lantern.

Branchbound Watcher CR 4

Medium Creature · Patrol brute

AC 16 | HP 118 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Stops pursuit if shown a properly cut golden leaf.

Attack. Root lash +7 to hit, 15 bludgeoning and target is grappled (escape DC 14).

Jealous Thorn-Nymph CR 5

Medium Creature · Social hazard and skirmisher

AC 15 | HP 108 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Can be bargained past with praise, secrets, or a stolen mirror.

Attack. Thorn kiss DC 16 Con, 21 poison and poisoned until next turn.

Dream-Moth Swarm CR 6

Medium Creature · Sleep alarm

AC 14 | HP 118 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Fire drives it off but risks waking Ladon.

Attack. Dust cloud DC 16 Wis, 24 psychic and slowed by drowsiness.

Ladon, Hundred-Eyed Dragon CR 12

Large Creaturestaged · Boss guardian · Boss

AC 19 | HP 298 (17d12+187) | Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)
· **Saves** Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +7 — **Saves** Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +7

Hundred Eyes. Advantage on Perception; creatures he can see have disadvantage on Stealth checks to hide from him.

Note. Preferred victory is sleep, bind, distract, or escape before full awakening.

Deadly pressure. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill. At initiative 20 (lair), Orchard Tremor or Lantern Wake (see Enc. 3).

Multiattack. Two Bites.

Session reminders

- Aegle - AC 15/HP 66 - dims one ward-lantern
- Branchbound Watcher - AC 16/HP 76 - grappling root lash
- Jealous Thorn-Nymph - AC 15/HP 88 - poison charm pressure
- Dream-Moth Swarm - AC 14/HP 95 - sleep dust alarm
- Ladon - AC 18/HP 205 - waking eye tokens

Maguffin

Sunset Shears

- Advantage on one Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Wisdom (Perception) check involving orchard wards.
- Cut one dream-vine on Ladon; it loses a legendary reaction and cannot awaken fully for 1 round.

NPC / ALLY

Mnestra of Mithaven

- She needs the apples to ransom sailors trapped in a winter that will not end.
- She forbids killing Ladon; a dead guardian calls Hera's whole gaze westward.

Aegle, Doubting Hesperid

- Recruit Enc. 1: Expose the false serpent tracks without blaming her, or promise to take only three named apples.
- AC 15 · HP 66 · Star-thorn bow +7 to hit, 9 piercing plus 7 radiant; can also dim one ward-lantern.

Remember

- Escape the western orchard with three apples while Ladon remains asleep, bound, or misdirected.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Fleece of Colchis

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 10 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Heist · Steal the Golden Fleece

Style: Harbor → Palace/Seals → Grove extraction | **Win:** Fleece on the Phasis skiff
Maguffin: Ram’s Bell of Phrixus · **Ally:** Medea · **QG:** Hera (Lady Argive)

"Ring once at the root of the golden oak — not thrice — and even sleepless lids grow heavy for a breath."

Major Beats

- 1. Hera: steal the Fleece before Aeëtes sows a war-army.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Harbor guards + bronze calf; Alarm carries.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Recruit Medea; Blood / Fire / Night seals.
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Bell → Cut → skiff; manage Alarm / Spartoi.

Alarm Track

Alarm	Effect
3	2 Spartoi spawn
5	+2 Spartoi; breath R4–6
7+	Muster — board or soft loss

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Dial back: reduce boss HP ~20–25%, cut one legendary action option or recharge breath to 6 only; Favor/track thresholds –1 where present; skill DCs –1.
Easier	APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
Harder	APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Hera (as Lady Argive) warns that Aeëtes would sow war from the sacred oak. Mist opens on the harbor of Aea. Slip the watch, court Medea in the pharmacy, open the Three Seals of Ares, and lift the Fleece from under the sleepless dragon — then run for the river before Spartoi claw up from the teeth.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Harbor Guard	3 · 4 · 5 · Enc. 1
Bronze Bull Calf	0 · 1 · 1 · Enc. 1
Palace Sentinel	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 2
Medea	1 · 1 · Recruit
Sleepless Dragon	adj · 1 · 1 · Enc. 3
Spartoi	0–2 · 2–4 · 4–6 · Alarm spawns

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 10:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 10.
- **Easier:** APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
- **Harder:** APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Encounter 1 — Harbor Shadows

☠️ Terrain Docks 60×40 · crates (½ cover) · 10-ft water edge · calf at the inland gate · horn-post center pier. · Night on the Phasis docks. 4× Colchian Harbor Guards pace the pier; 1× Bronze Bull Calf heats the customs gate. Tribute wagons and fishing smoke offer cover.

- Non-combat: Disguise as tribute-bearers — group Deception/Stealth 3 before 3 (DC 13) while one PC distracts the calf (Animal Handling or Ram’s Bell). Success: enter city at Alarm 0.
- Alarm Track starts here: Horn or open melee +1 each. Carry 0–2 into Enc. 2/3.
- Quiet entry: If Alarm stays 0, Medea’s Enc. 2 recruit DC is 12 and she gifts one Salve use early.
- Bribe: 50 gp + Persuasion DC 14 silences one guard pair for 10 minutes.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Encounter 2 — Pharmacy, Seals, and a Princess

☠️ Terrain Wing 50×40 · pharmacy alcove · pantry · brazier niche · seal lintel corridor · balcony drop 20 ft. to gardens. · Aeëtes’s palace wing smells of resins and bronze. Medea works late among vials. Beyond her door, the Three Seals of Ares bar the grove causeway. 3× Palace Sentinels rotate.

- RECRUIT MEDEA: Persuasion DC 14 (DC 12 if Enc. 1 Alarm 0). Vow: no massacre, Fleece leaves Colchis. Success → she joins Enc. 3.
- Seals puzzle: Blood / Fire / Night (see seal card). Night auto-opens with one careful Ram’s Bell ring against the recess.
- Combat path: fight sentinels; each round of open battle in the wing Alarm +1. Medea may still recruit if spared and persuaded after.
- Aeëtes is holding court elsewhere — do not stage his death. If the party seeks him, a glimpse and a shouted order raise Alarm +2 and force a retreat to the seals.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid (sorceress of Colchis), Chaotic Neutral · Recruitable Ally
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Found in the palace pharmacy. Persuasion DC 14 (DC 12 if Enc. 1 raised no Alarm) and a vow not to butcher Colchians needlessly. She joins Enc. 3 with Salve and Countersong.
- *Tip:* If not recruited. A sealed vial of Salve can still be stolen (Sleight DC 15) — no Countersong, Fleece Cut without her aid.

Encounter 3 — The Golden Oak (Final Heist)

☠️ Terrain Grove 80×60 · oak center (difficult roots 10 ft) · brush patches · shrine with false fleece · skiff 80 ft south along a 10-ft path. · The grove breathes gold. The sleepless dragon coils the oak where the Fleece hangs. River mist waits south — the extraction skiff rocks against black reeds.

- Suggested order: Bell (Drowsy) → Salve/Cut → False Fleece feint → dash for skiff.
- Win: Fleece on the skiff + ≥1 PC aboard and free of the coils. Mist closes; Hera’s bargain is kept.
- Dragon at 0 HP dies — allowed, but note Hera’s silence. Prefer Drowsy escape.
- *Tip:* 1. Ram’s Bell. Drowsy the dragon (see maguffin). Once preferred.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid (sorceress of Colchis), Chaotic Neutral · Recruitable Ally
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Found in the palace pharmacy. Persuasion DC 14 (DC 12 if Enc. 1 raised no Alarm) and a vow not to butcher Colchians needlessly. She joins Enc. 3 with Salve and Countersong.
- *Tip:* If not recruited. A sealed vial of Salve can still be stolen (Sleight DC 15) — no Countersong, Fleece Cut without her aid.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Medium Humanoid (sorceress of Colchis), Chaotic Neutral · Recruitable Ally
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Found in the palace pharmacy. Persuasion DC 14 (DC 12 if Enc. 1 raised no Alarm) and a vow not to butcher Colchians needlessly. She joins Enc. 3 with Salve and Countersong.
- If not recruited. A sealed vial of Salve can still be stolen (Sleight DC 15) — no Countersong, Fleece Cut without her aid.

STAT BLOCKS

Sleepless Dragon CR9

AC 17 | HP 168 | Climb 40 · LR 2

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 12 (+1)
· **Saves** Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +7

- Bite +9 (2d10+5 +2d6 poison) · Tail · Goldfire R5–6 Dex DC 16 (8d6) · Coil restrain DC 16 · Drowsy from Bell/Salve

Medea (Ally)

AC 14 | HP 78 | Cha 18 · Spell DC 15

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 18 (+4)
· **Saves** Wis +5, Cha +7

- Salve ×3 · Countersong 1/enc · Mist Step 2/rest · Poison dagger

Harbor Guard CR2

AC 15 | HP 39

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

- 2× Spear +4 · Alarm Horn

Bronze Bull Calf CR3

AC 16 | HP 52 | Speed 40

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 3 (–4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 1 (–5)

- Gore +6 · Stomp R5–6 · Heated Hide

Palace Sentinel CR3

AC 16 | HP 58

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

- 2× Kopis +5 · Net 1/day

Spartoi CR2

AC 14 | HP 32

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 11 (+0) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 6 (–2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 5 (–3)

- Sword + bash · Vulnerable bludgeoning · Alarm spawns

TOOLS / NPC**Ram's Bell of Phrixus**

- Enc. 3: ring once → Drowsy Con **DC 16** · twice/thrice Alarm +2

Golden Fleece

- Cut free Ath/Sleight **DC 15** · sheds light · win on skiff

Seals of Ares

- Blood / Fire / Night · Night = Bell · Force Str **DC 18**

Hera (Lady Argive)

- Steal, don't sack. Mist-exit after river extraction.

Remember

- Heist first. Sleep the dragon. Medea is the pharmacy key.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Unquiet Asphodel

One-Shot · 6 PCs · Lvl 8 · Underworld Mystery · ~3–3.5 hrs · + Optional Cerberus

Style: Ferry → Investigation → Stall Boss | **Win:** Force **Persephone** to leave initiative (unkillable) | **Setting:** Misthaven mist → Charon → Asphodel → Queen's garden.
Hermes gives **Obol of True Passage**. Rising dead are Persephone's secret necromancy. **Asclepius** allies. Stall until **Hades** arrives — or take optional **Cerberus** path.

"When the queen's garden sings with stolen breath, press this eye to the ferry-bell — the husband hears iron before lies." — **Obol** (22 words).

Major Beats

- 1. Misthaven — Hermes + Obol; mist.
- 2. Charon greets; fare paid.
- 3. **Enc. 1 — Teeth on the Styx:** Harryhausen skeletons.
- 4. **Enc. 2 — Healer in Asphodel:** Asclepius; death dogs + wraiths; clues.
- 5. **Enc. 3 — Queen's Garden:** Persephone stall; Arrival clock.
- 6. **Optional:** Cerberus Triple Gate — alternate Hades call.

Creature List

Creature	E	M	H	Notes
Hydra-Tooth Skeleton	4	6	8	Harryhausen; reassemble
Death Dog	2	3	4	Enc. 2
Stygian Wraith	1	2	2	Enc. 2 / Enc. 3
Persephone	1	1	1	Unkilleable; Threshold
Cerberus	—	opt	opt	Optional alt resolution

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Dial back: reduce boss HP ~20–25%, cut one legendary action option or recharge breath to 6 only; Favor/track thresholds –1 where present; skill DCs –1.
Easier	APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
Harder	APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Mystery truth: Persephone is a secret necromancer/summoner. Olympus & Hades unaware. Do not kill gods — stall / jurisdiction.

The dead are rising into the living world with stolen breath. Guided through Misthaven's mist, the party is met by Charon and ferried into an Underworld that should be orderly — and is not. Clues point past plague-hounds and tooth-sown skeletons toward the Queen's private garden, where Persephone hides a necromancer's craft from Olympus and from her husband. Misthaven tavern (or mist-trireme). Hands the Obol of True Passage . Sends them through the mist — Charon waits on the other side.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Hydra-Tooth Skeleton	4 · 6 · 8 · Enc. 1 / Persephone summons
Death Dog	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 2
Stygian Wraith	1 · 2 · 2 · Enc. 2
Persephone	1 · 1 · 1 · Unkilleable stall boss
Cerberus	opt · opt · Optional alternate resolution

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 10:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 10.
- **Easier:** APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
- **Harder:** APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Encounter 1 — Teeth on the Styx

Styx channel + landing — skiff 20×10 ft ; shore 80×40 ft; deep water = Styx hazard. · Through the mist: black sand, cold fog, and Charon poling his skiff. He accepts the Obol as fare for all. Mid-crossing — or on the Asphodel landing — sown Hydra-Tooth Skeletons erupt from the bank (Harryhausen drill-skeletons: clacking ranks, reforming bones).

- Style: Ferry set-piece / shore skirmish
- Win Condition: Reach Asphodel's path with the party aboard or ashore; Charon will not fight for them unless the boat itself is boarded
- Fall in: DC 15 Con or 4d6 necrotic + restrained by currents (Athletics DC 14 to climb out)
- Ferry-bell on the prow (Obol can strike it later — not yet for Hades)
- Non-combat: Charon can beach early if Persuasion DC 14 + another coin (or spare truth-toll promise). Skeletons still rise on shore — Religion DC 14 to identify tooth-sowing; burning the bone piles (action, fire) stops reassemble.
- Combat: Skeletons board or charge. Pack Drill + reassemble (d6=6) until bludgeoned/burned.
- Charon: If a skeleton damages the skiff (AC 15 / HP 40), he uses Styx Lash once, then demands the living finish it.
- Clue: skeletons' teeth are pomegranate-stained (Investigation DC 12) — floral necromancy, not Hades' usual law.

Encounter 2 — The Healer in Asphodel

☠️ Terrain & Features Asphodel field — 110×70 ft ; mist banks (light obscurement), healer's tent (¾ cover), bone cairns, path split: Garden Road vs Kennel Road (Cerberus optional). · Pale asphodel meadows. Asclepius tends a shade-plague tent, tracking stolen vitality. Packs of Death Dogs and a Stygian Wraith (or two) harass his work — herded, he notes, by flower-sweet whispers from the Queen's direction. Lydia the shade can testify if calmed.

- Style: Investigation skirmish / escort the healer
- Win Condition: Protect Asclepius, gather 3 mystery clues, and learn the garden ferry-bell exists (or the Cerberus road)
- Asclepius Diagnostic Gaze / Medicine DC 14: wounds show healing inverted into undeath .
- Shade Witness Persuasion/Religion DC 13: flower-crowned sowers after midnight.
- Survival DC 14: tracks of bare divine feet + dragging bone sacks toward the pomegranate garden.
- Arcana DC 15 on a dog collar: royal seal of the Queen, not Hades' helm-mark.
- Death Dogs try to drag Asclepius off; wraiths Life Drain the dying shades.
- Animal Handling DC 15 (adv with Obol scent) can turn one Death Dog for 1 minute.

Encounter 3 — The Queen's Garden (Boss)

☠️ Terrain & Features Queen's garden court — 100×80 ft ; pomegranate trees (½ cover; fruit = poisoned lure DC 15 Wis), tooth-furrows (DT), bronze ferry-bell on a plinth (Obol target), throne dais. · Persephone receives them among black pomegranates and tooth-furrows — gracious, then unveiled as summoner-queen. Olympus does not know. Hades does not know. She cannot be killed. The party must survive and force her off the initiative list.

- Style: Hard stall fight + ritual clock
- Win Condition: Persephone leaves initiative via Hades Arrival clock completion, successful bargain after threshold break, or Cerberus alternate jurisdiction (see optional)
- Start: Action to strike Obol on the ferry-bell (or Asclepius spends action to ring if Obol held).
- Clock: 5 rounds (see scaling). Announce on init 20.
- When clock completes: Hades arrives; Persephone leaves initiative immediately; summons fall inert; combat ends.
- Party must survive the clock — focus on control, pomegranate destroy, and not TPK.
- Reduce Pressure Threshold to 0 (180 baseline). She becomes Wrathful but still unkillable.
- Persuasion/Intimidation DC 18 (adv if pomegranate destroyed + Asclepius present): she agrees to pause summons and wait for her husband — leaves initiative in shame/fury (same end state).

DM Callouts

- RECRUITMENT. Share evidence of pomegranate-rot / queen's garden blight → he joins Enc. 3 as support healer (will not strike Persephone to kill).
- RECRUITMENT. If comforted (Persuasion/Religion DC 13), she guides the party toward Asclepius or the garden bell.
- Ally: Asclepius if recruited
- RECRUITMENT. Share evidence of pomegranate-rot / queen's garden blight → he joins Enc. 3 as support healer (will not strike Persephone to kill).

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Hydra-Tooth Skeleton

Medium Undead · CR 2 · Harryhausen

AC 14 | HP 26 | Vuln bludgeoning

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 8 (−1) · CHA 5 (−3)

- 2× Shortsword +4 (1d6+2). Pack Drill.
- Reassemble d6=6 at 1 HP unless smashed/burned.

Death Dog

AC 12 | HP 39 | CR 1 · Speed 40

STR 15 (+2) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 6 (−2)

- 2× Bite +4 (1d6+2). Both hit → Con **DC 12** disease.
- Two-Headed: adv Perception / multi-condition saves.

Stygian Wraith

AC 13 | HP 67 | CR 5 · Fly 60

STR 6 (−2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 15 (+2)

- Life Drain +6 (4d8+3 necrotic; Con **DC 14** max HP).
- Incorporeal; Create Specter 1/day.

Persephone — UNKILLABLE

Goddess · Secret necromancer · CR 12 threat

AC 18 | Threshold 180 | Fly 30

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 20 (+5) · CHA 20 (+5)
· **Saves** Dex +10, Wis +11, Cha +11 | Skills: Deception +11, Insight +11, Nature +9, Religion +9 | Resistances: necrotic, psychic; BPS from nonmagical

- Necro-Vine +10 (2d8+5 +3d6 nec; restrain Str DC 18).
- Spells DC 18: chill touch, blight, spirit guardians; 1/day circle of death.
- Sow Teeth (5–6): 1d4+1 skeletons. LR 3/day.
- LA: Vine / Whisper / Reap&Sow (2) / Wrathful (3 at Thr 0).
- **Win = leave initiative only.**

Cerberus — Optional Iconic

AC 16 | HP 178 | CR 10 · Speed 50

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 10 (+0)

- 3× Bite +10 (2d10+6); 2+ hits grapple Str DC 18.
- Roar (5–6): Wis **DC 16** fear cone.
- LA: Detect / Bite / Drag (2).
- Prefer calm/pass — not kill.

Charon

AC 16 | HP 110 · Pole +7 (2d8+3 +2d6 nec)

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 11 (+0)

Styx Lash (5–6): line Dex DC 15, 6d6 nec. Neutral witness.

KEY ITEMS

Obol of True Passage

- Pays Charon for whole party.
- Strike ferry-bell (action) → start Hades Arrival clock (once/session).
- Scent-token: adv first Animal Handling vs Cerberus (not consumed).

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Hermes Psychopomp — Quest Giver

- Mithaven → mist → Charon.
- Suspects the Queen's court; won't say her name.

Asclepius

- AC 14, HP 97. Medicine +10. Healing Touch 4d8 (3/day).
- Recruit with floral/royal clues. Won't kill Persephone.
- Cures Death Dog sleep-rot.

Hades — Resolution Device

- Not a combatant. Clock 5 rounds after bell.
- On arrive: Persephone leaves initiative; rising stops.

Shade Witness (Lydia)

- Saw flower-crowned sowers after midnight.
- Comfort Pers/Rel **DC 13** → guide.

Enable “Background graphics” in the print dialog before saving to PDF.

Three Throats at the Gate

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 10 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Subdue Cerberus (no kill) · Recruit Orpheus

Style: Mercy skirmish → Lyre/collars → Subdual finale | **Win:** Calm 8 while Cerberus HP > 0
Lose: Cerberus slain · **Maguffin:** Sop of Quiet Honey (3) · **Ally:** Orpheus · **QG:** Hermes

"Feed the quiet cake to a throat that barks for war — three mouths, three mercies, none of them a blade."

Major Beats

- 1. Hermes: soften the hound; do not kill.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Shades + Ker; nonlethal practice.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Repair lyre; recruit Orpheus; collar plaque (*sweet / song / circle*).
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Stack Calm tools to 8.

Calm Track (Win = 8)

Tool	Calm
Honey Sop / head (×3)	+2 each
Collar / head (×3)	+2 each
First Styx splash	+1
Gate Chains Bound	+2
Pull Stygian Thorn	+2
Orpheus Chord (1/enc)	+2

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Dial back: reduce boss HP ~20–25%, cut one legendary action option or recharge breath to 6 only; Favor/track thresholds –1 where present; skill DCs –1.
Easier	APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
Harder	APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Hermes (as a road-herald) warns that the Gate-hound raves with a Stygian thorn in his paw. Kill him and the dead climb. Soften him. Along the causeway, Orpheus waits with a cracked lyre — recruit the singer, claim the Triple Gate-Collars, and stack mercies until three throats sleep.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Styx Shade	3 · 4 · 5 · Enc. 1
Ker	0 · 1 · 2 · Enc. 1
Alecto's Echo	1 · 1 · 1 · Enc. 2
Orpheus	1 · 1 · Recruit
Cerberus	adj · 1 · 1 · Subdue

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 10:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 10.
- **Easier:** APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
- **Harder:** APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Encounter 1 — Shades on the Causeway

☠ Terrain Causeway 70×30 · 10-ft drops to shallow Styx-slick (difficult; 1d4 cold entering). Two broken statues (½ cover). · 4× Styx-Soaked Shades claw up from the ashen banks. 1× Ker circles, whispering to cut throats. Hermes’s rule echoes: practice mercy.

- Non-combat: Sop (1 dose) + Religion/Persuasion group 3 before 3 (DC 13) lays shades to rest; Ker still must be driven off or fought.
- Nonlethal practice: Declare nonlethal on melee that drops a shade. If ≥3 shades are spared, Orpheus’s Enc. 2 recruitment DC drops by 2.
- Ker’s Deathwish Aura punishes nonlethal — shove her away or silence her first.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique · 3 doses

Encounter 2 — The Lyre and the Collars

☠ Terrain Annex 50×40 · lyre on a plinth (AC 10 / HP 8 if smashed — Orpheus refuses to join) · plaque wall · fury perch 15 ft up. · Orpheus sits at the annex threshold, lyre cracked, refusing the Gate. Alecto’s Echo has torn a string and roosts above the instrument. A bronze plaque seals the Triple Gate-Collars .

- Lyre recovery: Defeat or bargain with the fury (offer a true apology Performance DC 15). Repair lyre: smith’s tools / mending / Performance DC 14 with spare wire from collars’ rack.
- RECRUIT ORPHEUS: Persuasion or Performance DC 14 (DC 12 if Enc. 1 mercy). He must hear that Cerberus is to be saved , not slain. Success → joins Enc. 3 with Song of Still Waters.
- Collar plaque puzzle: Inscription: “Name the mercies that are not blades: sweet / song / circle .” Speak honey, music, and ring/collar (or place sop + chord + touch the ring slot) — Investigation DC 12 for a hint. Opens collar niche.
- Combat path: fight the fury; plaque still requires the riddle (force breaks niche — DC 18 Str — but alerts Cerberus: he starts Enc. 3 with Roar charged).
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid (demigod-blooded bard), Neutral Good · Recrutable Ally
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Recover his lyre and persuade him the hound must live (Persuasion/Performance DC 14, or auto if the party refuses to kill shades needlessly). He joins Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* If not recruited. Party can still subdue Cerberus — harder. A distant chord may grant +1 Calm once as a mercy beat.

Encounter 3 — Three Throats (Final: Subdue Cerberus)

Tripartite Roar (Recharge 5–6). Each creature of his choice within 60 ft. Wis DC 16 or frightened until end of its next turn; Calm –1 (min 0) if any creature fails. · Cerberus fills the Gate court, three maws frothing, left paw bleeding ichor around a Stygian thorn. Steel can slow him — it must not finish him.

- Win: Calm ≥ 8 and HP > 0 → Cerberus sleeps; thorn removable automatically if not yet pulled; Gate stills.
- Lose: HP → 0 by damage. Nonlethal declarations do apply — if the blow that would kill is declared nonlethal, he falls to 1 HP and is stunned until end of next turn instead (teach the rule once).
- Rage: While thorn remains, +2 damage on Bites. Roar can reduce Calm by 1.
- *Tip:* Court 80×60 · three approach lanes to three heads · 3 Styx basins · 2 Gate Chain winches · thorn-paw zone south · Orpheus starts on a safe ledge if recruited.
- *Tip:* 1. Honey Sop. Feed a head — Sated (+2 Calm). See maguffin.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid (demigod-blooded bard), Neutral Good · Recrutable Ally
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Recover his lyre and persuade him the hound must live (Persuasion/Performance DC 14, or auto if the party refuses to kill shades needlessly). He joins Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* If not recruited. Party can still subdue Cerberus — harder. A distant chord may grant +1 Calm once as a mercy beat.

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique · 3 doses
- Medium Humanoid (demigod-blooded bard), Neutral Good · Recrutable Ally
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 2). Recover his lyre and persuade him the hound must live (Persuasion/Performance DC 14, or auto if the party refuses to kill shades needlessly). He joins Enc. 3.
- If not recruited. Party can still subdue Cerberus — harder. A distant chord may grant +1 Calm once as a mercy beat.

STAT BLOCKS

Cerberus (Subdue) CR10

AC 16 | HP 189 | Speed 50 · LR 2

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 10 (+0) · **Saves** Str +10, Con +9, Wis +7

- 3× Bite +9 (2d6+5 +2d6 poison DC 16) · Roar R5–6 · Thorn rage +2 dmg · LA Bite/Lunge · Win via Calm 8 not 0 HP

Orpheus (Ally)

AC 13 | HP 66 | Cha 20 · Spell DC 16

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 15 (+2) · CHA 20 (+5) · **Saves** Wis +5, Cha +8

- Song of Still Waters (Distract head) · Chord +2 Calm 1/enc · Inspire 1d8 · Countercharm

Styx Shade CR1

AC 12 | HP 27

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

- Withering Touch +4 · Wail R6 · spareable

Ker CR2

AC 13 | HP 45 | Fly 30

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 13 (+1)

- Claws + necrotic · Deathwish aura · Urge to Kill 1/day

Alecto’s Echo CR3

AC 14 | HP 58 | Fly 40

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 15 (+2)

- 2× Whip +5 · Screech R5–6

TOOLS / NPC

Sop of Quiet Honey

- 3 doses · Feed head Ath/AH **DC 14** · Sated +2 Calm

Triple Gate-Collars

- Collar head Ath/Sleight **DC 15** (adv if Sung) · +2 Calm each

Environment

- Styx basins splash · Gate chain winches Ath **DC 14** ×2 → Bound +2
- Thorn pull Ath **DC 16** · +2 Calm

Hermes

- Psychopomp quest giver — hound must live.

Remember

- 0 HP = loss. Stack mercies. Orpheus is the song layer.

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Troy's Hollow Gift

A level 8 siege infiltration about what victory is allowed to cost.

Style: Siege heist with double agents, civilian stakes, and a construct payload.
Win: Place or sabotage the wooden colossus to end the siege on the party's chosen terms without razing Troy as the victory condition.
Lose: The colossus becomes an excuse for massacre, the party is named as the betrayal, and both armies learn the wrong lesson.
Maguffin: Cedar Heart-Key · **Ally:** Cassandra, Unbelieved Witness · **QG:** Sinon, Professional Survivor

"A palm-sized cedar horse opens at the belly. Inside are two maps: one for entry, one for evacuation."

Major Beats

- Sinon makes the plan sound simple because he has hidden every consequence.
- Cassandra offers truth without the comfort of certainty.
- The colossus is a tool; the betrayal is deciding people are only terrain.
- The final turn of the heart-key defines what kind of victory survives the song.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Dial back: reduce boss HP ~20–25%, cut one legendary action option or recharge breath to 6 only; Favor/track thresholds –1 where present; skill DCs –1.
Easier	APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
Harder	APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Sinon, Professional Survivor hooks the party. Maguffin Cedar Heart-Key pays off in the finale against Wooden Colossus, Hollow Gift . Recruit Cassandra, Unbelieved Witness along the way. Plant (or sabotage) a wooden colossus inside a siege without becoming the betrayal.

Stakes

- Sinon makes the plan sound simple because he has hidden every consequence.
- Cassandra offers truth without the comfort of certainty.
- The colossus is a tool; the betrayal is deciding people are only terrain.
- The final turn of the heart-key defines what kind of victory survives the song.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Troy Gate Watch	med · hard · CR 5 · Alert guards with civic duties
Hidden Greek Raider	med · hard · CR 6 · Impatient payload soldier
Bronze Owl Sentry	med · hard · CR 7 · Automaton scout and alarm engine
Wooden Colossus, Hollow Gift	med · hard · CR 11 · Boss construct, siege payload, and moral machine
Cassandra, Unbelieved Witness	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2

DM Tips

- As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 10:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 10.
- Easier:** APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
- Harder:** APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Encounter 1 — The Gift at the Ditch

Between trench fires and city walls, Sinon offers the party a way to move the wooden colossus while every faction lies about what happens after the gate opens.

- Non-combat path: gather terms from three factions with Insight, Deception, or History.
- Use the Cedar Heart-Key to discover the colossus has more modes than Sinon admits.
- Recruit Cassandra by honoring her warning or preserving the evacuation map.
- Choose a branch: plant, sabotage, delay, or convert the hollow gift.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recrutable Ally · Prophetic ally and civilian conscience
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Listen without asking her to prove the curse, protect a civilian route she names, or admit the plan may be wrong.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — Inside the Wall's Shadow

The colossus inches toward the gate while the party slips through inspections, omen rites, and panicked civilians who may be saved or used as cover.

- Non-combat path: 6 stealth or social successes before 3 alarm failures.
- Spend successes to open civilian exits, hide raiders, or plant sabotage charges.
- Cassandra can identify which omen is fake and which alarm is real.
- If the party treats Troy as already doomed, Greek Raiders act with advantage in Encounter 3.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recrutable Ally · Prophetic ally and civilian conscience
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Listen without asking her to prove the curse, protect a civilian route she names, or admit the plan may be wrong.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — The Belly Opens

Inside Troy, the colossus wakes as soldiers, sentries, and prophecy collide. The party must decide what the hollow gift does before the siege becomes a sack.

- Hard fight: the colossus shifts modes between stealth payload, gate ram, and evacuation crane.
- Maguffin payoff: insert the Cedar Heart-Key to select or lock the construct's final mode.
- Branching win: plant, sabotage, expose, or evacuate, but razing Troy is not the win.
- Every spared watch squad or rescued civilian creates a witness who can refute betrayal.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recrutable Ally · Prophetic ally and civilian conscience
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Listen without asking her to prove the curse, protect a civilian route she names, or admit the plan may be wrong.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recrutable Ally · Prophetic ally and civilian conscience
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Listen without asking her to prove the curse, protect a civilian route she names, or admit the plan may be wrong.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

STAT BLOCKS

Cassandra, Unbelieved Witness

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Prophetic ally and civilian conscience

AC 14 | HP 58 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. Encounter 1 or 2). Listen without asking her to prove the curse, protect a civilian route she names, or admit the plan may be wrong.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Ritual dagger +6 to hit, 1d4+3 piercing; prophecy imposes disadvantage once.

Troy Gate Watch CR 5

Medium Creature · Alert guards with civic duties

AC 17 | HP 84 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Not villains; bribery, forged rites, or evacuation orders can bypass them.

Attack. Spear wall +7 to hit, 2d8+4 piercing; ally gains +2 AC while adjacent.

Hidden Greek Raider CR 6

Medium Creature · Impatient payload soldier

AC 16 | HP 92 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. May become enemy if the party sabotages the massacre plan.

Attack. Short blade +8 to hit, 2d6+4 piercing plus 2d6 if attacking from hiding.

Bronze Owl Sentry CR 7

Medium Creature · Automaton scout and alarm engine

AC 18 | HP 105 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Can be reprogrammed with the heart-key or blinded by sacred smoke.

Attack. Razor wing +8 to hit, 2d10+5 slashing; marks target with ringing bronze.

Wooden Colossus, Hollow Gift CR 11

Large Creature · Boss construct, siege payload, and moral machine · Boss

AC 18 | HP 225 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Note. Boss last. Winning is choosing and enforcing the payload's purpose, not razing Troy.

Hard encounter focus. Win condition may be steal, escape, disable, or drive-off — not always kill.

Multiattack / Assault. Cedar fist +10 to hit, 4d8+6 bludgeoning; splinters create difficult terrain.

Advance (1). *(Legendary Actions)* Move up to half Speed.

Session reminders

- 6 PCs level 8; siege heist with branching payoff.
- Enc 1/2 support stealth, social, and sabotage.
- Recruit Cassandra by believing the warning.
- Enc 3 is Hard; Cedar Heart-Key chooses final mode.
- Win is not razing Troy.

Maguffin

Cedar Heart-Key

- Opens hidden panels in the colossus, quiets its joints, and grants advantage on one sabotage, repair, or concealment check.
- **Inserted into the colossus core, it chooses the payoff: open gates, lock the payload, evacuate civilians, or disable the construct.**

NPC / ALLY**Sinon, Professional Survivor**

- Get the colossus through Troy's gates and make sure someone else owns the moral stain if it goes wrong.
- He will not enter the horse himself; he always keeps one exit and one scapegoat prepared.

Cassandra, Unbelieved Witness

- Recruit Enc. Encounter 1 or 2: Listen without asking her to prove the curse, protect a civilian route she names, or admit the plan may be wrong.
- AC 14 · HP 58 · Ritual dagger +6 to hit, 1d4+3 piercing; prophecy imposes disadvantage once.

Remember

- Place or sabotage the wooden colossus to end the siege on the party's chosen terms without razing Troy as the victory condition.

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Chains on Caucasus

A storm-climb to the titan's iron crag.

Style: High-altitude rescue with a moral branch, for 6 level-8 PCs across 3 rugged encounters.
Win: Break, loosen, or sanctify the chains so Prometheus' suffering no longer feeds the eagle-cult.
Lose: The cult keeps the wound open and turns stolen divine fire into a beacon for tyrants.
Maguffin: Kindling Nail · **Ally:** Io the Wind-Lost · **QG:** Dione of the Ash Lantern

"Bring no crown to the mountain. Bring a hand that can open and a blade that can choose not to cut."

