

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Official Game Adventure



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

TANTRAS

by Ed Greenwood



MAGICAL CHAOS TABLE

Employ the table below whenever magic or natural powers akin to magic are used in the Realms at any point in this adventure.

The spells of Midnight, avatars, and Elminster are affected least by Magical Chaos. They roll on this table normally. All other beings roll with a modifier of -15% (since the Fall, Chaos has been increasing throughout the Realms, so magic is less reliable than it was in Shadowdale). DMs should not feel bound by the results of this table, and should indeed decide on a case-by-case basis whether spells function or not, to best suit play as it unfolds (but don't reveal this to the players).

The DM should further modify percentile dice rolls as follows: for every experience level of the spellcaster (magic items are considered 6th level, artifacts are 12th level), +1; if the spell or effect contributes to chaos or drastic change of a given locale (e.g. *fireball* or *polymorph* spells), +12; and +4 if the spell (items and artifacts cannot receive this bonus) is small and simple, such as a 1st or 2nd level spell or a cantrip. When the modified score is determined, consult the table below:

Percentile Score	Result
01-19	Spell rebounds on caster, with full effects (if impossible due to nature of spell, reroll).
20-23	Pit opens instantly beneath the caster (depth varies at DM's option); there is no other spell effect.
24-27	Target of spell (or caster, if spell has no target) is instantly pelted with fiery, red flower blossoms that materialize and vanish again 1 round later. Blossoms do no damage, but prohibit accurate aiming of wands or missile weapons, and prevent reading of books, scrolls, inscriptions, and the like.
28-31	Spell affects random creature or area (DM's option) rather than the intended target area.
32-35	Spell functions normally, but any material components are not consumed, and spell knowledge is retained by the caster or the charge is retained by the item.
36-39	Spell functions normally but magical energy is released around the caster, <i>healing</i> any injuries of any beings within 10 yards of the caster (includes fatigue, <i>feble-mindedness</i> , etc.).
40-33	Total <i>darkness</i> and <i>silence</i> occur in a 30-yard radius about the caster, and last 2-8 rounds.
44-47	<i>Reverse gravity</i> (cf. spell) effect occurs in a 30-yard radius sphere about the caster, fast-ing 1 round; caster included in the effect.
48-51	<i>Shimmering</i> colors dance and play in a nimbus around the caster, blinding caster and all creatures within 20 yards for 1-4 rounds.
52-59	Nothing happens; no spell effect occurs.
60-71	Nothing occurs; no spell effect, but spell knowledge or charge is not lost.
72-98	Spell functions normally.
99-00 +	Spell functions with maximum possible effects, full damage, maximum duration.

Special Effects SubTable

With any result on the above table, the DM can add to play excitement by adding one or more of the following "special effects" (roll 1d12):

- 01: Earth tremor underfoot (minor, with rolling echoes).
- 02: Sun dims and then brightens again or a star falls.
- 03: Violent roaring or screaming sound.
- 04: Intense wave of heat (no damage) felt in the vicinity.
- 05: Non-harmful, oily green slime forms on everything within 120 yards.
- 06: Maniacal, echoing laughter is heard. Flowers fall from the sky.
- 07: Old, brittle bones (3d20) rain down for 2 rounds, in a 60 yards radius.
- 08: Caster and everything within 60 yards lose all hair; plants grow hair.
- 09: Harmless yellow-green and purple smoke rises from the ground.
- 10: Boulders rise, swirling in mid-air like leaves (2d12 impact damage).
- 11: Nearby tree is uprooted (indoors, rock or furniture moves by itself).
- 12: Whispering voice is heard, murmuring a random character's name—and—a prediction about that character's future (the DM can make it as specific as he wants; given the PCs' circumstances, portents of danger and doom would probably not be too far off...).

FORGOTTEN REALMS™

Tantras

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Credits

Design: Ed Greenwood
Editing: Anne Brown, Kim Mohan
Avatar Trilogy Coordinator: Jim Lowder
Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
Interior Art: Karl Waller
Cartography: Dave, Dennis & Diesel
Typography: Gaye O'Keefe
Keylining: Stephanie Tabat and Paul Hanchette

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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147 USA



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End, Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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PROLOGUE

The One Who Is Hidden will in anger cast the gods down into the Realms. The gods will walk among men, amid chaos of Art and nature, and there will be strife in Faerun.
From the Prophecies
of Alaundo the Seer,
called "the Wise."

Notes for The Dungeon Master

Tantras is the second of a trilogy of modules that describe the strife, called by some "the Godswar," in The Forgotten Realms.

These modules loosely parallel the action described in the Avatar Trilogy (*Shadowdale, Tantras, and Waterdeep*) published by TSR, Inc. It is not necessary that you or your players read the novels before play, nor are the adventures outlined in the modules identical to action in the novels. Players should use their own characters, though several NPCs will prove to be valuable if not necessary. (The NPC Midnight must accompany the party in order for the adventure to be completed.)

The adventures in *Tantras* are perilous; a party of lesser power may well not survive for long. Keep the party to a size that you are comfortable with. If encounters are too dangerous, allow the PCs to escape or avoid them; PCs should be challenged, but not casually destroyed.

How The Module is Laid Out

The adventures in *Tantras* are outlined in chapters, with each chapter made up of several events that occur in the order they are given (sometimes one follows immediately after the previous one). A few sections are labeled "Offstage Events"—information meant for the DM's eyes only, about facts that will enable the DM (and players, if they discover them) to understand more of the "big picture" about what is happening in this adventure and in other places in the Realms outside the immediate vicinity of where the player characters are located.

Any text that appears in a box is intended to be read aloud to the players (or given directly to them in summary form). The remaining information is for the DM, and should only be revealed in response to PC actions.

The chapters describe the intended flow of the story. PCs have plenty of freedom as to what they actually do in the chaos sur-

rounding the Godswar. Feel free to improvise to make the adventure exciting and enjoyable. If you read the entire module before play to see what will occur, it will be easy to see where there is ample room for your own side adventures, and where and how the adventure herein can be tailored into an existing campaign set in the Forgotten Realms.

Ability Checks

From time to time in this adventure an Ability Check is called for. The DM should roll 1d20 and compare the result with the appropriate ability score (Strength, Dexterity, etc.) for the character in question. If the roll is equal to or less than the character's ability score, the action succeeds. If the roll is greater than the ability score, the action fails.

The Setting

This adventure is set in the continent of Faerun in the Forgotten Realms, specifically in the Dalelands, the area on and around the River Ashaba, and Scardale and Tantras, two cities on opposite shores of the Dragon Reach. These areas are described in the boxed FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set. DMs who place this adventure in other settings will have to modify the geography, NPC "power groups," and gods used, but should still be able to use this module.

The Story So Far

This section is directed toward DMs who did not run *Shadowdale*, the previous module in this trilogy. This background information will bring DMs up to date on the state of the world and the events that have transpired prior to the beginning of *Tantras*. The DM should impart as much of this information to players as he sees fit, but should be careful not to overdo it; some of the facts described below (such as the full effect and significance of magical chaos) can be left for player characters to discover for themselves as this adventure unfolds. (For instance, it's okay to tell players that magic is unreliable, but let priest PCs find out for themselves that they can't obtain anything but low-level spells.)

The chaos was triggered when Bane, the God of Strife, and Myrkuil, the God of the Dead, teamed up to steal the Tablets of Fate from Lord Ao (the overlord of deities, usually referred to as The One Who Is Hidden). In retribution for this act, Ao banished all of the deities from their otherworldly domains

(except for Helm, the god who guards the Other Planes) and forced them down into Faerun, there to remain until the tablets are returned to their rightful owner.

During this time of unrest, the gods are battling among themselves for control of the world. Each deity takes the form of an avatar—a physical, usually humanlike form through which the deity can perform actions and accomplish things on this plane of existence. Avatars are markedly weaker than the deities they represent, but are still fearsomely formidable—so much so that it might be suicidal for even a powerful group of PCs to try to combat one of them.

Of great importance, in general terms, are the concepts of magical and physical chaos. During this time of trouble, magic spells and magical items are liable to function improperly or simply fail to work as they would have normally. Because deities are directly involved with the goings-on in the Realms and are disregarding their usual responsibilities, priest characters find that they are unable to gain or regain any spells of 3rd level or higher. And as if this magical upheaval wasn't bad enough, the very land itself is in chaos; unpredictable and unnatural effects may occur at any time, causing everyone to be on their guard even more than usual. (See the tables on the inside cover of this module for more information on magical and physical chaos.)

How can this situation be corrected and the gods forced to go back whence they came? The player characters have discovered—through research or hearsay—that, in some (as yet unexplained) way, the finding of two artifacts known as the Tablets of Fate is the key to setting things right again. They further know that one of these tablets can be found somewhere in the city of Tantras—so traveling to that city should be their first objective at the start of this adventure.

Unfortunately, before that journey can begin, there is a serious problem to take care of. Midnight, a spellcaster of no small ability and a pivotal figure in the quest for the Tablets of Fate, has been imprisoned and charged with the murder of the great old sage Elminster. The player characters will fail in their mission if Midnight does not accompany them to Tantras—so the first thing they must do is rescue her (and any cohorts who may be imprisoned with her) from the dungeon beneath the Tower of Ashaba in Shadowdale.

Elminster disappeared at the climax of a titanic battle in the Temple of Lathander between the avatars of Bane and Mystra, the Goddess of Magic. Midnight was blamed for his demise because she was present when

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the battle took place, and no one else was left alive who could be held responsible or could exonerate her. Many residents of Shadowdale saw Elminster go into the temple . . . but no one saw him come out.

In The Meantime . . .

DMs who did run Shadowdale before beginning this module should be aware that *Tantras* assumes that the forces of Zhentil Keep were beaten back by Shadowdale's defenders (with the help of Harpers, the Mistledale Lancers, and the Knights of Myth Drannor). If this seems an unlikely turn of events based on how the events of *Shadowdale* actually transpired, then a further reason for the defeat of Zhentil Keep's forces will have to be "manufactured": perhaps war parties of Hillsfar soldiers mounted an attack on the Zhentilar rear in the east, with Cormyrean raiders striking the western attack. Storm Silverhand might also appear, leading Harper heroes to disrupt the orcs attacking Shadowdale from the north. A DM can pick and choose from these causes of Zhentish defeat, or invent others to best suit an individual campaign.

General Advice

Players can quickly become bored with even the most exciting battles and dilemmas involved in saving the world if everything is tense, serious, and non-stop, hard-driving action. The dramatic impact of the widespread conflict and chaos afflicting the Realms is heightened in play if the DM uses humor (and thus, pathos), and describes the effects of war by concentrating on small details and individual NPCs.

Guard against giving out too much information, or too much of the wrong kind of information. It can be easy to overexplain, robbing the events of this trilogy of their mystery-and worse, giving the players a sense that everything is predetermined: that fate controls all, and that the actions of the PCs, no matter how well orchestrated, have no effect. Do not allow players to feel that everything will turn out as the gods intended. A good DM will avoid this at all costs; if saving the world becomes a big yawn, what does one do for an encore?

A Note About 2nd Edition AD&D® Rules

This adventure is written using the terminology and rules of the 2nd Edition

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, but is still easily playable by those who are using the original game materials.

Some of the more noticeable differences are changes in name only. The term "magic-user" has been replaced by "mage" (or, in a few places, the more general designation of "wizard"). The "cleric" character class is now the "priest" class, although members of that class are still usually referred to as "clerics."

In the new edition of the game, the benefits of extraordinarily high ability scores are specifically described. Much of that information (with respect to Intelligence and Wisdom scores) is repeated in the section on avatars of the gods (pages 42-44).

Another significant change is in the presentation of monsters. The description of the quelzarn (page 47), a new monster designed for this adventure, is identical in format to the way monsters are presented in the new *Monstrous Compendium* series. Although the information is organized differently and has been somewhat expanded, nothing from the original format has been omitted; everything that "1st Edition" DMs are accustomed to seeing is still provided in the new descriptive format. The page on which the quelzarn description appears can be photocopied and inserted in a *Monstrous Compendium* binder if the DM so desires.

Chapter 1: Trial and Flight

The adventure opens with the trial of any characters who participated in the great battle in the Temple of Lathander that occurred at the end of *Shadowdale*, the first module in this trilogy. The accused group will include Midnight, any PCs who were present for the battle, and Adon (if he was with the party). Kelemvor and Cyric (if they were part of the group) will not be among the accused. If the players demand an explanation for this, the DM could hint that perhaps the two of them have friends in high places, or simply got lucky; no one can say for sure what happened during the time the PCs were stunned by the explosion at the end of the battle. The text for Events 1 through 3 assumes that Adon was with the party in the Temple of Lathander; if this wasn't the case, then ignore all references to what Adon does during the trial and have him join Cyric in the rescue mission (Event 3).

If this module is being used in campaign play but *Shadowdale* was not used to precede it, then Midnight and Adon are being held for the murder of Elminster. Skip Events 1 and 2 and bring the player characters into the adventure by meeting a very persuasive Cyric, who hires them to aid him in rescuing the imprisoned NPCs. Begin the adventure with Event 3.

Regardless of whether they appeared in *Shadowdale* or not, Adon, Cyric, and Kelemvor should be involved in this adventure, and Midnight must be an NPC. These characters are described on pages 40 and 41.

Event 1: Trial

After the villagers entered the temple at the end of the battle, Adon, Midnight, and any PCs found there were promptly relieved of their weapons and equipment. They were taken to the Tower of Ashaba and thrown into the main guardchamber on the ground floor. They are being watched at all times by at least five grim folk who are obviously high-level adventurers. (Midnight's pendant was destroyed when Mystara fell in the battle. The object plays no further part in this adventure.)

The DM should make it clear that escape is impossible; locks can't be picked, the guards can't be overcome physically, and any spells the PCs might try to use will fail because of Magical Chaos. In any event, Adon and Midnight will not try to escape with the PCs, feeling that their chances of coming out of this alive are better if they go along with what their captors want, at least for the time being.

PCs who try to escape or attack their captors will be magically restrained, but otherwise not harmed in any way. Their captors

will not look or act all that kindly, however, and shortly, a guardcaptain will arrive. He will curtly order the PCs to accompany him. They will be led from the guardchamber, down corridors lined with guards, into the high-ceilinged audience chamber of the Tower of Ashaba.

The chamber is crowded with people, who look upon you with hard eyes and angry faces. Weapons are visible everywhere. You are led before an elevated throne. On it sits a tired, grim-looking middle-aged man still clad in battered and bloody plate armor. It is Mournngrym, lord of Shadowdale. He is drinking wine from a goblet; at your approach he waves it away, wipes his moustache wearily, and looks upon you all with cold eyes.

"You live, outlanders, because I hold justice above all else in this dale—and only because of that. Elminster the sage was a friend good and true to all of us here, and his Art was a strong defense against our enemies, always.

"Now he is dead—and you were found in the temple where he met his end. You stand accused of the murder of this good man. What say you, that you may keep your own lives? Speak, and speak well—or there will be more fallen in Shadowdale before this day is out!"

Mournngrym is very angry, but determined that justice be done. Others present are less patient. They want Adon, Midnight and any PCs who were taken with them slain on the spot, and without delay. A murmured chant of "Kill them! Kill them!" begins from the back of the crowd. Mournngrym waves the angry mutterings to silence and calls upon Sharantyr to speak.

The lady ranger does so, calmly and simply stating the circumstances she observed when she led the residents of Shadowdale into the ruined temple. Then she will fall silent, not making any accusations.

Florin Falconhand, a ranger and one of the Knights of Myth Drannor, towering above most in his hacked and spattered armor, will ask to speak. He will look at all present, slowly and grimly, as he says:

"If this is to be a home in which we feel loved and safe among our neighbors, and if it is to be a place where men love the rule over them and not go in fear of it, then justice must be preserved at all costs. And justice, I must remind all

here, requires proof of guilt, not merely angry condemnations. Think on that, friends, govern yourselves as you would be governed!"

The ranger's dark glances at the PCs make it clear that he does not think them innocent, by any means. He merely holds the belief that justice must prevail, no matter what the provocation. Mournngrym nods at Florin's words, and as the ranger withdraws with Sharantyr to guard the doors of the chamber, the lord of Shadowdale waves another murmur of angry comments and oaths to silence.

"We have heard wise counsel, fellow folk of the dale. It is justice that we allow those we accuse to speak in their own defense. I call upon them now to do so, one at a time, as I direct. Out of respect, I pray you do not shout or make comment upon what they say. If you have questions, stand and raise your hand; speak only when I acknowledge you.

"Outlanders, you who stand charged—if you do not answer the questions put to you, your very lives may fall forfeit. Had we priests enough on hand, and could we trust Art as we have always done, your every word would be tested by magic. But since we cannot do that, we must rely on our instincts—and we have learned over the years to recognize a falsehood when we hear one. Bear that in mind ere you bend the truth."

The PCs will be allowed to speak freely. As they testify, the DM should play the role of various angry villagers (spouting off in disobedience of Mournngrym's orders) who obviously think the PCs are guilty.

Lhao, the mild-mannered scribe of Elminster, will stand and be recognized at the end of the PCs' testimony. He will remind everyone that Elminster has often vanished before, sometimes for long periods, and that his great powers make his death at the hands of these folk unlikely at best, if indeed he is dead.

This will not make the villagers any less angry. Their comments will come thick and fast.

"Who's to watch after my cattle, come birthing-time?"

"Elminster's power kept us safe 'gainst Zhentil Keep, it did! Who's to protect us now, eh?"

Chapter 1: Trial and Flight



"Better friend I've never known, for all his high talk and hurling magic all about the place! He'd not go off and leave us when the Zhentish have brought war to our doors, and all! vanished, aye—at the hands of these butchers!"

"Death to them!"

"DEATH!"

"Kill them! KILL THEM!"

"Aye, kill the murderers!"

The room will erupt with shouts for the PCs' blood. Adon and Midnight will stand silent, and will bid any PCs who try to speak or struggle free at this point to be quiet and still. Mourgrym will stand grimly, and gradually the room will grow hushed.

The lord of Shadowdale looks slowly around before turning to fix you with an angry stare. "You who stand accused have been found guilty by these good folk, here assembled. To them, I leave your sentencing."

The lord of Shadowdale turns to the crowd. "Before you assembled here decide the fate of these murderers," he says

heavily, "do any object to the verdict? Are these folk innocent?"

A warrior in battered plate mail steps from the middle of the crowd and speaks out. Midnight's eyes flicker in recognition, but Adon remains stone-faced. None of you (the PCs) can recall having seen this man before.

"Innocent, guilty—who can say?" he begins. "Certainly not you, with not a shred of evidence either way! Yet you would slay these folk without pause. If Elminster walks in here tomorrow, who's to bring them to life again? I've walked these Realms a bit, and I tell you: they hold fairer trials in Zhentil Keep."

The speaker is Cyric, who is in disguise to keep from getting into trouble for speaking his mind. (Midnight thinks she knows who it is, but will not reveal her suspicion.) His words are initially met with silence. Villagers look at him for a breath or two, and then the chants of "Guilty!" and "Kill them!" begin again. People shake their heads at Cyric, who angrily turns his back. The shouts from the crowd get louder. Several villagers cry for the criminals to be burned, but a greater number demand that they be

impaled on sharpened stakes. Mourgrym lets the outburst rage for a time, long enough for him to establish what sentence the majority favors, and then waves the room to silence again.

When the lord of Shadowdale turns to you again, his face is hard. "This court of the people finds you guilty of the death of Elminster of Shadowdale and sentences you to death at highsun tomorrow, by impalement. My guards will carry out the sentence in the Tower meadow. Your lives can yet be spared in one way only: if Elminster is seen in the dale before highsun tomorrow. Whatever your fate may be, I suggest you begin praying now."

He instructs the guards to take you away. As the guards move forward to accompany you, the lord of Shadowdale adds sternly to the crowd, "Let no one move to insult or strike these prisoners. Do not leave until my guards signal that the way is clear. I want no escapes and no bloodshed." He turns away wearily, and sits down again as you are hustled out.

Chapter 1: Trial and Flight

The townspeople obey Mourngrym. In tense silence the PCs are rushed across a hallway, with guards all around (at least twenty in number, all armed with spears, swords, and war hammers), through a massive iron door, and down a dark, steep flight of stairs into the tower's dungeons.

Event 2: Imprisonment

The DM should refer to the underground level of the Tower of Ashaba map. The PCs will be marched down the stairs to the large cavern (area #2), where a smith, two dozen soldiers, and two men in robes (a priest of Tempus, and a mage of minor power who holds a wand ready in his hand) stand waiting. There, under the blaze of torches, the PCs will be manacled in steel collars, wristlets, and ankle bands that lock together; each requires two keys to open.

Midnight will be gagged, her hands wrapped tightly in cloth to keep her fingers immobile, and her wrists lashed to her waist behind her back, to prevent her from calling forth any spells. Any PCs who have demonstrated spellcasting ability, or whose gear, symbols, or speech has led anyone of Shadowdale to think them a spellcaster of any sort, will be treated similarly. An unguent of herbs on the gags will cause all gagged prisoners to feel drowsy and weak (make a Constitution Check or fall unconscious until the gag is removed).

The PCs will be dragged and half-carried to separate cells and chained to ceiling-rings therein. Then the guards will all depart, leaving the prisoners alone in the darkness. One guard will be posted in the dark nearby, seated on a stool, to listen to whatever the prisoners who can speak might say to each other.

Event 3: Rescue by Night

Cyric leaves the audience chamber along with the other villagers. They spill out onto the meadow, many of them heading for the Old Skull Inn and a much-desired drink or two, but Cyric quietly slips away and begins formulating a plan to rescue the prisoners. If Adon is not in the dungeon with the PCs, Cyric will seek him out, and the two of them (with help from some anonymous and temporary hirelings) will carry off the rescue.

If the PCs are entering the adventure at this point, Cyric will find and hire them, offering them up to 500 pieces of gold, train-

ing as a fighter, or a gem per person. (Cyric has a row of 12 large, milky blue sapphires, value 1,000 gp each, stitched into the collar seam of his ragged cloak.)

If PCs accompany him, Cyric will wait until after midnight before assaulting the tower. It is a dark, cloudy night (the moon will rise later, when the rescue party is in the tower). Cyric will be dressed in dark leather, fully armed and with all his other gear tied into a waterproof bundle, which he carries with him.

To reach the tower, Cyric will swim down the River Ashaba from just north of the Old Skull to the tower docks. There is a guard of twenty soldiers at the bridge where the main road through the dale crosses the river, and another watchpost atop the Old Skull itself.

If the PCs are with Cyric, this should be a tense skulk through the dark. The battle with Zhentil Keep's forces is still recent, and Shadowdale is alive with alert, patrolling soldiers in the night.

Cyric will direct the PCs to silently overpower the guards at the boathouse (ground level, area #29). He will charge straight for the alarm gong to see that no alarm is raised.

There are twelve guards in the boathouse. All are 1st level fighters, wearing chain mail (AC 5) and armed with spears, long swords, hand axes, and daggers. Each has 9 hp; all are alert and work well as a team. Two of them stand closest to the alarm gong on the east wall of the boathouse, just beside the door into the tower proper that they are guarding. If they manage to ring it, the men at the two nearest guardposts inside the tower will hear, ring their own gongs, and charge into the dockhouse to investigate.

Regardless of how well the assault goes, Cyric will order at least two PCs (hirelings or minor NPCs accompanying the PC party should be used, if such are along on this adventure) to seize one of the boats.

Cyric will select a 12'-long, sturdy, plain open wooden boat, flat-bottomed and well used. This bargelike craft has three benches, with oarlocks on the gunwales beside each seat, so that as many as six people can row it at the same time. He will order the PCs to provision it with oars, water kegs, tarpaulins, and food from the stores in the boathouse. Cyric instructs them to paddle it out into the stream if they are discovered, and then wait north of the bridge, as close to the tower as possible, for his return.

Cyric and any other PCs along on the adventure will then slip into the tower. Pairs of guards will be found at all the spots

marked "G" on the map. Cyric will curtly tell PCs not to go pillaging, reminding them that the only way to rescue the prisoners is to get in and out as quickly and as quietly as possible. "Stay together," he hisses fiercely, "and follow me!" Then he charges into the darkness.

Cyric has no compunctions about slaughtering guards. He will put them out of his way in any manner necessary, as long as it's quick, quiet, and will last until he expects to be gone.

All guards inside the tower are 1st level fighters with 9 hp each, wearing chain & shield (AC 4) and armed with spears, long swords, maces, and daggers. Each pair stands within 20' of a torch in a wall bracket; under each torch is an alarm gong.

If an alarm is raised, the entire guard contingent of the aboveground section of the tower (48 1st level soldiers in chain mail) will arrive in waves of six, one group every two rounds. The last two waves will be armed with halberds, and will carry cocked and loaded crossbows. If an alarm is not sounded, each stairway in the tower will have two guards posted at the top of it.

The upper stories of the Tower of Ashaba are home to many of the officials of Shadowdale and members of their staffs. However, due to a general state of exhaustion and losses suffered in the recent battle, the civilians who remain in the tower are asleep in their rooms and will not be roused by the guards (who consider themselves capable of dealing with this intrusion). If the PCs enter one of the guardrooms, they will run into a force of six soldiers who will sound an alarm and then attack. If they raid the kitchen (area #6), they'll meet two fat, middle-aged cooks (husband and wife) who will fearfully give them food before ducking out the slop-chute (area #7) into the night, in terror. (PCs must remove all their armor if they want to follow.)

The DM must create an atmosphere of excitement as the PCs stealthily cut their way across the tower's ground floor and down into the dungeons. If PCs take up the gear of fallen guards and assume their posts, the imposture will not be discovered until the next shift reports for duty, in three hours' time.

After the rescuers reach the dungeon, they will eventually have to encounter the six guards sitting in the large cavern (because these men have the keys to the cells). The guards are playing a dice game called "thabort": 2d6 are rolled six times, with the roller trying to roll every number from 1 through 6 to collect half the bets, and the onlookers betting on how many rolls will be needed to do this after two rolls have been

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made; those who guess right split the other half of the pot. The guards are so deeply absorbed in the game that surprising and overcoming them should not be difficult.

Each guard has as many as three keys (depending on how many prisoners are being held): a master door key (opens any cell) and two manacle keys (but never both for the same set of manacles).

All the guards here are 3rd level fighters with 20 hp, wearing chain mail (AC 5) and variously armed with whips, clubs, staves, and daggers. Against the wall behind them lean six halberds, and on a stone shelf nearby are 12 dusty steel vials, all stoppered with rocks and sealed with wax. One, marked with a purple triangle, is a sleeping draught (for subduing stubborn prisoners). Anyone so much as sipping it must save vs. poison at -5 or fall asleep for 3d4 turns in a drugged slumber that won't be broken by slapping, shouting, or attack. The effects will be apparent 1d4 + 1 rounds after sampling the potion, and are instantaneous when they do occur.

The other vials are all potions of healing that can restore 2d4+2 hp of damage apiece. One (determine randomly) will cause the imbiber to radiate a bright green *faerie fire* radiance for 2d4 turns.

The alarm gong in the dungeon is cracked. Even when it was fully functional, its noise never reached beyond the top of the dungeon stairs (to reach this point of the dungeon, Cyric or the PCs should have disposed of any guards there already). One round after any fight erupts in the cavern, a seventh guard will enter the cavern from his post (sitting on a stool near the cells) with his weapons ready and expecting trouble.

Cyric will leave the cavern as soon as he can, with whatever keys the rescuers have claimed from the guards, and go to free the prisoners. (The DM, by deciding which guards are carrying which keys, can make this process as laborious or as easy as he wishes.) Cyric will be primarily interested in freeing Midnight (his longtime friend) and Adon (if he is imprisoned). He will exhort Midnight to accompany him on a quest for the Tablets of Fate, and she will agree to go—but she will also insist (if Cyric seems reluctant to do so) that he free all the PCs and allow them to come along.

Midnight, rubbing her wrists and shaking off her grogginess, gives Cyric an earnest look. "We'll need all the help we can get," she says. "These others have endured much with me so far, and I will not go on without them."

Cyric nods curtly, moves to the other

cells, and releases everyone. "Out, now!" he says in a loud whisper. "Make for the boat, quick and quiet!"

Regardless of how cautious the assault party has been, they will be discovered by restless, off-duty guards when they reach the top of the dungeon stairs. An alarm is raised!

Guards will begin to arrive (six every two rounds, as previously noted). Cyric, Adon, Midnight, and the PCs will be forced to flee down the Ashaba in the darkness forthwith-or perish.

Cyric will order the PCs to "sink all those boats," indicating the other craft in the tower boathouse. This will cause a fight in the moonlight as the PCs try to scuttle the boats and fight off the aroused guards of the tower. Guards will also come running from the encampment atop the Old Skull, armed with crossbows, long swords, and spears to line the eastern bank of the river south of the tower as the PCs escape. If the PCs did not act quickly enough to scuttle the boats while Cyric, Adon, and Midnight ran for the escape craft, they may be forced to run along the riverbank, zigzagging to avoid crossbow-bolts and flying spears, and then leap into the water and swim in order to catch the stolen boat. The guards will spread out to cover both banks of the river, preventing the escape craft from coming ashore until it is out of the dale.

As the boat moves past the bridge, the guards there will peer out uncertainly at the shouting coming from the north, and then will cast their spears down at the boat passing beneath the bridge (A dozen will be thrown, at -2 to hit because of the darkness. Characters who take refuge under the benches or beneath shields will be unharmed.) Guards will rush from the tower to the bridge, shouting.

The water is running with surprising speed. As the boat slips away down the dark river, you hear a guard curse.

"They're getting away, gods blast them all! This is what comes of wagging jaws and holding trials and all, and not simply sinking steel into the lot of them without delay! Guilty? Kill 'em then, I say—don't put it off 'til highsun tomorrow; it always invites all this slaughter and getting us out of bed in the middle of the night!"

The soldier beside the complaining guard replies softly, "And what if I called every man or maid found in suspicious

straits guilty, and put steel to them there and then, as you suggest? I'd soon not have anyone to wake up in the middle of the night, would I?" You recognize the quiet authority of this second voice; it is Mourngrym's.

Event 4: Well Met by Moonlight

The boat rushes down the Ashaba, rocking and pitching in the strangely wild waves. The roiling waters carry you swiftly into the broad expanse of the millpond, and then something appears from the dark trees on your left.

It is a man in a dark robe, standing in the empty night air as though he is on something solid but invisible. He floats quickly toward you, raising a hand. "Well met," he says softly. It is Lhaeo, Elminster's scribe. "I have some things of interest to you, and bring you the blessings of Mystra in addition."

Lhaeo is protected by a *wall of force*, and floats upon an invisible disc of the same material. He will be unharmed by all attacks, and will not retaliate. Regardless of PC reactions, he will cast a small, seemingly limp sack down into the boat with the words, "May Art sustain thee," and then simply vanish.

The sack is a *bag of holding*. In it are Midnight's spell books (as well as any spell books or scrolls seized from PCs upon their imprisonment); any essential weapons and gear that were confiscated from PCs when they were imprisoned; seven steel vials containing *potions of extra-healing* (3d8 + 3 hp restored per vial); a *robe of useful items* (DM's choice of optional contents, although patches signifying gems and gold pieces are recommended); a *rod of resurrection* (only 6 charges left); and a crystal sphere. This sphere is wrapped in a piece of soft hide, on which has been written: "If this crystal shatters, it has come within an arm's reach of an item of Greater Art: an artifact, as the sages call them, or one of the Tablets of Fate. Pray not for success, but make thine own."

Chapter 2: Haste, Blood, and Moonlight

This chapter begins as the adventurers' boat leaves Shadowdale.

The River Ashaba tends to be shallow (about 8' deep) and rocky-bottomed. Normally a placid, easily traveled waterway, the Ashaba is currently feeling the effects of physical chaos. The river is fast-flowing (as much as 120 feet per round) and, because of its shallowness and rough bottom, very turbulent. The DM should bear this in mind when determining the fates of characters who enter the water.

Some guidelines: Characters who strike bottom will suffer 1d6 damage per occurrence, due to the rocks, but if not judged to be seriously hurt can readily kick against the bottom to propel themselves to the surface in order to breathe. The fast-flowing Ashaba will rapidly carry characters in the water downstream, but the boat, if deliberately propelled, can reach and outrun drifting or struggling characters in 1d4 + 1 rounds. A character in the water who is hit by the boat suffers 1d4 damage and must make a Constitution Check to avoid being knocked senseless; drowning may follow if the character is unaided.

Any character in the water may meet with any sort of fresh-water aquatic monster; the chaos has stirred up life in the Ashaba as well as its waves. Any sort of treasure that floats (food, lightly loaded wooden crates, and the like) may be found in the water or on the banks nearby.

The turbulence of the Ashaba creates strong eddies or back-currents in addition to the main flow: the DM can introduce whirlpools or undertows, or sweep a character—even a non-swimmer-up into a snag, or clear out of the water at a bend or islet. The DM should batter the PCs with the river, but not force them onto dry land or slay them outright.

Event 1: Fast Current To Freedom

The River Ashaba has a fast, vicious current that surprises everyone,

Cyric mutters, "Always placid, they said, all of them, and not everyone had reason to lie . . . This must be more of the doings of the gods!"

The PCs will swiftly outdistance their pursuers as the boat rushes on across the millpond and toward a bridge located south of

the pond.

The area around this bridge is illuminated by a circle of soft light. Amber *faerie fire* spells have been cast on stones that are hung high in trees all around the guardpost, at least a hundred paces distant. The guards themselves are thus in gloom, looking outward at softly lit surroundings. They have lighted, hooded lanterns with them on the bridge. (If attacked by the PCs, they will cast at least one of these down into the boat to illuminate it, possibly burning PCs and setting afire flammable gear, such as scrolls and spell books.)

The guards at the bridge have not heard of the escape, and will do nothing unless attacked by those aboard the boat. They won't know why a boat is traveling down the treacherous river at night, but they won't be inclined to question what's going on. Then, by means of a magical message, they will learn that the boat is to be stopped—but their orders come just a bit too late, when the boat is several dozen yards south of the bridge.

Crossbow bolts will begin ripping through branches and leaves, hissing into the water all around the boat as the river waters carry the craft into the deep woods. As the guards get off their first volley of crossbow fire, two of them will fire two bolts enchanted with light spells past the boat, aiming at the riverbanks as far down the Ashaba as they can shoot, and by the light of these the guards will be able to fire at the PCs for two more rounds.

Characters not under cover in the boat will suffer damage from up to eight crossbow bolts on the first round. Determine randomly which characters have a chance of being struck, then make attack rolls (THACO 19) to see how many bolts cause damage. (The guards are +1 to hit from short range because of their skill.)

