

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Official Game Adventure

Curse of the Azure Bonds

by Jeff Grubb and George MacDonald

Compatible with
the AD&D® and
the 2nd Edition
AD&D®
Game Systems.

Based on the best-selling
FORGOTTEN REALMS™
fantasy novel, *Azure Bonds*
by Kate Novak and Jeff Grubb.



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OFFICIAL GAME ADVENTURE



Curse of the Azure Bonds

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Distributed to the book trade in the United States by Random House Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd. Distributed to the toy and hobby trade by regional distributors. Distributed in the United Kingdom by TSR UK Ltd. ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, FORGOTTEN REALMS, PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION, and the TSR logo are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.

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PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION™

Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN 0-88038-606-1

9239XXX1501

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Curse of the Azure Bonds has a stranger history than most adventures created for the *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*[®] role-playing game. The adventure book you hold in your hands is based on the novel *Azure Bonds*, by Kate Novak and Jeff Grubb, and set in the sprawling *FORGOTTEN REALMS*[™] campaign setting. This adventure is also tied directly to the *Curse of the Azure Bonds* Computer Game, produced by Strategic Simulations, Inc., under license with TSR, Inc.

The result is the first “triple-play” story in TSR’s history—a novel forming the basis for a role-playing adventure (something we have gotten very good at over the years) and a computer adventure game. The computer game and the role-playing adventure are closely tied but do not mimic one another—each has been designed for maximum enjoyment in its element.

We have done the computer-RPG tie-in before, of course; many of you are familiar with the earlier *FORGOTTEN*

REALMS module, *Ruins of Adventure*, as well as its companion product, *Pool of Radiance*, the first *AD&D*[®] computer game from SSI. Some of the places and personalities from *Ruins of Adventure* and *Pool of Radiance* reappear in this product, and in some senses *Curse* is a continuation of *Ruins*—but it is not necessary to have played the earlier module before beginning to enjoy this one.

Likewise, playing the *Curse of the Azure Bonds* computer game (or reading the novel) is not necessary before playing this adventure, though your enjoyment may be enhanced by picking up the computer game and/or the novel. By the same token, the computer game and this adventure are not duplicate products designed for different mediums. While the gaming products follow the same plot for the adventurers, they are very different in the nature of monsters and encounters, as well as portrayal of the maps. A player of the computer game will get the feeling of his computerized adventure through playing this adven-

ture, but he should not expect that the same tactics that saved his characters in one situation will prove equally effective in the other. This is provided only as a warning: both games are branches from the same tree, similar but not exact.

Background

Azure Bonds (the novel) is the story of Alias, a warrior woman who awoke one morning with a strange set of mystic tattoos branded on her arm and a large lapse in her memory. She quickly discovered that the tattoos were magical in nature and very dangerous. They caused her to perform actions against her will (for example, she attacked a young noble named Giogi Wyvernspur, who had the misfortune to be doing a very good imitation of King Azoun of Cormyr). Her tattoo-like brand was made up of a number of smaller symbols, and what those symbols stood for indicated that an evil alliance of some sort was responsible for her condition.



Ordinary magical methods proved useless for removing the brands, so Alias set out to discover who was responsible for her curse. She was joined in her quest by three allies: Dragonbait, a mute creature similar to a lizard man; Akabar, a merchant from the South with moderate magical abilities; and Olive Ruskettle, a halfling who claimed to be a bard but seemed to be much more along the lines of a thief.

The adventurers passed through many perils (as is the lot of adventurers), including a battle with a crystalline elemental, a confrontation with a beast called a kalmari, a duel of honor with a dotty old red dragon, and the freeing of an elder god, Moander. Moander was one of the individuals responsible for Alias's curse, and with his defeat, his symbol faded from her arm.

Alias and her companions were captured by the evil alliance, and the secrets of the brand and of her own origin were revealed. The alliance responsible for her condition consisted of the followers of Moander (now broken in power following the defeat of their god's physical form on this plane), a thieves' guild called the Fire Knives (which holds a grudge against the King of Cormyr), an evil female mage named Cassana, a lich named Zrie Prakis, and a powerful entity from the Lower Planes named Phalse.

A second attempt to slay Dragonbait and bind Alias to her masters resulted in the destruction of Zrie Prakis and Cassana and the breaking of the power of the Fire Knives. Alias and her companions tracked Phalse down to his extradimensional lair and destroyed him with the aid of Elminster the Sage and the Nameless Bard. The adventurers, worn and bloody but triumphant, returned to the Realms and their own lives.

Those events took place during Mirtul and Kythorn (May and June), four months ago. At about the same time, a group of adventurers in Phlan, far north in the Moonsea, discovered the Pool of Radiance and its malefic protector, the daemon Tyranthraxus. The daemon was defeated but not destroyed, his threat to the North averted but not entirely eliminated. Tyranthraxus retreated and began to spin his plots anew.

There were few survivors of the alli-

ance that created Alias's bonds. The great magic-wielders of the group—Zrie, Cassana, and Phalse—were apparently dead. A few followers of Moander and a smattering of Fire Knives fled Westgate for safer havens to the north. These fleeing minions were of low level, but carried the tales of the Azure Bonds and their use in controlling others. These survivors encountered agents of Tyranthraxus, and a new plot began to form in the daemon's mind. Gathering new allies in the form of the Zhentarim and a renegade Red Wizard of Thay, Tyranthraxus formulated another plan for gaining power in the Realms.

As with the original alliance, each member of the New Alliance of the Bonds has its own agenda for the use of controlled characters. The Fire Knives are still seeking the death of the King of Cormyr. The followers of Moander (now called the Survivors of Moander) are seeking a reinstatement of their god. Zhentil Keep is looking for a way to turn good characters to evil acts, and sees this bonding as a test case for that experiment. The renegade Red Wizard of Thay wishes to enlist the aid he needs to create another Flight of Dragons, similar to the one that ravaged the North a few years ago.

And Tyranthraxus sees the new bonding process as a way that he can create multiple, living Pools of Radiance, allowing him to possess several individuals at once and control them for his own ends. His rise in power thereafter will be exponential as his influence spreads, creating his own army of minions whose souls belong to him.

But Tyranthraxus is also afraid. In the Dalelands exist magical items which were forged long ago to bring about his initial defeat. He chose his allies with an eye toward the fact that they are rumored to have these items, and seeks to have his agents (the player characters) bring these items to him in his lair in Myth Drannor, so that he may destroy them. Then nothing will stop him from his domination of the Realms.

It is now the month of Marpenoth, also called Leafall, which corresponds with October in our calendar. The trees of the Dalelands are just beginning to turn a rainbow of colors. Like the wheat and

the pumpkins, Tyranthraxus's plan has come to full ripeness. The Curse of the Azure Bonds has returned.

Running This Adventure

This adventure is designed for a party of 4-8 characters, each of 6th-9th level. It is assumed in this module that the heroes have previously gone through the adventures detailed in *Ruins of Adventure*, but this is not necessary for enjoyment of play.

The adventure may start in one of two ways, at the DM's discretion or as dictated by circumstances. The first method is to move the characters directly to Chapter 2. The heroes awaken in their quarters in Tilverton with a lapse of a month in their memories, and with strange blue tattoos branded on their forearms. The heroes must discover what has happened to them during the lost time.

Alternately, the DM can run through the events of Chapter 1, ending with the ambush encounter in which the heroes are captured. This method works best when playing the adventure in connection with a long-standing campaign. It has the disadvantage that player characters, being a wise and crafty group, may elude multiple attempts to defeat and subdue them. If the player characters prove to be too effective at eluding the ambushes, the DM should feel free to simply place the heroes at Tilverton, and let them try to account for the missing time.

The Azure Bonds

The player characters will be branded by the markings of those who seek to control their actions. These brands appear as bright blue tattoos, usually inscribed along the sword arm of the individual being controlled. The magical arts of creating a living vessel to control, and of hiding the brands, are lost to this New Alliance of the Bonds. Tyranthraxus wants the player characters to know who is responsible for their branding, as that will lead them first to his allies (and their hidden magic) and subsequently to him.



The tattoos—each character wears all five of the mysterious images—are the symbols of the various factions involved in the curse, all placed against a darker blue background of lines that appears to be a mixture of thorning plants and waves. Each of the symbols seems to be made up of smaller, identical symbols. That is, the symbol of the Zhentarim is actually made up of a collage of smaller Zhentarim symbols, each of which has been reduced to a speck the size of a pencil point.

The brands reflect light in the same way that stained glass does, and they give off a dull blue illumination of their own, though this is noticeable only in total darkness. In normal daylight, a brand may be mistaken for a “normal” tattoo, though one of extreme size and complexity.

The Azure Bonds are magical and dangerous. They represent a link between the characters and the New Alliance of the Bonds. If any divination spells are cast upon a bond, it will radiate a strong blue illumination, shooting bright rays into the air (treat as a *light* spell, in particular if anyone is looking directly at it). In addition, it will function as a *symbol of pain* to the individual the divination-type spell is cast upon. This “light show” and resulting effect is a physical repulsion of those spells by the bonds. Divination spells will reveal nothing about the bonds or the Alliance.

Attempts to remove the bonds through magical or clerical means will be resisted by the magics in the bonds. The bonds are 100 percent resistant to spells directed against them specifically (as opposed to spells that are directed against the individual who has been branded). Further, the bonds have their own protections against being removed:

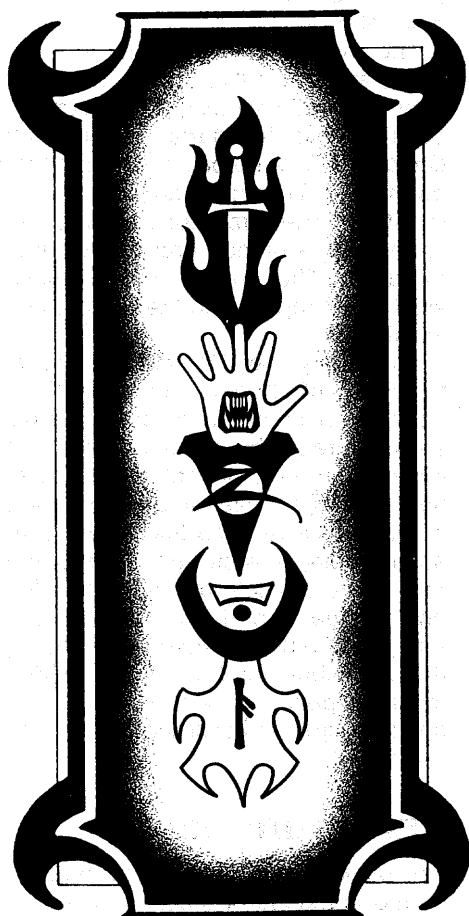
- * A windstorm will start up in the area occupied by the spell caster when removal of a brand is attempted, whether from the arm of the spell caster or another character. Loose objects will be cast about, and there is a 60 percent chance an object will hit the caster, certainly breaking the spell and possibly (DM's judgment) harming the caster.
- * The character who has been branded must make a saving throw ver-

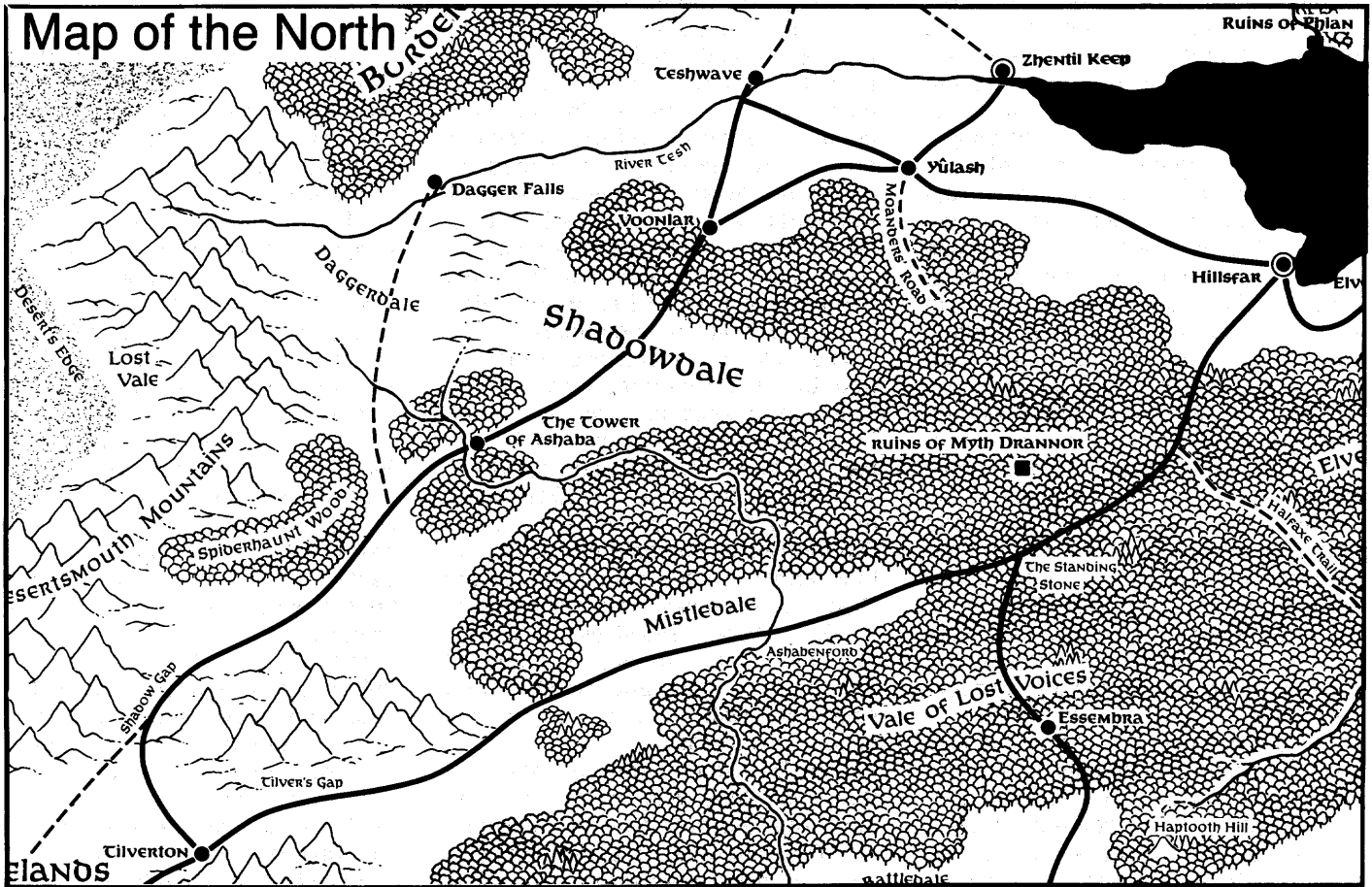
sus spells, or be overtaken by a berserker rage and a desire to slay the spell caster. This rage will permit the character to snap normal bonds, and will last for 2-8 rounds. This effect does not occur if the spell caster is the target of his or her own magic.

Dispel magic and *remove curse* will never have any effect on the brands, except to bring about the results mentioned above. A *limited wish* spell (if successfully cast without the death of the magic-user) will remove one of the marks from one individual. A *full wish* spell will remove up to three of the marks. Short of these actions, the Azure Bonds will prove extremely difficult to delete. Attempting to cut off the arm and *regenerating* it through magic will result in the brands merely reappearing on the new limb.

The Azure Bonds have been created by a group of individuals we refer to as the New Alliance of the Bonds (their predecessors from the novel carried no such high names, and were more chaotic in nature). Each group belonging to this alliance has its own reason for and its own methods of branding the characters. The Azure Bonds will force the characters, to perform actions they would otherwise not perform. The general goals of the members of the New Alliance are:

- * *The Fire Knives* seek the death of King Azoun IV of Cormyr. Player characters, because they have been branded with the Fire Knives symbol, must make a saving throw versus spells whenever they hear the sound of Azoun's voice. Failure to save means that they will attack the source of the sound until it is destroyed, the character is disabled or killed, or the encounter is ended in some other fashion.
- * *The Survivors of Moander* wish to bring their lord, also known as The Jawed God, back onto this plane, from where he has been banished since the death of his mortal form. They want the characters to reach Moander's temple beneath Yulash, where they will be slain and their deaths used to open the “worm-hole” to Moander's plane.
- * *The Zhentarim* see the characters





as a test project, part of an experiment to determine the success of forcing good and neutral heroes to perform evil acts. If this experiment works, the Black Network may capture others and similarly brand them. The Zhentarim have placed in their branding the desire for the PCs to commit random, evil acts, and ultimately to make their way to Zhentil Keep to report. These random acts become more frequent and more severely evil as the group nears Zhentil Keep. Opportunities to perform chaotic actions will appear throughout the text. They will affect single individuals, and not the entire party.

* *Dracandros the Mad*, also known as the Red Wizard of Thay, is currently in disfavor with the other Red Wizards. He feels that if he creates a great enough disaster in the

Dragon Reach area, he will be redeemed in the eyes of his fellows and allowed to return to Thay. A few years ago, a Flight of Dragons from the North ravaged the Dragon Reach and the Dalelands. As a result of being branded with his mark, the characters will answer to the sound of Dracandros's voice whenever they hear it, and will be compelled to perform whatever task he requires of them.

* *Tyranthraxus* seeks to destroy those magic items that could banish him forever from the Realms, and to convert the player characters to living Pools of Radiance, allowing him to increase his power in the Realms. His intent is to lead the characters to the various magic items held by the other members of the New Alliance, and have them bring these items to him.

The effects of the compulsions implanted by the various members of the New Alliance are similar to those of a *quest* or *geas* spell. Ignoring the long-term compulsions (to go to a particular place, such as Yulash or Zhentil Keep) will result in the characters feeling ill, losing one hit point per day because of a wasting sickness for every day spent resisting these compulsions. Such penalties do not apply while the characters are actively seeking out the individuals responsible for their brandings.

The more short-term orders (such as slaying the King of Cormyr when a character hears his voice) can be resisted if a character makes a saving throw. The magic of the bonds starts out very strong, but weakens over time. To reflect this, the first saving throw against any specific short-term order (likely to occur in Tilverton, where the party will encounter King Azoun) is made at -6 to the die



roll. The second such saving throw (whether against the same or a different short-term order) is made at -5, the next at -4, and so on, until the penalty is removed and player characters are saving against spells as normal versus the effects of the bonds. Note on a separate sheet of paper the number of times a character has had to save against the effects of the bonds. Making the saving throw indicates that the individual has resisted the effects of that particular order—if the order is given again in another encounter (or if the situation causing that order arises again), then another saving throw is required.

When the characters are operating under a long-term compulsion or a short-term order, the DM may either choose to play the characters as NPCs until the moment passes, or may choose to let the players continue to run their characters under the effects of the order. Such activity may be detrimental to the character's continued good health (and thus against the basic nature of the player running that character), so in recognition of a sincere and successful attempt to role-play a character under a potentially harmful compulsion, the DM should consider awarding bonus experience points (100 xp per encounter is suggested) to any character whose player demonstrates this sort of good role-playing ability.

The members of the New Alliance, Tyranthraxus in particular, are unaware that the effects of the bonds diminish over time. He feels that, given the characters' prowess (experience levels), the chance of them breaking free of his control is very small.

About the Dalelands

Most of the action of this adventure takes place in the northern parts of the Dalelands. The name "Dalelands" is properly used to refer to various allied dales that hug the borders of the Elven Woods, but the term is often used in the more "civilized" areas of Cormyr and Sembia to refer to their entire northern border, reaching as far north as the city-states that border the Moonsea. While these city-states are neither as small nor as rural as the dales, and in fact are openly hostile in some cases, the name

has stuck in popular usage in the South.

The dales themselves are rolling farmlands, dotted with individual holdings and small family farms. Usually each dale has a center of trade and government. For example, Shadowdale's center of trade is at the Tower of Ashaba, and the town that has grown up around it is referred to as Shadowdale as well. Daggerdale's center of trade is at Dagger Falls, at the town of the same name. Battledale's trade center, on the other hand, is the town of Essembra, safely located far from warring armies.

The Dalelands themselves were settled by an agreement between the Dalesmen's ancestors and the Elven Court, a large elven nation that occupied the forest the dales now surround. The elves permitted the Dalesmen, migrating from the east across the Dragon Reach, to settle the borders of their forest, on the condition that the Dalesmen not make further inroads into the Elven Woods. The elves had already lost much of their forests to "civilized" men from Cormyr and Sembia, and sought the Dalesmen as a counterbalance to this threat.

The Dalesmen agreed, and the Standing Stone was erected to commemorate the pact between man and elf. The calendar of DaleReckoning dates from the erection of that stone, and in the time since then, old dales have been abandoned or destroyed and new dales founded. In the area we are discussing, the major dales are Daggerdale, Shadowdale, Mistedale, and Battledale.

Recently, the Elven Court has abandoned the Realms entirely, retreating to the elvish island nation of Evermeet. While some elves remain, the elvish nation that once dominated the forest and kept adventurers away from such dangerous locations as Myth Drannor has vanished virtually overnight. Adventurers are just now beginning to discover that there are new places to delve for treasure as a result of this relocation of power.

To the south of the Dalelands are the nations of Cormyr and Sembia. These lands have regularly pushed their borders northward, expanding their power in a fashion that often brings them into conflict with local forces. Most recently,

the King of Cormyr has sent troops to Tilverton, bringing that city under Cormyrian control. The reason for this intrusion involves the king's daughter, and the player characters will become caught up in this plot in the first adventure of this module.

To the North of the Dalelands proper are the city-states of the Moonsea. While not as unified as the southern nations of Cormyr and Sembia, these city-states are very powerful both in armed force and in the strength of magic and adventurers they can claim.

The major cities of the western Moonsea are Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar. The former is a multiwalled city dominated by the Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network. It is an evil town, filled with informers and dark plots. Hillsfar is little better, but for different reasons. It seems to be run by more uncaring, mercantile forces, and its new ruler's intentions toward the Dalelands remain a mystery.

The cities of Phlan, Teshwave, and Yulash are decimated ruins, only now beginning to recover from the effects of war, pestilence, and a plague of dragons. A Flight of Dragons, a migratory wave of the great lizards, passed over the Dalelands several years ago, leaving great destruction in its wake.

Phlan is only now rebuilding from the devastation, its recovery hampered by the plots of Tyranthraxus, who was subsequently foiled by a company of brave adventurers. Teshwave fell to constant raiding by Zhentil Keep, and is now little more than a ruined way station, dominated by a garrison of Zhentil Keep soldiers. Yulash is a contested city, its wreckage fought over by forces from both Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar.

Lastly, the independent town of Voonlar lies between the Moonsea lands and the Dalelands. Independent in name only, the town is under the influence of agents of Zhentil Keep. These rulers have a more lenient attitude toward their people than do the Keepers to the north, but still will not cross their masters. Voonlar has been a staging area for Zhentil Keep raids to the south and west.

For more information on these locations, see Chapter 6.

The Awakening



In this chapter the heroes are ambushed, captured, branded, and brought to Tilverton.

Encounter 1

This encounter may occur anywhere in the Realms at that time-honored adventurers' gathering spot, the tavern. (It can be assumed for PCs who have completed *Ruins of Adventure* that this encounter occurs in the now-domesticated city of Phlan.) Read the following passage to the players:

The commons room is crowded, as is normal in prosperous times when the townspeople have benefited from the actions of wise and sure adventurers such as yourself. Mugs slosh with heady ale, and the cheers from a dart game in the corner and the rattle of dice echo across the bar.

You and your adventuring companions are seated at one of the larger and more prominent tables, nursing your own flagons of mead and ale. The past month has been quiet, and your adventurer's spirit is on the rise. Soon it will be time to quit this oasis of relative peace for new adventures.

You notice a tall, solemn-looking man weaving his way across the tavern toward your table. It is quite clear that he has drunk too much and is making forward motion only through sheer force of will. You point him out to your companions, and your table watches him stride unsteadily forward. From his dress he is undoubtedly one of the gentry, and on his sleeve he bears a patch showing a purple dragon, the symbol of the nation of Cormyr.

At last he stands before you. He goggles at your group, as if trying to dispel any multiple images. "Excuse me," he begins. "I wonder if you would be so kind as to help an envoy of Good King Azoon of Comeer, er, Cormyr." He wobbles and waits for a reply.

The man is Rastafan Dimetar, a courtier in the court of King Azoun IV of Cormyr. Rastafan has two problems. The first is obvious—he cannot hold his liq-

uor and has gotten himself absolutely blotto in an evening's carousal. His other problem is that, in said carousal, he has lost his purse, and the tavernkeeper is demanding payment before he departs. Rastafan, as he explains this part of the problem, will motion over to the bar, where an incredibly burly and formidable woman stands, rolling pin in hand.

"I tol' the dear lady," Rastafan continues, pulling up a chair so he does not topple over, "tha' you dear gentlepeople, respectable adventurers all, were friends and tha' you would cover the debt. I can get the money easley, er, eas-i-ly, but it's at another inn. I was wonderin' if you could len' me the money, to be quickly repaid, of course, of course, and get me out of this jam."

What Rastafan owes the barkeep is not a princely amount. Set a figure according to the wealth of the PCs. If their pickings have been good of late, then Rastafan's bar tab could be as high as a hundred gold pieces. If the player characters are currently tapped out themselves, the debt is only a few gold pieces, but no matter how small, it is more than Rastafan has at his disposal.

If the players kick in to help Rastafan, he will be very friendly and will offer to buy them a round (with their money, of course, but he says he will pay them back). He will also offer to them some "important news" that they could use.

If the players rebuff Rastafan, he will sit down among them and, in a conspiratorial whisper, offer them some "choice information" that would make any adventurer happy. Even if the heroes do not then "buy" the information, Rastafan will blurt it out, hoping to cadge a few coins in any way possible.

The "important news" is this: Last year, King Azoun's youngest daughter, Alusair Nacacia, ran off. Suspicion ran high that Gharri of Gond, a cleric from Tilverton, was involved, and indeed this was the main reason that the king sent forces to Tilverton and then stationed them there semipermanently.

This news has been on the grapevine, passed along in bards' tales and adven-

turers' legends, for the past few months. Rastafan's news is that the king's daughter was spotted again in the area near Tilverton not so very long ago, apparently making her way back to the city. Yet, still no one has seen her there. The king has been sending out envoys to recruit adventurers to locate his runaway daughter.

Rastafan is one such envoy, and has been given the authority to recruit true-hearted adventurers wherever he might find them, sending them to Tilverton to help scare up the missing princess. He has only his modest savings at another lodging, but can issue a letter of mark, instructing the bearer to be paid 1000 gp when the letter is presented to a responsible member of the Cormyrian bureaucracy.

If the adventurers are interested, he will gladly issue such a letter of mark if they will pay off his bar bill and help him back to his own quarters. There he will, in defiance of normal human nature, pay off the bad debt to the heroes. Then he will collapse in a drunken sleep until morning.

The journey to Tilverton may start anywhere in the Realms. If the heroes have completed *Ruins of Adventure*, the recommended route is south from Phlan across the Moonsea to Hillsfar, along the Southern Road past the Standing Stone and through Mistedale, and finally through Tilver's Gap to Tilverton. The alternate route, through Zhentil Keep, is patrolled by Zhentarim forces and as such has an evil reputation.

Use the wilderness encounter tables in Appendix II to determine encounters in the wild en route to Tilverton. Two definite encounters should be the ones given below: the meeting with the bard (the Nameless Bard) and the Ambush. Set the first one to occur on any evening when the PCs are camping out in the wild. Set the second for a night after that when the characters pass through Tilver's Gap, Shadow Gap, or the Stone-lands en route to Tilverton.

Encounter 2

This encounter passes on further information to the players, and sets up the interest of Elminster in the player characters.



The fire, built of dry and fallen wood, crackles merrily as your party begins preparation for dinner. The sky is overcast and the land turns gray and dark earlier than normal. You post watches to ward against monsters.

Give the players a chance to detail who is on the lookout for evil creatures, and where they are. Ask one individual on watch to roll for surprise. If the character is not surprised, read the following:

You see him before he sees you, a tall lone figure with a backpack and a staff. He carries a sword at his side and a yarting (an eight-stringed guitar) across his back. As you watch, he looks toward your position, shielding his eyes in the dying light of the day. Finally he cups his hands to his mouth and shouts, "Hello, the camp! Be you interested in a guest for your evening meal?"

If the player characters do not reply, or reply hostilely, he will move on. If invited to join the camp, he will do so.

If the chosen character fails his surprise roll, read the following:

The sky darkens and the last rays of the sun disappear, leaving the landscape a rippling set of grays and shadows. You strain your eyes to discern movement near the camp. Any creature could creep up on your party through these shadows.

All is quiet; then a deep, melodious voice to your right says, "Looking for something in particular, or are you just browsing?"

The speaker is the bard mentioned from the previous description. He took advantage of the watcher being off his mark by closing and inviting himself in. He looks nonthreatening (his sword is still in his sheath), but if attacked he will *teleport* away (using his ring). If threatened, he will shrug his shoulders and wander off.

The Nameless Bard (19th level bard): AC 4 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12"; HD

10; hp 59; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); *ring of teleportation*; AL CG; THAC0 4.

The bard will not give his name. ("What do names matter, when men take the names that please them?" he will say, or "My name is unimportant; it is my tales that matter.") He brings salted rabbit meat for the stewpot and information "from throughout the Realms."

The information is the important part, since this provides more news on the Realms and provides a basis for further adventuring. Here, in summary form, are the tales the bard tells:

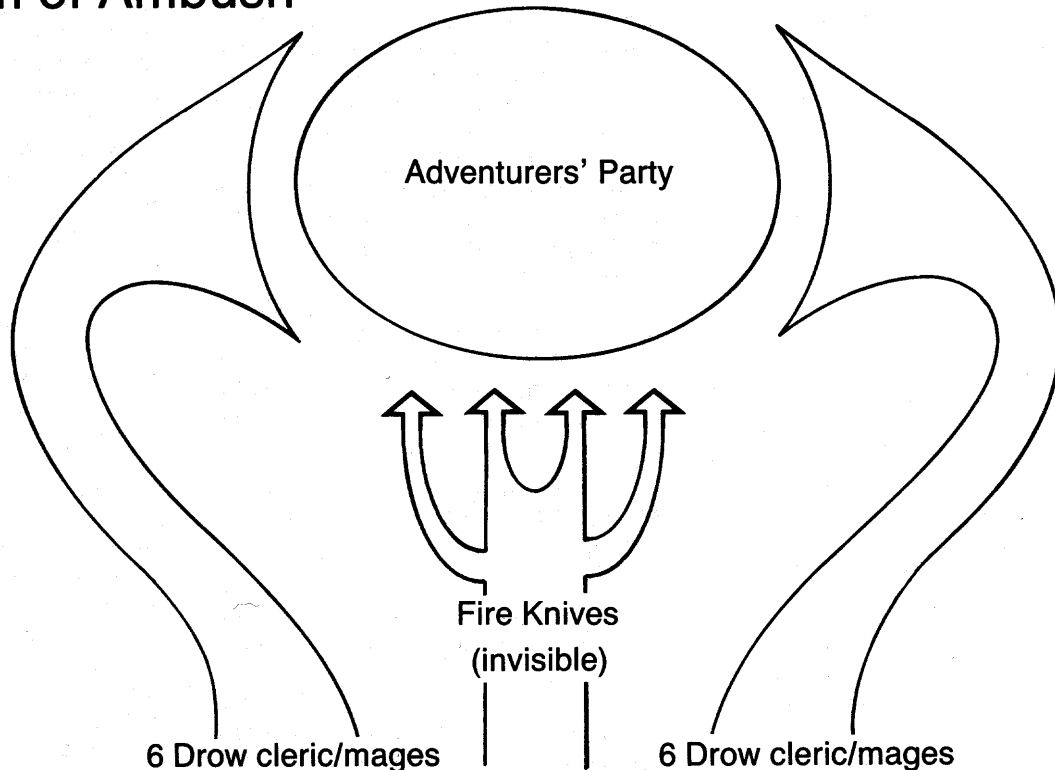
- * The daughter of King Azoun IV of Cormyr is still missing. She has been said to have been spotted in Westgate, sailing with a group of brigands from the Pirate Isles, and it is thought that she has returned to Tilverton. Rumor states that she ran off with the High Cleric of Gond Wondermaker, a priest named Gharri. The princess, Alusair Nacacia, is the youngest and most strong-willed child of the king, and has been missing for more than a year. It is said that a great reward is offered by the king.
- * Speaking of his majesty, the Purple Dragon of Cormyr will be arriving in Tilverton in the near future. The official word is that he will be meeting with town leaders about the occupation of the city by Cormyrian troops, and offering the town the chance to join the nation of Cormyr proper. Scuttlebutt in the courts of Cormyr says, though, that his majesty is more interested in recovering his errant daughter.
- * Tilverton is ruled by a council of burghers, but the real power was held, until recently, by the Lord of Tilverton, the cleric Gharri of Gond. He has disappeared as well, and may have run off with the princess, or gone into hiding after the arrival of the Cormyrians.
- * Dragons are becoming more active in the lands surrounding the Inner Sea. A great wyrm threatened the city of Suzail and was later shot down over Westgate, destroying most of the town in the process. More dragons have been spotted around the Vale of Lost Voices, in

Battledale, and near Haptooth Hill.

- * The Iron Throne, a merchant company that may have been supplied by the Zhentarim, closed off the Shadow Gap for a short time, leveling the inn that was at the Gap's crest. A band of noble adventurers defeated the creature who held the inn, a kalmari, and since then a new inn has been erected on the spot. The new inn is called "The Gulp & Swallow."
- * The kalmari? It's an evil creature created by a hell-witch from Westgate, now dead, though her creatures live on. It is a huge black cloud with a gaping mouth, and is often cloaked in stolen human flesh, looking normal until it chooses to destroy others. The Red Wizards of Thay, the Zhentarim, and the Iron Throne all were said to have these hell-creatures at their disposal.
- * There has been another shake-out among the Red Wizards of Thay, following another unsuccessful attack on the Witches of Rashamon. A number of powerful refugees are setting up power bases outside of Thay.
- * The Zhentarim is gathering its forces again. The Zhentarim is a group of mages, clerics, thieves, and fighters who are based in Zhentil Keep and a few other outposts, but who seek to dominate the northern lands from Waterdeep to Moonsea. Already Teshwave is a ruined heap thanks to these armies, and Yulash, nearly destroyed by a Flight of Dragons a few years ago, is now the site of a war between Zhentil Keep forces and those of Hillsfar, the latter led by their crack Red Plumes troops.
- * Many strong peoples oppose the Zhentarim. One is a rumored band of rangers, druids, and others, who are called the Harpers. They have been secretive until recently, when they have been more active in the politics of the Dalelands.
- * A huge monster has erupted out of the ruins of Yulash, apparently some abomination that had been trapped there since before the city itself was erected. It is said that the



Diagram of Ambush



monster, a huge heap of vegetation, was an incarnation of the dead god Moander. It headed south out of that city into the Elven Woods, leaving a huge swath of destruction behind it. The beast is rumored to have been destroyed, or gated to another part of the Realms.

* North of Moonsea, the city of Phlan is regaining its lost power. A group of powerful adventurers, conquering many great monsters, discovered the legendary Pool of Radiance and defeated its guardian, the creature known as Tyranthraxus.

The bard will gladly pass on any or all of this information, as well as anything the DM wishes to add for his own campaign. He will in turn listen to what the player characters have to say (if anything), and add that to his tales. If asked to stay the night, he will offer to stand a watch. No matter what, when dawn breaks the next morning, he will be gone.

If the bard is threatened, he will try to

leave peaceably. If attacked, he will use his *ring of teleportation* to transport himself to safety (either far from the party, or to Shadowdale if need be). His gear is protected by a *magic mouth* spell, which will give an alarm should anyone try to steal from him.

All of the bard's information is strained through his particular sources, in addition to his own censoring. It is true as far as he knows, and as far as he sees fit to reveal. The Harpers, for example, are indeed a group of rangers, druids, and others. The "others" he does not mention are bards, and this Nameless Bard is one of them. He is wandering the countryside gathering information, which he will turn over to his ally Elminster. If the heroes are open about themselves (as they ought to be), the sage will know a great deal about them when they encounter him later.

Encounter 3

This encounter takes place near Tilver-

ton, and is geared toward overwhelmingly capturing the player characters so they awaken in Chapter 2 with the brands placed on them.

The basic contingent of the ambushing force consists of these adversaries:

- 9 thieves of the Fire Knives guild, each 9th level.
- 12 dark elf mercenaries hired by Dracandos.
- 2 clerics of Moander, each 4th level.
- 2 magic-users of the Zhentarim, each 1st level.

The DM may strengthen the opposition if the player characters are particularly powerful or have abilities that would defy normal ambushing.

The Fire Knives have been provided with *invisibility* by the Zhentarim mages and *silence, 15' radius* by the Moander clerics. They carry swords tipped with drow paralysis poison (effects described below). If they attack by surprise, they have a chance of *immediately* knocking out each member of the PC party on the



first round, according to the level of the defender:

Defender Level	Chance of KO
0-1	95%
2-3	90%
4-5	80%
6-7	70%
8-9	55%
10-11	40%
12-13	30%
14-15	20%
16-17	5%
18+	0%

There is no saving throw against this immediate knockout. It is used here as an idealized "perfect case," with the intention that the player characters will be captured, not killed. The above rule of thumb is not recommended for everyday adventuring.

If the thieves fail to knock out the heroes in their first attack, or are detected, they will fight normally.

Fire Knives thieves (9th level, 9): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 9; hp 36 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + paralysis poison; AL LE; THACO 16.

Drow Elf mercenaries: These 6th level fighters will remain in the background, choosing to use their hand-held crossbows in a fight. The quarrels are tipped with the paralysis venom developed by the drow, the same venom used to coat the blades of the assassins. In normal combat the venom forces the target to save versus poison at -3 or fall asleep for 10-60 rounds (at least for the duration of the battle).

Drow Elf mercenaries (6th level fighters, 12): AC 3; MV 12"; HD 6; hp 45 each; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-4 (crossbow) + poison in either case; AL CE; THACO 16.

Clerics of Moander: These two low-level clerics were brought along to help with the *silence* spells and healing (if necessary) after the event. In addition to *silence 15' radius*, they each have two *hold person* spells to be used if a group of individuals tries to break out. One carries a scroll inscribed with an *unholy word*, to be used as a last emergency measure.

Clerics of Moander (4th level, 2): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 4; hp 24 each; #AT 1; Dmg

1-6 (mace); AL CE; THACO 18.

Zhentarim mages: The Black Network apparently cheated its allies; it promised magic-users but delivered two puny novices. Each one packs a scroll, however, that he can read from, with the following powerful spells, which each may use at his discretion: *stinking cloud*, *light*, *detect invisible*, *haste*, *protection from normal missiles* (to be cast before the battle), *polymorph other*, and *time stop* (a last resort).

The chance of any of these spells failing is as normal, with the following advisory: if it is necessary for the plot to continue, the spell should succeed (the player characters may still attempt saving throws).

Zhentarim mages (1st level, 2): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 1; hp 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger) + drow poison; AL LE; THACO 20.

The ambushers' plan is to attack the party when camping, preferably in some deserted area.

The thieves, rendered invisible and silent, go in first, while the drow break up into two contingents bracketing the party. There will be a cleric and a mage with each side. The thieves will try to take out as many characters as possible using surprise, including any characters standing watch. The watch may roll for surprise *only* to detect the drow and their clerics and magic-users. Unless they have magical abilities to detect the invisible and silent thieves, they will not detect them until the thieves attack.

Upon attacking, the thieves will become visible, but their silenced condition 15' around them will spoil spells that require a verbal component if a PC tries to cast one within that area.

The thieves' priority is the watch, and sleeping characters who look powerful (old mages, strong fighters, etc.). The drow mercenaries' priority is mages, any members of the watch who have avoided the initial assault, and any characters who are seeking to escape. The Zhentarim mages' priorities are would-be escapees, and those who may be invisible. The clerics of Moander are to round up escapees as well, and to bring on the heavy artillery if needed (if it looks like even one PC is going to escape).

If the player characters somehow get

the better of the attacking force, the ambushers will fight to the death (they fear their own masters more than they do the player characters). If apprehended and questioned magically, they will only confess to receiving orders from their masters to meet with the others, ambush the characters, and deliver them to Tilverton. This may set the characters on the road toward discovering these hidden masters without being saddled with the Curse of the Azure Bonds—if, for some reason, the DM would prefer playing through the events of the module without using the brands and the compulsions.

If the player characters kill the attacking force or cause them to run off, the DM should try again with a stronger force (adding giants with nets, perhaps a gorgon, or other powerful creatures, but not any of the named individuals from the other parts of this module).

The magic-users' scrolls will not survive the battle, either because they are used up or destroyed when their owners die. The drow venom will lose its effect 24 hours after the battle.

Should one or two characters escape the trap and seek to follow their friends, Tyranthraxus will discover their activities and dispatch a small force (four thieves, one cleric, one mage) to deal with them. Heroes who join the adventure at a later point to locate their missing comrades will find no trace of them (magically or otherwise) until they reappear in Tilverton, branded.

Finally, a word about what goes on behind the scenes for two weeks after a successful ambush and capture. The survivors among the ambushers deliver the heroes to the depths of Tilverton, to a vault protected by the spells of Tyranthraxus, where the Azure Bonds are placed on them. The various surviving members of the ambushers are supposedly dispatched to far locations to avoid any connection with the incident. (In reality, each faction of the New Alliance sends its survivors into combat against the others, in order to make sure that there are no leaks in their plans this time. The result should be the eventual elimination of all the other parties in the ambush.)

Tilverton



By normal or DM-inspired means, the heroes have been captured and branded with the Azure Bonds of the New Alliance. They awaken to discover their plight and quickly become involved with the Fire Knives, the King of Cormyr, and an unfortunate noble named Giogi Wyvernspur.

Encounter 1

Read the following passage to the players:

You awaken to the sound of two dogs barking and the evening hubbub of wagons and carriages passing by your window. You are resting on a simple straw tick covered with gray-ing sheets. You look around to find your companions similarly laid out, and just now awakening. You remember an attack, dark elves and figures leaping out the shadows and appearing magically among your midsts.

Then nothing, a deep void of blackness, until your awakening.

Your gear has been packed neatly beside your bed. You reach for it, then stop—as you notice that your entire right arm has been covered by an ornate, gleaming tattoo, marked with strange and arcane symbols!

See the earlier section “The Azure Bonds” (in the Introduction) for the appearances and effects of the symbols. All those who were successfully ambushed will awaken to find themselves in this state—branded by the New Alliance for mysterious purposes.

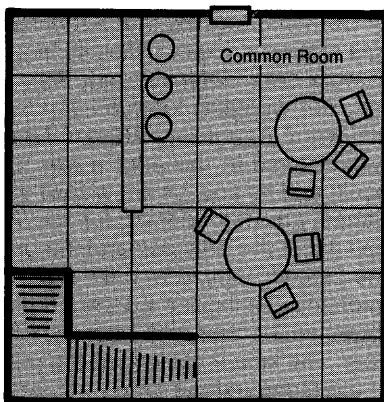
Some players may have read the novel *Azure Bonds* and/or played the computer-game version of this adventure. They should feel free to share whatever they know, considering it as knowledge gleaned from other sources (such as the Nameless Bard from Chapter 1). They (and you, the DM) should

also be aware that not everything a player may have learned from the novel or the computer game will be true in the context of this module.

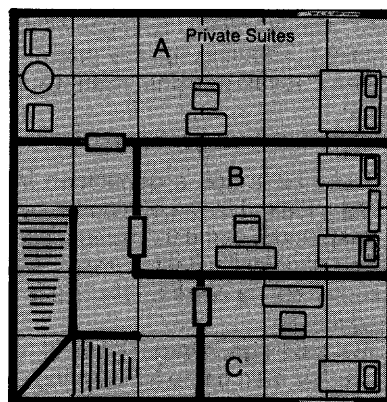
All of the characters' gear is present, with the following exceptions, if they apply:

- * Magical scrolls containing spells of level seven or higher have been claimed by Dracandros of Thay, and will be found with him at his tower at Haptooth Hill. Dracandros may use these scrolls against the heroes at a later date.
- * Devices or scrolls which raise the dead or wield esoteric healing abilities have been claimed by the Moanderites and/or the Zhentarim, and will be found at their locations.
- * Rings and other devices which allow *wishes* have been grabbed in the name of Tyranathraxus, and will be found among the treasure in his lair in Myth Drannor, protected from magical detection.

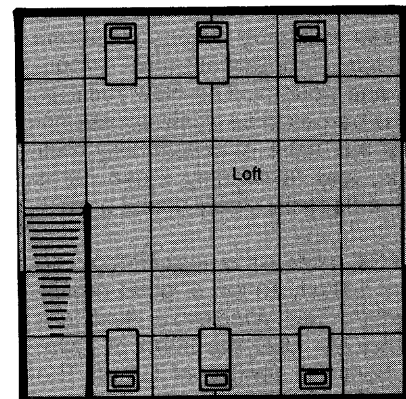
Windlord's Rest



1st Floor



2nd Floor



3rd Floor



- * Devices which contact or summon creatures from other planes, including items of elemental summoning, efreet bottles, and djinn rings, have been claimed by the Survivors of Moander, who intend to use them to pierce through the veil that separates the Realms from Moander's home.
- * All artifacts become the possessions of Tyranthraxus, by virtue of his being the most powerful member of the New Alliance. Alternately, the Mad Red Wizard Dracandros may have claimed these and already shipped them to an agent in Thay, to use as a bargaining tool for his return. The DM may use this alternative if he wishes to continue adventures beyond the bounds of this module. The sourcebook *Dreams of the Red Wizards* by Steve Perrin will be helpful for gaining further information on Thay.
- * Scrolls which protect from possession have been destroyed (perhaps the player characters will find their remains in a fireplace at the Thieves' Guild).
- * *Potions of human control* and more powerful magical rods, such as the *rods of rulership* or *beguiling*, may be in the hands of one of the more powerful enemies or, at the DM's option, may have been traded to some other force in return for favors, information, or supplies, putting the heroes on another mission following this one to locate the lost items.

All other enchanted items remain with the heroes, including magical weapons and armor, "nonthreatening" rings, scrolls, and potions. The New Alliance wants the heroes to be as strong as possible for the sake of completing their missions, and takes only those items that it deems to be highly useful or dangerous.

The PCs' room is the upper loft of The Windlord's Rest, an inn of good quality in Tilverton. The Windlord's Rest is a three-story inn near the heart of town, across from the Temple of Gond. The topmost floor was converted from an attic to one main room, with gabled windows providing light and an excellent view of the city.

Those looking out the windows to the east will see the imposing edifice of the Temple of Gond Wondermaker to the north of the inn. It is approaching midday, and the sounds of commerce, street traffic, and general commotion reach up to the PCs' ears. If the player characters are familiar with Tilverton, they will recognize where they are immediately. Also, any individual looking out the window will catch sight of a splendid carriage rounding the far corner, emblazoned with the Purple Dragon of Cormyr.

The stairs from the loft lead down to the second floor, where there are individual suites, and finally to the common room of The Windlord's Rest. It is here that the characters will meet Thungor Triblane, the gnome who owns the inn. If the characters make undue noise (like shouts of pain from trying to remove the bonds), Triblane will come to them.

Thungor Triblane, gnome (former 3rd level illusionist): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (100 gold pieces in a sock, wielded as a blackjack); SA spell use; SZ S; AL LN; THAC0 20.

Thungor is a bit daunted by people taller than he, but is basically honest and stalwart. He will react positively if treated well by the characters, but like a wise old dutch uncle if the characters are upset or angry (as well they should be, having been ambushed, kidnapped, robbed, and branded). Thungor will flee if attacked, shouting for the guard, as his many loyal patrons rush to his defense.

Here's what Thungor knows:

- * Three days ago a gentleman in a red cloak, his face hidden by a deep hood, came to Thungor's inn, The Windlord's Rest, to rent the loft room for a week. He paid in advance.
- * Two days ago, a larger party of red-hooded men came in, carrying the bodies and equipment of the party. They carried them up to the loft and laid things out as they were when the characters awoke.
- * The bodies did not look particularly well off, and Thungor asked the hooded men where the adventurers came from. "We are a quiet, holy order," said the lead red-hood.

"We found these people left for dead alongside the road, ambushed by brigands. We healed them as best we could, then brought them here."

- * Thungor was still unconvinced, but a bag of gold quieted him at the time.
- * Since then, the adventurers had been out like a light.
- * He's never seen the red-hoods before or since.
- * The date is a month after the characters' ambush by the New Alliance.
- * The characters had the blue doodads (his word) on their arms when they arrived.
- * Their packs have not been disturbed, and nothing has been taken from them while the characters have been here at The Windlord's Rest. (This last is a half-truth; Thungor took nothing, but *did* check out their possessions and in particular their gold).
- * Thungor swears all of the above is true, "Cross my heart and may Gond turn me blue."

Thungor wants to know if the characters are involved with the visit of the King of Cormyr. It seems that Azoun himself has arrived in town. Officially he is here to work out a defense treaty with Tilverton, but wagging tongues say that his wayward daughter, Alusair Nacacia, was spotted in the area a few months back, and he and his pet wizard Vangerdahast are here looking for her. Rumor has it that the princess and the priest of the biggest temple in town had mutual interests (Thungor's words) and ran off together. Neither has been seen for a year. The king is staying at the mansion of the Gunderstone family not far away.

As for the character's brands, Thungor breezily suggests that the characters get them cured at the Temple of Gond, as if they were no more than a simple cold or a case of lycanthropy. If the heroes have already caught on to the painful consequences of trying to remove the markings themselves, Thungor will recommend the services of a friend of his—Filani of Tantras, who has taken residence in the city as a sage, after fleeing legal problems in her home city. (Filani is a friend of

TILVERTON

- 1 Windlord's Rest
- 2 Gindarstone Mansion
- 3 Filani the Sage
- 4 Temple of Gond
- 5 Tilver's Palace (Abandoned ruins)
- 6 Cormyr Stairs
- 7 Market Stairs
- 8 Tilver Stairs
- 9 Upper City Gate
- 10 Market

To Shadow Gap
and Shadowdale

To Groll Pass
and Cormyr

To Tilver's Gap
and Mistedale





Thungor—they used to adventure together—and Thungor has already passed on to Filani drawings of the symbols on the PCs' arms and a reckoning of the amount of gold the heroes are carrying.)

Encounter 2

Encounters 2, 3, and 4 may occur in any order, and do not necessarily need to occur at all. How the adventure proceeds at this point depends on whether the characters decide to approach the king immediately (Encounter 2), to seek out the sage (Encounter 3), or to go to the Temple of Gond Wondermaker (Encounter 4).

If the characters try to meet the king, they will be directed to the mansion of the Gunderstone family. This relatively prestigious burgher clan has vacated its home temporarily so that the accommodations can be used by the king and his court.

The mansion has three entrances: the main one, a back entrance, and a servants' entrance. The carriage marked with trappings and pennants of the King of Cormyr is parked by the back entrance.

Each of the entrances is watched over by three Cormyrian guardsmen, armed with long swords and carrying dragon-headed whistles on thongs around their necks. They are to forbid all entry into the mansion to those without official business with the king.

Unfortunately, the guards do not have their stories coordinated. The ones at the front door say that the king is out sightseeing in the city. The ones at the servants' door say he is within, but meeting with church officials. The three guards at the back door by the carriage state that the king is within, but resting, and not to be disturbed. The guards are officious, polite, and abrupt in their answers. They will gladly take any messages or pleas for the king, which they will direct through His Majesty's personal secretary.

If the characters make any trouble, attack the guards, or try to force their way through, the guards will sound their dragon-headed whistles. Ten reinforcements of the guard will appear in 2 rounds, and twenty more in 2 rounds fol-

lowing that. Individuals will be given a choice of surrendering and retreating or being arrested for disturbing the peace.

Cormyrian Guards (3rd level fighters): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL LG; THAC0 18.

If the heroes do make an appointment, one will be set up for two days hence—but it will not be kept (see Encounter 5).

If the heroes stake out the building, after about an hour two men leave by the back door and climb quickly into the cab of the royal carriage. One is a paunchy wizard dressed in robes, the other a thin, foppish dandy who is sweating profusely even in the cool air. They are Vangerdahast and Giogi Wyvernspur. The former is the court wizard, the latter a gadabout from Cormyr whose only notable talent (in the context of this adventure) is his ability to mimic the king's voice. The carriage will go from here directly to the scene of Encounter 5.

Encounter 3

The sage Filani, recommended by the innkeeper Thungor, lives in a modest three-story home across from the Temple of Gond Wondermaker.

Filani of Tantras (9th level magic-user, sage specializing in Politics and History): AC 9; MV 12"; HD 9; hp 36; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA & SD spell use; AL N; THAC0 19.

Filani is a beautiful woman with dark hair bound up in white ribbons. Thungor has warned her already about the characters, so she is ready to receive them without any difficulty.

Filani is a businesswoman, and in exchange for information and aid, she will set a price in advance. She knows from Thungor how much money the player characters are carrying, and her price is 90 percent of that amount. She will not settle for less.

Further, she will not cast spells ("Casting spells on unknown runes is as smart as shoving your face into a dragon's throat," she says coyly), directing the characters toward the Temple of Gond if they are seeking that sort of aid.

If endangered, Filani will *dimension door* to her own loft and summon the guard from there. The heroes may

return to Filani any number of times, but she will only provide the information she has on hand, and only at the price demanded.