Major Beats

- 1. Dione frames the mission as rescue, then admits rescue has consequences.
- 2. The mountain tests strength, mercy, and patience before blades matter.
- 3. The cult believes pain is a renewable holy resource.
- 4. Prometheus asks what kind of freedom mortals are ready to defend.

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 11
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Reduce boss HP ~25–30% and save DCs –1; remove 1–2 minions per wave; allow one free short-rest beat after Enc. 1.
Easier	APL 9–10: use Library Standard, then Favor/track win –1 or boss HP –10%.
Harder	APL 12–13: boss HP +25%; add a lieutenant; no free rest.

Dione of the Ash Lantern hooks the party. Maguffin Kindling Nail pays off in the finale against Aetos, Eagle-Wound Hierophant . Recruit Io the Wind-Lost along the way. Free (or refuse to free) Prometheus while eagle-cultists try to keep the wound open.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Eagle-Cult Zealot	med · hard · CR 3 · Fanatic skirmisher
Crag Harpy Bloodcaller	med · hard · CR 4 · Aerial controller
Chainbound Giant	med · hard · CR 7 · Titanic bruiser
Aetos, Eagle-Wound Hierophant	med · hard · CR 10 · Boss cult priest
Io the Wind-Lost	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 1

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 11:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 11.
- **Easier:** APL 9–10: use Library Standard, then Favor/track win –1 or boss HP –10%.
- **Harder:** APL 12–13: boss HP +25%; add a lieutenant; no free rest.

Maguffin reminder: Check Enc. 3 payoff on the item card (page 3/4). Reward players who keep the object in hand.

Ally snapshot

Io the Wind-Lost

- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 1 — The Climb of Stolen Sparks

Ascend storm cliffs under harpy song while sparks from Prometheus' wound fall like meteors.

- Group climb: 6 successes before 3 failures at DC 15 using Athletics, Survival, Nature, or Medicine.
- Failure costs hit dice from cold and thin air, then draws a Crag Harpy Bloodcaller.
- The Kindling Nail anchors one impossible crossing for automatic progress.
- Recruit Io by rescuing her from a bloodsong lure or accepting her warning about the chains.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 2 — The Cult of the Open Wound

Raid or parley at a cliffside camp where zealots bottle sparks from the titan's torment.

- Stealth or parley can disable two spark vats before combat begins.
- Each intact vat lets a zealot add 7 fire damage once; Medicine or Religion DC 16 spoils a vat.
- The Chainbound Giant attacks everyone until its pain brand is broken or the altar crane is dropped.
- Io identifies which zealot carries the rite-key if treated as a person, not an omen.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Encounter 3 — Prometheus Beneath the Eagle

At the iron crag, choose freedom, refusal, or mercy while Aetos keeps the eagle diving.

- Three chain seals require actions and DC 16 checks; each seal changes the moral outcome.
- The Kindling Nail decides the finish: free him, loosen torment, or consecrate the wound closed.
- At initiative 20 the eagle dives; disabling perches or calming it with Animal Handling DC 16 redirects the strike.
- Win by ending the rite and escaping divine attention; killing Aetos is optional and not sufficient.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.
- *Tip:* Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.
- Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

Quick combat reference

- **Io the Wind-Lost** — AC 14 | HP 71 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-re
- **Crag Harpy Bloodcaller** — AC 14 | HP 90 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 4 · Aerial controller
- **Eagle-Cult Zealot** — AC 15 | HP 72 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 3 · Fanatic skirmisher
- **Chainbound Giant** — AC 17 | HP 148 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Creature · CR 7 · Titanic bruiser
- **Aetos, Eagle-Wound Hierophant** — AC 18 | HP 196 | Speed 40 ft. · Large Creature · CR 10 · Boss cult priest · Boss

Additional DM notes

- Motivation.** She wants the cult stopped before they sell Promethean pain as miracle-fire.
- Secret.** She fears freeing Prometheus may start a divine reprisal and accepts a merciful half-measure.
- Hard rule.** Prometheus must not be killed; his death would not end the fire, only scatter it uncontrolled.
- Appearance.** Black nail with a coal-red seam and a head shaped like a tiny torch.
- Handout.** "Drive it where iron learned cruelty; turn once for mercy, twice for rebellion."
- Enc. 1–2.** Can anchor a rope, calm divine fire, or grant advantage on one Athletics check during the climb.
- Enc. 3.** Wedged into the central shackle, it lets the party free, loosen, or consecrate the chains.
- 12 (+1)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**12 (+1)**INT**14 (+2)**WIS**16 (+3)**CHA
- Role:** Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1).** Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1:* End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- *Enc 2:* Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- *Enc 3:* Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.
- *Table tip:* Restate win condition when HP dips; players often forget the maguffin.

STAT BLOCKS

Io the Wind-Lost

Medium Humanoid, Neutral · Recruitable Ally · Scout, omen-reader, and reluctant witness

AC 14 | HP 71 | Speed 30 ft.

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

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.

Aid. Acts on party initiative when recruited; prefers nonlethal when asked.

Strike. Gore of wind +7 to hit, 13 piercing; can reveal a safe ledge once per encounter.

Eagle-Cult Zealot CR 4

Medium Creature · Fanatic skirmisher

AC 16 | HP 88 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. Fights harder near exposed drops but may flee if the eagle omen fails.

Attack. Hooked spear +7 to hit, 14 piercing and pulls 10 ft.

Crag Harpy Bloodcaller CR 5

Medium Creature · Aerial controller

AC 15 | HP 112 | Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

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

Note. Her song can be answered with Performance or thunder to break the lure.

Attack. Bloodsong DC 16 Wis or move toward the nearest cliff edge.

Chainbound Giant CR 8

Medium Creature · Titanic bruiser

AC 17 | HP 178 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Note. A victim of the cult; can be freed from frenzy by breaking its pain brand.

Attack. Iron sweep +9 to hit, 25 bludgeoning and knocks prone.

Aetos, Eagle-Wound Hierophant CR 12

Large Creaturestaged · Boss cult priest · Boss

AC 19 | HP 272 (16d10+176) | Speed 40 ft., fly 20 ft. (eagle mantle)

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)
· **Saves** Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +8 — **Saves** Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +8

Note. Defeat by breaking his rite, freeing the eagle from command, or forcing retreat.

Deadly pressure. Win condition may be seal the wound, loosen torment, or full freedom — not always kill. Eagle Dive lair at init 20.

Multiattack. Two Woundfire lance attacks or one lance and Eagle Command.

Woundfire Lance. +10 to hit, reach 10 ft. Hit: 24 (4d8+5) radiant/fire and target cannot regain HP until start of Aetos's next turn.

Session reminders

- Io the Wind-Lost - AC 14/HP 71 - safe ledge omen
- Eagle-Cult Zealot - AC 15/HP 72 - pull spear near cliffs
- Crag Harpy Bloodcaller - AC 14/HP 90 - cliff-edge bloodsong
- Chainbound Giant - AC 17/HP 148 - iron sweep bruiser
- Aetos - AC 18/HP 196 - woundfire rite boss

Maguffin

Kindling Nail

- Can anchor a rope, calm divine fire, or grant advantage on one Athletics check during the climb.
- **Wedge into the central shackle, it lets the party free, loosen, or consecrate the chains.**

NPC / ALLY**Dione of the Ash Lantern**

- She wants the cult stopped before they sell Promethean pain as miracle-fire.
- Prometheus must not be killed; his death would not end the fire, only scatter it uncontrolled.

Io the Wind-Lost

- Recruit Enc. 1: Save her from harpies without demanding her prophecy, or share water and listen to her warning.
- AC 14 · HP 71 · Gore of wind +7 to hit, 13 piercing; can reveal a safe ledge once per encounter.

Remember

- Break, loosen, or sanctify the chains so Prometheus' suffering no longer feeds the eagle-cult.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

Phaethon's Reins

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 12 · ~3.5 hrs · Aerial chase · Calm four horses, not a boss

Style: Outfit under fire → sky-road chase → four-horse calming contest.

Win: Rein looped through the yoke + all four sun-horses calmed (or three + Phaethon's consent) before Scorch 4.

Lose: Scorch Track hits 4 and the third city burns — or the chariot is destroyed (it is an *object*; 0 HP = instant loss).

Maguffin: Spare Golden Rein · **Ally:** Aello, Wind-Harness Rider (+ optional Pegasus) · **QG:** Heliopse, Singed Dawn-Priest · **Boss:** Kastru, First Fury of Typhon

"One hand guides pride. Two hands guide terror. Three true names guide the fire home." — **Spare Golden Rein**

Major Beats

1. Six rounds on a burning temple roof. Four stations compete for every action: the falling, the sandals, the vestuary, the pegasi.
2. Helios helps but will not touch his own runaway car. He sends Medea's dragon-drawn chariot instead — automatically, if the party can't fly.
3. The chase: 6 Lengths, nine pursuit checks, harriers whose job is to stop you rolling them.
4. Phaethon isn't driving. He's apologizing to the horses.
5. The chariot is the floor. The horses are the objective. The Furies of Typhon are the fight.

Flight & Fire Loadout (all optional)

Path	How (Enc. 1)	Gives
Talaria (winged sandals)	Herm of Hermes · Religion 14 / Sleight 16 / Persuasion 13 · 1 pair per success, max 6	Fly 40 ft · immune to falling damage · no prone airborne
Chrim & Chlamys of the Unburnt	Vestuary · Athletics 14 / Tools 15 / any water (auto) · sort jars 13	3 cloaks fire resist · 4 doses 10-min fire <i>immunity</i> · 1 dose auto-calms Pyrois
Pegasi + Pegasus	Free 4 tangled mounts, Animal Handling 10–12 · courtesy calls the sire	4 mounts fly 90 ft, riders never fall · Pegasus carries 1 courteous rider
Dragon-Drawn Chariot	Heliopse's petition, any time · automatic if <4 PCs can fly	Party platform, fly 90 ft, nobody falls, +1 Length/driven round · won't near the horses

Loadout audit before Enc. 2: count Talaria + pegasi + spells. Fewer than four PCs airborne → Helios's car arrives unbidden. **Never run the chase with a grounded party.**

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Enc · Count	Job
Solar Spark Swarm	1 · 3 (+2)	CR 4 · cold/prayer disperses
Ash-Wing Vulture	1–2 · 2	CR 6 · grapple = no pursuit check
Aithousa, Cinder-Nymph	2–3 · 2 → 3	CR 5 · Goad stacks +2 DC · <i>vuln. cold</i>
Pyrois, the Fiery	3 · 1	CR 6 · lead-left · cold / Chrim
Eous, the Dawn	3 · 1	CR 6 · lead-right · hymn / steady light
Aethon, the Blazing	3 · 1	CR 6 · trace-left · speared; healing
Phlegon, the Burning	3 · 1	CR 6 · trace-right · re-panics others; last
Kastru, First Fury of Typhon	3 · 1	CR 12 · BOSS · reskinned erinyes
Aello / Pegasi / Pegasus	1–3	Allies · –3 calming DC/round · mounts
Phaethon	3 · 1	Not a combatant · consent = –2 all DCs

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 12 — Enc 1–2 Hard, finale Deadly (~21,800 XP)
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Kastru HP 120 / 2 LA / Rekindle 14 ; 2 nymphs, Goad +1; horses HP 70, DC 13 (Phlegon 15); chase 4 Lengths; all DCs –2; one free short rest
Easier	APL 10–11: Kastru HP –15%, –1 LA; Scorch ceiling 5; calming DCs –1; grant the dragon chariot outright
Harder	APL 13–14: add Deiope (HP 110, no LA); Kastru HP +15%, Rekindle 18 ; Goad 60 ft; dead horse = 2 panicked. <i>Do not</i> raise calming DCs.

ENC 1 — First City in the Heat-Haze

Hard · ~45 min · **Six rounds, four stations** · 3× Solar Spark Swarm (+1 per rescue failure, max 5) · 2× Ash-Wing Vulture on the third failure · Roof 80×40 ft, three bell-towers, updraft columns (Perception **12**), burning awnings below

1 · Civilian Rescue

- Athletics / Acrobatics / Medicine **13**, one action each. **5 successes before 3 failures**.
- Success = 1 **Cooling Token** (max 5). Failure = new Swarm, or a messenger drops (Dex **14** reaction to catch, no token).
- Third failure → 2 Ash-Wing Vultures arrive.
- Rein: one auto-success, no action.

2 · Herm of Hermes — Talaria

- Religion **14** / Sleight **16** / Persuasion **13** w/ Heliopé. One pair per success, **max 6**.
- Rein slips the knot once free.
- 2nd failure here: a Swarm burns the rack, **2 pairs lost**.
- Worn: fly 40 ft, **immune falling damage**, no prone airborne, until dawn.

3 · Vestuary of the Unburnt

- Open: Athletics **14** / Tools **15** / any cold-water (auto).
- Sort chrism vs. lamp-oil: Arcana/Nature/Religion **13**. Fail → one jar is oil: **3d6 fire** on first fire damage taken.
- 3× Chlamys = fire resistance + adv. vs. Scorching Wake. 4 doses Chrism = **10 min fire immunity**.
- 1 dose on Pyrois's muzzle in Enc. 3 = **auto-calm**.
- **Neither stops radiant**.

4 · Aello & the Pegasi

- Free a pegasus: Animal Handling **12** (two badly tangled) / **10** (two trapped). Rein auto-frees one.
- **Recruit Aello**: free 2+ pegasi, or accept her 3 terms (no solo splits, no killing Phaethon, her command aloft). Refuse one → Persuasion **14**.
- All 4 freed = 4 mounts (fly 90 ft, riders never fall).
- **Pegasus**: all 4 freed + (Aello recruited / Humble Bridle / ask-don't-command **16**). One courteous rider only; refuses anyone who wounded a horse.

Helios's answer: from end of Enc. 1, Heliopé can petition for the **Dragon-Drawn Chariot** (Medea's old car, two winged serpents). Automatic if <4 PCs can fly. *"They may carry you. They may not touch the yoke. My son's hands must be opened by mortal ones."*

ENC 2 — The Sky-Road Chase

Hard / Chase · ~60 min · Gap = **6 Lengths**, six rounds · 2× Ash-Wing Vulture (rd 1), 2× Aithousa (rd 3) · Sky-road 120×30 ft, three cracked spans, 20-ft storm gap, **sun-javelin** in the wreckage (Perception **13** · 60 ft · 2d6+3 radiant)

- **Round order**: (1) Init 20 **Scorching Wake**, within 2 Lengths only — Con **15** or 4d6 fire — Chlamys half, Chrism none, Cooling Token negates; (2) d6 complication from rd 2; (3) pursuit checks (one *action* each); (4) tally **successes – failures = Lengths closed**; (5) harriers act.
- **Board at 0 Lengths**: Athletics/Acrobatics **13**. Auto with Talaria, Rein skyhook, or a seized pennant-line; **10** from the dragon chariot's rail. Fail → wheel rim, 14 bludgeoning/turn, Athletics **12** to climb in.
- **Grappled or on fire = no pursuit check**. *That is the whole reason the harriers exist.*

Pursuit menu — once per option, per PC

- Athletics **14** · hard-row the air
- Acrobatics **14** (**12** in Talaria) · thread a collapsing arch
- Survival **13** · ride the updrafts (adv. if spotted in Enc. 1)
- Arcana **15** · plot the solar arc, cut the corner
- Animal Handling **13** · mounted/aboard only
- Perception **13** · spot the pennant-line → next boarding auto
- Insight **14** · read Phaethon's panic, anticipate the veer
- Persuasion **15** (**12** w/ Aello) · **banks Phaethon's Name** (–3 consent DC)
- Performance **14** · **banks the Dawn-Hymn** (Eous auto-calms once)

Complications (d6, rd 2+)

- **1** Falling bronze sign — Dex **14** or 2d10 + lose 1 Length
- **2** Cross-draft — Str/Dex **13** or disadv. on this round's pursuit check
- **3** Ember hail — 2d6 fire, no save; Chlamys/Chrism ignore
- **4** Collapsing arch — group Acro/Ath **13**, 4 before 3; fail = –2 Lengths
- **5** Signal-runner stranded — one action (auto if flying) → +1 Cooling Token
- **6** Pennant-line — reaction Dex **15**: close **2 Lengths**, take 2d6 fire, next boarding auto

Six rounds gone: the chariot crosses the second city. **Scorch Track starts at 1**; chase continues at all DCs –2 until they board. **Never a hard fail** — they board, it just costs.

ENC 3 — Hands on the Burning Yoke (Boss)

Deadly · ~90 min · 1× Kaustra (CR 12) · 3× Aithousa (minus any killed in the chase) · 4× sun-horse (objectives) · Deck **40×20 ft**: four yoke stations, yoke strut front-center, wheel rims E/W (14 bludg./turn), burning pennants, open sky everywhere else. **Falling is the deadliest thing here.**

The chariot is an OBJECT. AC 19 · HP 210 · threshold 15 · immune fire/radiant/poison/psychic · **no initiative, no turns, no attacks.** At 0 HP it breaks apart in the air: **instant loss.** Say this out loud before round 1.

Scorch Track (0–4)

- **End of each round: +1 per two horses still panicked (round down).** Dead horse = permanently panicked. No other trigger.
- 4 panicked → +2 · 3 → +1 · 2 → +1 · 1 → +0 · 0 → the yoke answers
- **Cooling Token** (action, 1/round): -1 Scorch
- **Scorch 4 = third city burns. Overran the chase? Start at 1.**

Calming a horse

- Action adjacent to its station · **Animal Handling 15** (Phlegon **17**)
- -2 Rein looped · -2 Phaethon consented · -3 one check/round if Aello is aboard
- **Advantage** if grappled/restrained (Athletics vs. +7)
- +2 per Aithousa goading that horse — they stack
- **Damage never helps. 0 HP = Scorch +1 now and +3 to all remaining calming DCs.**

Horse	Station	DC	Its true answer (skips the check)
Pyrois, the Fiery	Lead-left	15	Cold/water without hostility → 12 ; 1 dose Chrism over the muzzle = auto
Eous, the Dawn	Lead-right	15	Performance 13 dawn-hymn (auto if banked); <i>Light/Daylight</i> held steady 1 round = auto
Aethon, the Blazing	Trace-left	15 disadv. while speared	Medicine 14 draws the spar → then 12 ; any 2nd-level+ heal = auto
Phlegon, the Burning	Trace-right	17	12 once the other three are calm; 10 if Phaethon speaks his name

Rein insertion (action at the yoke strut): loop it through and speak the three city names — no roll. While looped: **every calming check +2**, a re-panicked horse **saves with advantage**, Kaustra has disadvantage within 10 ft of the strut. **WIN GATE: the chariot cannot be turned without it.** Warn the party one round before that becomes tragic.

Phaethon's consent — Persuasion 15: **12** if Aello coaches · -3 if his name was shouted in the chase · -2 if the dragon chariot is docked where he can see it · **auto** if Heliopoe told them his name-history. He opens his hands and names the four horses aloud: **all calming DCs -2.** Damage him and it's +5 instead, and Aello walks.

Running the Furies

- **Kaustra plays arson, not bloodlust.** Prefers *Rekindle* (Wis **17**, adv. w/ Rein) to any attack while a calmed horse exists; steps over a dying PC to reach a quiet horse. *Ash-Cord* drags people off the deck (Str **18**, 15 ft) — a Talaria-wearer shrugs at it.
- **3 legendary actions/round:** Cord (1) · **Rekindle** (2) · Goad (1, orders a nymph). Ignore her and two rounds of work evaporate.
- **Aithousai are the DC tax.** Goad stacks; **vulnerable to cold**, and any cold damage cancels an active Goad. The radiant sun-javelin hurts them badly.
- **She need not die.** Fourth horse calmed → true dawn: 10d6 radiant to her; at ≤half HP she flees east to Etna. *Killing her is fine — she is Typhon's daughter, not Typhon.*

Outcome	What happens
Win — 4 calmed, Rein in	The nose lifts; the third city passes untouched. Kaustra screams once and is gone east. Phaethon says nothing — his silence is the point.
Win — 3 calmed + consent	Phaethon takes the fourth rein himself. Costs him his hands (scars, no mechanical penalty). Let him <i>choose</i> it aloud.
Loss — Scorch 4	Third city burns; Helios blamed; Kaustra sits on the rim to watch. Don't kill the party for it — land them, and let them see it.
Loss — chariot destroyed	0 HP: the car comes apart, everyone falls, the sun goes out at noon. Warn twice before allowing it.

STAT BLOCKS

Kaustra, First Fury of Typhon — CR 12 BOSS

Large Fiend (fury), CE · reskinned erinyes · wants the city, not you

AC 18 | HP 189 | 30 ft, fly 60 ft (hover) | LR 3/day

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 20 (+5) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 18 (+4) · **Saves** Dex +10, Con +10, Wis +8 ·, Con +10, Wis +8 · truesight 60 ft

Immune fire · **Resist** cold, poison, nonmagical B/P/S

- **Watch It Burn.** Always prefers *Rekindle* over damage while a calmed horse exists.
- **Sun-Hater.** Disadv. on attacks within 10 ft of the strut while the Rein is looped.
- **Multiattack.** 2× Ash-Cord, or Ash-Cord + Rekindle.
- **Ash-Cord.** +10, reach 20 ft, 2d8+4 slashing + 3d6 fire; Str **18** or pulled 15 ft (off the deck = falls).
- **Rekindle.** One calmed horse in 60 ft: Wis **17** (adv. w/ Rein) or panicked again.
- **Ashfall (R5–6).** 30-ft cone Dex **18**, 10d6 fire, half on save; fail = blinded 1 rd.
- **BA Etna's Patience.** Fly half speed, no OA. **RXN Spite (1/rd):** a horse is calmed in 60 ft → fly toward it.
- **LA (3):** Cord (1) · **Rekindle (2)** · Goad (1, order a nymph).
- **Driven off:** 4th horse calmed → 10d6 radiant; at ≤half HP she flees to Etna.

Aithousa, Cinder-Nymph — CR 5 (×3)

Medium Fiend (nymph of ash), CE · reskinned barbed devil, winged

AC 15 | HP 78 | 30 ft, fly 50 ft

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 16 (+3) · **Saves** Dex +7 · darkvision 60 ft

Immune fire · **Vulnerable** cold

- **Ember Body.** Melee attacker takes 1d6 fire.
- **Doused.** Any cold damage ends her Goad now; can't Goad until end of her next turn.
- **Multiattack.** 2× Spark-Lash +7, reach 10 ft or 40 ft range, 2d6+4 fire.
- **Goad the Yoke.** Instead of attacking: one horse in 30 ft has calming DC +2 until end of her next turn. **Stacks.**
- **BA Cinder Step.** Fly 25 ft, no OA.

The Four Sun-Horses — CR 6 each

Large Celestial (solar horse), N · objectives, not villains

AC 16 | HP 105 | 60 ft, fly 120 ft

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 6 (–2) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 14 (+2) · **Saves** Wis +4 · **Immune** fire · **Resist** radiant

- **Held Still.** Grappled/restrained (Ath. vs. +7) → calming has **advantage**.
- **Damage never helps.** 0 HP: **Scorch +1 now**, +3 to all remaining calming DCs.
- **Pyrois** — Flare Hoof +9 (2d8+5 + 2d8 fire) · Flare Rear R5–6 cone Dex **15** 7d6 fire · *Ignition:* pennants catch, 3 fire to adjacent.
- **Eous** — Rearing Hoof +9 (2d8+5 + 1d8 radiant) · Sunburst Snort R6 Con **15** blind · *Dawnward Bolt:* deck slides 10 ft east, Dex **14** · attacks from the east have disadv.
- **Aethon** — Lame Kick +9 (2d8+5) · Thrash R5–6 Dex **14** 3d8 + push 5 ft · *Speared:* calming has disadv.; bleeds 5/turn.
- **Phlegon** — Bite +9 (2d10+5 + 2d6 fire) · Sear-Trample R6 30 ft path Dex **15** 4d8 fire + push 10 ft · *Contagious Terror:* end of turn, one calmed horse in 30 ft Wis **14** (adv. w/ Rein) or panicked again.

Ash-Wing Vulture — CR 6 (×2)

Large Monstrosity · Enc. 1 escalation / Enc. 2 harrier

AC 16 | HP 88 | 20 ft, fly 60 ft · **Resist** fire

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 4 (–3) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 8 (–1)

- **Snatch** +8, reach 10 ft, 2d8+5 slashing + **grappled** (escape **15**). **Grappled = no pursuit check.**
- **Beak** +8, 1d10+4 piercing. **Drop:** releases a grappled creature over open sky.
- Adv. vs. creatures in shadow; goes for isolated flyers, prefers riders to mounts.
- **Driven off:** 2 coordinated bright signals **14**, or one flash of the Rein (free) → retreats 3 rounds.

Solar Spark Swarm — CR 4 (×3–5)

Medium Elemental (living embers) · Enc. 1

AC 15 | HP 66 | 30 ft, fly 30 ft (hover)

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 3 (–4) · WIS 11 (+0) · CHA 10 (+0)

- **Flare Lash** +7, 3d6 fire; ignites an unattended flammable item.
- **Immune** fire, poison · **Vulnerable** cold · harmless to stone.
- **Dispersed, not killed:** any cold, deep shade, or a Wis-based dawn prayer scatters one. Nature **14** to pull cold air down an updraft: all swarms in 30 ft attack at disadv. 1 round.

Allies — quick lines

- **Aello, Wind-Harness Rider** — AC 16, HP 72, Animal Handling +7. Storm javelin +8, 2d6+4 + 2d6 lightning. *Wind-Signals:* 1/rd an ally has adv. on a pursuit check. *Herd-Speaker:* 1/rd one calming DC –3. *Catch:* 1/rd a falling creature within 60 ft takes no falling damage.
- **Pegasus, the Cloud-Sired** — CR 6, AC 15, HP 110, fly 120 ft. One courteous rider, his pick; refuses anyone who wounded a horse. Rider never falls. *Skyward Surge R5–6:* fly 120 ft, rider gets one pursuit check with adv. **Never dies here** (0 HP → returns next round at half).
- **Wind-Harness Pegasus** ×4 — CR 2, AC 12, HP 59, fly 90 ft. Rider never falls (Dex **10** when the chariot bucks). Fire from the Wake → rider Animal Handling **12** or the mount breaks off 1 round.

KEY ITEMS

Spare Golden Rein — MAGUFFIN

Sun-warm braided gold, too light to fall and too bright to look at

- **Handout:** "One hand guides pride. Two hands guide terror. Three true names guide the fire home."
- **Enc. 1:** auto-success on one rescue / one tangled pegasus / one falling creature; slips the herm's knot once (one free pair of Talaria).
- **Enc. 2:** skyhook — auto-cross one gap, auto-board the chariot; its glow drives off a Vulture (free action).
- **Enc. 3 payoff:** action at the yoke strut — loop it and speak the three city names (no roll). All calming checks +2; a re-panicked horse saves with advantage; Kaustra has disadv. within 10 ft.
- **Win gate:** horses can be calmed without it; the chariot cannot be turned without it.

Talaria (Winged Sandals) — up to 6 pairs

- Enc. 1 herm: Religion **14** / Sleight **16** / Persuasion **13**; Rein frees one pair.
- Worn: fly **40 ft**, immune to falling damage, no prone airborne, until dawn.
- Enc. 2: boarding auto; Acrobatics pursuit **12**. Enc. 3: act from open air; the fall stops mattering.
- Votives, not loot — return them to a crossroads herm.

Chrism & Chlamys of the Unburnt

- Vestiary: Athletics **14** / Tools **15** / any water (auto). Sort **13** or one jar is lamp-oil (**3d6 fire** on first fire damage).
- **3 Chlamys:** fire resistance + adv. vs. Scorching Wake.
- **4 doses Chrism:** action to anoint, **10 min fire immunity**. One dose = auto-calm Pyrois.
- Neither stops radiant damage.

Chariot of Helios, Dragon-Drawn (fallback)

- Medea's old car; serpents **Phlox** and **Anthelia** (AC 16, HP 60 ea., fly 90 ft; never bolt, never attack).
- Heliope's petition any time from end of Enc. 1; **automatic if <4 PCs can fly**.
- **Enc. 2:** driver's action Animal Handling/Arcana **12** → +1 Length. Nobody aboard can fall. Athletics & Acrobatics pursuit options unavailable aboard; serpents won't close the last Length.
- **Enc. 3:** docked 20 ft off the flank — a falling creature makes Dex **12** to land in it; re-board the deck Athletics **10**; **Phaethon's consent DC -2**.
- Serpents won't come within 20 ft of a sun-horse, and won't touch the yoke.

The Chariot of Helios (Runaway) — OBJECT

- Huge object · AC **19** · HP **210** · threshold **15** · immune fire/radiant/poison/psychic.
- **No initiative, no turns, no attacks.** Cannot be calmed, charmed, or frightened. It is not the boss — it is the floor.
- **Scorching Wake (Init 20):** Con **15** or 4d6 fire.
- **Bucking Wheel:** a horse dies, or a panicked horse starts its turn with an empty station → deck-wide Dex **14** or prone; fail by 5+ = slide 10 ft to the rim.
- **0 HP = instant loss.** The car comes apart, everyone falls, the sun goes out at noon.

NPCs

Heliope, Singed Dawn-Priest (QG)

- **Motivation:** keep Helios's name from becoming a curse — save the cities before divine punishment stops being avoidable.
- **Secret:** she let Phaethon into the stables, and she still half believes a mortal hand could have proved worthy.
- **Hard rule:** open his hands, don't stop his heart.
- **The Petition:** she can call Helios's dragon-drawn chariot from the end of Enc. 1.
- **Name-history:** if the party asks about Phaethon, she tells them — **automatic consent** in Enc. 3.

Phaethon, Son of Helios

- AC 13, HP 44, **no initiative, no attacks, never moves**. Sixteen, sun-blistered, both hands welded to the strut by terror.
- **Consent:** Persuasion **15** · **12** w/ Aello · -3 if his name was shouted in the chase · -2 if the dragon chariot is docked in view · **auto** if Heliope told them his name-history. → he opens his hands and names the horses: **all calming DCs -2**.
- **Damage him:** +5 to all calming DCs and Aello leaves the deck.
- He holds on because he believes letting go kills him. Give him somewhere safe to fall.
- **Persistence:** he lives. The Heliades come for him at the sky-road's end.

Aftermath

- Heliope's tokens cool in order; she keeps the coldest.
- The Heliades take Phaethon. Poplars grow where they wait; their tears harden to amber. Any PC may keep one warm bead.
- Pegasus will come once more when called courteously — a favor, never a spell.
- Kaustra, if she fled, goes back under Etna to wait for the next mortal who wants to drive something he cannot steer.

Remember

- The horses are the objective. The chariot is the floor. The Furies are the fight.
- Damage never calms a horse. Killing one costs a city.
- No wings? The dragon chariot arrives unbidden. Never run the chase with a grounded party.

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Mother of the Deep Coil

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 12 · ~3–3.5 hrs · **2 encounters** · Arima lair · Phase 3 Deadly

Style: Outer Brood → Multi-phase Echidna | **Win:** Echidna 0 HP
Ban: no Typhon · no Cerberus summons · **Maguffin:** Tripod Brand · **QG:** Melitta of Delphi

"When the Mother calls her children from the dark, press this ash-iron to the stone — the nest forgets one name." — **Tripod Brand**

Major Beats

- 1. Mist → Cilician foothills; Brand.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Outer Brood; recruit Kimon; Short Rest only.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Phase 1 Hard → Phase 2 Hard+ → **Phase 3 Deadly**.

Creature List

Creature	Use
Death Dog / Brood Harpy / Dracaena	Enc1 + summons
Orthrus (not Cerberus)	Phase 2
Chimera / Brood Sphinx	Phase 2–3
Lesser Brood-Hydra	Phase 3
Echidna Gargantuan	Boss HP 310

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 12
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Reduce boss HP ~30–35%, strip one phase or one legendary action; minion counts –30%; Phase/Deadly language becomes Hard if present.
Easier	APL 10–11: use Library Standard, then remove the deadliest phase rider.
Harder	APL 13–15: restore full mythic pressure — extra phase or spawn; DCs +2.

Mist opens on the Cilician foothills above the deep of Arima — where the Mother of Monsters coils in her own darkness. Clear the outer brood, descend the chimney, and endure three rising phases as Echidna calls her children. Press the brand when she calls a name you cannot afford.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Death Dog	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 1 / summons
Brood Harpy	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 1
Dracaena Guard	1 · 2 · 2 · Enc. 1
Orthrus	1 · 1 · Phase 2 summon
Chimera	0–1 · 1 · Phase 2–3
Brood-Hydra	1 · Phase 3
Echidna	adj · 1 · 1 · Boss

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 12:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 12.
- **Easier:** APL 10–11: use Library Standard, then remove the deadliest phase rider.
- **Harder:** APL 13–15: restore full mythic pressure — extra phase or spawn; DCs +2.

Encounter 1 — The Outer Brood

☠️ Terrain 60×40 ravine · chimney entrance north (climb Ath DC 12 down 40 ft. after fight) · scree difficult terrain in two 10-ft patches. · Bone-littered ravine before the chimney. 3× Death Dogs + 2× Brood Harpies + 1× Dracaena Guard . Kimon is pinned under a collapsed goat-pen (½ cover).

- Non-combat path: Offer meat/wine + Animal Handling/Persuasion group 3 successes before 3 failures (DC 14) to draw dogs off while the party slips to the chimney — still face 1 dracaena at the lip (or bribe her with treasure 50+ gp).
- RECRUITMENT: Free/heal Kimon → Enc. 2 Guide / Warning Cry.
- Brand : disadv on one brood-beast's attacks vs. brand-wielder (1/SR).
- Rest: Short Rest only at chimney mouth; something huge exhales below.
- Tip*: RECRUITMENT (optional). If reduced without a killing blow and offered mercy (Persuasion DC 15), one may hiss a warning about Phase 2's Orthrus — then flees. Not a combat ally.
- Tip*: Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good · CR 1/2 · Recruitable
- Tip*: RECRUITMENT. Spare him / heal him in Enc. 1 (Medicine DC 12 or any healing). In Enc. 2 he can Guide once: party ignores difficult terrain from bone-scrree for 1 round, or points out a ½-cover ledge.
- Tip*: Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Encounter 2 — Mother of the Deep Coil (Multi-Phase)

Saves: Dex +7, Con +10, Wis +8 · Resist: poison, BPS nonmagical · Immune: poisoned · Senses: darkvision 120 ft. · LR 3/day · The nest opens: black pool, bone shelves, Echidna coiled half in water. She fights in three phases as HP falls. Budget this as the session's main dish.

