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FORGOTTEN REALMS®

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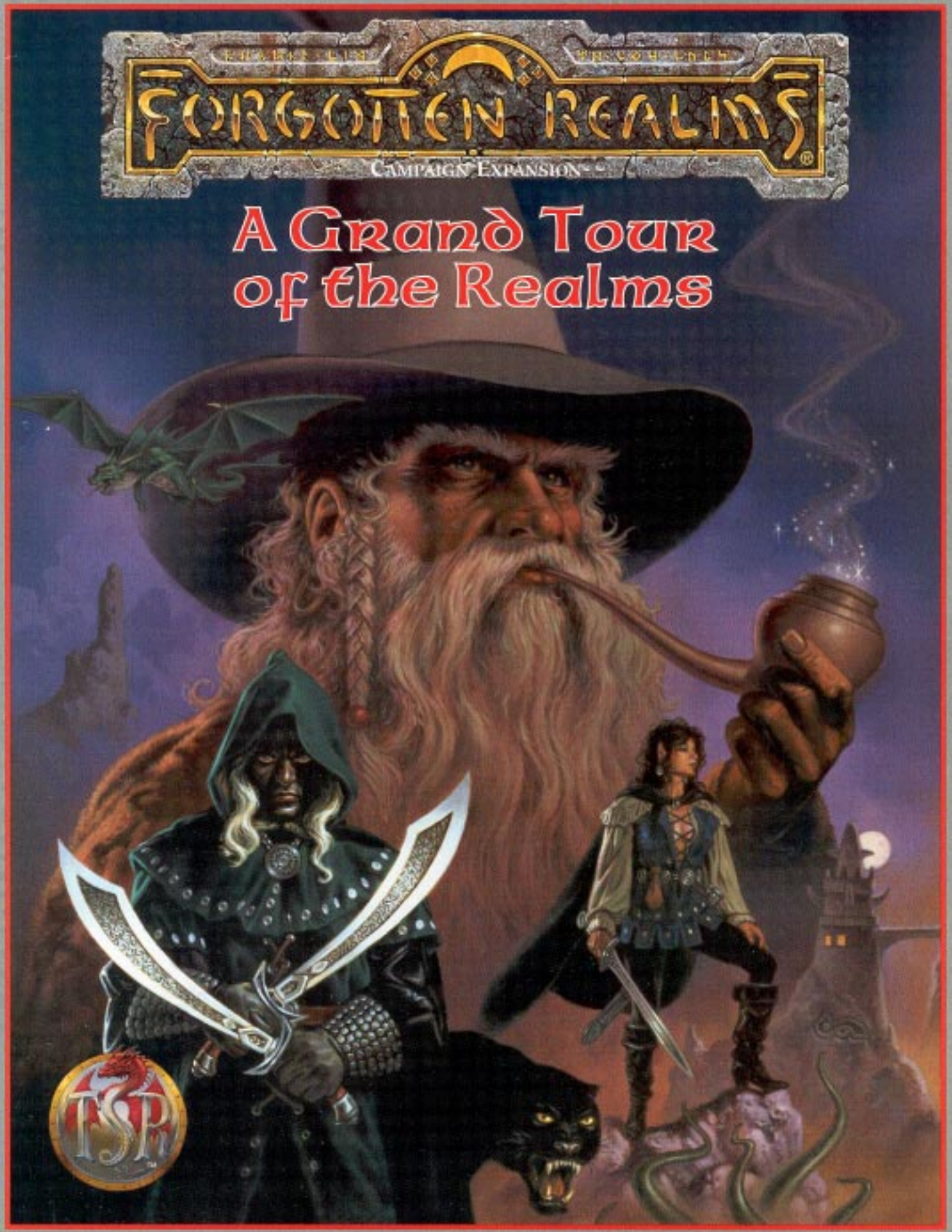
A Grand Tour of the Realms



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

CAMPAIGN SETTING

A Grand Tour of The Realms

Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb

Credits

Original Realms Design: Ed Greenwood
Project Design and Development: Jeff Grubb
***A Grand Tour of the Realms* Design and Development:** Jeff Grubb and Ed Greenwood
Editing: Julia Martin
Product Group Manager: Karen Boomgarden
Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
New Interior Art: James Crabtree, Eric Hotz, and Robin Raab
Interior Art: George Barr, Dennis Beauvais, Tim Conrad, Uttam, and Valerie Valusek
Color Cartography: Dennis Kauth and Cynthia Felegy
Interior Cartography: Steve Beck, Diesel, Cynthia Felegy, Dennis Kauth, Dawn Murin, and Dave Sutherland
Color Symbol Cards: Renee Kousek
MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Page Art: Tom Baxa
Poster Art: Clyde Caldwell
New Dales Sigils: Eric Hotz
Dales Sigils: Valerie Valusek
Typesetting: Angelika Lokotz
Production: Sarah Feggestad, Paul Hanchette, and Dawn Murin

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TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
USA

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

The Big Thank You

The FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting is more than the work of one (or two or three) women and men. While the world began in the mind of Ed Greenwood, it has been added to, increased, modified, defined, altered, and tweaked by innumerable hands since its first publication. Designers have explored new lands, authors have fleshed out the characters and adventures, and editors have translated these ravings into passible English. Artists have brought the Realms to life with pencil, ink, and oil paints. Cartographers have reproduced the early sketch maps of Ed's and brought them further into a new level of realism and development.

For this reason, the following pack of tightly knitted names represents the best and the brightest of the Realms, those who have contributed to the world, and without whom the Realms would have been a little drearier, a little less clear, and a little less flashy. Without a doubt some important figure has been inadvertently missed. The writer of this text abjectly apologises for any such lapses. The only known major omission in this listing of those who have made the Realms great is you, the reader, who brings his or her own attitude, vision, and sensibilities to this world. Enjoy.

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Paul Abrams (A), Marco Aidala (A), Aaron Allston (D), Mark Anthony (N), L. Richard Baker III (D), Dee Barnett (T), George Barr (A), Tim Beach (D), Steve Beck (C), Scott Bennie (D), Dennis Beauvais (A), Karen S. Boomgarden (E, M), Scott Bowles (E), Tim Bradstreet (A), Mike Breault (E, D), Brom (A), Anne Brown (E, N), Richard W. Brown (D), Timothy B. Brown (E, M), Clyde Caldwell (A), Deborah Christian (D), Doug Chaffee (A), Scott Ciencin (N), Dave Conant (C), William W. Connors (E, D), David "Zeb" Cook (D, N), Peggy Cooper (M), Elaine Cunningham (N), Ned Dameron (A), Elizabeth T. Danforth (E), Troy Denning (N, D), Michael Dobson (D, E, M), David Dorman (A), Jan Duursema (L, A), Terry Dykstra (A), Jeff Easley (A), Larry Elmore (A), Betty Elmore (T), Newton Ewell (E, A), Stephen Fabian (A), Chris Farris (C), Sarah Feggestad (T), Fred Fields (A), Nigel Findley (D), Mike Fleisher (L), Karen Wynn Fonstad (C), Vince Garcia (D), Grant Goleash (A), Cory Graham (T), Paul Hanchette (T), Scott Haring (D, E), Rick Harris (A), Eric Haddock (D), Andria Hayday (E), Bruce Heard (M), Laura Hickman (D), Tracy Hickman (D), Tim Hildebrandt (A), Ron Hill (A), Jim Holloway (A), Jane Cooper Hong (N, E), Paul Jaquays (C, A, D), Kim Janke (T), Dennis Kauth (C), Barbara Kesel (L), Mary Kirchoff (E, M), John Knecht (C), Christopher Kubasik (D), David "Deisel" LaForce (C), Michael Leger (D), Angelika Lokotz (T), Jaime Lombardo (A), Jim Lowder (N, D, E), Robert J. King (D), George MacDonald (L, D), Kathleen C. MacDonald (T), Elliot Maggin (L, M), Esteban Maroto (A), David E. Martin (A, D), Julia Martin (D, E), Mike Martin (M), Phillip Meyers (D), Chris Miller (A), Dan Mishkin (L), Kim Mohan (E), Roger E. Moore (E, M), Rags Morales (L, A), Chris Mortika (E), John Nephew (E), Bruce Nesmith (D), Douglas Niles (D, N), Kate Novak (N, D), Allen Nunis (A), Gaye O'Keefe (T), Erik Olson (A), Roy Parker (T), Keith Parkinson (A), Steve Perrin (D), Terry C. Phillips (E), Mike Pondsmith (D), Andy Price (A), Tom Prusa (D), Robin Raab (A), Jean Rabe (E, D, M, N), Tom Raney (L, A), Tom Reed (C), Thomas Reid (D), Peter Rice (D, E), Scott Rosema (A), Robh Ruppel (A), R. A. Salvatore (N, D), Carl Sargent (D), Steven Schend (E, D), Curtis Scott (D), J. Eric Severson (E), Warren Spector (M), Mike Stackpole (D), R. U. Steinberg (E), Douglas Stewart (E), David Sutherland (C), Rick Swan (D), Arnie Swekel (A), Stephanie Tabat (T), John Terra (D), Brian Thomsen (E, M), William Tracy (D), Uttam (A), Valerie Valusek (A, C), Allen Varney (D, E), Karl Waller (A), Jim Ward (N, M, D), Kevin Ward (A), John Wheeler (D, E), Lorraine Williams (M), Skip Williams (D, E), Steve Winter (E, D), David Wise (E), Robin Wood (A), Kim Yale (L), and Tracey Zamagne (T).

What the little codes mean: A=Artist, C=Cartography/Mapmaking, D=Game Designer, E=Editor, L=Licensed Products, M=Management, N=Novel Author, T=Typography

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The World of The Realms

Faerûn is no more than a small territory hugging a larger world, which in turn is only the third world of eight orbiting a central sun, which is entirely encapsulated in a crystal sphere within a swirling chaos, which in turn is only one in myriad alternate dimensions. But for the races of Toril, for the elves and dwarves and gnomes and halflings and humans, Faerûn has a very important name: It is home.

The Planet and its Continents

Abeir-toril (Ah-BEER Tor-RILL), more commonly called Toril, is the name of the orb that Faerûn and the Forgotten Realms are set upon, just as Earth is the orb that Eurasia is set upon. The name is archaic, meaning *cradle of life,* and is rarely used in everyday speech.

Abeir-Toril is an Earth-sized planet dominated by a large continent in its northern hemisphere as well as a number of other large landmasses scattered about its surface. This northern continent is called Faerûn in the west, Kara-Tur in the east, and Zakhara in the south. It is the primary purpose of this tome to deal with the western portion of this huge landmass, in particular the region in Faerûn between the Sword Coast and the Inner Sea.

Abeir-Toril has a single satellite, Selûne (also the name of the goddess of the night sky and navigation). This luminous, heavenly body is followed in its path across the sky by a collection of shining shards, called the Tears of Selûne. These tears are said to be nothing more than a cluster of ordinary asteroids and debris that trail the moon in its path, yet the Tears remain reflective and bright even when the moon is new in the sky.

In addition to the moon, there are seven visible planets that wander against the star-misted sky. They are dusky Anadia, green Coliar, blue Karpri and Chandos, ringed Glyth, odd-appearing Garden, and disk-shaped H'Catha. All follow regular paths around the sun. The stars are distant and eternal, and form themselves into patterns and constellations that each culture names according to its own desires.

A Torillian year is 365 days of 24 hours each. An orbit of Selûne is roughly 30 days. For further information on the calendar, refer to the Time in the Realms section in the "Faerûn" chapter.

Faerûn

Faerûn (Fay-ROON) is the cradle of the Realms, the heart of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting. In discussion, Faerûn and the Realms are used interchangeably. Faerûn consists of the northwest quarter of the dominant continent on Toril. It is bounded on the west by the Trackless Sea, on the south by the Great Sea, on the east by the wide expanses of the Hordelands, and on the north by the ice of the uttermost north. The continent includes a number of large off-shore islands, including Lantan, Nimbral, the Moonshaes, fabled Anchorome, and Evermeet.

Hordelands

Beyond the lands of Thay and Rashemen is a land of endless emptiness, paling with its vast openness even the Shaar to the south or the Fields of the Dead in the Western Heartlands. It is a treeless land occupied by barbarian herdsmen and raiders, the hollow link between Faerûn and Kara-Tur. It is called the Endless Waste in old texts. Its people call it Taan and themselves the Tuigan. The modem natives

of Faerûn call it the Hordelands, for out of this land came the engine of destruction known as the Horde.

Two years after the Time of Troubles, the barbarian tribes of this land united and like a swarm of ants surged westward into the lands of Faerûn. They conquered all that stood in their way, and even the Red Wizards of Thay paid kind words and hard tribute to their majesty. Under the leadership of Yamun Khahan, they boiled into the civilized lands of the Unapproachable East.

The Horde was turned back by the combined efforts of an alliance of western nations under the leadership of King Azoun IV of Cormyr. Yamun Khahan was slain and the Horde disbanded, some of its elements returning to their barren land, others settling on the lands of their newfound conquests.

The Horde has left its mark on the Realms, with a new flood of refugees and immigrants moving westward into Impiltur and the Vast. The Sea of Fallen Stars has carried these newcomers to all of its ports and beyond, and new heroes and legends have erupted in their wake.

And still the Hordelands sit like a watchful beast eying both Faerûn and Kara-Tur, and none know when they will erupt again in another Horde, and who can turn it back if they do.

Kara-Tur

Beyond the emptiness of the Hordelands lies a mystical and magical land known as Kara-Tur (Kah-rah-TOUR). It is a region very different from the lands of the Realms, and in the past only the hints of whispers of legends have come across that land to this. With the coming of the Horde and the wave of refugees pressed before it, more facts, legends, and tales of this land have passed from talespinner to talespinner. Many stories that cannot be placed elsewhere are said to come "from Kara-Tur when the world was still new."

The more amazing of the tales, of mortals passing through walls without magic, steam-breathing dragons, or warriors with hidden powers, are easily discounted or explained. However, it remains that the lands of Kara-Tur are very much unlike the native Realms.

Kara-Tur is known for two of its great nations, Shou Lung and Kozakura. Shou Lung may be the mightiest empire in the world, overshadowing the early days of Mulhorand, and the entire empire is ruled from a central city by an sage king advised by the spirits of his predecessors. Kozakura is equally famous as an island of warriors where duty and honor mean all to the loyal samurai and wandering ronin.

Kara-Tur's influence on Faerûn is only distantly felt, and then mostly in the form of some tavern tale of great riches and wise dragons, or in some mysterious artifact which appears in the court of a distant king. However, there are occasional travelers, both merchants and adventurers, from west to east and vice-versa, and care must be taken before challenging one of Kara-Tur's legendary warriors in combat.

Maztica

Beyond Evermeet in the Trackless Sea is a continent until recently unrevealed, known to its inhabitants as Maztica (Mahz-TEE-ka), the True World. Its existence has been hinted at in various tales over the millennia, but only with the voyage of Captain Cordell in 1361 DR was the drape of isolation ripped aside and the True World revealed.

Maztica is a wild and almost untouched land, dominated by great jungles and thick forests. Its peoples live simply in small communities or religion-based city-states. Their magics derive not from conventional (read "elder kingdoms") forces, but through focii of feathers and claws. The entire scope of these abilities, and the True World's new gods, is unknown.

The revelation of Maztica has had little effect on the bulk of the Realms, as there are more than enough new places to go and new monsters to vanquish without making a long sea voyage. The greatest effects have taken place in the Empires of the Sands and the island kingdom of Lantan, all of whom have laid claims to wide swaths of the new land (without consulting those who were living on it before the revelation). New riches have poured into these lands, making their rulers more powerful, but sending costs skyrocketing for commoners.

Six years after the revelation, much is still unknown about this far land. Maztican individuals and artifacts have been drifting into the Realms, a subject of comment and curiosity. The strange feather magic (pluma) and claw magic (hishna) have daunted sages, new vegetables have appeared in Faerûn, brought from Maztica, and the warriors of Maztica, like warriors throughout the world, are judged by the strength of their arms and the spirit in their hearts.

Zakhara

Far to the south, beyond the fabled lands of Halruaa and Luiren, of Durpar and Var the Golden, is a very different world, as alien as Maztica and as powerful as Kara-Tur. Located on the far side of the Great Sea, it is a hot, dry land of deserts and rocky mountains, its great cities hugging the coastlines for trade and water. It is a land of magic unknown in the north, of powerful monsters and more-powerful rulers. It is known as Zakhara (Zah-KARR-ah), the Burning World, the Land of Fate.

Zakharan culture at first blush seems to be related to that of the Empires of the Sands, or the desert tribes of Anauroch, and indeed there may be a long-distant connection, magical or otherwise. But the Land of Fate is a solid, unified culture unsullied by what the inhabitants laughingly call the Barbarian North. Its gods are unified into a single pantheon, and its leaders call heavily upon genies to solve every problem that confronts them. Items such as djinn rings and flying carpets that are infrequently encountered in the Realms are rumored to be sold on the open

market in Zakhara, and every person born to that land is said to be royalty. The truth of such claims may be distorted by the distance the tales have traveled.

Zakhara, like Kara-Tur, is separated from Faerûn by a great empty expanse, such that those who brave the Great Sea are most often adventurers and merchants who seek the new, the novel, and the profitable. The traveler should be warned, however, that Zakharans are firm in their belief that they are much, much more advanced and civilized than any other people, and treat others accordingly.

Races in the Realms

The Realms are home to a myriad number of sentient races, most of which are in direct competition with each other for land, food, and survival. Humankind is the most successful of the major races in Faerûn, but the race's supreme position is by no means a sure and secure one. Humans share their position with other older, generally benevolent races: dwarves, elves (and human–elf hybrids), halflings, and gnomes. Yet humans and the other elder races are regularly threatened by goblins of all descriptions, underwater and underground races, and most importantly, the powerful and dangerous dragons.

Humankind

The most populous and strongest of the major races of the Forgotten Realms, humans are considered the dominant race in Faerûn. Humankind in Faerûn comes in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Individuals sometimes show the height of the halflings, the stockiness of the dwarf, or the slenderness of the elf, yet remain completely human. Human skin color ranges from the pale, almost translucent Lantanese to the dusky, dark-eyed natives of Unther, with all shades in between.

The concept of subraces, common in other races such as halflings and elves, does not exist in humankind. All nationalities and races of humans can interbreed without difficulty, and their children, unlike the elves, will have traits of either or both parents. After a time, any isolated group of humans tends to establish its own traits, which may change in a few generations with the introduction of new settlers or invaders. This easy assimilation may account for the success of the race over others.

Humankind is also one of the most aggressive of the major races, approaching the goblins in ferocity and the dwarves in its single-minded drive when aroused to battle. At any time in the North, some group of humans, often with nonhuman allies, is fighting some other group (usually of humans and nonhuman allies). The dwarves think that humans battle indiscriminately among themselves because their lives are so short and therefore meaningless. The elves think they are aggressive because humanity has not yet figured out how to communicate properly.

Humankind has a spoken and written language that is accepted as Realmspeak and Tradetongue even between nonhumans as a form of common language (and is known casually as common). Humans have developed the idea of money beyond the dwarven conception of raw ore accumulated into a maze of different systems and coinage. They have generated art and literature and commentary by the ton-load, as well as raised the practice of slaughtering a foe to an art form and a science.

Humanity's greatest advantage is its persistence and potential. No other race has as many special opportunities to increase in power and ability and sees them through. Most of the powerful and wise in the Realms are humans (as are most of the petty-minded and cruel). Within their own race, humans seem to provide equal chances to both males and females. While the tendency in many societies is for women to occupy a domestic role, there is little resistance to a powerful female leader or proficient wizardess, should a woman choose such a position as her goal in life.

Humankind's attitudes range from the beatific to the diabolic, and its numbers include clerics of good faiths, pirates, traders, kings, beggars, slaves, mages, heroes, cowards, fishermen, and mercenaries. Humanity's abilities are limitless, and the question has been asked by some that when this race finally gets all the quirks out of its system and gets moving, will there be any room left for the other races of the Realms?

Dragons

Considered as individuals, dragons are the most dangerous creatures of the Realms. A dragon in full fury may level an entire city, and one at play may even destroy a party of brave knights. These creatures vary in size and capabilities, but are generally huge winged reptiles that can spit fire, acid, cold, or other fell creations.

Dragons come in two main types. The chromatic dragons are those whose scales resemble enamelled armor—usually red, green, black, white, or blue. The chromatic dragons are usually dark-hearted wretches devoted in equal parts to their own feeding, wealth, and the suffering of others. The *metallic* dragons have scales that shimmer like coins, and are generally classified as gold, silver, copper, bronze, and brass. These creatures tend toward good and neutral alignments, or at least seem more disposed to talk to humans than to devour them straightaway (though if threatened, they will do so quickly and without remorse). Such a listing is not all-inclusive, and there are reports from a number of sages of yellow, brown, purple, gemstone, and steel-colored dragons found along with more common types.

Dragons in the earliest days were the rulers of Faerûn between the Inner Sea and Sword Coast, and though they are now few (well, fewer), their individual power remains great. With the coming of elves and humans, the dragons retreated to the North.

Though it is rare, some elder wyrm of the race still occasionally comes down from the North or arouses itself from its decades-long sleep in some forgotten dale and terrorizes those it encounters.

Rarer still is one of the most deadly occurrences in the Realms, a flight of dragons. At such a time, great numbers of chromatic wyrms of all ages descend from the North to rain destruction down on all they encounter. The last such flight was over 11 years ago, in the Year of the Worm. Dragons of all shapes and sizes came down from the lands beyond Thar into the area of the Moonsea, the Dales, and Cormyr. The destruction was extensive, almost ruining Phlan, damaging Zhentil Keep and the Citadel of the Raven, and causing the death of Sylune, the Witch of Shadowdale. The most destructive of the wyrms were killed by powerful wizards and brave warriors, but a great many more took refuge in the mountain fastnesses of the Storm Horns, the Thunder Peaks, and the Desertsmouth Mountains, and continue to this day to raid outlying villages and travelers.

Finally, there seems to be a 300-year cycle called the *Rage of Dragons,* at the peak of which all dragonkind is affected. The ancient kingdoms of Anauria and Hlondath may have been victims of this form of attack. Not enough information is available on the Rage of Dragons, and no one looks forward to collecting more.

This most recent flight of dragons is widely held to be the work of the Cult of the Dragon, a mysterious group of people said to have devised strange magical arts that give them mastery over evil dragonkind. Other sages believe it to be some sort of ritual or cyclic behavior on the part of evil dragons, rather than a concerted attack.

Among both good and evil dragons, there is a code of honor that allows dragon combat without resulting in death. Such combat involves ritual battle with feints and pulled blows, each side demonstrating the damage it could have inflicted. This is the source of the legendary subdual of dragons, where the brave hero gives the dragon a hard swat on the snout and the beast rolls over and surrenders. In reality, such subdual combat is the product of a stated challenge (in auld wyrmish, an archaic dragon tongue), with the proper forms and appearances observed. Individual dragons may agree to such combat with humans, though they do not pull their attacks when fighting nondragons in this fashion. It should also be noted that since the Time of Troubles a decade ago, there is no recorded instance of a dragon agreeing to such combat or surrendering in this fashion to a mortal creature.

As a general rule for dealing with dragons, intelligence and good manners are the best weapons. Being able to identify the creature and its tendencies are half the battle, as this information is the foundation for good preparation (after all, that *ring of fire resistance* is of little value if the dragon turns out to have green scales instead of red). Dragons are also very aware of their long-standing prestige and great wisdom and are thus easily flattered. A glib-tongued warrior may be able to make a deadly attack (or better yet make a clever escape) when fighting a proud and vain dragon.

In summary, dragons are intelligent, deadly, powerful, and wise. Many have spellcasting abilities in addition to their other attacks. Once they ruled this land, and only through the determined actions and increasing numbers of the other races were they driven north. Treat them with caution.

Dwarves

The dwarves of Faerûn are a short, stocky people who seem to be a part of the earth itself, ranging in shade and hue from a rich earth-red to a granite-stone gray. Dour and with a strong distrust towards magic beyond that which a magical axe can lend, they appear to others as a withdrawn, moody people.

Dwarves come in a wide variety of hair, skin, and eye colors, regardless of their origin. The designations of mountain, hill, and jungle dwarves are fairly artificial, and more a matter of taste, closer to those humans who like the sea and those who prefer the high country. Both dwarven males and females have beards, though the females usually (but not always) shave.

Dwarven Life: Dwarves remain deeply tied to their roots and their sense of family and nobility. Dwarven nobles have declined in number with their race, and so are treated with respect by all, despite any long-running feuds that may develop between the dwarven kings. Loyalty and perseverance are considered dwarven virtues, and very common among the wanderers (see below). For this reason dwarven adventurers are often welcomed into adventure companies as a source of stability, solid reason, and battle prowess.

Shield Dwarves: The dwarves are a people whose numbers in the North have dwindled with the passing years. Their overall population has been declining since the days when the dragons controlled the lands of Cormyr and the Sunrise Mountains still spouted flames and steam. Among the dwarves, these northern dwarves are known as *mountain dwarves* to show their home terrain, or *shield* dwarves to reflect their battle prowess and history.

The reason for the numeric decline of these dwarves is twofold: For ages the dwarves have engaged in interspecies wars that bordered on genocide. Their primary foes were orcs and goblins, who sought out the same caverns and mines the dwarves considered their homes. In ancient days a live orc was competition both for treasure and for living space, and dwarven armies fought and died to protect and expand their realms. Unlike the goblin races, however, the dwarves were slow to recover their losses, and in time their numbers have diminished so that in another millennium the dwarf may join the duergahydra and the mornhound in extinction in the Realms.

This sense of racial loss hits all dwarves, and particularly shield dwarves, deeply, and they tend be melancholy and defeatist. They often throw themselves into their work, be it crafting blades or

seeking adventure. The last vocation is extremely popular with the few younger dwarves of the Realms, as the thinking is that if their dour dwarven gods have dealt a poor hand to the race, the best one can do is perform great deeds, so that the race is remembered in wondrous tales if not in descendents.

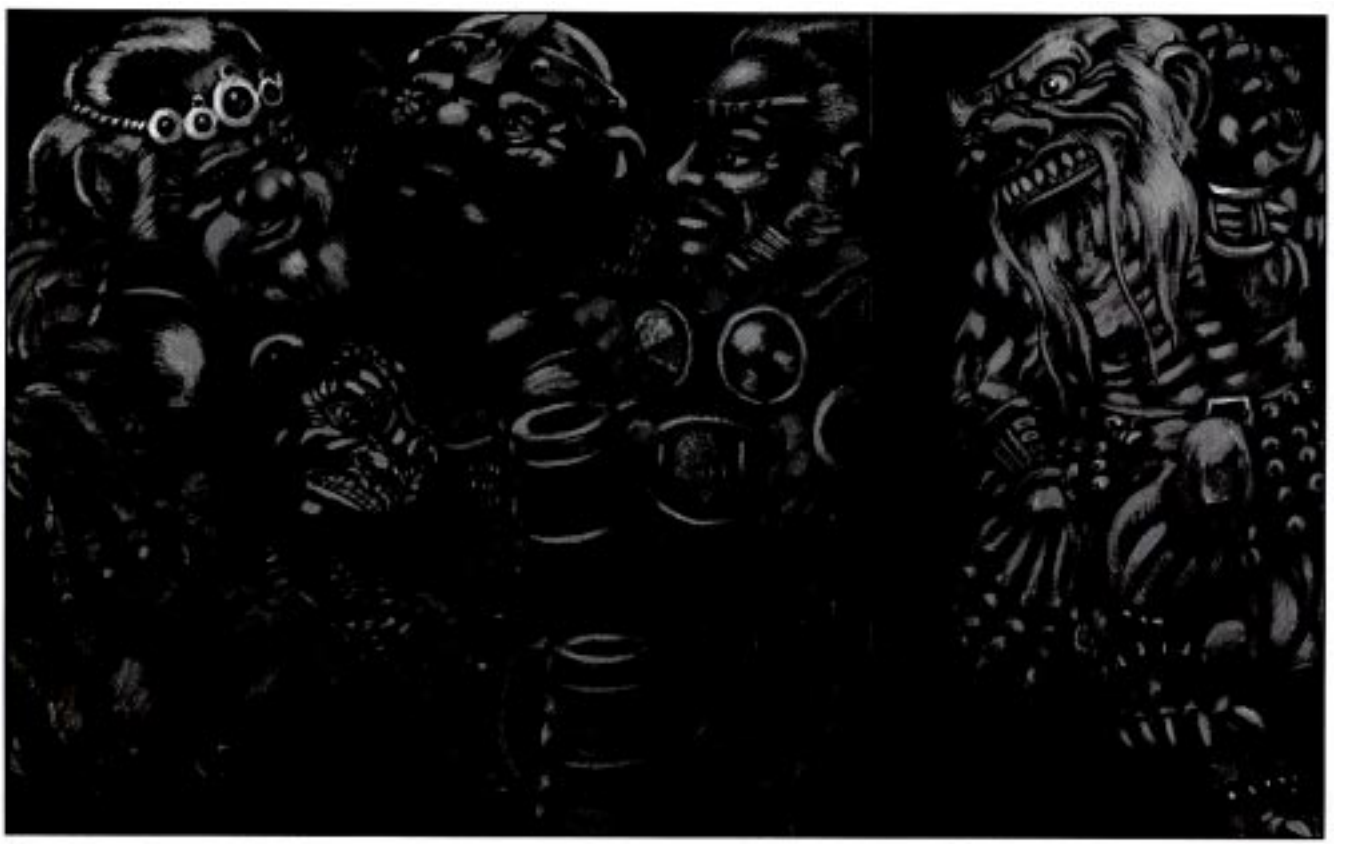
The Hidden: The northern, mountain-dwelling dwarves also tend to divide themselves by behavior into two categories: the *hidden* and *wanderers.* The hidden are a reflection of the shield dwarven sense of their loss and danger as a race. A majority of shield dwarves (and of dwarves in general) can be classified as part of the hidden. The hidden are reclusive and remain secretive about their homelands. Because of this, the small kingdoms of the dwarves are known about only in a general fashion. For example, the dwarves of the Far Hills travel to Easting for trade, yet no one knows if they are one community or several, and how they are ruled. More common are those dwarves who identify their home as some long-abandoned or enemy-occupied hold, such as the dwarves that were of Hammer Hall, or those of the Iron House, who had been driven out of the mines of Tethyamar.

Wanderers: Another type of shield dwarf that has been on the increase is the dwarf that seeks the company of humans in their towns and cities. Most adventuring dwarves come from this background, and are conversant in human styles and customs without abandoning their own heritage. It has been hazarded (but not voiced around dwarves) that they enjoy being around other creatures more short-lived than they. From such roving shield dwarves come tales of adventuring dwarves, who enjoy the company of humans and even settle in their cities. Such dwarves are known among their peoples as the *wanderers.*

Gold Dwarves: As the race of dwarves dwindles in the North, one great dwarven kingdom still thrives to the far South. There the earth is rent in a great chasm that could swallow the nation of Cormyr. Located on the rim of that chasm are the towers of the city of Eartheart, and within the walls of that chasm is carved the huge dwarven nation of Underhome. These southern dwarves are said to be very different from their northern cousins—prouder, more haughty, and more energetic. These dwarves are called *gold dwarves* or *hill dwarves,* the former name showing their wealth, the latter the terrain they are more comfortable with.

Wild Dwarves: Shield dwarves (both wanderers and the hidden) and gold dwarves dominate the dwarven population of the Realms. There are stories, though, of a savage dwarven offshoot in the jungles of Chult, known as *wild dwarves* or *jungle dwarves,* but they have been little seen beyond the borders of that great wood. Wild dwarves are said to be tattooed, bloodthirsty savages, but this may be an exaggeration.

Duergar: Finally, deep beneath the surface of the earth dwells a race of twisted dwarf-like creatures called the *duergar.* Surface



world dwarves view these creatures with a hatred that exceeds that of the elves for the drow. The dwarves deny any true kinship with this race, despite evidence to the contrary.

Elves and The Elven Nations

The elves are one of the major races of the Realms, and once ruled large sections of the Realms after the time of the dragons and before the coming of humankind. Now the majority of these long-lived beings have retreated from the onslaught of humankind, seeking quieter forests, and their numbers in the Realms are a faction of those even a thousand years ago.

The elves of the Forgotten Realms are of human height, but much more slender. Their fingers and hands are half-again as long as a human's, and delicately tapered, and their bones are light and surprisingly sturdy. Elven faces are thinner and more serene, and elven ears, as are ears in half a hundred known worlds, are pointed.

There are five known elven subraces in the Forgotten Realms, and four of them live in relative harmony. Cross-breeding is possible between the subraces, but in the case of the elves, the child will either take after the male or female parent's race (there are no drow—moon elf mongrels, and the child of such an unlikely union would have either all the traits of a dark elf or of a moon elf). The subraces are:

Gold Elves: Gold elves are also called *sunrise elves* or *high elves,* and have bronze skin and hair of copper, black, or golden blond. Their eyes are golden, silver, or black. Gold elves tend to be recognized as the most civilized of the elven subraces and the most aloof from humankind and the other races. The majority of the native elves of Evermeet are gold elves, though the royal family are moon elves.

Moon Elves: Moon elves are also called *silver* or *gray elves,* and are much paler than gold elves, with faces of bleached white tinged with blue. Moon elves usually have hair of silver-white, black, or blue, though all reported colors normally found in humans and elves may be found in this race. Their eyes are blue or green, and have gold flecks. They tend to tolerate humankind the most of the elven subraces, and the majority of adventuring elves and half-elves are of moon elf descent.

Wild Elves: Wild elves are called *green elves, forest elves,* and *wood elves,* and are reclusive and distrusting of nonelves, in particular humankind. Wild elves of the Forgotten Realms tend to be copperish in hue with tinctures of green. Their hair tends toward browns and blacks, with occasional blonds and copper-colored natives. Their eyes green, brown, or hazel. They tend to be the least organized of the elven peoples, and while there is no elven nation made up entirely of wild elves, there are wild elves in every other elven nation and on Evermeet.

Sea Elves: Sea elves, also called *aquatic* or *water elves,* are divided into two further divisions: those of the Great Sea (including all its salt-water domains such as the Shining Sea and Sea of Swords), and those of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Great Sea elves are radiant in different shades of deep greens, with irregular patches of brown striped through their bodies. Fallen Star sea elves are various shades of blue, with white patches and stripes. Both have the full variety of eye and hair color found in all the elven peoples and have webbed feet and hands and the ability to breathe water.

Dark Elves: Dark elves, also called *drow* (pronounced to rhyme with now or how) or *night elves,* comprise the most sinister and evil segment of the elven race, as if this subrace seems to balance the tranquility and goodness of their cousins with unrepentant maliciousness and evil. Drow have black skin that resembles nothing so much as polished obsidian, pale eyes (often mistaken for solid white), and hair of stark white. The variations in coloration present in the other elven subraces is missing here. Most of this fell race has been driven underground, and it members are shunned by the other elven subraces. (See also the Underdark Races section.)

Elven Life: The elves call their own race *Tel'Quessir,* which translates as *the people.* Strangers, in particular nonelven strangers, are generally placed under the category *N'Tel'Quess,* or not-people. Most elves treat the not-people with respect and politeness, as a host would a stumbling child, though the drow fiercely enslave any who are not of their race and consider the other elven subraces *N'Tel'Quess.*

The elves are generally ruled by hereditary noble houses that have held control of their nations for generations (and given the nature and long life of elves, the rule of a wise king may exceed the history of a human nation). Elven rule is autocratic and absolute, and it is the theology and philosophy of the elves which prevents abuse of such complete power. The coronals (monarchs of the Elven Court) make their pronouncements rarely, preferring to remain outside the normal course of their subjects' lives. However, once a decision is made and pronounced by a coronal—whether to declare war or retreat to Evermeet—it is followed by the bulk of the population.

The Retreat: The oddest phenomenon of elven life (to human observers) is the Retreat, which is viewed as a lemming like drive to sail to the farthest west, beyond the sea. In the case of the elves of the Forgotten Realms, the reason is not some biological drive, but rather the decision of the leaders of the elven nations to withdraw to less hostile lands. Such a decision was made after years (human *generations)* of thought, discussion, and meditation. Once made, it is irrevocable.

In the case of the recently voided Elven Court, the decision to retreat was made some 500 years after deliberation began. In the Year of Moonfall (1344 DR), the Pronouncement of Retreat passed from elf to elf, and they began to quietly evacuate their homelands along the Inner Sea. While for humans the disappearance of the Elven Court is regarded as a sudden vacuum in the

heart of the Realms, for the Elven Court itself it was as inevitable (and as important) as a merchant moving his shop farther down the street to increase the distance from a competitor.

The elves in Retreat usually make for Evermeet across the sea or Evereska on the edge of the Great Sand Sea of Anauroch. Those who reach Evermeet swear their fealty to Queen Amlaruil, who is that domain's monarch. Long ago the elven nation of Evermeet made the decision to fight those humans (and members of other races) who came to her shores, and as a result Evermeet is both the strongest sea power in the Realms, and a haven for the other elves in Retreat. Those who choose not to abandon the Realms entirely join the community at Evereska and seek to help defend Evereska's new colony in the Greycloak Hills.

Those elves on the Sword Coast and with easy access to the sea make the passage to Evermeet by boat, protected by the Navy of the Queen. How those farther inland cross is not known, for none see their passage out of the world of humankind. Great magics and extradimensional gates are assumed to be used, though there have been tales of great butterflies carrying some elven nobles westward.

The Former Elven Nations: The former elven nations of the Realms include Illefarn, where Waterdeep now rises from the sea-coast; Askavar, which is now called the Wood of Sharp Teeth, and the Elven Court, which once ruled Cormanthor, the forest country that ran from Cormyr to the Moonsea. Current elven nations include Evermeet in its seaward seclusion and Evereska (located in a mountain valley), with its colony in the Greycloak Hills. In addition, there are scattered groups of elves found throughout the realms, including wild elves, groups without noble rulers, and those who are comfortable with the human population (usually younger elves). The drow are not welcome among the elven nations and so have their own lairs in the Underdark..

Adventuring Elves: Adventuring elves are usually moon elves, though there are wild and gold elves as well found among humankind's adventuring companies. Sea elves and drow are much rarer in the surface world, but there are notable exceptions.

The Goblin Races

The goblin races include all creatures such as kobolds, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins. Some sages extend the definition to ogres, bugbears, trolls, and half-orcs. Regardless of their defined content, the goblin races are by and large uncivilized bands of sentient creatures that prey on other beings, raiding and pillaging when they can, stealing quietly when they can't. There has never been a great goblin nation or orcish empire, though all the goblin races have been used as servants, lackeys, and dragon-fodder for other more powerful individuals.

The goblin races have existed in the Realms as long as the elves, for elven histories have mention of the various creatures as

brutish invaders harassing the borders of their realms. The goblin races have been involved in genocidal wars with dwarves over their mountain peaks and with humans over the lowlands. Usually the goblin races have been repulsed or crushed, but there are still many ancient dwarven halls in orcish hands.

The goblin races are generally underorganized and underequipped, and would have been wiped out several times over were it not for their rapid breeding cycle and high self-preservation instinct. Faced with overwhelming odds, most members of a goblin race waver and retreat, and for this the tag *cowardly* is usually added to the collection of epithets that are used to describe them.

The goblin races tend to be cruel, evil, and malicious, aping humankind in dress and title, but with a slant towards harm as opposed to help. The greatest orcish citadels of the Desertsmouth Mountains are governed by a king and royal court in a rough travesty of Cormyr. Similarly, those goblins living beyond the range of the Lords of Waterdeep tend to have lords who rule in disguise in the manner of the Lords of Waterdeep. Such kingdoms are pale shadows of human empires in that they are little more than a handful of encampments or castles ruled by brute force.

Some members of these races, particularly among the half-orcs and ogres, brave the well-deserved hostile attitude of the rest of the world toward their ancestry in order to seek to make an honest or good living, but these are exceptions to the general character of these savage creatures. Caution is urged when encountering them in the wild.

Gnomes

The gnomes of Faerûn are a small, friendly race of humanoid creatures common in most regions of the Realms. They are smaller and less stocky than dwarves, and are thought to be distant relatives of dwarves (though only gnomish men have beards).

The faces of gnomes, regardless of age, are lined as if with centuries of smiles and frowns, making these people appear to be carved from wood. Their natural coloring, from a light ash color to maple to the color of varnished and buffed oak, increases the tendency to think of gnomes as a woods folk—when they are thought of at all.

The gnomes are called the forgotten folk of the Forgotten Realms, for despite the fact they are an everyday sight in major cities and have good-sized communities of their own, they seem unbothered by the world and similarly only rarely become involved with it. Gnomes have no history beyond the memory of the eldest clan member and the songs of legend. They have never developed their own written tongue, acquiring the written language of those they live among for everyday use. Unlike the elves, they have no millennial heritage, and unlike the dwarves, no death-knell tomorrow. As a result, they tend to take life as it comes, one day at a time.

Gnomes are among the most common-sense beings of a world filled with all manner of magical things. Their natural tendency towards illusioncraft has given them a wisdom to look beyond the fancy trappings of speech and appearance to find out what is really there instead of making them more crafty and cunning. Gnomes value their families first, then whatever other relatives they encounter, then other gnomes, then the world, in that order.

Gnomes have no subraces, but since the Time of Troubles a different sort of gnome has appeared in the Realms, coming primarily from the South. These gnomes are particularly interested in craft and artifice, including all manner of sciences and invention. This new breed of gnome is relatively rare, but counts among its numbers primarily younger gnomes who venerate the god Gond Wonderbringer (who resembles a gnome in their version of the faith). Such gnomes are currently found as apprentices to smiths, craftsmen, and wizards, and are eager to learn as much about the world around them as possible. What they will do with this knowledge is as yet undetermined, but given the legendary wisdom of the gnomes, everyday humans have little to fear.

The Half-Elven Peoples

Half-elves are a mixture of human and elf, and occupy the middle ground between the two. They are stockier than elves, but thinner than humans, and may or may not show the distinctive, elven pointed ears. They still have the slender and finely chiseled facial features of the elven faces. It is possible for a half-elf to pass as human or elf for brief periods, but usually such duplicity is discovered.

Half-elves are not a true race, but rather the product of the union of human and elf, and as such they have no national or racial heritage other than that of the area and family they have been brought up in. A half-elf that has been raised in the Elven Court thinks like an elf; while one from Aglarond thinks like a human, for the elven people have been long bred into the general population there.

As a result of their hybrid heritage, half-elves tend to be individualistic and their outlook and behavior varies greatly from person to person. Many are adventurers by nature, in that they are seeking their own niche in a world where (to their eyes) they belong truly to neither major culture.

Half-elves take on some of the features of their elven subrace:

- *Moon half-elves* tend to be pale with just a touch of blue around the ears and at the chin.
- *Gold half-elves* tend to have bronzed skin.
- *Wild half-elves* are very rare and tend to have copperish skin tinged with green.
- *Sea half-elves* tend to be a blend of the fleshtones of their human and elven parents. For instance, the child of a Lantan merchant and a Great Sea elf is likely to be a light green.
- *Drow half-elves* are very rare and tend to be dusky-colored with silver or white hair and the eye colors found in humans.

Regardless of origin, half-elves have a universal set of common abilities (as detailed in the *Player's Handbook).* A drow half-elf does not gain additional drow powers, or a sea half-elf water-breathing ability (save at the decision of the DM).

Half-elves may mate and breed, but will always produce the offspring of the other parent (a half-elf—elf pairing will produce elven children, while a half-elf—human pairing will result in human children). Second generation half-elves only result if two half-elves marry.

Halflings

Halflings are the smallest of the major races, and to observe their communities outside cities, the most numerous (and growing). They tend to resemble small street urchins, wise beyond their years. The halflings of the Forgotten Realms have a light covering of hairy down over most of their bodies that is most noticeable on the backs of their hands and the tops of their bare feet. Often their faces are bare, though there are more than a few full-bearded halflings as well.

The halfling people have a saying: "First there were dragons, then dwarves, then elves, then humans. Then it's Our Turn!" This attitude that all things will turn out to their benefit (and be served up to them on a silver platter) is typical of the halfling mindset—cocksure, confident, and with more than a streak of larceny to it.

A halfling's appearance, similar to that of a small human child, belies the fact that this is a race with the same basic needs as any other. Halflings live in many of the same areas as humankind and may be considered a competitor. Yet rather than being overtly hostile, halflings have a smug, far-sighted attitude that these lumbering giants (human beings) will eventually leave, destroy themselves, or give themselves up, and that which remains will be theirs.

This is not to say that halflings as a race or as individuals are evil, for they would do nothing to harm another unless harm had been inflicted on them first. But the tendency for them to take advantage is strong. Many a human thieves' guild has as its master thief a small, child-like creature who can sneak into and out of areas that larger folk cannot manage.

Halflings are delighted by the concept of money, which they consider a human invention that redeems the race. They enjoy gathering bunches of it, but unlike the dwarves with their ancient hordes, they see no point in keeping it, and fritter it away on gifts, parties, and purchases. Money is a way of keeping score on how well one is doing against the world and all its clumsy, lumbering races.

Halflings come in all the same skin colors and with the same variety of hair and eye color as humans. They tend to respect their families as groups not to steal from (though borrowing is permitted), and they show a strong loyalty to friends and those who have stood up for them. There seem to be only minor differences between the three major subraces of halfling: hairfeet, tallfellow, and stout. (Their differences are as noted in the *Player's Handbook.)* The subraces mix easily with each other and with other races.

Halflings excel at roguish tasks, and those who apply themselves in this area find their talents welcome among adventuring companies and thieves' guilds. As a result, halflings are as well-traveled and

knowledgeable about the world as humankind, if not more so. The crux of their knowledge is centered on immediate goals and gratification, for it is not as important for a halfling to know who the local lord is as much as to scope out the bill of fare at the local tavern.

To the far South there is said to be a nation of halflings called Luiren, whose inhabitants have pointy ears. Considering the fact that most of the other dominant races of the Inner Sea came originally from the South, and the stated (if joking) halfling intentions to eventually dominate all other races, the idea of a halfling nation is somewhat disturbing.

The Giants

The giants of the Realms have always been a secondary race, involved in battling whoever is on top. Their earliest appearances are in tales in which they contended with dragons for the control of the North, a battle that they usually lost, though their weakening of the dragons may have eased the influx of elves and dwarves. In battling with the dwarves for their mountain homes, they again came off a poor second, as dwarven size and fighting techniques were of great benefit in fighting giants, and are to this day. Then came the arrival of humankind in the North, pushing those giant communities that survived further back.

At present the giants are a collection of broken nations and shattered dreams, their long history overshadowed by modern events and newcomer races. They still are their strongest in the mountains of Faerûn, particularly in the North and the Cold Lands, thriving in those territories that others have shunned.

The occasional giant may be found in Waterdeep or Cormyr, but the bulk are still viewed as savage, brutal, and not particularly bright. This is untrue, since they are battlewise, lore-filled, and capable with both weapons and craft. Their power is often shown through their leadership capabilities, as giants are increasingly becoming leaders of groups of other less developed races, such as goblin tribes or orc holts.

The Underdark Races

Not all of the Realms is above ground. Beneath its surface, labyrinthine tunnels snake and coil through natural caverns and tunnels made by races long dead, and nations long toppled. This is the Underdark, a region as deadly as any surface swamp or mountain fastness.

In this land of eternal night a number of races thrive. Some have been driven to these lands by outside forces, some have a dislike of light, and some simply prefer the security which the surrounding walls hold. Their variety is legion, and their influence is felt throughout the Realms, as they often boil out of their hidey holes to raid the surface lands. They include, but are not limited to:

The Drow: The dark elves are by and large the best-known, most organized, and most powerful race beneath the surface of the earth. Communities of drow rule the lands beneath the North and the Moonsea, and smaller nations may be found throughout the Realms. Their best-known nation is the underground city-state of Menzoberranzan, home to a variety of scheming, evil families and their spawn and slaves. Drow in the past have even dominated the surface lands around their lairs, most recently holding the lands around and now comprising Shadowdale in the years following the fall of Myth Drannor.

The Duergar: The outcast subrace of the dwarves seeks to burrow deeper than their cousins, and unlock the greater evils that lie within the earth. Unlike the drow and goblins, duergar are not comfortable on the surface and never venture forth. It is assumed that much of the deepest construction of the Underdark is done by these gray dwarves. Like their surface cousins, the duergar are dying out from competition and low birth rate. They often sell their services and loyalty to more powerful creatures in exchange for wealth and a form of protection.

The Goblin Races: The goblin races are not a major factor in the Underdark, save as servitors and slaves of more powerful races. Instead, they occupy those regions of the caverns closest to the surface, where they serve as a first level of defense beneath the land.

The Illithids: These creatures, whose heads resemble a cephalopod, are also known as mind flayers. They have deadly powers of the mind, and live in great fortresses carved out of the living rock. Independent and scheming, the illithids rarely enter into long-standing alliances with others of their race, let alone other races, and such alliances are broken when it suits them.

The Beholders: Individually these creatures are as deadly as any dragon, and they often carve out large territories in the caverns of the Underdark and in desolate areas of the surface. They are uncomfortable with others of their race, and usually establish themselves as the chieftain of a disparate group of races (having removed any previous chieftains with their disintegrator rays). Beholders have integrated well with evil humans, such that they can be found beneath major human cities and in the service of such groups as the Black Network of the Zhentarim.

Other Races

The Realms is filled with sentient creatures of all descriptions, and the above listing is not exclusive. There are lizard men prowling the swamps, myconids patrolling haunted caverns, and centaurs and satyrs deep within the woods where even the elves go not. Deep beneath the seas mermen, tritons, and sahuagin clash, and in the mountains aarakocra challenge the dwarves for their halls and dragons for their lairs.

All of these races (and more) provide an example of the diversity of life in the Realms, and the great variety of threats they hold for the traveler, the merchant, and the explorer. While humankind is the most visibly successful of the races, that perch is by no means secure, and many races, old and new, may have a say in whether humans survive or pass from greatness like the elves, dwarves, and dragons before them.

Character Classes in The Realms

Adventurers are known by their many skills. Warriors, wizards, priests, rogues, and all the subclasses, kits, and varieties found within each of these major classifications allow adventurers a wide array of choices in their career and differing ways to increase their power. The Realms holds promise for each of these breeds of adventurer, as well as dangers and challenges.

Fighters

The services of trained warriors are in constant demand in the Forgotten Realms, owing to the large number of hostile creatures (including other humans) to be found in the world.

Fighters and their subgroupings tend to gravitate to certain positions and responsibilities, including:

- *Local militias, including police patrols, sentries, palace guards, and watchmen.* In times of hostilities, such women and men as these serve as foot troops in battle. Such positions are usually low-paying and hold little status, as in the battlefield such troops are often used to soften enemy attacks with "acceptable losses." However, it is here that most heroic warriors make their start, serving with these groups to protect their homes, with the survivors moving on to greater things.
- *Mercenary companies* engage in fighting for a price. These pay better than militias, but have the disadvantage that local rulers/employers usually give mercenary companies the most difficult positions or tasks, as they are professionals paid for their experience.
- *Trail guards* have the advantage of good benefits and travel with the disadvantage that such fighters must fight not only to protect their own lives but the property of others. Some of the smaller traders offer high wages but deduct any losses they incur from those wages.
- *Raiders* are fighters who perform acts of banditry and piracy. The disadvantage of this lifestyle is that these fighters do not normally operate in civilized areas and may be hunted down by more law-abiding groups.
- *Bodyguards* and other protection opportunities offer low pay at relatively little risk.
- *Leadership possibilities* are available at high level for fighter types, as their abilities (as opposed to those of wizards and priests) are generally understood by the populace, allowing a measure of trust.
- *Gladiators and professional fighters* are a rare occurrence in the North, though some debauched regions do set up such matches, usually between slaves or prisoners and monsters. The older realms to the south, including Amn, Calimshan, and Unther, have established gladiatorial guilds.
- *Adventuring companies* offer the highest return in advancement and money, as well as allowing warriors a great degree of independence. The disadvantages of these operations are the great deal of personal risk fighters are placed in and the essential need for cooperation with others.

Rangers

Rangers are specialized breed of warrior, suited to a wilderness existence while still retaining more of the trappings and station of society. Individuals who become rangers are normally from the civilized agricultural areas of the Realms, as opposed to its wilderness areas.

Rangers are a phenomenon primarily confined to the North, in particular that region north and west of the Sea of Fallen Stars called the Heartlands. Occasionally rangers hail from Amn or Chondath, but a ranger farther south is as rare as sympathy from a beholder. This may be due to the fact that rangers function best in those regions that are still being developed and explored by civilized humankind, and as such have little to do in those regions that have been settled and ruled (at least in name) for centuries.

Due to their low numbers, regional restrictions, and tendency to perform along the lines of moral good, rangers are both very individualistic and clannish. A ranger can often be found on his or her own, or in a company of druids or adventurers, where wilderness skills are useful. At the same time, when rangers meet, they often exchange names and gossip on the latest doings of others of their type. While not a political or social force, rangers comprise a finely wrought network of information, and it is this network that makes them a natural part of the group known as the Harpers. Not all rangers are Harpers, but many are, and the Harpers recruit further from the ranks of rangers only on the recommendation of rangers within the Harpers.

Paladins

Paladins are fighters of a higher calling than most common warriors. They fight for a strongly held moral and ethical code, and are held to exacting standards in all their actions. Failure to live up to their moral and ethical alignment results in their downfall, and the stripping of all special abilities granted by the paladin class.

There is no specific paladin's code, no set of do's and don'ts by which paladins are graded on a pass/fail basis. The closest thing to such a code is "Quentin's Monograph," a short treatise on the nature of alignment and paladinhood by a retired paladin. In addition to flowery descriptions of early endeavors and practical advice on the care of weapons and animals, the monograph summarizes what it calls the Paladin's Virtues.

The listing is not all-inclusive, and every paladin grades and emphasizes these virtues based on his or her own personal ethos and religious background. Paladins may obey all these virtues to the letter and still lose their special status, or flout one virtue in the name of

another and still retain paladinhood. In this fashion, a paladin may exist outside an organized hierarchy or even lead rebellions and wars against unjust or evil causes. It is possible under these virtues that one paladin may even fight another, both seeking to defend a different paladin's virtue or interpretation of all of them.

Paladins in the Realms, like priests, are devoted to a particular deity. The most common paladin deities are those which embody action, decision, watchfulness, and wisdom. Torm and Tyr are both popular deities for paladins, as is Ilmater, who stresses the need to suffer to attain one's goals. All these gods are good and lawful in their basic alignment.

Paladins also serve deities who present themselves as being good but not necessarily lawful, and lawful but not necessarily good. These include Azuth and Helm, who are lawful and neutral in their outlook, and Mystra, Deneir, Lathander, and Milil, who are good and neutral. Chauntea and Mielikki are also neutral and good, but tend to attract more druids and rangers than paladins, though there are exceptions. No gods who claim true neutrality, evil, or chaos in their ethos and morals have paladins operating in their name.

The Paladin's Virtues

The paladin's virtues are:

An organized approach brings the most good for all.

Laws exist to bring prosperity to those under them.

Unjust laws must be overturned or changed in a reasonable and positive fashion.

People rule: laws help.

Cause the most good through the least harm.

Protect the weak.

Goodness is not a natural state, but must be fought for to be attained and maintained.

Lead by example.

Let your deeds speak your intentions.

Goodness radiated from the heart.

Give others your mercy, but keep your wits about you.

Wizards

In many races, certain individuals have the ability to channel the ambient magical energies of the world to produce a desired effect. In the Forgotten Realms, this ability is called magic, or the Art, and the Realms are home to large number of the Art's practitioners.

All manner of spellcasters people the Forgotten Realms, and though universities and magical schools exist, the great majority of spellcasters still learn their skills in the time-honored fashion: by apprenticeship to a higher-level mage. After years of what seem to the student to be arduous and unpleasant chores, the tutoring mage will begin instruction in the easiest cantrips, later moving on to the first spells, and presenting the apprentice with his or her first spell book. Upon learning the basics, the young wizard usually journeys out to gain some real-life experience in his or her craft. Some go no further in their development, seeking other safer pursuits, and some perish in their adventures. Those that survive return to their former masters or to others of greater skill to learn greater magics and to share what they have discovered.

The magic universities function using this same principle on a larger scale; they house many wizards and sages with various specialties. They are not large operations, including maybe a dozen students at most and three or four sages with any true magical ability, but they are a change from the previous one-on-one relationship of mage and apprentice. These schools are almost nonexistent in the North, appearing only in the past 20 winters, and their first students are just now making their name in the Realms at large. Such colleges are said to be more common (and much larger) in the South, particularly in such magical lands as Nimbral and Halruaa. In the North, the failed experiment of a large university recorded in the toppled stones of a ruined magical college outside Beregost. Magic colleges in the North tend to be low key where they exist at all.

Practitioners of the Art are found in most walks of life, and there are former mages among the merchant class and courtiers. Many make their living at magic, either as court wizards, adventurers, or sages (the last being the least well-paid or recognized). Often they devote long periods of time to producing magical items. When they adventure, they are looking both for money to fund their researches, for magical items to understand and comprehend, and for books to expand the scope of their learning

Wizards develop a signature rune that they use to identify their belongings, sign as their name, and warn others. As a mage gains in power, more individuals recognize the rune and connect it with a mighty individual, not to be trifled with. Since some runes are connected with magical spells, the use of signature runes reinforces the tendancy of ordinary people to shy away from such magically marked items.

A mage may develop a signature rune at any time, though it should not be altered once created, to avoid confusion. This rune is used in all spells that require writing, including *symbol* - type spells, and nonmagically to indicate property or for messages. In a world where the majority of the people speak but do not read a common language, such runes are important to instruct the unknowing and to warn the cautious.

Mages relearn their spells daily from spell books, and usually maintain two sets of the texts—a traveling set for use in the wilderness, and a larger, more complete set at or near their home. Such books are very important; many specialized books that were once wizard's tomes are highly valued for the original spells therein.

The Curse of The Mage Runes

A powerful (level 10+) mage's sigil is protected by the *Trifold Curse of Mystra*, a curse which afflicts those (magician or not) who willfully copy the sigil of a known mage in order to deceive. The offender must make three ability checks—one against Strength, one against Intelligence, and one against Charisma.

If the Strength check is failed, the offender loses one point of Strength permanently, and 1-4 hit points permanently.

If the Intelligence check is failed, the offender loses one point of Intelligence permanently, and is *feebleminded* (as per the spell, no saving throw).

If the Charisma check is failed, the offender loses one point of Charisma permanently, and a glowing apparition (thought to be Azuth in his mortal form) follows the offender around, pointing and shouting, "Falsely done!" This apparition stays with the offender from anywhere from several days to two months, and can cast a real cloud over formal dinner parties (as Zeboaster the Blunt discovered when pulling a prank in the presence of Vangerdahast of Cormyr), not to mention alerting all beings encountered as to the offender's perfidy.

Specialist Wizards

Some mages are specialist wizards, concentrating their work in a particular direction and devoting themselves to a particular school of magic. A school differs from a college and university in that it is a particular type of study as opposed to a physical location. Wizards specializing in illusion/phantasm magic are said to belong the school of illusion, whether they operate in the lands of Thay or in the jungles of Chult.

Specialist mages have always existed in the Realms, but their numbers (save for the illusionists) were never great previous to the Time of Troubles. Most of the old guard wizards like Khelben and Elminster are nonspecialized mages. Since the Time of Troubles, the number of specialist wizards has increased, and these wizards have differing attitudes from their elders. The result of this magical gap in ages has yet to be resolved.

Abjurers: These wizards specialize in abjuration spells, and are concerned with wards and protection spells. Their general attitude is that in a dangerous world, the first order of business is to stay alive and whole. Abjurers prefer green and brown in their clothing. Only humans can be abjurers.

Conjurers: Conjurers are specialists in conjuration/summoning magics, and believe that to be a successful mage, all you need is to be able to call into being allies, lackeys, or powerful servants to work your will. Conjurers tend to be flashy in both dress and attitude. Humans and half-elves can be conjurers.

Diviners: These cautious wizards specialize in the divination school, particularly those spells of higher than 3rd level (known as the greater divinations). They are careful, cautious planners, bookish and literal in their outlook, as they are directed toward the gathering and verification of information. Their dress and manners are conservative and modest. Humans, elves, and half-elves can be diviners.

Enchanters: Enchanter specialist wizards hold a dual role. They imbue their magics into static objects, but also use their enchantment/charm spells to influence and control others. As a result, they are as a class very self-confident and tend to think of themselves as superior, even to other mages. Enchanters are social creatures and tend to dress stylishly. They are most comfortable in cities, which provide a wide circle of admirers (and subjects for their charms). Humans, elves, and half-elves can be enchanters.

Illusionists: Illusionists are devoted to one of the eldest specialty wizard schools, concentrating on the powers of illusion and phantasm. As a group they tend to be secretive, even to the point of having their own written language, *Ruathlek*, derived from their magical writings. They dress in simple grays and browns, perhaps with an accent of color or a gemstone. Only humans and gnomes can be illusionists; of the two, the gnomish illusionists are the more civil and friendly.

Invokers: Invokers are those mages who specialize in the invocation and evocation schools of magic. Capable of calling matter and effects such as lightning and fire out of thin air, they are used to possessing power and commanding the respect (or at least fear) of those around them. Self-confident to the point of cockiness, invokers prefer bright primary colors in their dress. Only humans can be invokers.

Necromancers: Necromancers are a two-sided coin. Some are interested in necromancy from its healing and restorative aspect in relation to the human body, while others (the better-known half) concentrate their work on the dead and undead. As a result, the school is separated into two camps, one white, the other black. White necromancers are healers, work with local churches, and are in general good-aligned. Black necromancers are secretive to the point of obsession, vengeful, and often black-hearted. Their dress tends to match their outlook. Only humans can be necromancers.

Transmuters: Transmuters, the masters of the alteration school of magic are, as a rule, creatives, experimenters, and explorers who are never happy with the way things are, but rather intensely intrigued by the way things could yet be. Their garb is cut for comfort, as opposed to fashion or camouflage. Humans and half-elves may be transmuters.

Priests

Priests are those individuals capable of directing energies derived from particular entities known properly in the Realms as powers, though often referred to as deities or gods. All priests belong to faiths that venerate these powers and advocate their aims and goals.

The peoples of the Realms tend to be generally tolerant of all faiths, such that in larger cities there are temple districts of various faiths of dissimilar alignments and goals existing side by side. Faiths and temples maintain varying levels of influence in the local government, and only in a few cases is there a state religion. One such example is the island nation of Lantan, whose strange inhabitants are

almost all worshippers of Gond. Even so, there are shrines to other deities on Lantan, though they exist primarily to serve foreign visitors.

Priests in the Forgotten Realms are divided into two types: the standard, generalist cleric, who has set abilities common to all churches regardless of faith, and the specialty priest, who has special abilities granted by the power in question. Many of the major faiths of the Realms have specialty priests, but the most common such priest encountered is the druid (see next section).

Priests can also be divided into two groups within their faith's organization, though members of one group easily and often cross into the other group. *Hierarchy-bound* priests are those who are usually tied down to a specific location, such as a temple, shrine, or monastery, and work primarily to the good of that location, the church, and the community, though not necessarily in that order. Mission priests are at-large agents entrusted to wander the length and breadth of the Realms spreading the basic tenets and beliefs of their faith.

Many of the priests found in adventuring parties, working alongside merchants, or in mercenary companies are mission priests. However, the line is a fuzzy one, such that a specialty priest who has spent his life in the hierarchy may suddenly decide, for the good of his order, to engage in a quest for an artifact, gather a group of like-minded adventurers, and set off as a mission priest. Similarly, a cleric who has spent her life in adventuring companies, tithing a large part of her earnings to setting up shrines for the power she follows, may determine to retire to a temple to use the experience she has gained to teach others, and enter the church hierarchy in that fashion.

Most faiths are fairly loose with such restrictions, only requiring that a priest get the approval of a superior (or of the power being venerated, if the priest is of matriarch/patriarch level) before joining or leaving the hierarchy. In a similar fashion, priests have no required dress code or raiment outside of the garb required for ceremonies. In general, priests dress in the colors of their order (usually those of their holy symbol) and wear some obvious symbol of their faith on their person. Priests of Tymora will tend towards grays and wear a silver disk either on a neckchain or affixed to a circlet, while priests of Tempus will wear helms (or metal skullcaps) and display Tempus's symbol (the fiery sword on the crimson field) on their shields.

Druids

Druids, the most common type of specialty priest, tend to worship outside of standard temple complexes, and instead wander the land, collecting into loosely affiliated circles throughout the Realms. The term *circle* serves to illustrate the unending cycles of natural processes, and to emphasize that no one creature is intrinsically superior to another. These druid circles fill the same requirements as church hierarchies do within the clerical faiths, but are much smaller. Among druids the distinction between the hierarchy-bound priest and the mission priest becomes almost meaningless because of the loose nature of circles and the roving tendencies of druids who are the caretakers of large regions.

In the northern Realms from the Sword Coast to Impiltur, druids in lightly settled areas have tended to gather in small groups, often with rangers and other allies, for mutual protection, defense of key areas or resources, and in order to accomplish their common goals more easily. These groups, usually consisting of a dozen or fewer druids and 20 or fewer others, vary widely in prominence and working relationships. In some, the druids live together in a woodland grove, and in others, they are widely scattered, with other group members serving as go-betweens. In some groups the druids and rangers deal with each other as equals, and in others the druids are revered by those who work with them.

In the Realms at large, these circles make up a network of communication and aid among those who venerate Chauntea and similar powers, such as Mielikki and Eldath. In general, the druids of the Realms seek balance between the needs of people (especially civilized peoples) and the needs of the natural world at the expense of neither.

While druids are relatively weak in the Dalelands at the moment, they have several major areas of power, including the Border Forest, the Gulthmere Forest, and, in particular, the Moonshaes. In the latter, the druids are worshippers of a good uncommon in the rest of the Realms, the Earthmother, and this faith is both native and unique to the area.

Druids of the same circle may worship different deities, though in general, druids of the same circle tend to worship the same god. Common powers venerated by druids are Eldath, Silvanus, Chauntea (in places), and the elemental lords, in particular Grumbar and Kossuth (earth and flame, respectively). Player character druids do not begin the game as members of a circle, but may form such circles if they find other druids and either accept them or are accepted into their ranks.

Great and grand druids are singular beings, and there is only one such individual for a 500-mile area about the abode of a great or grand druid. Each is entrusted with the organization and protection of the circles and other druidic shrines within that domain. The precise borders of a great druid's domain are nebulous at best, but there are three major regions within Faerûn. The first and eldest is on the southern shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars, and includes the Gulthmere Forest and the Chondalwood. The second is located in the scattered remains of ancient Cormanthor, ranging from Cormyr to the Moonsea, and includes the ancient territories of the Elven Court. The third is located in the North. It is based in the High Forest but includes all other forests and woods in the area. Druids are also active in the Moonshaes and the forests surrounding the Great Dale, but it is unknown at this time if their organization includes great and grand druids.

When a druid reaches sufficient level to advance in rank, she or he is expected to seek and and challenge another druid of his or her position. A sign will be sent by the power the druid worships indicating the location of the druid sought, unless the first druid knows the second druid's location already. At high levels, this is the only method of advancement for these specialty priests.

Musical Instruments of The Realms

For bards to be effective, they must be conversant with their tools. The Realms have a number of alternative names for many common instruments, and also feature instruments that are unique.

Birdpipe: A set of pan pipes.

Glaur: A short, flared, and curved horn which resembles a cornucopia, and is fitted with valves (those without valves are known as gloons).

Hand Drum: A double-headed drum.

Longhorn: A Faerûn flute.

Shawm: A double-reed instrument, the ancestor of the oboe and bassoon.

Songhorn: A recorder.

Tantan: A tambourine.

Thelarr: Also called the whistlecane, this is a simple reed instrument.

Tocken: A set of carved, oval, open-ended bells, played like a xylophone.

Wargong: Also called a shieldgong, the wargong is often made of the shields of one's vanquished foes. It is played with mallets.

Yarting: A guitar.

Zulkoon: A complex and semiportable pump-organ.

In addition, such devices as the trumpet, the signal horn, the harp, the dulcimer, the lyre, and the mandolin are commonly found in the Realms. Players who wish to introduce the bagpipe do so at their own risk.

Rogues

As more people gather in large cities, more individuals who prey on large collections of humankind gather as well. Chief of those are human scavengers who seek their profession by stealing from others. These are the rogues of the Realms. Their allegiance is to themselves and a handful of allies (at best), and their intentions are not always for the good of their prey. In the wilds, their behavior is often useful and beneficial to the group, but in the larger cities, their acts usually spell trouble, and most lawful towns have laws against such activities.

Despite such laws, thieves and thievery are common. Most major cities have a number of thieves' dens competing with each other in stealing and theft. A few cities (such as Zhentil Keep) have an organized group of rogues (a guild) controlling all such activity, and some can even operate from a building in broad daylight. Most thieves' dens are secret gathering spots, often located beneath a city, and they change as guards and lawful groups discover them.

The city of Waterdeep once was home to the most powerful guild of thieves in the North. The Lords of Waterdeep smashed that guild, forcing its leaders to flee the city. Those leaders are now the Shadow Thieves of Amn). Rogues of all types still operate in Waterdeep, but they are broken into innumerable small groups or operate alone. The most recent attempt at organization, headed by a beholder named Xanathar, has been smashed by the Lords and their agents.

The most common respite for rogues is what they call the "honest trade"—adventuring. While adventuring, roguish abilities may be used and indeed lionized in song and legend, when what a rogue is doing is almost the same as his or her in-town activities. The only difference is that instead of stealing from a lord's manor, she or he is burglarizing a lich's tomb. Many thieves take to this life, adhering to a code that keeps them out of trouble in civilized areas but keeps them in gold. Some leaders of important organizations are of this type. Their fellow guild members trust the cash box with such individuals in the city, but keep an eye on them in the wild for pocketed gems and magical items that find their way into their high-topped boots.

Bards

Bards have been called rogues with a better biographer, and indeed, they have many of the abilities and tendencies of their ill-reputed cousins, yet are in the main more welcome throughout the Realms than their roguish fellows. That level of trust operates mainly on the social level, though, for while a landed lord may invite a bard into his home for dinner, he will inevitably count his silvenware afterward.

Bards have a number of skills which make them singularly valuable in the Realms. They are wanderers by nature, and carry new items, information, gossip, tales, warnings, and other bits of knowledge from place to place. Further, it is the bard's nature to share this information, as opposed to hoarding it for his or her own good (something wizards are regularly accused of doing). The arrival of a famous bard is the subject of everything from mild discussion in larger cities to celebration in isolated villages. Bards are often rewarded with both food and shelter, and also pick up new tales and legends to relate elsewhere.

Bards can be of any alignment, though some part of their morality or ethos must be neutral. There are evil bards in the Realms, though their nature is not always apparent—garden-variety rogues are usually assumed to be of evil (or at least greedy) intent, but bards are generally presumed to be beneficent (or at least neutral). Many evil bards profit under this assumption.

Contributing to the reputation of bards as forces for good is the existence of a primarily good-aligned secret organization—the Harpers. The Harpers include druids, mages, priests, and rangers in addition to bards, but the group's musical background and the predominance of bards in such numbers among its ranks account for its appearance as a bardic society. Membership in the Harpers is limited and by invitation only, so that not every bard is a member of this group, though to the forces of evil it often seems so.

Most bards are independent by choice and by nature, owing nothing to any except their traveling companions. Not all bards are musicians (some are rumormongers or poets), and not all musicians are bards, though musical background is definitely useful in bardic society. Of old there were bardic colleges in the Realms, but they have been long since been abandoned, save for a few names and ancient stories.

Faerûn

Faerûn's civilizations range from the ancient and magical kingdoms of the South to the savage frontier lands where the rule of law extends only as far as a warrior's sword arm. The land is dominated by humans, but a sizable number of elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes dwell on and under it as well. The land holds an even greater number of fell races—goblins, orcs, ogres, drow, illithids, and beholders—to challenge the rule of humankind and its allies. And then, there are dragons—great beasts of tremendous power with their own hidden agendas.

In short, Faerûn is a hotbed of activity for the adventurous, ranging from icebound Sossal to the steamy jungles of Chult, from metropolitan Waterdeep to the secret cities of Thay. It is home to hundreds of heroes, adventurers, rogues, sages, freebooters, and idealists. It is a land of adventure.

The two large-scale (1 inch = 90 miles) color maps included in this box depict the bulk of the land of Faerûn. The Heartlands region is portrayed in greater detail on the smaller-scale (1 inch = 30 miles) color maps.

The Regions of Faerûn

Each of the following regions of Faerûn are covered in the successive chapters with greater detail being given to those in the Heartlands of the Realms—the eastern regions of the Dales, Cormyr, Sembia, the Vast, and the Dragon Coast, and the western regions of the Western Heartlands and Waterdeep. The regions of Faerûn include:

The Dalelands: Surrounding the edges of the old elven forest, Cormanthor, the Dales are home to both a tough, independent people and many dark secrets of the past.

