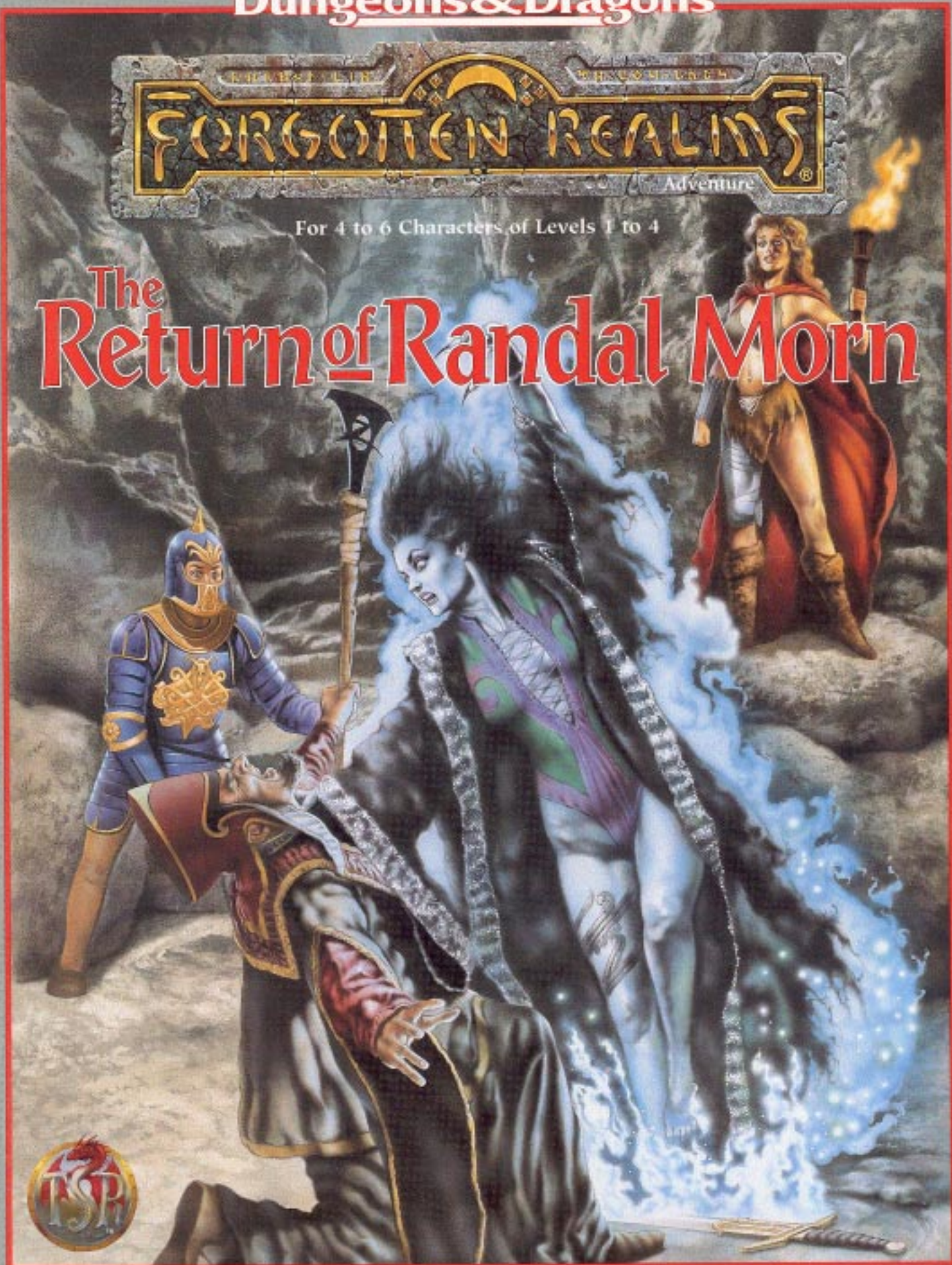


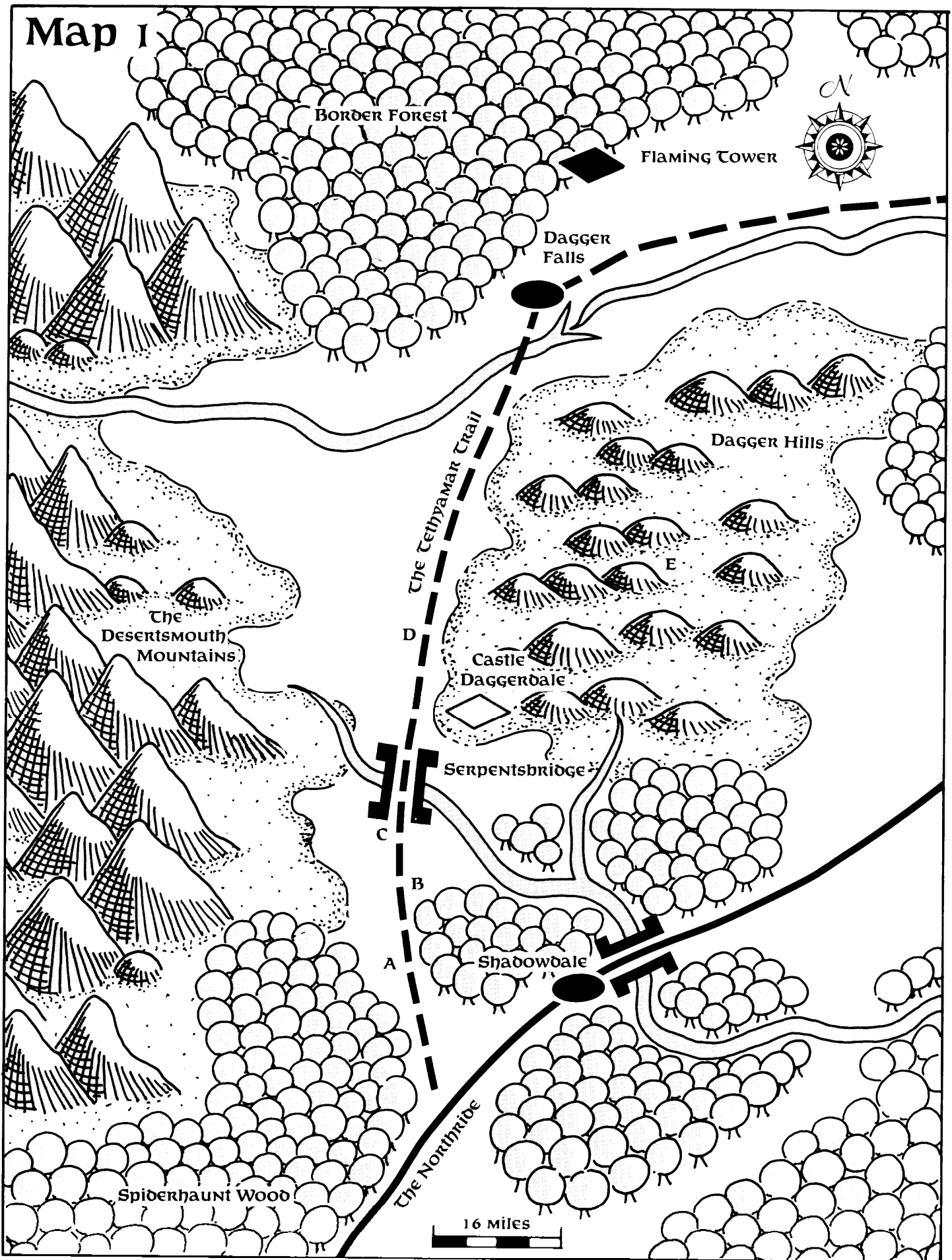
FORGOTTEN REALMS
Adventure

For 4 to 6 Characters of Levels 1 to 4

The Return of Randal Morn



Map I



Border Forest

Flaming Tower

Dagger Falls

Dagger Hills

The Desertsouth Mountains

The Cethymar Trail

Castle Daggerdale

Serpentsbridge

Shadowdale

Spiderhaunt Wood

The Northride

16 Miles

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons



The Return of Randal Morn

by Jim Butler

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Welcome To Dagger Falls!

*Fierce winds rise and dark shadows fall/Unbearable burdens grind us down.
Into dust we are bound, the circle comes around/Without sound.*

—Excerpt from Storm Silverhand's Legacy of the Chosen.



The Return of Randal Morn is a FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting adventure for four to six characters of 2nd through 4th levels. While 1st-level adventurers might be able to survive the rigors of this adventure, it is strongly recommended that a party include at least one 4th-level character. Nonplayer character (NPC) numbers and levels may need to be adjusted upward for more powerful parties.

This is the last module in the Dales trilogy of adventures, which began with *The Sword of the Dales* and continued with *The Secret of Spiderhaunt*. In this installment, the heroes finally rescue Randal Morn and discover the secrets introduced in *The Sword of the Dales*.

The Dungeon Master should be thoroughly familiar with the module before play begins. Specific information concerning the *arch-shadow* Gothyl and the unique magical items found within this adventure can be found at the end of the module.

The Action So Far

The heroes began their odyssey in Shadowdale. There they were hired by Lhaeo, scribe to Elminster of Shadowdale, to find and rescue Randal Morn.

According to legend, Shraevyn—a powerful wizard from times past—created a mighty sword known as the *Sword of the Dales*. The Sword was to serve as a symbol of authority for the ruler of the Dales, but knowledge of the blade—along with the location of Shraevyn's tomb—disappeared when the wizard died. Recently the tomb was uncovered in the area of the Giant's Claw, and word of its discovery reached Randal and his Freedom Riders. Randal raced to the tomb with the hope of recovering the Sword and using it to regain control of Daggerdale.

Once he and his companions found the Sword and left the tomb, they were attacked by Zhentarim forces. Randal and his group easily dispatched this enemy, but another one appeared: a horde of undead. This ghoulish group poured from the tomb and destroyed the rebels. During this onslaught, Gothyl, an arch-shadow (detailed on page 30-31), emerged from the *Sword*, trapped Randal, and disappeared. Gothyl was once a wizardess of tremendous power who sought to achieve lichdom many years ago. The process failed, and she was transformed into an arch-shadow. Since then, she has been seeking to change into a *demi-shade*.





Ariton, the only Freedom Rider to survive, escaped to Shadowdale and sought the aid of Elminster. The wizard's scribe, Lhaeo, tended the man's wounds and listened to his story. The scribe then went in search of adventurers willing to take on the job of rescuing Randal.

The PCs accepted the assignment and immediately ran headlong into danger. The tomb of the wizard Shraevyn was anything but empty; undead lurked around every corner and cryptic magical wards slowed the party's progress. When the PCs finally arrived at the burial chamber, they found the *Sword of the Dales* – but no Randal. The only sign that he had been there was a note telling the party to search for him in Spiderhaunt Wood.

As *The Secret of Spiderhaunt* unfolded, Gothyl sent the heroes dream images filled with cries of torment and anguish. She used them to disorient the PCs and to draw them closer to her tower in Spiderhaunt. The archshadow's scheme worked: The PCs headed for the tower.

Once the PCs were deep within the fortress, Gothyl disguised herself as Hedistrin, a beneficent spirit bound to the Sword, and appeared to them when they discovered

Randal Morn trapped within a *dreamglobe* spell. She told them what they needed to do to release Randal Morn, but her instructions were a trap. The heroes who did as they were told were attacked by the spirits of Gothyl's apprentices, which were trapped within the skulls of lifeless skeletons.

Unfortunately for Gothyl, the Zhentarim entered her tower on the heels of the party. Led by Ilthond (the Zhent wizard who was nearly burned to death by Shandril in the novel *Spellfire*), they took possession of some of the skulls and released Randal Morn. Ilthond teleported to Dagger Falls with both Randal and the skulls.

Gothyl was furious. Not only did she lose her apprentices, but she also lost her chance to drain Randal of his life force and become a demi-shade. She assumed the form of the friendly spirit again and begged the PCs to go to Dagger Falls and rescue Randal Morn. She has plans of her own for Ilthond.

Gothyl cast a *shadowshield* spell on each of the PCs (refer to page 29). This spell should be in effect on the PCs when the adventure begins.





What Now?

At the opening of this adventure, the heroes find themselves on their way to the city of Dagger Falls. The overland trek to the city is fraught with danger. Ilthond expects the PCs to make some kind of daring rescue attempt, so he has increased patrol activity in the area.

On their way to Dagger Falls, the PCs meet a band of Freedom Riders led by Ariton, the lone survivor of Randal's quest. Ariton has heard that Randal is held in Dagger Falls and knows his friend is scheduled to be executed. Ariton asks the PCs to go into the city and report on the strength of the Zhent militia. He stresses that this information is vital to a successful Freedom Rider attack.

The guards at the Dagger Falls gate harass the PCs but allow them in. The PCs complete the reconnaissance and deliver their report to the Freedom Rider contact. As the heroes leave, they are ambushed by 20 guards. The Zhents order the PCs to surrender, then the heroes are hit with arrows coated with sleep poison.