- Echidna uses full Multiattack; Call Brood (R5–6): 2× Death Dogs or 1× Dracaena + 1× Harpy.
- Lair actions on; Legendary Actions: Detect / Tail / Hiss (no Phase-3 Call).
- Brand: cancel next Call Brood once this phase.
- On transition (first time she enters this band): immediate free Call Brood — summon Orthrus (preferred) or Brood Sphinx .
- Call Brood options expand: Orthrus, Chimera (if Orthrus already out, prefer 2 Death Dogs + Harpy), Dracaenae.
- Lair: Coil Quake unlocked. Venom Spew preferred vs. clustered casters.
- Brand: cancel one Call or dismiss one CR ≤5 summon on arrival (once this phase).
- Deadly by design. On transition: roar — each enemy Wis DC 16 or frightened until end of its next turn; then free Call Brood: Lernean Brood-Hydra or Chimera + Orthrus if Hydra too heavy for your table.

DM Callouts

- RECRUITMENT (optional). If reduced without a killing blow and offered mercy (Persuasion DC 15), one may hiss a warning about Phase 2's Orthrus — then flees. Not a combat ally.
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good · CR 1/2 · Recruitable
- RECRUITMENT. Spare him / heal him in Enc. 1 (Medicine DC 12 or any healing). In Enc. 2 he can Guide once: party ignores difficult terrain from bone-scrree for 1 round, or points out a ½-cover ledge.
- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

ENC 2

- Echidna gains +2 to hit; Bite poison DC 19; Call Brood legendary (cost 3) available.
- Max summons raised; Hydra counts as 2 toward cap.

Quick combat reference

- Death Dog (Two-Headed Brood)** — AC 12 | HP 39 | Speed 40 ft. · Medium Monstrosity, Neutral Evil · CR 1 · Mini-optional
- Brood Harpy** — AC 11 | HP 38 | Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. · Medium Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil · CR 1
- Dracaena Guard** — AC 14 | HP 68 | Speed 30 ft. · Large Monstrosity, Neutral Evil · CR 3 · Echidna's door-ward
- Kimon the Goatherd-Scout** — AC 12 | HP 18 | Speed 30 ft. · Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good · CR 1/2 · Recruitable
- Echidna, Mother of Monsters** — AC 17 (natural) | HP 310 (20d20+100) | Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 40 ft. · Gargantuan Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil · CR 14 (phases escalate)
- Orthrus** — AC 14 | HP 85 | Speed 50 ft. · Large Monstrosity, Neutral Evil · CR 5 · Two-headed hound ·
- Chimera** — AC 14 | HP 114 | Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. · Large Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil · CR 6 · Classic brood-child

Additional DM notes

- **Non-combat path:**** Offer meat/wine + Animal Handling/Persuasion group 3 successes before 3 failures (DC 14) to draw dogs off while the party slips to the chimney — still face 1 dracaena at the lip (or bribe her with treasure 50+ gp).
- **RECRUITMENT:**** Free/heal Kimon → Enc. 2 Guide / Warning Cry.
- **Brand:**** disadv on one brood-beast's attacks vs. brand-wielder (1/SR).
- **Rest:**** Short Rest only at chimney mouth; something huge exhales below.
- 15 (+2)**STR**14 (+2)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**3 (−4)**INT**13 (+1)**WIS**6 (−2)**CHA
- Not Cerberus.** Two-headed only — never stage as Cerberus.
- 12 (+1)**STR**13 (+1)**DEX**12 (+1)**CON**7 (−2)**INT**10 (+0)**WIS**13 (+1)**CHA
- 16 (+3)**STR**12 (+1)**DEX**14 (+2)**CON**8 (−1)**INT**12 (+1)**WIS**10 (+0)**CHA
- RECRUITMENT (optional).** If reduced without a killing blow and offered mercy (Persuasion DC 15), one may hiss a warning about Phase 2's Orthrus — then flees. Not a combat ally.
- RECRUITMENT.** Spare him / heal him in Enc. 1 (Medicine DC 12 or any healing). In Enc. 2 he can Guide once: party ignores difficult terrain from bone-scrree for 1 round, or points out a ½-cover ledge.

Pacing helpers

- Enc 1*: End by ~45–50 min; if stuck, telegraph the non-combat path once.
- Enc 2*: Spend recruitment / maguffin early so Enc 3 is not a blank check.
- Enc 3*: Keep Hard, not Deadly — drop a minion wave before a TPK spiral.

STAT BLOCKS

Echidna CR14 BOSS

AC 17 | HP 310 | Gargantuan · LR 3

STR 24 (+7) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 18 (+4)
· **Saves** Dex +7, Con +10, Wis +8

- Bite +12 (3d8+7 +4d6 poison DC 18) · Constrict DC 20 · Tail Sweep · Call Brood R5–6 · Venom Spew · LA · Lair init 20

Orthrus CR5

Not Cerberus

AC 14 | HP 85 | Speed 50

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 4 (–3) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (–2)

- 2× Bite +7 + poison DC 14 · Double Maw R5–6 · Pack Howl

Chimera CR6

AC 14 | HP 114 | Fly 60

STR 19 (+4) · DEX 11 (+0) · CON 17 (+3) · INT 3 (–4) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 10 (+0)

- Bite/Horns/Claws +7 · Fire Breath R5–6 Dex DC 15 (7d8)

Brood-Hydra CR8

AC 15 | HP 150 · 5 heads

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 2 (–4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 7 (–2)

- 1 bite/head +8 · –30 HP = –1 head · Reactive heads

Death Dog CR1

AC 12 | HP 39

STR 15 (+2) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 3 (–4) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 6 (–2)

- 2× Bite +4 · poison/disease Con DC 12

Dracaena CR3

AC 14 | HP 68

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 8 (–1) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 10 (+0)

- Spear + Constrict · optional mercy warning

KEY ITEM / NPC**Tripod Brand of Arima**

- Enc1 1/SR: disadv vs brand-wielder 1 rd.
- Enc2: 1/phase cancel Call or dismiss CR≤5; Phase 3 finale forbids Call 1 rd + disadv Constrict.

Melitta of Delphi

- Pythia's courier — Mother awake in Arima; mortals must end it.

Kimon

- Recruit Enc1 → Guide / Warning Cry in nest.

Summon Ban

- Never Typhon. Never Cerberus. Orthrus OK.

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The Hundredfold Binding

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 12 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Rhodes · 4 Heliadae · Free Briareus (CR 16)

Style: Infiltration → Lens-works rescue → Ritual shutdown | **Win:** Free Briareus (Master Lock or 4 satellite locks) → 1–2 cleanup rounds
Villains: Actis (ray) · Macareus (captain) · Candalus (fever) · Triopas (siege) · **Maguffin:** Tenages’s Dial · **QG:** Electryone

"When hundred hands are pinned by jealous noon, turn Tenages's hours against the locks — free the mountain of arms." — *Tenages's Dial*

Major Beats

- 1. Electryone + Dial on Rhodes shore.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** Solar automata / light geometry (skill or fight).
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Fever wardens; recruit Lamprias; Master Lock intel.
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Four distinct brothers; free Briareus; vow foreshadow.

Creature List

Creature	E/M/H	Job
Solar Automaton	2/3/4	Enc1
Fever Warden	2/3/4	Enc2
Actis	1	Ranged / refract
Macareus	1	Captain / buffs
Candalus	1	Fever AoE
Triopas	1	Siege melee
Briareus	freed	CR16 cleanup

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 12
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Reduce boss HP ~30–35%, strip one phase or one legendary action; minion counts –30%; Phase/Deadly language becomes Hard if present.
Easier	APL 10–11: use Library Standard, then remove the deadliest phase rider.
Harder	APL 13–15: restore full mythic pressure — extra phase or spawn; DCs +2.

Misthaven’s mist clears onto Rhodes under a hard white sun. Electryone — daughter of Helios — reveals that her four exile brothers have returned to the Sunforge to bind Briareus , a Hundred-Handed One, with engines stolen from murdered Tenages. Free the giant; shame the jealous noon.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Solar Automaton	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 1
Fever Warden	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 2
Actis	1 · 1 · 1 · Ray / ranged
Macareus	1 · 1 · 1 · Captain / buffs
Candalus	1 · 1 · 1 · Fever / AoE
Triopas	1 · 1 · 1 · Siege melee
Briareus	freed · freed · CR 16 cleanup

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 12:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 12.
- **Easier:** APL 10–11: use Library Standard, then remove the deadliest phase rider.
- **Harder:** APL 13–15: restore full mythic pressure — extra phase or spawn; DCs +2.

Encounter 1 — Geometry of Jealous Noon

Lens Burst (Recharge 5–6). 15-ft cone Dex DC 12; 9 (2d8) radiant. · The outer colonnade is a living diagram — mirrors and Solar Automata executing Actis’s light-proofs. Actis is not here yet (vault balcony later); his geometry still kills.

- Non-combat path: Group challenge with Tenages’s Dial — Arcana/Investigation/Survival 4 successes before 3 failures (DC 14). Success: automata power down; Long Rest in a shaded alcove.
- Combat path: 3 automata. Destroying all pylons (AC 12 / HP 15 each) deactivates remaining automata at start of next round.
- Fail the skill path loudly → Hard Enc. 2 adds +1 fever warden.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Encounter 2 — Fever in the Lens-Works

Hot brass galleries smell of Candalus’s craft. 3× Fever Wardens guard Lamprias chained beside a rack of binding lenses. A mural shows four locks around a mountain of arms. · Hot brass galleries smell of Candalus’s craft. 3× Fever Wardens guard Lamprias chained beside a rack of binding lenses. A mural shows four locks around a mountain of arms.

- Non-combat: Bluff as Helios inspectors (Deception/Persuasion DC 14) or vent steam to cover a stealth free (Stealth DC 13). Dial grants adv once.
- RECRUITMENT: Free Lamprias → Master Lock ID + Help on Dial in Enc. 3.
- Combat: wardens focus the Dial-bearer. Candalus’s voice echoes (no card yet) promising “hours of fever” if they press on.
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good · CR 1 · Recruitable
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT. Free him in Enc. 2 (Ath DC 12 vs. fever-chains, or Persuasion DC 13 vs. guards). In Enc. 3 he can Help on Dial checks and knows which lock is the Master Lock (auto-ID).

Encounter 3 — The Hundredfold Binding (Boss)

☠️ Terrain Vault 80×50 · Briareus 10-ft center · 4 satellite locks at compass points · Master Lock on his chest-manacle · balconies +10 ft · kiln strips (Candalus). · Briareus kneels bound at center under the Heliorbit Manacles . The four brothers hold the vault:

- Actis — west balcony (rays / refraction)
- Macareus — north stair (captain / buffs)
- Candalus — among kiln channels (fever / AoE)
- Triopas — south floor (siege spear)
- Primary win: Open the Master Lock with Tenages’s Dial (action, adjacent) or open/destroy all 4 satellite locks.
- Each brother still living complicates “his” lock (see Linked Lock traits). Dial bypasses the complication.
- Nearly guaranteed win: The moment Briareus is freed, the encounter is won. Run 1–2 cleanup rounds while he uses Storm of Hands / Shattering Roar to erase remaining foes. Do not prolong a fair fight against CR 16.
- If PCs insist on fighting after cleanup, brothers flee or drop; Briareus does not turn on the party.

DM Callouts

- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good · CR 1 · Recruitable
- RECRUITMENT. Free him in Enc. 2 (Ath DC 12 vs. fever-chains, or Persuasion DC 13 vs. guards). In Enc. 3 he can Help on Dial checks and knows which lock is the Master Lock (auto-ID).
- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

- *Tip:* Keep page-3 creature AC/HP lines visible while resolving Enc. 3.
- *Tip:* Favor non-combat paths in Enc. 1–2; Enc. 3 should still feel Hard.

THE FOUR HELIADAE

Actis the Ray CR5

Ranged controller · balcony

AC 15 | HP 82 | Dex 18

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 14 (+2)
· **Saves** Dex +7, Int +6

- Sun-Javelin +7 · Refract R5–6 Dex DC 14 (4d8) · Blinding Lattice · Step of Light

Candalus the Fever CR5

AoE / poison-fire

AC 14 | HP 90 | Aura 10 ft

STR 12 (+1) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 13 (+1)
· **Saves** Con +6, Int +6

- Fever-Rod +5 · Kiln Bloom Dex DC 14 · Copper Vapor · West lock burns 2d6

Macareus the Blessed Blade CR5

Captain · north stair

AC 18 | HP 97 | Str/Cha

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)
· **Saves** Str +7, Cha +6

- 2× Kopis +7 · Benediction +3 rad aura · Challenge · Banner 1/day · Parry

Triopas the Sundering Spear CR5

Siege melee

AC 16 | HP 102 | Str 20

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 11 (+0)
· **Saves** Str +8, Con +7

- 2× Spear +8 · shove · Pillar Crack · Charge stun Con DC 15 · South lock immune to damage

BRIAREUS (FREED)

Briareus CR16 Ally

AC 18 | HP 287 | Slam +14 (3d8+9) · Storm of Hands ×6 · Roar 6d8 thunder stun DC 19

STR 28 (+9) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 22 (+6) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 18 (+4) · **Saves** Str +14, Con +11, Wis +8

- Do not run as a kill-boss. Cleanup only, then vow + exit.

KEY ITEM / NPC

Tenages's Dial

- 1/SR: adv on one trap/navigation check.
- Enc3: action to open a lock / Master Lock (bypasses Linked Lock hindrances).

Electryone

- **Motivation:** Stop brothers' binding without war on Helios.
- **Secret:** Engine built from murdered Tenages's science.

Lamprias

- Recruit Enc2 → IDs Master Lock; Help on Dial.

Foreshadow

- Briareus will answer a future great threat — DM-triggered ally session, not a summon spell.

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Victory Unchained

Campaign finale — free Nike beneath Etna, then rebind Typhon before the sky breaks.

Campaign finale · ~4 hours · 2 encounters · 6× Level 12
Win: Free Nike; rebind Typhon (do not kill)
Lose: Typhon free / Nike chained
QG: Iris · **Maguffin:** Fillet of Unclaimed Victory · **Ally:** Pyra

"Wear the unfinished crown into the dark. When Victory breathes, the knot will hold — and the horn will answer."

Stakes

- Typhon free → age of storms; prior victories footnote
- Nike chained → seals fail; triumph imprisoned
- Rebind → Victory flies; campaign debts honored

Major Beats

- Iris / Fillet / Etna descent
- Jailbreak Nike; Wake Clock; blessing
- Phase 1 Typhon half-bound
- Horn → helpers; Rebinding
- Epilogue farewells

This is the campaign's last stand. Iris finds the Theronauts in Misthaven mist and opens a path into the root-forges of Mount Etna , where Nike — Victory herself — hangs in volcanic iron. Titan-kin jailers keep her silent so that no triumph can be declared against the storm sleeping below. Freeing Nike is necessary. It is also the trigger: her chains share a lock-root with Typhon . When Victory's wrists open, the Father of Monsters begins to snap the remainder of his bindings. Nike cannot strike him — no god may, this day — but she can still bless the party and blow the Horn of Allies , calling every debt the campaign has earned into Phase 2 of the final battle.

Stakes

- If Typhon walks: storms unmake coasts; Olympian authority cracks; every prior victory in the campaign becomes a footnote to a new age of monsters.
- If Nike stays chained: even a wounded Typhon cannot be cleanly rebound — triumph itself is imprisoned, and battles elsewhere tip toward despair.
- If the Theronauts rebind him: Victory flies free; the campaign's debts are called and honored; the age remains mortal and contestable.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Slag-Hound	2 · 4 · 6 · Enc. 1
Titan-Kin Chain-Guard	2 · 3 · 4 · Enc. 1
Captain Orthos	1 · 1 · Enc. 1 elite
Typhon	1 · Enc. 2 · rebind, don't kill
Pyra	1 · 1 · Recruit Enc. 1
Helpers (menu)	1 row per player · Enc. 2 Phase 2

DM Tips

- As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 12:** ~4-hour finale. Enc. 1 Hard jailbreak; Enc. 2 Typhon 1400 HP with helper Phase 2 power fantasy. Rebind win, not kill.
- Easier:** APL 10–11: fewer guards; Typhon 900 HP ; anchors 45 HP; Nike Horns at first PC bloodied; Rebinding DC 16.
- Harder:** APL 12+ veterans: Orthos +4 guards; Typhon 1800 HP ; starts Phase 1 with Storm Crown; Eruption on Rebinding fail ×2. Still do not soft-cap damage.

ENC 1 — Root-Forge (Hard, ~90–110m)

Orthos + 3 guards + 4 hounds · 3 locks · false lock · recruit Pyra · Wake Clock

- Locks DC 16; Fillet temp HP on success
- Nike free → Favor (reroll miss or save once) · short rest if possible
- Wake Clock 4 = bridge hazard; ≥3 = Typhon starts with cracked anchor

ENC 2 — Typhon (Hard finale, ~100–120m)

Phase 1: 2 LA, half breath · Phase 2: Horn, 3 LA, Storm Crown · **HP 1400** power fantasy

- Anchors AC 18 / HP 60 · vuln thunder/siege
- **Do not soft-cap damage — empty the dice trays**
- **Rebind: all anchors down + Fillet bearer action DC 18 Ath/Cha**
- **0 HP = Eruption (reform 250 HP), not victory**

Helper rules

- 1 row per player · alternate PC / helper turns
- Army rows = one unit · Proteus = Wild Shape into a beastly Huge row (no own card) · Roc = Sinbad riding · full cards in interactive guide

Extra Encounter Detail (from session guide)

ENC 1

- *Beat*: Iris's rainbow hardens into a tunnel of heat. The party emerges on a slag bridge above a forge-pit where Nike hangs winged and chained. Captain Orthos and his Chain-Guards will not let Victory leave — triumph would name Typhon's defeat befo
- Win Enc. 1: Open all three true locks (Athletics, Arcana, or thieves' tools DC 16; Fillet & Pyra help) and spend an action cutting Nike's last shackle.
- Typhon's Wake Clock: Starts at 0 when the first true lock opens. +1 when a lock opens, +1 if Orthos dies on Last Order, +1 each time a PC is dropped to 0 HP. At 4, Typhon's roar collapses a bridge section (difficult terrain + 2 slag-hounds). Enc. 2 begins when Nike is free regardless of Clock — but Clock ≥3 means Typhon starts Phase 1 with one anchor already cracked.
- Skill / stealth path: With Pyra, the party may attempt a 6-success / 3-failure lockrun (DC 15) while two PCs distract Orthos socially or with a duel. Failures spawn hounds / alert guards — combat resumes mid-puzzle.
- As written: Orthos + 3 Chain-Guards + 4 Slag-Hounds (staged: hounds release in pairs).
- RECRUITMENT: Spare Pyra or show the Fillet — she marks the false lock and joins.

ENC 2

- *Beat*: The forge-floor splits. Below, Typhon heaves against the last volcanic chains — storm-heads, serpent coils, arms like siege towers. Nike takes wing to the crater rim: she will not strike; she will witness — and when the party is bloodied or
- Typhon: 2 legendary actions; breath at half dice; fly halved. Three anchors intact (or two if Wake Clock cracked one).
- Goal: survive, learn his tells, break at least one anchor. Do not race all three yet unless the table is steamrolling.
- If two PCs drop before any anchor falls, Nike sounds the Horn early (start Phase 2).
- Otherwise Phase 2 begins when the second anchor is destroyed or after ~5–6 rounds, whichever comes first — Nike chooses the dramatic beat.
- Nike blows the Horn. Each player's chosen helper arrives in an unoccupied space within 60 ft. (flying helpers may arrive airborne). Full cards: Ally Stat Blocks .

Quick combat reference

- **Slag-Hound** — AC 14 | HP 52 · pack tactics + molten blood
- **Titan-Kin Chain-Guard** — AC 16 | HP 95 · jailer keys · fire resist
- **Captain Orthos** — AC 17 | HP 168 · False Lock · Last Order advances Wake Clock
- **Pyra** — AC 16 | HP 84 · recruit; Lock-Lore advantage on Nike's chains
- **Typhon** — AC 20 | HP 1400 · rebind, don't kill · Phase 1 half fly / 2 legendaries

Pacing helpers

- *Enc 1*: Wake Clock starts on first true lock; Clock ≥3 cracks an Enc. 2 anchor.
- *Enc 2 Phase 1*: PCs alone — chip anchors; don't panic at the HP pool.
- *Enc 2 Phase 2*: Horn helpers alternate turns; race Rebinding (DC 18) under Storm Crown.
- *Table tip*: Cheer big damage; never soft-cap. Eruption on 0 HP is worse than binding.

ALLY STAT LINES (quick)

- Cerberus — CR 11 · AC 18 / 220 · 3 bites
- Hecatoncheires — CR 12 · AC 17 / 260 · volley or crush
- Sphinx — CR 10 · AC 17 / 180 · fly + spells
- Talos / Colossus — CR 13 · AC 20 / 280 · siege tank
- Sinbad on Roc — CR 10 · AC 15 / 200 · fly 120 · snatch · Roc-Lore tip
- Kreon — CR 10 · AC 16 / 170 · caster hybrid
- Knight+Cyclopes — CR 11 · AC 18 / 240 · unit wedge
- Hydra — CR 11 · AC 15 / 210 · heads
- Euryale — CR 9 · AC 16 / 170 · gaze / bow
- Echidna — CR 14 · AC 18 / 260 · spectacle
- Apollo's Chariot — CR 10 · AC 17 / 190 · radiant strafe
- Pandora — CR 8 · AC 15 / 140 · jar tricks
- Orpheus — CR 8 · AC 14 / 130 · counter-song
- Heracles — CR 13 · AC 18 / 200 · premier striker
- Leonidas — CR 10 · AC 20 / 180 · shield wall aura
- Atalanta — CR 9 · AC 17 / 150 · 3× bow
- Achilles — CR 11 · AC 18 / 160 · resist until heel
- Bellerophon — CR 10 · AC 17 / 170 · fly lance
- Satyrs — CR 8 · AC 15 / 160 · unit
- Leonins — CR 9 · AC 16 / 180 · unit
- Centaurs — CR 9 · AC 15 / 170 · unit
- Minotaurs — CR 10 · AC 17 / 200 · unit
- Cyclopeans — CR 9 · AC 16 / 180 · unit
- Amazons — CR 9 · AC 17 / 180 · unit
- Spartans — CR 10 · AC 19 / 190 · unit

ALLY CARDS

Cerberus

Huge Monstrosity · CR 11 · Helper · Three-headed hound · Persephone's leave

AC 18 | HP 220 | Speed 50 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Str +9, Con +8 · Senses: darkvision 120 ft., scent

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only. Counts as one ally body.

Three Heads. Advantage on Perception. Multiattack uses three bites (different heads). Cannot be surprised.

Gatekeeper. While Cerberus grapples a creature, that creature has disadvantage on attacks vs. anyone but Cerberus.

Actions

Multiattack. Three bites.

Bite. +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing plus 7 (2d6) poison. Large or smaller: DC 17 Str save or grappled (escape DC 17; Cerberus can grapple up to three).

Triple Howl (Recharge 5–6). Each enemy within 30 ft. DC 16 Wis save or frightened until end of its next turn.

Hecatoncheires (Briareus-echo)

Huge Giant · CR 12 · Helper · Hundred-hand echo · Not the full binding

AC 17 | HP 260 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Saving Throws: Str +11, Con +10

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Siege Echo. Double damage to objects and chain-anchors.

Hundred Hands, Staged. Choose Volley or Crush each turn — not both.

Actions

Volley of Blows. Six slam attacks +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning each.

Crushing Volley (Recharge 5–6). One attack +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., 45 (6d12 + 6) bludgeoning; Huge or smaller DC 19 Str save or prone and restrained until end of Hecatoncheires' next turn (escape DC 19).

Anchor Tear. Instead of attacking: deal 40 damage to a chain-anchor within 15 ft. (no roll).

Sphinx

Large Monstrosity · CR 10 · Helper · Winged guardian

AC 17 | HP 180 | Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 15 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 16 (+3) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 18 (+4)

Saving Throws: Wis +7, Cha +8 · Spell save DC 16

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Inscrutable. Immune to charm; thoughts can't be read.

Actions

Multiattack. Two claws; may replace one with Roar if available.

Claw. +8 to hit, 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing.

Roar (1/battle). Each enemy within 60 ft. DC 16 Wis save or frightened 1 minute (repeat save at end of turns).

Spellcasting. At-will: detect magic , minor illusion . 2/battle: hold monster (DC 16), lightning bolt (8d6, DC 16 Dex).

Talos of Crete / Colossus of Rhodes

Huge Construct · CR 13 · Helper · Bronze colossus

AC 20 | HP 280 | Speed 30 ft.

STR 24 (+7) · DEX 8 (−1) · CON 22 (+6) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 8 (−1)

Saving Throws: Str +12, Con +11 · Immunities: poison, psychic; exhaustion

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Immutable Form. Cannot be shapechanged.

Siege Monster. Double damage to objects and chain-anchors.

Molten Vein. When hit by melee, attacker takes 7 (2d6) fire (once/round).

Actions

Multiattack. Two slams.

Slam. +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning.

Hurl Bronze (Recharge 5–6). +12 to hit, range 60/180 ft., 32 (6d8 + 7) bludgeoning; target DC 19 Str save or prone.

ALLY CARDS (cont.)

Sinbad on Roc

Gargantuan Monstrosity · CR 10 · Helper · Sinbad + Roc (Serendib or Morpheus)

AC 15 | HP 200 | Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR 28 (+9) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 9 (−1)

Skills: Perception +9

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Sinbad Saddle. Sinbad rides (drive-off bird or egg-hatchling). Shares initiative; once/round may tip Roc-Lore instead of a Roc attack.

Flyby. Does not provoke when flying out of reach.

Keen Sight. Advantage on Perception relying on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. Two beak attacks, or one beak and one Talons.

Beak. +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., 27 (4d8 + 9) piercing.

Talons. +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., 23 (4d6 + 9) slashing. Huge or smaller: grappled (escape DC 19). Roc can move while grappling.

Buffet (Recharge 5–6). Each creature in a 30-ft cone DC 19 Str save or 21 (6d6) bludgeoning and pushed 20 ft.

Kreon, Spellcasting Minotaur

Large Monstrosity · CR 10 · Helper · Labyrinth archmage

AC 16 | HP 170 | Speed 40 ft.

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

Saving Throws: Int +8, Wis +6 · Spell save DC 16 · Spell attack +8

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Labyrinthine Recall. Cannot get lost; advantage on saves vs. illusion.

Glass Cannon. No heavy armor — position carefully.

Actions

Gore. +8 to hit, 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing.

Spellcasting. At-will: fire bolt (3d10), mage hand . 3/battle total among: fireball (8d6), counterspell , wall of force (1 round only), haste (self or one ally).

Arcane Gore (1/battle). Gore, then immediately cast fire bolt at the same target with advantage.

Knight Minotaur + Cyclops Duo

Huge group unit · CR 11 · Helper · Knight + 2 cyclops (one initiative)

AC 18 | HP 240 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 10 (+0)

Unit: Shared HP pool. Acts as one helper on helper turns.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the whole wedge.

Wedge Formation. While HP > half, +1 AC. At half HP, lose one cyclops attack from Multiattack.

Actions

Multiattack. Knight greataxe + two cyclops clubs (three attacks).

Greataxe (Knight). +10 to hit, 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing.

Club (Cyclops). +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning. Once per turn, shove 10 ft. on a hit (no save) vs. Large or smaller.

Rock (1/turn). Instead of one club: +10 to hit, range 30/120 ft., 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning.

Lernaean Hydra

Huge Monstrosity · CR 11 · Helper · 5 heads (max 8)

AC 15 | HP 210 | Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 2 (−4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 7 (−2)

Starts with 5 heads. Multiattack = number of heads.

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Multiple Heads. Adv on saves vs. blind/deaf/stun/charm while >1 head. Sever a head on a single hit of 25+ damage (or called shot).

Regrow. If a stump isn't dealt fire/acid before end of hydra's next turn, grow two heads (max 8).

Reactive Heads. 1 OA reaction per head.

Actions

Multiattack. One bite per head (max 8).

Bite. +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing.

ALLY CARDS (cont.)

Euryale (or Medusa)

Large Monstrosity · CR 9 · Helper · Gorgon sister

AC 16 | HP 170 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills: Deception +7, Stealth +8 · Senses: darkvision 60 ft.

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Petrifying Gaze. Creature that starts turn seeing her eyes within 30 ft.: DC 15 Con save or restrained (stone-flesh). Repeat save next turn: fail = petrified; success ends. Avert eyes = disadvantage on attacks vs her. Allies: warn before looking — no friendly petrify unless they choose to meet her gaze.

Actions

Multiattack. Two snake-hair bites or two shortbow attacks.

Snake Hair. +8 to hit, 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing plus 14 (4d6) poison.

Shortbow. +8 to hit, range 80/320 ft., 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing plus 7 (2d6) poison.

Freezing Glance (Recharge 5–6). One creature within 60 ft. that can see her: DC 15 Con save or restrained until end of its next turn (not full petrify).

Echidna (Bound Aspect)

Huge Monstrosity · CR 14 · Helper · Mother on a leash

AC 18 | HP 260 | Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 16 (+3)

Saving Throws: Str +11, Con +10, Wis +8 · Spell save DC 16

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Bound Aspect. Persephone's bargain: no Call Brood beyond the once-per-battle option; cannot summon Typhon/Cerberus.

Spectacle Pick. Strongest raw helper — still one body, one turn.

Actions

Multiattack. One constrict and one bite, or two bites.

Constrict. +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., 20 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning and grappled (escape DC 19).

Bite. +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing plus 14 (4d6) poison.

Call Brood (1/battle). Summon 2 brood minions (AC 14, HP 40, +7 to hit, 12 damage) in spaces within 30 ft. They act on her helper turn as part of her Multiattack budget (replace her attacks that turn with their attacks if preferred).

Chariot of Apollo

Huge celestial vehicle · CR 10 · Helper · Sun-chariot + driver-shade

AC 17 | HP 190 | Speed fly 90 ft. (hover)

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

Crew: Driver-shade included. Can carry 2 Medium riders.

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Sun Platform. Riders have half cover. If chariot drops to 0 HP, riders fall (DC 15 Dex for half of 6d6).

Radiant Wake. Ignores storm difficult terrain; sheds bright light 30 ft.

Actions

Solar Strafe. Move up to fly Speed; each creature in a 60-ft line once this turn DC 16 Dex save or 28 (8d6) radiant (half on success).

Trampling Hooves. +9 to hit, 18 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning plus 9 (2d8) radiant.

Flare (Recharge 5–6). Each enemy within 20 ft. DC 16 Con save or blinded until end of its next turn.

Pandora

Medium Humanoid · CR 8 · Helper · First woman · Jar sealed

AC 15 | HP 140 | Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 14 (+2) · WIS 16 (+3) · CHA 18 (+4)

Saving Throws: Wis +7, Cha +8 · Skills: Insight +7, Persuasion +8

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Hope Kept. Jar stays sealed except for listed tricks — she will not empty it.

Actions

Scepter Strike. +6 to hit, 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) psychic.

Jar Trick (3/battle, pick each time). 30 ft.: (1) one ally regains 28 (8d6) HP; (2) end one condition on an ally; (3) one enemy DC 16 Wis save or frightened and take 18 (4d8) psychic.

Inspiring Presence. Allies within 10 ft. have advantage on saves vs. frighten.

ALLY CARDS (cont.)

Orpheus

Medium Humanoid · CR 8 · Helper · Legendary bard

AC 14 | HP 130 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws: Wis +7, Cha +9 · Spell save DC 17

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Counter-Song. Reaction: when Typhon uses Cataclysm Breath or Triple/Howl-like frighten, force him to reroll the recharge or impose disadvantage on the save DC check — once/battle, cancel one breath entirely (Nike smiles).

Actions

Lyric Strike. +6 to hit, 5 (1d6 + 2) plus 9 (2d8) thunder.

Battle Hymn. Allies within 30 ft. gain 15 temp HP (1/battle) or each ally may immediately move 10 ft. without provoking.

Dirge of Chains (Recharge 5–6). Typhon or one enemy DC 17 Cha save or have disadvantage on attacks until end of Orpheus's next helper turn; on fail, also take 22 (5d8) psychic.

Heracles

Medium Demigod · CR 13 · Helper · Premier striker

AC 18 | HP 200 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 24 (+7) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)

Saving Throws: Str +12, Con +10 · Skills: Athletics +12

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Labors Remembered. Once/battle, ignore one instance of resistance to bludgeoning/piercing/slashing on a hit.

Power Fantasy. Hit hard. Smash anchors. Simple turn loop.

Actions

Multiattack. Three club attacks or two club and one bow.

Olive-Wood Club. +12 to hit, 18 (2d10 + 7) bludgeoning. Once per turn, deal +11 (2d10) on a hit.

Bow of Eurytus. +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing.

Anchor Breaker. Instead of Multiattack: one automatic 50 damage to a chain-anchor within 5 ft.

Leonidas

Medium Humanoid · CR 10 · Helper · King of the Hot Gates

AC 20 | HP 180 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws: Str +8, Wis +7 · Skills: Athletics +8, Insight +7

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Hot Gates Stance. While not incapacitated, allies within 10 ft. gain +1 AC.

Immovable. Advantage on saves vs. shove/prone; cannot be moved against his will while conscious.

Actions

Multiattack. Two spear attacks.

Spear. +9 to hit, 11 (1d8 + 7) piercing. Mark the target: it has disadvantage on attacks vs. creatures other than Leonidas until his next helper turn.

Hold the Line (Reaction). When an ally within 10 ft. is hit, grant +4 AC against that attack (1/round).

Molon Labe (1/battle). Allies within 30 ft. gain resistance to bludgeoning/piercing/slashing until Leonidas's next helper turn.