Cormyr: A rising power under the command of King Azoun IV, Cormyr is an established nation under the rule of law.

Sembia: A kingdom of allied merchant cities on the coast of the Inner Sea, Sembia is a land of opportunity and treachery.

The Moonsea: A small, deep lake, the Moonsea is bordered with independent city-states and their vassals. Great evil lies on the shores of the Moonsea in the form of Mulmaster and the fell Zhentil Keep.

The Vast: Situated on the far side of the Dragon Reach, the Vast is the gateway to the east. The region is centered in its greatest city, Ravens Bluff, and is both friend and challenge to heroes from throughout the Realms.

The Dragon Coast: A wild region of pirates, rogues, and traders, the Dragon Coast includes the Pirate Isles of the Inner Sea. Its most powerful city, however, is shadow-plagued Westgate.

The Western Heartlands: A wild, wide open space of endless plains, haunted moors, and monster-infested hills, the Western Heartlands is still an untamed frontier, waiting for the birth of new kingdoms and leaders.

Waterdeep: The City of Splendors, the greatest city in the North, Waterdeep is a merchant's dream, a wizard's marvel, and potentially an adventurer's worst nightmare. It sits upon one of the great underground complexes of the Realms-Undermountain.

The Island Kingdoms: Diverse and mysterious, the kingdoms of the Trackless Sea include the Moonshaes, elven Evermeet, magical Nimbral, and wondrous Lantan.

The North: The North is defined as the region north of the River Delimbiyr, excluding Waterdeep and reaching to the Spine of the World (the mountains also known as the Wall). This is a region of barbarian tribes and walled cities that challenge the dominance of the goblin races.

Anauroch: Anauroch is the Great Sand Sea, a spreading desert in northern Faerûn. Within its borders, entire ancient nations have been swallowed and lie waiting for any who would brave the desert's perils.

The Cold Lands: Crouched in the shadow of the Great Glacier, these areas include Thar, Vaasa,

Damara, and Sossal. They are under the continual threat of monstrous incursions.

The Unapproachable East: A land of magic and treachery, the Unapproachable East lies hard on the borders of the barbarian Hordelands to their east. The land is dominated by Thay, with its fell Red Wizards, and the various nations that oppose it.

The Old Empires: The eldest living cities and organized nations of the Realms, the Old Empires claim to be the birthplace of the modern world. Under the stagnant control of their soulless god-kings, they remain as they were millennia ago.

The Vilhon Reach: The southern coast of the Sea of Fallen Stars is a land of fallen nations, opulent cities, and ancient woods. It is a land of mercenary companies and petty kingdoms in endless minor wars.

The Empires of the Sands: The southern countries of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan are a mixture of the established Realms and the wonders of the South, influenced by both cultures and different from either,

The Shining South: The strange and magical lands of the far South are little more than legends to the natives of the Dales and Waterdeep, but they are legends of power and glory. From the jungles of Chult, to mage-dominated Halruaa, to Luiren, land of the halflings, the South is a diverse and deadly land.

Time in The Realms

The following calendar is common enough to apply to all regions within the Realms (especially the northern regions). The year consists of 365 days: 12 months of exactly 30 days each (due to the single moon and its followers), plus five days that fall between months. These days are special occasions. Leap year is retained purely for social convenience, and provides a sixth special day that is used as the basis for long-term agreements and such contracts and activities.

Months are subdivided into three ten-day periods. These are known variously as *eves, tendays, weeks, domen, hyrar,* or *rides* throughout the Forgotten Realms. While rides is the standard term used in Cormyr and the Dalelands, this text uses weeks to avoid confusion. However, in the Realms, the phrase "a week to ten days" means the same as "six of one, a half-dozen of the other."

Although the months that comprise a year are standardized, the system of dating years varies from place to place. Usually, years are numbered from an event of great political or religious significance. Each nation or region has cultures with unique histories, and thus, different reckonings. The system of naming the months is named for its inventor, the long-dead wizard Harptos of Kaalinth, and is in use throughout the North.

The Calendar of Harptos

The Calendar of Harptos is summarized in the table below. Each month's name is followed by a colloquial description of that month, plus the roughly corresponding month of the Gregorian calendar in parentheses. Special days are listed when they occur between months, and appear in italic type. Each special day is described in the Special Calendar Days section, below.

Order	Name	Colloquial Description	Gregorian Month
1	Hammer	Deepwinter	(January)
		– Midwinter –	
2	Alturiak	The Claw of Winter, or the Claws of the Cold	(February)
3	Ches	of the Sunsets	(March)
4	Tarsakh	of the Storms	(April)
		– Greengrass –	
5	Mirtul	The Melting	(May)
6	Kythorn	The Time of Flowers	(June)
7	Flamerule	Summertide	(July)
		– Midsummer –	
8	Eleasias	Highsun	(August)
9	Eleint	The Fading	(September)
		– Higharvestide –	
10	Marpenoth	Leafall	(October)
11	Uktar	The Rotting	(November)
		– The Feast of the Moon –	
12	Nightal	The Drawing Down	(December)

Special Calendar Days

Midwinter: Midwinter is known officially in Cormyr as the High Festival of Winter. It is a feast where, traditionally, the local lords of the land plan the year ahead, make and renew alliances, and send gifts of goodwill. To the commonfolk throughout the Realms, this is Deadwinter Day, the midpoint of the worst of the cold.

Greengrass: Greengrass is the official beginning of spring, a day of relaxation. Flowers that have been carefully grown in the inner rooms of the keeps and temples during the winter are blessed and cast out upon the snow to bring rich growth in the season ahead.

Midsummer: Midsummer, called Midsummer Night or the Long Night, is a time of feasting and music and love. In a ceremony performed in some lands, unwed maidens are set free in the woods and "hunted" by their would-be suitors throughout the night. Betrothals are traditionally made upon this night. It is very rare indeed for the weather to be bad during this night—such is considered a very bad omen, usually thought to foretell famine or plague.

Higharvestide: Higharvestide heralds the coming of fall and the harvest. It is a feast that often continues for the length of the harvest so that food is always on hand for those coming in from the fields. There is much traveling about on the heels of the feast, as merchants, court emissaries, and pilgrims make speed before the worst of the mud arrives and the rain freezes in the snow.

The Feast of the Moon: This festival, also called Moonfest, is the last great festival of the year. It marks the arrival of winter and is also the day when the dead are honored. Graves are blessed, the Ritual of Remembrance is performed, and tales of the

The Underdark

The wildest frontier in the Realms is not reached by moving in a cardinal direction, such as north or south. The most dangerous frontier in Faerûn is reached by going *down.*

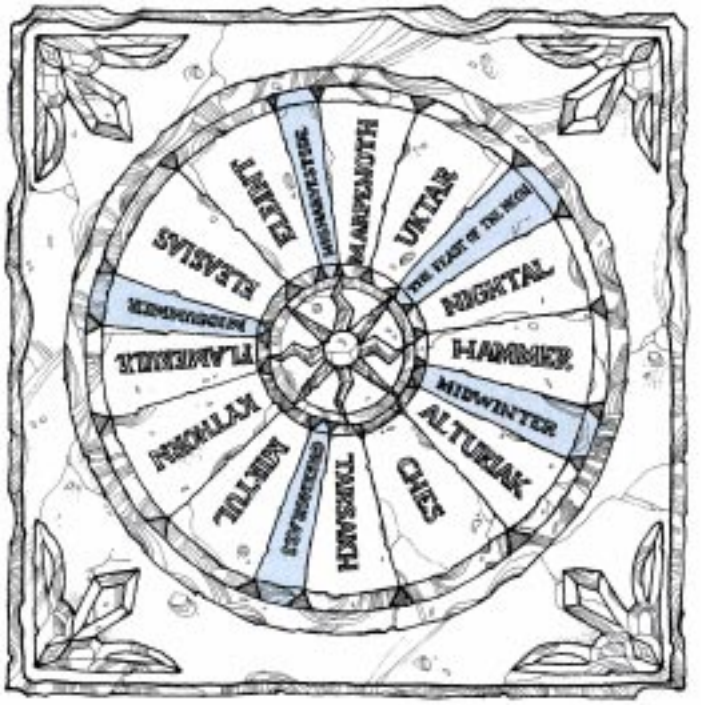
The lands of the Realms are riddled with geological uplifts, sinkholes, caverns, lava tubes, smokeholes, and fault lines. Add to this a millennium of delvings by dwarves and other ancient races, and another world lurks hidden beneath one's feet. This is the world of the Underdark.

The Underdark is huge, sprawling, and for the most part unmapped and undiscovered. It is possible (it is said) to walk from the Spine of the World to Calimshan, and from there to Unther, without once drawing a breath of surface air. Great empires have risen and fallen deep within the earth without the surface-dwellers having the slightest inkling of their birth or passing.

And the Underdark is inhabited by nations of mind flayers, aboleths, kuo-toans, myconids, and other creatures of the darkling plain. The best known of the Underdark races are the drow, for they maintain their relationship with the surface through raids and outposts. Only 500 years ago Shadowdale was a drow surface outpost, and reports of drow raiding parties are still common.

The best-known of the drow cities is fabled Menzoberranzan, reputed to lie beneath the Savage Frontier, but there are others: Eryndlyn, which lies beneath the High Moor; Sshamath, in the Far Hills; and Llurth Dreier in the Shaar. The oldest drow city, Bhaerynden, was destroyed in a civil war, the cavern it occupied falling in to form the Great Rift now occupied by the dwarves.

The drow are not the only individuals within these dark tunnels, and races and peoples undiscovered and much deadlier than they await the incautious traveler and the foolhardy adventurer.



doings of those now gone are told far into the night. Much is said of heroes and treasure and lost cities underground.

Wars, by the way, are often but not always fought after the harvest is done, continuing as late as the weather permits. The bulk of the fighting takes place in the month of Uktar, and the ironic practicality of the Feast of the Moon is readily apparent.

Shieldmeet: Once every four years, another day is added to the year in the manner of February 29 in the Gregorian calendar. This day is part of no month and follows Midsummer Night. It is known as Shieldmeet. It is a day of open council between nobles and people, a day for the making and renewing of pacts, oaths, and agreements. It is a day for tournaments, tests and trials for those wishing to advance in battle fame or clerical standing, for entertainment of all types, particularly theatrical, and for dueling.

Marking The Years

Years (winters) are referred to by names, each name consistent across the Realms. Each kingdom or city-state numbers years differently, usually to measure the reign of a dynasty or the current monarch, or since the founding of the country. The result is a hodgepodge of overlapping numbers that serve to confuse the ordinary person and frustrate the sage. The widespread differing year dates include the following:

Dalereckoning (DR): Dalereckoning is taken from the year that humans were first permitted by the Elven Court to settle in the more open regions of the forests. The information within this text is accurate to the close of 1367 DR. In some texts, primarily those which do not have direct ties to Dales history, Dalereckoning is called Freeman's Reckoning (FR).

Cormyr Reckoning (CR): Cormyr Reckoning begins at the foundation of House Obarskyr, the dynasty that still rules that land. The information in this text is accurate to the close of 1342 CR. The 25-year gap between Cormyr Reckoning and Dalereckoning has caused much of the confusion regarding elder days. Timelines and calendars of the period often use DR designators, but place the founding of Cormyr at 1 DR instead of 26 DR. This is understandable, given that the two reckonings are from two nearby parties and spread by a third (the merchants of Sembia), but it causes learned sages to slam their heads violently against their desks trying to figure things out.

Northreckoning (NR): Used in the City of Waterdeep, Northreckoning dates from the year Ahghairon became the first Lord of Waterdeep. The information within this text is accurate to 335 NR. A more archaic system called Waterdeep Years (WY) dates from the supposed first use of Waterdeep as a trading post. Now largely abandoned except in ancient texts, the current year would be 2455 WY.

Dragon Years (DY): The use of Dragon Years is an ancient form of counting in dragon generations of 200 years each. There are 10 cycles of 200 years to a color, and each two-millenium color is named after a type of dragon. This reckoning is long-since abandoned, such that it is uncertain whether the current year is 145 or 147 of the Adult Red Dragon.

Mulhorand Calendar (MC): One of the oldest calendars in use in the Realms, this ancient scheme of record-keeping dates from the founding of Skuld, the City of Shadows, reputedly by a Mulhorandi god. This tome is accurate to the year 3501 MC.

The Roll of Years

The wide variety of competing and often conflicting calendars causes no end of pain to the historian and the sage. Most use as their recording device the Roll of Years, a system by which each year has its own personal name. More recently, a new reckoning has arrived, based upon the world-shaking events of the Time of Troubles, called Present Reckoning (PR).

Names for the years are known collectively as the Roll of Years, as they are drawn from the predictions written down under that title by the famous Lost Sage, Augathra the Mad, with a few additions by the great seer Alaundo (for further information on Alaundo see the section about Candlekeep in the "Western Heartlands" chapter). The Roll is a long one; here is the relevant portion of it.

The Year of the Dragon (1352 DR)
The Year of the Arch (1353 DR)
The Year of the Bow (1354 DR)

The Year of the Harp (1355 DR)
The Year of the Worm (1356 DR)
The Year of the Prince (1357 DR)
The Year of Shadows (1358 DR)
The Year of the Serpent (1359 DR)
The Year of the Turret (1360 DR)
The Year of the Maidens (1361 DR)
The Year of the Helm (1362 DR)
The Year of the Wyvern (1363 DR)
The Year of the Wave (1364 DR)
The Year of the Sword (1365 DR)
The Year of the Staff (1366 DR)
The Year of the Shield (1367 DR, the year just ending)
The Year of the Banner (1368 DR)
The Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR)
The Year of the Tankard (1370 DR)
The Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR)
The Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR)
The Year of Rogue Dragons (1373 DR)
The Year of Lightning Storms (1374 DR)
The Year of Risen Elfkin (1375 DR)
The Year of the Bent Blade (1376 DR)
The Year of the Haunting (1377 DR)

Present Reckoning (PR)

In an attempt to get a handle on the various number systems in use, a new type of reckoning has been implemented with the approval of such worthies as Khelben Arunsun of Waterdeep and Vangerdahast of Cormyr and carried abroad by the Harpers. All year-dates trace back to the Time of Troubles as Year 0. It is currently 9 PR. Times before the Time of Troubles are listed with a negative number (the founding of the Standing Stone in 1 DR would be -1358 PR, the creation of Cormyr -1333 PR). Whether this nascent system of timekeeping becomes popular in the Realms is unknown, though Elminster has noted "You have to give a new system a generation or two to hash itself out. At least let it get into double digits."

Throughout this text, we will be using Dalereckoning (DR) for times, primarily since it reduces the large number of negative numbers of historical events. Heroes and adventurers looking to the future may consider PR instead for recording their own deeds.

Names in The Realms

Naming systems vary widely in the Realms, with many local customs being commonly followed. Player characters may carry one- or two-part names, nick names, titles, or pseudonyms in their career. General guidelines on naming are as follows.

Common Humanity: The greater bulk of humanity takes a single name, such as Doust or Moumgrym, with a secondary name added if there is confusion, either from profession (Doust the Fighter), location (Doust of Shadowdale), or lineage (the latter in particular if some legendary figure was in family line, such as Doust, Grandson of Miniber the Sage). In addition, a name may be added for a physical condition, such as "Blackmane" or "Firehair," or for some legendary or extraordinary event. (There are a large number of "Trollkillers" in the Realms, more a credit to the numbers of the monsters, rather than the prowess of their slayers.) Young children are given a pet name or diminutive that is sometimes retained, but more often than not dropped upon adulthood (Mourngrym and Shaerl's son is named Scotti, but that may change when he reaches his majority). A wedded couple sometimes takes a common name, which may be his or hers (particularly when dealing with nobility) or be a new name entirely. In the course of a lifetime, average humans can take and discard several surnames, keeping their given names throughout.

Human Nobles and Gentry: Noble and landed individuals tend to retain the family name, a name usually derived from the individual who established the family's fame, position, or prowess. Such names are retained even after the nobility has fallen from grace or power. Again, special additional names for events or appearances are common.

Human Wizards: Mages tend to eschew long titles and names, and the general feeling is that a wizard's fame should precede him or her, such that a single mention of the name is sufficient, and no one would doubt the speaker was referring to anyone else but the genuine article. For example, there may well be an Elminster the Barber or an Elminster of Waterdeep, but a reference to Elminster (or the even more modest "Elminster the Sage") refers to the advisor without peer who resides in Shadowdale.

Human Priests: Identifications of the faiths of the realms are usually included in a name, supplanting any family or noble names. Amaster, a cleric of Tymora, can be referred to as Amaster of Tymora without incident. In higher church circles and matters involving leaders of particular temples or faiths, the full title is important, such as Asgaroth of Tempus, Patriarch of Baldur's Gate.

Elves and Half-Elves: The People have family names that they tend to translate back into common as nicknames, so that there are families of Strongbows or Starglows in the world. Such family names are important in that elven siblings can be hundreds of years apart in age. Half-elves take elven or human naming fashions, depending on where they were raised, and may change back and forth several times in the human fashion.

Dwarves: Dwarves have a very strong sense of their past and the heroes in their families. They carry only a first name, followed by the qualifier of heritage. The lowest dwarves attach themselves to their state or hold, such as Mongor of the Iron House. Dwarves with a dwarf of renown in their heritage may use the appellation "son of" or "grandson of" (or "daul" or "grandaul" for females)

such as Thelarn, son of Mongoth. Beyond two generations, the phrase "blood of" is used, but only for the greatest dwarven leaders, as in Nor, blood of Ghellin, King-in-Exile of the Iron House.

Gnomes: These quiet people use both given and surnames, and maintain long-standing family ties, such that a third name, for location, may be necessary. For example, outside of his homeland, Wysdor Sandminer may have to be known as Wysdor Sandminer, of the Sandminers of Arabel to avoid constant discussions with other gnomes who may or may not be close relations.

Halflings: Halflings are similar to the gnomes in the fact that they use both given and surnames, but both those names may change over time and be overappended with nicknames for adventures, physical abilities, and pet or diminutive names. In addition, the original names may be lost behind a maze of pseudonyms and false backgrounds. For example, the halfling Corkitron Allinamuck chose both first and last names (his parents were named Burrows), and goes by the diminutive Corky and the nickname "High Roll."

Other Races: Most of the other races make do with a single name and further clarification as needed (a centaur named Aldophus may be called Aldophus the Roan, for example).

Orcs and goblins tend to use proper names only when they need to, the rest of the time using a native word that translates as "Hey, you!" in everyday speech (a true speaker of the orcish tongue can put a great deal of venom behind the word, such that fights can start in bars at its mention).

Languages of The Realms

As for everything else—sentient races, rulers, gods, and year-numbering systems—there is a plethora of linguistic variety in the Realms. There are racial languages and regional dialects, professional symbols and secret tongues. There are five "universal" written languages, and as many differing individual languages as there are those to speak them.

Most people north and east of the Sea of Fallen Stars are semi-literate, that is, they know enough of the written language to get by in their daily lives. The fact that written language is not universally understood accounts for many of the specialized sigils and runes within the Realms, as well as the popularity of bards.

Literacy is most common among the upper and more professional classes. It is also assumed to be common among most adventuring companies, and considered as much a survival skill as trapping or swimming. Westgate, southern Sembia, and perhaps Hillsfar in the Heartlands and Waterdeep on the Sword Coast are predominantly literate areas. Elsewhere one must "trust to your tongue," as wayfarers say.

In game terms, the DM may choose to make understanding the written versions of languages automatic for those who can speak them—if you can speak common you may read and write common as well. This is the easiest approach to language within the Realms, though not particularly accurate. In reality, reading or writing one of the five languages should be counted as a separate language proficiency from speaking the same tongue.

Common Tongue: Almost all intelligent creatures one might encounter can understand and speak common (the trade tongue of humans, spoken with little variance all across the known Realms), although they may pretend not to. From region to region of the Realms, common may have different accents and slightly different vocabularies as it becomes influenced by other local human and nonhuman tongues. While a native of Thay will be able to communicate with a denizen of Baldur's Gate, each will be aware of the other's ridiculous accent. In a similar fashion,

Languages of The Realms

Written Languages

Common
Dethek
Espruar
Ruathlek
Thorass

Spoken Languages

Aarakocra
Alzhedo (Calimshan)
Auld Wyrmish[1]
Beholder
Brownie
Bugbear
Bullywug
Centaur
Common
Dolphin[2]
Dragon Turtle
Dry ad
Dwarvish
Elvish
Elvish, Drow (Silent Speech)
Elvish, Sea
Firenewt
Gargoyle
Genie Tongue
Giant Eagle
Giant[3]
Gnoll
Gnomish
Goblin
Halfling
Harpy
High Shou (Kara-Tur)
Invisible Stalker
Jermlaine
Ki-Rin
Koalinth
Kobold
Korred
Kuo-Toan
Lammasu
Lizard Man
Locathah
Merman
Midani (Zakhara)
Minotaur
Morkoth
Muckdweller
Mulhorandi (Old Empires)
Nexalan (Maztica)
Nixie
Nymph
Ogre
Ogre Magi
Orc
Otyugh/Neo-Otyugh
Owlbear
Pegasus
Pixie
Remorhaz
Sahuagin
Satyr
Sphinx
Sprite
Sylph
Tasloi
Thri-Kreen
Treant
Triton
Troglodyte
Troll (Troll Hills)[4]
Umber Hulk
Undercommons (Underdark common)
Unicorn
Untheric (Old Empires)
Urd
Wemic
The Were-Tongues of Lycanthropy[6]
Whale[2]
Will-O-Wisp[2]
Yuan-Ti

Notes

[1]Auld wyrmish is the ancestral language of all dragons, and the tongue which they use when communicating with each other across species lines. In addition, each dragon subspecies has its own tongue, derived from auld wyrmish. These tongues may be treated as separate languages, though a knowledge of auld wyrmish will serve the traveler well.

[2]While these creatures have a common language among themselves, the nature of the language is undetectable by humans—dolphins use sounds higher than human hearing, whales use sounds lower than human hearing, and will-o-wisps use intensities of their own lights.

[3]Grants have a common tongue used by all of their race and in addition have their own sublanguages. Common grant and hill giant would be considered two separate languages.

[4]Trolls speak in a variety of tongues, consisting of corrupted and debauched phrases and loan words from other languages. Speaking troll refers only to the dialect of the Trollbark Forest and High Moors. Beyond this (say, in the Great Gray Land of Thar), the speaker might as well be talking in Midani.

[5]Undercommon is the trade language of the Underdark. It differs fundamentally from the common used on the surface and uses sentence structure and loan words from the races beneath the earth.

[6]Each type of lycanthrope has its own native tongue that is shared by the others of its breed. Each were-tongue must be learned separately, and cannot be used with lycanthropes of different breeds. In other words, a person speaking were-tiger cannot communicate with a were-bear.

Two Final Notes: Druids and thieves have their own private languages, which they do not share with individuals outside their community. They cannot be learned by an outsider but are available to individuals who are druids and thieves (thus is similar to the illusionists' use of Ruathlek).

Finally, some creatures can communicate with animals or plants, and some spells grant the same abilities. This does not mean that these beings have a language or intelligence, merely that communication is made possible on a deep, almost empathic level. Such communication may not be taken as a starting language.

nonhuman tongues each belong to the same linguistic tree, so that elves native to Evereska, Evermeet, and the Elven Court may understand each other (barring, again, local dialects and accent). To humans, the elven "common tongue" is referred to simply as elvish, and the dwarven "common tongue" as dwarvish.

The written common tongue, which is presented in these writing as English, is a descendent of Thorass, the original trade language. Most individuals use runes for conveying information.

Thorass (Also Called Auld Common): Thorass is the ancient written trade tongue and universal language of the long-ago Realms. It is often found in tombs, underground ways, and ancient habitations and is still in use among the scribes of the southern noble courts. It is the ancestor of the common tongue. This language was used primarily for documents and trading records, as well as histories, and as such did not achieve common usage. An inscription in Thorass translates directly into common, although it usually uses a stilted and archaic form of phrasing and vocabulary.

Espruar: This is the moon elven alphabet, in which most elves of the Realms render messages, either in common or their native language. A beautiful script alphabet, Espruar (ES-prue-AR) often covers elven jewelry and monuments in ornate designs. Espruar is rarely committed to paper, but when permanent records are required, it is pressed into metal in the dwarven fashion. Elven histories are rare, since most of the elves who experienced the historical events that would be in them are still alive.

Dethek Runes: Dwarves seldom write on that which can perish. Rarely, they stamp or inscribe runes on metal sheets and bind those together to make books, but stone is their usual medium: stone walls in caverns, stone buildings, pillars or standing

stones—even cairns. Most often, they write on tablets called *runestones* in the common tongue.

A typical runestone is flat and diamond-shaped, about an inch thick, and made of granite or some other very hard rock. The face of the stone is inscribed with Dethek runes in a ring or spiral around the edge, and the center normally contains a picture. Some runestones have pictures in relief and are used as seals or can be pressed into wet mud to serve as temporary trail markers underground.

To a dwarf, all runestones bear some sort of message. Most are covered with Dethek runic script, which translates directly into dwarvish or common. The runes of this script are simple and made up of straight lines for ease in cutting them into stone. No punctuation can be shown in Dethek, but sentences are usually separated by script slash marks, words are separated by spaces, and capital letters have a line drawn above them. Numbers that are enclosed in boxes are dates, day preceding year by convention. There are collective symbols or characters for identifying peoples (clans or tribes) or races. If any runes are painted, names of beings and places are commonly picked out in red, while the rest of the text is colored black or left as unadorned grooves.

Ruathlek: Ruathlek, the "secret language" or magical script of illusionists, is rarely found in the Realms. Illusionists themselves are fairly rare in the North—but Waterdeep is known to hold at least one library of books in that dweomer-guarded tongue. It has been surmised that this written secret language of the illusionists is derived from the use of magical runes. Illusionists only have access to this language upon choosing their class. It may be learned by others, but does not confer the ability to cast magical spells.

Currency in the Realms

Barter and coinage of all sorts are common in the Realms. The following system is that of the nation of Cormyr, and is typical of the other organized nations.

The favored form of currency in Cormyr is the royal coinage of the Court, stamped with a dragon on one side and a treasury date mark on the other (the penalty for counterfeiting in Cormyr and most other similar nations is death).

There is no paper currency save for I.O.U.s, which are known as blood-notes, as they must be signed in blood by both (or all, if more than two) parties involved and taken to the local lord for the affixing of the royal seal.

Coinage throughout the Realms is customarily valued as follows:

100 cp	= 100 copper pieces
	= 10 silver pieces
	= 2 electrum pieces
	= 1 gold piece
	= 1/5 platinum piece

In Cormyr, coinage terminology is as follows:

cp = copper pieces = copper thumbs
sp = silver pieces = silver falcons
ep = electrum pieces = blue eyes
gp = gold pieces = golden lions
pp = platinum pieces = tricrowns

In Amn, a major trading nation on the Sword Coast, the names are:

cp = copper pieces = fandars
sp = silver pieces = tarans
ep = electrum pieces = centaurs or decimes
gp = gold pieces = dantars
pp = platinum pieces = roldons or pearls

In Calimport, the largest city of Calimshan, the coins are:

cp = copper pieces = unarches
sp = silver pieces = decarches
ep = electrum pieces = centarches
gp = gold pieces = bicentas
pp = platinum pieces = kilarches

And in Waterdeep, City of Splendors, the coinage is:

cp = copper pieces = copper nibs
sp = silver pieces = shards
ep = electrum pieces = moons
gp = gold pieces = dragons
pp = platinum pieces = suns

In addition, Waterdeep has two special coins not found elsewhere: the toal and the harbor moon. The toal is a square, flat brass coin with a hole in its center. The toal is worth 2 gp within the city of Waterdeep, and is worthless outside of it. The harbor moon is a 50-gp coin made of platinum fitted with electrum and carved into the shape of a moon, again with a hole in the center.

Sembia maintains a similar coinage, but it is instead differentiated by shape. Gold coins are five-sided, silver are triangular, iron (replacing copper here) are square, and electrum are diamond-shaped. Sembia issues no platinum pieces, instead using silver and copper trade bars in 5-, 10-, 25-, and 50-gp denominations.

To most adventurers, the name of the coin is unimportant, and the face depicted on the coin is incidental to its true importance—immediate personal wealth.

Local city-states often mint their own copper, silver, and gold pieces. Electrum and platinum pieces are rarer, and are usually minted only by the more powerful states such as Cormyr, Waterdeep, and Amn. Smaller states, such as the fractured regions of Damara, use coinage borrowed from other nations and looted from ancient sources.

Merchants throughout the Realms make use of trade bars, either of silver or (for the more profitable caravans and costers)

electrum. These trade bars are generally ingots of the particular metal in 10-, 25-, and 50-gp denominations. They are marked with the trail mark of the merchant or company that uses them. There are even (particularly in the South), trade bars of 500- and 1,000-gp denominations. Trade bars are regarded as bulk coins of the denomination they are made in, and are checked by weight.

In adventuring, heroes will encounter all manner of treasure. In general, it does not matter where the coin originally came from, only its weight and value on the modern market.

Character Description Abbreviations

The sections which follow mention a great number of individuals of power, both in terms of local government and individual ability. The following shorthand abbrevations are provided so that when one encounters Thuggor the Rancid (LE dm F10), one has some idea who one is dealing with.

Alignment is given first, and indicates the alignment of the character as far as everyday life (and *know alignment* spells) are concerned. The alignments are:

Abbreviation	Alignment
LG	Lawful good
LN	Lawful neutral
LE	Lawful evil
NG	Neutral good
N	Neutral
NE	Neutral evil
CG	Chaotic good
CN	Chaotic neutral
CE	Chaotic evil

Following alignment is an abbreviation indicating race and sex (names are not always indicative of sex). These codes are:

Abbreviation	Race
h	human
d	dwarf
e	elf
he	half-elf
half	halfling
g	gnome
gob	goblinkind (orcs, half-orcs, etc.)
m	male
f	female

Race names of goblinkind and other humanoid and nonhumanoid (monster races) are also used unabbreviated for clarity in many cases.

Finally, class (if applicable) and level are noted. Multiclass individuals or characters with two classes (if human) will be noted by a slash between entries. Monsters are merely given their Hit Dice.

Abbreviation	Class
F	Fighter/warrior
Pal	Paladin
R	Ranger
W	Wizard
W(I)	Wizard (Illusionist)
W(T)	Wizard (Transmuter)
W(N)	Wizard (Necromancer)
W(A)	Wizard (Abjurer)
W(C)	Wizard (Conjurer)
W(D)	Wizard (Diviner)
W(E)	Wizard (Enchanter)
W(IN)	Wizard (Invoker)
P	Priest
P(Sp)	Priest (Specialty)
D	Druid
T	Thief
B	Bard

Therefore, Thuggor the Rancid (LE dm F10) is a lawful evil dwarven male who is a fighter of 10th level. Other information, such as exceptional Strength or magical items, may be noted as well, but this shorthand should help the DM if a player suddenly decides to take leave of his senses and insults Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon (CG hf W24).

The Dales and The Elven Court

The heart of the Heartlands is the rural communities known as the Dalelands. These small farming communities are the homes of many retired adventurers and the birthplaces of many new heroes and heroines. Teaching self-reliance and independence, the Dale communities produce a brave, strong, and free-willed race of women and men who are needed to challenge the forces of evil.

But the Dalelands themselves are defined by the great forest that they surround. This forest is the largest shard of what was once a great woods known as Cormanthor, which ran from the Moonsea to what is now the King's Forest in Cormyr. This largest remaining forest is known also as the Elven Court, for it was here that the last great elven kingdom on the Inner Sea lands held sway. To speak of one is to speak of the other, for the fates of the Dalesmen and the elven lords are interlinked.

The Dalelands

The region known as the Dalelands is defined as the nonforested areas inhabited by humanity north of Sembia and Cormyr and south of the River Tesh and the town of Voonlar. This region includes a wide scattering of different communities, all primarily rural in nature, that share (generally) common interests and ideals. In addition, the Dalelands are the home of many powerful individuals or groups that find the independence of the natives in keeping with their own beliefs.

The current Dales are: Archendale, Battledale, Daggerdale, Deepingdale, Featherdale, Harrowdale, High Dale, Mistledale, Scardale, Shadowdale, and Tasseldale. There are a number of fallen, nonexistent, and lost Dales scattered through the history of the Dalelands, but these are the official Dales. They should not be confused with other Dales located far from the Elven Court, such as the Great Dale far to the East or Icewind Dale near the Spine of the World.

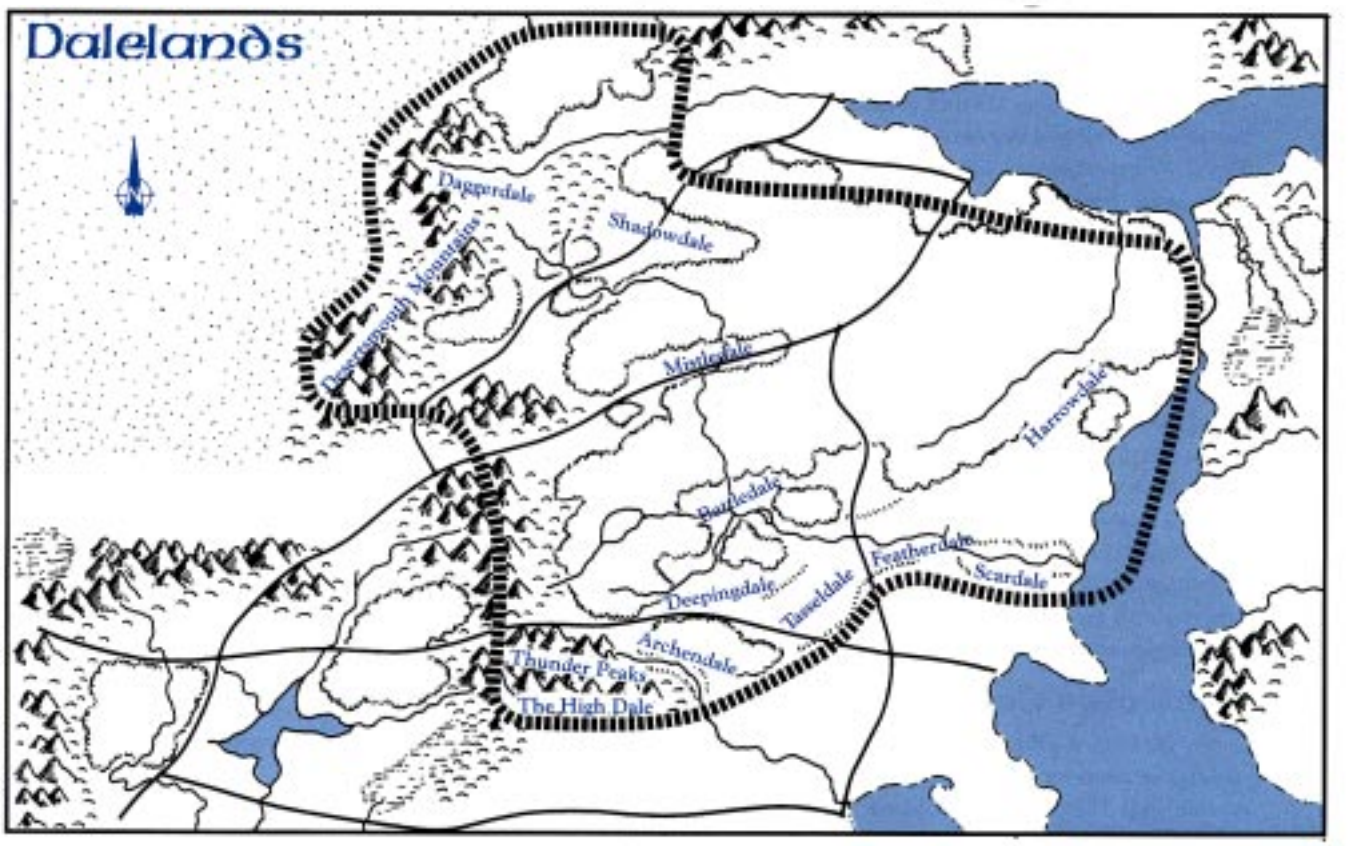
History

The founding of the Dalelands long preceded the creation of any of the existing Dales by hundreds of years, and the year numbering system known as Dalereckoning is actually a commemoration of humankind being given permission to settle in the lands north and west of the Inner Sea. Most of the current Dales are relative newcomers, the older Dales having been abandoned, destroyed, or overrun long ago.

In those ancient days, when Suzail and Chondathan (now called Saerloon) were mere coastal trading posts, the elves who ruled this forest entertained a request from settlers from the East, refugees and farmers from far-off Impiltur and Damara. This request was to farm and settle the borders of the great forest Cormanthor, in particular the rich delves and dales along the rivers Arkhen and Ashaba. These newcomers did not wish to lumber or clear the inhabited forest, but only to settle on the rich territories on its edges, and unlike some other settlers (early Sembia comes to mind) were willing to ask permission.

The lords of the Elven Court granted that request in return for aid from these new Dalelanders against outside aggression, both monstrous (orcs and goblins from the lands of Thar) and human (the rising powers in Cormyr and Sembia). In commemoration of this pact, humans and elves raised the Standing Stone that is now seen where the Moonsea Ride reaches Rauthauvyr's Road, the road from Essembra to Hillsfar. It is from the date of the raising of this stone that Dalereckoning is counted.

According to the pact made, the Dalesmen would only settle those regions that were unforested or unclaimed by the elves. As the elven woods receded under the axes of further invaders and settlers, old Dales perished and new ones came into being along the borders of the woods. People, both good and bad, have



raised petty nations in the Dalelands since, though any one Dale that turned against the pact would have to deal with the others.

Each of the Dales is a large swath of farms and fields, with a few scattered settlements and usually one central marketplace, capital, or Dale center. These centers are often, but not always, named after the Dales they are in, adding to the confusion as to what is a Dalelands territory. The Dales are not city-states, for their largest groupings of population rate as towns at best, and they lack the defensive walls common throughout the Heartlands. Nor are they true nations in the fashion of Cormyr or Sembia. They occupy a gray middle ground, and are nothing more, or less, than Dales.

Each Dale has slightly different laws, customs, and military organizations. Many rely on the work of charismatic heroes and adventuring companies for aid in times of trouble, and a large number of these individuals use the region as a base. This attraction for adventurers is further increased by the large number of elven and pre-elven ruins in the area and the departure of the Elven Court for Evermeet, leaving the woods open for exploration and exploitation.

The history of the Dales is filled with battles and attacks on its various members. In the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), Scardale, under the command of Lashan Aumersair, launched a number of swift attacks, conquering a number of the surrounding Dales. A coalition of forces from the other Dales, Sembia, Cormyr, and Zhentil Keep crushed the invaders and occupied Scardale. During the Time of Troubles (1358 DR/0 PR), Shadowdale was attacked by Zhentil Keep. More recently, the Dalelands have committed forces to a unified army under King Azoun IV of Cormyr to turn back the Tuigan Invasion (1360 DR).

The Dalelands Mindset

The natives of the Dales live in communities that are on the frontiers of civilized life and often targets for marauding bands of goblins, flights of dragons, and the depredations of other monsters. As a result, they tend to value heroism, self-reliance, and a strong, almost clannish sense of community. They feel that they should tend to their own and protect their homes. The local community comes first, then the Dales at large, then the larger world beyond it.

To an outsider, the Dalesmen seem close-mouthed, suspicious, and reserved. Indeed, until a newcomer is identified as friend or foe, or vouched for by a trusted individual, most keep their responses to the civil minimum. They are polite, but it is an observant and reserved politeness—they have had a bellyful of shapechangers, lycanthropes, and necromancers, and a little caution goes a long way.

Once a person is accepted, the Dalesmen are by and large open and giving, and expect the same from their guests. Once people are counted as a part of the community, they should pitch in to its defense. This particularly applies to adventurers who suddenly find themselves the local lords.

Dalesmen believe that nobles are one of the givens in daily life, like stars and crops and monsters—you might as well learn to live with them. As a rule, they like their government far removed from their daily life. The local lord should get things done that cannot be done on an individual level, like organize an army or see to it that the grain mill operates at a fair price. Beyond that the lord should keep out of trouble. Taxes beyond one piece of silver in 20 or one bushel of fruit for every 10 collected are considered excessive.

As for the rest of the world, the Dalesmen are fairly well isolated. Bards bring the latest news and rumors, and are always welcome, but the way Dalelanders see things, the farther away from home, the more dangerous the world seems. The Sembians are scheming merchants, always looking to line their pockets. The Cormyreans are fairly solid folk, but the recent acquisition of Tilverton has made many concerned about Azoun's true intent with his armies. The Moonsea, headed by Zhentil Keep, is a nasty bit of work, and its people should not be trusted further than one can throw them. As for the Vast, across the Dragon Reach, the rural communities there have ties with the ancestors of the Dalesmen, but the cityfolk should be watched to see if they are dangerous.

The Dales Council

Each of the Dales is self-governed, but together they form a loose council that meets each year at Midwinter in a different town of the Dalelands. This Dales Council, founded in the time following Aencar the Mantled King, is no stronger than the strength of its contributing members, yet has been held and its decisions followed with (generally) good faith over the past hundred winters. At the best of times, the Dales Council is a group of tough-minded, independent, argumentative individuals who would lay down their lives rather than see another Dalesman threatened.

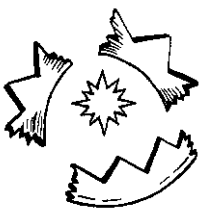
A list of the member Dales of the Dales Council and their rulers or representatives follows. Some Dales send the ruler of the Dale or its largest community as their representative. Some Dales send a committee or a randomly chosen delegate. Regardless of the number of individuals sent or the personal power of those individuals, each of the Dales has one vote in the Council.

No two Dales have the very same form of government, or even the same titles for their rulers. Several merely send a representative for the people of that Dale. Others have a hereditary or military leader. Some pass leadership from one adventuring bravo to another, and some, in the manner of Amn and more civilized states, hide the identity of their leaders behind a title.

The Dales are listed alphabetically, for any attempt to declare one Dale greater, larger, or more important than another is an invitation to an argument. Each Dale has its own individual entry.

- *Archendale* is represented by one of the Three Swords.
- *Battledale* is represented in Council by War Chancellor Ilmeth.
- *Daggerdale* sends a different delegate each year; the position is known as councilman (or councilwoman, councilelf, and in one year, a councilhalfling).
- *Deepingdale* is represented by Theremen Ulath, Lord of Highmoon.
- *Featherdale* sends a freely elected representative with a seven-year term. Representative Kirshoff is currently on her second term.
- *Harrowdale* sends a delegation of the Seven Burghers of Harrowdale, led by Reindorf Sandbeard.
- *High Dale* sends its high constable, Irreph Mulmarr.
- *Mistledale* is represented by High Councilor Haresk Malorn or one of his subordinate, but equal, councilors.
- *Scardale* has a nonvoting representative, Myriam Beechwood. Scardale has been under occupation by other Dales' forces until recently, and is only now being treated as a provisional member of the Council.
- *Shadowdale* is represented by Mourngrym, Lord of the Dale, or in his absence Shaerl Rowanmantle, his wife.
- *Tasseldale* is represented by Elizzaria, Grand Mairshar of the Dale, chief of its mounted officers.
- *Teshendale* was destroyed some 50 winters ago, yet it remains listed as a member of the Dales Council, and a chair is set aside at each meeting for Elder Jaothe Hulnhurn (missing and presumed dead). The idea that a dead Dale is a full member grates on the representative from Scardale.

Archendale



Archendale (pronounced ARK-en-dale) is situated in an isolated rocky gorge that carries the River Arkhen from the Thunder Peaks down to the sea at Selgaunt. The Dale is a beautiful valley of ferns, lilies, mosses, and clear pools. The valley and its surrounding area is warm through most of the year, and covered with heavy, wet snow in the winter. There are scattered farms and orchards along the valley floor. The Dale's largest community and general trading post is at Archenbridge, at the mouth of the vale, where the River Arkhen crosses the Dawnpost.

Archendale is home to aggressive traders who operate from the Moonsea to Dragonmere and beyond. The orchards provide rich fruit that commands a good price in Sembia. In addition, freshwater crabs, regarded as a delicacy in Archendale, live in the pools in the Dale. A few of the merchant houses that make Archendale home include:

- *Mirksha, Mirksha, and Mirksha:* This house is composed of three brothers with a thriving trade operating to Cormyr and Sembia. They will trade in anything and are known to have a taste for the exotic and the rare.
- *Jendalar's Fine Fruits:* This house, which bills itself as "Purveyors to the Tables of the King of Cormyr," specializes in sending apples and grus-grus fruit westward. It does have a standing order from the Royal Court at Suzail, but most of its sales are to the rising gentry class that wants to imi-

tate the manners of the nobility.

- *The Stone Crab Coster:* As may be surmised, Stone Crab Coster specializes in seafood, primarily freshwater crabs and crayfish, but more recently it has expanded to include seafood throughout the Inner Sea. Its current chief, Maximar Spendler, dreams of a trading empire that could challenge the Iron Throne and Sembia.
- *The Darkwater Brand:* An operation of bad repute outside of Archendale, the Darkwater Brand is careful to maintain excellent relationships in the Dale itself and not break any laws. Darkwater is accused of smuggling, slaving, kidnapping, and dealing with the fell cities of the Moonsea. The proprietors, a family named Dakker, deny all.

Archendale society has been formed from a long and proud history tainted by long-lasting grudges and many-layered intrigue. A hundred years ago, a battle with the people of Sessrendale resulted in the utter destruction of that community, a matter that neither Archendale nor its neighbors is likely to forget.

Natives of Archendale tend to be haughty, even among other Dalesmen, short-tempered, and vain. Outsiders are suspect, and if they work for one of the local merchant houses, that merchant house is held responsible for their actions. In general, Archendale is considered a fine place to trade but a poor neighborhood to live in.

Archendale has temples of Chauntea, Lathander, and Tempus within its borders. The Bounty of the Goddess is overseen by Thaliach Mindogar (NG hm P8) and four of his clerical followers. The temple of Lathander is under the command of Stellaga Brightstar (NG hef P12) and 16 priestly acolytes. The temple of Tempus is small, and based at Swordpoint. Its high priest is Battle-Chaplain Gordon Stakaria (N hm P10). As with all the Dales, there are shrines to Silvanus, Eldath, Mielikki, and Selûne scattered throughout the nearby woods.

Battledale

The territory of Battledale consists of a series of low hills and valleys that lie between the Pool of Yeven and Haptooth Hill, and extends northward under the shade of the elven woods. A large number of small farms and homesteads dot the area, but the Dale has no central community. The region is speckled with small hamlets, isolated ranches, and manors of retired adventurers and merchants.

This region of oft-disputed ground is gently rolling farmland, open and a suitable site for large battles. Battledale has seen heavy use in all manner of conflicts, most recently in the Scardale uprising. It was on the fields of Battledale that the power of Lashan of Scardale was broken and his forces sent reeling back to their native vale.

Battledale has a proud heritage, and was once the home of Aencar the Mantled King, a great warrior of the Dalelands who almost succeeded in forging the various communities into a cohesive nation. The ruins of Aencar's castle can still be seen from Rauthauvyr's Ride, the road running to the Standing Stone, and it has not been reoccupied since his death.

The rolling slopes around the castle still serve as the local site of the Shieldmeet, the quadrennial gathering of commoners and nobles. It is a time when the various classes may mix without (major) incident. Battledale's Shieldmeet attracts travelers from the nearby Dales, Sembia, and even Cormyr and the Moonsea.

Battledale has no official ruler or seat, though Essembra serves as a trading/gathering/goods center for the Dale. It consists of no more than a dozen buildings lining the main road, including an inn (the Watchful Eye), a smithy, a shrine to Tempus, and a temple to Gond (under the auspices of Lord High Smith and Artificer Gulmarin Reldacap (N hm P9)). On a hill overlooking Essembra is the fortified manor house of the local lord. The shrine of Tempus is regularly visited by soldier-priests from the nearby Abbey of the Sword, a fortified abbey under the command of Priest General Ambrose (LN hm P13).

The lord of Essembra and leader of the Shieldmeet is War Chancellor Ilmeth, sent as Battledale's representative to the

The Archendale Army

Archendale's is a military government ruled by three officers known as Swords: a Black Sword, a Red Sword, and a Blue Sword. The Swords have no other name, and magical measures (illusions, *bracelets of misdirection)* are used to maintain their secrecy. The Swords are deliberately mysterious, and usually speak through officers of the Archendale Army. One of the Swords always attends the Dales Council. Should a Sword perish, another is promoted from within the army.

The Archendale Army consists of 10 mounted units called rides with 60 soldiers per ride, for a total regular force of 600 soldiers. These are mounted forces of men-at-arms dressed in chain and carrying sword, lance, and composite bow. Each ride has a ridemaster—a warrior of 5th level or higher. Three of the rides (and the leading Swords) are based in a fortified garrison known as Swordpoint, located overlooking the ford at Archenbridge.

The traders of Archendale have used their wealth in the past to hire mercenary troops and spellcasters to protect themselves and their goods when the need arises in the manner of their Sembian neighbors. The Swords of Archendale allow this with the proviso that the Swords may appropriate said units for common defense in time of need.

The true identity of the Swords is hidden from everyday knowledge, and they may be any of the ridemasters or occupy some other position in the Dale. Inquiries into such matters meet a blank and tired stare from natives, and it is surmised that they themselves do not know the identities of the Swords.

Two Zhents' Worth

Much confusion exists in the Realms regarding Zhentil Keep and the (not-so) secret society known as the Black Network or Zhentarim. The two are closely tied, such that a speaker may refer to one when meaning the other and still be clearly understood. In general, both mean trouble.

Zhentil Keep is a walled independent city on the western shores of the Moonsea. It is one of the most evil cities in the Realms, a blight on the North, and a haven for evil groups, plotting manipulators, dark religions, and foul practices. Its rulers seek to dominate the lands around it, including the Dragonspine Mountains, Yûlash, Voonlar, and the neighboring Dales. The city of Zhentil Keep and its armies (known as the Zhentilar, to make matters more confusing) have destroyed Teshendale, come close to destroying Daggerdale, and for a long time had an agent ruling Shadowdale.

The Zhentarim is an organization of evil priests, wizards, and inhuman creatures bent on controlling all the trade and power between the Sword Coast (meaning Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep) and the Moonsea (including the intervening lands of Cormyr and Anauroch). Its aims in the Moonsea area are the same as Zhentil Keep's, and the two factions work hand-in-glove, often sharing the same membership. The Zhentarim have a more far-reaching effect than Zhentil Keep, though, and have agents throughout the North.

In addition, the Zhentarim are not limited to Zhentil Keep itself, and maintain a number of fortified outposts. Their rulership has spread with the passing years. In addition to being the dominant force in Zhentil Keep, the Zhentarim control the Citadel of the Raven and Darkhold, two important castle complexes. Over the years, more power has been moving away from Zhentil Keep (filled with a lot of unknown and untrustworthy flunkies) and into these more secure areas.

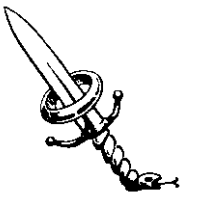
Within the Dalelands area, Zhentarim smells of Zhentil Keep and vice versa, but in reality not every Keeper (yet another name for a native of Zhentil Keep) is of the Black Network, and not every agent of the Zhentarim is from Zhentil Keep. Adventurers should watch who they trust as a result.

Dales Council. Battledale, despite its hostile name, maintains no standing army, and the title War Chancellor is a hereditary title, dating back to the time of Aencar. Ilmeth (LN hm F11) is a warrior dark of beard and mood who continually ponders the strengths of the various factions in the region.

The people of Battledale are friendly but private, and each generation has lost this brother or that sister to wars that occured on its land. Strangers are tolerated but not welcomed, and individuals who want their privacy (including one or two retired mages) are gladly given it.

Daggerdale

Daggerdale is a true dale, or stream valley, bounded by mountains on the west and rocky hills on the east. It is a farming and hunting community that has largely kept to itself in the past.



Daggerdale is and remains a Dale under continual siege and raiding. What communities exist are gathered behind small stockades, and travelers of any ilk are not welcome. Even the lowest offer of hospitality, the offer of use of the barn for bedding down, is missing in Daggerdale.

This was not always the case. Before the founding of Shadowdale, this region was known as Merrydale and had earned a reputation for its hospitality and trust. A tragic infestation of vampires destroyed that trust, and the community began to turn in on itself. Further disasters and betrayals deepened the suspicions of outsiders, and Merrydale became Daggerdale.

Daggerdale has learned its attitude at great cost. It stood by, besieged by its own problems, when Teshendale was overrun and captured by the forces of Zhentil Keep under the control of the Black Network, known as the Zhentarim. A flood of refugees surged into the Dale, where they were absorbed by the population. These refugees included a large number of Zhentarim agents. These agents rallied dissatisfied elements in the Dale, pointing out the ineffectiveness of the Morn family, the hereditary rulers of the Dale, in dealing with marauding orcs and Zhentarim. The Morn family was thrown out, and a "populist" ruler named Malyk was installed. Too late did the populace realize that this Malyk was no more than a Zhentarim agent.

Under Malyk, the Zhentarim controlled Daggerdale and ruled it with an iron fist backed by fireball-wielding mages. The populace was beaten into submission both by Malyk's agents and by the very marauding nonhuman tribes that Malyk was put in place to repel. Rather than pay the orc tribes in its service, the Zhentarim would send them to Daggerdale for their version of rest and recreation—rapine and revolution. During this time most of the Dalesmen began to retreat behind their stockades. Other Dales were unwilling or unable to help, being pressed by Zhentil Keep as well.

So it was until the last male heir of the Morn family, Randal Morn, returned to the vale. Gathering together a small band of heroes and rebels, Randal struck against the Zhentil Keep forces, slaying Malyk and "freeing" the Dale (1353 DR). This freedom is little more than a word, for enemy forces to this day continue to plunder the Dale at will. It is little surprise that the native population of the Dale is unfriendly, suspicious, and bad-tempered. Many of their own entered into service with Zhentil Keep, and trust does not exist even within families.

Randal continues his war against the invaders, operating from an ever-moving base to protect himself and his followers from the Zhentil Keep forces. He is the last of his line, save for his sister, Silver, who has been sent south and has married into the Cormaeril family of nobles in Cormyr. Should something happen

to Randal Morn, a Cormyrean family will have a claim on the lands of Daggerdale.

The Morn family ruled from Castle Daggerdale, located on the southern flank of the Dagger Hills, with a wide view of the valley. The castle was first gutted by Malyk, and later destroyed by Randal Morn's followers when Malyk was killed. It remains a haunting, desolate place, a site of lost hopes and wasted opportunities.

The largest settlement in Daggerdale was a trading outpost on the northern end of the Dale at Dagger Falls. Here goods and supplies were loaded from the dwarven mine of Tethyamar and from Teshendale for shipment down to Cormyr. With the triumph of Malyk and Zhentil Keep, the community became a starting point for Zhentarim caravans. Now that Randal Morn regularly raids the area, Dagger Falls is an open town, where forces of good and evil mix with regularity and in regular conflict. The local lord constable is a stooge in the service of Zhentil Keep, but he can only control what he sees, and his opponents make sure he can see little and prove less. Dagger Falls is a nest of intrigue and suspicion. Most of the extant temples and shrines in the area have been destroyed.

North of Dagger Falls is one of the last pure Zhentil Keep outposts in the Dale, the Flaming Tower. Originally built by a set of fire giant brothers, the giant-sized tower dominated the northern area for many years. More important, the tower existed in the shadow of the Temple in the Sky, a flying citadel which was tethered to the tower. A beast cult devoted to a beholder within the tower was established, and it held wide sway over the surrounding region in the years following the fall of Teshendale. The beholder and giants were quickly co-opted by the Zhentarim.

At length, the Knights of Myth Drannor, a Shadowdale-based adventuring company, destroyed the tower and killed the beholder, setting the Temple in the Sky adrift. Since that time the Temple has been recovered by Zhentarim agents and reestablished, A new beholder occupies the tower, but its worship is slight outside of some impressionable goblinoids. The ruins of the Flaming Tower remain in the hands of Zhentil Keep.

Daggerdale sends a different representative, chosen from the human population in its stockaded communities, to the Dales Council each year. All these representatives seem to be stamped from the same unfriendly mold—too proud to ask for help, too suspicious to trust anyone else. At one point, Ilmeth of Battledale hazarded the guess that Daggerdale only attended the Council to make sure the other Dales were not ganging up on it. Like similar comments about Daggerdale, this merely confirmed to the representative that the other Dales were scant help in dealing with the menace of plotting Zhentarim and marauding orcs.

Deepingdale

Deepingdale is a wide, deeply carved valley blessed with an abundance of game and timber. Like many Dale communities, its population is scattered in many homesteads, but the Dale considers its capital to be the town of Highmoon at the head of the valley, as the main road (the East Way) rises into the pass at Thunder Gap.

Deepingdale has in the past maintained an excellent relationship with the elves of the area, and with the Retreat of the elves, many individual elves and half-elves call this Dale their home. Over half of the population is elven or half-elven. As the area is a haven for wildlife, the Dale's inhabitants count the druids and treants as friends, as well.

Deepingdale's relationships with other human communities

lies many of the staple workers and farmers. They don't have much time for that nonsense of slaying dragons and casting spells and hunting treasure, not when there are herds to drive and crops to tend. The women and men of Featherdale are the most stolid and sensible of the Dales breed.

Featherdale has no ruler and no army, and has recovered from its brief sojourn under the thumb of Scardale. Its farmers are at heart independent of outsiders and self-sufficient, and go to Tasseldale for "city" goods. The Dale sends a freely elected representative to the Council, and that representative has a seven-year term. The current representative is the second in the Kirshoff line to serve in that capacity in the past generation and is on her second term. The general feeling is that the job is hers as long as she wants to put up with it.

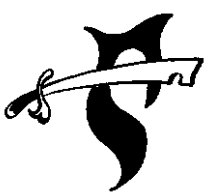
Featherdale's very dispersed nature has in many ways served to keep it safe from the advancing power of Sembia. There is no central keep to seize, market to dominate, or government to buy off, and to date the farmers of Featherdale are as willing to sell to the Sembians as to anyone else. While the Dalesmen are very willing to deal with their southern neighbors, they consider themselves very much Dalesmen, some tracing their families back to old Moondale itself.

The most striking feature of Featherdale is located at its eastward end, where this Dale borders with Scardale. Feather Falls is a beautiful set of plumes where the River Ashaba plunges 50 feet into the depression known as the Scar in a torrent of thundering water.

Feather Falls has a number of small buildings around its top and at a safe distance downstream from it. The most prominent of these are an abandoned temple to Leira, the Lady of the Mists, and a still-active temple to Lathander under the control of Morninglord Jallian Horgontivar (NG hm P13) and 16 of his clerical followers.

Also nearby are the remains of a tower run by the wizard Cholandrothipe the Quiet. Cholandrothipe provided a portage service in which large craft were magically diminished, walked up to the top of the falls, and enlarged. He was slain by assassins working for the Red Wizards, and no one has picked up his task. Now, any craft has to be unloaded and reloaded above the falls into smaller river barges.

Harrowdale



Harrowdale is a farming Dale of gentle slopes and old, well-worn roads cut deep into the land that reaches from the Dragon Reach to the forest along Halfaxe Trail. It is the oldest Dale still in existence, and was originally known as Velarsdale. Its capital is the town of Harrowdale, often a stop for ships traveling to and from the Moonsea (though in the past few generation Ylraphon has captured much of that regular trade).

The northernmost of the coastal Dales, Harrowdale's survival has in the past depended upon good relations with the elves. Much of the food it produces went to elven markets, and the Elven Court supported it, along with Mistledale, Deepingdale, and Shadowdale, because its ideals blended with the Court's own. While a few elven survivors still call at Harrowdale, and large number of half-elves live along its northern reaches, for the most part the old trade is gone.

Harrowdale was overrun by Lashan's forces in the recent war, and it was the appeals of the Dale's Council of Seven Burghers that resulted in mobilization of the northern countries against that threat. The people of Harrowdale escaped the war relatively unscathed and have already returned to their simple, pleasant lives.

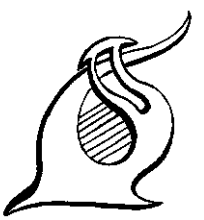
Harrowdale's armed forces consist of only a handful of soldiers (the watch) in the town, and about 20 mounted rangers of various levels. The chief duty of these rangers is to ride to some other location in case of attack and get help. With the passing of the elves, it has been suggested that a more formalized method of protection be instituted, but the Council has been resistant to change.

The Council of Seven Burghers comprises the seven richest people in the community, judged in terms of total land, money, and holdings in the community. The position of burgher is for life or until resignation, when a new survey is conducted to judge the richest person present. Zeboaster of Ordulin called this gathering the "Council of Seven Stones" when it was visibly unresponsive to his suggestions to put a little life into the community. The burghers have ruled since the days of Halvan the Dark, who built the Halfaxe Trail and earned the enmity of the elves.

Harrowdale has temples to Chauntea, Oghma, Tymora, and Mystra. The temple of Mystra has just been rebuilt after being destroyed in the Scardale war.

Natives of Harrowdale are often portrayed as a bit slow and provincial by the other Dales, but they are content in their lives. With the abandonment of the Elven Court, they are seeking new markets for their products, and are emphasizing trade with Tantras and Ravens Bluff across the Vast.

The High Dale



The community of High Dale lies in the shadow of the Thunder Peaks north and west of Sembia, and is the southernmost of the Dalelands. The Dale controls a natural pass between Hooknose Crag on the south and the Thunder Peaks to the north, skirts the northern shore of the Vast Swamp, and borders Cormyr near the Wyvernwater. While its pass sees some traffic, most travelers use either the East Way through Deepingdale, or the Way of the Manticore through Daerlun. The High Dale is a Dale of terraced farms that raise and produce sheep, turnips, potatoes, and hay.

High Dale is ruled by a set of six councilors, one elected each year for a six-year term. The councilors choose the high constable, currently one Irreph Mulmarr, who serves as their leader and

a member of the Dales Council. The high constable has six constables under his control who command the army and command and train the militia.

The High Dale maintains a standing militia of 50 fighters armed with sword and spear, but in times of crisis it could muster most of the vale's population. In addition, the High Dale is home to the Pegasus Archery Company, a mercenary company of horse archers, 75 in number, mounted on light horse and armed with short composite bows. Irreph has also managed to institute the Flying Auxiliary, 20 mounted archers on pegasusback.

Irreph Mulmarr, the high constable, is a 12th-level ranger, and his constables in command of the militia and archers are fighters of 7th-10th level. The commander of the Flying Auxiliary is a 6th-level paladin named Sothinar.

The High Dale has no temples, but it is littered with shrines to all the deities. A location of particular veneration is known as the Dancing Place, staffed by priests of a variety of good and neutrally aligned deities.

Mistledale

Mistledale is a wide clearing of farmland on the Moonsea Ride, the road from Tilver's Gap to the Standing Stone. Its largest community and capital is Ashabenford, where that river crosses the main road, and save for that community, the region is dotted with small farms and stockades. The Dale gains its name from the mist that rises at morn and eve from the river to fill it. This fog gives the area an eerie beauty, but also a haunting nature, and individuals have been said to have vanished in the mists, never to be seen again.

Mistledale is one of the largest and most sprawling Dales, encompassing a vast area up to and under the shelter of the forest itself. Most of its people are self-reliant, but every collection of hamlets or holdings has a large bell with a tone that carries throughout the vale. The bells are cast to different pitches, such that one trained in their use (such as a Rider of Mistledale) knows immediately where the trouble is.

Mistledale has no lord, but rather a Council of Six. The high councilor, senior member and ruler among equals, bears a black rod of office. The high councilor also commands the Riders, a mounted militia who keep the peace in the Dale and along the Moonsea Ride from the Standing Stone in the east to the edge of Tilver's Gap in the west. The current high councilor is Haresk Malorn, a quiet, middle-aged merchant of reputed great wisdom.

Mistledale has the standard scatterings of shrines, but also maintains abbeys to Chauntea and to Silvanus. These abbeys are akin to temples, but are self-contained within their walls, and do not owe allegiance to any city.

The Riders of Mistledale

The Riders of Mistledale number 30 and are known for their lacquered black plate armor and black helms emblazoned with the white horses that are the Dale's insignia. The membership of the Riders has varied over the years, but its members are always fighters and rangers, with the occasional paladin, of 3rd-6th level. They may be armed with magical weaponry of their own ownership.

The total membership of the Riders appears as a group only in the most dire of circumstance, and its members are more often found in groups of three or four, leading patrols of lower-level mounted warriors. In such cases, there are 10-20 1st-level warriors in chain mail with sword and spear accompanying the Riders. It is from this group that new Riders arise.

Heresk Malorn is high councilor of Mistledale and commander of the Riders, and fights as a 0-level fighter. He never appears at the head of his troops except under the most black circumstances (and then with as much magical armor as he can fit into and as much protective magic as he can manage). His black rod of office is rumored to be a *rod of rulership,* and is used in dire situations to protect the vale.

Moondale

Moondale is no longer a Dale, and no longer within the borders of the Dalelands, but is one of the lost Dales that have passed into the history books. Its story is an example of the changing nature of the Dales.

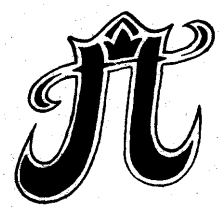
Moondale was a very old Dale on the southern edge of Cormanthor. Tasseldale was but a young community at the time, and Featherdale did not yet exist. Moondale was a trading and farming community, and its primary trade partners were Chancelgaunt (now Selgaunt) and Yhaunn in the nascent nation of Sembia.

As Sembia rose in power as a nation of merchants, ties to Moondale were strengthened. Trade bloomed and money flowed into the community, both from Sembia and from the elves to the north. This brought more traders, and with it more of the refinements of the civilized South. Sons and daughters of the original Dalesmen married into the merchant houses, and soon the entire community was a mixture of southern and Dales blood.

The outlook of the community, however, strayed from its dour (and to the younger generations, old-fashioned) viewpoint to a freewheeling lifestyle brought by of the influx of trade and the lure of money. Within a generation Moondale no longer considered itself part of the Dales community and began to lumber and farm more heavily the southern reaches of Cormanthor (abandoned by the elves). With a second generation, a city had grown up on the site of Moondale, and it joined the nation of Sembia as the city of Ordulin (see Ordulin in the "Sembia" chapter).

The lesson of Moondale (in the opinion of the Dalesmen) is how easy it is to fall away from the traditional and valuable ethics of the past and to be swept up by something new and dangerous and different. Moondale was not destroyed, but it ceased to exist as surely as Teshendale did years later. The other Dales, particularly Featherdale and Tasseldale, should pay close attention to this warning.

Scardale



Scardale takes its name from a steep-sided gorge known locally as the Scar that runs from the Feather Falls to the Dragon Reach. The legends of the original goblin raiders stated that in the battle between the orc god Gruumsh and the elven deity Corellon Larethian, one of the elven god's many blows went astray and carved this wide gouge in the (then) forest. The town of Scardale lies at the mouth of the River Ashaba, which most sages believe carved the gorge.

Scardale has almost recovered from the rule of a young, aggressive lord, Lashan Aumersair. The former lord, Lashan's father Uluf, passed on the title of lordship to his headstrong son, and Lashan wanted to build an empire from his small holdings. He gathered troops, wealth, and artisans to build Scardale into a great power and eventually take over all of the southern Dales. While engaged in this massive build-up, Lashan was less than diplomatic in hiding his aims.

Under Lashan's guidance, the initial campaigns against his neighbors resulted in the overrunning of Harrowdale, Featherdale, and Battledale. His very success proved to be his downfall, however, in that he had figured that the Cormyreans and Sembians would welcome a unified power to contend with the Moonsea cities, and that the Moonsea cities could not stop their squabbling long enough to mount a plausible attack.

Yet Lashan's stunning campaign was so swift and successful that Cormyr, Sembia, Zhentil Keep, and Hillsfar all rose in arms against **him** along with the other Dales he attacked. After overwhelming the central Dales, Lashan was turned back from Mistledale and Deepingdale by the combined might of all the enemies he had made. His empire collapsed overnight. Lashan vanished in the confusion, as his mercenary troops were cut up by the advancing armies.

Sembia briefly occupied Scardale itself, with the intention of adding the Dale to itself, but it was threatened and cajoled into withdrawal by the other kingdoms. All of the Dales Lashan briefly conquered are now independent again.

Scardale is currently under a provisional independent government, with a local lord answerable to a Parliament of Advisors. Hillsfar, Zhentil Keep, Cormyr, Sembia, and each of the Dales have a seat with this advisory body, and the advisors regularly send word back to their respective nations. The current lord is Myriam Beechwood, a complaining, angry former priest of Waukeen who uses his time in the Dales Council to point out this outrage and that atrocity committed by the occupying forces, and demanding that Scardale be returned to self-rule as soon as possible.

In addition, each of the occupying forces is allowed to maintain a garrison in the city. Each garrison cannot, by agreement, number more than 12 persons, though the specific composition of the garrison is left to each nation or Dale. Most of the various Dales send second sons of merchant families and local guard captains, but Sembia and Cormyr's garrisons feature a large percentage of experienced warriors. The Zhentil Keep garrison is dominated by agents of the Zhentarim, looking to turn Scardale into another fief of the Black Network.

This situation of garrisons and advisors is (in theory) to remain until Scardale resumes a normal form of government. This whole business is complicated by the fact that Scardale has always been ruled by a hereditary lord, and Lashan, if he still lives, is the rightful leader and cannot be usurped. Lashan (or proof of his death) has been sought in many areas, with contradictory results.

In the meantime, the various garrison factions test each other's nerve and strength of arm in conflicts that rate above tavern brawls and below battles, and various agents of the nations and communities in occupation play a huge game of intrigue and deception, even among supposedly stalwart allies. Far from bringing peace to Scardale, the combined forces have made the Dale a more dangerous place. The native inhabitants are as a result extremely secretive and distrustful of strangers, biding their time until they can retake what is theirs.

Scardale's temples, with the exception of the temple to Tymora, were destroyed in the war. The Lap of Luck is presently under the auspices of Gelli Parabuck (CG halfm P8), a cheerful and devout halfling. Due to the continuing presence of soldiers, the town also has a shrine to Tempus.

Sessrendale

Sessrendale is an abandoned Dale south of Tilverton and west of Mistledale, in the narrow plain between the southwestern arm of Cormanthor and the Thunder Peaks. It was destroyed about a hundred years ago (1232 DR) by forces out of Archendale.

The full details of the destruction of Sessrendale are conflicting in nature. Archendale sources say that foul necromancies and evil magical constructs stalked the lands, killing innocents and raiding caravans. Refugees who fled from Sessrendale into Cormyr after the event state that the only evil was in the hearts of the Archendale merchants who saw Sessrendale as a competitor and trumped up minor mishaps and created rumors to justify their assault. The fact that the lord of Sessrendale had the name the Dusk Lord did little to help Sessrendale's case.

The final straw was the brutal deaths of several Archendale merchant families whose caravan was en route to Cormyr. Again, the true fiends responsible were unknown, but this incident was enough to whip up excitement in Highmoon, and mobilize already purchased

mercenaries (and the Pegasus Archery Company from the High Dale) to swoop down onto the Dale.

The Sessrendale War was a three-week bloodbath that almost destroyed both sides. Sessrendale had the aid of powerful magicians, and widespread retaliation spread throughout both Dales. Losses were high, and even today along the East Way a traveler can see the burnt-out husks of old buildings and fallen towers.

In the end the Dusk Lord was (reportedly) slain, and Sessrendale's people driven west. The ruling Swords of Archendale, giving their orders from secret locations and secret identities, ordered all that could be stripped from the land be shipped back to Archendale in reparations, everything else burned, and the land salted so none could refound the Dale.

So history has passed over Sessrendale, but its lessons live on. The fact that the other Dales and the larger nations to the south took no action to stop Archendale, first in the war, and later in the wide-scale rapine and destruction, was taken a century later by Lashan as a reason to launch his own assault on the Realms. Further, the stories of Sessrendale, told by Vangerdahast to his young pupil Azoun, convinced the lad (who later would be king) that this border of his kingdom needs his hand and influence, adding to the reasons that Tilverton was taken by Cormyrean forces and annexed. Last, the shame of the attacks has remained with the natives of Archendale, such that they feel guilty for the actions of their ancestors. Yet even that shame is not enough for them to attempt to discover who the Swords were who ordered the destruction of another Dale.

Shadowdale

Shadowdale is a farming community straddling the North Ride from Shadow Gap to Voonlar. Its main town (of the same name) is located where that road crosses the Ashaba. The Dale is broken by patches of light woods that run to the borders of the town and interrupted by a large number of old ruins. These old haunts of treasure and monsters make the region very popular with adventuring companies, and more than a few have called this Dale their home.

Shadowdale is the most legendary of the Dales, and the most open towards strangers. Its ruler is usually an outsider chosen by acclamation by the Dalesmen after the previous ruler steps down or dies 'in office. There has not been a tradition of passing the mantle from parent to child, common in some other Dales.

