FORGOTTEN REALMS®
Fan Written Adventures

NORTHERN JOURNEY™

The West – Parts 1 – 4

Silverymoon – Moonwood – Backlands – Tale of 2 Liches

For Character Levels 1-2 with advancement to Levels 7-9

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An unofficial Adventure in the Forgotten Realms®

NORTHERN JOURNEY

Parts 1-4 – Northern Journey - The West

Version 1.0

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Cover illustrations: Above, the trail into the Moonwood, below, the Ashaba. Rear Cover: Mill on the Ashaba.

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FORGOTTEN REALMS®
Fan Written Adventures

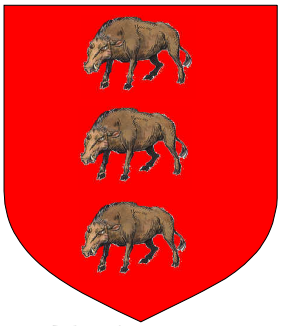
NORTHERN JOURNEY™

Part 1, Silverymoon

Formerly *"Into the Frying Pan"*
Version 14.0

For Adventuring Groups of Level 1

Neverwinter


Triboar

Nésme

Silverymoon

An unofficial Adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS®.

Contents:

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Questions & Answers
... for Players and Game Masters

To successfully run this adventure, game masters should have all of the material listen in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide* Version 8.

What's this module about?

This module starts with brand new characters of Level 1 in the City of Neverwinter. Through circumstances that are explained in the module, the characters - most of them until now inexperienced in adventure outside of Neverwinter - lost their property and are just about broke. They have to earn money - quickly - and an extraordinarily evil villain in the guise of a good mage offers them a job.

He gives them a few pieces of a strange kind of blue stone and wants them delivered to Lady Alustriel in Silverymoon before the savage winter begins. He'll only say that she knows the stone is coming and that two other groups also are trying to bring samples of the stone to her. Under no condition will he explain to the PCs what the stone is about.

On the way to Silverymoon the PCs - despite their starting first levels - will meet enemies (and friends?) galore.

What kind of characters are allowed?

Basically, that's up to the game master. But there are some conditions if the module is going to work as it should. The first-time PC - including the first-time Realms-PC - should learn to know Neverwinter well, not necessarily through the WotC literature, which often is eyes-only material for the game master, but rather through the game master. One possibility is a detailed verbal description from the game master. A better possibility is that the game master sits down behind PC and keyboard and types the description he wants his PCs to have.

This module above all is about getting a new adventure off to a good start. In particular, we mean a good role-playing start. Every player should know before an adventure starts exactly how he got to be who, what and where he is. He should know his hometown well. How could he not, without a lame amnesia excuse?

A first-time player - also a first-time player in the Realms - usually should be a PC who hasn't done much traveling. That way he can't be expected to know about places that his player knows nothing about. He'll know Neverwinter, of course, like the back of his hand. He'll have heard stories about the surrounding area and maybe spooky stories about the Neverwinter Woods. Possibly he's heard true or untrue tales about Agatha in the Conyberry area of the forest.

He's no doubt afraid of running into ruthless barbarians or man-eating trolls, neither of which he has seen to date. As a country hick in Neverwinter, he probably imagines Waterdeep to be smaller but more fantastic than it really is. The stories he's heard about Lady Alustriel in Silverymoon have been so exaggerated that the PC might almost expect her to be as fantastic as she really is. And he may have heard incredible stories about the Harpells in Longsaddle that could well be true or even understated. Before the adventure's over, the PC will get to know both miserable dungeons and nasty dragons, and both of the advanced sort.

An experienced Realms player could claim to have traveled, even if he is only of first level. If his game master(s) has/have played the Realms close to the book, he may be able to recognize and know about some of the places his new PC goes to. The game master should let the experienced player develop a character that makes it unnecessary for the player to pretend he knows nothing about Waterdeep, for example, when some of his previous players may have spent two years campaigning in the City of Splendors. The player and therefore the PC may well know the city better than the game master.

There are some tales now and then in *Dragon®* magazine about players who are such really good role-playing actors that they can convince one they know nothing about *"The Yearning Portal"* even though they sudsed down there every gaming evening of a two-year campaign. But chances are about nil that you'll run into one of these players outside of ***Dragon*** magazine.

The game master can except the experienced Realms player from the condition above that he be a Neverwinter native whose luck went bad. But if he's just come to Neverwinter from somewhere else, the PC's player should have a good explanation how his character traveled to Neverwinter in a manner that he has no experience points and is just now starting as an adventurer. If this option is used, the player and game master can spare themselves the exercises of having the player learn all about Neverwinter. Maybe he doesn't know much about Neverwinter yet, because he's just arrived, but he knows a lot about Daggerford or Mirabar or Waterdeep or wherever he hails from, where the player behind the PC knows the town.

No exceptions should be made to the rule that *all* PCs start with Level 1 and 0 experience points! This may be a first campaign for some players, a first Realms campaign for others and the next of many campaigns for the rest, but for the PCs that the players role play, it is the first adventure of *their* lives, and the PCs are no doubt excited and a bit afraid, even when they brag that they're not!

Every player should know what his PC did with himself before he decided to go on this adventure. Those who are natives of Neverwinter - the *City of Skilled Hands* - most likely were craftsmen or lived to some extent from the earnings of the craftsmen. Perhaps they were among the architects and construction workers responsible for the many beautiful buildings of Neverwinter. Maybe they were among the masters who craft Neverwinter's famous waterclocks, or they may have simply sold waterclocks.

Neverwinter is famous for its fantastic fruit crop. Perhaps the PC was a worker in the orchards. Or he may have been a farmer who produced the crops that fed the craftsmen. He may have worked on one of Neverwinter's fishing boats, until the day came when he got tired of the smell, the salt in his face, the hard work and never having sufficient silver shards in his pocket to buy a second beer evenings on the dock.

Some PCs may have worked in the production of the city's legendary multicolored lamps. Others could have raised flowers. All of these professions are common in Neverwinter.

A fighter may have had his training in the city army of Lord Nasher. A thief would have practiced his art carefully, to supplant his income in his main profession. It wouldn't take long for Lord Nasher's men to become aware of a citizen with a regular supply of cash and no visible means of support. There are wizards enough in Neverwinter that a new PC would have no difficulty finding a teacher. Perhaps his mentor was a member of the Many-Starred Cloak, or a suspected Harper who, of course, never confirmed or denied the suspicion. A priest no doubt trained in one of the city's temples to Helm, Tyr or Oghma.

If you're a game master, make sure your players know all these things for their PCs before you call the first dice roll. And if you're a player, don't let your game master call the first dice roll until your character has been fully developed. Follow this advice, and you can't help but enjoy a fantastic D&D-adventure, regardless of whether you jump into the frying pan with this module or direct into the fire of another adventure!

When does this adventure take place?

The adventure begins during the last ride in the month Mirtul. It is the Year of the Tankard - 1370 by Dales Reckoning, although few in Neverwinter use the calendar system of the Dalelands, in the distant East.

It is a time of drastic change in the North. Most people thinks it's a turn for the better, because so many bastions of evil have fallen in recent years, and the leaders of the North are trying to unite in mutual defense. Many priests, historians and philosophers say, however, that they sense evil - and new, darker times at the doorstep. The say that beasts once ruled the land, and the time is not distant, when the beasts will return.

So it will be, perhaps. But at present, the forces of good are stronger than in recent centuries in the North, even though still threatened from dangers on all sides. The first great fall of Evil occurred 14 years ago, in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), when Chieftain Bruenor Battlehammer and the dwarves of Clan Battlehammer defeated the duergar who had occupied their Mithral Hall for nearly two centuries. Clan Battlehammer reopened the famous dwarf mine. Successive battles, victories and other events are fully described in *The North.*

For Game Masters only

This adventure was designed primarily to get jaded, burned out players of too-high levels back into the swing and fun of good role-playing. It's also a good starting adventure in the most exciting part of the realms for a group of players new to AD&D or the Realms.

You should begin with a group of three to six players, all with Level 1 and no experience points. It's good to have a group strongest in fighters (or rangers), with perhaps a healing priest and a mage. It offers less for a thief, unless he uses a scout's kit or similar. Bards are a borderline case, unless you have a really good and imaginative role player. Druids won't know what to do in this one.

Although the players are only Level 1, they'll have encounters with an army of orcs, an ogre mage of might, the banshee Agatha from Neverwinter Woods near Conyberry, the Harpells, a black dragon, Manshoon - the most powerful mage of the Zhentarim, trolls, merciless Barbarians and, if they're lucky, Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon.

You may ask if that's not a bit too much power for a first level group. Of course it is, if the players decide to fight all (or perhaps any) of these mighty adversaries to the death. As game master, you might think about starting to sing the old "M*A*S*H"-theme song in that case: *Suicide is painless. It brings on so many changes.*

The truth is, first level characters are really little fish, not the kind that Manshoon, Agatha or even a black dragon regularly throws into their frying pan, although trolls are happy to eat just about anyone. Well, maybe the black dragon too. But none of these creatures but the trolls are after the PCs, just after things in the vicinity of the PCs.

If the PCs don't attack Manshoon, the dragon and Agatha, these high-powered NPCs are likely to ignore such no-account nithlings, who have nothing they want anyway. Is that what always happens? Of course not.

The story - a tale of crossing paths

The history leading up to this is fully outlined in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* Before you read the following segment, you should be familiar with the history. Only then will this explanation make sense.

This story begins with an alleged archmage in Neverwinter – Gaard, an aged member of the Many Starred Cloak in Lord Nasher's city. We say *alleged,* because unknown to anyone at the time the PCs encounter Gaard, the ancient mage has been killed by a former Red Wizard of Thay and now undead dragon vampire named Szarkh Gortth, who is looking for adventurers who would be likely candidates to bond into service as unwilling assassins who will destroy five magicians and liches who played a role in Sammaster's destruction.

Gortth/Gaard is sending adventurers on a test run to find a group with mettle enough to carry out the task he and his masters (Sammaster and the Tiamat-Avatar Kargmelchina) have in mind for them. The story he tells the adventurers he hires – *a completely false story* – follows:

Bruenor Battlehammer and the dwarves of Mithral Hall have made an unsettling discovery. Deep in the mines, on the border to the area where they already have battled drow, they have discovered strange, blue stones.

The priests of Moradin are disturbed by these stones. They certainly are no gems, but the priests sense a capacity for magic in the stones, and they believe Moradin is communicating to them that these stones pose a serious threat of some sort, but they have been able to determine no more.

Bruenor Battlehammer has written this off as delusions from dwarf schnapps, of which the priests have sampled generously recently. He's done almost nothing about the matter. One of the junior priests of Moradin took matters into his own hands several months ago. A merchant from Neverwinter was conducting negotiations in Mithral Hall. The priest suspected (correctly) that the trader also was a Harper agent. He gave him several specimens of the stone and asked him to have an investigation started.

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Upon his return to Neverwinter, the Harper agent passed the stones on to the aging Harper mage Gaard, resident in Neverwinter. Gaard and members of the Many-Starred Cloak have examined the stones and believe they may be similar to Chardalyn, the rare black stones found on the Sword Coast that can contain a spell ready for release. (S. "Volo's Guide to the North", P. 233)

The mages of Neverwinter have studied the stones and believe them to be of organic origin, like coal. However, these stones are, in their opinion, manufactured and not the result of natural processes, as is the case with coal. Gaard and the others are highly concerned that the stones may be the product of the drow and therefore, that they could pose a serious threat to all of Faerûn.

Neither Gaard nor the magicians of the Many-Starred Cloak are strong enough in magic to discern more over these stones. Therefore, they've decided to ask more powerful magicians to look into the matter.

Their first thought was to turn the stones over to the Harpells in Longsaddle, but they decided quickly against that. Gaard and the others believed that the Harpells could just forget that these stones might pose a drow danger and instead research them, put them to use but forget to report back what they had learned.

For that reason, they've decided to keep the stones secret from the Harpells. Instead they have communicated with Lady Alustriel and informed her of the stones, agreeing to transport samples to her so that the high magicians of Silverymoon can attempt to dig deeper into the secrets behind the stones.

The truth is:

- The stones are worthless blue chalcedony that are unknown in these parts. Gortth brought the stones with him from Vaasa.
- Other members of the Many-Starred Cloak, Lady Alustriel and Bruenor Battlehammer know nothing about the stones.
- Gaard's lifeless, blood-drained body lies dead in his own cellar.

There is no safe road from Neverwinter to Silverymoon, only dangerous trails. For that reason, Gortth decided to send three different groups of adventurers with samples of the stones on to Silverymoon, in the hope that at least one of the three groups succeeds. The first two groups already are on the way to Silverymoon. The PCs will find the corpses of the two previous groups along the way, the stone samples still by their bodies.

When Gortth/Gaard hears that the PCs are looking for a job, he will contact them and make them an offer to transport the stones to Silverymoon. Once Gortth sees the group, he has doubts whether it is strong enough or experienced enough to make it to Silverymoon, but he's found no one else he can hire to transport the third group of stones to Silverymoon.

He strongly recommends that the PCs attempt to find a caravan transporting goods and that they attach themselves to the group for the sake of safety and survival.

From this point on, the stones serve only to move the group eastward. With no great difficulty, the PCs almost make it to Conyberry. They run into trouble only just short of the village, on the edge of Neverwinter Woods.

Xred and the Zhents

Xred was one of the Northern attackers who helped destroyed Zhentil Keep. *(For details on the destruction, see the official* Ruins of Zhentil Keep *Accessory.)* He was among the captured, but his unusual and often strange magical abilities, together with the fact that he is a much higher level wizard than one would expect from an ogre mage, drew Manshoon's attention, and the Zhentarim archmage not only spared Xred but quickly elevated him through the upper ranks of the Zhentarim. Unfortunately for Manshoon, Xred is quite insane.

Several months ago, Manshoon came into possession of an ancient Netherese parchment. From this parchment, he believes to have learned that an ancient Neth mage of unimaginable power, sensing that his days were drawing to an end, vested his magic in the future. According to Manshoon's theory, this Netherese magic was woven into the developing life force of a distant, great great granddaughter who would be born centuries upon centuries after the mage's passing.

Manshoon also interpreted the parchment to mean that the reborn Neth magic would manifest itself in the first son born of this enchanted great, great granddaughter in the making, provided the mating were to take place under the moon during the Midsummerfest in the Year of the Risen Elfkin, five years from now.

With his magic Manshoon attempted to find these lost Neth descendants, and he believes he has succeeded. He believes the vessel of Neth magic to be one Söggrin, the 20-year-old daughter of a warrior second only to the chieftain and shaman of the Black Raven barbarian tribe.

In Ches of this year, when most of the Black Raven warriors were off on a raid, Manshoon and his current black dragon, Saumagenistopeles, raided the tribal camp near Raven Rock, wreaked destruction and abducted Söggrin, who had been held since as a pampered captive in the Citadel of the Raven. Manshoon's only interest in Söggrin is his intention to mate with her in five years, perhaps dispose of her, and then do all he can to steal the magical knowledge his son of Netherese descent will have. Söggrin has had no contact with Manshoon since her capture. She has been constantly watched and been taken care of by a Zhent mage named Blondung and priest of Cyric of Cyric named Von Fedel.

At this point, Xred enters the story. With one of his unusual brands of magic, Xred has managed to be able to pry into Manshoon's things at times without being detected. Xred also has read the Netherese parchment and interprets part of it differently from Manshoon. Xred has no means of knowing whether Söggrin is the intended vessel of magic, but he's confident Manshoon could make no mistake in such a matter.

However, Xred was able to correctly translate an old rune in the parchment that Manshoon misunderstood. His magic too comes originally from Netherese sources, and Xred read correctly that the mating couple must first be powdered with ground meal from the hard seeds of schoellweed, a popular ingredient in Neth magic and also one among the ogre mages of his homeland. Manshoon is unaware that schoellweed exists, because it usually is found only in the remote North.

Xred also knows that schoellweed meal is only effective in old Neth magic when it has been milled by humans, When members of other races mill the seeds, the powder that is produced is non-magical. And some time ago, he learned that the banshee Agatha has a hidden meadow in Neverwinter Woods, where schoellweed flowers in Spring and produces ripe seed in Summer.

The major point where Xred's understanding and Manshoon's diverge is the date when the mating with the vessel of magic must take place. Manshoon believes that date will come in five years. Xred is convinced that this year, the Year of the Tankard, is the fateful year.

And Xred wants the Neth magic just as much as Manshoon does. When Manshoon was off to Zhentil Keep recently, Xred captured Söggrin along with Blondung and Von Fedel, who attend to her, and transported all of them magically to his hidden encampment inside Neverwinter Woods, where he also has used a dweomer to conceal his own band of more than 400 orcs.

Since the abduction, Manshoon has been using his scrying spells and devices, in an attempt to find Xred and Söggrin, but without success to date. He has not found the proper means to break through Xred's strange concealing magic.

Xred had his orcs harvest schoellweed seed from Agatha's meadow last summer and he is doing so again this year. His milling operation has several problems, however. To avoid contaminating the Neth magic he can use only human millers. Schoellweed seeds are nearly as hard as rock and are difficult to mill. And Xred has only orc-made millstones, which grind poorly.

As a result, he uses Söggrin's two keepers as slaves, to turn the first treadmill the orcs built, but he desperately needs more humans to turn a second mill, which was finished in the last ride. Fortunately for him, the PCs come along and are captured just in time to supply the manpower he needs.

His orcs attack the PCs on the south edge of Neverwinter Woods, hopelessly outnumbering them The orcs take all human PCs captive and enslave them, but strangely enough let other members of the PC party go unmolested on their way, simply because they have no orders from Xred for dealing with non-humans.

Unfortunately for Xred, Agatha is furious at the theft of her schoellweed seeds. Last year, she killed several of his orc harvesting parties. Since then, she's been slowly tracking her problem to its source, before her harvest is stolen from her again this year.

After the PCs have suffered miserably for some time as Xred's slaves, Agatha attacks the camp one night and after a long and spectacular duel of magic, she destroys Xred. Satisfied, she returns to her lair, destroying and scattering orcs in her wake but leaving the PCs, Söggrin and her keepers in peace, if they do the same with her.

As soon as Xred is destroyed, his magical shield falls, and Manshoon is able to pinpoint the location of Xred’s corpse. It does, of course, take him time to reach the scene.

The PCs, Söggrin and the two Zhents - if still alive - flee and head toward Conyberry and then Longsaddle. There they all will be taken prisoner. The Many-Starred Cloak has found Gaard's body and has sent a magical alert to the Harpells, to keep a watch for a group matching the PCs' descriptions and to hold the group, if found, for the Neverwinter authorities, who want to try the PCs for murder.

With magic, the Harpells will determine that the PCs are innocent and they will allow them and Söggrin to proceed on their way. From the Harpells the group also will get the first word of old, lost dwarven halls named *Khiezar Dalan.* The Harpells do not know that the PCs dealt with an imposter rather than the real Gaard, so they too assume the stones are genuine, although they can find no trace of magic in the stones. Instead, the Harpells believe they see a possible link between the stones and magic in the old, lost dwarven halls of *Khiezar Dalan*. The Harpells are aware of the stones, because one of Gortth's/Gaard's other groups has given the Harpells a part of their stones.

On the first day out of Longsaddle, a band of about 30 Black Raven barbarians rides in full charge from the hills toward the PCs and Söggrin and surrounds them in little time. The barbarians believe the PCs to be Söggrin's captors and challenge them to one-to-one battles to the death.

The Harpells in Longsaddle decided to use Söggrin and the PCs to trap this marauding band of Black Ravens, and they're keeping tabs on the PCs at the time the Black Ravens attack. Just as the hit points are dropping to the point where some of the PCs think they're about to cash in their chips, Harkle and Andall Harpell ravage the hated Black Ravens with a long distance magical fire attack.

The sole survivor of the Black Raven band escapes, and he'll convince his chieftain that he's found Söggrin's abductors. Here's another great and unpleasant (for the PCs) future story hook. The PCs now are hunted mortal enemies of the most brutal barbarian tribe on the Savage Frontier!

As the PCs and Söggrin are crossing the hills between Longsaddle and the River Surbrin, they finally are discovered by Manshoon, who is riding his black dragon Saumagenistopeles. Manshoon will thank the PCs snidely for taking good care of his fiancée and throw the PCs as a reward a purse with 500 Zhent gold taler that have a purity of 92%. He, Söggrin and Saumagenistopeles then fly off and leave the PCs behind, if they do not act against them.

Söggrin will go back to Manshoon without resistance and tell the PCs not to try anything, because they're a couple sizes too small for Manshoon and can offer her no hope. If they try anyway, Manshoon will tell Saumagenistopeles to blast them, and the dragon does so quickly, rewinding the adventure once more.

Of course, no decent adventurer will leave Söggrin to her fate. The PCs have another five years to rescue her, which gives you - the game master - another good future story hook, if you want it. Whether you do or not, poor Söggrin disappears at this point from our tale and your adventure, unrescued.

Dragon, dragon, who's got the dragon?

The encounter with Manshoon and Saumagenistopeles drew the attention of another group in the hills to the North, although this group did not know that Manshoon was involved or that the great black dragon was his Saumagenistopeles.

These folks are a mage, a priest and two renegade Tuigan warriors who are agents of the Dragon Cult, They force an encounter with the PCs, thinking what they witnessed may have been a meeting with a cult dragon, and that the PCs may be fellow cult members.

The Dragon Cult members will test this theory through the use of a couple of sign words known only to cult members, which the PCs no doubt will not know. In the end, the cultists will try to destroy the PCs, because they don't want their presence known in the North.

Just as the PCs are nearly destroyed by the cultists, an attack comes from the surrounding hills. A strange black man with dragon wings and a band of draconians attack the dragon cultists with mighty magic from the hills. They destroy the cultists but have absolutely no interest in the PCs. However, the draconians have every intention of capturing the dragon ring possessed by the cult mage and will battle the PCs to the death for it.

Shortly after the PCs ride on, they encounter the corpses of four adventurers whose possessions haven been taken from their bodies, except for a small collection of small blue stones, just like those the PCs are bringing to Silverymoon. It looks as though they fell in an attack from barbarians.

The PCs discover regeneration

In their first night after crossing the River Surbrin and marching north of the Trollmoors toward Nesmé, the PCs have an almost fatal encounter with a band of hungry trolls. First thing next morning, they discover the mostly eaten remains of five more persons. By the corpses lie more of the blue stones.

By the time they reach Nesmé, they no doubt will be virtually paranoid, wondering what kind of deadly surprise awaits them there. The answer is, absolutely none, unless you, the game master, have a better idea. The PCs can catch a river ride on an experimental gnome steamboat, but that will end in disaster in the Trollmoors. Between Nesmé and Silverymoon, the PCs suffer another terrifying attack from trolls, several attacks, if it suits the needs of your adventure.

West of the Herald's Holdfast the PCs are cornered by a band of Sky Pony barbarians who want to honor them by fighting them to the death. The PCs will find an abandoned old mine entry that turns out to be a rear gate to fabled *Khiezar Dalan.* Before the PCs do much exploring, however, they see that *Khiezar Dalan* has become a huge drow city, too big for them to tackle.

The survivors finally meet Lady Alustriel in person in Neverwinter. Coincidentally, she is being visited at the time by Bruenor Battlehammer, who quickly announces the tale of the stones to be a hoax. Bruenor recognizes them for what they are, worthless blue chalcedony from the East. After a quick examination, Alustriel laughingly dismisses the idea of any magic being in the stones. She is however extremely grateful to the PCs for the news they've brought. The discovery of Khiezar Dalan is a great feat, and the presence of drow there must be dealt with. Alustriel rewards the PCs magnanimously, commensurate with their achievements.

The pot of gold

Silverymoon is can be the real pot of gold at the end of a dangerous rainbow for the PCs. They have been witnesses to many things that would be of great interest to Lady Alustriel and the Harpers. They certainly will want to know about Manshoon and Söggrin, and if you don't plan to run your own future adventure toward that goal, the PCs can be assured that the Harpers will see to Söggrin's rescue. Disturbing too is the appearance of the Dragon Cult in the hills east of the Trollmoors. And above all, one will want to know about the discovery of lost *Khiezar Dalan* and the Drow threat there.

Additional rewards for supplying good information could be the offer of assignments from the Harpers - deeds that could lead to the PCs one day winning their own pins - and/or training from some of Faerûn's very best in Silverymoon. Or you can have the red sigylls appear on the PCs and play *"Moonwood"* and the other four follow-up modules, where the PCs unwittingly take on Sammaster himself and learn the secret of the draconians.

One last suggestion for the game master. This isn't an adventure where your PCs go on a treasure hunt or a monster mash. Much of the time, the PCs have to concentrate on surviving rather than attacking the bad guys. Award your experience points for dealing well with situations at hand, for good role playing and for good information gathering!

Coins of Binding, Sigylls of Contagion

(For further details, see the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.) If you are planning to run the *Northern Journey* campaign rather than just this module, it is of *critical* importance that the encounter with the dragon ghost Grafvitnir take place more or less as described. The PCs *must* see the coins mentioned in this encounter, or they will not be bound by the Sigylls of Contagion and Grafvitnir's will, both necessary factors for the further run of *Northern Journey.*

Incompatibilities, Problems and Solutions

1. The Neverwinter City Map. WotC has made quite clear, that there are no city maps of Neverwinter, because Lord Nasher forbids their making. We have made an unofficial map, strictly for the game master's eyes.

When the PCs learn that there are no maps of Neverwinter, because Lord Nasher forbids map-making, one of your more enterprising characters will come up quickly with the idea of doing a quick and profitable map business once he's left town. He'll insist that he knows the layout of Neverwinter quite well, having lived there all his life.

OK. If he can do it, lots of other people already would have done it, and that hasn't been the case. WotC leaves us without an explanation of how such out-of-town map-making has been prevented, but you, as a game master, don't have that privilege. If your PCs are not about to release the first map on the market of Neverwinter - and we strongly suggest you don't allow that - you have to explain why it can't be done.

You can use almost any explanation you find reasonable within the terms of your campaign. In our campaigns, we've simply added another of the remarkable magical northern wards to the defenses of Neverwinter. As confusing as the street layout is, anyone who spends some time in Neverwinter can learn the layout of the town like the back of his hand. But once he's outside the city gates, the ward muddles his recollections, making map-making impossible.

2. New places, better-defined places. For several cities and villages in the North, WotC has given us in the campaign accessory ***"The North"*** and in ***"Volo's Guide to the North"*** excellent and detailed maps showing the shape and location of all the major places in town. Rare is the game master who doesn't add a few more places of his own, however.

WotC often makes this easy too. Most maps give the game master a reasonable supply of unidentified buildings. The game master can use these for his own expansion of the city or village. The only potential problem is, that WotC may decide to identify this building as something else in the future. If that's the case, you may have to move the newly-defined WotC-building to another location, explain what happened to the old building, etc. Those risks simply go with being a game master.

Every time we introduce you to an expansion of a WotC-definition or an *"unofficial"* place, we'll tell you, so that you can make your own decisions about the matter.

Experience Points and Levels

The PCs should start with level 1. In the course of this adventure, they should gain two or three new levels, ending the adventure with level 3 or4. If one member of the party reaches level 5, this will pose no serious problems.

Let the tale begin ...

Before play begins, the game master must be certain that the PCs have their backgrounds established and that it is known in Neverwinter, that the PCs are short on cash and need an offer to get financially back on their feet. Adventures do not come to them. They have to seek the adventure.

The best start is to have the PCs themselves search for a commission. If you want to make it interesting and give it ups and downs too, have them find a few handbills, only to learn that the commission already has been let to other adventurers. Let a few contacts - some perhaps shady - come to them with possible jobs, only to turn them down because they have too little experience, or none, to be more exact.

At the point when the players and the PCs are getting frustrated, bring a messenger from Gaard to them. For details on Gaard, his hall, etc., see the NPCs section at the end of the module. Gaard is not only a Harper agent but also an accomplished mage. He will not go to the PCs. They will have to go to him.

As you work the PCs through the adventure, pay attention to the weather and its effects upon the group. You can use the daily weather tables at the end of this module, which are based on official WotC weather data for the North, or you can generate your own weather.

Remember too, that weather can have an impact upon some encounters. Creatures that depend upon sight are not likely to attack the PCs if fog limits visibility to 50 feet and the two groups are a mile apart. Creatures that depend upon smell have a problem when the wind's blowing at 50 mph. A ranger may have trouble tracking in sandy soil after three days of heavy rain or anywhere after three hours of heavy snow. Weather also affects tempo. Don't ignore weather. It's one of the really fine tools in the hands of the game master for adventure in the North - particularly in the North.

As the campaign accessory *The North* and *Volo's Guide to the North* make quite clear, Neverwinter is a very special and certainly unique place in the Realms. While the characters prepare to leave Neverwinter in the first days of the adventure, use colorful and positive descriptions, to make fully clear to them, just what they'll be missing!

1. Neverwinter

Neverwinter (Large City), the Year of the Gauntlet (1370 DR). Conventional, AL: NG, 100,000 gp limit. Assets: 2 Million gp. Population 17,000 Mixed (88% human, 10% half elf, remainder Dwarf, Halfling).

Game Master: It's the 24th of Mirtul. It's been raining the past few days in Neverwinter, leading to moderate temperatures, rising during the day into the middle 60s F/just under 20℃, then dropping in the early hours before sunrise to the middle 50s F/12-13℃. One trembles thinking of the colder weather and snow that reign less than 60 miles/100 km to the east, beyond the warmth of the perhaps magical but forbidden Neverwinter Woods.

The PCs are gathered - against their better judgment - in the *Fallen Tower* Tavern. With their diminishing funds, they know the *Board Laid Bare* would be a better choice, but the PCs need work and the *Fallen Tower* is the place outsiders go to. The PCs have had no luck getting a local contract for any type of work, but tonight could be the night when an outsider comes to the *Fallen Tower* looking for someone - someone like the PCs.

Meals at the *Tower* are limited to turtle soup, brown bread with or without garlic butter or spiced sausages. A meal goes for 4 copper nibs, and there's a variety of drinks available, but the PCs' budget probably will limit them to tankards of the rather bland *Neverwinter Coastalbrau,* a seaman's ale with taste but no great character, that the *Tower* offers for 2 copper nibs a tankard.

You've bean sharing a table in the *Tower* with no one but yourselves for more than an hour, but until now, no one's entered who looks like a prospect. There are locals at some tables, and merchants from Waterdeep and Mirabar, but none seem to be seeking caravan guards or other services. The mood is rather quiet but friendly too. It could be that the only action tonight will be the wild phantom chase in a few hours.

If the PCs approach the merchants, they will be told they need no one.

The time winds on. It must be past 10 p.m./22 hours already, when old Harthar, a local who's seldom seen in any tavern or inn enters. Harthar earns his modest keep as a runner, delivering messages in the City of Skilled Hands. He's coming in your direction. It looks as if he's searching for you.

When Harthar reaches the PCs' table:

"Might I join you young folks for a moment and share a quiet word with you?"

If the PCs invite Harthar to join them:

"I have a customer who's sent me to ask if you're interested in a job. It involves making a trip to Silverymoon."

If the PCs are interested, Harthar continues:

"Well now, that's good. You know old Gaard, the mage, who lives at the end of the Whitewater Promenade. He has a few small items he'd like brought to Silverymoon. He knows it's dangerous, and he's willing to pay you well. Can I tell him that he can await you, tomorrow morning at 9, in his hall?"

That's all that's planned for tonight. The rest is between you - the game master - and the PCs. But if your players have never done it before and you don't let them experience the *Tower's* famous phantom chase, you're not playing fair!

The next morning:

The rain has dwindled into a drizzle today, and the sky gives some hope that the sun may even reappear. As you wind your way through the confusing streets of Neverwinter, it crosses all of your minds briefly, that you probably never will see another city in Faerûn so beautiful and cosmopolitan as Neverwinter, and if your luck on your new adventure runs ill, you may never see the *City of Skilled Hands* again either.

You wind your way westward, toward the sea and the Whitewater Promenade. You have no difficulty finding Gaard's hall, at the end of the promenade. The ground floor and first story of the building are of a stone block. The top two stories have a half timber facade under a red tile roof. The building has no resemblance to the stereotyped wizard's tower, but it is said that Gaard is a mage of might, and people claim he is an important Harper.

The hall has four sides, each about 50 feet long. The walls stand 40 feet high, the gable of the sloped roof 55 feet above the ground. It may not look like a wizard's tower, but it's also not a beggar's hut!

Most of the stone wall of the building's first two floors is covered with climbing ivy and also with the still bare vines of deciduous Boston ivy, that will not leaf out for another three weeks. The grounds are carefully but not necessarily well gardened. The plants show signs of knowing care, but most of the growth consists of ever-green, leafed bushes with more than a little holly. Before an aged, maintained wooden door stands the statue of a man, an intellectual looking man.

If the PCs are rude and try to force their way in, they will have absolutely no luck at all opening the doors. They also will find that they are unable to approach within 3 feet of the building at any point but the front door. When the PCs come within 3 feet of the statue, a polite houseservant's voice - one that doesn't seem to come from any where in particular - speaks:

"Well met in Neverwinter! Please be so kind as to state your business!"

If the PCs answer truthfully:

"Ah, yes," answers the voice. *"The master is expecting you. Please do come in and find yourself a seat in the library!"* Seemingly on their own power, the doors open and show you a reception hall 10 feet wide and 30 feet long. The walls are paneled in fine wood. Although there are no windows in the walls, the hall is well lit by small chandeliers with burning candles. In the right wall, about 15 feet from the main door, is another door. There are no other openings in the walls.

After the PCs enter the library:

You enter the library and immediately have the feeling, that this room can hardly be inside the house you saw from outside.

The room is about 35 feet long and 25 feet wide, and it's filled with bookshelves - enough to house a larger library of parchment books than you'd expect to find even in Waterdeep. There's no one there to greet you, but there is a desk and a group of six chairs directly in front of you. A polite voice that comes from who knows where says politely, *"Please be seated!"*

Game Master The PCs may look around. They find only books that none of them can read. If a PC tries to steal a book or anything else here, a powerful dweomer will force him to replace it (3rd Edition saving throw for will, DC 30, 2nd edition penalty 3 against magic). If the PC makes the saving throw, he will have to do it again when Gaard (really Szarkh Gortth) arrives, or Gaard/Gortth will detect the stolen item and ask the PC to replace it. Even if the PC makes both throws, he has to make another throw again upon leaving Gaard/Gortth's Hall, or the hall will refuse to let him out as long as he's in possession of the stolen item. Gaard/Gortth lets the PCs wait for about five minutes. If they try to leave the library, they will discover that the door is magically locked.

After a wait of about five minutes, an ancient man comes out from behind the bookshelves, an absent-minded expression in his voice. *"Aha!",* he says. *"You've come!"* He then walks slowly over to the desk and takes a seat there. He looks at first down upon his hands, then appraises each of you and says finally, *"I hear you're looking for work"*

After the PCs respond:

"My name is Gaard", says the old man, *"But I suppose you know that already. I'm looking for some young folks like you to transport a few small items to Silverymoon for me. Is that a job you might be interested in, or is that too far or too dangerous for you?"*

Gaard/Gortth waits for an answer. If the PCs refuse, the matter is closed and the adventure is ended until a sensible group of PCs is rolled. If the PCs are interested, Gaard/Gortth explains what he has in mind.

"I have an assignment for you, a strange one, perhaps. Some rather unimpressive blue stones have turned up farther in the North. These stones have nothing much special about them. They look like gravel, except for the fact that they have a dull blue color.

"Now, you're wondering no doubt, why such worthless gravel leads me to offer you a contract. The simple truth is, we have no idea, what these stones are. It's a new kind of stone that none of us has ever seen before.

"These stones are no doubt some absolutely normal type of stone that's simply escaped our attention in the past. We simply don't know what they are. I can tell you quite honestly, that I don't know what they are, and I haven't been able to detect the slightest trace of any special properties in the them.

"But there are those who are worried. The high mages in Silverymoon and even Lady Alustriel are worried about these stones. They're afraid the stones may have some magical properties that we here in Neverwinter can't detect, and they want very much to investigate them. The people who found them - they were dwarves - also were quite convinced that these stones have something special about them, although they didn't know what either.

"In any case, I have a contract with Lady Alustriel to deliver specimens of these stones to Silverymoon, so that they can be studied, and they lady has made more than enough money available, to finance their transportation eastwards.

Game Master: Judge for yourself, whether Gaard/Gortth tells the PCs the following. If they're overconfident, it might be more fun for them to be surprised and puzzled by the later discovery of corpses from other adventurers bearing blue stones.

"Now, I want to be honest with you. I've already hired two other groups to transport specimens of these stones to Silverymoon, and if I hire you. you'll be the third group. Lady Alustriel is quite determined to take a look at these stones.

"The first group to reach Silverymoon will get the biggest reward, of course. But there's pay enough for everyone, even if you're not the first to arrive with the stones. If we agree that you're the right people for this contract, I can finance the equipment and horses you need to head out. I can also pay you an advance of 25 gold dragons apiece. That's a lot of money, of course, but you'll need it to make this long and dangerous trip eastwards!"

If the PCs are interested, Gaard/Gortth has some second thoughts.

"You young folks seem enthusiastic enough, but I suspect you have far too little experience. The way to Silverymoon is one of the most dangerous trails in all of Faerûn. There are hordes of orcs everywhere, occasional dragons and tribes of barbarians that would just love to give you a chance to die in honor, in battle with them. If they don't find you, wandering Zhents or agents of the Dragon Cult will, and their intentions are just as unpleasant.

"Worst of all, though, are the trolls. There's no way to get to Silverymoon without going past the Troll Moors, and when you do that, you can count yourselves lucky, if you meet sizable bands of trolls only once or twice. It could happen much more often. However, if you do make it to Silverymoon, no one will ever call you inexperienced again!

"I can make a couple of good suggestions. Your brains will do more to get you to Silverymoon than swords, spells and thieves' tricks. And if you're really smart, ride with trade caravans as often as you can. Caravans sometimes draw trouble, but the best safety for inexperienced adventurers in the Savage North is in numbers!"

With that, Gaard/Gortth and the PCs end their meeting. The following encounter is possible:

While shopping the PCs encounter a wealthy looking man. He has been observing the PCs as well as others shopping for travel items.

"Now, my young friends, I have the impression you might be traveling into the Savage North. Well, met, I say, I being Minnerl, the once mighty mage, now accursed hawker. Oh, in my time I too was an adventurer and a mage of some renown, I might add, until I ran afoul of Manshoon himself in the Citadel of the Raven. In those days, fools we were. We trusted the Zhents, to remain true in their alliance. And that they did, until they needed us no longer. Most of my comrades died there in the citadel, but me? Manshoon made a laughing stock of me. He cursed me, he did. And since that day, I've been unable to use my magic or my magical items. When I do the one or the other, I become sick. Immediately. Horribly sick.

"I'm doomed now to the life I lead here. The greatest priests have tried to lift this horrible curse, but still to no avail. But I've not given up. No indeed! There's is a great priest of Mystra herself in Arabel, they say.

"Adon is his name. I need only to raise a bit more money, and then I'm on my way there to pay for his services. One day Minnerl the mighty will have his magic again, and Manshoon will learn to taste my revenge.

"But until then, I must raise money by selling my magical treasures, one at a time, until my curse can be lifted. As reluctantly as I must do it, today I part with one of my greatest treasures, my fire staff. You young folks are headed into the Wilderness, whither I know not. But if your path comes near the Troll Moors, my staff is your salvation.

"Fully 5 charges remain in the staff, and each is sufficient to destroy up to 12 trolls. Now, I know that my offer raises your suspicions perhaps. But I'm willing to prove, that my staff is what I say it is.

"If you'll commit to buying the staff when you see that it works, I'll let you expend one of those charges to test it! What do you say to my offer?"

Game Master: Minnerl is a charlatan. He has paid an illusionist to cast a spell on the staff, so that it seems to fire a Level 10 fireball when the user says the trigger words *"Hoosh! Hoosh!"*

Minnerl demands 50 gold dragons for the staff, but he'll settle for 30 dragons. The staff is as worthless as Minnerl himself.

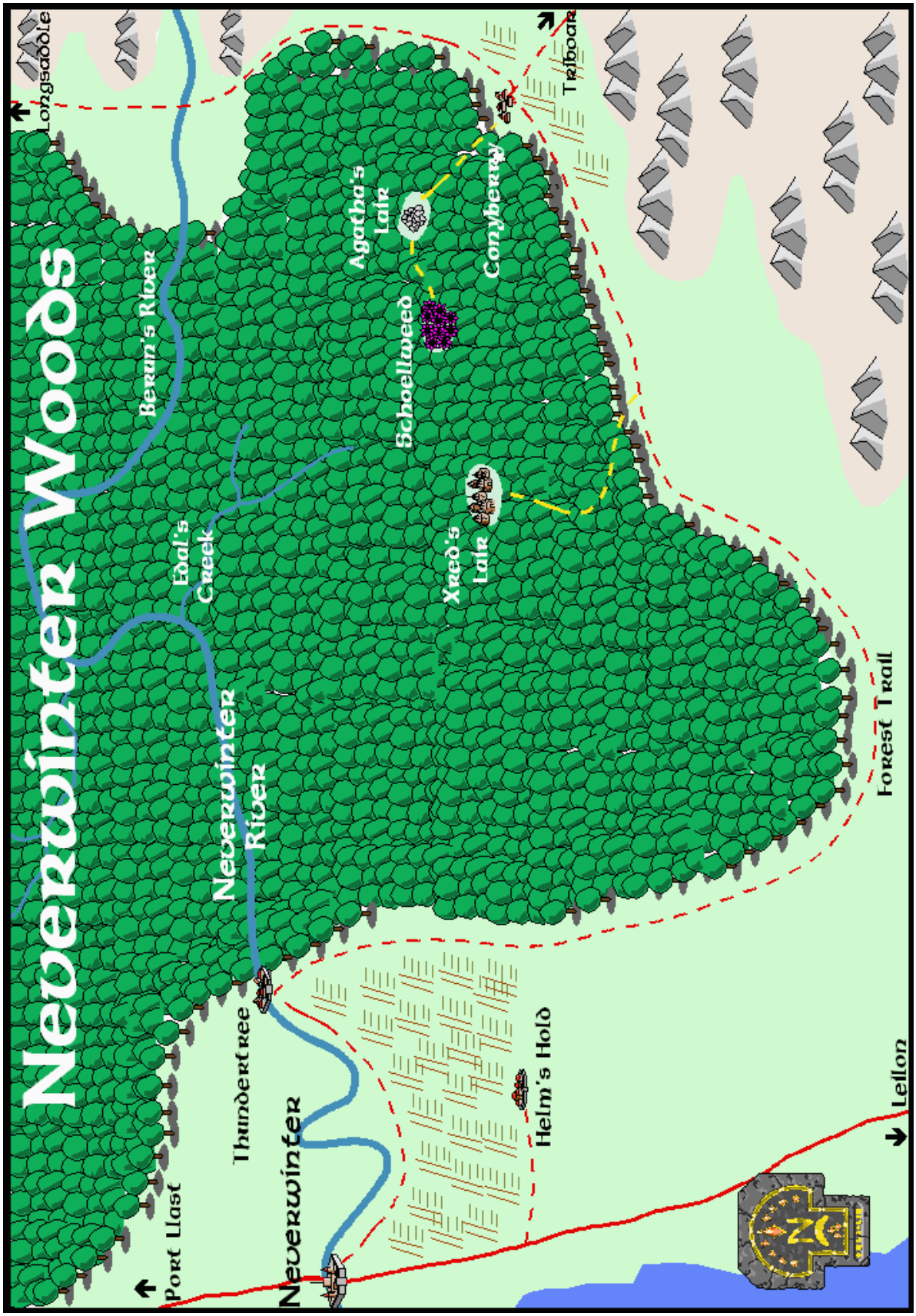
The Lucky Pears Trading Coster and the Battleaxe Transport are described in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

Map of Neverwinter

The Map of Neverwinter

There is no official WotC map of Neverwinter. This map was made for the *Northern Journey* adventure and is based in part on information in *The North* and *Volo's Guide to the North.*

1 – Castle Never.
2 – Hall of Justice, Temple of Tyr
3 – Hall of Knowledge, Temple of Oghma
4 – Shining Serpent Inn
5 – Moonstone Mask Inn, Restaurant and Festhall
6 – Cloak Tower: Tower of the Many-Starred Cloak
7 – Gaard's House (unofficial site)
8 – The Fallen Tower, Tavern
9 – City garden (unofficial site)
10 – Ren Dalstar's Corrals, sales of horses and riding supplies (unofficial site)
11 – Shining Knight Arms and Armor, sale of weapons and armor
12 – Sleeping Dragon Bridge
13 – Winged Wyvern Bridge
14 – Dolphin Bridge
15 – Park District, wealthy residential area (unofficial site)
16 – Board Laid Bare, restaurant
17 – Dannar's Mechanical Marvels, mechanical items from gnome and dwarven craftsmen.
18 – Jaesor's Fineware, Porcelain works
19 – Maskado's Maps and Legends, Bookstore
20 – Manycoins Moneylending, also moneychanger
21 – The Mute Lute, lute maker.
22 – Sacred Park of Sune
23 – Cemetery



Neverwinter Woods

2. Neverwinter Woods

Game Master: Use the Neverwinter Woods and Xred's Lair maps for this segment. There are several things to pay attention to once the PCs leave Neverwinter. The PCs learn almost immediately, that they only way to Silverymoon is over Longsaddle and Nesmé. Everlund Pass is under almost 6 feet of snow and won't be passable for some time to come.

The PCs may leave the *City of Skilled Hands* alone. They may leave with the *Lucky Pears.* The members of this group are braggarts who will bigmouth the PCs with tales of their own bravado, trying to impress the inexperienced adventurers with their own glory and the degree to which they think the PCs are green. By the time the PCs are captured, they should almost prefer Xred's orcs to Gaevert's braggarts. The third possibility is that the PCs ride out with the Battleaxe. Gildung will make quite clear to the PCs before they leave Neverwinter that he considers them so inexperienced that they're hardly worth the trouble of taking along. He will insist that they be trained throughout the entire journey to Silverymoon. He and his dwarves will stick to that too. The PCs will be ready to collapse after a day's training. The dwarves don't hate humans, but they have no particular love or respect for them either. As far as the PCs are concerned, the Battleaxe will be a dour, close-mouthed group.

It's also important that you pay special attention to the weather. The PCs probably have not been outside Neverwinter before and they certainly have never been near Neverwinter Woods. The magic warmth of the Neverwinter River shields the *City of Skilled Hands* from snow and the ravages of winter, but one doesn't have to be far from the river to experience true Northern weather, and in Mirtul that's cold weather, with 10" of snow on the ground as the journey begins. The PCs probably never have seen snow before, so it can be something to play up. It's also quite possible that they haven't really supplied themselves properly for winter, and after the first day or two in the cold, that they might want to turn back, to make more purchases, before they freeze to death.

That won't be a problem if they're riding with the *Battleaxe.* Gildung assumes that the PCs are stupid. He'll make sure they're properly equipped before they depart Neverwinter. The trip to Conyberry takes four days. On the first day already, the PCs veer far enough south of the river that the weather conditions in column 2 of the weather table (Neverwinter-Conyberry) apply. There are no planned encounters during the first 3½ days of the trip. You should of course feel free to add any you think your adventure needs.

2.1 Xred and Friends

Game Master: You need to do some advance planning for this encounter, because you have to divide your group. Xred's orcs should capture a part of your PC group and let the remainder go free. How the decision is made, which PCs to take, is dependent upon the composition of your group. Xred should be interested only in human PCs or only in male PCs or only in strong warrior types. This is necessary for this scenario, in which one part of the group is enslaved in chains in Xred's camp while the other PCs run loose in Neverwinter Woods trying to rescue their companions.

Start this encounter by emphasizing the weather. It's the afternoon of the third day. If the PCs are with the *Lucky Pears* or the *Battleaxe* you can decide which members of these NPC groups die in battle and which escape. But avoid the confusion of too many NPCs in Xred's Lair. Söggrin and her two Zhents will be more than enough to manage. Don't let the orcs take any prisoners from either of the NPC groups!

Adventuring is proving to be just a bit less romantic than the tavern tales you've heard would have it. Few things are on your mind so much at the moment as daydreams of being back inside the shelter of a friendly building again, preferably before a warm fire. You've heard that there's a *warm* town hall where travelers can stay, in a small village that must be only a few miles ahead called Conyberry.

According to tavern tales, the folk in Conyberry greet travelers in one of two ways. In both cases, however, locals are hidden in ambush, with crossbows ready, if you want to make trouble. Otherwise it seems to depend upon the mood of some local ghost named Agatha in Neverwinter Woods. The rural folk of Conyberry look upon Agatha as something of a protector, and when Agatha's stirred up about something, the people of Conyberry usually are too. What they get stirred up against are adventurers, because they assume the adventurers are the cause of Agatha's unhappiness. When Agatha and the villagers are upset, the villagers shoot first and ask questions later, according to some tales. According to other tales, they never ask questions, they just keep shooting.

When Agatha isn't riled up, the villagers still have their crossbows ready, but they ask first if travelers have anything to sell or barter. If coin is offered, the villagers will put one up in the village hall and sell mediocre ale for 2 copper nibs per jug or something called fire beer for 5 copper nibs a jug.

Right now, things could be a lot better. It's said that the Neverwinter Woods are about as dangerous as a place can be, but the trail has been staying a bit more south of the forest's edge. Discomfiting however are the large stands of tall shrubbery and scattered trees along both sides of the trail. If there are brigands or worse in the area, the brush certainly offers ideal ambush conditions.

Game Master: Let a little time lapse before the ambush. If the *Lucky Pears* or the *Battleaxe* are along, they begin to notice that something's not right and warn the PCs. At present, the PCs are almost at the point where the forest trail to Xred's Lair meets the trail to Conyberry.

The trail leads you through the brush for more than an hour without incident, but suddenly there's activity everywhere and on all sides. To your left and right as well as before and behind you spring loads of creatures up from the brush. There's lots of shouting in half animal tones that sometimes seem to have a bit of common in the content too.

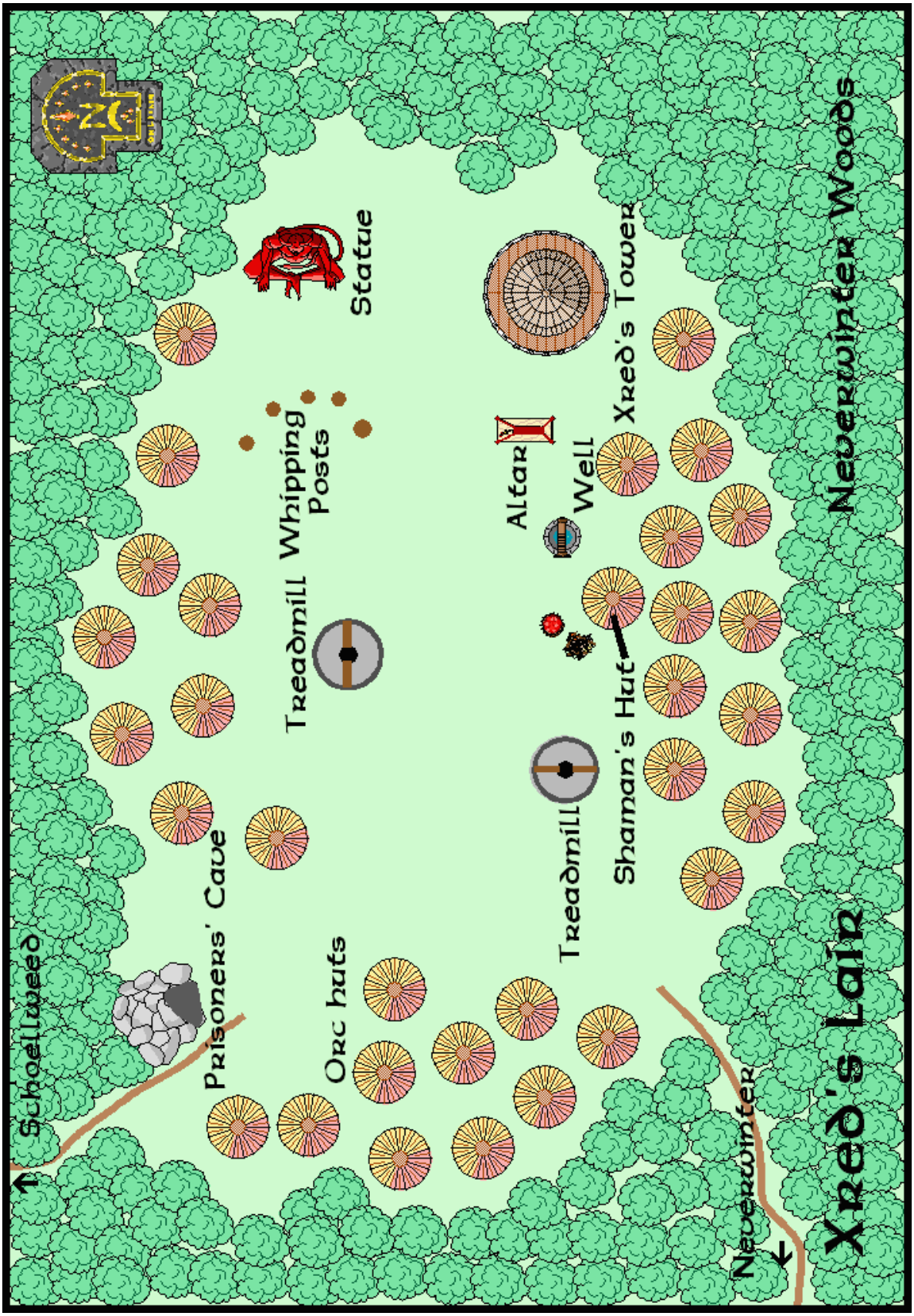
You're faced with an enemy of more than 100 humanlike creatures averaging about 6 feet tall. They have green-grey skin, short fangs and snouts instead of noses. All in all, that fits the descriptions you've heard of orcs, with one exception.

This band is well armed, bearing swords, spears, long bows and crossbows of respectable quality along with clean armor, in most cases decent chain mail. The creatures themselves are relatively clean too. They bear newly painted shields with a picture of a bloodthirsty panther.

One of the creatures stands out and shouts to you, *"No fight! Blood Panther no want kill you. Xred want you come visit him. Come see Xred! You no fight. We no fight. When you fight, you captured anyway. Visit Xred anyway. You no fight, we no fight. Okay what you say?"*

Game Master: It's time here to decide what you're going to do with the *Lucky Pears* or the *Battleaxe* if the group is with the PCs and also decide what kind of slaves Xred has ordered the orcs to take. The orcs will fight to capture the PCs and damage them as little as possible, even if that means more losses on their side. Of course, they might kill some or all members of the *Lucky Pears* or *Battleaxe* by accident. But the chosen PCs should be captured. If they go without a fight, they'll be disarmed but not bound. The statistics for Xred's raiding party of orcs can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

The orcs demand your weapons, but for the time being at least, you're allowed to keep your other possessions. On foot, you're led on a trail that goes continually deeper into the forbidden Neverwinter Woods.


Schoellweed
Prisoners' Cave
Orc huts
Treadmill
Whipping Posts
Statue
Treadmill
Altar
Well
Shaman's Hut
Xred's Tower
Neverwinter Woods
Neverwinter
Xred's Lair

Xred's Lair

3. Xred's Camp

Hamlet: Monstrous. AL: LE. 50 gp limit. Assets 50,000 gp. Population: 250 Orc, one Ogre Mage.

The orcs lead you over a trail through the forest. The path is narrow. The orc warriors at times have trouble marching two abreast. It's also apparent to you, that the orcs are afraid. They remain constantly vigilant, constantly ready to defend themselves against something. And you - the captives or guests, whatever the case may be - definitely are not the source of their concern. The forest is still. You too begin to sense something to be feared.

Game Master: If the PCs ask the orcs what they fear, the leader will answer only: *"Blood Panther afraid nothing! Blood Panther plenty tough bold! Urugh-kor grosz muth kain Anksth!"* From this point use the Xred's Lair map.

The trail into Neverwinter Woods is dark, but you also notice a substantial increase in temperature once you enter the forest, although no trace of sunshine comes through the thick canopy of deciduous trees and tall spruces far above you. The feeling grows, that you are being watched, and that's a feeling that's no doubt shared by the orcs. Their spears are constantly ready for battle. There is a leathery, green-grey hand on every sword hilt. Each bow and crossbow has an arrow or bolt nocked.

Game Master: Give the PCs time to react before you go into the camp.

You're underway for little more than an hour, when you begin to hear the sounds of a village. Now and then you hear the squeaking sounds of machinery. It could be a wheel and a cog. And then the trail begins to turn steadily to the right, until the view of a clearing opens before you.

The opening is a clear cut in the forest, about 700 feet long and 400 feet wide. To your right, left and ahead of you are groupings of thatch huts. Many Orcs - 200 or so - mill around the huts. On the far end of the clipping stand five whipping posts, all with hand manacles. Two unconscious or dead orcs are bound to two of these posts.

To your right are two large treadmills. They are being turned by two human males in chains wearing only fur loin cloths. A young, blond-haired human woman sits chained to a ring on a rock directly before one of the treadmills. She too wears only a fur loin cloth.

All three humans have the scars of a scourge on their backs. The two men are more heavily scarred than the woman. Two orcs with scourges stand casual guard over the humans, but the scars on the humans' bodies suggest that some time has passed since their last whipping.

The three humans look at you with somewhat blank faces. If they see you as a source of salvation, they certainly aren't betraying that to the orcs. The second treadmill is not being used at present.

Directly to your left is a dark cave.

To the right of the nearest treadmill, in front of an or hut, a strong fire is burning in a brazier. Next to the fire is a stone table with several sets of iron manacles upon it, along with blacksmith's tools.

On the far side of the clearing stands a stone structure, perhaps an altar of some sort. Behind it is the only proper structure in this encampment, a 50-foot/45m stone tower with excessively large windows and entry. At the foot of the tower is a wooden gate 12 feet/360 cm high and 8 feet/240 cm wide. About 100 feet/30m to the left of the tower stands a 15 foot/450cm monolith with a statue of an ogre in it and the word *"Vaprak"* at the foot of the statue.

Before you can take in much more of your surroundings, the orcs begin steering you toward the fire in the brazier to your right. When you reach it, the orcs order you to stop. You notice that a more muscular than average orc wearing a smith's apron walks out of one of the huts and comes in your direction.

One of your captors gives you an order: *"Everything off! No more clothes you wear. Naked as cony in forest now you. Take all off!"*

Game Master: If the PCs resist or even hesitate, the orcs strip them forcefully and quickly. Whether they undress voluntarily or are forcefully undressed, once they are naked a group of orcs picks up all of their possessions.

You're left standing fully naked. At the moment you do not even have the small bit of concealment offered by the other captive humans' loin cloths. As soon as you are stripped, a group of orcs collects all of your possessions and begins taking them across the clearing.

The smith quickly fits three-inch manacles around your wrists and sets a heavy, 12-inch/30cm long chain between them. For each manacle he removes a red-hot rivet from the fire with a tongs, sets it through the manacles and chain and hammers it tight. The process is repeated again with a second set of manacles to bind your ankles, again with about 12 inches/30 cm of chain between the iron rings. The links of chain are about 3/8 inch/1 cm thick.

After all of you have been manacled, a group of orc warriors comes forward, with hand crossbows, just like those you've heard described in stories about the drow. For each member of your party, there are two warriors who train their hand crossbows upon you. The warriors are about 15 feet/4.5m away from you.

An orc motions for you to move to the center of the clearing.

Game Master: If the PCs resist, they will be driven with a scourge. The orcs move them only 50 feet/15m into the clearing.

You move about 50 feet/15m farther into the clearing, when the orcs, without warning, begin firing their crossbows at you. The tiny bolts, little more than needles, sting as they pierce your arms, backs or chests.

Game Master: The bolts are tipped with a knockout poison. Each PC has a saving throw, but sooner or later, they'll all drop off to sleep for 5d4 rounds. The bolts do 1 hp damage per hit. In 3rd Edition, saving throws are for fortitude against DC 15. In 2nd edition campaigns, the PCs save for poison. Afterwards:

Each of you comes slowly awake. You still can feel where the bolts hit you. You seem to be standing. At least you're not so naked anymore. You can feel that you've been covered with a loin cloth, like the other prisoners. For some reason your hands are above your head.

You look up, and see that the chains between your manacles have been fastened to a pillar. It strikes you then. You have been chained to the whipping posts. You look around and see an orc with a scourge behind each of you. The entire orc village is standing in the clearing, watching you.

Behind the whipping posts stands an old male orc. He wears a strange leather tunic with runes or symbols of some kind upon it. He has a large ceramic jug in his hand, sealed with a cork. The old man seems to be waiting patiently for something.

Game Master: The orcs are waiting for Xred to appear. They will wait patiently and no longer will talk to or reply to the PCs. Let the PCs sweat things out a bit.

Several minutes pass, but the orcs maintain only silence. And then there's movement by the large tower at the other end of the clearing. A garish creature 10 feet/3m tall steps out of the tower. His face is green, his arms yellow and his grinning smile no doubt insane. He walks over to the whipping posts where you're bound and smiles almost lovingly. He walks circles around you and looks as if he's really pleased to see you.

Game Master: This is Xred. At first he ignores anything the PCs say or do. Xred is an ogre mage, but not as described in the Monstrous Compendium or anywhere else. He's simply a strange breed of ogre. His statistics can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

"It **is** *good to see you",* says this strange creature, nearly gushing. *"We do so love guests, and I'm sure you will enjoy your vacation here!"*

He looks across the clearing to the girl chained to the rock and says - almost in motherly tones:

"Just look at her! Isn't she sweet? And she's mine, all mine, and that's why I like it here in Zhentil Keep ... no, that's not what I wanted to say! What did I want to say?

"Ah, yes! She will love your vacation here ... no ... you will love her vacation here ... ah! ... it doesn't matter as long as Manshoon is off on his black Agatha. But that's just why Neverwinter Woods is such a dangerous place, isn't it.

"No, no! Xred has to protect his guests. Mustn't go into Neverwinter Woods, you know! Agatha is liable to be riding Manshoon ... no ... how silly of me. I meant to say, the black dragon is riding Manshoon's Agatha out there in the woods. Yes, that was it! That's what I wanted to say"

This guy seems to be a strange ogre of some kind. That's really the only thing his description comes close to, but it doesn't come very close to that either. One thing is sure. He's a 100% bullgoose loony.

"But I'm sure you'll like it here. There's so much to do. And the mill is so nice. And Söggrin's so nice ... but not for you! No, no, just for Xred! But the time's not right yet. But it must be before Manshoon flies his black Agatha.

And you **must** *learn not to leave the camp! Neverwinter Woods is a very dangerous place! Black Manshoon Agathas everywhere! But it takes discipline to stay in camp. Yes it does! And you learn discipline best, when you taste what happens without it."*

The creature turns to the old orc with the jug in his hand and says:

"Grazzght, help our friends out. Give them a good, long, free lesson in discipline, so they learn to stay here in our happy camp and not go into the woods!"

With that remark, the creature smiles lovingly, turns his back you and walks off to his tower. The old orc says:

"Okay, start very good lesson. You learns stay Xred; no go trees. Lesson very good, hurt very much ouch but very good lesson. Lesson all done, Grazzght heal up pretty. Visit no learn someday, Grazzght give new lesson. Someday visit learn. Okay, lesson begin."

The old orc makes a gesture with his hand. You can hear the orcs with the scourges step closer and then they begin flogging your backs mercilessly. One stroke after another after another. The torture seems to go on endlessly, until each of you, one at a time, loses consciousness.

Friends in deed is what we need

Game Master: The jug that Grazzght held is an orc healing potions. It is very effective. But Grazzght has not given the PCs enough to totally heal them. Xred wants them fit for the mill, but he wants them to feel pain for a few days too. He wants them to have keen memories of the scourging, so they think twice, before risking it again.

You've slept, although traces of pain awakened you partially several times. You perceive weak light of some kind and flames burning your backs. But more and more you become aware of your surroundings. You're in a cave of some kind, lying on chilly stone, still wearing only loincloths.

A long metal rod runs several yards across the floor of the cave and through your leg irons. Boulders at both ends of the rod make it impossible for you to reach whatever holds the rods in place, so that you can't slide the leg irons out of the rods.

The woman you saw chained to the rock outside is now chained to the other wall of the cave, out of reach and still asleep. The two men who were working the treadmill are awake and observing you. They too are held in place by the rod running through the leg irons and are locked in together with you.

Your backs have flashes of hot pain, but its obvious that you've been healed considerably. The last of the skin was gone from your backs before you fell unconscious. You see the back of one of your friends, and the only sign of the scourging are slightly swollen red welts.

It occurs to you that it's probably a new day. The light outside the cave seems to be first morning light. One of the other prisoners - the younger of the two men - speaks to you:

"Well met," he says, and chuckles then a bit at the irony of his own words. *"I'm Blondung."* He points to the older man, who is just awakening, and says, *"He's Von Fedel".* Then he nods toward the still sleeping girl and says, *"She's Söggrin. When you work at the mill, the orcs will stand behind you with a scourge. But as long as you behave, you only get whipped that one time, just as a warning. They don't want to injure us.*

"They want hard work out of us, so they keep us fit. If you get sick or hurt, Xred makes Grazzght heal you. They make the orcs hunt for you too. They even give us halfway decent food. For some reason, it's really important to Xred that we work the mill. I don't know why he doesn't just make his orcs do it. They're stronger than we are."

The older man of the two is awake now. He too has just a bit of a loony look in his eyes. He say, *"I know why. Because he's totally insane. That's why. Praised be the Dark Sun! I'm Von Fedel".*

You can see that the girl is waking up too. She looks at you, shrugs her bare shoulders, and says, *"Too bad. Now Von Fedel and Blondung won't have to work so hard anymore."*

Then her eyes light up a bit, and she says, *"Maybe that'll give Xred an excuse to whip them again. The fools are a couple of Zhent weaklings. My father's a warrior with the* Black Raven *tribe of Uthgardt! Manshoon captured me, and these idiots were my guards. Blondung there is a Zhentarim mage, and Von Fedel is a Cyric priest. Watch out for him. He's a useless fool, but he's almost as fruity as Xred! If you get a chance, kill them!*

"When your breakfast comes, eat well. They're going to chain you to a treadmill and make you grind schoellweed seeds. I get chained to the rock. Xred doesn't want me to work. He thinks I'm going to mate with him - while I'm scratching his eyes out!"

Game Master: In the days that follow, the PCs, Blondung and Von Fedel will be chained to the treadmills everyday and work in shifts milling schoellweed seeds. And Söggrin will be chained to her rock. The PCs not only will not be mistreated if they behave, but they also will be fed well - the orcs are forced to hunt for them daily - and the PCs will live *relatively* easy lives, compared to the fare of other slaves in the world. Because the PCs are in the Neverwinter Woods, they have relatively mild weather, although they sometimes wish for more covering than mere loincloths.

Xred has absolutely no interest for the PCs, only for the ground schoellweed meal. He will get no pleasure out of brutalizing the PCs and had made clear to the orcs that they will suffer, if they do anything without his permission that will reduce the PCs' productivity. The PCs may notice that their treatment is somewhat light for slaves, but neither Xred nor the orcs will inform them of Xred's orders to the orcs. The PCs and the NPCs who are enslaved with them can move freely in their cave in the evening. Only toward 10 p.m. will the orcs chain them in place in the cave.

In the days that follow in Xred's Camp, the PCs should learn who and what Söggrin, Von Fedel and Blondung are. They also will learn about the schoellweed and the plans Xred has for Söggrin, all of which are known to the three. Söggrin will, of course, argue her point of view, and the two men will argue the Zhent point of view.

Von Fedel will warn the PCs about Agatha and tell them that Xred is underestimating her and risking big trouble in stealing her schoellweed. He's certain that Agatha will come charging into the camp one day, killing everything in range with her banshee's wail and throwing her magic in every direction. And Von Fedel has a secret. He has a magic, invisible sack around his neck that neither the orcs nor Xred has detected. In it are his spell ingredients. And he knows a spell to make a waxy substance that one can use to plug one's ears if a banshee wants to wail.

You should take into consideration that the telling of such tales usually puts your PCs on a real upper of confidence. For that reason, you should have Von Fedel tell his story early on, and repeat it over and over and over again, almost as if the thing is something of a mad fixation with him. In addition, it is always good if one of the PCs gets an opportunity to feel around for Von Fedel's magic sack. They will find absolutely nothing. The sack foils even physical attempts at detection, but Von Fedel doesn't know that. And he will be paranoid about what the PCs are trying to do to him, if they tell him there is no sack there. He will hold up the invisible sack and insist it is in his hand - which it of course is - but the PCs will not be able to detect it.

Agatha should not attack the camp until the PCs have heard Von Fedel's predictions and the tale of his sack so often that they start to discredit both as the ravings of a mad man. The events in Xred's camp are routine at its lowest level. The PCs mill schoellweed seeds, eat and sleep everyday. As slaves they have no freedom to do anything else. This type of situation is one of the most difficult a game master can face. If you don't do your part right, you'll bore your players to death rather than keeping them tense and on the edge of their seats.

You have to tantalize them into making escape plans. Think up little events in camp that keep the candle of hope burning. This kind of adventure segment runs best of all if the PCs can be led to make an escape plan and then to keep modifying it, arguing about it, etc., without ever trying to escape at all. As a game master you can use comments from Söggrin, Blondung and Von Fedel as good instruments to shape the PC's arguments and actions.

If any of your PCs are caught trying to escape or making any other serious trouble, Xred will insist sadly that they must learn a bit more discipline, and the would-be escapees will be scourged just as mercilessly as on the day of their arrival. This time however the shaman will heal the scourged completely, because Xred wants the PCs at the treadmill. This healing has one exception: The body can take only so much. For each *subsequent* scourging after the first, the PC must roll checks against dexterity and constitution. Each time a check fails, he permanently loses one point in the failed category.

If repeated scourging weakens a PC to the point where he has little value at the treadmill, Xred will turn the PC lose with his possessions in the forest, give him two minutes head start and then let about 50 orcs hunt him down as sport. It's up to you, whether you play the hunt out with the PC in question or simply describe how the orcs return his body to camp.

And so it goes ... until a raging Agatha arrives:

I thought I heard that Banshee when she moan'

Game Master: *„Make it wail, Sonny",* as Brownie McGhee often said to Sonny Terry in their blues sessions. This event occurs one evening after the PCs have been freed from the treadmills but before they've been chained to their sleeping positions for the nights. In other words, they still can move freely within the cave.

A distant. horrible noise, like the wail of thousands of lost souls, echoes through the camp. Each of you feels a burning ring in your ears and suffers immediately from a headache. The orcs outside your cave seem to be hit even harder by the effects of this wail. Some run around shouting wildly. Others lay on the ground screaming and pound their fists into the soil.

Von Fedel shows the effects of the pain too, but then his eyes light up madder than ever, and his joyous voice shouts out, *"The hour of the Dark Sun is come! Oh, Cyric, my Lord, these infidels will at long last see you in your full glory!"*

The priest reaches to his neck, as though he's removing something, perhaps a necklace, and then reaches into nothing, as though a container were there. And from nothing, he removes several bees' wings. Then he begins talking with or praying to his god:

"Oh, my Lord Cyric, will you let this foolish banshee win the day and thereby acknowledge the dark powers of the elven kingdom as your superior? I believe it not, oh Dark Sun. I prithee then, to give us that which will foil this internal howling!"

Von Fedel's hands suddenly glow with a yellow brown light and then small balls of beeswax fill his hands. The priest looks elatedly at the product of his prayers and then shouts to all of you at once, *"See? Where were your weak heathen deities? Acknowledge now the Dark Sun as your Lord and Master, for he delivereth thee from ..."*

Before the priest can rant and rave on, another horrible wail echoes from within *Neverwinter Woods*. This time, the source of the wail is closer. You all feel like your heads and bodies are about to explode with sound, as if the wail wants to tear the very souls from your bodies, and you feel almost as if you might want to surrender to this idea. Just as the orcs did after the first wail, you fall to the floor of the cave and begin pounding your fists into the ground.

After a minute or so, you return to your senses and the pain begins to subside, although your thoughts remain confused and jumbled. You notice that Von Fedel is affected the same as the rest of you. His small balls of beeswax are scattered among you on the cave floor. The first to react is Söggrin, who immediately scrambles for a few of the beeswax balls and begins to push them into her ears.

While she's doing that, she says, *"Von Fedel, you're such an idiot that not even your damned Cyric can stand it! That last wail came only because he wanted to tell you to shut your big mouth and stuff the balls into your ears. In fact, I think he gave you so many of them, so that you can stuff your mouth full too. And if there are any left over, I have a few ideas where you can shove them too."*

Game Master: The PCs now should have sense enough to stuff their ears with beeswax too, but if they don't, give them a saving throw with the next wail. In 3rd edition save for will against DC 25. In 2nd edition save vs. breath weapon. Those who fail the save will start to attack their comrades. Those who don't will begin pounding their heads against the wall, each time for d2 points damage, until they're stopped or lose all but 1 hp, at which point they pass out, their heads a bloody mess. But if they still hadn't caught on to the beeswax by then, their heads were probably a bloody internal mess anyway.

You can see that Xred has left his tower. He's trying to smile to his orcs, some of whom are trying to kill one another, some of whom are battering their heads against whatever they can, and some of whom are laying motionless on the ground. Xred has a wooden staff covered with green moss or perhaps mould in his left hand. He begins drawing circles in the air. A dome of sickly green energy forms around his tower, the altar, the statue, the whipping posts, the treadmills, the well and the orc huts nearest to the far end of the camp.

He draws another circle in the air and a new dome of energy forms over your cave, the ever-burning smith's fire before the cave and the orc huts nearest you. Xred begins to smile triumphantly. Von Fedel, however, looks unhappy about it all. Perhaps he's worried that Xred's magic will steal his and Cyric's thunder. He shakes his fists at Xred, rattling the chains on his manacles. Xred, of course, doesn't notice this. He draws a third circle in the air, in the direction of the orc huts to the north side of the camp. Another dome of green energy forms and merges with the first two domes.

Now Xred smiles in a state of lunatic glee. He draws a fourth circle in the air, toward the group of orc huts to the south side of the camp. This time, however, his staff explodes in yellow flame and smoke, surprising and obviously injuring Xred. He shakes his still smoking hand in pain, but decides then to ignore it and looks to the huts on the south edge of the camp.

The dome of energy did not expand over the southern group of huts. Xred looks at this result with fleeting interest. You and he both notice that the still conscious and still living orcs inside the energy dome have calmed down, while those in the south huts outside the energy dome continue to be raving mad.

You and Xred also notice that the orcs outside the energy dome are starting to ram their heads against it and are getting the same bloody results as those who butt their heads against trees. Xred observes this contrast in behavior with mild amusement, shrugs his shoulders and begins to head back to his tower when ...

Perhaps the ugliest, most evil-looking woman you've ever seen runs past your cave to the right. The woman is screaming her head off in a wail that knows no mercy. Even through the beeswax it hits you like a combination of a thunderclap and an out-of-tune fiddle mixed in with the screeching of chalk on slate. Your headache comes back, and your teeth are filled with pain, but the effect is still milder than it was during the wail without the beeswax.

That's at least the case with all of you with beeswax in your ears inside the cave. Outside it's a different story. Xred's dome of energy develops cracks everywhere and simply disappears. Orcs begin dropping over right and left and presumably dead. Xred cringes in pain and blanches to such an extent that his green face turns yellow. He seems to be helpless and rapidly moving in the direction of being beyond all help.

Agatha apparently has arrived. She levels a finger in Xred's direction and blasts him with a fireball that also levels the whipping posts, the well and both treadmills. When the smoke clears, Ashes are all that's left of Xred. She points at Xred's tower and hits it with a lightning bolt of such force that it blows the upper part of the tower off and sends it crashing into the trees of Neverwinter Woods. The index finger of her left hand points at the statue behind the demolished whipping post, slamming it with a cone of ice. Cracks appear everywhere in the surface of the statue and it crumbles to the ground.

Agatha isn't finished yet. She fires another fireball to the left, setting the northern group of orc huts ablaze, turns to the right and does the same with the huts to the south. You immediately feel ready to thank any god - perhaps even Cyric, if need be - that the season's been wet, and the chances are good that the forest will *not* burn -- you hope, at least.

Now Agatha turns around, and for just a moment, that deadly finger is pointing right into your cave. But it keeps moving, until Agatha's aim falls directly on the eastern huts to the side of your cave. Another fireball shakes the ground.

At last Agatha pauses in her attack. She tries to survey the destruction around her, but the smoke of the burning thatch huts is so thick that she can see little at the moment. Neither can you. Fortunately for you, your cave has no other entrance, so there is no current that draws large amounts of smoke toward you.

You would however have a lot of trouble with smoke inhalation if you were out there with Agatha, but that would probably be the least of your troubles.

Come to think of it, maybe you aren't so lucky that the cave has no other openings. If Agatha gets curious about the cave, there is no other way out.

Game Master: It's only fair that you pause at this point and give the players a chance to attack Agatha, if that's what they want to do. The next segment follows only after a healthy pause, during which Agatha scrutinizes the area for anything she might have missed. She does see the cave, but if the players don't do anything to reveal themselves, she won't be interested. Once the pause is taken care of:

Agatha seems to be satisfied that Xred and his camp have been relegated to the history books. The huts have burned completely, and there is little smoke left. Keeping a watchful look on the remnants of the camp, she slowly makes her retreat and returns to the forest.

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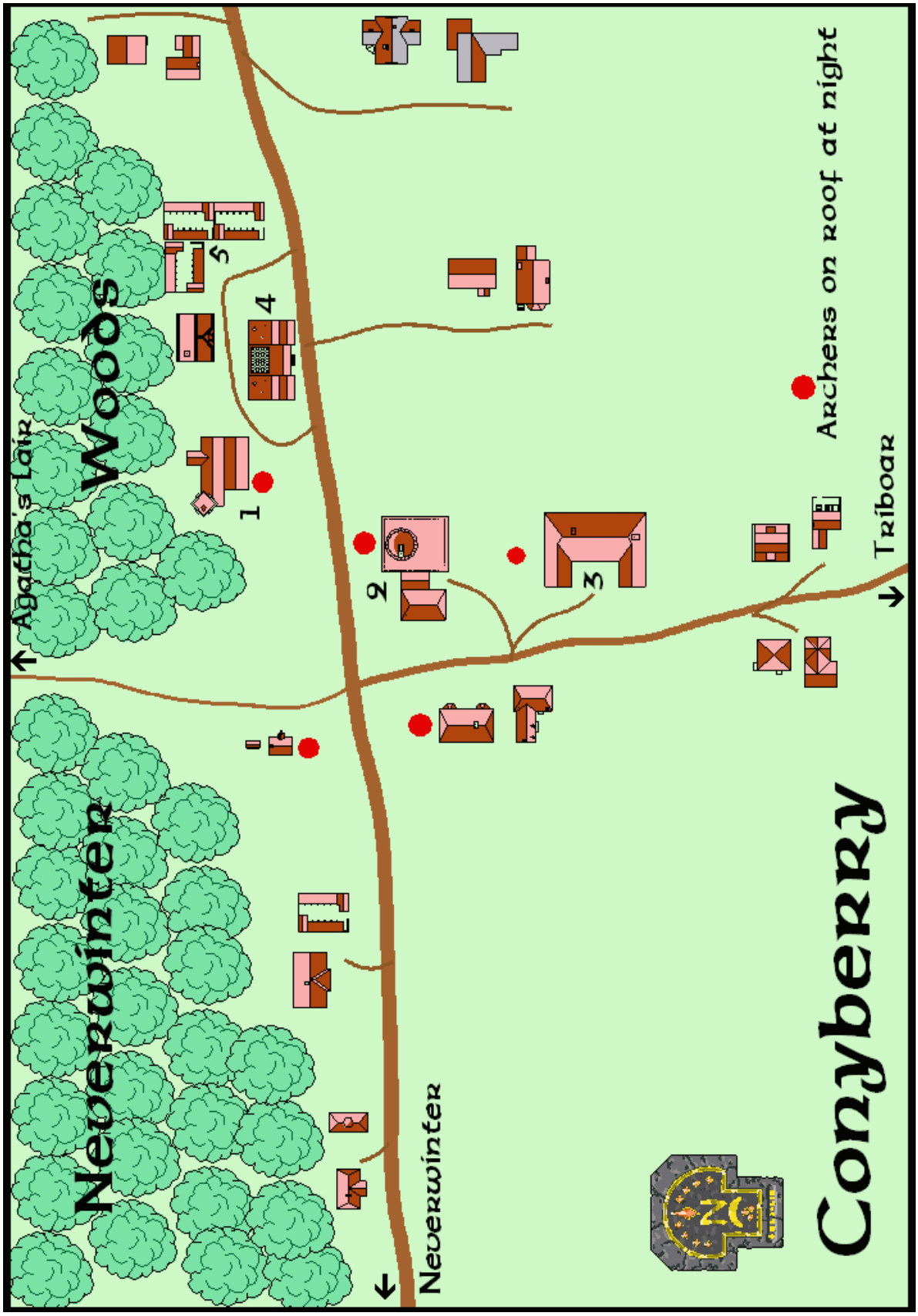
Game Master: The PCs are on their own now, along with Söggrin and the two Zhents. Agatha has blasted everything to ashes. We suggest that the ashes also are all that's left of any spellbooks Xred may have had, *unless* there was some exceptionally good playing to earn that kind of treasure.

If you think your players have earned a treasure here, a good place for it is in the cellar ruins beneath Xred's tower or perhaps in the ruins beneath the Statue of Vaprak. If there is a spellbook, it should concentrate on higher level spells that your players can't use. In that case, let them trade the spellbooks with the Harpells in Longsaddle for a fireball staff to use against the trolls, but make sure the staff runs out of charges before the group reaches Silverymoon.

If your party has a thief, give him or her something to do. Make the thief crack the lock to the room beneath the ruins, even if there is not pot of gold to be found at the end of this rainbow. If there is wealth to be found, it should be a modest amount suitable for players of this level.


Neverwinter Woods
Agatha's Lair
Neverwinter
1
2
3
4
5
Conyberry
Archers on roof at night
Triboar

Conyberry

4. Conyberry

Thorp, Conventional; AL: N, 40 gp limit, Assets 1,000 gp. Population 48, Human. For this segment use the Conyberry map. The red dots show you where the archers are stationed.

MAP:

1 - Village Granary.
2 - Banshee Brau Brewery.
3 - Conyberry Hall. Village Hall and open bay where travelers can spend the night.
4 - Willet Durr, Village blacksmith, only regular smithing, no weapons or armor.
5 - Tethel Hemmet's Stable. b Horses for sale and trade at 15% above PHB prices.

The last traces of daylight sink beneath the horizon behind you, as the fist pinpoints of lantern light become visible in the East, a few miles before you. It can only be the village of Conyberry. You trudge on wearily through the chilly evening, until at last, buildings become visible.

The forest to the north begins to yield to farmland, and then you pass two small and simple farms to the left and come to an intersection. It's difficult to see. There are small oil lamps burning on the walls of some of the wooden buildings, but they shed little light. Lights does shine from windows.

You seem to be at an unmarked village intersection with roads leading to the north, east and south. If there are any signs here, you can't make them out. No one is visible, nor can you hear any voices, but you can hearing the lowing of cattle and the mooing of an occasional cow in the barns. And there is the sweetly pungent waft of cow or steer manure in the air.

Game Master: Pause

There are two other farms to the right and left of you with light in the windows. There also are buildings before you to the right and left that are businesses of some kind, perhaps breweries, from the shape and the large smokestacks. Both are dark now, except for small oil lanterns burning on the walls near the doors. Farther to the right is a larger building with more lit windows, and you seem to see movement inside. There are still more buildings behind these to the east and additional buildings to the south.

As you're observing all of this, you can hear small objects flying through the air near you. Some are close enough that they make a small breeze in passing. And then a voice shouts out from somewhere to the right, *Y'all can just halt right there in your tracks. You the critters what got Agatha all riled up?"*

Game Master: Have all the PCs roll 2d10 for a 1% chance of being hit by a crossbow quarrel for 1d4 points damage. There are 8 armed farms on the roofs, one on each farmhouse to the right and left, one atop each brewery and four on Conyberry hall. At this point only warning shots are intended, but it is dark, and a PC could be hit by accident.

The villagers are quite convinced that the PCs are the ones who stirred Agatha up, and they're inclined to shoot with an aim the next time. In 3rd Edition, none have attack bonuses. In 2nd Edition, all have THAC0 20/22/25 at the various ranges. If the PCs can't convince the villagers they're innocent, they'll be driven off with crossbow salvos. If the shooting starts, the number of crossbow archers on the roofs will triple within 1d4 rounds. If the PCs succeed in convincing the villagers of their innocence, they can spend the night in Conyberry Hall.

One can buy a large tankard of local ale for 2 copper nibs, firebeer (beer mixed with grain alcohol) for 5 nibs and food from the farmers for 4 silver shards. The food will be roast pork, stewed rabbit or grouse, biscuits or homebaked bread, fresh eggs, salty butter and root vegetables.

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In Conyberry Hall the PCs also will run into a group of four halfelfen adventurers who identify themselves as the remnants of the *Silver Fir Mercenary Co.* from Daggerford. The company consisted of 24 halfelves. It was returning from Silverymoon and detoured over Sundabar, because Everlund Pass is snowed in. The news:

One member of the company: *"We're a new company. This was only our second time out. It was our job to safely bring a family from Tethyr to Silverymoon, and we succeeded, but with some losses of our own. We left Daggerford 30 man strong. We lost six on the way to Silverymoon. We were attacked by a large mob of trolls about 40 miles west of Olostin's Hold. We wiped out the trolls and protected our people, but we buried six of our own along the Trollmoors.*

"However, we did make it into Silverymoon without any great additional trouble. But then, after two days in the city, the reports came in of the horrible snowstorms in Everlund Pass. At the same time, there were a lot of reports about trolls knocking down trees and bridging narrow parts of the Rauvin, then fleeing north and killing anything in the way.

"So .. we had been paid quite well for our work. We could afford to stay in Silverymoon for awhile, but after two weeks, it became clear, that if we kept waiting for things to get better, we could be there for a long time. So, we checked out our options. The road from Silverymoon to Sundabar isn't all that risky these days. We knew we'd have trouble between Sundabar and Jalanthar, but we figured with 24 men, we could handle whatever would come along.

"We figured from Jalanthar we could cut down between the Everwood and the High Forest, and then cut across a corner of the High Forest south of the snow and make it into Olostin's Hold. A day out of Jalanthar things got miserable already. We were battered several times by orcs from the Thousand Fist tribe. For a few days, we managed to wipe out a lot of orcs without any losses of our own and only light injuries, but they succeeded in wearing us down.

"Towards the end of our second day out of Jalanthar, it seemed that we had left the orcs behind. The corner of the High Forest already was in view about 10 miles ahead of us. Farther on, we could spot the snowstorm to the northwest. We were surrounded by bush and small stands of trees, and then they fell on us - worn as we were from fighting the orcs. A pack of 10 verbeegs.

We wiped them out, but we buried 7 of our own too, and several more had serious injuries. We lost one of our two priests there, so healing became a slow process as well.

"But we finally made it to the High Forest and wove our way in under the trees. It seemed safe and peaceful there, no sign of a threat whatsoever. But in the night, we all dreamed, at least those of us who survived. We dreamed of creatures of the darkness. We couldn't really perceive of their reality. It was just an invisible something that was there.

"In the morning, when we woke up, we found that there were only six of us still alive - all halfelves. The 11 others - all humans - lay there under the trees. Our only Priest - Nardor, a priest of Corellon - examined the corpses. There wasn't a wound upon them, but they'd been drained of every last drop of blood. Nardor thought that we must have been spared because of our elfen blood, although he didn't know why.

"The six of us made it to Olostin's Hold and we teamed up with a group of moon elves who'd had similar dreams but no losses in the High Forest. We rode together as far as Yartar, but we had more heavy losses along the Trollmoors. We started out with the six of us and the five elves. After the last battle with trolls, we'd buried Nardor, our mage Lithfingar and three of the elves. Altogether, we numbered six when we reached Yartar.

"If you folks want to go to Silverymoon and you don't want to wait a year, you'll have to go over Nesmé and along the north side of the Trollmoors. You won't reach Silverymoon without losses, but it won't be as bad as the High Forest and the stretch to Jalanthar. And you can forgot Everlund Pass.

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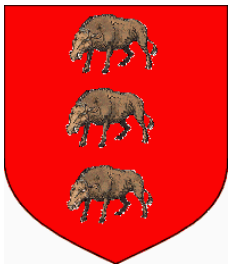
"It's being said in Silverymoon, that the snow probably will last right through into the next Winter. It's wizard weather that's causing it. The word is, that some Illitard or something like that is active in the High Forest. Supposedly calls himself the Beastlord or something down that line. And it's said that Lady Alustriel and the Mistmaster and others could put an end to the wizard weather, but they're not doing it. They're letting it keep up, so they can trace it to its source. At least that's what folks are saying in Silverymoon."

5. Triboar



Large town, Conventional, AL: NG, 3,000 gp limit, Assets 600,000 gp. Population 2,500 Mixed, 95% human, rest dwarf, halfelf, halfling. The PCs should be warned in Conyberry to avoid going through the hills northwest of the village, where wanderers have been plagued lately by small bands of kobolds and goblins. These bands aren't strong enough for the kind of opposition they usually meet on the road to Triboar, and they keep their distance from the road. If the PCs go through the hills anyway, stage regular attacks from 2W4+6 Kobolds or W4+6 Goblins. Plan the attacks on the first night at a timetable that keeps spell users from learning new spells, so they're inclined to advocate more sensible route plans in the future. Map: See *The North* or *Volo's Guide to the North*.

On the first leg of your journey to Triboar, you pass through the last of the farms and then the grasslands southeast of Conyberry, the low northeastern flank of the Sword Mountains coming ever nearer. The landscape is rolling, the grass and brush often high. You see no sign of other life in this area, but it would pay to keep on the alert.

Game Master: The trip to Triboar takes two days. If you need or want action on these days, use orc bands of the desired size on the edge of the Sword Mountains and bandit encounters the rest of the way. Pick your own size and strength. Watch the weather tables! At mid-afternoon on the Second Day:

The landscape declines now. The hilly landscape at the foot of the Sword Mountains yields once more to grasslands and large stands of brush. A few miles before you in the distance are large fenced areas patrolled by riders, within which cattle graze.

Game Master: The PCs have reached the ranchlands northwest of Triboar. Play out the encounters with the ranchhands as you wish. The ranchhands aren't looking for a fight, but they will keep a close eye on the PCs. Treat them as Level 0 to 3 fighters with longbows, shorts swords, whips and lariats. Give them +1 with the bows and +3 with the lariats, if the PCs start a fight.

As the afternoon begins turning slowly to evening, you enter a small stretch of forest with an unearthly but wholesome atmosphere. In about the middle of the forest, you see a small and crude, arrow-shaped sign nailed high to a tree and pointing along a narrow trail to the north through the trees. It says, *Gwaeron's Slumber*.

Game Master: The sign points to *Gwaeron's Slumber.* There is a small glade in this forest where the demigod Gwaeron the Tracker is said to sleep. Rangers who sleep in this forest receive a vision of what the goddess Mielikki wants them to do. Non-ranger worshippers who sleep here gain ranger tracking abilities for one day.

After you leave the forest, a small city - Triboar - comes into view before you, an unusual city. You estimate it to be a town of perhaps 2,500. A main thoroughfare runs in a north-south direction through the city, no doubt the Long Road. Another main road begins here and trails off to the East, without doubt the Evermoor Way. Today, at least, caravan traffic is considerably heavier on the Long Road in both directions than on the Evermoor Way.

There are no walls protecting Triboar, but to reach the center of the city, one does have to wend one's way through a number of corralled areas, stockyards, caravan yards and the like, all of which encircle the center of town.

Game Master: As the players enter town, read the following description. The two-story tower that the players see is the tower of the Lord Protector of Triboar, Jalimin Frindos (LN hm F7). Söggrin will make no trouble in Triboar.

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The smell of horse and steer manure is thick in the air, as you enter the small crossroads city of Triboar. Although no walls are present, the streets are patrolled by well-armed soldiers bearing Triboar's coat-of-arms. You pass several buildings with signs identifying them as businesses:

- *"The Six Windows",* to the left. A somewhat rickety old, small wooden inn. The sign says the innkeeper is named Jaunda. The house seems to have about 40 windows, not just six.

- *"The Talking Troll",* to the right. Another wooden building, a tavern of rather shabby means, to judge from the outside.

At last you reach the main intersection, where the Evermoor Way comes in from the East and intersects with the Long Road. The intersection itself is large, with a sizeable farmer's market in the middle of the intersection that's just beginning to shut down for the evening. Behind the market stands a formidable building with two-story tower that looks like it could be the seat of government.

Game Master: If the players turn northward:

To the left, not more than 50 yards north of the intersection, are two large houses. The first, *"The Everwyvern House",* appears to be an inn of elegant tastes. Next door to it is the somewhat smaller *"Pleasant Platter",* which looks more like a large and expensive restaurant than an inn.

A bit farther to the north you come to a wooden building on the right with a sign *"The Triboar Travelers - Caravans for Hire."* To the right is a large business with a store, corrals, a barn and a barracks type building. According to the sign, it's *"Ransor's Open Road",* an all-purpose outfit for caravans that offers everything from supplies and horses to hireswords.

At last you begin nearing more cattle yards and corrals, as you draw close the edge of the city again. Among the last buildings in this direction are two smithies, both run by dwarves. To the left is *Foehammer's Forge* and to the right is *Uldinath's Arms.*

Game Master: If the players turn southward:

To the left, about 60 yards north of the intersection, is a large tavern in a brick and half timber house. The sign above the door shows the coat of arms of Triboar, with three boars upon it. The tavern is called the *Triboar Arms.*

After another 60 yards or so and also to the left, you pass a respectable looking inn without restaurant. According to the sign, the place is called the *Northshield House.*

Still a bit farther and you pass a large construction plant on the right with stacks and stacks of sawed wood. According to the sign, this *Wainright's Wagons.*

Game Master: If the players turn eastward:

You go 100 yards or so past the intersection, and to the right, you see a wooden inn, painted green, although the color's beginning to fade, with the colorful name *The Frost Touched Frog.*

As you near the southern edge of the city, you see a large business with a store, corrals, a barn and a barracks type building. According to the sign, it's *The Cart and the Coin,* an all-purpose outfit for caravans that offers everything from supplies and horses to hireswords.

Game Master: There can be plenty of opportunities for adventure for your PCs here in Triboar. The men who tend the horses and cattle and the sellswords who hire out to guard caravans like to single people out for a fight in the bars at night.. Someone in your group is bound to fit the description of a potential target for abuse.

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Perhaps you have a priest or cleric in the group whose god is strictly lawful good - a Holy Judge of Tyr, for instance. The Lord Protector of Triboar - Jalimin Frindos - thinks he handles justice well enough himself and will not be particularly interested in your priest's service. The *"cowboys"* of Triboar know that the town is relatively open and that no particularly bad penalty awaits anyone who gets involved in a tavern brawl, as long as there's neither murder nor mayhem. A few days in jail at the most. A PC will, of course, hate having to spend his time there.

There are other good hooks in Triboar too. Maybe you have a ranger in the group who will want to spend a night at *Gwaeron's Slumber*. Or maybe he will only learn of *Gwaeron's Slumber* for the first time while he's in Triboar. Maybe you have a dwarf. Let an NPC give him a few non-specific tips about where the Lost Halls of Khiezar Dalan are (discoverable later in the adventure).

It could be that the group wants to hitch up with a caravan. If so, let them, but there'll be no caravan traveling east of Nesmé. In any case, you're missing out on something, if you don't turn this stop in an important frontier crossroads town into a mini-adventure of its own. Triboar deserves to be more than a beer and a bed! The next three days after Triboar- check the weather table! Then:

As you leave the smell of horse and steer manure behind you, the Long Road begins leading you northward and a bit to the west, through the lightly rolling grasslands and brush southeast of Neverwinter Wood.

Game Master: During these three days the PCs will have occasional encounters with caravans heading southward from Longsaddle. Some of them will report orc attacks since leaving Longsaddle. You also can arrange after the first day for attacks from bandits, orcs or goblins coming out of the hills, as your adventure requires. These three days are for free role-playing and game master ad-libbing. At the end of the first day:

Darkness is descending in the East and soon will reach to the western horizon too, going down behind Neverwinter Wood and the City of Skilled Hands, both now beyond seeing. The city lies about 120 miles/200km west of you, the eastern edge of Neverwinter Wood about 40 miles/65 km to your west and Conyberry about 50 miles/80 km to the southwest. Your group has reached the point where the range of rounded hills surrounding Berun's Hill begins in the south. These hills will accompany you on the left the rest of the way to Longsaddle. The Long Road flanks these hills on the east. To the right, the gently rolling hills, brush and grasslands that have been accompanying you since your departure from Triboar continue.

Game Master: The following passage is read at the end of the third day on the road. If Von Fedel and/or Blondung still are with the group, Söggrin will begin raising almighty hell about them being Zhents, once the group reaches Longsaddle. The Longriders will arrest Von Fedel and/or Blondung, and they will depart from the adventure at this point. Söggrin will insist on staying with the PCs.

The Long Road winds through low hills and comes out onto a sweeping panorama of vast ranch lands, farms and a small village with the shining band of a small stream flowing through it. Sheep graze in the hills to the east of Longsaddle. Fortified ranches with stockade fencing and watch towers surround the other sides.

6. Longsaddle

Small Town, Magical, AL: CG, 800 gp limit, Assets 750,000 gp, Population Human with few dwarves, halfling, half elves. The official WotC maps of Longsaddle can be found in the accessories *The North* and *Volo's Guide to the North*, both of which can be downloaded free from the WotC website.

The village of Longsaddle itself consists of small farms close to one another. The fields to the farms apparently all lie outside the village itself, which probably is home to only about 130 people or so, but the many scattered ranches surrounded Longsaddle could bring the total population count easily to 1,000.

And once again, the thick bouquet of steer manure enriches the air around you. The village itself is an irregular circle, through which a stream from the hill flows rapidly. The farms surround the middle of the village, where commerce seems to take place. In the very center is a small hill with a farm and sizeable ivy-covered house atop it.

Until reaching the center of village you pass nothing but farms and more farms. Then you come into a central area with several small businesses. There is only a single inn with guest rooms, a place called *The Gilded Horseshoe.* There's also a festhall that offers overnight stays - *The Night Mantle* - a Tavern - *The Horn and the Hoof* - and a gambling casino - *The Gambling Golem.*

Other businesses include *Jaster's Ring of Bells,* a shop that seems to specialize in casting and selling cow bells; *The Leaping Hooves Trade Stables,* which offers to buy road-weary riding and draft horses in trade for fresh ones; *Nalathar's Fine Stirrups and Spurs; Ostever's Slaughterhouse; the Rolling Wheel,* which sells supplies, and *Sixhorns Select Wares,* an all-around general store.

Game Master: Söggrin starts to get moody in Longsaddle. She's worried Manshoon will get her, but she also has very mixed feelings about her own tribe. She has no great desire to return to barbarian life, but she has no other goal either. She's convinced that either the Zhents or the Black Ravens will get her sooner or later, but she isn't interested in trying to stay in Longsaddle or follow any other suggestions that the PCs or anyone else will have for her.

The people of the Longsaddle have to fight off raids from the Black Ravens from time to time, so they too will not be particularly excited about having Söggrin there, although they will make no moves against her either. If the PCs try to abandon Söggrin in Longsaddle, the Harpells and the Longriders insist that they take care of her, seeing that they brought her into town.

Sooner or later, the PCs will end up seeking a place to stay at either *The Gilded Horseshoe* or at *The Night Cloak.* There are rooms free at the Horseshoe but not at the Cloak. Rooms are: 2 Gold Dragons the night including stable fees and an evening meal. Ordinary encounters should simply be played out. If the PCs wonder over to the Harpell area before dining in the Horseshoe, read the following:

As you approach the stream area, you notice that the house atop the hill across the stream is huge, and it also seems to have grown like topsy. Before you is a large wooden fence with a path going through it. On the other side of the fence, but on your side of the river are two large barns. A boy in a red robe that seems to sparkle is sitting on the ground just inside the fence on the other side of it.

The boy is playing with a gray pebble that does some extraordinary things. He throws it away from him, and each time it shoots out like a skyrocket, flaming into many colors, and then after about 4 yards/meters, it turns into a small, red ball of flames and shoots back toward the boy, who holds up his open hand to catch it. Just before the flaming ball reaches his hand, it turns back into a pebble, and the boy does catch it.

You notice something else here too that's mighty strange. The stream inside the fence flows ***uphill*** to just before a high, arched wooden bridge. There it disappears. It doesn't flow into a hole in the ground or anything. It just disappears. You can see that the wall of water there, more than 2 yards/meters high, just disappears. And then there's streambed. And then after another five or six yards/meters, you see the flowing wall of water reappear, and from that point, the stream flows downhill again.

Game Master If the PCs ask the boy's name, he replies, "Arath Harpell," and nothing more. If the PCs attempt to follow the path into the Harpell compound, they crash into the invisible wall, which is hard as stone. At that time, Arath - without taking his eyes from the magic pebble - will ask:

"Who ya lookin' for?"

If the PCs give the name of someone who does not exist, Arath will answer:

"There ain't no *(name).*"

If the PCs name someone who does exit, Arath says:

"He ain't here."

If the PCs ask when the person they named will be back, Arath says:

"Dunno"

If the PCs talk about something else, Arath ignores them. If they ask how they can get in, Arath says:

"Somebody with a token's gotta let ya in."

If the PCs ask if Arath can let them in, he answers:

"Sure, but I ain't gonna do it. I don't need none o' that kinda trouble!"

If the PCs ask who is in, Arath answers:

"Can't tell ya that. If ya wanna know that, ya gotta ask one o' the bigger folks inside."

Game Master: In no case will the PCs find a way into the Harpell compound at this time. When the PCs reach the dinner table at the Horseshoe:

There are quite a number of people in the dining hall tonight. None leave the impression of being locals. You appraise this crowd as a mix of caravan members and cattle or meat buyers.

Game Master: Give the PCs time, and then:

A group of three men - two young and the other in his 30s - enter the Horseshoe's dining room. The man in his 30s wears a red robe that seems to flash with color. The two younger men wear purple robes. The innkeeper acknowledges his visitors and says, *"Well met, Andall. Nothing unusual today."* The man in the red robe replies, *"Well met, Trappy. Each of us'll have a hand-pulled."* The three men then begin talking together.

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Game Master: Andall, Chiesedor and Wendlar Harpell have a magic in effect that leaves their voices quite audible but their words totally incomprehensible, no matter how hard the PCs try to listen in. The Harpells are making the rounds for the night, hunting for Zhents. They're quickly sampling thoughts of visitors to the village. With time, Andall will pick up thoughts of the PCs and the blue stones they're transporting. If there's a dwarf in the group, he'll also pick up thoughts about *Khiezar Dalan,* if there are dwarven PCs who know about *Khiezar Dalan.* After about five minutes, Andall will realize that the PCs are the suspected murderers of Gaard, who are being sought in Neverwinter. He will go directly to the PCs.

The man the bartender called Andall looks suddenly in your direction, as though he just recalled something important, stands up quickly, and muttering and waving his hands, walks over to your table. You notice that your bodies suddenly are surrounded by rings of yellow light that hold your arms tight to your sides, as though you were bound with rope.

"Well met! Andall Harpell, at your service. Those are my cousins, Chiesedor and Wendlar. You're under arrest, of course, for the murder of the archmage Gaard of the Many-Starred Cloak in Neverwinter. Such a dastardly deed! A nice old man, Gaard was! And to suck all his blood out like that! I say! Are you vampires?"

Game Master: Andall waits only a second for an answer, then ignores what the PCs say and continues talking.

"Well, there's nothing for it," Andall Harpell says. Then turning to the other two Harpells, he shouts, *"Chiesedor and Wendlar! Get Captain Narthing and bring him to the compound!"*

He turns his attention back to you then. *"There's no use resisting, you know. Just stand up and follow me please. I'm afraid you'll have to answer some hard questions!"*

He leads you out of the *Gilded Horseshoe* and then to the right, along the river, where you come to a fence.

As you reach the compound you see only two persons on the other side of the fence. A man with a white robe and hat and a white robe with gray stripes is standing across the river on the south side of the wooden bridge, seemingly pondering the place where the stream suddenly disappears. Now and then he seems to be muttering something. The bridge actually is more interesting than the man. It consists of neatly placed wooden boards that just seem to float in the air over the stream bed where the disappeared stream should be. The boards are not fastened to anything, and nothing supports them. The bridge is 40 feet/12m long and 10 feet/3m wide. It arches 25 feet/7.5m high over the temporarily empty stream bed.

The second person is sitting on a bench in front of the ivy-covered house. It's an older man with a blonde beard wearing robes of blue and green and looking irritated about something. He shouts to the PCs: *"You here for something, or are you just nosing around like tourists?"*

The man turns his head back toward the mansion and shouts, *"Andall, you've got some strange looking guests!"*

Game Master: The man in the white robes is Chardin Harpell, whom Andall will explain. The man in green and blue is Regewald Harpell. He feels nothing but chagrin for those who have no understanding of magic. Anytime anyone makes disparaging remarks over magic, Regewald will quickly start baiting them to attack him with a range weapon. He particularly goes after proud barbarians and dwarves. He will bait and insult them until they do attack. Then, he laughs nastily when their weapons bounce harmlessly off the invisible magic wall that follows the fence line.

Pointing to the man in white and gray standing by the bridge, Andall says, "That's my uncle, Chardin Harpell." Before Andall can continue, Chardin turns toward you, his eyes burning intensely with some kind of inner fury. He points to the area where the river vanishes and ask you, *"What is the significance of this? What can it mean?"* Then he returns his attention to the missing stretch of the stream and ignores you.

Andall explains to you: *"Poor Uncle Chardin! He's been asking that question for some 15 years now! It was his magic that caused the river to flow uphill, but he doesn't know what made it turn invisible under the bridge. It's a new phenomenon. We all know about invisibility, but no one we know has ever heard of a field of invisibility.*

"Poor Uncle Chardin doesn't know how he did it, and no one else seems to either. It's driven him around the bend. He's forgotten everything else. He just puzzles over this field of invisibility, and nothing else! But, onward, into the compound. We have some hard questions for you!

"Go over now to the opening in the fence - not the one you can see - the other one. It's invisible. It's three fenceposts to the right of the opening you see. Follow me! We go through and then cross the stream with the Underbridge, not the Overbridge!"

Game Master: The PCs doubtless will not know what Andall is talking about. He will explain as follows, and after he does that, Regewald may insult the PCs for being so stupid about magic.

Andall: *"The Overbridge is to go back. The Underbridge is to come over. Step over to the edge of the stream beneath the Overbridge and walk across. Follow me! You can't see how it works, but it does."*

When you walk to the bank of the stream, following Andall, you see that the bank drops off suddenly, and the water flows nearly 6 feet deeper. The riverbed in the stretch where the water disappears is about more than 10 feet below the point where you're standing. The drop could be unpleasant.

Game Master: As soon as one of the PCs takes his chances:

Andall flips over immediately in the air, but without problems, and they same happens to the rest of you, as you continue on. Gravity seems to be with you. You're now standing on the bottom of the bridge, feeling a little funny but fine.

Game Master: When the PC reaches the other side:

As soon as you reach the other side, you flip over again, and gravity seems to be back where it should be now.

Game Master: When all the PCs are on the other side:

Regewald Harpell, the man in the blue and green robes, is laughing his nasty laugh again. He says, *"Did you see that, now, the way these folks crossed the bridge like a bunch of scared young spring peepers! Brave folk these are! Hee-hee!"* Before Regewald can say anymore, Andall says, *"Knock it off now, Regewald. I can remember a time when you still had manners, before one of your experiments blew half of your brains out - the wrong half. These folks might have been a bit scared, but you were just plain dumb."*

Regewald Harpell stays on his chair, but he starts growling at Andall, like a mad dog. At the same time, a dog comes from behind the mansion, a large German shepherd, and he starts growling at Regewald.

Andall says, *"That's my cousin, Bidderdoo Harpell. He used to be a human magician too, but one of his experiments polymorphed him into a dog, and it seems to be permanent. No one's been able to polymorph him back, at least up 'til now. Bidderdoo thinks he's the Top Dog around here, and he doesn't put up with it, when he thinks Regewald is trying to upstage him. He's already bitten Regewald!"*

Andall leads you now into the Ivy Mansion. Directly inside the door is what probably once was a somewhat elegant reception room. It hasn't been cleaned for a while, and you have to follow a path through two rows of crates, those on the left are empty and those on the right are filled with freshly harvested produce. In the middle of the room stands the statue of a mage who seems to be hurling a mighty spell at whatever comes through the door.

Andall: *"That's my uncle Matherly - I mean my real uncle Matherly. He's been like that for more than 10 years now. We never figured out what spell he used or why he was doing it, but it obviously went wrong. Turned him to stone, and no one in the family has ever been able to come up with anything that can reverse it. Well ... I guess no one's tried now for awhile."*

Andall leads you directly into a large dining hall that could be mistaken for a public restaurant. He says, *"We call this the* Fuzzy Quarterstaff. *The family and all our guests eat here. Seeing we never got anything in the Horseshoe, you're invited too, of course. And it costs nothing. Just sit down there!"*

Andall makes a gesture with his hands, and some force pushes you into sitting positions in chairs at a table. Andall twirls his finger, and the glowing bonds holding your arms in place slink downward, freeing your arms but tying your legs firmly to the chair legs.

Andall starts walking off. *I'll be back soon, I hope. I'll get my uncle Harkle. He's the one who will ask the questions. Make yourself comfortable. Order whatever you want!"*

With that, Andall disappears out the door again.

The hall is not particularly full. Each table has an glass ornament on it that looks like an imitation of a huge jewel. At two tables are a bunch of farmworkers, all enjoying their noon meal. At another is a man in what could be mage's robes. Or it could also be that he's the innkeeper here. He's certainly sitting near enough to the beer tap.

Game Master: No one waits on the PCs, and Andall doesn't return until they've taken steps themselves to get service. If the PCs demand service:

A voice from the middle of the table saying, *"If you want something, just order. It'll come!"*

Game Master: If the PCs do order:

The voice in the middle of the table says, *"Thank you kindly! I'll pass your wishes onto to the cook!"*

Two or three minutes pass, and then you notice flashing balls of blue light floating through the air toward you from the direction of the tap. These balls of light settle on the table in front of you and turn into the drinks you ordered.

While you wait for your food, more and more people come into the *Fuzzy Quarterstaff.* You estimate the total between 35 and 40, a cross-section of farmworkers, cattlemen, Long Riders and Harpells in their fantastically colored wizard robes. There is a constant flow now of blue globes of light floating from the tap to tables.

After another 15 minutes, more balls of blue light emerge from the far wall and drift in your direction again, this time delivering the food you ordered, and shortly thereafter, more and more globes of light float to other tables, delivering food.

After the PCs have eaten:

A group of 6 Harpells - at least you assume they're Harpells, they all look like wizards - enters the *Fuzzy Quarterstaff*, accompanied by two well-armed men in their middle 40s who look like warriors. At the head of the group is a mage who looks to be in his middle 50s. His bald pate and remaining gray white hair make him look older at first, but the details of his face suggest that he's still under 60. He looks like a man with many things on his mind.

One of the others in the group is Andall Harpell. He points in your direction, and the older man and Andall come to your table. The four others break off from them and go to a table of their own. As the two reach your table, Andall says, *"This is my uncle Harkle."*

The older man nods in stern greeting and says, *"Well met! Harkle Harpell, at your service, along with Captain Narthing and Lieutenant Sarban of the Long Riders. As Andall's told you, we've been asked by the government in Neverwinter to arrest you on suspicion of murder and transport you back to Neverwinter. According to the charges, my good friend Gaard of the Many-Starred Cloak was found dead in his cellar. Every trace of blood was gone from his body. According to his magical servant, you were the last persons to enter his house, the last to see him alive."*

Harkle then turns his attention from you to the table and says to the table, *"You know what we want."* The table replies, *"Yes, Sir!"*

"Well," says Harkle. *"I'd suggest you make it easy upon yourselves and tell us the whole story. Don't leave anything out."*

Game Master: At this point, the PCs should relate whatever hey intend to relate. Harkle has a magic gem in his pocket which will determine whether the PCs are being truthful. If they are lying, the gem turns red, if not, it remains blue. The events at this point are completely dependent upon role-playing. The narrative continues after Harkle is convinced he has been told the truth.

Harkle: *"So, it appears you're innocent. It appears old Gaard still was alive when you saw him. That means then that he was killed by someone with high magic, powerful enough to get past his magical wards and get past his magical servant without being seen.*

"Hmm. We'll really should send you back to Neverwinter for questioning, though."

Suddenly something seems to occur to Harkle. *"Andall,"* he says. *"These folks are no murderers! They are our guests! Free them from their bonds!"*

Andall twirls his fingers again, and you are freed. Then Harkle continues talking to you.

"However, if we send you back to Neverwinter, we also would be thwarting good Gaard's will in his last action. It seems that it was pretty important to him to have those blue stones brought to Lady Alustriel, and I think the right thing for us to do is to send you on your way.

"But we still need to talk about those blue stones. Old Gaard sent a couple of other groups through here before you, and they gave us a small portion of the stones to study, although I suspect that's not quite what Gaard wanted.

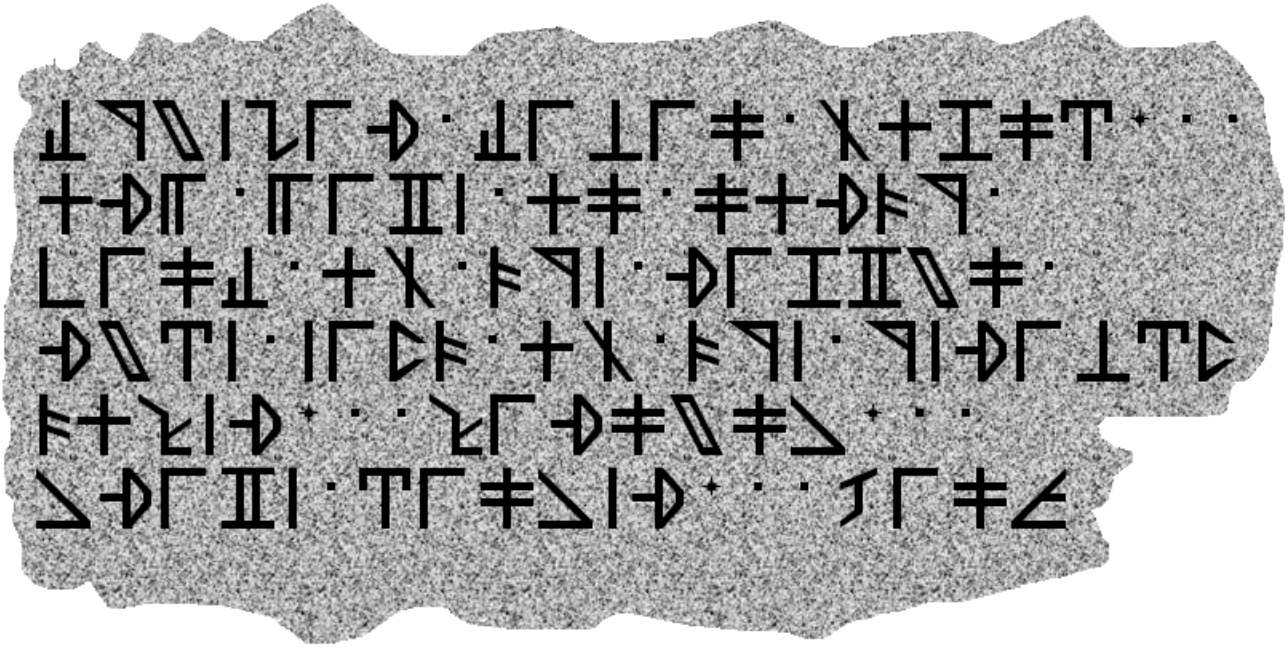
"Anyhow, we find no magic in these stones, but with think they might bear an older kind of magic than man or elf uses these days, a kind older even than the Neths. My father, DelRoy Harpell, is devoting all of his time to this matter. He thinks he knows the source of the magic, and he thinks something has corrupted it. We have an old dwarven runestone here, and DelRoy thinks it has to do with the message on the stone.

"He's had the message copied onto a scroll, and he hopes you'll bring it along with our news to Lady Alustriel, whom we work with too, by the way. Are you willing to do that?"

Game Master: Harkle waits for the PC's answer. The runestone is shown on the following page. It contains information on Khiezar Dalan.

Harkle: *"I have one more question. Do you know anything about Khiezar Dalan?*

Game Master: What happens next depends upon whether the PCs do know about Khiezar Dalan. If there is a dwarf in the group, he or she can be prepared in advance, because he or she will know of the legend of Khiezar Dalan, magnificent but lost dwarven halls of the North that rose and fell with Delzoun. About all that's known these days is, that deep within Khiezar Dalan a magic fire from the center of Toril and arose in a flame from a natural, rose-shaped fountain. Old dwarves recall, that it was called the Rose Fire. It is known that Khiezar Dalan was in the North, but beyond that, these great dwarven halls are much longer lost and more forgotten than was Bruenor's Mithral Hall.



The Runestone

CASE 1 -- No PC is aware of Khiezar Dalan

Harkle: *"Well, Khiezar Dalan always has been a favorite location of my father DelRoy, and there is some reason to believe that there is or at least was an extremely powerful concentration of magic there. But it's been lost for close to 2,000 years now. Recently, however, a dying dwarf was found in the* Lurkwood *on the* Lurking River *some 180 miles/300 km northeast of here. He claims that he and his murdered companions found* Khiezar Dalan *somewhere north of the* Trollmoors, *but he died before he could explain more about the location. However, he or one of his companions cut the Runestone we have, the one we copied onto a scroll to be brought to Lady Alustriel. I guess there's not much more I can tell you, except that my father DelRoy thinks there may be some connection between these blue stones and the runestone. But he's not much for explaining, unless it serves a purpose. I have my own problems to deal with, so explaining to me would serve only the purpose of satisfying my curiosity."*

CASE 2 -- At least one PC is aware of Khiezar Dalan

Harkle: *"Well, Khiezar Dalan always has been a favorite location of my father DelRoy. He's discovered over the years that there was a magic fire in Khiezar Dalan, called the Fire of the Rose or something like that, and he thinks it was a part of the source of old magical power that dwarven smiths once drew upon. He's also believes some dark and evil beings have taken control of* Khiezar Dalan *and may be making use of the power in the fire of the rose.*

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CASE 3 -- The PCs now know of and want to know more

Harkle: *"Well, then you'll have to talk to my father. But you won't be able to see him until late at night. If you wish to speak with him, I can arrange that. In that case, you can spend the night in the guest rooms here in the Ivy Mansion, if you wish."*

Game Master: It's role-playing until about 10 p.m., then:

At last Harkle comes for you and ushers you through twisting and turning corridors inside the Ivy Mansion, twists and turns you never would be able to trace your way back. You come to spiraling stairs and certainly climb higher than would be possible in the Ivy Mansion you saw from outdoors. But you've come to more or less expect such things from the Harpells. At last you're at the top of a tower that certainly wasn't visible from outdoors, in a circular room with magical paraphernalia of all sorts scattered around, small fires burning her and there with flames of varying colors and what not. An ancient man sits at a work bench, a flat stone on the bench before him, his gaze remote, staring in the direction of a tower window at nothing in particular.

Harkle says, *"Father, I've brought the travelers I spoke of."*

DelRoy answers, *"Well then sit them down, son!"*

It takes a bit of a search, but Harkle finally finds stools and chairs of different sorts here and there, enough for all of you.

DelRoy speaks again, *"So, my son says you want to know what it's all about! Well, I don't know what it's all about, but I have my guesses. So let's start with the story of Khiezar Dalan*

Now as you know, dwarves don't believe much in magic these days, unless of course it's their old ancient magic. Those of us who've paid attention to such things noticed long ago that the magic in dwarven weapons seems to have almost nothing in common with the kind of magic we wizards use today. We work with a weave that's controlled by the goddess Mystra herself.

"But it seems that the dwarves won their magic from the sun and the moon and the stars and the soul of Toril itself. That was extremely long ago. Perhaps there was no weave then yet. I don't know. There's a lot of debate over who came first, the dwarves or the elves. Dragon lore says it was the dwarves - Dvergr in the old tongue. And other histories say the elves - Alfar in the old tongue - learned their magic at first from the dwarves and forged mighty creations together.

"According to these tales, the parting of Dvergr and Alfar began when the Alfar discovered the weave and began using new magic and wizardry of which the dwarves didn't approve. Maybe it was just like that. Maybe that's a lot of hogwash. And maybe that's only a part of the real truth. That's the most likely option of them all. But it was long, long ago. No one knows.

"Some old dwarven runestones talk of a magic fire deep within Toril and say that the combination of sunlight, moonlight, starshine, fire from this source and blood of the enemy, usually blood of the orc, were the ingredients the dwarven smiths used to conjure their magic and place it in their weapons. A few runestones suggest that this magic fire was a fountain of flame known as the Rose of Fire somewhere in lost Khiezar Dalan.

"Now, these stones that Gaard came upon - they supposedly were found in an area where Drow had been in Mithral Hall – might contain this kind of magic. They seem to give me a hint of something like the old dwarven magic, but not quite. If there's magic in the stones, we don't know what it does. It would be kind of hard to guess what's behind these stones, if it wasn't for this runestone here.

"A while back, a druid and a ranger were traveling together on the Lurking River *in the* Lurkwood *a couple hundred miles northeast of here, when they came upon a trail of dead dwarves. Each dwarf and been staked out on the ground and then been cut with drow knives in several places, none of the cuts really serious, but all big enough for the dwarves to bleed to death.*

"The last dwarf still was alive. The ranger and the druid weren't able to save him. But they did get to hear his last words. He said he and his companions had found an entrance to Khiezar Dalan north of the Trollmoors.

Just where it is he never got to tell. He died first. But he did succeed in telling them where he hid this runestone. He wanted it brought to King Harbromm in Citadel Adbar.

That's just where it's going, too, but not until we find a dwarf caravan that's 100% certain to be able to get it through! But I certainly don't mind giving you folks a scroll with a copy of the text, if it'll help you out.

"Now, anything you folks might find out about Khiezar Dalan is quite important, because I think these Drow are up to something. Be sure to fill the good lady in on all the details!"

The Gambling Golem:

If the PCs decide to go gambling, the Golem offers two games. The first is *Fighting Frogs,* in which the spectators bet on which of two fighting frogs survive. The dueling frogs are fitted with sharp leg spurs. The second game is *Scattershields.* It is played on a large slate table with a gutter along the edge and a hollow in the middle called the throne. Around the throne are six, small metal war shields. Each player - who pays to enter the round - receives six glass marbles called spears. The players choose the color of their spears, and each player's spears are of a different color. In each round, each player tries to throw his spear into the throne. The other five try to deflect the spear into a gutter. Spears that land in the gutter are out of the game. Spears that are deflected but end up on the table surface can try again. The winner is determined when all the spears either are in the throne or in the gutter.

Scattershields in role-playing:

The house keeps one of the six platinum suns that the players pay to get into the round. The rest of the pot is divided proportionally among those players who have spears in the throne at the end of the game. The Golem is owned by the farmers and ranchers association. The profits help pay the Longriders who guard and defend the Longsaddle area. Harpells are prohibited from playing here, and the use of magic is prohibited in all games in the house. Violators are thrown into the local dungeon.

The cashier stands at the table and sells numbers for 1 platinum sun apiece. When a player at the table leaves the game, the next number may start playing. The fee for the first number represents the wager for the first game. Once a player is at the table, he may remain as long as he wants, but he has to pay another platinum sun per game.

Every player begins with a percentage chance equal to his Dexterity value + 40% to hit the throne. He throws 2d10. Two zeroes equal 100. If his throw is higher than his chance, he misses, otherwise he hits. All hits have to get past the shields. Every player has a base 1% chance for an automatic hit that the shields cannot defend against (a modified throw of 01).

The five shields have a chance equal to their dexterity value to deflect a spear. The players and NPCs roll 2d10. A natural or modified roll of 02 or lower knocks a spear into the gutter.

Experience bonuses:

Experienced *Scattershields* players get bonuses. PCs should enter their bonuses in their character sheets in case they return to Longsaddle and play again. For every 20 rounds of play, a player gets 1 bonus point, up to a maximum of 25 bonus points to hit and 65 bonus points to defend. By low throws to hit automatically, the bonus to hit is subtracted from the actual dice throw. If it amounts to 1 or less, the players gets into the throne automatically. By low throws to defend, the bonus to defend is subtracted from the actual dice roll.

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Game Master: There are many natives of Longsaddle who have chances to hit and defend as high as 80 modified Before the players leave Longsaddle, check the weather tables. Andall Harpell will appear to bid his farewells and will give the PCs a Staff of Trolls. See the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide* for details.

As you're preparing to head on your way, Andall Harpell, followed by two curious children, comes in your direction carrying a long, black staff 5 feet/150cm long.

Andall: *"I came to bid you farewell. Remember, keep your eyes and ears open for signs or a word of Khiezar Dalan. Harkle also sent something along to help you against the Trolls, but use it sparingly. This one's new, but it has only 15 charges.*

"Chiesedor invented this. We've already tested it out, and it works fine. It's something like a fireball staff, but it works differently. A fireball staff makes one big fireball. This one makes up to 36 little fireballs. They do very little damage actually, but they seek trolls out and ignite them. You only need fire to burn a troll, not a lot of fire.

"There are only a few drawbacks with this troll staff. One of them is, that Chiesedor has been only able to bring 15 charges into them safely, well ... 14 actually. With the 15th charge, you have to throw the staff at the trolls and the shout the trigger word as soon as it's out of your hands. If you're still holding it, it will blow up in your hands. That also happens quite unpredictably when Chiesedor puts more than 15 charges into it. Yeah ... he's already on his fourth pair of hands because of these troll staves. Harkle has had to regenerate his hands three times already, because of explosions, so be sure to count how often you use this thing!

"There other drawback isn't quite so bad. You see, Chiesedor has a funny sense of humor. Well, downright strange, actually. So ... the trigger word is ... oh, yes, I better put this down."

Andall sets the staff on the ground.

Andall: *"That's another drawback. If you're holding the staff in your hands and there aren't any trolls around when you say the trigger word, it'll also blow up in your hands!*

"It's only good on trolls, and the thing wants you to be serious when you use it, so make sure you have at least one troll around before you say the trigger word. "Anyhow ... the trigger word ... hmmm ... as I said, Chiesedor is a bit strange. Well, there's nothing for it. The trigger word is actually four words long: Enjoy more Longsaddle beef! *Yup ... that's it. Sorry about that!"*

Game Master: Andall picks up the staff again and hands it to one of the PCs - preferably a magic user. The departure follows.

When you reach the bridge Andall shouts to you: *"Don't forget! To leave you need to use the upper bridge. And then the real exit is the third post to the left of the opening you see. Good luck!"*

It gives you a funny feeling to walk across a bridge that seems to be nothing more than a bunch of boards neatly ordered and floating in the air, but you cross without any problems. You wend your way back through the village until you reach the cattle yards and then head eastward into the wilderness on a new road that seems to be made out of artificial stones, or perhaps out of stones that were magically shaped. The landscape here is relatively open. Small rolling grassy hills in every direction, with bushes and occasional copses of trees but no real forests to speak of. The amount of road you can see before you varies considerably, as the Nesmé Road twists through the hills. Sometimes you can see for two or three miles, at other times less than 100 yards.

Game Master: **There are no encounters until late in the morning.**

It seems to be a peaceful day on the road to Nesmé. You make it through most of the morning without seeing man or monster. Then, shortly before noon, two trade wagons with a contingency of eight armed riders come riding full bore in your direction. The wagons obviously are fleeing something.

Game Master: Pause.

As the wagons roll by you, the riders shout, *"Ride, ride for your lives. Barbarians! The Black Ravens!"*

Söggrin: *"But those are my people!"*

Before you have much more time to think about it, two groups of Barbarians - each 10 men strong - come charging over the hills to the north and south of you, about 500 yards away, and there's dust over the roadway to the east of you, although no riders are in sight there yet.

Game Master: Let the players decide their course of action. No matter what the PCs decide, the Black Ravens are the faster riders and will overtake them. The following occurs when the Black Ravens reach the PCs.

The Barbarians begin encircling both you and the wagons. And then the seeming leader of this troop suddenly notices Söggrin and signals his men to ring in close around you and ignore the wagons.

"Whores' sons!," the barbarian shouts at you. *"Cowards who kidnap our women!"*

Söggrin gets mad and says, *"Shut your big mouth, Derbroshin!"*

The big barbarian angers and shouts, *"And are you now the whore of such scum? It is no matter, Söggrin! When I rescue you and return you to your father, you will at last be mine. And then I shall set my little flower back on the true path."*

Söggrin answers, *"I suppose my father might be a problem. But all you'll get out of me is a daily kick in the balls, you overgrown ape. I can't stand you, Derbroshin. If father doesn't see things my way, I'll have to cut your damn throat. I assume the other thing is missing already."*

Derbroshin now faces the rest of you and says, *"You will die today, you worthless whores' sons."*

Game Master: If there is a dwarf in the group, Derbroshin will reluctantly tell him, *"You may go your way. The Black Ravens are at peace with the folk of the mountain."* Derbroshin has no choice. If he attacks a dwarf, he will be sentenced to death by his own tribe. If the dwarf refuses to leave the other PCs, barbarians will restrain him without harming him, keeping him out of the fight.

Derbroshin continues, *"You are cowardly whores' sons, but our law says you must be given the chance to redeem yourselves in deadly combat. It is your choice, whether you choose to die in honor, or whether we cut you down like the worthless blades of manure stained grass that you are.. If any of you should win, which I doubt very much, he is free to go his own way. Because it is you whom we honor, you have the choice of weapons No magic is allowed. My men have orders to shoot down anyone with their bows who resorts to magic of any kind."*

Game Master: The fighting should start. In combat abilities, the barbarians should be one step ahead of the PCs. For instance, if you have a level 3 magic-user with 7 hp, the opponent should be a youthful barbarian fighter of level 2, regardless of the magic user's level in that class. If by some quirk of fate the PCs managed to find their own way out of this encounter you should forego the appearance of Andall Harpell. However, it is absolutely pointless to allow your whole group to be slaughtered here, which will be the most likely outcome in most cases. In that case, Andall can be the PCs' salvation. The game master should decide when and if to stop this fight, usually when most if not all of the PCs are still alive. It can be stopped as follows:

There's suddenly much shouting from the barbarians mounted on horses. Everyone's attention is distracted by the sight to the south. In the sky, standing hundreds of feet tall, are the ghostly but very animate figures of Harkle and Andall Harpell.

"Derbroshin," shouts Andall Harpell. *"You and your cowardly bastard sons of caribou defile the honor of your mounts, in that you set your shit-filled asses upon them. We will free your horses this day of this dishonor!"*

Harkle Harpell says, *"Long have we waited for this day, O mother of all cowards, for you are no man, Derbroshin. I say again, you are the Mother of all cowards, and these worm pigs who defile their horses with you are the sisters of the mother of all cowards, for only cowards attack and kill the women and children of men who are away. This is your last day, cowardly mothers and sisters, but in honor you shall not die. You shall dwindle away to the worthless nothingness that you always have been."*

With these words, the images of the Harpells shoot tiny bolts of lightning from their fingers, hitting all of the barbarians but one, a youth of a mere 12 years or so. The remainder of the barbarians rapidly shrink, ever smaller and smaller, at first screaming, but then vanishing as specks of dust.

Harkle's image turns now to Söggrin and the youth. *"What is your name, young man?"*

The boy looks proud and angered and does not answer.

"So," says Harkle. *"Are you too a coward who kills unarmed women and children when the men are away?"*

The boy replies sullenly, *"I ride for the first time."*

Söggrin says sternly, *"You know me as the daughter of the second chief! I say to you this is an honest man. Do you tremble so in cowardly fear before a man, that you cannot recall you own name?"*

The boy looks up at Harkle, in wounded pride, and says, *"I am Karmat, son of Kurdarr."*

Harkle answers, *"Then ride with Söggrin, and tell your chief Ostagar of all that has happened here today, Karmat son of Kurdarr. And tell him if the Black Ravens ever again attack man, woman, child or beast in the vicinity of Longsaddle, I will reduce every warrior of your tribe to worthless dust, as I did to the cowards with whom you rode. Tell your chief I laugh in his face and scorn him, for he commands only fleas, whose courage dies when the enemy is not helpless!"*

Defiant, the boy jumps back upon his horse and shouts, *"Strike me down, if you will, But I will ride alone to my tribe and not in the company of this whore, though she be the daughter of the second chief."*

Harkle replies, *"So be it, boy. Then ride alone. But leave no word or deed out of your tale."*

With these words, the images of Harkle and Andall fade and disappear.

Söggrin seems to be deeply saddened by events. *"Poor met, this was,"* she says, *"and poor will this end for us all. Ostagar Tenfeather will not be able to bear the insult done to him today, above all, because he will see that truth which was in Harkle's words. Either he will lead the tribe in a suicide attack against the Harpells or take his rage out upon other folk. The boy will describe you, and he will think that you kidnapped me. Every Black Raven will be after your skulls. And a large part of my tribe will think I'm a whore. Poor met! Poor met!"*

Game Master: If you want an encounter this evening, stage an attack of goblins or orcs. On the following day, the second day out of Longsaddle, check the weather table.

The new day begins in an area with about the same terrain as yesterday. The hills have become perhaps a bit larger and the roadside bushier, but the landscape remains relatively open.

Game Master: Give the players time to make decisions of their own.

Early in the afternoon the new road dips downward into a low valley with scattered boulders, thick brush, trees here and there and many small, moraine-type hills. The new road goes on, but it twists between the hills and leads on Eastward.

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After about an hour in this terrain, you see a turn a corner through the brush and see a man standing in the road about 50 yards before you, waving you to stop. He's dressed like a dandy, but his clothing also is a bit worn. He smiles and looks friendly. As you approach, he removes his hat and makes a sweeping bow.

"Khelin Haldonn, at your service!" The man says. *"My friends are very shy. I'm afraid they're so shy, that they're hiding in the bushes. "We've all suffered some severe financial setbacks lately and would like to ask you for a friendly donation. All of your valuables would be satisfactory. We wouldn't think of taking your horses or anything else."*

Game Master: Khelin himself is something of a target here. His group consists of one fighter for every member of the PC group. Khelin counts as one of the fighters. Half of them is level 0 and half is level 1. All except Khelin have short bows trained on the PCs. These bandits are neither particularly dangerous nor particularly smart. If the PCs get a deadly bead on Khelin, put a *Hold Person* spell on him or something else, they can bring this encounter to a stalemate quickly. If that happens, make the PCs come up with a solution, not Khelin or his men. If you want a night encounter later in the day, use goblins, orcs or a small band of Black Ravens searching for the PCs and Söggrin. The latter can be particularly stimulating. The third day follows. Check the weather table, but ignore everything except the temperature and use the following information.

Already during the last watch a thick blanket of morning fog began creeping from the east - from the Trollmoors, still more than 50 miles/80 km away - over your campsite. As you make your morning breakfast, the thick fog limits your sight now to about 20 yards/meters in any direction. That still is enough to make out the new, magically built road of the Harpells to Nesmé.

Game Master: Give the PCs time to take care of things. If a ranger or druid is in the group, have him notice that neither the ground nor the foliage around you is particularly wet, a sign that the fog hasn't been on any particular spot for very long. To the ranger or druid, it seems that the fog is centered upon the group and moving with it. Non-ranger/druid PCs will not notice this themselves.

Into the early afternoon hours, the fog is still with you, although the visibility has increased to about 80 yards/meters. In the East, still somewhat distant, you hear the steady rumbling of thunder.

Game Master: Pause for the players to react. Let them do their own thing for a few minutes. If they don't do anything and **ask what's up, tell them nothing, except that the thunderstorm seems to be moving closer. Then:**

You're getting the impression that this thunderstorm is coming on way too quickly, your horses (and ponies too) are getting skittish, and the thunder comes on relentlessly without pause. You've never heard a thunderstorm come on so quickly. And then an apparition breaks into view in the sky, less than 100 yards above you, and it begins to circle. It's quite clear what it is - a black dragon about 30 yards/27m long bearing a rider. It's circling, and it looks like it's either going to attack you or land quite near to you.

Game Master: Söggrin is used to Manshoon's dragon and does not have to save. The fear aura of the dragon begins at 30 yards/27m. The PCs must make a saving throw or are subject to dragon fear. 3rd Edition saves are for will against DC 25. 2nd Edition saves are for petrification. Saving throws also must be made for horses (15) and ponies (17), however a ranger or druid who makes his save can calm his own horse. The following takes place after the dragon has landed and the excitement has died down.

The rider smiles at all of you and waves his hand. With that simple gesture, the fog surrounding you disappears. *(Game Master: Weather table weather is valid again.)* Söggrin looks at the dragon and rider, and you can see a look of pitiful defeat written all over her face. She talks to the rider: *"Manshoon, just about everything that could have gone wrong lately has. Your coming along right now is just a number too many. Couldn't you just go back to your test tubes and your frogs and your spiders and let me alone?"*

It suddenly sinks in with all of you, just what's happening here. You're not only faced with a huge black dragon who probably can turn all of you into dissolved corpses with a single hiccough, but you also have his master to deal with, Manshoon, first of the Zhentarim and one of the most powerful mages in all of the Realms.

Manshoon has no interest in any of you. In fact, he simply ignores you and talks with Söggrin: *"Now, my dear, you know better than that. It is your good luck, that you will become one of the truly great women of Faerûn. Why fight it, really? It's our fate, after all! Now come, do be a good girl! Let's head home, and I will give your friends a rich reward for rescuing you, and we all can live happily ever after.*

"It really would be sad if you would do something to convince your friends to be silly. Then I would be forced to simply destroy them. And I really have no reason to do them harm, and because they're complete strangers to me, I don't think they really have any reason to try to do any harm to me either. So don't be silly and lead them to their destruction."

Söggrin looks resigned and begins walking toward Manshoon and his dragon, saying, *"I guess you're right, as usual. And these people did save me, so please don't harm them."*

Game Master: Manshoon has absolutely no interest in the PCs. If they allow him to fly off with Söggrin, he will throw them a purse with 500 gold taler, newly minted in the Citadel of the Raven. These coins have a purity of 92%. In other words, they're worth 460 pure gold coins. If any PC prepares to attack Manshoon, Söggrin will notice and ask the PC to be reasonable. If any PC actually attacks Manshoon, his magical defenses thwart most attacks and he will use a disintegration spell against the PC and ask the remaining PCs to be sensible. If they undertake nothing further against him, he still will throw the survivors the purse as a reward. In any case, regardless of what the PCs do, Manshoon and Söggrin will be upon the dragon, flying eastward, in short order.

The following is valid if Söggrin flies off with Manshoon and the PCs still are alive:

And so, the mighty archmage of the Zhentarim flies eastward again atop the black dragon, taking your erstwhile companion, Söggrin, back to the Citadel of the Raven, where she apparently will be forced to mate with Manshoon and produce ... well, who knows what?

Game Master: Pause for the PCs to take whatever action they wish.

And so, the day wears on, with one less in your group. You're well into a long chain of verdant hills now, covered with tall grass, lush green spring brush and scattered trees. The Harpells may have applied their magic to build the new road to Nesmé, but they certainly did little to straighten it out. It twists and turns through the low hills, making it a good place for an ambush.

Game Master: Pause for the PCs to take whatever action they wish.

About half an hour goes by, when you come upon a straighter stretch of road. A group of four people is riding from the East in your direction. They are not making a charging attack against you or any other kind, but they aren't trying to avoid you either. The men wear no coats of arms and bear no flags.

Game Master: Pause for the PCs to take whatever action they wish.

As the group draws nearer, you can make out that a man and a woman wear no armor and carry only light personal weapons - knives and daggers. The other two look somewhat oriental. You've heard of warriors from faraway places in the East such as Rashemen, Thesk and also the Tuigan horde. Perhaps these men come from one of these races. The two easterners are heavily armed warriors with chain mail. The woman holds her hand high in a sign of greeting. As you come within shouting distance, she says: *"Samastrus galtora Dracluus heilah!."* The two armed men stay to the front, hands on sword hilts, prepared to defend themselves but not attacking. The other two remain just behind them. The man is a Halfelf.

Game Master: This is a secret greeting of the Dragon Cult, used to see if the persons met also are cult members. The group is searching for the lair of a black dragon they hope to turn into a dracolich.

The dragon is rumored to be somewhere in these parts. From the distance, the men saw Manshoon's black dragon land and then take flight again. The cultists suspect at first that the PCs may be other cult members, and that the PCs have found the dragon they are seeking. When the PCs do not answer properly, the cultists became highly suspicious. They will talk for some time with the PCs. They will not believe that Manshoon of

the Zhentarim simply flew down to them on a dragon, chatted and flew away again. The cultists also will ask questions designed to glean information on the strength of the party.

In the course of the conversation one PC manages to see that the halfelf has hidden inside his cloak a medallion with the symbol of the Dragon Cult. If the PCs tell the tale of Söggrin, that will give the cultists even more reason to do away with them. They will recognize this as valuable information they can do business with and they will not want to share it with the PCs. In the end Karana will give the order to attack. Rhiliith will use a *Hold Person* spell. The Tuigan warriors will attack. It will start like this, once Karana thinks she knows all that she wants to know:

"Well, you're not the people we thought you were," the woman says to you. *"I thought you were people from our own organization. I'm Karana Tharr, a Keeper of the Hoard of the Dragon Cult, if that means anything to you. But it real doesn't matter. We can't let you go off your own way. You know too much to suit me. Dobrish haddar!"* (**Game Master:** Tuigan command to attack)

As soon as she shouts the strange last words, the two warriors move with incredible speed. In a single fraction of a second, they spur their horse toward you, throw small, sharp star-shaped wheels of metal among you and draw thin, sharp swords from the backs, attacking. In this round, they have the complete advantage over you.

Game Master: Statistics for Karana Tharr's Dragon Cult Band can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* The following occurs while the PCs still are alive. This attack is supposed to destroy the Dragon Cult members and introduce the first clues toward the following modules of *"Northern Journey"* into your campaign, the appearance of draconians.

Suddenly tiny bolts of light flash all over among you, but they hit only your attackers - all four members of the Cult of the Dragon, and the bolts seem to cause them intense pain. You look to the hills around you and you see a man in black with dragon wings in the shadows beneath trees more than 100 yards/90m away, gesturing.

There is little you can make out about this man. Everything is black about him, and he seems to be trying to hide. Eight strange creatures are marching in your direction from the position where the man was. They all look like something of a cross between lizard men and dragons. The first four of these creatures have skins ranging from yellow and orange to red - about the same color as goblins - and they're about the same height as goblins too - 4 feet/120 cm tall or so. They're advancing with short swords drawn - half hopping and flapping their dragon-like wings, but they don't seem to be able to fly.

These creatures began marching in your direction before the other four and are about 30 yards/27m ahead of the remainder. Three of the four remaining creatures are gaining quickly, however. These three are larger and seem to be able to use their wings to glide for short distances. All three spit on their long swords as they fly. These three are about the same size as orcs and have the hairy, grey skin of orcs, but all resemblance ends there.

The eighth creature is considerably larger than the others - about 9 feet/270cm tall. It wears a red cape and has warty, green-grey skin, like that of a troll, also the sunken black eyes of a troll, but all other resemblance ends there too. This is the creature that is using the magic. Another round of flashing bolts strikes out from his hands and into the four dragon cultists. Neither side of this battle seems to show the least interest in you, only for each other at the moment.

Game Master: The PCs do have the opportunity to flee here, if they haven't been held. For those who flee, the following is valid only if they watch from a distance. Take PC actions into account.

The dragon cultists have overcome their state of surprise. The two warriors are both bearing down upon the four creatures in the vanguard of the attack, both swords ready as they rise. The mage, *Karana,* has taken a wand into her hands. She shouts, *"Nagasz hratblar," and a double-forked bolt of lightning strikes out and hits the large, magic-using creature at the back of the group of monsters. It doubles over in apparent pain.*

The halfelf among the dragon cultists shouts something unintelligible, and two of the gliding creatures come to a halt in the air and fall to the ground, unable to move. The third of these continues on, however. The two eastern warriors reach the four smaller creatures without difficulty and deliver mortal sword blows. All four of the creatures turn to stone on the spot, but the warriors were a bit too slow. Each has lost one of his two swords, embedded in the stone statues that had been these creatures.

The third of the gliding creatures has now reached the halfelf. The gliding creature strikes at the halfelf with its long sword, but the halfelf ducks the blow and strikes the creature with a staff, at the same time shouting, *"Kzhenarh!"* The creature loses the grip on its sword, and the arm shrivels away. The sword falls to the ground, and the creature crashes.

The two swordsmen each still have one sword free. They are in the process of bearing down on the 9-foot/270cm tall creature that was struck by Karana's lightning bolt, when a huge ball of fire emerges from the creature's hands, enveloping the two riders in flames. Their horses fall to the ground, burning, and the two warriors lay on the ground, writhing in flames. Karana begins fidgeting with a ring on a finger of her left hand, but the dragonman back in the shadows sees this and raises his right hand. A sickly green forked light streaks from his hand and hits all four dragon cultists. Their bodies simply vanish into nothingness, and their armor and possessions fall to the ground in a heap.

The dragonman does not move from his position in the shadow. The 9-foot/270cm tall creature also merely stands watch. The creature that crash with a shriveled sword arm begins standing and groaning in pain. His arm remains shriveled, as though it had been dead for years already. The other four dead creatures that had been killed by the warriors begin dissolving into dust. The two gliding creatures that had been made motionless begin moving again. One walks over and picks up two Chinese stars from the remains of one of the warriors.

Game Master: The draconians have no interest in the PCs, as long as they don't attack and let the dragon ring alone. This band will annihilate the PCs before they give up the dragon ring, and a draconian that is attacked will fight to the death.

Both creatures walk to the position where you had been with the dragon cultists. The one with the Chinese stars throws a star into the face of the groaning creature with the shriveled arm and another into its chest. The creature shouts a death scream and dissolves into a puddle of steaming fluid that dissolves all of the creature's possessions.

The second creature walks to the possessions of Karana and picks up one of her rings but leaves all of her other possessions and those of the halfelf lay where they were. The two creatures walk away then, in the direction of the 9-foot/270cm tall creature.

Game Master: PC Reactions?

Once the two grey creatures reach the tall one, all three turn and walk toward the dragonman in the shadow.

Game Master: PC Reactions?

As soon as the three strange creatures reach the dragon man, all three disappear.

Game Master: Statistics for the dragon vampire Szigh Harrd and his band of draconians can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Shortly after your encounter with the dragon cultists and the strange dragonlike creatures, your way winds down the low hills and into relatively open prairie land, where the road stretches straight before you like a ribbon. Another five miles or so in the distance, you can make out a river that winds down from the mountains and highlands in the north, flowing into the Surbrin.

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Game Master: Pause for the PCs

By mid-afternoon the boggy brush of the Trollmoors begins straddling the south shore of the Surbrin, thankfully the opposite bank from the one you're on. The landscape of the moor rolls from the riverbed slightly upward. Wiry trees grow here and there in the moor, but for the must part, the landscape across the river consists mainly of scrubby brush and black puddles that bubble now and then. A sweet decaying smell, totally unpleasant, wafts from the moor across the river in your direction.

The landscape on your side of the Surbrin is friendlier. Somewhat wet grasslands straddle the Harpells' road, and less than a mile to the north, the landscape climbs gradually upwards. The grasslands yield to greener, healthier brush than on the moor and stands of conifers.

As it nears sunset, you reach the southward flowing river, no doubt the *Goblintide*, just as it is being forded by a small caravan. It consists of two covered wagons with double drivers and six armed riders. Four extra horses are tied to the wagons.

One of the forward riders shouts out to you, *"Well met! Rostar's Trade from Nesmé, at your service. You'd be best to camp here tonight, with us. The Riders of Nesmé are out tonight, burning back the trolls, but there are a lot of reports of sizeable goblin movements in these parts. Strength in numbers is the best thing. There's plenty of firewood and trollwood here, and the Sky Ponies have moved into the area east of Nesmé. They won't be bothering us tonight!*

"There's also plenty of firewood here, and a reserve of trollbrands left by the Riders for travelers. Then you can ford the Goblintide *tomorrow, and you'll make to Nesmé by evening, with a bit of luck. You should be able to avoid trolls tomorrow. They stay mostly inside the moor by day and get active at night."*

Game Master: The man introduces himself as Rostar Dvall. He and his brother, Zarek, herd sheep in Nesmé. Rostar and his hired men are heading to Longsaddle and then south to Waterdeep with fine wool from Nesmé. The statistics for Rostar's Trade can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Rostar: *"Feel free to camp with us. We're only this one day out of Nesmé, so we're still carrying fresh meat and produce. If you want, you can unpack your horses and your bedrolls and start setting up. It's good to have everything in place before the fog gets too thick."*

Rostar is pointing at a thick cloud of fog moving northward across the moor in your direction.

"Once that gets here, you'll only be able to see for about 50 yards/15m or so, at the most. It moves out from the moor almost every night, without exception."

Rostar's men already have moved the two wagons into defensive positions facing to the north and east, where there is no water. Some of the men are fetching firewood and trollbrands.

"It's important here to have fire," Rostar says, *"and with the night fog, it can't be seen far off. I don't know if you've heard about it, but something's driving trolls out of the moor, giants, I've heard said. In any case, they seem to get desperate to flee these days. There are some narrows in the river to the east of here, and lately we've heard a few tales of trolls actually uprooting smaller trees on the moor and setting them across the narrows, to cross the water. Things like that used to be unheard of.*

"It's unlikely, but it is possible that some trolls might cross east of here and then come our way instead of to the north. In that case, they could ford over to us. So we need to have fire ready at all times, in case we're attacked. Now ..."

Rostar is interrupted suddenly by the shouting of one of his men over by the woodpiles. Kiel, Raddat, Yandar and the magician Keitl all are there. *"There are some bodies here,"* shouts Raddat. *"It looks like the Griffons or the Sky Ponies got 'em!"*

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Game Master: When the PCs reach the scene.

Four bodies lay on the ground. All four died of sword and spear wounds. Their clothing has been partly torn open, apparently to make sure all items were found that the dead were carrying. A few leather pouches are laying on the ground, and near one of them are several pieces of blue gravel, like the stones you're carrying. Rostar and his men pay the stones no heed.

Keitl, the mage, says, *"They took everything that was valuable except this,"* and he holds up the book in his hands. *"It's a spellbook, the last thing the barbarians want. The runes inside says it belongs to Nelissa of Daggerford, no doubt the lady there."*

Rostar looks at the scene and says, *"Those weren't Sky Ponies or Griffons. They bury the dead after an honor fight. Those were Black Ravens. They leave the bodies for the carrion birds. This is bad. Nesmé doesn't know that the Ravens are back in this area.*

You folks could be a big help if you'd get word of this to Lady Tessarin in Nesmé tomorrow. She needs to pull back the Riders from the moors and concentrate on defending the ciy. It's unlikely they'll ever work together, but the city could have a hard time holding out against all three tribes in a concentrated attack.

"Maybe Kralgar has hired the Ravens and the Sky Ponies to fight with him. He has it in his head that he's going to make Nesmé into Faerûn's first Uthgardt city. If he gets the Ravens and the Sky Ponies to ride with him, he might succeed."

Game Master: PC reaction.

While Rostar's fighters begin burying the four corpses, you return with Rostar to the center of the camp.

Rostar's prediction does come true. Within less than an hour, your campsite lies deep in thick, pea soup fog. Visibility is restricted to about 40 yards/12m or so, and the campfire burns a bit lower then usual. But Renda, the priestess of Lathander, is a great camp cook, and the fresh venison brought in barrels from Nesmé along with cooked potatoes and a camp vegetable stew taste better tonight than many a superlative inn's meals have, when one is used to dining in the city. Even the beer - Nesmé Trollbrau from a barrel - is a treat, although Rostar limits servings to a quart/liter per man, to make sure the watch stays alert through the night.

The companionship of Rostar and his men also is enjoyable. He tells you the Surbrin will bend somewhat south of the road shortly after the ford, so the smell of the moor won't be so bad anymore until you reach Nesmé, which is across the river on the edge of the moor.

"That smell," says Rostar, *"that sweet decayed smell, is the smell of troll."*

Game Master: PC actions. The following occurs after midnight.

There suddenly is shouting and alarm from watches in the area of the *Goblintide. "Awaken and to the defense,"* men are shouting. *"They surprised us. They came downstream on rafts."* In the weak light of the still flaming campfire you can see small creatures with yellow, orange and red skin running with spears and other weapons into the camp - Goblins - many of them.

GOBLINS: See the *Monster Manual* or *Monstrous Compendium for statistics.* 16 Standard MC goblins + 2 goblins per PC. Goblin weapons: nearly worthless. Goblin treasure, together: 13 copper darbs, 6 silver stengks from Luskan.

Game Master: You also can have Rostar ponder after the battle, why goblins are carrying coins from distant Luskan. On the next day, be sure to check the weather charts. Regardless, there will be fog until about 8 a.m.

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The *Goblintide* is wide - about 50 yards/15m - and shallow - seldom a foot/30cm deep -before it flows into the Surbrin. The stream is easy to ford. And once you reach the other shore, the magically built road of the Harpells takes a northeasterly course, while the river bends more to the east than to the north. Soon, both the river and the moors vanish from your view, and the smell of troll is only lightly in the air.

Game Master: There are the following encounters on this day. If you want more encounters, fighters and merchants from Nesmé, other adventurers, goblins, orcs and trolls all are possible.

You're under way for about an hour, when you see a group of 15 riders coming on the road in your direction. The riders still are about two miles away and are riding at a normal pace.

Game Master: This is a patrol of the Riders of Nesmé. If the PCs continue on:

The distance between you and the riders eventually narrows down to about 50 yards/15m. Most of the riders are well armed and well armored. There is a bearer of a flag in the group with the symbol of a flaming troll against a black field. Those bearing shields also have this symbol on the face of the shields.

Game Master: As soon as contact can be made:

You can see that the members of this group are experienced fighters, although two most likely are mages and one is a priest. One member of the group is a dwarf, although large for a dwarf, nearly 5 feet tall. He also has mastered horse-riding, despite his size. No doubt necessary to be a Rider of Nesmé. A pony would slow the patrol considerably. One of the leading riders shouts out, *"Well met! Amsradel, captain of the Riders of Nesmé at your service. What news is there on the trail to the west? Signs of orcs, barbarians? Uin! Come forth!"* The dwarf in the group rides forth to Captain Amsradel, who says, *"Uin here is our scout. Things you see often mean more to his eyes and ears than to ours."* Uin, a grizzled dwarf if ever there was one, nods in your direction and says in a raspy voice, *"Well, met! Bear ye news?"*

Game Master: If the PCs report about the slaying of the four adventurers at the Goblintide confluence, Amradel will question them in an attempt to gain as much detail as possible. After that topic is exhausted, he will give his news:

"You should make it to Nesmé today without much trouble. There's no sign of anything coming down from the North today."

The dwarf, Uin, adds, *"One of our patrols has found out that the orcs and the goblins are keeping each other busy. The Red Tooth goblins lair up in the Lurkwood, near the source of the* Goblintide*. The Screaming Fist orcs lair near the source of the Lurking River. That's only 10 miles/16km or so east of the Red Tooths, but they do have the two rivers between them.*

"Usually when they start fighting with each other it's because the one tribe or the other gets too active in the no man's land of forest between the two young rivers. The Red Tooths usually do their raiding west of the Goblintide and the Surbrin. And the Screaming Fists usually raid east of the Lurking River and north of the Surbrin.

"But the Griffons - that's a barbarian tribe settled up in that area - have been making life hard on the Red Tooths when they come out into the open. So the Red Tooths have started building river rafts to take them down the Goblintide, and after the confluence with the Lurking River, they've been raiding on both sides of the Goblintide and the Surbrin all the way down to Mornbryns Shield.

"The Screaming Fists haven't been standing for it. They've been slaughtering every goblin they find east of either river. The Red Tooths haven't gotten the message however. So less than a ride ago, the Screaming Fists decided to deliver the message in person. They marched through the forest and launched a full-scale attack on the Red Tooth camp. Since then, there's been an all-out war between the two tribes in the Lurkwood. A section of the forest is burning, but that probably won't get too much out of hand. It's been wet up there lately."

The dwarf spits down on the ground from his horse.

"Let's just hope the mangy bastards manage to wipe each other out!", he adds.

Captain Amsradel speaks again: *"As I said, I don't think you'll have much trouble. The main problems in this area come from the Griffons and the trolls. We have two patrols to the north, and they've seen no signs of the Griffons in the past few days. Another tribe was in this area about more than a ride ago - the Sky Ponies. But they rode up the east bank of the Goblintide, made an arc around Nesmé and crossed the Surbrin above its confluence with the Rauvin and rode off into the grasslands between the Surbrin and the Rauvin, towards Silverymoon, where they're more at home.*

"As for the trolls, well, there were some that threw trees over the narrows and crossed to the North early this morning. But I think we've gotten all of them. There's nothing left of those we got but ashes. We removed the trees too. And there are three patrols riding the south bank of the Rauvin between here and Nesmé today, destroying any trolls they find within the perimeter area. You'll may run into a few more patrols before you reach Nesmé, but I don't think you'll have any trouble today. The trouble's concentrated inside the moor and to the east of Nesmé right now. There are large hordes of giants and orcs gathering in the upper Surbrin Valley west of the Moonwood."

Uin, the dwarf adds, *"And the Riders of Nesmé only patrol the Trollmoors as far as the confluence with the Rauvin. After that, it's no man's land until Silverymoon. You've probably heard that the trolls are fleeing the moor. And that's just where they're doing it. They're crossing the Rauvin between the Surbrin as far as the Moonwood, and then they're fleeing up into the upper Surbrin Valley. Part of the reason they're fleeing is that giants are driving them out. But some say that a dragon or maybe more than one has settled in the moor and is behind it all. Who knows? And then, there are the Sky Ponies in that area too."*

Game Master: The rest of this encounter runs according to the role-playing.

You spend most of this day traveling through moist but not swampy grasslands. The landscape is slightly rolling but mostly flat. The spring grasses already are lush, and the scattered brush and trees are beginning to leaf out. Now and then, the Harpells' magic road twists around a small hill or dips and rises again, but most of the time your view is open for several miles around. In mid-afternoon you see a larger group of riders coming down a trail from the north through the grasslands ahead of you. The riders are more than two miles away, but they appears to be more Riders of Nesmé, although larger in number, about 20 in all. It looks like the riders will reach the road at about the same time as you reach the intersection with their trail.

Game Master: PC reaction.

As you come within hearing range, the forward rider shouts, *"Well met! Dragnor, field commander of the Riders of Nesmé, at your service. Is there news of the road?"*

Game Master: PC reaction. At the appropriate time:

Dragnor: *"Well, you don't have much to worry about from the North. We haven't seen any sign of the Griffons this time out. The Red Tooths and the Screaming Fists are still hard at war. Fortunately, it's raining heavily over the Lurkwood, and the fires are going out. That's the thing that bothered me the most. I'm a ranger. I lead only the outland patrols that stay out for a ride or so at a time and scout the enemy out. I'm all for the orcs and goblins butchering each other, as long as they don't burn the forest down in the process."*

Game Master: The rest of this encounter runs according to the role-playing.

Nesmé

7. Nesmé

Small City, Conventional, NG, 15,000 gp limit, Assets 1,000,000 gp. Population Mixed, 90% human, 5% dwarven, rest halfling, half elf, gnome.

The Map of Nesmé.

1 – The Fallen Temple, former Waukeen temple, overnighting possible.
2 – Citadel of the Riders
3 – Stockyards
4 – Docks
5 – House of the Wise Unicorn, club with rental rooms, no overnighting
6 – Sleepless Knight, secured house, fees high
7 – Forges of Nesmé (unofficial site)
8 – Sawmill (unofficial site)
9 – Cat on the Post, tavern
10 – The Duke and the Hunter, tavern
11 – Embattled Dwarf, tavern
12 – Five Gold Crowns, tavern
13 – Pride of the North, Festhall
14 – Northwind Arms, tavern
15 – Ringing Anvil, tavern
16 – Sundered Shield, tavern
17 – Corndibels Food & Provisions (unofficial site)
18 – Nesmé Trollbrau Brewery (unofficial site)

About an hour and a half before sunset, the road begins to climb gradually, limiting visibility to a point on the eastern horizon where the road apparently leads downward again and - at the moment - out of sight. In another hour, you reach that point without further incident, and the Surbrin Valley spreads out from north to south before you.

Straddling both sides of the river is a walled and fortified city, with a fortified bridge connecting both parts of the city. Behind the city are the bleak Trollmoors, however you can see that the part of the moors around the city but outside the walls is used extensively for farming and grazing.

The Surbrin flows out of the northeast, marking the boundary between the open grasslands to the northwest and the Evermoor to the southeast. It flanks Nesmé on its northwestern side, bends sharply to the southeast for about two miles, forms the city's boundaries on two sides, and then flows again toward the southwest.

Both parts of Nesmé are surrounded by heavy stone walls. The walls on the near side encircle a castle or citadel, flanked by stockyards and docks on the riverfront. Directly outside the walls on the west bank are four large horse ranches. The main city is on the east side of the Surbrin, also heavily walled in. There is another large castle or perhaps temple-like building in the eastern half of Nesmé, which really seems to be the heart of this isolated moor town. Outside the walls on the east side are a number of farms, stretching on into the Evermoor behind the city. Right now, the city seems to be having a problem. Smoke is pouring out of one of the boats in the docks.

Game Master: The next description begins when the PCs reach the outer wall on the west side, which is 30 feet/9m high.

As you approach the wall, one of the soldiers on watch greets you: *"Well met travelers? From where do you come?"*

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Game Master: PCs' reaction.

"What is your business in Nesmé?"

Game Master: And then:

" Have you had contact with our riders? Have you news of the road?"

Game Master: If the PCs mention their experiences, the guard will tell them that Lady Tessarin, the first speaker of the city, no doubt will request an audience of them. He then will continue on as follows:

"As a representative of the City of Nesmé, I bid you a hearty welcome to our fair and brave city, as we do to all welcome adventurers who come to our gate. If you plan a short stay here, there are accommodations available at the Merchants Hall - that's the huge building with the many spires on the other side of the river. It used to be the temple of Waukeen. If you have highly valuable items with you and you're willing to pay well for fortified, high security accommodations, you stay in The Sleepless Knight, *but that kind of safety has its price. A night there will cost you 5 platinum suns or platinum moons per room. If you're staying longer, there are plenty of fine houses here offering rooms by the week or the month. Enjoy your stay! You may enter!"*

As you enter through the massive city gate, the road leads you past a large citadel that apparently is the headquarters of the Riders of Nesmé. Below are the docks. The road leads upward across a wide, fortified and covered stone bridge that crosses the Surbrin.

As you ride through the bridge, you see four railed-off trapdoors in the center of the road. It looks as if these can be opened, to attack or perhaps pour boiling oil on invaders who come to Nesmé on the river instead of by land. Armed Riders of Nesmé with the symbol of the flaming troll are everywhere. The city seems to try to stay prepared for whatever may come its way. There is a mixed smell of forge fires and burning oil in the air.

As you reach the high point you can look through openings on the wall and down upon the docks and the river. Outside the city wall farms and pastures stretch off into the near reaches of the Trollmoors. Patrols of Riders keep watch in the farmlands too.

What you had thought was a burning boat is actually a somewhat stranger thing. It's a boat with a large cabin of fortified metal walls that has a large black chimney about 25 feet/7.7m high poking through the roof. This chimney is belching out the oily smoke you smell.

On the deck are four creatures similar to but somewhat smaller than dwarves. They all have light tan skin, noses twice as big as you've ever seen on anyone, and short but very well kept beards. These must be the gnomes you've heard of, but that seldom were seen in Neverwinter. You haven't the foggiest idea what kind of boat this might be. On the rear of the boat is a big round wheel made of metal slats that is halfway submerged in the water. The gnomes seem to be quite busy running around on deck, but at the same time, they don't really seem to be doing anything. Perhaps another of those great mysteries of the north.

At last you ride out of the bridge into the second and larger half of the walled-in city, on the moor side of the Surbrin. Here too are guards at the foot of the bridge. Before you is a city of perhaps 6,000 or so. Most of the buildings are square stone houses with gardens on the roofs. But there also are shops and taverns and quite a number of adventurer types going through the streets, some obviously a bit drunk already. And there is a festhall that seems to be doing a booming business this evening.

Along the wall below the bridge to the left is a series of larger buildings with sizeable chimneys and the smell of forges and smithies, but there also is a brewery with the sign *Nesmé Trollbrau."* The pedestrian traffic in this area also includes more than a few dwarves. One large buildings stands out in the middle of this section of the city. It is a huge building with many spires, apparently the former temple to Waukeen that's now called the Merchant's Hall, as the guard explained it.

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Game Master: On the PCs' first morning in Nesmé, as they are about to leave the Merchants Hall, they receive a message from the personnel that Lady Tessarin wishes to speak with them at 1 p.m. During this conversation she will:

- Question the PCs carefully on their journey.
- Try to convince them to stay in Nesmé.
- Warn them of the serious dangers of trolls, orcs, giants and Sky Pony barbarians between Nesmé and Silverymoon. She will even say there have been some recent reports of Drow Elves in this stretch recently.
- In the end, she mentions the possibility of traveling eastward with Graasz and his Gnomes. She should do this so well that the PCs really want to sail with Graasz and his tinker gnomes.

Lady Tessarin on Graasz: *"About a dozen years ago, a group of for gnomes came to Nesmé from some faraway island. They all are priests of the god Gond the Wondermaker. It was kind of funny at first. They used to rent the Fallen Temple once a week for some kind of service in Gond's honor, but most of the time, the four of them were only ones who attended, so they gave that up after awhile.*

"All four of them make the strangest contraptions. Most of them are ridiculous. Of course, one has to assume that these four are loaded in riches, and they have no guards at their workshop either. But word goes around quickly among thieves. And the word is out that this workshop is dangerous. Just about every time thieves have tried to break in there, they've come out dead or badly mangled by strange machines these gnomes build. Sometimes it's pretty gruesome.

"But we've learned to treasure Graasz and his friends. They also have invented some large fire-throwing machines. We experimented with them out on the moors. They're too complicated and unreliable for us. We're waiting for an improved version. But the gnomes have been quite successful with them. These flamethrowers carry enough oil for 100 shots. And one shot can destroy up to 50 trolls, if they're close enough together.

"Anyway, the four of them have their biggest invention to date - you probably saw it down on the docks. It's a big armored boat that runs without oars or sails. Graasz and his men have made some kind of big machine that burns oiled wood and it turns a funny wheel on the back of the boat that makes the boat go forward and backward. They also have some of these flamethrowers inside, and there are cabins above and stalls for horses on the lower deck. We've been pretty impressed with the boat, but we haven't been too effective with it.

"When we've taken it out on patrol, it scares off the trolls, and when barbarians see it, they flee at full speed. By the time the Riders get their horses on land, the barbarians have too much of a head start, and our men don't catch them. That kind of defeats our purpose. It doesn't help much, when we temporarily drive our enemies off. We want to destroy them!

"Anyway, Graasz sees this problem too, and he has another idea. If it works, it certainly could be an economic shot in the arm for Nesmé. One of the big problems we have here right now, is that Nesmé is a dead end. The only thing most people can do when they leave here is head back west. You folks for instance want to head on to Silverymoon. You'll never make it at your strength. You don't stand one chance in a thousand of getting through. Between orcs and giants and trolls and drow elves and the Sky Ponies, someone's going to make you good and dead long before you get to Silverymoon.

"That's where Graasz comes in. He thinks his boat is so well-armored that nothing can do it in. I think he might be right. He would like to start a boat line in the future that takes passengers in safety between Nesmé and Silverymoon. The possibilities are really exciting! Right now Silverymoon has nothing whatsoever to do with Nesmé. We're not enemies, you understand. It's just that because the Rauvin Valley hasn't been tamed yet, we're sort of at opposite ends of the world, even though we're less than 200 miles/320km distant from each other.

"I see it like this: This boat that Graasz has could be a great start. If we can prove that we can travel the Rauvin safely between Nesmé and Silverymoon, we can begin opening up trade with Silverymoon. And if we do that, I think I can convince the people here in Nesmé, that we should become a part of this new nation of Luruar. If we do that, we will forge bonds that certainly will go far toward helping us improve our security.

"Having trade with Nesmé will be of benefit to Silverymoon too. We have fine weapons, outstanding animals and barrel meat of the best quality to sell, and those are shortage items at times in Silverymoon.

"Right now, our Riders patrol the moor side of the Surbrin up to the confluence with the Rauvin. The Knights of Silver patrol the Rauvin downstream as far as the Trollmoors on the western edge of the Silverwood. That leaves about 90 miles/150km of deadly no man's land between our two cities. But the way I see it, if the merchants of Nesmé and Silverymoon both will see profit in opening a route between our cities, then I think we can raise the money between us to build a full-scale army to defend the Rauvin Valley. The Harpells are proud of the new road from here to Longsaddle, and Harkle already has said there's nothing he'd like to do better than extend the road all the way up to Lady Alustriel's doorstep, but before he's willing to take that on, the valley has to be tamed.

"What I wanted to do was send a patrol of Riders upstream to Silverymoon with Graasz on a maiden test voyage. However, the town council here is too conservative. Two rides ago, they turned me down, but did grant my alternative request and appropriated money for me to hire mercenaries or adventurers to travel to Silverymoon with Graasz.

"Unfortunately, that was no great victory for me. There are some experienced adventures who come here to seek treasure in the upper Surbrin Valley, but it's seldom that we get anyone who's heading toward Silverymoon or who even can be hired to go there. Folks normally just don't go to there from here.

"So, seeing you're going on to Silverymoon anyway. Graasz's boat will make better time than you can on land, because you don't have to camp at night. The gnomes can work in shifts and keep moving, night and day. I personally don't think Graasz's boat would be vulnerable to much of anything weaker than a dragon. Maybe you could damage it if cloud giants threw large boulders at it, but we've never had trouble with cloud giants in the Surbrin or Rauvin Valleys, although some cloud giants have moved into the Evermoor, but they stay in the interior of the moors.

"Anyway, if you're willing to ride to Silverymoon with Graasz and his men, I can pay you a commission in advance of 5 platinum Moons per person. There's plenty of room on board for your horses, and we'll set Graasz up with provisions enough to take care of you all the way to Silverymoon. Graasz is set to leave at anytime you want. In fact, he's getting so impatient to be off that he's threatening to leave without help. So .. what do you say?"

Game Master: The PCs should not be pushed into going with Graasz. If they refuse, they can ride upstream as far as the Rauvin confluence with a patrol of Riders. After that, they should get so battered that they want to turn back, but before or shortly after they do that, have Graasz come chugging upstream and offer them a ride. The rest of the events in Nesmé are up to the Game Master and role-playing. The statistics for Graasz and his party can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

8. River Rauvin

Game Master: Check the weather tables! The following takes place if the PCs ride with Graasz. If they start out with the Riders of Nesmé, play things out as described above. Let the players and riders have several encounters with trolls, orcs and Sky Pony barbarians. If the group is with Graasz, make sure you roll for seasickness. The boat does 45 miles/72km in a 24-hour-period.

On your first day on board, there's precious little adventure. Twice you steam past patrols of the Riders of Nesmé on the moor bank of the Surbrin. And frequently you pass the ashy remains of fires, with large bones protruding from the ashes. Toward sunset on the first day, you finally spot a band of trolls on the moor. There are nine of them 100 yards or so from the bank. One of the gnome fighters, Nardl, prepares the barrel of his flamethrower, but the trolls need only a quick glance at your smoke-belching boat, and they're convinced to hightail it for the interior of the moor.

When you awake on the morning of your second day, you see that your boat is just steaming into the confluence with the Rauvin and turning now westward, leaving the Surbrin behind. On the south bank, where the Rauvin meets the Surbrin, a camp of 20 Riders of Nesmé greets you, but the Riders also shake their heads, as if to indicate that you're all ravaging idiots. One of the riders shouts, *So, I see you finally found some victims, Graasz! Good luck to all of you. You'll need it! No man's land starts here."*

Graasz returns an unfriendly look back to the men in the marsh and shouts, *"We'll send you greetings from Silverymoon, troll sniffer!"*

The man laughs less now. *"I hope so Graasz,"* he shouts. *"But I wonder ..."*

Graasz ignores the remark, as you steam out of earshot. He tells you rather proudly, *"We're making great time. If you were getting up in a camp with the Riders this morning, you'd still have to ride another 15 to 20 miles/25 to 30 km, just to reach where we are now."*

Game Master: Check the weather tables!

This seems to be another uneventful day. Graasz is at the wheel and Nardl is keeping his eyes open for enemies that don't seem to be anywhere in sight. Rolfr and Gilkjr are sleeping. There are no more piles of ashes and bones on the edge of the moor. You've passed the point now where the Riders of Nesmé patrol. Other than that, the moor hasn't changed, but the view to the north is entirely different from what it was at sunset yesterday evening. Within 20 yards/54m or so of the Rauvin, the grass remains green and lush, but the grassland north of there slopes slightly uphill, and the land looks dry. The grasses are wiry, the plain relatively open and the occasional brush and trees more isolated from one another.

Game master: The following if weather and visibility allow: Starting about 12 miles north of the river, mountains appear, that become higher and higher as they fade into the horizon.

The only action before the noon hour is a brief sighting of half a dozen riders or so atop a small hill in the rough grasslands about three miles away. Graasz looks in their direction with his glass and says, *"Barbarians - Sky Ponies, I think, but I can't make out their symbol well from here. The boys look a little agitated. I don't think they like my boat. They're hightailing it."*

In the early afternoon, Nardl shouts out to Graasz, *"Hey, look here! A large school of butcher fish. I haven't seen those since we left Lantan. I didn't know there were butcher fish in the Rauvin."* Graasz ties the wheel in position and looks over the rail. *"That's what they are all right. Well, we didn't plan to go swimming anyway."*

He points the fish out to you. You see a school of several hundred fast-darting orange fish with grey stripes, all about a foot long, circling around the boat. This is the first time any of you have ever seen such fish. Nardl says, *"If you're ever in waters with butcher fish, don't go into the water! Those fish can strip your bones bare in less than two minutes time. Their teeth are like razors!"*

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Game Master: The statistics for Butcher Fish can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Now and then throughout the day, you spot riders far to the north, but even with the help of Graasz's glass, it's impossible to make out any details about them. There are no signs of trolls on the moor during the day, but in the time between sunset and darkness, you do spot groups of trolls deeper in the moor, seemingly tracking your progress from the distance. And the decaying, sweet smell of troll always lingers in the air.

Game Master: The next day. Check weather tables.

The new day starts without any sign of a foe on either bank of the Rauvin, although the smell of troll remains pungent in the air. Just ahead of you, the moor begins spreading toward the north, and the Rauvin also begins sweeping to the left in a northerly direction.

Graasz seems satisfied. *"By my reckoning,"* he says, *"we're about 90 miles/150km out of Nesmé and about 120 miles200km from Silverymoon, as the river flows. Of course, that would be a bit shorter by land, but you've still come about 30 miles/50km farther now then you would have on horseback. In other words, you've gained a day's time already. We'll need two more days after today, and then we're in Silverymoon. That's less than 5 full days. On horseback you'd need at least eight, and that's without any delays."*

Everything remains relatively quiet, but your enemies are becoming vigilant. Both the trolls and the barbarians seem to understand that you're bound to the water. After the morning fog has lifted, you notice that a band of about 30 trolls is running fast, keeping pace with the boat but also keeping distance. The trolls never come closer than about 2 miles/3km from the river.

After the fog clears even more, you also see that a troop of riders is keeping pace with you, perhaps 5 or 6 miles/8-10km to the north. Graasz studies the riders with his glass, then says only, *"Barbarians. About 50 of them, in all."*

In the course of the day, there is only one tight spot for you. You reach a narrow spot where the Rauvin flows rapidly. A huge tree trunk has been placed across the river there and wedged in place between large rocks. It's no doubt an improvised bridge made by the trolls. Graasz tries ramming the tree trunk out of the way, but the rocks hold it firmly in place, and the waterwheel at the back of the boat thrashes helplessly in the water. There's nothing for it, but to leave the boat and go on land, in an attempt to free the tree trunk from its place between the stones. The trunk itself is too big to use, but you think if you concentrate your strength on the stones, you may be able to dislodge it, and then Graasz will be able to ram the trunk with the armored hull and free it.

The barbarians to the north halt and hold their position. The trolls halt too, then begin moving carefully forward. You can see that the pack has grown. There are about 50 trolls advancing on you now. Graasz wakes Rolfr and Gilkjr. He tells Nardl and Gilkjr to help you with the rocks, and he and Rolfr man the flame throwers on the moor bank. The trolls come forth in your direction, but only cautiously and slowly. The rocks are huge - more than 4 feet/120cm high and a bit larger in diameter. Your first attempts to shove the stones aside is a dismal failure.

You can see that the barbarians are gaining a bit of courage now too. They are beginning to ride southward, in your direction, slowly but steadily. You have time, but not a lot of it. If you can't free the tree trunk, you'll have to turn back. The last thing you can do is travel on land here. The trolls have a hungry eye upon you, and the barbarians have perhaps a sporting eye upon you, the eye of a hunter, pursuing you as the game.

Game Master: Have the players notice that there are butcherfish in the water here again, so no one gets good ideas about swimming. Let the players use their ingenuity here, but don't make it easy. You also can make dummy dice rolls, and tell them that whatever they try fails. Meanwhile, the trolls and the barbarians keep approaching, although slowly. Make the players use their ingenuity. If they don't, you can let the gnomes flame the trolls, but let them hide in the boat again when the barbarians come charging. If they do use their ingenuity, let things get really tight. Have the gnomes flame the trolls and then, in the last minutes before the barbarians reach arrow range, let the players get back on board and use the following:

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SCENARIO: The PCs free the tree trunk:

Graasz backs the boat slowly about 100 yards/90m or so. You can see as he does that, that the Sky Ponies begin to draw back about 200 yards/180m from the position they had taken, and their horses are skittish. Nardl and Gilkjr stoke the furnace and Graasz opens the throttle full. The boat picks up speed and hits the tree trunk with such a jolt that it knocks most of you to the deck, but the tree falls into the water to the left or north of the boat and begins drifting downstream until it's behind you.

Then Graasz says, *"Okay, let's teach these Sky Ponies a lesson."* And he brings the boat back to a full stop. The Sky Ponies have moved back to a point about a mile/1.5km away and are doing nothing, just watching. Rolfr, Nardl and Gilkjr move over to openings in the middle of the deck and aim their flamethrowers. Rolfr tells all of you with range weapons to move to the two far ends of the deck and to take aim at the barbarians to the sides of the attack, but to wait until he gives the signal to attack.

Minutes go by. Graasz does nothing, and the Sky Ponies keep watching you. But then suddenly one of the barbarians raises a hand and shouts something. About 40 of the 50 barbarians spur the horses and ride in a full speed charge toward you and the river. The other 10 hang back.

Then, when they're about 30 yards/27m from the boat, they begin riding parallel to it, back and forth. shooting arrows from horseback, trying to shoot through the openings.

Graasz shouts, *"I'm going to have a little fun with these boys!"*

He begins turning metal valves in pipes inside the boat. After he's adjusted whatever it is he's adjusting, he pulls a thin chain. A weak scream comes from the roof of the boat. At the same time, Graasz makes the boat lurch a meter or two back and forth in the water and come to a stop.

The barbarians stop shooting and retreat about 20 yards/18m or so. They watch for a minute and then let out a victory whoop, spur their horses and charge farther. Graasz shouts, *"Get ready to fire!"*

The barbarians - 40 in all - are riding to flank the boat. 20 men come riding down the middle in full charge, direct against the center part of the boat. Two other groups of 10 men each ride to flank the boat for and aft. These make targets for your range weapons.

As the barbarians come within 30 yards/27m of the boat, they begin slowing their charge. Some draw their bows and arrows and others get out torches. More slowly now, they continue riding toward the boat until they're a mere 15 yards/14m away, then they stop. One of the barbarians shuts out, *"You who fight from the belly of the river dragon, come out! Your wyrm is wounded and has no fight left. Come out, and we will fight man to man with you and let you die deaths of honor. We have a mind to burn your wyrm. If you do not come out, you will burn too, like cowards!"*

Graasz shouts, *"Now, fire!"*

Game Master: Tally the PCs damage to the flankers, then:

While you're busy firing against the flankers, three huge balls of fire explode through the openings in the walls of the boat. In the central flank of barbarians, 18 of the 20 riders explode in oily flames, together with their horses, and are roasted to death on the spot. Only two of the riders in the rear of the group survive, their clothing partly in flames.

Seconds after you open fire, a horrible shriek sounds from the roof of your boat, one that no doubt echoes across the Evermoor and on into the mountains to the North. It brings fear into your souls too, although it doesn't seem to bother the gnomes. The surviving horses of the barbarians flee in all directions, riding away in terror. (**Game Master:** And some perhaps throw their riders.**)** The 10 barbarians who had stayed behind farther north of the river also flee wildly to the north.

"Hee hee hee," Graasz laughs nastily! *"Hee hee hee! Did you hear that? This thing has a whistle too! Hee hee hee! Full steam ahead!"*

With that Graasz adjusts and pulls among the various valves and levers before him. The boat jerks back to life and begins chugging upstream again, toward Silverymoon. Soon, you leave the scene of carnage behind you, but some time goes by before you clear the smell of burning human and horse flesh from your nostrils.

Rolfr says, *"Good work fellows! Good work Graasz. Rolfr and I are going to return to bed now. Who knows? Maybe we'll get to have some fun of our own during the night!"*

Game Master: Time for role-playing. Afterwards:

The day wears on without further encounters. After about an hour or so, you notice that a small group of riders is following you on land, three or four miles/5 or 6km distant to the north, and now and then bands of trolls seem to be keeping an eye upon you from deeper within the moor, but your enemies are keeping a healthy distance between them and you. And in the evening your boat leaves the western sunset in its wake and chugs on into the eastern night.

Game Master: On the new day only the temperatures are valid from the weather table. A heavy fog settles in that does not rise substantially during the course of the day.

As you begin the new day. you notice that the fog presses exceedingly close upon the boat. Visibility is less than 50 yards/45m, and the stench of the trolls is extremely strong. However, if trolls or barbarians still are attempting to follow you, they're doing it in vain. Nothing other than magic could follow you with its eyes through this fog. The barbarians abhor magic, and the trolls have none.

Game Master: Pause for role-playing.

It looks like this could be a boring day. There are no signs of an enemy, although the troll stench remains strong, and foes could be nearby. Graasz says, *"We're sailing toward the southeast now, but in a little while, the Rauvin will make a big bend, and from there it's straight northwesterly to Silverymoon. We've come about 130 miles/100km now, that's about 40 miles/65kmmore than you would have made on land, without delays. We should be in Silverymoon at about noon tomorrow."*

Game Master: Pause for role-playing.

The morning wears on. Nardl remains ready with the flamethrower, in case trolls do appear, but the first hours of the morning pass without incident. The fog lifts slowly and slightly. At mid-morning, the visibility begins reaching out to about 75 yards/70m. There's little for any of you to do but stare out into the fog.

After awhile Graasz interrupts the monotony. He tells Nardl, *"Go wake Rolfr and tell him I want him to make some calculations for me."*

Game Master: Graasz volunteers nothing more. If the PCs ask what's up, he answers:

GRAASZ: *"There's some kind of strange current that pulses through the water here. I think I know what it is, but I'm not sure. We're nearing the point where the river bends sharply to the northeast. I suspect there are some rocks on the south shore there that are causing a cross-current. But I don't like to guess on such matters. Rolfr can calculate that mathematically to a certainty."*

Game Master: And then:

A few minutes later, Rolfr does show up in the cabin, still rubbing his sleepy eyes. *"What's up Graasz?",* he asks.

"Probably nothing," Graasz answers. *"There's an unusual crosscurrent that pulses in the water now and then. I just want you to calculate what it is."*

Rolfr goes to a cabinet and removes a strange device with a ball on a chain and a gauge, a bit of parchment, a quill with ink and an abacus. He leaves all but the device on a table in the cabin, goes then on deck and attaches the device to the side of the boat, dropping the chained ball into the water. He goes back into the cabin to get the parchment, quill and ink and then returns to the deck.

Rolfr turns his attention to the device and closely observes the motion of the chain in the water and the constantly varying values on the gauge, scribbling madly all the while.

Then he brings everything back into the cabin, sits at a table and begins calculating madly with his abacus, saying nothing in way of explanation except, *"Hmmm"* and *"Interesting"* and *"You don't say!"*

After about 5 minutes of this, Rolfr finally turns to Graasz and says, *"There's some large object moving downstream with the current. It's coming right down the center of the riverbed. I think we'll meet each other in about half an hour."*

Graasz asks, *"Can you tell what it is?"*

"No," Rolfr answers. *"But from the size of it, I'd guess it's a large tree that the trolls uprooted to form a bridge, one that fell into the river and is drifting in our direction now. But that's just a guess."*

Graasz says, *"That could be dangerous. I guess we'll have to hug the north shore and slip by it. If we hit something like that head-on, it could damage the hull, but if we graze it from the side, our armor plating will take only a few scratches.*

"Well, good enough. You can go back to sleep, Rolfr. Now, the rest of you, go on deck. Keep a close watch for obstacles along the bank that we might hit. And Nardl, you take the flamethrower and eliminate any problems that come up. And later on, if you see any sign of this tree, give me plenty of warning."

Rolfr says, *"But Graasz, you don't have to do that yet. It'll be another half hour before we come together with this thing!"*

Graasz replies, *"Could be, Rolfr. But when trolls build a bridge, they often use more than one tree. Now, what if you've calculated one tree half an hour away, but there are really two of them, both smaller than the one you calculated, and the first one is only 10 minutes away? I do believe in playing safe."*

Rolfr answers, *"Ah yes! That's a good point you have there Graasz. Very good. Could be. Okay. I'll head off to bed again and leave things in your good hands."*

Game Master: Pause for role-playing.

After you go onto the deck, you find neither navigational problems nor anything for Nardl to flame with his weapon - at least for the first 15 minutes. Then you see a group of creatures on the north bank of the Rauvin, all about 70 yards/65m away from the boat. These creatures look like a cross between lizard men and dragons, something like those who attacked the Dragon Cult members between Longsaddle and Nesmé. These creatures - eight in all - move their hands to their weapons - ready to defend themselves - but they make no move to attack. They're simply prepared.

Nardl has his flamethrower aimed toward this creatures. He shouts back to Graasz, *"Whaddya think Graasz?"*

Graasz answers, *"I don't know what they are, but as long as they don't try to do anything to us, I wouldn't do anything to them:"*

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Game Master: Do the PCs do anything? If so, they're facing 4 goblin draconians, 3 orc draconians and a troll draconian who will fight to the death, if attacked. In the background, just beyond the fog curtain, is a dragon vampire named Rughad Szabul. If the PCs attack, play it out. If not, the boat steams by and the draconians do nothing but watch. The folks on this boat don't interest them. They're after dragon cultists.

In less than 20 minutes, your boat begins rounding a huge bend in the Rauvin. The river is wider here, and Graasz slows down. *"If there is a huge tree trunk floating downstream, we should be able to go around it with no problem,"* he shouts out to you on the deck. *"Thank the good gods and Umberlee too, that the river's so wide here. If Rolfr calculated correctly - and he always does - we should see that thing in another 10 minutes!"*

Because of the fog, you can see only little of the huge river bend that Graasz is describing, but you can feel that the boat is swinging gently around to the left as it continues hugging the north bank. That continues for a few minutes and then you see lots of unexplainable ripples and waves on the surface of the water, about 50 yards/45m in front of the boat. Graasz apparently sees it too, because he brings the boat to a sudden stop and sounds a short, urgent screech on the whistle.

The water continues to churn about 50 yards/45m in front of you, but the cause is impossible to determine. Still looking sleepy, Rolfr and Gilkjr appear on deck with flamethrowers in their hands. *"What's up?",* Gilkjr shouts. Nardl says nothing. He simply points to the churning water 50 yards/45m in front of your fog-enshrouded boat.

You watch this fateful spot on the water's surface for a minute or so, and then something begins emerging from the water, something huge. It's a dragonlike head, at least 8 yards/7m wide, followed by a long, long neck and red, glowing eyes. Actually, if you forget that it has no wings, it looks a lot like a dragon.

The gnomes look at it, and Rolfr, a look of dazzled wonder upon his face, says, *"A waterlingørmr! Wonderful! Who thought I'd ever get to see something like that?"*

Nardl turns to the rest of you and shouts, *Get inside now, all of you! That thing can breathe a huge cloud of boiling steam. If it hits you, you'll be like lobsters on a steaming plate in the Helm and the Cloak in Baldur's Gate. You might taste good, but you'll be dead. I know how to fight this! Get in! This is my moment!"*

Game Master: Any PCs who stay on deck probably will get roasted. *Requiescant in pace*. But check here, to see what the PCs do.

The beast in the water begins to bend over in Nardl's direction. At the same time, Nardl turns the flamethrower on the waterlingørmr. The beast lets out an earthshaking bellow of pain and breathes a huge cloud of steam over the entire boat. It becomes oppressively hot in the cabin, but not hot enough for damage. As the steam clears, you see the soot-covered and scalded head of the waterlingørmr bending over Nardl and then swallowing him in a single bite.

Game Master: Give the PCs a chance to react. Nardl's flamethrower did 12d6 dmg. The statistics for the waterlingørmr can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

After swallowing Nardl, the waterlingørmr disappears beneath the water again. Rolfr, in a voice filed with scientific consequence, says, *"It'll be back. A waterlingørmr has to dive and refill its water pouches with more water and then boil the water before it can make another steam attack. But something else is interesting too. Did you notice the angle of its neck?"*

Graasz answers, *"No I didn't. What did you see?"*

Rolfr already has gotten out his abacus again. *"Hmmm,"* he says. *"Let me see now. Yes, yes, just as I thought. The angle of the waterlingørmr's neck really leaves no doubt in the matter. Yes, of course. The rest of its body is precisely under our boat!"*

Game Master: Give the PCs a chance to react.

Graasz says, *"Oh!".* But before he can add anything to that, the boat begins lifting slowly out of the water.

Rolfr says, *"I don't think this will be too bad. The waterlingørmr's strong, but the armored plating makes the boat quite heavy. He can lift it, of course, but I think the boat's too heavy for it to do much damage."*

Rolfr may be right, but the tail or body of the creature certainly is raising the boat out of the water, although so slowly that the movement is almost gentle. The tail then tries to flip the boat violently onto the shore of the moor, but the boat really is too heavy for the beast. All it achieves, is that it manages to lay the boat on its side on the ground, without much violence. Something does break, however, because you can hear a large cracking sound. And you are all thrown from your feet.

Game Master: Check for Dexterity here. Those who make the check manage to land on the inner wall of the cabin without damage. Those who fail their check hit the wall for 1d3 hp dmg.

GILKJR: *"Do you smell what I smell, Graasz?"*

GRAASZ: *"I believe so, Gilkjr. Oil and burning wood. The tank has broken open and the engine room too. Everybody out of here! Quick!"*

Game Master: Within 1d4 rounds of this warning, there will be a roaring fire on the surface of the river that lasts for 1d2 turns. The fire burns outward, however, and does little actual damage to the boat. After the fire is out, the PCs can retrieve whatever possessions may be on board, but they will have to contend with the waterlingørmr first. Don't forget that the PCs' horses also are on board. Each horse has a 15% chance of damage from the fall of the boat. A throw of 6-15% indicates the horse will be partly lamed for 1d2 days, and a throw of 1-5% indicates a broken leg. This describes the fire for the PCs.

Flames rise suddenly across the surface of the Rauvin. Rolfr says, *"Well, that'll keep the Waterlingørmr under water for a bit! Nothing destroys a waterlingørmr so thoroughly as flames. If there are any trolls around, they'll keep their distance too."*

GRAASZ: *"I don't like this. We'll have to make it to Silverymoon before we can get what we need to fix the boat. The seams have cracked open all around the engine room, and all our flamethrower fuel is burning. At least it's getting out, and the boat isn't burning. We have only three flamethrowers left now, and each one can fire three blasts. That's it then. And we're still about 50 miles/80km east of Silverymoon. This isn't going to be easy. Gilkjr, go back in and get the flamethrowers out. We only have two choices. Either we have to flee deeper into the Trollmoors, or we have to destroy the waterlingørmr. Nardl already started that job. Let's finish it for him!"*

Rolfr seems to have his thoughts elsewhere. *"Now look at that!",* he says, pointing to the Rauvin. At least 200 butcherfish are floating belly up on the water, dead. *"Now I wonder what caused that!"*

Game Master: The oil in the water killed the butcherfish. This is intended as a very subtle tip to the PCs, but if they don't pick up on the idea, let it drop. The question now is, what do the PCs do? The gnomes will refuse to let the PCs use the flamethrowers, telling them they're too weak and inexperienced to stand against the waterlingørmr. If your situation needs it, you can have Graasz make the following remark:

GRAASZ: *"Now you folks get back, at least 50 yards/45m or so. This thing can shoot it's scalding steam out over a stretch of about 40 yards/35m, and if it hits any of you, I don't think anything will be left of you except a well-done roast for the trolls."*

Game Master: How the following events run is up to you. The gnomes no longer are needed for this adventure. If the players have been running their characters well, the PCs all should have reached the 2nd or 3rd level by now. With a few lucky dice rolls and good thinking, most of them should be able to make it to Silverymoon alive. It's your good right as a game master to keep as many or as few of the gnomes alive as you want. Our suggestion is, you have all three go out in flaming and steaming glory, destroying the waterlingørmr in the process.

If you want to do that, make the necessary dice rolls but ignore the real results and use the following scenario. If not, play things out the way you want them to be. In the end, however, the PCs and whoever else survives should be stuck on the moor side of the river in thick fog. It's now early afternoon. There's no opportunity here to cross the river except by swimming, and if the PCs want to do that, have them spot large schools of butcherfish in the water. If they do put together the connection between the dead fish and the oil, don't let them use it yet. Have a group of barbarians appear on the edge of sight on the north side of the river.

OPTIONAL SCENARIO:

Within a few minutes, Graasz, Rolfr and Gilkjr are lined up with their flamethrowers at the bank of the Rauvin, and not a moment too soon. The water begins churning, and the head of the waterlingørmr bursts out of the water once more. The golden and green color in the beast's face is mottled now with burns and large festering blisters. Steam is drifting from its nostrils and its open maw. *"Now!",* shouts Graasz, and three huge balls of fire envelope the waterlingørmr's huge head. From inside the flame a horrible shriek of pain echoes across the fogged-in moor. But before the flames have vanished, a massive cloud of hissing steam envelopes the three gnomes, and they too scream with pain. The blackened face of the waterlingørmr darts downwards, rises again with Rolfr's blistered but still wriggling body dangling from its maw, and then the head disappears beneath the river's surface.

As the steam clears, you see that every last bit of hair has been scalded from the heads of Graasz and Gilkjr. The skin of both is red and blistered, and Gilkjr is laying on the ground, writhing in pain. Graasz goes over to him and speaks some words over Gilkjr's writhing body. His actions do not heal the blisters, but Gilkjr stops writhing, stands again, retrieves his flamethrower and prepares for the next round.

Game Master: If a PC tries to help, Graasz orders the PC back. If a PC persists in coming forward, he probably will cease to exist in a few minutes.

Minutes go by, and there is no sign of the waterlingørmr. But then the water churns again, and with less energy than before, the huge head emerges from the water, blistered and except for the glowing red eyes now fully blackened. Again, the blasts of both flame throwers envelope the beast's head. From within the flames, there is another shriek of pain, this time much weaker than the last.

And then comes another huge blast of steam over Graasz and Gilkjr. The head of the waterbeast sweeps down once more, striking at Graasz, and rises then briefly, with the upper head, torso and arms of Graasz in its maw. His trunk and legs remain on the river bank.

The upper part of his body falls from the waterlingørmr's maw into the river and disappears quickly in the downstream current. The long neck of the waterlingørmr falls onto the gnomes' beached boat, badly denting its armored hull. Its lifeless eyes continue to stare out at you. Gilkjr lies unmoving, scalded and somewhat bloated on the bank of the Rauvin. The land suddenly becomes strangely quiet again, and you notice once more, that the smell of troll is strong in the air.

You look about you, and it sinks in, that you're stranded in the thick fog of this mid-afternoon on the edge of the Trollmoors, still a long 50 miles/80km from your goal, Silverymoon.

9. The Trollmoors and the Moonwood

You may be stuck on the Trollmoors, but there are no trolls in your immediate vicinity, at least at the moment, although the smell of troll remains strong in the air. By mid-afternoon, the visibility increases to about 150 yards/135m, not much perhaps, but enough to at least prevent a surprise attack. The land on the moor is open, at least along the river bank. Small clusters of wiry, leafless bushes with short, sharp thorns are the only significant brush in this area.

Game Master: Encourage the PCs to make their own decisions here, even if you know nothing will help them much. The brush the PC sees are intelligent wirybush plants, which are mobile. Any attempts to cross the river here should be foiled by butcherfish, barbarian sightings, etc. If the PCs provoke you into making a barbarian sighting, have them shoot arrows, forcing the players 100 yards deeper into the moor and out of sight of the river bank. This can improve the adventure, because the PCs probably will do nothing to mark direction, in which case they can get lost temporarily on the Trollmoors. The next description is for late evening:

Towards evening the fog and the smell of troll start thickening. It's usually recommended that one keep a strong fire going at night to hold trolls off, but there are no trees on the moor here. There's also no source of firewood except for the four-foot high wiry bushes you see scattered across the visible part of the moor. How well these will burn is another question. Although the bushes haven't leafed out yet, it is late Spring, and they're probably moist and green inside.

Game Master: If a PC tries to cut down a wirybush, the first attack will begin. Wirybushes will burn, but only quite poorly when they haven't been thoroughly dried. The statistics for the wirybush can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* game master: From this point on, the PCs should be entertained by trolls and wirybushes. A player whose PC dies cannot substitute now until the PCs reach *Khiezar Dalan*, where the substitute character could be a prisoner of the orcs. How often and how many encounters there will be should be determined in balance with the condition of the PCs. You should force them to fight for their survival. At the start, the PCs should defeat the trolls easily with the staff from the Harpells, but remember, it has only 15 charges. It's your job to run this staff down. It's use has a positive side; it gives the PCs points toward needed new levels.

If the PCs don't take some kind of steps to assure that their spell users can sleep uninterrupted, they will be unable to learn new spells the following day. Remember: It's your job as game master to interrupt and their job to overcome the interruptions. When the new day starts, check the weather table for temperatures. This is another day when the fog is thick. The visibility at daybreak is about 30 yards/27m, at 10 a.m. 50 yards/45m, increasing to about 75/70m yards at noon. Even if the PCs don't intend to go that way, have them hear running water again and at about noon arrive back into the Rauvin. At noon:

Both banks of the Rauvin start to become somewhat rocky. The river itself is about 30 yards/27m wide. The wiry bushes are totally absent on this part of the moor, and for the short distance that you can see north of the river, the land looks gravelly and not particularly fertile. Then, through the fog, a perhaps heartening sight opens before your eyes. A cluster of boulders stands on the north bank of the Rauvin, forcing the river to flow through a more narrow path here, squeezing together to a width of a mere 10 yards/9m. Of course, with the rapid, swirling currents at this point and boulders an both banks, you wouldn't necessarily want to try swimming across, to say nothing of possible butcherfish.

But that's not necessary. The trolls apparently have bridged the river here for you. Several young but solid oaks have been uprooted and placed across the stream here, 3 yards/less than 3m above the rushing waters. There are four trunks in all, side by side and wedged into place by the boulders on both sides, so they can't slip. The trunks are all about 12 inches/30cm wide on your side of the river and 18 inches/45cm wide on the other side, where their still fresh roots dangle in the air. If you lead them carefully and they don't bolt, your horses should be able to cross here too. It may be a good idea to cross quickly. The smell of trolls is getting intense. There must be trolls nearby, probably quite a few of them, in fact.

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Game Master: It's time now to start herding the PCs toward the lost rear gate to Khiezar Dalan, and the Sky Ponies will do that for us. The Sky Ponies have carefully been following the Rauvin. They have discovered the wreck of Graasz's ship and the corpse of the waterlingørmr. They rafted to the other side and determined that the PCs survived and are following the Rauvin eastward, and this "trollbridge" is a trap that they've set to lure the PCs to them. The Sky Ponies, as is their wont with outsiders, may be underrating the PCs, however.

These oaks were uprooted on the north side of the river. No oaks grow on the moor. And it would be almost impossible to place the trunks across the river with the root side up. The Sky Ponies also have left a lot of tracks behind. Alert PCs in the group may well come up with the idea that this doesn't add up. The additional clues are not hard to find, if the PCs search for them. The Sky Ponies - about 100 in all - rode in along the river bank from the west. They stopped here and trampled a lot of ground just north of the river. There also are clear tracks in the mud showing how the trees were dragged southward to the river. And there are clear tracks eastward along the north bank, showing that the Sky Ponies rode farther in that direction.