In the second round, as many as six bolts will have a chance to hit unprotected characters in the boat, but the guards' attack rolls are made with a -2 penalty for medium range (as the boat rushes on, getting farther away). In the third round, only four bolts have a chance to hit (and will only do so on a roll of 20, regardless of the target's Armor Class).

There are 10 male guards at the bridge, all lawful neutral 1st level human fighters of AC 5 (chain mail), armed with crossbows (6 bolts each), spears, daggers, maces, and short swords. They all wear royal blue surcoats adorned with the badge of Shadowdale: a silver crescent moon, floating points uppermost, upon which is superimposed the silver, spiral outline of the lower of Ashaba, which divides the crescent equally.

Their captain is a similarly equipped lawful neutral half-elven female. She is a 3rd level female fighter named Sieran, and is armed with a *mace of spellwarding* (a new magical item; see page 45). She will use it to dispel or reflect any magic cast at the guards.

If the PCs land to engage in combat, the guards will fight to the death to hold the bridge, and will try to slay the attackers, taking no prisoners. The fury of their attack should drive the NPCs (Cyric, Midnight, and Adon) back to the boat; the PCs would be wise to follow.

The guards will not leave their post to pursue the boat, and if the PCs do not act rashly, the boat should easily escape from the vicinity of Shadowdale.

OFFSTAGE EVENT

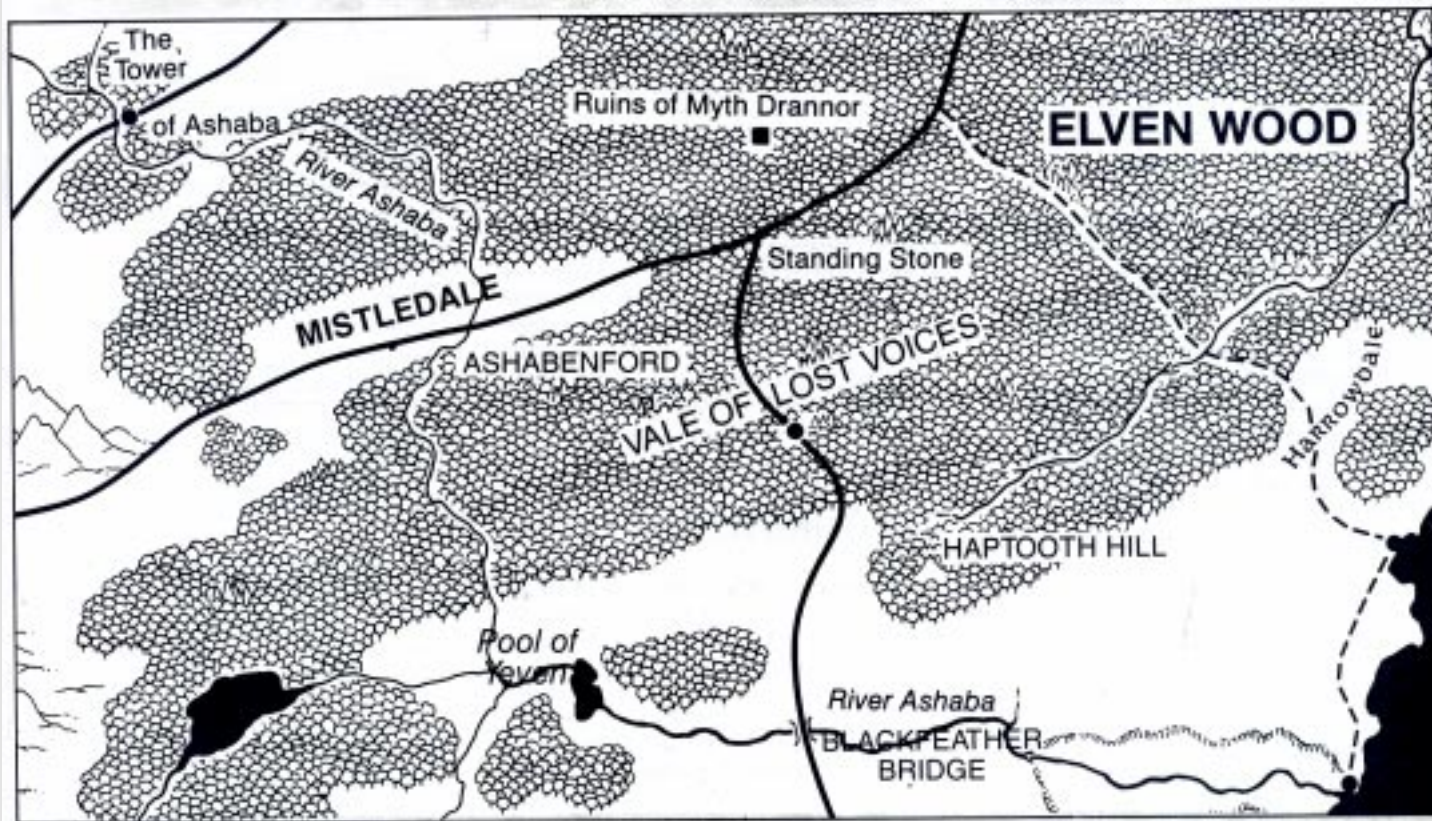
In Shadowdale, Mourngrym awakens a sleeping Kelemvor (the battle companion of Adon, Cyric, and Midnight) and convinces him to lead the hunt for the missing prisoners. Mourngrym gives him gems worth 1000 gp per escaped prisoner to persuade him to take the job, and promises an additional 2000 gp per prisoner captured or proven killed when Kelemvor returns to Shadowdale. Cursing to himself, Kelemvor agrees to lead the pursuit. The lord of Shadowdale organizes a pursuit force of a dozen archers and a guide. With a hastily eaten breakfast still warm in their stomachs, they plunge into the woods, heading south along the river.

Event 2: Wreck and Runes

The moon sails through scudding clouds as you race down the Ashaba. You need your paddles to slow and steer the boat, not to propel it. The water is rushing seaward with frightening speed, rocking the flat-bottomed boat from side to side as though it were a cork floating in a rain barrel during a storm. Several times rocks grate and grind beneath you, making the boat shudder for a moment before the current whirls you forward.

The physical chaos affecting the Realms in this Time of Troubles has altered the normally placid Ashaba in more ways than the speed of its flow. Strange creatures, not known to inhabit the river before now, lurk in its depths. Physical chaos should also be obvious in the surrounding lands (provide examples from the table on the inside cover or of your own invention, to suit your cam-

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paign) as the boat rushes ahead.

For every turn that the boat is on the Ashaba after getting past the southern bridge, the DM should roll for an encounter, referring to the Aquatic Encounter Table if one is indicated. (The chance of an encounter occurring is up to the DM, but it should be relatively high—perhaps as great as 50% on every turn when a check is made.) Creatures will be aggressive and a little bewildered; most will fight to the death rather than fleeing if the battle goes against them.

As the boat rushes on through the night, PCs should be kept busy defending the boat from rocks and overhanging banks with paddles, polearms, or weapons. During this perilous voyage, the DM should initiate a frequently interrupted discussion of the party's future and goals, by playing the parts of the three NPCs (Midnight, Cyric, and Adon).

Any PCs present can take part in the heated discussion. All the NPCs agree that they must try to gain possession of the Tablets of Fate. Cyric is adamant that the tablets be used for personal gain, on the theory that he trusts himself (and his companions) more than he trusts anyone else in Faerun. He would prefer that he and his companions wield the powers of the tablets than anyone else. After all, everyone else would try to use the tablets for personal gain, no

matter what visions or goals they might delude themselves into thinking they would accomplish.

The other NPCs disagree. The chaos must be stopped, they say. The world seems to be sliding into barbaric ruin, in which all life will ultimately perish. The heroes know that they must return the tablets to the Planes. Then Lord Ao will remove the gods from the Realms.

Cyric sees that his companions are as adamant as he, and that if all of them persist in disagreeing, they will still be arguing when the gods themselves sweep down to destroy them. He makes one try to enlist Midnight as a partner in a grand scheme to use the tablets together to establish a new, stable kingdom. They can force a better order and nature upon the lands, not merely restore the lifestyle. (Cyric really wants the tablets in order to increase his personal power. He can then carve out a land of his own to rule, and whatever happens, he'll be set for life.)

Midnight openly doubts his competence to do this, reasoning that Cyric has never made a decision in his life, and has no skill at command nor experience with decision-making; he has no business consorting with godlike powers.

PC involvement in the discussion should be encouraged, but Cyric and Midnight should be used to prevent any conclusion to

abandon the search for the tablets or even to leave the river. The NPCs should stress that the river offers the fastest escape from any pursuit from Shadowdale.

Whenever the council of war begins to flag, or the PCs involved are beginning to deduce some definite conclusions, the DM should read the following:

Beneath you, there is a sudden, queasy shudder. The boat has struck something yielding—something alive?

An instant later, there is a powerful surge beneath your feet. The boat rises sharply and tilts to one side. You hear a deep hissing from the water as the boat flips over. The creature sounds powerful, fearless, and terribly, terribly angry.

In the darkness, the boat has collided with a large, snakelike water monster, a quelzarn (a new monster; see page 47) having 8 HD and 52 hp. Driven up the Ashaba by the chaos in the waters of the Dragon Reach brought on by the Fall of the Gods, it is baffled and irritated, and welcomes this opportunity to feed and to lash out at something it can fight. It will fight to the death, twisting and wriggling to pursue PCs up onto the banks if necessary. All characters will be

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dumped into the cold, rushing waters of the Ashaba.

When the party is dunked, all PCs must make a Dexterity Check to avoid being struck by the boat, flying paddles, loose gear, or nearby drawn weapons, for 1d4 + 1 points of damage.

The quelzarn has no treasure. In the fray, the boat will be turned over and completely submerged by the quelzarn's weighty coils. The party's food, spell books, and other gear will all be lost in the water. Midnight and Cyric, for all their impatience to get away from Shadowdale, will refuse to leave the site of the battle until dawn allows them to recover all they can from the river bottom. (Midnight will certainly recover her spell book; the fate of all other gear is up to the DM.)

Midnight in particular will seem dazed from the effects of the battle, perhaps having been buffeted by flying paddles, the plunging boat, or the like. She will not be able to think of any magical aids to recover gear in the darkness (such as using light spells cast on stones, etc.). If PCs do so, allow them to benefit by gaining some time to eat and dry out, but delay them until dawn by presenting them with a damaged boat to repair.

The DM should refer to the Known Areas Encounter Table (see inside cover) for night encounters along the riverbank, and if extensive swimming, wading, or diving occurs, the Aquatic Encounter Table should also be consulted.

At dawn, PCs will need to cut fresh saplings or branches for replacement paddles and poles (the originals having been either lost or splintered into uselessness in the wreck and battle). When they walk away from the riverbank to find suitable pieces of wood, they will come upon a nearby clearing in which the earth has been trampled hard by many feet, somewhat recently.

Two large boulders rise out of the tamped-down earth in the center of this clearing. The boulders are dark, and smooth with age. On one has been carved an open human hand, fingers and thumb extended but held close together. On the other is an etching of a grinning human skull with a skeletal hand reaching from its mouth.

Small stones nearby have been set into the earth in a giant ring, connecting the two boulders. On each stone is the twisted, blackened, waxy remnant of a burned-out candle.

Alert PCs should recognize these runes as the symbols of the gods Bane and Myrkul, which have apparently been linked together by worshipers in some sort of ceremony (the long-gone priests came to this

place by boat; there are no tracks leading away into the woods). If no PCs recognize the runes, have Cyric or Adon do so, and reveal their knowledge to all.

The PCs should be able to repair the boat quickly. Allow all spell books and valuable gear, such as magical items, to be recovered (unless you think the PCs are relying too much on a particular item); later, the adventurers will need all the power they can muster. If the PCs seem reluctant to resume their voyage down the river, a sudden shower (or two) of elven arrows out of the trees should persuade them back into the boat in haste, and on down the Ashaba.

Event 3: Attack at Ashabenford

As the boat continues down the river, the waters will become quick and turbulent again, and Cyric will sarcastically needle the largely silent, withdrawn Adon, calling him "a useless lump" and "a mouth to feed with no brain behind it." Midnight will tell him sharply to "Hold thy tongue!" on two occasions. The second time this occurs, read the following:

Cyric eyes Midnight thoughtfully, his face expressionless. When he does speak, his voice is low and soft, almost a gentle whisper. "And what of your Art, lady? What are you becoming, and what will you do with the power you've gained?"

Midnight will say little, and appear to honestly not know just what powers she has gained. The DM should allow frank PC discussion of Mystra's fate and the possible uses of Midnight's power if players desire.

Midnight will remind everyone that Elminster told them "the trail leads to Tantras," and add thoughtfully, "I feel that we'll find one of the tablets there, somehow."

The day will pass with occasional monster attacks from the skies (stirges and the like) or from the waters around the rushing boat (use the Aquatic Encounter Table), and with shouts and (always failing to hit) arrows from unseen elves and men wandering in the woods near the river.

As the sun sinks low and darkness gathers under the trees, Cyric will insist on landing and making camp for the night, setting out guards and making as little noise and light as possible.

"You all know what happened last night!" Cyric says, looking around at everyone. "I'm not going through that again, if we can avoid it. Let's land and make camp, while we can still see to do so! What if it's a rock we hit next time—perhaps one with a dragon sleeping on it, or an orc patrol camped on it, eh?"

Whether the party lands or not, it will be the next morning before the river carries them briefly out of the forest, into the open farmland of Mistledale. The low, half-timbered buildings of Ashabenford loom ahead as the churning river rolls down to meet them. Read the players the following passage:

The boat slows, striking the bottom now and then in a series of lurches and sudden jolts. You can see the stones on the bottom around you: the water is very shallow here. Ahead, you can see the ford itself, where the overland road crosses the Ashaba in a muddy dip. Men of the village stand watching.

You hear a shout from somewhere ahead, and men come running toward you armed with long pikes, threshing flails, and boathooks. Somehow word has come from Shadowdale! Angry farmers and villagers are hurrying to the ford, to block your way.

"By all the gods," Cyric mutters, "was that old man loved so much all around these lands? What did he do, give away gold to everyone?" He looks around. "Get ready, all!" he says. "Be prepared to leap out and fight them off! We may have to push the boat through. Take down anyone right in our path; mayhap we can ram our way past the ford!"

Three Mistledale Riders lead the attack. They are the only trained and equipped warriors in Ashabenford at the moment: the others are on patrol at either end of the dale, or have not yet returned from the battle in Shadowdale. The Riders are on foot, and are all 3rd level neutral good fighters:

Belmargh, a tall man with a jet-black moustache and scale mail, AC 6, 27 hp;

Belmira, a broad-shouldered woman with fierce eyes and short red hair, clad in studded leather, AC 4 due to her Dex, 24 hp; and

Alasstan, a short, agile girl with long brown hair, who wears no armor but is AC 6 due to her 18 Dex, and has 21 hp.

All three Riders are armed with daggers (1d4), throwing axes (1d6), long swords

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(1d8), and spetums (1d6+1). They will seek to force the boat toward the western bank at the ford, concentrating on disabling spellcasters (such as Midnight), while the merchants with them swarm into the boat to try to halt its progress.

There are 12 merchants, 8 of whom will actually dare to fight. Most are stout and short, all are without armor, and all are armed with daggers (1d4), clubs (1d6), or staves (1d6). Treat all as 1st level fighters for attack purposes, but attach penalties for being unorganized (getting in each other's way and making other mistakes so as to unintentionally aid the PCs). They will not try to take any of the adventurers' gear, seeking only to capture or kill. They will shout instructions to one another, encouragement to the Riders, and cries for help. The merchants include Kaulvaerus (a horse trader), Lhuin (a leatherworker and saddlemaker), Braunstar (a cooper and wheelwright), and the farmers Osbryn, Mhaerek, and Darnym.

By dint of hard fighting (the DM can set the pace for this with Cyric and Midnight), the adventurers should be able to win past the ford. Their attackers will run along the banks for six rounds after the boat crosses the ford, hurling clubs (a roll of 20 is required for a hit that deals only 1d2 damage), and a hastily prepared "firebomb" (a flaming cloak wrapped around a fist-sized rock and hurled aboard). The DM should determine the effects of this last token of affection according to the presence and location of flammables (oil pots, parchment, etc.), in the boat, as the Ashaba picks up speed again and whisks the craft away.

The PCs should be allowed to leave the boat at the ford to engage in combat, but if they show intentions of stealing horses or otherwise trying to end the river voyage here, the DM should do whatever is necessary to get them back in the boat. (For instance: physical chaos causes the ground to heave up and crack open, making overland travel hazardous if not impossible; horses panic and run uncontrollably back toward the river, calming down only after the PCs have dismounted. The NPCs will use verbal threats or magical-but not physical-force to get the PCs to see the error of their ways.)

Event 4: Magic in The Mists

The boat rushes on, through the great Elvenwood, until night falls. Cyric will oversee the landing of the boat, and dragoon the PCs into arranging armed watches for their night camp, if the PCs do not voluntarily do so.

This area is wilder than the woods between Shadowdale and Mistedale. The night will be full of strange rustlings and creakings, eerie hootings and callings in the woods, and the adventurers will see far-off dancing lights (all harmless; either night-shine, a form of glowing moss, or witchfire, luminescent wisps of marsh gas). The DM should roll for random monster encounters once per turn, referring to the Wild Areas Encounter Table on the inside cover of this module, to see what hunting menaces do appear.

The night is chilly; dawn brings mist on the river. It persists as the adventurers climb into the boat and are swept southward once more.

The current is strong, tugging the boat this way and that, as you come out of the trees into open country. A bit later in the day you round a bend in the river and come upon a large area of water, perhaps a small lake, entirely shrouded in mist.

"The Pool of Yeven," Cyric mutters grimly, raising the pole he has been using to guide the boat as if to ward off an unseen attacker. "Look sharp, everyone! This place is . . . not well regarded."

Before Cyric, Midnight, or anyone else has any opportunity to explain or impart any of the legends or reasons for the fey reputation of the pool, a figure will loom out of the mist.

Out of the roiling mist appears the dark figure of a man in robes, trudging slowly toward you—walking on the water! He wears tattered black robes and cloak, and leans on a gnarled, bare, wooden staff. He is old, white-haired and long-bearded; as he draws nearer, you discover that you can see through him. His eyes are filled with tears.

"So much pain," he gasps. "I had not thought it would hurt this much." He draws himself up, in the empty air, and addresses you. "Beware, heroes-to-be," he says. "The Dark God, Bane, knows your quest and where the first tablet lies. Even now, he takes another avatar."

Angrily, the old man continues. "His ally, The Lord of Bones, seeks to destroy you here, in my own pool! Beware the dead, for they are his to command . . . all save Yeven."

The old man gasps and seems to shiver. "For I am Yeven, and by my Art I . . . I

defy thee, damned Myrkul." He gestures, and the mist rolls back, revealing the entire surface of the pool and the banks on all sides.

Then the staff in the man's hand shakes as he shudders, hunches over in apparent agony, and whispers fiercely, "I defy thee—and to death return! Ye may command in the Realm of the Dead, but here . . . here I can withstand thy power! Do thy own villainy! Yeven defies thee!"

The old man shakes, and his flesh crumbles away, the weight of the beard pulling his jaw off as his clothing sags and disintegrates to reveal a kneeling, shaking skeleton. Before your eyes it shatters, and crumbles, and is gone, leaving only the staff, floating upright in the air. An instant later the staff sinks from sight into the water, and there is only mist around you once more.

Yeven dwelt here long ago. A mage of power, he worked many magics here, creating (among other things) many gates to other planes and "skyships" to sail the winds of Faerun. In some mysterious way, much of his power became linked to, or invested in, the pool and its surroundings, and by this means he is able to appear to the adventurers, and defy the power of Myrkul to control the dead.

Others who have drowned or been buried near here were not so lucky. Myrkul's power raises them from the earth and the waters of the pool to attack the adventurers at this time. The god remains hidden, acting from afar to animate 20 skeletons (7 hp each) and 10 zombies (8 hp each). They will rise, dripping, from the water, each assembling horribly from separate body parts before the eyes of the PCs within 1 round (one free attack for any adventurer who seizes the opportunity).

The adventurers will see them on the banks of the pool, ripping up out of the earth in a macabre dance of disembodied skulls, bones and body parts, coming together in eerie silence to attack. The undead animated by Myrkul are unique in only one way: they can "walk" on water, air, or any surface, to attack from whatever elevation (and from whatever angle) they choose. They will march out across the pool to envelop the boat.

Six of the zombies and 14 of the skeletons wield rusting, crumbling blades. For every round of combat, each adventurer in the boat must make a Dexterity Check to avoid being struck by a sword tip thrusting up through the bottom of the boat. A failed

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check means 1 hit point of damage suffered, and a Strength Check must be made. A failed Strength Check means the struck character suffers one of the following fates (DM's choice: determine by situation or roll randomly):

1. Character pinned in place for at least the next round (-4 penalty to AC, 1 additional hp lost per round).

2. Character falls heavily (any character attack or spell in that round is lost or ruined, -2 penalty to AC for following round).

3. Character stumbles and drops weapon or spell component, delaying any intended attack until next round.

4. Character falls into another character (if the second character is launching a spell or wielding a weapon or magical item, determine how this activity is affected, and if the falling character can be hit by the weapon he fell into, make a normal attack roll to see if this occurs).

5. Character falls out of the boat (possible drowning, certain attack by undead, possible loss of clothing, items, etc., as DM desires).

6. Character flails about wildly in pain (possibly hitting a companion, but certainly ruining any attack or personal activity requiring Dexterity, such as readying a weapon, tying a knot, casting a spell, sorting through a pack, etc.).

The undead will attack until destroyed; the leaking boat will begin to fill with water as the Ashaba picks up speed again, pulling it toward the outflow at the lower end of the pool.

PCs who decide to land (Cyril, Midnight, and Adon will be too wounded, preoccupied, or dazed to argue or suggest anything; leave the decisions at this point to the PCs) to repair the boat will immediately face a monster attack, from a "thirst" (hunting flight, 4d6 in number) of stirges attracted by the sounds of battle.

Luckily for the adventurers, none of these stirges carry any infectious disease; unluckily for the adventurers, they are very thirsty, and cannot be driven away. The adventurers will be forced to kill them to be rid of them.

Physical chaos will reign in the woods around the pool the entire time that the adventurers are present, but it will not affect the pool itself, once Myrkul's undead have been destroyed.

Any PCs looking around, examining the pool, or keeping watch will soon notice Yeven's staff silently reappearing, floating upright above the center of the pool. It will make no sound or action, and is in fact

merely an apparition. If darkness has fallen, it will glow slightly with a green radiance. It is a sign that the pool is under Yeven's protection, and a hint to the adventurers to examine the pool's depths.

Any adventurers doing so (employing *water breathing* and *light* and similar magics) will find that the pool is about 40 feet deep in most parts and has a hard rock bottom, strewn here and there with gravel carried down by the Ashaba. The racing current of the Ashaba does not affect the pool's depths. Half buried in one gravel ridge is an ivory-colored marble statue of a long-haired, robed human.

If investigated, the statue will be identified as a tall, slim woman, sculpted with hands outstretched. Where her face should be is carved the sign of a many-pointed star. She is 6 feet tall.

Upon hearing this description, Midnight will whisper, "Mystra!" in awed recognition and demand that the statue be hauled to the surface.

The DM should allow the PCs to do so, dragging it toward the nearest shore in short dives if they lack ropes or other means of shifting the statue; it weighs only about as much as five humans.

Midnight stretches out a hand to the statue. Tentatively, almost reverently, she reaches out her fingers to touch its star "face."

There is a sudden blaze of blue-white fire about Midnight's fingers. Her hair stirs about her shoulders, and she laughs with delight. "A kind gift indeed, Yeven!" she says to the empty air about. "My thanks!"

Midnight seems invigorated and possessed of new power. She has actually been healed of all current physical damage, and has had spells magically restored to her mind, ready to cast anew. She has also instantly and permanently gained an experience level, earning new spell ability and 4 additional hit points. She will not speak of this to any of her companions.

Any PCs touching or closely examining the statue (Adon and Cyril will be reluctant to do so) will find it to be without seams, markings, latches, cavities, or any hidden openings.

Merely touching either of the statue's outstretched, open hands will activate their powers, however. Note that there are no instructions or indications that one should do so; PCs will have to discover this.

The left hand functions seven times, and its powers will then cease. The first seven

characters to touch it will be instantly and painlessly cured of all physical damage (hp losses), diseases, poison effects, insanity, mental control or compulsion of any sort (including existing *geas* or *quest* spells), confusion, weariness, or feeble-mindedness. Missing limbs or digits will be regenerated, scars and bruises will vanish, and so forth.

If Kelemvor is later brought to this statue, the hand's touch will cause him to briefly become a panther, and will cure all of the ills listed above that he may suffer at the time, but will not remove the curse. The statue will not in fact *remove curse* for anyone.

The right hand will instantly, silently, and safely recharge (restoring 2d6 charges) the first nine rechargeable magical items touched to it. All items bearing a dweomer, including potions and scrolls, and artifacts even if they do not emit a dweomer, will glow with a faint blue-white radiance when touched to this hand, even after its recharging powers are exhausted.

If the powers of both hands of the statue are exhausted, the statue will slowly and silently rise into the air by itself, levitate out over the surface of the pool to the center, and then sink back under the waters. The image of Yeven's staff will briefly reappear over the spot where it disappears from view.

An additional unadvertised power of the statue: magic cast or activated within 30' of the statue receives a +30% bonus on the Magical Chaos Table. Magic cast or activated 31 to 60 feet distant from the statue gets a 15% bonus.

If the party tries to move the statue away from the pool to hide it, or tries to put it on the boat (which will immediately begin to sink under its weight) or otherwise remove it from the pool, read the following passage:

A gentle, weary-sounding male voice speaks to you, from empty air:

"Upon pain of Mystra's doom, do not move this, her image, from this place. Loyal Yeven guards it, beyond death, and wise Ashaba will rise up to aid him, if you escape the pool. Other mages stand behind them, gone from fair Faerun with the passing years, but still sworn to serve Mystra.

"I stand with them; Azuth is my name. I wish you well, if you mean well in this place. Know you that no magic may harm or affect this statue, and no mortal may move it except the Magister and those Mystra herself gives leave to do so. All others who do will find that all magic they work, from this moment forth, is

Chapter 2: Haste, Blood, and Moonlight

twisted and awry, and works against their desires in the end.

"That is Mystra's doom, decreed by The One Who is Hidden to outlast even her passing."

Azuth (see page 42) will appear, floating in the air above the pool, if any of the adventurers persist. (Cyric, for one, is tempted to build a raft and take the statue away, but can readily be talked out of this; he will realize all too soon that the pool is a safer hiding-place for the statue than anywhere else.)

Yeven, Ashaba (an expert at water magics, who ultimately *polymorphed* himself into a water elemental and merged with the waters of the river that bears his name, never to be seen again), and the "other mages" that Azuth mentions will not appear.

Azuth himself will not attack the party. If PCs attack, he will avoid their attacks pas-

sively and effortlessly, and then will calmly and sadly proclaim the following: "I pronounce Mystra's Doom upon thee, Adon, son of Phylicia and Abrasax, follower of Sune Firehair," and so on for each member of the party trying to remove the statue or not actively speaking or working against the removal of the statue. (He will thus reveal the deities and parentage of each party member involved to the rest of the party, whether they want him to or not.) When he is done, he will stare steadily at the party, and the statue will rise by itself and vanish into the pool, as described earlier.

If the PCs persist or return to the pool in reinforced strength later to seize the statue, Azuth will appear in order to prevent its removal with all of his power.

Mystra's Doom is simply the "twisted magic" that Azuth referred to. All magic (either spell or item) ever wielded by a cursed character will be affected by magical chaos, even after the Time of Troubles is past (probably forcing a change of profession on

spellcasters). It can be removed, for service to Mystra or her causes, by Azuth, any current Magister, or any who hold the power to do so from Mystra (e.g. Elminster, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, Alustriel of Silverymoon, The Simbul, Mystra's successor, and others as yet unrevealed).

Midnight will be adamantly against the removal of the statue, and will not be cursed.

The statue itself turns (as a *ring of spell turning*) all magic worked upon it 100% back upon the caster/wielder (this includes spell-like natural abilities).

PCs will readily be able to find saplings, bark, clay, and tree-gum near the pool to repair their boat. Myrkul will not mount a second attack upon them, but the DM should roll on the Known Areas Encounter Table once every three turns (once every two turns at night) if the adventurers tarry here, and increase monster attacks steadily if the adventurers try to leave the river to travel overland.

Chapter 3: The Hand of Bane

This chapter begins as the adventurers leave the Pool of Yeven, heading eastward down the roaring River Ashaba.

OFFSTAGE EVENTS

1. The posse from Shadowdale that is pursuing the escaped prisoners, led by the NPC Kelemvor, makes very slow travel through the woods. Upon reaching Ashabenford, hearing of the battle, and that the boat passed through (Event 3 in Chapter 21, Kelemvor realizes that they'll never catch up with the fleeing boat while traveling along the riverbanks, nor by taking to the water themselves. His former companions have built up too much of a lead.

Their only hope of catching the fleeing ex-prisoners is by riding hard on the roads (via The Standing Stone) to reach Blackfeather Bridge, to wait for the boat there before the boat passes it.

Even as he gives the orders and they start off on the long, pounding ride, Kelemvor begins to have misgivings about catching his friends. Wrongly imprisoned, perhaps; and if so, what did they do wrong in fighting their way to freedom?

2. Myrkul, God of the Dead, has aided his ally Bane. Helping Bane to reassemble his scattered energies into a ghostlike "anima" form, he has guided Bane's anima to the nearest powerful gathering of Bane's priesthood, at Zhentil Keep.

There, Bane chooses to possess Fzoul Chembryl as his next avatar (in part due to Fzoul's Zhentarim links and knowledge, and partly to control, punish, and if necessary eradicate him: Fzoul has been the least loyal of Bane's powerful priests in the Realms).

Bane wants to capture Midnight. He fears and does not understand her growing powers and her link with Mystra. He is suspicious about her knowledge of the whereabouts of the Tablet of Fate that he hid, and wonders if Midnight is an unwitting agent of The One Who Is Hidden, perhaps Ao's way of testing Bane to see if he is still fit to be the Lord of Tyranny.

Bane learns from Zhentarim spies that Midnight has escaped from Shadowdale by boat down the Ashaba, and resolves to take custody of her personally when his forces capture her and bring her to Scardale.

Bane's agents (the Zhentarim, in particular) have been ordered to seize control of Scardale, giving Bane a naval base from which to attack Tantras.

Before the Fall, Bane hid the tablet he had stolen in the treasure chambers of the temple of Torm in Tantras: a perfect place, he thought at the time, but one that is now imperiled by Torm's arrival in the city and growing power.

Magical chaos makes Bane mistrustful of his own still-weak magic (and that of the Zhentarim and his loyal priests). He resolves to sail to Scardale, taking a fleet of six small, fast ships so as not to alarm Hillsfar, Mulmaster, or Sembia into viewing this as an invasion and trying to stop his fleet. Messengers are sent to Scardale to advise the garrison of Bane's intended arrival, and to order Midnight captured and brought to Scardale as a prisoner, to await Bane.

Event 1: An Unexpected Visitor

This event can occur whenever the party lands on the shore to make camp. (If the PCs are resolved to sail right down the river without stopping, the boat will spring leaks, forcing a landing near dusk for repairs.)

Suddenly, a robed, bearded figure appears in midair, seemingly from nowhere. He smiles at you, and nods. You recognize . . . Elminster!

Looking none the worse for wear, he says, "Ah, there ye are! Fled fast enough, didn't ye? Quite a game I've had, finding ye."

Elminster will step down from the air, striding straight toward Midnight.

"Good lady!" Elminster says airily. "Time has run on like a river, as they say, until it has come upon a certain rock. A rock where ye and I must sit down for a breath or two and have a little private talk."

If the PCs say, "But you're dead! They accused us!" or "What happened at the temple?" or anything of the sort, he'll merely wave one hand and say calmly, "Ah, yes. Nasty business, that." (If no PC says anything, the astonished Midnight will!)

Elminster will draw Midnight aside into the trees, out of sight. She will go with him willingly, waving away any PCs who try to accompany them, or to follow and eavesdrop.

A minute or so later, she'll scream. If the PCs don't try to rescue her, there'll be some fireballs and similar magic, and she will come running, frightened and bleeding, back to the party, panting that "He attacked me . . . his hands . . . like claws! He . . . got

away!"

If PCs investigate, they'll find her struggling to fight something that is shifting form into a likeness of . . . her! It is a doppelganger, with 30 hp, and it will escape when the party approaches. Its treasure is a foot-long, tapering stick of wood (a now-exhausted *wand of illusion*, which it used to make its semblance as Elminster appear to float in midair), a *potion of healing*, and two purses, torn from previous victims, containing a total of 10 gp.

Event 2: Theln Roaringhorn

Soon after the doppelganger attack, as night falls (and preferably when the party is on the riverbank, not sailing down the Ashaba), read the following passage:

A man steps out of the trees and hails you. "Travelers!" he calls in a deep voice of grace and dignity. "Well met! I am Theln Roaringhorn, Servant of Lathander. I come in peace, but being alone in these dangerous times, I fear for my hide every night. Might I share your fire? I will work healing on any one amongst you who most needs it, if you will let me share your company until the morrow."

The man is short but broad-shouldered. He wears the rose-pink robes of a priest of Lathander, and over them rose-colored padded armor. From his belt swings an iron mace. His hands are empty. He wears a metal helm, and at his throat dangles the rose-colored disc of Lathander.

Theln Roaringhorn speaks the truth. He is a wandering 6th level cleric of Lathander: AC 8; MV 12; hp 38; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace); Str 14, Int 15, Wis 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Cha 15; AL NG; THACO 18. Theln is a talkative, kindly, cultured man. For donations to Lathander, he will cast *cure light wounds* spells on additional party members other than the one promised in return for the party's protective company overnight.

He is truly who he claims to be, and will prove honest and trustworthy. His only possessions are a *cure light wounds* (x4) scroll slid down one boot and a purse in the toe of the other, which contains 1 pp, 4 gp, 12 sp, and 1 cp (both of Theln's boots are much too large; the toe of the other is stuffed with clean, unused bandages).

Theln will heal a party member as promised, suggest tutors in Scardale if asked (see

Chapter 3: The Hand of Bane



Event 5 in Chapter 4 for a list of possible tutors), and chat a lot.

Them was born in Waterdeep (of a noble family), and has spent many years traveling across Faerun in the service of Lathander, God of the Morning. He has only recently arrived in the Dragon Reach area, and although he is both a curious and observant man, he has not yet become familiar with the area.