The full history of this particular Dale, its inhabitants, and the dangers that lie waiting beneath it for the brave and adventurous can be found in the *Shadowdale* book.

Tarkhaldale

Tarkhaldale, also called the Lost Vale, is situated hard on the borders of the Great Desert Anauroch, flanked by steeply rising

mountains. Conifers dot the sides of this vale, as do old ruins and the entrances to mines and caverns.

This small mountain valley now lies on the edge of the vast, hostile desert that divides much of the known Realms. Once this ancient Dale was allied with the rich (and now buried) kingdoms of Asram and Hlondath, whose ruins have been long swallowed by the desert. At its height the community was a quiet mining and farming community known for its carved mugs and pipes. The sudden arrival of orcs and goblins, who slew the dwarves of the mountains around Tarkhaldale and drove away the elves of the nearby Border Forest, isolated the human settlement. Tarkhaldale fell shortly thereafter, and no human has attempted to settle here since. The only human feet that have trod Tarkhaldale are those of the occasional adventurer and the secret caravans of Zhentil Keep. For a long period, the vale was assumed to be occupied by gnolls, goblins, and other fell creatures.

The reports of orcs and goblins occupying the Lost Vale of Tarkhaldale have given way recently to new tales describing a colony of lizard-like creatures. These beings, called saurials, have established their own settlement in the area and are holding it against other races. They have been working to reseed and replant the region. Elminster has passed along information that these saurials are not an evil race in and of themselves, but that one should behave oneself around them because they are much smarter than they look, particularly the big ones.

Tasseldale

Tasseldale is the most civilized of the Dales and is dotted with a wide variety of small communities that, as a group, are considered Tasseldale. These communities are set in a dry river valley stretching from the end of Arch Wood to Featherdale on the River Ashaba. The river itself has long-since found another course (perhaps underground), leaving a wide, verdant, but relatively dry plain.

Tasseldale is the crossroads of the Dales, a pleasant defile marked with light copses of woods and scrub. Its many small communities and villages are lined with the shops and houses of artisans: toymakers, lacemakers, tinsmiths and potters, woodworkers and cabinetmakers, tailors and builders, weavers and vintners and scribes. A dozen of these communities lie scattered from Blackfeather Bridge to the Arch Wood, all of them no more than one street long.

Tasseldale has a force of mounted police officers, known as mairshars, composed of four patrols of 12 people each, plus 11 trainees who fill in to replace the sick or wounded. This force is charged with

patrolling the Dale, protecting all the small village communities, and maintaining the peace. To that end the mairshars are allowed to function as judges as well as arresting officers. The mairshars are fighters of 2nd-5th level, armored in regulation chain mail (though some may have additional magical items).

The ruler of Tasseldale is the leader of these forces, the Grand Mairshar Elizzaria. Elizzaria is a 9th-level fighter who has had previous training as a priest of Helm, rising to 8th level before leaving the church in a dispute over her faith.

The mairshars are Tasseldale's only visible fighting force, but every man and woman between the ages of 14 and 64 is considered part of the Tasseldale militia, and these chubby, contented villagers can lash out and destroy invading armies, as the forces of Lashan of Scardale learned several years ago.

Tasseldale is seeing an influx of merchants and trade from Sembia, including Sembian families moving into the Dale to get away from the hustle and bustle of the more metropolitan areas. Whether these new arrivals take to Daleland ways or the Dale suffers the same fate as Moondale remains to be seen.

Shrines are more common in Tasseldale than temples, and each small community has a few, usually dedicated to Chauntea, Silvanus, Eldath, Lathander, Tymora, or Lliira. There are are few dedicated to Helm or Tempus, and reports of one or two to Auril or Mask.

Teshendale

Situated along the valley of the River Tesh, the region that was Teshendale is now piles of ruins overgrown by brambles and shrubs. In its heyday it ran from the mouth of the Tesh and the independent trading city of Zhentil Keep to Dagger Falls and profited from the trade from the dwarves in the Desertsmouth Mountains to the inland sea.

This Dale was a full member of the Dales Council until two generations ago. Now it is no more. Its people were slain, driven off, or enslaved in a series of raids by the orcs in the mountains and the forces of Zhentil Keep. A large portion of the newer walls of Zhentil Keep were built of the granite mined from this Dale, which has been entirely quarried away, leaving only rolling, rocky areas and the remnants of Teshendale's farmland. The burned remnants of the former inn, the Teshendale Arms, still provide a meeting place for travelers and shepherds, but most of Teshendale's other buildings have vanished. The destruction of Teshendale was completed 50 years ago; its sign, still found on cairns and building stones, consists of a kite-shaped lozenge, with its lower half filled with water and a symbol of a cresting wave.

Teshendale was ruled by an elder; the last, Elder Jaothe Hulnhurn, is believed long dead. A place is still reserved at the Dales Council for Teshendale, partially in memory of Jaothe and partially as a warning that the destruction of Teshendale could happen to any Dale.

During the destruction of Teshendale, both Shadowdale and Daggerdale were under pressure from Zhentil Keep agents, and could not have aided even if they wanted to. However, the shame of their lack of action remains on both communities.

Teshendale's largest trading community was Teshwave, which is now totally under the control of Zhentil Keep and used as a staging area for their mercenary and nonhuman troops. One other community of note is the village of Snowmantle on the edges of the Border Forest. The stated home of Laeril Snowmantle of the Knights of Myth Drannor, this small community was destroyed by Zhentil Keep's armies, and is now used as a logging camp for that city.

The Elven Woods

The large forest known as the elven woods was once a much greater forest which reached the Storm Horns Mountains of Suzail and crouched hard on the Sea of Fallen Stars. This was known as Cormanthor, and was one of the great elven kingdoms of old. It is greatly reduced now from its halcyon days when the elves dominated the surrounding lands, but is still referred to by that name.

Now the elves are gone, mostly, having retreated to Evermeet out in the Sea of Swords. Some elves and half-elves remain—those with unfinished business or loved ones or comrades remaining in the land. The woods—that which has not been cleared for the new kingdoms of Cormyr and Sembia and farmed by the Dales—is littered with ruins. The elves of old, ruling from Myth Drannor, kept curious humans at bay, but they are gone now, and many humans seek to unlock the secrets of the elven woods.

Cormanthor is a mixture of temperate woods, generally in a climax growth. Oak, maple, and larch are common, with groves of beech and elm throughout. Some pines may be found in more barren areas, but the mixture is primarily deciduous. Light is shaded but not totally blocked out by the canopy of leaves above, and the woods give the traveler, whether human, elf, or other, a warm, contented feeling.

The Elven Court

Within Cormanthor, there were three main centers of elven activity—Semberholme, the Tangled Trees, and the Elven Court. The wondrous city of Myth Drannor was a fourth center until its destruction hundred of years ago.

The Elven Court, known in Thorass as Everlor, was the home of the royal family of Cormanthor and where most of what elven government consisted of took place. It was a widespread community, more similar to the separate holdfasts and farms of the Dales than the great cities of the humans. Its greatest buildings were for the royal family, but most of the community lived in wooden structures within the great trees of the area.

The elves of this region lived in the trees and were buried beneath them among the trees' roots with most of their worldly possessions. This was common practice for the elves, and as long as there was a living elven presence in the area, grave robbers gave the region a wide berth. Since the elven Retreat, however, adventurers and tomb robbers have sought to plunder the treasure beneath the roots. In addition (or perhaps as a result), more monstrous creatures now wander the Elven Court as well.

One prize that has so far eluded any plunderers is the hall of the royal family of Cormanthor. Its exact location is unknown, even among the elves who remain in the Realms. Given the magics of the powerful rulers, it is possible that they took the bodies and magics of their ancestors with them to Evermeet. However, reason the more greedy raiders, they would still leave behind the halls of their dead and the treasures buried in them. These halls have yet to be located.

Halfaxe Trail

Halfaxe Trail is an overgrown footpath that runs through the heart of the elven woods from Harrowdale to the Moonsea Ride. An early lord of Harrowdale in the days of the Blacksails (pirates), Halvan the Dark, grew weary of losing trade outside his harbors, and resolved to strengthen the importance and wealth of his Dale by linking up with the overland road from the Moonsea south to Cormyr. His chief obstacle in this goal was the elven woods.

Despite the elves' claim to the woods, Halvan the Dark hired a dwarven engineer, Durl Halfaxe, to cut a road. Halfaxe Trail was the work of the dwarf and an army of humans; they burned and cut a mile-wide slash through the trees to guard against elven ambushes. This was in defiance of the agreement between the Dalesmen and the elves, but even the entreaties of the other Dales could not stop Halvan. The elves and their allies raised an army, but were overmatched by the humans' numbers, weapons, and dark magic. The trail was put through.

Greedily, Halfaxe commanded his workers to cut on into the forest west of the road where he knew the ruins of Myth Drannor lay. Halvan the Dark accompanied his engineer in this task. Both Halvan and Halfaxe foresaw unearthing riches to keep them wealthy all their days. The elves raised up old and powerful magics slumbering in the ruins and slew the engineer and his force utterly. Not a human or dwarf returned from the party, nor were there bodies to send back.

The trail has since grown in until it is but a footpath, close-guarded by the elves; none pass save by their will. It is surprisingly well-used, for the elves are wise traders and not unfriendly to humans, even Lord Halvan's successors in Harrowdale, who went on to be major trading partners with the elves. Whether the trail remains open in these days following the disappearance of the Elven Court remains to be seen.

Moander's Road

Moander's Road is a very wide track burrowed into the northern side of the elven woods, running in a straight line from Yulash toward the ruins of Myth Drannor, though well short of that destination. Unlike Halfaxe Trail, this straight course was not created by a team of axemen over a period of months. Instead it was created in a single day by a god thought long dead.

The god Moander, Lord of Rot and Corruption, was roused from his sleep by Alias of the Azure Bonds in 1357 DR. Upon awakening, he set his own course south to Myth Drannor, hoping to seize the magic of that ancient site. He was stopped in his madness by Alias and her companions, but not before the god had destroyed a large swath of the forest, adding the debris to its body and growing as it moved forward. When this juggernaut was finally halted, it formed a huge hill that rises above the trees.

The hill still remains, an exclamation point at the end of a long line. Its rot still blooms with strange, unearthly blossoms, and it is unknown what creatures nest within its inanimate body. The destruction that Moander created, Moander's Road, is only now recovering and is overrun with scrub and small trees. However, it provides a rapid route to Myth Drannor from the north that agents of the Zhentarim have been quick to use.

Myth Drannor

The ruins of Myth Drannor are among the most celebrated of the Realms. Once a great city, Myth Drannor is now a sprawling ruin overgrown with trees and greenery, located in the heart of the elven woods.

Of old, humans were few in these lands; the vast forests of what is now the Dalelands were home to elves. When humans came first to what is now Sembia seeking the mineral riches of the north shores of the Moonsea, the elves met and traded freely with them in the splendid city of Myth Drannor. Humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes lived together there in harmony amidst created beauty. Myth Drannor was ancient then, and, sages say, outshone the most splendid of the cities of today, even vast and imperial Waterdeep.

Now a lost, fabled ruin, Myth Drannor was the city of bards, storytellers, artificers and inventors, arcane knowledge, mages, researchers, and historians. Its jewellers were matchless, and its musical instruments (of elven make) unsurpassed. It earned the name of *City of Love* among the elves, and the *Towers of Beauty* among bards. It was destroyed when the Army of Darkness captained by the dreaded nycaloths was raised in the northern mountains and swept down upon it over a millennium ago.

The elven hero Fflar, captain of Myth Drannor, slew a nycaloth with his bare hands then, or so the legends say. Others tell of a magical blade, Demonbane, wielded by him that day. Yet despite such heroics, in the end the city was lost, cast down,

sacked, and burned. Many of noble genius and influence found graveless deaths that day, and humans were driven almost to extinction on the Sembian coast.

For hundreds of winters humankind has remembered Myth Drannor as a legendary treasure house of lost gems and magic guarded by the elves who let none near and hold the place sacred. The passing of the elves in their Retreat to Evermeet has left the woods open to humankind for the first time. Since then, several bands of adventures are known to have entered the city. Not all have come out.

Many of the powers surrounding Cormanthor (Hillsfar, Zhentil Keep, Sembia, and the Dales), as well as adventuring companies, have sent exploring/plundering parties into the ruins that the elves held sacred and kept undisturbed since the city's fall. Few have found anything of value, and news has begun to spread of tanar'ri and fiends in the ruins. The Knights of Myth Drannor have reported finding a newly constructed altar to some dark power in the center of the ruins. The altar is reported as being undamaged and undisturbed, and was apparently brought into being by renegade priests of Bane. If this is so, it represents a growing threat to the entire Inner Sea area.

Myth Drannor represents a great and dangerous opportunity for adventuring parties in the Moonsea area—a large ruin that is only now being plundered. Such travelers are warned that in addition to creatures of the lower planes, the area holds forces and expeditions from various nations and adventuring groups who have set up their own areas of influence within the ruins and may take unkindly to intrusions. For a brief time, the Knights of Myth Drannor held the others in check, but that group has retired and the way is open to other explorers and invaders.

Semberholme

Lake Sember, surrounded by the towering oaks and maples of the elven wood, is one of the most beautiful locations in all the North. Here was one of the three main communities of elves before the Retreat.

Semberholme was a community of noncombatants, a place for women, children, and the infirm. The area was suited to this purpose because the surrounding limestone hills were extensively holed by water-drilled caves that had long ago been explored and secured by the surface-dwelling elves. In case of attack, the community could retreat below ground and hold off huge numbers of assailants with but a handful of warriors.

The rising tide of humankind, in particular the destruction of Sessrendale, convinced the elves that even Semberholme was not safe from humanity's invasion, This persistent human tendency to invade and destroy was a powerful force in the decision to begin the Retreat.

Semberholme was an elven community, and not even half-elves were permitted to drink of its waters. In the years since then, people have visited the lake and reported seeing visions of great crystalline towers rising from the lake's surface. The true nature of these towers, if they exist, is unrevealed.

The Standing Stone

The Standing Stone is a huge plinth of glossy gray rock, incised with elven runes that wind about its base in a series of bands. The stone itself is over 20 feet high, and may be found where the Moonsea Ride joins Rauthauvyr's Road.

The Standing Stone was erected 1,367 years ago by mighty elven mages to commemorate the pact between the Elven Court and the newly arriving Dalesmen. The winding script at the base of the Stone states the terms of that pact: that while there are elves in the forest, the people of the Dales may settle in those lands at their borders, but not reduce the woods or invade elven territories.

The wood has been reduced severely since the stone was erected, often by other human agents (in particular the Sembians), who have had little love of the People. When the Sembians forced the road through to Hillsfar (see the "Sembia" chapter), the elves responded by routing the road to pass at the base of the stone, ironically pointing out that not all people need to deal at the point of a sword.

The Standing Stone has some enchantment upon it and radiates magic. It cannot be defaced or marred, for stains or cuts on its surface heal within days.

The Tangled Trees

The third great elven community in Cormanthor was the Tangled Trees, a sprawling mess of houses and overlapping clanholds. While the Elven Court had its nobility and Semberholme its beauty, the Tangled Trees had its own magic and sparkle, and was the most vibrant and alive of the three elven communities.

The Tangled Trees was a place for the young, for elves no more than a century in age, along with half-elves and some human friends and lovers. It was a brawling, lusty place, with fights common and adventure waiting to be had. The Tangled Trees was established soon after the building of Halfaxe Trail as a further buffer between the staid elves and the Sembians. If the Sembians truly wished ill of the elves, then the elves' most vibrant and cunning members would show them the error of their ways.

The Tangled Trees is one of the few areas in Cormanthor where the traveler can still encounter elves in sufficient numbers to be impressive. Indeed, many of the elven heroes swashbuckling their way across the Inner Sea call this area their home. Not for them the peaceful Retreat, the calm lack of resistance. These young elves feel that they can take the world by the throat and show it the error of its ways. Such is the sure logic of the young of any race.

The Tangled Trees has a large number of abandoned tree homes and outposts, but many more are still occupied. Looters and adventurers seeking easy pickings have discovered that these elves are more than willing to fight for their territory and their homes.

Vale of Lost Voices

Hidden in the depths of the elven wood is a lightly wooded defile that lies across Rauthauvyr's Road between the Standing Stone and Essembra. This Vale of Lost Voices is a rich and fertile area, yet unsettled.

The Vale is a place sacred to the elves, for here they placed the bodies of their fallen warriors, and here their ghosts wander. The elves seldom go here, preferring when they do to visit it alone in search of spiritual guidance and peace or with family to make a burial or come to a wake. But the Vale is said to be guarded for the elves by another unknown being even in these times, and none has chosen to settle in it.

Other Features of The Dales Area

The Dales area has some other features of note, detailed here in alphabetical order.

Border Forest

The Border Forest is literally that—the wild frontier of four separate regions in the Realms, without truly belonging to any of them. Located north of Daggerdale, it could be called the northern border of the Dalelands. It is also the western reaches of the Moonsea cities, particularly Zhentil Keep, which is active within its woods, and of the Cold Lands, rich in their monsters. Lastly, it shares its western border with Anauroch, the Great Desert, preventing that great waste from expanding any farther eastward.

The Border Forest is a mixture of pines and patches of oaks and other deciduous trees. The forest floor is relatively tangled with small trees, scrub, and other undergrowth, making the going difficult.

The Border Forest is home to a wide variety of creatures, including satyrs, pixies, sprites, and dryads. These creatures tend to be cooler and crueler than their reputation in the South would indicate—the sprites are dressed for cooler temperatures, and the satyrs are shaggier to stand up to the cold winter. A number of druid groups have also set up shop within the forest's edges.

The greatest conflict within the Border Forest is caused by the extensive lumbering by Zhentil Keep out of Snowmantle. The various forest creatures regularly harass the Zhentil Keep operation, leading to reprisals from the humans. During this time the creatures retreat to the hills and the deepest portions of their home forest. The humans take minimal losses and return to tell their masters of a "resounding success." And three months later the satyrs and their allies begin the harassment again.

Humans traveling through the Border Forest should make clear whose side they are on. Otherwise, they may be lured into long term servitude by a nixie or dryad.

Desertsmouth Mountains

The Desertsmouth Mountains form the western border of the Dales and serve as a barrier between them and the Desert of Anauroch. These forbidding peaks are laced with hidden trails and long-forgotten outposts, many dating back to the days before the desert came, when the land was rich and vibrant. Now the area is mostly a monster-haunted wasteland.

The Desertsmouth Mountains were once the home of one of the greatest dwarven communities in the North, the Mines of Tethyamar. These wondrous mines and caverns were bored by generations of dwarves who looted the earth of her valuables and sold them to humans and elves, sending rafts of riches down the River Tesh to the Moonsea and beyond. The mines were ruled by the Iron House, the royal court of this great nation. Tethyamar has perished within dwarven memory, overrun by fiends and hordes of orcs and ogres. Its last king, Ghellin, still lives as the king-in-exile, his present whereabouts unknown. Dwarves in the Inner Sea lands speak of and work towards the day when "the king shall take his throne again."

The Desertsmouth Mountains are also home to the Lost Vale of Tarkhaldale (see the earlier Tarkhaldale section for more details) and are the reputed lair of Aghazstamn the Dracolich. Though destroyed, Aghazstamn's lair reportedly contained a rich load of sparkling, flickering glowstone, known as *beljuril.*

Shadow Gap

Originally known as Shaddath Gap, but more aptly corrupted to Shadow Gap, the high pass in the Desertsmouth Mountains serves as a permanent marking between the wilder Dalelands and the more civilized nation of Cormyr to the south, particularly since Tilverton has been placed under that nation's "protection."

A winding trail leads up the side of Shadow Gap, giving the traveler an excellent view of both communities. The gap is unoccupied, save for the occasional raider, and is marked by an empty hostel located at the saddle of the pass.

Spiderhaunt Woods

Located on the western slope of the Desertsmouth Mountains, the Spiderhaunt Woods are a thick wood of spikey oak, thistletree, and pine. It is heavily overgrown and dark as the night beneath the trees' canopy. Travel through them is well-nigh impossible, and most travelers who have business in the area prefer to skirt their edges.

Adding to the ill repute of this forest, it is the home of a huge number of spiders and ettercaps. Local legend states that a spider lord rules from the center of the forest's web, and all that happens within the Dales is merely the result of his wishes. A small Beast Cult has grown up around this unseen and likely fictitious creature, but any traveler who passes within the forest's borders is warned that the spiders rule here, regardless of their master.

Cormyr

Cormyr (Core-MEER) is one of the handful of proper nations in the North. Cormyr straddles the land in the northeast region of the Sea of Fallen Stars between the Lake of Dragons and Anauroch. It was at one time a heavily wooded region, but is now a land of small forests and organized farms. The surviving woods are as thick and dangerous as Cormanthor, but these areas are now outnumbered by terrain cleared for use by the cities and landed lords of Cormyr.

Cormyr is also called the Forest Country and the Land of the Purple Dragon. It is a rich kingdom; its southern, eastern, and northwestern areas have many farms, offering abundant yield for trade. The central areas of the kingdom are still wooded; these woods, carefully husbanded by the forces of the king, still yield good timber and have plentiful game.

Cormyr is also strategically located on overland trade routes from the cities of the Moonsea to the northeast; the Dalelands to the east; the Inner Sea (on which it has two major ports, Suzail and Marsember); and the lands to the west, northwest, and south—particularly the rich city-states and kingdoms of the Sword Coast.

Cormyr is a wet land, receiving abundant rain in summer and spring and abundant snow in winter. It has long, cold winters, and short but hot summers. Much of spring and fall is temperate and moist, and as a result, Cormyr's farms and forests are both green and rich in yield and splendor. Fog is common along the seacoast, and there are often mists present on the High Moors, extending in to the pass at High Horn and the gorge north of Eveningstar.

Government

Cormyr is a hereditary monarchy. The present king is Azoun IV, a regal, middle-aged man (in his fifties) of sophisticated tastes and keen wits, son of the famed warrior-king Rhigaerd II. Azoun has ruled from his hilltop palace in Suzail and the Royal Court of interconnected public buildings below it since 1336 DR. However, he is rumored to travel the land in disguise to learn more about his people. Azoun has proved himself a surefooted and careful monarch and military leader. He not only organized the crusade against the Tuigans in 1360 DR, but killed the leader of the enemy horde in single combat.

The king takes council from the Royal Magician, Vangerdahast, a wizard of great power and Azoun's mentor, teacher, and friend. Much of what Azoun knows of the world has been shown him by Vangerdahast, who today is known as Azoun's "pet wizard" and considered the power behind the throne. Vangerdahast is the most powerful wizard in Cormyr, and his loyalty is totally to the crown.

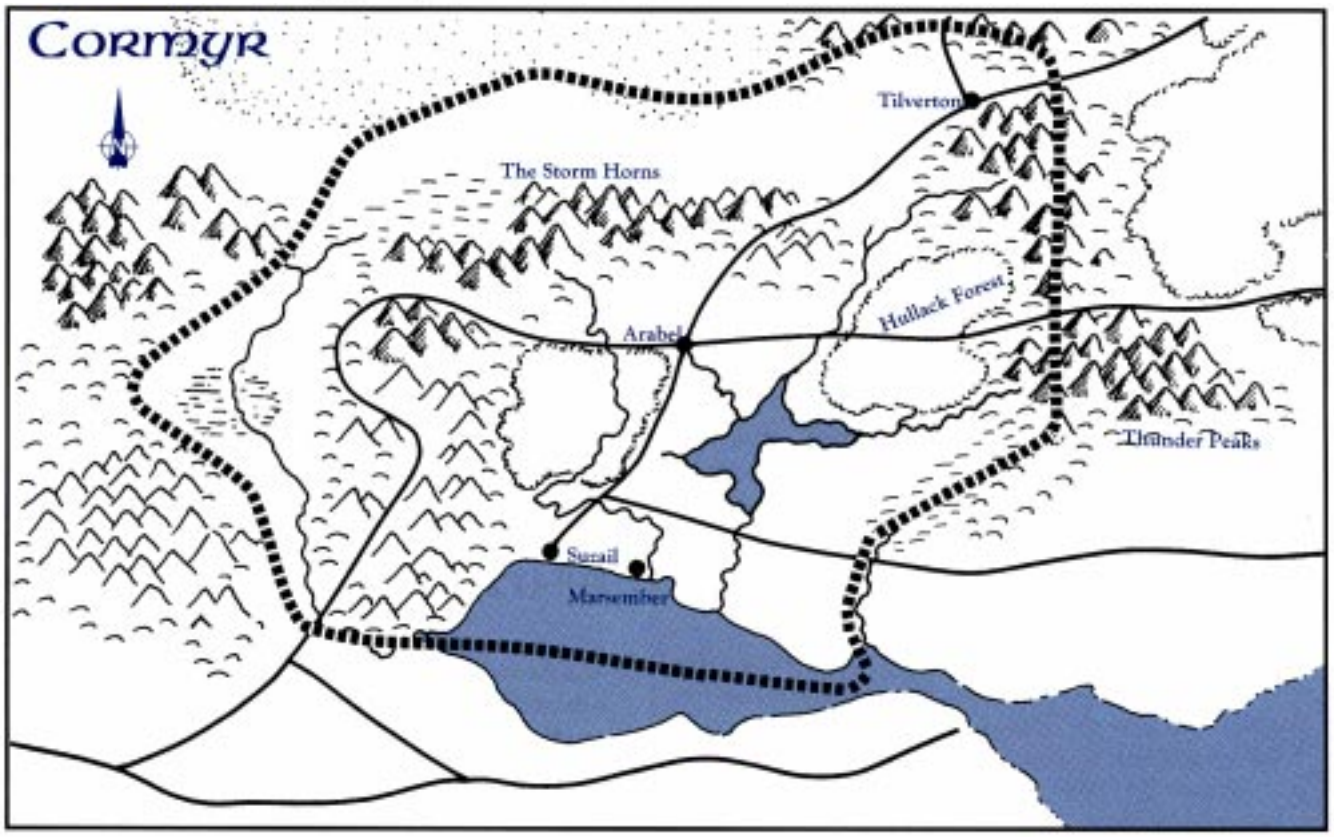
The king taxes lightly and makes the law by his decrees in the Court of the Crown. In addition to the tithe collected by the local lords, discussed below, there is a royal tax of 1 gp per head annually—5 gp for wealthy landowners.

Azoun's banner is the Purple Dragon (a purple dragon on a white field); it is borne often by a strong standing army under the command of the Lord High Marshal of the Kingdom, Duke Bhereu. For major endeavors, the king himself leads the way, following in the footsteps of his father Rhigaerd.

History

Cormyr dates its years from the founding of House Obarskyr 1,342 years ago, the first of the noble houses of Cormyr and the line of its kings. For the bulk of this time, Cormyr was little more than a single city (Suzail) and a few fortified outposts. At times the monarch was forced by rebellion and intrigue to rule from those outposts instead of from the throne. King Azoun is the fourth of his name and the 71st of his line.

The land has been officially at peace for many years—since Rhigaerd overthrew the last of the border raiders. However, Cormyrean forces have taken part in many actions in nearby regions, and the nation has



recently mustered its forces to face Gondegal, the rebel of Arabel; to occupy Tilverton on the marches of the Dalelands; and to lead a crusade against the great Tuigan horde invading the Realms from the east. One wit has noted, "Yes, the land is at peace, but the army has to keep busy."

In addition to pursuing major actions, Cormyrean patrols often skirmish with bandits on the roads in the north and west, and are at present battling orcs and other creatures north and east of Cormyr in Tilver's Gap and Shadow Gap. Both of these areas are threatened by evil raiders who will menace Cormyr itself if they ever overrun Tilverton. Cormyr has built a fortress, Castle Crag, to defend the kingdom from attacks from that quarter, and maintains the High Horn to protect against attacks from the West.

Lords of Cormyr

The king rules by means of appointed lords, one in each town or smaller city, and by the fealty of the landed nobility and the rich merchant lords. The landed nobility is extensive and interbred such that most can claim a drop of two of royal blood somewhere in their veins, but it centers around two dozen major families. The merchant lords are the wealthiest caravan and business owners of the day.

Local lords are responsible for defending the local farms, dispensing the king's justice, keeping the peace, serving as the king's eyes and ears, and (most importantly) collecting tithes for the king and for themselves (1 sp/head/year). Each lord is allowed up to 40 men-at-arms, plus up to six guides/captains (typically rangers). These may serve as the town guard. Volunteer town guardsmen are known as the watch, and may, upon the judgment of the lord, be exempted from the tax if their service has been valuable. Lords are also requested to stable and maintain a fit, fast horse of the best quality for the use of the king's messengers, who ride fast and far, requiring them to change mounts at every stop.

The relationship between the landed nobility and the appointed local lords is generally good, though many established families treat the local servants of the crown as no more than royal lackeys to be bossed about or flattered as need be. The financial health of local nobles can usually be discerned by the degree to which they fawn over the local lord.

Cormyte Defense

To enforce the royal word Cormyr maintains a large standing army, which has increased dramatically in the last decade. More than 12,000 Purple Dragons (called such for the banner of Cormyr) are now garrisoned in major cities and fortifications. A 25-ship imperial navy patrols out of Suzail, the palace guard numbers some 150 trained elite warriors, and the nation maintains a

Lords and Heralds of Cormyr

Local lords are summarized here. Towns are listed in order of size and importance. Cormyr has three major cities (Suzail, Marsember, and Arabel), and the remainder of its settlements are small towns similar to those found in the Dales. Each lord must have an assistant who serves as a clerk and recordkeeper and is a trained herald. (Heralds are listed with their respective masters.)

Suzail: Sthavar, Lord Magister of the City of Suzail, rules in the name of King Azoun IV and and acts as commander of his Purple Dragons. Sthavar's herald is Xrorn Hackhand.

Marsember: Marsember's lord is Ildool, a grasping hack politico who would gladly sell out to the highest bidder were it not for his herald Bledryn Scoril, who endeavors to keep him on the straight and narrow.

Arabel: Arabel's lord is a lady, the noble Myrmeen Lhal, a ranger of great power and repute. She is aided in governing by Westar of the Gates.

Tilverton: Tilverton only recently gained official status among the lords, though is still considered a protectorate. Tilverton's lord is Lady Regent Alasalynn Rowanmantle, and her herald is a young diplomat named Cuthric Snow.

Waymoot: Waymoot's local lord is Lord Filfar Woodbrand (also called "Trollkiller" Woodbrand). Dhag Greybeard serves as herald for him and Lord Commander Dembarron in High Horn.

Wheloon: Wheloon's lord is a headstrong youth grown into a headstrong man, Sarp Redbeard. His herald is Estspirit.

Immersea: Samtavan Sulacar is the lord of Immersea, a position he views as being close to being in retirement. This is because most of the real work is picked up by his herald, Culspiir.

Eveningstar: This small community is ruled by another female warrior, Tessaril Winter, and her herald Tzin Tzummer. In the lands of Cormyr, female rulers are more common than in the Dales.

Dhedluk: The appointed lord of Dhedluk is Thiombur, a jovial and conversant individual with connections everywhere. His herald is a young woman named Ildul.

Hilp: The small town of Hilp has Doon Dzavar as its local lord. His herald is the wizard Delzantar.

Espar: Hezom of Helm has left his church to aid King Azoun in government. Hezom's herald is a reformed rogue named "Yellow Hand" Yespar.

Tyrluk: Suldag the Boar, a warrior of great prowess and greater girth, is the appointed lord of Tyluk. His herald is his former squire Nzal "Tooth" Tursa.

High Horn: High Horn is a military outpost and is ruled in the king's name by Lord Commander Thursk Dembarron. His herald is Dhag Greybeard, who is also the herald for nearby Waymoot.

mounted force of 500 warriors trained in sword and bow led by 30 knights out of the Court. Most of these elite units are veterans of the crusade against the Horde and are members of the Order of the Golden Way, a military order commemorating those battles.

But the most deadly unit in the army is the widely feared War Wizards, mages who are known for their black-and-purple robes.

Wizards in Cormyr

Mages of any rank of power, from thaumaturgists (5th level) and up, must by law report their names, sigils, and dwelling places to the Royal Magician, Vangerdahast, in Suzail. Such spell-casters are also required to give their names whenever challenged in Cormyr by soldiers of the king or officers of the Court upon pain of magical destruction at the hands of the Royal Magician or the Council of Mages (the aforementioned War Wizards).

The Cormyrean Mindset

Cormyr is one of the most civilized and responsible nation in Faerûn. The people have a strong loyalty to their government and king, and tend to be law-abiding and peaceable unless put upon. For its part, the government of Cormyr seems almost enlightened in dealing with its people. There is a strong noble class, a vibrant freeman or commoner class, and a growing merchant class. The everyday situation has improved within the past generation for most Cormytes, and they are quite content.

Cormyreans are friendly and open, and see themselves as cultured, peaceful, and refined. They fight when they have to and to protect the rights of others. Having achieved peace within their own borders, Cormytes and their leaders look elsewhere to see what they can do.

Often Cormyreans see the rest of the world as a dangerous and evil place, needing a strong hand to control it. The Dalesmen are good at heart, but too disorganized to make a credible stand against the evil of the Moonsea. Waterdeep and Sembia seem to spend too much time counting money to fight their foes. The independent states of the Vast, the Western Heartlands, and the Dragon Coast are sprawling and disorganized. Someone has to bring peace to the world, and it might as well be the followers of the Purple Dragon.

Cormyreans are often perceived as being elitist and isolated from the troubles of the day. Their response is to point out that should it be their fault that they have put their nation in order, showing the value of a wise king, a good people, and a strong military force?

Adventurers in Cormyr are viewed as a curiosity; adventurers native to Cormyr are an aberration or following a passing fancy. The idea that people would risk their lives needlessly for gold or glory strikes many natives as odd, a throwback to darker days when that sort of thing was necessary. However, despite this attitude, there are more than enough dragons, goblin hordes, and evil emissaries of the gods to keep the brave at heart busy in Cormyr.

Customs

The nation of Cormyr has a number of customs that the traveler should recognize when operating there. These customs include:

- Commoners of both sexes bow their heads to royalty.
- Burials are followed by wakes.
- It is unlucky and an offense to the gods to kill a cat, for cats are the eyes and messengers of deities. It is good to keep a cat, but a sin to clip its tail, ears, or fur or hamper its ability to produce kittens. A cat may not be kept in a cage.
- Women interested in finding a mate wear purple scarves at hip and/or throat.
- Adventurers who go in peace, but armed, wear peacestrings about their swordhilts (to prevent quick unsheathings). These strings are colored and tasselled cords, and it is an art to tie them in ornate knots. The best of such knots look complicated, but may be undone with a single jerk to free the weapon.

Locations of Interest

Cormyr's three major cities are Suzail, Marsember, and Arabel, and it features quite a number of small towns. These cities and towns, as well as other notable features of Cormyr, are discussed here.

Arabel

Arabel is a fair-sized city of almost a thousand main buildings, situated where the East Way meets Calantar's Way in eastern Cormyr. It is a fortified city, though it has many posts for trading houses outside its walls.

Arabel is first and foremost a merchant city, famed for its jewelry, principally that of the merchant house of Thond. A number of trading companies have major outposts here, and there is always a floating pool of mercenary talent to be hired at any time, the largest unit being the Red Ravens. The city is also the main shipping area for coal in Cormyr, gathering coal from mines in the Gnoll Pass area. A map of Arabel may be found on page 46.

The major trading companies in Arabel include a number of multicity costers and priakos—Dragoneye Dealing, Six Coffers, Thousandheads, Trueshield, and the dubious Iron Throne (not to be confused with the Iron House of the dwarves). Local merchant houses include Baerlear, Bhela, Gelzunduth, Hiloar, Kraliqh, Misrim, Nyaril, and Thond.

Arabel has one major temple, the Lady's House, devoted to the worship of Tymora. It was here that the avatar of the Luck Maiden appeared to the populace and protected the city during its dark time. As a result, the church has grown further in power under the wise (and some say high-handed) leadership of Daramos Lauthyr (CG hm P11). The Lady's House is the major healing force in Arabel, with 24 priests answering to Lauthyr's call. The most notable of Tymora's servants in Arabel is Doust Sulwood (CC hm P8), former lord of Shadowdale. Doust strongly tries to mitigate Lauthyr's abrasive personality.

Arabel is also noted for a number of fine inns and taverns, the most notable being the Dancing Dragon and the Wild Goose (better known by its other name, the World Serpent). The best inn in the city is the Pride of Arabel, for those who can afford it.

Arabel is currently ruled by Myrmeen Lhal (NG hf R12).

Adventuring in Cormyr

The military history of Cormyr has long been one one of guerrilla ambushes and running skirmishes, with its army only conducting set piece battles outside its borders. The Court is thus very sensitive to the presence of armed people within the kingdom (that is, armed people who do not owe their allegiance to the king). Lawless freeswords cannot operate within Cormyr. Mercenaries cannot gather, while armed, in groups of more than five in any place save public markets or inns and taverns (and in the latter, it is customary to surrender all weapons to a custodian behind the bar). Violators face immediate disarmament, forfeiture of goods, and imprisonment at the hands of the local watch or soldiers of the king.

The exceptions to this decree are when such fighters are operating under hire; under contract to someone authorized to hire them (nobility, or chartered merchants) as caravan or warehouse guards, or as bodyguards; or by permission of the king. Save in times of war, permission of the king is granted only in the form of a royal charter.

A royal charter can be obtained only from the Lord Commander at High Horn, the Warden of the Eastern Marches in Arabel (Baron Thomdor), or the Chancellor or Lord High Marshal at the Royal Court in Suzail. The king can of course grant one at any time, anywhere. Such charters customarily cost 1,000 gp, a further tax of 300 gp a year, and can be revoked without warning at any time. The annual fee is payable upon the anniversary of the issuance of the original charter, with a late penalty of 20 gp per day thereafter, accruing up to 10 days later. Any further delay results in automatic suspension of the charter and a warrant for the arrest and detention of any such mercenaries operating within the boundaries of Cormyr thereafter.

Charters are customarily given to a company of adventurers. Such a company may not number more than 30 persons at any one time. All members of the chartered company must wear the arms or badge of their company at all times when armed in Cormyr. Finally, the names of the members of any such company must be on file in Suzail, any changes in rosters being reported once a month to the aforementioned officers in High Horn, Suzail, Arabel, or the high constable of the King's Garrison at Waymoot.

Arabel

Key To Arabel

1. Citadel (and jail)
2. Palace (court, assembly hall)
3. House Marliir (noble family)
4. The Weary Knight (inn of good quality)
5. The Lady's House (temple of Tymora)
6. The Dragon's Rest (guesthouse and barracks, owned by the crown for quartering of its guests)
7. The Whistling Wheel (inn)
8. The Traveler's Banner (inn)
9. The Lamps (hardware store)
10. The Bazaar (market area)
11. Eastgate
12. The Eastwatch Inn
13. The Iron Throne yards (merchant company yards)
14. Milzar's Yards (rental stockyards)
15. Thousandheads Trading Coster yards (merchant company yards)
16. Dragoneye Dealing Coster yards (merchant company yards)
17. Elfskull Inn
18. Calantar's Gate
19. Red Raven Mercenary Company HQ
20. The King's Trading Yards (crown-owned, but available for rental)
21. Trueshield Trading Priakos yards (merchant company yards)
22. The High Horn Gate
23. The Night Wolf Inn
24. Mother Lahamma's House (boarding house)
25. Raspral's Kiss (Festhall)
26. Six Coffers Market Priakos yards (merchant company yards)
27. Gelzunduth Warehouse
28. Gelzunduth Warehouse
29. House of Gelzunduth (local merchant)
30. Rhalseer's (boarding house of good quality)
31. House of Kraliqh (local merchant)
32. House of Bhela (local merchant)
33. Well
34. House of Misrim (local merchant)
35. House of Hiloar (local merchant)
36. Shassra's (boarding house of good quality)
37. Falcon's Rest (inn of good quality)
38. House of Nyaril (local merchant)
39. The Watchful Shield (rental bodyguards)
40. Dulbiir's (rental costumes and finery, escort service)
41. Mulkaer Lomdath, fine tailor
42. The Silver Tankard (tavern)
43. Mhaer Tzintin, Moneylender/moneychanger
44. Eighlar's Fine Wines
45. Jhamma's Silks and Furs
46. Dhelthaen (butcher)
47. The Strongwatch (rental warehouse, heavily guarded)
48. The Pride of Arabel (inn of good quality)
49. Orbul's Fine Carving & Furniture
50. Khammath's Crystal (shop)
51. The Black Mask (tavern)
52. House of Thond (local merchant)
53. Hawk's Perch Trading House (pawnshop)
54. Szantel's Ropes, Cords, Chains, and Mesh
55. The Wary Warrior (weapons of all types)
56. The Two-Headed Lion (tavern)
57. The Striking Snake (tavern)
58. The Coiled Whip (tavern)
59. The Gentle Smile (festhall of good quality)
60. The House of Baerlear (local merchant)
61. The Black Barrel (tavern)
62. Hundar's Fine Carpets, Perfumes, and Lantems
63. Iardon's Hirelings (rental servants, escorts, loaders and lifters, mourners, message or errand runners)
64. Monument to Dhalmass, the Warrior King
65. The Silver Stallion tack shop
66. Green Phial medicines & physics shop and clinic
67. Mhaes's (festhall)
68. House of Thond rental warehouse
69. Six Coffers Market Priakos warehouse (merchant company warehouse)
70. The Bent Bow (tavern)
71. Laeduth's (boarding house)
72. The Red Sword (tavern)
73. Vaethym Olorar, rental falconer
74. Saerdar's Silks and Flowers
75. The Hungry Man (restaurant)
76. The Chalice (fine brass and metalworks)
77. The Net of Pearls (gowns, jewelery, and lingerie)
78. Nelzara's (boarding house)
79. Buldo Cravan (butcher)
80. The Eyes and Ears of Arabel (messenger service, caravan guard hiring service, fast delivery service within Arabel)
81. Kelsar's Fowl (live poultry & game birds)
82. Ssarra's (restaurant)
83. The High Moon Inn
84. The Orange Banner Inn
85. The Lady's Tastes (fine clothing)
86. Soldiers Boots (tavern)
87. The Red Stirge (inn)
88. House Misrim Warehouse
89. The Velvet Couch (festhall)
90. The Burning Blade (tavern)
91. Nathscal's (rental) Warehouse
92. The Lavender Lion (festhall)
93. The Smoky Skull (tavern)
94. The Old Warrior (inn)
95. Zelond's (rental) Warehouse
96. Zelzar's (pawnshop and used goods)
97. Naneatha's (festhall)
98. The Dancing Dracolisk (tavern)
99. Thael Diirim's Parchment and Proclamations
100. The Roll Roast (Inn)
101. Daglar Maermeet (armorer)
102. Orphast Ulbanath (scribe, cartographer, genealogist)
103. The Moonlit Touch (nightclub, festhall)
104. Quezzo's (rental) Warehouse
105. Dhaliima's (boardinghouse)
106. The Three Sisters (pawnshop, used and damaged clothes and goods)
107. Nuirouve Dornar, Potter
108. Fillaro's Overland Food (barrels of fish, etc., from the Sword Coast and Inner Sea)
109. The Blue Mace (Inn)
110. House of Baerlear Warehouse
111. House of Lheskar Bhaliir (owner of the Dancing Dragon and the Dancing Dracolisk taverns, fence of stolen goods)
112. The Dancing Dragon
113. The Open Casket (pawnshop, used goods, caravan liquidations, and fence of stolen goods)
114. Ghastar Ulvarinn, Stonecutter
115. Baalimr Selmarr, Carpenter
116. Dazniir Relharphin, Wheelwright
117. Cheth Zalbar, Purveyor of fine perfumes, soaps, lotions, dyes, and cosmetics
118. Bracerim Thabbold, Bedbuilder
119. The Lamp, Lantern, and Candle Shop of Nphreg Jhanos
120. Tamthiir's Leather Shop (fine clothes made to order)
121. Psammas Durviir (tailor)
122. Elhazir's Exotica (rare and unusual gifts and treasures)
123. The Baths (bath house, wrestling gym, and beauty parlor)
124. Wayscross Inn
125. The Ivory Jack (tavern)
126. Phaesha's (boarding house)
127. Vondor's Shoes & Boots
128. The Feasting Board (eatery)
129. House Hiloar Warehouse
130. The Lame Camel (tavern)
131. Blackhand Lhaol's smithy
132. House Misrim warehouse
133. House of Kraliqh warehouse
134. The Scarlet Spear (inn)
135. The Lazy Lizard (tavern)
136. The Watchful Lynx (inn)
137. Nyaril warehouse
138. House Misrim warehouse
139. The Swinging Gate (inn)
140. The Nine Fires (inn)
141. The Three Bars (inn)
142. The Tired Traveler (inn)
143. The Wink and Kiss (tavern)
144. Thousandheads Trading Coster Warehouses (merchant company warehouse)
145. The Pork Market (yards)
146. Dragoneye Dealing Coster Warehouse (merchant company warehouse)
147. Ssantusas's (rental) Warehouse
148. Dhalgim's Yard (fuel, such as wood, charcoal, oils, kindling)
149. The Copper Cockatrice (hardware shop)
150. Irriphar's Inn
151. The Murdered Manticore (inn)
152. The World Serpent (sometimes the Wild Goose; inn)

Gondegal The Lost King

Arabel was independent for a brief time in recent memory, the center of a swordsman's empire. This swordsman was Gondegal, the Lost King, who in the Year of the Dragon (1352 DR) attempted to carve a kingdom for himself centered on Arabel and extending north to the Desertsmouth Mountains, south and west of Wyvernwater and the farms outlying from Eveningstar, and east to Tilver's Gap and the mountain passes.

"Gondegal's reach was longer than his blade," people say. He could not hold any of his territory against the might of Cormyr, Sembia, Daggerdale, Tilverton, and several of the other Dales—all of whom he drew the blood and ire of in the making of his throne.

Gondegal ruled for less than a season. He reigned officially for scarcely eight days, the remainder of his rule being spent fighting here and there against one foe or another in the lands he claimed. His troops were largely mercenary, and his treasury of seized goods was small and soon gone. One night Gondegal's force simply melted away before the advancing host of Cormyr and was gone.

The forces of King Azoun IV retook Arabel on the morn without wetting a blade. No one found Gondegal's body. He is known to have fled north and then east, via Teshwave, and then his fate becomes a matter of conflicting rumor and legend. Most believe he still lives with a score or more of loyal followers, keeping court in the wilds somewhere, a careful and ruthless bandit who takes care that none survive one of his attacks to carry tales anywhere. When entire caravans vanish at times anywhere between the High Dale and far-off Impiltur, he is blamed in the taverns.

Gondegal is said to be a tall, gray-haired warrior of considerable personal skill and intelligence. His badge is a gray wolf's head, face on, with red eyes. Caravan guards often warn merchants to beef up the escort on a particular caravan, "else thy gold'll soon be gilding Gondegal's throne." Gondegal was a fighter of 20th level and chaotic neutral alignment, and is proficient with both long sword and two-handed broad sword. Whether he yet lives, the magic or treasure he carries, and who his allies might be are all unknown.

Gondegal's reign had a great influence on the king of Cormyr, at that time in his second decade of rule. Not only was Azoun forced to put down an effective rebellion in his own country, he was forced to pay more attention to matters outside Suzail, to become the ruler of a nation as opposed to a city-state. Further, the bloodless assault on Arabel was Azoun's first true experience at the head of his army, and the joy of "freeing" the people of Arabel is one that remains with him.

Myrmeen's lordship tends to turn on the fact that she permits the traders and merchants to engage in whatever tactics they see fit, as long as no one is hurt and the crown is not endangered. Arabel's military forces are overseen by the Warden of the Eastern Marches, Baron Thomdor, who in addition to being a capable warrior (LG hm F17) is the cousin of King Azoun.

Calantar's Way

Calantar's Way is a cart road running from Suzail to Arabel in Cormyr, and has been named for the man who surveyed and built it over 400 winters ago. It has been carefully tended by the merchants and soldiers who use it.

Castle Crag

Formerly the easternmost outpost of Cormyr on the road to Tilverton, Castle Crag remains an important defensive operation in the Realms army, due to the unstable and dangerous nature of the Stonelands. Castle Crag defends Gnoll Pass.

Some 500 Purple Dragons make up the permanent garrison here, along with a detachment of the War Wizards. The garrison commander is Bren Tallsword (LN hm F10), a stiff-necked martinet who insists on drills and inspections on an all too regular basis. However, Tallsword is the exact person the crown wants in this position—a warrior who will fight to his last soldier to give the other forces, situated in Arabel, time to set up defenses and plan a counterstroke. Bren answers to the Warden of the Eastern Marches in Arabel.

Adventurers are not particularly welcome in Castle Crag, and those who arrive are told to complete their business and be off. There are a few small buildings along the road, used as taverns and hostels, but they are regularly leveled by Tallsword, who is concerned about morale (they are regularly rebuilt by the soldiers and other adventurers, with a wink and a nod from the Warden of the Eastern Marches)

Dhedluk

Dhedluk (pronounced dead-LUKE) is a small town of a hundred buildings surrounded by a wooden stockade with a single obvious gate. It is situated just north and west of the meeting of the Ranger's Way and Starwater Road in central Cormyr.

Dhedluk rests calmly at the heart of the King's Forest, and is a generally peaceful community of farmers and foresters. A local hero and famous adventurer, Thiombur the fighter, runs an inn, the Blushing Maiden, at the center of town. Thiombur (NG hm F8) is the appointed local lord of Dhedluk, and is said to know everyone in Cormyr.

Thiombar is a master of the skill of putting the correct people in touch with each other, and his inn is often a stopping point for those seeking an individual of a certain skill or ability. There is a 50% chance that Thiombar knows someone who might help a PC, though his fee is usually no less than 200 gp per level of the individual he is helping or referring to (whichever is higher). Thiombar will *never* aid in situations where someone within the Royal Court is threatened, and in such cases will tip the authorities off.

Thiombar's attitude towards the position of lord of Dhedluk is that he is doing the crown a favor, and the retired fighter would be as happy just to hoist drinks. The crown, on the other hand, is pleased to have such a source of information at its disposal.

Vangerdahast himself is said to be a regular visitor, just to heft a mug and swap a tale with his old friend and informant.

Espar

Situated in the rich farmland north of Waymoot, Espar is a scattering of about 120 stone buildings without central plan or defense.

Espar is the archetypical quiet Cormyrean farming town. It has a single inn, the Watchful Eye, whose common room is usually filled with local farmers; travelers are a rarity. Espar's greatest claims to fame are its appointed lord and a local smithy renowned for its sword crafting.

Espar's lord is Hezom (LG hm P10), a priest of Helm on leave from his church to till this position for the crown. He still performs healing for the sick and wounded, and exemplifies the finer spirit of Helm's ethos of guardianship. Hezom maintains a small shrine to Helm in the town.

Eveningstar

Eveningstar is an unfortified town of 50 or so main structures situated where the High Road crosses the Starwater. Eveningstar is a crossroads village and home to skilled craftsmen who produce wine, parchment, and wool for the weavers in Suzail and Daerlun. Eveningstar is a market for the small, but good, farms in the vicinity.

Several good inns serve the traveler and adventurer, including the Lonesome Tankard, whose proprietor is Duman Kiriag (NG hm F5), and the Golden Unicorn, Selda Imyara, proprietor. A third inn, the Welcoming Hand, is still a burnt-out rum, the result of a magical bar brawl.

Eveningstar's lord is Tessaril Winter (CC hf W12/F10), who is both quick and efficient in her duties to the crown. She is aided by her herald Tzin Tzummer (NG hm B7) and the town clerk, Aldo Morim (NG hm F3). Tessaril has a soft spot for adventurers and aids them when possible.

Eveningstar is a regular watering hole for the disguised king of Cormyr when he is out pressing the flesh, as the king is an old friend of Tessaril. Most of the natives know Azoun by sight, and treat his majesty as one of their own.

Eveningstar has one large temple, the House of the Morning, dedicated to Lathander. Its patriarch is Charisbonde Trueservant (NG hf P11). The House of the Morning is also the home of a retired Knight of Myth Drannor, Jelde Asturien of Lathander (NG hm P9). The sarcastic former Knight acts as the temple's seneschal, and is known to carry a *ring of spell storing* with three *raise deads* and two *flame strikes* stored in it.

Eveningstar's only other feature of note is a type of flying cat found in the area. These cats, known as tressym, have free run of the place, and are treated as mascots and signs of good luck. Lord Tessaril has a tressym as a familiar.

Eveningstar, like Shadowdale in the Dales, is located near a collection of ruins and underground caverns. The most notable of these is the Haunted Halls. Hidden within a steep-sided gorge north of Eveningstar, the Haunted Halls consist of a ruined keep and a nearby cavern complex, though most think only of the keep as the Haunted Halls.

The Haunted Halls were a long-standing bandit hold, cleaned out most recently during the reign of King Azoun III, and unoccupied since. They have been raided several times since then by adventuring companies, but rumors persist that the Halls hold rich treasure.

The Red Ravens

One of the few long-standing mercenary companies that operate in Cormyr, the Red Ravens have a strength on paper of 110 swords, but can easily triple that number with new hires if they get a sufficiently large contract. They have been kept on retainer by the government of Cormyr with the stated purpose of cleaning out the Stonelands to the north. They have been moderately successful in this goal, but the Stonelands are still far from being a safe territory.

The Red Ravens are commanded by Rayanna the Rose, a veteran of the Horde crusade. They are noted for their honesty and trustworthiness, as they do not wish to jeopardize their royal charter. Most of their troops are armed with studded leather and carry long swords. They charge 200 gp per week for the services of their 110-being unit. Their symbol is a red raven amulet.

The Farsea Marshes and The Marsh of Tun

Two great swamps lie on the far side of the Storm Horns, away from the civilized lands of Cormyr. The Farsea Marshes are the birthplace of the Tun River. Farther down its course, the swampy banks widen to form the Marsh of Tun. The entire valley of the Tun is boggy and prone to sudden sinks and marshy ground, but the trend is most widespread at these two designated marshes.

The two marshes share another feature, for each is reputed to have been the home of a great forgotten civilization. Such a civilization would have to have existed before the elves themselves, for there is no record among them of anything other than swamp in the area. Yet, adventurers have described ruined buildings of ornate shapes made of glass strengthened to the resiliency of steel being here. Such declarations are usually followed by the quick sickness and death of the speaker, since these swamps are also the home of pestilence and plague.

Without any idea of the facts, bards have fitted in a story of two great city-states ruled by lovers who had a falling out, a disagreement that escalated into a magical war which sank both cities, poisoned the land, and bred all manner of disease. Each was supposedly advised by an old woman, who is revealed at the end of the tale to have been Talona.

The truth of the matter remains unknown, but adventurers continue to brave the deadly nature of these bogs to recover

greater gold and glory. It is known that the lawless human tribes of the Tun have banded together under the command of a warlord, Thaalim Torchtower (LE hm F9), who operates an effective bandit kingdom, raiding caravans as they pass out of Cormyr. It is rumored that he has spies and agents throughout the Forest Kingdom and the Dragon Coast.

Goblin Marches and The High Moors

A thousand years ago when Myth Drannor was its height, the goblins and their inhuman allies ruled this wide plain. Theirs was a powerful race of inhuman warriors mounted on dire wolves and other strange beasts, and they raided at will the ancient kingdoms of Asram and Anauria, destroying the latter in 200 DR. Even the newborn city-state of Suzail saw the attacks of these organized evil foes.

But the goblins at last met an enemy they could not defeat in the form of the Great Desert Anauroch. The land dried out, and the soil lifted in great, blinding clouds. The goblins' mighty war empire fell apart as the people in it fled eastward to the Stonelands, westward to the Fallen Lands, and south into the High Moors. One organized surviving army laid siege to Tethyamar, the golden gem of the dwarves, and wrested it from the Iron House. These goblins and orcs, as cunning as they once were, now rule that land.

The Goblin Marches is now a sliver of land between the desert and the Storm Horns, growing smaller with each passing decade. There are still goblins here—broken, raiding peoples who attack each other's encampments as much as human travelers. With High Horn and Castle Crag in human hands, the rich lands of Cormyr are barred to them. The orcs, gnolls, ogres, and other humanoid races battle, raid, and live a miserable borderline existence.

The High Moors to the south of Anauroch, the foothills of the Storm Horns, are like the Goblin Marches, only moreso. Here can be found the ruined citadels and giant-built castles of the dispersed races, occupied by the savage remnants of these peoples. Because of their location, the High Moors remain unexplored by Cormyreans or Dalesmen, and tales continually surface concerning lost civilizations and ancient, elder powers brooding in these hills, alien to all humans.

One human group that has been active in the Goblin Marches is the Zhentarim, operating out of Dagger Falls and the Darkhold. The Goblin Marches occupy the main caravan route for the Black Network, and the Zhentarim rotate between paying off the goblins, hiring them, or wiping them out, depending on who the current military leader is. The Zhentarim are said to have imported powerful monsters whom goblinkind might follow in the hope of raising armies aligned with their sides, but their results have been spotty at best. The goblin tribes are still not powerful enough to challenge even a small unit of Cormyrean knights.

Helmlands

The Helmlands are the name given to the foothills surrounding the eastern Storm Horns near Gnoll Pass and Castle Crag. During the Time of Troubles, these lands erupted in a series of bubbling tar pits, which scarred the region. To make matters worse, the area is marked with widespread and random wild magic and dead magic areas where the rules of spellcasting break down or fail entirely. The problematic magic areas have been reduced since the Time of Troubles, but this land has become a fell and evil place. It is called the Helmlands as a reminder that Helm was supposedly responsible for keeping the gods' avatars in Faerûn, letting them wreak havoc. The lands are also called the Pits of Mystra.

The chief long-lasting legacy of this region is that it has provided a toehold for those border raiders who can press down past Castle Crag, and they use it as a base of operations for raiding around Arabel. Twice the combined forces of the Red Ravens and the Purple Dragons (with the less effective help of the War Wizards) have cleansed the area, and each time more goblins, gnolls, and orcs have made their way to it.

Rumors in the Royal Court state that Vangerdahast is working on a great magic that will remove the Helmlands, or at least send them somewhere like Thay where they will be appreciated. Of course, rumor in the Royal Court regularly says that Vangerdahast is working on this great magic or that. If he is doing so, he is holding his own counsel on the matter.

Hermit's Wood

Located just south of Wheloon, the Hermit's Wood takes its name from a ghostly figure that is often seen on nights of a full moon. This figure appears as a man in gray robes, carrying a lantern which shines with an eerie blue light. Some call this the spirit of the original hermit who lived in the woods in the time of Azoun II, while others say that it is fantasy or will-o'-the-wisps.

The Hermit's Wood is filled with game and singularly lacking in sentient nonhuman creatures. It has been extensively lumbered by people out of Wheloon.

High Horn

The High Horn is a great, grim fortress of high curving walls and frowning towers, and is the center of Cormyr's military operations in the west. The great towers of the High Horn were once essential, but are now no longer so heavily used. It is still the strongest defensive position in the realm of Cormyr. It guards the road to the West and a strategically important mountain pass, and was built to protect against the border raiders (bandits) and the lizard men of the marshes (although these latter have not proved troublesome since it was built).

High Horn has a guest enclave, where travelers can stay, but is strictly a military community. The High Horn is the wintering quarters of half the Cormyrean army, and it has extensive facilities to host both people and animals through a season-long siege. In recent years, the walls have been strengthened and discipline tight-

ened, in the face of the growing menace of Zhentarim-controlled Darkhold to the far west.

There is a standing garrison of 400 soldiers at High Horn at any time: 100 archers and 300 men-at-arms, led by a 4th-level fighter for every 10 soldiers, and under the overall control of the lord commander of High Horn. The position of lord commander is appointed annually by the king, and he is currently Thursk Dembarron (LG hm P15).

In addition to its other defenses, the War Wizards are making their base at this keep. There will always be at least three mages of 6th level present at any one time, and a 50% chance of a spell-caster of 7th-12th level in residence at any time.

Hilp

Hilp is a small town in southern Cormyr. It is a sleepy village between Immersea and Suzail, named for the warrior who founded it long ago by slaying or driving out all the trolls that infested the area. It is unfortified and surrounded by rolling hills. It is the local farmers' market and has a large cooper and wagonmaker business.

The local lord of Hilp is a former merchant named Doon Dzavar. Doon is not a native to Cormyr, but has worked hard in his tenure to earn the approval of both the people of Hilp and the crown.

Hullack Forest

One of the large remaining shards of the great woods that was Cormanthor, the western edge of Hullack was once considered the eastern border of Cormyr. As the nation grows and acquires new land to the north, settlers have begun to move into Hullack as well.

Hullack is a more primeval forest than the King's Forest, filled with dark valleys and hidden dales unseen by mortals for generations. Legends of ghostly creatures and strange monsters pepper local tales and caravan stories, and orcs and goblins regularly descend from the Thunder Peaks into this region.

For Cormyr to grow, the Hullack must be tamed, and the crown has notified several adventuring companies that riches and a minimum of government interference are to be found there.

Hultail

Hultail is a small village on the eastern shores of the Wyvernwater. No more than a handful of buildings, it does not even rate its own appointed lord. Instead, its matters with the crown are handled by Sarp Redbeard of Wheloon.

Hultail is typical of hundreds of small villages and hamlets scattered throughout Cormyr. Its only notable quality is that it is the only true port on the eastern Wyvernwater, and that it guards the "secret door" into Cormyr.

Most trade into Cormyr from the east passes through the Thunder Peaks through three gaps, or to the south around the southern extreme of the Vast Swamp. A fourth way exists, through the High Dale, past Hooknose Crag, and down the river to Hultail. This secret entrance is little used, though Dalesmen and others use it to pass into Cormyr without raising a ruckus.

The natives of Hultail are on very good terms with the Dalesman tradesmen who pass through and benefit from those items that are being smuggled into or out of the country. Recently, a retired War Wizard named Fractus (N hm W7) has set up shop nearby, and most of the locals believe he is there as a spy of the crown.

Immersea

Perched on the western edge of the Wyvernwater, Immersea is an unfortified town of about a hundred structures, with several large manors to the south and west of the city. Immersea is a way town on the road, a stopover and watering-place for horses and livestock, as it is right on the Wyvernwater. A large inn, the Five Fine Fish, produces its own potent and justly famed ale here. Immersea has no temples, but a shrine to Selûne is maintained nearby by Mother Lledew (CG hf P9). Immersea is also home to the mistfishers, who go out in the morning mists to catch fish in the Wyvernwater with long draglines and scoop nets. A map of the Immersea area can be found on page 52.

The great manor to the south and west, called Redstone for its color, is the ancestral home of the Wyvernspur family, a group of petty nobles who have regained prominence in the area through the actions of the family hero, Giogi Wyvernspur. Giogi, through his heroic efforts, has gained the ability to transform himself into a wyvern. He and his wife, a mage named Cat, have settled down and are raising a family.

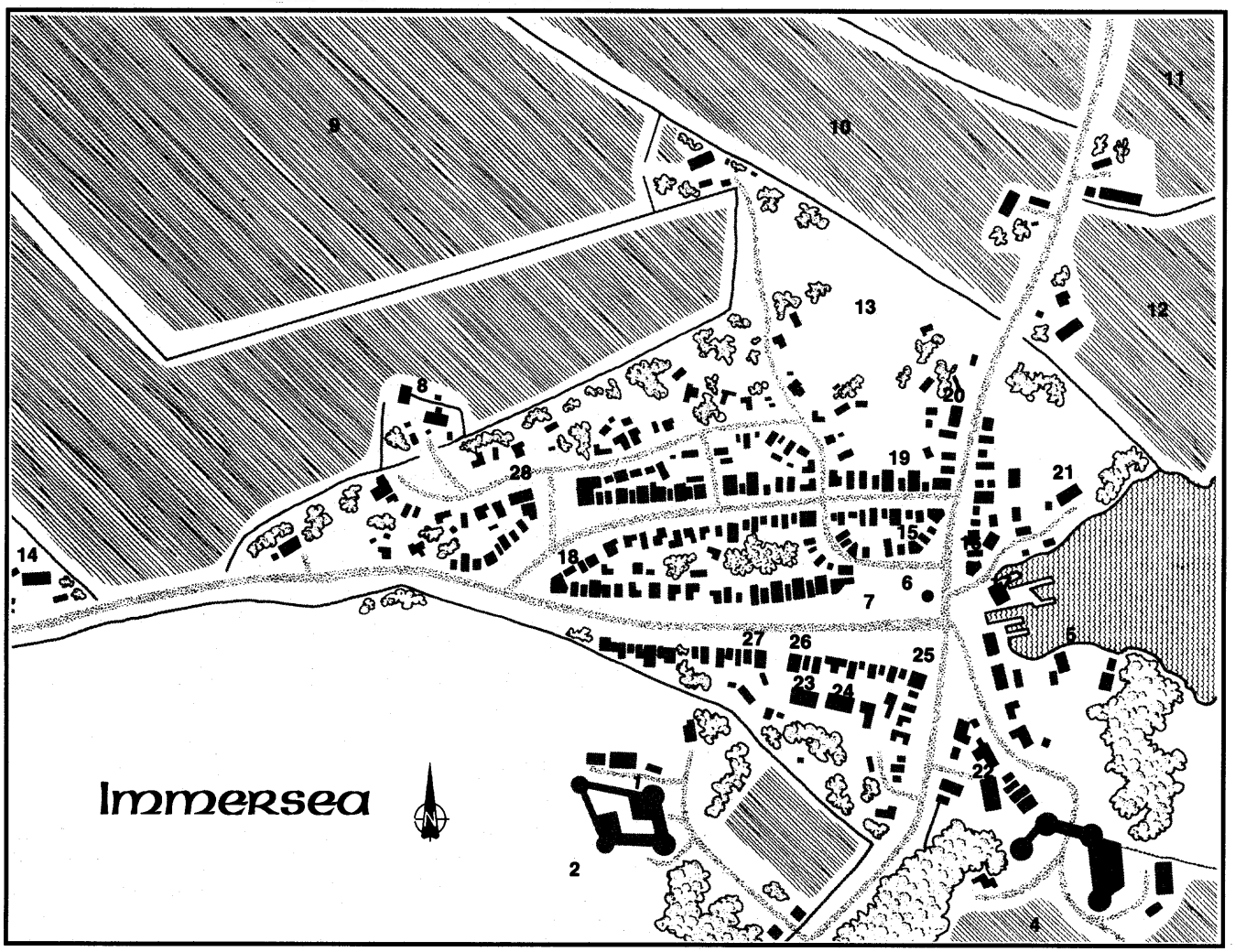
This castle is also the current abode of Samtavan Sulacar (LN hm F3), the local lord appointed by the king. Samtavan is neither local (he is a native of Suzail) nor a very effective lord, and his main occupation is to stay out of the way while his herald handles the important business of the area.

The other major family in the area is the Cormaerils, a noble house spread widely throughout Cormyr. The Cormaerils of Immersea are considered a minor branch of the line, but still maintain a nice manor known as the High Towers.

King's Forest

Cormyr is defined by its forest, one of the westernmost pieces of ancient Cormanthor, now abandoned by the elves to humankind. The woods is a collection of oak, maple, and rowan trees, with little undergrowth and a high, open canopy. It is riddled by major roads and cradles the small towns of Dhedluk and Waymoot.

The King's Forest is the property of the crown. It is rich in game and wildlife, and save for the occasional monster which wanders down from the Storm Horns, it is a hunter's paradise. The law in Cormyr on poaching is as follows: One may hunt in the King's Forest, provided one does so on one's own. Large-scale hunts are banned, with offenders being jailed or assigned to help dredge the Starwater. This law also gives some of the creatures a



fighting chance, and every so often a hunter loses in a battle with a boar or bear, which keeps spurious adventurers out.

Immersea Key

1. Redstone (Wyvernspur family house)
2. Wyvernspur farms (minor nobles)
3. High Towers (Cormaeril family house)
4. Cormaeril farms (minor nobles)
5. Szalan's Shipyard
6. Statue: *Azoun Triumphant* (Azoun III with sword raised aloft, on rearing stallion, bandits being trampled underfoot)
7. The market
8. Lluth's farm
9. Danae's farm
10. Tathcho's farm
11. Nilil's farm
12. Gulphet's farm
13. The High Common
14. Nazan's farm
15. The Five Fine Fish (tavern)
16. The Mist Runner (tavern)
17. Fish-cleaning shed
18. Halaband's Inn
19. The Immer Inn
20. Alzael's (slaughterhouse)
21. Smithy
22. Stables (rental) run by Dzulas
23. Mrastos Warehouse (rental)
24. Mrastos Warehouse (rental)
25. Nelzol's (hardware shop)
26. Chaslasse's Fine Clothing
27. Maela's (boarding house)
28. Nulahh's (boarding house)

The King's Forest has no known ruins within its borders, and there were no ancient empires or fell wizards practicing at the dawn of time nearby in any living or recorded memory. This may account for the Cormyrean attitude that all forests of the world should be as safe and secure as the one controlled by their king.

Marsember

Marsember is the second largest city of Cormyr, and, like the capital at Suzail, is a seaport on the Dragonmere (the Lake of Dragons). The city is built on a series of small islands, with each island crossed and recrossed by a number of canals.

Marsember is the City of Spices, and is so named because four competing trading families based here have shipped spices to and from lands far across the Inner Sea for decades, drawing much of the trade in condiments for the region here.

Because of the large numbers of small fishing boats that work out of its harbor (or anchor in the mouth of the Wyvernflow, but bring their catches here for sale), Marsember is the kingdom's busiest port.

Marsember is infamous for the intricate network of sewer-like, narrow, winding canals that run throughout the entire city. Spans of stone connect the upper floors of close buildings, and light skiffs are poled through the streets. The city was originally built on Marsember Marsh and expanded over time, taking what territory it might. Flat, hard ground is at a premium in Marsember, so that only the courts of the wealthy and places of government have large plazas laid out above the high water mark.

Marsember's sole large church is Morningmist Hall, a temple of Lathander under the control of High Morninglord Chansobal Dreen (NG hm P12). He has 16 priests of various levels serving under him. There are also shrines to Tymora and Umberlee in the city.

The light skiffs used in the canals of Marsember should be treated as coracles, though their dimensions are 8-10 feet long and 2-4 feet wide.

Marsember is ruled in the name of the king by Ildool (CN hm F7), a grasping political hack who retains his job in part by bemoaning how terrible it is so that no others covet his post. Rumors fly that Ildool skims his tithes to the crown, but all accounting to date has been proper. It is said that Ildool would open the city to slavers, Zhentarim, and other foul creatures if not for the efforts of the War Wizards and his herald, Bledryn Scoril. (LG hm F9), to keep him on the path of the righteous.

The other major official in Marsember is Ayesunder Truesilver (LG hm F14), Warden of the Port, charged with protecting a 12-ship detachment of the Imperial Navy.

Stonelands

The Stonelands are a wide, rocky desolation that lies between Gnoll Pass and Tilverton. The land gains its name from the great boulders that seem to be strewn at random throughout its length like monuments to some forgotten god. A haunted, heavily gouged, sparse wasteland, this land has long been a haven for tribes of gnolls, orcs, goblinoids, and evil humans, known collectively as border raiders, regardless of species.

The Zhentarim have been active in both the Stonelands and the Goblin Marches, seeking to weaken the crown's hold on this region near Cormyr and at least tie up enough resources so that the Black Network can operate with a free hand. To that end, there are reports of mad beholders cruising over the ravine-crossed terrain in the night, distintegrating anything that gets in their way. The truth has yet to be revealed, but the Cormyrean patrols and the Red Ravens are very watchful, and post guards in the evenings.

Storm Horns

Forming the western and northern borders of Cormyr, the Storm Horns are a massive uplift of sharp-toothed mountains, forbidding to all who seek to travel through them. They form an unbroken wall from the Lake of Dragons to High Horn Pass, and a second wall from High Horn to Gnoll Pass. This impenetrable uprising of land has served as a protector for Cormyr from attacks from the north and east, but by the same token prevents any expansion in those directions.

The power of most of the nonhuman tribes on the Cormyrean side of the Storm Horns has long since been broken, though there are occasions when a charismatic orc shaman can gather enough small holds together to form a raiding party. Deeper in the mountains, the tribes of orcs and other nonhumans are stronger, and travelers and prospectors have often learned that they were in orcish territories only with the first volley of black-feathered arrows.

The emptying of monsters from the Cormyrean side has also left a large number of empty caverns and cave complexes that have been occupied by new creatures. Supreme among them are dragons driven south by the most recent flight of dragons, who have retreated to their lairs for a long nap. After a decade, these dragons are now waking, and waking hungry. Tyluk, Espar, Waymoot, and Eveningstar have all been plagued by rogue dragons in the past year In such cases the best bet has been to find some adventuring party who will rid the area of the beast in exchange for its treasure.

The main road out of Cormyr, the High Road, leaves High Horn and weaves its way down through the foothills of the Storm Horns on the eastern side, heading south and crossing the River Tun at the Bridge of Fallen Men. There are two small towns on the route south, not under the control of Cormyr, but visited with increasing regularity by Cormyrean patrols.