Atalanta

Medium Humanoid · CR 9 · Helper · Peerless huntress

AC 17 | HP 150 | Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills: Acrobatics +9, Perception +7, Survival +7

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Sharpshooter Huntress. No disadvantage at long range; ignore half/three-quarters cover with her bow.

Actions

Multiattack. Three longbow attacks.

Longbow. +11 to hit, range 150/600 ft., 14 (1d8 + 10) piercing. Once per turn, knock Large or smaller prone (DC 16 Str save) or mark quarry (+1d8 on her next hit vs it).

Called Shot — Eye/Hand (1/battle). Vs Typhon: +11 to hit, 24 (3d8 + 10) piercing and he has disadvantage on his next breath or slam.

ALLY CARDS (cont.)

Achilles

Medium Humanoid · CR 11 · Helper · Best of the Achaeans

AC 18 | HP 160 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)

Saving Throws: Str +10, Dex +9 · Skills: Athletics +10

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Almost Invulnerable. Resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, slashing. Heel: if a critical hit or called shot targets his heel (Typhon can learn this after round 2 of Phase 2), he loses the resistance until healed by Pandora/Orpheus jar/hymn.

Glass Cannon Pride. Highest single-target spikes — don't hide him.

Actions

Multiattack. Three spear attacks.

Pelion Ash Spear. +11 to hit, 16 (2d8 + 7) piercing. Once per turn, +14 (4d6) on a hit.

Arsteia (1/battle). Move up to Speed without provoking and make four spear attacks.

Bellerophon on Pegasus (or Griffin)

Large unit · CR 10 · Helper · Rider + mount (one body)

AC 17 | HP 170 | Speed 10 ft., fly 90 ft.

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

Unit: Rider and mount share HP and turn.

Helper — Alternate Turns. Controlled on helper turns only.

Flyby Lance. Does not provoke when flying out of reach.

Actions

Multiattack. Two lance attacks, or one lance and one mount gore/beak.

Lance. +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., 15 (1d12 + 9) piercing; +9 (2d8) if he moved 20+ ft. toward the target this turn.

Mount Strike. +9 to hit, 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing.

Sky Drag (Recharge 5–6). On a lance hit vs Large or smaller, DC 16 Str save or target is carried 30 ft. with him (grappled).

Satyr Revel-Band

Medium unit · CR 8 · Helper · 6–8 satyrs (shared pool)

AC 15 | HP 160 | Speed 40 ft.

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

Unit: Shared HP. 4 attack rolls per helper turn.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the band.

Mirth. Once/battle: end frightened on all allies within 30 ft.

Actions

Pack Poke. Four shortsword or shortbow attacks +7 to hit, 8 (1d6 + 5) damage.

Pipes of Discord (Recharge 5–6). Enemies in 20 ft. DC 14 Wis save or disadvantage on attacks until end of band's next turn.

Leonin Pride

Medium unit · CR 9 · Helper · 5–6 leonin (shared pool)

AC 16 | HP 180 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 16 (+3) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 12 (+1)

Unit: Shared HP. Pack tactics.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the pride.

Pack Tactics. Advantage on attacks if another pride member (unit) is within 5 ft. of the target — treat as always on vs. Typhon's limb zones.

Actions

Multiattack. Four claw/spear attacks +9 to hit, 11 (1d8 + 7) slashing.

Pride Roar (Recharge 5–6). Enemies within 30 ft. DC 15 Wis save or frightened until end of pride's next turn.

Pounce Pin. Once per turn on a hit: Large or smaller DC 15 Str save or prone.

ALLY CARDS (cont.)

Centaur Lance

Large unit · CR 9 · Helper · 4–5 centaurs (shared pool)

AC 15 | HP 170 | Speed 50 ft.

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

Unit: Shared HP. Cavalry skirmish.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the lance.

Charge. If the unit moves 20+ ft. straight toward a target, first hit this turn +9 (2d8) damage.

Actions

Multiattack. Three pike attacks and one longbow, or four longbow.

Pike. +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., 12 (1d10 + 7) piercing.

Longbow. +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing.

Minotaur Phalanx

Large unit · CR 10 · Helper · 4 minotaur hoplites (shared pool)

AC 17 | HP 200 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 7 (–2) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 8 (–1)

Unit: Shared HP. Reckless brutes.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the phalanx.

Reckless. Unit may gain advantage on all melee attacks this turn; attacks vs it have advantage until its next helper turn.

Actions

Multiattack. Four greataxe attacks +10 to hit, 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing.

Labyrinth Rush (Recharge 5–6). Move 20 ft. without provoking; each creature passed DC 16 Str save or take 14 (4d6) and prone.

Cyclopean Levy

Medium unit · CR 9 · Helper · 5 cyclopeans (shared pool)

AC 16 | HP 180 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Unit: Shared HP. Siege throwers.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the levy.

Siege Assist. Double damage to chain-anchors with Rock attacks.

Actions

Multiattack. Three battleaxe or rock attacks.

Battleaxe. +9 to hit, 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing.

Rock. +9 to hit, range 30/90 ft., 18 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning.

Anchor Barrage. Instead of Multiattack: deal 35 damage to a chain-anchor within 90 ft.

Amazon Wing

Medium unit · CR 9 · Helper · 6 Amazons + captain (shared pool)

AC 17 | HP 180 | Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 14 (+2)

Unit: Shared HP. Disciplined focus-fire.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the wing.

Phalanx Step. +1 AC while HP > half.

Actions

Multiattack. Five spear or longbow attacks +9 to hit, 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing.

Focus Fire. Once per turn, if 3+ attacks hit the same target, deal +14 (4d6) piercing.

Captain's Order (1/battle). Wing gains advantage on all attacks this helper turn.

ALLY CARDS (cont.)

Spartan Hoplites

Medium unit · CR 10 · Helper · 8 Spartan hoplites (shared pool)

AC 19 | HP 190 | Speed 30 ft.

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

Unit: Shared HP, Best pure defense.

Helper — Alternate Turns. One player controls the wall.

Shield Wall. Allies behind the wall (within 5 ft. opposite Typhon) have half cover. Unit has +1 AC while HP > half.

Actions

Multiattack. Four spear attacks +8 to hit, 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing.

Hold the Line (Reaction, 1/round). When an ally within 10 ft. would be hit, impose disadvantage on that attack.

Phalanx Push (Recharge 5–6). Each enemy within 5 ft. DC 15 Str save or pushed 10 ft. and take 9 (2d8).

CORE ENEMIES

- Slag-Hound — CR 3 · AC 14 / 52
- Chain-Guard — CR 5 · AC 16 / 95
- Orthos — CR 8 · AC 17 / 168
- Typhon — CR 18* · AC 20 / **1400** · rebind, don't kill
- Pyra — CR 5 · AC 16 / 84 · recruit

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Slag-Hound

Medium Elemental · CR 3 · Enc. 1 pack

AC 14 | HP 52 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 10 (+0) · CHA 6 (−2)

Molten Blood. When hit by melee, the attacker takes 3 (1d6) fire (reaction once/round).

Actions

Attack. Bite +5 to hit, 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing plus 3 (1d6) fire. Pack Tactics.

Titan-Kin Chain-Guard

Large Giant · CR 5 · Enc. 1 jailer

AC 16 | HP 95 | Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 18 (+4) · INT 10 (+0) · WIS 11 (+0) · CHA 10 (+0)

Jailer’s Key. Carries a spike-key. A PC who takes one (action, contested Athletics) gains advantage on the next chain-lock check.

Etna-Hardened. Resistance to fire. Vulnerable to cold and radiant.

Actions

Attack. Multiattack: two volcanic mauls +7 to hit, 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning plus 3 (1d6) fire.

Chain Lash (Recharge 5–6). 30-ft line, DC 15 Dex save or 18 (4d8) slashing and restrained by slag-chain (escape DC 15).

Captain Orthos of the Root-Forge

Huge Giant · CR 8 · Enc. 1 elite

AC 17 | HP 168 | Speed 40 ft.

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

False Lock. One of Nike’s visible locks is a decoy he controls. Until Orthos is bloodied or persuaded (DC 18), checks against that lock automatically fail.

Last Order. At 0 HP, he can use a reaction to slam a console — advancing Typhon’s Wake Clock by 1 (see Enc. 1).

Actions

Attack. Multiattack: two forge-hammers +10 to hit, 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) fire. Or hurl slag +10 to hit, range 60 ft., 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning.

Pyra the Chain-Warden (defector)

Medium Humanoid (titan-kin blooded), Chaotic Good · CR 5 · Recruitable Ally

AC 16 | HP 84 | Speed 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 12 (+1) · WIS 13 (+1) · CHA 14 (+2)

Skills: Athletics +6, Arcana +4

RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Spare her when the first titan-kin squad breaks, or show her the Fillet and swear Nike will fly free — she knows which locks are false.

Lock-Lore. Advantage on checks to open Nike’s bindings. Can spend an action to grant an ally advantage on the next chain check.

Actions

Volcanic Spear. +7 to hit, 11 (1d8 + 7) piercing plus 3 (1d6) fire.

Ward-Spike (1/rest). Place a spike: a 10-ft radius becomes difficult terrain for titan-kin until end of combat.

EPILOGUE

Success

- Nike knots Fillet / olive leaves
- One-sentence farewell per helper
- Table boon: sanctuary / mist-ship / one future helper call
- Mithaven quiet ending — ask each PC’s tomorrow

Failure / bittersweet

- Typhon free → sequel war of ages
- Nike chained → seals slip; return hook
- Helper death (consent) → laurel grave

Optional scenes

- Heracles’s humility · Orpheus quiets stone · Spartan shield · Pandora’s shut jar · Atalanta’s lap · Hundred-hand salute

Long-form DM reference — not limited to 4 pages. Enable Background graphics when printing.

The Wrath of Pyrakmon

One-Shot · 6 Players · Level 8 · Greek Mythology · ~3.5 hrs / 3 Encounters

SESSION SUMMARY

- **Style:** Mythic Sea Voyage / Dungeon Assault
- **Setting:** Isle of Kyklos — open Aegean trireme deck, ruined coastal temple, Cyclops sea cave
- **Win Condition:** Defeat Pyrakmon, rescue Elara's crew, recover the Naxian Seal
- **Players:** 6 × Level 8 · ~3.5 hours · Quest Object: Wineskin of Maron (payoff Enc. 3)

A Naxian merchant hires the party to reclaim her crew and the Naxian Seal from the Elder Cyclops Pyrakmon. Survive a harpy ambush at sea, navigate a Medusa's shattered temple, then confront Pyrakmon in his cave — Elara's divine wine is their best edge: *"No giant can resist it."*

"Sailors of fortune — my name is Elara of Naxos. The creature Pyrakmon has taken my crew and my livelihood from the waters between here and his wretched island. I offer eight hundred gold pieces to any soul brave enough to see them returned. Come to the Anchored Krater before the tide turns. I have a gift that may prove useful — something the giant cannot resist." — **Note by harbour boy, blue wax seal · Elara of Naxos**

Major Beats

1. **Hook — The Anchored Krater:** Elara briefs the party, hands over the Wineskin of Maron, and explains Pyrakmon cannot resist divine wine.
2. **Encounter 1 — Storm of Feathers:** Harpies + Matriarch attack the trireme. Sail survival determines rest before landing.
3. **Encounter 2 — The Shattered Temple:** Kithara the Medusa guards the cave path — fight, sneak, or negotiate for fire-vulnerability intel.
4. **Encounter 3 — The Eye of Pyrakmon:** Storm the cave; use the wineskin; target the eye; free the bone-cage crew; recover the Seal.
5. **Resolution:** Crew freed, Seal recovered. Elara pays; if pressed, reveals the Seal's true power as a campaign hook.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Med	Hard	Notes
Harpy	3	5	7	Enc. 1; Luring Song targets crew NPCs too
Harpy Matriarch	0	1	2	Enc. 1 leader; omit for APL 4–5
Kithara (Medusa)	1*	1*	1*	Enc. 2; *bypass via negotiation
Skeleton Archer	2	4	6	Enc. 2; crumble if Kithara dies
Pyrakmon (Elder Cyclops)	1†	1†	1†	Enc. 3 boss; †HP / Legendaries scale
Giant Cave Hound	1	2	3	Enc. 3; released BA on Pyrakmon's 1st turn

Difficulty Scaling

APL	Enc. 1 — Storm	Enc. 2 — Temple	Enc. 3 — Cave (Boss)
4–5	3 Harpies, no Matriarch; Song DC 9 ; sails 30 HP; 5 crew	Kithara 80 HP, Gaze DC 12 ; 2 Skeletons; Persuasion DC 13 ; Mirror auto-succeeds 1st use	140 HP, STR 20/+5; no Legendaries/Resist; 1 Hound; Wineskin DC 14
6–7	4 Harpies, no Matriarch; Song DC 11 ; std sails	Kithara 100 HP, Gaze DC 13 ; 3 Skeletons	170 HP; no Leg. Resist; 1 Hound; Wineskin DC 15 ; 2 Leg. Actions
8	Baseline — 5 + 1 Matriarch; Song 11/14; sails 20 HP; 8 crew	Baseline — 127 HP, Gaze DC 14 ; 4 Skeletons	Baseline — 200 HP; 2 Leg. Resist; 2 Hounds; 3 Leg. Actions; Wineskin DC 17 w/ Disadv.
10	7 + 2 Matriarchs; 1 hidden in crow's nest; sails 15 HP; 3 sail-hunters R1	150 HP, Gaze DC 15 ; 6 Skeletons; regen 10 HP/turn while skeletons stand	240 HP, STR 27/+8; 3 Hounds; Lair Init 20 (DC 15 STR or Prone); no fire-eye bonus; Wineskin = Poisoned only on fail

A desperate Naxian merchant hires the party to brave the Isle of Kyklos, where the Elder Cyclops Pyrakmon has seized her crew and her most prized possession — the Naxian Seal, a trade charter with hidden divine power. The heroes must survive a harpy ambush at sea, navigate the petrifying domain of a vengeful Medusa, and finally confront Pyrakmon himself in his reeking cave. Elara has pressed a flask of supernaturally potent wine into their hands and assured them: "No giant can resist it." Shrewd Aegean merchant. Provides the party with the Wineskin of Maron and a briefing: Pyrakmon is a glutton for fine wine and will accept it as a peace-offering before turning violent. Secret: The Naxian Seal is a Binding of Poseidon — the holder can command sea-spirits to fill or deny sails within ten miles. She hasn't told the party.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Harpy	3 · 5 · 7 · Enc. 1; Luring Song targets crew NPCs too
Harpy Matriarch	0 · 1 · 2 · Enc. 1 leader; omit entirely for APL 4–5
Kithara (Medusa)	1* · 1* · 1* · Enc. 2; *can be fully bypassed via negotiation
Skeleton Archer	2 · 4 · 6 · Enc. 2; animated by Kithara — crumble instantly if she dies
Pyrakmon (Elder Cyclops)	1† · 1† · 1† · Enc. 3 boss; †HP and Legendary Actions scale, see Difficulty section
Giant Cave Hound	1 · 2 · 3 · Enc. 3; released by Pyrakmon as a bonus action on his first turn

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 8:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 8.
- **Easier:** APL 4–6: reduce minion counts ~30%; DCs ~2; boss loses one recharge or legendary option.
- **Harder:** APL 10–12: boss HP +25–35%; +1 legendary action; add a lieutenant or extra wave.

ENCOUNTER 1 — Storm of Feathers

Medium · ~20–25 min · ~4–5 rounds · 5× Harpy + 1× Matriarch · XP adj. ~3,400 | **Terrain:** Trireme Deck, 60×20 ft

Storm-cover ambush at sea. Two harpies bank for sails; Matriarch dives highest-AC PC. Charmed oarsmen are the clock. **Win:** kill/drive off all harpies before sails destroyed and too many crew overboard.

- **Sails (2):** AC 10, 20 HP each. Both intact = Long Rest before Enc. 2; one down = Short Rest; both down = no rest + 1 Exhaustion each PC. 3 crew overboard = treat as both sails down.
- **Terrain:** Rigging difficult (**DC 12** Ath/Acro climb 15 ft w/o Dash); Crow's Nest 25 ft (**DC 13** Ath); Mast = ¾ cover; oar banks = half cover (dive attacks disadv.); wind: PC shots NW disadv.; harpy shots with wind adv.
- **Overboard:** Rail + fail **DC 12** DEX when pushed/charm-walked → sea; swim 15 ft/rd; **DC 14** Ath/rd or +1 Exhaustion.
- **Init:** 5 harpies as group; Matriarch separate. **Sail Targeting:** 2 designated harpies claw sail as action (no attack vs Sail AC if uncontested). PC Reaction interpose → take claw hit instead.
- **Luring Song — Crew:** 8 crew WIS +0; **DC 11** WIS start of turn or walk toward singer. Matriarch Song **DC 14**.
- **Matriarch AI:** R1 Dive Bomb (40 ft descend); R2 Talon Rake grapple + lift 15 ft. **Flee:** no Matriarch + 3+ harpies dead → **DC 11** WIS morale next rd.
- **Skill checks:** **DC 13** Ath (BA, adjacent) grab charm-walker; **DC 14** Animal Handling calm charm; **DC 14** Performance counter-sing 1 crew (Matriarch targets counter-singer next); **DC 15** Perception spot Matriarch pre-R1 (loses Dive Bomb BA).
- **Harder:** 7 + 2 Matriarchs; 1 hidden crow's nest Surprise; sails 15 HP. **Easier:** 3 Harpies, no Matriarch; Song DC 9; sails 30 HP; 5 crew.

Failure: Both sails destroyed → row exhausted, no rest, 1 Exhaustion into Enc. 2. 4+ crew lost → Kairos unavailable in Enc. 3.

Resolution: Both sails intact → Long Rest. One sail → Short Rest. Matriarch corpse **DC 12** Investigation → silver armband (eye + IYYP) — Pyrakmon sentinel hint. Grappled PC falls ≤15 ft (1d6) if Matriarch dies mid-lift.

ENCOUNTER 2 — The Shattered Temple

Hard · ~30–35 min · ~5–6 rounds · 1× Kithara + 4× Skeleton Archer · or bypass | **Terrain:** Ruined Coastal Temple, 80×60 ft

Medusa Kithara (cast off by Pyrakmon) animates petrified victims. Not mindlessly hostile — hates Pyrakmon. **Win:** defeat or bypass; clear path to sea cave. **Bonus:** stand-down → fire weakness + crew alive intel.

- **Terrain:** 8 columns (¾ cover; LoS break = Gaze off); 4 deep-shadow 10×10 zones (lightly obscured; **DC 16** Perception locate Kithara — she starts in shadow); Altar centre (**DC 14** Religion → Adv. WIS vs Gaze 1 hr); Bronze Votary Shield on altar (mirror + AC +2); 4 petrified statues → Skeletons R1 (AC 15/20 HP if smashed pre-animate); S cliff 20 ft drop (2d6; climb back **DC 14** Ath full move).
- **Petrifying Gaze:** Start of turn, see eyes, ≤30 ft, not Incapacitated → **DC 14** CON. Fail = Restrained; fail again next turn = Petrified (Greater Restoration). Avert Eyes = immune that turn, Disadv. attacks vs her. Skeletons/Kithara immune to Petrify. Blinded = Gaze-immune.
- **Bronze Mirror:** Action angle shield → Kithara **DC 15** CON or Restrained until end of her next turn; immune after first successful save. Full Action — hand to support PC.
- **Negotiate:** Call "We are enemies of Pyrakmon!" (Action) → she skips that PC this rd (skeletons still act). **DC 15** Persuasion → skeletons off 1 rd, listens. **DC 17** Persuasion + proof (wineskin or Matriarch armband) → full stand-down, free shield, full intel (eye +2d6 fire; right-socket blind spot; crew in bone cage). Won't join combat; leaves island if given proof of his death.
- **Skeletons:** Awaken Dead BA R1. Crumble if she dies. Never animate if negotiated before R1. Prioritise PCs not averting eyes.
- **Stealth bypass:** **DC 14** group Stealth. Success: no combat, no intel. Fail: Surprise + all PCs **DC 14** CON or start Restrained.
- **Harder:** 6 Skeletons; regen 10 HP/turn while any stand; Gaze DC 15. **Easier:** 80 HP, Gaze DC 12; 2 Skeletons; Persuasion DC 13.

Failure: Stealth fail → Surprise + possible Restrained openers. Petrified PCs freed later are Stunned until end of next turn.

Resolution: Combat win → skeletons crumble; loot shield, 3× pearl earrings (20 gp), cave-map fragment (**DC 13** Inv); dying whisper of eye intel on merciful kill. Negotiate → full XP + intel. Map shows fire pit, cage, rock piles.

ENCOUNTER 3 — The Eye of Pyrakmon (Boss)

Deadly · ~40–45 min · ~7–8 rounds · 1× Pyrakmon + 2× Cave Hound · XP adj. ~9,450 | **Terrain:** Sea Cave, 120×80 ft · Rescue

Central fire pit; hounds chained at entrance; 6 sailors in whalebone cage (N wall). Offer wineskin pre-init if possible. **Win:** Pyrakmon to 0 HP. **Bonus:** free all 6 (cage AC 12 / 40 HP or **DC 20** Ath). Seal in shiny pile (**DC 14** Inv).

- **Terrain:** Fire pit 15×15; 3d6 fire (**DC 14** DEX half); shove into pit free with Greatclub if within 10 ft. Bone cage N: freed sailor while he's alive = 1-in-4 chance next Rock (**DC 15** DEX or 4d10+7). Chains: **DC 18** Ath break early; he releases both BA R1. Rock piles unlimited ammo. Stalactites above pit: **DC 16** attack/STR → 20-ft zone 2d10 (**DC 16** DEX half) + extinguish fire (dim light). Tidal pool S 20×20, 3 ft: difficult; he can't enter; safe for sailors.
- **Wineskin:** Pre-combat offer → Distracted 1 full rd (free surprise). Combat: adjacent Action **DC 15** Ath/SoH → 1 measure; he Disadv. on **DC 17** CON. Fail = Poisoned + Incapacitated EoNT; Success = Poisoned only. All 3 doses = auto-fail, Incapacitated 2 full rds. Willing or grappled per dose.
- **Eye (weak point):** While Incapacitated/Restrained — called shot Action vs AC 20; 15+ dmg in one strike → Blinded permanently. Kithara intel: fire to eye +2d6. Blinded → Disadv. attacks/Perception; Frightened of unseen PCs.
- **AI:** R1 Earthshaker + release hounds + Multiattack. R2–3 Multiattack damaged target; Fling consistent hitters; Rock ranged threats. R4–5 (<100 HP) shove toward fire; Thunderous Roar if up; Leg. Move chase. At 50 HP parley: "Give me your shiniest thing and go." Refuse → fight to death; Blind Swipe free-use (berserk).
- **Sailors:** Direct to tidal pool. Kairos (if signalled, ≤3 crew lost Enc. 1) arrives end R6 with 4 oarsmen.
- **Harder:** 240 HP, STR 27/+8; 3 Hounds; Lair Init 20; no fire-eye bonus. **Easier:** 140 HP, STR 20; no Legendaries; 1 Hound; Wineskin DC 14.

Failure / Retreat: He won't pursue past cave mouth; no HP regen on return. Sailors stay caged until he's down. Partial: some crew dead → 800 gp, no bonus.

Resolution: Full victory (all 6 alive) → 800 + 200 gp; Seal recovered; Seal secret revealed if pressed. Loot: 1,200 gp hoard; scrolls (Prot. Evil/Good, Stone Shape); Trident of Fish Command. Blessed Enc. 2 shield → +1 Shield rest of campaign.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Harpy

Medium Monstrosity, CE · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 11 | HP 38 (7d8+7) | Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR 12(+1) DEX 13(+1) CON 12(+1) INT 7(−2) WIS 10(+0) CHA 13(+1)

Luring Song. Creatures of choice within 300 ft. that hear: **DC 11** WIS at turn start or Charmed + Incapacitated; all move toward harpy. Success = immune 24 hrs.

Multiattack. Claws + Talons. **Claws.** +3, 5 ft, 1d6+1 slash. **Talons.** +3, 5 ft, 2d6+1 pierce.

Harpy Matriarch

Large Monstrosity, CE · Custom · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 13 | HP 78 (12d8+24) | Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR 14(+2) DEX 14(+2) CON 14(+2) INT 9(−1) WIS 12(+1) CHA 16(+3)

Saves: DEX +4, WIS +3 | Skills: Intimidation +5, Perception +3

Luring Song (DC 14). As Harpy but **DC 14**. While she sings, Harpies ≤60 ft. may Reaction-Claw a creature that stands from Prone within 5 ft.

Multiattack. 2× Claws + Talon Rake. **Claws.** +4, 1d8+2 slash. **Talon Rake.** +4, 2d8+2 pierce; Grappled (escape **DC 13**); carry up to 15 ft vertical.

BA: **Dive Bomb** — moved 20+ ft straight: next melee +2d6. Reaction: **Death Shriek** — on 0 HP, 30 ft **DC 14** CON or Stunned until EoNT.

Kithara (Medusa)

Medium Monstrosity, LN · Potential Ally · CR 6 (2,300 XP)

AC 15 | HP 127 (17d8+51) | Speed 30 ft. | Darkvision 60 ft.

STR 10 DEX 15(+2) CON 16(+3) INT 12(+1) WIS 13(+1) CHA 15(+2)

Skills: Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Petrifying Gaze. See eyes, start turn ≤30 ft: **DC 14** CON. Fail = Restrained; fail again = Petrified. Avert Eyes = immune that turn; Disadv. attacks vs her.

Multiattack. Snake Hair + 2× Shortsword, or 3× Longbow. **Snake Hair.** +5, 4d6+2 poison; **DC 14** CON or Poisoned 1 hr. **Shortsword.** +5, 1d6+2 pierce. **Longbow.** +5, 150/600, 1d8+2 pierce.

BA: **Awaken Dead** (1/combat) — up to 4 petrified corpses ≤60 ft → Skeleton Archers; crumble if she dies.

Skeleton Archer

Medium Undead, LE · CR ¼ (50 XP)

AC 13 | HP 13 (2d8+4) | Speed 30 ft. | Darkvision 60 ft.

STR 10 DEX 14(+2) CON 15(+2) INT 6(−2) WIS 8(−1) CHA 5(−3)

Vulnerable: Bludgeoning | Immune: Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Shortbow. +4, 80/320, 1d6+2 pierce. **Shortsword.** +4, 5 ft, 1d6+2 pierce.

Pyrakmon, Elder Cyclops

Huge Giant, CN · Boss · Custom · CR 10 (~5,900 XP)

AC 16 | HP 200 (16d12+80) | Speed 40 ft. | Darkvision 60 ft.

STR 25(+7) DEX 9(−1) CON 21(+5) INT 8(−1) WIS 10(+0) CHA 9(−1)

Saves: STR +11, CON +9 | Skills: Athletics +11, Perception +4

Single Eye. Disadv. Perception >30 ft and all ranged attacks; can't detect Invisible. *Earthshaker.* Moves 20+ ft: creatures ≤10 ft **DC 19** STR or Prone. *Legendary Resistance* (2/Day).

Multiattack. 2× Greatclub. **Greatclub.** +11, reach 10, 3d8+7 bludgeoning. **Rock** (Disadv.). +11, 30/120, 4d10+7; **DC 19** STR or Prone. **Fling.** Medium/− ≤10 ft: **DC 19** STR or hurl 30 ft, Prone, 3d8+7; landing zone 2d6 (**DC 15** DEX half).

BA: **Thunderous Roar** (Rech. 5–6) — 30 ft hear: **DC 15** WIS or Frightened until EoNT. Reaction: **Blind Swipe** — hit by melee → 1 Greatclub vs attacker (1×/rd; free-use if berserk <50 HP).

Legendary (3/rd): **Move** (1) half speed no OA; **Stomp** (1) ≤10 ft **DC 19** DEX or 2d6+7 + Prone; **Sweep** (2) Greatclub vs all ≤10 ft.

Eye called shot: while Incapacitated/Restrained, Action vs AC 20; 15+ dmg → Blinded permanently. Kithara intel: fire to eye +2d6.

Giant Cave Hound

Large Beast, Unaligned · Pyrakmon's Pets · CR 1 (200 XP)

AC 14 | HP 37 (5d10+10) | Speed 50 ft. | Darkvision 60 ft.

STR 17(+3) DEX 15(+2) CON 15(+2) INT 3(−4) WIS 12(+1) CHA 7(−2)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +4

Pack Tactics. Adv. on attacks if ally within 5 ft of target, not Incapacitated.

Bite. +5, 5 ft, 2d6+3 piercing; **DC 13** STR or Prone. Released as Pyrakmon BA on his first turn.

KEY ITEMS

◆ Wineskin of Maron

Wondrous Item (Uncommon) · Session McGuffin · 3 Uses · Given by Elara at start

Appearance: Hammered gold flask, grape-vine relief · 2 lb. Wine of Maron, priest of Apollo — supernaturally potent; Giants have Disadvantage on the CON save.

Pre-Combat Offer (best): Offer before initiative — Pyrakmon accepts greedily. Distracted 1 full round → free surprise round of actions.

Combat (Action): Adjacent: **DC 15** Athletics or Sleight of Hand to deliver 1 measure. Target must be willing or Grappled. Pyrakmon: Disadv. on **DC 17** CON. **Fail:** Poisoned + Incapacitated until end of his next turn. **Success:** Poisoned only (Disadv. attacks/checks).

All 3 uses: Automatic fail. Incapacitated 2 full rounds — prime window for eye called shot (AC 20, 15+ dmg → Blinded permanently).

DM note: Only Maron's vineyard can refill — potential campaign hook.

Naxian Seal

Quest Object · Recover from Pyrakmon's shiny pile (N wall) · **DC 14** Investigation

- **Appears as:** Trade charter / merchant seal of Naxos.
- **True nature (Elara's secret):** Binding of Poseidon — holder can command minor sea-spirits to fill or deny sails within 10 miles.
- **Reward:** 800 gp on delivery; +200 gp if all 6 crew alive. If party confronts Elara about the Binding: she claims it by Naxian law; offers one extra warehouse magic item for silence. Campaign hook if revealed.

Polished Bronze Votary Shield

Found on Enc. 2 altar · Standard shield (AC +2) · Mirror vs Kithara

- **Mirror (Action):** Angle at Kithara → **DC 15** CON or Restrained until end of her next turn; immune after first successful save.
- **Altar blessing:** **DC 14** Religion at sea-god altar → Adv. WIS vs Gaze 1 hr; if blessed, treat as **+1 Shield** for remainder of campaign after Enc. 2.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Elara of Naxos — Quest Giver

Medium Humanoid (Human), NG · Non-Combatant · Merchant of Naxos

- **Appearance:** Mid-forties, salt-bleached hair, ink-stained fingers; sea air + expensive perfume. Rarely raises voice; never bluffs when she can negotiate. Carries small bronze knife; will not fight. Languages: Common, Elvish.
- **Motivation:** Rescue her 6-person crew; recover the Naxian Seal; return home. Pays 800 gp + 200 bonus if all six survive.
- **Secret:** Seal is a Binding of Poseidon (sail fill/deny within 10 mi). Hasn't told the party — fears they keep it.
- **Roleplay:** Briefs at Anchored Krater; hands Wineskin; insists Pyrakmon is a glutton for fine wine. If confronted about Seal: "Mine by Naxian law and Poseidon's blessing" — offers one extra magic item for silence.
- **Stats:** Non-combatant — no combat block.

Captain Kairos — Trireme Captain (Ally)

Weathered sailor · Loyal to Elara's coin · Commands 8 oarsmen

- **Motivation:** Get the ship and crew home; follow Elara's contract.
- **Role in Enc. 1:** Survives unless DM rules otherwise. Crew charm-walks are his crisis. Beaches at island cove and waits.
- **Enc. 3 assist:** If signalled and ≤3 crew lost Enc. 1, arrives end of Round 6 with 4 oarsmen to carry out survivors. If 4+ crew lost overboard, unavailable (managing reduced crew).
- **Roleplay:** Practical, curt; improvises if sails/crew fail but party drifts (treat as both-sails-down rest).
- **Stats:** Ally NPC — no combat block needed; focus on timing / availability.

Kithara — Medusa of the Shattered Temple

Potential Ally · Enc. 2 guardian · Full combat stats on page 3

- **Motivation:** Survive in bitter solitude; hate Pyrakmon with cold ferocity. Enslaved by him years ago, discarded when she displeased him. Animates petrified prior visitors as Skeleton Archers.
- **Secret / Intel if stand-down:** (1) Eye vulnerable — fire attacks deal +2d6 to the eye; (2) slight blind spot to the right of the socket (old scarring); (3) sailors alive in bone-and-chain cage at cave rear.
- **Roleplay:** Pause if PC calls "We are enemies of Pyrakmon!" **DC 15** Persuasion = listen 1 rd; **DC 17** + proof (wineskin / Matriarch armband) = full stand-down, free Bronze Shield, full intel. Award full combat XP. Won't fight alongside party; promises to leave island if given proof of his death. Recurring NPC potential.
- **Stats:** AC 15, HP 127, Gaze **DC 14** — see creature card. Dying merciful kill may whisper eye intel.

Session Aftermath & Hooks

- **Full victory:** All crew alive + Seal → 1,000 gp total; Elara may reveal Binding if pressed.
- **Partial:** Pyrakmon down, crew losses → 800 gp, no bonus; Seal still recoverable.
- **Hoard:** 1,200 gp coin/jewellery; Protection from Evil and Good scroll; Stone Shape scroll; Trident of Fish Command.
- **Hooks:** Wineskin refill only at Maron's vineyard; Seal Binding as political/naval power; Kithara as recurring ally if Pyrakmon dies; Matriarch armband proves Cyclops uses harpy sentinels island-wide.

The Labyrinth of the Unshapen

One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 8 · ~3.5 Hours · Greek Mythology Themed

SESSION SUMMARY

- **Style:** Infiltration / Rescue / Boss Fight
- **Setting:** Clifftop stables → ruined stone garden → underground alchemical sanctum
- **Win Condition:** Stop Theron. Destroy the Chrysalid Crucible.
- **Players:** 6 × Level 8 · ~3.5 Hours · Atmosphere: Greek antiquity · Alchemy · Body Horror

Huntress-priestess **Phaedra** finds the party and presses a scroll fragment into a player's hand. **Theron Amorphos**, a disgraced alchemist, is two days from firing his Chrysalid Crucible — pulling the essences of all magical beasts within 100 miles into forced convergence. Cross his stables, thread the ruined garden, destroy the Crucible, and end his work.