Filani's information is as follows:

- * The first symbol, closest to each character's wrist, is a dagger wrapped in flame—the emblem of the Fire Knives, an old thieves' guild that was based in Cormyr. It ran afoul of the king and his supporters, and as such was for the most part destroyed. Survivors escaped to Westgate and to Tilverton, where they set up "guilds in exile," working with the local thieves. The Westgate branch is said to have been recently destroyed as well in a battle with adventurers. The Tilverton branch has been seeking to control the local criminal scene for years. The Fire Knives' hatred of King Azoun remains unabated, and this is one reason why everyone is so security-minded in the city these days.
- * The second symbol is that of the cult of a dead god, Moander, also called The Jawed God. True worship of the deity died out over a thousand years ago, when elven mages broke its temples and imprisoned the god. Since then, various crackpot groups have sought to revive the worship, always in an evil fashion. A tale recently come from the North says that an ancient temple was found beneath Yulash, and that a great monster was found there. The beast escaped, wreaking great havoc among both the Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar forces.
- * Speaking of Zhentil Keep, the third symbol is the secret sign of the Zhentarim, a fell and powerful organization that operates throughout the North but whose base of power is in Zhentil Keep. A coalition of powerful mages and clerics of Bane, the god of tyranny, the Zhentarim is ruled by Lord Manshoon, a great wizard, and his assistant, the evil high priest Fzoul Chembryl.
- * The fourth symbol requires some further research, for its precise significance is unknown. Its style, with angular jags and a flaming motif,



suggests the emblem of the Red Wizards of Thay. Their empire lies at the far end of the Sea of Fallen Stars, though they have agents roaming throughout the land. They dream of eventual conquest, but are continually wracked by internal conflict. Because of this infighting, while the Red Wizards are potentially more powerful than the forces of Zhentil Keep, they are presently less effective.

* The fifth and last symbol seems to have something in common with that of Moander. The Jawed God has been long dead, but recently news of him has surfaced. So it is with the representative of this symbol, which depicts the elvish rune for a name surrounded by flames. The name is that of the evil Tyranthraxus—a monster thought to have been defeated by adventurers. However, his name is being whispered in certain dark places once again.

Players whose characters have battled Tyranthraxus previously should be turning ashen at about this point. Indeed, if these heroes did fight Tyranthraxus, this is the true reason that they were chosen for this noble experiment. (If the heroes and Tyranthraxus are strangers, then it was mere chance—the PCs' misfortune—that put them in their present situation.)

Filani has no other information at hand, but points out that there is a renowned sage to be found on the road to Zhentil Keep and Yulash: Elminster the Wise, of Shadowdale. Elminster rarely sees visitors, but she will provide a letter of introduction if the PCs want one.

If the heroes want to try to have their brands removed, she recommends the Temple of Gond across the street.

Encounter 4

The Temple of Gond is an imposing structure which dominates the Upper City of Tilverton. It is five stories high and very broad, such that it sits like a brooding dragon overlooking the city. The bulk of the interior is devoted to the main chapel, but small corridors line the perimeter, leading to small meeting

rooms, libraries, and areas for spell research.

Gond is the god of blacksmiths, artificers, crafts, and construction, and his temple shows it. The walls are littered with clocks and other devices, continually in operation. The floor reverberates from the effect of some subterranean activity, and the ring of a smithy's hammer can be heard in the distance. The clerics of this faith carry hammers instead of the typical maces.

The former high priest of the temple was Gharri of Gond, the man who disappeared (along with the king's daughter) over a year ago. His subaltern, Burlan of Gond, now runs the temple until a new high priest is appointed. While Burlan is fairly powerful (12th level), he lacks both the diplomacy and temporal power that made Gharri the controlling force that he once was.

There is much rush and bother about the hall, for the King of Cormyr and his court wizard will be visiting fairly shortly, and all must be put into readiness. Burlan sees this as a chance to offset the rumors that Gharri ran off with Princess Alusair Nacacia, and has little time for other problems.

The heroes will be greeted by a lesser priest and asked their business. The priest, Castar, will see little problem in trying to remove the runes and will usher the heroes into a small room adjoining the main temple.

Castar will measure the runes, making notes for the temple's library. He will ask the going rate for a casting of *dispel magic* (500 gold—he reads it from a scroll). He will ask for one of the heroes to volunteer.

When the magic hits them, the brands will force their owner to react as described in the earlier section "The Azure Bonds": by attacking the person casting the spell. The hero will seek to attack physically, throttling the cleric with his bare hands if need be, until the fit passes. The other player characters should try to restrain the hero who is attacking.

Castar of Gond (3rd level cleric): AC 5; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 24; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5 (hammer); AL N; THAC0 20.

Castar will try to flee if attacked, and other clerics will gather to protect their

own if the other characters do not restrain their friend. If Castar is slain, a cry goes up for the watch, and the player characters are treated as if they had attacked the king (see Encounter 5 below). If the affected PC is restrained, the urge to slay Castar will pass in a few rounds, and everyone involved will correctly assume that the brands, and not the character himself, caused the hostile action. If they make proper apologies (and promise *never* to return) the heroes will be let out of the temple without further incident.

As they leave, they will see a large crowd gathering on the front steps of the temple. A white carpet is being rolled from the entrance to the curb; obviously, the clerics are making final preparations for the king's visit.

Encounter 5

This encounter takes place after the heroes have visited the temple, or have followed the coach from the mansion to the temple, or have visited the sage's house and decided to merely leave town. Read the following to the players:

A large throng has gathered about the stairs to the Temple of Gond. The twenty-three priests of the temple, dressed in their finery, bracket the stairs up the temple. Burlan, the current acting high priest, is at the top. A white carpet runs from the curb to the temple's mouth. The loyal and the curious have gathered to meet the King of Cormyr.

The royal carriage approaches, pulled by four white stallions. Pennants bearing the symbol of the Purple Dragon fly in the wind. A patrol of ten horsemen precede the carriage, and ten other guards follow it.

Let the player characters determine where they are in the area. With the throng of people, it will be impossible to move very far or very fast (3" per turn for now—but this will change when all heck breaks loose).

The carriage pulls up, its interior dark and its blinds pulled. The door opens and the court wizard Vangerdahast climbs out. The door swings shut behind him. A hand, bearing a ring with the pur-



ple dragon on it, appears from behind the curtain, resting on the bottom of the window of the carriage door.

"Greetings, people of Tilverton, and most worthy clerics of Gond Wondermaker, Smithy, and Artificer," says the mage. "I am Vangerdahast, personal wizard to our Royal Majesty King Azoun, the Purple Dragon of Cormyr. My lord is tired from his long journey, and must decline Priest Burlan's invitation to tour the temple today, but His Majesty does wish to address the crowd briefly. Your Majesty . . ." Vangerdahast motions to the carriage and steps back.

What is occurring here is a sham for the masses. The true king is in Tilverton, but in disguise, while a young lord named Giogi Wyvernspur has been persuaded to masquerade as the monarch, imitating the king's voice. Vangerdahast hopes that any assassins from the Fire Knives will attack the false king and reveal themselves in that fashion. He is unaware of the New Alliance and the Azure Bonds, though he does know that Giogi was almost slain several months ago by the woman Alias, who was branded in a similar fashion.

Giogi's speech goes something like this: "Dear, dear people of Tilverton, brave souls who dare to challenge the uncivilized wastes beyond the Stonelands, who rise above adversity to accept the aid and protection of your southern neighbor, I bring you greetings from myself and my family. I wish to thank in particular the kind and gracious priests of Gond Wondermaker, whose gifts and salutations have been greatly appreciated, and I hope to tour your temple in the very near future."

Giogi (imitating the king in a slightly nasal voice) will continue on in this vein, saying practically nothing of substance, but saying it in very proper style, for as long as he can.

The player characters, however, have been branded with the compulsion to attack the source of the sound when they hear the king's voice. Each of the PCs must make an immediate saving throw versus spells at -6. Failure to save means that the characters will draw their weapons and try to slay the supposed King of Cormyr.

If all of the characters make their saving throws against the effect of the Fire

Knives brand, Giogi's speech will proceed normally. Vangerdahast will decide to cast *detect magic* on the crowd (in the vicinity of at least one of the PCs) to see if he can discern a threat to the "king." The brands on the character(s) in the area of effect of the spell will react as described in "The Azure Bonds" section, giving off bright blue light and causing great pain to the affected PC(s). At the DM's discretion, the casting might also trigger an attack against Vangerdahast (assuming that he would be instantly identified as the caster of the spell). Regardless of exactly what happens, these events should throw the area into turmoil and get the PCs into trouble, just as if they had mounted an immediate attack against the "king."

If one or more of the PCs draws a weapon or tries to cast a spell, the act will cause an immediate panic. The crowd will bolt as soon as it becomes clear there is danger afoot. This scrambling turmoil will ruin any spell-casting begun in the first round thereafter, both for the characters and for Vangerdahast. The royal carriage is of solid construction, but the doors can be easily ripped from the hinges, allowing quick access. As the characters attack, they will hear Giogi Wyvernspur within shouting—in his natural voice—"Oh, no! Not again!"

Vangerdahast's first duty is to save Giogi/Azoun. He will fight his way to Giogi's side, grab him, and then *dimension door* to a spot 100 feet west and 200 feet in the air. With Giogi hanging onto him for dear life, Vangerdahast will follow that with *feather fall* to bring the impostor down to safety. When Giogi is safe (for the moment, anyway), Vangerdahast will return to the fray but stay in the background, letting the Cormyr guards handle the brunt of the fight.

The 20 guardsmen accompanying the "king" will dismount and attack as soon as the characters make their moves (there is nothing subtle about a charging fighter with an axe heading for the royal carriage). They will sound the alert, so that in 6 rounds, another 20 guards will arrive, along with Vangerdahast, if he got Giogi away safely.

As soon as Giogi disappears from the immediate vicinity, the compulsion will leave the affected characters—but they

will still be facing 20 armed guards who will want to arrest them for attacking their ruler.

Cormyrrian Guards (3rd level fighters): AC 2; MV 3" (due to crowds); HD 3; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL LG; THACO 18.

The guards will seek to bring the characters to zero hit points, but not to slay them (so that they can be questioned later). They will call for the assailants to surrender. Thus, the heroes have three options: fight, try to run, or give up.

If the heroes fight and defeat both waves of Cormyrrian militia, they will have a 1 in 6 chance of encountering 20 more militiamen each turn until they leave the city. After they defeat the first group, a shady individual will beckon to them from an alley. "Buddy," he will hiss, "over here to escape the law."

If the heroes fight and are defeated, or if they surrender, they will be taken to the Burgher's Court and thrown into the dungeon, in a common cell. Weapons will be confiscated, and mages will be shackled. Toward evening, a stone block will move from the wall and a shady individual (the same one mentioned above) will pop out, hissing, "This way to escape the law."

If the heroes run (probably their wisest move), they will succeed in escaping and will then encounter the same shady individual as they make their way out of town. In this case (and the first case), the shady individual will beckon for them to follow him down an open grating at the edge of a building. From there the group passes into the sewers.

Cutthroat McGill (5th level thief): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 5; hp 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL N; THACO 19.

Once in the sewers (regardless of the situation that got them there), the shady individual turns to them and says, "Pardon for the intrusion, but the name is Cutthroat McGill. I wuz told to bring you to my boss's place. We're the Thieves' Guild around here. The real one, not those scuzzy Fire Knives." With that he points at the symbol on the character's arms.

The Thieves of Tilverton



Cutthroat McGill leads the heroes down a short, straight stretch of sewer tunnel, having no branches to the left or right. Eventually they come to a large steel door blocking their path. McGill knocks on the door three times, and the door slowly rises.

This passage leads to the underground headquarters of the Tilverton Thieves' Guild, also known as the Rogues of Tilverton. The door is raised and lowered by two ogres from the quarters in room 1. The player characters are ushered into the room marked G. Read the following to the players:

Cutthroat McGill leads you into a large, richly decorated room, the walls dripping with expensive hangings and the floor awash in pillows made of exotic fabrics. Golden bowls of oil dot the perimeter with wicks set in boats of silver, providing a dim light to the room. Along the wall you entered are long benches on either side of the door, and seated on them are a group of scummy-looking rogues who eye you suspiciously. The only other exit from the room is to your left.

At the far end of the room is a low dais upon which sits a grossly fat man in regal but tattered robes. He motions you to enter and be seated.

As the heroes make themselves comfortable, the DM should make sure of the status of their weapons. Weapons that were lost as a result of their capture by the Cormyrians are returned at this time, carried on pillows by beautiful women, and "peace-bonded"-tied with strings to prevent easy removal (untying a peace-bonded weapon takes 1-4 rounds, or 3-6 if the character attempting it is running at the time). Mages who have been shackled will have their iron bonds removed, and their spell books and magic materials will be returned to them. The weapons and other items were "liberated" from the Cormyrians in the same fashion that the heroes were.

If any of the heroes are injured, serving girls will bring *potions of extra healing* (up to three) to aid the wounded individuals.

After they have become settled, the huge man on the far dais begins to speak.

"Good evening, gentle adventurers," says the large man on the dais. "My name is Artur Grossman. My thieves call me Guildmaster to my face and the Fat Man behind my back. I am the Master of the Rogues of Tilverton. I have brought you here because we have a matter of common interest."

He points at one of you with a pudgy, ring-laden hand. "You have been marked with the symbols of an evil alliance, one of which is very unpleasant to our group. Many years back, the Fire Knives of Cormyr had their power broken by His Majesty King Azoun IV. They fled to the hinterlands. Some came here, where they petitioned my father, the former guildmaster, for sanctuary. He granted it, and within the year he was dead from their poisons.

"The Fire Knives are bullies, seeking only vengeance against the king. They hold the king's missing daughter, Alusair Nacacia, as bait to lure him here and have their agents, you people, slay him. Normally, I would not care one way or t'other, but should the king die here today, all the thieves of Tilverton will suffer. Including my group.

"We suffer if the king dies. We also suffer if we oppose the Fire Knives directly. They are small in number but powerful in ability, and have many fell magics at their beck and call. They have allied themselves with a group of misfit clerics from Yulash, who still seek to bring their dead god, Moander, back to life. They talk with parts of the Black Network, the Zhentarim. They have struck a deal with a Red Wizard named Dracandros, and they have contacted even worse powers that we know little about.

"You have been brought to our headquarters for a purpose—to hunt down and destroy the Fire Knives, freeing the king's daughter so he will take her and go home, leaving us honest thieves to perform our daily tasks. We will provide a map through the sewers to their hideout, which

used to be the home of my respected father." He waves at another serving girl carrying a scroll on yet another pillow.

"What say you, noble adventurers? True, I make no bones about being thieves, chisellers, and petty grifters, but ours is a proud organization with small goals and strong civic pride. We do not wish to see Azoun or his daughter or particularly Tilverton hurt. Will you help us against a greater evil?"

The heroes may barter with Guildmaster Grossman for what he has. He can offer up to 2000 gp as an added inducement, plus all that the characters find within the Fire Knives' hideout. He warns that the Fire Knives are of high level and use particularly formidable spell casters and monsters in their operations. Further, though the map of the sewers is accurate, the map of the hideout is probably not, since the Fire Knives have almost certainly moved some of the walls around since taking over.

Should the heroes refuse the offer, Grossman will sigh and say, "I am sorry. You realize that we cannot let you live, now, knowing what you know. I am very sorry." He rings a small bell. There is a loud clamor as a general alarm sounds and the line of mercenaries behind the characters moves in to attack.

Should the heroes accept the offer, Grossman will provide the map, and direct the woman bearing it, named Thalia, to lead the party to the exit from the kitchen storage area (room 16). As they head toward the exit on the southeast wall, there is a commotion from behind the PCs. A group of Fire Knives, preceded by a tamed rust monster, breaks in through the iron door on the north wall. The mercenaries rush toward the doorway. "Run!" shouts Grossman to the characters, pulling himself to his feet and flinging a dagger into the midst of combat, skewering an enemy. "We can hold them off here!"

Guildmaster Artur Grossman (10th level thief): AC 4 (*robes of defense*, similar to the bracers of the same name); MV 6"; HD 10; hp 54; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL N; THAC0 16.



Mercenaries of Tilverton (4th level fighters, 10): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 24 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (two-handed broad swords) or 1-8 (long swords); AL NE; THAC0 17.

Servants (zero-level humans, 7-12 in number): AC 10; MV 12"; hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (will flee unless cornered); AL N; THAC0 20.

Thalia (4th level thief, appears dressed as servant): AC 7 (including dexterity bonus); MV 12"; HD 4; hp 23; Dmg 1-4 (concealed dagger) or by other weapon; AL N; THAC0 20.

If the DM wishes, Thalia will accompany the heroes into the sewers and out of Tilverton, especially if any of the characters has a charisma of 17 or higher (she's a sucker for paladins). Grossman is a nice guy, but a touch too sexist for Thalia's tastes.

Rust Monster: AC 2; MV 18"; HD 5; hp 25; #AT 2; Dmg nil; SA rusts; AL N; THAC0 15.

Fire Knives (6th level thieves, 8): AC 7; MV 12"; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA drow paralysis venom on the blades; AL LE; THAC0 19.

Tilverton Rogues Headquarters

G. The Guildmaster's Audience Hall. As described above. Secret door behind the Guildmaster's chair opens into Barracks #1 (room 4); reinforcements from Barracks #1 and Barracks #2 (room 6) will come through here either to join the attack against the Fire Knives or against the heroes, depending on whether the PCs decided to accept the Guildmaster's proposal.

1. Ogre Quarters. This is where the guild maintains the ogres who operate the main door and are also used as "enforcers" with particularly hard-to-deal-with clients. There are six ogres in all, who work as teams of two in 8-hour shifts on door duty. The four ogres not

on duty at any given time will be sleeping, playing cards (with a 51-card deck) or generally lazing about. If combat breaks out in room G, they will come to the scene immediately, seeking to enter through the north doorway.

Ogres (6): AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1; hp 16, 17, 20, 24, 25, 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; AL CE; THAC0 15.

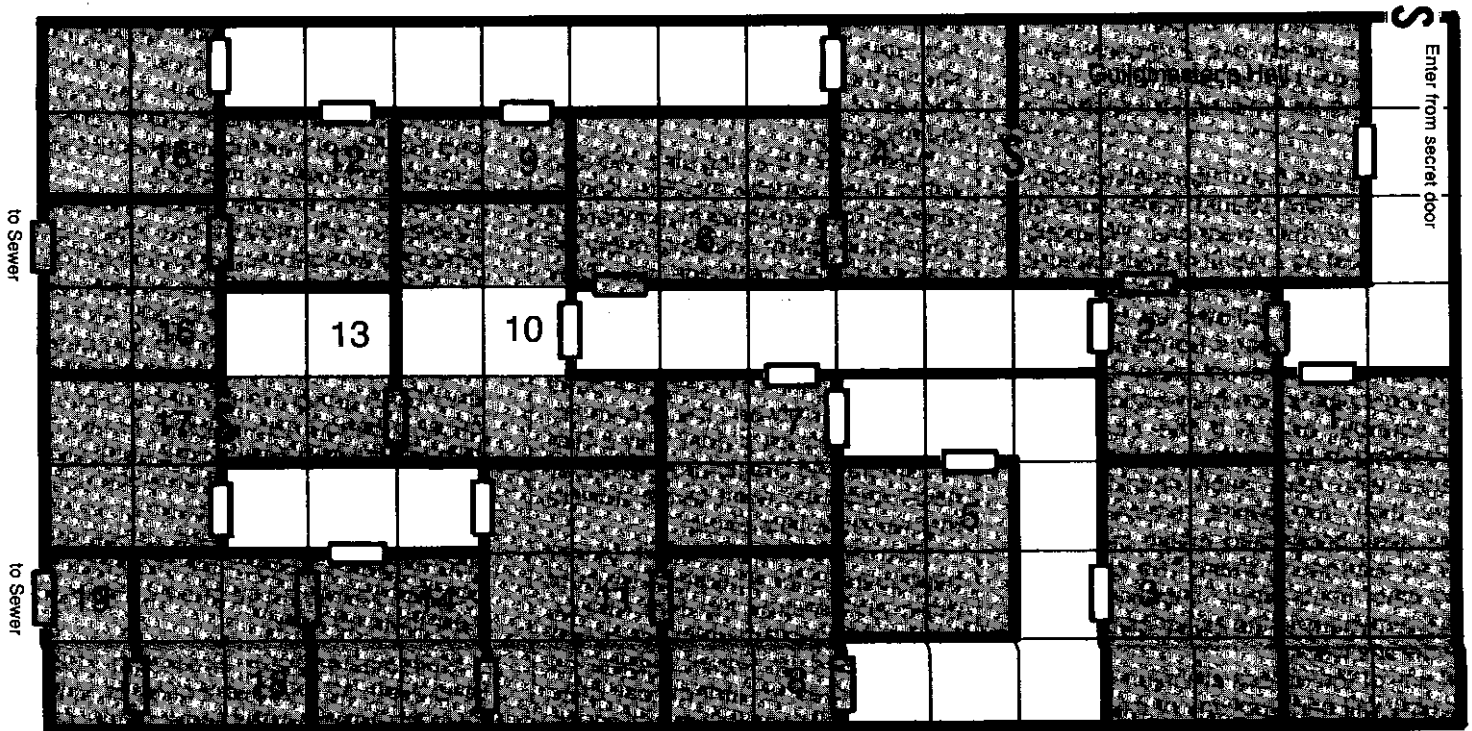
The ogres have 27 gold pieces—their winnings from card games with the guards in room 2.

2. Checkpoint #1. All three doors to this room are normally locked. The doors have small sliding panels at eye level for the guards to check anyone seeking to enter the area.

Currently, the west door (into room G) is open, the north door is locked, and the south door is closed but unlocked. The room has a simple table and two chairs.

Guards (2nd level fighters, 2): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 2; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL N; THAC0 19.

Tilverton Thieves' Guild



Corridor



3. *Treasure Room.* This room, lined with lead plates to deter treasure hunters and magical detection, has a stone door that requires ogre power (or 18 strength) to open. The room is lined with shelves, upon which sit 100 small golden casks. The casks, collected by Artur Grossman's late father, are worth 1000 gp each—which makes them, at this point in time, much more valuable than their contents.

Fifty of the casks are empty, a sign of how low the fortunes of the native thieves' guild have sunk. Forty of the remaining ones contain 200 gp apiece, nine of them each contain 200 platinum pieces (called tricrowns in the Realms), and the last one holds an account book with a running summary of all the treasure the room has contained over the years. The last few pages are covered with writing in red ink.

All the casks are similar in design, having been crafted by artisans of the Temple of Gond. Each one features a poisoned blade along the edge of the rim, which will jut out and stab anyone who lifts the lid (save versus poison or die) unless a small stud on the left leg of the cask is pressed before the lid is opened.

4. *Barracks #1.* This simple room is filled with ten bunk beds each with two lockers stuffed beneath. Twenty low-level thieves are housed here, ready to reinforce any battle in the Guildmaster's Audience Room. There is a peephole along the north wall into room G. Each of the lockers contain personal effects, and 1 in 6 will have something of worth (such as a gem of 100 gp value).

Thieves of Tilverton (2nd level, 20): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-4 (thrown dagger); SA thieving abilities; AL N; THAC0 20.

5. *Sergeant's Quarters.* This room is more ornate than a standard barracks room. It has a few paintings on the wall that until recently hung in Gunderstone Mansion and other houses of the gentry. Four sergeants, Grossman's right-hand men, have their quarters here. One will be found in the training area (room 11), while the others will be on hand here. They will challenge any strangers and

attack anyone who tries to break into the treasure room (room 3).

Sergeants of The Guild (5th level thieves, 3): AC 6; HD 5; hp 24, 26, 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA thieving abilities; AL N; THAC0 19.

6. *Barracks #2.* Similar in description to barracks #1 (room 4), this area also contains 20 thieves who will rush into barracks 4 and then into the Guildmaster's hall to aid in any fight.

Thieves of Tilverton (2nd level, 20): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-4 (thrown dagger); SA thieving abilities; AL N; THAC0 20.

7. *Checkpoint #2.* Similar in appearance to checkpoint #1 (room 2), except that both the west and north doors are locked, and the guards will not open them to anyone without authorization.

Guards (2nd level fighters, 2): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 2; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL N; THAC0 19.

8. *Barracks #3.* Similar in appearance to the other barracks (rooms 4 and 6), this one has ten bunk beds as well. It is empty, its residents either out on various missions or in training in room 11.

9. *Baths.* Steps lead down from the doorway here into a wide, white-marbled pool. A fountain along the far wall shoots water in a spray across the pond. The area is empty.

10. *Guildmaster's Quarters.* This is Grossman's home, and is even more sumptuous and tacky than his Audience Hall. A massive divan is tucked in the far north corner, and a fountain of a fish dominates the western wall.

Here also are Grossman's pets, a pair of dire wolves he raised from pups. Their names are Fluffy and Bojangles, and he treats them like puppies. ("Does pupple-wupples want din-din? Oh, pupple-wupples love din-din, don't they?") If the heroes open either door leading into this room, the wolves will growl, but will only attack if the heroes enter the room or attack them.

Dire wolves (2): AC 6; MV 18"; HD

3+3; hp 21, 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N THAC0 16.

The north door is open, but the door on the south wall is locked. Grossman carries a key to the door, and there is also one tucked behind the fish fountain.

11. *Training Area.* This area is for the training of thieves in combat and other arts. It is basically a bare rock floor sprinkled with sand. One sergeant and five thieves are within, involved in a training session. They are unaware of any combat in the other parts of the complex. If the heroes break in, they will be challenged, and if their answer is unsatisfactory, they will be attacked. If the thieves are told the truth about what's going on (the PCs' mission and the invasion of the Fire Knives), they will be helpful, telling the individuals how to escape from the complex through the back hallway (room 19).

Sergeant of The Guild (5th level thief): AC 6; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA thieving abilities; AL N; THAC0 19.

Thieves of Tilverton (2nd level, 5): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-4 (thrown dagger); SA thieving abilities; AL N; THAC0 20.

12. *Kitchen.* This room contains long tables for preparing food for Grossman and his men. A large fireplace dominates the southwest corner.

The kitchen is occupied by four cooks (zero-level humans). If the adventurers are accompanied by Thalia, the cooks will be properly deferential to the heroes. If not, the cooks will shout "Invaders!" and begin throwing things—pots, pans, cabbage, hunks of meat, etc. These projectiles do no real damage, but the cooks hope to drive the heroes out an exit—any exit. The DM should play the cooks for laughs, and if it looks like they will be slain, have them surrender.

13. *Guildmaster's Office.* The office is lit by a single large glass bowl of oil suspended above the doorway. The walls are done in a mural showing a view of Tilverton similar to the one the player characters had from the window of their loft back in the Windlord's Rest.



A massive desk and a massive chair dominate the room. The chair is mounted to the floor, and has three buttons along one arm. The first opens the secret door behind the desk leading to the library (room 17). The second dumps the bowl of oil down upon attackers in the doorway, inflicting 1-6 points of flame damage per round. The third sends an alarm through the entire complex, telling all to gather in the office and the library to deal with invaders.

The desk contains a copy of the map showing the route through the sewers to the Fire Knives' secret headquarters, as well as a piece of paper with this writing on it:

Fire Knives
Yulash
Black Network
Dracandos
?

These words are in Grossman's handwriting—the Guildmaster's musings on the sources of the heroes' brands.

Tucked in the lower right-hand drawer of the desk beneath some paperwork (mostly IOUs to the Temple of Gond), are a *dagger +3* and a pair of golden lion figurines of wondrous power (see *DMG*, page 144). The command word for the figurines, known only to Grossman, is "Leo." The word is also carved into the underside of the desk drawer, from where it can be read if the drawer is removed and turned upside down.

14. The Shrine. This simple room's doors are unlocked, and its furnishings bare and sparse; a few benches across the floor and an indentation on the far wall marked by the holy symbol of Mask, the god of thieves and intrigue. There are a few platinum coins scattered before the shrine.

Those leaving an offering at the shrine will be +1 to hit against members of the Fire Knives for the next day. Those who are foolish enough to take any of the donations already on the floor will suffer a -1 to hit for the next day against the Fire Knives, and in addition will be unable to use thieving skills successfully during that time (a twig snaps, a piece of loose plaster falls, or some other suitable minor calamity occurs to automatically spoil any attempt).

15. Servant Quarters. In this room are ten bunk beds, used by the kitchen cooks and the beautiful serving women who wait on Grossman hand and foot. There are four off-duty serving women present, in various stages of dress. If the heroes break in, they will scream, shriek, and throw pillows. They are zero-level humans, nonhostile, and if threatened will surrender. They have no treasure.

16. Storage Room. This room contains barrels of flour, salted meat, and other groceries to keep the guild in stock during a long siege. The south wall has an open doorway leading to a staircase that goes down into the sewers. However, once the heroes use the stairs, the last character in line will inadvertently trigger a mechanism that lowers a stone slab from the ceiling, blocking the doorway behind them. All of the members of the guild except for one are aware of this mechanism, and will take steps (so to speak) to keep from activating it if they come this way. The exception is Thalia—because Grossman, chauvinist that he is, has ordered this information to be withheld from her.

17. Library. Grossman is particularly fond of his library, and would be as incensed if something happened to his books as if something happened to his treasure or his wolves. The books are of two types—histories and bad poetry. Grossman especially likes the bad poetry.

Currently laid out on the table in the library is a copy of "Runes Made Easy" by the Scribes of Candlekeep. If a character examines the book, it will take 1-10 rounds to discern some significant fact about the brands on the heroes' arms. Roll separately for the time it takes to find each particular fact, and reveal the discoveries to the players in this order:

1. Fire Knives—an outlawed thieves' guild
2. Survivors of Moander—a dead god's cult
3. Dracandros—a Red Wizard of Thay
4. Zhentarim—a secret society

No amount of reading will reveal anything about the fifth mark (the one related to Tyranthraxus), because it sim-

ply isn't mentioned in the book.

The volume belongs to Filani the Sage (her name is on the inside cover), who has long since forgotten that she "lost" it. If it is taken out of the library and presented to her, she will reward the finder with 200 gp—but if Grossman finds out it's gone, the big man will be not at all pleased.

18. Armory. Here is where the guild keeps weapons and armor. All sorts of swords will be found here (up to three of each type), as well as three suits of plate armor and seven suits of leather armor. A *broad sword +2* lies jammed behind some chests, but nothing else in the room is magical.

19. Hallway. The hallway south of the armory leads to an open doorway, from which a set of stairs descends into the sewers. As with the entrance from the storage room (room 16), the step at the bottom of the stairs has a trip-stone, which will close the door behind the player characters after all of them have entered the sewers.

The Sewers



The sewers of Tilverton are a long-standing complex, begun by various hands and expanded over the years by generations of thieves, monsters, and civil servants. As with most such constructions, no single individual has a full idea of what lurks beneath the surface, and weird life and societies flourish there. The Fire Knives have established checkpoints throughout the sewer and maintain dominance over the region—but not even they, in all the years they've been sequestered here, have bothered or dared to investigate every nook and cranny of the place.

The sewer tunnels themselves are marked in gray shading on the map. In addition, the squares with a grid over them represent areas where there is a low ceiling in a room or passageway. Creatures over 4' in height suffer a -1 to hit in these areas. Lastly, some areas are flooded up to knee height, halving all movement through those regions. There are some open pits within the water, and those who fall in stand a chance of drowning unless they shed their armor.

Random Encounters

Random encounters may occur with the various denizens who occupy the sewers of Tilverton. Check for a random encounter after every 40' to 80' of travel in the sewers (vary the distance to keep players guessing), or when the heroes enter one of the rooms off the sewers that is not marked as the site of a special encounter. Random encounters will never occur within 20' of a checkpoint.

Roll on the following table to determine the nature of a random encounter. As always, the DM may increase or decrease the number of monsters encountered to reflect the strength of the party.

d10 roll	Encounter
1	1-8 trolls
2	1 otyugh
3	1 gelatinous cube
4	2-8 wights
5	4-16 ghouls
6	2-8 crocodiles
7	1-3 giant crocodiles
8	1-6 giant crayfish
9	1 black pudding
10	2-20 Fire Knives members

Trolls: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6+6; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA infravision, may attack separate targets; SD regeneration; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 13.

Otyugh: AC 3; MV 6"; HD 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-5; SA disease; SD never surprised; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 13.

Gelatinous cube: AC 8; MV 6"; HD 4; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA paralyzation; SD resistant to cold; immune to electricity, *fear*, *hold*, *paralyzation*, *polymorph*, and sleep-based attacks; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 15.

Wights: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 4+3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA life drain; SD silver or magic weapons to hit; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, cold, poison, & paralysis; SZ M; AL LE; THAC0 15.

Ghouls: AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* magics; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 16.

Crocodiles: AC 5; MV 6"/12"; HD 3; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-12; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 16.

Giant crocodiles: AC 4; MV 6"/12"; HD 7; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18/2-20; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 13.

Giant crayfish: AC 4; MV 6"/12"; HD 4+4; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/2-12; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 15.

Black pudding: AC 6; MV 6"; HD 10; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA dissolve wood; SD immune to cold, lightning, & physical attacks; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 10.

Fire Knives members (4th level thieves): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (no drow venom for these guys); SA and SD thieving abilities; SZ M; AL LE; THAC0 20. If no alarm has been sounded in the sewers (see below under "Checkpoints"), the Fire Knives will be heading toward the Tilverton Rogues' headquarters, intending to attack from behind (if the opportunity presents itself) and slay any strangers they meet up with but will not be particularly watchful. The heroes may hide from them if they gain surprise, and the thieves will pass them by. If the alarm has been sounded by any of the checkpoints, then the thieves will be actively seeking the intruders and, if encountered, they will not be able to be surprised or avoided.

Wandering monsters found in the sewers (including the thieves) will never have any treasure. Opponents encountered in rooms will have a 40% chance of possessing a chest or coffer of some sort containing 100-300 gp. There is a 20% chance that any such chest is trapped with a poison needle.

Special Encounters

Checkpoints. There are three Fire Knives checkpoint locations along the route from the Tilverton Thieves' Guild to the Fire Knives' hideout. Checkpoint duty is generally an assignment given as a form of discipline or punishment to those who have displeased Radatha, the leader of the Fire Knives.

The thieves manning each checkpoint are based in the room (2, 4, or 9) adjacent to the checkpoint in question. There will always be at least two members of the checkpoint garrison standing outside the door watching for intruders. Their torches, placed in wall sconces, will reveal their presence to those who approach, and allow the checkpoint guards to see clearly up to 20' away.

The Fire Knives have standing orders to let nonhuman denizens pass without question; most such monsters are too stupid to pose a real threat to the Fire Knives, and many of them possess great powers that could wipe out a checkpoint if any resistance was offered. The checkpoint guards will stop all human travelers, and will be especially wary of anyone approaching from the direction of the Tilverton Thieves' Guild headquarters.

That notwithstanding, it is possible to bluster one's way past the guards—they have drawn their assignments because they have offended Radatha in some small way, and they have no desire to further aggravate his displeasure. Someone claiming to be on some mission on behalf of the Fire Knives, such as spying on the Thieves' Guild or even bringing prisoners back from the raid, will be allowed to pass without causing the guards to sound the alarm. (If it occurs to them, the PCs could get past all the checkpoints quietly by showing their brands, claiming them to be evidence of their connection with the Fire Knives, and by passing off any unbrand-



ed members of the group as prisoners.)

The alarm is a large brass gong fitted in a niche in the wall in each room adjoining a checkpoint. If any persons encountered prove hostile or outwardly threatening, the guards have strict instructions to retreat into their room and sound the gong. The noise will carry, so that each checkpoint farther along the corridor will hear it and pass along the alarm. This means, naturally, that the occupants of the Fire Knives hideout will be forewarned when the heroes approach.

1. Garbage Disposal. This room is filled with wet trash, such that movement is reduced by half when moving

through the muck. It is the home of Happy Hogun, the neo-otyugh the kitchen cooks use as a midden and garbage disposal. All the kitchen wastes and unwanted items (sometimes including dead bodies) are dumped here for Happy to take care of.

Happy Hogun, the neo-otyugh: AC 0; MV 6"; HD 9; hp 65; #AT 3; Dmg 2-12/2-12/1-3; SA disease; SD never surprised; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 12.

Hogun remains hidden in the towering pile of garbage that dominates the room, and is generally nonhostile, so long as no one tries to remove any of his "treasure." Most of his riches consist of things such as old potato skins and decaying cabbage. There is, however, a

ring of invisibility in the pile, which was swallowed (for safekeeping . . .) by a thief who later met an untimely end and was dumped here. The ring will be found on a 1 in 10 chance per turn of random searching, or immediately if *detect magic* is used to scan the premises.

If any of his treasure is taken, Hogun will attack, retreating to his muck-piles only if the treasure is returned.

2. Checkpoint #1. This is the checkpoint farthest from the Fire Knives' hideout, and as such is reserved for those on the top of Radatha's "list." Three thieves are stationed here, all in the doghouse for holding out on Radatha's cut of the loot. All three will be in the corridor to begin with, but if they are attacked, one will immediately run into the room and strike the gong.

Checkpoint thieves (4th level, 3): AC 7; HD 4; hp 29, 30, 34; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL NE; THAC0 20.

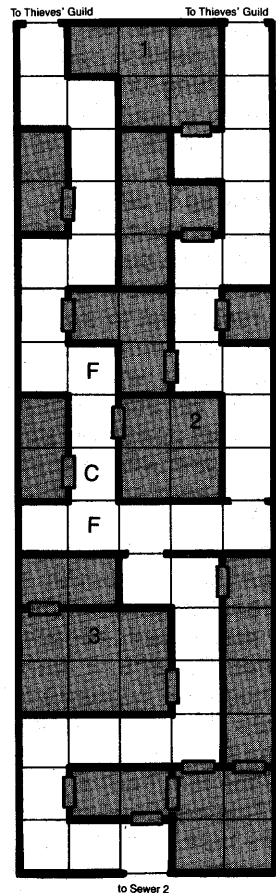
The thieves have no treasure, and their room is a pit with two cots, a table, and single oil lamp. On the table is a note, in Radatha's handwriting, which reads as follows:

Checkpoint One—

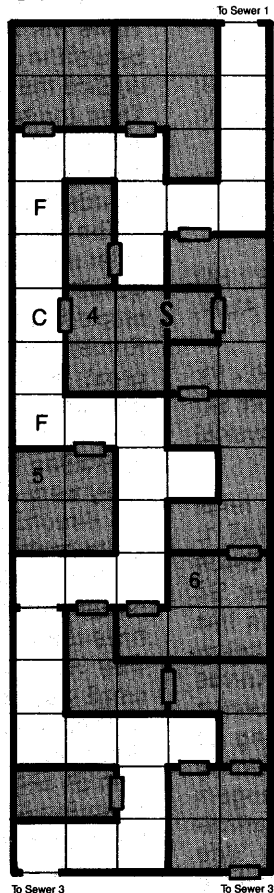
Be aware that we are launching a cleansing campaign against the Tilverton thieves this date, following their apparent interference with our attempt on Azoun's life.

Note also that we have captured an impostor pretending to be king, and are

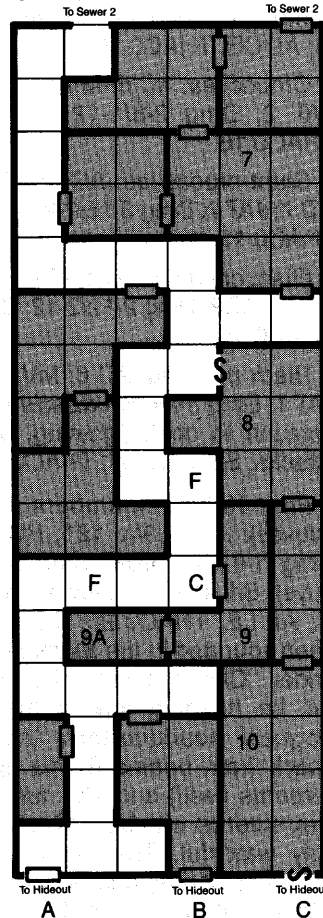
Sewer 1



Sewer 2



Sewer 3



- Sewer
- F Find Checkpoint
- C Checkpoint



using him and the girl as bait to lure Azoun into ambush outside the city tonight.

Be on the lookout for suspicious characters, in particular the king's pet mage.

Also on the table is a crude map showing the route from this checkpoint to the hideout (the guards want to be able to get back without getting lost or waylaid by a monster). The Fire Knives' map is not as detailed as that of the Tilverton guild; most importantly, it fails to mention the secret door that leads into the hideout.

3. *Troll Lair*: This room is the base of a petty ruler of the sewers, a powerful troll. He and his followers seek to eventually cast out all human interlopers and reclaim the underground for themselves. These trolls will not communicate with humans before trying to slay them. In addition to the lead troll, there are four of his followers here, mounted on crocodiles. The crocodile cavalry will follow the player characters if they retreat.

Giant Crocodiles: AC 4; MV 6"/12"; HD 7; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18/2-20; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 13.

Trolls: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6+6; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA infravision, may attack separate targets; SD regeneration; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 13.

Troll Master: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6+6; hp 54; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA infravision, may attack separate targets; SD regeneration; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 13.

4. *Checkpoint #2*. This room is similar to room 2, and its occupants would rather be anywhere else but here. It has the requisite cots and table, plus an alarm gong, and in addition has a firepit, which contains the burned remains of a message similar to the one received by the guards in room 2. (A cruel DM may choose to have the firepit also contain the remnants of some of the scrolls the PCs lost when they were ambushed by the forces of the New Alliance.)

Two of the thieves are normal Fire Knives members (identical to those in room 2), but the third one was part of the group that ambushed the PCs before

they were branded. He is one of the few survivors from that group, and fears for his life because he knows all of the other thieves from the ambush have been killed. If a conflict breaks out and he can escape, he will try to flee by running into the room and going through the secret door behind the gong. If he is captured, he will volunteer to tell all he knows in order to save his miserable hide. What he knows is this:

- * Radatha has entered the Fire Knives into a mystic alliance with Zhentarim, drow, and priests of Moander, all cooperating but still intending to serve their own purposes.
- * The brands are supposed to turn the heroes into puppets that obey the will of the alliance.
- * There is a priest of Moander at the Fire Knives hideout right now.

It is possible for the heroes to enter room 4 through the secret door—but they will have to be careful in order to avoid hitting the gong and saving the guards the trouble of sounding the alarm. If they enter the room quietly via this route, all three thieves will be out in the hall and may be taken by surprise.

Checkpoint thieves (4th level, 2): AC 7; HD 4; hp 24 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL NE; THAC0 20.

Ambush survivor (9th level thief): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 9; hp 36; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL LE; THAC0 16.

The checkpoint thieves have no treasure. They are on good terms with the ghost-lord in room 5, and often throw him and his servants little tidbits from their battles. Neither will come to the aid of the other, however.

5. *The Ghost-Lord*. This is the main lair of a colony of ghouls, led by a powerful ghost-lord who fancies himself king of the sewers. To that end he has fashioned a crude crown for himself and orders the other ghouls about. Naturally, he is an enemy of the other pretender to this throne, the troll master from room 3. Trolls and ghouls will fight each other when brought into contact.

Ghouls (14): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* magics; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 16.

Ghost-Lord: AC 4; MV 15"; HD 4; #AT 3; Dmg 7-10/7-10/7-15; SA carrion stench, paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* magics; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 12. The ghost-lord's extraordinary combat powers come from the *gauntlets of ogre power* he wears, which give him +3 to hit and +6 on all damage rolls. Because of the *gauntlets* covering his hands, he can only paralyze on a bite attack. Two hits with his hands (claws) in the same round indicate that he has grabbed and held his victim. In the following round (unless the victim somehow gets away in the meantime), the ghost-lord does not get his normal claw attacks but does get an additional +3 to hit on his bite attack.

6. *The Beholder*. Read the following to the players:

You open the door to see a room lit by the embers of a dying fire. Hovering directly over the embers, its circular form made red by the glow from the firepit, is a hulking sphere with slowly writhing eyestalks protruding from it. The main eye is pointed toward the opposite door, and the creature has its back to you.

The "beholder" is in reality a gas spore that has recently taken occupancy of this room, and is enjoying the heat of the fire that was made by the previous tenant. If the characters attack, it will explode, inflicting 6-36 points of damage to anyone within a 20' radius.

Gas spore: AC 9; MV 3"; hp 1; #AT 1; Dmg 6-36; SA explodes, disease; SZ L; AL N.

If the player characters do not bother the gas spore, it will not explode.

7. *Tombs*. Once, a long time ago, this was an underground mausoleum, either built here before the sewers were built, or placed here afterward by some paranoid family of Tilverton. The walls are white marble, and the room is set with daises, upon which rest what were once



caskets. The caskets are now nothing more than rotting wood, having deteriorated from the dampness, and the bones of the interred are scattered throughout the room.

This room is used as a dumping ground for the bodies of Fire Knives victims. It is protected by four spectres, who feast on the last life energies of the dying, and then sell the bodies to the ghastr-lord (room 5).

Spectres (4): AC 2; MV 15"/30"; HD 7+3; hp 34, 40, 45, 50; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based magics; SZ M; AL LE; THACO 13.

The Fire Knives (and the Tilverton Rogues before them) have never cleaned this room of its occupants. Buried with the original inhabitants were 400 gp and 5 pieces of jewelry worth 1000 gp each. This treasure is still in the room; all of it can be found in two turns of rather distasteful searching.

8. Abandoned Shrine. The only entrance to this room from the sewers is through the secret door. As the heroes open the door, read the following to them:

The door swings inward on a rusty, halting mechanism. Swirls of dust rise in the still air, then settle to the ground again. The floor is hard, dry, and covered with a thick layer of dust. Apparently, no one has been here for years.

The room is furnished with rows of dust-covered benches, all facing an alcove to the west. The alcove holds a small shrine dedicated to the thieves' god, Mask. The shrine has a book upon it, flanked by two scrolls. On either side of the shrine are two huge gray statues. Each statue has the mark of Gond on its forehead.

The statues are clay golems, created by clerics of Gond to protect the Tilverton thieves' original shrine. They will come to life if anyone touches the book or either of the scrolls.

Clay Golems (2): AC 7; MV 7"; HD 11; hp 50 each; #AT 1; Dmg 3-30; SA *haste*

(once per day); SD immune to edged weapons & missiles, immune to all spells except *move earth*, *disintegrate*, and *earthquake*; SZ L; AL N; THACO 10.

The golems are normally brown in color, but the years of dust have given them a grayish pallor. As they move, for the first round, they will kick up a cloud of dust that will cause any missile attacks to be at -2 to hit.

The golems will attack and follow anyone who desecrates the shrine, even if the book and/or scrolls are subsequently returned. They will also come to life if any of the crypts in room 10 are disturbed. They will not pass into areas with low ceilings, but will walk through doors, destroying them as they pass. The golems will go out of control (casting *haste* on themselves) five rounds after they are activated.

The book is a *manual of bodily health*. The scrolls each contain two *restoration* spells. There is no other treasure in the room. Characters who are smart will refrain from investigating, and will press on with the mission at hand. Characters who are less wise will end up fighting two clay golems.

9. Checkpoint #3. This area is similar to the previous two, save that the lodgings are moderately more comfortable, and its present guards are more numerous and have heavier firepower.

If the alarm has been sounded, the guards have moved a ballista from room 9A into the hallway, and they will blast the first thing that comes around the corner. The ballista inflicts 2-12 points of damage, fires once every three rounds, and hits as a 4 HD monster.

If the alarm has not been sounded, the ballista is still in its closet in room 9A. The heroes may use the ballista if they capture it, but it is bulky, slows movement to 3" for the two characters needed to pull it along, and takes 3 rounds to set up.

Checkpoint thieves (6th level, 5): AC 7; HD 6; hp 35, 34, 30, 24, 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL NE; THACO 19.

The room has three cots, a gong, and four chairs. If the alarm has not been sounded, two of the thieves will be inside the room sleeping. If the alarm

has been sounded, they will all be outside deployed for combat, with the back rank set to fire arrows at the approaching heroes.

10. The Grossman Crypt. As with room 7, the floors of this room are white marble covered with a thick layer of dust. Drawers line the east and west walls. Each drawer is labeled with the name of one member of the Grossman family. The bottom drawer on the west wall has been pulled out and is empty—it is the one meant for Artur Grossman.

There are no monsters in the room, but if the characters open any of the crypts, they will activate the clay golems from room 8 (unless the golems have already been defeated). The clay golems will burst through the door from room 8 in the second round after coming to life, and will come through the doorway into this room one round later.

The bodies in the thirteen occupied crypts are well-preserved but inanimate. Each has 200 gp worth of gems, jewels, and rings set about its person. One has a scroll with a *disintegrate* spell on it. This will be found in the third crypt searched (designed to occur at about the time that the clay golems arrive).

The secret door on the far side of the room is easily located from this side; anyone who takes as little as one round to scan the room will notice it (no roll needed). It opens into the storage room of the Fire Knives hideout.

The Fire Knives



The secret headquarters of the Fire Knives was at one time the main base of the Tilverton Thieves' Guild, and the home of the Grossman clan. The Fire Knives have appropriated it in order to further their own power, bullying aside the weaker Rogues of Tilverton.

The Fire Knives entered into the original Alliance of the Bonds in order to place an agent into Cormyr who would slay the king, whom they hate. They have entered into the New Alliance for a similar purpose, but in this case they sought to bring the king to their new power base, Tilverton, where their puppets (the player characters) could deal with the matter under their watchful eyes.

Their plan ran into difficulty because of the wisdom of Vangerdahast, the king's wizard, who convinced His Majesty to arrive in disguise and to order Giogi Wyvernspur, a petty noble who fancied himself a wit, to imitate the king. When the player characters attacked the false king, the Fire Knives were foiled again—at least for the moment. As the note in room 2 of the sewers indicates, Radatha has a backup plan, and by the time of the PCs' arrival at the hideout, the new machinations are well under way.

While the heroes have been underground, the Fire Knives have succeeded in capturing Giogi from the "safe" location where Vangerdahast had squirreled him away. (The wizard was not especially wise this time; knowing that Giogi's cover had been blown and thus that his continued usefulness was limited, Vangerdahast was rather lax in setting up security precautions around Giogi's quarters—and it was a quick and easy job for the Fire Knives to abduct the man.) Now, holding both Giogi and the king's daughter, Alusair Nacacia, they have sent a message to the king demanding that he meet them at a site outside the city. This, to the surprise of no one, is meant as a setup for an ambush.

In addition, the Fire Knives quickly discovered that their puppets had been captured by the Rogues of Tilverton, and out of blind revenge Radatha sent a major force there to "cleanse" the rival faction from the face of the earth.

As a result of trying to accomplish too

much at one time, the Fire Knives are nowhere near full strength in terms of manpower stationed at the hideout. They are relying on their reputation and their checkpoint system to ensure their safety.

The entire complex is lit by oil lamps set into the sides of the wall at regular intervals, 7' above the floor. The sole exception is the secret passage (room 10) which is unlit and painted ebon black along its entire length. The secret doors were manufactured by artisan-priests of Gond, and are of such excellent workmanship that the Fire Knives have yet to discover the existence of the doors or the network of passages concealed behind them.

A continual guard is maintained at certain locations, in particular the entrances to room 30, where Radatha is found. A team of four 4th level thieves may be found at each doorway. If the alarm has been sounded, the thieves will be hostile and will fight to the death to protect their master. If no alarm has been sounded, it will be possible to bluster one's way past the guards in a similar manner to that described in the text for room 2 of the sewers. In such a case, the 4th level thieves will follow the characters into room 30 to make sure they have told the truth, and will be present to join in the melee in that room if one occurs.

In addition, there will be regular parties of four thieves making patrols through all the corridors and the barracks. The patrols have full permission to investigate any open doors, and to slay those found within areas where they should not be. If no alarm has been sounded, there will be a 1 in 6 chance per turn of the PCs encountering a patrol. If the alarm has been sounded, this chance rises to 2 in 6.

Fire Knives patrols and guards (4th level thieves, 4 per contingent): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL LE; THACO 20.

In addition, if the alarm has been sounded, each patrol will have two hell hounds from the kennel (room 6).

If the characters are captured by the Fire Knives, their weapons will be stripped from them and taken to room 30 for later investigation and divvying up among the followers of Radatha. The

characters will be thrown into the holding pen (room 9), where Giogi Wyvernspur is also held. Magic-users and suspected thieves will be manacled; others will be bound with ropes. Eventually they will be taken to room 30 (see that text for further details).

If any of the Fire Knives escape after encountering player characters, all activity in the complex thereafter will be as though the alarm had been sounded. (There are no gongs here, but bad news spreads fast.)

Only Radatha and his sorcerous assistant Kybor know the full story of the Azure Bonds. The leaders don't want to slay their puppets unless it's absolutely necessary. So, on their orders, any guards who run into trouble with intruders in the hideout should try to capture the enemies and get them to surrender, but if they start to take serious losses, then they can attack to kill.

The Hideout

1. *Checkpoint A.* This checkpoint is staffed by six men who are spelled regularly. Their orders are to not permit anyone to roam freely through the complex except for Fire Knives members. The north door is locked, and in addition has a small sliding door set at eye level. The Fire Knives will open this slide to challenge any persons who seek entrance.

Fire Knives guards (4th level thieves, 6): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities; AL LE; THACO 20.

If no alarm has been sounded, the characters can lie their way in by claiming to have a message for Radatha, to be part of the Alliance, etc. Picking the lock and opening the door is seen as a hostile act, and the six soldiers will attack. If the characters behave suspiciously, the guards will ask for some confirmation or reassurance that they are familiar with the Fire Knives.