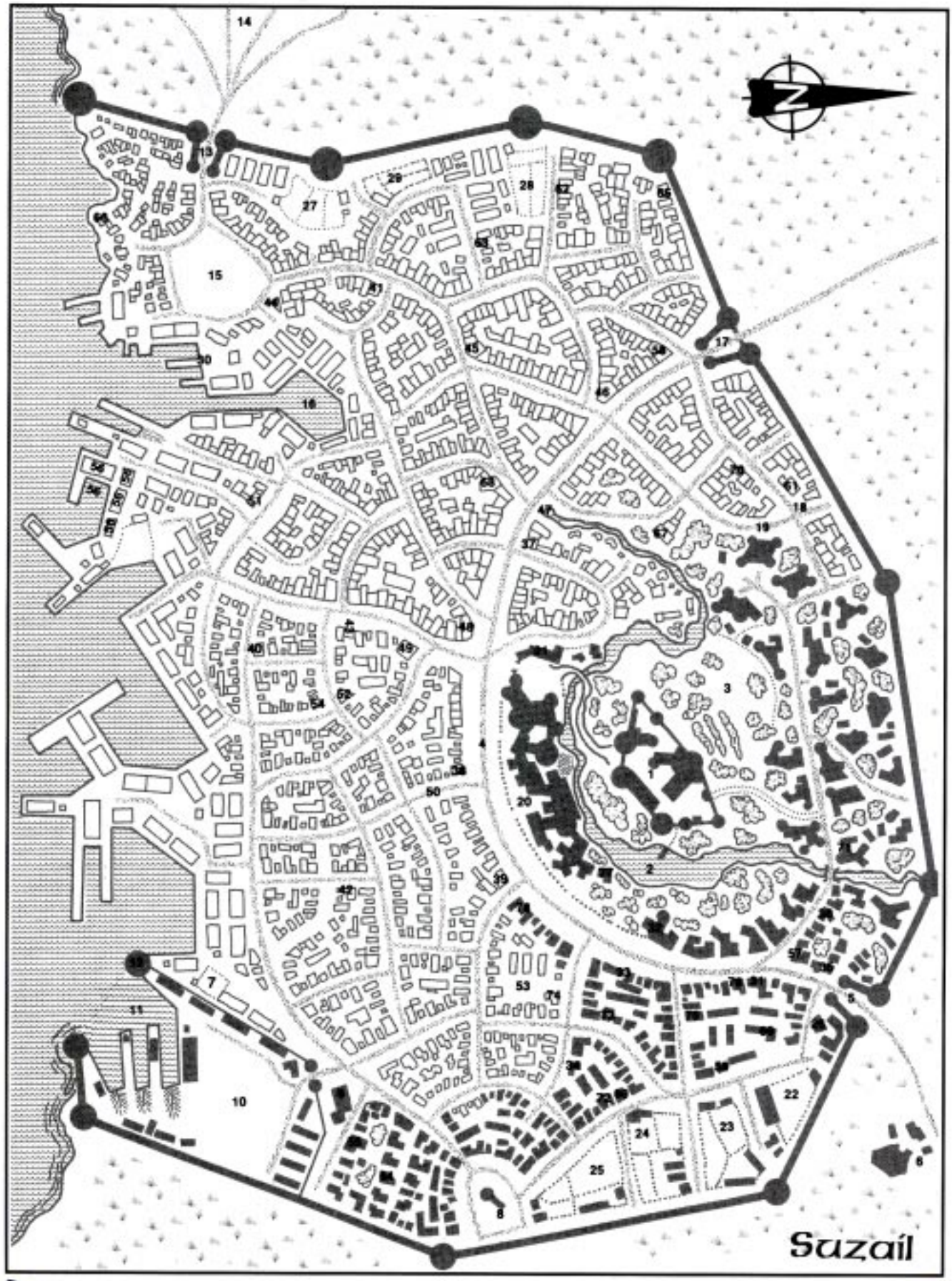
Eagle Peak is situated on a rocky outcropping overlooking the wide vale of the Tun River and the Marsh of Tun. It is a small hamlet of a dozen buildings, including an inn, stables, and a smithy. Its most recent addition is a small temple of Torm, headed by Lorandia of Torm (LG hm P5) and three of his followers. Eagle Peak is a regular overnight stop for caravans in and out of Cormyr.

Skull Crag, farther to the south, has a darker reputation. Located deeper in the mountains, the community has a stockade around it that is secured at night (though gold may open the locked gates, nothing else will). The town is dominated by a shrine to Myrkul (now to Cyric) far up the mountainside, one of the few shrines to the death god known in the Heartlands. The whitened marble of a natural outcropping has been polished and refined to resemble a humanoid skull. Followers of Myrkul (and now Cyric) have been known to make pilgrimages to this site of revelations and wisdom, and the rocks beneath the altar are littered with their bones. Vultures (of all types) are common near Skull Crag.

Suzail

Suzail is the royal capital and richest city of the kingdom of Cormyr, and home to the most important merchant houses and nobles of Cormyr. The city is dominated by the fortified castle of King Azoun IV, which is set apart from the lower city by its splendid gardens and rumored to have rich burial grounds beneath it. A map of Suzail can be found on page 54.

The city is justly famous for its bazaars, its ivory sculptors, and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Key To Suzail

1. Palace
2. Lake Azoun
3. The Royal Gardens (or Floral Gardens)
4. The Promenade (the street running from Eastgate to Horngate)
5. Eastgate
6. The Nightgate Inn
7. The Market Yard
8. Market Hall
9. The Lock-Up (city jail)
10. Citadel of the Purple Dragons (garrison)
11. Royal Docks
12. Harbor Tower
13. The Field-Gates
14. The Fields of the Dead (burial ground, off-map to west)
15. The Market
16. The Basin
17. Horngate
18. Monument: *The Purple Dragon*
19. House of Lord Magister of the City Sthavar
20. The Royal Court (interconnected buildings)
21. Court Stables
22. Dragoneye Dealing Coster yards (merchant company yards)
23. Thousandheads Trading Coster yards (merchant company yards)
24. The Seven Suns Trading Coster yards (merchant company yards)
25. The Six Coffers Market Priakos yards (merchant company yards)
26. Rheuban's Stables
27. Iravan's Rental Yards
28. Trueshield Trading Priakos yards
29. Talahon's Rental yards
30. Shipyards
31. The Towers of Good Fortune (temple of Tymora)
32. The Silent Room (temple of Deneir)
33. The Royal Smithy
34. Shrine to Lliira
35. Shrine to Oghma
36. Shrine to Malar
37. The Winking Eye (tavern)
38. The Old Dwarf (tavern)
39. The Dragon's Jaws (tavern)
40. The Weather Eye (tavern)
41. The Golden Goblin (tavern)
42. The Laughing Lass (tavern)
43. Zhaelun's Stockyard
44. The Crying Witch (tavern)
45. The Leaning Post (inn)
46. The Six Candles (inn)
47. The Jaws (culvert, taking stream to basin, #16)
48. Thelmar's Inn
49. Selavar's Inn
50. Zult's (licensed moneychanger)
51. The Black Rat (tavern)
52. The Mare's Tail (tavern)
53. The Courtyard of Zathchos
54. Taneth's (festhall)
55. Sontravin's Inn
56. Skatterhawk warehouses and dock
57. Shrine to Tyr
58. The Wailing Wheel (inn)
59. Sulchra's (festhall)
60. The Warm Bed (inn)
61. Skatterhawk family house
62. House of Helver Dhasjarr (LN hm F7)
63. House of Cormmor Lhestayl (CG hm F8)
64. House of Lanneth Murg (N hm F11)
65. Tower of Argul (LN hm W13)
66. The Purple Scar (festhall)
67. House of Dolcar Dethanter (CG hf T10)
68. Danain's (hardware shop)
69. Kriyeos Lathmil's stables
70. Tower of Laspeera (NG hf W14)
71. Wyvernspur Townhouse
72. Shrine to Milil
73. Warehouse of Jhassalan (oils and perfumes)
74. Tower of Baskor, the mage (NG hm W9)
75. Warehouse of Faeri (ivory traders)
76. Warehouse of Ossper (fine cloth)
77. Vangerdahast's Tower (royal magician)
78. Blackshield Apartments (court residence)

its clothmakers. Of the former, hundreds of winters of ivory gleaned from the Unapproachable East and the hot jungles of the South has found its way across the Inner Sea in great shiploads of raw tusks and fragments to here and been fashioned into inlays and goods for Amn, the North, and the Sword Coast cities. Of the latter, wool is woven as well in the Sembian city of Daerlun, but those who work looms in Suzail hold that their work is finer, and the colors more true and more lasting.

The major trading houses in the city are: the Dragoneye Dealing Coster, the Seven Suns Trading Coster, the Six Coffers Market Priakos, Trueshield Trading Priakos, and the trading families of Iravan, Zathchos, Skatterhawk, Jhassalan, Faeri, and Ossper.

Suzail has two major temples. The Towers of Good Fortune are dedicated to Tymora and presided over by Luckmaster Manarech Eskwuin (CG hm P12). The Silent Room, the temple to Deneir, is presided over by Thaun Khelbor (NG hm P10). There are also shrines to Lliira, Oghma, Tempus, Malar, and Milil within the city.

The First Citizen of the City and the nation is his most Royal Highness King Azoun IV, King of Cormyr, Protector of Tilverton, and Victor of the Horde Incursions (LG hm F20). Azoun rarely travels alone in the city, for he has a personal bodyguard of 6th–8th-level fighters, and in addition, is often in the company of his court, which includes among its numbers some of the more powerful Cormyreans, such as the wizard Vangerdahast. His majesty carries a number of items (rings, bracers, and the like) that provide immunity from various forms of attack, and it is rumored that he is the recipient of a specialized spell that, if he is gravely threatened, will *teleport* him elsewhere.

Vangerdahast, Royal Magician to the Realm of King Azoun IV and Chairman Emperius of the College of War Wizards (LN hm W17), is quiet and unassuming, though highly respected by his peers both for his knowledge and courtly tact. He does not suffer fools and fops well, but has an undying loyalty to the crown.

Sthavar, Lord Magister of the City (LG hm F15), is the local lord entrusted with the day-to-day governing of Cormyr's largest city. Sthavar maintains a separate residence outside the palace grounds. He has a complement of six guards of 5th level, and his herald, Xrorn Hackhand (CG hm R14).

Suzail maintains a large army of Purple Dragons, 14 ships of the Imperial Navy, and a large contingent of the War Wizards (more than 65 such wizards make their home in the city proper).

Adventurers visiting Suzail are usually directed to either the Dragon's Jaws or the Laughing Lass taverns, both of which commonly deal with the adventuring trade.

The Thunder Peaks

Forming the eastern border of Cormyr, this chain of mountains runs north from the High Dale, eventually joining the

Nobility in Cormyr

Suzail is the center of the kingdom and the home of its court. The landed lords and petty nobility of the nation come here to pay tribute to (and gain favors from) the crown. Most of the nobility is many generations old, some are as old as the Obarskyr line itself., the line from which the kings of Cormyr descended. Many are wealthy or powerful in their own rights, and some are poor as temple mice, existing by dint of imperial largesse. Many have large extant lands outside of Suzail but maintain apartments and townhouses for the court season.

Regardless of financial station, the nobility of Cormyr is regarded (at least by its members) as being superior due to its birth status and charged with helping direct the ship of state (though not handling the day-to-day operation—that's the work for the local lords and adventuring types).

A partial listing of the Cormyrean nobles include the following:

- *Bleths* of Suzail.
- *Cormaerils* of Suzail and Cormyr.
- *Crownsilvers* of the Royal House of Cormyr.
- *Dauntinthorns* of Suzail.
- *Emmarasks* of Suzail.
- *Huntcrowns* of Suzail.
- *Huntsilvers* of the Royal House of Cormyr.
- *Illances* of Suzail.
- *Marliirs* of Arabel.
- *Rowanmantles* of Suzail.
- *Silverswords* of Suzail.
- *Skatterhawks* of Cormyr.
- *Thunderswords* of Starwater Meadow (south of Hilp).
- *Truesilvers* of the Royal House in Marsember.
- *Wyvernspurs* of Immersea.

The Truesilvers, Huntsilvers, and Crownsilvers are considered Royal Houses because of their close blood ties with the line of King Azoun. The Cormaerils are the largest house in Cormyr, with hangers-on and fringe nobility in every court and council in Cormyr, and have a strong heritage of second- and third-born children going adventuring. The Rowanmantles have the ruler of Tilverton and the co-rule of Shadowdale in their line. The Skatterhawks are nouveau riche, having been made barons a scant hundred years ago, and still engage heavily in mercantile behavior.

An adventurer who wishes to be from "good blood" and noble station should choose a family name from this list. The Cormaerils are the best choice, since even the family historians are unsure of the number of possible heirs, sinister branches, and illegitimate young in the family tree.

Desertsmouth Mountain chain beyond Shadow Gap. It is a wild and unsettled land, the home of tribes of orcs and goblins that bedevil Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dales.

The main pass through the mountains is Thunder Gap, and it carries most of the trade from Arabel east to the southern Dales and Sembia. Goblin raids are still common on travelers through this area, and individuals are warned to go armed and in large groups. Cormyrean patrols regularly pass through.

The Thunder Peaks, like the Storm Horns, take their name from the sudden and devastating storms which rake their sides in all seasons. In the winter, Thunder Gap is sometimes completely closed by heavy snow.

Tilverton and Tilver's Gap

There are three passes through the Thunder Peaks: Thunder Gap in the south, and Shadow Gap and Tilver's Gap in the north. Roads from Shadow Gap and Tilver's Gap join at the small city of Tilverton, which has become important as a strategic location for Cormyr.

In 1357 DR, Tilverton was occupied by Cormyrean forces led by Duke Bhereu, one of the king's cousins. The given reason was the attacks of Lashan of Scardale and Zhentil Keep activity, but the crown of Cormyr has long had its eye on this valuable territory. The occupation was made with the tacit approval of the other Dales and Sembia, though both have since grown concerned about Cormyr's increasing power.

Cormyr has invested a great deal in expanding and improving its new protectorate. City walls have been erected to cover the sprawling town, and the main thoroughfares have been lined with cobblestones (they were previously mud tracks). There is a garrison of 850 Purple Dragons here, and foot patrols are common on the streets.

Tilverton is ruled by Lady Regent Alasalynn Rowanmantle (CF hf F9), cousin to Shaerl Rowanmantle of Shadowdale, who oversees a elected local council. In reality, nothing happens in Tilverton that is not determined by Cormyr. She is aided by Cuthric Snow (NG hm F2), a young courtier on his first posting outside Cormyr.

Tilverton has a temple to Gond Wonderbringer operating under the auspices of Burlan Almaether (N hm P12) and 26 lesser priests. It also has shrines to Helm, Lathander, Silvanus, Tymora, and reportedly, hidden in the depths of the sewers, secret ones to Mask and Cyric.

Tilverton is still a growing, sprawling town, with many of the features found in other independent cities. Unlike most of Cormyr, it still has an organized thieves' guild: the Rogues of Tilverton. The Rogues have been engaging in a long-running and losing battle with the War Wizards and the Cormyrean soldiers.

Tyrluk

Tyrluk (pronounced TEER-luke) is a small crossroads village, with a smithy, a carter, and a farmers' market. Hardy ponies are bred locally, and many caravans purchase remounts here. A wide pasture is reserved for caravans to bed down, but there is nothing resembling a inn or tavern for the wanderer. A stockade protects the city, but it has been years since any tribes have challenged the might of nearby High Horn, so the gates are left open at night for late travelers.

The appointed local lord is Suldag the Boar (NG hm F6), a warrior of moderate merit and incredible girth. His chosen name is said to come from his hunting ability in the King's Forest, but court wits have of late connected it with his waistline and eating habits. They do this

behind his back—not because Suldag would be horribly offended, but because gossip is much more fun that way.

The Vast Swamp

Situated on the eastern borders of Cormyr, this marsh forms the border between Cormyr and Sembia. Neither nation claims the swampland, and neither wants to deal with it unless some ugly monster crawls out of its depths.

The Vast Swamp is filled with lizard men, hobgoblins, gnolls, and trolls. Black dragons, beholders, and catoblepas have been reported within its borders, and will-o'-wisps are commonly spotted from the Way of the Manticore. The Vast Swamp is probably the single most deadly location within the borders of Cormyr. The general attitude toward it, however, is live and let live, since it would take an act of the gods to fully clean out and drain the huge bog.

The Vast Swamp is also reputed to be a home for necromancers, and legend says that the Dusk Lord of Sessrendale was not slam, but retreated to this land to plot his revenge against all the living in the Dales. This may or may not be true, since while mortals and even undead do perish, tales live on forever.

Waymoot

A large town within the bounds of the King's Forest, Waymoot is situated in an artificial clearing five miles across. The center of the town has a wide stone-walled keep, but the majority of the buildings at unfortified.

Waymoot is a traders' town in the center of Cormyr where horses and bred and trained, and wagons are made and fixed. It is home to a plethora of inns: the Cup and Spoon, the Old Man, the Moon and Stars, the Silver Wink, and others.

Waymoot's local lord is Filfar Woodbrand (LG hm F10), also called Trollkiller by the locals. A warrior of great power (18/94 Strength), Filfar is less than comfortable with the appellation, though it aptly describes his skill in repelling a troll attack on the town in his youth.

Waymoot has two small temples, one to Tymora and one to Lliira. The Tymoran temple is the Sheltering Hand, and it is run by Gothric of Tymora (CG hm P7) and three supporting priests. The Lliiricist temple is the Sounds of Joy, and it is run by Jezarai Moonbolt (NG hef P8) and three acolytes. Both the temple and its priestess were formerly dedicated to Waukeen.

Wheloon

Wheloon is a mid-sized town of more than 200 major buildings situated at the outflow of the Wyvernwater. Its distinctive buildings have roofs of vibrant green.

This river town grew up around the ferry here that transports traffic on the Way of the Manticore. Its green-roofed houses are the result of the use of a native slate for shingles, and have given rise to the phrase "the jade towers of Wheloon." Many craftsmen work here; the town houses boatmakers, basketweavers, sailmakers, and potters.

Wheloon is ruled in the name of King Azoun IV by Sarp Redbeard (NG hm F9), the most headstrong and independent of the appointed local lords. Sarp is known to disagree with court policy on a number of matters and has earned few friends in court. He is popular among the natives of Wheloon, who see Sarp as keeping the Purple Dragon of Cormyr out of their daily lives.

Wheloon has a single temple to Chauntea that is controlled by Harandave Donohar (NG hm P16) and 14 of his followers. It also feature a shrine to Silvanus, under the caretaking of Orlenstar Thirlthorn (N hm D4).

Cormyrean Patrols

Travelers through the gaps and other dangerous regions may encounter Cormyrean patrols assigned to protect caravans and keep the peace. A Cormyrean patrol numbers 12 fighters of 1st level led by a 4th-level fighter, with a 50% chance of a 3rd-6th level War Wizard, as well. All are mounted on medium horse with leather barding, and the fighters are armored in banded mail. Such patrols are instructed not to interfere with normal merchant traffic, to inform travelers to Cormyr of customs, and to avoid engagements with superior forces. If such a battle is inevitable, the majority of the troops are to hold the enemy while one gallops to make a report.

Sembia

Sembia is a wealthy merchant kingdom situated east of Cormyr on the western edge of the Sea of Fallen Stars. It is a land of rolling farms and rich plains dominated by a handful of large, wealthy cities. It is a well-run, organized nation that may in time rival the old kingdoms of the South and East. It is already one of the dominant powers in the region, something which makes its neighbors (particularly the Dalelands) very nervous.

The wealthy merchant kingdom of Sembia is a land of good farms, busy ports, skilled textile makers, and prosperity, with a vigilant army to keep it that way. The arms of Sembia are the Raven and Silver. The raven represents Rauthauvyr the Raven, long-ago founder of the realm, who never ruled Sembia but instead commanded its armies for a succession of merchant rulers. The silver coins represent Sembia's trading wealth.

History

The land of Sembia was settled by humans coming to the Sea of Fallen Stars from the south, originally for its stands of huge, high-quality iliyr-wood timber, that were much prized in shipbuilding. As the forests were cleared over the years, the treecutters came into increasing conflict with the elves, who feared the loss of their entire woods.

This loss would undoubtedly have occurred if the hastily gathered mercenary troops of the fledgling land had defeated the elves, but the elven nations defeated them soundly at Singing Arrows (884 DR) and afterwards repeatedly slew or forced back humans venturing north of the River Ashaba and Lake Sember. The Battle of Singing Arrows convinced distant Chondath to abandon its holdings and allowed the immigrant Sembians to establish their independence (as little more than a collection of rival city-states, much like the Moonsea or Vast today). It also set the stage for the appearance of the Raven.

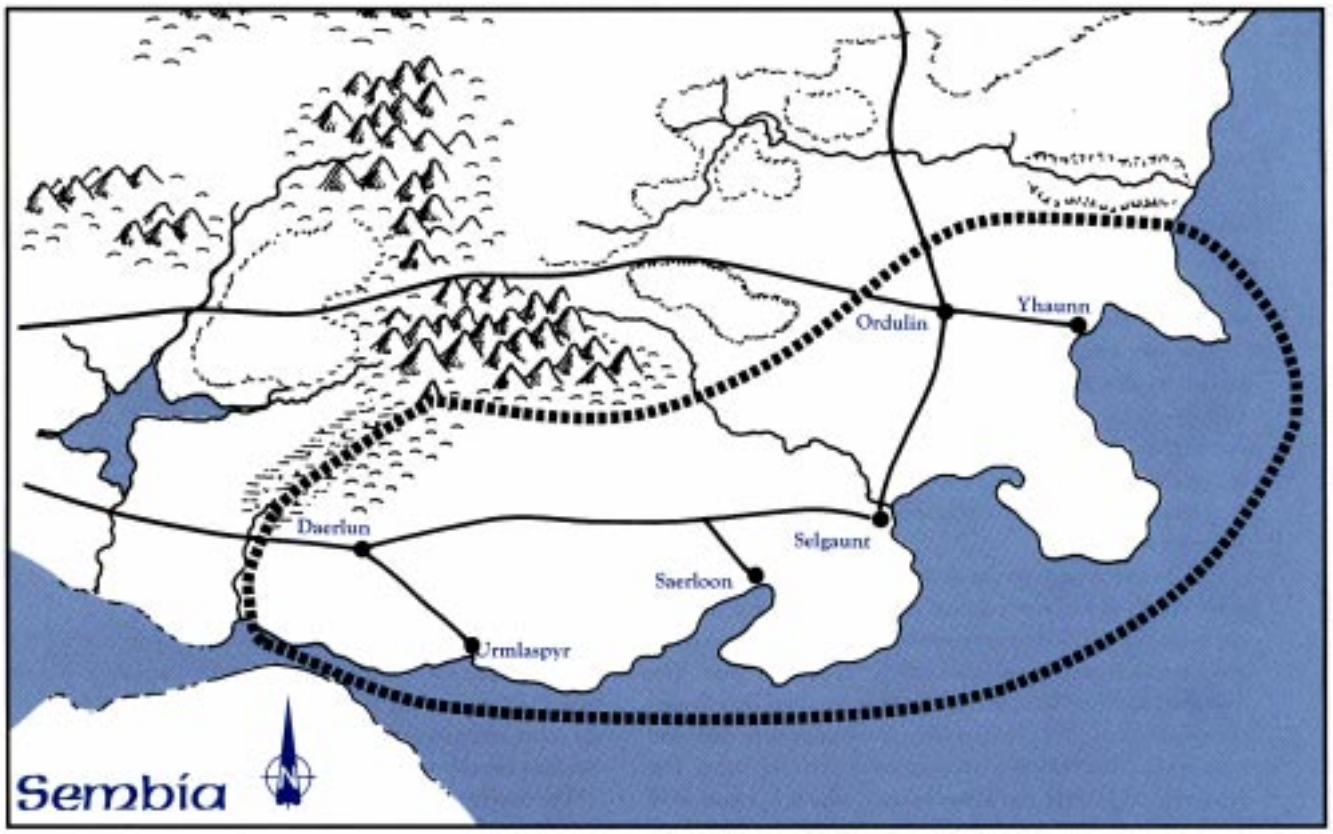
The Moonsea's (the Dragon Sea's) mineral wealth was discovered by humankind at about this time, and pressure began to grow in Sembia for a trade road through the elven woods to make Sembia the world's gateway to all these riches. The land grew strong as farms prospered in newly cleared lands, and craftsmen arrived from the south to take advantage of this chance to acquire land and wealth, bringing their trades with them. Rauthauvyr unified the city-states and towns in the face of the continuing elven menace, and insisted on maintaining a standing army, which he kept in practice by policing Sembia's borders and improving its roads. At this time (913 DR), Sembia became as a true nation.

Having accomplished all this, the Raven went alone as an envoy to the Elven Court and asked the elders of the Elven Council to approve a road open to humans going north from Sembia to the shores of the Dragon Sea (an earlier road had been destroyed during the conflict and was now overgrown). Raven proposed that the elves choose its route and retain control of it and the woods around it so that no woodcutting or human settlement would occur, and that Sembia's people build it with them.

The elves had earlier made similar arrangements with the Dalesmen and had no difficulty with the concept of such an agreement. However, the inhabitants of Velarsdale (now Harrowdale) refused the proposal, not wanting or needing such a road at that time (curious, since later a ruler of Harrowdale commissioned the disastrous Halfaxe Trail). The elves, not wishing to offend long-time allies, refused Raven's request.

Rebuffed, the Raven then threatened to exterminate the isolated elves in Arnothoi, the last embattled remnant of the elves in Sembia, if the Elven Court did not cooperate. He and his people would leave Arnothoi unmolested and its elves free to come and go and trade or not as they wished *if* the road was built.

The elves agreed under pressure, and Sembia's financial future was secured. Hillsfar, on the shores of Elventree. Over the years the elves of Arnothoi came north to join their brethren or slipped away to seek Evermeet, and that wood gradually disappeared. The route the elves chose ran past the base of the Standing Stone as a reminder of earlier, less-hostile dealings between humans and elves.



Sembia grew rich under merchant leaders of increasing wisdom, such as Saer (for whom Saerb was named, and Chondathan, later renamed Saerloon) and Selgar (Chancelgaunt was renamed Selgaunt at his death, when he was buried there).

Rauthauvyr the Raven, before his death, saw that these merchants had a strong standing council of merchant elders to advise them and to ensure that no ruler could hold onto power by force of arms. Then this farsighted man, creator of a nation, now half-blind and infirm from old war wounds, rode north into the elven woods and disappeared. None know what happened to him or where his bones lie, save perhaps some few elder elves.

The Overmaster

Sembia today is a strong kingdom, quick to defend threats to its sovereignty (such as the rise of Scardale), and first in financial wealth of all the western Inner Sea lands. Its ruler is called the Overmaster and is elected to a seven-year term by a council of merchants.

This merchant council is presently based in Ordulin and is 22 strong. The incumbent ruler, Elduth Yarmmaster, is just beginning his third term of office. Although there are always those ambitious for the Overmaster's chair or dissatisfied with its present occupant, Elduth has proven to be an mature and wise man of kindness and humor, though quite frail and elderly now and reportedly sustained by *potions of longevity*.

Some in Sembia have urged Elduth to take advantage of the recent disappearance of the elves to take over the lands from Hillsfar to the Dragon Reach to Mistledale and the Thunder Peaks, but so far Elduth has refused. He is eloquent in council, arguing that "swords speak, but they do not listen," and that the neighboring lands of Cormyr, the Dales, and the Moonsea would like as not reach for their own swords should they make such a claim. Instead, Elduth argues that Sembia should stand ready to support, and if necessary, usurp control in, those troubled regions quietly, as Cormyr did with Tilverton. Those who agree with Elduth speak of his sage nature in playing a patient waiting game. Those who disagree note that the great statesmen of Sembia is old and will likely not live out his term, magical enhancements or not. Then there will be a new day for Sembia.

The Sembian Mindset

It is said, "When you look into a Sembian's eyes, you can see coins being counted in his mind." The people of Sembia have the well-earned reputation of being money conscious, even

greedy and avaricious, in their daily lives. Their nation was built on trade, and lives and dies by trade. A measure of one's success can be given a value in gold pieces. Titles and accomplishments, which carry great weight in Cormyr and the Dales, matter little when confronted with the bottom line of the ledger book.

Sembians see themselves as being careful when matters are unknown, bold and decisive when they may pull off a coup or make a sale. They are in command of their own destiny, and should the gods set them back, they will learn from their mistakes and rise to regain that which they have lost and a bit more for interest.

Sembians are industrious and hard-working, toiling away at tasks long after any other people would stop for the evening. Candles, lanterns, and glowstones allow work well into the evening, and with the fall of night there are still those who press on, seeking their own form of perfection. The Sembians believe themselves superior to their neighbors because they work at life and work very hard.

The Sembians are cool to their neighbors, keeping them at arm's length. The Cormyreans are viewed as having too much of the noble blood poisoning their system, such that they hare off on crusades and quests regardless of the damage it does. The Dalesmen are primitive country bumpkins, surviving only by dint of powerful allies. The Moonsea cities are enemies to be destroyed from within economically since no army can take them. The same may be said for the Dragon Coast, which is a hotbed of secret societies and thieves' guilds. The Vast and the Westies are potential marketplaces and resources, and care must be taken not to turn them into rivals.

And then there are the elves. Sembian history is filled with conflicts between the elves and the humans of Sembia, and there is little love lost between the two. A pronouncement banishing the elves from Sembia is still on the books after 10 years and is used to harass irritating elven travelers. The elves of the the Tangled Trees still harass Sembian merchants. It does not bother the Sembians so much that the majority of the elves have gone into Retreat as that the ones that they left behind are now uncontrolled and making trouble.

Industrious, proud, diligent, cosmopolitan, and canny—these are the phrases the Sembian merchant would use to describe herself or himself. The phrases that the Cormyreans, Dalesmen, and elves would use are not listed here (to be polite).

Locations of Interest

The original concept of Sembia was as an open territory that DMs could play with to their heart's content, setting down their own designed cities as Ordulin and Selgaunt, untroubled by changes in the outer Realms brought on from TSR novels and game products. The requirements of the growing campaign world (particularly the Tuigan invasion) showed us that we had to give some level of detail to the area. While those who had not developed Sembia were not offended, those who had placed their cities there were *outraged,* and I [Jeff Grubb] received a number of angry comments and amazing letters (my favorite was the adventuring group that took over Sembia and attempted to build the "Great Sembian Peace Wall").

With the redesign of this boxed set, those elements which have been added are summarized here. Those areas we have not gone into, in particular the smaller cities of Surd, Tulbegh, Mulhessen, Kulta, Huddagh, and Saerb, are left open for DMs to develop (or not develop) at their leisure, with only the briefest mention here. And while (being now older and wiser) this designer cannot promise that no TSR designer, editor, author, or other worthy will not attempt to further develop Sembia, we will try to keep such interloping to a minimum. Sigh.

Daerlun

Daerlun is a large city in Sembia, closest to the nation of Cormyr and benefitting the greatest from trade with that nation. It is the most Cormyrean of the Sembian cities, which is to say its people are polite, warm, and friendly—far from the stereotypical ruthless Sembian merchant.

The natives of Daerlun are, however, wealthy, and seek to protect both that wealth and their own security. Adventurers and particularly thieves are not openly welcome in Daerlun, and those caught trying to ply their trade within the city walls are quickly caught and sent to the Deep Cells of the city, never to be seen again.

Daerlun is ruled by a high bergun, Halath Tymmyr, an old chum of Elduth Yarmmaster. Quite old now, Tymmyr confines himself to his quarters, allowing his commander of the guard, Allathast, to run day-to-day operations.

Daerlun is dominated by a single large temple to Sune (though many also claim to venerate Tyr, particularly when some criminal is captured). The House of Firehair is one of the most beautiful of Sune's temples and is presided over by High Priestess Thauna Maskalar (CG hf P21) and a small army of 48 lesser priests, the bulk of them human and half-elven females (the prejudice against elves does not extend to their half-elven relatives in Sembia). There are also shrines in the city to Azuth, Deneir, Lathander, Lliira, Loviatar, Malar, Mystra, Shar, and Tymora. Curiously, there is no shrine or temple to Tyr.

Daerlun is also the headquarters of the profitable and respected Firehands Group trading company (see the Merchant Companies sidebar in the "Western Heartlands" chapter).

Ordulin

Ordulin is the capital of Sembia, though not its largest city. It was built on the site of old Moondale, a Dale community that was

sucked up whole by the expanding nation of Sembia. Sembian texts refer to this settlement as "an armed logging camp," conveniently ignoring its original nature. Ordulin was made the capital as a compromise between the largest (and at that time, rival) cities of the nation, and has since grown in importance. As the capital, it is under the command of Overmaster Elduth Yarmmaster, but in reality is is controlled by the Council of Sembia and particularly its merchant class.

Ordulin is laid out like a compass, with all roads (and all power) radiating from three central buildings: the Great Hall of the Council, the Tower of the Guards, and the Guarded Gate, which is the mint and treasure-trove of Sembia.

Ordulin is home to a number of temples, including those to Gond, Sune, Tymora, Lathander, and Lliira (replacing a now-defunct temple of Waukeen). There are also shrines to Deneir and Loviatar.

Finally, Ordulin has its own thieves' guild, a gathering of self-styled revolutionaries called the Rot Grubs who are dedicated to the overthrow of the "godless merchantilocracy" and establishing a true king in Sembia. Their activities have become more pronounced of late.

Saerloon

Saerloon was one of the original colony cities established in the land that would be Sembia, and was known in those times as Chondathan. It gained the name Saerloon from the master merchant Saer, whose brave and industrious nature helped establish the city as an economic powerhouse. It is an old, refined city of exotic architecture and varied tastes. Its buildings are laced with cornices, friezes, carvings, and the ever-present gargoyles. Its people epitomize the head-down, continual bustle that marks Sembia, pausing only briefly (and regularly) to check to see if someone is creeping up on them.

Saerloon is ruled by Lady Merelith of the Guard (NG hf F11) in the name of the Council of Sembia, but as in almost all Sembian towns, it is the merchants who rule, and the markets (under the gaze of statues of Saer) are filled with their calls and competitive shouts.

Saerloon is home to two powerful magical churches, who aid the merchants in protection spells and abjuration magics. They

The Helms of Sembia

Many of the cities of Sembia use a military unit known as a *helm* for patrols and city watches. The standard helm guard is dressed in chain and carries a short mace and a dagger. Patrols are mounted on medium horse and carry short bows, as well. All are 1st-level fighters, and if trouble is encountered, standard procedure dictates that one member of the squad be sent for additional aid. A helm squad in the city is five soldiers; in the country patrols consist of 10 mounted warriors led by a fighter of 3rd-6th level. The helms always carry the shield and colors of Sembia.

are dedicated to Mystra and Azuth, and have in their service a number of powerful wizards. The most mighty is the Lady's Mage Cadellin Firehands (LN hm W24) of the church of Mystra. The city also has shrines to Lathander, Tempus, Lliira, and Tymora.

Dusky Saerloon is also a hotbed of thieving activities and intrigue, some of which is supported by the local merchants. The Night Knives are local thieves, smugglers and fences, though they are infiltrated by other groups. The Eyeless Mask is a group of slavers with a hatred of mages, priests, and the nobility that is supported by the Red Wizards of Thay. The Cult of the Dragon, the Zhentarim, and the Red Wizards of Thay all have their agents operating in the area.

It is no wonder that the typical Saerloonian is paranoid about his or her holdings, and there are an abundance of hidden caches of gold, gems, and magical items tucked away throughout the city, such that whenever a building changes hands, a unit of the local helms must search the building for any hidden treasures (which are then claimed by the state).

Selgaunt

A large city at the mouth of the River Arkhen (the natives will inform you curtly that its true name is the Elzimmer, named after a local water mage), Selgaunt is the wealthiest (and by connotation, most advanced) city in Sembia. Originally named Chauncelgaunt, it was renamed after the powerful merchant Selgar, whose tomb is within the city walls.

Selgaunt is ruled by the hulorn, a hereditary merchant mayor. The current hulorn is Andeth Ilchammar (CN hm W6), a half-mad, bored playboy who thinks himself gifted by mysterious and unrevealed greater powers to have a higher purpose in life, a divine mission that has yet to be revealed. As in all Sembian cities, the true power is with the merchants.

Selgaunt has a number of powerful temples, including ones dedicated to Lliira, Sune, Milil, Deneir, and Oghma, in addition to shrines to Lathander and Tymora.

Selgauntans are proud, almost snobbish people, barely tolerating other Sembians, much less the great unwashed masses beyond the borders of civilization. They regard the Dalesmen as savages, and those of Archendale in particular as brutal savages. Given that the natives of Archendale have within living history destroyed another Dale *and* still maintain a significant army, this may not be the smartest attitude to profess.

Urmlaspyr

Urmlaspyr is a bustling, fair-sized, Sembian city south of Daerlun. Here is where the industrious nature of the Sembian people is fully shown, for the city works round the clock, primarily in its busy docks and shipyards. Like Daerlun to the north, the city's inhabitants have a more open attitude to their neighbors, particularly Cormyr. Urmlaspyr is ruled by the merchants, of course, but their spokesperson in the city is the hammarch of Urmlaspyr, a mayor-for-life post. The current hammarch is Aluin Sumbrar (LN hm F2), a stout, weary man who wields little true power and acknowledges it with good grace.

Urmlaspyr is a relatively open and indulgent city, as its list of temples shows: There are temples to Gond and Tymora, but also to Umberlee and Talos, in open operation. The Goldhall of the Sacraments was the temple of Waukeen, but the high priest converted to worshipping Cyric and launched on a brutal campaign to prove himself to his new god that ended in the fireballing of the church building. The Goldhall is a burned-out husk, and the high priest is missing. It is assumed that there are underground temples to Cyric and to the Cult of the Dragon in Urmlaspyr, as well. Finally, the city houses shrines to Deneir, Lathander, Tempus, and Torm.

This open-mindedness about churches and faiths is more the result of hard currency than any great enlightened tolerance on the part of the local population, and should any power's faith, good or evil, get out of line and start hurting business, it will suffer the fate of the refounded Cyricist faith. Concern has been voiced regarding the eventual goals of the church of Umberlee.

Yhaunn

Yhaunn is Sembia's port on the Dragon Reach, and while it is not that nation's oldest city, is the oldest retaining its original (Chondathian) name. It handles a great deal of the Dales traffic heading south into the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Yhaunn is ruled by the Nessarch, a mayor-for-life appointed by the local merchants (of course). The current Nessarch is Andilal "the Stout" Tharimpar (NG hm F6).

Yhaunn is laid out in a excavated quarry on the shores of Yhauntan Bay, with the wealthiest (and most livable) houses located farthest from the sea, farthest up the hill, and closest to the Roadkeep, the single gate complex that serves as castle, jail, and treasury. Buildings and caretaking deteriorate as one approaches the sea, reaching at last the slums by the docks. In Yhaunn, where people stand in the community is determined by where they sleep.

Yhaunn has a number of temples, including ones to Tymora, Selûne, Lliira, and Ilmater. The temple of Lliira has absorbed the clergy and following of the old temple of Waukeen, moved into the nicer building, and sold off its old digs at a handsome profit (always a compliment in Sembia). The buyer remains mysterious, however, and rumors that the structure would be turned into townhouses or merchant space have been replaced with other, darker whisperings.

The Moonsea

The Moonsea is a deep natural lake located north of the Dalelands and connected to the Sea of Fallen Stars by the course of the River Lis. A cold, clear lake with deep, almost purplish waters, it is fed by the ice-cold White River in the east, the River Stojanow, which flows off the Dragonspine Mountains, and the River Tesh. It is also said to have entrances at its very depths to underground seas or the Elemental Plane of Water.

Trade is mostly over water in the Moonsea reaches, both between city-states in the region and to the south, down the River Lis to Sembia and the Old Kingdoms. Forged metals and raw minerals make their way down the Lis, along with exotic furs and, all too often, slaves.

The Moonsea reaches are a hotbed of adventurer activity as there are many old tombs, lost kingdoms, and long-dead barons on the lake's shores. In addition, most of the local governments are harsh and oppressive, and though the people may have no intention of rising up against them, these governments provide excellent foes, unimpeded by moral quandaries.

But the Moonsea also promises death to the unwary and the unruly, the ones who know not when to fight another day. The dungeons of Zhentil Keep are filled with would-be duelists who challenged a member of the Black Network, and the harbor of Mulmaster is littered with the bones of those who challenged the High Blade of that city. The battle cry of the area is well-chosen: "Dare—And Beware!"

History

The Moonsea has a long history as the border between the elven lands to the south and the darker, more sinister lands of the Ride and Thar., home of dragons and giant and ogre tribes in great multitudes. The deep sea was an excellent barrier to the raiders, as those tribes who sought invasion had to detour around and through the lands that would eventually hold Yûlash, Zhentil Keep, and Hillsfar.

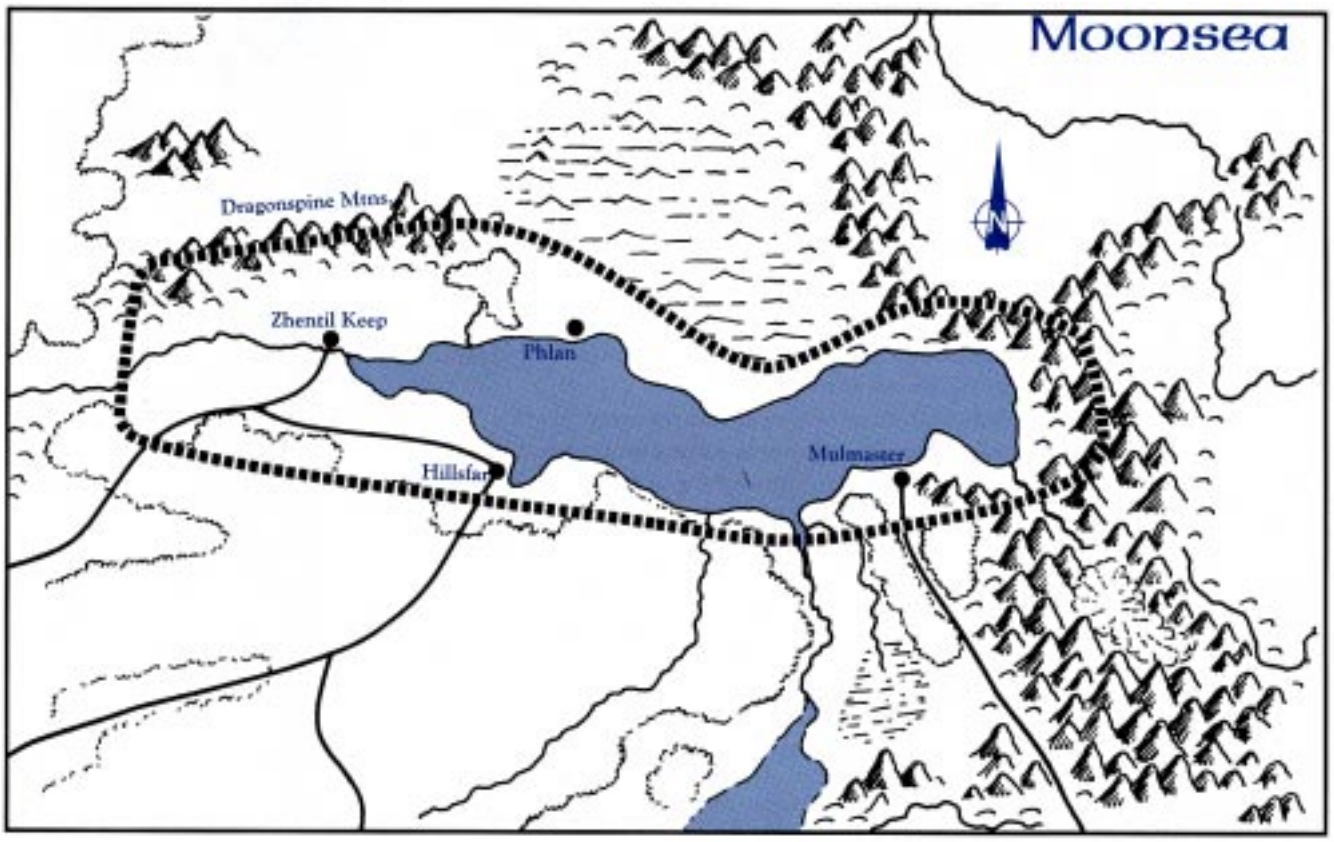
The first true settlement in Moonsea was Northkeep, a shining citadel established as a beacon of civilization and a jumping-off point for merchants seeking trade with the dwarves of the North—including not only Tethyamar, but the clans of the Cold Lands—who traded their metalwork and craft for much-needed magic. In the end, Northkeep was sunk beneath the icy waters of the Moonsea by the inhuman forces, and humankind suffered one of many setbacks in the region.

So has been the nature of human habitation of this region since the beginning. Human settlements thrive for a few years, usually through sheer willpower and on the strength of a sharp sword, and then are overrun by goblins, orcs, dragons, beholders, or giants. Phlan has fallen and risen again. Yûlash is a ruin where a decade ago there was a thriving town. Hulburg and Sulasspryn are empty hulks. Each of the cities of the Moonsea seems threatened with extinction in its turn, then is rebuilt.

This cycle may be the reason that only the strongest and the most savage survive, even prosper, in the lands of the Moonsea. The greatest cities—Hillsfar, Mulmaster, and the impenetrable Zhentil Keep—are all ruled by evil people who control their lands with iron grips. The lesser cities, Elventree, Phlan, and Thentia, may be less evil, but have a strong, independent, almost chaotic nature. In many ways the Moonsea is a frontier, with a frontier mentality.

The Moonsea Mindset

The people of the Moonsea cities are by nature plotters, informers, and spies. They keep their own thoughts most private—from each other and particularly from strangers. The walls not only have ears in most Moonsea cities but also tongues ready to speak out against anyone who strikes the local



lords as a threat. It is no wonder that under these circumstances the only ones to survive are those who keep their secrets to themselves. Better another take the blame than oneself, and best of all if that other is from a faraway place, with few to protect him or her.

The people of Zhentil Keep, Mulmaster, Melvaunt, and Hillsfar are used to cruel lords, for this is a cruel land. If gentle natures were to succeed, they would have done so earlier, and the wreckage of ruined cities would not lie all around. Better to support the lower planar creature that one knows than confront one of even more deadly and fell power.

The people of the Moonsea cities view most of the rest of the world, even those from other Moonsea cities, with suspicion and distrust. The Dalesmen live in a fool's paradise and cannot be trusted to grip the right end of a sword. The Cormytes and Sembians are empire builders, one using swords, the other silver. To the north are the Cold Lands, home of every evil that has plagued the coast. And the Vast is a breeding ground of more troubles and more adventurers. As for people from the other Moonsea cities, they are obviously spies, for who would not choose one's home city over another, unless there was sufficient gold in the deal?

To the outside world, the people of the Moonsea are viewed as unfriendly, sullen, dispirited, crafty, and most of all, dangerous. They are no more universally evil than the well-respected Dalesmen to the south are universally good. But, when traveling in the Moonsea region, that is the way to bet.

Interesting Features

The cities, towns, and sites which dot the area around the Moonsea are numerous and varied. Many sites of interest are detailed below in alphabetical order.

The Bell in the Depths

One of the great and mysterious sites in the Moonsea area, the Bell in the Depths is connected with legendary Northkeep, an island kingdom that was the first great citadel of humankind in these cold lands. Northkeep was of old a great and magical city, and it was under the protection of its magics that humanity first began to press back the orc hordes and take command of the sea.

The power of Northkeep made it a target for the orcs, giants, and other evil races. These creatures were not inclined towards sea actions, and Northkeep seemed safe until the day when (according to legend) 40,000 inhuman mages, shamans, witch doctors, and priests of all foul races gathered on the northern shore of the Moonsea and began to chant, bringing the

vengeance of their gods down upon the human interlopers. The gods (well, at least some of them) came and destroyed their priests in anger, but also sank Northkeep beneath the waves.

The upper reaches of Northkeep—its slender, now-broken spires—can be seen beneath the water by boats that sail nearby, but the region is said to be haunted, for the original defenders of Northkeep seek company in their watch over the Cold Lands. On fog-ridden nights, the bells of the tallest towers, now submerged, can be heard as far away as Hillsfar, giving the site its name.

Citadel of the Raven

The Citadel of the Raven is a large, well-protected chain of interconnected fortresses on the western edge of the Dragonspine Mountains, its multiple towers occupied by Zhentil Keep forces and under the control of the Zhentarim. The fortress chain stretches for some 10 miles, and can house a large number of troops.

The Citadel of the Raven was a ruined series of fortresses from a long forgotten kingdom. In the Year of the Crumbling Keep (1276 DR), the complex was rebuilt by the combined forces of the Moonsea cities of Yûlash, Zhentil Keep, Melvaunt, Thentia, Hillsfar, and Mulmaster as a bastion against assaults from the north. Staffed by the combined forces of these cities (and by groups of adventurers as well), the fortress repulsed many major attacks by organized groups of ogres over the 80 years of its existence.

In 1355 DR, through a combination of bribery, threats, treachery, and shows of force, Zhentil Keep gained complete control of the Citadel, expelling all other forces, and raised the banner of the Zhentarim in place of the Raven of the North.

The Citadel is currently the major military outpost of Zhentil Keep forces as well as a prison for the city's political prisoners. The forces of the Citadel hold little political power within the organization of the Zhentarim, and a posting here is regarded as a punishment detail. The citadel is currently held by 2,000 men-at-arms suited in chain mail and wielding light crossbows and swords, 200 horsemen in plate armor and similar barding with lance and long sword, and 50 3rd-level fighter commanders. The Zhentil Keep forces are commanded by Lord Kandar Milinal (LE hm F10), commander of the army. In addition, the Citadel is often the wintering ground for mercenaries in the employ of Zhentil Keep.

Several members of the Zhentarim may be present at any time, as well, and Sememmon the Wizard once made his home here, but with his relocation to Darkhold, the Citadel is the haven of Lord Manshoon (LE hm W19). Like Darkhold, the Citadel benefits from strong defenses, but it is not plagued by the dangers of a nuisance population.

The battlements of the Citadel of the Raven face outward north and east, but are very strong to the west and south as well. Should the cities of the Moonsea fall to outside force, this is the bolt-hole the Zhentarim and other evil creatures plan to use.

Elmwood

Elmwood is a small farming community on the southern shores of the Moonsea. It is close to being a Dale, and indeed there is a good bit of Dales blood in the veins of its inhabitants. It is a tranquil place, its only ruler being a constable, Thoyana Jorgadaul (NG df F8), an adventurer who retired here years ago for reasons of her health.

Elmwood has had no need to protect its neutrality, owing to the fact that there is not much that people have wanted out of it. It is a free portage for ships in and out the River Lis, but its inhabitants have never had any cause to protect their small holdings. Until recently they have had their backs to the Elven Court and with it the implicit protection of the moon elf kings.

Elmwood is that rarity in the Realms, a small town that is little more than a waystop for ships and a home of fishermen and skilled woodcarvers. It is a place of peace. Enjoy it when possible.

Elventree

Located at the edges of Cormanthor is Elventree, of old a meeting place between elves and humans in the centuries following the fall of Myth Drannor. Long a haven for rangers, artists, half-elves, and druids, it is also said to be an outpost of the Harpers, and many of its people's daily ways fit in neatly with the Harper philosophy.

Elventree is built very much on the elven mold. It is a place of forest trails and homes in shallow caverns and hollowed-out trees lit by glowing globes of soft hues. It has no large buildings or cleared commons, a fact that in the past has served it well as protection from invaders (that and the presence of the Elven Court).

Elventree is leaderless but not lawless, for its ways are those of the Harpers, the elves, and such natural gods as Silvanus, Eldath, and Mielikki. It is defended in its time of need by its inhabitants, which include several powerful mages as well as the clergy of temples to Mielikki and Mystra.

The Halls of the Unicorn are the temple to Mielikki here, and are set within the lengthwise hollowed trunks of great, fallen trees. The temple is staffed by High Priest Chandlar Hummerspoon (NG hem P12) and five faithful followers. The temple of Mystra is a greater mystery, for this great cairn is hollow and pitch-black, and holds great wonders within. The temple is tended to by a mysterious mage who keeps himself masked at all time (LG? hm W17+?).

Hillsfar

Located on the southern shore of the Moonsea, Hillsfar is one of the petty states vying for control in that area with Zhentil Keep. Like many of the cities of the Moonsea, Hillsfar is crouched behind a circular, ringed wall with a single great gate high above the sea. Access to the city is restricted only to those individuals

The Red Plumes

The Red Plumes of Hillsfar began as various mercenary companies wearing their own company insignias and dress but sporting the red-plumed helms provided by Maalthiir to show their allegiance. In the years since his ascendency, Maalthiir has forged them into a unified fighting force that is ultimately loyal to him (as long as the loot holds out).

There are 10,000 swords in total in the Red Plumes, but most of them are found beyond the borders of the city. A typical detachment outside the city consists of 20 2nd-level warriors on medium warhorses, with splint mail and long swords. They are led by a warrior of 6th level or higher. Within Hillsfar the Red Plumes are the local militia. If encountered, a patrol consists of four 2nd-level warriors. Within the city the Plumes are the supporters of a safe and orderly regime; outside the city they are little more than brigands, raiding for what they need or want, provided they do no (long-lasting) harm to the city.

approved of by the current government.

Hillsfar, formerly the most open city on the Moonsea, has changed markedly in outlook, a change directly linked to the disappearance of the elves. Formerly the meeting ground between the elves and humankind for trade and diplomatic dealings, Hillsfar is today an ambitious, well-armed city-state, challenging Zhentil Keep for economic supremacy in the region, and now visibly ready to meet any resultant military threat.

Hillsfar was until recently ruled by a council (overthrown 10 winters back) of humans, half-elves, and representatives of the Elven Court. The city is now governed by Maalthiir, First Lord of Hillsfar, a shrewd, ruthless, and independent merchant-mage (N hm W15). Rumor has it that he has plans to annex Elventree and the other nearby cities, and spread his influence down the coast, eventually opening a port on the Inner Sea. His mercenary guards, already nicknamed the "Red Plumes," have a squad in Scardale and others patrolling through the remains of Cormanthor, south towards Essembra. Maalthiir has assured Sembian envoys that he intends to merely protect these routes for merchant traffic in the wake of the Time of Troubles.

The new government of Maalthiir is expansionist in nature, but has been held in check by the actions of Zhentil Keep. Red Plume and Zhentilar forces have regularly clashed along their common horder, particularly in the now-ruined city of Yûlash.

There are three major temples in the Hillsfar. The most powerful is the Vault of Swords, a complex dedicated to Tempus. Its Most Holy General Dounalis Guff (CN hm P18) is the official chaplain of the Red Plumes as well. The House of Happiness, the temple of Lliira, is very popular among the people, and overseen by Barand Hithkin (CG hm P15). The Lastholme, a small temple of Chauntea, is controlled by High Priest Borm Hlast (N hm D13). There are also large public shrines to Umberlee, Malar, and Torm.

Hillsfar is noted for three other features. First, Maalthiir operates and encourages the use of the Hillsfar Arena, a site of gladiatorial games. It is also used for the disposal of those unpopular with the established regime. Second, the city is the site of one of the few honest-to-goodness magic shops in the Realms, the Magic and Curios Shop of Hillsfar (Laris, proprietor). Laris (LN hm F10) is a short-tempered, rude man who is well aware that his customers need him more than he needs them and is willing to part with a few minor magical items. Two stone golems enforce his prices.

The third feature, and the most dangerous from the standpoint of nonhuman adventurers, is the fact that Maalthiir is extremely humanocentric and xenophobic. Elves, dwarves, halflings, and even half-elves are banned from the city, and if found there will be put into the arena for a spectacle (say, unarmed combat with a minotaur). Atrocities involving Red Plumes and nonhuman areas are now legendary, and Red Plumes are hated throughout the Moonsea area by nonhumans, regardless of alignment.

Hillsfar therefore holds great opportunities and great dangers for the adventurer, the worst danger being running afoul of Maalthiir and his stooges. The merchant-mage has been shown to be skilled and capable in ruling his city-state from Castle Vultureroost, and did not succeed by underestimating his potential foes.

Hulburg and Sulasspryn

These two towns are little more than ruins, having suffered the depredations of their neighbors, the assaults of orc tribes, and the remorseless damage of dragons. Of old, they were cities on a par with Phlan, but now they are broken rums with a few rotted, vine-covered buildings left. Those who still live within or near them do so as isolated clans, suspicious of strangers and hostile to those who might pose a danger.

Hulburg and Sulasspryn serve as a reminder to those along the Moonsea that the advancement of humankind, which may be assumed as a given in the softer lands to the south, is not nearly as secure as humanity would wish to think it was.

As in all ruined lands, there are tales of lost kings and great, buried riches found just beneath the surface. Indeed, each year at least one adventuring party is drawn to these wrecked cities. That a few do not return encourages others to make the attempt, since it is obvious that the earlier troops "found something" (or that something found them).

Ironfang Keep

This forbidding black stone keep is situated on the cliffs overlooking the mouth of the White River, where the river tumbles in a shimmering falls into the Moonsea. The Keep is a harsh, forbidding, windowless citadel. None knows when it was built, for it was regarded as an ancient and fell place even in the earliest tales of the Dalesmen.

Ironfang is reputed to be the home of a family, school, or com-

munity of wizards of great and dark power, so mighty that not even the Cloaks or the Red Wizards dare disturb them. Some petty king or minor baron sends a party of adventurers the Keep's way every decade or so—said ruler soon afterward discovers the remains of the party stacked like cordwood in his bedroom. Larger patrols have met similar fates, and an army once sent out of Mulmaster succeeded only in stirring up the local gnoll population to 50 years of raids and invasions.

The Wizards of Ironfang are left to their own devices and mysteries, for they seem more than willing to leave alone those who return the favor.

Melvaunt

Melvaunt is a large, multiple-walled community north of the Moonsea on the southern borders of the lands of Thar. Melvaunt is a cold, austere place, smoky from its continually worked forges and smelters. Its populace tends to be both ruthless and unfriendly.

Melvaunt and Hillsfar have formed the eastern border to Zhentil Keep's aggression on the Moonsea coast. Melvaunt and Zhentil Keep have skirmished and battled since the Zhentarim took command of that citadel, and a number of naval battles have bloodied the purple water of the Moonsea. It is said that the three major families of Melvaunt are unified only in their hatred of the Black Network.

Melvaunt is a city of intrigue, primarily between the three major noble families: the Leiyraghons, the Nanthers, and the Bruils. Each seeks to control the ruling Council of Lords and dominate the city's trade and manufacturing. Small battles in the streets between bravos of various factions are common. The Nanther family has a weak claim to the rulership of Shadowdale, and one of their number, supported by agents and armies of Zhentil Keep, attempted to take control of the Dale. For dealing with the forces of Zhentil Keep, this branch of the family has been banished (and supposedly the young lord destroyed when he failed in his attempt).

Government is by a Council of Lords made up of wealthy merchants in the city. One joins the Council by replacing an old lord or creating a new seat at a cost of 2 million gp. There are 39 members of the Council (eight of which are Leiyraghons, seven Nanthers, and six Bruils). The titular ruler of the council is Lord Envoy Dundeld Nanther (LN hm F6), who is getting old in years. The Council meets monthly and governs with a very light touch, for the most part staying away from bothering the businesses of most of its members.

The army of Melvaunt numbers 5,000 swords and is often supplemented by hired mercenaries. The general of the armies is the Lord of Keys, a phenomenally strong and cruel man named Halmuth Bruil (NE hm F11—Str 18/32). Melvauntian forces wear cloaks and armbands of purple, with the badge of a silver sword transfixing a silver anchor.

The Melvauntian navy consists of a dozen ships, with the hulls of four new *Raven* - class vessels being laid down at the moment. Shipbuilding is a continual activity in Melvaunt, both for trade and for protection. The admiral is the the Lord of Waves, Meldonder Nuiran (LN hm W11), who also oversees the inspection of every boat entering Melvaunt's harbor.

Melvaunt has three large temples. The Purple Portals is the local temple of Gond. High Artificer Hlessen Muragh (N hm P12) oversees eight subordinate priests. The temple is very popular as it has been researching new methods of waterproofing, insulation, and construction. The Halls of Laughter is the temple of Lliira run by Sshandar Lyrindtar (CG hf P9), formerly of the Hillsfar church. She is aided by seven subpriests. The Resting Place of the Whip is a large and sprawling temple of Loviatar, who has a special attraction here in the cold, cruel North. Its matriarch is Suzildara Sharranen (LE hf P14), and she is aided by 16 subpriests. In addition to these temples, there are shrines to Tempus, Tymora, and the quasi-power Sharess.

Melvaunt is a merchant's town and a smith's heaven. The sky is dark from continual forging, the air heavy with the continual blows of construction, and the atmosphere foul from continual smoke. Trade rules, mostly from the open market in the center of the city. All commodities are available somewhere for some price, and it is well-known that Melvauntians engage in the slave trade, shipping suitable captives south to the Old Empires and the Pirate Isles.

Mulmaster

Mulmaster is a large city that is built upon the sides of mountains to its south. The Moonsea protects its north side and a large keep the southern road, making it a naturally protected fort and one of the strongest such areas on the Moonsea, rivaling Zhentil Keep.

The highest spur of land in mountainous Mulmaster is the site of the Towers of the Blade. Here the ruling families of the city abide, led by the High Blade of Mulmaster, Selfaril Uoumdolphin (NE hm F20). Selfaril is a wily, cagey individual trying to block the control that Zhentil Keep is exerting over the eastern Moonsea. He seeks, by alliance and military force, to become the dominant power in the region. This quest for dominance has long been a tendency of Mulmasterites and their rulers, despite several crushing defeats over the years.

Selfaril is a scheming, conniving, and dangerous ruler who secures his command by killing or discrediting any who threaten it. Of late, a new factor has entered into his rule. After a long courtship, the First Princess of Thay, the tharchioness of the Tharch of Eltabbar, has agreed to wed him. She retains her home and court in her homeland, but visits her love three times a year, traveling through magical means to his side. The tharchioness is a woman of no modest beauty and great ability (LE hf W13). The activities of the Red Wizards have dramatically increased in Mulmaster during the years of their courtship.

Mulmaster has a permanent fighting force of 6,000 persons and

15 ships, though most of these are old cogs and coasters used for hauling the troops to set-piece battles.

More deadly are the Cloaks of Mulmaster, a collection of wizards sworn to defend the throne of Mulmaster (if not always its occupant) in much the same way as the War Wizards do Cormyr. Any mage of 4th level or higher is "persuaded" to join the Cloaks or leave town. There are over 200 Cloaks, with 29 of them of 12th level or higher. The Senior Cloak is Thurndan Tallwand (CE hm 17). All non-Cloak mages are forbidden to practice within Mulmaster, on pain of torture, maiming, or death. This limitation does not apply to diplomatic missions and royal courts, so many of the Red Wizards have infiltrated the area as "advisors" to the tharchioness.

The most powerful temple in Mulmaster is the Black Lord's Altar, ruled with an iron hand by the High Imperceptor of Cyric, Szchulan Darkoon (LE hm P19), formerly an orthodox Banite but now a devout and vigilant follower of the Prince of Lies. He is served by 22 priests in his quest for greater glory.

Mulmaster holds a plethora of other temples. The High House of Hurting, dedicated to Loviatar, runs under the steady and firm grip of Milauteera Argauthiir (LE hf P9) and 24 enthusiastic lesser priests. The High Hall of Swords venerates Tempus and is occupied by High Priest-Captain Ghallas "Foesmiter" Khenistar (CN hm P14) and 16 junior-grade priests. The Tower of Mysteries is the temple of Azuth, and its high priest is Ghondomeir Hazathal (LN hm P11/W11(Dual class)). Ghondomeir and his 16 lesser mages and priests cater almost exclusively to the Cloaks, and are regarded as their eyes and ears for spotting new mages in town. Lastly, the Gates of Good Fortune is dedicated to Tymora and controlled by Naneetha Danchul (CG hf P11). It is the smallest major temple, and Danchul has only nine priests and priestesses serving her.

The House Built of Gold, the temple to Waukeen, has been abandoned following the death of that deity. The tharchioness has petitioned the High Blade that it be reopened as a shrine for Thayvian gods. The High Blade, her husband, is taking the matter under advisement. Both the High Imperceptor and the Cloaks oppose any additional Thayvian influence in the city.

In addition to these temples, there are shrines in the city to Lathander, Malar, Mask, Talos, and Umberlee.

Phlan

A city ruined but never fully destroyed by war, invasion, and dragon's strike, Phlan is only now beginning to regain a semblance of its once-great glory. The walled city has far to go to catch up with Mulmaster, Zhentil Keep, or Hillsfar, but the past decade has seen a rebuilding boom dedicated to recreating humanity's foothold on the northern Moonsea.

Situated at the mouth of the Stojanow River, Phlan has become a well-known stopover point for caravels and caravans across the north, particularly now that Hillsfar has taken a more closed and expansionistic policy. Gems and other treasures are coming down from Thar and Glister, and Phlan is the jumping-off point for their further transportation across the Moonsea. With trade come adventurers, settlers, farmers, and most of all, gold.

Phlan is ruled by a rotating Council of Ten, all of whom are judges and have full judicial power. The head of the council is Number One, who acts as mayor. Elections are common, as votes of no confidence are called for with every setback or charismatic new hero who appears.

Despite this growth, much of Phlan is still ruined and lies in wreckage, and rebuilding is a major preoccupation. Arrested felons are assigned to reconstruction tasks, and to this day new discoveries (and the creatures protecting them) are made in the heart of the ruins.

Phlan's thieves' guild operates overtly, though not with the blessing of the Number One. The Thieves of Phlan are noted for each having their left ear lopped off as a sign of loyalty and identification. It is said that a merchant with a *ring of regeneration* does a good business with the former members of this group.

Phlan currently has one temple, the Waiting, dedicated to Tyr. Its patriarch, Holondos Stimpiir (LN hm P12), is served by six subpriests of varying levels. There is also an abandoned and despoiled temple of Bane in the heart of the ruins that has not been reclaimed.

Teshwave

Once the most productive city of old Teshendale, Teshwave is used by the Zhentarim and Zhentil Keep as a military base and launching point for caravans and military expeditions into Daggerdale. It is here that the Black Network and the Zhentil Keep forces encamp their mercenary units and those nonhuman tribes at their disposal. The nonhuman units are rarely paid, but instead allowed to pillage at will throughout the vale.

Teshwave has no permanent government, only a military government run by the commander of the strongest unit present. Usually this is a warrior of 8th-12th level backed up by several mercenary units, a few priests of Cyric, a wizard of 6th level or so, and a few tribes of orcs, gnolls, or ogres.

Thentia

Thentia is the most fiercely independent but militarily weak of the cities on the Moonsea's northern coast. It is the most open city on the Moonsea, even moreso than Hillsfar in its halcyon days.

Thentia is ruled by a watchlord, elected by the local nobility. The current watchlord is Gelduth Blackturret (LN hm F9). The watchlord controls with the lightest of hands, since his power is little more than symbolic. The true power is in the hands of the local nobles, old families in town with names like Swifthands,

Khodoils, Mamarrathen, Birneir and Casplardann, These nobles are in turn supported by a collection of independent (and generally chaotic) mages.

Thentia has the largest collection of powerful, unorganized mages in the Moonsea area. They live in (relative) peace, since many of them came here to get away from the organizations of the Cloaks of Mulmaster and the War Wizards of Cormyr. These worthies include Phourkyn One-Eye (NG hm W21), Flammuldinath "Firefingers" Thuldoum (CG hm W18), Rilitar Shadow-water (CG em W15), and the mysterious mage known only as Scattercloak (CN? hm? W16?). It is these individuals that make Melvauntian slavers, Zhentil Keep raiders, and Moonsea pirates think twice before attacking Thentian ships and citizens.

Thentia has standard defenses of a sort: The Riders of Thentia are 60 in number, protected by scale mail, and are a force of mounted lancers. They differ from most mounted units in that they ride mid-sized musk oxen, called rothé, that are more sure-footed in the rocky slopes around the city. Thentia also has a force of warders (a police force) eight strong.

The only major temple in Thentia is the House of the Moon, presided over by Sureene Aumratha (CC hf P12) and six other priests. Sureene has two deputies—sorceresses trained by Firefingers himself (a W10 and a W9). There was a Temple of Waukeen in Melvaunt, but it blew up 12 years ago (1345 DR).

Thentia is also the home of a cult venerating a magical weapon, the Bright Sword, which is said to still fly about the dark underworld to assault those who offend it. Many within town know that this item, should it truly exist, must be only a man-made weapon, but belief is strong nonetheless. The Bright Sword covets magic and will track down those with unique magic and slay them. The existing mages are assumed to have some form of abjuration that prevents it from detecting or assaulting them, but newcomers to Thentia should be warned.

Voonlar

Voonlar is a large town north and east of Shadowdale. It is only slightly larger than cosmopolitan Shadowdale itself, and is considered that Dale's chief rival in the area. The North Ride, leading to Shadowdale and Teshwave, and Shind Road, which goes to Teshwave, meet in Voonlar in a "Y," with most of the important buildings, including temples to Cyric and Chauntea, at the joining of that "Y."

Voonlar is nominally independent, ruled by an elected bron (sheriff), who may direct up to six full-time deputies plus a militia of villagers raised as needed. In theory, all villagers vote in the annual election of the bron.

In reality, the town is ruled by Zhentil Keep, and its bron is a long standing puppet. The present bron's name is Buorstag Hlammythyl (LE hm F8), a burly fighter who worships Cyric and gained a formidable reputation as a mercenary before his arrival in Voonlar. He is a direct agent of Zhentil Keep and part of the Zhentarim.

Voonlar is a relatively peaceful town; its people are used to the foul nature of their lord, and more willing to pay taxes for mercenary assaults on Shadowdale than to go serve there themselves. Indeed, the natives of the Dalelands are looked upon as disruptive agents and rogues in the people of Voonlar's otherwise normal and placid lives.

The village is the headquarters of the Shield Trading Company, a minor merchant trading house that serves both the Moonsea and the Dales regions. Relatively reputable, the trading company is considered to be independent of Zhentarim influence.

Voonlar has two temples in operation. The Temple of Cyric, renamed the Dark God Reformed, is commanded by Gormstadd the Rerisen (LE hm P14), who is served by 14 lesser priests of varying levels. Gormstadd also maintains an elite temple guard of 16 4th-level warriors, as his temple has been raided many times over the years, primarily by terrorists out of Shadowdale. Indeed, a long-standing reward is offered by Gormstadd (10,000 gp) for the leading terrorist and thug, Mourngrym Amcathra.

Voonlar is also home to the Bounty of the Goddess, a large temple of Chauntea. Lady Shrae of the Goddess (CG hf L12) runs the temple with 14 lesser priests. She fields her own militia of 20 temple guards (all 2nd level), primarily as protection from the Cyricists. Lady Shrae is on good terms with her counterpart in Shadowdale, and good adventurers on the run have been known to hide out in the temple complex, pretending to be lay brethren. The temple to Chauntea is the more popular and graceful of the two temples, with extensive gardens and outbuildings.

In addition, shrines to Lathander and Tempus lie on the outskirts of the village.

Yûlash

Yalash was once a large, fortified city, but half the buildings have been reduced to scattered piles of stone by the continual warfare that has plagued this area. The city became a bone of contention between the forces of Zhentil Keep (the Zhentilar) and those of Hillsfar (the Red Plumes). In the war between them, much of the city was ruined. Both sides fought on, and the natives of Yûlash either fled to safer climes or joined one side or the other. In addition to the violence brought by the outsiders, the remaining citizenry is split into two rabid factions.

What remains of the city has been clustered behind hastily constructed stockades or sealed over to produce fortified buildings. The largest of these stockades is set up about the ruins of the main citadel, which flies the banner of Zhentil Keep. Zhentil Keep claims to be offering a "protectorate" status to Yûlash, much as Cormyr has done in Tilverton. Hillsfar's troops claim to be leading a popular resistance to the Zhentarim action.

Yûlash's importance is not its people (feuding) or product (negligible), but its location. It is seated on a wide plateau of stone and earth that rises above the surrounding area like a shield laid battle-side up. This allows the occupier to command the region around

The Occupying Forces of Yûlash

Zhentil Keep's current garrison consists of 120 fully armored mounted men-at-arms (full plate and plate barding for the heavy horses, lances and long swords), 320 lightly armored guards/skirmishers (banded armor, long swords and staff slings), and 52 archers. The garrison has three 6th-level clerics of Cyric, and three mages of Zhentil Keep. The foremost of these mages and present commander of Yûlash is Szamaeril (LE hm W10). His assistants are two mages (6th and 8th level).

The Hillsfar forces consist of 300 Red Plumes in 30 detachments. Each detachment is led by a 6th-level warrior. All are on medium horse, with splint mail and long swords. In addition, there are three 8th-level mages in the pay of Maalthiir, and four 5th-level priests of Tempus are present. The entire army is led by Haliator Mendara (LE hm F12), a warrior who supplements the meager support from Hillsfar with widespread looting.