Theln will recount rumors of the Zhen-tarim taking power in Scardale (the place is full of mercenaries and Zhentilar soldiers; the garrisons left by Hillsfar, Sembia, and Cormyr after the fall of Lashan seem to have disappeared). Them also has rumors of Bane himself ruling Zhentil Keep, the god Torm ruling Tantras in person from his great temple there, thousands of ships destroyed in a great storm to the south created by the goddess Umberlee, and Lathander himself walking the Realms in Tethyr or thereabouts.

If the PCs are polite and seem attentive, Theln will lean forward after passing on the abovementioned gossip, and whisper:

"There's something more, too. Last winter Lathander himself appeared to the faithful—in Soubar, it was, at a little shrine there—and imparted a prophecy.

Told us it was prophecy himself, words that came from 'The Hidden One.'

"Ever since, all of the most high and powerful of the followers of Lathander have been trying to learn who or what this Hidden One is. They've got nothing sure, for all their looking; even in Candlekeep. Oh, they found one or two whispers of the name, but no more; nothing to tell us anything about who this Hidden One might be, or was.

"Exist he must, for it came from the lips of Lathander himself. He's never led us false, and never will; and though even a priest might speak falsehood on occasion, I doubt that they reported this wrongly to us lesser of the faithful; they were too puzzled for that. If they'd lied to us, they'd have said something grand about their divining the true meaning of Lathander, or about him imparting the meaning of his words only to them.

"For good or ill, in the end they revealed all to us, and ordered all the faithful to seek far and wide across Faerun for news of this Hidden One. You wouldn't, perhaps . . . ?"

Whether the PCs tell Theln anything about The One Who Is Hidden or not, Theln will be eager to pass on the prophecy:

"I believe all should hear this prophecy, for times have turned dark indeed, and all of good heart must work together or perish together in this twisting of magic, and whelming of beasts and stormfury over all the lands. Hearken then, to the words of Lathander:

" 'Pride will in time cause a terrible theft. Because of this sin, all the gods will be cast down into Faerun. What was taken must then be found, ere they can return whence they came, and the Realms return to peace.

" 'What will be stolen is twofold. One lieth hidden in a holy place in Faerun, and one lieth near Faerun, in a place where the dead reign.

" 'What was stolen must be recovered by mortal hands. If this recovery comes to pass, the fallen shall rise, the land shall be restored, and two mortals shall be exalted.' "

The DM should use Theln to answer any PC questions about Realms background information and current events for which they need to know the answers.

Even if not asked about Scardale, Theln will assume that the adventurers are traveling there (after all, that's where the river goes, and the lands around are filled with

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small bands of armed men heading for Scardale: gathering Zhentilar troops, although Theln does not know this). He will suggest that the party “keep heads low and voices soft” if they visit Scardale. If the PCs ask what he means, or for more information or suggestions, read the following:

‘Soldiers are all over the place in the scar right now, and the prudent—even, ahem, prudent adventurers, if such exist—keep themselves out of harm’s way. You’d best find a place to lie low, or you’ll soon find yourselves wearing Zhentilar darkhelms and marching accursed-Bane-alone-knows-where, or just bleeding in a gutter.

“Seek out the Spouting Fish. It’s a place Friendly to travelers, even now, and they say little about who comes and goes, and where they’re from or who they bow to. You’ve little enough choice, anyway; the Green Griffon’s a barracks, now, with the town full of Zhentilar soldiers, and the Ashabenmouth Arms burned down a few rides back. There’s a tavern, too, the Singing Siren, if you don’t mind sleeping in the cellar or on the roof with a lot of snoring drunks, but no doubt the soldiers will be crammed into it every night, if it’s still standing. No, it’s the Fish or nothing.

“You’ll find it on the north side of Suth Street, about halfway up from the docks, between Sarkh Street and the Flameway. It has a signboard out over the street, and looks like it’s about to fall down. Green-tiled roof, porch with rotting boards, and pillars carved into mermaid and sea-serpent shapes, round window in the front door, of a-no, it’s probably broken by now. Anywhether, you’ll find Suth Street by bearing north from the Westmoot, just inside the gate. Go up Shawl Street—that’s the one with all the awnings—and look for where it splits, by a fountain of four dolphins. Take the left-hand street, and that’s Suth Street.

“If you come at it the other way, from the docks, Suth Street comes out between two dirty old warehouses. Right by it, a loading-boom stands; a little crane. It’s the northernmost boom in the harbor, the one closest to Harborwatch Keep. Oh, yes: the Keep’s a round tower, the biggest one in Scardale, and the only one that overlooks the harbor.”

The incredibly helpful Theln is in a hurry to go westward, to Highmoon to an agreed-upon meeting with his “good friend” Theremen. He will refuse to accompany the party,

or even tarry with them for a day.

If the PCs rob, delay, or harm Theln, Theremen (a half-elven 4th level fighter) will arrive in the morning looking for him, with a mounted force of 14 men-at-arms and 10 elven archers. Theremen Ulath is the lord of Deepingdale, and is armed with a long sword, a long bow, and (among his other shafts) six **arrows +3**.

Event 3: Bloodshed at Blackfeather Bridge

This event occurs as the party, traveling down the river toward Feather Falls, approaches Blackfeather Bridge

In the distance you see the low grey lines of a massive stone bridge spanning the river: Blackfeather Bridge. As the rushing Ashaba sweeps you closer, you also see men standing on the bridge—men in armor. They have bows drawn and aimed at you, arrows ready to fire!

“Turn the boat!” Cyric roars. “We’re but waiting corpses if we float right down into those shafts! We’ll all be slain, sure!”

Cyric orders everyone to try to pole and paddle the boat, rushing on in the wild current, toward shore. All of the NPCs will try to do so (and so should the PCs; the DM should make it clear that it is obvious from the twelve waiting, gleaming arrowheads that Cyric is right). Anyone trying to cast spells will be promptly thrown to their knees by the pitching of the boat (ruining the casting).

In the confusion (regardless of PC heroics), Adon accidentally tips the boat over, spilling everyone into the dangerously rough waters. Valuable gear may well be lost, and all of the PCs face the possibility of drowning (all of the NPCs will survive, although the DM should not make this apparent immediately).

The Ashaba is especially shallow here (6’ deep) and rocky-bottomed. The notes that opened Chapter 2 regarding the river apply here. Characters who abandon themselves to the water or are disabled will be swept under the bridge in two rounds, and whirled downstream for at least another four rounds before fetching up against a snag or being able to fight the current to

reach shore. During that time, they will face the threat of damage from at least one arrow per round, all of them fired at +2 due to good visibility and the high level of the archers, who are all skilled huntsmen, and due to the lowered maneuverability of the adventurers struggling in the water. (Swimming characters have a base movement rate of 40 feet per round, modified by encumbrance and the current.) The archers are all 1st level fighters, AC 7 (studded leather armor) and 8 hp, and have a normal THACO of 20.

The archers will begin to fire shafts from their long bows as the boat overturns, carefully aiming at individual targets in the water. They fire two sheaf arrows each per round (1d8 damage per arrow), short range to 50 yards, medium range to 100, and long range to 170.

Standing on the bridge beside them, Kelemvor does nothing. He shudders and twists, his mind in turmoil as he watches his friends in the water, and looks sidelong at the archers calmly peppering them with shafts. Then something inside him breaks.

With a sudden roar, Kelemvor turns into a panther and attacks the men from Shadowdale. His transformation begins on the third round of archery, and he attacks an archer, in panther-form, during the fourth round.

To determine the number of arrows the archers fire from then on, the DM should use this guideline: any archer attacked by Kelemvor directly in a round will fire no arrows at the adventurers (he may strike at Kelemvor with one arrow or a dagger, or may stab with an arrow as if it were a dagger). In addition, one of three other events will occur: (1) One or two additional archers will be distracted and automatically miss with their shafts; (2) One or two other archers will fail to get off one of their two shots; or (3) the archer(s) attacked by Kelemvor will manage to fire only once in the round at the panther troll 1d3 to determine which result, or decide according to the situation).

Kelemvor strikes the archers at +1 to hit for the first three rounds. Archers are slow to react, and hampered in their movements by the narrow confines of the bridge, while standing with their fellows and holding long bows, with quivers in the way.

Each archer has two quivers of 21 shafts each. One, filled with the lighter flight arrows (1d6 damage, range 7/14/21), is slung on each archer’s back, and the other, containing the sheaf arrows currently in use, is leaning on the bridge parapet in front of each archer, supported by poles cut for this purpose, which the archers can snatch up to use as quarterstaves when fighting Ke-

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lemvor. Each archer also has two daggers, one at his belt and one in a sheath in his right boot; a short sword; and his bow (which does 1d3 damage when used as a club).

If a PC decides to engage an archer, he or she must swim to the bank near the bridge and then charge the archers. This will require at least five rounds. By that time, some of the archers will have fled back up the road to their winded horses, and Kelemvor's raging attacks will have thrown the entire bridge into confusion.

At this point—unnoticed by any of the combatants—Cyric swims to the northern bank and vanishes straight into the woods. The other NPCs, when they notice Cyric's absence after the end of the hostilities, will assume that he has drowned and been swept downstream (and the PCs, having no reason to think otherwise, should agree with this conclusion).

When the bridge is clear of archers, or when PCs have reached the bridge and engaged the remaining archers, the panther will waver and stagger, and Kelemvor will become human again, amid the spattered gore, and promptly faint.

If the PCs try to pursue the archers who fled up the road, they will find men and mounts alike gone. If they consider leaving the river at this time, distract them with an immediate attack from the trees:

Out of the trees comes a flock of dark, heavily flapping things, rusty red in hue, with long, needle-pointed beaks or stings between their glittering yellow eyes. "Mystra save us!" Midnight snarls. "A thirst of stirges! To arms!"

The flock of stirges is 16 in number. As with the group encountered earlier, these creatures are ravenously hungry and cannot be driven off; they must be killed.

After the PCs defeat the stirges, the boat and what gear can be found must be rescued. The boat has lodged against the bridge pilings, which Adon will point out is widely known to be the fate of all barges not poled so as to prevent this, in normal times, and everyone will be thoroughly soaked. Midnight and Adon will revive Kelemvor. When this is accomplished, read the following passage:

"Are you traveling with us, then?" Midnight asks softly, as she and Adon bend over the wan, blood-spattered warrior.

"Seems that way, does it not?" Kelemvor's rough, somewhat weak voice replies. "Let me up, will you?"

It is at this point when everyone will notice (if they haven't already) that Cyric is nowhere to be found. Adon, more pessimistic than Midnight, will immediately assume the worst. Midnight will be obviously saddened, but successfully struggle to retain her composure ("We have to expect this sort of thing; it's a miracle none of us have gone down before now."). Kelemvor, when he comes to realize that the posse he led was responsible for Cyric's demise, will vent his fury by hammering his fist against the bridge, but will as quickly recompose himself. The PCs should be allowed to form their own conclusions, but under no circumstances will the NPCs allow any attempt to locate Cyric's body. ("Whether we find his body or not, we're no better off than we are already. There are better ways to use our time," Midnight will say.)

When discussion of this topic is closed, Kelemvor will struggle up, look at the be-draggled PCs and snort, and then say:

"Best to get on with it. If you lot of heroes'll get the boat righted and gather some firewood, I'll take Adon here and find us some food. Come on, dextrous one!"

Midnight chuckles. "Now, now—at least it's always the same boat that gets tipped over; you ought to be getting accustomed to fixing it by now. Haul away, the lot of you, if you want to eat!"

As Kelemvor and Adon vanish into a small grove of trees nearby, Midnight will crisply direct the PCs in standing watch, spreading out wet things on rocks and bushes to dry, gathering wood, and so on.

Eventually, Kelemvor and Adon will return, Adon staggering as he drags a small boar while Kelemvor struts alongside him carrying a couple of freshly killed rabbits.

The DM should force the PCs to camp, due to damage of the boat, approaching dark, and universal agreement against pressing on among the NPCs ("Knowing what we know of Scardale, what need is there for haste now?") if necessary.

Event 4: Darkness Pounces

This event occurs when the PCs are camped after Event 3, just as darkness is falling.

A sudden snorting and flapping sound comes from the gathering darkness overhead. Something small and gleaming hurtles down from the sky and shatters on the ground beside the fire. It *was* a small glass sphere; now broken, it gives off a greenish, coiling smoke.

You hear the flapping of wings just above you; then three dark shapes plunge down out of the night sky!

The assailants are three men in black, spiked armor which covers their faces. They are riding pegasi (which have been charmed or otherwise pressed into service as steeds for these evildoers).

The foremost Pegasus will dive toward a PC, attacking with both of its hooves (1d8 damage each) at +2 to hit. If either of the hoof attacks does damage, the PC will be knocked to the ground and unable to recover before the Pegasus's rider dismounts and attacks.

This black-armored man will strike at the downed PC, or at any character who seems to pose the greatest immediate threat—except Midnight. He fights with a dagger and a black-bladed longsword simultaneously. The blade of the sword is painted with red runes, but neither weapon is magical. The first strike of each weapon will deliver normal damage plus require the struck victim to save vs. poison or be slowed for 1 round, and then fall into a deep, drugged sleep (attacks, slapping, etc., will not awaken) for 1-4 turns, due to a sleep-inducing venom smeared on the blades.

This attacker is Jhembryn Durrock, 7th level assassin: AC 4 (7); MV 12; hp 41; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+1 Str bonus); Str 17, Int 15, Wis 11, Dex 17, Con 16, Cha 4; AL LE; THAC0 17 (including Str bonus). His black leather armor covers him completely except for his spike-booted feet, eyeslits, and breathing vents. On his breast is painted a crimson skull within a circle of red flames: the mark of Bane. The armor is studded with spikes. If Jhembryn smashes into a character (normal chance to hit), his armor deals 1d4 damage, and if he embraces or pins a character (which he can choose to do,

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on an “armor attack roll” of 18 or higher), the armor does double damage.

The glass sphere contained a gas that the assassins are immune to, due to long exposure and training. It expands to a 10'-radius globe on the round after it breaks, and a 20'-radius globe on the following two rounds, and then dissipates harmlessly, but anyone within its effect for any of those three rounds will be slowed (as the spell) for 1d4+1 rounds and will thereafter fall asleep. PCs are allowed a saving throw vs. poison to avoid the effects. Kelemvor will go straight to sleep, automatically failing his save if he is within the area of effect, and Midnight and Adon will have to save to avoid also falling victim to the gas. The substance will work through the skin; it need not be inhaled.

On the round after the attack of the first Pegasus, two more pegasi (with their riders) will land, targeting any obvious spellcasters (except Midnight) in an attempt to ruin any castings in progress.

The second Pegasus is ridden by Ulnar Varro, a 6th level assassin: AC 4 (7); MV 12; hp 33; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+1 Str bonus); Str 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Cha 7; AL LE; THAC0 18. He is armed with a scythe and a dagger. Treat Varro's special scythe as a khopesh sword with a 9 foot reach. It does 2d4 damage, and can snag opponents. Snagged opponents can be pulled to the ground (Strength Check to avoid), which ruins attacks or spellcasting for that round, and enables Varro to strike at +2 to hit on the next round.

If snagged victims successfully resist being pulled down, the snagging still prevents them from attacking for 1 round. If Varro's attack roll is a 19 or 20, he can disarm the struck opponent, if desired, instead of snagging, or stab with the scythe's point for maximum damage of 8 points.

The third attacker is Brel Sejanus, a 5th level assassin of Bane: AC 5 (7); MV 12; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 15, Int 15, Wis 12, Dex 16, Con 17, Cha 7; AL LE; THAC0 18. He is armed with bolos (three iron balls joined to an iron center-ball by three-foot lengths of thick, “roped” wire) and a dagger.

The bolos deal 1d6 impact damage to all S or M-sized creatures (1d4 to larger creatures), and can entangle a struck creature or character, preventing movement or attacks for 1-3 rounds, until the victim frees himself. The chance of entanglement is 80% for S-sized creatures, 60% for M-sized creatures, and 40% for L-sized creatures (larger creatures cannot be entangled, and in all cases entanglement percentages are modified by -5% per point of Dex above 15). Entangled creatures must make a Strength Check to avoid falling.

Both of the other assassins wear armor identical to Durrock's—armor that cannot be worn by someone it was not specifically fitted to, or the spikes will catch on each other and soon tear the armor apart.

The three assassins will strike at the PCs with practiced speed and skill, commanding their pegasi to strike from the air and disable anyone trying to escape.

The assailants will swiftly overcome the party. The adventurers will be captured, knocked unconscious, and tightly bound. At Durrock's call, a number of other pegasi (equal to the number of adventurers, plus one or two others to carry the adventurers' gear) will descend from the sky to transport the captives. (These creatures may be summoned earlier, if they are needed to help prevent any adventurers from escaping.) The PCs' gear will be thoroughly searched and loaded aboard one or two of the extra pegasi. All the captives will be allowed to keep is the clothing they are wearing.

Event 5: The Flight

The assassins are skilled at kidnapping. When PCs revive, they will find themselves too tightly bound and strapped to do more than breathe. Spellcasters will be gagged and stripped as well (to remove material components).

Whether they were rendered unconscious by the sleep poison or by a knockout blow, each adventurer will awaken 3d4 rounds after the pegasi head into the sky. Midnight and Adon (grateful to still be alive) will not struggle or protest. Kelemvor will remain unconscious throughout the journey that has just gotten under way. If any PCs insist on trying to get away, the DM should make it obvious that escape is, for all practical purposes, impossible. The pegasi are at least half a mile up in the air by the time anyone awakens. The assassins will warn any PC who might attempt an escape to cease such foolishness or be killed.

To reinforce this advice, Durrock has a *wand of viscid globs* (a new magical item; see page 45) in a sheath within easy reach of his saddle. He will use it to refasten any PC whom he notices struggling or moving about suspiciously. (Normally, targets are allowed a saving throw to dodge the *globs*, but the trusted adventurers will not have this option.)

If any PCs express an intention to struggle against the bond of the *globs*, the DM should forewarn them that their efforts will be useless. If they persist in trying, assessing 1 or 2 hp of damage per round (from muscle tears, strains, and so forth) should get the point across shortly.

Chapter 4: A Stormy Time in Scardale

This chapter begins as the pegasi, after flying all night, get to Scardale at dawn, carrying the adventurers.

Event 1: Arrival

The captured PCs reach Scardale without further incident. From the sky, many encampments can be seen on the banks of the Scar. The town itself is a hive of military activity.

Armored warriors on griffons patrol the skies. They give the group of pegasi a wide berth, and the assassins take the PCs down to the Harborwatch Keep. There, the adventurers are separated, chained, bound (Midnight and all spellcasters treated as described in Chapter 11, and imprisoned).

After arrival at the keep, the assassins will remain fully armored and armed until the Midnight and the PCs are secured (with the aid of no less than six Zhentarim wizards armed with *wands of paralyzation*).

The PCs will find themselves in adjacent cells, with barred fronts, no windows, and walls, floors, and ceilings of thick stone sealed long ago by molten glass poured over them, which fused hard as it cooled.

One assassin will remain on guard outside these cells, out of the view of most of the imprisoned PCs, but in front of the cells containing Midnight and any known or suspected PC spellcasters, where he will focus most of his attention. At the time of Event 2, that assassin will be Varro.

Beside each guardpost and group of cells hangs an alarm gong, with a striking bar dangling beneath it on a chain. (The bar is not really necessary; the gong will sound if struck by anything.)

The other assassins go elsewhere, to imprison Adon alone (they judge him the weakest character, most susceptible to torture). The Zhentarim wizards will take Kelemvor out of the keep (to imprison him in a special way so as to prevent his panther-form from aiding his escape).

The assassins are fully described in the preceding chapter (some of their specifics are reproduced here for convenience). They will remove their helmets when the prisoners are safely secured, but otherwise remain fully armed and armored (the charge or blow of an armored assassin does 1d4 damage; an embrace or pin deals double).

Jhembryn Durrock will be revealed as a huge, dark-skinned man whose flesh is seared almost black. Burns have so disfigured his face that he has grown a thick black beard and moustache. Jhembryn is the 7th level assassin: AC 4 (7); hp 41; #AT 1; THAC0 17. He is armed with a dagger and a

black-bladed long sword carved with red-painted runes. It is nonmagical. The runes read, "I serve no master but the one who holds me," on one side, and, "My point is always the most telling one in any dispute" on the reverse.

Ulnar Varro is the 6th level assassin: AC 4 (7); hp 33; #AT 1; THAC0 18. He is armed with a scythe and a dagger. Varro's 9-foot scythe does 2d4 damage, and can snag opponents (as described previously).

Brel Sejanus is the 5th level assassin: AC 5 (7); hp 30; #AT 1; THAC0 18. He is armed with bolos (described previously) and a dagger.

Another character who will be assigned to guard duty is Sar Mornil, a 5th level assassin identical to Sejanus in all respects, except that he is armed with a club (1d6) and a dagger (1d4). Lower in stature than the other three assassins, he will always work a night shift (so that one of the others can get some rest).

One assassin will be near most of the PCs at all times, and will always be awake and alert, possessed of cell door keys, and inclined to use a ruthless method of dealing with noisy, disobedient, or menacing prisoners: knocking them cold. Chained prisoners are automatically hit for full weapon damage each round (count as subdual; if a victim is reduced to 0 hp, he falls unconscious for 1d4 turns). The assassins are well practiced in knocking humans senseless without permanently damaging them, but do not particularly care if they do harm the PCs. (However, they have instructions that the NPCs must be kept safe, especially Midnight.)

The second assassin will be down another corridor on the same level of the keep, at the cell containing Adon. The third one will be near another group of cells elsewhere in the complex, where Midnight and other spellcasters are kept. The fourth assassin, off duty and lightly asleep (he cannot be approached without waking him), will be in a room which contains the only route up or down out of this level of the keep.

Event 2: Yet Another Wild Escape

This event begins during the first night after the adventurers arrive as captives in Scardale.

If the PCs devise plans of escape from their imprisonment, let them try to enact these (but make sure they don't succeed before nightfall). If one or more of them man-

age to get free of their cells and confront the assassin guarding them (at night this will be Mornil), no alarm will be raised—thanks to Adon. The gentle, fumbling cleric knocked his guard (Sejanus) cold with his chamber pot a bit earlier and escaped from his cell. He will show up at the alarm gong just before Mornil gets there to ring it, and will knock the assassin cold with the hilt of the dagger he stole from Sejanus.

If Adon does not appear under those circumstances, the escaping PCs will meet him soon after they subdue Mornil themselves, and then all of the escapees will move to free Midnight and the other imprisoned adventurers. (Kelemvor cannot be located at this time.)

If the PCs cannot get free, or do not try, Adon will show up just after dusk outside their cells, to knock Mornil cold and then free them with the keys he has seized from Sejanus.

"Here we go again!" Adon will say with a smile. If the adventurers search their level of the keep, they will find many empty cells, and all of their comrades except Kelemvor. There are no other prisoners in the keep.

They will also find the assassin Varro, sitting guard beside Midnight's cell. He will leap to his feet and run for the alarm gong (which the PCs should guard with their lives), and then try to slay as many of the adventurers as he can.

If the PCs overcome him and search further, they will find the only room on the level that allows them to escape (all the windows are too narrow to slip out of): a guardroom commanding both the upward and downward stairways.

In it are stored all of the adventurers' weapons, armor, and gear; a few loaves of bread; and ice-buckets containing earthen jugs of milk. No guards are present, and if the PCs do not make an undue amount of noise, they will be able to reclaim their possessions and make their way out of the keep.

If any of the assassins are overpowered and asked about Kelemvor, they will say that he's where the PCs "will never find him," taken elsewhere by Zhentarim wizards of power for special imprisonment, to prevent his escape in panther-form.

The levels of the keep above and below the adventurers' former cells are swarming with Zhentilar soldiers, far too many to fight. The PCs, Midnight, and Adon are forced to slip out of the keep amid the many excited comings and goings of the Zhentilar.

As they escape, the PCs will hear the following exchange between two Zhentilar soldiers in a passageway of the keep:

Chapter 4: A Stormy Time in Scardale

"Lord Bane himself is coming!"

"aye; he's landed in the harbor already, and on his way here! 'Tis said he's going to take personal custody of a prisoner in the town, a she-mage!"

Many similar mutterings will be heard, but even if they tarry to listen, the adventurers will hear nothing useful about Kelmvor's whereabouts and fate.

When the adventurers reach the street outside the keep, read the following passage:

You hear the clatter of booted feet hurrying on the cobbles. "Hulass! Make all ready! Lord Bane is in town and on his way here, to see the prisoners within! Rouse the lads! Hurry!"

Overhead, there is a dim flash of radiance. Looking up, you see a black pegasus turning in midair. On its back, a man in black robes leans down, wand sparking in his hand.

Another black horse turns in the air nearby, ready to confront the other flying mount. "All right," you hear the second rider say. "It's only one of ours, making ready for Lord Bane."

"Right," the rider of the first mount replies, and they move on. Beyond them, you see many other dark, flying shapes: the night sky is full of patrolling creatures.

"Assassins and Zhentarim wizards all over the place," Midnight hisses. "Gods above and gods below, is there no end to this?"

Obviously, the adventurers are in great danger of being spotted and recaptured, and would be foolish to take to the roofs of the city or employ any means of flight.

"Let's get well away from our jail, anyway!" Adon says heatedly. The adventurers should skulk through the dark streets, as he and Midnight set a brisk pace across the town. If the PCs are alert, they will soon notice that they are being watched and followed (openly, but at a distance) by soldiers. If the PCs do not watch behind them, Adon will do so, and point out the soldiers.

"That settles it! We must find a place to hide, and soon!" Midnight says. "I've no wish to find myself tastefully attired in whip-scars and chains, greeting Bane before dawn! What was that inn the priest

told us about? The Spouting Fish? Let's get to it. Everyone—speak, now, whatever you remember of his directions"

Whatever the PCs remember of Theln Roaringhorn's directions (given in the previous chapter), allow them to find the Spouting Fish, even as Zhentilar patrols close in. The DM should build an atmosphere of tension as a nighttime chase begins.

If they pass the Singing Siren on the way, they will find it a roaring, shouting tumult of tankard-clashing, off-duty soldiers. The signboard overhead crudely proclaims the inn's rechristening as the Happy Harpy, and it certainly sounds like there's a happy harpy or two singing inside. The celebrating soldiers, who have overflowed into the street, will eye the adventurers suspiciously. If the PCs are careful, however, they can use the large number of soldiers to temporarily hide, to elude pursuing patrols.

Event 3: At The Sign of The Spouting Fish

This event directly follows Event 2, when the adventurers arrive at the Spouting Fish.

The Fish looks just as Theln Roaringhorn described it (in the preceding chapter). There are no soldiers in sight as the adventurers pick their way through the sodden garbage littering the street and go inside,

It is a dim, dingy place. The taproom is of dark, oiled wood, lit only by the hearthfire and by small candle-lamps. It is crowded, too, but everyone hunched in the dark room seems to be muttering to his neighbor. It is the quietest taproom you've ever been in. Eyes look up as you enter, and then flick away again, quickly.

The bald innkeeper, Hlund, will charge the adventurers a silver piece per night, each, for their rooms and all meals (drinks extra). He is fat, moustachioed, soft-spoken, and polite, but he will not be bargained away from his flat rate, and if asked about possible tutors, or Harpers, or for news, or about any other sort of information, he will grin and nod and point to the crowded tables. "Listen, and learn," he'll say, and wink.

At the tables, the PCs will hear lots of angry talk: the Zhentarim are starting to enslave non-soldiers who happen to be in

Scardale; anyone who tries to leave, too! The darkhelms are also actively searching for spies from Cormyr and the northern Dales, have cut off all contact with Sembia, have asked merchants to "volunteer" cash payments to support the creation of the fleet, and so on—and "everywhere honest folk go, there are soldiers spying on them as well, like that idiot we threw out earlier."

If the PCs keep listening, or provide some recent news from "outside," they'll also hear several local rumors. The DM may devise his own, or choose entries from the following list (all of which are essentially true):

Scardale Rumors

1. The elves are returning to the Elven Court, bringing a great army of magical flying ships and awesome lightning spells!

2. Cormyr is preparing to invade the Dales. Troops are gathering in Tilver's Gap right now, and Mistledale will be the first to fall. Whatever happens, Cormyr is determined to seize and hold The High Dale and Archendale, which will mean eventual war with Sembia!

3. A huge flaming man, a hundred feet tall or more, walked through Westgate last ride, setting many shops afire! It took eight mages to destroy it. Their spells kept going awry. . . . No one knows where it came from.

4. Mages are disappearing from all over the Dragon Reach lands, answering some sort of secret summons and traveling west. Some say they are being lured to their doom by demons, or by undead Calishite sorcerers.

5. A lady who wept tears of fire wrestled in the sky with a giant in armor, somewhere over Wyvernwater.

6. The Zhentilar war-captain Helbronsar is in town, looking for The Lost Sword of the Lion, a magical, kingly sword which Lashan the Dreamer searched for, but never found.

7. The Zhentarim are mustering a fleet of ships, and have 2,000-3,000 soldiers in the dale already! It is said they plan to cross the Dragon Reach and attack the city of Tantras. Why? Not for us mere mortals to know!

8. Myrkul, Lord of the Dead, has been seen in Zhentil Keep. His priests are gathering there, to "work a great Death," as one of them screamed triumphantly while in his cups, at an inn in Ordulin.

Someone approaches your table. It's a dwarf, hairy and unkempt. One eye is hidden beneath a ragged black eyepatch; his left arm is folded in a dirty sling.

You noticed him drinking at a nearby

Chapter 4: A Stormy Time in Scardale

table earlier, He staggers a little, as if drunk. But when he fetches up against the end of your table, his remaining eye is keen, and his low, husky voice is steady.

"Well met, travelers. What news of Shadowdale?"

Adon bristles, but says nothing. The dwarf, watching him, winks. "I mean no mischief. But ye know how blunt dwarves can be, so I'll ask ye right out: be ye friends or foes of Bane and the Zhentarim?"

In the brief silence that follows, the dwarf puts his free hand to his throat and draws up something on a fine chain, until you see the gleam of a tiny pendant in his hairy hand: a silver harp.

If the PCs indicate that they are not friends of Bane, or seem reluctant to admit anything, the dwarf will tell them that he is a foe of Bane, and offer to give them a hiding place in the dale.

If the PCs say they support Bane, the dwarf will shake his head sorrowfully and go away. Before the adventurers retire for the night or move on, however, he'll return to try again, obviously not believing them.

The dwarf will give his name as "Sunrun." Anyone who speaks dwarvish will know that there is a famous dwarven drinking song, in which dwarves are blamed for one ill after another and caught red-handed each time, whereupon they always claim that "Sunrun" (which means "Nobody") is the culprit.

A few of the peace-garrisons installed in Scardale upon the Fall of Lashan are still holding out, Sunrun tells the adventurers, but they are unable to leave their wall towers, around which thousands of Zhentilar have camped.

The Sembians and the men from Hillsfar are truly trapped, he says, but the tower that those from Cormyr hold is linked by an ancient crawl-tunnel to an old warehouse in the dingier streets.

If the PCs will help the few remaining Cormyreans disrupt the Zhentilar with a few attacks on the harbor, the barracks, and the assassins (those the PCs escaped from earlier), Sunrun will hide the PCs, help them with disguises, and help them get out of Scardale when they want to leave.

The DM should strongly persuade the PCs to go along with this way of getting out of Scardale, reminding them of the Zhentish aggressions they heard about earlier. If they agree to follow the dwarf, he'll nod and say, "Time to go, then. The Zhents followed you

here they'll be back to raid, later." He'll lead them out into the night, and on to Event 4.

If the PCs refuse to have anything to do with Sunrun, he'll melt away into the darkness. Later that night, the raid will begin, with over a hundred armed Zhentilar storming the inn. In the midst of all the shouting and torch-waving, Sunrun will pop up through a trap-door, and hiss to the adventurers, "This way! Come, now! The time for foolishness is past!" He'll then lead them through a short, twisting crawl-tunnel, out through many back streets, and on to Event 4.

Event 4: A Revelation Or Two

This event begins after Sunrun has led the adventurers down many a dark and stinking alley of Scardale. The town seems alive with marching Zhentilar patrols. Several times Sunrun hastens the PCs inside a door or swings open the shutters of a darkened window to leap inside, to hide from the darkhelms.

Eventually, the PCs follow the dwarf into the depths of one of these darkened buildings.

You are in a damp, empty, echoing place. The faint scratchings of rats, scuttling out of your way, can be heard all about. "Show no light!" Sunrun says warningly, from the darkness ahead. "See my harp? Follow it!"

Straining your eyes, you can barely see a tiny, dull glow bobbing ahead. It must be the dwarfs harp pendant. "Mind your heads!" comes the dwarfs voice again, and you feel worn stone steps, descending into black nothingness.

The dwarf leads the adventurers along a dripping tunnel with an uneven floor, warning them twice about not scratching their faces on overhanging portculli, up and into a crumbling keep, lit by a few flickering torches.

A yowl sounds from up ahead, and a scrawny, smoky-grey cat trots forward to greet Sunrun. He scratches its head without slowing; it turns to keep up with him, as he leads you up a few old, sloping steps into a room that smells of sickness.

Two unshaven men lie on cots on the far side of the room, battered armor leaning against the legs of their beds. Both are bandaged; the bandages are dark with old blood. One is asleep. The other smiles weakly at you, but says nothing. Sitting on a stool beside one bed, stitching up a boot with nimble fingers, is a handsome, mischievous-looking blond youth. He nods an eyebrow at you. "Varden, at your service," he says wryly. "Well met; all we have here"—he waves around at the empty room—"is yours."

Varden is a 4th level thief: AC 6 (10); MV 12; hp 22; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (throwing daggers, longsword, sap); Str 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Dex 18, Con 16, Cha 16; AL CN; THAC0 19. He is a reckless, kindhearted rogue with an appetite for pranks and for lifting gems from rich ladies' dresses. He, the two wounded soldiers (Orbraun and Thalar, both 4th level fighters), an aging con man named Gratus (who knows Scardale like the back of his hand), the cat, and "Sunrun" are all that is left of the Cormyrean garrison. When Sunrun admits this, read the following:

"Why haven't the Zhentilar slaughtered you all long ago?" Midnight asks curiously, looking at them.

"Oh, well," replies the dwarf. "I rather expect that's not happened because of me."

Before your eyes, the dwarf's squat, hairy form twists and flows, colors scattering across its moving surface like a brief rainbow, and becomes taller and slimmer, until a young, dark-eyed woman in robes stands before you. She smiles. "I am Sharoon, of the Harpers. Some time ago Elminster asked me to look out for you, if ever you came this way."

