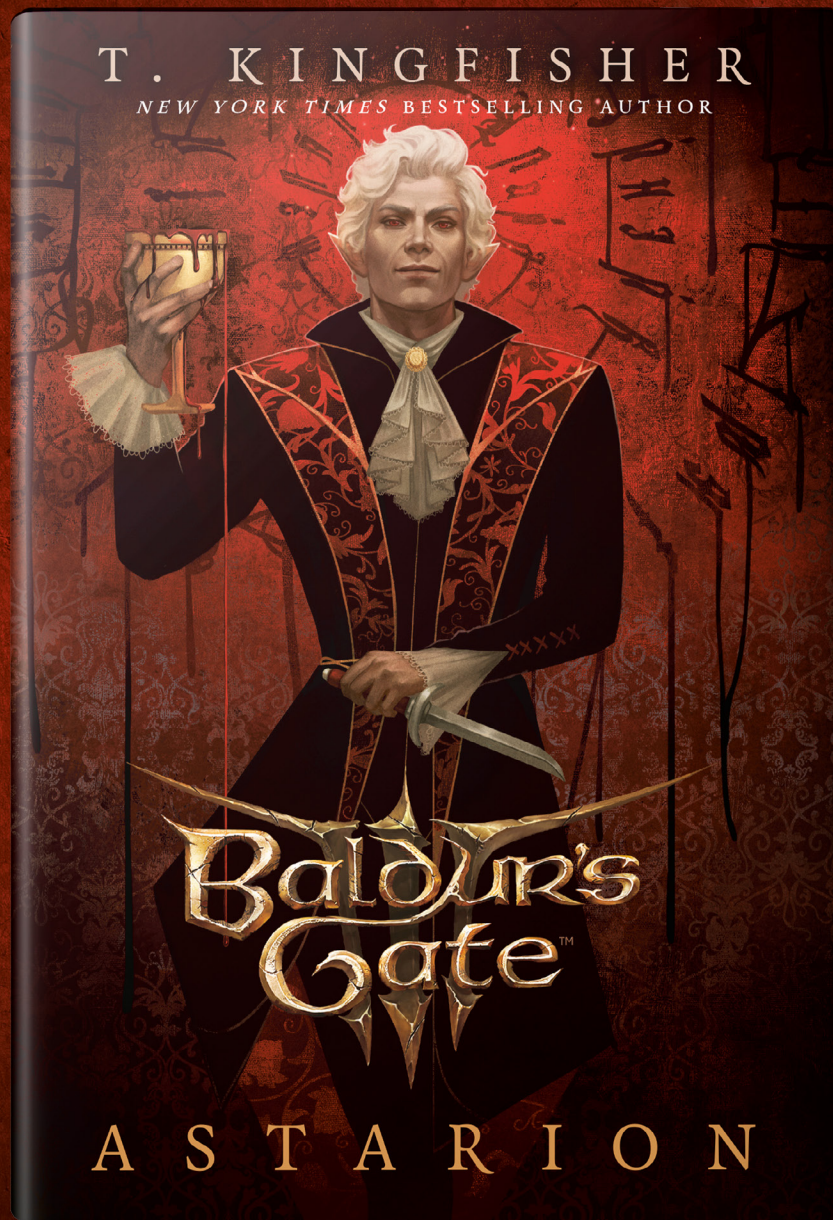


BOOK CLUB KIT

RESOURCES FOR BOOK CLUBS AND
ADVENTURING PARTIES EVERYWHERE!





Hello, Readers!

The very first D&D character I ever played had five hit points and lived for almost twenty minutes. I was nine and my cousin, eleven, was an even worse GM than I was a player. I emerged from this experience with an understanding of both THAC0 and the essential cruelty of human nature.

This was not what you'd call an auspicious beginning.

For years, my D&D experiences were limited to Gold Box games on my Amiga 500 (and Lord, I am definitely dating myself here). Later attempts to form gaming groups in college and afterward tended to eventually founder on opposing schedules. It was not until 2010 that I finally had a solid gaming group to explore the dungeon with, and by then, of course, they'd gotten rid of THAC0.