In addition, most of the natives can be broken down into one of two main factions, each with 20 or so smaller subfactions. The Yûlash in Rebellion faction is opposed to the Zhentil Keep occupation. The Purge Yûlash faction is opposed to the Hillsfarian-promoted rebellion. Both sides have a motley band of militias that usually run in packs of 10 to 20 women and men, unmounted, dressed in the leather, and armed with short swords. The various subfactions seem to hate each other as much as they hate the occupying forces, and treachery and ambush is common among them.

Yûlash and its all-important trade. This terrain feature is why the forces of these two Moonsea cities are fighting over Yûlash.

The combination of internal factions, Zhentilar, Red Plumes, and the occasional rogue deity has left Yûlash a near ruins, with only the most desperate and cunning natives remaining in the area. No inn remains for travelers, no tavern that is not a faction headquarters, and no church that is not controlled by occupying forces.

Yûlash's mount is reputed to be tunneled with secret passages and hidden lairs, and the caverns beneath the surface have extradimensional gateways to other planes of existence. For this reason the ruins are still an attraction for particularly gutsy adventurers. Both sides execute looters (to be read as "looters not on our side") and the Red Plumes are particularly brutal to captured nonhumans.

Zhentil Keep

Perched at the western end of the Moon Sea, Zhentil Keep is a large, walled city of the size and population of Suzail in Cormyr. It is one of the major ports of the Moonsea, and is dominated by a large temple complex dedicated to Cyric.

Zhentil Keep is ruled in name only by Lord Chess, a foppish, vain, fat overlord with a taste for gluttony (CN hm F3/W3/P3 (triple class, currently fighter). Chess is a gossipy blunderer, and though the Zhentarim have used him in the past as an ally, neither they nor anyone else knowledgeable in such matters count him as a member of their organization. He is under the constant protection of six 6th-level warrior bodyguards.

Zhentil Keep is the home of the Zhentarim, though the city and its populace are not completely under the thumb of the Black Network. The Zhentarim are discussed in their own section in the "Secret Power Groups" chapter in *Running the Realms.*

The Circle of Darkness, Cyric's temple complex in the Keep, is one of the largest in the Moonsea area. Its patriarch is Xeno Mirrormane (NE hm P18). Xeno was responsible for the Banedeath, a period when followers of Cyric destroyed all outward signs of Bane worship in the city, defiling and destroying the two rival Bane temples, the Black Altar and the Dark Shrine. Xeno then killed his brother Maskul, former leader of the church of Cyric, and took command. All low-level priests of the dead god Bane were given the choice of converting officially or posthumously. The bulk joined Xeno, and he is served by 40 priests of 1st-15th level. The former High Inquisitor of the formerly Orthodox Banites, Ginali, is missing and presumed dead. The former leader of the other Banite church, Fzoul Chembryl (LE hm P15) continues to live, due to a "special relationship" with Cyric and his connections with the Zhentarim. Fzoul operates on a short tether within Zhentil Keep. Cyric rules, and if any in Zhentil Keep think otherwise, they keep this information to themselves.

Zhentil Keep is also the home of a large temple of Malar, the High House of the Hunt, run by Huntmaster Daerdeth Malagar (CE hm P16) and 11 subpriests. The Tower of Pain Exalted venerates Loviatar under the stem eye of its patriarch Ulamyth Quantor (LE hm P17) and 14 attendant priests. There are also shrines to Auril, Tempus, Tymora, and Umberlee within the city walls.

Zhentil Keep is the birthplace of the Zhentarim, the Black Network that today is the single most powerful evil force in the Heartlands. It has concentrated on monopolizing trade, controlling small towns and cities, and conspiring against an ever-growing list of enemies that includes, but is not limited to, the Dalelands, Cormyr, Sembia, Waterdeep, the Harpers, the Cult of the Dragon, various orc, ogre, and giant tribes, and a growing number of adventuring groups. Surprisingly, it has lost power in Zhentil Keep in the past decade, particularly with the destruction of the more traditional Banites by the Cyricists. Zhentarim operations have been relocating to more remote, defensible bases such as Darkhold and the Citadel of the Raven.

Nighttime in Zhentil Keep is dangerous, in part because of press gangs, groups of local thugs employed by the Zhentarim or other groups to get cheap (as in "free") manpower. Such groups are armed with clubs, metal staves, and brass knuckles, and tend to be of 1st-4th level. These gangs use brawling tactics to knock out the unwary. Those so captured may find themselves on a slave ship heading for Thay, at the oars of a galley on the Moonsea, or in a work crew rebuilding sections of Yûlash or the Citadel of the Raven.

The Vast

This great, open (but far from empty) land forms the eastern boundary of the Heartlands. Within it are still the familiar peoples and ways found, in varying degrees, in Cormyr and Waterdeep. Traveling farther east one reaches the lands of Impiltur, Aglarond, and Thay, strange places with odd names and unknown peoples—the Unapproachable East and the Old Kingdoms. Parts of the Vast were among the first settled in modern times by humans, yet the region still remains wild and unchallenged in many locations. It is a land of adventure and of daring.

The Vast stretches the eastern length of the Dragon Reach and encompasses those lands whose rivers—the Lis, the Dalton, the Vesper, and the Fire— feed that great bay. It reaches as far east as the Earthspur Mountains and the Grey Forest.

The people of the Vast are a mixture of immigrants from the south and the west, and the region includes a strong strain of the same heritage that would grow in different directions to become that of the Cormyreans, the Sembians, and the Dalesmen. Small wonder that the natives of the Vast feel a stronger kinship and heritage with their neighbors across the Dragon Reach than those to the East.

The Vast has always been an adventurer's territory, and only recently has begun to take on the trappings of a more civilized land. Some of its cities, such as Procampur, are extremely old, but the hinterland has only been freed of orcish depredations in the past few generations (and some natives, their holds burning behind them, argue that point).

History

Two millennia ago the Vast was Vastar, the orcish lands. These were the breeding grounds of the goblin hordes that would spill eastward and cross the Dragon Reach in ramshackle boats to raid the elves. The orcs were overthrown by invading dwarves, who established the Realm of the Glimmering Swords. It was during this time that the first humans came to the Vast, including the mage Maskyr.

The rule of the dwarves occurred against a backdrop of constant war with the orcs, such that there were perhaps only 40 years of true peace for the Realm of the Glimmering Swords. The orcs overran the dwarves, and they escaped extinction only through the aid of human and elven allies. The remaining dwarves left the region to the newly arriving humans and retreated to the east, to the south, and to isolated and hidden communities within the Vast.

The most successful of the humans were the adventurers whose hunger was sated by gold and whose thirst was slaked by great deeds. This was the Time of the Glorious Fools, and there are those who will argue that it is still that age, as adventurers still rule the cities of Calaunt and Ravens Bluff. The orcs today are contained, if not conquered, and trade has grown up in the lands of the Vast. However, for many individuals with adventuring blood, it is still a wilderness in which one may prove one's worth.

The Vast Mindset

The people of the Vast are diverse, ranging from the old established families of Procampur to the newcomers of Ravens Bluff. They all share a spirit of adventure and daring that is unseen anywhere else in the Realms, even in the wild lands of the Western Heartlands and the Savage North. As many foes are found here as in the Moonsea, but here they seem to be beatable, and the good guys (meaning the adventurers, the merchants, and the civilized peoples) seem to triumph more often than not.

This leads to an optimism and an openness among the people of the Vast. Adventurers are welcome in that they bring gold, stories, and magic out of the hidden lairs and passages that they explore. As often as not this year's starving merchant guard is next year's hero or the next decade's town council member. There is a spirit of opportunity, advancement, and growth in the Vast.

The people of the Vast view themselves as kin to the Cormyreans, Sembians, and Dalesmen, and view all three areas with compassion, both as allies and good trading partners. Azoun of Cormyr is well regarded for his actions during the Tuigan invasion.

The Moonsea territories are less well thought of, they regard Mulmaster much the way that Shadowdale's natives view Zhentil Keep. The Moonsea is the home of cheats and tight-fisted spies. The cities of the Dragon Coast are too lawless, for many of the pirates that raid the Vast come from there.

These views are common among the cityfolk of the Vast. The rural population shares them as well, but rural people of the Vast are more reserved toward the brightly dressed, potentially dangerous adventurers that troop through their lands. The farmers think of most cities as dangerous, shady, or both. Tantras is dominated by religion, Calaunt by thieves, Ravens Bluff by religion *and* thieves, and Procampur by ancient status. As with farmers throughout Faerûn, they are happy to get their crops in with a minimum amount of hassle.

Interesting Features

Here are the significant and notable features of the Vast, presented in alphabetical order.

Calaunt

Calaunt is a medium-sized city on the eastern side of the Dragon Reach, located where the River Vesper flows into the Dragon Reach in a wide delta. It is a squalid, depressing city of tumbledown buildings and rotting slums, with only a few upper-class merchants and adventurers with manors along the outer wall. The chief business of the city is tanning, and the smell of the largest tannery overwhelms all other scents in the hot summer months. Mariners can reach Calaunt on smell alone.

Calaunt is ruled by Supreme Scepter Bellas Thanatar (NE hm F12). His regime is supported by the Merchant Dukes, six former adventuring companions known as "Bellas's Band," who became rich by following Bellas's orders, and richer still by helping him run Calaunt.

Calaunt is a magical place, but in a fell, fey manner, lacking any of the grace and wonder of other cities with heavy magic in use. Its gate guards are six stone golems, huge hulking brutes intended to cow the population as much as provide protection. The Supreme Scepter and the Merchant Dukes are all assumed to possess a great many personal magical items and are always looking for more, but those items are for personal use, and are rarely wielded in the name of Calaunt.

Calaunt has a standing army of 6,000 soldiers, led by 20 captains (5th-level warriors), each with a supporting battlemage (4th-level illusionists). In addition, the free city has a navy of six ships, used mainly to keep pirates at bay.

Two large temples dominate Calauntan life. The House of the Scarlet Hooks is a temple of Loviatar headed by Shaleen "Talonkiss" Oomreen (LE hf P14), who is supported by 24 priests. For those of a more beneficent nature, Calaunt is also graced by the Moonsilver House, the temple of Selûne, run by High Priestess Wyndra Syrylstone (CG hf P19) and 22 of her followers. There are also shrines to Auril, Malar, Talos, Tempus, and Lliira within the city walls.

Calaunt has a large and active thieves' guild in the form of the Shadowcloaks, a mysterious gathering of low-level thieves under the command of the Night Hood (abilities and identity unrevealed here). The wide-ranging activities of the Shadowcloaks are indicative of some form of tight relationship between the guild and the Merchant Dukes.

Calaunt is a large city (the third largest in the Vast, though behind Procampur in wealth) but a forgotten town, filled with twisting back streets and dark doings. It is a refuge for the lawless and the outcast, the forgotten and the forbidden. Local legends of great beasts occupying the sewers and slavers raiding in the middle of the night may be so much nightfog or they may be deadly and true in shadowed Calaunt.

Dragon Falls

The largest settlement between King's Reach and Tsurlagol, this is a small village situated above the thundering falls of the Fire River. A ferry operates a thousand yards above the village for merchant caravans. It is pulled across the river by ropes.

The village itself is dominated by a fortified inn, the Inn of the Dragon, made of fir wood and stone. The falls were originally said to be the home of powerful red dragon that terrorized the Vast south of the River Vesper. A band of human adventurers dispatched the drag on and built the inn. While the inn has passed into other hands since then, one of the original adventurers, a priest of Silvanus named Keldar of the Forest (N hm P13) makes his home there. Keldar is important mainly because he is the only permanent priest in town, and tends (well, ignores) a shrine at the head of the falls.

The Flooded Forest

The Flooded Forest is an arm of old Cormanthor that crossed the River Lis, but has sunken in the past century into a low bowl, becoming a fetid swamp. The trees of the forest are centuries old but have been dead for more than a hundred years. Hanging mosses and mushrooms are everywhere within the corruption of the marsh. Deadfalls of maple and oak are often encountered in the flooded forest, such that travelers are threatened as much by falling trees as by wandering monsters.

Wandering monsters are frequently encountered within the forest, including lizard men, black dragons, a number of fungi creatures, and carnivorous plants. Some of these creatures are not native to the area, giving rise to claims that someone or something is stocking the swamp to keep others away.

Glacier of The White Worm

The Glacier of the White Worm is a single, isolated river of ice located some 400 miles south of the Great 'Glacier itself, and weaving among the highest peaks of the Earthspur Mountains. it flows off a high cliff east of Mulmaster into the Moonsea on one side, and into Lake Icemelt on the other.

This glacier is home to a wide variety of polar creatures, giving rise to the idea that it was once a part of the larger sheet of ice to the north. It survives farther south than even its altitude would justify, and some dweomercraft may be involved.

The area takes its name from the pale albino remorhazes that are unique to the region. It is said that a king of their kind makes its lair in the very center of this domain.

Humans live in the area of the Glacier, primarily mountain barbarian tribes. A group of noble barbarians known as the Tribe of the White Worm is recorded as serving in the army of Zhengyi, the Witch-King of Vaasa. These barbarians are noted has having acquitted themselves well, and to have turned against Zhengyi when the nature of his evil became clear to them.

High Haspur

This alpine village is located in the heights of the mountains separating Ravens Bluff from Procampur. Most of the village is built on a series of low bluffs that overlook the trail, giving the townsfolk an excellent chance to defend themselves against frequent orcish (and other goblinkind) raids.

High Haspur has been ruled by the Morninglight family, a clan of gnomes, for generations. The Morninglights have proved to be expert negotiators with both the humans and the dwarves of the area, and maintain a peace between the two races. The head of the family is Fankolin Morninglight (NG gm I7/T10).

High Haspur is the site of an excellent inn, the Elf in Armor, also run by the Morninglights. The inn is named after the elven hero Beluar, who perished just north of the village in a battle with orcs. The trail through the mountains is called Elvenblood Pass in his memory, and the hero is buried in the small hamlet of Sarbreenar, located between High Haspur and the pass.

There are shrines to Tymora and Tyr in High Haspur, along with several others to various elven, dwarven, and gnomish deities, as well.

Hlintar

The crossroads town of Hlintar sits at the the intersection of the Hlintar Ride, going to Dalaunt and Dragon Falls, and the Cross Road, leading to Ravens Bluff and Kurth, and trades with all of these towns and cities. It is ruled by a master merchant, the head of a council of merchants, and its government reflects its leader—light rule save for matters that threaten the local economy. Hlintar is known for its pig farms and horses.

Hlintar is also known for the hatred that it inspires in dwarven hearts. Well over a hundred winters ago, a corrupt and evil master merchant coveted the dwarf-held lands east of the town. The leaders of these small communities were invited to meet with the master merchant, then killed in their sleep. Some escaped and later gained revenge by catching the master merchant in his own bedroom and breaking every bone and joint in his body. Since that day, no dwarf formerly native to Hlintar will enter the city.

Hlintar has a number of good inns, the most popular being Beindold's Busted Bones (Master Merchant Beindold was the corrupt one of legend). It is a regular meeting spot for individuals who do not want to be seen in Calaunt or Ravens Bluff.

Hlintar has a small temple to Chauntea, presided over by Gosmani Hagaris (N hm D7), and one to Lliira, controlled by Joybringer Halira Chessman (N hef P6). There are also shrines to Waukeen (abandoned), Selûne, Talos, and several dwarven deities nearby.

King's Reach

King's Reach is a wealthy, fortified town that has profited from trade in precious and other metals. Smelting is a common activity

The Roofs of Procampur

The closest thing to a caste system in the Vast is the division of Procampur according to function and task. A holdover from the city's earliest days, it divides the city beyond the port into eight districts. Each district is heavily guarded and walled, and its nature is indicated by roof color. The multicolored roofs of Procampur are dictated by royal order, and are set apart according to district:

- *District of the Poor:* Gray roofs.
- *Temple District:* Shining black roofs.
- *Merchant District:* Sea-green roofs.
- *Adventurers District:* Red roofs.
- *Sea District:* Blue roofs.
- *Services District:* Yellow roofs.
- *Nobles District:* Silver roofs.
- *High Court and Palace:* Gold roofs.

In this mountainous region, and prospectors in the Earthspur Mountains have long used King's Reach as a base. The town is the farthest navigable point on the River Vesper—farther upstream it turns into a torrent of falls.

King's Reach takes its name from the proclamation made by the dwarven deep king, Tuir, that humankind would come so far and no farther into the dwarven lands. The later collapse of Tuir's kingdom negated that demand, but the name has stuck.

King's Reach has a handful of small taverns and inns, none of which have more than a local repute, and that change hands often as this barkeep decides to strike it rich in the mountains and that prospector decides to settle down. The town also has a shrine to Tymora and is regularly visited by a priest out of Mulmaster (usually of 8th level).

Kurth

Kurth is named after its founder, a grim axe-wielding adventurer loved by the dwarves and given the nickname "Banditslayer." Despite this, the town has a reputation as being a dark and haunted place. It is said that pirates retire here to get away from the sea, treasure is squirreled away in every cellar, and dark deals and smuggling occur in the back rooms of Kurth's many bars. One persistent rumor concerns a ruined manor on the western end of town. Feljack's Hall, built by an adventurer 20 years ago, was destroyed by fire 10 winters back, and remained abandoned. Now armed skeletons are said to be seen picking through the rubble by the full moon.

Kurth is a large village, profiting from the trade up from both Ravens Bluff and King's Reach, and down from Mulmaster and Maskyr's Eye. It is thriving, and has a number of fine inns and taverns, including the Gauntlet and Girdle, the Rolling Heads, and Beluar'a Hunt. The last two are named after the elven hero Beluar's victory over the orcs at Viperstongue Ford. The hills outside of Kurth are known as Beluar's Hunt, commemorating the hero's pursuit of the fleeing orcs from Viperstongue northward.

Kurth has shrines to Eldath, Chauntea, and Clanggeddin. The shrine to Tymora is regularly visited by a priest from Mulmaster.

Maskyr's Eye

Maskyr's Eye is a village of 20 main buildings located at the foot of the Earthspur Mountains, beneath the shadow of the Glacier of the White Worm.

This small community is known primarily for its farming and horse breeding, and, at present, has no extremely high-level denizens in residence. The vale the community takes its name from is told of in the following tale:

Of old, the Archmage Maskyr explored these lands, which were still new to humankind, and came upon this valley. It was to his liking, and he thought to make a home there. In those days the land around the mountains was controlled by the dwarves, and the king of these dwarves was Tuir, Blood of Helban, who made his throne deep beneath Mount Grimmerfang, which the dwarven people had wrested from Orc-King Grimmerfang. Tuir, not wanting to give up any land to these newly arrived humans, gruffly stated that the dwarves would grant the valley to the archmage if Maskyr gave his right eye to Tuir right then and there. Maskyr, to the astonishment of Tuir's court, did so. The bargain was kept, and Maskyr lived happily in the vale that now bears his name.

Maskyr is long gone, disappeared, and presumably slain on some interplanar journey. Of his tower nothing remains, and only his name and the legend of Maskyr One-Eyed survives. The town has one of the finest inns in all the Vast, the Wizard's Hand, rivaled in quality only by the Worried Wyvern in Sevenecho.

Procampur

Procampur is a rich and independent city-state located on the eastern shore of the Dragon Reach. It is a large, sprawling city divided into districts by high walls. Each district is marked by slate roofs of a different color.

Procampur is the richest of the independent cities of the Vast, challenged only by Ravens Bluff and Tantras. Procampur was once known as Proeskampalar. It was a booming city before the founding of the Standing Stone and the creation of Dale-reckoning.

Procampur has a strong army and navy to protect the valuable substances it trades in from Inner Sea pirates and from other nations. It has defeated Mulmaster and Sembia decisively in past conflicts, and is now allied to the neighboring city of Tsurlagol.

From its early days until now it has been a city noted for its

skilled goldsmiths and gemcutters. It is ruled by a hereditary overlord with the title "thultyrl." The present thultyrl is a young man, Rendath of the Royal Blood (NG hm F11). The royal family of Procampur has no last name other than its title.

Districts are delineated by walls 15 feet high that separate them from each other. Guard posts, militias, and army barracks have white-washed roofs to tell them apart from the rest of a district's buildings. Royal orders are strict as to which activities may be performed in which district; for example, if an adventurer who has attained noble title wishes to settle in the Noble District, he must foreswear all further adventuring before his king and pledge to not aid or shelter any such individuals in his house.

All temples may be found in the black-roofed Temple District, which is dominated by four huge temple complexes as well as the scattered homes of the clergy and shrines of lesser gods. Torm is worshipped in the House of the Hand, presided over by High Priest Pallar the Obedient (LG hm P15) and 26 subpriests. Helm is venerated in the Tower of the Eye, presided over by High Guardian Endra "Watchever" Mathlyn (LG hf P16) and 18 subordinate priests. The Hall of Success was dedicated to Waukeen, but has been reconsecrated to Lliira. Its high priest is Baniya Dolester (CG hf P12), who in addition to her other duties tends to the needs of the previous High Priest of Waukeen, driven mad by the death of his goddess. The Lady's Happy Hall is the temple of Tymora, and is overseen by High Priest Orn Thavil (CG hm P14) and 24 subordinate priests. In addition, there are shrines to Mystra and Deneir in the city. The home of the former patriarch of Oghma, who disappeared during the Time of Troubles, is also a shrine.

Ravens Bluff, The Living City

Built over the rums of ancient Sarbreen, Ravens Bluff is one of the most prosperous and successful cities in the Vast. It is a large and bustling trading center located on the Dragon Reach where the Fire River flows between two large hills and into the Reach, and situated on the overland trade route from Procampur to the Moonsea Cities.

Sarbreen was a colony town, similar to Selgaunt and Saerloon. Yet while these cities prospered, Sarbreen dwindled into a small collection of keeps and private forts, with its inhabitants squabbling among themselves. For many years the city was little more than a waystop for caravans and a bolt-hole for pirates fleeing Sembian patrols. Between the orcs and pirates, the city, now known commonly as Ravens Bluff for the dark birds that nested in nearby cliffs, was experiencing extreme difficulties.

Thirty years ago (1337 DR), the Champions Games were sponsored by the local lords to find someone capable of rescuing the city from these raids. The winner of these games was a retired adventurer name Charles Oliver O'Kane. Lord Mayor O'Kane (LN hm F15) rebuilt the militia, repelled the goblin tribes, secured the trade routes, reorganized the local government, came to terms with the pirates, and rules justly to this day.

Lord Mayor O'Kane is supported by a deputy mayor and Council of Lords (the original local lords who sponsored the Champions Games or their descendents). The Council in turn oversees the economy, justice, the churches, and the military. Ravens Bluff's military is primarily the forces of the local lords, supported by levees from the city and hired militia units. With the exception of goblin raids and bandits, there have been no major military actions in Ravens Bluff for two decades.

The rise of activity in Ravens Bluff has been very good for the various religions in the area, since as more money pours into the city, more of it is spent on matters both spiritual and mundane. At last report, the city had temples of Chauntea, Gond, Helm, Lathander, Selûne, Tempus, Tymora, and Tyr. It has an operating temple of Waukeen, though many followers of Lliira are welcome there as well, and it is assumed that the priesthood is gaming its power from that source. There are also small shrines to almost every known power (and several forgotten ones) in the North in the city.

All the major faiths belong to the Clerical Circle, a branch of the government dedicated to religious harmony among the extant faiths. This organization is headed by a chief prelate. The present chief prelate is Sirrus Melandor, the high priest of Tyr, who has served for more than a decade (LG hm P15).

Ravens Bluff is a trader's town and an adventurer's city. The merchants and craft guilds are always in need of a strong sword arm or a knowledgeable mind for spells in their employ, and the success of the city in using adventuring talent encourages others to try. Whereas Cormyrean nobles regard adventurers as nouveau riche and the Moonsea natives see them as targets, the natives of Ravens Bluff welcome the hero and adventurer for his or her potential good. As a result, the city is swollen with young bravos, enterprising demihumans, outcast lords and ladies, second sons

Ravens Bluff and The RPGA®

The city of Ravens Bluff and its immediate surroundings have been given to the RPGA to develop. The RPGA is TSR's fan-based organization, and contributions from its members have been used to build the resurrected Ravens Bluff. At this writing, the RPGA has produced four 64-page accessories for the Living City and maintains a strong presence for the city in their *Polyhedron*® newszine, introducing new characters, new places, new buildings, and new adventures to challenge its heroes.

The designer recommends that those who are interested in knowing more about Ravens Bluff or who are looking for a good, alternate setting for their campaign, look at these products as a starting point, or better yet, join the RPGA and get a subscription to the Polyhedron newszine.

and daughters of nobility, and others seeking to make their claim on the world. Sometimes this leads to difficulties, including the odd ambush and an occasional body found in an alley, but it makes for a vibrant, thriving community.

Sevenecho

Sevenecho is a small town, and exists only as a market for the well-dispersed farmers in the area and, because of the ponds and wells nearby, as a watering hole for caravan mounts. It is a small hamlet named for the family that runs the local inn, the Worried Wyvern, one of the finest inns in the Vast.

The Worried Wyvern was founded in 1338 DR, and has grown to be a sprawling manse lying atop a wide knoll, with dormers, wings, side chambers, and other curiosities springing out at random. The Wyvern has its own deep well, and produces fine smoked meats, passable beer, and a sharp local cheese. The family patriarch and current proprietor of the inn is Beliot Sevenecho (LN hm F5).

The Sevenechoes are the most prominent of several local families that include the Scantshars, who are viewed with mild suspicion. Much of this stems from the fact that the family matriarch, an elderly and kind woman named Riliyyr, is an accomplished wizard (CG hf W7).

Two local legends surround Sevenecho. The first is that a ghost appears regularly on one of the nearby ponds. The Drowned Lady is said to have been a traveler who was slain by the local boy she flirted with and then spurned. The family the local boy belonged to varies according to who is telling the tale.

Of a more profitable note for adventurers, a local legend says that in the last days of Tuir the Deep King, nine dwarves, each dwarf bearing a chest of gems, were overtaken by orcs. They buried the gems and then assaulted the orcish hordes, fighting to the death. Given the circumstances surrounding the destruction of the dwarven kingdom in the area, this legend may be true.

The Guard of Tantras

The guard of Tantras consists of units of 14 1st-level warriors, dressed in plate mail with the arms of the city emblazoned upon it, and armed with short swords, spears, and daggers. They are led by a 3rd-level sergeant armed with long sword and mace. If more than one guard unit is called, an officer of 5th level with a morningstar is with them. Crossbowmen and wizards can be called out in case of emergency.

Standard practice for the Tantran guard is to try to sort things out first peaceably, calling for all sides to put aside their weapons (the "Whot's all this then?" approach). However, in crisis situations where native Tantrans are threatened, they will shoot first and use *speak with dead* later. The large number of temples (and knowledgeable priests) in Tantras makes this approach feasible.

Tantras

Tantras is a walled city north of Ravens Bluff, and like Ravens Bluff benefits from the trade coming up from Procampur. It is a large, walled city that has recovered well from and even prospered after the Time of Troubles. A godly battle during that period resulted in the destruction of a large portion of the city, and left a very large permanent dead magic area that extends from the north of the city.

Tantras is ruled by its High Council, a collection of local noble merchant families plus the high priest of Torm. The Council provides an invisible government, concentrating mainly on tariffs and merchant laws and less on the thieves' guilds and adventurers (save when they start affecting the merchants). As a result, Tantras is a rollicking, wide-open town, with only the more severe breaches of courtesy and law bringing in the guard.

Tantras is dominated by the Temple of Torm's Coming, the center of Tormite activity on the Sea of Fallen Stars and that faith's largest temple. It was at Tantras that Torm perished defending his faith in a battle with Bane, creating the great dead magic area that lies over the northern city. The High Priest of Torm is Barriltar Bhandraddon (LG hm P19), and he is aided by 49 sup-priests. Torm's church is the most influential in the city, and Bhandraddon has a seat on the High Council.

However, the faith of Torm is very indulgent toward other religions, and there are temples of many other gods in the city, including Tempus, Lathander, Gond, Selûne, Milil, and Tymora, all with established priests of no less than 13th level in power. In addition, shrines to Lathander, Loviatar, Umberlee, and Cyric dot the city.

Tantras does have an effective thieves' guild, the Grayclaws, an organization of smugglers and thieves who tend to prey on newcomers and those native Tantrans who have gotten gloriously rich, smug, or unscrupulous. The Grayclaws keep a firm watch on their members activities, so that they do not run afoul of the High Council. The Grayclaws have to date defended their turf from various forces, including the Red Wizards, the Zhentarim, slavers, the Harpers, and the Cult of the Dragon.

The combination of merchant-dominated politics, light rule, many priests, an active thieves' guild, and a large dead magic zone has made Tantras a haven for a large number of adventurers, including those who are currently unwanted in nearby Calaunt and Ravens Bluff. The dead magic zone is particularly good for those on the run from wizards, and many who have offended such groups as the Zhentarim and the Red Wizards of Thay have used Tantras as their bolt-hole.

Tsurlagol

Tsurlagol (TSIR-lah-gol), the gateway to the Unapproachable East, is a large, prosperous city east of Procampur. Here traders from the Vast meet with those from Impiltur and sailors from the

Vilhon Reach and the Old Empires. Here also dwarven wanderers bear messages, metals, and swords from their hidden relatives to their destination.

Tsurlagol is as old as Procampur, an allied city with which it is normally connected. However, Tsurlagol has burned to the ground a number of times over its long history and been rebuilt each time by succeeding generations. As a result, most of the city is on a low rise—actually the bones of the previous cities on which this city has been rebuilt.

Tsurlagol's highest office is called the Ven, a position chosen by the leading nobles and merchant lords from among their numbers. The true identity of the Ven is held secret, but for a 10-year rule, the Ven's word is law. Unpopular Ven, however, have met their deaths prematurely.

Less mysterious is the Ven's Voice, the spokesman for the Council and the Ven's leading advisor, in many ways more powerful than the Ven himself. The present Voice is Conoptora Billon (NG hm W13), a grasping, adventurous mage who has plans for seeing Tsurlagol achieve the dominant position in its relationship with the other cities of the Vast. Whether this desire is shared by the Ven is unknown.

Tsurlagol has served as a free port for pirates and smugglers for many years, and many natives of the Pirate Isles have houses they use as hiding places throughout the city. The city is also considered a suitable stashing ground for hot merchandise and foul-tempered captives. Many of the leading merchants of the city have served time in the Free Trade, as piracy is called. In this respect, Tsurlagol has much in common with the freewheeling cities of the Dragon Coast to the west.

Tsurlagol has three temples. The Rising Moon is the temple of Selûne, and is the wealthiest of the temples. Its patriarch is High Priest Orlathon Lunemast (LG hm P13). He is assisted by nine subpriests of varying levels. The Battering Wave is the temple of Umberlee, which is under the control of Thogonia Grim (LE hf P12) and six fanatical serving priests.

The third temple, the Cult of the Shadow, is a temple to Shar and also the headquarters of the local thieves' guild, the Sharwomen. Originally open only to female thieves, the organization is now open to both sexes following the complete destruction of the parallel male-oriented thieves' guild years ago. While the guild is open to both sexes, the bulk of the work goes to the men and the majority of the glory and gold to the original female members.

Viperstongue Ford

Viperstongue Ford is a strategic crossing of the River Vesper. Not only is the Vesper fordable here, but the ford coincides with a low saddle in the Earthspurs, forming one of the gateways to the northern Vast (the other being the higher Three Trees Pass). No settlement or building has stood long at Viperstongue due to the fact that the location has been the site of a number of battles.

It was at Viperstongue that the orcs and goblins defeated the dwarven armies under Deep King Tuir, setting up a retreat that ended in the underground battle of Deepfires. It was also at Viperstongue that the elven hero Beluar later routed the orcs, delaying the end of the older nonhuman Vast kingdoms.

Ylraphon

Ylraphon (Ee-IL-ra-FON) is a small, Dale-like town on the northern end of the Dragon Reach. Its people are similar in looks and disposition to the Dalesmen, and they may be an early settlement of the same ancestral stock that did not cross the River Lis and settle at the edges of the trees of the Elven Court. Ylraphon is the birthplace of a number of powerful wizards and rich merchants, but none of them has chosen to remain in the city, instead haring off to other lands and other adventures.

In its eldest days, Ylraphon was an elven community, then an orcish stronghold, then a dwarven town, then an orcish strong hold again before finally being conquered and settled by humans. Now it boasts a small port and a great many ruins to its east. Ylraphon often attracts adventurers seeking ancient tombs and ruined temples to lost gods.

Ylraphon has a small temple to Selûne, the Moonwater, presided over by Catalan Bree (LG hm P8) and four clerical followers. In addition, there are shrines to Chauntea, Umberlee, and Tymora in town. Rumors continually speak also of destroyed temples of Gruumsh, Moander, and Bane in the Flooded Forest to the north of town.

The Dragon Coast

The phrase Dragon Coast refers to the independent cities on the southern shore of the Lake of Dragons (Dragonmere) and the Sea of Fallen Stars. In a larger sense, it is used to blast the predatory and opportunistic tendencies of these various cities, and the term usually includes the pirate kingdoms that are sprinkled irregularly throughout the Sea of Fallen Stars and appear and fade with passing time.

This discussion includes the Pirate Isles, as both the pirates and their prey are one of the chief reasons for the existence of the Dragon Coast. While one great supply of caravans swoops down through Cormyr from the Moonsea, another great wave comes across the Sea of Fallen Stars to the Dragon Coast ports, bypassing Cormyr and Sembia and moving directly into the Western Heartlands. These caravans carry rare spices (and mages) from Thay, strange balms (and gods) from the Old Kingdoms, and finely made weapons (and poisons) from the Vilhon Reach. In short, all that is profitable (and illegal) passes through the Dragon Coast.

There are but three important cities on the Dragon Coast: Elversult, Teziir, and Westgate. Only Westgate truly lives up to the region's reputation as a sin-laden festhall of intrigue and dark adversaries, but as Westgate is the largest and oldest of the three, it sets the tones for all others. The other towns in the region are mere waystops in comparison with these three.

The merchants rule along the Dragon Coast much as they do in Sembia. But unlike Sembia, on the Dragon Coast there is little drive toward cooperation on a larger goal that benefits all. Each merchant on the Coast seems to value his own property and his own hide above all. For this reason thieves' guilds, long banished from Cormyr and Waterdeep, have flourished along the coastline, and bandits are very active. Still, some shipborne merchants sneer at the idea of Cormyrean or Sembian officials pawing through their belongings and decide to take their chances with the type of bandit who uses a sword instead of a counting book.

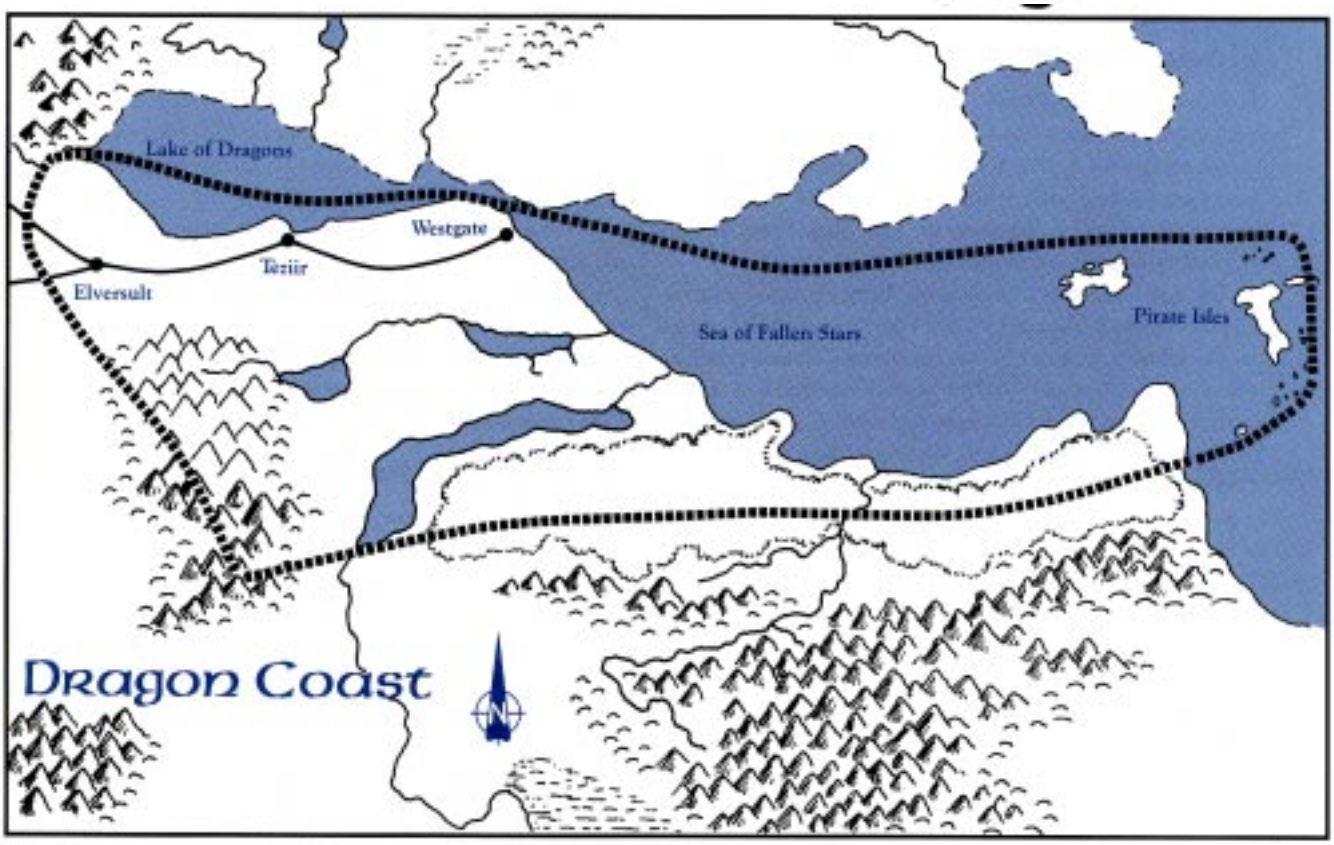
Adventurers find themselves in high demand on the Dragon Coast, but usually are sought out by shadowy masters through smooth-talking intermediaries. Respectability and honesty are a keynotes in the lands of the Dragon Coast, but that does not mean that all should *be* respectable and honest, only that all should *appear* to be respectable and honest. Travelers are warned that when dealing with a Dragon Coast merchant (or worse, a noble), one should shake hands and then count one's rings, one's fingers, and one's remaining horses.

History

The history of the Dragon Coast is the history of money, particularly the darker side of the coin. Situated on the main trade routes between the Inner Sea and the Sword Coast, these lands never coalesced into a solid, coherent nation, like Cormyr or Sembia. Instead small petty city-states have risen and fallen, powered by greed and the most powerful merchant or pirate faction of the day.

As a result, the Dragon Coast has always been the home of the smuggler, the pirate, the rogue, and the hired killer. It has been the place where those seeking to skirt the laws of more civilized nations to the north make landfall. It is here that the Red Wizards gain their access to the Western Heartlands, and where the Cult of the Dragon launches its plots to the south. And it is here that independent secret societies and assassin guilds have their greatest power.

The last semblance of organized resistance to this trend was the reign of Verovan, last of the kings of Westgate. The monarchy of Westgate had long worked closely with the various mercantile and pirate factions, but Verovan attempted to stem the growing power of the merchant houses and petty lords. His sudden and mysterious death without acceptable heirs in 1248 DR opened the door for much of what now is commonplace in the Dragon Coast—corruption and treachery.



It should be noted that while Verovan's name is still venerated in these lands, better known is Immurk, the greatest of the Inner Sea Pirates, a brash and flamboyant rogue who united a pirate fleet beneath him and ruled from 1164 DR to his death in 1201 DR. Such it is in the Dragon Coast, that good people are venerated, but the power of darker rogues is imitated.

The Dragon Coast Mindset

The typical native of the Dragon Coast does not think of himself or herself as a Dragon Coaster, as opposed to the Cormyreans or Dalesmen to the north. In fact, this native rarely thinks of nationality and home city at all. Each man, woman, and other sentient is a nation of one, seeking to protect him-, her-, or itself from the dangers of the outside world. As a result, most of the natives here are thought of as selfish at best, and rapacious and greedy in their worst moments.

The natives, of course, consider themselves to he merely sensible and reasonable. Their lands see a continual progression of caravans and trade bearing wondrous items from far-off lands. A bit of the riches and exotics stays in the area, but more passes on to Waterdeep or to Thay. Is it any wonder that the typical native would wish to see a little more remain in the area—in one's pocket, perhaps?

Thinking of the Dragon Coast as a gathering of thieves and vultures is slightly off the mark. To think of the natives of the region as intermediaries and facilitators, people who make things happen, is much more accurate. Everyone has a price, it is said, but the price is more reasonable in the Dragon Coast.

The natives of this land see the Cormyreans and Sembians as vulgar—even potentially evil—bullies, organized gangs that may at any moment force the cities of the Coast to obey the same rules they saddle their own peoples with. The Western Heartlands are a land of opportunity, and many a native has caught that caravan west to settle in Berdusk or Soubar, leaving behind those who truly *like* it here.

Not all natives of the Dragon Coast are grasping, greedy manipulators and confidence beings. The ruler of Elversult has struggled to make a city worthy of the respect of its citizens, and fair merchants and good mercenary companies live in the land. They are just extremely outnumbered by the rest of the cynical society of the Dragon Coast.

Interesting Features

The following are prominent locales and points of interest on the Dragon Coast, presented in alphabetical order.

Elversult

Elversult is a rich merchant city located where the Overmoor Trail meets the Trader's Road south of the Lake of Dragons. It is a common place for shipments heading for Cormyr to be separated from those heading west to the Sword Coast. From Elversult such packages are routed either along the High Road north to High Horn or to the lake ports of Ilipur and Pros.

The city is situated in a pleasant, lightly wooded area surrounded by small lakes and kettles. Many copses of the original woods still remain, since Elversult has always been under the control of strong rulers, and even the most corrupt and evil of them have valued the woods. The center of town is dominated by a tall, bare tor called Temple Hill, since it is where the temples of Lathander and Waukeen have been built.

Elversult has long had a reputation as a hive of smuggling activity and intrigue, a reputation which the present ruling lady, Yanseldara (NG hef F11/W12) is trying to shed, aided by her adventuring companion Vaerana Hawklyn (CG hf R19), with varying degrees of success. While open brawls in the streets are no longer common, the illegal activities in the town now take place underground, under magical protection, and under the cover of darkness. Yanseldara took command after leading a popular rebellion that overthrew an older, more oppressive regime.

Two of the three main temples in town are located on Temple Hill. The Tower of the Morn is the temple to Lathander, and is controlled by Morninglord Hathala Orndeir (NG hf P14), who intends to spread the word of the Dawnbringer throughout the entire Dragon Coast. She is aided in this task by 26 lesser priests.

The House of Coins is the only known temple to Waukeen still operating at the same level as before the Time of Troubles. Its master, High Priest Malakar Ghondar (N hm P11), and his nine serving priests swear that the failure of other temples to the Merchant's Friend is due to lack of faith on their parts, and only by keeping the faith strong in one's heart (and pocketbook) can one continue to receive her blessing. Doubters note that Malakar has been heavily interested in magical items brought from far away and think this may be the true source of his goddess's grace.

Located just off Temple Hill is the House of Hands, the temple to Gond. A small temple by Gondryr standards, it is captained by High Artificer Daragath Morliir (N hem P13). The High Artificer is a bright, scheming man, intent on finding out secrets—everyone's secrets.

Elversult is the jousting ground for a secret war between the Harpers and the Cult of the Dragon. The Cult of the Dragon controls the drug, poison, and assassin trade through a network of priests, thieves, and a few sympathetic monsters. The Harpers have friends in high places, reportedly including Vaerana Hawklyn herself. In the midst of this battle, a gang of small-timers known as the Purple Masks is trying to make its felonious living.

The Maces of Elversult

The town guard of the city of Elversult, the Maces, is also the core of its army. The Maces number about 3,500 and are capable of handling everything short of a full-fledged barbarian invasion.

For day-to-day operations, the Maces will be encountered in groups of five in the street, with whistles that allow them to communicate and summon aid (they have a code of blasts to indicate identity and nature of threat—a long rising blast indicates a mage or magic-using monster in combat). These police carry the maces that give the town guard its name and wear scale mail for protection. The commander of the Maces is Pierstar Hallowhand (LN hm F10).

Ilipur and Pros

The small ports of Ilipur and Pros are called the eyes and ears of Elversult, for it is through these cities that ships' cargoes reach the Elversult, should their captains choose to avoid the thieves' guilds of Teziir and Westgate. Ilipur and Pros are little more than villages with shallow harborages and no real docks to speak of. Ships' cargoes are unloaded onto flat barges and brought to shore, and new ships are constructed on land and muscled into the sea (as opposed to the shipwrights' using dry docks, as the larger cities can afford). Pros has such a problem with its harbor silting up that a pilot must be rowed out to approaching ships to allow them to avoid the sand banks and bring them in to safe harbor. Many ships bypass Pros and head for Ilipur, which is slightly larger and the more corrupt of the two.

Both these towns are ideal ports for small packages, such as magical texts brought into the Dragon Coast, smuggled goods that would attract too much attention, and individuals who do not want to be seen. As a result, both towns have agents of the Cult of the Dragons, Harpers, Astorians (from Teziir) and Night Masks in their area. In addition, a company of cruel adventurers known as the Men of the Basilisk ride in the area, raiding small hamlets and capturing and torturing travelers.

Both towns are run by a Council of Burghers and a lord mayor. The lord mayor has a staff of sheriffs, tax collectors, inspectors, and accountants (all usually relatives). A handful of fair to middling inns can be found in the region, but no temples—only shrines to Umberlee, Lliira, Tymora, and Tyr.

Pirate Isles of the Inner Sea

The Pirate Isles in the Sea of Fallen Stars are a large collection of rocky spurs jutting out of the water some 100 miles off the coast of Sembia. The majority have no name, while the larger islands are remembered as pirate dens and havens to scavengers. Not all the inhabitants of these islands make their living directly or indirectly from piracy, but the majority do.

The Pirate Isles are strategically placed to command all shipping moving to and from the Dragon Reach and Westgate from

all other areas on the Inner Sea. The isles are largely uncharted (except by pirates) and corsair vessels lurk among them.

The Dragonisle, the largest of the Pirate Isles, is also known as Earthspur, although that is really the name of the mountain at the southern end of the island. The Dragonisle is fortified and has two secure harbors defended by forts and three secure anchorages in addition to these harbors. The Dragonisle can hold 160 to 170 vessels within its fortified harbors. Both harbors have chains, submerged stone breakrocks, and ramships to prevent unauthorized entry. Their entrances are further protected by thick-walled forts. The northern harbor's fort is built into a cliff along the western side of the narrow harbor entrance, while the southern harbor's fort is set square at the mouth of the harbor. Each of these forts has a battery of mystic *Thayvian bombards,* rare and wondrous weapons brought long ago from Thay.

Pirate signals and verbal codes change constantly. A few old passwords, gleaned from various sources, include: "Obold," "Immurk Way," and "Holt-Ho!" Failure to use the correct password when called upon often results in the death of the user.

The pirates have not been strong enough to openly defy and stand against or even attack the ports of Sembia for nearly 200 winters. However, at least 200 active pirate vessels (and probably as many more hulls—perhaps as many as 600) lurk or are hidden in the Pirate Isles and around the coasts of the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Priapurl

Priapurl is a small, sleepy waytown along the Trader's Road. It has a small lake to its north that serves as a reliable source of water for caravans and travelers. Priapurl features a handful of reputable, relatively safe inns, the most prosperous of them being Lord Cyric's Bane, run by a former (and declared reformed) Banite priest who fled Zhentil Keep when the holy wars up there got too uncomfortable. The Bane has excellent food, and the former priest, Ghazzar (N hm P13(formerly)), maintains a strict "no religion" rule in the common room.

Priapurl's hereditary ruler is the Tar. The Tar was originally the leader of a local band of bandits, but over the generations the blood has been watered down by more civilized elements. The present ruler, Tar Hurara (LN hf F4), is little more than a wastrel who spends much of her year attending the Cormyrean court, leaving the running of the town to her assigned deputy, Ghazzar.

Priapurl is notable for the large independent keep to its south that is the home of the Mindulgulph Mercenary Company. The Mindulgulphs are a specialized unit of nonhuman and monstrous creatures under the command of Gayrlana, also known as Lady Bloodsword (LN hf F12). The Mindulgulphs include wemics, centaurs, giff, grippli, kenku, thri-kreen, and other specialized monsters such as beholders and treants. The bulk of the company has been sent south for an extended contract with the gold dwarves of the Great Rift, but some of the core unit remains here. Ghazzar keeps its members under retainer to provide the police force in town.

Let There Be Piracy!

Ships of the pirate fleet run the gamut of ships found in the Inner Sea, and include Sembian warships, converted Impilturian merchants, Cormyrean freesails, and biremes and triremes from Chondath and Chessenta. The latter galleys function well in the relatively calm waters of the Inner Sea and are crewed by slaves taken from previous raids.

Armament of these ships depends on the ship and owner, but generally runs as follows:

Small Galleys and Merchants: 1-2 ballistae.

Large Galleys and Merchants: 2-6 ballistae and a catapult.

Warships: 4-8 ballistae, 1-2 catapults, and sometimes (25% chance) a trebuchet. Only galleys may engage in ramming tactics, and only galleys are equipped with rams.

Pirate crews are double those of normal ships, as pirates tend to carry less bulk goods than merchant ships. Some pirates make use of companies of archers, aquatic beasts, and spellcasters, and it is a standard procedure that any archers on a ship should make an apparent spellcaster their first target. As a result, half-elven, elven, and other racial spellcasters that may wear armor are valued on all Inner Sea vessels, pirate or merchant, for making less obvious, less vulnerable targets.

Proskur

Proskur is a trading waystop located where the Overmoor Trail meets the High Road from Cormyr. It is the last eastward stop before entering the Storm Horns Mountains and is situated just south of the Bridge of Fallen Men, the site of a heroic defense in legendary times.

Like most of the Dragon Coast cities, Proskur is run by a merchants' council. In this case, the council is almost entirely made up of former thieves who discovered they could make more cash with less risk in honest trade than dishonest theft. As a result, Proskur has one of the most honest governments in the Dragon Coast area, since most of the council know all the tricks, cons, and scams that adventurers and rogues normally pull, having tried them themselves when Azoun was learning his history from Vangerdahast. The leader of the council is the radiant con woman Leonara Obarstal (NG hf T14), who claims to be a distant relative of King Azoun and has been known to say, "The advantage of merging the thieves' guild and the government is that you cut down on the paperwork and always balance the budget."

Proskur has a temple to Tempus under the command of Priest-Captain Dologar Nathan (LG hm P13) and six of his followers. It is also the site of a popular church of Mask, the Rogue Redeemed, under the auspices of Patriarch Milo Hallyspyr (N hm P5/formerly T10). The Rogue Redeemed preaches a variant testament to that of the orthodox churches of Mask, and has caused some controversy among the faithful—the Proskurian church teaches that theft, roguery, and deception are permissible as long as something is learned in the process, and when that learning process is done,

The Watch of Teziir

Those adventurers looking for the city watch members found only in adventuring tales—ineffective, overweight, and usually late—can find them in the flesh in Teziir. There the underpaid and unpopular watch consists of leather-armored 1st-level fighters armed with clubs (truncheons), short swords, and daggers. There are about 500 of these people serving the community under the command of Alton Mertlin (LN hm F7). Mertlin is a skilled fighter with horrible organizational skills, contributing to the watch's poor performance. Watch patrols, when they show up, number four standard members—unless someone calls in sick that day.

one may walk away clean, learning from one's experience without having to pay any additional price. The faith is very popular with the locals, but it is unknown who (or what) truly grants the spells of Hallyspyr and his seven assistants.

Reddansyr

A small town located between Teziir and Westgate, Reddansyr is the jumping-off spot for caravans south, as well as a common meeting ground for rivals from Westgate and Teziir and agents of Just about every power group in the Heartlands. It is a treasure-trove of information and opportunities. There are usually a half-dozen rumors floating around at any one time involving job possibilities, along with the occasional treasure map to some long-lost hoard or another.

At the center of a storm of rumors is the Giant's Folly, a bar and festhall established in an overturned boat. Said boat was hauled inland on a bet by a fire giant. The current proprietor, Gandios Laffabar (N halfm T12), lost the bet but gained the boat in a secondary bet and established it as his base. Business has been so good that he is looking for another giant to bring in another boat overland from Westgate. Gandios usually has one or two good rumors up his sleeve, but has been known to spin wild tales for the incredulous and let newly minted adventurers hare off to their doom on impossible quests.

Reddansyr houses a temple of Oghma run by Patriarch Thyrius Jorman (NG hm P14) and 14 of his assistants. The temple accumulates a great deal of information, but is much less willing to part with any of it than most other sources in Reddansyr.

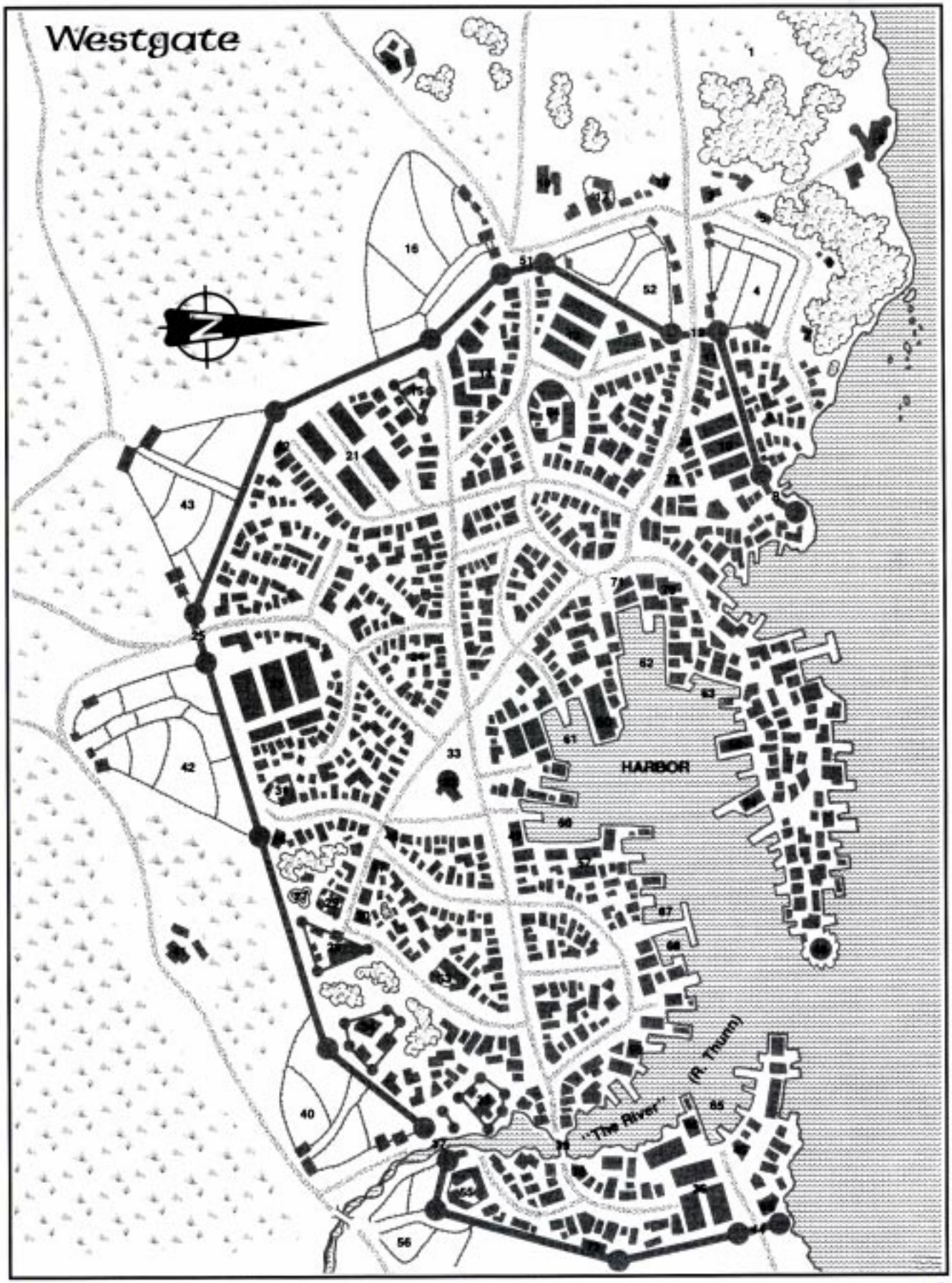
Teziir

The largest independent city on the banks of the Dragonmere, Teziir is Westgate's rival in the merchant trade. It is a sprawling, unwalled city situated on a high bluff overlooking the Lake of Dragons. Previous cities on this site have been attacked, sacked, and burned more than a few times throughout history.

Teziir was founded in 1312 DR by a council of merchants, mostly lawful and neutral in alignment, as an alternative to Westgate. This council of relatively faceless, bland merchants still

Westgate Key

1. Dhostar Vale (private park)
2. Castle Dhostar
3. The Leaning Man (Inn)
4. The Dhostar Yards
5. The Blind Eye (fence for stolen goods ostensibly a tack, harness, and trail goods shop)
6. Thessar the Warrior's house (LN hm F10)
7. Lilda's (festhall)
8. The Water Gate
9. The Shore (drovers/wanderers/journeymen's slum)
10. Dhostar Company sheds (merchant company warehouses)
11. The Jolly Warrior (inn)
12. West Gate
13. Thorsar Company sheds (merchant company warehouses)
14. Thalavar Company sheds (warehouse)
15. Castle Ssemm
16. Thalavar yards
17. The Spitting Cockatrice (inn)
18. The Empty Fish (tavern)
19. The Westward Eye (inn)
20. Gatereach (inn of good quality)
21. Ssemm sheds (warehouse)
22. The Purple Lady (tavern and festhall)
23. Guldar Company sheds (merchant company warehouses)
24. Temple of Mask
25. The South Gate
26. The city watch barracks
27. The Lords' Water (pool)
28. Castle Thorsar
29. Castle Urdo
30. The House of Silks (fine clothing and jewelry, a very expensive shop)
31. The Blue Banner (inn of good quality)
32. The Tower (serves as a registry office for imports/exports, the city watch headquarters, and a jail, with dungeons beneath it)
33. The market
34. Castle Guldar
35. Castle Vhammos
36. Vhammos Company sheds (merchant company warehouses)
37. The River Gate
38. The Black Boot (inn)
39. The River Bridge
40. Vhammos yards
41. The Rising Raven (inn)
42. Guldar yards
43. Ssemm yards
44. East Gate
45. The Old Beard (tavern)
46. The Harbor Tower (mariners call it the Westlight; a beacon and harbor defenses)
47. The Gentle Moon (inn)
48. Shalush Myrkeer's Shop (the largest shop in Westgate; buys and sells everything)
49. The Black Eye (tavern and festhall)
50. Urdo shed
51. Mulsantir's Gate
52. Thorsar yards
53. Castle Athagdal
54. Castle Thalavar
55. Castle Malavhan
56. Malavhan yards
57. Malavhan Company sheds (merchant company warehouses)
58. Dhostar docks
59. Thorsar docks
60. Malavhan docks
61. Urdo docks
62. Thalavar docks
63. Guldar docks
64. The watch dock (seized goods, pirate ships, ship inspections, etc., held here)
65. Athagdal docks and shipyards
66. Vhammoa docks
67. Ssemm docks
68. Ssemm docks
69. Temple of Umberlee
70. Temple of Tymora
71. Temple of Gond
72. Temple of Lathander
73. City witch barracks
74. City watch (meeting rooms, barracks)


Westgate
N
HARBOR
"The River" (R. Thurne)

runs Teziir by the simple, unspoken law: "Get results or get out." Anyone hired under the council's rule is judged by this yardstick.

Teziir has actively campaigned to bring more religions to the Dragon Coast, and due to this policy boasts small temples to Azuth, Chauntea, Helm, Torm, Tymora, and Tyr. Of these, Helm's, controlled by Patriarch Thyxlys Jon (LG hm P12), is the most powerful. The others do not boast priests higher than 8th level within their hierarchies.

Teziir is also home to a growing and powerful thieves' guild, the Astorians. Said to number some 700 active members, the guild specializes in the protection racket and petty theft. The Astorians have dreams of attaining the power of the Night Masks in Westgate, but this has not yet happened.

Teziir has never officially been at war, and so its merchants feel little affection toward mercenaries. However, the rising activities of the Astorians combined with increased pirate raids along the coast have caused the council to reconsider this position and take on a few adventuring companies to handle its dirty work. Most of the advice the council receives on who to hire comes from young Cydarin (N hm W8), whose chief virtue as "chief wizard of Teziir" is that he is the son of a councilman.

Westgate

Westgate is an Important port and caravan transfer point on the overland route that joins the Inner Sea and the lands to the west (Amn, Tethyr, the North, and the Sword Coast) and the far south. It is the largest of the Dragon Coast cities and a rival of both Cormyr and Sembia all by itself. A map of Westgate appears on page 83.

Westgate lies on the southern side of the long western arm of the Sea of Fallen Stars, across from Cormyr. It is independent of all kingdoms and outside authorities, and is considered an open city, free to all manner of trade from all sides. Westgate has fulfilled the role of trading link between Inner Sea east and Sword Coast west for as long as humankind has been in the Inner Sea area. Once a simple stopover and stockyard similar to Scornubel or Iriaebor today, Westgate has gained in importance as trade increased, diversifying into ship construction and repair, wagon-making, and other sideline industries. The local industries include pottery (of average to poor quality), scent-making (excellent fragrances), and wine-making (varying wildly from superior to merely good).

Westgate is ruled by a council of its rich, noble families that took command soon after the death of its last king, Verovan, in 1248 DR. They in turn chose a croamarkh to serve a four-year term. The current croamarkh is Lansdal Ssemm (N hm F3), grandson of the Ssemm family patriarch, Orgule Ssemm. Lansdal was a compromise candidate, and his term to date has been marked by a rise in interfamily violence and secret vendettas.

Westgate has a secret set of rulers as well. A band of professional assassins, extortionists, coercers, enforcers, and thieves known as the Night Masks have set up shop in the city. They are for hire by all and independent of the various noble houses, switching alliances as their purse leads them. The Night Masks control most of the illegal doings in the town and seek to expand their grasp to the north and west into other civilized lands.

The Night Masks make no secret of their existence, and their symbol, marked on shops to indicate protection, or left in some adventurer's home as a warning, is a domino mask.

The membership of the Masks is primarily thieves, but includes fighters, priests, and mages as the job demands. Normally Masks operate in groups of five, with a single member only aware of what four others of the group are up to. In this fashion, if one is caught, only that group is endangered. Levels range from 1st to 10th, with higher level beings available only for the most dangerous jobs. The leader of the Night Masks is unrevealed and known only as the Faceless.

Westgate has a large number of temples and small churches, as befits its station as a cosmopolitan hub of trade. It holds within its walls temples to Loviatar, Gond, Mask, Ilmater, and Talos. Most of these temples have high priests of 10th-15th level, suitable for most clerical work. The local temple to Leira has burned to the ground and been abandoned. A temple of Talona the Place of Waiting Death, is an open secret in the city. The city also holds shrines to Beshaba, Lliira, Malar, and Shar.

The Lords of Westgate

The local nobility, the lords of Westgate, are the heads of rich merchant families. All such families usually have long-standing traditions and feuds, run caravan companies and trading fleets on the Inner Sea, and pursue diverse business interests. The families of Westgate and their lords and symbols are:

Athagdal Family: Led by Lord Urlyvl Athagdal. *Family Trading Badge:* Russet weighing scales.

Dhostar Family: Led by Lord Luer Dhostar. *Family Trading Badge:* Tawny wagon wheel topped by three stars.

Guldar Family: Led by Lord Dathguld Guldar. *Family Trading Badge:* Black hawk.

Malavhan Family: Led by Lord Thamdros Malavhan. *Family Trading Badge:* Red sun.

Ssemm Family: Led by Lord Orgule Ssemm. *Family Trading Badge:* Ivory bird's claw.

Thalavar Family: Led by Lady Nettel Thalavar (matriarchal widow). *Family Trading Badge:* Green feather.

Thorsar Family: Led by Lord Maergyrm Thorsar. *Family Trading Badge:* Blue hand holding corn.

Urdo Family: Led by Lord Ssentar Urdo. *Family Trading Badge:* Yellow eye.

Vhammos Family: Led by Lord Thontal Vhammos. *Family Trading Badge:* Steel-gray open hand.

The Western Heartlands

The Heartlands of the Realms occupy a rough approximation of the center of adventuring and mercantile life in Faerûn. They extend from the Sword Coast and Waterdeep eastward through Cormyr, to the Dragonspine Mountains and the borders of far Impiltur. The Heartlands themselves are divided in two by Anauroch and the mountain range called the Storm Horns. On one side, Cormyr, Sembia, the Vast, the Moonsea, the Dales, and the Dragon Coast collectively comprise the Eastern Heartlands. The wide expanses between the Storm Horns and the Sword Coast are the Western Heartlands.

The Western Heartlands have best been described by one sage as "Miles and miles of miles and miles." Theirs is a sweeping, open terrain, broken by arid and eroded badlands, rolling hills, and high, forbidding moors. The land is often an area one passes through on the way to other areas—traders heading for Cormyr or Waterdeep, adventurers heading for the Inner Sea or the Savage Frontier, or armies and mercenaries heading for Amn and Tethyr. Yet life and civilization flourish here in the form of a handful of small mercantile city-states and a scattering of walled towns.

History

The history of the Western Heartlands is a history of endless battles and destroyed empires. In ancient times these were the lands of the Fallen Kingdom of Illefarn, the Lost Kingdom of Man, and rumored Netheril. In more recent history, the land has been fertilized with blood and bone as forces from the Empires of the Sands surged northward, the evil peoples within Dragonspear and the Goblin Marches spilled forth, and mercenary companies moved to and fro in the service of one petty warlord after another. Recent battles leveled the Way Inn and threatened Daggerford. Even the Time of Troubles did not leave this desolate land unmarked—Bhaal himself perished at Boareskyr Bridge, and the waters it passes over have remained poisoned to this day.

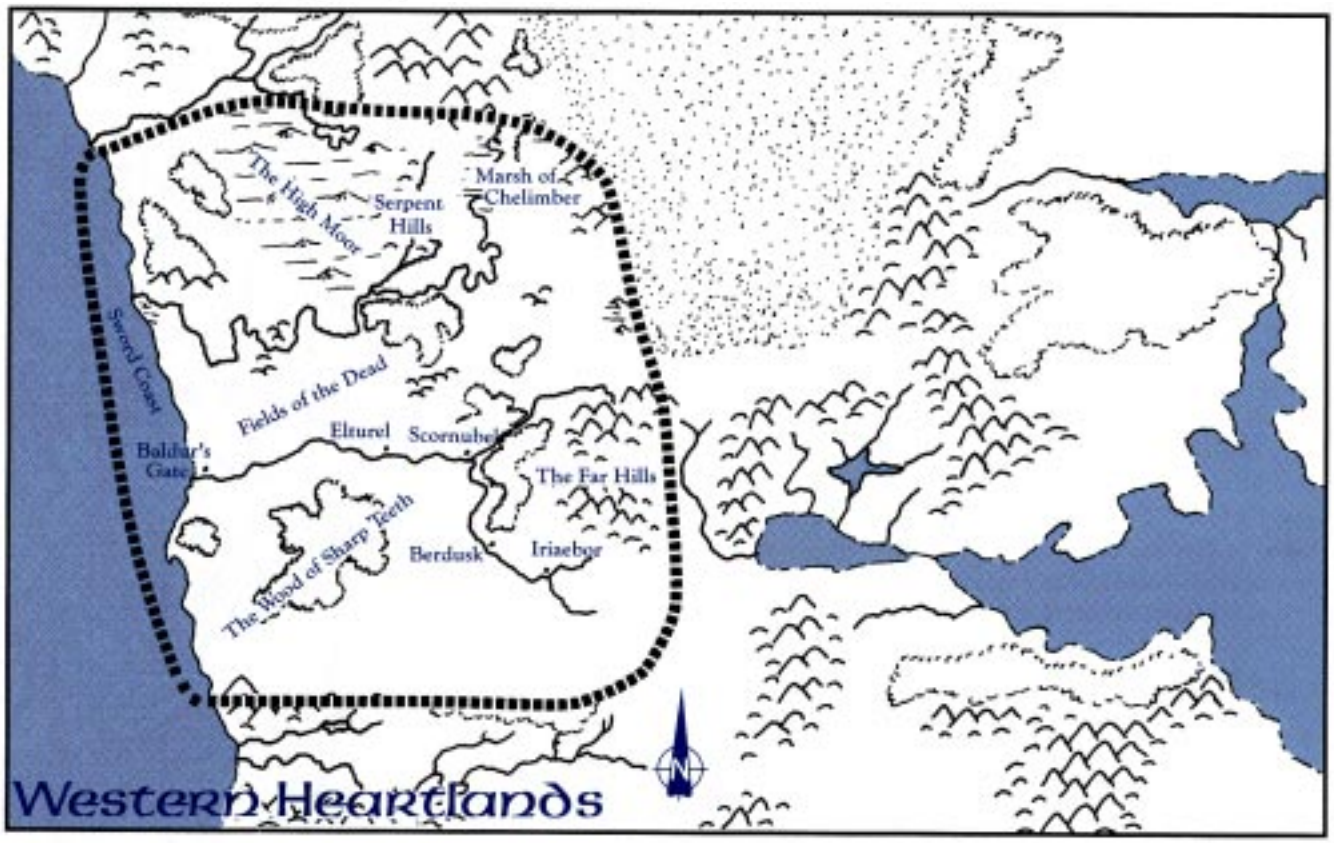
The cities of the Western Heartlands are strong, independent, and varied. They are also strongly motivated by trade, and listen harder to the ringing of gold than the call of battle. But something else prospers in the open land—freedom and opportunity. No nation lays claim on the Western Heartlands to land beyond that which their armies can control, and no warlord can make demands beyond the swing of his axe. Small holds and castles regularly spring up, only to be knocked down by invading forces, or abandoned after a generation or two. Lost dungeons and secret citadels lie scattered throughout the land, and this rugged frontier presents more than enough opportunities for adventurers.

The Western Heartlands Mindset

The mindset of the Western Heartlands is as varied as its people, ranging from the small communities behind their stockaded forts, to the adventurers' holdfasts, to the walled trading cities of Soubar and Scornubel. Yet, a few attitudes are common to all of them.

The people of the Western Heartlands are independent. They have little need or love of government, kings, and nations beyond the local level. An established patrol in the area is one thing, but onerous taxes, inspections, receipts, and bookkeeping are quite another. Careful recordkeeping *is* needed to run a successful caravan line, but that is a quite different matter—that's one's livelihood.

These "Westies" are generally friendly and open, at least initially. Enough people of enough differ-



ent attitudes and alignments come through that open conflict at the drop of a hat for monarch, god, or alignment would result in even more war than the land has already seen. Individuals are given a chance to prove themselves by their own abilities—then they can be killed in petty arguments.

The inhabitants of the Western Heartlands are stubborn. Warnings, arguments, and cold hard facts in no way stop them once their minds have been made up. Given the fact that they live in a chaotic land, their mulishness can be seen as a virtue.

The Westies see themselves as the last independent people, not counting the poor sods fighting barbarians in the Savage Frontier. The Waterdhavians, the Cormyreans, the Sembians, and the southerners are all soft, even when ganged up in huge armies for protection. The Dalesmen have promise, but are probably going to sucked up by the more powerful groups in the Eastern Heartlands. No, the Western Heartlands are the true heart of the Realms.

In return, the people of the rest of the Realms think of the Western Heartlands as—well, to be honest, they don't think of them much at all. The West remains a great undeveloped territory, a place that still needs the firm hand of whatever breed of civilization is available. The idea that there are folk already making a go of it out there strikes most folk as odd.

Red Cloak Patrols

A typical Red Cloak patrol numbers 12 1st-level fighters who are led by a patrol leader of 3rd-4th level. They are mounted on medium warhorses, wield spear and long sword, and wear chain mail (plate for officers). This is the normal composition of a patrol, but in times of danger its number may triple through recruitment, and the Red Cloaks may hire on additional mages and clerics. The standard stipend is 10 gp per level per week, plus a share equal to level of any treasure recovered (a 1st-level fighter will get 1 share, a 3rd-level three shares, etc.).

Interesting Features

The intriguing and outstanding cities, towns, and other locales of the Western Heartlands are discussed here.

Asbravn

Asbravn is a small town of about 50 central buildings nestled in a shallow delve north of Iriaebor where the Dusk Road and the Uldoon Trail meet. The town of Asbravn lies in the center of a thriving area of farms. These farms provide the nearby cities of Berdusk and Iriaebor with food, and produce wool for local use

and for export elsewhere in the Realms. The wool mills are in Berdusk, but the gathering place for most of the farmers is here in Asbravn, where several small costers ply a busy trade over the roads between the town and its neighboring cities. It is here that the large local farmer's market is held, and it is here that the Riders in Red Cloaks are based.