"Sunrun" is actually the human female 4th level illusionist Sharoon Themistyl: AC 6 (10); MV 12; hp 17; Str 14, Int 17, Wis 13, Dex 18, Con 16, Cha 17; AL CG; THAC0 19; age 19. Among the Harpers, she is known as "Stormweather." She does not believe Elminster is dead, and does not think the PCs are guilty of anything except defeating Bane (a great feat in her book!).

In return for helping her with a few strikes against the Zhentilar, she will cast illusory disguises on the PCs if they want to go about the town, and can offer them tu-

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tors (the thief, herself for illusionists, and the soldiers for fighters). Midnight can train lesser PC wizards, and Sharoon knows (and can quietly contact) priests of Tempus, Tymora, Lathander, and Selune in the area who will be willing to serve as tutors.

Event 5: Sojourn in Scardale

After Event 4, the DM may allow the party some time in Scardale, perhaps to allow them training for level advancement, to better face the perils ahead, or else can rush them on to Event 6. If the first option is taken, some additional work will be necessary before play resumes, to flesh out the suggestions given here. If the second option is taken, the DM should use only the last of the adventures suggested below (the attempt to rescue Kelemvor).

Potential Tutors

This list is only a beginning; DMs are encouraged to alter the potential tutors listed here, and to introduce tutors of their own to fit the player characters in their own campaign.

Ammethrine Nathyl, 6th level priest of Tymora: AL CG; impish, mercurial, agile, and smooth-tongued, famous for her dares and her enjoyment of all-night dancing. Found in the Lap of Luck, a small temple on Dawnstar Street.

Belintar Sharnraven, 7th level ranger: AL CG; tall, gaunt, and close-mouthed, handsome, kind, and possessed of a long, long memory. Found in a shambling wooden house leaning against the town wall. Belintar, the owner of the house, is also the "proprietor" of a secret tunnel running from the woods under the wall into his cellar. Harpers and other friends of Belintar used this tunnel to get in and out of Scardale during Lashan's iron reign, and can use it again now. Belintar will use it to take rangers he's tutoring out into the woods for training. The tunnel comes up into the side of a cesspit, which is largely covered by a manure pile in which Belintar grows mushrooms (which he sells to shops and restaurants around the town).

Brorin Hundegarl, 7th level priest of Tempus: AL CN; battle-scarred, gruff, brawling, and slow to fear. Found in the House of Swords (a shop-sized shrine to Tempus) in Laddath Street, where he lives above the sanctuary. He expects payment in the form of gold captured in battle, and a



promise (to Tempus, under oath) to bring about the defeat of a single, stated foe, within a certain time (which the PC can set).

Halath Mhaerim, 7th level wizard: AL NG; sleek, middle-aged, dignified but testy; highly skilled. Found in his second-floor garret above a grocer's shop on Soulall Street. Expects payment (at least in part) in the form of magical items.

Sordrim Nund, 6th level thief: AL CN; a smooth-talking seller of footwear whose shop is on the corner of The Anvil Run and Whelgar's Way. Young, good-featured but fairly ordinary in appearance; known to the sailors (from whom he never steals) as a fence and a contact for "shady business."

Adventures in Scardale

Following are some suggestions for adventures that the party may have while in

Scardale. Some of these may be prompted by the demands of tutors for the performance of specific services, and others by Sharoon.

1. Slaying the key Zhentilar officer, the corrupt but wily Chelbeth Thund (8th level fighter, 66 hp), who has poisoned weapons, and lots of treasure well hidden in the house in which he entertains his mistress.

2. Creating dissension in the Zhentilar ranks by killing mercenaries and Zhentilar soldiers and leaving the bodies fallen as though locked in combat with each other.

3. Slaying a spy of Bane, or making the spy appear to be a double-dealing traitor (there are almost two dozen trained spies of the Zhentarim in the city, mostly among the sailors and mercenary warriors, but a few among the merchants).

4. Looking for Lashan's lost treasury in the sewers beneath his old keep (still in the hands of the Sembians, who have crossbow-armed guards and pit-and-portcullis traps guarding this area. Observant explorers

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will find handholds cut into the rock of the cesspit wall beneath the keep. Climbing them up the slimy "glory-hole" (privy) passages into the upper levels of the keep, they will make a discovery just beneath Lashan's old room, now the bedchamber of the Sembian commander, an 11th level LN fighter named Kadarach. It is a niche in the wall containing a stone coffer. Within it are six *potions of healing* and a *short sword* +3.

5. Appropriating a pay-chest or two from a ship in the harbor while at the same time setting fire to as many more ships as possible, to hamper Bane's plans to take Tantras. The DM should refer to Event 6 in this chapter for details of the Zhentilar harbor guards.

6. Trying to rescue Kelemvor. Sharoon's contacts find that he is being held in the cellars of the house of Paerus, a grand structure on Shindal Street, kept helplessly entangled in *viscid globs* (see the new magic section) except for his head, and guarded by clerics and wizards of the Zhentarim. The DM should make these guardians too numerous for the adventurers to handle.

The attempt to rescue Kelemvor will fail, and the PCs will find themselves surrounded as the guards summon aid from the other Zhentilar and Zhentarim forces in the town. While the adventurers are fighting their way out, Sharoon and Gratus will appear and show them a handy route through the sewers. In the running fight, Sharoon and Gratus are badly wounded.

"First Cyric, now you," Midnight tells Sharoon grimly, as the adventurers drag their wounded rescuers away. "I'm not losing anyone else I care for in all this, if I can help it!"

OFFSTAGE EVENTS

Bane bargains with the captured Kelemvor, and cures him of the panther-curse, in return for Kelemvor's agreement to help Bane capture Midnight and get the Tablet of Fate.

Kelemvor has no intention of keeping his end of the bargain. He flatly refuses to even consider Bane's plans for him unless Bane cures him first and frees him. "Willing servants should be valuable, even to you," Kelemvor tells him. "Slaves who hate and fear you will turn on you the moment they spot your weakness, and from what I've seen and heard so far, you already have plenty of those." Bane grins coldly, and cures him.

Meanwhile, Cyric has become a turncoat-joining the side of the Zhentilar and has made rapid progress through the ranks. His cold-blooded strategic skill and adroit fighting have earned him a promotion to the command of Zhentilar armies

moving overland to Scardale, mustering for the invasion.

Event 6: To Leave at Last

Sharoon is too badly wounded to keep the Zhentilar attackers at bay any longer. (Gratus must be put to bed in the house of a friendly goodwife and temporarily retired from all adventuring.) She recommends that the PCs try to escape from Scardale now, by ship:

"It's impossible, overland. The countryside is crawling with gathering Zhentilar, and half the folk of the Dragon Reach skulking about trying to dagger a few of them here and a few of them there. The Zhents even rule the sky: their griffons outmatch any Sembia can send almost four to one.

"No, take a ship, and try to hide among all the Zhent ships bustling about out there in the Reach right now."

The sooner the PCs try to take a ship, Sharoon advises, the better: the harbor will soon grow far more crowded and far better guarded. She has a friend who captains a small, battered galley, and wants to get out of Scardale. He needs help in seizing his ship back from the Zhentilar.

The captain, Mnester (a LN 3rd level fighter with 25 hp, who fights with a battle axe), and his 12-man crew (1st level types who fight with cutlasses and belaying pins) are to be used to transport the Zhentarim in their planned invasion of Tantras, putting the ship at risk for no profit, and kicking a huge hole in the captain's expected shipping (and smuggling) trade. The captain wants out, but lacks the muscle to seize his ship. Perhaps the PCs . . . ?

Midnight will accept the mission of reclaiming Mnester's ship and drag the PCs along. All of the NPCs will stress that to split up now is to court certain death. The Cormyreans come along ("We're coming too," Sharoon says grimly), and the reinforced band of adventurers sets off through the streets. They use clothes, crutches, and a garbage cart to look like something other than armed-to-the-teeth troublemakers.

Although the DM should make the gauntlet of Zhentilar patrols a tense passage, the adventurers should, in the end, reach an old warehouse on the docks, and wait inside for nightfall. On the way, they will see Kelemvor (who's been searching the streets for

them), and Midnight will hesitate. He will promptly see her and saunter over to join the group.

Midnight and Adon are suspicious that he may be a spy for Bane, but Kelemvor quickly explains himself, and Sharoon seems to support his story.

"The same suspicions could be aimed at all of us here, and besides, what does it matter if he is? We've no time left now for arguing, or for him to do anything to stop us. The sailors can watch him."

All head for the warehouse, emptying the garbage cart into the spot in the harbor that the Zhentilar have been using these past months ("For that alone, the fisherman here would cheerfully slit their throats," Varden says). This gives them a look at the harbor layout for that night. The sailors and Captain Mnester are there; everyone waits for nightfall.

The *Queen of the Night* is a sagging, sway-hulled, battered old craft which has obviously seen better days. It is a merchant galley with twelve oars, a common type of ship in these parts. It has two tattered, fan-shaped sails, lateen-rigged on two masts.

The Zhentilar are, in fact, a little unsure of its seaworthiness, and therefore haven't charged ahead with plans to refit it or even get aboard before necessary.

As the PCs stealthily approach the ship by night, read the following passage:

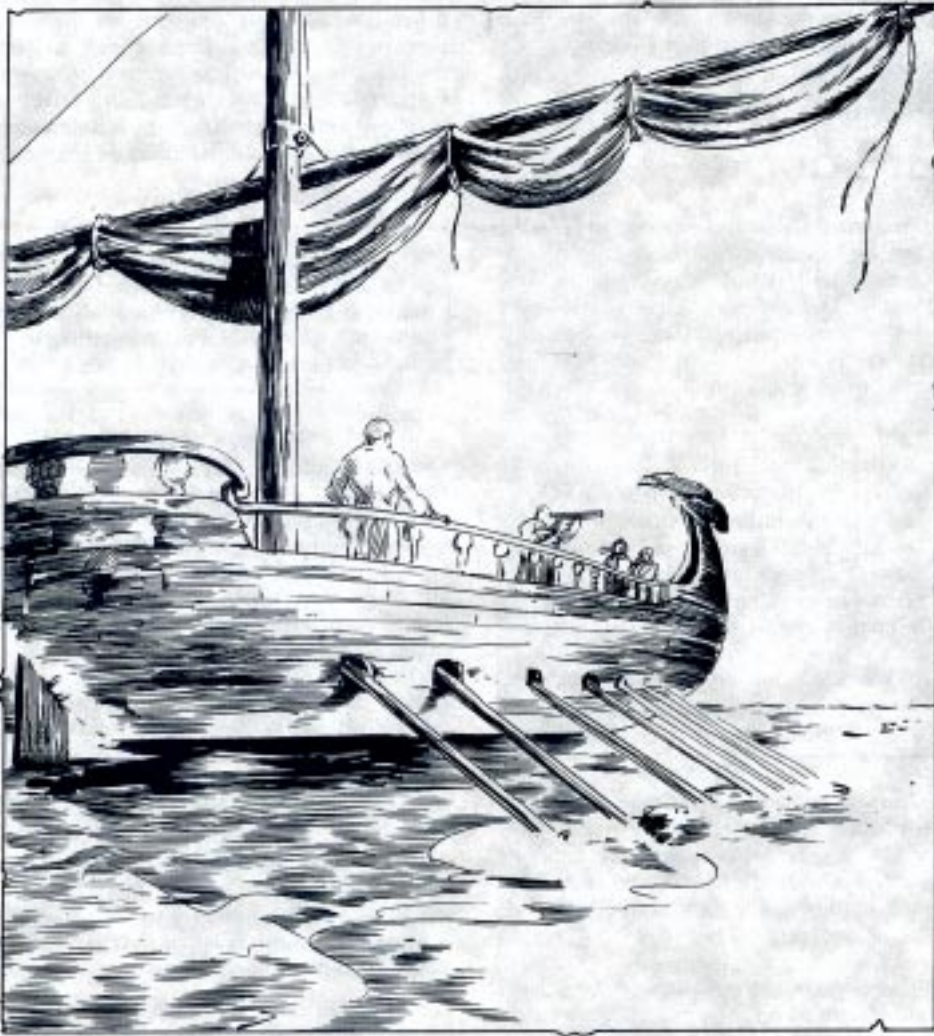
Two guards stop on the dock beside the ramp that leads down to the *Queen*. One murmurs something and waves his hand down at the listing boat.

The other laughs, and replies, "That thing? Look at her. . . if Talos so much as sneezes she'll be on the bottom, still tied to the dock! I'll just make stone-troll-cold sure I'm somewhere far away when it comes time to load troops aboard her. . . . I'd rather take my chances with a row-boat, if you'd know truth!"

The two guards are part of the night patrol of harbor guards. This patrol consists of a 5th level fighter (officer) in field plate, a 6th level Zhentarim wizard, a 5th level cleric of Bane, 12 crossbowmen, and 15 spearmen. All are alert, stationed in groups of two and three, keeping a close watch on all of the ships tied up at the docks. All will instantly be aware if one group of their comrades is attacked.

The officer or "Black Sword" is Albaer

Chapter 4: A Stormy Time in Scardale



Morndragon, who is armed with a bastard sword +2.

The wizard, Selcheth Yundaal, has the following spells: 1st level: *magic missile* (x4; each spell creates 3 missiles); 2nd level: *glitterdust*, *Melf's acid arrow*; 3rd level: *fireball*, *lightning bolt*. Selcheth also carries a dagger and two scrolls, each bearing one *dispel magic* spell.

The cleric, a Black Hand, has 17 wisdom and is named Thorn Nuldue. He is armed with a flail, a mace, and the following spells: 1st level: *command*, *cure light wounds* (x4); 2nd level: *aid* (x2), *charm person or mammal*, *flame blade*, *heat metal*; 3rd level: *cause blindness*, *pyrotechnics*.

The (light) crossbowmen are all 2nd level NE fighters of 16 hp each. The spearmen are all 1st level fighters of 9 hp each. Both types of guards are also armed with daggers and short swords.

Midnight will lead the attack if no PC is eager to do so; otherwise, the DM should have her defer to the decisions and tactics of the PCs.

When battle is launched, there will be instant mayhem, with 1d4 + 1 griffon-mounted Zhentarim joining the fray in 4 rounds. Shouting Zhentilar soldiers, flaming crossbow bolts, *light* spells, patrolling boats in the harbor converging on the commotion . . . PCs will face a lot of opposition.

In the battle, the thief Varden must be killed, Sharoon must vanish (so the DM can use her later, if desired, but take her out of the adventure now), and most of the captain and crew perish or are captured as well. The DM can retain what reinforcements he thinks the PCs need. Midnight, Adon, and Kelemvor must survive and get the ship under way, rowing like madmen. Midnight's magic can be used to clear a path out of the harbor.

It is deep night as the PCs slip past the patrolling Zhentarim ships and get out into the Reach.

Event 7: Battle Afloat

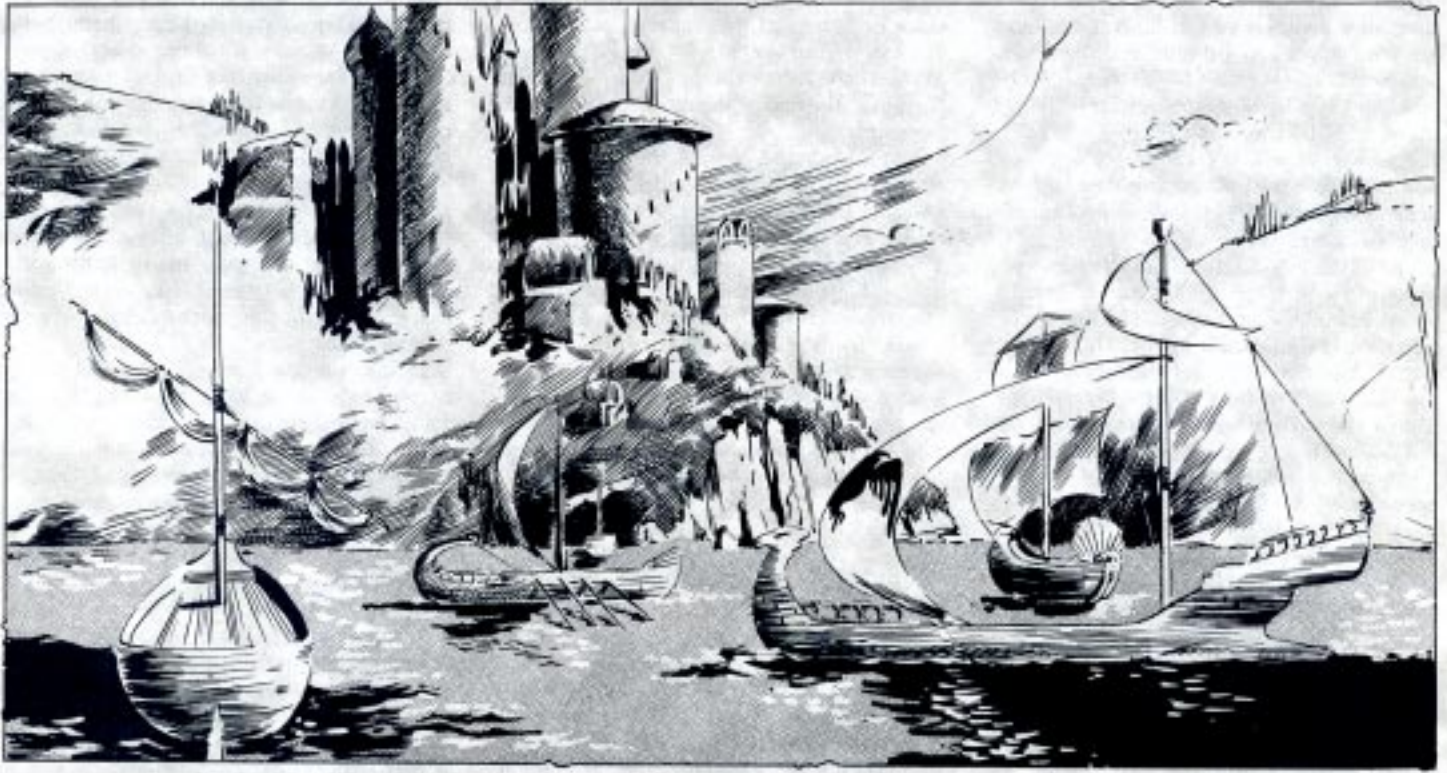
As dawn comes, the breeze coming down from the northwest dies. The *Queen of the Night* becomes a rather large target wallowing in the light swell in the center of the Reach, all too exposed to the eyes of Zhentarim on griffonback. Sure enough, a Zhentilar patrol galley bristling with archers soon appears, rowing steadily toward the drifting slave galley. Battle erupts.

The Zhentilar ship is a dromond (described in the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, page 70), with 60 rowers. It has 40 longbowmen aboard, all 2nd level fighters with 18 hp each, leather armor (AC 8), and daggers. There are also twelve 3rd level, leather-armored (AC 8) fighters armed with hammers and short swords, and a 5th level Zhentarim wizard (with 17 hp, the same spells as Selcheth in Event 6, above, minus the *lightning bolt*, and the title of "captain") named Whaul Zormm. The ship also boasts a battering ram.

The PCs will be forced to use their magic and battle skills to fight off the galley or sink it (they lack the numbers to crew it safely) and escape.

If defeated, they will be held captive on the galley, and it will turn back toward Scardale, towing the *Queen*. Halfway back, a seabird will fly past the ship, circle, and then land in the rigging. The bird will turn into its true form—Sharoon. She will cast spells on the crew to aid the PCs in escaping, and then fly raggedly off again, westward back to land.

Chapter 5: Gods and Assassins



This chapter begins as the party reaches Tantras. They will find the city bustling with activity: but will not be attacked as they enter the harbor. Everyone is too busy preparing for war to bother with a lone ship that harbor guards judge not to be a hostile vessel.

OFFSTAGE EVENT

Cyric arrives in Scardale, leading a Zhen-tilar force. To test this rising star in his ranks, Bane has sent him (along with Dur-rock, the assassin who led the assault on the PCs) to Tantras, to kill Kelemvor for his treachery and to capture Midnight. Bane is worried that the PCs are getting close to the Tablet of Fate.

Tantras rises above the eastern shore of the Reach on two hills. The higher of the two, to the north, is thickly covered with buildings, and an arm of land extends down from it to partially enclose and shelter the city's fine harbor. High stone walls protect the city from barbarian and orc-horde raids; from within them, wisps of smoke rise here and there. The city is preparing for war.

The harbor is crammed with vessels. As you slip in, you pass under a gigantic

boom, hung with chains, which can be used to close off the harbor mouth in the event of an attack. Hard-eyed, watchful men in armor regard you from behind rows of crossbow-guns, set into walled emplacements on either side of the harbor mouth. The points of the quarrels teach of which is as long as a man is high) turn slowly and silently as you pass, to always point at you. The rocking swell of the Reach subsides into the more tranquil chop of busy harbor water.

Inside, ships are made fast to each other, sometimes six and seven vessels deep, while shouting, sweating men on the docks struggle with bollard-pulleys and swaying, rickety boom-cranes to unload the ships. The place is a tumult of loading and unloading, and everywhere one looks there are half-naked men glistening with sweat; and unmoving, watchful men in full armor: the Tantran guardsmen.

"Ho, the ship!" bellows one, from a raised stone deck ahead of you. "Lose way—you're too fast in, by far! Fend you off from these"—he waves at three gigantic, seagull-covered spires, rising dark and glistening from the water—"and turn in here. That beyond's for

larger boats. Turn in, I say!"

Around the officer, as he speaks, a dozen archers come to look down at you, and ready shafts to their bows.

Obviously, disobeying the order to turn in would be quick suicide; Adon and Midnight will already be struggling to lift one of the long oars on the deck, to fend off. As the boat approaches the spires, the seagulls shriek and flutter up into the air in a cloud of dirty white feathers, wheeling and screeching in alarm.

When docked, the boat will be met by Tantran guardsmen: 30 men-at-arms (1st level warriors of 7 hp each) in blued, oiled field plate (AC 2) decorated with the silver wave and three stars of Tantras, and armed with spears, short swords, and daggers. Leading them will be an officer in full plate (AC 1) armed with a morningstar (2d4 damage), flanked by two crossbowmen (light quarrels, 1d4 damage, range 6/12/18). The officer will politely ask the adventurers to disembark and identify themselves. Ten of the guards will then search the ship. The officer will ask the adventurers how long they are staying, warn them that if war should come to the walls, they might not be able to leave, and their vessel might be seized for

Chapter 5: Gods and Assassins

“defensive purposes.” However, he invites them to enjoy their stay in Tantras, and (in a lowered voice) says that the god Torm himself is within the walls: in his temple, to be precise, “at the highest point on the hill there, hard by the north wall.”

The guards will find nothing suspicious, and will allow the adventurers and all their gear to pass into the city without comment or restriction.

The city is busy, but most of the activity is indoors. The ringing clangor of smithy work, hammerings, and the like are everywhere, and squads of soldiers in half-armor trot up and down the streets, led by shouting “Longswords” (sergeants), to keep fit. There are no guides to be found on the docks, and the PCs are free to wander.

Chaos and strife have come to the city. Some shops are closed, and a few buildings have burned down. Where this has happened, donkeys and sheep are tethered amid the rubble, each watched over by small, bored children. This livestock would normally be outside the walls, except on market days; war has indeed come to the eastern Reach.

Whether the PCs explore the streets by themselves, or whether they ask for recommendations, the result will be the same: the best inn in town is the Lazy Moon, on Shendle Street.

Any other inns that the PCs find will either be full or taken over as barracks, with grizzled door wardens in Tantran livery who exhort the PCs to “Join up! Wear the blue and silver with pride! These days, it’s the duty of every jack and lass to defend Tantras against the marauding beasts and worse! Torm himself watches over us!”

Event 1: All Through Life We Seek . . .

The PCs find lodging in the Lazy Moon (innkeeper: Faress, human male: group rate: 2 gp per day, all meals included but drinkables extra). Kelemvor crisply directs everyone to get a bath and sleep, and then meet in the taproom for “a jaw wagging” and a full meal after he awakens them.

The other NPCs should agree. Any PCs who are not tired will be curtly told to study spells or ready their gear, but not to go anywhere on their own.

When the party reassembles, Midnight will remind everyone that Elminster told them to seek one of the Tablets of Fate here. She advocates everyone splitting up into smaller groups and wandering the city for

at least a day, without asking prying questions or snooping overeagerly into discussions or inviting cellars. This way, they can get to know Tantras before meeting back at the inn at the end of the day to compare impressions.

The DM should consult the map of Tantras provided in this adventure as the PCs conduct their search, bearing in mind that native Tantras will be both very busy and unusually suspicious of strangers. An atmosphere of impending war hangs over the city, as Tantras musters for an expected attack from Zhentil Keep. Note that although priests of many religions are represented (Torm being paramount), there are no wizards of any sort to be found anywhere in Tantras above “journeyman” (2nd level), except for Midnight and any PC mages. If PCs ask anyone about this, the reply will be a stare, a slow shrug, and a brief, “Nobody knows. Just gone, all of them, and not a word spoken. These be not safe times in the Realms, now.”

As the PCs search, the DM can reward their queries and eavesdropping by imparting entries from the Tantras Talk Table (below), the statements in which are all essentially true. DMs are encouraged to add to this list to adapt it to the color and action of their own campaign, hinting at adventures they have arranged for future play.

Tantras Talk Table

1. Mages have disappeared—not just from Tantras, but from all across the Reach—and are said to be gathering in Waterdeep.

2. The goddesses Beshaba (The Laughing Lady of Ill Luck) and Tymora (The Smiling Lady of Good Fortune), who some sages claim to have once been one entity, Tyche, are battling each other the length and breadth of the North. Mountains have been toppled, castles laid waste, and forests flattened, the trees split asunder like so much kindling: and still the two fight on, shrieking like harpies and spitting lightning at each other!

3. Giant frogs have swarmed up out of the harbor in Calimport and overrun the docks, slaughtering thousands of sailors and slaves and gorging themselves on the bodies, while the satraps of the city have simply shut the doors of their tall, turban-topped towers and stayed inside, ignoring the carnage below. The whole city is said to stink of carrion in the heat of the sun, except for the richest quarters, where the slaves have been ordered to drench the trees, walls, and streets with the finest perfume to cover up the odors.

4. The Cult of the Dragon claims that the Wyrms-Rule is nigh, and there is open war-

fare in the streets of Westgate between merchant-house guards and cultists, who are trying to seize all the goods they can from the warehouses of the city, to be used as offerings to the Dead Dragons when they come flying into the city to proclaim their rule.

5. The seer Shuldo of Tharsult has told a council of merchants that old prophecies of the Shining South tell of a time when Dragon-Kings will rule many lands, and dark sorcery will prevail. That time, Shuldo fears, is nigh: for has not all the Art of men begun to cast awry?

6. Sailors on the Shining Sea report seeing a great light in the west, a tongue of white flame leaping from the sea to the night sky above. Judging by its location, it must have originated on the island realm of Lantan, but no one has come from there recently to tell what it was, nor do natives of that land now trading in Calimshan and the Tashalar know what the light might be, or what it could mean.

7. A mad seer in Iriaebor, Chathalos Ordgrimmer, has spoken in a trance about “a precious thing, near lost . . . a Tablet of Fate in the hands of death.” He has not regained his senses since, and is near death. Iriaebor is plagued by giant centipedes and carrion crawlers, who have swarmed up from cracks and tombs to choke the streets, battling each other and all the folk of the city mindlessly.

8. The waters of the Unicorn Run briefly flowed black with blood, and then ran clear again. The sorceress Laeral, once leader of the famous adventuring group known as The Nine, has since appeared in Scornubel and Waterdeep.

9. In Goldenfields, at the walled temple-farm of Chauntea, “granary of the North,” High Priest Tolgar Anuvien lies near death, after personally battling Myrkul, God of the Dead, who appeared in Goldenfields one night surrounded by a skeletal host. Tolgar drove Myrkul out of the walls of his great farm, but “dealt him no great harm,” as his longtime companion (in The Company of Crazy Adventurers), Malchor Harpell, has stated. Malchor arrived in time to rescue Tolgar from death, and make certain Myrkul’s defeat.

10. The ice-locked realm of Sossal, northeast of the Bloodstone lands, has been rocked by great explosions that have shattered the very glacier ice around it. The cause of these blasts is unknown, but suspicions are that the Fall of the Gods has something to do with the matter; who knows which gods may be battling each other there?

Chapter 5: Gods and Assassins

Guards will prohibit entry into the Temple of Torm to all who are not true believers of Torm (and able to prove it, by making offerings, carrying Torm's holy symbol, and having knowledge of the liturgy and teachings of his priesthood). If the PCs try to travel openly (without sneaking along side streets and alleys, etc.), they will run into a cordon of soldiers charged with keeping people out of the southern end of the city (and away from the hill at the south end of town); all streets beyond the Fountain of the Mermaid (map location #6) are off limits to civilians, since many of the buildings in this area have been commandeered for use as armories and barracks for the newly reinforced Tantran army.

After a day of searching, the party will reassemble at the Lazy Moon. Searching the city for some clue to the location of the tablet seems like it's going to be a slow, dusty process.

"In all the tales, the dragon just stands waiting to be fought, the treasure at its feet," Kelemvor grumbles. "You'd think that if these tablets were so important, we'd only have to find a cluster of battling gods or an unearthly glow or the like to find one of them, wouldn't you now? But no . . . that'd be too easy. . . ."

The DM should allow the discussion to continue, using the NPCs to direct the flow of conversation, until the PCs agree to or are persuaded to make another effort tomorrow. Again, Kelemvor warns PCs against independent action, and any PCs who try to set off on their own will find him waiting for them, watchful and unsurprised.

On the morrow, Adon insists on going off on his own. (If any PCs protest or question this—since they haven't been allowed to do the same thing—Kelemvor will growl something like, "Let him go. He's too sullen to suit me anyway. Maybe being by himself for a time will put him in a better mood.")

The PCs, Kelemvor, and Midnight will go out as a group, orders Kelemvor, saying something about "strength in numbers, in case we do discover something." For a slightly different reason, this decision suits Midnight just fine.

"I need all of you as bodyguards, of sorts," Midnight tells you softly. "If . . . when . . . we do come across it, I expect the tablet to be well guarded. After all,

you wouldn't leave such a thing lying about for anyone to take, would you?"

Midnight suspects she'll need help to claim anything with the degree of magical power that the tablet surely must have. Midnight will announce that she wishes to explore the streets of the wealthy folk that cloak the slopes of the hill which is crowned by the Temple of Torm. Read the following passage:

Someone is singing nearby. "My nose may be old/My nose may be cold/But it can smell right well/Still, sir! And it do smell/Adventurers bold, laden with gold/Adventurers bought, adventurers sold . . ."

The singer is an enigmatic, smiling young man in homespuns, with a lute on his back. He grins at you merrily, blue-grey eyes dancing. "And here you are!" he cries. "Adventurers, just as my nose thought! All swords and grim missions, and out-of-my-way-boy, I'm-saving-the-world-today-boy! Well met!"

Kelemvor challenges the man suspiciously. He merely grins and says:

"I'm but a minstrel, big strong fighting-man! Surely you can defeat the likes of me—with your agile tongue, perhaps?"

Midnight laughs. "You seem familiar. Have we met?"

The young man bows and winks. "But of course, my lady! Many times! You've promised to marry me twice or thrice—or no, was that the other one with long dark hair and divine beauty? Yes, I rather think it might have been. . . . Well, in that case, I'm the one who stabled your horse once or twice, and got walked on by you as you strode through the streets of Arabel, shining all over with blue-white light!"

(This strange story does make some sense to Midnight, who has begun to suspect the true identity of the minstrel. However, she is not sure enough of her suspicions to reveal them to anyone else, and will feign ignorance if she is asked about what the minstrel has said.)

Midnight stares hard at him. "And just what might your name be?" she asks softly.

The young man bows again. "Minstrel," he says innocently. "Minstrel by name,

minstrel by nature."

"Your *real* name," Kelemvor snarls, advancing on him. The young man hangs his head and coughs.

"Ah. Well. Yes. I *did* leave a little bit out," he admits, eyeing Kelemvor's hand as it tightens on his sword hilt. "I'm . . . Wandering Minstrel! But you can call me Minstrel, for short. All my friends do."

Midnight huffs in exasperation, but Kelemvor is more vocal. "All right then, young snaketongue," he says levelly. "What brought you to Tantras? If you can answer that one without clever evasions, that is."

Minstrel seems suddenly serious. "I'm here because I've always wanted to see the Great Bell. This is, after all, the City of the Bell."

"What? Why?" Midnight asks suspiciously.

Minstrel stares at her. "What, yourself? You haven't seen the Bell of Aylen Attricus yet? And you a mage, too!"

Minstrel will insist on showing the adventurers around the city.

"I can see someone's going to have to do this properly!" he says. "You lot can't even find the landmarks without help, it seems!"

Kelemvor, highly insulted at the way he has been talked to, stalks off, muttering that he is quite capable of finding his own way around.

"Leave him be," says Midnight. "He knows where to find us later—and in the meantime, I think we should take advantage of what this minstrel can tell us and show us." She smiles at the young man, and he returns her friendliness with a sweeping bow.

Event 2: The Temple of Town

This event follows directly after Event 1. Minstrel smiles at the PCs, waves his lute at the buildings all around, and says:

"To understand Tantras these days, you must see the Temple of Torm first. 'Tis a grand thing to see, and I'll be proud to take you there!"

Chapter 5: Gods and Assassins



Minstrel will insist on guiding the PCs up through rising streets of grand houses and rich shops to the Temple of Torm. There, he gets them through a guarded, high-arched iron gate, easily answering the queries of the guards as to the tenets of Torm's faith ("Never sleep without a watchful eye. Never leave a fault or gap in your armor or affairs for another day; fix it today, and you'll never be unready for danger. Guard the weak, watch closely the stronger. A good lock makes for honest guests.") and producing a silver gauntlet of Torm when asked if he bears Torm's sign.

If any PCs are watching Minstrel, they will see him draw up a neck chain, upon which are several holy symbols: the blood-red sword of Tempus, the silver disc of Tymora, the wheat-sheaf of Chauntea, and so on. Minstrel's nimble hands slide them down out of view until the gauntlet appears, whereupon he sweeps the other symbols up the chain (and over his shoulder out of view, under his shirt) as he presents the gauntlet of Torm for the guards' inspection.

Minstrel smoothly introduces the PCs and Midnight as "visitors, supplicants if you will, to the temple of Torm the Mighty." He then hands something to the guards (a thumb-sized ruby, if any PCs are looking) with the words, "A small, humble offering to further Torm's great work." The guards allow them to pass.