If you have a ranger in the group playing his role really well, and the events here haven't sunk in yet, give him a note or two, saying there are no oaks on the moor and that he sees all of these tracks, or both. If you have a ranger who hasn't earned these notes, make two wisdom checks. For each check he passes, give him one of the notes. A ranger has a good chance of spotting such things, even if he isn't looking for them. If other players find incongruities on their own, let them explore the possibilities. Without much trouble, the players will find all the signs above, if they are looking for something. The scenario continues as follows, to keep the PCs from turning back onto the moor:

You're only on the opposite shore for moments, when you hear a large number of creatures running through the fog on the other side of the Rauvin. With the sickeningly sweet smell of troll so heavy in the air, you have a good idea what kind of creatures these are. Unfortunately, the trolls can cross the bridge as easily as you did. And they're starting to emerge from the fog now. There must be 50, 60 .. no close to 100 trolls there. They stop briefly, to take in the situation, then begin crossing the rocks to reach the oak trunks.

Game Master: If the PCs don't flame the tree trunks, your adventure will end suddenly, with your PCs stuffing the tummies of hungry trolls. If the PCs do flame the trees, they're stuck on the north side of the Rauvin, where you want them.

THIS SEGMENT OCCURS ONLY IF THE PCs CONTINUE ALONG THE RAUVIN:

Game Master: The Sky Ponies are having an unplanned skirmish with Trolls.

You make your way for another half hour or so along the river, and then you hear the sound of a small battle less than a mile ahead of you. There's also the smell of smoke in the air - in fact the smell of burning troll. It could be that the Sky Ponies are ahead of you battling trolls.

Game Master: If the PCs continue forward but are too dumb to do it quietly, have the Sky Ponies spot them and lead them on a life-and-death chase through the fog in the area north of the river. The PCs will end up then by the gate to *Khiezar Dalan.* As a reward for such stupidity, some of the PCs should stand a good chance of being severely wounded or killed. If the PCs move up carefully on the Sky Ponies, the barbarians do not give them credit for being so smart and will not spot the PCs. Horses being ridden do not count as careful. Scouts going ahead on foot do. In that case:

You can't make anything out with your eyes, but you can hear voices, perhaps 50 yards or so away. If you listen carefully, you probably can make out the words:

Game Master: Do the PCs listen carefully?

Pony 1: *"The cowards from the monster belly should have been along by now."*

Pony 2: *"The idiots are slow. Don't worry. We'll hear them anytime now, galloping down the road as if there's nothing to fear. Without their iron water monster, they're nothing."*

Pony 1: *Hey, quiet, I thought I heard something!"*

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Game Master: Time for a silent pause.

Pony 2: *"There's nothing out there."*

Pony 1: *"I still don't like this. Damned fog. You know what they're going to do, don't you. They're going to head north, find the old Herald's Road and slip right around us. We can't let that happen. My brother is one of those who fell. I've sworn a blood oath. I intend to keep it."*

Pony 2: *"Calm down now. Jerek knows what he's doing. If they take too long, we'll track them and find them. But don't worry about the road. Those idiots don't know it's there, and they won't know how to get any farther in this fog except to keep following the river. They'll walk right into our trap. Be quiet now, or we won't hear them when they do come."*

Game Master: Silence. By this time, the PCs should have decided to head north. If not, have the Sky Ponies spot them and chase them there through the fog.

THE HERALD'S ROAD

You go somewhat blindly through the fog, after awhile having no specific idea where you really are, when you come upon the remainder of a road. You can see that the road is used. There are tracks in it, old and new (**Ranger:** Horses, orcs and elves). But in addition to the tracks, there are many roadstones along the way. This obviously is an ancient road that once led to somewhere. As you're looking at it, the road runs in a right-left-direction. The fog makes it difficult to tell, but it seems that the lightest point in the sky is to your left and the darkest to the right. In that case, a left turn would lead you generally in the direction of Nesmé, and a right turn generally in the direction of Silverymoon.

Game Master: When the PCs go to the right:

You ride only a short while, when the road comes to the edge of a mixed forest, partly spruces and partly maples and oaks with birches an the outer fringe. This could well be the Moonwood north of the Trollmoors and north of Silverymoon. If you stick with the edge of the forest, it would at least take you to the village of Quaervaar, half a day north of Silverymoon, with a good road heading south into the city.

Game Master: Role-playing among the PCs.

The fog is somewhat thinner here than on the river. You can see for about 100 yards/90m. Between the river and the forest you also ascended about 50 yards/45m or so. Still, there's not much for you to see and not much that could make you out either. So far, you seem to have evaded the barbarians. There are no signs of them, and the horses aren't to be heard either.

As you go along, rocky hills begin interrupting the edge of the forest at points. But outside of these, there are no places where the trees stand far enough from another to make a camp for the night that's hidden to possible eyes outside of the wood. Shortly before darkness falls, the fog thickens again, a cold drizzling rain starts to fall and visibility rapidly drops to about 50 yards/45m. At the same time, you come upon a small cave in the side of the hill, or, at a second look, more likely a shelter that someone dug into the hillside. Whatever it is, it's old and shows no signs of having been used for some time. (**Game Master:** Dwarves in the group will be convinced that this is the work of dwarves.)

The cave has a more of less oval shape, about 50 x 60 feet/15 x 18m in size. There are a few orc bones lying on the floor and ancient ashes of a long burned out fire, but nothing recent. As you're examining the cave, you hear horses in the distance. Listening a bit more closely, you seem to sense two groups of horses, one large, coming from the southwest, and another smaller, coming from the east. However, the horses are too far away for you to see anything. And in 10 minutes or so it will be too dark to see anything.

But before you can reconsider your situation further, a horn blows loudly in your vicinity. And it seems you can make out faint movement on the edge of the fog, about 50 yards/15m south of the cave. But at least it seems to have stopped raining again.

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Game Master: There are 6 Sky Pony scouts out there, each armed with longbow and with Attack Bonus 2/THAC0 18 at 50 yards/45m.

After another 20 minutes you can see and hear horses bearing riders with torches coming into the clearing before the cave. There must be close to 100 riders out there. One of them, holding a long shield before himself, rides to within 10 yards/9m of your cave and shouts out: *"Cowards who ride in monster bellies! Come out! You have hidden yourself in a place of great evil, where no Sky Pony will attack you. But you wrong yourselves, though cowards you may be.*

"I Jerek demand that you come out. Die with honor in battle with us, rather than dying of the horror you will find in this cave! I have spoken. We will wait for you to come to your senses."

The rider turns his horse around, and the Sky Ponies build fires and make their camp before the opening to the cave.

10. Khiezar Dalan

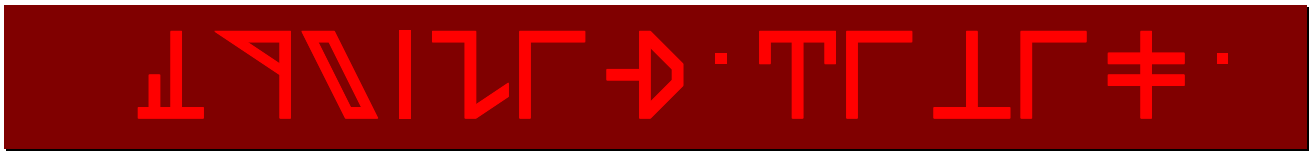
Game Master: The PCs are on the doorstep to a rear gate of fabled *Khiezar Dalan*. There really isn't a lot for them to gain here outside of knowledge, with one exception. Player groups seldom make ingenious moves. But one part of this complex is home to the small band of Bleeding Eye orcs, who are out to make a name for themselves. The PCs could - in an ingenious move - go into the orc tunnels, raise a bit of hell and run out again, then duck into *Khiezar Dalan* proper, while the orcs rush out and attack the Sky Ponies, whom they outnumber 2-1. But let us see what happens...

Khiezar Dalan Map - Level 1

A: Described above.

B: There are signs of foot traffic to this point. There is wear in the stony floor of the cave up to this point. Examination will reveal that the stone there is actually a turning door. After opening this door, the PCs will hear the orc voices at D. This door is best of all if a PC accidentally opens it.

C: Here are two sturdy, wooden doors. The drow who live in Khiezar Dalan have not succeeded in opening these doors, even with their strongest magic, and therefore do not guard them well, believing no one else can open them either. How they open in your campaign should depend upon the races of the PCs in your group. If you have a dwarf, then only a dwarf should be able to open the doors, and if a dwarf comes within 1 foot of the door, red Dethek runes will glow in the wood, saying *Khiezar Dalan:*



Glowing runes in the door ***Text:*** **Khiezar Dalan**

If there is no dwarf in the group, perhaps you could have the door open when a human or gnome verbally asks the door to open and identifies himself as a dwarf friend. If the group has only elves, halfelves and or halflings, you probably should require thieves' abilities. But above all, the PCs should have a means to open the doors.

Orc Wing:

D: This is a guard area. Six orc warriors are stationed here, expecting nothing, gambling. The orcs are at about the point where the letter D is on the map. They've left a warning horn lying at the entrance to area E. It will take the orcs 1d4+2 rounds to reach the horn if they are engaged, because they will not think of it at first. They will think only of fighting at first. These orcs have no treasure, other than poor quality long swords (-1, not cursed) and armor, chain mail AC 7.

E: This chamber has a deep pool of blue black water. On the outer edge one can see several ancient coins laying upon the pool's bed (Game Master: The Coins of Binding). The walls glow in a strange red color, and there are no signs that the orcs enter here. 1d4 rounds after the PC enters this room, the shimmering, transparent ghost of a red dragon will rise above the water and say, *"At last! No more orcs! Sammaster did this to me. He awoke me from the sleep of death and stole my body. I command you now to wreak revenge!"* And then the ghost sinks again into the pond. This sounds like a burdensome geas, but the PCs do not feel as if they have been obligated.

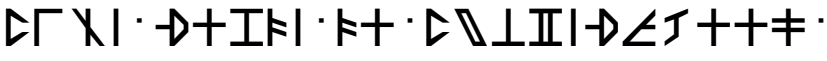
Game Master: The PC's are now bound to Grafvitnir's will by the Coins of Binding, but he will active the binding until later in the *NJ* adventure, when he requites the PCs' services. Szarkh Gortth also has stained the walls of this chamber with invisible runes implanting the Sigylls of Contagion upon the PC's, thus also binding them to Sammaster and Kargmelchina's will. These sigylls will be activated, a year later in Silverymoon, in Segment 2 of *NJ*, *Moonwood,* when Sammaster and Kargmelchina are ready for the adventurers to go forth and do their dirty work

F: In this room are many wooden barrels, unguarded. If the PCs look into them, they will find spoiled, salted meat and old, flat beer.

G-H: Large piles of stone have been placed here, at the entrance to a well-lit orc village under the earth. There are several large boulders in this cave, along with a number of ramshackle huts. You estimate that you can see about 200 orc warriors, almost an equal number of orc wives and 300 to 400 orc children, all living in cramped quarters and often fighting with one another. This entrance is not guarded. The cave looks as though it's a dead end.

Dwarf Wing:

Game Master: These halls are totally dark. As soon as the PCs reach the first 'Y' crossing after going through the double doors, they see the following runes cut into the stone, which read *Safe route to Silverymoon*.



Unfortunately for the PCs, these runes promise more than they can deliver. The old underground road to Silverymoon caved in ages ago.

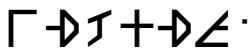
C: This marking denotes wooden doors, 7 feet wide and 10 feet high, just like the main doors. The rest are locked only if there is a thief in the group to open them, and they do not produce glowing runes.

I: At these points, the corridor passes defensive inner walls with arrow slots. No one is behind these walls.

J: Caved in tunnels. A 20 foot wide corridor led through here. Rails still are in the floor of the dusty corridor.

K: A long, dark, descending stairway, 10 feet wide.

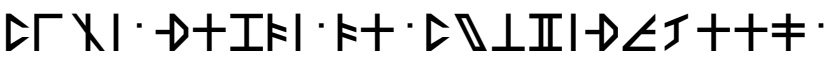
L: For no apparent reason, the stairway ends for a space of 30 feet, then continues again. (Secret door). However, there are runes in the wall at this point:

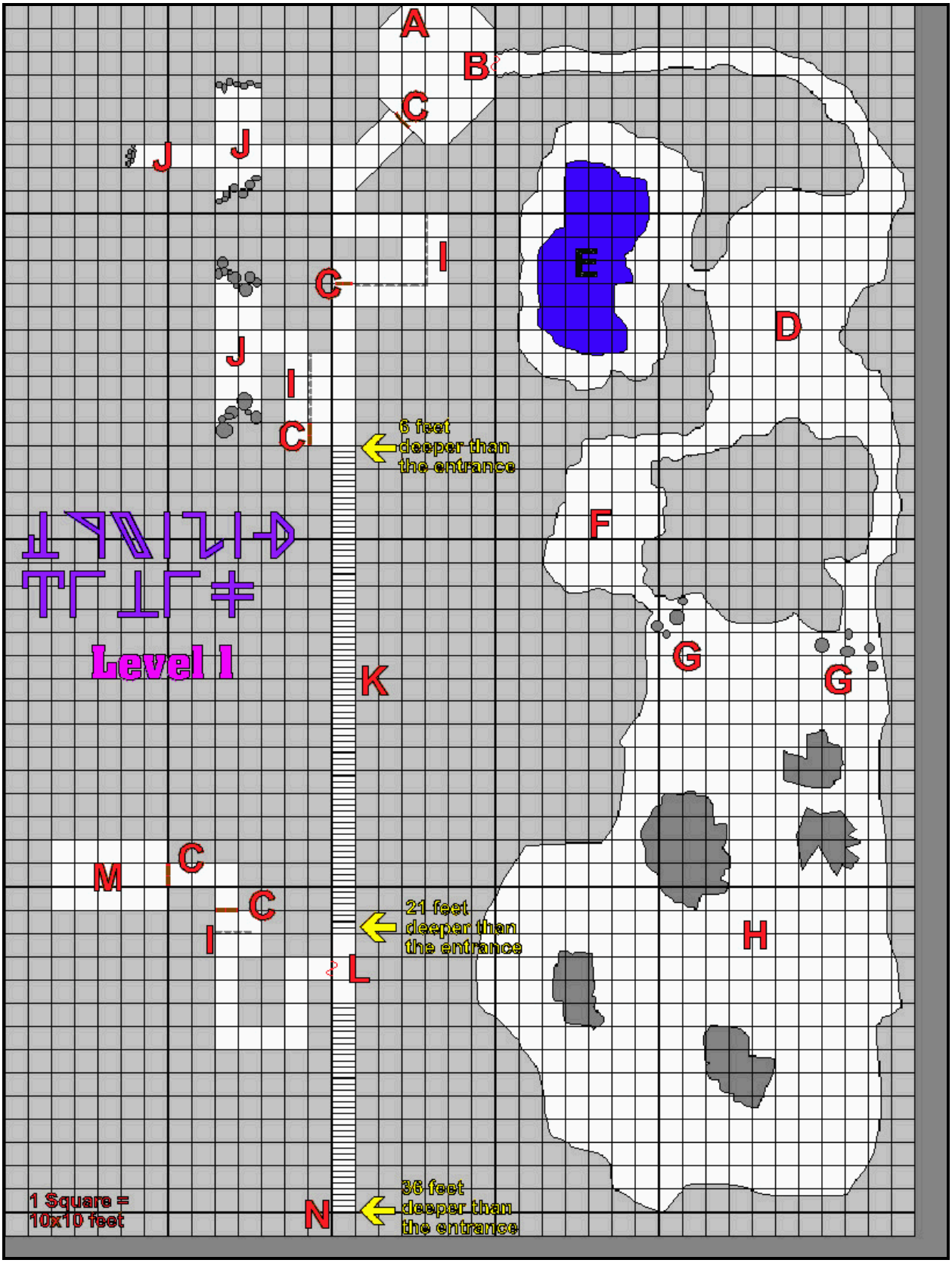


Game Master: The runes read *Armory.*

M: Armory. Content, all weapons and armor of finest dwarven quality but non-magical: Battleaxe +1, Warhammer +1, chain mail (dwarven size) +3, coins of an ancient minting with the impression of a dwarven warrior on one side and crossed battleaxe and warhammer on the other side: 32 gold, 41 silver.

N: The same sign, safe route to Silverymoon, as above. Points up the stairs.





Khiezar Dalan – Level 1

Khiezar Dalan Map - Level 2

A: This area opens onto a large platform and ends in a deep pit 30 feet/9m across. One cannot see the bottom of this pit. *(If a player drops something into the pit, it takes a minute before the object hits the bottom.)* On the other side of the pit is a raised drawbridge 5 feet/150cm wide that one could use to cross the pit, if one were on the other side. Behind the drawbridge are 2 closed wooden doors, 10 feet wide and 15 feet/450cm high, that were built to slide to the sides. The angled walls that run from the doors along the pit have arrow slots in them, but you see no sign of life or motion there. *(If there is a thief in the group, the doors are locked. The locks are considerably newer than the doors, and they are made of a strange, black metal. They are not the work of dwarves.)*

B: Defensive area. Empty.

C: A second set of sliding wooden doors stands at this point. The lock is of the same craftsmanship as the last. Once the doors are opened, one sees the following Dethek runes above the door on the inward side:

Game Master: The runes read *Moor Exit.*

D: Behind the doors is a stone platform 10 feet/3m deep and 30 feet/9m wide on the edge of a large, natural chasm 30 and more feet/9m or more wide. *(If something is dropped into this chasm, it hits bottom, sounding 30 seconds later.)* There is a narrow stone bridge without railing, 18 inches/45cm wide, crossing the chasm. *(If the PCs take no safety measures, a dexterity check at +2 must be made by non-thieves.)* To your right, about 120 feet/36m away, is another corridor that's illuminated, with a firm stone bridge 20 feet/6m wide crossing the chasm.

E: The chasm.

F: The second bridge.

G: At this point it's quite clear that you're in a main tunnel of an old dwarven mining complex.

H: Fully caved in.

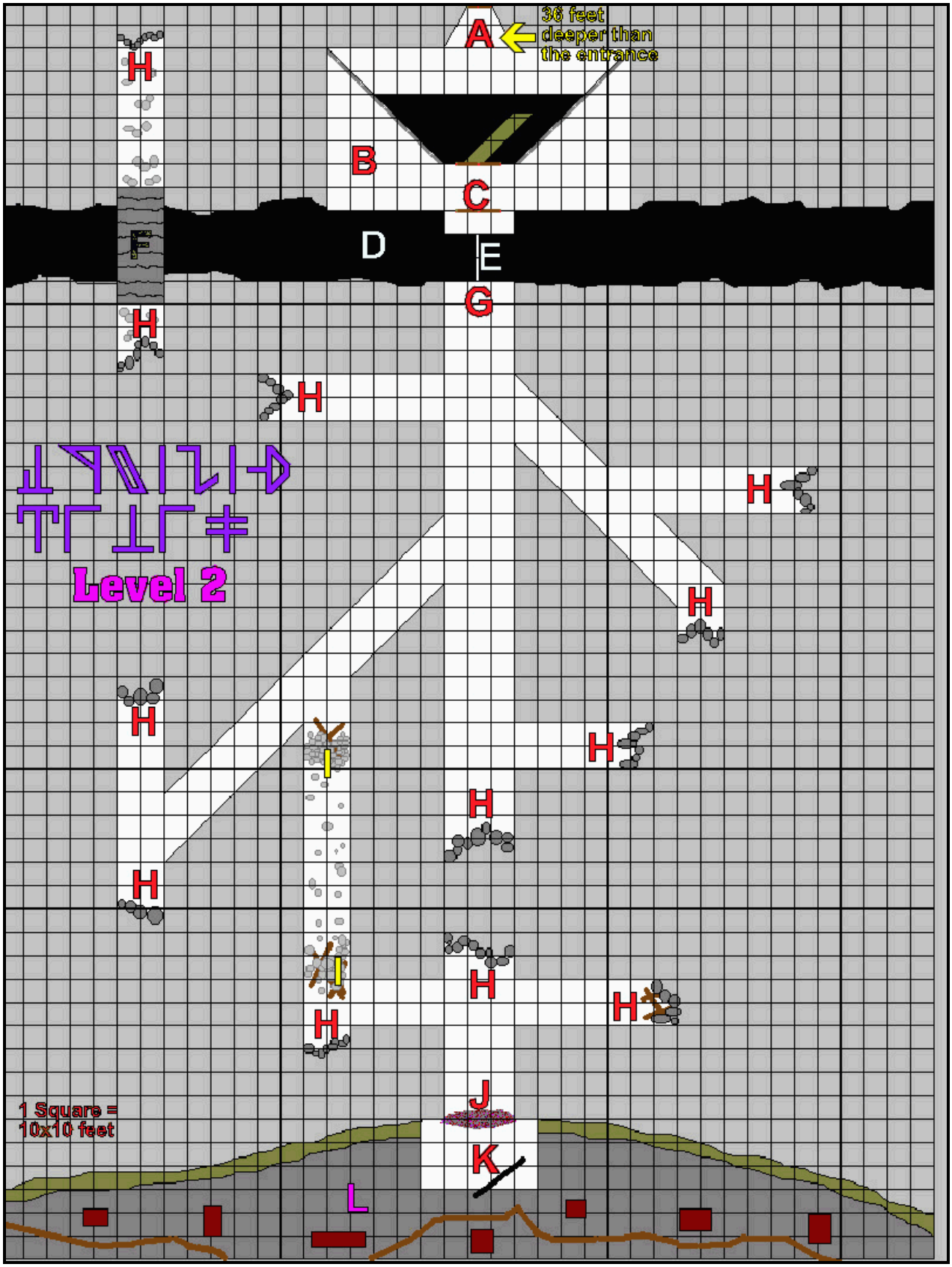
I: Caved in areas that the PCs can crawl over without trouble, if the make a dexterity check. If not, more rubble will fall upon them for 1d4 hp, after which they still can pass the rubble.

J: A violet colored, swimming light, always with purple sparks and some kind of motion within, fills all of this tunnel opening. You can see through it. *Visible are K and L. A PC who enters this magic area saves vs. magic or is dissolved. This is a drow protected area. If a PC makes it through, he must save again to return. Dwarves save with their normal magic bonus plus 2.)*

K: Behind the strange light is a stone platform, 50 by 30 feet/15 x 9m in size, with an old wooden support beam laying upon it. To both sides, paths lead downward from this platform.

L: The platform opens on a huge hall 50 yards/45m deeper. How long this hall is, is impossible to make out. You can see at least 500 yards/meters into it, and it is a good 300 yards/meters bright. There is no doubt that this once was a dwarven hall, but it's been modified over the years by its newer occupants. Magical violet-colored lamps light the hall, but in a dusky manner. Buildings constructed by no dwarf cover the floor of the hall, making it into a large underground city. The hundreds of drow elves who live here are under way and going about their business.

(Any PC who makes it into the Drow city will be captured and enslaved, departing at this point from the adventure.)



Khiezar Dalan, Level 2

11. Silverymoon

Game Master: For city maps see *The North* and *Volo's Guide to the North*. Once the players return to the rear entrance to Khiezar Dalan, they face the old problem with the Sky Ponies again. For the new day, use the weather table for temperatures. However, it will be a sunny day with only mild haze. If the PCs do not come up with the idea of setting the orcs onto the barbarians, the Sky Ponies will wait the PCs out for 1d4 days. This waiting period will start anew each time the Sky Ponies see some sign of life from the PCs. Meanwhile, each day that the Sky Ponies are waiting for the PCs, there is a 5% chance that the orcs will go out on a raid. If so, the PCs will hear plenty of signs from inside the cave that the orcs are in motion, giving them time to duck back into Khiezar Dalan.

During this wait-out period you can use the temperatures in the weather table, but the weather should be friendly, giving the PCs no advantage with fog, etc. If the orcs leave their lair, they outnumber the Sky Ponies 2:1. The Sky Ponies will slaughter the orcs in a protracted battle, but Jerek also will ,lose 65 of the 100 warriors camped before the cave. This will not prevent him from continuing to wait out the PCs, if he knows they still are there. If the PCs show no signs of themselves, he will assume they have fallen victim to the orcs and leave immediately after the battle. If the PCs help the Sky Ponies fight the orcs, Jerek will shout into the cave that they have done something to begin redeeming their honor and they should come out now, and fall in an honorable death.

Once the PCs leave the cave, they can continue westward on the road to Silverymoon. When they reach the site of the Herald's Holdfast:

> You've seen such creatures before, and now you spot them again. Six grey monsters that seem to be a cross between lizard men and dragons are searching the edge of the forest here. And you can see movement from more creatures inside the forest, but you can't make out exactly what these creatures are. The six monsters on the edge of the forest turn around as they hear you approaching. But after a few seconds, four of the six continue to examine trees and such. The other two keep their hands on their sword hilts and their eyes fast upon you, but they do not attack or do anything else to you.

Game Master: The draconians fight to the death if attacked, but they have no interest in the PCs. The dragon vampire leading them, Nuthar, will teleport away before the PCs or other foes can engage him. Nuthar and his band are searching for the Herald's Holdfast, hoping to find information there, but the Holdfast eludes them.

> In late afternoon, you come across five human bodies and seven orc bodies scattered along the edge of the forest at the site of a battle. All the bodies have been plundered of anything of value. Remaining by one body are a wineskin that has been punctured by a sword. Near a woman's body are a charred and broken staff four feet long, a small leather pouch containing small packets of red, yellow and blue sand, soot, salt, phosphorous, two small magnets, copper wire, silver wire and a tiny bell. A few feet away from this body you find a small parchment book laying near a small bush *(spellbook)*. Near yet another body is a leather pouch that's been opened. On the ground before the pouch lie 12 small blue gravel stones, like those you are bringing to Silverymoon.

Game Master: This is the last encounter for this day. However, the PCs should be attacked by a band of orcs they can manage as they camp during the night. The orcs come from the Moonwood. This is the last day. Check the tables for weather.

> The new day goes without incident until noontime, when you see a group of 12 riders in shining silver armor riding hard out of the Moonwood in your direction. At the speed they're coming on, you'll have to face them where you meet. Your horses are too tired to outrun them.

Game Master: PC Reaction.

As soon as you're within earshot, one of the riders shouts out, *"Well met! Hold fast in the name of the lady!"*

Game Master: The rider introduces himself as Glandril Nessalir, captain of the Knights of Silver. The PCs are coming out of an area usually frequented only by unfriendly barbarians, orcs and other monsters, and he will want to know what the PCs were doing there. The knights will escort the PCs into the Jewel of the North.

As this last day of the journey nears its end, the Rauvin River Valley spreads out before you, and in the middle of the valley, straddling the river, is Silverymoon, Jewel of the North. Here the Moonwood stretches southward all the way into the Rauvin Valley and to the doorstep of the fabled city of culture and knowledge. Likewise, the trees of the Silverwood to the south extend, northward, although in thinning numbers, meeting the river. On the eastern side of the city, the first rocky hills of the Nether Mountains already appear, forcing the Rauvin to turn sharply southward at that point, a direction the rivers follows around the foot of the mountains, when it turns eastward again.

The city is walled and divided into two sections. A smaller section lies on the south bank, housing military barracks but also a number of other buildings. The larger part of the city is to the north. There is no visible link between the two halves of the city, but everyone has heard of the fantastic magical Moonbridge across the Rauvin in Silverymoon, an invisible bridge that sometimes shines silver in the moonlight.

Coming from the northwest, you enter the larger half of the city through the Moorgate, directly to the palace of Lady Alustriel inside the western city wall.

City of Silverymoon

Metropolis, Conventional/Magic; AL: LG, 100,000 gp limit, Assets: 5,000,000 gp. Population: 26,000 Mixed, 90% human. 4% half elf, 2% elf, 2% dwarf, rest halfling and gnome.

So ends the formal part of this adventure. What takes place next is dependent to some extent upon your plans. If you intend to run *"Moonwood,"* Part 2 of *"Northern Journey"* then as part of the PC's reward, Alustriel will offer the PCs free advanced training until the following spring. If the PCs started at level 1 they all should be advanced about two levels when Spring comes - one each for multi-class characters. If they began at higher levels, they should receive at the most one level or perhaps even none, gaining extra proficiencies of their choice instead. The PCs then will resume playing at the end of Mirtul in the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR). If you do not intend to run *"Moonwood"* you should adapt things to fit your campaign plans.

When the PCs meet Lady Alustriel she is coincidentally being visited by Bruenor Battlehammer. She will react as follows to the different kinds of news the PCs may relate:

- **The blue stones:** Bruenor will immediate disclaim the phony Gaard's contentions that the blue stones come from Mithral Hall. He recognizes them and identifies them for what they are, worthless blue chalcedony, which he specifically says comes from Vaasa.

- **Manshoon and Söggrin:** Alustriel will send word to her sisters in the East. This certainly is distressing news, and it needs attention. However, her sisters have contact with Harpers who are much closer to the Citadel of the Raven than Alustriel and anyone in Silverymoon, and they perhaps can rescue Söggrin.

- **Khiezar Dalan rediscovered:** This is the most interesting news of all, both to the lady and to Bruenor Battlehammer. Bruenor agrees immediately to see to it that King Harbromm in Citadel Adbar is informed. This is news of vital importance to the dwarves, and the presence of a drow city is extremely distressing. But the dwarves must have the first word in how this matter is to be dealt with, according to Alustriel.

- **Dragon ghost in Khiezar Dalan:** Alustriel and Bruenor laugh at this. Sammaster was totally destroyed years ago, Alustriel says, and she doesn't think the PCs should worry. *(She's wrong, if you play Part 2.)*

- **Draconians:** Neither the lady nor Bruenor was aware of these creatures. She is concerned what they are and what they seek and will sound an alarm throughout Luruar.

Weather Tables

55/65℉ 13/18℃: Low and high temperatures. *SR: 4: 30 SS:7:50 - Sunrise and Sunset

Date	Neverwinter Neverwinter Wood	Neverwinter-Conyberry
Mirtul 24 SR: 4:07 SS: 7:56	54/65℉ – 12/18℃, overcast, rainy	28/36℉ - -2/2℃ , overcast, snow snowcover 10"/25cm
Mirtul 25 SR:4:06 SS: 7:57	56/68℉ – 13/20℃, mixed, 0.3"/6mm rain	24/37℉ - - 4/3℃, mixed, 1"/25mm snow snowcover 10"/25cm
Mirtul 26 SR: 4:05 SS: 7:58	55/71℉ – 13/22℃, mixed, 0.1"/1mm rain	23/38℉ - -5/- 2℃, mixed, snowcover 10"/25mm
Mirtul 27 SR: 4:04 SS 7:59	56/70℉ - 13/21℃ -, overcast	24/40℉ - - 4/4℃, overcast, snowcover 10"/25mm
Mirtul 28 SR: 4:03 SS 8:00	57/70℉ – 14-21℃, overcast, ½"/13mm rain	25/40℉ - - 4/4℃, overcast, snowcover 9"/23mm
Mirtul 29 SR: 4:02 SS 8:02	55/68℉ – 13-20℃, overcast, 2"/5cm rain	24/45℉ - -4/7℃, overcast, 4"/10cm snow, snowcover 12"/30cm
Mirtul 30 SR: 4:01 SS: 8:03	61/74℉ – 16/23℃, partly cloudy	28/43℉ - - 2/6℃, partly cloudy, snowcover 11"/28cm
Kythorn 1 SR: 4:01 SS: 8:04	65/74℉ – 18/23℃, partly cloudy	31/47℉ - - 1/8℃, partly cloudy, snowcover 9"/23cm
Kythorn 2 SR: 4:00 SS: 8:05	66/75℉ – 19/24℃, partly cloudy, 1" /13mm rain	32/46℉ – 0/8℃, partly cloudy, 1"/25mm mixed rain and snow, snowcover 8"/12cm
Kythorn 3 SR: 3:59 SS: 8:06	63/78℉ – 17/26℃, overcast, humid	33/45℉ – 1/7℃, overcast, snowcover 6"/9cm
Kythorn 4 SR: 3:59 SS: 8:06	64/77℉ - 18/25℃, overcast, humid, thunderstorm, ¾"/2cm rain	34/46℉ – 1/8℃, overcast, humid, ¾"/2cm rain
Kythorn 5 SR: 3:58 SS: 8:07	63/79℉ – 17/26℃, overcast, 0.1"/2mm rain	35/48℉ – 2/9℃, overcast, 0.2"/5mm rain
Kythorn 6 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:08	64/76℉ – 18/24℃, overcast	39/52℉ - 4/11℃, partl y cloudy
Kythorn 7 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:09	64/77℉ – 18/25℃, partly cloudy, 0.1"/2mm rain	40/51℉ - 4/11℃, partly cloudy, 0.1"/2mm rain
Kythorn 8 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:10	62/71℉ – 17/22℃, partly cloudy, chilly sea wind at 25 mph/40kmh	41/53℉ – 5/12℃, partly cloudy, mild west wind 10 mph/16kmh
Kythorn 9 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:11	60/69℉ – 16/21℃, partly cloudy, chilly sea wind at 30 mph/50kmh	41/55℉ – 5/13℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 15 mph/25kmh
Kythorn 10 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:11	58/67℉ – 14/19℃, partly cloudy, chilly sea wind at 40 mph/65kmh	42/56℉ – 6/13℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 20 mph/32kmh
Kythorn 11 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:12	53/64℉ – 12/18° C, overcast, thunderstorm from sea with 0.7"/18mm rain and wind 45 mph/72kmh	41/54℉ – 5/12℃, overcast, windy rainstorm from West, ½"/1cm rain and wind 30 mph/50kmh
Kythorn 12 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:13	52/60℉ – 11/16℃, partly cloudy, chilly sea wind at 30 mph/50kmh	40/52° - F4/11℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 15 mph/25kmh
Kythorn 13 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:13	54/66℉ – 12/19℃, partly cloudy, sea wind at 10 mph/16kmh	42/54℉ – 6/12℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 5 mph/8kmh
Kythorn 14 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:14	66/82℉ – 19/28℃, mostly sunny	51/63℉ – 11/17℃, mostly sunny
Kythorn 15 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:14	67/83℉ – 19/28℃, mostly sunny	52/65℉ – 11/18℃, mostly sunny

Weather Tables

55/65℉ 13/18℃: Low and high temperatures. *SR: 4: 30 SS:7:50 - Sunrise and Sunset

Date	Neverwinter Neverwinter Wood	Neverwinter-Conyberry
Kythorn 16 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:15	66/82℉ – 19/28℃, mostly sunny	53//67°- 12/19℃, mostly sunny
Kythorn 17 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:15	65/80℉ – 18/27℃, partly cloudy, 0.1"/2mm rain	52/66℉ – 13/19℃, partly cloudy
Kythorn 18 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:15	69/83℉ – 21/28℃, partly cloudy, humid, 0.1"/2mm rain, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m morning, later 500'/150m	54/71℉ – 12/22℉, partly cloudy, humid, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m morning, later 500'/150m
Kythorn 19 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:16	71/89℉ – 22/32℃, thunderstorms ¾"/2cm rain, west wind 15 mph/25kmh	56/75℉ – 13/24℃, overcast, thunderstorms ¾"/2cm rain, west wind 10 mph/16kmh
Kythorn 20 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:16	72/90℉ – 22/32℃, overcast, humid, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m, later 500'/150m	58/77℉ – 14/25℃, overcast, humid, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m, later 500'/150m
Kythorn 21 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:16	71/89℉ – 22/32℃, partly cloudy, west win 10 mph/16kmh	57/76℉ – 14/24℃, partly cloudy, west wind 5 mph/8kmh
Kythorn 22 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:16	74/93℉ – 23/34℃, overcast, humid, evening thunderstorms, 1"/25mm rain, west wind 30 mph/50kmh, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m, later 500'/150m	61/80℉ – 16/27℃, overcast, humid, evening thunderstorms ¾"/2cm rain, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m, later 500'/150m
Kythorn 23 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:16	61/69℉ – 16/21℉, mostly cloudy, cool sea wind at 10 mph/16kmh	54/78℉ - 12/26℃, mostly cloudy
Kythorn 24 SR: 3:56 SS 8:17	50/64℉ – 10/18℃, mostly cloudy, cool west wind	31/50℉ - -1/10℃, overcast
Kythorn 25 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:17	51/66℉ – 11/19℃, mostly cloudy	32/49℉ – 0/9℃, o vercast
Kythorn 26 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:17	42/50℉ – 6/10℃, overcast, cold west wind 15 mph/25kmh	20⁄34℉ - - 7/1℃, overcast, cold west wind 15 mph/25kmh
Kythorn 27 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:17	40/48℉ – 4/9℃, overcast, cold west wind 15 mph/25kmh	16⁄32℉ - -9/0℃, overca st, 2"/5cm snow, west wind 15 mph/25kmh, snowcover 2"/5cm
Kythorn 28 SR: 3:58 SS: 8:16	38/45℉ – 3/7℃, overcast, cold west wind 20 mph/32kmh, 1"/25mm rain	14⁄28℉ - -10/-2℃, overcast, 16"/40cm snow, west wind 15 mph/25kmh, snowcover 42"/105cm
Kythorn 29 SR: 3:58 SS: 8:16	42/50℉ – 6/10℃, partly cloudy	21/38℉ - -6/3℃, p artly cloudy, snowcover 31"/78cm
Kythorn 30 SR: 3:59 SS: 8:16	46/58℉ – 8/14℃, partly cloudy	28/46℉ - - 2/8℃, partly cloudy, snowcover 28"/70cm
Flamerule 1 SR: 4:00 SS: 8:16	50/66℉ – 10/19℃, mostly sunny	36/55℉ – 2/13℃, m ostly sunny, snowcover 22"/55cm
Flamerule 2 SR: 4:00 SS: 8:15	55/73℉ – 13/23℃, sunny	44/66℉ – 7/19℃, sunny, snowcover 14"/35cm (rivers start to flood, flash floods in high areas)
Flamerule 3 SR: 4:01 SS: 8:15	62/83℉ – 17/28℃, sunny	50/71℉ – 10/21℃, sunny, snowcover 8"/20cm (rivers flood)
Flamerule 4 SR: 4:02 SS: 8:15	68/86℉ – 20/30℃, mostly sunny	54/76℉ – 12/24℃, mostly sunny, snow-cover 1"/25mm (rivers flood)
Flamerule 5 SR: 4:02 SS 8:14	70/91℉ – 21/33℃, sunny	60/78℉ – 16/26℃, sunny, snow melted (rivers flooded)
Flamerule 6 SR: 4:03 SS: 8:14	72/94℉ - 22/34℃, sunny	66/82℉ – 19/28℃, sunny (rivers flooded)

Weather Tables

55/65℉ 13/18℃: Low and high temperatures. *SR: 4: 30 SS:7:50 - Sunrise and Sunset

Date	Neverwinter Neverwinter Wood	Neverwinter-Conyberry
Flamerule 7 SR: 4:04 SS: 8:13	76/98℉ – 24/37℃, sunny	68/88℉ – 20/31℃, sunny (rivers flooded, begin to subside)
Flamerule 8 SR:4:05 SS: 8:13	68/99℉ – 20/37℃, sunny until evening, violent thunderstorms evening, early night, 1.5"/4cm rain. Rivers flood.	48/89℉ – 9/32℃, sunny until evening, thunderstorms evening, early night, 1.5"/4cm rain. Rivers flood again.
Flamerule 9 SR: 4:06 SS: 8:12	68/76℉ – 20/24℃ overcast, steady rain, 2"/5cm, rivers flooded	48/55℉ – 9/13℃, overcast, steady rain, 2"/5cm, rivers flooded.
Flamerule 10 SR: 4:07 SS: 8:11	69/78℉ – 21/26℃, mostly cloudy, rivers flooded	52/61℉ – 11/16℉, mostly cloudy (rivers flooded)
Flamerule 11 SR: 4:08 SS: 8:11	50/64℉ – 10/18℃, mostly cloudy, cool west wind, f looding begins to subside	
Flamerule 12 SR: 4:09 SS: 8:10	52/66℉ – 11/19℃, mostly cloudy, 0.1"/2mm rain, fl ooding continues to subside	
Flamerule 13 SR: 4:10 SS: 8:09	54/68℉ – 12/20℃, partly cloudy, rivers almost nor mal	
Flamerule 14 SR: 4:11 SS: 8:08	55/69℉ – 13/21℃, mostly sunny, rivers normal	
Flamerule 15 SR: 4:12 SS: 8:07	57/71℉ – 14/22℃, mostly sunny	
Flamerule 16 SR: 4:13 SS: 8:06	58/73℉ – 14/23℃, partly cloudy	
Flamerule 17 SR: 4:14 SS: 8:05	56/71℉ – 13/22℃, partly cloudy	
Flamerule 18 SR: 4:15 SS: 8:04	55/70℉ – 13/21℃, mostly cloudy	
Flamerule 19 SR: 4:17 SS: 8:03	54/68℉ – 12/20℃, mostly cloudy	
Flamerule 20 SR: 4:18 SS: 8:02	51/65℉ – 11/18℃, overcast	
Flamerule 21 SR: 4:19 SS: 8:01	50/62℉ – 10/17℃, overcast, ¾"/2cm rain	
Flamerule 22 SR: 4:20 SS: 8:00	49/61℉ – 9/16℃, overcast, 1.1"/28mm rain	
Flamerule 23 SR: 4:22 SS: 7:59	48/60℉ – 9/16℃, overcast, 1"/25mm rain, rivers hi gh	
Flamerule 24 SR: 4:23 SS: 7:57	49/61℉ – 9/16℃, mostly cloudy, 0.3"/8mm rain, riv ers recede some	
Flamerule 25 SR: 4:24 SS: 7:56	51/66℉ – 11/19℃, partly cloudy, rivers recede	
Flamerule 26 SR: 4:25 SS: 7:55	54/71℉ – 12/22℃, mostly sunny	
Flamerule 27 SR: 4:27 SS: 7:53	56/74℉ – 13/23℃, mostly sunny	
Flamerule 28 SR: 4:28 SS: 7:52	58/76℉ – 14/24℃, mostly sunny, very humid, visibi lity 2000'/600m	
Flamerule 29 SR: 4:30 SS: 7:50	60/79℉ – 16/26℃, sunny, very humid, visibility 10 00'/300m	
Flamerule 30 SR: 4:31 SS: 7:49	63/88℉ – 17/31℃, sunny, very humid, visibility 50 0'/150m	

*The first light of day is about 30 minutes before sunrise. Full darkness comes 40 to 45 minutes after sunset.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®
Fan Written Adventures

NORTHERN JOURNEY™

Part 2, Moonwood

Formerly *Out of the Fire*
Version 5.0

For Adventuring Groups of Levels 4-6

Silverymoon

An unofficial Adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS®.

Contents:

1. Silverymoon
2. Quaervarr
3. The Suddrsbedr
4. The Moonwood
5. The Lonely Tower
6. Beorunna's Well
Weather Tables

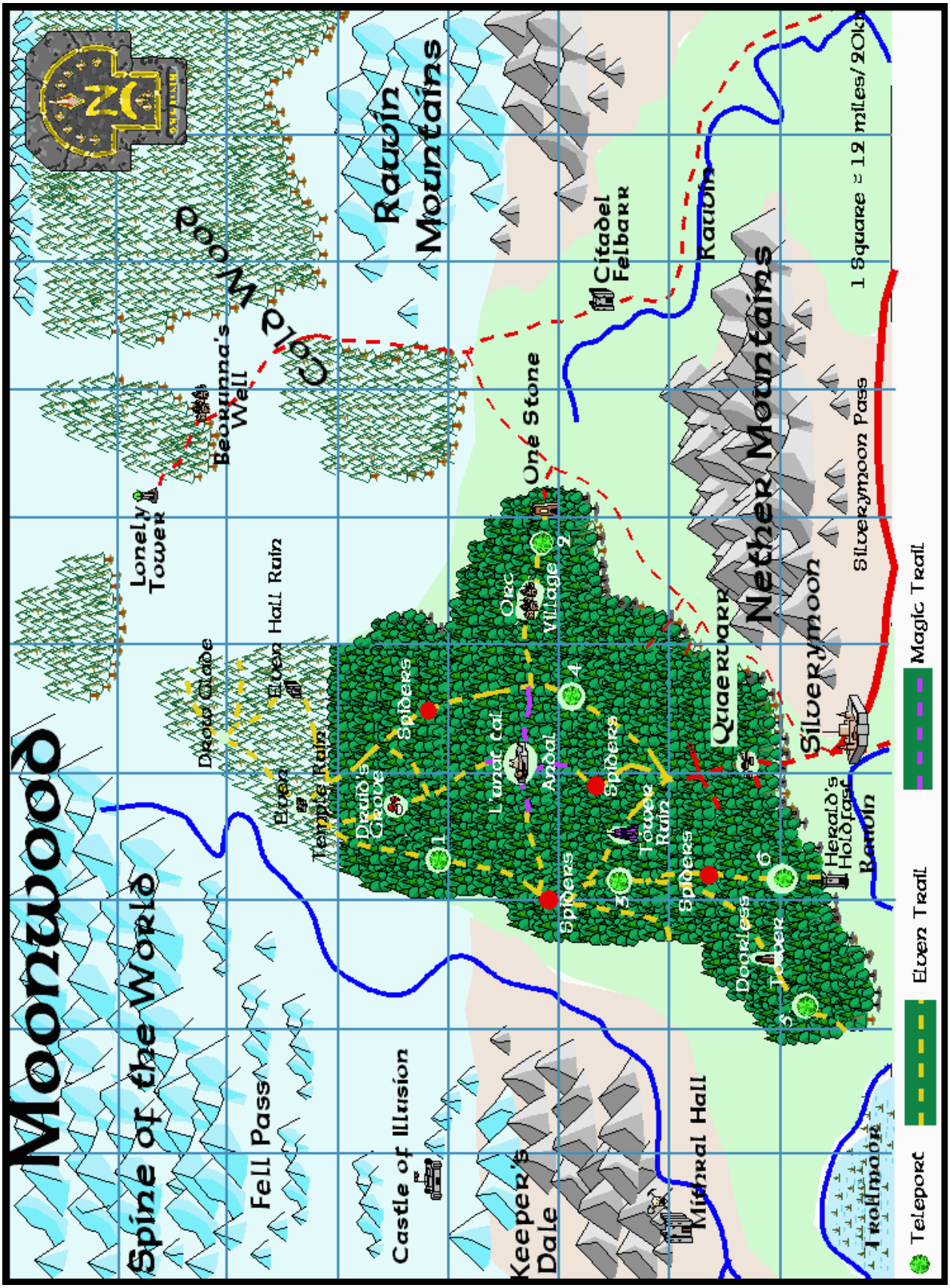
Supporting materials:

To successfully run this adventure, Game Masters should have the D&D *Players Handbook*, the D&D *Dungeon Master Guide* and at least one of the following: The boxed set *"The North"* (TSR - 1996), *"Volo's Guide to the North"* (TSR 1993) or FR5 *"The Savage North."* All of these products are out of print, but they can be downloaded free from WotC's web site:

http://www.wizards.com/dnd/DnDDownloads_classics.asp.

The files are in *Adobe® Acrobat®* PDF format. The *Acrobat Reader* can be downloaded free from:

http://www.adobe.com.


Moonwood
Spine of the World
Fell Pass
Lonely Tower
Druid Glade
Elven Hall Ruin
Elven Temple Ruin
Beorunna's Well
Cold Wood
Rauvin Mountains
Druid's Grove
Spiders
Castle of Illusion
Keeper's Dale
Lanat tal
Anbal
Orc Village
One Stone
Citadel Felbarr
Tower Ruin
Spiders
Spiders
Spiders
Quarrarr
Doorless Tower
Mithral Hall
Nether Mountains
Silverymoon
Herald's Holdfast
Rauvin
Silverymoon Pass
Rauvin
1 Square = 12 miles/20km
1 Rollmoor
Teleport
Elven Trail
Magic Trail

What's this Segment About?

This module is intended as a continuation of Module 1 of the *Northern Journey, Silverymoon.* However, it also can be played by a group that did not play the first module.

As the adventure begins, the PCs all are on the northeastern edge of the Moonwood north of Silverymoon, each bearing the same strange tattoo with six symbols and internally shifting colors on the inside of their left arms (see the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*). At the same time, the PCs continue being drawn by the symbols - called the red sigylls by Lady Alustriel in Silverymoon - to new destinations. The next is the Lonely Tower on the western edge of the Cold Wood, far away from civilization in the North.

What Kind of Characters are Allowed?

The final decision here is up to the Game Master. If your group has played *Silverymoon,* it may be that some of the players would like to drop their own characters and start new ones. This module has been designed to make such a switch easy. No character beginning this module should have a lower level than 4 in his or her main class. Single class characters should have levels between 5 and 6. It is acceptable if some of the single class characters have reached level 7.

Races: Members of the elven and gnome races would be somewhat alien in this adventure and also would make certain plot difficulties for the Game Master. We suggest that the Game Master not allow these races. That also goes for special races not described in the Player's Handbook, such as half dragons, drow, half drow, etc. We suggest that PCs be restricted to the following races: Human, halfelf and dwarf. Halflings are a borderline case that should be considered carefully by a Game Master before being allowed.

Classes: We would recommend that the Game Master not allow paladins. This class can create serious problems for the player and the Game Master in the course of this adventure. In addition, we question whether it would be possible to place the red sigylls on the arm of a paladin, although some Game Masters may disagree, and a paladin character was used successfully in playtesting. Druids and mystics would be very interesting characters if personified by talented role-players. A Game Master should consider and decide whether he wants to assume this challenge. A druid would be taking part in this quest because of a compulsion, not because of his own wish.

Resisting the Sigylls

The red sigylls will try to prevent the PCs from leaving the Moonwood before they have entered El'lahana Raikeil and retrieved the Mask of Nobanion. In this module, the PCs can resist the pull of the sigylls for one entire day on each day during which they make a successful saving throw. The rules are as follows:

D&D 3rd Edition Campaigns: RW for will, DC 30.

AD&D 2nd Edition Campaigns: RW for breath weapon, penalty of 3.

Experience Points and Levels

The PCs should have gained level 4 or 5 by the time they start this module (including the free level they receive through their training in Silverymoon). In the course of this adventure, they should gain one or two new levels, ending the adventure with level 5 or 6. If one member of a party reaches level 7, this will pose no serious problems.

1. Silverymoon

Metropolis, Conventional/Magic; AL: LG, 100,000 gp limit, Assets: 5,000,000 gp. Population: 26,000 Mixed, 90% human. 4% half elf, 2% elf, 2% dwarf, rest halfling and gnome. Maps: See *The North* or *Volo's Guide to the North*.

If you start out where *"Silverymoon"* left off, you're in Silverymoon in Spring. Your PCs arrived there the previous year and since then have been receiving gratis training and experience, with the *Jewel of the North* picking up the bill, courtesy of Lady Alustriel.

If your PCs all played *"Silverymoon,"* they will have received a Coin of Binding from Szarkh Gortth in his disguise as Gaard and when Khiezar Dalan was explored, they should have seen the dragon ghost in the pool and heard the message, *"Sammaster did this to me! He awoke me from the sleep of death and stole my body. I command you now to wreak revenge!"* If not, you have to arrange for them to have had this vision.

If you did not run *"Silverymoon,"* if you are starting some new PCs or if you have PCs who for some other reason did not have these experiences, then it is necessary for you to add into the background story of these PCs an encounter with a dragon ghost elsewhere who spoke the words quoted above and an encounter with an old man who gives the PCs strange ancient coins..

With these words, based upon the Coins of Binding he created, Grafvitnir commits the PCs to his quest. Therefore, the encounter with the dragon ghost is of a critical importance to the adventure.

It is likewise quite important that the PCs be led to believe that the Sigylls of Contagion are simply another new version of the Azure Bonds on the arm of Alias, as in the FR-Novel *"Azure Bonds."* When the PCs meet with Lady Alustriel, she should be role-played with the firm conviction that the symbols in the sigylls represent the powers who have fashioned the sigylls. The lady will refuse to remove the sigylls, because she cannot determine with exactly what magic they were fashioned *(Alustriel has no command over the old dvergr magic)*.

If your characters are not familiar with the tale of the Azure Bonds and Alias, use the optional explanation from Alustriel below. In any case, your PCs should leave Silverymoon fully convinced that the symbols within the sigylls are those of the persons responsible for the sigylls. This will enhance the adventure considerably, because as the PCs encounter each of the creatures behind the first five symbols, they will discover that these creatures have no idea who the PCs are or what they want. What's more, when the PCs attempt to display the symbol to four out of five of these creatures, they will discover that this symbol already has disappeared. The result is somewhat different with the lich Azimer in Module No. 4, *Tale of 2 Liches.*

The adventure is designed in such a manner that the PCs will not have any idea at first why they encountered the creatures behind the symbols. They should be highly confused by what is happening to them. They will never learn of the full effect their visit has brought to Ssessibil Istahvar, because the damage takes place on his home world, not in Faerûn.

Read the following only to PCs who have been trained in Silverymoon under Alustriel's sponsorship after finishing *"Silverymoon."* Other players should be given a similar opening that fits their background. It is the 24th of Mirtul in the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR).

> It's a beautiful day in Silverymoon, unusually warm for this time year and with clear skies and a bright, almost summery sun. Today you celebrate the anniversary of your first great adventure, the one that brought you across the North from Neverwinter to Silverymoon. After harrowing encounters with orcs, an ogre mage, barbarians, Manshoon of the Zhentarim, the Dragon Cult, trolls and - from the distance as observers - drow elves, you at last reached the Jewel of the North and won your audience with the great Lady, Alustriel Silverhand.

Your task - commissioned by the archmage Gaard of the Many-Starred Cloak in Neverwinter – who later was found murdered in his cellar, was to deliver a small pouch of strange, blue gravel stones to the lady. Gaard believed that these stones were perhaps magical, and he was convinced that they had come from priests of Moradin in Mithral Hall, but Bruenor Battlehammer, who was visiting Lady Alustriel at the time you arrived, dismissed the Mithral Hall element as false. He said the stones did not come from there at all, and what's more, they were neither strange nor magical but rather worthless blue chalcedony from Vaasa in the eastern Bloodstone Lands.

During your time of training here in Silverymoon, neither you nor Lady Alustriel has been able to learn anything more about why Gaard was convinced that these stones were magical objects sent from Mithral Hall or who was behind Gaard's murder. Lady Alustriel also has told you that she has received reliable information from the Harpers that the authorities in Neverwinter remain completely puzzled by Gaard's murder.

As a reward for your deed, Lady Alustriel has sponsored each of you in intensive training, in your chosen fields. With your first year as adventurers completed and a good base of knowledge and experience behind you, you're ready now to seek another commission or another goal, ready to ride out again, face the unknown, and with confidence, put your experience to the test. And to set you off on a proper start, you have an audience today with the great Lady, who has promised to give you a helping hand.

Game Master: The next also must be retailored for PCs new to this adventure:

Sounds great, doesn't it? And it seemed great too, until you awoke this morning and found a strange and no doubt magical tattoo on you arms - a red tattoo with six symbols that seem to swirl inside with a magical life of their own. Along with the tattoo, you find yourselves fighting a driving compulsion to ride northeastward immediately - through the no man's lands between the Moonwood and the Cold Wood, to some unknown destination beneath the eastern flank of the Spine of the World. There is no reasonable explanation for this compulsion, but you hardly can resist it.

Game Master: The following can be used for all PCs:

You make your way to the eastern wall of the magical city, where the lofty spires of Alustriel's white marble High Palace reach high into the northern sky. You wend your way - watched by Knights of Silver - through the beautiful corridors of the palace until you reach the lady's audience hall.

Game Master: If there are new PCs entering the adventure, have them already be in the hall at this point.

The lady awaits you. *"Well met!"*, she says, her voice warm and friendly, as always. *"And are you satisfied with what you've learned, now that your training has been completed?*

Game Master: Alustriel does not yet know that the PCs are bearing the sigylls. That becomes a topic only after the PCs explain this to her, but they are well aware that it is impolite to interrupt the lady in her own hall. If they do it anyway, someone other than Alustriel in the hall will remind them of this brusquely. Other PCs who are entering the adventure still are waiting to discuss their problems with the lady, but she already has been informed that they wish to talk about red tattoos that have appeared on their arms. Until the PCs force the question of the sigylls, Alustriel will talk to them about a possible commission. The PCs should not have a chance to explain their problem until Alustriel relates the following, because it too plays an element in the tale that is unfolding.

Alustriel: *"Now, I know you remember the strange wizard weather that hit the Everlund area more than a year ago and locked in the pass with high snows throughout the summer. The wizards of my Spellguard did manage to track this problem to its source, although deceiving magics misled them at first. It seemed for some time, that the wizard weather was coming from an area south of the Citadel of the Mists in the High Forest. But neither my people nor the Mistmaster were able to find anything in the area our search pointed to.*

"But then, with help from the Mistmaster, the Spellguard penetrated the deceptive magic and traced it to its true source, Dekanter, considerably farther to the South, where the southern border of the great desert Anauroch begins slowly turning toward the East. This source was of great interest to us. You see, Dekanter is one of the few remaining ruins of the Empire of Netheril.

"The Mines of Dekanter provided the Netherese with iron, until the mines were worked out. Later, the abandoned mines were used by the Netherese mages to conduct experiments, but these ruins have been explored time and again by adventurers, including many members of the Harpers, and all remnants of the old magic are gone. In recent years, the ruins have been a lair for a pack of gargoyles and hundreds of goblins. In the last few years, however, strange and unknown beasts have been spotted in the area near Dekanter, mutations of other monsters, in the minds of most who have studied this phenomenon.

"There is a second situation we have been attempting to learn more about too. There have been stories circulating in the fringes of the High Forest for a decade or so now about a creature called the Beast Lord. *The are some indications that this creature actually is a powerful* Illithid *or mind flayer, as they're often called. And as far as one can determine, he's been waging a war of sorts in the Underdark.*

"The Harpers have been attempting for some time to determine just what the base of operations is, that this Beast Lord uses, and until now, they thought he was operating from somewhere within the High Forest. This however is not the case, as we know now. The Beast Lord is operating from the ruins of Dekanter. He is the one who sent the Wizard Weather to us last year, and that is the location from which he sent it. Of this we are sure, for we counterattacked him with magics of our own, and we apparently have damaged him. It is reported that his war in the Underdark goes much more poorly since that time.

"But we need to know more. We can guess why he sent us the Wizard Weather. We believe he wished to test our strength. That could indicate that he is planning to bring his war to the surface, or at least considering whether such a move would be wise at this time.

"Now, I don't know whether any of you ever have considered joining those who harp. But I am authorized to offer you a commission as agents of the Harpers, to spy upon this Beast Lord and his minions in Dekanter. Your services will win you a respectable reward, and if you wish one day to become Harpers yourselves, this mission certainly would qualify as a testimonial to the worth of your services. What do you say?"

Game Master: At this point, the PCs have virtually no choice but to tell the tale of the sigylls and how they are being drawn northward. At that point, Alustriel will examine the sigylls and exclaim *"I know this magic."* She then will begin to tell the story of Alias and Dragonbait and the story of the second group of heroes who tracked down the demon Tyranthraxus in Myth Drannor (the heroes of the WotC Module FRC2, *Curse of the Azure Bonds,* which is available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com). It's best if you as Game Master tell these stories casually, in your own words, but if you don't know the stories, then read either or both of the following:

Alustriel (Tale of Alias): *"Sigylls like these showed up twice 14 years ago, in the Year of the Prince* (1357 DR). *It all started when a young lady now called Alias woke up in the month of Mirtul in the City of Suzail with similar sigylls on her arms, but hers were azure blue. Without getting into a lot of details, Alias was more or less a manufactured person, something like a clone, but not quite the same. The sigylls she bore bound her to perform certain deeds for her creators, among them a wizardess named Cassana in Westgate.*

One of the deeds she was supposed to carry out was the assassination of King Azoun of Cormyr. Among the groups behind the sigylls was the Fire Knives, a group of guild thieves that had been driven by the king from Cormyr. Alias was to exact their revenge for them. However, Alias had help from a saurial paladin she called Dragonbait, and she was able not only to bring the conspirators to destruction but also the god of decay, Moander."

Alustriel (TSR *Azure Bonds* module): *"At about the same time, another group of adventurers with whom I've had no contact personally managed to defeat the demon Tyranthraxus in the ruins of the city of Phlan on the Moonsea. It was believed that the demon was destroyed, but it actually was only defeated and began operating anew in Myth Drannor. Some of the surviving Fire Knives became agents of Tyranthraxus and passed on the tale of the sigylls on Alias's arms to him.*

Tyranthraxus learned to master the magic of the sigylls. He then formed a New Alliance of the Bonds that included himself, the Zhentarim, the surviving Fire Knives, surviving priests of Moander and the rightful ruler of Thay, the expelled Red Wizard Dracandros. In Marpenoth of the Year of the Prince, agents of Tyranthraxus managed to place the sigylls on a new group of adventurers, but the sigylls backfired again.

The survivors of the Fire Knives were hidden out in Tilverton, but the bearers of the sigylls managed to defeat them. The adventurers then were drawn to Yûlash, where they found and destroyed a hidden temple of Moander. The next stop was Zhentil Keep. Fzoul Chembryl, at that time still a priest of Bane, was interested in the alliance of Tyranthraxus more as an experiment than a cause.

He made a deal with the bonded adventurers, and they went on to the village of Hap in Battledale, where they brought about destruction of the wizard Dracandros and his dracolich and dragons. The last stop in their adventure was Myth Drannor, where they managed to destroy Tyranthraxus himself."

Game Master: After these explanations, Alustriel goes on to tell the PCs the following. Remember that it's your goal here to mislead the PCs into being 100% convinced that their sigylls are the same magic that was used on Alias and the heroes of the *Azure Bonds* module. The PCs should be convinced when they leave Silverymoon that their sigylls show the symbols of the six creatures or organizations that have bound them, and their confusion should grow as they continue to discover that those symbolized by the sigylls know absolutely nothing about them!

Alustriel: *"I have absolutely no doubt that this is exactly the same magic that was used twice 14 years ago. Some group of people or creatures or organizations has placed these sigylls upon you and is trying to use this magic to bind you to do certain deeds. But if I were in your shoes, I would not be disheartened. I would look upon this as a welcome challenge. Consider if you will - twice powerful groups have tried to use this magic to bind others to do their deeds, and in both cases, those who were bound were able to exert their own wills and instead bring their binders to utter destruction. You are strong and capable young people. I'm sure you will do the same.*

"Now, one of the things that helped Alias and the others who were bound was to know who and what was behind the symbols in their sigylls. I know the first symbol, and the second seems familiar to me, although I can't quite put my finger on what it is. But I certainly will try to come up with the answer. The first symbol belongs to a strange archmage named Ssessibil Istahvar. *We don't know much about him. He's something of a loner who has a tower in an isolated area more than 100 miles/160km north of here, not too far from Beorunna's Well between the Moonwood and the Coldwood.*

"The Harpers have kept their eye on Ssessibil for many years now, but except for the kind of guards he maintains, there's never been any sign of him being a wrongdoer. When I mention his guards, he does have a small army of orcs watching his tower, but he wouldn't be the first wizard to bind orcs to his service as a form of chief labor.

That alone is no certain proof of evildoing. However, if he's starting to use bonding magic, then he certainly deserves a closer look from the Harpers!"

Game Master: If the PCs bring up the tale again of the dragon ghost in Khiezar Dalan or elsewhere:

Alustriel: *"This is a strange tale too. But I think there's something other than the truth on the surface of it. Sammaster's lich certainly was destroyed. And if his spirit somehow was brought back again, I'm positive the Harpers would have heard something about it. One reason why the Dragon Cult hasn't been too successful is that there are leaks in their organization. I'm positive that we would know about it, if Sammaster had returned. I think there's some trick behind this manifestation, perhaps some plot of a group of cultists somewhere. But I'm quite certain that Sammaster has not returned."*

Game Master: After the discussion has been closed:

Alustriel: *"Well, if you're heading to Ssessibil's tower, I can think of no better way to do it than as agents of the Harpers. First of all, let me give you a token that you are in my service on behalf of the Harpers."*

Game Master: The lady gives the PCs a small, silver leaf of mithral engraved with the coat of arms of Silverymoon and the symbol of the Harpers.

Alustriel: *"If you come into contact with Those Who Harp and you show this symbol, you will be able to count upon their full help. And then, if you go to Captain Hardt of the Knights of Silver at the end of the day watch, he will see to it that you receiving travel money and some equipment. I also will ask the Spellguard to consider whether we can equip you with anything that might be of help."*

Game Master: You need to decide what equipment or magic items the PCs should receive to survive the encounters that follow. Don't overpower them, but look at their abilities and their present equipment, and have Captain Hardt and the Spellguard provide them with items that will give them a fair chance. Hardt estimates that the PCs will need 2 rides just to reach the Lonely Tower and return again. He will pay them 22 golden halfmoons of Luruar as travel money. The PCs now are working as agents of the Harpers (unless they have declined this).

2. Quaervarr

Village, Conventional, AL:CG, 200gp limit, Assets: 200,000 gp, population 760 Mixed (75% human, 20% half elf, 3% halfling, 1% elf, 1% dwarf). Check the weather tables! We have planned no unfriendly encounters for the trip from Silverymoon to Quaervarr, but you're free to add them if you wish.

Once again you ride out of the Jewel of the North and slowly into the unknown. You leave the city through the Hunter's Gate in the northeastern part of the city wall and enter into the southern fringes of the mysterious Moonwood. Today - at least - you suspect you won't have to worry about history, however. The Moonwood Road here is well traveled and usually secure, in times when Silverymoon is under neither impending nor actual attack. In this first day of travel, you should reach the logging village of Quaervarr, but that's also the last outpost of civilization north of Silverymoon. As the day winds on, you pass small wagons bringing simple wares and barreled meat and drink from Silverymoon to the loggers, and from the North you pass empty trade wagons returning to the city. Toward midday, you also pass a long, and complicated two-part wagon transporting 15-yard/13m-long pine trunks southward. The cargo, the drivers tell you, is destined to turn into masts for tall ships on the Sea of Swords. All the traffic coming from the North reports that the road is open and there are no problems to be anticipated.

Game Master: Time for the PCs to react.

It's evening time when you come into a large area cleared for a few miles in every direction. In the middle of this clearing, atop a small, broad rise, you find a village with about 150 houses and two large, water-powered sawmills. A small stream flows from the north into the clearing and turns then back into the forest toward the southwest, no doubt a small tributary of the Rauvin. Heavy duty wagons bearing cargoes of timber come from the wood to the north into the clearing.

You notice that the cleared land around the village - beyond a 100-yard/90m defense perimeter that remains clear cut - has been replanted with small trees. The men and many of the women here bear axes or swords. Most of the buildings in Quaervarr seem to be wooden cottages where families live, with medium to large garden plots surrounding the cottages. There is no sign of farming, however.

The mixed smells of freshly sawed pine and the smoke of many wood fires is strong in the air, but the smoke from the chimneys spirals high in the spring sky, so that the burning is no irritation. You've been told that Quaervarr's only inn is located in the center of the village. As you ride the dirt roads into the village you pass to the left a wooden frame building larger than most of the cottages.

Although there is no sign, it's obviously something of a trading market. Several peddlers' wagons from Silverymoon stand outside the building, and people go in and out the door. Those who come out usually are carrying supplies for the home or new logging tools. A bit farther up the road is a large, wooden lodge type building with a thatch roof. As you come nearer to it, you see a sign reading *"The Whistling Stag."* A sign by the door informs you that a room here costs 5 golden halfmoons per night, including stable fees, evening meal and breakfast. Drinks are extra.

Game Master: Time for the PCs to react. The prices here are high because most customers are wealthy persons out to go hunting with guides. The remainder of the guests usually are wood dealers. The food is of top quality. The Stag has hot baths, warm robes and a resident healer. The small peddlers and others who come to Quaervarr to sell their wares usually know families with whom they can room with for the night. The more prosperous traveling merchants do tend to have their evening meal and social hour in the Stag, even though they sleep elsewhere.

The people of Quaervarr are not hostile toward adventurers, but they do view them as being a bit unsavory and disreputable. They are seldom willing to put such folk up in their homes. Quaervarr does draw wealthy hunters but not many adventurers. Most who do enter the village are heading on expeditions into the Moonwood to find old elven treasures, and very few of these ever return through Quaervarr, when they return at all.

The local hunting guides do frequent the lodge at night, but they tend to sit in closed groups with each other. That's also true of the better-heeled merchants and peddlers making their social hour in the Stag. Your adventurers are most likely to be joined by wealthy pleasure hunters, mainly from Everlund, Waterdeep and the ranching areas near Longsaddle. However, the Moonwood also is home to some rangers and druids who cooperate with each other.

A ranger or two will come to the Stag for a meal and a social hour in the evening, usually on the house, because they bear reliable news of the wood for hunters and guides, who are the lifeblood of the Stag's trade. The rangers not only bring news to the guides - and news to Quaervarr if trouble is coming - but they also question adventurers planning to enter the wood. If they deem the adventurers to be honest, they will give them honest advice. But above all, the rangers will attempt to learn if the adventurers have plans that are inimical to the forest druids' goals. After the PCs enter the Stag:

Beyond the doors you find a large but warm and inviting hunting lodge. Two wood fires roar in large fireplaces and scent the air with the fragrance of burned pine pitch. Deer and elk antlers hang everywhere on the walls. Near the tap they even serve as towel racks. A large magical tapestry on one wall shows an animated elven hunt, with two bands of elves in fantastic armor galloping through the forest - their horses leaping over logs - hunting down boar, birds flying here and there through the air.

There are quite a number of people in the lodge, all seemingly clustered together in their own groups. Some look like weathered men of the woods, probably the famed hunting guides of Quaervarr. These not only sit together like a closed group, they also have made sure to pick a corner of the lodge where no free tables or chairs are nearby.

Other groups look more like traders and businessmen of the road, perhaps lumber buyers and the like. They are dressed as though they think they're a day out of Silverymoon and don't intend to travel any farther northward than that. Their faces bear the expressions of men who like talking and joking about business.

Most of the remaining customers look like rich folks who want to leave the impression that they're hunters, but their appearances are simply exaggerated. Their clothing has a woodsy look about it, but the kind of woodsy look one would expect to see in a tailor's shop in Waterdeep. Everything is a bit too fine but not nearly durable enough for the daily life in a logging village. The mannerisms of these people tends to vary between bragging and arrogant.

Game Master: These are the types the PCs will encounter here. The guides will make it clear that they aren't seeking company and that their services are for sale. They do not advise adventurers and do not intend to. The business types will not shun the PCs, but they will bore them to death, and they know only the road from Silverymoon to Quaervarr and nothing about the PCs' destinations. The braggarts will be happy to brag to the PCs and even invite them along on the hunt, telling them how *"reasonable"* the prices are. Sometime, after the PCs have been in the Stag for awhile:

Two rough-looking men enter the lodge. Both look as though they've been in the forest for some time, perhaps guides whose hunters didn't survive. They nod toward the innkeeper and without breaking their stride take chairs in their hands and go directly to the other guides who are sitting together. These fellows apparently get preferential treatment here. The waitress brings them tankards of beer, almost immediately, although other guests still are waiting to be served.

One of the arrogant city hunters notices this and looks like he's about to protest, but just as he's about to open his mouth, he seems to think better about it and returns to his conversation with other wealthy braggarts, an irritated look still on his face. As the waitress brings the beer to the two men, they nod and apparently exchange some friendly words with her and receive a smile in return. The men certainly are no strangers to the Stag.

Let the PCs sit on this a bit. Then have one of the men approach them.

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One of the two woodsmen who entered the Stag later comes to your table, tankard of beer in hand. His smile is friendly, but there is a guarded caution and watchfulness in his eyes that you're not accustomed to. You can see now that the man is a halfelf of unusually large size, a good 6 feet/180cm tall and weighing 190 pounds/85kg of muscle. There's no denying that he could be dangerous. *"Well met!",* he says politely. *"I'm Lairdlanggl of the Moonwood. Do you mind if I join you for a few minutes?*

Game Master: Wait for the PCs to react. If they're hostile, Lairdlanggl will excuse himself and depart, not bothering them again. We are not going to offer a ready dialog here, because this should be an open, role-playing exchange. Here are the main points:

- Lairdlanggl will try to find out all he can about the PCs' doings, and he will exchange honest information for honest information.

- Lairdlanggl will tell the PCs that the lumberjack's trail to the east will lead them out of the wood to the open lands between the Moonwood and the Cold Wood, but he also will tell the PCs that this area is extremely dangerous at present. The danger Adalwyn Swiftwings sees is the curse being carried by the PCs' symbols, although neither Adalwyn nor the rangers know this. Lairdlanggl's explanation:

"Adalwyn Swiftwings - the shaman of the Sky Pony barbarians - has gotten extremely agitated about something. He claims the totem beast has revealed to him that a horrible curse is being brought by men from the West to the North, one that will come near the ancestor mound and perhaps desecrate it.

"The Sky Ponies have their ancestral mound - One Stone it's called - about halfway up the eastern side of the Moonwood. Adalwyn has predicted that the mound will be desecrated and the tribe will be eradicated if the mound isn't protected at all costs. Now the chieftain, Jerek Wolfslayer, has been careful since the last shaman - Valric High-Eye - went too far some 15 years ago. The shaman got Jerek's son, Torlin, killed by a black elf. Valric died for that.

"But Adalwyn has been careful until now, and he's finally managed to get Jerek panicked. So Jerek's called in the Sky Ponies from all corners of the North to guard the mound. He has a line of about 100 warriors patrolling the southern part of the plain, warning anyone or anything that tries to enter to turn back. And they have orders to kill anything that doesn't obey. The rest of the Sky Ponies are scattered across the plain north and south of the One Stone, with orders to kill everyone on sight who's not a Sky Pony - no questions asked or answered. We think there are more than 600 warriors out there now, and more warriors come in from the West regularly."

Game Master: If the PCs ask for other routes:

Lairdlanggl: *"There is no good way to go there. It's not a good place to go to go to begin with. Once you get where you're going, it's a bad place to be, unless you're going to Beorunna's Well. That's the only thing like a sanctuary up there. Andar Heartfood and his Black Lion Tribe are settled there. They have a regular, primitive village there, where they farm. They've given up the old Uthgardter ways. They don't even worship Tempus and Uthgar. They have a cleric there named Patrevni Onehand who leads the people in the worship of Tyr, Torm, Ilmater and Helm.*

"The Red Tigers still take care of the well as an ancestral mound. The Black Lions seem to think it holds a foreign or maybe evil power, and they avoid the well. The Red Tigers are seldom at the well, except for Runemeet, but that's a long time from now, in Eleint. They're hunters, and they prefer to avoid strangers, rather than fight with them. They're usually off somewhere in the Coldwood.

"But once you're any distance from Beorunna's Well - well, then you're probably in trouble. Plenty of enemies prowl that land. There are even tales of Yeti being seen up there now and then.

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"Still, if you insist on going there, there really are only two other ways. You can go up the Surbrin Valley on the western side of the Moonwood, and fight large numbers of orcs several times a day for five or six days. Or you can try going through the Moonwood north of here, following what's left of the old elven trail, and see if the wood is willing to let you through. There are ways through the forest. I've taken them. But none of them are good ways or safe ways. Starting about 5 miles/8km north of here and a dozen miles/20km east of here, the forest gets magical and dangerous. And it stays dangerous."

Game Master: If the PCs ask about the Lonely Tower:

Lairdlanggl: *"I've seen it - only once. It's a strange thing. It's a huge white tower, in the middle of nothing out on the plain, about 12 miles/20km west of Beorunna's Well. It just stands there white, pointing up into the sky. There are no doors, no windows, just a big, tall, white tower. And at the base of it is a settlement with about 200 orcs. It's said that the tower belongs to a hermit archmage, and that this orc army serves him.*

"I don't know whether that's true or not, but there are some signs that lend credence to this story. The orcs beneath the tower are well-outfitted with good armor and quality weapons, and they stay there, doing nothing but defending the tower. The apparently get all they need from the tower. They don't hunt. They don't farm. They don't gather firewood. But they eat and build large campfires.

"These orcs also don't run on raids and they run off other orcs not smart enough to keep their distance. They don't bother anyone who stays away from the tower, and no one bothers them. All the barbarian tribes look upon the tower as a big, magical pimple on the plain, and they avoid it like the plague. The one maybe positive thing I can say about that tower is that I don't know what goes on inside it and no one else seems to either. But it doesn't seem to be harming anything - so far.

"Occasionally merchant wagons make it up the valley and deliver things to the orcs guarding the tower, then go south again. The pattern of people who have delivered there makes no sense either. There have been deliveries made by Zhentarim caravans, dwarves from Mirabar, and Neverwinter craftsmen bringing waterclocks. We don't know what the Zhents delivered. The dwarves brought ingots of mithral. Two known Harper mages have traveled there but reported that the dwarves have delivered nothing, only exchanged knowledge.

"But I think you'll only get in there by invitation. The orcs tell anyone else who nears the tower to leave, and if they don't obey, they're simply and efficiently slaughtered. When I was 15 years younger, a druid friend and I tried to visit the occupants of the tower. A rather intelligent speaking orc told me we weren't wanted, that we should go. My friend and I did. We didn't think there was much else we could do.

"Nine years ago we watched from the distance as a small horde of about 2,000 orcs came down from the North and approached the tower. They didn't even get to engage the orcs on watch below. The horde came charging on, there was a flash of light, and all 2,000 orcs simply vanished. Phht!!"

Game Master: If the PCs ask what's in the Moonwood to the North:

"That's difficult," Lairdlanggl says, and his eyes seem to grow a bit more distant. *"The farther north you go, the thicker the trees grow and the darker the forest gets. I always had the impression that the forest is overcoming something from its past, from the days when it was an elven wood, perhaps. I don't think it hates us; I just don't think the wood can handle us yet, us meaning men and dwarves and halfelves too.*

"I think the wood is carrying too many things yet from an old past that don't belong in it anymore, and it won't welcome us again until it shakes these problems off. I have a druid friend who went into the northern wood with me once, and he said the wood is out of balance. He said too much of its past is still there, with things that belonged to the wood of the past, things that have no right to be in the wood of today, and that puts everything out of balance then."

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Suddenly, his focus returns to you and matters at hand. *"But that won't help you much,"* he says. *"You need to know more practical things. All right. We found the wood confusing. For the first time since I was a child, I lost my way, and so did my druid friend. We became lost quickly, and it took a long time before we found our way again. I can tell you what we saw while we were lost, but I can't tell you where we saw it. I don't know.*

"Now and then, we came upon small bands of orcs. Sometimes they attacked us. Sometimes they made signs of truce and wanted to ask if we knew the way out. In deference to my druid friend, who believes orcs still are needed in these parts, I fought only to defend myself, as he did. After awhile, we encountered no more orcs or goblin types. We went through an entire day without meeting anything. And in the night, we slept. We intended to take turns keeping watch, but something simply put us to sleep. My druid friend thought it was stream water we drank. He said it was in a way too wholesome.

"That could be true. The next day we awoke in another part of the forest - I say that because the trees were different - feeling fully refreshed and stronger than we had felt in years, firmly bound in huge spider webs high in the trees. We were in the middle of a colony of gigantic spiders, a good two yards in diameter, who had captured us. Interestingly enough, the stream water that had put us to sleep - if that's what it was - seemed also to have renewed our strength incredibly and enabled us to cover fully and quickly from the poison of the spiders.

"However, that didn't help us in getting out of the trap we were in. But my druid friend knew some spells that did help. We finally managed to free ourselves and escape, although it was a close thing. Not all of the spiders were neutralized, and they remained hot on our trails for some time.

"These things were just the beginning of our adventures. We found many elven ruins, some still protected by old magics. This forest was abandoned nearly 1,000 years ago by the elves, so what you find in it is ancient. One ruin we entered was trapped with magic that left the two of us paralyzed and helpless for a full day. Fortunately, nothing but small natural animals came along during that time.

"Another time, we saw the ruins of an old elven castle under mounds of vines upon an overgrown isle in the middle of a small forest lake. We decided not to enter. We sensed that it simply was not a place intended for us.

"Much we saw during this journey - dryads and evil treants and at last, on the last night before we found our way out of the forest, we saw a sight that broke my heart and continues to break it until this very day. The old elven path through the forest had become wide, and the canopy of trees above was open and the moon was full. We heard sweet music before us and laughing women's voices.

"At last we saw before us a clearing, and in it six nearly naked drow women danced together, and I swear it! They were dancing a dance of joy and of life and of beauty. There was nothing evil in these drow women, of that I am sure. But there was danger. We could not interrupt. We could not have come forward. That well would have cost us our lives. And still ...

"Such beauty! Such love of life! Such happiness! I swear to you all! I never will know peace or happiness again, until I have found these sainted drow women and professed my love to all of them. And now you know it! Now you know what I have found in the Moonwood north of that point where no man goes."

3. The Suddrsbedr

(Pronounced SOOD-ers BAIT-er - SOOD rhymes with wood)

Game Master: If you go through the official material on the Moonwood, you'll have trouble putting more than a dozen paragraphs worth of information together. The key information is as follows: The forest is logged by men, but its *"dark depths are largely a mystery"* and an overgrown elven castle stands in the depths with *"great magic ... in its gloomy chambers"* and *"vine-choked, needle-thin spires* (that) *are lost among the trees"* with *"some sort of cloaking magic."* There's also *"a hill where drow ladies come on moonlit nights to dance in a great ring,"* seemingly *"in worship to Eilistraee."*

In *Powers and Pantheons"* Eric L. Boyd (under the entry for Lurue) reveals a bit more about the old elven castle ruin *El'lahana Raikeil,* hidden at another location not revealed in *Northern Journey,* where the Knights of the Unicorn found the fabled *Crown of Joy and Tears,* wore it, restored it to its place in the castle and then were taken on an exhilarating ride through the Moonwood with Lurue herself and the Silver Herd. But that's about the extent of official information on the Moonwood.

In this section, we expand greatly upon the official secrets and ways of the Moonwood. We have not removed the features but instead have expanded upon them and added a number of other things to the Moonwood, all of them unofficial, of course.

One particular addition is the Suddrsbedr of this chapter. You can play this adventure and use the Moonwood element of this chapter without making any use of the Suddrsbedr. One factor you should consider before introducing the Suddrsbedr into your game is how long you want your campaign to run. The Suddrsbedr gives you that advantage of bringing a colorful character into your game that no PC - regardless of which books he has read - will quite by able to identify or understand. The disadvantage is, that the use of the Suddrsbedr - at least as described here - could add an extra day or night of play to your campaign.

The Suddrsbedr is the spirit of the Moonwood itself. He is an ancient creature from an ancient time who gives life to a part of Toril that still exists in an ancient state. The Suddrsbedr is the Moonwood. Therefore, his word is law within the Moonwood. When he tells the denizens of the forest or other creatures within its bounds, including the PCs while they're in the Moonwood, to do something or not to do something, they obey him without ifs, and or buts.

The Suddrsbedr will show up in your PCs' presence only if they get themselves in such deep trouble that being rescued is necessary for their survival. If he does rescue them, the PCs then must work for 30 days on the Suddrsbedr's farm to repay the service they've received. During this time of servitude, the Suddrsbedr will take the PCs on wagon rides and show them things of educational value, including dancing drow women who are not evil and orcs who mind their own business but who defend themselves quite capably against human barbarians who make them objects of cruel sport. The Suddrsbedr will attempt to guide the PCs away from many of the stereotypes that govern many adventurers' lives in Faerûn.

This part of the chapter tells you how you can use the Suddrsbedr – if you use him. He is completely optional. If you have no desire to introduce him into your campaign, simply don't do it. Your PCs then can find all of the elements within the Moonwood that they want to on their own, without the Suddrsbedr guiding them there, and they can deal with these elements as they please.

Material Elminster censored from *Volo's Guide to the North*

Who or what the Suddrsbedr is, is a matter of speculation. He was a figure in the North in legends that existed long before the lives of any upon Faerûn today, and sages believe the Suddrsbedr is older than many of the gods, perhaps as old as Faerûn itself.

The archmage of Waterdeep, Khelben *"Blackstaff"* Arunsun believes that the Suddrsbedr is a god or a manifestation of a god, perhaps an avatar of Silvanus. The Blackstaff says there are legends of elven tribes long vanished from the Moonwood that mention the Suddrsbedr as an *"ancient being of the forest,"* and as a *"protector of the Moonwood, as old as the trees themselves."*

Such contentions have drawn a guffaw and laughter from the old mage of Shadowdale, Elminster, who claims to have spent time in his own youth on the farm of the Suddrsbedr, who then already was *"ancient."* Elminster claims, *"He's simply an old man who's been around a lot longer than he should be, like I am. He's a bit of a forester, and a mighty gardener. I learned everything I know about gardening from the Suddrsbedr, and with what I know about gardening, I could train the best gardeners in Evermeet. Unfortunately, Lhaeo isn't very good at arranging things, so I haven't had time to start the garden below the tower that I wanted to. Things here in Shadowdale aren't quite the way they should be yet."*

The bard of Silverymoon, Mintiper Moonsilver, also claims to have spent time on the Suddrsbedr's farm. Mintiper describes the Suddrsbedr as an old, wiry man of countless years, who uses no weapons and seems to apply no magic either, but nonetheless has an *"absolute and uncanny command over things."* He also describes the Suddrsbedr as a man who can *"sleep instantly and at the most unexpected times, snoring all the while."*

Both Elminster and Mintiper say when they questioned the Suddrsbedr about his origin's, he *"scratched his head and squeezed his eyes together, as if he was trying to recall, then shook his head, laughed, and said, 'Sorry! Don't remember! That was way too long ago! But it doesn't matter anyway. I'm here, and the wood's here, and that's what matters!'"*

Although the true story of the Suddrsbedr is lost somewhere in or between the pages of time, the following details could be gleaned about him from various sources:

- He appears to be a human male with thinning white hair and a slightly oversized nose, who stands just a little over 5 feet/150cm tall. From his appearance, he looks as though he might be a bit more than 90 years old.

- He bears a wood axe and a woodsman's knife, but he uses these mainly for forestry and the like and never as weapons. He does not fight, and seems to have no need to. All beings in the Moonwood do what the Suddrsbedr tells them to, albeit sometimes reluctantly.

- The Suddrsbedr has no interest in such things as good, evil, order or chaos. A discussion of such matters is a sure way to put him to sleep. He claims that what's important is, that things are *"the way they should be."*

- Treants of the Moonwood have told rangers in the forest that they heed Suddrsbedr's advice, because he has been in the North *"as long as the trees themselves"* and *"knows and understands better than we do."*

- The Suddrsbedr seems to think that the gods of Faerûn and mischievous halfling children are nearly the same thing.

- Above all, the Suddrsbedr seems to respect women and like children of all races, and he's as likely to be seen playing with orc offspring in the wood as with human offspring on the edge of the wood. Although he appears to be a human male himself, he has less sympathy for males, placing them in about the same category as mischievous halfling children and the gods of Faerûn.

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The Suddrsbedr lives alone in the Moonwood with a pony named *Hansi,* who looks to be every day as old as the Suddrsbedr, according to Elminster and Mintiper. His home is the ruin of an ancient elven settlement in the northern part of the Moonwood, about 25 miles/40km northwest of the One Stone ancestral mound. The only practical way to get there from the One Stone, however, is a four-day ride over old elven roads in the wood that takes one past a large orc settlement two days' ride out from the mound.

Mintiper says that the Suddrsbedr maintains good relations with these orcs, who in return treat the Moonwood with a respect they do not share for the Sky Pony barbarians who come to their ancestral mound or other humans they may come across. According to Mintiper, the Suddrsbedr claims that the orcs *"can't be blamed because their ancient ancestors got them turned into what they are"* and *"I have yet to meet a human who treats orcs any better than the orcs treat humans!"* He also likes to say, *"They'd still be where they should be, on their own world, if humans hadn't opened up the gates that brought them here!"*

According to both Mintiper and Elminster, the Suddrsbedr is a vegetarian. That may explain the strange layout of his *"farm,"* which I visited. He lives (at least purportedly - I never found him at home) in a large clearing where a small elven village stood many ages ago. The largest ruin left in the clearing consists of the walls of a once elegant hall. Somehow - perhaps with help from the orcs - the Suddrsbedr has managed to build a new roof of mud and thatch on the hall that is in complete contrast to the fading elven elegance of the walls. He uses the building as a barn - not for animals he keeps, but rather as an open feeding station for animals and other creatures of the Moonwood trying to survive the bitter cold of the Savage Frontier.

I should add here that a moderate temperature always seems to prevail within a mile or two/2-3km of the farm, regardless of the time of year or the weather conditions in the rest of the Moonwood. A small, shrine-like ruin with the symbol of the elven goddess Aerdrie Faenya serves as the Suddrsbedr's house. It remains open at all times. Except for food, hay beds and a few lanterns, there's nothing of value to steal. I spent several nights on the farm, in the unfulfilled hope of meeting the Suddrsbedr.

Most of the rest of the clearing serves as small fields, or perhaps more accurately, a large garden. The garden also grows within the crumbling walls of some old buildings, where others that are to some extent intact seem to serve as greenhouses.

I should mention that the Suddrsbedr's farm and the entire clearing in which it stands is a magic dead area - although not magic dead in the way areas affected by the chaos of the *Time of Troubles* are. Magic users suffer no ill effects while on the farm, but they have no magic either. Magical items, religious items and priestly magic also are without effect there. Elminster says that the Suddrsbedr's clearing is not a hole in the weave, but rather a place where the weave is *"the way it should be, as the Suddrsbedr puts it."*

Both Mintiper and Elminster told me that the least likely place to find the Suddrsbedr is on his farm, *"unless, of course, he invites you there."* The chances of finding him at all are slim, but when one does, one supposedly sees an aged pony pulling an old wooden wagon down one of the ancient elven trails. Holding the reins is an old wiry man, sound asleep and snoring. When one sees this combination, one has seen the Suddrsbedr.

Volothamp Geddarm,
Silverymoon, Year of the Banner

The Suddrsbedr - Notes for the Game Master

The Suddrsbedr serves two purposes in this adventure: He adds a bit of color to the tale that no one in the Realms ever will be able to explain completely (unless you as Game Master give them that opportunity), and he gives you, the Game Master, a tool you can use to rescue your PCs from hopeless situations in the Moonwood, if you wish to do that. In a well-running adventure with good players, that shouldn't be necessary more than once. But we've set no limit on the number of rescues.

The temptation may be there, to turn the Suddrsbedr into another *Tom Bombadil., a la* Tolkien. If you as Game Master wish to turn him into another *Tom Bombadil*, that's your good right, but we did envision him as a somewhat different character.

We see the Suddrsbedr as the ancient spirit of the Moonwood itself, from a time when things still were *"the way they should be,"* as the Suddrsbedr puts it. He is not a laughing, singing character, like *Tom Bombadil* is, nor does he have a Goldberry. Rather, he is somewhat gruff although in no way nasty. He is a bit cynical, because he doesn't see many things in Faerûn returning to *"the way they should be."*

However, there is no being within the Moonwood who will not do what the Suddrsbedr says, even if he doesn't do much saying. His word his law there, and nothing has a desire to resist it, including your PCs, including the Chosen of Mystra and including avatars of the gods of Faerûn. They too have no idea who or what the Suddrsbedr is, but they know he may been around longer than they have, and they suspect he still may be around after they're gone. This idea has penetrated even into Cyric's mad brain. The Suddrsbedr really is not bothered by the presence of evil beings in the Moonwood, although he may be bothered by what they are doing in the forest. In that case, he'll show up on his wagon and tell them to stop. He may even tell them to leave the Moonwood. Whatever he tells them, they will do it.

The Suddrsbedr can travel on his wagon almost instantly, although all journeys seem to take half an hour or so if passengers are along. And except by moonlight - when they now and then might get the feeling a lot of landscape is being crossed - passengers fail to perceive high speed travel. They think they're making a slow and simple wagon ride.

The Suddrsbedr knows what's happening everywhere within the Moonwood. If something's happening that isn't *"the way it should be,"* he well may step in and set things on the right path again. He will stop something that he doesn't think should be happening, for whatever reason that might be, and he never explains his reasons. For this reason, it also is thinkable that he might rescue the PCs. But if he does, he will be rescuing his *"new farmhands,"* and he will tell them to go to work for him for three rides, which they of course will do (s. below).

To sum up, the following points are true of the Suddrsbedr:

- He does not leave the Moonwood.
- He never fights.
- He uses no magic.
- He has a power of his own in the wood, and when he gives an order, it is always carried out.
- He repels *"wrong"* things - things that do not belong. But he takes no stand on matters of chaos, order, good or evil. He deems these things unimportant.
- He is afraid of nothing in the Moonwood.
- There is nothing in the Moonwood that fights with him or does not yield to him, except in the Quaervarr area and the drow glade, where he has withdrawn for the time being.
- He has a fantastically good farm next to the ruin of an old elven hall.
- He sleeps a lot, and when he sleeps, he snores.
- When he rescues people in the Moonwood, he makes them work as farmhands for three rides. And as a farmhand, one learns about many things.

First Encounter with the Suddrsbedr

Game Master: If you decide to use the Suddrsbedr in your campaign, the first encounter takes place as follows, when the PCs are in some sort of trouble:

> You notice an old wooden wagon pulled by an old pony with an ancient man at the reins, coming on in your direction, completely oblivious to *(whatever is going on).* It looks like the old man's eyes are closed, as if he might be sleeping.

Game Master: The Suddrsbedr will tell whatever is bothering the PCs to stop it, telling it/them/whatever, that these are his new farmhands, and he's been looking for them. He then will bring the PCs back to his farm, where he'll give them three rides' worth of chores to do, being mostly absent himself.

The Suddrsbedr and the Sigylls

Game Master: When the Suddrsbedr sees the red sigylls on the PCs' arms, he shakes his head sadly and says:

"Now that again, too! I haven't seen this kind of nonsense for a long, long time. I thought folks had finally forgotten about that kind of tom foolery."

Game Master: If the PCs try to get the Suddrsbedr to talk about the sigylls, he will only tell them that they're magic and that he has nothing to do with such hocus pocus. The same will be true if they ask him to remove them.

At the same time, the colors that seemed earlier to be moving within the sigylls are still now. They look like ordinary tattoos. And as long as the players remain in the Suddrsbedr's service, the sigylls are absolutely without effect. No magic works in the vicinity of the Suddrsbedr. The PCs at this time do not feel drawn or compelled to do anything.

Life as a farmhand

Game Master: The Suddrsbedr brings adventurers to his farm whom he thinks should learn something. If he rescues your PCs, it's because he senses that the sigylls on their arms are bearers of an imbalance that also will make his work in the Moonwood more difficult, should this imbalance actually come to be as planned.

The PCs will start off doing hoeing, spading, raking up refuse of the previous year's garden and putting what they accumulate onto a compost pile. They also will control the compost piles already there, seeing which need to be turned, which have drawn earthworms etc. They learn which of the moon phases are best suited for seeding different types of plants, and they also learn to transplant at the time when the moon Selûne is rising, not when she is in her phase of descent. At the end of their three rides on the farm, the PCs gain a lifelong proficiency as master gardeners.

As long as the PCs are farmhands, no being of the Moonwood will harm them. The Suddrsbedr also will see to it that the PCs observe how many life forms exist by feeding on other life forms, telling the PCs that there is nothing right or wrong with such things, only that this is *"the way things should be."*

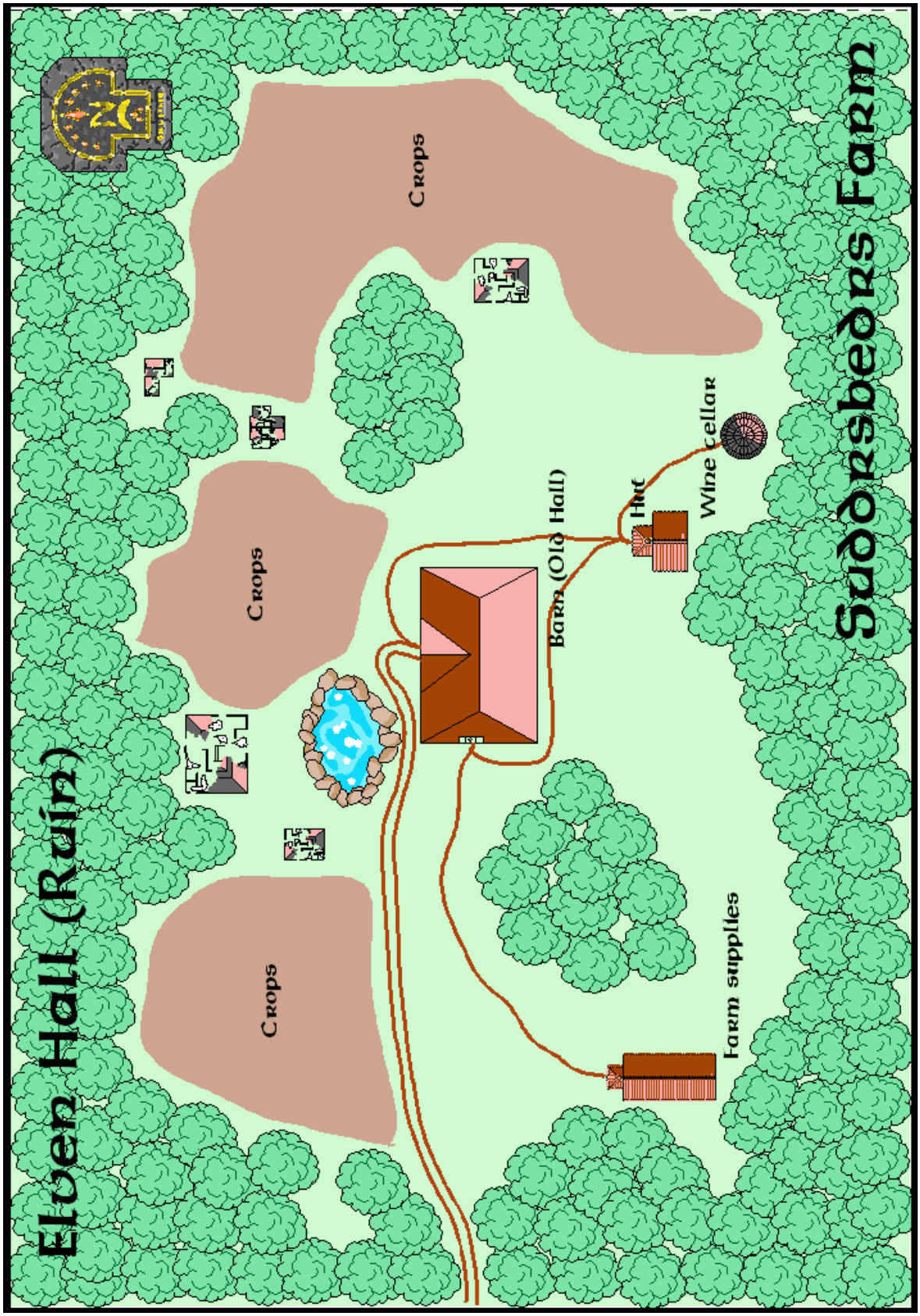
There is plenty of food available on the farm, and the PCs may hunt too, as long as they do not waste their fallen prey. In one small elven building on the *"farm,"* the Suddrsbedr has two large barrels of last year's fruit wine and several huge jugs of prune schnapps. Somehow, the door seems to be jammed beyond hope, if the PCs try to imbibe before evening.

A day will come when the Suddrsbedr will take the PCs off on an outing in his wagon. Hansi will find the way, and the Suddrsbedr will sleep and snore most of the way. He will tell the PCs they may only observe and not interfere with what goes on before them. After awhile the group reaches a point in the forest that overlooks a large settlement of perhaps 1,000 orcs or so. The orcs have about 20 human slaves who are being forced to do the hardest work in the camp, feeling the sting of the whip now and then.

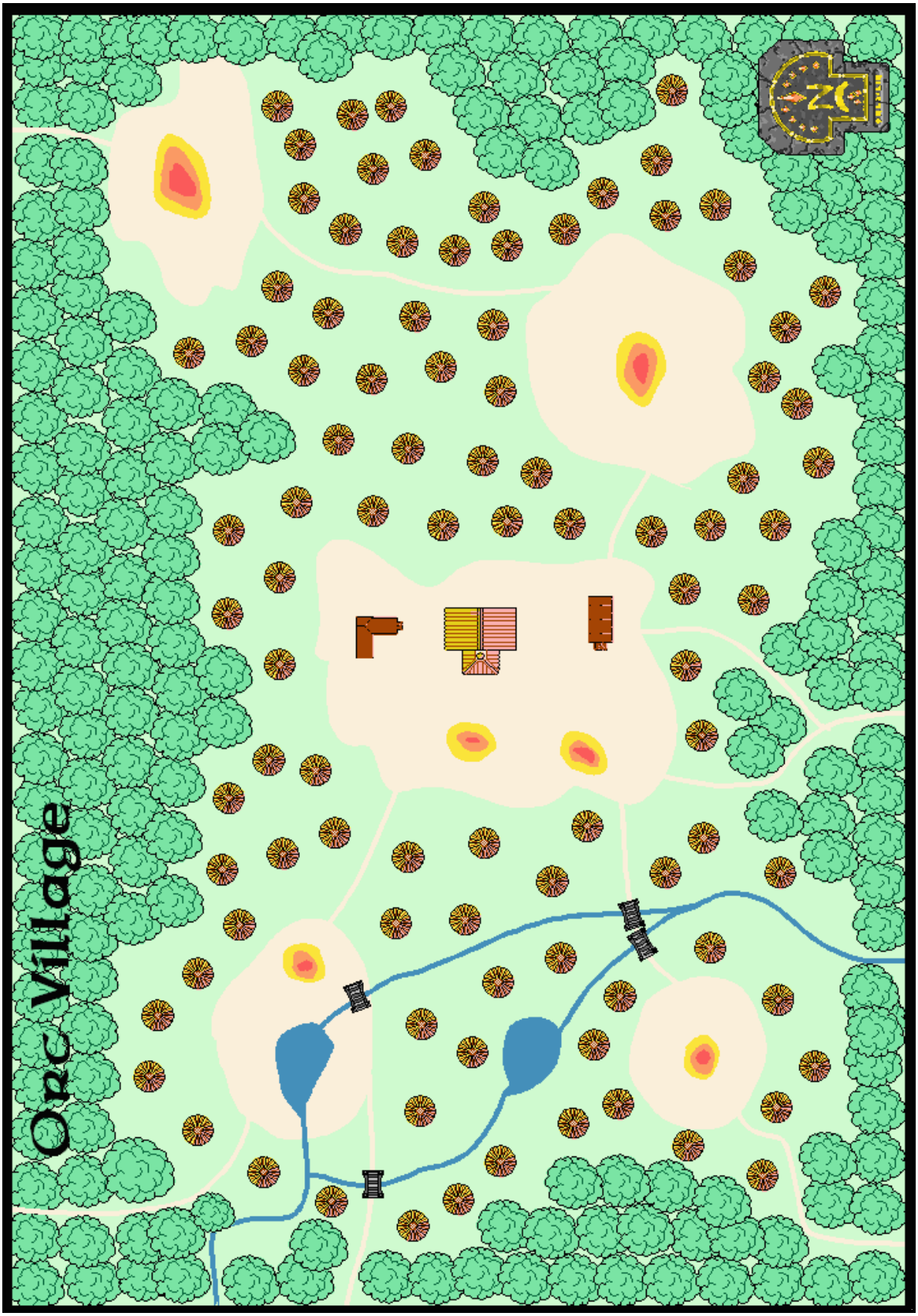
After awhile, the group returns to the wagon and heads back to the farm. Along the way back, the Suddrsbedr says:

"Interesting breed, those orcs. Ye can see that they've settled into the woods there. They don't leave it anymore either. They hunt here and forage and stay to themselves. Ye might be thinking it's a shame about those poor human slaves from the barbarian tribe. And it's a hard lot they have, there I'll agree with ye. It shows ye what comes out in the end, when ye don't let things be the way they should be. One thing gets miserable and then another, and in the end, everything goes different than ye want it to."

Game Master: A few days later the Suddrsbedr takes the PCs on another outing, to the top of a small hill, where the PCs can look out over a large area, seeing openings in the forest here and there.



Suddrsbedr's Farm



Orc Village

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Slowly, a picture develops before your eyes. A band of about 20 hunting orcs is stalking deer in the forest below, and to the east, a band of about 50 barbarians is also moving westward through the woods on the hunt. It becomes clear that the barbarians are hunting the orcs.

The trees make most of the battle difficult to see. There doesn't appear to be any clear victor. However, the orcs seem to know the ways of the forest better than the barbarians. When the orcs take a prisoner, they bind him and drag him back into the forest. It seems that the orcs are more interested in retreating than engaging the barbarians at present.

After a short while the barbarians are unable to find anymore orcs to fight, but they do have three orc prisoners. As you watch, the barbarians stake the orcs to the ground and with knives, flay them alive.

Game Master: The Suddrsbedr won't say much about any of this, except how sad it is that nothing's *"the way it should be"* anymore.

A few more days go by and the Suddrsbedr returns to take the PCs on another outing. This time they go into a particularly dark area of the forest - the PCs have no idea where it is. When they reach a small clearing, the Suddrsbedr tells the PCs to jump out of the wagon, and he tells the pony Hansi to wait there. He then leads the PCs on a twisting way through the trees where no path is visible:

After about 10 minutes, you comes upon a group of four orcs waiting in ambush. They turn, prepared to defend themselves, but then, seeing the Suddrsbedr, they lower their weapons. The Suddrsbedr says:

"Good day to ye, boys! Hunting something, are ye?"

One of the orcs answers: *"Wait for Sky Ponies. No hunt. Sky Ponies no let Laughing Skull alone. Laughing Skull hunt deer, Sky Ponies hunt Laughing Skull. When Laughing Skull kill deer, Laughing Skull eat deer. When Sky Pony kill Laughing Skull, him no eat Laughing Skull. Him cause much pain, leave Laughing Skull for crows. No way should be!*

"Laughing Skull have new Sky Pony workers. New workers get little bit help from whip, tell Laughing Skull that Sky Ponies come here today, hunt Laughing Skull. Today, Laughing Skull ready. Hunt hunter. Feed worms. Sky Pony no taste good. Me try already."

The Suddrsbedr laughs and says, *"Well, don't ye be letting us spoil yer sport, boys."* He then leads you a bit farther through the forest, to an old, abandoned black tower. **(Game Master: Not on map)** Without hesitating, he enters and you follow. You immediately are struck by the feeling that something very evil once occupied this tower. But that doesn't seem to bother the Suddrsbedr, nor do the partly crumbling brick stairs. He leads you upwards, until you can look out narrow arrow slits about 10 yards/9m above the ground. There is a large opening in the forest below you

A bit of time goes by. Then suddenly, in small groups, you see Sky Pony barbarians slipping into the glade and gathering together. Each Sky Pony looks at the tower in which you are hiding with fear and makes a sign of a circle and an X, as if he hopes to ward off evil spirits. After a time, a total of 20 barbarian warriors, ranging in age from 16 to the middle 30s, bands together. One barbarian, with different colors of paint on his forehead and arms, stands before the group.

"Men," he shouts. *"Today we honor Uthgar and Tempus. May we bring home many trophies from our hunt this day. Jerek and Adalwyn want to clean this forest of every last one of these foul orcs. From every orc that falls today, we will take the skull and offer it to our ancestors at the One Stone. Prepare yourselves. Soon the last of our scouts will arrive, and then we will march on the old elven path to the Northwest, where a band of 20 orcs is hunting.*

"We will attack this band, but we will let a few escape. Our scouts then will follow the surviving orcs to their camp and return to the One Stone, to report at long last where these vile creatures have settled. On the morrow then, we will return, with Jerek and Adalwyn leading us, and we will destroy this evil tribe for once and for all. All honor to Tempus! All honor to Uthgar!"

The rest of the warriors shout in return, *"All honor to Tempus! All honor to Uthgar!"*

A few minutes later, two groups of scouts enter the glade and begin conferring with the leader, but their discussion is broken off by the sounds of drums perhaps a mile or so to the Northwest. These are answered immediately by drums on all sides of the glade. And then arrows rain down upon the barbarians from all sides of the glades.

The barbarians try to take cover within the forest, but there simply are too many arrows. Within three minutes time, every barbarian warrior is down, most dead, some seriously wounded. More than 100 orcs emerge from the trees and begin slitting the throats of the wounded, dragging all the bodies but one into the forest. The body of the dead leader, penetrated by four arrows, is bound to the front of a large pine at the edge of the glade. Within a few minutes time, the orcs and the bodies are gone. The glade is trampled and stained with puddles of red blood.

The Suddrsbedr leads you out of the tower and back toward Hansi and the wagon. You pass one group of orcs on the way. They grin at you, and one says, *"Me no think big Jerek come now tomorrow. Me think many Sky Ponies less in trees. That good. Me think, way things should be!"*

The Suddrsbedr shakes his head, as if he's a bit confused, and says, *"Well now boys, I just don't know what to make of all of this. But I do wish ye a good day."*

Game Master: The Suddrsbedr then takes the PCs back to the farm and stays there that day. That night, he joins the PCs in a round of homemade apple wine from the past season's harvest. During the course of the evening, he says the following:

"Quite the thing, with these orcs. Quite the thing. It sure is a good thing that the Sky Ponies hunt these terrible orcs down. And it's just plain intolerable, the way these orcs are always marching out and attacking the Sky Pony settlement! Yes sir, one sure can see how good Jerek and his men are forced to defend themselves. Yes sir!

"Orcs, ye know, don't belong here at all, no sir! Magicians playing around with the weave opened a gate by accident and let 'em in. But that's no excuse for them staying, I always say. And when folks didn't want them around - what I can understand right well - it was the orcs who chose to go North. No, sir! I don't think you can blame the good folk of the good races, that the orcs didn't find anything to eat up in the mountains except snow. They have only themselves to blame, I always say. They could have gone somewhere else!"

Game Master: On the last night before the PCs' three rides as farmhands are up, the Suddrsbedr joins them again for apple wine. On this night disregard any information about clouds, rain, snow etc. in the weather tables. It is a clear, moonlit night. After the PCs have had their first round of apple wine, the Suddrsbedr says:

"Well, tomorrow yer time as farmhands is up, and ye'll be off an on your way again. But before ye drink too much of that apple wine, I'd like to take ye off on a moonlight wagon ride with Hansi. I do expect that in return for my hospitality, ye'll do a few things now and then to set this and that back the way it should be, but ye can't be doing that if ye don't know what's wrong.

"Ye may have been scandalized by those orcs ye saw, but that's nothing compared to what ye'll be seeing tonight. I'm also thinking ye might be wanting to pack yer things and take them along. By the time ye get done seeing what I want to show ye tonight, yer time as farmhands'll be done, and I be thinking that ye'll be a lot closer to where ye're heading if ye don't come back with me. And once we get to where Hansi's going to take us, those pictures on yer arms'll probably start tuggin' at ye again."

Game Master: If the PCs have their horses, they should be tied to the back of the Suddrsbedr's wagon. That way, they'll be able to keep up with Hansi's unnatural tempo of about 100mph/160kmh, a tempo no one can perceive, however. The dancing drow the PCs are being led to are followers of Eilistraee.

Hansi pulls the wagon as surely and steadily as ever, and the Suddrsbedr sleeps and snores as surely and steadily as ever, reins firms in his hands. You sometimes have the strange feeling that Hansi covers more territory than should be possible in a given amount of time. But that may be only an illusion caused by the trees and the moonlight. The wagon certainly feels as though it's plodding along steadily but slowly.

After perhaps half an hour or so, the Suddrsbedr awakens suddenly and tells Hansi to halt. *"That's a good fella,"* he says to the pony. *"Now ye just be waitin' here, while we take a little walk."*

In the bright moonlight you can see that the old elven road Hansi has been following leads onward, farther into the northeast.

"Ye can just be leavin' yer things (and yer horses) here," says the Suddrsbedr. *"We won't be goin' too far, and Hansi'll keep his eyes open, won't ye, Hansi?"*

As you head up the trail with the Suddrsbedr, he says, *"Now, I want to be warnin' ye here. There are a few corners of the Moonwood where I don't get around much anymore. And where we're going tonight is one of them. Ye want to make sure that the folks we'll be watchin' won't see ye, because if they do, the might be gettin' a bit upset, and some of 'em might even throw a bit of unpleasant magic at ye. So, I'd just suggest ye don't do much else but watchin' quietly, and if ye have to be sayin' something, do it quietly."*

After about 15 minutes or so, you hear music in the air - a strange kind of music, certainly not the kind one would associate with forest glades in midnight, but nonetheless a music of wholesome joy and rapture. The Suddrsbedr points ahead, down the road.

"Now, there ahead, where the road dips downward, there we'll be slippin' into the trees and tryin' not to be seen. What I want to show ye is just down below there."

As you come nearer to the dip in the road, you can discern that the music is the joyous singing of women's voices. At last, the Suddrsbedr makes a sign that you should follow him into the trees at the edge of the road. In the moonlight, he leads you down a deer path to a point where the forest opens onto a glade below the trees.

In the middle of the glade, a strange but bright fire burns, and six elven women with jet black skin and white hair - all fully unclothed - dance in a circle around the fire, singing a song of joy, seemingly oblivious to you or the rest of their surroundings.

The dance goes on for another 15 minutes or so. Then the elven ladies clasp hands together, laughing heartily. After that, they pick up their robes from the ground and don them again. Suddenly, their fire vanishes. In the moonlight, you seem to catch a quick blink of the women vanishing into the forest behind the glade.

The Suddrsbedr is shaking his head. *"What's this world comin' to, I ask ye! Drow women, laughing, singing and dancing, naked as jaybirds in the moonlight instead o' conspirin', plottin' and doin' dastardly deeds! Now, I ask ye, is that the way things should be?"*

Game Master: With these words, the Suddrsbedr will lead the PCs back to the wagon and set them on their way. He will tell them to keep following the old elven road ahead, which passes the glade where the drow danced, and in a day's time, it will lead them out of the Moonwood. The sigylls already are trying to pull the PCs onward.

4. The Moonwood

MOON ELVES IN THE MOONWOOD: *The WotC accessory* The North *leaves the impression that all moon elves have left the Moonwood and departed to Evermeet. Some of the WotC novels by R.A. Salvatore seem to contradict this, at least for the point in the timeline that was valid for the novels. This is a secondary question for Game Masters who run this* Moonwood *module, because there are no planned encounters with moon elves. The NJ Project Group takes the position that the elves probably have not completely abandoned the Moonwood, and that some of their number may even do a certain amount of caretaking at the abandoned castle* El'lahana Raikeil *from time to time. We also briefly describe the unofficial moon elf tree house settlement* L'Inat Tul. *If you wish to insert one or more encounters with moon elves into this module, we suggest you do so within this framework, and that you have these moon elves come from* L'Inat Tul *or some other small, hidden settlement within the forest.*

KEY ENCOUNTERS: The two main goals of the Moonwood journey to the Lonely Tower are the destruction of Ssessibil Istahvar and the gaining of *Nobanion's Mask,* a powerful magical item that Sammaster wants the PCs to use later in their battle against Harbet Gall in the Great Dale, in Module No. 5. The PCs' sigylls will resist any attempt they make to leave the Moonwood before they have entered *El'lahana Raikeil* and won the mask.

Game Master: This part of the adventure requires the Game Master's map of the Moonwood. Inside of the Moonwood, the PCs will have great difficulty traveling off of the old elven trails. Any time they veer from a trail, they should run into stretches of forest so thick that passage is quite difficult, or they should run into giant spiders. As long as they stay on the old elven roads (see PCs' description below) they can make about 15 miles/25km daily.

The canopy of the forest is so thick and the trees are so tall - 30 to 40 yards/meters - that the PCs seldom will know if the sun is shining and - without climbing - will have no way of knowing whether they're headed in the right direction. There are clearings and other open areas from time to time.

The teleportation magic and the gates *always* work as planned, which could lead to the PCs spending several rides in the forest, even if they don't run into the Suddrsbedr. They also may exit the forest at a number of different (and perhaps unpleasant) locations. With three exceptions, the elven trails still are protected by magic that makes them undetectable from outside the forest. The first two exceptions exist because they begin inside the forest and therefore are not beginnings of trails at all.

One of these points is at the end of the logging trails north of Quaervarr. The other is behind the ancestral mound One Stone. The third exception is the entry on the forest's northeastern corner, where the drow priestesses of Eilistraee destroyed the old magic in the area, including that concealing the way. If the PCs exit the forest at any other point, they must muddle their way around for 30 + 3d20 turns, before they find a trail again.

The gates always lead to the named destinations. The four enchanted trail segments to the *El'lahana Raikeil* castle ruin have teleport traps that work as follows. A player always should make the percent rolls.

1. The first time the PCs enter a yellow zone, they have a 90% chance of being teleported. Each succeeding time the borderline from a yellow road onto a purple road is crossed, there is a chance 10% less than the last time that the group will be teleported, until there have been a total of six teleportations. After six teleportations, the magic has no more effect upon the PCs, as long as they do not leave and re-enter the forest.

2. No teleportation goal is ever reached a second time through this magic. When all six goals have been reached, the magic exhausts itself on this PC group, *as long as it remains in the forest.* If the PCs leave the Moonwood, the magic begins all over again. The goal reached can be determined arbitrarily by the Game Master or randomly, as follows:

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- First teleportation: 1d6
- Second teleportation: 1d5 (1d10 divided by 2)
- Third teleportation: 1d4
- Fourth teleportation: 1d3 (1d6 divided by 2)
- Fifth teleportation 1d2 (1d4 divided by 2)
- Sixth teleportation: The sole remaining goal.

3. The teleportation and gate magic are collective. They will transport the entire group, even if only one PC crosses the threshold or crosses the line from green trail to yellow trail, as long as the group is basically together at the time of the crossing. This isn't valid, of course, if the group is in substantially different locations to begin with.

4. *NO* magic works in the presence of the Suddrsbedr, including teleportation traps and gates. He may not even know the magic is in place. If a PC is killed in the forest, the replacement can be teleported to them, rescued by them or found as another rescued *"farmhand"* at the Suddrsbedr's farm, whatever may be appropriate.

Special Weather condition: Light rain or snow will condense high in the trees for the most part, but heavy snow or rain eventually will break through. Rain then will continue to drip through the trees for 1d2 days after the actual rain has ended. Heavy snow clumps will fall to the ground 24 hours after the storm begins and continue to fall for 24 hours after the storm ends, with a 1% chance every hour that a falling clump will hit one PC.

If the PC makes a dexterity check, he sees the clump falling. If he makes a second check, he dodges it. All PCs within a yard/meter of the target PC also will be hit if they do not make checks. There is an 80% chance that the snow clump consists only of heavy snow for 1d2hp damage and a 20% chance that it contains ice for 1d4hp damage.

If you define winds over 50mph/80kmh (not in the weather tables), this will cause branches to fall. The one yard/meter rule prevails again, but because a falling branch makes noise, there is only one dexterity check made to avoid it. There is a chance of being hit only once every two hours. If a PC is hit, there is an 80% chance (01-80)that the branch is small for 1d2 hp damage and a 15% chance (81-95) that it is larger for 1d4 hp dmg. There is a 4% chance (96-99) that the branch is huge for 8d4 hp damage, and a 1% chance (00) that a tree falls, crushing the PC to death with no save.

More Material Elminster censored from "Volo's Guide to the North"

Game Master: If you wish, you may give this information to the PCs:

I pride myself - if I do say so myself - on the fact that few areas of the Realms have managed to elude me, once I have set may sights upon writing about them. There were, of course, some vicious characters in the North who spread rumors that I was an agent of the Zhentarim, thereby making things rather difficult for me at times. But these were elements where I was foiled - to some extent - by events perpetrated by others.

The Moonwood, I must admit reluctantly, simply eluded me. The only significant sight in the great forest that I managed to actually see was the *"farm"* of the Suddrsbedr, who was not there, as I already have mentioned.

My failure was not due to lack of trying, although there may be an explanation for it. I did enter the forest several times and attempted to proceed northward, then, after several days riding beneath the usually gloomy canopy of the trees, I found myself mysteriously leaving the forest at some point quite distant from where I thought I was. Not only that, but the relatively open old elven trail that I had been following would simply vanish behind me, leaving me with a forest wall that would be difficult to penetrate on foot, impossible upon horseback.

To substitute then for the experiences I was unable to gain for you, dear Reader, and perhaps also to explain in part, I offer you the following less than friendly comments from Elminster of Shadowdale.

"Ye don't know how good ye folk have it! Anytime Volo can't explain something, ye can rest assured ye have less erroneous information to sort through. However, ye shouldn't be looking to me as the definitive source of information on the Moonwood. The history of the Moonwood and what ye might find in it is really the history of the elves of the Moonwood, and they left it long years ago.

"I can tell ye what I've heard in old elven tales, however. The elves of the wood, mostly moon elves, lived in the North - north and west of the point where the One Stone stands. There was never much trace of anyone using the southeastern corner of the Moonwood, and the southwestern corner supposedly belonged to the most powerful mages - the few most powerful mages - of the elven folk farther to the north.

"In the waning days of the elves in the Moonwood, it's told that three mighty elven mages had towers in the southern half of the woods. The two with the southernmost towers supposedly had gone over to evil deeds. The northernmost of the three, also the most powerful of the three, remained a champion of good. The experiments of the two other mages began bringing evil things into the wood and causing evil things to happen. Finally, the point came where one of the two evil mages destroyed a small mountain within the Moonwood during one of his experiments, a mountain that had been sacred to the elves and particularly sacred to followers of Yathaghera, the Winged Queen, whom some folks in the north call Lurue.

"This was said to be the straw that broke the camel's back for the mage in the North, for his mate was an elven cleric who worshipped the gods of nature and joy, above all Yathaghera. The two lived together in a small, enchanted castle or manor house in the middle of the wood called El'lahana Raikeil. *The archmage of* El'lahana Raikeil *and his lady began what is reputed to be one of the mightier battles of elven art in the North, finally destroying in one way or another the two evil mages of the South, but only after their own castle too was severely damaged.*

"This battle of the mages left such magical chaos within the old wood, that most of the peaceful elves of the North soon retreated to Evermeet and never returned. The good mage and his lady remained behind, vowing they would try to undo what had been done, and that they also would try to restore the sacred mountain which had been destroyed.

"A few centuries later, the couple - now old and broken - left El'lahana Raikeil *and the wood too and followed their kin to Evermeet, saying upon arrival only that the magic had gone too far out of control for them to undo what had been done, and they had only partially succeeded in restoring the destroyed mountain. I don't know of anyone who's ever quite fathomed what they meant in saying they* 'partially restored' *a mountain!*

"In any case, most of the elves have long been gone from the Moonwood, but the old magic still lies there, sometimes in the most unsuspected corners. Only an idiot or a fool would think of adventuring in the Moonwood! But then, that's what adventurers are anyway, isn't it?"

And so, dear reader, with these paltry few, unfriendly words from another, I must unfortunately conclude my description of the strange and elusive Moonwood.

Volothamp Geddarm,
Silverymoon, Year of the Banner

Moonwood Encounters

Game Master: The Moonwood is a mostly dense forest with little sunlight and sparse food. It is not heavily populated by monsters, animals or humanoids. **Important:** Some encounters - sleeping waters - contribute to others, such as spider encounters. Don't forget about checking for these! **Special:** Build mushroom encounters into the adventure with some regularity! All of the mushroom varieties described in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide* can be found in the Moonwood.

Special Encounters

LOST MOUNTAIN: The *Lost Mountain* is the mountain described for Volo by Elminster above. This still is the sacred mountain it was ages ago to the elves of the Moonwood, and the good mage of the North did succeed in restoring it, however, there was an instability in his magic. The mountain is somewhere in the Moonwood everyday, but always out of reach of any adventurers in the area and always somewhere different each day. On some days, therefore, the PCs will see the mountain ahead of them, behind them, to the right of them or to the left of them. Outside of Volo's information, no one should warn the PCs about the mountain. Then it can create its contended confusion. When the mountain appears somewhere, it stays there through the day and vanishes between midnight and morning, to appear somewhere else, perhaps out of the PCs' sight on the next day. If the PCs are teleported or gated, they will, of course, lose sight of the mountain immediately.

The Lost Mountain is a low and unspectacular mountain, perhaps 150 yards/135m higher than the forest floor and about a mile and a half or two miles/2-3km in diameter. It slopes very gradually upward, capped by a small, craggy boulder at the top. Many might consider it to be a big hill rather than a small mountain. At night, the PCs will see small lights, perhaps from lanterns, they will think, moving about upon the mountain, but these lamps will wink out sometime after midnight.

The only unique or even interesting feature of the mountain is the fact that it is the *only* mountain of consequence in the Moonwood. It *never* appears within 15 miles/25km of the forest's edge and therefore, it *never* is visible from outside the forest. At the start of every day you should make a random decision where the Lost Mountain will be that day!

SLEEPING WATERS: The PCs encounter small streams every 1d4 hours daily (thrown once for the day) and there is a 50% chance that stream water still holds ancient elven sleeping magic (not effective in the Suddrsbedr's presence) for 3d10 turns sleep, collective percent throw, no saving throw. A PC who tries to resist sleep does so one turn long for every constitution check he makes, but he still is sleepy with AC and Attack/THAC0 penalties of 2 and half the normal attacks per round. There is a 50% chance within one 6 miles/10km of a spider marking that giant spiders will find the sleeping PCs. Outside of the range of the spiders, there is a 5% chance that an evil tree (see the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*) will sings its song of sleep and reach one PC. When an entire group of PCs sleep, there is a 5% chance of a forest encounter every 10 turns.

L'INAT TUL: This small settlement of moon elves ***is not*** shown on your map of the Moonwood. It should not be too distant from *El'lahana Raikeil,* but we leave its exact placement up to you. There are no traceable trails leading into L'Inat Tul. The village houses 22 moon elves who live in dwellings high in the forest's trees. If you decide to bring encounters with moon elves into your version of this adventure, they should come from L'Inat Tul. These elves are followers of Yathaghera, Rillifane Rallathil and Sehanine.

General Encounters

The frequency of random encounters should be determined by the Game Master.

ANIMALS: Normal forest animals, such as deer, birds, squirrels, foxes, boar, rabbits. These are found primarily on the fringes of the forest and in internal areas where tree stands are thinner, glades open and underbrush can grow, but such animals can be found almost anywhere.

BEAR, CAVE: 1d2, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

DRAGON, GREEN: (Xondastopisteles - mature adult), *(very seldom seen flying - lairs near Tower Ruin, see description)*

DRYAD:, 1, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

GHOST (of an ancient Elf), 1, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium. There is a 25% chance that the Suddrsbedr will appear, if he is being used in the campaign. He will chase off the ghost but take the PCs as farmhands only if he has rescued them. Otherwise he will make remarks about how such creatures *"shouldn't be at all."*

GOBLINOID: southwest of Castle Ruin, **Goblins (Boar Fang tribe),** 2d6 + 4, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium; northeast of Castle Ruin, **Orcs (Laughing Skull tribe),** 2d4 + 4, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

MOONWOOD MUSHROOMS: Various types and numbers at the Game Master's discretion. See *NJ Campaign Guide*.

SPIDER, GIANT, 1d4 outside area, 4d8 in area, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

TREANT, 1, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

TREE, EVIL, 1, See *NJ Campaign Guide*.

Area Encounters

The frequency of random encounters should be determined by the Game Master.

DRAGONFISH: These placid but dangerous fish populate the lake around the castle ruin. See the *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*.

CHOKE CREEPER, 25% chance of 1d4 every 10 square feet in the overgrowth on the *El'lahana Raikeil* isle, see D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium and **Choke Creeper** under **Plant, Dangerous.**

DRAGON VAMPIRE with **DRACONIANS,** one-time encounter, occurs southwest of teleport 5, if PCs are in that area. The draconians fight only if attacked. The dragon vampire vanishes if endangered. During the course of such an encounter, there is a 50% chance that the Suddrsbedr will appear, if he is being used in the campaign. He will chase off the draconians but take the PCs as farmhands only if he has rescued them. Otherwise he will make remarks about how such creatures *"shouldn't be at all."* See *NJ Campaign Guide*.

ELVES, DROW (followers of Eilistraee), 1d8, within 15 miles of drow glade, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

ELVES, GREEN 3d4, along western forest border to a depth of 25 miles into the forest south of the Tower Ruin, as Sylvan Elves in D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

GIANT, ETTIN: 1d4, within 20 miles of lair at Elven Temple Ruin but not within 10 miles of the Suddrsbedr's farm at Elven hall ruin.

GIANT, MOUNTAIN: from the north, 1d4 along western forest border.

GOBLINS (Boar Fang tribe), 4d4 + 8 within 12 miles of lair (500 yards west of Teleport 5).

HOBGOBLINS, 4d4, within 10 miles of the east border of the forest between Teleports 2 and 4, where they lair.

MEN, BARBARIANS 2d10+2, within 15 miles of One Stone, Sky Pony Warriors Levels 1-5.

OGRES, 1d4, from Teleport 1 to with 5 miles south of Elven Temple Ruin, lair in the Tower Ruin.

ORCS, (Laughing Skull tribe), 4d6, within 15 miles of village.

ORCS, other, from the North, d4 times 100 with 4d4 mountain giants, 4d6 ogres.

SNAKE; ICE ADDER, 1 at a time, within the area of the *El'lahana Raikeil* Ruin, See *NJ Campaign Guide*.

TROLLS, 2d4 trolls lair in the swampy area around the *El'lahana Raikeil* ruin, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium.

Starting the forest adventure:

Game Master: This adventure starts at the northern tip of the red logging trails north of Quaervarr. Check the weather tables. When the PCs are in the dark parts of the forest, there is no useable daylight until 90 minutes after sunrise, and it is gone 90 minutes before sunset. On heavily overcast days, the 90 minutes stretch to two hours, which may tell some of your sharper PCs what the weather conditions above are, at least to a certain extent. Read the following to the PCs:

As you leave Quaervarr, you follow a wide logging trail that leads to the northwest with equally wide trails branching off to both sides, heading into the areas that currently are being cut. The trails lead about 6 miles/8km out of town and then come to a rather abrupt end at a large staging area where horse teams and wagons along with their drivers await their turn to go in for loading. At the end of the staging area begins dark, dismal forest, unlike the more open growth near Quaervarr that is being cut for timber. You can make out a small opening between the trees at one point that apparently is an old elven trail into the Moonwood.

Several of the loggers watch you heading on due north, in the direction of the small opening. The forest before you is mixed growth. Large conifers and deciduous trees growing tightly together and reaching heights of 20 yards/18m and more. And you can see that the trees grow even higher a bit farther to the north.

One of the loggers shouts out, *"Hey, you folks aren't planning on going in there, are you? That's no place to be. That's dangerous forest there. Nothing but death waits for you there!"*

Game Master: PCs' reaction. Once they say they're heading on:

Logger: *"Well, I wish you luck. You're sure gonna need it! But I don't think I'll be seeing you folks again. There aren't many who go into the Moonwood and find their way out again. There's a lot of bad magic there, bad magic and evil things. That's no man's land."*

Game Master: PCs' reaction.

If stories are to be believed, well over 1,000 years have passed since the Moonwood was home to the moon elves. Nonetheless, the path before you seems to be open and clear and heading due north, as far as you can see, but that's 100 yards/90m at the most. The forest is too dark, compared to the daylight outside of it, for you to be able to see any farther into it. The trunks of the trees range from a foot/30 cm to nearly 3 feet/90 cm in diameter, and they stand four feet and less apart. It's understandable that the road here still is intact. Nothing will ever take seed in its path, except perhaps for mushroom spores.

You ride into the forest. The road is wide - about 5 yards/450cm - but basically, its simply a trail where there are no trees. Nothing else differentiates it from the rest of the forest floor. The going is a bit slower than you had expected. The forest floor here has a thick carpet of dead leaves and fallen needles that have accumulated over the years. As a result, (your feet/your horses' hooves) sink a few inches into the forest floor with each step. You'll be lucky to make 10 to 15 miles/15-25km in a day's time.

The air is still and a bit stale, smelling of ancient leaves and fungus. As your eyes become more used to the light of the wood, you can see that the road plunges on straight northward into the forest for at least several miles/kilometers. The forest is absolutely still, with nothing appearing to be alive except the trees. Your (feet/horses' hooves) plod quietly along the soft forest floor, and when you speak, your voices are muffled. The Moonwood seems to swallow all sound.

Game Master: PCs' reaction.

After a few hours, always moving slowly and laboriously forward, you come to a point where the trail divides in three directions. Each road is equally wide, about 5 yards/450cm. One branch is a continuation of the road you're on, still heading due north, if you haven't lost your bearings. The others branch off at about 45° angles to the northwest and to the northeast.

Game Master: From this point on, you have to add encounters where you need them, based upon the encounter information given above. As of this point, we will be giving you information only on encounter sites shown on the map. Please always consider the following. The magic of the sigylls always will do anything possible to keep the PCs together. The following scenario is possible and perhaps even probable: The party decides to visit some site in the forest. Two PCs stay behind with the horses and supplies. The rest of the PCs inadvertently gate or teleport themselves. The sigylls will force the two PCs who stayed behind to abandon both the horses and the supplies and run ahead, gating or teleporting to the others. If the move is a one-way move, the PCs have lost their horses and supplies.

El'lahana Raikeil - Castle Ruin

Game Master: This castle is based upon an invention of Eric L. Boyd in *Powers and Pantheons* (TSR - 1997), which in turn was based on brief descriptions of the ruins of an ancient elven castle in earlier TSR works on the North. We have tried to keep our El'lahana Raikeil compatible with and in the spirit of Mr. Boyd's creation.

In our version, El'lahana Raikeil was the castle of the elven archmage *Andal Leth'halunh* and his lady *Lislana T'Qaltar*, an elven cleric who worshipped Yathaghera (Lurue) and other related gods of nature and joy. Andal also was a follower of these gods. When one of the two evil elven mages who had occupied the southern Moonwood towers known today only as the *Doorless Tower* and the *Tower Ruin* devastated what now is called the *Lost Mountain,* Andal and his lady waged war against them and destroyed them, but in the process all of *El'lahana Raikeil* except for Andal's towers and the ground floor of the castle also were demolished and never rebuilt. The ground floor remains intact today and still is used from time to time by moon elves of the Moonwood who worship the same gods Lislana did and also now and then by members of the *Knights of the Unicorns* (see the entry for *Lurue* in WotC's *Powers and Pantheons*).

Andal was a specialist in teleportation and gates. During the process of retreating to Evermeet, he managed to gate the entire contents of his two towers to duplicate towers he had built upon Evermeet, and he destroyed the magical gates that enabled entry to the towers of *El'lahana Raikeil.* Adventurers who attempt to enter these towers can succeed only through the use of magic, by climbing or by physically destroying parts of the tower walls, and even if the do gain entry, they will find both towers to be hollow, empty tubes containing nothing whatsoever.

Andal likewise gated the valued possessions of his lady Lislana to Evermeet, with the exception of one article that she believed was intended for Toril's mainland and not for the enchanted elven island. This was the *Mask of Nobanion.* There is indeed a cryptic old manuscript of uncertain origin proclaiming that the servant of Malar will enter into an unholy alliance as he stands before his definitive defeat, and that the *Mask of Nobanion* will return on that fateful day and lead this evil minion of Malar to his destruction. Because of this prophecy, the elves of the Moonwood and the *Knights of the Unicorn* have not claimed the mask, but rather left it where Lislana placed it within *El'lahana Raikeil* before retreating to Evermeet.

Upon their departure, Andal and Lislana dedicated *El'lahana Raikeil* as a living sanctuary of *Yathaghera* the Winged Queen, along with other gods they worshipped, including *Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* and *Silvanus*. *El'lahana Raikeil* was further consecrated as a bastion against the priests and minions of Malar, the Beastlord. The castle and its isle are places that are deadly

dangerous to followers of Malar. The Game Master should however be careful to make the distinction that *El'lahana Raikeil* is not a temple; the religion of Lurue/Yathaghera does not use temples (see WotC's *Powers and Pantheons*).

Both Andal and Lislana took sweeping measures to bar abandoned *El'lahana Raikeil* to unwanted intruders. Andal's magic established a chain of teleportation and gate traps to demoralize intruders, while the lady called upon the forces of nature itself, to establish a miniature tropical climate upon the *El'lahana Raikeil* isle. She then populated it with a preponderance of dangerous plants and animals who will attack all intruders who do not in their hearts honor the ideals of *Yathaghera/Lurue, Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* or *Silvanus*.

For such encounters, use the island map and dungeon plan of *El'lahana Raikeil*. This site is at times visited by the *Knights of the Unicorn* (see *Powers and Pantheons*). If you wish, you may insert an encounter with members of the Knights here, particularly if you wish your players to retrieve the *Mask of Nobanion,* and the riddles of the dungeon are too difficult for them. Once convinced of the PCs' beliefs and intentions, the knights may help them enter the castle, but not even the knights can help PCs who do not honor the ideals of the nature gods, and no one can help save followers of Malar from their fate.

Within the ruin one can find the *Mask of Nobanion*. Unofficial statistics can be found in your *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. As mentioned by Elminster in the quotes from Volo farther above, the upper level of *El'lahana Raikeil* was demolished in the elven battles of long ago. There are no planned entrances to dungeon levels which may be below the castle ruin, but the entire site is clear for you to develop one, if you want a dungeon crawl here. The description begins 2 miles/3km before the ruin is reached but certainly well within the purple road zone. In other words, the PCs either have overcome a teleportation or they've temporarily exhausted Andal's ancient teleporting magic.

El'lahana Raikeil is in no way an evil place, but it certainly can be a dangerous place for your PCs. It was neither the intention nor the desire of Andal and Lislana to turn *El'lahana Raikeil* into a place of death – except for intruding priests and followers of Malar. But they also were determined to seal the castle off from all who do not devoutly honor the goals and principles of Yathaghera/Lurue.

The treant Humbarr maintains watch over *El'lahana Raikeil* and commands the magic that will set the castles defenses into action. When a group of intruders comes to the island, Humbarr can sense what their spiritual alignment is. Any priest, druid or shaman of Lurue etc. who attempts to enter here can without being hindered, but that does not extend to his or her companions. The same goes for priests, clerics, shamans, druids, cavaliers, monks and mystics who follow the teachings of *Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* or *Silvanus*. Other PCs who are deeply committed to the principles of Lurue's faith – including those who have no idea who Lurue or Yathaghera is – also will be admitted, although carefully tested.

PCs who have only a surface interest or none at all in the principles of Lurue will be barred, and if any of your PCs are followers of Malar, the animals, plants and protective magics of *El'lahana Raikeil* will do their best to destroy them. At first Humbarr will telepathically order thornslingers to levy non-fatal attacks, to attempt to drive off unwanted intruders. If this is not effective, he will unleash the choke creepers and animals upon the intruders, again with the intention of driving them off. However, if the unwanted intruders do not attempt to retreat within the first few rounds, all of the plants and animals defending *El'lahana Raikeil* will be ordered to attack to kill. There are no mercy rounds for followers of Malar. The defenses of *El'lahana Raikeil* will be ordered by Humbarr to kill in the first round of attack.

To simply reach the castle, the PCs must first cross the lake and avoid the dragonfish there. When and if they do reach the opposite shore, Humbarr will test them. If priests, clerics, shamans, druids, cavaliers, monks or mystics who follow the teachings of *Yathaghera/Lurue, Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* or *Silvanus* are in the party, Humbarr will send them a telepathic message warning them which members of the party are unwanted and that these will be attacked. He also will warn such persons that anyone killing an animal upon the isle will be destroyed.

If unwanted intruders continue to attempt to reach the castle, the thornslingers will begin attacking them. Magic, fire or weapons are necessary to cut through the thick brush to get to the castle. If the unwanted intruders do not retreat after the thornslingers' attack, Humbarr will order the choke creepers and tigers into action. If a tiger is killed, the intruders will find themselves in mortal danger, being handled from that point on in the same way as a follower of Malar would be.

Once the party reaches the castle perimeter, the quickwoods will attempt to destroy survivors among the unwanted intruders. Any attempt to burn or otherwise damage the castle's wall of vines will unleash a merciless attack by all quickwoods, choke creepers and tigers against the intruders, who, from that point on, will be dealt with as though they are followers of Malar.

If unwanted intruders survive and gain entrance to the castle, they will encounter Andal's many magic gates and also a wide variety of innocent looking potted plants and trees, all of which are magically disguised choke creepers ready to strike. Unwanted intruders who attempt to leave the castle with possessions from the castle in hand will continue to be attacked mercilessly until they are beyond Humbarr's reach, and the same goes for those who have killed animals or seriously damaged protective plants upon the isle. However, PCs who steal nothing and are nothing more than unwanted intruders will not be prevented from leaving the isle. Humbarr also will not prevent the removal of *Nobanion's Mask.* He knows that a time will come when it is the mask's destiny to travel.

Humbarr's last blow against fleeing intruders who have stolen, killed animals or seriously damaged plants is a telepathic message that can be sensed by trolls on the opposite shore of the lake (no allies of Humbarr's), who will become aware of the intruders' presence. The trolls will attack en masse.

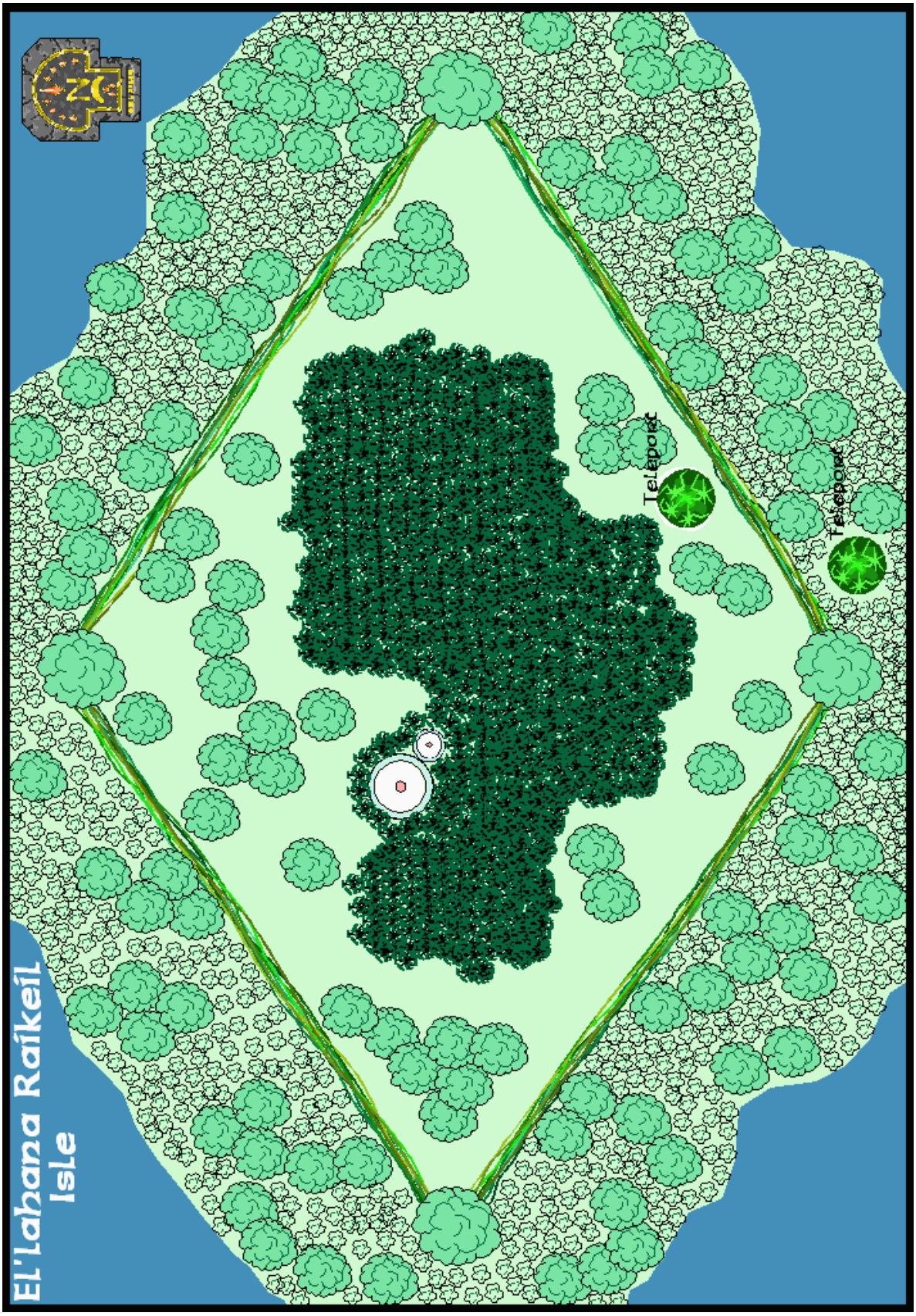
The brush on the isle can be affected by priests' spells and other magics. The use of such magic will not result in any extraordinary attacks, as long as it causes no permanent damage. Magic that does cause permanent damage will result in an all-out attack from the isle's defenses.

The brush will part automatically for priests, clerics, shamans, druids, cavaliers, monks or mystics who follow the teachings of *Yathaghera/Lurue, Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* or *Silvanus. El'lahana Raikeil* welcomes them. Others may make it as far as the mound of vines covering the castle unscathed if they travel by magical means such as flying, teleportation etc. Priests, clerics, shamans, druids, cavaliers, monks, mystics or especially devout followers of *Yathaghera/Lurue, Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* or *Silvanus* will be able to sense where the teleport points into the castle are and use them. Other followers of these gods can use these points if they find them, but the teleportation magic will not function for unwanted intruders.

It is extremely important that you assess your own goals with *El'lahana Raikeil* and your PCs' abilities before you run this segment. Most PC groups playing this module will have members with levels between 3 and 6 at the time they discover *El'lahana Raikeil.* This dungeon will be virtually impossible for characters of those levels. If you want your players to be able to enter the castle and retrieve *Nobanion's Mask,* a highly useful magical item for use later in the 5th module of *Northern Journey, The Great Dale,* then you probably will have to let them discover some magical help.

The easiest way to do this is to let them reach skeletons of past adventurers on the edge of *El'lahana Raikeil's* vegetation, and to find magic items among the objects possessed by these dead adventurers. We suggest above all a well-thought-out set of scrolls, because these can be used only once, which will keep them from troubling your campaign in the future with overdoses of no longer wanted (by you, the Game Master) magic.

The weather tables are not valid for *El'lahana Raikeil.* Regardless of the normal weather or time of year, the sun and moon always shine down from a clear sky upon *El'lahana Raikeil* isle, except nightly from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., when it rains gently. Daytime temperatures always are between 65 and 75°F/18-24℃ with lows be tween 60 and 70℉/16-21℃. There always is a light south ern breeze blowing across the isle.



El'lahana Raikeil Isle

About the Gate and Teleport Traps:

All of the gate and teleport traps except for gates A and B are attached to riddles. Priests, clerics, shamans, druids, cavaliers, monks, mystics and especially devout followers of the teachings of *Yathaghera/Lurue, Rillifane Rallathil, Sehanine, Khalreshaar, Nobanion, Eldath, Llira, Selûne, Mielikki* or *Silvanus* are immune to these traps but not to their group effect. Most of these traps will gate or teleport PC groups as a whole, if the riddles are not correctly answered, and they *will not* single out people as exceptions. In other words, if a priest of Lurue is a member of a group that is disinterested in Lurue's beliefs and goals, the priest will be gated or teleported along with the rest of his or her party, even though he or she normally would be immune, if a riddle is not solved. Party effects are valid for *all* members of the party that have entered the castle, but not for party members outside of the castle. Once a riddle is solved, the image of a silver unicorn will begin to materialize, becoming more solid with each subsequent success. For each riddle correctly answered, all members of the PC group save vs. magic or move one point closer to adopting the religion of one or more of the gods worshipped by Andal and Lislana. We leave it up to the Game Master to decide exactly how this religious shift should be implemented.

Approaching the Lake:

You seem to be coming into a wetter area of the Moonwood, and for the past half hour or so, the old elven road has been descending gradually. Small forest streams have gathered on both sides of the road, with a thin, but steady flow of water rushing ahead of you.

Game Master: From this point, if the PCs leave the road, there is a 15% chance per turn of an encounter with an ice adder (see the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*). There is a 2% chance that the PCs will encounter an ice adder in the road somewhere along the way to the *El'lahana Raikeil*, and another 2% chance for such an encounter when riding away from the ruin. In both directions, there is a 50% chance the PCs will have an encounter with 2d4 of the 8 trolls who lair in this area. Let the PCs follow the road for another mile.

There's no longer any doubt about it. You're definitely coming into a wet area of the Moonwood. If the road continues downward, you may find a pond or a lake at the end of your descent. The small creeks along the road have widened and gush forward now. The large conifers, oaks and other hardy trees you've become used to yield now to willows, birches and alders. Ferns grow on the forest floor, daylight penetrates the somewhat lower and thinner canopy of the trees, and the landscape is greening. The air is growing humid.

Game Master: If this is a sunny day, the sunshine breaks through the trees regularly, and the sky can be seen. If the weather is cold, it warms considerably more than a mile from *El'lahana Raikeil*, due to the ancient magic of Lislana. You can give your PCs the island map at this time, but be sure to print the version with the game master's layer hidden, so that they do not see where the teleportation sites are.

The descending trail comes into a small glade that is relatively level, before the trail begins its last, steep descent. As you expected, you see a small lake below you, but there is relatively little water surface, because it is dominated by an island that rises from the middle of the lake. The lake itself is perhaps 500 feet/150m wide and stretches over 400 feet/120m from north to south.

The island is about 350x250 feet/105x75m in size. There is no bridge across the lake, which rings the island with a stretch of water about 75 feet/23 m wide. In the center of the island is a huge, rather regularly shaped mound of thick vegetation about 20 feet/6m high and roughly 180 x 120 feet/54x36m in size. This well could be a an overgrown building or complex of buildings, but if so, the structure or structures are completely hidden by a thick network of twisting vines and climbing and trailing plants.

On the northwest side, two large, pure white towers rise out of the massive mound of vegetation. The larger of the two has a diameter of about 20 feet/6m and reaches a height of about 70 feet/21m above the mound of vegetation. The smaller is only 10 feet/3m in diameter and rises to a height of about 40 feet/12m above the mound of vegetation. At about 30 feet above ground level, a walkway emerges from the small tower toward the main mound of vegetation, but it is broken off in mid-air. The walkway too is mostly covered with vines. **(Game Master:** This walkway connected the tower to the main castle before the upper levels were destroyed.**)**

Vines and other climbing plants spiral around the tower walls another 14 feet/4,5m above the mound of vegetation that seems to be covering hidden structures. There are windows in the upper levels of the towers, and these gape open upon the surrounding landscape without panes of any sort, but the lowest of these that is visible is at least 20 feet/6m above the mound of vegetation.

This entire complex stands within a diamond-shaped walled area, but the wall is unlike any you've ever seen. It's a trained wall of vines and trailing plants nearly a yard/meter thick at most points and 30 feet/9m high. There are no watch towers along the wall but instead, huge oak trees – nearly 80 feet/24m high – in each of the wall's four corners. Between the wall and the great mound of vegetation is a grassed area with a variety of deciduous trees, all in full leaf. This area looks as though it is regularly tended. Impossible as it may seem this far to the north, you can see three huge lions sauntering around the grounds between the living wall and the mound of vegetation.

Reaching the strange, living wall will be no easy feat, even if you manage to cross the water. The stretch between the wall and the lakeshore is totally overgrown with trees surrounded by ferns, vines, bushes, trailing ivy, etc. The growth is thick, lush and 5 to 6 feet/150-180cm high.

Game Master: Trolls will not cross onto the island.

At the Shore:

The trail splits at the shore, heading to the right and the left. It may be that the path here circles the lake. There is no sign of a boat or any other means of crossing the water, and you can see already that swimming would be a questionable proposition. Beneath the surface of the crystal clear water, you can see a number of strange, fat fish swimming along the bottom, just above the bed. These fish are about 2 feet/60 cm long and 18 inches/45cm wide, and they have long, sharp spines.

Game Master: These are dragonfish (see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*. At this point, it's up to the PCs to figure out how to cross the water. If any of the PCs are inclined to go around the island, their sigylls will rebel at the idea. Sammaster's spirit behind the sigylls senses the presence of a powerful weapon to use against Harbet Gall, the lich priest of Malar in the Great Dale, and he will attempt to steer the PCs into obtaining this weapon, which is the *Mask of Nobanion*.

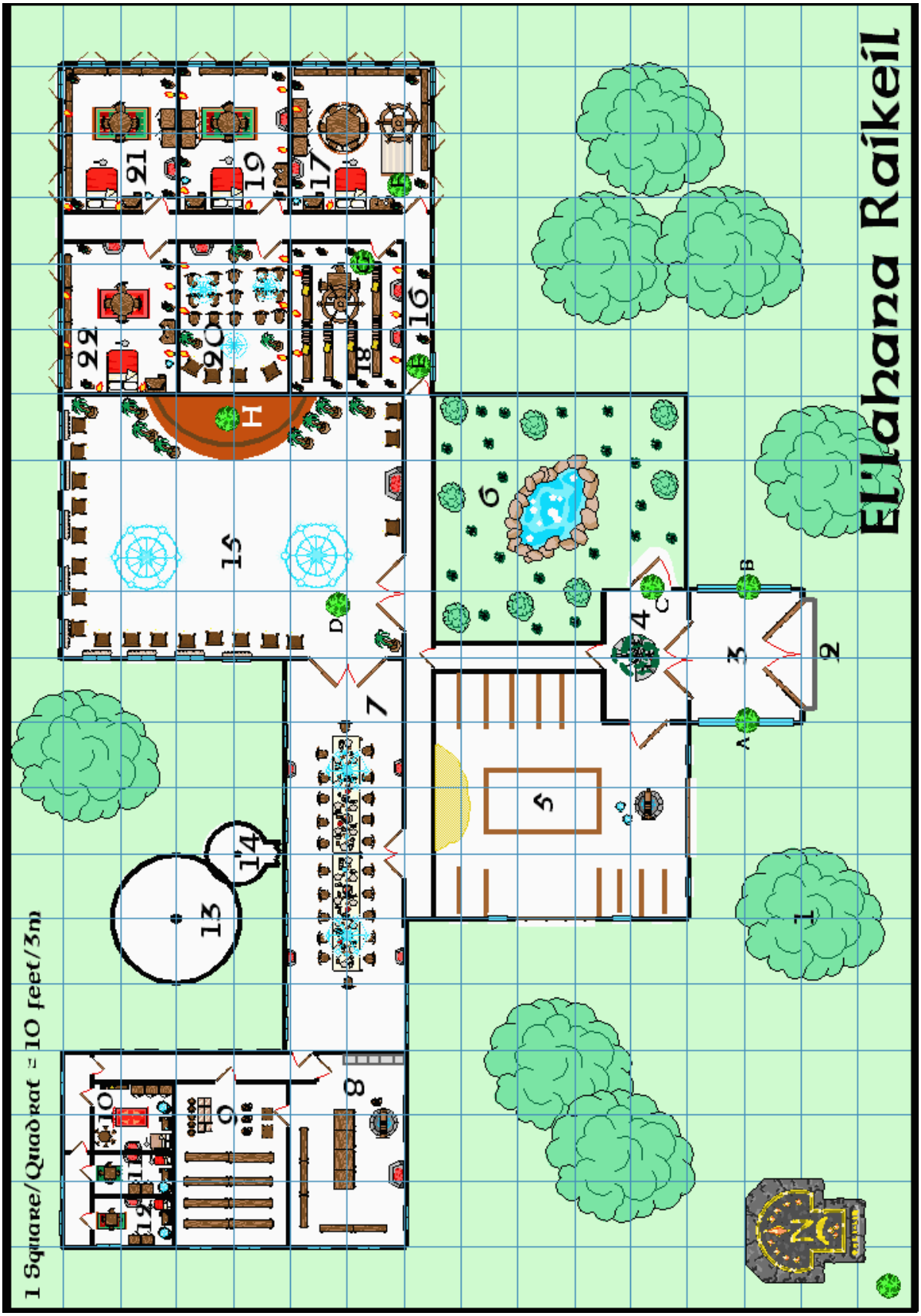
DRAGONFISH (see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*).

Game Master: The dragonfish do not have to pose a substantial threat to your party. The PCs can simply step around them, until they begin swimming. The dragonfish will not attack them. The next section should be read when the PCs reach the island.

A Close Look:

One of the first things you notice after reaching the other shore are half a dozen human or elven-sized skeletons tangled in the vines of the island just beyond the lakeshore. They've been there a long time. The bones are bleached, and vines run through the rib cages and the openings in the skulls. You can get a glimpse of what might be rusted metal under some of the skeletons, but to get to these, you'd have to cut your way through several yards/meters of thick brambles and vines. Then again, it looks like you'll have to make your way through many yards/meter of brush anyway, just to reach the living wall you saw from above.

Game Master: At this point Humbarr begins whatever action he plans to carry out. In addition to plant attacks, there also are six tigers patrolling the outer perimeter outside the vined wall. The tigers know how to slink through the brush and launch an attack, although they are unable to spring. If they encounter unwanted intruders, they will attempt at first to drive them off, resorting to deadly combat only if necessary. They will try to destroy followers of Malar immediately. 1d3 tigers will encounter the PCs at first, followed by another every three rounds until all six have arrived.



El'lahana Raikeil

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THORNSLINGER (see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*)**.**

The thornslinger is a spidery, white, carnivorous, dew-covered plant with light yellow blossoms. It is a ground cover about 8 feet/240 cm in diameter. It can attack living creatures by firing thorns. Each thorn has a range of 30 feet/9m and causes 1 hp dmg. The thornslinger shoots a large number of thorns in a spread pattern, but an enchantment will keep the thorns from hitting any target that is not an unwanted intruder. All unwanted intruders will be hit automatically by 2d4 thorns per round for 1 hp dmg each. The leaves and stem of a thornslinger are covered with a strong adhesive sap that holds anyone coming in contact with it with strength 13 or less fast until they are freed or digested. Characters with strength 13 or greater can break free in 1d4 rounds. Once a victim is caught by the dew, the thornslinger secretes digestive acids, causing 1-3 hp dmg per round. Normal fire causes normal damage. Open flames die out after one round and oil burns out in two rounds.

CHOKE CREEPER (Strangler Vine - see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*)**.**

The choke creepers of *El'lahana Raikeil* are long, thick vines with 64 branch vines each, all capable of attacking. The choke creeper is olive green. The main vine is almost 2 feet/60 cm thick. The branches have flexible tendrils that can creep at 5 yards/450cm per round. Light and heat attract them. The creepers at *El'lahana Raikeil* all are ancient, with main vines 160 feet/48m long and AC 6. The main vine has 64 branch vines, each with 16 hp that do not count toward the 200 hp of the main vine. The branches are AC 5. The branches look like normal vegetation, but they can grab unsuspecting victims, who can break free with a successful bend bars/lift gates roll. A victim has only a single roll. After that, he or she is held fast until the vine branch is severed. Victims being held can be strangled. A choke creeper is immune to weak fire but takes normal damage from hot fires such as those caused by burning oil. Cold causes only 1 hp damage per die but it also stuns the all plant sections struck for 1d4+1 rounds. Electricity does no damage. Instead, it doubles the creeper's movement rate for 1d4+1 rounds.

QUICKWOOD (see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*).

The quickwood looks like an oak, but it has a *"face"* with sensory organs that will be noticed only with a 10% chance at a distance of more than 10 feet/3m. An observant person will notice the *"face"* once he or she is within 10 feet/3m of the tree. A quickwood has infravision with a range of 120 feet/36m and it can detect vibrations in the ground through its roots and aerial movements through its leaves. The tree sends roots out for up to 90 feet/27m, through loose topsoil. The roots can hold any creature weighing less than 1,000 pounds/460kg motionless, but they cause no damage and are difficult to damage. Blunt weapons cause no damage and piercing weapons cause only 1 hp dmg per blow, but edged weapons can sever roots. Each root has 10 hp to sever, but this dmg is not subtracted from the tree's hit points. After a maximum of six roots are severed, the quickwood will withdraw the remaining 1d6+6 roots to safety. Roots can pull prey to the tree's mouth, which bites for cause 3d4 hp dmg. The quickwood's perspiration makes it immune to fire; lightning, poison and gas. It also is immune to most spells with no specific effect upon plants and it is immune to mind-affecting spells. When attacked by magic, a quickwood can absorb some or all of the spell's energy to radiate *fear* within a radius of 10 feet/3m per spell level absorbed. A spellcaster saves vs. spells. If successful, the spell has normal effects, and *fear* is simply a side effect. Otherwise all of the spell's energy is siphoned into the *fear* effect.

6 TIGERS, WILD (see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*), HP: 42, 38, 31, 40, 33, 29.

In open terrain. these tigers can leap 10 feet/3m upward and make a forward spring of 30 feet to 50 feet/9-15m to attack. This is impossible in brush. If both forepaws hit the rear claws also rake for 2d4 hp dmg each.

HUMBARR - TREANT (see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*) HP: 110.

Humbarr is an exceptionally old, powerful and tall treant. He hates evil things and the unrestrained use of fire. He can speak his own language and also elf, dwarf, orc, ogre, goblin, common, and a bit of almost all other humanoid tongues. A fire-based attack against Humbarr is at +4 to hit and +1 dmg. He saves against all fire-based attacks at -4. This weakness to fire also applies to animated trees under his control.

Winding Vines:

Game Master: The following is read when and if the PCs reach the wall of vines. Don't forget the four quickwoods that stand like mute watchtowers at each of the wall's four corners. Climbing the vines, the PCs will be cut by 12d4 thorns per 10 feet/3m with 1d2 hp dmg per thorn.

> Making your way through the brush has been difficult enough, but the wall of vines looks like an almost impossible challenge. The wall is a good 30 feet/9m high and easily a yard/meter thick. The vines that form the wall are thickly intertwined with one another and twist so close to each other that a rat would only slowly be able to find its way through. Many of the vines are woody and up to 4 inches/6cm thick. Just as many of them are wild brambles and roses laced heavily with sharp thorns, some more than an inch/2.5 cm long. Because of the thorns, the wall also would be extremely difficult to climb.

The Gardens:

Game Master: The following is read when and if the PCs make their way over the wall of vines surrounding the castle and find themselves in the garden. NOTE: Tree No. 1 on the layout map of *El'lahana Raikeil* is actually Humbarr, the treant.

> You've managed to make your way beyond the wall into what once were fine gardens, now a lawn of long grasses dotted with trees and small bushes. Three huge lions are marching in your direction.

Game Master: There are six in all on the grounds. What the lions do is dependent upon the PCs' philosophy:

- If all share the goals of Lurue, the lions will walk slowly and carefully to the PCs, sniff them like dogs would do and follow them but not attack.
- If some are unwanted intruders, the lions will drive them off, resorting to deadly combat, if necessary.
- If some are followers of Malar, the lions will make a running attack with complete destruction as their goal.

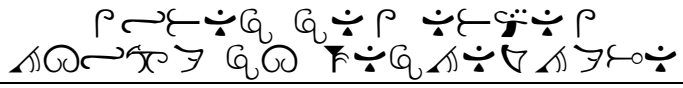
The lions will of course react differently to PCs of different inclinations.

6 LIONS (4 male, 2 female, common, see *D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium*), HP: 36, 34, 28 (F), 37, 30 (F), 33.

The lions can leap as far as 30 feet/9m. Males are armor class 5 in their forequarters and 6 in their hindquarters. If a lion hits with both forepaws, it rakes with its rear claws doing 1d6+1 hp dmg each.

Going in:

Game Master: The layout plan of the castle *does not* show the mass of vines on the exterior that covers the castle! The following is read when and if the PCs make their way through the overgrowth and actually uncover the building.

> **MAP SITE 2:** There is a slab of pink colored marble that you can now make out, hanging above the door. The following inscription is cut into the stone:
>
> 

Game Master: Text – *El'lahana Raikeil – House to Yathaghera.*

> The two copper doors are each three yards high and a yard and a half wide - massive and plated in copper. You can't tell what's beneath the copper plate.

Game Master: The doors are locked with a magical lock that can be opened with *Knock* or similar magic. Once a door is opened:

MAP SITE 3: The door opens on a room 20 feet/6m square. A second set of double doors is in the opposite wall. The room itself is empty and obviously filled with magic. You have no doubt that this building is covered with thick vines. But from inside of this room, there is no trace of them. The ceiling is transparent, as though it was made of glass, and shows the sky above you. There are huge, paneless windows in the two side walls. The window to the left opens onto a majestic landscape of lush grass, bushes and trees growing above an incredibly beautiful blue lake. The window to your right shows another beautiful blue lake, but this one in a rough wilderness probably seldom visited by man, elf or other intelligent creature. Both sites are alive. Breezes blow, and you have the feeling that you probably could step through the window and arrive at the destination you see. On the other side of the window to your left, a group of wild flowers sways gently back and forth in the light breeze. Bees and bumblebees fly from flower to flower, and you can hear them buzzing.

Game Master: These are gates created by Andal.

MAP SITE A: The Lake of Dreams upon Evermeet. This has become a one-way gate. The elves of Evermeet have destroyed the return portal. Only moon elves, gold elves and green elves can pass through this gate. All other races will meet an invisible barrier if they attempt to cross into Evermeet. This gate remains open for the Moon Elves and Green Elves still living in the Moonwood, and it is their path to make their retreat to Evermeet, when and if they believe their time has come. An elf who passes through this gate will see no trace of the gate from the Evermeet side. If he or she decides to return to Faerûn, that must be negotiated with the Queen.

The right gate is:

MAP SITE B: This gate opens onto a glade once sacred to followers of Yathaghera on the shore of Lake Sember near Semberholme. This gate still functions in both directions, but adventurers who wander through the gate to Lake Sember will have to find the return gate to use it.

There are four, ancient stone benches, some partly crumbling, along the shore of the lake about 30 yards/27m from the place where gated creatures arrive. The second of these benches from the left is the gate to *El'lahana Raikeil.* It functions only when the person who wishes to be gated sits upon the bench and concentrates upon Map Area No. 2 in *El'lahana Raikeil.* If PCs bearing the red sigylls wander through this gate still bearing the symbol of Ssessibil, the sigylls will draw the PC back to the bench and to *El'lahana Raikeil.* If, however, the PCs manage to reach or return to *El'lahana Raikeil* after Ssessibil's symbol has vanished, the sigylls will draw them *through* this gate to Lake Sember, because the gate substantially abbreviates the journey they must make to reach their next destination, Gwath in Daggerdale.

Game Master: This also can be an option for you. If the PCs enter *El'lahana Raikeil* after finding Ssessibil, and you wish to shorten your version of *Northern Journey,* you can have the sigylls draw the PCs *back* to *El'lahana Raikeil* and through this window to Lake Sember, thereby bypassing most of Module No. 3, *Daggerdale,* eliminating the entire long journey southward from the Cold Wood over Sundabar through the Delimbyir Valley, Sunset Vale, Sunset Mountains and Western Cormyr.

MAP SITE 4: The double doors open onto a small chamber with a wooden ceiling. This chamber too is mostly empty, 20 feet/6m wide and 15 feet/450cm long. There are large wooden doors in the walls to your left and right and a smaller door in the wall ahead of you. In the center of the chamber, a spiral staircase covered with vines winds upward until it disappears in a jungle of vines. The vines looks as though they're in healthy condition.

Game Master: The stairway once led to the upper levels of the castle which long ago were demolished. The vines are choke creepers. If one or more unwanted intruders enter the chamber, read the following:

As soon as you enter the room, the vines begin twisting and waving in all directions.

MAP SITE C: The doors behind you, ahead of you and to your left are of plain wood, but the door to your right bears glowing symbols:

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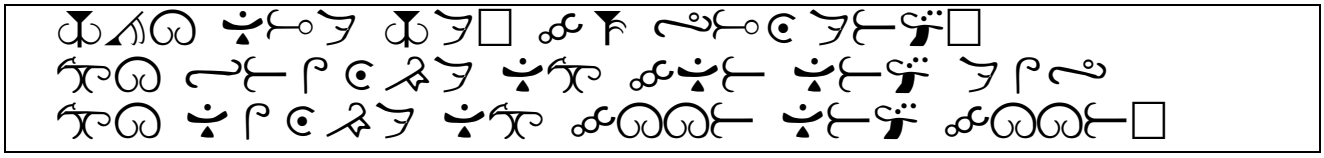


Game Master: **T**he symbols read: *Who are we, my friend, so unlike as man and elf, so alike as moon and moon?* The correct answer is *Selûne* and *Sehanine*. If no answer or an incorrect answer is given, this gate will transport the entire PC party – even if the members are split up – to a random teleport site not yet visited within the Moonwood. If the PCs already have visited all the teleport sites, they will be sent back to one of them a second time, the site to be chosen at random.

Game Master: Areas 5 and 7 through 12 are strictly functional parts of the castle and are not protected by magic. However, if followers of Malar are in the party and still survive, choke vines outside the castle will break through the windows and enter in an attempt to kill any Malarites.

MAP SITE 5: This area is an irregular hall, approximately 38 feet/11,4m by 45 feet/13.5m in size, that serves as a stall, probably for horses, although none are stabled at present. However, the barn has been kept up and shows signs of somewhat recent use. The ceiling is of normal wood and shows no signs of magic. Two large double doors, each 12 feet/360cm wide, are in the opposite wall and the wall to your left. There are horse stalls along the opposite wall and to your right, and a large stack of hay on the wall to your right. In the middle of the barn is a pen, probably for foals. To the left is a water well with two empty wooden water pails.

Game Master: Area 6 is a magic shrine to Yathaghera/Lurue and the related gods that had been worshipped by Lislana. There is no violence allowed within this ruin. Any intruder who acts violently will immediately be gated to a random site within the Moonwood. This shrine has a transparent ceiling that always shows a bright, starlit night under a full moon, regardless of the time of day. A drink from the clear pond water will heal all sicknesses, blindness, insanity, effects of poison, etc., but it has no effects upon wounds. Bathing in the pond will heal all wounds. This is the case regardless of religious philosophy or alignment, with the exception of Malar's followers. They will be poisoned in 1 round without a save if they drink the water and dissolved (no resurrection) without a save within 1 round if they bathe in it. The elven script reveals the portrayed gods' names, in Lurue's case *Yathaghera*.

MAP SITE 6: This area is an irregular hall, approximately 38 feet/11,4m by 45 feet/13.5m in size. It is also a strange room. No ceiling is visible, nor can you see any trace of the vines. Instead you can look upward into the night sky, where stars twinkle and Selûne shines in full moon. The floor of this room consists of gently rolling soil overgrown by lush, green grass, dotted with small trees – 15 feet/450cm or less in height – and small bushes. In the middle of the room is a pond, about 20 feet/6m wide and 15feet/450m long. The still surface of the water reflects the moon and the stars. There are three dimensional but non-moving paintings of many figures on the walls. Glowing silver elven symbols are painted beneath the figures.

The central figure seems to be a unicorn (Yathaghera/Lurue – see *Powers and Pantheons*), script: . Nearby is a great lion (Nobanion – see *Powers and Pantheons*), script ; a huge oak tree (Rillifane Rallathil – see *Demihuman Deities*), script: ; a beautiful elven woman in a flowing gown with drops of light falling from her gown to the ground (Sehanine), script: ; a human-looking woman in druidic robes with white flowers in her hair (Khalreshaar – see *Demihuman Deities* or *Elves of Evermeet*), script: ; a green elf with mixed blue and green hair who appears to be singing (Eldath – elven version – see *Faiths and Avatars*), script: ; a beautiful woman with hair of many colors arising from circles of smoke and bright lights (Llira – see *Faiths and Avatars*), script: ; a dusky-skinned woman with radiant eyes and ivory-colored hair (Selûne – see *Faiths and Avatars*), script: ; a tall woman clad in the garb of a ranger (Mielikki – see *Faiths and Avatars*), script , and a young man wearing scale armor with scales made in the shape of oak leaves (Silvanus – see *Faiths and Avatars*), script: .

Game Master: Area 7 holds neither threats nor useful items.

MAP SITE 7 (no magic protection): The double doors open onto a great dining hall 60 feet/18m long and 20 feet/6m wide. This rooms has a wooden ceiling that supports two, large, crystal chandeliers holding stubs of partially burned candles. The outer walls are lined with windows. and a 35-foot/10.5m long banquet table stands in the center of the room, with seating for 22 persons. There are four fireplaces in this room and doors in the west, south and east walls. It's been at least a few tendays since this room was used, but someone maintains it.

Game Master: Area 8 holds neither threats nor useful items.

MAP SITE 8 (no magic protection): The door opens onto a rather normal-looking castle kitchen, roughly 20 x 60 feet/6 x 18m in size, with doors at two points in the north wall. The ceiling is of normal wood. Along the north and west walls are shelves with pots, pans, plates, tankards, cooking vessels etc., but no food. In the center of the kitchen is a large work table more than 10 feet/3m long. Between it and the south wall is a water well with an empty wooden bucket standing next to it. A fireplace for cooking is on the south wall.

Game Master: Area 9 holds neither threats nor useful items. The buckets, sacks and crates are empty. Three of the barrels are empty, two contain mead.

MAP SITE 9 (no magic protection): The door opens onto a storage room, some 25 feet/7.5m long and 20 feet/6m wide. It contains empty shelves, empty sacks, three empty wooden buckets, five closed wooden barrels and two closed wooden crates.

MAP SITES 10-12 (no magic protection):

Game Master: Areas 10-12 hold neither threats nor useful items. These are servants' bedrooms and contain beds, dressing tables, closets, bedpans, empty wooden buckets, fireplaces, rugs, tables, chairs and fireplaces.

MAP SITES 13-22 (magic protection):

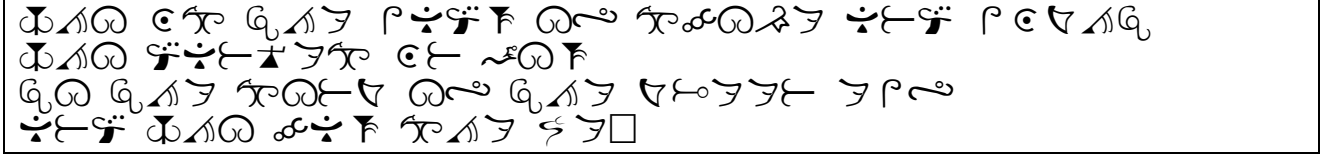
Game Master: Areas 13 and 14 are Andal's now empty mage's towers. Both are totally empty. These towers have no doors but can be entered by climbing up to the windows, however, the vegetation on the sides of the towers includes choke vines which will attack unwanted intruders. Areas 15 and 22 are the parts of the castle that were used personally by Andal and Lislana and are protected by magic. Magically disguised choke vines stand potted and ready to drive off unwanted intruders in most rooms. If followers of Malar are in the party and still survive, the choke vines in these rooms and on the tower walls will concentrate their efforts first upon killing any Malarites. Players who find themselves in the small tower will be automatically gated to the Moonwood Site *Tower Ruin* after 1 turn in the tower. PCs who find themselves within the larger tower will automatically be gated to the Moonwood site *Doorless Tower* after one round.

MAP SITES 13-14, Andal's Towers – The larger of these two towers has a diameter of about 20 feet/6m and reaches a height of about 70 feet/21m above the mound of vegetation. The smaller is only 10 feet/3m in diameter and rises to a height of about 40 feet/12m above the mound of vegetation covering the castle. No doors are visible, but paneless, open windows can be seen above, at levels about 20 feet/6m above the climbing vegetation. Vines and other climbing plants spiral around the tower walls to a height of about 14 feet/4,5m above the mound of vegetation that seems to be covering structures.

Game Master:

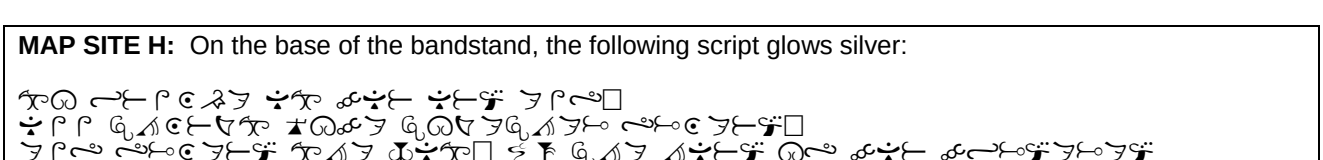
MAP SITE 15 (choke creepers and teleport) - You enter into a grand ballroom 60 feet/18m long and 40 feet/12m wide. The west and north walls are filled with curtained windows. Leather chairs are lined up along the west and north walls. There is a bandstand decorated by several potted plants on the east wall and in the room's southwest corner. More leather chairs and a fireplace line the south wall. There are double doors in the southwestern corner of the ballroom, in the west and south walls. Except for the two positions where huge crystal chandeliers 10 feet/3m in diameter with hundreds of candles each are anchored, the ceiling is transparent. Through it you see stars twinkling in the light of the full moon in a clear night sky.

MAP SITE D: The doors **(Game Master:** Both sets**)** are decorated with silver-glowing script:



Game Master: Teleport trap. The riddle is: *Who is the lady of smoke and light, who dances in joy to the song of the green elf? And who may she be?* The answers are *Llira* and *Eldath*. If the riddle is not answered correctly, the entire group is teleported to the opposite shore of the lake, to the point where it stood before crossing the water.

MAP SITE H: On the base of the bandstand, the following script glows silver:



Game Master: Teleport trap, activated when a PC comes within 5 feet/150cm of the bandstand. The riddle is: *So unlike as man and elf? All things come together friend. Elf friend she was, by the hand of man murdered, from the Seldarine redeemed. Say her sad name, and dance in joy with her!* The answer is *Khalreshaar*. If the riddle is answered correctly, a ghostly group of elven musicians will appear on the stage and begin to make unworldly beautiful dancing music. At the same time, the transparent image of a human-looking woman in druidic robes with white flowers in her hair will appear on the dance floor and bid the PCs to dance with her. If any want to resist this invitation, they must save vs. magic with a penalty of 2. Those who dance with the image of Khalreshaar are healed of all wounds, illnesses, poisons, mental afflictions etc. If the riddle is not answered correctly, the entire group is teleported into the larger of Andal's towers, map site No. 13.

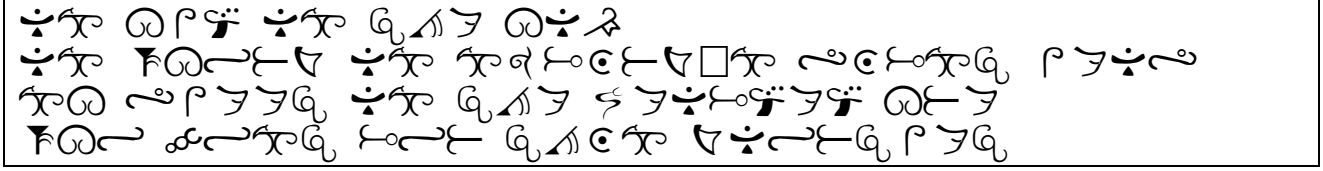
Game Master: The doorway to area 16 opens onto a passage into the private areas of the castle and the guest rooms. If the PCs manage to pass the teleportation trap, they still will encounter two choke creepers in the potted plants between the windows.

MAP SITE 16 (choke creepers and teleport) – The door opens onto a passage 5 feet/450cm wide and 28 feet/8.4m long. At the end of the passage is a doorway and an opening to the left. There are three windows in the southern wall, to your right. They give you an unobstructed view of the out-of-doors, with no sign of the vines covering the castle. Between them are two potted plants standing about 5 feet/150cm high. The ceiling in this room also is magical, showing an unobstructed view of the sky above.

Game Master: If unwanted intruders still are in the party, read the following:

As soon as you enter the passage, the two potted plants begin growing rapidly, shooting out tendril-like vines that begin waving in the air and reaching in your direction.

MAP SITE E: Silver symbols glow on the door:

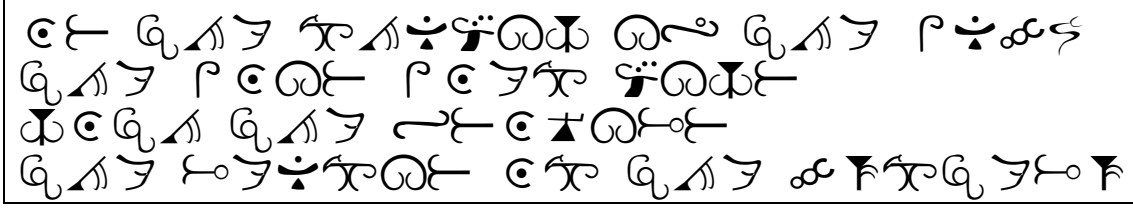


Teleport trap. The symbols read: *As old as the oak, as young as spring's first leaf, so fleet as the bearded one, you must run this gauntlet.* The answer is *Silvanus*. If the riddle is not answered correctly, the entire group is teleported into the smaller of Andal's towers, map site 14.

Game Master: Area 17 is the chamber of Andal and Lislana. No runes will appear on this door and no physical or magical means will open it until *all* of the riddles have been answered. Should the PCs leave the castle and successfully attempt to cut through the brush and reach a window to this room, they will find that the pane is opaque and it cannot be broken or otherwise opened. The sigylls will do their best to prevent the PCs from leaving *El'lahana Raikeil* without having entered this chamber. The lion mask on the table is the *Mask of Nobanion.* The sigylls will bring strong pressure upon the PCs to take this mask with them. This room will not take violent action to keep PCs from spending the night in it, but they will feel highly uncomfortable if they attempt to sleep here and will sleep poorly or not at all.

MAP SITE 17 (Gate and choke creepers) – The door opens onto a large bedroom chamber, some 25 feet/7.5m square. This room too has a magical ceiling, with an unobstructed view of the open sky above. Benches run along the east and south walls, which are filled with large windows that give you an unobstructed view of the castle grounds with no sign of the vines that cover the building. Potted plants grow in each of the room's four corners. There is a brown carpet on the floor directly ahead of the door, and a large wooden chandelier 6 feet/180cm in diameter hanging above the carpet, attached to a wooden area that appears to simply float in the air 20 feet/6m above the floor. To your left is a double bed with dressers to either side. There are closets along the north wall next to a fireplace. Cold torches are mounted on the north and west walls. A large six-sided wooden table with six wooden chairs stands on a rug in the middle of the room. A large mask of a lion's face lays upon the table.

MAP SITE F - *(Only after all other riddles have been solved!)*: On this door too, silvery symbols glow:



Gate. The symbols read: *In the shadow of the lamb, the lion lies down with the unicorn. The reason is the mystery.* The answer to this riddle is more difficult than to the others. The lion is *Nobanion* and the unicorn is *Yathaghera/Lurue.* The lamb symbolizes their mutual understanding that the fittest among beasts survive, but that one hunts and kills only when necessary to survive, not for the sake of the hunt and the kill themselves. If the riddle is not answered correctly, this gate will transport the entire PC party – even if the members are split up – to a random teleport site not yet visited within the Moonwood. If the PCs already have visited all the teleport sites, they will be sent back to one of them a second time, the site to be chosen at random.

If the PCs get beyond this gate and unwanted intruders still are in the group, read the following:

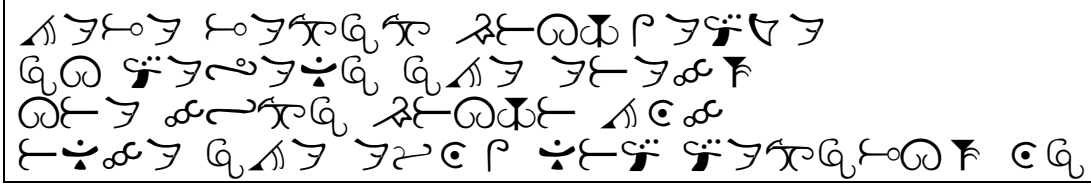
As soon as you enter the room, the five potted plants begin growing rapidly, shooting out tendril-like vines that begin waving in the air and reaching in your direction.

Game Master: There is nothing of value left in the library. The few parchment books still on the shelves that were not taken to Evermeet will crumble if the PCs try to take them.

MAP SITE 18 (Teleport and choke creepers) – The door opens onto a large room that apparently once was the castle library, 25 by 20 feet/7.5 by 6m in size. This room too has a magical ceiling that provides an unobstructed view of the open sky above. In the room are four rows of bookshelves and a wooden table with four wooden chairs. Over the table hangs a large wooden chandelier 6 feet/180cm in diameter attached to a wooden area that appears to simply float in the air 20 feet/6m above the floor.

There also are cold torches hanging on the north and south walls and twin fireplaces on the south wall. You can see four, healthy potted plants, each about 5 feet/150cm high on the east wall, and four more growing on the west wall. There doesn't seem to be anything of value in this room. The bookshelves are mostly empty. A few parchment books do remain on them, however, and you also can see the remnants of a few other books that have partially collapsed into piles of dust.

MAP SITE G: Silver symbols glow upon the door:



Teleport trap. The symbols read: *"Here rests knowledge. To defeat the enemy, one must known him. Name the evil and destroy it.* This is the second most difficult riddle in the castle. The answer is *Malar*. If the riddle is answered incorrectly, the entire group is teleported out of the castle to a point immediately beneath Humbarr (Map Site 1). Any areas of the castle – including the doorway – that the PCs may have freed from vines will be completely grown over again.

Game Master: If the PCs get beyond the teleport site and unwanted intruders still are in the group, read the following:

As soon as you enter the room, the potted plants all begin growing rapidly, shooting out tendril-like vines that begin waving in the air and reaching in your direction.

Game Master: There is nothing of value left in the guest rooms – map sites 19, 21 and 22. However, PCs who are not unwanted intruders can use these rooms as their own while staying in the castle. Please check the dungeon map for slight physical differences when describing these rooms to your PCs.

MAP SITES 19, 21 and 22 (choke creepers) – The door opens into a sleeping chamber, perhaps a guest room. The ceiling here also is magic and open to a clear sky. Within, you see benches along the windows, a double bed, dressing tables, a fireplace, a wooden table with four wooden chairs atop a rug, cold torches hanging on the walls and several potted plants.

Game Master: If unwanted intruders still are in the group, read the following:

As soon as you enter the room, the potted plants all begin growing rapidly, shooting out tendril-like vines that begin waving in the air and reaching in your direction.

Game Master: There is nothing of value left in the chamber music room.

MAP SITE 20 (choke creepers) – The door opens into a room apparently intended for events of some sort, perhaps musical performances. The room is 25 feet/7.5m long and 20 feet/6m wide, with a wooden ceiling that supports three crystal chandeliers each 3 feet/90cm in diameter. Four large leather chairs are on the opposite wall facing you. Sixteen wooden chairs also are lined up in rows in the room, facing the four leather chairs. Three cold torches each hang on the north and south walls. There also are three large potted plants in the room, each more than 6 feet/1m high.

Game Master: If unwanted intruders still are in the group, read the following:

As soon as you enter the room, the potted plants all begin growing rapidly, shooting out tendril-like vines that begin waving in the air and reaching in your direction.

Doorless Tower

FROM OUTSIDE:

Just off the trail to the (right/left - east side) stands a large white tower in the wood. It consists of white marble and ends in a pyramid shape at the top, about 30 yards/27m above the ground but still beneath the canopy of the forest, although it probably reached well above the trees in its own day. The base of the tower is 10 yards/9m in diameter. One face of the tower is covered in green moss (**Game Master:** A ranger knows automatically that this is north. Remind him, if the player forgets.) Thick ivy vines wind tightly around the bottom five yards of the tower. As far as you can tell, there isn't a single door or opening in the tower anywhere.

Game Master: Paladins and others with similar abilities will detect something evil but undefined. Other than magic, there is no way to enter the tower here. Its occupant, a demilich, was sealed in by Andal ages ago. It already was a lich when it destroyed the sacred mountain, and it still was a lich when it was sealed in. It was unaware of the gate to the *El'lahana Raikeil* and never used it. As a demilich, it is uninterested in the gate now, except for the fact that it has provided it from time to time with the energy of misguided adventurers.

FROM INSIDE (after gating):

(Game Master: The door that forms the gate here vanishes as soon as the PCs move more than a yard away from it, but it returns again when they're within a yard of it. The second door is a temporary magic door to the wood. It vanishes after 1 turn. See below.

You suddenly find yourself standing behind a closed double door of marble in a round room, about 10 yards/9m in diameter, perhaps a room in a tower. The ceiling is 10 feet/3m above the floor. The room is dimly lit by torches on the wall, burning with a sickly yellow-green flame. There are marble bookshelves along the wall filled with many volumes of parchment.

To the left side of the room is a table 6 feet/180cm long and 3 feet/90cm wide with six chairs along its sides. In the wall directly across from you is another double door of marble, just like the one behind you. And in the middle of the room is a spiral, marble stairway heading upwards, through a two-yard/180cm-wide hole in the ceiling. Yellow-green light comes through the hole too.

Game Master: The flames that illuminate the room are cold and magical and cannot be put out. The books crumble to dust when picked up. The door across from the PCs is a safety escape built by Andal. It remains available for 1 turn after the PCs arrive through the gate and then vanishes completely. It will not return until someone else comes through the gate, and that only after 24 hours have passed. If the PCs open the second door, it will whisk all of them on the ground floor out of the tower and into the forest. The sigylls will force the rest of the PCs elsewhere in the tower to run involuntarily out of it within the next round. PC who are outside in the forest have no way of re-entering the tower, except to return to the gate that brought them here and gate again.

SECOND FLOOR:

This level of the tower is about 30 feet/9m in diameter, and the ceiling is 15 feet/450cm above the floor. The spiral staircase leads upwards to another level, also illuminated with a sickly green light. On one wall is a large, half-circular workbench filled with vials and other paraphernalia of a magician, but the contents all seem to have evaporated with age. Laying on the floor in front of the workbench are the remnants of a being - a skull and pile of bones, the remnants of a robe. The skull faces toward the wall.

Game Master: This is an elven demilich, per D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium. This demilich belongs to the category of the oldest demiliches, whose *"shape will advance and threaten, but dissipate without attacking in 3 rounds unless attacked."*

THIRD FLOOR:

This level is nearly empty, and the ceiling is lost in the darkness above. There is soot on the white marble wall behind you, and on the floor behind you are the remnants of an inscribed circle with fragments of symbols still visible within the circle.

Game Master: The symbols are what's left of old pentagrams that no longer are complete. The PCs (and/or you as Game Master) can make of this what they(/you) will. The magic torches illuminate the first 5 yards of the wall, but the PCs can make out nothing that is higher. The walls are of polished white marble and cannot be climbed by a thief. If the PCs do find a way to ascend (for instance, with magic), there is nothing further above them, unless you as Game Master place something there.

Drow Glade

Game Master: This encounter is fully described at the end of Part 3, where the Suddrsbedr is described. If you are using the Suddrsbedr in your campaign, you should, if possible, also use the scenario described there. Otherwise make whatever modifications you wish.

Druid's Grove

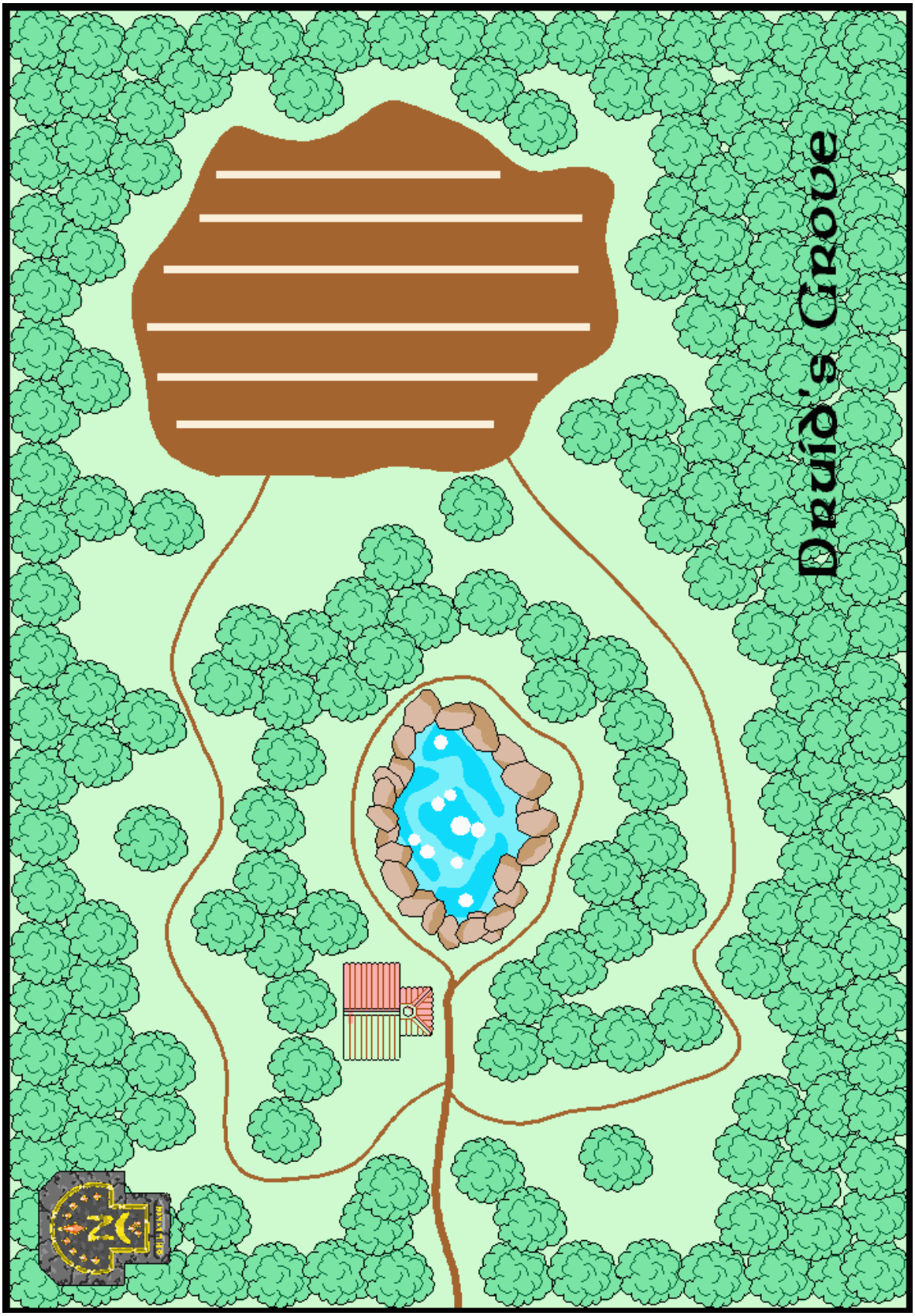
Game Master: The occupant of this grove is a 12th level Druid who left the High Forest in something of a fallout with other druids there. He is the only druid in the Moonwood, and he seldom is seen by PCs. He may be encountered in the forest as a bear. If the PCs attack him while hunting for food and he perceives this as their motivation, he will try to escape and change shape quickly. If they attack him without good reason to do so or simply for the sake of the attack itself, he will use his full powers to damage the PCs.

When he knows intruders are in the vicinity of his grove, he will shapechange, usually into bird form, and watch the intruders from the trees, etc. But as long as they do not disturb the balance, the PCs will be allowed to use the grove. This druid views men, elves, dwarves etc. as an integral part of nature. He feels the Moonwood would be better off with more mortals in it.

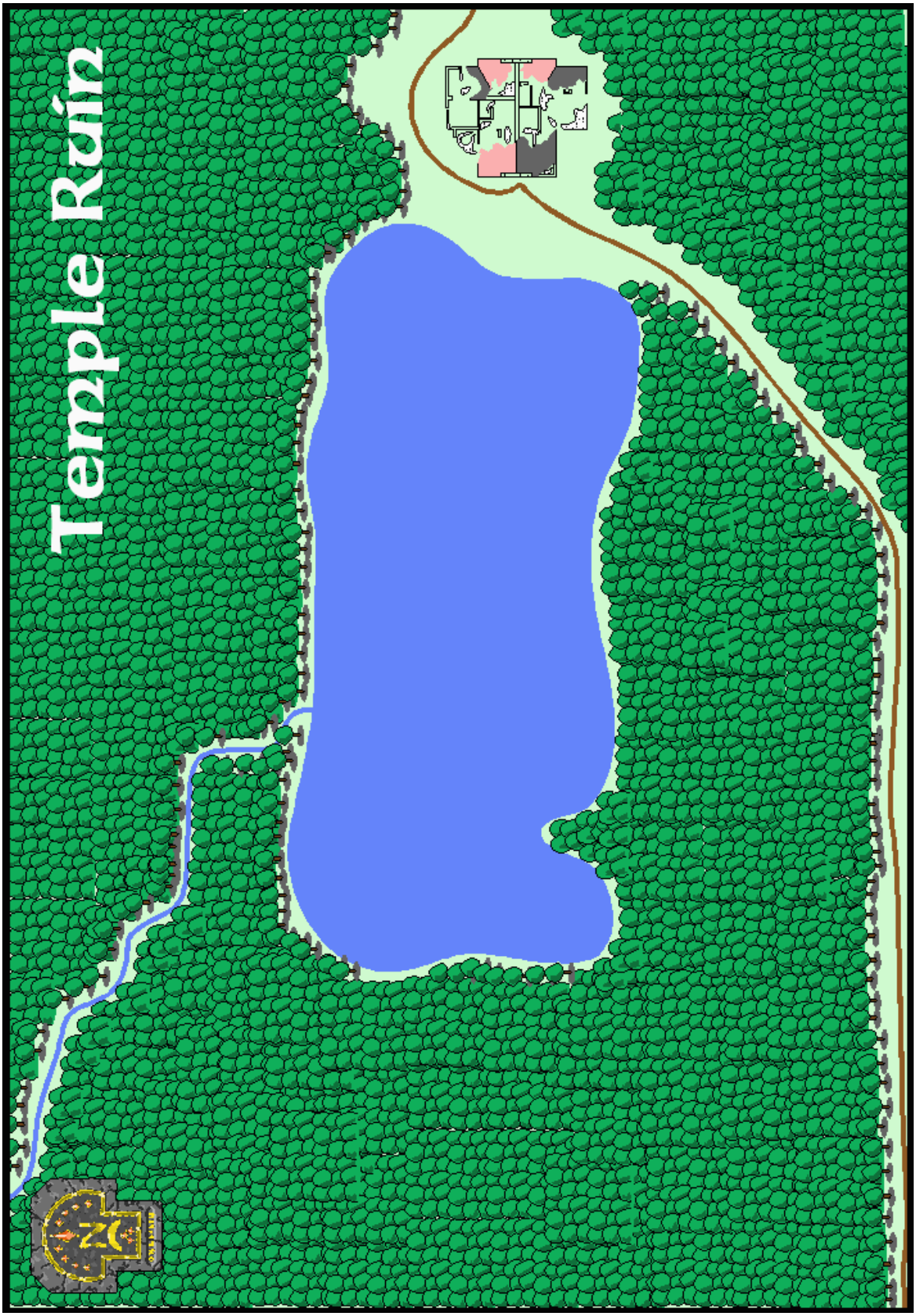
See the map of the grove. It has a scale of 10 yards/9m per square. The grove holds a simple, two-story hut with only a single straw bed, but with room for the party to sleep on the floor. There is a large fireplace nearly in the center of the hut and a simple wood-burning stove with pots, pans, tin plates, etc., where the PCs can cook food. There is a root cellar below the house in which the druid has stored beets, carrots, salsify, onions, whole wheat flour and potatoes in sand bins. There also is a large, tapped barrel of apple wine and another barrel of salted boar meet. The druid will not mind the PCs using his hut or his provisions. He also does not object to hunting or to fishing in his pond, as long as they take sensible amounts to consume themselves.

The druid has a number of apple trees and a large garden behind the pond. Pay close attention to the time of year. The apples trees will bear ripe fruit only from the end of Eleasias to the middle of Marpenoth. The first radishes will show up in the garden in the first ride of Kythorn, the first lettuce in the last ride of Kythorn. Some carrots can be harvested in mid-Flamerule. Beets begin coming in late in Eleasias, salsify, potatoes and onions in Eleint.

The PCs will have no encounters (except, perhaps, with an angry druid) as long as they are in the grove. Dangerous creatures do not enter the grove.



Druid's Grove



Temple Ruin

Elven Hall Ruin (Suddrsbedr's Farm)

Game Master: If you're not using the Suddrsbedr in your campaign, the *"farm"* will be as described in Part 3, but the Suddrsbedr and Hansi will not be there. See in particular Volo's remarks on the farm in Part 3. The farm has been mapped.

Elven Temple Ruin (Ettin lair)

Game Master: The ruin is an old temple to Aerdrie Faenya. It's now the lair of four ettins, 1d4 of which are home when the PCs arrive. After 10 rounds, there's a 10% chance that another ettin will appear per round, until all four are on the scene.

From time to time as there's a slight opening, you catch a glimpse of low, forested hills just above you to the north, and you also begin to hear the gushing of a forest stream flowing downward, more or less in your direction. There also are more birds than usual in the forest just to the north of you, and the smell of water is in the air.

Game Master: Give the PCs a little time.

After a few more minutes, the path begins turning toward the northeast, and you see an opening in the forest before you with a large, temple-like building in it. You also can see a small lake to the left, about 400 by 150 feet/120 x 45m in size. The building is about 120 feet/36m wide, 100 feet/30m deep and 30 feet/9m high. A quarter of the building in the northwest corner caved in long ago, and brush and plants grow where the floor was. The old elven trail leads directly to the caved in point, but there is room to make a detour around the ruin if you wish. Vines cover parts of the walls, but there is a large inscription on the right front wall in old symbols:

Game Master: Aerdrie Faenya**.**

Game Master: In the lair, the PCs can find in the open and piled together the bleached bones of four adventurers, all dead for some time. Still intact are chain mail and ring armor in human size, dwarven chain mail +3 and a metal helmet in dwarven size, a ring of protection +1, a spellbook from a 5th level mage, a long sword still in good condition, a mace +1, a dwarven warhammer +4, two longbows, 16 flight arrows still intact, two daggers, two battleaxes, a shield dwarven size, a holy symbol of Tymora, 16 Gold Dragons (Waterdeep), 3 Toals (Waterdeep), 27 Silver Shards (Waterdeep), 31 Copper Nibs (Waterdeep), 8 Halfmoons (Silverymoon).