"From one of his early papers. He published it himself. He thought it was about the animals." She presses torn papyrus into a player's hand — bronze ink, cut at both ends. The fragment reads only: **Break the sigil, break its loyalty.** — **Phaedra**

Major Beats

1. **Tavern Meeting.** Phaedra delivers scroll, contract, sketch-map. Investigation **DC 13**: Theron published taxonomy papers; **DC 17**: expelled for experimenting on sentient subjects; **DC 20**: declared dead 12 years ago.
2. **Celestial Stables.** Kreon manages 3 Griffins + 2 Pegasi in iron sigil collars. Combat avoidable — charm, deceive, or stealth to free aerial allies for Act 3.
3. **Broken Garden.** Skill challenge vs. Manticore / Hippogriff / Chimera patrols — or combat on failure. Cache holds Research Codex. Optional: rescue Thessaly.
4. **Chrysalid Sanctum.** Boss fight. Phase 1: squishy summoner on dais. Phase 2: Minotaur transformation (recommended: Contingency Draught).
5. **Resolution.** Crucible destroyed; Theron dead, subdued, or escaped. Phaedra arrives within hours.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Medium	Hard	Notes
Chimera	1	1	1	Enc 2 (garden) / Enc 3 (vat summon)
Composite Hippogriff	1	1	1	Enc 2 / Enc 3; Vat A pre-open on full alert
Harpy	1	2	2	Enc 1 & Enc 3; Luring Song Rd 2
Kreon the Yoke-Bearer	1	1	1	Enc 1; avoidable; reduced HP on Easy
Manticore	1	1	1	Enc 2; +1 on APL 10
Minotaur Guard	2	1	2	Enc 1 (2) / Enc 3 (1); Deadly Enc 3: 2
Theron P1 / P2	—	1	1	Boss Enc 3; CR 8 → CR 11
Griffin / Pegasus	3 / 2 stabled			Recruitable Aerial Allies → Act 3

Difficulty Scaling (baseline APL 8 ★)

APL	Enc 1 — Stables	Enc 2 — Garden	Enc 3 — Sanctum
4	2× Hobgoblin (no Minotaurs); −1 Harpy; Kreon 55 HP; DCs −3; song Rd 3	1 patrol at a time; 2 succ / 3 fail; DCs −3; Chimera 75% HP	Theron 55 HP, 2 LA; Vats A–B; P2 → 90 HP; Crucible 50 HP
6	1 Minotaur + 1 Hobgoblin; 1 Harpy; Kreon 70 HP; DCs −1	2 patrols; DCs −1; Chimera 90% HP	Theron 70 HP, 2 LA; Vats A–C; P2 → 120 HP; Crucible 65 HP
8 ★	As written (baseline).		
10	+1 Minotaur; Harpy DC 14; Kreon 110 HP + partial-Minotaur contingency; DCs +2	+2nd Manticore; DCs +2; all 4 engage; Fire Breath recharges 4–6	Theron 110 HP, 4 LA; 2 Minotaurs + 2 Harpies; P2 → 200 HP; save DC 18

Scroll payoffs (all acts): Act 1 collar DCs drop (remove **DC 12** / calm **DC 10**). Act 2 sigil break **DC 9** (vs 13). Act 3: recognize summon/Phase-2 chest sigils immediately (no Arcana). Without scroll: Act 3 Phase-2 sigil needs **DC 15** Arcana to identify.

ENCOUNTER 1 — The Celestial Stables

Hard (if combat) / Avoidable · ~40 min · 4–6 turns | **Terrain:** Clifftop limestone stables 90×60 ft (cliff N, 40 ft drop S). Pens = half cover; bronze lamps (bright 10 ft).

Creatures: 1× Kreon · 2× Harpy (cliff, +20 ft) · 2× Minotaur Guard. Stabled (not hostile): 3× Griffin · 2× Pegasus — iron sigil collars. **Win:** pass / free allies; combat optional.

- **Path A Social:** **DC 14** Deception/Persuasion (inspectors/traders) — Minotaurs leave; Harpies need separate **DC 17**. Kreon talk **DC 16** Persuasion (**DC 13** if party shows care for animals) → 10 min delay; charmed Kreon releases creatures. Non-combat Kreon foreshadows contingency vial.
- **Path B Stealth:** **DC 12** Perception (patrol gap) → **DC 13** Group Stealth. Silent collars: **DC 12** SoH w/ scroll / **DC 16** without. Full silent release of 5: 3 successes before 2 failures.
- **Path C Distraction:** Cut feed rope (**DC 10** Athletics / slash) occupies Kreon + Minotaurs 1d4+1 rds (–4 collar DCs). Illusion/throw: **DC 12** Deception (Kreon **DC 17**). Pen squabble **DC 14** AH — 1-in-6 aggro risk.
- **Combat:** Harpy Luring Song starts Rd 2 — humanoids 300 ft **DC 11** WIS or Charmed (must approach; cliff edge **DC 12** WIS or step off = 4d6 fall). Kreon Collar Command (BA): collared creature 60 ft **DC 13** WIS or attacks chosen target. Aggro d6 if stabled creature damaged / thunder near pens: 1–2 breaks free (then 1–3 party / 4–6 guard); 3–6 holds.
- **Sigil collars:** Remove SoH **DC 16** / **DC 12** · Smash AC 11 / 5 HP / **DC 13** STR · Calm AH **DC 14** / **DC 10** · Recruit **DC 16** / **DC 12** · Pegasi calm/recruit **DC 14** / **DC 16** → **DC 8** / **DC 10** w/ scroll. Kreon 0 HP: all collars slack — remove Free Action; calm/recruit **DC 10**.

Aerial Allies tracker: 0 = none · 1–2 arrive Rd 2 independent · 3–4 Rd 2 directable (**DC 12** AH Free Action) · 5 arrive Rd 1, +4 atk vs Theron/summons; Pegasi Inspire without direction check.

ENCOUNTER 2 — The Broken Garden (Skill Challenge / Optional Combat)

Hard / Avoidable · ~30 min · 4–5 turns if combat | **Terrain:** Ruined courtyard 150×100 ft. Fallen columns (difficult / ¾ cover); tangled copper pipe; open sky.

Goal: 3 successes before 3 failures (one zone each). Patrol: 1× Manticore · 1× Composite Hippogriff · 1× Chimera. Sigil-broken creatures skip combat. **Win:** reach lab stairs without full alert.

- **Zone 1 Fallen Columns (Manticore):** Group Stealth **DC 13** (adv if **DC 11** Perception finds gap) · Nature **DC 12** scent decoy = auto · AH **DC 14** · Sigil Break **DC 13** Ath/Arc (**DC 9** scroll) = auto-success + remove from further encounters.
- **Zone 2 Observatory (Hippogriff):** Individual Stealth **DC 14** (worst applies) · Arcana **DC 13** counter-hum = auto · Performance/Deception **DC 14** · Sigil Break needs climb **DC 14** Stealth or **DC 13** Athletics first.
- **Zone 3 Gate of Stone (Chimera):** Group Stealth **DC 15** (disadv if >3 move) · Perception **DC 12** + Athletics **DC 13** east-wall bypass · Deception **DC 15** (**DC 12** vs goat head) · Sigil Break **DC 14** / **DC 10** scroll = heads argue, auto-success.
- **Combat tactics:** Chimera Fire Breath first · Hippogriff stays ≥15–30 ft altitude, dive Prone · Manticore retreats to 100 ft, tail spikes; won't close <40 ft unless <30% HP. Combat sigil break: **DC 13**; freed rolls 1d6/rd (1–3 party / 4–6 enemy).
- **0 failures:** cache +1 item; wild collar-free griffin recruitable **DC 11** AH (free ally pip).

Failure: 1 = one alert, next zone Disadv · 2 = combat starts with alerted creature; other two arrive Rd 2 · 3 = full alert, all three engage; Theron starts Enc 3 with Vat A already open.

Cache (**DC 12** Perception / **DC 10** Athletics open): Research Codex always (1 min read → Adv on Enc 3 initiative; reveals Draught, Crucible priority, Phase-2 chest sigil). DM picks 1–2: Essence Dispersal Vial×3 · Sigil Chisel×1–2 · Antidote×3 · Smoke Pot×2 · Healing Potion×2. **Thessaly:** **DC 15** Perception; gate AC 10 / 5 HP / **DC 10**.

ENCOUNTER 3 — Theron, the Unshapen (Boss)

Hard · Phase 1 ~4–6 turns · Phase 2 ~4–6 turns | **Terrain:** Sanctum 100×80 ft, vaulted 25 ft. Dais +20 ft N · Crucible center (AC 14 / 80 HP) · 4 Vats A–D (AC 13 / 30) · Skylight 15×15 (ally entry) · Slabs DC 14 DEX / 4d10 + Restrained · Channels **DC 11** DEX / 1d4 acid · 6 mirrors (destroy 3+ halves Absorb Essence) · Oil lamps (1d6 fire ongoing).

Start: Theron P1 on dais · 2× Harpy (columns +10 ft) · 1× Minotaur (stairs). Full alert → Hippogriff already out. **Win:** destroy Crucible + defeat/subdue/prevent Theron.

- **Phase 1:** Stays on dais (force down: Thunderwave/Telekinesis/Dissonant Whispers or destroy stairs AC 12 / 40 HP). Absorb Essence (R): summon 0 HP within 30 ft → 2d6+3 HP (1/rd). Destroy Crucible → drops summons, blocks activation, weakens P2. Activate Vat (BA, recharge 5–6). Harpy song Rd 2 — charmed toward Harpy; reaching Crucible **DC 13** WIS or step in (3d8 acid, ends charm). Summon sigil break **DC 13** / **DC 9**; Theron may Seal the Sigil (LA cost 2).
- **P2 trigger (pick 1):** ★ Contingency Draught at 0 HP (Reaction drink → init 20, 160 HP); prevent: vial AC 10 / 10 HP (–2 atk) or steal **DC 17** SoH. Alt: all summons die same rd → 15 force + transform; Crucible immersion ≤40 HP; or Ritual Timer after 8 rds.
- **Phase 2 (AC 16 / 160 HP / Speed 40 / 3 LA):** Reckless always · Charge +3d8 + **DC 17** STR · Chest sigil AC 13/10 HP or **DC 15** Arcana → Theron **DC 16** WIS or lose concentration + all LA until next turn · Absorb Essence any 0 HP 30 ft → 2d8+5 (½ if Crucible gone; ¼ if 3+ mirrors) · BA retained spells: Hold Person / Slow / Misty Step · Slab Drop LA cost 2 · Below 30 HP: final statement then charge or Misty Step escape.
- **Allies:** Arrive Rd 2 (Rd 1 if 5 freed) via skylight; init 15; **DC 12** AH Free Action to direct. Griffins: fly-by; hit → **DC 13** STR or Prone (1/Griffin/enc). Pegasi: Inspire ally 30 ft Adv next attack.

Resolution: Crucible destroyed + Theron down → creatures settle; Phaedra arrives. Nonlethal → he names ≥2 parallel researchers. Escape → Minotaur form, formula memorized (sequel hook). Insight **DC 14**: Phaedra commissioned the survey Theron used.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Kreon the Yoke-Bearer

Medium Humanoid (Partial Transform) · LN · CR 4 (1,100 XP)

AC 15 · HP 80 (10d8+40) · Speed 30 ft · PP 13

STR 18(+4) DEX 12(+1) CON 18(+4) INT 10 WIS 12(+1) CHA 9(−1) · Saves STR+6 CON+6 · AH+5 Ath+6 Perc+3

Collar Command. Collared creatures 60 ft can't willingly attack him; at 0 HP / Incapacitated all collars slack (remove Free Action; calm/recruit **DC 10**). *Bull's Grit.* On damage, **DC 12** CON → reduce 5 (2/rd).

Multiattack. 2× Barbed Whip +6 (9 slash + 3 pierce, reach 10) or Whip + Chain Snare +6 (8 bludge; **DC 15** STR or Restrained). BA: Collar Command (**DC 13** WIS) · Drag Restrained 15 ft. R: Intercept (redirect atk within 5 ft to self).

Harpy

Medium Monstrosity · CE · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 11 · HP 58 (13d8) · Speed 20 ft, Fly 40 ft · PP 10

STR 12(+1) DEX 13(+1) CON 10 INT 7(−2) WIS 10 CHA 13(+1)

Multiattack. 2× Claws +3 (6, 2d4+1 slash). BA: **Luring Song** — humanoids 300 ft **DC 11** WIS or Charmed (must approach; no Dash; ends on dmg / stop singing / Incapacitated; success = 24h immune; max 3 targets).

Minotaur Guard

Large Monstrosity · CE · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 14 · HP 76 (9d10+27) · Speed 40 ft · DV 60 · PP 15

STR 18(+4) DEX 11 CON 16(+3) INT 6(−2) WIS 16(+3) CHA 9(−1) · Perc+5

Charge. 10+ ft + Gore → +9 (2d8) pierce; **DC 14** STR or push 10 ft Prone. *Labyrinthine Recall.*

Multiattack. Greataxe +6 (17, 2d12+4) + Gore +6 (13, 2d8+4). BA: Reckless (Adv atk / Adv vs self).

Chimera

Large Monstrosity (Amalgam) · CE [Sigil-Bound] · CR 6 (2,300 XP)

AC 14 · HP 114 (12d10+48) · Speed 30 ft, Fly 60 ft · DV 60 · PP 12

STR 19(+4) DEX 11 CON 19(+4) INT 3(−4) WIS 14(+2) CHA 10

Sigil Bound (goat horn): break adj Action **DC 14** Ath/Arc (**DC 10** scroll) → loses Multiattack 1 turn, then 1d6/rd targeting.

Multiattack. Bite +7 (11) + Horns +7 (15) + Claws +7 (11). **Fire Breath** (5–6): 60-ft cone **DC 15** DEX, 35 (10d6) fire / half.

Composite Hippogriff

Large Monstrosity (Amalgam) · Unaligned [Sigil-Bound] · CR 4 (1,100 XP)

AC 13 · HP 85 (10d10+30) · Speed 40 ft, Fly 60 ft · DV 60 · PP 13

STR 18(+4) DEX 13(+1) CON 16(+3) INT 3(−4) WIS 12(+1) CHA 7(−2) · Perc+3 · Keen Sight

Sigil Bound (neck-ridge): **DC 13 / DC 9** or AC 13/10 HP. *Pounce.* 20+ ft + Claw → **DC 14** STR or Prone; BA Beak if Prone.

Multiattack. Beak +6 (9) + 2× Claws +6 (11).

Manticore

Large Monstrosity · LE [Sigil-Bound] · CR 3 (700 XP)

AC 14 · HP 68 (8d10+24) · Speed 30 ft, Fly 50 ft · DV 60 · PP 11

STR 17(+3) DEX 16(+3) CON 17(+3) INT 7(−2) WIS 12(+1) CHA 8(−1)

Sigil Bound (tail spine): **DC 13 / DC 9**; freed 1d6/rd target.

Multiattack. Bite +5 (7) + 2× Claws +5 (8), OR 3× Tail Spike +5 (7, 100/200 ft). Prefers max range.

Griffin (Aerial Ally)

Large Monstrosity · Unaligned · CR 2 (450 XP)

AC 12 · HP 59 (7d10+21) · Speed 30 ft, Fly 80 ft · DV 60 · PP 15

STR 18(+4) DEX 15(+2) CON 16(+3) · Perc+5 · Keen Sight

Multiattack. Beak +6 (8) + Talons +6 (11). Ally: init 15; fly-by only; hit → **DC 13** STR or Prone (1/Griffin/enc). 5 allies: +4 atk vs Theron/creatures.

Pegasus (Aerial Ally)

Large Celestial · CG · CR 2 (450 XP)

AC 12 · HP 59 (7d10+21) · Speed 60 ft, Fly 90 ft · PP 16

STR 18(+4) DEX 15(+2) CON 16(+3) INT 10 WIS 15(+2) CHA 13(+1) · Saves DEX+4 WIS+4 CHA+3 · Perc+6

Hooves. +6 (11, 2d6+4). Ally: **Inspire** — ally 30 ft Adv next attack this rd. No direction check if freer visible; 5 allies: Inspire Free Action + also attacks.

Theron Amorphos — Phase 1: The Summoner

Medium Humanoid · LE · CR 8 (3,900 XP)

AC 13 (Mage Armor) · HP 85 (13d8+26) · Speed 30 ft · PP 17

STR 8(−1) DEX 14(+2) CON 14(+2) INT 20(+5) WIS 16(+3) CHA 12(+1) · Saves INT+9 WIS+7 CON+6 · Arcana+13 · Spell DC 17 / +9

Slots: Cantrips Acid Splash/Mage Hand/Minor Illusion/Poison Spray · 1st×4 Fog/Grease/Mage Armor/Identify · 2nd×3 Hold Person/Misty Step/Suggestion/Enhance Ability · 3rd×3 Stinking Cloud/Slow/Haste/Conjure Animals* · 4th×2 Vitriolic Sphere/Polymorph/Blight · 5th×1 Hold Monster/Contagion

Contingency Draught left belt (AC 10 / 10 HP; steal **DC 17** SoH). At 0 HP drinks → rises init 20 full P2; destroy vial first = no P2.

Multiattack. 1 spell + Alchemical Strike +9 (14 acid) OR 2 spells ≤2nd. BA: Activate Vat (5–6) · Alchemical Vial 30 ft (**DC 15** DEX, 2d6 acid + Poisoned). R: Counterspell · Absorb Essence 2d6+3. LA×3: Vial (1) · Redirect Beast (1) · Seal Sigil (2) · Essence Drain (3) **DC 15** CON 4d8 necro, heal half.

Theron Amorphos — Phase 2: The Unshapen

Large Monstrosity (Transformed) · LE · CR 11

AC 16 · HP 160 (15d10+75) · Speed 40 ft · DV 60 · PP 16

STR 22(+6) DEX 10 CON 20(+5) INT 18(+4) WIS 14(+2) CHA 8(−1) · Saves STR+10 CON+9 INT+8 · Resist nonmag BPS

Charge +3d8 + **DC 17** STR push 15 Prone · *Reckless* always · *Arcane Horns* Gore hit → **DC 16** INT or lose concentration · *Chest Sigil* AC 13/10 HP or **DC 15** Arcana → Theron **DC 16** WIS or lose conc + all LA · Absorb Essence any 0 HP → 2d8+5 (½¼ w/ Crucible/mirrors) · BA spells ≤3rd: Hold Person/Slow/Misty Step

Multiattack. Greataxe +10 (18) + Gore +10 (15), or 2× Greataxe. Alchemical Hurl replaces 1 atk (40 ft, **DC 15** DEX, 3d6 acid). R: Absorb · Brace (halve melee, 1/rd). LA×3: Gore (1) · Hurl (1) · Arcane Roar (2) 30 ft **DC 15** WIS Frightened · Sprint (3) full move no OA + Greataxe · Slab Drop (2) 10×10 **DC 14** DEX 4d10 + Restrained (**DC 16** STR); 4 slabs.

KEY ITEMS & McGUFFINS

Scroll Fragment — Phaedra's Handout

Physical Prop · Session Thread

Torn papyrus, bronze ink: **"Break the sigil, break its loyalty."** From Theron's early paper — he meant a warning; she weaponized it.

Act 1: recognize collar discs → lower remove/calm DCs. Act 2: sigil break **DC 9** (vs 13). Act 3: auto-ID summon & Phase-2 chest sigils (else **DC 15** Arcana).

Chrysalid Crucible

Session McGuffin · Central Basin

Destroy: AC 14 · HP 80. Immediately drops all active summons, prevents further vat activation, weakens Phase 2 Absorb Essence (halve). Priority target — Theron uses Redirect Beast to interpose.

If Theron immerses at ≤40 HP and Crucible is destroyed while he's inside: Phase 2 starts at 80 HP + Disadv on attacks 3 rounds.

Theron's Research Codex

Clay Tablets · Always in Act 2 Cache

1 minute to read. Reveals: (1) Draught of the Labyrinth on left belt; (2) Crucible powers summoning — destroy it; (3) Phase 2 chest sigil disrupts magic. **Grants Advantage on first initiative roll of Encounter 3.**

Draught of the Labyrinth

Contingency Vial · Left Belt

Recommended Phase-2 trigger. AC 10 · 10 HP (attacks at -2) · steal adjacent **DC 17** Sleight of Hand. Drinking at 0 HP → full 160 HP Unshapen form at Initiative 20. Destroyed first = Theron dies at 0 HP, no Phase 2.

Cache Options (DM picks 1–2)

Essence Dispersal Vial×3: 10 ft, **DC 14** WIS or lose sigil control 1 rd. **Sigil-Breaking Chisel**×1–2: auto-break one sigil, single use. **Antidote**×3: cure Poisoned + Adv next CON. **Smoke Pot**×2: heavy obscure 20 ft, 3 rds, Disadv attacks inside. **Healing Potion**×2: 2d4+2.

Sigil Quick Reference

Collars Enc 1: SoH **DC 12 / DC 16** or smash AC 11/5 HP/**DC 13** STR. Patrol Enc 2: **DC 13 / DC 9** (Chimera **DC 14 / DC 10**). Summons Enc 3: **DC 13** or AC 13/10 HP; Seal Sigil may rebind. Phase-2 chest: **DC 15** Arcana or AC 13/10 HP → Theron **DC 16** WIS. Gate/Vat D: AC 10 / 5 HP / **DC 10**.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Phaedra — Quest Giver

- **Role:** Elder huntress-priestess of Artemis · NG · sun-dark, grey-haired, economical speech.
- **Motivation:** Two seasons tracking creature wrongness (migration, pairing, gathering near ruins). Won't go herself — bad knees; pays well.
- **Knows:** Crucible fires in ≤2 days; 100-mile magical-beast radius; scroll is from Theron's early paper.
- **Secret:** She commissioned the field survey Theron used as baseline. Insight **DC 14** she's withholding. Quote: *"He was brilliant. He probably still is. That is the problem."*

Theron Amorphos — Antagonist

- **Role:** Disgraced alchemist-scholar · LE · gaunt, white-edged hair, stained robes; precise, never raises voice; 3 weeks underground.
- **Motivation:** Species separation is a flaw; Crucible is surgery, not cruelty. Correct that something is unraveling — catastrophically wrong about the remedy.
- **If confronted:** *"You came to stop it. I understand that. But I suspect she didn't tell you what the alternative looks like in another hundred years."*
- **Stats:** See Phase 1 / Phase 2 cards (p.3). Nonlethal → names ≥2 parallel researchers. Escape → sequel hook.

Kreon the Yoke-Bearer — Henchman

- **Role:** Stablemaster · LN · bull horns at temples, oversized hands; volunteered partial transform 11 yrs ago (ex horse-breaker).
- **Motivation:** Loyal, methodical, not cruel. Will not surrender — but can be spoken to. *If party treats animals with obvious respect, he hesitates before fighting.*
- **Roleplay:** Non-combat path foreshadows Theron's contingency vial. Stats on p.3.

Thessaly — Optional Rescue

- **Role:** Young naturalist · NG · ink-stained fingers, battered notebook; captured investigating creature strangeness.
- **Free:** East-wall pen Act 2 — **DC 15** Perception; gate sigil AC 10 / 5 HP / **DC 10** Athletics or Thieves' Tools.
- **Knows:** Overheard Draught location ("left belt, bronze clasp"); counted 4 vats (D forbidden); skylight is natural collapse.
- **Combat (Act 3):** AC 11 · HP 14 · Action each round: Help one PC (Adv next attack or skill check).

Resolution & Aftermath

- Crucible drained; controlled creatures slump/flee; ceiling trembles; Phaedra arrives within hours; beasts return to natural ranges over weeks.
- If pressed, Phaedra admits commissioning the survey. Theron subdued or escaped seeds a sequel.

The Hot Gates

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 10 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Thermopylae Hold · Favor of Ares

Style: Same-pass defense → Parley → Favor finale | **Win:** Favor 6 + plant Enyalian Spearhead → Ares slaughters horde
Allies: Leonidas + Spartans · **Recruit:** Dienekes · **QG:** Gorgo’s envoy

"Plant this in the steam-altar when war has seen your worth — then stand aside. Ares does not share kills."

Major Beats

- 1. Mist to Hot Gates; join Leonidas’s wall.
- 2. **Enc. 1:** First wave; vents/rockfall; recruit Dienekes.
- 3. **Enc. 2:** Parley with Warlord Kharos (3 before 3).
- 4. **Enc. 3:** Favor deeds → plant spearhead → Ares.

Favor of Ares (Win = 6)

Deed	Favor
Hold Fast (no breach + ≥5 at gate)	+2 / round
Triple Fall (3 downs same round)	+1 (max 2)
One Blow (above half → 0 in one hit)	+1 (need 2)
King’s Witness (finish near Leonidas)	+2 once
Steam Offering (DC 14, bloodied)	+1 / round

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Dial back: reduce boss HP ~20–25%, cut one legendary action option or recharge breath to 6 only; Favor/track thresholds –1 where present; skill DCs –1.
Easier	APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
Harder	APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Gorgo’s envoy sends the party through mist onto the Hot Gates: a cliff-tight pass where Leonidas and his Spartans brace against a horde of Titan-kin and Leonin . Hold the throat. Parley with Warlord Kharos . Then bleed for the war-god’s eye until the spearhead calls Ares.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Counts / Notes
Titan-kin Raider	4 · 6 · 8 · Waves
Titan-kin Brute	2 · 4 · 5 · Waves
Leonin Pride-Hunter	2 · 3 · 4 · Waves
Leonin Pride-Captain	0 · 1 · 1 · Enc. 2–3
Warlord Kharos	parley · 1 · 1 · Enc. 2/3
Spartan Hoplite	4 · 6 · 6 · Allies

DM Tips

- **As Written ★ — 6 Players, Average Level 10:** Baseline for this guide. Numbers, DCs, and win tracks assume six PCs at average level 10.
- **Easier:** APL 8–9: use the Library Standard (6×L8) box, then shave one more minion wave.
- **Harder:** APL 11–12: boss HP +20%; +1 legendary; Favor/track +1 to win.

Encounter 1 — First Wave at the Throat

Phalanx Commander. Allied Spartans within 10 ft. gain +1 AC. He and adjacent PCs ignore difficult terrain in the choke while he is conscious. · Drums in the east. Leonidas locks shields with 6× Spartan Hoplites. Wave: 6× Raiders, 3× Brutes, 2× Pride-Hunters.

- Hold the Line: Encourage PCs to brace (Ath/Intim DC 14) — teaches the choke before Enc. 3 Favor.
- Non-combat pressure valve: Collapse rockfall early (Ath/Sleight DC 14) to scare off remaining raiders if ≥half the wave is down — ends Enc. 1 early.
- RECRUIT DIENEKES: After the wave, he lies by a vent. Heal or Medicine DC 13 → joins Enc. 2–3.
- If 3+ enemies break past the choke into the camp zone, Leonidas spends Rally early (still available once in Enc. 3 if unused).
- *Tip:* Medium Humanoid (Spartan officer), Lawful Neutral · Recruitable Ally
- *Tip:* RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Wounded at the steam vent after wave one. Heal him (any healing) or Medicine DC 13 + share water → joins as elite hoplite for Enc. 2–3. “Then we shall fight in the shade.”

Encounter 2 — Parley under Truce-Spears

Horns change pitch. A truce-spear (white horsehair) advances. Warlord Kharos and 1× Pride-Captain meet mid-pass under temporary peace. The horde waits 60 ft. back — same map, no new location. · Horns change pitch. A truce-spear (white horsehair) advances. Warlord Kharos and 1× Pride-Captain meet mid-pass under temporary peace. The horde waits 60 ft. back — same map, no new location.

- PARLEY (primary path): Contested social clock — party needs 3 successes before 3 failures (Persuasion, Intimidation, Insight, History DC 14; Performance DC 13 if quoting Spartan law). Leonidas can grant one auto-success if a PC proposes an honorable delay until sundown.
- Success outcomes (pick 1–2): (a) Enc. 3 starts with –4 raiders; (b) Kharos reveals Ares “watches blood in the throat — not speeches”; DM may preview one Favor deed; (c) Pride-Captain sits out Enc. 3 opener; (d) 10-minute short rest under truce.
- Failure / betrayal: Immediate skirmish — Kharos + captain + 4 brutes + 2 hunters. If Kharos drops to half, he withdraws (flees to Enc. 3).
- Non-combat absolute: Party may refuse parley and reset the wall — skip to Enc. 3 with +2 Favor already (Ares likes scorn for chatter) but no rest and full enemy count.
- Killing Kharos here: allowed but Enc. 3 gains +4 brutes and a furious Pride-Captain with Pride Roar charged.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Encounter 3 — Favor of Ares (Final Hold)

Phalanx Commander. Allied Spartans within 10 ft. gain +1 AC. He and adjacent PCs ignore difficult terrain in the choke while he is conscious. · The full press. Waves crash the throat: remaining host + reinforcements (see roster). Kharos leads unless slain. Win is not “kill everyone” — win is Favor 6 and planting the spearhead so Ares ends it.

- Win: Favor ≥ 6 → Action plant spearhead in altar → end of round Ares arrives: all hostiles slain or routed; dying PCs stabilize; Leonidas (if up) salutes the god in silence. Optional +~45 min: Audience with Ares (see below).
- Ares on the field: Not a stat block fight. Narrate crimson storm and spear-shadows. He ignores PCs unless a PC attacks him — then a warning blow (4d10 force, nonlethal) and he finishes the horde anyway.
- Spawn pressure: Each round until Favor 6, if fewer than 4 enemies are in the entrance zone, add 2 raiders (or 1 brute) from the east — the horde is endless until the god comes.
- Suggested path: Hold Fast twice (+4) + One Blow ×2 (+2) or Hold Fast + King’s Witness + Offering.
- 4 brutes · 4 raiders · 3 pride-hunters · 1 pride-captain (unless sat out) · Kharos if alive
- Adjust from Enc. 2 parley outcomes.
- *Tip:* Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

Optional — Audience with Ares (~45 min)

After Enc. 3 win, Ares may stay at the spearhead for skill-check roleplay (skip if time is short). Not a fight. 6 successes before 3 failures; one check per PC per phase.

- Phase 1 Who Bled (~15): Insight 15 · Religion 14 · Athletics 14 · Intimidation 15 · Performance 14
- Phase 2 What War Is (~15): Persuasion 15 · History 14 · Insight 15 · Medicine 14 · Deception 16 (fail = 2 failures)
- Phase 3 Ask or Endure (~15): Persuasion/Intimidation 15 · Religion 15 · Athletics 14 · Insight 16
- 6 successes: enhanced Help payoff on Favor once before next LR + honest war answer. 4–5: standard Favor. 3 fails first: Favor kept + 1 exhaustion on loudest liar until LR.

DM Callouts

- Medium Humanoid (Spartan officer), Lawful Neutral · Recruitable Ally
- RECRUITMENT (Enc. 1). Wounded at the steam vent after wave one. Heal him (any healing) or Medicine DC 13 + share water → joins as elite hoplite for Enc. 2–3. “Then we shall fight in the shade.”
- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique
- Wondrous Item (maguffin), Unique

STAT BLOCKS

King Leonidas (Ally)**AC 18 | HP 136 | Speed 30**

- 2× Spear +8 · Rally 1/enc · Protect the Line · Iconic (no execute)

Warlord Kharos CR7**AC 17 | HP 136 · LR-style LA**

- Maul +8 · Command Rush · Earthshatter R5–6 · Banner vs fear

Titan-kin Brute CR2**AC 14 | HP 42**

- Greataxe +5 · Relentless 1/rest

Titan-kin Raider CR1**AC 13 | HP 22**

- Scimitar / Shortbow +4

Leonin Pride-Hunter CR2**AC 14 | HP 39 | Speed 35**

- Claw/Spear · Pounce · Roar R5–6

Leonin Pride-Captain CR4**AC 16 | HP 76**

- 2× Glaive +6 · Pack Tactics · Pride Roar 1/day

Spartan Hoplite CR3**AC 17 | HP 52**

- 2× Spear · Shield Wall

Dienekes (Ally)**AC 17 | HP 71**

- Recruit Enc. 1 · Hold Line adv · Shade Remark

TOOLS / NPC**Enyalian Spearhead**

- Plant at altar when Favor ≥ 6 → call Ares · Early plant +1 Favor once

Pass Hazards

- Hold Line · Steam vents · Rockfall $\times 2$ · Altar Offering

Gorgo's Envoy

- Mithaven hook — hold until the war-god answers.

Remember

- Same map all fight. Parley matters. Favor $>$ total kill count. Ares is the win button. Optional +45 min Audience after he arrives.

Enable Background graphics when printing.

 THE SHOW MUST GO ON — DM QUICK REFERENCE

6 Players · Average Level 5 · ~3–3.5 Hours · Greek Mythology Setting

Style: Investigation / Skill Challenge / Stage Combat | **Setting:** The Theatre of Dionysus — an ancient stone amphitheater (all 3 encounters here).
Encounters: Enc1 Easy–Medium brawl (non-combat option) · Enc2 Backstage farce + timed opera cues · Enc3 Hard boss combat on stage.
Win Condition: Survive all three acts of the play. Defeat Komos. Summon Dionysus with the Golden Mask to end the chaos and receive the God's blessing.
Description: A celebrated troupe is about to open a new play at the great amphitheater, and Dionysus wants a perfect, uninterrupted performance. Komos, a boisterous Satyr Captain who feels mocked by the script, has rallied a warband of satyrs and fauns to crash the stage. The party survives a chaotic dress rehearsal, then runs a backstage farce with timed aria cues and a rafter weight race — without tipping the house — before clashing with Komos in a finale the crowd believes is part of the act.

Hook — Mithaven Tavern: "Dion" (secretly Dionysus) hires the party to protect tomorrow's play from satyr saboteurs, hands them the **Golden Mask**. DC14 Religion/Insight reveals his divine nature (goblet never empties, ivy crown glows, smells of grapes). Party steps through the mist and arrives at the amphitheater at dawn.