The characters awaken to discover they are chained to a wall in a dingy room. A self-important officer by the name of Guthbert Golthammer enters the room, waving the Sword of the Dales as he speaks. Guthbert isn't the most intelligent man around, and the PCs easily trick him into saying the word *merrydale* – the command that opens their manacles.

When this happens, Ilthond immediately teleports into the room and orders Guthbert to kill the PCs. Gothyl, in her arch-shadow form, hisses from the Sword and attacks Ilthond. Finally, Gothyl kills the wizard and disappears. She has achieved her demi-shadow status.

The PCs see Zhent guards spirit Randal away and load him onto a wagon. A wild chase through the chaotic, battle-filled streets ensues, and the PCs are attacked by rooftop archers as they pursue the fleeing wagon. The wagon crashes and Randal is thrown to safety.

The characters at long last meet Randal as the Freedom Riders overwhelm the Zhent occupation forces. The party is taken to the Freedom Rider headquarters and given food and a few hours' sleep.

Finally, the PCs are pounded awake by the sound of war drums. A troop of orcs hired by the Zhents to level Dagger Falls floods into the city, and the characters quickly dispatch the enemy leader.

The adventure closes when Randal gives the PCs land grants within Daggerdale and the heroes are given the opportunity to talk with Elminster and Khelben.

Gothyl is far from finished. Refer to the Gothyl's Plans section at the end of the module (page 27).

Other Things To Know

Characters who completed *The Secret of Spiderhunt* begin this adventure by traveling to the eastern border of Spiderhaunt from Gothyl's tower. It should take characters three to four days of travel to get out of Spiderhaunt. Chances are good that Madarn, the gnome spiderhunter/guide, is still with them.

It is highly recommended that an adventuring party go through at least one of the prior adventures before beginning *The Return of Randal Morn*. If this is not possible, the DM should paraphrase the information contained in the **What Happened Before** section.

The PCs should know only that Hedistrin (Gothyl) is a spirit bound to the *Sword of the Dales* and that she wants Randal Morn to wield the powerful blade. These are all lies, of course, but adventurers have no way of knowing this, due to the *non-detection* spell she always casts before speaking to the group.

The DM should give new characters a reason to travel to Dagger Falls. A few scenarios include:

- The PCs encounter a Zhent warrior who is trying to get the Sword back to Dagger Falls. Once he is defeated, the heroes find clues that lead them to Dagger Falls.
- Gothyl emerges from the Sword and gives a convincing speech about how the Dales need them to rescue Randal Morn. She explains the powers of the weapon and Randal Morn's kidnapping. Her plea ends with a dire warning about the power of the skulls Ilthond took with him from the tower.
- Lhaeo, scribe to Elminster of Shadowdale, approaches the party and explains the quest. He tells them that the last party to attempt the rescue was destroyed, and he needs replacements. He gives them the *Sword*, one *potion of extra-healing*, a *long sword +1*, and the promise of a land grant in Shadowdale if they succeed.





The Journey

"I'm often asked the surest way to defeat a monster or destroy a magical ward, but it would be better to ask the safest trail or best-patrolled roadway. It does little good to arrive strong in knowledge, yet weak from travel".

– Elminster of Shadowdule



All characters begin the adventure a few miles north of the Northride along the Tethyamar Trail. Random encounters should be checked either once every four hours or when the party takes actions that advertise its presence (bonfires, *fireballs* into the air, etc.). Consult the Encounters Appendix on page 32 for specific scenarios. If the heroes devise an especially creative way to avoid an encounter, they should be rewarded. Innovative, intelligent role-playing should be rewarded as well.

As characters begin their journey toward Dagger Falls, read the following:

The Tethyamar trail continues north through this land. Patches of scrub brush and outcroppings of rock slowly turn into deep grass further ahead.

To the west, the dark Spiderhaunt Wood is a reminder of past journeys. Its dark branches undoubtedly hold more secrets than merely one wizard's tower.

The Dagger Hills, rising upon the western horizon, cut through the landscape like a jagged scar.

The following key corresponds to Map 1 on the inside front cover.

A. Zhent Welcoming

As soon as the PCs turn into a gully, they find themselves face-to-face with a squad of Zhent warriors. Roll for surprise normally.

The trail twists and turns as it comes out of a dry riverbed. Suddenly, thundering hooves and a resounding order of "Charge!" echo across the bleak landscape.

Glancing around quickly, you see a group of 12 mounted men-wearing the livery of the Zhentilar—galloping forward, lances gleaming. Behind the soldiers you see a familiar form: Illthond, the wizard from the tower in Spiderhaunt.

Illthond has been watching the PCs, confident that they plan to rescue Randal Morn. He ordered these men to meet the PCs outside of the woods and slay them.

Even if the PCs set weapons for a charge, the Zhents continue forward. The soldiers first attack with lances, then switch to swords.

If the PCs are not mounted, the Zhents gain a +1 on their attacks (attacking





from higher ground). The soldiers receive an additional +1 on their attack rolls vs. surprised defenders. A surprised PC loses all bonuses for Dexterity and shield.

Zhent Soldiers (12): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 12, 10, 9(×3), 8(×2), 7(×3), 6, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (2d6 for the initial lance charge, 1d6 thereafter), 1d8 (long sword); SZ M; ML 14; XP 35. Each wears chain mail and carries a long sword and a light horseman's lance. On each belt is small sack containing 35 gp.

Light Warhorse (12): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2+2; hp 14, 13, 11, 10(×4), 9(×2), 7(×2), 6; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SZ L; ML 6; XP 35. Each saddlebag contains one weeks' worth of iron rations and two changes of clothing.

Characters can hide behind the large rocks along the bank. One rock offers 75% concealment (-3 AC bonus) while the others offer 50% concealment (-2 AC bonus). PCs hide successfully only during the initial charge, since the Zhents approach from behind on the next round.

The horses do not attack unless one of the PCs is perceived as a threat (such as if a PC is running a wemic).

B. Broken Promises

A high-pitched wail assails your ears and echoes across the plains. The sound seems to be coming from all around, and you see a fiery streak of light blazing across the sky. The wail gets louder, and the fireball strikes a nearby boulder, shattering it in a burst of shrapnel. Thick, black smoke curls into the sky.

A genie bottle has been hurled to the earth, a casualty of a magical duel elsewhere in the Realms. If the PCs approach the point of impact, read the following:

Shards of splintered granite are scattered everywhere. About 100 feet in front of you is a small crater, and the dirt is smoking. Glowing within the hole is a small black bottle with gold trim. It shimmers with a heat you can feel as you move closer. You notice a large crack running down one side of the bottle.

The bottle is cool enough to touch after 1d4 rounds. If it is moved or touched, read the following:

"Free at last!" thunders a voice. A trail of black smoke snakes out of the bottle and transforms into a towering, 13-foot-tall creature. Fire dances across its skin, and its eyes blaze with contempt.

"Does Master give me to others, or do you seek to protect the master from my wrath?" the creature asks. "For time unimagined I have served mortal fools who sought to control me. Now I shall have my revenge!"

There is a loud grating sound, as if stone were pressed against stone. The bottle slowly crumbles into dust as the fiery creature looks on in glee.

The destruction of the *efreeti* bottle released the *efreeti* from service, but he wants someone to plead for mercy before he heads for the City of Brass, his former home.

If the PCs beg for their lives, the *efreeti* roars into the sky and disappears. If the characters attack or if the *efreeti* believes they're not sincere, he attacks. Any PC who attempts to command the *efreeti* is attacked immediately.

Efreeti (1): Int very; AL LE; AC 2; MV 9, Fl 24 (B); HD 10; hp 61; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8; SA invisibility, gaseous form, *detect magic*, *enlarge*, *polymorph self*, *wall of fire*, *pyrotechnics*; SD fire-based attacks inflict 1 HD less damage per die; SZ L; ML 15; XP 8,000.

C. Serpentsbridge

Characters who adventured through *Sword of the Dales* immediately recognize Serpentsbridge. When the party approaches the bridge, read the following:

The river Ashaba, churning its way south toward the Dales, rages below a huge stone bridge. A weather-worn wooden sign proclaims this to be Serpentsbridge. As you approach, you notice the stone on the sides of the bridge is cut into ridges that look like the writhing bodies of hundreds of snakes.

As the first of your group reaches the bridge, a rustling sound catches your attention. Before you can pinpoint where the sound came from, an animal-like yowl trumpets from the trees near the bridge.



Ilthond sent a force of hobgoblins to secure the bridge. The creatures are divided into two groups of six.

Rocks and trees on the northern side of the bridge give the hobgoblins cover. Armed with short bows, these brutes shoot at anyone attempting to cross Serpentsbridge.

The hobgoblins create confusion by moving to a different position after each round of battle. Each hobgoblin gains a -7 bonus to Armor Class as long as he is shooting from the protection of the trees.

If the PCs manage to engage the monsters in hand-to-hand combat, the hobgoblins first seek to attack the wizards and priests hiding behind the fighters.

Hobgoblins (12): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; HD 1+1; hp 9(×2), 8(×2), (7×2), 6(×3), 5, 4(×2); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 or 1d6/1d6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35. They carry long swords and short bows. Hidden under a rock beside the bridge is 1,250 sp and 425 gp.

D. Rendezvous

If characters met Mestin in *The Sword of the Dales* adventure, she approaches them openly and asks them to accompany her to the Freedom Riders' encampment.

"Hello there!" calls a voice from above. Emerging from behind a large clump of rocks is a human female in her late 20s. Her clothing is travel-worn and she carries twin long swords at her side.

You immediately recognize her—she is Captain Mestin Durmark, leader of the Freedom Riders.

If the PCs have never met her, read the following:

"I am Captain Durmark of the Freedom Riders. In case you don't keep up with the political affairs of Daggersdale, we're huge thorns in the Zhent's side." A sly smile stretches across her tanned features.

"Captain Ariton Delmis sent me to escort you to our camp. He has some interesting news and a proposition for you that I believe you may find interesting."

She knows that Randal is held in Dagger Falls, but her attention is captured by other troubles that could make

Randal's life (or death) meaningless. She urges the PCs to go with her to the Freedom Rider encampment, but she does not force them if they decline.

Mestin also tells the party that another Freedom Rider, Koril Benschay, was captured by the Zhents a few days ago. She fears for his safety and offers the PCs 500 gp to rescue him. If the characters agree, Mestin escorts them to the Freedom Riders' base camp (Area E).

Captain Mestin "Troll" Durmark: 5th-level human ranger (Justifier); AL LG; AC 2; MV 12; hp: 39; THAC0 16; #AT 5/2 (specialist and two-weapon style); Dmg by weapon type + 1; SA hide in shadows 31% move silently 40%; S 16, D 16, C 15, I 10, W 15, Ch 12; XP 420. She has *bracers of defense* AC 5, a *ring of protection* +1, a *long sword* +1, and a normal long sword.

Freedom Riders (12): 1st-level human fighters; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; hp 9, 8, 7(×2), 6(×4), 5(×2), 4, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; XP 35 each. They wear chain mail and carry long swords, short swords, short bows, daggers, and darts.

E. Freedom Riders

The journey from the rendezvous with Mestin to the base camp takes two hours of steady travel.

The Dagger Hills open onto a wide, grass-covered plateau. Much to your surprise, you see more than a hundred tents stretched across the area.

"When I first joined Randal Morn," Mestin begins, "there were only about 100 of us willing to dedicate our lives to his cause." She sighs, pausing to survey the orderly tent city. "As time passed and the Zhents became more ruthless, our ranks grew. Now we number about 500, but most are simple folk whose only desire is to return to their homes."

As your group makes its way through camp, you see people standing in small groups, laughing and talking as if they haven't seen one another in a long time. Others are busy with mundane chores such as cooking, repairing armor, or feeding horses.





Captain Durmark leads the PCs to a large tent guarded by six Freedom Riders.

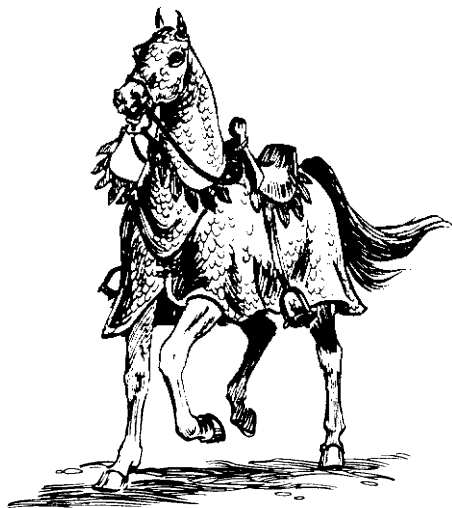
Mestin disappears behind the flap of the tent, and you follow. Inside, the tent is empty save for a set of stairs that descends into a gaping, square hole in the ground. Light shines from within the hole. Without pausing, Mestin begins downward.

The stairs go down about 60 feet and end in a large room filled with tables, chairs, maps, and Freedom Riders. The buzz of conversation fills the tiny room, and your nose is assaulted by the combined smells of earth, sweat, and moldy leather. A middle-aged man in chain mail is pointing to a map on one wall and speaking to a small knot of soldiers.