Orc Village

Game Master: See the map. The lookout point is above the village, along the old elven path just north of the settlement. 1,000 orcs of the Laughing Skull tribe live in this densely populated village, roughly 600 by 450 feet/180x135m in size. Of that total, about 300 are trained male and female warriors, another 100 are female orcs untrained as warriors and 600 are young, also not fully trained as warriors. Untrained qualify as Level 0 warriors. They also have 22 Sky Pony warriors held as prisoners. Whether anything occurs depends upon the PCs' actions. If the PCs are spotted without being in the Suddrsbedr's company, the orcs will try to take them prisoner and won't hesitate to kill the PCs in battle. Those taken prisoner join the barbarians as slaves.

You've reached a small lookout point on a low hill that gives you a narrow view of an orc village directly below you, about 80 feet/24m lower in elevation. You estimate that there are about 1,000 orcs in this village, 400 of them adults or youths old enough to be warriors, the rest children. The village is filled with round thatch huts and three larger wooden buildings. There are several cleared areas with bonfires burning in them and a small stream running through the village that widens in two places into tiny ponds.

Spiders

Game Master: These are not encounter areas that can be set up sensibly in advance. In any marked area, there are 4d8 giant spiders from the D&D Monster Manual or Monstrous Compendium at any given time. The forest in these areas consists mainly of ancient conifers - pine, spruce and fir – 90 feet/27m and more high. The spiders have a network of webs high in the trees. An observant PC carefully studying the tree crowns will catch a slight view of the webs now and then. The spiders are careful about attacking when they are fewer in number, usually going after the last in line, the PC doing research apart from the rest of the group, the straggler, etc. If a lot of spiders (more than 16) are present at the same time, they may also launch a massive attack against the entire party. Normally however, the spiders lurk in the trees, hoping to catch parties who drink stream water that puts them to sleep, where they can capture the PCs without combat.

Tower Ruin (Ogre lair)

ARRIVAL FROM OUTSIDE THE TOWER:

Game Master: 4 ogres lair inside of the tower ruin. 1d3+1 of them will be present at anytime. If it comes to an encounter, there is a 10% chance per turn that another ogre will show up each turn after the encounter begins. If the PCs bypass the tower, the ogres will attack immediately only if the ratio of ogres to PCs is 1:2 or less. If that's not the case, the ogres in the tower will wait until all four come together. They then will track the PCs and ambush them at the first advantageous opportunity.

The road opens onto a small clearing in the forest, still about 300 feet/90m ahead of you. In the clearing, you can make out the base of what's left of an ancient tower, some 50 feet/15m in diameter. The bottom 20 feet/6m of the tower still stand, broken off higher up by some act of violence, probably an explosion. Whatever took the top of the tower off happened long ago. There is a large breach 10 feet yards/3m square in the wall facing you. On the western side of the tower is a narrow footpath leading into the forest.

Game Master: This trail leads to the cave of the green dragon Xondastopisteles, 5 miles/8km distant to the west. Once the PCs are before the tower:

Stone rubble from the breaching of the tower lays in and before the opening. The interior of the tower is shaded. There's an antechamber here of sorts, running about 20 feet/6m deep. The only thing to see in the antechamber are blocks scattered along the floor from the breaching of the tower. The walls inside still are somewhat blackened, as are the stones lying inside, as though they were in a fire long ago. A wall of brick runs across the inside of the tower with two huge blue-green doors of copper, each 10 feet/3m high and 3 feet/90cm wide in the middle. The ceiling that was existed on this level is gone, replaced by a crude ceiling of mud and thatch, about 12 feet/360cm above the floor.

Game Master: Upon entering the tower:

The door opens onto a room that fills the rest of this floor. A spiral stairway is before you, one that reaches upward 10 feet/3m or so and ends in midair.

Game Master: The gate is on the third step from the bottom of the stairway. Go to the section *"Inner Chamber."*

ARRIVAL BY GATE:

Game Master: The gate is on the spiral stairway that goes upward, ending in midair about 3 yards over the floor. The third step from the bottom triggers the gate. 4 ogres lair inside of the tower ruin. 1d3+1 of them will be present at anytime. If it comes to an encounter, there is a 10% chance per turn that another ogre will show up each turn after the encounter begins, until all 4 ogres are present.

You suddenly find yourselves standing upon a spiral stairway in a large room occupying a little more than half of a level in round tower, about 50 feet/15m in diameter.

Game Master: Go to the section *"Inner Chamber."*

THE INNER CHAMBER:

The room you're in measures 30 by 50 feet/9x15m at its widest point. The walls are lit by daylight from arrow slits 3 feet/90cm above the ground and four torches burning on the walls. The only exit from this room is a pair of large, blue-green copper doors, each 10 feet/3m tall and 3 feet/90cm wide in a stone wall directly before you. The ceiling in this room is about 12 feet/360cm from the floor, but it is not the original ceiling. It's a crude construction of mud and thatch. The walls are blackened, as though there was a fire here long ago. Across the room from you, in the corner by a pile of bones, armor, cloaks and other items stand **(Game Master: the number)** ogres. They seem to be only briefly surprised by your appearance. The looks on their faces do not leave you with the impression that they plan to simply let you walk out of here. The ogres are picking up huge wooden clubs, each 6 feet/180cm long.

TREASURE: Chain mail for a human and two halfelves, a shield, two long swords, a mace, four daggers, a spellbook from a mage Level 4, 34 Copper Nibs (Waterdeep), 21 Silver Shards (Waterdeep), 6 Electrum Moons (Waterdeep), 12 Halfmoons (Silverymoon), 14 Gold Dragons (Waterdeep), 17 Silver Stengks (Luskan), 15 Gold Zards (Luskan).

Dragon's Lair

Game Master: Ordinarily the dragon is a key encounter in an adventure segment. Our green dragon, Xandastopisteles, is a secondary event. There are side things happening here that reflect on the main elements of this adventure. In the background, there is a group of Dragon Cult members including a keeper of the hoard out in search of Xandy's lair (this dragon is a she) hoping to convince her to become a dracolich. The Keeper of the Hoard is the reason that a dragon vampire with draconians is listed under the Area Encounters. Let the PCs get only a light hint of what's happening at this point, if any at all.

Xandy is a mature adult green dragon with 100 hp. Now and then she flies over the western Moonwood, and she's always available for a dragon flight when your adventure needs one. But usually she's in her lair. If you don't want the PCs to encounter her, simply don't have her fly and don't mention the path down to her lair from the Tower Ruin.

The path basically is there for nosy PCs. If they follow it down to her lair, she will be in it (unless you want her to be flying at the time). What happens then depends upon how good the PCs are at dealing with a green dragon who certainly will be convinced they are after the huge treasure she's sitting upon. Decide for yourself what you want that treasure to contain, if you intend to give your PCs a crack at it. As far as we're concerned, it's a small hill of coins and other glittering items of treasure that the PCs probably won't get very close to. Use the lair map. There is no source of light in the cave. After a hike of about 5 miles/8km, it starts like this:

After walking 5 miles/8km or so, the path takes a few twists and turns and then ends rather abruptly at a huge cave in the side of a small hill that's hardly more than a large rock outcropping. The mouth of the cave is about 50 feet/15m wide and 30 fet/9m high.

After entering:

You haven't even made it 30 feet/9m into the cave, when you smell something unpleasant. There's a poison in the air here. It's very weak, too weak to damage you at the moment. There's only a trace of it, but you know what it is. It's chlorine. What the source of it is, is impossible to tell from here.

Next stretch:

The smell of chlorine has gotten stronger, but still not strong enough to damage you. The cave widens here. The tunnel goes onward, but it widens substantially to the left, by about an additional 30 feet/9m. In this enlarged area is the half rotted body of a human wearing what appears to be a mage's robe.

Game Master: Adventurers who still are in the cave haven't earned a reward yet. This guy's been relieved of everything including his spellbook.

Bingo:

As you turn the corner, you see at last where the chlorine smell is coming from. Directly across from you, a large green dragon is staring at you with a discomforting smile on its face, sitting upon a small hill of coins and other items of treasure. The dragon's expression suggests that it thinks it's about to enjoy something.

Other Lairs

Game Master: The lairs for goblins and hobgoblins are crude and small settlements that require no special descriptions.

5. The Lonely Tower

Game Master: It should take the PCs about a day to ride through the open lands between the Moonwood and the Cold Wood, where the Lonely Tower stands. We are not offering a *"read-it"* type scenario for the first series of events because it shouldn't be necessary, and how things unfold is dependent more upon the PCs' dealings than on a fixed routine in a script.

There are no planned encounters for the day's ride from the Moonwood to the Lonely Tower, but if you want one or more encounters, it would be logical to have the PCs meet a band of marauding orcs coming down from the Northwest or a distant patrol of Sky Pony barbarians coming from the south. The nearer the PCs are to the Moonwood, the more likely an orc encounter. The nearer the PCs are to the Lonely Tower, the more likely a Sky Pony encounter. If you want a more neutral encounter, you also could have the PCs encounter a group of Black Lion barbarian hunters from Beorunna's Well.

Before you begin running this segment, you need to know what the PCs will run into. Ssessibil Istahvar is not a human, as the PCs believe and may continue to believe, but rather (according to *"The North"*) a creature from *"an alternate world"* where *"the predominant life form is a giant, catlike reptilian biped - Ssessibil's true form."* His abilities and appearance are those of a human male mage of the 27th level, who is aligned lawful evil. Ssessibil is among other things a master of making things look and seem to be different than they are.

He has a host of about 200 orcs around his tower that are led by a half-orc, half-human warrior named Barthan and his band of eight other half orcs. However, because his warriors have to deal with orc-hating barbarians and dwarves, Ssessibil has given his troops a different appearance too. They all look human. PCs who are barbarians and dwarves cannot see through this magical disguise. Other PCs who make an attempt to disbelieve the illusion see through it with a successful save vs. magic. PCs of levels 1-4 throw with a penalty of 2.

Ssessibil's orc army is not there to protect the tower against small groups of adventurers. The tower is warded, so that persons without a token cannot reach it. Even if they could, it has no physical entrance. The orc troops are there to divert bands of marauding orcs from the North and raiding barbarians from the South away from the tower, simply because Ssessibil does not want to be disturbed.

Until the Time of Troubles, few people knew the tower existed. Word has begun to spread, that there is a tower at this location, and it has drawn the attention of some other wizards including Red Wizards of Thay (who have ceased to exist). Ssessibil's orders to Barthan are to discourage visitors to the area without fighting them, when at all possible. He knows when visitors don't return to where they came from, that other adventurers have a tendency to come seeking them. He really wishes to be let alone.

He also uses the peaceful Black Lion barbarians to some extent as his eyes and ears and has deceived them into believing that he is former archmage who converted to the priesthood of Torm, who is doing research at this isolated point for his church, on evil magic that supposedly is infiltrating the North, and that the small army he has at the tower all are religious warriors called the *Knights of the Tantran Lion,* after the form Torm took during his battle with Bane in Tantras in the Time of Troubles.. The Black Lions and their cleric are fully convinced that Ssessibil is a priest of Torm.

Patreveni Onehand, the cleric of the Black Lions, has never suspected Ssessibil of being anything other than a priest of Torm who was a mighty mage before finding a more enlightened path as a priest. Ssessibil visits Patreveni occasionally in his guise of a Torm priest, to help maintain his friendly relations with the Black Lions. Ssessibil is visiting the Black Lions at present at Beorunna's Well and is not in the Lonely Tower when the PCs arrive there.

Barthan and his troops have orders to try to convince groups like the PCs to leave the area. They will only use violence if the PCs camp within a short distance of the tower for a longer period of time or if they try to violently break their way through the camp. He also will tell the PCs that Ssessibil is not in the tower at present, and if necessary, he will tell the PCs it would be useless to break through to the tower, because it has no entrance. If the PCs do not believe him, he even will go so far as to offer to take one PC of his own choice - he will pick one by looks who does not appear to be a spelluser - to the base of the tower, to judge for himself.

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Barthan will tell the PCs in all honesty that he has no idea when Ssessibil will return to the Lonely Tower. He will refuse to tell the PCs where Ssessibil is, unless the PCs happen to show him Ssessibil's symbol in the sigylls on their arms. If he sees these, Barthan will immediately be alarmed and recognize that something is happening that he cannot deal with. In that case, he will send the PCs on to Beorunna's Well, so that Ssessibil can deal with the problem himself.

Once the PCs are within 5-10 miles/8-15km of their destination you can read the following:

> The dark wall of the Cold Wood looms up in the distance before you. At one point you can see the tip of a tower poking through the canopy of treetops. There are small patrols riding the plain this side of the forest.

Game Master: At this point, the PCs cannot make out what type of riders these are. Determine how your PCs react, then, when the distance to the wood narrows to 2 or 3 miles/3-4km, read the following:

> A group of six riders comes steadily in your direction. They all are humans, well-armed, with chain mail, helmets, long swords and either crossbows or long bows, but none are reaching for their weapons at the moment or showing any sign of planning to attack. As they draw nearer, you see that they wear the symbol of a roaring yellow lion. *"Halt!",* the leader of the riders shout to you. *"This is holy ground. You may not ride farther!"*

Game Master: The man who shouts to the PCs is Gundling, one of Barthan's half-orcs. Most of the rest of this encounter must be role-played. If the PCs are allowed to ride closer to the camp:

> Something of a large military base has been built here. More than 200 warriors, all human and wearing the symbol of the roaring yellow lion, are camped in an opening on the western edge of the Cold Wood. There are a number of bonfires, and the clearing is filled with small thatch huts like those orcs sometimes build. These however are much neater and better kept up than orcs' huts tend to be. The top of the Lonely Tower stretches out of the trees from perhaps a mile/1.5km inside of the Cold Wood. You would estimate its height at more than 120 feet/36m. It is white, smoothly surfaced and needle-shaped with no windows except at the very top. These are dark.

Game Master: You'll find the statistics for Barthan and his orcs in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

6. Beorunna's Well

Game Master: Depending upon how precisely you wish to follow WotC's instructions, you may have to deal with a contradiction as your PCs move toward the Cold Wood. In the book *"The Wilderness"* in the boxed set, *The North,* WotC tells us on Page 58: *"The Cold Wood - This pine, spruce and birch forest is untouched by humankind."* On Page 18 of the same book, under the description of the Red Tiger tribe of Uthgardt barbarians, WotC tells us, *"They* (the Red Tigers) *hunt in very small groups and roam widely, primarily in the Cold Wood."* Only one or the other can be true, unless you make the Red Tigers extinct or inhuman. For purposes of this adventure, the Red Tigers are in the Cold Wood, and it is therefore touched by humankind.

On Page 58, we're also told that *"Snow cats (red tigers), ettin and orcs roam the wood."* We won't argue with that, but for purposes of this adventure, the small island of the Cold Wood between the Lonely Tower and Beorunna's Well is populated mostly by game, and the monsters are only in the larger main part of the forest. Since Ssessibil has begun communicating in disguise as a Torm priest with the Black Lions, a path has developed through this small island of wood. The PCs can use it to reach Beorunna's Well in two hours, which is where the next action takes place.

It is important to remember that the Black Lions, unlike other Uthgardt tribes, have forsaken their ways. The Shaman Bogohardt Blackmane is virtually the only Black Lion who still worships the beast totem. The other members of the tribe, who have settled and built the primitive community of Beorunna's Well worship the Tyr Alliance - Tyr, Torm, Helm and Ilmater. They are served by the general cleric Patreveni Onehand. Other important figures in Beorunna's Well are the chieftain, Alaric (The Strong) Heartfood and his son, Heafstagg Fourfinger, a 6th level fighter (AL: CN) who heads the local militia consisting of 135 warriors, 80 Level 1, 30 Level 2, 20 Level 3 and 5 Level 4. These are the only Black Lions who have official statistics.

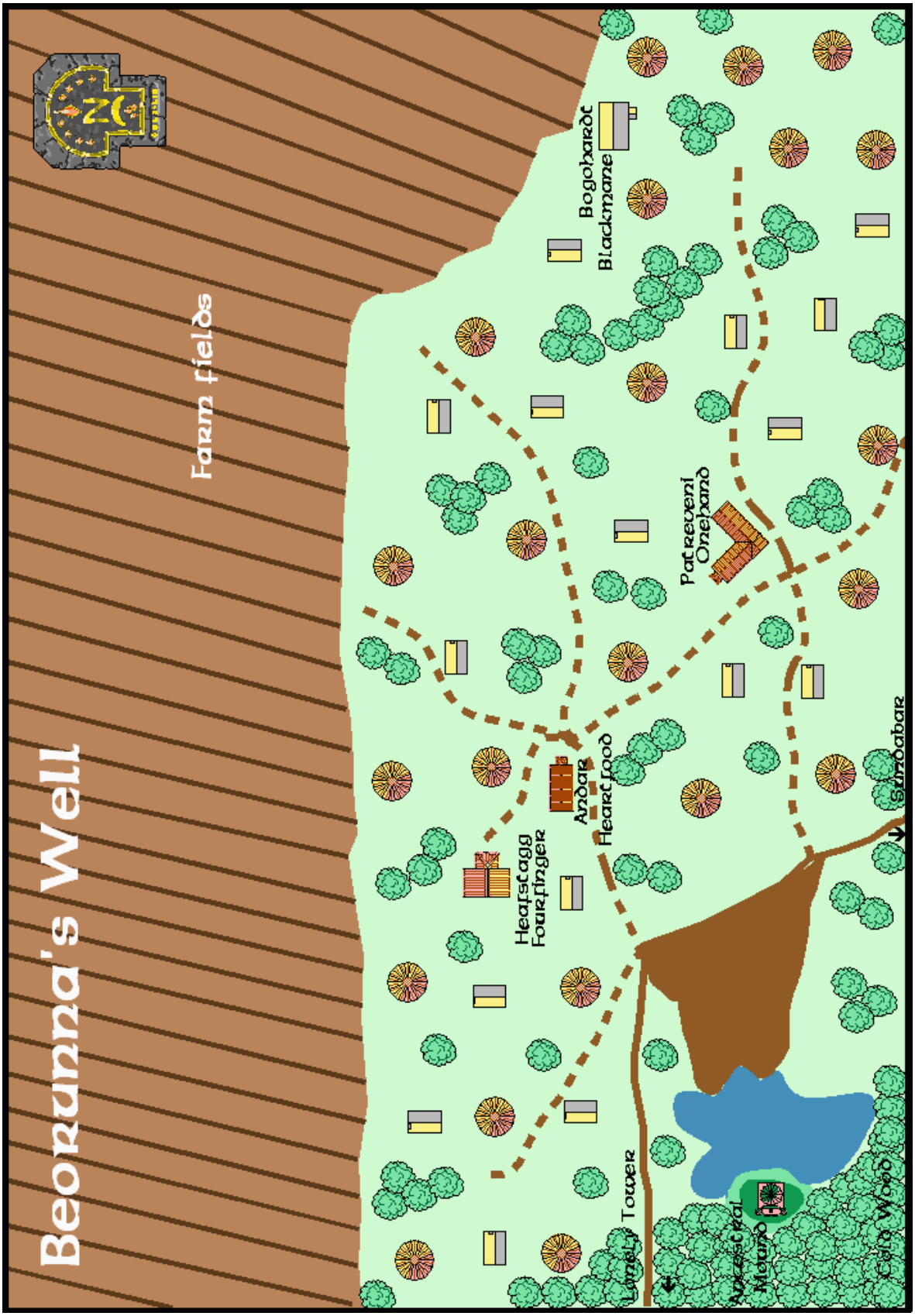
The Black Lions have become a peaceful farming tribe and they will not pick a fight. If your PCs are so stupid as to pick one themselves, have Ssessibil eradicate them and start anew with a more sensible group. We have added no new statistics to those from WotC, because there should be no need for them.

If your PCs want to play around at the ancestral mound itself, the Black Lions will not help them. There is information on the well in *"The North."* In addition to the dangers described there, you could have some members of the Red Tiger tribe show up who very much resent the PCs desecrating the well and go to war with them. If that happens, the Black Lions will stay out of it and let the PCs and the Red Tigers resolve the dispute themselves. If you have no encounters in the western island of the Cold Wood that the PCs have to cross, you can lead them on with the following text:

> The small part of the Cold Wood west of Beorunna's Well consists almost solely of white birch, spruce and pine trees. The path through the woods shows no sign of being ancient. Where there are small rises, the path still goes up and down rather than wearing its way deeper into the soil. Except for small forest animals, the forest is quiet and unpopulated. This part of the wood is only six miles/10km wide. In about two hours time, you find yourself riding out of the wood again and into a small farming village.
>
> The village seems to be rather primitive, consisting of log lodges and cabins, along with a number of thatch huts. Just south of the forest trail is a pond, about 80 feet/24m in diameter. The buildings all seem to remain some distance away from the water, but it looks like there is a large gathering and ceremonial place in front of the pond.

Game Master: See WotC's map of this area and the NJ village map. If the weather in the weather tables for today allows for 15 miles/25km visibility, you also can read the following.

> The cold, grassy plain in which the village is nestled spreads about 15 miles/25km farther to the east, before it meets the dark wall of the main part of the Cold Wood.



Beorunna's Well

Events in Beorunna's Well

Game Master: What happens from this point on is up to your PCs. The villagers will stare at them a bit but start no conversations on their own.

A lot of the villagers are working the fields to the north. There are young barbarian children playing in the village, but anytime you approach any of them, they shy away from you and run back toward their huts or cabins. In some of them, the mothers stand in the doorways and stare cautiously at you. No one offers greetings of any kind. There are four larger log buildings and a well in the center of the village, but nothing that looks like anything but private houses. There is no sign of any business, inn or tavern here. There are lean-tos near many of the buildings that shelter a horse as well as a cow or two, a few pigs or goats. Two men and a dog are grazing a flock of about 200 sheep south of the pond, just beyond the village, but the sheep still have to scratch for food. The grass is not particularly long yet.

Game Master: When the PCs spend the night in Beorunna's Well, they can be put up in Heafstagg's house for 4sp. The villagers will not give the PCs any help except to direct them to Alaric's lodge. If they ask for Ssessibil, the villagers including Alaric will always refer to him respectfully as *"the Holy Champion Ssessibil."* Alaric will bring the PCs to Patreveni's lodge, where Ssessibil is being hosted as a priest of Torm. He also wears a large Holy Symbol of Torm on the breastplate of the highly polished suit of armor traditionally worn by a Holy Champion of Torm. Because Ssessibil is not a human or a humanoid but rather a monster in AD&D definitions, he is exempt from the rule prohibiting a wizard from wearing armor.

When it comes to the encounter with Ssessibil, prepare yourself for it. If you've run your adventure well up to now, the encounter with Ssessibil is going to leave the PCs somewhat shocked, extremely perplexed and somewhat frightened about what is happening in their lives. Most PCs will be able to make neither heads not tails out of the logic behind this encounter, because everyone, including Ssessibil, will believe they've been subjected to the same magic as Alias was in the Azure Bonds adventure, and they will deal with it as such and tell the PCs quite confidently that this is what is happening to them, unaware that the Sigylls of Contagion are something different.

Ssessibil is a creature of little patience, left to his own devices. But because he values the unwitting services of the Black Lions, he should play his role as a Holy Champion of Torm to the hilt. When he goes abroad in the guise of a priest, he also will prepare a full slate of spells that appear to be priest spells. They actually are magic spells that achieve ends similar to those of priest spells, but they often have a side effect too, if they are special spells.

As a Game Master just pick out whatever priest spells you want Ssessibil to have and handle them as magic spells. It's irrelevant whether you can find an equivalent in an official WotC book. Ssessibil is a creature from another world with magic not yet written in the books of wizards of Faerûn. No other explanation is needed. But if he uses a priest's spell that has no equivalent in the official magic spell lists, have the spell cause some kind of counteraction that affects the Black Lions negatively but not obviously, so that they have the sneaking suspicion that there's a black cloud following the PCs.

As soon as the first PC tries to show Ssessibil the sigylls, the symbol of Ssessibil vanishes automatically and with no fanfare from all the PCs' arms. As soon as Ssessibil's symbol disappears, Sammaster and Kargmelchina have their first unmitigated success. Ssessibil now carries the contaminating magic that will cause the transmutation of mithral into iron on his planet, leading to the destruction of his own race.

If Ssessibil had no chance to actually see the symbol, he still will believe that the PCs did bear his symbol if Barthan recognized it, and he has no certain explanation at all for why it simply disappeared, although he will hint at what he thinks (erroneously) to be the true. Ssessibil recognizes all but the last of the remaining symbols on the PCs' arms. He does not know the symbol of Sammaster's and Kargmelchina's Castle Dragonblood.

He remembers how he went to work for these folks to destroy Sammaster, and he assumes that they were trying to use the Azure Bonds magic to trap the PCs into doing something to him, but he also is arrogant enough about his own magical power to feel convinced that his magical wards defeated the conspirators' magic. And so, he is willing to turn the tables on these alleged conspirators now by leaking some information to the PCs. After the commotion over the disappearance of Ssessibil's symbol is over, he tells the PCs the following:

"Now, I can tell you young folks something that might help you. You see, more than a dozen years ago, before the Time of Troubles, I was a mage who walked false and sometimes wrong paths. It was only after the Time of Troubles that I began to see that I was following a road that led to no good. It was then that I saw the light and repented and decided to devote the rest of my life to fulfilling the duties I had neglected until then.

"I turned then to Lord Torm, and he received me, although I had become nothing more than a poor, repentant sinner. And he gave me a special duty, for Lord Torm had learned through other servants that evil is afoot here in the North, evil magic, and it is my duty to find the roots of this magic and destroy it, insofar as it is in my power to do so, or to seek help if the danger is more than I can deal with. And that is what I and my Knights of the Tantran Lion do from my Lonely Tower.

"*I make no secret of that fact that there was a time when I was not a good person. I would not go so far as to say I was evil, but self-serving certainly would be a correct description of the man I had been, before I found the way to Lord Torm. And there once was a time when certain members of the Cult of the Dragon had attempted to convince me to become a part of one of their nefarious plots. I know not what it was, for I rejected it out of hand before it was explained to me.*

"However, I am convinced that these creatures are plotting again, and I am of the opinion that mine was among the symbols upon your arms because it bore a magic intended to bind me this time in their plot, whether I was willing or not. These fools do not know that Lord Torm has given me special protection against such magics. You, I am afraid, are still in some way bound to these evil creatures, and four of the five remaining symbols belong to them.

"I am sorry to say that I never have seen the last of these symbols, the one with the strange castle. Someone else must identify that symbol for you. But I can and will tell you to whom the other symbols belong and where I believe you may find these creatures.

"The first symbol belongs to a very dangerous wizardess of the Zhentarim who really is a double agent of the Dragon Cult. She is a powerful necromancer named Gwath, who operates from a secret dungeon somewhere in Daggerdale.

"The second symbol, the one with the flame, belongs to an insane lich named Azimer in the ruins of the 6 Tyryl Towers school of magic in Myth Drannor. Azimer is not a member of the Dragon Cult, but he has done work with the other three, although I don't know what his reasons are.

"The third symbol belongs to another Zhentarim who was a priest of Bane in Zhentil Keep named Xarth Kistar. I was led to believe that Kistar, too, was a double agent for the Dragon Cult inside the Zhentarim, but I came to believe that he really is a triple agent who betrays both sides, to serve his own ends.

"He will not be so easy to find, if he survived the destruction of Zhentil Keep. But I assume he did, seeing that you're bearing his symbol. In any case, he had sided with the Great Imperceptor of Bane and against Fzoul Chembryl during the Time of Troubles and had joined the underground movement that supported the imperceptor and opposed Chembryl. Whose side he's on now - Cyric's or Iyachtu Xvim's - is anyone's guess."

Game Master: When Ssessibil mentions Bane, Cyric and Iyachtu Xvim, Patreveni trembles again with fear.

"The fourth symbol belongs to a strange type, something of a renegade high priest of Malar the Beastlord who also was and perhaps still is a Keeper of the Secret Hoard with the Dragon Cult. Gwath and Kistar also are or were Keepers of the Secret Hoard, by the way. Well, anyhow, this priest is named Harbet Gall and you can find him in the Great Dale. He's one of the key leaders of the Malar faction there who's responsible for the religious wars that have been going on in the Great Dale for so many years.

"He's a strange kind of Malar priest. Normally, the followers of Malar and the Dragon Cult have nothing to do with each other, but Gall preaches that dragons are the greatest of all beasts and the greatest of all hunters, and in the Great Dale, one usually associates the church of Malar and the Dragon Cult with one another. I'm sorry I can't help you with the last symbol, but I've simply never seen it before. However, I think it is quite clear to all of you that it is your duty to seek out these evil beings and destroy them!"

Getting Rid of the Sigylls:

Game Master: Your PCs may come up with the idea of asking Ssessibil to get rid of the sigylls. Or you may want to run this scenario yourself *"for fun"* (your fun, perhaps more than the PCs). Or you may want to skip it and get your adventure on the move again at this point. We give you a choice between a very short scenario and a longer scenario.

SHORT SCENARIO:

SSESSIBIL: *"I'd really like to help you with removing these cursed sigylls, if I could, but I'm afraid that's beyond the powers Lord Torm has given me at the moment."*

LONG SCENARIO:

Game Master: Ssessibil is really still convinced that these sigylls are magic of the *"Azure Bonds"* type. He already has learned himself how this magic works, and he knows too how to remove sigylls of the type Alias had or that the heroes had in the WotC Module FRC2 *Curse of the Azure Bonds.* We know of course that the magic here is not the same, and Ssessibil's spell will backfire, which will make Ssessibil a bit more curious, but he will not reveal to the PCs that he is reacting curiously. Check ahead of time and determine which of your PCs has the fewest hit points at the moment. Calculate which dice roll would have a maximum of about 2 less than this number of points. For instance, if one PC has 18 hit points left, then the roll would be 2d8. Remember this combination.

SSESSIBIL:

"Fortunately for you, Lord Torm is against the very kind of evil these sigylls represent, and I believe I can use a certain prayer he has given me to remove them from your arms, along with whatever curse they carry. Of course, there always is a certain risk. But I can try to do this for you, if you wish."

No sooner does Ssessibil speak these words than Patreveni begins to tremble again and says, *"Ahh, please excuse me, Holy Champion, but I've been totally negligent! I must look after a few of Heafstagg's wounded warriors!"*

Ssessibil smiles patronizingly and says, *"But of course, Patreveni. We all must do our duty."* And Patreveni departs from his lodge. Ssessibil then takes powders and ointments from a pouch he carries and rubs them into your sigylls. Making circular gestures with his hands, head bowed and eyes closed, he says:

"Oh Lord Torm, sadly burdened are these young people who stand before us today, wishing nothing more than to fulfill their duties and being unable to do so, because another has bound them to his ways and his will. I pray you, oh Lord Torm, to free these unfortunate young folks from this dastardly binding."

Ssessibil raises his head once more and moves his hands in the shape of an "X". Suddenly there's a soundless blinding flash in the lodge and an invisible force slams all of you painfully into the wall.

Game Master: Roll the dice combination now that you determined above. No one should get killed here, but there should be a chance that your weakest PCs are badly damaged. This spell also will create a counteraction that will cause the mostly ignored Shaman of the Black Lions, Bogohardt Blackmane to have a minor heart attack at the same time.

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Before your sight returns, you already can feel the pain of being slammed into the lodge wall. As soon as you can see again, the sight you see is rather astonishing. Ssessibil is standing before you, still in his armor as a priest of Torm, but his face looks something like a cross between a cat and a dragon, his hands too are reptilian claws, and a thin, lizard-like tail has sprung out of the rear of his armor. At the same time, you can see that your arms still bear the sigylls.

Game Master: Ssessibil's magic disguise has been blown.

"I believe I've overextended myself," Ssessibil says, in his own voice. *"I guess I must serve Lord Torm a bit longer before I can use that spell properly. I'm sorry. I've also done this to myself once before, and it's humiliating!"*

Ssessibil makes a few fast gestures with his hands and says, *"Lord Torm, your humble servant begs your forgiveness and also begs you to restore him, so that he may again do his duty properly."* With these words, the priest's body quickly reverts back to its normal form.

Game Master: Ssessibil has magically disguised himself again.

Ssessibil:

"And I see that you have been injured. This much at least I can rectify!" He takes a pinch of powder from his pouch and throws it in the air, then says, *"Lord Torm, these young folks have been injured through my arrogance. I beg you now to heal them, so that they may go about doing their duty once more."*

Game Master: Roll 3d8 + 3 for healing one time. Each PC is healed up to the rolled number of points. Calculate the total number of points actually healed. A total of barbarians in the village equal to one third that sum will experience a weakness of 3hp that will heal itself at a rate of 1hp daily. This is the counteraction of the otherworldly necromantic spell Ssessibil has used. *After* the PCs have left Beorunna's Well, Ssessibil will tell Patreveni that the PCs are unfortunate creatures that are bearing a fearful curse through no fault of their own, and that the attacks of weakness in the village and Bogohardt's heart attack are the result of this curse. After that, the PCs will be anathema to the Black Lions, and if they ever return to the area around Beorunna's Well, they will be quickly driven off.

Patreveni returns to the lodge, looking somewhat troubled and a bit out of breath. *"Something else fearful has happened,"* the barbarian cleric says. *"Bogohardt just had a heart attack as I left the lodge. And there was nothing in his power he could do. Fortunately, I was able to heal him sufficiently."*

Ssessibil gives Patreveni what seems to be something of a knowing look and says, *"One could almost say that was to be expected."* He turns his attention then back to you and says, *"Bogohardt is a shaman of the old beliefs whose tribe has abandoned totem worship for religious enlightenment. He is quite old. His powers are few, and his days are short."*

All of you are coming to the conclusion that events here in Beorunna's Well are interesting, but that it's pressing that you get on your way again and head south. The sigylls are tugging at you one more, and you really think you'd better find Gwath, who apparently is in Daggerdale. It's already running through your head that the trip back through the Moonwood, Quaervarr and Silverymoon is too far out of the way and will take too long. There must be shorter way to get to Daggerdale, you think.

Game Master: If the PCs ask, they will be told they can travel southward between the second island of the Cold Wood and the Rauvin Mountains to Citadel Felbarr and from there to Sundabar. And their sigylls will pull them in this direction in any case.

Weather Tables

55/65℉ 13/18℃: Low and high temperatures. *SR: 4: 30 SS:7:50 - Sunrise and Sunset

Date	Moonwood area
Mirtul 24 SR: 4:07 SS: 7:56	28/36℉ - -2/2℃, overcast, snow snowcover 10"/25cm
Mirtul 25 SR:4:06 SS: 7:57	24/37℉ - -4/3℃, mixed, 1"/25mm snow snowcover 10" /25cm
Mirtul 26 SR: 4:05 SS: 7:58	23/38℉ - -5/-2℃, mixed, snowcover 10"/25cm
Mirtul 27 SR: 4:04 SS 7:59	24/40℉ - -4/4℃, overcast, snowcover 10"/25cm
Mirtul 28 SR: 4:03 SS 8:00	25/40℉ - -4/4℃, overcast, snowcover 9"/23cm
Mirtul 29 SR: 4:02 SS 8:02	24/45℉ - -4/7℃, overcast, 4"/10cm snow, snowcover 12"/30cm
Mirtul 30 SR: 4:01 SS: 8:03	28/43℉ - -2/6℃, partly cloudy, snowcover 11"/28cm
Kythorn 1 SR: 4:01 SS: 8:04	31/47℉ - -1/8℃, partly cloudy, snowcover 9"/23cm
Kythorn 2 SR: 4:00 SS: 8:05	32/46℉ – 0/8℃, partly cloudy, 1"/25mm mixed rain and snow, snowcover 8"/12cm
Kythorn 3 SR: 3:59 SS: 8:06	33/45℉ – 1/7℃, overcast, snowcover 6"/9cm
Kythorn 4 SR: 3:59 SS: 8:06	34/46℉ – 1/8℃, overcast, humid, ¾"/2cm rain
Kythorn 5 SR: 3:58 SS: 8:07	35/48℉ – 2/9℃, overcast, 0.2"/5mm rain
Kythorn 6 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:08	39/52℉ - 4/11℃, partly cloudy
Kythorn 7 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:09	40/51℉ - 4/11℃, partly cloudy, 0.1"/2mm rain
Kythorn 8 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:10	41/53℉ – 5/12℃, partly cloudy, mild west wind 10 mph/16kmh
Kythorn 9 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:11	41/55℉ – 5/13℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 15 mp h/25kmh
Kythorn 10 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:11	42/56℉ – 6/13℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 20 mp h/32kmh
Kythorn 11 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:12	41/54℉ – 5/12℃, overcast, windy rainstorm from We st, ½"/1cm rain and wind 30 mph/50kmh
Kythorn 12 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:13	40/52°- F4/11℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 15 mp h/25kmh
Kythorn 13 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:13	42/54℉ – 6/12℃, partly cloudy, west wind at 5 mph /8kmh
Kythorn 14 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:14	51/63℉ – 11/17℃, mostly sunny
Kythorn 15 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:14	52/65℉ – 11/18℃, mostly sunny
Kythorn 16 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:15	53//67°- 12/19℃, mostly sunny
Kythorn 17 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:15	52/66℉ – 13/19℃, partly cloudy
Kythorn 18 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:15	54/71℉ – 12/22℉, partly cloudy, hu-mid, morning f og, visibility 150'/45m morning, later 500'/150m

Weather Tables

55/65℉ 13/18℃: Low and high temperatures. *SR: 4: 30 SS:7:50 - Sunrise and Sunset

Date	Moonwood area
Kythorn 19 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:16	56/75℉ – 13/24℃, overcast, thunder- storms ¾"/2cm rain, west wind 10 mph/16kmh
Kythorn 20 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:16	58/77℉ – 14/25℃, overcast, humid, morning fog, vi sibility 150'/45m, later 500'/150m
Kythorn 21 SR: 3:55 SS: 8:16	57/76℉ – 14/24℃, partly cloudy, west wind 5 mph/8 kmh
Kythorn 22 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:16	61/80℉ – 16/27℃, overcast, humid, evening thunderstorms ¾" /2cm rain, morning fog, visibility 150'/45m, later 500'/150m
Kythorn 23 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:16	54/78℉ - 12/26℃, mostly cloudy
Kythorn 24 SR: 3:56 SS 8:17	31/50℉ - -1/10℃, overcast
Kythorn 25 SR: 3:56 SS: 8:17	32/49℉ – 0/9℃, overcast
Kythorn 26 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:17	20°/34℉ - -7/1℃, overcast, cold west wind 15 mph/ 25kmh
Kythorn 27 SR: 3:57 SS: 8:17	16°/32℉ - -9/0℃, overcast, 2"/5cm snow, west wind 15 mph/25kmh, snowcover 2"/5cm
Kythorn 28 SR: 3:58 SS: 8:16	14°/28℉ - -10/- 2℃, overcast, 16"/ 40cm snow, west wind 15 mph/25k mh, snowcover 42"/105cm
Kythorn 29 SR: 3:58 SS: 8:16	21/38℉ - -6/3℃, partly cloudy, snow-cover 31"/78c m
Kythorn 30 SR: 3:59 SS: 8:16	28/46℉ - -2/8℃, partly cloudy, snowcover 28"/70cm
Flamerule 1 SR: 4:00 SS: 8:16	36/55℉ – 2/13℃, mostly sunny, snow-cover 22"/55cm
Flamerule 2 SR: 4:00 SS: 8:15	44/66℉ – 7/19℃, sunny, snowcover 14"/35cm (rivers start to flood, flash floods in high areas)
Flamerule 3 SR: 4:01 SS: 8:15	50/71℉ – 10/21℃, sunny, snowcover 8"/20cm (rivers flood)
Flamerule 4 SR: 4:02 SS: 8:15	54/76℉ – 12/24℃, mostly sunny, snow-cover 1"/25mm (rivers flood)
Flamerule 5 SR: 4:02 SS 8:14	60/78℉ – 16/26℃, sunny, snow melted (rivers flood ed)
Flamerule 6 SR: 4:03 SS: 8:14	66/82℉ – 19/28℃, sunny (rivers flooded)
Flamerule 7 SR: 4:04 SS: 8:13	68/88℉ – 20/31℃, sunny (rivers flooded, begin to subside)
Flamerule 8 SR:4:05 SS: 8:13	48/89℉ – 9/32℃, sunny until evening, thunderstorms evening , early night, 1.5"/4cm rain. Rivers flood again.
Flamerule 9 SR: 4:06 SS: 8:12	48/55℉ – 9/13℃, overcast, steady rain, 2"/5cm, ri vers flooded.
Flamerule 10 SR: 4:07 SS: 8:11	52/61℉ – 11/16℉, mostly cloudy (rivers flooded)
Flamerule 11 SR: 4:08 SS: 8:11	50/64℉ – 10/18℃, mostly cloudy, cool west wind, f looding begins to subside
Flamerule 12 SR: 4:09 SS: 8:10	52/66℉ – 11/19℃, mostly cloudy, 0.1"/2mm rain, fl ooding continues to subside
Flamerule 13 SR: 4:10 SS: 8:09	54/68℉ – 12/20℃, partly cloudy, rivers almost nor mal

Weather Tables

55/65℉ 13/18℃: Low and high temperatures. *SR: 4: 30 SS:7:50 - Sunrise and Sunset

Date	Moonwood area
Flamerule 14 SR: 4:11 SS: 8:08	55/69℉ – 13/21℃, mostly sunny, rivers normal
Flamerule 15 SR: 4:12 SS: 8:07	57/71℉ – 14/22℃, mostly sunny
Flamerule 16 SR: 4:13 SS: 8:06	58/73℉ – 14/23℃, partly cloudy
Flamerule 17 SR: 4:14 SS: 8:05	56/71℉ – 13/22℃, partly cloudy
Flamerule 18 SR: 4:15 SS: 8:04	55/70℉ – 13/21℃, mostly cloudy
Flamerule 19 SR: 4:17 SS: 8:03	54/68℉ – 12/20℃, mostly cloudy
Flamerule 20 SR: 4:18 SS: 8:02	51/65℉ – 11/18℃, overcast
Flamerule 21 SR: 4:19 SS: 8:01	50/62℉ – 10/17℃, overcast, ¾"/2cm rain
Flamerule 22 SR: 4:20 SS: 8:00	49/61℉ – 9/16℃, overcast, 1.1"/28mm rain
Flamerule 23 SR: 4:22 SS: 7:59	48/60℉ – 9/16℃, overcast, 1"/25mm rain, rivers hi gh
Flamerule 24 SR: 4:23 SS: 7:57	49/61℉ – 9/16℃, mostly cloudy, 0.3"/8mm rain, riv ers recede some
Flamerule 25 SR: 4:24 SS: 7:56	51/66℉ – 11/19℃, partly cloudy, rivers recede
Flamerule 26 SR: 4:25 SS: 7:55	54/71℉ – 12/22℃, mostly sunny
Flamerule 27 SR: 4:27 SS: 7:53	56/74℉ – 13/23℃, mostly sunny
Flamerule 28 SR: 4:28 SS: 7:52	58/76℉ – 14/24℃, mostly sunny, very humid, visibi lity 2000'/600m
Flamerule 29 SR: 4:30 SS: 7:50	60/79℉ – 16/26℃, sunny, very humid, visibility 10 00'/300m
Flamerule 30 SR: 4:31 SS: 7:49	63/88℉ – 17/31℃, sunny, very humid, visibility 50 0'/150m

*The first light of day is about 30 minutes before sunrise. Full darkness comes 40 to 45 minutes after sunset.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®
Fan Written Adventures

NORTHERN JOURNEY™

Part 3, Backlands

Version 4.0

For Adventuring Groups of Levels 5-7

An unofficial Adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS®.

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Non-NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters:

In this new version 2.0 of *Northern Journey,* we have attempted to make this installment more useful to those of you who want to use our *Backlands* installment, but who prefer to use it as a campaign setting expansion rather than as an adventure module. Throughout this text, we will attempt to key all users to those things that are and aren't specific to the *NJ* adventure..

NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters:

This module is intended as a continuation of Part 2 of the *Northern Journey, Moonwood*. As the adventure begins, the PCs are preparing to leave the barbarian settlement of Beorunna's Well far in the north and will make the long trek over the Rauvin Valley, the High Forest, the Delimbyr Valley, Sunset Vale, and Cormyr to Daggerdale. The quest of the first symbol, the infecting of Ssessibil, took place in Beorunna's Well. The next goal of the red sigylls is Gwath in Daggerdale.

Supporting materials

To successfully use this accessory, players need the AD&D 2nd Edition Players Handbook. Spellusers also will be helped by Tome of Magic. Game Master's need the AD&D 2nd Edition Dungeon Master's Guide and the basic Forgotten Realms Campaign Accessory. Of considerable value are such products as *The Moonsea* accessory, the *Ruins of Zhentil Keep* accessory, *Cormanthor: Empire of the Elves, Ruins of Myth Drannor, Volo's Guide to the Dalelands* and the *Dalelands* accessory. However, almost all of these additional accessories were out of print at the time of this writing.

Which Characters are Allowed?

The final decision here is up to the Game Master. If your group has played *Silverymoon* and/or *Moonwood,* it may be that some of the players would like to drop their own characters and start new ones. This module has been designed to make such a switch easy in a *Northern Journey* campaign. No character beginning this module should have a lower level than 5 in his or her main class. Single class characters should have levels between 6 and 7. It is acceptable of some of the single class characters have reached level 8.

If you are running *Northern Journey*, keep in mind that new PCs must be exposed both to the invisible runes and also the coins of binding, so that the red sigylls appear on their arm and to assure thei PCs' binding to Grafvitnir as well. Each PC should be able to remember having seen ancient coins somewhere.

Races: Members of the elven and gnome races would be somewhat alien in this adventure and also would make certain plot difficulties for the Game Master. We suggest that the Game Master not allow these races. That also goes for special races not described in the Player's Handbook, such as half dragons, drow, half drow, etc. We suggest that PCs be restricted to the following races: Human, halfelf and dwarf. Halflings are a borderline case that should be considered carefully by a Game Master before being allowed.

Classes: We would recommend that the Game Master not allow Paladins. This class would create serious problems for the player and the Game Master in the course of this adventure. In addition, we do not believe it would be possible to place the red sigylls on the arm of a paladin, although some Game Masters may disagree. Priests or other clerics of Kelemvor should be allowed only under the condition that they wish to accompany the group. Kelemvor's clerics are immune from having such sigylls placed upon them. Druids and mystics would be very interesting characters if personified by talented role-players. A Game Master should consider and decide whether he wants to assume this challenge. A druid would be taking part in this quest because of a compulsion, not because of his own wish.

Game Master's Notes from the project group ...

When Marv Olson and I started out on the *Northern Journey* five years ago with a small module called *"Out of the Frying Pan,"* (the original version of today's module *"Silverymoon"*), it never occurred to us that our adventure one day would be taken up and further developed by gamers in several lands and enlarged into a sweeping set of eight installments. The broad base of ideas that have flown into *Northern Journey* is, of course extremely gratifying to us. In recent months, the two of us, in the last phases of work toward our doctorates, have been able to contribute little other than editing to the project. On the other hand, *Backlands* is all the evidence one could want that Marv and I really weren't needed for anything else in this phase of the project.

Before you begin familiarizing yourself with *Backlands,* I'd like to share some thoughts with you on what this module is and is not, and even more, what *Northern Journey* will do to *your* Realms, if you run the adventure by the book, and how you can avoid letting *Northern Journey* do things to your Realms that you'd rather not have done.

One large goal set by the *Northern Journey* project group is to create an optional expansion of the official Realms developed by WotC. In this installment we offer a number of maps that substantially detail certain areas of the Realms and even add places that are not officially defined, such as the monastic community of *Rolling Hills* south of the *Battle of Bones*.

There are some WotC products with which the project group has not attempted to reach compatibility. The six members of the project group are unanimous in their belief that the events described in the WotC Realms novel *"The Crucible - the Trial of Cyric the Mad"* are the worst Faerûnian derailment since WotC acquired the Realms from Ed Greenwood. We have every intention of ignoring the events in this book completely and can only hope that WotC's game designers have sense enough to follow our example.

Those of you who read the *Forgotten Realms Mailing List* in at WotC's Oracle in Internet no doubt are well aware of the lively and sometimes heated debate among list members over the question of whether one should change what WotC officially has designed. Some gamers think this is what Game Mastering in the Realms is all about. Others write such work off as *"mangling the Realms."* Such differences of opinion also exist to a certain extent within the project group. However, we all are strongly against taking a position as a group on this question, and we have attempted to make *Backlands* useful to both factions. We certainly do many things in *Backlands* that would alter the Realms in manners that WotC probably never will consider. At the same time, we have laced this module with Game Master notes that offer alternatives for those Game Masters who don't like to have such sweeping impacts upon *their* Realms.

During the development of *Backlands,* the *Cult of the Dragon* Accessory by WotC's Dale Donovan appeared on the market. Rather late in the game, we took a close look at this product, for the most part liked very much what we saw, and then went to work and made some deep-reaching modifications in the heart of our adventure plan, to make *Northern Journey* compatible with the official *Cult of the Dragon* definitions.

Before you start running this module, please take a close look at the effect *Northern Journey* as a whole will have upon *your* Forgotten Realms, if you run our material *"by the book."* If you don't like elements of our outline, please consider well in advance how you wish to change things, to insure that your adventure runs smoothly and still portrays the Realms as you wish to see them. All the critical matters of compatibility are discussed in detail in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

March 2000
Greg Waters
Winona, Minnesota U.S.A.

Notes for the Game Master

NORTHERN JOURNEY ONLY

After leaving Beorunna's Well, the PCs are more accustomed to the sigylls and also may have formed some doubts about them. As always, the sigylls will attempt to draw the PCs on to their next goal. However, if any PC wants to stay longer in any one place, he can resist the pull of the sigylls with a successful check for Intelligence or Wisdom, whichever is higher. If he tries to resist a second day, he has a penalty of 2, and an accumulative penalty of 2 per additional day. Each PC must check separately. Those who do not make their check will be drawn on.

ALL GAME MASTERS

Most of the areas in this release are covered by new overland maps. For this episode you also should have the following works. Most are available as free or pay downloads from http://www.rpgnow.com:

- The boxed set, *The North*
- FR5 *The Savage Frontier.*
- *Volo's Guide to Sword Coast.* It will be of considerable value on the journey from the Ruins of Dekanter to the Storm Horns and Cormyr.
- *Volo's Guide to Cormyr* or the out-of-print accessory *"Cormyr."* They will be of considerable value from the Storm Horns to Tilverton, ditto for Elminster's Ecologies.
- *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands*
- *The Dalelands*
- *Doom of Daggerdale*
- Jim Butler's trilogy of Randal Morn modules: *The Sword of the Dales, The Secret of Spiderhaunt* and *The Return of Randal Morn.*

As already mentioned, one possibility is that you run Jim Butler's excellent Randal Morn trilogy here instead of our version of Daggerdale. This is easy to do. First of all you have to move the trilogy into the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR) and then you have to substitute the name of our Gwath for Jim Butler's Gothyl. When your players travel from Sundabar to Daggerdale, and they begin to seek Gothyl, they simply will find no answers. Have Dulwar or another Harper friend in Daggerdale advise the players to go to Shadowdale and seek out Elminster for advice. The sigylls will immediately begin to draw the PCs toward Shadowdale.

Once the PCs are there, Elminster will be off to unknown parts, but Storm Silverhand will offer the group the commission defined in the modules (Lhaeo is now King Haedrak in Tethyr and no longer available). Storm also will throw in that winning the Sword of the Dales will be the key to finding Gothyl.

For those Game Masters who like their Realms *"WotC pure,"* a warning that we have redefined the Upper Delimbyir Valley considerably and we have expanded official definitions of Daggerdale, but we have not changed WotC's official definitions for Daggerdale, with the exception of having Randal Morn disappear a second time.

If you prefer to disregard our redefined Delimbyir Valley, that should pose no particular problem. The main redefinitions are on the east bank of the Delimbyir and serve to add more color to the PCs' journey along the west bank. On the west bank where the PCs travel we have added only a ruin that is not defined by WotC, which you can simply eliminate from your adventure, the Delimbyir Trail between the river and the High Forest and the Goldhammer dwarves and gnomes, who likewise can be ignored.

The basic campaign set on the one hand and the boxed sets *"The North"* and *"Ruins of Zhentil Keep"* on the other show different locations for the Ruins of Dekanter. The campaign set shows the ruins being on the south end of the Greypeak Mountains, southerly of the northern edge of the Forgotten Forest. We use the location shown in the new boxed sets - on the eastern side of the southernmost flank of the Greypeaks, between the Dawn Pass Trail and the Forgotten Forest.

We also incorporate the Zhent trade routes mapped in *"Ruins of Zhentil Keep"* that run eastward from the end of the Dawn Pass Trail into Anauroch and southward to Dekanter and then Yarthrain. At this point, we leave the area defined in *"The North"* and move into the domain of *"Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast."* We have redefined the first part of the southern Zhent trail as being built upon an old elven trail that branches off on the eastern edge of the Marsh of Chelimber and leads to the Halfway Inn below Evereska.

It then heads back toward Yarthrain connecting to the Zhent trade route about 5 miles northeast of Yarthrain. This trail is not officially mapped, although FR novels do mention the existence of the portion of the trail between Yarthrain and the Halfway Inn.

Resisting the Sigylls

The red sigylls will try to prevent the PCs from veering from the best trail to Daggerdale. In this module, the PCs can resist the pull of the sigylls for one entire day on each day during which they make a successful saving throw. The rules are as follows:

D&D 3rd Edition Campaigns: RW for will, DC 25.

AD&D 2nd Edition Campaigns: RW for breath weapon, penalty of 2.

Experience Points and Levels

The PCs should have gained a level between 5 and 7 by the time they start this module. In the course of this adventure, they should gain two or three new levels, ending the adventure with a level between 7 and 9.

More material censored from *Volo's Guide to the North*

Game Master: This material may be read by your PCs, if you wish.

The *Delimbyir* - the mighty *Shining River* - flows from the peaks of the Nether Mountains south of Deadsnows over a stretch of nearly 800 miles into the *Lizard Marsh* and the *Sea of Swords* west of *Daggerford* and south of *Waterdeep.* The banks of the lower *Delimbyir* - from *Loudwater* to *Daggerford* - still are host to relatively civilized lands today, as they were to other civilizations in the past. The upper *Delimbyir Valley* of today is a wilderness between the High Forest and the threatening Greypeak Mountains. Few humans travel the *Upper Delimbyir Valley* these days and fewer still survive to report of such journeys, although it is said that the west bank is less dangerous than it has been in only recent years, due to the apparent increase of the elven population in the southeastern corner of the High Forest.

There are indeed any number of forces attempting to keep one out of the *Upper Delimbyir Valley.* It seems that elves are returning to the forest from somewhere, cleaning out the monsters that had infiltrated it and are establishing a *New Eaerlann.* Neither they nor the druids of the *Tall Trees* are willing to tolerate a human presence in the forest. I have to admit that I never would have seen the valley, had it not been for the kind help of a ranger, who saved me from attacking vagabonds of the remnants of the Blue Bear Tribe at the Stone Stand ancestral mound.

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Elminster's Note: *It's with good cause that the druids and elves are keeping troublemaking human adventurers out of the forest. That's precisely why I saw to it that this material was deleted. As for the barbarians, they sometimes function like ants, cleaning up unwanted refuse in the wilderness. It seems to me that this is what they were doing in this case too, until this ranger unwisely interfered.*

Instead of being barred entry, the kind ranger made it possible for me to travel forbidden paths, stopping en route at the hidden Citadel of Mists in the High Forest, guiding me through the *Tall Trees* of the druids to the old ruin *Elven Post* and then accompanying me on through the haunting and haunted *Delimbyir Valley* as far as *Loudwater.*

Where the western bank of the *Upper Delimbyir* has remained through the centuries under the eye of the forest's elves, great civilizations once stood too on the eastern bank of the *Upper Delimbyir,* perhaps even greater civilizations than those of the lower valley. Above all, the eastern bank had been settled by magically gifted survivors of fallen Netheril. Indeed the ruins of their cities and towers still stand on the far bank, haunted by fell beings and sending the rays of mysterious blue lights across the water by night, guarded by hordes of orcs, ogres and stone giants by day.

Some claim the Delimbyir civilization fell when its inhabitants moved farther southward , but elves I spoke with on the west bank assure me that the Neths still are there, conquered by their own lich lords and existing unendingly as undead. They - the elves claim - are the source of the strange lights in the ruins in the night.

My worst experience in the ride we spent traveling to *Loudwater* came two nights before we forded the *Heartblood River.* About a dozen miles after the Delimbyir turns to the southwest but before one rides across the 25-mile-long stretch of the High Forest on the river's east bank, one has a clear view 30 miles or so southward into the foothills of the Greypeaks behind the eastern forest flank in no man's land. There stands the mostly intact ruin of a tall, coal black tower that penetrates outward from the rather barren hills nearby like a huge, dark fang.

"The tower of the lich lords," a forest elf told us. *"They still are there. They still rule. And they will call to you. You will wish to swim to them, across the river. If you wish to survive, you must resist them."* I asked the elf how his folk managed to resist the call of the lich lords. He replied only, *"They seek men, not elves."*

We had made our camp on the river bank while daylight still graced the land. Although sunshine covered the hills and mountains east of us at day's end, the evil tower stood dark and emanated fear. Later, after the last strains of sunset had disappeared behind the canopy of the forest behind us, the tower blinked into life or perhaps more accurately unlife, with twinkling points of blue light and a beckoning beacon of blue at the very top of the tower.

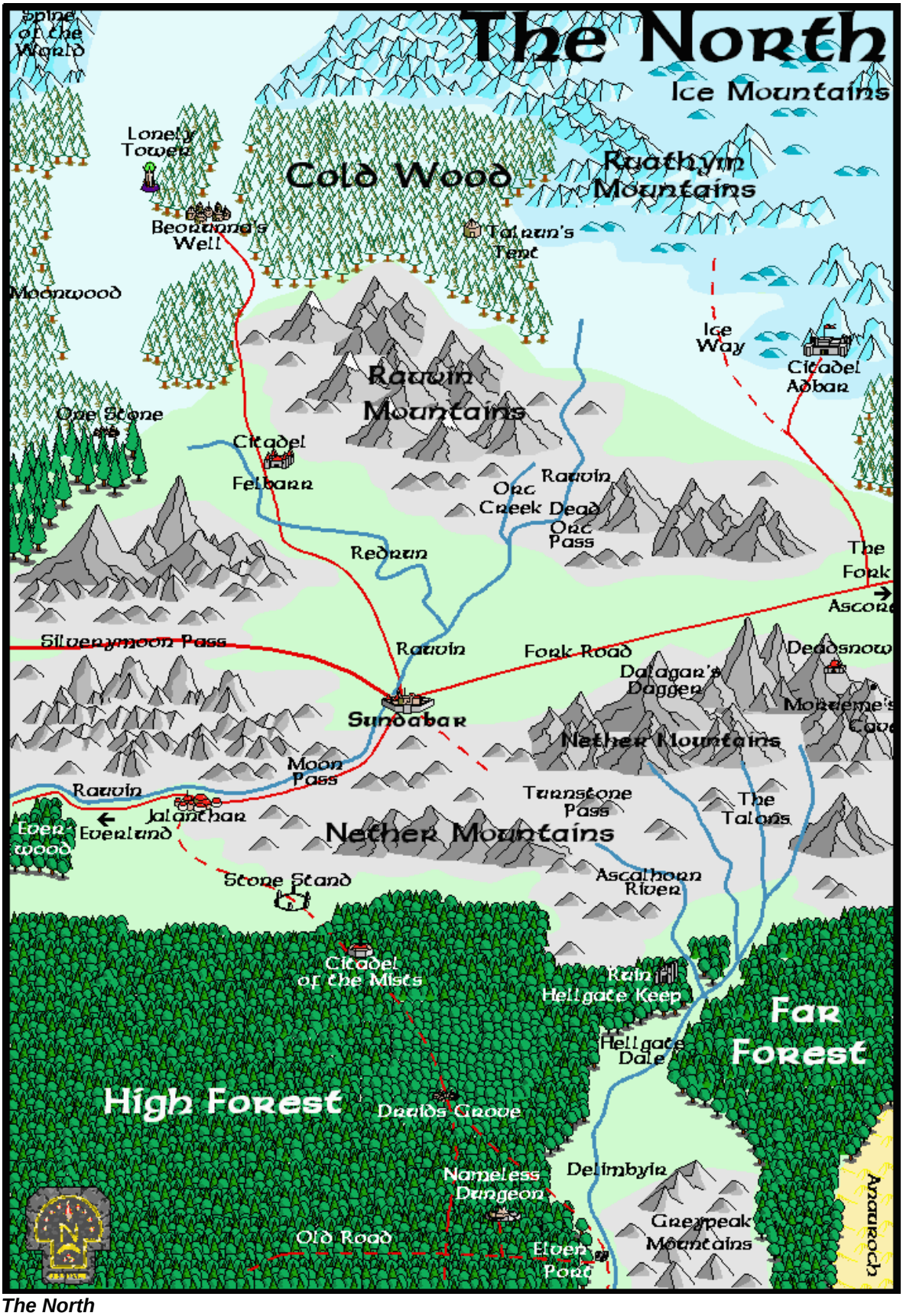
From it came the almost irresistible call to come forth, to cross the Delimbyir into the lands of the lich lords and to go to their evil tower. Throughout the entire night I felt the pressure of a great eye of evil staring down upon me over the miles, the eye of an immensely powerful, fell being, hungering for my soul. Many were the times that night that I was drawn to the very bank of the Delimbyir, each time able to resist the call to cross at only the last moment.

It occurred to me often during our 10-day Delimbyir Journey that immense treasure must lie hidden on the east bank and in the foothills of the Greypeaks. Great riches await the brave adventurer willing to cross into the lands of the lich lords, and together with those riches, a certain death awaits any adventurer foolish enough to visit the lands of the lich lords.

Volothamp Geddarm
Loudwater, Year of the Banner

1. THE NORTH

OFFICIAL SOURCE MATERIALS: The key source materials for this section all available for free or pay download from WotC's website or http://www.rpgnow.com. These are FR 5 *The Savage Frontier* by Paul Jacquays (TSR - 1989), FR 11 *Dwarves Deep* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1990), *Volo's Guide to the North* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1993) and the boxed set *The North* by slade (TSR - 1996). Also useful are *Cormyr: Empire of the Elves* by Steven E. Schend and Kevin Melka (TSR - 1998), *Hellgate Keep* by Steven E, Schend (TSR - 1998). The three gods' books (not available for download) - *Faiths & Avatars* by Julia Martin with Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1996), *Powers & Pantheons* by Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1997) and *Demihuman Deities* by Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1998) also are useful. Special thanks to Eric L. Boyd and Ed Greenwood for clearing up points that were questionable.


The North
Spine of the World
Ice Mountains
Lonely Tower
Cold Wood
Ruathyn Mountains
Beorunna's Well
Talnan's Tent
Moonwood
Ice Way
Citadel Adban
Rauwin Mountains
One Stone
Citadel Felbarr
Rauwin
Orc Creek
Dead Orc Pass
Redrun
The Fork
Ascon
Silvenymoon Pass
Rauwin
Fork Road
Deadsnow
Dalagan's Dagger
Sundabar
Nether Mountains
Moon Pass
Rauwin
Tunnstone Pass
The Talons
Jalanthar
Eoen-wood
Everlund
Nether Mountains
Stone Stand
Ascalhorn River
Citadel of the Mists
Ruin
Hellgate Keep
Far Forest
Hellgate Dale
High Forest
Dwalos Grove
Nameless Dungeon
Delimbyin
Greypeak Mountains
Old Road
Elven Port
Anauroch

The North

1. Rauvin Valley - Citadel Felbarr

If you're not running *NJ* but are using this accessory, it's up to you and your PCs to know and decide why your party is in Beorunna's Well and heading southward to Citadel Felbarr from there. You also can eliminate this part of the accessory and start out farther to the south.

If you are running *Northern Journey* and continuing from Part 2 *Moonwood,* Adalwyn Swiftwings, shaman of the Sky Ponies, still detects the presence of the sigylls endangering the One Stone. Any attempt by the PCs to ride down the open lands between the Cold Wood and the Moonwood and return to Silverymoon will be blocked violently by Sky Pony warriors. The only theoretical options are to return back over the Moonwood or to ride toward Citadel Felbarr (formerly the Citadel of Many Arrows). The sigylls will fight against any attempt to go south over Silverymoon, because this way is indirect. However, the sigylls will not fight against any attempt to break through the Sky Ponies, because they do not perceive the threat there.

Check the weather table! If your PCs try heading in a direction other than Citadel Felbarr, role play things out. Our narrative starts as the PCs head for the Citadel:

The stretch from Beorunna's Well to Citadel Felbarr probably will take you about three days. A dozen miles or so south of Beorunna's Well, the last stretch of the Cold Wood stands, an isolated island of forest about 25 miles wide and 35 miles long. On your first day out, you should reach the edge of the forest and ride along it, to a point about 5 miles north of the foothills of the Rauvin Mountains, which reach out to the foot of the forest itself.

Your second day's ride should bring you across the Rauvin foothills, and on the third evening, you should reach the dwarven citadel. The second day and night probably will be the most difficult. The Rauvins have the reputation of being orc-infested, and the foothills are the part of the terrain between the well and the citadel that will offer the shortest range of view.

Game Master: How many encounters occur before the third evening and when and where they occur are up to you. We suggest all encounters be with orcs coming from the Rauvins, unless, of course, the PCs try heading back into Sky Pony territory. Check out the weather for this time and run events as best fits your adventure. The narrative continues on the third evening out.

In the middle of your third day out, you at last can make out the high stone walls of Citadel Felbarr, a dwarven stronghold again, after years under the oppressive control of orcs. The great walls seem formidable, even from the distance.

About 10 miles east of the trail, the Rauvins begin once again. Before you is a long stretch of rocky land and small hills, many with gaping old openings to mineshafts, an area where the dwarves supposedly are attempting to reopen mines and are running into resistance. Today seems to be no exception. It looks like there's a small skirmish of some type going on in the distance, about five miles ahead of you

Game Master: If the PCs head over to the skirmish, they find a band of 10 mercenaries who had been hired to clear mineshafts fighting a band of six hook horrors coming out of the mineshaft at hand. The hook horrors use the statistics in the Monstrous Compendium. The mercenaries are 4 lvl 3 fighters and 6 lvl 2 fighters, all human male, with standard equipment and statistics.

The Citadel

Large town. Conventional. AL: LG. 3,000 gp limit. Assets: 1,000,000 gp. Population: 2,500 Mixed (90% dwarf, 8% human, rest halfelf, halfling, gnome). See the plan for Citadel Felbarr.

At last you come to the thick stone walls of Citadel Felbarr, 10 yards high and said to be nearly two yards thick. In the middle of the wall facing the young Redrun River is a massive and majestic stone gate with two towers roofed with tiles of a dark red stone that is unfamiliar to you, nearly as formidable as the wall in which it stands. Above the gate on the parapet stands a group of heavily armed dwarves. One shuts down to you:

"What folk be ye, and would ye be comin' in?

Game Master: The PCs should have little trouble being admitted to the citadel.

The interior of the huge citadel is something of a shock. There are a number of new structures inside the walls, but much of the citadel stands empty except for rubble where stone buildings recently having been demolished and wooden buildings having been burned. There are, however, a number of newly erected stone buildings within the walls, including a large palace, still partly under construction, a huge weaponsmith's operation and a large inn called *The Orc Skull*. Although the citadel is in the hands of dwarves again, there also are many human adventurers inside the walls. Everyone seems to be well-armored and heavily armed.

Map of Citadel Felbarr

Game Master: The citadel was retaken by King Emerus Warcrown and his clan in the Year of the Shield (1367 DR). Your PCs arrive there four years later, when additional reconstruction has taken place and the number of dwarves present had grown from 1,000 to 5,000. If you use this accessory in a year other than the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), you need to adjust the map and information on the citadel accordingly.

1 – Warcrown Hall. Many parts of King Emerus Warcrown's (dm, Fighter Lvl 12, AL: LG) Hall still are under construction, but it already is taking shape as a hall fit for a great dwarven king. The target date for completion is the Year of Risen Elfkin (1375 DR). The dungeon beneath the hall already has guests.

2 – House of the Reconquering Forge – Temple to Moradin. The high priest is Sonnlinor Dvalin Thunderhammer (dm, Priest of Moradin, lvl 10). He is assisted by two other Sonnlinors of levels 7 and 3.

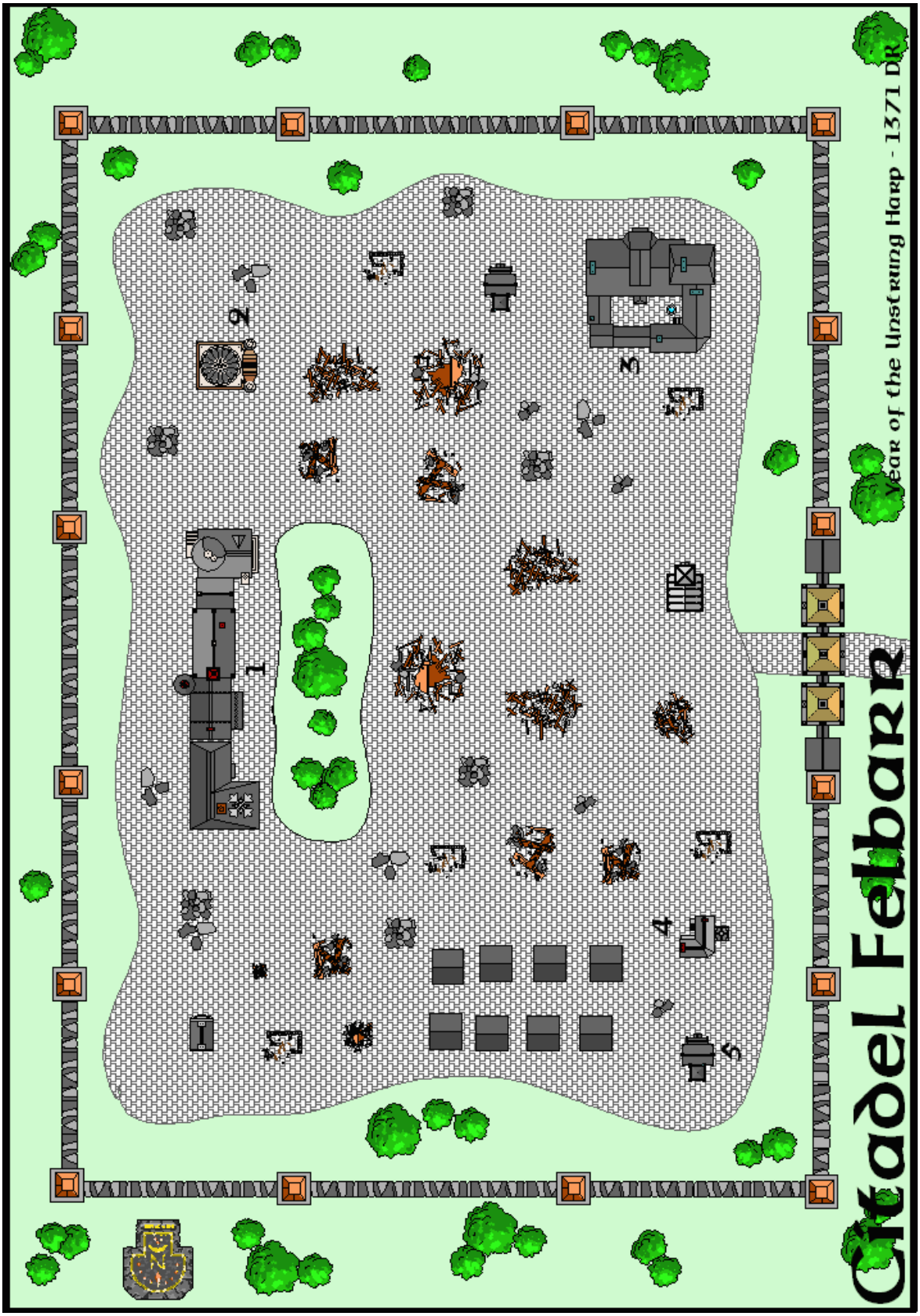
3 – Orc Skull Inn. The *Orc Skull* is a huge inn with a large tavern-restaurant complex filled with stone tables. The walls of the tavern are decorated with orcs' skulls. A room - simply furnished, the only kind here - costs 8 silver roses a night. The dwarves will grumble about coins from other lands but will accept them if they're *honest* coins. There is only one meal on the menu here at any given time, either deer or boar from the Cold Wood roasted on a spit along with a vegetable stew which varies in content from day to day. A meal costs 5 silver roses. One can have Star Brew beer from Silverymoon for 5 copper smiths a tankard or dwarf schnapps from Mithral Hall at 2 silver roses per shot.

Breakfast comes with a room and consists of a small tankard of Star Brew along with dark bread and cold sausage from Silverymoon. The same fare is offered at noon time, without beer included, but with cooked sausage for 1 silver rose. We suggest you stage no attacks here, but you can have a tavern brawl and/or a thieving episode if you wish.

Because almost everything's made of stone, brawls usually go without much reaction from the law. Thieving is another question. If a thief is caught - PC or NPC - it's 30 days in chains in an old and stinking orc dungeon with heavy labor during the day on the construction crew building King Warcrown's new hall. The innkeeper is a retired dwarven fighter named Barlin (dm, Fighter ´Lvl 5, AL: LG).

4 – Stonemarch Masonry Shop. This operation is run by Delvesonn Banthor *"The Razor"* Stonemarch (dm, Priest of Dumathoin Lvl 5, AL: NG). It also doubles as a shrine to Dumathoin. Word of Banthor's operation, which is in charge of reconstruction in the citadel, has drawn other stonemasons from far and wide. Adventurers with a strong back also can earn more money working for Banthor than they usually can fighting, by hauling in building stone from quarries outside the citadel-

5 – Harmglade Arms. Anthos Harmglade (dm, Lvl 0, AL: LG) is one of the rare magical master smiths of Clan Warcrown. At present, he's making weapons to order and selling them at extremely high prices, but he also has made clear that he serves the clan and citadel, first and foremost, should troubles come.



Citadel Felbarr

Tips and Rumors in the Orc Skull Inn:

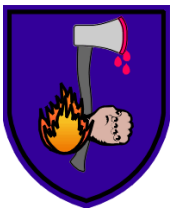
- A large horde of orcs is gathering in the Rauvins above the citadel. *(False. King Grauel and the orcs in the Rauvins still are disoriented from the loss of the citadel and are having trouble reorganizing.)*
- Demons in the dungeons below the ruins of Hellgate Keep are spreading a disease from another plane that is slowly killing the trees Turlang herded into Hellgate Keep, along with Turlang and the other treants. *(False.)*
- Bats are flying across the Upper Delimbyir from the Greypeak Mountains, landing on the western bank of the river, turning into vampires and attacking elves in the High Forest. *(False.)*
- A Zhentarim caravan trying to get around the trees in Hellgate Dell recently came up the Delimbyir Trail from Loudwater and attempted to travel through the forest in the area of the Tall Trees. Forest elves destroyed about 75% of the caravan before it ever reached the Tall Trees. The rest of the caravan vanished in the Tall Trees. *(True. The PCs will find the remains.)*
- The population of Drawn Swords south of Yarthrain is slowly turning away from the Harpers and beginning to favor the Zhentarim, at the urging of local merchants who resent the money they're losing as a result of not doing business with the Zhents. *(True and official - documented in the* "Ruins of Zhentil Keep.")

The PCs can leave the citadel the next day with a dwarven caravan heading to Sundabar and then on to Silverymoon. The dwarves are carrying a cargo of weapons to the cities and plan to bring back beer, sausage and other supplies. It's up to you whether the caravan has any encounters.

If the PCs are inclined to go on without the caravan, allow them to, but have them warned that there are sizeable orc raiding parties hitting any and all smaller groups traveling between the citadel and the new stone bridge built by the dwarves over the Redrun just above its confluence with the Rauvin *(This bridge does not exist officially)*. If the PCs still go it alone, one angle would be to have them get pinned down by the orcs until the caravan shows up and rescues them.

Regardless of what you and the PCs do, both river valleys consist of relatively barren, rocky land with stone outcroppings, all the way to Sundabar, at the foot of the Nether Mountains. The caravan needs four days to reach Sundabar. If the PCs are unhindered, they can make it on their own in three days. The next narrative is for the PCs' arrival in Sundabar.

2. Sundabar



Metropolis, Conventional. AL: LG. 50,000 gp limit. Assets: 2,000,000 gp. Population: 36,000 (97% human, 2% dwarf, rest half elf, halfling).

If you're running your own campaign together with this accessory, the use of the NPCs below is optional. if you do use them, your actions should be modified to fit the needs of your campaign.

If you are running the *NJ* adventure, when the PCs arrive in the city, they will be sought out by a halfelf ranger Harper known as Mosstreader, who is an agent of Lady Alustriel on good terms with the Master of Mists and the Druids of the Tall Trees in the High Forest. He will be willing to accompany the PCs as far as Elven Port. It was Mosstreader who - at the lady's behest - also accompanied Volo on his journey to Loudwater. It does not matter where the PCs room. Mosstreader will find them.

Two elven warriors from New Eaerlann - Truebow and Windstrider - who were on a mission to leaders of Luruar and other powers in the North, will join Mosstreader and the PCs as far as the Citadel of the Mists. A powerful attack from orcs is planned in the Moon Pass after the PCs leave Sundabar en route to Jalanthar. As planned, this encounter should be a very close thing for the PCs. Truebow and Windstrider are intended to give the group the firepower necessary to survive this encounter and also to offer any information the PCs make be seeking about the Upvale of the Delimbyir.

If you are using the Goldhammer Clan in your version of this campaign, Truebow and Windstrider also will warn the PCs that the Zhents are extremely paranoid in the area between Llorkh and Loudwater, because of strange guerilla warfare being mounted against them there. Truebow and Windstrider know of the Goldhammer clan and that it is behind these attacks, but they will tell the PCs nothing about the clan.

Game Master: The following applies when the PCs reach Sundabar.

At last you reach the fortified city of Sundabar. Your first impression is that the city probably is secure enough, but that it's anything but inviting. A huge, circular wall with many guards atop it and a massive gate leave you with the impression you could be entering a huge prison rather than a city.

Game Master: The PCs are handled suspiciously and questioned carefully before they're allowed into Sundabar. With or without dwarves, the PCs will be brought before higher authorities if their sigylls become known.

The guards at the gate scrutinize you as you enter the city, but they don't trouble you. They seem to be satisfied that you're in the company of the Felbarr dwarves. Chiseled in the stone above the entrance is the inscription *"Rivergate."*

You enter the gate in the thick wall, only to find that a second equally fortified wall stands before you, separated by a water-filled moat crossed by a drawbridge that leads to a second gate. There you're once again scrutinized by heavily armed guards, but they don't attempt to delay you. Your impression of Sundabar does not improve after you've left the gates behind you. The city has no color. There are no outdoor markets, no fancy signs proclaiming the virtues of a merchant's wares. All you see are stone buildings with slate roofs and small wooden signs or signs that have been chiseled into stone. Everything is as dour as a dwarf hall beneath the earth.

As you move toward the center of the city, you come to a large central circle surrounding a huge castle - the Master's Hall - according to the inscription. The building is filled with heavy catapults, and soldiers armed with heavy crossbows fill the ramparts of the castle. The square itself is partially paved with cobblestone and looks much the same as a market square in other cities, but there are no stalls or stands on the square here in Sundabar. It seems to serve only as a staging and arrival area for caravans.

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If the PCs and the dwarven caravan traveled together, they will part ways here. If your PCs are wise, they probably will find out with what they have to stock up before traveling onward. They will be able to learn that little in the way of supplies is available in Jalanthar and nothing after that until Loudwater. They also should switch horses here. If your PCs don't do this properly, you can have Mosstreader advise them of what lies ahead of them.

The only planned encounters here are those with Mosstreader, Truebow and Windstrider. In *NJ* campaigns, the magic in the sigylls does recognize that the bearers need rest to fulfill their mission, but the sigylls will become quite restless if the PCs try to spend more than 3 days in Sundabar. All the businesses, taverns and inns in *Volo's Guide to the North* or *The North* are available to the PCs, along with any you might wish to add. Wherever the PCs choose to eat and/or drink, Mosstreader will find them. The encounter with Mosstreader follows:

A thin, weathered looking halfelf with black hair enters the guest room and looks about at the tables, as if he's seeking someone or something. The man obviously is not a city dweller. His leather outfit and weatherworn face make quite clear that the man spends most of his time under open skies. His searching eyes come to your table. He seems to study each of you briefly and then he comes in your direction.

Game Master: In the *NJ* campaign, Mosstreader knows the names of all the PCs who were by Alustriel in Silverymoon, but not those who have joined the group since then.

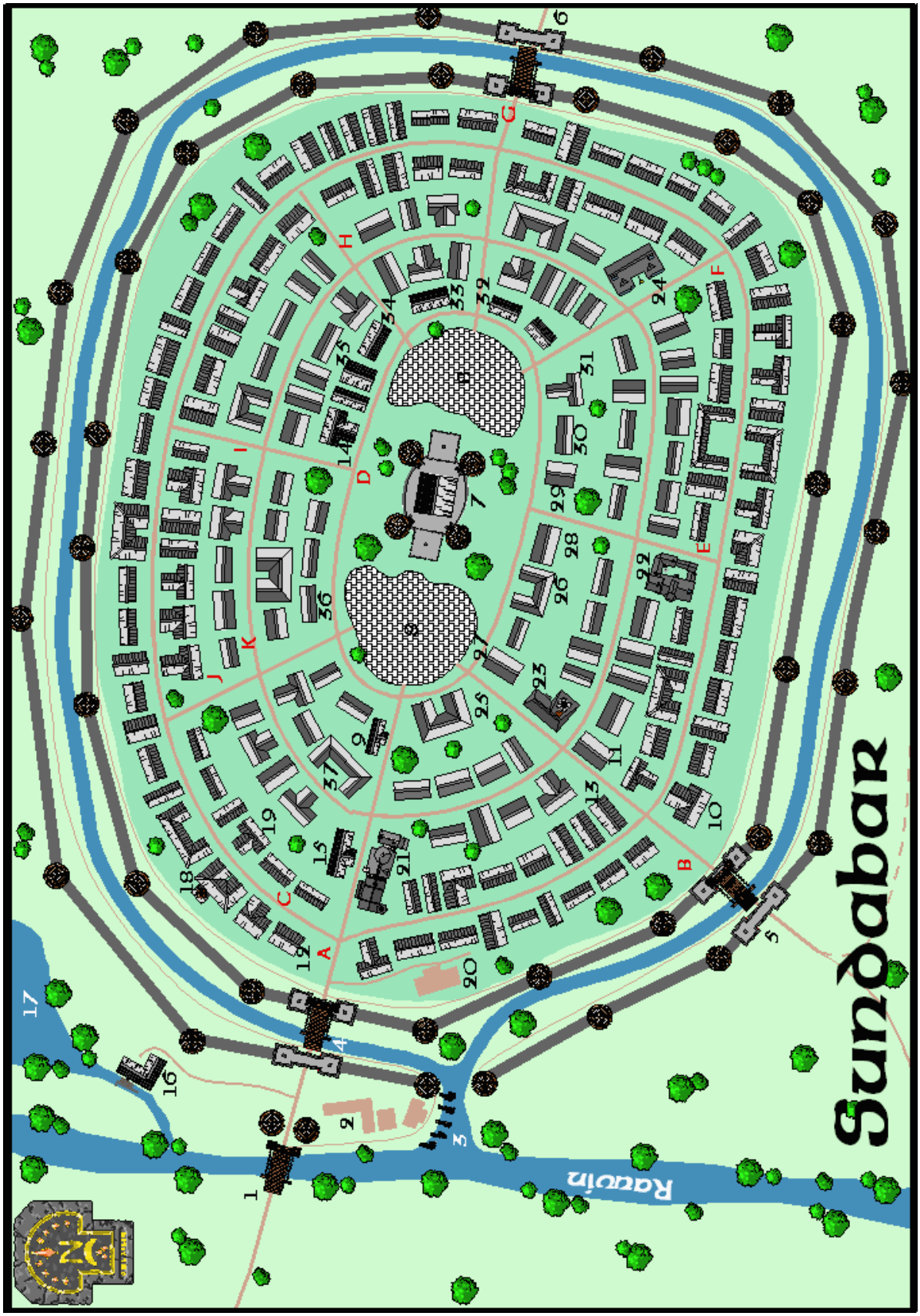
The man stands before your table and nods a slight greeting. *"Well met,"* he says to you. *"My name is Mosstreader, and I am seeking* **(Game Master:** Mosstreader lists the names he knows**)**. *Am I correct in assuming that you are here?"*

Game Master: If the PCs deny that they are who they are, Mosstreader will report them as suspicious to the city authorities and they will be brought to the Hall of Everlasting Justice, where they will be questioned by the Reverend Holy Justice Triandiall Truthammer (Paladin of Tyr, lvl 10), who can determine they are lying if they deny their identities. Mosstreader will be brought in, the PCs will be forced to reveal their sigylls, and Mosstreader will continue to inform the PCs of his purpose.

Mosstreader shows you a small pin with a symbol of a harp and stars. You recognize it as a symbol of the Harpers. *"Lady Alustriel has sent me to find you,"* he says. *"She has learned a bit more, and she suspected that this which you bear would prevent your returning to Silverymoon. She believes your second symbol belongs to a wizardess named Gwath* **(Game Master:** or Gothyl, if you are using WotC's Randal Morn modules**)**, *who last was known to be in Daggerdale. She also believes these things will force you to travel the shortest route, which begins in the High Forest and continues through the Upvale of the Delimbyir.*

"These lands are guarded and you will not be able to pass them without a guide who is recognized. I am a ranger well known in those parts. I can guide you to the Citadel of the Mists, where the Master knows me, and in my company, the Druids of the Tall Trees will let you pass to the Elven Port. That is not the end of your dangers, however. The lady wishes me to accompany you as far as Elven Port, where I can warn you of the dangers surrounding you from the elves of the High Forest, if necessary, for they do not welcome travelers at this time. Two elves of the forest also are traveling to the Mistmaster and are willing to accompany us as far as his citadel. I would welcome their company and their strength in the Moon Pass, where the dangers are great, for these two are formidable warriors. But the decision is yours. When do you plan to depart for the South?"

Game Master: Further events in Sundabar are a matter of additional encounters you may wish to define and actions your PCs may undertake. Thievery is not tolerated in Sundabar. If any of your PC thieves is caught in the act of performing theft, he can expect to spend at least 3 rides in the dungeons beneath the Master's Hall. Unless your PCs have some ingenious and successful plan to spring their fellow PC from the Hoosegow, the group will have to move on without him. The sigylls will not let the group sit around Sundabar for 3 rides. Statistics for Mosstreader, Truebow and Windstrider can be found in the Northern Journey Campaign Guide.



Sundabar

Map of Sundabar

NOTE: Officially, it is illegal in Sundabar to make maps of the city. The *NJ* map of Sundabar is an unofficial map, but it is based closely upon the descriptions offered in *Volo's Guide* and *The North*.

Street Guide:

A. Northwind Street
B. Lanthalar Street
C. Antar Street
D. The Circle
E. Undle Street
F. Mattaock Lane
G. Adbar Road (unofficial)
H. Cardle Lane (unofficial)
I. Vesper Lane (unofficial)
J. The Spur (unofficial)
K. The Egg

1 – Rauvin Bridge (unofficial). The drawbridge is maintained in an upright position from sunset to sunrise. If anyone wishes to cross at night, they have to negotiate with city guards.

2 – Relieved Raftsman Inn (unofficial). This house, owned and operated by Kelim Targgh (hm, lvl 0, AL: LG) and his wife Nelba (hf Lvl 0, AL: LG) is actually one of the better housing bets in Sundabar, although it's outside the wall. The Targghs are simple folk and their house offers simple accommodations with genuine home cooking. There is no menu; Nelba Targgh just prepares a big evening meal and a hearty breakfast for her guests each day. No meals are sold to walk-in customers who are not staying in the *Raftsman*. Most of the folks who stay in the *Raftsman* are traders who come to Sundabar on small boats or rafts and stay there until returning. The Targghs allow no weapons in the dining room. Kelim Targgh brews his own light, top-fermented ale. One quart/liter tankard is served with the evening meal. Additional tankards cost 3 copper smiths each. Accommodations with food cost an electrum unicorn and four silver roses per person per day.

3 – The docks.

4 – Rivergate. This gate carries almost all of the traffic to Sundabar, crossing Silverymoon Pass to Silverymoon.

5 – Turnstone Gate. This gate is used mostly by local farmers and ranchers, but it also connects to the dangerous Moon Pass trail to Jalanthar and the even more dangerous Turnstone Path, which peters out in the wilderness but once led through Turnstone Pass to Hellgate Keep.

6 – Eastgate. This gate connects to Fork Road, which eventually leads to Citadel Adbar and the ruins of Ascore.

7 – Master's Hall. This heavily armed and fortified castle is the center of government in Sundabar. It also houses the Hall of Justice. Beneath it are the city dungeons and the entrances to the deep wells, storage granaries and the *Fardrimm,* the area where the finest forging fires of the north are hidden in the Underdark in the *Everfire,* tended by Adbar dwarves. The entrance to the *Fardrimm* also is the gateway to the underground trail through the Underdark to Citadel Adbar.

8 – Caravan Staging Areas.

9 – Furjar's Flying Carpet. This is an absentee operation owned by the Waterdhavian merchant Furjar the Flippant. It's a general store that some would classify instead as a junk shop.

10 – Old Anvil Smithy. Master Smith Alabuth Helfyn makes armor, anvils and caltrops and exports them.

11 – Old Fireblower Pouch and Pipe Shop. Talbut Minshar offers fine quality pipes and tobacco.

12 – Shyndle's Lute and Pipes. Anar Shyndle is a maker of fine musical instruments.

13 – Horn Of Spirits Tavern. Volo rates this brawling dive as medium in price and low in quality. Tavernkeeper Halabar sells draft Orc's Blood beer at 4 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard and various schnapps made from forest herbs at 2 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter.

14 – Maiden at Midnight Festhall. Most folks say it's the most entertaining place in Sundabar. It has pretty girls at various prices, draft Orc's Blood beer at 6 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard and various schnapps made from forest herbs at 5 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter.

15 – Sighing Sylph Tavern. This otherwise quiet house boasts a painting of an immodest sylph near the doorway. The house beer is a run-of-the mill bottom fermented lager that sells for 4 copper smiths a quart/liter tankard. Forest herbal schnapps cost 3 silver roses for a shot/0.1 liter. The only food that's available are cold, smoked boar sausages that have been described more than once as *"high on innards and fat, absent of meat."*

16 – Rauvin Mill (unofficial). Tavis Hardrun (hm Lvl 0, AL: NG) runs a grain and stamper mill that produces feed, flour and vegetable oil.

17 – Mill Pond (unofficial).

18 – Orc's Blood Brewery. The regional brewery and malting house produces a bottom-fermented lager strong in bitter hops. Orc's Blood's beer is popular in the North, but there are many finer beers in Faerûn.

19 – Tabard and Tankard Tavern. Volo describes this tavern as *"pretentious … dirty, tired."* The only plus is its decent light and dark house-brewed bock beers, bottom fermented and rich in barley malt. The beer is good but overpriced at 6 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard, as are the various forest herbal schnapps varieties at 4 silver roses per shot/0.1 liter. The same goes for the cold cuts served with butter, horseradish and dark rye bread on a bread board for 4 silver roses.

20 – Unshimble's Ugly Face Tavern. This is the favorite watering hole of laborers, journeymen, apprentices, etc., and a good place for that brawl you might have been looking for. The characterless house brew, a top fermented, thin ale, costs 4 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard. Forest schnapps varieties go for 4 silver roses per shot/0.1 liter.

21 – Baldiver's Inn. Many of this quiet inn's residents are retired warriors, as is the owner, Baldiver. The rooms are simple, comfortable and warm, and the food also is simple and conservative but good. The house beer, a top fermented bitter stout ale, costs 4 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard. Forest herbal schnapps cost 3 silver roses per shot/0.1 liter. Dwarven spirits from Citadel Adbar go for 3 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter. Meals costs 5 to 9 silver roses.

22 – Firestar Chariot Inn. This is a somewhat rowdy inn that many consider to be a secret festhall. Rooms are luxuriously furnished and run from 9 silver roses to 2 golden halfmoons a night. The house serves Orc's Blood beer at 4 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard, forest herbal schnapps at 4 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter and mediocre meals at prices ranging from 6 silver roses to a golden halfmoon.

23 – Malshym's House (Inn). This safe and clean inn caters to merchants and other travelers seeking simple but good accommodations. The rooms run from 5 silver roses to a golden halfmoon per night. The house beer is a good, foamy, top-fermented wheat beer at 4 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard. Forest herbal schnapps cost 3 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter. Dwarven spirits from Citadel Adbar cost 3 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter. Solid traditional meals run from five silver roses to an electrum unicorn and five roses.

24 – Trumpet Inn. This quiet, well furnished inn draws mainly traveling merchants and adventurers. The name is reflected by the signboard, a trumpet from Amn full 20 feet/6m long. Innkeeper Gaurlar Darym and his staff are known for being able to handle anything, and adventurers who come to Sundabar often call upon them for services. Several northern adventuring bands also make the *Trumpet* their home. Rooms run from 6 silver roses to a golden halfmoon per night. Meals run in the same range. Darym's bottom-fermented bock beers are both the best brew and also the strongest in Sundabar. Both are rich in barley malt and run at about 8% alcohol. The light bock is offered in the warm months and is served cold. The dark double bock is served at room temperature in the cold months. Both cost 5 copper smiths per quart/liter tankard and are well worth the above average price. Forest herbal schnapps and dwarven spirits from Citadel Adbar cost 3 silver roses a shot/0.1 liter.

25 – Blackraven Wagons, Doors and Shutters. Hundarr Blackraven is one of Sundabar's better carpenters and wainwrights.

26 – Feldar's Wheels and Wagons. Ildar Felder is a maker of fine, expensive coaches and carriages.

27 – Gullaxe's Stairs, Rails, Poles and Handles. Ondabar Gullaxe specializes in turned wood and is quite capable of setting an axe head perfectly balanced on a new shaft, making a quality polearm, etc.

28 – Hammerlar's Fine Floors and Housework. Olen Hammerlar is Sundabar's leading house carpenter.

29 – Krystyn's Shelves. Krystyn Danard is Sundabar's foremost cabinetmaker.

30 – Larantarn's Chairs and Stools. Ommagol Larantarn also is a highly respected, specialized woodworker.

31 – The Lutery. The shop belongs to master instrument maker Jonstal Haerdrun.

32 – Mith's Carved Whimsies and Woodcuts. Mith Tlalant makes carvings of people, animals and birds that are exported as far away as Kara-Tur and Maztica. His original works cost up to 700 golden halfmoons each, but the resale prices reach into the thousands.

33 – Naeth's Nails, Pegs, Locks and Other Woodfinery. Naeth Robilar is a skilled carver of small wooden items and mechanical works including wooden locks.

34 – The Old Block. Faerndan Laurath and Basmel Torlstar are the co-owners of this furniture-making operation.

35 – Old Ornar's Beds and Tables. Beds are the main craft of Ornal Myntul, a human who has reached his 116th year.

36 – Thimm's Shingles, Shakes and Finefinish Tabletops. Olosk Thimm makes both tabletops and the wooden shingles popular with outlying farmers (most buildings in Sundabar have slate shingles).

37 – Garrison of the Sundabarian Army. The host numbers 2,000 men.

3. Jalanthar

Hamlet, Conventional/Anarchic. AL: CN. 25 gp limit. Assets: 50,000 gp. Population: 200, Human.

Check the weather table! Sundabar marks the end of civilization for all intents and purposes. The next town, Jalanthar, may be a bit safer than it was before the fall of Hellgate Keep and the forging of the new nation of Luruar, but it also is on the fringes of Luruar and really receives little protection from the new nation at this time. Basically, it's a wild frontier town, leveled many times by attacking orcs, often partially rebuilt again.

To reach Jalanthar from Sundabar, the PCs must survive a harrowing three-day ride through the Moon Pass of the Nether Mountains. Because there has been an increase in traffic between Sundabar and Jalanthar in the past few years, it's watched sharply by orcs of the Ripped Gut and Thousand Fists tribes, who will be certain to attack your group more than once before it reaches Jalanthar.

There also are bandit bands of verbeegs above the pass who have captured orcs, have forced them to fight for them and send them into the first vanguard of each attack, with the verbeegs following. For additional color and fear, you could have a great wyrm red dragon fly over the group, circle and plummet then to its death upon Dalagar's Dagger, and flyovers and/or encounters with blue dragons of the Morueme clan also are sensible menu items.

Put together encounters based on the strength of your PCs plus the strengths being lent to them by Mosstreader, Truebow and Windstrider. If you don't want to lose any of your PCs here, you still can make this a harrowing journey by fudging your throws for the three NPCs in the band.

If Mosstreader, Truebow and Windstrider have too much of a lucky streak while the PCs still are strong, fudge the results downward. If the PCs are about to be wiped out, fudge the three NPCs onto a winning streak. In no case should you let them dominate the battle.

Let the NPCs be successful while a few members of your party still are proud and hitting, but if you run the Moon Pass encounters well, the majority of your party members should reach Jalanthar battered and a bit humbler, but also proud of the trail of monster corpses left behind in the pass. At the end of the Moon Pass ordeal:

> Weary, battered and almost surprised you're still alive, you finally ride down from the pass through stony, gravely lands filled with scrub brush and wiry bushes. Your heart drops for a minute, as you make out the ruins of a small city before you, no doubt Jalanthar. However, as the picture becomes clearer, your spirits rise slightly. Jalanthar doesn't look like much, but there are people moving about in it. It may be a ruin, but it isn't an abandoned ruin.
>
> You pass a large, ramshackle group of buildings out of stone with clay tiled roof and a battered wooden sign showing a picture of an angry cockatrice and the inscription, *The Crowing Cockatrice.* The remainder of the buildings are small houses with stout stone foundations and thatch roofs. About half of the buildings however are unused, roofless ruins with crumbling walls. West of the city, the landscape looks a bit greener again, and the part of Jalanthar on the south bank of the rushing River Rauvin seems to be actually fertile, nourishing large apple groves.

Map of Jalanthar

Crowing Cockatrice Inn - The prices: A tankard of potent Jalanthar Amber apple cider, 4 copper smiths per tankard; Sundabar Orc's Blood lager beer, 6 copper smiths per tankard; meal of the day - usually bread and sausage cold cuts from Sundabar, 4 silver roses; accommodations, 9 silver roses per day.

Game Master: If you need violent encounters in Jalanthar, there's always a good tavern brawl. You also could stage a raid by a band of marauding orcs. All we've planned are rumors, tales and news, available along with a room in the Cockatrice.

Nether Mountains
Rannin
Sandabar
Fuerland
Fruit Orchards
Jalanthar
Crowing Cockatrice
Stone Stand

Jalanthar

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THINGS ONE CAN HEAR:

Ibrahart, human trapper: *"Strange things have been happening along the High Forest. A few weeks back, I was heading homeward with my pelts past the Stone Stand Mound, and I found the bodies of six Blue Bear Barbarians laying there, killed clean with arrows. Now, some other folks have seen those bodies too and will tell you that those were elven arrows.*

"But don't believe it. I know the elven craft when I see it!. Those arrows come from the Zhentarim and were made in Darkhold, I tell ya!" (Partly false - the arrows were from Tree Ghost warriors who were attacked by the Blue Bears as the Tree Ghosts tried to drive them off.)

Darmbrill, dwarf prospector (Nether Mountains): *"Most of us who live here have hideaways, safe caves off in the hills. I've got mine in good order too, I tell you! I just came back in a few days ago, and bad things are brewing up in the mountains. "Some of the orcs who were driven out of the citadel have come south and joined the Thousand Fists, and their numbers are greater than ever. It's just a matter of days before Jalanthar is overrun again. It's already nearly impossible to cross the pass to Sundabar."* (Partly true. Some orcs have joined forces, but Darmbrill has overestimated the number.)

Khiall, human hunter, High Forest: *"A lot of people think things are going to be better now that Hellgate Keep's buried under trees and the Citadel of Many Arrows has fallen. Well, you can believe what you will, I've been back in Jalanthar for a week now, but I spent the three months before that in the Upper Delimbyir Valley. The druids and the elves there know me and know that I'm no threat to the things they're protecting.*

"I've been hunting the Upper Valley and dodging bugbears and orcs there for the past 15 years. Of course, I stay on the west bank. I have no interest in visiting the lands of the lich lords. Anyhow, things are changing on the river too, and not for the good in my opinion. Now on our side, something's driving the bugbears out of the center of the forest, and there's more of them all the time on the edge of the woods near the river. But that's not what scares me the most. The orc armies patrolling the east bank keep growing, and more and more of the ruins over there have witch lights burning in them by night! The ghosts of the lich lords are getting restless.

"And in the South, I got news from the elves too. Something or someone is fighting a guerilla war with the Zhents in the Greyvale. Caravans have been found with every man and horse bashed in by hammers or sliced up by axes. A whirlpool turned up a few months back in the middle of the Greyflow just east of the Delimbyir and swallowed an entire Zhent barge with its cargo and crew. Other Zhent caravans have been ambushed by huge explosions in the Dawn Pass that suddenly blow up the whole road and everything in it. Other times, the road itself has simply caved in, into a hole 30 yards deep.

"About a month, some powerful Zhentarim mage was sent to patrol the road from the sky, riding a black dragon. It's said that this was one of the top mages of Manshoon himself. He was riding over a Zhent patrol at the time. There was a small copse of trees and bushes about 100 yards ahead of the patrol. A golden war axe flew out of the copse upward, beheaded the dragon, killing it and the mage, and then the axe flew back into the copse.

"Now these Zhentilar had a clear view in all directions. They insist nothing ever left that copse of trees. And they were there in less than a minute's time, but they found no trace of the axe, the person who used it or any possible escape route. The ground was undisturbed, and there was nothing else in the copse except trees, bushes and a few boulders. You might be thinking that the attacker had just turned invisible, but apparently that's not true either. There was a high-powered Zhentarim mage riding with the patrol, and he insisted there was nothing in that copse - visible or invisible!

"But it still gets better! I know an old dwarf prospector who the Zhents recognize and let in and out of Llorkh. He says it doesn't matter whether you're in the Ten Bells, the Drover's Cup or the Wet Wizard. Every Zhentilar in Llorkh is convinced that they have the lich lords after them. Only their leaders don't believe it. They blame this trouble on the Harpers.

"Anyhow, the last news he heard in Llorkh was that this secret enemy is attacking Dekanter too, where the Beast Lord rules. Now the Beast Lord is supposed to have a large number of everything from orcs and goblins up to beholders stashed away in the old Netherese mine ruins there.

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"And something's going around and causing the old mineshafts there to cave in with a huge, fiery explosions, and mind you, the younger Zhentarim mages are saying these explosions have nothing to do with magic either. Best of all though - the Zhents in Llorkh are whispering that these bushwhackers got a 700-year-old beholder. The corpse of the thing was found in its lair at Dekanter, every eye stalk chopped off with an axe and a mortal axe wound in the main eye!

"Now I'm all for it when something's cutting up the Zhents like this. But this is driving them really crazy and making the Greyvale and the Dawn Pass a dangerous place to be, if you can't give the Zhents a good reason why you should be there. Llorkh's closed up tighter than a drum right now. And worst of all, the Zhents have started moving into the Southwood. They're building a garrison there, although they're supposedly starting to lose men there too!" (Basically true - but elves are driving the bugbears out of the forest.)

4. The High Forest

Game Master: Considerably more information on this area and particularly on the Mistmaster and the Citadel of the Mists can be found in *Mintiper's Chapbook* by Eric L. Boyd (WotC - 2000), free for downloading from the WotC website, URL: *http://www.wizards.com/forgottenrealms/FR_Features.asp*

Check the weather tables for four days' time. We've decided to avoid encounters between Jalanthar and Stone Stand, but if you wish to use them, feel free to add your own. After leaving Jalanthar the group will remain in the lower foothills of the Nether Mountains. Mosstreader, Truebow and Windstrider seem to know their well way through the rugged brush and craggy rock of the foothills. There is no road or even a good trail from Jalanthar to the High Forest, just a path, which the three quickly avoid, instead leading the party through something of a labyrinth of rock and brush. Almost every corner looks as though it could turn into an ideal ambush.

The Regional Map

1 – Stone Stand. Barbarian worship site, see Page 57 of the booklet *Wilderness* in *The North*.

2 – Citadel of the Mists. This is the castle complex of the Mistmaster and his followers, who are closely affiliated with the Shadowdale faction of the Harpers. They are documented on Pages 52 and 53, Book 3 of the booklet *Wilderness* in *The North*.

3 – Ruins of Hellgate Keep. Hellgate Vale.

4 – Nameless Dungeon. This dungeon in the High Forest is described on Pages 55 and 56 of the booklet *Wilderness* in *The North*.

> **5 – Elven Port**. These ancient ruins may serve as a campsite for your PCs. The site once was a small, elven dock city of the land of Eaerlann. The elves and the humans of Netheril traded with each other, and this was the river port. The river shore to the south was farmland of the forest elves.

6 – Old Road. Official details can be found on Page 56 of the booklet *Wilderness* in *The North*.

7 – Delimbiyr River.

8 – Delimbiyr Trail.

9 – Reitheillaethor. This new elven settlement plays no planned role in the lich lords setting. Official details can be found on Page 56, Book 3, *The North*.

10 – Karse. The ruins of an ancient city built by Netherese emigrants. The only intact building is a large, black pyramid that had been and perhaps still is the lair of the lich Wulgreth, who created the Dire Wood and summoned baatezu devils to bring about the fall of Ascalhorn. Official details can be found on Page 55 of the booklet *Wilderness* in *The North*.

11 – Heartblood River.

12 – Shining Falls. The west border of the lich empire runs along the eastern bank of the river and the falls. Official details can be found on Page 56 of the booklet *Wilderness* in *The North*.

13 – Dahau Rock. A border marking of ancient, fallen Ammarindar. This lone, pillar-like stone of unknown origin stands 50ft/15m high.

14 – Loudwater. The independent Delimbiyr town is described on Page 62, of the booklet *Cities* in *The North*. An unofficial town map and extensive details can be found in this accessory.

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15 – Smiling Satyr Inn. This popular but isolated hilltop inn is detailed on Page 62, of the booklet *Cities* in *The North*.

16 – Night Hunters Crossing. The *Nighthunt Inn* is located at the crossing.

17 – Orlbar. This settlement has been under Zhentarim domination, but above all, it is enslaved to the vampire Count Rughan Tarrh in Qoqid Duhmm castle in the mountains above Orlbar. Our version of the settlement has been altered substantially from that in the official *FR* literature.

18 – Dawn Pass Trail.

19 – Llorkh. A Zhentarim enclave. You will find an unofficial map of Llorkh and full details on the settlement and in this accessory. The official definition of Llorkh can be found on Page 61, of the booklet *Cities* in *The North.*

20 - Spellgard. This haunted castle is detailed in the TSR accessory *FR 12 Anauroch*.

21 – Hrad Qoqid Duhmm. The castle of the vampire necromancer Count Rughan Tarrh. The castle and its environs are based upon the *Ravenloft* castle of Strahd. A conversion and adaptation of *Ravenloft* for use as Hrad Qoqid Duhmm is in Part D, Section 3 of *In the Land of the Lich Lords*, the sequel to *Northern Journey*. The original *Ravenloft* module and the newer 25th anniversary reissue are available as pay ESD downloads in PDF format from http://www.rpgnow.com.

Mosstreader, Truebow and Windstrider stop often, to simply listen. At first, the days pass without a single trace of orcs or any other creatures in the foothills. But shortly after the dawn following the third night in the hills, you see a changing landscape before and a bit below you. Several miles ahead, the hills end and a grassy plain begins, and then beyond it, a dark endless sea of trees continues on southward, farther than the eye can see. In fact, in almost every direction but behind you, your eyes take in endless forest - the High Forest, believed by many to be the largest forest in all of Faerûn.

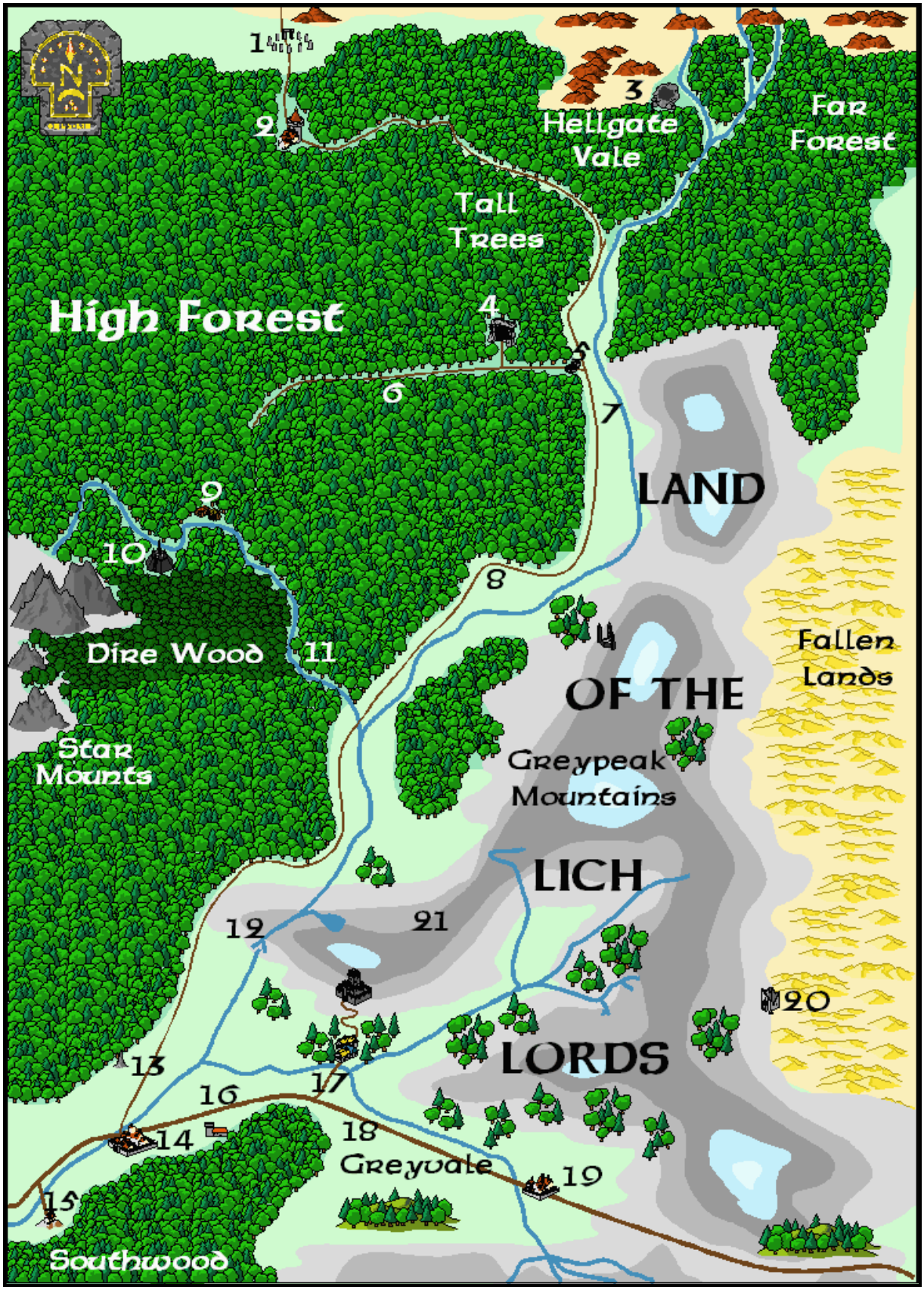
Soon, however, your path leads you back between low, barren hills, and the forest disappears from view again, however, for the rest of the morning, you come time and again to points where you can look out over the massive forest once more. And as you come nearer to the forest, you also notice something of a small, round woods in the plain at the edge of the larger forest.

Mosstreader motions you to halt. Then he says quietly to you, *"We're coming to the point where we leave the forest and come to the plain. There's an orc party out, somewhat behind us, with about 50 warriors. They're riding large war horses and won't be able to catch us, if we move out fast and put distance between us and them.*

"We're going to leave the hills rather abruptly and come to a narrow but sure trail that leads you to that copse of trees off in the distance. Windstrider's going to take the lead and set the tempo. The pace may be a bit fast for some of you, but you have to hold it if you want to keep ahead of the orcs. Be sure you keep about 15 yards between you and the horse in front of you. Even if you hear the orcs let out a war whoop behind you, always maintain about 15 yards separation.

Within a few minutes, things are just as Mosstreader said they would be. You suddenly reach an opening, and before you a narrow but seemingly firm path leads out through a plain of grass. a stretch of about five miles before it ends at a copse of trees 100 yards or so in diameter just past the edge of the High Forest. The grass in the plain already stands about half a yard tall.

Windstrider will give his signal, and then he and his horse will spring out onto the plain in a burst of speed. As the party follows, it will hear many grunting howls arising from the hills behind it. Those who look back and see, still more than a mile/1.5 km away within the hills, a large band of about 50 orc riders trying somewhat awkwardly to move rapidly in the party's direction. The events of this encounter are in the hands of the Game Master and his party. If the PCs are seriously endangered, the two elves can use powerful magic against the orcs.



The High Forest and the Delimbiyr Trail

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After more than an hour, the party reaches the round copse of trees before the forest. The copse, at least as it is now, is not natural but rather manmade. You can see that the copse rises in the center, that it has been mounded.

Mosstreader says, *"This is a barbarian ancestral mound. It was once the temporary mound of the Blue Bear and Tree Ghost tribes. The real ancestral mound was a holy site surrounded by a great and venerable oak that the barbarians call Grandfather Tree, however, they managed to lose their ancestral mound for many years and have only recently found it.*

"After losing their ancestral mound, they planted a cutting of Grandfather Tree here, where it grew. This served then as the ancestral mound of both tribes until a few years ago, when the Tree Ghosts found Grandfather Tree again. Since then, the Tree Ghosts meet here seldom.

"The Blue Bears let themselves be driven by a demon, and with her they overcame Hellgate Keep, but there too they were destroyed. There still are some survivors of the Blue Bears, however. Once the Blue Bears and the Tree Ghosts were the same tribe, but the Blue Bears split from the Tree Ghosts and went their own way, turning to demon worship and evil.

"Now that most of their tribe has been destroyed, the survivors of the Blue Bears have tried to rejoin the Tree Ghosts, but the Tree Ghosts want nothing to do with them. They drive them off, at the pain of death, if necessary.

"Since the Tree Ghosts found Grandfather Tree again, they've been coming here relatively seldom. But they do keep an eye on Stone Stand, because the survivors of the Blue Bears attempt to come here too, to pray, and the Tree Ghosts drive them off when they do, to prevent this holy site from being desecrated.

If the ancestral mound is inspected more closely, the party will find the rotting bodies of six Blue Bear barbarians - all about three weeks dead - about 20 yards/6 m outside the perimeter of the Stone Stand. All were killed with arrows from Tree Ghost barbarians, which Mosstreader can confirm. There are no fixed encounters at the Stone Stand. The Stone Stand is a logical place to make the camp for the night.

Check the weather tables for one day's time. The weather listed is valid, but the temperature will drop to about 50°F/10°C within less than a mile of the forest's edge, if a higher temperature is listed for the day in the table. If you want (an) encounter(s) between Stone Stand and the Citadel of the Mists, the most logical opponents would be bands of bugbears or orcs. This should be somewhat difficult combat for both sides, because the forest is thick between the Stone Stand and the citadel. It will take the group about 8 hours travel time to reach the citadel area.

South of the Stone Stand a narrow path leads into the dark forest. The forest trail is little more than a yard wide, making it impossible for your group to ride in anyway but single file. The trees here are tall, mostly a mix of ancient pine, spruce, larch, oak and beech. On the forest's edge one can see that many of the trees reach 100 feet/30 m and more into the sky. Most of the oaks on the forest's edge have trunks well over a yard/meter in diameter. The beeches have multiple trunks, the larger of them a good yard/meter in diameter.

You have something of an eerie feeling as you enter the forest. There is nothing wrong or evil about this forest, but you feel alien here. You don't belong here, and you wish you could avoid entering the great wood. You feel almost as if you are violating its sanctity. Several yards/meters into the forest you already have to accustom your eyes to the darkness. There is no trace of the sky above you. The canopy of the forest is totally closed, allowing only a dim hint of daylight to filter through to the narrow trail.

The trees grow thick here. There often is less than 2 yards/meters separation between the trunks. As a result, the lower branches all are dead, with neither needles nor leaves. The forest floor is thickly carpeted with fallen branches, old beech and oak leaves and decaying needles, but it is without undergrowth, except for occasional mushrooms.

The smell of forest fungus in the soil is strong, but not unpleasant. There are some signs of wildlife. You see an occasional squirrel collecting fallen beechnuts that never will germinate in this darkness. High above you, you can occasionally hear birds, although they are beyond sight.

The going is slow on this trail. It twists frequently between trees, forcing constant turns to the left and the right. There often are open areas that seem to lead off in other directions, but your guides seem to know the right way. Without them, you no doubt would be lost in no time at all. Of course, your sigylls might steer you onto the proper trail.

The next seven hours in the forest are in your hands. The three NPCs will speak little and urge the PCs to do the same, to avoid being heard. They will explain that no particular power claims this edge of the forest. It is for the most part uninhabited, but orcs and bugbears do roam this end of the wood. There also are occasional bands of Blue Bear survivors in hiding here. The druids of the wood and the forest elves seldom are seen in these parts. If the PCs make some kind of commotion, an encounter should follow, together with a chastising from the NPCs after the battle.

The following description should be read when the PCs reach a point about an hour away from the Citadel of the Mists.

You estimate that you've been riding steadily for seven hours or so, when the wood becomes a bit chillier and the air takes a humid turn. Soon you see thin mists twirling through the trees, but they quickly become thicker and thicker, until you barely can see the length of your own group. Mosstreader is leading the way. He shouts back to you:

"This part of the forest is fairly safe. We've entered the domain of the Mistmaster. There'll be no orcs or bugbears here, but the trail signs are intentionally faint. I know them, but I have to ride slowly here, to be sure I read them correctly. We're not far from the citadel, but it'll be an hour or so before we reach it. We'll have to go at a snail's pace now."

Game Master: Reaction from the PCs?

And a snail's pace it is. Your horses follow Mosstreader's animal at a tempo slower than you normally would walk, but as you look at the strange mists swirling through the trees about you, you're relieved to be riding behind a guide like Mosstreader.

Nearly an hour goes by before Mosstreader signals you to halt. Truebow and Windstrider continue silently on through the trees, forward and a bit to your left, disappearing quickly from sight.

Citadel of the Mists

Thorp, Conventional. AL: N. 0 gp limit. Assets:2,000,000 gp. Population: 12.

"They are leaving us here," Mosstreader says. *"This is their destination. They have business to conduct with the Mistmaster. But I will ride on with you as far as the Elven Port. It may be that we will have to camp here. The Mistmaster is quite secretive. Windstrider and Truebow will report that we are here*

"If we are to be admitted to the citadel, a messenger will come to us. If not, we must camp here for the night and lead our horses slowly in the next days. They are weary, but not far beyond here, the forest thins somewhat and opens occasionally upon meadows, where the horses can graze. However, I hope we don't not have to depend upon that. If we are admitted to the citadel, we will be able to obtain fresh mounts there."

What you do at this point depends upon the extent to which you wish to make the Citadel of the Mists and the Mistmaster accessible to the group. Revealing the Mistmaster himself at this point is not necessary. He has no particular role to play in the adventure and can and probably should be saved as a secretive figure for another campaign. You may wish to maintain that status too for the citadel. Our narrative assumes that the PCs are allowed into the citadel but do not get to see the Mistmaster.

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If you wish to have the PCs enter the citadel, a magical image of Luckbringer Cherissa Mintareil, a priestess of Tymora, can appear before the party, speaking to Mosstreader and inviting the group to enter.

If you wish to keep your PCs out of the citadel, have them camp where they are for the night. For the next three days the horses will have to be led and the PCs will be traveling on foot. In this case, it will take the group seven days to reach the druids' grove in the Tall Trees. If the PCs are admitted to the citadel, they will be able to change mounts there, and they can make it to the druids' grove in 5 days.

If the PCs are not admitted to the citadel, the likelihood of encounters will increase somewhat, the farther they move toward the druids' grove. Less likely are orc and bugbear encounters, more likely as the forest opens are encounters with deer, foxes, bears etc. *(See below.)*

IF THE PCs ARE AGame MasterITTED TO THE CITADEL:

See the citadel plan. Once the party enters the citadel Cherissa will greet the party. The exchange of greetings should be role-played. At some point, Cherissa will tell the group that the Mistmaster is deeply involved in affairs in the South and will not be able to meet with them. She will not elaborate on these affairs. (He is concerned about news Truebow and Windstrider have given him about the Zhents and the dwarven clan Goldhammer - however the two elves identify only what the dwarves have done without identifying the dwarves themselves.)

The priestess leads you through the gate into the citadel, a formidable but austere fortification. There is little decoration to be seen here. Most structures and items are of stone, steel, wood and leather, all of them functional. A few men come from large wooden doors in the base of one of the buildings, obviously large horse stables.

"They'll take care of your mounts," the priestess says, *"but you'll want to take your saddlebags with you. Unless any of you object, we'll trade mounts here. The High Lady believes you will want to spend little time here and that your mission in the South is pressing."*

The priestess leads you into the second building and up a simple stone staircase to the (European) second floor (American 3rd story), leading you to relatively small but well-equipped rooms, simple but fully sufficient for your needs. The rooms themselves are about 3 x 4 yards in size with heavy wooden doors that can be locked from within. The rooms are equipped with single beds, simple wooden closet cabinets, a wooden table with two chairs, candles and wall torches.

"Mosstreader, you can show our guests where things are. There are warm springs beneath the citadel, and there's a bath on this floor with a well that can draw water from the springs. The water isn't hot, but it's adequately warm to bathe comfortably. Dinner is in the dining hall this evening at 8. Windstrider, Truebow and the Mistmaster will not be able to join us, but the rest of us will be there. Gwynlynn brought in a beautiful buck yesterday. Till later then!"

The priestess leaves you to your own devices. Mosstreader says, *"I'd suggest the baths first. And if you leave your traveling clothes out, they'll try and find you some suitable substitutes for the road tomorrow.*

"We'll be joined tonight at dinner by Iltmul of Helm - a fighting priest, Azure, a charming wizardess from Silverymoon who studied under the Lady herself and of course Cherissa.

We'll be off early tomorrow, and you'll do best if you're as fresh as your new horses. We'll be heading into the high druids' domain, in the Tall Trees. While the druids keep their area in balance, that's something entirely different from being safe. The druids will do their best to keep too many orcs or bugbears from settling in their area, but too many is quite a few more than none at all. You'll need your strength."

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There will be no encounters in the citadel. If the PCs cause problems, the NPCs in the citadel should be more than capable of pacifying them, preferably with tranquilizing spells. Painful but not damaging magical traps should be available for each and every attempt at thievery. Magical gates will bar the PCs from entering areas where they have no business. The Mistmaster and his people already have been informed by Alustriel of the Sigylls and she has sent magical images of the symbols to them. No one at the citadel can add any new light to this matter.

Because combat encounters are unlikely, you should need no statistics for the official NPCs of the citadel. However, you can find the details on Iltmul, Azure and Cherissa on Page 52 of the book *The Wilderness* in the boxed set *The North*, which is on WotC's CD of out-of-print products. Azure will explain little about herself. Iltmul and Cherissa both are amiable participants in the dinner table discussions, but all three are primarily listening for valuable information.

Iltmul, Azure and Cherissa are not particularly interested in the symbols. They simply are unrelated to anything the folk of the citadel are involved in - whatever that may be. They will question the PCs on any points the PCs raise that are of interest to them, and they also will stress the need for the PCs to maintain a watch over each other, when they are within reach of the lich lords. They also will stress to the PCs how important it is for them to pass on to the Harpers any information they can win on the situation in the Greyvale, Llorkh etc.

Cherissa will select two members of the PC group that have left her with the impression of being trustworthy and will ask if she can speak privately with them. She will tell them the main Harper agent in Loudwater is Bolthar Theed, innkeeper at the Scarlet Shield (unofficial). She will say another Harper helper is the lord of Loudwater Nanthlor Greysword (official). The only surviving Harper in Llorkh is Marnana, wife of Lord Geildarr, Zhent lord of Llorkh (unofficial). Marnana should be contacted only in gravest need, Cherissa warns the PCs. She asks them not to tell the other PCs of this information..

The NPCs are willing to tell the PCs that they are very concerned about the attacks upon the Zhents in the Greyvale. They have nothing against the Zhents being attacked, but they are very worried that the Zhents may start doing totally irrational things in panic over their invisible enemy.

The Game Master must also keep in mind, however, that the elves of the High Forest will not betray the dwarves of Clan Goldhammer, and Truebow and Windstrider have not mentioned the dwarves to the Mistmaster. No one at the citadel knows anything about the Goldhammer clan, nor do Alustriel or any of the other Seven Sisters, Elminster or the Blackstaff.

There is no text for the dinner in the citadel. Servants will set the table with an excellent platter of roast venison together with a rich gravy, chunky potato dumplings, steamed beets and roast carrots. The food is gourmet fare. The wine is from the Ithmong Red Marl Lay vineyard in Tethyr. The variety (red) is the temperamental Hex's Blood grape, which produces a sour and unpleasant wine in most years, and a delight for the palate in the best of years. The vintage is the Year of the Bloodbird (1346 DR), a classical year for Hex's Blood in Ithmong

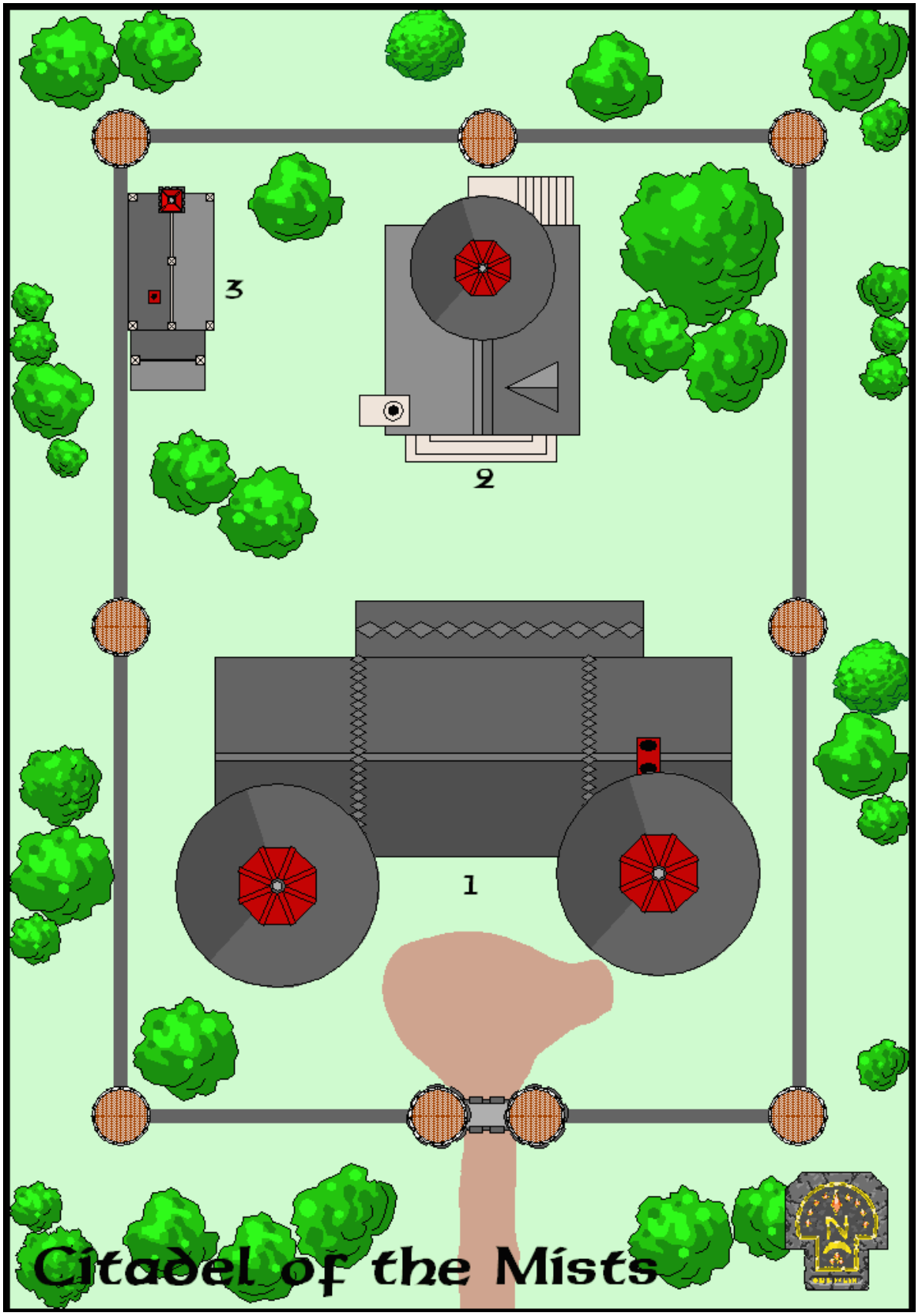
Game Master: Statistics for the NPCs of the citadel can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Map of the Citadel

1 – Castle. Main building of the citadel, where the Mistmaster has his rooms and laboratories.

2 – Lodge. The citadel's guards and the NPCs other than the Mistmaster reside here. This also is the building where the NPCs will be put up.

3 – Stables.



Citadel of the Mists

The High Trees

After leaving the Citadel of the Mists, the PCs begin a seven-day journey to Elven Port, where Mosstreader will leave them. The first two days of this journey are through uncontrolled lands between the citadel and the druids' groves of the Tall Trees. This is a good area for encounters.

Official suggestions for encounters in this area can be found starting on Page 51 of the book *The Wilderness* in the boxed set *The North* from WotC. For hostile encounters, we suggest bugbears being driven from the forest, bands of orcs from the Iceshield tribe, half-elven renegades, drow, boar and bears.

For neutral to friendly encounters, you can use centaurs (although they are far from their lair in the forest) and treants. For color, a flyover of one of the three green dragons resident in the forest also is a possibility. Be sure to check the weather tables! A planned encounter occurs after the second day (s. below). For the first two days in the forest, the temperature will not be higher than about 50° F/10° C, regardless of what the weath er tables suggest.

As soon as you follow Mosstreader through the perimeter of the citadel's grounds, the strangely swirling mists of the forest accompany you again. Only with the ranger's help could you possibly manage to find your way here.

The mists will continue surrounding the group until late afternoon, when they begin to let up. Encounters should not be avoided during this time, but both sides will have difficulty maintaining hostile contact, because of the mists. At about 4 p.m., the mists will begin diminishing. At about 5 p.m., you can read the following to the group.

The mists have at last become thin, and the High Forest once more affords a degree of visibility. You notice not only that the mists have diminished but also that the forest itself has thinned somewhat. The average separation between tree trunks now has grown to between 4 and 5 yards/meters. There are fewer oaks and spruces in this part of the wood than there were north of the citadel. Instead you notice a predominance of fir trees with a mix of pine and great beeches. This part of the forest seems to be managed to some extent, or at least tended. Fewer fallen branches litter the forest floor, and there are many areas where undergrowth has taken root, including bushes, grasses and wild blackberries, raspberries, strawberries and blueberries.

Game Master: The following is read about two and a half hours later, when Mosstreader chooses a camping spot.

Mosstreader has pushed on well into the evening, explaining that he wishes to bring this stretch of the forest behind you as quickly as possible. All traces of the mists vanished about two hours ago, and the forest continues to be thinner than it had been. Still, the going has been slow. There is neither a road nor a trail here. Only Mosstreader's knowledge of the High Forest has been providing direction.

His signal to halt comes in a small, almost circular meadow of tall grass, roughly 12 yards/meters in diameter.

"This glade is the safest camping spot around here," Mosstreader says. *"We don't want to build a fire. It's likely to draw something. But if we have to fight something here, it's open and suited to our own battle skills. "*

Normal camp preparations follow. In the night, the camp will be attacked by a group of giant forest spiders (s. the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*). We suggest an average of two spiders per PC and NPC, adjusted to match group strength.

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Game Master: The next day:

On your second day out from the citadel, your impression grows, that this part of the High Forest is tended to some degree. Even more, you can see that this part of the forest is very old. The crowns of many trees reach 250 feet/75 m and more into the sky, and the trunks at ground level sometimes are up to 12 feet/360 cm in diameter.

Game Master: There are no planned encounters this day. You are free to plan whatever encounters you wish. The PCs will reach the druid's groves on the following evening. The closer the group comes to the druids' grove, the less likely a hostile encounter will be. On the following day toward evening:

The farther you travel to the southeast, the older and larger the trees become. For the last several hours eagles have been seen high above you now and then, and at times you nearly have the feeling you are being followed, or perhaps more accurately, watched. By evening, the trees - all ancient oaks in this part of the forest - have grown too tall for you to be able to estimate their height. On the ground, many have trunks with diameters of up to 100 feet/30 m.

As you enter this perhaps most ancient part of the High Forest, you see two armed men coming in your direction. Both are clothed like rangers. They carry wooden shields, saber swords and wear leather armor. Both seem guarded at first, until Mosstreader shouts out, *"Well met, Karthan, Rodor! Praised be Mielikki's woodlands!"*

The two men return the greeting, but with somewhat puzzled expressions on their faces, and with a question: *"Well met, Mosstreader! Why have your brought outsiders to the Tall Trees?"*

The two are uneasy, although they seem to have lowered their guard somewhat. Mosstreader replies, *"They are on a mission for the High Lady, who asks Uthgang to offer them comfort and lodging during their journey."*

One of the two men says, *"I do not know if this is a good thing. But I do not think Uthgang would deny shelter to those the Lady sends. Uthgang is not here, so I must act in his stead. I am Rodor, a druid of Mielikki, as is my companion, Karthan. Mosstreader, you may take your guests to the Far Oaks. We will see to it that ladders are sent down and that you are cared for."* With these words, both druids quickly climb trees and vanish from view.

Game Master: Reaction?

Mosstreader leads you about 500 yards farther toward the south, explaining as you walk: *"There is a circle of druids in the forest who are headed by the Great Druid Uthgang Jyarl. The Tall Trees here are their home. These are the oldest trees in all of the forest, and the druids keep them healthy and alive. All of the druids live high in these trees, in tree houses built from fallen wood and thinnings.*

"The druids will not allow strangers in their main structures, but when visitors are accepted here, they are allowed to stay in separate tree houses, somewhat removed from the center of the Tall Trees. Our horses need a day of rest here.

"We cannot exchange horses here, nor can we anywhere else for many days. The druids here have no horses, and the next area that is settled is the city of Loudwater, about three rides farther to the south.

"The druids will lead our horses to a meadow, where they will be cared for and can graze. After one day's rest, we'll be able to continue. You must be very careful here in the groves! The druids will tolerate no disrespect to the forest or their grove. Kill nothing except in self defense. Cut no wood. And climb no trees but the one we are staying in!"

Game Master: Reaction?

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At last you come to an ancient oak with a trunk more than 50 feet/15 m in diameter. A long and heavy rope ladder with wooden rungs hangs down to the ground. *"This is where we ascend,"* Mosstreader says. *"It will be a long climb!"*

Game Master: Dwarves, halflings and gnomes without thieves' climbing abilities will be afraid of the climb and very reluctant to ascend.

The ladder is sturdy, but its swaying is discomforting for most of you. It is a long climb, as Mosstreader said, and you must interrupt your climb several times for brief rests, but at last, after ascending a good 150 feet/45 m, you come to a series of wooden walkways high in the tree that connect several small wooden huts. The walks are sturdy and have railings to prevent falling.

"You may choose your own tree huts," Mosstreader says, *"with two to a hut. I would recommend that you unpack your bags and get a bit of rest. In about an hour and a half we will be expected to descend for the evening feast."*

Game Master: Nothing more is planned until the evening feast. The drums the PCs hear later are orcs, somewhat distant to the Tall Trees and no threat unless you want an encounter here. If that occurs, remember that the druids have been holding the Tall Trees for some time, and it is highly unlikely that the orcs will pose any serious problems for them.

Evening Feast:

The 90 minutes' rest go by quickly. It seems that little time has passed, when Mosstreader tells you it is time to join the druids. There is a thin smell of smoke in the air, smoke from a cooking fire. Off in the distance, far to the South, you can hear a rumbling sound, possibly the distant beating of war drums.

It's really difficult to believe that there are people living here. The forest is ancient, its floor covered with the remnants of fallen leaves and needles. A smell of fungus, like autumn mushrooms, lingers in the air.

Although no paths are visible, Mosstreader weaves an unhesitating trail through the trees, covering a stretch of about 2 miles/3 km, opening at last upon a rounded glade about 100 yards/90 m in diameter. There's a small, apparently spring-fed pond in the middle of the glade, and a thin stream flows from the pond toward the southwest, disappearing quickly into the darkness of the trees. Sunset is not far off, and the forest already is growing dark, although the open glade remains well lit.

In the glade are two tiny, wooden huts and a number of small trees and bushes. Several of the trees bear green fruit - apples, pears and plums. To the north side of the pond sits a group of 17 men, all dressed like rangers. Their clothing is mostly shades of brown and dark green and is predominantly of leather. There are large stacks of old, dried wood near the men and two open fires. Over one fire a small cauldron is suspended, over another is a pit upon which a large boar is being roasted.

The men seem to be occupied with battle preparations. Some are sharpening their scimitars, others are fashioning a supply of javelins and spears. Mosstreader leads you over to the group. Among the men are Rodor and Karthan, the two druids who greeted you earlier. As you come nearer, you see that five or six of these men actually are women.

"Well, met, Rodor! Well met, friends", says Mosstreader. Most of the others return the greeting to Mosstreader with *"Well met"* or *"Praised be Mielikki's woodlands!."* Most nod a greeting in your direction, appraising you briefly but carefully. Then they return to their work. There is little trace of conversation here this evening. The people of the glade are in a serious mood. Now and then, a few of them go to stir the cauldron or test the boar meat with a fork.

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In the cauldron, the druids are cooking an unusual stew consisting of forest mushrooms, wild raspberries, blackberries and currants and sage as a seasoning.

The elves of the High Forest have been driving a growing number of orcs and bugbears from the interior of the wood. These are concentrated now in the eastern 5-mile-/8-km-fringe of the forest, starting at a point a few miles/kilometers south of Elven Port and continuing on until the Heartblood River.

Some bands of orcs and one band of bugbears already has managed to get by the elves and go through the wood north of Elven Port into the southern fringes of the Tall Tree, where the druids have turned them back or destroyed them. Because of the drumming in the south, the druids are again preparing to defend the Tall Trees.

Happenings in the druid camp are a matter of role-playing. Although the druids are generally neutral, they are allies of Alustriel and friends of Mosstreader. For this reason alone, they are willing to shelter the PCs and care for their mounts. But the druids will offer the PCs no help or information. Nonetheless, there is a lot of information that can be obtained. How much of it the PCs learn should be a result of their role-playing. The PCs - when played properly - can cause Mosstreader to ask for information, much of which then may be discussed openly, although the druids will not give the PCs information directly. They will give only information that Mosstreader thinks is worth asking for.

When the PCs do nothing to get Mosstreader to ask openly for information, he will be briefed privately by Rodor. Before he leaves the PCs, he will brief them on the information they absolutely need to know, because he is helping them in Alustriel's service. But he will provide them with considerably less information than they could obtain with initiative.

The druids will mention nothing about elves or New Eaerlann in the PCs' presence. They will refer only to *something* that is driving orcs and bugbears from the forest, knowing that Mosstreader is aware that the elves of New Eaerlann are behind this. The druids have the following information:

- There are relatively large concentrations of orcs in the border stretch of the wood between Elven Port and the Heartblood. Elves patrol the grasslands between the Delimbyir and the forest, often shooting anything that moves on sight. The orcs therefore avoid the fringes of the forest by day but are active in the grasslands by night.

- About 90 miles/150 km (6 days) southwest of Elven Port, a part of the High Forest still stands on the eastern bank of the Delimbyir, following the river to the southwest over a stretch of 50 miles/80 km (3 days). In this area orcs in the wood on the east bank apparently have built boats that on some nights cross the forbidding river in large numbers - 50 ore more - and transport orcs fleeing from the High Forest into the Land of the Lich Lords. Nothing more is known about this.

- The elves are in relatively firm control of the west bank south of the Heartblood and are more inclined to ask questions before shooting in that area.

Mosstreader and the PCs need to stay in the druids' camp two nights and one day, before the horses are fit to ride. The PCs can, of course, abandon their horses and go on foot, but Mosstreader will not abandon his horse. If the PCs choose to do this, they will go on without Mosstreader, and he will return northward, considering his mission to be fulfilled. If the PCs spend the two nights and one day in camp, they are required to remain either in the glade or in their tree shelters.

5. The Delimbyir Valley

The journey from the druid's grove to Elven Port takes four days. During this time, the group will follow a narrow trail through thick forest. The trail is visible to the entire party, but there are many side trails, and it is clear to the PCs, that they would become totally lost here on their own. The first two days, the trees remain tall, on the last two days the forest gradually grows lower and somewhat thinner.

A large tribe of hobgoblins that had settled in the area northeast of the Star Mounts, north of the Heartblood and somewhat west of the end of the Old Road is being squeezed out of the forest and into this area. The hobgoblins should be an ongoing problem for Mosstreader and the PCs the first three days. On the last day, the PCs are close enough to the Nameless Dungeon and Elven Port that the hobgoblins will keep their distance, fearing problems with forest elves.

Regardless of the weather table, the fourth day is sunny and clear:

> Throughout the day you've caught glimpses to your left (east) of more light than you've been used to since your first days in the High Forest, and it seems certain that the eastern edge of the forest is but a short distance from your trail. Rather frequently you begin to have generous views of the sky above you. It's sunny, and the heavens are blue and cloudless.
>
> By late afternoon you notice that the trail you're on shows signs of occasional use by others, both on foot and mounted, and the same goes for the occasional trails that branch off of this one and into the forest.

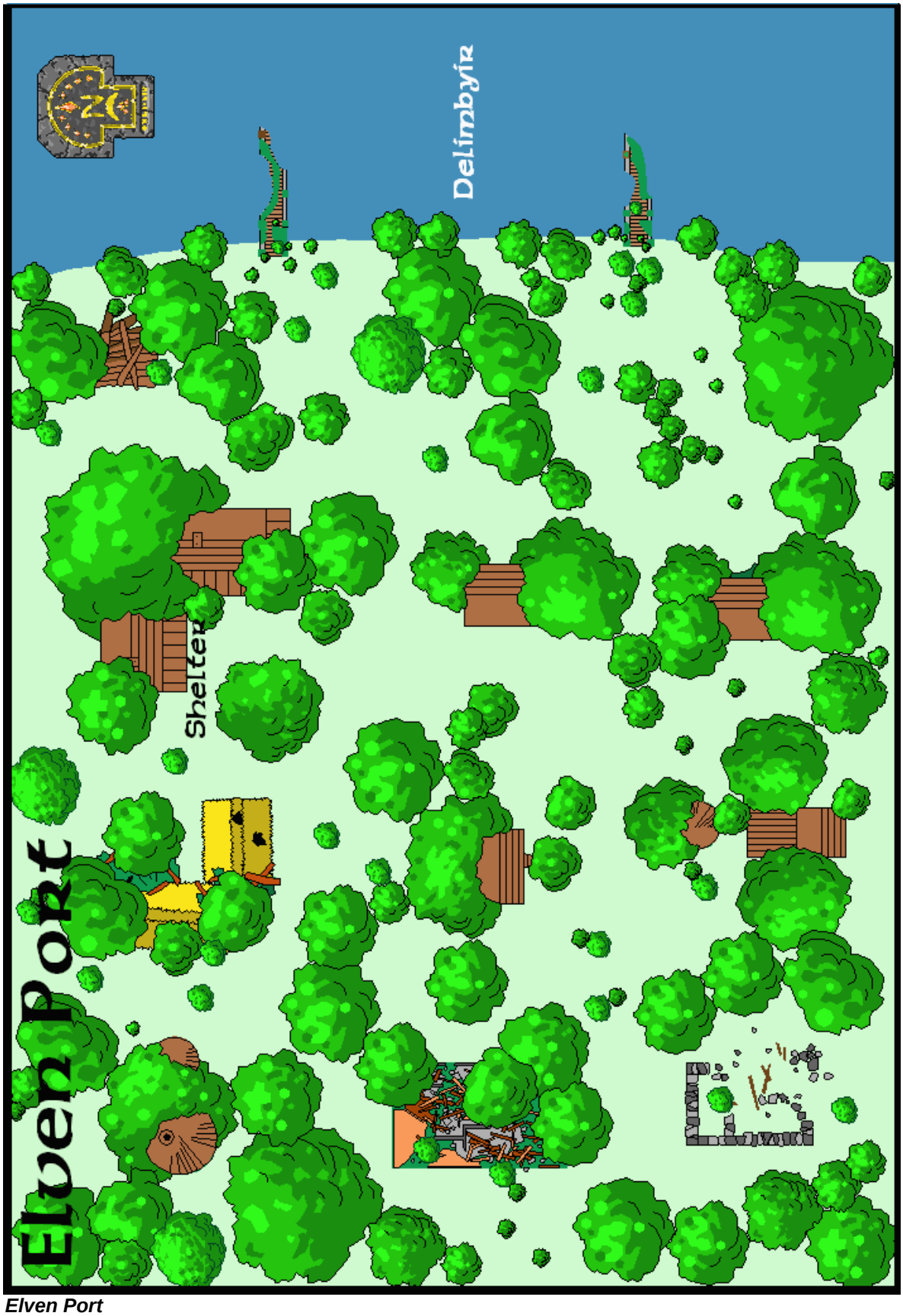
Elven Port

Thorp, abandoned. AL: N. 0 gp limit. Assets: 0 gp. Population 0.

> In the late evening you emerge from the wood. The sun is now low over the canopy of the forest to the right or west of you. Its setting rays sparkle in orange-red across the low waves of the swift-moving Delimbyir, now about 100 feet/30 m to your left, to the east of the trail. The river itself is about 250 feet/75 m wide at this point.
>
> Even the jagged and grim Greypeak Mountains on the east seem to have a slightly friendly cast in the glow of the sun setting upon them. However, that does nothing to warm up the looks of the troop of about 500 orcs marching southward on the other side of the river.
>
> The distance from your viewpoint to the orcs is more than 150 yards/135 m. A few of the marching orcs attempt to shoot arrows at you from the other side of the river, but all fall short of their aim and land in the Delimbyir.
>
> The leaders of the orcs don't seem to pleased with the way their troops have wasted arrows. They run quickly to those who've shot and begin whipping the offenders. You notice only now that the orcs are being led by a strange group of creatures, basically human in appearance, but with splayed feet. Their hands are skeletal and long, only skin-covered bones. They have pink faces with the skin stretched in a permanent grin, revealing sharp teeth and fangs. Somehow, you have the impression that these creatures may not be 100% alive.

Game Master - If the players want to shoot, the orcs wear crude chain mail and carry body shields, giving them in this case 3rd Edition AC 18/2nd Edition AC2 against arrow attacks.

> Mosstreader leads you only a bit further. You come to a point where you see the remnants of old stone docks reaching out into the Delimbyir. To your right, direction High Forest, stand the remnants of several overgrown buildings and to crumbling docks on the river bank but no signs of modern civilization.
>
> *"Welcome to Elven Port,"* says Mosstreader. *"This is where our ways part, but not until tomorrow. Once long ago this was a city called Elven Port. It was a small dock city of the land of Eaerlann on the Delimbyir. The elves and the humans of Netheril traded with each other, and this was the river port. The river shore south of here once was farmland of the forest elves. But those are ancient tales. The elves - most of them - left long, long ago.*



Elven Port

"The opposite shore was settled later by emigrants from Netheril who were dominated by evil mages. There's a magic upon the land east of us that contains these Neth spirits within their own lands. It is an empire of undead, and the monsters who serve them. The Land of the Lich Lords, one calls the opposite shore. By day one sees only the orc slaves. By night, the lich lords and their undead minions will call you to them. You must do all you can to resist them. If you fail and swim across and reach the other shore, you soon will march for the lich lords in their night army of Zombies."

Map of Elven Port

The ruin marked *Shelter* still has a solid enough roof in two areas to shield the PCs from the elements, and the overgrowth will block out most of the force of storm winds.

Along the LAND OF THE LICH LORDS

It will take your PCs approximately 15 days to reach Loudwater in the south. In the first eight days and nights, the PCs will have to contend with bands of orcs, bugbears and hobgoblins by day and the call of the lich lords at night.

The orcs, bugbears and hobgoblins are being driven from the High Forest by the elves of New Eaerlann. The bugbears and hobgoblins are pinned between the forest and the Delimbyir and drift somewhat desperately back and forth in this strip, having nowhere to go. They too fear the lich lords, although they are not called by them. The orcs, on the other hand, are wanted by the lich lords for their day army. They are being called to the narrows, where the High Forest straddles both sides.

Here, orc boats repeatedly cross the water from the East during the evening hours, picking up loads of orc refugees from the west bank and bringing them to the Land of the Lich Lords. PCs captured by orcs also may be taken to the opposite shore by boats, where they must be rescued or they will be killed in a ritual and turned into zombies, if they are human, or enslaved, if they are non-human. If a non-human is captured by day, it also is possible that the orcs will relieve him or her of all possessions and throw the person back into the Delimbyir, to fend for him- or herself, simply because they have no specific orders for dealing with non-humans.

Until the point where the High Forest stretches across the river - a journey of 5 days - the edge of the forest proper remains 10 miles/15 km and more inland from the river bank. The lands between the forest and the river are overgrown by brush and copses of trees. These lands descend gradually from the forest toward the river, dropping off rather suddenly then before the river. There are several bands of hobgoblins are bugbears roaming this area hunting for food and also fighting with each other, along with orc tribes doing the same, but also moving gradually southward, to the point of embarkation they are being called to.

The road follows close to the riverbank, below the last sharp drop in the landscape. This has two possible effects. PCs riding along the road will not be able to see bands of monsters above them, and the monsters will not normally see PCs following the road below them. However, all of the monster bands have some fear of the things they know are on the east side of the Delimbyir, and they will patrol the river area regularly, to check on possible threats. If hobgoblin, bugbear or orc scouts spot the PCs along the river, they will report the sighting and their band will attempt to ambush the PCs.

How often actual encounters occur is up to you, the Game Master. However, the *human* PCs should feel really harried during this part of their adventure. By night, of course, things get only worse. At night, the lich lords call to the *human* PCs. The cold, quite command of a dark and whispering voice echoes in their minds: *Come to me! Come to me! I offer you eternity!* Non-human races are of no interest to the lich lords.

If a human PC tries to resist the call, he must make a check against intelligence as a mage, wisdom as a priest or constitution for other classes. Dual- and multi-class characters check against their *weakest* attribute of those named.

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A PC who fails the check jumps into the Delimbyir and begins swimming to the other side - *if he can swim.* If not, the PC is lost. Swimmers may make a second check in midstream, if it is the first time they have given in to the call of the lich lords. If they make the second check, they can swim back.

One player can restrain another with a check for a successful throw to hit the other entranced player. The entranced player makes a check then for dexterity, and if he succeeds, he breaks free. For every 6 feet/180 cm distance to the river, there can be repeated checks. A player who gives in to the lich lords but is saved - either through a second check in midstream or through the interference of another player - is demoralized and weakened. He feels he will not be able to resist the lich lords again. For this reason, he receives no more midstream checks. He also has a penalty of 1 (cumulative per successful call of the lich lords) on all future attempts to resist. This information is valid for the next five days of adventure.

If your players intentionally cross into the Land of the Lich Lords, if they are drawn there simultaneously or if for some other reason you want to campaign across the Delimbyir, you may wish to use excerpts from the optional sequel to *Northern Journey, In the Land of the Lich Lords.* This accessory can be used alone or as an extension of *Backlands*. However, characters of the recommended levels 5-7 will hardly survive long in this setting, which was designed for epic level *D&D 3E* characters.

In the Land of the Lich Lords can be downloaded at:

http://www.vintyri.com.

After five hard days of battling against the voices of the lich lords and the monsters this side of the Delimbyir, you come slowly to a point where the High Forest reaches eastward to within a dozen yards/meters of the riverbank and then begins again on the east shore. With luck, this may mark the end of the Land of the Lich lords. At least their illuminated ruins won't be visible at night in this stretch.

On your first day following the river through the forest, you find little traces of hostile creatures, at least until about 2 hours before sunset. But then you spot a camp of about 200 orcs along the trail ahead of you. There's another camp of about 20 orcs on the other side of the river. This second group has 10 long rowboats beached on the bank of the Delimbyir. Both groups have campfires burning and appear to be about to eat for the evening.

Game Master - The orcs on the east bank are waiting until daylight passes, when a vampire will come to supervise the transportation of the orcs on the west bank across the river. Dealings here are up to the PCs, until that time comes.

Sometime after sunset, the orcs on both banks begin lighting torches. A man with skin nearly snow white in color comes from the forest on the opposite shore and begins supervising the orcs there. The orcs launch their boats and begin paddling to the western bank of the Delimbyir. The pale man stays behind on the far shore.

Game Master - Pause.

When the orcs from the far shore reach the western bank of the river, orcs from that side begin filling the boats.

Game Master - Pause.

As soon as the boats are filled, the orcs begin paddling back to the opposite shore. The pale man supervises the rapid emptying of the boats and leads the new orcs back into the forest. The orcs who were originally on the far shore begin paddling back again for new passengers. As they reach midstream, the pale man appears again and waits on the far shore.

It takes three boatloads before the orcs on the west bank all are transported to the far shore. These same happenings occur with different groups of orcs on the two following nights as well. A vampire always is in charge of the transportation. On the two following days, the river continues to run through the forest. Daytime encounters are possible with orcs on both days, but no bugbears or hobgoblins will appear here. The next description occurs on the morning after the third evening of orcs being transported across the Delimbyir.

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The Delimbyir continues to flow through the High Forest, but the forest begins receding rapidly from the banks of the river. Within a few hours, the tree line of the forest on both sides of the river is at least 5 or 6 miles/8 to 10 km back from the riverbank. The land between the Delimbyir and the forest consists of tall grass, brush and scattered trees on both sides of the river.

Until the PCs ford the Heartblood, orcs will constitute the only likely encounters on the west bank. Marching orcs still well may be spotted on the east bank. The next event takes place at about noon. The crossing of the ford can be a good spot for an ambush.

Towards midday you come upon another broad river flowing out of the High Forest to the West into the Delimbyir. This must be the Heartblood River that you've already heard mentioned. Before the trail reaches the river it makes a swerve to the northwest, toward the High Forest. The Heartblood is about 30 yards/27 m wide here at the confluence, but too deep and too swift to ford.

However, as you ride on, you notice that the river becomes wider and shallower. After about a hundred yards the Heartblood has widened to nearly 80 yards/72 m, but the water flows relatively slowly here, and it's only about a foot/30 cm deep.

Game Master - The next description follows at the end of the first day after crossing the Heartblood.

Shortly before sunset, the part of the High Forest east of the Delimbyir comes to an end. The forbidding Greypeak Mountains are back in sight again, along with the haunted ruins of the lich lords on the far shore of the river.

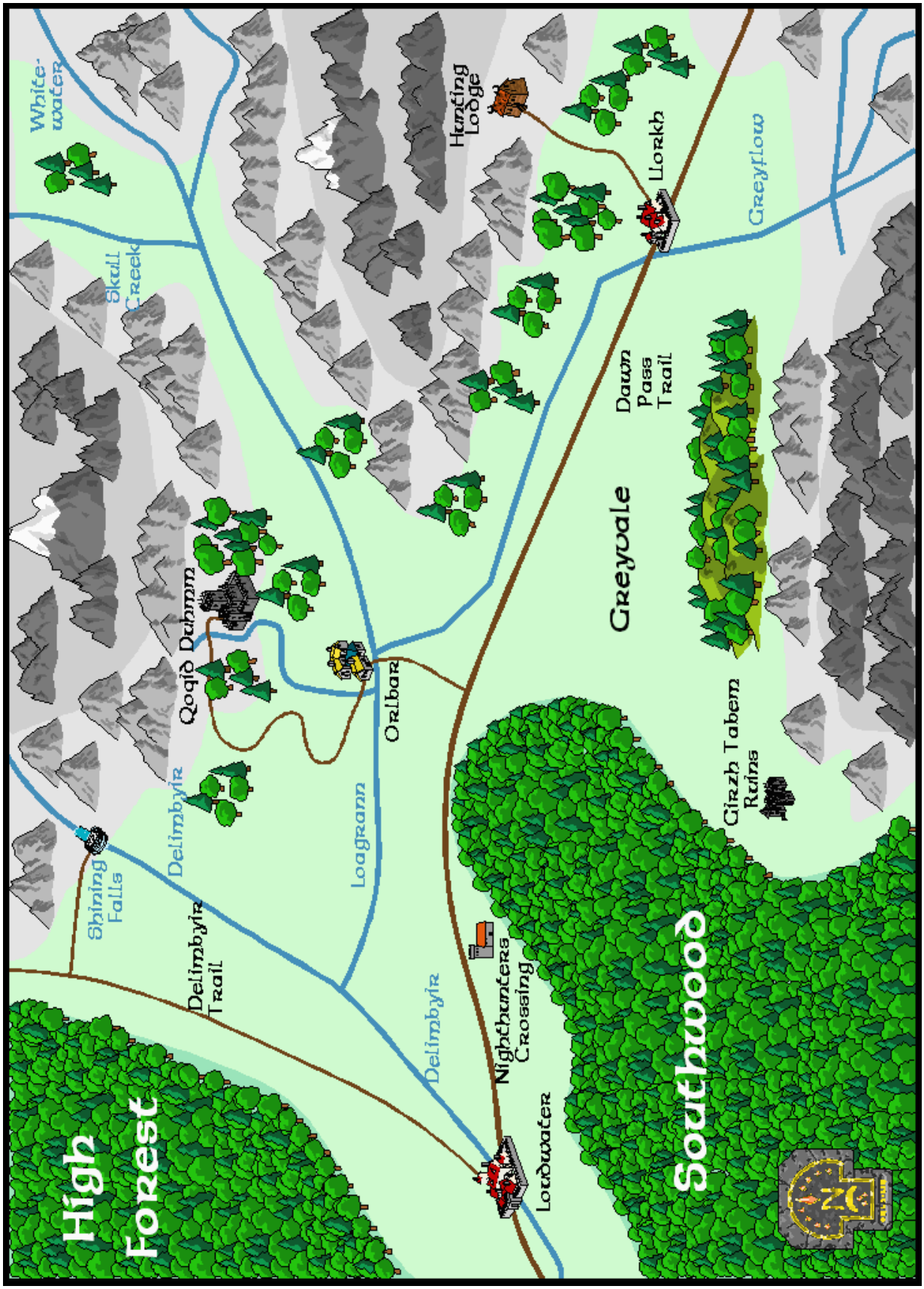
For the next two nights, the lich lords will continue to beckon to the human PCs. Monster encounters are less likely than earlier, but the chances increase that the PCs will run into highly suspicious forest elves from New Eaerlann, who will question the PCs closely. The elves assume that anyone found in the valley here is an enemy, and the PCs will have to convince them otherwise. Any part of elves that stops the PCs should be of sufficient strength to give them a real contest. If the PCs kill the elves, they should be hunted down mercilessly, with no more than a 10% chance of surviving. The next text should be read early on the second evening after leaving the part of the High Forest on the east bank of the Delimbyir behind.

As you near the end of your ride today, an ominous sight crops up before you. The Greypeak Mountains with the Land of the Lich Lords juts out sharply to the west about 5 miles/8 km ahead of you, and the Delimbyir flows at the point through a low pass in the Greypeaks, a good 20 miles/35 km to the east of the High Forest. Although no one has warned you about it, it looks like the river may steer you through the Land of the Lich Lords after all.

But not really. In this western outcropping of the Greypeaks are the Shining Falls, and they mark the end of the Land of the Lich Lords. But even before the falls, the Delimbyir continues to mark the border of the Lich Lords' lands, and neither they nor their other undead can cross the water. Once the PCs enter this western leg of the mountains, following the river through the pass, they should have no encounters. The Shining Falls are a holy site for the Goldhammer dwarf clan, and monsters tend to avoid this area. The elves of New Eaerlann do the same, out of respect for the dwarves.

Within a few hours, you follow the river trail into the barren, rocky pass through the Greypeaks. The Delimbyir is a wilder river here in the pass. Sometimes the walls of the pass are so narrow that your horses can just manage to keep their footing.

The narrow trail twists above the river water that rushes downward in its rocky bed with deadly, bone-breaking speed. The somewhat wider trail on the opposite side gives you a bit of apprehension. If any of the lich lords' orcs appear on a stretch like this, they will be able to fire arrows at short range across the roaring river with comfort, while you would have all you could do to just to keep your horse on the trail. And a well-placed arrow in a horse's flesh or even a spooked horse could mean almost certain death.



The Greyvale

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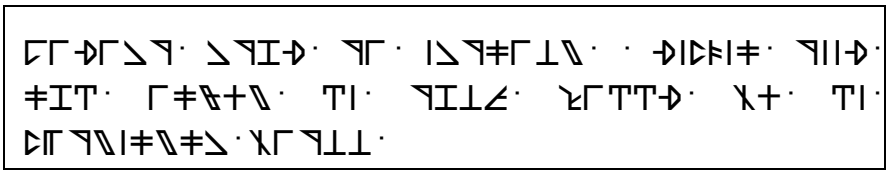
But just as such narrow places become nearly intolerable, the river gorge opens again widely, and the river moves slowly through the shallows, also a bit less than comforting, because a host of orcs in such an area could ford the Delimbyir easily and overwhelm you. Nonetheless, you have no choice but to go on. Towards evening, you hear in the distance a constant roaring sound, perhaps a waterfall. You find a shallows in the river, where the bank offers plenty of room for a camping place.

Game Master - On this evening, orcs from the east bank still can be a threat, but the ruins of the lich lords no longer are visible.

Towards the middle of the following morning, you come at last to the waterfalls that you've been hearing since the previous evening. It's actually a single waterfall about 150 feet/45 m wide that cascades down the side of the mountains in three tiers. The Delimbyir flows on below, of course, but the waterfall marks the end of the mountain. Old dwarven runes once were chiseled into a large boulder on the riverbank above the falls. The runes are ancient, but they still can be made out:



Game Master: The translation: This script is a combination of ancient dwarvish and an old dialect of the Goldhammer Clan. It reads , ***"****Xaragh ghur ha eghnali! Resten heer nud anjoi de huly waddr fo de Schiening Fahll."* The first part, *Xaragh ghur ha eghnali,* is ancient dwarvish for *Come in peace and be welcome!* The next part translates to *Rest here, and enjoy the holy waters of the Shining Falls.*

6. Loudwater

Large town, conventional. AL: NG. 3,000 gp limit. Assets: 2,000,000 gp. Population: 4,000 (75% human, 23% half elf, rest dwarf, halfling).

Game Master - At least part of the time, the PCs should have a clear view of the Delimbyir Valley and Greyvale below them.

The Delimbyir drops nearly 300 feet/90 m to the valley floor below. Unless you choose to go with the river, your descent will be a bit longer and not nearly so abrupt. The trail you're on zigzags down your side of the mountain. It's narrow, and you'll only be able to descend single file, but it's a lot less dangerous than many other trails you've been on in the last few rides. Only now do you notice that the road of the lich lords across the Delimbyir has disappeared. It apparently petered out somewhere behind you.

Game Master - Encounters with orcs or forest elves remain possible between the falls and Loudwater, but this is a good point to move the adventure on and have a few days pass by quickly.

From here at the waterfall, you get a clear view across the lands below and before you. The Delimbyir turns gently westward, cutting a 25-mile/40km swath through the High Forest, which seems to straddle the river, starting about 25 miles/40km ahead of you. Below you to the southwest, the Greypeaks continue on to the east and southeast, and another stream flows from them into the Delimbyir below you.

When you keen your eyes and look to the east, you see two rivers and a mountain stream coming from the Greypeaks and forking together about 35 miles/60 km away. It looks like there may be a small village **(Game Master:** Orlbar**)** near the point where these two rivers join. Loudwater is an estimated three days ride from here and still too distant to be made out.

You've continued ever since the waterfall to descend slightly, as you follow the Delimbyir downstream, and for the past hour or so, you have a good view of the tributary that flows into it from the Greypeaks in the east. The confluence of the two rivers is just ahead of you now. Beyond it, the mighty Delimbyir widens from 80 to about 90 feet/24 to about 27 m. The river current seems swift but not dangerous yet, at least not for a good swimmer, and the water no doubt is deep.

All day long, the land along the river has been a combination of open grassland, occasional thin brush and copses of deciduous trees on mostly flat land with occasional low hills. About an hour after you pass the river confluence, you come to a group of small hills that are open at the top and offer a good chance to build a campsite where one can keep an effective watch. The hill also offers grazing for your animals. The sun will set on less than an hour. From atop the hill you now can look down upon Loudwater, still about 25 miles (40 km) ahead of you, a good day's ride.

NORTHERN JOURNEY *only*

Game Master: If you're not running *Northern Journey* and/or you don't plan to use the Goldhammer Clan dwarves, please skip ahead to the point labeled *Northern Journey - all Game Masters*. At mid-afternoon on the second day, as the PCs are making their camp, the following occurs:

Just as you're settling into your campsite, you notice something strange over the road to your left, leading eastward out of Loudwater.

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What you're seeing is about 35 miles/60 km northeast of Loudwater, but looking across the Delimbyir, it's only about 25 miles/40 km from your campsite. There's motion on the road, probably a caravan heading from the northeast toward Loudwater, and there's something huge and birdlike flying above the creatures on the road. Your heart skips for a moment as you wonder if it might be a dragon, but you drop that thought. The flying beast is too small and not the right shape. It looks more like some kind of grotesque bird. It seems to be fighting with the creatures on the road, although that can't be determined for certain either from this point. In any case, there is a lot of motion.

Game Master - Pause for reaction from the PCs.

Suddenly, there's a blinding flash over the turmoil on the road northeast of Loudwater. As far as you can tell, the flying beast has exploded. At least there's no trace of it anymore. The motion on the road is continuing, but from here the figures are too distant and too small to make out what's going on.

Game Master - Pause for another reaction from the PCs.

When you look again at the road, the motion seems to have died down. The figures you saw earlier still are there, but they don't seem to be moving.

Game Master - The PCs have been witnessing a battle between the Goldhammer dwarves and Zhents. The Zhents have been destroyed. The next description is for the following day, near noon.

You ride only a bit farther when suddenly the stench of death and decay comes into your nostrils. Within seconds, the cause is clear. Three human bodies and three dead horses lay in the grass just to the west of the road.

There was a battle here. In addition to human footprints, there also are the marks of many smaller boots, about the right size for larger children, goblins, dwarves or gnomes.

The bodies to the side of the road probably have been dead for a few days. The first signs of rot are appearing around the wounds, which seem to be axe slashes. The weapons of the dead are scattered around the ground, also uselessly broken. You find a large dagger and two long swords with broken blades, two broken longbows and nearly 40 broken arrows. There also is a long wooden staff that's been broken into three pieces and a broken wand of oak wood. One of the men wears no armor. The others wear badly damaged helmets and chain mail.

Word of the PC group, its symbols, etc., has reached the ears of Manshoon in the Citadel of the Raven, and he is firmly convinced that the Zhentarim need to keep an eye on this situation but not interfere or hinder the group until it's clear what is going on. He also wants the group to be able to pass through Llorkh and the area of the Beast Lord without more trouble than is needed to be convincing. Therefore, he has sent Llaneth, a 9th lvl elementalist fire wizard from Darkhold, and two experienced Zhentilar warriors who are agents of the Zhentarim on a mission to infiltrate the PC group.

This group of Zhentarim agents has however run afoul of the Goldhammer Clan and lies dead along the banks of the Delimbyir. This event should considerably cloud any conclusions the PCs have drawn about the adventure. An investigation of the corpses reveals that all three bodies have symbols on the arms that appear much like those of the PCs, however, when a PC compares his symbols with those on one of the bodies, he sees subtle differences and comes quickly to the conclusion that these symbols are counterfeit. The movement within the symbols is nothing more than a magical illusion that can be dispelled.

The mention below of a member of the PC group is basically a Game Master's red herring. Through scrying, the Zhents have determined that some member of the group is a bit weak morally, and they think they may be able to enlist him. If this is handled properly, the PCs should start getting somewhat paranoid about a spy in their midst. If the PCs attempt to attack a suspected member of their own party, the red sigylls will stop them and break their will to do so. It should not be possible for sigyll bearers to attack one another physically or with magic. The following items etc. also are discovered.:

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SADDLEBAGS: In each 4 torches, lantern, 50 foot rope, 2 glasses of lantern oil, iron rations for 2 rides, 2 wine-skins, one each filled with potable water and Llorkh Desertfoam beer going flat, also changes of clothing.

BODY 1: Parchment found in a pocket indicates that this body was one Kildall Garn of Llorkh. The pockets contain the following coins: 1 Copper Hand (Mint Zhentil Keep before 1359), 2 Copper Silbs (Sunset Vale), 11 Copper Donkeys (Mint Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 1 Silver Sun (Mint Zhentil Keep 1359-68), 4 Silver Wheels (Mint Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 3 Gold Lions (Cormyr), 14 Gold Taler (Mint: Citadel of the Raven after 1368), pocket knife (not broken).

BODY 2: Parchment found in a pocket indicates that this body was one Rindung of Vloonar. The pockets contain the following coins: 1 Copper Sun (Mint Zhentil Keep 1359-68), 14 Copper Donkeys (Mint Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 2 Silver Suns (Mint Zhentil Keep 1359-68), 8 Silver Wheels (Mint Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 7 Gold Taler (Mint: Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 1 Platinum Moon (Luruar).

BODY 3: Parchment see below. The pockets contain the following coins: 2 Copper Donkeys (Mint Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 20 Copper Smiths (Luruar), 1 Silver Sun (Mint Zhentil Keep 1359-68), 3 Silver Wheels (Mint Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 20 Silver Roses (Luruar), 4 Gold Taler (Mint: Citadel of the Raven after 1368), 20 Golden Halfmoons (Luruar), 10 Platinum Moons (Luruar), Spellbook, 2 Pouches with the following contents: Phosphorus, Wychwood, Mineral prism, phosphorescent moss, tallow, powdered iron, sulfur, eyelashes in gum arabic, spider web, bat guano, oil, flint, nitre, pine tar, paint brush, pot of pitch, strips of thin, multi-colored silk, 12 firefly tails, granite dust, diamond dust, fleece, pouch of sand.* There was a golden ring on the ring finger of this person's left hand, but both the ring and the finger were smashed by some instrument, perhaps a hammer.

*** Game Master:** The oak wand for Alamir's Fundamental Breakdown was broken by the dwarves, who thought it might be a magic wand, and they took the small gold tube with a value of 1,000gp that's needed for Melf's Minute Meteors.

SPELLBOOK: Level 1: Affect Normal Fires, Agannazar's Scorcher, Burning Hands, Dancing Lights, Fire Burst, Read Magic, Light, Cantrip. **Level 2:** Flaming Sphere, Pyrotechnics, Continual Light, Invisibility, Web. **Level 3:** Alamir's Fundamental Breakdown, Fireball, Flame Arrow, Melf's Minute Meteors, Blink, Explosive Runes, Invisibility 10' Radius. **Level 4:** Fire Charm, Fire Shield, Fire Trap, Wall of Fire, Mass Morph, Stone-skin. **Level 5:** Conjure Elemental *(only Fire Elemental)*, Teleport, Advanced Illusion.

LLANETH'S PARCHMENT - The text:

Brother Llaneth:

Lord Manshoon feels it is time that we watch the progress of these strange symbols more closely. The Harpers have taken an interest in them, these strange dragon-lizardmen may be interested, and he believes it is time that our network not only becomes interested but also that it is more informed than any of these other organizations. Needless to say, you will be well rewarded here in Darkhold, should you succeed in your mission.

When you reach Llorkh, that fool Geildarr will have a salve there that has been prepared by Norgung and Dlantel in the Citadel of the Raven. It is being sent to Llorkh by caravan across the desert, and it will reach Geildarr before you do. Norgung has carefully scryed the symbol bearers, particularly the one whose name I gave you, who I believe will work closely with you. This member particularly has made close scrying of the symbols possible. The salve should duplicate the image of these symbols on your arms perfectly, and they also will bear a permanent illusion that makes it seem there is motion within the symbols.

Your assignment is to stay with this group and monitor it. Through concentration, you can use your ring to communicate with us or with the citadel. Learn all you can about these symbols, the power behind them, what the goal is, etc. If you can, find out what's behind these Lizard-Dragonmen that are hunting the Keepers of the Hoard of the Dragon Cult.

Above all, observe what you can between Loudwater and Llorkh and also between Loudwater and the Shining Falls. Let us know quickly about any small clue you can find, as to who is attacking us there.

When you return through the Greyvale with these sigyll bearers, the Zhentilar guarding the area - these ostentatious Lord's Men of Geildarr - will recognize you. But they will interrogate you sternly, as though that's not the case. Geildarr has offered a reward of 1,000 gold talers to anyone who provides significant information on the attacks against us to the west of Llorkh. Remind the Zhentilar that you left Llorkh to do that, and that you're returning now to report to Geildarr.

When you return to Llorkh, you still have to get yourselves and the sigyll bearers past the minions of the Beast Lord, if they attempt to go directly southward over our trail in the direction of Darkhold. That too is being arranged so that all seems credible. Geildarr has a tribute of 1,000 gold talers ready for you in Llorkh. He will know you.

When the minions of the Beast Lord stop you at the south end of the Dawn Pass Trail, simply say to them, *"Praise be to the Beast Lord!"* Give them the sack of gold talers, which they will examine and accept. After that you'll be left in peace.

I wish you luck. As you know, Renthgrar's chair on the council here in Darkhold is quite shaky. If you succeed in your mission, I think you will convince both Lord Manshoon and me, that Renthgrar should be elsewhere, and that your weight can anchor the chair properly again.

Sememmon
Lord of Darkhold

At this time the PCs are being watched closely by the Goldhammer dwarves, who suspect them of possibly being allied with their enemy in Llorkh and Orlbar. The Goldhammer Clan is no band of murderers. They spy invisibly inside of Llorkh but do not attack the city, because a battle there would cost innocent lives.

However, anyone who shows signs of being allied with the leadership in Llorkh or Orlbar can abandon hope. Such persons are considered at best to be consorting with the enemy. Any caravan bring goods into or out of Llorkh also will be attacked. People heading towards Llorkh who have not yet been seen consorting with the Zhents are observed but not attacked. However, if the PCs undertake anything that leaves the clear impression at this point (before Loudwater) that they are Zhent allies or sympathizers, move the teleport encounter up to this point.

You'll find that encounter described on the section that takes place between Loudwater and Llorkh. Such an action does not need to be an evil deed on the part of the PCs. Something as innocent as a priest of Kelemvor praying over and burying the Zhent bodies here along the trail would be quite sufficient to set such an encounter off.

All Game Masters

Game Master: If you skipped the last part, this occurs on the next day:

Loudwater now is visible ahead of you but still half a day away. The landscape around you is relatively open, and there are no signs of danger in any direction. Of course, small enemies like goblins could theoretically be waiting in ambush, hidden in the tall grasses west of the road. The eastern edge of the High Forest is about 12 miles/20km to the west.

Game Master: Later:

Late in the afternoon you finally reach civilization again, the City of Loudwater. The small city is surrounded by a dry moat 20 feet/6 m deep. There is no city wall, but there is a defensive rampart above the moat on the inside, a rampart filled with flower boxes.

To cross the moat, you have to cross a drawbridge that is raised. Twin guardhouses flank the bridge on the other side. A group of guards stands by the mechanism of chains, wheels and pulleys that control the bridge on the opposite side of the moat. Another group of four guards standing on your side of the moat signals you to pull over to the side, where they're standing.

"Well met," says one of the guards. *"If you'd be entering the city, I'd be knowing who you are and where you be coming from. Also what your business be in the city."*

See the Loudwater map. If the PCs say they're coming from Silverymoon, Sundabar or some other recognized place in the North, that will cause no particular reaction from the guards. They will assume the PCs - as most other travelers do - went from Everlund into the Dessarin Valley and then downstream to Bargewright Inn, eastward on the Iron Road to Uluvin, across the Secomber Trail to Secomber and then up the Delimbyir Valley to Loudwater.

If the PCs mentioned that they have traveled through the Upper Delimbyir Valley from the North, they should be interrogated closely by city authorities. No one travels from that direction! If they get into difficulty (other than through their own evil deeds) they should be pulled out of the lurch by the High Lord of Loudwater, Nanathlor Greysword, who works closely with the Harpers. He knows who the PCs are and that they are coming. If the PCs do not tell that they traveled down the Delimbyir, the guard says the following:

"Well now, good enough. You'll be needing a place to say. You'd be best off in the center near the market and the High Lord's Hall across from the docks. Most folks stay at the Scarlet Shield. *Of course, if you like a silly trick or two, you might be wanting to try the* Enchanter's Ecstasy. *You may pass!"*

With those words, the soldier signals to the men on the other side of the moat, and the chains begin squeaking, as the drawbridge is lowered to let you pass into Loudwater. There is no challenge on the other side of the moat. The soldiers let you enter the city.

As you ride a bit farther into the town, its beauty strikes you, the unusual looks of its population too. Just about every fourth resident appears to be a half elf, but many of the humans in Loudwater have an elfish look to them too, even to the point of having slightly pointed ears, perhaps a sign that there was considerable mating in an earlier age between the human settlers and the elves who once populated the eastern border of the High Forest along the Delimbyir.

The buildings in Loudwater are almost exclusively of wood, but one sees that only upon the second glance. Nearly every structure in the city is overgrown with vines. And between the buildings are luxurious, well cared for gardens as well as several large public gardens.

There are no straight streets in Loudwater. All of them, including the main street, the Delimbyir Route, twist scenically here and there. Tall trees grace the banks of the Delimbyir and the sides of the streets.

At last you come to the center of Loudwater, also the least attractive part of town. The ancient stone Arch Bridge, obviously the work of dwarves from an earlier age, crosses the Delimbyir just above a rushing rapids with dangerous rocks throughout the riverbed.

The city has dredged out a huge pond on the north side of the rapids and turned it into a harbor, but obviously one only suitable for experienced boatsmen. The dredged pool gives one a route past the huge boulders in the riverbed, but the current in the pool is no weaker than in the rapids. A number of riverboats, skiffs and barges all are anchored at the docks.

On the north bank, near the docks, are warehouses and a bit past the docks, a factory, the only things you've seen in the city that look more utilitarian than beautiful. On the south side of the Arch Bridge, you see the magnificent High Lord's Hall, which really is something of a city castle, along with a garrison, the marketplace and several taverns and inns.

The City of Loudwater:

If you are using the Goldhammer Clan dwarves, at the time the PCs reach Loudwater, six rides will have gone by since anyone has reached Loudwater from Llorkh. Four rides have gone by since the last caravan departed Loudwater for Llorkh, and no one is certain whether that caravan reached its goal. All along, the citizens of Loudwater have happily convinced themselves that they've merely tolerated the Zhents while successfully crimping their illegal activities through customs inspections.

The citizens of Loudwater now are having a difficult time with the growing realization of just how dependent they have become upon the Zhents and those who trade with them. The caravans and barges that have been moving back and forth between Llorkh and the Lower Delimbyir Valley also have reshaped the economics of the city.

Businesses had begun to base their production upon the needs of the caravan market, and as a result, not only the inns are relatively empty, but also with increasing frequency, the pocketbooks of many businessmen. Even local farmers find themselves with a surplus of animals and produce, after several years of neglecting downstream markets. People in Loudwater are becoming increasingly more upset about the economic blow the attacks on the Zhents have inflicted upon them.

At the time the PCs reach Loudwater, the local population has reached no conclusions or moral decisions. These are for your campaign to develop. It is conceivable that the folk of Loudwater in the future may try to become somewhat more independent from the caravan trade, or - more likely for humans - that they may become more accommodating to the Zhents.

The PCs should hear all kinds of rumors, very few of them backed up with knowledge, about:

- What kind of attacks have been hitting the Zhents on the Dawn Pass Trail.
- Who's behind these attacks.
- What the Zhents are planning to do about it.

The Game Master should let his/her imagination run wild on this one. The people of Loudwater know very little about the attacks and absolutely nothing about who's behind the attacks or what the Zhenatrim plans to do about them. The only firsthand knowledge about the attacks is that the locals have seen two flying dragons blow up in the distance.

The attacks all take place east of the Nighthunt, so all of the attacks to date have been more than a day's ride away from Loudwater. Visitors at the Nighthunt have told of seeing Zhent caravans and Zhent barges simply being swallowed by the earth. Other than brief descriptions like this, the PCs should hear only false tales.

NPCs of Loudwater:

See the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide* for Statistics

Pralever: The PCs will almost certainly have to visit Pralever's Provisions to buy supplies before they head out for Llorkh. Once Pralever knows that the PCs will attempt to reach Llorkh, he will make every attempt to plant a Messenger Coin upon them. He has important intelligence to pass on to the Zhentarim, and he is willing to risk losing a Messenger Coin to do this. He believes the last two Messenger Coins he sent to Llorkh may have been destroyed in attacks upon the caravans that carried them.

Warddh: The Harpers have sent word ahead that the PCs are coming. Warddh will attempt to look the group over and try to single out one PC he thinks he can trust. If one or more dwarves are in the group, he almost certainly will choose a dwarf.

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Warddh will tell the PCs that Loudwater marks the end of the area where Alustriel and the Blackstaff lead the Harpers. He will tell the PCs that they'll spend the next 2½ rides in territory where there's little human influence, and that what there is comes mainly from the Zhents.

Only when they reach Yarthrain - Warddh estimates that will be about 25 days from Loudwater - will the PCs be back within territory influenced by the Harpers, in this case however by the Berdusk branch of the Harpers whose leadership operates openly from Twilight Hall in Berdusk. The leading (official) Harpers in Berdusk, Warddh explains, are Cylyria Dragonbreast, the Lady of Twilight Hall, and Bellhuar Thantarth, the Master of Twilight Hall.

The only (unofficial) Harper agent in Llorkh, Warddh says, is Lalindra (hf, thief lvl 18, CN), madame of the festhall that bears her name. Warddh warns strongly against attempting to make contact with her except in the direst need. He says Lalindra is one of the most valuable undercover agents the Harpers have in the North, and her cover cannot be risked.

After leaving Llorkh, Warddh says, the PCs will undergo one of the most dangerous elements of their journey and travel through the lands of the Beast Lord. Not even the Harpers know who or what the Beast Lord is, Warddh says. There are some reports that the Beast Lord is a beholder with an army of gnolls (official WotC explanation in the *"Ruins of Zhentil Keep"* and *"The North."*) and other reports that the Beast Lord really is an illithilich with an army of 500 goblins and 50 gargoyles (second official WotC explanation in the *"The North"*).

Regardless of who the Beast Lord is, he completely controls the Dawn Pass, according to Warddh, and he is an ally of the Zhentarim. As far as his forces are concerned, the Harpers have confirmed that large numbers of gnolls, goblins and gargoyles are indeed in his service in the pass.

Information gained from too talkative Zhents in Llorkh who had been to the Ruins of Dekanter, the stronghold of the Beast Lord, indicate that more than one beholder is in the old Neth mine ruins, but that there is a hidden and even greater sinister force behind these beholders, perhaps an illithilich.

To travel through the pass or to travel the narrow Zhent trail between the Forgotten Forest and the Lonely Moor, one must get by the minions of the Beast Lord, Warddh says, and only two means are known to accomplish this. One is to show some special badge the Zhents use. Until now, the Harpers have not been able to obtain such a badge, but the PCs can reckon with a sizeable reward, if they can deliver such a badge to a senior Harper.

Another way that has succeeded is to convince the minions of the Beast Lord that the PCs are opening a new trade route that could be profitable. They can offer a bribe to the minions of the Beast Lord. A bribe of about 1.000 gold talers would be necessary, Warddh says, but he has no means of raising that money for the PCs.

He warns that the PCs in no way should enter the Lonely Moor, which is controlled by savage monsters who yield only to the Beast Lord. The only humans who can enter the moor are Zhents with badges. The Zhents have large stashes of contraband in the moor, and the Beast Lord gives them exclusive protection in that area, Warddh says.

The Beast Lord has no power in the Forgotten Forest, according to the dwarf, but the PCs hardly will find a welcome there. The forest is (officially) inhabited by treants and a mighty druid, both of whom welcome no visitors, adventurers, refugees or anyone else. If the PCs enter the forest, it will be assumed they are Zhent marauders, and they will be dealt with accordingly, without questions being asked Warddh contends.

After leaving the lands of the Beast Lord, the PCs will face the challenge of the pass between the Greycloak Mountains and Chelimber Moor, Warddh says. The mountains are under the control of elves, who will ward the PCs off with magic, except at Halfway Inn, the hostelry and trading post for those who want to have dealings with the reclusive elves of the Greycloaks. Harper contacts can be arranged at the inn, if necessary, according to Warddh, by talking with the (official) Innkeeper Myrin Silverspear (LN, em, F8). Chelimber Moor, however, should be avoided, according to Warddh. The main dangers are hostile lizardmen who will take travelers as slaves, and hungry stirges.

After leaving the moor and the Greypeaks behind, Warddh says, the PCs will cross Pelleor's Prairie (official name, s. *Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 1*), the vast grasslands that lie between Anauroch and the Serpent's Tail Stream north of the Battle of Bones. According to Warddh, the PCs can expect to see above all endless lands of waving grasses and herds of bison.

The prairie also is home to Nomadic tribes of wemics. Possible dangers on the prairie, according to Warddh, are stampeding bison herds, poisonous grass snakes, insect swarms and certain grasses that emit poison. Warddh knows of these things, but he knows no details. The Harpers have reported that there are some dwellers on the prairie, isolated homesteads that eke out a living on their own.

"Once you leave Chelimber Moor behind you," Warddh concludes, *"the lands around you should be fairly friendly. You shouldn't have to worry too much about attacks. When you reach Yarthrain, look up a man called* Rainbringer (unofficial NPC). *He's a ranger who wanders the prairie, but he usually doesn't stray that far from town. When he's in Yarthrain, you'll find him in the* Silver Blade. *He's the only Harper in Yarthrain. He'll be watching for you and will be able to give you some tips for the next part of your journey and whatever news there is.*

"On your first day out of Loudwater, you'll come to an inn on the Dawn Pass Trail called The Nighthunt. *The* (official) *owner is a Harper friend, a former ranger named* Ildur Arntar. *He runs the inn, along with four other former comrades of his in adventure, his wife, and two daughters. Ildur and his men have been around. He'll be able to tell you a few tales too, if you ask."*

Map of Loudwater:

1 – Outlying farms.

2 - Dry Moat.

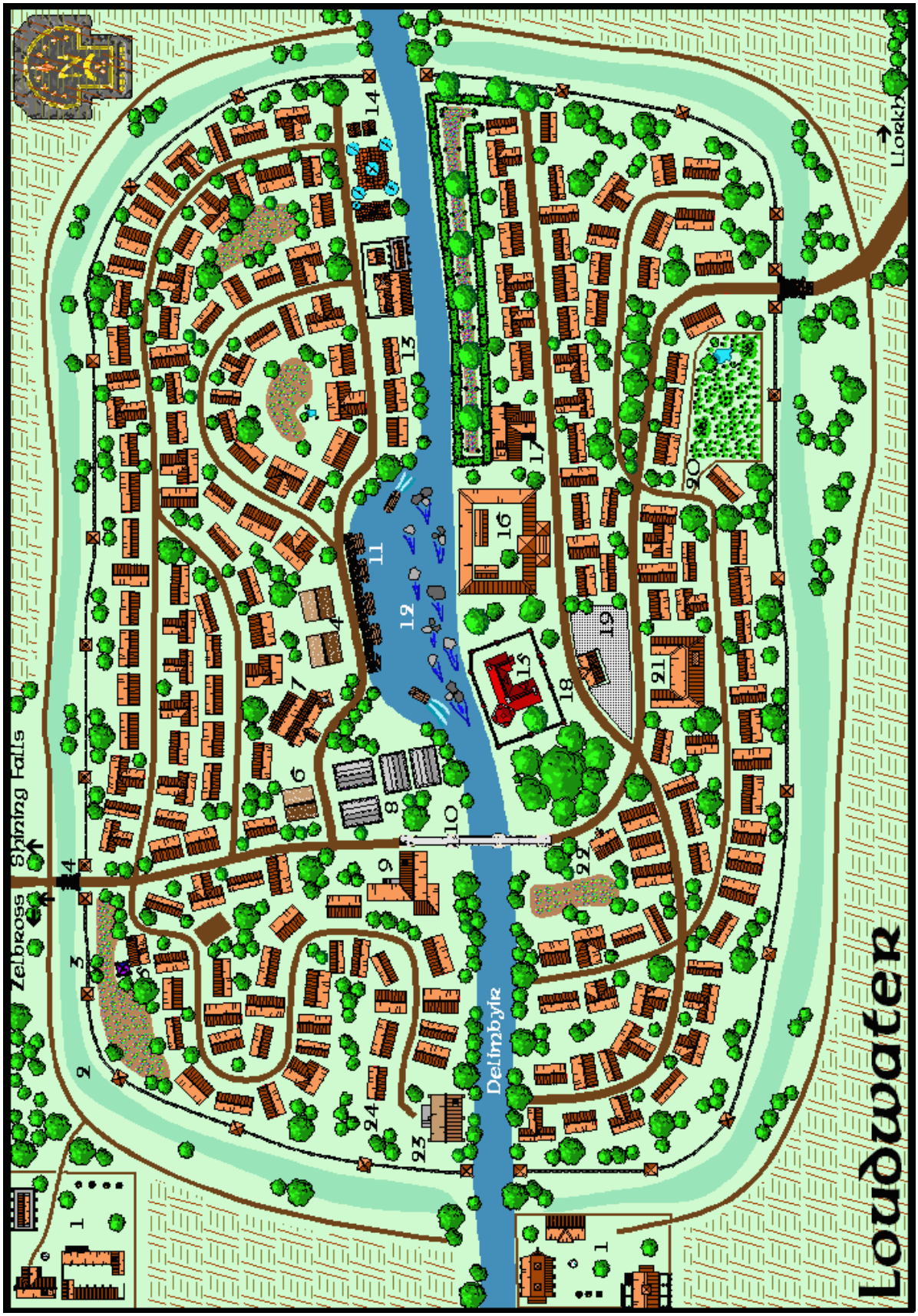
3 - Defensive ramparts. Flower boxes are atop the ramparts. During the growing season, a wide variety of flowers are planted in them.

4 - Delimbiyr Gate. The opening to the Zelbross, Secomber and the Delimbiyr Valley.

5 – Ahrens' Tower. This tower and the adjacent house are home to Ahrens the sage (human male, age 69, AL:N, Expert 7) and his wife Ibell (human female, AL:NG, age 66, Commoner 1). They also own a plot in the neighborhood garden on the tower's north side.

6 - City Warehouses.

7 - Sunrise Brewery. Owner Nieb Helandos' (half-elf male, age 70, AL: NG, Expert 5) beer is popular in Zelbross and Secomber, as well as in Loudwater. Sunrise is the only full-fledged brewery in Loudwater. Helandos' Sunrise Brew is an unusually good beer brewed in the Pilsener style. Its high quality is due to a combination of the superior hops that grow in the Delimbiyr Valley just north of Loudwater, mineral rich spring water and a secret old yeast recipe that Helandos inherited in Bambryn on the Dragon Coast. Helandos migrated from Bambryn to Sembia as a young man and started a caravan business there that soon began working under exclusive contract with merchants in Cormyr. In less than a decade he had moved his operation to Marsember. Helandos often rode with his caravans, and the lower Delimbiyr was one of his frequent routes. When he retired at age 45, he bought the then mediocre Sunrise Brewery and rebuilt it. The Harpers have been watching Helandos for a number of years. While still in Marsember he had frequent contacts with persons believed to be involved with the Iron Throne. When caravans friendly to the Iron Throne stop in Loudwater, there usually is contact between them and Helandos. The Harpers believe that Helandos may be establishing a base of operations for the Iron Throne in the North. They also have noted that caravans friendly to the Iron Throne have begun transporting surplus Sunrise Brew into the Dessarin Valley. Helandos is, in fact, unaware of any wrongdoing on his part.



Loudwater

8 - Watchful Turtle Warehouses: This company has its own guarded (but unheated) warehouses on the Delimbiyr and rents space at the rate of 1 silver rose or 1 silver shard per month. One pays for a full month, except if goods are picked up in less than a ride, in which case a refund of 4 copper smiths or nibs is paid. The place is named after the large, carved stone heads on the Arch Bridge next to the warehouses - large pig-snouted figures that resemble dragon turtles. The proprietor is an older, whiskered man named Argrath Dundal (human male, age 66, AL:N, Commoner 2)

9 - Pralever's Provisions: This large store sells almost everything needed for travel, from individual riders' provisions to caravan outfittings and maps. Pralever's (human male, AL:NE, Rogue 10/Fighter 8) cellars also store smoked and dried trail rations and hold many barrels of mediocre but hearty table grape wine from the Moonsea that holds up well to the constant jostling from being carried upon a horse. Pralever makes no secret of the fact that he grew up in and fled from Zhentil Keep. He's a friendly man who's always ready to help his neighbors in Loudwater. This trait superbly disguises the fact the Pralever is a high level agent of the Zhentarim. No one in Loudwater including the Harpers suspect him. Pralever carries items that were ensorcelled by Sememmon of Darkhold, which keep both his alignment and his magic from being detected. The best smith in Loudwater works for Pralever, the clanless dwarf Warddh (dwarf male, AL:LG, Fighter 12), who is the leading secret agent of the Harpers in Loudwater.

10 - Arch Bridge. This ancient dwarven bridge was built when the nation of Ammarindar still claimed the site of Loudwater. The bridge is decorated with statues of large pig-snouted monsters that resemble dragon turtles.

11 - Barge Docks.

12 - Delimbiyr Rapids.

13 - Jolym's Barrels and Packing. Master barrel maker Jolym (human male, AL:NG, age 51, Expert 3) does most of his business with those who keep goods in the warehouses of Loudwater and with caravans. He makes crates and barrels of all kinds. He employs a journeyman (human male, AL:NG, Expert 1), two apprentices (human male, AL: various, Commoner 1) and a laborer (human male, AL:N, Commoner 1).

14 – Dawn Pass House. This complex is Loudwater's new Lathander temple and also the new base the Harpers have established in Loudwater. It was built specifically to monitor the strange new traffic passing through town on the way into the lich lands. The Harpers do not believe that the pilgrims are in Kelemvor's service, nor do they believe that the pilgrims are doing anything good. On the other hand, they don't really know what the pilgrims are doing. There are no priests in the temple, only clerics of Lathander who are fit for adventuring. All three are members of the Harpers. They are the Morninglords Dayton Hombley (human male, AL:LG, age 42, Cleric 16); Marla Rowan, human female (AL:LG, age 34, Cleric 13) and Nana Pinkers (human female, AL:NG, age 27, Cleric 8). The buildings on the east side of the temple are storage and equipment sheds. The larger building on the west side also is part of the complex, although it's identified publicly as being **Mother Wilma's Boarding House** Mother Wilma really is the Harper wizardess Wilma Nocking (human female, AL:CG, age 58, Wizardess 19). Her *"guests"* all are Harpers: Buford Winston (human male, AL:NG, age 38, Ranger 15), Lindy Chilton (half-elf female, AL:CG, age 67, Sorceress 15), Landa Howerton (human female, AL:LG, age 32, Fighter 14) and Nelman Swagbottom (halfling male, AL:CG, age 61, Rogue 13).

15 - High Lord's Hall. The small castle of High Lord Nanathlor Greysword (human male, AL:NG, Fighter 11). It also houses the Loudwater government administration.

16 - Garrison. Loudwater's militia is housed here. It's a 300-man force that's divided into 15 patrol units of 20 men each. The commanders are two officers known as Gauntlets. They are Harazos Thelbrimm (human male, AL: LN, age 37, Fighter 5) and Kalahar Twohands (half-elf female, AL:CG, age 58, Fighter 6).

17 - The Merry Mer-She: The Mer-She is Loudwater's loud tavern and the place where you'll find a brawl, if you're looking for one. The unnamed house beer, the only drink, at 3 copper smiths or nibs a quart/liter tankard, is watery, but it gets thrown almost as often as it's consumed. There's lots of singing, dancing, questionable ladies and gentlemen etc. in this house. The only food is greasy fish and chips at 2 silver shards or roses. The tavernkeeper is Gibb Tulinn (half-elf male, AL:CN, age 79, Rogue 4).

18 - Risen Moon Market: The Risen Moon is the best source of food in Loudwater and certainly the most reliable. In season it offers the same farmers' produce as one can buy on the market square, but at about 2% higher prices. However, the Moon offers much more too. It has cellars under the store that can keep produce fresh well after it is out of season. In lower cellars, the Moon grows its own mushrooms, a smoky-flavored type that is popular in the entire stretch of the Delimbiyr Valley from Llorkh to Secomber. The Moon also stocks a wide variety of conserves including its own sour kraut made from cabbage, apple and caraway. The proprietor is Luthwen Tinnagel (half-elf male, AL:NG, age 68, Commoner 2).

19 - Market Square. This area is filled with activity every weekday from about half an hour after sunrise until early afternoon. The square is filled with stalls, 85% of them manned by local farmers and craftsmen selling their produce and wares. The other 15% are traveling merchants who pay the city a market fee for their stall space.

20 - Last Dawn Cemetery. The burial grounds include an old shrine to Lathander.

21 - The Scarlet Shield. The inn and restaurant were named after the rusting shield that hangs on its wall, once borne in battle by the warrior Harbet Szeiber, who built and ran the inn upon retirement. He no longer is alive. The current innkeeper is his nephew Wilmar Szeiber (human male, AL:LN, age 41, Expert 2), who tells tall tales about his uncle's adventures, the kind that leave the impression that Harbet might have been the greatest warrior in all Faerûn. This is an average but pleasant inn and the main stopping place for travelers in Loudwater, including disguised Zhents from Llorkh. Szeiber offers generous portions of Delimbiyr trout, boar, venison and beef at prices between 4 and 9 silver shards or roses. Sunrise Beer costs 3 copper nibs or smiths per quart/liter tankard. The 16 singles cost 7 silver shards or roses nightly.

22 - The Old Owl. This quiet tavern caters mainly to locals, ***quiet*** locals who want to converse or play cards over their drinks. The proprietor, a retired warrior, sees to it that loud and boisterous customers make a quick exit. The tavernkeeper is Willett Kurand (half-elf male, AL: NG, age 121, Fighter 9,), in retirement. Behind the tavern Willett operates a small brewery, but he sells the beer, Loudwater Owl, only in his own house at 3 copper nibs or smiths per quart/liter tankard.

23 - The Enchanter's Ecstasy. The cedar-roofed lodge-style inn is a pleasant place to sleep, if one isn't bothered by lots of kitschy magical gimmicks, like talking clocks, illuminated chamberpots etc. The inn has no tavern or restaurant. The Innkeeper is Morgan Wentram (human male, age 58, AL: CG, Expert 1). He has 12 singles at 6 silver shards or roses per night and four doubles at 5 shards or roses per person, double occupancy.

24 – Sather's House. Sather (human female, AL:NG, age 62, Commoner 2), is a former priestess of Tymora who lives in humble accommodations here. She tries now to earn a living as a healer and herbalist. She lost her faith after the shock of the losses incurred by the Band of the Hand in its attempt to enter a tomb in the Land of the Lich Lords.

Beyond the Map

The Smiling Satyr (not on map): This entertaining tavern (no accommodations) is atop a hill eight farms southwest of Loudwater on the Delimbiyr Route to Zelbross and Secomber. The Satyr is run by a former adventurer named Arvyn Umbryl (whose statistics are officially defined as unknown). The tavern is atop a hilltop of oaks and beeches at the end of a winding road that leads upward from the Delimbiyr Route. The turnoff on the Delimbiyr Route is marked by a wooden carving of a dancing satyr with pipes. When one comes within 20 ft/6m of the statue, it emits a quiet piping sound, the result of a Magic Mouth spell. There is a local legend that the statue also whispers secrets of buried treasures, when the moon is full. Umbryl owns two large fields on both sides of the hill where caravans can camp. Both fields have streams running through them which flow later into the Delimbiyr, along with fire pits and firewood. The Satyr is a favorite stopping spot in Loudwater for adventurers, guides, mercenaries, Zhent traders and those who trade with the Zhents in Llorkh. Inside, the tavern has a huge taproom with a large hearth at each end. Sunrise Beer costs 3 copper smiths or nibs per quart/liter tankard.