If the alarm has been sounded, the characters can still try to lie their way in. Their story will be accepted, they will be allowed in—and then they will be attacked. The checkpoint will have two hell hounds from room 4 in addition to its full manpower.

The thieves have 120 gp among them.



2. *Checkpoint B.* Similar to checkpoint A regarding procedure and number of thieves and heroes available. In addition, if the alarm has been sounded, the caretaker from room 3 will be present here as well. If the alarm has not been sounded, but a fight breaks out, the caretaker will enter and join the fray.

3. *Caretaker's Room.* The caretaker is a hill giant who opens and closes the stone plug in room 5. He is big and dumb enough to challenge anyone who enters his room whom he does not recognize.

Hill giant: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 8+2; hp 66; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 12.

The hill giant will come to the aid of the Fire Knives if a combat breaks out in room 2 or in the hallway outside his room. Conversely, if the heroes reach room 3 from elsewhere than room 2, the Fire Knives in room 2 will hear the commotion and come to investigate.

The hill giant has 1500 gp (his back pay) in a large chest, which he has tucked in a hole near the ceiling, some 15' above the ground.

4. *The Kennels.* Anyone passing this room will hear the loud barks and yips of those found within. Upon opening the door, a character will be set upon by a pack of hell hounds. The hell hounds are friendly to the hill giant (who feeds them) and the Fire Knives, but will attack all others they encounter.

There are a total of 15 hell hounds in the complex, all of them 6 HD monsters. If the alarm has been sounded, some of them will have been removed from the kennel and stationed with the checkpoint guards and patrols (two hell hounds per group of guards or patrolmen).

Hell hounds (15): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA breathe fire for 6 points; SD locate invisible objects 50% of time; SZ M; AL LE; THAC0 13.

5. *Entrance/exit.* This room is dominated by a large iron spiral staircase that winds up 100' to end in a huge stone plug. There is nothing else in this room.

This is the main entrance into the Fire Knives hideout, and opens onto a street

adjoining one of the warehouses that dot the Lower City of Tilverton. Normally a strength of 20 is required to move the stone plug, which is why this is one of the duties of the caretaker from room 3. Two men with 18 strength can also accomplish the task; there is not enough room at the top of the staircase for three men to apply themselves to the job at one time.

Currently, not even the hill giant can move the plug—because the Royal Carriage of the Purple Dragon of Cormyr is parked directly on top of it. None of the inhabitants of the hideout realize this yet, but no one will be able to leave by this route until after the encounter in room 30 is over.

6. *Storage Area.* This old area is used for junk that Radatha has no use for, but did not want to throw out. Primarily it is tacky art and wall hangings left over from when the Fire Knives threw Grossman and his bunch out of the hideout. These have been poorly packed, and most of the items, particularly the carpets and paintings, have suffered severe water damage.

Radatha and his Fire Knives do not know about the secret door in the north wall that leads into the Grossman crypt in the sewers. Nor do they know about the secret passage that lies to the south. This room is rarely searched and may be used by the player characters as a place to rest and heal themselves.

7. *Guest Rooms.* The reason that room 6 is rarely used is that room 7, to which it attaches, is normally used to house the more inhuman guests of the Fire Knives. Far from the beaten path, this place has some large, hastily lashed together beds and the basic amenities, without being too classy.

The current occupants of the room are four hill giants, buddies of the caretaker in room 3, who came to Tilverton to visit their city cousin. Since they arrived, they have been cooped up by the Fire Knives until the business with King Azoun is completed.

As a result, the hill giants are a little stir crazy, and looking for a good rumble. Any character who does not look like one of the Fire Knives is an open target (they know that beating on Fire Knives

will result in their friend the caretaker getting in trouble). If the characters appear from room 6, they will be immediately attacked. If they enter the room from the hallway, the giants will seek to confirm their alliances before attacking.

Those listening in on the giants from the secret passage will hear them complaining, in giantish, about the smallness of the portions at meals, the sullenness of the help, and the cramped conditions their buddy has to work in. Characters appearing from the secret door will also be rumbled, and if any giants survive, they will tell the caretaker and the Fire Knives about "vermin" in the walls.

Hill Giants (4): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 8+2; hp 45, 50, 57, 58; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA throw beer kegs (4 total) for 2-16 points damage; SD none; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 12.

The giants have 3000 gp on them. They know nothing about the other inhabitants of the complex, save that the "Big Cheese" is meeting with some allies today.

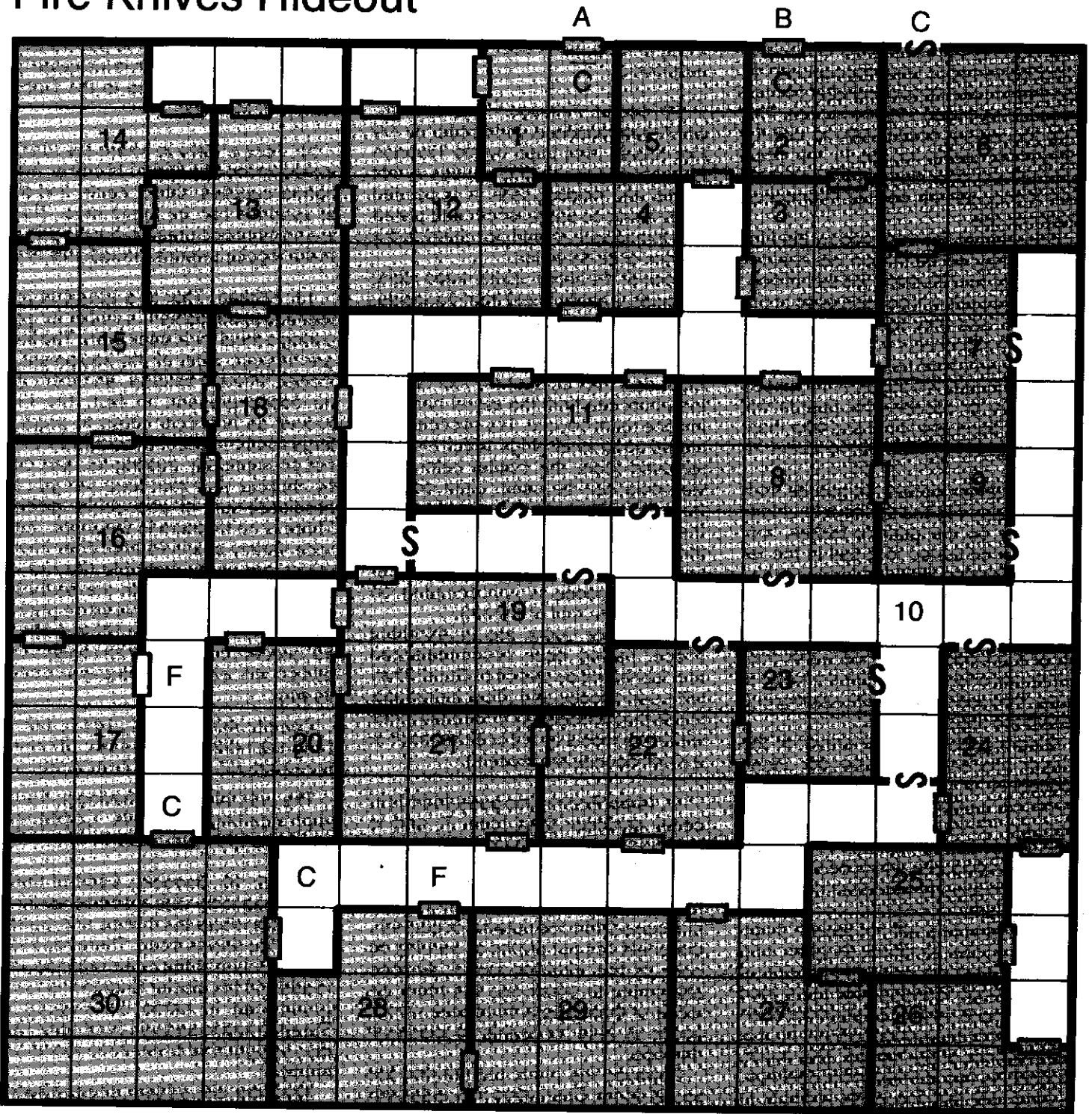
8. *Guard Room.* This is the guard room for the holding cell (room 9). This room contains 6 guards, all of whom are favorites of Radatha, and have been given these cushy positions as a result.

Guards (7th level fighters, 6): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 7; hp 68, 65, 60, 55, 54, 50; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8; AL LE; THAC0 14.

The guards are used to loud noises (they've been living next to giants for a while), and are not really paying attention to their prisoner, which means that the heroes may (with proper caution) be able to sneak the prisoner out without them noticing. The guards will notice the escape in about an hour (6 turns) and set off the alarm. Those watching from the secret doors will find the guards sitting around, napping, and generally being unprepared for an invasion of heroic figures from a hidden location.

If the heroes are captured somewhere else in the hideout and put into the holding cell, the guards will become much more active and attentive, and in addition will bring in two of the hell hounds to sit at the doorway and watch the heroes. See room 9 for further information.

Fire Knives Hideout



Corridor

C Checkpoint

F Find checkpoint



9. *Holding Cell.* This is the location of Giogi Wyvernspur, who was captured by the Fire Knives not too long after his battle (such as it was) with the heroes. The Fire Knives are holding him to use for bargaining power to get to the king; alternatively, they may decide to torture him if they decide he has information they can use.

If the heroes are captured by the Fire Knives, they will be thrown into this cell with Giogi, and Radatha will be notified. Two hell hounds will be positioned at the entrance, and they will howl if anyone opens the secret door in the back, bringing the guards from room 8. Both guards and hell hounds will attack. If the heroes do not try to escape, the guards will come for them and Giogi and take them at spearpoint to room 30, in about 10 turns.

If the heroes defeat the guards from room 8, they will find the keys to unlock this door on the guard's bodies, and Giogi will be curled in a ball in the far corner, sleeping fitfully.

If the heroes enter through the secret door, they will find Giogi napping as well. The guards in room 8 consider Giogi a bit of a creampuff, and not worth their continued attention. Six turns after he is gone, they will discover him missing and sound the alarm.

Giogi's reaction to the arrival of the player characters will be the same regardless of how they arrive—he will throw his hands up in front of his face and say, "Don't hit me!" Giogi has a history of grievous run-ins with blue-marked individuals, which he will gladly share with anyone who does not take a swing at him.

The characters will not have a magical compulsion to attack Giogi as long as Giogi does not do his impression of Azoun. Giogi, knowing now more than ever that he is liable to be attacked when he does this impression, will not do it in the presence of the heroes. This much, at least, he has learned in his dealings.

Giogi will join the party willingly in order to escape the Fire Knives. He wants to get out—quickly—more than anything, but if the subject of the princess is brought up, he will say that he thinks she is being held elsewhere in the complex, in a similar sort of cell. In combat he will prove to be next to worthless,

trying to keep as far from the enemy as possible.

10. *Secret Passage.* This hallway, which has remained undetected by the Fire Knives, was used by the Tilverton Rogues to spy on the various guest rooms and holding cells. It is painted black along its entire length and plated with thin sheets of lead, to minimize the chance of its detection.

Each of the secret doors noted along its length is easily found from the inside, because of the light that leaks through the small openings around the eyeholes and around the frames of the doors. Each door has an eyehole that lets an individual see from the secret passage into the room beyond. The eyeholes are closed up by small plugs, which must be removed (from the inside) before the view-hole can be used. Light coming from within the passageway may reveal the presence of the passageway to those in the room beyond through the open eyeholes (1 in 6 chance per occasion, if someone is concentrating on looking at the wall of a room).

The secret doors are in excellent shape, having been counterbalanced and lubricated by clerics of Gond. They will open silently and allow individuals inside the passageway to surprise those within the rooms on a 2 in 6 chance (1 in 6 if hell hounds are present).

11. *Guest Room.* This guest room is in better condition than room 7, and is designed for human guests. Its tenants at the moment are a priest of Moander and his two bodyguards (who are all in room 19 right now). Their room is empty and locked from the outside. In addition, the priest has put *glyphs of warding* on both of the exterior doors. Anyone attempting to break into the room via either of these doors must save versus spells or take 14 points of electrical damage.

However, the priest did not find the secret doors. Characters may enter and leave the room freely through these.

The priest's gear is laid out on a small desk. The paraphernalia includes extra spell components, a holy symbol of Moander (a wand with a hand at the tip, with a fanged jaw inset in the palm), two *potions of healing*, and some miscella-

neous papers. Among the papers is a map of Yulash, on which is indicated the location of the entrance to the hidden temple of Moander.

12. *Pantry.* Here is where the food is stored for the Fire Knives kitchens. Most normal supplies, salted meats, and other sundries can be found here. There are no monsters present, but the patrols make regular sweeps through this area.

13. *Kitchen.* This is a spacious and well-equipped kitchen, suitable for preparing a meal for a small army. The fires are banked, most of the equipment is stowed where it belongs, and there are no cooks present. In fact, the Fire Knives do not have cooks to prepare large meals—because these people are not an especially trusting lot, and only by cooking your own food can you be absolutely sure of what you're getting. There is no treasure in the room, but a wide variety of knives and other implements are easily available (for use as weapons, in a pinch). In the northeast corner is a man-sized hole with a grating over it. This leads down 20' to a 10' by 10' midden, occupied by an otyugh. The otyugh will attack anything that comes its way.

Otyugh: AC 3; MV 6"; HD 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-5; SA disease; SD never surprised; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 13.

The only thing worth having in the otyugh's garbage is a *knife +2* that was accidentally thrown away.

14, 15, 16. *Barracks.* Each of these rooms has thirty cots scattered about it; these are where the thieves and guards of the Fire Knives sleep. There has been some attrition of the ranks recently, and in addition the Master Radatha has sent groups out to battle the Rogues of Tilverton and to ambush the King of Cormyr, so right now these three rooms are empty.

They are still subject to surveillance by patrols, which roam through the areas looking for shirkers. If the alarm has been given, patrolmen will be accompanied by hell hounds.

A careful search of the rooms will turn up about 100 sp of treasure per turn, to a maximum of 1000 sp per room.



17. *Common Baths.* A natural underground waterfall here has dug out a small pool in the southern half of the room. The Grossmans had set up statues along the borders of the pool, but these have been knocked down by the thieves and the room turned into a common bathing area.

There are no monsters here, but the area is regularly patrolled. If combat breaks out, the area is very slippery, such that any character engaging in sudden actions (such as movements during a round of melee) must make a saving throw versus wands to avoid being pitched to the floor.

18. *Armory.* This area is filled with wooden weapon racks, open chests that once held armor, and closets containing empty hooks. The armory has been virtually emptied because of the need for equipment needed to pull off the two combat missions that were both scheduled for today.

There are a handful of weapons left, and a little armor as well. If they search the room, the characters will find some or all of these items:

- 3 long swords
- 2 broad swords
- 15 arrows but no bows
- 1 crossbow
- 5 daggers
- 3 suits leather armor
- 1 suit chain mail
- 3 gray cloaks with hoods
- 5 red cloaks with hoods

Also, partially concealed in one corner is an empty box marked with the words "drow venom—do not expose to heat, light, or fresh air" written in elvish, and marked with the symbol of Dracandros. The crate apparently held bottles at one time, but is now empty and discarded.

The area has no monsters, but is subject to examination by the regular patrols.

19. *Waiting Room.* This well-appointed room is used by Radatha as a place to let his guests cool their heels before being summoned into his presence. Low benches line the wall, and tapestries hang on all sides. Behind one tapestry is a secret door adjoining room

10. The wall hanging has eyeholes cut into it to allow those within room 10 to see out, but if the secret door is opened from outside room 19, the wall hanging will bulge out, revealing the existence of the door to anyone who notices.

The carpet is well worn from the pacing of many feet, the most recent sets belonging to the priest of Moander and his two bodyguards. The priest is waiting here to meet with Radatha. The priest's two bodyguards are *charmed* trolls, who will defend him to the death. If the heroes break in, the priest will have his minions attack, and will try to escape by either of the two western doors to warn Radatha and raise the alarm.

Priest of Moander (3rd level cleric): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); SA spell use; AL CE; THAC0 20.

Spells:

- 1st level *command*
light
sanctuary
- 2nd level *hold person*
silence 15' radius

Trolls (2): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6+6; hp 37, 41; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA infravision, may attack separate targets; SD regeneration; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 13.

The cleric will use *hold person* to ensnare as many adversaries as he can in the doorway, and will also cast *silence* if there are obvious spell casters in the group. He will leave his bodyguards behind to deal with intruders as he runs to report to Radatha—but see below for what happens if he is forced to flee into room 20.

20. *Training Area.* This area contains a set of bare mats strewn out on the floor for practicing gymnastics and combat skills. In the far corner, standing with a chain around its neck, is a large lion.

The lion is a beast domesticated by the Fire Knives and used to train agents in dealing with wild animals. The creature will not attack Fire Knives or those dressed like them. It will attack player characters, and the priest of Moander if he tries to escape this way. (If this occurs, the priest will run back into room 19, bringing the lion behind him.)

An important fact, not immediately noticed by anyone who enters the room for the first time: The other end of the chain around the lion's neck is not attached to anything, apparently because the last people to use the room forgot to anchor the chain again when they were through. As a result, the animal can (and will) roam freely if attacked or disturbed. A character may be able to bring the lion under control by grabbing the chain and yanking on it. The lion is accustomed to being on a leash, and will become docile (relatively) if it thinks it is once again tethered.

Lion: AC 5 (forequarters)/6 (hindquarters); MV 12"; HD 5+2; hp 40; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10; SA rear claws for 2-7/2-7; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 15.

21. *Guest Room.* This room is currently not in use, and as such the dressers are empty, the beds are sheetless, and there are no clean towels available. It is occasionally used by the guards in room 22 for on-duty naps, so there is a 50% chance that there will be a sleeping guard here. The guard will come to the aid of his fellows if a battle develops in room 22, and likewise if there is a disturbance here, the others will charge in to help.

22. *Guard Room.* This is a duplicate of room 8, where right now a group of elite guards is protecting an important prisoner in the holding cell (room 23). There are, at most, six guards present, although one of them may be napping (see room 21) when trouble breaks out.

Guards (7th level fighters, 6): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 7; hp 68, 65, 60, 55, 54, 50; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8; AL LE; THAC0 14.

These guards are more vigilant than their brethren in room 8. Those spying on them will see that they are very nervous, and are keeping a close eye on the prisoner in room 23. If the secret door is opened into room 23, they will notice it in 1 round, and will quickly open the cage (1 additional round) and charge in. Though they do not know of the secret door, their vigilance ensures that they will not be surprised if heroes suddenly appear out of the woodwork (literally) to rescue their charge.



The guards have a total of 100 gp among them.

23. Holding Cell. In this room, behind the locked and barred door to room 22, is the reason for the guards' unease. Alusair Nacacia, Princess of the Realm of Cormyr, daughter of King Azoun IV, is held captive here. She is not bound, and paces the room waiting for a chance to escape.

When the princess left Cormyr she had little in the way of talents and skills, but after more than a year on her own, she has developed into a fairly effective thief. She has been waiting for the guards' attention to drop so she can try to unlock her prison door, but they have been too vigilant so far.

If the heroes battle the guards in room 22, she will aid them in any way she can: trying to unlock the door, striking and/or holding guardsmen who are close to her to give the heroes a better shot at them, or, if all else fails, causing a general ruckus to try to distract one or more of the guards. If the heroes open the secret door, she will escape out that way with them. Her departure will be immediately noted, and the cry will go up.

Alusair will thank the heroes if she is rescued, and then point out the way to Radatha's lair. She wants the leader of the Fire Knives dead for kidnapping her. Alusair seems to have the steely determination of her father, but in the past year has also gained a sense of unforgiving bloodlust. She will demand a weapon from the party so she can fight, and will lead them to Radatha's lair (or will go alone, if they choose not to accompany her).

24. The Sorcerer's Library. Rooms 24, 25, 26, and 27 have been designated by Radatha as belonging to his sorcerer, Kybor. Signs are posted on all the doors to these areas from the corridor, reading "Wizard Territory—Keep out or Die!" Even Radatha does not disturb his mage when the spellcaster is in his rooms.

Room 24 is the magician's library. A small collection of scrolls and books is littered around on low tables. Kybor was neither neat nor organized in his work. Several of the tables are scorched, and the manuscripts that

were there have been reduced to ash by some powerful source (see room 26).

Of the books that remain, many deal in potions and poisons, in particular those potions that allow control over others. No formulas are given, and the potions are described in general ways in terms of effects and appearances. A few other written items, of more recent vintage, show maps of Yulash and Zhentil Keep. One large map on the center table, now mostly ash though its corners are intact, was a map of the Elven Woods.

There is no treasure in this room.

25. The Wizard's Quarters. These are Kybor's living quarters. The room, unoccupied at present, is nicely decorated in somber reds and blacks. It contains a bed with a comfortable mattress, a full-length mirror, and a large, spacious closet filled with colorful crimson robes and capes. Beneath the bed is a small strongbox containing 20 gems worth 50 gp each. Beneath the mattress is also a *wand of wonder*.

26. The Wizard's End. This is Kybor's magical lab, tucked in a far corner of the complex for two good reasons. First, Kybor likes his privacy. Second, if an experiment goes awry, it will be a while before any bad effects spread out of the wizard's domain and into the rest of the hideout, which will give the occupants some time to react.

There are magical runes inscribed on the floor, and against the far wall is a large table crammed with retorts and other alchemist's gear. Along the south wall is a wine rack crammed with scrolls.

The place has been devastated. The glassware has been smashed, and the scrolls almost completely reduced to ashes, much like the books and maps in the library (room 24). The body of Kybor the sorcerer lies across the magical writings on the floor, face up, his robes charred and his face twisted into an expression of pure fear.

In Kybor's tightly clenched right hand is a scrap of paper ripped from a book, mostly scorched and unreadable, but still clear in spots. On it is written the sign of Tyranthraxus, which is matched both by the player characters' bonds and by the brand singed deeply into the

dead flesh of Kybor's forehead.

If the paper is examined closely, this much can be discovered:

- * Tyranthraxus ruled a great swath of land long before the coming of the Dalesmen to the North.
- * He had bases in Phlan, in Yulash, in the Dragonspine Mountains, and in the Elven Woods, and fought with the elves often.
- * He was driven from Yulash by the Moanderites, who carried a powerful artifact, called the *Gauntlets of Moander*, which chased the daemon's followers from the city.
- * A second weapon was said to be able to discover Tyranthraxus when the daemon was in one of his many disguises. This was the *Helm of the Dragon*, which was later linked to several ancient Flights of Dragons in legend, and was lost in the Vale of Lost Voices.
- * A third weapon, a sword said to be made to slay him and him alone, was the *Blade of Lathander* forged in the hearth of the morning sun. This was fought over by many factions following Tyranthraxus's initial defeat, but was at last said to have been stolen from Zhentil Keep, after which the boat carrying it sank in the Moonsea.

What happened here is that Kybor attempted to do a little research into his master's powerful partner, and in return Tyranthraxus killed him and tried to burn all evidence that might be used against the daemon. (The attack was silent, so that no one else in the complex is yet aware that something bad has happened inside the lab.) All that survived reasonably intact was this tightly crumpled piece of paper, which Kybor ripped from one of the now-burned books in the library.

Kybor is recently deceased—so recently that a *speak with dead* spell will yield no information except for Kybor's spirit screaming in fear and shouting "Tyranthraxus!" over and over again until the spell elapses.

All of Kybor's magical scrolls have been destroyed save one, tucked into a nook near the bottom of the rack. This one contains three spells: *disintegrate*, *knock*, and *wizard lock*.



27. *The Wizard's Treasure Room.* This large room contains Kybor's treasure hoard, which consists of many rare and wonderful paintings (most of them taken from Grossman). There are about 3000 gp worth of paintings here, though Grossman would want to pay at least twice that to get them back. There are also three chests here, untrapped, each with 500 gp in it.

The treasure room is protected by an iron cobra, a magical automaton created by the Red Wizards of Thay.

Iron cobra: AC 0; MV 12"; HD 1; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison; SD unaffected by *charm*, *sleep*, and *webs*, non-magical weapons inflict half damage, saves as 12th level magic-user; SZ S; AL N; THACO 19.

28. *Radatha's Quarters.* Even though he is the head of a major thieves' organization (albeit one in exile), Radatha lives a spartan existence. This room contains nothing of note except a simple bed, a

small writing desk, a set of dresser drawers along the far wall, and a silvered mirror hung over the location of the secret door. The door to room 29 is locked, and Radatha carries the key on him.

29. *Radatha's Treasure Vault.* This room holds all the currency that Radatha has shaken down from the city of Tilverton in the years since he set up the Fire Knives in exile here. There are twelve large oak chests here, all wrapped with iron bands and sealed with wax over the locks, into which is pressed the symbol of the Fire Knives.

All of these chests are trapped, such that when someone tries to unlock or lift one, or scrape the wax from a lock, the chest will explode, inflicting 2-20 points of damage to anyone within 10'. The coins within a chest will not be damaged, but other items may be (pending the outcome of saving throws).

Each of the chests holds 800 sp and 200 gp. Tucked up into the lids of chests

3, 6, and 9 are magical scrolls. The first is *protection from lycanthropes*, the second a scroll of three clerical *heal* spells, and the third a *cursed scroll* that causes everyone within 20' when it is opened to fight at -2 to hit until a *remove curse* is cast.

30. *Radatha's Lair:* This is where the heroes, under one circumstance or another, will encounter Radatha and come to a conclusion about the first of the Azure Bonds. Who is present in this room and what they will be doing will depend on how successful the heroes have been to date.

Always in the room will be Radatha and his hand-picked honor guard of five thieves and five fighters. The honor guard will be standing along the north and east walls as the characters enter. Radatha will be sitting on a throne in the southwest corner. On his right is an extremely large hell hound. On his left, an hourglass is nearly empty of sand.



Radatha (13th level thief): AC 4 (including dexterity bonus); MV 12"; HD 13; hp 65; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA & SD thieving abilities, plus a *brooch of shielding* (makes wearer immune to *magic missiles*); AL NE; THAC0 14.

Honor guard fighters (8th level, 5): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 8; hp 78, 75, 70, 65, 64; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8; AL LE; THAC0 13.

Honor guard thieves (8th level, 5): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 8; hp 46, 45, 40, 39, 30; #AT 1; SA & SD thieving abilities, backstab; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-4 (thrown dagger); AL NE; THAC0 19.

Hell hound: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 7; hp 48; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA breathe fire for 7 points; SD locate invisible objects 50% of time; SZ M; AL LE; THAC0 13.

In addition, these other individuals will be present, if the given circumstance applies:

The Priest of Moander and his bodyguards (from room 19), if they are still alive.

The guards from rooms 8 and 22, if they are still alive.

Giogi Wyvernspur (from room 9), if he is not already with the player characters. He will be here as a prisoner, his hands bound with ropes.

Alusair Nacacia (from room 23), if she is not already with the player characters. She will be here as a prisoner, her hands bound with ropes. She will be on the verge of untying the ropes when the characters arrive.

Any surviving patrols and/or check-point guards, with two hell hounds per group, will arrive in 2-4 rounds after a melee breaks out.

The hill giants from rooms 3 and 7 will surrender peacefully once Radatha is dead. They are not involved with the matter at hand.

If no alarm has been sounded, Radatha will welcome the heroes into his lair. He is aware of who they are and can guess what damage they have probably caused to get here. He will be calm and apparently friendly, and will tell them he wishes to explain a few things.

If the alarm has been sounded, Radatha will be less confident, knowing that the characters have fought their way into his room despite active opposition. As they enter, he will give his men an

order to let the adventurers pass into his presence. If the heroes do not attack Radatha, the guardsmen will fall back and let the leader go into his speech.

If the heroes are brought in chains to Radatha, the master of the Fire Knives will be supremely confident and gloating as he haughtily explains his master plan to them.

Radatha wants to deliver his speech no matter what the circumstances, in the time-honored tradition of the bad guy who gives out information when he knows the good guys are going to die anyway. The heroes may set upon Radatha at any time during his speech, getting a free round of attacks on him and his people, but from that point forward they will lose any information they might have gained from his monologue.

Radatha's speech:

"First off, I'd like to thank you all for your help, small though it be, in flushing out the imitator of King Azoun. With him identified, it was much easier to locate the true king and lay a trap for him—a trap that should be going off just about now, I might add.

"A little background. Our group was thrown out of Cormyr years ago by King Azoun for being too bloody. For this reason we want him dead. As an example, no? Some fled to Westgate. A lot fled here, with myself as their obvious leader.

"The lot that fled to Westgate, they fell in with some sorcerer types who came up with a way to control people. The experiment was a disaster, wiping almost all of them out, but some did survive to make it back here with some priests of Moander and part of the information for how to achieve this control.

"So I set about creating a New Alliance to slay King Azoun, among other things. I let some powerful folk at Zhentil Keep and elsewhere know what we had, and got their aid. We pooled our resources and goals, and there you are! Guinea pigs for our new order!

"Now, you are tied to each of your masters by those bonds on your arms. We are the first and foremost masters, of course, by virtue of where the mark of the Fire Knives is located on your arms. Only myself and my pet sorcerer, Kybor, can free you from the mark of the Fire Knives. Either we can choose to do so,

or the marks would vanish upon the death of both of us. As you can see, Kybor is not present here, so slaying me would avail you nothing.

"Now, we wanted you to slay the king, but made a mistake that the earlier, deceased Westgate branch also made—we outthought ourselves. Figuring that the king would travel in disguise, we designated the sound of his voice as the trigger for the assassination. We were unaware of the existence of the fop who could imitate the king's voice.

"Now we had the means, but we needed to create the opportunity. Lo and behold—the princess, after a long absence, suddenly reappeared. We captured her, made it known to certain people that we had her, and waited for Azoun to take the bait—to come to Tilverton to rescue his daughter.

"It would have worked, with the power of the Moanderites and the Zhentarim and that Red Wizard and the Flamed One, but the trap was sprung too soon. We had to do with brute force what we previously had to do with finesse."

With that, Radatha walks over to the hourglass. The last of the sand is trickling through it. "We sent all available forces to kill the king in an ambush, and another group to silence the Tilverton mob. We had hoped to capture you there, but such was not to be. Now, with the falling of these last grains, the king is dead, and we have no further need for you. Therefore, I have one last order for you — *Shadanta!* Kill each other!"

If the speech has been allowed to proceed to this point, the characters will be compelled to attack each other unless they make their saving throws versus spells. If the princess is a prisoner, then at this point (or earlier, if the speech is interrupted) she slips her bonds, grabs a dagger from a nearby guard, and flings the weapon at Radatha. "Kill him!" she shouts. "Kill him and you'll all be free!"

The scene degenerates into a free-for-all, with the following components:

Any uncontrolled characters (those who saved against the compulsion) plus Giogi and Alusair, versus . . .

Radatha, his honor guard, the hell hound, and any surviving guards, versus . . .



The priest of Moander and the two trolls, if they are still around (the priest wishes to keep the heroes from killing themselves, for his group's own purposes), versus . . .

The still-controlled characters, who will attack the others in their party first, but if attacked by any other group will fight them as well.

Alusair will try to lead an attack on Radatha. While Radatha is correct in saying that only the deaths of himself and Kybor will free the party, he is unaware that Kybor is already dead (see room 26).

The trolls, if still around, will square off against the hell hound—not by choice, but because the hell hound will instinctively know that they are the best targets for it to attack (since they are especially susceptible to flame).

The compulsion to slay their companions will persist for 2-8 rounds for the affected characters (roll individually for each PC). When the compulsion is over, each will regain full control of his actions. (Radatha could issue another order, but he should be too busy fighting for his life to take the time for that.)

After 2-8 rounds of combat, any remaining guards and patrols in the complex arrive.

On round 5 of the combat, the roof of the room is blown away and the cavalry arrives. If the combat is over, they will come to help clean up. They represent 20 Cormyrian Elite Defense troops (descending by ropes), led by King Azoun himself, and Vangerdahast, who *disintegrated* the top of the building and now *levitates* himself into the combat.

The king is shouting orders, and if Radatha is still alive, any heroes who are not presently controlled by the impulse to slay each other must make another saving throw or suddenly turn and attack His Majesty. The Cormyrians and Vangerdahast will move to protect the king from these interlopers. The king will recognize his daughter (if present) and seek to come to her aid, disregarding the advice and the actions of those who are trying to protect him.

When Radatha dies (one way or another), all the heroes who are marked by the Azure Bonds must make a saving throw versus spells (no modifier) or be stunned for a round because of a sud-

den sharp pain in their arms. They discover that the symbol of the Fire Knives has vanished—and any compulsion that had been still in effect (to slay each other or to kill the king) has also ceased to exist.

Alternately, Radatha may be captured and forced to voluntarily rescind his hold on the heroes. He will do so only to save his own skin, and only after he is convinced that Kybor is dead.

Aftermath

The battle of the Fire Knives will end with the characters dead or victorious. Player characters who die in the battle will be *raised* at the Temple of Gond free of charge, on orders of the king. The same goes, of course, for Giogi and the princess.

The king and his wayward daughter will be tearfully reunited (he may say something about promising “no more arranged marriages”—alluding perhaps to the cause of her departure). Vangerdahast will have the Cormyrian forces spread throughout the complex, eradicating any form of resistance (and claiming most of the remaining booty for the treasury of Cormyr).

Throughout these concluding events, Vangerdahast will stay by the king's side and will remain incredibly suspicious of the characters. (His last encounter with a blue-marked warrior had a similar ending, and involved a dragon as well.) He will allow the characters to speak briefly with His Majesty before hustling them off to safety back at Gunderstone Mansion. He will allow this only if the heroes did not attack the king. If there were any attacks, he will make sure that the king and the princess are whisked away at the battle's close, and will only allow the PCs in the presence of the king if they are supervised by a great number of guards.

Once he learns the full truth about the heroes from Giogi and/or Alusair, the king will be very grateful to them. He will offer whatever help he can give them in their quest. (Vangerdahast harrumphs at this, knowing that it is *he* who will have to do the work to back up such a promise.) The assistance may include some or all of the following aids:

- * The heroes' original weapons, if they had been lost, will be returned to them.
- * If the heroes have not yet visited the sage Filani, the king will provide them with a note, indicating that the fee for her services is to be charged to the Cormyrian treasury.
- * The heroes will be fully healed before they leave Tilverton.
- * If the heroes failed to recover the map of Yulash (room 11) or Kybor's scrap of paper (room 26), these items will be delivered to their room at the Windlord's Rest by a grumbling Vangerdahast the next day.
- * The king also extends a standing offer for them to join him at his table in Suzail . . . as soon as they remove the rest of those ugly tattoos, that is.

All is not sweetness and light, however. Vangerdahast will have a petty revenge, instructing the guards at the Tilverton gates to refuse the characters readmittance once they leave—“King's Orders”—to prevent them from taking another shot at His Majesty. And, of course, the heroes still have to contend with the other four Azure Bonds.

The heroes should finish this chapter with the belongings they had when they awoke in Tilverton, any treasure they've gathered, the gratitude of the king of a powerful nation, and the need to make a choice about where to go next.



The player characters end their encounters with the king and his family problems in possession of a number of clues as to the location of their other masters. Most of the clues seem to point north: to Zhentil Keep, the base of the Zhentarim, and to Yulash, the home of the Moanderites. To the north also lies the home of Elminster the Sage, who may be able to place further information at the characters' disposal.

From this point on, the characters are generally free to wander as they see fit across the North. Short descriptions of what the heroes will find at each location are given below. Some of these places are described in much more detail in later chapters of this work.

Zhentil Keep

The agents of the Zhentarim are everywhere in the lands they control, and these agents are on the lookout for the adventurers to report their progress to Fzoul Chembryl. This city is described in detail in Chapter 9.

Yulash

Yulash is a contested city, split between the forces of Hillsfar and those of Zhentil Keep. It is described in detail in Chapter 7.

Hillsfar

This town has a temple of Chauntea, suitable training areas, and a variety of stores. The residents' attitude toward nonhuman races, in particular halflings, is rather hostile. The police force here is known as the Red Plumes (see Chapter 7 for details).

Phlan

No longer in ruins, the town is booming in the wake of the first defeat of Tyranthraxus and, if the heroes of this adventure are the same as from *Ruins of Adventure*, they are regarded as favorite sons, rating the best rooms and the most discounted prices. However, the fact that characters wear the sign of Tyranthraxus is troubling to some townsfolk, who whisper that these are false heroes, sent by Tyranthraxus to gain revenge.

If the heroes are not those who earlier saved Phlan, the reaction of the people to the symbol of Tyranthraxus will be

similar to that of the Hillsfarrians to Zhentarim—open hatred. The heroes will be asked, politely but firmly, to leave.

There is a temple of Tyr Grimjaws, god of justice, here, as well as adequate training facilities and stores. The stores are a little behind the times, and the more esoteric items will be very expensive or unavailable.

Teshwave

Teshwave is a ruins under the control of Zhentil Keep. Formerly the seat of Teshendale, the area was abandoned fifty years ago in the face of growing attacks against the villagers. There is now a garrison of Zhentarim soldiers here. All goods cost twice their normal price in Teshwave, and there are no sages worth speaking of.

There is a shrine to Bane here, but it will refuse to aid all non-evil characters. The heroes may gain some aid by brandishing the Zhentarim symbol. Of course, a full report will be sent to Zhentil Keep, and then the Zhentarim masters will know where the heroes are.

Dagger Falls

Dagger Falls is the seat of Daggerdale. The residents have a reputation for being insular and hostile toward outsiders. This reputation is to some extent undeserved, since the outsiders they are most hostile toward are the Zhentarim. The older residents still remember when the forces of the Black Network destroyed Teshendale, and it's no secret that the Zhentarim are now raiding the outskirts of Daggerdale as well. For this reason, outsiders are assumed to be Zhentarim agents unless otherwise noted.

The reception the heroes will get in Dagger Falls is cool, turning to hostile if they still bear the marks of the Zhentarim on their arms. Fortunately, there is a reasonable voice in Dagger Falls, in the person of Randall Morn, an adventurer who may be able to provide information on the Zhentil Keep crew for the adventurers.

If the heroes prove to him that they are not of the Zhentarim (by not trying to kill anybody, for example), Randall will pass on "common knowledge" of the Zhentarim and Zhentil Keep. Most of this information is found in the introductory

sections of the chapter on the Zhentarim. He will also provide the adventurers with a map of Zhentil Keep.

There is no temple worth speaking of in Daggerdale—that is, no organized church that doles out healing services to adventurers. Prices of goods and services, while initially set at twice normal for strangers, are negotiable.

Shadowdale

Shadowdale boasts two temples, one dedicated to Lathander, god of morning, and one for Tymora, goddess of good fortune and adventurers. It is also the home of Elminster, the master sage.

Elminster lives in a tower overlooking the town, with a winding path leading up to the door and a big sign out front that reads: "No trespassing! Violators should notify next of kin. Have a pleasant day." Beneath the sign is the symbol of the sage, a crescent moon and sphere.

Those trying the direct approach will find Elminster unreachable. His scribe and secretary, Lhaeo, will ask the visitors to fill out forms and will be willing to set an appointment for several months in the future, but will have a variety of reasons why the sage is not available at the present time, such as:

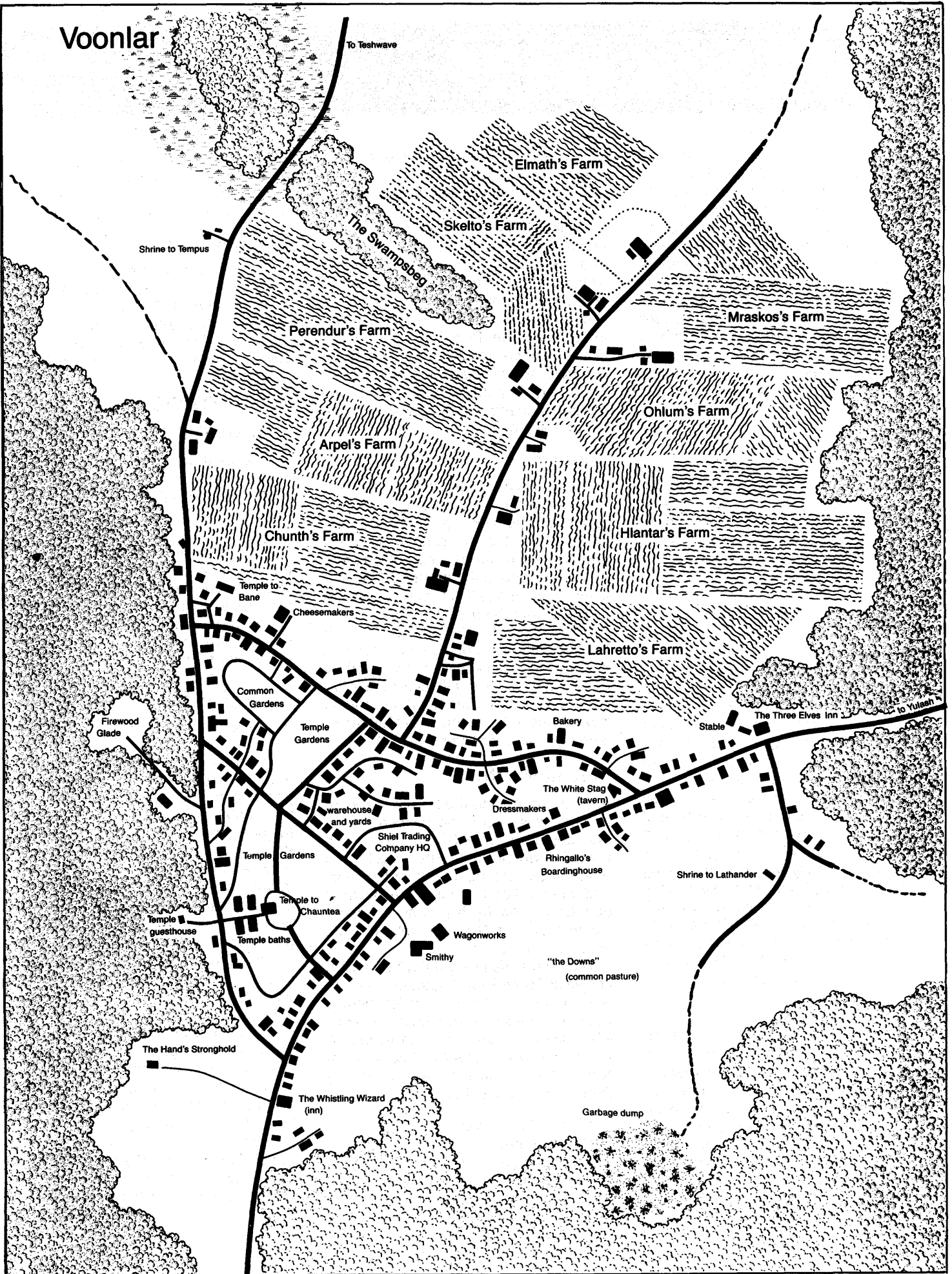
- * He is in the middle of an experiment.
- * He is on an extended tour of the lower planes.
- * He has just completed a battle with a type VI demon, and is not in the best of moods.
- * He has just finished destroying a group of tattooed barbarians. What did you say your problem was?

Elminster, however, is very interested in the heroes' plight. He has had reports both from the Nameless Bard (Chapter 1) and from Vangerdahast, and is seeking to discover who is behind the brands and what their true purposes are. Once he discovers this, he will send the information to the heroes by a dream (see Special Encounter 2, below).

Shadowdale does have an excellent inn (the Old Skull), and the town's stores are both reasonably priced and well stocked, since they typically do a brisk business in the adventuring trade.

Clerics at the Temple of Lathander will be able to pass on the story of the *Blade*

Voonlar





of *Lathander*, a legendary weapon which was said to be able to slay Tyranthraxus. The sword was used to press back Tyranthraxus's attacks in the North. After the creature's death, the sword passed from adventurer to adventurer. At last it was stolen by agents of the Zhentarim and taken to the Temple of Bane in Zhentil Keep. Then, as a story from a few years back relates, the sword was stolen from the Black Network by a halfling thief. The halfling escaped by boat, but his vessel was sunk in the Moonsea and the sword (so Zhentil Keep says) was lost.

Mistledale

The major town of this dale shares the dale's name, and is situated at Ashabanford. It has good stores, but no sage. The residents are not terribly upset at the sight of the Zhentarim brands, since their relations with Zhentil Keep are cool but not hostile.

Essembra

The "seat" of Battledale is located some 30 miles from the dale itself, mainly because Battledale has lived up to its name and proved to be a regular battleground for human and inhuman forces. Essembra is a fortress town, with limited access and vigilant guards. There is a church of Tymora and a temple of Helm the Watcher here, but no sage.

One bit of news that casual visitors will pick up readily in the bars is that a lot of dragonish activity has been spotted around Haptooth Hill. The dragons have been raiding supply wagons, and forcing the farmers away from their harvests. One rumor says a mad wizard is involved, another that undead creatures are there, and a third says that an abomination, similar to that which came from Yulash, has been hatched on Haptooth Hill.

Myth Drannor

The longtime capital of the Elven Nation, this ruins is now overrun with monsters. (This area is the locale of the action in Chapter 14.) Part of it is currently the hiding place of Tyranthraxus, and the player characters should not travel here until they have dealt with all of the other masters. If they set out for Myth Drannor before this time, they will become lost on their way through the

woods and will pass out of the forest in another direction.

If player characters somehow do reach Myth Drannor (for instance, through the use of magic which allows faultless tracking or automatic location of a destination), they will find it girded with an impenetrable (no matter what) dome of force erected by Tyranthraxus to keep out interlopers. The dome will be intact until the PCs have found the *Blade of Lathander*, the *Helm of Dragons*, and the *Gauntlets of Moander*. Then and only then, Tyranthraxus will create an opening in the dome near the old graveyard.

Voonlar

This city is in most respects an independent entity, but it is politically under the control of Zhentil Keep. There are temples to Chauntea and Bane in this town, and shrines to Tempus, god of war, and Lathander, god of the morning. No sage is available in this town, but its inns are first rate, and the prices are fair.

Should the adventurers pass through Voonlar with the Azure Bonds displayed openly, their presence will be noted by priests of Bane, who will relay their information to Fzoul Chembryl at Zhentil Keep—and to his enemies at Mulmaster (see Special Encounter 1 below).

Moander's Road

A major addition to the terrain in recent months, this is a huge plowed furrow that begins at Yulash and runs south toward Myth Drannor. The "road" is a path through the forest of toppled trees and uprooted earth. This is the swath of destruction left by the passing of the Abomination of Moander following its escape from Yulash.

The road ends in a giant hill of debris, known as Moander's Mound, which is the remains of the abomination left behind when its consciousness *gated* to elsewhere in the Realms. Those investigating the mound will discover that scavengers have made the Mound their lair. Among the monsters found there are:

- A lair of 12 vultures
- Three separate otyughs
- A neo-otyugh in lair with treasure
- A lair of three shambling mounds

There is a 1 in 6 chance of discovering any of these creatures, one per hour, in the mess. Those in lairs will have their normal treasure and magical items.

Shadow Gap

A new inn has been constructed in this gap, the former one having been destroyed by the Iron Throne with the aid of a kalmari. While there are no clerics or sages here, the heroes may rest the night without danger of attacks by monsters.

Wilderness Encounters

For general wilderness encounters in the Realms, check the tables in Appendix II, referring to the area through which the heroes are traveling. Check for encounters three times per day and twice during the evening. On a 1 in 6, there will be a random encounter. In cases where the heroes are occupying two areas at the same time (such as a border region), the DM may choose the type of terrain the heroes take their encounter from.

Special Encounters

1. The Priests of Bane

Many of the towns in Moonsea reaches are plagued by temples of Bane, an evil god whose temporal base of power is in Mulmaster, across the Moonsea. The major temple in the region is in Zhentil Keep, but there are also a temple in Voonlar and shrines in Teshwave and Yulash. There was a temple in Phlan, and while this has been destroyed by brave heroes, there are still surviving priests in this area.

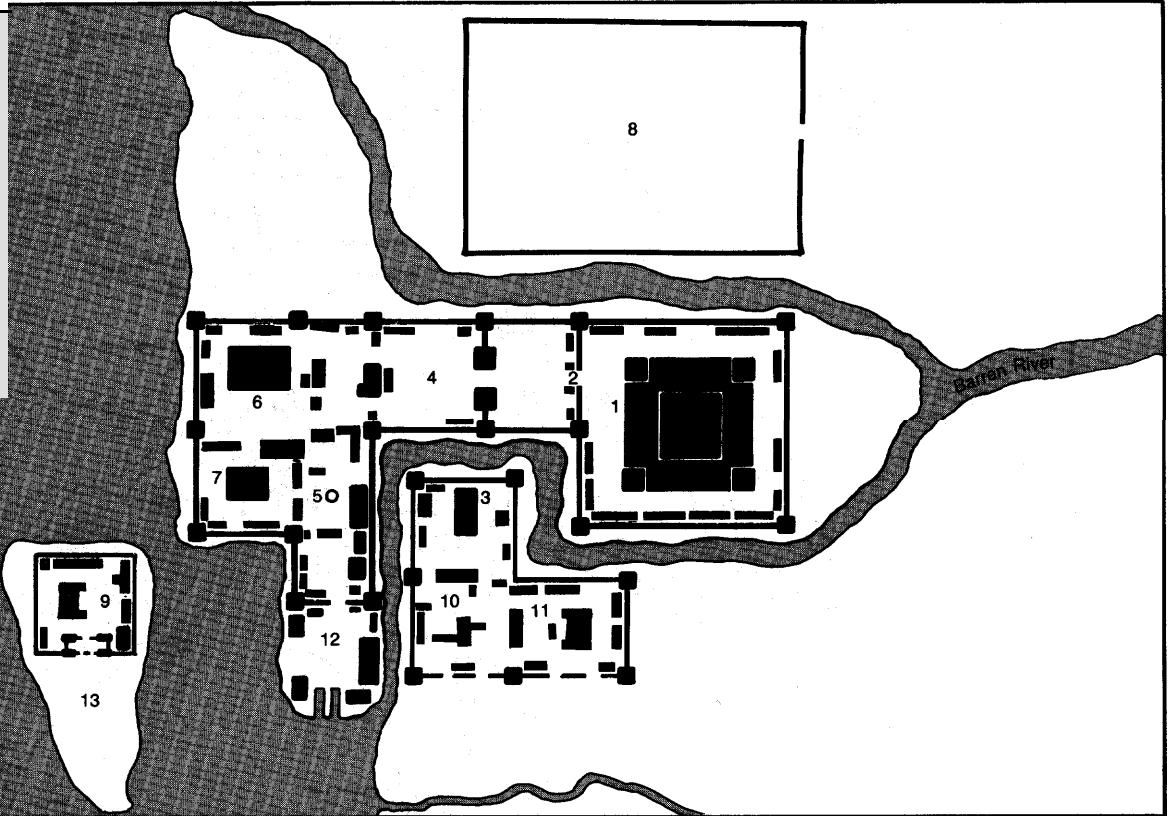
If the player characters appear in any of the abovementioned towns and still carry the mark of the Zhentarim, the clerics will send off reports to Mulmaster and to Fzoul Chembryl in Zhentil Keep. They will have agents (1st level thieves) follow the PCs around the town. If captured, the thieves will spill their guts, telling the heroes they were hired by the local church of Bane.

If the heroes have had the mark of the Zhentarim removed, the church of Bane will be hostile to them. In any town that the heroes enter which has an outpost of



City of Phlan

1. Valjevo Castle
2. Stojanow Gate
3. Temple of Bane
4. Podol Plaza
5. Kuto's Well
6. Cadoma Textile House
7. Mantor's Library
8. Valhingen Graveyard
9. Sokol Keep
10. Mansions
11. Kovel Mansions
12. Civilized Phlan
13. Thorn Island



Bane, they will be attacked by a revenge squad of clerics of Bane and their followers.

Cleric leader (5th level): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 25; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA spell use; AL LE; THACO 18.

Spells:

- 1st level *command*
protection from good
sanctuary
- 2nd level *hold person*
resist fire
silence 15' radius
- 3rd level *dispel magic*

Fighter assistants (5th level, 5): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 45, 40, 35, 30, 35; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword); AL NE; THACO 16.

Thief assistants (5th level, 5): AC 7; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 30, 38, 26, 24, 22; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-4 (thrown dagger); AL NE; THACO 19.

The fighters will engage the charac-

ters head-on in an ambush situation, while the thieves will try to circle around for backstabbing, or else remain in the back rank and throw their daggers. The cleric will use *hold person* and *silence 15' radius* to harass the heroes, then retreat under the cover of a *sanctuary* spell if things are going against him.

The ambushers will be interested in slaying the heroes for their effrontery and leaving their bodies as a warning.

2. The Sendings

Following their defeat of the Fire Knives, and following the defeat of each of the next three opponents, the heroes will receive a dream-sending courtesy of Elminster, who is motivating the party to gather together the necessary tools to defeat the New Alliance and Tyranthraxus.

The first dream comes to the characters 2-8 days after they leave Tilverton, and before they reach Yulash, Zhentil Keep, or Haptooth Hill. Each following dream will occur 1-3 days after the

defeat of another of the major parts of the alliance.

Read the players the following passage in full on the occasion of the first sending:

You are standing on a wide, flat plain covered with swirling mist. As the mist thins and parts, you see you are standing on a great map of the North, in the location where your mortal body rests.

There are others on the map now, regarding and taunting you, declaring you the puppet and they the masters. These are your enemies, and in your dream your face grows flush with anger.