When *Baldur's Gate 3* came out, it was mind-blowing. I occasionally want to find other geeks my age and yell, "How did we get here from the SSI version of *Pool of Radiance*? Our NPCs used to be made of ten pixels and a piece of string, and we were grateful to have that many pixels! This is so cool!"

We've all come a long way, obviously. I am so delighted to have been along for the ride.

(Although I do occasionally miss THAC0.)



T. Kingfisher



Discussion Questions:

1. How much did you know about Astarion's story before reading this novel? Did it live up to your expectations?
2. The character of Astarion was created in the game *Baldur's Gate 3*. How do you feel the novel reminds you of the game? What about the novel and Astarion's story surprised you?
3. Who is your favorite secondary character in the novel and why?
4. What was your favorite scene and why?
5. Do you have any favorite quotes from the book? Why did they resonate with you?
6. Do you agree with Astarion's final decision to send Hahn away? How, in his shoes, would you have dealt with the paladin?
7. After having read *Baldur's Gate 3: Astarion*, has any element of *Baldur's Gate 3* been recontextualized? Would you approach your in-game actions any differently?
8. If you were a participant in Szarr's bloody competition, which mythical creature or figure's blood would you be most eager to retrieve?
9. Without the events of *Baldur's Gate 3*, what do you think would have happened to Astarion and his fellow spawn? Would he have found a way to escape on his own, eventually, or would he have been destroyed?
10. Which moment in the book do you think sealed Hahn's final decision to turn his back on his order?



BALDUR'S GATE 3: ASTARION

A ONE-SHOT BY T. KINGFISHER

This adventure is set in Baldur's Gate and the estate of noblewoman Delilah Hullhollyn.

SUMMARY

At Rat's Run tavern, the party is approached by a mysterious figure who wishes them to acquire a very specific variety of blood—that of a hook horror. The nearest available hook horror is in the menagerie on the estate of Delilah Hullhollyn. It has recently molted, the only time when blood is easy to acquire. But the estate is well-guarded and the party will have to use stealth and guile to make their way inside.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

What brings you to Rat's Run? Are the party established friends or are they competing with one another to acquire the horror's blood? Regardless, you've heard rumors that someone at Rat's Run has been asking about the menagerie. . . .

- I'm a local with no morals and less sense of smell. Rat's Run is where I drink.
- I've been employed by a rival noble who envies Lady Hullhollyn's menagerie and wishes someone to investigate it close up.
- I belong to the Society For Prevention of Cruelty to Monstrosities. Hook Horrors are sentient beings and deserve to live free!
- I have a friendly history with one of the underkeepers at the menagerie. She's very concerned that someone may attempt to take advantage of the hook horror's molt to harvest its hooks for the illicit reagent trade.
- I am part of the illicit reagent trade. I want those hooks.
- Somebody's willing to pay for hook horror blood? Sure, whatever you say, boss. I'm a freelance adventurer and can always use the money.

PART 1: RAT'S RUN

In the sleazy Rat's Run tavern, a shadowy figure lurks at a semi-private table. Their servant, a cringing goblin named Gortongue, wanders through the floor, occasionally dropping hints about a job to be done involving the menagerie. If the party expresses interest, they will be conducted to the table, where a raspy-voiced individual in a deeply shadowed cowl offers a significant reward for blood from the hook horror, and provides an enchanted vial to keep it fresh. The shadowy individual, if pressed, will say they are called Roan.

Starting fights in the Rat's Run is not advisable, as many people will wish to join in the fun. Should the party ignore this advice, Roan is an elven woman who uses the [Vampire Spawn](#) stat block, while other enthusiastic bystanders are left to the GM's discretion.

PART 2: GETTING INTO THE MENAGERIE

Asking around Baldur's Gate will turn up a number of individuals who have information about the menagerie that they may be willing to part with, or even aid—if you can convince them it's in their best interest.