Customers like to use long forks to roast cheese and sausages and to make toast over the hearth fires. A bread board with rye as well as sausage and cheese for roasting costs 3 silver shards or roses. Umbryl also offers dishes with venison, boar, veal and Delimbiyr trout at prices ranging from 4 silver shards or roses to 1 gold dragon or halfmoon. The walls are decorated with monster skulls and old weapons and shields. Among them are two battle axes of dancing that react to Umbryl's command to protect him and his staff.

Delimbiyr Grain Mill. The mill is in the middle of farms about two miles downstream from Loudwater. The master miller and owner, Dellan (human male, AL:NG, age 77, Expert 4) charges a milling fee of 10% by weight. He employs a journeyman miller (human male, AL:N, Expert 1) and two apprentices (human and half-elf male, AL: various, Commoner 1).

Breeston's Sleds and Wagons. Loudwater's wagon- and sled maker is master wainwright Charles Breeston, human male, AL:LG, age 36, Expert 4. He employs a journeyman (human male, AL:NG, Expert 1), two apprentices (human male, AL: various, Commoner 1) and two laborers (human male, AL: various, Commoner 1). His shop is just beyond the mill.

7. The Greyvale and Orlbar

Game Master: This part begins when the PCs head out of Loudwater eastward on the Dawn Pass Trail.

You have no trouble finding the Dawn Pass Trail. It's the main street in Loudwater south of the Arch Bridge. The road winds gradually toward the northeast, veering at first ever more southerly of the Delimbyir. Soon the mighty northern river will be behind you. At last you come to the northeastern drawbridge across the flower-lined moat.

The guards at the drawbridge nod casually and as they prepare to lower the bridge, one guard asks, *"And be you spending the night in Ildur's house?"*

The guards are fully expecting to hear the answer yes. If that's the only answer the PCs give them, they'll be wished a good time and can leave Loudwater quickly. If the PCs say they are planning to head on to Llorkh, the guards will give them warnings of what happens, contending nothing makes it much farther eastward. There will be a long round of rumor and little or no fact, before the militia finally lowers the drawbridge reluctantly.

The Greyvale before you looks like a beautiful valley, at the start a low, grassy swath some 25 miles/40 km wide, standing deep below the heights of the Greypeak Mountains to the north and the south. The road is a caravan and wagon trail that seems to be used more than it's maintained. The trail is about 10 feet/3 m wide, but on horseback one has to ride single file between wagons ruts that could cause a horse to loose its footing.

On both sides of the road also are well worn paths. You could do what many others have done before you, riding three abreast, one in the middle of the trail and another to each side of it, on the paths. For more than an hour, you continue through rich farming country, but then the signs of civilization recede, and farms become less frequent, reappearing now and then in small clusters of houses and barns set together amid larger fields and orchards. Most of the land in the valley is open, rolling very slightly upwards toward the north and the south in the direction of the Greypeaks. Tall grasses among frequent clusters of trees and brush grace the valley floor. Your visibility is good in all directions. If there's anything out there that poses a threat, you certainly don't see any sign of it.

Game Master: That's all until evening. Check whether the players want to do anything.

Nighthunters Crossing

Thorp. Non-Standard (no government). AL: NG. 40 gp limit. Assets: 124 gp. Population: 62 Mixed (94% human, 2% dwarf, 2% halfling, 2% halfelf). Authority figures: None. Others: Ildur Arntur, human male, AL:NG, owner of the Nighthunt Inn, Fighter 12 (former Ranger). Watch: None. Taxation: None.

Money accepted in Nighthunter's Crossing: See the section *Coins of the North* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. Coins of Waterdeep and Luruar are accepted at face value. No other coins ever are accepted. An attempt to pay the innkeeper with coins of Zhentish minting can cause a fight.

Nighthunter's Crossing is not a formal settlement, as such, nor is it a part of Loudwater or any other governmental entity, kingdom or state. It's simply a crossing in the wilderness, albeit a strange one. The Dawn Pass Trail is the only road through the thorp. The other path is the trail of a ghostly boar hunt that comes down now and then from the Greypeaks in the night, crosses the Dawn Pass Trail just east of the settlement and then rides on down into the Southwood on a forest road that ceased to exist a few thousand years ago.

No one really can say what the tale of the ghostly hunt is, although most of the farmers living at Nighthunter's Crossing claim to know it. They say it's the hunt of the assassinated King Sergeju of Qoqid Duhmm in the old Netherese Western March. The king was assassinated after a hunt by his brother, Count Rughan, who lived in the Girzh Tabem castle in the Greyvale a bit southeast of Nighthunter's Crossing.

There is one bit of evidence to support this claim. In the Year of the Bluebird (1346 DR), a daring merchant from Secomber who was willing to deliver furniture to vampire Count Rughan's Qoqid Duhmm castle noticed a large, framed canvas painting laying on a pile of refuse waiting to be burned, and he took the painting.

Ildur Arntur (human male, AL:NG, age 43, Fighter 12, Expert 4), the owner of the *Nighthunt Inn*, bought the painting from the merchant and hung it on the wall of his common room. The painting shows a royal hunting party on its ride. An inscription on the back dates it to 1618 in Netherese Years (NY), or -2241 DR. At that time, Count Rughan had not yet assassinated his brother-king. The figures shown on the hunt are named in the inscription, and the leader is identified as King Sergeju.

The painting is an exact duplicate of the ghost hunt that is seen riding through the night at times in Nighthunter's Crossing. Therefore, locals speculate that the eerie Night Hunt really consists of the ghosts of King Sergeju's party, which is riding back from Qoqid Duhmm to its haunt in Girzh Tabem castle after unsuccessfully trying to have avenged itself upon the ghost of Count Rughan in Qoqid Duhmm. As long as the count remains undead, the locals say, the ghostly hunting party is unable to find him.

They well may be right … or wrong. Whatever the case may be, the Night Hunt never has shown the least interest in or even awareness of living mortals in Nighthunters Crossing. The hunting ghosts also emanate no magical fear. In fact, when one can hear the ghostly hunt riding down from the north, drunken guests at the Nighthunt often go out to watch it, as though it were a spectator sport.

Other than this oddity, Nighthunter's Crossing is little more than a collection of offbeat characters who have chosen to live apart from the rest of civilization. None of them, including the innkeeper Arntur, ever tells his or her story to strangers. The innkeeper, the smith and a farmer who breeds horses are willing to do business with strangers, if they pay cash with coins of Waterdeep or Luruar.

It appears that Nighthunter's Crossing once was larger. Before coming into the inhabited part of the thorp from the west, one passes about a dozen abandoned, dilapidated farms on both sides of the Dawn Pass Trail. Then, however, one sees a crude wooden sign inscribed *Nighthunter's Crossing,* followed by another 17 farms that still are being worked.

At last, one passes a public well on the left and a complex of low buildings on the right that comprise the *Nighthunt Inn* and distillery. The inn has a wooden sign that says simply, *The Nighthunt*. A somewhat smaller building on the east side of the inn has a wooden sign saying *Home of Nighthunters Fruit Schnapps*. A third building somewhat behind the two bears no sign, but the chimney and roof vent suggest that it's a house brewery.

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The last two structures are Darggh's Forge, a small smithy, to the left, and then, on a creek about 75ft/25m south of the trail, Kelt's Mill. The stream, known as *Nighthunt Creek*, is 10ft/3m wide, fast-running and about a foot/30cm deep. It flows out of the Southwood into the Loagrann north of the thorp.

Locals claim that Nighthunt Creek is the border of civilization; everything east of the creek belongs to ghosts, undead and the Zhentarim, they say. Anyone who crosses the bridge and rides into the East well may be riding to his or her death, according to the locals.

Hatred of the Zhentarim is high in Nighthunter's Crossing, and no one hates the Zhents as well as the innkeeper, Ildur Arntur. Nonetheless, he and his neighbors will do business with people traveling to and from the Zhentarim stronghold of Llorkh, and they know they sometimes are dealing with loyal but covert Zhentarim. Anyone coming from or traveling to Llorkh has to put up with diatribes against the Zhents and lectures that make the point that the listener should find a way to earn an honest living. An attempt to pay bills with coins of Zhentish minting can provoke a fight.

The innkeeper, Arntur, is a former ranger who somehow lost his powers. He runs the Nighthunt together with his wife Shaltana and four daughters. In his Volo's Guide to the North, Volothamp Geddarm predicts that due to Arntur's adversity to the Zhents, his days are numbered.

As far as our version of the Greyvale is concerned, this is a shortsighted conclusion on Volo's part. Our Zhents aren't quite that dumb and foolish. The Zhents are quite aware that all of Arntur's blustering and outrage over their deeds and their presence in Llorkh does no harm to the Black Network whatsoever, even if it is a bit irritating to listen to at times. Quite to the contrary, Arntur's anti-Zhent lectures set other tongues wagging in the *Nighthunt*, and many of them begin their remarks with the phrase, *I shouldn't be saying this, but ...*

The result is that the Nighthunt is an extremely good source of information and intelligence for the Zhentarim, a fact that would outrage Arntur, if it ever occurred to him. The Zhentarim maintain spies in the Nighthunt to pick up on anything that is said as a result of Arntur's diatribes. They not only learn much about the activities of their enemies, but they also are able to improve their trade analyses, as a result.

In general the Zhentarim sell as expensively as possible and buy as cheaply as possible. In Llorkh, they have been dependent to some extent on doing business with merchant caravans that come voluntarily from the Sword Coast to do trade with them. Such merchants can do business elsewhere too, so it's important that the Zhentarim know where the price borders with these merchants lie.

When a Sword Coast caravan stops at Arntur's en route to Llorkh, and the merchant responds to one of Arntur's diatribes with remarks to the effect that this may be his last trip to Llorkh, if negotiations go as lousy as they did the last time, the Zhentarim are tipped in advance that they have to better their offer if they want to keep this merchant as a customer and/or provider.

Arntur's daughters Lanandra and Mala are restless to head off on a first adventure without parents, and Arntur and his wife know that they're ripe for it. If you need NPCs knowledgeable in the area from Loudwater over Llorkh through the Dawn Trail Pass, either or both of these young ladies could join the PCs temporarily.

If it comes to an unexpected hostile encounter in the inn, Arntur and his family will use lesser weapons like knives, clubs, chairs and frying pans until someone can retrieve their main weapons from the kitchen, an action that usually will require 2 rounds. The NPCs that aren't family members are close friends of the Arnturs and are in for the duration, if there's fight.

The inn seems to be a homey place when one enters it, but not one that's doing a lot of business. The PCs will find a man sitting behind the tap - a tough looking type 40 years old or so. Through the open door one will see two women in the kitchen, one in her early 40s and the other in her early 20s.

A shady looking halfling, a tough looking dwarf wife and four men who probably are farmers will be sitting at a large round table playing cards, all with tankards of beer before them on the table. The card players will give visitors a cursory look, nod in their direction and return to their game.

The customers are:

- The miller Kelt Samson (human male, age 48, AL:LG, Expert 3, Fighter 3.
- Farmer and horse breeder Sinda West, human male, age 41, AL:N, Expert 3, Ranger 3.
- Blacksmith Darggh, dwarf female, age 201, AL:LG, Expert 4, Fighter 6.
- Farm worker Hesta, halfling male, age 54, AL:CN, Rogue 9.
- Farmer Clifton Daggett, human male, age 59. AL:LN, Fighter 4.
- His son, farmer Mervyn Daggett, human male, age 33, AL:NG, Fighter 5.

The cook is:

- Shaltana Arntur, human female, age 41, AL:NG, Expert 1, Fighter 2.

The waitresses are:

- Lanandra Arntur, human female, age 20, AL:NG, Ranger 2.
- Mala Arntur, human female, age 18, AL:NG, Warrior 2.

The two others who may appear in the common room are the Arntur's younger daughters:

- Rilla Arntur, human female, age 13, AL:NG, Commoner 1.
- Larenda Arntur, human female, age 9, AL:NG, Commoner 1.

News and Scuttlebutt

What if anything the PCs learn in Nighthunters Crossing is dependent upon the questions they pose and the way they act. Arntur, his family and the card players will be more inclined at the start to listen to the PCs than talk to them. The following news and scuttlebutt is available.

- The settlement Nighthunters Crossing is named after a ghostly boar hunt that comes down now and then from the Greypeaks in the night, crosses the Dawn Pass Trail just east of the settlement and then rides on down into the Southwood. If the conversation continues, all details gradually will come out (all true).
- Within a few miles east of Nighthunters Crossing, it can be dangerous to leave the trail and travel to the north or south of the road. Much like the Land of the Lich Lords to the Northwest, the Greyvale was settled by refugees from the ruins of Netheril, and they brought with them much of the evil and magic of Netheril. A few hours east of Nighthunters Crossing, the Dawn Trail Pass begins to follow the south bank of the Greyflow, a shallow river that is easy to ford at many points. Just beyond the north bank one begins to find the ancient ruins of Neth holdings and castles. Only moss covered foundations are visible today, but beneath them are cellars and dungeons that either have been plundered or still are protected by fell magic (all true).
- The northern fringe of the Southwood near Nighthunters Crossing is logged by men, but within 10 miles east of Nighthunters Crossing, the forest and also many parts of the valley floor north of it must be avoided. The descendants of horrible mutated creatures, products of ancient Neth magic, live in the old Neth ruins in this area. These evil mutants tend to keep to themselves but seek viciously to destroy any living creatures that enter their domain.

They do not however come north to the Dawn Pass Trail and attack travelers. That cannot be said for several bands (not tribes) of bugbears that live in the Girzh Tabem ruin or the dungeons of some of the Neth ruins north of the Greyflow. They will ford the river to attack travelers. The bugbears' goal is robbery, but they prefer to kill their victims and safely rob the corpses rather than taking from live victims (all true).

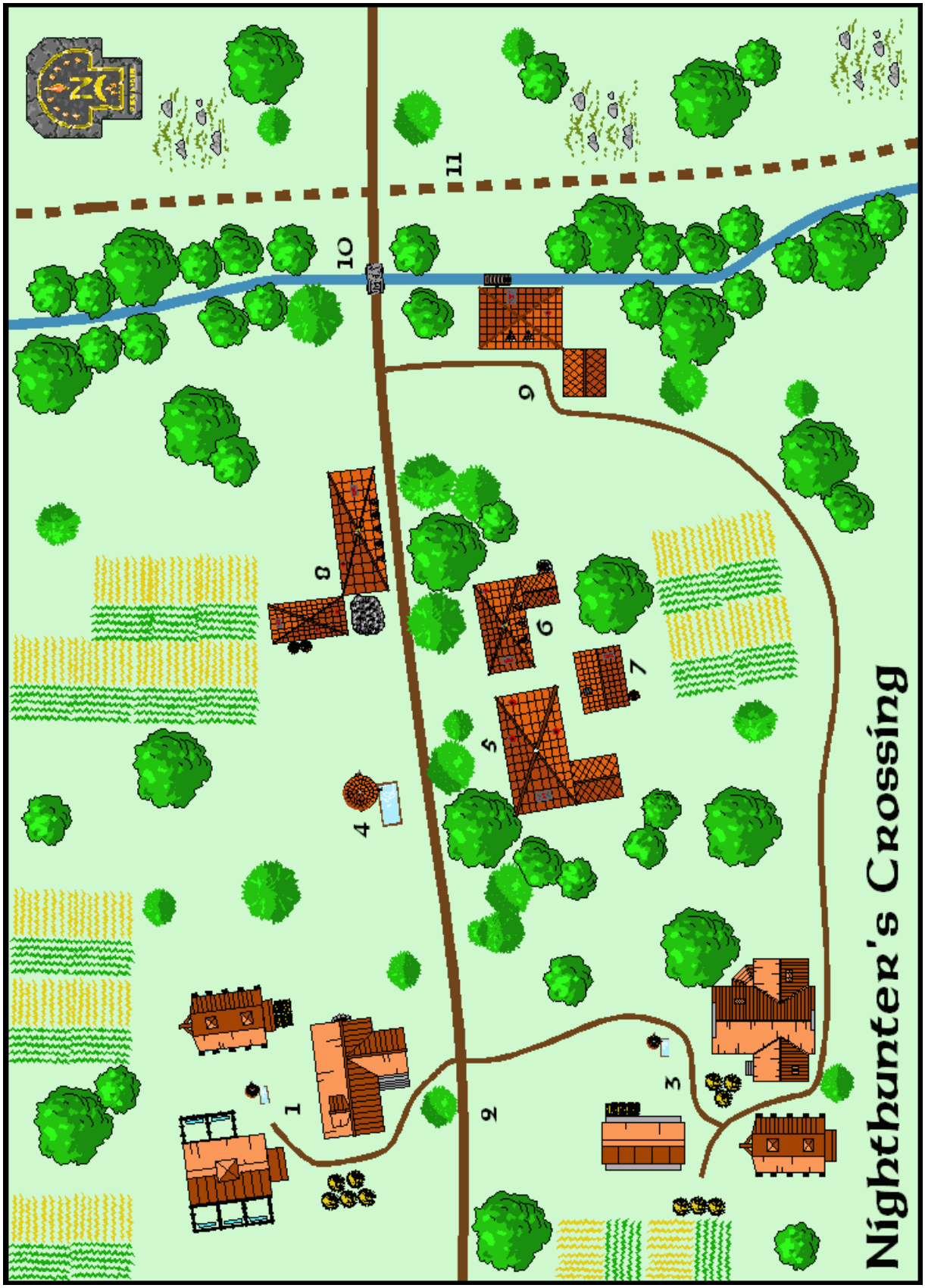
- There have been vampire attacks in Loudwater recently (true). The people in Loudwater say the vampires are servants of Count Rughan from Qoqid Duhmm castle above Orlbar (what they say is false). They also say the count again has begun spawning vampires and is sending them out to feed (what they say is false). The people of Nighthunter's Crossing believe the vampires come from elsewhere, probably from the pilgrimage of which they've heard (true).

- Only large bands of orcs and some other monsters are awake by daylight in the lich empire (true). The undead all sleep by day (not quite true, but they aren't on the surface). During these hours, it is possible to slip into the lich lands, if one can avoid the orcs (true).

- (Unofficial) Two years ago, Ildur and his band of adventurers followed up tips that there is a rear entrance to the Ruins of Dekanter in Bleached Bones Pass. They followed the Greyflow to its source and then crossed the Greypeaks into the pass, where they spotted two Zhent caravans crossing westward toward the Southwood. They did indeed find the rear shafts into Dekanter that were reported to be in the pass. The shafts were dangerous, partly collapsed, but the group was able to follow the shafts into the central part of the mine ruins, where they came upon a unit of 20 gnolls. Battle was joined but broken off after a huge beholder could be seen in torchlight in the distance quickly moving toward the scene of the battle. Ildur and his band weren't prepared to engage the beholder, so they beat a quick retreat, with Hesta using her spells to cause a total collapse of the row of mine shafts behind the group. This access to Dekanter no longer is open, but Ildur and his band are convinced that the Zhentarim have built a detour that caravans now can follow from Anauroch through the Lonely Moor and past Dekanter, into Bleached Bones Pass and the Southwood, and then no doubt out again onto the Delimbyir Route. What impact this will have upon Llorkh is uncertain, but there were no signs of attacks upon the Zhentarim in Bleached Bones Pass. **(Game Master:** The pass is outside of the surface area above the Goldhammer halls.**)** The pass itself is (official) littered with old bleached bones, remnants of battle in days gone by. Trails lead up into the Greypeaks from the valley floor into strongholds of orc bands (not tribes), who usually are busy warring with one another, when there is no prey traveling through the pass. The pass itself is part of an ancient road that once connected Dekanter with Illefarn in the West.

- There is a druid named Tharnn Greenwinter (official, Appendix 1, *Elminster's Ecologies*) who roams Pelleor's Prairie south of Chelimber Moor. He has been friendly with the Harpers and can be a source of help on the Prairie. Tharnn can be found almost anywhere on the prairie, but his grove seems to be somewhere near the Hill of Lost Souls. The hill should be avoided however. Restless spirits of the fallen at the Battle of the Bones to the south wander the hill, which also is (officially) home to unfriendly lava ankhegs and fire newts. There also are (officially) a few small bands but no tribes of orcs and goblins in the area of the hill.

Game Master: Daughters Lanandra and Mala are restless to head off on a first adventure without parents (official), and Ildur and Shaltana know that they're ripe for it. If you need NPCs knowledgeable in the area from Loudwater over Llorkh through the Dawn Trail Pass into Pelleor's Prairie, either or both of these young ladies could join the PCs. If it comes to an unexpected encounter, Ildur and his family will use lesser weapons like knives, clubs, chairs and frying pans until someone can retrieve their main weapons from the kitchen, an action that usually will require 2 rounds. The PCs that aren't family members are close friends of Ildur and are in for the duration, if there's war.



Nighthunter's Crossing

Map of Nighthunters Crossing

1 – Sinda West's Farm. Farmer and horse breeder Sinda West (human male, age 41, AL:N, Expert 3, Ranger 3) owns this farm. He lives on it with his wife, Nelly (human female, age 38, AL:NG, Commoner 1) and their children, Hardwick (human male, age 14, AL:N, Commoner 1) and Paula (human female, age 11, AL:NG, Commoner 1). West breeds horses and will sell them to travelers at prices 15% above those in the PHB.

2 – Dawn Pass Trail.

3 – Clifton Daggett's Farm. The farm is owned by Daggett (human male, age 59. AL:LN, Fighter 4) and operated by him and his son Mervyn (human male, age 33, AL:NG, Fighter 5). The Daggetts have nothing that they sell to travelers.

4 – Public Well.

5 – The Nighthunt. The inn is owned by Ildur Arntur (human male, AL:NG, age 43, Fighter 12, Expert 4) and run by Arntur, his wife Shaltana (human female, age 41, AL:NG, Expert 1, Fighter 2) and his daughters Lanandra (human female, age 20, AL:NG, Ranger 2) and Mala (human female, age 18, AL:NG, Warrior 2).The Arnturs live in the back of the inn. They also have two minor daughters, Rilla (human female, age 13, AL:NG, Commoner 1) and Larenda (human female, age 9, AL:NG, Commoner 1). The *Nighthunt* has no regular menu, but Shaltana Arntur knows where to get fresh meat on short order, and her storage cellar has the rest of what she needs to whip up a good meal in short order. Depending upon what's served, prices usually range between 4 and 8 silver shards or roses per person. Since leaving his earlier career as a ranger, Ildur Arntur has learned to become a master distiller and a brewmaster. His house brewery is behind the inn, his distillery next to it. He brews a rich lager beer and distills prune schnapps from the wild prune plums that grown along Nighthunt Creek. His lager beer costs 3 copper smiths or nibs per quart/liter tankard. His schnapps costs 2 silver roses or shards per shot/0.1l glass. The Nighthunt has eight single guest rooms at 7 roses or shards a night.

6 – The Nighthunt Distillery.

7 – The Nighthunt House Brewery.

8 – Darggh's Forge. The master blacksmith is Darggh (dwarf female, age 201, AL:LG, Expert 4, Fighter 6). She repairs weapons for the locals, although with no master touches, but she refuses to do weapon or armor repairs for travelers. Hers is the blacksmith's craft. She's not willing to risk trouble by repairing a valuable sword or the costly armor of a traveler that might be flawed when she's finished. Shoeing horses and making and repairing tools for locals are her work. The forge is not a fulltime operation. Darggh fires her furnace when there's business to be done. Often, however, she can be found playing cards in the Nighthunt. She refuses to say anything about her origins. From her accent, most guess she's from Citadel Adbar.

9 –Kelt's Mill. The waterwheel that turns the grindstone which mills the grain usually is in operation only at harvest time. The owner is master miller Kelt Samson (human male, age 48, AL:LG, Expert 3, Fighter 3), who operates it together with his wife, Sheila (human female, age 45, AL:NG, Commoner 2) and his son, journeyman miller Larry Samson (human male, age 23, AL:LG, Expert 1). Samson mills grain at harvest time in return for barter credits that entitle him to meat from other farmers in the settlement. He keeps no livestock, but he and his family have adequate farm fields to sustain their living.

10 – Nighthunt Creek. It flows from the Southwood in the south into the Loagrann in the north. The fast-flowing creek is about 10ft/3m wide and a foot/30cm deep. The undead of the Greyvale will not cross its water, and the various bugbear bands of the Greyvale have learned that they're no match for the farmer-warriors of Nighthunters Crossing. They do not cross the creek either.

11- Path of the Nighthunt. When the ghostly Nighthunt appears, it rides down this otherwise invisible trail along the east bank of Nighthunt Creek.

The inn seems to be a homey place as you enter it, but not one that's doing a lot of business. There's a man sitting behind the tap - a tough looking type 40 years old or so - who was studying a parchment as you came in. Through the open door you can see two women in the kitchen, one in her early 40s, the other in her early 20s.

A shady looking halfling, a tough looking dwarf wife and four men who probably are farmers are sitting at a large round table playing cards, all with tankards of beer before them on the table. The man at the tap studies you carefully for a minute, says then, *"Well met! What can we do for you?"* The card players give you a cursory look, nod in your direction and return to their game.

Game Master: The following takes place after the PCs depart Nighthunters Crossing. The journey from there to Llorkh takes four days. There is one planned encounter and there should be occasional ambushes or raids from groups of 11 to 20 bugbears. See the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium* for statistics.

Although it takes nothing away from the beauty of the Greyvale, it becomes clear quite quickly after leaving Nighthunters Crossing that you've left civilization behind you as well. The only sign of men's presence in this area in modern times is the trail itself and the camping places you see along the trail, along with remnants of battles. Already at noon on the first day out, you come across fragments of destroyed wagons along the road and rotting bodies, dead a few weeks already, whose bones have been picked by buzzards and vultures. You also see such carrion birds often in the trees along the river and the trail. The feeling is always there, that you're being watched, but no observers are visible.

If you're using the Goldhammer Clan, the PCs will come frequently during the next three days across remnants of Zhent caravans that were destroyed by the Goldhammer Clan. In every case, the corpses are rotting, but those that are fresher show signs of being killed by axes and hammers. There are no valuables or identification on any of the corpses, and all armor and weapons have been intentionally battered and beaten into uselessness and beyond repair.

If any PC searches more than one or two badly rotting corpses, you should check with each search for the possibility of his contracting a serious, contagious disease. It's also possible that the PCs may find pieces of black dragon scale or a dragon tooth. The only planned encounter occurs on the morning of the 5th day in the Greyvale.

The following encounter takes place on the fourth day out of Nighthunters Crossing.

It's been four days now since your departure from Ildur's in at Nighthunters Crossing. Shortly after noon you catch sight in the distance - more than 10 miles away - of a city in the Greyvale about half the size of Loudwater. As far as you can see, there's nothing in motion between you and the city along the Dawn Pass Trail. Ever since leaving Nighthunters Crossing you've had the feeling you're being watched, a feeling that's never let up, either by day or by night. Not only that, but this feeling has become more intense with each passing day. Now, you have almost the uncanny feeling that someone's breathing down your neck. Still, there's no sign of an observer anywhere. But you have worse problems before you. Late this afternoon early this evening you'll reach the small city ahead of you, Llorkh, no doubt, and then you'll have the Zhents to contend with.

Game Master: The next section is pertinent only if you are using the Goldhammer Clan in your campaign. If not, fill in any encounters or other details you want to have in your campaign between here and Llorkh and jump then to section *8. Llorkh.*

The Goldhammer Clan

Game Master: Wait a bit before you read the following. If you have a dwarf in the group with proficiency in history. legends, lore, saga, etc., you'll want to pass him or her a note that *Dvergr* is the old dwarven name for *dwarf*.

If it's been a bit too quiet for you, maybe you can breathe a bit easier now. The daylight about you is starting to take on unnatural golden color. However, you see no clue as to what the cause of this strange occurrence might be. But the golden light is become intense, not so that it hurts your eyes, but rather as if you might be entering a brilliant golden fog.

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Game Master: Wait for the players to react. Dvergr magic is about to teleport the PCs into a dungeon chamber beneath the Hall of *Gordthalornfaern* (in the dwarven tongue, more or less *home of the gods' kindness*), not far beneath the Dawn Trail Pass. It is important that you understand how the Goldhammer Clan (*Aehamar* in the dwarven tongue) deals with travelers on the Dawn Trail Pass. These dwarves are no murderers, but they are at war with the Zhents of Llorkh, and they kill their enemy. Those who trade freely with the Zhents count as the enemy.

The Goldhammer Clan is not quite certain where the PCs fit into the picture. They aren't bringing cargo to the Zhents, so the dwarves aren't certain the PCs are the enemy, although really don't doubt much that this is the case. But because they aren't killers, they are asking questions first this time. This encounter is a dangerous one for the PCs. If they make false moves, they probably won't survive. The dwarves will defend themselves with a rune of lightning, doing as much damage as they deem necessary.

The light becomes ever more intense but not brighter. If it were to become only a bit brighter, it would begin to cause pain, but that's not the case. However, the fog like aspect of the light has become so dense that your range of sight has been reduced to about 5 feet/150 cm. The road beneath you seems to be trembling slightly too, although noiselessly. Your horses are a bit skittish but for the moment, they only refuse to move forward rather than bolting.

Game Master: Pause for a reaction from the PCs.

At last the light begins to thin. At first, you can make out little, although you do seem to see torches burning brightly, a bit back from your position on all sides. The misty light begins to disperse quickly, revealing a strange scene indeed. You're in a stone-walled cavern, a prison dungeon apparently, if the 10 sets of manacles with chains embedded in the stone walls are any indication. There is only one possible exit, a stone door a yard/90 cm wide and 5 feet/150 cm high. It's closed at the moment. The cavern is roughly round, with a diameter of about 40 feet/12 m. You're approximately in the middle of it, surrounded by eight dwarves who are armed to the teeth and bearing shields with a golden hammer on a scarlet field.

Two older dwarves stand to the rear of the group (King Niping and the priestess Olfynga), both with battleaxes in their hands. One, a woman, looks at you with pure suspicion in her eyes. The older of the two, a man, has sad eyes that also are suspicious. Six other dwarves stand in a circle around you, four of them with battleaxes at the ready, two of them holding stone slabs with strange runes.

Game Master: The PCs see the following runes:

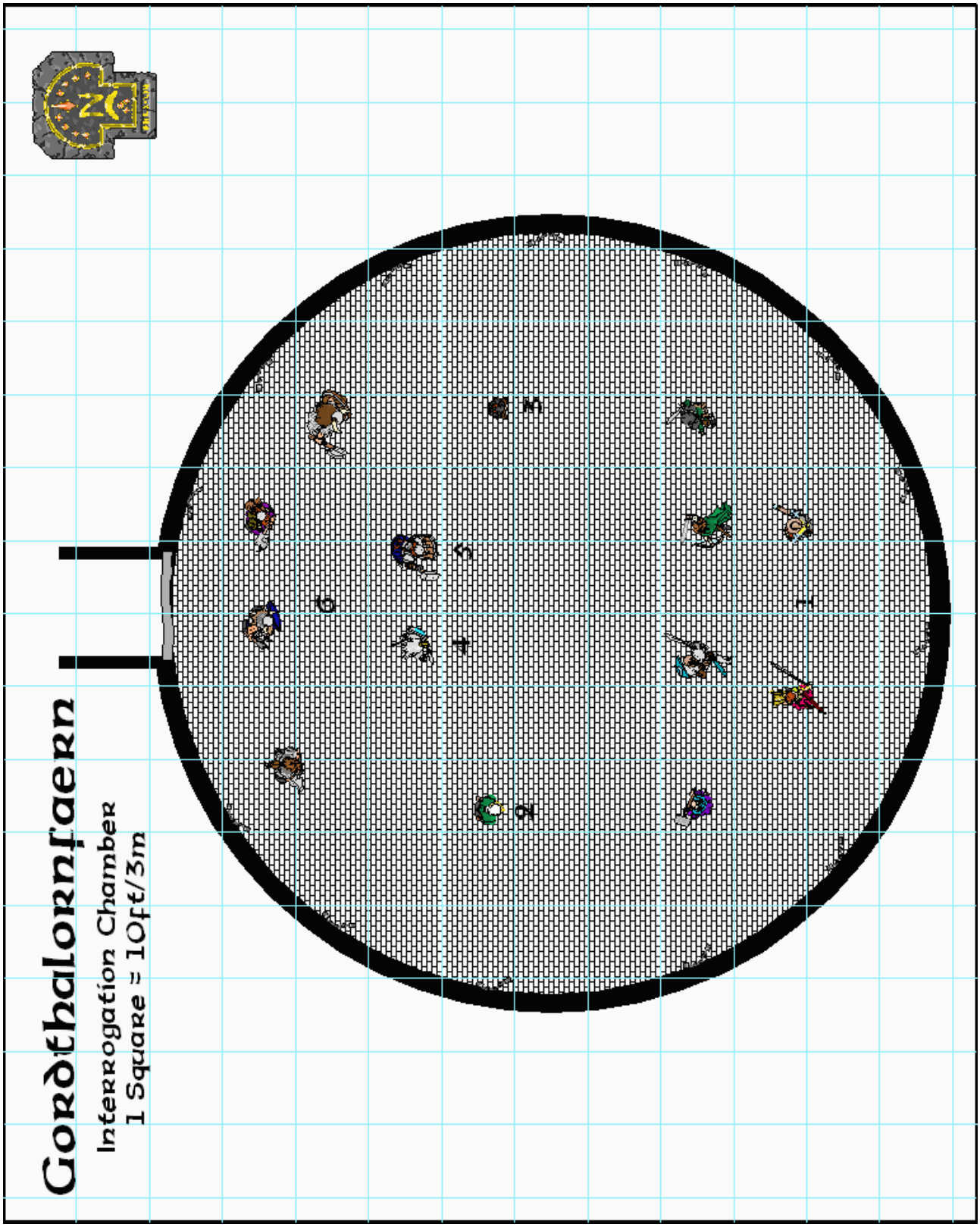
Sonnburakrín
(Stonepass)

Eldarrorn
(Lightning)

One of the dwarves with a runestone (ᛁᛚᛊ)in the group encircling you says, *"More scum from Luskan? Just what be we having here? Ye'd be well advised to stay where ye be. We've a few questions fer ye, and ye'd best be answering them, if ye'd be living to see the new day!"* With these words, the older dwarf in the rear holds up the polished runestone with the runic stave and a large diamond in a facet, perhaps an inch/25 mm in diameter. He says to you, *"And now we'd be knowing a few things from ye."*

Game Master: The PCs see the following rune:

Ilíthsamryn
(True dealing)



Gordthalornfaern Dungeon

Game Master: The two older dwarves are King Niping and the priestess Olfynga of Moradin.

Gordthalornfaern Dungeon Plan

There is a map of the complete halls of Gordthalornfaern in *In the Land of the Lich Lords*, but it is of no use at this time. Without dwarven magic, the stone door that leads out of the dungeon chamber shown in the room plan cannot be opened. Although the PCs certainly can bring the Goldhammer dwarves to be friendly to them they are not ready to trust the PCs or anyone else from outside of Gordthalornfaern with any of their secrets.

Among other things, the dwarves will not acknowledge that there is anything more to Gordthalornfaern than the dungeon cell where the PCs arrived, and the by no means will they take the PCs into other parts of Gordthalornfaern. On the contrary, regardless of what friendships are struck, the dwarves will try to convince the PCs that they have been magically transported to dwarven halls somewhere near Luskan.

The following plan information should help you set the stage for this encounter:

1 - The PCs at the point where they arrive.

2 - Dwarven Runecaster Nifar who bears a lightning runestone.

2 - Dwarven Runecaster Brolin who bears a lightning runestone.

4 - King Niping.

5 - Sonnlinor Olfynga of Moradin.

6 - Dwarven warriors, from left Doldar, Oinar, Fildur and Wilping.

For campaign statistics see *Gordthalornfaern - Royal Encounter* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

KING NIPING: *"Ye be in the land of our clan, and ye be here without our invitation, and ye be riding in the direction of our enemy. We'd be knowing what ye're doing here and what business ye'd be doing with the enemy, so that we know whether ye be fit to live. And if ye think ye're being fit to live still a bit longer, ye'd sure and be giving us a few good answers."*

Game Master: King Niping is interested only in answers, not answering. Any PC who makes evasive statements , asks questions without the king's permission, etc., can expect a 1hp bolt from a lightning rune. The first time a question is asked without his permission, the king will wait for the lightning bolt to strike and then say:

"I'm thinking, I'll be doing the asking and ye'll be doing the answering here."

Game Master: And immediately afterward, Nifar, the dwarf who caused the lightning bolt, says:

"And I'm thinking, ye'll be showing the king some respect, or I'll be frying ye from outside in!"

During the course of their interrogation of the PCs, the dwarves will tell a fictitious story to attempt to convince the PCs that they stumbled into the dwarves' domain near Luskan, where the magicians of the Host Tower are their main enemy, and if the PCs are let go, that the dwarves have no control over where they end up, that its wasn't their magic that sent the PCs to them, but that they'll no doubt come out somewhere near Luskan.

This invention is intended to keep the PCs from being aware that the Goldhammer Clan actually lives beneath the Greyvale. If the PCs don't do anything foolish, the encounter will move on to the point where the sigylls are discovered by the dwarves.

At this point, the open role playing begins. As soon as the dwarves see the sigylls, jump immediately to the section, *The Dvergr and the Sigylls.* Until then, the PCs should be having difficulties. The dwarves basically are 90% convinced that the PCs are Zhent allies, and above all, they're looking for a confirmation of that to justify dispatching the PCs - permanently. However, these dwarves are lawful good, and they won't eliminate the PCs until their own words convict them fairly, at least fairly in dwarf terms.

It's your turn to role play King Niping and the rest of the dwarves. The king finds this kind of work saddening. He's not an executioner type and does not like giving the command to eliminate a band of Zhents. At the same time, he's aware that the Zhents by and large are rotten to the core, and he thinks eliminating them is the only reasonable thing to do with a Zhent.

As a result, he will continue interrogating the PCs. Olfynga of Moradin may throw in a few questions too, but Niping will lead the interrogation. Don't forget that the clan is trying to delude the PCs as to where they are. Niping will make references to Luskan, as if to indicate that the dwarves are in the Luskan area, and also to suggest that the Luskan area is where the PCs will reappear, if the dwarves decide to free the PCs. Niping and Olfynga will act as though they've never heard of Zhentarim or Zhentilar or Llorkh, should the PCs mention such place names,

If the PCs try to attack the dwarves, the dwarves will react with force, but before the PCs can be killed, rays of red light will emanate from the sigylls and reflect the Dvergr magic back upon the Dvergr. This out should be used only if absolutely necessary. This red ray will burn away any clothing or armor that may be covering the sigylls, and at that point, the dvergr will see the sigylls and you'll jump to the section *The Dvergr and the Sigylls.*

Until then, the PCs will receive a 1hp lightning bolt from Nifar's runestone every time the dwarves think they're being disrespectful to Niping. If a PC attempts to elude the king without outright lying, Nifar will shake his lightning rods threateningly at the PCs without attacking. Repeated attempts to delude the king will be met with a 1d6 lightning bolt. After an attempt at delusion, Niping will repeat his question and say he wants the uncolored truth this time. If a PC lies outright, the king will say, *"That is a lie,"* and Nifar will deal the PC a 1d6 lightning bolt. In this case, Niping will repeat his question and say again that he wants the uncolored truth this time.

The Dvergr and the Sigylls

Game Master: If you have one or more dwarves in your group, prepare the following note in advance and pass it to the dwarven PC(s) after the king speaks. The note should read as follows:

> It's obvious to you that King Niping was speaking the dwarven language, but in a combination of his clan's own strange dialect and ancient dwarfish, which you barely understand. But you could pick out the following words: *Dvergr, olar* and *ronan. Dvergr* is the ancient word for *dwarf, olar* is dwarfish for *magic,* and *ronan* is ancient dwarfish for runes.

Game Master: These events begin just as soon as the dwarves see the sigylls. Niping is a master runecutter, and the runes of contagion within Kargmelchina's sigylls are clearly visible and readable to him.

> Looking at the sigylls, King Niping and the other dwarves seem nearly shocked. Niping walks slowly over to you and without touching you or your arm looks carefully at the sigylls. Horrified then, he turns to the dwarf wife who had been standing next to him and says: *"Boelva Dvergr olar! Bimbars sakfella ronan á smita!"*

Game Master: This is the point to pass dwarven PCs the note.

> The king turns to you, seemingly part outraged and part terrified. *"How?",* he asks. *"Where be ye getting these horrible, accursed runes of contagion? Who are ye? Where are ye from? Are ye from the South? Are ye from the Great Rift?"* The king looks deeply into your eyes, frightened and horrified, as though he sees the reawakening of a terrible, ancient evil.

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Game Master: Make a short pause for the PCs to react, but if they go on too long, Niping will cut them off. The *Stonepass* runestone will send the PCs back to the Greyvale.

"Go!", the king commands you suddenly. *"Go! Take yer horrible curse from me halls! Begone, I say, and may the gods have mercy on ye!"*

Niping waves his hand. The dwarf bearing the second runestone raises it. The intense foggy golden light that had enveloped you earlier surrounds you again. In only seconds time, you can just make out that Niping and the other dwarves are fleeing through the door in the dungeon chamber, and then the light becomes denser than ever and you can barely make out each other. And again, the earth trembles slightly beneath you. Then the light starts dimming, just as it had done before, and you find yourselves still on the Dawn Pass Trail, looking eastward toward Llorkh, as though you all had just awakened from a strange dream.

Orlbar

Village, Nonstandard (Zhentish). AL: NE. 50 gp limit. Assets: 100,000 gp. Population: 450 Human.

Game Master: If your PCs want to go to Orlbar, they should need to succeed in a check against the pull of their sigylls. Sammaster, one of the figures who is drawing the PCs eastward through the sigylls' magic, has no desire at all for his sigyll-bearers to be taking on Count Rughan or, even worse, into the Land of the Lich Lords, where he is preparing a secret base of his own.

If your players do overcome the pull of the sigylls and do go to Orlbar, they doubtless will want to take on the Count Rughan, their chances of success at their current levels are poor but not impossible. To let the campaign drift into this side adventure you need to download *In the Land of the Lich Lords*, the sequel to *Northern Journey*.

If the PCs do battle and destroy Count Rughan at this stage in the adventure, that will not interfere with your being able to run *In the Land of the Lich Lords* in the future when your party has reached epic levels.

On your way to Orlbar, the trail takes you over the Greyflow and then the Loagrann, with both rivers bridged just east of the confluence with the Greyflow. The boards that form the two bridges' roadways show centuries of wear, and their condition is something less than reassuring. They no doubt still can carry pedestrians and single riders, but you wouldn't want to lead a heavy wagon across them, particularly not across the Loagrann bridge, which is clearly weak.

Orlbar lies at the foot of the Greypeak Mountains, which rise abruptly in deep cliffs just north of the village. Your first impression of Orlbar itself is one of poverty. The village is a collection of mostly rundown shepherds' farms with roofs of thatch or of ancient shingles made of slate and wood. The only newer buildings are a wooden garrison and a house and another building of wood next to it.

Small farm fields are confined to the village itself and to the immediate outlying area. In the grassy flatlands and hills beyond the village, sheep graze. There also are the ruins of several abandoned shepherds' houses and farms in the hills and meadows outside of the village.

Just north of Orlbar, the Greypeak mountains spring as high as 1,500 feet/450m above the valley floor. There are small, lower mountains just before the large peaks begin, but they yield quickly to the steep vertical cliffs of the main range. Immediately to the northeast of the village, standing atop a natural column of rock, about 1,000 feet above the valley, is an old castle, probably an abandoned ruin. It at least shows no signs of life.

Arrival by daylight: That's not the case in the village itself. Peasants and shepherds are busy carrying out their daily chores, and a few armed soldiers walk about lazily here and there, obviously having little to do and expecting nothing unusual to come their way.

Arrival by darkness: The village is quiet, with most buildings illuminated only be weak candle and lantern light.

The Lord's Men stationed in Orlbar will question the PCs on what their business in Orlbar is, but they really aren't too concerned, although they may be curious. Few people, after all, would have a reason to want to come to Orlbar, and once they're there, there's little in the line of Zhentarim operations for them to interfere with. The Lord's Men and Ivarzin are there only to see to it that Orlbar's mutton and wool goes to Llorkh and nowhere else.

The Zhent detachment in Orlbar is strong enough to keep shepherds under its thumb, but a middle level group of PCs could end the Zhent presence in Orlbar quickly, if it chose to. On the other hand, this could result in the Zhents sending a somewhat stronger unit, but that's not certain. To reach Orlbar, reinforcements also would have to cross both bridges, a twin bottleneck. From a tactical point of view, the Zhents could keep the village's wool and mutton from going anywhere else, without fighting, by simply blocking the road south of the Greyflow bridge.

The official Orlbar is a small village of 450 shepherds on the north side of the Loagrann-Greyflow confluence. In the summer of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), the Zhents moved in and took control, mainly to divert the shipment of mutton from Loudwater and points west to Llorkh. A Zhentarim mage named Felishar Ivarzin (hm, wizard lvl 5, LE), a former lieutenant of Geildarr in Llorkh, assumed control of the village and (official) built a small temple to Iyachtu Xvim there. Officially, Orlbar lies south of the Land of the Lich Lords. The realm of the undead ends in the Greypeaks, north of Orlbar.

Area Map of Orlbar

A - Sheep grazing areas.

B - Mountain's End Cemetery.

C - Loagrann River. The confluence with the Greyflow is about a mile/1.5 km southwest of the map's border.

D - Ghost Creek. This fast moving mountain stream flows down from the Land of the Lich Lords in the Greypeaks and enters into the Greyflow just west of the village.

E - Mill Pond.

F - Crawdad Pond. Some villagers seeking a variety in their diet catch freshwater crabs in this pond in season. The pond is seldom dangerous, because the butcherfish of Ghost Creek seldom swim below the bridge below Butcherfish Pond.

G - Butcherfish Pond. From here stream upwards, Ghost Creek has a thick population of butcherfish. The fish usually do not swim below the pond, because some of Count Rughan's *Fog of Containment* settles into the water and poisons them.

H - D'tarig Camp. They serve Count Rughan.

I - Tunnel of the *Agnhur bhuk Ghzuhm* orc tribe. Orcs who are on the sleeping shift lay their bedrolls out here, the shaman, Mrukkh nghar Ghuun stays here when he is in camp, and the chieftain Griszh nugh Kruaggh keeps the tribal treasure here, under guard, of course.

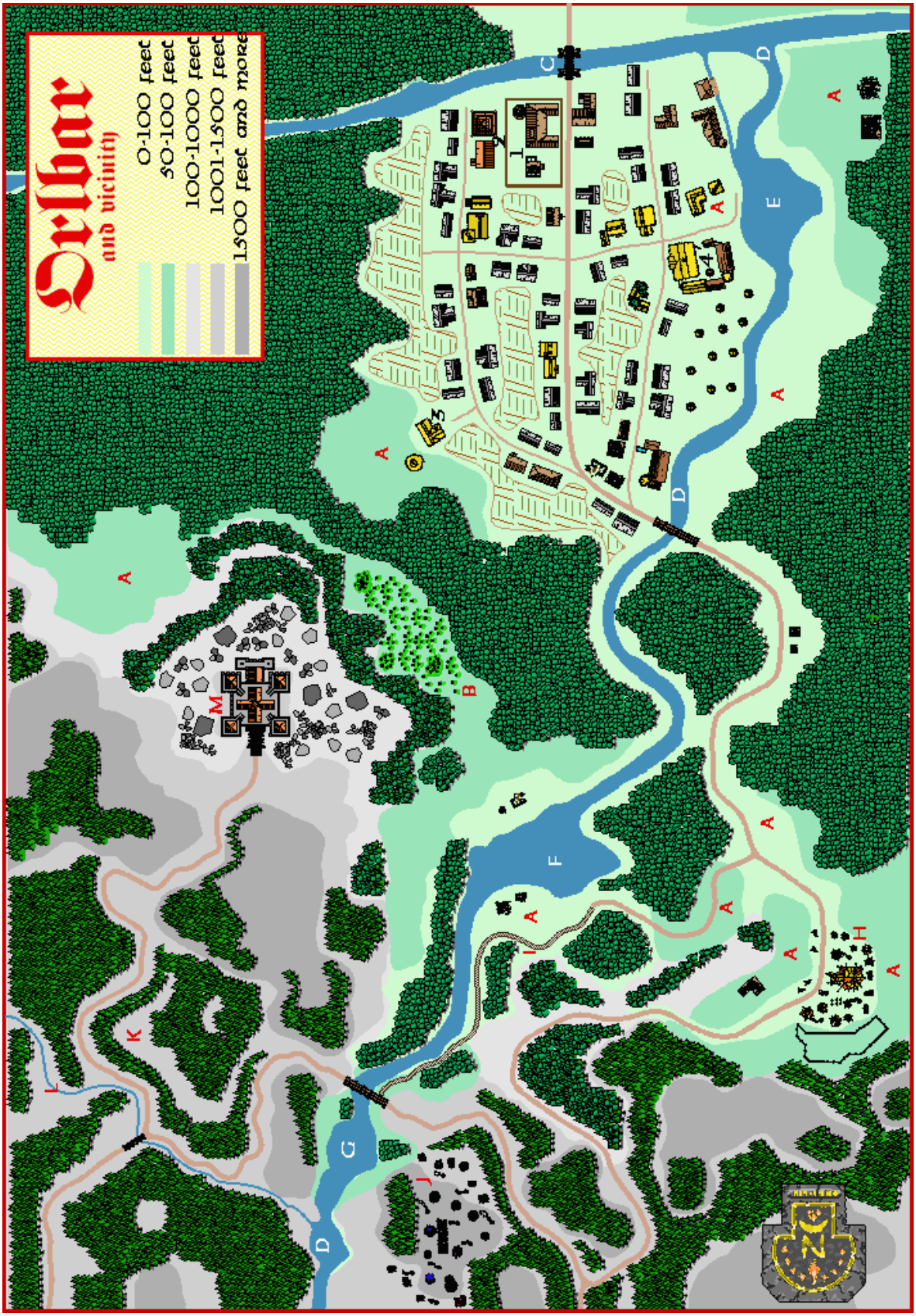
J - Orlbar Camp of the *Agnhur bhuk Ghzuhm* orc tribe. See the tribal description above. The chieftain, Griszh nugh Kruaggh, is based here.

K - Wolf's Glen. There almost always are wolves on guard here. Throw 1d100 to determine the situation:

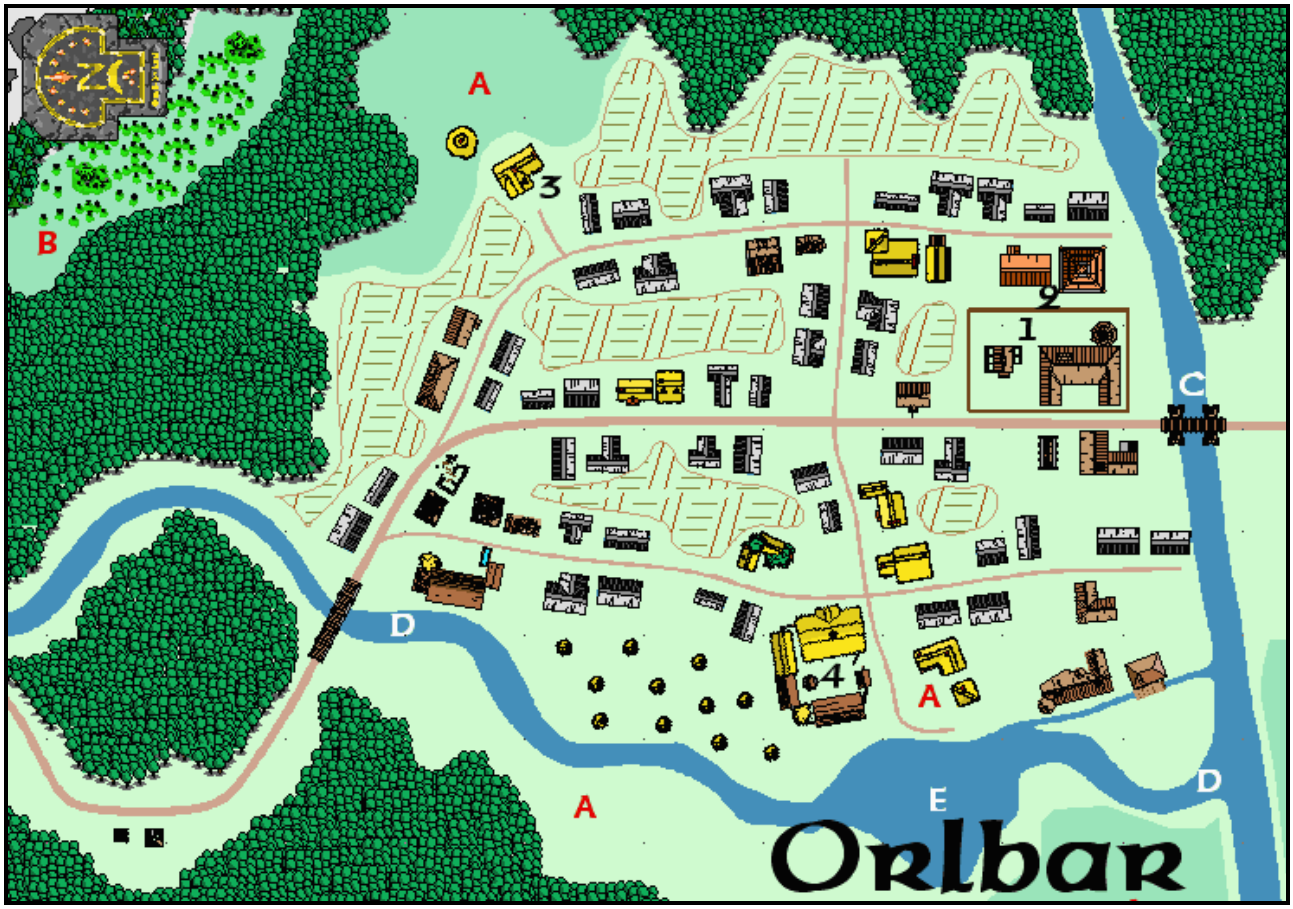
> **By Daylight:**
>
> **Winter wolves** (in season), 30% chance (1-30 on 1d100) 3d6 wolves.
> **Worg wolves,** if winter wolves are in season, 60% chance (31-90 on 1d100) 4d6 wolves, otherwise 80% chance (1-80 on 1d100) 4d6 wolves. There is a chance of 1 on 1d4 that worgs are being led by a werewolf.
>
> **In Darkness:**
>
> **Death wolves,** 30% chance (1-30 on 1d100) 2d6 wolves.
> **Wraith wolves,** 50% chance (31-80 on 1d100) 3d6 wolves. There is a chance of 1 on 1d4 that worgs are being led by a werewolf.

L. Blood Brook.

M. *Hrad Qoqid Duhmm*, Fortress Castle of the Vampire, Count Rughan Tarrh.



Orlbar Vicinity



Orlbar

The Village Map of Orlbar

1 - Garrison of the Lord's Men and the Tower of Felishar Ivarzin. There are 16 Lord's Men (Zhents) from Llorkh stationed here. One is the commander, Tarbit Ruddn (hm, fighter lvl 5, AL: NE). The others all are level 1 and 2 fighters. At any given time, five Lord's Men will be on duty patrolling the village for an eight-hour shift, five will be awake but off duty for eight hours and five will be sleeping for 8 hours. Ruddn and Ivarzin usually sleep from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

2 - House of the Tithing Hand - Temple to Iyachtu Xvim. Ivarzin, although a wizard, also is a fanatic follower of Xvim's church. He built this temple in Orlbar and the priest's cottage next to it, but to date, the church has sent no priest to Orlbar, so it serves only as an untended shrine to Xvim. However, it is clear to the Lord's Men of Orlbar that they would be wise to pay their respects to Xvim regularly, if they want to prosper. Ivarzin also has given the Lord's Men the order to spread Xvim's faith among the villagers, and those who seek to curry the Zhents' favor visit the shrine regularly, although most villagers in truth worship only Chauntea. Because there is no priest in Orlbar at present, Ivarzin allows Ruddn to use the priest's house as his quarters. And because Ruddn has an overriding fear of vampires, the cottage usually reeks of garlic, making it a real question of duty for the soldiers who pay their respects there.

3 - Kolyan Family Farm. Indirovich Kolyan (hm, Lvl 0, AL: NG), a native of Rashemen, was generally considered to be the obman of Orlbar. That title has been used historically in the village to describe the man the village considers to be its leader. Kolyan was the man who more or less ruled Orlbar, at least until the Zhents came, and he remained the man to whom villagers turned as their leader until his recent death. His son and daughter, Ismark and Ireena, still live in the house. Kolyan's wife, Ludmilla, was taken by Count Rughan some 20 years ago and turned into one of the count's vampire brides.

4 - Ghost Creek Inn. Most folks would argue that the term *inn* is an exaggeration. This is above all the slightly dilapidated farm of the widower Ruwald Huthgar (hm, lvl 0, AL: NG) and his family. By day, Huthgar tends to his sheep, like most of the rest of Orlbar's residents. At night, he opens his small tavern, where he sells Desert Brau beer from Llorkh at 6 copper mules per quart/liter tankard and his home distilled rye whisky at the same price per shot/0.1 liter. Huthgar's beer price is high only because he has to pay the Zhents an exorbitant price for the beer. He also will fry up lamb chops and potatoes at a silver wheel a serving. On any given night 1d2+3 off duty Lord's Men, 1d4+1 on duty Lord's Men and 2d4+4 villagers will be in the tavern. The villagers will buy no food; 50% of the Lord's Men will buy food. There also is a 70% chance that Ruddn will be drinking there. Once every tenday, some of the D'tarig also will come to the inn to drink. Rare visitors to Orlbar can stay in any of the six drafty guest rooms above the tavern and a price of 8 copper mules per night.

The Mood in Orlbar

The average alignment of Orlbar's residents is neutral with an inclination toward evil (N(E)). This does not mean that the people of Orlbar are evildoers as such. In their daily lives, they have a mix of alignments, as would be the case anywhere else. But when it comes to choices, almost anyone who lives in Orlbar will pick an evil alternative for an outsider before sacrificing oneself.

Since the days of Netheril, the folk of Orlbar, their fathers and their grandfathers before them not only have been relegated to being nothing more than simple farmers and shepherds, but also to serving as cattle for the vampire count who lurks 1,000 feet/300m above them and feeds upon them, drinking their lifeblood. Even worse, many villagers have lost beloved daughters over the years to Count Rughan, who makes vampire brides of their children.

Because of the *Fog of Containment* which their undead master maintains over the valley, only about 20% of the villagers ever succeed in leaving their native valley alive. Those who do seldom are foolish enough to return. The average villager then tends to have the attitude that there are two groups of people in Faerûn - *us* and *them*. And they take a bit of joy in letting *them* - usually free of their vampire count curse - share a part of their burden.

The villagers of Orlbar do not welcome outsiders; to the contrary, they are seen as a threat. When the PCs arrive in Orlbar, they may find that the locals are ready to attack them with seemingly little provocation. Those who live in Orlbar have learned through experience that adventurers usually mean bad times for them.

Most adventurers who have tried to enter the vampire count's castle die on the other side of the chasm, without ever reaching it. Those who do make it into the castle die there. To the villagers' knowledge, no one ever has returned from *Hrad Qoqid Duhmm* alive.

That does not mean that all adventurers have been total failures, however. Before being killed by Tarrh, or in a few cases being turned into vampires themselves, some have succeeded in killing quite a number of Tarrh's servants, at times even some of his vampire *"brides"* in their coffins.

Although the farmers and shepherds of Orlbar are hardly equipped to do so, Tarrh has made it clear to them that he expects them to keep adventurers from using Orlbar as a staging point for raids on his castle. Anytime Tarrh awakens in the morning to find that havoc or destruction have been wreaked upon his servants - living or undead - he visits the village in the following night. If he's only slightly angry, he drains one villager of his blood, leaving a corpse behind. If Tarrh is more than slightly angry, he may kidnap one of the village daughters, take her to *Hrad Qoqid Duhmm*, and in the following days turn her into a new vampire bride.

Many generations of Orlbar residents have paid the price of allowing adventurers to slip through their village to the count's fortress. They are tired enough of paying this price that they may resort to poison or trying to kill adventurers in their sleep, rather than suffering themselves.

8. Llorkh

Small Town, Non-Standard (Zhentish). AL: LE. 800 gp limit. Assets: 1,500,000gp. Population: 1,000 (Mixed, 95% Human, 2% D'Tarig, 2% dwarf, 1% half elf, halfling etc.)

NORTHERN JOURNEY GAME MASTERS ONLY

As mentioned when the PCs found the bodies of the Zhentarim operatives in the Delimbyir Valley, the Zhentarim are becoming interested in the PCs. Sememmon, the Lord of Darkhold, had placed magic upon Llaneth which makes it possible for Sememmon to know whether Llaneth lives. Because the magic has failed, Sememmon is rather certain that Llaneth is dead. A Zhentarim agent in Zelbross also has just learned from travelers coming from Loudwater that a group fitting the PCs' description was in Loudwater and had decided to brave the risk of the attacks in the Greyvale and proceed on toward Llorkh.

After receiving this news, Sememmon no longer was merely interested in the PCs; he now is fascinated with them. He wants, as always, to know what their story is, but he also has evolved a fixation about their journey. He is rather convinced that the PCs are being driven, for whatever reason, directly into his lap in Darkhold, and the idea tantalizes him, because his curiosity over the magic that the PCs and their sigylls carry has become overwhelming for the dark mage.

He has no doubt now, that the PCs are proceeding toward Llorkh. He does not want the PCs to begin perceiving the Zhentarim as having a finger in their soup, so, on the previous evening, he sent Geildarr a command, one that has the puppet ruler of Llorkh tearing his hair out, a command that caused Geildarr's underlings to have a horrible night, filled with Geildarr's frustrated rage.

Sememmon's command was easy enough to understand, but Geildarr is fully aware that its *successful* execution is filled with potential risks, and he has no desire to have Sememmon displeased with him. Sememmon has commanded Geildarr to see to it that the PCs make it through Zhent territory unharmed, in other words from Llorkh to past the ruins of Dekanter and the lands of the Beast Lord.

The PCs, however, are to be led to believe that they are viewed with suspicion by Geildarr and the Lord's Men and that the minions of the Beast Lord are properly unfriendly. But the PCs are to get through unharmed, and without having the slightest suspicion that the Zhents are giving them a helping hand. Geildarr sees this assignment as being so risky that he deems it nearly impossible.

Northern Journey introduces in Llorkh a new (and unofficial school) where assassin monks of Iyachtu Xvim are being trained. The training center is a highly secret operation of the Xvimist High Tyrannar Fzoul Chembryl in Zhentil Keep. Because of the secrecy, no strangers are allowed in the Xvimist compound.

In addition, persons who have been known to have been nosy about the compound or to have talked about it in public have simply vanished, never to be seen again in Llorkh. This is an important site in the *NJ* adventure. Your PCs will hear of it again when the encounter Chembryl in Zhentil Keep.

ALL GAME MASTERS

If you are not running *Northern Journey*, you can eliminate the Xvimist assassins school, if you wish. This facility is necessary only for the *NJ* adventure. In this part, there are no lengthy text encounters. Rather, this part is a case study for open roleplaying totally dependent upon the PCs' actions. At this point you can give the PCs the Llorkh map, if you wish.

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Late in the afternoon, the Dawn Pass Trail brings you near the city. The trail bridges *(the bridge is not on the map)* the Greyflow just west of the city wall, from the looks, just completed. *(There is no official mention of a wall.)* The river flows then southward from the Dawn Pass Trail, which skirts the outside of the city wall. On the river, outside of the city, stand warehouses and a dock where several shallow barges are tied (still west of the area on the map). The river continues on southward and a bit to the east, crossing through a heavy grating in the southwest wall into the southern part of the city.

Inside the city wall, Llorkh consists of two low, broad hills. A small fortress castle is atop the eastern hill and two strange purple buildings, possibly a temple complex, stand upon the top of the western hill. A number of buildings, from their looks farms, stand on the north side of the Dawn Pass Trail, outside the city wall. As far as you can make out, there is only one gate into the city, in the middle of the north wall. On the northwestern corner of the wall, on the other side of the Dawn Pass Trail, stands a large, wooden watch tower. Several soldiers also guard the trail at this point. One hears that Llorkh is an evil town, and the tales no doubt are true, although that contention is hard to confirm from your location. From here, Llorkh looks much like any city of 2,000 or so with a strong wall.

Game Master: Lead the PCs into the inn known as Tantarn's House.

When the mines near Llorkh still were productive, Llorkh had a population of about 2,000 humans and 300 dwarves(official). The mines were worked out, the clanless Ammarindar dwarves began moving to Mithral Hall and the Zhents came with their Lord's Men. That accelerated the dwarves' migration from the Greyvale and led to a gradual exodus of humans from the city.

Today, Llorkh has a population of about 1,000 humans (unofficial), 70 D'tarig (small humans related to dwarves and native to Anauroch) and a handful of dwarves. Several buildings in and near Llorkh stand vacant today. The human populations includes 400 Lord's Men, 350 native Llorkh residents who remained after the Zhent occupation, 50 renegade Bedine from Anauroch and 200 other people who have come to Llorkh since the Zhent occupation. This group consists of Zhentarim and merchants and craftsmen who support and live from them and rabble.

When Geildarr became Llorkh's Lord, his operations were too heavy-handed, and this above all was responsible for the destruction of Llorkh's agriculture. When the Lord's Men needed provisions, they confiscated livestock and produce of the local farmers, defining this as taxation, rather than buying what they needed, which would have assured the economic survival of agriculture in the eastern Greyvale. Within six months' of the Zhent occupation, Geildarr's policies had turned Llorkh into a city lying in the middle of rich, fertile farmlands that were, for the most part, lying fallow.

Geildarr had no choice but to begin importing meat and produce from the Delimbyir Valley, particularly pigs and calves from the Secomber area. The rising demand from Llorkh, paid for in cash, led to substantially increased farm production in the Delimbyir Valley. If you are using the Goldhammer Clan dwarves, this now is leading to substantial but unsaleable surpluses in the free areas west of Llorkh, due to the closure of the Dawn Pass Trail east of Loudwater by the Goldhammer Clan's attacks.

The high cost of imported food forced the Zhentarim to take action to resuscitate the dying farms in the Greyvale. The Zhentarim paid premiums to farmers in the Moonsea area willing to move to Llorkh, and farms in Llorkh also were offered to a few farmers living in Daggerdale outside of Dagger Falls, who had been selling livestock and produce to the Zhentarim in Dagger Falls and now were in danger of reprisals from Randal Morn and his Freedom Fighters.

However, as one might expect, these imported farmers were people with problems who were not the most capable farmers. They did restore a part of the agricultural production in the Greyvale, and the Zhents became quite successful in raising beef cattle in the open grasslands of the Greyvale, but they still were partially dependent upon imported meat from Secomber and Zelbross.

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Llorkh also has had to weather a small religious war (unofficial), although it was of interest mainly only to the priests and the Zhentarim authorities rather than the local population. After the occupation of Llorkh, a high-ranking (official) priest of Cyric named Mythkar Leng came to the city and established the local Temple of the Black Sun. In the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), after the destruction of Zhentil Keep, a group of Xvimists came to Llorkh (unofficial), and after what locals call *The Night of the Godson's Revenge,* a patrol of the Lord's Men found the bodies of Leng and the other Cyricist priests with throats slit on the loading ramp of the slaughterhouse (unofficial - there is no official WotC information that Leng is dead).

The following day, Kharad Darr (LE hm P13), a high priest of Iyachtu Xvim, along with three other Xvimist priests took over the temple and rededicated it to Xvim as the Temple of the Seeing Hand. The assassination of Leng and the other priests of Cyric led to turmoil in Darkhold that was settled (on the surface at least) by a command from Sememmon to the effect that all fighting between the Xvimists and Cyricists in Llorkh would end immediately, that both religions would be tolerated in Llorkh and that the Cyricists could open a new temple in the city (but Sememmon did not return the old temple to them).

A priest of Cyric named Karsen Baern (unofficial - LE hm P10) came to Llorkh in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR) and opened a new temple to the Dark Sun in a long-empty building that once had sold mining supplies to the dwarves who left Llorkh. Since that time, two lesser priests of Cyric also have come to Llorkh to join Baern there. The Xvimists and Cyricists continue to hate each other, but there have been no conflicts.

Some think the churches take Sememmon's threat seriously, that he will destroy both temples and their priests and declare Llorkh a church-free city where temples are prohibited, should a new conflict begin. But others scoff at this idea, saying Sememmon never would have the courage to defy Fzoul Chembryl. The think the new strifeleaders in Llorkh will enjoy a Xvimist funeral as soon as Fzoul tires of them.

This is the environment the PCs are coming into. Geildarr has orders from Sememmon that the PCs are to be hassled enough to seem credible, but that they are to pass through Llorkh and travel through the Dawn Pass and past Dekanter without being harmed. Geildarr can see to it that the PCs come to no official harm and that they will not be molested by sober Lord's Men, but he is not capable of protecting them from drunken off-duty Lord's Men and murderous thieves.

This is the setting your adventure group is coming into. We leave the translation of these events up to you. The PCs should be hassled by the customs soldiers at the western customs tower but eventually be allowed into the city, and they should be warned that Tantarn's House is the only safe place to stay. How long they remain in Llorkh is up to you and them. It should be clear to the PCs that their animals are in desperate need of rest and they should buy new horses, at double the prices in the PHB.

Game Master: The following paragraphs are valid only if you have used the Goldhammer Clan. If not, jump to the section *NPCs of Llorkh.*

The closing of the Dawn Trail Pass by the Goldhammer Clan is creating growing economic problems, not only for Llorkh but also for the cities and villages of the Delimbyir Valley, such as Loudwater, Zelbross and Secomber. The folk downstream may despise the Zhents, but they have been doing a lot of business with them, and the sudden disappearance of this business due to the Goldhammer attacks has been economically disruptive.

The most serious problems in Llorkh are food shortage and the lack of cash flow due to the slack in business. When the old human population began to evacuate Llorkh, many of the local farmers were among the first refugees. Geildarr was unwise in his takeover of the city, and his lack of wisdom has diminished his stand substantially within the ranks of the Zhentarim. If the route from Llorkh to Loudwater can sometime be reopened and business revived, many of the Zhents in Llorkh expect that Sememmon will see to it that Geildarr is assassinated and replaced by someone far more competent in dealing with the problems that are faced in maintaining a distant outpost bordering on *enemy* lands.

The Goldhammer Clan has destroyed the herds of beef cattle in the Greyvale, reducing local production only to grains and summer vegetables. The loss of Greyvale beef was partially compensated for by the occupation of Orlbar and the redirection of Orlbar's mutton to Llorkh's markets, but mutton shipments from Orlbar also has been cut off by the dwarves.

At present, the people of Llorkh are in great difficulty. Local bread, seasonal vegetables and beer are available. Produce and grain seem to grow closer to the city than the Goldhammer Clan is willing to attack. The last fresh mutton from Orlbar is being sold at exorbitant prices. The only other meat that's available are salted conserves in barrels being imported from Darkhold. Other merchandise that can't be produced locally is becoming scarce and also is high priced.

Of course, very few people in Llorkh can pay these prices, because the lack of caravan and barge traffic has left a large share of the population without work and therefore without pay. Thievery - with victims often laying dead in the street - is becoming ever more frequent.

The Zhentarim in Darkhold and the Citadel of the Raven are aware of the economic difficulties in Llorkh, but the Zhentarim are not about to develop a welfare state there. The people of the city are caught between a rock and a hard place. They have no choice but to support the Zhentarim. No one in Llorkh is naive enough to believe that white knights from the Lord's Alliance one day will march into their city and liberate it. The people of Llorkh who remained have been written off to the man as being filthy Zhent collaborators.

At the same time, enough of the Lord's Men have seen the (official) alternative route the Zhents are opening to the south of Llorkh and have spread the word in the city. Most residents think the chances are fair that the Zhentarim in the East one day will abandon them along with Geildarr and his Lord's Men to their fate. Cargoes from Anauroch already are being detoured through the Lonely Moor past Dekanter and through Bleached Bones Pass into the Southwood, where the Zhentarim have built a fortified caravan station. This new trade route winds through the wood, ferries the Delimbyir on rafts northeast of Zelbross and turns onto the Delimbyir Route.

What rankles the folk of Llorkh the most, however, is that the Zhentarim have done little to deal with their unknown enemy in the Greyvale (i.e. the Goldhammer Clan). They reason either that they're doing hardship service for the Zhentarim in the remote Greyvale, or in other cases, that they have to put up with the Zhentarim and should, therefore, at least be able to expect protection.

Statistics for Geildarr, Lord of Llorkh, the Ruinlord of Iyachtu Xvim, Kharad Darr, and the Strifeleader of Cyric, Karsen Baern, are under *Llorkh - the Key NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

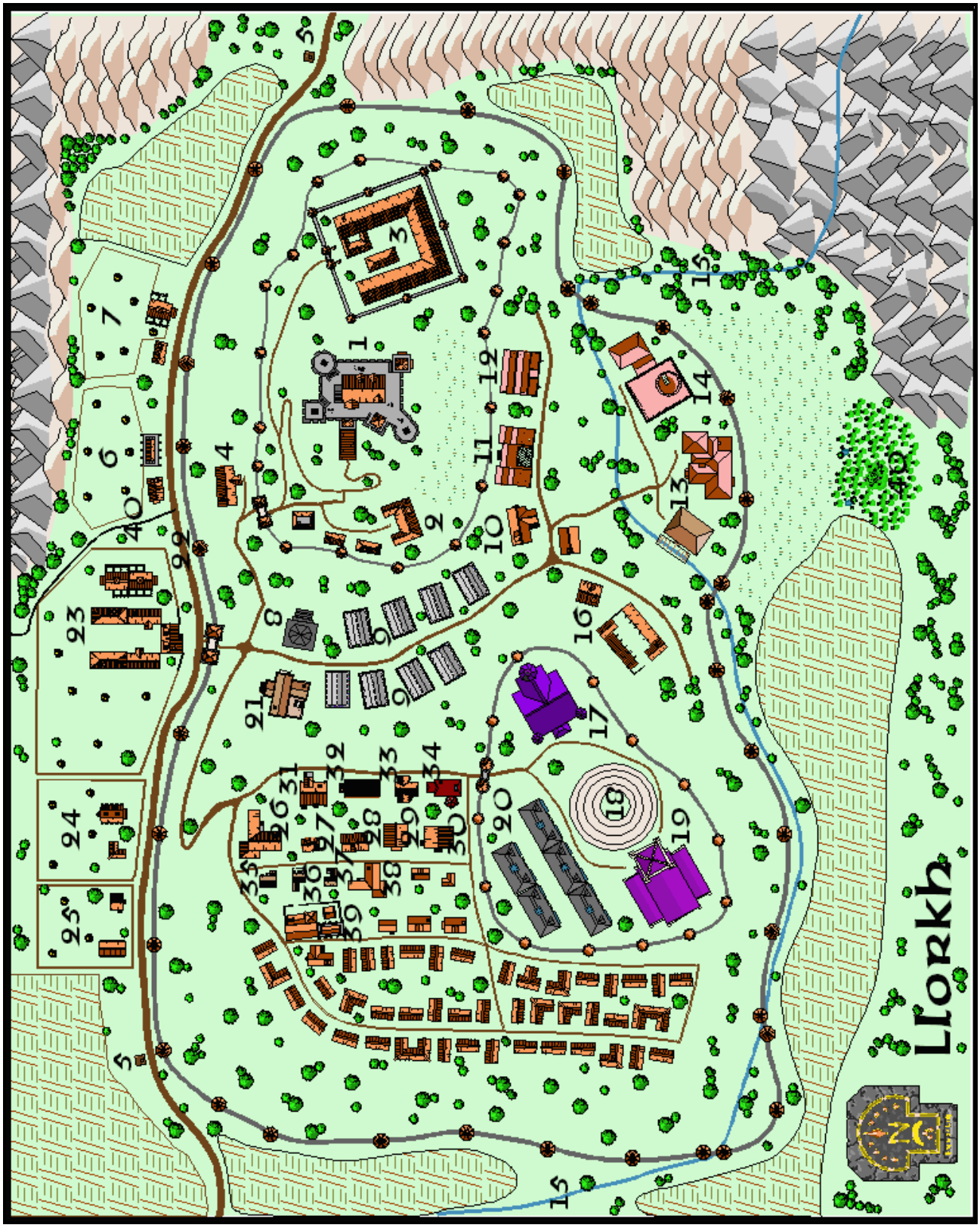
Map of Llorkh

NOTE: If you are not running *Northern Journey* and do not wish to use the Xvimist school for assassin monks, we suggest you turn the site into a Xvimist temple complex with residence halls for visiting Zhentarim. The map information below tells you which locations in Llorkh are official. There was no official WotC map of Llorkh at the time of this writing, therefore, the map itself is unofficial.

1 - Lord's Keep. This is a tall, fortified castle where Geildarr has his seat. There are dungeons beneath the keep, and the Zhentilar serving as Lord's Men remark from time to time that there also are tunnels leading off from the dungeons that connect to Underdark and also allegedly to the domain of the Beast Lord.

2 - City Administration.

3 - Garrison of the Lord's Men. The garrison holds 400 soldiers who call themselves the Lord's Men but serve the Zhentarim.



Llorkh

4 - Lalindra's Festhall: This is one of the most raucous bars, dancehalls and perverse bordellos in Faerûn. This festhall offers virtually any service a customer is able to pay for. The madame of the hall, Lalindra (CN hf T18), is not for sale. But everything else is. The absolute immorality of this festhall makes it a perfect cover for Lalindra's real nature as a Harper agent. Lalindra is not however a typical Harper. Questions of good and evil more or less go by her. During the brief period when the Zhentarim took over Iriaebor (Year of the Wyvern and Year of the Wave - 1363 and 1364 DR), Lalindra's parents were caught stealing from an important Zhentarim. Lady Ravendas, the Zhent ruler in the city, had them publicly hanged. After that the young Lalindra vowed to exact never-ending revenge from the Zhents. When she offered to do so in Llorkh, the Harpers in Berdusk agreed to use her services, despite reservations about her amorality. Lalindra already has arranged the death of three high captains of the Lord's Men, and in one case, she managed to frame the next-in-line for the murder, and he was publicly hanged.

5 - Customs Towers. These 50 foot/15 m high towers guard the Dawn Pass Trail from the East and the West. Atop each tower are six Lord's Men (1 fighter lvl 2 and 5 fighters lvl 1), two of whom man a large ballista and four of whom are armed with long bows. Beneath the tower are nine men (1 fighter lvl 3, 7 fighters lvl 1 and 1 priest, lvl 2-4 - west only) armed with spears or long swords and long bows. The men below the tower wear chain mail and carry shields (AC: 4). They will stop and interrogate all who attempt to enter the city. One priest of either Xvim and Cyric is required by Geildarr to be present at the west tower at all times, to detect lies. All suspicious travelers are detained in the dungeon beneath the Lord's Keep until they can be interrogated by the Zhentarim, who usually are in no hurry. Anyone caught lying automatically qualifies as being suspicious.

6 - Eitel's Farm. Lukas Eitel (hm, Fighter lvl 1, AL: LE), also an outcast spy from Daggerdale, was given this farm by the Zhentarim. Eitel understands that the Zhentarim know little mercy. He understands that the farm was a farewell gift, and he is doing his best to keep it going, but he understands little about agriculture and makes many mistakes.

7 - Rethram's Farm. Berthold Rethram (hm, lvl 0, AL: NG) is one of the few natives of Llorkh who has remained despite the Zhentarim. The Rethram family has owned the farm for five generations, and Berthold is reluctant to abandon it to the Zhents. He still hopes that the Zhents one day will be driven from Llorkh, although he is not really particularly optimistic that this will come to pass in his own lifetime.

8 - House of the Black Sun - Temple to Cyric. Strifeleader Karsen Baern (hm, Priest lvl 10, AL: CE) is assisted by two junior strifeleaders of levels 7 and 2.

9 - Zhentarim Warehouses.

10 - Nintars Leather- and Saddlewares, Nintar is the bastard son of a Zhentilar and a Bedine woman, but he came to Llorkh before the Zhents arrived. He runs a clean business and is almost indispensable for the Zhents. Nintar earns well and has four bodyguards in his pay at present. He seldom leaves the building where his shop his, which also includes his lodgings.

11 - Gindal, Armorer, and 12 - Birnung, Weaponsmith. The crotchety dwarven brothers stayed when the rest of their kind fled Llorkh. They have earned a small fortune making weapons for the Lord's Men, caravan members and, from time to time, high-ranking Zhentilar who have given them well-paid commissions for premium quality. Weapons and armor from the brothers begin at double the PHB prices and go upward from there. A small, stone wall surrounds these neighboring buildings, which resemble miniature dwarven fortresses. The are no other capable weapons- or armor makers in Llorkh, and the Lord's Men rely heavily upon the services of Gindal (LN, dm, fighter lvl 11) and Birnung (LN, dm, fighter lvl 13). For this reason, there always are 1d4+2 of the Lord's Men (fighters lvls 1 and 2) guarding the wall around the brothers' buildings, where they also live. Gindal and Birnung *never* leave their smithies by any detectable surface route. It is rumored that they have connections with the Underdark beneath their buildings, however.

13 - Grey Mill and Grain Elevator. This large mill on the Greyflow is owned by Hrendall Parth. Four journeyman millers and six apprentices work for him. Hrendall mills all types of local grain and also has a stamper mill for pressing vegetable oil from seeds. The Lord's Men guard the mill well, and it is protected by magic against fire. The mill is a critical asset. Without it, Llorkh would starve.

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14 - Desert Brau Brewery and Malting House. Desert Brau is the only beer that's sold in Llorkh. It once was a beer with a good reputation in much of the North, but the old brewmaster left the city shortly after the Zhents came, and the Zhents gave the brewery to Etaldar Gibb as a payoff. Gibb had been an innkeeper who brewed his own house beer in Scornubel. His beer there too had the reputation of being *"highly affordable,"* which translated to *"cheap but lousy."* After he took over Desert Brau, the beer in Llorkh became lousy but not cheap, because it's the only beer the Zhents let into town. Since the trouble with the Goldhammer Clan, Gibb's beer has gotten even more watery, because he has to compete with Hrendall Parth for barley. Parth mills a barley flour that's mixed in with wheat and rye flour to extend the supply, which also diminishes the amount of barley Gibb can turn into malt.

15 - Greyflow River.

16 - Khardar's Horse Sales. Khardar (hm lvl 0, AL: N) has good horses. But his prices these days are double those in the PHB.

17 - House of the Seeing Hand - Temple to Iyachtu Xvim. Ruinlord Kharad Darr (hm, Priest lvl 13, AL: LE) is assisted by two Hatemasters of levels 8 and 5 and an Oppressor of lvl 3.

18 - House of the Seeing Hand - Arena. Assassin monks train here, at times in battles that lead to the death of some students.

19 - House of the Seeing Hand - Assassin Monks' Training School.

20 - House of the Seeing Hand - Student Housing.

21 - Slaughterhouse. This operation is headed by a retired Zhentilar named Kurd Bhurrig (half-orc male, fighter lvl 6, AL: CE).

22 - Dawn Trail Pass.

23 - City Farm. The master is Kardulln (hm, fighter lvl 5, AL: LE), one of Geidarr's Lord's Men. The farm itself runs on slave labor.

24 - Garnan's Farm. Owner Garnan Keeth (hm, Lvl 0, AL: NG) is a native of Llorkh who would like nothing more than to leave.

25 - Reno's Farm. The owner is Reno Tebell (hm Thief lvl 4, AL: CE). Tebell was a Zhentarim spy in Dagger Falls. After Randal Morn recaptured Dagger Falls, Tebell was spirited away to Llorkh and given the farm, which he has driven to virtual ruin.

26 - Rudlar's Travel Gear. Almost any supplies or outfitting travelers or caravans need can be found here. Rudlar's (LN, hm, lvl 0) prices are double those in the PHB, but times are hard, business barely exists and he's running out of money. PCs who are skilled hagglers can bring him down to PHB prices.

27 - Reinacek the Schneider. Reinacek (LG, hm, Lvl 0), now nearing age 60, was born and raised in Llorkh, considers it his home and has no intention of leaving. He'd prefer that the Zhents weren't here, but he knows how to hold his tongue and survives without trouble. Although it's little known, some of Reinacek's best customers these days are the girls at Lalindra's Festhall, who order their working clothes from him (except for leather specialties, which Nintar makes). Although he leaves the impression he's a poor man, the festhall girls pay him well, and he is in no danger of starving.

28 - The Wet Wizard. A mediocre tavern with six mediocre single rooms for travelers. In better times prices were high. They still are for the drinks - Llorkh Desert Brau at 8 copper mules per quart/liter tankard, cheap Moonsea wine at 1 to 5 gold talers a bottle and and so-called dwarven spirits that even the lowest dwarf would be ashamed to distill at 2 gold talers a shot/0.1 liter. Food, as almost everywhere in Llorkh, consists of imported salted meats from barrels, usually used in soups, and local vegetables and breads, at high prices, of course.

Because there are few travelers to speak of, the dusty and musty rooms go cheap, 2 silver wheels a night. The (unofficial) tavernkeeper is a half orc named Zhorschh (hom, fighter lvl 8, AL: CN) who has a surprisingly good personality for his mixed breed and also the ability to put troublemakers quickly asleep. It's believed that Zhorschh named his house after Geildarr, not intending to be complimenting. He drops remarks now and then that leave the impression he's not a great fan of the Zhents.

29 - Durk's Fishing and Hunting Wares

30 - Drover's Cup. A dusty version of the *Wet Wizard,* but without rooms. Caravan drovers, who usually tent outside the city wall, like this watering hole. Because caravan traffic has come to a stop, the (unofficial) tavernkeeper, Ferad Nethtar (hm, lvl 0, N) has an empty house most evenings.

31 - Argan's Furs

32 - Bedine Desert Wares. A group of Bedine brothers runs this shop, which sells outfitting for desert travel and items made by Bedine nomads. There are rumors in Llorkh that the brothers really are assassins for hire. They are that, but a bit more. The brothers - Elkhim (hm, fighter lvl 11, AL:LE) and Nulamm (hm, thief lvl 16, AL: LE) are agents of the Kraken Society.

33 - The 10 Bells. Tavernkeeper Larnad Silmandar (hem, wizard lvl2/fighter lvl 2, AL: CN,) once had an unusual watering hole that offered decent wine and specialties from Waterdeep. Since the attacks of the Goldhammer Clan, Larnad has the same drinks and food as any other tavern in Llorkh (s. Wet Wizard). He also has three dusty single rooms without service available, going right now for a silver wheel a night.

34 - Mage's Pockets Imports. Very few people in Llorkh have ever entered this (unofficial) strange shop, which opened shortly after the Zhents came. Customers were travelers who had the look of mages and visiting mages of the Zhentarim. The owner is a seemingly reclusive mage named Kondovor (hm, Transmuter lvl 16, AL: LE), who sells spell components. It's said and believed in Llorkh that Kondovor's shop is protected with magic, and this well may be true. Twice already the charred remnants of humans were found in front of his shop after loud explosions in the night, leading one to the conclusion they may have tried to break into the shop and in doing so set off dangerous warding spells. Kondover is actually an agent of the Dragon Cult who spies upon the Zhents and (traveling from Llorkh through the Underdark) is searching for a legendary red dragon that the cult believes to be lairing in the Greypeaks north of the Greyvale.

35 - Llorkh Spices. Tethel the Grey (hm, thief lvl 16, AL: NE), an agent of the Zhentarim, runs this shop, a front of the Zhentarim, which specializes in selling various kinds of exotic contraband to merchants who visit Llorkh.

36 - Alandar's Maps: Map making is a hobby for Alandar (hm, wizard 22, AL: N,), which he uses to pay for and support his obsession, the gain of knowledge. He is a sage whom people seldom call upon, but who can provide almost any information needed about the Delimbyir Valley, Dekanter, Pelleor's Prairie, the Greycloak Mountains, Western Anauroch, etc. Given a bit of time, Alandar also would be able to come up with the information that the coat of arms the PCs saw belonged one to the estranged Ammarinder clan of dwarves known as Goldhammer, whose halls were beneath Greyvale a part of the Delimbyir Valley.

37 - Salandras Woven Wares. Salandra Liss (hf, Lvl 0, AL: NE) is a servant of the Zhentarim who sells contraband textiles being offered by the Black Network. Most of her business is with traveling merchants, and she usually sells in lots rather than individual items.

38 - The Six Shields. The worst, dirtiest and most dangerous inn and tavern in Llorkh. This house, owned by a former Zhentil Keep innkeeper named Karmedy Ogroggl (hm, fighter lvl 7, AL: NE) is nothing more than a brawling second barracks for Zhent soldiers wearing the robes of the Lord's Men.

39 - Tantarn's House. Tantarn comes from Iriaebor. He is a decent and relatively honest innkeeper, and he runs the only *clean* inn in Llorkh. As an innkeeper in Iriaebor, Tantarn collaborated with the Zhents, and he was forced to flee the city after Ravendas' fall, to save his neck. His involvement with the Zhents in Llorkh is minimal, but he does listen in on anything of interest that he may overhear in his house and report it to contacts from the Lord's Keep.

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Tantarn offers Llorkh Desert Brau at 7 copper mules per quart/liter tankard and cheap Moonsea wine at 5 silver wheels to 3 gold talers a bottle. He's also learned to use what is available to make delicious stews and soups that one won't find elsewhere, at 5 silver wheels a bowl. And for those who can afford it, he still can obtain scarce Orlbar mutton, with dishes selling at 1 to 2 gold talers a serving.

9. Dawn Pass

Game Master: This part begins after the PCs Leave Llorkh.

Once again, it's off into the sunrise on the appropriately named Dawn Pass Trail. You've heard more than once, that a long, dangerous journey through No Man's Land awaits you. Llorkh was your last civilized stop in what people refer to as the North. The next speck of civilization on your map is the village of Yarthrain, an estimated two rides to the south, in what's known as the Backlands of the Sword Coast. Never mind that the coast itself is some 600 miles/1,000 km farther to the west.

On the way to Yarthrain, you'll have to make it through the rest of the Dawn Pass and the lands controlled by the Beast Lord. After that, you'll be in territory so uncivilized that neither the Zhents nor the Harpers claim to have any influence within it. A dazzling prospect in all, described with names like the Lonely Moor, Chelimber Moor and Pelleor's Prairie. But that's the direction in which your sigylls are steering you.

Within an hour after leaving Llorkh, you've gained 600 feet/180 m in altitude, and the pass has narrowed considerably. The fertile grasslands have yielded to a rocky mountain pass that supports little vegetation. What does grow is mostly scrubby. Finding camping spots will be no problem, however. There are regular locations where Zhent caravans have stopped for the night, and many of these are even stocked with firewood.

This description fits the terrain for the next four days. The trail almost always goes straight forward, to the southwest. On dry days, dry creek beds follow the trail. When it rains, these turn quickly into unpredictable, roaring mountain streams. In these days, likely encounters are with brigands, bands (but not tribes) of orcs, bugbears, goblins etc. Stage these encounters as you wish or as you need them. The motivation is always robbery.

Game Master: On the fourth day out, read the following:

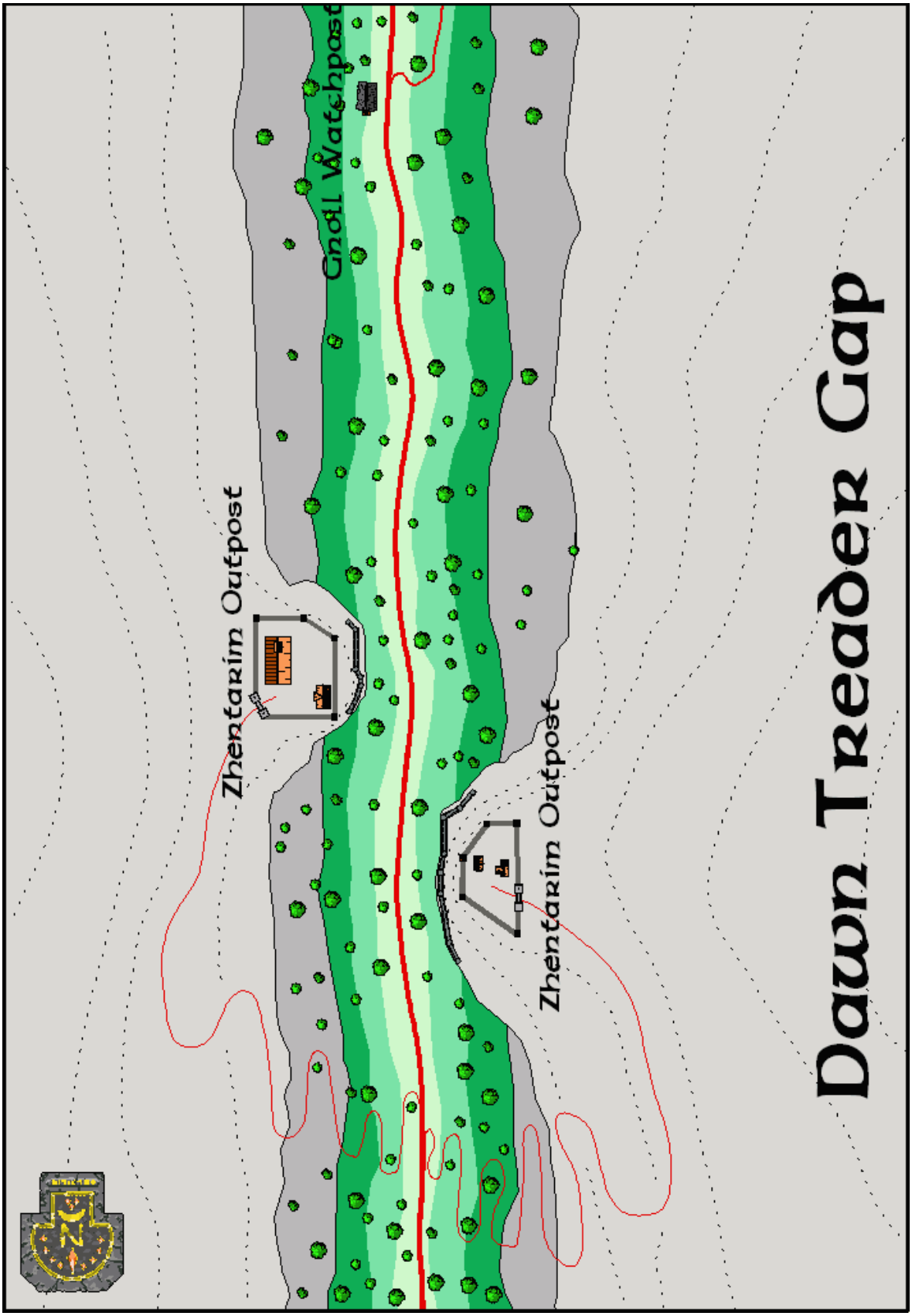
On your fourth day after leaving Llorkh, you near what apparently is the highest point of the Dawn Trail Pass. The steep slopes of the Greypeaks hug close to the Zhent wagon trail and climb high above the road. You're entering Dawntreader Gap. You can see that fortifications have been built into both walls of the gap, about 100 feet/30 m above the road, and there are signs of motion behind openings in the fortifications. A group of a dozen gnolls patrols the road about 150 feet/45 m ahead of you. They're signaling for you to stop. There doesn't seem to be any way to avoid this encounter, except perhaps by turning around and heading back toward Llorkh.

Game Master: PCs' reaction, then:

Once you're within shouting distance, one of the gnolls, who's relatively fluent in common, begins interrogating you: *"Who you be? Where you go? Have badges, or come to work in Beast Lord mines?"*

Haggling should begin here. The captain of the Lord's Men in the fortifications above has orders that the PCs should pass unharmed, but the gnolls also have orders that riders without Zhent badges, all travelers must either pay tribute to the Beast Lord or work as slaves for him. A tribute of 1,000 gold talers is expected. If the PCs resist too much, the captain will order his men to shoot them with arrows tipped with a sleeping poison (Save vs. poison or sleep in 1d4 rounds). The sleeping PCs then will be searched and relieved of 1,000 gold talers. If they have too little money, the captain has orders to pay the gnolls the difference while the PCs sleep. The Zhents will do all they can to avoid killing the PCs. After the tribute has been paid the PCs will be allowed to ride on.

Game Master: In the road the PCs will encounter a gnoll leader and 11 Gnolls. In the ramparts are 10 Lord's Men, 2 Gnoll leaders and 24 Gnolls. Game Master: For statistics on the Lord's Men see the encounter *Dawn Pass Ramparts* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* For statistics on the Gnolls, see the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium.*



Dawn Treader Pass

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After allowing you to ride out of Dawntreader Gap, you see one of the gnolls climbing up to one of the lower peaks above you, but one that remains in clear view to the southeast.

Game Master: Pause for PC reactions.

A bit later, when you look behind you, you see why the gnoll climbed the peak. He apparently was ordered to signal far and wide over the lands before you that you're coming. Atop the peak the gnoll had climbed burns a huge bonfire with green flames.

Game Master: Pause for PC reactions.

At least you're traveling downhill now. Dawntreader Gap is soon behind you. The Dawn Pass Trail bends westward now and turns slightly, so you see only the descending Zhent trail and mountains before you.

The next planned encounter occurs in four days. As was the case west of Dawntreader Gap, a dry creek beds follow the trail on dry days. When it rains, these turn quickly into unpredictable, roaring mountain streams. In these days, likely encounters are with brigands, bands (but not tribes) of orcs, bugbears, goblins etc. Stage these encounters as you wish or as you need them. The motivation is always robbery. None of these attacks however will come from minions of the Beast Lord, who has been paid his tribute. If the PCs get into trouble, it's always possible that a band of gnolls serving the Beast Lord will attack the attackers, who are operating in the Beast Lord's territory without the Beast Lord's blessing. The gnolls are not interested in defending the PCs per se, only in destroying the renegade bands violating the Beast Lord's territory. The only descriptions until the next encounter explain what the PCs see on these days.

1st Day after Dawntreader Gap: Two hours after you begin riding, the trail takes its last turn and then a view of the foot of the Greypeaks opens before you. The valley floor is about 300 feet/90 m below you. In the distance, about 20 miles/35 km east of you, is a large forest, no doubt the *Weathercote Wood,* a forest that's the chilling topic of children's horror tales in the North. *Weathercote* was once a border forest of Netheril, and it's said that the forest still is a place of fell magic, blue mists and evil light. It's also been said that no magic from outside the forest can penetrate into it.

Fortunately, you can see that the trail runs at least 5 or 6 miles/10 km west of the forest at its nearest point. At the beginning of the valley floor below you, the road branches, with a second trail leading along the north edge of Weathercote. This is no doubt one of the Zhentarim trails into the great desert Anauroch. As far as you can see, the trail below twists through foothills of the Greypeaks and prairie land that stretches between Weathercote and the mountains. Below, the road constantly turns slightly to the southeast.

Game Master: After another hour:

After about an hour, you're out of the mountains and on the valley floor. The foothills remain rather stony, with wiry mountain brush the only vegetation. Tall grasses, a yard/ m and more high, cover the prairie, which has only isolated trees, mostly wiry conifers. The trail here is in good condition. But it seems improbable you'll have the closest part of Weathercote behind you before you make your camp for the night.

2nd Day after Dawntreader Gap: As far as you can see, it looks like the landscape will remain unchanged during the course of the day, but at least you'll be able to bring some distance between you and Weathercote.

3rd Day after Dawntreader Gap: Once again, it looks like the landscape will remain unchanged during the course of the day, but you've now left the shadow of Weathercote.

Game Master: At the end of the 3rd day:

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For the past several days, the trail has remained close to the foothills of the Greypeaks, when not actually going through them. This evening, however, you've reached the point where the Greypeaks and the trail each go their own way. The trail continues to bend gently toward the southeast, while the mountains turn now to the southwest. The trail before you leads through flat, open prairie. The only unexpected enemies you're likely to encounter here are those who can conceal themselves in the tall prairie grass, in other words, animals who move on all fours or creatures goblin size and smaller.

10. Ruins of Dekanter

***NJ* and the History of Dekanter:** According to official Realms publications from WotC, these mines originally were *"discovered"* by the humans of Netheril in -3859 DR, when the neighboring dwarven empire of Ammarindar was 1,340 years old. The Netherese used the mines as a main source of metal for 1,100 years, until the mines began to peter out. At that time, according to Ed Greenwood in FR 11 *Dwarves Deep,* the Netherese turned to the dwarves of Ammarindar for their needs for ore and metals.

Ammarindar was founded in -4100 DR, 240 years before Netheril, and it existed until the Year of the Curse (882 DR), when demons overran Ascalhorn and then poured on through the Underdark, also looting most of Ammarindar, killing or driving out the dwarves. The (unofficial) southernmost hall of Ammarindar, *Garnaugh,* borders directly on the northern edge of the mine ruins of Dekanter.

In -1658 DR, Netherese mining operations at Dekanter were forever closed. Three years later, the mines began being used as a Netherese test grounds for new spells. After the fall of Netheril, the mines were abandoned and fell into a state of disrepair. At some later time not clearly documented, the so-called Beast Lord and his minions moved into the mines, from fallen Garnaugh, we theorize unofficially. The upper levels of the mine ruins, as of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), were occupied primarily by 50 gargoyles and 500 goblins who serve the Beast Lord, according to the WotC boxed set *The North* by *slade* (1996).

The *Backlands* segment of *Northern Journey* is current in the Year of the Tankard (1371 DR). In this element, we've expanded upon the official definition in an unofficial manner. We describe only the upper and outer layers of the mines, showing you where the way to the depths can be found, but these are up to you to expand, if you wish to use them in your campaign.

In our concept of Dekanter, the realm of the Beast Lord extends beyond the mines into the (unofficial) fallen dwarven hall of Garnaugh, which is shown on the Ammarindar layers of the Delimbyir-Greyflow map. We conceive of mine shaft levels 3 and lower as still being rather sound, but the first two levels of Dekanter being in poor and relatively decrepit condition after years of use by goblins and later gnolls, both of whom maintained them shoddily at best.

Neither the Beast Lord nor his beholders, in our concept, use the mine entrance at Dekanter. They reach the mines through the Underdark, which has adequate and stable passages between the mines and the fallen dwarven hall Garnaugh. Within Garnaugh are entrances to the main routes of the Underdark, which give the Beast Lord clear access to the realms of drow and duergar as well as to the phaerimm of Anauroch.

The Beast Lord currently is engaged (officially) in an only loosely described war in the Underdark. Most sages (unofficially) believe the Beast Lord may be a mentally enslaved illithilich working for the Phaerimm and attempting to bring legions of the Underdark who otherwise are beyond their reach into their grip.

If your PCs use the mini-dungeon plan of the main entrance to Dekanter prepared for the *NJ* adventure, they will find that the first two levels are a series of not always stable, irregularly shaped shafts and tunnels which show years of makeshift, improvised and often inadequate maintenance by the goblins and gnolls of the Beast Lord. These tunnels were in bad condition when the Beast Lord took over the mines from the Underdark and Garnaugh, and the gnolls and goblins have done little to improve that condition.

Our mini-dungeon ends in level 5, at a stone door at Position 22, which leads into the heart of the mines, which we've done nothing to document. In the levels above, the PCs will encounter unstable tunnels, remnants of Netherese magical experiments, signs of ancient mining activity and the trappings of the gnolls who now use and guard the upper levels. The goblins no longer are allowed in these tunnels; their mission is to police the lands surrounding Dekanter, while orc tribes in the mountains control Bleached Bones Pass for the Beast Lord.

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We substantially increased the population over that listed in *The North,* filling it with about 500 gnolls and 2,000 goblins, as well as the 50 gargoyles officially documented.

In our vision, the heart of Dekanter and Garnaugh include the Beast Lord's treasure stores and the laboratories where he produces the experimental monsters described in *The North.* We envision a rear entrance to the mines near the western end of Bleached Bones Pass, one which leads into a long tunnel wide enough for caravan travel which extends back into the heart of the mine ruins of Dekanter, below the 5th level we've mapped.

Game Master: This encounter takes place in the afternoon of the 4th day after the PCs have left Dawntreader Gap. The number of gargoyles appearing equals the number of PCs and henchmen in your party.

Towards the noon hour, you notice several large specks, (*insert the number here*) of them, flying out of the Greypeaks in the West in your direction. It looks like a flock of 6 sizeable birds, flying maybe 500 feet/150 m above the terrain. They're a bit less than 10 miles/15 km away, too far to make out any details.

Game Master: About an hour and 15 minutes later:

It looks like there may be trouble brewing. The birds flying in your direction probably will reach you in 10 minutes or so. These creatures are about 6 feet/180 cm long, and if you're not mistaken, it's a flock of gargoyles.

Game Master: About 10 minutes later:

There's no more doubt about it. The creatures flying above you definitely are gargoyles. They begin circling above you and slowly descend to about 100 feet/30 m over your heads, but then remain at that level, showing no intention of doing anything else or of attacking immediately. However, as you're still watching the gargoyles, shouts echo all around you, and you see that a band of about 150 goblins has you surrounded, Most of them brandish short swords or short spears, and they hold to a position a good 100 feet/30 m away from you. One of the goblins lays his spear on the ground, holds his hands up in the air and says, *"Please not shooting! Come to parley you, says boss."*

Game Master: PCs' reaction

"Big boss plenty nosy," says the goblin. *"Wants see pretty pictures on arms. That's all. No hurt arm picture people. No want fight. Boss only want see pretty pictures! You come with peaceful? We no wants fight you and plenty dying. Big boss says must bring you, but no kill pretty picture people. Goblins attack but no kill do goblins plenty dying. No want. Come peaceful. Big boss no hurt you. Only want see pretty pictures!"*

These goblins have orders to bring the PCs to the Big Boss, a beholder named Ranzan in the ruins of Dekanter, who really does want above all to see their sigylls.

Ranzan, the illithids of Dekanter and the gnolls and goblins are well aware that the Beast Lord has agreements with the Zhentarim, and it would be fatal for them to violate these agreements. They know that the PCs are to be given protected passage through the Beast Lord's realm, and that the Beast Lord would be enraged, if he knew Ranzan was detaining the PCs.

Nonetheless, Ranzan is a beholder, and even if he does have reason to fear the Beast Lord, he still takes care of his own interests first. He knows only a little about the story of the PCs and their sigylls, and he's always trying to find a power which might free him of the Beast Lord, so he's not about to neglect checking out the sigylls too.

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Both the Beast Lord and Sememmon would be of the opinion that *all* of the PCs should pass into Pelleor's Prairie guarded and unharmed. Ranzan does not see things so narrowly, however. He thinks if perhaps all of the PCs but one would make it through to Pelleor's Prairie, the Beast Lord, Sememmon and anyone else concerned should be more than satisfied; they should be downright grateful. Therefore, he's not beyond trying out a bit of perhaps very destructive magic upon one of the PCs.

However, Ranzan knows nothing of the old dvergr magic bound into the PCs' sigylls. The mix of Ranzan's own anti-magic ray with his magic and the dvergr magic in the sigylls will backfire painfully upon the beholder.

The PCs' first order of business, however, is with the goblins, and they have orders to bring the PCs in, regardless of what happens to the goblins themselves, but the PCs are not to be seriously harmed. At some point, if the PCs push too hard, the gargoyles will begin making swooping attacks, to fly the PCs off to Dekanter, and select goblins will use blow guns with sleep poison (save vs. poison or sleep in 1d4 rounds). It should be nearly impossible for the PCs to escape this trip. The following narrative is for those being flown to Dekanter.

The encounter includes a gargoyle per PC and NPC henchman, 2 goblin leaders, 8 assistant goblin leaders and 140 normal goblins. Statistics for these monsters can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium*.

For Flying PCs:

No matter what you try, you can't do anything to free yourself from the gargoyle. The creature reaches an altitude of 500 feet/150 m amazingly quickly, which also seriously minimizes the available options. And any time you attempt to make movements or even say anything, the beast takes great glee in snapping its wings, which shakes you ferociously and leaves you temporarily dizzy. You estimate that you spend an hour and a half in the air, always flying above a broad wagon trail that crosses westward back into the foothills of the Greypeaks and then into a pass through the mountains. At last the gargoyle reaches a large staging area where perhaps 200 goblins and 50 gnolls work. More gargoyles perch on the mountainsides and hold watch over the area. There are several old mine shaft openings here.

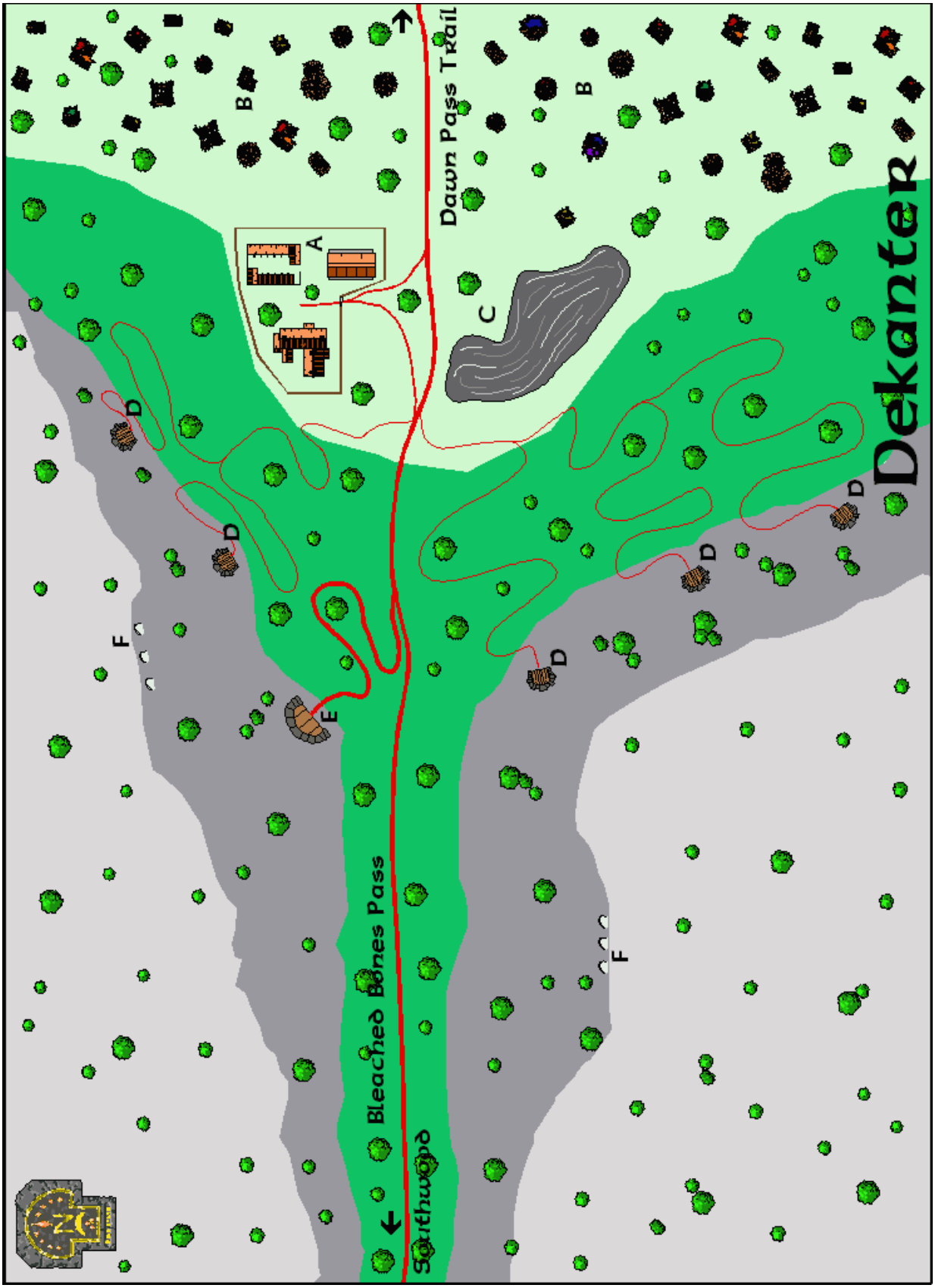
Game Master: Read the following if the group is divided between flyers and riders.

None too gently the gargoyle releases you into a group of gnolls who point to a large log on the ground and tell you to take a seat.

Game Master: The PCs who have been flown to Dekanter will be detained until the riding PCs arrive.

For Riding PCs:

Interestingly enough, the goblins make no attempt to disarm you or otherwise relieve you of possessions. They allow you to continue riding, albeit slowly, but at a pace that forces them to run double time to keep up with you. You go another 500 feet/150 m down the trail and then come to a cutoff, where the trail heads westward, back towards the Greypeaks. The goblins steer you onto this trail. If you remember all you've heard about this area right, it seems a good bet you may be heading towards the ruins of the old Dekanter mines of Netheril, where the so-called Beast Lord now rules.


Dekanter
Dawn Pass Trail
Bleached Bones Pass
Southwood
A
B
C
D
E
F

Dekanter

Surface Map of Dekanter

A - Zhentarim outpost. This facility is used by Zhentarim caravans traveling through Bleached Bones Pass, but it has no permanent Zhentarim personnel. When no caravans are on hand, the outpost is maintained by gnolls for the Zhentarim.

B - Gnoll Shacks. Some 500 to 600 gnolls are housed here.

C - Tailings. These are largely stone and mud removed from the mines for maintenance.

D - Goblin Caves. These are what's left of early Netherese exploratory mining shafts. Today, the2,000 or so goblins of the Beast Lord live crowded within them. These areas are instable and poorly maintained. An *Earthquake* spell has a 75% chance of causing a complete shaft to cave-in.

E - Main Entrance to the Mines of Dekanter.

The ride lasts more than three hours, but then you reach a large staging area where perhaps 200 goblins and 50 gnolls work. More gargoyles perch on the mountainsides and hold watch over the area. There are several old mine shaft openings here. Several of the gnolls come over to your group. One says, *"We take care of horses. Big boss see you now. Follow!"* And the gnoll heads off to the opening of one of the mine shafts. The other gnolls crowd in behind you, pushing forward.

Game Master:

Dungeon Plan of Dekanter

If you're using the CC2 map file **DEKANTER.FCW**:

- Deactivate the layers *DEUTSCH, ENGLISH* and *TEXTS*.
- Activate the layer *MOUNTAIN UNDERLAY* and whichever of the following layers you wish to view: *LAYER 1, LAYER 2, LAYER 3, LAYER 4* and *LAYER 5.* If you activate all five of these layers, you will see them running from the lowest (*LAYER 5*) upward to the first (*LAYER 1)*.

Monsters of Dekanter

Statistics for all Monsters in the Dekanter dungeon can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium*..

Illumination

None of the areas the PCs enter have their own sources of illumination unless otherwise noted. The gnolls who lead the PCs to Ranzan bear torches.

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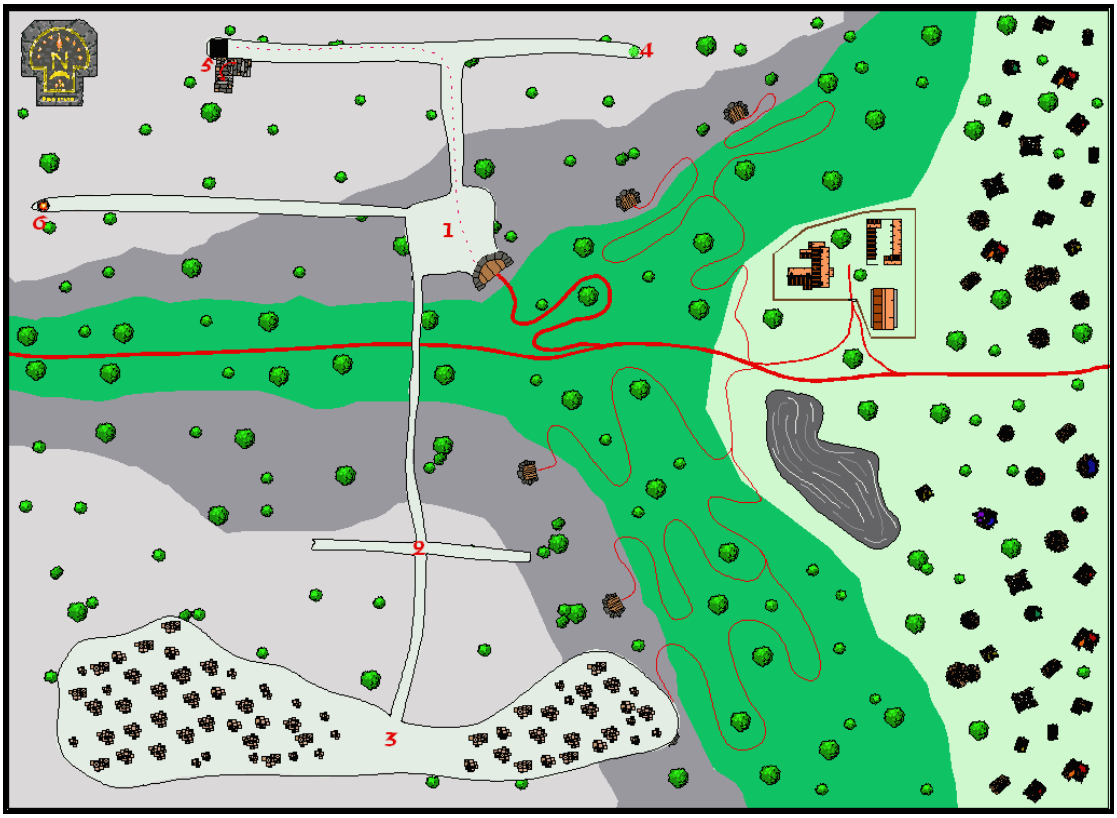
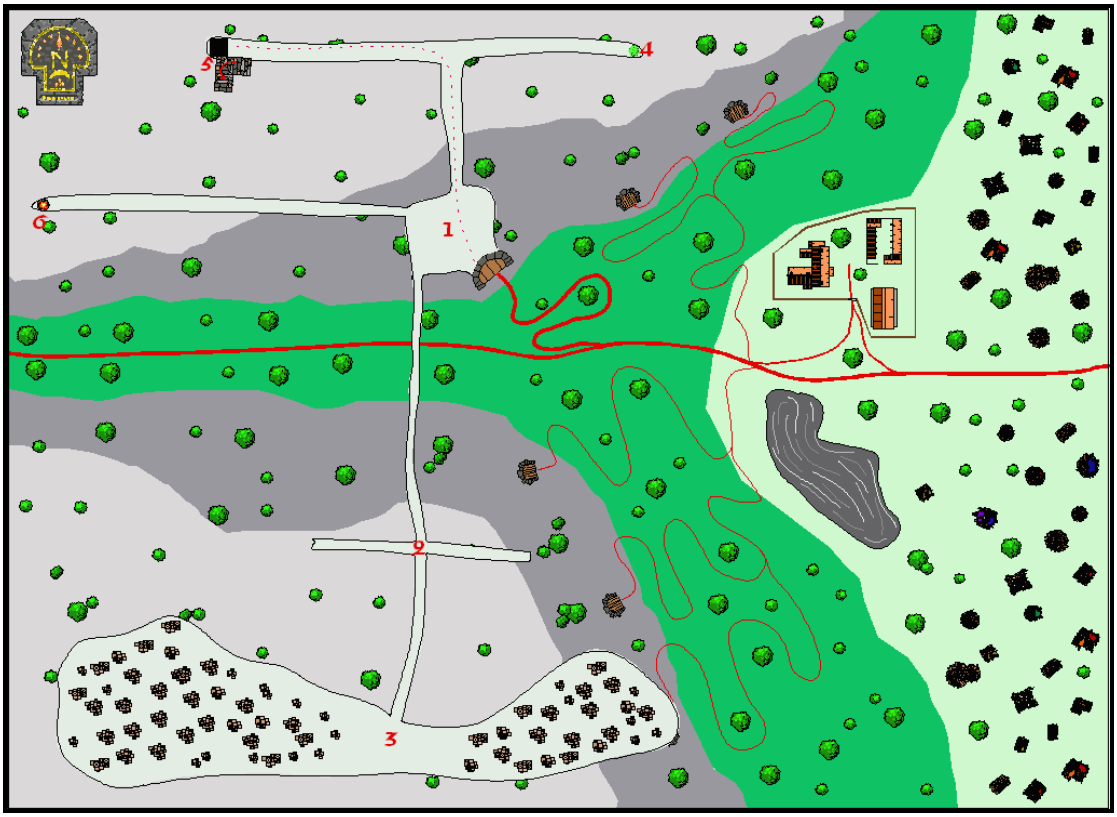


Dekanter – Level 1



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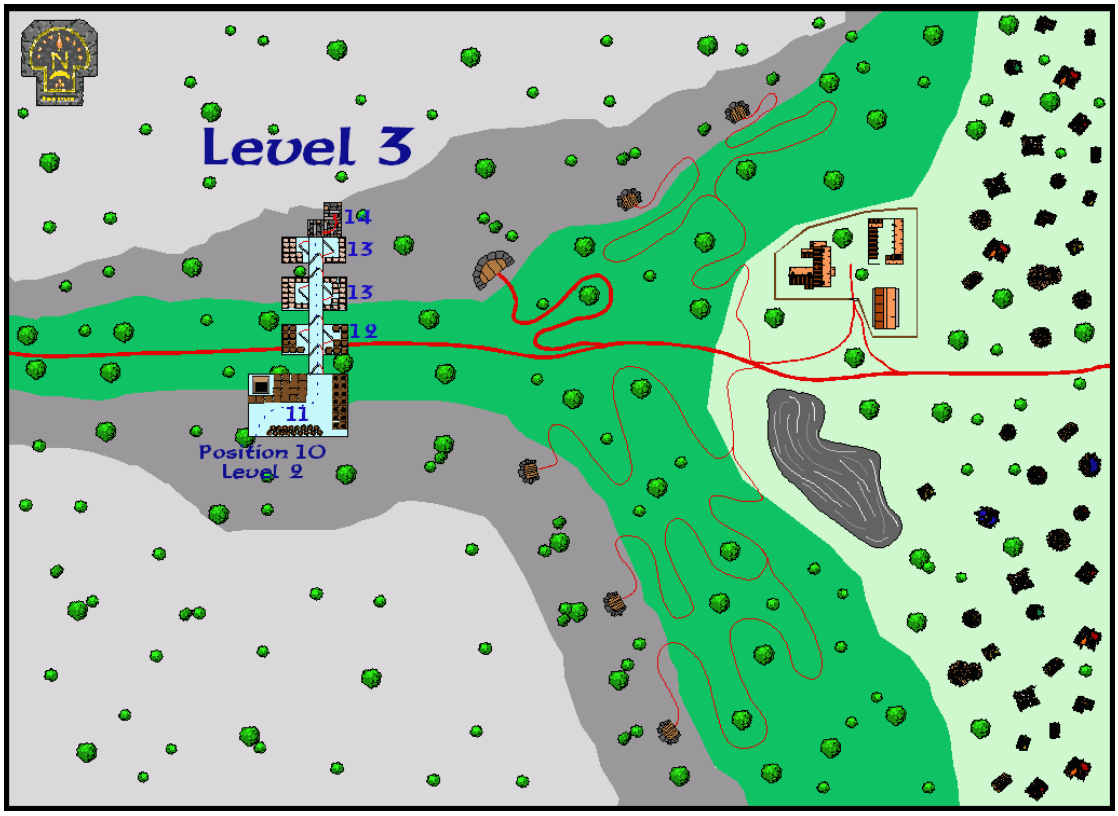
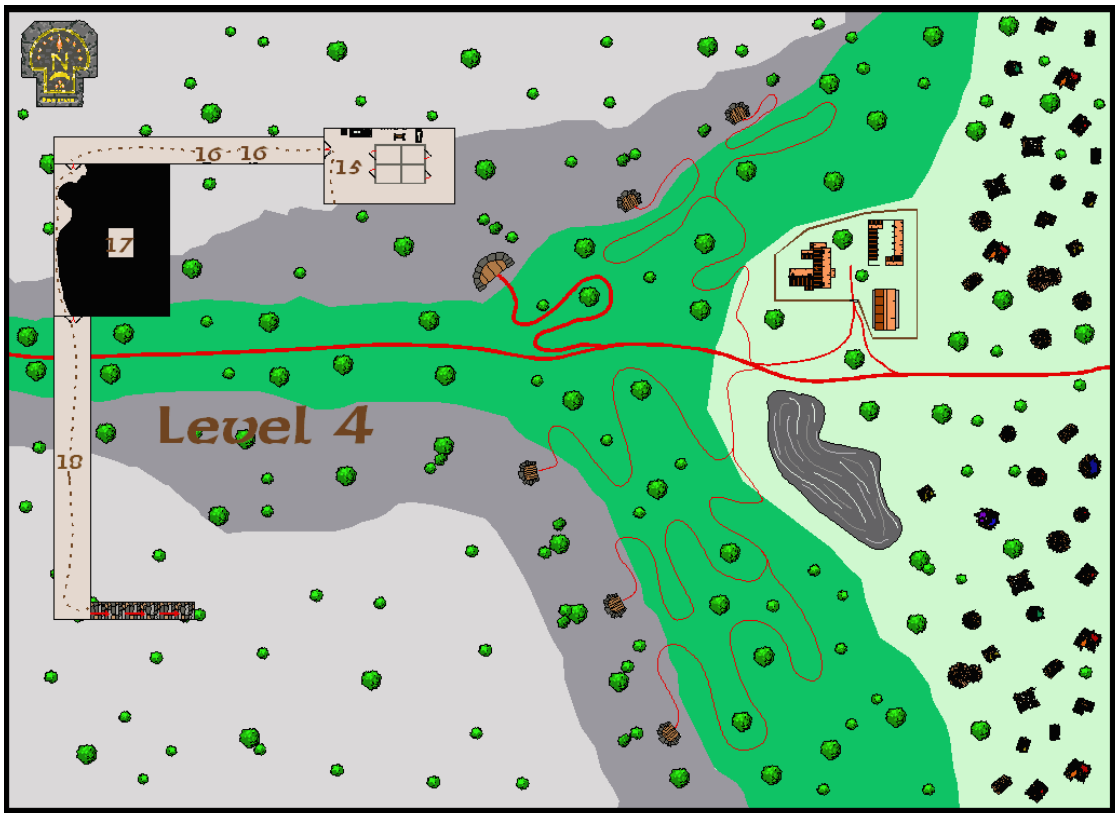
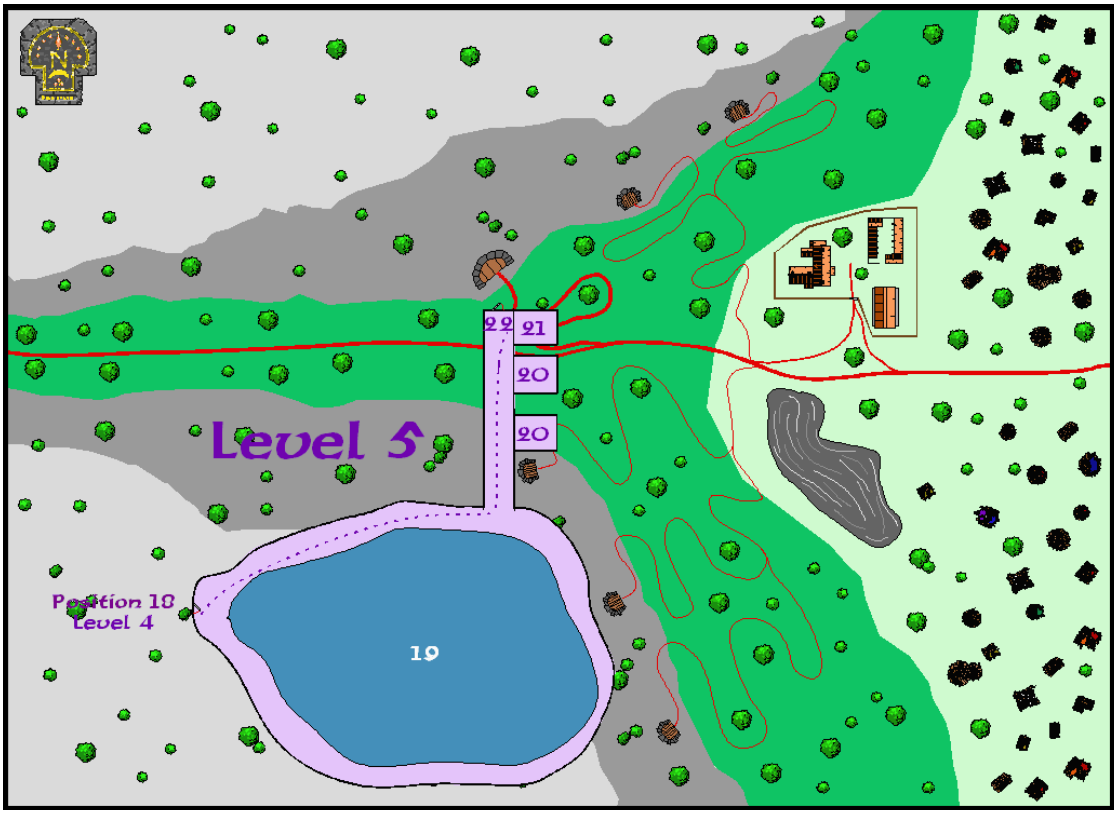


Dekanter – Level 3



Dekanter – Level 4



Dekanter – Level 5

Layer 1 - Red lettering and trail:

Game Master: This layer has been slowly caving in. The passages and ceiling all are of irregular height and width where large chunks of mother rock have fallen out. Many of the wooden beams that the original miners used to support the tunnel have been replaced by unfinished, sawed-off tree trunks. The layer looks like small cave-ins have occurred everywhere and with some regularity. If the PCs use any *"earth-shaking"* magic on this layer, the Game Master should determine the chances of a large cave-in. As a measuring stick, an *Earthquake* spell would have a 75% chance. Any *"earth-shaking"* magic on this layer should at least cause small rocks and gravel to fall from the ceiling.

1 - Main entrance to the mine. (Directly behind Position E on the surface map.) This area always is guarded by 1d4+2 armed gnolls who will determine if those who wish to enter have legitimate business in the mine. All gnolls in this area carry alarm horns.

2 - Cave-Ins. This intersection leads to cave-ins, to the right as well as to the left.

3 - Zhentarim Storage Area. The Netherese began their mining of Dekanter here, clearing this hall of a small but concentrated deposit of iron ore. The Zhentarim pays the Beast Lord for the use of this ancient mine hall as a storage area for contraband. It is always guarded by 1d6+6 gnolls.

4 - The Green Glow. This short stretch of mine shaft ends abruptly at a cave-in. Directly before it, the shaft is filled from top to bottom and right to left to a distance of 10 feet/3 m before the cave-in with a flashing, almost gaseous, green glowing light. This is, in fact, a still intact, one-way Netherese gate. Any PC who walks into it will immediately be transported to the *"lich city,"* the ruins of Oreme in Anauroch, 180 miles/290 km east and slightly north of Dekanter. With that, the character will vanish from your adventure, and the player must roll up a new PC (but also see *Variant* below).

5 - Stairway and Mine Elevator. All that's left of the elevator is the shaft, which vanishes into the seeming endlessness of the abandoned mines below. The stairway leads to Level 2.

Layer 2 - Green lettering and trail:

Game Master: This layer also has been slowly caving in. The passages and ceiling all are of irregular height and width where large chunks of mother rock have fallen out. Many of the wooden beams that the original miners used to support the tunnel have been replaced by unfinished, sawed-off tree trunks. The layer looks like small cave-ins have occurred everywhere and with some regularity. If the PCs use any *"earth-shaking"* magic on this layer, the Game Master should determine the chances of a large cave-in. As a measuring stick, an *Earthquake* spell would have a 75% chance. Any *"earth-shaking"* magic on this layer should at least causes small rocks and gravel to fall from the ceiling.

7 - Orange Area. This may have been the opening into an underground chamber or, more likely, the site of a magical explosion. The shaft widens out suddenly and crudely to the left and right and then ends abruptly in a cave-in. All the surfaces in this area are pure orange in color when illuminated, and they also show a weak orange glow in the dark.

8 - Black Area. This shaft ends abruptly in a cave-in. The surrounding walls all still are mostly covered in ancient, oily soot.

9 - Cave-In. This shaft also ends in a cave-in, but one without any special earmarks.

10 - Stairway. Entrance to Level 3.

Layer 3 - Blue lettering and trail:

11 - Elevator Room. The northwestern corner of this room has an opening in the floor into an elevator shaft with no trace of the mine elevator that once was there. The rest of the room is filled with wooden crates and barrels. If these are examined, the PCs will find that the crates are filled with short swords and with leather armor sized for both gnolls and goblins. The barrels contain beer that has soured.

12 - Oil. Both rooms are filled with barrels of whale oil.

13 - Grain storage. All four rooms are filled with sacks of grain.

14 - Stairway. Entrance to Level 4.

Layer 4 - Brown lettering and trail:

15 - Torture Chamber (Former Smithy). This room still contains a smith's oven and a water fountain that leave little doubt that it once served as a smithy. It's just as obvious what use it's put to today. On the stove - cold at the moment - are pincers and branding irons. Four pairs of empty manacles hang from the wall. Four empty, barred cages are in the middle of the chamber. It also contains a rack and an iron maiden.

16 - Doors. These stone doors can be opened easily, but behind both, within a yard/meter, one will find only totally caved-in shafts.

17 - Foundry. The foundry furnaces for this part of the mines once were in this chamber, but there's no visible sign of that. Most of the room is simply a huge, seemingly bottomless hole, no doubt the result of a Netherese magical experiment. The ledge leading around the hole narrows to a width of one foot/30 cm, at places. Each PC must make a saving throw or become dizzy in this room. In 3rd Edition check for fortitude against DC 20. In 2nd Edition check for paralysis. Any dizzy PC must check for dexterity in the middle of the room or fall to his/her death, at the bottom of the hole, some 300 feet/90 m below.

18 - Descent. This long shaft descends at a grade of 6%, ending at the stairway into Level 5.

Layer 5 - Purple lettering and trail:

NOTE: This level always is guarded by two illithids and 1d4+2 gnolls. The illithids wander through this small level. The gnolls usually gamble with each other in one of the guard rooms. They all are charged with preventing unauthorized creatures from entering the lower dungeon levels.

19 - Hall of Rain. This ancient mining hall is another fluke of Netherese magical experimentation. The hall is filled with an underground lake with a shoreline averaging about 10 feet/3 m wide. It rains constantly in this chamber, but the level of the lake never rises or falls.

20 - 21 - Guard Rooms. Ranzan waits for the PCs in Room No. 21.

22 - The Gate Beyond. This stone door leads to the main parts of the Ruins of Dekanter and into the lost dwarven hall of Garnaugh, beyond, where the Beast Lord, its illithids and its beholders lair. We have not detailed these areas.

Variant

"Death traps" in dungeons sometimes can be turned around by a Game Master to make the run of an adventure more interesting and surprising. PCs who enter the green glow at Position 4, Level 1, of the Ruins of Dekanter are sent instantly through the one-way gate to the ruins of Oreme in northeastern Anauroch.

Ordinarily, such a one-way trip is equivalent to the death of the gated PC(s). Oreme is the remnant of a once beautiful city now covered by the sands of the desert. Many of its tall towers still stand, while others have toppled into the sands. PCs adventuring between the Dawn Trail Pass and Pelleor's Prairie will hardly be equipped to survive on the desert, and it's even less likely that they would escape the clutches of the mighty liches who now occupy Oreme.

One of our playtesting Game Masters came up with an interesting variation on the gate and Oreme. One of his PCs was a priest of Tyr, a holy justice who took the lawful element of his alignment very seriously. His preaching sometimes was enjoyed by the other PCs about as much as a case of hemorrhoids. They had a good laugh when the holy justice, against their better judgment, entered the strange, green glow of Dekanter and promptly vanished. The player reluctantly created a substitute character.

But the Game Master decided not to leave things as they were. The holy justice had been a valuable PC, in the Game Master's mind, and his regular preaching of the tenets of his faith often kept the rest of the group on the path of the adventure.

Later, in Daggerdale, before reaching Dagger Falls, the Game Master intentionally fudged dice rolls and *"killed"* the substitute PC. Then, as the party neared Dagger Falls, he handed the player a note filled with background information.

It turned out that the gated holy justice was saved by the wandering (and invented) Bedine Tribe Ayat D'ar just outside or Oreme and gradually taken across the desert to the Saurial settlement at Tarkhaldale (the Lost Dale), where he was helped on to Dagger Falls, the direction in which his sigylls were drawing him. With great joy (and groans from the others), the lost holy justice rejoined the party just after it had arrived in Dagger Falls.

This is not to say that the gating of a character in Dekanter and his return from Anauroch is the right tool for every campaign. The point rather is that a Game Master who steers the defined events in his adventure rather than being steered by them often produces the unexpected, a sometimes hard-to-achieve element that provides a lot of spice in a campaign.

Ranzan's Chamber

Game Master: The following narrative should be read as the PCs approach Ranzan's chamber.

The gnolls at last lead you into a short corridor with three large stone doors, the last of them guarded by two the tentacled creatures with slimy skin and big eyes. They look at you and without further reaction make movements with their hands. A thundering, rolling sound comes from the doorway, and the stone door begins to slide open. The two tentacled creatures go through the doorway and motion for you to follow.

Game Master: See the floor plan for Ranzan's chamber. Ranzan and the rest of the creatures at Dekanter assume the PCs are working for Sememmon and are on their way to Darkhold. But if the PCs explain it's not that way, it won't interest them much. If it comes to combat, the necessary information is below the narrative.

You're led into a simple stone chamber exactly 16 feet/4.8 m square. The two tentacled creatures stand impassively in the two rear corners, watching you carefully, but that's not really what's drawing your attention. Your focus is fully on a big green ball with a big mouth and a huge eye that's grinning at you in the middle of the room, from near the back wall.

This big ball is about 6 feet/180 cm in diameter and has a single big eye above its grinning mouth. On top of its head are 10 eyestalks with 10 smaller eyes. This floating, grinning ball reminds you of some tales you've heard. You think the creatures in them were called beholders, and if your memory serves you right, they're rather dangerous.

This one seems friendly though, at least for the moment. *"Well met,"* it says, still grinning. *"As the servants have told you, I just want to take a look at those sigylls. It won't take long. Then we'll guide you back to the trail and you can be off to see your master, Sememmon, in Darkhold. We don't want to keep him waiting, after all."*

If the PCs start questioning why Ranzan thinks Sememmon is their master, he will say something like, *"Well he seems to be expecting you. And he did pay us quite a bit of money for our insurance services, to see to it that you make it through this wild country without coming to harm. But I'm afraid that's all I know. If you need more information, you'll have to wait until you get to Darkhold and ask Sememmon personally."*

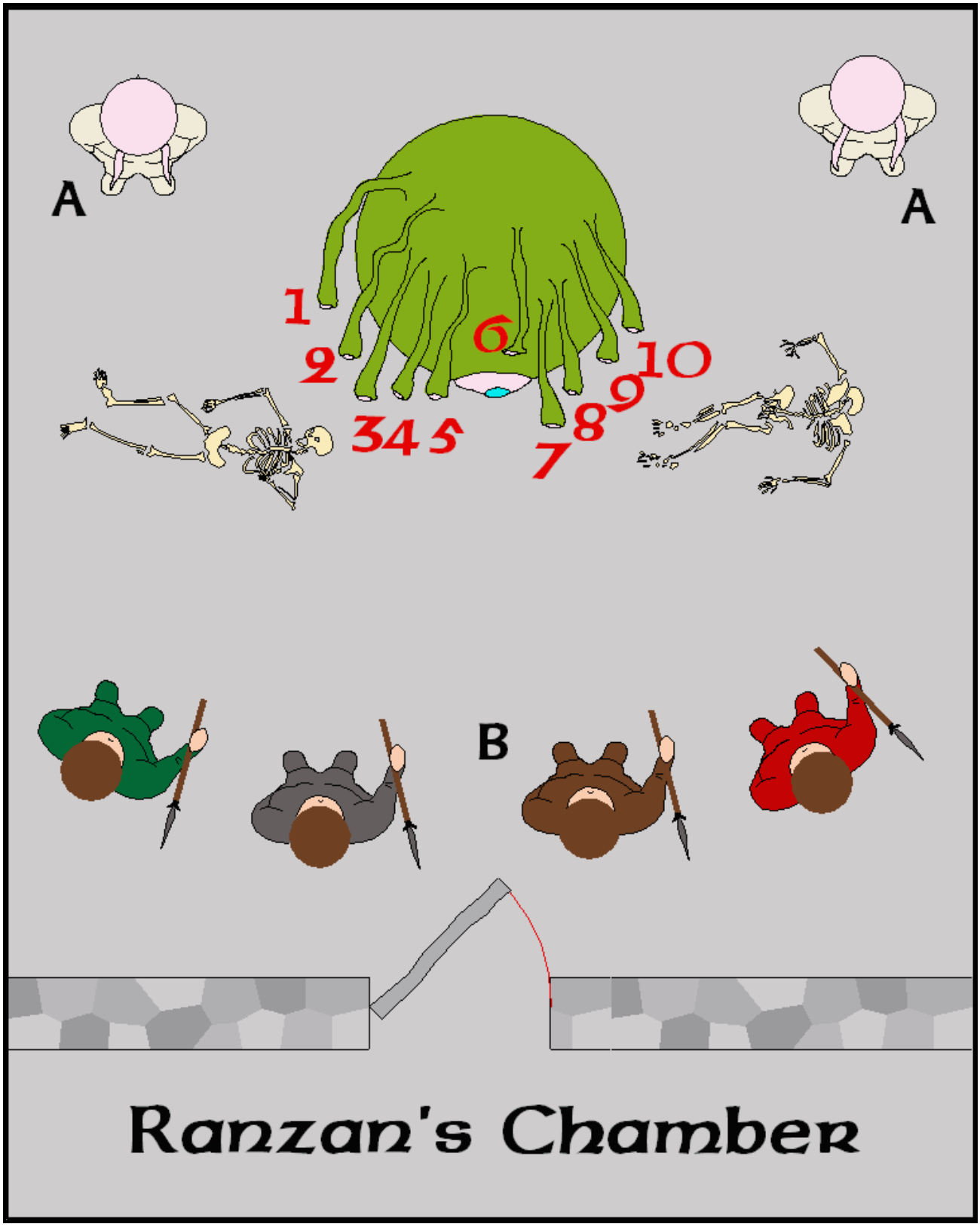
At this point you need to pick one of your PCs - either arbitrarily or with intention - whom Ranzan will insist come over, to show him his sigylls. If the PC is afraid and another volunteers to take his place, Ranzan will not object. If there is a paladin in the group, Ranzan will insist the Paladin come, explaining *"I know how brave you paladins are. I wouldn't want to insult you by asking a weak mage, or a bigoted priest, or a thief or some simple fighter to stand here in your place."*

Plan of Ranzan's Chamber

We suggest you give a copy of the chamber plan to each PC in case he or she acts against one of Ranzan's smaller eyestalks, so that he or she can tell you which stalk the target is. You need to preserve eyestalks 3, 7 and 8 for Ranzan's examination. If a PC attacks Ranzan before the examination, switch numbers and assign other eyestalks to these numbers.

A. The Mind Flayers
B. The PCs

The Statistics for Ranzan can be found in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. The Mind Flayers or Illithids are described in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*.



Ranzan's Chamber

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Game Master: This part of the encounter takes place as Ranzan inspects the sigylls.

"Hmmph!," says the Beholder. *"Hmmph! I find no special magic here. Hmmph. But what is this? What is this? Hmmph!"*

The creature offers no explanation of what is bothering it, but seems to be seriously pondering the matter. And then it slowly begins to tip its head slightly downward. Two of its eyestalks bend downward and focus upon the sigylls. **Game Master:** *Detect Magic* and *Legend Lore.*

"Hmmph!," says the Beholder, sounding impatient now. *"Hmmph! Is this a hoax?"*

The two eyestalks recede and a third focuses now on the sigylls **(Game Master:** Unweave magic**)**. A thin ray of blue light shines from the eye onto the sigylls, but this ray barely has touched the strange symbols, when a huge spray of gravel emerges from the sigylls and batters the beholder's eyestalk mercilessly, finally tearing it from the beholder's head. **(Game Master:** The dvergr magic in the sigylls *always* will defend itself against attempts to attack it with magic of the weave!)

The Beholder roars with rage and pain, and if you interpret it right, it's expression is one of surprise and even fear.

"Servants!," the beholder roars. Immediately, the two tentacled creatures in the back of the room wave their hands. With a thundering, rolling sound, the heavy stone door rolls open again. Eight gnolls enter the chamber, their spears at ready.

"Lord Sememmon is waiting impatiently for our guests!", Ranzan shouts to the gnolls, who stare astonished at the ichors dripping from the wound where the 10th eyestalk had been. *"We do not wish to keep him waiting! Usher our friends safely out of our halls and out of our lands, as quickly as possible. Now! Move!"*

The gnolls look frightened but motion for you to leave the chamber. The two tentacled creatures also make gestures with their four-fingered hands, suggesting you depart quickly. Ranzan, the beholder, wears an expression that suggests he seriously is pondering the idea of suddenly and definitively exploding.

Game Master: Assuming the PCs are willing to depart.

The eight gnolls guide you at near double time back through the maze of mine shafts. Behind you, you continue to hear the angry roaring of Ranzan, the beholder, and you're not against the idea of putting as much distance as possible between yourselves and the bellowing monster in the mines.

At last, you reach the surface and daylight. Your eyes need a quick adjustment to the daylight, but the gnolls already are barking out orders in a dog-like language you can't understand. **(Game Master:** Assuming no PC understands the gnoll tongue**).** As your eyes become accustomed to the light, you can see that several gnolls and goblins are scurrying about. Your horses are being brought out, along with a dozen others, two of which are being packed with provisions. Everything goes with astonishing speed. Soon one of the gnolls speaks with you.

"Big Boss say we guide you. Big Lord Darkhold no should wait. We ride now plenty quick, help you home. Get on horses. Plenty quick."

The PCs should of course have a chance to try talking with the gnoll leader, if they wish. What he replies is up to you. The gnolls will make the two-day trip with the PCs from Dekanter to the edge of the Lonely Moor and the Forgotten Forest. The lands of the Beast Lord end there. The gnolls will camp there for the night with the PCs, but leave them the following day and return to Dekanter, taking the gargoyles with them.

You're being joined by 10 mounted gnolls and two pack horses. As soon as all of you are ready, the leading gnoll gives a signal, and your formation moves out briskly. As you leave, you notice that eight gargoyles also take wing and accompany you in the air.

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The gnolls do not lead you out over the same trail that brought you to Dekanter but rather over a second road that leads to the southeast. Until mid-afternoon you ride with only a brief pause at midday steadily through the foothills of the Greypeaks. Several times, you spot bands of goblins and bugbears less than a mile/1.5 km in the distance, but the size of your formation and the eight accompanying gargoyles above you seem to discourage any visits they may have planned.

At last in mid-afternoon you leave the foothills of the Greypeaks and return to the grasslands you had been forced to leave two days ago. They stretch out to the southeast for another 25 miles/40 km or so.

You're not able to see much farther, but the grasslands seems to end at the edge of moorland to the east and forest to the west. You assume you're seeing the Lonely Moor and the Forgotten Forest in the distance. The gnolls press on until shortly before sunset, when they stop to make a camp for the night. The gargoyles apparently plan to remain in flight over you through the night.

Game Master: Night camp. The next day:

The gnolls break camp quickly. The eight gargoyles remain in flight over you. Today's journey is much the same as it has been since yesterday afternoon. As you ride onward toward the southeast, the Greypeaks fade into the distance behind you and the Lonely Moor and Forgotten Forest draw ever closer. If anything is lurking upon you in the grassland, the size of your group and the eight flying gargoyles apparently are discouraging it from doing anything more than watching. You have no encounters on this day. Half an hour before sunset, you reach a campsite on the west side of the trail about half a mile/1 km north of the Forgotten Forest. The gnoll leader brings your troop to a halt here and begins to make camp.

Game Master: Night camp. The next day:

Shortly after dawn, the gnolls begin to break camp. The gnoll leader comes over to you and says, *"We go now back. Beast Lord land ends here. Gnolls no like moor. Trees no like gnolls. You go plenty hurry see big boss Darkhold."*

PC reaction? The gnoll leader knows little about the lands to the South. He knows that gnolls who go into the Forgotten Forest don't come out again. He will begrudgingly admit that the Beast Lord also claims control over the Lonely Moor and that the gnolls are sent into the moor at times to help the Zhentarim caravans there, but that there are a lot of dangerous creatures in the moor who don't take orders from the Beast Lord, and service there is risky.

II. THE BACKLANDS AND SUNSET VALE

OFFICIAL SOURCE MATERIALS: The key source materials for this section all are out of print but are available for free or pay download from the WotC web site or http://www.rpgnow.com. These are *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1994), *Elminster's Ecologies Appendix 1 - The Hill of Lost Souls* by Scott Davis (TSR - 1995) and *The Battle of Bones* by Donald J. Bingle (TSR - 1995) and the boxed set *The North* by slade (TSR - 1996). Also recommended are the three gods' books - *Faiths & Avatars* by Julia Martin with Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1996), *Powers & Pantheons* by Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1997) and *Demihuman Deities* by Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1998), which *are not* available per download. In addition, we recommend the Avatar Trilogy novel *Waterdeep* by Richard Awlinson (TSR - 1989)

11. Lonely Moor, Forgotten Forest & Marsh of Chelimber

The next part of the PCs' journey covers 225 miles (360 km) of largely uninhabited territory that is barely described in the core *Forgotten Realms* products. The journey from the north edge of the Forgotten Forest to Yarthrain should take under average conditions one ride (10 days). The PCs will spend the first day getting past the Lonely Moor and the Forgotten Forest.

After leaving the gnolls and the gargoyles, you ride less than 15 minutes before reaching the narrow trail between the Forgotten Forest and the Lonely Moor. The trail consists of two partly overgrown wagon ruts in a swath of land perhaps 15 feet/4.5 m wide on the eastern edge of the Forgotten Forest. Beyond that, the land gradually sinks and turns quickly into dry peat and moor vegetation. Thin trails come from the moor to the road, not necessarily a comforting prospect. The moor is bleak, and you've been warned that it's dangerous.

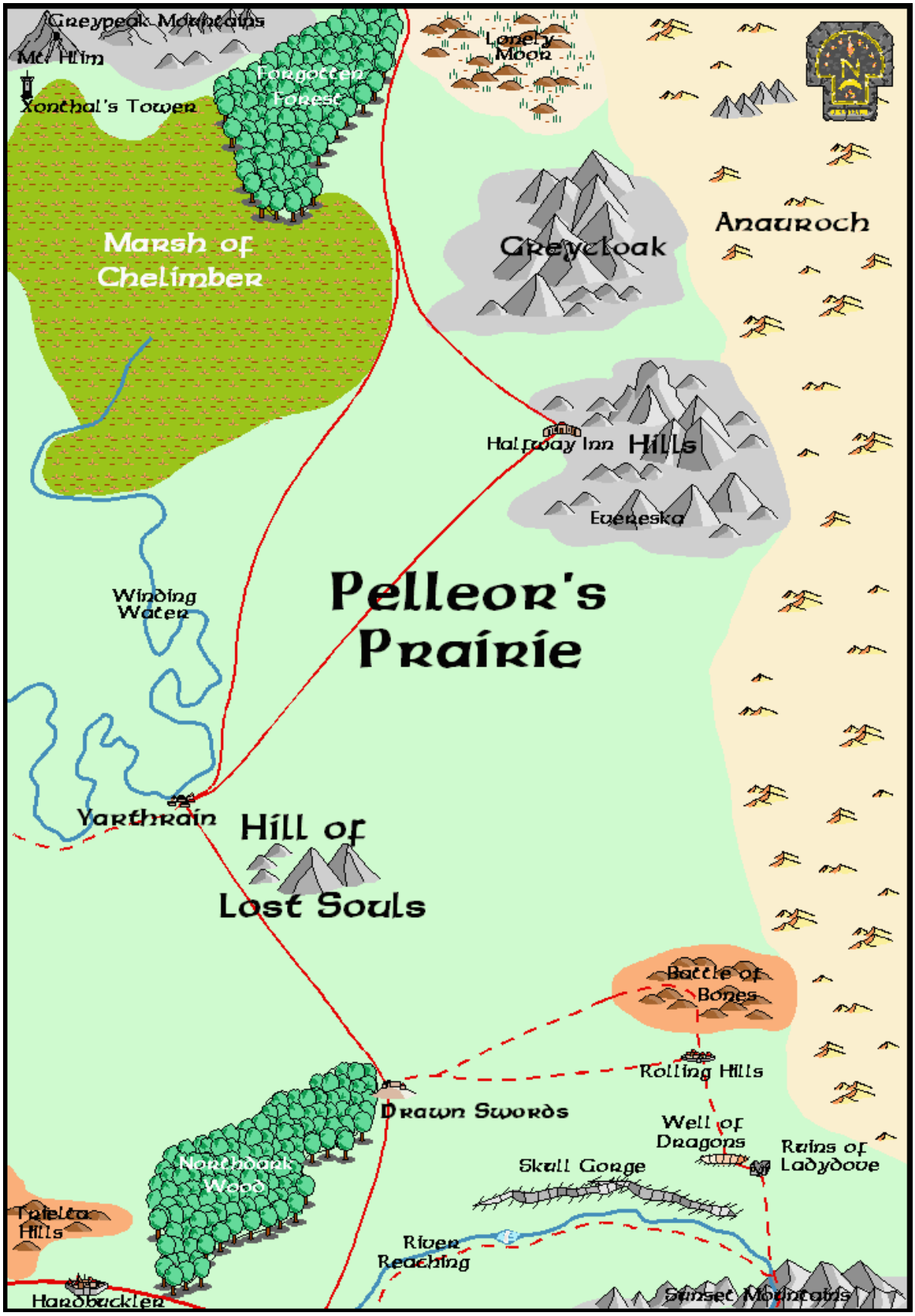
Just to your right stands the ancient, dense Forgotten Forest. The wood does not leave you with a feeling of evil or a threat to anything outside of itself, but it emanates a clear message that you are not welcome there, and you feel rather certain you would not want to enter the wood, even in time of need.

Rather quickly you come to the conclusion that you'd like to do everything you can to hurry down this trail and have both the moor and the forest behind you before you camp for the evening. That may not be possible, of course. By day, you still can make the wagon ruts out in the trail. By night, the ruts will turn into deadly traps for your horses, who easily could trip upon them. And the trail is the only choice you have. The peat on the edge of the moor is too soft for a horse, and moors are known to have their own deadly traps, such as pools and patches of quicksand

Game Master: The only planned encounter is at night, but daytime encounters with other moor creatures are possible. Encounters with hostile forest creatures are unlikely.

In the evening, the eastern border of the Forgotten Forest begins to turn away from the trail toward the west, but the land between the forest and the road is rough and unsuitable for riding. The western perimeter of the moor's peat basin continues to follow close to the road. Throughout the day, the moor has been your main source of worry.

From time to time, you've seen large ponds of black water standing farther into the moor, and several times large, ugly birds of varieties you've never see before climbed from the moor and followed you briefly from the air, then returned to the swampy sections farther inside the moor. Throughout this entire leg of the journey, a thick stench of rot turns your noses. It's beginning to look as though the moor will stay with you as long as you're able to ride.



Southward toward Pelleor's Prairie

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Game Master: Pause for the PCs.

With the sun already slightly below the horizon, the Lonely Moor at last starts turning sharply to the southeast from the trail, and a stretch of rough grassland, just like on the forest side of the road, begins to separate you from the moor. You can still ride safely in the fading daylight for another 10 to 15 minutes, which should put about a mile's/1.5 km distance between you and the moor. The edge of the forest is now about 6 miles/10 km to the west of you.

As far as you can make out in the fading light, you're at the start of a large prairie that spreads out far to the east and west before you. The weather must be harsh on the land here. The only thing that's abundant is long grass. There are small trees here and there, all scrubby and retarded in their growth, seldom reaching a height of more than 10 to 15 feet/3-5 m. And it looks like two out of three trees you see have died already. The same goes for the wiry bushes that crop up here and there through the long grass.

Firewood will be no problem this evening, but that brings you to another critical decision. Should you make a fire at all? The flames of a campfire would be an open invitation to hungry monsters of the night, particularly those on the moor, which still starts just a mile or so/1.5 km north of you. On the other hand, trolls are among the monsters one encounters most frequently on a moor, and the flaming brands of a campfire would make good weapons to combat them. And the trolls, if there are any in the vicinity, will smell you and find you, with or without a fire.

Game Master: The trolls of the Lonely Moor are hungry, and the PCs look like the makings of a good meal. They will arrive from the moor sometime during the night. The statistics for trolls can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium.* The next day.

The new day takes you thankfully farther and farther away from the Lonely Moor and deeper into the wide and seemingly unpopulated prairie that's opening before you. You make it through the entire day without a single encounter or sign of one. When you at last make your camp for the night, however, you can see new mountains ahead of you to the east and a new and perhaps even larger moor to the west. You'll probably be near both after another day's ride.

The mountains are difficult to make out. Only the foot of them is visible. The peaks disappear in mist and fog. These no doubt are the Greycloak Mountains, one of the last strongholds of the elves in Faerûn. And the moor can only be the great Chelimber Moor, a source, perhaps, of considerably more trouble than the much smaller Lonely Moor you passed yesterday. At least your tempo is respectable, just like on open road.

Game Master: If you want encounters on this night, the most likely prospects are bands of orcs or bugbears, motive robbery. Statistics for these monsters can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium.*

It seems that your horses like prairie grass. The landscape leaves the impression that it's too dry here on this prairie for much other than grass to live long. But there are areas where recent rains left large puddles that still are several inches deep. The water is becoming stagnant, but it doesn't seem to bother your mounts, who apparently are becoming accustomed to long, steady riding with little rest. By early afternoon, you even begin running into a few small freshwater streams that come down from the fog-covered Greymantles in the East.

The only thing that troubles you a bit is that is the your camping place is in the middle of the high pass between the Greymantles and Chelimber Moor. The fog surrounding the mountains begins just a bit more than a mile/2 km east of the trail. One doesn't have to go far off the road on that side to already be bitten by a chilly, unfriendly wind that comes from the elven mists, and you have seen warning signs here and there, that it is forbidden to enter these elven lands.

The outer perimeter of Chelimber lies about two miles/3.5 km to the west. This side of the trail seems to be your best bet. Someone - no doubt the Zhentarim - built a defensible camping ground here. a wooden palisade fence 12 feet/360 cm high encloses a circular area about 60 feet/18 m in diameter. It seems to be less than a year old. The wall won't offer you substantial protection, but it will do more for you than camping in the open.

A narrow opening, 6 feet/180 cm wide and 10 feet/3 m tall leads into the campground. The entry once could be closed off, but the gate was torn from its hinges and lays now partly burned and useless on the ground. The wood is heavily scratched, and odds are the that scratches came from troll claws. You see similar scratches along the wall in places and charred areas here and there on the interior of the wall. The inner wall has a wooden gangway 4 feet/120 cm below the top of the wall. The gangway has been burned away in a couple of places, but the holes can be jumped.

As we said, the wall won't offer you absolute protection, but it will give you an advantage. Any doubts you may harbor about that are dispelled by an old but grisly sight inside the fence. The partially burnt remains of a small wooden wagon stand to one side of the compound. Several sets of charred troll bones lay at various positions along the inner wall, and there are more of them near the remnants of the wagon. It looks like all the corpses have been picked clean, not only of possession but also of flesh. Only skeletons in rotting clothes and rusting armor lay here, some beside rusty weapons.

By all signs these remnants could be from the last group to have taken shelter here. The entire campground is over grown with grass 2 to 3 feet/60 cm to 1 m tall, and in the middle of the compound is a large cluster of brush, some 15 feet/4.5 m in diameter and up to 5 feet/150 cm high. Next to the wild brush is a large stack of firewood, another sign that this was a Zhentarim campground.

There will be two types of encounters on this evening. Trolls will attack the PCs during one of the watches, and the phantom of Lord Anandar will appear to *each* watch until the strongbox for Lord Winter is rescued. The time of the troll attack is *not* dependent upon the encounter with the phantom, although you as Game Master well may wish to keep them separate. It may be somewhat difficult to run them simultaneously.

The number of trolls that appear is dependent upon where the PCs are. If they are in open land, they will have to fight eight Trolls. Within the protection of the campground they will face twice that number (16 trolls). The trolls are hungry. Their sole motivation for attacking is their hunger. Their statistics can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*.

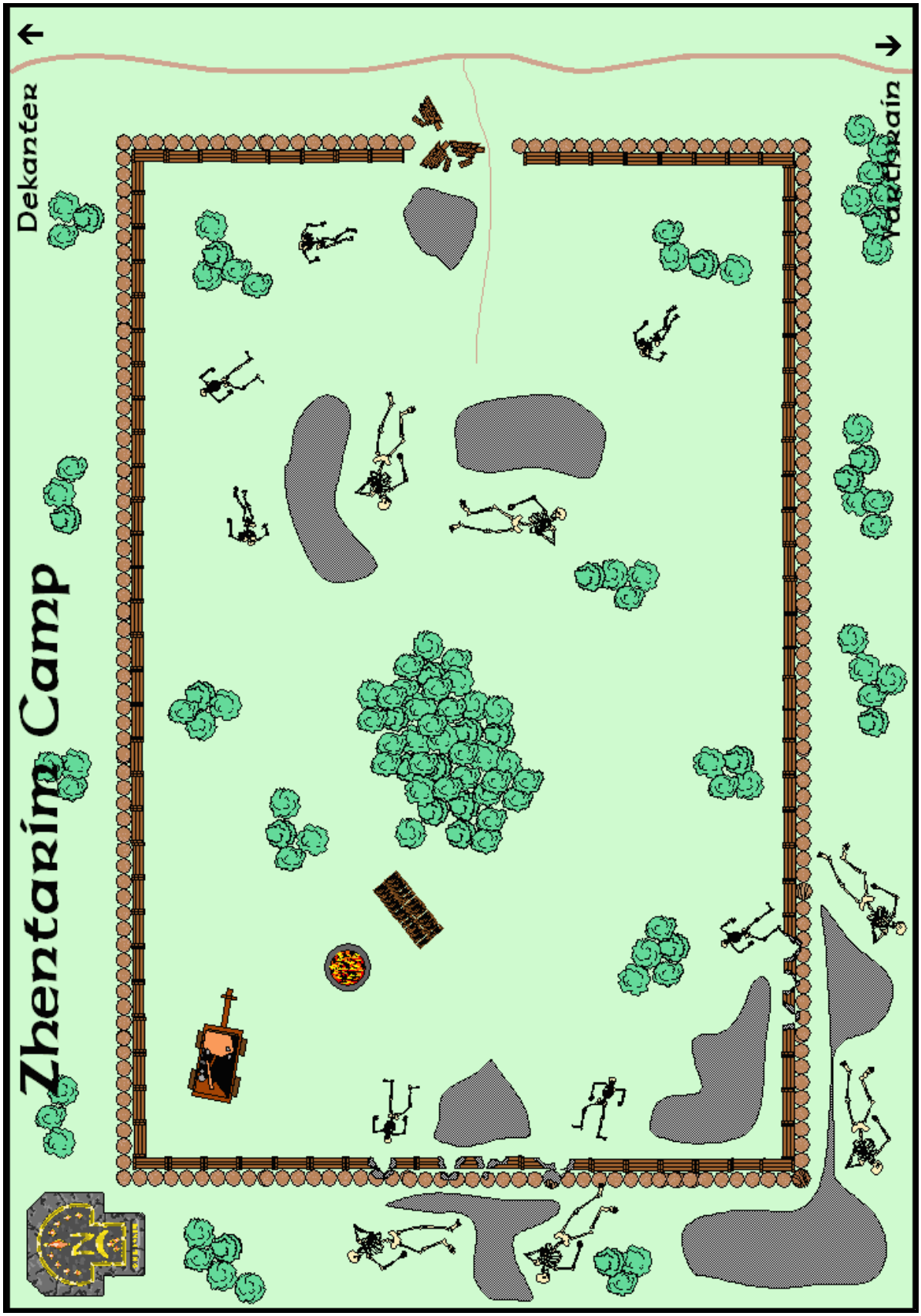
The Tale of Lord Anandar

Lord Anandar (unofficial) was a 32-year-old paladin (LG, hm, PL 11) who served both Torm and Tyr. He was commander of the Purple Dragon outpost in Eveningstar in Cormyr from Ches (3rd Month) in the Year of the Shield (1367 DR) until Alturiak (2nd Month) in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR).

At that time, he was asked by the Lord Tessaril Winter of Eveningstar to take a leave of absence and to take on a rather risky quest. She wanted Anandar to investigate the fate of a merchant from Eveningstar named Alman Grumm, who was in the somewhat risky but profitable and tax-generating business of exporting conserved Sharrada meat to the Moonsea area. Sharrada (official) is a longhaired breed of beef cattle that connoisseurs rate the finest beef in Faerûn.

Anandar learned that Grumm was betrayed by his brother and heir, Hoegnar Grumm. Hoegnar saw to it that Alman was captured and taken into slavery by the Zhentarim. He then ended up working as a slave on board a Luskanite ship on the Sea of Swords. Anandar tracked Alman to Luskan and found the ship upon which Alman had been enslaved, only to learn that Alman's health had deteriorated seriously and that he had been sold with a group of other slaves back to the Zhentarim, for whom he was forced to labor on the city farm in Llorkh.

In Llorkh, Anandar succeeded in buying Alman, whose health had deteriorated drastically, from the Lord's Men. The paladin paid a handsome price for passage through the lands of the Beast Lord, together with Alman in a small wooden wagon. However, Alman's slowly sank beyond hope, and he died at the campgrounds the PCs now have reached.



Zhentarim Camp Ruins

Ironically, Anandar had weathered the most incredible dangers in his quest for Alman, only to fall in battle here against a large horde of trolls. He died when a wave of more than 30 trolls coming from Chelimber attacked. With fire, Anandar succeeded in destroying the entire band of trolls, but he was severely wounded and unable to heal himself sufficiently. He died before the night was out, but only after writing a report to Lord Winter and locking it in a small strongbox. That was during the first ride in Flamerule (7th month) in this Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR). Before dying, Anandar managed to creep deep into the bushes of the campground, where his hand bones still grasp the strongbox.

Since then Anandar's spirit has been remaining at the campground as something of a phantom. He is a special sort of phantom, however, for he can put a curse on those who do not do what he perceives to be the duty of any living being, to bring the strongbox to Lord Winter in Eveningstar, seeing that at least a measure of justice will be done for Alman, whose brother, Hoegnar, is believed to be an honest merchant of unquestionable character.

Any who refuse to follow Anandar's spirit to the strongbox, or any who refuse to finish his quest for him, will learn telepathically the nature of his curse. Those who do take the strongbox will learn the nature of the quest and the curse that will befall them if they do not fulfill their duty.

Game Master: Statistics for Lord Anandar's phantom can be found under *New NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

Encounter with Lord Anandar's Phantom

You become aware of an alien presence somewhere in the campground. And then your attention focuses on the bushes within the campground, where an eerie purple blue light has risen from the ground and is beginning to move through the bushes in your direction. It takes the form of a human warrior, perhaps a knight, dressed in purple and blue.

Each PC that sees the phantom must make a save vs. fear. If only one PC sees the phantom, it will move in that PC's direction and with wordless gestures attempt to convince the PC to follow it. Anandar's phantom will not curse a refusing PC as long as it senses the PC's fear.

Once the fear is past, the phantom will not deal with the PC for longer than 1d4 + 8 rounds before cursing the PC. If a PC is cursed, give him/her a copy of the curse text. If Anandar senses that there are paladins in the group, he will choose them first. After that, he will choose in the following order priests of Torm, Tyr, Ilmater and Lathander. Other PCs will see the gestures Anandar directs toward the chosen PC, but Anandar ignores these PCs.

It could occur that the chosen PC is hesitating, but another PC jumps in and voluntarily follows the phantom. In this case, Anandar will immediately ignore the chosen PC without cursing him and shift his attention to the volunteer, who now is the chosen PC. If the chosen PC follows the phantom and other PCs interfere, an invisible wall of force will hold them back.

The warrior points with its transparent right hand to the left hand, where an illuminated lantern appears briefly. It seems to be signaling you to light a lantern.

Game Master: After the PC has a lantern.

The warrior now is motioning for you to move over to the group of bushes from which it arose.

Game Master: If the PC follows:

The apparition points to a spot low on the ground on the side of the bushes. You can see that there is an opening here at ground level through which you conceivably could creep on your stomach into the bushes. The apparition signals with its ghostly hands that you should do just that. A lantern reappears in its hand, perhaps a signal that it wants you to take the lantern too. It then crouches and creeps into the brush itself.

Game Master: If the PC follows:

It's quite difficult to creep into the brush, and more than once, you're scratched by branches above you, but at last you reach the apparition's goal. It sits up. The branches don't seem to interfere with its substanceless body. That's an option that's not open to you. Before you lies a skeleton, a human skeleton that wears rusting armor and rotting clothes that once were identical to those worn by the apparition.

The right hand of the skeleton holds a masterful two-handed sword that's now rusted beyond salvation. In the bones of the skeleton's left hand is a small strongbox made of some metal that apparently is immune to rust. The apparition now is gesturing wildly that you should take the strongbox.

Game Master: If the PC attempts to remove the skeleton as well:

The apparition gestures that you should leave the bones where they are and concentrate upon the strongbox.

Game Master: Once the PC is out of the bushes and examines the strongbox:

The box is about a foot long, two inches deep and 9 inches wide (30 x 5 x 23 cm). On the cover, inscribed in the metal, are the words: *"Deliver to Lord Winter in Eveningstar, Kingdom of Cormyr."*

Game Master: If the PCs open the box, inform them of what Anandar has to report, described above.

Lord Anandar's curse

The hollow eyes of this apparition look into your own, and a message penetrates into your thoughts:

"Be accursed, fool who is unwilling to perform the duties most fundamental to his own race. I curse you in the name of Torm, so that you never again in your life may gain new knowledge or new talents, and I curse you in the name of Tyr, so that the knowledge which you already possess may fail you in your moments of greatest need!

"May you bear my curse until the end of your days, or until you beg upon your knees a high priest of Torm or Tyr or Ilmater or Lathander to make my quest your own, upon the penalty of your own damnation."

With these words, the image of the apparition vanishes.

12. Pelleor's Prairie

The official definition of Pelleor's Prairie covers the area between the Hill of Lost Souls and the Battle of Bones in the south, Anauroch in the east, the Serpent's Tail Stream in the West and Chelimber Moor and the Greymantle Mountains in the North. The prairie covers an area approximately 215 miles/345 km long and 215 miles/345 km wide. The official WotC descriptions of this area come mainly from the druid Tharnn, who lives in the area near the Hill of Lost Souls, and who published his findings in *The Hill of Lost Souls* by Scott Davis in Appendix 1 to *Elminster's Ecologies* (1995).

Towards the middle of the new day, you come to a point where the road heads off in two directions. The left fork no doubt goes on to the Halfway House beneath the Greymantles and Evereska. The right fork, to the Southwest, should eventually lead you to the Winding Water after about six days on the prairie, and then to the village of Yarthrain after the seventh day.

An hour later, you near the end of this stretch of the Greymantles, although they begin again at the limits of your sight in the Southeast. It's in the southern stretch of the elven mountains that one finds the Halfway House and, if one is of elven blood, hidden Evereska. But your destination is Yarthrain, to the Southwest. As far as you can see in that direction, there's only prairie, prairie and more prairie. You'll be grateful for whatever rations you have and the fact that your horses can graze, but water will be another problem, perhaps a serious one.

You don't have to let the animals die of thirst. Regardless of what your weather tables say, provide a monsoon-like cloudburst briefly several times a day. The cloudburst should be of short enough duration that the water merely wets the tall grasses and causes temporary puddles in open areas, preventing any measurable amount of water from percolating into the soil,. while providing sufficient water at the same time for the animals.

We have no encounters planned for the next six days, before the group reaches Yarthrain, but you can stage those you need. Probable *friendly* encounters are bands of wemics and herds of bison. The most likely hostile encounters are bands of trolls, orcs or goblins. Trolls are unlikely until the last two days, when the group nears the Winding Water.

The group also could encounter a Zhent caravan or a unit of Zhent soldiers from Darkhold traveling northward. Another unlikely but possible encounter that could take place in the night before Yarthrain would involve a band of undead from the Hill of Lost Souls.

13. Yarthrain

Hamlet, Conventional, AL: N, 100 gp limit, Assets: 100,000 gp. Population 90 Mixed (95% human, 5% half elf).

Our narrative resumes in the village of Yarthrain on the Winding Water on Pelleor's Prairie. Most of the material here is unofficial. Those elements that are officially defined by WotC are marked with an asterik (*). This unlikely village in the middle of nowhere manages to survive partly because it is in the middle of nowhere, in a prairie, far removed from most hostile life forms.

The Zhent caravans that came through the village caused no serious problems here, because the villagers treated the Zhents like any other customers. The Zhentarim saw no reason to dole out the costs of occupying this tiny village, when the villagers were willing to provide the shelter they sought here on journeys between Darkhold and Llorkh. Units of Zhentilar still ride through the village from time to time, but there have been no caravans in recent weeks.

Another reason why Yarthrain is left in peace is that the center of the village is haunted*. The rare monster bands on Pelleor's Prairie are aware of the haunting and are afraid of Yarthrain therefore, for superstitious reasons. Yarthrain was once the seat of the so-called Baron of the Backlands*. In the middle of the village stand the ruins of his castle, his garrison and the mansions of four of his leading followers.

The full story behind these events is explained in detail in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast.* At night, the mansions of the baron's followers come to unlife, as their ghosts* revel at parties. Persons who have attempted to enter the ruins at night, when the ghosts are active, usually are found dead in the morning, with their brains devoured*. These ghosts do not leave the ruins of their mansions and trouble only those who enter their houses*.

There also is the phantom of a beautiful lady* bearing a silver sword, who appears before and terrifies visitors but does not harm them. She usually comes to visitors in their sleep, revealing her brown bones atop a mound of coins*. Her story also is detailed fully in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast.*

Yarthrain has a population of 60* adults and about 30 children, all human. There are neither Harpers nor Zhentarim in Yarthrain, although both organizations have private agents here. The farmer and horse breeder Retlar Gunnd has earned a good bit of money from the Zhents and has agreed to provide them with the little information he receives. He does this through Zhentilar or caravans riding through the village and through Zhent operatives who sometimes are on board the skiffs that bring merchandise to the village from Serpent's Cowl downstream.

Harmal Tinnig, a farmer who was trained as a blacksmith and has a small smithy, is a friend of a ranger on the prairie who either has contacts with the Harpers or is one. Harmal passes all news on to him. Retlar's relation with the Zhents is no secret in Yarthrain, but it's not a matter that occupies most folks' minds. Harmal's relation with the ranger also is no secret, but villagers know nothing of the ranger's Harper contacts.

The only places of interest here are the inn, the Silver Blade*, run by a former mercenary adventurer known as Timn Berl (hm F5, Longsword) and his wife Gilda (hf Transmuter 5), Retlar Gunnd's farm, because horses are sold, and Harmal Tinnig's smithy. Of course, the haunted ruins of the baron's court may interest your PCs too.

There are no planned encounters here, but there are plenty of opportunities to use the setting to stage a wide variety of them. As a Game Master you can see that the town doesn't have a lot of obvious defenses. They usually aren't needed, because Yarthrain is pretty far removed from any sizeable monster tribes and doesn't have anything of value to draw raiders for other reasons.

Nonetheless, most of the men in town (23 of them) fight and qualify as level one fighters with long- and short swords of middle to low quality. The specialty here is archery. These men are skilled with bow and arrow as fighters of level 3. Special defenses come from the Silver Blade (s. description). Zhent patrols or adventure groups can arrive in town as well and deal with PCs who try to tear up the seemingly defenseless village, if your PCs are inclined to do that.

Yarthrain - the Village

Although the Winding Water flows through Pelleor's Prairie, the river valley has something of its own mini-climate, which tends to produce short but frequent rainfall during the growing season within about 10 miles/15 km of the river. This rain does little good or bad for most of the river valley, but its is a blessing for Yarthrain, which is located on the broadest of three loops in the river's path. The river is exceedingly shallow in Yarthrain, which leads to the accumulation of organic sediments at the bottom of the river loop.

Over the millennia, occasional floods have washed these rich sediments repeatedly across the prairie lands southeast of the river in the Yarthrain area. The result is extremely fertile soil that also is richly productive because of the regular rainfall, otherwise too infrequent on the rest of the prairie. The agricultural richness of Yarthrain is the reason it survives and thrives in such an unlikely location.

Until the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), the late Rennett Bartsch (House No. 8) was Yarthrain's miller, grinding wheat, oats and barley with a horse-drawn treadmill on his farm. Rennett lost his life in a fire in the Year of the Worm that destroyed the small brewery behind his farm and damaged the mill. His son Henning, who took over the farm after his father's death, was not interested in reconstructing the brewery or running the mill again on a regular basis, shifting instead to cattle- and swine-breeding and turning the grain cellars of the mill into a small meat-packing operation that packs beef and pork in brine in wooden barrels.

Henning does maintain the mill, with the understanding that the villagers may use it to mill their grain in time of emergencies. But he negotiated an agreement with the mill in Soubar in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR) under which all exceptionally high quality grain from the usually rich harvest in Yarthrain is shipped to Soubar and milled. As payment, the farmers receive 10% of their grain back in the form of flour and also a respectable price.

Flour and grain shipments led to the start of a skiff-shipping operation at the settlement at Boareskyr Bridge in the Year of the Prince. After the poisoning of the water at Boareskyr Bridge during the Time of the Troubles in the Year of the Shadows (1358 DR), the skiff operation moved upstream from Boareskyr Bridge to Serpent's Cowl.

Henning knows that settlers from Sembia, sponsored by the Iron Throne, are en route to the Winding Water Valley, and when they begin arriving, he will initiate steps to have the remaining structures in the haunted village center torn down completely, so that their stone bricks can be used to construct new buildings.

Henning has hired priests of Lathander to view the old ruins, and the priests are convinced that the ghosts of the baron's followers will be banished, if the buildings they haunt are destroyed. The same priests believe, however, that the ghost of a lady with a silver blade who haunts the village and its inn can be banned only by finding her bones and interring them properly. The work in the haunted section will begin in the spring of the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR).

Yarthrain also ships hides to Soubar for tanning and buys beer from the Soubar brewery. In addition, the packed meats of Yarthrain are considered the best in the entire Sword Coast region. All in all, the development of skiff traffic on the Winding Water has improved the lot of both the farmers of Yarthrain and the merchants who deal with them, and it has provided employment for skiff pilots and coxswains.

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Skiffs usually travel in groups of 3 to 6, with a pilot and two coxswains per skiff, along with a group of eight to 12 mercenaries who accompany the skiffs riding along the south bank of the Winding Water. A skiff journey usually takes one and a half rides upstream to Yarthrain and a ride back downstream to Serpent's Cowl.

In low water times, the skiffs have to dock about half a day's ride west of Yarthrain, where wagons meet them, to transport wares in both directions to and from Yarthrain. Since the closure of the Greyvale to Zhent caravans and the reduction of Zhent traffic between Darkhold and Llorkh, Zhentarim agents have begun signing on occasionally as coxswains on skiffs, to keep an eye on Yarthrain and what's happening in the village. And of course, the crews from Serpent's Cowl are the Yarthrainer's main source of news from the outside world too.

In *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast,* it is suggested that Zelarravyan of Amn, the old *Baron of the Backlands* about 90 years earlier, built his *Backlands Castle* on a hill somewhere outside of town, and that the remnants of the castle have been mostly dismantled since as a source of stone bricks used for newer constructions, including the Silver Blade Inn.

We've made some slight modifications. In a prairie landscape cut by a small river, we consider the kind of hill that is a good foundation for a castle to be unlikely. In our version, the baron built his castle in the center of what is now Yarthrain, along with a small garrison for his mercenary soldiers and mansions for his leading officers.

In the Waterdhavian mercenary attacks some 65 years ago, the mansions were damaged, the castle was partially destroyed and the garrison was almost completely destroyed. The ghosts of the baron's officers haunt the still mostly intact remains of their mansions by night, although the above ground floors of these buildings appear to be safe by day. Whether the cellars are safe by day is uncertain.

There are tales of adventurers entering the cellars by day, finding nothing and emerging unscathed. There are other tales of other adventurers entering the same cellars by day and never returning. The truth of the matter is difficult to determine. That certainly is not the case with the night hauntings. Eerie lights illuminate the mansions after the last traces of the sun have disappeared in the west, and anyone who looks within from outside can see the ghosts of the lords and ladies within dancing to inaudible music. Villagers claim that no one who has entered a mansion by night ever has returned alive.

Without exception, their bodies are found the next day, with the victims' brains devoured, which has led to some speculation that mindflayers may have access to the cellars of the mansions by night. There is only one room of the old garrison still intact. There are some tales of ghosts of soldiers having been seen in this room by night, but this contention is questionable. Unlike the ghosts of the lords and ladies, the soldiers' ghosts are seldom seen, if ever, while the other ghosts appear night for night without fail.

Tales of soldiers' ghosts in the ruins of the castles share the same status. Many adventurers have entered the garrison and castle ruins at night without coming to harm. Old records indicate that the baron had at least one dungeon level beneath the castle's cellars. It is believed that the baron had amassed a large treasure which he stored in this dungeon, and also that this is where he killed the wife of the Waterdhavian noble.

The floor of the castle's cellar caved in more than half a century ago, and no one including bands of dwarves has succeeded to date in finding an entry to a dungeon level. It is true that many of the large stone bricks from the garrison ruin and also some of the stone bricks from the castle ruin have been used to construct or expand newer buildings in Yarthrain.

Nearly 90 years ago, the so-called *Baron of the Backlands* who founded Yarthrain kidnapped the bride of a young Waterdhavian noble, which proved to be the baron's downfall. The noble led a band of 1,000 mercenaries in attack on the baron, who fled after murdering the lady. It took another 10 years for the noble to track the baron down and slay him. The ghost of the lady appears regularly in the night to visitors to Yarthrain staying in the Silver Blade Inn.

She appears as a lady carrying a silver sword, who reveals to them a vision of her brown bones atop a mound of golden coins, apparently the treasure of the baron, which to this day, like the remains of the lady, never has been found. The inn in Yarthrain is named after the ghost of the lady. A full description of the inn is available in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast.*

A former mercenary adventurer known as Timn Berl (hm fighter lvl 5, long sword, LN) and his wife Gilda (hf Transmuter lvl 5, N) bought the inn in the Year of the Wave (1364 DR), after the last owner died without survivors in old age after a brief illness (all unofficial). Timn and Gilda have managed to adapt themselves well to village life, and the villagers have come to accept them and also value them for increasing their defensive strength.

Timn and Gilda have identified themselves only as former adventurers who've had their fill of hacking and slashing. Some of the villagers are aware that the two have some magic items of unusual power, and because of this, they have improved Yarthrain's defensive posture, but no one has pushed them on this issue.

Timn and Gilda are the only two survivors of an adventuring company that was commissioned to destroy a Thayvian Red Wizard in Impiltur but unintentionally left him barely alive. He now is trying to track them down, and they are hiding out in remote Yarthrain. This is the reason for something that villagers consider to be a real quirk with the Berls. A sign at the door says and they insist that no one be allowed in the inn who is wearing headgear of any kind.

The threshold to the inn's door is ensorcelled, to magically prevent entry to anyone with a covered head. This magic can of course be penetrated or banned, but if that is done, an alarm is sounded. The threshold to the guest room door, where all visitors enter, also is ensorcelled to give Gilda true seeing through any non-permanent disguise, magical or otherwise, that a visitor may be using to disguise his head.

If a visitor enters with Thayvian tattoos, he will be fatally poisoned quickly. Details of this situation are given in the entries for Gilda and Timn under *New Unofficial NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. Both the Zhentarim and the Harpers are aware that Timn and Gilda are in Yarthrain and what their stories are, as they have told them, but they have given neither group particular cause to show interest in them.

Yarthrain - the Map

1. The Dock. Skiffs and small rafts coming from Serpent's Cowl pull into the dock at irregular intervals, sometimes merely dropping off passengers, usually paying adventurers who want to seek riches and glory in the backlands, but more often bringing construction materials, supplies and above all, flour. The flow of the Winding Water in Yarthrain is too irregular to drive a mill reliably on a regular basis.

2. The Winding Water.

3. The Silver Blade. Timn and Gilda Berl run a friendly, comfortable house with decent local food at reasonable prices. The rooms are simple, clean and comfortable. The only drink available is *Soubar Wyrmwater* Beer. Timn is however pondering the idea of opening his own small house brewery, an idea that Village Leader Henning Bartsch is trying to discourage. The Silver Blade is, of course, haunted by Yarthrain's Lady Ghost. Timn and Gilda have 10 single rooms at 5 silver dublees per night, and 6 doubles at 4 dublees per person nightly. A pint of Soubar beer costs 3 copper silbs. Meals run between 4 and 9 silver dublees.

4.-6. The Haunted Quarter. No. 4 is the haunted garrison ruin, No. 5 the baron's castle and the four buildings with No. 6 are the haunted mansions of the baron's officers.

7. Retlar Gunnd's Farm and Stables. Guund (AL: LN(E)) is one of the more money hungry Yarthrainer. At age 42, his goal is to amass enough money to retire by the time he's 60, to some location - perhaps Scornubel or Berdusk - and let his son Evard, now 18, take over his farm. Gunnd is not an evil man, but he certainly cannot be described as good either. Amassing wealth for his own future and spending that future somewhere other than in Yarthrain really are his only goals.

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Drawn Swords
Yarthrain
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Yarthrain

Gunnd is on relatively good footing with his fellow villagers, but he has no friends. Nor does he make enemies in Yarthrain. He and his family have worked hard to make their farm prosper. As the Zhentarim began increasing traffic between Darkhold and Llorkh, his prosperity began to grow more quickly than he had hoped. He was the only reliable source of fresh horses between Hill's Edge and Llorkh.

The Zhents were happy to deal with him, and vice versa. With time, the Zhentarim also spoke to him about becoming a paid agent, an offer Gunnd was quick to accept. He's a good agent too. He observes all he can of visitors to and events in Yarthrain and gives full and accurate reports to his Zhentarim contacts.

He does not know what the Zhents do with this information, nor does he seem to care. All observations he can make about your PC group also will be passed on in accurate detail. The Iron Throne is planning a fatal accident for Gunnd and his family in early spring of the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR). Whether Henning Bartsch is aware of these assassination plans is for you as Game Master to decide.

8. Henning Bartsch's Farm. Henning Bartsch is the acknowledged village leader of Yarthrain and one of the city's leading grain farmers. The PCs will no doubt only come to know him in this respect. He also is the key figure of the Iron Throne in the Backlands, a fact the PCs will come to know only if you as Game Master make this information accessible to him. We have developed Henning Bartsch thoroughly in the section *New Unofficial NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide,* to give you an important NPC the PCs can come to know in future spinoff adventures you may wish to develop.

9. Hardy Talender's farm.

10. Tandar Reb's farm.

11. Wilmar Plog's farm.

12. Harnal Tinnig's Farm and Smithy: Harnal grows both grain crops and fruit trees. His orchards are in the river valley about four miles north of Yarthrain. The craft of the smith has been passed down from father to son through the generations in the Tinnig family. Harnal's smith talents are limited largely to repairing tools and farm implements. Any repairs he makes to armor will bear some risks, because Harnal understands little about armor.

He also is not capable of making good repairs of weapons. He could, for instance, repair a broken sword blade, but after his repair, the balance probably would be lost and the blade would be of only poor quality. He is close friends with a prairie ranger named Trinfingl, who is a Harper agent in the Backlands. When Trinfingl comes to Yarthrain, Harnal keeps him informed. There are no plans of the Iron Throne to act against Harnal, because they are unaware of his service to the Harpers.

13. Widow Minna Tipl's farm.

14. Bendar Tagg's farm.

15. Distar Hammet's farm.

16. Widow Libett Smyde's farm.

17. Village Cemetery.

Events in Yarthrain

The following encounters can or should occur in Yarthrain:

- The PCs certainly should have an encounter with the ghost of the lady with the silver sword.

- If the PC group doesn't know it yet, it should learn in Yarthrain that Randal Morn and his Freedom Fighters have retaken Dagger Falls.

- Scuttlebutt: The people of Yarthrain are hardy and independent Backlands folks. The Zhents are the current brunt of their wit. The Zhentarim caravans began traveling through Yarthrain several years ago, sometimes bragging how rich the villagers would become through Zhent trade. With the exception of Retlar Gunnd, most Yarthrainer were skeptical. They tend to believe that big numbers like the Zhents fall quickly and easily, and they like to joke now about how something went wrong in Llorkh, etc. Retlar Gunnd does not take this well. Based upon the Zhents, he began expanding his horse breeding operations. Without Zhent caravans, the market in Yarthrain is too small, and he already has had to bring horses to Boareskyr Bridge to sell, in the end at break-even prices. If your PCs need horses, they can buy them from Retlar at a 10% discount from PHB prices.

- Any decent band of PCs will at least want to look at the haunted houses at night, when the ghosts are active. If they enter a haunted house at night, the ghosts will be oblivious to them, but the PCs will be drawn irresistibly into the cellar, if they do not make a saving throw. In 3rd edition, save for will at DC 15. In 2nd edition, save against magic. In the cellar they will encounter mindflayers wanting to devour their brains. There are two less mindflayers than group members in the encounter, but always at least one mindflayer.

Game Master: The statistics for illithids or mind flayers can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*..

After Yarthrain your PCs still have another 4 days on the trail before they reach Drawn Swords. During this time, they're back in Pelleor's Prairie again. Encounters are not particularly likely during this time, but possibilities are herds of bison, bands of wemics or encounters with the poisonous snakes and plants identified in Appendix 1 to *Elminster's Ecologies.* Other possibilities are a prairie fire, a patrol of Zhent soldiers from Darkhold riding northward (who may try to rob and kill the PCs) or bands of orcs or hobgoblins.

In the last day before reaching Drawn Swords, the chances of encounters with bands of marauding orcs increases, and there also is a chance of encounters with bands of brigands. Possible neutral encounters are with a ranger or hunters from Drawn Swords.

14. Drawn Swords

Thorp, Nonstandard (Harpers of Berdusk). AL: NG. 1,000 gp limit. Assets: 200,000 gp. Population: 80 Mixed (90% human, 10% half elf).

Drawn Swords comes into view on the fourth day out of Yarthrain, when the PCs have any encounters you've thrown in behind them and the village of Drawn Swords is coming into view. The description we've used for the village is compatible with the description in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast.* Some of the NPCs and details are unofficial, in which case they are marked with an asterisk(*).

Drawn Swords is a Harper bastion under the control of the Harper Branch in Twilight Hall in Berdusk. The castle ruin has a gate to Berdusk, which is the source of supplies for the village. The population of about 80 consists mainly of hunters and guides. Most businesses in Drawn Swords deal with providing guide services for wealthy visiting hunters vacationing in the village.

Drawn Swords is atop a high hill on the edge of the *Northdark Wood.* The sides of the hill are terraced with hunters huts, cottages and lodges on each terrace level. On the top of the hill is an old castle tower ruin.

Drawn Swords is a fueling and rest stop for your PCs. There are no planned encounters here, but they could occur if the PCs do something to suggest an affiliation with the Zhentarim or some other evil agency. If the PCs reveal their sigylls, some of the folk will become aware who they are, because Twilight Hall knows the sigyll bearers are heading southwards. In that case, you could have the Harpers detain the PCs for a day until they get answers from Twilight Hall, which probably won't involve much more than *Good luck!*

As a Harper bastion it's a good place, for the PCs to pick up news you want to feed them. There is one item the PCs need to learn here, for the sake of the rest of the adventure, the story of Tyran driving the Zhents out of Teshwave (s. below).. They probably will learn it in the tavern of the inn. More information about Tyran the Outlaw Prince can be found in the WotC Accessory *"The Dalelands"* by L. Richard Baker III (TSR - 1993).

Another attraction just outside of Drawn Swords is the *Flame Stone of Sune*, a huge, upright stone that glows with a flickering orange red on midsummer nights, as though it's flaming. This is a holy site of the goddess of beauty, Sune. If any of your characters are priests of Sune, they will insist on visiting the stone, which frequently draws pilgrimages of Sune's followers. On midsummer nights above all, but also at other times, orgiastic rituals take place among Sune's worshippers at the stone. You'll find more details in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast.*

Game Master: The following description should be used when the PCs begin noticing Northdark Wood as they near Drawn Swords:

> In the distance, you can make out the traces of a forest to the south, no doubt Northdark Wood. As you ride on, an object becomes visible on the east side of the wood, apparently a large, single hill. It still is difficult to make out, but it seems to be high, with a fortress castle at the top.

Game Master: After a bit, as the PCs draw still nearer:

> What you're seeing is really something of a small mountain standing alone on the floor of the prairie before the forest, its peak perhaps 200 feet/60 m above the prairie. The mountain apparently is the village of Drawn Swords. Its sides are terraced in four steep tiers. Stone huts, cottages and hunting lodges stand at intervals along the two middle tiers. On the peak is the crumbling ruin of an old fortress castle with a tower, but the ruin still serves as a village defense. You can see several men atop the tower. Ballistae and a giant triple crossbow are mounted on the top of the broken-off tower, and there are stacks of wood at several locations on the side of the mountain large enough to make huge beacon fires. There's no sign of farming on the prairie below.

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The PCs will have to wind their way up the side of the mountain to reach the inn. Along the way, they will be questioned carefully, as to what their business in Drawn Swords is. Most of the folks encountered will be tough, outdoor types. People will steer the PCs to the inn. The following should be read as the PCs ascend the hill with a view to the southwest:

The canopy of Northdark Wood stretches out to the southwest as far as your eye can see. The forest is about an equal mix of conifers and deciduous trees, many of them a good 80 feet/25 m tall. A large stone, about 12 feet/3 m tall, stands alone in the prairie grass on the edge of the forest. Northdark Wood apparently is a good place for hunting. You see a party of 12 emerging from the forest near the large stone, walking toward Drawn Swords and carrying the carcasses of three large bucks.

The Inn: the Sword and the Dragon:

There is a gate to Berdusk on the ground floor of the Swordskeep ruin. It is used to transport supplies to Drawn Swords and to transport people and the hunters' bag back to Berdusk. In the event of Zhent attacks, powerful Harpers are gated to Drawn Swords to defend the village. The trail from the castle ruin leads directly to the inn. It is not unusual for live monsters to be held in cages before the inn, until they are transported to the ruin, to be gated back to Berdusk. This is what the PCs see as they approach the inn:

As you reach the upper level of Drawn Swords Crag and approach the inn, more than one unusual sight greets your eyes. Two men and a woman stand in front of the inn, watching over a group of three huge cages. The men are protected by leather armor and have swords, bows, knives and other weapons. From their appearances, you guess them to be rangers or experienced hunters. The woman also is dressed in leather, for the wilderness, but has no armor and her only weapon is a dagger. A mage, you suspect.

One of the cages holds a large orog orc who shakes the bars futilely. Another holds a huge, purple and green colored spider, more than 7 feet/2 m in diameter. The bars of the third cage glow green with magic, and sparks constantly jump back and forth between the bars. In this cage is a mindflayer, who keeps pounding its head, as though it's in pain.

The castle ruin is still one level higher. A trail leads to it from the inn, and a group of four unarmed men are coming down from the ruin pulling two carts, each carrying two beer barrels. The men are dressed for work, not for the hunt.

The woman, who you take for a mage, shouts, *"It's about time you get some new beer. I thought the stuff last night was getting sour."*

One of the workers shouts back, *"Crap, Janda! You know we get new beer from Berdusk everyday!"*

The whole group laughs then, but the scene leaves you a touch puzzled. If new beer is coming in from Berdusk - more than 350 miles/580 km to the south by road - one would think it would come in by the road, below, and not arrive at the ruin above.

In any case, after that kind of a journey, one well might expect the beer to be sour. Well, perhaps it came in earlier, and there's a beer cellar in the ruin above, where it's stored.

Game Master: The following is overheard by the PCs at some time when they are in the inn tavern.

"The Zhents have taken another major blow. Two years ago, they lost Dagger Falls, and they haven't been able to get it back. Randal Morn, the rightful ruler, is in full control now. Well, you know, men from a lot of the rightful families of Teshendale have been hiding in the woods and harassing the Zhents with guerilla warfare for many years.

"In their last days in Daggerdale, the Zhents had moved a number of their troops out of Teshwave into Dagger Falls. The leader of the Teshendale rebels, Tyran the Outlaw Prince, *he calls himself, used that opportunity and the fact that Zhentil Keep is still a disaster area to convince Mourngrym of Shadowdale, the Riders of Mistledale, the Knights of Myth Drannor and a band of Harpers to join them, and they ran the Zhents out of Teshwave too about six rides back. Nearly 600 Zhentilar lost their lives there. Another 400 Zhents escaped across the river into the North.*

"But we're not so sure they'll be back soon. With Dagger Falls lost, their Tesh trade route already is in trouble. The new ruler in the ruins of Zhentil Keep, this Lord Orgauth, pays lip service to the Zhentarim, but neither he nor the Raven of the Citadel have made any effort to help each other for several years now. It's hard to believe that Manshoon would risk a large contingent of troops to recapture Tesh Wave, when Dagger Falls still remains closed to him.

"That won't reopen his trade route. About the most he'd gain is Teshwave back, and that place is a ruin. It's worth nothing to him as long as his Tesh route is cut off at Dagger Falls in the West. And Sememmon in Darkhold? Well, he has a large contingent of Zhentilar too, but they're awfully far away. I don't think he'll risk losing most of them. And before his troops can help recapture Teshwave, they're going to have to take a lot of damage from the Purple Dragons and get past Dagger Falls too. No sir, I think Tyran is going to be in Teshwave for while, for what it's worth."

A tip in time ...

Your PCs may not be thinking of it yet, but they need a charter to go through Cormyr as a group. This may be a good time for NPCs to start reminding the group that it will have to come up with 1,000 gold lions to buy a charter, if it hopes to get past High Horn and into the kingdom!

What's Rolling Hills?

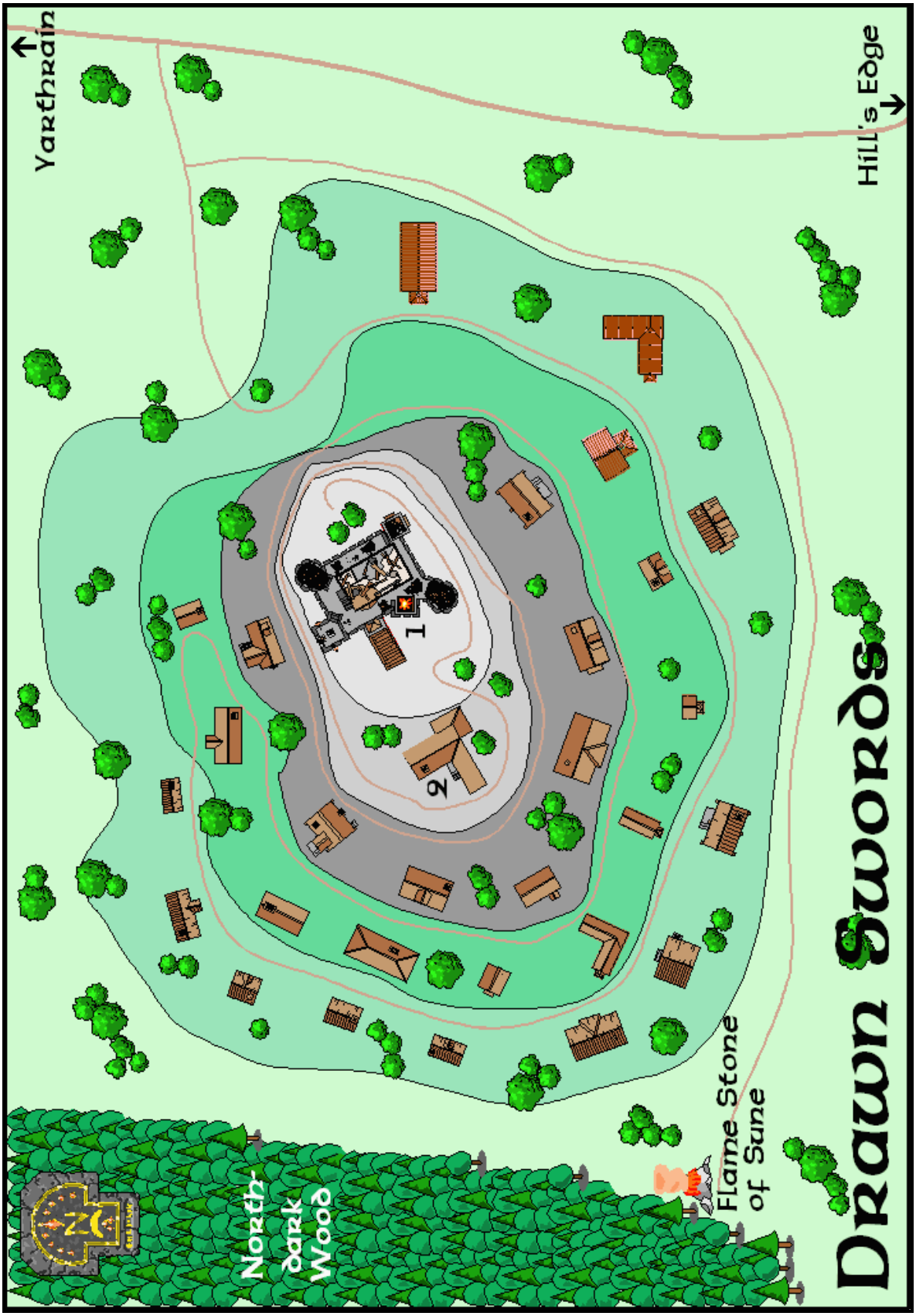
It may be that your PCs raise this question. The most anyone in Drawn Swords at the time the PCs are there knows (outside of Windor Cannh - see below), is that some kind of religious community has set up a monastery there with priests and monks, to try to do something about the restless spirits of the Battle of Bones and the Hill of Lost Souls.