On the map, on the rise that houses the ruins of Yulash, a cruel woman with a bloodless face, dressed in white, laughs and beckons you to come to her. She opens her hand, palm outward, to reveal a living mouth there, which



Yulash is a large ruined city situated atop a great hill, the tallest piece of land between the River Tesh and the Elven Woods. Long ago Yulash was an important city, but the Flight of Dragons ruined most of its buildings and drove much of its people south to more civilized lands. The part of the city that survived became a bone of contention between the powers of Hillsfar and Zhentil Keep. Both sides poured manpower into the area, driving off the last of the citizens in a bloody war for domination. The only people left in Yulash now are the armies of Zhentil Keep and the Red Plumes, and adventurers and looters, whom both armies sentence to death upon capture.

And . . . the Survivors of Moander.

Led by Mogion, a high priestess of the cult, they have collected themselves from throughout the Inner Sea, the last of the followers of Moander known to be anywhere in the Realms, to work a miracle.

They intend to break through the wall between the planes to free Moander once more, bring him bodily onto this plane to wreak destruction on the lands of the Moonsea and turn the Elven Forests into a huge, verdant, and treacherous jungle, all the while slaying anyone who does not bow to his inhuman will.

The heroes will see Yulash about two days before they reach it. The area around the city is a blasted plain filled with the wreckage of battle—destroyed farmhouses, overturned wagons, and the skeletons of long-dead warriors left for the scavengers. The heroes will be able to get to the walls of Yulash easily without being detected.

There still seems to be conflict within the walls, and eldritch fires dance over the ruined city during the night. The player characters should be warned of this so they move with caution through the areas.

Getting into Yulash is not a major problem, since the walls are riddled with holes. All the holes in the Hillsfar sector and the Zhentil Keep territories are guarded by patrols of the particular faction. The main gate into the Red Plume headquarters (see the inset map of the southwest corner of the city) is guarded, but the other two entrances into the city (including the large one left by a passing abomination) are unguarded.

Random Encounters

The Red Plumes of Hillsfar control the southern areas of the city, and the areas outside the gates to the east and west of the city. The Zhentil Keep forces control the northeast gate, and a good chunk of the downtown district. The remainder of the territory is an open war zone, where forces from both sides are active in destroying each other.

Troop Reaction to Heroes: The armed forces of both Hillsfar and Zhentil Keep are common encounters in each occupied area. The soldiers' reactions to outsiders are similar. In occupied areas, troops will call out for strangers to surrender before attacking, and will take prisoners if possible. In the War Zone, the operative procedure is to shoot first and ask questions later. In the contested area, soldiers for either side will attack any individuals they spot who are not showing the banner of the same side.

Discoveries Among the Ruins: While moving through the city, player characters may discover treasure left behind by previous occupants. For each building searched, there is a 1 in 10 chance of finding 30-120 gp (60%) or 1-10 gems (40%) worth 100 gp each. Anyone caught appropriating such items is considered a looter and is subject to being shot on sight.

Encounter Tables

In either occupied area, there is a 1 in 6 chance per turn that an encounter will occur—but regardless of the die rolls, a full hour (six turns) will never pass without some kind of occurrence.

In the War Zone, the per-turn chance of a random encounter is 2 in 6, and something will happen at least once every half hour (three turns).

The DM may modify both of the above stipulations to account for the party's behavior or current situation. If the heroes are holed up inside a ruined building, the frequency of encounters would be lessened. If they're walking down a street playing "kick the helmet," or otherwise asking for trouble, then the converse would apply.

If an encounter is indicated or dictated, roll on the table that relates to the PCs' location and see the following text for descriptions of the results.

Hillsfar Section

d10 roll Encounter

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Red Plumes patrol |
| 2 | 3-12 vegepygmies |
| 3 | Little looters |
| 4 | Major looters |
| 5 | Red Plumes patrol |
| 6 | 1 giant slug |
| 7 | 1-8 trolls |
| 8 | Zhentil Keep terror team |
| 9 | Red Plumes deserters |
| 10 | Moander cultists |

Zhentil Keep Section

d10 roll Encounter

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Zhentil Keep patrol |
| 2 | 1-2 shambling mounds |
| 3 | Little looters |
| 4 | Major looters |
| 5 | Zhentil Keep terror team |
| 6 | Zhentil Keep patrol |
| 7 | 1-8 trolls |
| 8 | Zhentil Keep patrol |
| 9 | Little looters |
| 10 | Moander cultists |

War Zone

d10 roll Encounter

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Zhentil Keep patrol |
| 2 | Red Plumes patrol |
| 3 | Zhentil Keep patrol |
| 4 | Red Plumes patrol |
| 5 | Zhentil Keep terror team |
| 6 | Red Plumes deserters |
| 7 | 1-8 trolls |
| 8 | Little looters |
| 9 | Major looters |
| 10 | Destroyed patrol |

Encounter Descriptions

Zhentil Keep patrol: Twelve fighters of 3rd level led by a 6th level fighter. One of the twelve will always be a Zhentarm agent. They will seek to pick off their opponents from a distance if outnumbered. Otherwise they will close and attack on foot.

Patrol leader (6th level fighter): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 6; hp 50; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword) or 1-6 (short bow); AL NE; THACO 15.

Patrol members (3rd level fighters, 12): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword) or 1-6 (short bow); AL NE; THACO 18.



Red Plumes patrol: Ten mounted fighters of 3rd level led by a 6th level fighter. They prefer to attack their prey in open areas, riding them down and striking with their spears. If the targets flee into the ruins, they will dismount and follow. They ride medium war horses, which will attack if their riders are waylaid.

Patrol leader (6th level fighter): AC 2; MV 6" (18" mounted); HD 6; hp 50; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword), 1-6 (short bow), or 2-12 (with spear, charging); AL N; THAC0 15.

Patrol members (3rd level fighters, 10): AC 4; MV 6" (18" mounted); HD 3; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword), 1-6 (short bow), or 2-12 (with spear, charging); AL N; THAC0 18.

Red Plume war horses (11): AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 14 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-3; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 16.

Little looters: A group of 2-12 2nd level thieves prowling the wreckage of the city for gold and magic that they can sell in Voonlar or Phlan. They will have 10-100 gp in treasure on them if defeated. They will try to flee farther into the ruins after their first member is slain.

Looting thieves (2nd level, 2-12): AC 8; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA thieving abilities; AL NE; THAC0 20.

Major looters: Another group of adventurers plundering the wreckage, but these looters pack more punch, and the good-sized groups have no qualms about slaying the occasional patrol that stumbles onto their activities. They are also 2-12 in number, but one-third (round up) of any group of three or more are 6th level magic-users with some heavy firepower spells. The remainder are 9th level thieves. A group of major looters will have 1000-6000 gp in treasure, mostly in gems and rare objects.

Looting thieves (9th level, 2-8): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 9; hp 28 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA thieving abilities; AL NE; THAC0 16.

Looting magic-users (6th level, 1-4): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 6; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use; AL NE; THAC0 19.

Spells:

- 1st level *charm person*
magic missile (x2)
sleep
- 2nd level *invisibility*
stinking cloud
- 3rd level *prot. from normal missiles*
either *lightning bolt*
or *fireball*
(50% chance of each)

Each magic-user will have his *protection* spell in effect when encountered, because both sides in the war have missile weapons.

Destroyed patrol: The heroes stumble upon the remains of either a Zhentil Keep patrol or a Red Plumes patrol (50% chance of each). There will be copious dead bodies of men (and in the case of the Red Plumes, horses), still wearing their armor, but all valuables have been stripped from them. The heroes may salvage weapons but will find it unwise to take anything else, since both sides have distinct uniforms and armor. They may later be attacked by one side for looking like the enemy, or by the other side for having looted the dead bodies of their comrades.

Zhentil Keep terror team: This is an elite unit, designed for making strikes into the heart of Red Plume territory, destroying as much as possible, and sneaking out again. Favorite targets include the Red Plume horses, which the Hillsfar troops use to great effect in moving around the city.

The terror team specializes in hit-and-run tactics that are best accomplished when the group is at or near full strength. If a team loses four members (or three magic-users), the others will bolt and run in different directions, intending to regroup and be reinforced later at the nearest Zhentil Keep outpost. This type of encounter will occur no more than once per day; if a later die roll on the same day indicates another terror team, substitute either a Red Plumes patrol or a Zhentil Keep patrol, depending on the characters' present location, or roll again if the encounter is in the War Zone.

Terror team leader (9th level magic-user): AC 4 (*bracers of defense*); MV

12"; HD 9; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use; AL LE; THAC0 19.

Spells:

- 1st level *light*
magic missile (x2)
sleep
- 2nd level *invisibility*
mirror image
rope trick
- 3rd level *fireball*
lightning bolt
prot. from normal missiles
- 4th level *polymorph other*
stoneskin
wall of force

When the mage is encountered, his *stoneskin* and *protection* spells are already in effect. If pressed, the wizard will throw up his *wall of force* and flee while *invisible*.

Terror team members (6th level magic-users, 3): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 6; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use; AL NE; THAC0 19.

Spells:

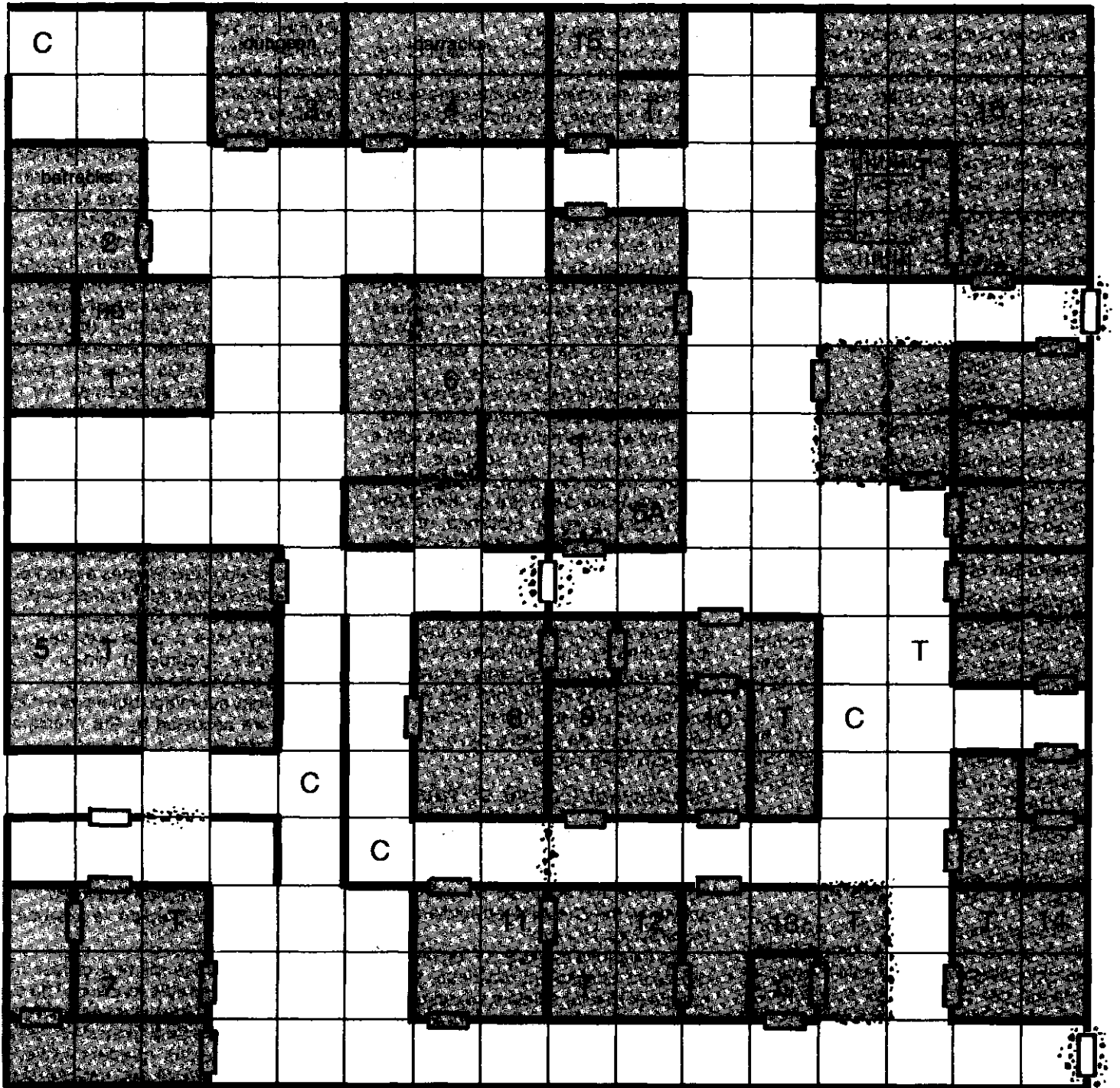
- 1st level *charm person*
magic missile (x2)
sleep
- 2nd level *invisibility*
stinking cloud
- 3rd level *prot. from normal missiles*
either *fireball*
or *lightning bolt*
(50% chance of each for each mage)




The spell casters' *protection* spells will be in effect when they are encountered, since both sides in this war have missile weapons.

Terror team members (4th level thieves, 4): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA thieving abilities; AL NE; THAC0 20.

Red Plumes deserters: This is a group of Red Plumes who have decided they have had enough of the war, and intend to seek their fortunes farther south, after a little recreational looting. They have the manpower of a normal Red Plumes patrol (see above), but will attack under all circumstances, seeking to silence any interlopers.

Yulash



-  open to sky
-  ruined wall
-  blocked doorway

- C** Checkpoint
- T** trap



Moander cultists: A group of five followers of Moander making their way to the hidden temple. If the heroes achieve surprise on the cultists and do not attack, they will be able to follow the cultists to the edge of the midden that serves as the upper gate of their temple. The cultists have no treasure.

Moander cultist leader (4th level cleric): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 4; hp 21; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); SA spell use; AL CE; THACO 18.

Spells:

1st level *command*
light
sanctuary
2nd level *dust devil*
hold person

Moander cultist bodyguards (3rd level fighters, 4): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (two-handed broad sword); AL NE; THACO 18.

Nonhuman encounters

Shambling mounds (1-2): AC 0; MV 6"; HD 10; hp 50 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SA suffocation; SD immune to fire, half damage from weapons and cold attacks, lightning hit adds +1 HD; SZ L; AL N; THACO 10.

Giant slug: AC 8; MV 6"; HD 12; hp 72; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA spit acid; SD unaffected by blunt weapons; SZ L; AL N; THACO 9.

Trolls (1-8): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6+6; hp 30 each; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA may attack separate targets; SD regenerate; SZ L; AL CE; THACO 13.

Vegepygmies (3-12): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD piercing weapons inflict only 1 point of damage per hit, immune to electricity and *charm-type* magic; SZ S; AL N; THACO 16.

The Zhentil Keep Forces

If the heroes are captured by Zhentil Keep forces, they will be taken to a "safe location" near the ruined temple of Ilmater (far from Zhentil Keep headquarters). There they will be left with their weapons and told to wait. The arresting force will then send a runner to Zhentil Keep HQ with the heroes'

descriptions and story.

If the heroes still bear the sigil of the Zhentarim, the runner will return in ten minutes with orders that the heroes are not to be harmed, and should be escorted to the edge of the Zhentil Keep secure zone. The leader of the Zhentil Keep patrol will note to the heroes that if they are found within Zhentil Keep territory again, he will not guarantee being able to stop his men from accidentally shooting them as looters. This is a heavy hint, and what it means is that any Zhentil Keep troops encountered from here on in will attack first, rather than have to deal with the problem of waiting for orders from their higher-ups.

If any or all of the heroes do not have the mark of the Zhentarim on their arms, a runner will return in ten minutes with a second patrol of 10 soldiers. Both patrols will confer; then, drawing their bows, they will open fire on the player characters from a distance of 30'. Orders have come down to the Yulash commander that such individuals are to be slain on sight.

A similar reaction should be expected by those heroes who approach the Keep forces directly. They will be set aside in a "safe place" until their story is checked. If they bear the mark, they are warned and escorted away. If they do not, they will be slain as looters by a 2-patrol strength firing squad.

Southwest Corner of Yulash

The southwest corner of Yulash is in the Red Plumes' "secure" zone. The force's headquarters has been moved here recently because of increased activity by the Zhentil Keep soldiers near the previous HQ site.

The locations marked "C" on the map represent checkpoint locations, where patrols of Hillsfar soldiers are stationed. These units are not mounted and thus they do not carry spears, but they are otherwise just as formidable as the Red Plumes patrols that might be met elsewhere in the city. They will challenge anyone who comes within two spaces of their positions, and will attack those who do not surrender. Those who surrender are taken to area 3 for holding until the captain can talk to them.

Brigadier-Captain Lethbron-Stot is the current commander of the Red

Plumes in Yulash. Called merely "The Captain" by his men, he is a stiff-necked, shortsighted martinet who lives by a rule book that probably does not apply to the battle they are fighting (one big reason why the war is going against them and they are suffering desertions). The captain will be normally found in area 1, though he will move to area 3 to interrogate suspicious characters.

In the interview, the captain will start with a neutral attitude toward the player characters—he's gone through this before, talking to would-be heroes who are looting and calling themselves adventurers. To determine the captain's reaction to the PCs, have the players specify who the spokesman for the group will be in the interview with the captain; then roll 2d6 and refer to the list of results below after applying any modifiers that fit the situation. The modifiers are these:

- 1 If the heroes are known to have killed Red Plumes soldiers or are carrying Red Plumes equipment.
- 1 If the heroes are marked with the symbol of the Zhentarim—or +1 if they have a good excuse ready (DM's judgment) when asked about the marks.
- +1 If they submitted quietly when they were accosted by the checkpoint patrol.
- 1 If they were defeated in combat and dragged here.
- +1 If the spokesman is lawful good.
- +1 If the spokesman is a paladin.
- +1 If the spokesman is a cleric of Chauntea.
- 1 If the spokesman is a thief.
- 1 If the spokesman is chaotic in alignment.

A modified dice roll of 4 or less indicates an unfavorable reaction. The captain declares all the player characters to be looters and orders them slain. He will then return to his quarters while his orders are carried out (unless he is attacked himself). All available forces in areas 1-6 will come to the attack. All Red Plumes patrols will attack the PCs on sight from this point on. If the heroes escape from the city, they will be automatically attacked by Red Plumes patrols in the wilderness and in Hillsfar whenever they encounter them.



On a modified result of 5-9, the captain remains neutral. He believes their story, but doesn't give them any aid in their mission. What he does is to issue them a pass that allows them to move past any Red Plumes checkpoints or patrols provided that they are on their way *out* of the Hillsfar-occupied part of the city. He does not want to see them again in his part of town. If the heroes return, the captain's next reaction check is made at a -2 modifier (because they have bothered him again).

The captain has a positive reaction if the modified result is 10 or more. He is now firmly on the characters' side, and gives them some information that may help them as well as him. He tells them that he is concerned with strange dealings around the company midden (garbage dump), a great hole near the ruined temple of Helm the Watcher. He hasn't been able to spare the manpower to engage in treasure-hunting, but if the heroes would be interested, he would provide a map to the midden, and the accompaniment of a patrol as far as the entrance to the ruined temple.

Area Descriptions

1. Captain's Quarters. In this area is a simple desk and chair. A set of stairs leads up to a loft in the southern half of the room, and behind a wall in this elevated area are the captain's cot and his personal effects. Hidden at the bottom of his pack is a particular memento of the Yulash campaign: a *short sword +3* with the hilt shaped like a mind flayer.

The captain is always present here, accompanied by two Hillsfar fighters, unless he is interrogating prisoners. If the complex is assaulted, he will enter the fray only if the heroes are being too successful (after they have slain 10 or more Red Plumes).

Brigadier-Captain Lethbron-Stot (12th level fighter): AC -2 (*plate +4*); MV 6"; HD 12; hp 93; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword); AL N; THAC0 9.

Red Plumes bodyguards (3rd level fighters, 2): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword); AL N; THAC0 18.

In addition to the magic sword, the captain has five trade bars of platinum in his desk, worth 200 gp each.

2. Barracks. This four-story building is missing its roof, but the bottom three floors are the quarters for the on-hand Red Plumes forces. There is a patrol (10 men) quartered on each floor. At any given time, two of the patrols will be on duty and ready to respond instantly to an alarm, an order to mobilize, or the sight or sound of any obvious sign of trouble; the other 10 men will be asleep. When an alarm is sounded, the two on-duty patrols will exit the barracks in the next two rounds, but the men who were sleeping will need five rounds to get out of bed and jump into their gear.

Red Plumes soldiers (3rd level fighters, 30): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword) or 1-6 (bow); AL N; THAC0 18.

3. Jail. This is the most structurally sound building in the Red Plumes camp. Its walls are 3' thick, and the enclosure is secured by a heavy iron grate. The captain conducts his interviews (see above) from the other side of this grate.

When the jail is occupied (which is almost always), a squad of five Red Plumes soldiers (see area 2 for stats) is stationed in the area outside the door. This squad will aid other units in sight who have problems with invading heroes or monsters.

4. Barracks. This is a two-story building, of which only the bottom floor is in use. The building houses two 10-man patrols (see area 2 for stats) and seven leaders (see below). If trouble breaks out in the open area adjacent to the barracks, one patrol and six of the leaders will exit the building to fight with the intruders, while the last leader will take the other patrol up to the ruined second floor to fire down on the melee. Their standing orders are to concentrate on visible spell casters with their bowfire.

Red Plumes leaders (6th level fighters, 7): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 6; hp 50 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword), 1-6 (short bow); AL N; THAC0 15.

5. Company Armory. This extremely dilapidated structure is missing half its roof; the exposed portion is covered with a crude tarpaulin to keep out the rain. This is where the Red Plumes keep their

extra harness, swords, supplies, spears, and arrows.

The patrol stationed at the checkpoint outside the building is charged with preventing entry to the armory without the captain's explicit permission. They will be split into groups of five, watching both entrances.

The floor boards are weak in the square marked "T" (common knowledge to Red Plumes, who avoid it). Anyone entering that square will be pitched into a sub-basement 30' below, taking 3-18 points of damage from the fall. There is no treasure in the armory.

6. Stables. This is where the horses of the Hillsfar Red Plumes are kept when they are being fed and rested. At any given time there are 40 medium war horses here, tethered to pegs driven into the ruined stone walls. The roof over the enclosure was missing entirely when the Red Plumes occupied this area, but some timbers have been recently replaced, and now the eastern half is under cover.

A patrol of Red Plumes soldiers will be on duty here, tending the horses. If there is a disturbance in the immediate vicinity of the stables, they will grab their weapons and arrive for the fray in 2 melee rounds. They will not ride horses into a general melee, but if it looks like the looters (that is, the player characters) are going to escape, they will mount up, grab spears, and pursue them.

Area 6A has a yellow ribbon stretched across the doorway and a sign reading "Warning! Structure Unstable!" nailed to the wall next to it. The sign is true—any who enter the square marked with a "T" will cause the northern wall to collapse, inflicting 3-18 points of damage from falling debris to anyone within 10' of the wall to the north, west, or south.

Because of this treacherous trap (which can be avoided, by those who know about it, by simply jumping across the 10' span), the room is also used as a hiding place for the company payroll—5000 gold pieces in 100-gp-value platinum bars. The entire treasury is hidden beneath an overturned urn in the southeast corner of the area.

7. Ruined Tower: This building was once one of Yulash's watch towers, 100



feet tall, most of which is now scattered on the hillside below. The building is now open to the elements above the first story. The floor near the northeast corner is sagging badly, and if any weight of more than 100 pounds is placed upon it, the entire 20'-by-20' section will fall 20' to a basement beneath, doing 2-12 points of damage to anyone caught in the collapse.

8. Ruined Smithy. This roofless building was once an ironsmith's shop. The forge still stands along the north wall, though most of the other equipment has been stripped by the Red Plumes.

A careful search of the room (requiring a full turn) will reveal that jammed into the forge's ruined chimney is an intact container holding a *potion of giant strength* (roll for type).

9. The Potter's Shards. This building was once a pottery, though now the kiln is broken open and the room is littered with shattered clay pots.

Should the heroes investigate the room, they will disturb 20 giant rats who make these ruins their home.

Giant Rats (20): AC 7; MV 12"/6"; HD 1/2; hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SZ S; AL NE; THACO 20.

10. The Shattered Inn. This building was once an inn, the "Watchful Eye" (the sign is leaning against the wall just inside the north doorway). The roof of this two-story building is missing, but the stairs to the second floor are solid.

The second floor is the final resting place for a dead fighter in *chain mail +1*, and the 20 giant rats who have stripped the flesh from his bones (see area 9 for rat stats). The fighter is in the area marked "T" on the second floor. If the heroes investigate the armored skeleton, the rats will attack, streaming out of the ruined walls. The added weight of men and rats will cause the floor to start to fall in. In two rounds, the floor of this section will collapse, inflicting 1-6 points of falling damage to those on it when it goes and 1-10 points of fallen-upon damage to those directly below it. The rats, being rats, will be unharmed and still in a nasty mood.

11. The Master's Voice. This was once a tavern, as suggested by the remains of

a bar and the amount of shattered glassware in the area. Characters must move carefully through the area or suffer 1-2 points of damage per 10' of movement from the glass shards. A sign hanging outside identifies this as "The Master's Voice, A Drinking Establishment of Quality" (well, that's what the sign says).

Behind a table propped against the south wall, a Red Plumes trooper is taking an unauthorized nap. If the player characters make noise or search the room, he will awaken and, drawing his bow, rise and demand the characters' immediate surrender.

If the heroes produce a pass from the captain, the soldier will be mollified and lower his weapon. If not, he will call for his comrades at the checkpoint outside, who will arrive in one round.

Red Plumes soldiers (3rd level fighters, total of 10): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword) or 1-6 (bow); AL N; THACO 18.

12. Bakery. This building was once a bakery, and the ovens still stand along the north wall. The walls are sound here, and there are no monsters and only infrequent patrols. If the heroes choose to rest here, they will be undisturbed for at least 10 hours.

13. Ruined Stores. This building was whole and sound until about four months ago, when the Abomination of Moander ripped off the eastern end. The northeast corner is still standing, but is very shaky; anyone who enters that section of the area will take 2-12 points of damage from toppling masonry.

This building was once a store, and still is littered with shattered crocks, scattered and rotted foodstuffs, and broken gear. Anyone who enters the store will be spotted by the Red Plumes checkpoint outside the southeast corner of the store (the collapsed wall allows the patrolmen to see into this area). The patrolmen (see area 12 for stats) will call for identification and/or surrender, and will pursue anyone they perceive as potential looters.

14. The Halfling Hermit. This two-story building is missing its second floor but retains its roof, so that the ground floor in effect has a 20-foot ceiling. The build-

ing is the lair of a slightly addled halfling thief, who is hiding on a bit of the second-floor rafters in shadows, ready to trap any monsters who invade his turf.

The halfling is Burto Milibuck. Burto was, ah, acquiring objets d'art from the ruins about four months ago when this huge moving mountain of garbage nearly swept him up in its escape from Yulash. Since then, Burto has not been right in the head, continually seeing vegetable monsters everywhere, and laying traps to destroy them. Here in his lair he is waiting for the monsters.

Above the area marked "T" in this room is an open-bottomed cage rendered *invisible* by a scroll spell that Burto read. The cage is suspended, and Burto has his hand on the release. When a monster (or characters) enter that square, Burto will release the cage, which will become visible when it crashes down upon and around the party.

Burto will shout at the trapped individuals to surrender, revealing himself from the shadows and carrying his bow. He says his arrows are tipped with deadly poison, but the purple stuff on the tips is in reality grape preserves, which he has a cache of up in his hideaway.

The cage is fairly light and can be lifted by a single person with a strength of at least 12. Burto is further hampered by having only two arrows. After getting off his second shot, he will throw his bow at his assailants (no damage) and seek to escape, either through an upstairs window, or through the secret door to the north.

Burto is not evil, just confused. If he is talked to calmly and assured that none of the party are vegetables, he will settle down and free the adventurers. He will even join the party, if asked, but will run off during their next encounter with vegepygmies, shambling mounds, or other plantlike monsters.

Burto has a *short sword +2* in addition to his arrows. In his cache he has three jars of grape preserves, and a *potion of frost giant strength*.

Burto Milibuck (insane 10th level halfling thief): AC 5; MV 12"; HD 10; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (arrows smeared with grape preserves) or 3-8 (*short sword +2*); SA thieving abilities; SZ S; AL CN; THACO 16.



15. *Well Room*. This building looks in good shape, but is the home of a will-o-wisp, waiting for the unlucky to enter its lair. The floor is paving stone, and section of floor in the southeast corner is on a pivot so that it will tilt when anyone steps on it, dumping the unsuspecting character(s) into a well shaft 40 feet deep. Victims take 2-16 points of abrasion damage from the walls of the shaft on the way down, and after they've fallen 30 feet they plunge into a 10-foot-deep pool of smelly, stagnant water.

The will-o-wisp entices intruders into the trap by hovering over the southeast corner at eye level and changing its appearance so as to look like a glowing golden ring or halo (treasure!).

If the fall does not kill the victim(s), the will-o-the-wisp descends into the pit and attacks normally, pulling the life energies out of the trapped character(s). It remains in the bottom of the pit until it senses that any surviving occupants of the room have left, and then it ascends. The pivoting floor slab will swing back to its most stable (horizontal) position in 1-3 turns, thus resetting the trap. (If the will-o-wisp has not left the well shaft by the time this happens, the creature will be caught inside the shaft—until the next time someone steps on it.)

Will-o-wisp: AC -8; MV /18"; HD 9; hp 33; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SD become invisible for 2-8 rounds, only affected by *protection from evil*, *magic missile*, and *maze* spells; SZ S; AL CE; THACO 12.

If reduced to five or fewer hit points, the will-o-wisp will shoot out of the well (or out of the area, if it is attacked before the trap is sprung), seeking to escape.

The bottom of the well is littered with the dead forms of those who have come before. Among the debris at the bottom of the stagnant pool are a *long sword +1* and a *wand of magic missiles* with seven charges remaining.

16. *Temple of Helm*. This ruined building was once a temple dedicated to Helm the Watcher. In the destruction wrought by the Flight of Dragons, part of the temple floor was blown away, revealing a huge pit (area 17), which other natives have been using as a garbage dump or midden.

As the heroes approach the temple

doors, they will hear the sounds of battle within: the ring of steel on stone, and the shouts of a woman warrior. If the heroes enter the fray, read the following to the players:

You see the broad expanse of the temple, its litter and debris swept to one side. In the center of the room, surrounded by greenish vegetable-humanoids, are a woman and a lizard man, fighting back to back against the monsters. The woman is tall with a red cape and reddish blonde hair, and wields her weapon like a seasoned professional. Her companion looks like a misshapen lizard man, with too-short arms and a fin sticking out of the top of his head. At their feet lies the immobile body of a cleric in plate armor. Nearby is a very large hulk of rotting vegetation, to which the woman deals a death blow just as you enter the room. There are about 10 of the smaller vegetable monsters on the floor with the cleric, also immobile, but about 20 more are still active, pressing in on all sides.

The female warrior is Alias, whose biography and statistics may be found in Appendix I. Her companion is Dragonbait, a paladin of the extradimensional race of saurials, who is also detailed in Appendix I. The large hulk is the body of a shambling mound, and the smaller monsters are vegepygmies.

Their companion on the floor is Mixilia, a cleric of Helm who contacted Alias a month ago with troubling news: the Cult of Moander was active again, and working in Yulash to return Moander to the Realms. Mixilia brought Alias here, but the group was ambushed before they could enter the secret temple. Mixilia was attacked and suffocated by the shambling mound while the vegepygmies tried to keep Alias and Dragonbait occupied. Alias did break away and manage to kill the large monster, but not in time to keep Mixilia from expiring.

Now there are still 20 vegepygmies in the room which must be dealt with before anything else can happen.

Vegepygmies (20): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 1; hp 5 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD piercing weapons inflict 1 point of damage

per hit, immune to electricity and to some *charm*-type magic; SZ S; AL N; THACO 19.

If the player characters do nothing, Alias and her companion can deal with the vegepygmies in about 20 rounds, taking about 10 points of damage apiece in the process. Dragonbait will heal Alias first, then himself. Even though these monsters are not particularly formidable, Alias will be not at all happy that the PCs elected not to help dispose of them. As a result, she will not aid the party hereafter.

If the heroes do chip in against the monsters, melee will proceed normally. Alias will wait until the end of the battle to make introductions. Dragonbait will check Mixilia's body, and look up, shaking his head. Alias will ask if any of the heroes have the ability to *raise dead*. If they do, and if Mixilia is *raised*, the cleric will act as guard at the top of the midden while the others descend (see the following text). Otherwise Alias will put his body in a safe place, hoping to carry her friend back to civilization later.

Dragonbait will examine the player characters using his *shen*-sight. If the heroes are not evil, he will give Alias a sign that all is clear. If any of the player characters are evil, he will give his mistress a negative sign, and the pair will disassociate themselves from the characters.

Assuming that the characters do help defeat the vegepygmies, and that no one in the adventuring party is evil, Alias will tell the story of what she is doing here, and then expect the player characters to do the same. For starters, read the following to the players:

"First off, my name is Alias. This is my companion Dragonbait. He's not a pet, not a familiar, not a servant. He's a saurial, the only one I know of in the Realms. I'm an adventurer by trade and disposition, usually fighting only when called for, or to right some wrong.

"It's the latter situation here. There's a cult at work here, one that worships an ancient and evil god called Moander. I was here a few months back, and was responsible for accidentally freeing a part of it



from its imprisonment here. We killed that part of it, called the Abomination of Moander, but not before it carved up a large chunk of the forest to the south. Still, when it was gone, we thought that would be that.

"We were wrong. It seems that there is a temple complex down here that I didn't know about at the time, and the Survivors of Moander, as they now call themselves, are gathering to try to bring back their lost god. I don't know how they're going to do it, but I intend to stop them. You can help if you want. We can reach the temple by going down through the old garbage dump to the southeast.

"My cleric friend Mixilia caught on to their activities and went looking for help. He found me and Dragonbait. We have a grudge against Moander and his followers, and want to see them put out of business for good. Care to help?"

If the heroes are haughty, condescending, or rude at this point, Alias will not give them, or ask for, any more information. She will say, with some measure of disgust, that the heroes (not the word she would use) are on their own, since that's the way they seem to want it. Then she and Dragonbait will pick up the body of Mixilia and appear to be preparing to get their cleric to safety. Rather than overtly aiding the party from this point forward, they will put their friend in a safe place once the heroes have begun their descent, and then they will follow the PCs secretly, intending to come to their aid if the characters find themselves overmatched.

If the heroes are friendly, Alias and Dragonbait will join their party. Alias will do all the talking for the two of them, while Dragonbait will apparently communicate with her telepathically. Actually the saurial communicates by means of scents, a fact which Alias has become aware of, but which others may not notice immediately.

If the heroes show their markings, Alias will look at them, curse, and tell them the following:

"I've seen them before," she says, rolling up her own sleeve to reveal a swirling patch of blue tattooed to her skin. "I carried marks like those myself, not too long ago. They are magical slave-bonds of a sort, forcing the . . . person . . . who wears them to perform certain actions against their will. It was such a marking that originally brought me to Yulash, and caused me to free Moander's Abomination. You may be similarly affected.

"I recognize Moander's symbol, but the others are new to me. Let's see. . . that one looks like the sigil of the Black Network, based up in Zhentil Keep. Nasty people, according to a friend of mine. The main point with these symbols is that they can be resisted through a strong sense of will and identity. If you can force yourself to resist the attack, you can triumph over them.

"Another point. The markings are usually tied to a few individuals, such as a powerful mage or leader of a group. Kill this individual, and the brand for that group falls apart."

When the discussion is over, it will be time for the PCs to descend toward the underground temple with or without Alias and Dragonbait. (If any Red Plumes soldiers have witnessed the foregoing scene, they will refuse to go into the pit with the characters; they have a "live and let live" attitude toward the Moanderites—fighting the Zhentil Keep forces is quite enough for now—and won't do anything to jeopardize that status.)

17. The Midden. After the appearance of the Abomination of Moander, the Red Plumes took measures to secure the area around the midden, which they had previously used as a garbage dump. But they still wanted to dump things there (it's a very deep hole, and perfect for such a purpose), so they erected a structure around it with only one man-sized opening, along the southeast wall leading to and from the rest of the ruined temple. This allows Moanderites to come and go if they so desire (remem-

ber the "live and let live" policy), but prompts them to head away from the Red Plumes complex when they do emerge from the hole. And the Hillsfar troops still have access to the hole for dumping purposes.

The midden itself is a gaping hole 200' deep, with the bottom 30' or so filled with trash and refuse. Those who fall down the shaft will take only 4-32 points of damage, but stand a chance of sinking and drowning in the soft muck after they hit. A stairway spirals down the side of the shaft, but it is only wide enough for one person at a time, so that any group of travelers must proceed in single file.

At about 100' down, there is a hole in the wall along the midden. The remains of a stone secret door still hang on its pivots. Within this passageway is the entrance to the temple of the Survivors of Moander.

The Temple of Moander



The temple complex of Moander has long been buried beneath the city of Yulash, formerly serving as a prison for an earthly incarnation of that god known as the Abomination of Moander. The creature was freed recently and its earthly form destroyed soon thereafter. Now Moanderite cultists from throughout the Moonsea Reaches have gathered together to try to bring their god's power back to the Realms.

The heroes are intended by the Survivors of Moander to be used as sacrificial victims in the main shrine (room 9). To this end, they do not want to slay the heroes, and will try to knock them unconscious in combat if forced to fight. Otherwise, they will flee back to room 9 in hopes that the heroes will pursue them there and enter the trap.

If any of the Moanderites are talked to, the occupants of the temple will welcome the characters as conquering heroes and tell them that everything will be explained if the player characters accompany them to the main shrine, where they will meet with Mogion, their leader. They will trap them there.

The Moanderites' servants, however, are not so diplomatic, and will attack to slay the heroes whenever they are engaged in combat.

Room Descriptions

1. Guard Post. This corridor is inscribed on both sides with twisted, convoluted carvings, all of a violent and disturbing nature. The size of the carvings increases as the heroes move down the hall, as does their graphic and violent nature.

When the heroes reach the corner, they will see to the north a patrol of 10 vegepygmies. The vegepygmies have orders not to attack any party that presents the holy symbol of the Cult of Moander (which the characters might have obtained from room 11 in the Fire Knives hideout back in Tilverton). If the heroes have such a symbol, the monsters will let them pass. Otherwise, they will attack.

The heroes may try to pass using the runes on their arms as a ticket in. The vegepygmies will be confused (this is not an actual holy symbol), but will let them pass. The vegepygmies are all leader-types of higher hit dice than normal.

Vegepygmies (10): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD piercing weapons inflict 1 point of damage per hit, immune to electricity and *charm*-type magic; SZ S; AL N; THAC0 15.

The vegepygmies have no treasure. At area 1A the heroes will find a ruined wall of blue-glazed brick. The brick is shattered and nonmagical, but if Alias is present, she will shudder visibly at the memory of what was once locked behind this wall.

2. Vegepygmy Garden. This is the barracks of the Moander cult's vegepygmies. Several huge pots are set up along the south walls, and a great plant is growing out of each pot. Hanging from the plants, like immature fruit, are clear-walled pods, within which are almost fully grown vegepygmies. Magical lamps set in the ceiling give this room a reddish glow. The room is the home of 25 vegepygmies, 5 of them leader-types. Also present are 5 thornies, the vegepygmy version of a war dog, which will aid their masters. If the invaders fail to show the symbol of Moander, the monsters will attack.

Vegepygmies (20): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD piercing weapons inflict 1 point of damage per hit, immune to electricity and *charm*-type magic. SZ S; AL N; THAC0 16.

Vegepygmy leaders (5): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD piercing weapons inflict 1 point of damage per hit, immune to electricity and *charm*-type magic. SZ S; AL N; THAC0 15.

Thornies (5): AC 3; MV 15"; HD 4; hp 25 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA spines (see below); SZ M; AL N; THAC0 15. Thornies are covered with sharp spines (like those of a sea urchin) that will inflict 3-12 additional points of damage whenever the creature scores a regular hit in close combat.

The vegepygmies will have a scattering of 1000 gp, mostly in coins of lesser value, among their gear. If the plants are not chopped down, they will produce a new "crop" of vegepygmy leaders who will track down the heroes for revenge. There will be 10 vegepygmies in this new crop.

3. Shambling Mound Quarters. These areas are where the cultists store their other allies, a set of 6 shambling mounds. These creatures are quite content to be led about by the cultists for various purposes, because the cultists keep them well fed and docile. For this reason they will not attack immediately, but will fight back if hit first.

Shambling mounds (6): AC 0; MV 6"; HD 8; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SA suffocation; SD immune to fire, resistant to cold, all weapons inflict half damage; susceptible to *plant control* potions and *charm plant* spells; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 12.

If the creatures are left undisturbed, they will later be rounded up by the Moanderites for the final conflict in room 9.

4. Food Storage. Here is a colony of 12 shriekers raised as a food source for the Moander cultists. They are nonhostile, but light within 30' or movement within 10' causes them to set off a hideous shrieking. The shrieking will cause the complex to be warned that there are invaders in the area, and cause a group of cultists to appear in 1-6 rounds. If the heroes had left the door to the shambling mounds' quarters open as well, the shamblers will arrive in 2 rounds for dinner.

Cultists (3rd level fighters, 6): AC 8; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 18. If slain in an earlier encounter, these cultists will not be present for the climactic fight in room 9.

5. Preparation Room. This room is used by the Moanderites as a changing room for putting on their holy robes before entering the shrine (room 9). There is a closet here with four hooded robes of Moander and masks (white with the jawed palm emblem on the forehead) in a small closet here. The robes provide AC 8 to the wearer. Of more interest may be the materials left behind by the last group of cultists when they changed: 5 suits of plate armor, 6 suits of chain mail, 9 suits of leather armor, a *two-handed sword +1*, 6 bows, 2 crossbows, 40 arrows, 10 quarrels, a *battle axe +2*, 5 long swords, 5 broad swords, a *short sword +3*, 12 daggers, and 25 cloaks. The heroes may choose from the equipment here to rearm them-



selves for future combat.

There are also three casks of wine here, used for celebrations among the cultists. The wine may be used to negate the sticky webs of the giant sundew in room 6.

6. Trash Control. The doors to this room open 10' over the floor, so that player characters who are not expecting the drop must make a saving throw versus wands or immediately fall 10' for 1-6 points of damage. The room is used as the cultists' garbage pit, where they dispose of dead monsters as well as individuals they have captured and have no further use for. The room is also the home of a giant sundew.

Giant Sundew: AC 7; MV 1"; HD 8; hp 50; #AT 6 per target within range (5'); Dmg 1-3; SA suffocation, combat penalties; SD resistant to fire and missile attacks; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 12.

7. Mogion's Quarters. These are Mogion's personal quarters. The high

priest herself will be found in the shrine (room 9) preparing for the sacrifice. The room is fairly empty, since Mogion has had neither the time nor the desire to refurbish it. There is a simple bed, a dresser and closet, and a small writing desk in the room.

In the desk drawer is a special ring that will protect the wearer and all within 10' of him or her from the stone guardian in room 8. On the desk is a letter, marked with the symbol of the Zhentarim, that reads as follows:

Most Respected Mogion of Moander:

The Red Wizard Dracandros has provided a magical sending to me, alerting me that you are planning to exterminate the subjects of our little test. While I realize that you are among the survivors of not only a banished god but an earlier alliance, I must protest strongly your intention to eradicate our subjects before they are fully tested.

If you carry out this mad plot and slay our pigeons, then Dracandros, myself,

and Lord T will all be forced to hunt you down and slay both you and anything you choose to bring onto this plane. Do not doubt that we can do so. Remember that I represent a more active power that is still at work in this part of the Realms, and will take poorly to your hostile actions. Once the subjects have been fully tested, then we may slay them.

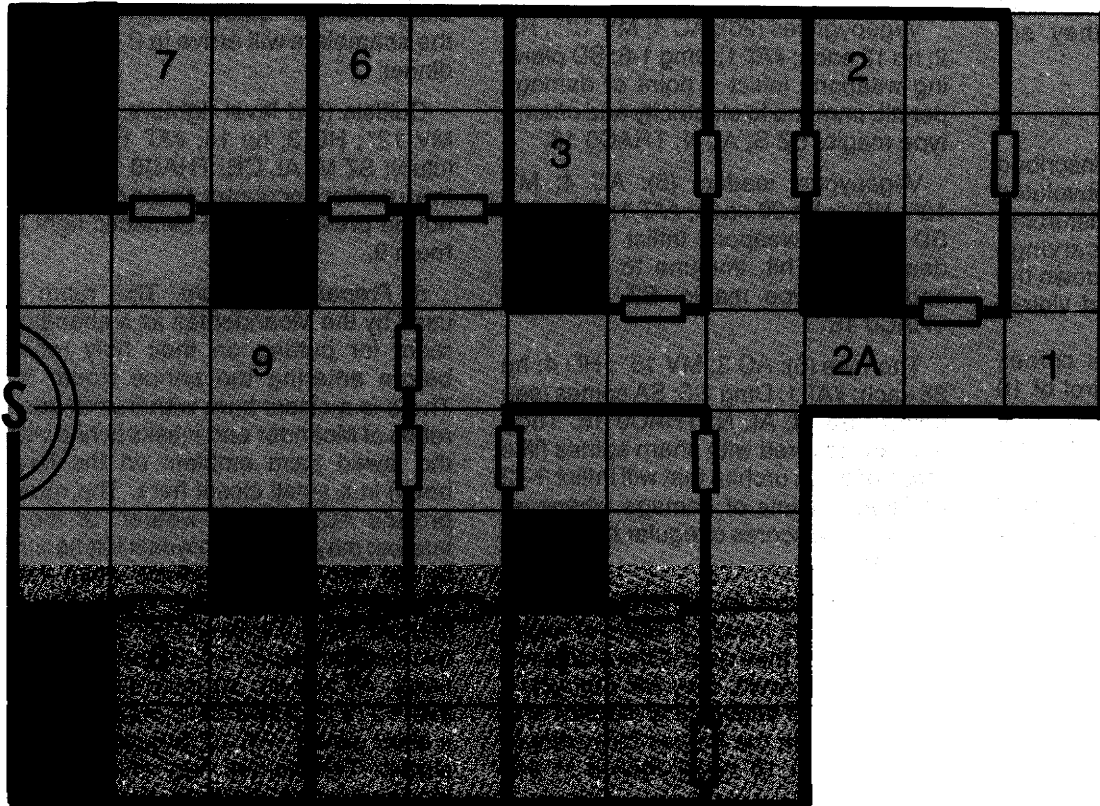
One more thing: I performed the requested research for you, and you are wrong. It is only the gauntlets, not the appearance of Moander himself, which can devour the Pool of Radiance. This further weakens your argument to bring "old moldy" back onto this plane.

*Yours in darkness,
Lord Fzoul Chembryl of Bane,
Zhentil Keep*

8. Treasure Vault. Here is where the treasure of Mogion and the Survivors is stashed, including treasures previously hidden elsewhere beneath the city, and goods looted from above. The booty includes the following items:

Temple of Moander

midden



The Temple of Moander



- * 3 solid gold holy symbols of Helm, worth 1000 gp each.
- * 10 Lantanese trade bars, worth 500 gp each.
- * A statue of a white owl, carved in whale ivory, worth 700 gp.
- * A chest filled with nonmagical copper rings. The rings have *Nystul's magic aura* cast upon them, and will radiate magic. The chest is trapped so that when it is opened, poison gas will fill a 20'-by-20' area.
- * 2000 gp in loose coins scattered about the floor.
- * Any devices and items for raising the dead that may have been stolen from the player characters before they awoke in Tilverton.
- * A stone statue of Dracandros, Red Wizard of Thay, labeled as such at the base. This statue is in reality a stone guardian that was given to Mogion by Dracandros as a memento, and which the wizard also uses to spy on the evil cleric. The stone guardian will wait 5 rounds after the door is opened, then will attack anyone in the room who is not protected by the special ring from room 7.

Stone Guardian: AC 2; MV 10"; HD 4+4; hp 28; #AT 2; Dmg 2-9/2-9; SD detect invisible objects; resistant to edged weapons, cold, fire, and electricity; immune to normal missiles, poison, *hold*, *charm*, *fear* or paralysis. Vulnerable to *stone to flesh*, *transmute rock to mud*, *stone shape*, and *dig* spells; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 15.

9. *The Shrine*. Read the following passage to the players when they enter:

This underground vault is lit by oil lamps sitting in tall brass holders at each corner. The center of the room is slightly depressed and covered with soft moss, like a living carpet. The walls were once white marble, but now are tinged green by algae.

At the far end of the room is a raised dais, behind which is a huge statue of the jawed palm of Moander. Before this great symbol of Moander is a small bench, upon which sits a thin, skeletal woman. She is dressed in sickly white robes, and wears a

mask which covers her upper face. On the forehead of the mask is another symbol of the jawed palm. She wears no armor, except for a set of heavy gauntlets which do not seem to fit with the rest of her outfit. She motions to you to come closer, and rises.

To each side of the woman are two manlike brutes, similar to golems in appearance, except that they are green in color. Along the side walls are a number of cultists, also dressed in sickly white robes. They carry clubs hanging from short chains attached to their belts.

The woman is Mogion, the highest-ranking priest of Moander left in the Realms. Her stats and story are found in Appendix I and summarized here. She wears the *Gauntlets of Moander*, which provide her with enhanced abilities (see Appendix I).

The two creatures on either side of her are algoids under her control. They are totally loyal and will die to defend her. They are already under the control of the power of the *gauntlets*, and as such cannot be *charmed* or *held*. They will only attack if Mogion herself is attacked and damaged.

Algoids (2): AC 5; MV 6"; HD 5; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10/1-10; SD immune to magical fire and lightning, immune to edged weapons of less than +2; vulnerable to *part water* and *lower water*; SZ M; AL CN; THAC0 15.

There are 20 cultists in the room, minus some or all of the six who might have been slain in room 4 when the shriekers sent off their warning.

Cultists (3rd level fighters, maximum of 20): AC 8; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 18.

Assuming that the characters do not rush forward to attack Mogion or the cultists immediately, then the high priest speaks:

Mogion smiles at your group and beckons you forward again. "Welcome, adventurers," she states, her

voice a piercing whine. "I hope that you have suffered no hardship in reaching this hallowed spot, for you are to play an important role in the future of our faith. You are about to help us bring a dead god back to life. Come forward."

Mogion wants the heroes to step forward onto the mossy mat, at which point the ceremony will begin. If the heroes seem hesitant, she will use the command word for activating her part of the *Azure Bonds* ("*Kitsath*") to force the characters forward.

If Alias and Dragonbait are present, they will be unaffected by the compulsion, as will anyone else who makes a successful saving throw versus spells. The cultists will move in on those resisters, seeking to pummel them with their clubs and force them onto the mossy mat.

When four individuals marked with the bonds are present on the mat (or the maximum number available, if fewer than four have been branded), the second phase of the ceremony will begin. Mogion will motion with a gauntleted hand, and vines will twist out of the moss, hindering the characters on the mat as if by an *entangle* spell. She will then begin casting a spell given her by Moander, which, she is told, will bring him into this realm. The marked heroes were only needed to set off the spell; once they have been maneuvered onto the mat (by guile or force) they may move off it and the spell will continue.

Mogion will begin casting, which will have two immediate effects: first, she will be surrounded by a *major globe of invulnerability*, and though she may still be attacked physically, whoever does so must first get past the algoids. Second, those on the mossy mat must make a saving throw versus wands or immediately fall unconscious. Those who are unconscious on the mat at the end of 6 rounds must make a second saving throw or be slain because of the effect of the special spell (see below).

Beginning the spell casting will break the hold of the compulsion on the affected player characters, allowing them to move and act normally. The cultists will



try to keep the heroes penned in on the mat, and new vines will grow each round to keep the individuals *entangled*.

As soon as she starts casting the ceremonial spell, Mogion will discover that she did not know the whole truth about how the magic works—but neither she nor anyone else will be able to stop the casting from running its course once it is begun. Read the following passage to the players just after the casting begins:

The priestess Mogion makes a mystic gesture, suggesting that she has started to cast a spell. Then, suddenly, she stops, arrested in her motion like a puppet whose strings have been pulled taut. She begins to gag, and reaches toward her throat, clawing for air. She rips the mask from her face to reveal not a human face, but that of some green monster, tendrils growing in place of hair, her eyes turned the bright yellow of poisonous mushrooms, her teeth growing, as you watch, wooden and sharp-pointed.

The transformation will take 6 rounds, at the end of which Mogion will be the new vessel of Moander, a plant-monster which will have the benefit of the *Gauntlets* it still wears. When the magic has finished its work, the vines reaching up from the mat will suddenly sprout blades, killing immediately any unconscious characters still on the mat, and inflicting 1-3 points of damage to anyone conscious figures still fighting the cultists and the entangling vines.

Mogion will retain her original statistics (see Appendix I) until the casting is completed, at which point she will be fully merged with Moander and very difficult to slay.

Moander/Mogion: AC 0; MV 12"; HD 20; hp 120; #AT 2; Dmg 3-30; SA *Gauntlets of Moander*; SD immune to lightning, hit only by +2 or better weapons; heals damage when in contact with other plants; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 7.

Moander/Mogion will slay everyone she comes near who is not plantlike—she does not discriminate between cultists and members of the characters' party. If the heroes are slain (and the adventure ends here), Moander/Mogion

will seal off her complex and rest for a year, before breaking out into the Realms for revenge against those who tried to destroy the deity the first time.