Within, the PCs find a hive of activity. Men scurry this way and that with barrows and hods of stone, rubble, and mortar. Dust is thick in the air. Tapping noises can be heard from several places. The temple is evidently being rebuilt.

A priest nearby, who is consulting a drawing of this proposed side of the temple (all obelisks and thrusting towers crowned with minarets), turns to look inquiringly at the visitors.

He is Zaharen, a Lesser Eye (5th level cleric) of Torm: AC 7 (10); MV 12; hp 37; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (he carries a mace); Str 14, Int 12, Wis 18, Dex 17, Con 16, Cha 14; AL LG; THAC0 18. Spells: *cure light wounds* (x2), *detect evil*, *light*, *sanctuary*; *flame blade* (x2), *hear metal*, *hold person*, *spiritual hammer*; *dispel magic*, *meld into stone*.

Note that while Torm is within the temple, all of Torm's priests will have their magic work for full duration and effects.

If attacked, Zaharen can shout a warning that will bring 20 or more lay worshipers and 15 or more priests on the spot within 5 rounds. (If magical *silence* prevails, Zaharen can summon half that aid in the same time by hurling his mace through a great rose window which is under construction nearby.)

Zaharen is eager for new converts and glad to answer queries. He knows little of

the layout, inner security, and true wealth or military strength of the temple, but he is eager to (and the DM should use him to) pass on the following information.

The god Torm is here! His fall destroyed much of the temple in Tantras, but it is being rebuilt. He has proclaimed a new age of stability and law for his followers, beginning with his incarnation among them. All through the mounting chaos in the Realms, the faithful of Torm have worked on building a new temple around their god and the golden, lion-headed statue that stood guard within the door of the old temple. And the unenlightened have flocked to worship the Lord of Loyalty! Torm is the foundation of law, order, and justice in these troubled times. His people must withstand those who would tear asunder this rule of order for their own gain and delight in destruction and suffering. These wreckers of havoc include the darkhelms and cruel mages of Zhentil Keep, of course, but there will be others as well.

Midnight can sense powerful magic within the inner temple: magic which she, as a nonbeliever, is not allowed to approach. The price of her entry is to fully, and forever, embrace the worship of Torm. According to Zaharen and other priests of the temple, worshiping Torm involves the renunciation of her magic and the surrender

Chapter 5: Gods and Assassins

of all her worldly goods, (especially magical items, books, and components) to the temple, a price Midnight will refuse to pay.

In the distance, the adventurers see that Adon has found his own way here, and is smiling while he talks earnestly to a cleric of the temple. If any PCs hail or try to approach him, Minstrel will subtly bar their way:

"A man must find himself. Would you stand in his way, and have him be forever half a man?"

OFFSTAGE EVENT

On a deserted street in Tantras, Cyric and the assassin Durrock find Kelemvor. Cyric hangs back to watch as the assassin prepares to attack Kelemvor.

Durrock is fast, but overconfident. Kelemvor appears unaware of his presence as he creeps closer—and then Kelemvor calmly turns and runs him through when he is within steps of striking. An astonished Cyric runs away, but not before Kelemvor recognizes him.

Event 3: The Bell on The Hill

This event follows Event 2 directly. After their conversation with the priests, Minstrel will softly advise the PCs, "We could come back another time, if you're especially interested. They're rather busy now, and we've attracted the attention of the temple guards." Minstrel will point over his shoulder; beyond, the PCs can see unsmiling faces watching them steadily from small, arched windows set around the base of the outer wall of the temple.

Minstrel will then guide Midnight (with the PCs, but without Adon, who has wandered off deep into the temple, where guards and priests alike will forbid the PCs to follow) all the way across Tantras, to the shrine of Mystra atop the hill at the southern edge of the city.

On the way, Minstrel warns the party:

"One thing, friends: the soldiers have their barracks hereabouts. Common folk are not supposed to venture south of the fountain without approved business, these days. But I've noticed that if one avoids the fountain itself, around highnoon, few folk seem to be around to watch. So, come you down this alley, and around here, and . . ."

Minstrel will sneak the party toward the hill by back streets. They are not seen by soldiers, and soon reach the slope.

"Ahead, lady, is something of interest to you, indeed: the local shrine of Mystra, Lady of Magic," Minstrel says softly, and leads the way up an old, smooth-cobbled street that dissolves into grass ahead.

A smiling Minstrel kneels on the grass, indicating the shrine with a graceful wave of his hand. It is simply the grassy crest of the hill, surrounded by an old, crumbling, knee-high stone wall. At its center stands a cylindrical tower, made of stone blocks, rising some 50 feet into the air. At the top, visible between the stone pillars holding up the tower roof, hangs an apparently ancient bell.

Anyone who ducks through the small, open entrance at the base of the tower will see that a thick rope dangles down from the bell, ending about four feet off the ground. A narrow stone staircase spirals up the inside of the tower wall, ending at a small landing about five feet below the bottom of the bell—close enough for someone standing on this platform to reach up and touch the bell.

Midnight seems quietly awed by the sight of the tower and the bell. Without asking permission or waiting to see if anyone will follow her, she enters the tower and begins to ascend the stairway. (Walking is the only way to approach the bell, since—as will be apparent if anyone tries—no magic of any sort will function within the confines of the low stone wall. If any PCs follow her, they will find that the stairway is too narrow for two people to walk abreast, and the landing at the top is only large enough to comfortably and safely hold two people at one time.)

Midnight climbs the stairs resolutely, pauses briefly on the landing, and then reaches out and touches the bell. It will seem like an old, cold, metal bell to any PC who touches it—but for Midnight, the experience is quite unforgettable.

She suddenly feels power surging into her as she touches the bell, increasing her mastery of magic. The DM should add a level to Midnight immediately (she gains 4 hit points and new spell use, with no training necessary) and read the following passage:

Midnight touches the bell and gasps. A faint blue glow arises around her hands, and then seems to flicker around her. She stands taller and straighter as it

fades away. She turns toward you, smiling, seems to exhale her held breath, and looks around.

Suddenly she frowns. "Where's Minstrel?"

So other being will be able to feel the power pass into Midnight, nor will they be able to touch her, drain the power, or pull her away from the bell as she touches it: they will simply discover themselves held immobile by an invisible *wall of force*. Neither Midnight nor anyone else will be able to make the bell ring or emit the slightest sound at this time, no matter what they do to it; pulling on the rope or striking the bell will simply have no effect.

The reason for Midnight's question is that in the excitement, as the blue glow surrounded her, Minstrel (standing on the ground outside the low stone wall) abruptly vanished into thin air. (If any players stated that their PCs were specifically watching Minstrel, that's exactly what the PCs see: one moment he's there, and the next—blink!—he's gone.)

An almightily puzzled Midnight comes back down the stairway and out of the tower and walks slowly all around the hill.

"Friends," Midnight says deliberately, frowning in her uncertainty, "I wish I knew who or what Minstrel was. He seems so damnably familiar." She sighs and looks around at you.

"I'm beginning to be able to *feel* magic. It comes and goes: sometimes I know when magic is near. Its intensity, too, I have some inkling of. And I cannot feel any more magic here.

"Mystra left me a great gift, in this bell. She's given me power, power I can still feel burning within me. It is great, friends, but it is not enough to be from the tablet, even if a Tablet of Fate can be so transformed.

"And yet the bell is the only thing I've yet found in the city that is at all magically powerful—except the magic I felt in the Temple of Torm.

"And if Torm is within the temple, and the tablet is, too—then why hasn't he revealed this, or used the tablet to force his way out of the Realms, as Mystra tried to force her way out while we watched?"

(This occurred in *Shadowdale*, the predecessor to this adventure.) "Can't the gods feel the presence of tablets, or know them when they see them? What

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can Torm be doing?

"Or, where else in Tantras is the tablet hidden? Beneath the waters of the harbor, perhaps? Or in one of these thousands of homes and shops? Mystra aid us all!"

Midnight will discuss things freely with the PCs for a short time at this point, but then abruptly wince, and announce, "I'm . . . I'm suddenly *starving!* I must eat! Let us go back to the Lazy Moon. But there's just one thing I must do first!"

Midnight strides down the hill and knocks on the door of the nearest shop. A curious, bewhiskered face, with pipe attached, looks out and blinks at her.

"Eh . . . how'd ye get past the soldiers, all of ye? Huh! Shields and swords and all; they'll be half screaming mad if they see ye!"

Midnight smiles. "Yes, yes, I fear so. We'll be going back in a moment, but I must know one thing, first: this bell, here . . . how old is it? Who brought it here, and why?"

"Eh, lady, lady . . . there's some 'at goes through life learning the answers to fewer questions than that! Hold hard a moment, there! Well. . . hem, hem . . . the bell. The Bell of Aylen, folk call that. Who put it there I couldn't tell ye. It's stood there these hundred years past, before there was a wall, I know that from the city records, when I worked down-and-along. My father used to play around it when he was a youngling. And that's . . . a long time ago.

"Aye, 'tis an old thing. There's a tale or two about it, if I can just. . . ah, yes: only a mage of great power can get it to ring, they say. Bit of a problem right now, if we needed it rung an' all: there be no mages in the city. They've all vanished, belike, taken themselves off before the fighting gets here, I don't doubt! That's the problem with mages, y'see . . . they never stand and fight with a sword, like, but are always dancing around to burn thy rear . . . uh, hem, begging thy pardon, lady.

"Anyways, lady, that there bell, 'tis said, will protect the entire city from all harm for a whole day. It makes a sort of barrier. The mage Alaskhon the Old knew all about it, when he was still alive; that's how they knew where to build the

city walls, y'see. And . . . hem, that's all I know. Good day."

And with that the pipe returns to the old man's mouth, and the door closes.

Midnight will not try to ask anyone else about the bell, nor go in after the old man, and will forbid the PCs to do so. She will set off toward the inn, frowning thoughtfully.

When the PCs arrive at the Lazy Moon, a grim Kelemvor will be waiting for them. He will tell them all about Cyric and the assassin:

"And when I stuck him, he was just opening his mouth to deliver his usual little homily . . . the words assassins whisper in the ears of their victims, so that they die knowing who's responsible . . . and he said, 'For Ba—!' and then I got him. I *know* he was going to say, 'For Bane.' I'm afraid Cyric's a friend no longer, if it's that master he serves.

"We must watch sharp; he's lurking somewhere in the city. Bane no doubt wants me dead, for my treachery; ah, yes, I cheated Bane before he could cheat me, and no doubt he'll have my death of it, before long, but he also wants this tablet we're all after, and he wants a lady called Midnight. And I, for one, aim to give him neither?

Kelemvor snarls silently at the tankard in his hand for a moment, and then lifts still-blazing eyes to look around at you. "So tell me," he prompts gruffly, "the burden of your day's doings."

Midnight will wave at the PCs to tell the tale, breaking in only to say:

"The tablet *must* be in the Temple of Torm. Or so I think, anyway. But I don't know how to be sure of that, or how to get it. Any ideas?"

However, she will shake her head to any plans the PCs come up with:

"We're not snatching some bauble or obvious treasure," Midnight says, exasperated, "but only looking for something that might not even be there, something we are unsure of the protections upon or the properties it might hold. An assault on the temple would mark us for

sure death in this city, and might well do more harm than all the might of the Zhentarim. We cannot proceed by raiding the Temple of Torm."

At that moment, Minstrel comes into the taproom, arm in arm with Adon. The cleric is laughing. "You had us fooled indeed, old friend," he says, and Minstrel grins at him in reply before turning his head to wink at all of you.

Midnight's eyes narrow and then suddenly become very bright. "Elminster!" she breathes. "Elminster!"

Minstrel grins. "Aye, lady. Well met, as they say. Now thy journey really begins."

Event 4: Reunion and Disunion

This event follows directly after Event 3. Still in his minstrel garb, but letting fall his illusory youthful looks, Elminster plays upon a small hand-harp as he sits down with the PCs, puts his feet up on an adjacent empty chair, and talks. As he plays on, others in the taproom slowly drift away, shuffling home or up to bed or off to do other tasks about the place, until Elminster and the adventurers are quite alone (due to the subtle magic of his harping).

The DM can use Elminster to explain anything the PCs don't understand about the events that have befallen them, except that he will not talk about the recent events involving Cyric.

If PCs avoid asking Elminster things, have the NPCs put questions to him. When the old sage is asked about the bell (if the PCs don't do so, Midnight will), read the following passage:

"It is of the power of Mystra," Elminster says softly. "A great spell worked with the magic that slumbered here . . . until you, lady, came to claim it. I have been asked to say no more about it, by a greater one than I."

If asked about Shadowdale, Elminster will reply:

"Mourngrym and all are well, and rebuilding. The eyes and hands of Zhentil Keep are turned elsewhere; relative peace reigns. If it makes thee all any the

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happier, neither he nor Lhaeo nor the Harpers hold thee guilty for my death; I have taken care of that. Ye must still answer, if ye return, for what ye did to the guards . . . I would steer clear of the dale a few years yet, if I were ye."

If asked about the Tablet of Fate, Elminster will say:

"It is very near. If I knew precisely where, I'd not be sitting here talking calmly to all of ye now. The other tablet lies very far away, but its finding is linked to the Sword Coast, near or in Waterdeep, as far as I can learn."

If a PC asks Elminster how he learned this (or anything, for that matter):

"By agreeing not to reveal my sources," Elminster says dryly, "and keeping that sort of promise these five hundred years and more, youngling. Conduct thyself accordingly, and learn wisdom in thy turn."

In answer to any queries about Bane's present actions, read the following boxed text. The DM should introduce this even if the adventurers seek to break off discussions without bringing up this subject.

Elminster speaks with sudden urgency. "Hold! There is something of importance that ye must witness! Hush, all, and stay still as death . . . and watch!"

He gestures, and then harps loud and fast, casting a hand-sized crystal sphere into the air. It floats before you, growing larger and brighter, as he plays on . . . and then, suddenly, you see images moving within it:

A cruel-faced, moustachioed man sits on a throne in a vast chamber with a polished black marble floor. His eyes burn like black flames, and you somehow know that this is more than a man: Bane himself looks out of those eyes.

Bane is softly explaining something to a gathering of fearful men in the robes of high clerics of Bane.

" . . . This, my will, must be done. Your diligent service alone can accomplish this, and you shall be rewarded for it.

You all know of the Black Brother. It has stood in hiding for as long as any of you can remember, for longer than the years even your oldest records recall. Know, brethren, that I put it there. Long, long ago I knew it would be needed."

Bane leans forward, eyes burning. "The Brother is made of black glass, crafted by devils under my command. It bears a special and very old spell, the greatest of my working. . . the most perilous a god can ever undertake. It can swallow souls. They will give it life and energy and power. The souls must all be loyal to me, or at least my thinking, for they must align under my command. You must get those souls for me."

Faint moans can be heard in the chamber. More than one of the black-robed men is shaking. "U-us, Dread Lord?" one, braver than most, asks with white, trembling lips.

Bane smiles coldly. "I am touched by your eager loyalty, all of you," he says thinly. "No, you are too few to serve, although you were my first choice. I shall need you to perform the necessary ceremony, the Stealing of the Souls."

There is an instant of heavy silence. One of the priests faints, toppling silently to the floor. His head strikes it with a hollow thud, and he lies motionless, a thin ribbon of blood streaming slowly outward from his body. Bane smiles again.

"The clerics of Myrkul," he explains, "are even now working a great Death Spell, one that requires knowledge of the real names of all the assassins in Faerun. They will slay all the 'dark brothers' in all of Faerun for us, my brethren. We must not . . . cannot . . . do less. You must steal those souls for me, and focus them *here*."

At his gesture, a huge black statue wearing spiked armor (like the assassins encountered earlier) descends slowly from the darkness overhead, surrounded by four floating, spherical monsters with eyestalks like coiling snakes around their uppermost curves, and great single eyes and saliva-dripping mouths below. They begin a rhythmic, deep-voiced chanting.

"Our friends of the many eyes will lead the chant. Join in, all of you, my brethren. The time to serve me is *now! Now! Now!*"

The priests fearfully join their voices to that of Bane's avatar, and swiftly, inexorably, the chanting rises into a fist-shaking crescendo. A weird yellow-green glow surrounds the statue.

(At this precise moment—unknownst to the PCs at this time, but which they will surely discover later—every assassin in the Realms drops dead. All of their souls now fill the great black avatar of Bane.)

Suddenly, the statue moves its hands and turns. Bane's avatar falls silent in mid-chant, mouth hanging limply open, and sags back upon the throne, drooling. The beholders glide out of the way, and the black glass juggernaut strides slowly and ponderously from the cavern, heedless of the clerics it steps on.

Elminster whistles a jaunty little tune and waves his hand. The crystal fades to darkness, spins in midair, and then dwindles, still spinning, until it is gone. "He comes here," the old sage says. "Your turn to be heroes."

Midnight is furious. "This is all some sort of game to you, isn't it?" she spits at him, eyes blazing. "All across the Realms, folk are dying, while you watch and flit here and there, humming and noting things and enjoying the festival! All for your benefit, is it not? You're no better than these swaggering gods, hurling power right and left with not a care for any other creature! Your little vanishing act in Shadowdale nearly bought our deaths, on the spot! You hinted that if we sought the tablets, we'd best come to Tantras, and when we do, fighting and risking death all the way, you tell us that there is something important we must see, and show us a deity talking about slaying thousands! That statue is on its way here, and no doubt you expect us to stop it, don't you? You grinning old snake!"

Elminster smiles. "Ah, spirit at last. Perhaps even enough. Well, Midnight, what is the burden of thy wailing, truly? Entertainment I've given ye all, and to spare. A little excitement, a few moments of suspense to liven thy days, and ye spit at me like a kitten. No gratitude, no delight in seeing me . . . ye wound me deep, ye do indeed. This day finds ye all alive and well, does it not? Ye've traveled, and seen sights and breathed the air of far places, have ye not? What then irks, so?"

Midnight shakes her fist at him. "Being treated like trained dogs, gods frown on you! Being sent hither and yon like ignorant, unfeeling puppets, for no reason!"

Elminster's eyes are steady upon hers. "Was it really for no reason I directed ye

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here? Are ye that unseeing, indeed? Is it for mere amusement that I battle gods and race the lands over, burning what unreliable Art I have left aiding this one and that, great and small? Is it for mere amusement that I sit listening to thy insults-I, who have shielded thee so carefully as thy power grows? Learn to look, girl: learn to see! It is that understanding ye must nurture, even more than knowledge and raw power of Art! Ye must learn to see the true natures of beings, before it is too late!"

Midnight stares at him, her face paling. "What do you mean?" she whispers. "Shielded me? Why?"

Elminster sighs. "Still, ye think only of thyself, looking not to the needs and wants and plans of others. Look and listen, lady mage, and learn. Answers ye hear but do not heed, sweeping on to other things without thinking . . . so answers I will not yet give. Look and learn, for thyself. And learn wisdom, as quickly as ye can. So much depends on thee."

At that moment there is a thunderous knocking upon the taproom door. A breathless messenger bursts into the room. He is clad in nondescript hose and jerkin, but a gleaming gauntlet bounces from a chain upon his chest.

"I seek the faithful of Torm!" he cries, when he has breath enough to speak. "All in this place who worship Torm, Lord of Loyalty, Master of Duty, hearken! Torm himself commands you to come in haste to his temple! Come to us, now, without delay! Torm has need of you!"

He gasps for breath again, looks around, and adds in lower tones, "Spread the word," and rushes out.

Midnight turns on Elminster. "I suppose this is another of the things you have foreseen, or brought about? Well? If you want me to follow your hints and pleas any longer, you'd better tell me more about this game you're playing . . . now! Why does so much depend on me? What is all this about? Why are we here, and why is Torm calling all his worshipers together?"

If any PCs are worshipers of Torm, Midnight will forbid them to leave, as well as some of the inn staff who feel compelled to heed the call, at least until the sage has explained what is going on.

"When people follow the bidding of mages and gods without asking questions," Midnight says grimly, "they tend to get killed. If I'm to learn wisdom, I'd like to stay alive to do it. That will require all of us together and healthy, so no running off anywhere, anyone, unless we all go, from now on."

Elminster nods approvingly. "Well said, lady. Ye see the difference, when ye think before rushing about doing things? Splendid! As to thy questions, know ye I am not all-seeing, nor infallible. I know not why Torm is calling on his faithful. I fear, however, that he will use their gathered life-force in some way, perhaps to battle the statue ye saw, that Bane commands. I shall try to learn what I can."

The old sage closes his eyes, murmurs something, and gestures gently. For long moments thereafter, he seems to sit listening to something no one else can hear. When he opens his eyes at last, he looks again at Midnight.

"I cannot be sure, though I seem to see another giant, a golden colossus. . . but I do sense great danger. When ye have used the Art as long as I have, ye will be able to feel its ebb and flow, as those who wield it draw it in, hurl it forth, or twist it to their ends. A great tide is drawing in about us, now. I fear a great release of Art will come; something so great as to destroy much that is near.

"This city, for example. All the folk in it, including thyself, for another. All the trees and birds and growing things for a long ride about; little things, as ye say. Mere details in this game I play, as you would have it."

Elminster's lips twist sarcastically as he looks at Midnight. "I do know why Bane comes hither: he seeks to regain the tablet he hid here earlier-ah, yes, it was he-and he seeks to force thee into open battle, for it is Midnight now who intrigues him, one mortal whose powers and place in this chaos he does not understand.

"The tablet must be in the Temple of Torm. I, too, have been searching the city these last few days; I have come to the conclusion that there is no other place it could be. They will be busy there now, scurrying to obey Torm. I can get ye inside, and then, 'tis time to earn thy glory."

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This chapter begins as Elminster tells the adventurers it is time for them to act. The DM should allow time for PC discussions and preparation, and then run Event 1.

Event 1: Into The Temple

When the PCs have prepared themselves for battle, read the following passage:

Elminster looks up from his harp, an instant before any of you can interrupt to tell him you're ready to leave. "All prepared to be off bloodletting, then? Swords sharp? Let's be on our way!"

Briskly he leads the way into the streets, seeking the Temple of Torm by the straightest route, ignoring the curious stares of Tantran guards and scurrying townsfolk alike. Along the way he explains to the group that getting into the temple will be much easier now than it was before—the followers of Torm are being called together for some urgent purpose, and the guards at the temple aren't likely to be too particular about refusing entrance to anyone who wants to get in.

Elminster leads you into an alleyway at the base of the hill where the temple is located. Safe from prying eyes, he pulls a bit of fleece and a pinch of sand from the pockets of his robe. He mutters a few syllables, waves his hands, and a minute later the sage's body and face are transformed into those of a strong young fighter, complete with a symbol of Torm's gauntlet dangling from a chain around his neck. "Am I not devastating?" he asks Midnight, flexing his biceps. "Remember now, everyone: when we approach the front gates of the temple, let me do the talking."

The sage strides on, with the adventurers in tow, and the group soon arrives at the gates of the Temple of Torm.

The guard on duty smiles and holds up a hand in greeting. "Welcome, faithful!" he says, noticing the gauntlet symbol around Elminster's neck. "Not a moment too soon—the Ceremony of Power is about to begin. But hold—thy companions bear no tokens of Torm. What be

their motives for entering here?"

"Recent converts," Elminster answers smoothly, "who have come to see that loyalty to Torm offers the only hope for all of us. I have tested them and found them worthy. If you would also examine them, I pray you do it quickly, so that we may lend our strength to the ceremony."

The guard hesitates only for a moment, looking back over his shoulder toward the interior of the temple. "Your word is good," he says to Elminster. "Pass, and go directly forward to the large chamber, where Torm awaits."

Elminster smiles, nods, and strides into the temple. You follow, leaving the guard behind.

Elminster will lead the adventurers straight into the temple, through areas #3 and #4 (see the map of the Temple of Torm). Despite the fact that the place appears all but deserted, he will urge his companions to move quietly and carefully. The doors leading from area #4 to #5 are slightly ajar, and from within #5 the sounds of prayerful muttering can be heard. Elminster halts in front of the secret door along the north wall of area #4, opens it, and then turns to the party, speaking in a whisper:

"Beyond those doors to the east lies the great chamber—if ye go there, ye will surely get caught up in the ritual. So we stop here; explore beyond this hidden door, and let thy good sense be thy guide. Now all stand still, for just a moment . . ."

The old sage moves among you, touching each of you briefly, and one by one you wink out of sight. "Invisibility will let ye go where ye will," he says, "but be sure to stay together—and move as quietly as ye can; guards can hear even if they can't see. When ye wish to be seen again, say my name and the spell will be broken."

He reaches out and hands Midnight a scrap of paper, adding these instructions: "Open this, and read the word thereon *only* when you are ready to leave, and be sure all of ye are touching each other, linked flesh to flesh. It will bring ye back to the inn. There is more to do, for both ye and I, so rest assured I shall be waiting for ye, when ye come back. Mind ye, curb thy greed when rifling the temple riches: this spell will allow ye to carry only one thing of magic, each, above what ye already hold, or ye

will be lost amid the Ethereal Plane forever."

And with that, Elminster is gone, vanished in an instant. You are alone in the depths of the Temple of Torm.

Event 2: Torm, Tantras, and The Tablet

This event directly follows Event 1, after Elminster has left the adventurers in the Temple of Torm. The DM should be thoroughly familiar with this entire event before running it: there are many things to remember. Note that the magical defenses of the Temple of Torm are not subject to magical chaos at this time, with Torm in residence.

The adventurers will have to spend at least some time exploring the interior of the temple, and they should begin by heading north along the corridor that Elminster revealed to them. Nowhere within the temple will they encounter residents or guards (everyone has gathered in area #6 for the ceremony)—except at the four entrances to area #43. The fact that this place is still guarded should be a tipoff that what they seek is within this chamber. When the PCs first pass by one of the entrances, read the following passage:

The inside of this diamond-shaped chamber is dimly lit. Just inside the entrance you see a stern, motionless guard facing away from the center of the room. You can make out the shapes of guards stationed at the other points of the diamond as well.

The space between the guard and the nearby walls is several feet wide, sufficient for the adventurers to silently shuffle past the guard in single file. The guard will not be aware of their presence unless they make noise or (of course) if they attack. If a guard is attacked or alerted, he will move away from the flagstone upon which he is standing, and this action will set off an alarm that will bring the other three guards running to his aid.

The guards are 6th level priests of Torm. All are AC 1 (full plate), and bear maces of *spellwarding* (see New Magical Items, page 45) as their only weapons. While they are within this chamber, all priests of Torm able

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to use the spell can call lightning as though a storm were overhead. Each of these four priests has one call lightning spell, two *dispel magic*, two *flame blade*, one *withdraw*, and two *cure light wounds* spells.

When the party advances into the chamber, read the following passage:

The ceiling of this huge chamber is lost in darkness overhead. The bare stone floor has been polished smooth by many feet, and swept clean of all dust recently. The room seems to be empty except for a mosaic in the center of the floor worked in the image of the open-handed gauntlet

of Torm.

Suddenly, off to the south, you can hear a rising, rolling chanting coming from many throats. It grows louder, more insistent, and more exultant as you listen.

"Hurry!" Midnight hisses suddenly. "They may be coming in here, for all we know! Hurry, and keep quiet!"

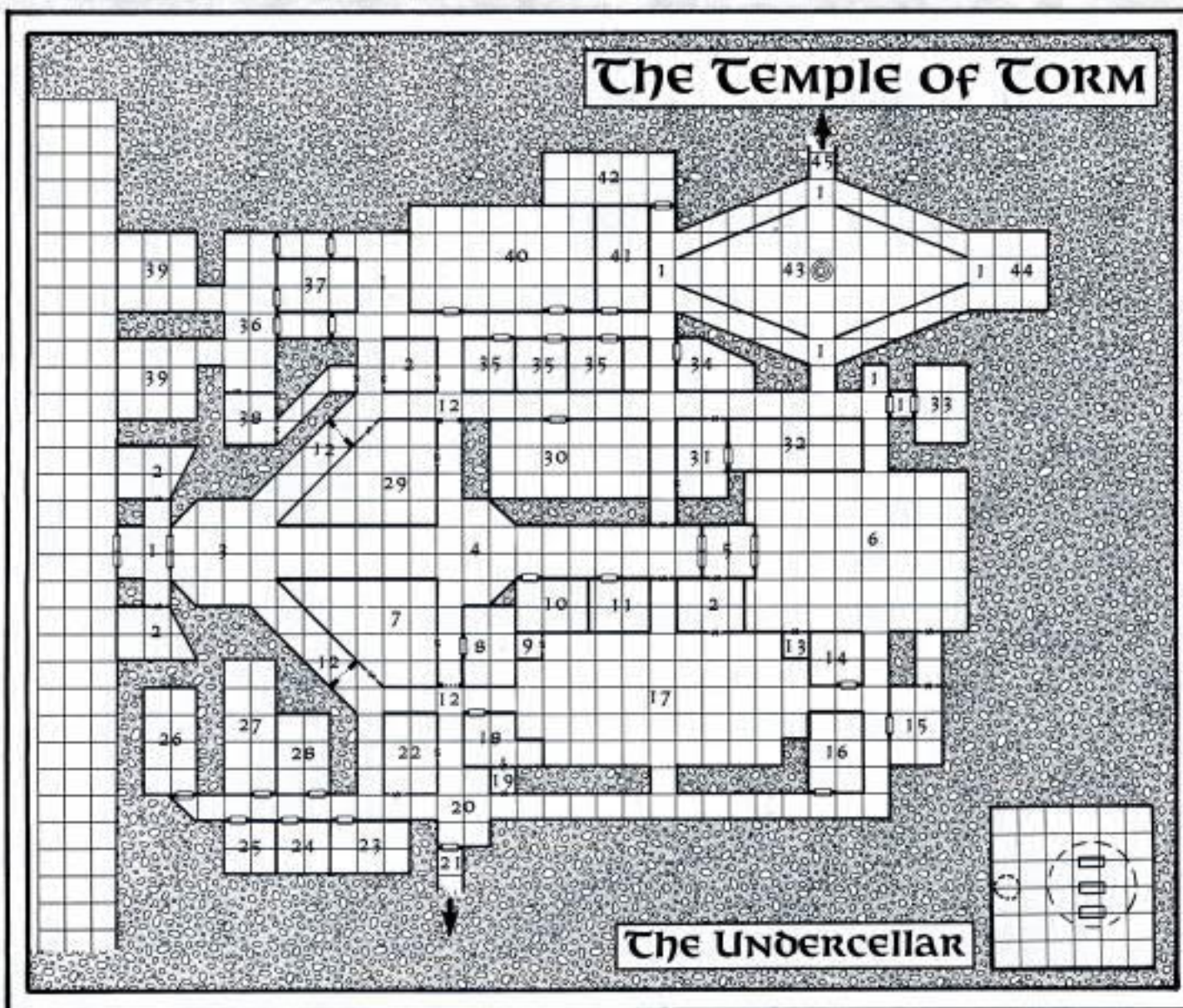
The chanting is coming from the High Holy Hall (area #6), where hundreds of worshippers of Torm (clerics and nonclerics alike) are gathered to hear the words of their deity. In a short time (see below), this

ritual will come to a rousing climax.

There is nothing invisible or hidden in the room. If the PCs investigate the mosaic, they will find two hand-holds hidden in its design, disguised as joints of the gauntlet-covered hand.

The entire palm of the gauntlet lifts noiselessly (one character with Str 16 or higher can pull it out) to reveal a shaft descending downward for thirty feet (2d6 falling damage to anyone pitching down; it has a wooden ladder down one side) into a very dimly lit opening below.

The shaft ends in a low, square, stone chamber. Three large chests, the size of wagon-trunks that merchants use (four of them together fill the floor of a large



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wagon), sit in a row upon the floor. A circle has been chalked around them, and the faint radiance in the small chamber (caused by a dim white *faerie fire*) emanates from this.

In the air above each chest float three daggers, points downward, hanging unmoving in emptiness. Nothing else is visible in the room.

DM's Note:

From the moment the first PC sees this room, the DM should secretly keep track of real time, using a watch. After twenty-five minutes have elapsed, the chanting will rise to a definite climax, then suddenly end. One round later, a great crashing noise will be

heard from above, and the sound of ominous rumbling from outside this chamber will begin. Two rounds thereafter, the ceiling of this chamber will collapse.

The Ceremony of Power was more than a ritual. The avatar of Torm that was present in the temple (in the image of a handsome man) drew upon the support of his worshippers, whose chants and supplications gave the avatar the power to "possess" a great, lion-headed statue that stood within the High Holy Hall. As soon as the avatar took this new form, it rose up and burst through the ceiling of the temple (heading off to join battle with the avatar of Bane). Shock waves from this damage are quickly spreading throughout the eastern part of

the temple, causing many walls and ceilings to crack and collapse.

Everyone in the small chamber when the ceiling caves in must make a Dexterity Check or suffer 4d6 damage from falling rock (if the check is failed, save vs. petrification for half damage). Characters who take full damage are buried or pinned beneath the debris, and must be freed by their companions or perish.

Nothing will occur in the small room until an adventurer touches or passes into the *faerie fire* circle, which acts as a sort of "electric eye." At that time, the white radiance will instantly flare into brilliant light and change into the image of a huge spectral

Ground Floor

Note: The descriptions given here apply to the state of the temple in normal circumstances. Refer to the text of the module for particulars that are true at the time this adventure is taking place.

1. **Guardpost.** Three guards on duty at each post, all clerics of 4th-6th level in full plate (AC 1) and armed with maces of spellwarding, and iron staves (+1 on damage). main (public) entrance is on west wall.

2. **Guardroom.** Sleeping quarters, occupied by 1d4 + 1 off-duty guards at all times.

3. **Entry Hall.**

4. **Offeratorium.** Lay worshippers of Torm are barred entrance beyond this area, where they can give offerings and receive blessings.

5. **Sanctum.** Always staffed by a single priest kneeling in prayer.

6. **High Holy Hall.** Gathering place for clergy only.

7. **Sacristy.** Vestments and everyday items (chains, tables, etc.) stored here; staffed by two junior priests.

8. **Guest Apartments.**

9. **Spy Chamber.** Whenever #8 is occupied, a priest is stationed here to eavesdrop on visitors.

10. **Chapel.** For use by lay worshippers.

11. **Confessional.**

12. **Gates.** Bars run from floor to ceiling; locks difficult to pick (-14%). 1st level priests stationed inside each gate to report on and who approach.

13. **Chancel.** Closet containing holy symbols, sacred relics, and prayer-scrolls. *Off* limits to all but clerics of Torm.

14. **Storeroom.** Cutlery, dinnerware, candles, often materials needed to feed large numbers of people.

15. **Vestry.** Where clergy store their robes and bless for ceremonies.

16. **Cook's Quarters.**

17. **Refectory (dining hall).**

18. **Guest Apartments.**

19. **Spy Chamber (see #9).**

20. **Nave.** Staffed by six guards.