NPCs of Drawn Swords:

The only NPC of importance in the village is the Harper Ranger Windor Cannh (s. below). The people who live here are loners, not family types, who make their money hunting, trapping and working as guides for wealthy hunters who come from the city. There is a shrine to Mielikki in the Northdark Wood about a mile inside the forest, west of the Flamestone of Sune. However, there are no regular priests here.

The Inn, the *Sword and the Dragon,* is the one place where folks gather, usually at night. Any night of the week, there will be a combination of adventurers, hunters and locals in the inn. The locals usually stick to themselves and don't welcome the company of strangers. The hunters generally are folks a class or two too high for most of the rest of the people in the house.

As a result, they tend to stay together too, mostly because they know the locals want to be left to themselves, and because they aren't comfortable with adventurers for too long. These folks are *important* somewhere else, but they tend to be a touch afraid of folks who spend everyday doing what they pretend to do while on vacation. Adventurers, of course, always are looking for tips and information, and they tend to mix well with other adventurers.



Drawn Swords

The key goals of most adventurers are the search in Northdark Wood for lost relics of the old elven tribes who once settled the wood and the surrounding area, along with the Hill of Lost Souls and the Battle of Bones, where some adventurers still like to search for treasures of ancient battle victims, most without success and many without being seen again. It's not a good idea having anyone available when the PCs are there who are thoroughly informed about the Battle of Bones, because that's where the PCs are heading, and you don't want them to know too much in advance.

The personnel in the inn is, as explained in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast"* from Berdusk and is rotated regularly through use of the gate in the Swordskeep.

Game Master: Statistics for the ranger Windor Cannh are under *New NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

The Map of Drawn Swords:

1. Swordskeep. Ruin of a robber-knight's fortress castle. Two triple crossbows and a ballista are mounted atop the main tower. The remnants of a second tower can be used to set off alarm fires.

2. The Sword and the Dragon Inn. The Sword sells Twilight Brew beer from Berdusk at a loss. The inn and its tavern are owned and operated by the Harpers of Twilight Hall in Berdusk, who subsidize the beer in order to draw both travelers and locals into the Sword, where the *ears* of the Harpers can hear what's new. Twilight Brew costs 3 copper silbs for a quart/liter tankard. Food consists mainly of vegetables and conserves gated in from Berdusk along with venison and boar brought in by local hunters. The daily dish, regardless of what it is, costs 6 silver dublees. The inn's 16 single rooms cost one gold harp per person per night.

All remaining buildings on the map are private huts, cottages and lodges of hunters living in Drawn Swords.

15. Battle of Bones

When it's time to leave Drawn Swords, your PCs probably will plan to head towards Hill's Edge. Their sigylls will however pull them strongly toward the Battle of Bones. The journey through Sunset Vale and around to Cormyr is much longer than simply crossing Yellow Snake Pass, the Tun Plain and the Storm Horns, as far as the sigylls concerned. The pull will not hinder the PCs from going back for additional supplies or to ask new questions, but it will eventually force them to leave.

The first days of their journey run according to the same guidelines as previously given for Pelleor's Prairie, with encounters available but no fixed encounters planned. The going is slightly slower, because the trail is nothing more than a narrow path through the prairie grass. To make a respectable pace, it's necessary to ride single file.

On the second and third days, there should be no encounters other than perhaps poisonous snakes. If the weather tables show a snow cover for these days, make clear that no snow has fallen in this area. The ground is open. The prairie grass will get ever more wiry, the ground stonier and stonier and the trail ever more difficult to make out. Regardless of what the weather tables show, there is a thick haze on these days, with visibility limited to about 3 miles/5 km.

The landscape is dull, lifeless and depressing. The soil is dry with only dry creek beds and the most persistent sorts of wild brush available. Animal life is limited to poisonous snakes. By the third day, paladins will begin detecting a brooding mood of evil upon the land. Towards the end of the third day, the mist seems to be coalescing into thicker fog.

Game Master: Statistics for poison snakes can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*. On the fourth day, it's yet another matter. It's time to ignore the weather tables:

> Last evening already, you began to notice a chilly fog settling upon the land. In the darkness, it was impossible to assess how thick the fog is, but on the next morning, as the first signs of day appear in the sky, you notice that the fog is pure pea soup. You're in the middle of a white cloud, with no more than 150 feet/45 m visibility in any direction. The trail you've been on still is visible, but barely.

Game Master: Towards mid-afternoon:

> Although the daylight has become somewhat stronger, the fog remains as thick as it was since daybreak. The fog also has been thick in the sky above you for several hours, making it quite difficult to judge direction by the sun. You can of course make out lighter and darker areas in the sky, but the sun is so diffuse that even an experienced ranger could misjudge (**Game Master:** With an error margin of 5 to 10 degrees, and double that for other persons).
>
> That problem is made considerably worse by the fact that your already thin trail has been crossed in the last several hours by a number of other similar trails converging into yours from various angles. You've done your best to try and pick the right path each time, but you really have no way to know whether you've been successful or not.
>
> If you had to describe this ride through the fog, you might pick the word *haunting*. It seems to you that the sound of the wind is almost a groaning. No sooner do you have that idea, however, than it occurs to you that the air is absolutely still today. There is no wind. What, then, is that distant groaning you hear now and then?

Game Master: A ranger in the group who checks can determine that all of the trails are used from time to time. There are some signs of human- and goblin-sized boot tracks, but the great majority of what he/she sees look like tracks of human and goblin skeletons. In case it's not clear to you, the PCs have wandered into the haunted Battle of Bones. If you want additional details on this area, see the *Battle of Bone"* accessory in *Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 1.*

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(Occurs at map location 1). In your last hour of daylight, you notice that the landscape has become uneven and rocky, with large boulders standing alongside the trail frequently. It's also clear that you been climbing gradually but steadily. It could be that you've wandered into the foothills of some low mountain ranges. That's all good enough, of course, but in addition to that, you've come into an area now that's strewed with skulls and bones - very ancient skulls and bones, but seemingly from humans and goblins for the most part. Whoever once owned these bones seems to be long dead.

Beginning at Map Location 2:

From here on it's up to you to pick the encounters. There is a lich from Kara-Tur named Ignar Turc Abolin active at the Battle of Bones who controls many of the undead there, according to *Elminster's Ecologies Appendix 1*. We haven't planned an encounter with him, but if you want an added side adventure at this point, you could go off on a lich hunt (we know - very punny).

There are a lot of encounters available to you here, more than enough to murder a PC group several times over. Pick whatever you want. Encounters go on until you choose to run Part 25, *A Voice in the Dark,"* at which time the PCs can be rescued by a high priestess of Kelemvor. After that time, if you want to restore lost levels, the priests of Kelemvor and the high priest of Ilmater in Rolling Hills will be able to use the 7th level priest spell *Restoration*, within reason.

The Battle of Bones has a good supply of monsters (see below). Which of them and how many your PCs encounter is up to you. When you and/or your PCs have had enough, run the following:

Suddenly, a deep woman's voice sounds from behind you. You also are aware of torchlight from that direction. The voice says: *"Kelemvore lexora mortator! Rest! Go to Kelemvor, to be judged! Go!"* The undead do not seem to be able to resist. What remains of their physical essences is dissolved and begins sinking into the soil and rock beneath. For a moment, a blue spark lights where each of the undead have been and then goes out.

After you become adjusted to the fact that the seemingly impossible enemies that surrounded you moments ago have been vanquished by the simple voice of a woman, you turn to see that spoke. Behind you stands an attractive but frail looking woman of about 40, thin and only a little more than five feet/155 cm tall, who holds a lowered mace in her right hand. The woman is wearing a robe of neutral grey with a hood.

From under the hood, you see that she also is wearing a silver headband. Sewn into the robe over her heart is a symbol of an upward reaching skeletal arm that ends in a skeletal hand holding golden scales. However, you can pay only fleeting attention to the appearance of your rescuer, because she seems to be in trouble. The lady trembles, as though she has been weakened or even wounded, and it looks as though she is having a difficult time standing.

Game Master: Give your PCs time to react, before the lady regains her composure. When she does:

"Fools!", the lady says sharply, surprising you with her anger. *"Why are you here? Are you seeking treasure, or only death? Fools! Let the Battle of Bones in peace! Why are you here?"* Slowly, you begin to get the impression that the lady could become hysterical if she doesn't receive good answers quickly.

From this point on, it's a matter of role-playing. The PCs are dealing with Klarsa of Kelemvor, the high priestess of Kelemvor at Rolling Hills. If the PCs are the least bit reasonable and truthful about their situation, Klarsa will invite them to Rolling Hills and lead them there. Her statistics are in the next part. Her action to rescue the PCs was not the normal turning or destruction of undead, but rather a special power Kelemvor has granted his priests within five miles of the Battle of Bones or the Hill of Lost Souls. His priests call it the *Judgment Command*.

This power works in two different ways, one for undead who were humans and half-humans (i.e. half elves, half orcs, etc.) who worship human gods or none at all, and in another way for members of other races and half-humans who worshipped non-human gods. All who are undead through their own magical or clerical efforts - such as liches, banshees, etc. - have a saving throw, in 3rd Edition for fortitude, in 2nd Edition against death magic, both with a bonus of 4.

HUMAN UNDEAD & HALF-HUMAN UNDEAD WITH HUMAN GODS: The command affects a number of undead equal to the hit points of the priest, regardless of their level . The physical remains of the undead are driven into the ground and buried. Their spirits are sent to Kelemvor for judgment. Targets of the command cannot be restored to their undead state without being restored first to genuine life.

NON-HUMAN UNDEAD & HALF-HUMAN UNDEAD WITH NON-HUMAN GODS: The command affects a number of undead equal to the hit points of the priest, regardless of the power. The physical remains of the undead are driven into the ground and buried. Their spirits are sent to where members of their race go for judgment or eternal rest. Targets of the command cannot be restored to their undead state without being restored first to genuine life.

EFFECTS OF THE COMMAND: In using this command, Kelemvor channels powers into his priest that normally would be beyond his or her ability. This takes a tremendous toll upon the priest. The command may be used at the most three times a day, and it costs the priest one hit die damage per affected undead, regardless of level.

In addition, the priest ages irreversibly one ride (tenday) each time he uses the command, and thereby brings closer the day when he himself stands before Kelemvor. All of the hit points can be regained after eight hours of uninterrupted sleep, but the ride of life that is lost through premature aging is lost forever. In addition, the priest is weakened for 1d4+1 rounds after using the command. In this time the priest cannot fight, defend himself or use spells or other priestly powers. Again, this command can be used only within five miles of the Battle of Bones or the Hill of Lost Souls.

Monsters of Battle of Bones

Monsters from the *D&D Monster Manual* or *Monstrous Compendium*.

3W6 + 12 SKELETONS (15-30), 1W3 WANDERING SKELETONS (1-3), SHADOW (1), 2W10 + 10 WIGHTS (12-30), 3W6 + 5 WRAITHS (8-23), SPECTRE (1), GHOST (1), 1d6 CARRION CRAWLERS (1-6) and 5d4 ROT GRUBS (5-20).

Monster specific to *"Battle of Bones"* supplement, *"Elminster's Ecologies,"* Appendix 1. This accessory can be downloaded free from the WotC web site.

3d2 BONE MINERS (3-6.

Monster from the monster pages of the 2nd Edition *Forgotten Realms Boxed Set.* This accessory is a pay download available from http://www.rpgnow.com.

1d8 GAMBADOS (1-8), also known as *"Springing Skulls of Doom.*.

Map of Battle of Bones

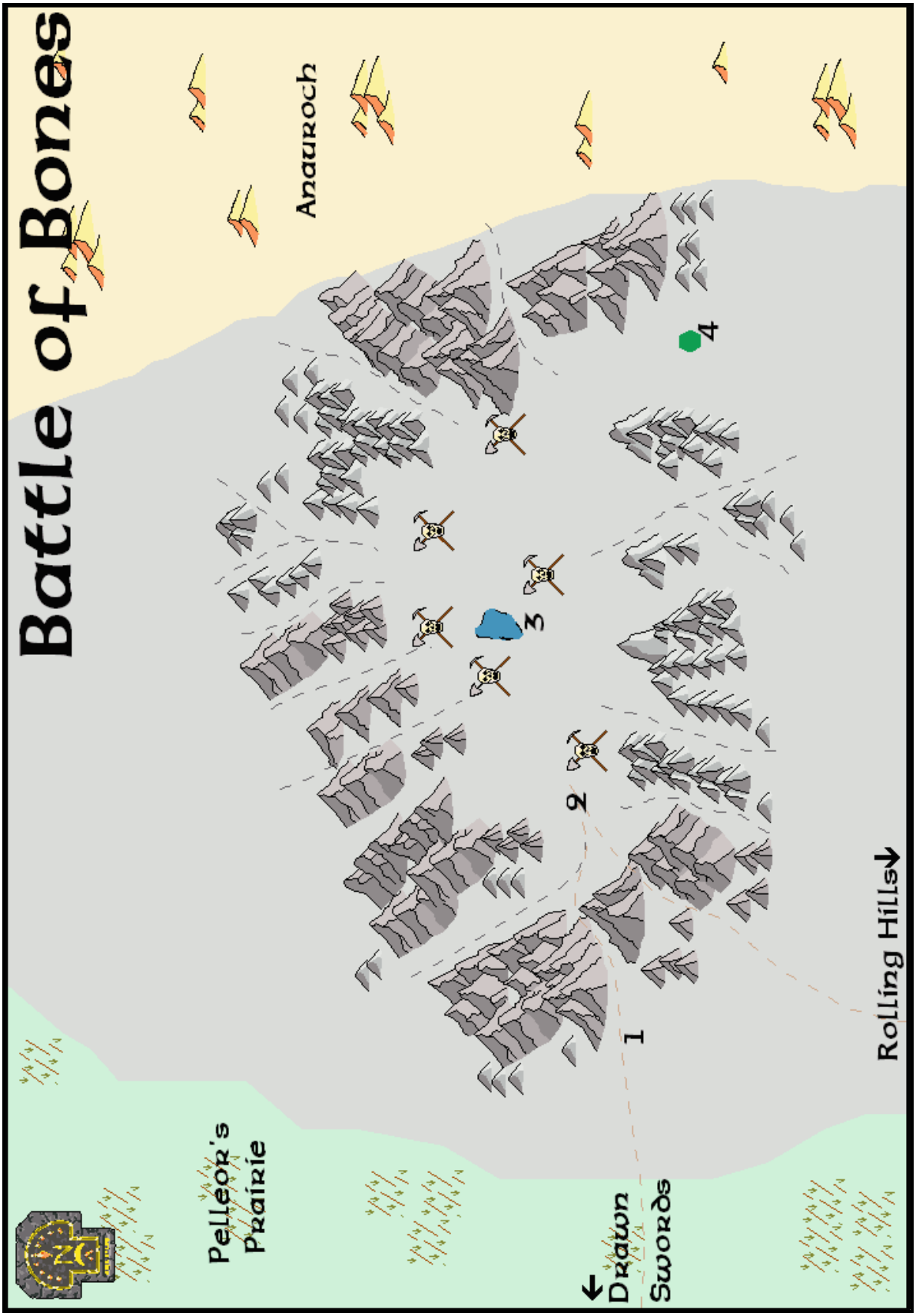
NOTE: Areas marked with a pick, shovel and skull are abandoned mining shafts.

1 - Groaning. This is the point where groaning is heard in the air. See above.

2 - Encounters. This is where the PCs' encounters with undead take place and it also is where they encounter Klarsa of Kelemvor.

3 - Pond of Tears. Contains water only in spring. For more details see *Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 1.*

4 - Rose Garden Labyrinth. For more details see *Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 1.*



Battle of Bones

16. Rolling Hills

Thorp, Nonstandard (religious quarters). AL: N. 100 gp limit. Assets: 500,000 gp. Population: 40 Human.

Rolling Hills **is not** a village officially defined by WotC, but it is spun-off of a description in the *Hill of Lost Souls* accessory to *Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 1*, where author Scott Davis reports over *a settlement directly south of the Battle of Bones* whose inhabitants *reported that a hill about 15 feet high rolled through their village, knocking over tents, unearthing fences and smashing down crops*. This occurred after the village was about five years old. The 30 or so villagers who lived there had been quite certain that the hill had been in its original position at the time they moved there and that it was a genuine hill.

Out of this official thread we've developed the religious community of *Rolling Hills,* which probably will play a relatively small role in most versions of the *Northern Journey* campaign, but which can be used as a spinoff for future adventures in an around the Battle of Bones and the Hill of Lost Souls.

The prairie settlers who had their tent village disrupted by the rolling hill in the Year of the Sword (1365 DR) finally gave up and left the area, after sages and mages who had come to the area were unable to determine the cause of this incident or to give any assurance that another rolling hill would not strike their tent village again. The learned men who had studied the matter did believe that its roots were to be found in some tremendous evil within the Battle of Bones, and several of them thought this evil most likely was a powerful lich.

This matter was of extreme concern to such folk as the Druid Tharnn Greenwinter of Pelleor's Prairie, who already was convinced that the balance on the prairie had been severely upset by the extreme number of undead from the battle nearly 300 years ago and those forces trying today to make use of and control the undead left from the battle.

Tharnn's alarm in turn awakened the concerns of the druids of Chauntea in the Heartlands, among others of the High Druid Nartan of Chauntea from the fringes of Hullack Forest in Cormyr, who agreed that the undead on Pelleor's Prairie must be put to rest, and that the natural balance should be restored to the land. The latter task certainly was a fitting mission for the druids of Chauntea, as far as Nartan was concerned, but dealing with the undead was hardly a druid's task, and that would have to be done before the druids would have a chance to succeed at their work.

Klarsa of Kelemvor had managed to reach the level of a high priestess and also to have gathered a representative following without ever having established a temple of her own. She was among the higher ranking, wandering Doomguides in Faerûn. The answer, as to why she never had established a temple, was brief and simple. Klarsa knew that Kelemvor had a special mission planned for her, but he had not revealed that mission to her yet.

Revelation came in the Year of the Staff (1366 DR), when Klarsa and her followers crossed Cormyr and encountered the High Druid Nartan, who encouraged her to take up the challenge of the Battle of Bones and the Hill of Lost Souls. Although the churches of Kelemvor and Chauntea usually have little to do with each other, Klarsa and Nartan agreed after several conversations, to take up this challenge together, after additional elements, such as a protective force and the financing of a base of operations, could be secured.

Toward the end of that year, Klarsa turned to the newly established Temple of Lathander in Arabel, hoping to find an open ear there. The High Priest, Dannl of Lathander, was sympathetic to her cause, but he felt that the laying to rest of large numbers of undead represented more an overdue ending than a new beginning and was not quite consistent with the goals of the Morninglord's church. However, he suggested two other contacts to Klarsa.

For strength of arms, he suggested she contact the Abbott of the Monastery of the Yellow Rose in service to Ilmater in Damara. For financing, Dannl recommended her to the wealthy Arabeler coal merchant Nadar Hendling.

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Several of Hendling's ancient ancestors were among those who had fallen in the Battle of Bones nearly 300 years ago. Hendling knew that many of the fallen in the battle continued to exist as undead, and he had said often that he would do whatever he could to see that they had found their rest. By the time she had left Arabel, Klarsa had won Hendling's pledge of financial support for her mission.

From there the high priestess and her followers traveled across Sembia, the Dragon Reach and the Vast into Impiltur and to Damara, where they met with followers of St. Sollars in the Monastery of the Yellow Rose. As worshippers of Ilmater, the members of the monastery were convinced that an interminable existence as undead was one of the worst forms of suffering, and Kane both monks and paladins of his order volunteered to join Klarsa of Kelemvor on her mission to Pelleor's Prairie.

Returning in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR) to Cormyr with her own supporters and the worshippers of Ilmater, Klarsa added the High Druid Nartan and two of his followers to her small troop and then traveled on to Arabel, where she collected the financial pledge offered by Hendling and an additional unexpected supporter, the priest Conard of Lathander, a member of Dannl's temple in Arabel. In contrast to Dannl's opinion, Conard was firmly convinced that Klarsa's mission represented the type of new beginning fundamental to the Morninglord's faith. Dannl respected Conard's opinion and sent him off with his blessings.

With her full contingency now assembled, the group traveled from Arabel over the Storm Horns to Eagle Peak, where they encountered dwarves who knew of the ruins of an old dwarven settlement a day's ride south of the Battle of Bones. The stone blocks of the abandoned settlement still were in good condition, the dwarves assured her, and could be used to construct a new settlement in the area. With the money donated by Hendling in Arabel, Klarsa commissioned the dwarves to build the new settlement *Rolling Hills.*

The dwarves did their work quickly and with skill. Klarsa and her following reached the site of the new *Rolling Hills* in early Mirtul of the Year of the Banner. By the end of Eleint in that year, the mill already was operating, as was the common house, and sufficient structures had been erected in each of the other quarters to adequately house the priests of Kelemvor, the druids and monks of Chauntea and the paladins and monks of Ilmater along with Conard, the priest of Lathander among their ranks.

Outside of the Ilmater-Lathander-combination, it is a curious combinations of faiths that usually have little to do with one another working together,. The duties are well-defined down religious lines. Klarsa and her priests of Kelemvor are responsible for laying the undead to rest, as does Conard of Lathander. The paladins and monks of Ilmater provide combat defense for the priests. The druids of Chauntea are attempting to restore the balance of nature to some areas south of the Battle of Bones. And the monks of Chauntea do the farm work, the milling, brewing and cooking necessary to support *Rolling Hills.*

In the first year, Klarsa and her company were relatively satisfied with the results of their work, but with each new success, they met with increasing resistance, believed to be steered by liches at the Battle of Bones. This was a growing problem, but a white necromancer of high level from Iriaebor named Gamling joined Klarsa's monastic community late in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR) and has since been trying to weaken the hold the liches have over the undead of the Battle of Bones. Gamling lives in Kelemvor's quarter.

Gamling is not the only newcomer to *Rolling Hills.* Several druids and monks of Chauntea and also warriors who worship Kelemvor have come to the monastic community since its founding.

Game Master: After receiving answers from the PCs Klarsa of Kelemvor will identify herself as the high Doom-guide of the church of Kelemvor in the village of Rolling Hills. If asked about the village, she will explain:

"Rolling Hills is a monastic village where followers of three different churches that normally are not aligned with each other have come together, three churches - Kelemvor, Ilmater and Chauntea. We also have a high priest of Lathander with us and a white necromancer who follows the church of Mystra.

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"In the fog, you can't make it out, but this is a large triangle of mountains that encloses a huge flat of rocky, barren land. Men used to call it Torgor's Triangle. *Today it's called the* Battle of Bones. *Our mission began about 300 years ago, when 400,000 men and goblins killed each other here in the most senseless battle in the history of Faerûn. After this battle, nearly 400,000 corpses were strewn across the land here, not a one of them ever properly buried.*

"It was similar northwest of here too. The wounded survivors of the battle who managed to escape made it to a small lonely mountain there, where many of them also died without a proper burial. The mountain's known as the Hill of Lost Souls. *Here and there you'll find the biggest collection of walking undead in all Faerûn.*

"Our mission is to end their undead existence and send them to Kelemvor for judgment. The followers of Ilmater view the existence of these undead souls as endless suffering, so they support us in our efforts by providing us with a defense. The followers of Chauntea are here to cleanse and purify the land.

"There are many things here that aren't right, and some of them have nothing to do with the fallen from the battle. There's a lich here, someone from Kara-Tur, who's trying to organize the undead for his own purposes. He also can organize them into a substantial troop to defend him. Every time we think we're on his trail, we're blocked by a large troop of undead, more than we can banish in a single day. We always have to turn back before our powers have waned too much. There also are several necromancers dabbling here, who still are very much alive.

"And at least one of them is using troublesome magic. Our mission started when a delegation of lay followers of Chauntea petitioned one of our priests who had been examining the Helmlands in Cormyr. They had established a farming settlement somewhat south of the Battle of Bones, outside of the area consider endangered by the undead. They still were living in tents, when someone sent two large foothills of the mountains here rolling southward across the plain and through their settlement, destroying their tents and their fields. We think now that this magic came from the lich. In any case, that's where the name of our village comes from, Rolling Hills."

This narrative starts as Klarsa begins to leads the PCs out of the Battle of Bones. One assumes that the journey will be made in the darkness of night.

Klarsa lights a torch and urges you to do the same. She then leads you along a stony trail that winds through crevasses at brings you at last into an opening, where you come after about 15 minutes to an open area. Eight persons are gathered here, apparently waiting for Klarsa. Three are heavily armed and wear plate armor. Two are wearing only gray robes and carry morning stars as weapons. The three others are wearing robes similar to Klarsa's and carry maces.

Klarsa quickly explains who you are and introduces you to her companions. The armored men all are paladins of Ilmater from the Monastery of the Yellow Rose in Damara.:

- Sir Harnell Penn
- Lady Davitta Gitton
- Sir Tau tsi-Dang

The robed companions are a man and a woman, both monks of Ilmater from the Monastery of the Yellow Rose:

- Brother Lindar
- Sister Ralda

The remaining companions are two priests and a priestess of Kelemvor:

- Doomguide Hestell of Kelemvor
- Doomguide Reetha of Kelemvor
- Doomguide Xaneth of Kelemvor

Before you have much chance to converse with the others, Lady Davitta says, *"We have to leave here quickly. We were on the trail of the lich again. He'll have a new force marshaled soon, and we have to head back before it reaches us. We've done all we can for today."*

Klarsa replies, *"Good. We can talk when we get to Rolling Hills."*

The journey by torchlight southward from the Battle of Bones is uneventful. Several hours go by in the darkness, before the first signs of daylight become visible in the east, where Anauroch lies. And still you continue on. Here south of the Battle of Bones the air is free of the blinding mists that had plagued you a day earlier, but behind you, distant in the north, you can see that the mountains of the Battle of Bones still are shrouded in fog.

At long last, with full daylight upon the land, you see a village surrounded with a wooden palisade wall about 10 feet/3 m high before you. The landscape here is quite different from that on Pelleor's Prairie. This land seems to be fertile, with different types of plants in evidence. And there are farm fields on both sides of the road before the village wall. To your right, west of the road, you can hear a stream flowing from the north.

Further events in Rolling Hills are a matter of role-playing, based upon the history, descriptions and statistics of the village. We have intentionally developed Rolling Hills to a greater extent than is necessary, to offer you a chance to use it in future spin-off adventures.

Arrival in the Village:

Unlike the desert landscape surrounding the Battle of Bones, the village of Rolling Hills sits atop a small hill in gently rolling grasslands with frequent copses of trees, wild hedges and brush. The land here seems to be quite fertile, an observation that's confirmed by the agricultural fields outside the village wall.

The wall itself is made of large wooden posts about a foot /30 cm in diameter and 10 feet/3 m high. The trail you're riding on leads directly to a gate with two large wooden doors, each as high as the wall and 5 feet/150 cm wide. The gates are beginning to open as your party approaches them. Directly inside the wall at the gate, to the left or east of it, stands a square wooden tower about 40 feet/12 m high with walls with walls 15 feet/4,5 m wide. Three men are atop the tower, observing your approach.

A carved wooden sign to the right of the gate bears the inscription:

Society of Bountiful and Just Mercy

As you pass through the gate you see a few simple stone buildings with wood shingle roofs that remind you of dwarven constructions. The buildings are among huge trees that stand so thick at places that it's almost like being in a small, thin forest. A group of people observes you from inside the gate. Two of them are heavily armed and wear plate mail. Their shields show the same coat of arms as those of the three paladins riding with you - a yellow rose on a white field. The three remaining people - two women and a man, all three a bit on the round side - stand unarmed inside the gate, wearing welcoming smiles. All three wear simple, dark green robes.

"Welcome back!", shouts one of the women. *"I've been worrying about you. You're overdue! It looks like you've been busy with rescue duty."*

Klarsa answers, *"Perhaps, but more important, another hundred restless souls have gone to Kelemvor. Meritta, please take care of our guests. We'll join you soon."*

The round woman says, *"Well met! I'm Sister Meritta, a monk of Chauntea. We don't get many visitors here, but when we do, it's one of my jobs to take care of them."* The smile suddenly vanishes from her face. *"You were at the Battle of Bones,"* she says matter-of-factly. *"Did you lose friends there?"*

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Game Master: Meritta's reaction will be appropriate for the PCs' answer. Afterwards it continues as follows:

"Well, I'm on foot, so you'll have to lead your horses and walk too. But we're almost there. It's just a jog around that house in front of us, through the trees, over the creek and we're there, at the community house, where you'll be sheltered. If you don't like our cooking, you can keep it to yourself. The next inn is two days away from here."

As she said she would, Meritta leads you through the trees to a simple wooden bridge that crosses a beautiful stream about 10 feet/3 m wide and filled with clear, clean water. Directly on the other side of the bridge is a large stone building with stalls in the back. If you were somewhere else, you'd take it for an inn. To your right, across from the community house, is a huge grain mill with a large waterwheel in diameter, turning steadily.

As you cross the bridge, Meritta suddenly gives you a stern warning:

"That's Bone Creek. We call it that because it flows down from a spring on the south flank of the Battle of Bones. It looks clean and clear, but don't let that fool you. It's poisonous. You can touch the water, and it won't warm you. But if you drink any of it, you'll be lucky to survive.

"We built the village on the creek so we could use the water to drive the mill. But our druids haven't succeeded in keeping it pure yet. They've purified the spring up there several times, but it never lasts for more than a day or two. Then the water starts running poisonous again. The folks who claim to know things around here think there's someone up at the Battle of Bones using magic to poison it.

"You have to be careful with your animals. Sometimes the stream just draws them suddenly, and it's hard to keep them from drinking. But it's just as deadly for horses as it is for you. There are two branches you have to watch out for. This here is Bone Creek. We dammed the creek up near the gate and diverted the Mill Stream over there off of it. But it's all the same water and just as poisonous.

"This here in the middle is something of an island. It's here for all of us. The area we just left is the quarter of Kelemvor's church. Over there, on the other side of the Mill Stream, our quarter starts, the church of Chauntea. And in the southeast behind the community house is the area of Ilmater's folks."

Two younger men come out of a side door in the community house, and Meritta tells them to take care of your horses. She leads you then into the community house. The first floor looks like a large tavern room in an inn. It's been newly-cleaned, but the smell of breakfast still is in the air.

"Breakfast is over for the community," she says. *"But we'll be fixing something up for you and the others, We'll let you know, as soon as it's ready. Normally, food's ready in the morning and at noon when the bell up in the belfry here rings. The house is open from late afternoon until midnight, and the kitchen's always going then. There is no night bell. It's almost like being in your favorite inn.*

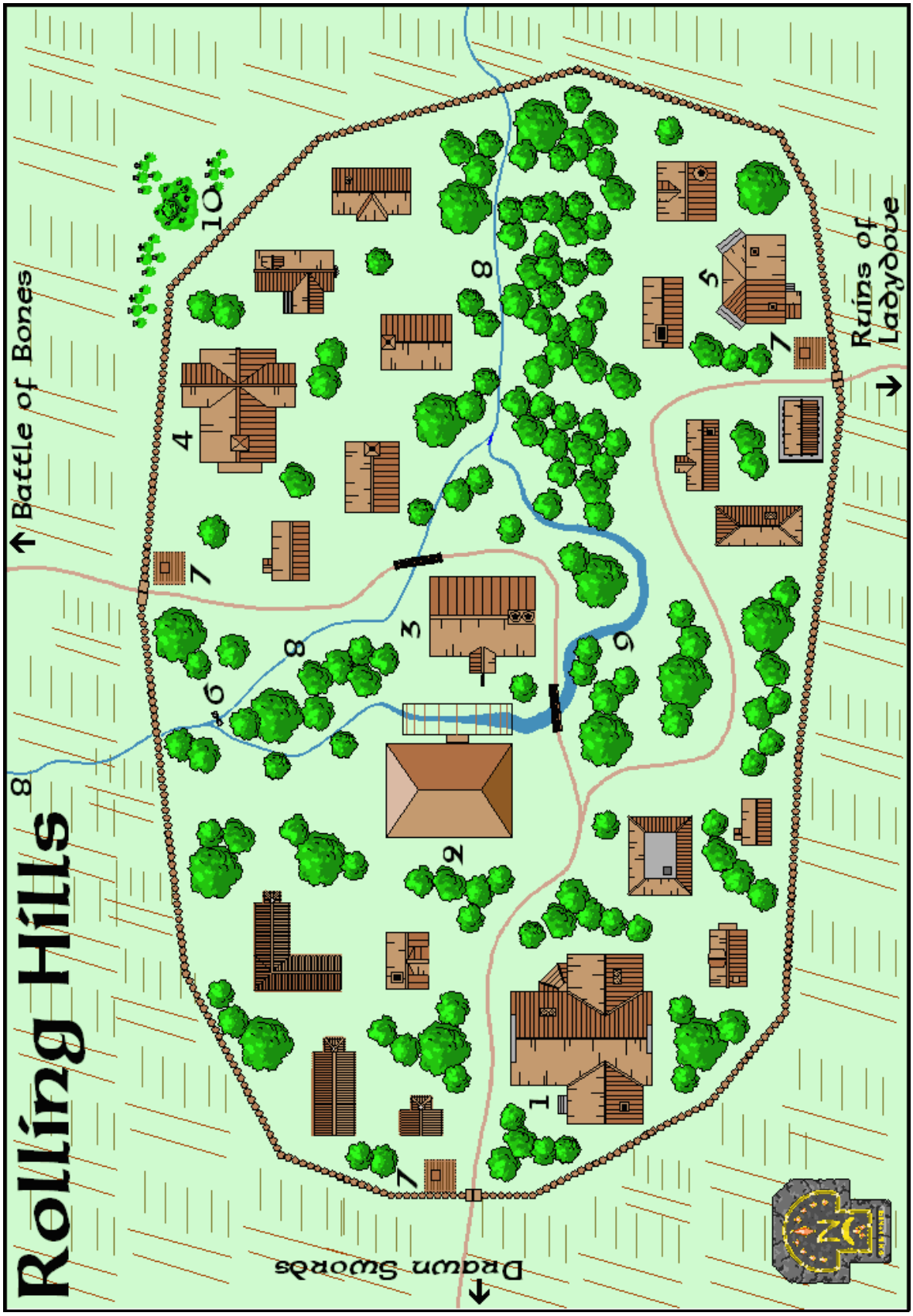
"We don't charge for anything here, but some visitors are so moved by our hospitality and fine cooking that they feel compelled to make a big, quiet donation. If any of you have the compulsion, you can relieve yourselves over there."

She points to a large metal box on the wall with a slot in the top, then leads you up the stone stairway to the upper story.

"This was built by dwarves for us, so it's nothing fancy, but no one's ever complained that they didn't sleep well her yet."

The monk leads each of you into small, spartan rooms with simple but comfortable looking beds, washing bowls, and various bars and hooks you can use to hang up your gear.

"We don't have maids or room service here, so we ask our guests to clean up the rooms after themselves when they leave. If you need the jakes, you'll have to go down to the ground floor. So, make yourselves at home. We'll let you know when breakfast's ready."



Rolling Hills

Game Master: The statistics for the NPCs of this settlement can be found under *Rolling Hills NPCs* in the *Unofficial NPC Encounters* of the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

Map of Rolling Hills

NOTE: When water from Bone Creek or the Mill Stream is consumed, it is poisonous to humans, demi-humans and animals. It should be treated as a Type J poison *(s. Dungeon Master's Guide)*.

The Quarters: The Village of Rolling Hills is divided into four quarters - the quarters of Chauntea, Kelemvor and Ilmater and the neutral mill quarter operated for all religions by the followers of Chauntea.

1 - House of the Bountiful Harvest. Temple of Chauntea and quarter of Chauntea's followers. This is a small temple with a large granary, animal barn, sheds and brewery.

2 - Village Mill. This facility serves all of Rolling Hills. It is operated by monks of Chauntea, in the Mill Quarter.

3 - Community house. This is the village kitchen where all faiths eat and can use common rooms. It substitutes for a village inn. It also has guest rooms for visitors. The inn, in the neutral Mill Quarter, is operated by monks of Chauntea. There is no fee for food, drink or accommodations here, but donations are graciously accepted from travelers.

4 - House of the Just Death. The temple of Kelemvor and in the quarter of Kelemvor's followers.

5 - Monastery of the Last Mercy. The temple of Ilmater and quarters of Ilmater's followers.

6 - Mill Dam on Bone Creek.

7 - Watch Towers, manned by followers of Ilmater.

8 - Bone Creek (poisoned).

9 - Mill Stream (poisoned).

10 - Village Cemetery. Maintained by the church of Kelemvor.

17. Well of Dragons & Ladydove

Thorp, Nonstandard (no rule). AL: N. 40 gp limit. Assets: 200,000 gp. Population: 2 Human.

The trip from Rolling Hills to Well of Dragons/Ladydove should take your group two days. We leave it up to you, whether there are hostile encounters on these days. The closer your party is to Skull Gorge, the greater the chance of encounters with roving bands of brigands, goblins or orcs.

It is quite important that you read the details in this section carefully in advance and that your are thoroughly familiar with them before you run the events here. Depending upon what has happened to your group up until now, you will be running different events.

If you need in-depth information on the lady innkeeper, Yajandra Dlaethero, or more information on her inn, the Well of Dragons or the ruins of Ladydove see *"Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast."* The general entries are on pages 137-38, and the details on Yajandra are on page 227.

- The Well of Dragons is west of the ruins of Ladydove. It is a huge crater of an extinct volcano as wide as several villages. Normally, it is concealed by illusory landscape and will not be noticed. However, the crater is visible in the moonlight. Dragons come to this crater with a part of their treasure, to die. Some simply nosedive into it. The floor of the crater is littered with bones and treasure, but it all is guarded by a dire dragon - an undead shadow dragon who *is not* a dracolich.

- Ladydove was a halfelven village. It was burned to waste by the dire dragon. Only Yajandra's inn and stable still stand.

- Yajandra Dlaethero is a 17th level wizard from Calimshan and the Realms' *"greatest living sage on matters of dragonkind,"* according to Volo. She came to this area to study the Well of Dragons. If your players are smart enough to tune into this, Yajandra should be able to give them a few very general tips as to the dragon connection with their sigylls, information they normally wouldn't begin to come upon until much later. But before you let Yajandra give your players any information, make sure they've earned it by smart roleplaying.

- Her inn, *The Dire Dragon"* is warded against the dire dragon in the well, all other dragons and brigands.

Yajandra's Information

The inn is Yajandra's link to the outside world. It's her source for news. She does not believe in interfering with or getting mixed up in the doings of her guests. She also is neutral. She takes no sides between good and bad, Harpers and Zhents, etc. Her wardings and her spells are more than adequate to protect her from anything hostile guests may intend to do. Yajandra prefers most of all to listen silently and unobtrusively.

When guests pose questions, Yajandra will give them the information they seek, if she has it. She will not however betray information she has overheard from guests. Both Harpers and Zhentarim, for instance, have come to her inn. She would never think of betraying to a Harper whatever Zhentarim plans she may have overheard, or vice versa. She thinks such organizations should deal with their own problems. When Yajandra is asked for and gives information, she usually limits her answers rather carefully to what has been asked. She volunteers nothing.

The following are some of the answers the PCs could get from Yajandra:

- She will tell the PCs the details of the Well of Dragons, if asked, and also will inform them of the presence of the dire dragon. If the PCs intend to check out the Well of Dragons, she will not attempt to discourage them or otherwise influence their decision.

- She will tell the PCs that the trip up into the Sunset Mountains along the young River Reaching is extremely steep and nearly impossible for horses, which have to be led in any case. The same thing is true for much of Yellow Snake Pass in the mountains. Only the specially bred mountain ponies of Cormyr's Purple Dragons are adequate for such a journey. On the other hand, if the PCs cross the mountains by foot, the journey across the Tun Plain to the Storm Horns will be slow, and they will be exposed to quite a few dangers during this time.

- From time to time, Yajandra buys mountain ponies from travelers coming out of the Sunset Mountains, without asking how their owners came into possession of them. You have to decide as Game Master whether she has any mountain ponies in her stable at the moment, and if so, how many. She sells mountain ponies for 200 gold harps each and buys animals from PCs at PHB prices. Yajandra will tell the PCs that Cormyr views mountain ponies as property of the crown. She will tell them that if they ride the mountain ponies into the Storm Horns and explain at High Horn that they bought the ponies from her, the Purple Dragons will accept this explanation, but the ponies still will be confiscated at High Horn as property of the crown, and the PCs will be given horses in trade.

- If the PCs show Yajandra their sigylls, she will examine them carefully but say little voluntarily. If questioned carefully, she will tell them that there is an old type of magic not of the weave in the symbols, a type of magic about which she knows little, but one that elves and dwarves used to command in ancient days. She also will tell the PCs she sees the *finger of Tiamat* in the sigylls. If Dragon Cult members overhear this, they will try to assassinate the PCs.

- If the PCs ask about Tiamat, she will tell them that Tiamat is an evil dragon goddess who had a following mostly only in old Unther in the East. She will say that some evil dragons but certainly not all of them have a certain loyalty to Tiamat. She also will tell the PCs that Tiamat has attempted to rise in power several times and always has fallen again, because she has allowed her avatars to be destroyed too easily.

- If the PCs ask about the draconians that they and others have seen, she will say that she does not know for sure, but she believes that these creatures are *children of Tiamat.* She also will say that she believes Tiamat may be trying to take control over the Cult of the Dragon, and that these creatures are trying to kill off the cult's leadership, so that priests of Tiamat can take their place. She will emphasize that this is speculation and not knowledge on her part. If the PCs press her for her reasons for this speculation, she will answer only, *One watches, and listens, and learns.* Yajandra also will say these things in the presence of cult agents.

Yajandra's Inn

The Dire Dragon is chilly and damp in the colder season, but also rustic and comfortable. The dampness comes from the swampy pond in the ruins of Ladydove (a clean fish pond, before the devastation by the dire dragon). The pond also is Yajandra's source for frogs. The inn has 12 single guest rooms, each 10x10 feet/3x3 m in size. Beds are equipped with warm, colorful quilts that ward off the chill in the night. Yajandra charges one gold harp per room per night. The only food and drink available are Yajandra's own herbal schnapps, at 2 silver dublees a shot/0.1 liter, her herbal tea at 2 copper silbs a cup and the meal of the day at 6 silver dublees per portion.

Visiting the Ruins of Ladydove

If the PCs ride into the ruins, the first thing they will notice is that the village has turned into a thin forest of fast growing tree varieties, above all, birches. Below the trees is a wild growth everywhere of fire bushes, wiry green bushes about a yard (meter) high, that come up in some parts of the Realms after the soil has been subjected to such intense heat as to sterilize it to a depth of one foot/30 cm.

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When the PCs come to the ruins, they will see only remnants of walls, foundations and scattered bricks, all totally charred and partially overgrown. The bricks lay in such a manner as to suggest that the buildings were exploded. One with knowledge of such things would guess that this took place about 25 years ago (in the Year of the Worm - 1356 DR, to be unofficially precise).

The pond looks as though it once may have been clean and pure. It still is not polluted, but its ecological balance has changed over the last 25 years. Marine weeds and reeds grow all over in the pond. It breeds insects, including mosquitoes, and frogs, but no longer supports fish. The pond is fed by underwater springs.

First Day:

The farther south you go from Rolling Hills and the Battle of Bones, the more fertile the soil becomes, although the landscape here is unpopulated and unused. Copses of trees, bushes and brush are frequent among the tall grasses. Your trail frequently crosses small brooks and streams that flown into the River Reaching near Skull Gorge in the South.

On the second day, the PCs pass the Well of Dragons described in *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast,* a large crater filled with bones and treasure, where dragons go to die. It can be seen only by moonlight. At other times an illusory landscape hides it. If your players explore the well, they will encounter the dire dragon (undead shadow dragon) that inhabits the well.

Second Day, Option 1:
Reaching Well of Dragons at Night by Moonlight

The new day begins much like the last and continues so until the bright light of the moon shows your trail veering off to the left or east a bit ahead of you. Somewhere in the distance, you smell a wood fire, not the smell of a burning forest, but rather that of a fireplace or a cooking fire. You ride another 500 feet/150 m or so and then see to your left, to the north, a huge gaping crater, like the crater of a volcano, easily 3 miles/5 km in diameter. Within this crater you see only darkness.

Second Day, Option 2:
Reaching Well of Dragons at Night, No Moonlight

The new day begins much like the last and continues so until after sunset. At last, your trail veers off to the left or east a bit ahead of you. Somewhere in the distance, you smell a wood fire, not the smell of a burning forest, but rather that of a fireplace or a cooking fire.

Second Day,:
By Night After Passing the Well

You ride another quarter mile/400 m or so and then see to your left, to the north, light through the trees. Just a bit farther, and a path veers off northward, just before what appears to be a small, thin forest. The road leads directly to a friendly looking inn lit by lanterns to both sides of the door. Just to the left of the inn and behind it is a large stable, and it's doors also are lit by lanterns. Above the inn's door is a sign with a picture of a particularly evil looking black dragon and the inscription, *The Dire Dragon.*

Second Day, Option 3:
Reaching Well of Dragons by Daylight

The new day begins much like the last. At last, your trail veers off to the left or east a bit ahead of you. Somewhere in the distance, you smell a wood fire, not the smell of a burning forest, but rather that of a fireplace or a cooking fire. A small wisp of smoke spirals above the trees.

Second Day,:
By Daylight After Passing the Well

You ride another quarter mile/400 m or so and then see to your left, to the north, a glimpse of buildings through the trees. Just a bit farther, and a path veers off northward, just before what appears to be a small, thin forest. From within the forest, you get a glimpse of a few more buildings standing in ruin. The road leads directly to a friendly looking inn. Just to the left of the inn and behind it is a large barn. Above the inn's door is a sign with a picture of a particularly evil looking black dragon and the inscription, *The Dire Dragon.*

Encounter No. 1 - The Dragon Cult

This encounter takes place after the PCs have settled down to eat in Yajandra's inn. The three strangers are members of the Cult of the Dragon. It is their intention to enter the Well of Dragons later in this night, not to steal treasure, but to encounter the dire dragon there, attempt to learn more about its undead nature and perhaps win it to the cult's cause.

You've just begun enjoying your evening meal when you hear riders approaching in the west. After listening for a few moments, you conclude that three horses are coming in your direction. A few minutes later, they come to a halt in front of the inn, and then a single, not necessarily friendly looking stranger enters. The man is quite thin and armed only with a dagger. He has a long, thin mustache, a goatee and thinning black hair, just beginning to turn grey.

"Well met," he says to Yajandra. *"I take it the inn is open today?"*

Yajandra nods affirmatively.

"Good," replies the stranger. *"I'll get my companions. May we quarter our horses in the stable?"* Again, Yajandra nods affirmatively, and without further words, the man disappears out the door. Five minutes later, he returns with two companions, a tall, chubby man and a large woman with a well-muscled frame. Both bear long swords and shields without an emblem. They wear chain mail.

The group nods a greeting in your direction, then sits together at another table. Yajandra takes their order and disappears then into the kitchen.

Game Master: Pause. If the PCs ask questions, the cultists say only that they are scientific people doing research in the Backlands. The cultists otherwise remain silent.

After a few minutes, Yajandra brings the newcomers their drinks, then asks, *"Will you be needing rooms for the night?"*

The thin man replies, *"No. We plan to enter the well tonight."*

Yajandra nods, saying no more, and returns to the kitchen.

Game Master: Pause. If the PCs ask questions, the cultists again say only that they are scientific people doing research in the Backlands. They otherwise continue to remain silent.

A bit of time passes, but at last Yajandra brings the strangers their food. The thin man says to her, *"We're scientists from Cormyr. We want to do research in the well ..."*

But before he can continue, Yajandra laughs and says, *"Research! I can well imagine! Research into the location of coins and jewels, with the intention of removing them, I suspect. Well, quite a number of folks have gone into the well, and a precious few have come out again. But no one's come out up until now with coins or jewels in the hand! There's a problem with a dire dragon in the well!"* And she laughs again.

"My dear lady! You misunderstand me completely," the man replies. *"We are not treasure hunters, I assure you. We are hear to do research, and we wish very much to come face to face with this dire dragon. To be more precise, we wish to speak with him. And I'm quite certain our interest will flatter him!"*

Yajandra is no longer laughing, but she doesn't seem to be taking the strangers very seriously either. *"I'm not so sure about that,"* she says. *"But what you do in the well and whether you come out or not is your business, not mine!"*

The thin man smiles. *"Precisely my dear lady! Still, you would be doing us a great service, if you could tell us a bit more about the well!"*

Yajandra looks bored now. *"There's not all that much to tell. The well appears to be the crater of a volcano that's been extinct for a few thousand years. An illusory magic hides it. Until you're within a few feet of the edge, you can't even see it under normal conditions. But for some reason, the magic doesn't work by moonlight. Then you can see a big hole in the landscape, about 3 miles/5 km wide. The walls of the crater are steep, but there are narrow trails along the walls leading downwards.*

"About 150 feet/45) below the rim is a floor, probably a bed of hardened lava. It's not level, but rather has ridges in the surface, like small hills and ravines here and there. There also are holes in the lava bed that lead into tunnels to who knows what. It's hard to see the lava bed, because everything's covered with bones and coins and jewels. Dragons come there to die. Some land in the well and spend their last days or hours there. Others nose dive in and end their lives spectacularly. Most of the dying dragons bring at least a part of their hoard with them.

"But none of this treasure is there for the taking. The dire dragon is down there, an undead shadow dragon, that is. Just what kind of undead this shadow dragon is, or how it got to be that way, is a mystery. It's not one of these dracoliches that the Dragon Cult creates. It's something else, but what, I don't know. No one else seems to either."

The strangers seem to weigh Yajandra's words as they finish their meal. After that, they leave the inn again, retrieve their horses and ride back toward the West.

Encounter No. 2 - Draconians

Less than 10 minutes have gone by, when you can hear the sounds of battle a bit to the West, in the direction the strangers have ridden.

The cultists have been attacked and are being destroyed by a band of draconians led by a dragon vampire. If the PCs react quickly, they will come on the scene just as the draconians are vanishing into the darkness. The PCs will not succeed in following the draconians, because the dragon vampire will teleport his party quickly to its next destination.

Whether the PCs see the draconians or not, they find the bodies of the three cultists along with their possessions, including the thin man's spellbook, and two puddles of acid on the ground. When you assemble the spellbook to be found by the party, use some of the new cult spells in the *Cult of the Dragon* accessory by Dale Donovan (TSR - 1998), if you have access to it! The book should hold spells of levels 1-5

TREASURE: 2 long swords, non magical. 2 chain mail, non magical, for large humans. Three daggers. Two long bows. 18 flight arrows. 5 sheaf arrows. 2 quivers. 3 watersacks, full. Trail rations for 6 rides. Chubby fighter: 14 gold lions, 8 gold harps, 18 silver falcons, 8 silver dublees, 11 copper thumbs, 5 copper silbs. Lady fighter: 12 gold lions, 10 gold harps, 20 silver falcons, 6 silver dublees, 7 copper thumbs, 8 copper silbs. Thin man: 7 platinum tricrowns, 10 gold lions, 12 gold harps, 8 silver falcons, 6 silver dublees, 4 copper thumbs, 5 copper silbs, a smashed ring finger with a demolished golden ring and a spellbook.

Encounter No. 3 - Ghosts of the Past

If you've been running this adventure well, your group must have had at least one fatality between now and the time the original PCs left Silverymoon. If not, if the entire original group still is alive, this encounter cannot be run. Otherwise, the ghosts of *all* dead PCs appear. These are not frightening ghosts, such as the official ghosts in the *Monstrous Compendium.* Pick one dead PC to do most of the talking.

Just as you're about to call it a night, without any warning sounds from outside, new guests enter the inn. They even mange to enter without opening the door. Wearing sad looks upon their faces and the same clothing as last time you saw them, and looking rather transparent, **(NAMES)** walk toward you. Somehow, you feel sadness but no fear.

CHOSEN PC says, *"Be careful you don't end up dead, like we are. A man and a lady seem to be responsible for these symbols, and they don't like failure. As soon as we died, they captured our souls and set us out to suffer. Everyday, all day long, all night long, without a break, we have to wander across the ridge of a high mountain range somewhere.*

"The ridge is way high up, somewhere far away from here. It's always frozen there. There's always a yard/1 m of snow or more. We can't leave the ridge. We're dead, so the cold doesn't make us sick and it can't kill us. But we feel it just like we did when we were alive. All that cold is horrible, it's so painful. But we can't escape it. And we're always so hungry and so thirsty, only there's nothing to eat and nothing to drink."

CHOSEN PC reaches out for one of the beers on your table, but his hand goes right through the tankard. He's unable to grasp it.

CHOSEN PC says, *"I didn't think that would work. I'm still so thirsty. You have to be careful. Don't let yourself be killed. As long as you have the sigylls, they have your souls. Die, and you'll be marching on the mountain with us. It's so warm here. I wish we could stay here.*

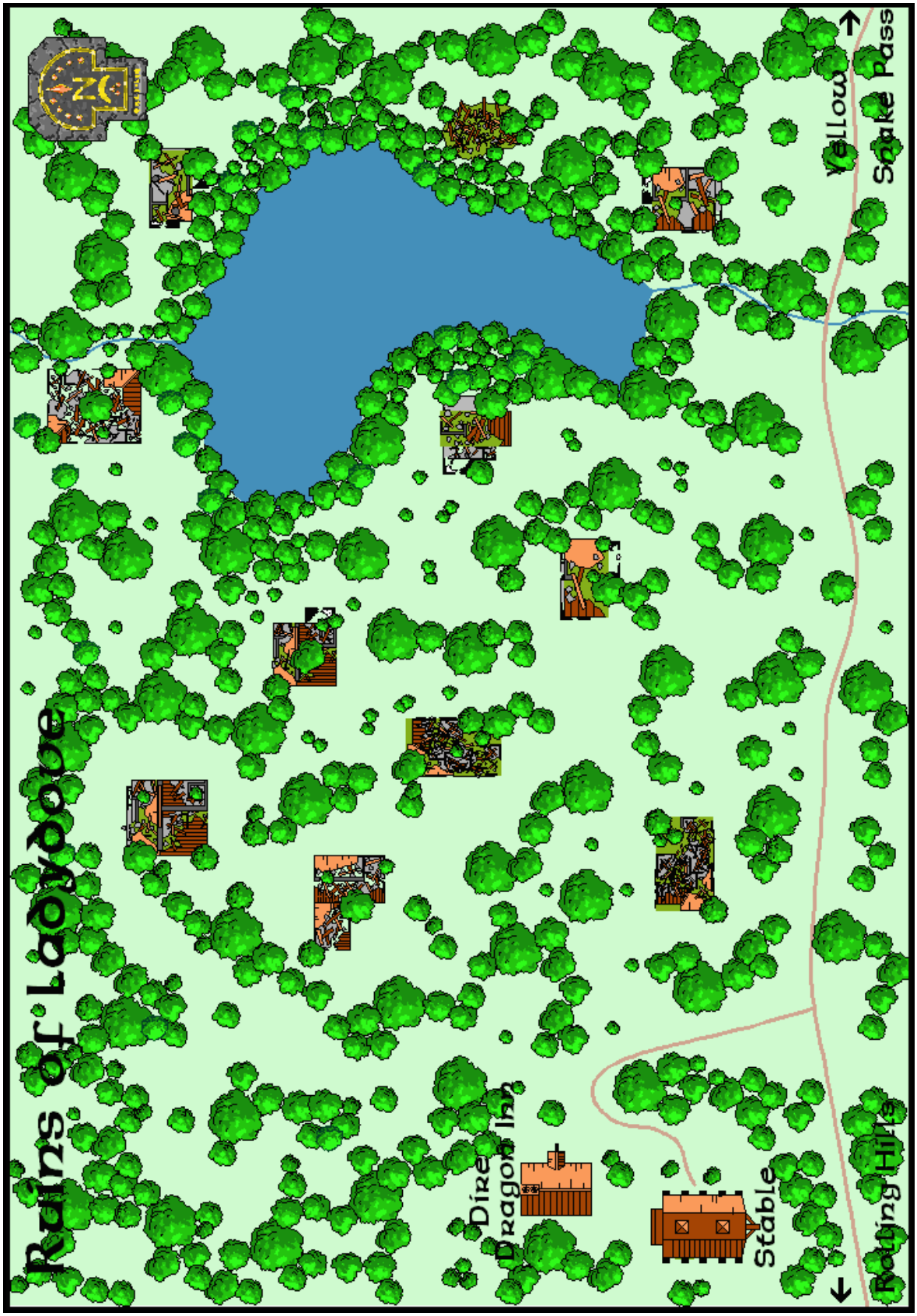
"There's an undead dragon somewhere near here. He says he pulled us to you, but he can't keep us here. He hates the man and the lady you're working for, but he's afraid to get into too big a tangle with the lady. Stay away from that dragon! He'd love to kill all of you, just to foil the man and the lady, but if he kills you, then you'll be marching the mountain with us. Anyhow, the dragon says he called us here, so you can see what kind of bastards you're working for.

"Oh, is it warm here! At the end of our mountain ridge is a valley, and across from it is an even higher mountain. The peak of the mountain is almost always above the clouds, and it's even colder than our ridge, and the snow is deeper. That's where we started out. That's where the man and the lady live.

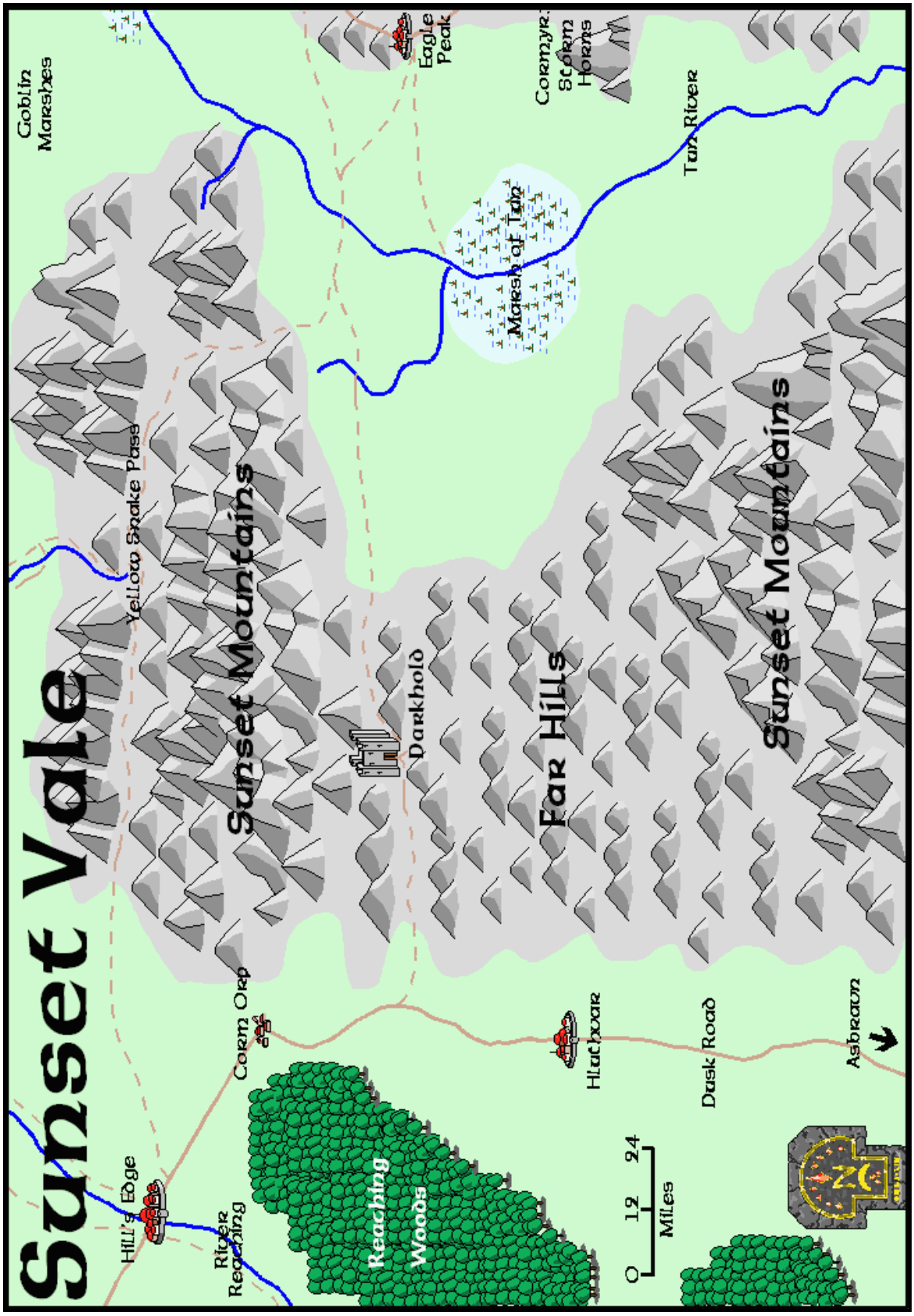
"He's a thin, evil-looking man with beady eyes. He looks like he's totally insane. She's an incredibly beautiful woman with black hair, but she looks absolutely evil too. That's where they brought our souls after we died. First of all they shouted us up and down and told us what worthless failures we were, and then the man used magic and sent us out onto the cold ridge across the valley.

"Their castle in the sky is huge and powerful, but it's not pretty. And dragons always are flying around it - red, blue, green, black and white dragons - always. I think the man and the lady are the ones who made these sigylls, and I think you're going to them. I also think they're going to destroy you when you get there. I don't know how, but you have to destroy them first. And only if you destroy them will we ever be free to go to Kelemvor!"

Game Master: The PCs can chat a bit longer, but then the ghosts of their companions fade and disappear.



Ruins of Ladydove



Sunset Vale, Yellow Snake Pass and the Tun Plain

18. Yellow Snake Pass

It will take the average PC group 11 days to cross the wilderness between Ladydove and the fortress High Horn in the Storm Horns of Cormyr. Once the PCs reach the source of the River Reaching, they are in territory that once was firmly in the hands of the Zhentarim of Darkhold and still is claimed by them, although they no longer are able to completely control Yellow Snake Pass and the area.

During the Time of Troubles, many of Darkhold's troops were siphoned off to fight Bane's losing wars. Because of the many setbacks the Zhents have suffered in the last 13 years, Sememmon still has not succeeded in rebuilding his troop strength to the old level. As a result, the three garrisons in the pass that once were permanently manned stand empty, and Zhentilar are only irregularly are seen in the pass. Darkhold does send patrols out into Yellow Snake Pass from time to time, and these have as their mission the capture or destruction of any invaders.

The first part of this journey - the five days until the group is out of the Sunset Mountains - breaks down as follows:

- **Ladydove Ruins to the foot of the Sunset Mountains:** One day. The trail follows the small bed of the young River Reaching. Encounters are highly unlikely. If any occur, they will be with adventurers or Zhents heading toward Ladydove.

- **Ascending the north wall of the Sunset Mountains to the source of the River Reaching:** Two strenuous days. The thin trail follows the River Reaching up the mountain side. The river here is nothing more than a small, fast mountain stream. Daytime encounters are highly unlikely. If any occur, they will be with adventurers or Zhents heading toward Ladydove. There are small bands of goblins on the north wall of the mountains, who sometimes will ambush a camp on the mountainside in the middle of the night.

- **Once the PCs reach the source of the River Reaching,** they are well within the old Zhent territory. It will take half a day from the source of the river to reach the summit of the north wall, which also is the summit of Yellow Snake Pass. At that point, the PCs enter into Yellow Snake Pass and can begin their descent to the Tun Plain. If you wish, you can have them encounter a Zhent patrol at anytime from the river source until the PCs depart the mountains, however, there should be only one such encounter. The Zhents never have two patrols in Yellow Snake Pass at the same time.

- **The trail through Yellow Snake Pass** still is in quite good condition, although the Zhents are not able to use it to anywhere near the extent they once did. It should take the PCs about a day and a half of steady downhill riding to reach the floor of the Tun Plain. The terrain along Yellow Snake Pass is quite variable. Sometimes the PCs will cross mountain meadows with small streams, sometimes the trail winds through forests, mostly pine, and sometimes the trail winds through rugged boulders and rock outcroppings. There are three small but strongly fortified Zhent outposts built at such positions, each with a stone wall and a tower. If you plan an encounter with a Zhent patrol, there is only a 5% chance that the patrol is within a garrison at the time the PCs meet it. Empty garrisons are protected with magic. The gates are locked and warded. If a gate is unlocked by someone who does not bear a ward token, a 10d8 fireball will explode, with the person who opened the gate at the center of the fireball. The same fate will greet anyone who climbs a wall and attempts to cross it into the garrison.

Game Master: Statistics for the Zhent patrol can be found under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

19. The Tun Plain

Game Master: If you plan to have your PCs enter the Marshes of Tun, be sure to see the accessory giving full details on this area, the booklet *The Cormyrean Marshes* by Anthony Pryor in the 1994 boxed set *Elminster's Ecologies.* This accessory is available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com.

It takes three days to cross the Tun Plain. The landscape is open grassland. The grass grows green and about a yard/meter high in late spring and summer, but by early Eleint, it's already turned golden, and brown by the end of the month. After that, the wind tends to blow the dead blades of grass over, and the average height drops off to about a foot and a half/50 cm. There are occasional bushes and trees standing alone on the plain, but there is no shelter. A party of PCs riding or hiking across the plain is visible for miles around.

The plain is crossed by the main trails shown on the Sunset Vale map and also a number of smaller trails. The Purple Dragons of Cormyr and the Zhentarim contest the plain. It is possible to encounter patrols of either. If the PCs encounter a Purple Dragon patrol, they will be allowed to accompany the Dragons in relative safety to High Horn.

Other possible encounters on the plain are with bands of goblins or orcs, or with the female black dragon Skurge from Tun Marsh. The PCs cross Tun Plain about 25 miles north of the marsh. For encounters with Zhentarim or goblins, use the statistics listed under *Yellow Snake Pass*. For encounters with Skurge use the statistics in *Elminster's Ecologies*. For encounters with orcs, use the statistics in the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium*.

III. CORMYR AND THE DALELANDS

20. Cormyr

Game Master: Perhaps only the Dalelands are better defined than Cormyr in WotC's literature for Game Masters. In this part, we're doing without new maps or lengthy descriptions for most areas. Instead, we'll only summarize what the PCs can expect at different points.

Recommended Official Source Material for Cormyr

- ***FRC2 Curse of the Azure Bonds*** (TSR - 1988) by Jeff Grubb and George MacDonald (Tilverton)
- ***Waterdeep FRE3*** (TSR - 1989) by Ed Greenwood
- ***Waterdeep*** (TSR Novel - 1989) by Richard Awlinson
- ***Haunted Halls of Eveningstar*** (TSR - 1990) by Ed Greenwood (Eveningstar area)
- ***Cormyr*** (TSR - 1994) by Eric W. Haddock
- ***Elminster's Ecologies**: The Thunder Peaks and the Storm Horns*** (TSR - 1994) by Eric W. Haddock
- ***Volo's Guide to Cormyr**** (TSR - 1995) by Ed Greenwood
- ***Cormyr - a Novel*** (TSR Novel - 1996) by Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb.
- ***Four From Cormyr**** .(TSR - 1997) by John Terra
- ***FR Interactive Atlas***(TSR CD - 1999), by ProFantasy Ltd.

*** Available as a free download from the WotC-Website.**
**** Available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com.**

Storm Horns

Map source: Various accessories offer overland maps. There are no detail maps.

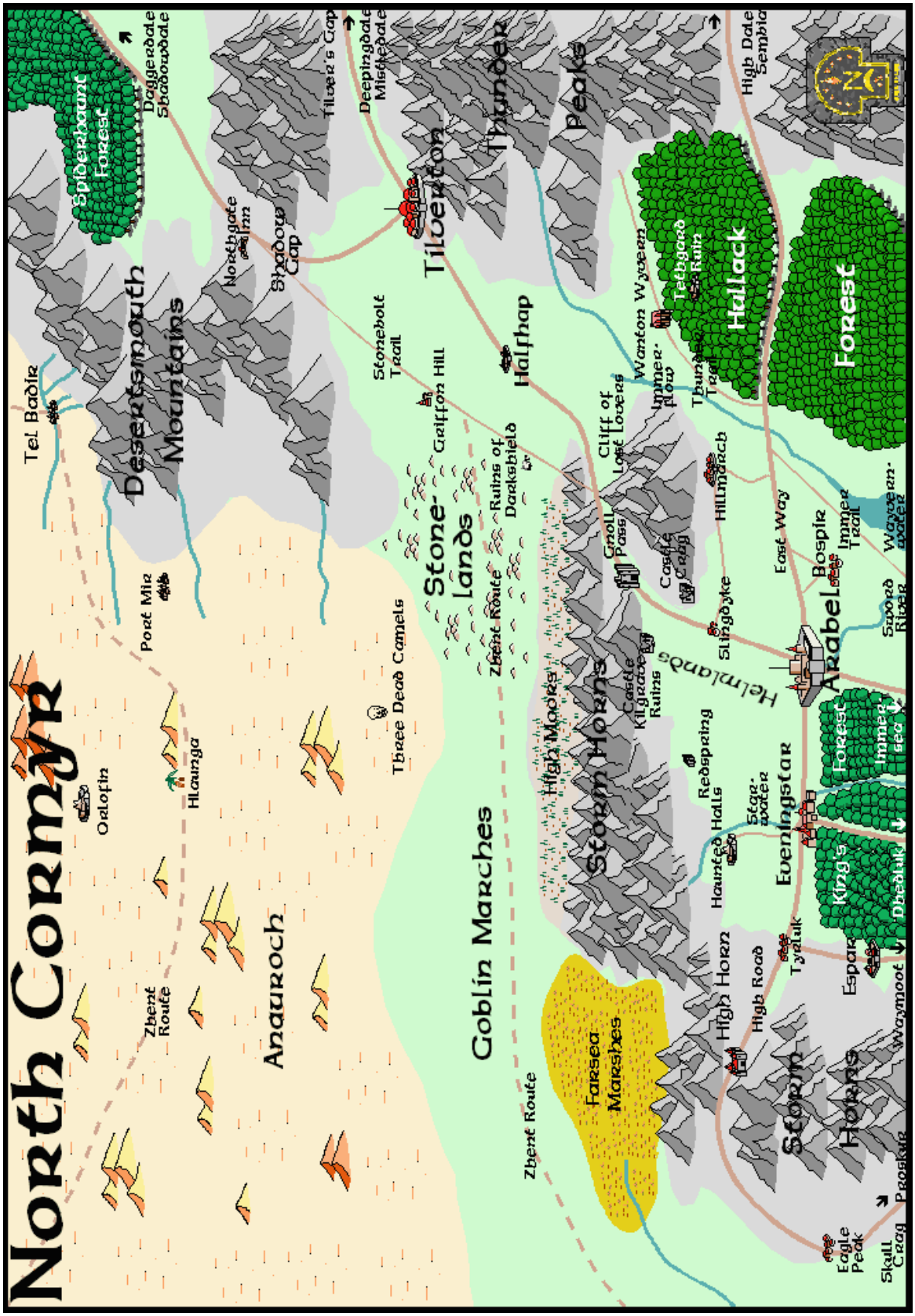
After leaving the Tun Plain, the PCs will need to ride and lead their horses upward for three days before they reach High Horn. There still are monsters in abundance in the Storm Horns, from small goblin bands up to aged red dragons, but the trails are heavily patrolled by Purple Dragons, and most of the monsters have learned that life is longer and more profitable when they prey on adventurers who leave the trails to search for the fabled lost cities etc.

We have planned no encounters between Tun Plain and High Horn, but if you want to treat your PCs to a more exciting time than that in the mountains, you'll find all the information you need in the booklet *The Thunder Peaks and the Storm Horns* in *Elminster's Ecologies.*

High Horn

Hamlet, Nonstandard (military fortress). AL: LG. 100 gp limit. Assets: 1,000,000 gp. Population: 500 Mixed (400 Human soldiers, 100 various transients), Map source: Floor plan in *FR Interactive Atlas, Cormyr Accessory.*

The fortress High Horn is built on a tall, needlelike peak in the Storm Horns. It has multiple walls and tiers. PCs who are not Purple Dragons will not be admitted to the fortress, but there are accommodations for travelers outside of the first wall. Before the PC group will be allowed to enter Cormyr, it must come up with 1,000 gold lions to buy a charter valid for a year's time.



North Cormyr

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All mages of level 5 or higher will be required to register with the War Wizards of High Horn, and they will be warned that they can be drafted into the service of the crown in times of emergency. Mages also will be warned that it is a crime to use their magic in any manner within Cormyr that damages life or limb or disturbs the peace, even when unintentional, except in cases of self defense.

All PCs will be warned that they must tie their weapons with peace strings when in populated areas or when traveling upon open roads, and that they may use their weapons only in self defense outside of the wilderness. The soldiers warn the PCs that King Azoun is the law in Cormyr and the guarantee of their safety in his kingdom.

If they take the law into their own hands or violate the law of the king, they will be duly punished. If you want more details, *Volo's Guide to Cormyr* has a drawing of High Horn and its walls high in the Storm Horns (Page 204).

NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters only:

Before leaving High Horn, the PCs should hear the following news. This information is of critical importance to the adventure. The commander of the Zhentilar at Teshwave at the time Tyran the Outlaw Prince reconquered it was a female Zhentilar officer named Slater. She supposedly rose in the ranks of the Zhentilar on the grounds that she had been one of Cyric's companions during the Time of Troubles, before Cyric became a god.

When Tyran and his allies attacked Slater and her already isolated Zhentarim in Teshwave, and after it had become apparent that no reinforcements were coming and the Zhents would be defeated, Slater led the 400 surviving members of her command in flight northward on the Teshnost Trail into the Dragonspine Mountains. Tyran decided to secure Teshwave, rather than pursuing Slater and her men deep into Zhent territory.

Five rides ago, Dagger Falls woke up to a day without sunshine. The city remained pitch black until noon, when the darkness began to slowly dissipate over the next hour. During this siege of darkness, not even torches, lanterns or magic light sources could shed anything but the dimmest light. The population of Dagger Falls is convinced that this was some evil magical work of the Zhentarim. By 1 p.m. of that day, however, the darkness had vanished completely, and Dagger Falls returned to normal, at least until it was discovered that Randal Morn had disappeared again, the second time in two years. To date, he has not been seen again.

During the ride following Randal Morn's disappearance, his Freedom Fighters came upon information that their leader once again was being held prisoner in Gothyl's tower in the southern part of Spiderhaunt Wood (for more details on Gothyl and her tower, see WotC's *Sword of the Dales* modules by Jim Butler, set in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR)). A large unit of Freedom Fighters left Dagger Falls within a few days time to march into the forest and seek Randal Morn.

This however was a Zhent ruse. One ride after Randal Morn's disappearance, on a fog-drenched night that may have been caused by Zhentarim magic, Slater and her 400 Zhentilar came quietly down from the north, using magic to break through the North Gate of Dagger Falls, and invaded the city. With many of the Freedom Fighters off in the South searching for Randal Morn, the city's defenses were substantially weakened.

The Freedom Fighters fought until dawn but then evacuated the city rather than seeing it destroyed in battle. Afterward, they set up siege lines outside the wall. Slater and her 400 Zhentilar now hold the part of Dagger Falls within the city walls again, but they are cut off from all supplies and will become desperate by mid-Winter, because they also are cut off from the city's main food cellars.

Less than a ride after Slater's invasion of Dagger Falls, the contingent of Freedom Fighters that had gone to Spiderhaunt returned with empty hands and were 22 fewer in number than when they had left, with all losses due to spider attacks. They found that Gothyl's tower was in a state of ruin in Spiderhaunt, with no sign of Randal Morn anywhere near there, and also no traces of anyone other than spiders having been near the tower ruin in the past year.

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With these returning Freedom Fighters plus the steady trickle of volunteers from other Dales coming in to help defend Daggerdale against a new Zhent invasion, the ring around Slater and her 400 Zhentilar becomes ever tighter. The Freedom Fighters are content to wait things out until Winter, when they believe they can starve the Zhents out of Dagger Falls, but other political forces between the Moonsea and the Lake of Dragons are not so patient:

Hillsfar has moved another 1,000 Red Plumes into the ruins of Yûlash, and all signs are, that these Red Plumes are being kept ready for a march westward at anytime. An ambassador from Hillsfar has tried to convince the new Prince Tyran of Teshendale in Teshwave that if his troops move, they have no interest in Teshendale but rather want only to march past Teshwave, to *"help"* the Freedom Fighters in Dagger Falls.

Within days of the Hillsfar troop movement, spies reported that all Zhentilar in the Citadel of the Raven were put on full, permanent alert, and that Lord Manshoon has no intention of letting the Red Plumes move into Teshendale or Daggerdale. He apparently is ready to make an all-out Zhentilar commitment to open warfare, if that's what it takes to contain the Red Plumes in Yûlash.

After the disappearance of Randal Morn, Lord Mourngrym of Shadowdale and High Councilor Heresk of Ashabenford in Mistledale each sent 30 men to aid the Freedom Fighters. Recently, the full contingent of the Knights of Myth Drannor also has arrived in Daggerdale to bolster the Freedom Fighters' cause.

This entire situation has put King Azoun IV of Cormyr into a horrible situation that seems to only get worse with each day. After Tyran recaptured Teshwave, Azoun stated in an open address in Suzail that it had been a critical error to allow the Zhents to take over the Tesh Valley to begin with. He said that Cormyr had counted upon the Dalesmen to protect their own, and no one had been prepared for the fact that virtually no one anywhere in the Dales would lift a hand to help their neighbors when the Zhents overran Teshendale and Daggerdale.

In retrospect, Azoun knows his comment was tactically foolish, but he also added that the neighbors of the Dales came to understand through this how small-thinking, self-serving and unreliable the Dalesmen can be, when they are called to higher deeds.

The Great Purple Dragon said Cormyr will not stand by idly and watch the Zhentarim overrun its neighbors again, and both Randal Morn and Prince Tyran have his pledge of help, should they be threatened anew (not that either had requested help from Cormyr).

Azoun's flaming words rolled like an alarm through the Dales and also the ranks of the Zhents in Darkhold. As far as the Dalesmen are concerned, Azoun's expansionism began and ended in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), when the Purple Dragons annexed Tilverton. The Dalesmen have made it quite clear that any movement of the Purple Dragons north of Tilverton will be viewed by them as aggression and dealt with accordingly.

The Harpers have made clear that they too will fight with the Dalesmen against Cormyr. Even the Knights of Myth Drannor, many of whom are natives of Cormyr and staunch supporters of Azoun, have said they will throw their lot in with the Dalesmen, if Cormyr invades Daggerdale.

The threat of the Purple Dragons moving northward also resulted in all Zhentilar in Darkhold be putting onto permanent full alert. Spies of the crown and Harpers as well have received information that about 2,000 covert Zhentilar who had been stationed in Sembia are slipping slowly and quietly westward, across the Neck and over Westgate, Reddansyr, Teziir, Elversult and Proskur into Sunset Vale, where they will bolster the forces now stationed at Darkhold.

Azoun reacted at first by moving 1,000 Purple Dragons from Wheloon to Suzail and 750 Dragons each from Suzail to High Horn and Eagle Peak. Patrols of the Tun Plain soon will be increased substantially, to detect and stop any possible movements of Zhentilar from Darkhold over the Goblin Marches and Stonelands toward Daggerdale.

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However, as soon as Azoun moved the 1,000 Purple Dragons out of Wheloon, thereby weakening his Eastern border, Sembia began a maneuver with about 2.000 of its own troops northwest of Daerlun on the Vast Swamp, on the opposite bank of the swamp from Cormyr. Azoun was forced to backtrack quickly and instead replace the troops in Wheloon with men from Immersea and Arabel.

At present, Azoun is taking a great risk. He is reducing his interior troop ranks and security to send ever more Dragons into the border regions. One ride ago, he had moved another 1,500 Purple Dragons into Tilverton, with strict orders to move no farther northward. Another 250 men each have come from the interior to strengthen the troops at High Horn and Eagle Peak.

However, should any serious problems develop in the interior, Azoun will be facing serious problems. Troop strength at such critical locations as Eveningstar, Arabel and Immersea is at an all-time low now, and even the troops in the capital of Suzail are at a level lower than Azoun's generals consider to be acceptable.

On the other side of the coin, many of Azoun's military commanders outside of Suzail as well as members of some noble houses and the majority of Cormyr's merchant leaders are urging the king to move immediately and take permanent control over Daggerdale and Dagger Falls, annexing them into his kingdom as he did with Tilverton. They contend the Purple Dragons could reach and conquer Dagger Falls long before the Zhentarim or Red Plumes would reach the scene, and the Freedom Fighters and Dalesmen are too few in number to stop the Purple Dragons.

Azoun would in truth liberate Dagger Falls on a moment's notice, if the Zhents and the Red Plumes were the only problem, although he is not so certain he would annex it against the Dalesmen's will. However, the idea of making war upon Dalesmen, Harpers and the Knights of Myth Drannor is morally reprehensible to him and the reason he has stayed his hand until now.

The following additional information is not accessible to the players but is important to the Game Master. There are three sane voices behind the scenes in this matter: Captain Mestin *Troll* Durmark of the Daggerdale Freedom Fighters, who is Randal Morn's deputy governor, the royal magician Vangerdahast of Cormyr and Elminster of Shadowdale.

Captain Durmark arranged to have Elminster contacted, and she asked him to start negotiations to head off an all-out war over Daggerdale. Elminster in turn contacted Vangerdahast, who also was convinced that the situation had gotten dangerously out of control. As the PCs are preparing to leave High Horn, a secret meeting is being conducted in the Tower of Rhauntides of Highmoon in Deepingdale between Lord Mourngrym, High Councilor Heresk of Mistledale, Captain Durmark, Lord High Marshal Duke Bhereu of Cormyr, high commander of the Purple Dragons, and Elminster and Vangy.

Before the PCs can reach Daggerdale, a binding treaty will have been hammered out under which Cormyr can come to Daggerdale's defense in time of need, but will withdraw its military presence from the Dale when the governor of Daggerdale deems the presence of the Purple Dragons to no longer be necessary. This agreement will be sufficient to save face for King Azoun, although many from the Dales faction would prefer to keep Cormyr completely out of the Dales.

Both Elminster and Vangy contend that this entire crisis is being staged by a power unfriendly to the Dales, Cormyr and the Zhents alike. El is convinced that the Cult of the Dragon is behind it (he's wrong), while Vangy is just as convinced that the Iron Throne of Sembia is the culprit (he's right, to a certain extent).

Tyrluk

Hamlet, Conventional. AL: N. 50 gp limit. Assets: 500,000 gp. Population: 270 Human.

The PCs spend two more days in the Storm Horns before reaching Tyrluk, the unfriendliest village in all of Cormyr. Anyone who is not one of the 270 or so locals is most happily seen departing. There is a camping place on the north edge of town, but no one in Tyrluk, including the innkeeper, will put strangers up. This does not mean, however, that the people of Tyrluk are unwilling to accept Cormyrean gold lions from those they don't like.

The hostility of the folk of Tyrluk toward strangers often is explained by experience. The village has been ruled in the past by lords who were swindlers and brigands, and it has a long history of being robbed by traveling thieves and raided by brigands, monsters and, at times, Zhentarim. The current Lord,Suldag the Boar, is a hard-drinking, boisterous, roaring soldier in retirement.

Map of Tyrluk

1 - Byrl Tarnsilver's Farm. (Unofficial).

2 - Tam MacDougal's Dairy Farm. (Unofficial).

3 - The Old Man's Face - Inn. (Official). Tavernkeeper Gennett Wending (unofficial, hm, lvl 0, AL: LN)) serves strong but bad house beer at four copper thumbs for a quart/liter tankard and bad, overseasoned stews at five silver falcons a serving. Customers are a mix of locals, Purple Dragons and whatever travelers happen to be in town, who, of course, are avoided by the locals and always served last. The *Old Man* also has six dinghy guests rooms, but Wending lets them only to guests of locals or, when he's feeling generous, visitors of locally-stationed Purple Dragons.

4 - Lord's House and Garrison of the Purple Dragons. (Unofficial). Lord Suldag the Boar (hm, fighter lvl 6, AL: NG) rules from here, assisted by his herald, Nal *Tooth* Tursa (hm, fighter lvl 3, AL: LN). There also is a contingent of 12 Purple Dragons regularly stationed here.

5 - Charri the Smith. (Official). Charri (hm, lvl 0, AL: LN) is a capable blacksmith, but he's not trained to make or repair armor or weapons.

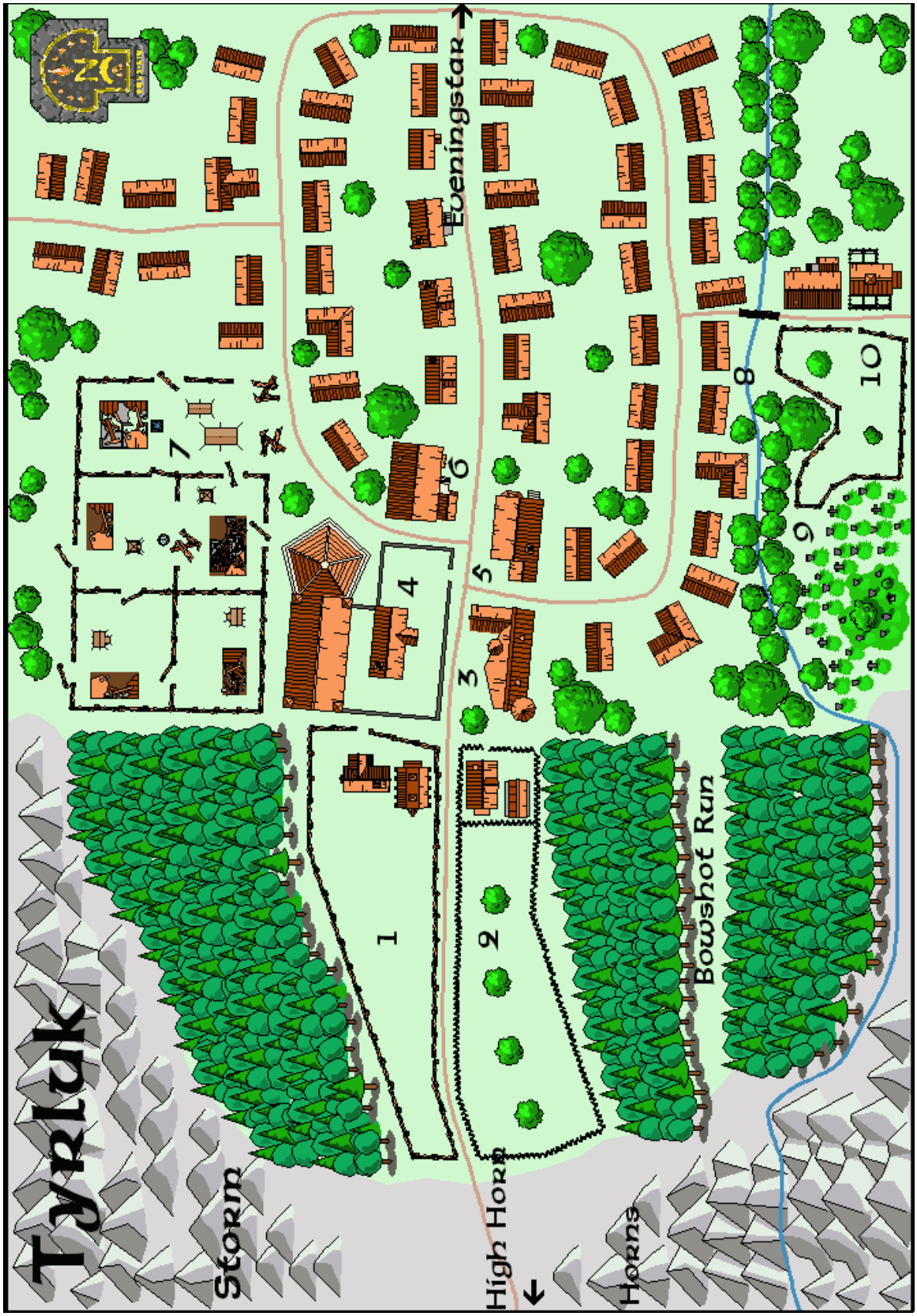
6 - Olgul's Cartworks. (Official). Olgul (hm, lvl 0, AL: LN) and his employees specialize in making carts and small wagons for farmers, but they also can repair larger wagons.

7 - Klibet Werts Farm - Abandoned. (Official, name unofficial). The grounds of the abandoned farm are the only place where locals are willing to allow travelers to spend the night. The roofs of the building are leaky. Most travelers set up tents in the abandoned fields of the farm.

8 - Storm Creek. (Unofficial).

9 - Village Cemetery. (Unofficial).

10 - Silturr Shadowshield's Steeds. (Official site). Shadowshield raises top quality mounts for the Purple Dragons, but he also will sell to travelers who can afford his mounts, at prices ranging from 36 to 40 gold lions.


Tyrluk
Storm
High Horn
Horns
Bowshot Run
Eveningstar
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Tyrluk

Eveningstar

Village, Conventional. AL: NG. 500 gp limit. Assets: 1,500,000 gp. Population:420 Mixed (98 % Human, 2% other). Map and Floor Plan Sources: *FR Interactive Atlas CD, Cormyr, Haunted Halls of Eveningstar* (also line drawings of the village and Tressym), *Volo's Guide to Cormyr.*

It will take the PCs a long day on the road to get here, but after a night in Tyrluk, it will be well worth it. Eveningstar is one of the best documented places in all of the Realms. You can find lots of details in the *Cormyr* accessory, *Volo's Guide to Cormyr* and the module *The Haunted Halls of Eveningstar.* There also are more details in the WotC novels *Waterdeep* by Richard Awlinson (1989) and *Spellfire* by Ed Greenwood (1990), the latter giving you a good feel for the personalities of Lord Winter and Dunman Kiriag.

As a Game Master, you should play up the fact that the PCs have reached a small corner of paradise. The landscape of the Starwater Valley is beautiful. The tressym - flying cats - are fascinating. The people of Eveningstar are salt-of-the-earth types from back when *dad was a boy.* Innkeeper Dunman Kiriag of *The Lonesome Tankard* just may have the best down-to-earth food anywhere in the Realms, to say nothing of his legendary house-brewed beer.

His menu always includes Eveningstar's unique *sharrada,* the shaggy beef raised only in the Eveningstar area, which are considered a gourmet's treat throughout the Realms. Eveningstar also has the *Low Lantern* tavern and dancehall, where even King Azoun comes now and then, to dance with his former lover, Lord Tessaril *Tess* Winter.

Of course, one of your PCs has the strongbox of Lord Anandar and must deliver it to Lord Winter in Eveningstar, giving him/her or perhaps all of the PCs a chance to meet the local ruler, which isn't usually difficult, because she circulates among the locals and spends time in the *Lonesome Tankard* and the *Low Lantern*. If Lord Winter is given the strongbox, she will not open it in public.

Arabel

Metropolis, Conventional. AL: NG. 100,000 gp limit. Assets: 20,000,000 gp. Population: 25,000, Mixed (95% Human, 5% Other). Map sources: *FR Interactive Atlas CD, FR boxed set - A Grand Tour of the Realms, Forgotten Realms Adventures (2nd Edition), FRE1 Shadowdale* module by Ed Greenwood. These paper products are available as pay downloads from http://www.rpgnow.com.

Special info sources: Excellent line drawings in *Volo's Guide to Cormyr,* information in the 1989 novel *Shadowdale* by Richard Awlinson.

It takes another long day of travel for the PCs to reach Arabel from Eveningstar. The city of 17,000, governed by Lord Myrmeen Lhal, is well outlined in *A Grand Tour of the Realms,* one of the booklets in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Set,* which really is essential to the running of *Northern Journey*. Arabel has a number of fine inns, taverns, etc. The PCs will be required to show their charter upon entering and leaving the city. In Arabel, the PCs turn northward along the *Mountain Ride,* to head toward Tilverton.

Slingdyke

Thorp, Conventional. AL: N. 0 gp limit. Assets: 100,000 gp. Population: 12 Human.

Further source info: *Volo's Guide to Cormyr* by Ed Greenwood (WotC - 1995). This text gives considerably more background information about Slingdyke than is found here.

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This small settlement, at the point where the Dragon Trail turns off to Hillmarch from the Mountain Ride, is another of several strange, magical mystery settlements in Cormyr, although one through which PCs in a *Northern Journey* campaign most likely will only pass.

A good rider can make it the trip between Arabel and Gnoll Pass in a day's time, weather permitting. Bur caravan traffic tends to be somewhat heavy on the Mountain Ride, and Slingdyke is at about the point where caravans traveling between Arabel and Tilverton need to stop and make camp for the night, making it a logical location for an inn.

Slingdyke did indeed once have an inn - the *Slingdyke Arms* - but it burned down shortly after the Time of Troubles, and a royal edict that has gone unexplained prevents its being rebuilt. As a result, the only place for caravans to camp is in the pastures behind the inn's stables, which still are maintained by the Purple Dragons, a workable alternative in the warm months but a *cold comfort,* as locals are likely to say, in the winter.

The edict against rebuilding the inn isn't the only mystery in Slingdyke. Anyone who's spent anytime in what's left of the hamlet will become rather quickly convinced that the smith and *"farmers"* on the *Cold Comfort Farm* east of the crossroads are nothing other than a Cormyrean war wizard and a band of Purple Dragons in disguise. Why they're running the farm disguised is another unanswered question. Why the disguised Purple Dragon works as a blacksmith and does business with caravans and other travelers is another.

The third mystery is *Golden Grain Acres*, the second and last farm within eyeshot of the old fortress mound west of the Mountain Ride. It seems to be an open secret that the monks of Chauntea who run the farm are a group of Harpers who are there to keep an eye of local traffic and the Purple Dragons - both those who admit what they are. It's no secret that the crown of Cormyr and the Harpers, while not enemies, are something less than the best of friends. There are many who wonder why the crown then tolerates an apparent nest of Harper spies in an area where controls are tight and much is secret.

The only hypothesis anyone has advanced to date is that the excellent light bock beer brewed by the monks, rich in the malt of their own barley, keeps the otherwise isolated purple dragons happy. Traveling groups and caravans also can buy beer from the monks, in small 2.5 and 4 gallon/10 and 15 liter barrels, for 4 and 6 silver falcons respectively.

Despite its mysteries and miniscule size, Slingdyke long has been an important bulwark of Cormyr's defense against the Stonelands to the west. Immediately to the west of the Dragon Trail's intersection with the Mountain Ride is a huge defensive mound that once was the site of an ancient Cormyrean fortress. The settlement has its name from one of the legendary battles that took place there, where a patrol of Purple Dragons on the *"dike,"* after running out of arrows, began slaying attacking orcs with slings and stones.

Map of Slingdyke

1 - Ancient Defensive Earthworks. The site is kept cleared. The only installation atop it is a signal tower where the Purple Dragons light warning fire beacons in time of attack.

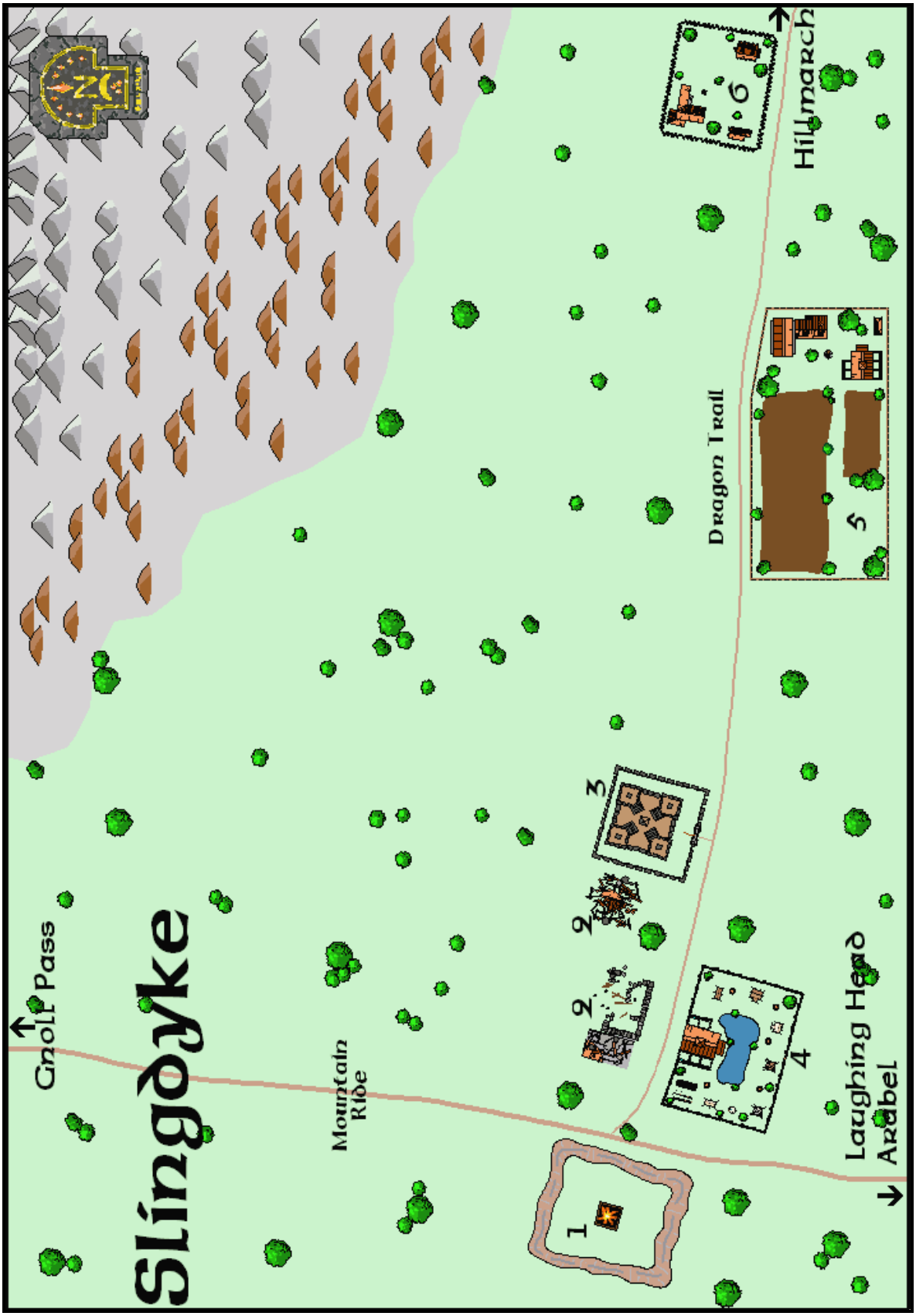
2 - Ruins of the Slingdyke Arms Inn.

3 - Keep of the Purples Dragons. Two dozen soldiers keep the watch here.

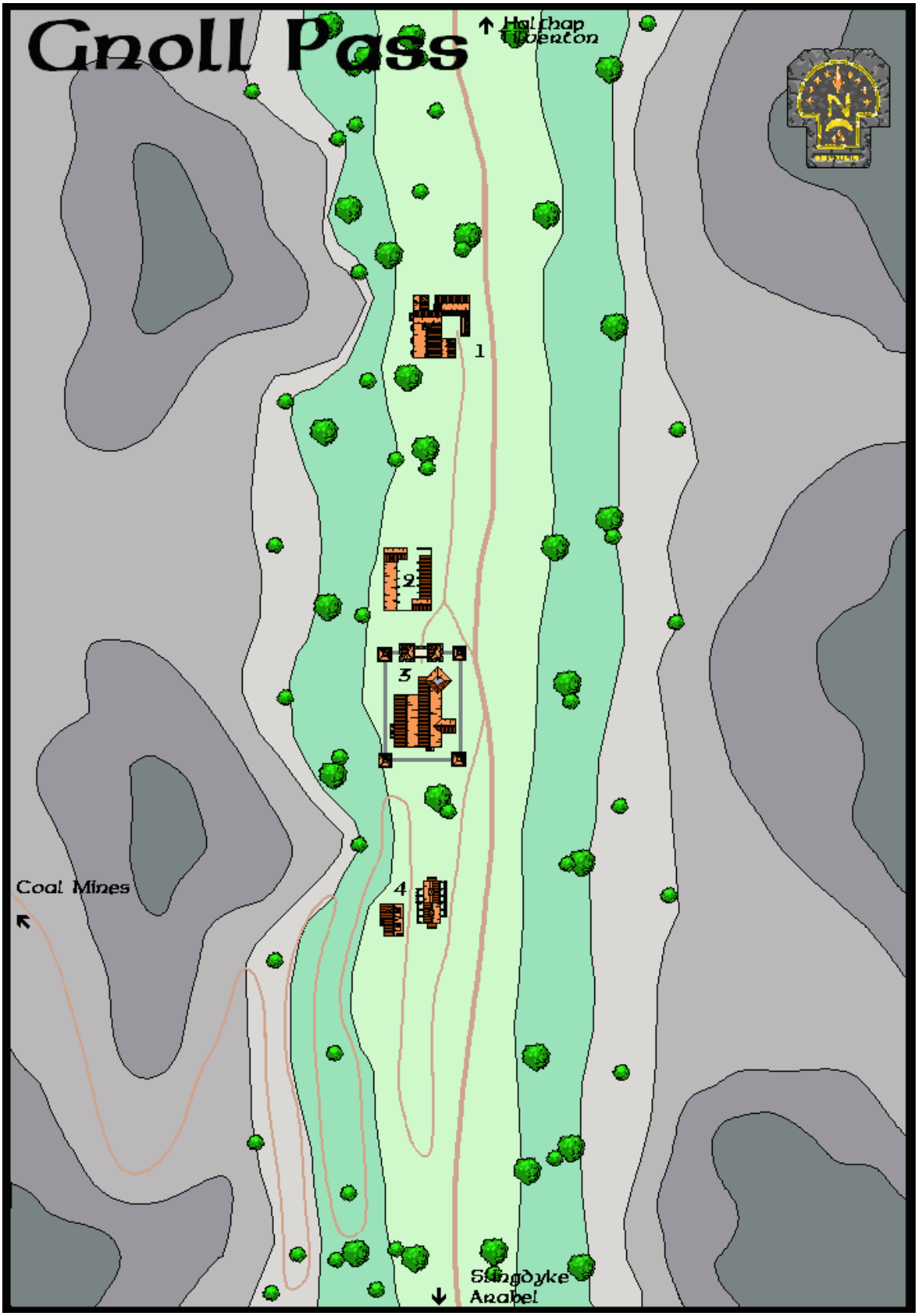
4 - Stables of the Slingdyke Arms Inn. The stables are maintained by the Purple Dragons. Travelers and caravans can camp or set up tent in the pasture behind the stables-

5 - Golden Grain Acres Farm. Six monks of Chauntea believed to be Harper agents run this farm, among other things brewing their Golden Grain Bock Beer, sold only at the farm.

6 - Cold Comfort Farm. Four Purple Dragons and a Cormyrean War Wizard disguised as farmers and another Purple Dragon who works as a smith run this farm.


Slingdyke
Gnoll Pass
Mountain Ride
1
2
3
4
5
6
Dragon Trail
Hillmarch
Laughing Head
Arabel

Slingdyke


Gnoll Pass
Halthap
Tiberton
1
2
3
4
Coal Mines
Stingdyke
Anabel

Gnoll Pass

Gnoll Pass

Village, Nonstandard (garrison). AL: NG. 20 gp limit. Assets: 2,000,000 gp. Population: 650 Human (600 soldiers, 50 villagers).

The pass is a long day's ride northward from Slingdyke. The coal mines of Arabel are west of the Mountain Ride in the pass. Traffic through the pass is relatively heavy, with heavy duty coal wagons regularly traveling between the pass as Arabel, as well as all of the caravan traffic between Cormyr and Tilverton, Shadowdale, Mistledale, Deepingdale, Daggerdale, Voonlar and the Moonsea region.

The pass holds a garrison of 600 purple dragons (unofficial). In the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), a new inn called *The Miner's Rest* (unofficial) opened in the pass. The inn was built and is owned by a consortium of merchants from Cormyr and Sembia, and the Iron Throne has a quiet, non-controlling share of the business. There also is a horse breeder in the pass that sells and trades replacement, and he has a semi-retired wainwright working for him who can repair wagons in an emergency, at emergency prices, of course.

Map of Gnoll Pass

NOTE: None of these sites are official. All are creations of the Vintyri Project.

1 - Miner's Rest Inn. The 20 single rooms run one gold lion and the eight doubles nine silver falcons per person per night. The guest room serves Arabel Coal Brew, a dark bitter ale that is nearly black. Meals are standard fare, good in quality but not outstanding, at prices ranging from 5 silver falcons to a gold lion. There are various innkeepers, all hired, on duty at different times, working shifts.

2 - Stables of the Purple Dragons.

3 - Garrison of the Purple Dragons.

4 - Davy Spead's Horse Sales. Spead offers a wide variety of quality horses, all at 20% above PHB prices. The services of his wainwright, Tavis Durnam, a native of Arabel, cost a gold lion per started hour of work. Spead gets a 20% commission out of this rate.

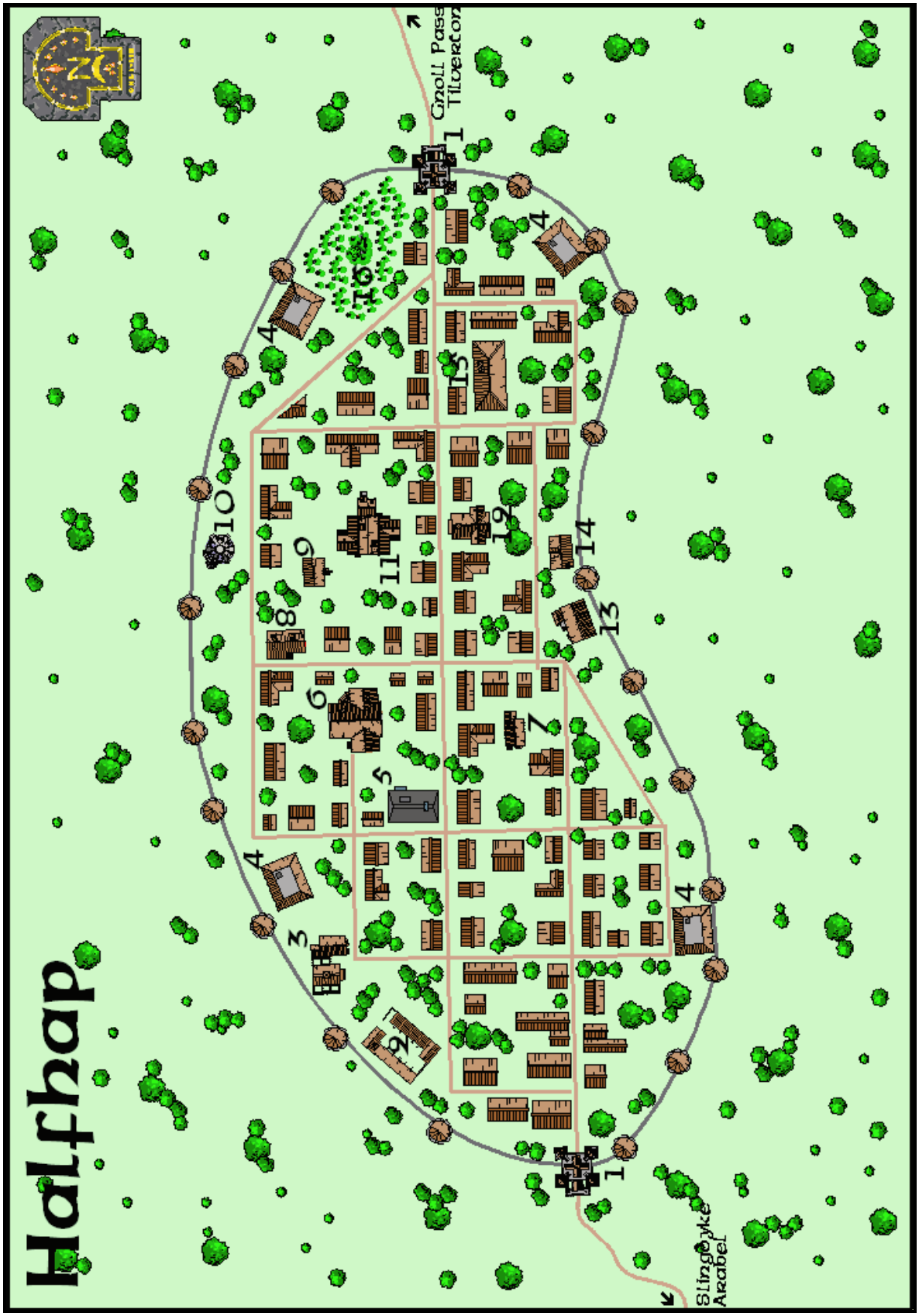
Halfhap

Large Town, Nonstandard (garrison town). AL:NG . 3,000 gp limit. Assets: 1,000,000 gp. Population: 2,200 Human (other races less than 1%).

A long day's ride northeast of Gnoll Pass on the Moonsea Ride, Halfhap is a small walled city of 2,200 that is described in the *Cormyr* accessory, *Volo's Guide to Cormyr* and *Four From Cormyr*. The Purple Dragons of Halfhap conduct flying patrols on hippogriffs. Your PCs are certain to be spotted by a flying Purple Dragon at least an hour before reaching Halfhap, and he will keep a regular eye on them, to see that their checked if they try to avoid Halfhap.

The city has an austere look, with most buildings simply constructed and decked with wooden shingle roofs. Nonetheless, it's an expensive place to go or stay. Halfhap produces little or nothing. The people who live there sell services to the Purple Dragons and/or travelers. Whatever one buys, anything from a tankard of Arabel Coal Brew to a horse, has to be imported from Arabel or elsewhere.

The PCs can spend the night in Halfhap in the *Blacknee's Halfhappenstance Inn* and the *Marching Myrmidon Inn* (both official). They also can entertain themselves in the (official) *Doffed Cloak* festhall or the (official) *Evershield's Embers* tavern. Halfhap is a barracks town, bland and with little to make life exciting.



Halfhap

NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters only

When the PCs reach Halfhap, they will discover that the town is relatively empty, because 900 of the 1,200 Purple Dragons stationed in Halfhap were ordered four days earlier to Tilverton. Upon their arrival, the PCs will find that Halfhap's remaining 300 Purple Dragons are enforcing the highest security. If the PCs draw suspicion, a war wizard will scrutinize them, to determine they really are what they seem to be, a priest of Tempus will test the truth of their statements and the local junior herald will check their charter to be sure it's not forged.

Map of Halfhap

NOTE: The only official map of Halfhap is a tile map in *Four From Cormyr*. Our map is based on this map, but it adds considerable detail.

1 - Entry Keeps. Each of these keeps can hold up to 100 Purple Dragons. Anyone passing in or out of Halfhap must pass through the gate of one of the keeps, where the Purple Dragons conduct careful controls. Those who try to evade these checks by making a loop around Halfhap, remaining outside of the wall, are checked even more carefully.

2 - Purple Dragons Hippogriff Stable. This stable houses the hippogriffs of the Purple Dragons.

3 - Merry's Mounts and More. Merialeth *Merry* Loriamanthor (ef, fighter lvl 7, thief lvl 7, AL: CG) sells horses, ponies, other livestock and riding gear. She also will stable valuable horses of travelers, but at a fee of 10 gold lions a night.

4 - Barracks of the Purple Dragons. Each of these buildings houses one of the four battalions (of 300 men each) stationed in Halfhap. **Northern Journey Game Masters:** The barracks in the northwest, northeast and southeast are empty and in caretaker status at the moment. The soldiers who live there are camped in Tilverton.

5 - House of Duty - Shrine to Torm. The shrine is the only building in Halfhap with a slate shingle roof. The shrine is run by the aging Holy Champion Azreena Ironoath (hf, Priestess of Torm, lvl 16, AL: CG).

6 - Blacknee's Halfhappenstance. This three-story inn opened in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR). It is run by the family of halfling Innkeeper Buzzrip Blacknee (ham, fighter lvl 1, AL: CG). This is a luxury house, but enough well-heeled folks travel the Mountain Ride to keep it in business. A room costs 10 gold lions per person per night, including evening dinner and breakfast. The inn also charge stable fees: 1 gold lion for a horse, 3 for a Pegasus, 5 for griffons and hippogriffs and 10 for *"other"* mounts.

7 - Short and Tall Supplies. The store has a wide variety of standard equipment items at 10% above PHB prices. The owners - who gave the place its name - are Elvin Elminster (hm, fighter lvl 1, AL: CG) and Dangus Barrowfold (dm, fighter lvl 5, AL: LG).

8 - Doffed Cloak Festhall. This house was built with a Purple Dragon clientele in mind, but their commander has placed it strictly off limits, so the madame and her ladies have to content themselves with the business of travelers.

9 - Evershields Embers Tavern. Anyone who really wants beer rather than ale in Halfhap has to go to the *Embers,* where owner Angryn Evershield, an immigrant from Hillsfar, brews his own house lager, which he calls *Happy Hap Lager*. Beer, salted bread sticks, cheese and cold sausage are all that Evershield serves. *Happy Hap* costs five copper thumbs per quart/liter tankard. A snack plate, with a bit of everything mentioned above, along with a dill pickle and a spoon of horseradish, costs 5 silver falcons.

10 - Nodric's Tower. This is the home and tower of Halfhap's resident sage, Nodric (hm, mage lvl 5, AL: CG). Nodric has a 25% chance of being able to answer any reasonable about religion, history, legend or myth. He chares 20 gold lions per answer.

11 - Lodge of Luck - Shrine to Tymora. Built out of white marble, the shrine offers card and dice games and serves Arabel Coal Brew at 5 copper thumbs per quart/liter tankard.

12 - Marching Myrmidon Inn. Halfhap's older, traditional inn, is a bit more sensibly priced than Blacknee's Happenstance, at 7 gold lions per person per night, including evening dinner and breakfast. Owner Jerit Gondason (hm, retired fighter lcl 5, AL: CG) serves better food than the *Happenstance,* but he offers only imported Arabel Coal Brew ale.

13 - Constabulary. Perrin Clovenshield (hm, fighter lvl 10, AL: LN), commander of Half Hap's Purple Dragons and virtual lord of the town, has his offices here. The dungeons below the constabulary have room for up to 300 prisoners.

14 - Commanders Quarters. Perrin Clovenshield (hm, fighter lvl 10, AL: LN), commander of Half Hap's Purple Dragons and virtual lord of the town, lives in this well-guarded mansion.

15 - Gloryhall - Shrine to Tempus. The local cleric is Battlelord Boneblaster (hm, priest of Tempus, lvl 14, AL: N).

16 - Halfhalp Cemetery (unofficial).

Tilverton

Map Sources: *FR Interactive Atlas CD, Forgotten Realms Adventures, Cormyr, Volo's Guide to Cormyr, FRC2 Curse of the Azure Bonds.*

NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters only

Large City, conventional. AL: N. 40,000 gp limit. Assets: 1,200,000 gp. Population: 12,900 Mixed (95% Human, 5% other). City maps will not be necessary, because only one PC at the very most will be allowed to enter the town. Huge army camps surround the plain outside Tilverton's walls beneath the Thunder Peaks. 3,000 Purple Dragons are camped outside the city.

Towards late evening, riding under the steep walls of the Thunder Peaks to the east, the border city of Tilverton at last comes into sight several miles/kilometers ahead, although the sight is not at all what you had anticipated. The town seems snug enough among its smoking chimneys within the fortified city walls. But to all sides outside those walls are hundreds of tents and small fires, with perhaps 3,000 men camping there, as though they're holding the city under siege.

Game Master: After a pause:

As you come within about a mile and a half of the camps, a patrol of a dozen Purple Dragons rides in your direction. Within short order, the dragons have reached you. Their leader salutes sharply and says, *"Well met! Sergeant Avril Tendel of the Purple Dragons of Cormyr! I'm afraid you've entered a royal war zone. In the name of his Highness, Azoun IV, I must ask you to accompany us to our headquarters for questioning!"*

Game Master: Reaction.

The dragons lead you to a large tent set up as an administrative center. They ask for your charter and ask you then to take a seat at benches in the middle of the tent. A sergeant with a three-day beard comes over a few minutes later and says, *"Your papers seem to be in order, but some questions have to be asked. Those are orders. It'll take a bit. I can offer you all a field beer, if you're thirsty from the trail."*

Game Master: The sergeant will bring all of the PCs who want a beer a light-colored brew of medium quality in a tankard with the embossed symbol of Cormyr's Purple Dragon. The beer is refreshing, after the long ride from Halfhap, but it's not anything that ordinarily would excite anyone.

After awhile, a priest of Tempus and a man in a purple robe show up and question you upon whether your charter is genuine, whether you're really the people listed on it, and whether your intentions are counter to those of the crown. Obviously, they're using magic, to determine whether you're being truthful, but they seem to be quickly satisfied with your answers. The priest says, *"Seeing you have a royal charter, we don't have to waste a lot of time interrogating you. Do you plan to ride on through the night, or do you intend to spend the night here in Tilverton?"*

Game Master: The charter is returned to the PCs, and they see it now also bears today's date along with the inscription, *War zone control. Tilverton. Emmerick Dalwain, Captain, Purple Dragons.* If the PCs wish to ride on, they are advised to ride directly to the city wall and then follow the road leading to the east around the city, going around it and heading north again. If they wish to spend the night, the priest will inform them of the following:

"Well, Tilverton is overflowing, so it's closed to anyone not working for the crown. You'll have to stay outside the wall. There are no beds free in the city anyway, but we do have camping places set up here for travelers, where you can rent tents, buy food and the like. If you have any really pressing need to do business in the city, you can apply for an entry permit for one member of your group.

"But orders are that no one else other than registered residents, servants of the crown or Purple Dragons may enter the city as long as martial law is in effect. "Sergeant Narbl! In any case, I'll have Sgt. Narbl lead you to the camping grounds. If you need to entire the city, you'll have to return here for a permit."

As the priest finishes his sentence, a tall sergeant of the Purple Dragons appears.

"Sgt. Narbl, our guests have been cleared. Please find them a camping site!"

"Yes sir!", the sergeant replies. *"Follow me, please. I'm sure we'll be finding something for you!"*

The sergeant leads you about half a mile/500 m farther toward the city wall, to an area along the wall with something of a makeshift city outside the city. The Purple Dragons have pulled farther back from the Moonsea Ride on both sides of the road, making room for a larger camping area filled with tents and travelers, small caravans, merchants and the like. Strategically, it occurs to you, a good decision. The camping area, which no doubt includes everything from honest merchants to thieves and Zhent spies, is surrounded by Purple Dragons armed to the heels and ready for war. Any trouble that might break out could be contained and quelled easily.

The camping area already shows the first signs of permanency. Several merchants have dug in and built small stands selling various wares. Across the road from you is a large outdoor restaurant, a place that consists of a large stand and about two dozen wooden tables and benches that have been planted into the soil. A sign above the stand says, *"The Laughing War Crow - Mother Mariia's War Camp Food."* Another sign advertises *Tilver Stonebrau* beer, fruit schnapps from the Moonsea and different kinds of sausage and cold meats from Voonlar. Still another sign says, *"Before every battle: A prayer to Tempus and Tymora, a sausage from Mariia!"*

All Other Game Masters

We have planned no special encounters for Tilverton. You can use the official materials on Tilverton without modification, or, if you are using the new disappearance of Randal Morn and the mobilization of the Purple Dragons, you also can use the section for *Northern Journey* Game Masters above.

21. Shadow Gap

Thorp, Nonstandard (private development). AL: NE. 1,000 gp limit. Assets: 500,000 gp. Population: 30 Human.

Please note that the *FR Interactive Atlas* includes a floor plan of the Northgate Inn that corresponds to the description in the novel *Curse of the Azure Bonds* by Jeff Grubb and Kate Novak (WotC - 1988). The inn was destroyed by fire 15 years before the current date in this adventure. The *Northgate* described here is a different structure.

This High Pass separating Tilverton and Cormyr from the western Dalelands had been plagued for many years by goblinoid raiders, brigands and the like, but for some 160 years, travelers and caravans found a reliable sanctuary in the pass, in the fortified *Northgate Inn,* built in the Year of the Bloody Wave (1194 DR) by an enterprising merchant from Turmish and operated by his family until the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), when the complex was destroyed by fire.

In that year, a kalimari disguised as a herald appeared in the inn and announced that he represented the Iron Throne Trading Co. He said the Iron Throne was disturbed about spreading war and violence in the Dalelands and the Moonsea area, and it blamed this unrest on weapons dealers traveling the North Ride. As a result, the kalimari said, the Iron Throne was closing the North Ride through Shadow Gap for a period of 30 days. The kalimari said all guests in the inn could leave and depart Shadow Gap in peace, but all weapons of war must be left behind.

This led to an all-out brawl, in which the inn was destroyed. In the end, the sellsword Alias of Westgate, her saurial paladin companion Dragonbait and their halfling friend Olive Ruskettle managed to destroy the kalimari, but only after the inn had been reduced to a burning ruin.

It also became clear later that the kalimari had been summoned by the evil alliance in Westgate headed by the wizardess Cassana that had been trying to steer Alias through her Azure Bonds, and that the secret Iron Throne probably had not been involved.

In the years that followed, the inn lay in ruins, and the gap once again became a somewhat more dangerous pass for travelers and caravans. In the Year of the Wave (1364 DR), a new and heretofore unknown organization calling itself the *Northeast Trading Co.*, which also built the *Miner's Rest Inn* in Gnoll Pass, purchased the ruins from family interests in Turmish and began reconstruction of the Northgate. It was reopened in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR) and has been a healthy business establishment for the past three years. (This second *Northgate* is unofficial.)

No one is quite certain, however, who or what is behind the *Northeast Trading Co.* On the surface it is run by a group of merchants from Cormyr and from Daerlun in Sembia, but there is strong suspicion that the Iron Throne is behind the operation.

The company has announced plans to build similar fortified inns on other trade routes and recently purchased the inn at Blackfeather Bridge on the border between Battledale and Featherdale. It also has applied to the crown in Cormyr for a permit to build a new fortified inn in Thunder Gap. There is organized resistance to this among many merchants in the kingdom, who are convinced that the inns will be nothing more than intelligence gathering centers for the Iron Throne.

King Azoun has given the protesting factions time until the Midsummer Festival to produce any evidence they may find that there is anything shady about the *Northeast Trading Co.* He has said he will allow the construction of the Thunder Gap inn if no convincing evidence is presented by that time.

Little is known about the people behind the company. On the surface, its owners appear to be just what they claim to be, a consortium of 12 small but successful independent merchants from Arabel and Daerlun. It is credible that these merchants could have raised sufficient money to finance their venture, although it is by no means certain that they actually did so. All regular employees of the inn speak with a Daerlun accent, and they seem to be rotated from time to time.

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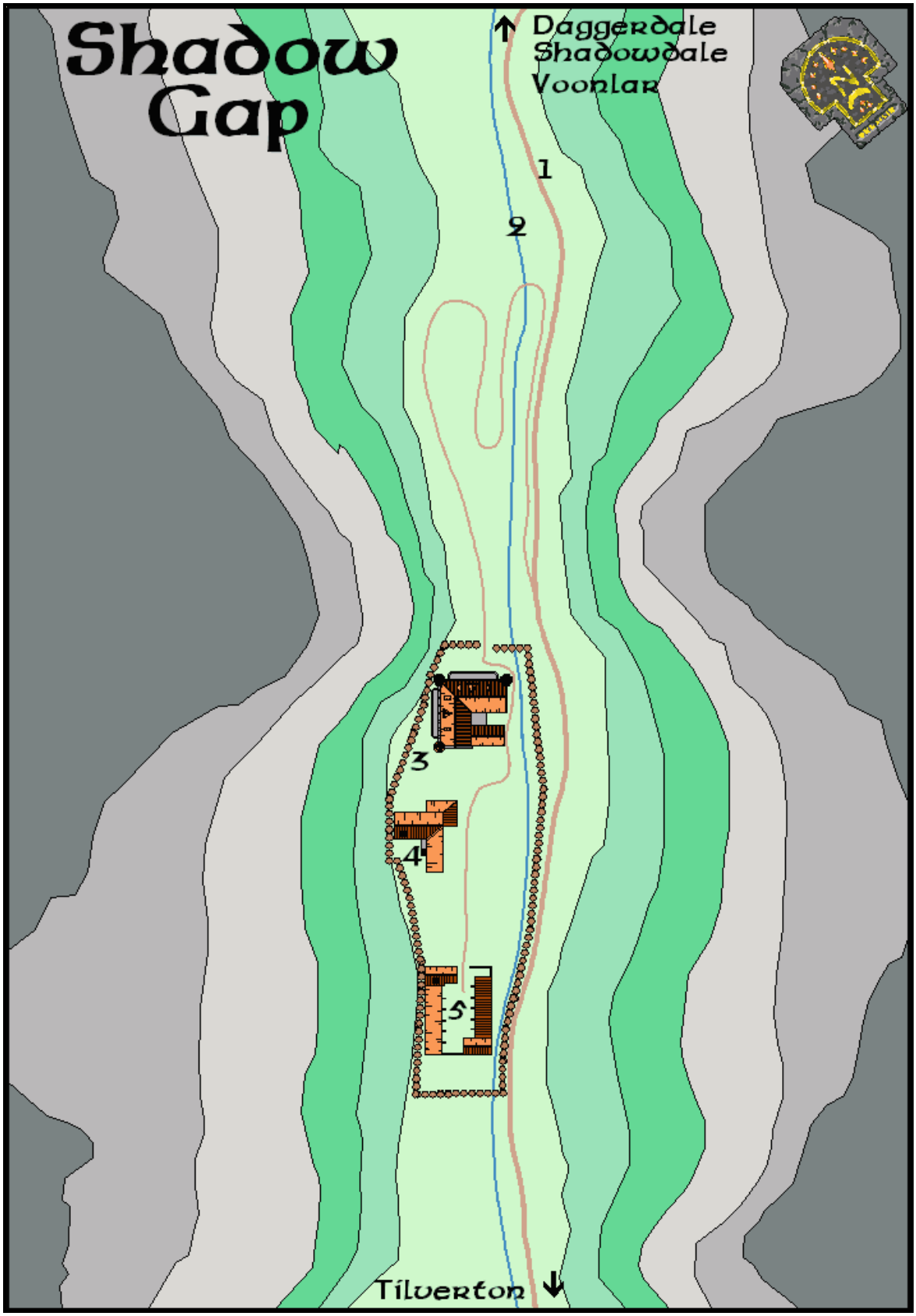
To date, no one has discovered any untoward or covert operations being conducted by the company, and it is being scrutinized closely by war wizards, agents of the Purple Dragons, Harpers, Zhentarim, agents of the Dragon Cult and no doubt also the Iron Throne, if indeed it is not behind the scenes in this operation.

The inn complex is surrounded by a 20-foot/6 m high wooden wall with watchtowers. A dozen former Sembian soldiers from the Daerlun area patrol the complex and keep the peace within it. Security is further bolstered by an offer from the trading company to mercenary and adventuring groups operating in the area around Shadow Gap. Such groups are entitled to free room and board at the inn, if they agree to spend at least one ride out of three within the complex. Several groups have taken the company up on this offer. A separate housing complex with 40 beds was built for these guests above the wagon halls.

The inn proper has 100 beds and offers professional animal care for riding and caravan horses. A limited supply of horses is offered for sale at anytime, as replacements for injured or lame animals. There also is a smithy available in the wagon hall, who can repair metal items and who sells tack and travel provisions.

Rooms cost 7 gold lions per person per night. Tilver Stonebrau Lager Beer costs 5 copper thumbs per quart/liter tankard. Meals run from 8 silver falcons to 1 gold lion and 4 silver falcons. Stable fees with animal care come to 1 gold lion and 5 silver falcons per horse, but caravans can negotiate group fees.

At the end of another long day's ride, the saddle of Shadow Gap rises before you. As the day comes to an end, you reach a fortified inn, direct in the saddle of the gap, one that calls itself the *Northgate.* It's a huge, four-story half-timbered construction with two side buildings, one a barn with horse stables and another a wagon hall for caravans.


Shadow Gap
Daggerdale
Shadowdale
Voonlar
1
2
3
4
5
Tilverton

Shadow Gap

22. Spiderhaunt Wood

Game Master: From Shadow Gap it's an easy downhill ride to the edge of Spiderhaunt Wood, where the PCs can make a camp just as the last daylight fades from the sky. The spiders are hungry and will come out of the wood for a hearty PC-meal.

From the Shadow Gap saddle it's all downhill, easy riding and you make good time. A few hours before sunset, with well over 20 miles/30 km behind you, a vista of the Dalelands unfolds before you. Massive forests straddle both sides of the North Ride in the distance. Behind the stretch of forest to the left of the road, farther to the north, you see the expansive Desertsmouth Mountains.

Before the it begins getting too dark to ride safely, you come upon a camping ground on the north side of the road, one that's used frequently by caravans, from the looks of it. Three or four miles/five to seven kilometers north of the campgrounds, the first stretch of forest begins on the northwestern side of the road. The other side of the road remains mostly open.

Game Master: The party will be attacked by 2d4 + 4 Phase Spiders (6-12). See the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium* for statistics.

On the following day you make it to another sizeable camping grounds at the point where the Tethyamar Trail turns off to the north and Daggerdale, while the North Ride continues on toward Shadowdale, about a day's ride away now. It would take another day to reach Daggerdale too, and about three more days to reach Dagger Falls on the Tesh, the besieged seat of government where the Zhents apparently have recaptured the city.

Game Master: If the PCs camp at the campground, there is only a 5% chance that phase spiders will attack again. That chance decreases by 1% for every additional mile/1.5 km farther from Spiderhaunt that the PCs camp.

23. Daggerdale

As soon as the PCs leave Spiderhaunt behind them, they'll be entering the southern part of Daggerdale and the final adventure element of this *Backlands* segment. This element can be played rather quickly if you wish, by simply moving the adventure steadily up the Tethyamar Trail to Dagger Falls. Once the PCs reach there, you can run the Zhent prisoner event rather quickly and send the players on to the Flaming Tower for the grand finale.

However, many Game Masters will want to do some genuine exploring in the back areas of Daggerdale, and some Game Masters no doubt will want to have Daggerdale alone take up a few evenings of gaming. That's no problem. We've tried to key you to all the locations where you can find the information you need to campaign extensively in Daggerdale, and if you're running the *NJ* campaign, we also give you the reasons why the sigylls will allow this delay.

The area Randal Morn had most under control before regaining Dagger Falls was the stretch south of the Dagger River and the Serpentsbridge. The main settlement in this part of Daggerdale is the (official) village of Anathar's Dell, a community of the Brightblade Dwarven Clan. Randal Morn was allowed to use Anathar's Dell as a secret base of operations while he still was out of power in Dagger Falls. Anathar's Dell was a relatively secret settlement in those days; one had to know it existed and where it was in order to find it. That's no longer a problem.

There's a sign at the turnoff on the Tethyamar trail now that advertises the inn *Anathar's Hall,* which should be your players' first stop in Daggerdale. There they should be able to gain all the starting information you want them to have. There too they can obtain one of the parchment maps of Daggerdale that Randal Morn has made available showing little known villages that survive in the dale and many important ruins that Morn's Freedom Fighters have charted.

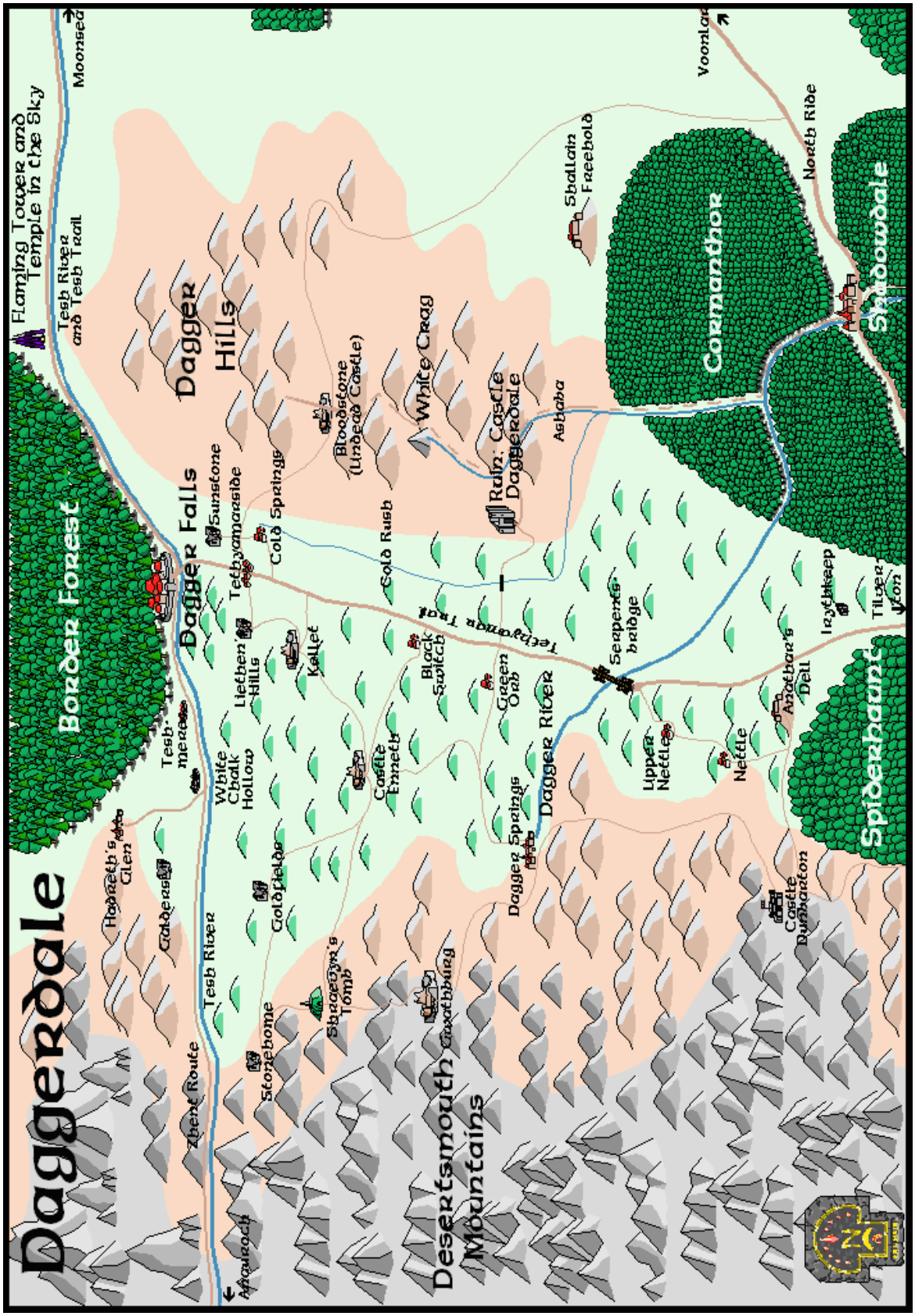
Daggerdale still has severe problems with bands of orcs and other goblinoids as well as brigands and Zhents and even some beholders roaming the back areas of the dale. Morn would like these problems to be cleaned up as quickly as possible, and he feels that his maps will be alluring to some adventurers, who will explore the abandoned areas of the dale in search of old treasures, magic etc. In doing so, he believes they also will make a substantial contribution to cleaning up the scum still plaguing the dale.

All Game Masters

Those Game Masters who are using *Backlands* only as a campaign setting expansion are, of course, free to stop and adventure anywhere in the Realms that they wish. In Daggerdale, *NJ* Game Masters can do this with the same ease. The PCs in the *Northern Journey* adventure are being drawn on by their sigylls, but this draw is being steered by Sammaster in far away Castle Perilous above Damara and Vaasa in the East.

At this point in the *NJ* adventure, Sammaster has a problem. He wants to lead the PCs to their next victim, Gwath. But Sammaster has no idea where she is, so the PCs will have to seek her. This gives *NJ* Game Masters who'd like to campaign extensively in Daggerdale the opportunity to do just that, and for as long as they wish. Only when the PCs actually save Randal Morn from Gwath will the sigylls begin pulling them onward toward Zhentil Keep. Until then, the sigylls will only do their best to keep the PCs from leaving Daggerdale without having found Gwath.

For this reason, we've created a highly detailed list of greater Daggerdale that shows you not only the sites individually mapped for and used in the *Northern Journey* adventure, but also where you can find all the available details for other sites shown on the map that are not explained in detail or mapped in this *Backlands* segment of *Northern Journey*.



Daggerdale – overland map

Daggerdale - Notes on the Overland Map

Our map shows all of the locations within Daggerdale that are described in official WotC products including those added to the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD by the volunteers who helped produce the maps. In addition, our map also includes unofficial locations in Daggerdale that were created by Eric L. Boyd and by participants in the Internet Daggerdale Project.

Of the Daggerdale sites listed on the overland map, only the following are included in the map package of the *Northern Journey Backlands* segment: *Daggerdale, Anathar's Dell, Black Switch*, *Dagger Falls, Flaming Tower* and *Temple in the Sky.*

Anathar's Dell. Hamlet, Conventional. AL: NG. 100 gp limit. Assets: 6,000,000 gp. Population: 350 Mixed (80% dwarf, 20% human). Above the surface a beautiful farming community, beneath the surface, the mines of the Brightblade Dwarven Clan who mine minerals and semi-precious stones. The only inn is also called *Anathar's Hall* and is run by a female dwarven innkeeper named Kharva. The village has a shrine to Chauntea and the halls of the Brightblade clan have temples to Moradin and Dumathoin. This is an official location. For more information see *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1996), the novel *Finder's Bane* by Jeff Grubb and Kate Novak (TSR - 1997) and the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD (TSR - 1999). A map of the village is included in the *Backlands* package.

Black Switch. Thorp, Conventional. AL: NG. 40 gp limit. Assets 200,000 gp. Population 45 Human. A farming village of 11 farms, with a blacksmith, a millstream, mill and a small, newly remodeled inn and brewery, called the *Ruse's Mage* and shrines to Chauntea and Lathander. This and the town's name go back to an old tale of a farmer who scared off an orc band by holding an ordinary black switch in the hand, pretending that it was a wand and he was a mage, and threatening to blow the orcs all the way back to Gruumsh, if they didn't disappear. They did. *Black Switch* is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. The map is included in the *Backlands* package.

Bloodstone *(earlier* Highstone, *also known as* Undead Castle). Ruin. Not a lot is known about the ancient ruins of this village high in the Dagger Hills. It is said that Highstone was one of the first settlements of Merrydale to be completely taken over by vampires in the Year of the Gray Mists (796 DR). It supposedly was destroyed two years later by high elven mages and powerful elven warriors from Cormanthor. The stone walls of windowless, roofless buildings still stand in some places, as do remnants of the low city wall, but all is heavily overgrown with moss, weeds and trees. By day, the site leaves the viewer with a discomfiting eerie feeling. By night, the ruins are said to be haunted by ghosts and worse. More historical information can be found in Section 24, entitled *Gwath*. In its *NJ* form, Bloodstone is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. A map of the still existent dungeon beneath the ruin was published in the module *How the Mighty Are Fallen* and republished in Update 2 (March 2000) of the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD.

Castle Daggerdale. Ruin. This mountain fortress was the traditional seat of the ruling family Morn. The Zhent usurper Malyk gutted the castle in the Year of the Wandering Wyrm (1317 DR), after driving the Morn family from rule and taking over Daggerdale himself. Randal Morn and his Freedom Fighters destroyed the castle themselves in the Year of the Arch (1353 DR), when they killed Malyk. The castle is devastated today and fully in ruins. This is an official site. There are more details in the *Dalelands* accessory by Richard L. Baker III (TSR - 1994). We are aware of no floor plans.

Castle Dunbarton. Thorp, Nonstandard (garrison). AL:NG. 0 gp limit. Assets 300,000 gp. Population 75 Human (Purple Dragons of Cormyr). For years, the castle was an all but forgotten ruin in southwestern Daggerdale, until the Kingdom of Cormyr took an interest in it, quietly refurbished it and just as quietly planted a contingent of Purple Dragons in it. Zhentarim agents still at large in Daggerdale have begun taking an interest in Castle Dunbarton because they have become aware of the Purple Dragon presence there. Randal Morn also has begun taking an interest, because the Zhents are interested, although he's not yet aware of the Purple Dragon presence. Castle Dunbarton is an invention of Eric L. Boyd. Christof Wuttke of the Daggerdale Project expanded upon and mapped Mr. Boyd's invention. This material can be downloaded from the Daggerdale Project's Internet site.

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Castle Enneth. Thorp, Nonstandard (outpost). AL: NG, 10 gp limit, 1,000,000 gp assets. Population 40 Human (Freedom Fighters). A small walled city with a small castle or manor house, Enneth supposedly still is in good condition. Economic plight caused the city to dwindle during the Zhent reign. The last regular residents are believed to have left Enneth in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR). However, the Freedom Fighters used it after that time as a base of operations. Much of Enneth still is in good condition. The city could be revived, if new residents can be found. Sufficient Freedom Fighters remain in Enneth to keep it free of monsters. Castle Enneth is an invention of the *Vintyri Project.* Additional material and a map can be downloaded from the Daggerdale Project's Internet site.

Cold Springs. Thorp, conventional. AL: NG. 20 gp limit. Assets: 200,000 gp. Population: 48 (Human). The village is at the source of a stream that flows into the Ashaba. It consists of a dozen farms, a smithy and a tavern (no accommodations) called the *Waters of the Dales.* There also is a mill about a mile downstream from the village and a small shrine to Chauntea near the mill. Cold Springs is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. Additional material and a map can be downloaded from the Daggerdale Project's Internet site. Cold Rush Creek, which has its source in Cold Springs, also is an invention of the same group. Additional material on Cold Springs and a map can be downloaded from the Daggerdale Project's Internet site.

Dagger Falls. Village, Conventional. AL: N, 200 gp limit. Assets 1,000,000 gp. Population 800 Mixed (97% human, 3% other). This is the largest town in Daggerdale and in more modern times its seat of government. For quite a number of years, it was under the control of the Zhentarim, and in the *NJ* adventure in *Backlands* it has fallen again into the hands of Zhent renegades, who are being besieged by the followers and allies of Randal Morn. Dagger Falls is an official location. The *Backlands* package includes a town map tailored to the needs of the *NJ* adventure in Dagger Falls. Other maps and details can be found in *The Dalelands* and *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands.* Considerably more material can be found in the TSR modules *Doom of Daggerdale* by Wolfgang Baur (TSR - 1993) and the *Randal Morn Trilogy* by Jim Butler (TSR -1995). *Doom of Daggerdale* introduced the subterranean *Crypt of the Mage King,* Colderon the Razor, an evil ancestor of Randal Morn, and the *Eagle's Eyrie,* once an outpost of the Brightblade dwarves. Both the crypt and the dwarven ruins also are mapped on the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD. The third module of the Randal Morn trilogy, *Return of Randal Morn,* and the *FR Atlas CD* also have floor plans of the Dagger Falls garrison.

Dagger Springs. Ruins of an abandoned old village with the remains of 14 farms, a smith's shop, a grain storage facility and a small tavern, none with roofs and some with only foundations still remaining. Zhents or orcs may at any time be temporarily holed up here. Dagger Springs is an invention of the *Vintyri Project.* It has not been mapped or further detailed.

Galders. A small abandoned village of four farms in decrepit condition. Orc bands sometimes hole up here. The last residents vanished from Galders in the Year of the Highmantle (1336 DR). Galders is an invention of the *Vintyri Project.* It has not been mapped or further detailed.

Goldfields: A once prosperous village of rich farming and freshwater fishing, only dry lake beds, 20 abandoned farms and a dozen cottages remain. Many of the buildings still seem to be in remarkably good condition. The last of the local residents left the village in the Year of the Spur (1348 DR), after foolish Zhent magical experiments caused the spring-fed lakes to dry up. Zhent records found in Dagger Falls claim that a substantial colony of doppelgangers in the service of the Zhentarim lairs here, but the Freedom Fighters have not yet verified if this still is the case. Goldfields is an invention of the *Vintyri Project.* Additional material and a map can be downloaded from the Daggerdale Project's Internet site.

Green Orb: Hamlet, conventional. AL: . N(E). 100 gp limit. Assets: 450,000 gp. Population: 85 (Human). This is a rather prosperous village for Daggerdale, but one that the Freedom Fighters keep their eyes on. A good 25 farms are scattered across the countryside here, along with several miles of fruit orchards. The village has a smithy, a schnapps distillery and a tavern (no accommodations) called the *Schnapps Queen,* which has two separate guest rooms, one for locals and one for strangers.

People in Green Orb are suspicious of and rather unfriendly toward natives of other parts of the Dales. This village produces fruit schnapps of very high quality with a good reputation in much of the Heartlands. The Zhents, soured on by a fanatic priest of Bane, managed to persecute and financially abuse the farmers of Green Orb to such an extent that the last of them at last left, and the highly profitable schnapps industry collapsed.

Realizing the mistake that was made, financially wiser Zhentarim saw to it that loyal farmers from the Moonsea and Zhentish spies from elsewhere were brought into Green Orb to revive the schnapps industry. The majority of these folk had been followers of Bane until the Time of Troubles. In the intervening years they rejected Cyric. Three different priests sent to Green Orb by the church of Cyric simply vanished, and their takeover of Bane's temple was a short-term matter. After the Time of Troubles and the Destruction of Zhentil Keep, the people of Green Orb turned to the worship of Iyachtu Xvim.

A low level priest, Ruinlord Radargh from Xvim, came to Green Orb in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR) and reopened the Banite temple there, but it was destroyed in the same year by Randal Morn's Freedom Fighters. Radargh vanished - into the hills behind Green Orb, where he maintains a small, makeshift cave chapel for the villagers.

The main Zhent agent in Green Orb is the town councilor Heldarm Dernesch, who also owns the tavern. Dernesch and other village leaders have been debating just what position they should take in the future. They are beginning to believe that Daggerdale is lost to the Zhentarim. However, they do not want to lose their rich farms.

Randal Morn's deputy governor, Captain Mestin *Troll* Durmark of the Freedom Fighters, in her last visit to collect taxes in Green Orb, made it quite clear that the villagers have very little time left to integrate themselves as loyal Dalesmen, or they will be deported back to the Moonsea. Dernesch and the others are looking for no new conflicts at present. The PCs will not receive a welcome in Green Orb, but they also will not be harmed if they keep their noses out of village secrets.

Green Orb is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. The details and the town map are available from the Daggerdale Project.

Gwathburg. This ancient castle, now filled with undead, is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. The details and the castle plan are available from the Daggerdale Project.

Hadreth's Glen. Hamlet, Conventional. AL: NG. 100 gp limit. Assets: 220,000 gp. Population: 210 Human. This village was created by Bill T. Breeze *Murton*, one of the volunteer mappers for the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD and is thus an official location. A village map is available on the CD.

Irythkeep. The ruins of this small fortress are described by Ed Greenwood in the novel *Cloak of Shadows* (TSR - 1995). The tale of the rise and fall of Irythkeep is recorded on lost pages of history, but it appears that the castle once defended broad farmlands that spread across the surrounding area. The Tethyamar Trail to the west of the keep dips in this area, becoming even a bit swampy in places, and parts of the trail itself are in poor.

Foundations and occasionally partially standing walls of old farms still can be seen through the brush and young forest that it is taking roots where fields once were tilled. The first that one sees of the keep itself are two *fingerlike, stone pillars* arising from the overgrowth. The walls of the keep show signs of being battered in from without, and what remains of the walls shows signs of fire. A careful search will reveal *a ragged stone ring outlining the outer walls, a few overgrown outbuildings and stables still clinging here and there to their roofs and those fingerlike remnants of towers.*

Fast growing duskwood, pine and shadowtop saplings are taking root everywhere within the keep's grounds. In the Year of the Shadows (1358 DR), when the avatars came to Faerûn, a band of Malaugrym had established a powerful gate in the ruins of Irythkeep. They were hunted down by Elminster of Shadowdale and three Harpers who later became known as the Rangers Three: Sharantyr, then a member of the Knights of Myth Drannor, and two of Storm Silverhand's students, Belkram and Itharr. A battle followed in the ruins of Irythkeep in which mighty magic was hurled both by Elminster and the Malaugrym, who were slain before they could return to Shadow Castle on the Plane of Shadows. Irythkeep has not been mapped or further detailed.

Kellet. This small walled city was destroyed by a red dragon during the Flight of Dragons in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR). It had been turned into a Zhentilar garrison city, and the Zhents incurred heavy losses during the destruction. The foundations of Kellett's buildings still stand, but that is all. The city wall also is mostly rubble. Kellet is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. It has not been mapped or further detailed.

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Liethen's Hills. The village consisted of four farms and three garden cottages, that continued in use until the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), when the same red dragon that devastated Kellett totally destroyed Liethen's Hills and all of its residents. Zhentilar used to claim these ruins are haunted, but that claim has not been substantiated yet. Liethen's Hills is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. It has not been mapped or further detailed.

Nettle. Hamlet, Conventional. AL: NG. 100 gp limit. Assets: 400,000 gp. Population: 120. The richly fertile valley between the green hills in this area makes Nettle the foremost vegetable and grain basket of Daggerdale. The small Nettle Creek flows down from Upper Nettle through Nettle, driving the recently rebuilt grain mill there - the biggest in all Daggerdale - which also is joined by a newly rebuilt brewery that produces *Nettle Beer,* already a secret tip among beer drinkers in Shadowdale, Mistledale and Tilverton. There are about 30 farms in Nettle, along with a large shrine to Chauntea. The small inn (6 beds) is a house operation of the Nettle brewery. Nettle is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. The details and the village map are available from the Daggerdale Project.

Serpentsbridge: Thorp, Conventional. AL: N. 0 gp limit. Assets: 200,000 gp. Population:12 Human. One abandoned farm has been rebuilt here, along with another enclosed house that is said to belong to a reclusive mage who recently came to the area from the Scardale area. Both Randal Morn and Captain Durmark have met with the mage and afterward told their followers he will *"be an asset to the Dale."* Little more is known about him. This is an official site introduced in WotC's *Randal Morn Trilogy*. It has not been mapped or further detailed.

Shraevyn's Tomb. Shraevyn was an ancient mage lord in Daggerdale who created the magical *Sword of the Dales* to protect his native Merrydale. He and the sword are documented in the first module of the Randal Morn trilogy, *Sword of the Dales,* by Jim Butler (TSR - 1995). The tomb has been looted and now is empty. The floor plan can be found both in the module and on the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD.

Stonehome. A totally decrepit village ruin of a dozen quarry workers cottages and a broken down tavern, abandoned in the Year of the Grimoire (1324 DR). Goblinoids are almost always holed up here. Stonehome is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*. It has not been mapped or further detailed.

Sunstone. Once a combination of four garden cottages belonging to wealthy merchants of Dagger Falls and five small farms, Sunstone was abandoned by the Year of the Dragon (1352 DR) at the latest. During the Time of the Troubles (Year of the Shadows - 1358 DR) the Malaugrym had established a powerful gate in the ruins of Sunstone, which was destroyed in that year by Elminster of Shadowdale and the Rangers Three. The buildings here range from somewhat decrepit to hopeless, but some could be restored with sufficient money and hard work. Sunstone is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*, based upon descriptions of abandoned, Malaugrym-infested villages in the novels *Cloak of Shadows* and *All Shadows Fled* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1995). Sunstone is an invention of the *Vintyri Project.* Additional material and a map can be downloaded from the Daggerdale Project's Internet site.

Teshmere. Thorp, Conventional. AL: NG. 40 gp limit. Assets: 250,000 gp. Population: 40 Human. This village was created by Bill Howard, one of the volunteer mappers for the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD and is thus an official location. A village map is available on the CD.

Tethyamarside. Thorp, Conventional. AL: NG. 40 gp limit. 220,000 gp assets. Population 50 Human. This village was created by Ian R. Malcomson, one of the volunteer mappers for the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD and is thus an official location. A village map is available on the CD.

Upper Nettle: Thorp, Conventional. AL: NG. 10 gp limit. Assets: 150,000 gp. Population 36 Human. Although only six miles (8 km) upstream from Nettle on Nettle Creek, the village of Upper Nettle has considerably less rainfall in a year's time than Nettle. The result is little farming land but rich grazing for cattle. The village consists of eight spread-out ranches and no other businesses, shrines or temples. The Zhents had tried to starve the cattle ranchers with high taxes, but those days now seem to be past. Upper Nettle is an invention of the *Vintyri Project*.

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White Chalk Hollow. Thorp, Conventional. AL: NG, 40 gp limit- Assets 175,000 gp. Population 42 Human. This village was created by Shawn Lewandowski, one of the volunteer mappers for the *FR Interactive Atlas* CD and is thus an official location. A village map is available on the CD.

Anathar's Dell

Game Master: This narrative can be used if the group heads on directly northward to Dagger Falls, which most groups will tend to do.

The dell is settled by the Brightblade dwarven clan, two old humans families - Blacklock and Talop - and two halfelven families - Snowgold and Winterwood. The dwarves mine silver and emeralds, the humans and half-elves farm and are worshippers of Chauntea who support and are supported by the druids in the area. Members of the four families take care of the Chauntea Temple (No. 8 on the map) and run the brewery there. This village operates basically as a commune.

FIRST EVENING AFTER SPIDERHAUNT:

By mid-afternoon you've managed to leave the Spiderhaunt Woods behind you, and you begin traveling up the Tethyamar Trail, a beautiful stretch of rolling road across one low hill after another. This must be a blessed land in some ways. Just about anything suited to the climate must grow here in southern Daggerdale. All sorts of vegetation straddle the sides of the rolling trail, bushes, grasses, wildflowers, trees, even many wild cherries, plums and apples. From all you've heard, inns were non-existent before Randal Morn recaptured Dagger Falls, and that was merely two years ago, so inns probably still are a rarity.

As these thoughts cross your mind, your horses take you to the top of another hill, and you see a long, green valley stretch out before you, with many copses of trees to both sides of it, and in the distance a virtual sea of rolling hills. About 500 yards/450 m ahead of you, you see a crossing, apparently only a trail that leads off the road, but there's also a meadow there that actually could make an ideal campgrounds for the night, and it is getting late.

Game Master: Pause.

As you reach the meadow, you notice a still new trail sign pointing along the smaller trail leading west. The smaller trail leads under a larger hill with a red stone crag atop it. The sign says:

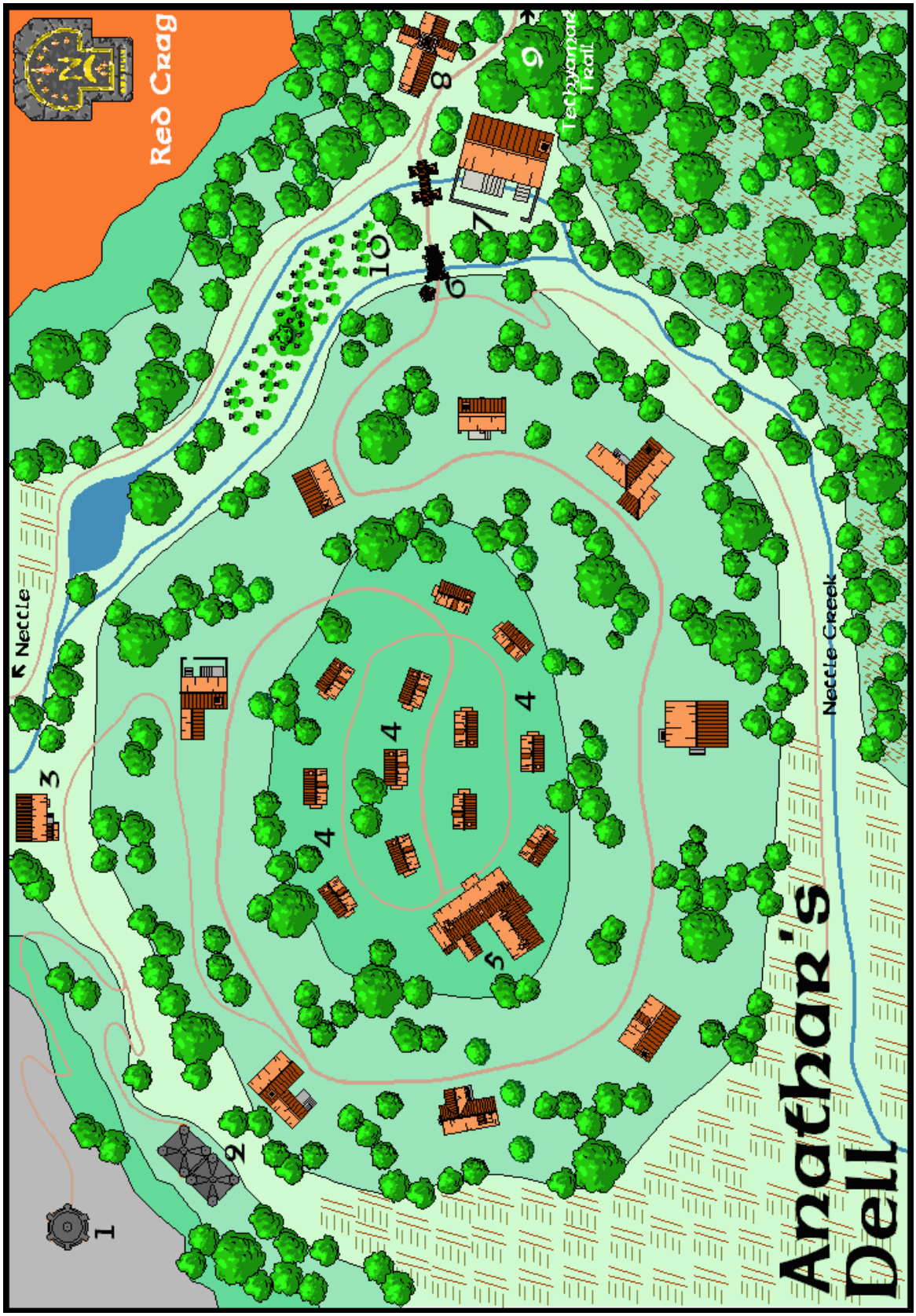
"Anathar's Hall in Anathar's Dell - Fine Food in a Free Dale,
Comfortable Guest Cottages, 4 miles/6 km"

Game Master: Pause. The rest is used if the PCs go to Anathar's Dell.

The trail is narrow, wide enough only for two abreast, but nonetheless frequently used. After a few hundred yards/meters, a small stream comes in from the north and follows the road as it winds downward into a narrow valley. Both sides of the road have a heavy growth of weeds and brush, along with frequent copses of trees. After following the trail in the fading daylight for about 3 miles/5 km, you begin to hear movement and then grunting in the brush, and now and then you get a quick but shocking glimpse of a tiger cub.

If the PCs attack the tiger cub, it will draw angry parents in 1d4 rounds and equally angry villagers in another 1d4 rounds. Through the druids of Chauntea, the tigers keep watch on the entrances to Anathar's Dell *(see also the TSR novel* Finder's Bane *by Jeff Grubb and Kate Novak and* Volo's Guide to the Dalelands*).*

Within a few minutes, the view in the fading daylight opens onto a valley with a hill in the middle, farm fields and fruit orchards. You hear water running ahead of you, a creek that flows through small village mill. The road leads you to a bridge across the small millstream On your side of the bridge, the road turns to the northwest and follows the north bank of the stream to a gray stone building about 650 yards/600 m ahead, on the north foot of the hill. It looks like it could be a smithy. On the other side of the bridge, the road winds up the hill into the village, warmly lit with welcoming lanterns. Farms straddle the hillside. Through the trees, it looks like a group of cottages and a larger building, perhaps the inn, stands at the top. Another dirt trail circles the foot of the hill on the other side of the stream.



Anathar's Dell

Map of Anathar's Dell

1 - The Brightblade Mines. Visible for the most part are only tailings and the massive, ornate stone entrance to the halls and mines of the Brightblade Clan. The Brightblade Clan, which founded Anathar's Dell, mines mainly silver and emeralds here. The clan also produces silver bars with a value of 25 gold lions that will be accepted almost anywhere in the Realms at face value.

2 - Stronghouse. This is a heavily fortified barn the Brightblade Dwarves built for the human and halfelven residents of Anathar's Dell. The families of the village graze large herds of beef cattle on the higher hills to the east of the village from late Tarsakh until mid-Eleint, weather permitting. The barn gives these herds shelter in the winter. But the huge walled barn also serves as a defensive fortress the residents can flee to in time of attack. A deep and bountiful well provides sufficient water, and the village's food cellars are beneath the stronghouse, with easily enough provisions stored there to endure a two-year-siege. In ancient times, the tower of the mage Anathar stood on this site. Anathar had an agreement with the Brightblade Clan to defend the village. He and a dragon killed one another when the dragon attacked the village.

3 - Dell Smithy and Stables. This business is run by the master dwarf smith Njolding (dm, fighter lvl 5, AL: LG), but his interest goes only as far as the smithy. An employee of his, the retired ranger Londa Warrin (hef, ranger lvl 10, AL: NG) runs the stable and takes care of the horse trade for him.

4 - Guest cottages. See No. 5.

5 - Anathar's Hall. This friendly inn is run by a dwarf wife named *Kharva.* Food and mood are quite good in the inn. The main guest room still serves from time to time as the impromptu headquarters for Randal Morn's Freedom Fighters, and the rooms on the 2nd story (European 1st floor) serve as a barracks for the eight Freedom Fighters (hm, fighter 6 x lvl 1, 1 x lvl 2, 1 x lvl 3, AL: NG,) permanently stationed here. This inn is a communal operation. All food in the inn is provided by the local agriculture, including the beer, which is brewed in the temple brewery. The guest cottages surrounding the hall belong to Kharva's inn operation. A cottage can house up to two persons and costs two gold lions a day. These give the guests the right to eat and drink all they wish in the hall. No money changes hands in the hall. It is open to all local residents and to guest cottage visitors, all of whom eat and drink all they wish at no charge. ***There is a setting for the PCs' visit to the hall!***

6. Dell Drawbridge. The bridge usually is down, but it is raised when trouble is expected and at night. One of the village's residents always is on duty in the small guardhouse at the bridge.

7. Valley Mill. Grain is milled and vegetable oil is pressed by the local worshippers of Chauntea. The mill belongs to the temple.

8 - Temple to Chauntea: Most of this temple actually serves as storage for grain and other produce, however, the druids of the area do lead services to Chauntea at the two solstices and the two equinoxes. Local worshippers of Chauntea maintain the temple and run its brewery.

9. Treehouse Family Snowgold: This tree is by far the largest oak in Anathar's Dell. The PCs may or may not notice a large treehouse high in this oak. Some members of the halfelven Snowgold family live in the treehouse and maintain a constant lookout from there, sounding an alarm, if needed. The Snowgolds also take care of the tigers who patrol the village perimeter.

10. Village Cemetery.

Encounter - Anathar's Hall

Anyone could feel at home in Anathar's Hall. The massive stone walls, obviously the work of dwarven masters masons, leave one feeling secure.

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The two huge roaring fireplaces, the warm light of the lanterns and the happy mood that fills this house make it uplifting, to say nothing of the excellent lager beer the locals brew in their temple. There's also the fine, locally grown food cooked to perfection by the innkeeper, the dwarf wife *Kharva.* Tonight's fare is local beef roast, local potatoes in a rich forest mushroom source, a large vegetable platter and a huge bowl of salad, all local produce.

Kharva has made it clear that your cottage tab pays for all you can eat and drink, and she seems to suggest the kitchen has an endless supply of food. As the night wears on, she comes over to your table with a piece of parchment. A quick look shows you that it's a map of Daggerdale.

"Randal Morn has been pretty much running things in southern Daggerdale for a few decades already," Kharva tells you. *"This use to be his hidden headquarters, this very hall here. Well, after he took over Dagger Falls, and before he vanished again, he had the scribes there make a bunch of these maps. He thought nothing would help make peace so much in the dale as more new folks settling it, and he thought it was time to reveal where all the hidden villages and the known old ruins are, so that new folks know where they might go. I thought you folks might be able to use a map too."*

NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters:

The Night and the Morning After:

Game Master: The following takes place sometime in the middle of the night.

On this evening, each of you sleeps too soundly to arouse himself from the light nightmares, in which you and you alone plod on across a high mountain ridge, horribly cold and deep in snow. All the while, dragons are swooping down from the sky, their maws grinning at you and bearing teeth that seem to be just a bit too long and a bit too pointed. And then, the largest dragon of them all, an impossibly huge red dragon sweeps down upon you from behind, also with unnaturally long and pointed teeth.

You know no real dragon the size of this one ever has existed. Its flight cracks across the sky like an earthquaking thunderbolt, and the sound causes avalanches on the slopes below you. Despite the cold, you begin to sweat with fear. But the dragon does nothing to you. Grinning, it lifts upward and flies on, almost out of sight ... and then ... and then it turns around and dives at you once more from ahead.

You know you're in a dream, sweating in temperatures of perhaps -40 degrees (F or C), ridiculous as that may seem. Again, the dragon's flight cracks across the skies like a thunderbolt, causing new avalanches, and again, the dragon gains altitude and flies back in the direction from which it had come. Then it vanishes, and the smaller dragons return. Powerful as they are, these normal dragons no longer cause fear in you. After seeing the gigantic red, these other dragons seems as harmless as butterflies on a summer day.

You almost begin to believe you'll succeed in shaking the nightmare, when suddenly, that horrible droning sound begins vibrating behind you again. Once more, the great red is coming, faster than before it seems, and then, you feel a slight bit of relief. It's not flying over your ridge this time, but over the next ridge to your right. Your eye follows the path the dragon seems to be following, and now and then, through the heavy snowfall, you seem to glimpse an old castle ruin on a peak in the distance.

Once more, the dragon's flight cracks like a thunderbolt through the night, and again, avalanches begin. But the dragon flies on past you and then seems to land where you thought you saw the castle ruin. The smaller dragons who had been plaguing you depart now and follow in the wake of the great red. Soon all the dragons vanish in the distance, and once again, your are left in peace, in the snow, in deep cold, drenched in sweat.

Slowly now, you begin to awake. The night seems peaceful, but it certainly is too cold. Moonlight comes through the bedroom window of your cottage. Your sweat begins to chill you in the coldness of your room. It's too cold. Something's wrong here. You reach for the candle on your night table and light it, and then you see the cause of the cold. Something has completely shattered the glass of your bedroom windows. Shards of glass lay on the floor beneath it.

The sound of a dragon vampire's low flight has caused the glass to break. The dragon vampire sought and found the three cult members tracking the PCs at the camping area south of the Serpentsbridge. It flew back to Spiderhaunt, where it had left its draconians, picked up the draconians and flew then to the Dagger Springs ruins at the source of the Dagger River. From there, the group will march on foot to the Serpentsbridge, to destroy the Dragon Cult members there. The PCs will not be able to learn any of this until the next day.

THE NEXT DAY:

You awake the next morning as planned and head to Anathar's Hall for breakfast and to take your leave of Kharva. When you enter the hall however, you're surprised to see that she's not alone. Six armored men and - from his symbol - a priest of Lathander are seated at a table with Kharva, each working on a liter of beer and looking pale, nervous and extremely shaken. You see now that many of the windows in the hall and also drinking glasses have been shattered.

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Game Master: Greetings and formalities. Once the topic comes around to the breakage, etc. Kharva says:

"You heard nothing in the night? Well, the Freedom Riders here have been piecing together information that tells me a bit more about those things I already knew. A dragon came up the Tethyamar Trail today, went back down again and then came back up, but this time flying right over us and on into the northwest. It was so damned low, that it caused all of this damage. I assume your windows have had it too?"

One of the Freedom Fighters says, *"We saw the whole thing in the moonlight. The dragon wasn't the biggest ever, but it wasn't even 100 feet/30 m over the trail, or on the second flight, over the village here. The damned thing was horrible. It was our assignment to patrol the southern trail today, over Green Orb and then out to the Dagger River Source to check out the old village ruins there. Orcs have been holing up there from time to time.*

"We reached the Dagger Springs by mid-afternoon. That village isn't worth much. No structure left to speak of, just a lot of rubble. We continued on, and just as the last light of day was vanishing in the west, we reached the Serpentsbridge. We made our camp there.

"It was in the middle of the night when it came. We saw it rising up from Spiderhaunt in the south, flying so low, just above the treetops. Everything was silhouetted against the moonlight, so we couldn't tell what color it was. It flew right up from the south over the Tethyamar Trail until it reached the Serpentsbridge, circled and then flew back south again and landed near Spiderhaunt. Then there was a bit of peace again.

"But shortly afterwards, the dragon rose again from Spiderhaunt and flew right towards us, right over our heads, maybe 20 feet/6 m above the trees. And damn, we're all sure the thing was carrying riders of some sort. The flight cracked like a thunderbolt. A couple of hours went by before I could hear again. Then the dragon flew on, without even blinking at us, direct toward the Dagger Springs, and it landed somewhere out there and simply vanished, just like that!"

Serpentsbridge

Game Master: It takes until the noon hour to reach the bridge.

As you begin hearing the rushing waters of the Dagger River nearby, you can see a small settlement at the bridge. A large old, single farm, obviously newly restored, stands direct on the road about 100 feet/30 m south of the bridge. In a cluster of planted poplars and pines behind the farm is what appears to be a house, probably a large mansion.

The massive arch of the Serpentsbridge is a masterpiece of dwarven construction, a structure left from ancient times when the Dales were the province of elf and dwarf. The surface of the road on the bridge is a series of small ridges rather than being smooth, and when you look long enough at these ridges, you begin to see them transforming themselves into writhing snakes. A second, closer look convinces you, however, that this is nothing more than an optical illusion. At least you know how the bridge got its name.

Game Master: Use the following only if you are using the dragon dreams and the Dragon Cult element of the *NJ* adventure.

The bridge and the nearby structures capture your attention only fleetingly. Instead, your eyes are drawn to a sight in the road a mere 50 feet/15 m south of the bridge. A man with a spear, two farmers with pitchforks and a bearded man in a tan robe with a wooden staff that has the carving of a hand atop it are staring distrustfully at the sight in the road: Two dead warriors with broken swords and the charred remains of a third person lay there, near three puddles of a still fuming liquid.

The group of people looks suspiciously at you, but continues to divide its attention between you and the carnage in the road.

Game Master: The locals will watch the PCs but wait for them to offer a greeting. The mage - the man in the tan robe - will not identify himself, but rather say, *"I live here."* However, he is the first to say anything to the PCs:

"I didn't see what happened here. I just came out to see what was up after the fireball exploded."

Game Master: When the PCs introduce themselves properly, the man with the spear will slowly tell a bit more.

"Well, that's my farm there. We were inside eating, when we heard a quarrel starting out here and swords clashing. At first we watched from the windows, because we had the clear impression that the best thing that could happen would be if they all destroyed each other. Looked like a bunch of worthless, evil trash to me. These two here - he points to the two men's corpses with smashed swords - *drew their swords and started fighting.*

"They were up against half a dozen creatures that looked like a cross between baby dragons and lizard men, more or less. And then there was another one, back in the trees there. He looked like a black man with dragon wings. He seemed to watch, rather than mixing in. Those puddles there were some of these dragon lizards. The two men with the swords and three of the dragon lizards managed to kill each other in battle. Then the lady - that's the incinerated one there - tried to throw a fireball into the rest of the dragon lizards.

"Well, the fireball got halfway there, and then a huge, grey green dragon lizard more than 9 feet/3 m tall - with troll hair, warts and a big war hammer - just waved his free hand. The fireball turned around in its tracks and went and fried the lady on the spot, just like you see her there. Then this big dragon lizard went over and smashed up the weapons and the corpses, like you see them now.

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"The black dragon man came out of the trees and signaled for the dragon lizards to follow him. That was a strange looking one. When he opened his mouth to shout to the dragon lizard, he had long white fangs, like a vampire. But everything else was so pitch black about him that you couldn't see any details at all - except for red burning eyes and those big black wings, just like on the dragon lizards.

"In any case, the whole group of them hightailed it over the bridge and then left the road and headed off to the northeast, heading more or less in the direction of the castle ruins up there."

His finger points to a hilltop some 20 miles/30 km away in the Dagger Hills, where the crumbling walls of the ruin of Castle Daggerdale stand.

The man in the tan robe looks at you, then points down at the corpses on the road, whose pockets are being pilfered by the farmers, who find coins in them. *"Trash from the Dragon Cult!",* the man in the robe shouts. *"Look!"*

With his staff, he straightens a wrinkled tunic, and on it you see a small symbol of the cult.

"Strange"!, says one of the farmers, holding several coins in his hand. *"These are silver shiners and gold talers from Impiltur and silver seagulls and gold galleons from Tantras or Raven's Bluff! Strange, that all their money comes from there!"*

The man in the tan robe points up toward the ruin of Castle Daggerdale and says, *"And the ones who went that way - spawn of Tiamat!"*

In disgust, he spits on the road, then says, *"I don't have time for this foolishness! Bah!"* He taps the road with his staff. There is a flash of blue light and a wisp of blue smoke, and the man vanishes.

The farmers will say only that the man in the robe is some eccentric old mage who lives in the mansion *"back there."* If the PCs try to enter the mansion, they will find that an invisible magic barrier they cannot penetrate runs through the ring of trees surrounding the mansion. The next narrative follows when the PCs leave the settlement and cross the bridge.

Black Switch

As evening approaches, you come to another of many small dirt roads that have crossed the Tethyamar Trail. This one, however, has a small sign pointing left that says, *"Black Switch - 2 Miles/3 km. The Ruse's Mage - house brew and a good night's sleep."*

Game Master: And then:

The trail leads you down into another idyllic Dales valley, this one on a creek bed flowing through lightly forested hills. Most of the land in the village below the hills consists of tilled farm fields, but there is a pond in the middle of the village, along with about a dozen farms, a small country inn, a small temple, a mill and a grain storage house. From the looks of the chimney, the inn apparently also has a small house brewery.

The Map of Black Switch

1 - Village Granary. This is a community building with several layers of cellars used to store grain and provisions for the entire village.

2 - Black Mill. Miller Kenneth Racek runs this water-powered mill, which makes various flours and presses vegetable oil.

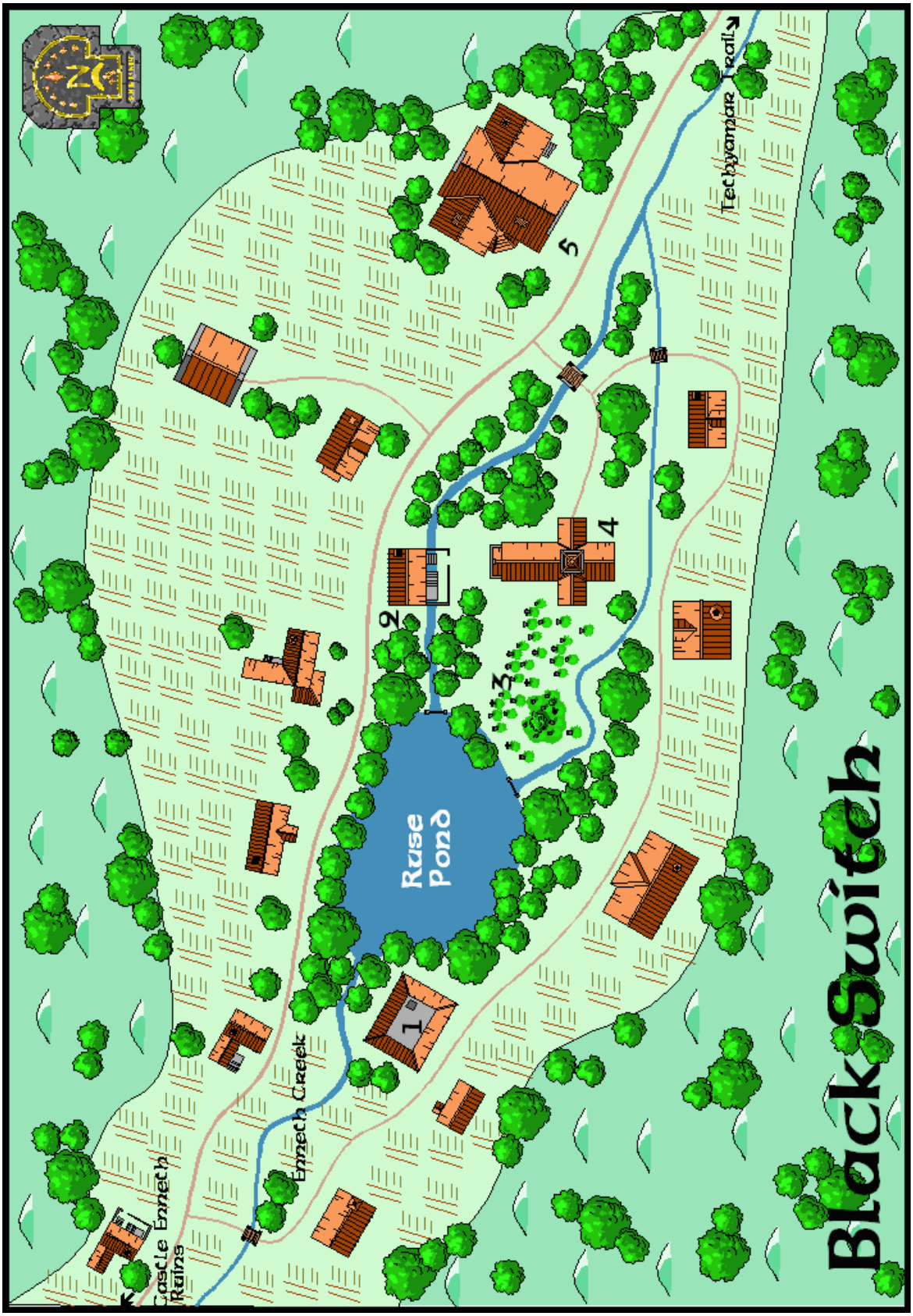
3 - Village Cemetery.

4 - Sunrise House of Bounty. The House holds shrines to Lathander and Chauntea. The Priest is Melfar of Lathander (lvl 2). The Chauntea shrine is maintained by worshippers and local druids.

5 - The Ruse's Mage Inn and Brewery: Several hundred years ago, a farmer remembered only by the name of Kimpl stood up against a raiding band of about 20 orcs. They arrived in the early morning hours, and Kimpl was wearing only his night robe. According to local legend, it was an *absolutely ridiculous robe - the kind of thing only magic dabblers ordinarily would wear.* He supposedly emerged from his farmhouse with a large black stick in his hand about the size of a staff, waved it at the orcs and claimed to be some visiting mage from distant points. He told the orcs if they still were visible in the village - then called Starvale - in another 3 minutes, he would blow the orcs all the way back to Gruumsh.

He apparently put the fear of the god into them, because they hightailed it, turning Kimpl into a local hero and legend. Kimpl was the *mage* of the ruse. The inn was named after him. The village was renamed after his staff. Even the village pond was named after his ruse. In the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), Delbert Hiel, a retired militia member from Deepingdale, bought the long closed inn and remodeled it. It was opened in Tarsakh of the current Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR). Hiel calls his delicious lager beer *Black Magic Brew.* It's available only at his inn, at 4 copper thumbs per quart/liter tankard. He has no plans to sell it elsewhere. His inn also serves local meat and produce at prices ranging from 5 to 8 silver falcons and has 2 single rooms and 9 silver falcons and four doubles at 8 silver falcons per person.

Ruse Pond - The pond is named after Kimpl's ruse. It is a favorite spot for catching rainbow trout and yellow perch. The pond was dammed by Kenneth Racek's ancestors, to run the mill.



Black Switch

Dagger Falls

Next to Shadowdale, Dagger Falls is doubtless the best defined village in the official *Forgotten Realms* literature. The main sources for information on Dagger Falls are *The Dalelands* accessory by Richer L. Baker III (TSR - 1994), *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1996), the TSR modules *Doom of Daggerdale* by Wolfgang Baur (TSR - 1993) and the *Return of Randal Morn* by Jim Butler (TSR - 1995), the *FR Interactive Atlas CD* (TSR - 1999) and the Daggerdale Project.

Information on Slater and other unofficial NPCs introduced in *Northern Journey* can be found under the heading *"New Unofficial NPCs"* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. Slater also is described in detail in *Tantras,* the second *Avatar Trilogy* novel by Richard Awlinson (TSR - 1988).

Non-Northern Journey Game Masters

From this point on, the *Backlands* accessory is strongly focused upon the *Northern Journey* adventure. In it a number of non-canon events have taken place or are in progress. It is fully possible to use these events without running the *NJ* adventure, but you will have to make some modifications to remove links to the red sigylls the *NJ* PCs have on their arms, which are drawing them through the adventure.

Once you have removed associations with the red sigylls, Gwath can become a prime villain who has captured Randal Morn and hidden him in the Temple in the Sky. She can become the prime villain for your PCs, although they will not know this until after they encounter her.

To help you decide how to proceed in your campaign, we've prepared the following summary of events from the *NJ* adventure, the events that are about to be described here.

The *Dalelands* accessory by Richard L. Baker III tells the story of Tyran the Outlaw Prince, who makes hidden camps in the forest of Cormanthor and fights a guerilla war against the Zhents in Teshendale. In the unofficial *NJ* campaign, Tyran and his men succeed in recapturing Teshwave (although not all of Teshendale) in the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR). We've unofficially placed an official Zhent NPC named Slater in Teshendale as Guthbert Golthammer's successor as commander of the Zhent forces in the Dale.

Officially, Golthammer succeeded Tren Noemfor as commander of Zhent forces in Dagger Falls in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR) but was defeated (also official) when Randal Morn freed Dagger Falls in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR). Slater was a Zhent soldier who rode with Cyric briefly when he still was human during the Time of Troubles. She has not been mentioned in official material since the novel *Tantras* from 1988. The decision to make her the new commander in Teshwave is an unofficial *Northern Journey* invention.

In the unofficial *NJ* version, Slater and about 400 Zhentish soldiers as well as a large Zhentish unit of orcs fled into Teshendale's countryside and into the Border Forest after being driven out of Teshwave by Tyran. As a result, Teshendale itself remained contested, although Tyran took control of Teshwave and the immediately surrounding area.

In the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), the lich Gwath used magic to darken Dagger Falls for half a day, and during this time, her wizardry captured Randal Morn, placed him in a trance and spirited his body off to the Temple in the Sky northeast of Dagger Falls. She also has taken over the body of the beholder Xulla there. Gwath wants to return to human form and rule Daggerdale. To this end, she is trying magically to merge herself with Randal Morn, her unconscious prisoner.

After Randal Morn's second disappearance, Zhent agents working for Slater slipped a phony tip to Morn's Freedom Fighters that their lord once again was being held prisoner in Gothyl's tower in Spiderhaunt Wood, where he had been held two years earlier by the demi-shade Gothyl. Morn's deputy governor, Captain Mestin *Troll* Durmark of the Freedom Fighters (official NPC), ordered a large contingent of men off to Spiderhaunt, under the command of the paladin Sir Ariton Delmis, to free Morn, but they discovered only an empty tower, with no sign Morn ever had been there.

During the time that Dagger Falls was undermanned, Slater and her renegade Zhents attacked Dagger Falls. *Troll* Durmark ordered her troops and the civilian population to flee Dagger Falls through underground tunnels, rather than fighting a battle against Slater's troops, where the outcome was questionable and which would have severely damaged if not destroyed Dagger Falls. During their flight, Durmark and the people of Dagger Falls blocked off the areas of the tunnels where food is stored.

Slater and her troops were able to enter Dagger Falls without resistance, but as soon as they had slammed the gates shut behind themselves, they found themselves besieged by Captain Durmark and her Freedom Fighters. By the time they discovered that they'd been cut off from Dagger Falls' food storage, they were trapped in the city.

The besieging force had grown too strong for them. The Freedom Fighters are waiting patiently now. Slater and her men sooner or later will surrender, starve to death or rush out of the gates in a mad suicide attack.

That's the situation when the *NJ* PCs arrive in Dagger Falls. Shortly after arriving, Captain Durmark will learn that Randal Morn is being held prisoner in the Temple of the Sky. The PCs, the Knights of Myth Drannor and a large part of the host besieging Dagger Falls will march on the Flaming Tower. While the others conquer the Zhentish tower, the PCs will be teleported into the Temple in the Sky, to encounter Gwath/Xulla and free Randal Morn.

If you're interested in running your campaign within this scenario, continue with the information for *NJ* Game Masters below. If not, you can use the materials presented here and the other sources we've suggested to stage whatever you wish to have happen in Dagger Falls in your campaign.

For NORTHERN JOURNEY Game Masters

When the PCs reach Dagger Falls, they'll find the besieging sources are happy and well settled in. Captain Mestin *Troll* Durmark of the Freedom Fighters, Randal Morn's deputy governor, has no interest in charging the walls. The residents of the city have been slipped out through the tunnels, which have been sealed.

The city's main food supplies are stored underground, outside of Zhentish reach. There is nothing left to eat or drink inside the walls except for grain and well water, and there's too little grain to last through the winter. The Zhents will be slaughtered if they try to ride out through the army of siege. Basically, as far as Captain Durmark is concerned, Slater and her Zhents have foolishly imprisoned themselves in a death trap. They either will have to surrender, or they will die.

The force behind the PCs' sigylls is Sammaster, and he does not know where Gwath is at the moment. Neither does anyone in Dagger Falls, although several people will say that Randal Morn was making remarks about her and how she has to be dealt with, shortly before he disappeared. This results in the fact that the PCs are not being pulled in any particular direction at the moment, although it's doubtful that the sigylls will allow the PCs to leave Daggerdale.

This gives you the chance to let the PCs wander Daggerdale in search of Gwath, if you wish. That situation will change as soon as the event *Captured Xvimist* occurs. At that point, a force will march on the Tesh Trail to the Flaming Tower. to rescue Randal Morn, and the PCs should follow.

At the time the PCs reach Dagger Falls, they find that the army besieging the 400 Zhentilar inside the city walls consists of the following groups. If you use the *Campaign Cartographer 2* and *Campaign Mapper* map (Map file **DAGGERFALLS.FCW**), you can activate the layer *SEIGE FORCES* to see the exact locations. Each force is encircled by a dotted line of a different color. The individual colors are listed below.

- Captain Durmark and 250 Freedom Fighters under her command. The Freedom Fighters' area is blue on the map.

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- The Knights of Myth Drannor (official NPCs): Ranger Florin Falconhand, mage Jhessail Silvertree, mage Merith Strongbow, druid Lanseril Snowmantle, mage Illistyl Elventree, thief Torm and Priest Rathan Thentraver of Tymora. For details see FR7 *Hall of Heroes* by various authors (TSR - 1989) and the *Heroes Lorebook* by Dale Donovan and Paul Culotta (TSR - 1996). The knights' area is green on the map. There are many novels by Ed Greenwood that will give a Game Master good insight into the personality color of the Knights, above all, *All Shadows Fled* (TSR - 1995), *Crown of Fire* (TSR - 1994) and *Spellfire* (TSR - 1988).

- 15 fighters from the village of Snowmantle (official location), who accompanied Lanseril to Dagger Falls. Snowmantle recently freed itself from Zhent oppression (see the adventure *Felled Hopes* in the *Ruins of Zhentil Keep* accessory (TSR - 1995), and the loggers want the head of the lady from Teshwave (Slater) who was the commander In Teshwave who gave orders to the troops in Snowmantle. The Snowmantle group's camping area is yellow on the map.

- All 100 members of the Red Ravens Mercenary Company in Arabel (official NPCs). The Red Ravens have many debts to settle with the Zhents. Randal Morn and his Freedom Fighters have helped out Red Ravens in trouble more than once. And Rayanna the Rose, leader of the Red Ravens, is a friend of Morn's. The Ravens are in this fight to the end - gratis this time. They've sworn to take on no new missions until Randal Morn has been rescued (for details on the Red Ravens, a picture and information on Rayanna the Rose, see the accessory FR 15 *Gold & Glory* by Tim Beach, TSR - 1992). The Red Ravens' area is red on the map.

- The 15-member Freemen of Cormyr (unofficial NPCs). This band really is a highly-disciplined undercover fighting intelligence unit of the Purple Dragons in Cormyr. The Freemen aren't aware of it, but the Knights of Myth Drannor know who they are. As long as the Freemen behave, the Knights will keep this information to themselves; many of them are, after all, loyal subjects of the Cormyrean crown. The Freemen will be reluctant to join the troop riding to the Flaming Tower. Their mission is to keep an eye on Dagger Falls, report on the situation magically to Suzail, with the help of the war wizard in their company and to engage themselves fully in any operation to recapture Dagger Falls. With the exception of passing intelligence to Suzail, the Freemen have orders from King Azoun IV to lend 100% support to Captain Durmark in the Dagger Falls siege. The Freedom Fighters' area is purple on the map.

- 20 soldiers from Shadowdale and 15 Riders of Mistledale (official organization). For more information and color on the Riders of Mistledale see *All Shadows Fled* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1995). The Dalesmen's area is orange on the map.

Another day is drawing to an end on the Tethyamar Trail, when you at last begin the descent into the Tesh River Valley. More and more farms begin straddling both sides of the road, and at last, you reach the floor of the river valley, with the inn, the *Teshford Arms,* to your left, and the Tesh ford directly ahead of you.

Descending the hill into the valley, you were fully able to take in an overview of Dagger Falls and the current situation in the oft-contested city. The scene around the walled city is something of a miniature rerun of what you experienced in Tilverton.

An army is camped around the city walls, perhaps 500 strong. The meadows outside the city walls are filled with soldiers, fighters, tents and campfires. About 20% of Dagger Falls stands outside the city wall, to the east and the north. Soldiers patrol atop the city wall, but for the most part, the city inside the wall seems to be lifeless. There's no activity on the streets whatsoever, and the only smoking chimneys seem to be in the garrison.

The river roars down from the Desertsmouth Mountains in the West through the valley, and the mighty Dagger Falls, directly south of the city wall, send a spectacular spray into the air in the waning daylight.

The Teshford Arms (Map No. 13) is the only inn with accommodations, and it has been commandeered by Captain Durmark as headquarters of the Freedom Fighters and seat of the provisional government. In short, there are no rooms available. Your PCs will have to camp like everyone else.

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Fulgath's Caravan Supplies (Map No. 11), on the north side of the Tesh Trail on the eastern edge of town, does have tents for sale at 5% over PHB prices. In the southeastern corner of the Tethyamar Trail and the Tesh Trail, immediately east of Dulwar the Leatherworker (Map No. 10), the farmers set up a daily market in an open meadow. A good supply of local produce and meat is available.

One also can eat and drink in the Teshford Arms (Map No. 13) and in the Red Rock Tavern (Map No. 12), which is on the east side of a country road about 150 yards/135 m north of the city wall. The following encounter takes place when the PCs attempt to cross the Tesh ford:

The far side of the ford is blocked by a group of six soldiers wearing the coat of arms of Daggerdale on their tunics. One of the soldiers shouts to you, *Halt!* He then approaches you and says, *Dagger Falls is under siege, as you can see. Be ye havin' a pass?*

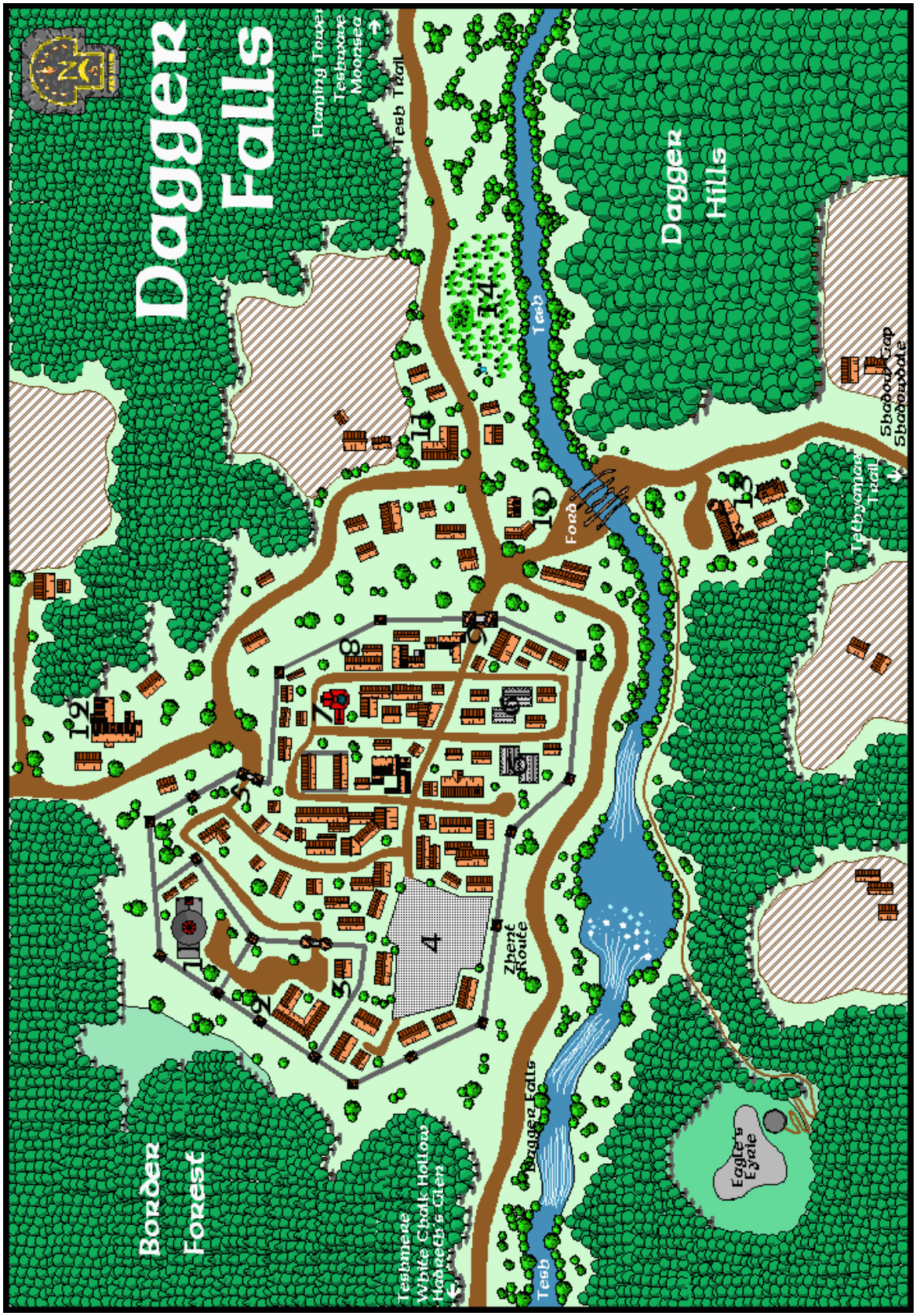
Game Master: The PCs don't have one of course. The soldier continues:

Then ye'll be needin' to go over to the Teshford Arms there. That's our provisional seat of government. And ye'll be needin' to apply for a camp pass, afore ye'll be crossin' the bridge!

The PCs will be carefully questioned by one of Captain Durmark's officers over their purposes and intentions. Under circumstances, the captain herself may speak with them. The Freedom Fighters will attempt to win a pledge of support from the PCs. In the end. the PCs will be given a camping place directly on the southwest corner of the Tesh Trail and the road leading to the closed main gate to the city.

You come to the quick conclusion that things are at a standoff here, and that neither side is doing any useless fighting. You can see Zhentish troops walking along the top of the wall, observing the siege power below, but the Zhents are firing no arrows down upon the camp, and no one in the camp is shooting up at the Zhents. There seems to be something of an uneasy and unspoken truce in effect at the time.

Slater and her Zhents will not start anything. She understands that she and her troops are getting a hungry breathing spell because the Freedom Fighters don't want to destroy or damage the inner city. She has no plan for escape, and it already has occurred to her that the help she expected from the Citadel of the Raven is not coming. She knows if her troops start firing on the camp below and begin wounding or killing people, that the enemy is quite likely to react with a barrage of flaming arrows, which would burn the Zhents out of the city walls. She hasn't come up with a plan to save herself or her men yet.



Dagger Falls

Map of Dagger Falls

1 - Constable's Tower. Since the Zhentarim mage Ilthond was killed by the demi-shade Gothyl there, the tower is said to be haunted, and dark, deadly magic is said to prevail there.

2 - Garrison. During the occupation, these were the Zhentish barracks. Until recently, the Freedom Fighters used them, but Slater and her Zhentish soldiers are occupying them again.

3 - Headquarters. Previously *Troll* Durmark's command center, Slater now exercises her command from here.

4 - Market Square.

5 - Forest Gate.

6 - Thund's Rental Storage Warehouses.

7 - Lathander's Light - Temple to Lathander. The temple is headed by Mornmaster Harndarr Oryn. He is served by 16 priests and three paladins, many of whom are off searching for Randal Morn at the times the PCs arrive in Dagger Falls.

8 - Broken Dagger Tavern. This still seedy tavern is run by a half-ogre named Dynter.

9 - River Gate.

10 - Dulwar the Leatherworker, shop.

11 - Fulgath's Caravan Supplies.

12 - Red Rock Tavern. Dagger Falls' favorite watering hole is a Harper outpost run by the retired half elven minstrel Kessla.

13 - Teshford Arms Inn. The innkeeper is named Olavia Tsardruyn. The house has been commandeered as headquarters by Captain Durmark and the Freedom Fighters, so no accommodations are available, but meals are available at prices averaging about a gold falcon (due to current shortages).

14 - Dagger Falls Cemetery.

Dagger Falls - Ginnith's Fall:

Game Master: You can run this event at any time you wish.

The uneasy truce is broken by a disturbance atop the city wall next to the main city gate. Some kind of madman in a black robe is standing atop the wall, waving a mace insanely and shouting down to you:

Heretics and infidels! Your time has come! Hear Ginnith, High Priest of Cyric, and tremble before your doom! The Dark Sun has filled my soul with his power, and I curse you now, every last one of you, to die of the black plague!

It strikes you, that this shouting fool makes a great target for arrow practice.

Game Master: Give the PCs time to down him. If they don't, have someone else do it.

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The arrow(s) strikes(s) the shouting man. He topples a bit, tries to regain his footing and then falls head first to the ground just north of the main city gate, nearly hitting a small group of Daggerdale Freedom Fighters camped there. A cheer goes up from the camp, and at the same time, many fighters reach for their shields and bows, but the Zhentish troops patrolling the city wall above don't seem inclined to battle to avenge the fallen man. In fact, the loss doesn't seem to bother them at all.

24. Gwath

The next planned event is the segment *Captured Xvimist* But before you can run that, it's time to learn about Gwath. The events detailed in the following section are consistent with the canon histories of Daggerdale and Shadowdale, but they flesh out the official histories with many unofficial details. Dates and year names are consistent with those in the official history.

The main non-official element in this narrative is Gwath herself, who is an invention of the *Vintyri Project.* We have used Gwath as a glue to bind together official historical details, such as the arrival of spiders in Spiderhaunt Woods, the activity of drow in Shadowdale and elsewhere during Myth Drannor's days of glory, the appearance of vampires in Merrydale, before it became known as Daggerdale, the manipulations that led to the Zhentarim take over of Daggerdale and the ruling Morn family being cast out of power, etc.

Shortly before Randal Morn disappeared, Elminster of Shadowdale made a quiet visit to him in Dagger Falls and passed on information that he and the mage Rhauntides of Highmoon in Deepingdale had gathered concerning the great lich Gwath. Elminster told Morn that he and Rhauntides believed that Gwath was rising again, and that steps must be taken to destroy her, or his Dale easily might fall again or even be destroyed. The following summarizes information that Elminster gave to Randal Morn.

The first traces of Gwath in the Dalelands go back to the ill-named *Year of the Kindly Lich* (606 DR), when a traveling mage from ancient Cormyr named Garthur and his band entered the southeastern part of the *Daleswood* (unofficial), now known as *Spiderhaunt Woods.* The band had many difficult encounters with gigantic spiders in the forest, some of them believed by Garthur to be unnatural creatures. Garthur noted in his journal that the forest still had been peaceful and free of such spiders in a similar expedition some 10 years earlier.

He and his band also discovered new trails that had been made into the Daleswood, and they were following these trails when the many encounters with the giant spiders occurred. After a bit more than a day in the forest and with many hard battles behind them, Garthur and his band came upon an opening in which stood *a larghe and evil-looking towre of great dimension.* Furthermore, this tower was guarded by a band of four highly capable *warryors of the darke elven ffolk.*

It came to combat with these four apparent drow, and after three of the dark elves and one of Garthur's warriors lay dead before the tower, a woman, *in part of the drowe race, emergethed from the towre and identified herselfe as Gwath the mighty and she did saye, that she beeth a priest of Llolth. She then attacked us with magickes most powerful and evil, and only in the last minute was I able to use mye own magickes to remove myselfe and the last survivore of my group to safetye. And long it was that our wounds did healeth, before we again were of our known strengths.*

Elminster noted that the description in Garthur's journal of Gwath being *in part of the drowe race* is a very interesting remark and also one that has led to differences of opinion between himself and Rhauntides. Elminster said his library in his tower in Shadowdale holds a number of texts taken from the drow chambers in the Twisted Tower after their defeat, and these texts prove *almost conclusively* that Gwath was a full drow who came from the dark elven cities beneath the Dalelands.