Should the heroes kill Mogion before she completes the transformation, the cultists will flee in terror. The algooids will continue to attack until they are destroyed. The fleeing cultists will try to cave in the path behind them, sealing the heroes into the complex.

The cultists do not know about the secret passage behind the dais, activated by reaching inside the mouth of the statue and flicking a switch. The wall will rise, showing a passage that leads out to a drainage pipe outside the bounds of Yulash itself.

Once the group is free of Yulash, Alias and Dragonbait will leave the party. They have had enough of Moander's plots, and are heading for Shadowdale after going back into the city briefly to pick up their friend's body. (If the characters recovered some kind of device for raising the dead in the temple's treasure room, then the DM should give the party extra credit for offering to help Mixilia, or for simply giving the device to Alias for her to use. She will not ask for help, even if she knows that the heroes now have such an item.)

Before departing, Alias tells the heroes that if they ever need help in the form of information, there's a goatherd in Shadowdale she knows who is fairly knowledgeable (she means Elminster, of course).

If either Alias or Dragonbait is reduced to 0 hit points in the encounter, the affected character will immediately be surrounded by a bluish glow and instantly healed back to full strength and consciousness. (This was a gift from Elminster to save them from a certain-death situation.)

If the heroes defeat Mogion or Moander/Mogion, they should take the *gauntlets*. If they fail to do so, Alias will take them, and, on a "random encounter" a few days later, reappear to give them back to the player characters. She will say that she took them to a friend of hers to identify, and he suggested they be given to the heroes. If pressed for the identity of this "friend," she will only say that he is a goatherd . . . in his spare time.

Zhentil Keep



Zhentil Keep is a large, fortified city at the mouth of the River Tesh. It is regarded by all within the Moonsea Reaches as an evil town, ruled by cruel tyrants and home to bloodthirsty clerics and sadistic mages. It is the recognized seat of the Zhentarim, an organization of mages, fighters, and some clerics formed to control a swath of land from the Moonsea to the Sword Coast.

One of the major factions in the Zhentarim is the clergy of Bane, led by Fzoul Chembryl, second in command of the Black Network under Lord Manshoun. The leader of the network is not in Zhentil Keep at the moment—he is off dealing with a small rebellion at Darkhold, far to the west of Cormyr. Fzoul is the effective leader of the Zhentarim here at Zhentil Keep at this time.

Now, while Fzoul is the leading patriarch of Bane in Zhentil Keep, not all the clergy are in favor of Fzoul's alliance with the Black Network. These malcontents tend to be older, more reactionary priests, and they echo the sympathies of the High Imperceptor of Bane, the highest-level Cleric of Bane in the Moonsea, who rules from far-off Mulmaster.

In normal times, Fzoul would have the opportunity to pursue his own petty plots. But with the added responsibility of keeping the Zhentarim running while Manshoun is away, he is stretched thin. Several agents of the High Imperceptor of Bane have been sent to Zhentil Keep to check on Fzoul's fitness to rule. One of the agents is the High Inquisitor, Ginali. The other is Orox, a beholder charged with the task of destroying Fzoul if he is found unfit.

The timing of the inquisition is miserable for the overloaded Fzoul. He had just previously engaged in joining the New Alliance of the Bonds, promising the aid of the Zhentarim to that conclave, without telling Lord Manshoun. Fzoul's idea was to discover the secret of the bonds, and thereby turn the heroes into Zhentarim agents against their will. He has kept track of the heroes' progress through the North by reports from his agents, but he is positive that the orthodox Mulmaster faction is aware of the heroes as well, and will use them as proof of his unworthiness to remain in a position of power.

The magical and clerical population of Zhentil Keep is therefore split into two camps—those supporting Fzoul (called the Zhentarim in this chapter), and those supporting the High Imperceptor and his agents (called the Orthodox Banesmen, or Banesmen for short).

Making matters worse, there is a third faction at work in Zhentil Keep. The Keep is ruled in title if not in fact by Lord Chess, a pompous, overweight debaucher who cares little about who runs the Zhentarim or the church of Bane, as long as he gets his cut of the action. He controls the "official" patrols, little more than groups of bullies in uniform.

The city is a powderkeg, with differing factions squaring off to fight for control. What could make matters worse? . . .

Encounter 1

As the heroes are heading northward for Zhentil Keep, roll as if for a random encounter. Then read the following:

The road rises over a small hillock, and you hear ahead the sound of mildly discordant music. On the hill's far side, you see a horse tethered to a tree, and beneath it, strumming an eight-stringed guitar, a female halfling. The halfling notices you and jumps to her feet, trying to wave you to stop.

The player characters may ride on past, ignoring the halfling. They will not gain any information on the Keep, and a miffed halfling, when arriving at the Keep, will set them up anyway.

If they do stop, the halfling will ask the heroes for a favor. Her small horse pulled up lame, and she has a singing engagement in Zhentil Keep. Could they give her a lift, either riding behind a member of the party or on a pack horse?

The characters can examine the horse ("borrowed" from a passing noble) and discover that it has no more than a stone in its shoe, easily remedied. The halfling will then join the party anyway.

The halfling will give her name as Stevie Nickelplate, an aspiring bard. She is really Olive Ruskettle, an all-too-famous halfling thief whose story is told in

Appendix I. Olive has attained her desire, to be identified as a singing talent in her own right, but has found that it is not always desirable to be known in a town before you arrive there, so she has adopted a new name.

If confronted by characters who have heard of a halfling bard named Olive Ruskettle, Olive will play dumb, thanking the heroes for the compliment. Olive, says "Stevie," was her inspiration to become a bard, and she will rail on for altogether too long about how virtuous and talented this Ruskettle is.

If among good-aligned characters, and still pressed, Olive will flip up her collar, revealing a small silver pin showing the Moon and Lyre of the Harpers. "See this?" she whispers tightly, in a conspiratorial fashion. "It means I'm one of the good guys. Secret mission. Hush-hush. The name's Stevie."

The heroes will recognize the "secret symbol" of the Harpers, a supposedly beneficial group in the North. The truth of the matter is, Olive is only partially on a mission for the Harpers. That is, the Harpers don't know about her mission, but if they did, she is sure they would approve.

A fellow halfling, named Benjil Turcot, was the one who stole the *Blade of Lathander* and was later slain at sea by the Zhentarim. The Zhentarim said the *Blade* was lost when the halfling's ship went down. Olive knows otherwise; the Zhentarim have the weapon, and it is presently in the possession of Fzoul.

Olive knows that if she steals the blade, Fzoul can't complain openly, because he has declared it lost already. Since Fzoul has other troubles right now, this seems like an ideal time to pull off the theft. And if the heroes help create a smokescreen, so much the better.

In the course of conversation, Olive will pass on some or all of the following facts—claiming (truthfully) that her sources are very reputable.

* Zhentil Keep is ruled in name by a bozo named Lord Chess, who is pretty ineffective. The real power is in the hands of the Zhentarim, who rule by terror and magic.

* Chess's boys are pretty wimpy, but there are a lot of them. If you run into troops, act humble, or else you'll be dragged to the magistrate.



- * The Zhentil Keep magistrates exist for one reason—to keep the local gallows and the Arena in business. They have a perfect record for convictions.
- * Manshoon runs the Zhentarim, but he's out of town. His toady, Fzoul Chembryl, is in charge. Fzoul's the head of the local church of Bane the Tyrant.
- * Fzoul's Zhentarim respect only those who are as sly as themselves. You can get by with a glib tongue and a sense of dark humor when talking to them.
- * Anyway, Fzoul's bosses, out at Mulmaster, are not happy about Fzoul's dealing with the Black Network. Serving two masters and all that. So their forces are making trouble now that Manshoon is out of the picture, either to topple Fzoul from the church or make him look bad to either of his bosses.
- * The Mulmaster Faction are also members of the Church of Bane, but they're an orthodox group, and call themselves Banemen. Their base is the temple in the city, while Fzoul is pouting in his tower next door to it.
- * The Banemen are just plain nasty. If you're nice to them, however, and keep a smile plastered on your kiss-er, they will let you pass.
- * All the factions are said to be hiring out-of-town talent to deal with their opponents, recruiting from Teshwave, Mulmaster, and Hillsfar. Identifying yourself as being from one of those cities is good enough to start a fight in any bar in the city.
- * Speaking of taverns and inns, the best in the territory are located in the Inner Quarter, near the Arena (and the Temple of Bane, although she does not mention this). The Foreigners Quarter is the worst, where they charge triple and quadruple prices for everything. The Inner Quarter charges double, but at least the food is of standard quality.

"Stevie" will deny knowing anything about the *Blade of Lathander*, and will ask for the story about it if the subject is brought up.

Olive will not mention which inn she's playing at unless asked—it's the

"Bruised Strumpet," in the Inner Quarter.

During the rest of the trip to Zhentil Keep, Olive will remain with the party and will help in combat as best she can without risking her neck. However, she will not cook under any circumstances (she says she finds it degrading).

As soon as the party reaches Zhentil Keep, Olive will break off from the group and become lost in the city crowds. From there she will quickly get in touch with the various factions, telling each that the "hired muscle" from out of town has arrived. The hired muscle she is referring to are the player characters, who she hopes will serve as a distraction that makes it easier for her to accomplish her thievery.

Encounter 2

Zhentil Keep is a fortress town which has continually expanded to take in more land within its huge black granite walls. The current walls are some 40' tall, towering over all but the tallest buildings within, and are continually patrolled.

There are two gates, north and south. The South Gate is at the end of a huge, well-fortified bridge spanning the River Tesh, which also serves as the western border of the Zhentil harbor. The North Gate opens on a well-beaten track that leads north, eventually ending at the Citadel of the Raven.

Each gate is a monster of masonry, with a huge steel portcullis that may be dropped in a single round on orders from within. (It is assumed that the characters will approach the South Gate, but the following information applies to both gates.)

There will be a patrol of guards at the gate, with two large bruisers interviewing people who want to enter.

The bruisers sit at a table with sheets of paper before them. One of them will ask these questions of each visitor:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your business here?
3. Are you a follower of Bane?
4. Are you from Hillsfar?
5. Are you from Mulmaster?
6. Are you from Teshwave?
7. Are you wanted for crimes anywhere in the Moonsea?

8. Are you carrying any powerful magical items?
9. Have you ever fought against Zhentil Keep forces in an armed conflict?
10. Are you bringing in any fresh fruit?
11. What was your name again?

Both bruisers write down the names on their papers. For every "Yes" answer, bruiser #1 shakes his head and writes something. For every "No" answer, bruiser #2 shakes his head and makes a note on his paper. If asked, they will state that the questions must be answered before anyone is allowed into the city. The procedure is strictly routine, and the information is used to open a dossier on the respondents.

If the gate guards are attacked, the patrol (treat as Zhentil Keep Troops from Random Encounter Tables) will answer the attack, and the portcullis will ring down. The heroes will have to try the other gate, or wait until the next shift to try to get into the city.

Olive Ruskettle's answers to the questions are:

1. Stevie Nickelplate
2. Minstrel making an appearance
3. No
4. No
5. No
6. No
7. Yes (and she goes on to refer to the Ruler of Hillsfar as a "bucket-head")
8. I wish
9. No
10. No
11. Stevie Nickelplate

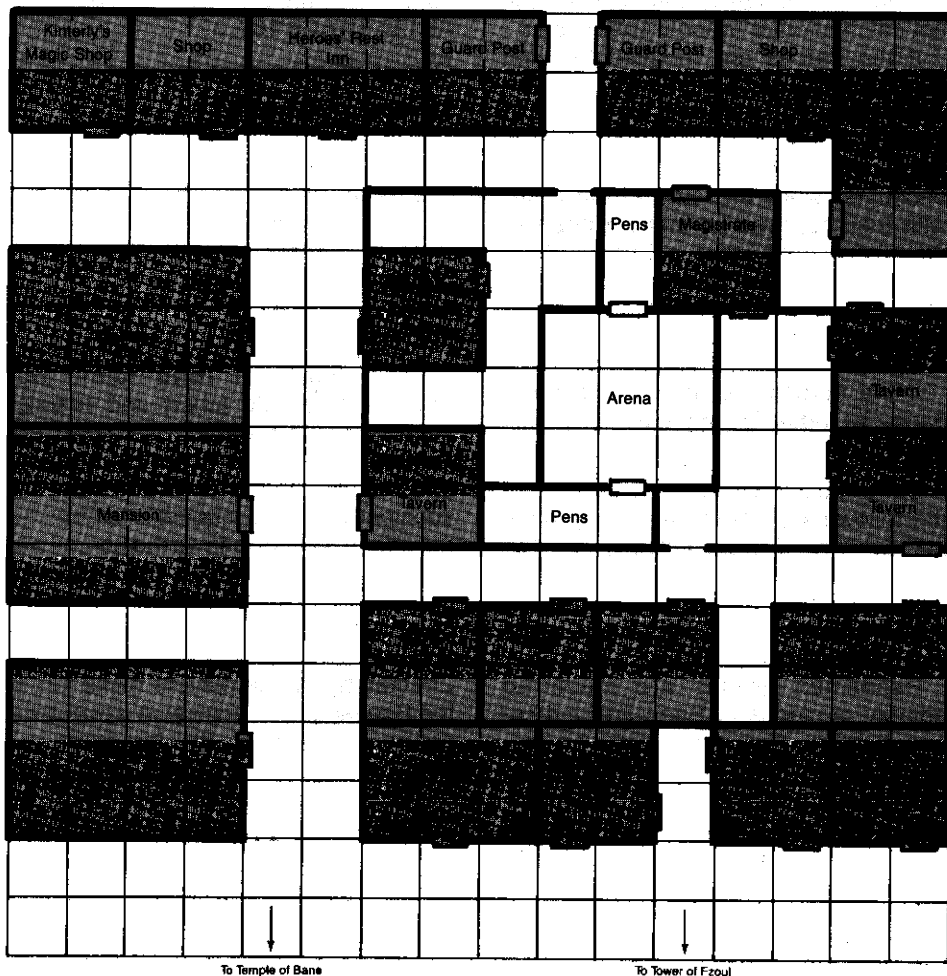
Random Encounters

Zhentil Keep is a lawful, if evil, town. Most of the townspeople will try to shy away from newcomers or strangers, since spies are everywhere and everyone is watched for potential subversion. Encounters will be with members of one of the three factions currently competing for control of the city.

Each three turns, there is a 30 percent chance of encountering one of the groups. In the Inner Quarter, near the Arena (and the Temple of Bane), this increases to a 30 percent chance every turn. Encounters are not checked if the



ZHENTIL KEEP TOWN



heroes are in shops or other buildings.

When rolling for an encounter, roll a ten-sided die to determine type: Add two to the roll if the player characters are in the Inner Quarter.

d10 roll Encounter (Faction)

- 1-5 Zhentil Keep troops (Chess)
- 6-8 Zhentarim gang (Fzoul)
- 9-12 Orthodox Banemen (Ginali)

Zhentil Keep troops: These are the "peacekeeping forces" in Zhentil Keep—in reality, bullies in uniform. A typical patrol numbers 12, made up of the following individuals:

3rd level cleric of Bane: AC 2; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (mace); SA spell use; AL LE; THACO 20.

3rd level fighters (10): AC 5; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 23 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword); AL LE; THACO 18.

Official spells of troop clerics:

- 1st level *command*
sanctuary
- 2nd level *hold person*

3rd level magic-user: AC 10; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use; AL NE; THACO 20.

Official spells of troop mages:

- 1st level *magic missile* (x2)
- 2nd level *invisibility*

The Zhentil Keep troopers have the "right" to stop and challenge anyone on

the street, to demand what they are doing and where they are going. They do this in the most offensive way possible, since "Treating an officer with disrespect" is grounds for dragging the offender before the Magistrate. If the heroes are anything but humble and meek to the troopers, their honor will be offended and they will start a fight.

If a fight breaks out, the cleric will wade in with *hold person*, then *command* the lead character so affected to "Fall." The mage will pop off both *magic missiles*, then turn *invisible* (in order to escape and later bring reinforcements and/or offer evidence). One fighter will sound a whistle (meaning "Battle in progress—come quick!"), and all the fighters will advance to attack.

If the player characters defeat a squad of Zhentil Keep troops, but the alarm is sounded, all further encounters with the troops will be hostile, and the numbers will be doubled. (The heroes may succeed in slaying everyone in the patrol, but their descriptions will be turned over to the Zhentil Keep officials by frightened townspeople.)

If the heroes are defeated by the troopers, or surrender to them, they will be taken to the Magistrate.

If the heroes talk their way past the first group of Zhentil Keep patrolmen, one of them, apparently thicker than the rest, will say to a companion, "Hey, I thought the little shrimp minstrel said these guys were tough." The other guardsman will elbow him in the ribs and drag him out of earshot.



Zhentarim gangs: These are made up of Fzoul's people from the lower echelons of the Black Network, and aspiring would-be members. They pack more magic than a Zhentil Keep patrol, but have less in fighting firepower. Gangs of Zhentarim challenge who they want, where they want, particularly keying on members of the Orthodox Banesmen party. There are standing orders that individuals with unusual tattoos on their arms are to be brought (alive) to Fzoul's Tower in the Inner Quarter.

Zhentarim gangs usually have from 12-16 members, and can vary slightly in composition. A typical group includes these individuals:

3rd level fighters (4): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 23 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword); AL LE; THAC0 18.

4th level clerics (4): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 4; hp 24 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (mace) SA spell use; AL LE; THAC0 18.

Typical spells:

1st level *command*
protection from good
sanctuary
2nd level *hold person*
chant (one per group) or
silence 15' radius

6th level magic-users (6): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 6; hp 16 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use; AL NE; THAC0 19.

Typical spells:

1st level *armor*
charm person
magic missile (x2)
2nd level *stinking cloud*
web
3rd level *fireball* or
lightning bolt
(50% chance of each)
prot. from normal missiles
(already in effect
when encounter begins)

The DM may use other spells than the ones listed if he so chooses. The fighting abilities of the Zhentarim gangs differ from those of the troopers, mainly in that they are more poorly organized. In general, the fighters will hold the adversaries back while the clerics and mages try to neutralize the threat with *holds*,

charms, and the *web* and *stinking cloud*. A *silence 15' radius* is cast only if it will not catch another friendly spell caster.

If the heroes are reduced to 0 hit points by the gang members or otherwise captured, they will be taken to Fzoul's Tower (see Chapter 10). The gang will have at least one other encounter while en route to the tower with their captives (to make it interesting, they could meet a Zhentil Keep patrol, or a group of Banesmen, or both), and there is a chance that the heroes will either escape or fall into the hands of a different faction in the process.

If the heroes defeat any Zhentarim gang, all other gangs they meet will attack first and ask questions later.

Banesmen: The most conservative of the followers of Bane, this group does not condone Fzoul's actions with the Zhentarim, especially the way he consorts with mages. The Book of Bane, their official history, depicts magic-users in a particularly poor light.

Banesmen groups are made up entirely of clerics of Bane and mercenary fighters. They concentrate on anyone and anything that seems to be outside the realm of their tiny worldview. They are looking for individuals matching the heroes' description, and will subject the player characters to harsh questioning on the street. As long as the characters are pleasant, responsive, and honest, the Banesmen will let them pass.

Each group of Banesmen includes 15 individuals—a leader referred to by the others as "The Inquisitor" (he asks most of the questions), plus equal numbers of fighters and clerics serving under him.

6th level fighters (7): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 6; hp 45 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); AL LE; THAC0 15.

5th level clerics of Bane (7): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 36 each; PAT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); SA spell use; AL LE; THAC0 18.

Official church-prescribed spells:

1st level *cause light wounds*
command (x2)
2nd level *hold person* (x2)
silence 15' radius
3rd level *paralysis* (reverse of
remove paralysis)

7th level cleric: AC 1; MV 6"; HD 7; hp 56; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); SA spell use; AL LE; THAC0 16.

Official church-prescribed spells:

1st level *command*
penetrate disguise
sanctuary
2nd level *detect charm*
enthrall
know alignment
3rd level *dispel magic*
paralysis
4th level *detect lie*

The Banesmen have found out through a reliable (short and female) source that the Zhentarim were bringing in hired muscle with incredible abilities, and the patrols are on the lookout for such persons. The Inquisitor will ask the questions, and as long as the heroes are straight-faced and polite, the interrogation will be no more than a few short, blunt questions: "Who are you? Who do you work for? What do you know of the Zhentarim?" If the players make fun of the Banesmen, or answer in a less than deferential manner, the Inquisitor will ask his questions again, this time backed up by a *detect lie* spell. If he notices the tattoos, he will cast a *detect charm* on them, with the resulting fireworks as for any divination spell cast upon the runes (see "The Azure Bonds" near the beginning of the module).

If the heroes are lying (or if there is an explosion of blue light on the street), the Banesmen will attack, seeking to capture the heroes to take back to the Temple of Bane, and to twist from them their secrets, since they are obviously Zhentarim agents. If the heroes are reduced to 0 hit points or otherwise incapacitated, they will be brought to the Temple of Bane and an "audience" with High Inquisitor Ginali.

If the heroes defeat the Banesmen, all future encounters with them will be hostile. No questions will be asked, and the DM may replace the information-type spells in The Inquisitor's repertoire with more powerful offensive magics. The Banesmen will attempt to bring the heroes to 0 hit points and drag them off to the Temple of Bane.



The Inner Quarter

The Inner Quarter is moderately cleaner than the rest of the city, and as Olive said, the food is passable and the prices are only high instead of stratospheric. The Temple of Bane and Fzoul's Tower are covered in Chapter 10, and as such will not be mentioned here. The important sites are the taverns, shops, and most importantly, the Magistrate and the Arena.

Taverns and Inns

The taverns and inns of Zhentil Keep's Inner Quarter are expensive in price and moderate in quality, as opposed to the rest of the city, where prices are outrageous and quality is poor. The taverns include:

The Axe and Minotaur (favored by Zhentarim troops)

The Roaring Dragon (a lively, honest place)

The Black Avatar (a place of dark deals)

The Whipwalker's Cloak

The Last Stop (favored by Zhentarim mages)

The Gorey Eye-Beast (worst of a bad lot)

The inns of the Inner Quarter include:

Heroes' Rest (cozy, but noisy)

Oparil's Tower (well decorated but poorly maintained)

The Bruised Strumpet (a true fleabag—and they've never heard of Stevie Whatserplate or Ruskitty either; the last bard to sing there was gutted for fun)

Shops and Stores

Most of the stores throughout Zhentil Keep are overpriced, charging what they can get away with, especially to strangers. If trouble breaks out, Zhentil Keep troopers will quickly arrive to deal with the problem (that's why the merchants pay protection money in the first place).

The shops will charge between two and four times the fair value of an item (DM's call—how much can you bleed the characters for, how desperate are they, etc.). Items confiscated by the Magistrate are immediately turned over to the individuals in charge of these establishments for resale. Any items the heroes have taken from them will show up in the marketplace soon afterward.

One shop should be noted—Kinterly's Magics. One of the few recognized mag-

ic shops in the Realms, this place holds no bargains. Under the sign of a pawnbroker, Kinterly offers free of charge to test any item for magical effect. If it is magical, he will tell the customer it is not, and will try to purchase it for a pittance. Kinterly will sell almost empty items such as wands and rings for full-charge prices, and will sell items such as "dud scrolls" (look real, but don't work) for full price. Kinterly is an 8th level mage with two fire giants as his assistants, and he has a very good relationship with the Zhentil Keep guard.

The Magistrate

This four-story building of utilitarian red brick has similar cousins throughout the city. It is the home of the Inner Quarter's Magistrate; Osconivon, a drunken sot who takes bribes from all prosecutors and has a perfect record with his judgments. Most of his judgments, of course, are to send the offenders to the Arena.

If the heroes are hauled before Osconivon, they will be healed up to full strength (can't have the monsters beating on damaged goods) while he conducts the trial. If the heroes fought Zhentil Keep troops, they will have 50 percent of all money on them confiscated at the start, before any charges are brought. The charge will be (if nothing else comes to mind) fomenting rebellion within the city walls. How do the characters plead?

If the heroes plead guilty, all money and equipment is stripped from them, except for one weapon. If they lose the *Helm of Dragons* and/or the *Gauntlets of Moander*, these will be returned to them later (see "Aftermath" in Chapter 10). They will be sent to the Arena as prisoners, to defend themselves as best they can.

If the heroes plead not guilty, the Magistrate will rule that the matter can only be settled by a "trial of guilt" in the Arena. The heroes will be taken handcuffed to the Arena, but they will be allowed to keep their gear and their remaining money. The Magistrate will then break for a liquid lunch.

Magistrate Osconivon is a 10th level fighter, and will wield his gavel like a club. His bailiffs are two stone giants, and there are three patrols of Zhentil Keep troopers on hand. The characters will discover that their chances are better in the Arena.

The Arena

The procedure for setting up and running Arena combats is as follows: Captured heroes are placed in one of the pens on either side of the battlefield, watched over by guards, while a group of mystery monsters are put into the pens on the opposite side. The herald announces the combat to the spectators in the stands. If the heroes win, they are thereby proved innocent. If they lose, they're guilty anyway, and anyway they're in no shape to argue.

There will always be a number of monsters equal to the number of characters who were captured—but that doesn't mean the fight will be a fair one. The type of monster may be chosen by the DM from the following list, or may be determined randomly.

d10 roll Monster

1-2	Ogres
3-4	Minotaurs
5	Trolls
6-7	Owlbears
8	Griffons (wings clipped)
9	Wyverns
10	Gargoyles (won't be used against a group having no magic weapons)

Ogres: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1; hp 17 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 15.

Minotaurs: AC 6; MV 12"; HD 6+3; hp 27 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8 or 1-4; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 13.

Trolls: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 6+6; hp 30 each; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA may attack separate targets; SD regeneration; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 13.

Owlbears: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 5+2; hp 22 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA hug for 2-16; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 15.

Griffons: AC 3; MV 12"; HD 7; hp 28 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 13.

Wyverns: AC 3; MV 6"; HD 7+7; hp 35 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SA poison; SZ L; AL NE; THAC0 12.

Gargoyles: AC 5; MV 9"/15"; HD 4+4; hp 24 each; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 15.



The Temple of Bane and The Tower of Fzoul

Bane's temple in Zhentil Keep is called the Dark Shrine, and is one of most imposing structures in the city. It is six stories high, dominated by a great cathedral that begins on the second story. (Only the first floor is important for this adventure, and that area is described below.)

Abutting the Temple of Bane is the tower of the Zhentarim leader, Fzoul Chembryl, whose eight-story residence looms over even the temple. (Again, only the first floor is described in this adventure, since the heroes will have no reason to explore the upper stories.)

The Temple of Bane

The Dark Shrine is the seat of Bane's power in Zhentil Keep, and is currently in the hands of the Orthodox Banerian under the leadership of High Inquisitor Ginali, chosen representative of the High Imperceptor of Bane in Mulmaster. If the heroes are defeated by the Banerians in the city, they will be brought here. If the heroes attempt to enter the building of their own free will, they may do so, but will be surrounded by a patrol of Banerians and ushered forcibly into the presence of Ginali, who meets them (Encounter 1) in the Small Chapel on the first floor.

Encounter 1

The Small Chapel is Ginali's seat of operations, where he is conducting his investigation into the fitness of Fzoul to be the spiritual leader of Bane at this end of the Moonsea. Ginali conducts his "investigation" by torturing and killing those loyal to Fzoul that he captures. He is aided in this by his assistant, Orox, a beholder who is currently elsewhere (but will turn up in time to deal with Fzoul). No one outside of the Banerians knows of Orox (the beholder was brought to the city in a crate), which is Ginali's secret weapon.

The Small Chapel is a large room, made larger by being stripped of its pews. The pews have been carried to the former torture room, and the torture devices that had been gathering dust were exhumed and brought here—a rack, an iron maiden, thumbscrews, and other gruesome items that Ginali uses

for effect as much as for actual torture.

Ginali sits on a small raised platform in the center of the chapel, lit by a single shaft of light from high up in the ceiling (regardless whether it is day or night outside). The light is bright, and prisoners will be shoved into it at the foot of the dais. Ginali will make sure that the prisoners are chained before they are brought into his presence.

In the shadows surrounding the light source, Ginali has three patrols of his loyal Banerians waiting. If a hero somehow escapes in his presence, they have instructions to slay the offender (and the offender only—the others are to take this as a lesson).

High Inquisitor Ginali (10th level cleric of Bane): AC 0 (*bracers of defense* AC 2, *ring of protection* +2); MV 12"; HD 10; hp 67; #AT 1; Dmg 4-9 (*mace* +3); SA spell use; AL LE; THACO 14.

Spells:

- 1st level *cause light wounds* (x2)
command
cure light wounds
- 2nd level *cause fear* (x2)
hold person
silence 15' radius
- 3rd level *cause blindness*
curse
speak with dead
- 4th level *cause serious wounds*
detect lie
poison
- 5th level *flame strike*
true seeing

6th level fighters (18): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 6; hp 45 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); AL LE; THACO 15.

5th level clerics of Bane (18): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 36 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); AL LE; THACO 18.

Spells:

- 1st level *cause light wounds*
command (x2)
- 2nd level *hold person* (x2)
silence 15' radius
- 3rd level *paralysis* (reverse of
remove paralysis)

7th level cleric "Inquisitors" (3): AC 1; MV 6"; HD 7; hp 56 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); AL LE; THACO 16.

Spells:

- 1st level *cause light wounds*
command
cure light wounds
- 2nd level *detect charm*
hold person
know alignment
- 3rd level *dispel magic*
paralysis
- 4th level *detect lie*

Ginali will be seated on his high-backed throne like a pot-bellied spider at the center of its web. He will tell the characters that they have been accused of being lackeys of the unfit Fzoul Chembryl, and if this is true, then they should be destroyed. How, he asks, do the accused plead?

If the heroes tell the truth about their condition, Ginali will listen to the story in full. If a *detect charm* or *dispel magic* has not yet been cast on the brands, he will cast it at this time, with the usual results. However, Ginali is in no danger from an attack, because the victim (he will choose one character for this examination) will be in chains when this experiment is undertaken. Next, Ginali will try a *true seeing*, and the effect will make him clutch his own head in pain.

If the heroes brazen it out and decide to say nothing, Ginali will tell them that they will speak, or he will feed them to his pet, Orox. With that, he giggles.

If the heroes try to turn one evil against another, Ginali will sort out their true intents by using *detect lie*. Similarly, if the heroes make up stories, Ginali will use the *detect lie* spell. The heroes may try to pass on some potentially useful information, and if they are speaking the truth, then Ginali will take all such ideas under advisement. (For instance, if the PCs say that the halfling may be responsible for their problems, Ginali later will—unbeknownst to the heroes—order "Stevie" found and slain.)

Whatever the characters say or do, short of throwing their lives away in attack, Ginali will react the same in the end. He will choose one of the player characters at random, and his three Inquisitors will beat the character senseless, down to 2 hit points, in front of the others. Any other PCs who try to attack at this point will be set upon by the other Banerians and slain.



The player characters (including the unconscious one) will be dragged to one of the two dungeons located on this level. They will be stripped of their armor and weapons, which will be placed in the guard room, but the Banesmen won't bother to examine or confiscate incidental equipment that they may have stored in packs, pouches, belts, and so forth. A patrol of Banesmen will be stationed outside the dungeon's heavy wooden door.

Ginali is the epitome of evil. He is a creature without redeeming qualities, and should be played accordingly—cruel and literally uncaring.

Encounter 2

The heroes remain trapped in the dungeon for about four hours. During this time they may heal their wounded, try to escape their chains (held on by standard locks, pickable by a thief with the correct tools) and otherwise try to escape. The doors are solid oak without

windows, and are bolted and barred on the outside as well as being locked.

If the heroes somehow break through the door, they will immediately encounter the patrol of Banesmen stationed outside. Their armor and weapons are tucked in the far corner of the guard room, and they must fight as well as they are able under the circumstances. The chains with which they were bound will inflict 1-6 points of damage in combat. The Banesmen will fight to the last man.

If four hours pass without the heroes having escaped, read the players the following passage:

There is a scratching at the door, followed by the throwing of the bolts, and the thunk of the heavy wooden bar being moved. (Here the DM should pause to see if the characters are taking any action.) A small hand reaches around the corner, and then the red-haired head of a female halfling comes into view. "Sorry," says

the halfling with a smirk. "I was looking for the little halfling's room."

The halfling is Stevie/Olive Ruskettle, who has singlehandedly defeated the guard to help with the heroes' escape. (Since she set them up in the first place, this only makes sense, but that fine point of logic is lost on the members of the halfling race.)

The reason for her triumph is obvious in the next room—all of the Banesmen are asleep in the chairs, slumped over a sumptuous meal. "I told everyone never to let me cook," Stevie says with a smile. The guards have been knocked out by poisoned food. ("Drow venom—the last of my supply," she sniffs.)

The heroes have three choices. They may attempt to escape out the front door; to do so, they must get past another patrol of Banesmen at the Watchpost by the exit. They may choose to escape via the secret door that Olive



found in the back of the temple. Or they may try to hunt down and kill Ginali before taking either escape route.

If they choose the last option, they will find the Small Chapel empty. Ginali will be found in the High Priest's Quarters behind the Small Chapel.

The heroes will not encounter any priests in the temple other than in particular set locations. Most of the Banemen are out in the city right now, except for a handful in the temple complex.

Room Descriptions

The Small Chapel: A large, empty room, lit by a single light source high above. It was here that Ginali initially "interviewed" the heroes, but on their second approach, it is empty except for some torture devices ringing the light.

The Watchposts: There are two of these, one at the main entrance and one near the entrance to the Small Chapel. Each is manned by a squad of Banemen (see above for details; there will be the usual 6 fighters, 6 clerics, and an Inquisitor).

Stairs: These grand spiral staircases lead up into the main cathedral, which is opened only on high holy days of Bane. The doors at the top are locked and barred from the other side.

Torture Room: A musty room of recently disturbed dust, once holding implements of torture, now nearly filled with stacks of pews that were ripped out of the Small Chapel.

Dungeons: These two cells and the guardroom adjacent to them are described in Encounter 2 above.

Storage: These are filled with neatly stacked crates containing supplies for the church, including dry foodstuffs, robes, metalwork, holy symbols, and the like. In the first storage room the characters check, there is also a very large box which apparently (judging from the packing material) held a huge sphere of some type. There is also a small pile of dust next to it in an otherwise clean room. (The crate was used to bring in Orox the beholder to the Temple of Bane. The pile of dust was a worker who got too enthusiastic with a pry bar.)

Anterooms: These two small rooms

near the Small Chapel are "ready rooms" for the clerics for normal services. They have symbols of Bane on the wall, but otherwise nothing of interest.

Lower Priest's Room: This was the office of Fzoul's assistant—he has been slain, and his office is now the home for three Inquisitors, resting after a long day of torturing.

7th level cleric Inquisitors (3): AC 1; MV 6"; HD 7; hp 56; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); AL LE; THAC0 16.

Spells:

1st level	<i>cause light wounds</i> <i>command</i> <i>cure light wounds</i>
2nd level	<i>detect charm</i> <i>hold person</i> <i>know alignment</i>
3rd level	<i>dispel magic</i> <i>paralysis</i>
4th level	<i>poison</i>

The Inquisitors will attack if any infidels enter their room. They will also come if Ginali reaches the bell-cord in his office (see below) and summons their aid.

The Inquisitors have some 4000 gp in "flawed religious icons" in their room.

The High Priest's Office: Fzoul made little use of this office when he ran the temple, because his tower is right next door. Ginali has set this up as his home for the duration of his stay—which will be a long one, since he has determined Fzoul to be unworthy. In the office is a simple cot, a large, ornate desk littered with papers, a globe of the known Realms (including Kara-Tur), two overstuffed easy chairs, and large symbols of Bane sketched on each wall.

Ginali is here alone, seated in an easy chair, taking a little wine. When the characters burst in, he will leap to his feet and run to the bell-cord hanging behind the desk (this takes 1 round). He will pull the cord (in round 2), summoning his three Inquisitors from the Lower Priest's Room (if they are still alive). Then he will use spells to attack the party as best he can, seeking first to immobilize them, then to slay them slowly.

Ginali's men will arrive in two rounds, if they are able. Ginali in the meantime will try to *hold* the characters, using any

spells that he did not use in their previous interview. Unless the characters have rested and regained spells, he will be reduced in power. If the heroes have rested, Ginali will be at full power.

Ginali is, like many evil men, a coward at heart. If reduced to 10 hit points or less, he will fall to his knees and beg for mercy. He will promise the heroes freedom, riches, anything they desire, as long as they do not harm him further.

If the heroes are soft-hearted enough to spare this sadist, he will turn on them as soon as he gains sufficient manpower. Killing him now is the wisest course of action—which Ruskettle will recommend, if she is present.

Treasure Vault: If someone presses a small depression in the center of the symbol of Bane inscribed on the west wall of Ginali's office, the entire wall section will slip down, revealing a huge treasure vault—guarded by a beholder.

"Who dares to disturb my rest?" shouts the beholder. "You will feel my Eye of Death!"

The beholder is an illusion, a joke on Fzoul's part to remind himself of the deadly nature of riches. If the heroes act as though they believe the illusion (such as by attacking it), the "beholder" is programmed to send a single beam from one of its eyes to hit one character at random. The victim must save versus spells or perish, literally "willing" himself to death. The beholder will then give out an evil laugh, and the image will fade.

The treasure of Bane is here, looted from a wealthy town and donated by well-off believers. There are 1000 trade bars worth 100 gp each, and three chests of gems (protected by poison needles on the hasps), each chest having 100 gems of 1000 gp value each. Holy statues of other gods, carved in gold, are stacked like cordwood—there are 20 different statues, each worth 500 gp each.

The treasure carries a *curse*, of course, being from Bane's own temple. The individuals who take treasure will be -2 to hit and damage until they return it or a *remove curse* is cast.

The Secret Passage: Down the hall opposite the last storeroom, Stevie/Olive shows the party a secret entrance

The Temple of Bane and The Tower of Fzoul



activated by pushing on a loose stone near the floor. A small circular hollow appears in the wall, leading to a 5' wide tunnel. The tunnel emerges in the courtyard of Fzoul's Tower (see below). Stevie says that she will be the last one through, to close it up, but unless the party keeps an eye on her, she will leave the group at this point (but will reappear later). If the characters keep an eye on her, she will follow them for now, but will slip away at the next opportunity.

Fzoul's Tower

Lord Fzoul Chembryl lives in a narrow seven-story tower adjacent to the Temple of Bane. The tower has traditionally been the home of the individual who

runs the Church of Bane in Zhentil Keep, but has been in Fzoul's hands for so long that it is now simply known as "Fzoul's Tower."

Only the first level of the tower is shown on the map. The upper levels contain further living quarters, studies, storage areas, and research facilities. The top of the tower has a flat roof.

Room Descriptions

Courtyard: This area runs from the main gate to the tower proper. It is patrolled by a Zhentarim gang under normal circumstances. It is here that the secret passage from the temple (see above) comes out. A large outdoor shrine to Bane swings away from the

wall to reveal the passage behind it. Anyone who comes through the secret tunnel and exits here will be noticed by the Zhentarim lackeys.

Stables: Fzoul keeps a number of fast, light horses here, in addition to any steeds he picks up along the way. If the heroes were captured by the Zhentarim, they will find their mounts here, their equipment untouched.

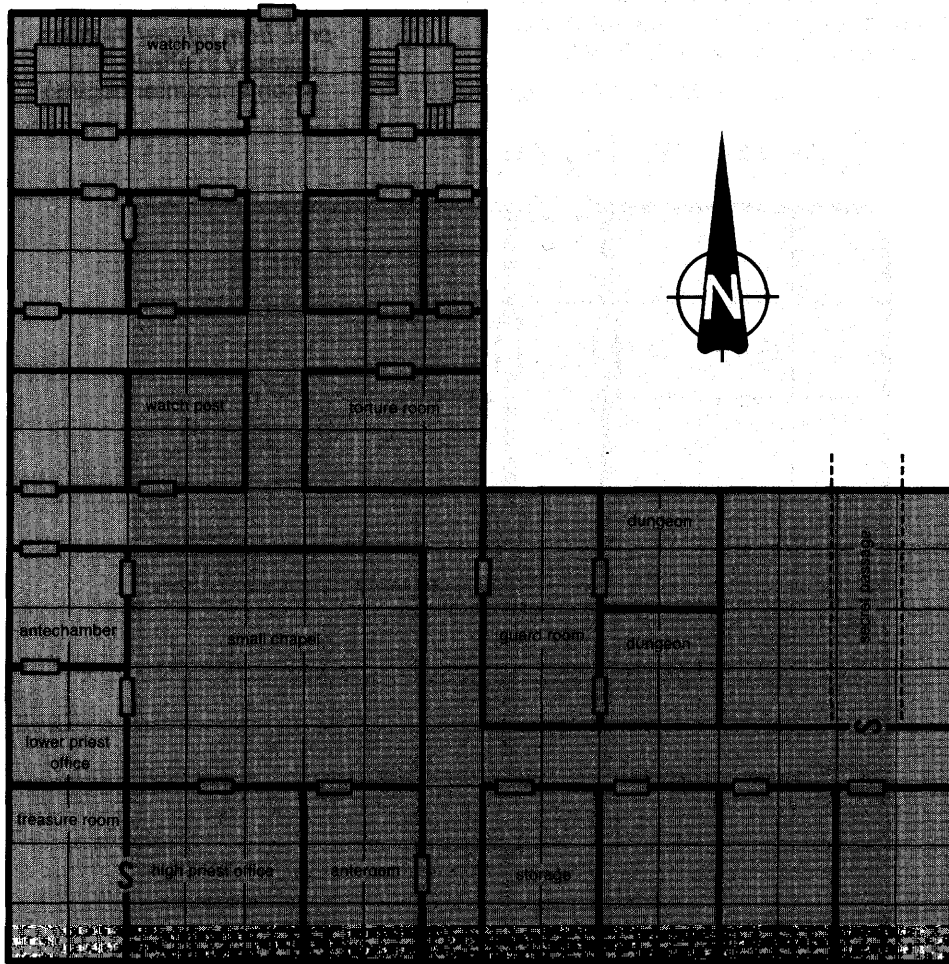
Guardroom: These are the ground-level quarters of the Zhentarim who patrol the grounds. They also serve as footmen, valets, and servants on the first floor.

Stairs: This spiral staircase leads up to the higher levels of the tower. The steps end at the second floor before a highly magical door that will only open in the presence of Fzoul, and only if the high cleric is not under duress or mental domination.

Feasting Hall: Here is where Fzoul does most of his casual entertaining. There is a long table dominated at the end by a huge portrait of Fzoul, Manshoon, and Chess as younger men. At the other end of the room is a large fireplace, over which hangs the *Blade of Lathander*, a broad sword with a blade of ruby quartz. A fire burns merrily. A dumbwaiter brings food and drink from the kitchens and cellars below the tower.

Fzoul's Office: This is where Fzoul relaxes and takes care of minor church business. The heroes will only reach here if Fzoul himself is dead. There are

Temple of Bane





The Temple of Bane and The Tower of Fzoul

trappings similar to those in the High Priest's Room of the temple: a desk, two overstuffed easy chairs, a desk chair, and a globe of the known Realms. In the bottom drawer of the desk Fzoul keeps his *incense of meditation* (liberated from the temple before Ginali moved in); he has a *staff of the serpent (adder)* stuck in an umbrella rack by the door.

Fzoul's Laboratory: This cavernous lab is something out of an old tale of a mad scientist. Stairs lead down to the main floor, which is cluttered with counters packed with magical, active equipment, and a great white table on pivots, large enough to strap a human being down. There is the smell of a summer storm in the air, and the room hums with eldritch energies. Small homonculous creatures move along the counter-tops, measuring chemicals and reading gauges on equipment.

Encounter 1

The heroes can enter the tower in one of three ways: They may enter freely and of their own will (this includes attempting to break in). They may be brought here, subdued by the forces of a Zhentarim gang. Or they may escape to here from the Temple of Bane.

If the heroes enter by the front gate, they will be greeted by a Zhentarim gang. The gang will demand the reason for their presence. If they say they are here to talk to Fzoul, a runner will be sent to check with his lordship. He will return in five minutes, and the heroes will be escorted into the Feasting Hall. Fzoul will be waiting for them there.

If the heroes show the Zhentarim symbols on their arms, they will be immediately shown to the Feasting Hall.

If the heroes attempt to break in, the Zhentarim gang will assume this is an assault from the Orthodox Bane faction and attack, seeking to keep the characters alive for later questioning. They will call in reinforcements if needed. If the heroes are airborne, they will call in three wyverns to aid in repulsing the assault. When the heroes surrender or are reduced to 0 hit points, they will be captured and taken to Fzoul in his Feasting Hall.

If the heroes are brought defeated into the tower, they are placed in the

Feasting Hall. The doors to both sides lock them in.

If the heroes escape from Ginali and the Temple of Bane, they will emerge from behind the shrine to find a Zhentarim gang waiting for them. Fzoul will be with the gang. He will welcome the heroes to his humble abode, and instruct the guardsmen to escort the heroes to the Feasting Hall. He will join them shortly. Unless the heroes attack, he will leave them to the guards. If the heroes do attack, trying to kill Fzoul immediately, he and the guards will resist, aided by the three wyverns that live atop the tower. If Fzoul is slain at this time, the Zhentarim will be demoralized and retreat into the tower, letting the heroes escape. Lord Fzoul will be *raised* at a later date, weakened in power and prestige, and angry at the heroes.

3rd level fighters (4): AC 3; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 23 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (broad sword) or 1-6 (bow); AL LE; THAC0 18.

4th level clerics (4): AC 3; MV 6"; HD

4; hp 24 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (mace); SA spell use; AL LE; THAC0 18.

Standard spells:

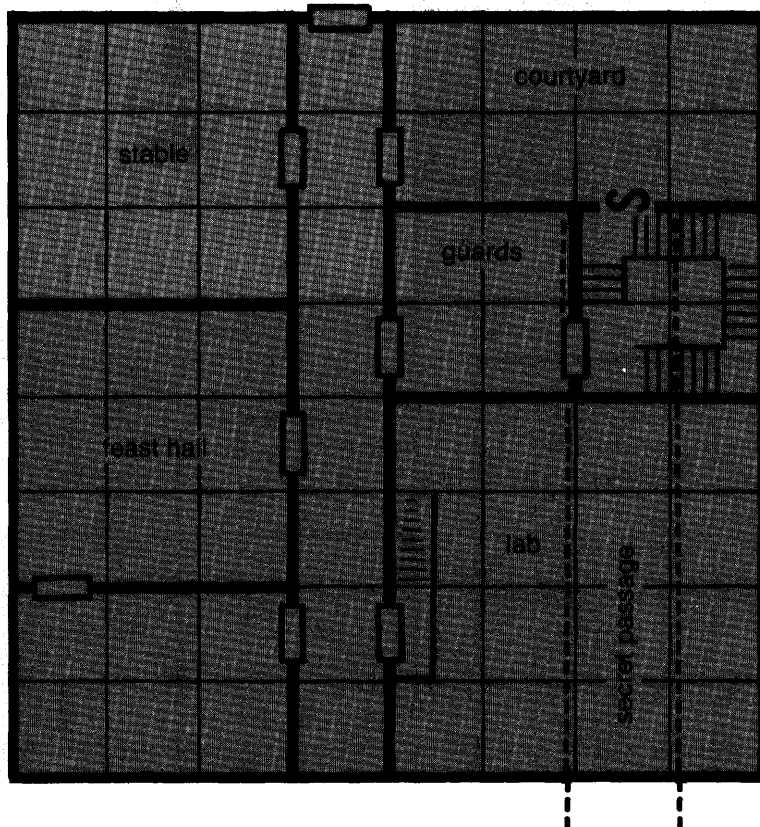
1st level *command*
protection from good
sanctuary
2nd level *hold person*
chant (one per group)
or *silence 15' radius*

6th level magic-users (6): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 6; hp 16 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use; AL NE; THAC0 19.

Standard spells:

1st level *armor*
charm person
magic missile (x2)
2nd level *stinking cloud*
web
3rd level *fireball* or
lightning bolt
(50% chance of each)
prot. from normal missiles
(already in effect
when encounter begins)

Tower of Fzoul





Wyverns (3): AC 3; MV 6"/24"; HD 7+7; hp 63 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SA poison; SZ L; AL N(E); THAC0 12.

Once the heroes are escorted (in whatever state) to the Feasting Hall, read players the following passage:

A few minutes pass, and you look about the room. It is large, high-ceilinged, and apparently used for entertainment. A crystal chandelier hangs over a long oak table. At one end is a portrait of three young men; one a slender cleric with ritual tattoos, one a obvious spell caster, and the third a portly, grinning fighter. At the opposite end is a fireplace. A small fire warms the room. Above the fire hangs a sword with a rosy blade, similar to the one shown in your dreams.

The door to the south audibly unlatches. A tall man dripping in finery and jewelry enters, followed by six Zhentarim fighters carrying trays as if they were servants.

"I am Fzoul Chembryl," says the man. "You are my guests. Please be welcome."

If the heroes attack at any time during this encounter, they will have to contend with Fzoul and five of the fighters. The last one will run out to summon the patrol from the courtyard, which will arrive in 3 rounds. If the heroes slay Fzoul, the mark of the Zhentarim will disappear from their arms, and any surviving gang members will retreat. Otherwise Fzoul and the Zhentarim will fight on until all the characters are slain.

If the heroes do not attack immediately, Fzoul will motion for them to make themselves at home. Unless stopped, he will do (in the order given) the following things:

- * Examine the Azure Bonds on each character.
- * Ask about the circumstances that caused the missing bond(s) to disappear.
- * Ask about their adventures.
- * Heal all characters who are damaged, by means of *potions of extra-healing* served in fine crystal chalices. ("The chalice from the palace holds the brew that is true.")

- * Remove all curses and other malignant dweomers on the heroes. The two exceptions to this are the curse from the temple's treasure vault (he will ask for his money back first), and the Azure Bonds themselves.

After doing all these things, he will sit at the head of the table and explain himself. (Fzoul's statistics and personality are given in Appendix I.) Read the following passage to the players:

"You people represent an experiment, and an investment. Some time back, a consortium of individuals set about creating the perfect tool, a combination assassin, spy, and warrior. They succeeded in their creation, but failed to control it, and it destroyed them. There were survivors, however, and though they knew not how to recreate the making of the being, they knew enough of the controlling bonds to form a new group. The bonds you wear are the symbols of that new group.

"The various parties of this New Alliance of the Bonds entered into it for different reasons. Revenge, or creating pawns to act certain ways. I entered into it from curiosity. If this was a way to turn people against their wills, then it could be a powerful force for the faction I represent.

"So I contributed my talents and the talents of my network to the problem. Now, my organization is beset by other problems right now, and perhaps you can aid me with them. I've got a rival here who is plaguing me, named Ginali. He wants both my life and my job. You may be the perfect people to deal with him. But first, I must test the effects of our handiwork."

He points at one of you. "You there," he says. Now he points to another. "Kill that one! Triambul!"

The hero so commanded must make a saving throw against spells or immediately go into a killing rage, trying to slay the indicated character. The other members of the party may throw themselves in to prevent the attack, and the compulsion will pass in 2-8 rounds.

If the hero makes his saving throw

and is unaffected, Fzoul's eyebrows will rise and he will say, "Curious. The effects may not be long-standing. Will you come to my lab? I have some equipment there that will help."

If the hero does not make his saving throw, Fzoul will note, "There was hesitation there, and the effect did not last as long as desired. Hmmm. All right, will you accompany me to my lab? I have some equipment that may help."

Fzoul does not think anything wrong of his action—he is evil, though not in the same dogmatic sense as High Inquisitor Ginali.

If the characters follow Fzoul, he will lead them across the hall to the lab. If Ruskettle is still around, she will take this chance to duck out. The heroes will have the chance here (those toward the back of the procession) to grab the *Blade of Lathander* (it bears no magical protections, since everyone assumes it is at the bottom of the Moonsea). If they do not take it, the next time they enter the room, it will have been taken by Ruskettle (see "Aftermath" at the end of this chapter).

Encounter 2

Fzoul leads the characters into the lab. Small creatures scurry out of the way. The evil (though, at the moment, non-hostile) high priest chooses one character and examines the Azure Bonds with a number of lenses, magnifiers, and magical "diagnostic" tools. The latter (being magical) will cause the runes to glow a bright blue, but since they do not employ actual spells, will not set off the customary adverse effects.

About five minutes into this checkup, read the following to the players:

Fzoul turns to you as if to say something, when suddenly there is a tremendous crash to the south. A large chunk of the southern wall has fallen to the floor, revealing a gaping hole. Through the hole floats the impressive mass of an eye tyrant, a beholder. "Fzoul Chembryl!" shouts the beholder. "You have been found guilty of heresy, and must be destroyed. I am Orox, the engine of your destruction." Other manlike figures lurk behind the beholder.



This surprise attack was made possible by the fact that the beholder discovered the secret tunnel leading to Fzoul's tower. The monster and the other invaders followed the passageway until they were adjacent to the lab, and then blasted through the wall.

Before all of the assailants can get into the room and initiate combat, Fzoul will quickly turn to the player characters and say calmly, "I will make you a deal. I remove the bonds on you, and you will fight these stiff-necked interlopers. Yes or no?"

If the heroes agree, Fzoul will utter a few words, and the symbol of the Zhentarim will fade from their arms without pain. Fzoul will then *teleport* to safety.

If the heroes do not agree, Fzoul will issue a compulsion through the bonds for them to attack the beholder, and then he will *teleport* away. If the heroes defeat the beholder and its allies, the symbol of the Zhentarim will disappear.