21. **Service Entrance;** locked door guarded by six teeth of Torm.

22. **Herbarium.**

23. **Kitchen;** visitors are not welcome.

24. **Pantry (meat and cheese).**

25. **Pantry (bread and vegetables).**

26. **Wine Cellar.**

27. **Food Storage (dry goods).**

28. **Food Storage (seldom-used non-perishables).**

29. **Workshop.** Broken and torn items repaired here.

30. **Sanctuary.** Prayer room, often used as extra guest quarters.

31. **High Priest's receiving room;** locked and (usually) empty.

32. **High Priest's Apartments;** always very well guarded by magic.

33. **Punishment Cell.**

34. **Proctor's Quarters;** second in command lives here.

35. **Upperpriests' Quarters;** shared by three powerful priests, with at least one of them herein at all time

36. **Guardroom and weapons room.** Six guards watch over weapons crafted by temple workers

(which are sold for a source of income).

37. **Weapons Workshop.**

38. **Armory;** the temple's arsenal.

39. **Smithy;** two forges, worked by five strong priests.

40. **Hall of Instruction.** Classroom for lessons and meetings.

41. **Novitiate Quarters** for all postulants accepted for instruction in the clergy, and novice priests who watch over them; 12-16 persons present at all time.

42. **Priests Dormer.** Similar to #41, used by full priests (3rd to 5th level).

43. **The Over Tomb.** Chamber of solitude used for meditation and prayer; always guarded by four vigilant clerics (see text).

44. **Reliquary.** The resting place of the temple's most revered relic, a battered mace said to have once been wielded by Torm himself. Guarded by a band of Torm spell, it floats mysteriously in midair five feet above the floor.

45. **Secret Side Entrance.**

The Undercellar

This area and the means of entering it are detailed in the text. The small circle on the map shows where the vertical shaft comes out into the chamber; the large circle around the chests is the area from where the *faerie fire* radiance emanates. The ceiling in the room is 10' high. If any of the chests are dragged aside, shallow graves will be found underneath, containing nothing but the bones of some very old priests of Torm.

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hand, enveloping the area. It is a *Hand of Torm* (a new priest spell, described in the New Magic appendix beginning on page 45), and it will constrict any adventurers within the area of effect who do not have a holy symbol of Torm in their possession.

Through the *band*, unaffected by its magic, will flash the daggers, attacking any beings within the circle. They are *teeth of Torm* (also described in the New Magic appendix). Each tooth strikes once per round, at one being, until that being leaves the guarded area (the chalk circle). It cannot be prevented from reaching a target, and *dispel magic* will not cause it to cease in this case. A *dispel magic* cast on a *tooth* in this situation will cause it to become a +1 weapon, a second *dispel magic* will cause it to become nonmagical for attack purposes, and a third *dispel magic* will slow the blade's attacks to one per two rounds. Subsequent attempts to *dispel magic* will decrease the blade's attacks to one every four rounds, one every eight rounds, and so forth.

The three chests are outwardly identical and unlocked. They are too heavy to lift (empty weight more than 500 pounds) and too large to be hauled out of the chamber without destroying the ladder. The center and southernmost ones contain some items of value (see below), but their latches are trapped with sleep poison (save vs. poison or fall unconscious for 4d4 rounds).

The northernmost chest contains 36 cloth bags, each one cylindrical, about two feet high and six inches in diameter. Thirty-five of them contain 100 gold pieces each. The thirty-sixth contains the Tablet of Fate.

The Tablet of Fate is of plain, weathered stone, two feet high, with rounded ends and edges. On its sides are engraved the names and symbols of the gods, and their divine portfolios. It radiates no dweomer, but if Midnight is still carrying the shatter-crystal given to the adventurers by Lhaeo in Chapter 1, that crystal will shatter as soon as the lid of the northernmost chest is raised.

The southernmost chest contains loose swords, maces, orbs, and scepters. All are richly chased and ornamented, and studded with jewels. None are magical, although several items in the chest have been imbued with a *Nystul's magic aura* made everlasting by the application of a *permanency* spell. (If a PC detects for magic among the items in this chest and then takes a "magical" object away with him, he will discover later that his assumption was wrong.)

The center chest contains a similar collection of objects, among them eight items that actually are magical: a *staff of curing* (21 charges), a *rod of resurrection* (14 charges), a *wand of wonder* (50 charges), a *short*

sword +3, a *dagger* +2, *longtooth*, a *brooch of shielding*, a *rod of cancellation* (8 charges) in a special protective case, and a *gem of brightness*.

The spell triggered by Midnight's reading of the word on the piece of paper will bring even dead characters back to the inn, as long as they are being touched by a living character when Midnight reads the word.

The NPCs will strictly adhere to Elminster's warning about taking only one additional magical item per person out of the temple. Any PC who disobeys the restriction, even unwittingly, will wind up fully clad and with all gear, including the "extra" magic item(s), lost somewhere in the Ethereal Plane.

If a DM wants to be merciful, Adon can explain what he thinks happened to the PC(s) upon the group's return to the inn, described in the next event. Elminster will sigh, shake his head, and mutter something long and complicated indeed as he stares into a fist-sized crystal sphere plucked from midair. The character(s) will reappear seconds later in the taproom, devoid of all clothing and possessions (the magic works only on living objects).

Event 3: Ringing The Bell

This event begins as the adventurers return from the temple. Elminster's magic will take them straight into the taproom of the Lazy Moon, empty except for Elminster (sitting patiently at a table, with a tankard beside him) and the astonished innkeeper.

If Midnight is injured and the party has no means to deal with the problem, Elminster will speedily produce potions to see to her healing. After the PCs have related their stories and dealt with any necessary healing or redistribution of gear, read the following passage:

Elminster coughs loudly. "Are ye done, then? Finished plundering temples, and all that? There's more important things to be about, ye know. . . ." The old sage looks off into the distance casually.

Midnight turns on him furiously. "As if we haven't dared enough, while you sat here tossing back ale! More important things to do? What else is it you want of us, then?"

Elminster sighs. "There is one thing ye could do, all of you. Get to the great bell upon the hill. Midnight, ring it as soon as ye can, and save all this city and those in

it. Go! And I shall do what I must. . . For," he adds with a crooked smile, "I have played this game long enough that I begin to understand *my* part in it." He rises with a gesture, and the harp and his robes vanish away, leaving him clad in what appear to be silver flames, flowing and rippling. "Go, now!" he says sternly. "Tantras depends on thee! Fame awaits, and the chance of living to eat a hot dinner tonight, and other nights besides! Ring the bell!"

"The bell!" gasps another voice. The innkeeper, Faress, white and shaking, stares at you open-mouthed from behind the bar. "The bell must be rung? Hurry, then—hurry!"

Midnight nods, frowning. "Right, then, old sage. Your precious bell shall be rung. Why me, though? You are more the master of Art than me, by far! Why entrust this to me, if it is so important? Why can't you simply do it, and save us a little excitement, this once?"

Elminster grins. "And let thee go to thy graves never knowing the feel of saving the Realms? Nay; I be not that cruel. . . 'Tis the greatest feeling in the world, lady! I cannot bring myself to rob thee of it! As to why ye must, and not I . . . all will be made clear in Waterdeep." He smiles and waves. "Don't be long in getting there, or ye'll miss all the fun!" he says—and then he vanishes in a sudden flare of blue light.

Faress bellows up the stairs, addressing unseen tenants. "The bell! The bell is to be rung! Doom is upon us!" He sees you, still gathered in the room an instant after Elminster's departure, and says, "Tarry not, if you would be heroes! Ring the bell! Hurry! *Hurry!*"

Outside, residents of Tantras are rushing down the streets headlong, sprinting as if their lives depended upon getting to the Temple of Torm before their next breath. They will run over, around, or through anything and everything in their way. PCs will have to battle a path through them for the first 3 turns after Elminster's disappearance, after which the city will be strangely quiet except for a rising humming sound coming from the general direction of the partially ruined Temple of Torm.

If PCs wish to investigate this noise, read the following:

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Midnight says fiercely, "Not now! Whatever is going on, we shall seek to learn *after* we ring this bell! Irritating as that old man may be, I'll grant he's learned something to stay alive five hundred years. It the bell must be rung, we ring it, and then I want some answers, by all the gods, and if need be, from all the gods. Come!"

She sets a punishing pace, running hard through the streets of the city. The DM should describe time-wasting obstacles such as abandoned carts blocking the way, lost travelers asking directions, suspicious Tantran guardsmen, persistent peddlers selling worthless amulets to "save thy souls, goodfolk, now that the end of all worlds is at hand!" A panting Midnight, hair streaming behind her, remains at the head of the racing group.

Any attempt to use magic to shorten the journey through the city, should fail: *fly* spells will have only the effects of *jump* magic, *teleport* spells will function only as blink magic, in random (not always desirable) directions, and so on.

The noise to the north rises to a crescendo, and then suddenly ends. There is a flash of light in the air above the temple. At this point, the characters' magic should not work reliably at all, and an electric tension will grow in the air. Short, blue bolts of lightning can be seen arcing from building to building. Some sort of charge is building up. . .

When the adventurers get within sight of the bell tower, read the following passage:

Suddenly, just ahead, you see Tantran guards with drawn weapons. "Go no farther," one says grimly as they approach you, swords held menacingly. "This area is restricted to Tantran soldiers only."

In the next instant Elminster appears in a shimmer of light and waves his hand. The guards fall senseless to the ground.

"Why don't *you* just ring the bell?" Midnight screams at him, exasperated.

"I cannot," he answers, in a voice that is starting to fade away at the same time that his form becomes blurred and insubstantial. "My power is akin to it; if I touched it, the bell and I would destroy each other. Something some folk would welcome, I admit; but all of this city would be riven with us. . ." At that, his body and voice both disappear.



Midnight screams, "Mystra preserve us all!" more in anger than in prayer, and charges toward the hill.

Before anyone can reach the base of the hill, vibrations will begin to move through the ground, coming from the north. Within seconds, the shocks increase in intensity, to the point where loose stone blocks are toppled from walls. Trees are heaved up and left canted at odd angles: buildings, wood and stone alike, are twisted and broken; it is as if the very ground has gone mad and is bent on destruction.

The tremors and upthrusts are especially powerful in the area right around the bell tower (but if anyone were on top of the hill, they would see that the area inside the low stone wall is calm and unharmed). Any PCs who try to accompany Midnight in her climb up the hill must make a Dexterity Check or be thrown to the ground (1d6 damage; 1d3 rounds needed to regain one's feet).

While Midnight struggles to make her way up the hill, Adon will glance back over his shoulder. "Look!" he shouts to attract the PCs' attention, and points toward the north:

Two juggernauts tower above the city skyline, two glowing giants grappling and punching each other like two huge bullies brawling in a tavern. One is black, wearing the spiked armor of Bane's assassins; the other golden and lion-headed. As they smash each other,

lightinglike energy glows around their fists, flaring as punches land. With each blow the ground shakes even more and buildings all around you shudder.

At this point, some buildings will fall with a roar burying terrified people running down adjacent streets.

"Come on!" Midnight will shout grimly as she continues heading up the hill. Each round there will be another tremor, requiring additional Dexterity Checks for any PC's who manage to remain standing.

The juggernauts battle on, the destruction growing wilder: chain lightning leaps from them to rain down on tall buildings and the ground, and wailing winds gust and buffet the city and the PCs. Cracks open in the earth, swallowing horses and cityfolk in the streets below (the DM should threaten the PCs with these fissures, but not harm any PCs). Everything rises to a shrieking climax, and then . . .

Midnight makes it to the top of the hill, throws herself over the low stone wall, and staggers inside the bell tower. A moment later she pulls on the rope—and it works! The bell swings bath and forth, its peals causing a deafening noise. Any character on the hill when the bell is rung must save vs. spell or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. (Midnight will automatically fail her save). If anyone except for Midnight tugs on the rope, nothing will happen.

Immediately after the bell sounds, read the following passage (for the benefit of any PCs who were not stunned):

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There is a great flash of white light, and an earth-shaking rumbling. Everyone is thrown off their feet as the very earth cracks open. Something silver and sparkling is rising into the air all around as buildings leap into the air and begin to fall, the world rocks, all people within sight are thrown down, and birds tumble helplessly past you, hurled out of the air.

Through the rising, silvery radiance (which begins to shimmer with rainbow colors), you see the two juggernauts slowly topple.

Slowly, ever so slowly, they fall from view behind the glowing radiance. An instant later, there is a shattering explosion.



Bright light will temporarily blind any conscious PCs. Then they will be overcome, knocked senseless by the discharge of energy as the two colossi disintegrate. The avatars of Bane and Torm seem to have vanished, probably consumed by the awesome explosion.

A *sphere of force* created by the bell (that will resist *dispel magic* and similar attempts to breach it) will prevent anyone from leaving Tantras for one day after the ringing of the bell. The bell actually creates a shimmering, mist-veiled prismatic sphere of gigantic proportions, enclosing a spherical *wall of force* and an *anti-magic shell*, these concentric spheres being protected both inside and out by spheres of *spell reflection* and *spell turning*.

Event 4: Aftermath

When the PCs regain their senses, they will be lying on the hilltop. Above them, the bell's supports stand empty. The bell has vanished.

Below the PCs lies a partially shattered city. Some buildings have fallen. Many streets are blocked with rubble. Dazed citizens are picking their way through the wreckage trying to salvage what they can. All is hushed. The air and ground are still.

Midnight will be dazed for a round or two. Kelemvor and Adon will see her, decide that she will be all right, examine the PCs to make sure they did not sustain mortal injuries (rendering what aid is necessary), and then crisply direct the PCs to see to Midnight's safety, while they go to help tend the wounded.

If the PCs explore, they will discover sev-

eral things. Within the city, in the spherical area of effect of the bell, all magic will function normally (i.e., not subject to magical chaos) for one day (24 hours to the minute from the ringing of the bell).

Although the city is damaged, the surrounding land is blasted down to bare, twisted, still-cooling rock, which has melted and flowed in many places. Utter devastation reigns in this area, and magic of any sort simply will not work. The minds of spellcasting characters will feel numbed and dazed while they are within this area, which extends for a radius of several miles, from a focal point just north of the city walls where the two juggernauts struggled. This seared area will be magic-dead for $1d4 + 1$ years. Inside and outside the city, there is no sign of the avatars of Bane and Torm.

In the city, there is a great breach in the north wall where the golden avatar of Torm made its way out of the city toward the approaching juggernaut of Bane, crushing animals and people underfoot as it went. The surviving Tantran soldiers are busily filling this gap with rubble.

Soldiers are everywhere, working with renewed vigor now that the doom they foresaw has been averted. They know well that this Time of Troubles is not over, and they are preparing for other attacks.

The Temple of Torm lies in ruin, shattered and fallen. The golden avatar had burst carelessly out of it, weakening the structure, and in the great blast that ended the battle of the two juggernauts, the magic which held up the temple failed, and it collapsed entirely.

If the PCs explore the ruins of the temple, allow them to find four *potions of healing*, a *mace + 1*, seven cloth bags containing 100

pieces of gold each, and a *rod of beguiling* with 29 charges. No priests of Torm seem to be left alive to explain things or offer resistance to the party.

If the PCs examine the gap in the wall or specifically go seeking Elminster (whereupon they will be directed to the gap by an awed housewife), read the following passage:

Elminster is standing atop the tumbled blocks of a collapsed section of the city wall, looking grimly out over the devastation. He smiles at you and says, "Ah, well done indeed. A little cataclysmic, perhaps, but it could not be helped. Other matters press now, so I must be off. See ye all in Waterdeep! Mind ye aren't late!" With a last smile and a wave, he vanishes into thin air.

Midnight looks wearily around at you. "Well," she says in wry disgust, "you heard the Great One. Let's get our gear and get going."

Kelemvor and Adon arrive at that moment. "Did he say what I thought he did?" Adon asks wearily. His hands and robes are stained with blood that is not his own. Kelemvor just shakes his head.

"Perhaps we could save time by sailing to Suzail, or Westgate," says Midnight grimly, "but I've no wish to ride the waves an instant longer than I must, when UMBERLEE and who knows what other fallen gods or leviathans are lurking just below. It seems that the old sage wants us to see every hill and dale between here and the Sword Coast, so we may as well get started."

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Kelemvor agrees. "I always wanted to see Waterdeep," he says sardonically. "How about you?"

Ending The Adventure

If this module is being played singly, or if the DM wishes to take play in a different direction at this time and not continue on to FRE3, Waterdeep, then Midnight, Adon, and Kelemvor should leave the PCs and head straight for Waterdeep. With them will go the attention of Myrkul and Cyric, leaving the PCs to contend only with the risen Zhentilar, the ambitious Zhentarim, the widespread chaos of Art and nature, and rampant bandits and looting.

In the Dragon Reach area, Sembia will move quickly to seize Scardale from the Zhentilar, and both Hillsfar and Mulmaster will try to exploit the lack of Zhentish naval superiority in the Moonsea by attacking her shipping, blockading her harbor, and mustering warriors for attacks upon her. Mulmaster will firmly block the northern end of the River Lis by sinking old barges and rotting cogs and stationing six ships crammed with catapults and archers nearby. Passage from the Dragon Reach into the Moonsea will be temporarily impossible.

The trapped Zhentilar will try to break back through to the Moonsea, and the entire region will rise in arms, from Cormyr in the

west to the Bloodstone lands to the north.

At the same time, renegade cults and priesthoods such as The Cult of the Dragon and the followers of Moander, as well as thieves' guilds and other clandestine organizations made suddenly desperate by the disappearance of their assassins, will mount confused, inept terrorist raids, sabotage attempts, and vendettas everywhere in the area, trying to further their own mysterious ends in the general confusion.

The DM can guide the PCs as desired or let them choose their own course of action, probably beginning with a voyage on The Sea of Fallen Stars to Sembia, Cormyr, or Westgate. An interesting campaign could arise out of the chaos that grips the land at this time.

If play will continue with FRE3, Waterdeep, the PCs will set forth with Midnight, Kelemvor, and Adon on their voyage westward. Be advised that Cyric, fourth of the NPC companions, is still alive, and will be following the PCs with his own plans in mind.

The events of Waterdeep will follow directly after this module. If you do not yet have FRE3, delay the PCs and the three NPCs by handing them a temporary lack of transportation (i.e., no boats remain intact in the harbor after the great explosion). This creates a chance to rest and recuperate (and perhaps find tutors to advance in levels), and a chance to allow Midnight to develop her newly found powers. Adon and Kelemvor can help in tending the injured and rebuilding the city, to keep Tantras an oasis of order and safety amid the strife and chaos now widespread in Faerun (some-

thing the PCs may find satisfying, too). A refusal of the three NPCs to leave Tantras for a time may force the PCs to stay, too, as raiding brigands, monsters, and Zhentarim become suddenly too strong for the PCs to handle by themselves.

Perhaps a Harper agent could also surface to spy on the PCs, as a minstrel (who looks suspiciously like Elminster's disguise, perhaps because Elminster hastily copied his appearance when searching for the PCs) who follows the PCs around, asking them about their adventures so as to make up ballads about their valor.

This Harper agent could be a helpful liaison, leading PCs to potential tutors in the city, or a Zhentarim who leads them into ambushes, or merely a bard full of local lore that may lead the way to side adventures (finding a lost dragon lair and hoard, recovering a smuggler's cargo hidden in the sewers of Tantras and guarded by now-hungry lizard men, uncovering a drow-led plot to seize control of Tantras or at least most of its merchant fleet).

An entire campaign can be set up in Tantras, with the DM shaping and detailing the city to his own ends as play develops (and the shattered city rebuilds itself). If a DM desires to later continue on to the *Waterdeep* module, of course the Zhentarim have always wanted to control a port on the Dragon Reach itself. They might well choose to invade in force at this time, trying to take the city by stealth (and slay or drive out all adventurers who might thwart their plans) where the force of Bane's frontal attack, or the abortive invasion by their Zhentilar soldiery, have failed.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

This section describes four major non-player characters, one of whom (at least) became involved with the PCs in the previous module in this series, *Shadowdale*. They are the four main characters of *The Avatar Trilogy* novels, and are described more fully in accessory FR7, *Hall of Heroes*.

It is recommended that all four of these NPCs be used to accompany the PCs at various points in the adventure—introducing them into the story as described in Chapters 1 and 3—although technically, Midnight is the only NPC who must be in the adventuring party for the story of *Tantras* to unfold in proper fashion.



"MIDNIGHT" ARIEL MANX

Human Mage, Level 7 (at beginning of adventure; becomes Level 8 in Chapter 2, Event 4, and rises to Level 9 in Chapter 5, Event 3, gaining 4 hp and increased spell capacity each time)

Str 6
Int 16
Wis 10
Dex 11
Con 10
Cha 17
HP 9 (rising to 23, then to 27)

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Worships: Mystra, Goddess of Magic

Armor Class: 10

Equipment: Spellbook containing armor, charm person, comprehend languages, feather fall, magic missile, run, Tenser's floating disc, identify, read magic, shocking grasp, sleep; continual light, darkness 15' radius, deepockets, detect evil, ESP, invisibility, levitate, locate object, scare, shatter, wizard lock; clairaudience, clairvoyance, feign death, fireball, fly, haste, hold person, infravision, material, suggestion, water breathing; dimension door, enchanted weapon, fire charm, fire shield, ice storm, Leomund's secure shelter, massmorph, polymorph other, polymorph self; 2 daggers (one at belt, one hidden in boot), staff, two flasks of oil, one potion of healing in a steel vial, and a pearl of power (allowing Midnight to "recall" two 1st level spells), sewn into a garter worn beneath her robes.

Midnight is a thin woman in her late 20s, with a slim, catlike body. She has jet black hair, deep ebon or scarlet (depending on her mood) eyes, and darkly tanned skin. Her hair reaches down to her waist, but Midnight usually keeps it in braids.

Midnight was in her youth unruly, restless, argumentative, and bored. Her merchant parents lacked, it seems, any imagination or dreams. Midnight sought both, earning her nickname from her excursions into the local night life, and it was after a tryst with a conjurer named Tar that she then set her sights on magic.

She began to feel a presence observing her from time to time. When Sunlar, a high priest in the Deepingdale temple of Mystra, singled her out for special attention, he fueled her suspicions that she had been selected for some great destiny.

Midnight is outwardly scrappy and tough, close-mouthed about her past and her powers. She enjoys being mysterious, and a focus of male attentions—and she knows that some important destiny lies just ahead of her.

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KELEMVOR LYONSBANE

Human Fighter, Level 5

Str 17
Int 15
Wis 13
Dex 16
Con 18
Cha 14
HP 44

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Armor Class: 4

Equipment: Chain mail & shield, short sword, bastard sword, lance, bow, dagger, three potions of healing in steel flasks.

Kelemvor is a fierce fighter whose natural fighting skills are more than a match for most foes. He does not shy away from attacking foes who outnumber him tenfold. He is a werewolf, and his lycanthropic



abilities, such as immunity to normal weapons, apparently extend in a weakened form to his human shape. While he takes damage from normal weapons, he regenerates from their effects at the rate of 2 hit points per round.

Due to a twisted permutation in the "family curse," Kelemvor must be paid to perform any deed not in his own best interest. (The original lycanthrope could not take money for any such altruism.) Otherwise, he becomes a panther until he drains blood.

Since Kelemvor cannot control his transformation into a panther, his lycanthropy rarely works to his advantage. In battle, however, Kelemvor's panther form is terrifyingly vicious. The werewolf attacks as a 5 HD monster, striking with the claws on its two front paws for 1d4 each, and biting for 1d8 damage. Moreover, the werewolf is considered to have 18/94 Strength for the purposes of attack and damage bonuses (+2, +5).

The werewolf can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons of at least +1 bonus. It possesses keen night vision that enables it to see in near-lightless conditions, acute hearing, and a precise sense of smell.

In appearance, Kelemvor is a muscular and ruggedly attractive man in his early 30s with long black hair.

Kelemvor is a mercenary who grew restless and came to Arabel (prior to the start of FRE1, *Shadowdale*) in search of something-what, he's not sure, but something more than senseless killing. Born into a military family, Kelemvor grew to hate his father, and ultimately slew Kendrel Lyonsbane when he first became a werewolf in a moment of extreme rage.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



CYRIC

Human Fighter/Thief: Character with Two Classes; 3rd level Fighter, formerly 5th level Thief

Str 17 (+1 on attacks, +1 on damage)

Int 11

Wis 10

Dex 15

Con 15

Cha 15

HP 14

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Armor Class: 1(9)

Equipment: Plate mail, small shield, long sword, short sword, dagger, hand axe, coil of 100' of black waxed rope, grapnel, 1 set of thieves' picks and tools hidden in a hollowed-out wooden crutch, 16 empty canvas sacks with leather thong drawstrings, 3 flasks of oil, 6 iron spikes, mallet, dark-lantern, 12,000 gp in gems.

Born in the back alleys of Zhentil Keep, Cyric never knew the names of his parents (although he suspects his father was someone of influence in the Zhentarim). One morning his mother was found in the street with her throat slit, and his father was nowhere to be found—so Cyric, still a babe, was sold to slavers.

He ended up with a wealthy family in Sembia, but always felt out of place. Cyric was always curious about far-off lands and customs. After causing his Sembian foster parents a great deal of grief, he ran away, and nearly starved in the wilderness. Forced to steal to survive, Cyric reached a city and eventually fell into membership in its thieves guild, where he remained for four winters.

His love of traveling took him onward in

the end. He stole to support himself as he event, journeying about the Dragon Reach and the ports of the Inner Sea. He returned to Zhentil Keep to learn about his family. He may have found his father, but that man was killed before Cyric had a chance to learn more about him. It was then that Cyric decided he must abandon his life of thievery. He became a fighter and worked for causes he thought were just. He met and befriended Adon and Kelemvor while working as a guard in Arabel, desperately afraid that someday his past might resur-



ADON

Human Cleric, Level 5

Str 11

Int 9

Wis 15

Dex 12

Con 12

Cha 13

HP 25

Alignment: Neutral Good

Worships: Sune Firehair

Armor Class: 2

Equipment: Plate mail, large shield, mace, war hammer, 2 vials of holy water, 3 flasks of oil, a pack containing a wooden rack in which are six glass vials-tall *potions of healing*), a scroll containing the spells *command*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *protection from evil* and *purify food & drink*, and a notebook of mediocre love poems.

An only child, Adon was born to wealthy and beautiful parents, Abrasax and Phyllicia, both devout worshipers of Sune. Vain but plain, Adon lacked ambition-but en-

joyed idle luxury all too much. Seen as weak-willed and overly concerned for his appearance, but not enough concerned with spending money wisely, Adon did little in his youth.

His father, increasingly angered, tried to educate his son in the ways of the world by sending him to far-off cities. On the night of his 15th birthday, Adon had a sudden revelation. He revealed to his parents his incredible belief that Sune Firehair would raise him to divine power to be her consort upon his attaining manhood. On the spot, he primly resolved to become a cleric.

Adon sees himself as a crusader, fighting injustice and indecency wherever he goes. He always has a cause, and reveres women to the point of quickly exasperating most he meets. Adon would like everyone in the Realms to care more for others, and came to Arabel to see if he could begin to make a difference in this cruel, confusing world.

After the events of *Shadowdale*, the first module in this series, Adon experiences a sort of breakdown, and will often numbly sit and do nothing unless goaded into action by his companions. He will slowly come out of this, noticeably improving in Chapter 4 of this adventure, and coming fully to life in Chapter 5.

AVATARS OF THE GODS

This section details the avatars of the gods that play a part (directly or indirectly) in the events of *Tantras*. These are but four of the many avatars that have been cast down to Faerun during the Time of Doubles. Far less powerful than “usual” avatars assumed by divine beings, they are the result of possessing human or humanlike bodies. These *are* the gods: no god has multiple avatars or a simultaneous existence on other planes during the time covered by this series of modules.

The DM can freely modify the minor powers of avatars used in play to explain spectacular magical effects, physical feats, powers, and so on. Magic may have (temporarily, at least) ceased to be reliable, but most deities are still the equivalent of at least a 12th level mage, able to unleash full magic.

Avatars can be slain, but unless *energy drain*, *wish* spells, or similar magics are employed to drain the avatars of their divine energy, magical safeguards prepared beforehand by most deities will enable them to survive a “death” that destroys their physical form. However, the scattering of their energies may prevent them from taking another avatar for 1d6 weeks or longer.

The DM should note that no *glyph* or *symbol* magics have any effect on avatars (except to attract their attention). All avatars can hear their names spoken anywhere in Faerun, along with the next nine words of the same speaker. Avatars also detect the speaker’s voice-likeness, distance, and direction (although they usually ignore the ceaseless babble this creates in their minds). Many weapons can affect these weakened avatars.

Destroying an avatar may or may not destroy the being; some deities will survive apparent death in avatar form, existing as entities akin to ghosts. Such ghostlike “anima” forms cannot be turned, and can become *invisible* at will. They can perform magic, have a ghost’s attacks, and have half the avatar’s hit points.

It is recommended that the DM use direct appearances in play by avatars sparingly; it is hard to excite or awe players whose characters are battling the thirteenth or fourteenth avatar of the day.

Abbreviations

AL: Alignment. Indicates the deity’s behavior. A second listing in parentheses after the alignment indicates a deity’s tendency to stray from the primary alignment.

Symbol: The sign by which the deity is known; an avatar may or may not choose to

display it.

HD: Hit Dice. The number of hit dice the avatar has.

THAC0: Acronym for “To Hit Armor Class 0”: the score needed on a 20-sided die to hit an opponent who has an Armor Class of 0. The score needed to hit other Armor Classes is easily calculated from this number. Note that THAC0 does not take into account adjustments to the attack roll due to strength, skills, or magic.

SpA: Spell Ability. The class and level at which the avatar casts spells (M=mage; CL=cleric).

MV: Movement. How fast, in distance per round, the avatar moves (F1=flying speed).

AC: Armor Class. This is the avatar’s frontal Armor Class, including dexterity, magical protections, and innate durability. The AC may be worse if the avatar is attacked from behind or from the flank.

hp: The avatar’s hit points (always less than those of the deity at full powers).

#AT: Number of Attacks. The number of attacks the avatar can make in a single round.

Dmg: Damage. The hit points of damage inflicted by a single avatar attack.

MR: Magic Resistance. The chance of a spell failing when used against the avatar. In this adventure, this factor should be applied *in addition* to magical chaos. The deity’s normal MR is usually about twice as high as that of its weakened avatar.

SZ: Size. An avatar can cause the possessed body to grow larger (or shrink smaller) by 50% of its normal size.

High Ability Scores: The 2nd Edition *Player’s Handbook* gives details of the increased powers and abilities conferred by ability scores higher than 18.

For purposes of the avatar descriptions below, note that high Intelligence confers immunity to believing illusion/phantasm spells, as follows: 19 Int results in automatic disbelief of 1st level spells; 20 Int results in disbelief of 1st and 2nd level spells, and so on, up to 24 Int, which allows automatic disbelief of all illusion/phantasm spells of 6th level and lower.

Also, high Wisdom confers the ability to throw off the effects of certain charm-like magics and magical effects, as follows:

19 Wis: *cause fear, charm person, command, friends, hypnotism*

20 Wis: *forget, hold person, ray of enfeeblement, scare*

21 Wis: *fear*

22 Wis: *charm monster, confusion, emotion, fumble, suggestion*

23 Wis: *chaos, feeblemind, hold monster, magic jar, quest*

Note that the above list assumes immunity

to less powerful versions of similar spells.

The avatars likely to be encountered by the PCs are these:

AZUTH (*Demipower*)

AL: LN (NG); Symbol: A human hand, forefinger pointing upward, outlined in a nimbus of blue fire.

Azuth, the High One, is a mage of legendary power (the Elminster of his day) whose kindly and loyal aid to a succession of Magisters led Mystra to offer him service. As her trusty “right arm,” Azuth has served her well.

Appearing as a kindly but powerful old man, with an imposing bearing, beard, and agile physique, Azuth traveled about Faerun serving Mystra’s ends with unshakable loyalty.

Azuth’s unambitious nature and relative familiarity with the Realms have allowed him to weather the Fall with more serenity than most deities, although the chaos affecting all magic has made his mighty Art less reliable than usual. His actual magical strength has been reduced only slightly by The One Who Is Hidden, but Azuth is not the sort to take advantage of this by wantonly attacking other beings. Azuth is elusive and mysterious, and will seek to avoid most confrontations.

HD 10; THAC0 14; SpA M 22; MV 14, Fl 16; AC -5; hp 77; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; MR 50%; SZ M; Str 15, Int 23, Wis 19, Dex 18, Con 15, Cha 16, regenerates 1 hp/turn.



Symbol of Azuth

AVATARS OF THE GODS



Symbol of Bane

BANE (Greater Power)

AL: LE; Symbol: A black human hand, open but with thumb and fingers aligned together, sometimes on a red field or surrounded by a nimbus of red flames.

Bane, The Black Lord, is a thoroughly evil and malicious being who revels in strife and tyranny. His actions were a major cause of the Fall (although he does not realize that The One Who Is Hidden knows the full extent of his deeds), and he sees the Fall as a rare opportunity to enforce his will upon humans and gods alike, slaying those he can and enslaving or duping the rest.

Bane often appears as a handsome, black-haired man of oily looks and a derisive, even cruel manner. He can change his appearance at will to any other human form, but will always favor black garments, hair or adornment. When angry, his eyes flicker as red as fire. He is familiar with the Realms because of his love of meddling with affairs there, and will use this knowledge to full advantage as he seeks a military ascension to seize power from The One Who Is Hidden. After all, who better than Bane should rule all? And who stands to stop him?

HD 19; THAC0 10; SpA M 21; MV 16, Fl 24; AC -3; hp 96; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (plus Str bonus) + 2d6 tissue burn MR 40%; SZ M; Str 17 (+1, +1), Int 24, Wis 21, Dex 17, Con 19, Cha 16, regenerates 2 hp/round.

MYRKUL (Greater Power)

AL: NE; Symbol: A skull or skeletal hand (sometimes combined, with the hand issuing from the mouth of the skull).

Myrkul, Old Lord Skull, often appears as a flying, burning-eyed skull trailing a shadowy teardrop of ectoplasm. This is an unlimited range projected image; his avatar is "full form"—a cloaked, animated corpse. The corpses used by Myrkul disintegrate rapidly, and so tend to be more skeletal than zombie-like. The head of The Lord of Bones, however, will always be a bare skull.