The Red Cloaks, named for their distinctively colored cloaks, are local volunteers commanded by experienced warriors, and are paid a small amount by Iriaebor to cover their cost of operation. They supplement this stipend with any battle loot they may take. In return, the Riders in Red Cloaks patrol the area around the town (particularly the mountain slopes to the east), fighting off bandits, orcs, bugbears, and predatory monsters to keep the farmlands safe.

Asbravn's temple to Ilmater is in serious need of repairs. Its chief priest, Asgar Tellendar (N hm P5), is trying to hold things together long enough for a benefactor to pay for repairs, but if one is not forthcoming, he will have to close down. The town also has shrines to Lliira, Lathander, and Waukeen (whose shrine is now abandoned and defaced).

Baldur's Gate

Baldur's Gate is located at the southern reaches of the Sword Coast, 50 miles up the Chionthar River from where that flow enters the Trackless Sea. It is situated on the northern shore of the river, astride the Coast Way from Amn to Waterdeep. Baldur's Gate is known as being "halfway to everywhere."

This important independent city is renowned as one of the most tolerant but quietly well-policed places in the western Realms, and it is home to many adventurers and entrepreneurs as a result. It is ruled by the Four Grand Dukes, also called the Council of Four, though the title of duke is an honorific taken upon ascending to the Council and is used regardless of race or sex.

The city of Baldur's Gate is actually two cities. The first Baldur's Gate was originally completely walled, with gates to the north for the Coast Way and to the south leading to the docks. With the founding of Amn, trade became very profitable in the relaxed climate of Baldur's Gate, and the city grew. The city burst its original bounds, growing beyond its wall until the presence of raiders forced the erection of a new wall.

Baldur's Gate is divided by its original wall into an upper and lower city. The upper city is both older and of a more permanent nature, and it is here that the nobles, rising merchants, and newly wealthy adventuring companies rub shoulders. The lower city, hugging the shores of the Chionthar, is larger but made of wooden structures and warehouses.

The present grand dukes of Baldur's Gate are: Entar Silvershield (LG hm F21), Liia Jannath (CG hm W16), Belt (CN hm F19), and Eltan (LN hm F20). Eltan is commander of the Flaming Fist Mercenary Company, one of the most powerful such companies in the Realms, which has its main base in Baldur's Gate and serves as that community's standing army.

Baldur's Gate enjoys (or suffers) a thriving thieves' guild controlled by Guildmaster Ravenscar (NE hm T19). The thieves' guild of Baldur's Gate is on good terms with the local government in most matters and tries to keep the destruction and looting to a serviceable minimum. The guild also ruthlessly crushes any opposition to its control of illicit activities.

The city of Baldur's Gate has three major temples. The High House of Wonders is dedicated to Gond and presided over by High Artificer Thalamond Albaier (N hm P17) and 21 subordinate priests. The Lady's Hall is the local temple of Tymora and is controlled by Chanthalas Ulbright (CG hm P15) and 24 serving priests. The Water-Queen's House, one of the few true temples to Umberlee, in presided over by Storm-Priestess Janatha Mistmyr (NE hf P16) and eight rabid clerical followers. Only the tolerance and open spirit of Baldur's Gate allows its existence. The city also contains shrines to Helm, Ilmater, Lathander, Oghma and Lliira (formerly Waukeen).

The Battle of Bones

Travelers moving into this region pass over a withered land with a few stunted scrub trees. The soil has a dusty white pallor to it. As the site of the battle nears, outcroppings of bone jut from the soil until finally the bones outnumber the rocks themselves and the adventurer is moving through a wasteland of bleached remains.

On this site, in a shallow valley almost 300 winters ago (1090 DR), a titanic battle erupted between human forces and the various goblinoid races. The goblin nations, along with orcs, hobgoblins, and their allies, had spilled out of the dwindling Goblin Marches and overrun the North. A combined force of humans and elves, along with the last shards of several dwarven kingdoms, met the invasion head-on at this site. After almost a week of continuous fighting, the good races triumphed, and only a tenth of the great horde was sent reeling back to its marches. The victory came at horrendous cost, however. So numerous were the dead that even today their bones are said to cover the ground here to a depth of 12 inches.

Encounters Around the Battle

Encounters in the area of the Battle of Bones extend 30 miles in all directions, and include all manner of undead creatures: skeletons (humanoid and animal), zombies (human and monster), wights, wraiths, and spectres. The undead are often found in mixed parties, with one more powerful undead leader (wight, wraith, or spectre) to be found for every 20 lesser undead). Lesser undead under the control of greater undead turn as the greater undead. Undead in the Battle of Bones area itself are turned on the "Special" column. The mysterious force behind the gathering undead may be of lich power at least, and if greater, may even have several liches or more powerful undead as servants.

This region is avoided by most travelers due to the great numbers of undead creatures now said to be here. Those who do come this way—seeking a route along the edge of the desert—speak of some power organizing the undead into patrols and thereby controlling the area. No one has yet investigated these claims.

Beregost

Beregost is a small town located south of Candlekeep on the Coast Way. It comprises about 40 central buildings and several larger estates located some distance from the town itself. The town is dominated by a large temple and its attendant buildings. To the east on the low rise overlooking the town is the shell of a ruined castle, now abandoned. Beregost is first and foremost a trading center, a starting and rallying point for expeditions into the southern kingdoms of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan.

Beregost also is the home of a large temple to Lathander, God of the Morning. The high priest of this temple is one Kelddath Ormlyr (NG hm P16), once a merchant of note whose ships plied their trade up and down the Sword Coast. His temple staff consists of three 8th-level priests, six 4th-level clerics, and nine 2nd-level novices, in addition to a varying number of acolytes. The complex is defended by 200 men-at-arms who also serve as the city guard. Kelddath is regarded as the town's governor, though day-to-day operations are handled by a five-member town council.

On a hill to the east of Beregost lies the burned ruins of a school of wizardry founded some 300 years ago by the mage Ulcaster. It was destroyed 80 years later by Calishite mages who feared the school's collective power had come to rival their own.

Beregost is also the home of several notable individuals. One of the foremost smiths in the Sword Coast area, Taerom "Thunderhammer" Fuiruim, has his estate and shop here. Taerom (N hm F1, but with 25 hp) is a master armorer, capable of forging full sets of plate armor, ornate weapons, and using rare and exotic ores.

Beregost is also the abode of the wizard Thalantyr, a conjurer of great repute (N hm W(C)15). Interestingly enough, the Ulcasterian school was also a school of conjurers and summoners. Thalantyr is aided by Taerom in creating magical items.

Beregost has maintained its independence mainly by catering to the whims of any army large enough to occupy it and waiting for said army to destroy itself fighting others. Historically, attempts to wall the city have drawn attacks from others.

Boareskyr Bridge

The bridge is a massive structure crossing the Winding Water along the Trade Way from Waterdeep to Scornubel. It is of stone, and wide enough to carry two wains side by side in either direction. On the southern side of the bridge is a large encampment of tents and wagons.

This bridge is named for a famous adventurer of the early days of human settlement in the North. Boareskyr (also called the Great Boareskyr in these parts) built the first temporary bridge at this site in order to rush an army across it and assail an unsuspecting tribe of orcs. (The orcs, a tribe called the Bloody Tusks, were wiped out by this maneuver.)

Several bridges have stood at this site since and been destroyed over time. The previous bridge was gray stone and was destroyed during the Time of Troubles in a battle between Cyric and Bhaal, a conflict which poisoned the Winding Water (see the Winding Water section). A new bridge has been erected here in black stone, with statues of Bhaal (northern end) and Cyric (southern end) guarding the way.

Boareskyr Bridge has no permanent settlement, but there is almost always a city of tents and wagons here where caravans stop to trade goods back and forth and where they buy mounts, wagons, and necessary provisions and maintenance. The Bridge is the last organized post on the Trade Way from Scornubel north until travelers reach the Way Inn.

Law is a rough-and-ready matter at the Bridge, but several powerful adventurers who respect and keep law and order are often in the tent city—a fighter named Barim Stagwinter (NG hm F7), Theskul Mirroreye of Tyr (NG hm P6), and Aluena Halacanter (N hf W9), a mage. Barim and Theskul tend to wander in and out of the tent city, though one will always be about. Aluena maintains a small estate, called Heartwing, upstream (where the water is not poisonous). There she raises pegasi as mounts. Her standard charge is 5,000 gp for a mount, and candidates for purchase undergo a number of interviews and examinations to determine if they are willing and capable of handling one of her steeds. Her contract at time of sale includes a clause that if a pegasus is maltreated and returns to Heartwing, the purchase price will *not* be refunded. Aluena is thought to be a member of the Harpers.

Candlekeep

Candlekeep is a complex of clustered towers perched on a spur of volcanic rock overlooking the sea. It is reached by a single road, the Way of the Lion. Lights burn in the windows of the keep at all times, and travelers approaching the structure can hear a low chanting.

The towers are one of the great centers of learning in the Realms. The monks of Candlekeep also preserve the predictions of Alaundo the Seer. Alaundo is the singular sage whose prophecies have proved correct over the years. Many of these predictions were minor in nature ("A golden unicorn shall travel unmolested through the length of Waterdeep"), while others hint of great import ("White birds shall vanish from the North, and great evil shall die and be reborn"—said to connect directly with the Time of Troubles).

Services at Candlekeep

Candlekeep attracts adventuring traffic in the form of individuals seeking advice, answers, and information, as well as those seeking copies of maps, records, and general browsers looking for clues to adventure and hidden treasures. The following prices should be a guideline for dealing with such individuals:

- Sage advice is twice standard rates (2,000 gp per day), but the library is complete, and working with the scribes should be considered as working with a sage of 18 ability in any field.
- Book copying is 100 gp per text, or 10,000 gp per magical text (including spell books, but excluding magical tomes such as the Tone of Clear Thought). A text is considered a single item, whether it is a map or major opus. The copy is noted as a copy by being inscrived with the symbol of Candlekeep (a castle with candle flames atop the towers).
- Browsing is tolerated under specific rules:

1. Petitioners must each be sent bearing the seal or sign of a recognized powerful mage, and said mage is responsible for the actions of a petitioner bearing his seal. Both Elminster and Khelben are "on probation" after agents bearing their symbols engaged in a magical duel in the general reading room.
2. Petitioners must each give (permanently) to Candlekeep a book of no less than 10,000 gp value.
3. Browsing is permitted for nine days and nights provided the first two conditions are met. On the tenth morning, petitioners are given the choice of leaving (they may return a month later) or joining the order as acolytes. In browsing, travelers may engage in research as if they were sages themselves, with a sage ability equal to their Intelligence (maximum sage ability of 15) and at no further cost.

Magical books and other dangerous items are kept in the inner rooms of the Keep. Only the Keeper (the order's head) and the Great Readers (his accomplished staff) may enter these rooms. Any information that may be found within these areas must be researched through the scribes (no browsing permitted).

Upon the seer's death, his citadel at Candlekeep became a haven for both the veneration of his prophecies and the accumulation of all knowledge. The acolytes of the keep continually chant the remaining prophecies of Alaundo, which grow shorter over the centuries as they come true and are discarded.

Candlekeep boasts one of the finest libraries in the Realms. The grounds also house a small temple to Oghma and shrines within to Deneir, Gond, and Milil, but the monks of Candlekeep claim to be nondenominational.

The fortified keep derives much of its income from finding and copying specific passages of information from books of lore, magic, and philosophy preserved there for clients all over the Realms, and from issuing new manuscript books for sale in

Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate. These new manuscripts are created by collecting certain passages from older texts together. The scribes of Candlekeep also make additional copies of books brought to them, but others in the Realms provide this last service for less severe fees.

Cloak Wood

This wood, located north of Candlekeep and just south of Baldur's Gate, is ancient and thickly overgrown with elms, beeches, felsul, and hiexel trees. It marks the southern end of the Sword Coast. The Cloak Wood is a perilous place and home to gremlins, mites, grigs, satyrs, stirges, korred, hangman trees, and other less common monsters. This high number of aggressive and territorial creatures has turned the wood into a battleground between rival races.

The sages of Candlekeep have sufficient evidence to indicate at least one *gate* exits in the wood, but the exact numbers and/or destination of these *gates* is unknown. They may lead to other parts of the Realms, to an alternate Prime Material Plane where such creatures as are found in the wood are common or to the outer planes to the Beastlands (Happy Hunting Grounds). Few who have investigated the matter have returned to report on it.

Corm Orp

The village of Corm Orp is a flea-speck village with about 15 permanent buildings on the Dusk Road between Hluthvar and Hill's Edge. The low hills to the east of the town, however, are dotted with halfling burrows and dominated by a goodly sized structure emblazoned with the symbol of the daisy.

This tiny village is known for its large resident population of halflings, who live amicably with the few human inhabitants of the place despite the fact that the village's lord, Dundast Hultel (NG hm F4), is human, as is the village militia (30 humans in chain with long swords). Militia members wear green strips of cloth on their right arms and left thighs to identify themselves. The native halflings, preferring to see someone else fight their battles, are quite comfortable with the arrangement, though if the town is seriously threatened, a horde of halflings will come boiling out of their underground homes.

Halfling priests of rank dwell in Corm Orp, making the area a well-known gathering spot for the race. Many halflings converge on the hamlet each Shieldmeet to do business with their fellows, trade native goods, and exchange tales, doubling or trebling its already sizable nonhuman population.

A large temple to the deity Sheela Peryroyal has been constructed in the hills overlooking Corm Orp. Its matriarch is Alliya Macanester (LG halff P12 with 20 Wisdom), who is much venerated and loved by her followers. She is served in the temple by four 6th-level clerics, eight 3rd-level priests, and 16 1st-level acolytes.

Corm Orp's notable export (other than halflings) is a type of stout pottery. Made of simple red clay in large, usable forms, the pottery of Corm Orp is highly thought of for its sturdiness and is in common use throughout the Realms for everyday functions.

Most noted of the Corm Orp potters is Ilvn Makepeace, whose work is regarded as superior even alongside the sturdy pots the area is famous for. Makepeace's shop uses a staff of a half-dozen halfling apprentices. His work sells for 1-5 sp per piece, which is 10 times that of normal pottery.

Daggerford

Situated in the flood plains of the Delimbiyr River, Daggerford is a small, walled community of 40 stone buildings that is dominated by the small castle of the "duke" of Daggerford. The town is situated on the south side of the ford. Daggerford is a sparsely inhabited but strategic junction where the Trade Way (the main route from Waterdeep) crosses the Delimbiyr River (also known as the River Shining).

Daggerford gained its name from an incident reported to have occurred 400 years ago: A merchant traveling through this region searching for a safe crossing sent his son ahead of the family wagons to look for a safe passage across the Shining. The boy found the ford in the dark, but was set upon by a raiding party of lizard men. Defending himself with his sole weapon, an old dagger, the lad slew six of the creatures before aid arrived from the wagons and drove the creatures off. The story spread along the merchant ways over the years, so that the ford, and later the town that grew up on its banks, was known as Daggerford. This may just be local legend, though there may be a grain of truth in the old tale. The current so-called duke of Daggerford, Pwyll Greatshout (LG hm F5), claims to be a descendent of this merchant lad.

Daggerford has temples of Chauntea and Lathander and a shrine to Tempus within its fortified walls, ministering to the needs of the overland trade. The high priestess of Chauntea is Maerovyna (LG hf P8), who is served by two to eight underpriests of 2nd-5th level. The temple of Lathander's Rise is operated by Liam Sunmist (LG hm P9) and is favored by Duke Pwyll. The shrine of Tempus is overseen by a lone missionary, Baergon Bluesword (CN hem F5/P5), who is overly zealous in preaching the faith of the Battle God to the exclusion of all other subjects. He has become generally insufferable following a great battle near the town against the hordes of Dragonspear (1363 DR).

Darkhold

The Darkhold is a high-spired keep of black stone that rises from a bare rocky spur on the side of the mountain known as the Grey Watcher (also called locally the "Grey Watcher of the Morning"). The stone of this ancient tower is not of local origin, and the tower has alternately been reported as being created by an elemental during the reign of Netheril or as being built by giants as a citadel during the Giants Empire. Regardless, the structure is mammoth in human scale, with halls and a courtyard large

enough to host entire battles. The castle has been known by many names through the years, including the Keep of the Far Hills, the Wild Hold, and Sunset Keep. It was seized by the Zhentarim in 1312 and has become a major base for the Black Network, rivalling the Citadel of the Raven.

Patrols from Darkhold roam the Far Hills north to Yellow Snake Pass and Skull Gorge and south to Asbravn, often sparring with the Red Cloaks of Asbravn and the Corm Orp militia. Caravans controlled or guarded by Zhentarim forces make this place a regular stop when traveling to and from the Sword Coast. Representatives of Darkhold can be found in merchant trains from northern Mirabar to southern Calimshan, and east to Zhentil Keep itself.

Darkhold is currently the base for 1,000 men-at-arms under the command of the wizard Sememmon (LE hm W15) and a strong force of rogues, warriors, wizards, and evil clerics.

Dragonspear Castle

This vast, ruined sprawl of high walls and toppled spires that is visible from the Trade Way is only 100 years of age. It was originally the home of Daeros Dragonspear, who built the stronghold at the height of his adventuring career. Daeros was slain some 70 winters ago (1290 DR) in battle with the forces of the evil wizard Casalia. Daeros's company of skilled warriors repelled a number of attacks, but in the end the entire company was slain or driven away, and the citadel was plundered. Dragonspear castle was soon afterward beset by other evil spellcasters and brigands seeking the gold and treasure reported to have been left or hidden within.

The ruined fortress fell empty for a time, and thereafter served as the temporary home to small groups of bandits or outcast mages. These would prosper for a few years raiding the caravans of the Trade Way until driven out themselves by mercenary companies from Waterdeep or by Khelben and his colleagues in wizardry.

In recent years, some evil agent allied with the orcs, trolls, and bugbears of the High Moor succeeded in opening a gate to a lower plane within the castle. Strengthened by a growing army of fiends, the combined forces of the High Moors tribes devastated the area from the Way Inn to Boareskyr Bridge, such that today that part of the Trade Way is not considered safe territory.

In the face of the extraplanar incursion, armies were raised in Waterdeep and elsewhere to clear the Trade Way and destroy the evil at Dragonspear. The attempt to empty the castle met with heavy resistance, and the battle continued for almost two years before the castle was again cleared. Most of the structure was burned in the process, leaving an empty shell on the moors.

The wreckage of Dragonspear Castle is considered desolate, though priests of Tempus have set up a small shrine within the castle walls in hopes of keeping evil creatures from using it as a base again. Few inhabitants of the Sword Coast will camp near the castle by choice, and rumors persist of excavations that predate Daeros's fortress and of a still-operational *gate*. In recent years, the numbers of nonhuman and evil troops have again swelled, and fiends are once again assumed to be active in the area.

Darkhold Patrols

Darkhold patrols normally number 20 troops led by a 2nd-level fighter. They are normally dressed in banded mail and carry light crossbows and long swords. Those patrols encountered within 10 miles of the keep are foot patrols, while those beyond that range are mounted on medium warhorses and carry lances in addition to the previously mentioned weapons. There is a 30% chance that any patrol encountered will include a 3rd-level wizard.

Durlag's Tower

South of the Wood of Sharp Teeth a dike of hard rock juts from the plains. Atop this pinnacle is a single, massive tower. It is in good repair, but seems unoccupied. This local landmark is the isolated keep of Durlag Trollkiller, son of Bolhur, a dwarven hero said to have massed treasure in legendary proportions and stored it here and in a few other choice locations. This treasure is protected by all manner of magical wards and mechanical traps, the latter of Durlag's own devising.

The tower itself, built entirely of volcanic stone and in fair condition given the amount of time and neglect involved, lies atop a volcanic plug that dominates the surrounding lands. Durlag, aided by hired dwarves, is said to have hollowed out the mountain for the rock that made up his tower and used the space created to hide further treasure. Durlag is now long dead, and many have come seeking his treasure over the decades, with varying degrees of success. Within the last 50 years, a new power of fell majesty has taken up residence within the remains of the tower and uses the defenses created by Durlag to keep both itself and the treasure safe.

Easting

Easting is a small town east of Iriaebor (hence its name), and is typical of such small communities. Three things set it apart from other similar (and often unnoticed) communities throughout the Western Heartlands. While other communities might have a notable product, a significant nonhuman population, or a famed inhabitant, they rarely have all three like Easting does.

Easting's small size and location make it a meeting spot for dwarven merchants working out of hidden delves in the Far Hills. Their smith work is above the human average, and individuals wishing to contact such craftsmen or to contact dwarven communities usually start in Easting.

Easting is the home of Rulthaven the sage, whose area of expertise lies in the study of plants (sage ability 19) and their uses, including herbs and poisons. Rulthaven is true neutral, and

The Hell Riders of Elturel

The Hell Riders are a close-knit organization whose members are extremely loyal to their leaders and to each other. They take their name from the story that a company of Riders had in the past ridden into Avernus, first of the layers of the Nine Hells, to rescue a companion. The total Hell Rider force numbers around 2,000 women and men.

The Hell Riders are usually encountered in patrols of 30 warriors. Levels vary between 1st and 6th, and there will be at least one priest of Helm present of 2nd-8th level. Each patrol is led by a marshal of 6th level. The Hell Riders ride in plate mail of crimson and white, marked with the symbol of an upturned crescent.

Major expeditions, raids, and punitive actions against aggressive demihumans are led by Dhelt himself or the High Watcher of Helm.

One-tenth of all the earnings of the Hell Riders go directly into the coffers of Elturel.

is consulted both by priests of good and representatives from Darkhold.

Finally, Easting is the home of at least four noted horse breeders whose stables do a brisk trade in remounting travelers journeying from the Sword Coast to the Inner Sea. Their prices remain competitive.

Elturel

Situated on a bluff overlooking the River Chionthar, Elturel is divided between a lower city, called the Dock District, and an upper city, called the High District. In size and general capabilities it is similar to its rival upriver, Scornubel. Elturel was founded here both for its defensive position, and for the narrowness and shallowness of the Chionthar at this point, where it is crossable by poling barges.

The Evereska Charter

The Evereska Charter is more of a unilateral declaration of the moon elves of that nation than a true agreement between nations. The elves declared in 1335 DR that moon elves were claiming the old Tomb Hills (now the Greycloak Hills) for both settlement and to suppress the large number of elven-related undead that were plaguing the region. Evereska agreed in principle in this document that elven undead were the responsibility of the living elves, and that banshees should be put to rest by elves throughout the Heartlands and the North. This token offer of aid (and the fact that no one was about to stop them) allowed the first moon elf caravans to move in.

The Charter states that any tomb robbers found within the borders of the Greycloak Hills will be tried by elven judgment. Since the definition of tomb-robbing is left to elves, all but the most resilient (and cocky) human raiders have attempted to challenge that claim. Travelers near the Hills sometimes describe rusted iron cages with human skeletons within, giving an idea of elven judgment.

Elturel is known for its strong, well-equipped mounted troops, the Hell Riders, who patrol and provide caravan escort from Waterdeep to Iriaebor. It is also a major center for the Dragoneye Dealing Coster.

Elturel is governed by High Rider Lord Dhelt (LG hm Pa116), former leader of the Hell Riders. Dhelt shares the protective nature of his troops. A paladin dedicated to the cause of Helm, Dhelt is viewed as a tolerant and respected man who actively encourages trade and leaves the merchants to their jobs with little interference. He is interested in seeing Elturel unseat Scornubel as the major trading town between Waterdeep and Iriaebor.

Elturel has two major temples and a smattering of shrines. Helm's Shieldhall is the most powerful church in the city, and remains one of the strongest churches of Helm in the North, primarily due to the patronage of Lord Dhelt. The Shieldhall is run with an iron hand by High Watcher Bereldum Shondar (LN hm P18), an aggressive defender of the faith, who is served by 21 underclerics of various levels. The other major temple is the High Harvest Home, the temple of Chauntea. It is overseen by Raulauvin Oregh (NG hm P20) and 18 of her clerical followers. Elturel also features shrines to Ilmater, Tempus, Tymora, and Lliira (formerly Waukeen).

Evereska

Evereska (Eh-ver-EH-ska, which means *fortress home* in the elven tongue) is a rich and fabled valley nestled in supposedly unbreathable mountains, tucked against the borders of Anauroch. It is one of the last large concentration of moon elves in the North, possibly in the Realms themselves.

Evereska is a high valley surrounded by mountains, its only entrances either well-guarded and difficult ascents or secret tunnels known to few. All good elven folk are welcome to this vale, and elven lore and wisdom are held in high esteem and cherished here down through the centuries.

This vale has been a refuge of the elven peoples for over 7,000 years and has never fallen to any outside attack. It is said to be guarded by the magics of the greater elven power Corellon Larethian. Several times in its long history, the mountain fortress has been attacked by goblins and orc armies, but these armies were eradicated by screaming magical bolts from the sky.

The High Valley of Evereska is removed from the common world by its altitude, and this may be why this region remains strongly elven while most of the rest of the elven nations have gone into Retreat. Frequent watchposts lace the mountains surrounding the domain and guards maintain constant vigilance, so that travelers seeking Evereska are usually discovered by the elven watchmen before they see the elves and before they get within 10 miles of the vale.

Those who seek to fly above the range have a similar problem, for the elves of Evereska maintain several flights of giant eagles

that are used as mounts for the slenderer members of the race. Those who seek to enter by magic (from another plane or by *teleport)* find all such magical methods foiled (perhaps by some gift from Corellon). The best method of entering Evereska is as an elf or in the company of elves in an open and honest method.

Of the vale itself, its resources are rich and abundant, dwarfing the meager resource of the wastes beyond its mountain walls. Temples of all the elven deities may be found within, with matriachs and patriarchs of very high level, as well as a college of elven and select half-elven mages who make their specialty the Ethereal and Astral planes.

The Far Hills

A low saddle of rocky, forbidding hills slung between the two arms of the Sunset Mountains, the Far Hills are only hills in comparison to those forbidding peaks. They are a rocky upland, broken only by hidden valleys and thick, twisted copses.

The Far Hills are dominated by Darkhold (see the entry on Darkhold for more details), and have fallen more and more under the effects of the Zhentarim there. The region is regularly patrolled by Zhentarim forces as far north as Yellow Snake Pass and as far south as the southern Sunset Mountains. These patrols are long-distance riders, and tend to be stronger than those close to Darkhold.

Fields of The Dead

These open, rolling lands between the Winding Water and the River Chionthar are an area of ranching/herding of different sorts and, along the banks of the Chionthar, crop farming. Despite the current peaceful appearances, it was no less than 500 winters ago this region was a favorite battleground for those interests contesting control of the lands north of Calimshan (this was before the founding of Amn) and the legendary Kingdom of Man. With continual bloodshed over centuries of war seasons, the land became littered with the cairns of the dead and the booty of the fallen. Even today, bones litter the field and plows turn up skeletons in rusting armor, the occasional magic blade, or metal tubes containing a scroll or treasure map.

The Forest of Wyrms

A thick woods of great trees, including pines and redwoods, the Forest of Wyrms is noted both for the wide variety of snakes found along its rocky forest floor and the greater than average number of green dragons lairing in its forested depths.

The Forest of Wyrms holds Lyran's Hold, which was once the tower of a powerful wizard who became a more powerful archlich. In 1357 DR, an adventuring company plunged into its ruins, splitting up in the process. Only three survivors emerged. Two of the survivors, a rogue and a priest, swore that they had battled the archlich and killed it, taking its treasure. The third survivor, a female warrior, was less sure. However, when she felt her life was threatened by her former comrades, she fled to the south. The two other survivors have laid claim to the hold for future use, but none who have investigated that use have returned to tell what it is.

Zhentarim Patrols

Zhentarim patrols in the Far Hills area and in Yellow Snake Pass are composed of at least 40 2nd-level warriors to a patrol, plus a mage of 1st-6th levels and a cleric (of Cyric) of similar level. The patrols are usually mounted on medium warhorses (their leaders on heavy warhorses, when possible), wear scale mail, and are armed with short bow and long sword. The mage or priest carries some method of communicating with the Darkhold should the troop run into trouble (if nothing else, a word of recall or succor spell on a scroll).

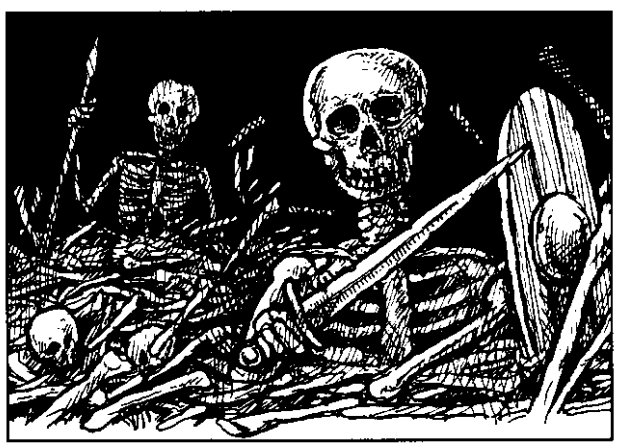
The Forgotten Forest

This forest is a rich, mature woods filled with oak, walnut, and shadowtop trees. The foliage is thick so that the interior is cast into deep and continual shadow. This forest is the remains of a larger wood that has diminished over the years with the spread of Anauroch. It is a mysterious, deeply overgrown wood of huge trees, and travelers who have skirted its edges have reported seeing sprites, korred, and unicorns within its depths.

The Forgotten Forest is said to have the largest population of treants in the North, ruled by one known as Fuorn (if encountered, treat Fuorn as having 24 HD—double the normal largest size—and delivering 5-30 points of damage with a blow). In addition to the treants, the Hierophant Druid Pheszeltan (N hm D16) makes his home somewhere in the depths of this land. Travel through the forest is discouraged, and those in the area are highly encouraged to build their fires only using wood from deadfalls.

The Friendly Arm

The Friendly Arm is a small walled community dominated by a former castle that is now used as an inn in much the same way as the Way Inn to the north (see the entry on the Way Inn). The



Friendly Arm is used as a waystop for caravans from Beregost to Baldur's Gate.

The Friendly Arm was at one time a holdfast controlled by the evil priest Mericor of Bhaal. Mericor was killed in human form and then later slain in undead form, in the process wrecking most of the interior of his keep (and parts of the surrounding countryside). The area remained a waystop for both caravans and armies coming north, but without a local lord or guiding hand over the area.

About 20 years ago (1346 DR) the ruined keep was seized by an adventuring company under the control of the gnomish illusionist Bentley Mirrorshade (CG gm I10/T10), an industrious young gnome. Bentley and his followers chased out the remaining creatures dwelling in the keep, began renovations, and established the Friendly Arm as an inn and meeting spot. Since that time, the Arm has grown in prestige and importance as a relatively safe place and has been used by adventurers from the South heading to Waterdeep, and merchants from the northern climes heading to warmer markets. Bentley has a deal with most of the important powers in the South—they are allowed to quarter their troops nearby, provided they that do not "smash the crockery." In return, Bentley promises not to admit anyone claiming to be a descendant of the Tethyrian royal family.

Bentley is aided in his task by his wife Gellana Mirrorshade (NG gf P10, due to wisdom), a ranking priestess of Garl Glittergold. The Temple of Wisdom (called by some humans the Shrine of the Short) is one of the few gnomish temples that regularly takes in human supplicants.

Bentley and Gellana run a safe and secure inn, with weapons checked at the door and wizards' left thumbs peace-bonded to their belts. In addition, several of Bentley's curvaceous human bar wenches are said to be iron golems under powerful illusions.

Greycloak Hills

The Greycloaks are a small group of high, isolated hills north of Evereska, and are considered an outpost of that elven homeland, having been settled slightly more than 30 years ago by a contingent of elves and half-elves (see the earlier sidebar on the Evereska Charter).

The normal gray garb of these elven settlers is what has given the hills their current name, as well as the regular mist that began to surround the hills soon after their immigration. The hills were previously referred to as the Tomb Hills, for the region held (and still contains) the final resting places of long-dead warrior kings from the days of the Fallen Kingdom and was (but is no longer) haunted by banshees. Adventuring companies up to a few decades ago made forays into the area to loot these old tombs, but with the current settlement of elves under the Evereska Charter, such activities have ceased (or at least become more discreet).

The elves and half-elves of the Greycloaks are of moon elf blood, though there are a few wild elves among then. They are friendly with the group known as the Harpers, but wary of the Zhentarim and their allies, and extended patrols from Darkhold have been spotted in the area.

The elves of the Greycloak Hills are said to make musical instruments for trade with humans, though they work quietly through certain merchants in the town of Hill's Edge to the south. The settlement is ruled by Watcher Over the Hills Erlan Duirsar (NG em F9/W11), who is said by the women of Hill's Edge to be both very tall and handsome.

The reason for the Greycloak settlement is unknown, and its presence is puzzling considering the general withdrawal of the elven peoples from the Realms. Only the ruling elves know the full reasons, but it has been surmised that there is something in the Greycloaks that the elves of Evereska wish not to fall into the hands of others.

Hammer Hall and The Halls of The Hammer

The Halls of the Hammer are an abandoned dwarf hold west of Mt. Hlim dating back to the times before Illefarn ruled the North. They are now wrecked, generally ignored, and in neglect.

Hammer Halls is an isolated homestead, consisting of a house and stables surrounded by a stout wooden palisade, built by a company of adventurers, the Men of Hammer Hall, intent on exploring and exploiting the depths of the abandoned hold. As is common for adventuring companies working for long periods in a particular area, the Men of Hammer Hall used the stockade as a place to retire to between sorties into the dwarf hold.

After exploring the ruins for several seasons, the adventurers are said to have set off for the North, and have not been heard of since. The fate of their treasure, and the treasure that may remain in the Halls of the Hammer, is unknown. This area is a true wilderness, traveled by people but seldom settled, and the question remains open.

The High Moor

The High Moor is a vast, rocky wasteland rising to a gorge-scarred plateau cloaked in grass and scrub trees. The Moor is often shrouded in mist and is the home to many trolls and bugbears, as well as goblinoid races. The monstrous inhabitants of the Moor often raid the roads, so that merchants collect in large caravans and hire additional guards when passing near it, and the Way Inn (see the entry on the Way Inn) maintains a permanent force of well-armed defenders. Of old, in ancient days, this was a rolling hill land of farms and small, magical cities, but now all that remains is a battle-scarred, cavern-infested desolation.

The soil of the Moor is too thin for farming and its rock (mostly granite) too poor in valuable ores to support permanent settlements. The barbarian humans found in these lands depend on herding sheep and goats and overland trading for their livelihood.

The High Moor is home to a handful of prominent underground adventuring locations, and an unknown number of smaller or undiscovered ruins. Dragonspear Castle, the Dungeon of Swords, and Hammer Halls may all be found in the scrub-covered badlands of the High Moor.

Hill of Lost Souls

Once in the years before even the elves lived in the North, this was an active volcano, but it has with the passage of the winters become little more than a hill with a cup-like peak. Its sides are covered with soft, shiny grass, and only the occasional outcropping of hardened lava or a scattering of obsidian chips belies its true origin.

The slopes of this grass-cloaked peak were home to an armed camp at the time of the Battle of the Bones (c. 1090 DR), and it was here that the armies of humankind raised their standards and tended their wounded. In more recent times, the peak has been used by rogue spellcasters as a meeting place and by the Hierophant Druid Pheszeltan (see the Forgotten Forest entry) to work mighty weather magics. Today the Hill is empty, save for haunts and occasional tribes of goblinoids.

Somewhere on the Hill of Lost Souls is the tomb of Thelarn Swifthammer, son of Mongoth. This dwarven adventurer is said to lie entombed with a *hammer of thunderbolts,* a huge quantity of gold, and a weapon called *Skysplitter,* an intelligent war axe that has the ability to *call lightning.* The Tomb of Thelarn has not been uncovered, and at least one adventuring company, the Men of the Blue Blade, have met their end at the hands of orc bands while searching for it.

Hill's Edge

Hill's Edge is a small but prosperous community located along the Dusk Road between Triel and Corm Orp, at the foot of the Far Hills. The Edge is a freewheeling town where raiders are as common as traders, and often indistinguishable. Situated near the western entrance of Yellow Snake Pass, the town sees a lot of trade and a great many agents of the Zhentarim and their forces at Darkhold.

Hill's Edge is home to two modest temples, one to Lliira, the other to Cyric. The Cry of Joy is the Lliiran temple, and it is controlled by Joybringer Caseldown (CG hf P7). The Fist of the Future is the Cyricist temple run by Emana Gortho (NE hf P6), a careful plotter who seeks to attract the attention (and favor) of her god by bringing Hill's Edge fully to the side of evil. Gortho has been assembling thugs, rogues, and fanatics to aid her in this matter.

Hill's Edge is ruled by a mayor, elected yearly. Of late, there has been a dearth of suitable (and willing) candidates, and the town fathers are looking for some adventurer or merchant brave or willing enough to take the job. Hill's Edge has no militia or police force, and the town leaders dislike the idea of any action that might drive business elsewhere.

Hluthvar

This town of a hundred buildings is surrounded by a wall of stone 10 feet high. Three gates pierce the wall, and the wall top is patrolled. The town is circular, and its largest building is a temple near the center of town.

Hluthvar was named for a locally born warrior hero who fought and died at the Battle of the Bones in 1090 DR. Located at the foot of the Far Hills, the town is within sight of Darkhold (see the entry on Darkhold for more details) and is armed against it. Darkhold patrols are not welcome here.

The streets of Hluthvar radiate from the central open market like the spokes of a wheel, with the largest street being the Dusk Road, which goes by another name in town. At the north end of the circular market stands a temple to Helm and a large livery stable and at the southern end, a wagonwain's shop and the local inn, the Watchful Eye.

The town is dominated by the temple of Helm, whose high priest is Maurandyr (LN hm P16). In addition to serving as patriarch, Maurandyr also is the city's magistrate and mayor. The town's militia consists of 70 2nd-level fighters of both sexes, armored in plate mail and armed with swords and crossbows. The militia is organized by the temple.

Of late Maurandyr has taken to strange spells of fainting and disordered behavior. Some say it is the displeasure of his god that is causing his sickness, others that the strain of holding office is too much. Some say that it is the rising power of the Darkhold that is directly or indirectly responsible for the attacks.

Illefarn

Illefarn no longer appears on any modem map, but of old it was a great and powerful elven nation which controlled the Sword Coast in the days before Waterdeep's founding. Illefarn is also known as the Fallen Kingdom, and is a legendary, almost mythological place. Centered on the great forest that bordered the Delimbiyr River, it was said to have rivalled Myth Drannor itself in its magical power.

In time, the incursions of the goblin and nonhuman tribes, along with the rising tide of human traders, pirates, and barbarians, forced the elves into Retreat. Some withdrew to Evereska, many to Evermeet. Ilefarn's forests have long since disappeared, and its cities have been abandoned and reduced to dust. The kingdom was primarily composed of moon and gold elves, with a sizable minority of wild elves and dwarves.

The lands of Illefarn the Fallen Kingdom were briefly gathered together in a human empire known as the Kingdom of Man. Like Illefarn, it has fallen as well, leaving behind only shattered ruins and hidden treasure.

Iriaebor

The many-towered city of Iriaebor occupies a sprawling ridge above the north fork of the River Chionthar. It is the farthest that barges can be pulled up the river, and this, combined with the fact that the city is the endpoint of roads coming out of Cormyr and the Inner Sea, makes Iriaebor one of the most populous and economically powerful cities in the region.

Iriaebor is called the Overland City, and it is here that many caravans form up for the overland journey to Scornubel or to be ferried downriver before making the trek across the High Moor. The bluff the city is built on is impressive and an adequate defense against most attackers, but space is at a premium on the relatively flat ridge, so that Iriaebor has more towers than any other city of its size. Indeed, the various merchant houses indulge in shameless competition to exceed each other, with occasional catastrophic building collapses as a particular spell needed for construction elapses or where shoddy materials were used.

The plains surrounding Iriaebor make the city a center for breeders of fine mounts and draft beasts. In addition to towers, the city's craftsmen are known for their fine construction of kegs and barges, both of which are of better quality than most of the towers.

The ruler of Iriaebor is Bron, who is an adventurer (LN hm F10) who was catapulted into the position in the heat of a shooting war between merchant families. A fallen paladin who once venerated Eldath, Bron feels Iriaebor has the resources to become another Waterdeep in strength and power if only he can keep the feuding merchant families from engaging in economic sabotage, excessive tower-building, and cutthroat dealings. He has to date failed in his attempts to even slow down the feuds.

Iriaebor has three temples. The Silent Hall is the largest temple of Eldath in the Western Heartlands. Its matriarch is Luaqqa Absalassrin (N hf P13), who controls a staff of nine lower-level priests. The Golden Bowl of the Goddess is dedicated to Chauntea, and its 42 priests are presided over by High Worshipmistress Nalva Imthree (NG hf P11). Last, the High Altar of the Moon, also called the Moontower, is the temple of Selûne. Its high priestess is Astyaril Hulemene (CG hf P17), who watches over a staff of 36 priests of lower ability.

South of the bluff, there is a large, abandoned temple of Waukeen, the Tower of Gold. Its priest, one Hathalon Ormliir, is said to have gone mad from the death of his goddess and vanished in a blue explosion of magical fury. The Tower and its grounds have remained shuttered and closed since that time, though the temple of Lliira is negotiating with the city to reopen the temple, consecrating it in the name of the Lady of Joy and Freedom. Complicating matters is the fact that the site of the temple was once reputed to be the tower of a powerful (and vanished) archmage, Taskor the Terrible.

The Laughing Hollow

The Laughing Hollow is a constriction in the flow of the River Shining (the River Delimbiyr) upstream of Daggerford. It is bordered by cliffs on either side and thought to have been an ancient dwarven quarry. Plant and animal life are plentiful on the valley floor, and the walls bear traces of having once been worked for stone. The area is considered a fey and treacherous place by mortals, but it is the home to tribes of wild (green) elves, pixies, and other fairy creatures. Rumors persist as to an ancient treasure that may be found here.

Lizard Marsh

The Lizard Marsh is a great bayou formed at the delta of the Delimbiyr (the River Shining). The river disappears in a morass of waterways, cold-weather mangroves, and hanging moss. The presence of this swamp is one reason that no great cities have grown up on the banks of the mouth of that flow.

The Lizard Marsh does not freeze in the winter, but instead the open water is reduced to a slushy consistency. Whether this is due to the proximity of the sea or some natural or magical feature of the swamp is unknown.

The Lizard Marsh is home to a large colony of lizard men, who raid the surrounding area. They trade looted goods and slaves to sea races along the coast. The lizard men are said to be highly advanced, and they use metal weapons. Most of the lizard men swear fealty to an ancient member of their breed, known to traders as Redeye. Redeye is reputed to have magical powers and abilities.

The marsh is also home to a number of small- to medium-sized dinosaurs, some of which have been tamed by Redeye's band. These creatures are not as large as the behemoths that lumber through the jungles of Chult far to the south, but are still enough to give trouble to adventurers seeking Redeye's base.

The Lonely Moor

Of old this dusty waste was the glory that once was Netheril, among the greatest and most magical of human empires in the North. Now it is a rolling desolation of stunted scrub that reaches from the desert's edge to the Greypeaks. It is a land of scavengers and savages, with leucrotta and more deadly creatures being common. Of late, the Zhentarim have made the Moor a regular stopping point for caravans bound for distant Llorkh, and have hired local gnolls as caravan guards—actually a bribe for them to go bother someone else.

Where the Lonely Moor meets the Forgotten Forest in the shadow of the Greypeaks lies the ruins of Dekanter. These ornate and twisting caverns were originally dwarven mines, then later, once their ores had played out, they were used as a research area and playground for the powerful mages of Netheril. With the toppling of that great empire, the mines and wizard towers were

abandoned again, to be subsequently occupied by more fell races.

The ruins once more have occupants, in the form of a powerful goblin tribe under the command of Lord High Chief Ghistpok, as well as being inhabited by several tribes of gargoyles. More menacing are reports that a creature known as the Beast Lord has made the ruins his home, and creating such magical creatures as perytons, bulettes, and mongrelmen, and then turning them out to raid the world at large.

Marsh of Chelimber

The marsh of Chelimber is 1,000 square miles of low ground at the headwaters of the Winding Water. It is a misty, overgrown bog broken by small hillocks. A large number of rums dot the marsh.

This vast swamp is known to be inhabited by lizard men and other creatures hostile to humans. The lizard men are said to be led by a giant-sized specimen named Kront, and their forces patrol the marches, armed with whatever usable weapons they salvage from their victims.

Misty Forest

This forest of pine, spruce, and other evergreens covers the western slopes of the High Moor. It takes it name from the mists and fogs that creep down through the trees from the moorlands, making travel disorienting at best.

The Misty Forest is occupied by a number of wild (green) elf tribes who are on good terms with humans (such as those from the Way Inn), provided that they are left alone. The woods are regularly patrolled by rangers and druids, and a number of forest shrines to Eldath, Mielikki, and Silvanus are scattered throughout its length.

The Misty Forest is often used by barbarian humans and savage orcs to sneak up on the Trade Way or the Way Inn. To date, however, the warnings of the wild elves and the human foresters have spoiled any surprise attacks.

The Reaching Woods

The Reaching Woods is a thick young woods located on the banks of the Chionthar and split into two main (northern and southern) branches by the River Reaching tumbling south out of Hill's Edge. The north branch thins at the point where the Dusk Road passes through it, and then it continues in a minor subbranch on the road's far side. The forest is filled with hardy stands of maples, elms, and beeches, which give the entire woods a feeling of peace and serenity.

The Reaching Wood is known to be the home of several powerful druids, and several shrines to Eldath have been erected among its placid pools. Some regions of the woods have been invaded by goblinoids, who enslave the native centaurs and satyrs.

The Reaching Wood is also the home of the Walking Tower. The tower resembles a great statue, many stories high, and is thought to be a relic of the days of Netheril. The Walking Tower was the property of the ranger Alomystia a hundred years ago, hut none know what became of him. The Walking Tower has been seen in certain parts of the woods, often moving randomly from place to place, as if looking for something.

The Creation of Chelimber

Here is the tale the bards tell about the origin of the Marsh of Chelimber:

In the early days of Waterdeep, before the forests to the west had been stripped and used to fashion the great ships of Orlumbor, the land that is now marsh was ruled by Chelimber the Proud. Chelimber was both rich and decadent, and spent his days in these western woods hunting wild boar and in drunken feasts in his great hall. When it is said that Chelimber was rich, it is usually added that he was rich beyond most kings in terms of silver, in beautiful tapestries, and in gold. Yet he disdained these things in favor of the thrills provided by the flask and the blood of the dying boar.

In those days the Winding Water welled up from the heart of a rocky crag to the south and east of Chelimber's keep. One spring, a mage built his cower on that crag, using elemental help and taking but a few days. Chelimber's astonishment was matched by his anger, and he took up arms to sweep this intruder from his lands. The Wizard of the Crag (for he gave no other name) turned Chelimber's warriors to stone and sent balls of fire into the prince's keep. At a loss, Chelimber summoned an archmage from lriaebor, one Taskor the Terrible, who specialized in solving magical problems for a fee (in other words, wizard-killing).

Taskor and the Wizard of the Crag contested on Midsummer's Eve, each raising mighty magics and countering with spells and elemental forces, and their battle wrought great destruction. The crag was destroyed, and both Taskor and the Wizard vanished in the fight (and have never been seen in the Realms since). The water elementals the Wizard kept in his tower ran amok, laying waste to a large section of the prince's land, flooding his keep, and slaying Chelimber himself.

This is how the marsh that bears the name of Prince Chelimber was created. The site of Chelimber's castle, now the Keep of the Drowned Prince, can no longer be discerned, for many trees and overgrown hillocks now rise from the marsh's water and Chelimber's time was long ago. It is said that Chelimber still lives in some arcane fashion and guards the riches in his sunken keep from those who seek to despoil them.

Scornubel

Scornubel, the Caravan City, is a huge, unwalled, open city set on the north shore at the confluence of the Chionthar and the River Reaching. It is an unwalled town buzzing with continual activity, and a large number of pack animals, wagons, and symbols of mer-

chant and trading companies can be seen as the traveler enters the city. Most of the buildings are low—one or two stories—with a scattering of larger buildings and towers in the center of town. A map of Scornubel can be found on page 99.

Scornubel is one of the key cities on the Trade Way leading from Waterdeep to the lands of the Inner Sea. Like its rivals, Elturel and Iriaebor, it is a town of merchants and those things merchants are concerned with: warehouses, transportation, and protection (usually from the other merchants). Its population can swell to sixfold its normal numbers during the summer trading season.

The Caravan City is ruled by the shrewd, elderly, and regal Lady Rhessajan Ambermantle (NG hf B14), who in her time was a daring explorer and wandering trader and is still famed in tavern talk as "Rhessajan of the Tents." The Lady Rhessajan is supported by three lord high advisors named Burdan (LN hm F12), Deep (NE hm T9), and Phantar (NG hm F13), all middle-aged adventurers and retired caravan masters themselves. Lady Rhessajan and her advisors make their judgments on activities in the city based on one key factor: what is profitable for the city and its merchants. The city militia and scouts are provided by an agreement with the Red Shields merchant company.

Scornubel has only one established temple, the Healing House of Lathander. Its high priestess is Josura Hlammel (NG hf P14), and she is aided in her ministrations by 12 additional priests. The very name of the temple indicates the view most of the local merchants have toward the faith—it is useful to patch up their injured companions and employees. Josura ministers to the needs of all alignments. In addition, shrines are scattered through the city to every deity in the Faerûn pantheon and some quasi-gods from farther away.

Scornubel is also haunted, which is not unusual, but what is surprising is that the inhabitants know the haunter. The mage Oebelar was transformed through magical attack or mishap into little more than a coldly shining eye and a blackened hand and forearm floating in the air. Oebelar wanders the city at will, watching, observing, peeping, and peering at all the living activity. Oebelar cannot speak, but can signal and write. His remaining body parts are unaffected by magic, and attempts to turn or banish them have failed to date.

Serpent Hills

The Serpent Hills are a great expanse of rolling hills and rocky lands rising to low mountains in the center and broadening to the west until they become the High Moor. Better-watered than the Moor, the Serpent Hills are greener and overrun with small copses and scrubland.

The Serpent Hills are noted for the large quantities of snakes, dragons, and other reptiles found throughout their length. Brass and red dragons are the most common, along with some coppers and bronzes.

The Serpent Hills are the home of the Dungeon of Swords, supposedly a relic of the days of Netheril. The Dungeon is a small crypt of a forgotten war hero who either lived during the reign of Netheril or in the century after its fall. The hero either forged or collected a huge number of magical blades that are said to rest with him in his crypt. An adventuring company visiting the scene reports a great chasm and ghostly warriors protecting the old crypt and its treasures, and they have not attempted to loot it since these hazards were discovered.

Skull Gorge

Skull Gorge is situated on the upper course of the River Reaching. It is a sharp cut through the surrounding terrain, and its steep walls run almost to the river's edge. The walls of the gorge are made of a very pale gray stone and are riddled with caverns.

It was in this steep-walled valley that the bulk of the surviving orc and hobgoblin chieftains and shamans gathered following the Battle of Bones (see more under that entry) to stand off the armies of humans. The goblinoid races summoned extraplanar aid, for later forces encountered many fiends and tanar'ri. A great disembodied skull glowing with red flames was seen in the air above the gorge as the human troops made their final assault. The gorge was cleared of the orcs and hobgoblins, and is now thought to be deserted.

Much booty is said to have been hurriedly concealed in the caverns that lace the whitestone walls of the gorge. Few who have come here seeking that treasure have been seen again, and though treasure has been found here, so have fell beasts that seem to appear from nowhere to attack travelers in the gorge.

Soubar

Soubar is a small town along the Trade Way north of Triel, and it is often used as a waystation for traders traveling along that road. It has about 30 semi-permanent buildings, the remainder of the structures being temporarily lashed together or supports for the tent city that springs up near every trading city. Only a few of the inhabitants winter here, retreating instead to more pleasant lairs in Elturel and Scornubel.

Soubar is a wild, brawling town, with no laws other than those of strength and gold. During the winter it is desolate, during the summer overflowing with caravans and all manner of traveling peddlers who cater to the needs of the trading community.

The one truly permanent building is the Winding Way, a tavern located in the ruins of what was once thought to be a temple of Bane. It is run by Mag, a supposed former priest of some unknown deity who retired and has made the tavern her home ever since. Mag wears a *ring of misdirection,* so her alignment and true abilities are unknown, and while some travelers have declared that she has healed the sick on occasion, no other proof of her abilities has ever been shown. She allows travelers to sleep in the old choir loft, where broken instruments of torture are stashed.

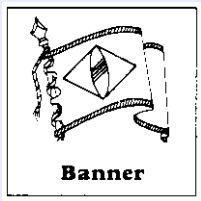
Key To Scornubel

1. Trail Lords (merchant company) headquarters; office and warehouse (A), warehouses (B-E)
2. Highmoon Trading Coster (merchant company) warehouse (C-J), office and stronghouse (A), and staff quarters (B, K, L)
3. Highmoon Trading Coster stables and paddock
4. Trail Lords stock pens and stables with paddock
5. The Stags Caravan Company stables and stock pens, with paddock
6. Ferry dock and route of *Southroad Ferry,* a large barge operated by Burlin (N hm F6) and two 3rd-level warrior bravos
7. Arkaras the Shipwright
8. The Red Shields stables and paddock; office at (A)
9. Tallahabur the Wagonmaker (sheds A-D, house E)
10. The Walk (public meeting place and market)
11. The Windriders Trading Coster stables (with paddock) and stock pens
12. Surefeet Trademasters (merchant company) stables with paddock
13. The Purple Sun Trading Coster stable with paddock and stock pens
14. The Windriders Trading Coster (merchant company) headquarters; office (F), and warehouses (A-E)
15. Purple Sun Trading Coster warehouse (A-D)
16. Surefeet Trademasters headquarters; office and stronghouse (D), warehouses (A-C)
17. Red Shields warehouses (A-C and D-F)
18. The Stags Caravan Company headquarters: warehouses (A-H)
19. The Jaded Unicorn (tavern and inn of very low quality)
20. The Thirsty Thunder Beast (tavern)
21. The Dusty Hoof (tavern and inn)
22. Traveler's Rest (inn)
23. The Fishym & Smoka Inn (the "Fish-smoke"; tavern and inn of low quality)
24. The Nightshade (festhall and night-club)
25. Kaerus Thambadar's smithy (blacksmith and ironmonger)
26. Fish market
27. The Green (assembly area for outbound caravans)
28. The North Green (see 27)
29. The East Green (see 27)
30. The Spice & Wine Shop; Ulder Mooroo (N hm W3), proprietor
31. Malikhar the Outfitter (leather straps, packs, tarpaulins, weather cloaks, harnesses, boots, etc.)
32. Purple Sun Trading Coster (merchant company) office
33. Purple Sun Trading Coster hirelings' barracks
34. Angah Lalla (fence for stolen goods; ostensibly a curio trader in items from exotic lands)
35. The Free Traders of Scornubel offices (run by the city); a registry of unemployed, casual journeyman drovers, guards, animal trainers, etc., and stronghouse)
36. Free Traders public warehouse (rental storage space guarded by the watch)
37. Free Traders public warehouse (rental storage space guarded by the watch)
38. Headquarters of the watch (D) with barracks (A-C) and enclosed stables (E)
39. The Randy Wench (tavern and gaming rooms)
40. The Jester's Bells (tavern, festhall, and scented baths)
41. Thruu's Way Rooms and Dining (the "Through-Way"; inn)
42. Scornubel Hall (meeting chambers available for rent, quarters for the local council and visitors, the city's emergency granary and deep wells)
43. The Raging Lion (inn; tavern and rooms at A, stables at B)
44. Mother Minx's (festhall)
45. Thyumdar's Reliquary & Eremosckh (general store for all goods; large and prosperous; Thyumdar (N hm W7) often uses the *wizard eye* spell in his business dealings)
46. The Everfull Jug (winery and drinks shop)
47. Ehaevaera's Beauty Rooms (hairstyling, scented baths, massages, manicures, body painting, and tattoos for women)
48. Ssimbar's Fine Clothes
49. Preszmyr the Herbalist (herbs, drugs, phylacteries, perfumes, and scented powders)
50. Far Anchor (inn)

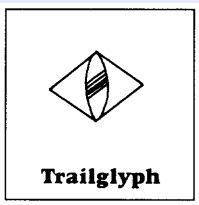
Merchants of the Realms

Most trade travels in caravans for safety throughout the Realms, and the great majority of caravans are run by independent caravan masters who often display no badge or colors at all. A few caravans are sponsored or directly manned by a city or alliance, and they usually bear the sigil of that place. The caravans of Amn are so marked, as are those of the Zhentarim. In addition to these caravan types, however, there are a rising number of large overland companies who make trade their business, particularly on the profitable Waterdeep to Moonsea run.

Large companies—which are usually created by the permanent amalgamation of smaller caravan companies in several geographical areas, so that the new company controls a route or strategic area—are known as *priakos*. Alliances of small, independent companies into a caravan traveling group for safety are known as *costers*. Add to this all manner of temporary alliances, merchant consortiums, and adventuring companies, and a great many groups control and pursue trade in the Realms.


Banner

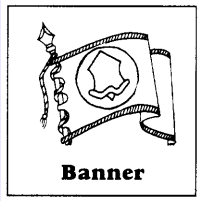
Dragoneye Dealing Coster: Originally based in the Vilhon Reach area, the Dragoneye now operates more often out of Iriaebor and Elturel. This oldest of the costers was begun by two merchant brothers who were tired of shipping things overland to avoid the Inner Sea pirates only to lose them to bandits on the long land routes west of Westgate and reluctant to pay incredibly stiff fees to the merchant houses of Westgate to have their cargoes accompany the well-guarded caravans of that city. The brothers, Iltravan and Chethar, still run the coster, but they have taken on two lesser partners: the Mhalogh of Mordulkin (a minor noble) and Bezenttar of Suzail.


Trailglyph

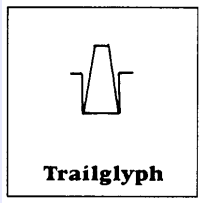
Firehands Group: Founded nearly a decade ago out of Daerlun, the Firehands has had a rough go of it trying to establish itself in a market with many other trading operations. Catering fully to the Waterdeep to Sembia run, its representative is Dhellart the Night Blade (LN hm F11). Its rates are competitive, but raids and sabotage are common, and the Iron Throne is usually blamed.

Highmoon Trading Coster: Headed by Guldeph Maremmon (N hm F9), this flourishing concern dominates the Sword Coast overland routes from its bases in Scornubel and Waterdeep (surprisingly, it does not reach the Dalelands). It carries everything, but has exclusive supply rights to kaorph (blue wine) and certain spices—arispeg, marka, and delph—that originate somewhere far to the south and east. Its colors are a white crescent on a black, star-studded oval.

Iron Throne: A mysterious organization with its origin in the Eastern Heartlands (possibly Sembia), the Iron Throne is known for

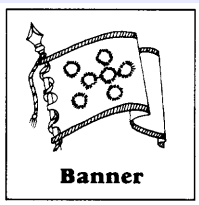

Banner

arriving on the scene, declaring all merchant companies to be equal, and that it is their spokesmen. Often the Iron Throne pronouncements have been common-sense declarations, but more often the company has ruffled the feathers of quite a few local lords and other merchant houses. Nothing is known of the masters of this operation, who may be dethroned dwarven lords, agents of Thay, or outcast elves. It has been ascertained that the Iron Throne is not a front for the Zhentarim, though the two have had intermittent dealings over the years.


Trailglyph

Merchant's League: Based in Baldur's Gate, the League promotes merchant safety through good roads, regular patrols, defensible waystops, and strong, well-run, and well-guarded caravans. Prominent members of the League are Irlentree, Zorl Miyar, and Aldeth Sashenstar. All are successful merchants who reside in Baldur's Gate. The League is an organization in decline, however; the rise of the various costers is replacing its functions and sapping its traditional support.

Red Shields: Formerly a mercenary company (still available for such jobs, some say), the Red Shields are a group of highly skilled (1st-3rd level) fighters who are well-armed and bear red, featureless shields. They usually hire out in groups of 25, 50, or 75 to guard regular road travel from Neverwinter through to Amn, and run their own regular run from Scornubel to Waterdeep every few days, carrying messages as well as cargo. Led by Bronthar Helmbrind (N hm F6) and his lieutenants Miftat (CN hm F5) and Vuldan (LN hm F4), the Red Shields effectively (and loosely) police the streets of Scornubel, watching the city's perimeters to ward off bandit raids (and to keep themselves well informed of events within those perimeters).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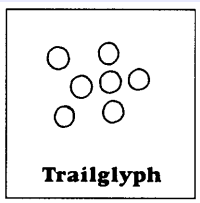
Seven Suns Trading Coster: The name of this group refers to the widely separated partners who formed the group, converting their own small merchant companies into regional bases and providing horses, draft oxen, and wagons, and hiring local guards. The seven partners are Jhasso of Baldur's Gate, Shield of Everlund, Pomphur of Almraiven, Chond of Calaunt, Alvund of Ormpetarr; Dzunn of Sheirtalar; and Nammna of Milvarune. This coster usually provides the leanest guards and the worst wagons, and is inclined to be slow and often bandit-struck as a result; however, it also undercuts its competitors on most routes.


Trailglyph

Soubar has been raided and destroyed a number of times in living memory, usually by goblin tribes from the High Moor.

Sunset Mountains

The Sunset Mountains are a pair of mountain ranges separated by the Far Hills, which are literally part of their chain. They form a high, almost impenetrable barrier between the Eastern and Western Heartlands and are home to a large number of the evil tribes and savage nonhuman races which plague the area.

In addition to evil nonhumans, several small, active branches of the dwarven nations inhabit in the region, still mining their ore and refining their metals as their grandfathers did a millenni-

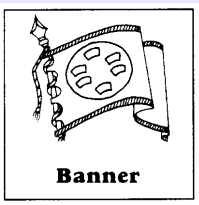
um ago. They are secretive about the exact location of their homes, as are all the hidden, because all it takes is one loose word into one greedy ear and the wonders of the dwarves are yet again under siege. Most of the dwarves trade in the town of Easting (see the Easting entry for more information).

Sword Coast

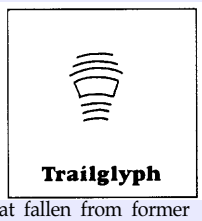
The Sword Coast is the western shore of Faerûn, running from Candlekeep and the Cloak Wood in the south to Luskan in the north. The Sword Coast is a rough, brawling area dominated by the City of Splendors, Waterdeep. The coast itself is treacherous, filled with undersea reefs, rock outcroppings, and soft, mucky undersea shelves that extend out for miles. True ports are few and far between on the Coast, which is the reason that the best harbors capable of handling sea vessels, Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate, have grown into important cities.

Scholars and sources disagree (of course) on the effective length of the Sword Coast. Some extend it further south into the lands of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan, to Calimport. The southern kingdoms resent this categorization, for they consider the

Merchants of the Realms, Continued



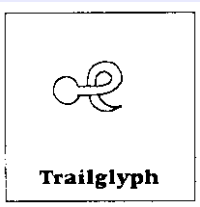
Six Coffers Market Priakos: Named for the six wealthy merchants who sponsored it, this priakos is run by Thelve Baruinheld of Berdusk and has bases in that city, in Waterdeep, in Silverymoon, in Priapurl, and in Selgaunt. It is large, efficient, and prosperous, but only four of the six original partners still live (the survivors are Ultramm of Selgaunt, Syntel of Iriaebor, Maftan of Waterdeep, and Szwentil of Marsember).



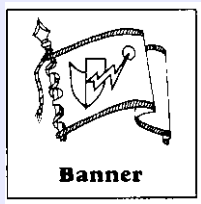
Stags Caravan Company: An older, somewhat fallen from former greatness outfit of rugged adventurers (now mostly dead or gone to other adventures elsewhere) that has been taken over by merchants who are constantly dealing in large and small matters everywhere. The company's aging trail general, Black Tomm Bharhinn, has lost effective control of day-to-day operations to Storm, Hlevell, and Dindar Pel, all young merchants of Amn who despair of making their fortunes within that kingdom of mighty merchants but are bound and determined to make money here.

Surefeet Trademasters: Headed by a council (the merchants Pheng Thelombur, Aramma Dulve, and Prist Thelmip) and based in Scornubel, the Surefeet specialize in providing expert guides/escorts/guards for ail concerns—their own caravans and those of any overland traveler. Their rates are high, their employees good—and it is rumored that the Surefeet have gained much wealth through several rich tomb and temple ruin finds made by guide members.

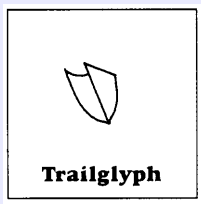
Thousandheads Trading Coster: Run by the former adventurer Bharavan Bhaerkantos (N hm T9) from his stronghold east of Riatavin, this coster operates only on a single route: from Waterdeep to Hillsfar via Scornubel, Berdusk, Iriaebor, Proskur, Arabel, and Essembra. Its name refers to the "thousands" of small one- to twelve-wagon outfits that benefit from this coster—Bharavan recruits retired adventurers to guard his caravans, and offers cuts rates to small merchants. His guards are tough, hard-nosed, and tireless. They have instructions to go after and kill any caravan raider, so few casual raiders tangle with Thousandheads caravans twice.



Trail Lords: A mysterious, pompous outfit (that some say is ruled by Thay or other fell sorcerous eastern lands), the Trail Lords have been known to hire half-orcs and worse as guards, but they appear to have boundless monetary resources and can mount a small army or two to guard especially valuable clients and cargo in a very short time. The Trail Lords' masters are said to be merchant kings (none have ever seen them). They direct operations through their representative, the fat, masked illusionist Mhereg Ssar (N hm W(I)6).



Trueshield Trading Priakos: Based in Telpir on the Dragon Coast, this professional organization builds its own wagons and equips and trains its own guards, and does both of these things very well. Few bandits tangle with its caravans. Even orcs leave them alone on most trips. Its rates are expensive, but it almost always delivers, so money has been pouring into its coffers for the eight seasons it has been in business. The master merchant of the Trueshields, Dzentraven Thiomtul, is credited with the idea of sealed destination wagons into which the goods of many small shippers intended for a common destination are packed together, rather than the traditional "peddler" wagonpacking method where goods are packed by assorted weight and bulk considerations.



Windriders Trading Coster: The Windriders are young, relatively inexperienced merchants with a wild reputation for fierce competition, hard traveling, and high jinks. All wear shields adorned with a white Pegasus, wings outstretched, and they are much used for swift, discreet carrier service around the North. There are approximately 60 Windriders. They prefer to remain anonymous and are represented through their office and leader, Torshilm Firetel (CN hm F6), formerly of Westgate.

In addition to these major lines, there are a number of other trading organizations, ranging from one-shot operators, to seasonal family operations, to independent merchants, to specialists in the small package trade (smuggling). All are regularly looking for strong sword arms and wise wand-wielders to enhance their chances of getting across the Western Heartlands. An aspiring adventurer for whom time is not a concern can usually find employment by hitching up with one of these organizations.

lands of the Sword Coast dangerous hinterlands, and its people little better than barbarians.

In addition to the dangerous physical nature of the Sword Coast, a large number of hostile races also live off the coast, including sahuagin, locathah, tritons, savage mermen, and sea elves. The Sword Coast is very similar to the nearby High Moors in that it is both a forbidding terrain and contains flora, fauna, and inhabitants dangerous to those who pass through it.

Triel

Triel is a waystation along the Trade Way from Scornubel to Waterdeep, and it is here that lesser-used Dusk Road from Elturel and Hill's Edge meets with the Trade Way. Triel has a small permanent community that exists behind a log-and-boulder stockade and locks its gates at night. Most travelers are not welcome within the gates after nightfall, and during the summer most merchant caravans camp out in wide circles on the surrounding fields. Triel has a few farms in the area, but most of its needs are cared for by passing merchants.

The local lord is Elvar the Grainlord (CN hm T9), who makes the stockade his home. Elvar is regarded as being a few stones shy of a fortress, but is generally a reasonable lord when it comes to trade. His dementia comes in two mild forms. First he has a fear (not unreasonable) that the community will run out of food in the winter when no one visits, so that most of his "keep" is given over to storage bins of grain and dried vegetables, sealed and protected. Elvar continually worries about the state of his grain protection, and those invited to his dinner table are warned that this *will* be a subject of conversation.

Elvar's other mania is religion. His tastes swing widely, and he examines one faith after another. He enters into a new fit of faith with the sure hand of a new convert, but soon finds errors in the theology, dogma, or practice, and abandons it for a new one. He has gone through most of the major powers twice, and many of the quasi-powers. He is at the moment a practicing Cyricist—no, no, wait, he's changed his mind again.

Trielta Hills

The hills to the north and east of Triel are rolling, pastoral, and occupied by small communities of halflings and gnomes. These races tend to remain quiet and provincial, since those who attract attention attract goblins and other nasty predators as well.

Occasionally gold or silver is discovered (or rediscovered) in part of the Trielta Hills, kicking off a small land rush for a generation of humans, with their squabbling and fighting. The halflings and gnomes tend either to work with the humans (with a kind tolerance and quiet amusement) or move away until the danger passes.

There are no legendary lost kingdoms, wizard towers, ruined holds, or great archliches in the hills above Triel, making them almost unique in the Realms for their normality.

Trollclaw Ford

This ford across the Winding Water is overhung by high, tree-cloaked banks and surrounded by hills on both sides. The ample cover provided by the surrounding vegetation makes it easy to stage ambushes here, and the plants and terrain may hide a great number of assailants with ease. Troll bands have struck at travelers so often over the years here that the ford was given its grisly name. Piles of gnawed and burned bones stand as grim warnings to travelers on both sides of the river about a mile from the ford. As a standard precaution, most caravans have at least 20 armed guards when making this passage.

The water at Trollclaw Ford is black and foul-smelling, the heritage of a godly battle at Boareskyr Bridge (see the Boareskyr Bridge entry). The water is drinkable at Trollclaw, but exceedingly bitter tasting. Travelers seeking to replenish their waterstores have to seek out a spring in the nearby hills, giving the monstrous population one more opportunity to attack.

Troll Hills and Trollbark Forest

As can be surmised from the names of these adjacent regions, this forest and the adjacent low mountains are overrun with trolls of every type and description. This region has the closest thing to a troll nation and a common troll language, though the empire of the trolls makes the typical orc tribe look like King Azoun's court!

The Trollbark Forest is a dark wood of twisted live oaks, black ash, and scrub pines. The forest floor is heavily tangled with underbrush, including both poisonous and carnivorous varieties of plants. Low vales throughout the wood are filled with bogs and swamps. In short, it is the sort of place that only trolls would *want* to live.

The Troll Hills are little better. Live oaks predominate to the timber line, and their rounded peaks are topped with thick patches of razorgrass. Here the trolls and their allied races live in caverns that lie beneath most of the peaks. It has been said that in ancient days drow caravans moved through here at will to a hidden drow city, but when that city was overrun by trolls, the drow destroyed all access to this area from below.

The trolls of this region travel and raid as far north as the Lizard Marsh and west into the High Moor and Trollclaw Ford. A colony of trolls in the Trollclaws to the west communicates regularly with those within the forest.

In addition to the rumored drow city beneath the Troll Hills, the Troll Hills are the home of the Warlock's Crypt. Said to be the final resting place of Larloch, a great wizard of Netheril protected by his immortal, devoted servants, as well as a troop of trolls, it is reported to house great magics. The Warlock's Crypt is known to be somewhere in the western part of the hills (the position on the map is inexact). It was discovered in 1351 DR, the Year of the Crown. The sole discoverer to make back it to civilization, however, brought with him a virulent plague that decimated Baldur's Gate that year.

The Way Inn

This village numbers fewer than 20 buildings, the largest of which is a sprawling manor house that is used as an inn. The Way Inn is run by Dauravyn Redbeard, a stout, middle-aged swashbuckler (LG hm F5). A high wall around the community provides its only protection. To the south of the town a great commons has obviously been used as a parade ground for military forces over the years.

The Way Inn is usually used as a staging ground for hunters, adventurers, and military units planning actions in the High Moor. Waterdeep pays a small annual fee for permission to use the commons as an encampment on those occasions when it goes to war. As a result of the regular traffic, Dauravyn is well-informed on all the local gossip and legends. He is willing to part with the information for a price, and if the listener assures him that he (Dauravyn) will not be held responsible if the information is faulty or incomplete.

The Way Inn has a small shrine to Mielikki tended to by Artemus Collin, the lone priest to that goddess in town (NG hm P12). Collin is an irritated, growling priest, continually angered by the fact that people do not want to talk to a cleric unless they are bleeding.

The Way Inn maintains a force of archers and spearmen to repel the irregular raids of trolls and other creatures. The normal armed force wear splint mail and carry spears, short bows, and firepots—the last to deal with the marauding trolls.