"Mestin," he says when he sees your group enter. "You made splendid time!" The man weaves his way to your group and gives Mestin a big bear hug.

"I'm glad you decided to join us," the man says, smiling as he faces your group. "I am Ariton Delmis, temporary leader of the Riders. Judging by your appearance, you must be the ones who left Shadowdale to rescue Randal Morn. Can you tell me what has happened on your quest?"

Since Randal is now in Dagger Falls, Ariton knows that something went wrong during the party's travels. Consequently, the man is very interested the PCs' mission. Once the PCs finish their story, Ariton continues:



"Well, you have certainly been busy!" he says, walking to a nearby table and pouring a glass of water. He offers each of you a glass, then sits down at the table.

"We've been busy, too," he says. "Our patrols are running into increased orc and goblin activity in Daggersdale. More disturbing is the fact that these humanoids carry coins minted in Zhentil Keep." Ariton takes a long draught of water and continues.

"Last week I sent scouts to explore the Border Forest. They reported seeing an army of nearly 250 orcs as well as a few Zhent wizards and patrols. It's not too hard to figure out who's behind this."

Ariton pauses, then sighs as he looks at your group and says, "We plan to strike Dagger Falls in four days."

Once the PCs ask any questions they have, continue:

"There are other considerations that are forcing us to wage war so early," Ariton says. "Randal Morn is scheduled to be executed. If we are to rescue him, we must know Dagger Falls' defenses. I could have our city contacts report to me, but I hesitate to risk them further. After all, if we fail it will be up to them—and you—to rescue Randal.

"We need to know how many city guards there are, as well as their locations. This is a dangerous assignment, but I hope you are willing to take it on."

If the PCs decide not to help Ariton, he thanks them and has two guards escort them out. If they agree, continue:

"Report this information to Dulwar as soon as possible. He's a leatherworker who runs his own business in Dagger Falls; his shop is easy to find."

After pausing for questions, Ariton bids the adventurers luck in their endeavors.

Ariton Delmis: 5th-level human paladin: AL LG; AC 0; MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD *detect evil*, +2 on all saving throws, lay on hands for 10 hit points once per day, *cure disease* once per week, aura of protection, turns undead as a 3rd-level cleric; S 17, D 12, C 12, I 11, W 15, Ch 18; XP 270. He wears *chain mail* +3 and wields a *long sword* +2 and *shield* +1.



Dagger Falls

“There are two kinds of spies—the sneaky and the dead.”

—*Shaerl Amcathra, Lady of Shadowdale*



Ithond's true desires are to obtain The Sword of the Dales and to find out why Gothyl is so interested in the weapon. To that end, he has instructed the town constable, Guthbert Golthammer, to capture the PCs and bring them in for interrogation. Guthbert, in turn, placed his second-in-command, Toren the half-orc, in charge of the mission. Toren ordered his men to watch all the entrances to the city.

Each PC should roll an observation or alertness check upon entering Dagger Falls. PCs who are successful sense that the group is being watched but cannot tell by whom.

The areas below are detailed on Map 2 on the inside back cover of the module. The PCs can freely wander the city; they are not approached by the Zhents at any time. As soon as the PCs deliver the information to Dulwar, go to the **Ambushed!** section on page 12.

When the party enters Dagger Falls, read the following:

Your first impression of Dagger Falls is that it is alive with activity. People hurry about, jostling one another on their way to whatever business occupies them. The smells of perfume, smoke, food, animal dung, and unwashed bodies hang in the air; the cries of merchants and tradesmen hawking their goods and services at the tops of their lungs competes with bleating sheep and barking dogs; and banners snap overhead in the wind.

The streets are relatively clean, and most of the buildings appear well-kept and occupied. A few of the structures—obviously temples or shrines of some kind—are boarded up and abandoned.

But something isn't quite right with the activity before you. An undercurrent of uneasiness flows just beneath the surface of this otherwise normal scene, and you suspect it has something to do with the great number of Zhent guards you see milling about everywhere.



1. The Teshford Arms

This dingy little inn is the meeting place for undesirables who work for the Zhentarim. The owner, a middle-aged man named Olav, charges exorbitant prices (2d4 gp) for his dirty rooms and poor food.

Olav used to be the constable of the town. This did not earn him many friends, but it did keep his inn from being burned to the ground. He now cares little for either the Zhentarim-sponsored militia or the Freedom Riders.





2. Dulwar's Leather Wares

The smell of leather and oil permeates the air, and leather hides are stacked along the walls. Belts, jerkins, gloves, and other items are piled on shelves that stretch from the oil-spattered wooden floor to the beamed ceiling above. Behind a large table sits a thin, balding man well past his youth. He is carefully stitching together what appears to be a pair of suede boots. Even from where you stand you can tell the leather—and the man's work—is of exceptional quality.

The man looks up as your shadow falls on his work. He smiles and says, "Hail and well met. How may I help you?" His arms gesture to encompass the entire room. "If it's leather you need, you've come to the right place!"

Although Dulwar (NG hm T8) is a skilled thief, his first love is working with leather. After some highly profitable adventures with Randal and Mestin Durmark a few years ago, he decided to set up shop in Dagger Falls.

His business is quite popular with the local militia. He is fond of saying that he has the Zhents "eating out of my hand," and his boasting is more true than not.

If the PCs come here to inform him of troop strengths, he quickly takes out a quill and scribbles undecipherable notes on some grubby parchment. Once he has all the information, he thanks the PCs and promises to get the news out as quickly as possible.

The Zhents saw the party enter Dulwar's, and the PCs are attacked as they leave (proceed to the Ambushed! on page 13). However, if either an individual PC or the entire party stops by before completing the reconnaissance, the Zhents do not attack.

3. The Red Rock

The tavern is undergoing minor renovations thanks to a generous donation by an adventuring company that stayed here last year. Kessler (CG hef B6) is remodeling the tap room and repairing some upstairs rooms damaged by rowdy Zhents.

The Red Rock has good food, a wholesome atmosphere,

and outstanding entertainment. It is known as a gathering place for Freedom Riders and other citizens sympathetic to the rebel cause. Because of this, the place is occasionally raided by Zhents (hence the necessity of repairs). While the party is in The Red Rock, there is a 75% chance that a group of Zhents looking for trouble enters the inn and harasses the PCs.

Zhent Soldiers (1d6): 0-level humans; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each. They wear chain mail armor and carry short swords. Each carries a pouch containing 2d6 gp.

4. Gatehouses

These stone and wood structures were originally added to the city wall as sentry posts from which to watch for enemy attacks. Unfortunately, they are now used by the Zhentarim to keep Dagger Falls citizens in line by watching their every movement in and out of the city. Each structure holds 35 guards; the north entrance is patrolled primarily by orcs, and the eastern gatehouse is manned by human fighters.

If the PCs approach either gate to the city, the heroes are questioned by the guards. This interrogation is harsh, and it should be immediately obvious to the characters that the guards are looking for people who fit the PCs' descriptions. If the PCs attack or make threatening moves, the entire gatehouse force empties into the street. The PCs are bound, gagged, and taken to the Constable's headquarters (Area 9).

Northern Gatehouse Orcs (35): Int average; AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long swords); SZ M; ML 11; XP 35.

Eastern Gatehouse Soldiers (35): 0-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; XP 15 each. They wear ring mail and carry short swords and light crossbows.



5. The Broken Dagger

This hole-in-the-wall is the afterhours hangout for the Zhent militia and their unsavory mercenaries. Its violent reputation is known throughout Dagger Falls.

Tharwin One-eye (LE hm F7), a former Zhent tracker, is owner and barkeep. He pays scarce attention to the fights that break out regularly in the tap room unless someone starts using magic. If this happens, he tries to stop the spellcaster from completing a spell.

PCs who enter the bar are immediately approached by a group of drunken Zhents itching for a fight.

Mercenaries (3): 2nd-level human fighters; Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 18, 15, 12 THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35. Each is clad in chain mail armor and carries a short sword and long sword. Each has a small pouch containing 4d10 gp.

6. Warehouses

The Zhentarim store military and trade goods in these buildings. PCs who walk between the two structures have a 20% chance of glimpsing slaves in the cages inside each building. The warehouses are patrolled by eight groups of 10 soldiers, and an additional 25 guards are on slave-watch duty inside each building.

7. Market Square

This circular marketplace is home to a variety of shops, and the entire area is alive with activity. Merchants call out specials, brightly-colored cloth hangs from stalls and doorways, and wandering vendors hawk everything from sweetmeats to cheap jewelry.

Despite the activity, no one pays attention to a man secured in the stocks along the southern wall. His shirt is no more than strips of bloody rags, and his back is reddened and blood-caked by whip lashes. His face is rough with sweat and beard stubble.





The man is too weak to speak, but if he's given water, food, or magical healing, he becomes strong enough to tell the party what happened to him.

"Thank you," the man manages to gasp. He swallows with some difficulty, then continues. "I'm Calmion Brendis. A few days ago, a group of us tried to release Randal Morn from his cell in the garrison. Every one of my friends was killed, and the Zhents made me an example . . . whipped like a dog in the marketplace."

Calmion coughs, and swallows again. "I am to die alongside Randal Morn. A more honorable companion in death I could not imagine."

If the party continues to aid Calmion (NG hm T3), he tells the PCs that Randal is now held in the constable's headquarters (Area 9).

Should the party free Calmion, there is a 75% chance that the guards notice and attack. If the guards attack, proceed to the **Ambushed!** section on page 12. If the party releases Calmion, he thanks them and departs. He neither accepts further help nor offers to help the group rescue Randal. He's had quite enough of that.

The following shops can be found in the marketplace.

Alrim's Magic Emporium: This small shop sells simple tricks and sleight-of-hand illusions such as weighted dice, marked cards, and bendable coins. No real magic or magical items are found here. The proprietor, Alrim, takes great joy in demonstrating each and every knick-knack.

Endo's Erotic Elixirs: Endo promises that his herbal concoctions induce a feeling of love and well-being in any imbiber. "A perfect gift for a loved one!" he cries from his stand. "Guaranteed to produce a night to remember!" Most of the potions are quite tasty but have no effects except one: There is a 10% chance that any potion produces a deadly allergic reaction. Affected PCs must make a successful system shock roll in order to avoid death.

Helstaff's BaneBrews: A thoroughly disreputable character, Helstaff (LE hm M6) served the Zhentarim until he set up his own nefarious business.

Any poisons in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* are sold

in BaneBrews, and Helstaff sells to anyone—no questions asked. However, Ilthond told him to look out for the PCs, and all 'poisons' he sells to them are worthless.

The DM is encouraged to remind good-aligned PCs of the consequences of using the poison.

Milmon's Charms and Favors: Milmon appeared on the scene a few years ago, selling charms he claimed would protect the citizens from all manner of sickness and disease. Needless to say, Milmon made a small fortune.

These days his charms and amulets are more conventional. Rabbit's feet, holy medallions from various faiths, and other pseudo-spiritual items are for sale here.

8. The Garrison

The garrison sits securely behind a high stone wall. The only access is through a gate on the east side, and about 50 guards are on duty here at any given time.

The party is carefully watched, and it is doubtful that any plan to get into the garrison—no matter how ingenious—works. As soon as characters put any idea into action, guards immediately surround them.

9. Garrison Headquarters

This ramshackle building serves as both the headquarters for Constable Golthammer and a high-security prison for Randal Morn. Eventually, the PCs end up imprisoned here. The specifics of the structure are detailed in the following chapter.

10. Ilthond's Tower

Ilthond claimed this keep, which once served as the constable's house, as his own. The wizard has been hard at work here recently, trying to decipher the magic of Gothyl's apprentices' skulls.

Any attempt to sneak into the tower provokes an immediate response from the guards. If the PCs try to access the tower in any way, proceed to the **Ambushed!** section below.





Ambushed!

Regardless of how cautious the PCs are, they are eventually surrounded by Toren's men and ordered to surrender. If the PCs leave Dulwar's store, attempt to rescue Randal, break into the garrison, leave the city, or step alone into the street, read the following:

Guards seem to materialize out of nowhere and surround you. Those in front of you carry crossbows, and you look up to see soldiers poised on rooftops. They are aiming short bows straight at you with what you know is deadly accuracy.

A lone figure in chain mail armor steps forward. The man is large and burly, and his twisted, dark features indicate an orcish heritage.

"You are under arrest," he says. "We can do this in one of two ways." An evil smile stretches its way across his face. "The peaceful, bloodless one would be for you to remove your weapons and lie face-first in the dirt. I would suggest this as your best option."

If the PCs separate, Toren searches for and captures the PCs one by one. If any PC either draws a weapon or attempts to flee, the guards with the short bows shoot first. The ground troops with the crossbows shoot only as a last resort. All arrows and crossbow bolts are tipped with sleep poison (see "Poison Arrows," below).