If the heroes start to argue, Fzoul will merely *teleport* away. The beholder will attack the heroes. If the heroes win, Fzoul will honor his offer. Fzoul's research, in any case, has convinced him that the bonds are a temporary, secondary control device, and he supposes that there are better means available than they to influence people.

Orox the beholder will be accompanied by a group of Orthodox Banemen. If Ginali still lives, he will be here as well (and Fzoul will point him out in particular when offering his deal).

Orox the beholder: AC 0 (body), 2 (eyestalks), 7 (eyes); MV 3"; HD 10; hp 30 (body); 15 (central eye); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA magic; SD anti-magic ray; SZ L; AL LE; THAC0 10.

High Inquisitor Ginali (10th level cleric of Bane): AC 0 (*bracers of defense* AC 2, *ring of protection* +2); MV 12"; HD 10; hp 67; #AT 1; Dmg 4-9 (*mace* +3); SA spell use; AL LE; THAC0 14.

Spells:

- 1st level *cause light wounds* (x2)
command
cure light wounds
- 2nd level *cause fear* (x2)
hold person
silence 15' radius

- 3rd level *Blindness*
curse
speak with dead
- 4th level *cause serious wounds*
detect lie
poison
- 5th level *flame strike*
true seeing

6th level fighters (6): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 6; hp 45 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); AL LE; THAC0 15.

5th level clerics of Bane (6): AC 2; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 36 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); AL LE; THAC0 18.

Spells:

- 1st level *cause light wounds*
command (x2)
- 2nd level *hold person* (x2)
silence 15' radius
- 3rd level *paralysis* (reverse of
remove paralysis)

7th level cleric "Inquisitor": AC 1; MV 6"; HD 7; hp 56; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (flail); AL LE; THAC0 16.

Spells:

- 1st level *cause light wounds*
command
cure light wounds
- 2nd level *detect charm*
hold person
know alignment
- 3rd level *dispel magic*
paralysis
- 4th level *cloak of fear*

The heroes, once their bonds are removed, are under no compulsion to fight the beholder and its companions. They may run from the invaders, leaving the Zhentarim on duty (along with any troops Fzoul can muster) in a pitched battle for the tower. If the characters go back for the *Blade of Lathander* at this time, they will find it missing. The heroes will find their horses in the stables, and they may make a hasty retreat.

If the heroes fight and defeat the Banemen, and the symbol of the Zhentarim disappears, Fzoul will reappear and suggest that the heroes get out of town quickly, as there will be fighting in the streets by nightfall. Again, the *Blade of Lathander* will be missing, though Fzoul will blame the Banemen, not the heroes and/or their allies.

Aftermath

Fzoul speaks the truth: Zhentil Keep will be alive with all three major factions, attacking at random, within two hours of the defeat of Orox and/or Ginali. If the heroes are still around, they will have to fight their way past doubled encounter groups of Troopers, Zhentarim, and Banemen. These encounters will occur in the temple and the tower as well, since they are overrun with warring forces.

If the heroes escape with the artifacts they arrived with, and with the *Blade of Lathander*, they will not see Olive Ruskettle again. She escaped in the confusion and is currently heading south to rejoin old friends.

If the heroes lost any artifacts in the city, and/or escaped without the *Blade of Lathander*, read the following passage to the players:

You pass south from the city, smoke and flames already rising from its central towers. Up ahead is a lone tree, beneath which is tied a small pony. Seated beneath the tree is a familiar-looking halfling.

"Stevie" has the artifacts, of course, having stolen them from the people who stole them. She was caught by Elminster, who has pointed out that the items are better off in the heroes' hands than hers, unless she wants to fight Tyranthraxus by her lonesome. She will very sullenly, in the tone of a young person who is being made to apologize, walk up to the party's leader and say:

"I'm sorry you had any trouble back there. I'd like to make it up to you by giving you this." She holds out the blade (and any other lost artifacts) for the characters to have. Then she turns away. The heroes hear her mutter loudly, "There. I did it. Happy now?" And the sky, as if in response, rumbles deeply.

Ruskettle will join the party if asked, but after two days she will set out on her own course, to Hillsfar or to the south (any direction the heroes are not going), doing whatever she needs to do to get away without having to explain.

The Village of Hap



Hap does not appear on the main maps of the North because it is a mere flyspeck, a collection of buildings tucked at the base of the huge granite spur known as Haptooth Hill. It was a peaceful village, trading with towns of more significant size, such as Essembra, and boasted not only a good inn but a fine shrine to Lathander as well.

Was . . . until the arrival of Dracandros.

Dracandros of the Crimson knew he was the rightful ruler of Thay. His power was unquestionable and his word was law. . . or so he thought. His magical colleagues in Thay, however, had other ideas. Branded as mad by his fellows, he eventually was forced to flee across the Inner Sea, deep into the forest near Essembra.

Dracandros was undismayed by his turn in fortunes, however. He believes he can cause a new Flight of Dragons to erupt, and use the great wyrms to invade the Dalelands. With this devastation proving his power and cleverness,

he would return to Thay to regain his place among the wizards.

To enact his plan, the Red Wizard moved into a tower deep in the woods near the tiny village of Hap. He has set up a dracolich named Crimdrac as the ruler of the town below. Through Crimdrac, Dracandros keeps order in the lands around the tower while he perfects his scheme.

He was offered the chance to join the New Alliance by Tyranthraxus. Dracandros joined immediately, hoping to use the victims as bait in his plots.

The characters, of course, will need to discover all of this during the course of play. Initially, they will encounter the town and find it enslaved by the minions of Crimdrac. Akabar, a good merchant, will help the adventurers gain the knowledge they need and assist them in freeing the village if possible.

In order to free the village, however, the heroes must convince the townspeople that the minions of Crimdrac can be defeated. No words will suffice . . . only

action will persuade the villagers.

To begin this adventure, read the following passage to the players:

The instructions from Essembra are easy to follow, as you move through the forest on thin, winding trails. You seek the mountain spur called Haptooth Hill. Information indicates there is a small village there, called Hap, at which you can reprovision and set up a base camp.

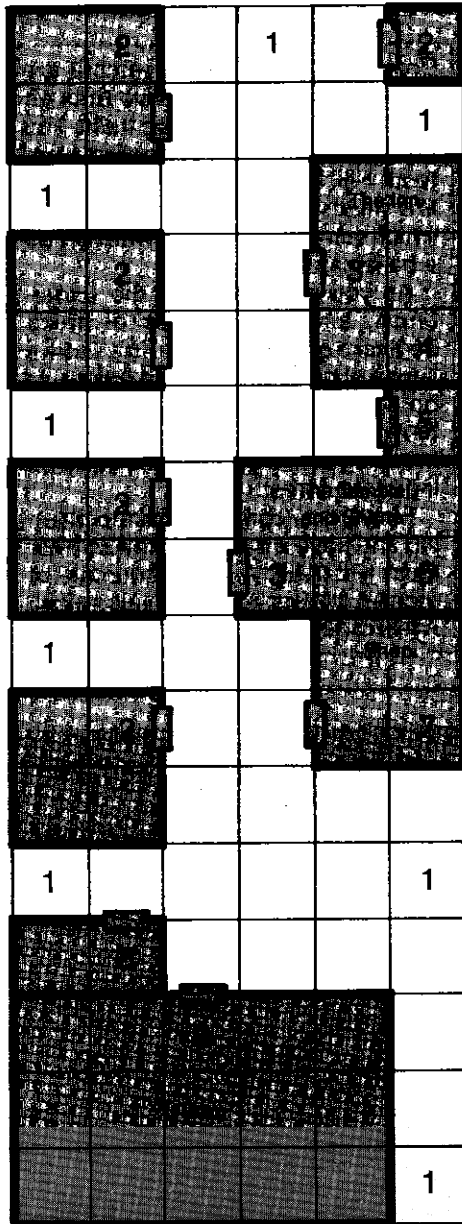
As you move through the underbrush, a creeping sense of dread begins to grow within you. You have a sense of having been here before, of being familiar with this region, though you are strangers here. The brooding dread grows in the deepening of the forest.

Finally you come to a hilltop clearing and have a splendid view of Haptooth Hill itself. A huge mountain of granite, it towers over the vale below. A few rooftops are visible through the





HAP



trees, and the smoke of kitchen fires rises on the breeze. But the sense of dread remains as you ride down toward the village.

Hap is a small farming community which now finds itself in the grip of fear. Though all too quiet in its outward appearance, the town is ruled by what is called "The Horde."

When the heroes enter the town, they will find no one on the streets. The shutters and windows on all the houses are drawn and locked. Rough cloth drapes bar the heroes from looking into buildings without entering them.

Nothing will happen to the heroes on the streets of Hap unless they upset or attempt to fight any of the minion guards.

If the players attempt to leave the town again or if they attempt to rest anywhere but at the inn (Encounter 4) or in the temple (Encounter 6), they will have an encounter with minion guards as in Encounter 1 below.

Encounter 1

The minion guards met in this encounter represent a small contingent of the total garrison for the town. The group consists of five dark elf fighters and a dark elf fighter/magic-user. There is a 10 percent chance in any given encounter that one of the two efreeti commanders of the garrison will also be present with the encountered guards.

Dark elf town guards (5th level fighters, 5): AC 2; MV 12"; HD 5; hp 24, 18, 16, 32, 19; AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA spell use; MR 50%; AL CE; THAC0 16.

Spells (innate):

- dancing lights*
- faerie fire*
- darkness*
- detect magic*
- know alignment*
- levitate*

Dark elf town guard (4th level fighter/magic-user): AC 2; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 24; AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA spell use; MR 50%; AL CE; THAC0 17.

Spells:

innate magic (see above)

- 1st level *charm person*
jump
magic missile
- 2nd level *invisibility*
web

Efreeti commander: AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 10; hp 52; AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA become *invisible*, assume *gaseous form*, *detect magic*, *enlarge*, *polymorph self*, *create illusions*, *create wall of fire*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 10.

In their dealings with the heroes, these guards will assume that the player characters are merchants or farmers of their controlled area merely coming into town to bring their tribute or for some other unsuspecting purpose. They will taunt and bully the heroes, shoving them about and generally laughing at them. They may even do minor damage to the characters. This treatment will last only as long as the heroes display the proper groveling attitude toward the minion guards. The heroes' conversations with the guards must be along the lines of meek submissiveness, or the guards will become immediately suspicious of them.

If the heroes attempt to fight the guards (or if they anger the guards into attacking them), one of them will sound the alarm. Once the alarm is sounded, one additional group of guards will arrive each round on a roll of 1 or 2 on a d6 until three additional groups of guards have arrived. If an efreeti has not arrived by the time the last group of fighters comes, then an efreeti will be with the last group.

The first group of guards will attack, yelling things along the lines of "Kill the intruders! Seal the town as Crimdrac commands!" Should the heroes be successful in killing several squads then the latter squads will cry out, "At least we die clean!" and "Better death than the punishment of Crimdrac!"

If the characters manage to defeat all four guard squads, then this encounter ends. The remaining guards in the town will flee back to the cave. Go to the Aftermath should this happen.

Encounter 2

This encounter will take place whenever the heroes enter one of the village's



humble peasant cottages. The families who live there will leap to the corners of the room and cringe in fear from them.

Adventurers who attempt to parley will get only fearful looks and waving-away motions from any peasants they attempt to talk with. All these pitiful people will say to the characters—in hoarse, low voices—is that they should “Go away before the Horde gets you!” If the heroes persist in questioning these people, they will only get more emphatic about the player characters leaving and will start to raise their voices. With each repeat of “Go away!” after their first utterance, the townspeople will get a little louder, so that there is a cumulative 5% chance per utterance that one of the minion guard squads will show up.

If this occurs, run Encounter 1 (see above) in this location. The peasants will refuse to fight the guards or aid the heroes in any way until the player characters themselves prove that they can beat the guards, either in Encounter 1 or Encounter 9.

Townspeople (zero-level fighters, variable number): AC 9; MV 12”; HD 1; hp 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL NG; THACO 20.

If the heroes manage to defeat the minion guards, then the townspeople will be helpful. Go to the Aftermath.

Encounter 3

Upon entering either the inn or the temple shrine, the heroes will meet Akabar Bel Akash.

Akabar’s statistics and background are given in Appendix I. He has come to this town as a merchant. Now he is frustrated in his efforts to free these people from their enslavement, but does not want to leave.

Akabar is sympathetic to the needs of the adventurers and will help them in any way he can. He will offer to join the party (temporarily) any time after the heroes return to either the inn or the shrine for rest.

The great Akabar can converse on many subjects. These, in particular, may be of some interest to the heroes:

On the people: “They are deeply afraid. They are starving. The terrible monsters which have sealed this town from outsiders do not let the people

work their own fields. The people pray to their gods to deliver them but feel helpless against the might of the evil ones. Should anyone show them that these creatures can be defeated, then surely they would rise up against their oppressors and gain back their freedom once more.”

On safe places: “There are but two safe places in the town: the inn and the temple. Both of these places can give you sanctuary but little else until the people throw off their fears.”

On the minion guards: “The dark elves rest under the shade of our trees and walk freely the streets during the day. They often walk with men of magic, though it saddens my heart to think of such things. They are commanded by two efreet with hateful fire for eyes. Yet even these do not make me fear so much as does the one they call Crimdrac. Though I have never seen this creature which seems to rule them, even those powerful and horrible efreet fear him.”

On the master of the evil: “I don’t know about this terrible Crimdrac fellow, but I do know where he resides. It is common knowledge he rests in a cavern within Haptooth Hill itself. I can lead you there, for it is far from this very spot.”

Neither Akabar nor any of the townspeople have heard of Dracandros of the Crimson. Akabar, if asked about this name, suggests that Dracandros may be another name for Crimdrac. No one knows what Crimdrac looks like.

Akabar is a man of action. If he is present with the party while they are trying to fake humble peasantry, Akabar has a 50 percent chance of getting fed up with it and causing a fight as in Encounter 1.

Encounter 4

The Millery Inn, which services the town, is a two-story structure with a large common room on the main floor.

If the heroes enter the inn before they have routed the guards, they will encounter Akabar (see Encounter 3). They will find the bartender, Silas Genk, a man with staring eyes, standing behind the bar. He will serve the heroes without anything except a hateful glare.

If the heroes enter the inn after defeating the guards, they will find a grateful

Silas Genk. He will move quickly to thank the heroes for freeing his people and explain that he is not only the innkeeper but the meister of the town. He will offer anything he can in the way of food and drink to the heroes, as well as a place to rest. He will assure them that he can keep the town safe for a few days . . . so long as the heroes can get into the forest and get rid of this “Crimdrac, whoever or whatever that is.”

Silas Genk (3rd level fighter): AC 7; MV 12”; HD 3; hp 17; AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL NG; THACO 18.

Encounter 5

As the characters go through a dark alley between the inn and the temple, they will spot a small door set into the wall of a building. On the door is a sign reading “Round & Round.” The door is solid wood, wrapped with rust-eaten steel bands. It is locked shut. A crank handle, easily movable, protrudes from the wall next to the door.

If the heroes turn the crank, it will produce the tinny and slightly off-key strains of the jack-in-the-box song. When it comes to the part where the box opens up, the door will spring open—and at that instant, three copper-covered salamanders leap from a vat of molten copper just inside the door. The same event takes place if the door is unlocked or bashed open.

Salamanders (3): AC 5/3; MV 9”; HD 7+7; hp 22, 28, 33; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12; SA heat; SD hit only by +1 or better weapons; SZ M; AL CE; THACO 12.

In addition to the molten metal, the room contains most of the treasure looted from the townspeople: 10,000 sp and 3000 gp. The only ones who can open the door without causing the salamanders to attack are the efreeti commanders—but they will never perform this service for anyone not allied with them, even at the cost of their lives.

Encounter 6

The temple, a shrine to Lathander, is tended by Mumfrey Mimly, a priest of the dawn god. He, as the rest of the populace, is scared of the guards and will not aid the players, other than offering them



temporary sanctuary, until the guards are routed from the town.

After the guards are taken care of, however, Mumfrey will be most helpful.

First and foremost, he will use the powers of the shrine to heal characters in need. The shrine contains a minor artifact, some "blood of Lathander" trapped in a bit of amber. This allows the church greater powers than normal, but will only function for a cleric of that shrine. The shrine will allow Mimly to *cure critical wounds* up to 4 times per day and *raise dead* once per day.

Mimly will also be able to identify the *Blade of Lathander* for what it is, and provide some information on its history and use.

Mumfrey Mimly (3rd level cleric): AC 9; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 15; AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL LG; THACO 20.

Encounter 7

The proprietor of this shop, known only as Thimberel, will literally hide behind his massive store counter and not come out until the guards are dealt with by the heroes. Should the heroes force Thimberel to come out, he will start screaming hysterically . . . causing the guards from Encounter 1 to arrive.

Still, Thimberel will talk with the player characters from under the counter, just so long as he doesn't have to come out. He will deny any knowledge about what is happening around the town or anything about the guards. He will say, however, that "A fella was in here a minute ago asking the same things. He was headed toward the inn." Thimberel's hand comes out over the counter and waves in the general direction of the inn. "Perhaps if you *hurry* you can find him there! Better *hurry!*" Thimberel will refuse to sell anything to the heroes, claiming he is "doing inventory" and couldn't possibly sell them anything until later . . . perhaps in a week.

If the player characters have defeated the guards, Thimberel will come out from behind the counter with a great smile on his bookish face. He will repeatedly wipe his gleaming bald head with his handkerchief and will be willing to sell anything that the PCs desire from his store at a 10 percent discount. He has a stock of items which includes

nearly anything from the Basic Equipment and Supplies Costs chart at the back of the *Players Handbook* which is priced at less than 40 gp and which is not armor or weapons.

Thimberel (1st level fighter): AC 9; MV 12"; HD 1; hp 4; AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL NG; THACO 20.

Encounter 8

Two large bronze urns, each as tall as a man, stand in this room. These are the homes of the two efreeti which are running the garrison in the town.

If neither efreeti has been encountered prior to this time, then both will be found here. Otherwise one will be here and the other will be with the remaining guards in the barn (Encounter 9). If one of the efreeti has been killed, then the remaining efreeti will be in the barn.

Efreeti (1 or 2): AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 10; hp 52 each; AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA become *invisible*, assume *gaseous form*, *detect magic*, *enlarge*, *polymorph self*, *create illusions*, *create wall of fire*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*; SZ L; AL N; THACO 10.

Encounter 9

If no alarm has been sounded, four squads of dark elves are found here lounging in the darkness of this barn. They will laugh at the heroes as they enter, bullying them and pushing them about as the guards in Encounter 1 so long as the heroes remain meek and submissive. If the heroes resist at all, the dark elves will attack.

If the heroes have already routed the first wave of guards, then these four squads will be found here listening to their efreeti commander as he rallies them to attack the heroes in the street.

Dark elf town guards (5th level fighters, 5 per squad): AC 2; MV 12"; HD 5; hp 24, 18, 16, 32, 19; #AT 1, Dmg 1-8; SA spell use; MR 50%; AL CE; THACO 16.

Spells (innate):

dancing lights
faerie fire
darkness
detect magic
know alignment
levitate

Dark elf town guards (4th level fighter/magic-user, 1 per squad): AC 2; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 24; #AT 1, Dmg 1-8; SA spell use; MR 50%; AL CE; THACO 18.

Spells:

innate magic (see above)

1st level *charm person*
jump
magic missile
2nd level *invisibility*
web

Aftermath

If the heroes manage to defeat the guards in Encounter 1, then one of the villagers will have seen the action and will start shouting, "They did it! They killed the guards!" The people of the village will pour out into the streets, cheering the heroes and saying such things as "We're right behind you! Go get 'em!" They will start goading the heroes into going to the barn to "Finish off the scum!"

If the heroes don't go to the barn within a few turns, then the "barn" will come to them. The remaining squads and the efreeti commander will emerge and challenge the heroes. If the heroes defeat the efreeti, the remaining dark elves will attempt to disengage and flee into the woods.

If the squads from the barn are defeated or routed, then the townspeople will break into celebration. They will dance in the streets, and Silas will proclaim a day of celebration and thanks.

Akabar will come up to the heroes amid the shouts of the crowd. Clapping his hand on the back of one of the player characters, he will laugh heartily and say, "Well done! But now you must rest and prepare, great warriors. A half-done task is not done at all! Tomorrow we shall finish the job, for I shall take you to the cavern of this Crimdrac and we shall destroy him for good and all."

A cheer goes up among the townspeople at this decision, and everyone toasts the great heroes.

Allow the PCs to rest and reprovision in the town before proceeding to the next chapter.

Haptooth Hill



To begin this adventure, read the following passage to the players:

Haptooth Hill rises like a huge gray-white tooth from the surrounding greenery of the forest. Rubble leads up to a near-vertical rise of hard, smooth stone. At the top of the hill is the gleaming spire of a white tower. Huge dragons circle the tower like great birds of prey.

Haptooth Hill is the remains of an ancient volcano that once stood here. The volcano itself has long since eroded away, leaving the plug standing as a solitary monument to its existence. The heroes find the entrance to the cavern described by the townsfolk of Hap easily in the eastern face of the plug.

Heroes with mountain-climbing abilities and those who can fly are welcome to try to scale the exterior flanks of Haptooth Hill, but Dracandros has already warned his dragons that enemy warriors and wizards would be planning an attack. They will take any fliers or climbers as enemies, and react accordingly. Two red dragons will be dispatched to handle the interlopers.

Red dragons (2): AC -1; MV 9"/24"; HD 9; hp 36, 45; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/3-30; SA breath weapon; SZ L; AL CE; THACO 12.

The Caverns

The burrows beneath Haptooth Hill were carved by draw interlopers, who arrived by following natural dry lava tubes from deep below the surface. The draw came under the control of Crimdrac the dracolich, who holds them in his sway. The draw and others in the caverns have no loyalty to Dracandros, and if Crimdrac is slain, they will abandon the tower.

The caverns resonate sound effectively, and the heroes will be aware of this as they enter. They hear whispers, parts of conversations, the tread of feet ahead, but they see nothing immediately. This cuts both ways, and while the heroes' arrival will not be noticed, the sounds of battle will be. If the heroes engage a group of draw guards, the other two patrols will arrive in 1-4 rounds. If the combat continues for

more than two turns, Crimdrac will be aroused from his undeadly slumbers and will come to investigate. If Crimdrac is engaged in combat, the draw will not fight, preferring to see how their master handles the intruders.

Area Descriptions

F. Drow Patrols. Characters will find draw patrols at these locations. The draw will ask "Who goes there?" in a loud voice which reverberates down the hall. They will accept the word of any who say that they are there to see Dracandros, but will send a runner ahead. If the heroes try to bluff their way past the draw, the dark elves will allow them to pass, and escort them to the tower.

Each patrol consists of 10 male fighters of 2nd level led by a 7th level draw female cleric. They are armed with draw swords and hand-held crossbows, but do not have any of their draw venom.

Male draw fighters (2nd level, 10): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 16 each; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1-8 (sword) or 1-3 (crossbow quarrel); SA spell use, +1 to hit from weapons; SD +2 on all saving throws; MR 50%; AL CE; THACO 18 (including bonus).

Spells (innate):

dancing lights
faerie fire
darkness

Female draw cleric (7th level): AC 2; MV 15"; HD 7; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg 4-11 (adamantine mace +3); SA spell use; SD +2 on all saving throws; MR 50%; AL CE; THACO 16.

Spells:

innate *dancing lights*
faerie fire
darkness
detect magic
know alignment
levitate
clairvoyance
detect lie
suggestion
dispel magic
1st level *bless*
cause light wounds
command
2nd level *dust devil*
hold person

silence 15' radius
3rd level *blindness*
paralysis
4th level *protection from good*
10' radius

The draw are under orders to allow those with business with Dracandros or Crimdrac to pass, and to slay all others. Nobody told *them* about these magical tattoos.

1 & 2. Drow Quarters. Each of these rooms are the quarters of the draw at the guardposts. They contain sleeping mats and a few personal items. Each area also has a special item:

Area 1 has a collection of dark elf jewels, called quinarts, or "black tears." They are worth 1000 gp each, and are scarce (and thus valuable) because if they are exposed to sunlight for more than 1 round, they melt and become worthless.

Area 2 has a cauldron in it with an ancient draw mage-woman bent over it, feeding mushrooms into the pot. She is Arcanali, a "retired" and slightly addled old draw, who is responsible for brewing up draw venom. The draw have none on hand, since Dracandros has been taking it all (with Crimdrac's blessing) and selling it to other members of the Alliance. She is bitter about the situation.

If the heroes befriend her (she may not know about previous battles—she is hard of hearing as well), she will give them a vial of draw venom, good for a single sword or for 5 arrows, for one combat. She will request that it be used on "that robber-baron Dracandros."

3. Salamanders' Home. This area is very warm, and it is clear upon entering that the fires of the ancient volcano of Haptooth Hill are no longer fully banked. A collection of hot mud springs (paint pots) are in the northwest corner of this chamber, surrounded by 6 salamanders who are working at making containers for Arcanali's venom. They are overseen by a powerful efreeti.

Salamanders (6): AC 5/3; MV 9"; HD 7+7; hp 42 each; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6 (spear)/2-12; SA heat; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; AL CE; THACO 12.

Efreeti: AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 10; hp 70; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA become *invisi-*



ble, assume *gaseous form*, *enlarge*, *polymorph self*, *create illusions*, *create wall of fire*; AL LE; THACO 10.

The salamanders and the drow have an agreement—each stays out of the other's way. A battle in the caverns will not concern the occupants of this area, and the sound of fighting from here will just be written off as "those elementals" by the dark elves.

The salamanders will attack any who enter. The efreeti will view the battle and, if there are more invaders than salamanders, will become *invisible* and go to report to his master. Otherwise the efreeti will join in the melee.

The hot springs inflict 1-6 points of heat damage to normal humans who are immersed in them. Their vapors, however, are mildly curative, and will restore 1-6 hit points damage per turn to the heroes, up to their maximum, for each turn they are in the cave.

The only treasure in this area is a scroll spell tucked in a hole 12' above

the ground. It reveals a specialized *gate* spell designed to open into the elemental plane of fire. Written at the bottom in a spidery hand are the words "Make copy of this for Lord T" and the mark of the symbol of Dracandros (which matches those on the PCs' arms).

4. *Crimdrac's Lair*. Crimdrac is described in detail in Appendix I. He is a lying, thieving sort, but wants to appear great and powerful before his minions.

He joined up with Dracandros in hopes of learning some magical abilities; so far, The Red Wizard has used Crimdrac's minions and manpower to locate the Helm of Dragons and provide power for his New Alliance, but has given nothing in return. Still (so far), Crimdrac remains a faithful ally.

If the heroes are being escorted to the tower, they will see Crimdrac at the entrance to this cavern. Crimdrac will not give the heroes a second thought, because his lordship has a number of visitors. Crimdrac will be helping the

Red Wizard when the heroes try to escape.

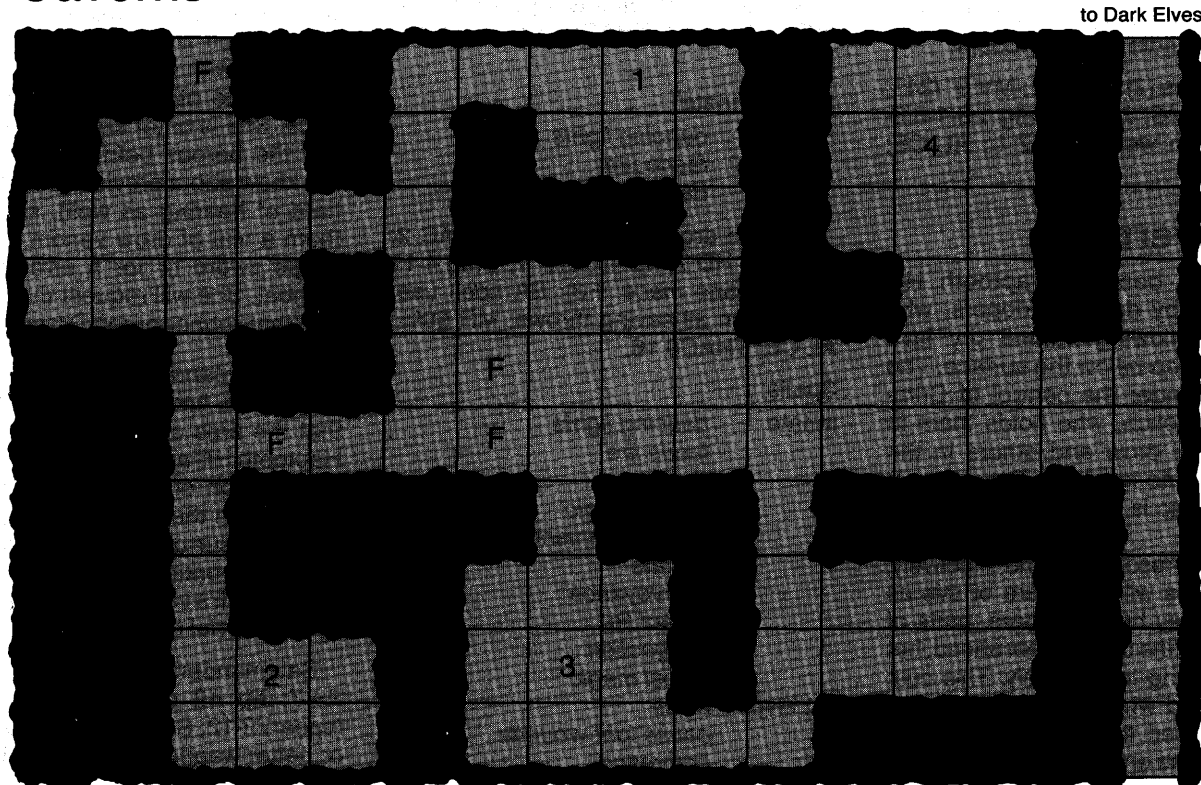
If the heroes are sneaking through the complex, unless they are equipped with such items as *boots of dragonkind* or rendered *silent* and *invisible*, Crimdrac will attack them outside his cave.

Crimdrac will attempt to frighten off the interlopers first; then, if that doesn't work, he will settle in for the battle. Crimdrac will fight to the death—he has not been filled in on Dracandros's plans, and is confident that, in the event of his death, he will be able to possess the mind of one of the dragons floating around, and begin again.

If Crimdrac is slain (or his spirit chased out), his power over his minions will be broken, and they will flee back to their dark elf territories far beneath the earth.

In the southeast corner of this cavern is an entrance to the dark elf undercities. This tunnel hooks up with other similar tunnels that link an underground world that crosses most of the North. If

Caverns

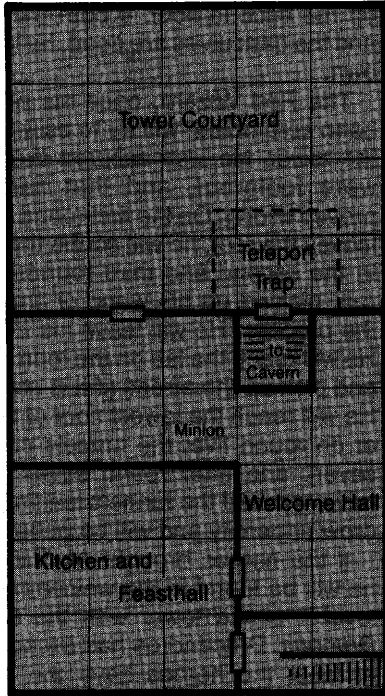


F Dark Elf Patrol

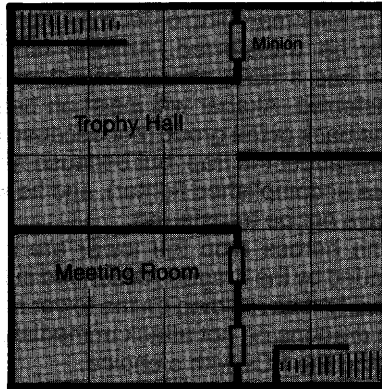
to Wizard Tower



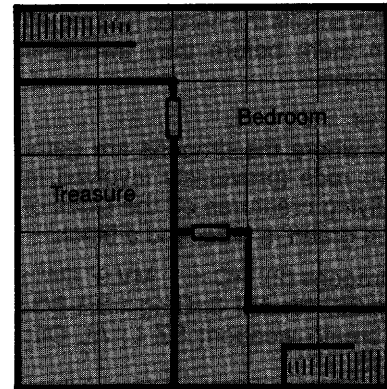
Wizard's Tower



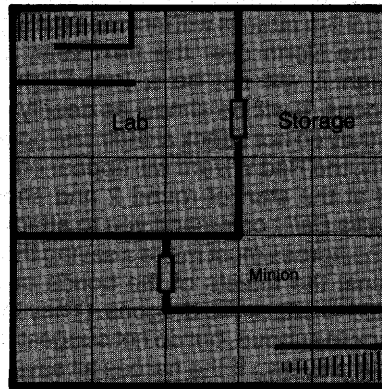
Level 1



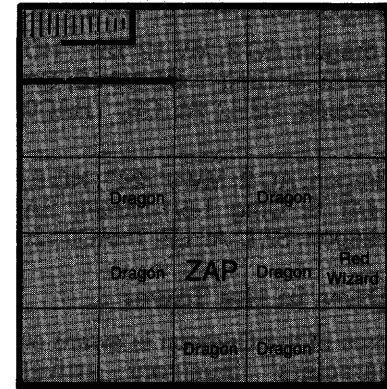
Level 2



Level 4



Level 3



Level 5

the DM so chooses, he may use this as an entrance into further adventure, or, if he does not wish to have player characters roaming about down there, seal it up with a rockfall after about fifty yards.

The Tower of Dracandros

The Tower of Dracandros is located on the ruins of earlier structures. A conspicuous outpost such as Haptooth Hill tends to attract the attention of those who seek to build large, obvious keeps to dominate the area around it. Conversely, since such keeps draw the attention of those who would fight such domination, fortresses have been ruined almost as often as they have been built. There have been a score of them on Haptooth Hill in recorded memory. Dracandros's is the most recent, and perhaps the most formidable.

The Tower of Dracandros is four stories high with a flat roof ringed by a cren-

ellated wall. There are five dragons up on the roof, either perched around its edges or gliding just above it.

A Brief Tour

Level 1

Exit from tunnel

Courtyard

Welcome Hall

Kitchen and Feasthall

The Red Wizard has set up a trap outside the entrance from the caverns. See "Adventure in the Tower" (below).

Level 2

Hall of Triumphs. Herein is a detailed description of every important act Dracandros was ever involved in, including trophies, mounted creatures, plaques, ribbons, and certificates of recognition.

Meeting Room. This is dominated by a huge portrait of Dracandros done in black velvet.

Level 3

The Wizard's Lab. Contains various

alchemical devices and beakers, chemicals, small living and preserved animals. No magical items or protections.

Storage. Holds furniture that was never unpacked, empty crates to be filled with drow venom, dried foods, and other supplies. No weapons.

Level 4

Dracandros's Bedroom. Impressively large bed with thick feather pillow and mattress and ruffles. There is a large chest with the magic-user's clothes, at the bottom of which is a fully charged wand of fireballs.

Treasure Room. This room has a *glyph of warding* on its door handle that inflicts 20 points electrical damage to any who touch the knob. The room contains these items:

- * 3000 gold pieces
- * 400 platinum pieces
- * 35 pieces of jewelry
- * A *manual of golems*, marked "damaged" on the front, but actually in perfect condition.



* All the scrolls the heroes had stolen from them before they awoke in Tilverton.

Roof Level

This is where the dragons are gathered: two reds (previously involved in picking flying creatures off the sides of the hill), a green, a blue, and a black.

Red dragons (2): AC -1; MV 9"/24"; HD 9; hp 36, 45; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/3-30; SA breath weapon; SZ L; AL CE; THACO 12.

Green dragon: AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 7; hp 35; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-20; SA breath weapon; SZ L; AL LE; THACO 13.

Black dragon: AC 3; MV 12"/24"; HD 6; hp 30; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/3-18; SA breath weapon; SZ L; AL CE; THACO 13.

Blue dragon: AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 8; hp 40; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/3-24; SA breath weapon; SZ L; AL LE; THACO 12.

Adventure in the Tower

Dracandros of the Crimson is aware of the characters' imminent arrival (through the airborne dragons, if nothing else), and has laid a trap for them. He has convinced the dragons that a human invading party is on its way to slay their representatives.

When the characters reach the top of the stairs, read the following passage to the players:

The stairs you have just climbed end at an entrance to a broad courtyard at the base of the tower. Standing in front of you, some distance away, is a short, apparently panic-stricken man in a red robe, wearing a circlet on his forehead with a green gem set in it. He shouts at you: "Beware! Evil dragons have taken over the tower! They intend to kill you all!"

There is a sudden flash of light—and you suddenly find yourselves on the top of the tower, surrounded by evil, drooling, angry dragons!

Dracandros had a *teleport trap* set up on the floor at the top of the stairs to take those in the courtyard up to the top of the tower. The first three lines of charac-

ters in their marching order will automatically be transferred. Anyone farther back has a 50% chance of not being transferred. Akabar will insist on being in the back of the group (not because he knows about the trap, but because he is a less accomplished fighter), and he will always *not* be transferred.

The heroes atop the tower are surrounded by the dragons described in the above text as residing on the tower roof. The dragons do not attack immediately, leaving the PCs with a choice.

If they attack the dragons, the dragons will respond in kind, now convinced of humanity's evil intentions. Dragonish attacks will increase throughout the North over the next year, and though it will not be a true Flight of Dragons, it will be almost as deadly.

If they do not attack at their first opportunity, the Red Wizard will appear on the roof at the start of round 2 and shout, "*Triallis Bal!* I command you to attack!"

The heroes must make a saving throw against the effects of the bonds or be forced to attack the dragons. (They may attack to subdue, but do not suggest this to the players.) If the heroes all save, or if the ones who save try to stop their companions from attacking, or if the PCs attack to subdue (the dragonish equivalent of jousting or playing patty-cake), the dragons will be convinced that Dracandros's ranting is that of a madman after all. Several will fly off, including the two that stand between the heroes and the Red Wizard, and the others will back away.

If any heroes attack because of the compulsion of the bonds, the dragons will attack back, but only against PCs who attacked them. The others will be spared, and upon the deaths of the attacking characters, the dragons will fly off. Nothing will be gained or lost from this in terms of the security of the Realms.

If the heroes attack Dracandros instead of the dragons, the dragons will see through the Red Wizard's plot and take off. They cannot harm the Red Wizard as long as he wears the *Helm of Dragons*—but if he loses the *Helm*, the dragons will attack him immediately.

If Dracandros is attacked, either by player characters, dragons, or other heroes, he will flee down into his tower.

When he reaches the bottom of the first descending flight of stairs, he will sound a silent alarm. This alarm will summon the dark elf patrols from below to help him. His efreeti, if still alive, is in the lab on the second floor. If both the efreeti and the dark elves are dead, he is on his own.

The Red Wizard, once his plan has been scrambled, will try to escape from the tower. He was assured the bonds were foolproof, and that has been proved wrong. On the first round after he leaves the roof, he will sound the alarm. In the second and third rounds he will run, picking up his *wand of fireballs* in the process. He will leave his treasure. He will reach the lab on the fourth round and pick up the efreeti (if it is still alive). He will reach the lowest floor of the tower on round five, the tunnels on round seven, and after round seven he will have reached the tunnels leading to the drow undercity and will be gone.

If the heroes brought Akabar along, he will be found in the welcome hall on level 1 of the tower with the *Helm of Dragons*. Dracandros has escaped, but at least the heroes have the artifact, which Akabar will willingly turn over in exchange for the wonderful time he has had.

If the heroes catch up with Dracandros, either in the tower or below, he will fight to the death, using his *wand of fireballs* and his spells to the best of his abilities. With his death, his signs will fade from the characters' arms. They will also get the *Helm of Dragons*, which gives them (among other things) knowledge of where to find Tyranthraxus.

Aftermath

If Dracandros escaped, the DM may wish to set up a "revenge/ambush" encounter using Dracandros (alone) sometime later in the adventure. This battle should be to the death, and thus would result in the removal of the bonds related to the Red Wizard. Alternately, Dracandros could flee to Myth Drannor, where his body will be possessed by Tyranthraxus to serve as his host when the heroes arrive at his temple.



Myth Drannor a millennium ago was the capital of the Elven Nation in the North, the most splendid of all magical cities. It was the wonder of its age, filled with elven people and traders from other lands and other dimensions. It was the high point of the civilization of the people of the Northern Forest.

Like most wonders of the world, however, Myth Drannor eventually fell to rot and ruin. Extradimensional invaders, rogue magicians, and the incursions of mannish tribes in the area brought about its fall. After an invasion of fell creatures from the Lower Planes, the city was abandoned, save as a place to bury the dead.

Still, the elves guarded it as their homeland, keeping the city safe from prying eyes on the outside and, conversely, keeping weaker humans safe from the perils that had made Myth Drannor a ruin.

Following his defeat in Phlan, Tyranthraxus moved to the abandoned city. He laid claim to an ancient temple of

Labelas Enoreth, the elvish god of longevity. The other powerful beings in Myth Drannor protested, but through negotiation, possession, and playing one faction against another, Tyranthraxus's will became law.

Tyranthraxus, using the knowledge from his new allies in Myth Drannor, harnessed the power of the Pool of Radiance to cover the city in an elliptical *dome of force*. This dome cannot be passed either way, and is solid. The exception to this is at the Burial Glen, which brackets the dome like a gateway into the dead city.

Only part of the Burial Glen and the Old Temple of Longevity are used in this adventure. The wide expanse of ruined and semi-ruined buildings are still available for exploration.

The Burial Glen

Random Encounters

There is a 1 in 6 chance on each turn the

heroes spend in the burial glen that they will have a random encounter. If this occurs, refer to the table below.

d10 roll Encounter

1	2-12 ghouls
2	1-6 ghasts
3	1-3 wights
4	2-12 grave robbers
5	1-6 hell hounds
6	1-6 giant spiders
7	1 anhkheg
8	2-12 boring beetles
9	1-6 carrion crawlers
10	2-8 gargoyles

Ghouls: AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 9 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1 -6; SA paralysis; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 16.

Ghasts: AC 4; MV 15"; HD 4; hp 18 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1 -8; SA paralysis, stench; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 15.

Wights: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 4+3; hp 23 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA life drain; SD





MYTH DRANNOR



silver or magic to hit, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold* and cold-based spells, immune to paralyzation and poison; SZ M; AL LE; THAC0 15.

Grave robbers (4th level fighters): AC 4; MV 6"; HD 4; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (picks); SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 18.

Hell hounds: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 16 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA breathe fire for 4 points; SD surprises on 1-4 on d6; SZ M; AL LE; THAC0 15.

Giant spiders: AC 4; MV 3" *12"; HD 4+4; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA webs, poison; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 15.

Anhkheg: AC 2 (4); MV 12" (6"); HD 7; hp 28; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18 (+1-4); SA squirt acid; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 13.

Boring beetles: AC 3; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 15.

Carrion crawlers: AC 3/7; MV 12"; HD 3+1; hp 13 each; #AT 8; Dmg 0; SA paralysis; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 16.

Gargoyles: AC 5; MV 9"/15"; HD 4+4; hp 20 each; #AT 4; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6/1-6; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 15.

Area Descriptions

1. *Death's Gateway*. The only break in Tyranthraxus's *dome of force* is at the entrance of the Burial Glen, almost as if some inhumanly great power was holding this gateway open for the heroes to pass. (Funny thing, coincidence. . .)

When the characters are making their final approach to Myth Drannor, read the following passage to the players:

You see the woods clearing ahead to reveal a sight chilling even in the full light of day—a large graveyard, part of the huge cemetery that Myth Drannor has become. At the entrance stands a tall, thin figure wrapped in a gray cloak. His face is hidden in

the depths of his hood, and he carries in one bony hand a huge scythe.

If the heroes attack, the figure will disappear like a phantom evaporating in a wind. If the heroes approach, however, the figure will turn, and in an archaic voice ask, "Who be ye?"

The heroes can ignore the figure and pass into the Burial Glen without further incident. If they reply to the figure, he will ask, "Why doth thou disturb the spirits of the late, great Myth Drannor?"

If Tyranthraxus is not given as a reason, the figure will say, "Ye may pass," and stand aside. If Tyranthraxus is named, the figure will say, "Doth ye have the helm, the gauntlets, and the blade, so thee may find the beast, seal his lair, and slay him dead?"

If the heroes do not have the items, the figure will send the PCs away to find them, "For thee will surely fail without them, and even with them your task is



not an easy one." If the heroes do have the items, it will say, "Good and good and good. You may pass through the glen into the ruins, and from there to the tyrant's temple. Or you may pass through the Warrior's Gate at the center of this complex, and from there pass into Tyranthraxus's lair unaware. But beware, for the way is perilous!" The figure will then move off into the forest, leaving the heroes behind.

The lean, deathlike figure with the archaic tongue is Elminster, hamming it up more than usual. He will walk into the woods for about 100 yards, turn *invisible*, then return. The heroes will see him next in the Temple of Tyranthraxus.

2. *The Crypt of Thanatos*. The outside walls of this crypt are inscribed with scenes of elves at peace and at war; jousting and reveling, battling and dying in battle against fell beasts. Its main doors are flanked by statues of a beautiful female fighter with a spear. The carvings over the door read, in elvish: *Thanatos—Let her rest*.

The crypt is divided into two halves. The upper crypt (2A) is laid out like a standard elven home, with divans and low tables along the walls and bright mosaics hanging overhead.

The door to the lower crypt (2B) has been shattered, and the place is in a shambles. The mosaics in this room are marked with dark stains. The funeral bier has been overturned, the body torn asunder, and the treasure scattered. The bodies of four later visitors are here—grave robbers who dared to risk the vengeance of the spirit within.

Thanatos died under evil circumstances, apparently, and her spirit has returned as a banshee (also called a groaning spirit). The banshee is confined to the two rooms of the crypt, but will slay anyone who comes down the stairs, and will further pursue them into room 2A.

Thanatos the banshee: AC 0; MV 15"; HD 7; hp 45; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA wail; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; MR 50%; SZ M; AL CE; THACO 13.

If her lair is entered during the daylight hours, Thanatos will not be able to use her wailing. At night, however, she will use that attack in the first round.

Treasure is scattered about room 2B: 1000 tricrowns (platinum pieces), a *spear* +3, and a *shield* +2.

3. *Ain't Mis-bee-havin*. This tomb was apparently that of a prosperous and long-lived family.

The doors are locked but can be picked as per normal thief chances. The gates to the tomb creak on very rusty hinges, and the dust is thick once the characters enter.

Along the western wall of the entranceway (3A) are portraits done in copper of all the major members of the family (named Danewood, according to the markers). They were a family of human merchants, grown wealthy over the course of generations.

Corridor 3B is similar to 3A, though the floorwork is newer and in better condition. Characters who enter this area will hear a loud buzzing coming from the rooms to either side. The reason for the buzzing becomes self-evident, as a loud, angry giant bee emerges from the door to the right.

There are a total of eight soldier bees and 30 workers, divided evenly between 3C and 3D. If forced to retreat, each group can escape the building through a (relatively) small hole in the back of each tomb, about 30' up near the roof.

Soldier bees (8): AC 5; MV 12"/30"; HD 4+2; hp 24 each; #AT 1 (sting); Dmg 1-4; SA sting once for poison; SZ M; AL N; THACO 15.

Worker bees (30): AC 6; MV 9"/30"; HD 3+1; hp 14 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA sting once for poison; SZ M; AL N; THACO 16.

The bees will flit about near the high ceiling of the tomb, darting down to attack any member of the group. The workers will not leave the nest if the heroes flee, but the soldiers will pursue until slain or until the heroes dodge into another building.

These tombs have no treasure, but each bee nest does have a large quantity of royal jelly, equivalent to 5 *potions of extra-healing* with the side effect of *curving disease* with each helping.

4. *The Magic-Users' Tomb*. This long tomb is decorated on the outside with a bas-relief of mages engaged in various

acts of derring-do—mages fighting evil clerics, mages fighting beholders, mages repelling orc hordes single-handed, etc. The name over each of the doorways is "Kinsor."

The Kinsor family of mages used this as their family crypt and treasure vault. The locks on the doors show the telltale scratches of having been picked, but are currently locked.

These doors are a trap set by the Kinsor clan. The doors will close and lock behind anyone who goes through them, becoming momentarily intangible in doing so, so that anything used to block them open falls to the ground. When the doors close, the second part of the spell takes effect: An earth elemental is summoned and attacks the party. This occurs with every door in the complex. In addition, the three doors leading to the outside of this area are trapped in both directions. Opening any of these doors to escape the tomb causes an earth elemental to appear outside the tomb and attack.

Area 4A of the shrine is covered with further bas-reliefs, these showing grave robbers being slammed, destroyed, and torn apart by earth elementals.

Area 4B has two tombs. The tombs themselves are unprotected (other than by the elementals). There are three *scrolls of protection from undead* within the two tombs here.

Area 4C has three tombs. They contain, in addition to the mortal remains of the mages, a *wand of fireballs* (10 charges left), a *ring of protection* +3, and a *toque of clear thought*.

Area 4D contains two tombs, and has a set of *Nolzur's marvelous pigments* and two *potions of giant control*.

5. *Grave Robbers*. This tomb is that of some heroic nobleman. The corner with the exterior doors is carved with figures of the man hunting, making war, and otherwise fighting. His sword is shown radiating waves of light or energy. The doors to this shrine have been removed, and the entrances are dark.

Area 5A is the upper level of the crypt, and has been desecrated by tomb robbers. The only significant item remaining here is a great marble statue of a fighter in archaic armor that has been smashed face-down against the ground.



Area 5B is reached by stairs down from 5A, and is the lair of a colony of 12 ghouls. They will set upon the newcomers, but one member will dart down the stairs to the south.

Area 5C is where the ghouls keep their heavy artillery, protection, and tunnel-digger. The ghoul that descended to this level will return 2 rounds later, riding on the shoulders of an umber hulk and banging on its head with a staff to direct it one way or the other. The ghouls will part to let the umber hulk take the brunt of the attack. If none of the ghouls escape the room, the umber hulk will arrive by itself in 5 rounds, tunneling up behind the heroes and blocking the exit out.

Ghouls (12): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralysis; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; AL CE; THAC0 16.

Umbur hulk ("Clyde"): AC 2; MV 6" (1"-6"); HD 8+8; #AT 3; Dmg 3-12/3-12/2-10; SA confusion; SZ L; AL CE; THAC0 12.

The ghouls are aware of the umber hulk's abilities, and will not look it straight in the eyes.

In area 5C the heroes will find the despoiled tomb of the fighter depicted by the statue above. The body is long gone, but the sword remains. It is a *sword +1, +3 versus extradimensional creatures*. The staff the ghoul was directing the umber hulk with is a *staff of healing* with 20 charges left.

6. The Warrior's Gate. This large, shrinelike tomb dominates the central region of this part of the burial glen. It rises to a pinnacle some 100 feet high, and witch-fire dances about its peaks. It has two plain, simple entrances to the east and west. Over each entrance is the sign of crossed swords and the words, in common, "Only the Brave." The doors are well oiled, and open at a touch.

Areas 6A and 6B are anterooms for the crypt. They are stacked with dead bodies, laid out like cordwood. These bodies are not undead, but extremely unpleasant, as they have been recently disinterred. There are no monsters or treasure here.

Areas 6C and 6D each contain a group of zombies and skeletons, includ-

ing monster zombies and a giant skeleton. The group in 6C is dressed with red banners around their heads, while those in 6D are dressed with blue banners. They will attack the heroes as soon as they enter the room. Attempts to turn these low-level undead will fail, as they are under the control of a higher undead. No treasure is in either room. Each room contains these creatures:

Skeletons (5): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 1; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD half damage from edged weapons, immune to *hold*, *sleep*, *charm*, and cold-based spells; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 19.

Zombies (5): AC 8; MV 6"; HD 2; hp 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *charm*, and cold-based spells; SZ M; AL N; THAC0 16.

Giant skeleton (1): AC 7; MV 12" HD 11; hp 50; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD half damage from edged weapons, immune to *hold*, *sleep*, *charm*, and cold-based spells; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 10.

Bugbear zombies (3): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 6; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; SD half damage from blunt weapons, immune to *hold*, *sleep*, *charm*, and cold-based spells; SZ L; AL N; THAC0 13.

Area 6E is reached by steep stairways from either side. It opens into a thin, high room. In the northwest corner of the room is a hole in the floor. In the southeast corner is a low dais, upon which is a large table. Behind the table is an ancient, undead figure. He is akin to a zombie except that his skin is stretched tight over his visible bones, as if all the moisture has been sucked from him. Instead of eyes, he has a pair of twinkling pinpoints. The creature is dressed in archaic military regalia, and has a dented helm on his head.

The creature is a lich, and a dotty one at that. Insanity in many forms is a hazard among liches, who in life strove to become immortal, and now in their undead state have nothing to use that immortality upon.

This lich, Remarkus, is doomed to spend his eternity running a sort of "war room." The large table before him is covered by a map of Myth Drannor as it was about 600 years ago, and the map is perforated by pins that mark the locations of the undead legions he controls.

The lich will look at the heroes unblinkingly, then say in a cracking voice, "Did I send for you? Odd, I should have brought the others as well." He rings a small silver bell at the side of the table, and the other undead from the opposite room ascend the stairs slowly.

If the heroes attack the lich, he will snap back far enough into the real world to attack in return.