The Way Inn was destroyed utterly by Dragonspear forces in 1363 DR. Redbeard has rebuilt the wall and buildings with the support of Lord Piergeiron of Waterdeep and Mirt the Moneylender, also of that city.

The settlement's best protection is usually the fact that in the summer it is surrounded by merchants, soldiers, and adventurers, and in the winter there is nothing worth taking. Dauravyn is said to have a magical form of instantaneous communication with the Lords of Waterdeep, and if threatened, magical and military aid are forthcoming. Dauravyn is known to wear *bracers of defense* AC 2, and has a two-handed broadsword hanging behind the bar that is said to be magical.

Winding Water

This wide, slow flow snakes its way from the Marsh of Chelimber to the sea, strengthened by the Serpent's Tail Stream (more a small river). A slow, turbid river, the Winding Water makes its way along a wide and marshy bottomland, and frequently alters its course, leaving swamps and oxbow lakes in its passing.

Between Boareskyr Bridge and Trollclaw Ford the water of the Winding is poisonous, the magical aftereffect of battle between the rising power Cyric and the old power Bhaal. At the bridge the muddy, but potable, waters become jet black and stink with a foul, rotting odor. The river remains that way until Trollclaw Ford, where it loses its poisonous properties (though it remains cloudy to the sea). During the stretch between the bridge and the ford, the water is Type K contact poison, Type G if ingested. The poison is magical in nature, and loses its poisonous potential (though not its smell) if removed from the river.

The Wood of Sharp Teeth

This vast forest is so named because it is completely wild and abounds in forest creatures dangerous to humankind. This forest is a maze of undergrowth, tangled with nettles and thornbushes.

Satyrs are known to dwell here in numbers, and there are thought to be dryads within it also, but the wood is feared more for its less intelligent denizens, who are numerous and savage enough to have discouraged woodcutting and hunting by the citizenry of Baldur's Gate. No elves of any type are believed to make this woodland their home, but travelers are warned that very little is known of this area.

Many valuable duskwood trees can be seen by those passing by, but none have dared cut any for many years, for death comes swiftly to those who pass beyond the forest verge. Local legend in Baldur's Gate holds that there is a lost, ruined city in the forest depths.

Yellow Snake Pass

This pass through the Sunset Mountains is one of the few usable trails north of the Far Hills and south of Anauroch. This remote mountain pass is a long, wide, natural valley that forms a strategic overland passage through the mountains north of Cormyr. It is named for a strange and fearsome draconian beast that resembled a winged serpent of ivory-yellow color. It made this region its home several hundred years ago until it was slain by the adventurer Tuirlagh "Foehammer" Nundass of Silverymoon.

The Pass is presently controlled by the Zhentarim, who permit no one through who is not a member, ally, or approved client of their Black Network. The Zhentarim have resisted several attempts by Cormyr, Iriaebor, Scornubel, and Hill's Edge to oust them.

Forces within the pass are unknown, though it is known to hold several nastinesses of gargoyles (a nastiness being one tribe of the creatures) and at least one stone golem.

The Zhentarim patrols in Yellow Snake Pass are quartered at a number of small waystops along the length of the pass. These waystops are usually two-story keeps built at the mouths of, or in front of, caverns. Should the troops be overwhelmed, they can retreat into the Underdark and wait for reinforcements.

Firepots

Firepots are small clay jugs filled with flammable oil and carried in slings of leather. These weapons are lit, spun around the head, and flung up to 30 yards away. Upon striking a hard surface, the jugs break, inflicting 1-6 hit points of fire damage to all within 5 feet of the impact point. The oil continues to burn for 1-10 rounds or until it is extinguished, doing 1-4 points of damage each round.

Waterdeep

Waterdeep, the City of Splendors, is the most important and influential city in the North, and perhaps in all Faerûn. For this reason it is considered part of the Heartlands of the Realms, even though it lies 150 miles north of Daggerford. The road to Waterdeep is well paved and well patrolled. The city is the hub of trading from the mineral-rich lands to the north, the merchant kingdoms of Amn and Calimshan to the south, the kingdoms of the Inner Sea to the east, and the sea kingdoms and traders to the west.

Waterdeep is named for its outstanding natural deepwater harbor, and the city that grew up at this site has become the commercial crossroads of the northern Realms. More than 100,000 people make their home in Waterdeep. The city sprawls northward from the sea, spreading along the flanks of Mount Waterdeep, a great and singular mountain. Of old, Mt. Waterdeep was said to have been a dwarven citadel, and the entire length and great depth of the mountain is riddled with passages and tunnels, most of which are still occupied by deadly creatures whose presence in the mountain pre-dates the founding of the city itself. One reason that Waterdeep is an attractive location for adventurers is that it has a large adventuring site (Undermountain) comfortably located near temples and other recovery areas.

History

Waterdeep was used as a trading site for trade activitives between northern tribesmen and southern merchants more than two millennia ago. By 1,000 years ago, permanent farms had sprung up in the area. The first mention of a Waterdeep (not as a city, but as a collection of warlords) occurs only 400 years ago. The city was truly established as a going concern by 1032 DR, the year Ahghairon became the first Lord of Waterdeep, and the date from which Northreckoning is counted.

The city grew spectacularly, such that by 1248 DR both the City of the Dead and the guilds had been developed. The guildmasters seized control soon afterwards, ushering in a period of unrest and bitter conflict known as the Guildwars. The Guildwars ended only when the two surviving guildmasters brought in their own period of misrule. It was only in 1273 DR that the present system of government (or lack thereof) was instituted. This was the year that the Magisters were established and the secret Lords of Waterdeep were firmly reestablished. Since that time, the city has continued to grow and prosper.

Humankind and other races come from all over the Realms to earn hard coin in the City of Splendors. Over the years these successful merchants have set up guilds and themselves become nobility, supporting the secretive Lords of Waterdeep who police the city fairly, yet with a light hand, by means of the superb city guard (soldiers), city watch (police), and over 20 black-robed magistrates. As a result, Waterdeep is a place tolerant of different races, religions, and lifestyles. This in turn has encouraged commerce, and Waterdeep has grown into a huge, eclectic city.

Government

Waterdeep is ruled by a council whose membership is largely secret. These hidden Lords of Waterdeep maintain their identities behind magical masks; called *helms* and while they rule in public, none know the true identities of most of them. The subject of who the Lords are is a common topic of noble conversation, and some consider it a game to discover whom the Lords are, a game made more confusing by the fact the Lords themselves set their own rumors afloat.

It is a known fact that Piergeiron the Paladinson, Warden of Waterdeep and Commander of the Watch (LG hm Pal14), whose golden-spired palace dominates the center of the city, is a member of the Lords. He is the Unmasked Lord, and wears no disguise over either his face or his heart. It is gener-

ally assumed that the archmage Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun (LN hm W27) is also of the Lords, and perhaps chief among them, exceeding even Piergeiron. The identities of other members have not been made public knowledge. The names of Mirt the Merchant (CG hm F9), the courtesan Larissa (NG hf F4), and Texter the Paladin (LG hm Pal17) have been connected with the Lords, though evidence exists to both prove or disprove claims that they are Lords, and beyond these four (including the Blackstaff) conjecture swings widely as to who is a Lord and who is not.

The Lords appear in public only in the Lords' Court, hearing all cases of murder, treason, misuse of magic, and appeals from lower courts. On such occasions there are always at least four Lords present, but sometimes six or seven are seen, and rarely as many as nine. Piergeiron chairs the Court and asks all questions, for the Lords speak through him. In chambers the Lords all appear similarly masked and robed, their robes formless and black, with black capes, and their masks completely covering the head and face. These masks have featureless faces, with mirrored crystals over the eyes, save for Piergeiron's. He has had his face covering separated from his *helm,* and lets those who appear before the Court see his face.

The Helms of Waterdeep

The helms of the Lords of Waterdeep have some undetectable magical enchantment upon them that prevents the use of divination spells (including *ESP* and *detect lie)* on the wearer while they are in use. It is impossible to determine the wearer's thoughts, alignment, or identity when she or he is wearing a helm. Rumors float that the helms are tied to a powerful illusion that also distorts the height and weight of the wearer and his or her voice in a random fashion. Thus, attempting to discern Larissa's curves (or Mirt's massive form) is all for naught. One halfling rogue has even claimed to be a secret Lord of Waterdeep; however, his immediate disappearance has made it difficult to prove or disprove that claim.

In addition, many of the powerful of the City of Splendors wear their own additional protections to keep the curious and indiscreet spellcasters at bay.

Defense and Justice

Waterdeep maintains two separate armed forces, the guard and the watch. The city guard serves as Waterdeep's soldiery, and its members staff garrisons, road patrols, and watchposts, and serve as bodyguards and gate guards. The watch is the local police force, and in addition to capturing criminals, its members settle petty disputes, give directions, summon medical and priestly aid, and generally perform duties that promote the idea that Waterdeep is a city open to all who know how to behave themselves.

The members of the guard are armored in scale mail of black, silver, and gold, and carry short swords and bows. They are normally found in patrols of 12. If out on road patrol, they will be mounted on medium warhorses, and have a 5th-level fighter as a leader.

The watch is equipped with leather armor strengthened with chain (treat this as AC 7) and colored green, black, and gold. The members of the watch are armed with short, stout rods (treat as clubs), daggers, and short swords. They usually travel in foot patrols of four warriors. Watch members carry horns with which to summon reinforcements.

Waterdeep has strong walls on its landward sides and is protected in part by Mount Waterdeep on the seaward side. Mount Waterdeep is studded with watch towers and defensive positions, and patrolled by special guard units on flights of hippogriffs.

Waterdeep also benefits from a large native population of the adventuring class (including powerful mages, priests, and warriors) who are more than willing to deal with any and all miscreants who threaten their home city. In many ways, this is its best defense.

Waterdhavian justice is dispatched by the Magisters, who direct the common courts of the city. These Black Robes, as they are often called, are empowered to pass sentence. They are always accompanied by six members of the guard. Any individuals found guilty may appeal to the Lord's Court, ruled over by the masked Lords of Waterdeep, where serious cases are usually heard. Individuals bringing frivolous cases to the Lord's Court usually face stiffer fines than if they accepted a magister's ruling.

Other Important Factions

It is said that the Lords rule Waterdeep but do not truly run it. This is quite true, in that there are a number of other factions who make up Waterdeep. The most noticeable are the guilds—powerful merchant and craft organizations that control much of the life-blood of the city. Once the guilds ruled the city,

and it almost destroyed itself in a series of internal commercial wars. No one wants to see those days return.

A second important Waterdhavian faction is the local nobility. It consists of 76 respected (for the most part) families of varying degrees of power, most of whom can trace their lines to before the founding of Waterdeep itself. Many powerful names come out of Waterdeep, including the Amcathras (whose scion is now Lord of Shadowdale), the Cassalanters (wealthy moneylenders), and the Wands (a family of powerful and noble wizards).

Third, a rising merchant class exists outside the standard guilds. These are caravan and coster operators, and they use Waterdeep as a destination for their caravan goods. More shops are offering a variety of different goods because of this growing group. The most notable of these new merchants is the retired wizardess Aurora, who has established a magical retail organization to supply a wide number of patrons across the North with specialized items.

Last, one must consider the continual tide of adventurers that flood the city. Some establish themselves as citizens of good standing and remain permanently, while others drift off for other climes or meet their ends in back-alley brawls. Secret societies such as the Harpers and the Red Sashes make up the closest thing to organizations drawn from this group.

These four factions are rough approximations, and they overlap—a wandering Harper can be the descendent of a noble family that works in the tanning guild, but who is representing a merchant company from Amn. The established government pulls the best from all four areas as its Lords, to the benefit of all.

The Waterdhavian Mindset

Waterdhavians are a composite of their component parts. A sizable number of the natives are recent arrivals from one part of the world or another, all with different viewpoints, deities, and attitudes. Waterdeep, as a result, is varied and cosmopolitan in nature, open to the many different nationalities and races in the Realms. It is not so much a melting pot as a gem grinder—smoothing the rough edges so individuals shine at their best.

Waterdhavians can show the bluff honesty of a Dalesman, the calculating planning of a Sembian, the honor of a Cormyrean, the independence of a Westie and the sly cunning of a native of the Moonsea. These behaviors can all be exhibited in the same individual, and the art of choosing the right frame of mind for a certain instance is inherent to the city's character.

Waterdhavians attempt to be understanding and openminded, but the trend is not pursued to a fanatic level. That nobles, merchants, adventurers, traders, and immigrants all have their own place in society is accepted, but that does not mean they necessarily want to associate with each other. Waterdeep at its best is never a society of equals. However, this level of toleration means that it is hard to surprise a Waterdhavian, whether with invading gods or walking statues or flying carpets. They *have* seen it all before.

Religions in Waterdeep

Waterdeep has a huge variety of faiths, and the odds are that if a deity is worshiped somewhere in Faerûn, it has at least a follower (or likely a wandering priest or two, and maybe a shrine) in the City of Splendors. However, there are only are seven major temple complexes within the city. They are dedicated to Gond, Lathander, Mystra, Selûne, Sune, Tempus, and Tymora.

In addition to the temples, shrines to Silvanus, Mielikki, Chauntea, Lliira, Sharess, and Siamorphe (the last two are local divinities) can be found here. In addition, there are secret temples and hidden shrines to most of the dark gods, often hidden away beneath the streets of the city. These include churches to Cyric, Talona, Umberlee, Shar, Auril, and a wide variety of the Beast Cults, including the Cult of the Dragon. In the years immediately following the Time of Troubles, Waterdeep had an active Cult of Ao; however, this has diminished almost to nonexistence.

In the Trades Ward, there is a building known as the Plinth that is kept as a place of worship and meditation for all faiths. Many long-dead and departed deities may hear from their only worshippers at the base of this structure, which is usually festooned with flowers and other small offerings. Here one may find followers of odd and obscure faiths and frequent intense theological discussions. The watch stations a detachment here to prevent the discussions from getting overheated and disturbing others.

Thieves' Guilds in Waterdeep

The last official thieves' guild in Waterdeep was destroyed in 1300 DR, and while there have been many claimants to that position and title over the years, there have been no groups of sufficient power to challenge the Lords of Waterdeep. Since the Lords *are* secret, no criminal knows if a trusted partner is truly on his or her side or not.

This is not to say that there are no thieves or crime in the streets of Waterdeep. Rather, crime here is random and dispersed, with no one leader or organization to command it. The most recent attempt was made by a crimelord named Xanathar, a beholder with a well developed secret network in his service. This network was savaged and Xanathar defeated through the actions of bold adventuring companies at the command of Lord Piergeiron. Whether a new crimelord comes to the fore remains to be seen.

The Wards of Waterdeep

Waterdeep is roughly divided into wards. The wards originally all had guards and walls in the manner of Procampur and other ancient cities, but the press of progress has toppled or bored through most of the walls. Only the walls and guards around the City of the Dead are still maintained. The wards of Waterdeep are:

Castle Ward: This central ward encompasses Mount Waterdeep and much of the government of the city. Here is located Castle Waterdeep, the place of government, as well as the Palace of Waterdeep (also known as Piergeiron's Palace), Lord Piergeiron's private residence. This ward is also a common place for retired adventurers such as Mirt the Moneylender to make their homes.

City of the **Dead:** This park-like area is surrounded by high walls. It is often visited during the day by wanderers and the odd picnic. At night, the gates of the City of the Dead are closed, for it is Waterdeep's graveyard. The more important personages have their own personal graves or family shrines, while others are confined to larger crypts. The reason for the guards is not to protect the graves, but rather to protect the city from the occasional restless undead creature that does not appreciate its accommodations.

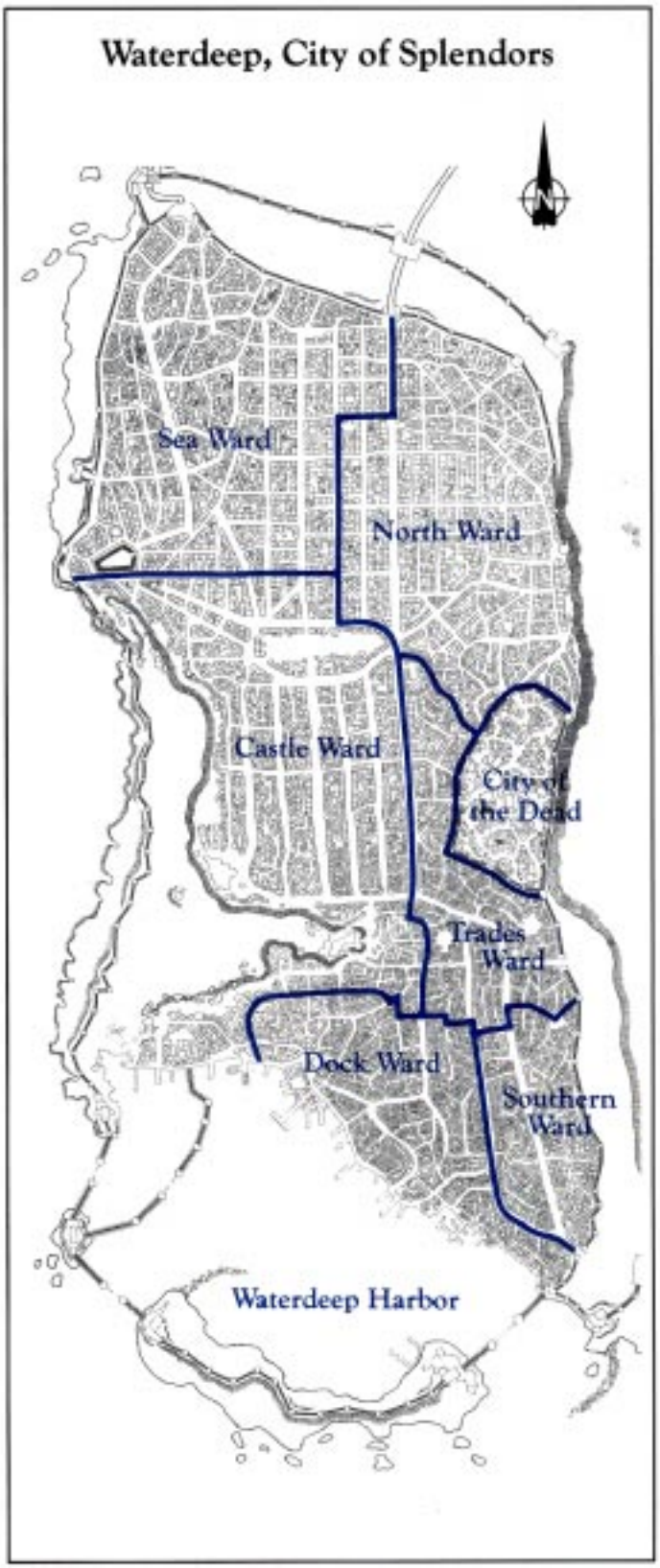
Dock Ward: As one might assume, Dock Ward is situated hard on the Great Harbor of Waterdeep, and holds the docks, shipbuilding yards, and warehouses for the sea trade. The harbor is inhabited by mermen who keep the peace within their own watery city.

North **Ward:** Tucked in the northwestern portion of the city, North Ward is the land of the nobility and their villas. The moneyed classes make their homes here, far removed from the hustle and bustle of the lower (literally) classes by the docks and in Southern Ward.

Sea Ward: The newest of the wards, Sea Ward contains many of the temples of Waterdeep, along with a good helping of the newer noble families and retired adventurers who can afford the odd villa or two. The Field of Triumph, Waterdeep's arena, is located here.

Southern Ward: South Ward (only nonnatives refer to it by its official name of Southern Ward) is a place of caravan masters and traders, for it is close to the South Gate, the opening to the Trade Way. Here one finds stables, ironmongers, and a goodly variety of inns and taverns.

Trades Ward: Reaching north from the River Gate through the heart of Waterdeep, Trades Ward houses the homes and places of business of most of the city's craftsmen and artisans and the headquarters of many of the powerful guilds of Waterdeep.



Beyond The Heartlands

Beyond the Eastern and Western Heartlands lie numerous intriguing and exotic lands. In the limited space here, it is impossible to come close to completely covering the other regions of Faerûn, let alone each of their lands. In order to give a fair feeling for as much of the vastness and variety of Faerûn as possible, the major nations of the remaining regions of the Forgotten Realms are covered here. In an attempt to convey their nature, a mixture of essential information and enticing detail is presented.

The Island Kingdoms

Faerûn's western coast borders on a great ocean known as the Trackless Sea, though various small parts of it are also known as the Sea of Swords (along the Sword Coast) and the Shining Sea (the arm that reaches into the land south of Amn and Calimshan).

The Trackless Sea is the home of a number of powerful, unique, and diverse island nations, ranging from the elven refuge of Evermeet, to the rapidly rising Moonshaes, to the magical kingdoms of Lantan and Nimbral to the south.

Evermeet

Evermeet is a large island several thousand miles to the west of the Moonshaes, and is similar to those islands in size. Despite its great distance from the shores of Faerûn, the island of Evermeet is well-known to most of the knowledgeable of the Realms as the final home of the elven nations. It is a happy realm of deep, wondrous forests and much laughter, where the gold elves, under the leadership of the moon elven royal house, live in rich splendor. Queen Amlaruil has ruled alone since the death of her husband, King Zaor, 40 winters ago.

The art, the music, and the magical research of Evermeet are far above what is seen in the lands of humankind, even in Waterdeep the Splendid. All elves save the drow and half-elves are welcome in Evermeet, and many sea elves live in the surrounding waters.

To guard this wondrous realm against humans, particularly the aggressive raiders from Ruathym and the Pirate Isles, Evermeet has the mightiest navy in this hemisphere—the most numerous and well-armed nautical force in the known Realms. Based in the fortress of Sumbrar, with smaller outposts at Elion and Nimlith, the vessels of Evermeet's fleets patrol from the Wave Rocks to the Gull Rocks and the Teeth, in a wide circle of ocean. Some of these vessels even sail the skies.

Boats are built and repaired at Siiluth and call at only a few ports in the lands of humankind: the Moonshaes, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep, and perhaps one or two others. In the past, the ships of Evermeet have fought many battles with Ruathym, the reavers of the Nelanther (Pirate Isles), and Calimshan, hurling back all attempts to seize the island or its treasures.

Many of the elven nations from the Realms have sought safe haven in Evermeet, and Evermeet's navy has aided in ensuring those nations that made their home on the Sword Coast received safe passage to the island. How elven nations far inland have made their way to Evermeet has not yet been revealed, for while the Elven Court has vanished from Cormanthor, there was no record of a mass migration of the elves.

Lantan

Lantan is a southern nation some thousand miles south of the Moonshaes that is known for its merchant traders, found up and down the Sword Coast. Lantan is widely known for its maroon-sailed, lateen-rigged ships, which ply the crystal and deep green waters of the southern seas of the Realms.

Lantan itself is a land of lush jungle and rock pinnacles, atop which perch the turreted aerial homes of the Lantanna. These homes are often joined to neighboring abodes by spidery, railless bridgespans. Lantan is peopled by contented folk who worship Gond Wonderbringer, god of artificers. The Lantanna carry on energetic independent sea trading in order to make enough money to enrich their homes with splendid ornamentation and new ideas or inventions, which they are always encouraging the experimentation with and implementation of.

The Lantanna prefer to avoid conflict, viewing combat as wasteful and expensive. However, this has not prevented them from introducing to the rest of the world the arquebus, a primitive musket that uses magical smoke powder (which Lantan seems to have in abundance).

Both islands of the nation, Lantan and Suj, are ruled from the capital of Sambar by the Ayrorch, a council of twelve whose members serve for life and who themselves select replacements to their ranks. The head of the Ayrorch, the *ayrar,* speaks for the council in Lantan; another member of the council, the *lantar,* is its traveling envoy to other lands. Neither position is traditionally given by seniority or as a reward for service or merit. The Ayrorch seems to sort out its members' duties on a pragmatic basis—those with a talent or liking for certain tasks undertake them. The current lantar is Bloenin (N hm P24), a cleric of Gond who delights in the interaction of systems, in particular human systems such as governments, politics, and economics. Those fortunate enough to encounter the man will find him reserved and almost alien in his dealings, as if wheels were physically turning behind his green eyes.

Lantanna as a race favor shades of yellow in their clothing and have large green or black eyes, copper-colored hair, and skin the color of parchment or old ivory. They wear loose robes and large sun hats when at home on their islands, and anything practical when on ship or trading ashore elsewhere.

Lantanna often barter, but among themselves they use coins, particularly electrum and platinum pieces, as currency. Lantan merchants carry trade bars of electrum and platinum, usually in the standard 25-gold piece denominations and marked with the symbol of Gond. This money is considered universal tender, but it has caused a number of fights when presented beneath the noses of those who do not like the Wonderbringer.

Lantanna dislike traveling far inland, but they do have widely roving agents who keep tabs on inland events and on caravan companies—mainly based in Amn and Waterdeep—authorized to trade for, and with the goods of, Lantan. Unless an expedition to Lantan is planned, the Lantanna most likely to be encountered are merchants or agents. The Lantanna abroad tend to use native help wherever possible, so that only the leaders of a Lantan trading group are Lantanese.

The typical Lantanese merchant is also a cleric of Gond of 5th-10th level, and usually is accompanied by a group of 3-12 bodyguards (sometimes Lantanna, often local). Such merchants prefer a light touch in their dealings as opposed to brute force, though when such force is necessary, they hire adventurers to wield it.

Mintarn

Mintarn is a medium-sized island 400 miles southwest of Waterdeep. It is best known as a safe haven for those in flight from the authorities. This beautiful tree-cloaked island is a free port on the Sword Coast where no questions are asked and no one is turned away.

The island is a refuge for fugitives from justice, pirates, war refugees, mercenaries, and others who want to transact business (shady or otherwise), buy arms, or enjoy themselves away from the watchful eyes of foreign rulers and more proper authorities. Its wine taverns and festhalls are legendary up and down the Sword Coast for both their services and their danger.

Mintarn is ruled by a self-styled "tyrant" named Tarnheel Embuirhan (LN hm F15). His Tyrancy, despite his title, is known to be open-minded, open-eyed, and open-handed, and lets Mintarn tend to itself in most of its day-to-day dealings. Tarnheel does keep order (brutally if the occasion calls for it), keeps individuals from using force to gain their ends on his island, and acts to prevent pirates, other realms, or other scalawags from gaining control of Mintarn.

The Moonshaes

The Moonshaes are a large collection of islands well to the west of the Sword Coast, divided into a collection of more than a dozen small, petty kingdoms unified under one high queen. Those kingdoms in the southern parts of the islands are held by the Ffolk, farmers and fishermen who were the original human inhabitants of the islands. The kingdoms of the northern regions of the Moonshaes are held by the descendents of Northmen raiders.

The Moonshaes are blanketed with many forests of oak, hickory, birch, yew, and pine. Much of the land is mountainous and rocky or low, flat bog. The coastlines are primarily rocky, and brutal winter storms sweep the islands during the winter months.

The Northmen invaders of the Moonshaes are descendents of the same stock as the people of Luskan and Ruathym, farther north. After years of raiding and pillaging the Ffolk's lands, the two peoples now live in relative harmony.

The kingdoms of the Northmen are run by warlords (titled as kings)—strong and brutal people who have won their posts through a combination of might and cunning. Each of these kingdoms generates a subsistence level of food for itself (with no extra) through agriculture and farming. The Northmen feel that it is far more honorable to live a life of adventure than to farm—adventure that often leads them to pillage the nautical craft of other nations, the coastline of the North, and even the nonhuman-held lands of the Nelanther.

No single king of the Northmen rules the others, though the larger an army or fleet that a king can muster, the more influence he holds in the Northmen councils. Thelgaar Ironhand, Grunnarch the Red, and Raag Hammerstaad have been powerful kings of the Northmen.

The lands of the Ffolk are also broken into many small kingdoms. Unlike the Northmen, however, all of the kings of the Ffolk owe fealty to the high king or queen, who resides in his or her massive fortress at Caer Callidyrr, on the island of Alaron.

The Ffolk concentrate much more heavily than the Northmen on peaceful pursuits, such as farming, fishing, hunting, and trading. The lands they hold tend to be more hospitable than the domains of the Northmen, and consequently provide a wealth of agricultural produce, but also serve as an ever-present invitation to the raiders' greed. The united Ffolk are capable, however, of defending themselves from any invaders.

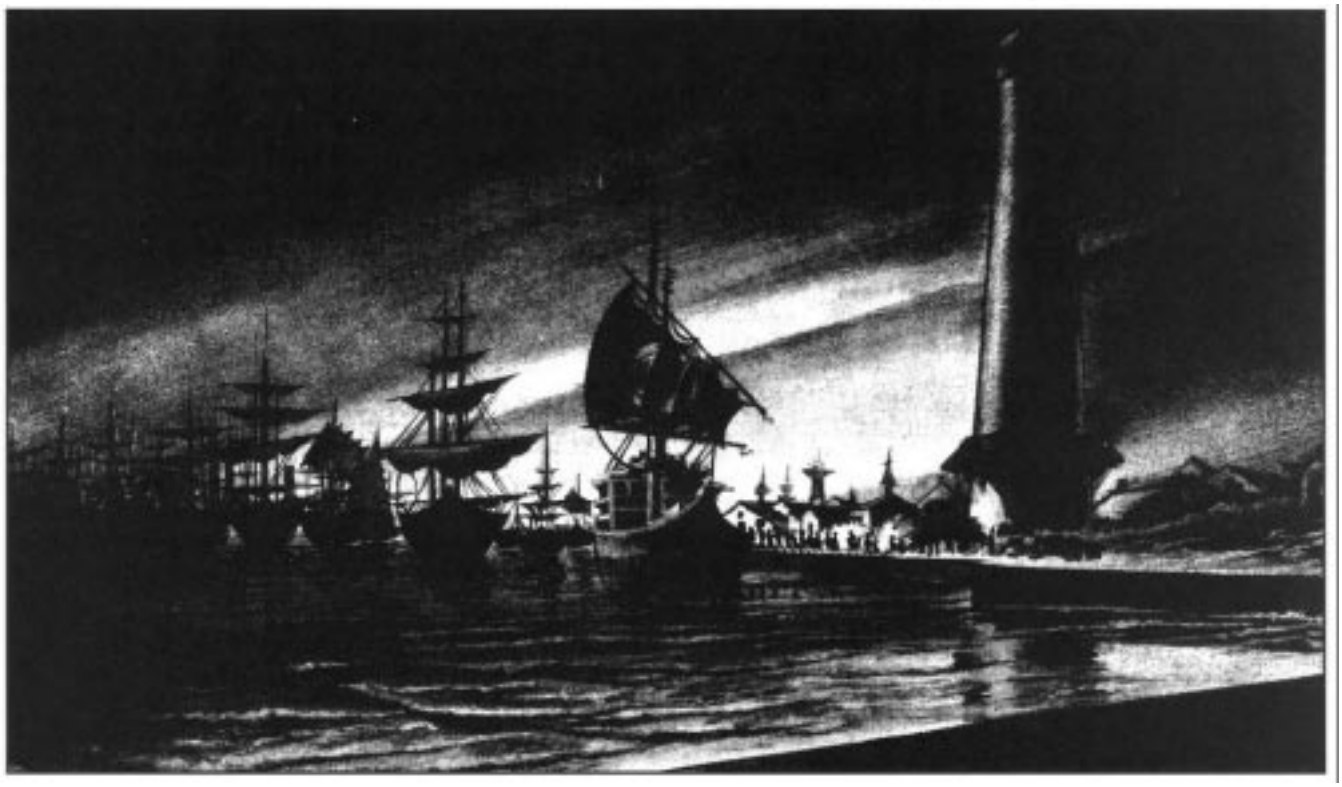
The largest of the Moonshaes, Gwynneth, contains a small region still inhabited by the islands' original residents. This region is a broad valley, with a huge, cold lake in the center called Myrloch. The entire region is referred to as Myrloch Vale, and rumors among both the Northmen and the Ffolk speak of the enchanted nature of the place. Here dwell small bands of reclusive dwarves, firbolg giants, and a race known as the Llewyrr, an elven people.

All of the dominant native races of the Moonshaes, including the Ffolk and excluding the Northmen, worship a goddess that is visualized as the mother of all life, and indeed of the world itself. She is often referred to as the Earthmother. The words of the goddess are spread through her druids. These druids tend to consider themselves a breed apart from those on the mainland of Faerûn and are polite, though distant and reserved, in dealing with such druidic circles. The Great Druid here, mistress of all the druids in the North, is Robyn Kendrick, former high queen of the isles.

The Northmen worship a stormy aspect of Tempus, god of war, through their own shamans. These shamans promote those teachings of Tempus that support their view of the world as a victim waiting for the raiders' plundering hands.

In the recent past, clerics teaching the faiths of some of the other religions of the Realms have arrived in the kingdoms of the Moonshaes and have attempted to spread their own faiths. These clerics have generally met with death among the Northmen, and an attitude of amused disbelief among the Ffolk. The clerics of these new gods have made a few converts among the Ffolk, but they by and large remain true to their ancient beliefs.

The Ffolk and the Northmen have struggled throughout their history, and only in the past 20 years has there been peace between them under the rulership of High King Tristan Kendrick (NG hm R16) of the Ffolk. Recently, the Ffolk, Northmen, and Llewyrr have united to defeat a plot of the god Talos to dominate the isles. Tristan has since abdicated his position to join his wife



Robyn in Myrloch Vale, leaving the reins of government to his daughter, Alicia (CG hf R7), and her husband, King Keane (LG hm W14).

The Nelanther

The Nelanther comprises scattered islands that trail from the coast of Faerûn, jutting out from Amn into the Trackless Sea. Most of the islands are wild and almost waterless, uninhabited by humanity. Some are the home of the most brutal reavers and corsairs to be found in Faerûn.

The Nelanther are also called the Pirate Isles, which creates confusion between them and the islands of the same name in the Sea of Fallen Stars. However, the pirates of the Sword Coast are very different from their Inner Sea cousins. While the inhabitants of the Pirate Isles of the Heartlands are primarily humans, the Nelanther's peoples are seagoing members of various nonhuman races—lizard men, orcs, ogres, and minotaurs, with a minority of evil human mages and priests. In addition, the savagery of the Nelanther reavers far exceeds the worst atrocities of the Fallen Star pirates. The Nelanther reavers have no internal codes, no secret alliances, and no close relationship with any other nation for supplies.

Uncounted numbers of reaver nations are scattered throughout the Nelanther, most consisting of little more than a base area and a few ships. Most of the viable and healthy creatures of the region are raiders, while the weak, infirm, and children remain ashore, engaging in wrecking and salvaging. Many land-bound tribes start their pirating careers by drawing a Waterdhavian caravel or Amnian merchant onto the rocks, then refitting it as their own warship. A few free ports exist in the chain, but they only last a few generations before being discovered and destroyed by other navies or falling to internal dissent.

The Nelanther tribes fight among themselves as much as with merchant ships (and the regular fleets that sail out of Evermeet, the Moonshaes, and Amn to deal with their threat). Of old, when Illefarn was in bloom, the Nelanther was said to be the home of a powerful nonhuman civilization. Each race claims that it was their species that commanded this culture, but the truth remains unknown. That the Nelanther was once occupied by an advanced race is incontestable; tall Sea Towers jut out of the isles (and occasionally, the ocean) throughout the chain. The natives regard these as places of evil magic, and as such, avoid them.

The Nelanther reavers deter only a portion of the trade coming north out of the Empires of the Sands, which either takes the road network or swings far to the west through the Moonshaes to avoid the reavers. In this way, the reavers benefit both the Moonshaes and such coastal towns as Beregost and Baldur's Gate by driving trade their way.

Nimbral

Nimbral the Sea Haven is a fabled land that may in truth not exist, for it is rumored to be south of the southernmost of the known realms, as far south from Lantan as Lantan is from the

Moonshaes. It is a fabulous, legendary nation, supposedly the home of great mages of power.

Far to the south of the Sword Coast lands, this lone island is said to rise out of the Great Sea. Nimbral is spoken of as the Realm of the Flying Hunt, and from this tiny land of forests and high meadows, warriors dressed in armor of glass are said to mount pegasi and take to the air, raiding nearby shipping. Nimbral is home to an enclave of extremely powerful, though studious and introverted, archmages, known as the Nimbral lords.

There are reputed to be 27 or so of these lords with perhaps a dozen more apprentices of some accomplishment, and they form a tightly knit, loyal family. The lords of Nimbral keep to themselves and the maintenance of their realm. This introverted application of their studies has, it is said, resulted in strong but unique magical developments, in particular discoveries involving illusion, displacer-type spells, and magics that duplicate the psionic disciplines.

The above may be all a fairy story, for many tales come out of the South involving great and powerful magics that exceed the powers of the North. Yet just as often a flying ship appears on the horizon, carrying wonders from such a land as this or Halruaa, and so mention of Nimbral is included herein.

Orlumbor

Orlumbor is a rocky, bare island just off the Sword Coast, 300 miles south of the city of Waterdeep. It is home to a few fishermen, some goatherds, and the most skilled shipwrights in the Realms. The finest ships of the North find their origins at the docks of Orlumbor.

Of old the island of Orlumbor was covered with trees, though these have long since been cut down. Most of the ships that ply the Sword Coast have been built, or at least repaired, here.

Orlumbor has a good natural harbor on its landward side. It is within that harbor, cut into the living rock of the island itself, that the docks and homes of the shipwrights of the island are found. The homes are cave-like complexes connected by tunnels and stairs, and the construction docks are seldom empty or deserted.

Orlumbor is an independent nation that has several times retained its independence solely by having Waterdeep as a strong ally. That city-state of the Sword Coast has stepped in to aid Orlumbor in conflicts with Mintarn (before the advent of the "tyrant" there), then Baldur's Gate, and most recently, Amn. The Lords of Waterdeep see it in their best interests to keep the most important shipbuilding center of the Sword Coast independent of any of Waterdeep's strong rivals.

Orlumbor is home to the mage Delshara Windhair (CG hf W17), also called the Witch of the Waves, whose magics are reported to have hurled back ships from the Pirate Islands and from Luskan that were attacking Orlumbor.

Ruathym

The home of raiders and pirates, Ruathym is a land of bold, proud humans and a seagoing breed of dwarves. Ruathym is also the ancestral home of the Northmen who settled in the Moonshaes. The island is a regular combatant with the coastal city of Luskan.

Ruathym is united under the iron grip of First Axe Aumark Lithyl (LN hm F13), who consolidated four petty kingdoms on the island into a single unified nation during a war with Luskan in 1357 DR.

Ruathym is a rocky, forbidding land, its coast riven with deep fjords and clear bays. The land itself has stands of magnificent pines that are protected from cutting by the authority of the First Axe, to prevent indiscriminate shipbuilding. The land is mostly civilized, with few wild creatures. Its greatest danger is the Northmen themselves, a lusty, violent people "two steps up from barbarians," in the words of one Waterdhavian mercenary recruiter.

The Savage North

The North, known also as the Savage North and the Savage Frontier, is a wild, untamed, and dangerous land located north and east of Waterdeep. The very definition of the North depends on the definer —to a merchant from Calimport, everything north of Tethyr, including all of the Heartlands, is the Barbarian North, while to a native of Silverymoon, the North begins beyond that reasonable city's walls.

The North is a land of barbarians and goblin tribes, and is dotted by walled cities and ancient dwarven fastnesses. The highest mountains in Faerûn, the Spine of the World, form the North's uppermost border. Most of its forests are still virgin and untrammeled by human settlement.

As such, it attracts both adventurers and settlers. Adventurers seek the wreckage of the lost kingdoms, the abandoned dwarf holds, and the wizard towers. The settlers look for new lands to farm and new opportunities. As in the Western Heartlands, the region is dotted with the small holds and settlements of this retired adventurer and that petty lord. Some, like Loudwater and

Leilon, grow into full-fledged cities, while others perish quietly, leaving ghostly reminders of humankind's passage this way.

Barbarian Peoples

When the first civilized humans emigrated into the Savage North, they found the land already inhabited by humans. These were a dark-haired, blue-eyed people, a large and hardy folk descended from savages, outcasts and refugees of Netheril, and early explorers. These people took their name from their legendary founder, Uthgar, and call themselves the Uthgardt.

The Uthgardt roam the North in the land between the citadels and fortress towns. Civilization is viewed as a weakness among these people, and magic—as opposed to priestly spells—a sin. They maintain a nomadic life, living by hunting (and among evil tribes, by plundering). Leathers and furs are common dress, and male warriors tattoo the image of their totem, the symbol of their tribe, on themselves.

The Uthgardt venerate Uthgar, their founder, who in their mythology is the son of Tempus and the husband of Chauntea (both of whom they also venerate). However, the Beast Cults are also very strong within the Uthgardt tribes, such that each tribe has its own totem and individual quasi-power.

Relationships between the Uthgardt and the civilized towns vary according to season and whim. Civilized people and unprotected caravans are often considered fair game by the Uthgardt barbarians.

Citadel Adbar

A large and powerful dwarven community in the North, Adbar (properly, Adbarrim) is the last shard of the dead dwarven kingdom of Delzoun. Only the gate tower is visible above the surface, for this is an underground city, with miles of granite corridors snaking beneath the Ice Mountains.

Citadel Adbar is ruled by King Harbromm, son of Thalbromm (LN dm F13), who has held his community together in the face of threats from the orcish tribes and the rising power of Hellgate Keep.

Hellgate Keep

Of old, the elven kingdom of Eaerlann founded the tower of Ascalhorn on a jutting crag commanding the valley below. The elves' purpose was to protect their lands from orcish invasions and the refugees created by the fall of Netheril. Ascalhorn served its purpose well, for it guaranteed the peace for a century. Ascalhorn developed into an awe-inspiring city of magic and wonder, rivaling even Myth Drannor in power and majesty.

In the end, Ascalhorn fell victim to an assault from within. A foolish and/or evil mage opened a *gate* to the lower planes and welcomed the forces of darkness in. Creatures of the Abyss infiltrated the city, and in one hellish night slew the majority of the inhabitants in their beds. The remaining people fled to Sundabar, Silverymoon, and Citadel Adbar, and told of the horrors that had visited Ascalhorn. Hellgate Keep was born.

Hellgate Keep is a foulspawn city, and its patrols and minions regularly threaten its neighbors. Its commander is Grintharke, a tanar'ri of great power who is served by magically altered dinosaurlike creatures.

High Forest

The greatest forest in the North is the High Forest, and it has remained untouched by woodcutters' blades for centuries. It is the home of powerful druids, half-elves, and elven refugees. Treants dominate the northern quarter, known as the Woods of Turlang. Drow and orcs are said to dwell in the earth deep beneath the forest. Aarakocra nest in the high mountains at the center, which are known as the Star Mounts. A series of escarpments and gorges created by the flow of the Unicorn Run, called the Sisters, lies to the south of the Star Mounts.

The High Forest was part of the old elven kingdom of Eaerlann, but great stretches of it have never seen a ruler of any race. The woods are regarded as magical, and wizard weather is relatively common within their borders—blood-red snow, boiling rain, and explosive hailstones being not unknown occurrences. It is said that the Dire Wood, an enchanted section of the forest that once housed ruined Karse, is responsible for the destructive weather.

Icewind Dale

The most northerly civilized area in the Realms, Icewind Dale is literally at the end of the earth, pressed hard against the Spine of the World and the Sea of Moving Ice. It comprises a collection of trading communities known as Ten Towns that trade with the northern barbarians and in local crafts. The Icewind Dale also has a reputation as a hide-out for those seeking to lose themselves or other pursuers.

Each town is has its own government, but all look to Cassius as their spokesperson. The best-known native of Icewind Dale, however, is the hero Wulfgar, son of Beomegar (CG hm F8).

Llorkh

Formerly a sleepy mining community, Llorkh has become a base of Zhentarim operations in the Savage North. The old lord of the community was mysteriously murdered, and the wizard Geildarr (LE hm W7) installed himself as the new ruler.

Most of the inhabitants have thrown in with the new regime (though they have no great affection for its leader), and the town is the endpoint of caravans up from Darkhold. Geildarr has multiplied his personal wealth several times over. He has been known to hire adventurers to loot the remains of Netheril, looking for magic to improve his standing in the Black Network.

Geildarr is served by a force of 400 purple-cloaked Lord's Men who protect the town from orcs and protect Geildarr from townsmen who think they can do the job better than him. The greatest threat to the Black Network's growth in the area is another evil force in the region, Hellgate Keep.

Llorkh has a thriving temple to Cyric. It is presided over by Mythkar Leng (late of Bane) (LE hm P12).

Luskan

The City of Sails is, with Neverwinter, the dominant coastal city north of Waterdeep. It is the home of fierce, proud, and warlike Northmen who engage in trade and raiding up and down the Sea of Swords. It is a pirate haven for raiders, under the direction of their captains. Luskan ships have been involved in conflicts with Ruathym, Mintarn, and Orlumbor. They give the ships of Amn and Waterdeep a wide berth, and have unsuccessfully attempted to raid Lantanese ships on a number occasions.

Luskan is ruled by a council of five high captains, all of whom are assumed to be former pirates. There are temples to Auril, Tempus, and Umberlee within the city walls.

Mirabar

Mirabar is the mining center for the Sword Coast, sending its forged metal bars, fine gems, and exquisite metalwork south to Waterdeep or overland to Luskan. It is home to a combined population of humans and dwarves living in relative harmony. The area around Mirabar is littered with mines, open quarries, and discarded talus.

Mirabar is ruled by a marchion, but the true power is in the Council of Sparkling Stones, an assemblage that meets each fall to plan out the amount of metal and stone to be hauled out in the next year, and more important, who those materials will be sold to. Many a petty tyrant building his own empire has discovered that his supplies have dried up if the miners of Mirabar do not approve of his attitude and actions.

Shrines to Tymora and Chauntea can be found in Mirabar, but most of religious sites, and all of the temples, are underground in the dwarven communities, and are dedicated to the dwarven powers.

Neverwinter

Neverwinter is a bustling city located further north along the coast from Waterdeep along the High Road. It is a friendly city of craftsmen who trade extensively via the great merchants of Waterdeep. Their water-clocks and multihued lamps can be found throughout the Realms.

Neverwinter gained its name not from its craftsmen, but from the skill of its gardeners, who have contrived ways to keep flowers blooming throughout the months of snow—a practice they continue with pride.

"By the clocks of Neverwinter" is a watchword for accuracy and delicate precision. The water-clocks produced here are accurate to within five minutes over a year, provided that sufficient water is available. These clocks sell for 150 gp each, can be carried by a single person (using both hands), and are quite in fashion in city and town homes of the more civilized regions.

The multihued lamps are the result of carefully mixed and blown glass, and are designed to produce pleasing colors against the walls at night. These lamps sell throughout the Realms, and are usually priced at 5 gp each.

Neverwinter is ruled by Lord Nasher (NG hm F12), a retired adventurer known to have stockpiled a great deal of magic in his time. An amiable and fearless balding man who enjoys news of the outside world, Nasher is protected by his own personal bodyguard, the Neverwinter Nine—nine 5th-level fighters packing as much magical protection as he does.

Neverwinter features temples of Helm, Tyr, and Oghma. Helm's Hold is presided over by its founder, Dumal Erard (LN hm P12). The Hall of Justice, the temple of Tyr, is controlled by Reverend Judge Olef Uskar (LN hm P10), who aids Lord Nasher in civil cases. The Halls of Inspiration venerate Oghma, and their chief priest is Sandrew the Wise (LN hm P11).

Silverymoon

The Gem of the North and its largest inland city, Silverymoon is an echo of lost Myth Drannor. It is a beautiful city of ancient trees and beautiful towers that crouches on the northern shore of the River Rauvin. It is the center of learning and culture in the North. Elves, dwarves, humans, and representatives of other races live in peace and exchange ideas freely.

The city is ruled by High Lady Alustriel (CG hf W22), a powerful force in the North and a senior member of the Harpers. Alustriel is a powerful spellcaster, but her greater talents are in her natural kindness and graceful diplomacy, talents that have served her well in preserving her city against the ravages of the North and, in particular, the rising power of Hellgate Keep.

Silverymoon is protected by a number of magical spells and wards, including the Moonbridge, the main span across the Rauvin. The bridge is made of invisible force, and its crest may be turned off, sealing the city from attack in that direction.

Silverymoon has temples to Helm, Lathander, Milil, Oghma, and Selûne within its walls, along with a shrine to Mielikki. It is also home to a temple to Shiallia, the Golden Oak Inn and Temple, tended by Izolde (CG hf P7), proprietress and high priestess. In addition, Silverymoon holds a music conservatory and a school of thaumaturgy within its gates.

Sundabar

Sundabar was an abandoned dwarven hold resettled by human refugees from Ascalhorn, which is now Hellgate Keep. The city is known for both its excellent woodworkers and its extensive trade with various dwarf clans. It is also the home of the Bloodaxe Mercenary Company. Sundabar is ruled by Helm Dwarf-friend (NG hm F14), a former member of the Bloodaxes.

Sundabar has temples of Helm (no relation to Helm Dwarf-friend) and Tyr within its walls.

Anauroch

Anauroch (A-NAW-rock) is a barren wasteland that dominates the North, a huge mass of steppeland, rocky wastes, and true desert that runs from the uttermost north almost to the Lake of Dragons.

The Great Desert was not always so huge, and has grown remarkably in the past millennium, driving savages, goblins, and other evil creatures farther south into the lands of humankind. Many human and elven kingdoms were swallowed by the wastes, and their ruins remain buried beneath the sands. Netheril, Asram, Hlondath, Anauria, the city of Orolin, and the great goblin kingdoms now all lie below its shifting dunes.

The area of the Great Desert is in fact a collection of different types of deserts, and includes hot sandy wastes similar to the Dust Desert of Raurin, rocky badlands with very sparse scrub and no available water, basins filled with salt flats and prickly cacti, windswept sandstone mountains carved by the breeze into bizarre shapes, and polar steppes and icy wastes in the north that rival those of Vaasa. In general, it is as inhospitable a place as can be found on the surface of Toril.

Science, at least as it is currently understood, does not explain the reason for this advancing desert, and great magical or godlike powers may be involved. On the positive side, the encroaching desert has forced trade south through the bottleneck the wastes create into the realms of Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dales, making these regions the wealthier for the loss of such great cities as Orolin.

For the longest time, the wastes of the Great Sand Sea were considered to be totally uninhabited. However, Zhentarim activities along the desert's edge (including an attempt to create a cross-Anauroch trade route) have brought to light a number of intelligent people who make the desert their home. The human Bedine are a nomadic race of desert riders and sheikhs, and seem to be the Black Network's chief obstacle in their goals. The D'tarig are a quasi-human, quasi-dwarven race of thieves, spies, and bandits who are (sometimes) allies of the Zhentarim. Races are also said to live beneath the sands in their own Underdark: warrior lizards called laertis, lamias, beholders, illithids, and dark, magical creatures unseen in the South who sit on the buried thrones of the ancient Netheril cities.

The Cold Lands

The Cold Lands is a rough, loose grouping of territories that lie between Anauroch and Sossar Bay, bordering on the Tuigan Hordelands, and north of the Moonsea and the civilized nations of the Eastern Heartlands. The name speaks of its main feature, chilling cold, often because of greater altitude but most often due to the presence of the Great Glacier, Pelvuria, that squats across this territory. Thar is within its borders, and the Ride, but also Vaasa, Damara, and far-flung Sossal itself.

The Cold Lands are rife with monsters, often the descendents of tribes and clans pushed northward by the civilizing forces of humankind, elves and dwarves to the south. Here dragons rule supreme, commanding petty nations of nonhumans and human savages. Here orc hordes are formed to swoop down on softer, richer races to the south. And here are lost kingdoms and past glories, ancient cultures waiting to be discovered.

Damara

Damara is a region north of Impiltur and east of the Moonsea that consists of a large number of petty kingdoms and small rural communities similar to the Dales.

Until the most recent generation of humanity, Damara was a nation of the power and importance of Impiltur or Sembia. It maintained strong trade relations with other nations of the Moonsea and Inner Sea, and its trade banner and bloodstone trade bars were found throughout the Realms.

In recent memory, however, Damara was invaded by a force from Vaasa, its northern neighbor. The war between these two nations lasted for 10 years, until the Witch-King of Vaasa and his forces defeated King Virdin of Damara at the Ford of Goliad, sweeping the last shreds of organized resistance from their path and slaying the cream of Damaran nobility.

The Vaasan invaders captured the northern quarter of the kingdoms, while the southern portion fell into small, squabbling baronies. Only the actions of Gareth Dragonsbane (LG hm Pal21) and other brave adventurers prevented the Witch-King of Vaasa from ruling the day. The Witch-King's power was broken, but most of the time since then (1359 DR) Dragonsbane has had to spend rooting out the Vaasan land forces from Damaran terrain and rebuilding his shattered land. His most enterprising endeavor has been to create the Gates—two huge fortresses in Bloodstone Pass that will hold that land from invaders and protect the valuable mines.

The people of Damara are similar to those of the Dales in appearance and attitude. It is as though that the Damarans and the Dalesmen sprung from the same wandering peoples.

When Damara was at its height, its merchants would use trade bars made of chalcedony, a deep-green stone flecked with sparks of red jasper, which gave the gems the name *bloodstones*. These bloodstone trade bars were made in 25-gp measures, and the fact they were used in common trade reflected the huge amount of

this stone that could be taken out of the Galena Mountains through scattered mines.

Such trade bars, marked with the crest of a Damaran noble house on one side and the year (in the ruling years of the present house) on the other, are used in the Realms today. Most merchants, however, see them as cursed money, bringing on the user the same misfortunes as befell Damara. Hoards of bloodstone trade bars may be found in the parts of the Realms as part of more ancient treasures.

The faiths of the Damarans are similar to those found throughout the Heartlands, though they pay special attention to Ilmater, god of endurance and suffering, and in particular venerate the memory of a long-dead patriarch of that faith, St. Sollers the Twice-Martyred. The symbol of this sect of Ilmater's faith is either the bloodstained rack or Sollers's own symbol, the yellow rose.

Glister

Glister is a small town situated at the gateway between Thar and Vaasa. Well defended by hills on three sides, the community is a rough-and-ready trading post, willing to deal with ogre tribesmen and nomads as well as traders from the Moonsea.

Glister was the capital of the sole human kingdom of Thar, established by Beldoran in 1288 DR with the death of the last ogre Tharkul. The human kingdom flourished despite continual nonhuman raids, but was at last overrun by ogres in 1303 DR.

Despite the destruction of its kingdom, Glister remains a powerful force for civilization in the North. This is made possible in part by the presence of Thusk Tharmuil (CN hm W24), an archmage who has retired to the area, and the presence of three small temples which date back to Beldoran's day: the Hall of Luck (Tymora), the House of Swords (Tempus), and the House of Auril's Breath. The House of Swords is particularly strong, maintaining a walled abbey outside the town and hosting a force of 49 warrior-priests under the command of Ghordrimm Sumbar (CN hm P17).

The Great Glacier

This huge icecap sits square in the center of the Cold Lands and is responsible for the inhospitable nature of the lands surrounding it. It, with Anauroch, is one of the great obvious features on maps of the Realms. And like Anauroch, it is believed to have a magical origin.

The sheet was believed to be a solid, uninhabited wasteland from end to end, but the studies of Vaasan explorers, along with those of Sharra Frohm (LG hf F5, descendant of the famous author of *Blood and Ice,* Palus Frohm), have opened up a world as odd as that found within the heart of the Great Sand Sea. Like Anauroch, the Great Glacier has its own indigenous humans, in the form of the Ulutiuns, a short, primitive breed of humans who are perfectly adapted to the icy region where they make their homes.

At the center of the glacier lies the surprisingly warm mountain range of Novularond, reputed to contain lost cities and great wealth. No lost cities have been detected in early exploration, but by this time explorers have learned not to make final judgments on first sight. The Great Glacier has proved as surprising as Anauroch, and as mysterious as the Shining South. Who knows what other surprises wait frozen within its heart?

Narfell

Narfell is a dry, flat grassland at the foot of the Great Glacier, separated from it only by Icelace Lake. Only a few plinth-like rocks jut out at random from the grassy soil, scattered irregularly and sparsely about as if by a careless and lazy hand. Narfell is a land with vast herds of wild ox and reindeer. Once it was said to be under the command of a magical empire, much like Netheril or Illefarn. Now it is only the home of the Nars.

The Nars are horsemen, and their skill exceeds that of the barbarians of the Ride and may well equal that of the best riders of the Tuigan horde. Those Tuigan invaders who pressed the Nars did so after their defeat at the hands of Azoun and the death of their Khahan. Already badly mauled and without leadership, they were completely obliterated in Narfell, but this is not exactly a fair test of the two groups' abilities.

Some 20 major tribes of Nars dwell in Narfell. They consider the land their own, and will fight to maintain it and their herds. Lately, trade with the Nars has opened up with Impiltur and, in the wake of the Horde's defeat, with the rest of the Unapproachable East. Most trade occurs at a yearly trade fair in Bildoobaris.

The Ride

The Ride is a wide, open steppeland that extends between Thar and the Border Forest. It is the home to proud and savage tribes of mounted barbarians. They may be related to the Tuigan horde, or be some people forced out by that eastern empire, or even be native to the land, but regardless of their origin they have made the Ride their own.

The barbarians of the Ride consider anyone and anything that crosses their land to be fair game, and while they fight among themselves they will band together to confront an outside foe. Zhentil Keep learned this in the Year of the Dragon (1352 DR) when its forces attempted to launch a heavily armed assault on Glister, crossing Ride land. The Zhentil Keep forces were ambushed and almost everyone was killed, the leaders escaping only through magic. The barbarians erected a stone on the edge of their land, facing Zhentil Keep, saying simply, "We wait."

Sossal

Far to the North, on the far side of the Great Glacier, is the legendary kingdom of Sossal. This remote nation is the home of the Sossrim, a very pale, very blond race whose members dress in white and can conceal themselves in the ice. It is not known whether great magics by the land's native shamans have spared

Sossal of the Great Ice or if those magics are the cause of it.

Sossal was first reached and detailed by Dabron Sashenstar (N hm F9) in 1357 DR, but little has been done to bring full trade to the area. Part of the reason for a lack of further developments stems from the Tuigan Invasion, particularly since a cadre of horsemen belonging to the invaders caught up with one of Dabron's first caravans. Dabron is believed slain.

Thar

The Great Grey Lands of Thar stretch northward from the Moonsea in a rising steppeland that ends at the Great Glacier Pelvuria. Thar is a desolate, uncivilized region untouched by the hand of settlers and farms. Instead, it is a land of nomad raiders and the home of the beast-men (ogres) and great bands of orcs.

Thar was of old an ogre kingdom dominated by the hulking beast-men. The ogres were both cunning and powerful, and have been credited with many foul deeds (including stirring up dragons and calling all the inhuman priests together to sink Northkeep). The ogres were ruled by a Tharkul (ogre king), who commanded their loyalty, along with that of yeti, trolls, and other fearsome and dangerous creatures. The last Tharkul was Maulog. Seventy winters ago, he was slain by the human Beldoran, who established human Thar. Now Beldoran is dead, and the ogres plan for the day when the Tharkul once again reigns.

Human activity through Thar is surprisingly common. Glister (see also the entry on Glister) is a heavily armed encampment in the heart of Thar, and is used as a base camp for prospectors, traders, and adventurers. There is great mineral wealth in the West Galena Mountains north of Thar, and every miner and dwarf knows that these are part of the same mountain range that offered up the bloodstones of Damara. Traders often find isolated communities of skilled dwarves who they can trade southern goods with for fine creations in stone and iron. And adventurers hear of lost, nonhuman kingdoms here, ruled by giants and orcs and ogres.

Vaasa

Vaasa was for years the name of the unclaimed waste and wild land beyond the northern bounds of Damaran patrols, in much the same way that the land of Thar begins where the claims of the Moonsea cities end (and the monsters begin). It was (and for the most part remains) a cold, wintery, unpleasant land of rolling moors and tundra that becomes an impenetrable bog during the few weeks of high summer.

Twenty years ago, a huge edifice of dark stone bound in iron arose overnight on a lonely crag only 60 miles north of the Galenas and the Damaran border. From this Castle Perilous its master, Zhengyi the Witch-King, declared mastery over all the lands of Vaasa.

Zhengyi soon made good his claim, recruiting an impossibly large army of people, bandits, inhuman tribes, and mystical beasts, and swept through Vaasa into its neighboring land of Damara. Through strength of arms and treachery, Zhengyi defeated the Damaran armies at the Ford of Goliad, and slew the majority of its rulers, including the King of Damara, Virdin Bloodfeathers. Zhengyi is said to have accomplished this task with the help of a powerful Grandfather of Assassins who operates from a secret base in the Galena Mountains.

Through the actions of Gareth Dragonsbane and other heroes, Zhengyi was defeated and his power drained from him. His magical citadel toppled in on itself as his armies wavered and fled. The land has since been returned to its original state—which is to say, a wasteland dominated by hostile nonhuman tribes.

However, all is not peaceful, even with the great Gates controlling the pass into Damara (see the entry on Damara). Dragons have nested in the wreckage of Zhengyi's old keep, and reports have surfaced of a wild-eyed priest of evil who is seeking to unite the nonhuman tribes under his own banner. He calls himself the son and heir of Zhengyi. What will come of this remains to be seen.

The Unapproachable East

The eastern portion of Faerûn is a study in contrasts. Here lies Impiltur, almost a western country in the manner of Cormyr and Sembia. Yet here too sits scheming and exotic Thay, land of the Red Wizards. Here is the wooded land of Aglarond, under the wise rule of its magical queen, the Simbul, and yet also here are the rough and barren uplands of Rashemen, home of a proud, semibarbaric people. It is difficult for an outsider to gain an understanding of the region and its people, even though they move through most of the other cities of Faerûn as travelers, traders, and spies. Hence the term "unapproachable"—the only way to truly know the East is to have been born here.

The East suffered most heavily during the Tuigan invasion of 1360 DR, as the invading hordes moved through Rashemen, Ashanath, and Thesk, only to be turned back by an allied army of Heartlands nations under the command of King Azoun IV Many of the lands here are only now recovering from the devastating effects of that invasion.

Aglarond

A small realm that keeps to itself, Aglarond exerts little influence in affairs of state beyond its borders. It is important in the overall strategic balance of the Inner Sea lands, however, simply because its continued existence prevents Thay from spilling out into the Sea of Fallen Stars. Aglarond's strength is its current ruler, a female archmage of fabled powers, known only as the Simbul (CN hf W30).

Aglarond lies on the northern side of a peninsula jutting out into the eastern end of the Inner Sea. It is a sparsely inhabited, heavily wooded realm of few farms and no large cities. Jagged pinnacles of rock stand at its eastern end; to their east, these fall away into vast and treacherous marshes that largely isolate the Simbul's realm from the mainland. Travel in Aglarond is by griffon, ship, or forest trail. It trades lumber, gems, and some copper for glass, iron, cloth goods, and food when freetrader vessels come to port. Aglarond, however, sends out no trading ships of its own.

Aglarond cannot boast a field army of any size, nor a navy, but within its woods the Simbul's foresters are expert and deadly troops, adept at firefighting and at using coastboats (long, canoe-like open boats handled with lateen sails, oars, and poles) to raid by night. These foresters are equally well trained in treetop travel and fighting amid the foliage. The foresters are alert and grim. The menacing might of Thay is uncomfortably near, and Aglarond's blades are all too few. At the battles of Singing Sands (1194 DR) and Brokenheads (1197 DR), Aglarond's forces turned back invading hosts from Thay, but the cost was great. Skirmishes with raiders hoping to win glory for Thay, or mercenaries hired by Thay, are common.

Little is known of the Simbul's aims and true strength, but she appears to constantly roam the northern Realms, working to influence all manner of events, operating in disguise or from behind the scenes. Such actions are presumably to better Aglarond's safety, although the Simbul is said to be a member (or at least an ally) of the group known as the Harpers, whose aims are more widespread.

Impiltur

Impiltur is a nation of united city-states rising in the area south of Damara on the shores of the Sea of Falling Stars, between the Earthfast Mountains and the finger of the Inner Sea called Easting Reach.

Impiltur is still a land of opportunity for the daring and the hard-working. Rich new copper, silver, and iron lodes have been found north of Lyrabar and near the High Pass. Trade is increasing in the area and reaching out to Rashemen, Sembia, Procampur, and Bloodstone Pass.

Impiltur was formed 260 winters ago, when the independent cities of Lyrabar, Hlammach, Dilpur, and Sarshel were united by Imphras, war captain of Lyrabar, to face the menace of hobgoblin hordes advancing from the Giantspire Mountains, from whence they had only raided sporadically before.

Imphras established his line as the royalty of Impiltur, a line that continues to this day. The current ruler is Queen Sambryl, the widow of Imphras IV, the founder's great-great-grandson.

Sambryl (CG hf W17) understands the need that she appear to lead Impiltur (and take an interest in that duty), but she finds governing boring and tedious at best, unpleasant and insulting at worst. She prefers to travel her land, acting as a figurehead for the true rulers, a council of protectors known as the Lords of Imphras II.

The Lords of Imphras II are the true protectors of the realms of Impiltur and number twelve; their levels are unknown but not less than 11th, and their alignment almost always lawful and good. Their most powerful member is Kyrlraun (LG hm Pal20), who is the Queen's most trusted advisor.

Impiltur today is a war-ready realm, still on the frontier of civilized lands, but largely at peace. It is friendly with its neighbors Telflamm, Rashemen, Aglarond, and the scattered states of Damara, and does not meddle in affairs beyond its borders. It did not suffer directly from the Tuigan Invasion, though it did offer troops to the alliance. The waves of refugees who flooded west during and after the invasion had a greater effect on the land than the Horde itself. There has been great disruption in Impiltur's cities, and only now are the lords and the queen returning them to their previous levels of peace and prosperity.

The arms of Impiltur are a crossed sword and wand on a dun banner, bordered in scarlet.

The Great Dale

To the north and east of Impiltur lies the Great Dale. This broad, open dale is said to have been the original home of the Dalesmen, but this is unproven. It is similar to the Dales on a larger scale—a broad, expansive valley that is rich in soil and vegetation. Yet, save for a few trading outposts and hamlets, the Dale is empty.

Here dwells the Nentyarch, a mysterious mage of great power who rules grim people and strange beasts. He lives in peace in the forest north of the Dale, in a castle supposedly made of living trees. He seems to have little effect on the Dale that is placed (by others) under his command unless the wood is entered by those he has not invited. The uninvited guests simply vanish.

Rashemen

Rashemen lies north of the mysterious land of Thay and is the easternmost of the established realms. To its east lie uncounted leagues of rocky, grassy wastelands, and the home of the Tuigan horde and (it is rumored) other dangerous peoples. The land of Rashemen is the home to a race of short, muscular humans who are concerned primarily with their herds, and who are adept at carving bone and sculpting rock.

The trade goods of Rashemen are wool, furs, and carved stone and bone, as well as much-prized casks of *jhuild,* or firewine. Firewine sells for 1 gp a pint in Rashemen, 15 gp a pint elsewhere in the Realms. Rashemen imports cloth, woodwork, lumber, and foodstuffs. Rashemen is self-sufficient in war metals and has large herds of goats and rothé. Rashemen is also the home of *sjorl,* a heavy, smoky-flavored cheese. Sjorl is very nourishing, but it is an acquired taste, and little is exported.

Some ballads refer to Rashemen as the Land of Berserkers.

Such is the fearless savagery and stamina of its warriors that at least 20 invading forces from Thay have been slaughtered or turned back from incursions into the land in the last hundred winters. To date the Far Land remains free.

Rashemen is ruled by a *Huhrong* (Iron Lord, or senior war leader), whose steel-shod palace towers above the roofs of the city of Immilmar. The Iron Lord commands Rashemen's standing army, called the Fangs of Rashemen. The Fangs are a contingent of warriors clad in heavy fur-and-leather tunics, armed with hand weapons, short bows, and light lances, and mounted on surefooted mountain ponies.

The Iron Lords are chosen by the Witches of Rashemen, a group of female spellcasters who hold great power in the land. The continued existence of Rashemen, hard on the borders of Thay and in the path of the Tuigan horde, speaks greatly of the true power of the Witches' magic. There are believed to be no fewer than 60, and likely over 100, Witches in the land, Within the nation of Rashemen the members of this order wear black robes and gray masks revealing only passive faces. Should a Witch leave Rashemen for any reason, she abandons her black garb and conceals her powers, for none has revealed her abilities or identity beyond the borders of her native land. The central haven for these Witches is the town of Urling. In their homeland, the Witches of Rashemen are venerated and respected. The penalty under Rashemen law for harming or disobeying a Witch is death.

It is this powerful order which provides the pilotless boats known as witch-ships, and which unleashes monstrous beasts and poisonous gases on vessels from rival Thay. These witch-ships roam at will throughout the great Lake Ashane, also called the Lake of Tears, from as far north as the Falls of Erech to as far south as Lake Mulsantir and the "harbor of chains" at Surthay.

The people of Rashemen are by nature a hardy, brawling race. Both sexes practice the sports of snow-racing (a wintertime cross-country foot race, clad only in the briefest skins) and the hunting of snowcats. Widespread hobbies among those who can afford the time include the collecting of rare and beautiful stones (including gems) and exploring the old ruins in the north of Rashemen. The elder kingdom that was located in the north was known as Raumathar, and is now only a collection of destroyed citadels. It once ruled Rashemen and contested with the now extinct magical kingdom of Narfell to the west (that occupied the current lands of Narfell, but Narfell now is not occupied by any kingdom, just the Nars).

The key ritual for young men in Rashemen is the *dajemma,* a journey to manhood that every male Rashemi makes in his youth. The *dajemma* often has some far-flung goal, such as an expedition around the Inner Sea itself, but if the youth returns home, he is accorded great honors, considered an adult, given the rights of a warrior of the Rashemi. The *dajemma* is a perilous undertaking, but has the advantage of showing the young males of Rashemen the nature of the world outside, so that the Rashemi have an understanding far beyond that of normal rustic cowherds. These continual *dajemmas* have the additional advantage of strengthening trade contacts with the West, and picking up useful information about the nations of the Inner Sea, in particular military information. At the same age, young females are tested by the Witches, and those who qualify are inducted into their organization.

Sages, merchants, and mercenary captains generally agree that Rashemen has no designs upon the lands around it. As with most nations that border Thay, its primary concern is survival in the face of an expansionistic, hostile neighbor, and with the aid of the Witches, it accomplishes that task quite well. Rashemen's warriors are fearless and feared, but they are rarely encountered outside their homeland, and do not have the reputation or expertise of the mercenary companies of the Sword Coast.

On the eastern border of Rashemen are the ruins of Castle Rashemen, destroyed by Yamun Khahan in the Tuigan Invasion. These ruins are reported to be infested with monsters.

The most common encounter with a Rashemen citizen is with a youth (or band of youths) on *dajemma,* usually taking in the sights and much of the liquor in the area. For most of the inhabitants of the Inner Sea and Sword Coast, the Far Land of Rashemen will remain a mysterious land sung of in minstrel's tales, the setting for feats of brawn, the starting point of epic travels, and the land of the mysterious Witches who can thwart the Red Wizards of Thay.

Thay

Thay is a powerful, exotic, magical, and evil nation that lies in the eastern reaches of the Realms, bounded by Aglarond and Thesk in the west, Rashemen in the north, the Inner Sea in the south, and Sunrise Mountains and Endless Waste in the east. It is set upon a collection of tableland and mesas known as the Plateaus of Thay. The realm is best known for its rich prosperity, ancient heritage, byzantine government, and magic-based society.

Thay is controlled by a loose confederation of powerful spellcasters collectively called the Red Wizards of Thay who are evil and paranoid to the extreme, seeking to maintain their own power in their nation while undercutting the power of other realms that they perceive as dangerous to their existence. Other mages who are not of their cult (and in particular those mages who are involved in ruling rival nations) are viewed as threats to be eliminated. The total number of Red Wizards is unknown.

Thay has a noble class as well: Tharchions and tharchionesses govern its provinces, under the direction of the Red Wizards' chosen spokesmen, the zulkirs (the most powerful of their magical brotherhood). There are at present believed to be eight zulkirs, of whom the name of only one is well-known. in the Inner Sea lands: Zulkir Szass Tam (LE hm W29).

The collected Red Wizards are devoted to an expansionistic and imperialistic policy of swallowing neighbor states. This policy

has been hampered by internal strife among various factions and personality cults among the Red Wizards, and by the fact the cult trusts neither mercenaries nor high-level adventurers that are not of themselves. Of the large number of invasions of Rashemen, three out of four have been led by some particular faction leader of the wizards seeking to expand his dominion at home by bringing home victories from the field.

The Red Wizards roam the lands of Faerûn seeking to increase their power. Any Red Wizard so encountered will not be of less than 9th level, and may be of up to 15th level. There is a 50% chance of wandering Red Wizards having bodyguards (usually ogres or other nonhuman creatures), and an equal chance of them having 1-4 low-level (1st-8th level) aspirants to the red cloth with them. The Red Wizards do not go in for subtlety, and wear their crimson robes haughtily in all but the most discreet situations.