In his youth, Rhauntides spent a decade (unofficial) studying in Halruua, in the Shining South, where he claims that the name Gwath is known from ancient tales in which a half-drow named Gwath once had been active as a mighty priestess of Llolth where the half-drow nation of Dambrath now stands, and further, this Gwath vanished inexplicably from the South in the early 7th Century DR, at roughly the same time Garthur recorded first mention of the Gwath of the North.

At this time, Elminster said, Myth Drannor was rising to the height of its glory, and the drow race seemed determined to halt the expansion of the moon elves westward from the legendary city. As a priestess of Llolth, Gwath seems to have been in the forefront of this campaign.

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The ancient elves of Myth Drannor came to know Gwath as a powerful priestess of drow sapper bands that conducted guerilla warfare by night in Cormanthor on the fringes of Myth Drannor, and Elminster said he has no doubt that Gwath played a major role in opening a gate for the Army of Darkness into Myth Drannor in the Year of the Lost Lance (712 DR).

Gwath did not escape unscathed from her attacks upon the elves of Myth Drannor. The rulers in the Elven Court learned of her tower in Spiderhaunt Woods, as the borderland forest had come to be known, and led many forays into the wood to attack and inflict damage upon the tower. With time, Gwath was forced to flee, and she sought refuge in the foothills of the Desertsmouth Mountains on the western border of Merrydale, where she began construction of the Gwathburg in the Year of the Scarlet Sash (679 DR), finishing it in the Year of the Lost Lance (712 DR), as the Army of Darkness begin attacking Myth Drannor.

After the fall of Myth Drannor in the Year of Doom (714 DR), the drow controlled the entire surface valley of the Ashaba from present-day Ashabenford to deep within the Dagger Hills north of Shadowdale. The real goal of the drow seemed to be to gain the iron-fisted domination of the western Dalelands, from Spiderhaunt in the southwest to the Desertsmouth Mountains in the West and the Tesh Valley in the north. Again, all indications are that Gwath was the spokeswoman of Llolth and the leader of the drow movement.

Gwath's next goal was to destroy the growing human population in the western Dalelands. To this end, she summoned 15 great vampire lords from another plane to her Gwathburg, immediately exerted control over them, and ordered them to infect all of Merrydale with vampirism. These vampires first were seen in the Year of the Grey Mists (796 DR), when Merrydale began to be known as Daggerdale. It appears that Gwath turned over her Gwathburg to the vampire lords at this time and moved to a new, secluded tower in the Desertsmouth Mountains, one that has not been located to this date, although sages believe it to be in the northern part of the mountains, somewhere south of the old Tethyamar mines.

At this point, however, Gwath and the drow had overextended themselves. Both the elves of Cormanthor and the men of the western Dalelands and Cormyr arose against the vampires and the drow. The vampires had completely overtaken the village of Highstone in the Dagger Hills, turning its entire population into vampires. In a daring daytime raid, elves from the Elven Court attacked the village, which had come to be called Bloodstone, and before the sun set on that fateful day, a wooden stake had been driven through the heart of every vampire in the village.

At almost the same time, a band of 400 armed men from the southern Dales and northern Cormyr, led by a group of priests of Lathander from Cormyr, fell upon the Gwathburg shortly after sunrise. After a day's fighting that caused many losses among the men of the Dales and Cormyr, the last of the 36 drow soldiers defending the castle of the vampire lords was killed, and with less than 30 minutes remaining until sunset, the priests of Lathander drove stakes into the hearts of all 15 vampire lords.

This is believed to have taken place in the Year of the Patchworked Peace (802 DR). The vampires of Merrydale, now Daggerdale, had not been completely destroyed, but the vampire lords and their slaves in the village of Bloodstone were eradicated. The villagers of Daggerdale were able to track down and destroy the remaining vampires in the dale on their own.

Gwath returned then to Daggerdale, this time to enact her wrath upon her former servants. She cursed the 15 vampire lords and the population of Bloodstone to haunt the Gwathburg and their homes eternally, as ghosts. She cursed the 35 drow warriors of the Gwathburg to defend it forever, as skeleton warriors, and she cursed their drow commander to lead them forever, as a death knight. And other curses she placed too on the Gwathburg, to entrap those who would violate it.

At this time, the power of the drow in the Ashaba Valley had reached its peak, with the Marshall-Mage Azmaer commanding the Ashaba Valley from the Twisted Tower in today's Shadowdale (official). In the Year of the Leaping Lion (834 DR), men built Castle Grimstead on the border of today's Shadowdale as a defense against Azmaer's drow.

The castle stood 30 years, until Azmaer's forces succeeded in destroying it in the Year of the Broken Branch (864 DR). But the days of the drow were numbered. It took another 42 years, but in the Year of the Plough (906 DR), Azmaer and his drow had been driven from the Twisted Tower, the human settlement of Shadowdale had been created, and Ashaba became its first leader.

For more than 100 years, the annals of the Dales had been written without a single mention of Gwath's name. It was as though she had vanished from the face of Faerûn. *This is not what happened, however,* Elminster assured Randal Morn.

Elminster said there are many signs that Gwath's break with the faith of Llolth had begun long years before the vampire lords were summoned to the Gwathburg, and this break was culminated definitively in the Year of the Patchworked Peace (802 DR), when the vampire lords and the vampires of Bloodstone were destroyed.

Gwath, according to Elminster, had become fascinated with magic, and she had abandoned her priesthood and her own drow race to turn to wizardry and to seek power. He believes Gwath may already have been a mage of low level at the time of Myth Drannor's fall, and that she ascended to lichdom when she revisited Gwathburg for the last time in the Year of the Plough (906 DR).

By that time, the tale of the ghosts of the vampire lords, skeleton warriors and a death knight in the Gwathburg had circulated through the Western Heartlands, and adventurers sought out the castle, either in search of a fortune or, on religious grounds, to attempt to send the undead to their eternal rest.

In the Year of the Queen's Tears (902 DR), Gwath had battled a mighty beholder named Garnath, seeking to steal its magic. After a long and dangerous battle, Gwath succeeded in killing the beholder and binding it to her undead. With her magical experiments over the next few years, she managed to change the magic in one of its surviving eyestalks to detect false oaths. In the Year of the Plough (906 DR), after Azmaer's fall and with the increasing human population in the Dales, she placed the undead beholder in the Gwathburg, to eternally guard it and to bind those who enter the castle as undead into service guarding the castle. As far as is known, Gwath never again returned to the Gwathburg.

Having divorced herself from the drow and Llolth, Gwath now seemed to be determined to become a power in her own right, and to this end, she began turning her attention to organizations of power in the Realms. Gwath also moved covertly within the Dalelands, disguising herself as a seductive, darkhaired human woman, which hid both her drow heritage and her decaying, undead lich's body.

In the early 10th Century DR, there are records of Algashon, the Bane priest who swayed Sammaster, founder of the Cult of the Dragon for many years, often being seen in the company of a beautiful, dark-haired mage cult member who was known as Gwann. *There can be little doubt,* Elminster told Randal Morn, *that Gwann was in truth Gwath.*

In these years too, cult annals record that Gwann gave birth to Algashon's daughter (unofficial). Elminster is convinced (unofficial) that she is none other than the demi-shade Gothyl, who captured the Sword of the Dales and Randal Morn in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), after taking up residence in Gwath's long abandoned tower in Spiderhaunt. Gothyl, according to Elminster, was a mage who was turned into a demi-shade when her attempt to ascend to lichdom went awry. For more details, see the *Sword of the Dales* Trilogy by Jim Butler (TSR - 1995).

The mage Gwann was a prominent cult member for many years, most certainly a Keeper of the Secret Hoard. Her base of operations seemed to extend from Shadow Gap to the Mines of Tethyamar. After the fall of Sammaster, Algashon and Drakewings left a vacuum in the Cult of the Dragon in the early years of the 13th Century DR, Gwann was one of the more powerful Keepers of the Secret Hoard to fill it.

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By the end of the second decade in this century, Gwann appeared to be one of the three leaders of Algashon's old faction within the cult. The two other Keepers of the Hoard aligned with Gwann/Gwath were double agents - Xarth Kistar, a priest of Bane within Zhentil Keep, who saw himself as Bane's chosen successor for Algashon, a role Bane may actually have chosen for him, and Harbet Gall, a high priest-archlich of the Beast Lord Malar in the Great Dale. Gall was of the firm belief that dragons are the greatest of all beasts, and that the cult should be merged into Malar's church. At this time, there also were some elements of the cult in the Great Dale who were advocating that the cult should affiliate with the Untheric dragon goddess Tiamat.

The remaining Keepers of the Secret Hoard in Sembia, the North, the Vilhon Reach and Sunset Vale were opposed to these three and supported the old cult faction of Drakewings. When the Algashon faction attempted to wage war upon the Harpers, in the Year of the Horn (1222 DR), at the time the Harpers had come under the sway of the evil Harper King, Gwann led the attacks upon the Harpers, and the Drakewings-Faction withheld its support. leading to serious defeats of Gwann's faction.

The schism in the cult continued another 60 years or so and even deepened, until the Year of the Many Mists (1282 DR), when a lich calling itself Sammaster arose in the Desertsmouth Mountains near Shadow Gap. Gwann/Gwath, Xarth Kistar and Harbet Gall were among the Keepers of the Secret Hoard who visited the lich's lair in this year, and they left convinced that the lich was indeed Sammaster. They also left the lair abhorred over Sammaster's new theories regarding dracoliches and dragon vampires and agreed that he must be destroyed.

Kistar arranged to obtain the lich-destroying magic from the insane lich Azimer in the ruins of Myth Drannor, and the three met and contracted with Ssessibil Istahvar of the Lonely Tower to carry out the assassination. When Sammaster's resistance proved stronger than the three or Ssessibil had expected, it was no doubt Gwath, with alignment concealed, who contacted members of the Harpers identifying herself as *Gwynna, Witch of the Desertsmouth Mountains,* to tip them to the location of Sammaster's lich near Shadow Gap.

The Harpers arranged for the paladins of the Company of 12 to investigate the tip, and these did indeed find Sammaster's lich, which they, together with Ssessibil's magical attacks, destroyed, without finding the phylactery, however. Interestingly enough, the name of the Keeper of the Hoard Gwann disappears from the annals of the Cult, simultaneously with the destruction of Sammaster's Lich

More than 20 years before Sammaster's ascension as a lich, in the Year of the Bright Dreams (1261 DR), the mage Manshoon had formed the Zhentarim and had risen to the leadership of Zhentil Keep. By the time Ssessibil and the Company of 12 had destroyed Sammaster's lich in the Year of the Blacksnake (1285 DR), the Zhentarim clearly were the waxing power in the Dalelands, just as the divided Dragon Cult's power was waning.

It was in the Year of Spilled Blood (1315 DR), 30 years after the destruction of Sammaster's lich, that a beautiful, dark-haired human mage identifying herself as Gwenda appeared at the gates of Zhentil Keep announcing that she was seeking an audience with Lord Manshoon. The unfortunate Zhentilar guards at the gate laughed, and then literally died laughing. When the woman brushed aside other armed resistance by the Zhentilar and a few lesser priests of Bane, she was encountered by the high priest Fzoul Chembryl, and after a discussion with him was indeed taken in to meet with Manshoon.

The contents of those conversations are unknown, according to Elminster, but it was obvious that Gwath had found a new organization with which to ally herself, and that Gwenda was nothing other than a new manifestation of the lich Gwath. After the meeting with Fzoul and Manshoon, Gwenda returned unharmed upstream on the Tesh and traveled as far as Teshwave, where she had settled down.

It is said that Teshwave and other parts of Teshendale were struck with devastating magicks before the Zhentilar overran the Dale in their conquering wave in the Year of the Gulagoar (1316 DR). After their conquest, there was no further sign of Gwenda in the dale, dead or alive, but within days, a beautiful, black-haired woman named Gwenda showed up in Dagger Falls.

With considerable money in her pockets, she purchased the decrepit Broken Dagger Tavern inside the city walls, which soon become the source of discontent over the ruling Morn family's lack of action to help Teshendale when it was overrun by the Zhents. Gwenda the tavernkeep was one of the main supporters of a good customer of her bar named Malyk, who said he could protect Daggerdale better than the Morns.

Before the Year of the Gulagoar (1316 DR) was over, a popular uprising had unseated the Morn family in the Dagger Falls area and put - unwittingly - the Zhentarim puppet Malyk in the Morn family's place, although the Morns continued to be the predominant power in southern Daggerdale. Within a few rides after Malyk's assumption of power, Gwenda sold her tavern to a disabled Zhentarim tracker named Tharwin One-Eye, and nothing more was seen of her in Dagger Falls or elsewhere in Daggerdale for many years to come.

Elminster assumes that Gwath spent the next 40 plus years in her hidden tower in the Desertsmouth Mountains, perhaps receiving magical items or knowledge as payment for her service to the Zhents. There is no further trace of her in the history of the Dale until the Time of Troubles. In the Year of the Shadows (1358 DR), a Harper ranger spied a dark-haired skeletal creature he took for a lich dabbling around the abandoned cottages in the former village of Sunstone southeast of Dagger Falls.

A short while later Elminster and the ghost of the Witch of Shadowdale Syluné, among others, came to the same spot to destroy several malaugrym (shadow masters) and the newly established gate through which they had come. The details on this encounter can be found in Ed Greenwood's novel *All Shadows Fled* (TSR - 1995). Elminster has little doubt that the skeletal figure seen by the ranger was anyone other than Gwath, in the process of opening the gate.

After the Time of Troubles and this one incident in the former village of Sunstone, nothing more was seen of Gwath in Daggerdale. Elminster had assumed that Gwath's physical essence as a lich was beginning to degenerate and that she most likely was preparing to move on to existence as a demi-lich.

Only recently, he said, was his mind rather abruptly changed on this point, although he still does not know how Gwath hopes to maintain her physical essence. Harper spies have reported that a beautiful, dark-haired human woman who calls herself Gwannet has been quietly visiting with important merchants in Sembia who are believed to be associated with the secret Iron Throne. Furthermore, according to the Harper spies, Gwannet has been presenting genuine looking documentation to the Sembian merchants which identifies her as a special ambassador of Randal Morn's.

She also is telling the merchants that once he has established firm control over all of Daggerdale and has destroyed the Flaming Tower, the last Zhent bastion in the Tesh Valley, that Randal Morn wishes to enter into an alliance with the Iron Throne, giving the organization the exclusive trade rights along the old Zhent trade routes through the Tesh Valley.

Lad, ye can be sure that Gwath isn't making these promises without some good idea of how she can make them come true, El told Randal. *I think the first problem yer going to have to take care of is Gwath herself!*

Gwath - What's Really Happening:

Elminster's words to Randal Morn were the sum and essence of what he knew before Morn's second disappearance.

Gwath has several problems to resolve. Her physical essence as a lich is indeed degenerating. However, she also has been cursed by the church of Llolth, and the curse prevents her from ascending to demi-lichdom. She is placing her hopes for survival upon a group of rare Netherese scrolls she obtained that contain high level magic spells.

She already has used several of these scrolls, first to cast the pall of darkness over Dagger Falls that she used to capture Randal Morn and then to helplessly subdue him and hold him captive within a cloud of force. She used other scrolls to infiltrate the Temple in the Sky and to destroy the beholder Xulla who had reigned there.

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Still another of the Netherese scrolls has made it possible for Gwath to occupy the beholder's body and to control its physical and magical functions. Neither the denizens of the temple nor the Zhent Xvimists in the Flaming Tower below are aware that anything has taken place between Gwath and Xulla.

She has teleported Randal Morn's subdued body into the Temple in the Sky and is using her most valuable Netherese scroll to merge her own soul into Randal Morn's body, together with his own. The result. if successful, will be much like the implanting of an avatar's spirit into a host body. Bane's takeover of Fzoul Chembryl's body during the Time of Troubles is a good example. For more details, see the novels *Shadowdale, Tantras* and *Waterdeep* by Richard Awlinson (TSR - 1988).

If Gwath succeeds, she will live in Randal Morn's body and control it, but Randal Morn's spirit also will be in the body. This will give her access to his personality, his knowledge, his memory, his entire soul. She will even be able to push his alignment forward concealing her own. No one will be able to determine that Randal Morn no longer is Randal Morn, simply because he will continue to be Randal Morn - and much more.

Gwath has indeed made arrangements with the Iron Throne in Randal Morn's name, and once she becomes Randal Morn, she intends to turn them into reality. She earlier had considered taking over the Dragon Cult but abandoned the idea because she views the cult as being somewhat insane and unstable.

She once set her sites on the Zhentarim too, but in the Time of Troubles, she viewed the Zhents as being too subservient to a god (Bane) and she considers the losses the Zhentarim have suffered since the Year of Shadows as proof of intolerable weakness.

The Iron Throne, on the other hand, has thoroughly impressed her. It has grown into an organization of incredible and constantly growing power, yet few people within the Realms outside of its leaders have any idea just who or what the Iron Throne is. After becoming Randal Morn, Gwath intends for herself as Randal to become ***the*** Iron Throne in the Dalelands, and in time, she believes that she can take over the organization completely.

If her plot succeeds, she will return from the undead to the living as Randal Morn and be able to begin building the base of tremendous power she long has sought for herself.

25. The Flaming Tower

At this point, you have some complicated decisions to make. If you're using *Backlands* as a campaign setting expansion but not running the *NJ* adventure itself, you have to decide what, if anything, you want to make available to your players in terms of the Flaming Tower and the Temple in the Sky. If you're interested in using our expansion on these official sites in the Tesh Valley, you need to read ahead and then decide which elements of *Backlands* you want to bring into your campaign and how you want to do it.

If, on the other hand, you're running the *Northern Journey* adventure, this is the segment you run when you're ready to tell the PCs where Randal Morn is and send them off to the Flaming Tower. If the PCs head off to distant parts of Daggerdale after reaching Dagger Falls, they must return to Dagger Falls before this event can take place. However, *NJ* Game Masters also have their decisions to make.

We envision events with divided action, where the Knights of Myth Drannor, the Freedom Fighters and the Red Ravens capture the Flaming Tower, while the PCs wait for the right opportunity to take Gwath (in the form of the beholder Xulla) in the Temple in the Sky.

However, this plan isn't every Game Master's cup of tea. Some Game Masters want their PCs to get a piece of both actions, having them join in the taking of the Flaming Tower and then sending them off to deal with Gwath/Xulla in the Temple of the Sky. We've tried to supply enough information to make both options work. Please read ahead, to determine how you wish to proceed.

From downstream on the Tesh Trail, you see a group of Freedom Fighters riding in your direction with an additional man in a black robe who appears to be tied to his horse. The group rides into the area quickly and past you to the Teshford Arms, where Captain Durmark has her provisional headquarters.

As the group passes you, you see that the man wears symbols of the Zhentilar and of a black hand with two green eyes. That's the symbol of the god Iyachtu Xvim, the son of Bane. This must be one of his Zhentish priests, who's been captured by the Freedom Fighters. The soldiers quickly lead the captive into the headquarters.

This event not only draws the attention of much of the camp, but also of some of the Zhentilar patrolling atop the city hall of Dagger Falls.

More than half an hour passes before anything more occurs. Then one of Captain Durmark's lieutenants runs out into the camp and begins shouting, *Attention! Attention! We've learned where Lord Morn is being held captive. The rescue is being planned. Attention! Attention!*

This news causes even more of a flurry among the Zhentish troops atop the walls.

Several sergeants leave the Teshford Arms then and walk over to the leaders of the many groups camped around the city walls. One of them comes to your group too, and the sergeant says, *Well met! Captain Durmark would like one of you to attend the planning conference for the rescue of Lord Morn. She'd appreciate it if you'd send your delegate over immediately.*

Game Master: The following discussion takes place only within earshot of the PCs' delegate.

The sergeant leads you into the dining hall of the inn, which has been converted temporarily into a conference room. Several sergeants are standing guard to keep the uninvited out. Captain Durmark is seated at the head of the table, and next to her is a huge man in plate armor. He's wearing the symbol of the Freedom Riders and also the mailed hand of Torm.

Others around the table are Florin Falconhand of the Riders of Myth Drannor, Damian Rarth, a logger from Snowmantle, Rayanna the Rose of the Red Ravens, one of the Freemen of Cormyr named Rinaldo and representatives of Lord Mourngrym in Shadowdale and the Riders of Mistledale.

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Well met!, says Captain Durmark. She nods to the armored man sitting next to her. *Some of you don't know Ariton,* she says. *Fortunately, he just rode in from the south of Daggerdale with 100 men this morning. Let me introduce Sir Ariton Delmis, a faithful paladin of Torm and commander of the Freedom Fighters in Daggerdale.*

Now. Let's get right down to business, because we may have to act fast. As you saw, we have a prisoner, a Zhentish priest of Iyachtu Xvim from the outpost in the Flaming Tower. I can't claim that we captured him, because he was fleeing from the tower and surrendered gladly to our men.

Some of you may know nothing about the Flaming Tower. It's on the Tesh about a day's ride downstream from here. It's a large tower that the Zhents recently rebuilt, and they chained to it is a big chunk of rock that floats up in the sky. People call it the Temple in the Sky. It's a product of the old Netherese magic.

In old times, the voice of Bane used to speak from there. Nowadays, the Flaming Tower below is held by the Zhentish and controlled by their Xvimist priests, while the temple above is in the hands of an allied beast cult. In the temple they worship a beholder named Xulla.

We've learned from our prisoner that Lord Morn is being held captive by the beholder Xulla in the Temple of the Sky. The prisoner came from the Flaming Tower below, and he doesn't know just what they're doing up above. But he's certain that Lord Morn is a prisoner there, and he saw his unconscious body being transported up there tied to the back of a griffon.

The representative of the Freemen of Cormyr signals with his hand.

Rinaldo, of the Freemen of Cormyr, Captain Durmark says. *You have a question?*

Yes, says Rinaldo. *Isn't this a bit too easy and simple? Don't you smell a trap? Why should a Zhentish Xvimist priest run into our hands and just deliver us this kind of information?*

Captain Durmark nods. *Good question, one we've asked too. First of all, our priests have checked his story, and they say he's not lying. The priest told us the head of the Zhents there is a Xvimist high priest, Wallach of Xvim. This Wallach apparently has asked the High Tyrannar Fzoul Chembryl for help, and Chembryl has replied curtly that Wallach and his detachment have become superfluous. Apparently the Zhentish in the Flaming Tower have been cut off from supplies, replacements and reinforcements. Neither Zhentil Keep nor the Citadel of the Raven has any interest in them anymore. They've been abandoned.*

In addition, since capturing Lord Morn, the beholder Xulla has broken off all communication with Wallach. Apparently the beholder is an ally of the Zhentish below. Our prisoner calls himself Murdoch of Xvim, and he says he comes from Zhentil Keep.

According to Murdoch, being abandoned has caused this Wallach to go totally insane. Murdoch said it is a custom in the Xvimist church to offer their god blood sacrifices in times of trouble. But he says it also is a clear rule of the Xvimist church that the sacrifice victims must be worshippers of an enemy god of Xvim, to weaken the enemy god. Murdoch said only a fool would sacrifice Xvim's own followers, because that would serve to weaken Xvim.

But that apparently is exactly what Wallach has planned. He's told Murdoch and the other lesser Xvimist priests in the Flaming Tower that he has been spoken to directly by the godson, and that Xvim wants a special sacrifice in this case, the lives of all his own lesser priests. This sacrifice is to take place during the next full moon.

Game Master: The voice Wallach has been hearing is actually the voice of Gwath, who intends to have the Zhents in the Flaming Tower destroy one another as much as possible before she captures the tower in the form of Randal Morn.

Murdoch says he has no intent of yielding his life to such insanity, and for that reason, he fled the tower. However, the only information that he would give us to begin with is that he knows the fate of Lord Morn. Before he would give us more information, he insisted that we enter into a binding agreement with him.

These were his terms. We must agree to release him, if his story proves to be true. If not, he is our prisoner, and we may deal with him as we see fit. But if the information he gives us is correct, we must return him to Zhentil Keep a free man and unharmed, under the protection of an armed guard.

I have agreed to this. I have told Murdoch if he lies to us, I will hang him. If he tells us the truth, we have a chance to rescue Lord Morn, and I will free him in the manner he demands."

None of the other faces around the table show any signs of disagreement.

Now, Captain Durmark continues. *We need a rescue plan. Some of us must ride to rescue Lord Morn, and others of us must remain here to take care of Slater and her Zhentish troops inside the city walls, when they decide to surrender, or when they try to leave.*

On behalf of Daggerdale, I will remain here with 100 of my men. Lord Ariton will ride out to the Flaming Tower with the 100 men he has brought from the south and 150 of my men. This unit will represent the Freedom Fighters in the rescue.

Florin, she says, directing her attention to Florin Falconhand of the Knights of Myth Drannor. *I'm asking you and the other Knights to go to the Flaming Tower, and what's more, to lead the attack there. You and your predecessors destroyed the tower some 20 years ago. It was rebuilt exactly according to the old plan. No one knows as well as the Knights of Myth Drannor what we're up against there or how to deal with it.*

Florin Falconhand nods his agreement. *It's the only reasonable option,* he says. *But to make a plan, we need to know something about the enemy strength. Did this Murdoch give you any information?*

Yes, Captain Durmark says. *The Flaming Tower below is manned by 100 seasoned Zhentish soldiers, all worshippers of Xvim; Wallach, who is a high priest, four lower level Xvim priests and four low level Zhentarim mages.*

According to Murdoch, the Zhents stopped reconstructing the tower in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR), right after the destruction of Zhentil Keep. At the time construction was stopped, the ground floor had been finished and the four upper floors and roof had been built, but no rooms walls went up on these floors. They're all still empty floors, 300 x 300 feet/90 x 90 m in size. The distance from each floor to the ceiling is 20 feet/6 m. The ceilings are high so that the fire giants can move in the tower, if need be. The roof is empty too, except that it's used for the griffons to land, that fly between the tower and the temple.

Murdoch has never been in the Temple in the Sky, but he says it's inhabited by 10 Zhentish soldiers who take care of the six griffons used to fly persons between the tower and the temple, about 30 gnoll warriors, five fire giants and the beholder, Xulla. When an attack is launched, the fire giants will appear atop the Temple in the Sky and start hurling boulders down upon you.

Rayanna the Rose of the Red Ravens asks, *What's the distance? How high are the fire giants?*

Captain Durmark answers, *About 400 feet/120 m.*

Well, says Rayanna, *that settles that question then. I guess we'll be riding with the Knights of Myth Drannor and Lord Ariton. We have three triple ballistae in our wagons. That's the only thing short of magic that can take the giants out reliably!*

Florin Falconhand says, *The Flaming Tower is one problem. We'll lead that assault. But we also need a good guerilla troop to go up to the Temple of the Sky. We have to assume the Zhentish and the gnolls won't be sending any griffons down to give anyone a free ride, but Jhess can prepare spells to make the troop invisible and to fly it up there. Who's going to do that?*

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Rinaldo says, *Well, I can't volunteer my Freemen for that. We're here to free Dagger Falls. Before I could commit the group to go to the Flaming Tower, I would have to discuss it thoroughly with the others. We want to see Lord Morn rescued, but more than that, we want Dagger Falls to be freed again, and frankly, I see our place as being here, not there.*

Captain Durmark turns to the logger from Snowmantle. *Well, Laren,* she says. *You and your men are strong and good fighters, but you hardly have the experience it would take to carry out a guerilla attack. And we did promise you folks a chance to take part in the justice, when we get this Zhentish commander Slater in our hands."*

That's right, ma'am, Laren agrees.

Captain Durmark says the soldiers from Shadowdale and the Riders of Mistledale also should remain in Dagger Falls. At last she focuses her attention upon you. *Well,* she says. *How about the sigyll bearers? You folks are searching for this Gwath, and I think the only one who might be able to help you is Lord Morn. I can't think of a faster way to get an answer than to go up in the temple and rescue him. Looks to me like you could be the first folks he gets a chance to talk to!*

The following information applies when preparations are being made for the attack. This assumes that the PCs will deal with the Temple in the Sky and the others will storm the Flaming Tower. If you intend to have your PCs participate in both attacks, you will need to modify the plan.

1. The Red Ravens will leave Dagger Falls a day ahead of the others, because they will be traveling more slowly with wagons carrying supplies, include three triple ballistae and a siege power's supply of arrows.

2. The master riders of the Red Ravens will draw the fire giants into the open at the start of the battle. Other Red Ravens will attempt to use their ballistae to take out the fire giants. Flanks of Red Raven archers will attempt to take out any Zhentish archers who appear.

3. The PCs, Jhessail Silvertree and a small rear guard of Red Ravens will remain at the start in the rear flank.

4. Once the fire giants are dead, the Freedom Fighters, all the Knights of Myth Drannor except Jhessail Silvertree and the remaining 40 Red Ravens (archers, ballista personnel and rear guard excepted) will storm the tower.

5. Once the Freedom Fighters, the Knights of Myth Drannor and the Red Raven ground troops begin to storm the tower, the Red Raven archers will send a heavy barrage of arrows into the tower's ramparts, to make it impossible for Zhent archers or ballista teams to attack the storm troops below.

6. Merith Strongbow of the Knights of Myth Drannor will be in the first flank of the attack and will destroy the gates of the tower with magic. He will have two spells prepared, one for the outer gate and one for the inner gate.

7. There are several holes in the bottom of the Temple of the Sky where the griffons fly into and out of their lair. Somewhat removed from these, near the point where the chain is embedded into the stone of the flying rock, is another hole that the fire giants use to climb from the tower to the temple and back. When the entry into the tower has succeeded and the battle there is at full pitch, Jhess will teleport the PCs en masse into the giants' entry hole.

8. Merith Strongbow of the Knights of Myth Drannor will lend the PCs a ring that they can use to communicate telepathically with Jhess on the ground below. They can use this ring to pass on important news, call for reinforcements or request to be teleported back.

9. ***Optional:*** The Knights of Myth Drannor have some magic with them that they intend to use to destroy the Flaming Tower and the Temple in the Sky after Randal Morn has been rescued.

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Game Master: Statistics for the NPCs of Dagger Falls can be found under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

Shortly after sunrise, you join the 250 Freedom Fighters and the seven Knights of Myth Drannor on the ride downstream along the Tesh toward Teshwave. The day is uneventful until late afternoon, when you finally catch up with the 100 members of the Red Ravens Mercenary Co. and their wagons, which rode out ahead of you yesterday.

You ride on until even the light of sunset has faded far in the west behind the Desertsmouth Mountains. You do not stop, however, until you're within a mile/1.5 km of your goal, the Flaming Tower. In other words, you're letting the Zhentish outpost know you're coming, but that's probably not a problem, because they no doubt have spies somewhere in the land who reported your march eastward long ago.

There still is enough light to make out the target of your attack for tomorrow. The Flaming Tower is not afire. Instead, it's a bleak, stone structure, square and fortress-like in shape, 300 feet/90 m long on each side and 100 feet/30 m high.

A strange, huge rock - perhaps a piece of a broken-off meteorite - floats above the tower and is anchored to it with a huge chain. That must be the Temple in the Sky. It's irregular in shape, like almost any chunk of rock, but otherwise roughly the same size as the tower. There's a gap of about 100 feet/30 m between the roof of the tower and the bottom of the rock. There are a few pinpoints of light coming both from the roof of the Flaming Tower and from spots on the surface of the Temple in the Sky. The Border Forest lies dark, quiet and closed, to the north of you and to the north of the Flaming Tower.

But your attention is quickly drawn back to your camp, which is the strange mix of exaggerated celebrating and quiet contemplation one so often finds among large groups of soldiers on the evening before a huge battle. The Freedom Fighters and the Red Ravens have the task of conquering a well-armed and heavily-fortified tower.

The magic of Merith Strongbow and Illistyl Elventree - two of the legendary Knights of Myth Drannor - is fighting on their side, but the Zhents have the magic of the high priests of Iyachtu Xvim working for them. The task is not enviable. Many of the Freedom Fighters and Red Ravens who are celebrating or contemplating tonight will be carrion on the field of battle at this time tomorrow, their spirits in the realm of Kelemvor.

Your task is perhaps even less enviable. You have to infiltrate the floating temple, find Randal Morn and abscond with him, if at all possible, without engaging in battle with the beholder Xulla. If you do engage Xulla, then the chances are slim, that all of you will be among the living tomorrow at this time. You've increased your powers and honed your skills tremendously in the past months, but you suspect that the magic and anti-magic of a beholder still is far beyond your abilities. May Tymora be with you!

Those who contemplate vanish quickly into their tents, and you know they will not be seen again before dawn. But the majority are more typical warriors. Every mercenary and soldier knows that a day on duty well may be his last, regardless of whether he's storming a tower or guarding a caravan.

Most want to live and celebrate to the fullest, as long as they're still alive. And in this pre-battle camp, the celebrating faction is spurred on by the three priests of Tymora in the group - the legendary Rathan Thentraver of the Knights of Myth Drannor and two Tymora priests of the Red Ravens - who encourage the soldiers to enjoy their luck - Tymora's blessing - while it still is with them, and to say a prayer or two to the lady that it may continue through the battle tomorrow.

Everywhere in the battle camp is light. Torches move here and there, bonfires burn, and over several spits, boar and deer are being cooked that were brought down in the Border Forest by advance groups of fighters from the Red Ravens who rode ahead to hunt. The wagons of the Red Ravens contained not only ballistae, arrows and other military supplies but also three 25-gallon/100 liter barrels of Arabel Coal Brau, and a tankard or two are available to anyone in the camp with a thirst tonight.

Game Master: The rest of the battle camp is a matter for role-playing. The following takes place on the next day.

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With sunrise, the battle camp comes to life. There's no more sign today of the previous evening's celebrating and contemplation. The day of deeds has come. Each warrior in the camp is preparing now for the march to the Flaming Tower. Soldiers check each other's armor, to make certain every belt and buckle is correctly fastened and closed. Sword belts are balanced and some warriors are busy exercising muscles, trying to ease the morning aches from too much of a good thing the evening before.

In surprisingly little time, however, your army is ready to ride. The seven Knights of Myth Drannor already have left camp and ridden ahead to scout the situation at the Flaming Tower. The Freedom Fighters look with admiration and perhaps a bit of envy upon the Red Ravens, who make their preparations with the discipline of a professional army, which they are. The key words for the Ravens are *quickly* and *precisely*. While the Freedom Fighters still are breaking camp, the Ravens already have their wagons packed and ready, and many of their warriors are doing battle exercises with one another while they wait.

But in just a little more time, you and the Freedom Fighters are on your mounts, Sir Ariton Delmis gives the command to ride, and your army begins moving eastward, at the pace the wagons of the Ravens demand. After about 15 minutes, the Knights of Myth Drannor ride back to the main host.

Florin Falconhand reports, *There are five fire giants atop the Temple. They can break off large chunks of the temple rock itself and throw them down. A good rider can dodge the giants, as long as there aren't too many riders at once. The giants aren't smart enough to gauge where one is heading.*

They try to throw the stones where you are when they see you. If you keep riding, you remain ahead of the place where the rock actually hits. Of course, once you have too many riders, or once the riders start crossing each other's paths, the chance increases substantially that a giant will hit by accident.

Rayanna the Rose of the Red Ravens says, *Leave that work to us. We have plenty of experience baiting giants and dodging their boulders in the Stonelands. We've trained in it. After we line our armies up, I'll send my giant baiters out, and they'll be carrying some special incentives to rile the giants up. We'll ride right up to the temple walls and pitch clay pots against the wall.*

These clay pots are something we have made for us in Cormyr. They have a couple of special effects. Each time one explodes against stone, it can cause a crack to run through the stone. The explosion also is a bit earth-shaking. But the clay pots also release gases that slowly go upward and eventually reach the giants' noses, and it makes them positively berserk.

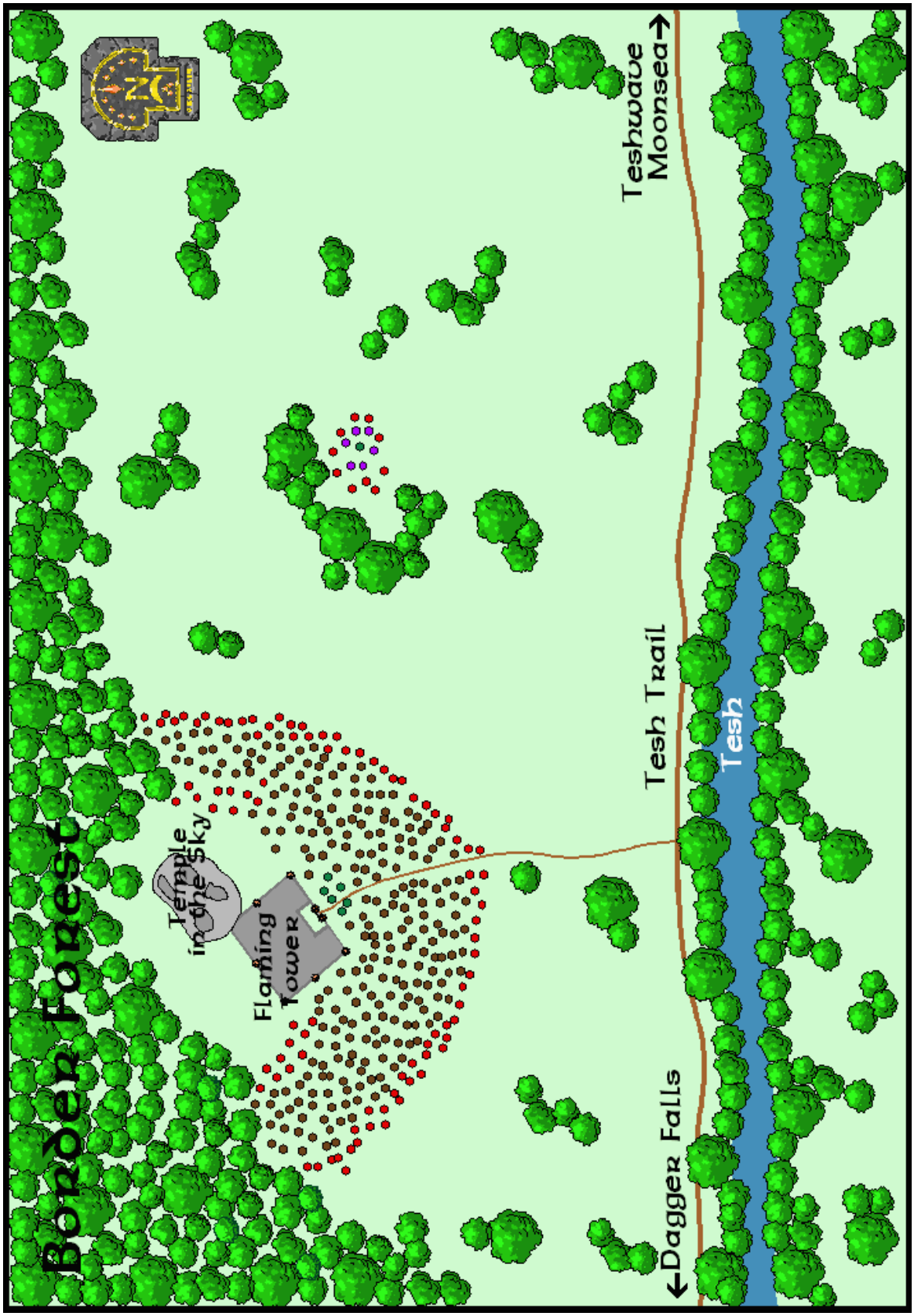
That gives them the advantage of being able to double the rate at which they throw rocks, but they also begin to throw wildly and with no regard for defending themselves. That's where our triple ballistae come into play. We make them berserk and then put them out of commission. It works every time!

Florin Falconhand answers, *Good, but that's only the first problem. We also estimate that there are about 40 Zhentish archers on the roof of the tower, behind battlements, where you'll have a hard time hitting them, and a ballista team in each of the watch towers.*

Rayanna says, *We're also prepared for that. We may not be able to take many of the Zhentish out with direct hits. But we have some special arrows that will drive them back into the tower. We have arrows with gas cylinders. When they hit a hard surface, the arrows explode and release a gas that's a bit heavier than air.*

At the start, it makes anyone breathing it sick, and they start to retch. This gas is also somewhat explosive, particularly where it concentrates in heavy pockets. The next thing we do, after firing a barrage of gas arrows, is to fire several volley of flaming arrows. Small explosions go off everywhere where there's a strong pocket of gas. Zhents who are in areas where there's an explosion have their lungs full of gas, and they explode too.

Now, like I said, you can't overestimate this. The gas attack won't kill too many Zhents, but it will drive them back into the tower, which is where you want them when you're storming the gates.


Border Forest
Temple in the Sky
Flaming Tower
Tesh Trail
Tesh
Dagger Falls
Teshwave Moonsea
N

Battle Site

Game Master: The following scenario is described 10 minutes later, when the host reaches the Flaming Tower. Use the battle site map here. The green dots represent the Knights of Myth Drannor,, the brown the Freedom Fighters,, the red the Red Ravens and the purple the PCs. The green dot among the PCs and the Red Ravens protecting them is the Knight of Myth Drannor mage Jhessail Silvertree.

Another 10 minutes later and your host has assembled along the Tesh Trail at the intersection with the road to the Flaming Tower, about 900 feet/275 m to the north. The 40 expert archers of the Red Ravens divide themselves into two groups of 20 each and march to the east and west sides of the Flaming Tower. Immediately, the archers use stands to plant their half-high shields in a line before them, building a defensive wall behind which they can crouch.

As soon as they do this, the fire giants begin throwing stones down at the archers, but the archers remain a bit out of range for the giants. The Zhentish archers send several volleys of arrows down towards the archers.

Game Master: At this point there is a 1% (1d100) chance in each of two rounds that 1d4 Red Ravens are hit for 1d8 dmg each .

After four volleys, the Zhentish hold fire, apparently deciding to save their arrows until they have better targets. The giants seem to be smart enough too to realize that the archers are out of range. The warriors of the tower and temple wait, as do the Red Raven archer behind their shields.

Meanwhile, the six members of the triple ballista team draw their wagons over behind the Red Ravens on the east side of the tower and begin unloading the three triple ballistae. Another volley of arrows flies toward the wagons, but they're out of range.

Game Master: There is a 1% (1d100) chance1 Red Raven archer in the east flank is hit for 1d8 dmg. As of this point, the battle begins. The statistics for the Zhentish enemy at the Flaming Tower can be found under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

The Battle:

It takes about 10 minutes for the Red Ravens to set up the ballistae. During this time, the battle remains a standoff, with neither side firing. Then a group of five Red Ravens mounts its horses. All of them have three clay pots tied to each side of their horses. The pots look a bit like round flower pots.

Meanwhile, a group of Red Ravens signals for you and Jhess to ride over to a copse of trees about 600 feet/185 m southeast of the tower, to take partial cover there. Jhess says, *We'll wait with our magic until the fire giants have been destroyed. After that, it'll be simple for you. You'll have only 10 Zhentilar, 30 gnolls and a beholder to deal with!*

Just then, the five Red Ravens suddenly begin riding zigzag in a storm attack upon the Flaming Tower. The 40 Red Raven archers simultaneously send a volley of arrows up to the roof of the tower. The five fire giants come to the edge of the roof of the Temple in the Sky and each throws a small boulder to the ground. At the same time, three bolts from the triple ballistae fly up towards the fire giants.

Game Master: The Red Ravens make an attack every three rounds. After each attack in the first 12 rounds, the following occurs:

Red Raven riders: In the first 6 attack waves, each rider throws a clay pot against the stone wall of the Flaming Tower. When the pot hits, it causes an earth-shaking explosion. The riders throw their pots against the same point on the wall with each attack. There is a cumulative chance of 5% per hit, that a crack will appear in the wall.

Ballistae: Roll 1d20 for each of the three triple ballistae. The Red Ravens hit a fire giant with 16 or better, for 3d8 + 3 hp dmg. Tally the hits.

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Red Raven Archers: They will fire 2 arrows per round over three rounds. In the first three rounds, they fire only gas arrows, and no Zhent is hit. They will wait then for the gas to disperse. In the second and third groups of three rounds, they fire normal arrows, twice per round, with a 2% chance per 6 rounds of hitting 1d4 Zhentish archers for 1d8 hp dmg. In the fourth group of three rounds, they fire five volleys of combat arrows and one volley of flaming arrows. There again is a 2% chance per 6 rounds of hitting 1d4 Zhentish archers for 1d8 hp dmg. The results of the flaming arrows will be narrated below.

Zhentish archers: The volley from the Red Ravens keep them from taking solid aim. There is an overall 3% chance that 1d4 of the five Red Raven riders is hit for 1d8 hp dmg during the 3 rounds.

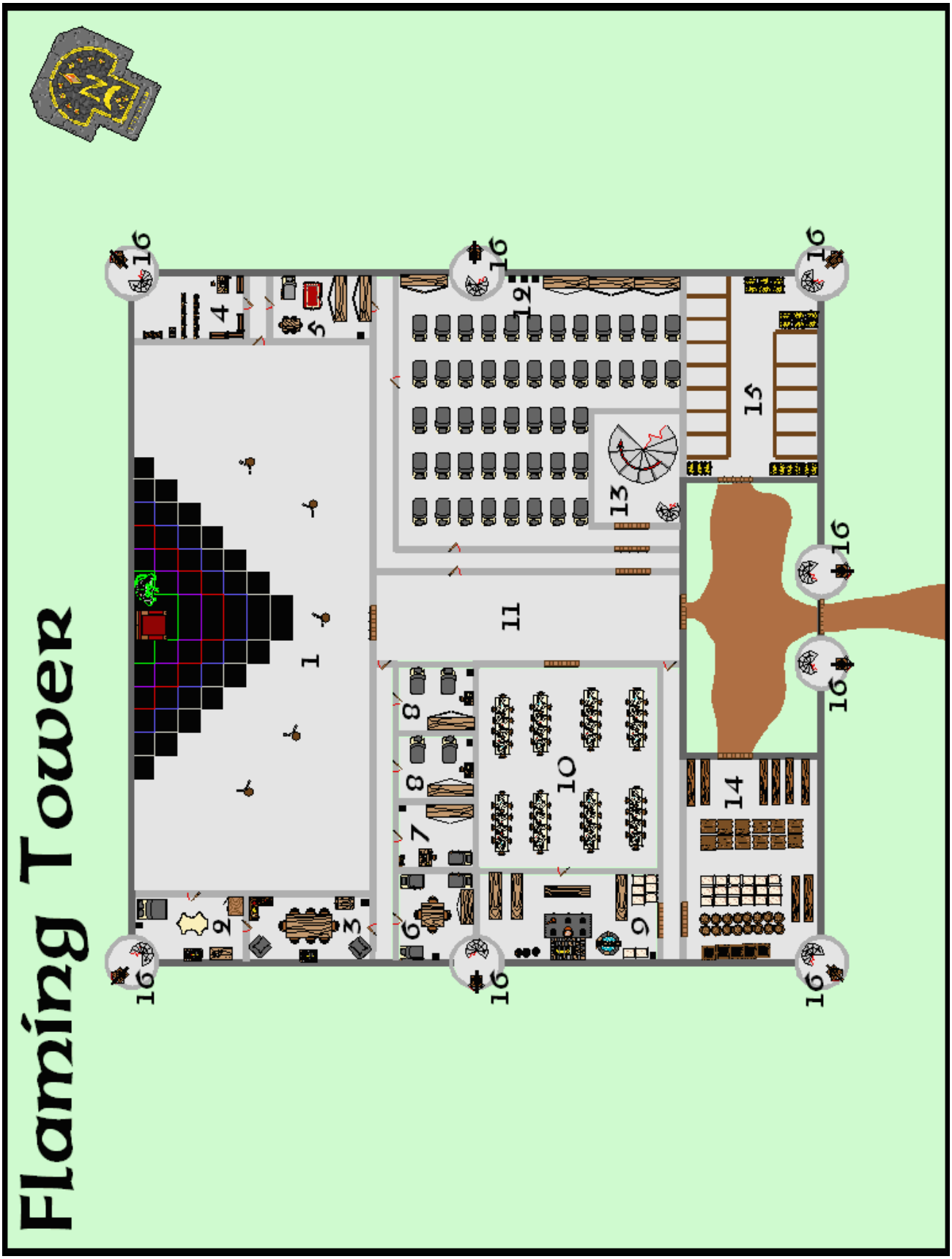
Fire giants: Each of the five fire giants has a 5% chance per attack wave of hitting one of the five Red Raven riders, for 2d10 hp dmg to rider and horse. The horses have 30 hp each. However, if a horse takes more than 10 hp dmg, it lives but is crippled.

Game Master: The following occurs in the 13th round of combat:

On the roof of the Flaming Tower, you can see a series of small flashes accompanied by the sound of small explosions, shouting men and running boots. Parts of two human bodies fall to the ground below.

As of the 14th round, there will be no more attacks from the roof of the Flaming Tower. After each rider has thrown his six clay pots, he has no more to throw. As of the 14th round, the gas also has reached the fire giants and made them berserk. As of this point, each giant has only a 1% chance per attack wave of hitting a Red Raven rider (dmg unchanged). The Red Raven ballista teams now can hit the giants with 14 or better. This scenario continues until all five giants have been destroyed.

If you are running action with the PCs inside the Flaming Tower, please see our floor plan. An official floor plan was published in the *Ruins of Zhentil Keep* accessory (TSR - 1995) and republished in Update 2 (March 2000) of the *FR Interactive Atlas CD* (TSR - 1999), but this map was current before the destruction of the tower by the Knights of Myth Drannor. It is not consistent with the description in the novel *Finder's Bane* by Jeff Grubb and Kate Novak (TSR - 1988), which we used as our source. If you're not running the Flaming Tower battle in your campaign, please jump to the next segment, *Onward and Upward.*



Flaming Tower

Plan of the Flaming Tower

1. Temple of Iyachtu Xvim. Wallach has a throne upon the dais with an oily black statue of Xvim to his left. Below the dais are five wooden posts with manacles. This is where Wallach will wait for the invaders and attempt to destroy them with magic.

2. Bedroom of Wallach of Xvim.

3. Chamber of Wallach of Xvim.

4. Office of the Zhentish Commander.

5. Bedroom of the Zhentish Commander.

6. Joint Bedroom of the Level 3 Priests Lundar, Murdoch, Yurdd and Bethlu. The room is empty. Murdoch is in Dagger Falls and the three others are locked in cells in the Temple in the Sky, waiting to be sacrificed to Xvim.

7. Private Room of the Xvim Priest Gardath. This room is empty. Gardath is the first ranked of the four level 3 priests under Wallach. He also is locked in a cell in the Temple in the Sky, waiting to be sacrificed to Xvim.

8. Private Rooms of the 4 Zhentarim Mages. The rooms are empty. The mages used spells to flee the Flaming Tower after sighting the enemy camp the previous night.

9. Kitchen.

10. Dining Hall.

11. Hall.

12. Zhentish Barracks.

13. Separate Stairways for Zhentish Soldiers and the Fire Giants. The stairway leads through the empty upper floors to the roof.

14. Supply Room. Food, grain, beer, weapons and armor as well as general supplies are stored here.

15. Zhentish Horse Stables.

16. Eight Watch Towers. Each tower is manned by three Zhentish archers and a Zhentish ballista team with ballista.

Onward and Upward

The last of the fire giants has fallen, and there's been no sign of Zhentish archers on the rooftop for some time now. Suddenly you hear a bugle call, and the host of Freedom Fighters forms behind Sir Ariton Delmis, Florin Falconhand, Merith Strongbow and the other Knights of Myth Drannor. The 40 Red Raven foot soldiers that have been on the sidelines until now take up the rear behind them. *Okay,* says Jhess suddenly. *It's your turn now!*

She points up to the Temple in the Sky, to a spot near the point where the chain is anchored, where a hole penetrates into the rock. There are several similar holes farther to the left, but this one stands alone.

That's the giants' entrance into the temple, the mage says. *They climbed the chain from the tower to get up and went through there. Fire giants aren't known for their dexterity, so I assume you won't have any trouble getting a footing in there, to keep from falling out. However, I'm not taking any chances.*

Falcon and Merith have given me strict orders to stay out of the battle today and to concentrate on you folks, so that's what I'm going to do. First of all, I'm going to put a Feather Fall *spell on each of you. Then I'm going to turn each of you invisible, although I doubt it will do you much good for long. The beholder up there no doubt has magic in place to destroy invisibility, before an intruder comes into protected areas.*

Game Master: At this point, you have to pick a PC to wear Merith's Ring of Telepathy.

Now, **(PC's name)** *you take this,* Jhess says, giving you a plain golden ring. *This is Merith's Ring of Telepathy. I have it's partner. If you have to communicate urgently with me, or if you need to be teleported back down, just concentrate on my image in your mind and then think your message to me. I'll receive it. Any questions, before I send you up?*

Game Master: Questions? Answers?

Jhess goes now into deep concentration, eyes closed, saying words you don't understand and touching each of you, one after the other upon the shoulder. As she reopens her eyes, a flash of light goes up from the Flaming Tower, followed by a loud explosion and a roar of voices.

I believe Merith has opened the first gate, Jhess says, smiling. Her remark is followed by two smaller flashes and explosive claps. *And I think he and Illistyl are seeing to it that a few Zhentish archers above the inner court are getting a nap. All right, I've put a* Feather Fall *spell on all of you, with a delayed effect. If you have a free fall of more than 10 feet/3 m, the spell will kick in automatically and save you. It'll work only one time though, so be careful you don't fall in the wrong place!*

Once again, she closes her eyes, but before she can begin to do anything, there is another brilliant flash and loud clap from within the Flaming Tower.

That's the second gate, Jhess says. *Our people have breached the tower!*

She closes her eyes again and concentrates once more, speaking arcane words and magically destroying several eyelids and bits of some other substance. And then each of you blinks out of sight, one after the other. In the background, you all can hear the roar of battle from within the Flaming Tower.

Good!, Jhess says. *The other Knights, the Freedom Fighters and the Red Ravens all are doing their jobs. It's time for you to go to work too. Remember, don't blow it with your invisibility! It won't last forever up there, but it could get you past a number of guards without having to fight them or without having them sound an alarm!*

This next spell I'm using is going to be pretty exhaustive for me, and I have to do it again to get you back, so I won't be able to do much more for you except pass on communications. This is a mass teleportation, and it costs an awful lot of energy. That's why the Ravens are here to guard me. So make sure you mean it, when you tell me to bring you back!

26. The Temple in the Sky

See the dungeon plan. The PCs find themselves in the passage above opening No. 1. An official floor plan was published in the *Ruins of Zhentil Keep* accessory (TSR - 1995, available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com) and republished in Update 2 (March 2000) of the *FR Interactive Atlas CD* (TSR - 1999), but this map is not consistent with the description in the novel *Finder's Bane* by Jeff Grubb and Kate Novak (TSR - 1998), which we used as our source.

Again Jhess closes her eyes and speaks arcane words, and suddenly, the temperature drops. You still can't see one another, but you find yourself in a passage 8 to 10 feet/245 to 300 cm wide and 20 feet/6 m high. The passage leads upward another 30 feet/9 m or so, where it seems to end at a huge spiral stairway of stone, about 20 feet/6 m in diameter. There's a smell of animals, manure and worse in the air here and two gnolls armed with halberds coming down the passage in your direction. One says to the other in common: *No think you hear right. No think something here. Giants all dead!*

Statistics for the encounters in the *Temple in the Sky* can be found under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Level 1

1. Giants' Entry Passage. Already described.

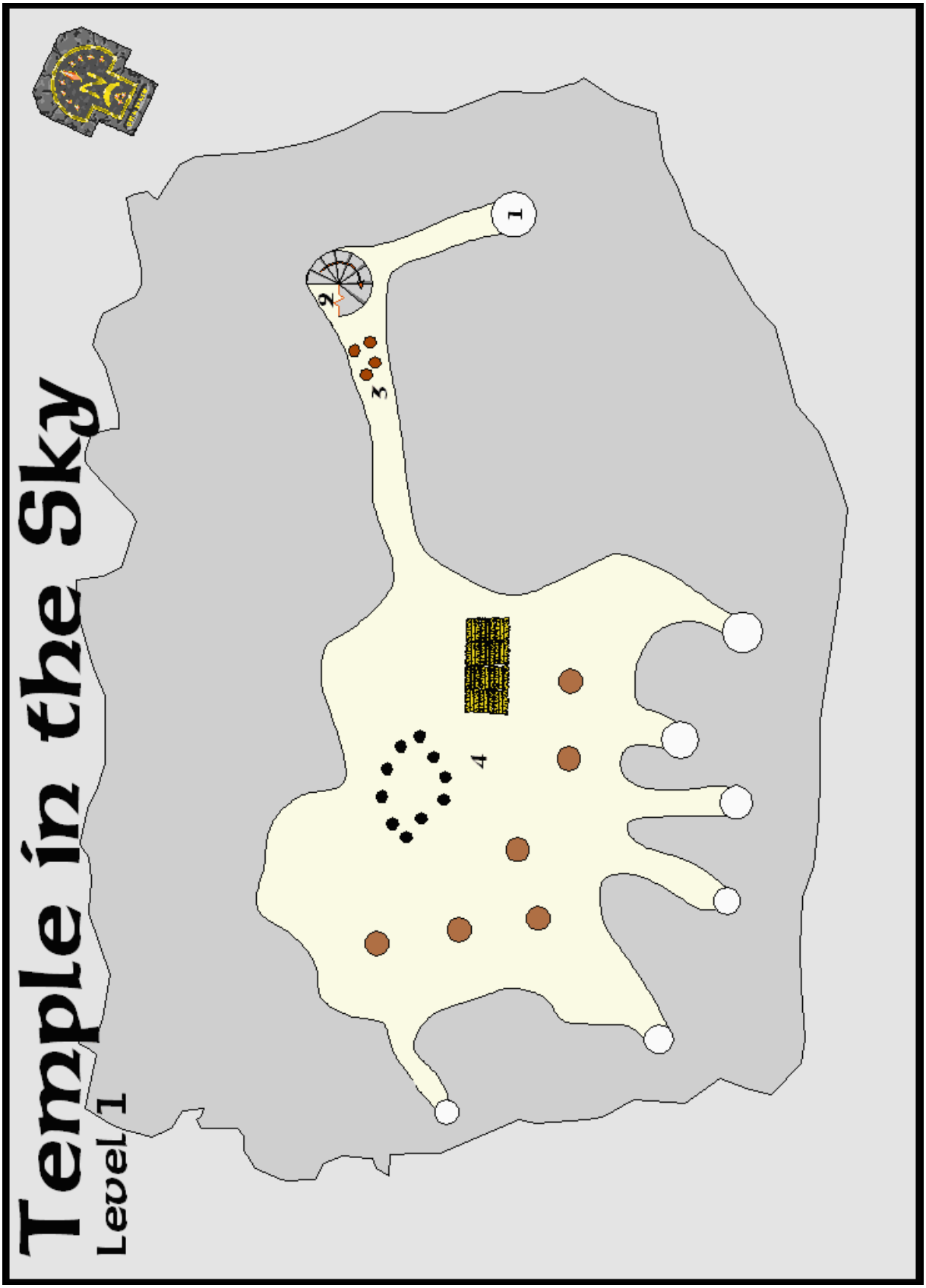
2. Spiral Stairway (Valid for levels 1-3, ends at level 3): Once you reach the staircase, it becomes clear why it's so large. It's a double staircase. The inner 3 feet/1 m is a normal stairway, with steps at the right intervals for humans and humanoids. The outer 6 feet/180 cm is a stairway for the fire giants, with each step a 6 feet/180 cm above the last. From the ground floor, it looks like the stairway goes up two more flights.

3. Four Gnoll Guards. Their main job is to control entry into the temple by the Zhents, who - unlike the gnolls and fire giants - are not worshippers of Xulla.

4. Griffon Den. Four gnolls guard the passage from the stairway to the den. The PCs will find 10 Zhentish warriors and six griffons in this chamber. The Zhentish have orders to tend the griffons and ignore other events in the temple, and they'll do just that, if necessary. If worse comes to worse, they'll also take flight with the griffons and abandon the temple.

The Zhentish Xvimists below use the temple only to house prisoners in the cells on level 2. If the PCs enter the den, the griffons will sense them and want to attack. Under all circumstances - whether invisible or not - the PCs will surprise the 10 Zhentish soldiers, who are busy observing the battle below and paying no attention to their own area.

If the Zhents notice that griffons are becoming uneasy but cannot see the PCs because they still are invisible, they will assume the battle below is disturbing the griffons and will keep them in reign. If the PCs leave the griffons' den, they will not be pursued. If the Zhentish soldiers see the PCs, they won't know who they are, and they will consider the PCs and their identity to be Xulla's business.



Temple in the Sky – Level 1

Level 2 - the Residents

See the dungeon plan.

This level holds 70 cells, once cells of cloistered priests or monks of Bane, now prison cells for the Zhentarim maintained by the beast cult worshippers of Xulla. The following prisoners are in the cells at present, all scheduled to be sacrificed to Iyachtu Xvim. The doors of the occupied cells all are trapped with needle traps that inject type F poison (save vs. poison or die instantly) into a victim who opens the door without the proper key. The prisoners are not aware of this trap.

Game Master: Statistics for the encounters in the Temple of the Sky can be found in the section *Unofficial NPC Encounters* of the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Plan of Level 2

1. Spiral Stairway. (s. above).

2. Walkway. Patrolled by six gnolls with halberds (s. above). When the PCs cross the threshold into the cell area, a permanent but invisible rune over the threshold will ban all *active* magic on their persons, such *Invisibility, Strength, Haste, Slow*, etc. It will not however destroy their *Feather Fall* spells, because these are *inactive* at the moment. The spell *Detect Magic* can find the rune.

3. 70 Cells. Each 10 x 10 feet/3 x 3 m in size, lit with a torch and lock trapped when occupied (see above).

4. Altar of Bane. The gnolls are unaware of this altar. It can be found only if the secret door is detected. Ancient blood stains the huge, black, hand-shaped altar, but nothing else is to be found here.

5. Gardath's cell

6. Lundar's Cell.

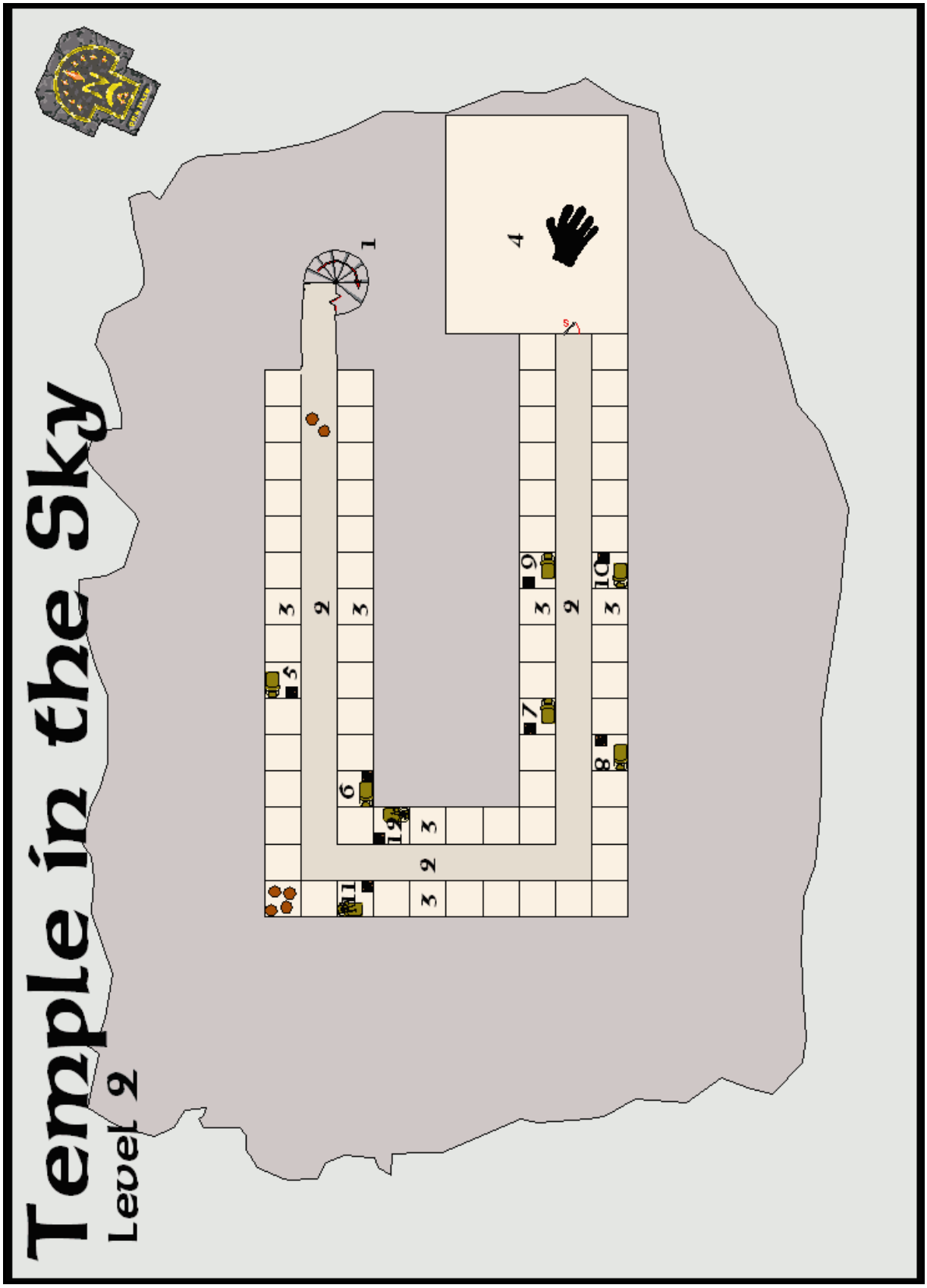
7. Yurdd's Cell.

8. Bethlu's Cell.

9. Rudar's Cell.

10. Kippela's Cell.

11-12. Cells of Dead Freedom Fighters. Skeletons of the two Freedom Fighters lay on their beds. They are not animate.



Temple in the Sky – Level 2

Level 3

See the dungeon plan.

1. Spiral Stairway. The stairway ends at this level.

2. Passages. These tunnels are roughly 8 feet/240 cm wide and high. They are not illuminated.

3. Lair of the Fire Giants and the Gnolls. The fire giants are dead now, atop the temple roof, but 12 gnolls are in the lair when the PCs arrive. They may be sleeping, if the PCs reach the lair quietly.

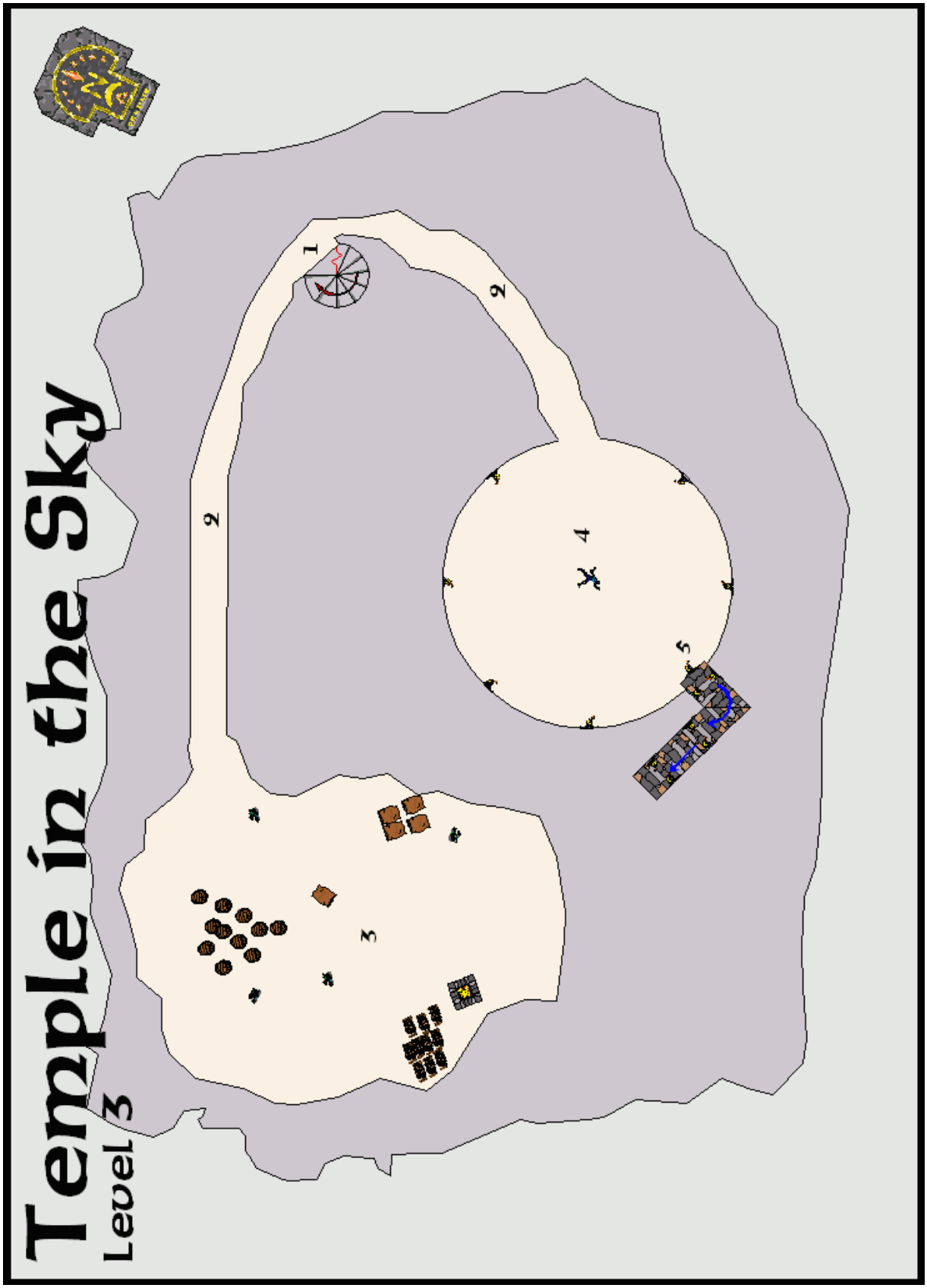
4. The Round Chamber. The threshold to this chamber is trapped. The floor is an illusion. In the threshold is a hole as wide as the passage and 2 feet/60 cm across that leads to a twisting, polished chute which comes directly out on the north wall of the rock. The PC falls then to the ground, unless his *Feather Fall* spell is intact, in which case he lands upon the roof of the Flaming Tower. It's up to you to decide what he finds when he reaches the bottom of the tower stairway.

If you're running a non-*NJ* campaign, you need to outfit this chamber to suit your campaign's needs. If you're running the *NJ* adventure or using the element of Randal Morn's recapture by Gwath/Xulla, once the PCs are inside the chamber, they will find an unconscious human male who fits Randal Morn's description floating inside thin, swirling green mists.

Before the PCs can do anything, they hear large, double explosions in the Flaming Tower below them. (Merith and Illistyl have just destroyed the Xvimist High Priest Wallach with a double volley of fireballs). Morn will react to nothing the PCs can do, but they can see that he breathes, and from time to time he moves slightly and groans, as though he is being mentally tortured.

If the PCs come in contact with the mist, they will find that it is as hard as rock. Nothing they do will penetrate it. They need to destroy Xulla/Gwath and her magic to free Randal Morn. This entire chamber is lit by torches. Behind the floating figure of Randal Morn, one can see another torch lit, stone stairway turning farther upward into some unknown level not connected to the spiral stairway.

The first step in each direction is connected to a mechanical trap. Each step shows a small gap to all sides. These are foot pressure traps. With 30 or more pounds/14 kg pressure on them, they are set off. The trap at the bottom of the stairs (Randal Morn side) releases the 400-pound/182 kg brick above the step. The victim can avoid being hit - if he or she has room to move quickly out of the way - by making a dexterity check with a penalty of 2. Otherwise damage amounts to 4d5 + 20 hp. The mechanical trap at the top of the stairs sets off a delayed blast fireball for 10d6 hp dmg within 20 feet/6 m, save vs. magical fire for ½ dmg.



Temple in the Sky – Level 3

Level 4 - Gwath Waits:

See the dungeon plan.

Plan of Level 4

1. Stairway. This is a continuation of the torch lit stairway described for Level 3.

2. Gwath's Chamber. *(see the narrative below).*

3. Temple Roof. This level of the temple is smaller than the three lower levels. The roof on this level is not accessible from Gwath's chamber, only from fire-giant-sized tunnels in the roof of chamber No. 3 on level 3.

Game Master: The statistics for Gwath (Xulla) can be found under *Unofficial NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* These are only suggestions. If this encounter runs as planned, the sigylls will destroy Gwath before she is forced to resort to magic. Once this encounter is over, the PCs should use Merith's ring to communicate with Jhess and have her teleport them and the still unconscious Randal Morn back down to her.

Encounter With Gwath

Gwath/Xulla must be played very carefully by the Game Master at this stage. Gwath already has invoked the Netherese scroll to merge her spirit into Randal Morn's body, but the process involved is a slow one that requires a great deal of concentration, although not total concentration, on her part. This puts Gwath in a pinch. If she wasn't in one, players of the PCs' levels would almost certainly be demolished by a lich of Gwath's power.

However, Gwath cannot flub the magic she is working with Randal Morn. She has no second copy of the Netherese scroll she has read, so she is unable to repeat this magic. Her true physical essence has degenerated to the point where she must replace it quickly, and Randal Morn now seems to be her last chance. Llolth's curse is blocking her from the transformation into a demi-lich.

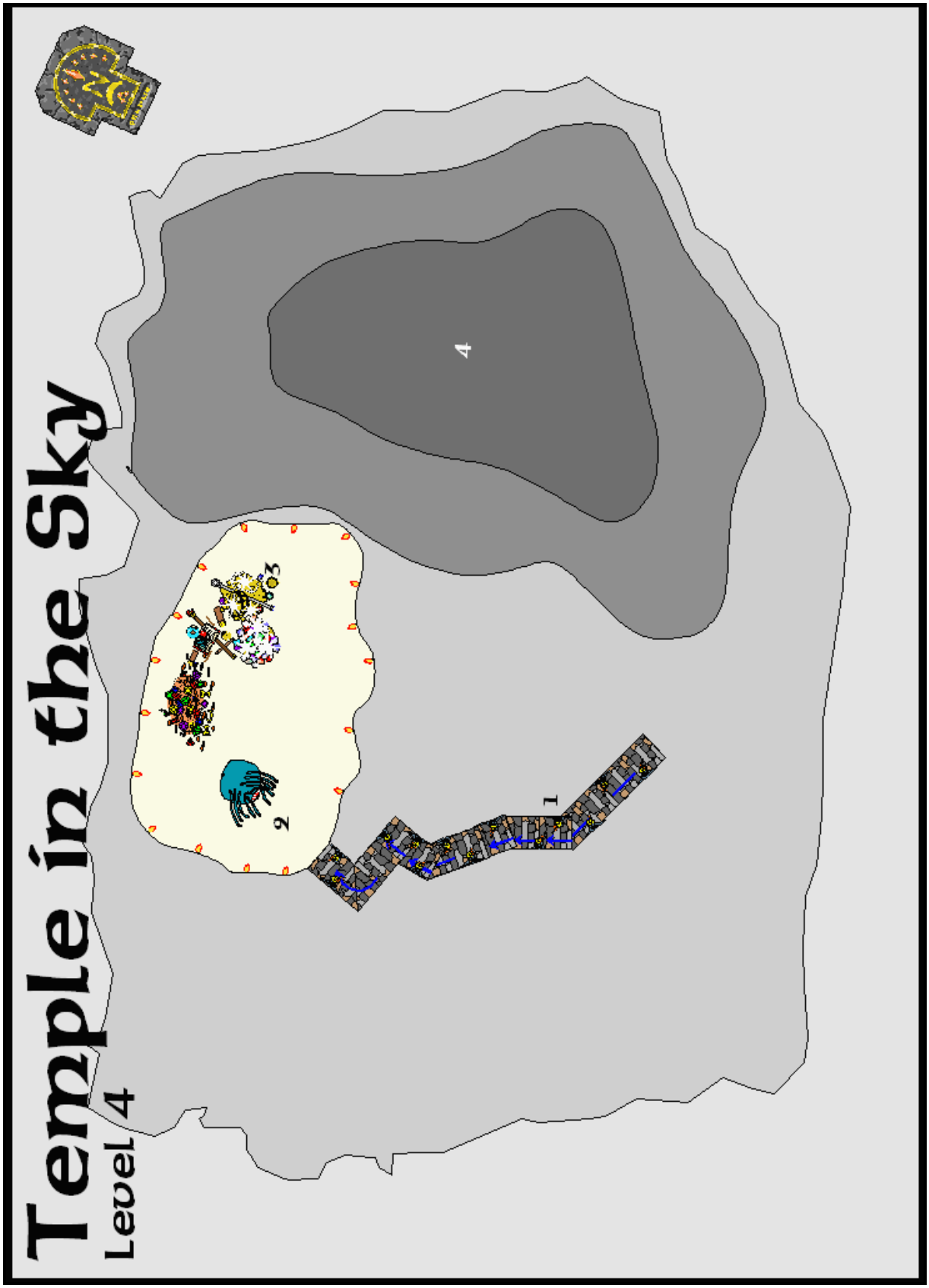
For this reason, Gwath will try to rely solely upon the magic in Xulla's eyes and will use her own spells only as a last resort, in absolute self defense. The key to Gwath's motivations is survival. To break the magical bond with Randal Morn is suicide. Gwath will do all she can to survive, and that is also the PCs' key to success.

Unfortunately the PCs don't know they're dealing with Gwath. They think they're dealing with the beholder Xulla. If the PCs' dealings make it clear to Gwath that she will not survive, she will go out in an incredible blaze of glory that may leave every member of your group dead. For this situation, you should hold back no punches and shield no one as Game Master. It's easy to roll up the next group of characters who find symbols on their arms for Part 4 of *Northern Journey*. Gwath is one of the truly powerful beings of the Realms. If the PCs force her into a corner with no way out, her demise should be spectacular and fatal for the PCs.

When the encounter begins, Gwath will focus in the first two rounds upon the encounter. At the end of that time, it suddenly will become clear to her that her lack of concentration has left her link to Randal Morn dwindling from a fragile thread. In the third round, she will pay no attention to the PCs whatsoever. After that, she will deal with the PCs only every odd-numbered round, and she will return to her magic every even-numbered round. That gives the PCs a free hand in every even-numbered round.

The PCs' sigylls will take effect as soon as one PC comes within 10 feet/3 m of Gwath. Once the sigylls begin taking effect, Gwath's link to the weave of magic and to Randal Morn will be broken immediately and her soul will begin to disintegrate. After three rounds, she will cease to exist. Xulla's head will fall lifeless to the floor. The PCs will notice that Gwath's symbol has vanished from their arms.

When the PCs return to Level 3, they will find Randal Morn unconscious upon the floor. He will be alive, but in a coma-like state, from which the PCs will not be able to awaken him. Any living gnolls still will be available to be encountered, but the Zhentish soldiers will have fled the temple in flight on their griffons.



Temple in the Sky – Level 4

Beyond the stairway is only absolute darkness. But as you cross into the chamber, torches flame magically into life along all the walls, revealing a huge, irregular shaped chamber. For the most part, this chamber is empty, but a large, blue beholder hovers before you. Behind the beholder on the floor is a small mountain of treasure.

The beholder does not attack you, however. Instead, it speaks:

Well met! Men call me Xulla, and many come here to worship me, but you have other goals, I believe. I am a peaceful beholder, and I do not wish to fight you or to do you harm. I sit here and meditate. If you wish to rob me, do so. Take what you wish from the chests behind me. The coins and the baubles that my worshippers bring me are of no value. Then go. Let me meditate in peace.

If the PCs are smart enough to do just that, they will succeed in their mission. They will have come with 10 feet/3 m of Gwath, and the sigylls will begin doing their work. But most PCs will not be that smart.

IF THE PCs ASK ABOUT RANDAL MORN:

I have told you, I am a peaceful creature. I have nothing to do with this man. He is a prisoner of a lich named Gwath, who I believe works with the Zhentarim in the tower below. The Zhentarim placed him there. It is not my work.

Gwath's Treasure

The treasure contains gems and jewelry with a combined value of 500,000 gold pieces and mixed coins from different mints with a combined value of 350,000 gold pieces. It will be possible for Jhess to transport only a modest amount of this treasure to the ground.

Far to the right is a golden chalice with a cover. It contains a jewel that seems to have a dark eye in the middle of it. This is Gwath's phylactery. The sigylls will attempt to force the PCs to take it, even though it radiates intense evil. Merith, Jhess and Illistyl will recognize it as a phylactery. The phylactery should be destroyed later.

Beneath the golden chalice are six spell books surrounded in an evil green light. Each book has a 10d8 delayed blast fireball and a *Finger of Death* laid upon it, to go off the moment the book is touched.

Going Back

Jhessail's teleportation magic brings you safely back to the spot from which you left, along with the unconscious Randal Morn. You still know nothing more than you did before about the purported lich named Gwath, perhaps even less than you did earlier. Strangely, her symbol disappeared as you destroyed the beholder Xulla. It may be that there was some magic bond between your sigylls, Gwath and the beholder, but at this point, you can only speculate.

A quick look convinces you that the battle of the Flaming Tower has been won. Although most of the tower will continue to stand, because it's built of stone, it is in flames at the moment, and everything flammable within the tower is sure to burn. The army of Freedom Fighters and Red Ravens is camped before the tower, but the army is smaller than it was before the attack begin, and there are a number of wounded being attended to.

Despite this fact, the priests come over to find out whether Randal Morn's been rescued, and one of them tries to deal with his unconsciousness, but his spell has no effect. Rathan Thentraver of Tymora from the Knights of Myth Drannor examines Morn too, but uses no spells upon him. *This man has been under a grueling mental strain,* Rathan says. *He needs rest, but I believe he will awaken with little damage. Transport him home in a wagon, and see that he is well cared for. It is the best thing we can do.*

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Just as Rathan finishes speaking, Randal Morn turns and says in desperate tones, *The Iron Throne! She wants to bring Daggerdale under the control of the Iron Throne. We have to stop her and them. The Iron Throne is our enemy!*

And then he becomes silent again. Those who hear raise their eyebrows in surprise. Sir Ariton Delmis says, *I think there will be interesting news when Lord Morn awakes. And perhaps new battles to fight. Only today have we destroyed one of the last Zhentish bastions in the Tesh Valley, and already, we seem to have a new enemy wishing to control us. But next of all, when Lord Morn is leading us again, I think it will be time to rid Dagger Falls of the remaining Zhentish scum.*

At this time, the PCs still should not be aware that they have encountered Gwath in Xulla's body. They should still believe themselves to be in need of talking with Randal Morn, to determine where the lich is, and they will be puzzled that Gwath's symbol has vanished. To make things more confusing, the symbols will not be drawing them in any particular direction at the moment.

The mad mind of Sammaster in the mountains above Damara and Vaasa is rejoicing at Gwath's destruction, and he and Kargmelchina/Tiamat now are planning new strikes by the draconians against Keepers of the Secret Hoard in Sembia. For a short time, the PCs will be free to go their own way.

If the PCs are inclined to pick a direction other than Dagger Falls, the Knights of Myth Drannor will strongly encourage them to follow Gwath's thread to its end. They should make every argument possible to convince the PCs to solve the Gwath problem.

If the PCs fail to mention Gwath's phylactery, Rathan Thentraver of the Knights of Myth Drannor will recognize it for what it is. The knights will speculate that the PCs may have found Gwath's phylactery, therefore destroying Gwath's sigyll, but that they have not found Gwath herself yet. They will explain incorrectly that the soul of a lich is in the phylactery, and that as long as the phylactery is not destroyed, the lich can rise again.

This is not quite correct. Gwath's soul is indeed in the phylactery, forever doomed to languish there. No known magic can free her from the phylactery, due to the magic carried by the sigylls of contagion. However, she will go to her eternal rest if the phylactery is destroyed.

The Knights will seek to gain the phylactery from the PCs to destroy it, but first they will assess their losses and discuss with Sir Ariton Delmis what moves to make next.

Florin Falconhand to Sir Ariton Delmis: *Have you spoken to Rayanna yet? What losses have we incurred?*

Sir Ariton Delmis: *We have 46 dead and another 31 wounded badly enough to need transportation. The Ravens lost eight and have six badly wounded. We'll maintain our camp here until we can send wagons back from Dagger Falls to transport the wounded we can't cure. We do have a supply of healing potions available, so we can handle the worst wounds and keep anyone else from dying. The Ravens will leave their wagons and 24 healthy members of their group in the camp. I'm taking 100 back to Dagger Falls and leaving 73 behind. We and the Ravens will leave our priests here.*

Rathan Thentraver: *Well, I don't think anyone's going to be riding back to Dagger Falls today anymore. There are a number of things that have to be done here first. I'm going to assemble the priests and we'll see to it that the most seriously wounded and those who can't be moved in their current state are healed as well as possible, and then we'll rest, and then we'll do the same thing tomorrow.*

Once we've done all the healing we can today, it's important that we move back to last night's camp. We can use the Red Ravens' wagons to transport the wounded. But we need to get away from the tower and the temple as quickly as possible. We don't know what's in the tower dungeon, but it's quite conceivable that the fire still will lead to a massive explosion. We also don't know what evil still may be lurking above in the temple. We have to get the camp away from these potential dangers!

The rest of the Knights can return to Dagger Falls, but Lanseril and I have decided to stay here and help the wounded. Lanseril is particularly grateful. Snowmantle, the village he comes from, is to the northeast of here. The Zhents have been raping the Border Forest near Snowmantle for several years now, and they've had to been thrown out of Snowmantle twice already. Lanseril hopes the liberation of Daggerdale and Teshendale and the destruction of the tower will make it extremely difficult for the Zhents to reactivate their devastating lumbering business in the forest."

Destruction and Retirement Option

The *Northern Journey* concept envisions the western Tesh Valley being liberated of Zhentish control. For that reason, we have incorporated a section to completely destroy the Flaming Tower and the Temple in the Sky, but if you wish these canon elements to remain in your campaign, you can ignore the following events. No future elements of *Northern Journey* are dependent upon them.

Our system for destruction of the tower and the temple is ***not*** an original conception of our project group. Rather, it uses a possibility Ed Greenwood defined in the novel *All Shadows Fled* (TSR - 1995) capitalizing upon the abilities of Mystra's ghostly chosen, Syluné, Witch of Shadowdale and one of the Seven Sisters. Syluné will be present in an occupied body that is destroyed along with the Temple in the Sky, using Mystra's fire.

If you choose to destroy the Temple in your campaign, Illistyl will inform the PCs that the Knights are about to carry out the destruction, and she will insist that she be allowed to teleport the phylactery back to the temple. However, the Knights will not fight to force the PCs to turn over the phylactery. The following discussion takes place between Florin Falconhand and Sir Ariton Delmis.

This segment of *Northern Journey* is set late in the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), when most of the human members of the Knights of Myth Drannor are reaching an age where it's time to unlace their wandering boots. In the following segment, we retire most of the Knights, but this action too is optional. You can omit it without having any future negative effects upon your campaign.

Florin Falconhand: *There's another reason to move the camp today, Sir Ariton. The Knights of Myth Drannor destroyed the Flaming Tower 21 years ago. We were a different group then, but I was among those who joined in the attack. We thought we did a thorough job, but the Zhents still were able to rebuild it.*

We've learned from our errors. We don't want to have to conquer it a third time. We would like to use some ... uh ... rather ... uh ... unconventional methods to erase both of the tower and the temple from the face of Faerûn. We assume you have no objection?

Sir Ariton Delmis: *None whatsoever. It would be wonderful to have them gone forever!*

Florin: *Well ... good ... but remember, I said our methods will be unconventional, but by no means evil!*

He turns then to fellow knight Torm and says, *Let's get our box then.*

The two Knights of Myth Drannor head over to one of the wagons of the Red Ravens and begin removing a large wooden box, about six feet/180 cm long. It looks exactly like a coffin. They carry the box over to the side of the wagon and open it.

Hello, Sweetie!, Torm says.

A lady's hand reaches out of the box and slaps him in the face. Then the lady herself steps out of the box. She's dressed like a typical farmer's wife from the Dales and seems to be well over 70 years old. Florin leads the lady over to your group, and Torm comes too. Torm says:

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I would like to introduce our lovely companion! Sir Ariton Delmis of the Freedom Fighters of Daggerdale; Rayanna of the Rose, commander of the Red Ravens **(Game Master:** add the names of the PCs present**)** *may I introduce you to Syluné, also sometimes called the Witch of Shadowdale?*

The old lady bows a smiling greeting and says, *Well met! Congratulations on your victory!*

Sir Ariton's expression is totally skeptical. *Hmmm,* he says. *I'd heard that Syluné died in a fight with a red dragon more than 15 years ago, and that her ghost now remains in her hut in Shadowdale, haunting the hut. I also would expect Syluné to look a bit different.*

The old lady replies, *Well, nothing against Lucinda's looks, but this isn't exactly the way I see myself either. Lucinda was a Harper ranger in Deepingdale, and when she died, she left me her body. I sometimes need a body as a vessel for the kind of magic I'm going to use today.*

And it is true, that my ghost is bound to the general area of my hut. The area's really a bit wider. I can go anywhere I want in Shadowdale, and I actually spend most of my time on my sister Storm's farm. But there is a way I can be transported, and Torm here knows that secret. They brought me along, because I'm the only one here who has a means to destroy the tower and the temple."

Sir Ariton nods, surprise and skepticism still in his expression. *Well met, then, Syluné. It's an honor to meet you and a privilege to have your help!*

Game Master: Reaction?

With that, the work continues. By evening, most of the camp has been moved back to the place it was the night before. The last of the Red Ravens' wagons has transported the three triple ballistae to the camping ground. Merith and Jhess of the Knights of Myth Drannor come over to your group.

You folks are a bit inexperienced for the kind of doings you've been brought into, Merith says. *"When all is said and done, I think you'll find that you've been pawns in the hands of some awesome power, a power so strong that it crosses the borders of your imagination.*

Jhess says, *Nonetheless, that's no ground for losing heart. The powers behind your sigylls have made the same mistake that other powers of evil have done time and again, and it always leads to their defeat. They've ignored the power of your own free wills. They'll only win when you quit resisting them. As soon as you say to yourselves that it's no use trying to resist, then they've won. Then you really are their pawns.*

But if you keep resisting, you can break their hold over you, and then instead of being their tools, you can stay on their trails and hunt them. It really works. Never giving up is what makes the successful adventurer, and successful adventurers are the ones who survive."

Merith says, *Well and good, Jhess. But our friends here need to learn more than how to resist the sigylls, as important as that may be. These would-be masters of yours wield incredible power. I'm inclined to think that it's as great as the power you'll see today. I'm even inclined to think a god may be involved.*

Young folks with your experience usually charge right into things, and the lucky among you survive. But most of the survivors have the wisdom to gauge the power they're facing and the methods they can best use to fight it. You can almost never go against a great power head on.

We Knights of Myth Drannor are basically simple folks, and so are you. Sure, we're accomplished adventurers with widespread reputations, but we've been at it for a long time. We've managed to hone our combat skills or delve deeply into our magic or become close to our gods, and that gives us the skills and abilities to do things that most folks couldn't begin with. Nonetheless, we're still simple folks. We're in an entirely different league from the one you're up against.

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Florin Falconhand speaks: *You know we've destroyed this tower once before, but that was a different* 'we' *than the one standing before you today. There were many more Knights of Myth Drannor in those days, but something catches up with all of us that doesn't have much effect on the great powers - aging.*

We get older. Doust, our first leader, has been retired in the temple in Arabel for several years already. Merith and Illistyl and Lanseril, with their elven blood, will be able to go on for some time yet, and my wife, Dove, too. But for most of us, our adventuring days are coming to an end."

Lanseril, the druid, says, *My elven blood might make it possible for me to continue, but this is my last ride with the Knights. When you break camp in the morning, I'll be heading home to Snowmantle. Now that the Zhents have been pushed back, my duty is in the Border Forest. The Zhents have done so much damage there, that I'll be old too before things are set aright again.*

Torm, who seldom says a serious word, adds, *Well, Rathan has been looking at the Temple in Arabel too. Doust is the high priest now, and he's asking Rathan to join him. I suppose I'll have to hang around there too and rob the collection box regularly, to keep them on their toes.*

Merith says, *We're all getting older, but away from the point too. We want you folks to get older too. You'll be facing some awesome power at times, power like all the knights together have never mustered.*

Syluné, let's not even talk about the present. Let's go back 20 years, when you still were alive, and all the Knights still were together and in their prime. And let's assume we were enemies, and we took you on head on. Who would have won?

The Witch of Shadowdale answers without hesitating: *As long as I kept myself confined to my magic of the weave, I would have been hard pressed. But if I had resorted to my true powers, I could have destroyed all of you easily, in minutes.*

Florin Falconhand says, *And if we'd observed you, and learned something of your powers and weaknesses, and then attacked you from the side, using all we'd learned?"*

Syluné answers, *I think you would have had losses, but I would have been destroyed. That's how it was with the red dragon, to some extent. My powers were much greater than its powers. But there was no escape for me. We destroyed each other. But if there had been four dragons, one coming from each direction, at least one would have survived without a scratch.*

Florin Falconhand says, *And that's it in a nutshell. Syluné is going to destroy the tower and the temple, completely. She's going to release a level of power on them that you never again in your lives will witness, if you're fortunate. But this also is the level of power we think your enemy commands. Understand how great that power is, and you may be able to deal with it, if you have to.*

Being close to the tower and the temple during its destruction is not without danger. For that reason alone, Sir Ariton and Rayanna have commanded their armies to maintain their distance. But we'd like to invite you to come with us.

Game Master: If the PCs decline, they will see Mystra's fire destroy the tower and temple from the distance, but they will not be able to see Syluné.

The Knights of Myth Drannor wait silently as the last of the Freedom Fighters and Red Ravens move to the camping area to the west. It seems like a small eternity has passed, and then Syluné says, *Well friends, I think it's time.*

Florin says, *Be careful. Don't go as far as you did in Mistledale. We almost lost you then.*

Torm adds, *Good luck, lady!*

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The old lady faces you all with a confident smile, unnatural sparks of life burning in her eyes. She turns then to Torm and says, *After it's over, bring me back to Shadowdale, Torm!*

The thief replies, *Don't worry lady.*

Slowly then, the aged body walks out toward the tower, stopping less than 100 yards/90 m before it. She stretches out her hands and begins singing a strange song, and soon, her entire body is enveloped in flames of a brilliant, blinding white light. The flames reach out then from her hands, upward, enveloping the entire Temple in the Sky in white fire, until the huge floating rock turns white with heat. The links of the chain holding it in place melt and fall upon the Flaming Temple below, and slowly, the entire rock begins to disintegrate and fall as rubble down onto the Flaming Tower, causing large sections of the walls to cave in.

The slowly vanishing, flaming body occupied by Syluné redirects the flames now to the rubble that's left of the Flaming Tower, melting the rock into glowing red puddles that look like lava. Not only the temple and the tower have been destroyed. You can see through the flames that the burning body inhabited by Syluné's ghost is withering slowly, vanishing.

The ancient, flaming hands move downward now, sweeping the molten remains of the Flaming Tower in a last wave of white fire. And then it stops. Where Syluné had stood, you now see only red hot, glowing cinders and wisps of smoke.

And then, from deep beneath the ruins of the tower, you hear a rumbling sound and the soil beneath your feet trembles under the impact of a subterranean explosion. The molten stones begin crumbling inward, and the earth continues to rumble. At last, all that remains of the tower, the temple and Syluné are a wide but low mound of smoldering rocks and a pile of ashes.

Time to get my lady, Torm says.

Jhess warns him, *Be careful, Torm! It's still hot out there.*

The thief smiles and says, *But I can't keep my lady waiting,* and he begins walking to where Syluné had stood. When he reaches the point where the Witch of Shadowdale had stood to work her magic, he removes a small box from his pocket and a tongs, then bends over to pick something up with the tongs and put it in the box. After that, he begins returning in your direction. As soon as he reaches your group, Florin says, *How does it look, Torm?*

The thief shakes his had with a touch of a sad smile. *She did it again. She broke it. I guess that means Rathan and I will be leaving you too in the morning. We'll have to take it back to Shadowdale quickly, before there's a problem.*

Florin says, *I think we'll go together. I think Randal Morn's people can get along without us now, and our place is with you and Rathan until Syluné is home again.*

It is a fragment of stone from Syluné's hut that makes it possible to transport her ghost away from Shadowdale. The Knights of Myth Drannor will not reveal this information, but Game Masters seeking more information will find it in *All Shadows Fled* by Ed Greenwood (TSR - 1995).

27. Dagger Falls.

Events have been occurring in the past few days, and when the PCs and the others return, Dagger Falls is back in the hands of the Freedom Fighters. However, there is no important reason for you to stick with this version of events. If you wish to have your PCs play a role in the reconquest of Dagger Falls, we suggest you obtain and modify TSR's module *The Return of Randal Morn* by Jim Butler (TSR - 1995). It will give you all the details you need to run a rip-roaring, good reconquest of the walled city. Here is our version of events:

During the night, Randal Morn is kept under the close watch of the Freedom Fighters and under the care of Rathan Thentraver of Tymora, the priest of the Knights of Myth Drannor. On the next day, Sir Ariton Delmis informs you that Lord Morn had awakened several times during the night and talked briefly and incoherently, making remarks about a totally evil drow, and how she was responsible for everything all these hundreds of years, how he must talk with the Harpers, etc. He did not however make any mention of Gwath. As the camp awakens, Lord Morn is again in a deep sleep.

Rathan Thentraver leaves Lord Morn's tent and joins you and Sir Ariton. The other Knights of Myth Drannor already are fully packed and waiting on their horses. Rathan's hose also has been packed. The priest tells Sir Ariton, *Lord Morn has been under a physical strain, but he hasn't suffered any physical damage. However, he has been in a mental battle for his very existence. From the little I can draw from his remarks, I assume this beholder was trying to mentally subdue him and conquer his spirit.*

If he can't get over this rather quickly after he's regained his strength, I think you ought to send him off to Shadowdale, if Storm or Elminster are there, or else to Waterdeep or to the lady in Silverymoon. They may be the only ones who can help him. This Xulla seems to have been extraordinarily powerful in magic for a beholder. In fact, I suspect strong magic from old Netheril was used upon Lord Morn.

Whatever the case, there's nothing more that I or the other priests here can do for him. Bring him back to Dagger Falls. With Tymora's blessing, he'll snap out of this and come to terms with this himself. He's a strong man. I doubt that the likes of this beholder could break him.

Florin Falconhand says, *We'll be leaving now. The worst is over for Daggerdale, and what's left to do, you'll be able to manage without us. We're heading back to Shadowdale, and we intend to make good time. We have to take care of the spirit of Lady Syluné. We'll give Captain Durmark a full report on all that's happened here when we reach Dagger Falls this evening. What other messages should we deliver?*

Sir Ariton says, *First of all, I want to thank you and all the Knights of Myth Drannor for your help, in the name of Daggerdale and Lord Morn. I certainly agree that you must reach Shadowdale as quickly as possible, if that's what is necessary for Lady Syluné. In destroying the temple and the tower yesterday, she damaged the Zhents beyond our wildest hopes, and her well-being certainly is among our first concerns.*

Due to the work of Rathan and the other priests, 16 of our wounded and five of the Red Ravens who were seriously injured can ride with us today. We'll be taking the three wagons of the Ravens to transport the three remaining wounded Ravens and six of our wounded back to Dagger Falls. That'll leave us with 10 wounded here in camp.

We're leaving some of the priests behind, so by the time more wagons arrive, we hope all will be fit to ride. What we need from Captain Durmark then is two wagons of supplies. Those who stay here will need two days to bury the dead.

Florin Falconhand say, *Very well! We wish you well in your recapture of Dagger Falls.*

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The individual knights begin exchanging farewells with Sir Ariton, their own druid Lanseril Snowmantle and all of you. Then Lanseril splits off from the rest of you and follows the Tesh Trail to the east, while the other six Knights of Myth Drannor head out at smart speed toward Dagger Falls. Within a short while, you and the contingent of Freedom Fighters and Red Ravens bound for Dagger Falls also break camp and head out, although at a considerably slower pace because of the wagons in your group. Your trail-weary horses no doubt are grateful.

The first day's ride along the former Zhentish trail between the Tesh and the Border Forest is uneventful. Throughout the entire day, you see no sign of other intelligent beings or powers. Towards evening, you come to a large camping area that still has a good supply of firewood available, no doubt a camping area for Zhentarim caravans traveling at about the same tempo as yours, a day short of the Flaming Tower. Sir Ariton calls the host to a halt, with orders to make camp for the evening. A band of six Red Ravens that rode out ahead of you to hunt is waiting with a bag of three deer and five boar.

There's quickly disciplined movement everywhere, securing horses, pitching tents, bringing water in from the river, making fires etc. And in short order, the smell of cooking fires fills the air.

Game Master: Any campground role-playing can take place here.

Sir Ariton reports the next day that Lord Morn has had a peaceful and quiet night, with no new disturbed utterings. The second day is much like the first - slow and uneventful, but the relaxed ride is doing wonders for your horses. At last, you see the walls of Dagger Falls a few miles/kilometers ahead of you, but the lay of things is surprising. The army of siege that had been surrounding the city has vanished.

As you near the outskirts of Dagger Falls, all seems to be peaceful and in order. Farmers shout their greetings and ask how Lord Morn is faring. Sir Ariton brings the line to a halt and asks what's become of the siege.

Well, one farmer says. *It happened a few hours after you and the others rode out for the Flaming Tower. Apparently there was an uprising among the Zhentish inside the city walls. From what we heard, the Zhents there took their own commander, this lady Slater, prisoner and hanged her on a gallows on the marketplace.*

When Captain Durmark and her men entered the city, they found her body still dangling from a rope there. After they hanged her and killed a few other officers who didn't agree with their plan, the Zhentish opened the East Gate suddenly and decided to try to flee in force. Of course, the spies who know which tunnels to use knew what was up and had brought Captain Durmark the news, so she was prepared. When the Zhents came charging out, the Freedom Fighters and the Red Ravens and the others cut them down like spring hay.

They took only two dozen prisoners. Almost 400 others died in battle, and their bodies were burned that night in a funeral pyre a bit upstream. Our side had no losses, or so I hear, although we did have about a dozen wounded. The forest druids came in to help out with the healing. It seems they hate the Zhents for what they've done to the Border Forest!

A smile crosses Sir Ariton's face, and he tosses a gold coin down to the farmer. *Thanks,* he says. *There seems to be no end to the good news lately!* Then he signals the host to ride on. Ten minutes later, you reach the East Gate of Dagger Falls, and if you had any doubts, they're dispelled by the fact that the city gate is open and the guards all wear the symbol of Daggerdale.

You're hardly inside the gate when soldiers begin shouting greetings to Sir Ariton and asking how Lord Morn is doing. Captain Durmark also is rushing in your direction.

Lord Morn ..., Sir Ariton begins.

Lord Morn is alive and in Daggerdale again, and he will recuperate, a strong but still wavering voice shouts from behind the paladin. In the opening of the wagon behind you, stands the still weak form of Randal Morn, smiling and waving to the crowd, but still being supported by a priest. The crowd sends up a roaring cheer, and Lord Morn smiles back and waves again, but then is returned to the wagon.

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There is joy and chaos in Dagger Falls, but in the course of time, you at last get word that Captain Durmark's men have cleaned up the garrison after the Zhents and you'll be allowed to quarter there. The rooms are soldiers' barracks, but they're acceptable - and free. There are no ifs, ands or buts about the evening victory banquet.

The Freedom Fighters have been hunting boar and deer since word of Lord Morn's rescue arrived, and the best of Dagger Falls' hidden supplies have been brought up from the cellars to make for a feast of the first order, to celebrate the return of Lord Morn and the crushing of the Zhentarim in the western Tesh Valley.

At the peak of the feast, the still weak Lord Morn comes forth, supported by Sir Ariton, and the crowd roars, seemingly endlessly. When at last he gets a chance to speak, Lord Morn signals in your direction and says, *These brave adventurers here are the ones who saved me from a horrible fate beyond belief. My friends, come forth to the table of honor!*

Again the crowd roars. When the shouting and applause at last dies down, Randal Morn speaks again. *My friends, in destroying my captor, these brave folks destroyed an evil of ancient origin, born from the womb of a drow elf. This evil walked the Dales hundreds of years ago and worked closely with the dark elves who plagued Shadowdale in ancient times.*

This same evil brought the vampire lords to old Merrydale, those who nearly destroyed our folk. Since those days, our home has been known as Daggerdale. This evil grew powerful enough to betray the spider goddess Llolth herself. This evil walked with Sammaster and his minions in the darkest days of the Dragon Cult, and then betrayed him.

It turned later to the Zhentarim, leading to the fall of Teshendale and the plots that led to the Zhentish occupation of Daggerdale, and then it betrayed the Zhents. And now it would have allied itself with a secret organization in Sembia known as the Iron Throne, and it had intended to use Daggerdale to give the Iron Throne the harsh power the Zhentarim had exerted over us. But this evil exists no more, for these brave folks have destroyed it, utterly and forever!

Again, the crowd roars. When Lord Morn is ready to speak again, he says, *Friends, as you can see, I still am too weak to resume rule of Daggerdale. For a short while, I will ask Captain Durmark to continue in my place, until I am well again. There also is much to discuss with our friends in the other Dales, in Cormyr and among the Harpers, for in the time I was held captive, I learned much of the evil surrounding us. Bur now I must rest again! Eat, drink and be merry!*

Sir Ariton than helps Lord Morn over to your group. He again repeats his deep thanks for your help and says, *A bit later, after I have rested again, I would appreciate it if you would come to my chamber to talk with me. I will send for you"* Sir Ariton then leads Lord Morn back out of the dining hall.

28. Randal Morn's Tale

Later in the evening, a messenger comes to your table and bids all of you to follow him to Lord Morn's quarters. You're led quickly through the halls into Randal Morn's chamber, where several Freedom Fighters stand guard, along with Sir Ariton. Rinaldo, the leader of the 15 Freemen of Cormyr, is being addressed by Randal Morn at the moment. He holds a large parchment envelope with a new wax seal in his hand.

So, as I have said, I have dictated the main points I know to my scribe, and he has recorded them faithfully. If you value your king and your country, you and your men will leave Dagger Falls on the morrow and travel with all due speed back to Tilverton, where you will give my words to the leading war wizard there. The documentation in your hands is the key your king needs to deal with many of the evils threatening his land.

Once more, I offer you and your men my deepest thanks for your help in conquering the Zhentarim enemy. Your deeds only further bind the friendship between Daggerdale and your great kingdom. Sir Ariton is arranging for a company of 15 Freedom Fighters who will accompany you to Tilverton, both to see that this vital message reaches your kingdom safely and also to see that you and your men are accorded all due honors here in Daggerdale. And now I'm afraid I must devote my few remaining energies to my other guests."

Rinaldo turns around and notices for the first time that you're waiting. The expression on his face makes clear that he's less than enthused with Lord Morn's decision to send him and his men back to Tilverton, but he also recognizes that he probably has no other choice, and he knows the sealed envelope in his hand could be of critical importance to his King Azoun.

Once Rinaldo leaves the chamber, Randal Morn smiles tiredly and says to Sir Ariton. *Foolish Purple Dragon spy,* he says. *He didn't think he should leave us until he receives orders from Tilverton or Suzail.*

The Freemen all are Purple Dragons - an elite spy unit of honorable, well-trained fighters that are supposed to watch, report and stick their fingers into things, when it's in the so-called interest of the crown. Of course, everyone here knows who they are. If you want a spy troop, you recruit thieves, not soldiers of honor. That's why Azoun has to do a lot of things the hard way.

But this time, I think Rinaldo will be told he did the right thing. Once that envelope is opened, I think Vangerdahast will be here in the blink of an eye. However, I did send a 15-man escort along to make sure that Rinaldo doesn't leave a few of his men behind by accident."

Lord Morn shifts his attention now in your direction.

Until now, the PCs have been pretty much in the dark as what's been happening to them. Randal Morn is now able to shed light on about 50% of the riddle. After he explains what he knows to the PCs, they still will know nothing of many crucial factors, but they will think they have learned an awful lot, and what's more, they'll probably start to do a lot of guessing. You can read the following to your PCs, but it's even better if you print it out, make an extended break and give them time to read it while they crunch potato chips, munch popcorn, slurp Coke®, guzzle a beer or smoke a cigarette. But after the PCs read Randal's remarks, make sure they have time to pose questions.

Well, the story I could tell you would take several days, and I don't have the energy to do that yet, so you'll have to settle for the short version. The creature you destroyed the in the Temple in the Sky was not the beholder Xulla, it was one of the most vile and evil creatures ever found in the Dales, an ancient drow lich named Gwath.

To start at the end of the tale, Gwath came into possession of some extremely powerful scrolls from ancient Netheril. She used one of these to completely destroy the spirit of Xulla and to occupy the beholder's body. Then she captured me and used an even more powerful scroll to try and take me over. What she wanted to do with me is a time-consuming process.

She wanted to take me over completely, to have full access to my thoughts, memories, knowledge, personality, everything. To do that, her magic had to contain and completely subdue my soul, to push it back into the corners of my physical being, where her spirit could control everything, but she could use my spirit anytime she wished. She was still in the process of magically subduing my spirit, when she was destroyed.

This process apparently can take varying amounts of time, depending upon whether the victims resist or not. I resisted as well as I could. Meanwhile, she pumped me full of her knowledge, and as a result, I know answers people have been seeking for a long time to a great many secrets.

That sums up the end of the story. Let's go back to the beginning, more than 750 years ago. There's a land far away in the south called Dambrath. You've probably never heard of it, but you most likely have heard of Luiren, the halfling nation that makes the famous cheeses and raises pipeweed. Dambrath borders on Luiren, and it's a land controlled today by evil half drow.

But more than 750 years ago, Dambrath was a land where men were locked in a constant battle with the drow beneath them. It was in these days that the high priestess of Llolth, Gwath, went north, on a mission from the spider queen herself. Drow were trying to take control of the western Dalelands and already were in control of Shadowdale, ruling over it from the Twisted Tower there.

Gwath came to the Daleswood north of Shadow Gap -it's called Spiderhaunt now - had a tower built there for herself and filled the wood with all varieties of giant and magic spiders to defend the tower for her. From her tower, Gwath, in the name of Llolth, steered all efforts of the Drow to cement control of the northwestern Dales.

At this time, Myth Drannor rose to its glory, and it come often to combat between the elves and other folk of Myth Drannor and the drow of the Twisted Tower. In the Year of the Lance, Gwath turned the tide and won the battle with Myth Drannor. She succeeded with Llolth's help in opening a gate in Myth Drannor to the Army of Darkness, and the fall of Myth Drannor began. However, before that, the leaders of Myth Drannor had found Gwath's tower in Spiderhaunt and had launched several forays against it, forcing her to flee.

In the Year of the Scarlet Sash (679 DR) *already, she abandoned her tower and fled to the unsettled edge of the mountains in our valley, Daggerdale, which was known then as Merrydale. The Fall of Myth Drannor was inevitable, in truth, the city would collapse in another two years. Shadowdale was a drow stronghold, with Gwath as high priestess, and Gwath's eyes now were upon Merrydale.*

Not long after moving into the newly-built Gwathburg, Gwath's drow captured a party of adventurers trying to make its way through the Desertsmouth Mountains and found among the treasures these adventurers had won several strange scrolls in a language that was foreign. These proved to be a powerful set of scrolls from ancient Netheril.

The scrolls fascinated Gwath and began to draw her away from Llolth's path and into the weave of magic. The years in the Gwathburg marked the beginning of her betrayal of Llolth and her new path as a wizard. More than 100 years after obtaining these scrolls, Gwath used one for the first time, to summon 15 great vampire lords to Merrydale. With the arrival, Gwath built a new tower deep within the Desertsmouth Mountains, south of the old Tethyamar Mines. This tower is filled with foul magic, but to date, it has remained unfound. That is past. It can be destroyed at last, for I know where it is.

Gwath was in her new tower, and the 15 vampire lords took possession of the Gwathburg. It was their goal to destroy the human population of Merrydale, to open the Dale to the Drow, to at last give them the sole control over the lands between the Tesh and the Ashaba. However, Gwath and the Drow overestimated their power.

The men of the lands that now are the western Dales and northwestern Cormyr as well as the elves of Cormanthor arose, to rid this part of Faerûn from the drow and vampire menaces. After six years of the vampire plague, which led to Merrydale becoming known as Daggerdale, men from the southern part of Daggerdale and northern Cormyr, led by priests of Lathander, crossed the land, destroying large numbers of vampires and at last finding the Gwathburg and destroying the 15 vampire lords as well.

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In eastern Daggerdale, waves of elves from Cormanthor swept across the Dagger Hills, destroying the vampires there and then ravishing Gwath's gateway to the East, the village of Highstone in the Dagger Hills, which had become known as Bloodstone, where every man, woman and child had died in a vampire feast or had been turned into a vampire. The attempt to conquer Daggerdale with vampires failed, and men gained courage.

With elven help, they began working to clear Shadowdale of the accursed drow there. They built Castle Grimstead near Shadowdale, which fell after 30 years to the dark elves, but after another 40 years of hard resistance, the men and elves captured the Twisted Tower and drove the drow back into the Underdark.

Gwath's bid for power in the name of Llolth had ended in defeat, although the wizardess herself remained free. In the years that followed, all memory of Gwath was lost in Daggerdale, for in these years the wizard and later lich was active primarily in Sembia, as a high member of the Cult of the Dragon.

Before ascending to lichdom, she was the mate of the Bane priest Algashon, who steered Sammaster through the developing years of the cult, and Gwath had every intention of winning Sammaster's position with time. Algashon also was the father of Gwath's only child, a daughter named Gothyl. She had become a demi-shade. She reopened her mother's old tower in Spiderhaunt two years ago and held me captive there.

But things also went awry in the Dragon Cult. The organization was constantly without organization and in chaos, and many of its members were as insane as Sammaster himself. But then Sammaster was destroyed and after him Algashon. Sammaster's mistress, Kargmelchina, had vanished. And so, Gwath became one of the cult's greatest Keepers of the Secret Hoard. The combined chaos and insanity made it difficult to bring the cult together, as she wished, but as this century drew near, she felt she was achieving some success.

And then Sammaster returned as a lich, in the mountains above Shadow Gap, raving with what Gwath perceived as new madness, advocating the creation of dragon vampires. Gwath conspired with two other leading Keepers of the Secret Hoard - Xarth Kistar, a priest of Bane and double agent in Zhentil Keep, and Harbet Gall, a double agent priest of Malar the Beast Lord in the Great Dale - to have Sammaster destroyed.

They obtained magic to destroy Sammaster from an insane old lich named Azimer who haunted the empty halls of the School of Magic beneath the ruins of Myth Drannor, and they hired an arch mage named Ssessibil Istahvar in the Lonely Tower near the Cold Wood in the North to work this magic upon Sammaster, because they did not consider themselves powerful enough to do it.

However, Sammaster was a strong opponent for Ssessibil, and their duel of magic went on for some time. Gwath became impatient and betrayed Sammaster to the Harpers as well, and a combined assault of 12 Harper paladins plus Ssessibil's magic at last succeeded in destroying Sammaster's lich, although his phylactery has never been found.

After the destruction of Sammaster's lich, Gwath wearied of the Dragon Cult and focused her sights instead upon the Zhentarim and indeed forged new alliances with Manshoon and the leaders of the Zhentarim. She appeared now in a magical form as a sorceress named Gwenda, and her intrigues led to the fall of Teshendale and later to the fall of my family here in Daggerdale.

After the Time of Troubles, however, first disgusted with the Zhents' subservience to Bane and the loss of so many Zhentilar and then with their new subservience to Cyric, who in the end destroyed Zhentil Keep, Gwath became disgusted with the Zhents too.

Her new hope for power became the secretive Iron Throne in Sembia. Disguised as a beautiful sorceress named Gwanett, she did what the best spies in the Dales have failed to do, she rooted out some of the more important figures in the Iron Throne and made deals with them.

Even before she closed her dealings in Sembia, she began setting her plot here in Daggerdale into motion. Long ago, her daughter, Gothyl, had sought lichdom and failed, ending up as a demi-shade. Gwath entered the Tomb of Shraevyn and worked magics to place Gothyl's spirit into the Sword of the Dales which the ancient mage Shraevyn had created for our protection back in the days when Daggerdale still was Merrydale. With the help of one of her Netherese scrolls, Gwath had given Gothyl an ability to free herself from the sword by taking over my body.

Gwath then would have been able to remain in the background, where she preferred to be, while Gothyl - in my body and mind - would be running Daggerdale. Well, that didn't work out as planned either, because I was rescued.

However, when Gwath came back from Sembia, these events didn't bother her that much either. She would have had to drive the Zhents out of Dagger Falls anyway, and that much already was accompanied. Daughter Gothyl's fate was Gothyl's problem. She had failed Gwath and was no longer of interest.

Gwath set the next event into operation and saw to it that Tyran the Outlaw Prince received steady and reliable tips about Slater and the weaknesses of her Zhentilar in Teshwave, and as she knew he would, Tyran drove the Zhents out of Teshendale for her.

Next of all, she needed me, and she decided she was going to take me over herself this time. But the problem is, even with a Netherese scroll, it can take a lot of time to take the kind of control of a person that she wanted. If it's not done right, you get the body and lose the soul, and she needed not only my body but also my spirit - 100% intact. So, she needed a sheltered situation.

Her supply of Netherese scrolls was running short, and she had to use another one, this time to destroy the spirit of the beholder Xulla and take over its body. Xulla was a safe cover. The chances that anyone would bother him were as good as nil. It's just that Gwath forgot again, as she has so often, to take an important point into consideration.

The Xvimist priest down below was absolutely insane. He went so raving mad that he turned on his own, and one of them blew the whistle, showing you the way here. You rescued me on time, and in some way I still don't understand, you managed to destroy Gwath. All I know is that some wave of magic came over her, and her spirit just seemed to disintegrate.

In any case, the Dales and Cormyr will be better for it. I know where her tower is hidden, where there still are a few Netherese scrolls hidden, and I know who some of the powerful folks behind the Iron Throne in Sembia are, and I also know where there are some highly respected people in neighboring lands who really are nothing more than agents of the Zhentarim. So with Gwath destroyed, there's going to be a good housecleaning.

Now, my last comment, then it's time for me to rest again. Daggerdale is indebted to you folks. When you're tired of your adventuring, come back here to us. I can promise each of you a very valuable land grant. If you're a priest, we'll build you a temple. If you're a mage, we'll build you a tower or whatever else it is that a mage builds. If you're a bard, we could even try to start a new bard's college here in Daggerdale.

You see, I know where Gwath has her fortune hidden, and with it, we can do a lot of things that weren't possible earlier. But I also know that the wandering boots have to start pinching before the time's right for my offer. Just don't forget it. The new Daggerdale really needs folks like you."

Lord Ariton's remarks also are intended to add fuel to the PCs' fire. At this point, they should be led to the conclusion that their sigylls automatically destroy the people they symbolize. They then should be good and confused in *Tale of 2 Liches,* Part 4 of *Northern Journey,* when the sigylls destroy neither Xarth Kistar in Zhentil Keep nor Azimer in Myth Drannor.

All the while Randal Morn has been explaining things, Sir Delmis Ariton has looked on noncommittally, until Lord Morn made mention of Ssessibil Istahvar. At that point, Sir Ariton seems to be pondering something. At the end, he says:

It's interesting, Lord Morn, that you mention Ssessibil Istahvar. A Harper agent we both know has asked me if I would question our friends here on this matter. They went to Ssessibil a while back and met with him then in a barbarian tribe village up north. Shortly after that, the orcs who'd been guarding his tower for many years simply disbanded. He had been claiming to be a priest of Torm, and the barbarians were waiting for him to return, as he had promised he would.

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Since a few days after our friends here met with this Ssessibil, there's been no more sign of him. His tower is unguarded, but no one's found a way in. It has no doors or windows. Khelben in Waterdeep took an interest in this, and he says he can find no trace of Ssessibil in Faerûn. Now, the Harpers would like to know what happened, and they think something you folks did may have played a role in this. Can you shed any light on these things?

With Sir Ariton's remarks, we come to the end of *Backlands,* Part 3 of *Northern Journey.* The adventure continues in Part 4, *Tale of 2 Liches*. However, at this point, Sammaster is rather involved in his war with the Cult of the Dragon. If you want, you can have the pull of the symbols simply vanish for a certain amount of time, giving the PCs time to explore other parts of Daggerdale, seek Gwath's tower, clean up the Gwathburg. etc. When you're ready to have the PCs move on to *Tale of 2 Liches,* simply have the sigylls start tugging the PCs in that direction.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®
Fan Written Adventures

NORTHERN JOURNEY™

Part 4, Tale of 2 Liches

Version 3

For Adventuring Groups of Levels 7-9

An unofficial Adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS®.

Contents:

1. Teshendale
2. Zhentil Keep
3. Cormanthor
4. Myth Drannor
5. Lower Ashaba Valley
Cormanthor Weather Table

Supporting materials

To successfully play this adventure, players need the AD&D 2nd Edition Players Handbook. Spellusers also will be helped by Tome of Magic. Game Master's need the AD&D 2nd Edition Dungeon Master's Guide and the basic Forgotten Realms Campaign Accessory. Of considerable value are such products as *The Moonsea* accessory, the *Ruins of Zhentil Keep* accessory, *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves, Ruins of Myth Drannor, Volo's Guide to the Dalelands* and the *Dalelands* accessory. However, almost all of these additional accessories were out of print at the time of this writing.

Questions & Answers ...for Players and Game Masters

What's this segment about?

This module is intended as a continuation of Part 3 of the *Northern Journey, Backlands*.

As the adventure begins, the PCs all are in the walled city of Dagger Falls in Daggerdale. They have destroyed the drow lich Gwath, represented by the second of their six sigylls, and believed they also have destroyed Ssessibil Istahvar, represented by the first symbol. Both of these sigylls of contagion have vanished from their arms. Four of the six original sigylls still remain.

What kind of characters are allowed?

The final decision here is up to the Game Master. If your group has played *Silverymoon* and/or *Backlands,* it may be that some of the players would like to drop their own characters and start new ones. This module has been designed to make such a switch easy. No character beginning this module should have a lower level than 5 in his or her main class. Single class characters should have levels between 6 and 7. It is acceptable of some of the single class characters have reached level 8.

Races: Members of the elven and gnome races would be somewhat alien in this adventure and also would make certain plot difficulties for the Game Master. We suggest that the Game Master not allow these races. That also goes for special races not described in the Player's Handbook, such as half dragons, drow, half drow, etc. We suggest that PCs be restricted to the following races: Human, halfelf and dwarf. Halflings are a borderline case that should be considered carefully by a Game Master before being allowed.

Classes: We would recommend that the Game Master not allow Paladins. This class would create serious problems for the player and the Game Master in the course of this adventure. In addition, we do not believe it would be possible to place the Red Sigylls on the arm of a paladin, although some Game Masters may disagree. Priests or other clerics of Kelemvor should be allowed only under the condition that they wish to accompany the group. Kelemvor's clerics are immune from having such Sigylls placed upon them. Druids and mystics would be very interesting characters if personified by talented role-players. A Game Master should consider and decide whether he wants to assume this challenge. A druid would be taking part in this quest because of a compulsion, not because of his own wish.

Resisting the Sigylls

The red sigylls will try to prevent the PCs from veering from the best trails to Zhentil Keep , Myth Drannor and Scardale. In this module, the PCs can resist the pull of the sigylls for one entire day on each day during which they make a successful saving throw. The rules are as follows:

D&D 3rd Edition Campaigns: RW for will, DC 20.

AD&D 2nd Edition Campaigns: RW for breath weapon, penalty of 1.

Experience Points and Levels

The PCs should have gained a level between 7 and 9 by the time they start this module. In the course of this adventure, they should gain two or three new levels, ending the adventure with a level between 9 and 12.

Game Master's Notes from the project group ...

When Marv Olson and I started out on the *Northern Journey* seven years ago with a small module called *Out of the Frying Pan,* (the original version of today's module *Silverymoon*), it never occurred to us that our adventure one day would be taken up and further developed by gamers in several lands and enlarged into a sweeping set of eight modules. The broad base of ideas that have flown into *Northern Journey* is, of course extremely gratifying to us. In the past three years, the two of us have contributed little other than editing to the project. On the other hand, *Tale of 2 Liches* is all the evidence one could want that Marv and I really weren't needed for anything else in this phase of the project.

Before you begin familiarizing yourself with *Tale of 2 Liches,* I'd like to share some thoughts with you on what this module is and is not, and even more, what *Northern Journey* will do to *your* Realms, if you run the adventure by the book, and how you can avoid letting *Northern Journey* do things to your Realms that you'd rather not have done to them.

One large goal set by the *Northern Journey* project group is to create an optional expansion of the official Realms developed by TSR and WotC. In this module we offer a number of maps that substantially detail certain areas of the Realms and even add places that are not officially defined.

There are some WotC products with which the project is incompatible and will not attempt to reach compatibility. Key examples are the TSR novel *Crucible - the Trial of Cyric the Mad* by Troy Denning and the WotC *Cloak and Dagger* (2000). The reasons behind our deviations already have been detailed in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide* and on our Internet web site.

Those of you who read the various Forgotten Realms mailing lists in Internet no doubt are well aware of the lively and sometimes heated debate among list participants over the question of whether one should change what WotC officially has designed. Some gamers think this is what Game Mastering in the Realms is all about. Others write such work off as *mangling the Realms.*

Such differences of opinion also exist to a certain extent within the project group. However, we all are strongly against taking a position as a group on this question, and we have attempted to make *Tale of 2 Liches* useful to both factions. We certainly do many things in *Tale of 2 Liches* that would alter the Realms in manners that WotC probably never will consider. At the same time, we have laced this module with Game Master notes that offer alternatives for those Game Masters who don't like to have such sweeping impacts upon *their* Realms.

Before you start running this module, please take a close look at the effect *Northern Journey* as a whole will have upon *your* Forgotten Realms, if you run our adventure *by the book.* If you don't like elements of our outline, please consider well in advance how you wish to change things, to insure that your adventure runs smoothly and still portrays the Realms as you wish to see them. *Northern Journey* has above all sweeping impacts upon two major organizations in the Realms - the Zhentarim and the Iron Throne. These impacts only start to become apparent in this module and will be furthered developed in the last two modules of *Northern Journey.*

This information is presented in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* It is important that you read this outline in the *Campaign Guide* in advance.

October 2000
Greg Waters
Winona, Minnesota U.S.A.

Game Master: Module 3, *Backlands,* ended with the PCs in the company of the twice-rescued Randal Morn, in the city of Dagger Falls in Daggerdale. Sammaster's concentration was upon other things at the time, and the PCs had a bit of time available to act freely in Daggerdale, but the time finally comes when the sigylls begin pulling the PCs again in directions other than their own. The module resumes after the PCs leave Dagger Falls and head toward Teshwave. Tyran the Outlaw Prince is an official NPC detailed in the accessory *FRS1 Dalelands* by L.Richard Baker III (TSR - 1993), available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com.

1. Teshendale

Background for the Game Master

Game Master: Please see the Teshendale-Zhentil Keep map.

(Unofficial events - not chronicled by WotC) In Spring of the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), Tyran the Outlaw Prince and his rebels managed to drive the Zhentilar commander Slater (later lynched by her own troops in Dagger Falls) out of Teshwave. In doing so, Tyran managed to free the town of Teshwave, which was little more than a ruin, from the Zhentarim, while at the same time make the surrounding lands more dangerous.

The PCs reach Teshendale in the summer or fall (dependent upon your campaign's pace) of the Year of the Unstrung Harp. At this time, Tyran controls only the part of Teshendale within about a 20-mile (32 km) radius of Teshwave and the small but fortified village of Dalesouth about 30 miles (50 km) southeast of Teshwave on the Shind Road at the edge of Cormanthor. Since the Year of the Gauntlet, when the Zhentarim's support of Teshendale was suddenly reduced, Tyran had been using Dalesouth openly as a fortified base for his rebels, and the town is still under their control.

The biggest problem in Teshendale nowadays is the number of renegade Zhentilar who had escaped Teshwave and Dagger Falls when the freedom forces reconquered both cities. Most of the Zhentilar in the two cities either fell in battle or were captured, but an estimated 350 Zhentilar still are at large. Many now use the Border Forest and the northern fringe of Cormanthor as hideouts, to plague the countryside as bandits. Bands of Zhentilar also have taken over most of the small villages of Teshendale that the Zhentarim left intact, and Zhentilar from Zhentil Keep have occupied parts of Voonlar but are meeting with heavy resistance there.

After the destruction of the Flaming Tower and the Temple in the Sky, the few remaining Knights of Myth Drannor - Florin Falconhand, Merith Strongbow and Illistyl Elventree - returned to Shadowdale, only to learn that Zhentil Keep had opened a barracks with a unit of Zhentilar in Voonlar, the population had risen up against them and that civil war was raging in the village. Falcon, Merith and Illistyl were joined by the Rangers Three and a band of Harpers and then surprisingly the Red Ravens Mercenary Company, who had not returned to Arabel after all. The Zhents in Voonlar - along with many parts of the village - have been severely damaged, and it is believed that it is only a matter of days until all of Voonlar is liberated.

Rayanna the Rose, leader of the Red Ravens, explained her presence by saying her outfit is under direct contract from King Azoun IV in Cormyr to remain in the Voonlar and Teshendale areas until the renegade Zhents have been eliminated. She says Azoun has been withdrawing his battle forces from Tilverton and his no intention of invading the Dales, but he also has no intention of letting the Zhents get a foothold in any part of the Dales again. She also reports having learned from the Purple Dragons that most of the more important Zhentilar have withdrawn from Scardale, that Sembia is about to pull up stakes there as well and that the other occupation troops probably will leave soon too.

The information about Voonlar will have a direct effect upon the PCs only if they go there from the orc camp and the information on Scardale is important only at the end of this module, when the PCs reach the town on the Dragon Coast. However, the PCs can and should get this news when they reach Teshwave.

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After conquering Teshendale, the Zhentarim destroyed almost everything but Teshwave, and little of this city stands anymore. Most of the buildings fell into ruin during the Zhent occupation and others were destroyed when Tyran drove Slater and her troops out of Teshwave. When the PCs travel through Teshendale, they will see the ruins of many settlements that are overgrown with moss and weeds. The Zhentarim conquered Teshendale in the Year of the Gulagoar (1316 DR) and burned most of its villages soon thereafter. Nature has had 55 years to hide the ruins.

However, there were a few farm villages in Teshendale where the population was forced to flee, where the Zhentarim then brought in slave labor to produce food supplies for the large garrison that had been stationed in Teshwave. These villages now are strongholds for many of the renegade Zhentilar still in the dale. They are *Granling, Bowshaft, Hamer's Bend* and *Dalesouth.* In addition, the unofficial village of *Bane's Boot* is mapped and defined. This village belongs neither to *Teshendale* nor the Dalelands, but rather to the Moonsea area, where it is under the direct rule of Zhentil Keep.

There are two types of *"Zhent"* troops in this module who call themselves *Zhentilar* - the real *Zhentilar,* who are the troops of *Zhentil Keep,* and the renegade Zhents who had been stationed in *Teshwave* and *Dagger Falls* in the service of the *Zhentarim.* These troops are neither recognized by nor welcome in *Zhentil Keep,* although a large number of these men once were Zhentilar serving the city. The current ruler of the keep, the supposed Lord Orgauth, does not need the extra troops at present and does not have the capacity to house and feed them. When these troops come to the keep, they are turned back with the possibly false information that they have orders to ride to the *Citadel of the Raven.* What position Lord Manshoon and the leadership of the citadel take in relation to these unattached Zhents, when and if they arrive at the citadel, is up to you as Game Master.

In addition to the renegade Zhentilar plaguing the countryside, there also are an estimated 4,000 orcs at large, orcs who had served the Zhents in Zhentil Keep, Teshwave and Daggerdale. Interestingly, one has seen fewer and fewer of these orcs recently. They seem to be a problem only along the stretch of the Tesh Trail south of the Border Forest.

The reason one is seeing less and less of the orcs is that they are being pressed into service by orc generals Vraak and Gröpp. Both are veterans who fought with the Zhent contingent that joined King Azoun in his crusade against the Tuigan Horde in the Year of the Turret (1360 DR). Vraak and Gröpp were decorated by Azoun for their deeds, and they and their troops developed a sense of pride unusual in orcs. Vraak commanded the orc unit and Gröpp was his deputy.

In the Year of the Wyvern (1363 DR), Vraak and his troops were ordered to return from Thesk, where they had remained, and to be stationed in Zhentil Keep. As usual, the Zhents treated them as dirt, a situation that generated a deep-seated hatred for the Zhents within the orcs. When Cyric's minions destroyed Zhentil Keep five years later in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR), Vraak, Gröpp and their troops destroyed the one bridge that still connected the main part of the keep to the Foreign Quarter south of the Tesh, cutting off the last escape route of many of the keep's residents and guaranteeing their death. They also saw to it that Rinda could escape with the Cyrinishad.

In this manner, Vraak, Gröpp and their troops won their long desired revenge against their Zhent masters. After that, they fled into the open lands between Yûlash and Teshendale and then into Cormanthor, slowly working their way westward. The orcs who had served the Zhents and had escaped from Daggerdale or Teshwave are no match for the troops of Vraak and Gröpp. They are pressing the other orcs into service under the two generals, who have amassed an army of 3,500 orcs in a camp inside of Cormanthor, about 15 miles southwest of Voonlar.

Vraak, Gröpp and their troops are just as evil as any other orcs, but they have made the Zhentarim into their sworn enemies, and they are not interested in damaging anyone who is an enemy of the Zhents.

The narrative begins when the PCs leave Daggerdale. Be sure to keep a close watch on the weather tables. Depending upon how quickly your group has moved forward, it is quite possible that there is snow on the ground or that it is snowing. If there is snow, tracks are easy to spot and identify! The same goes for wet mud after a rainfall.

The Adventure begins ...

For a short while, you've been freed of the magic in the symbols on your arms. Only four of the six original sigylls remain. Those of Ssessibil Istahvar in the Lonely Tower and Gwath of Daggerdale have vanished. But if the information Ssessibil gave you at Beorunna's Well is correct, the first three of the remaining symbols - from top to bottom - belong to the following:

- **Xarth Kistar,** a priest in Zhentil Keep.
- **Azimer,** a lich in Myth Drannor.
- **Harbet Gall,** a priest in the Great Dale.

The last symbol, showing a mountain castle at night, remains a mystery.

Game Master: If tracks can be seen, there are tracks of horses, men and orcs between the Border Forest and the Tesh.

The trail north of Daggerdale has remained mercifully devoid of encounters as far as the camping area west of the ruins of the Flaming Tower, where you spent the night with the Freedom Fighters waiting to attack the tower the following day. However, although the trail has been empty, you're convinced you have seen movement at times from within the forest. It looks like you'll have to hold a tight night watch.

Game Master: There are no scheduled encounters at any particular time until the third morning, but at times of your choice, encounters with bands of vagabond orcs and renegade Zhentilar are likely. For Zhentilar statistics, see *Tesh Valley Encounters* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. If there are more than 5 Zhentilar, there is a 25% chance that one is a priest. There is a 70% chance that he is a priest of Xvim and a 30% chance that he is a priest of Cyric. The PCs can be watched from hiding places during the day. As the PCs ride eastward, the Border Forest recedes to the North. The land north of the Tesh is slightly rolling, with copses of trees and lots of brush, ideal cover for anyone planning an ambush. The forest is about 10 miles (15 km) distant, when the group stops to make camp for the second evening. The PCs reach a point on the Tesh Trail just about due south of Snowmantle.

The following encounter takes place at daybreak of the third day.

As daylight begins to sweep across the Tesh Valley from the east, you notice a band of about a dozen well-armed orcs 500 feet/150 meters or so behind you on the trail. They're sitting on their horses, doing nothing at the moment but observing you. And as you look a bit more closely, you can see there also is a respectable number of orcs within the brush and the trees north of the trail and river. You turn your head a bit more to the East, you see another group of about 20 orcs blocking the trail ahead of you.

It looks like you're surrounded. However, it does look like these orcs aren't in a big hurry to kill you. From the group of 20 ahead of you on the road, several break off and start riding in your direction, no weapons leveled yet. One of the three is carrying a shabby, light gray flag, or maybe it's just a dirty white flag.

The orcs are wearing black armor of a Zhentish style, considerably better in quality than one is used to seeing among orcs. They also bear properly painted shields with a coat of arms showing a burning city in black silhouette against a yellow-green sky. In the center is a large, domed building. It could even be the Black Temple of Bane that once stood in Zhentil Keep. In the foreground is a bleeding skull. *(See graphic)*

Game Master: This orc band belongs to the *Brigade of the Bleeding Zhent Skulls*. For statistics see *Tesh Valley Encounters* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* The patrol conists of an orc leader and 5-12 Orcs. The reaction is, of course, up to the players. The orcs will not attack the players. They want to find out who they are. If the PCs attack, the orcs will defend themselves, even if it means heavy losses. If the PCs start a fight, run it out. If any PCs survive and are captured, they still will be questioned as to whether they're Zhents and be taken bound to Vraak and Gröpp for questioning. Otherwise:

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One of the orcs, who seems to be something of a leader, looks at you and asks, *"You Zhents?"*

Game Master: If the PCs are dumb enough to claim to be Zhents, the orcs will try to massacre them on the spot, probably succeeding and bringing the portion of this adventure involving your PCs to an abrupt end. The only way to continue with *Northern Journey* is to roll up a new set of PCs who suddenly have had encounters with the red vision, have sigylls suddenly appear on their arms, etc. If the PCs are smart enough not to claim to be Zhents, the leader will say:

"Good, maybe you no Zhents. Come. We go talk Generals Vraak and Gröpp!"

Game Master: It should be clear to the PCs that the orcs are insist they accompany them to see Vraak and Gröpp, but they are doing nothing to harm the PCs, and they don't attempt to disarm them or relive them of any of their possessions, if the group has not attacked the orcs.

The orcs will lead the PCs southward to a ford on the Tesh and then farther southward to the orc camp in the forest shown on your map. This leg of the journey will take three and a half days. The PCs will reach the *Brigade of the Bleeding Zhent Skulls* in early afternoon on the fourth day.

What takes place in the camp is dependent to a great extent upon what the PCs have done up until now and how they react. The orcs are used to taking losses and will not overreact if there has been combat between them and the PCs that has caused orc losses. Vraak and Gröpp are mostly interested in whether the PCs are Zhent supporters are not.

If the generals hold the PCs for allies of the Zhents, they will try to kill them as painfully and mercilessly as possible. If on the other side they consider the PCs to be enemies of the Zhents, they will brag excessively, repeatedly showing and mentioning the medals they received from Cormyr's King Azoun IV in the *Horde* campaign in Thesk.

This recognition from Azoun has turned Vraak, Gröpp and their troops into proud orcs, and nothing wins their friendship as easily as recognition of them and their medals.

Vraak and Gröpp plan to try to besiege the supply routes to the Citadel of the Raven. This is not a good idea, because it will force Manshoon to liquidate them, which he can do. The PCs should get extra EPs if they convince Vraak and Gröpp to concentrate upon the Zhents in a more purposeful way. The following describes what the PCs see after being brought into the orc camp.

After following the trail through the forest for several hours, you begin passing frequent guard stations manned by orcs and occasional half-orcs, and then you come into a large camp in an area of the forest where a number of trees have been felled, making the forest thinner than it had been, with several small openings, although nothing like a full clearing.

The camp holds about 2,000 warriors, the great majority of them orcs, although some are half-orcs and there also are humans wearing the same coat-of-arms as the orcs. Several things strike you about this camp. It seems to be incredibly well organized for an orc encampment. It barely smells bad, and things are kept relatively clean. And again, the orcs in this camp are better equipped than usually is the case, most wearing black Zhent armor and bearing weapons of reasonable quality. In the center of the camp is a group of about a dozen military tents of good quality.

The orcs who are guiding you take you directly into a tent filled with several important looking orcs wearing uniforms that show Zhentilar officers' symbols of rank. Two of them, sitting on ornate chairs at a staff officers' table, are wearing Zhentilar generals' stars but again bearing the same coats of arms as the other orcs, rather than Zhentilar symbols.

Both orc generals grin at you. One of them says - pointing to a cormyt military medal on his chest - *"My name General Vraak. I fight with King Azoun in Thesk."*

The other general says, *"Me too. General Gröpp. Also with Azoun."*

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Game Master: At this point things are up to you as Game Master and your PCs. This encounter is wide open and can go anywhere. If this PCs convince Vraak and Gröpp and are allowed to go their way, they can reach Voonlar in half a day or return directly to the Tesh Trail north of the camp and the forest in one long day or with a late start in a day and a half.

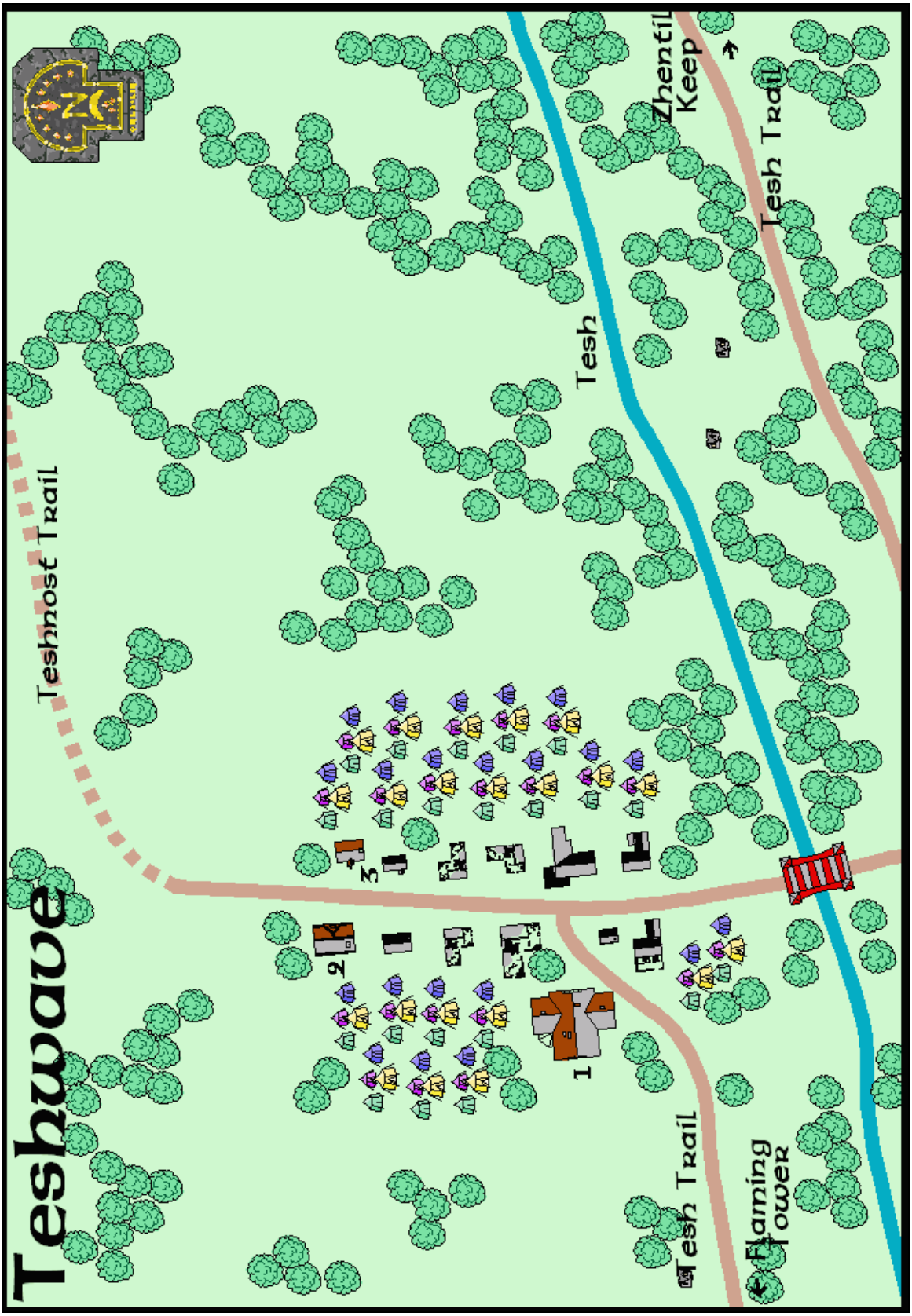
The Adventure Goes On

Game Master: Regardless of which way your PCs Travel, they eventually will reach Zhentil Keep. If they ride from the orc camp or from Voonlar northwards, they will reach Teshwave in a total of three days time. In this case, you need to use the Teshwave scenario below. If they travel from Voonlar to Teshwave, they will have to pass through the mostly abandoned and ruined village of *Granling*,.

If they are inclined to travel over Yûlash to the Keep, you may wish to discourage this by having NPCs point out that it's almost impossible to get past the Red Plumes at Yûlash. On this route, they will pass through Dalesouth, where Tyran's troops may view the PCs more suspiciously than they might like. On this route, the PCs will need six days to reach the keep.

The PCs should encounter very serious problems with the Red Plumes in the Yûlash area and even more serious problems if they cause losses for the Red Plumes during an encounter. Getting past Yûlash should be extremely difficult. In addition to the Red Plumes in the Yûlash area, encounters with bands of orcs (not affiliated with Vraak and Gröpp yet) and bands of renegade Zhentilar are quite likely west of Yûlash. During the first day's ride northeast of Yûlash, patrols of Red Plumes also are likely.

If the PCs go on the other hand to Teshwave, they will pass through Hamer's Bend and Bane's Boot or Bowshaft and Yûlash. Hamer's Bend is also a potential source of problems with Xvimists, although there's not much in Bane's Boot except for farmers.


Teshwave
Teshnost Trail
Tesh
Zhentil Keep
Tesh Trail
Tesh Trail
Flaming Tower
1
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Teshwave

Teshwave - Map, Status & Encounters

Hamlet, Nonstandard (Rebel camp). AL: CG. 5 gp limit. Assets: 100,000 gp. Population: 400 Human rebels.

Game Master: To our knowledge, there is no official WotC map of Teshwave, however, the remnants of the town are well described in the TSR accessory *The Moonsea* by John Terra, available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com. WotC's official versions of *Teshwave* and of *Teshendale* proper still remain under the control of the Zhentarim. Our unofficial maps and descriptions of *Teshendale* and *Teshwave* are compatible with the official material in *The Moonsea,* but in our adventure, *Teshwave* has been captured by the rebel *Tyran the Outlaw Prince* while *Tyran* still continues to conduct guerilla warfare against the Zhents in the official products (see also the TSR accessory *The Dalelands* by L. Richard Baker III, another product available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com).

Map: The map of *Teshwave* shows that only three buildings are intact: The Inn *The Rapids* (1), the village stables (2) and *Verguns Caravan Stop* (3). Hallorfan Teshdale, owner and operator of *The Rapids,* remained in *Teshwave* after Tyrans takeover and still runs the inn. Tyran is well aware that Hallorfan was forced to run the inn for the Zhents, although he hated them.

Vergun, however, is considered a traitor by Tyran's men. He disappeared when the Zhents were driven from town. If he is found, he will be summarily hanged by Tyran's men. They have taken over the operation of Vergun's store.

The rest of *Teshwave* consists of unusable ruins. Three other buildings still stood before Slater and her Zhents were driven from town: The *Manor House,* where Slater and earlier Guthbert Golthammer lived as commanders of the Zhent troops, *The Pit,* a store that had been turned into a gambling casino, festhall and tavern, and the shrine, which served in turn Bane, Cyric and in the end Iyachtu Xvim. All three, along with the shabby lean-tos that had been used by the Zhentish orcs in Teshwave, were destroyed when Tyran took the city, or what's left of it.

Status: Tyran's men succeeded in stashing supplies in Dalesouth, but it is difficult bringing these supplies over the trailless stretch between Dalesouth and Teshwave. Tyran had counted on importing supplies from the Dales over Voonlar, and he and his men captured the treasury of the Zhent commander Slater in Teshwave, so he can afford to buy such supplies, however, because of the street fighting in Voonlar, it's impossible for caravans to reach Teshwave over Voonlar at present.

During their occupation, the Zhents allowed Hallorfan and his personnel to live in the run-down *The Rapids,* but they supplied the food and drink Hallorfan served, and no one was paid for their work. There still is a good stock of beer from various parts of Cormyr, Sembia, the Dales and the Moonsea in the cellars of *The Rapids,* along with enough salted meat in barrels, to feed Tyran's troops for another three to four rides. After that, the lack of supplies could turn into a serious problem. Vergun sold shoddy goods at steep prices. Tyran's men have depleted most of the store's stock. If the PCs seek anything in the store, they will find the quality of the goods low.

Encounters: Tyran has about 400 men stationed in Teshwave at present, almost all of them in tents surrounding the ruins. If the PCs come to *Teshwave,* guards will be suspicious, cautious and thorough. They will have to be convinced that the PCs are not Zhents or Zhent sympathizers.

Voonlar – Status and Encounters

Small Town, Nonstandard (civil uprising). AL: N. 200 gp limit. Assets: 1,200,000 gp. Population: Mixed (98% Human, 2% half elf, dwarf, halfling).

An official map of Voonlar appears in the module module FRC2, *The Curse of the Azure Bonds*, available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com. The map in *Curse of the Azure Bonds* is inconsistent with information contained in the *Moonsea* accessory, which has no map. We have attempted to maintain compatibility with both official versions, giving the *Moonsea* version the priority in cases where there is a conflict.

Status: (The following *NJ* approach contradicts in part canon information in *Cloak and Dagger*.) With the powers at his disposal in the substantially shrunken *Zhentil Keep,* Lord Orgauth does not plan any great military campaigns. He intends to keep most of his Zhentilar in the city to protect it against possible attacks from Hillsfar and/or Mulmaster. Nonetheless, Orgauth did not want to sit back and see Zhentil Keep's influence in Voonlar eradicated, and he assumed Shadowdale and Cormyr would do nothing against the Zhents in Voonlar, as always had been the case.

The Zhentarim may be able to do without certain trade routes and caravan business, but a balance of power in control over trade between the Moonsea area, the Dales and Cormyr is critically important for *Zhentil Keep.* Thus, when *Dagger Falls* fell, Orgauth established a Zhentilar barracks in *Voonlar* with a contingent of 30 soldiers.

This was a mistake. It sparked an uprising. Orgauth then made a second mistake and sent a second contingent of 100 Zhentilar to Voonlar, including a few powerful mages and Xvimist priests. They burned a trail through Voonlar to the former Cyric temple, where they began meeting heavy resistance, but then forged their way into the garden quarter and into the warehouse district, only to be brought to a surprised stop by the remaining Knights of Myth Drannor, the Rangers Three and the Red Ravens.

Since then, fighting has continued, and parts of the Zhent-occupied areas are in flames. The Zhentilar commander has requested more reinforcements, but unknown to him or anyone else in Voonlar, Lord Orgauth considers this to be a battle he no longer can win, and he intends to send no other help. Instead, the keep's diplomats are insisting elsewhere that the soldiers were not sent by the keep but rather are renegade Zhentilar from Teshwave and Dagger Falls who were refused entry to the keep.

The Zhentarim puppet in Voonlar, the *"Bron,"* Buorstag Hlammthyl, and several of his sheriffs were captured early on by enraged farmers from Voonlar, and they were lynched.

Voonlar is a small village with large farms to the north of the city. On the northwestern edge of the village there once stood a temple to Bane, later taken over by Cyric's church and recently destroyed in a battle between Cyricists and Xvimists. The temple ruin is on the road from Voonlar to Teshwave in the north. To the north of the temple are several farms, all of which have been burned, together with their fields. On the northwestern edge of town stood a Shine to Tempus, but this was leveled in the early stages of the fighting.

To the south of the ruined Bane-Cyric temple are the Common Gardens of Voonlar, which also lay in ashes at the moment. The renegade Zhents are holed up in the partly destroyed 25 or so buildings surrounding what were the common gardens. The Zhents also hold a forester's home and a firewood glade just inside the forest to the west of the village.

In the southwestern part of the village is a large temple to Chauntea with huge temple gardens spreading to the northeast from the temple. The northern part of the temple gardens have turned into a no man's land that has the two bands of Zhents in the northern part of the village cut off from each other. Southeast of this northern part of the common gardens are the warehouses and supply yards of Voonlar, which are involved in heated battle at the time the PCs arrive. The Zhentilar hold the warehouses and supply yards, but the Red Ravens are headquartered in the Shield Trading Co. headquarters just to the southeast and are launching rather merciless attacks upon the Zhents.

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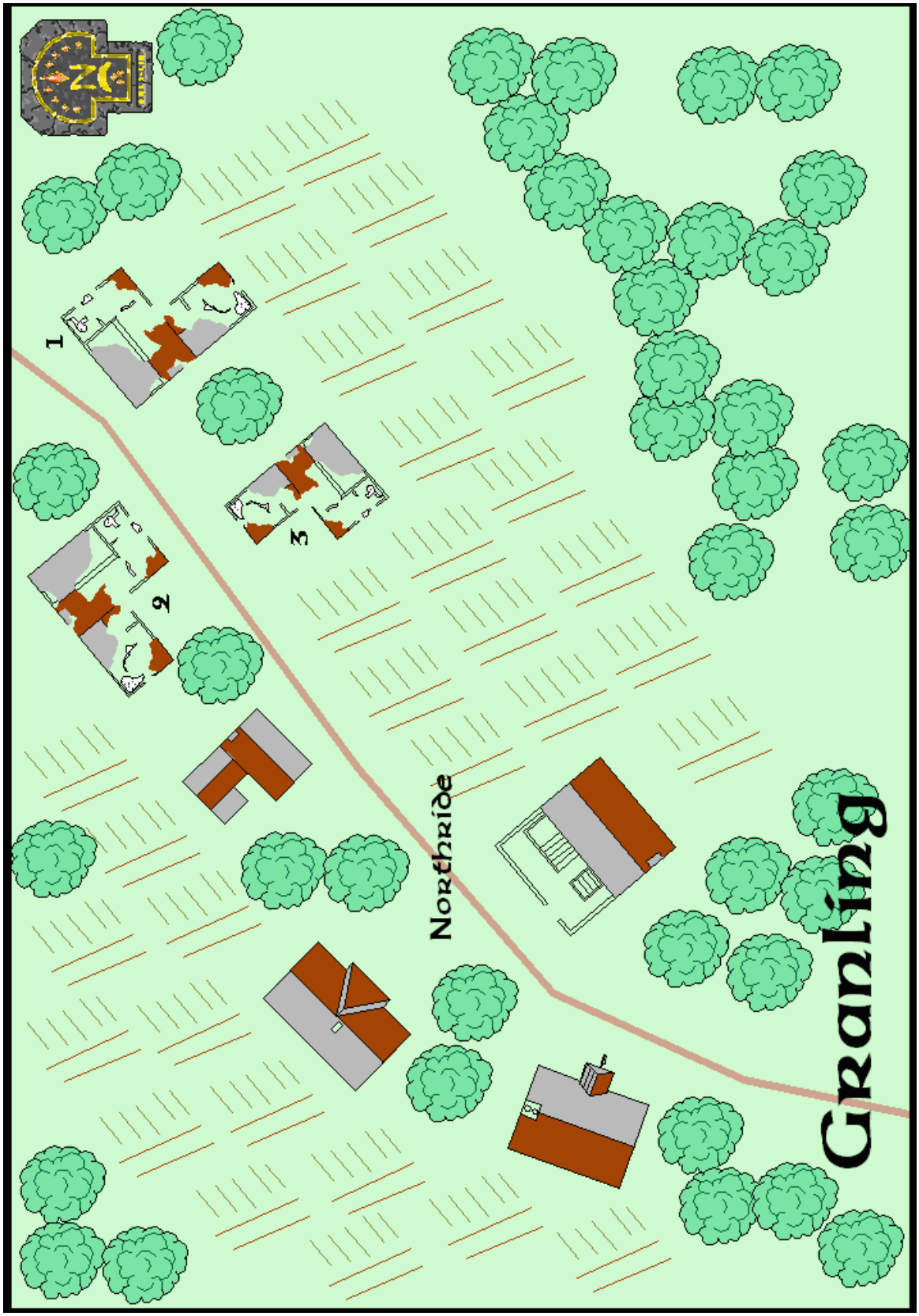
The remaining members of the Knights of Myth Drannor - Florin Falconhand, Merith Strongbow and Illistyl Elventree - and the Rangers Three are using the building that had been the stronghold of Bane's Hands and later of the Zhentilar as their base, but most of the time they can be found on the grounds of the Chauntea temple, making attacks against the Zhents to their north. Several buildings in the areas occupied by the Zhents are in flames, but the southwestern and eastern parts of Voonlar remain intact, including the *Whistling Wizard Inn,* the *Three Elves Inn,* the *Sign of the Shield,* the *Boring Pig* and the *White Stag Tavern.* The *White Stag* and the *Sign of the Shield* are close enough to the battlefield though, that they remain closed. The other taverns and inns are open for business.

Encounters: What your PCs encounter if they come to Voonlar depends upon the point where they enter the village. If the enter into the firewood glade or to the north of it, they'll be riding into territory occupied by the hard-pressed Zhents and approaching the Zhents from the rear. If they ride into the village south of the firewood glade, they'll be entering the battle area under the command of Florin Falconhand of the Knights of Myth Drannor. Regardless of how the PCs enter, they can expect a sharp challenge from the ranks of whatever party they ride into.

Granling - Map, Status & Encounters

Map and Status: Thorp, Nonstandard (abandoned). AL: E at present. 0 gp limit. Assets: 100,000 gp. Population: No permanent, temporary 12 Human Zhentilar. Tyran's troops made a guerilla attack here about a month before taking Teshwave, freeing the slaves and mercilessly killing all of the Zhentilar, the Zhentarim mage and the Cyric priest who had controlled the village. An inn that had been converted into a Zhent barracks (2) and two of six farms (1 and 3) were destroyed in the battle. The village was abandoned by the rebels and now is occupied by 12 renegade Zhentilar, who are holed up in the four farms that still are intact.

Encounters: There are no mages or priests here. The Zhent warriors all are fighters levels 1-3.

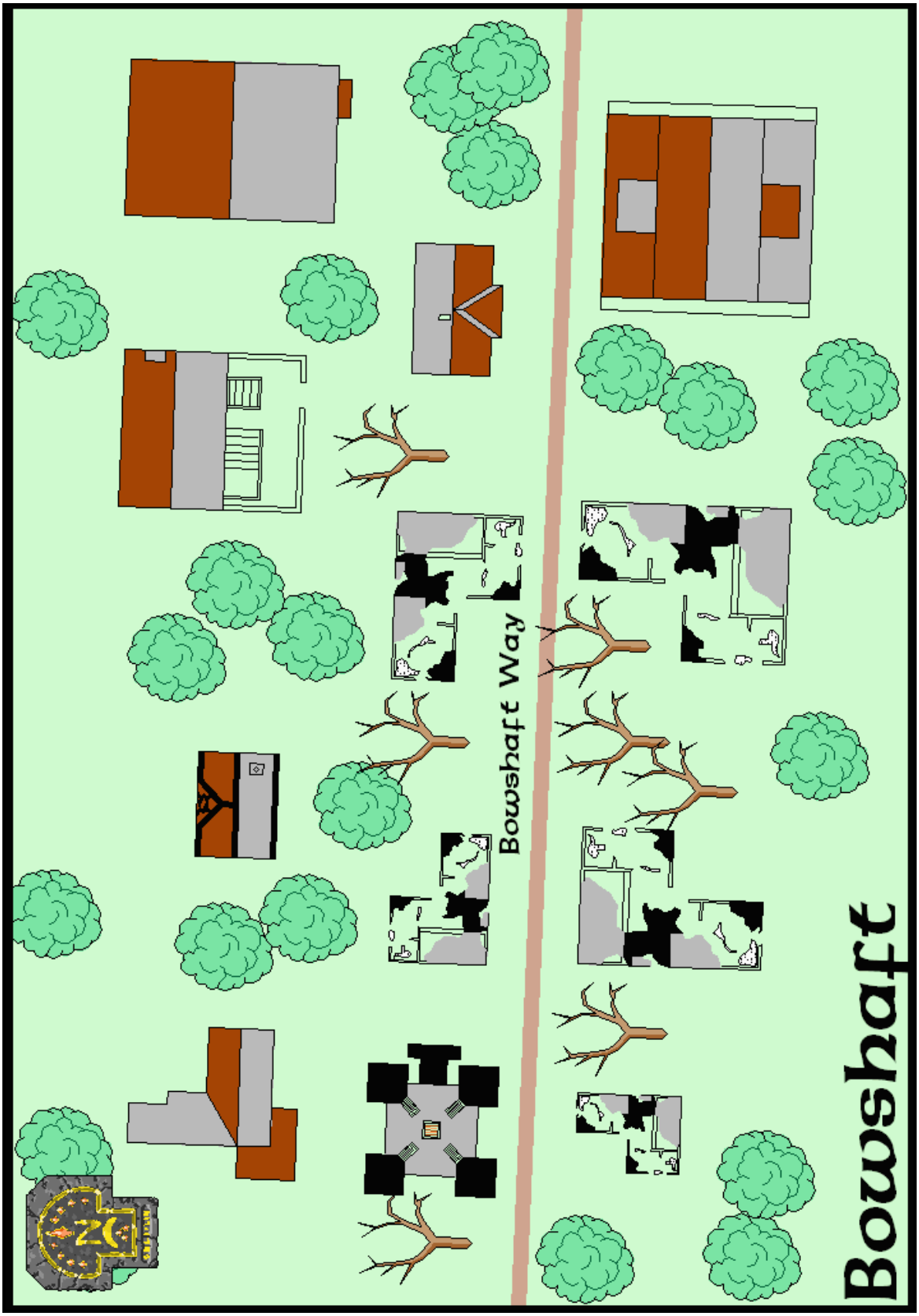


Granling

Bowshaft - Map, Status & Encounters

Map and Status: Thorp, Nonstandard (abandoned). AL: E at present. 0 gp limit. Assets: 20,000 gp. Population: No permanent, temporary 15 Human Zhentilar. The majority of the Zhentilar in Bowshaft rode to defend Teshendale and did not return. The 50 slave farm workers in Bowshaft rebelled against the second level Zhentarim mage and 10 Zhentilar who remained behind, killing all of them but also suffering heavy losses of their own. The 29 surviving slaves are making their way through Cormanthor, planning to bypass Voonlar and then try to make their way to Shadowdale. A barracks and five farms were destroyed in the uprising. The village now is occupied by 15 renegade Zhentilar who are holed up in the five farms and a smithy that survived undamaged. The smithy is the only building still intact on the south side of the *Bowshaft Way.*

Encounters: There are a 5th level Necromancer, a 4th level priest of Cyric, 1 level 10 fighter, 2 level 7 fighters and 10 fighters levels 1-3 scattered among the six buildings that still are intact.

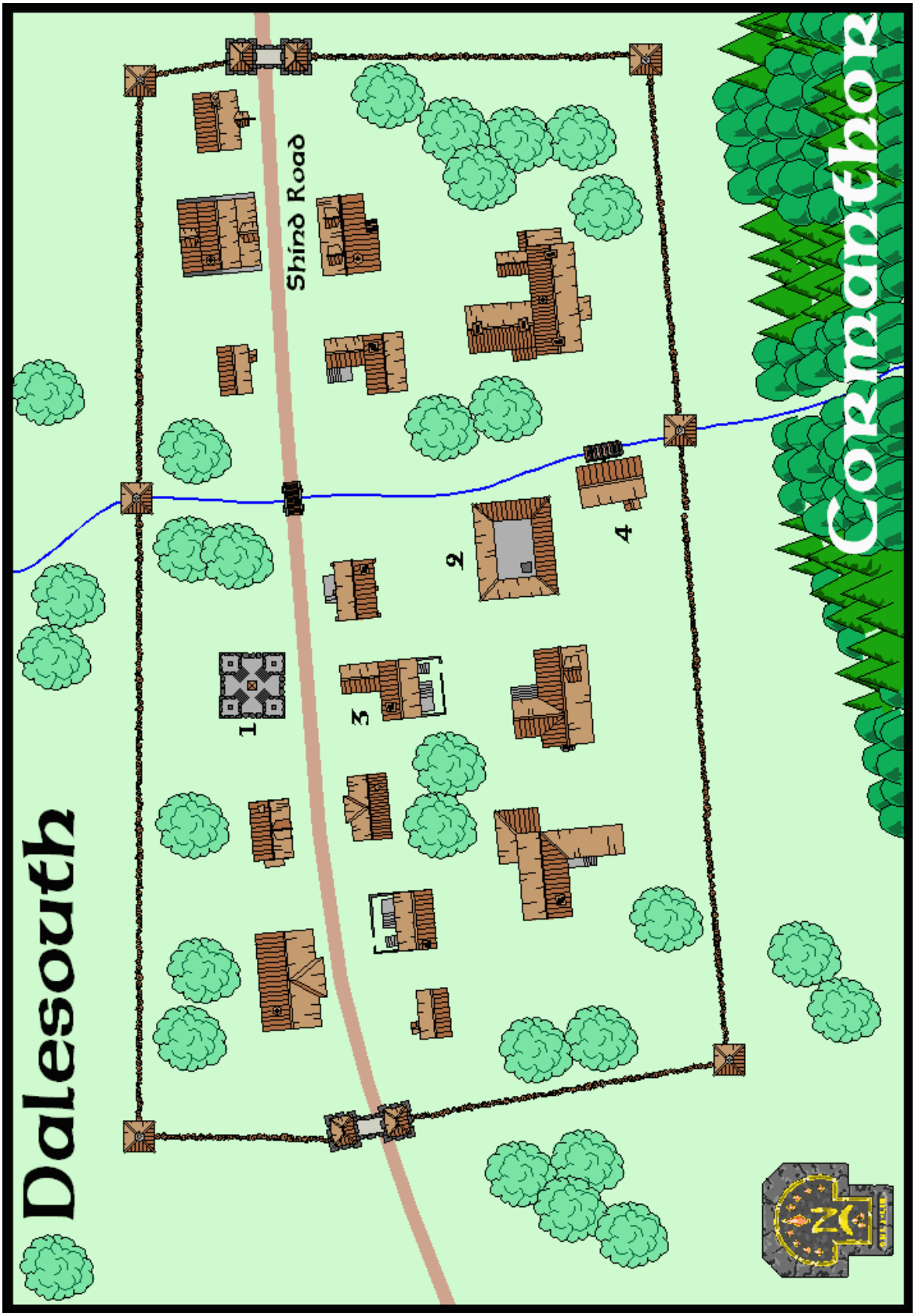


Bowshaft

Dalesouth - Map, Status & Encounters

Map and Status: Thorp, Conventional. AL: CG. 30 gp limit. Assets: 220,000 gp. Population: 62, Human. The village is surrounded by two wooden walls 5 yards (meters) high with wooden watchtowers and a variety of traps in the ground within 100 yards (meters) of the outer wall. The village has a barracks (1), a smithy (3), a large granary (2), a mill (4) and 14 farms. It is in the hands of Tyran's troops, who do not ride more than a mile or two (up to 3 km) from the wall, because of the danger of attack from renegade Zhentilar.

Encounter: The PCs will be sharply scrutinized and carefully interrogated by Tyran's men.



Dalesouth

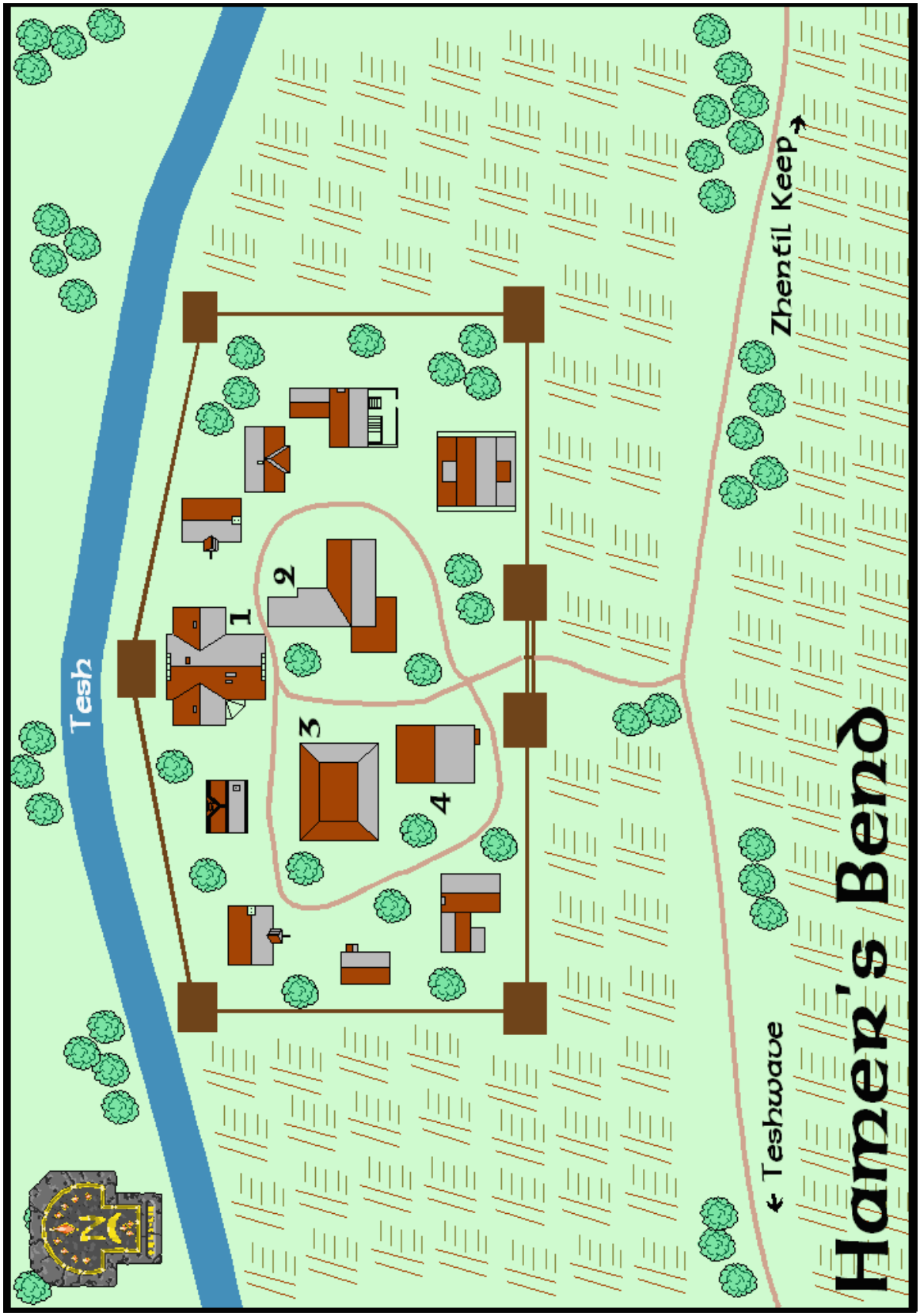
Hamer's Bend - Map & Encounters

Map and Status: Thorp, Nonstandard (Zhentish). AL: LE. 50 gp limit. Assets: 420,000 gp. Population: 74, Human. This village is surrounded by a wooden wall with wooden watch towers. The fields are outside the wall. Within the wall are a third level Zhentarim mage, a second level Xvimist priest and 45 Zhentilar, along with 30 slave farm workers. An inn that was converted to a barracks (1), a smithy (2), a farm that has been converted to slaves' quarters (4), a general store (3) that successively served as a temple to Bane, Cyric and Xvim and eight farms stand within the wall.

When the PCs approach the village, they will see slaves plowing the fields, guarded by Zhentilar carrying whips. All of the slaves are naked from the waist up, regardless of the temperature, and many bear whip scars on their backs. If the PCs ask questions, the Zhentilar will not acknowledge that these people are slaves, but rather will contend they are murderers and other hardened criminals serving sentences at hard labor.

Encounters: Zhentil Keep controls Hamer's Bend. The soldiers here are not renegades, but rather Zhentilar of the Keep under Lord Orgauth's command. The keep needs capable craftsmen and adventurers, the former to help rebuild, the latter to clear the ruins in the northern sector of undead and other monsters, so that reconstruction can be speeded up.

The Zhentilar here have orders not to hinder the travel to the keep of adventurers or craftsmen. It will be relatively easy for the PCs to pass this village, as long as they are not hostile. That includes not trying to free slaves, which will be difficult for paladins and other lawful good characters.



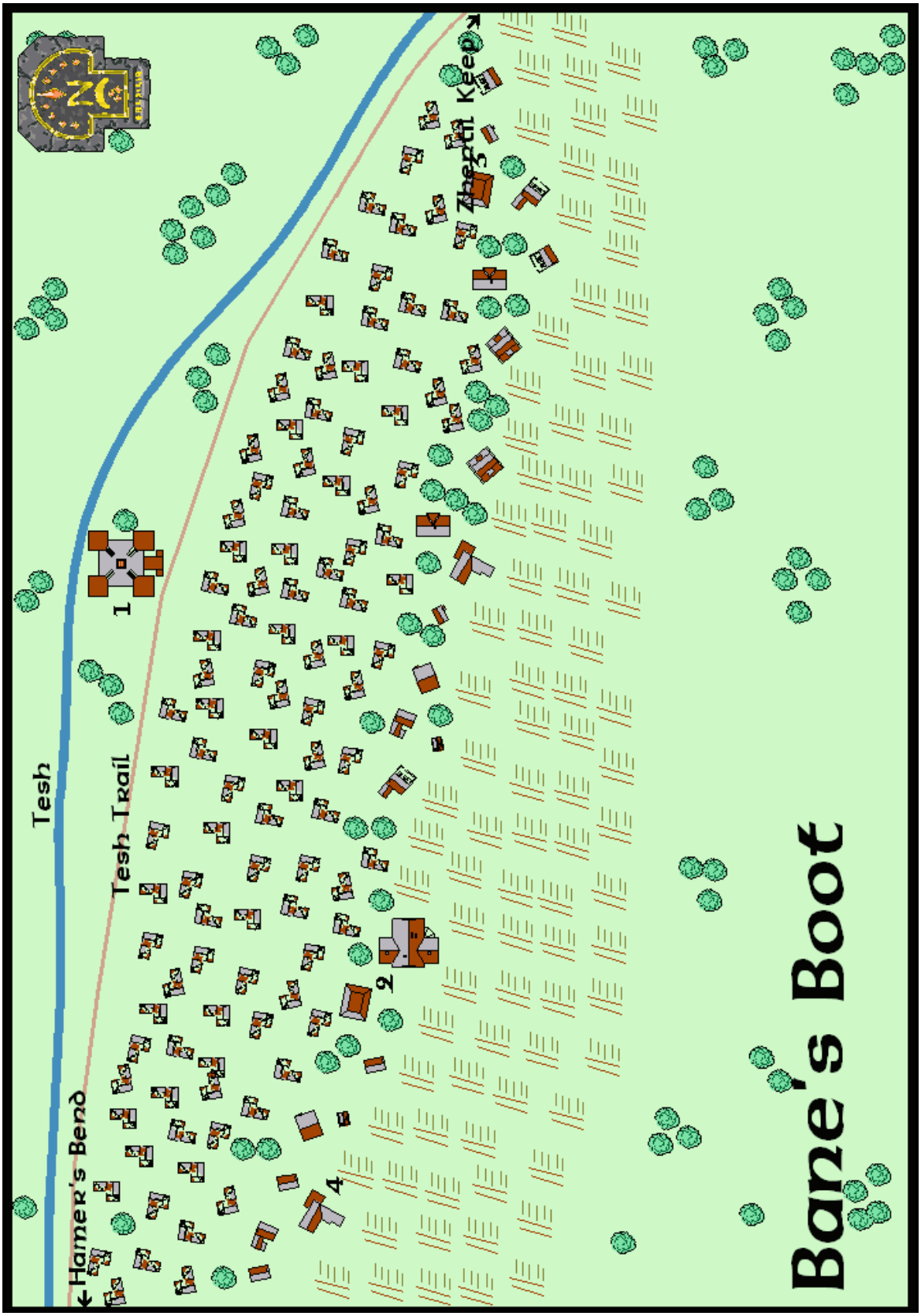
Hamer's Bend

Bane's Boot - Map, Status & Encounters

Bane's Boot is not a part of Teshendale. It belongs to the Moonsea area.

Map and Status: Hamlet, Conventional. AL: LE. 100 gp limit. Assets: 1,250,000 gp. Population: 104, Human. This is a village, mostly of farmers, and it is under Lord Orgauth's rule. It originally had a population of about 500, but the forces that ravaged Zhentil Keep three years ago also wreaked havoc here, and only some of the surviving farm families have returned. The southern part of Bane's Boot away from the Tesh Trail still is mostly intact, but the area along the Tesh is in ruin. A Zhentilar outpost stands between the trail and the river.

Encounters: The Zhentilar outpost is manned by 10 Zhentilar fighters, levels 1-3. The soldiers here are not renegades, but rather Zhentilar of the Keep under Lord Orgauth's command. The keep needs capable craftsmen and adventurers, the former to help rebuild, the latter to clear the ruins in the northern sector of undead and other monsters, so that reconstruction can be speeded up. The Zhentilar here have orders not to hinder the travel to the keep of adventurers or craftsmen. It will be relatively easy for the PCs to pass this village, as long as they are not hostile.



Bane's Boot

2. Zhentil Keep

Large city, Conventional. AL: Mixed. Gp limit: None. Assets: 12,000,000 gp. Population: 18,000 Mixed and fluctuating, about 90% human with varying numbers of elves, half elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes and half orcs.

You can run this segment of the adventure best when you use it together with the TSR boxed set *The Ruins of Zhentil Keep* by Kelvin Melka and John Terra, which is among the pay downloads available from http://www.rpgnow.com. This boxed set includes highly detailed information on and complete maps of the Keep before and after its destruction in the *Year of the Banner* (1368 DR). The huge color maps alone will greatly facilitate the running of this segment.

The gates to Zhentil Keep are ensorcelled with permanent detect lie spells. A priest of Iyachtu Xvim is at all times near the gate to interpret this magic and to report the results to the Zhentilar who watch the gate. Anyone who lies to a guard will immediately be arrested and thrown into the Crypts. He or she may be able to talk himself out of the matter, but there is a chance the prisoner won't be interrogated until 3 or 4 rides after the arrest.

If the PCs lie, they can expect the same treatment, at least until their sigylls are noticed, when the guards and/or Xvim priests suddenly release they are the *"honored guests"* that High Tyrannar Fzoul Chembryl has been awaiting.

Before beginning this segment, please read the following notes carefully! Please take into full that TSR has defined no official status for the Zhentarim after the *Year of the Tankard* (1370 DR). As already explained in other texts to this adventure, the Northern Journey project has been reshaping the roles of the Zhentarim and the Iron Throne in Faerûn rather substantially. The events and the status of persons, places and organizations as described in the following segment are unofficial and differ substantially from official WotC material beginning with WotC's *Cloak and Dagger* release in 2000. You may wish to change some of these matters to realize a closer compatibility with your campaign or official WotC material!

Lord Orgauth and Desmonda (Abarax and Eshaerís)

If Manshoon, Fzoul Chembryl or any other Zhentarim or for that matter anyone else are aware that Lord Orgauth and his consort Desmonda are not really who they seem to be but rather the Pit Fiend Abarax and Erinyes Eshaeris, there is no visible indication of this. Orgauth and Desmonda play only a background role in this adventure, and it is not necessary for you as Game Master to resolve this question if you do not wish to. The Northern Journey project group decided to leave this question open.

From all appearances, Abarax seems to be quite satisfied ruling the new Zhentil Keep in the form of Lord Orgauth, who is dead. However, the more important people in Zhentil Keep know that Lord Orgauth is becoming increasingly concerned with the problem of rebuilding the main part of the keep on the north bank of the Tesh and with strengthening the city.

For 3 years, since the destruction of the main part of the keep, the city has been living on deficit spending, using hidden reserves of money the Zhentarim left behind to finance economics that cause much more to be purchased from outside the keep than can be imported.

On the one hand, Orgauth must keep the new and smaller keep militarily strong, to defend it against Hillsfar and Mulmaster. On the other, Orgauth must revitalize the keep as a center of trade and rebuild the destroyed quarters of the city north of the Tesh.

This last objective has come to a virtual standstill. After gnome construction masters began rebuilding the Force Bridge and the Tesh Bridge in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), the Knights of Myth Drannor, in a surprise raid, attempted to destroy the skeletal structures of both projects, succeeding to some extent.

The reason for this attack is unknown in the keep, although common folk speculate that the Knights did this to protect them from the great numbers of undead wandering the northern ruins by night. The army of undead is Orgauth's most serious problem. Only three structures have been completed to date on the north bank, the large Xvim temple known as the *Heart of the Hand* and two huge, fortified warehouses on the river.

Fzoul Chembryl and his Xvimists seem to have managed to protect the temple to date, but after the deaths of many Zhentilar and the magical rotting of goods stored in the warehouses, these were abandoned. The only work going on at present is the reconstruction of the two bridges and the attempts to rebuild the old city wall. Work on both come to an abrupt halt half an hour before sunset each day, and the workers on the north bank are quickly returned by boat to the new keep in the South. However, not only the population of the new keep but also Orgauth are concerned what will happen once the Tesh freezes over in Nightal or Hammer of the coming winter.

All attempts to eradicate the army of undead in the north have failed. Large numbers of undead - all no doubt former residents who died during the keep's destruction in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR) - have been destroyed already, but some hidden force on the north bank seems to be capable of raising new undead as quickly as the older ones are destroyed.

The Xvimist church has not been able to bring this problem under control. A delegation of priests of Kelemvor came to the keep in Eleint of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR) and seemed to be achieving a certain degree of success, but they too were destroyed one by one, until all of them were dead, or perhaps undead.

This has brought reconstruction to a standstill. And this problems remains unresolved just at a time when a number of important businessmen from Sembia have indicated their willingness to invest heavily in the rebuilding of the keep and to reopen trade routes through the keep - if the ravaged northern quarters can be cleansed of the undead.

Some of the more important citizens of the new keep have quoted Orgauth as saying that he has information that the god of the undead Orcus has returned, and that Goat's Head priests are responsible for the undead haunting the northern ruins, however, no one seems to know what the source of Orgauth's information is.

The Zhentarim

Game Master: The following interpretations of the Zhentarim and the Iron Throne are unofficial and contradict information offered in the WotC product *Cloak and Dagger* (2000), as do most of the *Northern Journey* versions of these organizations.

Lord Manshoon in the Citadel of the Raven had already toward the end of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR) completed firm plans to reoccupy the keep and replace Lord Orgauth as its ruler, but these plans were tabled, after Manshoon, Fzoul Chembryl and Sememmon decide to shift the focus of the Black Network toward more Mafia-like operations.

The Citadel of the Raven and Darkhold did nothing to help the keep during its dark days of starvation during and after the besieging of the keep by the army of white dragons, giants and other monsters sent by Cyric to destroy the keep in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR). As a result, the population of the new keep has about an equal degree of hatred for both Cyric and the Zhentarim. Twilight Hall, the temple of Cyric in the new keep (No. 61 on WotC's map), was burned to the ground by angry mobs in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), although it is whispered that the angry mobs really were Xvimists.

The Zhentarim maintained a small, covert headquarters in the keep (No. 78 on WotC's map), but it was quickly renamed the *Embassy of the Citadel of the Raven* and placed under heavy Zhentilar guard after the devastation of Cyric's temple. What presence the Zhentarim choose to maintain in the city will no doubt be extremely undercover but effective.

Of course, most Zhents are well aware that the new temple of Iyachtu Xvim - the *Heart of the Hand* - in the northern ruins is the true center of the Zhentarim in today's Zhentil Keep, and that the high priest of the temple, High Tyrannar Fzoul Chembryl, is the leader of the keep's Zhentarim.

In truth, the Zhentarim have decided not to retake overt control of the keep. Whether they know the true identity of Orgauth or not, Manshoon and Sememmon agree with Chembryl that the new keep, as it is being run by Orgauth, serves the best interests of the Zhentarim, as these interests are defined today. All three plan to enrichen the Zhentarim coffers by siphoning money off of the earnings of Sembia's Iron Throne, and the Zhentilar are well aware that the rich Sembian merchants dealing with Orgauth are members of the Throne.

The presence of the Zhentarim certainly will grow substantially in the time to come, but it will be a covert presence of underground mages and assassins, coming to the keep to assure that insurance payments are made regularly to the Zhentarim, above all by the Iron Throne, whose members seem to believe they are moving in to fill and secure a void left by the Zhentarim, before the Black Network itself can recuperate.

The leaders of the Iron Throne do not seem to be aware that the Zhentarim themselves are behind the rumors spreading across Faerûn, that the Black Network is crumbling and suffering hard times. However, it is easy to understand how an organization as refined as the Iron Throne could except such a thesis, when one looks at the devastation done to the visible element of the largely invisible Black Network, not only in Zhentil Keep but also in Teshendale and along the High Forest in the North.

Fzoul Chembryl (P18 - Iyachtu Xvim)

Chembryl is an official NPC of critical Realms importance. Our version of Chembryl differs substantially from that in the WotC accessory *Cloak and Dagger* (WotC - 2000). Chembryl also plays a key role in the first part of this adventure, and it's your job to play his role. To do the part justice, you have to know his thoughts, plans and motivation in great detail.

When he meets with the PCs, he will listen carefully to their words and analyze them. Anything that the PCs might say that bear upon areas of his interest will make him alert, lead to additional questions and, when appropriate, lead him to determine how the PCs stand on the matter.

If he considers the PCs to be a threat to his plans, there is almost no chance any of them will leave Zhentil Keep alive. If he thinks the PCs' mission will be to his benefit - regardless of how the PCs feel about Fzoul, his church or the Zhentarim - he will see to it that they are safely on their way. He may help them. He may even arrange for Zhentarim agents or Xvimist priests to help them from the background after they leave the keep. If you know too little about Fzoul, you will do neither him nor your players justice!

Iyachtu Xvim's highest priest in Faerûn is at the highest and most satisfied peak of his religious career, although he is under intense pressure to solve critical problems at the moment. Nonetheless, Chembryl has risen high in the esteem of Lord Manshoon and therefore within the Zhentarim. Although such things are never stated directly in public or in private, it is generally agreed that Chembryl has passed Lord Sememmon of Darkhold within the ranks of the Zhentarim and now is second only to Manshoon with the Black Network.

The reason for Chembryl's rise can be summed up in his success as the high priest of Iyachtu Xvim and his position as the architect of the new Zhentarim strategy for the age following the Time of Troubles, the destruction of Zhentil Keep and the fall of Hellgate Keep, critical events that had substantially damaged the old Zhentarim base of operations in Faerûn. At a time when Manshoon and Sememmon could apparently come up with no satisfactory plan for dealing with these setbacks, Chembryl drove the church of Cyric out of the remnants of Zhentil Keep and much of the Black Network itself and produced a new plan to refocus and streamline the Zhentarim in a manner that would substantially reduce the operation's expenses while increasing its profits and power in the long run.

Chembryl's strategy won the surprisingly fast acceptance of Manshoon. Even Sememmon stood begrudgingly on Chembryl's side. The Lord of Darkhold had in the end relatively little choice. The fall of Hellgate Keep and the complete closure of the Upvale of the Delimbyir through Turlang and his treants, together with the mysterious attacks upon the Zhentarim in the Greyvale, made years of groundwork Sememmon had laid in the Western Heartlands virtually useless. Darkhold was in danger of becoming a cost factor that produced little for the Black Network other than to guard itself.

Chembryl's plan brought new purpose and meaning to Darkhold and to its ruler, Sememmon, and Chembryl also was generous in his recommendation for responsibilities to be placed under Darkhold's control. The plan was a bittersweet pill for Sememmon to swallow. It once again secured Sememmon's position in the triumvirate of Zhentarim leaders, but at the same time, it demoted him from the second to the third rank within the organization.

The key point of Chembryl's plan is to channel the Iron Throne of Sembia into an unwitting but in effect iron clad alliance with the Zhentarim, which in the eyes of the Black Network's troika is equivalent to an alliance between the Zhentarim and the nation of Sembia itself. If Chembryl's plan works, not only King Azoun of Cormyr and his future successor but also the lords of the various dales will be facing a substantially stronger opponent than in the past, but they also will be surrounded to the east, north and west by a counterforce that must be reckoned with.

Manshoon, Chembryl and Sememmon believe that Chembryl's strategy will succeed because it is secret. Only the three alone know the full details of the new strategy, and few other important members of the Black Network are aware of more than a few elements of the overall strategy. This secrecy is necessary, because the Iron Throne hardly will take all of the steps the troika is expecting it to, if it begins to suspect that it is being manipulated by the Zhentarim.

The first element of Chembryl's plan is to leave the intentional impression in the Heartlands that the Zhentarim is in a state of disarray, chaos and disintegration. As far as the Iron Throne or other important political figures are concerned, Manshoon and Sememmon are sitting within their fortifications and doing nothing to halt the disintegration of the empire they had built over many decades. Turlang and his treants hold the Upvale of the Delimbyir unchallenged. The main reaction of Darkhold to the attacks in the Greyvale has been to discontinue sending new troops and caravans into the area, leaving the Zhentarim in Llorkh to solve their own problems.

The pressure of the Lords Alliance in the North has given Sememmon grounds enough to table plans for developing alternate trade routes, even though he has won the covert control of many of the villages of the Sword Coast's Backlands, and in some cases the overt control as well.

Three years have passed since the destruction of Zhentil Keep. To the great surprise of the keep's neighbors, Manshoon has made no move to unseat the upstart Lord Orgauth within the new keep. This is viewed by Manshoon's enemies as a critical error, because hatred for the Zhentarim after the refusal of the Citadel of the Raven to aid the starving population of the keep in the Year of the Banner has been subtly fired by Lord Orgauth's administration, and any overt attempt by the citadel to wrest control of the new keep now would be met by strong resistance from the population.

Cementing the dismal public image of the Zhentarim are the successive losses of Dagger Falls, Teshwave and the Flaming Tower (The two latter events are unofficial. They occurred in the 3rd Module, *Backlands.*). Silence and inactivity have been the only responses from the citadel and Darkhold. For most people, any last doubts were removed, when the Zhentarim abandoned the fleeing Zhentarim from Dagger Falls and Teshwave to their fate, and Zhentil Keep closed its gates to these soldiers. Those sages who have warned that this is a deception have found few open ears in the courts and conference rooms where the daily flow of Faerûn's events are steered.

This inaction has been viewed by the Iron Throne as an invitation. The Throne has rapidly begun expanding its caravan and smuggling operations into areas that until recently were the province of the Zhentarim, and it has met only token resistance from the Black Network. Most of the Throne's operations are conducted by front organizations operating under cover names, but the Zhentarim spy network has had little difficulty in identifying these.

The Throne has followed Chembryl's plan so closely to date, that some front operations of the Throne already have contracted with Zhentarim agents for the hire of Zhentarim guard units to assure free passage of caravans through the Stonelands. Chembryl views this as one of the high points of his strategy, because as it becomes clear to Azoun in Cormyr that the caravans which pass through the Stonelands are a cooperation between the Zhentarim and Sembian merchants, it also will become extremely difficult for him to deal with the problem.

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If the Purple Dragons attack caravans of seemingly innocent Sembian merchants guarded by paid Zhentarim troops in the Stonelands, Azoun faces the substantial risk of sparking a war with Sembia and at the same time war with Darkhold, and this would be a confrontation that would put Cormyr in the extremely difficult position of having to defend itself against enemies of substantial power on two flanks. It may be more likely that Azoun is forced to come to terms with the Iron Throne and let its caravans pass through Cormyr again, subject to customs inspections of course.

At the start, Chembryl is confident that the Zhentarim can attain a certain income from the Iron Throne through such activities as providing troop protection through the Stonelands, the Tun Plain, the Sunset Mountains and the Backlands of the Sword Coast as far as the Ruins of Decanter, where the Zhents are in alliance with the Beastlord.

Again, the Zhents could earn revenues by guaranteeing the Iron Throne exclusive access to and use of the trail through Beached Bones Pass and the new Zhentarim trail and caravan facilities in the southern part of the Southwood.

In the long run, however, Chembryl is counting not on the Iron Throne, but rather upon the Zhentarim and the his Xvimist followers. He wants the Zhentarim to become much more heavily involved in blackmail and assassination than it has been to date. He is advancing this plan above all to increase the power of Iyachtu Xvim and at the same time to diminish the power of Xvim's most hated rival among the Faerûnian pantheon, Cyric the Mad.

It is Chembryl's long-range intention to see to it that the portfolios of Bane that Cyric overtook be brought into the hands of Iyachtu Xvim. But Chembryl is well aware that neither his god nor he and his church have the power necessary to achieve that at present, and it will take time before Cyric can be forced to forfeit such portfolios as strife. However, Cyric has neglected his portfolio of murder, taken over from the dead god Bhaal, and Chembryl intends to wrest this portfolio from Cyric's grasp, bringing it to Xvim.

Under Chembryl's plan, the Zhentarim will have three seats of power. The Citadel of the Raven will become a training center for the wizards of the Black Network, and it also will be a troop base, with training for talented mercenaries under Zhentarim control who use cover names and offer guard services for caravans and other trade movements in the Moonsea area, the Dales, Cormyr and Sembia. These groups also will see to the sabotaging of trade movements that are not *"insured"* by the Zhentarim. As the first center of power within the Black Network, the citadel also will continue to be the headquarters of the Zhentarim and the center of strategic planning, including the expansion of Zhentarim operations in the East and the South.

Darkhold will command all Zhentarim operations in the Western Heartlands west of Cormyr and Anauroch, including the North, the Sword Coast and the Backlands. Lord Sememmon also will be responsible for setting the strategy for expanding Zhentarim operations into Tethyr, Amn and Calimshan. Sememmon's command also will extend over Darkhold and the presidial operations in Llorkh. Darkhold will be responsible mainly for the training of covert Zhentarim caravan guard operations in the North, the Stonelands, the Sword Coast, the Backlands, Tethyr, Amn and Calimshan. These groups also will see to the sabotaging of trade movements that are not *"insured"* by the Zhentarim.

Chembryl will be responsible for Zhentarim operations in Zhentil Keep and in Llorkh. As long as Lord Orgauth poses no problems for Chembryl, he is content to leave him remain as political leader in the keep, regardless of whether Chembryl knows that Orgauth really is the pit fiend Abarax. In Chembryl's point of view, the keep is above all the Unholy See of the church of Iyachtu Xvim, and Orgauth is doing a commendable job of reviving the keep and protecting it, at no cost to the church to the Black Network.

Zhentil operations in the keep and the church of Xvim amount to one and the same thing, and the Xvimist strategies of the Black Network will be forged by Chembryl, his assistant, Ruinlord Xana the Once-Martyred and the other Ruinlords and Hatelords within the keep. Chembryl also will lead the highly secret new Xvimist School of Assassins in Llorkh. Tyrannar Grett Bondart (hm P16), second only to Chembryl within the Xvimist church, already is in Llorkh organizing the new outpost.

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Slave labor is building a 50-foot-high wall around the upper city (*see the map of Llorkh in the* Backlands *module*). All residents and businessmen who were located on the western hill within Llorkh where the temples were have been driven out by Zhentarim troops from Darkhold (Troops in Llorkh no longer operate under the guise of being the *"Lord's Men."*) In the lower city, the two remaining priests of Cyric were destroyed by the Zhentarim Archmage Ashemmi (hf M15) from Darkhold, second to Lord Sememmon in command there. The Xvimists are converting the temple into a house of Xvimist worship for Zhentarim troops and travelers who will pass through Llorkh. Ashemmi currently is in charge of military operations in Llorkh, although Geildarr Ithym (hm M8) remains the nominal lord and ruler.

The Zhentarim warehouses in lower Llorkh are being converted into businesses. Lalindra's festhall has been closed, and Lalindra and her ladies have been forced to flee town along with most of the residents and businessmen who were in the now closed upper city. The entire upper city will be hermetically sealed and turned into a new Zhentarim training center for Xvimist assassins. More than 1,000 new assassins will be in training at any one time, once the school is in operation. Through this facility, Chembryl believes that Xvim within a few years time will have gained so many assassin followers that Cyric will not be able to avoid forfeiting the portfolio of murder to Xvim, a loss which will move Cyric farther in the direction of stepping down from major power to intermediate power, while Xvim will move farther toward rising from a lesser power to an intermediate power.

As already mentioned, Chembryl is highly satisfied with the Zhentarim side of his work and the fruits his labors have reaped to date, but he is less satisfied with the current status of his clerical life. The church of Xvim is facing two major problems, and Chembryl knows he must solve them, or Xvim will depose him in favor of a new High Tyrannar. He has every intention of using the PCs to help attain his goals, and the PCs may have little choice but to serve Chembryl, albeit indirectly, doing exactly what he wishes from them.

One problem is the goddess Tiamat, formerly of the Untheric pantheon and since about six months a lesser power of the Faerûnian pantheon (see WotC's *Powers and Pantheons*.). Xvim considers Tiamat to be a mortal enemy, because he believes she is trying to take his portfolio of tyranny from him, in much the same manner as Chembryl wants to take Cyric's portfolio of murder for Xvim. Tiamat's followers are ruthlessly attempt to take over the Cult of the Dragon, and through Tiamat's avatar Kargmelchina and the dragon vampires and draconians she and Sammaster control, she is destroying all opposition to her within the cult and coming ever closer to her goal. Xvim expects his church under Chembryl to stop Tiamat.

Chembryl's second problem is the rebuilding of Zhentil Keep. Before the Time of Troubles, the keep was firmly under the religious control of Xvim's father, the dead god Bane. Iyachtu Xvim wants the keep to be his city now. He expects Chembryl to achieve this goal. Xarth Kistar, a burnbones of Cyric's church is in Chembryl's way. Kistar haunts the subterranean ruins of the keep north of the Tesh, commanding a small army of undead, who haunt the surface by night and destroy whatever reconstruction took place during the day.

Xvim has given Fzoul access to the magic that had been used to imprison Xvim earlier beneath the keep, and with this magic, Fzoul has managed to contain the burnbones Kistar in ruins of dungeons beneath the remnants of Bane's old Black Altar, but this magic does not prevent Kistar's undead from ravaging the ruins by night.

Game Master: See the description of Xarth Kistar in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

To date Kistar has taken no action against Chembryl's church, but Chembryl knows he must destroy Kistar. Chembryl's power will ebb substantially if he is unable to curb the destruction of all reconstruction projects by Kistar's undead in the northern ruins of the keep. And as is mentioned in WotC's *Faiths and Avatars,* Iyachtu Xvim *"ensures Fzoul's loyalty by possessing him at regular intervals to probe his thoughts ..."* During such a possession, Xvim has made it clear to Chembryl that *all* of Cyric's church must be eliminated from the keep, and that includes Xarth Kistar as well.

Chembryl is loathe to take on this task himself, above all because he is uncertain that he can survive a battle with Kistar. He will be more than happy to lead the PCs to Kistar's lair. He entertains no delusions that the PCs will be able to destroy the burnbones, but he does think the PCs will be able to damage and weaken Kistar, and then Chembryl can lead a group of his own Xvimist priests and a few middle level Zhentarim mages into the crypts, with considerably better chances of destroying the burnbones.

These are the thoughts and the knowledge Chembryl will have in his head when the PCs encounter him, and these are the thoughts and knowledge that you as Game Master also must have in your head, before you can run this encounter properly!

Toward the Black Hand

Game Master: The PCs are on their own in the keep, until the next segment, *The Invitation,* takes place. It's up to you how long you want to let them roam in the Foreign Quarter on the keep's south bank, before the first main encounter begins. However, do not forget that neither the PCs nor the spirit of Sammaster, which is steering them, have any idea where within the keep Xarth Kistar can be found.

When the PCs ask questions, most people won't recognize Kistar's name or will recall it only vaguely. There will be some who will know more, but they should be more difficult to root out. No one the PCs encounter will know where Kistar is or what has become of him. Some may warn the PCs to be careful about mention his name, because Kistar was a Cyricist, and Cyricists are extremely unpopular in today's keep.

The ideal guideline for running open adventure in today's keep is WotC's boxed set *Ruins of Zhentil Keep*, available from http://www.rpgnow.com as a pay download. Regardless of whether you use this set, please check the simple map and descriptions included with this module. WotC's map is official and current to the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR). Our map is unofficial and current to the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR) but not compatible with *Cloak and Dagger* (WotC - 2000). It reflects unofficial changes since the time of WotC's set. WotC's map is the only highly detailed map. Ours simply shows changes in the two years since WotC's map was current and a few critical locations.

For those Game Masters who may wish to campaign in Zhentil Keep in times after this module and who want to use the WotC boxed set unaltered, the necessary modifications will not be difficult:

- If you want Twilight Hall - the Temple to Cyric - to be intact, you can simply have it been rebuilt again on its old site (No. 61 on WotC's map).