Toren: 4th-level half-orc fighter; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 33; #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 11; S 16, D 13, C 15, I 13, W 11, Ch 9; XP 420. He wears chain mail and wields a *long sword* +2 (coated with sleep poison).

Zhent Ground Troops (40): 0-level humans; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (light crossbow) or 1d6 (short sword); SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each.

Zhent Archers (12): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6 (flight arrows) or 1d8 (long swords); SZ M; ML 14; XP 65 each.

Poison Arrows

Each time a PC is struck with a poisoned weapon, crossbow bolt, or arrow, he or she must save vs. poison. Success indicates that the PC suffers normal damage from the attack but is not affected by the sleep poison.

The poison takes effect immediately after a failed save. The PC fights at a -1 penalty to all attack and damage rolls, proficiency checks, saving throws, and ability checks during the first round. On the second round the penalty increases to -3. The character is now disoriented and confused, and there is a 75% chance that the PC does not recognize fellow party members and attacks one of them. At the end of 1d4 rounds thereafter, the PC collapses into a deep sleep.

Aftermath

The PCs awaken in the interrogation chamber at Constable Golthammer's headquarters, detailed in the following chapter.

PCs who somehow managed to escape Toren's trap are pursued by three 3rd-level priests and 35 Zhents, all on horseback. When they catch the PCs, each priest casts hold person before the battle begins.





The Garrison

“What? What did you say?”

—Guthbert Golthammer

This imposing structure was once a well-kept, comfortable military base, but time and disrepair have slowly taken their tolls on the old wooden structure. Golthammer now uses it as his home, and roughly 250 men also reside here. Many visiting Zhent dignitaries stay in the headquarters during visits to Dagger Falls.

Three rounds after the interrogation begins, the Freedom Riders attack Dagger Falls, and every PC has a 75% chance of hearing the combat outside. Unfortunately for the characters, no rebels rescue them; the PCs must free themselves.

The PCs wake up in the interrogation room (Area 1) with Toren (see page 13) glaring contemptuously over them.

1. Interrogation Room

The PCs have been unconscious for 1d6 hours. They are groggy and weak as they recover from the effects of the poison.

Your head throbs with pain, and waves of nausea wash over you. When you try to move, you realize that your hands and legs are chained to some large object. Your companions are shackled to large logs, all of which are secured to the wall with a series of metal bolts and plates. You can only assume you're trapped the same way. The room is filled with a variety of well-maintained—and often-used—torture instruments.

Eight guards, along with a half-arc—obviously their leader—sit about 15 feet away. They are laughing and drinking as they fumble around with your weapons. The *Sword of the Dales* is not among the weapons, however.

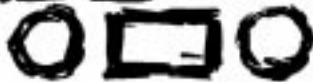
“You won't have use for these anymore,” remarks the leader as he rises from the table. He ambles to you, then spits on the ground near your head.

“If I were you, I'd say my prayers pretty quick, my friends,” he says, laughing in a very nonhumorous way. He walks to a nearby door, turns, and says, “The constable wishes to speak with you.” He opens the door, then disappears.

After about five minutes, Guthbert Golthammer enters the room.

The door opens again, and a huge bear of a man strides into the room. This 300-pound giant thunders into the center of the chamber, swinging the *Sword of the Dales* over his head. A few more strides brings him face-to-face with you.

He stabs the tip of the blade into the wooden log just within your reach, but his massive hand never releases its grip on the *Sword*.





"I'm Constable Guthbert Golthammer, you rebel scum. I've got questions for ya," he says, standing up straighter. Then, strangely, he gazes at the far wall and mutters, "Constable Guthbert Golthammer, yeah." His eyes glaze over, then they snap to focus and he shakes his head. "Questions for ya!" he thunders.

Guthbert Golthammer: 3rd-level human fighter; AL CN; AC 5; MV 12; hp 37; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+5 (Strength and specialization bonuses); S 18/36, D 12, C 18, I 6, W 9, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 11; XP 270. A key around his neck opens the chest in his bedroom (Area 5).

Guthbert has been described by many as a "glorious incompetent." He has trouble carrying on an intelligent conversation and is constantly distracted.

Guthbert's line of questioning is foggy and incoherent, and it should take the characters no time to figure out that the man has no brain.

The first time any PC speaks, continue:

"Ah, yes, of course," huffs the constable, plucking the Sword from the wood. "Tell me what powers this sword has—each and every one!" he roars, pacing back and forth in front of the log. He glares at each of you in turn, poking your chests with a grubby finger.

Guthbert interrupts the first PC who responds.

"Aha, I knew you were into this adventuring thing for the money!" Guthbert yells. "Quit playing games with me! What do you really want?" Growling and switching the Sword to his other hand, he makes a fist. "What is this tingling?" he asks no one in particular, staring in alarm at his hairy, hammy fist.

Guthbert demands to know all sorts of useless information from the PCs, most of it trivia about themselves and their mission. Guthbert doesn't give the PCs time to finish before he throws another senseless question at them.

The PCs should be able to easily trick Guthbert into calling upon the Sword's power to part chains and manacles. If the PCs don't remember the magic word, Gothyl sends a *whispering wind* that speaks the word "merrydale."

If the PCs still can't figure it out, she casts a suggestion on Guthbert to speak the command word.

Unfortunately, Ilthond placed a spell on the blade to alert him if any of its powers are used. Once the Sword releases the PCs, Ilthond teleports into the room.

The wizard you fought in Spiderhaunt appears with a pop of magical energy. Glaring out across the room, his face contorts and twists with rage. His hands tighten on the skulls he holds.

"Golthammer, you fool!" Ilthond roars. "I ordered you to kill these rebels!" With a lightning movement he drops the skulls and grabs for the *Sword*.

Guthbert's hand jerks away as if struck by an electric shock, and the Sword clatters to the floor. Howling in pain, the huge man backs away from Ilthond.

A misty form immediately hisses from the *Sword*. A shadowy image emerges from the mist, but its features are nothing like those of Hedistrin, the Sword spirit you met before.

Stringy black hair hangs limply around her shoulders, and her skin is a sickly yellow-green. Pinpoints of crimson fire dance in her eyes as her clawed hands reach out for Ilthond.

"Noooooo! !!" the wizard cries, stumbling backward. Like a snake striking its prey, the spirit grabs him around the throat.

Guthbert Golthammer has no idea what is happening to him. He felt shocks through his hand three times when he was interrogating the PCs, but the worst shock came when Ilthond appeared.

The eight guards charge the PCs as Golthammer draws his own blade, leaving the Sword on the floor.

As the battle begins, the skulls hover and float in the air. Their eye sockets fill with a blood-red fire, and ghostly voices echo throughout the room:

*Embrace the shadow, darkness falls,
Hail to Gothyl, join her legions in these halls.*

The PCs can dive for their weapons and attack in the same round. The rest of their equipment is in the War Room (Area 6).





Golthammer either goes after anyone who grabs the Sword or attacks the most powerful-looking fighter. The rest of the guards charge blindly forward.

Ilthond; 7th-level wizard: AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; hp 23; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 9, C 12, I 17, W 16, Ch 8; XP 3,000; *bracers of defense* AC 2, *ring of telekinesis* (100 lb. weight), *dagger +2*, *17 darts +2*; *teleport ring* (detailed on page 29), *wand of lightning* (22 charges).

Spells: 1st level: *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*. 2nd level: *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *web*. 3rd level: *Melf's minute meteors*, *protection from normal missiles*. 4th level: *stoneskin* (already cast; protects Ilthond from five attacks).

Gothyl, Arch-shadow: Int supra; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; W18; hp 47 (before transformation), 62 (after transformation); THAC0 12; #AT 0; Dmg 1d4+1; SA energy drain; SD the spell non-detection in effect whenever she talks to the PCs, magical weapons required to hit; XP 4,500.

Spells: 1st level: *darkness*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *wall of fog*. 2nd level: *invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *mirror image*, *scare*, *web*. 3rd level: *flame arrow*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *non-detection*. 4th level: *Evard's black tentacles*, *fire shield*, *ice storm*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *stoneskin*. 5th level: *Bigby's interposing hand*, *cloud-kill*, *cone of cold*, *magic jar*, *wall of force*. 6th level: *anti-magic shell*, *death spell*, *fish to stone*. 7th level: *finger of death*, *power word stun*, *teleport without error*. 8th level: *Bigby's clenched fist*, *symbol*. 9th level: *time stop*.

Zhent Guards (8): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 14; XP 65 each. They each wear chain mail and carry long swords.

If a PC touches a skull: Any character who touches a skull is immediately attacked with magic similar to that of *magic jar*. The PC must roll a successful saving throw vs. spell at +2 or become possessed by one of Gothyl's trapped apprentices.

Characters who fail the save fight a losing battle for 1d4 rounds. During this time, the PC can physically

attack the skull with a -2 penalty on attack rolls. If the skull is destroyed, the character under attack is stunned for one round. Each skull is AC 5 and has 12 hit points.

If a PC both fails the saving throw and fails to destroy the skull, his or her body becomes possessed by the spirit of the evil apprentice. The character's spirit becomes trapped within the skull. The possessed PC immediately attacks the nearest Zhent. After the Zhents are finished off, the possessed PC turns on fellow PCs.

Since it is Gothyl's intention to possess all the PCs, she won't let the characters kill one another; any non-possessed PCs who is attacked falls unconscious when he or she reaches 0 hit points. This lasts as long as any skulls containing spirits remain intact.

Possessed creatures are distinguishable from non-possessed creatures by their glowing red eyes and occasional facial tic. After 24 hours, the red eyes fade, but the physical tic remains for 1d4 months.

If a skull is destroyed while a victim is possessed: The possessed character immediately makes a system shock roll if the skull containing his or her original spirit is destroyed. If successful, the PC's spirit is restored to his or her body, and the PC is struck unconscious for 1d4 turns. If the system shock fails, both the spirit of the apprentice and the character are killed.

The spirit of the evil apprentice bonds with its new body after one day. If the skull is destroyed more than 24 hours after the PC's body is possessed, that character's spirit is destroyed as well. A *wish* or similar magic can return the PC's spirit to the appropriate body and vanquish the apprentice forever.

Things Don't Look Too Good

If the party is losing, the DM should have 1d6 Zhents touch the skulls. Any Zhent who does this automatically becomes possessed. Possessed soldiers turn on other guards, since Gothyl wants to exact her revenge on the Zhents and Ilthond.

If the party is making quick work of the guards and Guthbert, 1d10 additional guards arrive and attack. If the PCs attack Gothyl, she uses whatever means necessary to defeat them. She may cast *stun* on the first fighter to attack her, or she might cast *minor globe of invulnerability* to shield her against a spell attack. She doesn't play with them for long, however. If the PCs continue to attack her,



she kills them one by one. The PCs should soon realize that she is more than a match for them.

As the PCs do battle, read the following:

Ilthond is hunched over, gasping for breath as his near-skeletal hands clutch a nearby table. The shadowy figure makes a final lunge for Ilthond, her hands tightening on his throat.

“Die, witch!” gurgles the wizard. His words are scarcely out of his mouth before his eyes widen in surprise and his body slumps to the floor. “Randal Morn was not worth this much trouble,” he gasps as a final, ragged breath escapes from his body.

The spirit begins to glow brighter and brighter, and you hear Hedistrin’s voice echoing in the chamber.

“Yes, yes!!! I have achieved my goal!” she cries. Slowly, she fades out of existence.

Gothyl has ascended to demi-shade status. Characters do not see her again unless they attempt to destroy the Sword. If they do, she immediately appears.

When characters charge out of the room, read the following:

Just as you thought you’d seen every Zhent who ever another group of them comes running in your direction as your party spills into the hallway.

There are 2d4 Zhents running around in the hall; PCs should easily defeat these soldiers. Most of the guards run when they see both Ilthond and Guthbert lying dead in the interrogation chamber.

2. Supply Room

This vast chamber contains normal military supplies and equipment. Arms and armor, iron rations, polearms, and other military equipment fill the room. Everything is in good condition and ready to use.





3. Reception

An engraved bronze plaque is attached to the door of this room. It reads: "Guthbert Golthammer, Constable." The door is unlocked.

A large desk occupies the northeastern corner of this office. A heavy oak door in the east wall is closed. A threadbare couch sits in the southeast corner.

The desk looks neglected—papers are scattered haphazardly across the desk and ink from an overturned inkwell has ruined many of the documents.

Most of the documents detail such mundane information as supplies and taxes collected. A PC who inspects the papers more closely finds some things of interest.

One document details an agreement between the Shattered Stone orcs and the Zhentarim to destroy Dagger Falls. The orcs' payment is 2,000 gp plus plundering privileges. The contract is quite old but appears to be binding. Apparently, the Zhentarim plan to summon the orcs to descend upon Dagger Falls as their soldiers retreat.

A thick ledger contains the names and payoff amounts of Zhentarim contacts within Dagger Falls. Although it looks worn, many of the names could prove valuable. These names should be provided by the DM.

Inside the desk is a secret compartment that contains a ruby worth 100 gp.