Myrkul is in an uneasy alliance with Bane. Both know they cannot trust the other, but both hope to emerge triumphant from the final confrontation, after they have destroyed the other gods. Both believe that if they wrest the divine power from the avatars they destroy, and wield the Tablets of Fate together, they can destroy or at least defy The One Who Is Hidden, and emerge as Rulers Of All. (Interestingly, this parallels the prophecies of The Cult of The Dragon, which believes that dead dragons will eventually rule all of Faerun, and later, all other planes as well.)

Myrkul has possession of one of the Tablets of Fate—being kept in the Realm of the Dead (a region in Hades), where his own



Symbol of Myrkul

Castle of Bones is located. Myrkul is denied access to the Realm of the Dead at this time, robbing him of much of his power (which he has tended to invest in items), but he believes that The One Who Is Hidden does not know that the tablet is hidden there. Myrkul has also concealed the precise whereabouts of the tablet from Bane, just as Bane has kept the precise hiding-place of the tablet in Tantras from him; thus the two gods feel that they have protected themselves enough to work together.

Myrkul is somewhat haughty. He thinks nothing of lesser gods as well as "no-account cattle" (mortal creatures). He will prefer to frighten or awe such personages (the PCs, for example) by taunting them with his im-

age, rather than engaging in face-to-face combat. (In "normal" times, it is Myrkul's way to quickly retreat to Hades if seriously threatened, by using one of his gates. These are permanent portals, set up long ago and usable by anyone; Myrkul cannot quickly "turn off" a gate, but all are guarded by minions loyal to Myrkul at the Hades end. During the Godswar, The One Who Is Hidden has turned all such gates into disruptive traps for avatars; contact with them causes wrenching pain, and if the avatar persists in trying to pass through, through, dispersal of the avatar's form.)

HD 18; THAC0 14; SpA M 23; MV 12, Fl 18; AC -4; hp 136; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (+1 Str bonus) plus 1d4 chilling damage (see below); MR 45%; SZ M; Str 16, Int 18, Wis 23, Dex 15, Con 25, Cha 9, regenerates 2 hp/round.

Myrkul's chilling damage—which can be conferred by a bare-handed attack or a weapon blow—is identical in effects to a *chilling touch* spell: 1d4 damage (no save), plus save vs. spell to avoid a 1-point Strength loss; lost Str returns at 1 point per hour.

By touch Myrkul can also exercise additional powers (usable in combination with physical and chilling damage, if he desires). He can *animate* undead indefinitely. If skeletons or zombies, they obey him absolutely; if of greater power, they must perform one service for him (treat as a *command* spell) and are then free-willed. He can also *disrupt* undead (destroying them instantly and forever, to dust that not even he can reanimate), as he wills. Myrkul cannot by touch seize control or command existing undead above the power of skeletons and zombies; he can influence only those undead he himself animates.

On living creatures, Myrkul can at will confer *flesh rot*, "the mummy disease." It is fatal in 1d6 months, negates all *cure wounds* spells, causes infected creatures to naturally heal at only 10% of the normal rate, and causes a permanent Charisma loss of 1 point at the end of two weeks, and 1 point per two weeks elapsed thereafter. Touched creatures are allowed a save vs. poison to avoid, but must save again for each touch that Myrkul makes.

A side effect of Myrkul's touch (make an Intelligence Check to end this, checking once per turn) is that living creatures see all those around them as moving, talking, clothed skeletons, and cannot see flesh (including expressions, moving lips, etc.). This does not mean that an adventurer will automatically assume that his or her comrades have become undead; the DM should simply describe the effect to the player, and let the player decide how the PC will react.



Symbol of Torm

TORM (Demipower)

AL: LG (LN); Symbol: A metal gauntlet (that of a human right hand, fingers and thumb together and pointing upwards, palm open), sometimes enclosed within a triangle of bare-bladed swords.

The God of Duty, Loyalty, and Obedience is a great fighter the faithful "war-arm" of Tyr, Lord of Justice. Unfortunately, Torm was separated both from Tyr and from his own weapons and armor of power during the Fall, left to his own devices. He decided that only through strict adherence to law and authority—his own—could the Realms be freed of the chaos brought on by The Fall of the Gods, and he set about establishing order from his temple in Tantras. In other times, his dispassionate (some would say ruthless) rule might seem irksome in the extreme but amid the chaos of Art and nature, with half of Faerun risen in arms and strife, it was welcomed by many. People all around the Dragon Reach began coming to Tantras, to join the faithful of Torm.

Torm's present avatar (when he first comes to Tantras) is a fine-featured, fair-haired man of firm speech, piercing grey eyes, and a ready sword. Sear the climax of this adventure, Torm draws additional power from the fervor of his worshipers and thereby takes a new form for his avatar: that of a lion-headed warrior, in the image of a statue that has been located in the worship hall of his temple. (Statistics given below are for this form, which has a better armor class and more hit points than his humanoid avatar.)

Able to see magical auras, upon his arrival in Tantras he immediately appropriated the finest weapon in his temple, a *sun blade*. This is a bastard sword of +2 power, +4 against evil creatures (including avatars),

which does double damage against some undead and other creatures which are from, or draw power from, the Negative Material plane. It can, upon command, shed light equivalent to full sunlight. This *sunray* power may be used only once per day, and begins as a 10' radius globe centered around the sword wielder, expanding 5 feet per round to a 60' radius globe. Thereafter it fades to a dim glow (suitable for illumination only) which lasts another 10 rounds.

He also carries a *short sword of quickness*, a +2 magical weapon which strikes first in every combat round.

Torm expects his faithful to obey him instantly and without argument, because that's what loyalty is all about (questions and suggestions are acceptable, as long as they don't involve direct challenge or delay). He believes he must enlighten nonbelievers, but will not coerce them into following his fill. If they refuse, they are nothing, and may be treated as such by all thinking creatures.

Torm's avatar lacks many of the god's powers but retains the abilities to, at will, *feather fall*, *know alignment* (60' radius), *detect invisibility*, and use *true sight*, *hold portal*, and without restriction pass or part all locks and wards (not, however, escaping trap effects). He acts at all times with personal free action (as the wearer of a *ring of free action* does, free from *hold*, *slow*, and similar magics, and natural or magical webs or bonds). Torm is never surprised, and need nearer sleep. For all his talents, he is not all-knowing or a great strategist; his strengths lie in diligence and attention, and he is unaware that a Tablet of Fate is hidden in his own temple. *i(Do not, of course, reveal this to the players!)*

HD 14; THAC0 13 (+3 Str bonus); SpA M 12, CL 18; MV 17, Fl 24; AC0; hp 112; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (+ 7 Str bonus); MR 30%; SZ M; Str 19 (+ 3, + 7), Int 18, Wis 19, Dex 18, Con 18, Cha 15, regenerates 1 hp/turn.

NEW MAGIC

Spells

Hand of Torm (Evocation)

Sphere: Guardian
Range: 40 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 12-foot-radius sphere
Saving Throw: Neg.

This 4th level priest spell is an improved form of the *wyvern watch* magic. It was developed long ago by priests of Torm, and is often used to defend sacred areas (such as the treasure chambers in the temple in Tantras). It may be used by worshippers of Torm anywhere in the Realms.

A successful casting of the spell causes a shimmering, translucent image of a gigantic gauntleted human hand to appear, cupped so as to define a spherical area. It is typically used to guard that area against intrusion. Any sighted creature approaching the image will readily see it. By careful preparation and combination with other magics, the spell can be cast and kept in stasis until it is triggered by some other action (such as what occurs in this adventure).

The material component of the spell is the priest's holy symbol. Any creature bearing a symbol sacred to Torm will be able to pass through the hand (and the sphere it defines) without effect. Any other creature who approaches the guarded area will feel a warning prickling in the air, an almost electric tension.

If the guarded area is entered, the intruding creature will feel a solid force resisting its forward movement. The creature must make a successful Strength Check to continue forward into the protected area, and a

second Strength Check to pass out of the guarded area at any other point except at the one entered. Failure will cause the creature to be paralyzed for 1 turn per level of the caster (or until freed by the caster, whichever occurs first).

Any creature without a holy symbol of Torm who attempts to pass an area guarded by a *hand of Torm* will be slowed so as to require 2 rounds to enter or exit. Regardless of the Strength Check results, the intruder must also make a saving throw vs. spell for each round. A successful save means no damage; failure indicates that a crushing, constricting force squeezes the intruder for 1d6 points of damage in that round. Note that although observers will see the image of the hand closing about the intruder, a *hand of Torm* can constrict and hamper the progress of more than one creature within its confines at any one time.

Any number of creatures can be affected by a *hand of Torm* without dissipating or exhausting it. *Dispel magic* will destroy it instantly.

Elminster's Effulgent Eupuration (Abjuration)

Range: 10 feet/level
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This is the 9th level wizard spell used by Elminster in the battle with Bane at the end of Shadowdale (FRE1), presented here for the information of DMs and players who are interested in knowing more about how

Elminster does what he does. The spell is Elminster's own invention, and one of the magics he is most proud of devising.

The *Effulgent Eupuration* enables a wizard to negate even the most powerful offensive magical effects. When it is cast, silver spheres about the size of the caster's head come into being, issuing from the caster's hand and growing rapidly as they leave it. One sphere per level of the caster is produced by this spell.

The caster can, at will, direct the spheres to drift (at a maximum movement rate of 60 feet per round) and move up to the limit of the spell range. The caster cannot make the spheres invisible, or retain any for later formation; all of them come into being at the time of casting, although they may be retained indefinitely for future use, floating silently overhead.

Any sphere contacting an offensive magical effect (including area-effect magics, but not passive barriers) will automatically absorb the effect. Thus, when a sphere absorbs a *fireball*, the *fireball* does not blast or deal damage, but merely turns silver in hue and dwindles away to nothingness, robbed of its magical energy.

A sphere positioned so as to envelop an item (such as a wand) will prevent the object from functioning. The item will "fire" (expel charges) if so commanded, but its magical effect will not occur.

Note that *anti-magic shell* and similar spells are not harmed by the spheres of an *eupuration*, but in turn can neither stop nor destroy such spheres. Prismatic spells of all sorts, whether barriers or not, are destroyed on contact with silver spheres (regardless of the wishes of the caster of the *eupuration*).

Silvery spheres cannot be directly attacked or moved. They have no solid, physical presence, and can pass through magical and physical barriers alike as though such barriers did not exist. The only way to affect a sphere is to cast *dispel magic* or an offensive spell directly at it; both tactics will cause a sphere to exhaust itself dealing with the magic.

Neither the caster nor anyone else can harness the spell energies dissipated by the spheres. Even the magic of deities or their avatars can be affected by the silvery spheres of an *eupuration*.

Items

Mace of Spellwarding

XP value: 2,000

This +1 magical weapon appears as a finely made mace wrought of one piece of blued, oiled steel. In battle, it functions nor-



NEW MAGIC

mally. If it touches any item or solid, nonliving surface that bears a dweomer, the mace will glow with a magenta-hued radiance, the intensity of the light increasing with the strength of dweomers contacted.

The force of any spell, magical item, or artifact discharge directed at the bearer of a *mace of spellwarding*, or activated so that its area of effect includes the *mace* or its bearer, will be sucked into the mace, instantly and harmlessly. This effect is audible and visible, and entirely protects the bearer (even from such specifically aimed magics as *magic missile*, *charm* magics, and the like). Absorption is involuntary, not selectively controllable.

For each level of spell absorbed (treat item functions as the level of the lowest equivalent spell), a *mace of spellwarding* gains an additional +1 bonus, lasting 6 turns. Bonuses apply to both damage and attack rolls, and are cumulative.

Upon exceeding a maximum of bonuses (which varies from mace to mace; most were designed to handle no more than 12 spell levels), a *mace of spellwarding* expends its excess energy in a random *teleport*. It always travels to a safe place (i.e., neither high nor low for human-sized wielders) somewhere on the same plane, but its destination cannot be foreseen or influenced in any way.

If no one is holding or carrying the *mace* when it overloads, it will simply vanish in a burst of magenta-and-white radiance. Anyone holding (or touching a holder of) a *mace of spellwarding* will be taken along on the *teleport* (to a maximum of one creature per "plus" held by the *mace* at the time of overload, including the "extra" pluses the weapon could not handle).

A *mace of spellwarding* functions as a normal weapon only (exhibiting no magical powers whatsoever) for one day after *teleporting*, and thereafter regains its +1 status and ability to *spellward* again.

Tooth of Torm

XP value: 1,000

This special sort of magical dagger, developed by priests and wizards loyal to Torm in ages past, is customarily borne only by high-ranking servants of the Lord of Loyalty.

It is a silver-bladed, +2 weapon that will never tarnish, break, or lose its sharpness. When grasped and commanded, it empowers the wielder to *see invisible creatures and objects* within a 60-foot range. This sight also shows the alignment auras and dweomers of beings and items viewed.

A *tooth of Torm* is not wielded in battle, but if released while under a command to

strike, it will *blink* away to attack any selected target creature up to 30 feet away, striking and returning within a round. It cannot be grasped while attacking or returning, and will come to float beside its commander's shoulder. No living creature can travel with it, but hand-sized or smaller nonliving items strapped or tied to the blade will be carried along with it.

It will obey only lawful good beings, and will burn (for 1d2 points of damage per touch, or per round of continual contact) chaotic evil creatures upon contact.

A *tooth of Torm* can also be commanded to guard. The commander holds the dagger with its point toward the object or area to be guarded (such as a door, altar, or archway), positions it as desired, and then releases it. The commander then repeats the word "guard" continually until the dagger has reached or is touching the area or object to be guarded.

The dagger will then hover in place indefinitely, until it is affected by *dispel magic* or the guarded area is violated, whereupon it will *blink* to the attack. The dagger will strike repeatedly, once per round, until the guarded object or area is no longer touched or disturbed, or until the dagger itself is destroyed. (An intruder who flees empty-handed will thus suffer only a single attack from the dagger.)

Note that the commander of the dagger, or any lawful good creature, will not cause the dagger to activate even if such a creature does disturb or enter the guarded item or area. An avatar or high servant (being from another plane) of Torm will also not cause a *tooth of Torm* to strike. The presence of all other worshipers of Torm who are not lawful good will cause the dagger to strike.

Any number of *teeth* can be combined to guard a single object; it was common practice of old to place a ring of *teeth* in the air above a coffer containing temple treasures each night, as an inner guard on the valuables.

Wand of Viscid Globs

XP value: 750 gp

Thought to be of drow manufacture, the *wand of viscid globs* is used as a deterrent or as a way to keep prisoners inescapably bound. When it is activated, a sphere of magical energy—appearing as a "glob" of some unknown substance—is projected toward an intended target within 60 feet. A target that is able to move is allowed a saving throw vs. wands to dodge the *glob*, but someone or something that is bound or otherwise immobile cannot prevent the *glob*

from striking. The wand can be used once per round.

Solid items within the 5-foot-diameter *glob* when it strikes its target are permanently bound to one another—hands to weapons, armor to bodies, and so on. The specific effect on any character or creature struck depends on the position and orientation of the character's body at the instant when the *glob* makes contact. A standing character will be rooted to the spot, but if he was holding his weapon away from his body (and if the attachment of armor or clothing to skin does not completely hinder movement) he may still be able to use his weapon to defend himself. *Globs* are most often used (as in this adventure) to firmly bind victims who have already been trussed up by ropes or chains, making escape virtually impossible.

No amount of struggling will enable a trapped character or creature to be free of a *glob*; all that will happen, if the victim tries hard enough, is minor damage (1 to 3 hp per attempt) from strained or torn muscles. The magic of a *glob* negates any contrary magic that might have been available to or in effect upon a targeted character or creature (such as a *ring of free action*). A character struck while flying or swimming will sink slowly to the ground (taking no damage from the fall) and will not be glued to the solid surface he comes in contact with, but may be frozen in position and unable to move—which could be a serious problem for someone whose *water breathing* spell is about to expire.

Dispel magic will cause a *glob* to vanish, and ordinary alcohol will dissolve a *glob*; a flask of wine contains enough liquid to undo the effects of two *glob*s. The effect of the *glob*s is not cumulative; a character already contained within one cannot be further affected by repeated applications of the magic.

Quelzarn

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical, subtropical, and temperate fresh and salt water
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	J, K, L, N, Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 20
HIT DICE:	5-10
THACO:	15 (5-6 HD), 13 (7-8 HD), 11 (9-10 HD)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Hold monster</i> ability
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to electrical attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	G (up to 60' long)
MORALE:	Very steady (13-14)
XP VALUE:	
5 HD	1,250
6 HD	1,500
7 HD	1,750
8 HD	2,000
9 HD	2,250
10 HD	2,500

Quelzarn are giant, solitary water snakes found in both fresh and salt water. They are agile and swift hunters, and may be of magical origin.

Quelzarn are eel-like in appearance, with mottled brown or green slimy skin that is extremely slippery. The slime enables them to breathe air through skin membranes, and is often home to mosses and weed. Quelzarn are usually 30-40 feet in length, and have a spinelike fin running the length of their backs. Broad, leaf-shaped fins cover their gills just behind their wide, toothed jaws, and a quelzarn's head sports a bony, fin-shaped crest.

Combat: Quelzarn will eat anything living (and carrion if desperate). They spend their days cruising for meals, or drifting while they digest one. Quelzarn can cast a 60-foot-range *hold monster* spell once every turn. They use this in battle and to immobilize prey. Quelzarn are highly resistant to the polluted waters of busy harbors and vast swamps alike. They have been known to *hold* a sailor standing on a dock, and then rear out of the water to drag him down.

Quelzarn bite for 3-12 damage, and are capable of swallowing whole any creature of 4½ feet in height or less. (The victim, even if *held*, is allowed a Dexterity Check to avoid this fate.) Swallowed victims will drown in 6 rounds; they will find that the interior of a quelzarn is AC 9, and inflicting 20 points of damage to one will cause the creature to spit its victim(s) out. Swallowed victims suffer only 1d2 points of damage from the creature's teeth. Angry quelzarn are capable of vomiting a swallowed creature out in order to bite it.

Habitat/Society: Quelzarn are thought to have a magical origin, perhaps the result of long-ago experimentation by mages of Unther (certainly, the creatures were once hunted there for sport). They have a natural magic resistance, and are entirely immune to all electrical attacks, both magical and natural. Quelzarn are attracted by magical attempts to control their wills, but re-



ceive a saving throw every second round against such magics (or spell-like natural or item powers) to break free of control. The interest of quelzarn in magic use, plus their shape and humanlike eyes, sometimes causes them to be mistaken for nagas.

Quelzarn roam great distances in their lives, and are thought to mate (they do so only seldomly) in deep undersea caves. They may cooperate with other creatures (in return for food), and will never attack another of their kind. If one quelzarn encounters another while attacking prey, they tend to ignore each other and attack independently rather than fighting or closely cooperating.

Ecology: Quelzarn have no distinct lairs. Any treasure found within a quelzarn will be inorganic matter that has been swallowed (such as coins and gems). The digestive juices of quelzarn slowly break down flesh, tissue, and even bone. The brain and cranial fluids of quelzarn have been found useful in the making of spell inks for *slow* and *hold* magics, and as a distillate in the manufacture of *rings of free action*. Quelzarn tissue is a useful alternative ingredient in the seasoning of wood to be used in the fashioning of *wands of lightning*. Quelzarn skin is leathery and snakelike, but death or severing causes it to cease producing its slimy coating. It soon shrivels into uselessness.

Greater Quelzarn

These creatures are thought to be very rare or even extinct, but are often referred to in Untherian hunting accounts of long ago. Larger than most quelzarn, they had an additional magical ability; that of *spell turning* (as a *ring of spell turning*). They were cunning and highly intelligent, often luring hunting ships into traps, and were known to ally with other marine creatures on occasion.

The Tower of Ashaba

Underground Level

This level of the tower is very old, having been built long ago by the dark elves of the depths—with the exception of area #2, where the rock walls are lighter in color and less dusty than the walls in the rest of the complex.

1. Stairway; very steep, rough-hewn stone stairs, dropping more than 80 feet in about 30 feet of horizontal distance.

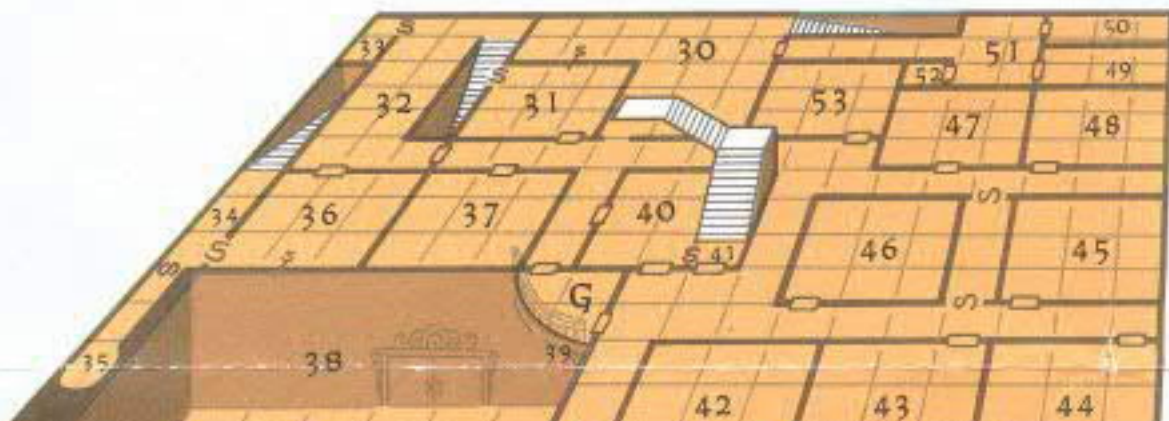
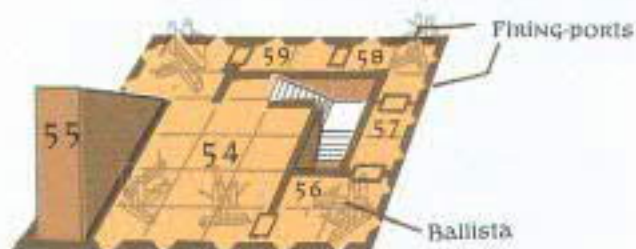
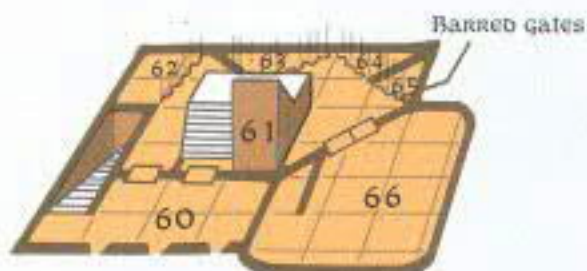
2. Blast Cavern; created by a fairly recent explosion. Stores of food and beer along walls, torches set into sconces, entire area magically illuminated.

3. Cellar Stores; nonperishable materials, including chalk, thread, needles, boxes of tinder, and lamp oil.

4. Wine Cellar; many large, full barrels of wine, too heavy to move upstairs without using a rope crane or some other lifting device.

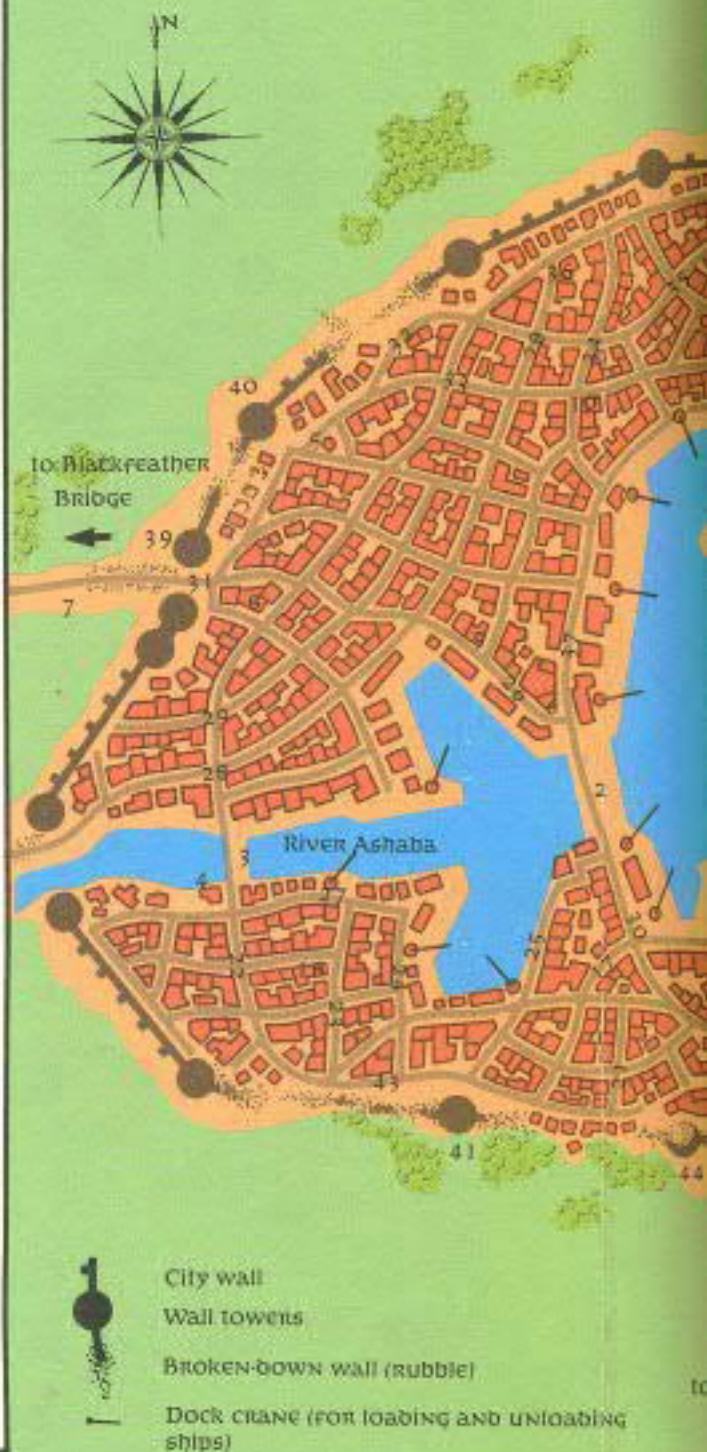
5. Storage; mostly old furniture and lamp standbards; pieces can be used as staves, but may (2 in 6) break if they strike.

6. Stairs; rising as they curve from south to west, illuminated by continual light. Niche in wall contains unlit torch and filled, unlit oil lamp.



City of Scardale

1. Harborwatch Keep
2. Anvil Bridge
3. Dawnstar Bridge
4. The Lap of Luck (temple to Tymora)
5. Four Dolphins Fountain
6. Ashabemouth Arms (burned-out inn)
7. The Westway
8. The Green Griffon (inn; currently used as soldiers' barracks)
9. House of Swords (shrine to Tempus)
10. Spouting Fish (inn)
11. Singing Siren (tavern; also known as the Happy Harpy)
12. The house of Paerus (a now-deceased merchant)
13. Northend Tower
14. The Wash Rocks (or "Awash Rocks")
15. Partially sunken, wrecked ship, set with catapults by Zhentish soldiers to command the nearby waters of the Reach
16. The Talon (natural breakwater)
17. Sordidim Nund's shop, footwear
18. Yakholim the grocer (second floor; residence of Halath Mhaerim, wizard)
19. Juliet's Street
20. Whelgar's Way
21. The Blackmarch
22. Dawnstar Street
23. Soulall Street
24. Wulf Street
25. The Stribe (street)
26. Labbath Street
27. Turlin's Street
28. The Flameway
29. Copper Street
30. The Anvil Run
31. The Westmoot (intersection)
32. Shawl Street
33. Suth Street
34. Sarkh Street
35. Shinbal Street
36. The house of Belintar Sharnraven, ranger
37. Dock Street
38. Uglund Street
39. Wall tower garrisoned by Cormyr
40. Wall tower garrisoned by Sembia (encircled by Zhentilar soldiers)
41. Wall tower garrisoned by Hills far (encircled by Zhentilar soldiers)
42. The house of Sashes, lady merchant of Sembia (trade representative; very rich, said to have magical guards and griffon steeds)
43. The Dead House (burial crypt for the rich, plots for 600 gp each; proprietor is Luth Ormar, merchant, who lives next door)
44. Barrast Murtene, horse trainer & dealer



7. DUNGEON. Guard stool at top of stairs; seven unlit torches hung on walls in trian-

11. Corridor lined with crypts containing stone caskets of past lords of Shadowdale;

16. Spyhole Chamber; allows a quick cover occupants of the Feast Hall



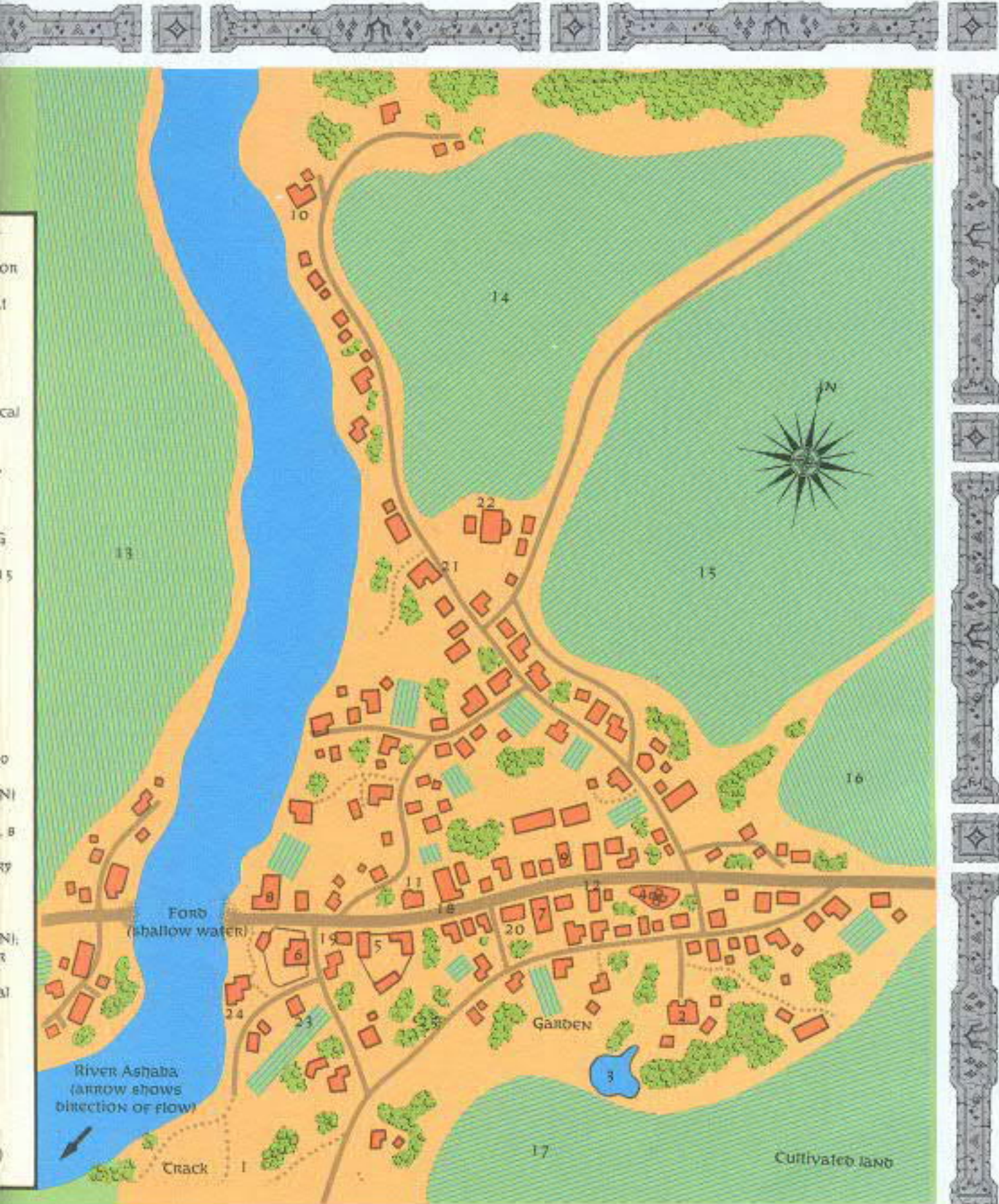
Village of Ashabenford

1. COMMON GROUND (usable by all for grazing land, campsites, etc.)
2. House of Heresk Malorn, High Councillor of Mistlebale (0 lvl, 10 hp, LN)
3. Heresk's Pool (rumored to contain great treasure)
4. Horsewater Pool (for common use, to water and wash down travelers' horses)
5. Ashabenford Arms, a good place to stay (prop. Ardel Hammerbayle, Ftr 4, 22 hp, LG)
6. Shop of Kaulvaerus (Ftr 1, 8 hp, LN, a local councillor); horses bought, sold, trained, & tended
7. Braunstar the Wheelwright (Ftr 1, 12 hp, LN, a local councillor), wagon building and repairs
8. Lhuin's Fine Leathers (Ftr 1, 4 hp, NG); saddles, tack, boots & belts made, repaired, & sold
9. Soritar's House of Watchfulness (Ch 4, 15 hp, N); warehouse space for rent
10. House of Arlparn (Ftr 2, 13 hp, NG); hunter, fisherman, and guide
11. Wayside shrine to Chauntea (staffed by Jhanira Barasstan, Pr 4, 29 hp, NG, a local councillor)
12. Wayside shrine to Tymora (no clerical staff)
13. Farm of Tolbin Sarone (Ftr 1, 9 hp, CN)
14. Farm of Channas Hornweather (Ftr 3, 20 hp, CN)
15. Farm of Kuthe Memblarn (Ftr 2, 14 hp, CN)
16. Farm of Ulb Rlothass (Ftr 4, 36 hp, NG)
17. Farm of Taniatha Tyrilan (secretly Wiz 2, 8 hp, NG)
18. Arlho's Fine Flasks (0 lvl, 6 hp, LG); winery & brewery
19. The Velvet Veil; tavern, dancing club, & gambling hall
20. Muthlimmer the Merchant (Ch 7, 37 hp, CN); all goods bought & sold (actually a fence for stolen merchandise)
21. Darblas the Smith (Ftr 6, 56 hp, NG, a local councillor); very skilled at metal forging, weapon repair, etc.
22. House of the Ribers (barracks & stables for 20)
23. House of Thorm Ulber (0 lvl, 5 hp, LN, a local councillor)
24. Thorm Ulber's grist mill
25. House of Skori (a supporter of Lashan, now fled or killed, the house a burned ruin)