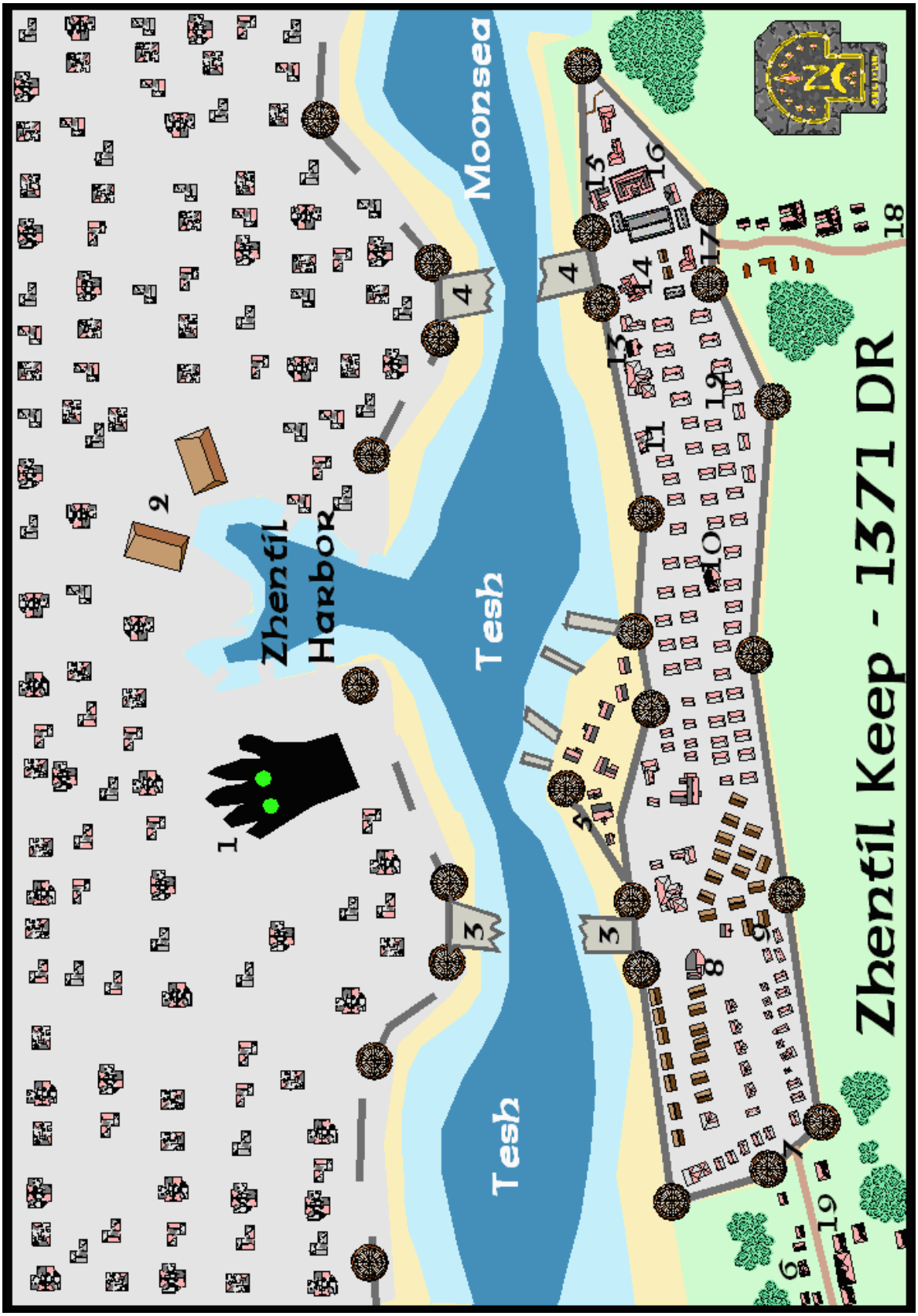
- If you do not want the two rebuilt warehouses on the harbor on the north side of the Tesh among the ruins, find a reason for them to have been destroyed again after this adventure.

- If you do not want to use our location for Iyachtu Xvim's *Heart of the Hand* temple, move it elsewhere. Likewise, if you don't like our design for the temple, change it. When and if WotC maps the temple, it no doubt will do both. However, remember that the temple does officially exist in Zhentil Keep since the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1369 DR), according to WotC's *Faiths and Avatars* (s. entry on Iyachtu Xvim).

If you do not use *Ruins of Zhentil Keep*, you will need to flesh out the surviving parts of the keep yourself, if you want to give your PCs time to adventure there. The map and descriptions supplied with this module are absolutely no substitutes for the official WotC material in detail and important game information. They also are different in some respects from what WotC defined as being the status quo two years earlier.

The Northern Journey Keep Map

1 - Heart of the Hand, new Xvim temple
2 - New harbor warehouses
3 - Force Bridge ruins
4 - Tesh Bridge Ruins
5 - The Tesh Wave, tavern, many sailors
6 - Keep to Yourself Tavern
7 - River Trail Gate
8 - Pride of Zhentil Keep Inn
9 - Defiant Gesture Inn
10 - House of Comfort Inn
11 - Ruins of Twilight Hall, Cyric temple
12 - Mug and Mutton, rowdy tavern
13 - Burst Boil, tavern for humanoids
14 - Crypts - constabulary and jail
15 - Tesh Inn
16 - Lord Orgauth's complex
17 - Throat Gate
18 - The Throat (Road)
19 - Tesh Trail



Remnants of Zhentil Keep

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Approaching the Keep

The following narrative begins as the PCs approach the keep:

The tales you've heard about the devastation of Zhentil Keep were by no means exaggerated. The small portion of the keep on the south bank of the Tesh - once the Foreign Quarter - stands in relatively good condition inside huge, massive walls 40 feet (12 m) thick and 100 feet (30 m) high. But the main part of the city still stands in devastation and ruin. One can see that attempts have been made to rebuild some of the structures on the north side and to repair portions of the old city wall, but as far as you can make out through breaks in the crumbling wall, only three structures stand completed north of the Tesh. One is a low but broad pitch black building on the west side of the harbor. The others are two huge warehouses, each four stories high, on the northeast side of the harbor. It also looks like some of the docks have been repaired.

You ride past several unmarked buildings as you approach the wall and the massive River Trail Gate on the south side of the Tesh. One of the buildings is a dumpy tavern that calls itself *Keep to Yourself*. Both atop the high wall and at the gate are a number of well armed and armored Zhentilar, all wearing the coat of arms of the keep, a mailed and jeweled fist. You can see that the Zhentilar at the gate question most persons who attempt to enter.

Game Master: The Zhentilar at the gate have complicated orders and are intelligent soldiers. It's their job to make people who would be useful in the rebuilding of the keep feel welcome at the gate. They also are supposed to pinpoint traveling merchants who are bringing goods into the keep solely to earn money. If these merchants are an asset to the keep or are bringing in much needed wares, they gain easy entry without being charged customs fees. Other merchants will enter only after being taxed. The guards also will attempt to weed out Harpers, supporters of the Knights of Myth Drannor and agents of the Zhentarim. Members of the first two groups are thrown into the crypts and executed. Zhentarim are taken to the *Heart of the Hand* temple for Fzoul Chembryl's priests to deal with.

The six guards at the gate all are level 5 fighters with long swords, helmets, shields and chain mail. At any given time there also are 6 + 1d4 trained archers, level 3 fighters with a longbow bonus of 2, atop the wall ready to deal with problems.

Two additional figures always are in the background. One is a level 7 sergeant of the guard armed and outfitted like the other soldiers. The other will be a priest of Iyachtu Xvim, of level 4 + 1d4. He wears a ring of telecommunication and carries a staff of lie detection. When the guards question someone attempting to enter, the priest detects whether they are lying and communicates this information to the sergeant of the guard.

In possible later encounters, you should note that the Throat Gate is manned in the same manner.

The following occurs when the PCs reach the gate.

All six Zhentilar standing outside the gate keep a close watch upon you. You can also see figures **(Game Master :** sergeant and priest**)** inside small gatehouses to either side of the gate. One of the Zhentilar, with a seemingly friendly manner, approaches you.

"Well met," the guard says. *"Welcome in the name of Lord Orgauth to the new Zhentil Keep. As you can see, our city's finances are in disastrous shape, due to the horrendous reconstruction costs we're facing. As much as he dislikes it, Lord Orgauth has been forced to levy a customs tax on all goods non-essential to reconstruction other than food that are being brought inside the gate for sale. Do you have any such goods to declare?"*

Game Master: If the PCs declare anything, the customs tax is 10% of reasonable (PHB) market value.

"And what business do you plan to transact during your stay in Zhentil Keep?"

Game Master: The guards' reaction is based upon the answer.

"Have you any connections with a group calling itself the Harpers?"

Game Master: Any PC who acknowledges being involved with the Harpers will be denied entrance, on the grounds that the Harpers have declared themselves to be enemies of Lord Orgauth and the keep.

"Have you any connections with a group calling itself the Knights of Myth Drannor?"

Game Master: Any PC involved with the Knights will be arrested, regardless of whether he tells the truth or lies.

"Have you any connections to a group known as the Zhentarim?"

Game Master: Any PC Any PC who acknowledges connections to the Zhentarim will be asked if he wishes to be escorted to the ambassador or to the Temple. He has no other choice. PCs who lie will be taken to the temple.

"Have you any connections to the church of Cyric?"

Game Master: The guards will allow Cyric's followers into the keep, warning them that the keep is a dangerous place for them. The priest of Xvim will have the PC in question marked for assassination, and the assassination could be attempted any time until Fzoul Chembryl is aware of the PCs' presence.

"How long will you be staying in the keep, and where will you be staying?"

Game Master: The guards will insist upon a time estimate. They will recommend *The Tesh Inn* (WotC Map No. 55) as the safest in the keep, followed by *The Defiant Gesture* (WotC Map No. 63) and the *House of Comfort* (WotC No. 59). They will recommend strongly against *The Pride of Zhentil Keep* (WotC No. 62). For food and drink without accommodations the *Tesh Wave* (WotC No. 69) on the docks also may be recommended.

Game Master: The statistics for this encounter can be found under *Fzoul's Invitation Committee* in the section *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. The members of the group are Hatemaster Zinda of Xvim, Oppressor Gaarth of Xvim and 3 Zhentilar soldiers. This event occurs on a night of your choice, when the PCs are in a tavern or inn finishing their meal.

A group of five armed persons enters from outside, drawing not only your attention but also the respectful attention of most other patrons. Leading the group are a man and a woman wearing black skullcaps, black robes with green trim and symbols of a black hand with green eyes. Both carry coal black maces. Behind them are three Zhentilar armed with long swords, wearing helmets and chain mail and bearing shields with the coat of arms of Zhentil Keep. The five have their eyes upon you and appear to be heading directly to your table.

Game Master: Allow the PCs to react. When the newcomers reach the PCs' table:

The woman in the black robe raises her hand in a sign of greeting, and she says, *"Well met! Zinda of Xvim at your service! If I am not mistaken, you are the sigyll bearers?"*

Game Master: Allow the PCs to react. After the matter is settled, Zinda says:

"I come bearing an invitation. Lord Fzoul Chembryl, the High Tyrannar of our church, would be honored by your presence on the morrow at a feast in your honor within our temple. Lord Chembryl knows of your situation and also that you are in search of a certain individual. He believes that you and he have many mutual interests to discuss, and he also is prepared to lead you to the person you are seeking. May I answer that you accept his invitation?"

Game Master: As soon as Zinda finishes her remarks, the PCs note that the sigylls are exerting pressure for them to accept. They make a normal check for resisting the sigylls.

After some or all of the PCs accept, Zinda replies:

"Very well. You may not be aware of it, but our new temple stands within the ruins of the old city across the river. There still are many grave dangers to be dealt with among the ruins, and the risks are especially great in the hours of darkness. Lord Chembryl does not wish you to be endangered, therefore, he suggests that you meet with him during the day, so that you may return safely to this part of the city before darkness falls.

"He bids you to feast with at the noontime tomorrow. This will give him then the afternoon hours to discuss things with you that are of pressing interest to us all and to assure your timely return here. Beyond the wall east of the Force Bridge (WotC Map No. 103) *are docks* (WotC Map No. 92)*, near the Tesh Wave tavern* (WotC Map No. 69)*, where the warehouses* (WotC Map No. 93) *stand. We will await you there tomorrow half an hour before midday, and we will transport you to the north city by boat. After your meeting with Lord Chembryl, we will return you by boat to the safety of the south city, before darkness falls."*

The Heart of the Hand

Game Master: Regardless of what the weather tables show, there is no precipitation on this day, but heavy clouds hang over the keep and a thick fog covers the ground, limiting visibility to about 100 yards/meters.

As promised, Zinda and her four companions await you in the dismal foggy gloom of the docks near the Tesh Wave tavern (WotC Map No. 92). Little of the north city is visible from here. The ruins of the north gate to the Force Bridge stand eerie and skeletal in the fog. In addition to the five persons whom you met the evening before there also are two brawny, unarmed men in the group. Tied to the near end of the dock is a large rowboat with room for two oarsmen and 16 passengers. The symbol of Iyachtu Xvim has been painted on the prow of the boat. To the rear you see the name *The Floating Hand.*

Zinda of Xvim nods to you and says, *"Well met! Lord Chembryl awaits the honor of your visit."* She motions to you to take seats in the boat, and then the two large, unarmed men sit at the oars and begin rowing you across the Tesh. The boat crosses directly over and then follows the western bank into the ruins of Zhentil Harbor. The shape of the ruins becomes a bite more clear. As before, you see only three structures that still are intact, one the low black temple building which apparently is your destination and also the two large, reconstructed warehouses. You can make out now that these buildings, the warehouses, although newly rebuilt, stand apparently abandoned. Window shutters at the ground level have been torn off and gates and doors are missing. There is no sign of life around the two buildings.

The condition of the black temple building is more difficult to make out, due to its color. Slowly, the boat pulls into an only slightly damaged dock in the northwest corner of the harbor ruin beneath the temple (the location in the harbor just east of the Zhent warehouses numbered 31 on the WotC map of the keep before 1368 DR). Some parts of the dock have been broken off, but enough remains to give you a seemingly safe path to firm soil. Your boat is not alone. Three others also are docked there.

As you reach the bank, your limited vision shows nothing but ruin and destruction in every direction except for the black temple. Here and there people are underway in the fog, apparently exploring some of the ruins. As you approach the black temple, you see that it too has been under attack. At several places, there are large scratch marks in the black stone surface, although it's unclear to you what could cause such scratches. You see no sign of windows or doors in the temple.

Game Master: Pause and give the PCs time to deal with matters.

Zinda and the others lead you on to the blank, black wall of the temple. She raises a symbol of Iyachtu Xvim and says *"Czerneruka zeleneoko!"* Within a few seconds, the wall begins to glow with an evil green light. Zinda gestures with her hand and the three Zhentilar walk through the light and vanish. *"Follow please,"* she says to all of you.

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Game Master: Pause and give the PCs time to deal with matters.

You're swept ever so briefly by a swiftly passing but deep cold as you enter through the magical entrance, and then you find yourself in a grand entranceway walled in black and lit with torches fired by a green flame. A few seconds later Zinda and the second priest appear behind you. The three Zhentilar already are waiting ahead of you.

The dim light of the torches and the coal black walls make it difficult to see much at the start, but as your eyes become more accustomed to the lighting conditions, you notice paintings on the walls, all gruesome scenes of murder and torture.

Zinda and the second priest move ahead of you and lead you through the hallway inward, deeper into the temple. Within minutes it becomes clear to you that you hardly will be able to find your way out again without the help of Chembryl's followers. There is a magic in place in the temple that makes it impossible for you to memorize your path. It leads through black labyrinthine corridors obviously filled with illusions. You often see yourself turning in one direction, although you know your feet are heading in another. You pass many large black doors, but all are closed.

At last, however, you enter a huge hall, again with black walls and illumination from green torches. The room is attended by obvious slaves. two men and two women, fully unclothed and bearing the scars of whips. They bear blank looks, like zombies, although they still seem to be alive. A large half-ogre nearly 8 feet/250cm tall watches over the slaves, a nine-tailed scourge in his hands. The slaves are busy cleaning, except for one of the woman, who brings a tray of drinks to you.

Zinda motions for you to be seated. *"Lord Chembryl will call for us shortly,"* she says. The three Zhentilar take watching positions in the room. The male priest stares at the slave woman who bought the drinks, as if he has some ideas going through his head, but then he takes a seat too, although still watching the slave woman closely.

After a few minutes, Zinda responds to an invisible and inaudible messages and says, *"Lord Chembryl bids us to dinner."* Again, an area of the wall glows in an ill green color of light, and Zinda motions for you to follow her through.

This magic portal opens into a huge dining hall attended by half a dozen naked slaves. Large roasts of calf, lamb and boar are on the table, together with an assortment of fish and accompanied by a variety of vegetable and fruit entrees and salads. At the head of the table sits a red-haired man with huge mustache flanked at by Zinda and a small, somewhat cruel-looking dark-haired man in black clothing without symbols (Assassin monk Rardan Hurn, lvl 12 - see New PCs in the Appendix).

The two men are seated, but Zinda still stands. *"Lord Chembryl,"* she says, indicating the red-headed man, *"and one of our agents, Rardan Hurn,"* pointing to the smaller man. *"Lord Chembryl, I have brought the sigyll bearers to you."*

Chembryl welcomes you with a broad, generous, friendly smile. *"Welcome to the Heart of the Hand, friends! Please be seated! By all means, be seated! Zinda, you too! Let us enjoy our feast! We will talk business afterwards."*

You notice that Zinda and Hurn have taken seats right and left from Chembryl, but both sit about 6 feet/2m from Chembryl.

"We have the finest wines from Tethyr and in my cellar are the best beers of Faerûn," Chembryl says. *"What can I offer you?"*

Game Master: Once the PCs decide what they wish to have, they are served by the slaves. During the feast, Chembryl will conduct only pleasant social conversations with the PCs, talking about their journey to the keep, etc. He will decline in a friendly manner to discuss his purposes, saying that this is a matter to be dealt with after the feast.

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Once the feast is finished, Chembryl, Hurn, Zinda and the PCs will move to a smaller chamber adjacent to the dining hall, again through a magical portal, where they sit at a round table, served exquisite liquors and wines of their choice by two naked slaves, one male and one female.

Chembryl will question the PCs at some length. Exactly what the Game Master in the role of Chembryl asks is dependent upon what kind of characters the PCs are and what they have done to date. In the section on Chembryl at the beginning of this chapter we have given you full information on Chembryl, so that you can pose these questions properly.

Chembryl above all will want to assure himself that the PCs are not in cahoots with Tiamat's church, but rather are her unwilling servants. He already is fully convinced that the PCs are serving Tiamat and is not likely to be persuaded otherwise.

As Game Master, you also should remember that Zhentarim spies have been observing the PCs, and as a result, Chembryl will know much of what they have been up to, at least on the surface. In such matters, he could catch the PCs telling lies.

If the PCs need to be dealt with more harshly, Chembryl also can remind them that they took part in the destruction of Wallach of Xvim and the temple in the Flaming Tower, and that he holds them accountable for that. In truth, the Flaming Tower had become expendable; it was isolated and made no new contribution to generating badly needed new worshippers for Iyachtu Xvim. In addition, Wallach had gone around the bend and Chembryl would have been forced to eliminate him anyway. But he will not let this on to the PCs. He will retain the suggestion that he might want revenge from the PCs as a trump card.

Once the PCs have reached the point with Chembryl where he is ready to send them off to Xarth Kistar, he will make the following remarks. Based upon the experiences in your campaign up to this point, it may be necessary for you to modify these remarks. In addition, if the PCs ask questions about Tiamat, Chembryl can give them all the information listed in *Powers and Pantheons* He is not aware of Sammaster's return, however, nor does he know anything of Kargmelchina or the avatar of Tiamat using Kargmelchina's form.

"Whether you like the idea or not," Chembryl tells you, *"I think you are destined to be allies in purpose with my church. You have been made into tools of Tiamat in some fashion, of that I'm certain. These sigylls you are bearing force you to do her work in some way. For instance, she wanted you to destroy Gwath, and in some manner that is unclear to me as well as to you, I think you delivered Gwath's destruction to her.*

"Perhaps you're being steered through the sigylls by one of her high priests, or perhaps the dragon queen is steering you herself through an avatar. I've been unable to find that answer, although I have sought it. There are many in my church and many more among the Zhentarim who would argue that I am foolish in dealing with you, that you are agents of my enemy, whether willing or not, and that I should destroy you. I could do that, of course.

"But I don't believe in things like these sigylls. When one forces another to do things, the tasks can only be little things, menial things, like the work we give these slaves here. They know if they don't this work well enough, that we will whip them mercilessly, and if they are uncooperative for too long, that we will find some excruciatingly painful and slow means for them to die, all to the greater honor of Iyachtu Xvim.

"For greater deeds, however, slaves are totally unsuitable. When one seeks agents to perform greater deeds, one needs willing agents dedicated to their cause, not slaves. To succeed, the agent must be dedicated above all to success in fulfilling his mission. An agent who works unwillingly under compulsion or threat is dedicated above all to escaping his circumstances, and then to gaining revenge upon the person who compelled him. And so it will be with you. I trust in that.

"I have learned these things through hard experience, first, when I was younger, through failures I experienced in trusting too much in what I thought I could achieve by placing others under my control, and later by being bonded and rebelling myself.

"You are unaware of this to be sure, but in the Time of Troubles Bane took my body as an avatar and totally subjugated my will to his own. And then I was forced to look on through my own eyes, poweless, as this fool of a god that I worshipped toyed with Cyric, thinking that he could overcome this incompetent but headstrong thief's will. Bane paid for this idiocy with his own existence, and Cyric took his place in the pantheon of Faerûn. But I, Fzoul Chembryl, survived.

"And then I was bound again to this new god, this greatest fool among all gods, Cyric. And I learned to hate as never before, wanting nothing more than to destroy this upstart, and that is a goal I will gain one day! In the end, Cyric read the Cyrinishad that I was to have read, and it was Cyric who went insane, not I. My will could not be beaten by this wimp of a god! It was I who read Oghma's book and with that reading destroyed the church of Cyric in Zhentil Keep.

"This is where I will place my trust then, not in you but in your own strong wills. I will do nothing to try to control you. Nay, more than that, I will help speed you along your path, for I am convinced that Tiamat and her church will pay bitterly for the control they have taken over your wills. At a minimum, you are certain to destroy this high priest or perhaps avatar that is steering you through these sigylls, and that will be a bitter defeat for Tiamat and a great victory for Xvim!

"Three of the four sigylls you still bear are known to me. The first belongs to Xarth Kistar, once of Bane, now a burnbones of Cyric who haunts the crypts beneath the ruins of Bane's Black Altar. I will bring you to him, so that you made do your work, for I believe it is your lot to destroy him, and in doing so, you will serve me and Xvim as well, and also Lord Orgauth, the ruler of the keep.

"It was my intention to undertake this task myself, for Kistar awakens the undead who walk these ruins by night and prevent the restoration of Zhentil Keep. But my obligations to my church have made it impossible for me to attend to this task yet. It is good so, for I see now, that Kistar's destruction is your lot. I already have confined him for you. Using magic beyond his ability, I have bound Kistar to the crypts. He is unable to leave them. But he will be no easy victory for you. He will send a small number of undead to you, but fortunately, those undead in the crypts cannot leave them, and he cannot call undead from outside of the crypts to help him within.

"The crypts are protected with a ward to keep the living and the undead from entering or leaving them, so that no fool of an adventuring mage intentionally or unintentionally releases Kistar from his prison. I will send Zinda with you, to lead you into the ancient crypts of Bane, and she will bear a ward token that will allow you to pass within. You must explore the crypts, for Kistar has closed the entry to his lair with powerful death magic.

"In the days of Bane, our priests mapped the old crypts. We have found copies of these maps in the Citadel of the Raven. Zinda will bear a map with her, so that you will know what you seek. Look now, and I will tell you what I know, although I fear it is too little."

Chembryl takes out a small map (players' map of the crypts) and points to a round symbol (No. 1). *"This is a large spiral stairway that leads more than 200 feet/60m deep, into the ancient crypts. The last person to descend these stairs was a high priest of Xvim, a Tyrannar named* Gobitsch, *who less than a year ago descended to the entryway to the crypts, to place a magic seal of Xvim upon them which prevents Kistar and his minions from leaving the crypts. This seal will have no effect upon you. It affects only the undead. It bars the passing of their negative energy.*

"Kistar cannot leave the crypts, but he can summon his undead who are outside of the crypts and order them to act during the hours of darkness. Gobitsch made the mistake of ascending from the crypts at night. Although Kistar could not reach him personally, he did send a large number of skeletons and zombies from above into the staircase, and they attacked and eventually killed Gobitsch on the staircase before he reached the surface. However, Gobitsch and I were able to communicate briefly with each other through magic before he entered the crypts. He said the staircase is fully intact and was not affected by the destruction of the keep above.

"Gobitsch estimated that he had descended a total of 200 to 250 feet/60-75m before reaching the end of the staircase and the entry to the crypts. He said there were two doors at the bottom of the staircase. At first he went directly through the door to the right, which opens on a corridor that divides itself into a Y after about 60 feet/18m.

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The right fork should lead directly into the old temple of Bane, but Kistar apparently has placed a large field of negative energy which must be highly destructive in nature there. Gobitsch recognized it for what it was and did not attempt to go through.

"Gobitsch said the fork to the left had caved in after about 20 feet/6m. That was known to us. In the Year of the Tressym (1263 DR) when Bane revealed himself in the Temple of the Sky, a delegation from my church met with the Banelich who held the temple in the crypts, and an agreement was reached with him.

"Our church caused this cave-in, to seal in the walking liches who laired there and roamed the city above by night. The Banelich would not, of course, allow to have himself sealed in, but he did agree to prevent the other liches from leaving the crypts through the temple.

"In an emergency, you may have to tunnel through the rubble to go on, but there is much reason to believe that there is another entryway into the vaults once haunted by the liches. In any case, our records indicate that a stretch only about 20 feet long was caved in. Gobitsch did report that there were several smaller caved-in points along this corridor as well.

"At that point, Gobitsch returned to the stairwell and used the second door. He said his light showed little sign of damage in this wing of the vaults,

"The undead will be a trial for you, but you have the power to overcome them, particularly if you have the ability to rest undisturbed. I will give Zinda a very valuable and ancient work of magic known as a "Candle of Positivization." *The art of making such candles has all but disappeared in our times, and yet, these things are extremely powerful against the undead.*

"Before you can light the candle, you must be in a closed room with closed door no larger than 40 x 40 feet/12 x 12m. The room must be devoid of the negative energy of the undead. It will not ignite in the presence of negative energy, and it's flame will die if it is transported from the position where it was lighted. But once the candle is burning, its positive energy will ward off even the most powerful of the undead, indeed, it is said that such candles even could hold back Orcus, the god of the undead, who was banished from our realms more than a decade ago.

"The candle will give you a safe room in which you can recover from wounds, heal yourselves and learn new spells. It can be extinguished and lit again, burning a total of 40 hours. Use it well!

"If you are successful, I can promise you, that you will receive a substantial reward from Lord Orgauth, and I will use my powers to speed you on your way afterward, so that you can confront this power of Tiamat and destroy it, freeing yourself from your bondage. Your next sigyll belongs to the mad lich Azimer in the ruins of Myth Drannor. And the third belongs to Harbet Gall in the Great Dale!

"You must act during the hours of daylight, for these are the hours when the power's of Kistar's undead are at their ebb. Zinda will call for you tomorrow half an hour before sunrise, and the boat will set you on the north bank of the Tesh at the moment of sunrise, when Kistar's minions are weak and vulnerable. And then Zinda will lead you into the crypts beneath the ruins of the Black Altar! Arm yourselves well with weapons and spells suited to combat the undead. And bring adequate sources of light. There is no natural illumination in the crypts. The undead need no light and do not like it.

Game Master: It is likely that your PCs still will ask Chembryl many questions. He will answer them freely, as long as they do not jeopardize his church or betray his doubts that the PCs will survive their encounter with Kistar. In the latter cases, he will simply lie, when it is convenient. If you wish, you also may have Chembryl give the party magical items to help them against undead, should the PCs be too weak for the new encounter. If the PCs ask Chembryl about the crypts, that information is given in the section below.

The Crypts

Game Master: It is best when you fully familiarize yourself with the following material before running this segment. You should assess what your PC party can do in this dungeon and to what extent you wish to open the party to destruction before you decide which NPCs enter the party with the PCs. Basically, only Zinda needs to join the party. It should be clear to the party that Chembryl intends to have one of his own among them, even though this is left unsaid. And Zinda carries the ward that is needed to enter the crypts. The PCs should be able to see this ward and know where to find it in the event Zinda is killed in the crypts. As stated, Chembryl considers her to be expendable, and she is just as expendable to you as Game Master.

See the map, *Zhentil Keep, the Ancient Crypts*. There are separate PC and Game Master maps. Zinda will be in possession of the PC map that Chembryl showed the PCs, which she will make available to the party.

These crypts came into being an estimated 400 some years after the establishment of Bane's Black Shrine in Zhentil Keep and an estimated 100 years or so before the founding of the Zhentarim. Some records place the establishment of the crypts in the Year of the Long Shadows (1164 DR), at the same time Voonlar was established, but other records suggest the crypts may already have existed a decade or so earlier.

A great spiral staircase (No. 1 on the plan), 30 feet/9m in diameter, led downward from the shrine (and later Black Altar) into the depths and led to a complex of three vaults (A, B and D). The vaults in Wing A housed heroic Zhentilar warriors who served the church of Bane. Wing B housed the vaults of powerful Zhentarim mages who had worshipped Bane. Wing D housed the vaults of high priests of Bane.

The mages' and priests' wings were joined by a round chamber some 90 feet/27m in diameter (No. 31), in which a huge magic flame burns. This fire once was a source of power directly from Bane, and it was used to sacrifice heretics. Kistar - unknown to Chembryl - has rekindled the flame as a source of necromantic power from Cyric.

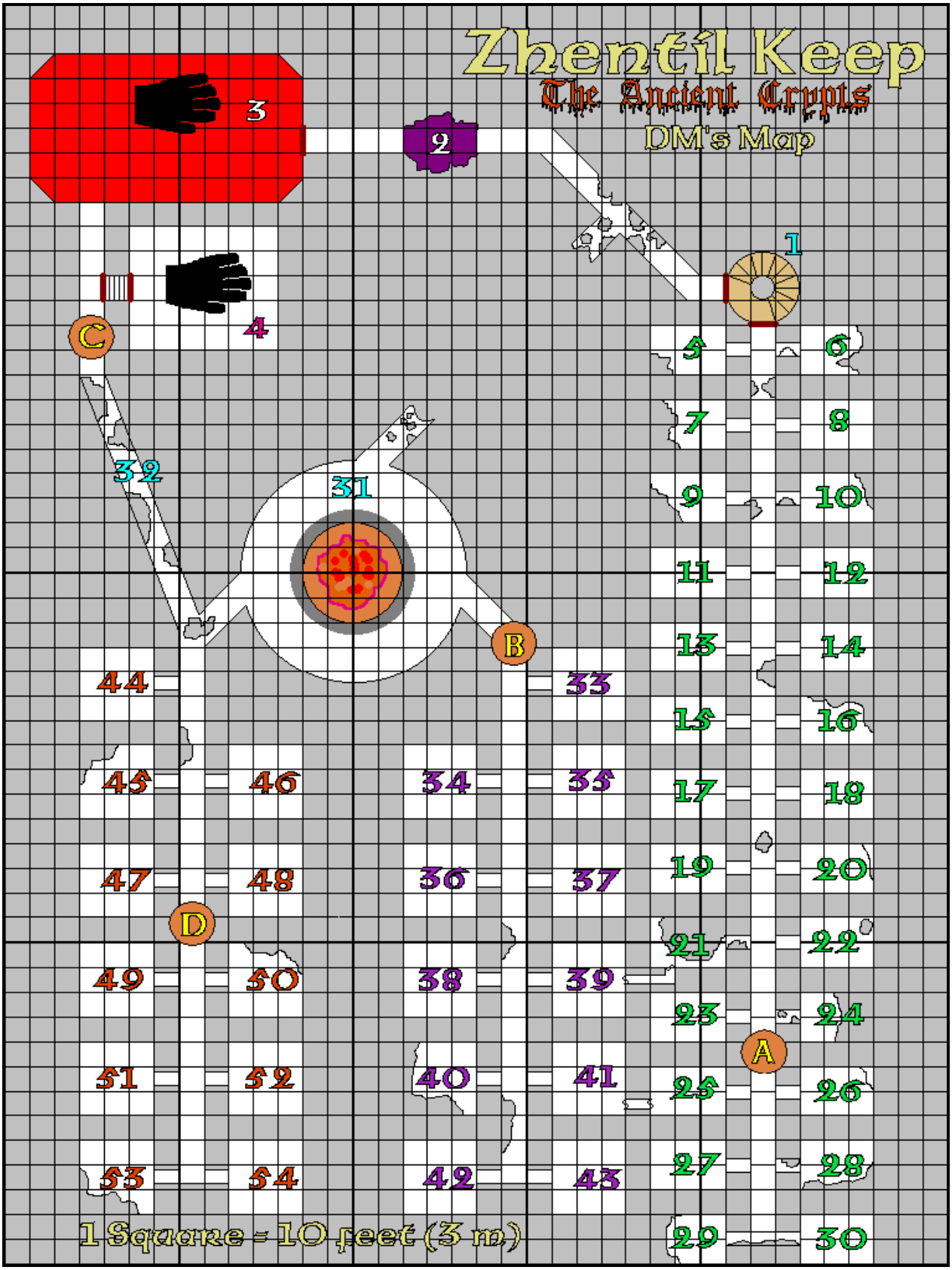
Some centuries after their establishment, the crypts came under the control of an undead high priest of Bane who had risen to a Banelich. The lich's chamber (No. 4) and the altar of the Black Hand (No. 3) came into being at that time.

For many years, the mages' and priests' vaults had been the home of a number of liches, all under the domain of the Banelich who controlled the crypts. These liches should not however be mistaken for *Those Who Walk by Night.* The powerful liches of the crypts were at times among *Those Who Walk by Night*, but the majority of the fearsome liches who bore this name were former Zhentarim mages whose crypts and vaults were elsewhere under the keep. The liches in the crypts below the Black Altar were all devout and powerful followers of Bane's church. regardless of whether they were priests of Bane or Zhentarim mages during their lifetimes.

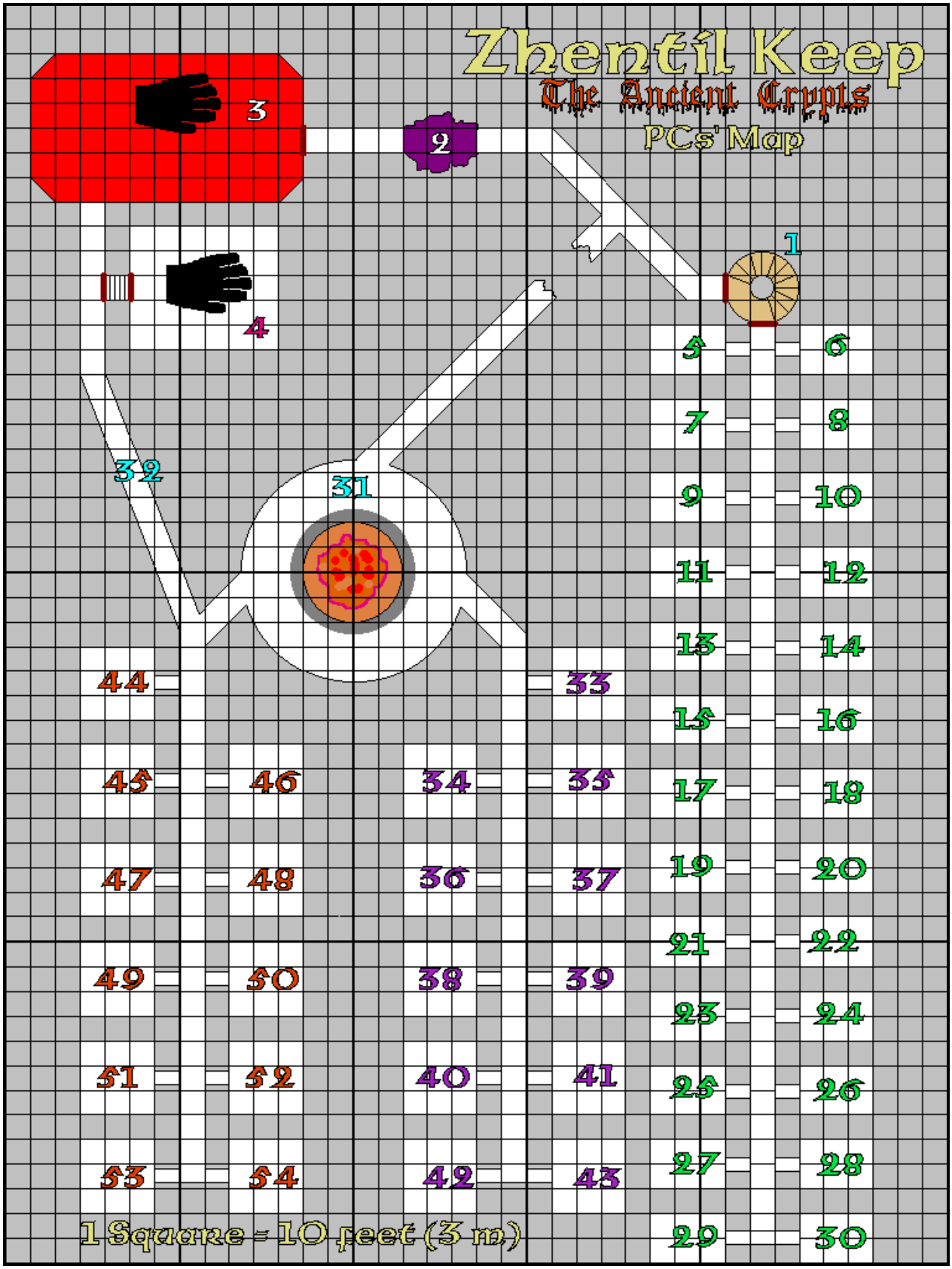
At the time Xarth Kistar took over the crypts, only one lich remained, Kinztha, the lich of a Zhentarim mage who had left the living in the Year of the Morningstar (1350 DR), still a relatively *"young"* lich as such matters go (see New NPCs in the Appendix). Kistar captured Kinztha's phylactery and now exercises absolute control over the lich, who will join the PCs in trying to destroy Kistar with an even suicidal vengeance, if they manage to free his phylactery.

All other liches who had been in the crypts either have ascended to demilichdom or were destroyed in the lich purges in the keep in earlier years. When Kistar came to the crypts, he found no undead here other than Kinztha, who had taken the Banelich's chamber (No. 4) and the temple (No. 3) to use as his laboratories. He was of course immediately evicted by Kistar and has been forced since then to maintain watch at position C, to ward off undead or intruders who attempt to enter Kistar's domain behind.

Kinztha is a weak link in Kistar's defensive chain. He knows his only chance to regain his phylactery is for someone more powerful than he is to pass position C and take on Kistar, at least distracting the burnbones long enough for Kinztha to regain his phylactery. If the PCs can convince Kinztha that they are capable of this, he will attempt to accommodate them, as long as he thinks he can avoid being destroyed.



Zhentil Keep, the Ancient Crypts – Game Master's Map



Zhentil Keep, the Ancient Crypts **– Players' Map**

Kinztha's orders also help make such a result possible. His orders are to warn any intruder to turn back. Kistar wants to avoid having Kinztha destroyed, because he cannot replace him with another lich as long as he and his undead are imprisoned by Chembryl's Xvimist magic within the crypts. Therefore, Kistar prefers that Kinztha frightens intruders off rather than engaging them. This gives Kinztha opportunity to negotiate with the PCs.

Of course, before they can do that, the PCs have to reach Kinztha, and that will be extremely difficult. The entire direct tunnel from the stairway to the fire chamber has caved in, not just a small part of it, as shown on the PCs' map (see the Game Master's map).

Kistar has established a field of negative energy 10 feet/3m high and 30feet/9m long at point No. 2. Any PC going through this field needs to survive a series of saving throws or he/she will be permanently disintegrated by the negative energy. The 3rd Edition save is for fortitude against DC 20, the 2nd Edition save vs. death magic, Considerably more detail on this death trap and its shortcomings are found below.

Of course, none of the Bane-worshipping Zhentilar warriors interred in vault wing A became liches. However, Kistar succeeded in raising several of these warriors as undead shadows and wights who guard the wing against intruders. There also are slimes in some of the vaults and Kistar has laid traps for living intruders (see below).

The only means by which the PCs can proceed beyond vault wing A is to discover the tunnels leading into Wing B from vaults 21 and 25. One of these is trapped.

Kistar also succeeded in raising some of the mages interred in vault wing B into spectres, again to guard against intruders. In addition, if the PCs are not careful, they also will disturb demiliches in this wing, whom Kistar wisely chose not to disturb, and there are slimes and traps.

The only method to get from wing B into wing D is to pass through the fire chamber (No. 31) and most likely take heat damage. In this wing, Kistar again succeeded in raising some of the dead priests who did not become liches, animating them as spectres, and there are demiliches as well as traps and slimes.

If the PCs attempt to pass through tunnel No. 32, they will find that the destruction of the keep above in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR) caused several cave-ins, and it is easy to cause still more of them. They also have Kinztha to handle and Kistar himself at positions 3 and 4.

The Map - Running the Encounters

SUBSTITUTE PCs: This dungeon may well prove to be a killer for your party. In that case, you may wish to roll up one or more substitute PCs. It is possible that old victims of the Church of Bane were imprisoned in suspended animation in the crypts, to be awakened under a geas in a future time when a member of the church awakens them. These PCs will automatically be under a geas to fulfill the same mission as that of the person who awakens them, a vehicle with which to compel these new PCs without red sigylls to follow the pull of the other PCs' sigylls. This is of course strictly optional, but this system does give the Game Master an opportunity to insert new characters for players whose PCs may be killed, without forcing the player to sit out the game for an extensive period.

ENTERING THE CRYPTS (Before the map)

Game Master: The weather in the following description prevails, regardless of what is in the weather table.

> The haze and fog that obscured the ruins during your journey to Fzoul Chembryl's temple have vanished completely as you begin your adventure in the crypts. The sky is cloudless, the air is clear and the bright orb of the sun will ascend any minute now above the golden red horizon in the East. Nothing obscures your view of the ruins to the north. You already can make out some two dozen or so persons rummaging in the new daylight through the ruins.

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Zinda is approaching in the black boat with three Zhentilar and the two brawny oarsmen who rowed you on your last crossing. The boat pulls into the dock, and the Zhentilar hold it fast without tying it. *"Climb in,"* Zinda says. *"There's no point in tying the boat. We're departing right away anyway."*

As you climb into the boat, the sun rises above the horizon in an almost friendly greeting, hopefully a good omen, because that's about all the sun is likely to do for you today. In short order you'll be heading deep below Faerûn's surface, where no sun shines and only foolish adventurers dare to go.

The oarsmen row steadily and soon steer you back to the dock where you landed upon your last visit. The Zhentilar jump to and tie the boat fast. Zinda tells you, *"The soldiers will come with us as far as the ruin of the Black Altar. There are heavy remnants from fallen walls that need to be lifted before we can find the stairway to the crypts. There's no point in our doing the dirty work there. We'll need every bit of strength we have when we reach the crypts."*

The group of you follows the Zhentilar through the eerie and mostly silent ruins of what once was a great city, making their way mostly through what once was a network of streets. Rubble-filled cellars, remnants of walls and all too often bones - most of them human, but some from substantially large creatures, perhaps ogres and giants - line your trail to both sides, and rubble and bones also litter the roads as well. At times, large obstacles block the remnants of a road, forcing you to make short detours.

Others scavenging the ruins pause and look at your group only long enough to appraise it, no doubt partly because of the uniformed Zhentilar, but probably also to determine whether there are mages or priests among you who bear watching. In the cellar of a building to the left you see what may once have been the rib cage of a young dragon. And a bit farther before you, to the right, in a crater of unknown origin rest the bones of its right wing. Where the rest of the skeleton may be is anyone's guess.

The three Zhentilar steer you ever on toward the northwestern part of the old city, until you've crossed a distance of about half a mile/850m, when you come upon a huge area, roughly 200 feet/60m in diameter covered everywhere with massive thick blotches of a shiny substance that could be black glass which was melted and cooled again.

"Here it is, ma'am," one of the three Zhentilar tells Zinda. *"That's what's left of Bane's temple. The heat melted the black stone walls and turned them into this,"* he adds, point to the shiny but dust-covered black substance. *"I know where the entrance is, but first of all, my men and I must lift the slabs we placed over it to close it off."*

The three Zhentilar go to the eastern corner of the ruin, and with extreme effort, manage to lift and move several of the large, glassy black boulders. Their works takes a good 20 minutes, before you finally can see something of a rapidly descending tunnel leading down through the rubble. *"The warded door is down there, ma'am."*

A tunnel descends downward into the darkness, well over 50 feet/15m deep. The path of descent goes through loose rubble, large rocks of the black, glassy substance, pieces of broken-off wood and scraps of jagged metal, some of them quite sharp. It will be virtually impossible to walk down this tunnel, however long it may be, and if you slip and start sliding, it will be dangerous, perhaps fatal.

Game Master: The PCs have to make their way down this 100 foot/30m long tunnel to reach the door to the stairway. Neither Zinda nor the Zhentilar will think of it, but if it occurs to a PC, the group members can descend in relative safely if they are restrained from above by a rope that is let out slowly. The leader of the three Zhentilar knows the tunnel is about 100 feet/30m long. If the PCs do not secure themselves, they must roll for dexterity every 10 feet/3m until they slide hopelessly out of control. A sliding PC sustains 1d2hp dmg for every 10 feet/3m he/she slides. There also is a 10% possibility the PC will hit a sharp metal object on the way down. To determine damage, roll 1d100 and subtract the point of descent the PC was at when he/she began sliding. Divide the result by 4 to determine the amount of damage sustained by hitting the object. These checks are not necessary if the PCs go down by rope.

As each of you neared the end of your descent, you noticed a small flaming symbol in the darkness before you. When you examine the symbol more closely now, it looks as follows:

The symbol, about 6 inches/15cm high seems to be etched in stone. Green flames race back and forth within the lines of the symbol. As you're looking at it, the Zhentilar throw your rope down to you. *"Good luck, ma'am,"* one of them shouts, with perhaps a trace of sarcasm in his voice.

Game Master: The following narrative begins after the PCs have light**.**

Once you have light, you can see that your path has ended at a seemingly undamaged stretch of subterranean wall of coal black stone directly before you. In the wall is a large door of the same black substance, about 4 feet/120cm wide and more than 6 feet/2m high. The flaming rune is about 5 feet/150cm above the ground, firmly etched in the door. A metal ring, partly rusted and about 4 inches/10cm in diameter is fastened to the right side of the door a little more than a yard/about a meter above the ground.

Zinda takes out a small piece of stone, roughly 3 inches/75mm square and holds it before the door. It bears the same flaming symbol as you see upon the door. *"One of you with a bit of strength, pull the door open,"* she says. *"The symbol will let us pass. Its companion is here."*

Slowly the door opens, rusted hinges screeching in loud protest after long disuse. A cold and moldy smelling draft crosses your faces briefly. You enter into a round, unlit chamber of black stone, some 40 feet/12m in diameter, surrounding a descending, black spiral staircase. The black walls here rob your light of all strength. You can see barely 30 feet/9m, before your surroundings disappear in the black void.

The temperature is cool - perhaps 50℉/10℃ - and t he air is damp and musty. The are but two ways to go, back into the sunlight, or downward to the crypts.

1 - THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE:

Game Master: After the PCs begin their descent.

As you descend the stairway, you hear only your own footfalls. The air remains damp and musty, and the temperature continues to linger at 50℉/10℃. Afte r an estimated descent of 50 feet/15m or so, you come upon an exit, although the stairway itself plunges deeper into the darkness. A walkway, about 2 yards/2m wide and 10 feet/3m high leads 5 yards/4.5m inward from the stairway, ending at a black stone door with iron ring similar to the door above but without the flaming rune.

Game Master: An olive slime (see *the D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium* for Olive Slime and the Olive Slime Creature) is attached to the ceiling directly above this door, and it will drop upon the first PC standing directly before the door.

Olive slime feeds on animal, vegetable, or metallic matter. Vibrations will cause it to release its tendrils and drop. It ignores armor in determining a hit with Attack Bonus 1/THAC0 19. The victim's dexterity bonus is valid only if it is aware of the slime's presence and attempts to avoid it. Upon contact with a victim, the slime releases a numbing poison and then spreads itself over the victim's body. Parasitic tendrils enter the body and channel fluids from the victim into the slime. This process affects the victim's brain and slowly changes its body. The victim must roll a 3rd Edition saving throw for reflex vs. DC 20 or a 2nd edition save vs. poison to determine whether it notices that a slime has dropped upon him. Because of the black walls and weak lighting, Zinda and the other PCs have only a 15% chance in this area of noticing the slime's attachment.

Within 2d4 hours, the victim's main concern becomes how to feed, protect, and sustain the growth of the olive slime. The victim also will try to keep the slime's presence a secret from Zinda and the other PCs. If Zinda or the other PCs attempt to destroy the slime, the victim will attempt to escape them. Meanwhile, the victim must consume double rations to feed the slime or it will starve at a rate that costs the victim 10% of its hit points daily, rounded upward. Healing magic will have no beneficial effect. After 1d6+6 days, the victim will turn into a vegetable creature and then into an olive slime creature (s. *Monstrous Compendium*).. Olive slime can be harmed only by acid, freezing cold, fire, or by a *cure disease* spell. Spells that affect plants also work on olive slime. Green slime and olive slime neutralize each other.

The vegetable creature is linked symbiotically with the olive slime that created it. The creator slime can call its creatures to defend it from attack, and they will immediately and mindlessly obey. Olive slime creatures seek out animal victims for the parent slime. When they attack, olive slime creatures have a 10% chance per hit to infect a victim with slime (s. olive slime above and in the *Monstrous Compendium*). If they succeed, they change targets or flee to avoid killing the new victim. Olive slime creatures are harmed by acid, freezing cold, fire and *magic missile* spells and spells that affect plants. At zero hit points an olive slime creature's skeleton collapses and it turns into a puddle of olive slime. Green slime neutralizes the olive slime and causes 2d4 points of damage per round to an olive slime creature, until its body is reduced to a skeleton.

Game Master: The following is read if the PCs open the door.

> The door opens onto a corridor of black stone, 2 yards/2m wide and 10 feet/3m high. After 10 feet/3m, the corridor is completely blocked by a cave-in.

Game Master: After continued descent:

> The spiral staircase continues to wind ever farther downward. You estimate that you've descended another 100 feet/30m, when you come upon a second exit like the last, leading toward the same type of door with an iron ring.

TRAP: Stepping on the stone floor directly in front of the door will trigger an ancient trap that releases a large stone block weighing 1,000 pounds directly above. If a PC releases the trap, he can avoid its first impact if he has room to dodge it and he makes a successful dexterity check. If not, the player suffers crushing 1d20+20hp dmg. If the victim survives the damage, it must roll 1d20 to determine whether bones have been broken. Use the following table to determine results. In the case of a fracture, the victim cannot continue without healing of 50% of the total lost hit points for the first fracture + 5% for each additional fracture of the lost hit points. If a victim has to be left behind, it will lose 1hp per turn per fracture, until it dies. The other PCs' sigylls will resist attempts by another PC to return a victim to the surface. Make a normal check for resisting the sigylls.

1: left leg
2: right leg
3: left arm
4: right arm
5. rib cage
6. both arms
7: rib cage and left leg
8: rib cage and both legs
9: rib cage and right arm
10. rib cage, both arms, both legs
11: both legs
12: both legs and left arm
13: both legs and right arm
14: both arms and left leg
15: both arms and right leg
16: both arms and both legs
17: rib cage and right leg
18: rib cage and left arm
19: rib cage and both arms
20. no fracture

This is only the first round after the stone drops. This stone is 3 feet/1m long and 18 inches/50cm high and deep. After hitting the victim and/or floor, the stone will bounce onto the spiral staircase, causing substantially more damage. The Game Master must determine in advance where Zinda and each of the PCs is standing. Zinda or any PC with room to dodge the stone can do so with a successful dexterity check or sustain 8d4hp crushing damage. If Zinda or a PC sustains more than 16hp dmg, roll with the table above for fractures.

After the second bounce, the stone will hit the spiral staircase, knocking out all steps over a distance of 1d20+10 feet/1d6+3m, where the stone will begin falling through the open center of the staircase. From here the staircase descends another 100 feet/30m. There is a 10% chance that the stone will strike the stairs again 40 feet/12m from the bottom and tear out another 1d12+12 feet/1d4+4m of steps at that level. Wherever steps have been torn out, the PCs must use climbing abilities, ropes etc. to descend further into the crypts.

Game Master: After the trap:

If the PCs open the door, they either will find the room caved in, as above, or a small chamber where one or more substitute PCs are in suspended animation and awake. If the PCs do not open the door, and you need one or more substitute PCs, have their passing awaken the characters behind the door. If you want a spectacular scene here, you also can have an emerging substitute PC set off the trap.

Game Master: After continued descent:

You've descended another 50 feet/15m or so since the last exit, when you come upon a third door.

GLYPH OF WARDING: You also can have substitute characters who emerge from this chamber, but they stand then behind a small metal chest upon the floor. Within the chest is a small, finely crafted hand made of black opal that must be worth 4,000 to 5,000 GM. This item really is the phylactery of the lich Kinztha, hidden here by Xarth Kistar, who has forgotten where it is, due to the madness filling his brain as a result of the power of Cyric that he bears. It could be found at this time, without the PCs recognizing what it is, or, if the PCs wish to or need to return it to Kinztha, it could be discovered later. Kistar placed a glyph of warding upon the small chest which when opened by persons not recognizing the rune will set off an explosive fire within 10 feet/3m of the chest, causing 18d4hp dmg. Victims may make a 3rd Edition saving throw for reflex at DC 20 or a 2nd Edition save vs. magic for 50% damage.

Game Master: After continued descent:

Another 50 feet/15m or so, and you at last reach the end of your descent in a round chamber surrounding the staircase with two large stone doors of black stone, each 10 feet/3m high and wide.

2 - NEGATIVE ENERGY FIELD

This field of negative energy was created by Xarth Kistar to block the entrance to his lair. Kistar is not aware, however, that this field is destabilizing itself as the result of the effects of the positive energy surrounding it. As a result, the field will dissipate after destroying two human or humanoid lives. The field itself covers a 30-foot/9m stretch of the corridor and also penetrates into the walls, and it looks like a large patch of dim, purple-glowing light.

The field has no effect upon undead, but it will instantly disintegrate living beings upon failure of a saving throw. To pass through the field, a living being must save every 10 feet/3m, in other words, three times to pass through the entire field. For each successful save, the victim sustains 1d8+2hp dmg and loses one experience level. In 3rd Edition, save for fortitude, in 2nd Edition against death magic

The minimum damage for three successful saves then is a loss of three levels and 9hp, along with the hit points permanently lost through the lost levels. The negative energy field is exceptionally dangerous. Characters who attempt to test the field also will lose either their lives or at least levels, if they stick an object they are holding (such as a weapon, staff etc.) into the energy field.

Held objects function as conduits, which will instantaneously channel negative energy to the person holding the object, forcing a save and resulting in the same consequences as if the individual had stepped directly into the energy field. A disintegrated character can be restored only through wish magic. Lost levels can be restored with the 7th level priest spell *Restoration.* If the PCs succeed in destroying Kistar, the energy field will collapse.

Encounters With Xarth Kistar

Kistar is a burnbones of Cyric who can cast spells as an 18th level priest of Cyric and a 15th level Necromancer, although he is neither. He can theoretically continue to choose priest spells much in the manner of a living priest. However, he does not and cannot use spell books as a living necromancer would. Any spellbooks or other flammable items in Kistar's possession already were burned unintentionally through his proximity long ago. Rather than studying magic spells in a book, Kistar originally retained the wording of these spells in his undead memory and learned to use them anew from memory. However, the madness of Cyric that burns in him severely hampers his ability to choose and learn spells well. In addition, most of the magic spells once in his memory have vanished, due to madness and disuse. Wizard spells that he learned long ago but have not used until this time remain, ready to be applied, but many of these spells Kistar never will be able to learn again. Because Kistar's interest in magic is so strongly concentrated upon necromancy, the only spells he still retains in memory are those of this school. Some of these are spells of his own creation, from his days among the living (s. New Spells in Appendix). In addition, Kistar's choice of new priest spells and magic spells that need to be replaced is severely hampered by the madness and chaos burning within him.

When Kistar picks spells, the first 25% of his spells is chosen when he is torn by madness. These spells may come *only* from the necromantic sphere. The next 25% of Kistar's spells is chosen when he is ravaged by chaos, and these spells will be highly illogical choices. He may choose priest spells from all spells available to specialty priests of Cyric, but spells in this group will not suit the probable circumstances of the day. The last 50% should be cunningly chosen spells. These also may be chosen from among all spells available to specialty priests of Cyric.

Kistar can learn any spell of levels 1-7 from the magic school of necromancy, including those spells of his own devising in the appendix. When he is choosing which spells to learn, the first 25% is chosen when he is ravaged by chaos, and these spells will be highly illogical choices. The last 75% should be cunningly chosen spells, with about a third of that cunning touched by madness.

Once Kistar's new priest and wizard spells have been chosen, the Game Master must determine before the gaming session with 1d100 what state of mind Kistar is in when he leans a spell. With a result between 1-50, he is lucid and learns the spell properly. With a result between 51 and 75 he is ravaged by chaos and learns the spell but improperly. When he uses this spell, you must determine its effect with the table of wild surge results in WotC's *Tome of Magic.* With a result of 76-00, Kistar is mad when he learns the spell and is not able to learn it at all, although he believes he has.

The last selection phases take place during encounters. Kistar always believes he has learned all spells properly. In his lucid phases, he will, however, be puzzled why he decided to learn certain spells and will not select these. For every round of combat, there is only a 50% chance (1-50 with 1d100) that Kistar will deal rationally, a 25% chance that he will react insanely (51-75 with 1d100) and a 25% chance that he will act chaotically (76-00 with 1d100). If Kistar is reacting rationally in a round, he will use his best weapons and cunning to attempt to destroy his opponents.

If he is mad or insane in a round, he will forget his spell powers and make an absolutely reckless physical attack, causing the standard heat damage for a burnbones. If he is affected by chaos, he will carry out some strange action in the round, not necessarily one that will damage himself or leave his opponents unscathed, but one that is something other than the most logical and effective action for the situation.

SUGGESTED SPELLS:

Each Game Master is of course welcome to make up his own spell list. The following is merely a suggestion. Remember that some of the spells must be absolutely ridiculous for a burnbones to learn! The notation /C means that the spell was learned while Kistar was being ravaged by chaos. He has learned the spell incorrectly, and you must use the wild surge table to determine the results. /M means that Kistar learned the spell during an insane phase, and he therefore did not learn it at all, although he is unaware of that. He still will spend one round trying to cast a spell that won't work, but as a burnbones, he can cast and attack physically in the same round.

Priest Level 1: Curse, Curse /C, Detect Good /M, Cause Fear, Cause Fear /C, Protection from Good, Call Upon Faith /M, Darkness

Priest Level 2: Silence 15' Radius /M, Silence 15' Radius, Silence 15' Radius /C, Black Talon, Know Alignment, Defile /C, Defile, Hold Person /M.

Priest Level 3: Astral Window /M, Enthrall, Create Food and Water, Glyph of Warding /C, Animate Dead, Animate Dead /C, Feign Death /M, Dispel Magic.

Priest Level 4: Focus, Cloak of Fear /C, Cloak of Fear, Dark Aura, Dark Aura /M, Skull of Secrets, Cause Serious Wounds /M, Call Woodland Being, Doubt /C

Priest Level 5: Slay Living, Plane Shift /C, Flame Strike, Insect Plague, Cause Critical Wounds /C, Dispel Good.

Priest Level 6: Control Weather /C, Harm, Harm /M, Blade Barrier.

Priest Level 7: Breath of Death, Create Direguard /M

Necromancer Level 1: Read Magic, Read Magic /M, Read Magic, Read Magic, Detect Undead

Necromancer Level 2: Spectral Hand, Spectral Hand, Spectral Hand /C, Spectral Hand /M, Spectral Hand

Necromancer Level 3: Vampiric Touch, Vampiric Touch /C, Vampiric Touch, Feign Death /M, Feign Death

Necromancer Level 4: Kistar's Boneburn /C, Kistar's Boneburn, Kistar's Boneburn, Mask of Death /M, Enervation

Necromancer Level 5: Kistar's Negative Trap, Kistar's Negative Trap, Animate Dead /C, Animate Dead /M, Magic Jar

Necromancer Level 6: Kistar's Negative Poker, Death Spell /M

Necromancer Level 7: Kistar's Negation

KISTAR'S INSANE MOMENTS:

When Kistar goes through a mad phase while involved in an encounter, he sometimes forgets he's involved in combat and talks during the round to himself or to the PCs as if they are other persons, totally ignoring the fact that he perhaps is being attacked. Some samples you can use:

Suddenly Kistar stops attacking and says, *"Now, my good Kinztha! Success is almost here. I do believe I've found Mirrormane's spirit. I will waken him and send him to destroy that double traitor Chembryl. First he betrayed Bane and then Cyric, and now he follows Bane's half god bastard son, but not for long. No my good Kinztha! We'll send Mirrormane to him!*

OR:

"Listen, Chembryl, for the Black Lord wants this of you! There must be strife. You no longer can tolerate this intruder Ginali and his Black Shrine! It must be destroyed! Is that clear enough?"

OR:

"So, you think you've trapped me here Chembryl? Fool! Fool! I have the Taerth of Tarth. I can travel from here to the cold plane whenever I wish, and from there it's only a quick hop and a jump to a position right behind your back! Are you watching your back, fool of a traitor?"

3 - THE FORMER BLACK ALTAR

Game Master: Kistar moves between rooms 3 and 4. It's for you to decide where he is at any given time. Make sure the PCs are drawn to remove the Wand of Orcus from the Taerth.

You enter a large room, probably a former temple, 60 by 100 feet/18 by 30m in size. The walls are of black stone, the floor of blood red stone. In the center of the room, standing about 10 feet/3m away from the rear wall, is a huge black stone in the shape of a hand,. The hand is about 40 feet/12m long and 25 feet/7.5m wide. It stands about 4 feet/120cm high. It may well have been an altar to Bane at one time, but above it now, in the wall, is a burned in symbol of Cyric's dark sun, roughly 10 feet/3m in diameter. The room is in a state of disarray. Bones and skulls are strewn everywhere. There also are small to middle-sized piles of ashes here and a multitude of broken glass vials, all long since empty. Along the wall opposite the alter stands a huge door frame, more than 10 feet/3m high and 10 feet/3m wide. In the frame are two ornate doors decorated with symbols of skulls. The door is closed. Etched in it is the inscription *Gareszh Hvrann*. **(Game Master:** The Taerth of Tarth**)**

4 - KISTAR'S CHAMBER

Game Master: Kistar moves between rooms 3 and 4. It's for you to decide where he is at any given time.

There's a double door in the corridor about 10 feet/3m high with each door 5 feet/1.5m wide. Both doors are made of black stone and are undecorated. It looks like they may push inward.

GLYPH OF WARDING: Kistar placed a glyph of warding upon the door. When it is opened by persons not recognizing the rune, they will set off an explosive fire within 10 feet/3m of the center of the door, causing 18d4hp dmg. Victims may make a 3rd Edition savings throw for reflex at DC 20 or a 2nd Edition save vs. magic for 50% damage.

The doorway opens to a second double door of black stone, also apparently opening inward.

GLYPH OF WARDING: Kistar placed a glyph of warding upon this door as well. When it is opened by persons not recognizing the rune, they will set off an explosive fire within 10 feet/3m of the center of the door, causing 18d4hp dmg. Victims may save for fortitude at DC 20 or in 2nd Edition save vs. magic for 50% damage.

The double doors open into a chamber 60x50 feet/18x15m in size. In the middle of the chamber is a huge black stone in the shape of a hand,. The hand is about 40 feet/12m long and 25 feet/7.5m wide. It stands about 4 feet/120cm high. It may well have been an altar to Bane at one time,. The room is in a state of disarray. Bones and skulls are strewn everywhere. There also are small to middle-sized piles of ashes here and a multitude of broken glass vials, all long since empty.

VAULT WING A:

Game Master: This wing is haunted by shadows and wights, and there are patches of green slime. The exact number you place in the wing should be based upon the strength of your party, with an eye toward the encounters that still will take place after the PCs leave Wing A. With the exception of two wights the PCs spot upon entering the wing (two always are on patrol), other wights and shadows will be in chambers behind closed doors. They will be drawn out, however, by the passing of PCs before their doors.

In this wing and in the other two wings, the PCs can seek sanctuary by using their *Candle of Positivization* (see New Magic Items in the *North Journey Campaign Guide*), but it is important that they have sufficient food and water to survive in their magic sanctuary.

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The shadows and wights in Wing A are unwilling servants of Xarth Kistar, although this unwillingness will be of no help to the PCs. Important Zhentilar warriors who were devout followers of Bane were interred in these vaults. Most lie in their vaults now as inanimate skeletons. The wights and shadows are former warriors whose spirits were trapped by Kistar and awakened in their undead form.

The dead warriors were buried with armor and weapons, making it possible for the PCs to find treasure in some of the vaults, if that suits your campaign's needs. If not, you can have your PCs find that all old metal has been severely damaged by rust. The areas where special encounters occur are listed below.

The statistics for Shadows, Wights and Green Slime can be found in the D&D Monster Manual or the *Monstrous Compendium*.

ENTRY: As you open the door, you see immediate movement. Two mummified humans with clawlike skeletal hands and burning eyes begin moving towards you. The first is about 40 feet/12m away from you, the second 50 feet/15m.

Game Master: The creatures are guarding wights, and they will attack the party.

VAULT 14: This door opens onto a room that is fully intact. Within lie the bones of a warrior upon a bier. The skeleton still wears old rusted armor and a sword sheath at its side. At the foot of the warrior is a small chest. The skeleton makes no attempt to move after your opening of the door.

Game Master: The area 2 by 2 feet/60x60cm large inside the door has been trapped with a delayed 6th level necromantic *Death Spell.* It automatically will kill an intruder of level 8 or with 8+3hd or less (s. Player's Handbook). It will not affect creatures of level 9 or higher.

VAULT 21: This vault is almost completely caved in. To the left side of the vault there still is a path about a yard/meter wide and about two feet/60cm high, through which one might crawl, but one must be careful. The pile of rubble above this hole is not stable, and jarring it could cause a cave-in.

Game Master: This is the only *"safe"* way into Wing B. A thief can pass into Wing B without trouble. Other characters need to make a dexterity check, or rubble will fall on them for 2d4hp dmg.

VAULT 24: This door opens onto a room that is totally caved in in the middle. The edge of a funeral bier still sticks out of the rubble, and upon it lies an undamaged sword that glows with light blue light.

Game Master: All of this is an illusion. The room no longer exists. Where a floor is shown on the map, there actually is a large hole 100 feet/30m deep. A PC can detect this by probing with his/her foot. A PC who walks onto the illusionary floor will fall immediately for 10d6hp dmg. If the victim survives the damage, it must roll 1d20 to determine whether bones have been broken. Use the following table to determine results. In the case of a fracture, the victim cannot continue without healing 50% of the total lost hit points for the first fracture + 5% for each additional fracture of the lost hit points. If a victim has to be left behind, it will lose 1hp per turn per fracture, until it dies. The other PCs' sigylls will resist attempts by another PC to return a victim to the surface. Make a normal check for resisting the sigylls.

1: left leg
2: right leg
3: left arm
4: right arm
5. rib cage
6. both arms
7: rib cage and left leg
8: rib cage and both legs
9: rib cage and right arm
10. rib cage, both arms, both legs
11: both legs
12: both legs and left arm
13: both legs and right arm
14: both arms and left leg
15: both arms and right leg
16: both arms and both legs
17: rib cage and right leg
18: rib cage and left arm
19: rib cage and both arms
20. no fracture

VAULT 25 - Entry: No sooner do you open the door than the mummified remains of a warrior, still carrying a sword in a sheath at its side, begins moving in your direction. The creatures eyes are burning, and its claw-like hands reach out, preparing to attack.

Game Master: The creature is a wight. A hidden door conceals the 2x2 foot/60x60cm opening into Wing B. The hidden door is an illusion and can be found only through detection of illusions or magic.

VAULT 25 - Hidden door: A part of the lower wall to the left rear of this chamber appears to be an illusion. There actually is a 2 by 2-foot/60x60cm opening in the wall here that leads out of the chamber into the darkness.

Game Master: A green slime, roughly 3 feet/90 cm in diameter, is attached to the ceiling of this crawl space.

VAULT 27: This door opens onto a room that is fully intact. Within lie the bones of a warrior upon a bier. The skeleton still wears old rusted armor and a sword sheath at its side. At the foot of the warrior is a small chest. The skeleton makes no attempt to move after your opening of the door.

Game Master: The chest holds 500 platinum hands minted in Zhentil Keep before the Time of Troubles. These coins are 85% pure and have a true value of only 425 pm. A green slime, 4x3 feet/120x90cm lurks above the chest.

VAULT WING B:

Game Master: This wing is haunted by spectres, and there are demiliches in some rooms and patches of green slime. The exact number you place in the wing should be based upon the strength of your party, with an eye toward the encounters that still will take place after the PCs leave Wing B. With the exception of one spectre the PCs spot upon entering the wing (one always is on patrol), other spectres will be in chambers behind closed doors. They will be drawn out, however, by the passing of PCs before their doors.

In this wing the PCs again can seek sanctuary by using their *Candle of Positivization* (see New Magic Items in the Appendix), but it is important that they have sufficient food and water to survive in their magic sanctuary.

These vaults were used by mages who had ascended to lichdom and also as burial places for Bane-worshipping mages who died. The spectres in Wing B are unwilling servants of Xarth Kistar, although this unwillingness will be of no help to the PCs. Important Zhentarim mages who were devout followers of Bane were interred in these vaults. Some lie here now as inanimate skeletons and others have reached demilichdom and have been avoided by Kistar. The demiliches will not attack the PCs for an attack's sake, but they will be quick to defend themselves and protect their remains and also to fight if disturbed. Kistar did however succeed in capturing the spirits of a few dead mages and he raised them as undead spectres. The vaults that had been used by liches who were destroyed before reaching demilichdom contain neither physical remains nor undead.

The dead mages were not buried with spellbooks or magical items, making it impossible for the PCs to find treasure in their vaults. The liches who came to the vaults took their spellbooks, scrolls and magical items with them. The spellbooks will have rotted in the intervening years, but you can locate magical treasure that still functions in some of the vaults, if that suits your campaign's needs. But remember that the Zhentarim are fully aware of this area, and that much of what may have been here will have been plundered. You should place demiliches in several vaults. These are the areas where treasure is most likely to be found. The areas where special encounters occur are listed below.

The statistics for demiliches, specters and green slime can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*.

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ENTRY THROUGH VAULT 39: After a crawl of about 20 feet/6m, you emerge in a new vault 30 feet square/9m square. There are old tables in this room that still hold rotting substances and empty glass vials. In the corner to your right, about 15 feet/4,5 away lie a pile of bones, atop it a skull with four gems sparkling where teeth once were. There is no movement within the vault.

Game Master: This is a demilich. It will rise as soon as the PC has emerged into the room.

AFTER A PC IS IN VAULT 39: Suddenly the dust begins swirling around the skull and bones, and it assumes the swirling form of a man, then begins moving threateningly in your direction.

Game Master: The dust will settle after 3 rounds if it is not attacked.

ENTRY THROUGH VAULT 41: After a crawl of about 10 feet/3m, you emerge in a new vault 30 feet square/9m square. There are old tables in this room that still hold rotting substances and empty glass vials. There is no movement within the vault.

Game Master: This vault is unoccupied. It belonged to a lich who was destroyed at an earlier time.

ENTRY INTO CORRIDOR: The corridor is mostly intact. There are only two places where there have been minor cave-ins. However, there is another problem. A transparent humanlike creature, perhaps a ghost, is coming from the right in your direction, still about 50 feet/15m away from you.

Game Master: This is a spectre. It will attack any PCs in the corridor but will not enter a vault.

VAULT 34: This vault is intact and empty. There is a huge table in the room filled with old parchment books, vials and many containers. There is no sign of an occupant, living, dead or undead.

Game Master: This vault belonged to a lich who was destroyed by night in old Zhentil Keep. Before he left his vault, he placed a *Delayed Blast Fireball* (s. Player's Handbook, Wizard's spell, level 7) upon the floor stone directly behind the door. It will be activated as soon as it is stepped upon, and the fireball hits all victims within a 20-foot/6m radius, including the table and the ancient items still on it. The fireball causes 10d6+10hp dmg, half damage with a successful saving throw for reflex in 3rd Edition and vs. magic in 2nd Edition. The Key of Pandemonium in this vault can be of vital importance to the PCs!

TREASURE: The spellbooks will crumble at touch and are unusable. If the PCs manage to avoid setting off the delayed blast fireball or if some items make their saving throw, they should be able to find a replacements for spell components and some healing potions. There also is Key of Pandemonium (s. Appendix, New Magical Items) among these other items.

VAULT 42: This door opens onto a room that is fully intact. A funeral bier stands in the middle of the room. Upon it lies a skeleton holding a wand of golden metal. There is no movement in the room.

Game Master: All of this is an illusion. The room no longer exists. There actually is a large round crater here, roughly 40 feet/12m in diameter and 60 feet/18m deep. A PC can detect this by probing with his/her foot. A PC who walks onto the illusionary floor will fall immediately for 6d6hp dmg. If the victim survives the damage, it must roll 1d20 to determine whether bones have been broken. Use the following table to determine results. In the case of a fracture, the victim cannot continue without healing of 50% of the total lost hit points for the first fracture + 5% for each additional fracture of the lost hit points. If a victim has to be left behind, it will lose 1hp per turn per fracture, until it dies. The other PCs' sigylls will resist attempts by another PC to return a victim to the surface. Make a normal check for resisting the sigylls.

1: left leg
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10. rib cage, both arms, both legs
11: both legs
12: both legs and left arm
13: both legs and right arm
14: both arms and left leg
15: both arms and right leg
16: both arms and both legs
17: rib cage and right leg
18: rib cage and left arm
19: rib cage and both arms
20. no fracture

ALL OTHER VAULTS are left to the Game Master's discretion!

BETWEEN B, C and D:
NO. 31 - FIRE CHAMBER

Three different doors open onto this huge round chamber, fully 90 feet/27m in diameter. In the center of the room is a large round hearth of black stone, 50 feet/15m in diameter, in which a strange but intensely hot fire burns with fury. Strange is, that the fire seems to simply be there. There is no fuel visible that it might be burning, nor is there a chimney to release the heat of the fire or to free the smoke that appears not to be there in the first place. The fire also emits no smell.

DAMAGE: A lightly laden adventurer can make it from one door to another in one segment. More heavily laden adventurers require two segments. The fire causes 3d4hp dmg per segment. Spells and magical items that protect against magical fire realize their full effect in this chamber.

VAULT WING D:

Game Master: This vault once was the unholiest sanctuary of the church of Bane within Zhentil Keep. The mightiest priests of Bane were interred here, and these also were the chambers of those mighty priests of the Dark Lord who had risen to lichdom.. In these vaults, a powerful Banelich once ruled, and the lich priests of Bane who abode here answered to his command. Until the fall of Bane in the year of the Shadows (1358 DR), entry to these vaults was forbidden to all but the highest priests of Bane in the Dark Altar.

After the fall of Bane and the destruction of the Banelich who ruled the crypts at that time, the remaining liches were freed and began to operate on their own, roaming the surface of the keep by night. This led to the gradual destruction of most of them. Today, only the lich Kinztha remains. Kinztha is bound to follow Kistar's commands or risk having his phylactery destroyed, but Kistar's control of Kinztha is limited to the force of his threat of destroying Kinztha's phylactery. Kistar's magic makes it immediately clear to him if Kinztha leaves area 32, for that reason the lich always remains there. The threat of destruction of the phylactery does not keep Kinztha from taking steps to assure his survival as a lich and to help rescue him from Kistar's clutches.

The first 20 feet (6m) of the corridor that leads into vault wing D – from the corridor entrance to the doorway of vault 44 – has been turned by Kistar's Key of Pandemonium into a one-gate to the Plane of Pandemonium. Any PCs who enter the corridor will automatically be gated to the Plane of Pandemonium and can be rescued only if the other PCs succeed in traveling to the plane with the key and against extreme odds in returning again.

Before the PCs can attempt to enter this corridor, they must get past the rubble blocking the entrance (s. Game Master's map of the crypts). As they attempt that, a translucent image of Kinztha, created by his magic, will warn them that the entrance is trapped by the church of Cyric and will destroy them unless they find the key (providing they have not done so yet).

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He will project into one of the PCs mind images of the way to vault 34, where he has hidden the key. At a time when Kistar's attention was focused elsewhere, Kinztha used magic to teleport the key from Kistar's chamber (4) into vault 34. Once the PCs already have the key, Kinztha's image informs them that the PC possessing the key must hold it directly before the entrance to the corridor and then concentrate for 3 rounds upon closing the gate. If the PCs reach the corridor with the key already in their possession, the image will arise and inform them how to use the key.

This area is haunted by the spectres of priests of Bane (who did not become liches), who have been raised by Kistar. You should decide how many spectres you wish to have and where they are located, based upon the strength of your PC party. Specific vault descriptions:

ENTRANCE: You can see another entrance before you, but the corridor here is almost completely caved in, making passage difficult. There is an opening to your right 12 to 14 inches/30 to 35cm wide. If you are careful, you may be able to make your way through without causing more of the roof of the crypts to collapse. If not, you could be buried.

Game Master: If you judge any of your PCs to be a bit large for this squeeze. have him/her make a dexterity check or bring down another 3 feet/1 m of rubble into the opening for 1d2 hp dmg. Once the first PC reaches the middle of the blocked area:

IF THE PCs DO NOT HAVE THE KEY OF PANDEMONIUM: Suddenly, a translucent white-grey figure emerges from the pile of rubble to your left and holds up a ghostly hand, signaling you to stop. In a somewhat quaking, tinny voice, the image says, *"Halt! The way before you is trapped by a magical gate produced by the vermin of Cyric. If you enter into it, you will vanish forever from Faerûn, into a realm that is beyond all hope. Return to the mages' crypts and find the key! Then one of you must hold the key before the entrance ahead of you now, and concentrate for full three minutes upon the thought of closing the gate. Only than can you enter!"*

IF THE PCs HAVE THE KEY OF PANDEMONIUM: Suddenly, a translucent white-grey figure emerges from the pile of rubble to your left and holds up a ghostly hand, signaling you to stop. In a somewhat quaking, tinny voice, the image says, *"Halt! The way before you is trapped by a magical gate produced by the vermin of Cyric. If you enter into it, you will vanish forever from Faerûn, into a realm that is beyond all hope. You have a key among you! One of you must hold this key before the entrance ahead of you now, and concentrate for full three minutes upon the thought of closing the gate. Only than can you enter!"*

Game Master: After the image delivers its message:

As suddenly as the image appeared, it dissolves again, leaving you once more alone, in the chilling silence and cool, musty air of the crypts.

VAULTS – GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The vaults – all 30x30 feet/9x9m in size - are in two categories. Some contain coffins, where priests of Bane who had not ascended to lichdom were interred. Others contain workbenches, tables and other paraphernalia used by liches to further their research. The liches have been destroyed, and their vaults all have been plundered, some of them by Kinztha himself. There should be little magic left to find here. There would be no reason for healing magic to be here.

PARTIAL CAVE-IN BETWEEN VAULTS 44 AND 45: A green slime, 40 by 60 inches (1 x 1.5 m) hangs above the ceiling over the free area next to the collapse.

VAULT 45: As you look in from the entrance, you see a dusty tomb standing on a stone block in the center of the vault. The rear right corner of this vault has caved in completely, in all a total of about 200 square feet (18 square meter). Several of the stone blocks in the ceiling hang downward at precarious angles.

Game Master: This vault was seriously weakened during the destruction of the keep. Violent actions or loud shouting by the PCs could cause further cave-ins. If they occur, they will move from the right rear to the left front. Depending upon how violent the PCs' actions are, there is a 10% chance per action of a new cave-in, each time 1d2x100 square feet/9qm (1 square on the map). If the PCs have enough physical room to try dodging the cave-in, they may make a dexterity check to determine whether they succeed. Otherwise 1d2 x 1,000 cubic feet/27 cubic meter of small blocks of sandstone fall upon them, for 10d6 hp crushing dmg per 1,000 cubic feet/27 cubic meter.

VAULT 50: As you look in from the entrance, you see a dusty table standing in the center of the vault. On both sides are dusty shelves with vials, tins, boxes and a few empty cages which might once have held rats or mice. Almost the entire left side of this vault up to within 6 feet/180 cm of the entrance has caved in. The collapsed area is about 5 feet/1.5m wide.

Game Master: This vault was critically weakened during the destruction of the keep. The rest of the ceiling is on the verge of collapse. Violent actions or loud shouting by the PCs will bring down the ceiling, causing each PC to be buried under 1d2 x 1,000 cubic feet/27 cubic meter of small blocks of sandstone for 10d6 hp crushing dmg per 1,000 cubic feet/27 cubic meter.

VAULT 52: This vault contains a black altar encrusted with ancient, dried blood, just inside the door. The altar is 8 feet/240cm long and 30 inches/75 cm wide. Ancient, rusted manacles of iron are embedded in the black stone at the head and the foot of the altar. Three sets of manacles are embedded in the stone wall 8 feet/240cm above the floor, and ancient remnants of three human skeletons dangle from these manacles. On the rear wall is a table filled with vials and small torture instruments such as whips, thumbscrews, face cages and garrotes. To the right of the altar you see a skull and a pile of bones lying on the floor. The teeth of the skull seem to reflect an unusual amount of light.

Game Master: This vault belonged to a sadistic lich of Bane (not a Banelich) named Karburt Gith. Gith has ascended to demilich status, and these are his remains. As a lich, Gith successfully researched a new spell of Bane that he called *Manacle Trap.* It works anytime wall manacles are within 30 feet/9m of a victim with no saving throw. The trap was set by Gith upon the entrance to his vault. Anytime a being enters the room, a dead victim (also a skeleton) in the wall manacles will be released and the person entering the vault will automatically be transported to the wall and manacled, until all three sets of manacles hold living victims again. Because the manacles are heavily rusted, a victim can break the chains with a check against strength at a penalty of 5 (i.e. Strength 18 checks at Strength 13). The standard rules apply for arousing the demilich Gith. An *amulet of life protection* prevents soul trapping but not the destruction of the victim's physical body. A demilich also can curse those who disturb it. A *forget* spell causes the skull of a demilich to sink without attacking. *Dispel evil* causes 1d4+4hp dmg to the skull. A *shatter* spell causes 3d6hp dmg. A *holy word* spell causes 5d6hp dmg. A *power word kill* spell cast by an ethereal or astral wizard shatters and destroys the skull. Only a fighter or ranger with a *vorpal sword*, *sword of sharpness*, *sword +5*, or vorpal weapon or a paladin with a vorpal or +4 weapon can inflict normal weapon damage on a demilich's skull. Any character with a +4 or better weapon or a *mace of disruption* inflicts 1hp dmg per successful hit. If the remnants of a shattered demilich skull are not destroyed through the combined immersion in holy water and use of a *dispel magic,* the demilich will reform in 1d10 days.

VAULT 53: As you look in from the entrance, you see a casket standing atop an altar-like stone in the center of the vault. Beginning about 6 feet/180 cm from the doorway, the rear part of the room is diagonally caved in, from left to right, to a point on the rear wall about 10 feet/3m to the left of the right wall. The left rear of the casket also is embedded in the rubble.

Game Master: This vault was seriously weakened during the destruction of the keep. Violent actions or loud shouting by the PCs could cause further cave-ins. If they occur, they will move from the caved-in area to the right front. Depending upon how violent the PCs' actions are, there is a 10% chance per action of a new cave-in, each time 1d2x100 square feet/9qm (1 square on the map). If the PCs have enough physical room to try dodging the cave-in, they may make a dexterity check to determine whether they succeed. Otherwise 1d2 x 1,000 cubic feet/27 cubic meter of small blocks of sandstone fall upon them, for 10d6 hp crushing dmg per 1,000 cubic feet/27 cubic meter.

NO. 32 - DAMAGED CORRIDOR

The light of your torches reveals a corridor of unknown length 10 feet/9m wide and 8 feet/240cm high. As you look into a corridor, you see a skeletal form in robes coming in your direction from a distance of about 30 feet/9m. *"Halt!",* the figure shouts in a hoarse voice like a loud whisper. *"You may not pass here. These halls are sacred to the servants of Cyric. Only the unholy of the Dark Sun may pass here."*

Game Master: The approaching figure is the lich Kinztha (s. *Campaign Guide*, New NPCs). There is no further script for this encounter. To run this encounter well, your role-playing is 100% dependent upon the actions of your PCs and Kinztha's motivations, which are described below. You owe it to your PCs to run this encounter really well, so that they also have a chance to make use of the possibility that Kinztha may ally with them. This cannot be realized if you do not play the role of Kinztha well.

Encounters With Kinztha

Kinztha is no servant of Cyric, but he is a mortal enemy of Xarth Kistar and, if the PCs play their cards well and have a bit of good luck, he can be a potential ally of the PCs. The Game Master must carefully weigh Kinztha's decisions in view of Kinztha's true goals. Kinztha was a 15th lvl Zhentarim mage, and he has continued to advance as a lich. He is extremely intelligent and can make quick decisions in situations on how to best serve his own goals.

These are the things which govern how Kinztha reacts, all rooted in the knowledge that Kistar has stolen his phylactery, and Kinztha does not know where Kistar has hidden it. As long as Kistar has the phylactery, Kistar has the power to destroy Kinztha. If the PCs have found the phylactery, Kinztha will not be able to detect its presence due to concealment magic placed on the phylactery by Kistar, but he will recognize it immediately if the PCs show it to him.

Kinztha's goals:

- Preservation of his existence by assuring that the phylactery is not destroyed.
- Gaining his phylactery back.
- Destroying Kistar, as soon as he is certain Kistar is not in possession of the phylactery (which actually is almost always the case because the phylactery is hidden outside of the crypts and outside of Kistar's immediate reach).

These goals are mitigated by Kistar's threats. Kistar has warned Kinztha that he will destroy the phylactery immediately if anyone proceeds through corridor 32 and enters into Area C on the dungeon map. This is to a great extent an empty threat, as far an immediate act of revenge is concerned, because Kistar has hidden the phylactery out of his own reach and has forgotten where it is.

This gives us a good hint at other motivations Kinztha will have:

- If another being does indeed break through and reach Kistar, Kinztha will do all he can to break off the encounter and reach Kistar, to attempt to destroy him before Kistar can destroy his phylactery. From this point, Kinztha will concentrate fully upon destroying Kistar as quickly as possible, and he will ignore the PCs as long as they allow that.
- Kinztha will do all he can short of risking his own destruction to prevent others from reaching Kistar, as long as he believes Kistar is in possession of the phylactery.
- Kinztha will attempt to break off combat if he believes he is in serious danger of being destroyed. If he feels his destruction is imminent regardless of what he decides, he will make an all-out attempt to destroy Kistar before Kistar can destroy the phylactery, rather than to destroy Kistar's enemies. He hates Kistar..

Since rising to lichdom, Kinztha has had little interest in the affairs of gods or men. He knows that Bane has been destroyed, but that is largely irrelevant. The Zhentarim he once served so loyally now are insignificant mortals in his eyes, smalltimers who dabble in trivia. Kinztha has set his sights upon the web of magic and the rise to demilichdom.

He will be grateful that the PCs have opened the way to his liberation, but other than that, he has no interest in the PCs and certainly no interest in damaging them or allying himself with them. Please note that his alignment has changed from neutral evil in life to pure neutral as a lich.

Aftermath in the Crypts

Game Master: Kinztha has no interest in fighting the PCs. If Kistar is destroyed and the PCs turn their attention to Kinztha, he will use a mass random teleportation spell he has developed to remove them from his presence rather than risk his own existence combating the PCs to the death. The only exception will be if the PCs have his phylactery and attempt to manipulate him with it. In this case, he will make every attempt to destroy the PC party and probably succeed.

If he teleports the PCs, the entire surviving party should be teleported collectively to the Segment *Burned Bones* in Part 3 of this module, *Cormanthor.* This means, of course, that the PCs will have only those possessions with them that they carried into the crypts and they will have lost their horses or other animals. In this case, Fzoul Chembryl will gate the assassin monk Karat Gor (see *New NPCs*, *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*) into Cormanthor (see details under *Karat Gor*) with the assignment to try to catch up to the PCs and attach herself to the group or, failing that, to stay on the group's trail, follow them and keep an eye on them, intervening if they are in danger. You'll find the details on Karat Gor's mission under *Karat Gor* below.

Back to the Keep

Game Master: If the PCs return after destroying Xarth Kistar, Fzoul Chembryl not only will be quite grateful but also will take entirely new look at the PCs, viewing them as have the potential for being a substantial help, wittingly or unwittingly, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the church of Iyachtu Xvim. He is not hesitant to tell the PCs that he is convinced the sigylls will steer them into doing deeds that are in Xvim's best interest, and therefore, he is willing to help the PCs, even if they think they despise him. If Fzoul has determined that any of the PCs are evilly aligned, he will speak privately with each of them and try to recruit them as agents of the Zhentarim in his service. He also will do the following:

- Offer to supply the PCs with magic. Each PC should have the opportunity to request a magic item of his choosing from Chembryl if the choice is reasonable. It could add a good twist to your adventure if the PCs discover later that one or more of these items belonged to a Harper killed by the Zhents.

- Chembryl will arrange for the PCs to meet with Abarax in the form of Lord Orgauth, who in turn will reward each PC in a public ceremony with *Hero of Zhentil Keep* medals made of gold and with a value of 20 gp per medal. Orgauth will tell the crowds how the PCs have rid the northern ruins of the force that had been awakening the undead there and making reconstruction impossible. Due to the PCs heroism, he will tell the crowd, the north quarters of the keep once again will be able to rise from the ashes. In addition, Abarax/Orgauth will reward each PC with two diamonds with a value of 1,000 gp each. These diamonds were recovered by Zhentarim in Scardale in the Year of the Turret (1360 DR). The diamonds were once part of Lashan's treasure, and can be identified as such by certain persons in Scardale.

- Optionally, if you wish to avoid running the trip from Zhentil Keep past Yûlash into Cormanthor on a day-to-day basis, Fzoul will offer to use an old two-way Zhentarim gate in the ruins of the north city (at a location of your choosing) which will transport the PCs to an abandoned Zhentarim staging area 6 miles / 8km southwest of the end of Moander's trail. A narrow trail follows from this staging area back to the end of Moander's Trail, where a narrower path leads straight to the south east, to Myth Drannor 20 miles/32km farther away.

- Chembryl attempts to convince the PCs to include Karat Gor in their party.

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Karat Gor

Game Master: The assassin monk Karat Gor is fully described in the section New NPCs in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*. Her assignment from Fzoul Chembryl is to stick with the PCs to the bitter end, if they accept her, or to stay on their heels, just out of site, if they reject her. One option, if you have a deserving player itching to do an evil character, is to convert Karat Gor into a PC. If she remains an NPC, she will stay loyal to Chembryl and follow his the letter of his orders, but she also will try to assassinate any rival non-PC priest if she thinks she can interpret Fzoul's orders in a way to allow this. Karat Gor is totally expendable as an NPC and can be eliminated at any time. She is intended as an evil nuisance to the group.

3. Cormanthor

Game Master: To put the most color in this segment of your adventure, we suggest you use the *Cormanthor* booklet in WotC's *Elminster's Ecologies* accessory if possible:

Possible Encounters

Game Master: A substantial number of humanoids, monsters and natural plants and animals populate the area of Cormanthor between the end of Moander's Trail (site of the encounter *Moander's Terminal* below) in the North and the Standing Stone in the south, the area in which the PCs find themselves. More details on Cormanthor are available in *Elminster's Ecologies,* which is among the pay downloads at http://www.rpgnow.com. Encounters with some of these life forms are planned and explained. You are, of course, free to add as many others as you wish. The most likely encounters follow. For more detailed information see the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium.* The Cormanthor version of the firefly is described in *Elminster's Ecologies*.

- **Azmyth**
- **Bulette (Landshark)**
- **Chimera**
- **Cockatrice**
- **Fyreflies**
- **Gorgon**
- **Orc**
- **Owlbear**
- **Pyrolisk**
- **Squirrel, black**
- **Wolf, Worg**

Starting this Segment

In this segment, we assume that the PCs either are gated with Fzoul Chembryl's help into Cormanthor, are that they are teleported there by the lich Kinztha. If Kinztha has teleported them, the scene picks up immediately in Cormanthor with the segment *Burned Bones.* If you decide to have your party travel to Myth Drannor by land, it must go past the ruins of Yûlash and down Moander's Trail. In this case, we leave you to your own devices, with the suggestion you use not only *Elminster's Ecologies* but also the *Moonsea* accessory.

If the PCs are gated into *Cormanthor* with Fzoul Chembryl's help, begin with the segment *Fzoul's Zhenting.* If they are teleported by Kinztha, begin with *Burned Bones.* If they travel by land, they probably will not reach the site *Fzoul's Zhenting,* but rather will reconnect with this module at *Moander's Terminal.*

Fzoul's Zhenting

Game Master: Fzoul Chembryl tells the PCs about a gate into Cormanthor. The gate has been warped by the mythal and now functions only in one direction, from the keep into Cormanthor. Chembryl may or may not know this, as the Game Master decides. You will have to flesh this narrative out with extra dialog. Fzoul explains:

"There was a time when our organization once conducted research into the secrets of Myth Drannor. In those days we used a gate in the vicinity to travel back and forth between the keep and Myth Drannor. The gate leads to a Zhentarim safehouse in the forests of Cormanthor, about a day's ride north of Myth Drannor. I would suggest you use this gate to travel to your next destination, Myth Drannor. Winter is coming soon, and you must conclude your business in Myth Drannor quickly and cross the Dragon Reach before it becomes impossible to sail. If there is a harsh winter, you'll be stranded in Harrowdale or Scardale until spring.

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"The safehouse to which the gate leads once was constantly manned and watched, but it's been abandoned since the destruction of the keep three years ago. Since that time, the gate has been used only occasionally. It's a two-way gate, so if you find yourself in difficult circumstances after arriving, you can return to the keep here with no trouble. The gate opens into the cellar of the old safehouse. It is sealed by a magical door, but we have keys here to open the door. Without a key nothing can enter or leave the cellar. I can give you a key.

"The gate offers you another advantage besides time. By land, you must pass the ruins of Yûlash. The Red Plumes of Hillsfar control that area and patrol it heavily. By coming from the Zhentil Keep area into the Yûlash area, you will raise the suspicions of the Red Plumes, and you no doubt will have an extremely difficult time continuing on your way. It may even be that the witch dictator of Hillsfar, Maalthiir, will take some interest in your sigylls and have you taken forcibly to Hillsfar. By using the gate, you can avoid these risks.

"It's in the ruins, on the north side of the city, not far from the ruins of the Black Altar. If you wish to use the gate, I can have Karat Gor lead you there tomorrow. It's large enough for your horses. You'll need her to break the illusion protecting the gate. I can give her a token to do that.

"In earlier years, before our keep was destroyed, scientists from my brotherhood conducted considerable research in Myth Drannor. In the last three years, we've had to concentrate our resources elsewhere and have been forced to neglect this valuable work. But I can give you a map that shows you where certain things may be found. Azimer, whom you seek, once taught in the wizard's school known as the Six Tyryl Towers.

Game Master: **Chembryl gives the PCs the players map for Myth Drannor at this time.**

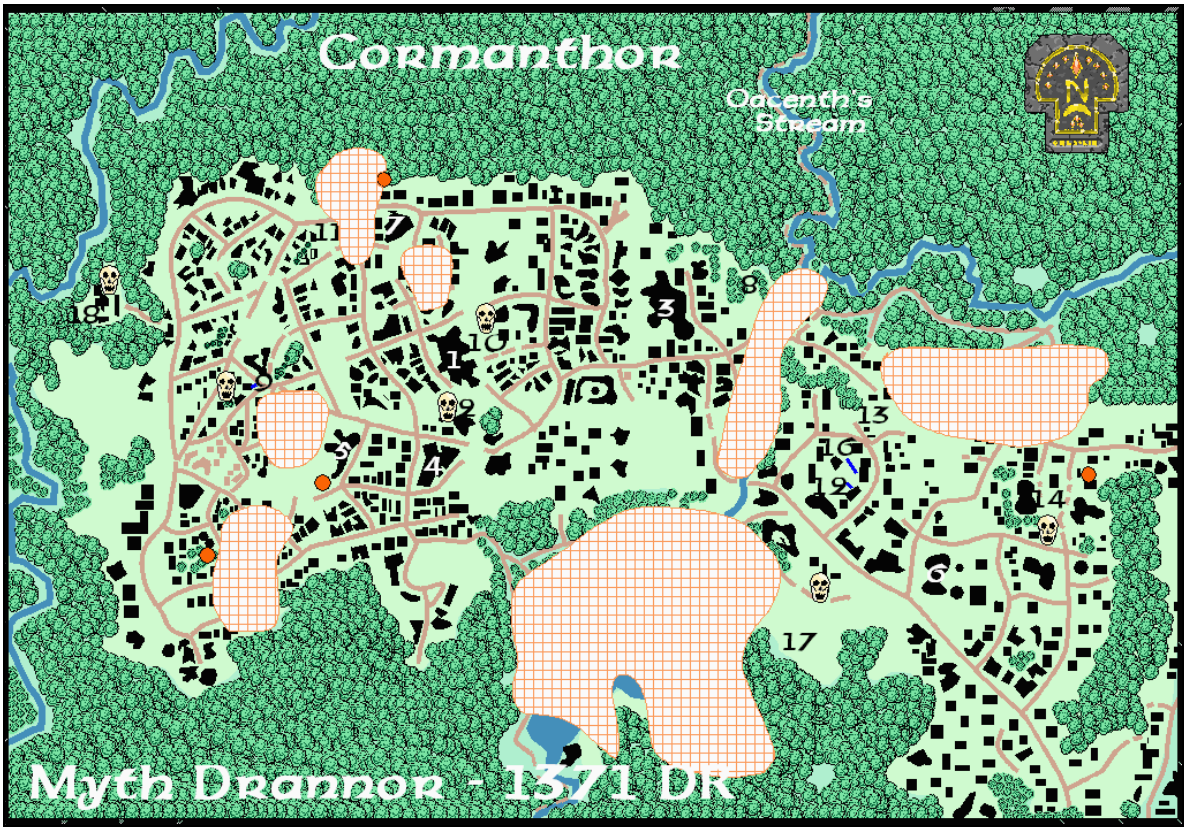
(Game Master: Chembryl shows the PCs the location. He does not know it, but Azimer moved to another location after the remainder of the *Six Tyryl Towers* caved in. The location of *Six Tyryl Towers* is D25 in the *Dlabraddath* section of Myth Drannor on the map included in WotC's *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves*).

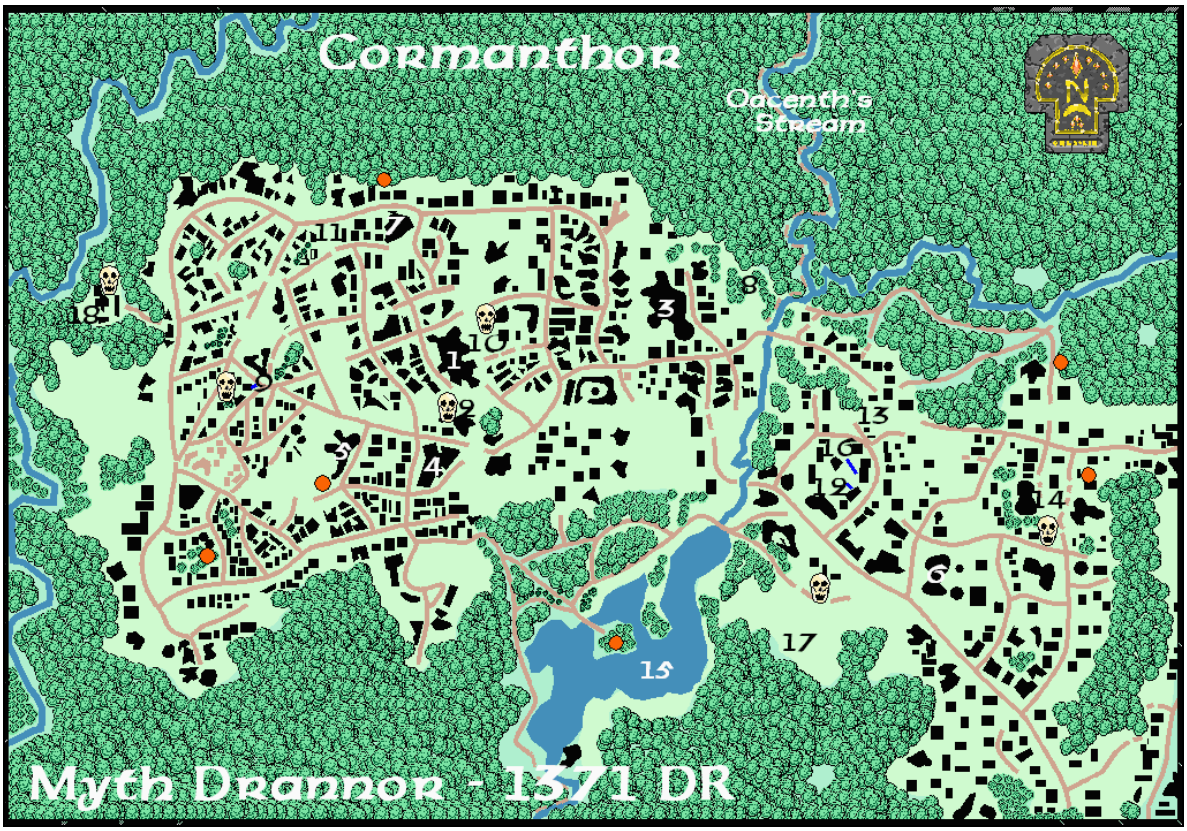
A part of the school sank beneath the surface of Myth Drannor but remained intact. Our researchers once had contact with Azimer. He is a very powerful, ancient lich, you know. From our reports, he must be a strange type. Our researchers made some notes to the effect that Azimer basically is friendly, but the second he thinks he's being threatened, he tends to react by attacking with magic of the most devastating sort.

"This map may be slightly out of date. Our last research team added notes to it in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR), shortly before the keep was destroyed. Unfortunately, I can't add much to the information there. The people who prepared this map have been missing for the last three years. The notes they made explain themselves, but what special significance the skull symbols or the orange dots have I can't say. I assume the skulls point out some particular danger, if one area of Myth Drannor is more dangerous than another.

"There also is a problem with devils in Myth Drannor. The place is overrun with them, and also other unpleasant things. I'm afraid my former church is responsible for the devils there, albeit it another branch. The High Imperceptor of Bane in Mulmaster sent men to Myth Drannor who raised these devils. This may have been Bane's wish, but it seems now in retrospect that Bane already was beginning to go mad in the latter days before the Time of Troubles, before he flew off on the insane suicidal course that led to his alliance with Cyric and then to his own destruction. In those days, against our own better judgement, some of my priests yielded to pressure from Bane and opened gates allowing these devils to enter Myth Drannor. To this day we have not fathomed Bane's purpose. I suspect now that there was none. That this was merely an early manifestation of the madness that later destroyed him.

"If I were you, I would make my camp outside of Myth Drannor, at least a few miles away from the perimeter of the ruins. Some other magic or power prevents the devils we conjured from leaving the ruins, and it's considerably safer outside of the city, particularly by night, although nowhere in that part of Cormanthor really is the least bit safe."





Myth Drannor in 1371 DR – with wild magic areas (above) and without (below)

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Game Master: There are two versions of the Zhentarim map of Myth Drannor, one for PCs and one for you. The PCs map is dated 1368 DR, your 1371 DR (*Year of the Unstrung Harp*). The orange dots are places where Zhent research shows that mages once lived. The skulls are particularly dangerous areas. The map key is valid for both maps. The following information are notes that are written on the back of the map copied for Chembryl and given to the PCs. We suggest you print this on the back of the PCs' maps using the *Common Tongue* font. Orange shaded areas on the Game Master's map show magic dead areas.

MAP KEY:

1 – Cormanthor Castle. The castle is completely intact, but we found it an impregnable stronghold of devils and gargoyles.

2 – Speculum. The old mages' hall is in disastrous condition. Our attempts to descend into the hall met with attacks from devils and a mutation of a mind flayer.

3 – House of Song. The old Oghma temple is largely intact, but we had no time to research it. Strange music emanted from the temple at times. We have noted it for our next expedition.

4 – Tyrintar's Hall. This building is haunted by undead. The central banquet hall still is relatively intact, but undead dine there.

5 – Irithlium. The walls of this old hall of magic still stand, and the dungeons beneath its ruins may have potential, but a curse affects mages here. Regardless of what precautions we take, we suffer severe headache and fall unconscious in this area.

6 – 6 Tyryl Towers. The upper parts of this school were mostly blasted away in the Battle of the Army of Darkness, however, the two westernmost towers still stand. These are to be avoided at all costs. They are haunted and guarded by some sort of magical ghost. Much of the subterranean area of this school of wizardry remains intact, but the old lich of the school, Azimer, is too temperamental and insane. Somehow, he decided we were allies of the missing prince of Scardale, Lashan, and he became quite determined to destroy us, succeeding to some extent. We were forced to flee. The next expedition should be prepared to destroy this lich, so that we can conduct our research properly.

7 – Shaundakul's Throne. There is evidence that this temple honored a forgotten god named Shaundakul. We were unable to tell whether he was an elven or human god, but we suspect the latter.

8 – Dragondark Tower. The upper levels of this school of wizardry were completely destroyed, but there are signs that lower levels still may be reachable with proper equipment.

9 – Windsong Tower. The walls of the greatest of Myth Drannor's wizard schools still stand, but whatever is to be found is underground. We entered these levels and found them highly intact but also filled by a pervasive, sickly magic that tried to draw us inwards and succeeding in winning some of us, who did not return again.

10 – Ursplindaar. This library doubtless held knowledge that was priceless, but everything that is on this site was blasted away, and we found no trace of it.

11 – Sanctorioum. This great library too has vanished beyond all trace.

12 – Incanistaeum. This was our one success. The upper levels of this great school of magic are partially intact but have been emptied of all treasure. We did succeed however in searching the first underground level, and this was the source of most of the magic returned to the keep from this expedition.

13 – Tower of the Hand. The temple to Azuth may house lost Myth Drannor's greatest magical treasures, but as far as we can ascertain, the temple has vanished completely.

14 – Hall of the Guild of Naturalists. The eastern face of the hall has been blasted away, but the remaining walls still stand intact. However, this structure would more rightly be called the Hall of the Guild of Stirges. We turned back.

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15 – Glyrryrl's Pool. This area too is completely mage cursed.

16 – Thelenaeum. The old hall of mage philosophers may indeed prove to be another great discovery. The upper level is fully destroyed but the subterranean entrance seems to have been fully protected by rubble. We descended a ladder in a shaft some 200 feet/60 m deep and checked the beginning rooms. We had the impression the Thelaneum has been genuinely abandoned since the fall.

17 – Lathander's Farm. This colony of purposeless priests seems to have set up a protective zone around its settlement that keeps devils out. We sought no contact or strife with the Morning Lord's priests – this time.

18 – Burial Glen. This is a doubly dangerous area. Undead haunt it by night, devils steal tombstones and drop them upon your head by day.

Game Master: Whether or not the PCs accept Fzoul's offer, he leaves them with the map and the rest of the day belongs to them. If they decide to use the gate, go the section *Over the River and Through the Woods.* If not, you must prepare to run the land journey past Yûlash and down Moander's Road, inventing your own encounters until you reach the end of *Moander's Road* and the encounter *Moander's Terminal.*

Over the River and Through the Woods

The following takes place on the next morning, if the PCs agree to be gated. If the PCs haven't agreed to let Karat Gor travel with them, it should become clear in the course of the following encounter that she is the only one who knows where the gate is, she has the token to break the illusion and she has the key to get the PCs out of the cellar on the other side. Disregard contradicting information in the weather tables and use the information below.

Karat Gor already is waiting for you as you leave the inn, together with three Zhentilar and the two oarsmen who rowed you across to the north bank along with Zinda of Xvim. The sun already has risen over the Moonsea, and the sky is relatively cloudless. You follow Karat Gor to the docks and again make the journey across the Tesh, this time on a barge large enough to bear your horses, setting to on the provisional docks on the other side, as before. There are more people scavenging through the ruins now than on your earlier visits.

Karat Gor looks back to you and says, *"The word's already beginning to travel, that the master of the undead has been destroyed, and that the ruins are becoming safer, but that won't be the case for these scavengers for long. Lord Orgauth soon will be sending construction crews over again, and he'll put an end to the scavenging then."*

She leads you on through the ruins, until you reach the black, glossy coated rubble where the Black Altar once stood. Karat Gor leads you to a position across the remnants of Imperceptor Street from the temple ruin, to the southeast of the temple. All that you can see here are the rib cage bones of a giant who apparently fell here, atop rubble where a small building once may have stood.

Game Master: If you have WotC's boxed set *Ruins of Zhentil Keep,* this is the site on the pre-1368 map of the first small building (unnumbered) on the north side of Elephstron Way, directly across from the Black Altar.

Karat Gor walks toward the bones, holding a small, glassy black stone before her. As she does so, you notice images of yourself beginning to walk ahead of you, past the ruins of the Black Altar. At the same time, the rib cage and rubble disappear, and a road can be seen about 16 feet/4.8m wide and 10 feet/3m high, leading gradually downward into a tunnel and darkness.

"The scavengers can't see us anymore," Karat Gor says. *"They see only the images of us continuing on and the illusions of the rubble and the rib cages. Lord Chembryl said this tunnel leads only another 50 feet/15m or so, and then we reach the gate. There we can gate through to Cormanthor."*

Game Master: If the PCs haven't agreed to let Karat Gor accompany them, and someone objects at this point, she will remind them that she has the key to let them pass through the magical door in Cormanthor, and she is the only one in the group who knows how to use the key. If the PCs refuse to take Karat Gor with them, she also will refuse to lead them on, and the PCs will have to ride the long way to Myth Drannor. Their sigylls will, of course, strongly rebel at this thought.

Your horses are restless, as you lead them down the road beneath the surface. As Karat Gor said, the road runs only a distance of 50 feet/15m or so, before ending at a wall that glows with a weak, carmine red light. Without hesitating, Karat Gor leads her horse through the light and vanishes immediately from sight.

Game Master: As the PCs go through the gate, you report only that they vanish, until the entire party has passed through. There can be no communication from the other side of the gate with PCs who remain behind. Because the mythal has changed the magic of the gate, there also is no going back.

Any PC who tries to refuse entering the gate must resist the pull of his/her sigylls at this point. If he/she/they succeed(s), this/these PC(s) are stranded in Zhentil Keep for a day, until they test their resistance again, and the adventure goes on in Cormanthor without him/her/them.

In this case, the player(s) of this/these PC(s) must leave the room, until they reach Cormanthor. You must decide how to bring the two fragments of the party back together. The best solution normally is to greet the tardy PCs upon their arrival in Cormanthor with an encounter that the entire group would survive, but that is likely to wipe out a faction of the PC group. In that case, the hesitant players must start new PCs in the game. This is easier than temporarily running two adventures, until the group comes together again. The following is valid for the PCs who have gated into Cormanthor:

You find yourself in absolute darkness. Something is making your horses restless. But you can hear nothing but the sounds of your own party and your animals.

Game Master: If one of the PCs makes light:

You find yourself in a stone cellar, 30 x 30 feet/9 x 9m in size. The walls are made of large bricks of natural sandstone. The ceiling is 8 feet/240 cm high and consists of natural stone as well. Absolutely nothing is in this room, not even dust. There's no trace of a door or any means to enter or leave this room. There's also no visible trace of the gate to Zhentil Keep.

Game Master: Reaction?

Karat Gor walks over to the wall opposite from the point where the gate to Zhentil Keep seems to have been and says, *"Ruzhgarotprahd!"* **Game Master:** This should be said quickly and somewhat unintelligibly, so that no other PC is able to catch this command word. You can see that she holds a glassy, black key in her hand as she says this word.

Game Master: This key still has a two-way function. If the PCs wish to hide themselves at sometime in the cellar, Karat Gor can use the key to reopen the door, but there is of course no way to gate back to Zhentil Keep.

A large metal door suddenly appears in the wall before Karat Gor. She pushes upon the door, and it opens outward, silently. Daylight pours through the opening, and you can see a stone stairway ascending before you. You can also smell orc and hear grunting orc voices farther away from you.

Game Master: As this scenario develops further, you will see that the orcs are unaware of the PCs and also will not see the PCs unless they make themselves visible to the orcs, make loud noises or act in some other way that makes their presence known. The orcs think they're camping before an unoccupied room. The next description follows when one of the PCs pushes his or her way forward, up the stairs.

The stone stairway rises about 8 feet/240cm, opening onto the stone floor of what once was a building, some 50x30 feet/15 x 9m in size. All that's left now are the four fully intact stone walls, all charred black, the charred skeleton of a lattice work that once held a roof above you and the blackened rubble of broken clay roofing tiles across the floor. There are door and window openings in the walls, but they're completely empty, with no sign of doors or window membranes.

The orc voices you hear and the smell come from outside of this ruin somewhere, but not far from it. At the most 30 to 50 feet/9 to 15m removed. Mixed with the smell of the orcs is also the smell of smoke from a small campfire. From the sound the orcs are making, you estimate that only half a dozen or so are outside the ruin.

THE BLEEDING GORGON ORC COMPANY

The survivors of this tribe of orcs, the strongest of the tribe, managed to kill a gorgon several months ago, but only after the gorgon managed to wipe out nearly 100 other tribe members. These orcs have learned their way around the part of Cormanthor north of Myth Drannor and generally know which areas are safer. They prey on anything they consider to be weaker than themselves and attempt to avoid anything they think is too powerful for them.

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These orcs have been managing to live rather well in Cormanthor, and they're not interested in dying. If they think the PCs are too strong for them, they'll do their best to get away. If they consider the PCs to be weak, they'll promise to let the PCs go if the PCs surrender whatever they have that looks valuable to the orcs, including weapons. If this brings the PCs to a point at which they seem to be easy to handle, the orcs will murder them quickly. If the PCs seem to be a borderline case to the orcs, the orcs will try to flee. If they succeed, they then will backtrack and try to ambush the PCs, if feasible. The orcs will under no condition come within 3 miles/5km of Myth Drannor. The influences of the mythal have given band members a magic resistance of 5% per experience level.

Game Master: Scenario 1 follows when the PCs reach a point where they can see the orcs without having made noise going through the broken roofing tiles. Scenario 2 occurs if the PCs *do not say* they are taking steps to avoid the broken tiles. If the PCs do try to avoid the tiles, they succeed automatically without a dexterity check. There are enough free areas to do that without making noise.

SCENARIO 1:

As you reach a point where you can look outward, you see the thick forest of Cormanthor less than 50 yards/45m away. Between the ruin and the forest, about 50 feet/15m away from you, sits a circle of six orcs – two of them female - around a campfire. About 20 feet/6m to the left of them and 100 feet/30m behind them, a narrow trail roughly 2 yards/2m wide winds through the forest. Two more orcs stand at the trail's opening into the forest, backs turned to you, longbows in hand, looking down the trail into the forest. These two orcs apparently are holding watch.

All eight orcs are muscular, a match for the very strongest orcs in most orc bands. They all also wear armor and carry weapons of respectable quality. Each of the orcs has a backpack and a quiver full of arrows on his back, as well as a sheath with a long sword at his side and a long bow lying near him on the ground. All wear well-made helmets showing a crudely painted symbol of a bleeding bull and chain mail of respectable quality. None of the eight orcs carries anything which would indicate that he or she is a shaman. All eight seem to be warriors. One wears two golden rings on each hand and appears to be the leader of the band.

The physical condition of this band and its equipment suggest strongly that this is a rather successful group of orc bandits or adventurers who have made themselves at home in Cormanthor. As soon as the orcs see you, they begin reaching for their weapons. In this round, only the six orcs around the campfire can react. The two more distant orcs on the edge of the forest still have their backs to you and still are looking down the forest trail. In this round, you automatically have the initiative.

SCENARIO 2:

As you leave the ruin, you see a group of eight orcs concentrating upon you. Four in the first row are moving quickly in your direction, with long swords drawn. They're about 5m away from you and can connect in this round yet, if they choose to attack. Four others are about 40 yards/36m away from you, three of them with long bows drawn and aimed, one fidgeting with one of four gold rings. He has two gold rings on each hand.

As you look outward, you see the thick forest of Cormanthor less than 50 yards/45m away. Between the ruin and the forest, about 50 feet/15m away from you is a campfire. About 20 feet/6m to the left of the fire is a narrow trail, roughly 2 yards/2m wide, that winds through the forest.

All eight orcs – two of them female - are muscular, a match for the very strongest orcs in most orc bands. They all also wear armor and carry weapons of respectable quality. Each of the orcs has a backpack and a quiver full of arrows on his back, as well as a sheath with a long sword at his side and a long bow lying near him on the ground. All wear well-made helmets showing a crudely painted symbol of a bleeding bull and chain mail of respectable quality. None of the eight orcs carries anything which would indicate that he or she is a shaman. All eight seem to be warriors. One wears two golden rings on each hand and appears to be the leader of the band.

The physical condition of this band and its equipment suggest strongly that this is a rather successful group of orc bandits or adventurers who have made themselves at home in Cormanthor. As soon as the orcs see you, they hesitate slightly, as though they're appraising you. Neither side has the initiative.

Game Master: What the orcs do after this depends largely upon what the PCs do, based upon the description of the Bleeding Gorgon above. The leader of the group, Anragh, is wearing four magical rings. One of them is an Elven Ring of Spell Turning that functions differently than a ring of spell turning in the Game Master's Guide (s. Appendix). Another is a Ring of Shooting Stars (s. Game Master's Guide). The others are a Ring of Blinking and a Ring of Invisibility (both Game Master's Guide). Anragh knows how to use the rings. The Elven Ring of Spell Turning will deflect all spells in the 1st, 11th, 21st etc. combat rounds. The Ring of Blinking also is always in effect. Anragh uses the Ring of Shooting Stars at a point when he thinks it would be beneficial to do his opponents the most damage possible. He uses the Ring of Invisibility only when he wants to escape. If the PCs destroy Anragh's band, it is quite possible that he will follow them in an invisible state and ambush them regularly with the Ring of Shooting Stars. All four rings are elven treasure Anragh has recovered. The command word for the Ring of Blinking is *Silversnow.* Anragh knows this, because he heard it said by the elf he killed to obtain the ring. The blinking lasts six rounds after the command word has been spoken, after that the ring is inactive for 6 turns (1 hour). Anragh can use the invisibility ring at will. He knows how to use only one power of the Ring of Shooting Stars. This ring has many different functions, but each function has its own command word. The human mage who possessed this ring was killed from behind by an invisible Anragh. He heard the mage speak the command word *Ragazdh,* which releases a ball of lightning with a range of 120 feet/36m that causes 4d12 hp dmg. Anragh can move the lightning ball up to 4 rounds, before its charge is released or dissipated. When a creature is within 5 feet/1.5m of the lightning ball, it releases its charge and causes its damage. The victim(s) is/are entitled to 3rd edition save for reflex at DC 20 or a 2nd Edition save vs. magic for half damage.

See the encounter *Anragh's Orcs* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide* for statistics.

Orcs hate direct sunlight and fight at -1 penalty to their attack rolls in sunlight. Their morale decreases by 1 under these circumstances as well

Game Master: After the encounter:

A quick survey of your surroundings shows you that the single trail you saw into the forest also is the only visible trail out of the area. The forest itself is awesome. The trees all are deciduous here, ancient trees of immense size. Most of them are oaks, maples and hickories, and you estimate their height at about 200 feet/60m. The trunks of many of the trees are as wide as small houses, up to 30 feet/9m in diameter. The hickories already are a positive omen. At this time of year, there still is a plentiful supply of hickory nuts on the ground, a point that's underlined here and there by the sight of huge, pitch black squirrels, about 2 feet/60 cm long, scampering here and there to collect nuts for the winter. If you run short of food, the nuts probably will be sufficient to pull you through for a time.

Little is left of this old Zhentarim safehouse. All signs indicate that it came under attack at some point and was burned out, possibly through magic. About the only options open to you are to follow the forest trail, plow through the forest itself or stay where you are.

Game Master: It should take the PCs about 3 hours to reach *Moander's Terminal* from the safehouse. The description of the forest along this route remains unchanged. We leave any possible encounters up to you, suggesting the use of the monsters listed above.

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Moander's Terminal

After about three hours, you reach a point where the trail widens about 50 feet/15m ahead of you and intersects with another bigger trail that crosses it. Your own trail ends at this point. The part of the new trail to the left is about 100 feet/30m wide. The continuation to the right is only about 10 feet/3m wide. It looks like this area is crossed by a giant mole or some similar creature now and then.

In and to both sides of the intersection are five large mounds of upturned soil, each about 10 feet/3m high, 15 feet/4.5m long and 5 feet/1.5m wide. Four of these mounds are older, showing signs of weathering and small outgrowths of new vegetation. One however looks like it is at the most a day or two old. In the middle of the intersection lay a knight's helmet and a long shield with a coat of arms showing a red lion with blue wings breathing silver fire.

This is the hunting grounds of a bulette who happens to be hunting in just the moment the PCs arrive. The bulette breaks ground as soon as the PCs are within 10 feet/3m of the intersection. You have to make a random choice for the victim (no elves or dwarves) and then make rolls for surprise and initiative. The bulette is hungry and will attack, regardless of what the PCs do.

As you approach the intersection, soil suddenly shoots up from the trail about 20 feet/6m in front of you, and a large creature nearly 10 feet/3m tall and 12 feet/4m long arises from the mound of soil, eyeing you hungrily. The head and rear portions of the monster are blue-brown. The rest of the body is covered with plates and scales in shades of grey-blue to blue-green. The teeth and nails are a matte ivory shade. The eyes are yellow with blue pupils and are surrounded by brown-black skin.

Game Master: The monster is a Bulette (Landshark). The next planned encounter occurs about 90 minutes later. If you wish, you can, of course, run additional encounters before that time.

Burned Bones

ONLY FOR PARTIES TELEPORTED BY KINTHA INTO CORMANTHOR:
You find yourself suddenly upon a 10-foot/3m wide trail through an awesome forest. The trees all are deciduous here, ancient trees of immense size. Most of them are oaks, maples and hickories, and you estimate their height at about 200 feet/60m. The trunks of many of the trees are as wide as small houses, up to 30 feet/9m in diameter. The hickories already are a positive omen. At this time of year, there still is a plentiful supply of hickory nuts on the ground, a point that's underlined here and there by the sight of huge, pitch black squirrels, about 2 feet/60 cm long, scampering here and there to collect nuts for the winter. If you run short of food, the nuts probably will be sufficient to pull you through for a time.

Game Master: The 90-minute time lapse mentioned below does not occur if the PCs were teleported by Kinztha into the forest. This encounter takes place after only a few rounds in that case. But enough rounds should pass so that the party can discuss the new environment and decide in which direction to go. Because the party does not know where it is, you should decide that the direction it chooses is the direction of Myth Drannor, unless a PC has climbed a tree to determine real directions. In that case, the PCs will have to check for resisting the sigylls if they wish to head northward.

About an hour and a half after the battle at the intersection, you come to a small opening in the forest on the east side of the trail. The opening runs along the trail for about 300 feet/90m and reaches about 400 feet/120m into the forest. It's covered with tall grasses, small bushes and and the faded remains of summer wildflowers. Along the road are three heaps of black ashes and in each heap a blackened skull and a collection of totally charred bones. One of the charred skulls is orcish, but the others look as though they may be human or elfish. Two of the ash piles show some signs of weathering. They already have been rained upon. The third ash pile with the orc skull probably is only a day or two old.

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It doesn't look like there's anything around capable of incinerating you at the moment, but it does look like this could be your lucky day. A family of four strange-looking game birds is feeding on the back of this meadow, about 350 feet/105m away from you, and after a quick hunt, they could make a nice, warm meal for the entire party. Two of the birds are about 3 feet/90 cm long, no doubt the parents, and the other two are smaller, 2 feet/60cm, most likely the offspring. It doesn't even look as though the hunt will be any great problem. All four birds have startled waddling in your direction, at about half the tempo you usually make, no, now they're flying, at a tempo about 50% faster than you can walk. As they draw nearer, you can see that they're really a strange breed. They look almost as if they're a hybrid of a lizard, a rooster and a bat. Their feathers are reddish brown except for one feather in each tail, which is bright red.

Game Master: This family consists of 2 adult and 2 young pyrolisks. It plans to look at the PCs, with the usual results. The statistics can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*.

Sculptor's Glade

Game Master: Your PCs have gained a new enemy, a minor league enemy, actually, but one who may leave the impression that he's a bigger problem than really is the case. He is Progath (s. New NPCs, Appendix), a 7th level Necromancer who is a religiously fanatic member of the faction of the Cult of the Dragon opposing Tiamat. Progath was in Dagger Falls at the same time the PCs were there, and he managed to overhear some remarks made there that the PCs were bearing magic sigylls that would help them carry out a mission in Tiamat's service.

Progath is an example of a person made dangerous by a little bit of knowledge. He knows little more about the PCs than this bit of scuttlebutt, but he has managed to firmly convince himself that the PCs are behind that draconians who are attacking important members of his cult faction. Progath has made it his current goal in life to completely destroy the PCs, from a distance, if at all possible. He came to Cormanthor to wait for the PCs, to ambush them. He traveled into Cormanthor with a band of two lesser mages and five cult warriors, all under his disposal. Here at the encounter point we've named *Sculptor's Glade,* Progath and his men were attacked by a band of six cockatrices who often gaze here, but are not present when the PCs arrive. Only Progath escaped, through the use of his magic. The rest of his band was artistically immortalized by the cockatrices. Progath's first plan is to attack the PCs with a dragon rune (s. Appendix, New Magical Items) he took from the corpse of an archmage of the cult. He has only one of them.

A bit more than an hour goes by, and you come to another glade, this one smaller than the last and on the western side of the trail. The glade follows the trail for scarce more than 200 feet/60m and protrudes only 100 feet into the forest. Statues of seven fighting heroes grace the glade, no doubt works left from old Cormanthyr, the elven empire, you think at first, but then it occurs to you that these statues are new and quite clean, smudged only with bird droppings in a few places. In fact, the statues probably were sculpted within the last few days. In the middle of the group, standing against a stone on the ground, is a piece of wood with a strange rune painted upon it.

Game Master: The rune -

There's no sign of the sculptor anywhere, or for that matter, of any other living being, other than a few normal looking birds in the sky and a few 2-foot/60cm-long black squirrels running under the trees of the forest.

Game Master: The following occurs as soon as any PC approaches within 20 feet/6m of the rune, triggering it:

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Just as (Name) approaches the rune, it vanishes. At the same time, you hear a thundering sound in the sky above you and see a relatively small green dragon, about 20 feet/6m long, diving to attack you.

Game Master: The statistics are in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*. Once the duration is past:

After only (1d4+3 rounds) minutes of combat, the green dragon suddenly disappears, almost as if it never had been there. The damage it has done remains however.

Elves

Less than an hour passes, when each of you begins to have the feeling that you're being watched, and not only by a single pair of eyes. However, when you look, there's no sign anywhere of anything unusual, only the large black squirrels you've been seeing since you entered Cormanthor and birds. Now and then, you do seem to catch a glimpse of patches of green or brown within the forest, but if they aren't illusions, they're as good as invisible.

Game Master: Give the PCs time to react. After another turn (10 rounds):

The trail comes into a long, very gentle bend. The curve is nowhere near sharp enough to make you susceptible to ambush. You always can see at least 200 feet/60m ahead of you. As you finally come out of the curve, you can see what looks like a man sitting upon a fallen tree trunk to the right side of the road, about 500 feet/150m ahead of you. You can make out no details yet, but it looks like the man simply sits there, holding a staff.

Game Master: Give the PCs time to reach the man. All the while they approach, he sits motionless upon the tree trunk, seeming to be deep in thought. If the PCs shout ahead to the man, he does not answer. The following occurs when they reach a point about 100 feet/30m from the man:

Suddenly, a single arrow flies from the forest to your left across the road, about 20 feet/6m in front of you, and disappears into the forest to your right. The man lifts his head, shouts into the part of the forest to your left, *"Good, good! Now they know yer there. Save yer arrows unless they be needed!"* After that, the man turns his attention toward you, without saying anything.

Game Master: The man is an ancient elf mage of Cormanthor named Selindar. He knows of the days when the old magic still was used, and he can recognize it, although he is too young to have learned to use it. As of this point, he will talk with the PCs. There are 20 elven archers hidden in the woods on each side of the trail. If the PCs attack Selindar, the archers will cut them down mercilessly. If the PCs still have not spoken when they reach a point within 20 feet/6m of Selindar, he will begin the conversation. Based upon what the PCs say, you can excerpt his side of the conversation from the following:

After seeing his long ears and noticing that he has no beard, it occurs to you that the man is no old man at all, but rather an ancient, silver-haired elf. He carries no weapons, but if he's a mage, the staff in his hand well may be weapon enough.

"Well met", the old elf says. *"Selindar of the Elven Court. Might ye be the folk that Elminster of Shadowdale said we should be watching for? Might ye be having some pretty pictures about ye? On yer arms, for instance?"*

Game Master: Reaction. Selindar asks to see the see the sigylls. After inspecting them carefully and with great interest, he says:

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"Well, now, I tell ye! That lightens my heart, as much as one can have a light heart over such things. Ye can bet I was unhappy to hear that such things were being brought back but know ye, that's not the work of elves. This magic be from the dwarves, the dwarves of the south, to be exact, the ones in the Great Rift. Not that it be coming from them now, anymore, mind ye! I'd not be believing that for a minute. The dwarves in the south won't be using the old magic anymore than we elves here. It's gone from us, as ye might be knowing. But someone else has managed to reawaken the old magic of the dwarves, and they be using it on ye."

Game Master: Selindar will give the PCs the following information *only* if they are smart enough to ask how magic can be returned that the gods have taken away from them.

"That's a good question ye be asking there," Selindar replies. *"And I'm not about to tell ye that I be knowing the answer. But the old sage of Shadowdale and I have been friends since the laying of the mythal, and we've communicated over the miles with each other on this matter, and we be of much the same opinion. Ye see, there be gods and then there be more gods. We elves follow our Seldarine, and the dwarves be following Moradin's clan, and humans be following their own pantheons.*

"It be true, that Corellon took this magic away from us and that Moradin took it from the dwarves. The old human goddess, Mystral, never had to occupy herself with this matter, because men never learned this magic to begin with.

"What we be thinking, then, is that humans together with one of their gods have found old dwarven secrets from the Great Rift and are starting to use the old magic of Moradin's folk. Now, the human goddess of magic, this new Mystra, be with little experience or knowledge yet, and we be thinking, that she's not knowing that this old magic is being called upon again. And even if she be knowing that, it well may be that she understands no more about this magic than ye or me.

"And there be still other tales to consider. We be knowing too, that the humans of the old East, south of Thay, had their own gods. I be meaning the gods of Mulhorand and Unther and the like. Since yer Time of Troubles, these old gods be either dying or pushing their way into the Pantheon of Faerûn. Now, ye might also be knowing, that a Untheric goddess named Tiamat has gained in power and has been active for more than some 20 years in the East, dealing with men who pray to Ao's gods.

"Elminster and I be thinking, that Tiamat perhaps be the one who is making these old secrets available to her followers, without that young Mystra be knowing of it or at least knowing what she might be doing about it. But we be thinking too, that this must be stopped, and it may be that the gods have given ye this task."

Game Master: If the PCs ask Selindar for more information about Tiamat, he can tell them all the information to be found in WotC's *Powers and Pantheons* and also the role Tiamat played in the Bloodstone Lands. Selindar will explain the following in all cases:

"We be here, because the old sage in Shadowdale asked that we be helping to protect ye. That be not much, what we can be doing for ye. Our folk has left the Elven Court, and only the few of us still remain, to guard the trees. But Elminster hopes that ye be having a good sleep before ye be entering Myth Drannor, and that ye be healed of those things what ail ye.

"I have potions with me to take care of the healing, and I can be calling a priest if needs be. My men will be staying in the forest, keeping evil and hungry creatures from bothering ye, so well as they can. I'll also be doing what I can to shield ye from magic, but it may be that it's too little.

"I doubt not that ye be knowing it already, but ye be having an enemy here in the forest, or at least some of the time. I be thinking that he be using his magic to come and go. I know not his strength yet, although I be thinking, that his magical toys be more powerful than he. I know not, whether I can protect ye fully against his magicks."

Game Master: If the PCs ask Selindar for more information about this enemy, he will add:

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"This man be a mage of the Dragon Cult. Good a tenday already is it, since he came into the trees, together with a small band of other mages and warriors. These others met their end when they didn't know cockatrices for what they were. Statues they be now. And I be thinking you've seen them already on your way here. Statues, they be, all but their leader, the mage I cannot name. This mage, meseems, uses his magicks to come and go, as it pleases him. At times he be under the trees, at times not.

"But it be clear that he be seeking ye. As this tenday began, a group of foolish men came to the ruins of Myth Drannor from the Standing Stone. They were in the old city less than hour when three of their seven be laying dead. Wisdom, they learned then, and fled with all haste to the north, leaving foolish dreams of Myth Drannor's treasures behind them. And still one more of their four they lost, for he stopped to long to gaze upon a pyrolisk, until the pyrolisk gazed upon him as well, and he ended as a pillar of flame.

"But before he came to his end, the men from the Dragon Cult found those who would flee and questioned them as to whether they had seen folk with sigylls like your own. And I be thinking, this mage from the cult would see ye destroyed. It is he we shall be destroying, when we find him and have the strength to do this. But through his magicks, he has eluded us until now.

"Our advice it is, that ye be camping more than two miles /3km from the perimeter of Myth Drannor, not that ye'll be safe, mind ye. Nowhere in Cormanthor is safe these days. It's just that ye'll be considerably less unsafe. If ye must go into Myth Drannor, and it seems ye must, it's best that ye do it by daylight and leave the city before night falls.

"The devils and other friendly creatures in the city are just as much awake by day as by night, mind ye, but by daylight, ye can at least see them as well as they can see ye. By night, they do the seeing and ye do the dying in the darkness. Once ye leave the city, the devils cannot follow ye, but that's all that cannot follow ye. Other things ye may conjure can go right out of the city with ye. I wish ye luck. The City of Song and Love be lost, mind ye, and I go no more there."

Game Master: Selindar and his elves will not accompany the PCs directly, but instead remain unseen in the woods, guarding the PCs' perimeter.

Beasts in the Dark

Game Master: Unless you have some particular reason to weaken your PCs by keeping them from learning new spells before they enter Myth Drannor, the following encounter should occur, as described, at sunset, after the PCs have made their camp and before they sleep. Progath has returned to Cormanthor with his limited magic. He has been making darkenbeasts. This is the last planned encounter with Progath. After this encounter, however, you should continue using Progath tailor made for your campaign. Progath is absolutely expendable and can be destroyed at any point after this encounter, but to add color to your campaign, you should have him be destroyed in actual play. Some possibilities that worked well in play testing:

- The PCs finally track Progath down and destroy him.
- Draconians track Progath down and destroy him in view of the PCs.
- The PCs finally track Progath down and are about to destroy him, when Draconians arrive on the scene and destroy him in view of the PCs, beating them to the punch.

The statistics for Progath are in the Appendix under New NPCs. We suggest you have Progath plague the PCs with darkenbeasts through and after the Myth Drannor segment, until he is destroyed. Progath can create 7 darkenbeasts a day and will send this many out each day against the PCs, as long as it is possible.

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Shortly after you've finished making camp for the evening, you hear the strange, leathery flapping of several large sets of wings coming from the south, out of the direction of Myth Drannor. In the remaining light of the evening sky you can make out unnatural looking beasts of some sort above you and in the process of making an attack. The creatures have skeletal bodies, two rear claws, a head like a pterodactyl and the pointed tail and wings of a wyvern. The bodies, all 4 to 5 feet long, are leathery black, with weakly glowing red eyes. At the moment, they're about 100 feet/30m above you.

Game Master: Further encounters in Cormanthor continue until the PCs begin the Myth Drannor segment.

4. Myth Drannor

Game Master: You begin using this segment as soon as your players come within 5 miles/8km of the ruins of Myth Drannor. This segment will be one of the most difficult for you in all of *Northern Journey* to run, because Myth Drannor operates with a complicated set of rules.. On the other side of the coin, there are few parts of the Realms that offer the Game Master more freedom to choose than does Myth Drannor, due to its own magically unpredictable nature. You can run this segment best of all if you have use the 1998 WotC *Arcane Age*™ accessory *Cormyr: Empire of the Elves* by Steven E. Schend, which can be downloaded free from WotC's website, as well as the older out-of-print accessory by Ed Greenwood, *Ruins of Myth Drannor*, which is available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com.

Cormyr: Empire of the Elves will give you the full details of Myth Drannor as it was in its days of greatest glory. For you as the Game Master, this accessory gives you exactly the tool you need to flesh out the ruins of Myth Drannor beyond the few sites we describe in this segment, so that you can bring the ancients ruins fully to life in your campaign. When you know what stood on a particular site, you also know best how to define what remains there today. We consider this WotC accessory invaluable for any campaign action in the lost *City of Song.* All playtesting Game Masters used this accessory in their campaigns and would not gladly have gone with out it.

Ruins of Myth Drannor helps likewise to understand the present day population of Myth Drannor, the intricate functioning of the mythal, etc. This boxed set also is the only really good source of maps for the city's ruins. Obtaining a copy of this set can be difficult, but if you have one, we suggest substituting the full rules and details authored by Ed Greenwood for the simplified versions we use here, except where specifically noted.

You will find that the random whims of Myth Drannor's magic combined with the escalating scale of encounters that inevitably comes into play within the ruins can send this segment of your adventure spinning out of control in no time at all, if you avoid the work-intensive preparations necessary to know what's happening at all times in your campaign's version of the ruined city.

Myth Drannor is both complicated and complex. If you skimp on preparation, your characters may get slaughtered, and your players may with justification want to slaughter you as well, for doing lousy work as a Game Master. You owe it to your players to let them thrill and perhaps even fall in the ultimate Faerûnian danger that Myth Drannor offers, but you also owe it to them to see to it that the escape hatches Myth Drannor offers are in place and that the strange random magic of Myth Drannor works for as well as against them.

The rule we would urge upon every Myth Drannor Game Master: *Know what is everywhere, why it is there, what it intends and why, and what strange magic the mythal may work next!*

With that word of wisdom, you can roll up your sleeves!

Preparing for Myth Drannor

To make proper preparations for Myth Drannor, you need to examine in advance each larger and smaller encounter site, determine what will happen there, why it will happen and what statistics you need to have at hand to run this encounter. In this segment, encounters occur in the following categories:

- The Encircling Wood
- Within the Mythal
- Myth Drannor in the Open
- Planned Encounters
- Unplanned Encounters

A part of this plan involves knowing exactly what opponents (or potential allies) your PCs will find at a given site, why this/these creature(s) are there, what they plan to do, how they will react to different actions taken by the PCs, what spells they have ready, if applicable, and what their battle statistics are, if applicable.

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The Encircling Wood

Once the PCs are within 5 miles/8km of Myth Drannor proper, the landscape, flora and fauna begin to change dramatically. The land becomes hilly and the forest is thick and dark, limiting vision in most places to a range of about 90 feet/27m. Many breeds of mushrooms and thick vegetation of the type that can do without strong daylight grow lushly on the forest floor, slowing passage. Thick vines grow around most tree trunks, reaching upward, toward the sky and more light. Small springs bubble up frequently along the forest floor and quickly turn into thin streams that rush downhill to the ruins of the city.

You are, of course, free to stage whatever encounters you wish in this area. If you want your category to remain within the spirit of official Myth Drannor, we suggest you select you encounters from our list below.

Black bears
Brigands *
Brown bears
Bugbears
Bulettes
Dire wolves
Giant poison snake
Gnolls
Goblins
Hobgoblins
Moon Elves
Ogres
Orcs
Owlbears
Pixies
Spiders
Stirges
Trolls
Wyvern

Within the Mythal

Once the PCs enter into the mythal, they will of course see the ruins of the still awesome city, but they also will be able to spot the above ground encounters that may occur and will likewise be spotted by the various and sundry collections of heroes, brigands, monsters and devils that roam the surface of Myth Drannor. Above all, they will have to contend with and in some ways be helped by the strange powers of the mythal.

Myth Drannor's magic mythal encompasses all visible parts of the city's ruins except for the burial glen for a distance of 700 feet/210m above and below the ruined city's surface. The rules, powers and properties of the mythal's magic along with its chaotic action will keep you constantly on your toes as a Game Master, if you want to run Myth Drannor well. These things, combined with the score card you'll want to keep for escalating encounters, will make running Myth Drannor at least as much of a hard-working challenge for you as Game Master as it will for your players in trying to keep their PCs alive and progressing toward their goal.

One element of the mythal that will have an overwhelming influence upon your campaign is that fact that no mind-influencing or mind-reading magic and no scrying, divination, location or other detection magicks work within the mythal, and that includes the magic of the PCs' sigylls and Grafvitnir's coins of binding. Once the PCs are within the mythal, their sigylls are still and motionless, like tattoos of the highest quality. Sammaster and Grafvitnir not only lose control over the PCs, they also lose all contact with them. As far as they are concerned, the PCs have ceased to exist. Sammaster may be aware of this property of the mythal. We leave that for you as Game Master to determine. Grafvitnir never has heard of Myth Drannor and knows nothing of the mythal. Neither he nor Gortth Szarkh will have the least idea how the PCs have vanished.

This means that the PCs are absolutely free to do what they want within the mythal. It's even conceivable that they could find an object that destroys the magic in *one* of the PCs' sigylls, erasing them, before the magic power of the object is spent. That too is a Game Master's decision. But once any other PC leaves Myth Drannor, the sigylls will reexert their control immediately and for 6d10 turns function with added strength that results in a penalty of 1 against any PC's check to resist the sigylls, and the sigylls will, of course, attempt to drive the PCs back into Myth Drannor until Azimer's symbol disappears.

Other manifestations of the mythal:

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- **Teleportation magic** does not work properly. It simply fails when used from within the mythal. An attempt to teleport *into* Myth Drannor will result in the object of the spell being teleported without error or damage to another random location upon Faerûn.

- **Transportation magic** such as *Word of Recall, Transport Via Plants* etc. transports the subject to another random location within Myth Drannor.

- **Psionic powers** that would achieve the same effects as negated spells also are negated.

- **Gate Spells** do not age the caster, but involuntary targets of such spells are a huge problem for the caster (s. Below).

- **Feather Fall,** the magic spell, always is in effect for living victims of a fall.

- **Special summoning spells** such as *Leomund's Secret Chest* and *Drawmij's Instant Summons* always produce something, but it is a random result determined by the Game Master.

- **Banishment** spells work without material components.

- **Summoning magic** always succeeds, but the warding never succeeds in trapping the victim, who arrives angry and attacking the spellcaster.

- **Diseases, Insanity and Victims of Magical Feeblemindedness** stand a non-cumulative 20% daily chance of being cured by the mythal.

- **Wild magic:** Whenever magic is used within the mythal, there is a cumulative 10% chance per spell level that it will go awry. That means 9th level magic spells have a 90% chance of running amok and only a 10% chance of success. The effects of spells that go amok are determined by a wild magic table. You can find these in WotC's *Tome of Magic* or in the WotC pay downloads *Forgotten Realms Adventures, Ruins of Myth Drannor* or the FRE2 module, *Tantras* from http://www.rpgnow.com.

- **Magic surges:** When magic is used that passes a wild magic test, the caster must save for will in 3rd Edition and vs. death magic in 2nd Edition, to determine if the spell is strengthened by a power surge. If the saving throw fails, another random die is thrown. If the result is even, the mythal augments the spell to its maximum effect in all aspects.

- **Magic strong areas:** These areas often glow with a blue-white light. Magic in these areas also operates at maximum strength, but with a roll of 1-4 on 1d6, it also will produce a random wild magic side effect.

- **Dead magic:** These shift and usually are only a few yards/meters large. The approximate current locations of larger, shifting areas are shown in the orange shading on the Myth Drannor Game Master's mini-map accompanying this module.

- **Mythal Ghosts:** The *Ruins of Myth Drannor* boxed set adds this special ability for beings who spend more the nine days uninterrupted within the mythal. They can free a shadowy likeness of themselves when they are at or near death, a condition that sets in when they have lost 90% or more of their hit points. These ghosts can walk up or downward 20 feet/6m, walk on air, attempt to free the host spirit from restraints, transfer items held by the host to another, fight for the host, issue silent warnings to others, fight other mythal ghosts, contain the alert being of the sleeping host or can be sent off on a mission by the sleeping host. In the latter case, the host cannot be awakened until the ghost returns. Once a character gains a mythal ghost, this ability lasts for one year for every 24 hours the character has spent in the ruins of Myth Drannor.

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Escalating Encounters

The two greatest powers of evil inhabiting Myth Drannor are the phaerimm and the alhoon. The Phaerimm are the same magical beings found beneath the great desert Anauroch. They are described in *Ruins of Myth Drannor,* the FR13 accessory *Anauroch* (pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com) and *Arcane Age* accessories from. Ed Greenwood sets the number of Phaerimm beneath Myth Drannor at about 40 in the OOP boxed set *Ruins of Myth Drannor.* In the same set, he also estimates the number of Alhoon at about 40. The alhoon are illithiliches – mighty undead mindflayers. The phaerimm and alhoon are enemies. They also have in common that they mentally enslave adventurers and other creatures to do their bidding for them, and one of the jobs assigned to these mental slaves is to spy upon the surface in search of new visitors. The alhoon use those who are captured not only as servant slaves but also as table treats, eaten solely for pleasure. Like other liches, the Alhoon have no need to eat. But they do enjoy brain delicacies from time to time.

The phaerimm and alhoon are the deepest and most powerful slavemasters among Myth Drannor's permanent residents, but slavery is the way of existence if not necessarily of genuine life for almost all of modern day Myth Drannor's denizens. Each level of monsters is under the thumb of another. Even the devils or baatezu, originally summoned to Myth Drannor by priests of Bane, are manipulated by the alhoon, who mentally manipulated the Zhentarim mages who convinced the priests to open the gate that brought the baatezu to the city. Ed Greenwood speculates that the alhoon wanted the devils in the city to draw the attention of the phaerimm away from the doings of the enemy alhoon.

The baatezu or devils also are among the great forces of evil in the ruins, and they too have slaves who spy for them. Ed Greenwood estimated that about 70 baatezu remained in the city after the Time of Troubles, and their numbers have doubtless decreased since that time. Magic keeps them from departing the ruins, gating back to their home plane or gating allies in from their home plane. Shortly after the Time of Troubles, according to Ed Greenwood, the surviving baatezu included the pit fiends Aglaeroch and Nuleerda, the gelugons Belubaer, Dlithgorkh and Oluubarga and the cornugons Dlanchass, Faerlfeyd, Glaungter, Ilitharge, Oumisser and Xarklara. The remaining baatezu are said to be mostly erinyes and barbazu, with some hamatula, abishai, spinagon and osyluths.

In the hierarchies of Myth Drannor, adventurers who have been captured and groups of monsters often are agents of higher monsters. A part of their job is to report sightings of new groups within Myth Drannor to their masters. The more often the PCs are spotted in the ruins, the greater the chances are that some servant of a figure of power has seen them, will report back and set the wheels in motion to have the PCs captured and killed or enslaved. The longer the PCs remain in the city and are being spotted, the higher up the chain of evil the news of them will go. On the other side of the coin, the more careful the PCs are and the more they operate under concealment, the more slowly the news of them will travel thorough this evil and enslaved chain of command.

To run this or any Myth Drannor adventure well, you need to determine with each outing the PCs have made in Myth Drannor who has seen them, for whom he, she or it works and how this being responds to the spotting. You need to keep records of which evil hierarchy is becoming aware of the PCs and how high up the chain of command this news has traveled.

This segment contains sufficient information for encounters up to baatezu levels. There are no planned encounters with phaerimm or alhoon. If you wish to have these in your campaign and you have the original WotC products with the statistics for these monsters, by all means feel free to insert them in the adventure.

Gates

Briefly said, Myth Drannor is filled with them. You can place them wherever you want, and you can and should use them to suddenly place your PCs in great danger, to suddenly remove your PCs from great danger, to suddenly place your PCs in areas of great interest, to suddenly remove your PCs from newly discovered areas of great interest before they know where they are, to get your PCs totally lost and to help them find a known path again. Most gates will transport the PCs to other locations within Myth Drannor, but there also are gates to all kinds of locations within Faerûn.

It Goes Two Ways

Nothing should be absolute in running Myth Drannor, and nothing should be overdone. The phaerimm do not wander Myth Drannor's surface (although their spies do), so the 40 or so phaerimm Ed Greenwood mentioned years ago or those listed in our own population statistics ***will not*** be encountering the PCs unless the party plunges deep in the dungeons of the ruins, where the phaerimm lair. Such encounters are not planned in this module, but if you want to add them, the full details on phaerimm lairs, the traps and magic that protect them and definitions of all of the special spells the phaerimm may use against your PCs are fully described in the *Ruins of Myth Drannor* set.

You should deal in a similar manner with the Alhoon. These monsters – 40 or so in number - do not regularly wander the ruined streets of Myth Drannor like Saturday shoppers, where they will have to ward off irritations from the city's other denizens. They lair beneath the ruins and rely on slaves to bring victims to them. In the depths, then, is where Alhoon encounters should be, if you plan to use them.

The devils or baatezu are an entirely different matter. They can be virtually *anywhere* within Myth Drannor, but there are less than 70 of them, so they can't be *everywhere.* If you want to do a masterful job of Game Mastering Myth Drannor, decide ahead of time where baatezu are and how they will move after that starting point. After that, stick with your plan. Don't put devils somewhere where they aren't, unless, of course, your PCs have done things which would draw their attention or the attention of spies who have had time enough to alert their devil masters. In that case, it's only credible that the baatezu leave your plan of movement and seek out the PCs.

Your party can encounter just about every imaginable foe or friend within Myth Drannor. To be credible, put in the friendly encounters as well as the hostile ones. Let your imagination run wild. The chaos in the mythal's magic can make almost anything possible. Regardless of how weak your PCs may be, they can and should fall into the most hopeless of situations, but remember too, that the circumstances and magic of the mythal can make unhoped for help and escapes possible at just these times. Make use of *all* of Myth Drannor's possibilities.

A Cannon Full of Canon

Any reader of the various Forgotten Realms mailing lists in the Internet is well aware of the controversy among Game Masters and players in the Realms over the issue of so-called *"canon,"* that is, official WotC definitions of the Realms vs. those Game Masters generate for their own campaigns. The *Vintyri Project* has neither the desire to get involved in this debate nor a solution for the conflict that arises from time to time between advocates of the two positions. Instead, we would like to help those Game Masters who want to keep their campaign as official as possible do it.

The key to running Myth Drannor in official style lies primarily in three WotC products: The original grey-box boxed *Forgotten Realms Campaign Set* from 1987, the *Ruins of Myth Drannor* by Ed Greenwood from 1993 and the *Arcane Age*™ accessory *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves* by Steven E. Schend, which appeared in 1998. The latter is available free for downloading from the Wizards' website. The other two are pay downloads.

In the original grey boxed campaign set, Ed Greenwood detailed sizeable, partial dungeons for the following locations:

- **Hall of the Guild of Naturalists** – Also known as the *Hall of the Beast Tamers.* This location of this building also is shown in *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves* (Map No. D31, NJ Map No. 14) but without the dungeon plan.

- **A School of Wizardry:** This is the school were Azimer still laired after the *Time of Troubles* and also the location where he destroyed Lashan of Scardale. According to *Ruins of Myth Drannor* and *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves,* there were several schools of wizardry in Myth Drannor. Neither the accounting in the grey boxed set nor the original article in *Dragon* Magazine No. 95 specifies which school this dungeon plan belongs to. That leaves Game Masters more or less free to put this dungeon into any of the schools described by Steven Schend or to add another school somewhere in the many parts of the mapped ruins that are not identified, a school that has not been officially mentioned. In this module we use the official school *Six Tyryl Towers* (C:EotE Map No. D25, NJ Map No. 6), for which WotC has made no dungeon plans to date.

The monsters of Myth Drannor are a different problem. The accessory *Ruins of Myth Drannor* includes 16 new *Monstrous Compendium* pages (designated FRX1) with an equal number of new monsters, or at least monsters that were new in 1993. Predictably, in the official encounter tables for within the mythal, Ed Greenwood used predominantly monsters from these 16 new pages. For the record, the following new monsters were listed:

Aratha (Killer Beetle)
Baelnorn
Blazing Bones
Doomsphere (Ghost Beholder)
Dread
Feystag (Calygraunt)
Electrum Dragon
Fang Dragon
Lythylx
Magebane
Metalmaster (Sword Slug)
Naga, Bone
Ormyrr
Windghost
Xantravar (Stinging Horror)
Xaver

Fortunately, almost all of these monsters are simply random items taken from WotC's *"we haven't used that one yet"* pile, having in most cases nothing particular to do with Myth Drannor at all. Your Myth Drannor dungeons can do just fine without any of them except the *Baelnorn,* which already has been documented in other WotC products. Of course, if you download *Ruins of Myth Drannor*, you will find monsters like the *Blazing Bones* or *Magebane* that are interesting but not necessary, and the *Windghost* by its very description could prove useful later if your PCs are leaving Vaasa and heading toward the Moonsea.

In the random encounter table, Ed Greenwood also listed other monsters such as *baatezu, tanar'ri, gargoyles, hobgoblins, skeletons, nagas, spiders, snakes, wraiths, shadows, wizshades, will o' the wisps* and *phaerimm.* Interesting are the *tanar'ri*. Nothing in the official Myth Drannor chronicles explains their presence, but one would assume that their being in the city would keep their arch enemies, the baatezu, fully occupied, and vice versa. This module supplies other ideas for encounters in Myth Drannor, and if you use them, we doubt you'll have any serious problems with canon, as a result.

Myth Drannor in the Open

Once the players have entered the ruins, they will be awed by their beauty, even in decay and ruin. Within the mythal, the rules listed for the magic of the mythal take effect. Above dungeon level, the players can encounter any of the monsters in the table below as well as any additional monsters you wish to add.

Animals (friendly or hostile)
Bugbear bands
Devils (baatezu)
Drow parties
Gargoyles
Giants
Harpies
Hobgoblin bands
Lathander priests
Moon elves (friendly or hostile)
NPC Groups (friendly or hostile)
Ogres
Orc bands
Stirges

Below dungeon level, the possibilities are unlimited. If they players go deep enough, they even may encounter alhoon or phaerimm. The main monsters that should be prepared are:

Animals (friendly or hostile)
Baelnorn (where appropriate)
Beholder types
Blazing Bones
Bugbear Bands
Dragons, lairing
Gargoyles
Ghosts
Hobgoblins
Lich
Lurkers
Magebanes
NPC Groups (friendly or hostile)
Ogres
Orc bands
Rust monsters
Shadows
Skeletons
Spectres
Spiders

Planned Encounters

Although some encounters may prove to be virtually inevitable, the only truly necessary planned encounter is that with Azimer.

Leaving Myth Drannor

There are five means by which the PCs can leave Myth Drannor: 1) By the means with which they came in, 2) through a gate, 3) through gating by Azimer, 4) being flown by the red dragon Sváfnir, 5) as departing souls of the dead. The official Myth Drannor also offers Game Masters the choice of having gates teleport the PCs to other destinations in Faerûn, but this choice makes little sense, if you want to continue campaigning according to plan.

Unplanned Encounters

Our dungeons plans have an adequate supply of encounters available, and you may want to plan a few random Myth Drannor dungeons with encounters to take care of areas your PCs will wander into without your PCs planning it.

The Plot

This *Myth Drannor* segment is not just a crawl through a fabled dungeon in search of Azimer. There are other adventurers and NPCs in Myth Drannor at present, and some of them are in their own way searching for Azimer too, just as the PCs are doing more directly. As long as the PCs remain within Myth Drannor, the main plot of this adventure has no effect upon them. Their sigylls are motionless and do not draw them. They may remain in Myth Drannor as long as they wish and as survival allows. Only if they leave the mythal will their sigylls reawaken. However, although the PCs are freed from the plot of *Northern Journey* for the time being, the *Myth Drannor* segment has brewed up its own plot for them.

This plot has its roots in the Vast more than 30 years ago, when a paladin of Helm rescued a dwarven smith from an orc attack. As a result, the smith rewarded the paladin a few years later with a mighty warhammer he forged that priests of Helm endowed with great magic, creating the *Weapon of Metamorphic Vigilance,* one of the great weapons of learning (see the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*). This weapon not only carried mighty magic but also could reshape itself into the form best suited for use by its bearer, this its name.

The weapon was forged and enchanted for the Helm paladin Sir Klavet, who was killed by a Zhent spying party near Sevenecho. With his death, the great weapon also fell into the hands of the Zhentarim, who later saw to it that it came into the hands of Lord Lashan of Scardale, who they quietly supported in his attempt to conquer all of the Dalelands. However, Lashan's army was defeated in the Battle of Mistledale in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), although he and some of his men escaped and fled to Myth Drannor. There they intended to seek out even mightier magic, with which to revive and continue their war, but instead, Lashan and most of his followers found only their destruction. For 15 years, Lashan's disappearance has been a mystery, and many have been convinced that Lashan either is dead or that he had returned to Scardale, where he is believed to have remained in hiding, waiting for his new day to dawn.

Only one person knows the true story, and he had not told it until recently, afraid that he would be accused of cowardice. This individual was Lashan's former Minister of Intelligence, a medium level (8) mage named Ronluth. In truth, Ronluth did reach Myth Drannor with Lashan's band and they succeeded in entering the subterranean ruins beneath the old Six Tyryl Towers School of Wizardry (Ronluth did not know the ruin's name), where they found an ancient lich. Before Ronluth or other band members could react, Lashan attacked the lich (Azimer – but Ronluth did not know this name). In desperation, Ronluth, whose spells for the day already had been exhausted in combat, reached for a golden ring upon a shelf in the ruin, a golden ring with a magical golden glow, and he placed it upon his finger. Ronluth saw Lashan wound the lich with his strangely enchanted weapon, a sword.

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The ring seemed to ask Ronluth where he would rather be. The mage saw the lich blast Lashan with a spell and then cause his lord to stand rigid through his touch. Thoughts of an evacuation tunnel beneath Scardale came to Ronluth's mind, in response to the ring's telepathic question. The lich had raised its hands again in a magical gesture, and Lashan issued a horrible scream of pain and simply vanished. All that remained was his magical sword, which fell to the floor of the lich's domain. And then Ronluth knew no more of these things. He was standing in the relative safety of a tunnel beneath Scardale.

For many years, Ronluth was as good as a wanted man, for the occupation forces in Scardale continued to search for all former officials of Lashan's government, putting many of them to death. Ronluth was taken into the tunnel sanctuary of surviving members of Lashan's own family. He intended at first to keep the magic ring he had found in Myth Drannor, although it always was ice cold upon his finger, but then he perceived that the ring slowly was taking control of his mind. Summoning every bit of will that he could and then barely succeeding, Ronluth threw the ring on a starless night in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR) into the Dragon Reach.

Upon his deathbed in Flamerule of this current Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), Ronluth at last revealed to Lashan's survivors what had happened in Myth Drannor, what befell the last Lord of Scardale and that all that had remained of his lord in the ruins of the City of Song was his magic sword. Ronluth could not, of course, identify the lich as Azimer or state exactly which ruin in Myth Drannor was the site of Lashan's fall, although he did say the encounter occurred in the southeastern corner of the fallen city.

This revelation in its turn set several events slowly in motion. A nephew of Lashan, Abilar, was the first to react, organizing a family-sponsored expedition to Myth Drannor to seek the last lord's magic sword, which had grown in legend to be a weapon much greater than it was in truth, although its powers were neither few nor trivial. A cousin of Lashan who had been a Zhentarim agent for years passed the news onto a priest of Cyric and former priest of Bane named Drandalar, who had served the Zhentarim during their occupation of Scardale and was about to desert the Black Network, above all because of its turn toward Xvim and against Cyric, but also because of its seeming abandonment of Zhentilar who had been in remote locations such as Scardale. Drandalar was aware of the magic in Lashan's weapon. He decided the first goal of his band of deserters would be Myth Drannor, to seek the lost *Weapon of Metamorphic Vigilance.*

Agents of the Iron Throne in Scardale got wind of Abilar's expedition and reacted even more quickly than Drandalar. They knew little of Lashan's blade but were aware of the legend that had grown about it and decided quickly that they too would seek this weapon, not only to claim its power for their own but also to prevent it from falling into other hands. Emenlander, the Sembian warrior-mage who led this expedition of the Iron Throne, ambushed and completely destroyed Abilar's expedition on the banks of the Duathamper along the old Halfaxe Trail on the edge of the old Elven Court within Cormanthor, with more than a day's lead time ahead of Drandalar's band. However, when Drandalar reached the scene of battle and identified the corpses left behind, he, unlike Emenlander, knew that more than one group was seeking Lashan's sword, and he began to forge plans to ambush those who went before him.

Neither Emenlander nor Drandalar however had the smooth going they had hoped for. Arrows from unseen enemies, no doubt elves, struck down many members of both bands. Emenlander had but three men left upon reaching the opening into Myth Drannor, and Drandalar had but two. However, these were not the only seekers after Lashan's magic weapon.

A mage who had followed Drandalar in Scardale deserted the priest after hearing his plans to travel to Myth Drannor, and he instead sold the news of Lashan's fall and his legendary sword to agents of the Cult of the Dragon in Ordulin. The cult coveted Lashan's sword, because certain Keepers of the Secret Hoard were erroneously convinced that the weapon was a sword Sammaster once had enchanted with dragon magic. The mage was killed by cult agents shortly after selling his information, but both factions of the cult received the mage's news. Within two days after Drandalar's expedition had left Scardale, an expedition of traditional cultists rode out of Moontassle and headed toward Rauthauvyr's Road toward Myth Drannor. A day after that, a band of Tiamatist cult members followed, leaving Archtassle and crossing the Tassleway toward Rauthauvyr's Road and Myth Drannor.

When the PCs reach the fallen City of Song, they not only will face the standard Myth Drannor encounters listed above but also will have to contend with the four competing expedition parties seeking Lashan's legendary sword, in truth, one of the *Weapons of Learning,* the *Weapon of Metamorphic Vigilance,* which is intended for the PCs and which Azimer most likely will give to them, if they reach him.

The Encircling Wood

Game Master: The descriptive narratives for this segment are relatively brief, particularly in contrast to those offered for within the mythal. Once the players are within 5 miles (8km) of Myth Drannor, they need descriptions of the change in landscape, along with those of any encounters you provide.

We suggest you pick whatever encounters you wish to use from the list below. You also can select encounters with a random throw of 1d20 at game time, but you then will have to prepare every kind of encounter in the list. Your work will be much easier if you select desired encounters from the table and then prepare only these thoroughly. For statistics, see the *D&D Monster Manual* or the *Monstrous Compendium*.

1d20	Encounter	1d20	Encounter
1	1d3 black bears	12	4d4 Moon Elves
2-3	1d4+4 brigands *	13	2d4 ogres
4	1d6 brown bears	14	1d6+10 orcs
5	1d4+4 bugbears	14	1d4+1 owlbears
6	1d2 bulettes	16	5d4 pixies
7	1d3 dire wolves	17	2d10 spiders, giant
8	1 giant poison snake	18	4d4 stirges
9	4d4 gnolls	19	2d4 trolls
10	4d6 goblins	20	1 wyvern
11	2d10 hobgoblins		

** adventurers roughly equal in level to the PCs*

Specific NPC Encounters

See the encounter descriptions *Myth Drannor Brigands* and *Moon Elves of the Encircling Wood* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

Game Master: The following narrative should be used once the PCs enter the Encircling Wood. They will need about two hours to make it through the Encircling Wood into the ruins.

> Your path becomes narrower, leading into an ever thickening part of the forest, that slowly seems to be thickening around you. The forest floor has become hilly and somewhat wet. Your see small springs regularly, and these create a number of tiny streams that cross your path from time to time but generally head in the same direction as you are going. The forest is getting thicker, lush growth of ferns and similar plants begins to fill the forest floor, and the going is getting harder, because of the vegetation.

Game Master: This situation continues, the closer toward Myth Drannor your PCs come. Any encounters are up to you.

> The forest has continued to grow thicker and the number of small streams has multiplied. At times, you have to squish your way through wed mud, at other times, you have to cut off brush that nearly closes the few remnants of the barely visible trail. Thick lush vines climb up most of the huge trees, and equally lush vegetation, mostly ferns and fungus, fill the forest floor, which now seems to consist of one round hilly mound after another. Between the darkness from the thick forest canopy and the frequent hilly mounds, you seldom seem to be able to see more than 90 feet/27m in any direction.

Game Master: This is the last chance for encounters. The PCs soon will reach the mythal and the ruins.

The Burial Glen

Please note that we include data for the glen under *"Within the Mythal,"* although it is technically outside of the mythal. The magical effects of the mythal do not pertain to the burial glen. The glen is the site where the priests of Bane gated devils (baatezu) into Myth Drannor. This area is in charred ruin, and one usually finds at least a few devils here. They are constantly searching this area for a clue to reopening a gate to their own plane.

Within the Mythal

Again, we suggest you pick whatever regular encounters you wish to use from the list below. You also can select encounters with a random throw of 1d20 at game time, but you then will have to prepare every kind of encounter in the list. Your work will be much easier if you select desired encounters from the table and then prepare only these thoroughly.

Standard Encounters Above Ground

1d12	Encounter	1d12	Encounter
1-2	2d4 Animals (friendly or hostile)	9	4d4 Hobgoblins
3	2d4 Bugbears	*1	Lathander priests
4	2d4 Devils (barbazu)	*2	Moon elves (friendly or hostile)
5	Drow party	*2	NPC Groups (friendly or hostile)
6	1d6+2 Gargoyles	10	1d4+1 Ogres
7	1d4 Giants (stone)	11	4d6 Orcs
8	1d6 Harpies	12	3d4 Stirges

* 1) only planned encounters outside of farm area; 2) these encounters should be used *only* if they did not take place in the Encircling Wood.

Standard Subterranean Encounters

1d20	Encounter	1d20	Encounter
1-2	2d4 Animals (friendly or hostile)	10	1d4 Lurkers
*1	Baelnorn (where appropriate)	11	1 Magebane
*1	Beholder types	*2	NPC Groups (friendly or hostile)
3	1d2 Blazing Bones	12	1d4+1 Ogres
4-5	2d4 Bugbears	13-14	4d6 Orcs
*1	Dragons, lairing	15	1 Rust monster
6-7	1d6+2 Gargoyles	16	1d4 Shadows
8	1 Ghost, Elven	17	1d12 Skeletons
9	4d4 Hobgoblins	18	1d2 Spectres
*1	1 Lich	19-20	2d4 Spiders, large

* 1) only planned encounters; 2) only if not used in Encircling Wood or above ground.

Where the Devils Are

Game Master: Please note that the effects of the mythal limit many of the powers of the baatezu in Myth Drannor! In the Year of the Serpent there were about 70 devils (baatezu) and also tanar'ri (demons) in Myth Drannor. In the intervening years, no new gates have been opened. The devils and demons are arch enemies of the Blood War, and they slowly managed to kill each other off, with the demons at last being totally eliminated.

Some devils including one pit fiend have been destroyed since the Year of the Serpent, some in the war against the demons, others by adventurers. Some would contend that Myth Drannor has, as a result, become a bit safer. Perhaps, but not much.

Pit fiends: Nuleerda is believed to have been destroyed in the war with the demons, but Aglaeroch still reigns supreme in Castle Cormanthor.

Gelugons: Dlithgorkh apparently also was destroyed by the demons. Belubaer reigns under Aglaeroch in Castle Cormanthor. Oluubarga leads a renegade group of devils in the ruins of the Speculum. Lower baatezu of Aglaeroch and Oluubarga sometimes fight one another, but there is no open warfare between the two.

Cornugons: Oumisser and Xarklara are believed to have been destroyed by adventurers. Ilitharge fell in the war against the demons. Dlanchass and Glaungter serve under Aglaeroch, Faerlfeyd under Oluubarga. All three can however be found in the open at times, watching over lesser devils in the ruins, while the pit fiends and gelugons tend to remain in their lairs.

Hamatula: It is believed that four survived the demon wars and brushes with adventurers. All four are believed to be loyal to Aglaeroch. At least one Hamatula usually can be found in the burial glen. One of the other three usually will be at large, with the two remaining serving Aglaeroch at any given time in Castle Cormanthor.

Erinyes: 12 are thought to have survived. It is believed that nine of them serve Aglaeroch and the remaining three have gone to Oluubarga in the Speculum. About half of the erinyes are under way within the ruins at any given time.

Barbazu: 22 are said to have survived, 14 of them in the service of Aglaeroch, the other eight by Oluubarga. Half of the barbazu will be under way at any given time, the rest being in their leaders' lairs.

Abishai: one red abishai, three green abishai and one black abishai serve Aglaeroch. They are always abroad and are denied entrance to Castle Cormanthor.

Osyluths: Four are believed to survive in Myth Drannor, all in Oluubarga's service. They also are abroad and are denied entrance to the Speculum.

Spinagons: Five are believed to survive. It is unclear whom they serve, and it well may be that they simply jump to the command of whatever higher devil crosses their path. They are not allowed in Castle Cormanthor or the Speculum.

At the time the PCs arrive in Myth Drannor, the following groups of devils are at large at the listed locations in the ruins. These groups will of course move regularly, except for those in Castle Cormanthor and the Speculum:

Castle Cormanthor: (NJ Map No. 1 – C:EotE Map No. C4, Lair of Nuleerda): The pit fiend Nuleerda, the gelugon Belubaer, the cornugons Dlanchass and Glaungter, two hamatula, seven barbazu, 10 erinyes, 26 gargoyles.

Speculum: (NJ Map No. 2 – C:EotE Map No. S29, Lair of Oluubarga). The gelugon Oluubarga, the cornugon Faerlfeyd, one erinyes, four barbazu, 16 gargoyles, about 80 feet/24m above the lair of an alhoon, who may control Oluubarga and his followers mentally. This building also houses an extra-dimensional safehold established by the ancient archmage Alaghlar of the Horns. Adventurers who get past the gargoyle guard and stumble on one of Oluubarga's devils can use the safehold as a sanctuary and place of rest.

Burial Glen: (NJ Map No. 18 – C:EotE Map indicated but not numbered). One hamatula, two barbazu. one red abishai and one black abishai (Aglaeroch). The only building still standing in relatively good condition in the glen is the Warrior's Gate (unnumbered), a shrine which is linked by an underground tunnel to a building in the northwest of Myth Drannor believed to be Ilbrannath's Tower (NJ Map not indicated – C:EotE Map No. S12).

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Lathander's Farm: (NJ Map No. 17 – C:EotE not shown). On the border to the farm, taunting priests, one erinyes, two barbazu, two osyluths (Oluubarga).

Hall of the Guild of Naturalists: (NJ Map No. 14 – C:EotE Map No. D31). One Hamatula, two barbazu and a green abishai are searching this ruin, otherwise occupied by 150 stirges, looking for a group of adventurers spotted in this area. Aglaeroch has sent the devils to search for Drandalar's expedition, which in turn is beneath the ruins in the dungeon levels. Game Masters who have the original grey box campaign set can lure their PCs here and run the *"Hall of the Beast Tamers"* mini-module. This hall also contains functioning gates to Undermountain and Waterdeep.

Dragondark Tower: (NJ Map No. 8 – C:EotE Map No. C25). Only the dungeons remain, and they are partially mapped in *"Ruins of Myth Drannor."* All five remaining spinagons – current master unknown – are in this area and will spot the PCs as they come into Myth Drannor from the trail along Oacenth's Stream. The spinagons will remain hidden until the PCs depart the orange magic dead area and then ambush them.

Windsong Tower: (NJ Map No. 9 – C:EotE Map No. S16). One erinyes, two barbazu and two osyluths are searching the dungeon of this famous wizards' school on orders from Oluubarga, trying to determine what the sickly but seductive magic beneath the school is that tortured prisoners have said beckoned to them. If these devils search too deeply, the size of Oluubarga's army will diminish substantially. One of Myth Drannor's most powerful phaerimm lairs there.

Irithlium: (NJ Map. No. 5 – C:EotE Map. No. K7). Just to the northwest of this building is a long, thin stretch where all buildings have been absolutely blown away and brush grows. Two erinyes and two green abishai aligned with Aglaeroch are in this area.

Glyrryrl's Pool: (NJ Map No. 15 – C:EotE Map No. K25). There is an area across the patch of forest to the north of the pool where no ruins stand. Everything was so strongly blasted here that only charred rubble can be seen across the surface of the still-blackened soil where only few weeds are hardy enough to grow, even today. This area is roughly surrounded by the Street of Song in the south, Shandol Street in the west and north and Darthil Street in the east on the C:EotE map. At present two erinyes and two barbazu subservient to Aglaeroch are patrolling this area.

SPELL ABILITIES, all Myth Drannor devils except spinagon: Always active: *Know alignment.* Once per round – *Advanced Illusion, Animate Dead, Charm Person, Infravision, Suggestion.*

SPECIAL DEFENSE ABILITIES: Full damage: *Acid, Lightning, Magic Missile, Silver Weapons (lesser baatezu).* Half damage: *Gas, Cold, Silver Weapons (greater baatezu).* No damage: *Normal iron weapons, fire, Poison.*

Game Master: Statistics for all devils in Myth Drannor can be found under *Myth Drannor's Devils* in the *Unofficial NPC Encounters* section of the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

Where the NPCs Are:

Emenlander's Iron Throne expedition entered Myth Drannor three days ahead of the PCs. Drandalar's Cyricist expedition arrived a day before the PCs. Hbnaster's anti-Tiamatist Dragon Cult expedition entered the ruins a few hours before the PCs. Ralpur's Tiamatist group will arrive in Myth Drannor three hours after the PCs. All three groups arrived on the stream trail south of Glyrryrl's Pool and Ralpur's group will arrive there.

Game Master: Statistics for these groups can be found in the section *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

DRANDALAR'S GROUP is searching the dungeon ruins beneath the Hall of the Guild of Naturalists: (NJ Map No. 14 – C:EotE Map No. D31), although they aren't aware of this. They had been searching the dungeon beneath an unnumbered ruin to the south of the Hall but crossed an invisible gate into the dungeons beneath the hall. They do not know that one Hamatula, two barbazu and a green abishai are searching the ruin above, where 150 stirges lair, looking for them. For Game Masters who have the original grey box FR Campaign Set, this dungeon is can be run with Ed Greenwood's mini-module *"Hall of the Beast-Tamers"* in the *"Game Master's Sourcebook of the Realms."*

EMENLANDER'S GROUP is fighting undead at the moment in Tyrintar's Hall (NJ Map No. 4 – C:EotE Map No. K15), but they are unknowingly near a gate which will take them to the Thelenaeum (NJ Map No. 16 – C:EotE Map not shown). Game Masters with *"Ruins of Myth Drannor"* can bring the PCs to the Thelenaeum and run the mini-dungeon adventure on the location card.

HBNASTER'S GROUP is trying to escape a confrontation that broke out with the erinyes, two barbazu and two osyluths who had been plaguing the priests at Lathander's farm. After spotting the new group entering Myth Drannor, the five devils turned their attention in that direction.

RALPUR'S GROUP is in Cormanthor between the Standing Stone and Myth Drannor. It will reach the fallen city and enter in the south on the trail to the west of Glyrryrl's Pool during the course of the day.

Where the Other Lurkers Are:

FEAST OF THE UNDEAD: The central dining hall of Tyrintar's Hall (NJ Map No. 4 – C:EotE Map No. K15) is haunted by feasting undead who are unable to leave the hall. There also is a gate in this hall to the Thelenaeum (NJ Map No. 16 – C:EotE Map not shown). The feasters include three former wizards and a former priest who have turned into blazing bones and 15 spectres.

DROW PARTY: This party of inexperienced drow has gated into Myth Drannor through the House of Song (NJ Map No. 3 – C:EotE Map No. C18) in search of potent magic. The drow left Oghma's temple quickly to escape the strange music within, which they found magically unpleasant. At present they are heading toward the southeast and well may encounter the PCs.

WATCHERS: Anywhere the PCs enter into remains of family houses and crypts they stand a chance of encountering baelnorn, the undead elves who stand watch over family property abandoned in the fall of Myth Drannor. Many baelnorn are curious about the outside world and will aid PCs in exchange for information or also aid them if the PCs are involved in combating a foe that could be a threat to the family household remains they are guarding.

SLAVE-GATHERING SLAVES: A band of bugbears enslaved to a phaerimm has been sent out by its master to see what's behind the action going on upon the surface and to bring back slaves to the phaerimm. This phaerimm lairs in dungeons about 80 feet/24m beneath Shaundakul's Throne (NJ Map No. 7, C:EotE Map No. S23). At present the bugbears are just north of the House of Song (NJ Map No. 3 – C:EotE Map No. C18).

The Dungeons

Six Tyryl Towers School of Wizardry (Azimer's Lair)

NJ Map No. 6, C:EotE Map No. D25

This is the main dungeon, but it also should be the last dungeon the PCs reach in Myth Drannor.

Alternative 1: Use the mini-module *"Lashan's Fall"* by Ed Greenwood in the original grey box *"FR Campaign Set."* Place the gates to Scardale and the dragon lair at whatever positions you prefer.

Alternative 2: Reopen entrances **G5** and **G16** on the *"Six Tyryl towers"* dungeon map and use the mini-module *"School of Wizardry"* by Ed Greenwood in the original grey box *"FR Campaign Set"* together with this segment, expanding the dungeon adventure.

The *Weapon of Metamorphic Vigilance*

Before your PCs leave Myth Drannor, Azimer should pass the *Weapon of Metamorphic Vigilance* onto the PCs. This will not be mentioned again, because there is no foredetermined time or place when this should happen. In Azimer's possession, the weapon has the shape of a dagger. The influence of Helm within the weapon will strongly influence Azimer to offer it to a cleric, paladin or other follower of Helm. Next in line will be priests or followers of Tyr or Torm. If none of these are available, Azimer will want to give the weapon to the PC whose philosophy is closest to Helm's. Azimer will be rather insistent upon following his inclination. There needs to be no logical explanation for any of this. Azimer is, after all, insane.

Running the dungeon:

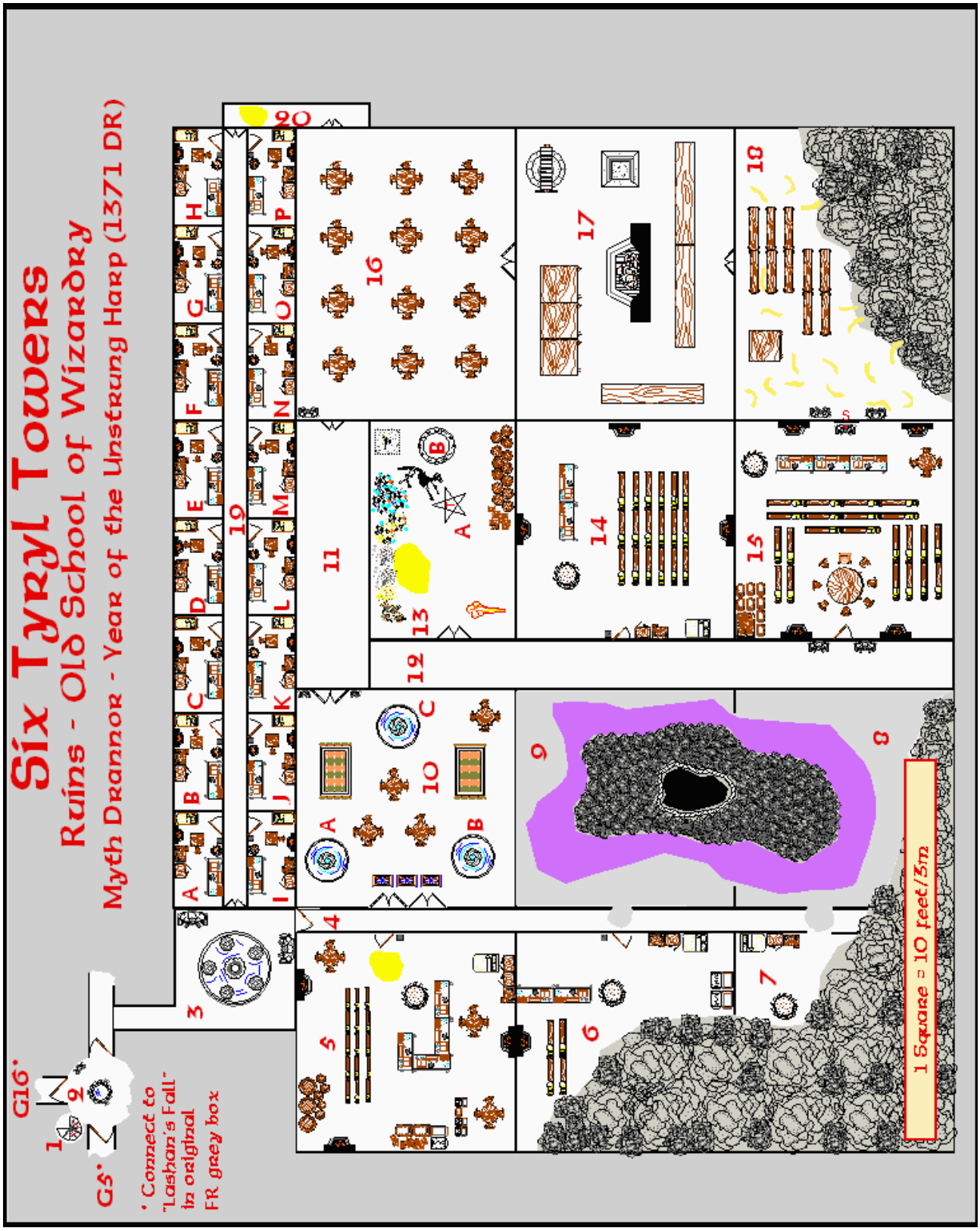
This dungeon is an extension of the *Lashan's Fall* dungeon by Ed Greenwood in the original grey box *FR Campaign Set,* which is available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com. We have designed this dungeon to be a fully compatible extension of Greenwood's original, in line with his suggestions, but also one that can be used on its own without having the original.

Lashan's Fall takes place in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), shortly after Lashan, Lord of Scardale, and a band of his men, fleeing from their defeat in the Battle of Mistledale, arrive in Myth Drannor seeking powerful magic with which to continue their war. At the start, Azimer has just destroyed Lashan, after Lashan wounded him with his sword, and he has killed the remainder of Lashan's men as well. That was 15 years ago.

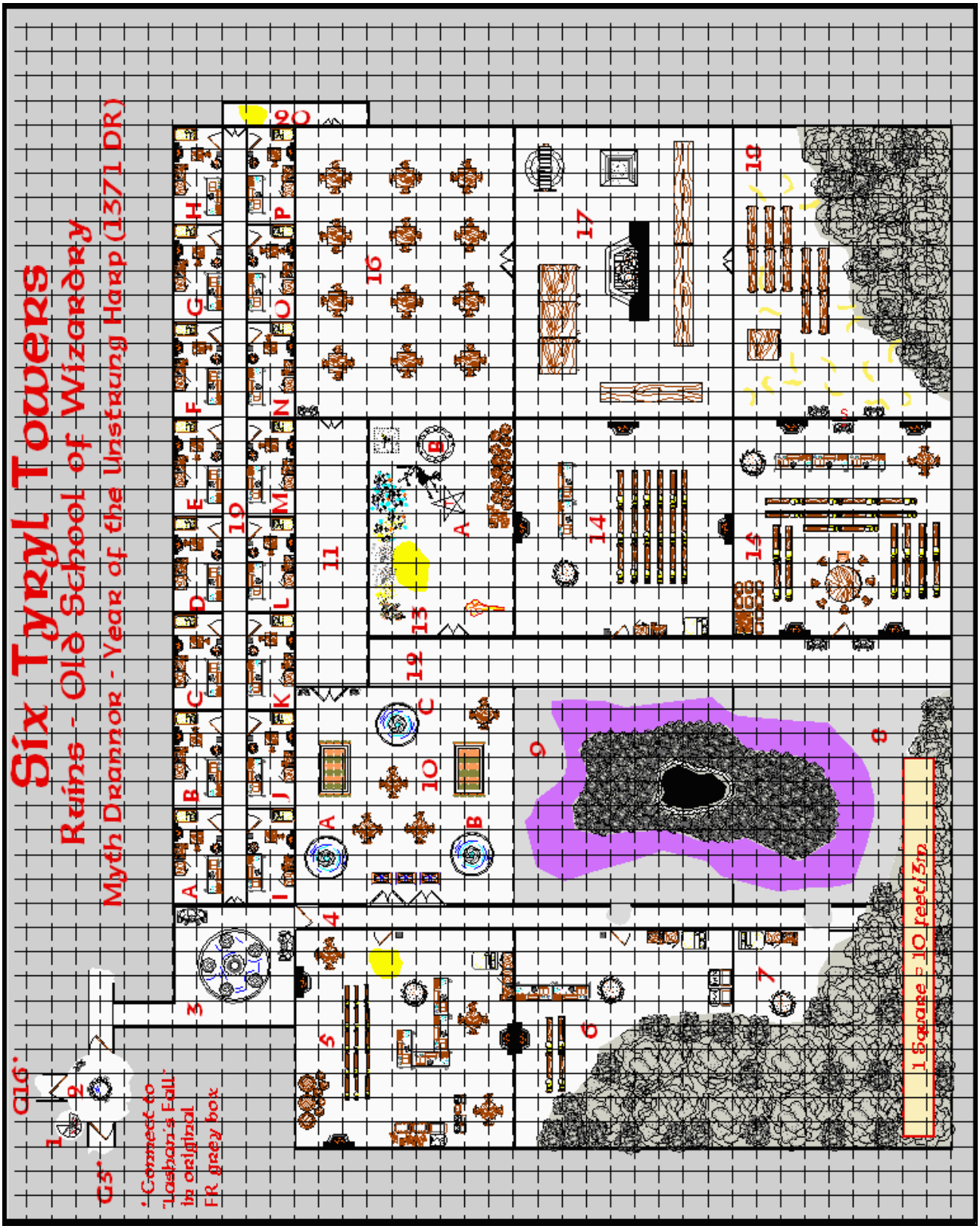
At that time, Azimer's lair was in the dungeon wing entered at ***G5*** and ***G16*** on the *Northern Journey* dungeon plan. The part of the dungeon shown in the NJ plan was blocked by rubble from a cave-in in the corridor leading from the circular chamber ***(2)*** into the first dungeon room ***(3).*** Greenwood explained that this rubble could be cleared, opening the passage into the old residential rooms of the school, and this is what you find on the NJ dungeon plan. The only parts of the NJ dungeon plan which also are on the original dungeon plan by Ed Greenwood are points ***1, 2*** and ***G5*** and ***G16****.*

In the 15 intervening years since Azimer destroyed Lashan, changes have taken place. If you do not use alternatives 1 and 2 above, the dungeon defined by Ed Greenwood will have begun collapsing in the years following Lashan's fall. As a result, Azimer raised zombies to clear the passage between points ***2*** and ***3****,* to move into the remaining areas of the school shown on the NJ dungeon plan. If you use the original plan by Ed Greenwood together with our plan, then Azimer will have simply decided to raise zombies to open more of the school. After reopening the residential wing on the NJ plan, insane Azimer began forgetting what the zombies were and became convinced that they were his students.

All of the zombies still are in the dungeon. They spend their time in their assigned rooms *(area **19**),* studying non-existent spellbooks and going into the dining hall thrice daily to *"eat"* from empty plates. At night, they faithfully lay eight hours long in their beds, as if they were sleeping.



Six Tyryl Towers



Six Tyryl Towers with 10m/3ft grid

If attacked, they will defend themselves vigorously, but primarily by trying to use spells they don't have. Only at the last resort do they fight physically. They do these things because Azimer is their master, and this is what he has ordered them to do. Several of the zombies wear the uniforms of Scardale. These undead are Lashan's men raised.

Azimer's insanity has advanced over the last 15 years, since Lashan's fall. When Myth Drannor was abandoned, Azimer was the schoolmaster here, and he had delved deeper and deeper into the evil side of necromancy to ascend to lichdom. However, magic and life beyond life were Azimer's goals, not evil, and there is little trace of good or evil left in his nature these days. Undead, he exists for the sake of magic and his imagined students. If Azimer is attacked, he becomes raging angry and will destroy his attacker with no ifs, ands or buts. He is paranoid, among other things, and believes in conspiracies that wish to destroy him. He has little patience with but no anger for his students, unless, of course, he considers them to be traitors who attack him. He is convinced that his current students never will learn anything. He's right, of course, seeing that they're all zombies.

Basically, Azimer's insanity manifests itself as follows. He spends 98% of his time (1-98 on a roll of 1d100) oblivious to all but the most pressing of realities around him. He's fully convinced that he's alive. If anyone tries to inform him that he's a lich, he tells them in condescending tones that he or she is demented. He also is convinced that he's still headmaster of the Six Tyryl Towers school and that his magical research is for the school's benefit. The other 2% of his time Azimer is seemingly sane. He is aware again that he's a lich, and this depresses him. It is at these times that Azimer sends out a call to night hags to bring larva to him from the lower planes, which he consumes to prolong his existence as a lich.

When living adventurers come to Azimer, he's immediately convinced that they're new students, and he will assign them to rooms which are empty but not necessarily safe. He also will see to it that they obtain his magical mark, which lets them pass all golems who guard areas open to students. Azimer is only briefly puzzled by the appearance of dwarves, halflings, half orcs etc. When he sees such creatures, rather than dealing with the complex and boring problem of why someone who can't study magic is coming to his school, he will polymorph the new student into a human (1-50 on 1d100) or an elf (51-00 on 1d100). No saving throw is allowed because of Azimer's command of the magic within the mythal. Polymorphed students have to seek help elsewhere, if they wish to return to their true form. If they ask Azimer to polymorph them back to their original form, he will tell them they are insane. A dwarf, halfling, etc. can't learn magic! He will accept gnomes however, certain they are there to learn illusionist magic.

Azimer makes a point of telling each PC that he/she must pay for his/her studies by conducting a mission for him. He will say little about this mission other than that he intends to send them to the edge of Cormanthor near Scardale. In this case, Azimer is not being secretive. He once had a job he wanted done there, but he forgot what it is years ago. However, he is sure it will come back to him at anytime. As long as Azimer continues to exist, the PCs' sigylls will not allow them to leave the mythal for long. Azimer's offer is one of their few chances to get out of Myth Drannor.

Each PC will be asked – after any polymorphing, if that's necessary – whether he or she is a novice or experienced: Novices will be given a parchment book, a magical primer. The book itself is magic, but it also teaches the fundamentals of magic. Any student who spends two days with the book will become a Lvl 0 mage's apprentice, able to use cantrips and the 1st level spell *Read Magic*. Experienced mages will be asked to name their school and will be given a spellbook with spells of that school, a valuable gift to be sure. They also will be told that their learning will be put to a severe test by Azimer.

If the PCs who have no past magical experience remain in the dungeon for two days, Azimer will test them. If they really have worked with his magical primer, he will ask them to read a magical text (The Game Master should play this out. Have two texts ready, one readable, and one gobbledygook. Give the PCs the readable text individually after they've done their job, otherwise the non-readable text.) If the PC fails, Azimer reprimands him/her severely, warns that the student will have a second chance the following day and that he/she will be expelled from the school if he/she fails again.

The same test should be made on the following day. If the PC fails, Azimer will teleport the PC alone back to Point ***1.*** His command of the mythal is strong enough to make such a teleportation possible. if the PC succeeds, Azimer will ask which school he/she wishes to study and hand the PC a primer and spellbook for that school. With another two days study the student gains Level 1 (0 XP) as a specialty mage in his/her chosen field and masters *Read Magic* and one spell of his/her choice from the book given him/her by Azimer. Any human who learns magic in Azimer's school can continue with both schools as a multi-class character rather than a dual class character, an exception to the PHB rules. However, if a dwarf, halfling, etc., later is polymorphed back to his/her original race, the use and understanding of magic is lost, although the spellbook from Azimer remains in his/her possession.

Six Tyryl Towers is not a killer dungeon but it isn't safe either. The dungeon is Azimer's lair, and he has seen to it that it's safe for him and his students. That means only that he has eliminated those pests that can damage a lich or a zombie. PCs however will find a fair amount of potential danger. And they'll find nothing that is edible, although potable water is available. PCs without rations will have a severe problem. There are no stores or farms in Myth Drannor.

Soft invisible bells ring throughout for dawnfry, lunch and dinner. At times, Azimer shows up in the dining hall (area ***16***) to *"eat"* with his zombie students from empty plates. These fine meals are served by zombies from the kitchen (area ***17***). At other times Azimer will bring a plate of diced larvae with him and really eat. The players are free to dine or not. Azimer admires students willing to go without a meal to devote more time to their studies.

The students basically are free to do whatever they wish, including departing the school at will. The mythal golems will block them, however, from areas barred to students.

G5, G16: Also see above. These are the connecting areas to the dungeon from *"Lashan's Fall"* in the grey boxed set. If you use *"Lashan's Fall,"* these areas can be open or partially open. Otherwise they are hopelessly caved in.

Game Master: The statistics for Zombies can be found in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendium*.

Azimer's location: At any given time, Azimer could be anywhere in areas 12-18. He almost never enters areas 1-11 or 19.

Above the dungeon: This description is used while the players are in the ruins of the Six Tyryl Towers. It continues until the PCs investigate the southwesterly of the four towers that still stand. When the PCs reach this tower and begin to investigate it, go to point 1.

Four of the six towers of the ancient magic school still stand, to the east and west of the site, but all traces of what once stood between these lonely but still majestic towers apparently was blasted away centuries ago. All that remains is rubble, fragments of the stone from which the school had been built, and these have been covered to a great extent by overgrowth and about a half a dozen skeletons, human in size and all showing signs of having been bleached after years in the sun.

1: The southwesterly of the four remaining towers:

Although the window openings above stare hollow and emptily across the ruins, this tower seem to be intact yet. It contrasts strongly with the remnants of the school's walls to the East and West or the other three still standing towers, which have large breaks in their outer walls, almost as if they had been blasted by cannon balls from a distant future. A wooden door more than 6 feet (2m) high and more than a yard (meter) wide stands intact but unlatched at the bottom of the tower, swaying slightly back and forth in the light breeze wafting through the ruins. The tower itself is 20 feet (3m) in diameter and 50 feet (15m) high.

Game Master: The upper levels of the tower are empty. They contain only the spiral staircase and watch platforms at every level where there is a window. Read the following after the PCs enter:

Inside the tower is a spiral stairway of huge stone bricks and 10 feet/3m in diameter, leading both upwards and into the depths and darkness. From the ground floor, all you can make out is the stairway and an empty watch platform before a window. About 6 feet/2m below you, on the descending part of the stairway, an ancient human sized skeleton lays across the stairs, apparently the bones of a human who died exiting the lower levels. You can see only about 18 feet/5 m into the depths. Nothing seems to be moving on the stairs, but something of a thin, musty smell wafts upwards from the depths.

Game Master: After the PCs begin descending:

Although you keep penetrating deeper below the surface, no threats come your way. Now and then, small skeletons of long dead creatures lay upon the stairs. The bones possibly are from dead stirges. But no sounds come from below. All is still. Only the musty smell grows stronger.

Game Master: At the bottom:

After an estimated descent of about 50 feet/15m, the stairway comes to an abrupt end at a 5-foot-wide, doorless opening into a large circular chamber, some 30 feet/9m in diameter. **(Go to 2).**

2. The entry chamber:

In the center of this circular chamber is a fountain 9 feet/270cm in diameter. Water still bubbles up from below, and the water seems to be clean. The wall across from you and to the right is completely caved in, showing a wall of natural stone. To your left and right and also in the wall across from you and to your left are large wooden doors, each more than 6 feet/2m high and 5 feet/150cm wide. Between the two doors to your left stands a black, glassy statue in the shape of a man, 7 feet/210cm high and 4 feet/120 cm wide. The statue is motionless.

Game Master: As soon as the first PC enters the chamber:

A voice sounds suddenly, with no visible source. It also is impossible to detect which direction it comes from. It asks, *"Who rules Myth Drannor?"* And then the silence returns. Except for the bubbling water in the fountain, there is no movement anywhere within the room.

Game Master: The statue is a mythal golem. After the question is asked, the golem will remain inactive if the answer *Azimer* is given without other words in between. Otherwise, if the door to area 3 is touched, the golem will issue a warning cuff for 1d4 hp dmg. Afterwards, the voice will repeat the question. If the door is touched again, the golem attacks with a full blow. This process continues with the question being repeated each time the door is touched.

The golem will attack once after each touch of the door without the password and it also will attack once for each attack made against it. Full details on the mythal golem can be found in the *"Northern Journey Campaign Guide."* The water in the fountain is magical. Any PC who touches the water saves vs. magic or will automatically lose all desire to entire any forbidden area within the dungeon and also will refuse to accompany other PCs on such an attempt. If a PC drinks the water this effect is automatic without a saving throw.

3. The healing chamber:

The door leads into an empty passage 10 feet/3m wide that ends after 30 fett/9m in a cave-in. After 10 feet/3m, another corridor opens to your right.

Game Master: After the PCs proceed to this point:

The new corridor runs on for about 25 feet/7m and then seems to open into a larger area.

Game Master: After the PCs proceed to this point:

The corridor opens into a large room, 50x50 feet/15x15m in size. In the middle of the room is a huge fountain 30 feet/9m in diameter from which a central column of water shoots 2 feet/180cm high in the center, and five smaller jets of water shoot up more than 3 feet/1m high along the perimeter. In the middle of the wall to your left and also in the left hand corner of the opposite wall are large wooden doors, each more than 6 feet/2m high and 5 feet/150 cm wide. Both are closed, and by each stands another of these large, glassy black statues, identical to the one you encountered in the entry.

Game Master: The PCs again are encountering mythal golems, identical to the one in area 2. When the door to area 19 is touched, the PCs hear the question, *"What is the key to knowledge?"* The golem guarding this area wants to hear the answer *"Learning."* When the door to area 4 is touched, the question is, *"What is the key to learning?"* The golem wants to hear the word *"Teacher."* The water in the fountain is highly magical. Touching it has the effect of a potion of extra healing (3d8+3 hp healing). Drinking the water implements a full restoration. It will cure a victim of all wounds, illnesses, diseases, poisonings and madness. It even will restore levels lost through negative energy. A dead body placed in the fountain will be restored to life if it has been dead for less than 1d4+6 days. Drinking the water also will provide a full day's nourishment, eliminating the need to eat for a 24-hour-period. This magical fountain was created by the old masters of the school to restore advanced students who were seriously damaged by the effects of magical experiments they had been assigned to perform. Nothing will give the PC a clue to these properties, however, except for actually making use of them. *Detect Magic* will show the presence of many types of magic in the water.

4. Corridor to faculty rooms:

Game Master: Before abandoning this area, Azimer removed *everything* of unconceivable value from it. The only thing the PCs will find in this wing is junk and trouble. Fluids that once were in vials on the workbenches have evaporated. Barrels, cupboards and closets contain only dust. Parchment crumbles to dust when touched. The accessible corridor is 240 feet/72m long, but remember that conventional lighting illuminates stretches of 50 feet/15m at the most. At any time, your PCs can be attacked by stirges or magebanes. There is nothing in the corridor other than doors, rubble from the explosion in areas 8 and 9 and rubble from the cave-in at the corridor's end. Azimer does not use areas 5-10 and considers them to be sealed off. His zombie *"students"* do not know the password to the area, so he considers it to be closed.

The door opens into a long corridor 10 feet/3m wide. It runs on past the range of your illumination, so it's impossible to determine whether anything is to be seen farther on. Thirty feet/9m from the entrance, you can see a large wooden door in the wall to the right and a double set of such doors in the wall to the left.

Game Master: When the players reach the area where the entrances to areas 6 and 9 are:

There are openings here on both sides the corridor, and only the right side of the corridor is passable. The left side is blocked by a pile of stone rubble that comes out of the doorway to your left. The doorway itself is blocked by a pile of gravel and rock 5 feet/150 cm high, but it would still be possible to enter it by climbing over the rubble. There is a large wooden door, more than 6 feet/2m high and 5 feet/150 cm wide covering the opening to your right.

Game Master: When the players reach the area where the entrance to areas 7 and 8 are:

There are openings here on both sides the corridor, and only the right side of the corridor is passable. The left side is blocked by a pile of stone rubble that comes out of the doorway to your left. The doorway itself is blocked by a pile of gravel and rock 5 feet/150 cm high, but it would still be possible to enter it by climbing over the rubble. There is a doorless doorway, more than 6 feet/2m high and 5 feet/150 cm wide, to your right.

5. Mage's Quarters and Lab:

Game Master: The yellow area shown on the map just inside the door is an olive slime, described in the *D&D Monster Manual* and the *Monstrous Compendioum*. This room has remained closed. There are no stirges or other monsters in this room, unless the PCs have admitted them.