4. The Constable's Office

Lush red carpet on the floor pads each step. An immense, ornately carved oak desk is nestled against an eastern window and fills most of that part of the room. Two plush chairs sit in front of the desk.

Two bookshelves completely cover the north wall. They contain a variety of leather-bound books, scrolls, and sheafs of parchment. Everything is covered with a thick layer of dust.

All of the books are boring technical manuals on warfare strategy and troop deployments.

The desk drawers are locked but can be easily picked

on a roll of 1 or 2 on a d6. The top two drawers contain inkwells, quills, and parchment. The bottom drawer holds a large sack filled with rubies, emeralds, and sapphires worth a total of 2,000 gp.

A secret compartment is located along the southern wall. Anyone who presses the latch to the compartment trips a blade trap; any PC within 6 feet of the trap must roll a successful save vs. paralysis or be hit with 2d6 points of damage.

Inside is a cache of magical items that Guthbert collected for Ilthond: bracers of defense AC 7, scroll of four mage spells (*armor*, *alarm*, *magic missile*, *sleep*), *mace +1*, *short sword +1*, and a *suit of ring mail +2*. In a leather pouch is a key that opens the door to the jail (Area 8).

5. Guthbert's Bedroom

The wooden floor creaks and groans as you make your way across the room. A massive bed with a feather mattress sits in the northeast corner. A small wooden chest lies at its foot.

Near the door in the south wall stands a suit of plate mail armor on a metal rack. A huge two-handed sword hangs above a dresser on the southwestern wall.

The two-handed sword on the wall is normal, and the dresser contains nothing but normal clothing. The chest at the foot of the bed is locked. Inside are some winter clothes piled on top of a coffer filled with 425 gp, two potions of *extra-healing*, and a *helm of underwater action*.

6. War Room

A massive oak table and eight chairs fill the room. The walls are covered with tattered maps and diagrams, and papers and maps are scattered on the table.

A leather satchel filled with scrolls sits in the southeast corner, and bags are piled in the northeast corner.

All of the scrolls are useless. The bags contain all the PCs' belongings. When they search the bags, they find only the gold is gone; all other possessions (including magical items and weapons) are still there.





7. Barracks

From the looks of the rumpled beds and the strewn clothing and personal items, it's clear that whoever was in here left in a hurry. The door in the north wall stands open.

The door in the hallway leading east to the outside is open. If anyone goes through the door, read the following:

Sounds of loud, raucous fighting come from the streets. Directly in front of you stands a small group of four guards, apparently the only ones ordered to remain with the headquarters when the Freedom Riders attacked the city.

Before you have a chance to react, they attack.

The Zhents fight until two of them are killed. The other two then throw down their swords and surrender.

Zhent Guards (4): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 11; XP 65 each. They wear chain mail and wield long swords.

8. Jail

The metal door to this room is locked, and the key is located in the Constable's office (Area 4).

The door opens to reveal a 10-foot-wide walkway stretching between four jail cells. A movement on the western wall catches your eye—a section of the wall is slowly pivoting closed. You glimpse three guards dragging another man through the secret door. The wall section glides into place with an audible click, and the door seems to dissolve and disappear into the stone.

"They're taking Randal Morn!" cries a prisoner.

Characters must spend 1d4 rounds looking for the mechanism that opens the one-way secret door. Once they open it, proceed to **The Chase** section below.

The occupant of the cell, Koril Benschay, is a merchant

and rebel sympathizer. Captain Mestin told the PCs about him when they met her along the road (see page 7). The key that opened the door does not open the cells, so the PCs must break down the cell door to release Koril. Once freed, he asks for a weapon and joins the general fray outside. He doesn't know where the guards took Randal.

9. Officer's Mess

This room is filled with long rows of tables and benches. The smell of food wafts in the air, and stains cover most of the tables. No one is here.

10. Kitchen

The only people here are the cooks and helpers, and they immediately surrender when they see the PCs. They're all innocent Dagger Falls citizens who work for the Zhents under honest circumstances.

The Chase

The Freedom Riders battled their way into the city, and the chaos of combat fills Dagger Falls. The DM should alter the locations of the following encounters and the narrative to reflect the PCs reactions to the battle.

Flight From The Compound

The PCs catch sight of the wagon when they either open the secret door in the jail or run around the building.

Arrows, sling stones, and crossbow bolts fill the air, and the rumbling wheels of a wagon rise over the sounds of battle. A few hundred feet away, three Zhent soldiers driving a rickety wagon rush out the opened gate of the Zhent compound. The crowds of people and soldiers in the streets slow the wagon's progress, but it manages to veer south toward the marketplace.

You glimpse a familiar form in the back of the wagon—Randal Morn.

A squad of six Zhent guards breaks out of the chaos in the street and rushes toward you. Apparently, they have been watching for your group.





There is a 10% chance per round that a random PC in the street gets hit by a projectile zinging through the marketplace.

Zhent Guards (6): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; hp 8, 7(×2), 6, 5, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each. They wear ring mail and carry short swords and light crossbows.

To Market, To Market

When the PCs defeat the guards, read the following:

The sound is deafening. Merchants are hastily trying to get their goods out of harm's way as women scream and children cry. Occasionally an overloaded wagon topples over, injuring anyone unlucky enough to be near it.

The wagon carrying Randal is stuck, unmoving, in the throng. The driver is swinging his sword and screaming at people who are blocking the way as the other soldiers punch and kick whomever is closest to them. The one who guards Randal has the heel of his boot on the rebel leader's back.

It takes five rounds for the party to reach the wagon. The first round after the party begins the chase, archers open up from the rooftops. They first aim for innocent bystanders near individual PCs, hoping to draw the characters' attention away from the wagon.

If the PCs continue toward Randal, the archers shoot at them directly. Just as the PCs get within grabbing range of the wagon, it lurches forward.

Zhent Archers (8): 2nd-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6 (flight arrows) or 1d8 (long swords); SZ M; ML 14; XP 65 each.

End of The Line

By the time the PCs get away from the archers, the wagon is only slightly ahead of them. Each PC has an 80% chance of grabbing the wagon; any character who does so must roll a climbing proficiency check at -3 to determine whether he or she gets into the wagon.

The open gate of Dagger Falls looms before you, and the wagon carrying Randal Mom has picked up speed.

Just as the wagon turns toward the gate, a sharp crack of splintering wood fills the air. One of the front wheels flies off and smashes into a thousand pieces, and the wagon careens through the crowd.

The Zhents are tossed out into the street. One does not get up, but the remaining two rise shakily to their feet and face your party.

Zhent Kidnappers (2): 3rd-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; hp 23 (29), 20 (33); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 11, XP 120. Each wears chain mail and carries a shield and long sword.

Randal Morn: 7th-level human fighter, 6th-level thief; AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; hp 19 (33); THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 17, C 13, I 12, W 10, CH 15; SZ M; ML 14; XP 500.

The Zhents immediately flee through the main gates. The haystack onto which Randal landed is in a corner of the compound, removed from the chaos of battle. Once the characters discover Randal, read the following:

A weak smile crosses Randal's face as he says, "It seems we are well met in the middle of battle!" He sits up in the hay and rubs his head.

Suddenly his eyes widen and he jumps to his feet. "Does anyone have a sword or armor I can use?" he asks, just as an entire squad of Freedom Riders converges on your group.

Randal Morn has no interest in the Sword of the Dales and doesn't accept it if a PC offers it to him. He feels there's something very wrong with the weapon. "Look at the mess it's already gotten me into," he'll remark.

By now it's clear that the Freedom Riders won the battle. The PCs, along with Randal, are escorted to a house near the Zhent barracks that has been converted into a makeshift Freedom Rider headquarters.

If the PCs choose to help Randal Morn reclaim Dagger Falls—thereby assuring themselves of the reward that Lhaeo promised them—proceed to the next chapter.





The Fight for Dagger Falls

Don't worry about the about weapons an enemy hits you with. Beware of the surprises.

—Old Dagger Falls saying



With the eastern entrance secured, the Freedom Riders immediately moved toward the barracks in an effort to rescue Randal Morn. Captain Ariton Delmis led the charge to the barracks himself, sending Captain Mestin to secure the northern parts of the city. Moving swiftly to the northern entrance, they quickly overpowered a large troop of orcs stationed at the Red Rock Tavern. Unfortunately, the orcs managed to sound the alarm before they were trounced, alerting the Shattered Stone orcs to move on the town.

Sweet Victory?

It takes 1d6 rounds for the PCs to reach the Freedom Rider headquarters with Randal and the rebels. During this time, they have a 40% chance per round of being attacked by roving bands of Zhents or orcs, but these battles should be short and swift. As soon as the group reaches the headquarters, read the following:

The Zhent compound is alive with crackling flames. Bodies of Zhent warriors lie scattered like limp rag dolls, and the smell of death and blood is sickening. You see a small group of Zhents tied together by a length of sturdy rope and being led away by five or six Freedom riders. As you walking along, more Freedom Riders pour through the gates of the compound.

Captain Ariton rides through the soldiers toward your group. "Randal!" he cries, and sends his horse into a gallop. The cry of "Randal Mom" is quickly picked up by the troops as more than 30 Riders follow Ariton.

A swarm of bodies rush forward and strong arms lift you and your companions into the air. By now the shouts of "Randal, Randal" are mixed with the cries of "Here they are—the heroes of Dagger Falls!" People slap you on the back and shake your hand as you're carried into the Freedom Riders' command post just inside the compound gate.

Randal and the PCs are taken inside the headquarters to rest and relax. For the next hour or two, the characters are bandaged and fed. All PCs are offered healing, and anyone who accepts recovers 2d6 hit points.

During this time, rebel scouts rush in, reporting to Randal on the status of the





ongoing battles. The DM can create any number of scenarios here, but each piece of good news should be followed with bad news.

One scout reports that there is no sign that the Zhentarim had any advance warning of the Freedom Rider attack on Dagger Falls, and so far no Zhentarim reinforcements have been sighted. Unfortunately, the Shattered Stone orcs are massing for an attack in the Border Forest. Estimates now place their numbers at nearly 300.

It's Not Over Yet...

As the reports become more dire, Randal approaches the PCs. Settling into a chair, he addresses them:

"I am almost ashamed to ask for your assistance again," begins Randal, "but there are areas of Dagger Falls that could benefit from your particular skills. Would you be willing to join us in battle for a second time?"

The PCs can decide whether to return to battle or to stay out of it. If anyone declines to help, Randal explains that he understands and does not pressure the PC. Read the following to those who agree to help:

"There are two hot spots in the city," Randal begins. "The first is in the eastern section, near the main gate. Apparently, a group of about 20 off-duty Zhent soldiers were drinking at the Broken Dagger when the Freedom Riders attacked that section of town. They put up quite a fight and are still there. A number of archers are staked out on the roof and are attacking our troops with flaming arrows. Most of the northern and southern sections of the streets are on fire. Also, the idiot Toren is lurking around there somewhere."

Randal is silent for a moment, then continues. "The second problem is not quite as tricky. A large force of Zhents guards-some of them reported to be less bloodthirsty than their companions-are holed up in a stone warehouse in the southeastern section of town. They need to be cleaned out."

After the PCs have had a chance to digest this information, read the following:

Randal smiles wanly. "I can promise you a land grant in Dagger Falls as well as some type of financial reward if you defeat the Zhents." He paces the room for a moment, then returns to you. "I also guarantee that, should you not survive, your families will be provided for. But that won't happen, right?" Randal chuckles.

"Your actions will be upheld as lawful, and you will not be held responsible for any damages you cause in the performance of these tasks. What say you?"

If the PCs decide to tackle the Zhents at the Broken Dagger, go to The Broken Dagger section below. If they choose to clean out the warehouse, proceed to The Warehouse on page 23.

Randal sends 2d6 Freedom Riders with the PCs. The DM should play them as expendable NPCs, although they do not agree to any obviously suicidal plans.

The Broken Dagger

As the PCs approach the Broken Dagger, they recognize the area as the place where they were attacked by archers during the wagon chase. When the party nears the tavern, read the following:

Zhent and Freedom Rider bodies, broken and twisted in odd, unnatural angles, litter the area. The fires burning at both ends of the street radiate tremendous heat even at this distance, and the air is filled with smoke, ash, and debris. Although the flames are huge, after a moment you realize they are not spreading.

The Broken Dagger is a stone and brick building with a wooden roof. Archers can be seen along the roof, their bows pointing into the street.

Four of the archers are protected by 50% cover (-4 bonus to AC), and two have 75% cover (-7 to AC). The Freedom Riders tried burning the tavern down, but the Zhents were able to put out any burning arrows that hit the roof. All 20 Zhent guards are inside the tavern, along with Toren.

If the PCs come up with a creative solution for eliminating the guards, it should be allowed to succeed.





Zhent Ground Troops (20): 0-level humans; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35 each. They wear ring mail and carry shields and short swords. 2d6 of them have pouches containing 1d12 gp.

Zhent Archers (6): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6 (flight arrows) or 1d8 (long swords); SZ M; ML 14; XP 65 each.