Major Beats

- 1. **Mithaven Hook:** "Dion" hires party, hands over the Golden Mask, sends them to the amphitheater before dawn.
- 2. **Enc1 – Dress Rehearsal:** Satyrs crash rehearsal; drive off or talk down. Pipes can be recruited if spared & charmed. Thalia and Papadakis introduced.
- 3. **Between Enc1 & 2:** Party scouts the theater, speaks with Thalia about the script, identifies sabotage entry points.
- 4. **Enc2 – The Show:** Three hidden threats during the live performance. Neutralize without the audience noticing. Disruption Counter tracks failures.
- 5. **Disruption Threshold:** 3 Disruption Points → audience boos, Komos storms the stage immediately (skips "prepared" start of Enc3).
- 6. **Enc3 – Curtain Call:** Komos and remaining crew brawl onstage; audience believes it's part of the show. Party defeats Komos & protects patrons from Faun Revelers in the stands.
- 7. **Deus Ex Machina:** Komos defeated → any PC holding the Golden Mask on stage raises it aloft (DC12 Performance). Dionysus descends, freezes remaining satyrs, audience erupts. Show is a success.

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	CR	Enc1	Enc2	Enc3	Notes
Komos, Satyr Captain	4	—	—	1 (Boss)	Enters stage at start of Enc3
Silenos, Satyr Sorcerer	3	—	1 (hidden)	1 (if not stopped)	Hidden backstage compartment in Enc2
Pipes, Satyr Bard	2	1	—	1 (if not recruited)	Recruit opportunity in Enc1
Nettles, Satyr Archer	2	—	1 (upper gallery)	1 (if not stopped)	Critical to find in Enc2
Satyr Hoplite	1	3	—	2 + 2 (wave)	Wave arrives end Rd2 of Enc3
Faun Reveler	1/4	4	2 (backstage)	4 (audience)	Each disrupts patrons in Enc3

Scaling Table

APL	Enc 1	Enc 2	Enc 3
6	Remove Pipes. Fauns flee at 2 down. Non-combat DCs –2.	Remove Silenos. Fauns asleep (wake DC8 Stealth fail). Threshold 4.	Komos 55 HP. No reinforcement wave. Fauns cause only 1 (not 1d4) flee/rd. Finale DC10.
8	— Baseline as written —		
10	+2 Hoplites. Pipes plays Tragedy variant from wings (unseen) Rd1. Recruit DC16.	Silenos pre-cast Mage Armor. Nettles' first 2 shots auto-Tangling. Threshold 2.	Komos 95 HP + free Headbutt reaction/round. Wave arrives Rd2. Silenos starts w/ Hypnotic Pattern active if he survived Enc2.

ENCOUNTER 1 — A Rowdy Rehearsal (Easy–Medium · ~25–35 min)

Pipes leads 3 Satyr Hoplites + 4 Faun Revelers to crash the dress rehearsal on stage/backstage. Non-combat resolution strongly available.

Non-Combat Options:

- **Show Mask:** no check — adv. on all social checks rest of encounter
- **Persuasion DC14** (DC10 w/ mask shown)
- **Performance DC13**: satyrs lose next turn, 1 Faun defects
- **Intimidation DC15** w/mask / **DC18** without: Fauns flee

Combat Notes:

- Pipes: Panpipe Melody Rd1, stays on gallery
- Hoplites: Ram Charge when possible
- Fauns: scatter, throw figs, target Thalia
- **Break point:** 2 Hoplites + 3 Fauns down → rest flee

Recruit Pipes: Drop to 0 HP (not killed) + immediate DC14 Performance/Persuasion → joins party for Enc2–3. **Aftermath:** Success → scout theater, reduces Enc2 DCs by 2. Pipes' clue (if not recruited): "check the upper storage room." Damage to Thalia/3+ actors → Enc2 Disruption threshold drops from 3 to 2.

ENCOUNTER 2 — Noises Off / The Aria (Backstage farce + opera cues · ~35–45 min)

Tone: Perspective flipped backstage — silent door ballet, fraying cast, wrong props — interleaved with timed opera cues (aria line, dance block, balcony laurel) and a rafter race when a letter reveals a weight will drop at the lover's kiss. Sell chaos → house applauds.

⚠ **3 Disruption Points = Komos storms stage IMMEDIATELY** (Enc3 starts, no prep, reinforcements Rd1). **Gains:** missed Cue Beat (+1) · unaddressed sabotage (+1) · failed Recovery / Silent Rule (+1) · visible action + failed cover (+1). **Recovery:** DC14 Performance/Deception to sell the bit. **Farce always-on:** Silent Rule (whisper or Stealth DC12); Door Ballet (Acrobatics DC12 on flagged crossings); Wrong Prop once (SoH/Perf DC13); Lovers' Spat blocks a wing (Persuasion/Perf DC12).

🎭 Cue Beats (interleave)

- 1 Aria line: choose correct lyric + **DC13** Perf/History.
- 2 Dance block: **DC14** Acrobatics/Perf.
- 3 Balcony laurel: **DC14** Athletics/Acrobatics or **DC13** SoH toss.
- Nail = adv on next sabotage/Recovery. Miss = +1 DP (Recovery OK).

🏋️ Weight Race (after Cue 3 / Act II)

Letter: *At the lover's kiss — the weight falls.*
3 successes before 3 failures (Ath/Acro/Inv/SoH DC14; adv Inv w/mask). Or DC12 SoH / DC16 Ath at winch. *Drop:* 4d10 (Dex DC14 half) +1 DP.

🕸️ Nettles (Act II, gallery)

Spot: **DC13** / **DC15**. Approach: **DC14** Stealth. *Unaddressed:* Tangling Shot, +1 DP, flees to Enc3 gallery.

🧴 Silenos + 2 Fauns (Late Act II)

Find: **DC14** Arcana / **DC15** Inv (adv w/mask). Bypass: **DC13** Stealth or fig. *Unaddressed:* wrong-door pile-up, +1 DP, flees Enc3 backstage-left.

Loot: Nettles: 3 Tangling Arrows. Silenos: Potion of Greater Healing + note (Komos targets mask-holder; enters center-left with 2 hoplites). All 3 Cues nailed → one PC inspiration.

Resolution: 0–2 Disruption → 1 min prep, Pipes 5 temp HP. 3 Disruption → "NOW! The show is OVER!"

ENCOUNTER 3 — Curtain Call (BOSS) (Hard · ~45–60 min)

Primary: Defeat Komos. **Secondary:** Keep 20+/50 audience seated.

Round Timeline:

- **Rd1–2:** Audience cheers, thinks it's the show
- **Rd3:** +2 Satyr Hoplites burst in (Rd1 if Enc2 failed)
- **Rd4+:** Komos uses Stage Crash on recharge; audience starts noticing

Audience Protection:

- Each active Faun in stands = 1d4 patrons flee/round (from Rd3)
- Real damage reaching crowd = 2d6 flee + 1 round panic
- PC action, **DC10** Persuasion = usher 10 patrons out safely (no penalty)

Komos AI: Rd1 Ram Charge + Multiattack. Rd2 Rally the Revel, targets mask-holder specifically. Rd3+ Stage Crash on recharge. Won't flee unless all allies down AND below 15 HP (DC15 WIS to actually retreat).

Finale: Komos at 0 HP → mask-holder on stage, Action, **DC12** Performance (DC10 if 30+ patrons remain) → Dionysus descends, paralyzes remaining enemies (no save), encounter ends.

Patrons Remaining	Result	Reward
30+	Full Success — standing ovation	Blessing of Dionysus + 800 GP
20–29	Partial — chaotic but survived	Blessing (shorter) + 500 GP
<20	Technical — show was a disaster	No Blessing, 1 Inspiration + 200 GP

Komos's Fate (player choice): Captured → exile 10 yrs or turned into a goat. Killed → satyrs bow and leave quietly. Spared → slinks off, "he'll be back."

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

 Komos, Satyr Captain (BOSS) — CR 4

AC 16 | HP 78 (12d8+24) | Spd 40 ft
STR 18(+4) DEX 14(+2) CON 14(+2) INT 10(+0) WIS 16(+3) CHA 12(+1)
Saves: STR+6 CON+4 | Athletics+6, Intimidation+5, Performance+5
Magic Resistance. Adv. on saves vs spells.
Revel's Fury. Adv. hit = +7 (2d6) dmg.
Ram Charge. Move 20ft straight+attack: +2d6, DC14 STR or prone.
Multiattack. Two Shortsword +6 (1d6+4).
Javelin. +6, 30/120, 1d6+4.
Stage Crash (Recharge 5-6). 30ft line, DC14 DEX, fail: 3d6+4+prone.
BA: Rally the Revel. Ally within 30ft adv. next attack.
BA: Headbutt. +6, 1d4+4.
Reaction: Parry. Reduce melee hit by 1d6+2.

 Silenos, Satyr Sorcerer — CR 3

AC 12(15 Mage Armor) | HP 45 (10d8) | Spd 40 ft
STR 10(+0) DEX 10(+0) CON 14(+2) INT 12(+1) WIS 18(+4) CHA 18(+4)
Saves: WIS+3 CHA+6 | Arcana+4, Nature+4, Persuasion+6
Magic Resistance. Adv. on saves vs spells.
Spellcasting. CHA DC14, +6 to hit.
Cantrips: Mage Hand, Minor Illusion, Shocking Grasp (3d8 lightning)
1st(4): Mage Armor, Thunderwave (2d8, push 10ft)
2nd(3): Shatter (3d8), Hold Person
3rd(2): Hypnotic Pattern, Fear (30ft cone)
Quarterstaff +2, 1d6.

 Pipes, Satyr Bard — CR 2 (Recruitable)

AC 13 | HP 38 (7d8+7) | Spd 40 ft
Saves: DEX+4 CHA+6 | Deception+6, Performance+8, Persuasion+6
Magic Resistance. Adv. on saves vs spells.
Panpipe Melody (Recharge 5-6). DC14 WIS, 30ft. Comedy=Incapacitated; Tragedy=Frightened.
Shortsword +4, 1d6+2. Vicious Mockery: DC14 WIS, 2d4 psychic+disadv.
BA: Discordant Note. DC14 CON or lose concentration.
As Ally: Enemy satyrs no Magic Resist vs. his Panpipe Melody. Grants adv. on 1 Performance/Deception check per encounter. Ranged only, won't melee.

 Nettles, Satyr Archer — CR 2

AC 14 | HP 35 (7d8+7) | Spd 40 ft
STR 12(+1) DEX 18(+4) CON 12(+1) INT 14(+2) WIS 12(+1) CHA 10(+0)
Perception+4, Stealth+6, Survival+4
Magic Resistance. Adv. on saves vs spells.
Nimble Escape. Dash/Disengage as BA.
Trick Shots (per attack): Tangling — DC13 STR or Restrained; Blinding — DC13 CON or Blinded.
Multiattack. Two Shortbow +6, 80/320, 1d6+4 + Trick Shot.
Shortsword +6, 1d6+4.

 Satyr Hoplite — CR 1

AC 15 | HP 22 (4d8+4) | Spd 40 ft
STR 14(+2) DEX 13(+1) | Athletics+4, Perception+2
Magic Resistance. Adv. on saves vs spells.
Ram Charge. Move 20ft+attack: +2d6, DC12 STR or prone.
Spear +4, reach 5/range 20-60, 1d6+2 (1d8+2 two-hand).
BA: Headbutt. +4, 1d4+2.

 Faun Reveler — CR 1/4

AC 13 | HP 13 (3d6+3) | Spd 40 ft
DEX 15(+2) WIS 14(+2) | Performance+4, Stealth+4
Magic Resistance. Adv. on saves vs spells.
Fruit Fling +4, 30/60, 1d4+2. Trip Kick +4, 1d4+2, DC10 STR or prone.
Enc3 only — Audience Harassment: Action = 1d4 audience members flee (auto, no roll).

ITEM CARD

 Golden Theatrical Mask of Dionysus

Palm-sized gold mask on a braided cord, comedy front/tragedy back. Warm to the touch. Inscription: "When the curtain falls for the last time — raise me aloft upon the stage, and the God of Theater honors his word."

- **Enc1 — Fey Hesitation:** Displaying the mask openly (no check) causes all Fey within 30 ft. to hesitate — they recognize Dionysus's symbol. Grants advantage on Persuasion/Intimidation vs. satyrs/fauns this encounter. Faun Revelers won't approach the holder unordered.
- **Enc2 — Sabotage Sense:** Holder has advantage on Investigation checks to locate magically tampered objects, hidden effects, or illusion magic within 60 ft. Mask grows warm/vibrates near active sabotage.
- **Enc3 — Deus Ex Machina:** After Komos is incapacitated, holder standing on stage may use their Action to raise the mask aloft and make a DC12 Performance check (DC10 if 30+ audience remain). Success → Dionysus descends immediately. Failure → retry next turn. Result of 20+ → spectacular entrance, every PC gains full Blessing of Dionysus.
- **Properties:** Cannot be destroyed by non-divine means; not counted for attunement limits. Worth ~500 GP to a collector but won't be sold — reappears at holder's side the next morning if sold or lost.

NPC QUICK CARDS

 Dionysus — Quest Giver & Deus Ex Machina

Disguised ("Dion"): striking, olive/ivy crown glowing faintly gold, goblet that never empties, smells of grapes and honey. DC14 Religion/Insight to notice divinity; winks if confronted.

Divine form: barefoot, purple silk, thyrsus staff (fennel + pinecone), eyes like wine at dusk, radiates golden light.

Motivation: Wants his festival play performed flawlessly — considers this entirely reasonable.

Secret: He wrote the play's provocative subject matter himself and is quietly amused that Komos has taken personal offense.

Divine Power: At the finale, freezes all remaining enemies with a gesture (no save, Paralyzed until released). Will not fight on the party's behalf mid-encounter — only after the win condition is met.

Line: "All who truly love theater are divine, are they not?"

 Thalia — Lead Actress & Playwright

AC10 HP12 | Performance+8, Persuasion+5, History+4

Motivation: The show must go on — non-negotiable. Will physically try to remove satyrs from the stage herself if the party is slow.

Secret: Knowingly wrote a thinly-veiled caricature of Komos's father as the play's buffoonish villain. Entirely unapologetic — she was pleased when Komos showed up ("free publicity").

Useful: Knows the full backstage layout & every hidden compartment (advantage clue for the rigged crane if consulted). Will stall the audience with improvised monologue, buying 1 extra round on any Disruption timer at DM discretion. In a pinch, throws a ceramic prop vase (+2 to hit, 1d6 bludgeoning) with great drama.

 Papadakis — Stage Manager

AC10 HP8 | Investigation+5, Perception+4, Sleight of Hand+3

Motivation: To not be blamed for whatever goes wrong; to survive one performance without catastrophe; to possibly retire.

Secret: Hired a satyr stagehand last season who humiliated him with a prank (swapped chorus water for wine, painted masks upside-down). Suspects Komos is that satyr's cousin and this attack is revenge.

Useful: Complete backstage map in his wax tablet — automatic success on any Investigation check about prop locations if consulted. Carries a Potion of Healing "for emergencies."

Fainting Condition: DC10 CON save on witnessing open bloodshed on/near the stage. Failure = unconscious 1d4 rounds.

Quick Reminders

- Pipes recruit: 0 HP (not killed) + immediate DC14 Performance/Persuasion
- Papadakis faints: DC10 CON save on bloodshed near stage
- Thalia/3+ actors damaged in Enc1 → Enc2 Disruption threshold drops to 2
- Dionysus never fights directly — only freezes enemies at the finale

"The air above the stage shimmers with the scent of wine and pine resin... 'Well played,' he says simply. 'Well. Played.'" — Dionysus's Entrance (read-aloud)

6×L11 · ~3–3.5 hr · Thebes (Seven Gates) → North Gate → Phikion road → trap halls → summit cave. **Win:** assemble the hidden six-letter name from altar letters, shout it (bonus action, end of round, one try), fetch the Seal, place it on the central altar. Fighting the Great Sphinx’s body is suicide — crack gems, run altars. Bring a torch, any key, thieves’ tools, a hammer or shield, 1 gp, a polished blade or mirror.

Major Story Beats

1. **Agora of Thebes.** Nikias hires at the civic hub inside the Seven Gates; writ + 1,200 gp on return; rumor of a nest-treasure on Phikion. Leave by the North Gate. Map: [images/maps/Thebes .png](#) (map - thebes).
2. **Enc. 1 — Road of Four Riddles.** Goat-road up Mount Phikion. Four adolescent sphinxes. Answer for hints; fail and that one attacks.
3. **Enc. 2 — Trapped Ascent.** Stair and halls: plates, darts, false floors, crush-ceiling, riddle-door.
4. **Enc. 3 — Summit cavern-temple.** Six altars, six armor-gems, end-of-round riddles, cipher thirds. Shout the hidden name → Seal → central altar (or present Seal to Savano — Broken Form, p. 2 / p. 4).
5. **Resolution / Epilogue.** Patron goddess arrives; Savano stands down; brood flees; Thebes pays in full and throws a banquet. Blessing: inspiration + one Int/Wis reroll before next dawn.

Thebes & Phikion

Thebes sits on the Cadmea in the Boeotian plain, seven gates in its circle of walls. To the north the road climbs **Mount Phikion** — the Sphinx Mountain of the old stories, the peak from which a riddling lion-woman once taxed every traveler bound for the city. Helicon and the Muses lie west; Cithaeron closes the south. Three nights ago Phikion roared. The North Gate road is empty. Shepherds swear an *abandoned* temple in the summit cave holds a nest the size of a dragon, and that something in it is worth a city’s ransom.

Rumors (red herrings): some say it was a temple to **Apollo**, but the schools of art and knowledge moved into the city long ago; others claim **Ares**, who helped found Thebes — yet Thebes has not seen war in generations. Merchants mutter an Egyptian god, “Amara” or “A-man-raw” (**Amun-Ra**), patron of a different Thebes. **APOLLO** and **AMUN-RA** both have six letters. None is the answer.

Magistrate **Nikias of Thebes** hires the party in the agora: rid Phikion of the Ancient Sphinx, and protect the unnamed treasure within. Late 60s, missing two fingers; once a caravan-captain on this road. He climbed two years ago and came back alive. *Secret: the Great Sphinx spared him for a half-clever answer and took the fingers as tuition. He is ashamed. He does not know her name.*

“She will ask you something. Answer well — or don’t come back to make me bury you inside seven walls.”

Theban Writ — read in the agora

By order of the council of Thebes: the North Gate road and the peak of Phikion are closed. The Ancient has woken in the cave-temple on the Sphinx Mountain. Bring her to peace — by wit, not by a war seven gates cannot win — and guard the treasure she nests upon until the council can claim it. Do not let the brood eat the road.

— Wax-sealed writ, pressed into a PC’s hand by Nikias

Enc. 1 — Road of Four Riddles

The party leaves Thebes by the **North Gate**. The Phikion road switchbacks above olive terraces; the Cadmea shrinks behind them, Helicon a blue mass to the west. Four winged shapes drop onto the stones ahead — lion-bodies, human faces, not yet the size of the thing that roared. Three males, one female. They have been waiting for travelers on the Sphinx Mountain.

“The Ancient yawned,” says the largest, Kleitos. “So we came to eat whoever tries her game. Or — if you are amusing — we will tell you what the mountain already knows.”

If all four hints are earned, Ismene adds: “She is bored. Be interesting.”

Enc. 1 — Engagement

Each sphinx poses *one* Level 1 riddle (pick 4 of 8; p. 3). ~60 seconds. Party may confer. Correct: satisfied, gives its hint, does not attack. Wrong/refuse: *only that sphinx* attacks; others lounge. Party attacks first → all four join (Hard/Deadly — warn them). 0 HP: flees or yields. Killing them costs later hints and Savano’s respect (Insight DC 14: she will know).

Hints if correct: Kleitos — six altars want *deeds*, not only words. Phaedros — path and halls are trapped; watch the floor. Orthos — keep a *reaction* for the Ancient’s end-of-round question. Ismene — the last word that ends the game has **six letters**.

Terrain: switchback 15 ft. wide, 80 ft. long; 40-ft. drop (3d6). Boulders: half cover. Sphinxes start 40 ft. ahead, flying available. 1 fight ≈ Easy; 2 ≈ Medium; all 4 ≈ Hard for 6×L11. Four hints: short rest on the road. Two+ fights: Enc. 2 without a short rest.

Enc. 2 — The Trapped Ascent

Near the summit the Phikion road pinches into a stair cut from living rock, then a colonnade that should not exist this high — a hallway into the peak. Bronze nails in the lintel still hold faded Theban ribbon and a worn stamp (owl-shaped, meaning long forgotten). Something has been maintaining this place. The last door opens onto a vast dark that smells of old incense and lion.

Gauntlet of five stations (+ optional 6th). Each is one spotlight “round.” Phaedros’s hint: adv. on the first Perception/Investigation to spot a trigger. 3+ trap hits = Enc. 3 starts without a short rest. Clean run = 1 minute to bind wounds (Hit Die as an action) in the cave mouth.

Trap Stations

#	Station	Spot / Disarm	On Failure
1	Goat-stair plates	Perc 15; tools or Ath 14 (wedge)	Darts +8, 14 (4d6) poison; Con 15 or poisoned 1 min
2	False ledge	Survival or Inv 14	10-ft. slide, 3d6 bludgeoning, prone; Dex 13 half
3	Hall of hollow tiles	Inv 16 (13 w/ 10-ft. pole)	Fall 20 ft. onto spikes, 4d6 piercing; Ath 14 climb out (action)
4	Crush ceiling	Perc 15 (hairline); Ath 16 brace or Mage Hand on pin	8d10 bludgeoning, Dex 16 half, 10-ft. square
5	Riddle-locked bronze door	Speak any used Enc. 1 answer, or <i>knock</i> / tools 16, or Str 20	Glyph: 6d8 thunder, Con 15 half; door still shut
6*	Optional bronze net alcove	Stealth 14 past tripwire	Restrained, escape 14; 2d6 piercing as barbs close

Enc. 3 room traps (optional): two sand-sink tiles (Dex 15 or restrained, escape 14) between platforms 2–3 and 5–6; one dart slit on the north wall (same as station 1) if a PC sprints the straight line.

Enc. 2 / Enc. 3 — Summit cavern-temple (entry)

The summit cave is a cathedral in the peak of Phikion. A crack in the roof shows open Boeotian sky — wind, not a cellar. Columns like tree-trunks hold a ceiling lost in smoke-stained dark. Six raised platforms ring a sand floor. On each, a stone altar wears a bronze plaque. At the far end a wall of living rock has been carved into a sleeping lion the size of a dragon — until the lion opens its eyes.

The **Great Sphinx** unfolds. Gargantuan. The roar you heard in town was her stretching. Call her only the Ancient / Great Sphinx until midway Enc. 3 (p. 4). Bored, proud, willing to play. *Secret: she does not want mortal flesh. She wants the game finished so her patron will visit. The hidden name opens the door; the seal is the invitation. Her name is Savano — a red herring (Greek ησν, νσn, θσo).*

“Four centuries,” she says, almost kindly. “Play my game. Fail, and I remember I am hungry.”

Balancing / Suggestions

As written ★ — 6×L11. Enc. 1 Hard if 3–4 brood fight; Enc. 2 Hard traps; Enc. 3 Deadly CR 22 puzzle-race. XP: L11 Hard 3,600 / Deadly 5,100 per PC (6× = 21,600 / 30,600). Savano alone is 41,000 — not a fair fight. Gems are the stall: AC 17, HP 54, cracked at 30 HP. Intended: 2–3 PCs on gems, rest on altars. Body slugfest is a losing clock.

Library Standard — 6×L8. Brood HP ~25%; trap DCs ~2; Savano HP 360, AC 20, save DC 18; gems AC 15, HP 36, cracked at 20; patience 12 rounds; only 4 required altars (drop decoy + one).

Easier (APL 9–10). Library Standard, then Ismene does not fight; crush ceiling is 4d10; cipher third #2 already visible on a History DC 12 glance.

Harder (APL 12–13). +1 brood cub round 2; altar activations provoke OAs from her reach 15; patience 8 rounds; gems AC 18, HP 66, cracked at 36; wrong combat answer also 4d8 psychic (Int DC 18 half) to the speaker.

City help (Enc. 1 peaceful + Enc. 2 clean): shrine acolyte at cave mouth on round 4 with a torch, a key, a hammer, 1 gp, and polished bronze — one free tool delivery, then they hide.

Name (DM): Reveal **Savano** after 2–3 letters or Inv/Arcana 16, Hist 15, Pers/Intim 17 — she offers it as if vital. Do **not** say the patron goddess’s name before the puzzle is solved.

Savano — the Ancient Sphinx

Gargantuan Monstrosity (Sphinx), LN · CR 22 (41,000 XP) · BOSS

AC		HP		Speed		Reach
22 (gem hide)		490 (28d20+196)		50 ft., fly 80 ft.		15 ft.
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
26 (+8)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	

Saves Dex +9, Con +14, Int +13, Wis +12

Skills Arcana +13, History +13, Religion +13

Perception +12

Immune psychic; nonmagical B/P/S (Aegis gem)

Immune charmed, frightened, paralyzed

Senses Truesight 120 ft., PP 22 · all languages, telepathy 120 ft.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). Failed save → success.

Inscrutable. Immune to mind-reading and divination. Insight vs. her has disadvantage.

Lair Aura. Temple is her lair. Ignores sand difficult terrain. Reach 15 ft.

End-of-Round Riddle. Enc. 3 clock (p. 4). Not an action. Action economy p. 3.

Armor-Gems (6). Head, back, shoulders, thighs — each an Ancient Gem Stone. Telegraph the option they power. Gem damage does not reduce her HP. Aegis sets AC and B/P/S immunity. Cracked/destroyed: p. 4.

Voice. This is a game. Relish their fear; dare them to strike. Lines on p. 4. Call her the Great Sphinx until midway Enc. 3.

Multiattack. One Claw and one Bite, or two Claws.

Claw. +15, reach 15 ft., 19 (2d10+8) slashing.

Bite. +15, reach 15 ft., 24 (3d10+8) piercing.

Solar Tempest (Recharge 5–6; Head gem). 60-ft. cone. DC 21 Dex or 56 (16d6) radiant (half on success).

Word of Unmaking (1/Day; Back gem; also Patience fail). Each creature she chooses within 90 ft.: DC 21 Con or 66 (12d10) force and prone (half, not prone).

Innate Spellcasting. DC 21, +13. At will: *detect magic*, *thaumaturgy*. 3/day: *dispel magic*, *counterspell*. 1/day: *greater invisibility*.

Legendary Actions (3/round)

Claw (1). One claw.

Vanish-Step (1). Teleport up to 60 ft.; does not provoke.

Lair — Column Fall (2; L shoulder gem). 10-by-30-ft. line. DC 19 Dex or 44 (8d10) bludgeoning (half).

Lair — Swallowing Sand (2; R thigh gem). 15-ft. radius difficult; DC 19 Str or restrained (escape DC 19).

Lair — Echo Roar (3; R shoulder gem). 30-ft. radius. DC 21 Wis or frightened until end of its next turn.

Savano, Broken Form

Huge Monstrosity (Sphinx), LN · CR 13 (10,000 XP) · Alternate Enc. 3

AC		HP		Speed		Reach					
18 (natural)		264 (16d12+112)		40 ft., fly 60 ft.		10 ft.					
STR		DEX		CON		INT		WIS		CHA	
22 (+6)		14 (+2)		24 (+7)		20 (+5)		18 (+4)		20 (+5)	

Saves Dex +7, Con +12, Wis +9

Skills Arcana +10, History +10

Perception +10

Resist psychic

Immune charm, fear

Senses Truesight 60 ft., PP 20 · all languages, telepathy 120 ft.

Triggered. Party presents the Seal to Savano (action) instead of placing it on the central altar. All remaining armor-gems **shatter**. Fair fight for 6×L11. Use this block immediately; keep her initiative.

Crownshed. No gems, no Legendary Resistance, no Solar Tempest, no Word of Unmaking, no gem-gated lair legends. Hide is cracked stone and empty sockets. She is furious, still playing.

Inscrutable. Immune to mind-reading and divination. Insight vs. her has disadvantage.

Lair Aura. Ignores sand difficult terrain. Reach 10 ft. (no longer 15).

End-of-Round Riddle. Continues until she drops. Same action-economy rules (p. 3).

Voice. “Bold. You offer a god’s gift to *me*? Then earn what’s left without my crown.” Lines p. 4.

Multiattack. Two claws, or one claw and one bite.

Claw. +12, reach 10 ft., 17 (2d10+6) slashing.

Bite. +12, reach 10 ft., 20 (3d10+6) piercing.

Hunting Roar (Recharge 5–6). 30-ft. radius. DC 17 Con or frightened and stunned until end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. DC 18, +10. At will: *thaumaturgy*. 1/day: *dispel magic*. No *counterspell*, no *greater invisibility*.

Legendary Actions (2/round)

Claw (1). One claw attack.

Sand Lash (2). 10-ft. radius. DC 15 Dex or restrained (escape DC 15).

At 0 HP. She does not die. She stumbles, recites the seal-incantation; light fills the cave; Athena arrives, heals Savano; Savano becomes friendly. Run Epilogue (p. 4).

Peak-Brood Androsphinx

Large Monstrosity, LN · CR 7 (2,900) · Kleitos / Phaedros / Orthos

AC	HP			Speed	
16	102 (12d10+36)			40 ft., fly 50 ft.	
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills History +6, Perception +5, Religion +6

Senses DV 60, PP 15 · Common, Sphinx

Resist psychic

Immune charmed (riddle-trance)

One Quarrel. Does not join another sphinx’s fight unless attacked or its own riddle was failed.

Magic Weapons. Claws count as magical.

Multiattack. Two claws.

Claw. +7, reach 5 ft., 13 (2d8+4) slashing.

Riddle-Roar (5–6). 15-ft. cone; DC 14 Wis or frightened until end of its next turn.

Ismene, Peak-Brood Gynosphinx

Large Monstrosity, LN · CR 6 (2,300) · Adolescent gynosphinx

AC	HP			Speed	
15	85 (10d10+30)			40 ft., fly 50 ft.	
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Skills Arcana +7, History +7, Perception +6

Senses DV 60, PP 16

One Quarrel. Same engagement rule as the brothers.

Innate Spellcasting. DC 15. At will: *mage hand*, *minor illusion*.

1/day each: *detect thoughts*, *hold person*.

Multiattack. Two claws.

Claw. +6, 10 (2d6+3) slashing.

Brood Cub

Medium Monstrosity, Unaligned · CR 4 (1,100) · Optional Enc. 3

AC	HP	Speed
14	52 (8d8+16)	40 ft., fly 40 ft.
STR	DEX	CON
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Multiattack. Two claws.

Claw. +6 (8 / 1d8+3 slashing).

Summon 1–2 at initiative 20 on round 3 if the table is steamrolling unused altars.

Ancient Gem Stone ×6

Large Object (embedded crystal) · Enc. 3 stall

AC	HP	Cracked
17	54	30 HP remaining (24 dmg)

Immune poison, psychic, necrotic; blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious.

Not immune to nonmagical B/P/S. Magic weapons not required.

Embedded. Occupies head, back, a shoulder, or a thigh. Moves with her. Destroying a gem does not damage her.

Called Shot. Name the gem. Use this AC, not hers. A miss does not hit her body. Head ~15 ft. up; back needs a rear angle or flight.

Cracked / Destroyed. 30 HP = cracked (option weakened). 0 = destroyed (option gone). Effects p. 4.

White-Hot Repair. When the hidden name is spoken, all six reset to 54 HP and Intact (not if Broken Form already triggered).

Nikias of Thebes

Medium Humanoid, NG — Quest Giver · town only

Motivation. Reopen the Phikion road; keep the unnamed seal from tomb-robbers and brood.

Secret. The Great Sphinx took two fingers as tuition for a half-right answer.

Quote. “She will ask you something. Answer well.”

Pays **1,200 gp** in full when the patron appears and the road reopens. Half if they left her stone without the name. Optional Enc. 3 shout-help via sending.

Clay Tablet of Savano

Reward · Wondrous · 1/Long Rest

1/LR reaction: after a statement in the last minute, know if it was a deliberate lie.

While held: adv. on Investigation to solve riddles/ciphers.

Earn: speak the hidden name and place the Seal (or complete Broken Form + Epilogue).

Level 1 — Road (pick 4 of 8)

1 · L1Lightning / Thunder

I roll and crash with mighty sound, striking earth and shaking ground. My power warns all who hear, what am I that brings fear near?

2 · L1Mortal / Man

What walks on 4 legs in the morning, 2 legs in the afternoon, and 3 legs in the evening?

3 · L1River

What always runs but never walks. Often murmurs, never talks. Has a bed but never sleeps. An open mouth that never eats?

4 · L1Secret

I am broken when spoken, yet stronger when kept. I die in the light, but live where you’ve wept.

5 · L1Star

My light casts no shade and is nightly displayed.

6 · L1Time

The foolish man wastes me, the average man spends me, and wise man invests me, yet all men succumb to me.

7 · L1Torch / Lantern

I shine and guide in darkest night, flames within bring gentle light. Carried by adventurers with care, what am I that burns the air?

8 · L1Wind

Voiceless it cries, wingless it flutters, toothless bites, and mouthless mutters.

Riddle Hint DCs (action)

Where	Faint	Useful	Near
Enc. 1 road	12	15	18
Enc. 3 altars	14	17	20
Enc. 3 Great Sphinx	15	18	21

One try per riddle per PC. Help OK. Fail by 5+: florid wrong turn. Tablet: adv. Investigation. Faint = domain only. Useful = a property. Near-giveaway = almost names it. Insight always works to read the asker.

Level 2 — Altars (pick 6 of 14)

9 · L2Candle

Tall I am young, short I am old, while with life I glow, wind is my foe.

10 · L2Coal

Born black as night, next red with heat, then cold and white, my life’s complete.

11 · L2Echo

I speak without a mouth, hear without ears, I answer all without fear.

12 · L2Hammer

Line up my friends, I’ll beat them all; I batter each upon its head. If I strike true, I build up walls; if not, my claw will raise the dead.

13 · L2Key

Cut me once, I do not bleed; I’ve crooked teeth but no mouth to feed. I can be chained yet set you free — knowing all that, what can I be?