ows a guard to
Feast Hall with a

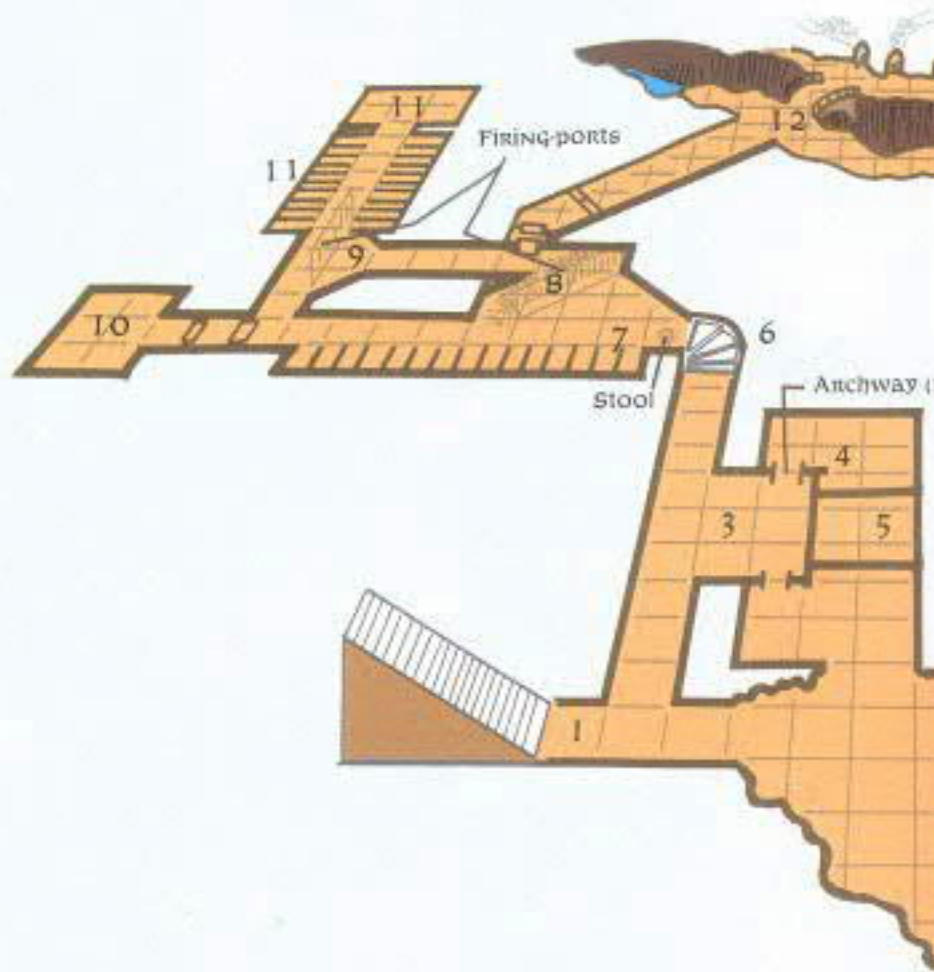
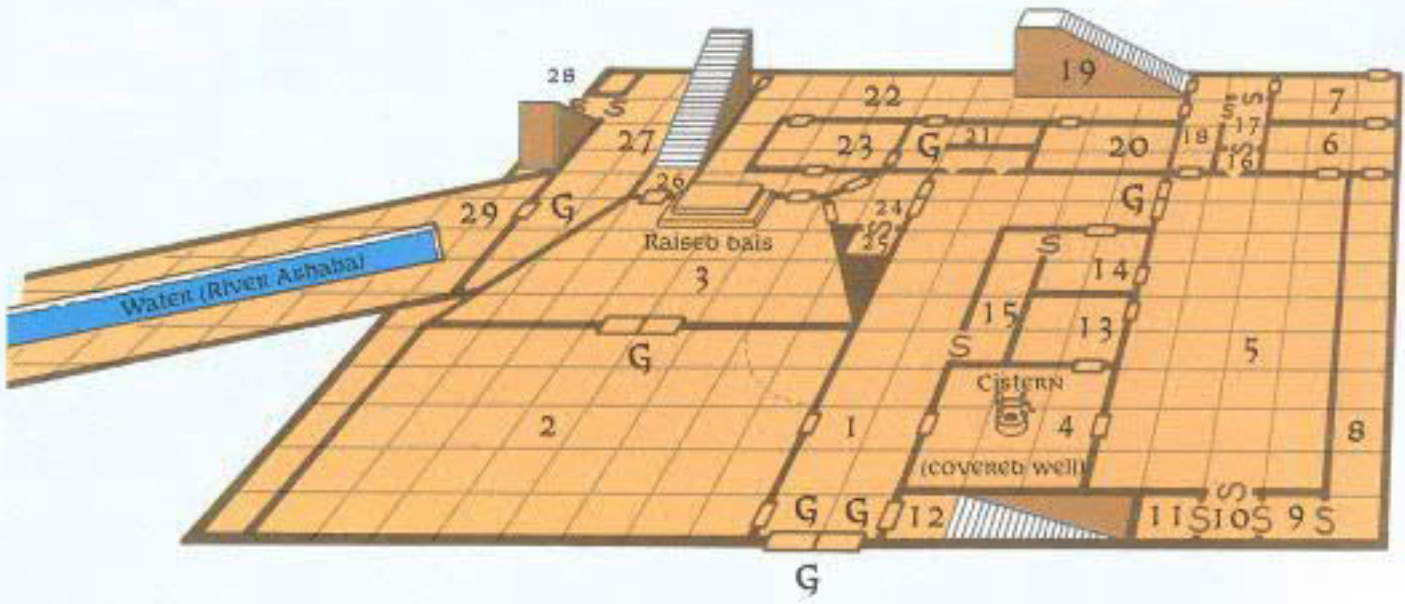
45. Bedroom of kitchen staff (Lalym, Sebros, Massim, Purk)

City of Tantra



5. The Great Bell, also called the Bell of Aylen Atticus, atop the city's second highest hill

12. The Morning Halls, temple to Lathanber, normally busy, currently all but deserted



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7. Dungeon. Guard stool at top of stairs; seven unlit torches hung on walls in triangular area. Firing-ports (built by brow for security) now unused. Fifteen small cells along south wall, where prisoners are kept.

8. Chamber nearly filled with stone rubble (much of it carted from area #1), in an effort to block off the passageway leading northwest to the brow tunnels.

9. Archer's Gallery, an area behind a set of firing-ports that are still usable. The floor here has some rubble, but movement into and out of the area is still possible.

10. Library; both sets of doors heavily guarded by magical warbs and glyphs. Elminster, Lhaeo, and Mourngrym have the only keys, and will not part with them.

11. Corridor lined with crypts containing stone caskets of past lords of Shabowbale; north of that, the Tomb of Sylune. This is a monument to the witch whose skill and courage saved Shabowbale from being ravaged by a great red dragon. A phantom of the lady may appear here (to warn intruders away); it cannot be harmed and cannot cause physical harm.

12. Entrance to the brow underworld, blocked off from the rest of the complex by three locked, spiked doors set with magic mouth spells to warn off would-be explorers. A stone bridge spans an underground gorge (ice-cold water 120 feet below). Leading away from the stone ledge on the far side are six cave mouths—entrances to the "bark world." These have been filled in with rocks and debris, but could be cleared out—from either side. . . .

GROUND LEVEL

1. Grand Entry Hall
2. Forecourt; ceiling height 120'
3. Lord's Court/Audience Chamber
4. Room of the Well; secondary guard-post, source of drinking water
5. Feast Hall; long rows of tables
6. Kitchen
7. Scullery; floor slopes down to north, draining water & refuse out under the door
8. Pantry; only keys held by Shaeri (Mourngrym's wife), the cook, and Mourngrym
9. Wine Cellar; center cask on west wall opens to reveal passage to #10
10. Closet of Cordwood (emergency fire-wood)
11. Emergency Cache; misc. equipment, food & water, weapons, magical items
12. Stairs to Underground Level
13. Ladies' Antechamber
14. Mens' Antechamber
15. Secret Passage; used by lords and other dignitaries to slip away from boring ceremonies in the Feast Hall

16. Spyhole Chamber; allows a quick cover occupants of the Feast Hall to crossbow, or to eavesdrop on "private" talk. All residents of the tower know this room.

17. Secret Chamber; baggers, loaded bows, and torches are stored here

18. Back Hall; alternate route to the lery for kitchen servants

19. Stairs to Second Floor; illumina continual light and always guarded

20. Duty Room; storage of linens, n for servants on duty

21. Watch Room; storage for guards & weapons; the place where shift changes are made. Large crossbow (triple damage) can be fired through port to the Grand Entry Hall.

22. Servants' Common Room

23. Guards' Quarters

24. Guards' Court; an extra detachment of guards is always stationed here, to reinforce or defend in an area being attacked

25. Armory; filled with racks of polearms

26. Lord's Stair; private stairway to floor (#32), with secret door in wall way up that opens into #31

27. Storeroom; holding area for goods received but not distributed to their normal storage places

28. Secret Stair; access into #33 on south side of tower; only keys to locked doors are held by Mourngrym

29. Boathouse; shed filled with equipment, materials, and sailing/boating gear

30. Parlor; lounge area for tower residents, always staffed by servants of the guards

31. Grand Guest Bedroom

32. Lord's Chamber; lounge, office, sitting room

33. Lord's Wardrobe; walk-in closet with clothing and personal items

34. Hidden Chamber; usable by lord as escape route. Spare weapon (long and small cache of gems stored here)

35. Treasure Cache; most of the lord's personal riches stored here

36. Lord's Bedroom; spyhole in base allows view of area #2

37. Guest Bedroom

38. Empty space; upper part of area

39. Minstrels' Gallery; balcony usually occupied by guards, guests, and/or lords with trumpets

40. The Bower; lounge area open to all residents

41. Stairs to Third Floor

42. Bedroom of Aseel, Chatelaine of the Tower

43. Bedroom of Sammeth (cellarer), Bracegar (butler)

44. Bedroom reserved for Elminster, Lhaeo, or a specially designated guest

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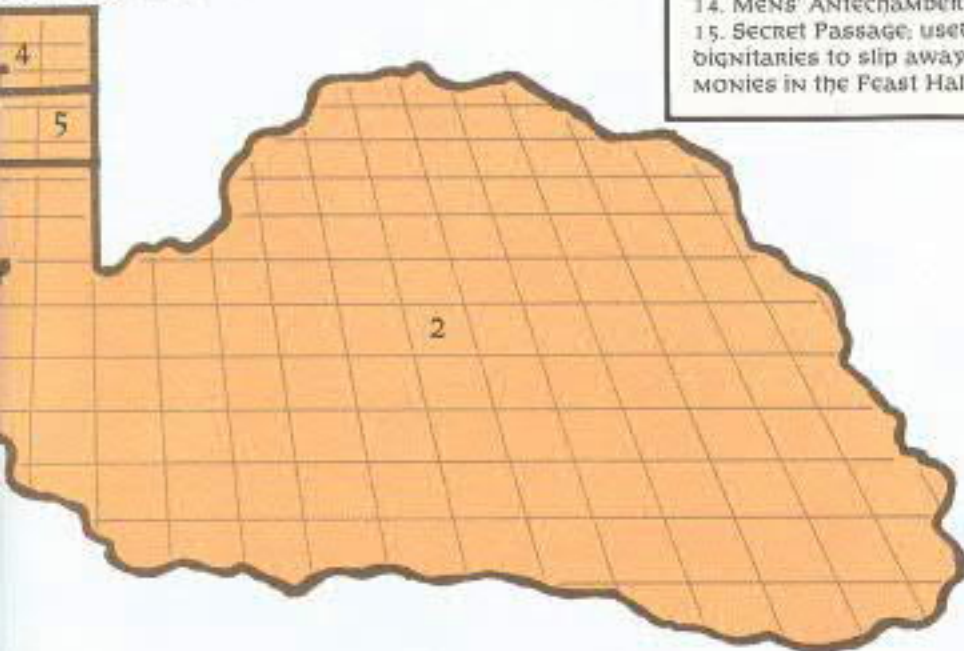
98. Empty space; lower part of area

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Archway (NO DOOR)



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area open to all

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or Elminster,
signed guest

- 45. Bedroom of kitchen staff (Lalym, Sebros, Massim, Purki)
- 46. Bedroom of Essen (herald), Samal and Heth (pages)
- 47. Guards' Bunkroom
- 48. Bedroom of Vobbal and Deggeth (constables) and some guards
- 49. Bedroom for serving-girls
- 50. Bedroom for chambermaids
- 51. Maids' Common Room
- 52. Maids' Toilet
- 53. Bedroom of Curnal Rhestayn (seneschal) and Thurbal (captain-of-arms)

Third Floor

Doors here and farther up are of stone (to keep fires from spreading from room to room; the upper levels are specially designed for military defense and security (differing from the first two floors, which are residential/ceremonial areas).

- 54. Guardroom/Conference Room; command headquarters when tower is under attack
- 55. Stairs to Fourth Floor
- 56. South Guardroom
- 57. Shooting Gallery; firing-ports face onto tower meadow
- 58. Guardpost; contains ballista (too large to be moved out of this area)
- 59. Shooting Gallery; same as #57

Fourth Floor

- 60. Guardroom
- 61. Stairs to Fifth Floor
- 62. Pen; small cages containing game birds and messenger pigeons
- 63-65. Pens; housing for hippogriffs or other aerial mounts
- 66. Landing Deck for aerial mounts, guarded by ballista behind parapet

Fifth Floor

- 67. Altar to Tempus
- 68. Circular Stair to Sixth Floor

Sixth Floor

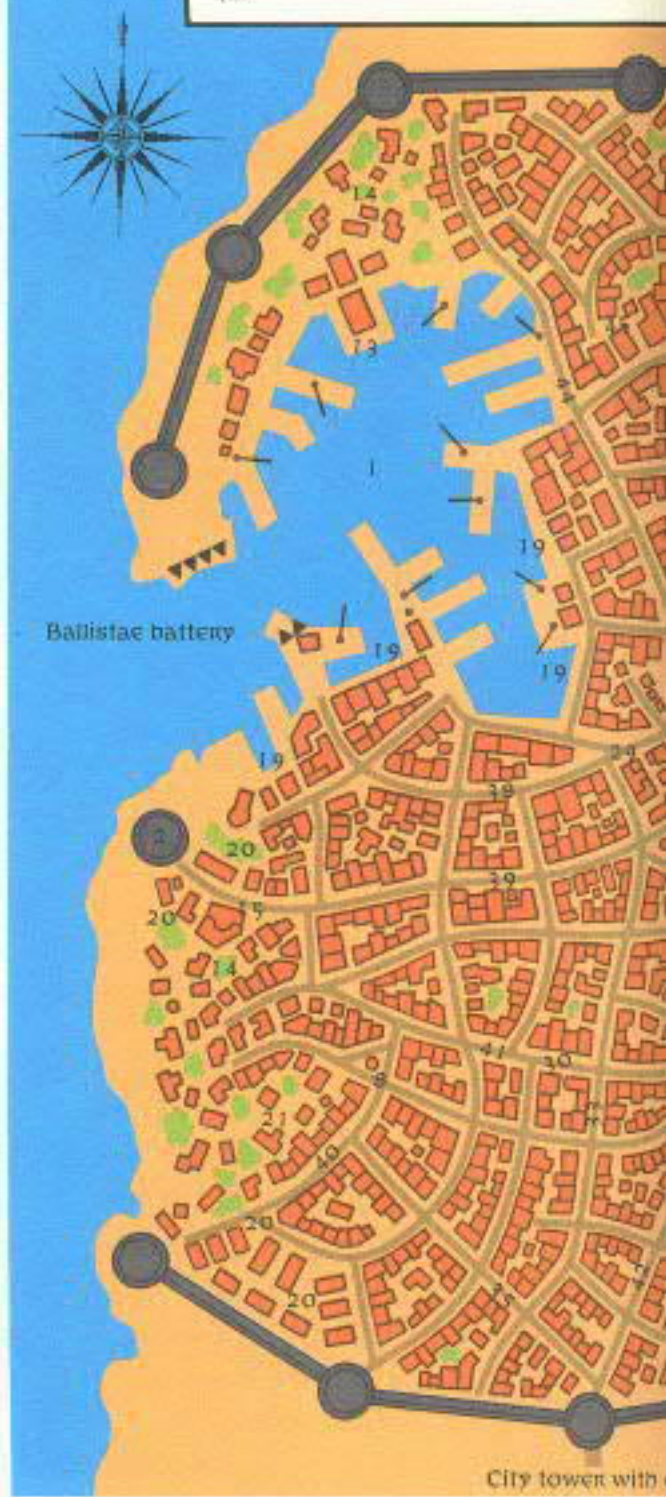
- 69. Meditation Area; bedding-mat and quilt, chamberpot, clay jug of water
- 70. Ladder (rungs in wall) to Seventh Floor

Seventh Floor

71. A barred and magically protected trap door leads up to an open platform surrounded by a low parapet; a flagstaff projects up from one corner. This is occasionally used as an observation post—or the place Elminster threatens to hurl his latest student from!

City of Tantra

1. Tantras Harbor; ballistae batteries of the city's main entrance, chain barrier across harbor mouth, catapults on seacoast towers
2. The Sea Tower; city's main fortress, barracks, training area for troops
3. The Market; open-air market area, usually very crowded and busy
4. The Temple of Torm, atop the city's hill



5. The Great Bell, also called the Bell of Aylen Attricus, atop the city's second highest hill
6. Fountain of the Mermaid, an old landmark whose origin is lost in antiquity
7. The Lazy Moon Inn (prop. Faress, 0 lv, 6 hp, NG)
8. Statue of Brandon Battlemaster, bronze remembrance of a long-ago hero astride his horse, cloak streaming out behind him
9. The Roaring Lion Inn, normally the best in the city, currently an army barracks
10. Guiber's Gooey Grubb Inn, a cozy place, now taken over by Cantran soldiers
11. The House of Glory, temple to Tempus, recently damaged by accidental fire

12. The Morning Halls, temple to Lathanber, normally busy, currently all but deserted
13. Mulbiver the Shipwright, a master builder, currently very busy with preparations for war
14. Villas and mansions of the rich and noble
15. The House of Skilled Hands, newly built temple to Gond, not fully staffed
16. Bowbar's Wagonworks; construction and repair of wagons
17. The House of Twilight; brothel/night club
18. The Weeping Wyvern, a large and crowded inn, not yet taken over by soldiers
19. Warehouses, all well guarded by private mercenaries
20. Barracks, formerly privately owned buildings commandeered by the army for housing
21. Carnfassa's Tower, the property of a 16th level wizard who seems to have disappeared
22. Halemar's Fine Blades, armorer and weaponsmith, very busy these days crafting materials for the army
23. The Cantran Guild of Merchant Masters; private club for citizens who own and run merchant fleets (but membership is open to anyone who pays 200 gp annual dues)
24. Saprach's Fine Wines, best selection of wine in the city; the proprietor is also a thief and a fence, and on the side specializes in quiet disposals of suddenly deceased persons
25. The House of Moonlight, temple to Selune; priests will heal anyone (even non-worshippers of Selune), but will not grant repeated requests
26. The Happy House of Splendor and Song, temple to Millil; the largest such building to be found north and east of the Inner Sea; thought by some to be a local contact place for The Harpers
27. The Silly Satyr, a tavern of (to put it mildly) very ill repute
28. The House of Hope, temple to Tymora, currently without a lot of material or spiritual resources
29. The Green Sirene, an inn favored by sailors—now taken over by the Cantran Navy, which uses it as a barracks and recruiting post
30. The Agate Anchor, a huge curio shop stocked with anything (nonmagical) under the sun (prop. Chulbos, Ftr 11, 74 hp, AC 0, LN; guards Nuathue, Ftr 4, 28 hp, and Alphale, Ftr 5, 34 hp)
31. Shenble Street
32. Ember Lane
33. Bowshot Street
34. Stumble Street
35. Marlstone Lane
36. Roel Street
37. Hammerwind Street
38. Mairse Run (street)
39. Whistleturn Way (street)
40. Chiripost Lane
41. Dragonleather Street
42. The Street of the Six
43. The Street of Shabows
44. Finlisker Street
45. Blacklamp Alley (a frequent site of brawls and murders)



Tower with gate



RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLES

The tables below are provided for the convenience of the DM to determine the nature of random encounters in the area where this adventure takes place. The schedule for making checks is generally left to the DM's discretion, with some advice given in the text of the adventure. Other types of creatures may be encountered, at the DM's discretion; these tables are meant only as a guideline and a time-saver. Use the Known Areas table in the area between Shadowdale and Mistedale, and around the Pool of Yeven; the Wild Areas table in any other non-sea location, and the Aquatic table whenever the characters are traveling on the River Ashaba or across the Dragon Reach.

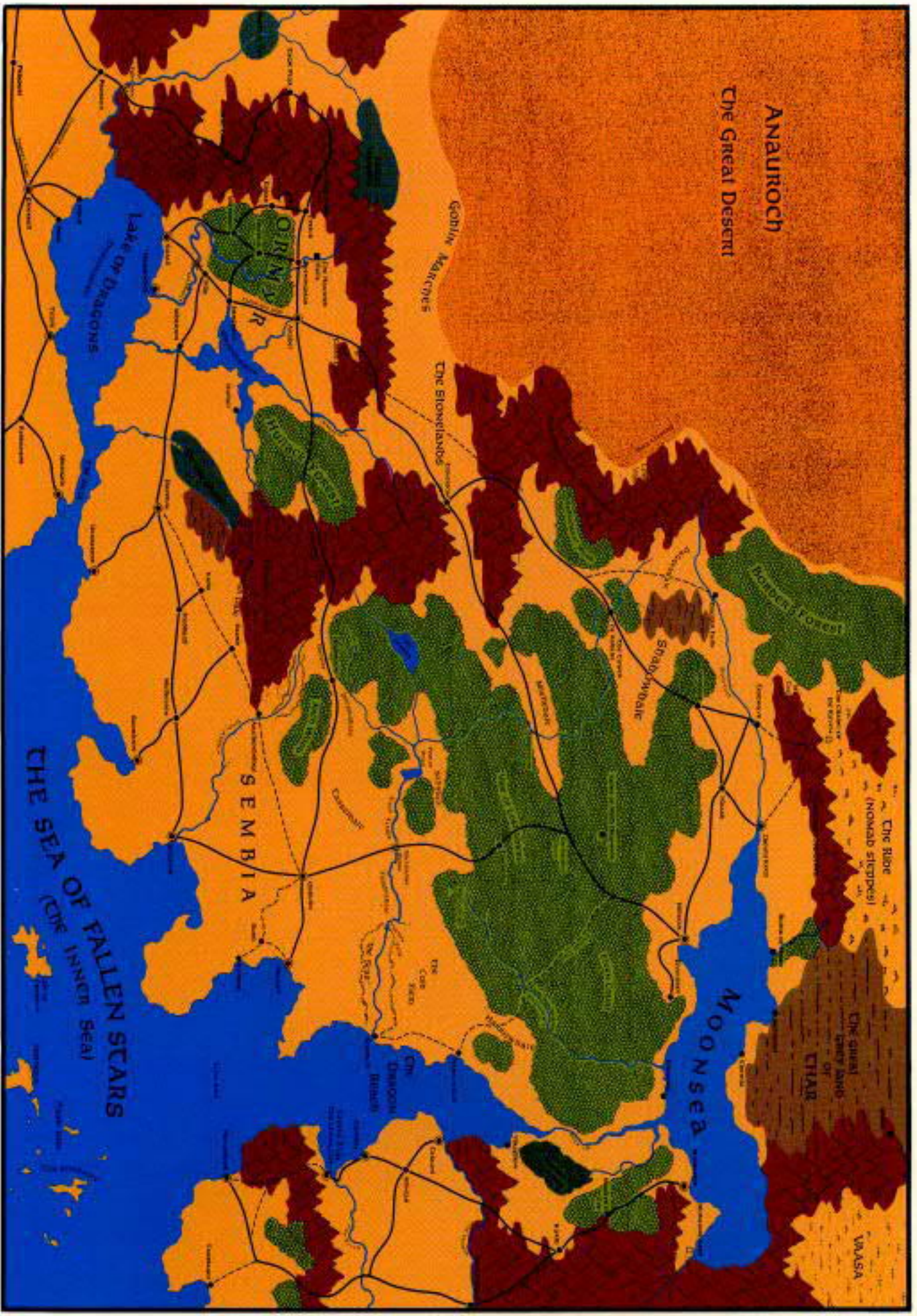
Known Areas		Wild Areas		Aquatic	
1d20	Encounter	1d20	Encounter	1d20	Encounter
1-3	Trolls (2d4)	1-2	Wild dogs (4d4)	1-2	Throat leeches (1d2)
4-5	Giant snakes (1d4)	3-4	Brown bears (1d6)	3-6	Giant crayfish (1d4)
6	Lyc., werebears (1d4)	5-6	Ores (4d12)	7-8	Giant gars (1d6)
7-9	Large spiders (2d10)	7-8	Giant toads (2d4)	9-10	Giant eels (1d4)
10-11	Giant centipedes (2d12)	9-11	Large spiders (2d19)	11-13	Sea lampreys (1d4)
12-13	Bandits (5d4)	12-14	Stirges (4d6)	14-15	Giant catfish (1)
14-16	Stirges (4d6)	15	Giant hornet (1)	16-17	*Quelzarn (1)
17	Wild boars (1d6)	16	Goblins (5d8)	18-19	Giant water spiders (1d6)
18	Gnolls (4d6)	17	Bugbears (2d6)	20	Kelpie (1)
19	Owlbears (1d4 + 1)	18-19	Wolves (2d19)		
20	Zombies (4d4)	20	Owlbears (1d4 + 1)		

*New monster

MONSTER SUMMARY TABLE

Some of the vital statistics of monsters featured in this adventure are presented in this table for handy DM reference during play. The DM should refer to the original AD&D@ game monster books or the 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium* for more detailed information.

Name	AC	HD	#AT	Dmg	MV	Remarks
Bear, brown	6	5 + 5	3	1-6/1-6/1-8	12	hugs: 2-12
Boar, wild	7	3 + 3	1	3-12 (3d4)	15	fights 2-5 rds. at 0 hp
Bugbear	5(10)	3+1	1	2-8 or weapon	9	attack as team
Catfish, giant	7	7-10	1	3-12	Sw 18	poison, swallows whole
Centipede, giant	9	2 hp	1	poison	15	poison (+ 4 on save)
Crayfish, giant	4	4+4	2	2-12/2-12	6, Sw 12	surprises on 1-3
Doppleganger	5	4	1	1-12	9	ESP, change form
Dog, wild	7	1 + 1	1	1-4	15	hungry; will attack
Gar, giant	3	8	1	5-20 (5d4)	SW30	swallows whole
Gnoll	5(10)	2	1	2-8 or weapon	9	many weapons carried
Goblin	6(10)	1 - 1	1	1-6 or weapon	6	may have slaves
Hornet, giant	2(4)	5	1	1-4	6, Fl 24	poison, paralysis
Kelpie	3	5	1/day	2-20/rnd or drown	9, Sw 12	charm (females immune)
Lamprey, sea	6	5	1	1-6	SW 9	blood drain
Leech, throat	10	1 hp	1	1-3	1, Sw 1	choke (3 in row slays)
Lyc., werebear	2	7 + 3	3	1-3/1-3/2-8	9	silver or + 1 wpn to hit
Orc	6(10)	1	1	1-8 or weapon	9 (12)	- 1 to hit in full daylight
Owlbear	5	5+2	3	1-6/1-6/2-12	12	hug for 2-16
Pegasus	6	4	3	1-8/1-8/1-3	24, Fl 48	dive, rear kick
*Quelzarn	5	5-10	1	3-12	6, Sw 20	hold monster ability
Skeleton	7	1	1	1-6	12	edged wpns do half dmg
Snake, gnt, pois.	5	4 + 2	1	1-3 + poison	15	poison slays or 3-18 dmg
Spider, gnt. water	5	3 + 3	1	1-4	15	poison
Spider, large	8	1 + 1	1	1	6, Wb 15	save at +2 vs. poison
Stirge	8	1 + 1	1	1-3	3, Fl 18	blood drain, hits as 4 HD
Toad, giant	6	2 + 4	1	2-8	6	hop, 6 range
Troll	4	6 + 6	3	5-8/5-8/5-12	12	regenerates 3 hp per rnd
Wolf	7	2+2	1	2-5	18	hunt in packs
Zombie	8	2	1	1-8	6	strike last; spell immunities



ANAUROCH

The Great Desert

Goblin Marches

The Stonelands

OIRINIA

Lake of Dragons

MOONSEA

SEMBRIA

THE SEA OF FALLEN SCARS
(OR INNER SEA)

The Flue
(Nomad steppes)

The Great Green Lands
OF THE EAST

CHIA

WASA

PHYSICAL CHAOS TABLE

The effects described on this table are suggestions only; the DM should feel free to make up alternatives and substitute freely. Bear in mind, however, that play will have to go on in the “new” environment afterwards; consider the impact of widespread changes to the landscape beforehand. Roll percentile dice, and consult the table below; the frequency with the DM consults the table is a matter of choice (generally, the presence of avatars or large-scale magic activity increases chaos and the presence of large populations or mountains decreases chaos). The use of this table should make travel strange, exciting, and occasionally dangerous; not an exhausting, never-ending obstacle course. DMs who also used the preceding adventure, *Shadowdale*, should roll on this table more often than they did in the previous adventure, since chaos is generally increasing throughout the realms.

Percentile Score

Result

01 - 10	Natural <i>fireworks</i> effect (as in the <i>pyrotechnics</i> spell) occurs. The air is filled with a ringing, chiming sound that dies away (with the fireworks) after 1-4 rounds.
11-24	Undergrowth sprouts into sudden, frenzied life (if no foliage underfoot, it will grow, even from bare rock or atop water), equal to an <i>entangle</i> spell, which lasts 7 rounds in a 60-yard diameter area (save equals slowed, not held; held creatures can fight and cast spells, but not change location). Musk-like plant scents and floral bouquets will waft (harmlessly) in the air.
25-30	Insects appear with a menacing buzzing sound, a swarm equal in effects to an <i>insect plague</i> , (priest spell), lasting for 1-4 turns.
31-44	The air turns violet and luminous (lasting 1-12 rounds). During this time, all within the area (a 400-yard diameter sphere extending into any buildings, the ground beneath, etc.) are <i>slowed</i> , affected by <i>feather fall</i> and <i>neutralize poison</i> , and are <i>cured</i> of 1-4 points of damage if injured. All invisible creatures and objects, and all dweomers (but not alignment auras) can be clearly seen in the violet field.
45-52	There is a menacing crackle, and a strong smell of ozone. <i>Lighting bolts</i> (damage 1d6 through 4d6; determine randomly) form spontaneously from rocks or exposed wood of any sort, leaping in a straight line to the nearest bit of rock or exposed wood (rock to rock or wood to wood, never one to the other). Save vs. breath weapon to avoid if possible (contact with any part of a bolt's destination (such as climbing elsewhere on the same cliff,) makes a saving throw impossible). Bolts and discharges will steer away from and avoid large concentrations of pure metal; fully armored characters will automatically make their saving throws, if allowed any.
53-62	Lashing rain begins, though the air grows warm. This precipitation lasts 1-10 rounds, affects a small (80-yard-diameter cylinder from ground to upper air) area, and within it, all creatures can understand the speech of all other creatures, as if a <i>tongues</i> spell were in operation.
63-70	All small, light (roughly 10 lbs) objects within a 10 yard radius that are not held or secured will <i>animate</i> (as the priest spell <i>animate object</i>). They will fly about aimlessly; make Dexterity, Checks each round to avoid being hit. Any hit does 1-2 points of damage. Any being concentrating on a moving object for at least 1 round will discover that he can influence its course, perhaps employing it as a weapon. A maximum of 1 object at a time can be so controlled by a being; if two beings try to control the same object, the creature with the higher Intelligence will ultimately prevail. This effect will last for 1-2 turns.
71-88	The ground begins to rise and fall as if it were waves on the open sea. Charging or springing accurately becomes impossible, as does riding other creatures. Writing and spellcasting take twice as long (but are not ruined). There is a 1 in 6 chance each round that this condition exists that a rift will open in the earth and swallow a rock, tree, or being up, spitting them out unharmed (unreachable by magic or physical means during their entombment) 2-5 rounds later. There is also a 2 in 6 chance that a <i>shooting star</i> (as in the missile released by a <i>ring of shooting stars</i> will appear overhead, and burst. All creatures must save vs. spell to avoid suffering damage. These conditions last for 1-3 turns, moving with any traveling creatures.
89-96	All creatures within a 90-yard radius, from earthworms to dragons, are enshrouded in a <i>faerie fire</i> radiance for 1-6 turns thereafter. The radiance will shift color slowly but constantly; it will also act as a <i>ring of spell turning</i> , and as a <i>regeneration</i> field: all damage, however caused, suffered by a creature within a radiant field, is not suffered but gained as <i>healing</i> . Creatures at full hp can increase their hp by this means, such increased hp being lost at the rate of 1 per day (24 hour period), or through injury. Creatures augmented substantially in this way save at their “new” Hit Dice total, but still attack and function at their original level or Hit Dice.
97-00	A <i>reverse gravity</i> effect occurs. All creatures take damage as per the spell, but upon landing find that they have permanently gained 1-4 hp, and 2-yard-range <i>infravision</i> (if they already, possess <i>infravision</i> , its range is extended by 2 yards). A strange, flickering golden radiance flashes here and there; <i>arrows of direction</i> and similar devices will not function. Tracking is impossible. These latter effects fade away in 1-2 turns.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
2nd Edition



Official Game Adventure

TANTRAS

by Ed Greenwood

Elminster has been murdered.

And to make matters worse, the player characters who helped to save Shadowdale from the armies of Zhentil Keep in *Shadowdale* (FRE1) have been sentenced to death for killing the old sage. They're innocent, of course, but in this time of troubles in the Realms, truth and justice are not always served. Imprisoned in the Tower of Ashaba, the heroes must escape if they are to survive!

Later, when the heroes start their quest for the first of the mysterious Tablets of Fate—mighty artifacts stolen from the overlord of the gods himself—they come up against an even greater peril: Bane, the God of Strife, and his ally, the God of Death, have set in motion a plot to capture the heroes and their companions. You must face deadly assassins, nightmarish monsters, and violent storms on your way across the Dalelands. And the worst threat of all is an unexpected one—the man who helped you earlier has now joined the side of Bane and the forces of Zhentil Keep.

Tantras is the second of a three-part series of adventures for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 2nd edition roleplaying game, but it can also stand alone. Set in the popular FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game world, this adventure is loosely based on Richard Awlinson's *Tantras*, the second novel in the Avatar Trilogy. This adventure is designed for four to six player characters of levels 6-9.



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Lake Geneva,
WI 53147 U.S.A.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End, Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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