Toren: 4th-level half-orc fighter; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; hp 14 (33); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8; S 16, D 13, C 15, I 13, W 11, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420. He wears chain mail and carries a shield and *long sword* +2.

If the PCs find themselves fighting Toren, it should be a close fight between the half-orc and the heroes, but the party should win.

The Warehouse

As characters approach the large warehouse, read the following:

Bodies, both Zhent and Dalesman, carpet the area around the warehouse. Captain Durmark notices you and approaches. "Good to see you," she says wearily. She is covered with dirt, blood, and ash, and her face drags with exhaustion. "I have a squad of around 30 Freedom Riders here, but these Zhent rats are proving harder to trap than we expected."

Mestin looks toward the building and continues. "Torching the warehouse would most likely flush the Zhents out, but Randal gave me strict orders not to bum the building," she explains. "We could really use the military supplies that are stored in there."

A rebel appears at Mestin's elbow and hands her a skin of water. She tilts her head back and gulps it, then wipes her mouth. "There's a lot of food in there, too, and we need that more than the weapons. If Dagger Falls is besieged by orcs, the food could prove to be quite valuable."

What Mestin doesn't know is that the Zhents are considering surrender. The ranking officer, sergeant Wilton

Mortaire, knows that the rebels need the contents of the warehouse. He is also aware that the Zhent wizards would never negotiate for the release of a few defeated guards.

As the PCs arrive, a white flag is shoved through the door of the warehouse. Glancing cautiously outside, Mortaire calls out that he wishes to negotiate.

Sergeant Wilton Mortaire: 2nd-level human fighter; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; S 17, D 12, C 16, I 13, W 10, Ch 13; SZ M; ML 11, XP 120. He wears chain mail and carries a long sword.

Zhent Ground Troops (50): 0-level human fighters; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35 each. They wear ring mail and carry short swords.

If the PCs agree to negotiate, Captain Durmark approaches the warehouse with them. As the highest-ranking member of Randal's forces, she must agree with any truce accord. Chairs are set up outside the warehouse.

A tall man emerges from the warehouse and seats himself on the empty chair in front of you. Behind him, you see a few Zhent soldiers standing warily in the warehouse doorway.

"I am Wilton Mortaire, leader of the Zhents inside." Mortaire looks haggard and dirty, but his eyes gleam with a fierce determination. He seems uncomfortable but calm. Whatever decisions he's come to, he appears willing to live—or die—by them.

"You seem a little surprised that I wanted to negotiate," he begins, clenching his hands before him. "In all honesty, I'm surprised that you'd listen."

He licks his lips nervously and continues. "I request the following:

"We are to be released and allowed to go where we will. In return, we agree not to turn and attack Dagger Falls once we are released."

Characters with observation proficiency detect a great deal of anger behind the man's words; anger directed toward Zhentil Keep. He continues:





“Second, there are to be no charges brought against any member of this group for actions during our tour here.” He locks a cold gaze upon Captain Durmark.

“Third,” he goes on, “We are to be allowed to keep our armor and weapons so we can defend ourselves during our return journey. Finally, we are to be provided one week’s worth of rations for each soldier.

He looks at Mestin and clears his throat. “If you give me your word as an officer, I will honor the terms of my agreement. If you do not agree to this,” he turns and looks at his compatriots in the warehouse, “we will burn this building and everything in it.”

Mortaire is willing to bend on the third option if the Freedom Riders agree to provide him with some kind of protection. The Zhent leader is also willing to give up the pardons—except the one for himself, that is. He does not agree to any other counteroffers unless he’s assured of this.

If he and the PCs come to a suitable agreement, the situation ends peaceably and each PC gains a 500 experience point bonus. If no agreement is reached, the Zhents

immediately set the building on fire and perish in the flames. The Freedom Riders have only a 20% chance of putting out the flames, but even if they do, the contents of the warehouse are ruined.

Orc Attack!

It should be nearing evening when the PCs complete their missions. Any wounds the PCs sustained are healed by priests from the Freedom Riders. The party is given food and shown into a quiet back room to rest.

You awaken to the sound of drums echoing through the night. *Not again*, you think wearily as the chaos outside grows louder.

Randal immediately calls the PCs to the main room of the headquarters. When they reach him, they see he is in full armor, prepared for battle. He waits until a large group of Freedom Riders encircles him, then he speaks.





“Scouts report that the Shattered Stone orcs are converging *en masse* about a mile outside of town,” he begins. “The orc chief and his bodyguards have erected a large tent to serve as a command post. I believe it’s in our best interests if we eliminate him.”

He turns to a Freedom Rider you’ve never seen and says, “Jurab, take 20 Riders and fortify the main gate. The rest of you, return to your posts and await further orders from me. They will undoubtedly come quickly, so be ready to move.”

He turns to your party and smiles. “I’ve saved the best mission for you. I need you to attack the chief. He has but a few guards protecting him, so the biggest challenge is to approach him undetected.”

If the PCs agree, continue:

“Kiksa (CG em B6), one of my most trusted soldiers, will take you to an old shack that sits just north of The Red Rock tavern.” Randal gestures to the remaining soldiers, and a stern-faced man of about 45 steps forward. He nods tersely to you as Randal continues. “Wait until the orcs attack the city, then circle around behind their encampment. The orc chieftain will most likely be there.”

The PCs have just enough time to station themselves in the shack when all hell breaks loose.

The drum beats finally stop, and you estimate that it’s about 2 a.m. An eerie silence descends upon your ears; even nighttime insects seem to be holding their breath, waiting.

Suddenly, orcs burst from the darkness and rush the city wall. Many fall before an onslaught of Freedom Rider arrows, but still they press forward.

The night sky is illuminated by a large globe of fire hurling toward the city. As it strikes, flames leap all around, and horrible screams can be heard from the defenders.

Just as the pitch is released, the PCs see the outline of a catapult in the distance. The heroes must now choose whether to destroy the catapult or slay the chief.

If the PCs decide to destroy the catapult first, it fires

two more shots before they get to it. The catapult is the biggest threat to the safety of Dagger Falls, and each PC receives a 100 experience points bonus if they attack it first. The fiery pitch balls automatically hit the city; the DM can determine the exact locations.

The PCs reach the catapult just as a third volley soars into the city. The battle for control of the catapult should be close but by no means certain; the PCs should not automatically survive.

If the group decides to go after the orc king first, the catapult releases 1d10 volleys toward the town.

Orc Catapult Caretakers (6): Int average; AL LE; AC 8; MV 9; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 11; XP 15 each. They all wear leather jerkins and carry short swords.

The Chieftain

As the PCs approach the clearing, each has a 25% chance of tripping over a wire that runs between the base of two trees. If this occurs, any chance of surprise is ruined and the orcs attack. Any rogue character who is searching for traps has a +2 bonus on a find traps roll.

If the characters manage to avoid detection and get to the camp, read the following:

It seems that you could walk right into camp and not be noticed. Chaos reigns in the camp: A large, well-dressed orc is perched atop a large rock, yelling and grunting orders to frenzied orc soldiers. *He’s a perfect target for an arrow, you think, though it’s doubtful that a single arrow could kill him.* Three orcs—obviously bodyguards—look toward the glow of fire in the city.

Chief Gulab of the Shattered Stone Orcs: Int high; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 14; XP 175. He wears chain mail and carries a shield and short sword. A bag on his belt contains a rat pelt, 35 gp, and a key.

Bodyguards (3): Int average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 11; XP 15 each. All three carry short swords.





If the party swept through the orcs at the catapult, this battle should underscore the deadliness of orc soldiers. If the party is badly injured, the DM may want to make the odds easier by eliminating the bodyguards.

If the PCs defeat the orcs and explore the leader's tent, read the following:

You smell the tent before you see it. When you do enter, you see rotting food and smell sweat-soaked clothing and armor. Other indistinguishable smells make it almost impossible to breathe. The lights from outside cast a filtered glow inside the tent, and you see piles of clothing and other objects scattered on top of an ornately carved camp bed. At the foot of the bed is a beautifully worked metal chest with a large lock.

The key to the chest is in the pouch on the chief's belt. If the PCs manage to open the lock, they find 6,750 gp, 2,200 sp, two *potions of extra healing*, a *potion of sweet-water*, a scroll of three wizard spells (DM's choice), *leather armor +1*, and a pair of *boots of elvenkid*. Also inside the chest is a ledger page listing these items; apparently this is the booty payment from the Zhents for the assault.

When the PCs return to the city, read the following:

The brassy calls of trumpets break through the sounds of battle as the night sky is momentarily illuminated by streaking balls of light. Silhouetted against the bursts of light is a force of horsemen charging forward across the bridge to the south.

A banner bearing the symbol of Shadowdale flies over these troops. With a crash, the mounted riders charge headlong into the groups of orcs gathered outside the walls. Hundreds of Shadowdale troops rush forward to engage the gathered horde.

"Long live Randal Morn and Lord Mourngrim!" cry the new defenders of Dagger Falls before their voices are lost in battle. Almost immediately, the main gates open and the Freedom Riders surge forth to join in the fray. The orcs turn and run for their lives.

If any of the heroes try to face down the onrushing orcs, they are cut to ribbons. At the very least, the PC should be knocked unconscious and stripped of a few key belongings (but not the *Sword of the Dales*).

When the battle ends, the Freedom Riders joyously revel until dawn. Toward noon, the PCs should try to see Randal, but he is meeting with Khelben Blackstaff and Elminster concerning the events of the last few days. Since he is unavailable, Ariton informs the characters that they are to be Randal's guests at a banquet this evening. He recommends sleep.

If the PCs decide not to sleep, they can explore the city. An armed escort accompanies them, since Elminster is concerned about Zhent reprisals.

The damage to city is quite extensive. The Teshford Arms and Dulwar's suffered only light fire damage, while The Red Rock was torched as the orcs fled. Kessla, the proprietor, is quite gloomy and disheartened. The PCs find her sifting through the rubble of her place.

If the characters have extra money, they should be gently nudged to help out this kind lady. She is ecstatic, promising them free room and board whenever they visit Dagger Falls.

Still, many residents are pitching in to help one another, and the damage to the city should undoubtedly be repaired soon.

The Banquet

At around eight that evening, the PCs are taken to the old Garrison Headquarters. The atmosphere of the festivities is left to the DM's imagination, but the PCs are to be honored for their accomplishments.

When Khelben stands and announces that the banquet is over, Elminster approaches the PCs and asks them to stay. When everyone has left, read the following:

The renowned Elminster smiles warmly at your group. He motions you to gather around the table where Randal sits. The leader of the Freedom Riders is resplendent in a velvet doublet, and the gold circlet around his brow gives him a regal appearance.

"My friends," he says, "I owe you much more than these mere tokens can express. You risked your lives to save my own, and I am forever grateful."

A guard hands Randal a large, bulging leather satchel. He pulls out scrolls and full pouches and places them on the table. "I promised you a reward," he says. "I hope you are pleased with it."





The scrolls are the land grants. Each grant includes 50 acres of land, materials to build a house, and all voting rights as a landed citizen of Dagger Falls.

Randal hands each PC a beautifully wrought gold filigree brooch, decorated with Randal's personal coat of arms. The brooches are worth 50 gp each, but their value is immeasurable: As long as a PC owns one, he or she has the right to call upon the Freedom Riders for help. The pouches contain gems worth 1,000 gp. Randal also offers public offices in his new government to each of the PCs.

Elminster produces a land grant for 10 acres outside Shadowdale. He also agrees to take a PC wizard as a pupil for 1d4 months. This offer is made only if the PCs have completed all three adventures.

The matter of the Sword of the Dales is left up to the DM. Gothyl does not sit idly by while the PCs attempt to destroy the Sword, even if it means confronting the combined might of Elminster and Khelben.

If the PCs ask Elminster's help in this matter, the wizard first determines how Gothyl is tied to the Sword, then

severs that tie. This won't kill Gothyl, but it does make her angry. Unless the PCs manage to destroy the weapon, Gothyl survives.

Gothyl's Plans

Despite Gothyl's successful ascension to demi-shade, she still has plans for the PCs. Her true desire is to break the bonds of undeath and return to the Realms as a living, breathing sorceress. In order to accomplish this, however, she needs suitable minions—and the PCs are perfect for her plans.