If the heroes use the time while the other undead are arriving to cross the room and jump into the hole, the lich will let them go, muttering to himself about illusions.

If the heroes pause to fight the undead, run the battle normally. At the end of it, the lich Remarkus (if he wasn't involved in the fight) will stand and instruct the winners to sweep the losers into the passage-hole and then to return to their posts. (If the heroes win, they are free to disregard both of these orders, and nothing will happen to them as a result.) Then he will sit down again and, head in bony hand, ponder the map for a while.

The passageway leads down into a wide vault filled with the bodies of no longer animated undead. The passage leads to the embalming room of Tyranthraxus's Temple.

Remarkus the lich: AC 0; MV 6"; HD 11; hp 44; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA spell use as 18th level magic-user, paralyzing touch, fear; SD immune to *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity*, or *death* spells/symbols; SZ M; AL N(E); THAC0 10.

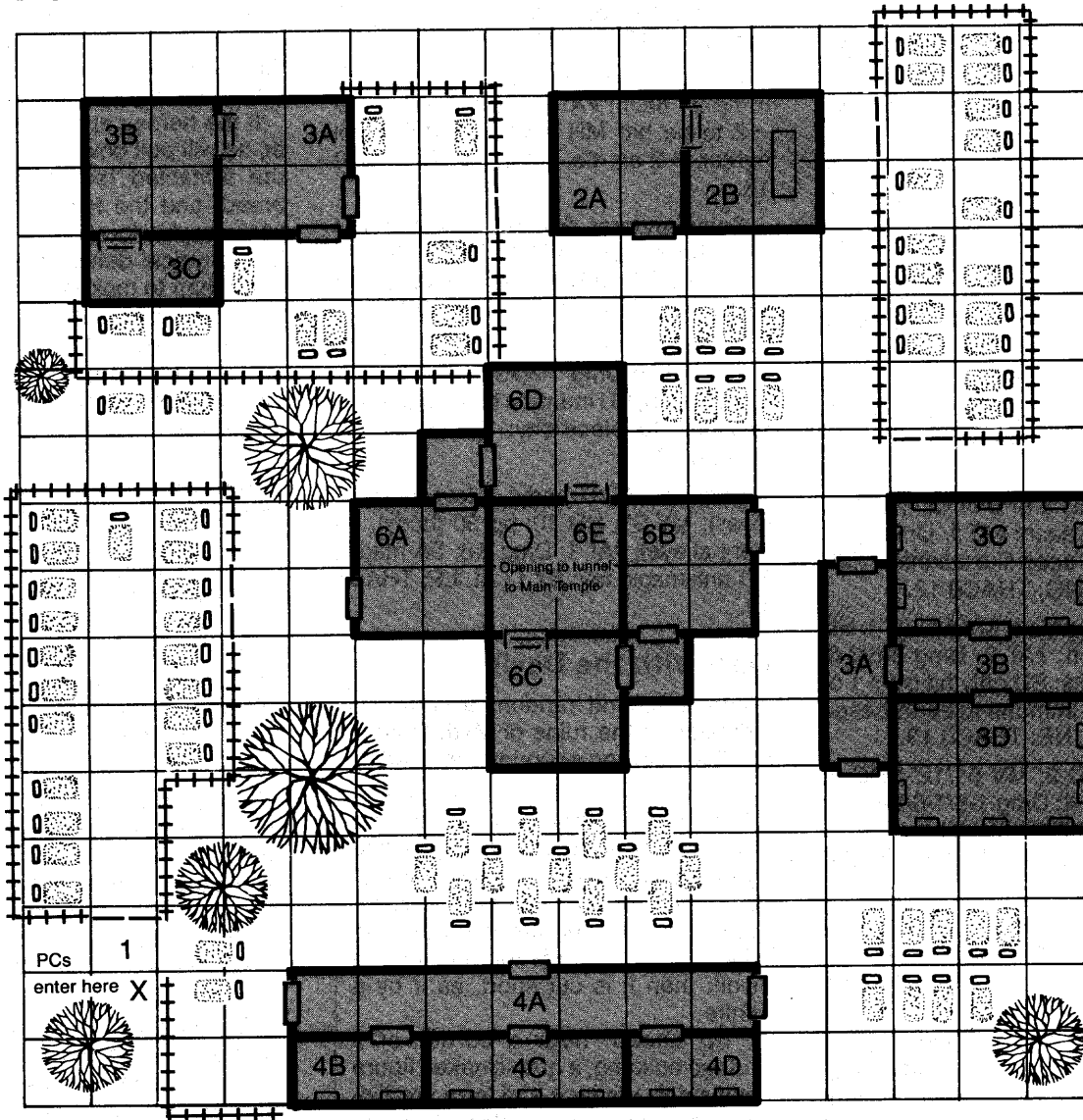
There is no treasure in Remarkus's room.

Random Encounters in the Ruins

The ruins of Myth Drannor are filled with odd beasts, as the place was once an extradimensional as well as magical crossroads. A number of hostile creatures have come to call this home. For every 2 turns the characters spend in the city and its surroundings, there is a 1 in 6 chance of a random encounter. If this occurs, check the table below.



Burial Glen



d20 roll	Encounter
1	2-12 thri-kreen
2	1 xag-ya
3	1 xeg-yi
4	1-4 tunnel worms
5	2-16 wemics
6	1-2 chimerae
7	2-8 moon dogs
8	1-2 chaggrin grue
9	2-8 margoyles
10	2-12 gargoyles
11	1 behir

12	1 lamia
13	2-20 orcs in ambush
14	1-2 gorgons
15	1-4 ettins
16	1-6 carrion crawlers
17	2-5 displacer beasts
18	2-5 salamanders
19	1-4 xorn
20	1 beholder

The exact nature of the random encounters and the reactions of the

monsters are left to the DM. When a second random encounter is called for, use the encounter "Deal with the Devil" (below) instead.

Thri-kreen: AC 5; MV 18"; HD 6+3; hp 27 each; #AT 5 or 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-4/1-4/2-5 or by weapons; SA leaping; SD dodge missiles 60% of time; SZ M; AL CN; THAC0 13.

Xag-ya: AC 0; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg 7-12; SA energy blast; SD



only hit by +1 or better weapons; MR 15%; SZ M; AL N; THACO 15.

Xeg-ya: AC 0; MV 6"; HD 5; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg 7-12; SA energy drain; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; MR 15%; SZ M; AL N; THACO 15.

Tunnel worms: AC 4; MV 6"; HD 9+3; hp 39 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA lunge; SZ L; AL N; THACO 12.

Wemics: AC 6; MV 12"; HD 5+8; hp 28 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 (club); SD surprised only on a 1; SZ L; AL N; THACO 13.

Chimerae: AC 6/5/2; MV 9"/18"; HD 9; hp 36 each; #AT 6; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-4/1-4/2-8/3-12; SA breath weapon; SZ L; AL CE; THACO 12.

Moon dogs: AC 2 or 0 or -2; MV 30"; HD 8+16; hp 56 each; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA baying; SD spell-like abilities; MR 25%; SZ M; AL NG; THACO 12.

Chaggrin grue: AC 4; MV 12" (3"); HD 5+5; hp 35 each; #AT 2; Dmg 3-6/3-6; SA clinging, quills; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons, immune to earth-based magic; SZ S; AL NE; THACO 13.

Margoyles: AC 2; MV 6"/12"; HD 6; hp 24 each; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8/2-8; SA camouflage; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; SZ M; AL CE; THACO 13.

Gargoyles: AC 5; MV 9"/15"; HD 4+4; hp 20 each; #AT 4; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6/1-6; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; SZ M; AL CE; THACO 15.

Behir: AC 4; MV 15"; HD 12; hp 48; #AT 1 and 1 or 1 and 6; Dmg 2-8/2-5 or 2-8/1-6(x6); SA lightning bolt, swallowing; SD immune to electricity and poison; SZ L; AL NE; THACO 9.

Lamia: AC 3; MV 24"; HD 9; hp 36; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spell use, wisdom drain; SZ M; AL CE; THACO 12.

Orcs (attacking from ambush): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; hp 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short bows) or 1-8; SZ M; AL LE; THACO 19.

Gorgons: AC 2; MV 12"; HD 8; hp 32; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA breath turns to stone; SZ L; AL N; THACO 12.

Ettins: AC 3; MV 12"; HD 10; hp 40 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/3-18; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ L; AL CE; THACO 10.

Carrion crawlers: AC 3/7; MV 12"; HD 3+1; hp 13 each; #AT 8; Dmg 0; SA paralysis; SZ L; AL N; THACO 16.

Displacer beasts: AC 4; MV 15"; HD 6; hp 24 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SD -2 to be hit; MR saves as 12th level fighter, +2 on die; SZ L; AL N; THACO 13.

Salamanders: AC 5/3; MV 9"; HD 7+7; hp 35 each; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/2-12; SA heat; SD only hit by +1 or better weapons; SZ M; AL CE; THACO 12.

Xorn: AC -2; MV 9"; HD 7+7; hp 35 each; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3(x3)/6-24; SA surprise on 1-5; SD immune to fire and cold, resistant to electricity; SZ M; AL N; THACO 12.

Beholder: AC 0 (body), 2 (eyestalks), 7 (eyes); MV 3"; HD 10; hp 36 (body), 15 (central eye); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA magic; SD anti-magic ray; SZ L; AL LE; THACO 10.

Deal with the Devil

When a second random encounter is indicated in the ruins of Myth Drannor, run the following encounter instead.

As you move through the ruins, you feel that all eyes are upon you and your party. There is a rustle of wings as a flight of bats, startled by some sudden noise, erupts overhead. In the distance sounds the baying of a wolf; then it is cut short, as if by a knife.

Up ahead, near a corner of a ruined building, a gray-cloaked figure steps out. His face and form are hidden, but he points a clawed, three-fingered hand at you and beckons you to come forward.

The figure is a mind flayer, a representative of the opposition to Tyranthraxus—those who would like to restore Myth Drannor to its earlier state without the possessing spirit. Three of its comrades are waiting about 40' farther around the corner as this monster makes its initial approach.

Mind flayers (4): AC 5; HD 8+4; hp 16, 20, 21, 24; #AT 4; Dmg 2 each; SA mind blast; MR 90%; SZ M; AL LE; THACO 12.

The heroes may ignore, evade, or run away from the mind flayer without incident. If they attack, both the visible mind flayer and his three hidden companions will return the attack.

If the heroes approach the mind flayer, he will pull down his hood, revealing the tentacled features of one of his breed, and the fact that he has small horns on his forehead. (This is a harmless physical defect, and has no effect other than to make the characters think twice about accepting his aid.) If the heroes remain nonaggressive and still interested in conversation after seeing the horns, read the following passage to the players:

"You are fighting Tyranthraxus, the Mindless One," says the mind flayer, making the question a statement. "If you approach by the surface routes, you will be found and slain easily—your own battles announce your arrival. I and my colleagues know another route, a secret route, into the Tyrant's Temple. We will show it to you—for a price."

The mind flayer's price is one magic item for each member of his group, payable in advance. The mind flayer is telling the truth, and if the heroes give them the items, they will take the player characters down to an entrance to the sewers beneath Myth Drannor.

"This way has been cleared for your arrival—but move quickly, for the Tyrant's agents are everywhere, and this place may not be secure for long!" There is the rumbling of thunder above your heads, and the mind flayers look at each other nervously. "Go now, enemies of our enemy. The next time we meet may I feast on your minds, but for now may our Darkness be with you." With that, the mind flayers flee up the stairs and back into the ruins.

The sewers, as the mind flayer promised, are clear of monsters, and lead straight, without branches, to a secret entrance in the floor of the kitchen of the temple (room 1).

Tyranthraxus!



The Temple of Tyranthraxus is located in the northwestern corner of the sprawling Myth Drannor complex of ruins, in an abandoned temple of the elvish god of longevity. It is here, on the second floor, that the Pool of Radiance has been relocated.

Tyranthraxus has a pair of gargoyles acting as watchdogs over the front entrance. These creatures will not attack, but will warn Tyranthraxus of the characters' approach. He will prepare accordingly (see area 6 for details).

Room Descriptions

1. Kitchen. This large kitchen was once used to cook for both the feast days and for daily life of the novitiates. It has since been abandoned and the wooden door from the dining room locked. There is nothing of interest or use in this room, except for a collection of very rusty knives (will do normal damage but snap after one hit) and a large floor drain which opens into the sewers. The heroes may enter the temple through this drain from the sewers.

2. Dining Area. The long common tables in this area have been stacked against the far wall, and the symbols of the elvish gods and saints on the walls marred and disfigured. There is an arch to the north and a locked door leading to the kitchen. Any significant noise in this room will be heard in the altar room (room 6) and will warn Tyranthraxus of the characters' arrival. He will not be surprised.

3. Cloak Room. This room was an overlarge closet for wraps and the like. Now it is the lair of Tyranthraxus's pet cloaker, one of the original inhabitants of the building that Tyranthraxus has domesticated for personal use.

Cloaker: AC 3(1); MV 1"/15"; HD 6; hp 24; #AT 2 + special; Dmg 1-6/1-6 + special; SA moaning, enwrapping targets; SD shadow use; SZ L; AL CN; THACO 13.

The cloaker will be alerted by anyone opening the temple doors, and will begin its low-volume moaning. If anyone moves into the cloak room, the cloaker will attack. If the heroes leave the cloaker alone, it will continue its moan-

ing (Tyranthraxus and his kalmari are immune), and will come to the aid of its master if Tyranthraxus is attacked.

4. Anteroom. This area was the anteroom and dressing area for the priests of Labelas Enoreth. It is now empty.

5. Priest's Office. All the furnishings in this room have been swept into a corner in a disordered heap. There is no treasure here, but in the northeast corner a loose stone can be moved to reveal a cavity containing a *ring of animal friendship*.

6. Altar and Shrine. This area is a wide space without benches or pews, dominated by an inlaid symbol of Labelas on the floor. The west end of the room is dominated by a low platform, above which is a stained-glass window. If it is daylight, the room will be dancing with pinpoints of colored light from this window.

Tyranthraxus is in this area in a possessed body, along with his assistant. The DM may choose any of the bad guys whom the characters have met throughout this adventure—someone who wasn't killed by the PCs—to serve as the source of the possessed body. These may include:

Ginali, High Cleric of Bane
Orox the beholder
Radatha of the Fire Knives
A priest of Moander
The mind flayer from the previous encounter
Dracandros, Red Wizard of Thay

Using Fzoul Chembryl is not recommended, as the Zhentarim *will* come looking for him. Cruel DMs may choose to use one of the not-nasty individuals as the possessed form, such as Alusair Nacacia, Princess of Cormyr, or the sage Filani of Tilverton. Elminster, or individuals who have received the spell *Elminster's Blessing* (see Appendix I), should not be chosen.

If none of the above seem suitable (or if all of the really bad guys were killed), then the form Tyranthraxus will take will be of a 10th level cleric of Bhaal who was exploring the ruins and got too close to this temple at the wrong time.

Possessed body, 10th level cleric of Bhaal: AC 2; MV 6"; HD 10; hp 50; #AT

1; Dmg 1-6; SA spell use; SZ M; AL NE; THACO 14.

Spells:

1st level *command* (x2)
fear (x2)
2nd level *hold person* (x2)
silence 15' radius (x2)
3rd level *blindness*
dispel magic
paralysis
4th level *giant insect*
protection from good 10' radius
sticks to snakes
5th level *cause critical wounds*
flame strike

Whatever the possessed body's form, it will be wearing *boots of striding and springing* in addition to any other magical items it might possess.

The possessed form will have an evil grin, and will be surrounded by the non-burning flames that are Tyranthraxus's hallmark.

Tyranthraxus's companion is a burly companion in bearskin with a two-handed broad sword. While looking like a typical barbarian, this fellow is in reality the shell holding a kalmari (see Appendix I).

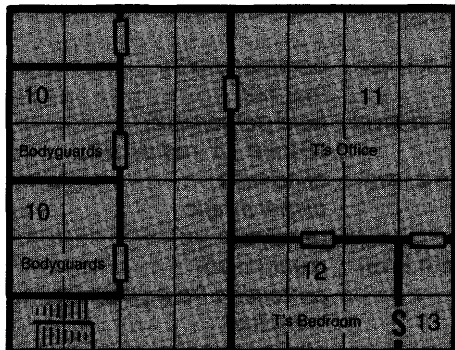
If Tyranthraxus is not surprised, any and all defensive spells will be cast for him already. He will be found on the platform, with his barbarian kalmari on his right. On his left is a glowing red vertical portal. This is not the Pool of Radiance, but rather a *gate* into the elemental plane of fire.

If Tyranthraxus is unaware of the characters' entrance into his lair, he will be pacing the length of the shrine, his assistant following behind him, fretting about when his puppets will arrive. His back will be to the characters (regardless of which entrance they use), and they will be able to surprise him.

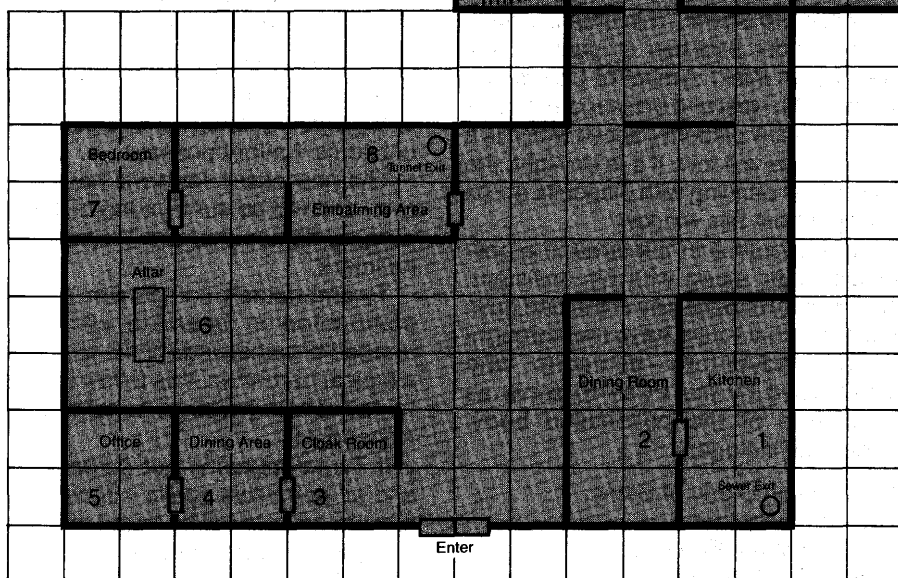
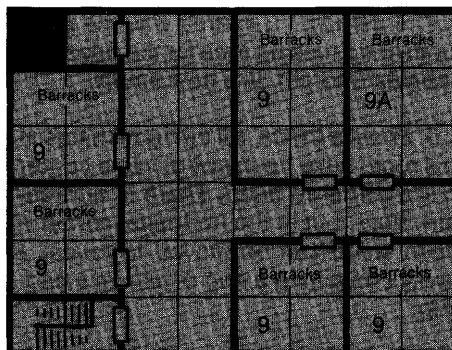
Regardless of the situation, Tyranthraxus's first move is to give a *command* to the bonded members of the party to "*Freeze!*", and then to hand over the artifacts of power to him (the helm, the gauntlets, and the blade). If the portal to the elemental plane of fire is open, he will instruct his kalmari to dump them into the portal and close it. If not, he will instruct the kalmari to take the items to the pool (room 11).



TEMPLE OF TYRANTHRAXUS



2nd Floor



Tyranthraxus, if all the characters are frozen, will take a few minutes to gloat and explain his plans in true villainous fashion. He compelled the heroes to gather the devices that could slay him, and to bring them to him here in his lair. He manipulated them into slaying the other members of the New Alliance. Now they are totally under his control, and will serve as his own portable pools of radiance, capable of traveling the Realms and doing his bidding. All that remains is a single spell.

When Tyranthraxus casts that last spell over the frozen and/or immobilized player characters, they receive one last saving throw. Those who fail it are possessed by Tyranthraxus and made into

his servants (as if they were possessed by the spirit). Those who make this saving throw will be never be able to have Tyranthraxus possess them again.

More likely, however, is that some characters will be frozen and others not. Tyranthraxus will have his barbarian kalmari go after the individuals with the artifacts in the following order: blade, gauntlets, and helm.

The kalmari will fight as a 5th level fighter with the two-handed sword until it takes its first hit. That hit (magical or physical) will cause the Kalmari no damage, but will force its body to split open, revealing the true form of the kalmari beneath it.

If Tyranthraxus is outnumbered and

attacked by the survivors of his freeze, he will leap over the characters (using the boots) and try to escape up to the pool (room 11). The cloaker from room 3, if still alive, will cover his retreat.

If Tyranthraxus is separated from the body, either by killing the body or hitting it with the *Blade of Lathander*, his spirit will flee to the Pool of Radiance in room 11 for his alternate plan. The body will return to its original possessor, and may be hostile to the player characters.

The kalmari and the cloaker will fight to the death to protect their lord.

7. Sleeping Room. A room with long-rotted cots and beds. A few rats scurry before the PCs' light, but there is nothing else here.

8. Embalming Room. This room still reeks of the fluids and spicy herbs used in preparing the dead for their immortal voyage into the future (one of the beliefs of worshipers of Labelas is that death itself is an illusion and that the dying should be prepared to be later returned to their bodies). There are three long-dried out elven bodies in this room, but no monsters or treasures. The door to the main area is locked.

9. Lower Barracks. These were the rooms of the novitiates, and are now empty of tenants, treasures, and monsters.

If the heroes lost their artifacts to Tyranthraxus, they will be returned in room 9A, depending on how they lost them.



If the artifacts were tossed through the portal into the elemental plane of fire, the heroes will find the lean figure of Elminster, still dressed in the gray cloak he wore at the Burial Glen. The cloak is smoking as if it has been exposed to great heat. The sage was on the far side of the portal, waiting for the artifacts to be passed through. He returns the tools to the heroes and asks if there is anything else they need. Elminster will not join the party, though he will tell them he'll be around if need be.

If the artifacts were given to the kalmari for safekeeping, the forms of the beast and of its barbarian host will be dead on the floor, with Elminster standing over them. He is apparently wounded, and will again return the lost artifacts.

If the heroes are in hot pursuit of Tyranthraxus, still in control of the artifacts, Elminster will not appear, but he will make sure that the door to the stairs leading up will be left open.

10. Priests' Rooms. These areas were once the quarters of the higher priests of the temple, with windows overlooking the forest. The windows have been boarded up and the furniture removed. There are no monsters or treasure here.

11. Pool of Radiance. This huge room was an upper shrine, which Tyranthraxus has turned into the second location of his Pool of Radiance. The pool is a fountain of glowing liquid. A large, metallic statue is standing in the center of the pool.

The statue is an activated iron golem, which represents Tyranthraxus's alternate plan. If Tyranthraxus is removed from his bodily form, he will flee back here, take possession of the iron golem, and await the arrival of the heroes. If Tyranthraxus fled here in his possessed form, he will use the golem as a separate entity to battle the heroes.

The *Gauntlets of Moander* will close the Pool of Radiance 4 rounds after being brought within 20' of the liquid. The character with the gauntlets can do nothing else during this time. Only the death of the individual with the gauntlets will stop the process.

If the pool is closed, anything in the pool will be destroyed (no saving throw).

This includes the golem and Tyranthraxus. If Tyranthraxus is still in a body, he will be destroyed when that body dies or when his spirit is forced out of it by the *Blade of Lathander*. If Tyranthraxus has been forced to retreat to the pool, he will be destroyed.

With the destruction of Tyranthraxus, the last symbol will disappear from the heroes' arms, freeing them from the New Alliance completely. Any of the members of the New Alliance may return at a later date to vex the characters (you can't keep a good villain down), but the bonds will never return. The player characters are free.

12. Tyranthraxus's Bedroom. This is an opulent pleasure palace with rich linens, fancy wall hangings, and a fountain of flames in the center of the room. The furnishings alone are worth 5000 gp, and represent the best that a looting expedition in Myth Drannor had to offer.

13. Treasure Room. The door from the Pool of Radiance to this room appears as a great golden door, with symbols of flames etched upon it, and a laughing face in the center.

Tyranthraxus has left a sinister trap on his treasure room as a parting shot to anyone who may foil him. The northern door from the pool room is trapped and fake—the true entrance is through the secret door in the bedroom.

If the northern door is opened, multiple *delayed blast fireballs* will explode in the room. All treasure in the room will be destroyed. Anyone in the 10' by 10' area in front of the door will take 60 points of damage (save for half damage). Anyone in the rest of room 11 must make a saving throw or take 30 points of damage.

The treasure of Tyranthraxus includes these items:

- * 50,000 gold pieces.
- * 20,000 platinum pieces.
- * 50 gems of 500 gp value each.
- * 80 pieces of jewelry and statuary.
- * A scroll of 6 cleric spells, none lower than 4th level.
- * Two scrolls of 4 magic-user spells, none of them lower than 5th level.
- * A *ring of three wishes*.
- * A *djinn ring*.
- * A *figurine of wondrous power* (ebony fly).

* A *portable hole*.

* Two large *bags of holding*.

* All rings and artifacts that may have been taken from the player characters before they awoke in Silverton.

Aftermath

After the heroes have defeated Tyranthraxus, gathered up their treasure, and left the temple, they will encounter the figure in the dark cloak with the scythe. This time his hood is pulled back, revealing the smiling features of Elminster, sage of Shadowdale.

"You've done well," says the sage, "and should be rewarded for your actions in saving this land from Tyranthraxus. If I may offer my part of thanks, I would take you to wherever you wish to go in the Realms. Where do you wish to travel?"

The heroes may choose any location. If any party members are damaged or dead, the sage will first *teleport* the party (without error) to a friendly temple, sending word ahead that they are to be treated in full, with the Harpers picking up the tab. Then, when they exit the temple, they will instantly be taken to their chosen destination. The way is clear, the heroes are wealthy in experience and gold, and the Realms are open for their adventure!



Major NPCs, Magic Items, New Monsters

Alias

6th level female human fighter

Str 17, Int 17, Wis 17, Dex 17, Con 17, Cha 17

Height 5'10", Weight 140 lbs., Hair color reddish blonde, Eye color green

AC 4 (chain & shield)

Hit points 48

Alignment neutral good

Weapon Proficiencies: All swords, dagger (thrown or wielded), mace (both types), axe (both types), club, dart, all pole arms, lance (all types), morning star, staff, weaponless combat.

Known languages: common.

THACO 15

Magic items of note

Magical Tattoos. A set of twisting blue runes were once set into Alias's right arm. At first glance they appeared to be part of a tattoo, but closer inspection revealed they were a set of magical sigils which affected Alias's actions. The sigils originally bound Alias to the masters who created her, but with their demise these symbols have disappeared. The pattern currently is a snaking swirl of thorns and waves, ending with a rose at the wrist. The pattern cannot be removed magically. It will radiate a bright blue light if *detect magic* or any other divination spell is cast upon it.

Elminster's Blessing. For the purposes of this adventure, Alias has received (unknown to her) the benefit of a spell from the Sage of Shadowdale. If she is about to be slain (reduced to -10 hit points through wounds or bleeding), she will be cloaked in a blue glow and immediately returned to full strength.

Alias's story (from the notes of the Sage Elminster, as told to the master bard Olive Ruskettle):

Alias was created by a group of powerful individuals to act as a magical servant, spy, and assassin. Alias was intended to masquerade as a human, but to carry out particular actions over a particular time.

The original conception for what

became Alias was developed by an individual now known only as the Nameless Bard. The bard was seeking a way to carry on his songs and stories beyond his death, without fear of their meaning becoming lost or corrupted. To that end, he and his assistants created a humanoid "vessel" which was to contain that knowledge. The spells to activate this "vessel" went afoul, killing an assistant and maiming another. The bard was brought before his fellow Harpers—an organization of bards, druids, and rangers devoted to maintaining the balance. He was found guilty of letting his pride result in the death of others, and for this crime was sentenced to exile in another plane, deprived of his name, and, worst of all, all his tales and stories were eliminated from the records. This was at a time when the North was less populated than today, so such actions were within the Harpers' power.

The Harpers were not as effective as they thought in removing all trace of the bard's work from the Realms, for once something is thought of, it is difficult to unthink. Eventually, a powerful southern sorceress, Cassana of Westgate, happened upon the tale and discovered the bard's place of extradimensional exile. He was held at the Citadel of White Exile, a rocky spur located at the junction where the Plane of Gems and the Positive Material Plane meet. Cassana rescued the bard, getting from him a promise to aid her in creating another vessel. The bard, lonely from long exile, feeling no loyalty to the Harpers, and still vitally interested in preserving his tales, agreed.

Cassana was an evil sorceress, and recruited others of her ethical ilk to perform the necessary magical operations. The Nameless Bard pushed his own doubts about his new allies to the back of his mind, glad only to be given a second chance to create his perfect vessel.

Cassana's allies included Zrie Prakis the lich, Cassana's former lover, who was more powerful than Cassana, but totally under her control. Using their magics, Cassana constructed Alias's body, and Zrie made it immortal. The Fire Knives, a group of thieves and assassins which had been chased out of Cormyr, provided most of the manpower and "acquisitions" required for the

spells cast by Zrie and Cassana. A cult of a long-dead god, Moander, also called the Jawed One, donated the energy needed to bring Alias to life.

Lastly, the creation needed a spirit and a soul. Cassana contacted a powerful daemon, through what she believed to be the daemon's agent, a nasty-looking halflingish creature named Phalse. Phalse was no more a halfling than the King of Cormyr is a centaur, but was rather the daemon himself, maintaining a ruse to spy on the others in the alliance. Phalse was charged with bringing a pure soul into the mix, an innocent who would be sacrificed to bring the new vessel (which was to become Alias) to life.

Phalse found his innocent in the form of the saurial paladin known as Dragonbait. The sacrifice was marked, as was Alias, with the symbols of the alliance—Cassana's insect-squiggle, Zrie's interlocked rings, the jawed palm of Moander, the flaming dagger of the Fire Knives, the blue-upon-blue circles of Phalse, and the last, no marking at all, to symbolize the Nameless Bard. The bard learned of these symbols shortly after he completed his task, creating the history and background of the vessel, and putting his songs within it. Upon discovering that Alias had come to life before the sacrifice of the saurial, and fearing for his creation's purity, he helped free her and the saurial. When the others learned of his betrayal, they imprisoned him beneath Cassana's home in Westgate.

Needless to say, the members of the evil alliance began to squabble amongst themselves after this setback, and their pact began to disintegrate as they began plotting to betray one another.

Alias and Dragonbait fled across the Inner Sea to Suzail, capital of Cormyr. Alias was semiconscious at this time and remembers little of the voyage, and nothing of her creation. When she awoke (at the "Hidden Lady" inn in Suzail, where Dragonbait had left her), she thought she had a gap in her memory, taking up the space between where the Nameless Bard's story stopped and her present situation began. Because the bard had not "programmed" her with a memory about the sigils, which were to have been hidden before she was let loose, it seemed to Alias that the



strange tattoos had suddenly appeared. Associating them with her memory loss, she set about trying to have them removed.

Removal proved a problem, however, because the runes were an inherent part of Alias's makeup, and actively resisted all spells that attempted to harm them. Magic could still affect Alias, but it could not affect the runes. In addition, the runes glowed a bright blue when a divination spell was used on them.

Alias sought out magical and clerical aid and the counsel of sages to solve her problem, and in the process was brought into contact with the noble halfling Olive Ruskettle and the trader Akabar Bel Akash. Dragonbait also rejoined her. Although Alias did not remember fleeing from Westgate with him, he seemed familiar to her, so she allowed him to come along as well.

Each member of the evil alliance responsible for Alias's creation had a different goal for her. Her motivation to achieve these goals ranged from a "strong desire" to do something to a mindless compulsion. The goals were these:

The Fire Knives desired revenge against the king of Cormyr, Azoun IV, because he had banished them from his country many years before. They programmed Alias with a pattern which would force her to attack at the sound of the king's voice. It might have worked, had not an imitator of the king accidentally sprung the effect's trip-wire instead of Azoun.

Moander's minions were trying to bring back the Realmsian incarnation of their god, who had long ago been imprisoned in the ruins beneath Yulash. From them, Alias received a strong desire to go north, and to work the necessary magics to free Moander. They succeeded in freeing their god, but it was in such a weakened state that it was shortly thereafter destroyed by Alias's allies.

The Nameless Bard placed his songs within Alias, and with them the desire (whether intentional or not) to sing in Shadowdale, in the heart of Harpers country, to show off to those who had imprisoned him. This too drove Alias north soon after her awakening.

Zrie Prakis's motives remain unclear, but he was apparently unhappy with his

undead service as Cassana's slave, and hoped to reverse the situation. Cassana was the physical model used to create Alias, and Alias had all of the sorceress's youthful beauty without her evil madness.

Cassana herself opted for a more variable plan. She tied her symbol to the power of her wand, which also maintained her power over Zrie Prakis. When within range of the wand (100'), Alias would perform Cassana's bidding. Cassana also saw Alias as a way of maintaining her own immortality, and intended to possess the woman's body (after the other members of the alliance were dead, of course).

Phalse was perhaps the most farsighted of all. He saw Alias as the first "trial run" for an army of similar creatures, twelve of which Alias and her allies discovered, not yet brought to life as Alias was. Phalse intended to bend them to his purposes alone. First and foremost among Phalse's goals was the full destruction of Moander, whom Phalse regarded as his bitterest rival.

All the plans of the evil alliance failed, however, largely owing to the fact that Alias unexpectedly proved to have a soul and will of her own, linked to the saurial's, but independent nonetheless. Thus she had developed her own personality, one which attracted good friends to help keep her out of trouble when she attacked a Wyvernspur noble whom the runes mistook for King Azoun of Cormyr. These friends also accompanied her during her quest to discover the meanings of the runes and ultimately destroy them. When she freed Moander's Realmsian form, these same friends (the saurial Dragonbait, the merchant Akabar Bel Akash, and the noble and highly underrated halfling bard Olive Ruskettle) recruited the red dragon Mistinarperadnacles and destroyed Moander within a day.

The evil alliance's attempts to recapture Alias included attacking her with assassins of the Fire Knives Guild, a crystal elemental under Zrie Prakis's control, and a kalmari created by Cassana. All these creatures were defeated by Alias and her friends. Furthermore, these victories succeeded in further enhancing Alias's will. Unfortunately, during the battle with Moander, Alias





and her friends were all transported to Westgate, where they were finally captured by Cassana and her alliance. By this time Alias had already learned and accepted her origin, and this strengthened her character and her will as well.

A second ceremony was set up to sacrifice the saurial to bring Alias totally under the control of Cassana and her allies. The sacrifice, held on the Hill of Thorns outside Westgate, was disrupted by an attack of Alias's friends, who had freed the Nameless Bard and come to her rescue. But it was Alias's own sense of will that broke the spell. Zrie and Cassana were apparently slain in the battle, along with all remaining Fire Knives. Phalse fled through an extradimensional portal to the Citadel of White Exile.

Alias, Dragonbait, the Nameless Bard, Akabar, and Olive Ruskettle followed Phalse to the citadel, where Phalse's full plan, and the duplicate Alias, were revealed. The daemon, which had abandoned his halfling form, fought Alias in his true form, as a beholder-headed man. Alias defeated him anyway, breaking the last visible hold the evil alliance had on her. After the disappearance of all the sigils of the evil masters, Alias reasserted her belief in part of the purpose the Nameless Bard had designed her for—restoring his songs to posterity. At that moment, in the space Cassana had left for the Nameless Bard's sign, a blue rose blossomed.

With the death of Phalse, the multiple Aliases vanished, though whether they dissolved or were magically teleported is unknown.

In the final summation, Alias has proved herself to be not some automaton or golem, but truly a human, with human emotions and values. She sings the Nameless Bard's songs, but changes them and creates her own as well. While this defeats the bard's original purpose, he has decided that the end result is better than what he had hoped for.

The reason for Alias's power, ability, and free thought is currently unknown. Nothing in the plans of Nameless or the alliance accounts for her free will. It could be the strength of Dragonbait's will which is linked to her own, or some unaccounted-for variable in her creation, or the actions or some unknown,

outside force. The fact remains that Alias is as "human" as most of the natives of the Realms (and perhaps more human than most).

west as the Sword Coast.

Alias is an adventurer, not a mercenary. She fights as often for the cause of good as for any monetary reward. She dislikes organized law and rules, however, and will bend or break them as need be (and as much as Dragonbait will allow her to). She retains a dislike of clerics, which was likely initially patterned into her as a way of dissuading her from seeking clerical help. She still regards them as book-banging fools who know nothing of the real world.

One thing Alias despises is slavery in any form. Having been enslaved by arcane means herself, she has a pretty wide interpretation of slavery, and a complete enmity toward those who engage in or tolerate it.

Alias is a very good songstress, well versed and trained from the Nameless Bard's own experience. Most of the songs she knows are ancient, those of the bard's which were suppressed by the Harpers as well as many others forgotten over the long passage of the years.

While Alias has the memories given her by Nameless and the skills provided by the alliance, her body is still newborn and unhardened by experience. She will tire more easily than she "remembers" she did in her nonexistent past. Nonetheless, she has twice the endurance of a normal man. Similarly, she "remembers" liking the taste of alcohol, but she has a child's palate and resistance, so besides not really enjoying the taste of most alcoholic beverages, she is easily inebriated by them.

Dragonbait

7th level saurial "paladin"

Str 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Cha 4 (18)

Height 4'10", Weight 150 lbs., Scale color green, Eye color yellow

AC 5

Hit points 50

Alignment lawful good

Weapon proficiencies: crossbow, bastard sword, long sword, two-handed

sword, battle axe, weaponless combat, saurial broad sword (1-8/1-10 damage).

THAC0 14

Magic items of note

Magical Tattoos. As for Alias (see above).

Sword +5, "Holy Avenger." This oddly shaped sword was Dragonbait's chief weapon during his adventures with Alias. It has a wide, topheavy blade with jagged teeth and a short handle. It functions in the same manner as the *Holy Avenger* sword, providing a magic resistance of 50% in a 5' radius, dispelling magic at the same level as the wielder, and inflicting +10 hit points of damage to chaotic evil opponents. To all others, it functions as a +2 sword. Humans in particular will find this sword difficult to wield, and as such are -2 with it, regardless of its magical bonus, until proficiency with the weapon (technically a "saurial broad sword") is gained.

Elminster's Blessing. As for Alias (see above).

Dragonbait's story (from the notes of Elminster, translated without his permission into the vernacular by Olive Ruskettle; available at all toy and hobby shops):

Dragonbait is a saurial, a member of a race of sentient, lizardlike creatures who are not native to the Realms, but rather come from an alternate material plane. Dragonbait is the first and only saurial to appear in the Realms. (The only one known of, that is; the Realms is a huge place, and who knows what might turn up in the Jungles of Chult?)

Saurials are bipedal reptilian creatures, similar to the Realmsian dinosaur, but as intelligent as man (and in Dragonbait's case, more intelligent than most).

Dragonbait is short, with a blunted muzzle and powerful, peglike teeth. A single fin grows from the back of his head. He wears clothes, though it is not known whether he needs to wear them for protection or does so out of modesty.

Saurial culture is apparently similar to that of the Realms, such that Dragonbait has made the transfer between the two worlds with a minimum of personal shock. Then again, Dragonbait may just be a quick learner and easily adaptable to new situations. He appears to have an intuitive grasp of human nature as well,



able to approach individuals in a non-threatening fashion, and get his point across without words.

Dragonbait is apparently mute, except for the ability to utter some growls and guttural snorts. In actuality, his race has a very highly developed sense of smell, and communicates by scent in the same fashion that humanoid races of the Realms use voice. These scents are easily picked up and translated by other saurials, and by dragons as well, pointing out a possible connection between the two. To normal humans, a saurial must "shout" a scent to be understood, and then only the very basics of emotion are transmitted by smell.

Dragonbait's known scents and the emotions associated with them are these:

- Brimstone: confusion
- Roses: sadness
- Lemon: pleasure/joy
- Baked bread: anger
- Violets: fear
- Honeysuckle: tenderness/concern
- Wood smoke: devotion/piety
- Tar: victory/celebration
- Ham: nervousness/worry

Dragonbait has turned his inability to communicate properly in the Realms to his advantage by appearing to be less than he really is. He understands the common tongue, though he cannot speak it. Many assume that his inability to communicate equals an inability to comprehend. Dragonbait does not correct them on this matter.

The name "Dragonbait" was given to him by the warrior Alias soon after her awakening (see "Alias" above). Originally meant as a threat ("One wrong move and you're dragon bait, understand?"), the saurial took this as his name. The comical appellation adds further to the creature's apparent harmlessness. Dragonbait's true name is a combination of scents and subsonic guttural clicks. The dragon Mist knew it, but died without passing on that knowledge.

In his own world, Dragonbait is a holy fighter who crusades for good. In that respect, and in many of the abilities he shows, he is a "paladin." The quotation marks are noted only because Dragonbait is obviously inhuman, and in the Realms (at least), only humans can be true paladins. Dragonbait does exhibit

many paladin-type powers, including these:

- * Saving throws at +2.
- * Immunity to all disease.
- * Laying on hands, as a paladin, for 1-4 points of healing per day.
- * *Detect evil* up to 60' distance. In Dragonbait's case, this ability (called the *shen-state*) reveals more along the lines of a *know alignment* spell, showing colors for the various intentions, and intensity of those colors for strength of those alignments.
- * Wield his world's equivalent of a holy sword.

Unlike paladins, Dragonbait does not have the following abilities:

- * Radiate *protection from evil*.
- * Turn undead as a cleric.
- * Use cleric spells.

It is unknown if Dragonbait can summon the equivalent of a paladin's mount, and if so, in what form that mount would appear.

Dragonbait's home world and native dimension are unknown to any in the Realms, and he will not divulge any such information. He was captured by the daemon Phalse while on a mission in the Abyss, so that even Phalse and his alliance do not know his origin. He was imprisoned by Phalse, the sorceress Cassana, the lich Zrie Prakis, and members of the Fire Knives and the minions of Moander to be used as a sacrifice. His death was to activate the form of a living slave, Alias.

Something, as yet unrevealed, went wrong in their plans, and Alias revived early. Dragonbait helped the semiconscious woman to escape, and the pair fled to Suzail, in Cormyr. Using his *shen* abilities, Dragonbait determined that while Alias was the creation of an evil alliance, she was basically good, with the potential for becoming either good or evil.

When the evil alliance recaptured Alias and Dragonbait, it was the swordswoman's and the saurial's combined will that finally broke the spell binding her to her makers. The alliance was defeated, but at a cost—in the final battle with Phalse, Alias lost Dragonbait's holy sword when both Phalse and the sword were pitched into the Positive Material Plane and exploded.

Dragonbait now carries a nonmagical version of his saurial blade, and continues to accompany Alias in her adventures through the Realms. Though Alias (and several others, including Elminster) know of Dragonbait's true nature, he continues to play the part of a humble servant, leaping into action as a true warrior only when necessary. In the case of Dragonbait, it can be truly stated that paladinhood is proven more by actions than by words.

Azoun IV, King of Cormyr

20th level male human cavalier

Str 18/00, Int 15, Wis 14, Dex 18, Con 18, Cha 16

AC 0/-7

Hit points 105

Alignment lawful good

Weapon proficiencies: lance, long sword, broad sword, horseman's flail.

THAC0 4

Azoun's story:

Those who have seen the good king of Cormyr report him to be a handsome man, standing just under six feet tall. He maintains the regiments of exercise and drill he adopted as a young cavalier and is in excellent shape for a middle-aged man. Azoun's brown hair and beard are only now beginning to show hints of silver.

Azoun is happily married, and his wife, Filfaeril Selzair, is as strong-willed and as cultured as her husband. Azoun and Filfaeril have two daughters, Alusair and Tanalesta. Their only son, Foril, died when he was only two. The loss of his only male heir remains a source of great anguish for Azoun.

Azoun's nickname, "The Purple Dragon," is derived from his battle standard. The banner with the purple dragon on a black field has flown over Cormyr for many relatively peaceful years. This long period of prosperity, coupled with Azoun's reputation of being a just ruler, has made Azoun's subjects loyal and content.

However, Azoun himself has found the price of rulership difficult to pay. Because he is a devoted father and husband, he has often found the demands of state far too taxing on his personal time. Also, because Azoun is idealistic,



he finds the idea of sometimes placing the survival of the state over the needs of its individual citizens very disturbing.

Yet, despite any momentary doubts Azoun may have about the conflicts of individual liberty versus duty to the state, he will always make his decisions based upon loyalty and duty to the “higher” good of the state and the promotion of peace in the kingdom. In functional terms, this means he expects all able citizens of Cormyr to serve or support the large standing army established in the kingdom. Any adventuring parties of four or more members based in Cormyr must be registered with the king and will likely have a set term of service they must fulfill in the army each year.

Azoun recognizes the sacrifice his citizens must make to support the state. Because of this, he is determined to make Cormyr the safest and most peaceful kingdom possible. Adventurers will encounter many facets of Azoun’s “peace policy” every day they spend in Cormyr.

Azoun does not permit mercenaries or adventurers free rein of the city when they are not under a binding contract to a local merchant or nobleman. Adventurers wishing to make their permanent residence in Cormyr must obtain a charter from Azoun. Public display of weapons is also limited, and adventurers who travel armed in public must have their weapons bound in “peace strings,” ornate cords which are knotted around a weapon to deter its quick use.

Though Azoun does maintain his skills as a swordsman, he personally favors the finer things his position can offer him. He is a patron of the arts, and his court at Suzail is one of the most refined in all the Realms. He dabbles in both poetry and music, and is especially fond of drama.

This may account for his penchant for disguises. Often, when he ventures out of the court, he will try to pass himself off as a merchant. He is, in fact, quite adept at this and can sometimes fool even the most astute observer.

The other possible motivation for Azoun’s use of disguises is his long-standing feud with the thieves’ and assassins’ guilds in and around Cormyr. Azoun detests thieves and assassins, and he has gone so far as to drive the

Fire Knives, an organization of assassins, from Cormyr. There are many practitioners of the thieving arts who would be happy to see Azoun dead, and he has been the object of many assassination attempts. One of these attempts involved the Fire Knives in the creation of the hero Alias. For their very substantial financial backing of Cassana as she prepared her experiment for life, the Fire Knives were allowed to include their sigil on Alias’s arm and program her for one task. The Fire Knives decided their highest priority was the assassination of Azoun. As soon as she heard King Azoun’s voice, Alias was instructed to attack and kill him immediately. The plot failed when Giogi Wyvernspur, a Cormyrian nobleman, imitated Azoun’s voice at a wedding. Alias attacked Giogi, and it was only luck, and the interference of Alias’s friends, that saved Giogi’s life.

Azoun has a very high regard for magic and magic-users, and he recognizes the great potential for good and evil in practitioners of the magic arts. Mages of 5th level or higher must register with the government.

Azoun wears *bracers of defense AC 3* and a *ring of protection +3* when not in battle. He also wears a *ring of free action* at all times. In battle, in true cavalier style, Azoun wears a magnificent suit of armor, *full plate +5*, and carries a *shield +2* emblazoned with his standard. He owns a large number of enchanted swords but prefers to fight with either his *vorpal sword* or *defender +4*.

In playing Azoun, the DM should remember that the King is committed to the safety and freedom of his people. He will deal harshly with troublemakers and will tend toward overgenerosity with those who want to help the kingdom. However, Vangerdahast will be at his side or very close nearby at all times to make sure things don’t get out of hand.

Akabar Bel Akash

5th level male human magic-user

Str 11, Int 15, Wis 13, Dex 12, Con 13,
Cha 14

AC 10
Hit points 15
Alignment lawful good
THAC0 20

Commonly used spells:

1st level *enlarge, light, magic missile*
2nd level *bind, continual light, deep-pockets, magic mouth, pyrotechnics*

3rd level *fly, haste*

Magic items of note

Elminster’s Blessing. As for Alias (see above).

Akabar’s story:

Akabar Bel Akash, from the rich and prosperous land of Turmish, is a merchant and “mage of no small water,” as they say in that part of the Realms. Akabar deals in fine weaves and spices and is known by all who deal with him as a fair and honest trader.

Like many Turmish merchants, Akabar sports a moustache and a long, square beard. He is dark-skinned, blue-eyed, and has curly brown hair which he often bands with gold cords. Though the merchant-mage is very thin, his true size is often hidden by the large, billowing robes he favors. He will often be found wearing robes of crimson highlighted with thin white stripes and a white cloak with red trim. His clothing cannot hide his height of 6’2”, however.

Akabar has three blue dots tattooed horizontally across his forehead. These dots mark him as a Turmish scholar of religion, reading, and magic. He also wears a single sapphire embedded in his left earlobe. The earring signifies that Akabar is married.

In fact, Akabar has two wives—Akash and Kassim—and they are currently looking for a third wife to join the family. This may sound a bit odd, but it isn’t when you realize that Turmish businesses are run by women and businesses are generally family operations. Akabar, in fact, is little more than a front man for his wives’ enterprises.

This does not mean that Akabar is not self-sufficient and strong-willed. Actually, he must have had both of those traits in order for his first wife to take him into her family when they married.

Akabar is generally very practical, and this fact is mirrored in the spells he commonly uses. The Turmishman will study spells that have specific uses for him in his travels as a merchant.

He will always know a number of useful cantrips, such as *clean, dry*, and



spice, and the higher-level spells he studies, such as *fly* and *haste*, will be geared toward escape or self-preservation. Akabar commonly throws a *magic mouth* spell on his earring to alert him to danger as he sleeps.

The most offense-oriented spell he studies is *magic missile*, never *fireball* or *lightning bolt*—and that spell is used to skewer his dinner more often than it is to strike an opponent. His recent adventures, however, have made him quite proficient in the use of his chosen spells. In battle he will often fly around his opponents, using his other spells to keep them off balance until he and his party have a chance to escape.

Akabar's adventure started when he was delivering fine weaves to an estate north of Suzail for a wedding. Dimswart, a local magic-user and sage, was finally marrying off his last daughter. Akabar was traveling in a large caravan headed for Suzail.

The caravan was attacked by Mistorperadnacles, a red dragon, and one of the wagons was carried away with its occupants—including the intended entertainment for the wedding, the "famous bard" Olive Ruskettle. Akabar's spell book was also taken in the raid, though it is unclear how Olive Ruskettle came to be carrying it when she was stolen away with the wagon.

Dimswart was intent on rescuing the lost entertainer and hired a mysterious swordswoman, Alias, and her saorial companion, Dragonbait, to save her. Akabar knew of a secret way into the dragon's lair and used that knowledge to force Alias and Dragonbait to take him along.

This was not his first meeting with Alias. Only a few days before Dimswart sent them to rescue Olive Ruskettle, Akabar had tried to discover the origins of the strange tattoo Alias had on her right arm. When Akabar cast a *detect magic* spell on the tattoo, a frightening blue light erupted from it. Alias was understandably upset by this and was not pleased when Akabar—the Turmite greengrocer, as she sarcastically called him—was included in her foray against the dragon.

As time went on and Akabar and Alias shared more adventures, the two grew very close. Akabar considered himself

Alias's protector for a long time. As Alias grew self-confident, and Akabar learned to trust her mute saorial companion, Dragonbait, he realized that he was not needed in that capacity.

His time adventuring with Alias, as she searched for the origin of her mysterious "Azure Bonds," matured Akabar, especially in his use of magic. He became an invaluable ally to Alias and was crucial in the eventual defeat of Cassana and Zrie Prakis.

For a time, Akabar was linked with the god Moander, when the deity escaped from his prison in Yulash. In the form of the Abomination—a mound of decaying earth and greenery that had the ability to grow a myriad of eyes and mouths—Moander captured the merchant-mage and possessed his mind, dragging him along like a puppet and using his voice and form to communicate with Alias, who was also a prisoner at the time. The effects of this possession are still unknown, though, as Akabar noted, his part in the eventual defeat of the mad god will certainly gain him Moander's eternal enmity.

In a game scenario, Akabar will be encountered as a merchant. He has had enough adventure and is now content to spend the rest of his days trading his wares in the Realms.

However, Akabar Bel Akash now feels a strong kindred spirit with adventurers and will be helpful in any way he can. His travels as a merchant have given him an outstanding knowledge of the areas surrounding the Inner Sea, in addition to his vast knowledge of Turmish history and religion. He will be glad to talk, at length, on any one of these subjects, or just trade tales of adventurers with friendly parties he encounters.

Olive Ruskettle

6th level female halfling thief
(pseudo-bard)

Str 11, Int 12, Wis 7, Dex 18, Con 15,
Cha 13 (17 to other halflings)

AC 6

Hit points 29

Alignment chaotic neutral

Weapon proficiency: dagger.

Nonweapon proficiencies: reading/
writing, alertness, running.

THACO 19

Magic items of note

Elminster's Blessing. As for Alias (see above).

Olive's story:

Adventurers familiar with bards and the limitations that bardic colleges put on the induction of halflings will realize instantly upon meeting the famous Olive Ruskettle that she cannot possibly be a true bard.

In fact, Olive is not a true bard, as she has never had formal bardic training, and the renown attached to her name has been slightly misplaced, though Olive has done all she can to foster the confusion.

The halfling who claims to be Olive Ruskettle is really a thief who has always aspired to a life of entertaining people and the easy living that profession can bring. Olive Ruskettle is not even her true name; the halfling won the name and the reputation of Olav Ruskettle, a true and famous bard, in a dice game. Since that time "Olive" has done her best to maintain her image as a bard of great talent.