14 · L2Lightning

In the form of fork or sheet, I hit the ground. And if you wait a heartbeat, you can hear my roaring sound.

15 · L2Mirror / Reflection

If you drop me, I’m sure to crack. Give me a smile, and I’ll always smile back.

16 · L2Money / Coins

Though I’m tender, I’m not to be eaten. Though fresh mint, nor your breath to sweeten.

17 · L2Name

Passed from father to son, and shared between brothers. Its importance is unquestioned, though it is used more by others.

18 · L2Riddle

When someone’s solved my name, I know defeat, until that moment, though, I have them beat.
19 · L2Shadow

Each morning, I appear to lie at your feet; all day, I follow no matter how fast you run, yet I nearly perish in the midday sun.
20 · L2Silence

The instant my name is spoken I am broken.
21 · L2Sun

I am the one eye no lid covers. The helmsman trusts me further than any oracle. Each evening I drown in the western sea.
22 · L2Tears

When you mourn, I mourn along; a watchful eye guards my Vault. Laughter or pain, I join in throngs — not of the sea, but still drops of salt.
Level 3 — Combat (end of round)

23 · L3Bee

We plunder every flower and leave each unharmed. We raise a city of six-sided rooms and pay tribute in gold that needs no forge.
24 · L3Cipher

I twist the letters, hide the word, only the clever may be heard. Spies and rogues rely on me, what am I in secrecy?
25 · L3Dreams / Sleep

Two brothers were born of Night. One lends what the other keeps. I rehearse your death nightly; my brother comes once. **Death is wrong** — she enjoys saying so.
26 · L3Honey

A thousand soldiers guard this golden hoard, each with a single sword; there’s just one door, so theft is quite a feat, but the reward is sweet.
27 · L3Life

I am carried by all, yet held by none. Lose me once, and I am gone.
28 · L3Milk

For many it is daily fare, this drink that no man can prepare.
29 · L3Oar

I have a blade that has never drawn blood. Thirty of my brothers keep time with me. I wound the sea, and the sea forgets the wound.
30 · L3Ring

Silver, brass, bronze, gold. Given, bought, stolen, sold. Symbols of wealth, power, or love. Forged like a sword, fits like a glove.
31 · L3Sail

Empty, I am a rag. Filled, I carry a hundred men faster than a horse. I starve when the air holds still.
32 · L3Salt

The sea makes me, the sun frees me, the rock hoards me. I am whiter than marble. No feast is worth attending without me.

L2 Activations (action after correct answer)

Ans	Deed
Candle	Lit flame / 1 fire dmg
Coal	Ember or 1 fire
Echo	Call/clap; Perf 13; thunder
Hammer	Bludgeon / Str 13
Key	Any key, tools, <i>knock</i> , Dex 15
Lightning	Lightning dmg / storm-flash
Mirror	Bounce light off shield/blade/mirror
Money	1+ gp or Pers/Decep 15
Name	True name + “I am mortal,” or Hist/Rel 16 grey-eyed epithet (alias fails)
Riddle	Pose unused riddle or Int/Perf 13
Shadow	Shadow must touch plaque
Silence	Still turn, <i>silence</i> , or Stealth 16
Sun	Sunlight, <i>daylight</i> , <i>light</i> , Rel 15
Tears	Willing tear, salt water, grieving touch

Riddle / Puzzle — Action Economy (Enc. 3)		
Activity	Cost	Rules
Read altar plaque silently	Free (adjacent)	Only you know text until shared.
Read a riddle aloud to the table	Action	You get first answer attempt; others must wait.

Activity	Cost	Rules
Attempt altar riddle answer	Action	At that altar; one try per riddle per PC.
Perform altar activation	Action	After correct answer; solve ≠ activate.
Take revealed letter parchment	Bonus action	Letters timed by DM; not bound to riddle.
Share a new letter with the group	Reaction	Required when you learn one — or only you know it.
Roll for a hint	Action	One try per riddle per PC; DCs above.
Answer Savano’s end-of-round riddle	Reaction	Must have reaction; one voice; no conferring.
Shout help when another read aloud	Reaction	You forfeit answering Savano’s riddle this round.
Guess the hidden six-letter word	Bonus action, end of round only	One guess per round for the whole party. Wrong → free claw legendary.
Discuss word-puzzle answers	—	Only during end-of-round pause (~30 sec). No mid-round table-talk.
Fetch Seal from wall	Action	After correct word is shouted.
Place Seal on central altar	Action	Normal win → Epilogue.
Present Seal to Savano	Action	Alternate path → gems shatter → Broken Form (p. 2).
Enc. 1 road riddles	—	~60 sec confer allowed; different rules than Enc. 3.

Accept variants in parentheses. Enc. 1: ~60 seconds, confer allowed. Enc. 3 combat: one reaction, one voice, no conferring. Player cards: Notes — Riddle Cards. Cipher thirds (DM): (1) A Θ H N A (2) A-THE-NA (3) grey-eyed one who won the city. Patience: warn R6, weary R8, catastrophe R10.

Enc. 3 — Summit cavern-temple

The summit cave is a cathedral in the peak of Phikion. A crack in the roof shows open Boeotian sky. Columns like tree-trunks; six raised platforms with bronze plaques; sand orchestra; a sleeping lion carved in living rock until it opens its eyes. The **Great Sphinx** unfolds — Gargantuan. Call her only Ancient / Great Sphinx until 2–3 letters or Inv/Arcana 16 / Hist 15 / Pers/Intim 17; then she offers **Savano** as if it mattered. “You pry at my name? Savano. Carve it if you like — the wall wants something older.”

“Four centuries. Play my game. Fail, and I remember I am hungry.”

Final Encounter — Temple

True win: Collect letters, shout the hidden six-letter name (bonus action, end of round, one try, must be heard). Rear wall opens — Seal revealed; she does *not* stand down. Central altar rises. Fetch Seal (action), place it (action). Athena appears; Savano becomes friendly.

Terrain (~120×80 ft.): Sand orchestra 40-ft. circle; she occupies 20 ft.; sand is difficult except for her. Six platforms: 10-ft. squares, 5 ft. high, 25 ft. apart; climb is 5 ft. of movement. Activate plaque = **action**. Take a revealed parchment = **bonus action**. Columns: ¾ cover. Rear wall sealed until the name.

Letters are the DM’s to time. Five letters spell Ἀθηνᾶ (A θ η ν ᾶ); one decoy Ω. Not bound to a specific riddle or activation. After any successful activation you may reveal a letter, hold it, or place it on a different success. History/Religion 14 with 3+ real letters: “This is a name of the grey-eyed goddess.” Leftover L2 plaques can be extra platforms (no letter, or red herring M / Ξ).

The Clock

- **Initiative:** roll. Melee + cooldown spells punish clusters and anyone ignoring altars. She does not camp a single altar unless a PC is mid-activation.
- **End of every round:** Level 3 riddle. Only a PC who still has a *reaction* may answer (no conferring — one voice). Correct: one-third of the wall-cipher + all PCs adv. on saves vs. her until end of next round. Wrong / no eligible answer: disadv. on those saves next round.
- **Cipher thirds:** (1) A Θ H N A fade onto the wall. (2) A-THE-NA. (3) “The grey-eyed one who won the city.”
- **Patience:** Warn R6. Weary R8. End of R10 if the name is not spoken: Word of Unmaking on every PC (TPK-adjacent) unless the **Back** gem is destroyed — then melee frenzy instead. Back gem flashes at the start of that round.
- **Wrong shout:** she laughs; a claw legendary is free. One party guess per round, end of round only.

Armor-Gems (stall)

Declare a gem. AC 17, not 22. Nonmagical weapons work. Miss does not transfer. L11 Reckless greataxe: ~3-in-4 to *crack* in one Attack action; almost no chance to destroy on one swing. Plan **1–2 actions to crack, 3–5 to destroy** if 2–3 PCs stay on her. Gem dmg ≠ her HP. Hidden name spoken = all repair 54 HP Intact, white-hot (unless Broken Form already triggered).

Gem	Telegraph	Intact → Cracked → Destroyed
Solar head red	Solid red when Tempest charged; brightens while recharging; flashes EoR before use	60-ft cone DC 21 16d6 → 20-ft DC 18 8d6 → no Tempest
Unmaking back violet	Glowes while available; flashes start of intended use / patience break	90 ft DC 21 12d10 + prone → 45 ft DC 18 6d10 → no Unmaking
Echo R shoulder gold	Flashes on a PC’s turn before Echo Roar legendary	30-ft DC 21 Wis frighten → 15-ft DC 18 → no Echo Roar
Column L shoulder bronze	Flashes start of her turn the turn before Column Fall	10×30 DC 19 8d10 → 5×15 DC 16 4d10 → no Column Fall
Sand R thigh ochre	Flashes before a PC moves if she will Swallowing Sand	15-ft DC 19 / esc 19 → 5-ft DC 16 / esc 16 → no Sand
Aegis L thigh iron	Flashes when body B/P/S is negated (not when a gem is struck)	Immune nonmag. B/P/S, AC 22 → Resist B/P/S, AC 20 → no resist, AC 17

Seal phase

Name spoken → rear wall splits; Seal (owl-stamped bronze disc) in the compartment (action to retrieve). All gems knit shut, white-hot. Seventh altar — bare marble, no plaque — rises in the sand. She will not Unmake for **4 rounds** after

the name (she wants the invitation finished). Adjacent + holding Seal: action to place → combat ends, Epilogue. Stall past 4 rounds: back gem flashes; Unmaking if intact, else melee frenzy. If she is reduced to 0 HP (full form) she turns to cracked stone, not death. Seal stays locked unless someone still shouts the name (Religion 16: the wall wants a word, not a corpse). Then place the seal; Athena un-stones her; priests are chilly. Never speak the name: priests displeased, Nikias pays half.

Savano — Lines (one when the cue hits)

When	Line
Enter / unfolds	“So thoughtful of you to deliver yourselves to me — what God have I pleased that such a feast greets me in my own home?”
Hidden / invisible	“Your scent would be enough to find you, intruder — but you cannot hide from my gaze!”
First fail / blood	“Oh, what a poor and cruel fate for such young souls. Come all this way just to work your ways back down to Hades, through my belly — a tragic end for pitiful mortals.”
They attack	“Come, strike me with those mighty muscles of yours! It will help me savor every sinew of your flesh as I rend it from your bones. I can almost taste it.”
Stall / forfeit	“You wouldn’t forfeit your lives so easily, would you? I’ve waited over 400 years for this hunt — I will not be denied my satisfaction!”
Correct riddle	“A spark. Don’t let me start hoping — hope is how I season the meat.”
Wrong / silence	“Silence is an answer. I have eaten better ones.”
Runs to an altar	“Fuss with the furniture if you must. I will still be here when you are finished being clever.”
She takes a hit	“Yes! Again! Make it mean something before I swallow the story of you.”
Round 6	“The sand grows dull. Finish your puzzle, little guests — or I finish the guests.”
Round 8	“I am weary of the chase. Speak the word that puts me back to sleep, or I unmake the room.”
Wrong shout	“A pretty noise. Not the one that buys you dawn.”
Brood cubs	“Children — keep them off the stones. Mother is still playing.”
A PC drops	“Down already? Stand. I have not given you permission to be boring.”
Gold / prayers	“Gold? Prayers? I have Thebes under my mountain and four centuries of appetite. Offer me a better game.”
Gem cracks	“Ah! You found the jewelry. Break another — I like a guest who reads the room.”
Gem destroyed	“Gone. Good. I have been wearing that one too long.”
Name reveal	“You pry at my name? Savano. Carve it if you like — the wall wants something older.”
Hidden name spoken	“Grey-eyed. Yes. That was the password — not the ending. Fetch what she left me, and put it where a friend would put it.”
Seal presented to her	“Bold. You offer a god’s gift to <i>me</i> ? Then earn what’s left without my crown.”
Broken Form at 0 HP	(stumbles) “...By the seal she gave me... let her see this through.”

Alternate Ending — Seal Presented Early

If the party solves the word puzzle quickly, fetches the Seal, and **presents it to Savano** (action) instead of the central altar: every remaining armor-gem **shatters**. Replace her block with **Savano, Broken Form** (p. 2). Keep initiative. This is a fair fight for 6×L11 — no Tempest, no Unmaking, no LR, two legendary actions. At 0 HP she does not die: she stumbles, recites the seal-incantation, light fills the cave, **Athena** arrives, heals Savano, Savano becomes friendly. Continue Epilogue. If they instead place the Seal on the altar, skip this fight entirely.

Epilogue — Old Friends

The seal clicks onto the marble (altar path) or the incantation finishes (Broken Form). Light like a spear-point fills the cave. **Athena** is simply there — helm under one arm, grey eyes amused, the owl-stamp on the disc matching the one on her gorget. Savano drops to her belly as if four centuries were a long joke she has finally been allowed to finish.

“Little owl,” says the sphinx, voice suddenly small. “You are late. I have been entertaining.”

“You have been napping on my house, Savano. And teaching Thebes to be afraid of a door I left unlocked.”

She sets two fingers on the sphinx’s brow. “Did they play well?”

“They fetched the password. They fetched the gift. They even broke my jewelry, which I have been meaning to replace. Gods and monsters are not supposed to take tea. I have missed our arguments.”

“Then we will argue. Quietly. This temple was always ours.”

Athena looks at the party as if grading a tablet. “You brought a monster her favorite guest, and a city its road. That is wisdom enough for one afternoon.” Blessing: inspiration + one Int/Wis reroll before next dawn.

She never wanted flesh; she wanted a problem worth her mind. Theatrical wounded roar for the agora; telepathy under it, dry as dust: Children. Off my mountain. Mother is done playing, and she has company. The brood flees. Nikias pays 1,200 gp in full. Banquet — wine, olives, a whole goat, too many speeches.

A young Theban bard climbs a bench: “What’s brown and sticky?” He waits. “...A stick!” A psychic groan from the mountain: “Maybe I’ll just eat that guy, and then head back to bed.”

The Laurels of Olympia

One-Shot · 6 Players · Average Level 10 · Olympia Stadium · ~3–3.5 hrs / 3 Encounters

Style: Contests + Crowd Investigation → Vault → Arena Boss | **Win:** Contest standing; expose Sons of Ares fix; stop **Khalkotaurus** (0 HP, Olive Token brow ×2, or Olympic torch brands) | **Setting:** Misthaven mist → Olympia gates → stadium / stands → understadium vault → closing ceremony.

Diaktoros gives the **Olive Token**. **Damon “the Book”** runs a FIFA-scandal gambling mafia (Sons of Ares). Ares does *not* claim them. Default: 3 PCs compete, 3 work the crowd.

"When bronze claims the sacred sand and the crowd screams for blood, press this olive to the false victor's brow." — Olive Token of Nike (24 words). Payoff = brow-socket on Khalkotaurus (Enc. 3).

Major Beats

1. Misthaven invite — Diaktoros + Olive Token; mist → stadium gates.
2. Register as Mistwalkers; meet Damon / Sons of Ares + rival teams (red herrings).
3. **Enc. 1:** ~3 compete / ~3 crowd clues; Dex/Con/archery/javelin options; lethal branches.
4. **Enc. 2:** vault + flame; split-party; distraction to search bags; recruit Lea.
5. **Enc. 3:** Khalkotaurus; Olympic torch brand; olive-token brow payoff.

Competing Teams (miniature caps)

Team	Cap	Notes
Pride of Nemea (Leonins)	≤6	Captain Lea — best ally
Iron Tusks	≤3 Bugbear + ≤3 Rhino Minotaur	Foul-prone
Wild Chorus (Satyrs)	≤10	Recruitable
Phalanx of Elis (Hoplites)	≤10	Law / break up brawls
Single Eyes (Cyclopeans)	as available	Orc-sized intelligent cyclopes
Labyrinth Horns (Minotaurs)	≤8	Charge threats

Creature / Enemy List

Creature	Easy	Med	Hard	Notes
Leonin Athlete	2	3–4	5–6	Enc. 1 rivals
Bugbear Bruiser	1	2	3	Iron Tusks / Enc. 2
Rhino Minotaur	1	2	3	Iron Tusks heavy
Satyr Reveler	3	5	8–10	Recruit pool
Hoplite of Elis	3	5	8–10	Neutrals / allies
Cyclopean Contender	2	3	4	Puzzle helpers
Minotaur Athlete	2	3	4–5	Enc. 1 combat path
Ares Cult Saboteur	2	3	4	Sons of Ares mafia Enc. 1–2
Khalkotaurus (Boss)	1 adj.	1	1	HP 120 / 168 / 200

Difficulty Scaling

APL	Enc. 1	Enc. 2	Enc. 3
4–6	DC –2; 1 rival	2 cultists; hint	HP 120; no LA; token ×1 ends
8 ★	Baseline	Baseline	HP 168; full LA
10	DC +2; full caps	4 cultists + bugbear	HP 200; snipers; token ×2

Partial party in a contest: 1–2 PCs → 1 rival, DC –2; 3–4 → baseline; spectating PCs Aid (DC 12) once/heat.

Encounter 1 — Opening Contests

Default: 3 PCs compete, 3 crowd-work (Insight/Investigation). Introduce **Damon the Book** and red-scarf Sons of Ares. Run any **two** heats. Religion DC 14: Ares does not claim this “cult.”

Contests: A Stadion · B Discus · C Pankration · D Torch Relay (Olympic flame) · **E Long Jump (Dex)** · **F Footwork (Dex)** · **G Dolichos (Con)** · **H Oil & Heat (Con)** · **I Archery** · **J Javelin** · each heat has a Lethal branch

- **Clues:** Insight Damon 14 · Investigate bags 14 (ledger: Iron Tusks + Phalanx clerk) · Perc west stands 15 (spike case → north) · satyr bribe = red herring · Lea’s tents clean
- **Distraction:** Performance/Athletics DC 13 scene while ally Stealth/Sleight DC 14 searches satchels
- **Lethal branches (per heat):** A poison skins · B discus foul · C pankration sword · D torch snuff/fire · E spiked landing · F spiked pit/knife · G laced water · H ignited oil · I archery “accident” · J javelin foul · Contestors finish rounds while others fight
- **Combat:** 2 saboteurs + 1 bugbear *or* Iron Tusks budget; Lykos wants nonlethal

Encounter 2 — The Contested Laurel

Vault 80×50. Laurel stolen; Olympic flame gutters. Sons of Ares swap in control spike for Khalkotaurus. May try to snuff the flame.

- **Split party:** Vault 2–3 → 2 saboteurs, puzzle 2 successes, DC –1. Stadium team finishes heat / may face lethal branch. Abandon heat = forfeit victory, reinforce vault round 2. Full party = baseline 3. Solo investigators get 2 Hoplite escorts (watch Damon’s clerk).
- **Distraction upstairs:** crowd scene DC 13 → adv on Stealth snatch in vault; fail peels 1 saboteur upstairs
- **Puzzle:** Race → Discus → Pankration → Flame (or today’s slate). Wrong = Dex 14 / 2d6 poison. Arcana 15: spike + Olympic flame keyed vs idol
- **Win:** Laurel and/or brow diagram; keep or rekindle flame. Spike escape = bull starts with breath ready

Encounter 3 — Brazen Bull

Damon’s construct (not Ares’s will) tears free. Allies stand with PCs. **Win:** 0 HP *or* Olive Token brow ×2 *or* wear it down with Olympic brands + token.

- **Olympic Torch:** Action brand Ath DC 14 / melee spell atk — 4d8 radiant+fire (ignores fire resist) + disadv on bull’s attacks until end of its next turn. Thrown 20 ft = damage only. Rekindle at altar; Religion 15 or olive oil + fire if snuffed
- Stampede round 2 (round 1 if flame died mid-ceremony). Water trough Ath 13 suppresses Furnace Heart 1 rd
- Damon optional chase / Hard+ snipers in stands

DM Callouts

- Need 2+ Enc. 1 clues to accuse cleanly before Enc. 3; zero clues still playable but vault is colder.
- Recruit Lea: fair play or show ledger / stop lethal branch on her athletes.
- Olive Token still the mid-combat “press it to the brow” payoff.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Leonin Athlete*Medium Humanoid (Leonin), N · CR 2***AC 14 | HP 45 | Speed 40 ft.**

STR 17 (+3) DEX 15 (+2) CON 16 (+3) INT 10 WIS 12 CHA 11

- Pride's Dash (1/SR): BA Dash; OA vs it disadv.
- **Claw** +5 (1d8+3); **Javelin** +5 (1d6+3). Cap ≤6.

Bugbear Bruiser*Medium Humanoid (Goblinoid), CN · CR 2***AC 14 | HP 42 | Speed 30 ft.**

STR 17 DEX 14 CON 18 · Reach +5 ft · Surprise Attack +2d6

- **Morningstar** +5 (2d8+3). Cap ≤3.

Rhino Minotaur*Large Monstrosity, N · CR 4***AC 15 | HP 76 | Speed 40 ft.**

STR 20 (+5) · Charge (+2d8, Str DC 15 prone) · Reckless

- **Gore** +7 (2d8+5); **Maul** +7 (2d10+5). Cap ≤3.

Satyr Reveler*Medium Fey, CN · CR 1/2***AC 14 | HP 22 | Speed 40 ft.**

Magic Resistance · Panpipes DC 13 (3/day)

- **Ram** +3 (2d4+1); **Shortbow** +5 (1d6+3). Cap ≤10.

Hoplite of Elis*Medium Humanoid (Human), LN · CR 1***AC 18 | HP 32 | Speed 30 ft.**

Phalanx: +1 AC / adv vs forced move near allied shield

- **Spear** +4 (1d6+2). Cap ≤10.

Cyclopean Contender*Medium Humanoid (Cyclopean), N · CR 2***AC 14 | HP 52 | Speed 30 ft.**

Orc-sized intelligent cyclops · Single Eye (disadv sight >30 ft)

- **Greataxe** +6 (1d12+4) ×2; **Rock** +6 (2d6+4).

Minotaur Athlete*Large Monstrosity, CN · CR 3***AC 14 | HP 76 | Speed 40 ft.**

Charge (DC 14) · Labyrinthine Recall · Cap ≤8

- **Greataxe** +6 (2d12+4); **Gore** +6 (2d8+4).

Ares Cult Saboteur (Sons of Ares)*Medium Humanoid (Human), CE · CR 2 · Mafia fixer muscle***AC 13 | HP 38 | Speed 30 ft.**

- Fixer's Muscle: adv vs fear near vault/Damon/bull. Ares does not claim them.
- **Scimitar/Hand XB** +4 (1d6+2). Blood Signal +1d2 (Enc. 2; max +2).

Khalkotaurus — BOSS*Huge Construct, U · CR 9***AC 18 | HP 168 (120/200) | Speed 40 ft.**

Immune poison/psychic/nonmag BPS · Resist fire · Vuln thunder · LR 2/day

- Furnace Heart: 2d6 fire in 10 ft. Siege Monster. Olympic flame brands ignore fire resist.
- **Gore** +10 (3d8+6 +2d6 fire); **Slam** +10 (2d10+6, Str DC 17 prone).
- **Breath** (5–6): 30-ft cone Dex DC 16, 8d8 fire.
- LA: Detect / Slam / Trample Charge (2; 20 ft, Dex DC 15, 3d6 + prone).
- **Token:** 40 force + lose LA 1 rd; 2nd press ends fight.

KEY ITEMS

Olive Token of Nike

- Handout (24 words): bronze sand / press olive to false victor's brow.
- Enc. 1–2: optional adv on one Contest check/event (invitation recognized).
- Enc. 3: Action adjacent → 40 force + strip LA 1 round; second press (Help/prone) ends animation.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Diaktoros — Quest Giver

- **Motivation:** Keep Games sacred; favor clever victors.
- **Secret:** Hermes in disguise.
- **Roleplay:** Winks, never confirms divinity; ushers into mist.

Judge Lykos — Hellanodikai

- **Motivation:** Fair heats; prevent riot.
- **Secret:** Suspects bronze-animation magic at vault.
- **Stats:** AC 12, HP 27; Insight +6; Call Foul (Recharge 5–6).

Captain Lea — Pride of Nemea

- **Motivation:** Win with honor; protect her six.
- **Recruit:** Fair Enc. 1 or cult proof Enc. 2 → Enc. 3 ally (+2 Leonins).
- **Stats:** AC 15, HP 78, CR 4; 3× claw +6 (1d8+4); Victory Roar 10 temp HP.

Damon “the Book” — Fixer

- Human bookmaker; Sons of Ares brand. FIFA-scandal polite.
- Endgame: animate Khalkotaurus if the fix collapses.
- Ares does not recognize him. Quote: “Bet on who already knows the score.”

Team Caps Reminder

- Field only miniatures you own. Shrink heats to match who participates.
- Default 3 compete / 3 crowd. Spectators Aid once/heat (DC 12) *or* Crowd Cheer Perf/Pers DC 13 → Inspiration or adv on next Contest check (beat by 5+ = whole heat adv; fail by 5+ = boos/disadv).

Enable “Background graphics” in the print dialog before saving to PDF.

The Sleepless Queen

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 12 · ~3–3.5 hrs · **3 encounters** · Delphi / Crisa / Mount Cirphis · **Finale Deadly**

Style: Investigation → two interchangeable middle acts → vampire-coded lair rescue | **Win:** Herophile out of the cave alive, and Lamia denied her bier
Lose: the taken children drain dry, or her smoke reaches an intact bier · **Maguffin:** The Sleepless Eye · **QG:** Theoxena, Senior Pythia · **Allies:** Acheilus (E1) · Alcyoneus (E2)
The family: Lamia's three children are **Acheilus** (E1), **Herophile** (E3), and **Scylla** — **all three are alive**, and Scylla never appears.

"She gave up her eyes so she could sleep. It did not work. Make her look." — **Theoxena, pressing the amber into someone's palm**

THE PREMISE. Queen **Lamia of Crisa** and her three children vanished at the end of last summer. Now livestock, then a shepherd, then children come back *emptied* — dry, not torn. Crisa's elders say *beast*. Delphi says **a creature made by the wrath of Hera**, and refuses the name.
DM truth: **Hera changed this family. She did not kill it.** Acheilus took the shoals and lives as a pariah; Scylla went out into open ocean and has not come back. Herophile is nine and looks untouched, and what came for her came as *prophecy* — she speaks true things in her sleep. Her mother has decided that is the change arriving slowly and can be held off, and every drained calf, shepherd and child has gone into holding it off. **Lamia does not keep what she drinks — it goes into her daughter.** She is wrong: it finished months ago, and Herophile told her so and was disbelieved.
Therefore: Herophile is **not a prisoner** — not bound, caged, or drained. She stays because she is nine and will not leave her mother alone with this. **The finale is an argument, not a jailbreak. Hera never appears. Scylla never appears.**

Major Beats

- Misthaven mist-line → the Sacred Way. **Theoxena** gives the **Sleepless Eye** and names two roads.
- Sea path (E1):** the monster on the shore is not the killer — he is the queen's son, and he has a sister he cannot reach.
- City path (E2):** Alkippe is four steps from throwing a garlanded boy off the Leap to appease a goddess who never took anybody. The Garlands are the off-switch.
- Finale (E3):** the Sleepless Cave — charm, thralls, shapechange, three taken children on a six-round Draught Clock, and a daughter who is not tied up and will not leave.
- A spring rises where the body falls. Crisa names it **Sybaris**. Herophile goes to Delphi, and Theoxena is the one who tells her nothing was ever coming.

Running Order — Either Path First

	Sea first (1 → 2)	City first (2 → 1)
2nd act warned	Rite Track starts at step 2 ; Wardens already on the terrace; Alkippe gets a 4th charge	Acheilus opens submerged , no surprise, tide floods round 1; +2 Raiders round 3
Worth / E3 door	Clue 3 — the only place the family is called alive out loud; auto-completes Choice step 2 . Earns the sea-mouth (Ferry Out, surprise round)	Breaking the rite is visible from the cave mouth — auto-completes Choice step 1 . Earns the upper crack (surprise round)
Both / neither	Both allies: split the approach, two PCs by sea-mouth and the rest by the crack, both acting round 1 — strong on purpose. Neither: in the front door, in the dark, four Hollowed awake. Also fine.	

Clue Track — What Hera Actually Did

every clue points one way: nobody in this family died

#	Clue	Where / DC
1	"Changed, not killed" — Hera leaves a household walking around	Delphi, second ask · Insight 15 / Persuasion 16
2	The Eye is a <i>person's</i> — set aside by a queen who did not want to watch	The Eye · History 16 / Religion 15 / Arcana 15
3	"I have a mother." <i>Acheilus is her eldest; his sister is still in that cave</i>	E1 · parley only — never at swordpoint
4	Bites are human; bodies are <i>emptied</i> , not fed on — the life is going somewhere	E1 bodies or E2 dry calf · Medicine 16
5	Krisos was in the room. Wool on the chamber door, knotted from the inside	E2 · Investigation 15 / Persuasion 18 / Insight 17
6	Acheilus, Herophile, Scylla — three names, three fates (shoals, cave, open ocean)	E2 · Meganira or History 14

Name Them (action, E3 only) — needs **3+ clues**; once per clue above 2. Speak all three children and what became of each. Lamia makes a **DC 18 Wis save (DC 20 from the garland-wearer)** or loses **legendary actions** and **Sleepless Regeneration** until the end of her next turn. **5+ clues** also auto-completes **Choice step 3**. **0–2 clues is a valid outcome — the argument just has to be made cold.**

Creature / Enemy List

Easy · Medium · Hard · full stat blocks on sheet 3/4

Where	Roster
E1 shore	Ichthyian Raider CR 3 (2·3·4, +2 if city-first) · Brineseer CR 5 (1·1·2) · Reef-Hound CR 3 (1·2·2) · Acheilus CR 10 (1) <i>elite, recruitable, her eldest</i>
E2 terrace	Yoke-Sworn Acolyte CR 2 (4·5·6) · Peacock-Eyed Warden CR 5 (1·2·2) · Bronze Yoke-Heifer CR 6 (—·1·1) · Alkippe CR 9 (1) <i>leader, surrenders</i>
E3 cave	The Hollowed CR 2 (2·3·4, +2 P2) · Strix Flock CR 3 (1·1·2, +1 P2) · Empusa CR 6 (1·1·2) <i>not her daughters</i>
Boss	Queen Lamia of Crisa CR 15 — HP 310, LR 3/day, two phases, Deadly

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 12 — E1/E2 Hard (≈13,700 / 13,600 XP), E3 Deadly (≈22,400 XP)
Library Standard	6 PCs · APL 8 — Lamia HP 200, LR 2, bite 4d6 (6d6 P2), Regen 10; all DCs –2; cut 1 Empusa / 2 Hollowed / 1 Strix and the P2 wave; Acheilus CR 7 (HP 130, no Undertow); E2 = 4 Yoke-Sworn, 1 Warden, no Heifer; Clock 8, two children. Finale reads Hard .
Easier	APL 10–11: Lamia HP –15% and Regen 15; cut 1 Empusa; Draught Clock 7; E1–E2 lose one elite each.
Harder	APL 13–14: Lamia HP +15%, LR 4/day, third Empusa in the sea-mouth; Douse the Light also suppresses darkvision past 30 ft; Draught Clock 5. Never raise the Choice DCs — the argument is the session, not the challenge.

DM Tips

- Run the clue count openly** — it is what gets a nine-year-old to walk. Both middle acts pay the same XP talked down or fought; say so if asked.
- The Eye has one use in E3, three choices** — bier, socket, or the girl's hands. Make them choose out loud; do not hint. All three are right answers to different questions.
- The Empusae are not her daughters.** They are the first women she drank. Do not let a player conflate them with the children.

- **Minis:** angler/shark → Acheilus · sahuagin → Ichthyans · sharks → Reef-Hounds · pirates → Yoke-Sworn · storm-spirit constructs → Wardens · skeletons → Hollowed · harpies → Strix · **Scylla mini** → **Lamia in Serpent-Coil.**

Encounter 1 — The Shark-Marred Tide HARD · ~45–50 min

☠ **Shingle shore & sea-stacks 80×60.** Three stacks (half cover, Athletics **12**) · tide pools south (difficult) · eleven drained bodies laid out above the high-water line, hands folded. **Tide clock:** end of rounds 2 / 4 / 6 the water advances 10 ft — difficult terrain for the party, open water for gills; Acheilus regains 10 HP/turn while a foot deep.

Roster: 1× Acheilus (CR 10) · 4× Ichthyan Raider (CR 3) · 2× Brineseer (CR 5) · 2× Reef-Hound (CR 3) = **13,700 XP** | He is Lamia's eldest son. He will not say so to anyone holding a weapon.

- **He talks first.** *"I have killed four of you this season. I remember every face. Do you want to be five?"* A party that answers instead of rolling initiative gets the parley for free.
- **PARLEY (non-combat):** any one of — show the **Eye** (automatic; he has seen it before, wet, on his own sand, and knows whose it is), sheathe weapons and let him speak first, or Persuasion/Intimidation **16**. Then group check **3 successes before 3 failures, DC 15** (Persuasion / Insight / History / Performance — flattering his old face gives advantage once, and is the cruellest move available, because the face is a lie he tells).
- **What it buys — CLUE 3.** He drops the Aphrodite story: *"I had a mother. I still do. She is in a cave on that mountain and she has my sister."* Three names, three fates, and the fact the session turns on — **Hera changed this family, she did not kill it.** Nowhere else is it said out loud.
- **Clue 4 here:** Medicine **16** on the row of bodies — human jaw, two punctures, and *emptied* rather than fed on. An action; can be done mid-fight.
- **RECRUIT ACHEILUS** → holds the **sea-mouth** in E3: flooded back entrance + surprise round, **Ferry Out**, and auto-completes **Choice step 2. He will not fight his mother** — he comes as far as the water. A PC may ask him in anyway: see *Her Son in the Water*.
- **Combat → parley:** breaks off at **60 HP** for terms (Persuasion **14**; free with the Eye); Ichthyans follow his lead. **Loot:** 400 gp votive bronze; one *potion of water breathing* per two PCs.

Killing him closes Clue 3 and the sea-mouth permanently — and the party has killed the queen's son without ever learning they did. Do not soften it, do not announce it; if it comes out in the cave, Lamia has advantage on attacks for 1 round and immediately uses Call the Strix, and **Choice step 2 closes forever**.