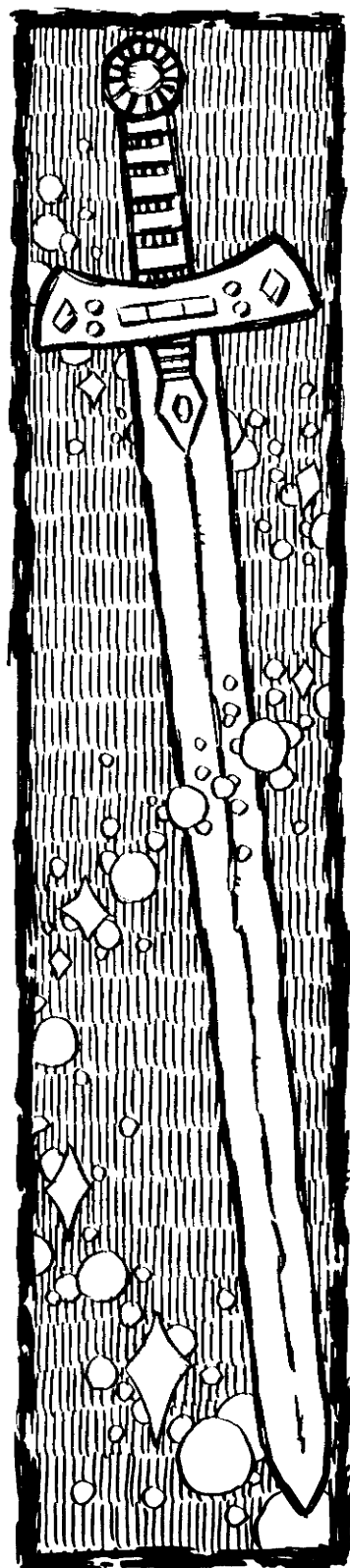
Gothyl's actions depend on the direction in which the DM wants to take the campaign. If the DM believes that the PCs should keep a weapon as powerful as the *Sword of the Dales* with no strings attached, then so be it.

Gothyl can take the PCs in any direction the DM wants. Eventually, however, the PCs are likely to tire of Gothyl. When this happens, they are forced to destroy the *Sword of the Dales*.





Magical Items And Spells



The Sword of The Dales

The *Sword of the Dales* is a long sword +3 made of highly polished silver and inlaid with precious gems in its pommel. It glows with a soft blue radiance at all times.

The Sword unlocks chains and manacles within 30 feet if the wielder speaks the word *merrydale*. The Sword grants the wielder the ability to breathe water (as the spell water breathing) once per day. The blade's most prominent ability is to cause double damage on all magically transformed and magically created creatures. This includes golems and other magical constructs but not summoned or conjured creatures such as elementals.

In addition to the above powers, the weapon also reflects all *polymorph* and lightning-based attacks back at their caster.

XP Value: 7,500

GP Sale Value: 25,000

The Sword of the Dales is a regional icon—a weapon of power to save the Dales from the forces of evil. Most collectors are not interested in the weapon because it draws too many visitors seeking a glimpse of the weapon. Gothyl, the evil presence which lives within the blade, further complicates matters by casting suggestion through the Sword on interested collectors or diviners. Such *suggestions* always seem to refer the appraiser to “more capable and interested parties” some distance away. In other words, Gothyl attempts to make any interested buyer believe that he is not qualified to accurately judge the item's value.





Shadowshield

4th-Level Wizard Spell (Alteration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: One creature

Saving Throw: Negates

This spell enables a wizard to make a creature more likely to survive an attack by imbuing the creature with a phantom shadow of itself.

This phantom possesses half of the creature's normal hit points. When attacked, there is a 60% chance that the phantom takes all damage. The *shadowshield* is ineffective against psionic or attacks that affect the mind.

The phantom makes saving throws just as the affected creature. If it is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, the *shadowshield* is dispelled and cannot be

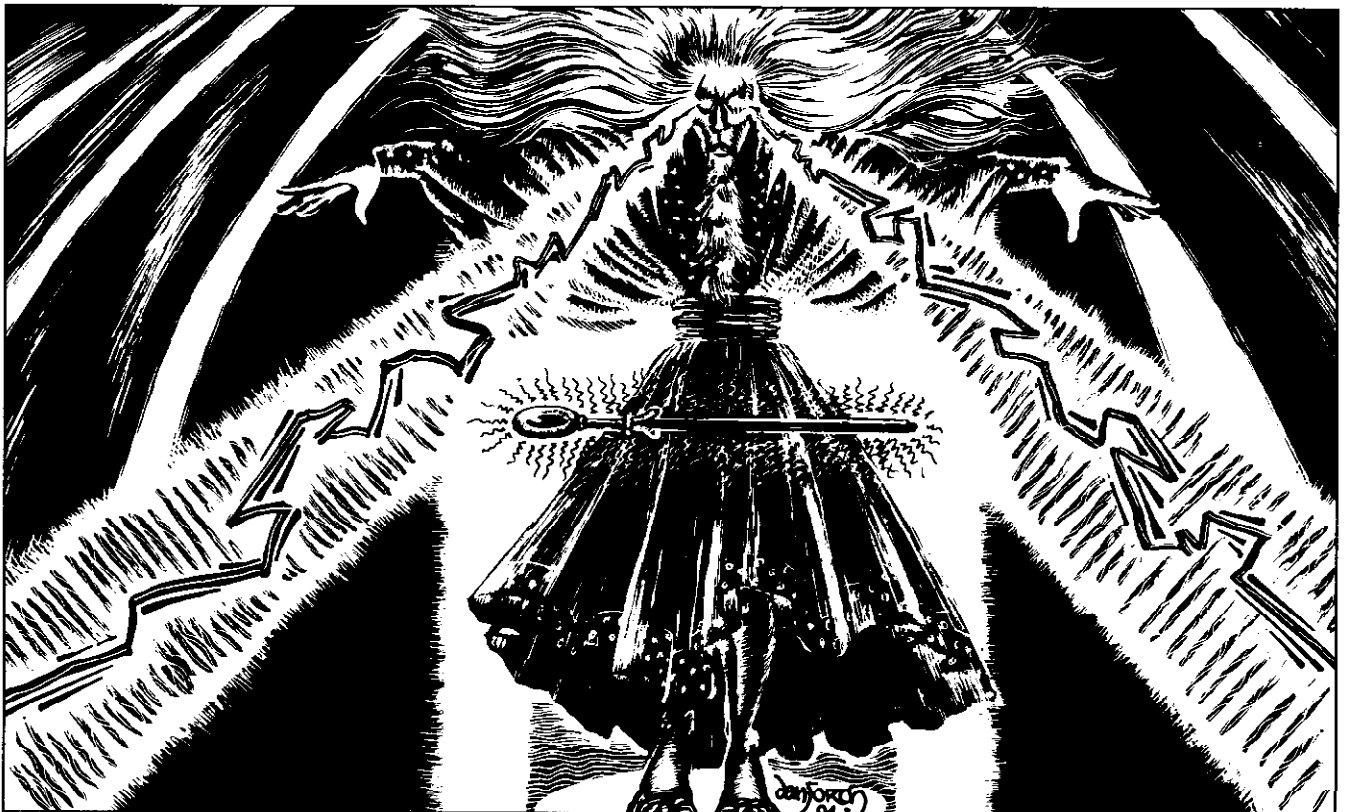
cast again until one day per each hit point of damage taken has passed. In addition, creatures that attempt to use this spell more than three times per year must make a Constitution check. Failure indicates the permanent loss of one point of Constitution.

The material component of this spell is the creature's shadow, which must be present to cast the spell.

Teleport Ring

These plain brass finger rings were once common in the Realms but are now very rare. They enable any wearer to *teleport without error* from a current location to a predetermined spot on the same plane, either by speaking a command word or through activation by force of will.

Teleport rings operate exactly like the 7th-level wizard spell but cannot travel across the planes. These rings were the source for Halaster's version of the horned and cursed *teleport rings* found in the *Ruins of Undermountain*.



	Arch-Shadow	Demi-Shadow
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	Nil	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (19-20)	Supra-genius (19-20)
TREASURE:	C	W
ALIGNMENT:	Any evil	Any evil
<hr/>		
NO. APPEARING:	1	1
ARMOR CLASS:	6	1
MOVEMENT:	9	9
HIT DICE:	8+	11+
THAC0:	12	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4+1	2d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Energy drain Spell use	Energy drain Spell use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Magical weapons needed to hit	+2 or better weapons to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M (6' tall)	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	4,500	8,000

As evil men and women grow older and see their deaths before them, many decide to take their chances with becoming a lich. Most fail and die. The unlucky few who survive the process but fail to achieve lichdom become arch-shadows.

Arch-shadows resemble ghosts or banshees that wander the earth, trying to fulfill their own dark plans. They are brutal and unforgiving in their quest to attain a secure existence.

Although any arch-shadow is usually disguised, in their natural form they appear as ghostly silhouettes of their original bodies. Piercing blue-white pinpoints of light serve as eyes, their hair has become ebony, and their fingernails have turned blue-black.

After gazing at an arch-shadow in its true form for 1d4 rounds, creatures see another side of this undead. The skin that covers their ghostly bodies becomes withdrawn and tight, and their blue-white eyes are tinged with crimson. Their faces are contorted in pain and agony. Sages have speculated that this was their final appearance before death, but only the arch-shadows know for sure.

Combat: If an arch-shadow initiates combat, it is to allow them a chance to achieve demi-shadow status. If an arch-



shadow is forced into a battle in which it has no chance of achieving some goal, it fakes its own death and awaits another opportunity.

Each blow from an arch-shadow causes 2-5 (1d4+ 1) points of cold damage. Creatures immune to cold suffer only 1d4 points of damage. By force of will, the arch-shadow can also choose to drain one life-level from its target, but by doing so it takes the chance that its true nature will be revealed.

Both arch-shadows and demi-shades retain the spellcasting abilities they had in life; most undead of this sort are 18th level or higher in ability. They can also use the same magical items they wielded in life.

Arch-shadows cannot be destroyed by simple combat, powerful magic, or chance. Similar to a lich, their life force is stored in a receptacle. This receptacle is always a magical item of moderate to great power that is carefully protected.

A magical weapon of +1 or greater enchantment is required to strike the arch-shadow. After being reduced to 0 hit points they simply dissolve, drawn back to their magical prison. Both arch-shadows and demi-shades are unaffected by natural sunlight.

As with all undead, arch-shadows are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *death*, *life-level loss*, *enfeeblement* and other attacks that affect the minds of living creatures. Arch-shadows are turned as wraiths.

Habitat/Society: Arch-shadows are relentless in the pursuit of their independence. Typically, their desire is to achieve demi-shade status and live out their existence in the study of new magics. To this end, they cooperate with adventurers or any other creatures that help them accomplish their goal.

Unlike the lich, who takes very little interest in the affairs of the living, the arch-shadow is most interested in the happenings of the intelligent races. If there is a way to cause widespread destruction and fear while in the pursuit of achieving demi-shade, so much the better. These acts serve only to reinforce the fear of the arch-shadow's power.

Creatures aiding an arch-shadow should expect little more than the chance to serve once demi-shade form has been achieved. Demi-shades expect loyalty from their subjects, but have no honor to offer their followers.

Ecology: There are no recorded instances of a high-level priest or wizard striving to become an arch-shadow on purpose—it is misfortune that leads to their existence.

During the process of achieving lichdom, the wizard or priest creates a special phylactery in which to store his or her life force. If this item ruptures during the process, there is a 5% chance that the wizard or priest becomes an arch-shadow instead of being utterly destroyed.

There has been much speculation concerning the reasons behind the phylactery's failure. More often than not, faulty construction or some slight error in an incantation causes the delicate process to break down.

Once the lich process has failed and the creature has successfully made the crossover to arch-shadow status, survival is not guaranteed. A system shock roll must be made, with failure indicating that the arch-shadow is sucked into the Negative Energy Plane.

If the roll is successful, the arch-shadow must install his life force into a magical item of moderate to great power, such as a +3 or better weapon, *ring of wizardry*, *staff of curing*, or other item of which the experience point value is greater than 1,500 (no artifacts). These items cannot be owned by the arch-shadow or any former henchmen, nor can they be within 10 miles of the arch-shadow once the attempt to become a lich has failed.

Usually the decision of which magical item to use is made for the arch-shadow. He or she is *teleported* to a random location where an item capable of accepting the infusion exists. The source of this *teleportation* is unknown.

After infusing the item with its life force, the arch-shadow has tremendous capabilities regarding the uses of that item. The arch-shadow can add additional powers to it, place contingency and other warding magics upon it, and

generally attempt to twist the magic for specific purposes.

Adding additional powers to the item may destroy it (and thus kill the arch-shadow), so powerful contingencies are placed upon it instead. The chance of destroying an item by placing additional powers into it is 5% per spell level of ability added multiplied by the magical bonus of the weapon.

In order to destroy an arch-shadow, the item infused with its life force must be destroyed. Once the item is destroyed, the arch-shadow loses 2 hit points per day until dead.

To make the ascension to demi-shade, the arch-shadow must drain creatures who have touched the Sword within the last 24-hours. It takes eight life levels gathered within two hours for the change to occur, but an arch-shadow can gamble and gain more Hit Dice in the process of transforming. They accomplish this typically by draining high-level characters or powerful creatures, normally attacking by surprise.

For each additional level over eight that the arch-shadow drains, one extra Hit Die is added. If the draining takes place in a particularly unhallowed place, the arch-shadow gains an additional +1 on Hit Dice. In no event can the arch-shadow surpass 30 HD.

Demi-Shade

This is the mature form of the arch-shadow. After draining enough life energy to emerge into its new form, the demi-shade typically disappears from the face of the world for a time as it determines its next course of action. Since it still retains its link to the magical item that carries its life energy, the demi-shade normally brings the item with it for safekeeping.