> The large wooden door is closed, but it opens without difficulty. Inside, you see a large room, larger than your light sources can illuminate. Immediately to your right you see the jakes, a small hole opening into the depths. Before you is a workbench with glass vials and containers upon it and a brazier before it. To your right is a small, round wooden table with four wooden chairs. There also is a construction just visible in the darkness behind the table, probably a fireplace. Between the brazier and the table, and somewhat farther back, you also can see the beginning of three bookshelves that reach back into the darkness. Some old books made of parchment still are visible on the shelves.

Game Master: If the PCs thoroughly search the room, they also will find two more fireplaces, two more sets of tables and chairs, quite a number of barrels, sacks and chests, a bed, a desk, a wardrobe and cupboards. If the PCs leave the door open, the chances are good that stirges will enter. Remember the difficulties of holding torches, lanterns etc., and fighting stirges at the same time.

6. Mage's Quarters and Lab:

Game Master: A large part of this room has caved in, and there are narrow passages through the rubble that have allowed 18 stirges and 700 rats to gain entrance to this room. It would be theoretically possible for the PCs to carefully crawl through some of these passages back to Myth Drannor's surface, at a substantial risk of causing new cave-ins that would crush them and/or bury them alive, and they may have to do that if they close the door to this chamber. Azimer has worked magic upon the door to make it a one-way door. Once it is closed, it ceases to exist from within. The PCs can leave only by crawling up out of the dungeon or by using magic to pass through the walls back into the corridor (area 4). The following should be read as soon as the PCs open the door. The PCs must close the door in the same round as they opened it to avoid attack.

> As soon as you open the door, you hear and see hundreds of rats running in your direction and also a number of large, birdlike creatures flying directly towards you. You see a jakes in the floor to your right, a brazier 15 feet/450cm before you and what may be workbenches to the right. To your left, it looks like there has been a large cave-in.

7. Mage's Quarters and Lab:

Game Master: Most this room has caved in, but there are narrow passages through the rubble that have allowed 62 stirges to gain entrance to this room as well as the rubble in area 8. These stirges move between areas 4, 7 and 8, using them as a lair. Normally, they return to the surface to feed, but they always are delighted to have guests for dinner. It would be theoretically possible for the PCs to carefully crawl through some of these stirge passages back to Myth Drannor's surface, at a substantial risk of causing new cave-ins that would crush them and/or bury them alive.

> You can see immediately that all but a 40x40 foot/12 x 12m corner of this room has caved in completely. A brazier still stands some 40 feet/12m before you, and a bed, desk and closet are visible to your right. Nothing else is in sight except a large pile of rubble and birdlike creatures with long bills flying in your direction.

8-9. Exploded Mages' Quarters and Labs:

Game Master: Both openings are covered by a pile of gravel up to 5 feet/150 cm high. The PCs can advance in this area only by crawling over the gravel and rocks. All the while, they are liable to be attacked by stirges. This area once consisted of two additional mage's quarters and labs, much like area 5. In the last battle of Myth Drannor, some great magic was worked here that caused this area to blow a miniature volcano-like crater at the point where the dividing wall between the two areas stood.

The crater, roughly 20 x 30 feet/6x9m in size, is surrounded by a huge pile of rocks up to a foot/30 cm long. Beneath the rocks is a pile of gravel that's approximately 5 feet/150 cm high. The mound of rocks reaches to a height of 8 feet/240cm. The purple area surrounding the rocks is a dead magic area, with all the accompanying effects. There are no monsters in this area, except for the 62 stirges already described for area 7, which also have free access to this area.

The crater is the top of a shaft leading 700 feet/210m deeper, to *Sváfnir's Rest (s. the encounter of the same name),* which is 100 feet/30m *beneath* the border of the mythal. It is not only possible but not especially difficult to climb down the crater, however the sigylls will do their best to keep the PCs from exiting the mythal if Azimer's symbol remains upon their arms. Stirges will follow the PCs into the shaft for the first 30 feet/9m, but there are no other monsters there.

A thief not in combat can descend the shaft without making checks for climbing. Other characters check at 80% for success, with normal bonuses and penalties. If a thief is under attack from a stirge, he must check at his normal climbing rate per round in combat but never less than 70%. Non-thieves check at a base rate of 60% with normal penalties but no bonuses. If a character falls, he can stop his fall with a successful dexterity check in the first two rounds of falling. After that, the PC falls helplessly to the bottom of the shaft.

Damage in falling amounts to 1d4 hp in the first round of falling, 1d8 hp in the second round and 3d6 hp each additional 30 feet/10m of falling. Falling can start at anytime after the characters have crossed the high point of the rock pile above the crater. There is a 25% chance per round atop the rocks that a PC will start a rockslide. If so, he/she must make a dexterity check per 3m of rocks to see if the fall is stopped. Falling in a rock slide causes 2d12 hp additional dmg per round.

The description is valid for the doors to 8 and 9:

> A large pile of gravel blocks the opening to this area, spilling out into the corridor, and blocking it partially as well. Within the doorway itself, you can see that the pile of gravel goes on for:
>
> Opening to 8: More than 30 feet/9m
> Opening to 9: More than 20m/6m
>
> before it ends at a pile of larger rocks, up to a foot/30 cm in length, which rise into the darkness. It looks like the only way to enter into this area is to crawl over the gravel and rocks.

10. Reception area

Game Master: This area still is intact, although Azimer generally ignores it. It was used by teacher mages of the school to receive guests, and it also contains three magical fountains. The two mythal golems guarding the entrance are identical to those in areas 2 and 3. They will attempt to stop anyone touching the doors who does not bear an invisible, magical rune identifying them as faculty. There also are carpets and round wooden tables with chairs in this room.

The three fountains produce only confusing information with random use. Anyone who stares into them with any degree of concentration will see a never-ending series of pictures flashing by, along with a babble of words and a blast of confusing thoughts (no damage). The water is not poisonous, but it is bitter. Anyone who drinks or even nips water from one of the fountains will be plagued by a bitter taste the rest of the day and lose all appetite. The fountains are

A. Fountain of Surveillance: With strong concentration, the observer can picture any location he/she knows within the mythal and see and hear all that occurs within 10 feet/3m of the point of concentration. The observer also can read the thoughts of any individual within the scryed area who is not magically protected against thought reading.

B. Fountain of Observation: With strong concentration, the observer can picture any location of any size anywhere within old Cormanthyr and see what is happening. Nothing can be heard, and no thoughts can be read.

C. Fountain of Spells: Teachers at the school used this fountain as a library. All spells which were in the spellbooks of the library (lost in the fall of Myth Drannor) were magically memorized in this fountain, so that a teacher could look into the water, concentrate upon the desired spell and read it, exactly as if it was a spellbook.

From 4: Behind the doors is a large room, too large for your illumination. Before you are three small carpets and behind them, on the edge of your light, two small, round wooden tables with chairs. You can hear the water of fountains and just barely make out fountains to your left and right, at the edge of your illumination.

From 11: Behind the doors is a large room, too large for your illumination. Before you is a large carpet, 12 feet/360cm wide, that stretches back into the darkness. You can hear the water of fountains and make out a fountain to your left, at the edge of your illumination. Strangely, the illumination of the room behind you does not penetrate into this chamber.

Game Master: Areas 11 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17, 19 and 20 are illuminated by weakly glowing walls.

11. Gallery

Game Master: The long walls of this area contain magic windows looking upon other places. The window on the wall facing toward area 19 shows *Castle Cormanthor,* (NJ Map No. 1 – C:EotE Map No. C4). Anyone looking into this window will see the castle along with the devils who come and go there. The second window, on the wall to area 13, also remains active but dark. It shows an area of the *Thelaeneum* (NJ Map No. 16), but this area is buried beneath the surface and is totally dark. However, if you have one of the other NPC groups within Myth Drannor there, the PCs will be able to see the other group and its surroundings within the light of the NPCs' torches. This is a one-way window. No one in the ruins of the *Thelaeneum* can look into the gallery from there. Anyone in area 11 can enter areas 10, 12 and 16 without being troubled by golems.

From 10: The doors lead into a large room with double doors at the far end and a single door to your right. The walls of the room themselves glow weakly, providing pleasant illumination. Most of the left wall is covered by a window that shows a large building on the surface, almost completely intact. (Game Master: Identify it as *Castle Cormanthor,* if the PCs already are aware of it.) You can see devils moving about in front of this building. A similar window is on the wall to your right, but it is dark.

From 16: The doors lead into a large room with double doors at the far end and a single door to your left on the far end. The walls of the room themselves glow weakly, providing pleasant illumination. Most of the right wall is covered by a window that shows a large building on the surface, almost completely intact. (Game Master: Identify it as *Castle Cormanthor,* if the PCs already are aware of it.) You can see devils moving about in front of this building. A similar window is on the wall to your left, but it is dark.

12. Corridor

Game Master: Except for the three doorways and the two mythal golems guarding area 15, this corridor is empty. The golems will try to keep anyone but Azimer from entering area 15.

This door opens onto a corridor about 250 feet/70 m long and 20 feet/6m wide. The walls glow lightly, illuminating the entire corridor. At distances of about 30 feet/9m, 100 feet/30m and 200 feet/60m there are closed wooden doors in the wall. The last door is guarded by two more of the glassy, black statues you already have encountered.

13. Treasury

Game Master: The door to this room is impervious to non-magical attacks of all kinds. There is a permanent spell on this door that reacts immediately when anyone not bearing the invisible magic mark of a faculty member attempts to open this door. It alerts Azimer and it sends a lightning bolt against the person attempting to enter that causes 6d6 hp dmg per blast. There is a 3rd Edition saving throw for reflex at DC 20 or a 2nd Edition save vs. magic for half damage. It also has a 100% spell turning ability in the first 1d8+2 rounds after a magical attack upon it has begun. These spells are protected by two other spells.

The first layer above these spell gives them permanency. The spell above the permanency spell also causes a 6d6 hp lightning bolt if anyone tries to dispel one of the spells magically and does not succeed. The two upper spells must be dispelled before the bottom spell can be deactivated. The treasure along the wall to area 11 contains an uncounted number of ancient coins, jewels and magic items – Game Master's choice. Before the treasure, 20 feet/6m inside the door (yellow area on the map), there is an olive slime on the ceiling.

A spout of intensely hot flame arises from the floor about 10 feet/3m to the right of the door. What the magical source of this flame is has been long forgotten. It has been burning here for centuries, dating back before the fall of Myth Drannor. The flame sheds no heat, but anyone touching it remains enveloped in flame for as long as the contact lasts, and the flame does 12d6 hp dmg/round,. There is a 3rd Edition saving throw for reflex at DC 20 or a 2nd Edition save vs. magic for half damage. The sacks along the wall to area 14 contain spell components of many different types. Perishable components have rotted, turned to dust, etc. The barrels all contained elverquisst, long since evaporated. The two magical symbols:

> **A: Pentagram.** Azimer is immune to the magic of this circle. Therefore, he usually does not think of it or warn others about it. This circle will immediate teleport anyone who touches it and any other living beings within 50 feet/15m of that person into *Sváfnir's Rest,* a different dungeon location described later in this module. It does not teleport undead.
>
> **B: Magical circle**. This circle is a gate to *Llindfalar's Glen,* a location in the *Scardale* element of this module.

The door opens into a room 60x90 feet/18x27m in size. The walls glow weakly, pleasantly illuminating the entire room. Along the left wall is a fantastic treasure – countless items which may be magic and huge piles of coins and jewels. Behind the treasure, on the rear left wall, stands a small cage containing a skeleton about 3 feet/90 cm long. It looks like it probably is the skeleton of a halfling. In the center rear of the room are a pentagram, a skeleton of a baby dragon, a human skeleton and a magical circle. On the far right wall lay eight sacks and past them 13 wooden barrels, each 3 feet/90 cm high. Some sacks are completely flat and no doubt empty. Others look somewhat flat, as though they may be half empty. Immediately to your right is a spout of flame more than 6 feet/2m high, but it doesn't appear to shed any heat.

14. Chamber of the Vice-Rector

Game Master: Kelywin was vice rector of the Six Tyryl Towers School of Wizardry under Azimer before the fall of Myth Drannor. He vanished during one of the last battles before the fall. There once were rumors that he was one of the mages whose art caused the large crater in areas 8 and 9 to appear. Azimer long ago removed anything of value from this room but since then has left it undisturbed.

The door opens onto a room larger than the reach of your illumination. Direct behind the door is a hole, a small jakes. At a 45 Grad angle to the left from the door is a brazier. Before you are six rows of bookshelves that reach back into the darkness. Ancient parchment book still are upon them. To your right are a desk and wardrobe and behind them a bed.

Game Master: The room also contains workbenches and three fireplaces. The books upon the bookshelves crumble upon touch.

15. Chamber of the Rector –Azimer's room

This door is closed. Immediately to its left and right stand two glassy black statues, like those you've already encountered.

Game Master: This where Azimer makes himself at home. The mythal golems at this door give no warning cuffs but begin delivering serious blows as soon as someone other than Azimer attempts to go through the door. Azimer also is magically alarmed immediately. The chests and sacks on the left wall (viewed from the door) overflow with magical items, none of which Azimer usually will give away. He will, however, give the PCs at some point the *Weapon of Metamorphic Vigilance.* The bookshelves are filled with books of magic that have been preserved through Azimer's art and are in good condition, as is everything else in this room. The workbenches are filled with components being used for Azimer's current research. A fire burns in the brazier. There also are fireplaces that show no trace of having contained a fire in ages. The mythal golem on the rear wall guards a hidden, magical door that can be found only through magical means.

Like other areas of this complex, this room is lit by a weak glow from the walls. There is no doubt that the room still is occupied and in use. Directly before you is a large round table encircled by eight wooden chairs, and behind them and to both sides of them stand row upon row of bookshelves filled with valuable looking parchment books. On the wall to both sides of the door are fireplaces. In the far left corner of the room are several sacks that seem to be full and also closed chests.

Game Master: Behind the bookshelves:

Behind the bookshelves is a burning brazier and row of workbenches filed with burners, glasses, vials, remnants of rodents, parts of plants and may other objects that all look suited for use as spell components. This work area obviously still sees regular use. To the right of the workbenches is a smaller round table with four wooden chairs. Two fireplaces are on the rear wall, but they show no sign that there has been a fire in them for ages. In the middle of the back wall stands another of the large black, glassy statues, guarding nothing in particular that you can see. It seems instead to be keeping watch upon the entire workbench area.

16. Dining hall

Game Master: At breakfast, noon and evening times, Azimer's zombie *"students*" will be seated here, eating nothing and pretending that they're enjoying a meal. Now and then Azimer will join them and eat larvae. At other times, the room will be empty.

From area 20: The doors open into another room lit by dimly glowing walls. The room is about 90 feet/27m wide and 120 feet/36m long. In it are 12 wooden round tables, each with four wooden chairs. Directly across, in the opposite wall, is another set of double doors guarded by a black, glassy statue like those you've already encountered. Another set of unguarded double doors is in the middle of the wall to your left.

From area 17: The doors open into another room lit by dimly glowing walls. The room is about 90 feet/27m wide and 120 feet/36m long. In it are 12 wooden round tables, each with four wooden chairs. At the far end of the wall to your left is another set of double doors guarded by a black, glassy statue like those you've already encountered. Another set of unguarded double doors is at the far end of the wall to your right.

From area 11: The doors open into another room lit by dimly glowing walls. The room is about 90 feet/27m wide and 120 feet/36m long. In it are 12 wooden round tables, each with four wooden chairs. The doors you entered through are guarded on this side by a black, glassy statue like those you've already encountered. Directly across, in the opposite wall, is another set of double doors, unguarded. A third set of unguarded double doors is in the middle of the wall to your right.

17. Kitchen

Game Master: 24 hours a day, six zombies will be working fervently in the kitchen, seeming to be cooking meals for the school but actually only going through the motions empty-handed.

These doors open onto another large room lit by dimly-glowing walls, this room apparently is the school's kitchen. Inside the door to your right are large wooden tables for food preparation and to your left is a well. In front of you past the workbenches is a huge oven, one which obviously has cooked nothing for centuries. To the left of the oven is a large wash basin. Behind the oven and to the right are large wooden shelves that still hold pots, pans and other utensils, but there's no sign of any food here. Nonetheless, six zombies are working feverishly here, going through all the motions of washing pots and pans, prepare food and cooking, although they're empty-handed in reality.

18. Storage room

Game Master: This is the room where Azimer keeps the larvae that the night hags deliver to him. About half of this room is caved in. The PCs will see the mythal golems only if they go through this room to investigate it. If the PCs touch the hidden magical door, without knowing it, the golems will attack immediately, delivering full blows. A magebane also is lairing over the rubble, and 15 larvae are crawling around the room. Statistics for these encounters can be found under *Azimer's Pets* among the *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

These doors open onto a dark room. Your first impression is that it probably was some kind of storage room. Several empty and deteriorating wooden shelves stand before you, and to your right at the edge of your illumination is a square wooden workbench. The top of it seems to be partly covered by dried gore. The room is by no means empty. Several large worms with nearly human faces are slithering across the floor in your direction.

19. Dormitories

Game Master: Azimer's zombie *"students"* live in these rooms, but not all are occupied. What the PCs find here depends upon the time of day. From around midnight until about 5 a.m., the *"students"* lay in bed, dutifully acting as though they're sleeping. At about 5 a.m., they arise from bed and study their spellbooks until about 6:30 a.m., when they head to the dining hall for *"breakfast."* At 7:30 a.m. they return to the dormitory to study their spellbooks until noon. They then spend another hour in the dining hall before returning to their studies, from 1 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., when they return to the dining hall for an hour for their last *"meal."* At 7:30 p.m. they return to their dormitory rooms, to study their spellbooks again until going to bed around midnight. Each zombie has a spellbook with one spell in it, *"Read Magic."* Azimer refuses to give his students news spells until they master this one, and zombies, of course, master no spells. The zombies have been trained to attack uninvited intruders with magic they do not possess. Zombies issue no invitations. All intruders are uninvited. However, because the zombies will attack only with magic as long as they are not attacked personally, intruders can do pretty much what they want, as long as they don't attack the zombies. When the zombies leave their rooms, they *do not* take their spellbooks with them. If a zombie's spellbook is taken, the zombie will continue to study spells in a nonexistent spellbook.

The following rooms house zombies: A, I, J, D, N, H. The others are free and may be assigned by Azimer to the PCs. The following narrative describes all rooms:

The door opens onto a room 20 feet/6m wide and 40 feet long. It contains a bed, desk, wardrobe, desk, workbench, small brazier, table and chair, fireplace and jakes. **Game Master: (**If the room belongs to a zombie, describe where it is, if it still is in the room, and then add:) An open book is lies upon the desk.

20. Dormitories

Game Master: This area is the students' entrance to the dining hall. The corridor is empty, except for the yellow slime lingering above the doorway to area 19.

The doorway opens onto a short corridor 10 feet/3m wide, with another door 30 feet/9m away. The corridor appears to be empty.

Running the Encounter With Azimer

It's important to remember that the PCs' sigylls have no effect upon Azimer, and Azimer has no effect upon the sigylls. Therefore, the sigylls will draw the PCs back to Myth Drannor every time they attempt to leave the mythal, as long as they continue to bear Azimer's symbol. Azimer views the PCs as new students.

At the first encounter, he will insist they take their new spell books and head to their dormitory rooms. He may also assign them chores to do for him, and the PCs may have to leave the school at times to try to find food. At some point, however, the PCs probably will try to convince Azimer to listen to the tale of their sigylls, and at some time – not necessarily the first time – he should listen.

Once Azimer sees that the PCs bear his symbol, sees what the remaining symbols are and hears the descriptions of the missing symbols, he'll laugh hysterically and can be brought to explain that someone is using the PCs to destroy those who destroyed Sammaster. After this, Azimer will work a magic to remove his symbol from the PCs' arms, tell them he finds their mission entertaining and volunteer to send them on their way to Harbet Gall in the Great Dale.

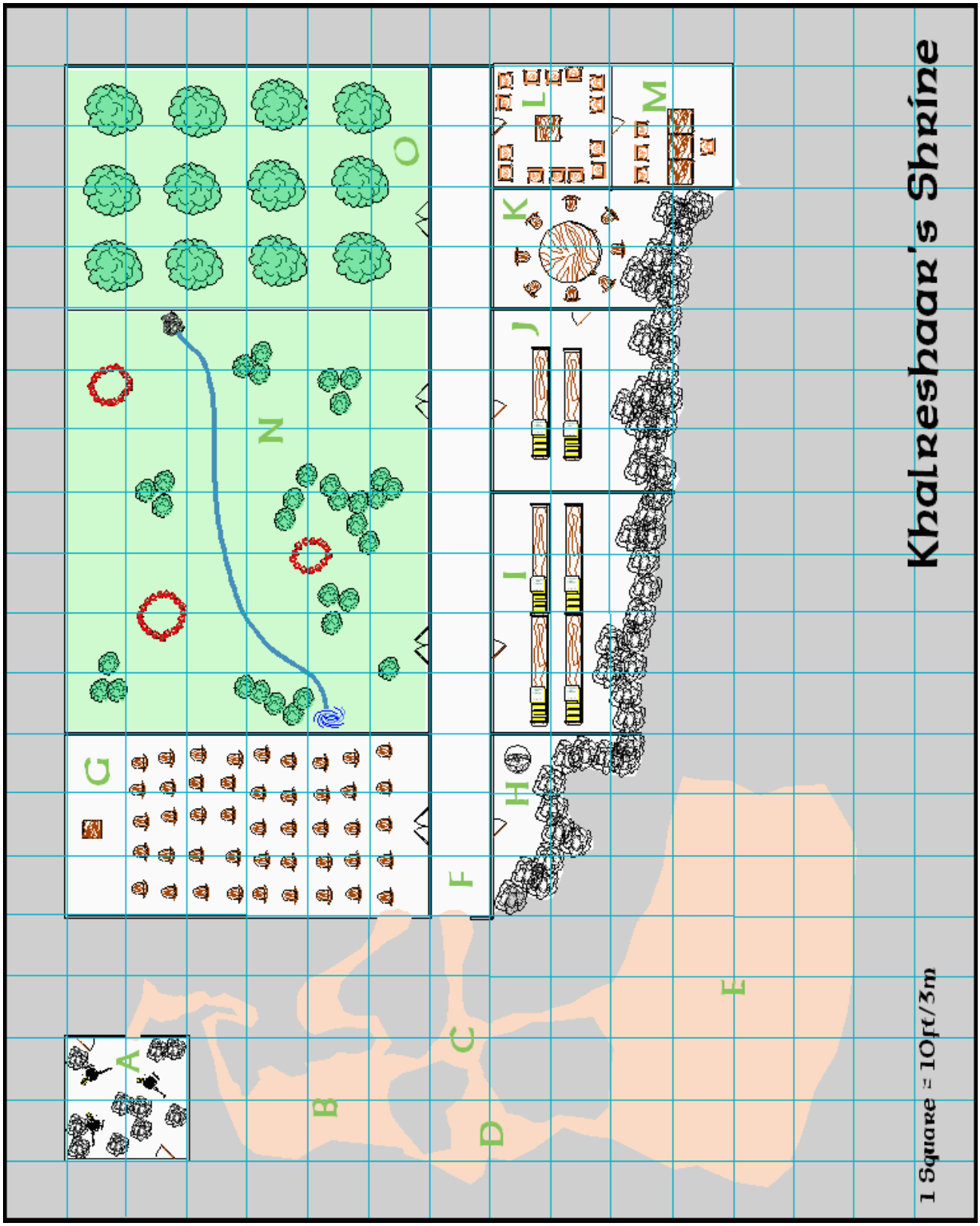
At this point, you can let fate play some tricks too. Azimer will take the PCs to area 13, the treasury. However, Azimer never thinks about Point A, the pentagram, because it doesn't affect him. This setting is ideal if you use tin figures, because the players themselves then can move their figures to the gate (point B). It is Azimer's intention to gate the PCs to *Llindfalar's Glen* on the way to Scardale. Once they are standing within the magic circle, Azimer will say the magic word that gates them safely to their destination. However, if just one of the PCs steps on the pentagram, they will be teleported instead to *Sváfnir's Rest.* Then they can deal with one of Faerûn's mightier red dragons over transportation to the East!

Khalreshaar's Shrine

Unofficial site – not shown on the NJ map of Myth Drannor

This is a sanctuary the PCs can find and use. The Game Master may place it at any unmarked location on a Myth Drannor map. Priests of the Seldarine demigoddess Khalreshaar in ancient Myth Drannor established this area as a shrine. Khalreshaar is a little known demigoddess of the elves who once was a human druid who sacrificed her life in defense of elven woodlands. She was transported by the Seldarine to Arvandor. More details on Khalreshaar are available in the WotC *Forgotten Realms* accessory *Elves of Evermeet*, available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com, and in *Demihuman Deities* by Eric L. Boyd (TSR - 1998).

In Myth Drannor's last days, the high priests of Khalreshaar protected the shrine against devils and undead. Neither the devils (baatezu) nor the alhoon venture here, and the servants of the phaerimm have not yet discovered this dungeon. Devils or undead (including alhoon) who enter Areas F or G are automatically destroyed within 1d4 rounds and automatically have a cumulative penalty on all rolls of 2 per round until they arrive. Once the PCs destroy the orc inhabitants, this dungeon should be relatively safe, although it is possible that new monsters may discover this area. Orcs entered the ruins through an opening that now is caved in and then widened crevasses they found into the tunnel that opens onto area A. Count fallen orcs. The lair holds 16 orc warriors plus a leader in Area E.



Khalreshaar's Shrine

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Game Master: As mentioned, site A can be found anywhere you wish or at the site of any unnamed dungeon the PCs choose to go to. The description of the upper entrance is up to you, but this entrance will lead the PCs to a dark shaft:

A: Your path opens onto a shaft with walls of marble, some 20 by 20 feet/6x6m in size. Whatever this shaft once was connected to above has long since vanished. The top of the shaft is covered by a marble wall that tipped on its side. There are several large cracks in the wall, but it does not appear to be in danger of collapsing. A marble staircase leads downward into the undeterminable depth of the shaft. The staircase is about a yard/meter away from your position. To reach it, you'll have to jump.

Game Master: Any human- or elf-sized PC who *fails* his/her dexterity check still has a 90% chance of jumping safely to the stairs. Dwarves, halflings and gnomes who *fail* their dexterity check have a 75% chance of success. Anyone who fails both checks falls 15 yards/15m to the bottom of the shaft, for 1d6 hp dmg per yard/meter. The following is read during the descent:

You slowly get the impression that this shaft once was a tower above ground. As you descend, you see windows every 10 feet/3m or so, all now block by stone and mud.

Game Master: The following description is for the bottom of the shaft. Be sure to add the wounded bodies/corpses of any PCs who may have fallen to their death.

The bottom of the shaft is covered with several feet/about 60cm of rubble, mostly stone that has caved in from above and come through the openings. There are quite a number of bones and skulls here, some human, some orc and others too severely smashed to be identifiable. All four walls have sizeable windows blocked by soil and stone, which also poured through them at some time. Two of the walls facing one another also have doors that hang open, but the openings too are completely filled with soil, rock and debris. The partially damaged doors themselves are majestic works of art, with fine engravings of trees and many different kinds of animals. The only exit here is a window next to one of the doors that has a small, totally dark tunnel opening leading off from it. It appears that the tunnel was made by someone or something coming from within. Although the rubble beneath the window is higher than at other places, there are no signs of tailings, indicating that the tunnel was begun on the other side. The tunnel is oval, about 4 feet/120cm high and 2 feet/60cm wide.

Game Master: This tunnel was made by the orcs who lair in areas B through F. The magic barring devils and undead has no direct effect upon the orcs, but they can sense it, and it makes them uncomfortable, therefore, they usually remain in their lair and do not venture into the ruin.

Tunnel to B: After venturing about 5 feet into the tunnel, it turns about 45° to the right and widens to about 4 feet/120cm. It continues on for another 10 feet/3m, reaching a branch off to the right, about 2 feet/60 cm wide. The broader tunnel continues on another 6 feet/180 cm or so and ends at a cave-in. From the smaller tunnel to the right comes the foul smell of dung and urine.

Game Master: After entering the smaller tunnel:

As soon as you enter the narrower tunnel, the evil smells become noticeably stronger. The tunnel turns slightly but steadily to the left, and after you've covered a distance of about 10 feet/3m, you hear grunting tones of conversation ahead of you. You heard this language before. It's orcish.

Game Master: Reaction?

After proceeding another five feet/150cm, you begin to see white light reflecting from the tunnel wall ahead of you. You also hear the tones of at least three different orc voices.

Game Master: The orcs have been having a lively discussion, although they should be keeping watch. If the PCs have been relatively quiet, the orcs will be surprised, if not, the orcs have the advantage.

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The tunnel opens onto a roughly oval-shaped chamber, some 8 feet/240cm high, 20 feet/6m long and 12 feet/360 cm wide. This is no natural cave but rather an underground opening probably caused by the upheaval that occurred when the shaft sank. As you entered, three orcs were sitting on the floor, playing a game that involved flipping bones. All three look up at you in surprise. The room is illuminated by a wall torch. To the back of this unnatural cave are three thin tunnel exits, one to your far left that's only about 4 feet/120 cm high, and one to your left and another to your right, both about 6 feet/180 cm high.

Game Master: If given the chance, the orcs will flee. They are armed with longs swords of good quality, each 1d8+1 hp dmg. When the PCs near the entrances to the tunnels to areas C and G:

As you near the two openings to the left, the smell of dung and urine becomes almost overwhelming. It seems to emanate from the taller of the two tunnels, the one more to the right.

C: You cross a short, 5-foot/150cm stretch of tunnel and nearly retch. It opens onto a small cave roughly 5x10 feet/150 x 300cm in size, piled nearly 5 feet/150 cm high in the center with orc dung. There's an exit at the far end and other passages to the left and right.

Game Master: Any PC trying to pass through this chamber must check dexterity, or he/she will slip and fall in the dung heap.

D: Three orcs with notched arrows in long bows are crouched on the floor. They unleash their arrows as soon as you come into view (only one target). This cave is about 13 feet/4m long and 10 feet/3m wide, with an exit 2½ feet/75cm wide and 7 feet/210cm high at the rear. A torch hanging on the wall illuminates this area.

Game Master: For the first shot, the orcs have an attack bonus of +8 / THAC0 of 12. Each orc has 6 + 2d8 arrows.

E: (*This lair is inhabited by 16 orcs and an orc leader. Read the number of surviving at this position.*) ***X*** orcs stand at the ready, prepared to defend their lair. Eight of them have long bows ready, arrows notched. All of the orcs also have long swords at their sides. The lair itself is approximately 70 feet/21m wide 50 feet/15m long. There are two tunnels leading into the lair, both from the same direction, about 15 feet/450cm apart. Quite a number of objects and a few small chests are scattered around the back of the lair. The entire area is illuminated by wall torches.

Game Master: The objects scattered around the rear of this chamber are treasure that the orcs have found in Myth Drannor. We suggest you place items here that your specific group can use along with trash that orcs might collect. Other treasure can be determined with the AD&D random tables. If the group leaves openings, the orcs will try to flee through them. The leader of the orcs has found two magical *Snowballs* (see campaign guide) in the ruins of Myth Drannor and will use them to save his life, if necessary. The other orcs are not aware that he has these magical weapons. If he is killed quickly, the PCs have a chance of capturing these valuable magical items. If the orcs managed to flee into area H, the leader will stand in the doorway from F to H and throw a *Snowball* at the PCs as they enter into H. He then will follow any other surviving orcs through F and G and back into the tunnel, then climbing up the stairway in the shaft (Area A).

Within the shrine: This dungeon is intended as a sanctuary or safehouse for the PCs within Myth Drannor, not as a treasure trove. Anything of conceivable value that once had been here has long been removed.

F: Your door opens onto a long, unlit corridor with marble walls, 10 feet wide and 10 feet high. It's impossible to tell how long it is. It runs on past the limits of your illumination. The walls and the ceilings are sculpted to depict woodland scenes. Several marble doors, most standing open, are visible on both sides of the corridor.

G: The tunnel opens onto a large chamber without illumination, 30 feet/9m wide and longer than the 50-foot/15m range of your illumination. In the wall to the left is a large, partially open double door of marble, sculpted with images of a forest landscape. As far as your light carries, you see rows and rows of marble seats, as though this room may have served as a recital hall, a lecture hall or perhaps a temple. There are two large windows that may once have opened onto daylight in the rear of the chamber, but mud and rocks pours through them now.

Game Master: The following is read after the PCs investigate the rest of the chamber:

The room extends another 10 feet/3m or so past the original range of your illumination. At the end of the row of seats, a marble pedestal a little less than 5 feet high/140 cm high stands facing the seats. All four walls and the ceiling are of sculpted marble and depict woodland scenes with trees, running streams, deer, boar and other creatures of the forest.

H: The tunnel opens onto a room that has mostly collapsed. It's impossible to tell how large this area once was, but all that remains now is a triangular corner with about 30 feet/9m of wall to your left and right. The walls are 10 feet/3m high and were fashioned of fine marble. In the left wall is a large wooden door (*describe the orc leader throwing the Snowball, if he's there*). In the remaining corner is a statue of a woman nearly 6 feet/180 cm tall. The woman represented by the statue seems to be a lady of the woodlands, perhaps a ranger or a druid, with flowers in her hair. Her physical features are those of a human. She wears robes with no visible armor but is armed with a scimitar. The statue is a sculpture of quality, but it is not precise enough to be the product of a medusa. It's simply a statue. At the foot of the state is an inscription in Espruar:

Game Master: The inscription is the name *Khalreshaar.* Once non-evil-aligned PCs begin to cross the doorway threshold and leave the room:

Suddenly, you hear a deep and musical female voice. It seems to come from the statue, although the statue makes no movement. The statue says, *"You can return to me at any time, my children. You need only think upon my likeness, and you will return."*

Game Master: The statue of Khalreshaar is a one-way gate into the shrine. It will not gate anyone out of the shrine. Anyone within the confines of the mythal who has seen this statue and is not of evil alignment will be gated automatically to the statue after 1d4 rounds of concentration upon the memory of the statue's likeness.

I: This door opens onto an unlit, partially caved-in room with bookshelves and marble walls and ceiling decorated like those in the corridor. Two rows of bookshelves still stand, filled with old parchment books. The room is 40 feet/12m wide and runs 25 to 30 feet/7.5 to 9m deep, before yielding to the impenetrable rubble of a cave-in.

Game Master: The books will disintegrate into shreds if handled or opened.

J: This door opens onto an unlit, partially caved-in room with bookshelves and marble walls and ceiling decorated like those in the corridor. Two rows of bookshelves still stand, filled with old parchment books. The room is 40 feet/12m wide and runs 30 to 33 feet/9 to 10m deep, before yielding to the impenetrable rubble of a cave-in.

Game Master: The books will disintegrate into shreds if handled or opened.

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K: This door opens onto an unilluminated partially caved-in room 20 feet/6m wide and 30 to 40 feet/9 to 12m deep, before it yields to a cave-in. In this room stands a marble round table, 12 feet/360 cm in diameter, surrounded by a number of marble stools. The walls and ceiling are of marble and are sculpted much the same as the corridor.

L: This door opens onto an unilluminated room 20 feet/6m square. In the center of the room is a small marble table, to both sides along the wall are marble stools. Another door is in the rear wall. This room also has walls and a ceiling of marble, sculpted like those in the corridor.

M: This door opens onto another unilluminated room 20 feet/6m square. Directly inside the door are three marble stools, and beyond them a marble desk with a marble stool behind it. This room also has walls and a ceiling of marble, sculpted like those in the corridor.

N: As soon as you enter this room, you sense an aura of magic. The ceiling seems to be hundreds of yards/meters above you, and in it twinkle images of stars and the moon, Selûne, the moon. The light of this moon image is adequate to light the entire chamber, with the silvery light of Selûne herself. Despite the current location of the room beneath the surface, grass and small clumps of bushes grow here, along with occasional rings of mushrooms. A thin, underwater stream rises from a spring on the left wall, flows across the room and disappears then into a cluster of rocks near the right wall. There's even a fresh forest breeze that blows through this room. The four walls are windows onto a living forest somewhere, where trees move in the breeze.

Game Master: The walls are magical windows onto a place in Cormanthor within the former Eleven Court. They are, however, only magical windows. The PCs cannot pass through these windows into Cormanthor. PCs who spend their nights here will benefit from healing. For each night (at least six uninterrupted hours) spent in this room, a wounded PC is healed for 1d8+2 hp dmg. A PC who sleeps every night here, uninterrupted for a tenday is healed automatically of blindness, deafness and disease.

O: The door opens into another unlit room that extends on past the limits of your illumination. The room is 40 feet/12m wide and extends on more than 50 feet/15m into the darkness. This room has a floor like that of a forest, and tree trunks stand here at regular intervals of about 10 feet.

Game Master: The rest of this chamber looks the same. This room was built as a magical, thought-steered, one-way gate to various sites that were important to Khalreshaar's followers near the Grove of Darkness, at Eerienne, near the old elven Court, near Faelorin, near Briarbosk and on the shore of Lake Sember east of Elventree.

These locations all are shown on the map of the WotC *Arcane Age*™ accessory *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves,* which can be downloaded free from the WotC website.

In the days of Myth Drannor's glory, followers of Khalreshaar could wander among the tress in this magical chamber and meditate upon these sites, which would gate the person to this site. Similar gates existed at the other end. These gates no longer function correctly. Any intelligent creature that wanders among the magical trees today finds him/herself spiritually at one of these sites, at random, but he/she remains physically within the shrine beneath Myth Drannor, always able to see the chamber's door and always able to leave the chamber.

The location the observer finds him/herself at changes regularly, as does the time of the visit. Thus, the visitor may be viewing the old Elven Court at the time of its greatest glory, then see modern day agents of the Cult of the Dragon marching along the shores of Lake Sember, a few minutes later watch a battle against yugoloths at another location, etc. All senses of the PC or other creature except touch are valid at the site being viewed.

The person can see, hear and smell just as if he/she were there at the time and place being viewed, but all things are intangible. If a PC attempts to touch anything, his or her hand simply goes through the object, as though it were not there. Living beings at the site being viewed cannot see, hear or otherwise perceive of the viewer.

House Lan'telun

Unofficial site – not shown on the NJ map of Myth Drannor

This is a dungeon the PCs can find. The Game Master may place it at any unmarked location. This dungeon should be found only after the Game Master decides how he/she wishes to use this site. Above the dungeons are the ruins of a once majestic house, but only the walls still stand. Within the house one finds only a mass of rubble and weeds. If the PCs search through the rubble, they will find a round trap door 3 feet/90 cm in diameter, that is mostly hidden beneath the rubble. The cellar of the house still is in good condition and is guarded by the baelnorn Althfindl Lan'telun.

Game Master: Statistics for Althfindl can be found under *New NPCs* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

A: Under the rubble you've found the corner of what looks like a trap door.

Game Master: After the PCs open the trap door:

The door opens into a round shaft, 10 feet/3m in diameter, which contains a spiral stairway of wood leading into the depths. The staircase seems to be in solid condition. There is no illumination.

Game Master: The stairway blocks the view of the bottom level, bit it descends only to a depth of 15 feet/4.5m.

After a descent of only 15 feet, you already reach the end of the stairway. It apparently services some sort of cellar. There is a large wooden door in the wall, a yard/meter wide and more than 6 feet/2m high. The door has an ornate lock and doorknob. There are no hinges visible, suggesting that the door opens inward.

Game Master: The door is locked with a magical lock and with a spring lock with a poisonous needle. Both must be deactivated to open the door.

B: The door opens into an unilluminated room 30 feet/9m wide and 20 feet/6m deep. In the center of the room is a wooden round table, 15 feet/4.5m in diameter, with eight wooden chairs surrounding it. There are wooden doors in the rear wall and in the wall to your right as you enter the room.

Game Master: The door from area A is locked with a magical lock and with a spring lock with a poisonous needle. Both must be deactivated to open the door. The door to area C is locked with a conventional lock.

C: The door opens into an unlit corridor 10 feet wide and 20 feet long. At that point, the corridor turns to the left, but there also is a massive wooden door at the end of the corridor.

Game Master: This door also is locked with a magical lock and with a spring lock with a poisonous needle. Both must be deactivated to open the door. The doors to D, F and G are locked with conventional locks.

D: The door opens into an unilluminated room 40feet/12m long and 20 feet/6m wide. There is a second door in another wall (s. map). The room is filled with shelves, sacks, boxes and barrels. It's obviously some kind of storage area.

Game Master: Both doors to this room are secured with conventional locks. The room contains almost every kind of spell component imaginable, both Althfindl has done nothing to preserve them. All perishable spell components lost their substance and their value years ago.

E: The door opens onto a huge hall support by massive marble pillars five feet thick. This immense room no doubt was and perhaps still is an immense library. Rows and rows of bookshelves fill the hall, and in the center are massive wooden tables with ornate wooden chairs. Torches hang at regular intervals upon the walls and the pillars, and long candles burn in stands next to the tables. The hall itself is 170/51m feet wide and 110/33m feet long.

Game Master: All three doors to this room are locked with a magical lock and with a spring lock with a poisonous needle. Both must be deactivated to open a door. This room was Althfindl's reason for becoming a baelnorn.

Game Master: Rooms F and G are identical.

F G: The door opens into an unilluminated room that may once long ago have served as a mage's lab. It obviously has seen no use in years. The room itself is 60 feet/18m wide and 30 feet/9m deep. in it are a huge marble workbench 30 feet/9m long and 10 feet/3m wide, its surface marred by many ancients stains. To the side of the work bench is a brazier some 5 feet /1.5m in diameter.

Game Master: Both rooms are secured with conventional locks.

Dungeon of Pain

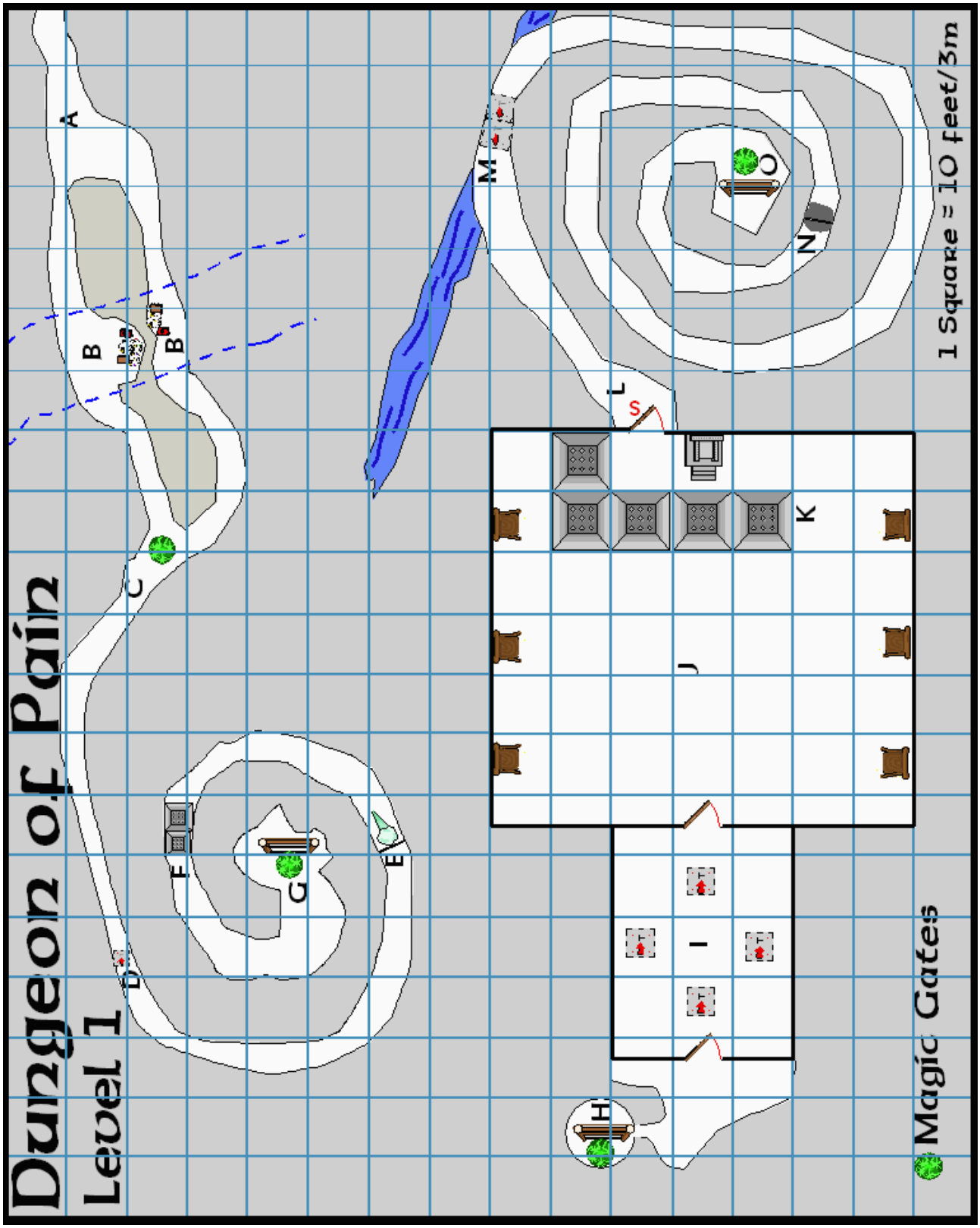
Unofficial site – not shown on the NJ map of Myth Drannor

This also is a dungeon the PCs can find, but one they may wish they hadn't. It is not a single dungeon but rather a collection of isolated locations connected to each other by gates that are not noticed by characters passing through them. The Game Master may place this dungeon at any unmarked location. The dungeon is not a creation of Myth Drannor, but rather the work of a powerful witch of Rashemen named Nardet who turned evil and later turned into a lich as well. Nardet came to Myth Drannor 400 years after its fall and was quite successful in finding many of the better concealed and more powerful magic items and treatises still within the confines of the lost city. Like many liches, Nardet slowly went mad, but her madness has manifested itself in paranoia. She has an overwhelming conviction that there is a conspiracy underfoot to deprive her of her hoarded treasure.

There are of course plenty of creatures within the lost city who would delight in depriving Nardet of her treasures, if they knew of them, but she has become almost completely forgotten, because she has herself holed up in her lair like a great dragon, behind a line of many mechanical and magical traps, guarding her truly great treasures against intruders who rarely make themselves visible but who, in her deranged mind, always are nearby.

Nardet does venture forth at rare times, when greed drives her to seek still more treasure in the ruins of Myth Drannor, and she has worked magicks upon certain night hags who bring her larvae to prolong her unlife, magicks that allow these night hags to pass all traps without triggering them. Only to satisfy her greed does Nardet maintain a route into and out of her lair, otherwise she would have entombed her undead self happily ever after years ago. To build this magical lair, Nardet exhausted the mighty magicks of many ancient items and scrolls that she had found in Myth Drannor's ruins. These magicks take a wanderer through her lair to a number of strange and mysterious places although not necessarily wonderful places. Nardet's goal is to cruelly destroy intruders, or to at least scare them off, not to trap them and drive them deeper into her lair in desperation. For that reason, all gates are bidirectional.

This dungeon is designed to be a place your adventurers will find so murderous that they eventually will want to flee from it with nothing to reward them for their troubles. If your PCs do find Nardet, they will immediately be gated back to the start of the dungeon, before they have a chance to do anything. The PCs should come across a small tunnel leading into area A when they are exploring another area.



Dungeon of Pain – Level 1

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Level 1

A: The narrow tunnel opens suddenly into a somewhat oval cavern, roughly 15 feet/4.5m by 20 feet/6m in size. The walls of this room are black, totally covered with soot, There are two narrow exits at the back of this room.

Game Master: This area still belongs physically to Nardet's lair. In the second round after this room has been entered, a delayed fireball explodes for 6d6 hp dmg. In 3rd Edition save for refley against DC 33. in 2nd edition save vs, spells for half damage. Nardet checks and if necessary renews this spell every 1d4+2 days. The two tunnels leading to the areas marked B are the physical end of this dungeon. They are two-way gates to an entirely different area beneath the dungeon kitchen ruins of Azimer's Six Tyryl Towers school of wizardry. Regardless of the direction in which they travel, the gate will *not* be noticed by the PCs.

Game Master: The two tunnels leading from are A to the areas marked B are the first gate. The location of the areas marked B is approximately under the kitchen of the Six Tyryl Towers dungeon. It also is a bit to the side of and far above the dungeon *Sváfnir's Rest.* The same description is valid for both areas marked B.

B: The tunnel leads into another irregularly shaped cave, roughly 15 feet/4.5m square. In the center of this room, someone has stashed a treasure of no little value. Hundreds of gold coins lay stacked on the floor, along with three books that look as though they most likely are spellbooks. The pile also includes two wands and three rings.

Game Master: Everything here is an illusion, including the floor. This room is an open pit that has a drop of 30 feet/9m into a fast flowing underground river which eventually will deposit survivors at Sváfnir's Rest. Areas C through G are a part of an old drow complex west of Shadowdale. Nardet has used her magic to block this area from the rest of the complex, but it still is far outside of the mythal. As soon as PCs still bearing Azimer's sigyll enter this area, they will feel a strong pull in *both* directions. The sigylls will attempt to force the PCs to move on, but they cannot determine a direction, because both directions lead back to Myth Drannor.

C: Your path takes you into a new tunnel, about a yard/meter wide and more than two yards/about two meters high. The tunnel seems to turn continually to the left.

D: TRAP!

Game Master: When a PC steps on the stone floor at this point, a part of the ceiling over a stretch of 20 feet/6m collapses, leaving nearly a foot/30 cm of broken rock on the floor and causing 4d6 hp dmg to each PC in the area. Dwarves using their abilities can detect this trap with a 20% bonus.

E: TRAP!

Game Master: A wire is spanned over the floor at this point. When a PC triggers it, a cloud of chlorine gas will be released in an area of the tunnel 10 feet/3m in either direction from the wire. Any PC who breathes the chlorine saves vs. poison for 4d6 hp dmg or dies in 1d6+2 rounds. Nardet check this trap and if necessary renews it every 1d4+2 days. It contains no more chlorine after its release until it has been renewed. *Any* PC carefully checking the floor area with adequate light can see this wire, and one then easily can step over it

F: TRAP!

Game Master: The floor here is an illusion. Instead of a floor, the tunnel holds a pit a yard/meter square and 2 yards/meters deep that contains 25 sharp spikes. A PC falling into the pit will land on 1d8+10 spikes for 1d6 hp dmg per spike. The illusionary floor can be detected by physically tapping upon it or through magic.

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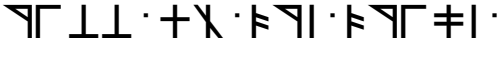
G: The tunnel ends suddenly in a cave approximately 12 feet/4m in diameter. In the middle of the cave is a stone shaft leading downwards into the darkness. A metal ladder is securely fastened to the stone wall of the shaft

Game Master: This shaft is the next gate. It comes out far to the north in the *Spine of the World* beneath the ruined halls of an ancient and evil dwarven thane named Gifar, who was cursed along with his top ministers to an unending existence in undeath. Using ancient dwarven magic no longer available, like that in possession of Grafvitnir and the Goldhammer Clan (s. Module No. 3 *Backlands*), the longbeards of the clan isolated the trapped reception chamber and the throne room of the thane from the rest of the clan's halls, causing the thane and his ministers to slowly suffocate. The ghost of the thane and the wraiths of his six ministers exist on here. Nardet used high magic of Myth Drannor to fashion the passages in and out of this area, but the ancient magic of the clan still binds the undead dwarven spirits to the throne room. The undead hate all living beings and will attack viciously. PCs still bearing Azimer's sigyll will continue to be drawn into moving on as quickly as possible, in *either* direction, because they sense that both paths lead back to Myth Drannor.

H: You estimate that the ladder descended approximately 100 feet/30 m. You find yourself now at the bottom of the shaft, with another tunnel 4 feet/120 cm wide leading off into the darkness.

I: After only a few meters, the tunnel widens suddenly to 30 feet/9m, ending at a wall of obvious dwarven construction, 20 feet/6m high. A massive wooden double door 6 feet/180 cm wide stands closed in the wall. Above it inscribed in stone is a legend:

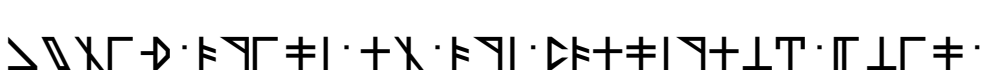


Game Master: Translated from Dethek: *Hall of the Thane.* The following description should be used only if the PCs look into area I with adequate light.

The great double doors open onto an empty and unilluminated hall, 30 feet/9m wide and 40 feet/12m long. In the middle of the far wall is another double door, exactly like the one you just passed through. Otherwise, there is nothing to see but bare stone walls – and the easy-to-see trap on the ceiling. The ceiling is covered by a series of metallic nets holding quite a number of rocks of substantial size, a foot/30 cm and longer in size. It seems probable that something in this room could trigger the release of these metal nets, causing all of the rocks to come down upon your heads.

Game Master: The triggering stones in the floor are that *"something."* A dwarf using his/her abilities has a chance to discover the trigger stones. If the trap is released, everyone farther than a yard/meter from an open door sustains 10d6 hp dmg from falling rocks, which later leave an accumulation of rocks averaging 15 inches/38 cm in height across the floor. Anyone within a yard/meter from an open door can dodge the falling rocks by jumping outside the room, with a successful dexterity check.

J: Your first impression of this room is that you maybe should have picked a different one. To eac side of you, along the walls, sit three dwarves upon regal chairs. Yet another dwarf sits upon a throne across from you, along the opposite wall. The seven dwarves are not refugees from Snow White. They also are by no means alive, but rather, quite clearly undead, and they are getting to their feet and looking in your direction with unfriendly interest. The room is 70 feet/21m wide 55 feet/16.5 m long. In the stone wall, above and behind the throne, is the following inscription.



Game Master: The inscription reads, *"Gifar, Thane of the Stonehold Clan."* As soon as the last PC enters the room, a huge iron grate falls, barring the way back. This is triggered only by the absence of life in area I. Beneath the Thane's throne the PCs can find pulley and cable works to lift the grate again. As long as all of the PCs keep their sigylls covered, the undead will attack them mercilessly. As soon as a sigyll is visible, Thane Gifar will order a halt to all fighting. At the time when he and his ministers were confined in the throneroom, Gifar had persisted in refusing to turn over the *Thane's Axe* of the clan to his captors. He and his ministers were told that at some time in the distant future, they would receive a second chance to escape eternal damnation on the negative plane. They were told a runecutter would return one distant day to the throneroom, and if Gifar relented at that time and yielded the *Thane's Axe*, he and his ministers would be freed from undeath into normal death. If a sigyll is revealed, Gifar will detect the presence of ancient dwarven magic and conclude that the runecutter at last has come.

He will walk to the throne and mark an invisible rune upon the seat with his ghostly hand. The *Thane's Axe* then will float upward from the throne and toward the PCs. The axe is a normal battleaxe +5. In combat it can be used only by dwarves. It refuses to move in the hands of members of other races in combat. After giving up the axe, Gifar's ghost will fade away and a small pile of dust will appear on the floor where he stood. The same happens with the wraiths.

Game Master: Statistics are available in the entry *Thane Gifar and His Ghosts* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*

K: TRAP!

Game Master: The area in front of and to the side of the throne, as shown in the plan of this area, is a large trap. The floor here is of very fragile and thin stone that will cave in when it is stepped upon. The traps are 2 yards/meters deep and contains 25 sharp spikes per square yard/meter. A PC falling into the pit will land on 1d8+10 spikes for 1d6 hp dmg per spike. The trap floor can be detected by physically tapping upon it, with the help of dwarven abilities or through magic.

L: The door leads into a rough tunnel that quickly narrows to a yard/meter in width and a bit more than six feet/1m in height. The tunnel seems to turn continually toward the right.

Game Master: Point L is the threshold to a new location. If you're running the *NJ* adventure, you may wish to place the PCs on the southern edge of Cormanthor, on their route toward Scardale.

M: TRAP!

Game Master: The area above the underground river is a large trap. The tunnel floor is fragile and thin stone that will cave in when it is stepped upon. The underground river is 10 feet/3m below2 floor level. The river flow leftward on the dungeon plan with a speed of 20 mph/35kmh, and it is 6/180 cm feet deep at the edges and 10 feet/3m deep in the middle. PCs who cannot swim will immediately be towed by the current and will drown if not somehow rescued in 1d4+4 rounds. Characters who can swim but allow themselves to be towed by the current will be drawn 1,000 feet/300 m downstream. In the last 300 feet/90 m the PC(s) will begin hearing the sound of a waterfall. Those who do not begin swimming back in the next 100 feet/30m will be drawn hopelessly onward and be dashed to their death upon rocks at the bottom of a 300 foor/90m deep underground waterfall. Normally a PC can be rescued from the wall only by swimming and being hauled back above with a rope. The walls are wet and slippery. Only a thief can climb them, and then only with a 15% penalty. Thieves also can use their climbing ability to scale the wall past the trap. The trap floor can be detected by physically tapping upon it, with the help of dwarven abilities or through magic.

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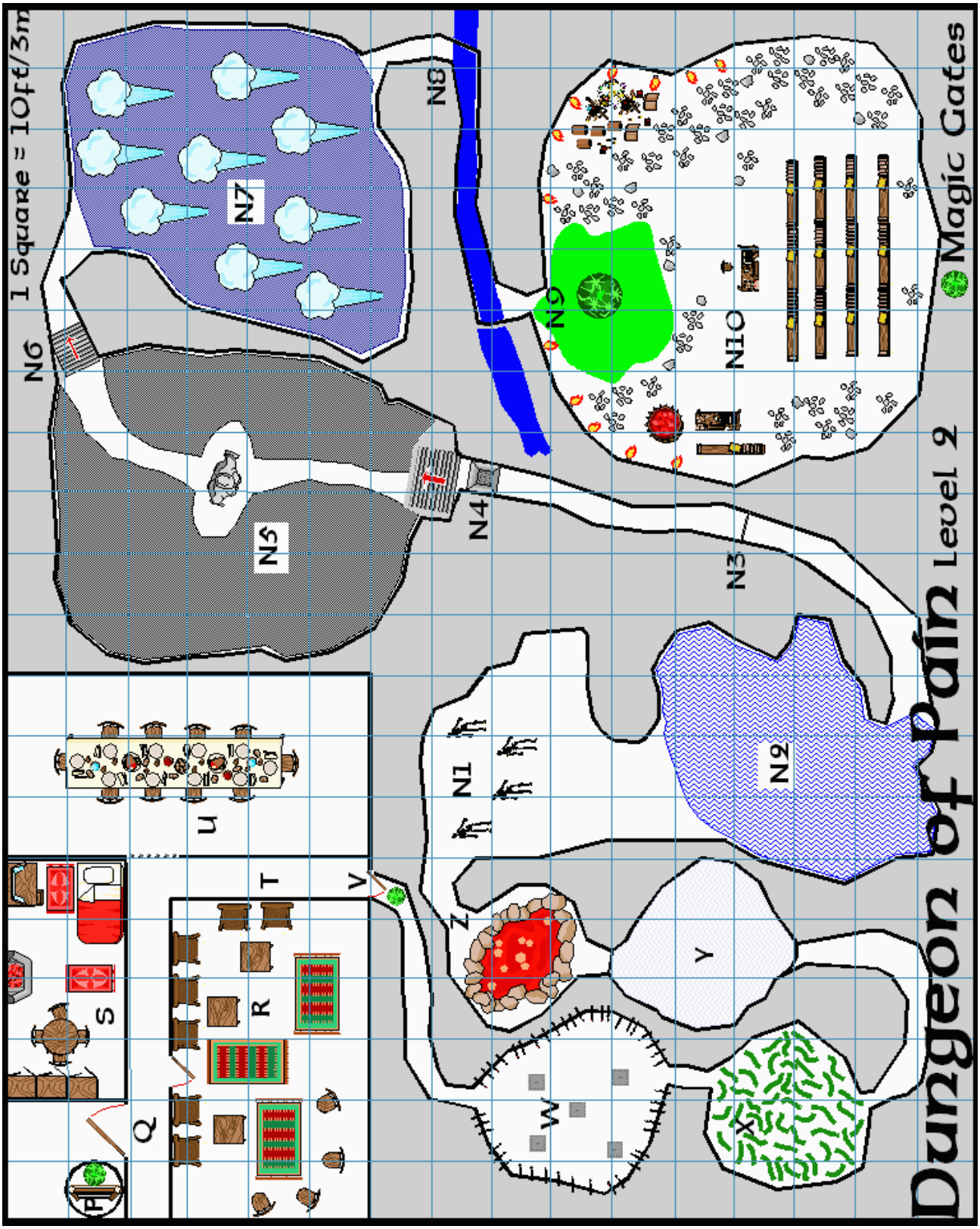
N: TRAP!

Game Master: At this point the floor is covered by a large, loose rock as wide as the tunnel. One can step over the rock, but if one steps upon it, it will release a large 3foot/90 cm guillotine-like blade that will fall upon the PC who released the trap. The PC will hear a rolling sound above him/her. If he/she says that he/she is jumping out of the way and there is room to jump in the direction indicated, he/she succeeds with a successful dexterity check. Any player hit with the blade is automatically sliced in two for 500 hp dmg, unless he/she has adequate magical protection. This trap can be detected with dwarven and thieves' abilities. Any player inspecting the tunnel ceiling also will see the slit through which the blade falls.

O: The spiral-shaped tunnel ends at last in a cave about 15 feet/4.5m in diameter in which a seemingly sound metal ladder leads upwards into a dark shaft 5 feet/150 cm wide.

Game Master: The shaft is 20 feet/6m high but magically darkened.



Dungeon of Pain – Level 2

Level 9

Fortress of Gellin: This fortified mountain castle, once ruled by the *Iron Duke Melthrun,* fell in –1263 DR. Melthrun's daughter Ingthra fled the fortress and ran off with an archmage named Nesbar from an ancient and forgotten land. Angered Melthrun sent agents out to recapture his daughter, and they succeeded when Nesbar was off on travels. Ingthra was brought back the *Fortress of Gellin* and imprisoned by her father in her chamber (area S), left there to starve to death to music of mourning that a quartet of musicians was forced to play in area R.

When Nesbar learned what had happened, it was too late. Ingthra had died and was buried. However, he avenged himself upon Duke Melthrun and his ministers. He trapped them during an evening meal in the banquet hall of the fortress (area U) and sealed the hall with magic they could not pass, trapping them there forever. Using ancient magic of the Netherese, Nesbar placed a double curse upon Melthrun and his men. They too were left to starve, in the banquet hall. Until the magical seals upon the room are broken, however, they are resurrected each dawn, again in the last stages of death through starvation, and they must suffer and die anew in the course of each day. This has been going on for more than 2,500 years already.

The second, more severe and permanent part of their punishment begins when they are *freed* from the first curse. As soon as the magical bars at the entrance to area U are destroyed, the duke and his men will automatically be banned to eternal suffering in the abyss. The only means left in the modern world to destroy the bars is a Netherese *Wand of Prohibition* (s. *Campaign Guide*) in the chamber of Ingthra. She is a haunt and cannot use it in her current form but will do so without hesitating as soon as she can take over the body of a PC. The command word of the wand is *"Halgar."* Ingthra's haunt believes that the duke and his men have grown used to the trails and tribulations of starving to death and that it's time they begin suffering their *real* punishment. They PCs are free to avenge Ingthra or tom simply leave this dungeon through area T. But Ingthra will attempt to take over the body of a PC before the group can depart.

P – Tower room: The ladder ends in daylight, in an otherwise empty room 20 feet/6m square. It's extremely cold her, perhaps –20° F/XXX° C. Large, paneless w indows are in two of the walls, a wooden door in yet another. A look at the window reveals that you're in a tower high in a mountain chain somewhere. The tower walls continue below over a height of 50 feet/15m, ending at a mountain cliff that descends another 100 feet/30 m. Everything outdoors is covered with ice and snow. From somewhere comes the sound of sad chamber music, music of mourning.

Q - Corridor: The door opens onto a corridor 60 feet/18 m long and 5 feet/150 cm wide. There are three additional doors, in all, two doors in each wall. The music seems to come from behind the doors of the room across from you.

R – Recital chamber: The door open onto a musical recital chamber, 55 feet long and 25 feet wide, The room is furnished with chairs, and a transparent quartet of ghostly musicians plays ancient music of mourning on four stringed instruments in miserable states of repair, although the ghostly music sounds as though it comes from instruments of remarkably good quality.

Game Master: The spirits of the magicians will do nothing to the PCs, and the PCs can do nothing to the spirits. As long as the instruments are in the hands of the spirits, the PCs cannot touch them. The PCs' hands simply will pass through the spirits and their instruments. Once Ingthra's haunt vanishes, the musicians' spirits will vanish too.

S – Ingthra's chamber: The door opens onto a beautiful chamber filled with daylight from the windows. The room is 40 feet/12m long and 20 feet/6 m wide. It is furnished like the room of a woman, with bed, dressers, closets, table etc. The invisible, ghostly form of a woman sits upon the bed, but looks up excited as soon as she sees you. *"At last!",* she says. *"I've been waiting more than 2,000 years for you!"* She takes a wand out from beneath her pillow and begins approaching you, an eager look in her eyes.

T: The door opens onto an empty corridor 5 feet/150cm wide and 25 feet/7,5m long. There is another door in the opposite wall.

Game Master: **T**he far door is the threshold to the next gate, into Nardet's true lair.

U: Huge metal bars block the entrance to this room, but it is illuminated by eerie, green-burning torches. A long dining table stands within the room, but it bears only old china, pots and silverware, all without a trace of food.

When the occupants still are alive: 12 emaciated men are sitting at the table or tottering in the room. All look as though they are upon their last legs, dying of starvation.

When the occupants are dead: The corpses of 12 emaciated men lie on the floor of the room. All look as though they died of starvation.

Game Master: Melthrun and his men are unable to perceive of anything outside of area U. They will not be able to see, hear or otherwise perceive of Ingthra. If she is generous, she will warn the PCs to remove their magical items at least 50 feet/15m from the bars before using the wand. Of course, if you want to reduce the amount of magic your PCs have, perhaps to almost none, there is no need for her to be generous. The *Wand of Prohibition* has no effect upon artifacts or objects of ancient dwarven or elven magic.

V: The door leads into another crude tunnel that forks off at a 30° angle to your right and descends wi th a slope of about 5°.

Game Master: Point V is the gate back to Nardet's true lair beneath Myth Drannor.

W: After continuing for about 50 feet/15m, always descending at the same angle, you reaching an opening onto a cave roughly 30 feet/9m in diameter with a ceiling 15 feet/4.5m high. There doesn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary in this chamber, other than the fact that the walls are perforated like Swiss cheese with countless small holes. The tunnel exits and continues on across the room.

Game Master: There are five hidden plates in the floor (see dungeon plan) that will set off the trap in this chamber, releasing 200 spears flying in all directions. Each PC will be hit by 1d4+2 spears for 1d6 hp dmg per spear. Nardet checks this trap and adds no spears every 1d4+2 days.

X: You proceed through a mere five feet of tunnel before it opens onto another chamber roughly 30 feet/9m in diameter that opens onto a pit 6 feet/180 cm deep. An estimated 50 snakes crawl around on the bottom of the pit. The tunnel continues on the other side of the pit.

Game Master: The 50 snakes are poisonous.

Y: The tunnel continues on another 50 feet/15m or so, twisting steadily to the left, before opening onto a cave 25 feet/7.5 m in diameter. The cave is filled with a clear liquid, but its fumes causing an unpleasant burning sensation in your noses. On the other side of the cave the tunnel continues. Through it you can see the flickering light of fire.

Game Master: **T**he cave is filled with acid for 2d4 hp dmg per round before being cleaned plus acid damage to all susceptible equipment.

Z: As soon as you reach the opposite side of the room, you feel intense heat. The tunnel leads on another 5 feet/150 cm before opening onto another room about 30 feet/9m in diameter which contains a pit holding a liquid that is burning in flames 3 feet/80 cm high. The tunnel continues on the opposite side.

Game Master: The cave is filled with a highly flammable oil. PCs who enter the oil suffer 4d6 hp dmg per round. After leaving the pit, the oil upon them continues to burn for 1d4 rounds at 1d6 hp dmg per round.

Nardet's Lair

N1-N2: After leaving the flames, the tunnel turns sharply to the right and continues on for about 15 feet/7.5m before opening onto a long, weakly illuminated cave. The light comes from the rear of the cave (are N2), which is filled with the weakly glowing but thick fumes of a light blue gas that swirls in the air. The cave is about 90 feet/27m long. Its sides are irregular, averaging about 30 feet/9m in width but narrowing to about 15 feet/7.5 m 25 feet/7.5m deep into the cave. After that, the cave widens again. The glowing gas fumes swirl beyond this point. In the front part of the cave (area N1), the first 25 feet/7.5m, you encounter a different problem. Four corpselike warriors with blackened skullike faces in blackened, charred plate armor, all with glowing orange-red pinpoints of light for eyes, stand waiting for you, two-hander swords at the ready. One of the creatures says in a raspy voice, *"Back! Go back!"*

Game Master: The gas is poisonous, causing 10d4 hp dmg per round it is breathed. In 3rd edition save for fortitude at DC 20, in 2nd Edition vs. poison *per round* for half damage. The gas also is explosive if a fire (including a fireball from a death knight) is ignited, causing 10d6 hp dmg but also consuming the gas in the process. Each PC is entitled to save for fortitude against DC 25 in 3rd edition, against paralysis in 2nd Edition for half damage. Nardet will renew a consumed gas supply in 1 turn + 1d10 rounds.

The creatures before the PCs are four death knights – fallen Paladins of Helm, Tyr, Torm and Lathander. If any of the PCs are paladins, priests, clerics, monks or crusaders of these gods, the death knight will sense this and make that PC to his personal prime foe in the group. If the PCs proceed into area N1, the death knights will fight them until all the PCs are dead or until all four death knights are destroyed.

The four death knights fight honorably: They never ambush opponents from behind, nor do they attack before an opponent readies his/her weapon. They never will surrender or parley. The death knights have the following magical abilities, all as a 20th level mage:

- They constantly generate *fear* in a 5-foot/150cm radius.
- They can cast *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, and *wall of ice* at will.
- Twice daily, they can cast *dispel magic*.
- Once daily, they can use either *power word, blind*, *power word, kill*, or *power word, stun*.
- They can cast *symbol of fear* or *symbol of pain* once daily.
- They can cast a 20-dice *fireball* once daily.

The death knights cannot be turned, but they can be dispelled by a *holy word* spell. The knights have power over undead as a Level 6 evil priest. In addition to the 75% magic resistance is, the knights can reflect a spell back at the caster and if an 11% or lower is rolled. For statistics, see the encounter *Nardet's Lair* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

N3: After passing through the large cave, you enter a long and twisting tunnel again, averaging 3 feet wide.

Game Master: At point N3 the floor is covered by a large, loose rock as wide as the tunnel. One can step over the rock, but if one steps upon it, it will release a large 3foot/90 cm guillotine-like blade that will fall upon the PC who released the trap. The PC will hear a rolling sound above him/her. If he/she says that he/she is jumping out of the way and there is room to jump in the direction indicated, he/she succeeds with a successful dexterity check. Any player hit with the blade is automatically sliced in two for 500 hp dmg, unless he/she has adequate magical protection. This trap can be detected with dwarven and thieves' abilities. Any player inspecting the tunnel ceiling also will see the slit through which the blade falls.

N4: TRAP!

Game Master: A section of the floor at this point 1 yard/meter square is covered by a thin sheet of rock. Anyone who steps upon this area will fall into a pit 2 yards/meters deep that contains 25 sharp spikes. A PC falling into the pit will land on 1d8+10 spikes for 1d6 hp dmg per spike. The trap floor can be detected by physically tapping upon it, with the help of dwarven abilities at a bonus of 2 or through magic. PCs without special abilities have a 10% cumulative chance per round to discover this trap through careful observation.

N5: You estimate that you've gone through more than 100 feet/30m of tunnel, when you come to an opening the leads into a stairs 10 feet wide and six feet long, descending into an open shaft, somewhat oval in shape, 50 feet/15m long and 40 feet/12m wide. The shaft is dark. There is no way to estimate how deep it is. A stone bridge without railing, 3 feet/90 cm wide, crosses the shaft. In the center, the bridge widens to about 15 feet/7.5m. At this point stands a large, motionless, stone statue of a man, 9½ feet/285cm tall.

The golem is immune to all weapon of less than +2 enchantment. A *rock to mud* spell can slows it for 2d6 rounds. The reversal, *mud to rock,* will heal the it, restoring all lost hit points. *Flesh to stone* makes the golem vulnerable to normal attacks for one round except for spells that do not cause direct damage. Once every second round, the golem can cast a *slow* spell upon any opponent with 10 feet/3m radius.

Game Master: The statistics for the golem are under *Nardet's Lair* in the *Unofficial NPC Encounters* section of the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.* The golem will attempt to hold off all intruders until it is destroyed. The shaft is 1,000 feet/300m deep. A fall will cause 150d6 hp dmg.

N6: At the exit from the shaft is an ascending stairway, also 10 feet wide and six feet long. It leads into a new tunnel four feet/120cm wide and 10 feet/3m high that veers off to the right.

Game Master: The stairway is an illusion. The 1,000-foot/300m deep shaft continues at this point. In actuality, magic holds this end of the bridge up. It is supported by nothing. A PC who steps onto the stairway will fall 1,000 feet/300m for 150d6 hp dmg. The illusion can be detected by magic or by testing the stairs.

N7: The tunnel twists on to the right another 20 feet/6m and then opens onto a somewhat trapezoidal shaped cave 45 feet/13.5m long, 40 feet/12m wide at the entrance and 50 feet/15m wide on the opposite side, where the tunnel goes on in the left corner. The entire room is filled with a bubbling liquid and steam that gives off considerable heat.

Game Master: The liquid is boiling water. Any PC who goes into the water suffers 10d6 hp dmg per round. Those who fly or otherwise travel through the steam above the water suffer 1d6 hp dmg per round.

N8: As you enter the tunnel again, you can hear the rushing sound of flowing water. The tunnel leads on for 10 feet/3m and then ends suddenly on a swiftly flowing underwater stream about 3 feet/90cm wide. There is nothing but a wall of natural stone on the other side. The stream flows at a rate of about 20 mph/35 kmph, from your left to the right. There is an open space about 5 feet/150cm high above the flowing water – in both directions.

Game Master: The water is only three feet/90cm deep and can be waded easily. If the PCs follow it upstream, they eventually will come to a round shaft 100 feet/30m high through which the water pours. This wet, slippery shaft is impossible to climb, even for a high-level thief. If the PCs decide to continue stream downward past the entrance to N9, they will reach a point 500 feet/150m downstream from the entrance where there is a sudden drop. The stream's velocity increases to 50 mph/80 kmph and the depth to 10 feet/3m.

As of this point, the PCs who can't swim are in trouble. All PCs still in the water have another 20 feet/6m in which to turn back, or they will cascade over a waterfall to a depth of 200 feet/60m for 20d6 hp dmg. The full description of area N9 should be read only to PCs who leave the stream at that point and enter the tunnel.

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N9 – Nardet's Chamber:

Game Master: This entire area is a gate, triggered by the command word *"Vanish!"* from Nardet. As soon as she says this word, the PCs find themselves at location A, level 1.

At the stream: You come upon another tunnel entrance in the stone wall to your left. The tunnel is about 4 feet/120cm wide and 8 feet/240cm high.

Game Master: The following is read only to PCs who go through the tunnel, at the point they reach the threshold to area N9 but before entering it:

End of the tunnel: The tunnel leads on only another 7 feet/210cm or so and opens then onto a huge cavern some 70 feet/21m in diameter. The entire cavern is lit by strange torches that burn in a blood red color, emitting a rust-colored smoke. There are rows and rows of bookshelves in the cave, most filled with bound volumes. To your left along the cave's wall you see a large collection of staves, rods and other objects that look suspiciously magical. Next to them are a number of old chests. In front of the bookshelves, an old crone sits at a desk studying a book.

She turns around, and you see that her face is half rotted away. It wouldn't surprise you if she isn't another lich. She certainly isn't alive, whatever she is. The figure studies your group carefully, then mutters, *"More intruders come to Nardet. Want to visit Nardet. No invitation. No manners. Bah!"*

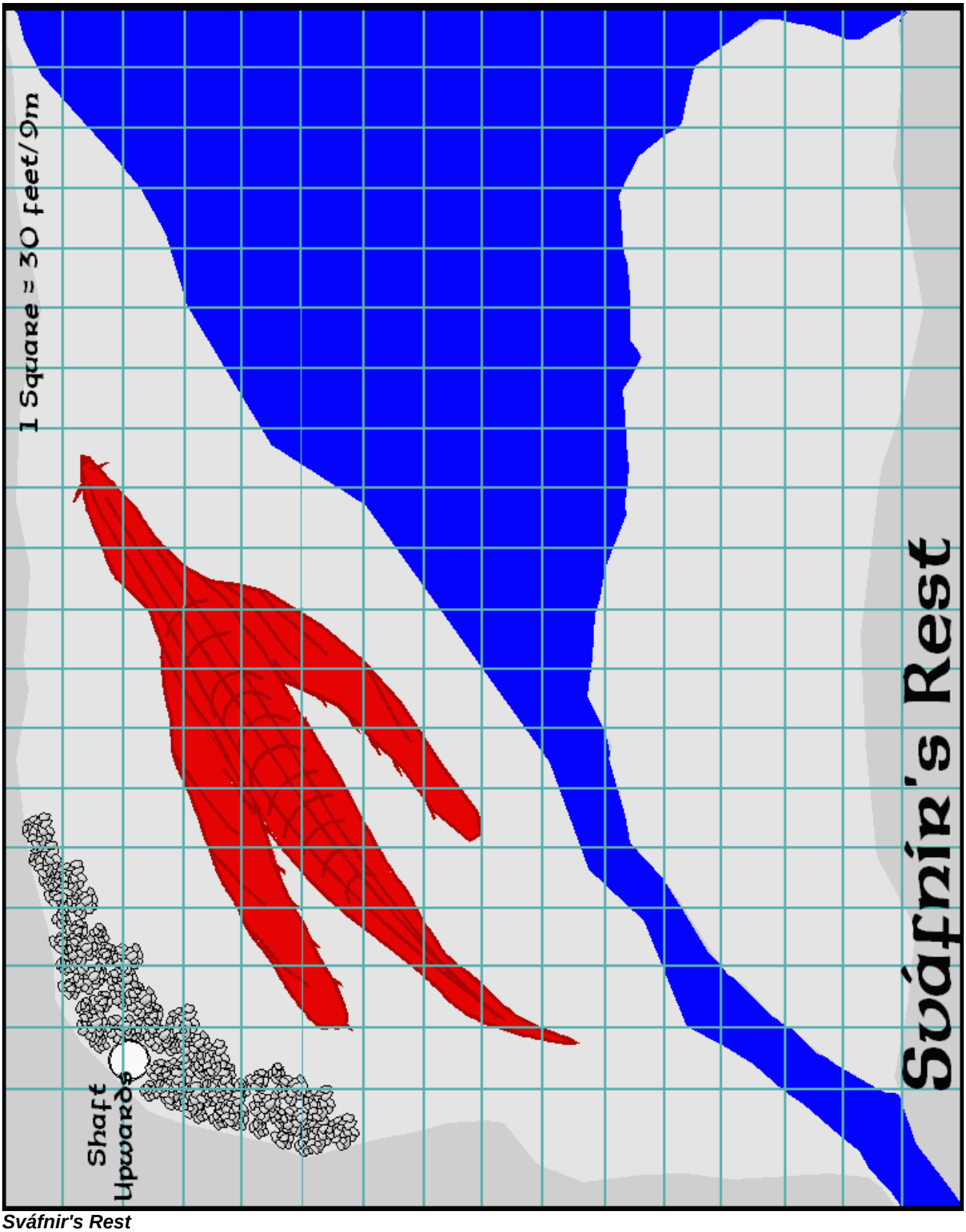
With those words, she turns her back to you and begins focusing her attention once more on the book upon her desk.

Game Master: The following is read after all of the PCs have entered Area N9:

Once again, the old crone looks in your direction, and says quite simply and disgustedly, *"Vanish!"*

Game Master: As soon as Nardet says the trigger word, the PCs find themselves back at location A, level 1:

A: You find yourself suddenly back in the ruins of Myth Drannor, before a narrow tunnel that opens into a somewhat oval cavern, roughly 15 feet/4.5m by 20 feet/6m in size. The walls of this room are black, totally covered with soot, There are two narrow exits at the back of this room. You know this area well. You've been here before. This is the entrance to the dungeon you apparently have just exited.



Sváfnir's Rest

Sváfnir's Rest

This dungeon is 800 feet/240m beneath the ruins of the Six Tyryl Towers School of Wizardry and 100 feet/30m beneath the lower limit of the mythal. PCs entering here with Azimer's symbol will be pressured by their sigylls to move immediately back into Myth Drannor. The shaft leading upward is easy to climb (see the description of areas 8 and 9 in the *Six Tyryl Towers* dungeon).

The cavern houses the great red dragon *Sváfnir,* third son of Grafvitnir, who is behind a part of what is steering the PCs. Grafvitnir thought that Sváfnir and his other sons were destroyed millennia ago and has no idea that Sváfnir still exists. Sváfnir was a priest of Tiamat in Unther in olden times. He made the mistake of flying over ancient Cormanthyr, where he was captured in days of yore by elven mages and put into a magical sleep, with the idea that a red dragon of his stature – or at least some of his parts – might someday prove useful. His sleeping form was imprisoned by the elves in a cave beneath what later would become Myth Drannor. Ancestors of some of the mages responsible for the Six Tyryl Towers being built were among the captors of Sváfnir, and the secret of his prison was passed on over the years to the leaders of the school. The last person in Myth Drannor to be aware of Sváfnir's existence was Azimer, but he may gave forgotten this secret with the advancement of his insanity.

By all rights, Sváfnir's spirit well could expect to remain in a magical sleep here in this forgotten dungeon, until the ravages of time conquered even the ancient elven magic and reduced his form to dust. But, as usual in Faerûn, pesky adventurer fools have rushed in where wise men never go. Even so, the chances should be nil that the adventurers can awaken Sváfnir. Some gods, perhaps, or maybe Azimer, might know what magic the ancient elves used upon the great wyrm and what other magic could end his sleep.

However, Sváfnir was a high priest of Tiamat, the your PCs' sigylls carry within them the magic of Tiamat, and it so happens that presence of Tiamat's will be sufficient to slowly awaken Sváfnir, who will immediately sense that the PCs are bearers of Tiamat's magic, on a mission for his goddess. I

t will be of no interest to Sváfnir, whether the PCs serve Tiamat willingly or not. He will know they obey her command. Sváfnir will not know what the PCs' mission is, but if the PCs no longer bear Azimer's symbol, he will know they must depart Myth Drannor rapidly, in his goddess' service. Likewise, if they still bear the symbol of Azimer, he will sense that the PCs' business in Myth Drannor is unfinished.

If the PCs still bear Azimer's sigyll, Sváfnir will leave his involuntary lair without them, if not, he will offer ... no, *insist* ... that the PCs fly from his prison with him. Sváfnir already will hear Tiamat's call to him, for the goddess will sense his reawakening, and will send the great wyrm on a mission into the South, to destroy a hideout of dragon cult mages who oppose her infiltration of the cult.

If the PCs have finished their business with Azimer, Sváfnir will fly them as far as *Llindfalar's Glen* west of Scardale, the same destination Azimer would have teleported them to.

What Sváfnir does in your Realms – if anything – after depositing the PCs is your decision. We have no further appearances planned for him in the *Northern Journey* adventure.

If the PCs have teleported into Sváfnir's Rest: You find yourself suddenly in an entirely different place, a huge cave. Behind you is a large shaft leading upward into darkness.

If the PCs have climbed the shaft into Sváfnir's Rest: You find yourself suddenly in an entirely different place.

And then in both cases: You're in a huge, oval-shaped cavern with mossy walls. The walls glow in a blue-white color. A river flows through the cave, toppling over a huge waterfall at the opposite end. The cavern itself is a bit less than 600 feet/180m long and 400feet/120m wide, broadening to a width of 480 feet/144m at the far end. In the center of the cave on your side of the river sleeps what may be the largest red dragon in all of Faerûn. The motionless wyrm is about 170 feet/51m long, and its tail stretches out over another 180 feet/54m. As far as you can see, there are only three ways out of this cavern:

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- You could try climbing the shaft behind you upwards.
- You could swim the river upstream. It flows out of a tunnel 15/4.5m wide, with a roof 8 feet/240cm above the water.
- Theoretically, you could also leave by the river's downstream exit, although in practice, this would require the ability to fly, because of the waterfall.

As the underground river approaches the waterfall, it widens to about 180 feet/54m, followed by a drop of 150 feet/45m. Below the foams and then flows shallowly with a width of about 500 feet/150m. The stone walls on both sides of the waterfall are filled with moss and glisten with water atop a slimy surface. It would be virtually impossible to climb down to the shallower river, that flows outward through a tunnel with a descending roof that reaches a height of 200/60m feet directly above the waterfall, gradually dropping then from that point until the walls lose their glow and the darkness conceals what follows.

Game Master: Keep track of the round in which the PCs arrived. Sometime during the first three rounds, read the following:

It begins to strike you, that something's wrong with this dragon's lair. What may be the greatest red dragon in Faerûn should be drowning in treasure. There's not so much as a copper nib to be found in the vicinity of this dragon. And ... the dragon seems to be a bit stiff. You begin to wonder if it is a stiff. It shows no sign of motion whatsoever. It doesn't even seem to breathe.

Game Master: Two rounds later:

A deep-sounding release of air, almost like a gigantic gasp, echoes suddenly and briefly through the cavern.

Game Master: Next round:

There is some motion from the dragon after all. Its chest moves slightly, as though it's breathing lightly. But its eyes remain closed, and its position remains stiff.

Game Master: Two rounds later:

If one or more PCs are looking at Sváfnir's eyes: Slowly, the great wyrm lifts its eyelids and then begins to move its jaws. A huge bass voice rings from within the dragon.

If no PC is looking at Sváfnir's eyes: A huge bass voice begins to echo through the cavern.

Game Master: And then, in both cases.

"So," booms the voice of the dragon. *"The goddess at last has sent me my saviors, and I can sense that she has much for us to do. Good. I think some measure of years has gone by already. Hmmm. Yes. I see. There are some fool mortals in the south who wish the goddess ill. Fools! She wishes me to deal with them. Sváfnir will do this thing gladly!*

If Azimer's sigyll has been removed:

"And you have your tasks to do too. The goddess has rewarded you with work, and she wishes that I expedite you upon your journey. Sváfnir has never stooped so low as to carry mortals upon his mighty back, but this be now the wish of the goddess, and her will shall be done. Our paths run together for some short distance, and Tiamat wishes me to transport you to the point where our paths shall part."

Game Master: After this, Sváfnir will insist with distaste that the PCs mount his back. If any PC is uncooperative, Sváfnir will simply whack him/her senseless and then use magic to transport the unconscious PC onto his back. As Game Master, keep in mind that the great wyrm has no desire whatsoever to serve as a means of transportation for such low servants of the goddess as the PCs.

He would much rather eat them. He is simply carrying out the will of the goddess and will do so as expeditiously as possible. He has no qualms about being brutal. Once the PCs are upon his back, Sváfnir will use a magic spell he knows to bind them there, almost as though they have been glued. He then will fly out of the cave, sometimes bringing the PCs head within inches of the roof, and after that over the canopy of Cormanthor, finally releasing the PCs at *Llindfalar's Glen.* The PCs will suffer 2d6 hp dmg from wind buffeting or half damage with a successful check for damage. In describing their flight, detail how harrowing and painful it is. PCs who fail their constitution check will be heavily bruised from constantly being buffeted against Sváfnir's scales.

If Azimer's sigyll has been removed:

"And you have your tasks to do too. The goddess has rewarded you with work, and she wishes that you be about it! If you do not want to earn her wrath, I would suggest you return to there where you come from, to fulfill your duty!"

Without further ado, the great wyrm rises and begins flapping its wings, causing buffeting winds so strong that you barely can stay on your feet.

Game Master: Each PC must check for dexterity to avoid being blown down.

Without losing further words, the dragon flies over the waterfall and then downstream, out of the cavern. Only as its tail vanishes in the darkness do the horrible winds caused by its flight begin to ebb.

Game Master: The PCs now have but three choices. They can try climbing the shaft into the ruins of the Six Tyryl Towers, they can try to follow Sváfnir downstream (a virtually impossible choice for PCs who aren't overloaded with magic) or they can try to swim upstream. If they succeed with the latter, they will arrive at area B of the *Dungeon of Pain.* Statistics for Sváfnir can be found under *Sváfnir's Lair* in the *Unofficial NPC Encounters* section of the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

Additional Adventures in Myth Drannor

If you want to extend your PCs' stay in the ruined city, there is no need to limit yourself to the dungeons described in *Northern Journey*. You easily can add the *Hall of Naturalists* dungeon from the original grey boxed set or the dungeons from WotC's *Ruins of Myth Drannor.* You also can design your own dungeons based upon the knowledge of old Myth Drannor contained in WotC's *Cormanthyr: Empire of the Elves.* The control here is almost completely in your hands as Game Master. It's virtually impossible for the PCs to remain long outside of Myth Drannor, as long as they still bear Azimer's sigyll, and they won't be able to find Azimer until you as Game Master open a way for them to enter his domain.

5. The Lower Ashaba Valley

Game Master: This scenario begins at sundown in *Llindfalar's Glen*, either after Azimer gates the PCs to this site or after Sváfnir has flown them there. If the PCs are gated, their appearance in the glen is almost instantaneous. If they are flown, describe the harrowing flight, the damage and the degree to which the PCs are exhausted. The description of the glen below begins afterwards.

Llindfalar's Glen is an ancient glade in a forest valley in which the elves of *Cormanthyr* once worshipped the Seldarine. It is a site that does not tolerate evil, as Sváfnir soon learns. From time to time, it still can be the site of strange and wonderful events. Feel free to invent some. If Sváfnir lands her, you should ravage him with strange magic in some manner that your PCs will not understand, so that the wyrm barely escapes the glen alive. If any of your PCs have an evil alignment, invent ways for the magic of the glen to taunt them. The concepts of midwoods and rimwoods used here are based upon the definitions in WotC's *Elminster's Ecologies,* which is among the pay downloads from http://www.rpgnow.com.

Llindfalar's Glen

You find yourself alone in the silence of an open woodland glen. The grass grew long here in the summer, but the yard-/meter-long blades lay brown and withered on the ground. The glen itself is a wide valley between two forested hills. There are bushes but no trees in the valley, although thick forest waxes on the hills to both sides. In the last rays of today's sunlight, you can see that the valley is about a mile and a half/1 km long and roughly 200 feet/60m wide. The hills quickly ascend to a ridge roughly 300 feet/90m above the valley floor.

The valley descends gradually from your left to your right. A narrow stream bed roughly six feet/2m wide runs through the valley floor, but it is mostly dry. The sun is setting behind you to your right, indicating that the stream normally flows toward the southwest. To your left – upstream – the creek winds through a narrow stone gorge and disappears in the forest hills. As far as you can make out, the stream bed makes a somewhat friendlier path to the southwest, where banks covered with brown grass and roughly two yards/meters wide follow the gently descending bed into the forest. The only other way you can see to leave the glen would be to walk through the thick forest on the hillsides at some point.

The lower levels of the forest here consist of birches at the fringe, soon succeeded by a combination of ashes and beeches. As the forest ascends the hillsides, chestnuts and maples begin to dominate. There are no conifers in this area. In addition to the dead grass of the past summer and scattered, leafless bushes, you also can see the stone foundations of three long-vanished buildings. To judge from the size of the foundations, they were nothing more than small forest huts. There also are a few long dead, fallen trees on the edge of the forest. They probably are suitable for firewood, if you wish to build a fire.

Game Master: The PCs are surrounded and being observed by a band of 10 elves, all suspiciously neutral if the PCs teleported into the glen, all hostile and suspicious if the PCs flew in with Sváfnir. Shortly after the PCs have settled comfortably into their camp for the evening, the elves will test the PCs. Three brown bears will run into the camp quickly enough to alarm the PCs but slow down then and begin observing the camp thoroughly, including walking among the PCs, nosing through their belongings etc. The bears will be quite obnoxious, but they will not attack the PCs unless attacked first. Their mission is reconnaissance, not combat.

A bear will attack quickly and expeditiously if any PC begins working a spell, but let up if the PC breaks off his spell. In running this encounter, always remember that these bears are highly intelligent elven fighter-mages who have shape-changed. If it comes to definite combat, the elves will send volleys of 16 arrows per round, all aimed to do maximum damage, raining down on the PCs, until the shape-changed elves succeed in fleeing into the woods. PCs shooting into the woods have a 25% chance on a natural throw of 20 of hitting an elf with a missile attack.

These elves know how to cover their tracks. The bear tracks, of course, are easy to follow, but they simply vanish within a few yards/meters of the forest's edge. No one who is not a ranger has any chance of tracking the elves, not even with a tracking proficiency. A ranger can track the elves with his tracking ability at a penalty of 4, but he has a 50% chance every 30 feet/9m of losing the trail.

The elves will follow the PCs until they leave the midwood and enter the rimwood. If the PCs did not attack the bears and follow a steady trail out of the forest, the elves will not attack. If any PC attempts to use suspicious magic, warning shots will be fired.

If the PCs start heading deeper into the forest, the elves will start firing warning arrows in their direction and shoot to hit if the PCs do not change direction. If the PCs did attack the bears, as soon as the PCs delay anywhere, new volleys of arrows will rain down upon them until they move on.

The elves will not parley with or voluntarily show themselves to the PCs. They should remain nothing more than a constantly threatening source of deadly arrows, until the PCs cross into the rimwood. The journey into the rimwood take about two hours. Statistics for the bear-elves are in *Midwood Encounter* under *Unofficial NPC Encounters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*.

The Rimwood

Game Master: If the PCs try to leave Llindfalar's Glen by going through the forest or hiking upstream, they should be alerted by warning and then deadly volleys of elven arrows. The elves have every intention of driving the PCs out of Cormanthor. The only route the elves leave open to them is downstream. Once the PCs cross from the midwoods into the rimwood, you may be tempted to have an edgeland appear here. That's your decision as Game Master, but according to their official definition in WotC's *Elminster's Ecologies,* it really is too late in the year for edgelands to be present.

The streambed continues taking you gradually downward through the dark, thick forest. The wood is mostly silent, except for the noise you make. From time to time, you hear the short song of a winter bird, and occasionally you hear other bird calls that sound a bit unnatural, probably confirming your suspicion that you're still being watched and followed.

Game Master: After about two hours travel time, the following should be read. From this point on until, ignore the weather tables and use the weather information given here. Specific winter weather is an element of the adventure at this point.

You're underway for about two hours, when the forest begins to thin and also to take on something of an unhealthy look. The temperature also begins dropping steadily, and patches of snow are visible on the forest floor. The forest seems to go over rather quickly from ashes, beeches and birches to hardy blueridge and needleaf pines, all short and squat, only seldom reaching more than 20 feet/6m. The vegetation here consists mainly of wiry bushes, all in their leafless season.

Game Master: Pause.

You've been in this thin and unhealthy looking stretch of forest for only about 10 minutes, but you've already gone through a rather dramatic change in climate and landscape. The deciduous trees of Cormanthor have disappeared, leaving only single, squatty pines, standing well isolated from one another. The temperature has dropped to about –10℉/-23℃, and there is nearly a foot/more than 25 cm of snow on the ground. You can neither see nor hear any trace of wildlife.

The landscape here is so open, that it's impossible for whatever was observing you in the forest to still be following you, unless, of course, it is invisible and can go through snow without leaving tracks. The streambed continues on its southeasterly course, but it remains dry, except for occasional patches of ice. There are no tracks visible in the snow, which seems to be relatively new, at least on its upper layer. You estimate that the most recent snowfall was no longer than two days ago.

The Cold Field

Game Master: In the 1993 accessory *The Dalelands* by L. Richard Baker III, one of the pay downloads offered from http://www.rpgnow.com, the Cold Field is defined as a treeless plain known as *a place of the dead.* The landscape is further defined as being grassy downs over which many ancient battlefields lie scattered. In winter, those travelers who cross the field seek sheltered trails to avoid the bitterly cold winds blowing from the north. There are rumors that Lashan of Scardale hid his still-missing treasure in a cairn upon the Cold Field, and it is said that once each year, on the deepest night of winter, the ghosts of the fallen from ancient battles walk the Cold Field and claim the soul of any living being unfortunate enough to be out on the field at that time. Your PCs will need to spend two nights on the Cold Field, reaching the village of *Feather Falls* in Featherdale in mid- to late afternoon of the following day.

As you continue onward, a genuine feeling of desolation and hopelessness comes over you. As far as you can see, the landscape consists of a slowly descending, treeless, snow-covered plain. The snow comes quickly to a depth of nearly a foot/30cm. Here and there the bare branches of bushes rise from the ground, bearing their own burden of snow, and now and then, day old rabbit tracks cross your path, but other than that, the plain is lifeless. You slowly come to the conclusion that the plain *wants* nothing living here, that is a landscape in the empire of lifelessness if not of death. The farther you go, the more your backs are hit by a bitter, freezing wind out of the north, a cold wind that blows down upon you from over the canopy of Cormanthor. The sky is totally overcast.

Game Master: Late afternoon:

As the day wanes, the weather becomes ever more miserable. The temperature is dropping steadily. You estimate it has fallen to –15℉/-26℃, and the pene trating north wind is positively threatening. You look somewhat desperately for a place to take shelter during the night. But the landscape reveals nothing but the open, snow-covered plain, snow-laden bushes and the icy path of the narrow forest stream you've been following. There is no source of firewood here, and even if you were able to start a campfire, it's doubtful that it would stay aflame in this wind and improbable that it would pass on any heat in any case. You begin to question seriously whether you can survive the night without shelter.

Game Master: An hour later:

As the daylight begins to fade, you see structures of some sort, perhaps the ruins of small buildings, a few miles/kilometers ahead of you. With luck, their walls may at least be solid enough to shield you from the wind.

The Cairn of Morlonas

Game Master: The sequence below is read after half an hour more of travel. Morlonas was a warrior mage and leader of rebellious elves from Cormanthyr nearly 2,000 years ago. He fell in battle here, and as a son of royal blood, he was interred along with his lieutenants by his foes in this cairn. Unbeknown to most elves of the court at that time, the widow of an elf who had been killed by Morlonas' warriors had worked a curse upon Morlonas and his lieutenants, damning them to undeath until a greater foe one day would destroy them.

The lieutenants of Morlonas exist as undead beneath the rubble of the two remaining cairns. They are beyond the PCs' reach and the PCs are beyond their reach – unless the PCs disassemble the cairns. Morlonas exists on alone in the larger cairn as an elven high wraith (see the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide*). By the nature of his curse, he will be tortured with pain through the rest of his existence, until he is destroyed. The curse also prevents him from leaving the cairn. Morlonas has discovered a means to temporarily dispel that pain however. And he has a plan for escaping his cairn after nearly 2,000 years of imprisonment.

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Morlonas can suck the life force from a living being and use it to enliven his high wraith form. Once he has done that, he also is free to leave the cairn in the new form. He cannot however physically stand daylight, therefore, even when filled with a foreign life force, he has been unable to travel far from the cairn. His last living victim, some 400 years ago, was an archmage whose spellbook included the 5th level mages' necromantic spell *Magic Jar*. Morlonas has learned this spell and intends to use it to take control of a living body, to escape at last from his cairn.

If the PCs enter his cairn, they will find his remains laying upon a bier there, motionless, as his mind issues a sleep command. If they do not enter the cairn but make a camp in the open, they will be so severely damaged from wind and frost and motionless that they suffer one point constitution loss with attendant penalties every 3 hours. A 3rd Edition saving throw for fortitude against DC 20 or a 2nd Edition saving throw against magic is allowed.

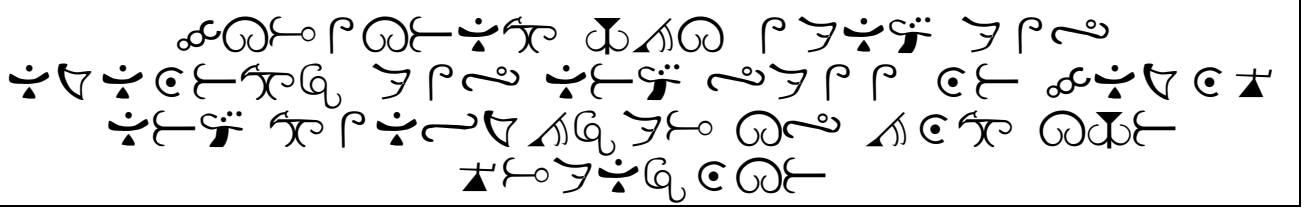
In addition, for every 3 hours spent in camp, each PC must save for fortitude again or in 2nd edition save vs. breath weapon or suffer severe frostbite of hands and feet, making him/her unable to walk on or fight. In this case, you have to warn the PCs of their repeatedly worsening condition with such lines as, *"You're slowly losing all sense of feeling in your fingers ..."* Within the cairn, the cold will make the players uncomfortable, but they will suffer no freezing damage if they have adequate winter clothing.

As darkness begins to descend upon the plain, blanketing it with a moonless, starless night, you at last reach the small structures you saw from the distance. The temperature has dropped to about –20℉/-29℃, and the icy wind is beating your back at a speed of about 50mph/80kmph. The buildings do not look particularly promising. Your first impression is that they may have been a shepherd's house and perhaps two shelters for the animals built out of fieldstones in ancient days.

The two smaller buildings have caved in totally, but the larger building still stands. The entire structure, including its semi-rounded roof, is made of fieldstones. It occurs to you that the structure must be hundreds if not thousands of years old.

Be that as it may, it radiates something of a welcoming feeling to you (**Game Master:** Paladins and priests using magic against such measures excepted**)**. There seems to be only one way into the building, a doorway of sorts blocked by a stone slab a foot/30cm wide and 5 feet/150cm high. There are no windows in the building, which could be a blessing, because they no doubt would by empty and open to the wind if they were there.

Upon the door is a symbol about 8 inches/20cm high, old in style but looking as new as if it had been painted only yesterday. It shows a white snowflake upon a blue flame. Below it, much older, is a barely readable elven inscription cut into the stone:



Game Master: The inscription in Espruar reads, *"Morlonas who lead elf against elf and fell in magic and slaughter of his own creation."* The following is read only after the PCs enter the cairn:

It seems that this structure was not a shepherd's house but rather a burial cairn. Inside, you see torches burning with an obviously magical blue fire on the wall. In the middle of the room stands a large stone block, 40 inches/1m high, 4 feet/120cm wide and 80 inches/2m long. Atop the bier lies an ancient yellowed skeleton 5 feet, 6 inches/165 cm long. The skeleton still wears elven chain mail and a helmet of best quality, although of ancient styling. Its handbones rest upon the area where its stomach once was, still gripping the hilt of a long sword with a large diamond in its hilt. The skeleton shows no sign of movement. Another set of elven runes, these more crudely cut, are visible on the front of the bier.

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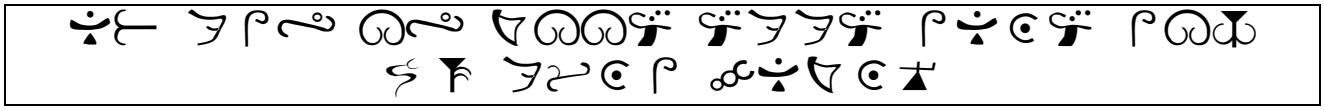
Game Master: These magical runes affect any person who reads them and can understand Espruar. Reading these runes, which the High Wraith Morlonas cut with his sword, causes an additional saving throw penalty of 2 against Morlonas' sleep command. Hearing a translation of the runes *does not* cause the same effect. The runes are:



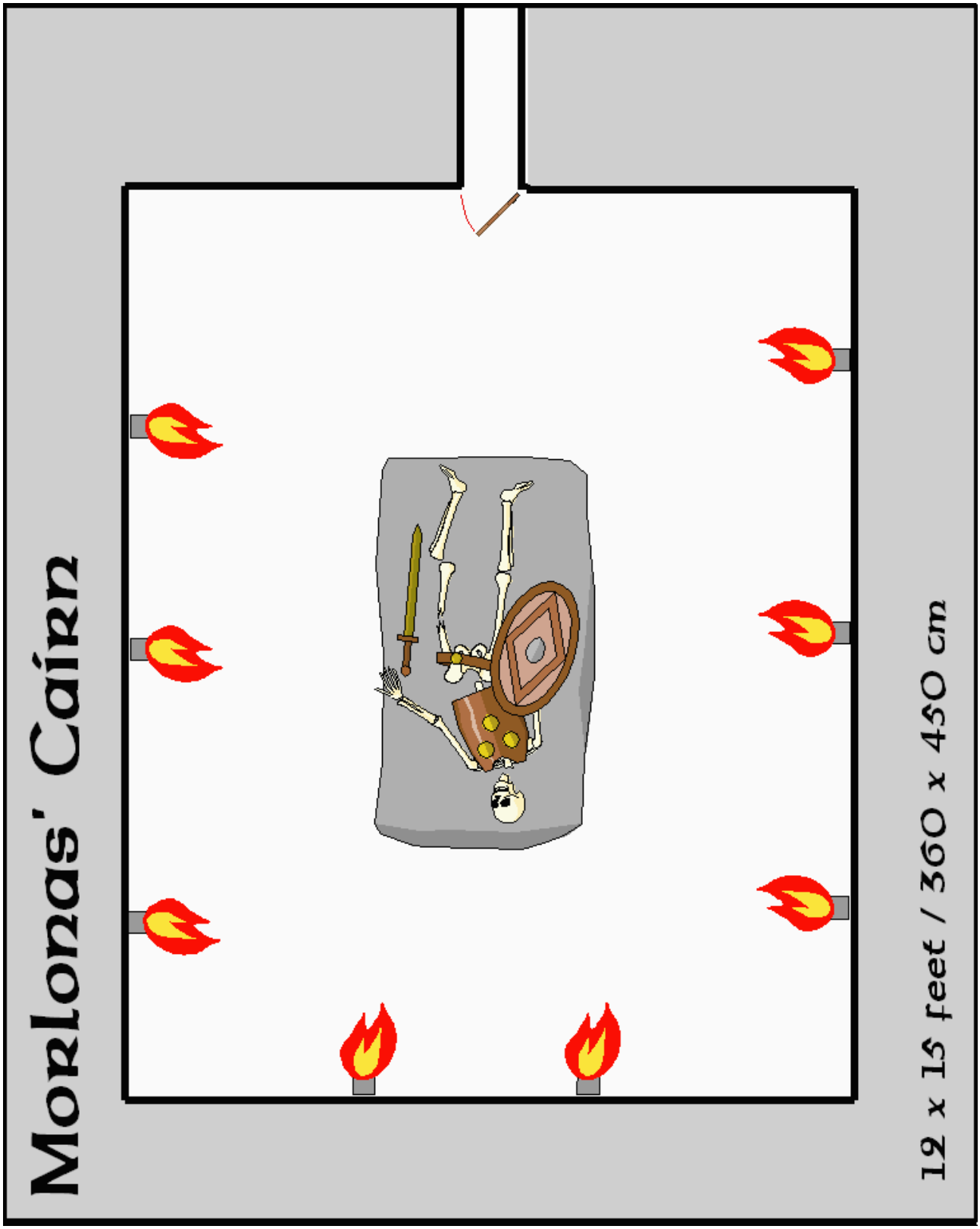
Game Master: The runes read, *"An elf of good deed, laid low by evil magic."* These magic runes were cut by Morlonas to set intruders more at ease and make them easier victims. He will begin reacting in the first turn only if the PCs make physical contact with his remains. If at the end of the first turn the PCs no longer are taking particular measures to observe Morlonas' skeleton for signs of movement, they are considered to be off guard. This is his goal, because in this case, the PCs have an additional saving throw penalty of one against his sleep command. Any PC who has read his inscription now has an additional penalty of two. From this point on, you need to run the encounter according to the PCs' actions and reactions. Once Morlonas has eliminated all PCs who are not sleeping, he will choose a PC at random and begin drawing life energy from him/her. It is of course possible that another PC will awaken during this time, causing serious problems for Morlonas.

If Morlonas succeeds in drawing all the life energy from (and thereby killing) the selected PC, he then will start using his *Magic Jar* spells, transferring his own spirit first into the diamond upon his sword hilt and afterwards into the body of a chosen PC, whose body he will attempt to take over, transferring the PC's spirit into the diamond. Morlonas will choose the body he thinks will best serve him as a warrior. If he succeeds, he will take all of the gear of the PC whose body he has taken as well as his own sword, abandoning those PCs who still are sleeping, and marching northward, following the streambed back into Cormanthor, seeking his revenge. Morlonas has no idea how many years he has existed as a high wraith or what the current status of the elves in Cormanthor is. When the other PCs awaken, they will find Morlonas' skeleton still there upon the bier, but their companion gone, along with Morlonas' sword. When the PCs venture out of doors by daylight, they will see their erstwhile companion's tracks still visible under new snow heading northward back along the depression where the stream bed was.

Morlonas the Elven High Wraith is a Fighter lvl 9 and Necromancer lvl 18 of chaotic neutral alignment. He is armed with a magical long sword +4. The statistics for Elven High Wraiths can be found under *New Monsters* in the *Northern Journey Campaign Guide.*.

A high wraith's magical resistance is only against magic with direct effects. A high wraith also takes damage only from magical weapons of +1 enchantment or better. The first attack is its aura of welcome, effective within 50 feet/15m of the entry to the wraith's lair. The second attack usually is the sleep command. All living persons within 30 feet/9m of the wraith must make a 3rd Edition saving throw for will at DC 25 or a 2nd Edition saving throw vs. paralysis at a penalty of 1 or fall immediately into a deep sleep from which they cannot be awakened by normal means.

Cursed Long Sword +4 – Morlonas bore a long sword with a diamond one inch/250mm in diameter in its hilt. The sword is enchanted at +4 but also is enchanted to work with a curse against all bearers except Morlonas himself. This curse dies if Morlonas is destroyed. But if he only has been banned, as soon as another bearer of this sword engages in combat with a foe with an inferior weapon, Morlonas' sword will spring into the foe's hand and the foe's sword will spring into the bearer of Morlonas' sword's hand. The sword then will shield the new bearer of the sword magically against the first 50hp of dmg from his own former sword, in the hope of killing the former bearer. This will continue with each subsequent bearer of Morlonas' sword until a tenday has passed, when Morlonas' sword suddenly will vanish – with diamond, if it has been removed – and reappear together with the reformed Morlonas in his cairn.



Morlona's Cairn

New Era Trading Co.

Game Master: If a PC's body has been overtaken by Morlonas, describe what the PCs find along with the fact that the victim PC and Morlonas' sword are missing. Also mention seeing depressions beneath the new snow that seem to be tracks heading northward.

In contrast to the previous day and night, you're greeted on the new morning by the first rays of a glowing sun in an almost cloudless sky. The sun doesn't seem to have brought any particular warmth, however, but at least the bitter northwind has stopped blowing. The temperature is at about –20℉/-29℃. There also are an other 10 inches/25cm of new snow on the ground, making the dried streambed you were following difficult to find at first, but you eventually can make out a low point in the landscape and a slight depression that leads on through the snow in the proper direction. This landmark can only be the streambed.

Game Master: At noontime the following occurs. The road described leads from Battledale to the road across the Cold Field connecting Harrowdale with Feather Falls.

As the morning hours wear on, your situation improves somewhat. The snow cover has become thinner and the temperature somewhat warmer. Along the way, you may have passed a warm spring hidden beneath the snow, because the streambed is visible again and bearing a thin flow of icy water toward the southeast. The snow cover has dropped to a depth of about 8 inches/20cm. The temperature has risen to –5℉/-21℃.

The midday sun of high noon glows over your heads, with barely a cloud in the sky. However, something new appears before you. Your trail connects with what beyond doubt is a snow-covered road coming in from the west and continuing southeastward along the streambed you've been following. It's no major road to be sure, but a road it definitely is, some 10 feet/3m wide. The snow makes it difficult to tell when traffic last crossed this road, but it's clear that no one has used it since the last night's snowfall.

Game Master: An hour later:

The sunshine still remains, but the new night remains a threat. Although the weather has improved, it still will be extremely cold in the night, and there's no more sign of shelter than on the previous night. The landscape remains treeless and relatively flat, although there are very low hills and mounds in places, and you pass now and then by small, collapsed burial cairns off from the road. The temperature has risen to about 0℉/ -18℃, and the wind remains calm.

Game Master: Mid-afternoon. The new road is the trail across the Cold Field from Harrowdale to Feather Falls.

The temperature has not risen above 0℉/-18℃, but there are increasingly more small mounds in the landscape and the road is leading you through what once must have been a battleground or perhaps a settlement wiped out by the plague. Small, mostly collapsed burial cairns follow the road on both sides regularly now, and a mile or so/kilometer or so ahead of you, you can see that your road connects with still another trail that's somewhat wider. Those cairns that aren't collapsed have gaping openings in them, where sealing slabs once may have been.

Game Master: If the PCs investigate any cairns which haven't caved in, they will find them empty, except possibly for a few truly ancient bones. Upon reaching the new trail.

The road you've been on comes to an end here, and the new road – about 12 feet/360 cm wide – leads to the left into the northeast and to the right to the southwest. The stream you've been following continues on through the landscape to the southeast, but without any sign of a trail following it. You have your choice here.

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The turn to the left leads northeastward and into a more barren and snowier landscape. The turn to the right heads into lower land with less snow and some miles/kilometers ahead yet, a hillier terrain. The ancient burial cairns continue to straddle the road in both directions and also to follow the streambed to the southeast. Your sigylls seem to be tugging you to the right.

Game Master: At sunset:

As this day draws to an end, the temperature remains cold but relatively consistent, about 0℉/-18℃. The landscape consists here of mixed flatlands and moraines, low, round, kettle-shaped hills. Again, however, t6here is no sign of anything resembling shelter. More brush grows in this area and there even are signs now and then of bold trees that tried in vain to take root in this landscape. But of a genuine shelter, there is no sign. The northwind is beginning to get restless too. It's nothing like the previous night, but there is a wind from the north at about 6pmh/10kmph that has a biting cold edge to it.

Game Master: Pause and then:

Just as your road leads you between two of the larger moraines, you notice a structure in the fading sunlight on the backside of the hill to your right. It's a long, wooden building, perhaps 50 feet/15m long, that goes back into the hill itself. In the front and somewhat to the left is a large chimney built of fieldstones. There are windows in the structure, but they've all been boarded over. To the front of the building, still partly shielded by the roof, is the remainder of what once was a respectable stack of firewood. What's left would be sufficient to heat the building for a tenday or so. Only the top layers of wood seem to be wet from the snow.

The only things that are suspicious about the place is that it's here at all and that it seems somewhat new, despite the fact that it's far removed from any other trace of civilization. In any case, it seems to be unoccupied, and there's nothing in the snow to indicate anyone or anything has been here lately. The only tracks you see are from the occasional crossing of rabbits.

Game Master: When the PCs investigate the building:

As you approach the building, you see a newly cut sign on the front of the building:

Private Property. New Era Trading Co., Harrowdale. Trespassers will be eliminated.

That is a threat for certain, but there doesn't seem to be anyone around to enforce it. However, the massive wooden door to the right of the sign seems to open inward, with hinges on the inside, and there is a large keyhole in the door. It probably is locked.

Game Master: The door is locked but not trapped. The PCs should be able to find some way to break it open. The New Era Trading Co. is a front for the Iron Throne in Harrowdale, and if it ever becomes known that the PCs have broken in and damaged anything, a contract will be let on their heads, but that is unlikely. The building was not expensive and the trade road will not be used again until the worst snow is past in early spring. In other words, a few months will pass before agents of the Iron Throne look in on this site again. The structure is nothing more than a simple trade way shelter used by caravans of New Era travelling between Feather Falls and Harrowdale. For a caravan, it's exactly a day out of Feather Falls. This area still is inhospitable to most forms of life, although some shepherds still graze this far north in summer. In any case, it's unlikely that sleeping PCs will be interrupted here. After the PCs open the door:

The door opens onto a large, empty, wooden foreroom, about 10 feet/3m wide and 15 feet/4.5m deep. In the left wall is a large wooden double door, 8 feet/240cm tall and equally wide. There are large metal rings in the doors, which also are hinged to the inside, but there's no sign of a lock.

Game Master: There is no lock. The PCs only need to push the doors inward. After they do that:

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These doors open onto a large open room, 40 feet/12m long and 15 feet/4,5m deep. Unused torches hang at regular intervals on the walls and there's a huge fireplace in the middle of the wall to the left, still filled with the ashes of a long-dead fire. A large black kettle hangs within the fireplace and next to it is a heavy wooden working bench with butcher's tools. A few probably empty beer barrels with the inscription *Ordulin Moonbrau* stand near the fireplace, but except for these things, the room is empty.

Feather Falls

Hamlet, Nonstandard (Iron Throne Domination). AL: N. 500 gp limit. Assets: 800,000 gp. Population: 300, Mostly Human.

Game Master: A few hours after the PCs are under way:

The night has brought no new snow. On the contrary, it looks like it will be another day of beautiful sunshine with perhaps somewhat warmer temperatures. At sunrise, the temperature is at about 0℉/-18℃, no cold er than it was when you made your camp the evening before. There are no new tracks visible near the shelter.

On this new day, the landscape is again undergoing change. The flat plain continues yielding more and more to rolling hills, isolated, hardy trees become more frequent and shepherds' shacks begin to crop up. Most welcome, however, is the change in temperature, which has been steadily rising. Before noontime already, you estimate that it has reached 15℉/-9℃. The snow c over also has dwindled to about 4 inches/6cm and rabbit tracks have crossed your path several times. You also see tracks at one point partly covered by newer snow that no doubt were left behind by a wolf pack.

Game Master: At mid-afternoon:

By mid-afternoon it occurs to you that despite the friendlier conditions – the temperature is now at about 20℉/-7℃ – you'll still need shelter for the night, and o utside of small shepherds' huts, the landscape has been offering nothing. It may be considerably warmer than it was the last two nights, but it's still quite cold.

Game Master: Short pause:

As you cross the crest of one of the larger hills, you let out a breath of relief. Some 5 or 6 miles/8-10 km away flows a wide, shining river that disappears from sight at a village, where the landscape conceals its further route to the east. The village doesn't look familiar, but it does look big enough to be able to offer food and lodging.

Game Master: The village the PCs see is Feather Falls in Featherdale on the Ashaba. By the time the PCs reach Feather Falls, the temperature will have climbed to 26℉/-3℃. You can make Feather Falls into a quick one-nighter for your PCs, or you can turn it into a village filled with counter currents and intrigues that observant PCs might react to or act upon. It's up to you as a Game Master, how much of Feather Falls' behind-the-scenes life you may want to make visible to your PCs. Feather Falls – in our version - has in its own way a lot to do with the Iron Throne. The Iron Throne although often present behind the scenes, actually has very little to do with this adventure, but if you play your cards right, it can be turned into an excellent, long-running red herring.

Our tip is, let the PCs start hearing occasionally innocuous but slightly suspicious sounding remarks about the Throne, the kind of remarks that will lead the PCs to believe that the Throne may have something to do with their sigylls too. The more the PCs do, the more it will become known that they are a group bearing such strange sigylls. And the more aware the Iron Throne is that the sigyll-bearing PCs are crossing its turf, the more likely the organization is to develop a curious interest in the PCs. Nonetheless, the Throne will continue to have nothing to do with the sigylls, and the sigylls will continue to have nothing to do with the Throne or its goals.

Feather Falls is well described in the *Dalelands* accessory available as a pay download from http://www.rpgnow.com and *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands*, a free WotC download *Volo's Guide* also has a picture of the waterfalls. In the official descriptions (the last current in the Year of the Gauntlet – 1369 DR), there still was no inn in Feather Falls. We have added one unofficial inn, the *Portage House,* a front operation of the Iron Throne, begun late in the Year of the Gauntlet and finished in spring of this Year of the Unstrung Harp, 1371 DR. In the past two years, Feather Falls has grown from a village of 85 to a community with a population of about 300. Some of these are plague refugees from Scardale, but many are from Sembia, knowing agents and unknowing workers of the Iron Throne.

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The landmarks described in the *Dalelands* accessory and *Volo's Guide* still exist, although their condition has changed somewhat. Early in the Year of the Tankard, the *Ashaba Wave* came to Feather Falls with money-lined pockets. The *Ashaba Wave* is a new mercenary company of about 150 fighters with a few mages and thieves and a priest whose religion has not been made public. The *Wave* claims to be working on its own at present, without contract. It actually is working under secret contract for the New Era Trading Co. of Harrowdale, which in turn is another front of the Iron Throne.

The *Wave* announced publicly that its goal was to clean up the three *troubled* sites in Feather Falls. These are:

- *Cholandrothipe's Tower*: (Map 3) The ruined, fire-blackened tower of the late mage Cholandrothipe in the center of the village. Cholandrothipe was murdered by a band of junior red wizards from Thay, who in turn fled in fear from the many magic traps guarding Cholandrothipe's Tower. Other adventuring groups hoping to find magic within the tower ruins have met similar fates. After a tenday of losses with no gains, the *Ashaba Wave* also gave up its attempts to claim the tower, explaining that it would return to this goal after achieving the others. In reality, the New Era Trading Co. ordered the *Wave* to focus its efforts elsewhere. The Iron Throne has only a limited interest in the tower and is more inclined to destroy it at some future time, if it becomes a problem, than to make the investment it would take to destroy its traps.

- *Mistfall House.* (Map 1) The former Temple of Leira in Feather Falls seems to be one of the *Wave's* bigger success stories. The temple led into the Underdark, which the priests used for a lucrative smuggling trade. The *Wave* succeeded in sealing off the Underdark entrances, which also brought to an end the emergence of monsters from below into the former temple complex, and the *Wave* also found a reputed fortune in merchandise stored in the cellars deep below the temple, which it is said was sold to the New Era Trading Co. In any case, the *Wave* has taken over the upper level of the temple complex and made it into *Wave* headquarters.

- *Temple Behind the Falls.* (Map: Beneath the waterfall) The *temple* actually is a series of caves behind the falls where cultists once held services of some sort and may do so yet, and where smugglers supposedly have hidden treasure. The Iron Throne wants exclusive control of these caves as caches. That is not, however, the *Wave's* current assignment. New Era has said only that it views Feather Falls as an important way station on its growing trade routes, and it wants the town cleared of dangerous and unknown entrances to the Underdark. The *Wave's* job is to seal off all caves that lead into the unknown – permanently – and to keep others out of the area *"because of the danger"* until the job is done.

Feather Falls Map:

1 – Mistfall House. (Official) Former temple of Leira. See above.

2 – Portage House. (Unofficial) New inn, see below

3 – Cholandrothipe's Tower. (Unofficial) See above.

4 – House of the Morning. (Official) Lathander Temple at the foot of Feather Falls. Morning Lord Jallian Horgontivar and several junior priests (official).

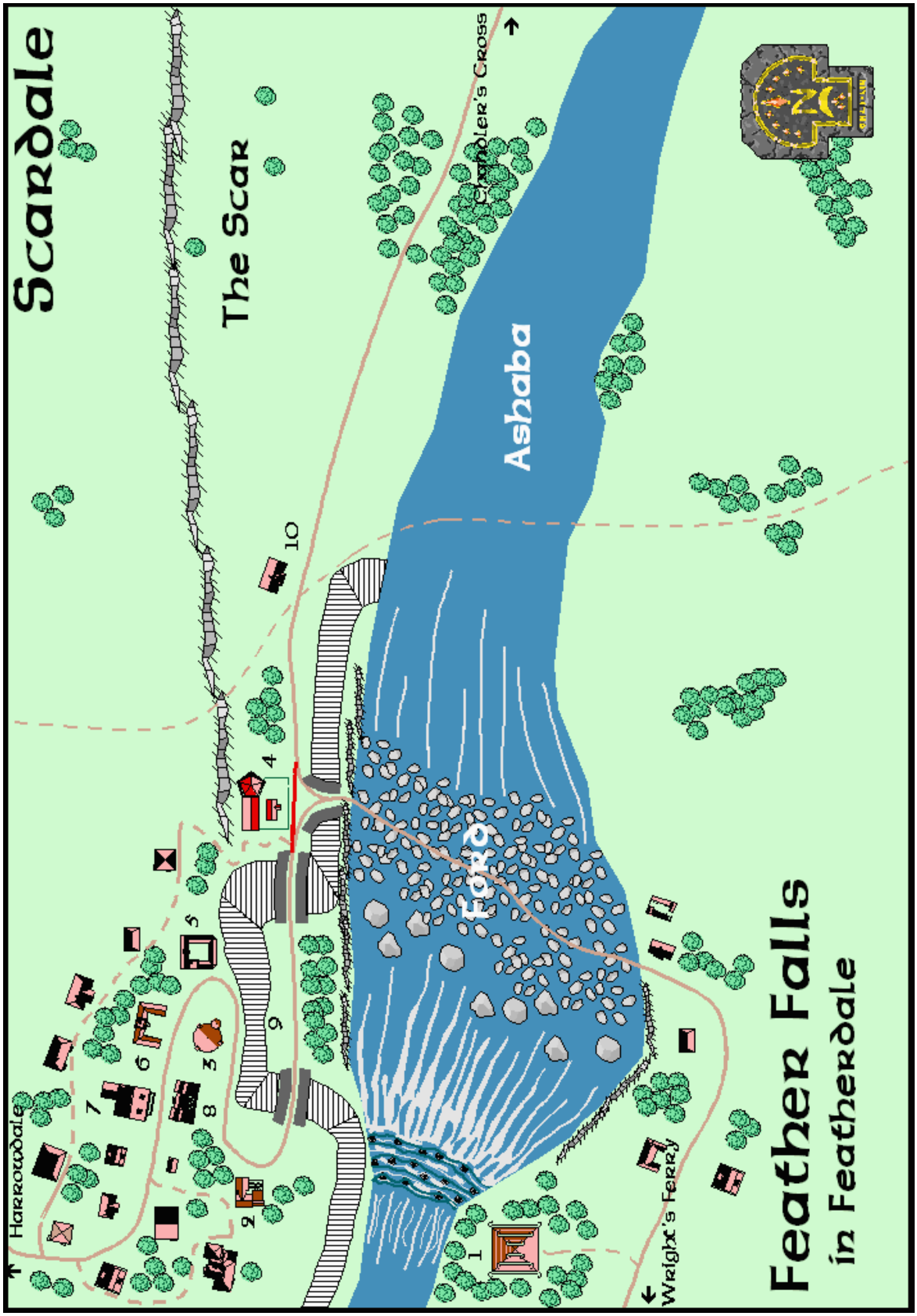
5 – Smithy. (Unofficial) The smith is a dwarf named Roin Deepforge. See below.

6 – Market Hall. (Official) An open hall where farmers sell their produce. In winter, usually only brewers with beer or ale and farmers with produce stored in cellars are found at the market hall.

7 – Wagon repair works. (Unofficial) owner Roald Bolter. See below.

8 – Darwinn's Trading Post. (Official) Ulwynn Darwinn and his sons sell a genuinely wide variety of merchandise.

9 – The Portage. (Official) Boats are portaged around the falls with a track of log rollers built by the Dalesmen. The Iron Throne has long-term plans to peacefully take over the portage and use it as a source of revenue.



Feather Falls

10 – Widow Bartley's House. (Unofficial) Just over the border in Scardale. See *Scuttlebutt* below.

The Ford – The river can be crossed at the ford in the shallows just downstream from the House of the Morning. This is the only means to reach the road to Wright's Ferry and Blackfeather Bridge on the other side of the river.

Game Master: The following descriptions are read to the PCs as they enter Feather Falls:

The trail takes you through a series of small farms to a village on the north bank above a huge waterfall **(Game Master:** Show the picture of the falls in *"Volo's Guide,"* if available.**)**. The village itself consists of about 20 buildings, but as you draw nearer, you can see that a few more buildings – one of them relatively large – also are on the lower river bank below the falls. Your road leads through the village and then downhill to the area below the falls, following the river downstream. At a shallows, obviously a ford, another road begins on the other side of the river that leads westward. There also are more farms on the other river bank.

There is one unusual phenomenon in this village. A strange track begins upstream from the waterfalls and winds its way around the village downhill, running under a wooden bridge on your road, and then following the north river bank to a point beyond the shallows, where it ends at the river. The track is a walled roadbed filled with rounded logs. **(Game Master:** This is the portage.**)** Within the village itself you can see several small shops and a rather large building that can only be an inn. A sign above its doorway says, *"The Portage House."*

Game Master: Feather Falls uses primarily Sembit coinage, but coins from Cormyr and the Vast also are accepted at full value. Most businessmen will accept current Zhent coins at 80% of their face value. The following information is valid for the *Portage House*:

PORTAGE HOUSE: It's off season at the Portage House and rates are low. PCs can have single rooms at half the normal price, 5 silver hawks a night. Ordulin Moonbrau runs 5 steel pennies (a Semian steel penny equals one copper piece) per tankard, which holds a quart/liter. Meals run from 3 to 8 silver hawks. The rooms are quite comfortable and the food is good. In winter season, singles cost 8 silver hawks per person per night, doubles 7 silver hawks per person per night.

Through the New Era Trading Co. in Harrowdale, the Iron Throne financed this inn and subsidizes it as well in the winter season. In return for the subsidy, New Era has a contractual priority right for room reservations. The Iron Throne is in the process of developing a trade monopoly to and from the Vast and the Bloodstone Lands, and having a series of inns along major trade routes is a key element of this plan.

These inns will serve the Iron Throne not only as hostelries but also as sources of important information. The Throne wants to maintain tight control over the inns, the persons who run them and the persons who work in them. In the future, this control will be strongly implemented through financial dependence and, if necessary, force.

The current innkeeper and nominal owner of the *Portage House* is Onlar Holwin, a basically honest man who ran a good inn in Ordulin that went bankrupt. New Era made him the offer to finance the *Portage House* through family connections Onlar has to the Iron Throne, although he is unaware of these. An aging uncle of Onlar's in Ordulin is an important secret member of the Iron Throne deeply involved in New Era. The Throne, through New Era, financed the *Portage House*. Onlar repays this financing at normal, non-usurious rates. In addition, New Era repays Onlar's losses during the winter season, when caravan road traffic along the Ashaba dwindles to almost nothing and river traffic ceases.

This subsidy will be paid only until New Era reaches its goal of increasing year-round trade along the Ashaba. At that point, the *Portage House* is expected to stand on its own two feet financially. Onlar has heard of the Iron Throne but knows virtually nothing about it. He has no idea that he is working for the Throne or that New Era is a Throne front. He believes that New Era is a respectable, socially responsible organization that will bring new prosperity to the lower Ashaba Valley and in the process be successfully financial itself.

The following persons – all formerly of Ordulin in Sembia - currently are involved with the *Portage House*:

Onlar Holwin: Age 42, large, somewhat muscular and somewhat fat as well, can use clublike devices as a club with the statistics of a fighter level 2, otherwise lvl 0 with AC 10. Onlar's wife, Hermione, is 40. Their two daughters, Penulta and Tarinda, are 19 and 17. They work as extra waitresses in the high season but are tutored by their mother in the off season. All members of the family are aligned neutral good (neutral). They have an apartment in the inn.

Gelben Kaan: Age 38 (NE – lvl 0). Gelben is a talented cook who is a secret follower and paid agent of the non-Tiamatist faction of the Cult of the Dragon. Cult agents come by every tenday or two and talk with Gelben about what's been happening in Feather Falls. Gelben is a friendly an outgoing man who is popular with the locals. Gelben's job is to take care of the noon and evening meals. Onlar and his wife handle breakfast. Gelben uses his shift to the cult's advantage. The *Portage House* offers warm food evenings until 9 p.m., and Gelben usually has the kitchen closed before 10. Anyone who wants to eat after that has to settle for a breadboard with bread, butter, cheese and sausage, prepared by the waitresses. After he closes for the evening, Gelben sits with a tankard or two of beer at the table where the locals are, never missing a tidbit of the local news. Although magic would show an evil alignment, Gelben is not under suspicion by anyone. He's viewed as a round, jolly cook who prepares respectable dishes and saves his drinking until after the work is done. The PCs are not likely to come into direct contact with him. He makes no effort to spy directly upon travelers, but rather picks up news of them through the locals. Gelben rooms in the *Portage House*.

Brock Keeler: Age 36 (LE – Thief lvl 12, Weapon proficiencies club and short sword). Keeler is the head waiter in the *Portage House.* He is a veteran Zhent agent who has been spying upon the Iron Throne for years. The Throne knows him and considers him to be reliable, not being aware that he works for the Zhents. He won the trust of the Throne by appearing to be very useful to it, intentionally but seemingly casually mentioning information to known Throne agents that the Zhents planted, which the Throne believed to be somewhat useful. Agents of the Throne believe that Keeler has a *"good ear"* for things, and that he chats too much to people he likes about what he hears. As a result, the Throne always has seen to it that he receives good job offers where he works within earshot of seemingly likeable people who secretly serve the Throne. Keeler is an expert at reading between the lines. He watches what other people who serve the Throne in Feather Falls say and do, with an ear particularly upon Onlar Holwin, Urwynn Darwinn and members of the *Ashaba Wave* who frequent the inn. The Zhentarim works closely with him too, to make sure these people want to keep him within earshot. In one staged event, which made him invaluable in the eyes of the Throne, two Zhent agents from Scardale who were known to the Throne spent a night in the *Portage House.* In truth, they said and did nothing of importance while they were there, enjoying their beer and food at an isolated corner table. Later that evening, however, a seemingly astounded Keeler told Onlar and some members of the *Ashaba Wave* about the incredible conversation he had *"overheard."* Keeler passed on many of the details about how secret Zhent agents had blown up the Hillsfar garrison in Scardale. The Throne had long suspected this to be the case but had no concrete evidence to confirm the story. After checking out the threads of evidence from Keeler's narrative, they found out his information checked 100%. The Zhents, of course, were about to abandon Scardale anyway, so it was not the least bit detrimental to their plans to have this information passed on. Brock rooms in the *Portage House*.

Ruby Deller: Age: 27 (NE – Thief 4). Ruby is the chief waitress at the *Portage House* and also the resident pleasure maiden. Both in listening to what goes on at tables as well as in bed, she gains interesting information that would escape agents of the Throne. Ruby receives 15 gold pentars a week in return for a night visit with the widower Ulwynn Darwinn in his apartment above his general store. Most of Feather Falls assumes that Ulwynn is lonesome and that Ruby is doing her side business with him. In truth, Ulwynn prefers the more sophisticated pleasure ladies he visits when he's in Ordulin, and he has no interest in Ruby's services. He wants to know what Ruby has heard, from everyone about everything. The only explanation Ruby ever has heard from him for this curiosity is that there are too many new people in Feather Falls, and he wants to keep a close eye upon who is doing and saying what, before the village unwittingly falls into the hands of an organization like the Zhentarim. Ruby says nothing of her suspicion, but she's convinced that there's more to Ulwynn's curiosity than just this. She's certain there's some power behind Ulwynn, and this instills a certain fear within her. She's interested only in keeping both Ulwynn and this power satisfied, and for that reason she really does tell Ulwynn everything about everyone, without exaggerating, distorting or leaving anything but the most trivial details out. As a result, the Iron Throne also has Ruby's ears working for it in Feather Falls, and her ears hear things that others don't. In addition, it gives Ulwynn the ability to monitor the loyalty of Onlar, the *Ashaba Wave* and others indirectly in the Throne's service in Feather Falls, through business with the New Era Trading Co. Ruby has a room in the *Portage House.*

Mardy Hingle: Age 25 (NE – Thief 1). Mardy is the second waitress at the *Portage House* and also does a side business as a lady of the knight. She's not in anyone's hire, largely because she's incapable of correctly relating anything she's heard. No matter what she retells comes out either distorted or exaggerated, and she blabs about everything. Nonetheless, she is the favored lady of the night among lower ranking members of the *Ashaba Wave* and does a flourishing side business with them. Ruby Deller does listen casually to Mardy's tales from the members of the *Ashaba Wave* and passes on to Ulwynn what she hears, but both handle Mardy's tales with a large grain of salt and a generous portion of skepticism. Mardy rooms in the *Portage House*.

Lindy Wallen: Age 24 (NG – Thief lvl 3). Lindy has been at the *Portage House* for only three months. She is a newly-recruited Harper agent who assembles and passes on whatever information she can to other Harpers. Lindy is somewhat unpopular with Ruby and Mardy, because they both think work as a lady of pleasure is among the social duties a young waitress should perform. They consider Lindy high-nosed, moody and picky, because she says no much more often than she says yes. In truth, Lindy would rather not do any secondary business whatsoever, but she makes the sacrifice when she thinks it will serve the Harper cause. Lindy was sent here because the Harpers are suspicious of what's happening in Featherdale, Scardale, Harrowdale, Tasseldale and Archendale. They find the ease with which the Zhents were driven from Scardale to be a bit incredible, and they also suspect that the Iron Throne is in the process of subtly taking control of the five dales as a precursor to a future annexation by Sembia. Lindy is in Feather Falls to gather whatever information she can. She rooms in the *Portage House*.

DARWINN'S TRADING POST: Officially, Ulwynn Darwinn (also see Campaign Guide) is the local representative of the New Era Trading Co. Unofficially and unbeknown to most Featherdarrans, Ulwynn is a member of some rank of the Ordulin branch of the Iron Throne. He is the man who can exercise genuine power in Feather Falls, in that he can see to it that the *Ashaba Wave* does things necessary to serve the Throne's goals. He also can call in secret agents of the Throne to perform dirty work that needs to be done. Ulwynn uses his power as seldom and as quietly as he can. He believes such power achieves the greatest success when used carefully and judiciously. He is a 62-year-old widower (NE – thief lvl 6) who lives in an apartment above his trading post. His sons live in farmhouses on the outskirts of Feather Falls on the south bank of the Ashaba. Ulwynn's trading post is a successful business, and its profits have risen recently, due to the fact that many of the wares he offers actually are contraband purchased at low prices through the Iron Throne.

SMITHY: Roin Deepforge (Age 212, N, Fighter lvl 12, proficiency battleaxe) is an emigrant from the Great Rift in the South. He is a gruff, humorless character who never has explained why he left his homeland, or anything else for that matter. He is a talented blacksmith who also can fix weapons and armor without causing penalties. Roin also can make swords, battleaxes and other metal weapons of excellent human quality and good dwarven quality. They function with neither bonus nor penalty, and it is not necessary to make checks for faults. Roin is genuinely neutral and takes sides on no issues. He refuses without exception to repeat information given to him by customers, regardless of who the customer was or who asks the questions, and he will discuss nothing but the quality of his work and his prices. His human journeyman, a 26-year-old Featherdarran named Hardan Green, reports that Roin never discusses anything but work with him. Hardan says he has asked Roin more than once if Roin ever has forged certain items. Roin always answers with yes or no, describing the object as well, without saying for whom the work was done or when.

On those occasions when travelers come to him seeking information, Roin answers gruffly, *"I sell only my work, not gossip. Ye can buy plenty o' that in yon alehouse. Get ye hither!"* Roin eats twice daily. He sends Hardan over to the inn at mid-morning to buy them both a first meal. Shortly before extinguishing the forge at day's end, he sends Hardan back to the inn, to bring back a hot evening meal and to have his two-quart/liter stoppered tankard filled with beer. Roin never socializes personally. He has six vicious dogs guarding his smithy who will attack if Roin is threatened or if intruders attempt to enter the smithy in the night. Roin has a room in the smithy. Hardan lives with his family on a small farm just north of the village.

WAGON WORKS: Waggoner Roald Bolter (aged 64 – NG) is a talented craftsman. He and his son Gerbed (age 34 – NG) run the wagon works, although Roald is no longer there all the time. He and his wife Gilda (age 65 – NG) live on a small family farm south of the Ashaba. Gerbed and his wife Minna (age 31 – NG) live in an apartment above the wagon works. Roald and Gerbed have a certain amount of possibly useful information through their dealings with caravans needing wagon repairs, and they will discuss things to a certain extent, but they also are careful to avoid saying anything that might get them into trouble.

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SCUTTLEBUTT: These are among the things that are easy to learn in Feather Falls:

*** The *Knights of the Scar* are financed by and are under contract to the Iron Throne. The Knights are a band of 150 mercenaries.**

- Scardale is getting back on its feet again, after 15 years of occupation, severe war and fire damage and a strange siege of the plague. Most of the population fled, but the city is starting to rebuild and some folks are returning to the port town. Many new people also are coming to Scardale, particularly from Sembia.

- Chandler's Cross used to be a few buildings along the road. It's a bustling town of 200 now. Many of the people who used to live in Scardale Town have moved to Chandler's Cross and Scarsdeep. Scarsdeep also has doubled in size.

- The area between Feather Falls and Scardale is safe these days, because it's patrolled by the *Knights of the Scar** who have their base in a newly-built, stockaded settlement called Scar Knight's Home between Chandler's Cross and Scardale Town. The knights do a commendable job keeping the Scar free of monsters and troublemakers. However, when questioned by the knights, it pays to be polite. People with big or unfriendly mouths can easily find themselves in deadly combat with the knights.

- The current provisional ruler of Scardale is Rendar Toedlig, a wealthy Sembian merchant whose family owns a shipping company in Yhaunn. Toedlig is highly respected in all of Scardale, not just Scardale Town, because he promised to bring money in from Sembia to rebuild and he has kept that promise.

- The Knights of the Scar operate with the blessings of Rendar Toedlig, and the same goes for the road and river tolls they charge travelers. These tolls go to support the knights' costs, but they also help finance the rebuilding of Scardale.

- Featherdale officially ends at the ford and Scardale officially begins there (see the broken border line on the Feather Falls map). There's a small cottage just across the line where Widow Bartley lives. One can buy a toll card good for one tenday there for the price of one gold pentar. Widow Bartley sells the toll cards from shortly after sunrise until sunset. It's advisable to buy toll cards from her. It saves time and problems when encountering the Knights of the Scar, who also collect the tolls, but often with a lot of delay and arbitrary bureaucracy.

MORE SCUTTLEBUTT: These are among the things the PCs might hear if they ask questions in Feather Falls:

- Widow Bartley hasn't lived in the scar for long. Her house belonged to a merchant without family who died of the plague while visiting Scardale. *"Someone"* bought the house for her. She's the aunt of one of the leaders of the Knights of the Scar.

- The plague that hit Scardale was a strange thing. Among other things, it made people shake. Priests who had been there and traveled through Feather Falls said it was difficult to deal with, because it was no natural disease. It was cause by magic.

- The occupation troops started leaving Scardale because of the plague. **(Game Master:** only partially true.**)**

- Neither the Zhents nor the troops of Hillsfar left Scardale voluntarily. They blew each other's garrisons up, and after that, there wasn't much left of either contingent. **(Game Master:** Not really true. Secret Zhent agents blew both up.**)**

- Cold spells like this one come only infrequently to the Scar at this time of the year, and when they do, they last only a few days. **(Game Master:** Not really false, but strongly optimistic.**)**

- Two tendays ago, shortly before the cold wave began, there was a strange outbreak of violence at the intersection between the House of the Morning and the ford. A group of five strange creatures who were human-sized but looked like a cross between lizard men and dragons came into Feather Falls from the direction of Wright's Ferry.

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They were accompanied by a black-skinned, humanlike man with dragonlike wings. They got no farther than the south bank of the Ashaba at the ford, where they attacked a lone traveler wearing heavy furs. The traveler defended himself with magic of high power. The battle was still raging when members of the Ashaba Wave reached the scene. Before the battle came to an end, both the victim of the attack and the black man with dragon wings vanished, no doubt through magic. The lizardlike creatures also were difficult to defeat, and when they were killed, some turned to puddles of acid, others to statues that crumbled shortly after into dust, and one of the creatures exploded violently upon death. Three members of the Ashaba Wave died in the battle and seven more were injured, some badly.

- At this time of the year, one can find excellent accommodations at *Chandler's Kitchen* in Chandler's Cross, one day east of Feather Falls. In the high season, the place is overpriced and overfilled sometimes, but at this time of year, a dearth of business makes Chandler reasonable.

- Less decent and slightly more expensive fare await one in Scar Knights' Home a day east of Chandler's Cross and halfway between Chandler's Cross and Scardale. Scar Knight's Home is a wooden fortification on the north side of the Ashaba at a ford that leads to Scarsdeep. The settlement began as a toll station of the knights but then was built into a stockaded garrison. The knights have two floors with very spartan but decent barracks, where guests can pay for a bed, and paying guests eat in the knights' mess, where the food is good but well below gourmet quality. Scar Knights' Home isn't paradise, but it sure beats staying out in the cold at this time of year.

Chandler's Cross

Your journey out of Feather Falls begins under an overcast sky with a temperature of 33℉/1℃. Only s cattered patches of snow lay here and there, nothing that might slow your travel. And although there's no trace of the sun, it also doesn't look as though snow is likely. The trail eastward takes you out of the village, zigzagging down the hill on the north side of the waterfall, and down into the lower river valley and into the Scar. From there the Ashaba Road follows the north bank of the river to the East. You pass by the *House of the Morning* to your right and then come to a cottage on the left. Before the cottage, a new sign with letters carved in wood stands on the left side of the road. The inscription says:

Welcome to Scardale
A Land in Restoration
Your Toll Helps!
- Rendar Toedlig, Provisional Government

In front of the cottage is a smaller wooden sign with the inscription *"Widow Bartley."*

Game Master: Smart PCs will pay their toll here. A pass for a tenday costs one gold pentar. If they pay no toll now, they will be delayed en route by the Knights of the Scar between Chandler's Cross and Scardale Town. With the amount of patrolling done by mercenaries serving the Iron Throne, hostile encounters are unlikely along the Ashaba Road between Feather Falls and Chandler's Cross. There may possibly be encounters with bandits, but please consider that any bandits on this stretch no doubt would assess potential victims and decide either not to tangle with groups like your PCs or choose an ambush. A hostile encounter with bandits is more likely to occur if your PCs come upon bandits robbing a small group of less powerful people. At this time of year there also is little other traffic on this part of the Ashaba Road and virtually no traffic on the river. These won't pick up again until Spring, when the weather is warmer. We have planned no encounters for this stretch, but you're welcome to add one or more, if you wish. The following description can be read at about noon.

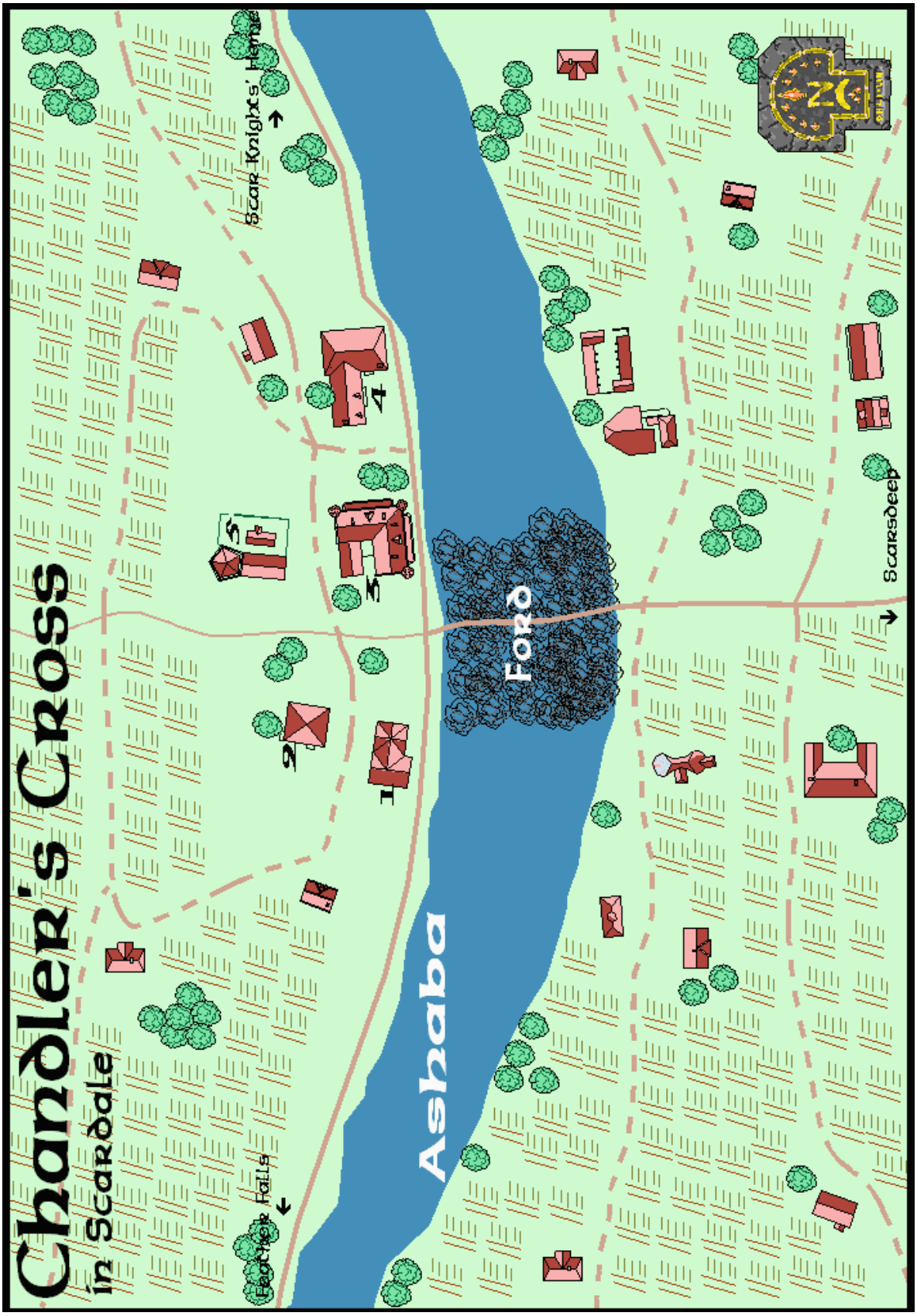
By noon the temperature has risen to about 40℉/4° C, but there's not much else good to say about the weather on this day. It's stayed overcast and the Ashaba Valley is hazy, limiting visibility to about a mile/1.5 km. The day is grow and cheerless, and the landscape vanishes quickly, to your left in the ascending brush running northward up the scar, to your right, in the plain across the river.

Game Master: An hour before sunset:

As the day wears on, the haze at last thins, bringing visibility to about five miles. With about an hour left before sunset, you at last can make out a rural river settlement straddling the Ashaba several miles/kilometer ahead of you. It's no doubt Chandler's Cross, and if so, you should reach the village before darkness falls. You also can see a road branching off on the opposite side of the river, to the southeast. The river has been widening and becoming shallower and the descent more gradual in the last few hours.

Entering Chandler's Cross - Thorp, Conventional. AL: N(G). 100 gp limit. Assets: 600,000 gp. Population: 80 Human.

The smell becomes increasingly more unpleasant, the closer you come to the village. The town smells almost like a medium sized fish market. The road stays close to the river on your right. The center of the village, or as much center as it has, is to the left of the road. The rest of the village straddles the river and consists of small huts with boats beached nearby and small farms, none of either showing any trace of wealth. Most of the buildings, although poor-looking, also seem to be reasonably new. Another road crosses the village and the shallows of the river. The part of the road to your left is relatively narrow. It leads up to the last of the farms in the lower part of the Scar north of the village and then ends. But the stretch that crosses the ford at the shallows is more substantial, heading on southeasterly to the village of Scarsdeep.



Chandler's Cross

Directly to your left, before the crossroads, is a large and old brick building **(Map Site 1)** with a sign saying *Kardin's General Store and Warehouse.* Behind it is another large brick building **(Map Site 2)**, but this one is less than 10 years old. It too has a sign, saying *Marl Breelart – Blacksmith.* Still to the left but across the intersection is a large, new, half-timbered building, by the looks of it, an inn **(Map Site 3)**. Its sign says, *"Chandler's Kitchen."* You can make out the corner of a big, wooden building behind the inn **(Map Site 4 – Lower Ashaba Fish Packing)**, but you can't make out what it is. A bit up the road, on the east side, is another large building of stone, temple-like, with a symbol of a large coin at the peak of the roof **(Map Site 5 – Luck on the Other Side)**, no doubt a temple to Tymora.

In Chandler's Cross:

1 – Kardin's General Store and Warehouse. Kardin Resartis, a former adventurer (human male fighter lvl 6, N), bought the general store 20 years ago and has been running it ever since. Anyone can rent warehouse space here, with no questions asked, however, it contains little contraband. Merchants transporting non-perishable wares tend at times to stash merchandise here when prices for the goods are low in Cormyr, Sembia or in the coast cities of the Vast across the Dragon Reach, and then bring them back on the market again later when prices rise.

2 – Marl Breelart, Blacksmith. (human male lvl 0 N) Marl fled to Chandler's Cross two years ago after the shaking plague broke out in Scardale Town, where his first smithy stood (in a part of town near the former Zhentilar compound, which since has burned down.) He's a master smith for toolmaking, implements etc., but he has virtually no experience working with weapons or armor.

3 – Chandler's Kitchen. Brent Chandler (human male thief lvl 3, N) claims to be one of the original Chandlers of Chandler's Cross, even though most folks remember no tales of any Chandlers ever living at the ford. He fled to Chandler's Cross in the Year of the Shadows (1358 DR), when his Ashabenford Arms Inn in Scardale Town burned down, and after working one season as a fisherman, he began building his inn a year later. It was completed in two years. Like most inns on the Lower Ashaba, the kitchen does a booming business in the trade season and a quiet business in Winter. At this time of year, the inn offers only two dishes of the day (6 silver hawks), quart/liter tankards of Ordulin Moonbrau (4 steel pennies) and bread, butter and cold cuts on a bread board (4 silver hawks). A single room costs 6 to 9 silver hawks and a double costs 5 to 8 silver hawks per person. In season prices average about 60% higher. Chandler is an easygoing innkeeper who wants his guests to be happy and comfortable. His inn is far from the best in Faerûn, but it's much farther from being the worst. No one in the *"Kitchen"* is a Zhent or Iron Throne agent, but some of the hired help does pass on information to questioning guests who are willing to pass money under the table.

4 – Lower Ashaba Fish Packing. This old and traditional business in Chandler's Cross is the reason for the smell. Not only river fish from the Ashaba but also fish from the Dragon Reach transported upstream from Scardale Town are packed in salt brine in barrels here and transported upstream and to the West for sale.

5 –Luck on the Other Side. This temple to Tymora was begun in Spring of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR) and finished this year shortly before the cold set in. The high priest is Gedwina Lurt (human female priestess lvl 9 NG). The temple also houses three lower level (2-4) priests. Gambling is of course available, with drinks served at a bar run by Chandler's folks.

Scar Knights' Home

Hamlet, Nonstandard (mercenary garrison). AL: N(E). 50 gp limit. Assets: 200,000 gp. Population: 200 Human.

It will take a day to travel from Chandler's Cross to Scar Knight's Home. Between the two, the PCs should encounter a patrol of the Knights of the Scar large enough to discourage aggression on the PCs' part. The knights will demand to see the PCs' toll card. If the PCs have one, they still will be interrogated carefully by the knights but then allowed to go on their way. If the PCs have no toll cards, the knights will hassle and delay them and at last sell them toll cards, marking off three days of the 10 as already expired, saying that no one can know how many days the PCs really have spent in the Scar so far. Anything the PCs protest against should result in phony, exaggeratedly heartfelt speeches about Scardale's dire need and how every single steel penny helps to rebuild the ravaged port town. It's up to you to decide when the encounter occurs. The knights should include a fighter lvl 8 as leader, a number of fighters lvl 2-5, a mage lvl 5, a priest of Tempus, lvl 6 and two thieves, lvl 3 and 6.

The new day isn't much different from yesterday. As you head out, the temperature is at 34℉/1℃ and t he sky is overcast with an even thicker haze in the Scar than a day earlier. The humidity is strong enough to be felt physically. Visibility is limited to about half a mile/750m, making it difficult to guess what the weather will bring in the course of the day.

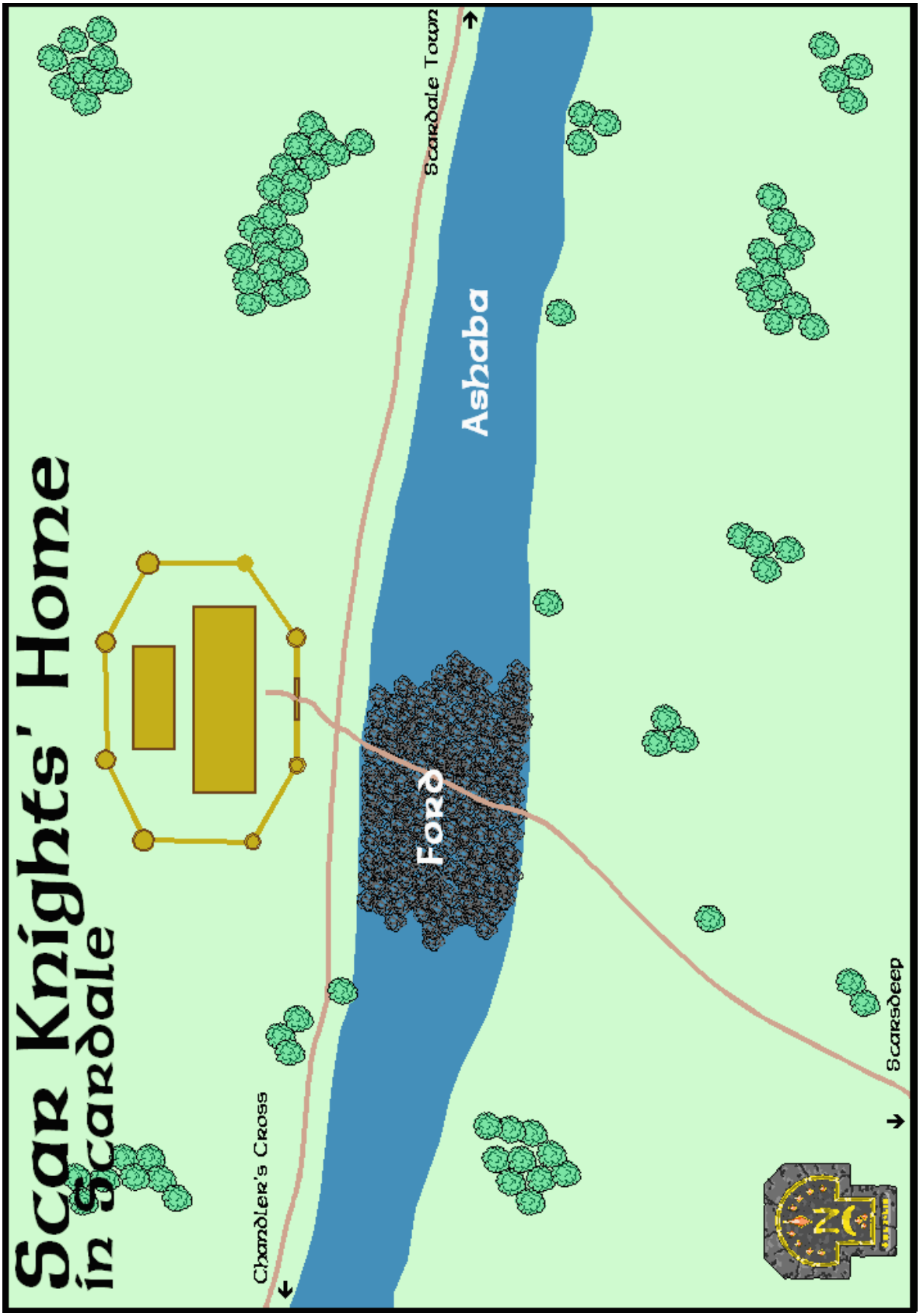
Game Master: At noon:

At midday, the temperature has risen to a chilly and humid 41℉/5℃. It hasn't rained or snowed, but t he misty cold drizzle that came and went several times in the course of the morning has left you feeling miserable. Visibility has increased to about three-quarters of a mile/1km.

Game Master: Shortly before sundown:

As this unpleasant day draws to an end you at last see a round, stockade-like complex with a wooden wall emerge from the mist about five minutes ahead of you. Two relatively large wooden buildings stand inside. It all looks new and singularly uninviting, or at least it would look uninviting in another time and a different kind of weather. Despite its stern appearance, the complex does look like it's dry inside, and there's sure to be heat, as evidenced by several spirals of smoke ascending steamily in the cold evening air. The road leads past the wooden wall. but even if you wanted to, you would hardly pass the guards without being noticed. They stand inside wooden towers at the base of the large wooden gate leading into the complex.

Game Master: The guards will demand to see toll cards and really hassle the PCs if they still have none. They then will sell cards to the PCs and strike 7 of the 10 days. Whether the PCs have cards or not, they will be told they can spend the night at the *"Home"* for a *"donation"* of 1 gold pentar. This will buy the men a room in a men's barracks and the women a room in the women's barracks. They also are entitled to an evening meal and a breakfast in the mess. The barracks beds are sturdy and comfortable. The food is good mess hall food but not up to the standard one expects from a decent inn or tavern. The beer is mediocre but drinkable. If the PCs attempt to get information out of the mercenaries, they will be able to gain only general information about the political situation in Scardale and such. The mercenaries are convinced that they work under contract to the provisional government and know little or nothing about the Iron Throne. They are of course well aware that they carefully scrutinize and even hassle travelers, but as far as they understand, they have orders to do this only to keep evil organizations from infiltrating the dale during its period of weakness and recovery. The general alignment of the Knights of the Scar runs from neutral to somewhat evil, which is to be expected from mercenaries whose motivation is purely financial. The leader of the knights is *"Major"* Derwell Kardi (NE, Fighter, lvl 12).



Scar Knights' Home

Scardale Town

Village, Nonstandard (Iron Throne domination). AL: N(E). 150 gp limit, Assets 1,400,000 gp. Population: 800, mostly human.

We've planned no specific events for the port town of Scardale, but we do have adventure scenarios. Once the PCs reach Scardale Town, they're on the Dragon Reach, and their sigylls are determined that they cross it and head on to the Great Dale, where their next target, Harbet Gall is. This late in the year, however, boat traffic dwindles to virtually nothing due to the danger that harbors can be frozen in. There already are blocks if ice in Scardale Harbor, but none dangerous enough to severely damage a ship yet. At this time of year, the only captains who will risk a voyage across the Dragon Reach are the very good and the very foolish. Our scenario tells what the PCs will find in Scardale Town and how people in various places will react to them. If the PCs are smart, they can learn a lot of information about the Iron Throne, the Zhents, the days of Lashan etc., all of which is of no particular value to them in this adventure.

The Village Map

1 – Watchtowers and Village Gates.

2 – Village Walls.

3 – Stables.

4 –.Green Griffon Inn. This newly remodeled house is run by the former warrior Meldan Ledds (see People below), who spent years in the service of the Harpers and now is their new resident agent in Scardale. The Griffon had to be rebuilt, because it had been confiscated and used as a military barracks during the occupation of Scardale. Ledds runs a clean inn that specializes in seafood from the Dragon Reach and lamb from Featherdale. The Green Griffon has its own house brewery. The house beer, a specialty, is made from wheat malt rather than barley malt. It is sold only on premises, at 8 steel pennies per tankard – 1 quart/liter. Single rooms in the Griffon run per person per night from 8 silver hawks to one gold pentar and two silver hawks, doubles cost from 6 silver hawks to one gold pentar per person. Meals run from 4 silver hawks to one gold pentar. The menu includes only lamb dishes, seafood and vegetarian entrees. The Griffon has 8 double rooms, 10 singles and a tended stall, with a stall fee of 1 silver hawk per horse per night.

5 – 4 Dolphins Fountain. The market square fountain is about 200 years old and is adorned with a statue showing four dolphins jumping through the air, The area around the fountain is magically protected against scrying, so the fountain square is not only a favorite meeting place because of the location's beauty but also as a place to trade information or plan treachery. Agents of Aldavius Darkhand usually choose the fountain square as the location where they work out deals for peddling contraband and other illegal wares.

6 – Crownsilver's Tower.

7 – Karbil Derr's House (unofficial - secretly known as the *Hand on the Harbor,* temple of Iyachtu Xvim). This building, once (officially) the home of a ranger named Belintar Sharnraven, who has (unofficially) disappeared from Scardale, has been taken over by the Xvimist church and is run by Tyrannar Karbil Derr (s. People below), who passes himself off as a Moonsea merchant. The house still is in the early stages of operation. In the future, it will serve as a main base for Xvimist assassins.

8 – Ithana Redstave's House

9 – Spouting Fish. Despite the fact that it's favored by sailors, Yhelsed Cablehand's tavern is a quiet inn. Cablehand (s. People below) was a Zhent agent for years. Nowadays, he sells whatever information he gleans from his customers to all interested buyers. Cablehand has an excellent fresh seafood menu (4-8 silver hawks), a selection of imported whiskies (4 silver hawks to 1 gold pentar for one shot/0.1 liter), and Ordulin Moonbrau at 4 steel pennies per tankard. Three single rooms are available upstairs. When there is decent harbor traffic, Cablehand lets these rooms only to sailors (6 silver hawks a night).

Scardale Town

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10 - Singing Siren (also called the *Happy Harpy*). Ulfgang Halfhand's (s. People below) tavern is the place to go in Scardale for a good fight. It's the house for black marketers, mercenaries and – when ships are in the harbor – for sailors looking for physical exercise. The only good thing in an otherwise dirty tavern is the imported Calaunt Portbock, a dark beer strong in barley malt. It sells for 9 steel pennies for a liter tankard. Halfhand also has imported whiskies ranging in price from 3 steel pennies to two gold pentars per shot/0.1 liter. The only food available is cold smoked fish with bread (2 silver hawks).

11 – Hall of Records.

12 – Northend Tower: The tower is the stronghold of Aldavius Darkhand (s. People below).

13 – Harborwatch Keep: Traditional seat of government of the lords of Scardale in the Aumersair dynasty, ending with the late Lord Lashan. Rendar Toedlig (s. People below) rules now from the keep.

14 – Port Authority

15 – Customs Warehouse

16 – Stone Mason Company

17 – Dawnlight Hall

18 - Scardale Provisioner. Talana Ghend (s. People below) runs the general store, which is a branch of the Scardale Provisioner run by her mother, Shaliana, in Scarsdeep. The Provisioner is well-defended and well-stocked, with prices about 30% above the PHB lists.

19 – House of Crossed Swords. Sole priestess in the temple (formerly shrine) to Tempus is the priestess Ulara Axehaft (s. People below).

20 – The Sleeping Lion. Tavern with four small guest rooms. The innkeeper is former Purple Dragon sergeant Bedger Harmon (see People below) , now the secret eyes and ears of Cormyr's throne in Scardale. Harmon runs a slightly dirty house with only one specialty, the remaining barrels of northern Cormyr's famous dark beer, Arabel Coal Brau, in his cellars. The war wizards have promised him a new supply as soon as the first spring shipments to Scardale can be made. The guest rooms are singles, but Harmon can add second beds to them. A single costs 9 silver hawks per night, a double 7 silver hawks per person. A cold plate runs two silver hawks and a quart/liter tankard of Coal Brau costs 8 steel pennies.

21 – Scargate Inn. This facility is being built by a group of Sembian merchants (secretly backed by the Iron Throne) and still is in construction. The house plans to open in summer of the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR). It is a large, half-timbered inn with attached brewery, distillery, stall, store and smithy. The brewery will be large enough to sell beer in barrels to off-premise customers and to export beer, and the distillery also will be able to produce substantial quantities of whisky. According to reports, the house will cater to caravan traffic, offering all supplies necessary for travel by land, caravan supplies and repairs, etc. There supposedly will be 20 single room and 12 doubles in various price ranges.

22 – Dawnstar Bridge.

23 – Anvil Bridge.

24 – Lap of Luck. One priest remains in the Tymora temple and gambling hall, the halfling priest Gelli Parabuck (s. People below).

25 – Yahorlim the Grocer. Yahorlim has a good selection of food products and travel rations, all overpriced at about 30% over PHB prices.

26 – Stonejaw's Stonecutting and Masonry.

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27 – Warriors Rest. Kaman Harloon (s. People below) operates this cheap and dirty inn, a house that draws mostly adventurers who are low on financial resources. Harloon is an agent of the anti-Tiamatist faction of the Dragon Cult in Selgaunt. A night's lodging costs 7 silver hawks or 5 silver hawks per person in a double. Bedbugs and lice infestations can occur. Cold plates – the only menu item – go for 2 silver hawks. A month before the Zhentilar garrison was destroyed last year, Harloon bought a large black market stock of barrels of Ordulin Moonbrau at a low price from the Zhents. He bought too much. It's too old and going sour. But it's still the beer he serves, for 2 steel pennies per liter tankard.

28 – Dragon Reach Fish Packing: (Unofficial) This new Scardale industry opened its doors in Tarsakh of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR). It is a business operation of the Iron Throne and also the main reason why those Scardale fishermen who did not flee town in the time of the shaking plague are able to keep making a living. Fish from the Dragon Reach are packed in salt brine and are smoked here, then shipped by caravan into Sembia, although it still is necessary to send some fish on to the larger packing plant in Chandler's Cross. The Scardale plant is running at about 10% capacity at present, but that's expected to increase substantially once winter is past. Fronts for the Throne also are financing the move of jobless persons in the cities of Sembia to Scardale, to take up the fishing trade. A boat-building company owned secretly by the Throne in Yhaunn plans to offer boats to these newcomers in return for a percentage of their earnings. The broadened fishing trade serves several goals of the Throne: The plan will substantially increase the Sembian population of Scardale, making future Sembian annexation plans easier to implement, and the Throne believes there is a great, potential inland market for packed seafood.

29 – Fishing Docks.

30 – Rusty Anchor. In this rundown shop, Lester Moody (human male, Commoner lvl 1, N) sells boatimng, shipping and fishing supplies. Many items are out of stock at present.

31 – Warehouses.

32 – Waukeen's Shrine (untended and run down).

33 – Dragon's Tail: This tavern once was a central point of Zhent activity. The new owner is a retired smuggler named Willart Hardwick (human male thief lvl 9 NE). The tavern is home to black marketers and smugglers and is believed to be partially under the hand of Aldavius Darkhand (s. People below). All the clientele is disreputable and it is claimed that some unwitting customers disappear here and turn up later chained to the benches and oars of a ship or serving as slaves in Mulmaster or Thay. The fare, however, is respectable, and Hardwick keeps the place relatively clean. Cold seafood dishes run from 2 to 6 silver hawks, warm seafood plates cost 5 to 9 silver hawks. Ordulin Moonbrau costs 3 steel pennies per tankard, 1 quart/liter. Calaunt Portbock costs a gold pentar per tankard. Various imported whiskies also are offered at 8 silver hawks to 10 gold pentars per shot/0.1 liter.

34 – Cat's Paw Investigative Services.

35 – East Sembia Trading Fleet. This Iron Throne front is headed by Norbert Willow (human male, Thief lvl 13, NE).

36 – Moneychanger. The shop is run by a seedy halfling named Morris Birchbrook (halfling male, Thief lvl 10, CE). He will haggle over commissions but never go below 5% for big exchanges and 10% for smaller exchanges.

37 – Dragon Point Inn: Innkeeper Willem Kendl (human male lvl 0 N) is a 65-year-old brewmaster and innkeeper with long years of experience and sufficient financial reserves to keep his house going in difficult times. He is not interested in the factions and forces that plot and conspire in Scardale, makes a point of *not* hearing what his guests say to each other and is worthless as a source of information. On the other hand, he runs the finest inn in Scardale Town. As long as ships regularly docked in Scardale and caravans came regularly through the lower Ashaba Valley, the Dragon Point was the favored house of merchants and ship officers. Few of either have come to Scardale since the outbreak of the shaking plague.

Now that the plague is past, the harbor has been restored and the occupation is ended, Kendl believes with the coming Spring that the Dragon Point will enjoy its old prosperity again. The inn's restaurant is the favorite evening spot for better-to-do locals, but the finely cared for guest rooms are mostly empty. However, when representatives of the Iron Throne or Sembian merchants come to Scardale, they immediately choose the Dragon Point. Kendl brews two beers: His *Harbor Bock* is a creamy, brown double bock beer rich in barley malt, his *Harbor Gold* is an excellent beer with an extra portion of bitter hops. A quart/liter tankard of *Harbor Gold* costs 8 steel pennies, A quart/liter tankard of *Harbor Bock* costs 1 silver hawk. Both beers are available only on the premises. The Dragon Point also has several imported whiskies at 8 silver hawks to 2 gold pentars per shot/0.1l. Kendl's menu includes a selection of Dragon Reach seafood dishes, Featherdale lamb and beef and pork from rural Scardale. Prices run from 9 silver hawks to 2 gold pentars. Single rooms run from 1 to 2 gold pentars per person per night. Doubles are 8 silver hawks to 1 gold pentar and 7 silver hawks per person per night. Stall fees are 2 silver hawks per horse per night.

38 – Rendar Toedlig's House.

39 – Manor House of Lady Sashesh, Ambassador from Sembia. (s. People, below).

40 – New Sembian Garrison: (Unofficial) The expansion of the keep complex was the first building project other than the harbor restoration to be finished under Rendar Toedlig's leadership. The garrison has room for 200 soldiers (only 100 are stationed there now), support personnel, weapons, horses, etc.

41 – The Talon. A rugged peninsula sometimes used by smugglers.

42 – Wash Rocks (also called *Awash Rocks*). A site of smuggler activity.

43 – Pelkov's Tower: (Unofficial) This is the tower of the archmage Pelkov (s. People below), the Zhentarim agent who has infiltrated the Iron Throne and ostensibly serves Rendar Toedlig.

People

AXEHAFT, ULARA: (Human female, neutral, priestess lvl 7 – official WotC NPC). Axehaft is the priestess of the Shrine of Crossed Swords, the relatively new temple of Tempus in Scardale.

CABLEHAND, YHELSED: (Human male, neutral evil, thief lvl 5 – official WotC NPC). Cablehand is the innkeeper of the Spouting Fish. Earlier he was an important, paid spy for the Zhentarim, delivering the Black Network information on the ships traveling the Dragon Reach. Today he sells his information to anyone who wants to buy. His main customers are agents of the Iron Throne, although he does not know this.

DARKHAND, ALDAVIUS: (Human male, neutral, thief lvl 12 – official WotC NPC). Darkhand is a black marketer who can obtain almost anything for a price. He is almost impossible to locate by direct means. When one wants to do business with Darkhand, one usually makes inquiries about the transaction itself, not about Darkhand, in the Singing Siren or the Dragon Tail. The word then generally gets back to Darkhand, who sees that a message is sent back to the person making inquiries that can lead to a meeting.

DERR, KARBIL: (Human male, Xvimist priest lvl 12 - LE). Derr arrived in Scardale Town in the Year of the Tankard and took over the house of disappeared ranger Belintar Sharnraven. To date, no one has objected. To maintain his cover, Derr is negotiating actual trade with the Moonsea region which will bring surplus Zhentarim contraband into the city once the winter is past. Because he is one of the first merchants to deal seriously with Scardale since the shaking plague, Derr is respected and valued by Rendar Toedlig and other local leaders. They are of course unaware of his true role. Yhelsed Cablehand also is unaware of any connection between Derr and the Zhentarim.

GHEND, TALANA: (Human female, CG, thief lvl 7 – official WotC NPC). Talana runs the Scardale Town branch of the Scardale Provisioner, a company owned by Talana's mother and now based in Scarsdeep. The Provisioner is a well-stocked general store with prices about 30% higher than in the PHB.

HALFHAND, ULFGANG: (Human male fighter, LE, lvl 9 – official WotC NPC). Halfhand is Aldavius Darkhand's lieutenant. Persons trying to maintain contact with Darkhand often go through Halfhand, who runs the Singing Siren tavern.

HARLOON, KAMAN: (Human male fighter, CE, lvl 3 –NPC). Harloon took over the Warrior's Rest shortly after the Time of Troubles. He had been a warrior in the service of the (now anti-Tiamatist) faction of the Dragon Cult in Selgaunt, but he was taken out of action by severe leg wounds. With expensive healing, Harloon could have been restored to his old health, but he did not have sufficient funds and the Dragon Cult wasn't willing to subsidize the temple fees for a low level fighter. Instead, the cult helped finance Harloon's purchase of the Warrior's Rest, with the understanding that Harloon would pass on all news to agents of the cult traveling through Scardale in return for a monthly payment of 5 gold pentars. Since Tarsakh of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), when the shaking plague hit Scardale, no agent of the cult has come to the port town, and Harloon has received no further payments. This has made Harloon quite bitter about the Selgaunt cell of the cult. The Warrior's Rest is a dump that provides Harloon with only a marginal income. If Harloon's palm is properly greased, he no doubt would tell what he knows about the cell and, more important for your PCs perhaps, how Tiamat's church is trying to take over the cult. Harloon still is a fanatical believer in the teachings of Sammaster, but he believes the current leadership of the Selgaunt cell to be corrupt and incompetent, mostly because his payments have been cut off. He hates Tiamat's church, which he views as an absolute corruption of the cult and its goals.

HARMON, BEDGER: (Human male fighter lvl 6 - NPC). Former sergeant of the Purple Dragons, retired, innkeeper at the Sleeping Lion. Bedger's tavern has four small guest rooms upstairs. Food is limited to cold plates, but he does still have a stock of Arabel Coal Brau, the famous dark beer from northern Cormyr, in his cellar. Bedger recently received magic items from a junior Cormyt war wizard who was sent to him, and he can use these items to communicate with Cormyr. He has agreed to the throne's request that he act as Cormyr's eyes and ears in the now Sembian satellite town of Scardale.

LEDDS, MELDAN: (Human male fighter lvl 16, NG - NPC). For years Meldan Ledds was a heroic warrior in service with the Harpers between the Dalelands and the Moonsea region, until he was struck by a disaster in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR). He and his band of adventurers were attacked by a red dragon on the edges of Cormanthor between Battledale and the Cold Field. The dragon instilled such fear in Ledds that he fled. His three companions were fried to a crisp, while Ledds survived. Ledds has not been able to cope psychologically with this event, and Harper priests have been unable to help him. He feels deep shame that he yielded to fear and abandoned his comrades to their fate, but even worse, he has developed a psychological phobia. He has a constant, overwhelming fear of the dragon who attacked him and his comrades and is convinced that this dragon still is tracking him. Ledds believes that any time he finds himself in the open countryside or in the wilderness, this dragon will sense his cowardly trail, track him down and destroy him. Only in cities does he feel safe, irrational as this may be. The Harpers decided to retire Ledds from service as a warrior, instead helping to finance his purchase of the Green Griffon and make him the chief Harper resident agent on the West Coast of the Dragon Reach. Ledds is a quiet innkeeper, still bothered by the deaths of his companions and his flight. He runs a clean, quality house and is proud of it. He has a +4 bastard sword in which he is specialized and keeps it hidden beneath the Griffon's bar. Ledds has no fear of fighting within Scardale, but he will refuse to leave the port town.

PARABUCK, GELLI: (Halfling male priest, CG, lvl 8 – official WotC NPC). Parabuck is the priest who runs the Lap of Luck temple of Tymora.

PELKOV: (Human male mage, LE, lvl 14 - NPC). Pelkov is the highest known archmage in Scardale. He is a Zhentarim archmage pretending to be a loyal agent of the Iron Throne. He is ostensibly in the direct service of the Throne's leading figure in Scardale, the head of the provisional government, Rendar Toedlig. In truth, Pelkov, along with Dalton Krenn in Sembia and Shandaril in Damaran Heliogabalus, is one of the top triumvirate leading the Iron Throne. More details can be found in *Bloodstone*, Part 7 of *Northern Journey*. Pelkov's statistics are in the NJ Campaign Guide.

SASHESH, LADY: (Human female fighter/thief, LN, lvl 7/10 – official WotC NPC). Lady Sashesh has been Sembia's official representative in Scardale for years and currently is the Sembian ambassador to Scardale. She is believed to be the second most powerful person in Scardale, after Rendar Toedlig. In truth, she is No. 3, after secret agent Pelkov and Toedlig. She has close ties to members of the Iron Throne, although she is not believed to be a direct member of the Throne. It is said that Lady Sashesh is responsible for planning the eventual annexation of Scardale to Sembia. She lives in a large manor house on the coast in the southeastern corner of Scardale Town.

TOEDLIG, RENDAR: (Human male thief, LE, lvl 14 - NPC). Toedlig is the head of Scardale's provisional government and ostensibly the chief figure of the Iron Throne in Scardale, although the Zhentarim double agent Pelkov ranks much higher. His statistics are in the *NJ Campaign Guide.*

The Iron Maiden

The one bit of information your PCs need to learn in Scardale is how to get across the Dragon Reach. There is a single ship in harbor at the moment, and it is under the command of *"Captain"* Nenton Binks. His ship, the *"Iron Maiden,"* is a former merchant ship from Mulmaster that was captured and taken over by the Zhentarim. During the Time of Troubles, Binks, then a pirate captain, captured the *"Maiden"* from the Zhents and added it to his pirate fleet, using Yhaunn in his native Sembia as his base. Binks, an important member of the Iron Throne whose pirate activities always were conducted in Sembia's favor, was officially ignored and unofficially protected by the Sembian government. At present he works directly for the Iron Throne, commissioned to guard and protect the Scardale harbor region, refusing entry to military ships from other lands, particularly ships from Cormyr and those of the Zhentarim. To date, neither has attempted to sail into Scardale Harbor.

Binks and his crew also sail special missions for the Iron Throne, delivering particularly *hot* cargoes of contraband to customers willing to pay a high price for the merchandise. At present, Binks is carrying a cargo consisting of temple treasures, mostly from the fallen temple of Waukeen in Tantras, but perhaps also to some extent from the Tantran Torm temple. These items first were stolen by the high priests of Torm in Tantras during the Time of Troubles. During the chaos after the fall of Bane and Torm in the Bay of Tantras, agents of the Iron Throne managed to steal these and other precious items from the dungeons beneath the Torm temple in Tantras which had been opened through Midnight's magic.

The Iron Throne has been storing these items concealed in Yhaunn for the past 13 years after reaching the decision to sell them only outside of the Heartlands and only under the most covert conditions. Leaders of the Throne deem it unwise to take any risk whatsoever of being identified and setting the vengeance-seeking priests of a church or perhaps even an angry god upon their tails, and there are rumors that the goddess many of them once served, Waukeen, has returned. And they are peddling stolen goods from one of her temples. A sale of these items to a buyer in Calaunt has been arranged through a middleman, and Binks' ship has been contracted to deliver the items to the port in Calaunt.

That may or may not be a source of conscience problems for your PCs, but they may be more troubled over the cracking of whips and cries of pain they hear now and then over the droning of a beating drum below deck. Mulmaster used slaves to row its ships. The Zhents captured the Mulman slaves along with the ship and kept the slaves chained to the benches, replacing the dead with slaves of their own. Binks captured the Zhents' slaves along with the ship and also kept them chained to the benches, replacing the dead with sailors from captured ships or who were shanghaied in ports.

To perform the missions the Throne has in mind for him, Binks needs to maintain a low profile. He is not interested in having ports closed to him as a captain who runs a slave ship, so he attempts to conceal the fact that he has slaves on board. He will not enter ports such as the harbor of Tantras, because ships often are searched by the authorities there, and he would be hanged if slaves were discovered on his benches. He feeds his slaves adequately and sees to it they are whipped only when necessary, not for humanitarian reasons, but to keep his slaves healthy. He will not shanghai sailors in most ports, simply because he doesn't want to risk having his men caught in the act. When slaves die, he usually replaces them only in Calaunt, where sailors can be shanghaied without drawing any official interest whatsoever.

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Your PCs should have no doubt that slaves on the benches are rowing the *"Iron Maiden."* What they do with that information is up to them. Statistics for Binks can be found in the Campaign Guide. Statistics for First Mate Jasper Hoogan and the rest of the crew follow: This segemnt ends with the trip across the Dragon Reach. Part 5 of *Northern Journey, Impiltur,* begins when (and if) the *"Iron Maiden"* reaches Calaunt in the Vast, on the eastern shore of the Dragon Reach.

Cormanthor Weather Tables

Marpenoth (10)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Marpenoth 1 SR: 6.15 SS: 5.40	Sunny, calm, High 66℉/190℃, low 45℉/7℃
Marpenoth 2 SR: 6.16 SS: 5.38	Partly cloudy, calm, High 64℉/18℃, low 46℉/8°
Marpenoth 3 SR: 6.17 SS: 5.36	Cloudy, calm, high 64℉/18℃, low 47℉/8℃
Marpenoth 4 SR: 6.18 SS: 5.34	Cloudy, wind N 5 mph/ 8 kmh, high 63℉/17℃, low 46 ℉/8℃
Marpenoth 5 SR: 6.19 SS: 5.32	Overcast, light rain, wind N 10 mph/8 kmh, high 60°F/16℃, low 44℉/7℃
Marpenoth 6 SR: 6.20 SS: 5.30	Overcast, rain, wind N 6mph/10 kmh, high 58℉/14℃, low 40℉/4℃
Marpenoth 7 SR: 6.20 SS: 5.28	Rain, wind N 15 mph/ 24 kmh, high 48℉/17℃, low 36 ℉/2℃
Marpenoth 8 SR: 6.19 SS: 5.26	Heavy rain, wind N 15 mph/ 24 kmh, high 48℉/9℃, l ow 37℉/3℃
Marpenoth 9 SR: 6.18 SS: 5.24	Rain, wind N 10 mph/16 kmh, high 45℉/7℃, low 35℉ /2℃
Marpenoth 10 SR: 6.19 SS: 5.22	Rain, wind N 8 mph/14 kmh, high 43℉/6℃, low 34℉/ 1℃
Marpenoth 11 SR: 6.19 SS: 5.20	Rain, wind N 6 mph/10 kmh, high 42℉/6℃, low 34℉/ 1℃
Marpenoth 12 SR: 6.20 SS: 5.18	Sunny, wind N 15 mph/24 kmh, high 42℉/6℃, low 33° F/1℃
Marpenoth 13 SR: 6.20 SS: 5.16	Sunny, wind N 18 mph/29 kmh, High 41℉/5℃, low 33° F/1℃
Marpenoth 14 SR: 6.21 SS: 5.14	Sunny, wind N 18 mph/29 kmh, High 41℉/5℃, low 33° F/1℃
Marpenoth 15 SR: 6.23 SS: 5.12	Sunny, calm, High 42℉/6℃, low 34℉/1℃
Marpenoth 16 SR: 6.23 SS: 5.10	Sunny, calm, High 44℉/7℃, low 35℉/2℃
Marpenoth 17 SR: 6.24 SS: 5.08	Partly cloudy, wind E 5 mph/8 kmh, High 46℉/8℃, l ow 41℉/5℃
Marpenoth 18 SR: 6.25 SS: 5.06	Partly cloudy, wind E 10 mph/16 kmh, High 48℉/9℃, low 42℉/6℃
Marpenoth 19 SR: 6.27 SS: 5.02	Partly cloudy, wind E 12 mph/19 kmh, High 50℉/10℃ , low 44℉/7℃
Marpenoth 20 SR: 6.28 SS: 5.00	Cloudy, wind SE 5 mph/8 kmh, High 52℉/11℃, low 45 ℉/7℃
Marpenoth 21 SR: 6.30 SS: 4.58	Cloudy, wind SE 5 mph/8 kmh, High 54℉/12℃, low 46 ℉/8℃
Marpenoth 22 SR: 6.32 SS: 4.56	Partly cloudy, breeze S, High 56℉/13℃, low 47℉/8 ℃
Marpenoth 23 SR: 6.33 SS: 4.55	Sunny, wind S 5 mph/8 kmh, High 60℉/16℃, low 48℉ /9℃
Marpenoth 24 SR: 6.35 SS: 4.53	Cloudy, wind S 10 mph/16 kmh, High 62℉/17℃, low 5 0℉/10℃

Marpenoth (10)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Marpenoth 25 SR: 6.36 SS: 4.51	Partly cloudy, calm, High 61℉/16℃, low 49℉/9℃
Marpenoth 26 SR: 6.38 SS: 4.49	Overcast, wind NW 5 mph/8 kmh, High 53℉/12℃, low 43℉/6℃
Marpenoth 27 SR: 6.39 SS: 4.48	Occasional rain, breeze N, High 48℉/9℃, low 42℉/ 6℃
Marpenoth 28 SR: 6.41 SS: 4.46	Rain, wind N 6 mph/10 kmh, High 44℉/7℃, low 35℉/ 2℃
Marpenoth 29 SR: 6.42 SS: 4.44	Rain, wind N 5 mph/8 kmh, High 41℉/5℃, low 35℉/2 ℃
Marpenoth 30 SR: 6.44 SS: 4.43	Rain and light snow, breeze N, High 37℉/3℃, low 3 2℉/0℃, snow trace

Uktar (11)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Uktar 1 SR: 6.45 SS: 4.41	Rain and light snow, breeze N, High 35℉/2℃, low 3 0℉/-1℃, snow cover half inch, 1.25cm
Uktar 2 SR: 6.47 SS: 4.40	Rain and snow, calm, High 34℉/1℃, low 29℉/-2°, s now cover 1 inch/2.5 cm
Uktar 3 SR: 6.48 SS: 4.38	Heavy snow, calm, high 31℉/-1℃, low 27℉/-3℃, sn ow cover 8 inches/12 cm
Uktar 4 SR: 6.50 SS: 4.37	Cloudy, wind N 5 mph/ 8 kmh, high 28℉/-2℃, low 23 ℉/- 5℃, snow cover 8 inches/12 cm
Uktar 5 SR: 6.51 SS: 4.35	Clear, wind N 10 mph/8 kmh, high 26℉/-3℃, low 21° F/-6, snow cover 8 inches/12 cm
Uktar 6 SR: 6.53 SS: 4.34	Clear, wind N 6mph/10 kmh, high 24℉/-4℃, low 19℉ /-7℃, snow cover 8 inches/12 cm
Uktar 7 SR: 6.55 SS: 4.32	Light snow, wind N 10 mph/ 16 kmh, high 30℉/-1℃, low 22℉/- 6℃, snow cover 10 inches/25 cm
Uktar 8 SR: 6.56 SS: 4.31	Overcast, wind N 5 mph/ 8 kmh, high 30℉/-1℃, low 23℉/-5 ℃, snow cover 10 inches/25 cm
Uktar 9 SR: 6.58 SS: 4.29	Cloudy, wind N breeze, high 30℉/-1℃, low 22℉/- 6℃, snow cover 10 inches/25 cm
Uktar 10 SR: 6.59 SS: 4.28	Partly cloudy, wind N 5 mph/8 kmh, high 27℉/-3℃, low 20℉/- 6℃, snow cover 10 inches/25 cm
Uktar 11 SR: 7.01 SS: 4.27	Partly cloudy, wind N 6 mph/10 kmh, high 26℉/-3℃, low 18℉/- 8℃, snow cover 9.5 inches/25 cm
Uktar 12 SR: 7.02 SS: 4.25	Sunny, wind N 10 mph/16 kmh, high 24℉/-4℃, low 18 ℉/- 8℃, snow cover 9.5 inches/25 cm
Uktar 13 SR: 7.04 SS: 4.24	Sunny, wind W 10 mph/16 kmh, High 27℉/-3℃, low 25 ℉/- 4℃, snow cover 9 inches/22.5 cm
Uktar 14 SR: 7.05 SS: 4.23	Sunny, wind W 5 mph/8 kmh, High 31℉/-1℃, low 27℉ /-3℃, snow cover 9 inches/22.5 cm
Uktar 15 SR: 7.07 SS: 4.22	Partly cloudy, calm, High 34℉/1℃, low 32℉/0℃, s now cover 9 inches/22 cm
Uktar 16 SR: 7.08 SS: 4.21	Partly cloudy, calm, High 39℉/4℃, low 34℉/1℃, s now cover 8 inches/20 cm
Uktar 17 SR: 7.10 SS: 4.20	Partly cloudy, wind W 5 mph/8 kmh, High 42℉/6℃, l ow 38℉/ 3℃, snow cover 8 inches/19.5 cm
Uktar 18 SR: 7.11 SS: 4.19	Partly cloudy, wind W 10 mph/16 kmh, High 45℉/7℃, low 37℉/2℃, snow cover 7 inches/19 cm

Uktar (11)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Uktar 19 SR: 7.13 SS: 4.18	Partly cloudy, wind W 12 mph/19 kmh, High 48℉/9℃, low 40℉/4℃, snow cover 7 inches/17 cm
Uktar 20 SR: 7.14 SS: 4.17	Cloudy, wind SW 5 mph/8 kmh, High 50℉/10℃, low 43 ℉/6℃, snow cover 4 inches/10 cm
Uktar 21 SR: 7.16 SS: 4.16	Cloudy, wind SW 5 mph/8 kmh, High 53°F/12℃, low 45℉/7℃, snow cover i inch/2,5 cm
Uktar 22 SR: 7.17 SS: 4.15	Partly cloudy, breeze SW, High 55℉/13℃, low 46℉/ 8℃, snow cover trace
Uktar 23 SR: 7.19 SS: 4.14	Sunny, wind SW 5 mph/8 kmh, High 52℉/11℃, low 46° F/8℃, snow cover trace
Uktar 24 SR: 7.20 SS: 4.13	Cloudy, wind S 10 mph/16 kmh, High 57℉/14℃, low 4 7℉/8℃
Uktar 25 SR: 7.21 SS: 4.12	Partly cloudy, calm, High 57℉/14℃, low 45℉/7℃
Uktar 26 SR: 7.23 SS: 4.12	Overcast, wind NW 5 mph/8 kmh, High 48℉/9℃, low 3 7℉/3℃
Uktar 27 SR: 7.24 SS: 4.11	Occasional light rain, breeze N, High 40℉/4℃, low 34℉/1℃
Uktar 28 SR: 7.25 SS: 4.10	Light rain, wind N 6 mph/10 kmh, High 38℉/3℃, low 33℉/1℃
Uktar 29 SR: 7.27 SS: 4.10	Rain and light snow, wind N 8 mph/10 kmh, High 36℉ /2℃, low 31℉/- 1℃, snow cover trace
Uktar 30 SR: 7.28 SS: 4.09	Rain and light snow, breeze N, High 34℉/1℃, low 3 0℉/- 1℃, snow cover half inch/1 cm

Moonfeast

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Mondfest SR: 7.30 SS: 4.09	Snow, breeze N, High 33℉/1℃, low 29℉/-2℃, snow cover 1 inch/2.5 cm

Nightal (12)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Nightal 1 SR: 7.31 SS: 4.08	Snow, breeze N, High 31℉/-1℃, low 27℉/-3℃, snow cover 3 inches/7.5 cm
Nightal 2 SR: 7.32 SS: 4.08	Partly cloudy, calm, High 27℉/-3℃, low 22℉/-6, s now cover 3 inches/7.5 cm °
Nightal 3 SR: 7.33 SS: 4.07	Cloudy, calm, high 25℉/-4℃, low 24℉/-4℃, snow c over 3 inches/7.5 cm
Nightal 4 SR: 7.34 SS: 4.07	Cloudy, wind N 5 mph/ 8 kmh, high 20℉/-7℃, low 18 ℉/-8℃, snow cover 3 inches/7.5 cm
Nightal 5 SR: 7.35 SS: 4.07	Overcast, wind N 10 mph/8 kmh, high 16℉/-9℃, low 10℉/-12℃, snow cover 3 inches/7.5 cm
Nightal 6 SR: 7.36 SS: 4.06	Partly cloudy, calm, high 13℉/-11℃, low 6℉/-14℃ , snow cover 3 inches/7 cm
Nightal 7 SR: 7.37 SS: 4.06	Partly cloudy, calm, high 10℉/-12℃, low 3℉/- 16℃, snow cover 3 inches/6.5 cm
Nightal 8 SR: 7.38 SS: 4.06	Clear, calm, high 7℉/-14℃, low 0℉/-18℃, snow co ver 2.5 inches/6.25 cm

Nightal (12)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
Nightal 9 SR: 7.39 SS: 4.06	Clear, calm, high 3℉/-16℃, low -3℉/-19℃, snow c over 2.5 inches/6.25 cm
Nightal 10 SR: 7.40 SS: 4.06	Clear, calm, high 3℉/-16℃, low -6℉/- 21℃, snow cover snow cover 2.5 inches/6 cm
Nightal 11 SR: 7.41 SS: 4.06	Clear, calm, high -4℉/-20℃, low -10℉/- 23℃, snow cover snow cover 2 inches/5.5 cm
Nightal 12 SR: 7.42 SS: 4.06	Partly cloudy, wind N 15 mph/24 kmh, high -8℉/-22° C, low -14℉/- 26℃, snow cover 2 inches/5 cm
Nightal 13 SR: 7.43 SS: 4.06	Partly cloudy, wind N 20 mph/36 kmh, high -12℉/-24 ℃, low -20℉/- 29℃, snow cover 2 inches/5 cm
Nightal 14 SR: 7.44 SS: 4.06	Partly cloudy, wind N 16 mph/26 kmh, high -16℉/-27 ℃, low -34℉/- 37℃, snow cover 2 inches/5 cm
Nightal 15 SR: 7.45 SS: 4.07	Cloudy, north breeze, High -10℉/-23℃, low -14℉/- 26℃, snow cover 2 inches/5 cm
Nightal 16 SR: 7.45 SS: 4.07	Cloudy, north breeze, High -7℉/-22℃, low -10℉/- 23℃, snow cover 2 inches/4.5 cm
Nightal 17 SR: 7.46 SS: 4.07	Cloudy, north breeze, High -6℉/-21℃, low -2℉/- 19℃, snow cover 2 inches/4.5 cm
Nightal 18 SR: 7.47 SS: 4.08	Overcast, wind N 5 mph/8kmh, High 0℉/-18℃, low -4 ℉/- 20℃, snow cover 1.5 inches/4 cm
Nightal 19 SR: 7.47 SS: 4.08	Snow, wind N 12 mph/19 kmh, High 4℉/-16℃, low 0℉ /-18℃, snow co ver 5 inches/12.5 cm
Nightal 20 SR: 7.48 SS: 4.08	Heavy snow, wind N 20 mph/36 kmh, High 8℉/-13℃, l ow 7℉/- 14℃, snow cover 20 inches/50 cm
Nightal 21 SR: 7.48 SS: 4.09	Heavy snow, wind N 12 mph/19 kmh, High 10℉/-12℃, low 9℉/- 13℃, snow cover 30 inches/75 cm
Nightal 22 SR: 7.49 SS: 4.10	Snow, wind N 10 mph/16 kmh, High 14℉/-10℃, low 10 ℉/- 12℃, snow cover 34 inches/85 cm
Nightal 23 SR: 7.49 SS: 4.10	Light snow, wind N 5 mph/8 kmh, High 18℉/-8℃, low 14℉/- 10℃, snow cover 35 inches/87.5 cm
Nightal 24 SR: 7.49 SS: 4.11	Cloudy, calm, High 20℉/-7℃, low 16℉/-9℃, snow c over 35 inches/87.5 cm
Nightal 25 SR: 7.50 SS: 4.11	Partly cloudy, calm, High 18℉/-8℃, low 14℉/- 10℃, snow cover 35 inches/87.5 cm
Nightal 26 SR: 7.50 SS: 4.12	Clear, calm, High 14℉/-9℃, low 10℉/-12℃, snow c over 35 inches/87 cm
Nightal 27 SR: 7.50 SS: 4.13	Clear, calm, High 10℉/-12℃, low 6℉/-14℃, snow c over 35 inches/87 cm
Nightal 28 SR: 7.50 SS: 4.14	Clear, calm, High 7℉/-14℃, low 3℉/-16℃, snow co ver 35 inches/87 cm
Nightal 29 SR: 7.50 SS: 4.15	Clear, calm, High 3℉/-16℃, low -1℉/-18℃, snow c over 34.5 inches/86.5 cm
Nightal 30 SR: 7.51 SS: 4.16	Clear, calm, High 0℉/-18℃, low -4℉/-20℃, snow c over 34.5 inches/86.25 cm

Lower Ashaba Valley: Cold Field – Featherdale - Scardale

This segment of *Tale of 2 Liches* requires very specific weather. Please use the sunrise and sunset data in the tables above and the weather listed in the text.

NORTHERN JOURNEY™

The West – Parts 1-4

Silverymoon – Moonwood – Backlands – Tale of 2 Liches

Northern Journey begins with a party of 1st and 2nd level adventurers seeking work and finding it in Neverwinter. Their mission takes them to Silverymoon, where they gain expert training. A year later, they awaken with moving red symbols on their arms and an irresistible magical urge that draws the PCs northward through the Moonwood to the mysterious archwizard Ssessibil in the Lonely Tower and then southeastward through the dangerous mountains to Sundabar. From there, the strange magical force draws them onward, down the Delimbiyr over Loudwater to the ruins of Dekanter, through Pelleor's Prairie and Sunset Vale and then across Yellow Snake Pass and northern Cormyr to Daggerdale, where they battle the evil lich Gwath, who has taken the form of a beholder. Their *Northern Journey* continues on to Zhentil Keep, Myth Drannor and Scardale, with Parts 1 to 4 ending in Scardale Town, where the magic attempts to draw the PCs across the Dragon Reach to the Vast. The first four segments in this volume are in traditional module form. After *The West*, the adventure continues with Parts 5 to 7 – *Impiltur, the Great Dale* and *Bloodstone*. As a finale, the *Northern Journey* sequel *In the Land of the Lich Lords* also is available for epic level *D&D 3E* characters.