- **KIRA OXENWAITHE** is one of the keepers of the menagerie. This elven woman can be found drinking in the Monk & Mastiff in the Lower City. She knows all the ways in and out of the menagerie, and could perhaps be convinced to let the party in through the back way, but only because she's extremely worried that her hook horror charge will be in danger during its molt.
- **MERIE BALLAD** is a halfling who was commissioned to paint portraits of each of the animals in the menagerie. But Lady Hullhollyn insulted the artist's work after they painted the bulette's eyes the wrong color, and they're embittered and looking for a way to strike back. They do know of at least one entrance into the menagerie. They can be found painting the sunrise and sunset over the water from a wall in the upper city.
- **CELIA STRIPELIGHT** is extremely worried. Her son went missing and was last seen in a net being carried by men wearing Hullhollyn livery. Questioning will reveal that her son was a tiger cub at the time and that Celia herself is a **were-tiger**. She wants her son back and may be willing to come along as extra muscle.
- **RAND CHATTERJACK** believes all animals should live free. This gnome druid knows the entrances and exits to the menagerie and is more than willing to accompany the party inside. Possibly a little too willing.
- **DUST** the Moon-Elf is a potion-maker in the Guild. He's willing to pay quite a lot for hooks from the hook horror. More if you can bring him the entire carcass. It's not his job to figure out how, though.
- **MENAGERIE GUARDS** drink at a small, nameless tavern just outside the walls. They cannot be bribed, but there's a rumor that the guards sometimes like to show off the wild beasts to particular friends . . .

PART 3: ENTERING THE MENAGERIE

Just outside of Baldur's Gate, on the estate of Lady Delilah Hullhollyn, is a massive walled enclosure filled with animal cages. Inside, fantastic beasts from across Faerun pace back and forth, some roaring and furious, some resigned to their fate. There are several entrances to the menagerie, for guests, employees, and even to bring in the animals themselves, but all are carefully guarded.

The cages are magically locked, but a talented Rogue could deal with that easily enough. More worrisome are three **Veterans** who act as night watchmen. If the party cannot conceal themselves as the watchmen make their rounds and are spotted, the Veterans will first summon one another, then sound the alarm and call for reinforcements. Once the alarm has sounded, the party has only a short amount of time to reach the hook horror and fulfill their mission before guards flood the area. Releasing the animals will certainly distract the guards, but it might also cause a serious problem for the party.



If **CELIA STRIPELIGHT** has accompanied the party, she will go to the tiger pit and begin working to retrieve her son. This may involve letting the **tigers** out.

If **RAND CHATTERJACK** has accompanied the party, he will begin freeing the animals. This will definitely involve letting the tigers out. Attempts to stop him will result in Rand attacking the party. He is a **druid**. If he feels he is in danger of losing, he will take the form of a snake and attempt to hide inside one of the cages.

The **molting hook horror** is in a cage between a dire bear and a displacer beast. It will attack anyone who enters the cage. It will not appreciate having its blood harvested and will be uninterested in explanations. It is not necessary to kill the hook horror to acquire blood, but it would certainly make things easier.



PART 4: GETTING PAID

Once the blood is in the party's possession, they need only return to Rat's Run to be paid for their services. Roan thanks them and expresses interest in the possibility of working with them in the future.

If the party has killed the hook horror, **KIRA OXENWAITHE** will be waiting to ambush them near Rat's Run. She is a **druid** who can wildshape into a **bear**, and may have brought several of her co-workers with her.

If the party killed **RAND CHATTERJACK**, his organization will hunt the party down and attack them. They consist of a number of **druids** and **rangers**, none of whom are terribly dangerous, but whose disappearance might cause questions.

Playlist

This playlist will set the mood for the decadently dark fantasy adventure.

Available on Spotify

[Click here](#) to listen
Or scan below.



“Sanctified”

Nine Inch Nails

“House of Self-Undoing”

Chelsea Wolfe

“People are Strange”

The Doors

“My Friends”

Red Hot Chili Peppers

“Oh! You Pretty Things”

David Bowie

“Seven Devils”

Florence + The Machine

“The Devil is a Gentleman”

Merci Raines

“Vampire”

Olivia Rodrigo

“Bad Guy”

Billie Eilish

“Eat Your Young”

Hozier

“Me and the Devil”

Soap&Skin