Unlike its lich cousin, the demi-shade remains highly interested in the affairs of the living. After 10-40 years of solitude, the demi-shade puts its plans to work. Although they seldom have any desire to rule countries, they possess a fierce determination to see the world burn around them.

The demi-shade appears as a physical manifestation of its previous body. Skin color has changed to a deep shade of gray-back, and eyes burn a fierce crimson.

Combat: The touch of the demi-shade inflicts 2d4 points of damage and the loss of one level of experience. Its strong ties to magic also cause a 25% failure rate against magical items that grant immunities to life level loss (i.e. *scarab of protection*). A demi-shade can be turned as a lich and a vampire and has all of the resistances and immunities of an arch-shadow.

A demi-shade can only be struck by weapons of +2 or better enchantment. It is not adversely affected by sunlight but tends to avoid it nonetheless. If its phylactery is destroyed, it loses 4 hp per day until it perishes.



ENCOUNTERS Appendix

1-3 The Zhentarim

Zhent Captain: 2nd-level human fighter; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); XP 35; wearing chain and shield.

Soldiers (10): 1st-level human fighters; AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; hp 8, 7(×3), 6, 5(×4), 3; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon type; XP 15 each. They wear ring mail and carry short swords and light crossbows.

Horses (11): Int. animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 3; hp 13 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1-2; SZ L; ML 6; XP 65.

4-5 Freedom Riders

Freedom Riders (12): 1st-level human fighters; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; hp 9, 8, 7(×2), 6(×4), 5(×2), 4, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; XP 35 each. They wield long swords, short swords, short bows, daggers, and darts.

6-7 Wolves

Wolves (2d6): Int low; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 10 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SD +1 vs. charm attacks; SZ S; ML 10; XP 120.

8-10 Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins (12): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; HD 1+1; hp 9(×2), 8(×2), 7(×2), 6(×3), 5, 4(×2); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 (long sword) or 1d6 (short bow); SZ M; ML 12; XP 35. Their treasure is hidden under a large rock: 1,250 sp and 425 gp.

11 The Great Red Ghost

12 Zhentarim Patrol

13-14 I've Lost My Pride!

Wemic (2): Int average; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 33, 26; THAC0 15; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 and 1d4+1 (warhammer); SD -2 bonus on initiative rolls; SZ L; ML 12; XP 270.

15-17 Fire Beetles

Fire Beetles (2d6): Int non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8; SZ S; ML 12; XP 35.

18-20 Kobold Scouts

Kobolds (20): Int average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 6; HD 1d4; hp 4(×3), 3(×7), 2(×7), 1(×3); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 9; XP 7. They are armed with javelins and short swords.

Encounters Appendix

There is a chance every eight hours for an encounter to occur.

The Zhentarim

These patrols were sent to search for the PCs. If the PCs surrender or are defeated by the Zhents, Captain Mestin Durmark leads a rescue mission.

Freedom Riders

They have no idea who the PCs are; this patrol is scouting the area for Zhent patrols. They ask the PCs a few polite questions and then move on.

Wolves

The animals are hesitant about approaching fire but will attack as soon as the fire goes out.

Hobgoblins

One of many patrols sent out to scour the area, the goblins are supposed to make sure no one gets through the trail to Dagger Falls.

The Great Red Ghost

To the northeast, a blotch of crimson can be seen circling the Dagger Hills. PCs who grew up in the Dagger Hills and make a successful Wisdom check have heard of this phenomenon.

This is actually nothing more than a pseudo-mirage—the heat from the hills and reflected sunlight. After 1d4 turns, the image seems to disappear behind a hill.

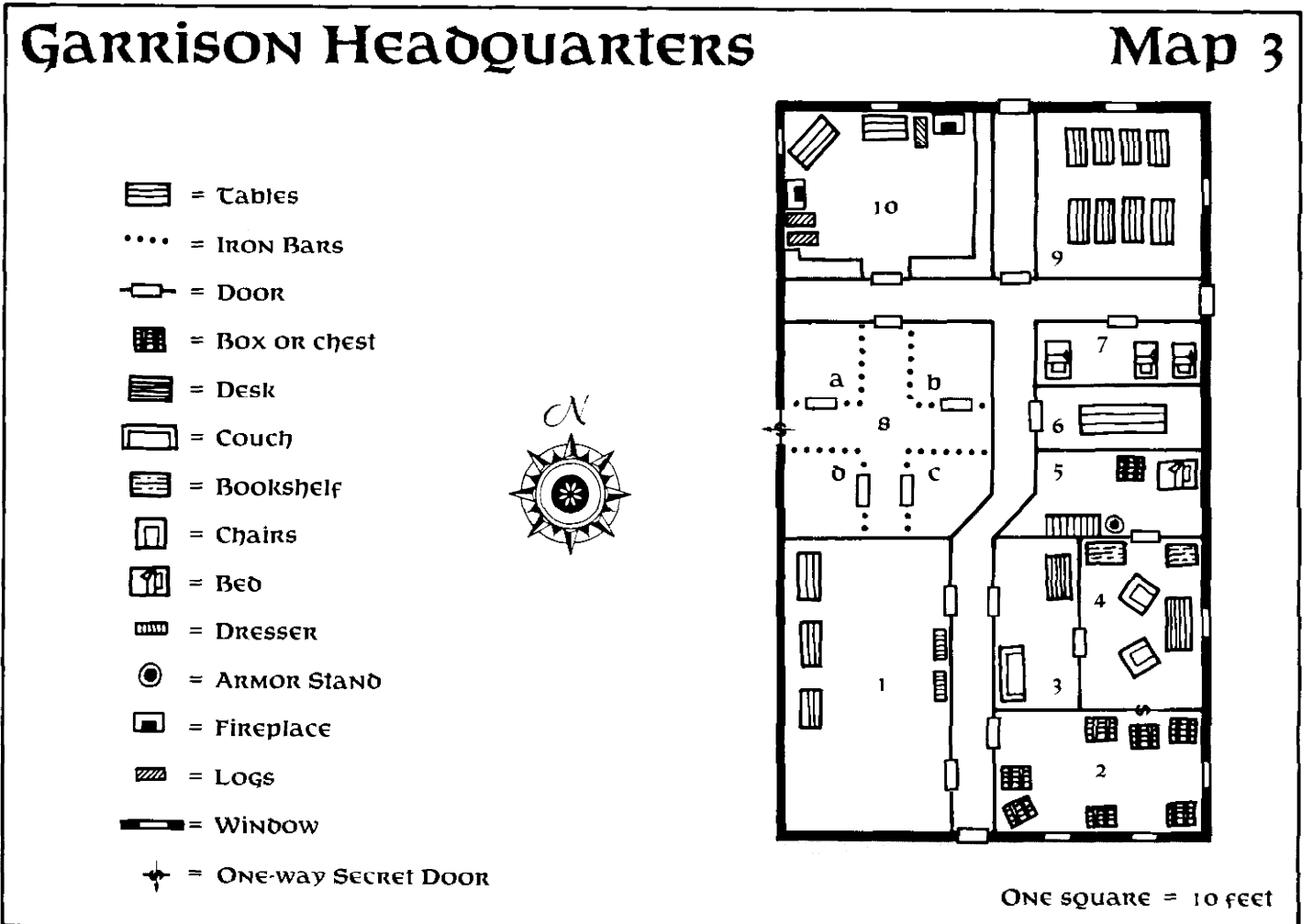
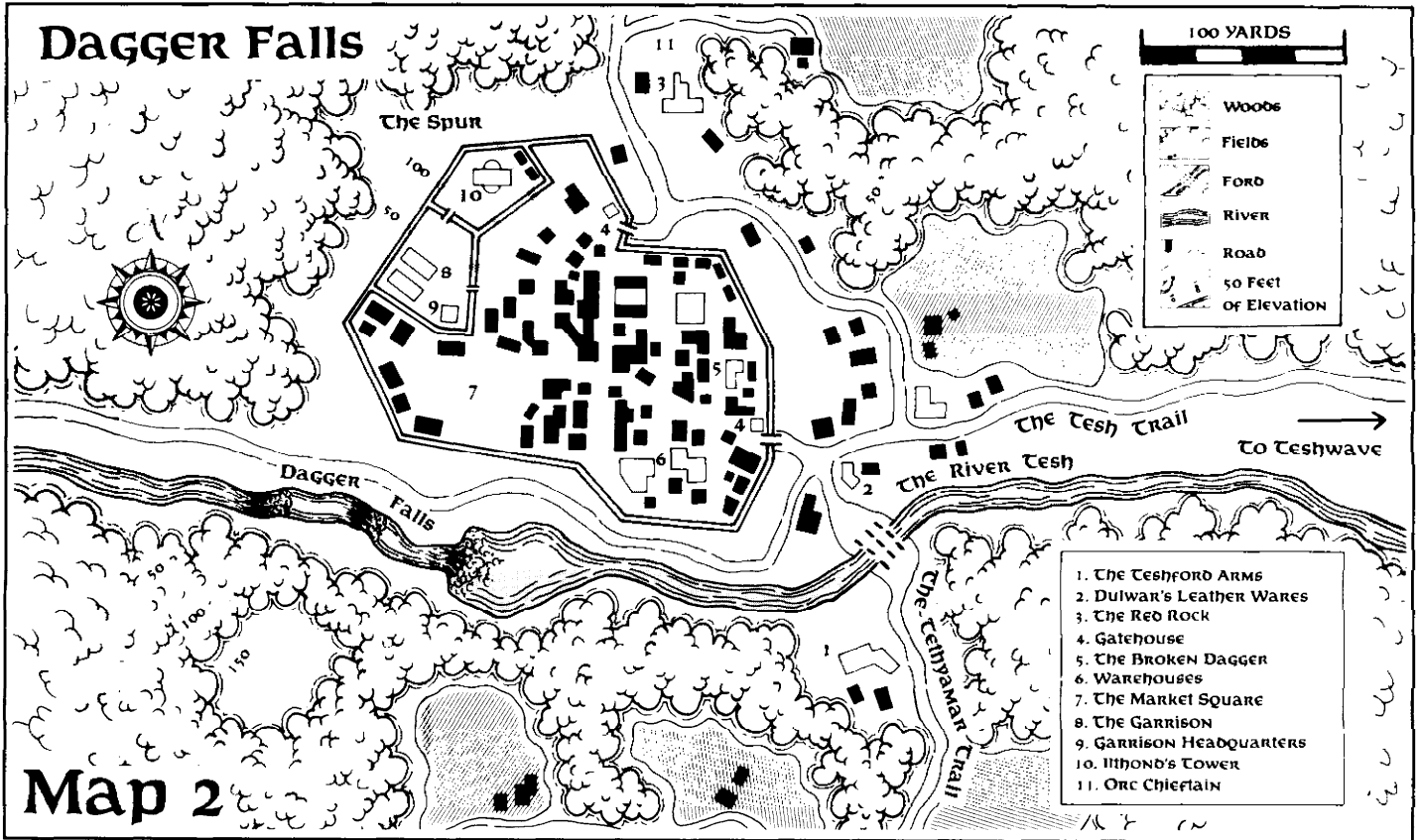
I've Lost My Pride!

These two wemics have recently been accepted by their pride as adults. There's only one problem; they're lost. They're quite embarrassed and ride up to the party asking for directions to "a large burned-out building used by the humans a long time ago." They're referring to Castle Daggerdale, and the PCs have a 50% chance of knowing where the castle is.

Kobolds

These small creatures were sent out to raid and to report to their king on the increased hobgoblin activity in the hills. They're more interested in loot than in any discussion.







The Return of Randal Morn

by Jim Butler

In part one of the Randal Morn trilogy, *The Sword of the Dales*, the legendary leader of Daggerdale, Randal Morn, was captured by unknown assailants as he sought to regain the great weapon for which that adventure was named. A stalwart band of young and enthusiastic heroes was recruited to ride to his aid, yet all they recovered was the *Sword* itself and a message: "Seek me in Spiderhaunt Wood." In the second part of the trilogy, *The Secret of Spiderhaunt*, those same adventurers found Randal and freed him briefly, yet he was almost as quickly torn from their grasp by an agent of the evil Zhentarim, seeking to end the threat of Randal Morn's return to power.

In this final episode, the heroes must follow the kidnapper's trail and rescue Randal Morn before the Zhentarim finish interrogating him and the axe falls upon his neck. Armed with the *Sword of the Dales* and aided by a powerful magical spirit that lives within the weapon, the heroes must march into the heart of Zhent-occupied Dagger Falls, free Randal Morn, and save the city from utter destruction. The job is dangerous—perhaps more than the heroes can handle—yet those who would live in songs and legends cannot concern themselves with living to a ripe old age!

This is the final part of a trilogy of modules that began with *The Sword of The Dales* and *The Secret of Spiderhaunt*.



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

Sug. Retail

U.S. \$6.95

CAN \$8.95

U.K. £4.50

ISBN 0-7869-0170-5



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