Olive's glib tongue, boisterous personality, and fair talent for singing and playing have carried her far. Though she has been cornered many times by well-traveled folk who claim to have seen the "real" Olav Ruskettle perform, Olive always manages to lie her way out of the confrontation, often claiming that the person who claimed to be Olav Ruskettle was someone who was trying to steal her name and pass himself off as a bard.

Though she claims to be from Cormyr, no one has ever been able to pin down Olive's true home. The hazel-eyed, red-haired halfling prefers it that way, too. Though she is charismatic and attractive, she realizes that her past as a thief could cause her a number of problems if it were discovered.

But this does not mean Olive has forsaken her thieving abilities or retired as a practitioner of the thieving arts. In fact, Olive has found the ability to pick pockets with finesse and open locks with ease quite a benefit to her life as a performer. Patrons who refuse to pay her what she feels she deserves for her singing often end up missing their purses when Olive leaves.

Olive is only 3' tall, which is short even for a halfling. Because of this, and the



taller races' general reaction to halflings as a cute (though somewhat prone to pilfering) race of beings, Olive tends to react strongly against anyone who treats her as less than an equal. For example, anyone who might pat Olive on the head or pick her up would find themselves barraged by caustic insults and perhaps even fists and feet.

The halfling also hates those who rigidly follow the tenets of a specific alignment, and especially loathes paladins. Olive is insecure about her past as a thief and really doesn't consider herself a common pickpocket. She believes she is only taking what is her due, and often that is the case.

In fact, Olive finds she is quite often mistaken for a villain when she is simply taking care of herself the best way she knows how. Such was certainly the case when she was convinced by the evil pseudo-halfling Phalse to help him track the swordswoman Alias. Though Alias had rescued Olive from the dragon Mist, who had kidnapped her, Olive had seen Alias attack someone for no particular reason, and had heard about her attack on a cleric. The swordswoman seemed, as Phalse pointed out, a very dangerous woman. While this was certainly a substantial incentive to aid in her capture, Phalse also offered Olive a great deal of money.

When Olive discovered she had allied herself with the wrong party, that Alias was not a menace and her creators were extremely evil and dangerous, Olive helped rescue Akabar Bel Akash from Cassana's dungeon, and then helped foil the sorceress's plans to gain complete control of Alias.

Olive's adventures with Alias gained her a myriad of new songs to sing, and Olive is even planning on composing a long work telling the adventures of Alias and her companions. The piece, entitled *The Magic Arm Chronicles*, may take the form of a book or a lay. Olive has yet to start it.

In addition to a number of wonderful songs and a wealth of material for new tales, Olive gained another very special gift on her adventures with Alias. Because the halfling helped to rescue the Nameless Bard from Cassana's dungeon, the true bard, a Harper, gave Olive his small, silver harp and crescent moon pin, the symbol of the Harpers.

A Dungeon Master running Olive should emphasize her desire to become a true bard and, at the same time, the chaotic side of her character that prevents her from doing so. Players will find Olive interested in any stories or songs they can relate to her, though she will often get bored if the telling is long or the tale too philosophical.

Olive loves strong drink and has a very strong constitution. For a person of such small stature and slight build, Olive eats and drinks quite heavily. Any player characters attempting to match her will likely find themselves far outclassed.

When the tales are over and the food and drink gone, Olive will depart, paying as little as possible of the bill.

Fzoul Chembryl of Bane

13th level male human cleric

Str 12, Int 14, Wis 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Cha 13

Height 5'11", Weight 160 lbs., Hair color red, Eye color green

AC 2 (*bracers of defense*) or 0 in battle (full plate armor)

Hit points 80

Alignment lawful evil

Weapon proficiencies: mace (both types), flail (both types), morning star.

THACO 12

Magic items of note

Mace +4.

Morning star +1.

Ring of free action.

Ring of spell storing.

Ring of teleportation. A magical device which permits the bearer to *teleport* (with standard chances of error) as per the spell, once per week. This is used by Fzoul as a safeguard in situations where he is overmatched and threatened with death.

Rod of cancellation. Kept in a sleeve in his left boot.

Three blocks of *incense of meditation*, kept in the Dark Shrine.

Staff of the serpent (adder), kept in the Dark Shrine.

Fzoul's story:

Fzoul is the second in command of the Zhentarim, a not-so-secret organization which is also known as the Black Network. The leader of the Zhentarim is

a 16th level wizard, Lord Manshoon, but Fzoul holds great power as well. As a major figure in the Church of Bane, god of tyranny, he is capable of controlling great forces as a result.

Fzoul is power-hungry but cautious, always taking the long view. He seeks to eventually depose Manshoon, but to remain a trustworthy ally until that time, so that his lord would not seek to eliminate him first. His relationship within the church is strong among his followers, but chilly with other Church of Bane leaders, including the High Imperceptor of Bane, a 19th level cleric whose base is in Mulmaster and who is Fzoul's titular superior in the Moonsea area.

Fzoul plays off one force against the other, usually supporting Manshoon against the High Imperceptor. Recently he has opened negotiations with a third powerful force, the creature known as Tyranthraxus. If Fzoul can discover a method to subvert the wills of men, good and evil, he will bring a powerful tool to both the Zhentarim and to the Church of Tyranny. If successful, of course, Fzoul intends to keep the method's secrets to himself.

If Fzoul is slain before he can *teleport* away, an automatic *contingency* spell will activate his *word of recall*, sending his body to a safe location in Thay, and notifying his servants that he is in need of a *raise dead*. Thus, killing Fzoul himself will neither end the threat of the Black Network, nor will it necessarily mean that Fzoul will not return in the future.

Vangerdahast

15th level male human magic-user

Str 12, Int 18, Wis 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Cha 12

Height 5'7", Weight 220 lbs., Hair color white, Eye color blue

AC -1 (*bracers of defense* AC 2 plus *ring of protection* +3)

Hit points 60

Alignment lawful neutral

Weapon proficiencies; dagger, knife, staff.

THACO 16

Commonly used spells:

1st level *charm person, detect magic, friends*



2nd level *detect invisibility, ESP, mirror image*

3rd level *detect illusion, hold person*

4th level *charm monster; dispel illusion, remove curse*

5th level *Bigby's interposing hand, passwall, wall of iron*

6th level *geas, globe of invulnerability*

7th level *reverse gravity*

(In dangerous situations—such as the mission to Tilverton—the mage will also fill out his complement of spells with *magic missiles, fireballs, lightning bolts*, and other such less subtle, but more dramatic, spells.)

Magic items of note

Wand of force.

Wand of armory. When touched to a target individual, this wand provides the target with an invisible field of force, providing AC 0 for 6 rounds. The field absorbs all *magic missile* attacks, and all electrical-based attacks (including magical ones). Other spells will affect the target normally. A *dispel magic, disintegrate, or limited wish* will bring down the field, not affecting the person behind it.

Ring of many wishes (unknown number of charges left). This ring is only used in the most dire emergencies, such as the possible death of his Lord King Azoun IV.

Vangerdahast's story:

Vangerdahast is the Royal Magician of Cormyr, Court Wizard of the Purple Dragon, and Chief Sorcerer of Suzail's Council of Mages. Stern but kindly, the white-haired Vangerdahast is the advisor, former tutor, and longtime friend of King Azoun IV, ruler of Cormyr.

Vangerdahast is of an indeterminate age. Very few, if any, people remember him when he was young. For his last 30 years in Cormyr he has appeared as he does today: white-haired, a tad overweight, with a careworn face and concerned blue eyes.

Vangerdahast tutored Azoun as a youth, and the old mage and young hot-blooded prince soon became fast friends. When Azoun ascended to the throne, "Vangy" became his chief advisor in affairs of state.

Vangerdahast is no sage or visionary, and as such often chooses the easier course or best short-term solution for a

problem as opposed to the long view. His loyalty and fierce devotion to king and country is unquestioned, and where you find Azoun, his "pet wizard" will not be far behind.

Elminster the Sage

26th level male human magic-user

Str 13, Int 18, Wis, 18, Dex 18, Con 14, Cha 17

Height 6'4", Weight 200 lbs., Hair color gray-white, Eye color steel gray

AC 7 (*ring of protection +3*)

Hit points 96 (Scholars may point out that no mage, even one of 26th level, should have 96 hit points. Elminster is no ordinary mage.)

Alignment chaotic good

Weapon proficiencies: all weapons available to magic-users.

THACO 11

Spells:

In his long life, Elminster has gained access to every common spell available to magic-users, and in addition has developed, researched, and on occasion discovered further spells of great power. In daily use, he will have any spell suitable or necessary for virtually any foreseeable encounter.

Magic items of note

Ring of regeneration.

Necklace of missiles.

loun stones (carried on person).

Staff of striking (optional).

Elminster's story:

Elminster is perhaps the most traveled and most knowledgeable sage in the Realms, referred to as the "sage of record" in texts from the Sword Coast to Thay and from the Icewind Dales to the Jungles of Chult. Tall, imposing, with a merry twinkle in his eye and a love for fine humor and strong drink, he nonetheless puts on a gruff, dotty expression with those he meets for the first time. He appears to be less than he truly is.

Elminster is ancient, older than some nations in the Realms, and steeped in the power of those long years. He states publicly that he does not involve himself with the daily affairs of men, but in reality he seems to be involved in most major problems in the Realms, either directly or through a network of allies and



friends. He meddles, but always at his leisure and on his own terms.

Elminster is "in retirement," after a long career that spanned the Realms, in the sleepy rural town of Shadowdale. There, in his book-filled tower, he continues his ruminations and experiments, leaving usually only to fetch this spell component or that snippet of information. Or, more often than he cares to admit, to help destroy the plans of one dark power or another to enslave the Realms.

Those journeying to Elminster's tower in Shadowdale should be prepared for disappointment, as the sage rarely sees visitors. Instead, those seeking out the sage run instead into Lhaeo, his scribe, who is a master of bureaucracy from the old courts of Tethyr (when Tethyr still had courts). Lhaeo will be glad to provide tons of paperwork until the individual gets the idea and goes away.

Elminster takes the long view as to "his" caretakership of the Realms. The petty nobles and minor squabbles matter little in the cosmic play of things. He has said he has walked on half a hundred worlds, and this tends to give a certain perspective to a man, leaving him less concerned by a rampaging dragon or the plans of the Black Network. When Elminster does focus his attention on something, it is usually through others that he works his plans, and there is little he cannot do once he sets his mind to it.

Crimdrac the Dracolich

Undead dragon

Frequency: Unique

No. Appearing: 1

Armor Class: -2

Move: 9"/24"

Hit Dice: 11

% in Lair: 20%

Treasure Type: B, H, S, T

No. of Attacks: 3

Damage/Attacks: 1-8/1-8/3-30 plus chilling damage (see below)

Special Attacks: Breath weapon

Special Defenses: See below

Magic Resistance: See below

Intelligence: Exceptional

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Size: L

THACO: 10

Crimdrac is a dracolich, or night dragon, an undead creature who in life

was a powerful and dangerous red dragon.

Dracoliches are the reported creation of the Cult of the Dragon, a mysterious evil organization that believes the Realms are fated to fall under the control of such creatures, with the Cult controlling the night dragons.

Like a human lich, a dracolich is immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, cold, electricity, death spells, and *symbols* of death and insanity. It is also immune to potions or items that would normally control dragons. Further, it is immune to poison, paralysis, *hold* spells, and *fear*. It may not be harmed by normal weapons, but is fully vulnerable to magical weapons, spells other than those mentioned, and monsters with magical properties or six or more hit dice. A dracolich cannot be turned by a cleric.

In addition to having the attack abilities of a red dragon, a dracolich can inflict 2-16 points of additional damage by *chilling* on any successful hit. Individuals who are immune to cold are unaffected by this, but all others must make a saving throw versus paralyzation or be paralyzed for 2-12 rounds.

The gaze of a dracolich also paralyzes. The range of this gaze is 4", and individuals of 6 or more levels or hit dice add +3 to their saving throws. If an individual saves against this paralysis, he is immune to the paralyzing gaze of that particular dracolich from then on.

A dracolich has whatever magic was available to the dragon. Crimdrac had no magical abilities in life, but has been told by Dracandros, the Mad Red Wizard, that he can be trained in magical abilities, cementing their relationship.

Crimdrac does retain the fire-breathing ability he had in life.

If Crimdrac is slain, his spirit will seek out another dragonish body within a one-mile range. Failure to find one will cause Crimdrac's spirit to be trapped within the bounds of its inanimate body until a proper host shows up. If it takes a new dragonish host, then the dracolich loses one hit die. Fully destroying the body before he escapes will result in destruction of the dracolich's spirit.

Crimdrac appears as a great gray-red dragon, his scales translucent and stretched tight over the dragon's skele-

ton. Two fire-motes dance where the creature's eyes once were, and its voice is a low, harsh croak.

Crimdrac was created by the Cult of the Dragon, and seeks to aid Dracandros in his pursuit of a new flight of dragons. His eventual goal is to learn all he can from the Mad Wizard (including magical abilities), and then slay him, directing the flight himself against the northlands. Other dragons, even evil ones, do not trust dracoliches by nature, so he hopes that Dracandros's abilities will bring them together for him to lead.

Crimdrac is also a liar, much more so than most red dragons. He has in the recent past claimed to have led the attack on Zhentil Keep during the last Flight of Dragons, to have slain the witch Sylune in Shadowdale, and to have destroyed the Abomination of Moander over Westgate. Reports of the dragon's death in each of the above cases were, in his words, "exaggerated." Any action performed by any dragon in the Dragon Reach is claimed by the dracolich and added to his own list of achievements.

Dracandros of the Crimson Red Wizard of Thay

18th level male human magic-user

Str 10, Int 18, Wis 9, Dex 10, Con 15, Cha 5

Height 5'4", Weight 110 lbs., Hair color blond (with beard), Eye color one green, one blue

AC 2 (*Helm of Dragons*)

Hit points 40

Alignment chaotic evil

Weapon proficiencies: staff, dagger, knife.

Known languages: Common, Thayan, Amnrite, Auld Wormish (dragon).

THACO 13

Magic items of note

Helm of Dragons (described separately below).

Brooch of shielding.

Ring of fire resistance.

Scarab of protection.

Commonly used spells:

1st level *affect normal fires*, *burning hands*, *magic missile*

2nd level *darkness 15' radius*, *flaming*



	<i>sphere, mirror image, pyrotechnics</i>
3rd level	<i>fireball (always), phantasmal force, protection from normal missiles</i>
4th level	<i>fire charm, fire shield, fire trap, stonewall, wall of fire</i>
5th level	<i>conjure elemental, hold monster, wall of force</i>
6th level	<i>contingency, stone to flesh</i>
7th level	<i>delayed blast fireball</i>

Dracandros's story:

Dracandros was one of the powerful movers and shakers of Thay, and there was talk (at least according to Dracandros) of him being in the running as ruler of that land following the inevitable deposition of the current tyrant. Whether this is true or just the ravings of an unsound mind, any chance that Dracandros had was destroyed when he attacked a guest at a state dinner party. (True, the guest was a mind flayer, but such details are not as important in Thay as they are elsewhere in the North.)

Dracandros had all his lands and magical property confiscated, and was banished from the realm, barely escaping with his life. Still, his mind was not turned to revenge, but rather to performing an act so outrageous in its power and effect that his masters in Thay will welcome him back with open arms, no, beg him to come back to rule his homeland.

Through rumor, trickery, and magical pursuit, Dracandros found the *Helm of Dragons*, a gold circlet which apparently gave the wearer great power, in particular in dealing with dragons. Dracandros thought that by contacting the bulk of powerful dragons in the North, he could start another Flight of Dragons.

A Flight of Dragons is a feared event in the North, but fortunately very rare, occurring only once per generation or so. The most recent flight was a few years back, and resulted in the devastation of Phlan and Yulash, and the deaths of powerful individuals in Cormyr, Shadowdale, and Zhentil Keep. Dracandros thinks that if he brings about another Flight so soon, he will gain prestige among his former colleagues.

Dracandros met his first ally in Crimdrac the dracolich, and set up shop on Haptooth Hill for his plan of domination. Crimdrac held a large number of drow

and other magical creatures under his sway, guarding the entrance to their underground caverns. The drow would not follow the Red Wizard on his own, but they respected and feared the dracolich.

At this point Dracandros was himself contacted by Tyranthraxus ("Lord T," as he is called), offering him entry into the New Alliance. Dracandros saw this as an opportunity to create an incident which would turn the individual dragons into a flight that would cover the Realms. (The true reasons for the Flights are not revenge-motivated, but rather in the nature of the dragons themselves; this indicates the type of thinking Dracandros was engaging in.)

Dracandros is a short, twisted spider of a man, given to long, raving taunts and arm gestures that would be considered excessive even by an actor in the Living City. He thinks only of his goal to be readmitted to the Red Wizards, and will let nothing like facts stop him.

The Helm of Dragons

The *Helm of Dragons* was forged by the elves of Myth Drannor, long ago when that city was in full flower. It was intended first as a weapon against Tyranthraxus, pointing out his secret base, but has proved to have other powers as well.

The *Helm* is in reality a gold circlet with a green gem on the brow. The gem contains the image of a dragon rearing on its hind legs. Upon placing the helm on one's forehead, the wearer knows the abilities of the device.

The *Helm of Dragons* provides the following abilities:

- * Locates, within a range of 500 miles, the site of the Pool of Radiance (currently in Tyranthraxus's temple in Myth Drannor).
- * Provides the wearer with +2 to all saving throws involving Tyranthraxus.
- * Allows the wearer to communicate with all dragons in their native tongues.
- * Makes the wearer immune to any and all attacks by living dragons (but not dracoliches).
- * Provides AC 2 to the wearer.

The device functions only when Tyranthraxus is in the Realms. If he is

slain or banished, the device goes dormant until the threat returns.

Mogion of Moander

12th level female human cleric

Str 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Dex 9, Con 17, Cha 9

Height 6'0", Weight 140 lbs., Hair color black, Eye color brown

AC 2 (*Gauntlets of Moander*)

Hit points 72

Alignment chaotic evil

Weapon proficiencies: mace, club, flail, hammer (thrown).

THACO 14

Magic items of note

Ring of plant control. Same as *ring of mammal control*, but affects plants and vegetable monsters, including algoids, shambling mounds, and treants. Allows the user to cast one *entangle* spell per day.

Gauntlets of Moander (described separately below).

Mogion's story:

Mogion was the daughter of a Sembian noble. She fell in with Cultists of Moander and rose to become their leader. She thought of the dead god as a banished legend of the past, not granting magical powers beyond the simplest, until four months ago. At that time a vision sent by the newly freed Moander informed her that she was to be his chosen high priestess, and that she was to come to Yulash.

Moander was soon defeated thereafter, but the tie with Mogion remained. The cleric grew in power, gaining levels of spells unavailable to others of the cult. She soon became the cult leader throughout the North, and was known as the Mouth of Moander.

Mogion entered the buried temple of Moander and recovered the lost *Gauntlets of Moander*, which she now wears as a symbol of her office. When survivors of Moander's death in Westgate reached her with the information about the controlling runes, she contacted Radatha of the Fire Knives in Tilverton about starting a New Alliance. The pair needed power, and so brought in Zhentil Keep, Tyranthraxus, and Dracandros. Her intention is for the others to choose the best sub-



jects, which she would sacrifice to bring Moander back into the Realms.

Mogion is aware that she has the “weakest” position among the magical powers, but feels she can strengthen it by bringing Moander back. She has been given a ceremony by the Jawed God to reinstate him, and feels that the *Gauntlets* will allow her to control the creature. This last is untrue, and Fzoul has told her so, but she persists in believing it.

The Gauntlets of Moander

The *Gauntlets of Moander* are a set of bulky magical gloves forged by the Priests of Moander long ago, in the years before their god was banished and imprisoned. They were originally designed to destroy the Pool of Radiance, the home of Tyranthraxus. The mere threat of these gloves was sufficient to cause Tyranthraxus to flee Yulash.

The gauntlets have the image of an open mouth in each palm. In the presence of the Pool of Radiance, the mouths will activate, and beams of light will arch out, linking with the pool itself. In 5 rounds it will have sucked the energy dry from the pool, sealing it forever. The *Gauntlets* will then fall dormant, losing all magical abilities, until a new Pool of Radiance is opened.

The *Gauntlets* have a number of beneficial side effects:

- * Give the wearer AC 2.
- * Function as *gauntlets of ogre power*.
- * Provide +2 on saving throws versus spells.
- * Allow the wearer to communicate with (but not command) all plant life.

The wearer is also more susceptible to the effects of Moander’s own magics, saving at -4. (This should not be a problem for the heroes by the time they gain these devices.)

Blade of Lathander

The *Blade of Lathander* is a magical broad sword of incredible power, forged by a renowned dwarven smith in the fires of the morning sun itself, in the Temple of Lathander at Saerloon. It was created for one purpose—to slay the

spirit of Tyranthraxus, master of the Pool of Radiance.

The sword is a *broad sword +3* with a blade of smoked ruby quartz, unbreakable in normal combat. On its goldenommel are the symbols of Lathander and Tyranthraxus, the latter crossed out.

In normal combat, the sword functions as a *broad sword +3*. In combat with Tyranthraxus or those he has possessed, the sword will glow a bright pink. When it glows it is +6 to hit, and inflicts 3-30 points of damage. Tyranthraxus must make a saving throw versus spells (at -6 for the body he inhabits) or be forced to retreat to the Pool of Radiance.

Unlike the *Gauntlets of Moander* and the *Helm of Dragons*, the sword has no other special powers. Since its forging, it has never been used against Tyranthraxus, though its existence is said to have kept him in the North during his peak of power. It was stolen from Saerloon and the Temple of Lathander a hundred years ago, and has bounced from treasure vault to treasure vault for the past hundred years. Two years ago it was stolen from the Zhentarim by a half-ling. The Black Network recovered the sword and sank the ship the thief was escaping in. The Zhentarim have since put out the rumor that the sword was lost at sea, when in reality it is being kept by Fzoul Chembryl in his tower.

Alusair Nacacia Princess of Cormyr

6th level female human thief

Str 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Dex 18, Con 16, Cha 17

Height 5’6”, Weight 150 lbs., Hair color blonde, Eye color blue

AC 6

Hit points 36

Alignment neutral

Weapon proficiencies: short sword, short bow, dagger, knife, broad sword.

THACO 19

Magic items of note: None.

Alusair’s story:

Alusair Nacacia is the younger daughter of King Azoun IV of Cormyr. Headstrong and rebellious, she has had a stormy relationship with her parents,

which reached its high point more than a year ago over the matter of a wedding arranged for her to one of the Wyvernspurs of Immersea. Alusair took off for the wild country to the north with her current flame, Gharri of Gond, the High Priest of the Church of Gond in Tilverton. Gharri of Gond had just lost a battle of wills with the King of Cormyr, and was on the verge of losing his power base in the city when he escaped with the princess.

Gharri’s magical abilities helped keep the couple safe during the first few months, when the search for them was most intense. Eventually, however, the romance cooled, and Alusair and Gharri parted after a fight. Gharri later fell in with the Knights of Myth Drannor, who set up a shop for him in the more rural reaches of Shadowdale.

As for Alusair, she drifted, and found a vocation she was very good at: recovery and redistribution of wealth (thievery). Forced to become good at her skill or starve, Alusair prospered, changing from a hothouse flower to a streetwise individual. She was on her way to Cormyr to rejoin her family when she was captured by the Fire Knives.

Alusair is hot-tempered and strong-willed. She has found that on the streets, an argument is as well solved by the sword as by the sweetened diplomatic words used by Vangerdahast. She wants to rejoin her father and court life, for no other reason than that the Thieves Guild of Mulmaster has a price on her head.

Tyranthraxus The Possessing Spirit

Tyranthraxus has no “statistics” in the common sense. He is a nonentity which takes command of living beings, shoving their consciousness into a type of *temporal stasis* while he runs all the higher functions. Tyranthraxus cannot access the memories of an individual he has taken over, but can mimic the victim’s voice and actions perfectly.

A being possessed by Tyranthraxus has these special abilities:

- * *Fiery aura:* As a sign of possession, the physical form of the host body is surrounded by flame. The fire does not hurt the host, but inflicts 2-20 points of damage to anyone hit by Tyranthraxus.



- * *ESP*: Tyranthraxus can detect all thought processes within 150' of himself. As such, he cannot be surprised. The power is blocked by walls, so it does not have its maximum range when Tyranthraxus is inside an enclosure, such as his temple. However, it is still effective enough that the player characters will not get the drop on him.
- * *Magic resistance*: Tyranthraxus gives his host a flat 20% resistance to all spells.
- * *Transference*: Tyranthraxus can abandon his host at any time and seek out a new host. The new host must make a saving throw versus death or come entirely under Tyranthraxus's control. If the saving throw succeeds, Tyranthraxus will be stuck in the former body. While linked to his host body, Tyranthraxus cannot be *abjured*, *dismissed*, or otherwise affected by spells which target extradimensional creatures, such as *protection from evil*. He may be affected by an *exorcism* spell. If his host body is slain, and he does not successfully transfer to a new body, he will be forced back to the Pool of Radiance, where he will remain until some other individual touches the Pool. If confined in the Pool, he may only try to command the minds of those who touch its liquid.

Tyranthraxus's story:

The name Tyranthraxus is found among the ancient legends of the Beast-Men (ogres) of Thar, along with the tales of the Pool of Radiance, and the creature seems as eternal as the Moonsea itself.

It is not known what nether pit spawned Tyranthraxus, for none of the lower planes will claim him. He seems to be eternally bound to the power of the Pool of Radiance, such that he moves it with him as he relocates his base of power.

Tyranthraxus has but one basic ambition—to level the Realms beneath his iron rule. His most recent attempts to set up a power base in Phlan were thwarted by brave heroes. Now relocated to Myth Drannor, Tyranthraxus has hit upon a new plan, using the magical abilities of the Azure Bonds. He has

manipulated a number of allies to aid him in this matter.

Tyranthraxus has a secret agenda with these allies, however. Three of the four factions possess artifacts which could cause his downfall and banish him from the Realms. He has planted in his part of the bonds the desire to take these items and bring them to him in Myth Drannor, where he will destroy them, thus preventing him from being harmed in the future. Further, he intends to see that he is the only bond-holder at the end, and that the Heroes of the Bonds will be turned into his menial slaves, in effect creating portable Pools of Radiance that will let him move at will through the Realms and control multiple people at once.

Kalmari **Summoned monster**

Frequency: Very Rare
 Number Appearing: 1
 Armor Class: -6 (and see below)
 Move: 6"
 Hit Dice: 3
 % in Lair: 100%
 Treasure Type: Nil
 No. of Attacks: 2
 Damage/Attack: 1-10/1 -6
 Special Attacks: See below
 Special Defenses: +2 or better weapons to hit; see below
 Magic Resistance: 100%
 Intelligence: Average
 Alignment: Neutral evil
 Size: M
 THACO: 16

The kalmari in its natural state is an amorphous being of a mistlike consistency with a three-foot-long, tapering tail. The most striking thing about the kalmari is its jaws, which seem to stretch almost all the way around its body. Set below the kalmari's two unblinking yellow eyes, the mouth is filled with huge pointed teeth. However, adventurers are likely to first encounter the kalmari while it is possessing a host from this plane.

To be called to this plane, a kalmari must possess a body made of materials from this plane. It prefers to possess a living host, which it then devours from the inside, but can also be contained within a nonliving shell created to give it full use of its terrible jaws. The body be-

ing possessed retains its natural armor class, but will only take 10 points of damage before it splits and falls apart. After the host is destroyed, the kalmari will emerge, making a noise like a thousand hissing snakes. The kalmari can only stay on this plane without a host or a magical shell for ten minutes. After that time it is sent hurtling back to Acheron.

The kalmari's jaws inflict 1-10 points of damage and its tail only 1-6. In addition, the kalmari can entangle a victim with its tail when it hits with a natural 20. Only when the tail is severed, by doing 10 points of damage specifically to the tail, is the victim free. Otherwise the adventurer is helpless.

It is the mouth of the kalmari that is most feared, however. Though the kalmari's bite is not deadly, the monster can swallow a creature whole on any attack roll that is 4 (or more) greater than the minimum needed to hit, or on a natural 20 in any case. The victim will be digested in a number of rounds equal to its levels or number of hit dice. After that time, the creature cannot be resurrected. The kalmari will not attempt to swallow anything else until the previous victim is dead.

The kalmari's one weakness is that it cannot digest magic. It will vomit up any magic item swallowed with a creature immediately upon the death of the creature possessing it. The kalmari can be slain with any magical weapon which it has swallowed and rejected. These weapons have an added +2 to hit the monster, and also gain +2 to the damage bonus they normally possess, but only against that kalmari. Note, too, that a kalmari can only be slain with a weapon it once swallowed, and weapons eaten and rejected by other kalmari are treated as normal magic weapons.



Wilderness Encounter Tables

The following tables correspond to the map on page 93, and should be used to generate random encounters when the player characters are moving overland.

Table 1
Clear terrain, east of Desertmouth

d20 roll	Encounter
1	1-6 lycanthropes, werewolves
2	4-16 merchants
3	1-6 ogres
4	1-6 wild boars
5	2-16 wolves
6	3-30 herd animals, antelopes
7	2-16 ghouls
8	1-20 wild horses
9	2-16 pseudo-undead, ghouls
10	1-4 poisonous snakes
11	1-2 owls
12	4-20 giant rats
13	2-8 giant toads
14	1-6 anhkhegs
15	2-20 ordinary bats
16	2-8 dire wolves
17	4-16 goblins
18	1-2 basilisks
19	1-4 scarecrows
20	2-12 bugbears

Table 2
Clear terrain, Shadowdale region

d20 roll	Encounter
1	4-16 merchants
2	1 mule
3	1-4 domestic cats
4	1-20 bulls
5	5-20 huge centipedes
6	2-4 giant stag beetles
7	1 leprechaun
8	2-8 shadow mastiffs
9	2-8 huge spiders
10	4-24 pilgrims (Tymora)
11	4-24 jermlaine
12	1-2 pseudo-undead, vampires
13	1-2 trolls
14	3-12 giant fire beetles
15	1-4 huge pedipalps
16	1 penanggalan
17	1-4 halfling thieves
18	1 grue, chaggrin
19	1 tween
20	1 ghost

Table 3
Clear terrain, Daggerdale region

d20 roll	Encounter
1	3-18 bandits
2	1 Zhentarim patrol
3	4-12 ogres
4	2-8 huge spiders
5	4-16 wolves
6	4-20 giant rats
7	5-50 hobgoblins
8	1-4 giant poisonous snakes
9	2-16 ghouls
10	2-16 pseudo-undead, ghouls
11	2-8 huge spiders
12	1-4 trolls
13	1-4 large pedipalps
14	2-8 minotaurs
15	2-8 vapor rats
16	2-8 dire wolves
17	1-6 ghouls
18	2-8 griffons
19	1 red dragon (young adult)
20	1-4 rakshasas

Table 4
Clear terrain, Zhentil Keep region

d20 roll	Encounter
1	1 Zhentarim patrol
2	1 mule
3	3-24 bandits
4	1-6 jackals
5	4-20 giant rats
6	1 Zhentarim patrol
7	1-6 war dogs
8	1-4 jackalweres
9	1-2 basilisks
10	2-8 huge spiders
11	1-2 draft horses
12	1-4 cockatrices
13	2-4 griffons
14	2-8 shadows
15	1 red dragon (old)
16	4-16 blink dogs
17	5-30 orcs
18	1-4 wyverns
19	2-8 wolves, worgs
20	1-2 fog giants

Table 5
Clear terrain, Hillsfar region

d20 roll	Encounter
1	3-12 bandits
2	1 Red Plumes patrol
3	3-18 ordinary vultures
4	2-8 giant toads
5	1 Red Plumes patrol
6	1-6 ordinary ravens
7	1-4 manticores
8	1-4 poisonous snakes
9	2-20 ordinary bats

10	2-16 ghouls
11	1 witherweed
12	4-20 pilgrims (Chauntea)
13	1-4 giant pedipalps
14	2-8 lammasu
15	1-2 hill giants
16	1-3 wolfweres
17	2-8 harpies
18	1-2 bulettes
19	2-5 displacer beasts
20	1-3 medusae

Table 6
Clear terrain, Phlan region

d20 roll	Encounter
1	1-6 mastodons
2	4-12 ogres
3	1 Zhentarim patrol
4	1-3 black bears
5	5-30 orcs
6	1-6 skunks
7	3-12 bandits
8	2-16 ghouls
9	1-12 trolls
10	1 witherweed
11	1-2 tigers
12	2-12 blood hawks
13	1 giant bumblebee
14	1 moon dog
15	1-2 whipweeds
16	2-8 hippogriffs
17	2-12 land lampreys
18	1-2 earth dragons (adult)
19	1-2 black dragons (young adult)
20	10-80 goblins

Table 7
Mountains and foothills

d20 roll	Encounter
1	2-20 ordinary bats
2	5-20 bandits
3	3-24 goats
4	1-6 ordinary ravens
5	2-20 large spiders
6	5-20 orcs
7	1-2 cave bears
8	1-4 cockatrices
9	1-3 stone giants
10	5-20 goblins
11	1-6 large scorpions
12	1-4 giant black squirrels
13	2-8 giant worker bees
14	4-20 quaggoth
15	2-5 owlbears
16	1-4 screaming devilkins
17	1-4 leucrotta
18	2-8 margoyle
19	1-2 mountain giants
20	2-8 wraiths



Table 8
Medium woods

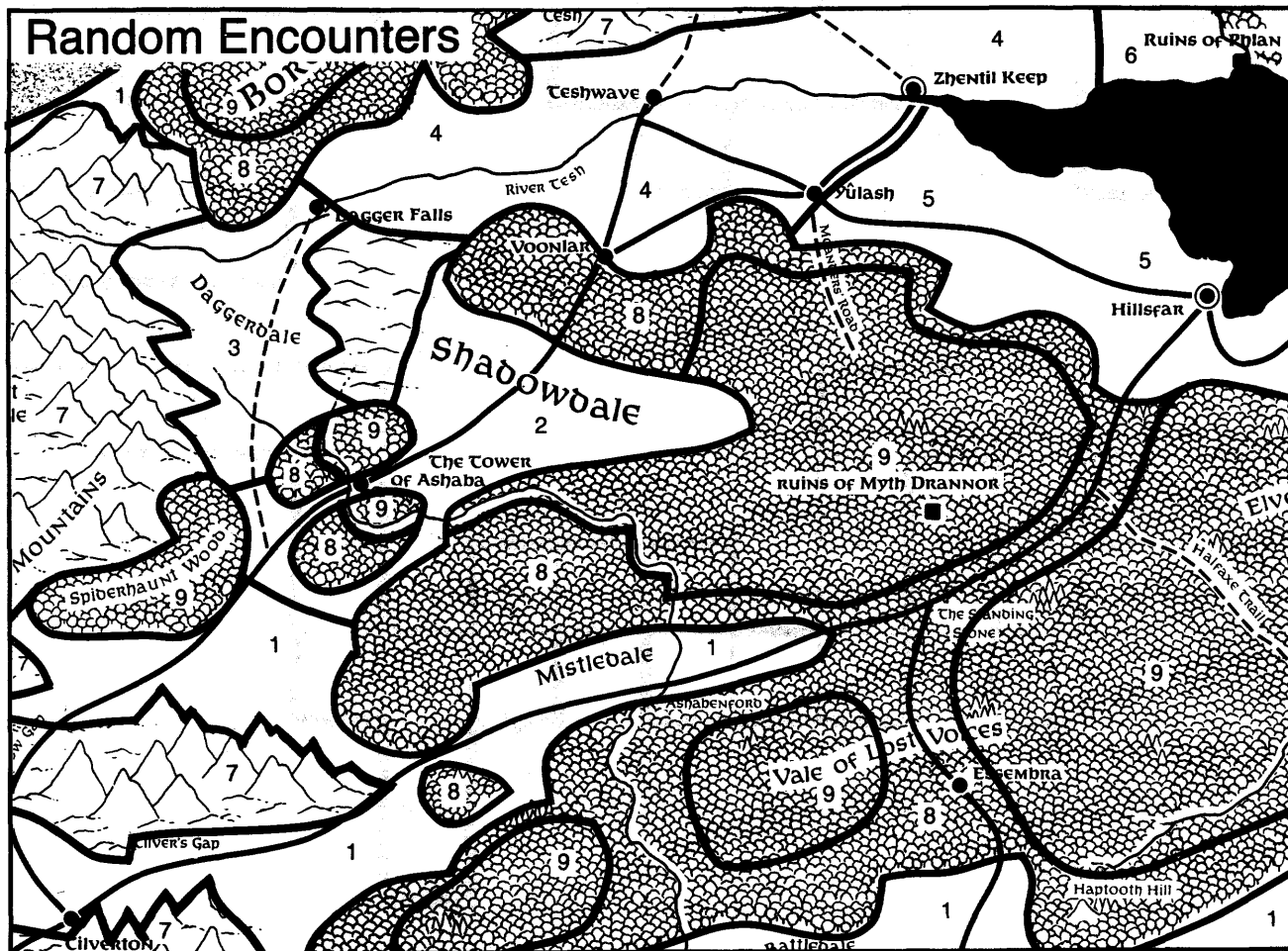
d20 roll	Encounter
1	4-24 gnolls
2	1-20 bulls
3	1-6 wild boars
4	1-6 lycanthropes, wereboars
5	2-24 giant centipedes
6	2-20 large spiders
7	1-4 basilisks
8	2-8 clubneks
9	4-24 stirges
10	1-4 giant poisonous snakes
11	2-8 trolls
12	5-20 bandits
13	1-6 anhkhegs
14	2-8 obliviax
15	2-8 shadows
16	3-12 giant ticks
17	2-8 vapor rats
18	1 groaning spirit
19	1-2 green dragons (adult)
20	4-16 zombies

Table 9
Heavy woods

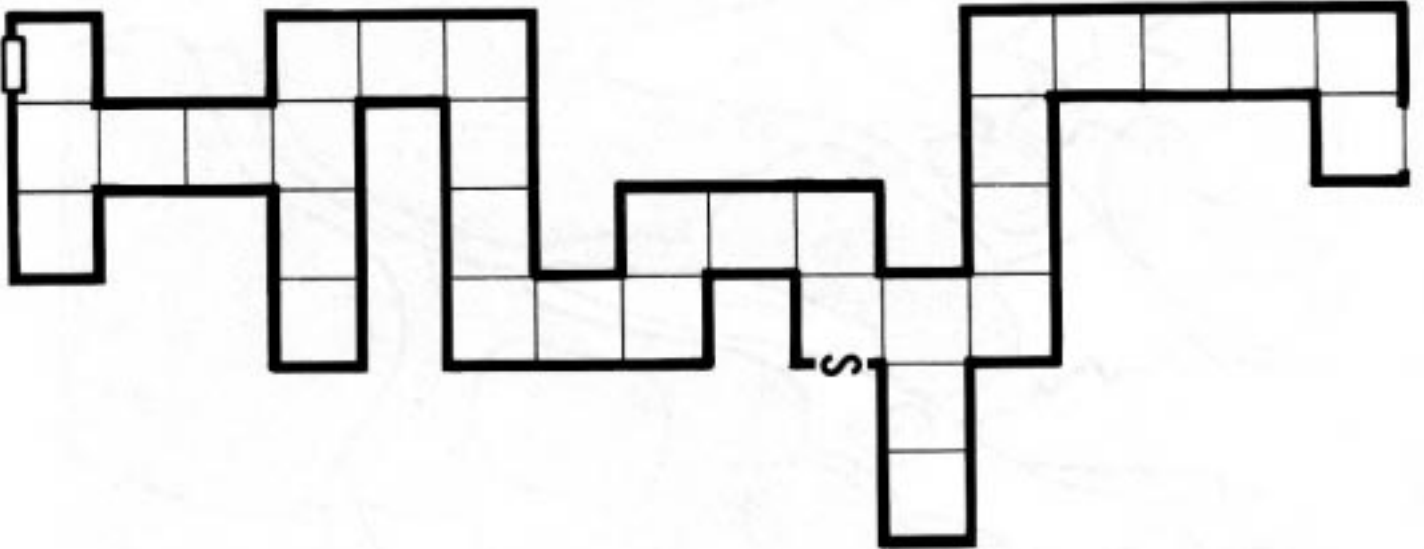
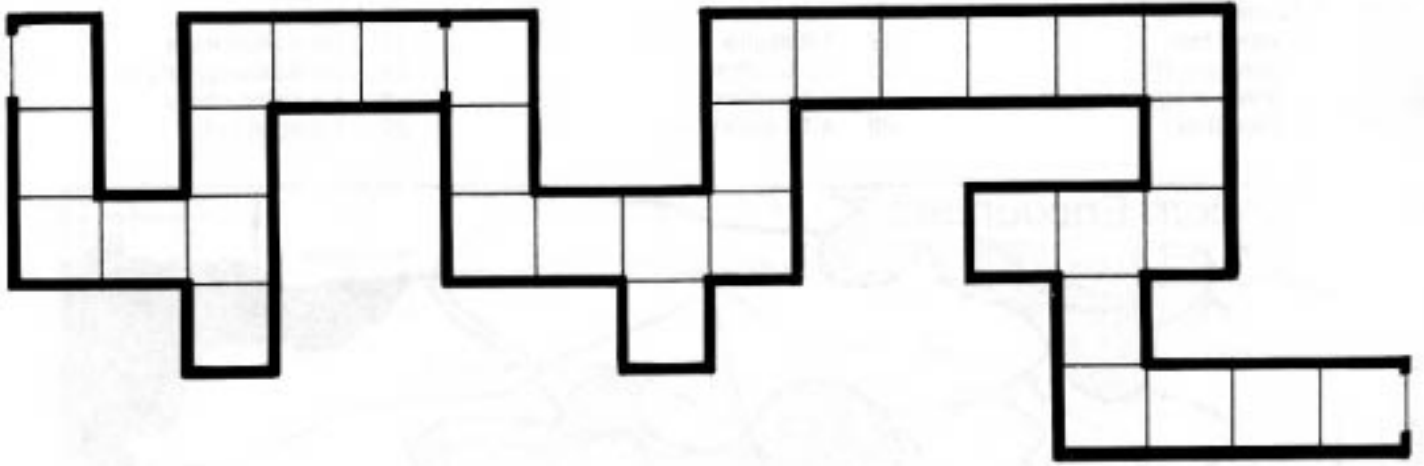
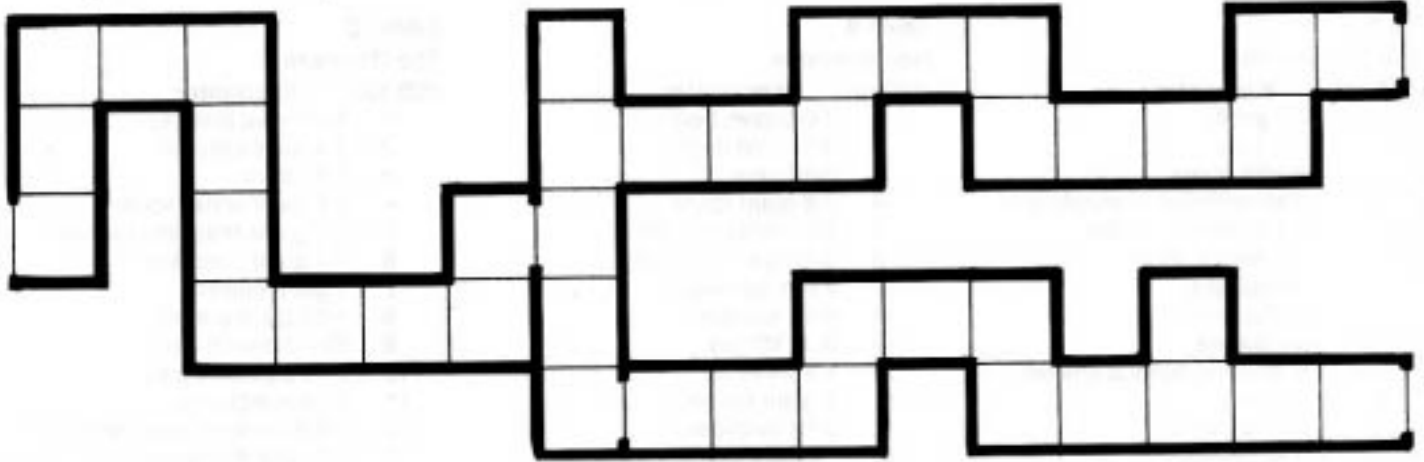
d20 roll	Encounter
1	1-6 brown bears
2	4-16 wild dogs
3	4-48 orcs
4	2-8 giant toads
5	2-20 large spiders
6	3-12 giant fire beetles
7	2-8 moon elves
8	4-40 kobolds
9	5-30 stirges
10	1-4 wyverns
11	1 giant hornet
12	2-12 bugbears
13	1 choke creeper
14	5-40 goblins
15	6-36 sprites
16	1-20 treants
17	1-6 skulks
18	1 bloodthorn
19	1 greenhag
20	4-16 quicklings

Table 10
The Moonsea

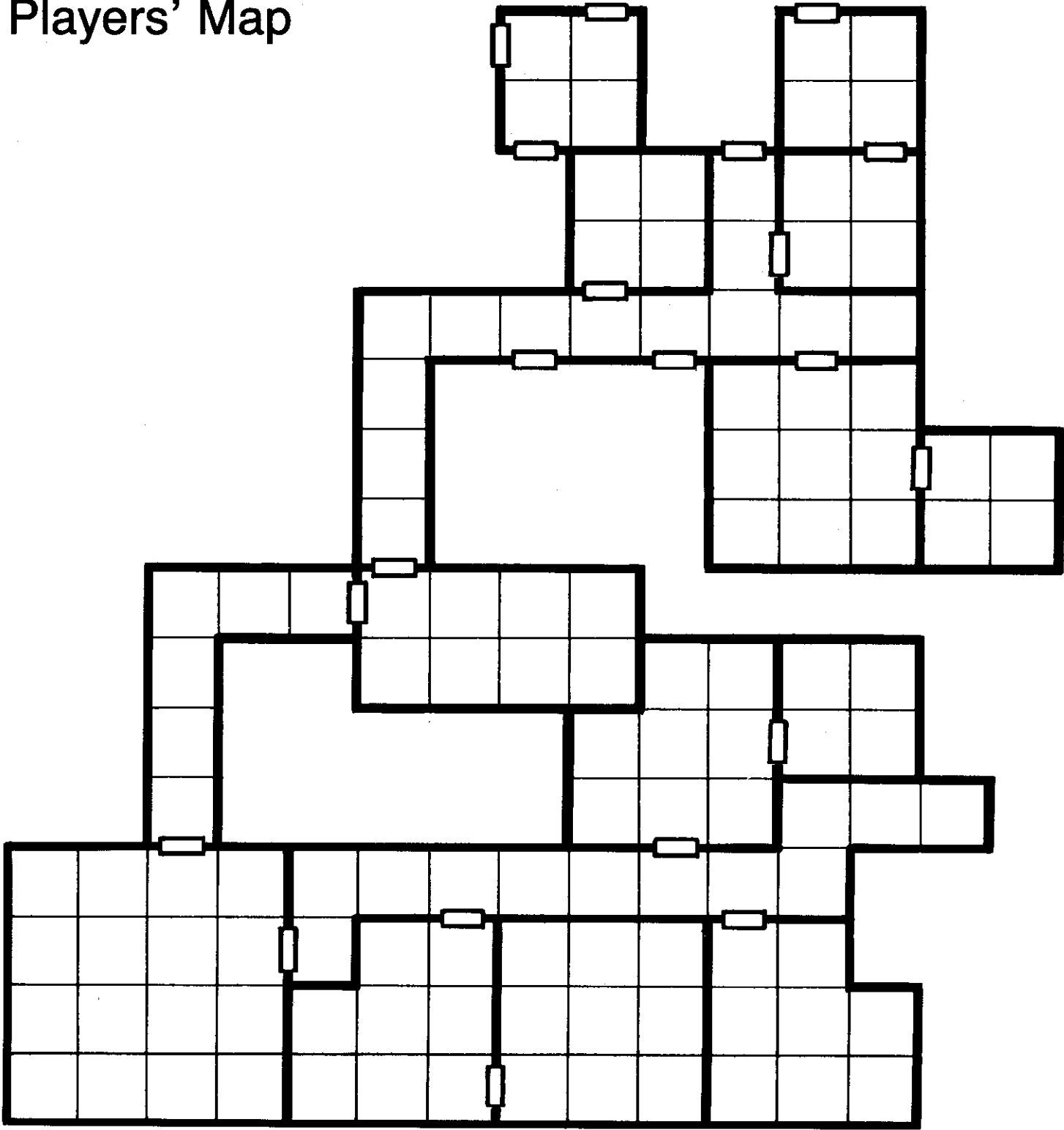
d20 roll	Encounter
1	1-2 throat leeches
2	1-4 giant crayfish
3	1-4 otters
4	1-6 giant water spiders
5	1-2 giant snapping turtles
6	1-4 giant lampreys
7	1 giant catfish
8	4-16 giant cranes
9	20-50 buccaneers
10	2-16 aquatic ogres
11	4-16 merchants
12	1-2 dinosaurs, elasmosaurus
13	1-4 carp dragons (young adult)
14	1 mist dragon
15	2-5 giant otters
16	1 sirine
17	1-6 marine trolls
18	2-8 marine gargoyles
19	1-3 water weirds
20	1 dragon turtle



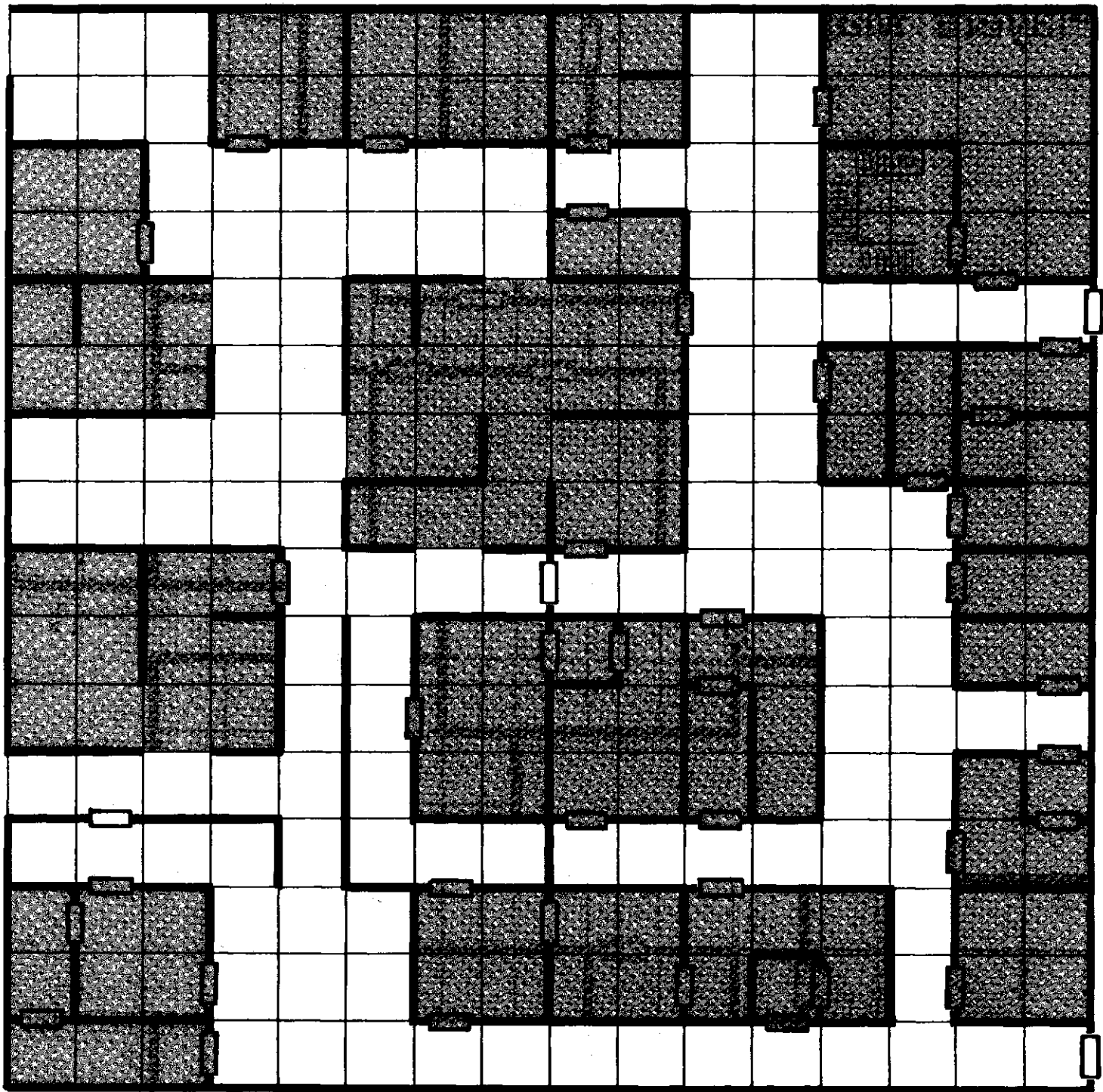
Players' Map of Sewers



Fire Knives Hideout Players' Map



Yulash Players' Map (Southeast Corner)



 open to sky

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition



Curse of the Azure Bonds

by Jeff Grubb and George MacDonald

Day breaks, and the crowing of a distant rooster wakes you from an all-too-short sleep. Another day of adventure, you think as you arise—but then you stop short. You, and all of your companions, have an elaborate blue tattoo covering most of your sword arm!

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ISBN 0-88038-606-1



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