Encounter 2 — The Garlanded Boy HARD · ~45–50 min

☠ **Threshing-floor terrace 70×70.** The **Leap** along the south edge (200-ft drop, no rail, 10 ft of loose chalk — Acrobatics **13** or slide 5 ft toward it) · altar-block centre (half cover) · colonnade north (Wardens) · four shovable braziers · **200 Crisans ring the terrace two deep.**

Roster: 1× Alkippe (CR 9) · 6× Yoke-Sworn (CR 2) · 2× Peacock Warden (CR 5) · 1× Bronze Yoke-Heifer (CR 6) = **13,600 XP**

RITE TRACK — advance 1 step at the end of every round. Also advances while 3+ Yoke-Sworn chant within 30 ft of each other, even if Alkippe is down (*Chorus*). **1 Naming** → **2 Anointing** (he stops moving on his own) → **3 Yoke-Cord** (restrained; Alkippe regains a charge) → **4 The Leap** — **he goes over.**

- **THE GARLANDS ARE THE OFF-SWITCH.** **Tear off** (action, Sleight of Hand or Athletics **14**, auto if adjacent & unopposed) → Rite drops back one step, Heifer stunned 1 round. **Wear them yourself** (action) → rite pauses, Yoke-Sworn cannot attack you, Alkippe attacks you at disadvantage, Heifer will not charge you — *and you become the mark.* **Destroy them** (off the Leap or into a brazier) → every Yoke-Sworn makes a **DC 16 Wis** save or flees 1 min; Heifer stunned; Alkippe loses her remaining charges.
- **NON-COMBAT:** show Theoxena's token or Religion **17** to recite the true Delphic verse, then Persuasion **16** (advantage with 3+ clues). Alkippe reads it herself and stops the rite. She will not apologize.
- **THE SHORTER PATH:** her rite rests on Hera having *taken* the royal household. Tell her it is alive — queen in a cave on Cirphis, with her own daughter — backed by **Clue 3 or 5**, and she stops with **no check at all** and sits down on the altar step. *"Then what, exactly, am I giving her back?"*
- **THE CROWD:** any area effect within 10 ft of the crowd line, or any hit on a civilian, panics them — terrace becomes difficult terrain everywhere and the party forfeits **Clues 5 and 6.** Warn the table out loud the first time someone lines up a fireball.
- **RECRUIT ALCYONEUS** — free him without stripping his dignity (let a player ask) or wear the Garlands yourself. Brings the **upper crack** and carries children out one per round.
- **She is watching.** The terrace is visible from the cave mouth and Herophile spends her evenings at it. **Breaking the rite auto-completes Choice step 1.** Do not tell the party; let her say so.
- **The Eye here** (action): every Yoke-Sworn takes the Morale save at **disadvantage** thereafter; Alkippe loses a charge. **Loot:** 600 gp offering; *periapt of health* on her belt if turned.

If step 4 completes: Alcyoneus dies. No ally, no upper crack, no auto-complete on Choice step 1 — what Herophile watched was a city killing a boy on her mother's account — and the **Draught Clock starts at 5.**

Encounter 3 — The Sleepless Cave DEADLY · ~60–75 min · 2 phases

READ FIRST — Herophile is not a prisoner. Not bound, not caged, not drained. She is standing on the Drinking Floor in a clean wool dress watching her mother work, and she can walk out any night she likes. She stays because she is nine and will not leave her mother alone with this. **The rescue is an argument (Herophile's Choice, page 4/4).** **The clock is on the other children.**

☠ **The Sleepless Cave 120×90, no natural light. Threshold** (E, 20×30) — a built doorway hung with wool threads knotted from the inside; *Lamia cannot cross it either way while they are intact.* **Nursery** (N, 30×30) — three child-height biers made up as *beds*; one slept in this week, two not in a season. Search = Clue 6 free; no Night-Smoke. **Drinking Floor** (centre-S, 50×50) — shed-skin drifts (two 15-ft difficult patches), eleven baskets 20 ft up with **three living children** (rope AC 12 / 5 HP; a dropped basket = Dex **12** or 2d6), the **Bier** south. **Sea-Mouth** (W, 20×40) — chest-deep, 60 ft underwater passage out. Ceiling 25 ft. Standing terrain, always on: **Drifts** — enter or start a turn in one, Dex **16** or **restrained** (escape **16**). **The Sleepless Dark** — nonmagical flames give dim light at half radius, magical light ≤3rd suppressed, **heavily obscured beyond 30 ft** regardless.

Roster: 1× Queen Lamia (CR 15) · 2× Empusa (CR 6) · 4× Hollowed (CR 2) · 2× Strix Flock (CR 3) = 20,800 XP; +2 **Hollowed** / +1 **Strix on Phase 2** ≈ **22,400. No Long Rest inside.**

DRAUGHT CLOCK — start 6 (5 if Alcyoneus died). Remove one at the *end* of every round; track it openly. **At 3** one child stops moving and Herophile watches the party notice. **At 0** every child still in a basket dies, and **each death restores 30 HP to Lamia** — she is not hoarding it, she is passing it on, and the party can watch where it goes.

Save one: reach the basket (Athletics **13** to climb, fly, or cut the rope) + an action — Sleight of Hand **15**, Athletics **16**, or any slashing damage to the wicker. Out of the draught permanently.

Get them clear: the **Nursery** (no smoke) · Alcyoneus one per round · Acheilus ferries without limit. **She will not stop you** — no action defending baskets, no attack on a PC carrying a child. She does not think she is doing anything wrong.

- **PHASE 1 — The Queen's Welcome (HP 310–156).** She does not attack first. She *explains*, calmly, like a physician describing a regimen — she wants a second opinion and has not had one in a season. Insight **16**: she is not enjoying any of this. Opens **Queen's Welcome** on the garland-wearer, else the highest-Cha PC. Hollowed rise from the drifts and grapple; Strix hold the ceiling near the baskets and punish anyone climbing to a child; Empusae guard the Nursery in false form. **Drinking Bite only on grappled / charmed / restrained / incapacitated targets.**
- **A MOTHER'S BLINDNESS.** She cannot harm Herophile, target her, or land an area effect that would catch her — **and anyone within 5 ft of her is in that blind spot too.** Let the party work it out, including for holding the Bier wall.

- **WIN:** Herophile leaves the cave alive — by her own choice or in someone's arms. **Lamia at 0 HP with the Bier denied is the complete victory.** Bier intact and Eye-free → she reforms in 1 hour at 50 HP; a party that won the Choice and left has still won the session. Say so.
- **PHASE 2 — The Skin Comes Off (HP 155–0).** Free transition: permanent Serpent-Coil, **DC 18 Wis** or frightened to end of next turn, +2 **Hollowed** and +1 **Strix** arrive. Drinking Bite → **8d6**; Call the Strix recharges **4–6**; **+2 to hit**. She stops explaining — the argument is over and she has decided she needs them out of the room, not agreeing. If she has been **Named**, she says one thing in Phase 2 and it is "*She is still small.*" Let the table sit in it.

BOSS — QUEEN LAMIA OF CRISA, THE SLEEPLESS

Large Monstrosity (Shapechanger), CE · CR 15 (13,000 XP) · BOSS

AC 18 | HP 310 (27d10+162) | Speed 40, climb 40, swim 30 | LR 3/day

STR 20 (+5) · DEX 18 (+4) · CON 22 (+6) · INT 17 (+3) · WIS 18 (+4) · CHA 22 (+6) — Saves Dex +9, Wis +9, Cha +11 · Deception +11, Perception +9, Stealth +9 · Resist necrotic, nonmagical B/P/S · Immune charmed, exhaustion, frightened · darkvision 120, blindsight 30 · **Sleepless** (no sleep/exhaustion) · **Serpent Climb** (ceilings, no check)

- **Shapechanger** (bonus action) — *Queen* (Medium, the face on Crisa's coins) · *Serpent-Coil* (Large, true form, Claw reach 10 ft) · *Night-Smoke* (fly 40 hover, through any 1-in gap, immune nonmagical B/P/S, adv Dex saves; cannot attack/speak/handle objects; **cannot enter running water or the Nursery**). Reverts to Serpent-Coil at 0 HP.
- **Sleepless Regeneration** — regain **20 HP** at the start of her turn unless she took **radiant** damage or damage from **running water** since the end of her last turn.
- **Threshold-Bound** — cannot cross a doorway hung with a household's wool threads unless invited. *This is why she takes children out of doors.* She tied her own, around the last of her household.
- **A Mother's Blindness** — cannot willingly harm *Herophile*, cannot target her, aborts any area effect that would catch her; **anyone within 5 ft of Herophile is in that blind spot too.**
- **Her Son in the Water (1/enc)** — first time *Acheilus* is visible to her in the cave: **Wis DC 20 or stunned to end of her next turn.**
- **Multiattack** — three attacks, only one may be Drinking Bite. **Claw** +11, reach 5 (10 in Coil): 16 (3d6+5) + grapple (escape **17**), two at once.
- **Drinking Bite** +11, reach 5, vs. grappled / restrained / incapacitated / willing: 12 (2d6+5) piercing + **21 (6d6) necrotic** — **8d6 in Phase 2. Target's HP maximum drops by the necrotic dealt (until long rest) and Lamia regains that many HP. HP max reduced to 0 = dies and rises in 24 hrs as one of The Hollowed. (She does not keep it. It goes into Herophile.)**
- **The Queen's Welcome** (Recharge 6) — one creature within 30 ft that can see her: **Wis DC 19** or charmed 1 hour; treats her as a trusted friend and is a willing target for Drinking Bite. Repeats the save whenever she or her allies harm it; immune 24 hrs after it ends.
- **Call the Strix** (R5–6; **4–6 in P2**) — 1 Strix Flock or 2 Hollowed within 60 ft, on her initiative.
- **Legendary** — **Uses 3 (4 in Lair)**; the whole finale is her lair, so **4/round: Drift** (1) half speed, no OAs (full in Night-Smoke) · *Hungering Gaze* (1) Wis **19** or disadvantage on its next save vs. her · *Child-Voices* (1) Wis **16** in 60 ft or frightened, fail by 5+ also move to the deepest tunnel, **deafened immune** · *Owl-Cry* (2) chosen creatures in 30 ft, Con **18** or 14 (4d6) psychic + deafened · *Drink* (2) one Drinking Bite.
- **Levers:** *Name Them* (Wis **18/20**) and *Eye in socket* (Wis **18**) each kill her regeneration for a round; *Eye in bier* or a burned bier makes 0 HP final; the *Choice completing* is Wis **20** or stunned.

STAT BLOCKS

Acheilus, Shark-Marred CR 10

E1 elite · recruitable · *her eldest son*

AC 17 | HP 184 | 30, swim 60

- Multi: Bite +9 (22, grapple **17**) + 2× Harpoon-Claw +9 (16, Str **17** or pull 10 ft) · Tide-Fed +10 HP/turn in water · Blood Frenzy
- Undertow R5–6: 30-ft cone Dex **17**, 36 (8d8) + push 15 + prone
- Breaks off at 60 HP for terms. **Will not fight his mother.**

Ichthyian Raider CR 3 · Reef-Hound CR 3

Sahuagin reskin · shark mini

Raider AC 16 | HP 60 | 30, swim 40 · Hound AC 14 | HP 76 | 20, swim 50

- **Raider:** Bite +5 (6) / Trident +5 (10, thrown 20/60), two attacks · Net 1/turn (escape **13**) · Blood Frenzy
- **Hound:** Bite +6 (13) + Str **14** or dragged 5 ft to water · Pack Tactics · Blood Frenzy

Ichthyian Brineseer CR 5

Tide-priest · spell DC 15

AC 15 | HP 82 | 30, swim 40

- 2× Brine-Spark +7 (14 cold, 60 ft) · Barbed Staff +4 · 3/day hold person · 1/day tidal wave

Alkippe, Hierophant CR 9

E2 leader · surrenders at 0 HP

AC 18 | HP 150 | 30 | spell DC 17

- 2× Yoke-Rod +6 (9 + 10 radiant), or rod + cantrip
- Yoke-Cord 3/day (bonus): Str **17** or restrained 1 round
- 3/day hold person, spirit guardians, guiding bolt · 1/day flame strike, banishment, mass cure · Reaction 3/day healing word (3rd) · disadv. vs. garland-wearer

Yoke-Sworn Acolyte CR 2

AC 15 | HP 45 | 30

- 2× Sickle +3 (6 + 3 radiant) · Hymn-Bolt +5 (10 radiant, 60 ft)
- **Chorus:** 3+ within 30 ft advance the Rite without Alkippe
- **Morale:** garlands lost → Wis **16** or flee 1 min (disadv. if the Eye was shown)

Peacock-Eyed Warden CR 5

Temple bronze construct

AC 18 | HP 95 | 30

- 2× Bronze Glaive +7, reach 10 (14) · Eye-Flare R5–6: cone Con **15**, 18 (4d8) radiant + blinded · never surprised

Bronze Yoke-Heifer CR 6

AC 17 | HP 126 | 40 | blindsight 60

- 2× Gore +8 (16) · Hooves +8 (18, prone) · Trample Charge Str **16** · Brazen Lowing R6 Wis **15**
- **Garlands leave a living wearer → stunned 1 round**

Empusa CR 6

E3 lieutenant · *not her daughters*

AC 15 | HP 104 | 30 | resist fire, nonmag B/P/S

- 2× Claw +7 (13), or Claw + Draining Kiss (17 necrotic, HP max –half, she heals) · Beguiling Word R5–6 Wis **15**
- False form hides the bronze leg — Insight **18** · Flame-Hair 7 fire on grapple
- The first women she drank. **Lamia has three children; none is in this block.**

The Hollowed CR 2

Her drained · undead

AC 13 | HP 52 | 30, climb 20

- 2× Grasp +5 (10) + grapple **13** — **sets up her Drinking Bite** · Dry Bite +5 (7 + 7 necrotic), grappled only
- **Remembering:** **speak its living name → stunned 1 round**

Strix Flock CR 3

Screech-owl swarm

AC 13 | HP 66 | 10, fly 40

- Beaks +5 in its space: 14 (4d6) + 3 necrotic (half HP → 7)
- Screech R6: 20 ft Con **13** or deafened — *deafness blocks her Child-Voices*

KEY ITEMS the Eye has one use in the cave and three ways to spend it**The Sleepless Eye — maguffin**

A human eye, brown and unclouded, set in a plum-sized lens of amber resin. Always slightly warm.

- **Handout:** "She gave up her eyes so she could sleep. It did not work. Make her look."
- **Clue 2:** History **16** / Religion **15** / Arcana **15** — adult, human, recent; a Libyan queen was granted the setting-aside of her eyes, and used it the night her household changed so she would not have to watch.
- **E1:** shown to Acheilus, opens the parley automatically. **E2:** action — every Yoke-Sworn takes the Morale save at **disadvantage** thereafter; Alkippe loses a charge.
- **E3 — one use, three choices. Into the Bier:** her smoke cannot enter it; 0 HP becomes final — *the win against the monster*. **Into her socket** (she must be grappled, restrained, stunned, or unaware within 5 ft): **Wis DC 18** or stunned to end of her next turn with regeneration offline. **Into Herophile's hands:** she looks into her mother's own eye and sees what was done and what was never coming — **every remaining step of the Choice completes at once, the win without a body**.

The Sacrificial Garlands — E2

- Three fillets of white wool and laurel. Whoever wears them is the rite's claimant; nothing else marks it.
- **Tear off 14** → rite back a step, Heifer stunned. **Destroy** → Wis **16** morale rout.
- **Wear** → rite pauses, Yoke-Sworn cannot attack you, *you become the mark* (Lamia opens on you in E3; your **Name Them** is DC 20).

The Bier of Shed Skins — E3

- **AC 12 · HP 40 · vulnerable fire and radiant.** About one round of committed effort with an open flame.
- Perception **13**: the skins are *arranged*, not shed — a bed with room for four, and a diadem at the bottom. Telegraph it.
- **Intact + Eye-free** → *she reforms there in 1 hour at 50 HP*.
- She defends it: from the first damage, every legendary action goes to whoever is nearest.

HEROPHILE'S CHOICE — THE ACTUAL RESCUE

Three things she needs to hear, **each from a different source**, one action apiece. She listens, does not interrupt, and has thought about all of this more than the party has.

- **1 · That it does not stop when she leaves.** Persuasion or Insight **16**. *Automatic* if the party broke the rite at Crisa — she watched it from the cave mouth.
- **2 · That her brother is alive and waiting.** *Automatic* with Clue 3, or Acheilus at the sea-mouth. **A lie does not work** — she will know, and the step closes for good. So does telling her he is dead.
- **3 · That it was never coming for her.** Religion, Medicine or Arcana **18**. *Automatic* with 5+ clues, or if she is handed the Eye to look into. This is the one she has been trying to tell her mother for months.
- **On completion:** she takes the nearest offered hand and walks. Lamia makes a **DC 20 Wis** save or is **stunned** to the end of her next turn. Herophile becomes a freed ally — *A True Word 1/enc: reaction, one roll against her mother within 30 ft is made with advantage*.
- **Carrying her** always works and is always worse: half speed, she screams for her mother, Lamia has advantage on the carrier until she is out.

NPC QUICK REFERENCE**Theoxena, Senior Pythia — Quest Giver**

- **RP:** formal, precise, treats every statement as testimony; accepts correction from evidence, despises flattery.
- **Secret:** the word was *changed*, not *killed*. She will not name Hera's grudge inside Apollo's precinct. Insight **15** / Persuasion **16** outside it → **Clue 1**.
- **Epilogue:** adopts Herophile the same afternoon — and is the one who can say the sentence the girl has needed for a season: *nothing is being held off, and nothing ever was*.

Acheilus, the Shark-Marred — E1 ally · her eldest

- **He is Lamia's son** and knows exactly what is in that cave. The drained wash out of his mother's sea-mouth; he has spent a month laying them above the waterline and folding their hands, because he cannot stop her and cannot turn her in.
- **RP:** strangers get the Aphrodite story; the truth means saying his mother's name, and he will not until the parley earns it.
- **Will not fight his mother.** He comes as far as the water. A PC may ask him in — see *Her Son in the Water*.

Alkippe, Hierophant of the Yoke — E2

- Insight **17**: she is terrified, and the terror predates the rite — the verse came in her own sleep.
- **Wants** a household restored for a household unmade — wrong, not evil, and not lying.
- **Turns** on the true Delphic verse — or instantly, no check, on being told the household is alive (Clue 3 or 5). Surrenders at 0 HP and will not let the Acolytes die.

Alcyoneus of Crisa — E2 ally

- Sixteen, chosen by lot. **Recruit:** free him without stripping his dignity, or wear the Garlands yourself.
- **Gives:** the upper crack into E3; carries one child per round out of the cave.
- **Stats:** AC 13 · HP 32 · Sling +5 (6) · Shout Down 1/enc — one ally gets advantage on its next save vs. charm.

Sibyl Herophile — the rescue · her youngest

- Nine. **Not bound, not caged, not drained.** She can walk out any night and has not, for a season, because she will not leave her mother alone with this.
- She prophesied her own ending, told her mother once, was disbelieved, and stopped trying. She will say it to the party in a flat voice.
- What came for her came as **prophecy** — she speaks true things in her sleep. Her mother has decided that is the change arriving slowly. *It already finished, months ago*.
- Asked, she gives all three children's names and four of the Hollowed's living names, with or without Clue 6.

King Krisos of Crisa — clue source

- **Clue 5:** Investigation **15** in the royal house, or Persuasion **18** / Insight **17** on him — no fight here. **He was in the room.** Hera's wrath took his wife and all three children in one night, in front of him, and changed rather than killed them, and he ran. The chamber is untouched — three children's beds, wool knotted on the door from the inside.
- *"A beast can be hunted. Say the other thing and you are asking me to hunt my daughter."* Told she is alive, he asks only whether she is still small.

AFTERMATH & REWARDS**The spring called Sybaris**

- Every child out of a basket goes home and Crisa watches them go home; the elders still call it a beast. **Loot:** the diadem (900 gp, Crisa pays double to bury it) · 1,200 gp votive silver under the Nursery biers · the Eye unless spent.
- Herophile to Delphi: she walks past Theoxena to the tripod and says something specific, unprompted and correct about a PC. Theoxena names the gift and says nothing was ever being held off. She says; she will be a Pythia.
- **Acheilus**, if he lives, cannot come to Delphi and does not ask to — somebody has to go down to the shingle and tell him. **Scylla** stays in open ocean; leave it unresolved.

Sleepless Fangs of Lamia — reward

- **Earn:** destroy her for good — smoke denied, bier burned — and draw the fangs before the body cools. (A party that wins the Choice and leaves her alive does not get these, and should be told that is a fair trade.)
- Crafting component: a long rest + smith's or leatherworker's tools, DC 15, sets them into one weapon.
- **Fangbound Weapon:** once per turn on a hit, +1d6 necrotic and regain half. **3/long rest**, against a grappled / restrained / incapacitated target or one that cannot see you, instead +4d6 necrotic, regain half, and reduce its HP maximum by the necrotic dealt until it long rests.

Remember: the win is Herophile, not the kill — she is not tied to anything and has to be *persuaded*. The clock is on the other three. The Eye has *one* use. The Threshold threads keep her in as well as out. **Hera never appears. Scylla never appears.**

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Sinbad and the Roc of Serendib

One-Shot · 6 PCs Lvl 10 · ~3–3.5 hrs · Greek–Arabian crossover · Sinbad ally · Three-phase Roc finale

Style: Quick Cyclops toll (RP) → Valley Fork (branch) → Roc: nest → descent → ship | **Win:** Extract crew; end the Roc's pursuit at sea — Diamond mercy (preferred) or 0 HP (downed, staged)
Guest: Sinbad the Sailor · **Maguffin:** Serendib Noon-Diamond · **Pacing:** Enc. 1 ~20 min · Enc. 2 ~45 min · Enc. 3 ~90–105 min (half the session).

DM SECRET — do not leak: the egg in the nest is a poachers' decoy (carved cliff-stone, hollow; the real egg was stolen). Nobody knows — **not even Sinbad**, who believes it's a dud that must be removed so the Roc will leave. Reveal **ONLY** in Enc. 3: destroy/roll the egg (auto), Investigation DC 18 mid-fight, or the Phase 3 finale.

"When the mountain-bird stoops for its stolen moon, flash Serendib's noon — nest remembers sky, and sky remembers mercy." — *Serendib Noon-Diamond*

Major Beats

- 1. Mist → crossover shore; meet Sinbad; Noon-Diamond. Insight DC 15: he wants the egg gone as much as the crew ("It's a dud — she'll never leave while it sits there").
- 2. **Enc. 1 (quick, RP):** Valley Cyclops toll — gift / riddle / story / flash. Combat discouraged; ~20 min.
- 3. **Enc. 2 (branch):** Rim Path (Proteus ride + recruit; free Layla) or Gorge Floor (1–3 scorpions + 1–4 serpents; **no recruitment**). Converge at cliff base; Short Rest.
- 4. **Enc. 3 (3 phases, ~half the session):** P1 nest (Roc grounded, free crew) → P2 flight + vultures + egg decision + descent → P3 trireme pursuit; 0 HP or 5–6 rounds → Diamond finale + reveal.

Creature List

Creature	E/M/H	Mythos / Where
Valley Cyclops	1 (RP)	Greek + Sinbad · Enc. 1
Proteus (Old Man)	1	Fey/Fiendish Druid · Wild Shape · Rim
Giant Scorpion	1/2/3	Gorge floor
Diamond Serpent	1/2–3/4	Gorge floor (giant snakes)
Ghul (opt)	0/0–1/2	Arabian · Gorge
Giant Vulture	1/2/3	Enc. 3 P2 nest guards
Roc of Serendib	1	Rukh / sky-terror · 3 phases

Difficulty

Tier	Adjust
As Written ★	6 PCs · APL 10 — Enc. 1 RP scene; Enc. 2 Hard either branch; Enc. 3 Deadly, three phases.
Easier	APL 8–9: 1 scorpion + 1 serpent; 1 vulture; Roc HP ~20%; DCs –1.
Harder	APL 11–12: 3 scorpions + 4 serpents; 3–4 vultures; Roc +1 pass per 2 rounds in P3; DCs +1.

Misthaven's mist opens onto a black-sand shore where wine-dark water meets spice-wind surf — a “crossover islet” the charts refuse to name. Sinbad the Sailor is already waiting, bruised and grinning, with a diamond that burns like noon. His crew was taken toward a cliff nest; a one-eyed giant tolls the valley; and above it all, a rukh the size of a sky-mountain guards an egg that will not hatch.

DM Tips

- **Reveal discipline:** describe the egg as cold and strangely still; never call it false. Layla and Sinbad cannot identify it — they sell the mystery.
- **Enc. 1 pacing:** if weapons come out, telegraph cost (138 HP of wasted daylight; Roc shadow passes). Cyclops fights to drive off, retreats after 2 rounds.
- **Enc. 3 clock:** one 198 HP pool across all three phases — track continuously. Free the crew in P1 or there's no ship in P3 (Sinbad prioritizes it).

Encounter 1 — The One-Eyed Toll (Quick · RP · ~20 min)

☞ Terrain Valley mouth · 50×40 ft · boulder cover · cliff walls (climb DC 15). Cyclops in a 10-ft choke. · A Valley Cyclops tolls the only path — same breed Sinbad fled on another voyage. Roleplay scene; **combat discouraged**.

- Paths (pick any, one check max): Guest-gift 25+ gp (no check) · riddle contest (group Int/Perf DC 14, 3-before-3; win = learn both Enc. 2 branches) · swap stories about "the cousin" (Perf/Persuasion DC 13, Sinbad Helps) · diamond flash + sprint (Ath DC 13; burns flash, no toll reward).
- If they fight anyway: Cyclops drives off, not kills; retreats to cave after 2 rounds and hurls rocks. Narrate the sun moving; no reinforcements.
- Toll reward (any peaceful path): road-marker (+1 Navigation up the cliff) + warning: "Mind the little ones on the floor. Mind the old man on the rim. Mind the bird everywhere."
- Peaceful passage → Short Rest available. No Long Rest this session — say so.

Encounter 2 — The Valley Fork (Hard · ~45 min · branch)

☞ Valley floor 80×40 + rim ledge (10 ft wide, 15 ft up) · diamond difficult terrain · dens/burrows (Gorge) · poacher camp with Layla staked (Rim). Party picks: **Rim Path** (social, allies) or **Gorge Floor** (combat, **no recruitment**). Both converge at cliff base → Short Rest.

- **RIM:** Proteus drops on a PC — Riding Burden (restrained, half speed, 2d6 psychic/turn). End: Ath contest DC 15 / wine+Perf DC 14 / diamond flash. Wild Shapes ≥1×. Recruit: Persuasion/Insight DC 14 after clean ride-end → joins Enc. 3.
- **RIM:** Free Layla (Ath DC 12) at poacher camp → joins Enc. 3 with Help. She says: "They spent two nights up there and left heavier than they came." **She does NOT know about the decoy.**
- **RIM hazard:** ledge narrows ×2 — Acro/Ath DC 12 or slide to floor (2d6, prone, one serpent stirs).
- **GORGE:** 1–3 Giant Scorpions + 1–4 Diamond Serpents (E 1+1 / M 2+2 / H 3+4), two waves. Group Stealth/Survival DC 14 crosses quietly (mixed = scorpions only). Dash on diamonds: Dex DC 12 or prone. Optional +1–2 Ghuls. Faster route, zero allies.

Encounter 3 — The Roc of Serendib (Deadly · 3 phases · ~90–105 min)

☞ P1–2: nest ledge 30×40 · 40-ft drop (4d6, Ath DC 14) · egg center (AC 12/HP 20) · pillars AC 14/HP 25 (crew penned behind) · rope-ladder south. Descent: skill challenge. P3: trireme deck 20×60 · mast AC 14/HP 50 · hull AC 15/HP 80. One 198 HP pool across all phases.

- **P1 Nest (rd 1–3):** Roc grounded, defends egg — Beak/Talons/Snatch/Nest Quake. FREE THE CREW (Ath DC 12 vs pen) — they ready the ship; Sinbad prioritizes if players don't. End rd 2–3: she launches (Str DC 13 or prone).
- **P2 Flight:** Roc passes every 2 rounds (one flyby: Beak+Talons or Snatch, then out of reach). 1–3 Giant Vultures drop and guard the egg (disadv. on checks vs egg within 5 ft of one). Then the egg decision: **TAKE** (Str 13+/two hands; carrier descends at disadv.; P3 = she wants the egg) · **LEAVE** (2 free descent rounds; P3 = revenge) · **DESTROY** = **REVEAL** (shatters like a statue — carved stone, hollow; Layla: "Someone carved this." Sinbad: "...Then where is her egg?") · **ROLL DOWN** (Ath DC 13; bursts below = same reveal at distance; she dives after it — 2 free rounds).
- **Descent:** each PC 2 checks (Surv/Ath/Acro DC 13; road-marker +1; egg carrier disadv.). Fail = 2d6; two fails = start P3 prone.
- **P3 Ship (rd 1–6):** egg aboard → she hunts the carrier; else revenge. Talons hit: Str DC 17 or overboard (reboard: Ath DC 13 + rope). Siege Beak ×2 dmg vs mast/hull. Perch (1/2 rds, mast or bow-post): **Wing Gale** — deck Str DC 15 or pushed 10 ft + prone; at rail, second Str DC 13 or overboard. Perched = meleeable via rigging.
- **Finale:** Roc to 0 HP (downed on bow, NOT dead) or party survives 5–6 rounds → **Diamond solution:** flash auto-succeeds; if reveal hasn't landed, egg cracks in her talon now. Read handout; she departs. Executing her = pyrrhic; either way Sinbad finds the poachers' trail (real egg stolen — sequel hook).

DM Callouts

- **THE SECRET:** egg = poachers' stone decoy; real egg stolen. Nobody knows, incl. Sinbad (he thinks "dud"). Reveal only in Enc. 3 (destroy/roll auto · Investigation DC 18 · P3 finale).
- Sinbad: frees crew, rope rescues, helms ship in P3. Layla: Help + hauls swimmers. Proteus (if recruited): Wild Shapes — shark form in P3.
- On any Enc. 3 success: Proteus pledges a future call. Persistence: no gods die.

STAT BLOCKS

Sinbad (Ally)

AC 15 | HP 84 | Climb 20

STR 14 (+2) · DEX 16 (+3) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 13 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 16 (+3)
· **Saves** Dex +6, Wis +5

- 2× Scimitar +6 · Feint Wis DC 14 · Seven Voyages 1 HP once/SR · Roc-Lore Tip · P3: helms trireme

Valley Cyclops CR6 (RP)

AC 14 | HP 138

STR 22 (+6) · DEX 11 (+0) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 8 (−1) · WIS 6 (−2) · CHA 10 (+0)

- 2× Club +9 · Rock +9 · Poor depth perception · Drives off, never kills; retreats rd 3

Proteus (Old Man) CR4 · Rim

AC 14 | HP 71 · Fey/Fiendish Druid · Magic Res

STR 16 (+3) · DEX 12 (+1) · CON 14 (+2) · INT 13 (+1) · WIS 14 (+2) · CHA 15 (+2)

- Slam + ride · Salt Curse R5–6 · **Wild Shape** ≥1× (again if Enc. 3 recruit) · Future-call on Enc. 3 success

Giant Scorpion CR3 · Gorge ×1–3

AC 15 | HP 52 | Burrow 10

STR 15 (+2) · DEX 13 (+1) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 1 (−5) · WIS 9 (−1) · CHA 3 (−4)

- 2× Claw +4 grapple DC 12 · Sting +4 + 4d10 poison Con DC 12 half · Gem-shell ambush (Perc DC 15)

Diamond Serpent CR3 · Gorge ×1–4

AC 14 | HP 60 | Climb 30

STR 18 (+4) · DEX 14 (+2) · CON 12 (+1) · INT 2 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 3 (−4)

- Bite +6 + poison Con DC 12 · Constrict grapple DC 14 · Hunts by vibration

Ghul CR2 (opt · Gorge)

AC 13 | HP 45

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

- Claw +4 · Howl Wis DC 12 · Adv vs bloodied

Giant Vulture CR1 · P2 ×1–3

AC 10 | HP 40 | Fly 60 · Pack Tactics

STR 15 (+2) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 15 (+2) · INT 6 (−2) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 7 (−2)

- Beak +4 · Talons +4 · Egg Wardens: disadv. on checks vs egg within 5 ft

Roc of Serendib BOSS · 3 phases

AC 15 | HP 198 (one pool) | Fly 120 · LR 2

STR 28 (+9) · DEX 10 (+0) · CON 20 (+5) · INT 3 (−4) · WIS 12 (+1) · CHA 9 (−1) · **Saves** Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +5

- +13 Beak/Talons · Snatch R5–6 · P1: Nest Quake · P2: Flyby every 2 rds · P3: Wing Gale (perched; Str DC 15 push+prone), Talons Str DC 17 or overboard, Siege Beak ×2 vs ship · LA Wheel · 0 HP = downed, not dead

KEY ITEM / NPCS

Serendib Noon-Diamond

- 1/SR: flash ≤30 ft Dex **DC 13** blind 1 rd (Enc. 1–2; works in Enc. 3 P1–2 vs Roc: Con **DC 15**, no Snatch/Quake that rd).
- **Diamond solution (P3):** triggers at Roc 0 HP *or* after 5–6 survived rounds — flash auto-succeeds; egg cracks in her talon (reveal, if not yet landed); read handout; she departs.

Sinbad the Sailor

- **Motivation:** Recover crew — and remove the egg. He's sure it's a dud ("should have hatched two seasons ago") and that she'll never leave while it sits there.
- **What he doesn't know:** the egg is a poachers' decoy. He learns at the reveal like everyone else; his beat: "...Then where is her egg?"
- **Roleplay:** Boastful, generous, allergic to hopelessness; quotes both wine-dark and spice-wind seas.

Layla of Basra

- Rim Path only: free (Ath DC 12) → Help in Enc. 3; hauls swimmers in P3.
- Knows the poachers "left heavier than they came" — does **not** know about the decoy.

Crossover Reminder

- Cyclops & vultures = shared skies · Proteus = Wild Shape druid (recruitable, Rim only) · Roc outcomes seed Victory (poachers have the real egg — chase hook / Roc-mount seed).

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