Faith is a secondary matter in the lands of the Red Wizards, but many evil powers thrive here. Cyric has found a new and enthusiastic following, in that the Thayvians recognize a winner when they see one. Shar, Malar, Loviatar, and Talos are also venerated, and there are many cults (encouraged by the Red Wizards) devoted to Kossuth, the Elemental Lord of Fire.

During the Tuigan Invasion, the Red Wizards fought the invaders to a draw, then politically redirected them toward the savage people of Rashemen. This is typical of Red Wizard tactics—a show of force and power, followed by crafty negotiations and advice.

Thesk and Telflamm

A small agricultural nation in the East, across the bay from Impiltur, Thesk has long benefitted from a rich trade route leading from Telflamm on the Sea of Fallen Stars to Rashemen and northern Thay. In 1360 DR, this advantage was turned into a disaster as the Tuigan horde used this trade route, the Golden Way, as a path to march into the heart of the Realms.

Thesk is now a desolate land. Many of its smaller cities are in ruins as a result of Tuigan raids, and most of the population was sent fleeing to Impiltur, the Vilhon Reach, and the Vast. Trade still rules here, and Theskian and Impilturian merchants are seeking to reforge the links with the East, opening new markets to the Nars of Narfell and beyond.

Thesk is plagued by inhuman raiders throughout its hinterland, including a large and organized tribe of orcs. These orcs were originally sent from Thar by Zhentil Keep to serve in the united western army fighting the Horde, but they have remained, and continue to plague the Golden Way and its surrounding territories. In this way one group of evil wizards (the Black Network) has made life difficult for another group of evil wizards (the Red Wizards of Thay), while everyone else suffers.

Thesk is ruled by an oligarchy of the merchant-mayors along the Golden Way. In the wake of the Horde, this has led to intercity squabbles and threats.

Telflamm, a port on the Sea of Fallen Stars, is not a part of Thesk, but is the jumping-off point for caravans heading east, and as such is closely allied to them. It is ruled by a grand prince, but his rule extends only as far as the edges of the city walls, and the rest of Thesk pays lip service at best. Even within the city, the merchant council and guilds seem to have more power than the prince and the nobility.

The Old Empires

The common reference to the Old Empires (also the Ancient and Grim Empires) refers to the lands of Chessenta, Unther, and Mulhorand, which were among the first nations in Faerûn, and still survive to this day. They are weathered and beaten by their great age, but hold a majesty that pales all of the Heartlands and the North in comparison. They were old before the Standing Stone was set, old before Myth Drannor was created, old before Netheril was founded. But unlike Netheril and other vanished empires, these kingdoms still live.

The Old Empires are lands of god-kings and strange wizardry They worship a mixture of common powers and deities unheard of in the rest of the Realms. They tend to be insular and self-contained, rarely reaching out beyond their borders to affect the surrounding Realms. They consider themselves to be the center of the universe, the most cultured nations on Toril, and they may be correct.

The Alamber Sea

This arm of the Inner Sea is also known as the Sahuagin Sea because it is infested with sahuagin, who have built a great undersea empire in its shallow, level waters. The kingdom is known as Aleaztis and its capital is Vahaxtyl. Its leader is Krome (LE sahuagin Shaman8, 8+8 HD, and numerous magical items).

The sahuagin are relentless raiders, and indiscriminate as to their prey. In many ways, the savagery of the sahuagin has been responsible for Unther and Mulhorand being contained in what (to the rest of the Realms) is a comer of Faerûn.

Chessenta

Situated on the far side of Sea of Fallen Stars, Chessenta is the youngest of the Old Empires. It is said to be a rich, fertile land filled with wild, drunkenly crazy people, and in Sembian dance-plays, a staggering, comic acrobat is often noted as "the Chessentan."

Chessenta is a land of powerful city-states with only the faintest historical notion of a "national" government. The "nation" unified to throw out their Untherite oppressors only 400 years ago, under the command of the great war hero Tchazzar. With Tchazzar's death, the country fell apart, and it remains a kaleidoscope of rival city-states, each with its own customs, loyalties, rulers, and agendas. Mercenary work in the region of

Chessenta is rich and rewarding for those who wish to dabble in its pliable, ever-changing politics.

Mulhorand

Mulhorand is one of the great and ancient nations of the South, of which little truth and much rumor is known. It is situated at the far end of the Sea of Fallen Stars, in the region known as the Alamber Sea (or the Sahuagin Sea). Mulhorand is the oldest of the known nations of Faerûn. Its capital, Skuld, was founded more than 3,500 years ago, and is one of the oldest (if not *the* oldest) continually inhabited human cities.

Mulhorand was once a much larger empire, its borders extending westward to far Semphar and northward into what is now Thay and Rashemen. Mulhorand is ruled by a pharaoh, the earthly incarnation of the Mulhorandi supreme deity. The true power lies with the various rival priesthoods. When Horustep III ascended to the throne at age 11, the rivalry between the various faiths had increased to the point the countryside is on the verge of an internal holy war. Things have remained tense in the 10 years since then, and sporadic bouts of violence break out frequently as the priesthoods test each others' power and intentions.

Unther

Unther is an ancient kingdom only centuries younger than neighboring Mulhorand, and despite a few early conflicts, the two nations have existed in relative peace, Mulhorand's empire reaching north and west, and Unther spreading east and south. Chessenta was once part of Unther's empire, which stretched as far as the Eastern Shar and the Lake of Steam.

Unther is ruled by a god-king, Gilgeam, son of Enlil, the founder of Unther. Gilgeam has ruled for the past two millennia, and unlike the incarnations of Mulhorand, has maintained the same immortal form throughout. Unlike the Mulhorandi pharoah, Gilgeam is deeply involved in the major decisions of the land. The philosophy in Unther is, "Life is difficult and hard, but you are expected to do the bidding of your god because he is your god." Gilgeam makes many of the western deities, including Loviatar and Talos, look positively enlightened.

Unther's political structure is currently eroding, as more people come to resent Gilgeam's eternal rule (or misrule). Parts of the empire have broken away over the years, but now the rot is reaching the heart. It may take a century or two, but revolution is coming to Unther.

The Vilhon Reach

The entrance to the Vilhon Reach, a long southern spur of the Sea of Fallen Stars, lies far to the south of the Pirate Isles, and its mouth is guarded by the island Ilighôn. It is a fertile, rich land divided up into quarreling city-states and petty nations. Like neighboring Chessenta, the Vilhon is an excellent area for mercenary activity, and the warrior gods of Tyr, Helm, Tempus, and Talos are all venerated throughout the countryside.

The people of the Vilhon Reach and many nations farther south have the habit of marking their foreheads with small dots of colored chalk to show ability. If they wear one dot, individuals can read. If they wear two, they can write. If they wear three, they can use magic. Different variations of this scheme are used throughout the southern Realms.

The three important "nations" of the Reach are Turmish, Chondath, and Sespech. In addition, a large number of independent city-states and trumped up local authorities occupy the region. A new "nation" may easily come into being under the banner of a powerful adventurer in a small town, rise to prominence in a decade, and then fade with that hero's death.

Chondalwood

The Chondalwood is a large expanse of forest south of Chondath. It is a rarity in the Realms in that its borders are continuing to expand, particularly to the North.

Of old, the northern reaches of the Chondalwood had been heavily lumbered by the nation of Chondath. In a deadly magical conflict between coastal and inland city-states known as the Rotting War, entire counties and baronies were wiped out by mystic plagues and rotting diseases (a surviving sample of this plague may have started the Great Plague of 1317). Since that time, most of this land was abandoned, and the woods crept north, overtaking ruined cities and citadels.

The Chondalwood is home to satyrs and centaurs, but also to various vegetative and fungal creatures such as vegepygmies and myconids, who rule the magically rotted hearts of the wood. Mistletoe and other parasitic plants are common, as are all manner of mushrooms and other fungi. There are said to be druids within the heart of the Chondalwood, but they are savage, angry dervishes, as willing to attack paladins as orcs in their protection of a moral and ethical balance.

Chondath

To look on Chondath now, a scattering of allied city-states and towns, it is hard to believe that this is the same nation that produced the merchants who settled Sembia and established it as a major nation on the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Five hundred years ago Chondath was one of the supreme trading empires in Faerûn, and golden Arrabar was its capital. After that came a period of decline, and then disaster. Conflicts with the elves of Cormanthor convinced Chondath to abandon its northern territories. Then, a civil war erupted within Chondath between the coastal cities of Arrabar, Hlath, and Reth, and cities farther inland. The war lasted five years (during which most of the military pulled completely out of Sembia) and culminated in

the Battle of the Fields of Nun (902 DR).

The battle was a devastating draw, spilling the best blood on both sides, and worse was to follow. A magical duel began between the rival alliances, during which many spells and ancient magics imported from Netheril and Mulhorand were unleashed. As a result of those spells or the combinations of those magics, a virulent plague erupted in Chondath, destroying the inland cities and making them uninhabitable. The coastal cites only survived through closing their gates and harbors to possible plague-bearers. The plague quickly subsided, but the Chondathians were unwilling to return to their old haunts. Chondath began its long decline.

Chondath today is a strip of allied city-states under the nominal control of the lord of Arrabar, and ranges from Arrabar north to Hlath. Arrabar is a sleepy city, a capital of a shrunken empire. Reth is an independent city-state. Rivalries among the various small communities between them are common, and mercenary forces can find ready employment all along the Chondathian coast. However, powerful magics are rabidly shunned in Chondath in favor of battling with the sword.

Gulthmere

Gulthmere is a wide, tangled forest located on the shore between Westgate and Alaghôn, in Turmish. It is a sprawl of rising uplands dotted with cedars and pines, eventually giving way to the Orsraun Mountains to the south.

Gulthmere is noted for rich loads of mineral-bearing rock throughout its length, particularly topazes and rubies. Prospectors and dwarven miners roam the wooded hills and challenge the native monsters and tribesmen for the riches within. Adventurers, thinking of the riches that the bloodstones have brought distance Damara, dream of petty kingdoms within the wood's fastness. Indeed, the forest has swallowed a large number of abandoned (and destroyed) keeps over the years.

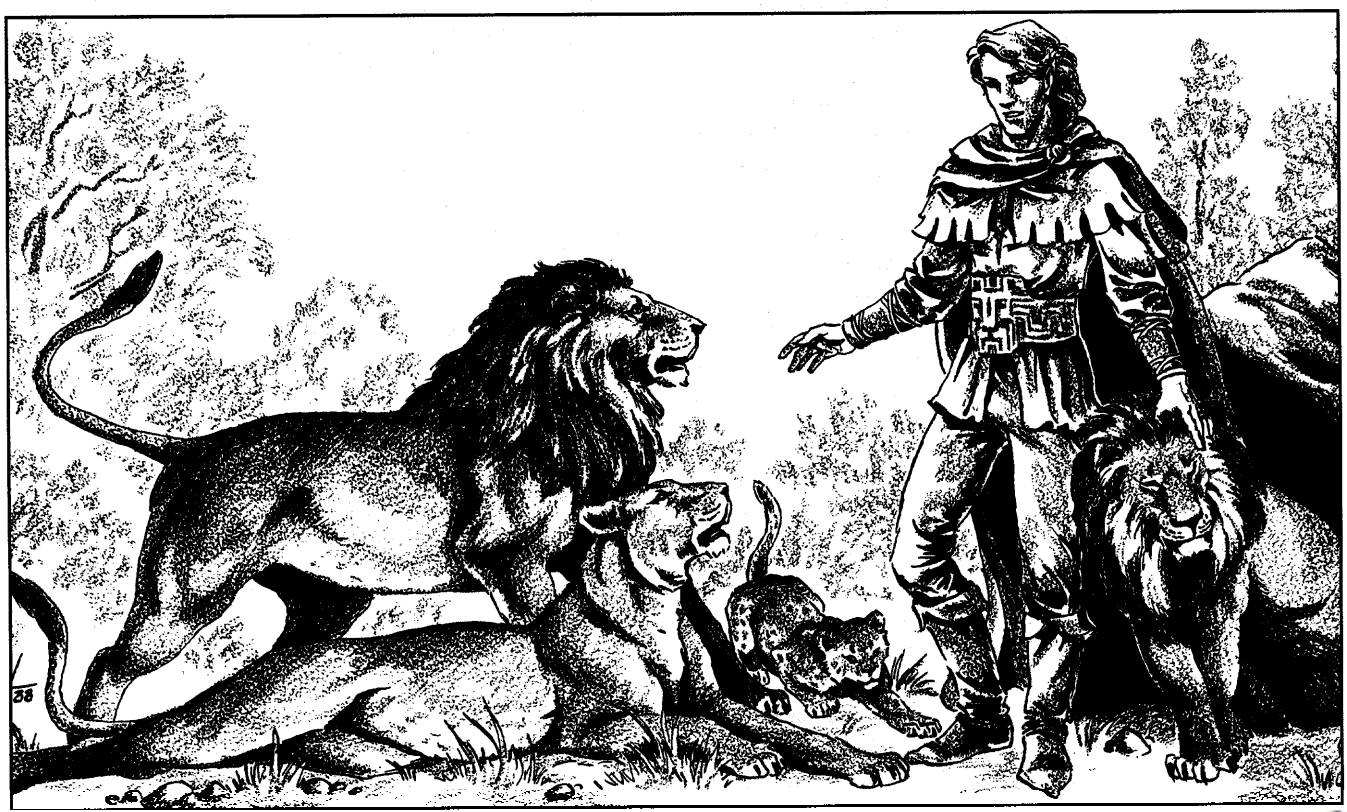
Gulthmere is said to be protected by Nobanion, a lion god who roams the woods. Nobanion is venerated by all the tribes of Gulthmere, and often called upon to halt the invasion of greedy northern invaders.

Hlondeth

Hlondeth is an independent walled city-state that commands the main road (the Holondar) west out of Turmish. It also serves as a port conveniently located directly across from Arrabar, Chondath's capital.

Hlondeth is called the City of Serpents, and is a stunning, ancient city whose architecture is dominated by serpent designs and shiny green marble brought out of Orsraun.

Hlondeth has been ruled by the Extaminos family for centuries. Even the polluting of the bloodline by those affected with the curse of the yuan-ti did not shake the power that the family held. As such, Hlondeth is currently ruled by a yuan-ti halfbreed, Dediana Extaminos (LE yuan-ti female, 8HD). Dediana has a ser-



Lost Empires

The Realms today are built upon the bones of the past, on ancient, fallen empires who have been swallowed by war, by plague, by invasion, and by nature. These empires were old and decadent before the first civilized, modern humans moved north of the Sea of Fallen Stars. It is among their wreckage that adventurers often move, and the remains of their past have become the treasures (and the deadly magics) of today. Here is a brief and all-too-incomplete list of lost empires and cities:

Anauria: One of the nations swallowed by Anauroch, Anauria was one of the "survivor states" of Netheril. It was known for its magic, and its sword-making ability. It was abandoned 1,200 years ago, and swallowed by the desert shortly after that.

Askavar: An elven community in what is now the Wood of Sharp Teeth. It was abandoned by the elves some 800 years ago (estimated), its people heading for Evereska or Evermeet.

Asram: Decadent Asram was a contemporary of Anauria and followed it into decline as the desert spread over its lands. Asram is best remembered for its most important city, Orolin, the City of Magicians, where the spirit of Netheril (if not its wisdom) was kept alive.

Cormanthyr: The elder name for Cormanthor, Cormanthyr is the most recent of the dead empires, and is not quite dead yet. Its home was in the elven woods which the Dales surround, with communities in the Elven Court, Semberholme, and the Tangled Trees. With the recent Retreat of the elves, only the Tangled Trees still has a sizable elven population. The best-known gem at the center of old Cormanthyr was Myth Drannor.

Delzoun: A contemporary of Netheril Delzoun was a great dwarven community in the North. Citadel Adbar is one of the few remaining outposts of that land; the rest of its great halls are in orcish hands.

Eaerlann: Situated in the eastern portion of the High Forest, Eearlann was an elven kingdom that survived the fall of Netheril. The elves of Eaerlann built Ascalhorn (later Hellgate Keep). Eaerlann's people emigrated to Evermeet, or helped form the Kingdom of Man (see below).

Hlondath: Third and last of the "survivor states" to fall to Anauroch's onslaught, Hlondath was a nation of loggers and herdsmen. Much of what is known about Hlondath comes from its neighbors, the dwarves who fled from Tethyamar.

Illefarn: A contemporary and survivor of Netheril, Illefarn was a kingdom of elves and dwarves occupying the North, including the site of Waterdeep. The great dungeon of Undermountain was part of the Illefarn empire.

Imaskar: The Imaskar may have the claim to having been the oldest known (and recognized) human empire in Faerûn. It was situated in what is now the desert of Raurin and the Plains of Purple Dust. Also known as the Artificers, the Imaskari left behind impossible architecture, devilish magics, and cruel devices. It is not known what caused Imaskar's fall, but Mulhorand, Unther, and Raumathar all trace part of their heritage to Imaskar.

Kingdom of Man: A human-led kingdom in the North in the wake of Illefarn, the Kingdom of Man hoped to retain the glory that was Illefarn, and included humans, dwarves, and elves. It was swept away in two generations. It is also known as the Fallen Kingdom, a name that is often applied to other empires as well.

pent body and a human upper half.

Dediana apparently rules with a light hand, for the city remains profitable and has good relationships with both Turmish and Chondath. Relationships with Sespech are tense at the moment—Dediana's son, a pureblood, is romancing the baron's eldest daughter. The city is profitable and money flows easily. Beautiful buildings are going up, the most wondrous being the great aviary of Extaminos, nearly complete in 1367 DR.

Nimpeth

Another independent city-state on the Vilhon Reach, Nimpeth is best known for both its wine (the surrounding vineyards are among the best in the Realms) and its mercenaries. Nimpeth is often a starting point for adventurers heading west to the Shining Plains, south down the Golden Road, or into the warring city-states of the Vilhon.

Nimpeth, like its fellow city-states (Ormath, Lheshayl, Ormpettar, and half a dozen smaller cities) is extremely sensitive, in a diplomatic sense. Generations of petty warfare and internal disputes have rendered offense unavoidable, and battles even arise out of buying some pears at a local market.

Sespech

Sespech is a pocket barony at the lower reaches of Chondath. It declared its independence of Chondath during the Rotting War, and since that time it has been held by a number of rebels, occupying forces, adventurers, and compromise leaders.

The current leader of Sespech is Baron Thuragar Foesmasher (LN hm F10), recently installed after a mysterious series of assassinations convinced the last baron to seek employment closer to the lord of Chondath's court in Arrabar. Thuragar has declared the barony an independent force, and is recruiting troops for "self-defense."

Baron Thuragar is also engaging in a shipbuilding program, with the probable long-term goal of dealing with Hlondeth. The ambassador from Hlondeth, Dmetiro Extaminos, son of the ruling (and evil) leader of that city, has begun courting his daughter, Glisena.

The Shining Plains

The Shining Plains are a wide expanse west of the Vilhon that gains its name from the slick-looking grass that dominates the area. The grass reflects light as if it were recently rained on, creating a shimmering effect (like "a living mirror," in the words of one traveler).

The Shining Plains are home to nomadic tribes of humans, centaurs, thri-kreen, and wemics. Wildlife abounds, including bison, elk, wild horses, mammoths, ground sloths, predators such as saber-toothed cats, and flightless birds.

Turmish

The land of Turmish lies due south of the Pirate Isles, and is a rich, fertile farming land of many small villages and a few larger city-states. It is a relatively peaceful and civilized location, well-managed and with few monsters raiding the countryside. It is a good place to be from, as its natives have an excellent reputation as fair traders, and they are welcome throughout the Inner Sea.

The people of Turmish are tall, mahogany-skinned, and beautiful, and the men of the trading classes have square, long beards. In addition to its farms, the land of Turmish is known for its ornate and finely crafted armor. This armor is embellished with embossing, spires, and raised, fluted curves, mixing elven and human styles.

Alaghôn is the capital of Turmish and its largest city. It is ruled by a freely elected council, with each citizen, regardless of race and social position, having a single vote. The chief speaker is chosen from the ranks of this Free Council. The duties of this chief speaker are few, the most dramatic being maintaining local and mercenary units for defense from pirates and other nations. Turmish does not start wars, unlike some local city-states—they are bad for business.

Empires of The Sands

The Empires of the Sands are three kingdoms located directly south of the Western Heartlands, but whose influence is felt throughout the entire Realms. These kingdoms are Calimshan, Tethyr, and Amn, and collectively they are known as the Empires of the Sands.

The Empires of the Sands are lands of djinni and efreet, where the local population and architecture show ties to the far-off land of Zakhara to the south. There may be some ancestral tie to these people (in addition to the irregular merchant ship), but the Empires are as much a part of the "normal" Realms as Cormyr or Sembia. Unified godheads and all-powerful fates are not part of these empires' beliefs. "Exotic, but not exotic enough to hurt," is one sage's assessment of the differences between Zakhara and the Empires.

The Empires are traditionally extremely strong nations, and although the civil war that has all but destroyed Tethyr has

Lost Empires, Continued

Mulhorand: A living "dead empire," Mulhorand's grasp once extended east to Semphar and north to Thay before these lands cast off their shackles. Ancient monuments and dark sorceries in these lands are the legacy of this once-mighty empire.

Narfell: Occupying the land at the foot of the Great Glacier, Narfell was a great and cruel empire whose leaders made dark pacts with creatures from other planes. Their chief rival was Raumathar, and the two destroyed each other in battle a thousand years ago. The horsemen who occupy the land now claim to be the descendents of the last battle with Raumathar.

Netheril: An ancient and powerful human civilization that predates modern human movements in the region, Netheril was a society of mages, much like Halruaa (which may be a descendent, or at least a beneficiary of Netheril's knowledge). The bulk of Netheril lies beneath the sands of Anauroch, but some of its outposts dot the Lonely Moors and the surrounding areas of the North. It is believed that Netheril died some 2,500 years ago, but fragments and "survivor states" continued on until 1,000 years ago.

Oghrann: Oghrann was a great dwarven nation that once surrounded the vale of the River Tun, burrowed into the Sunset Mountains, and dug under the Storm Horns of what is now Cormyr. It fell thousands of years ago, and its survivors trade in the Far Hills. The halls of Oghrann are now occupied by orcs and other monstrous creatures.

Raumathar: A great eastern empire that once included Rashemen and Thay, Raumathar is two millennia old and almost a thousand years dead, perishing in battle with its foe Narfell. Its people were known as powerful battle-wizards.

Shandaular: There may have been two or more Shandaulars, wonderful cities of trade and magic. One was said to be in the Shar in the days of Netheril, the other in Narfell, 500 years later. Each is described as being a trading community of wondrous power and fantastic wizardry that attracted the best talents of the region and rewarded them with ancient and strange coins. In each case, the city's destruction was also recorded, but not the agent of that destruction.

Shoon: Now called Iltakar in Calimshan, the city of Shoon bloomed at the same time that the Standing Stone was erected in the elven forest. It was named after its powerful mage-king, who was supposed to have created the *Tome of the Unicorn*. Four hundred years after its founding, Shoon was is ruins, for reasons unknown.

Unther: As with Mulhorand, the other living "dead kingdom," the wreckage of Unther's empire can be seen throughout Chessenta and the Eastern Shaar. It left more temples than wonders, some of which have been turned to other tasks today.

become a regular feature in the tales of bards, Amn and Calimshan are both major forces in Realms politics. Amn, in particular, wishes to dominate all the lands that touch upon the Trackless Sea. The opinions of the other nations and cities on these shores about this are best left unstated.

Amn

Amn is the northernmost of the Empires of the Sands. It lies 200 miles south of Beregost, on the Trade Way. Its borders are considered to be the Cloud Peaks to the North, the Forest of Tethyr to the south, the Snowflake Mountains to the east, and the sea to the west. As a powerful merchant nation, however, the reach and influence of Amn is much greater. The land of Amn is called the Merchant Kingdom, and its citizens range far and wide in the Realms, more widely than those of any other land, save perhaps the natives of Rashemen.

Amn is ruled by a Council of Six. The Six are merchant-kings who are masters of intrigue and manipulation, and have more wealth than they can ever spend. This cabal of like-minded people has held control of Amn for over 30 winters. During this rule, four members of the Council have died, and replacements have been selected from Amn's wealthy merchants by the surviving Council members. Amnian policy has not changed in the slightest despite these changes in the Council.

Amn's rulers are shrewd, but more than one member of the Council is also fat, lazy, and arrogant. Upon ascending to the Council, a merchant-king is known only by his or her title. Speaking, printing, or otherwise using the original name of a merchant-king in Amn is punishable by slow torture and death.

The preeminent member of the present Council is the Meisarch (CN hm W13), who is never without at least 15 retainer/bodyguards (fighters of 6th level, trained to lay down their lives to protect him). He is the oldest member of the Council, and a corrupt, jaded, and debauched individual who seems to spend most of his days stamping out plots (real or imagined) against his rule. The remainder of the Council are more reclusive and almost never leave Amn itself. They are the Tessarch, the Namarch, the Iltarch, the Pommarch, and the Dahaunarch.

Amn is the richest land on the Sword Coast, rivalling the city of Waterdeep itself. Amn and Waterdeep see themselves as the powerful trade rivals of the region, and agents from both sides are always abroad, gathering information about each other's activities and disrupting each other's trade. Amn has recently opened the True World of Maztica across the trackless sea, and a large number of Amnian adventurers and would-be conquerors have left Amn for new opportunities, such that Amn has been in need of mercenary companies to maintain patrols on its borders. The nation is badly overextended, with interests in a half-dozen foreign lands. Should it be able to consolidate its power, it will become the economic leader of the Realms.

Calimshan

Located south of Tethyr, the rich lands of Calimshan are a hotbed of merchant dealings and double-dealings. Established before Waterdeep and the cities of Amn, Calimshan would be one of the most powerful and wealthy nations on the western coast of Faerûn, casting Waterdeep and Amn into the gloom, *if* it were unified. In reality, the nation of Calimshan is a collection of squabbling city-states, each such city gripped by its own internal merchant factions and power struggles. All pay (verbal) obeisance to the pasha of Calimshan.

The largest of these city-states is Calimport, and it is here a sequestered pasha relaxes and debauches while his servants and bureaucratic underlings squabble about the kingdom. Outsiders tend to equate the two words, but not all Calishites are from Calimport.

By royal decree, all ships of Calimport's navy and merchant fleet fly the flag of Calirnshan: a gold field with blue lines slanting across it. This, plus the general inclination of traders to gloss over troubles at home, gives others the illusion of a vibrant, unified nation.

Calimshan considers both Amn and Waterdeep its economic rivals, and is also involved in a continual series of clashes with the Border Kingdoms to its east, which are considered part of the Calishite sphere of influence only by those who must report to the pasha.

Tethyr

Tethyr lies between the borders of the Forest of Tethir and the gathered city-states of Calimshan. It is a land of large dominions and warring lords, and an ideal place for the mercenary and the spy.

This rich but troubled land is now a realm of changing rulers and uncertain power. The heir to Alemander IV staged a pocket revolution to put himself on the throne, but did not reckon with the degree of discontent among the Amnian people. The heir was assassinated along with Alemander, and, in a period known as the Ten Black Days of Eleint, most of the royal court was eliminated.

Tethyr's former ruling family has been hunted into virtual extinction following the death of Alemander IV, and political chaos reigns. Nonhumans (given no power in the previous human regime) have formed their own independent states. Nobles (those who survived) vie for position and contend for power based on the slightest tint of royal blood. Double-crosses, treason, and ambush are all accepted political methods in modem Tethyr.

The royal family of Tethyr is believed fully destroyed, though on occasion a claimant or pretender arises to rally forces of one type or another. If any direct-line heir has survived the bloodbath of Tethyr, he must currently be far from that land, using another name, and keeping his lineage secret to avoid being hunted down by the various factions.

Tethyr is still a wealthy and historied feudal kingdom of many noble families, strong in arms and trade alike, yet until the situation stabilizes, travelers are warned of the dangers of rival factions

and border patrols. Mercenaries and adventurers, however, are well aware of the opportunities available in Tethyr. Both the Council of Six (in Amn) and the pasha of Calimshan watch the endless war with interest, each thinking of the potential benefits of placing their own puppet on the throne.

The Shining South

The saying goes, "From the South comes all magic," and indeed, the lands to the south of the Heartlands become progressively older and more magical in nature. The original human civilizations in Faerûn were said to evolve from the West and South, though this claim may just be Mulhorandi hot air that has survived to this day. It is known that the South is a strange and marvelous place. When odd things occur, the response often is, "Ah, it must be Southern magic," as if the spellcasters of the South used books of magic alien to those in the North.

The South begins where the rest of the Realms ends. The South starts at the Lake of Steam (which forms the borders of Calimshan and the Vilhon city-states), cuts eastward across the northern end of the Shaar, across the base of Unther and Mulhorand, and at last fades out in the wild hinterlands of the Hordelands. Its southern boundary is agreed as being the Great Sea, which separates it from the even more exotic lands of Zakhara.

Most of what follows is half-truths and legend. Those seeking the full truth will have to go to the South themselves and separate the facts from the lies.

The Great Rift

The entrance to Underhome, the largest known community of dwarves in the Deep Realms, the Great Rift is the spectacular home of the gold dwarves. It is a huge cleft carved into the Eastern Shaar, 300 miles in length and 80 miles across at its widest. The floor of the canyon is marked by buttes, temples, and mesas, and dominated by the Riftlake, a wide and pure inland sea.

The dwarves have made this beautiful and forbidding place their home, and here they thrive, having forced out the competing underground races. They are looking to spread still further. This is one location in the Realms where the dwarven peoples do not seem to be in retreat.

Better known than Underhome are Eartheart and Khôltar, the great human and dwarven cities that border the Rift. Here the dwarves meet with strangers to engage in trade and send rich ores (and legends) up the Golden Road to the Inner Sea.

Halruaa

The strange and magical land of Halruaa is a nation ruled by magic and mages. It is a place of flying palaces, magical furnaces, and great

towers that defy logic and gravity. Its masters are wizards who are organized into great schools, its lowest master being on the same par with Khelben, Elminster, or the Simbul in the North.

What most people know of Halruaa are the legends of wonders brought by their great flying vessels that cruise over Faerûn like lords of the heavens. These ships belong to the Halruaan merchants, who carry strange devices and sell their wares (and their advice) to those who can afford their price, and collect both curiosities and the odd rumor in their path.

Jungles of Chult

Dominated by a huge jungle, the land of Chult, located across the Shining Sea, is the home of dark rumors, ancient, fallen civilizations and gem mines, and elder gods and lost magic. What is known from those who have penetrated the edges of this verdant rain forest is that it is a place filled with great monsters, with dinosaurs and other prehistoric beasts that exist (in much smaller numbers and sizes) only in the deepest swamps of the North.

Lake of Steam

The Lake of Steam is a large, enclosed bay of the Shining Sea. The region is extremely volcanic, such that a number of steam vents and fumaroles cause the sea to bubble and smoke along its length. Its islands are volcanic in origin, and its largest island, Arnrock, is an active volcano.

The Lake of Steam has a large number of cities and towns along its perimeter. They are known in general terms as the Border Kingdoms. Little is known about these kingdoms, save that they trade with Vilhon Reach to the north and are continually battling with Calishite forces to the west. It is rumored that some of the cities, such as Mintar, are held under the sway of cruel and insane outcasts of magical Halruaa.

Luiren

The kingdom of the halflings, Luiren is a southern nation on the Great Sea. It is a nation of small communities without any centralized government or ruler. Its largest cities, or burrows, are great hills tunneled and retunneled by the families within, with a few buildings erected for the "tall people" (often called the "poor tall people").

Travelers heading for Luiren are advised to make plans to go elsewhere, not because of any great danger, but because while one halfling may be a nuisance, a nation of them is a menace, particularly since they enjoy turning the tables on their larger guests. Be prepared for small chairs, low roofs, and being talked to loudly and slowly as if one were mentally impeded by one's great size.

Raurin

The near-mythical desert of Raurin is a massive, sandy waste that could swallow entire nations of the North. It is located in the farthest southeast, beyond the domains of Mulhorand.

Unlike Anauroch, Raurin is a great sandy waste dotted by rare oases and dead kingdoms. It is also known as the Dust Desert and the Stone Desert. Great and magical kingdoms were said to rule this land, and it may have been their fall that first drove humanity to the lands of the Inner Sea and toward the Sword Coast. What lies in Raurin is as yet unrecorded, and its mysteries are held beneath a sandy shroud.

One arm of the Dust Desert surges north toward Mulhorand. Called the Plains of Purple Dust for its distinctive, blood-colored sand, this arm has an ill reputation as being the home of dark gods and evil creatures from the nether plains.

The Shaar

The Shaar is a most effective barrier between the Heartlands and the Shining South, effective through its own emptiness. The Shaar is dominated by miles upon miles of thick grassland, and peopled only by nomads, herdsmen, and raiders. Yet, strange temples and abandoned shrines to lost gods dot the lands, and some of the wanderers encountered wield great mystical powers. Mighty winds powerful enough to overturn wagons and lift mounts into the air are common.

The region known as Eastern Shaar is sparser, less green, and more of a wasteland. Larger than the Shaar in area and more arid, it is separated from the Shaar by a ridge known as the Landrise. The Eastern Shaar is free of any major features save for the huge chasm known as the Great Rift.

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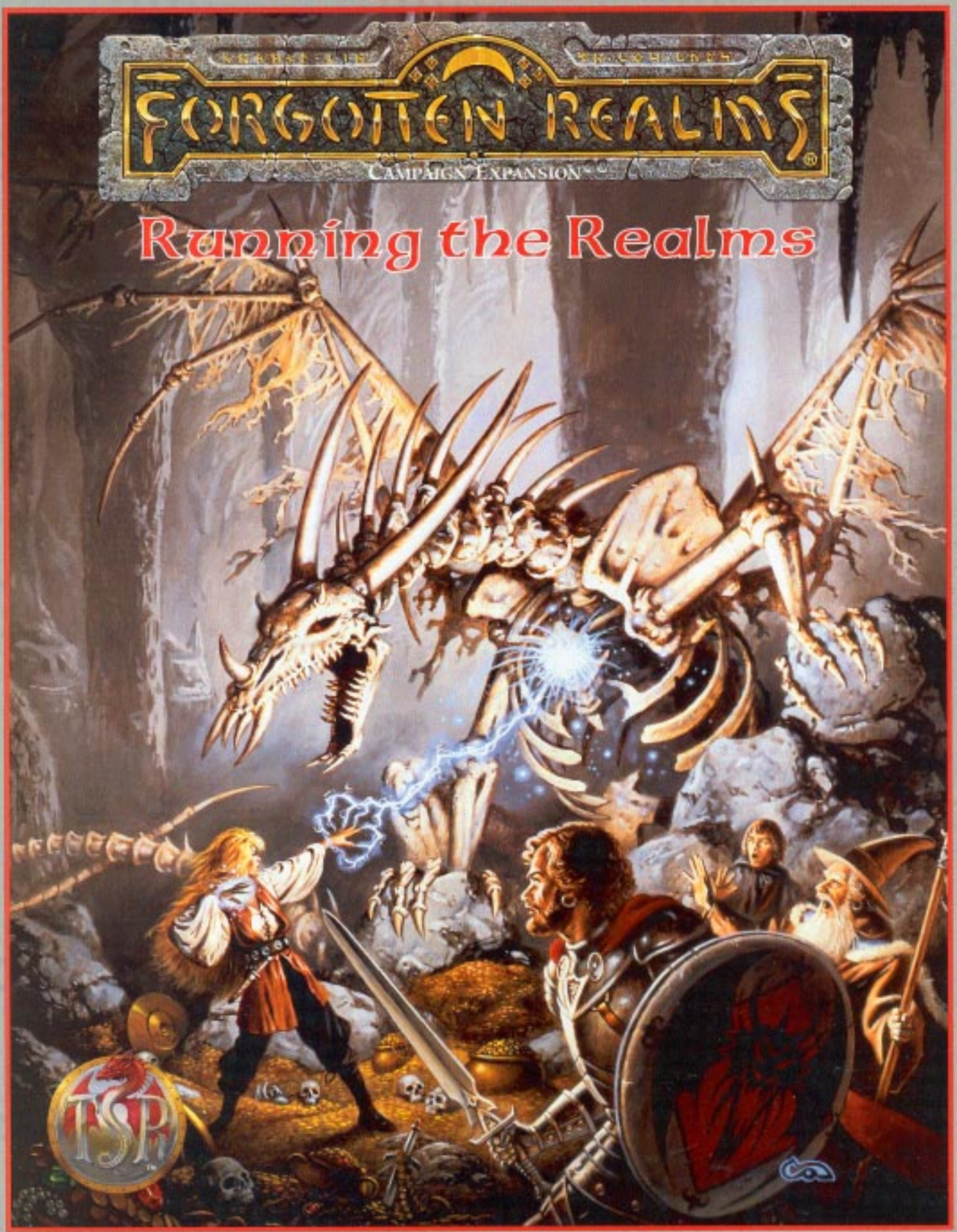

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USA

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
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Into The Forgotten Realms

Welcome to the start of the Third Age of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, the most popular fantasy role-playing setting in the history of the AD&D® game. The Realms began long ago in the dark ages (early 1970s), in the fertile mind of Canadian librarian Ed Greenwood. It was the home of his short fiction, several D&D® campaigns, and numerous articles in DRAGON® magazine. It was on the merit of these articles that the Realms were suggested as a basis for an AD&D campaign, and eventually as the home for the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. That was 1986, and the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting box debuted the next year (that set is now known as the Old Gray Box around TSR). The rest is both history and hysteria.

One of the hallmarks of the Realms is to stress the "shared" in shared world. We did this for a number of reasons. We wanted to stress the idea that there are many stories within the Realms, not just one. We wanted to show that writers (both of fiction and game material) could bloom by laying down permanent parts of the Realms. We wanted to have a lot of things going on at once, so that there would always be something that people would be interested in. And, to be blushingly honest, we had large tracts of the Realms which were little more than a name and a few sentences from Ed in his copious notes on the Realms. In many cases the various creatives were hammering the last nails into a dungeon just as the adventurers were trying the front door.

With all that in mind, why is this the Third Age of the Realms? It's only 10 game-years after the original setting was set down (although a 10-year span marked by a mongol invasion, the discovery of a new continent, and a war of the gods). Here's my thinking on it.

The Pre-Age Age was before 1987, when the Realms existed in the mind of one man and his game players. You'll meet some of these characters within, such as Storm Silverhand, Florin and Dove, and, of course, Elminster. This was the heart of the Realms, and something we at the company reach back to with fondness, since it is the gaming that we first enjoyed all those many years ago.

The First Age started with the Old Gray Box and Doug Niles's novel, *Darkwalker on Moonshae* (Doug's novel predates the boxed set by a month, and gets credit as the first official FORGOTTEN REALMS product). During this time we (both Ed and we folks at TSR) were literally lashing things together as fast as we could, exploring Waterdeep, the Empires of the Sands, the Moonshaes, Cormyr, and the Vast. We were explorers in a new land, describing for the first time (and often creating for the first time) new lands and peoples.

The First Age ended with a bang in the Avatar Crisis and the official introduction of the AD&D 2nd Edition game. Here was a watershed, a turning point for the Realms. The world was like a great, ungainly airplane, made by many hands, that finally began to sail aloft of its own speed. In the Realms, the line between the First and Second ages was defined by the best-selling Avatar novels and the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* hardback rules book, which brought the campaign fully over to the AD&D 2nd Edition game.

The Second Age was a time of greater exploration through both time and space. Kara-Tur was officially attached to the eastern side of the continent, and Maztica appeared to the west. The Horde arose and tromped through the land, leaving scars not yet fully healed. Characters aged and had children and grew up. Zakhara, the Land of Fate, was detailed to the south. And through it all the Realms continued to develop and grow for thousands of DMs and players.

Now the Second Age draws to a close after 10 years of game time and five years of real time. We've seen the first best-selling hardback, computer games, and new formats like the *Volo's Guides.* This product, along with the novel *Prince of Lies,* marks the end of the Second Age and the beginning of the Third.

What lies ahead in this new age? Both a growth of new areas and a return to old ones, developing deeper

understanding of the Heartlands and its peoples. More adventures, more source material, and more fun for those who have worked in the fields of the Realms for many years lie before us. To be quite honest, I don't know exactly where we go next. I only know it will be one heckuva ride.

I've rambled on long enough here, but I have to extend some special thanks for all that falls within. To Ed, of course, and Julia. And Karen Boomgarden, the original editor who now is the product manager of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting product group. To authors Doug Niles, Bob Salvatore, Kate Novak, Elaine Cunningham, Anne Brown, Jane Cooper Hong, and Scott Ciencin (in books); Steve Perrin, George MacDonald, Paul Jacquays, Scott Bennie, and Tim Beach (in games); and Troy Denning, Jim Ward, Jean Rabe, and especially Jim Lowder (in both). And particularly a grand note of appreciation to those who gave up their time for a full review of this manuscript in rough draft—Doug, Bob, Elaine, Jim W., Jim L., Jean, and Ed (of course) as well as Tim Brown, and Brian Thomsen (and that's the short form, folks—check the bibliography and credits in *A Grand Tour of the Realms* for the whole magilla).

I'm out of space and out of time. Welcome to the Realms.

—Jeff Grubb

Introduction To The Realms

Weary of the world around ye? Welcome to my world, where magic rules and dragons fly. Beauty meets the eye often here, and anyone can try to win a throne! Oh, aye, ye can do that in your world, too—but it's all more fun here .—Elminster

Welcome the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, probably the largest, most detailed fantasy world ever created. To me, it's home.

It began in 1967, when I started writing tales of land of splendors, awesome magic, and smart-tongued heroes. When the AD&D® game appeared, I revised my imaginary multiverse to fit. A FORGOTTEN REALMS roleplaying campaign began in 1978 and continues, though play sessions have become rare and precious.

My players expected to explore a world that lived around them, where acts had consequences, caravans took needed goods from place to place, people had histories and dreams—and the monsters did, too. They wanted a world that felt real.

Making the Realms seem real was my job—and it still is. I have been generating Realmslore in DRAGON® magazine from 1979 ("The Curst" in issue #30) on, and in a host of FORGOTTEN REALMS game setting products since. Other scribes now stand shoulder to shoulder with me, spinning their own tales—so at long last my world can surprise me!

Now I explore neglected corners of the Realms, telling an inquisitive elf from Poughkeepsie what King Azoun's underwear looks like, and a would-be conqueror from Portland what guards Elminster's spell book—if one can find them.

When I put on Elminster's hat at GEN CON® Game Fair each year (the beard's my own), I'm often asked what I like best about the Realms. The answer is the warm, shining memories—of laughter, friends and the funny, clever, often noble things their characters do, such as:

• My dearest friends gathered in my old gaming cottage in the woods, on a night so hot sweat streamed from us, leaping up shouting sometime after midnight as the Knights of Myth Drannor felled the last Zhentarim wizard to rescue Randal Morn of Daggerdale.

• A young lady whose name I never knew at GEN CON® Game Fair IX, announcing that her low-level paladin would try to rescue someone from 46 orcs—an attack that meant her character's certain death. Tears gleamed in her eyes as she said quietly, "My duty is clear. Farewell, my friends—it's good to have shared such glorious adventures with you."

• Talking excitedly in restaurants and hotel corridors until the wee hours about doings of kingdoms that exist only in our minds, explaining details to eager DMs wanting to portray a place or character just right.

• The many, many folks around the world who've written me letters—sometimes in struggling English—to thank me for entertaining them, and ask questions or plead to see a place or character in print.

The Realms are also kind people who've given Elminster a clay pipe in friendship, or a scroll—or an offer of marriage!

I could fill pages and still not thank all the friends the Realms have brought me, from Chris and Lisa to Yves and Manon, to Capucine, to Guy, to Chris and Leo, to Bruce and Beatrice, to Steve and Terry to—you see? My deepest thanks to all of you!

At TSR, Jeff Grubb, Karen Boomgarden, Jim Lowder, Steve Schend, and Julia Martin have guided and cleaned up after the enthusiastic creative geniuses unleashed on the Realms. I thank and salute them. Take some well-earned bows, folks! This set is Jeff Grubb's painstaking work; he deserves special thanks.

As their tales unfold, writers create bright sparks that light up comers of the Realms. Jeff Grubb and Kate Novak did it with Olive Ruskettle and Alias; Bob Salvatore with Zaknafein; Elaine Cunningham with Arilyn and Danilo; Mark Anthony with Caledan, Mari, and Morhion; Scott Ciencin with Myrmeen and Krystin; and Allen Varney did it by bringing Waterdeep perfectly to life in *Knight of the Living Dead* – horn such sparks warm, friendly fires grow. Thanks!

I must also thank all who've come to sit by a metaphorical fireside anywhere in the Realms. Your interest has made it possible to tell these tales. It's your world now—keep demanding the best. Tell us what you want to see and know, and we'll go and look and show.

Oh, yes, Poughkeepsie: Azoun tells me he's worn quite a variety of gear down the years, but favors short, tight silk breeches of blue or red, adorned with (what else?) a purple dragon codpiece. He'd also like to know *why* you want to know this! Portland: Don't even *think* about it!

I still smile eagerly when I sit down to write another Realms novel, sourcebook, boxed set, or adventure, and chuckle as Realmsplay evokes vivid scenes—because, my friends, it's good to have shared such glorious adventures with you.

—Ed Greenwood

Setting Up a Campaign

Each FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign should be different, reflecting the personality and gaming needs of the players and the DM. Some campaign groups enjoy just a set of adventurers fighting their way through dungeon settings without much thought of the outside world, while others revel in storytelling and legends. Still others enjoy the grand scale of high-level individuals challenging great powers, ruling huge empires, and engaging in political skullduggery. The FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting is intended as a base for all these types of adventures, providing a foundation for DMs to tailor as they desire. There is no rule stating that every AD&D® campaign must be alike, nor is there one stating that every FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign must be identical. The Realms is a very large place, with more than enough room for player characters and campaigns to develop.

In addition, the lands of Faerûn provide a home for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 2nd Edition game. There are lands to the east, south, and west, which form additional campaign settings that use modified versions of these rules.

A campaign may be set up in a number of ways, depending on the level of gaming experience of the DM and players. A few of the options are discussed below.

Campaigns for New Players

In setting up a campaign for first-time players, the key is to think small. Many rules and ideas are presented in the AD&D® hardback tomes, and that glut of information can be quite daunting at first.

The basic requirements for a first-time campaign are a home base and an area the player characters can explore and adventure in (a dungeon).

The home base does not have to be huge or important, and, in fact, using one of the many small towns in the Realms as a base has several advantages. The DM does not have to worry about making up or managing too many nonplayer characters at first, and the low-level adventurers are special, and may be consulted by (or sometimes chosen to be) local rulers. One such area is Shadowdale, which is a small farming community with a few high-level individuals (such as Elminster the Sage) that has in the past recruited adventurers as protectors (such as Mane's Band and the Knights of Myth Drannor). Shadowdale is also covered in exacting detail in its own book in this set, complete with local maps of the town and descriptions of the inhabitants, giving the players a sense of place for their adventures.

The DM may choose to create his or her own small town for initial adventures. This takes more work, but will produce a final product more in line with the DM's desires. Any of the Dale communities would be suitable for this, including Mistledale, Archendale, and Featherdale (Daggerdale tends to be reclusive and Scardale was recently on the losing end of a large war). The smaller towns of Cormyr such as Hilp and Immersea are also suitable, as are the small towns of Sembia, and the Trade Way towns of Soubar, Triel, or Hill's Edge.

For initial campaigns, only a brief sketch of the town is needed, noting such things as local smithy, general store (where most items from the *Player's Handbook* may be found), and local mage (if any). Leave some houses and areas blank for introduction of new NPCs or for growth of the characters (such as an abandoned farm that the party may buy with their treasure and use as the basis for their eventual palatial manor).

The second requirement of a low-level campaign with beginning players is the dungeon. The Dalelands (and many other areas) are rife with underground caverns and kingdoms, lost empires beneath the earth,

ruined towers of mad wizards, and crumbling remains of time-lost cities. Any of these can provide a basis for adventuring, and it is recommended that some type of dungeon egress be located in the nearby area (not close enough to threaten the town overmuch, but sufficient to cause the disappearance of a few cattle in the middle of the night, or create intriguing rumors about the great wealth to be found beneath the earth).

Shadowdale, the third book in this set, contains an adventure for first-time players, "Beneath the Twisted Tower," by Don Bingle. This adventure begins in the cellars beneath the Tower of Ashaba itself, and forms the basis for a number of evenings of adventure, sure to challenge new players and delight experienced ones (the current writer takes no blame for the horrible puns at the start of each chapter).

A few notes on running a first-time campaign:

- *Take it easy.* First-time DMs and players *will not* remember all the rules involved in the AD&D® game. If a rule is forgotten and later recalled, just keep going, remembering for next time.
- *Do not overwhelm the players, either in detail or in challenge.* Many of the monsters of the AD&D game are suited for higher-level individuals, and encountering some (such as dragons) will spell disaster for the 1st-level party. Show common sense in random encounters, generally not throwing more total Hit Dice of monsters at the player characters (PCs) than the group has total levels. Even if the random encounter calls for eight trolls to descend on the party of eight low-level player characters, one such creature will be more than enough to challenge them. This applies to "set" encounters as well—most prepositioned monster encounters assume a standard amount of party health. If the party is few or badly wounded, adjust the power of the monsters accordingly.
- *Give the players an even break.* Great stories have to begin somewhere, and if the players' characters buy the farm early and regularly, they won't develop personality. Don't reward foolish play, though. It may be useful to keep a cleric of sufficient level in the area for the first few adventures in order to bring back from the dead characters who are learning from their mistakes.
- *Set the scene.* In encounters, do more than give the bare-bones description. Dress it up a little—get the players into the mood of being in a dungeon.

  Compare this description:

  "You open the door and see a 10-foot by 10-foot room with a kobold in it."

  With this one:

  "You ease open the door to reveal a small, stone-walled cubicle in the center of which is a short, lizard-like creature with horns. The creature hisses at you and draws its sword."

  A good description is half the battle. Describe what the

PCs would see, hear, smell, and feel in the circumstances. This also allows the DM to fox the players by letting them make assumptions which are not entirely correct.

- *Role-playing.* The best opportunity for initial role-playing for first-time players is in town. Player characters need provisions, training, and often information. Create a few local characters with broad tendencies: a boisterous merchant, a shifty mercenary captain, a forgetful magician, etc. Use funny voices and accents. Have fun. Your players will pick up on this and start doing it themselves.

Campaigns for Experienced Players

The second type of FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign involves players and a DM who have played the AD&D® game, either with their own campaigns or using adventure modules, and who understand the rules systems fairly well. These players are starting with 1st-level characters, but have the experience of running such individuals before.

A starting campaign with experienced players can be set in any town or city in the Realms, according to the tastes of the DM. Many prefer a small, limited area to start in, similar to Shadowdale (see the previous section), while others may wish to start with a grander stage, such as a large city, as a base of operations.

A number of cities are described and keyed in *A Grand Tour of the Realms,* including Arabel and Suzail in Cormyr and Scornubel on the Trade Way. DMs may use these as the PCs' initial base of operations or may create their own. Note that the bulk of the nation of Sembia and its cities is left open for DMs to develop if they see fit.

More experienced players vary in their needs in a campaign from group to group. Some prefer dungeon-style adventures early on, while others will strike out across the wilderness, looking for random encounters, and others take on missions for more powerful individuals as bodyguards, mercenaries, or merchant troops.

The first case, of dungeon adventurers, is similar to that presented for first-time players, though the location of the dungeon does not necessarily have to be within easy reach of the home base.

The second case, random wandering, can be handled at its most basic level by random encounter charts such as are found in Volumes I and II of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®. DMs may want to mix these with their own dungeon settings or special events or encounters, providing a direction in the party's travels. For example, characters may hear in Arabel of the disappearance of the elves of the Elven Court and the abandonment of Myth Drannor, causing them to head overland to that ruined city, where they may discover an adventure of their DM's choosing.

In the final case, the player characters are given a mission of some type by another individual and will be rewarded for the completion of this mission. This provides a nice background for the adventure, and the DM may move the characters along by means of an NPC advisor/employer.

In running experienced players, here are a few hints.

- *Know the rules.* This is not to say memorize the rules or be able to argue long and convincingly about them, but have an idea where to find things, both in these texts and in other AD&D game products.
- *Be ready to wing it.* Even the most complete set of rules and backgrounds will not cover every situation, and players often want their characters to try things that are not covered by any handy rule. Be willing to make things up. If it does not work, try something else next time. If it does, keep it. Many campaigns, both for the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting and otherwise, have a number of house rules.
- *Role-play.* The players have a handle on the mechanics of running characters, so encourage them to think like their characters in the game. A good technique for experimenting with this is to agree among the group to consider every thing a player says, unless addressed to the DM or another player by real name, to be what the player character says.
- *Use the world.* The various legends, news reports, and descriptions of the Forgotten Realms are intended as a starting point for DM-created adventures. A tale of a treasure hoard of an ancient (and, one would hope, long-dead) dragon may spur the PCs to check out an area. Create your own local legends. The modem lands of the Dales and Cormyr are only slightly more than a millennium old, and Waterdeep a mere handful of centuries old. There were older kingdoms of humans and elves and dwarves long before that.

Characters from Other Worlds

Experienced players may wish to bring characters from other campaigns into the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting. These characters may come over because of the demise of their native world, the discovery of a portal to the Realms, or the fact they have gotten too tough for their homeland. The world of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, Abeir-Toril, has a huge number of portals and other *gate* - type devices that link that world with other areas of the Realms, with the outer planes, and with alternate Prime Material Planes containing other AD&D campaigns. Player characters from these campaigns may discover methods of traveling to the Realms (either through the Astral Plane, by devices, or by using free-standing portals) and begin adventures in the Realms.

In making the transition to the Realms, certain items are gained and lost in the transfer.

- Characters making the transfer, by whatever means, to the Realms gain the ability to speak the common tongue of the Realms, as well as the Realms equivalents of elvish, dwarvish, and other languages. Previously spoken tongues are lost unless there are no Realms equivalents to them.
- The FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting is an AD&D® 2nd Edition campaign world, so that player characters who are not strictly AD&D 2nd Edition (such as a dwarven cleric/thief/illusionist/paladin with a 24 natural Strength) cannot enter the Realms without modification to fit the rules of AD&D 2nd Edition. Illegal classes would be dropped, ability scores would be reduced to racial limitations (though they may be increased later by magical or other means), and special abilities over and above those normally provided for characters because of their class or kit are removed. DMs, at their own discretion, may choose to let such individuals into their FORGOTTEN REALMS campaigns (such as letting a kender from Krynn or a half-giant from Athas make the transfer), but that decision rests solely on the DM.
- Similarly, magical items that are special to a particular world may not make the transfer to the Realms, either being destroyed, being returned to their original plane, or being stripped from the player character and placed somewhere in the Realms. Which scenario occurs is up to the DM. In general, this treatment is reserved for extremely powerful items and, in particular, artifacts.
- The physics of the Realms are slightly out of synchronization with the rest of the planes, so that many technological devices which operate on electronics do not function. Equivalent devices may be developed by player characters. DMs should put some thought into what they will allow into their campaign worlds. DMs may choose to eliminate the use of gunpowder (or its magical equivalent, smoke powder) from the Realms, at their option.
- The powers (deities) of the Forgotten Realms are a fairly open-minded group (as such beings go). Clerics of faiths not listed as the major religions of the Realms may still receive spells as normal, though they will not receive the benefits of belonging to an organized hierarchy and may be called upon to explain the nature of their faith more often than those of established Realms churches.
- When making the transfer between campaigns, large items such as castles, libraries, laboratories, and hoards of treasure are usually left behind. Characters making such a transfer should be able to bring with them what they may normally carry on their person (and perhaps a single mount). Given the existence of *bags of holding,* this could be a great deal in and of itself.

Characters from other campaigns may span the range from low-level wanderers to extremely high-level powers that have challenged a deity or two in their time. The style of the campaign is set by the levels and powers of these individuals. If DMs choose to admit incredibly powerful, quasi-godlike individuals to their Realms campaigns, it is recommended that they at least strip most of the newly arriving individuals of the majority of their wealth.

Using The Maps

The maps enclosed in this package, and those in related sourcebooks and other products, are provided without a normal hex grid superimposed over them. Instead, two sheets of clear plastic, overprinted with a hex grid and scale for both of these maps are enclosed for use with FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting maps. These plastic grids may be used to determine distances and the duration of travel. There are 5 hexes per inch, so that each hex is 6 miles on the enlarged (1″ = 30 miles) maps, and 18 miles on the rough (1″ = 90 miles) maps.

There are two sets of large maps in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting boxed set. The first set is a general map of Faerûn, from the viewpoint of the native of the Heartlands (the region from the Dalelands to the Sword Coast). This is a depiction of Faerûn as the player characters operating in this area would know. The regions nearest Cormyr and Waterdeep are well-mapped, but as the map moves farther away, less is known. The scale on these maps is 1″ = 90 miles.

The second set of maps covers the primary regions detailed in *A Grand Tour of the Realms,* dealing mainly with the Heartlands regions, including the nations of Cormyr and Sembia, and from the independent city of Westgate in the South to the lands and cities of the Moonsea in the North. The scale on these maps is 1″ = 30 miles.

Using The Hex Grids

The ungridded maps may be used in play for general discussion and explanation. The grids are used when moving along the map.

When using the grids for determining straight distance, place the corner point (marked with the "X") over the place the traveler is starting from (usually, but not always, a city). Use the straight row of hexes directly above that "X" hex to determine how many hexes it is from that starting to point to the destination point.

Unfortunately, roads, streams, and other commonly used methods of travel do not move in straight lines, so that the "true" distance between points may be larger than presented. Again, set the "X" hex on the starting point, and center the final destination in one of the hexes. Then follow the method of travel, counting each hex as a hex to be moved through. For short distances of a few days travel between cities (such as within Cormyr or Sembia) this method may be used with each day's move. For longer journeys (from Scornubel to Iriaebor, for example) it may be worth lightly taping the plastic grid to the map with masking tape. (Adhesive tape is not recommended for this, as it does

the job too well, and may damage the map when removed). For extremely long journeys, several way-stops may be determined and measured to en route from one side of the map to the other.

Each FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign should reflect the personality and desires of the DM and his or her players. To that end, DMs should feel free to make notes or otherwise mark up their maps to reflect changes in their worlds. If a group of PCs set up an adventuring headquarters in an abandoned (and unmarked) tower in the Stonelands, the DM should feel confident in placing that on the map to be used as a marker for a place to start from. Similarly, if an enterprising group sets out to build an empire around the Moonsea, improving roads and influencing the actions of the established city-states, that may be recorded on the map as well.

Movement Using The Maps

The amount of time it takes to move through the various terrains is determined by a party's movement rate, and the movement cost of the terrain the characters are moving through. The movement cost is discussed in detail in the Terrain Effects on Movement and Terrain Modifiers in Overland Movement sections of the Time and Movement chapter of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide,* and represented on the table at right. Most movement costs are ½, 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8, but situation modifiers, such as ravines, scorching heat, and rain, may increase the movement cost.

Cross-reference the movement rate of the party (figuring on whether the characters are encumbered or mounted) against the cost of movement for that particular type of terrain. This will provide either a number of hexes which may be crossed per day, or the number of days needed to cross that particular hex. The slowness of moving through terrains without roads or trails should indicate why most individuals use roads for their movement, and why there are such large expanses in the Realms where a wizard tower or a monster colony can spring up without anyone noticing.

Traveling Through Mixed Terrain: A party may remain in the type of terrain they choose for purposes of movement (a group in a hex containing hills and plains may remain in the plains). This applies up to the point that they *must* obviously enter the other type of terrain, at which point all penalties take effect. A group in a hex with plains and swamp may remain in plains, but if their travel would take them across swamp terrain, they must suffer the penalties of the swamp.

Precedence of Encounters

Swamp
Forest
Plains
Desert
Hills
Mountain

Water Movement in the Realms: General movement for waterborne travel is covered in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide.* One important point to discuss here is the *falls line.* Many of the rivers, such as the River Lis, which links the Moonsea with the Sea of Fallen Stars, are navigable along their entire length by galleys and ships. Others are navigable only to the last cascades of that river. These cascades are called the falls line, and above that point normal seagoing ships cannot travel. Small skiffs, rafts, and shallow-bottomed barges may still move upriver after being ported up over the falls, but they are then subject to any further falls, cascades, or obstructions.

When players choose to have their characters move along a previously uncharted river or stream, include in the encounter chart the chance of a cascade, section of white water, or falls, according to the area the stream passes through. Mark these locations on the map (as they, unlike monsters, will not move away from the area) for future travelers.

There are three exceptions to this rule. The River Lis from Moonsea to the Dragon Reach is clear and unblocked, its falls reduced by wizards from the Moonsea cities. The River Chlonthar between the Sword Coast and Scornubel is similarly a major artery, and this wide, muddy flow has no sudden drops in its region. The south fork of the Chionthar from Scornubel to Inaebor has one major blockage, a cascade near the town of Berdusk. It is here that barges from the two larger cities stop and unload, their cargo reloaded onto other barges on the far side of the falls and continued up or down the river.

Encounters in The Realms

Individuals traveling cross-country may encounter a number of unplanned adventures en route from point A to point B. These random encounters may aid or hurt the player characters in their ultimate goals, or provide an evening's adventure in themselves. This section deals with determining what creatures are found where and how DMs may create their own tables for random encounters.

The following system for random encounters is to be used at the DM's option. If a long series of pointless encounters ("You see 50 orcs—again") would slow down play, do without them. If a sudden attack would spice up things for bored (or cocky) adventurers, put it back in. Random encounters are often a good test of a DM's experience, since the DM is literally pulling the monsters and the situation out of thin air to make things intriguing for his or her players.

The rules for creating and using random encounters are described in the Random Encounters section of the Encounters chapter of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide.* The few cases where they need to be modified for use in the Realms are listed below.

The type of terrain for an encounter is determined by the terrain in the hex. Many different types of terrain may be in a hex at the same time, so use the idea of terrain hierarchy. Certain types of ter-

Movement Tables

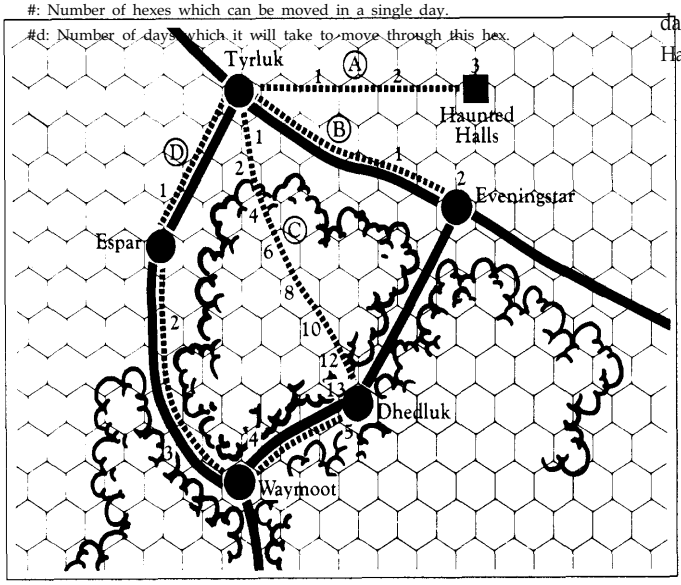
For 1″ = 30 Mile Maps — *1 Hex = 6 miles*

MC\MR	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24
½	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2d	1	1	2	2	3	3	4
2	4d	2d	1	1	1	1	2	2
3	6d	3d	2d	1	1	1	1	1
4	8d	4d	3d	2d	2d	1	1	1
5	10d	5d	3d	2d	2d	2d	1	1
6	12d	6d	4d	3d	2d	2d	2d	1
7	14d	7d	5d	3d	3d	2d	2d	2d
8	16d	8d	5d	3d	3d	2d	2d	2d
9	18d	9d	6d	4d	4d	3d	3d	2d
10	20d	10d	7d	5d	4d	3d	3d	2d
11	22d	11d	7d	5d	4d	4d	3d	3d
12	24d	12d	8d	6d	5d	4d	3d	3d

For 1″ = 90 Mile Maps — *1 Hex = 18 Miles*

MC\MR	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24
½	3d	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
1	6d	3d	2d	1	1	1	1	1
2	12d	6d	4d	2d	2d	2d	2d	1
3	18d	9d	6d	4d	4d	3d	3d	2d
4	24d	12d	8d	6d	5d	4d	3d	3d
5	30d	15d	10d	7d	6d	5d	3d	3d
6	36d	18d	12d	9d	7d	6d	5d	4d
7	42d	21d	14d	10d	8d	7d	6d	5d
8	48d	24d	16d	12d	10d	8d	7d	6d
9	54d	27d	18d	13d	11d	9d	8d	7d
10	60d	30d	20d	15d	12d	10d	9d	7d
11	66d	33d	22d	16d	13d	11d	9d	8d
12	72d	36d	24d	18d	14d	12d	10d	9d

MC: Movement cost of the terrain (read down).
MR: Movement rate of the individual (read across).
#: Number of hexes which can be moved in a single day.
#d: Number of days which it will take to move through this hex.



Terrain Costs for Overland Movement

Terrain	Cost	Terrain	Cost
Clear	1	Hills, rolling	2
Desert, rocky	2	Jungle, heavy	8
Desert, sandy	3	Jungle, medium	6
Farmland	½	Marsh, swamp	8
Forest, heavy	4	Moors	4
Forest, light	2	Mountains, high	8
Forest, medium	3	Mountains, low	4
Glacier	2	Mountains, medium	6
Grasslands	1	Roads	½ (along road)
Hills, foothills	4	Trails	½ cost for surrounding terrain

Terrain Costs Summary

Cost	Terrain Type
½	Roads (along road)
1	Plains, grassland
2	Light forest, rocky desert (Anauroch), glacier, rolling hills
3	Sandy desert (Raurin), medium forest
4	Heavy forest, foothills, moor, low mountains
6	Medium jungle, medium mountains
8	Heavy jungle, swamp, marsh, high mountains

Movement Example

Party A, mounted on medium horses (movement 15), sets out for the Haunted Halls overland. Laying the grid over the 1″ = 30-mile map, the Haunted Halls is six hexes from Tyrluk, and, according to the Movement Tables, a part) with a movement rating (MR) of 15 moves 2 hexes per day in clear terrain (movement cost (MC) of 1). The party will reach the Haunted Halls on the close of the third day.

Party B, a similar group, sets out for Eveningstar along the road. Road travel is much faster (5 hexes per day according to the Movement Tables), so the party reaches Eveningstar about noon the second day of their travels.

Party C, a group of cheese smugglers on foot (MR 9), is heading from Tyrluk to Dhedluk, avoiding the roads (and Cormyte patrols). The smugglers move 1 hex the first day in clear terrain, and 1 hex the second (though the hex contains woods, they keep to the clear parts as much as possible). Starting with the third day of travel, it will take them 2 days of travel for each additional hex because of the movement cost of the medium forest terrain, such that it will take them 13 days (assuming that Dhedluk is in the middle of the hex) to reach Dhedluk.

Party D, a more respectable band of peddlers, can easily walk along the roads through Espar and to Dhedluk in 5 days. This is one reason that most civilized people keep to the roads.

rain will take precedence over other types for purposes of encounters. See the Precedence of Encounters List on page 10.

A hex which contains multiple types of terrain will be considered the terrain of the higher rank for purposes of encounters. For example, if a hex contains mountains and hills, the terrain is hills for purposes of encounters. If a region is both swamp and plains, it is considered swamp. Roads and paths are always considered to be the terrain surrounding them for purposes of encounters. In this way, a party skirting the swamp does not have to move at swamp speeds, but will encounter swamp monsters.

Once terrain type is determined, the encounter must be determined to be civilized or wilderness. Civilized regions are those under the control of humans or races allied to humans. These regions have suitable patrols, population, and defenses from most invading creatures. Areas within 18 miles of major cities, and 6 miles of towns, are considered civilized. Wilderness regions are those not under the control of any lawful group, and usually are a breeding ground of fell beasts, such as the Troll Hills and the High Moor. (Most of Cormyr is consider civilized for these purposes.)

If the hex under consideration lies within a civilized area, any encounters there are considered civilized encounters (when a civilized encounter table exists—there are places people can walk out of their homes and into a manticore encounter). Any hex that is not within a civilized area is considered wilderness.

The nature of the difference between a civilized encounter and a wilderness encounter is totally up to the DM. Things to take into consideration in this decision include the nature, terrain, history, and current status of the region. A civilized encounter in a kingdom that has long been at peace will likely be along the line of patrols and merchants, while an encounter in a kingdom that has been recently overrun by invading armies will produce wilder results.

Having determined the terrain and status of an encounter, go to the appropriate table to determine the type of monster encountered. DMs may have specific tables for certain locations in the Realms of their own creation, or may use the excellent tables in the backs of both Volumes I and II of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®.

Wild Magic and Dead Magic

One last wrinkle to the Realms regards the presence of wild magic and dead magic areas. These areas are relatively small and rare, the largest wild magic area being the Helmlands north of Arabel and the largest dead magic zone being the northern part of Tantras, where two gods exploded! More common are wild and dead magic areas which are a few yards (or feet) across.

Dead Magic Regions

No magic can be cast or activated within a dead magic area. Spells cast by a character within a dead magic area are lost, as are charges from wands, rings, or other devices. Spells cast from outside a dead magic area into a dead magic area do not function, and those which having areas of effect that occupy both normal areas and dead magic areas have no effect within the dead magic area.

This restriction applies to wizard spells, priest spells, and spell-like abilities of monsters and gods. No one can *teleport, gate,* or otherwise magically move into or out of a dead magic area.

Spells of the divination school will not function if the target or subject is within a dead magic area. Illusions will not operate within the dead magic area, though they can be seen by characters inside the area if cast outside the area. Dragon breath and the petrification ability of gorgons and medusae are unaffected by dead magic zones.

Spells which were already in operation prior to the creation of a dead magic area are broken as soon as the dead magic area appears. Spells in operation on a person or object prior to entering the dead magic area continue operating normally, however. A hasted, charmed, geased, or otherwise enchanted individual is still magically enhanced (or hindered) even inside a dead magic area, even though these spells cannot be cast within, into, or out of the area.

Enchanted creatures such as golems are not physically harmed upon entering a dead magic area, though they feel uncomfortable within the region and want to leave it as soon as possible. Such enchanted creatures may not use spells or spell-like abilities once within the dead magic area.

Enchanted objects which do not use charges or which always have

their magical effects in force are similarly unaffected by the dead magic areas. A *sword +1* retains its +1, but if it also casts a light spell once per day, that spell-like ability cannot be used within the dead magic area. Swords, armor, potions quaffed before entering the region, some rings, and a number of miscellaneous magical items continue functioning this way.

Spellcasters who enter the dead magic area are immediately aware of its presence, tipped off by the dull headache which results from the spellcaster losing touch with the ambient magical nature of the Realms. Spellcasters are not otherwise hampered within the field (aside from being unable to cast spells), but most will seek to leave the area as soon as possible.

Dead magic areas are invisible and tend to be shaped like spherical bubbles, extending as far above the ground as they do below. Some dead magic areas form irregular shapes. Dead magic areas can appear anywhere, from deep underground to (theoretically at least) high in the air.

Dead magic areas are difficult to destroy; a full *wish* will remove a sphere with a diameter of 12 feet (approximately 1,000 cubic feet) while a *limited wish* removes a sphere with half that diameter (approximately 115 cubic feet). Individuals who prefer to be away from magic look at these dead magic regions as a place to hide from wizards, or at least to stand equal with them.

Wild Magic Regions

Similar to the dead magic areas are those in which magic has become erratic and the effects of spells unpredictable. These wild magic areas are smaller then the dead magic zones, with few exceeding 100 yards in diameter. They are, however, scattered throughout the Realms. Only spells cast by individuals within a wild magic area are affected by the nature of the area. Wizard spells, priest spells, and the spell-like abilities of creatures are affected. Spells cast from outside the wild magic area against targets within the wild magic zone are not affected by the wild magic. When a spell is cast in the wild magic area, the DM should roll on the Effects of Wild Magic Table to determine what effect the wild magic area has on the spell.

Unlike dead magic areas, wild magic areas are not immediately detectable upon entering them. Spellcasters and enchanted creatures may enter and leave them without realizing they are in a wild magic area and without suffering any ill effects until they attempt to cast a spell in the area.

Wild magic areas respond more favorably to magic—a *dispel magic* will successfully shut down a wild magic area for 1-4 turns, and a *limited wsh* or full *wish* will dispel any single wild magic area entirely. Due to the work of the faith of Mystra most of the wild magic areas in civilized regions have been discovered and either destroyed or at least prominently marked with a warning sigil (nonmagical, of course). There remain a number of wild magic areas scattered throughout the Realms, though these are in lonely, wild places and deep beneath the surface of Faerûn.

Effects of Wild Magic

Roll	Result
01-19	Spell rebounds on caster with normal effect. If the spell cannot affect the caster, roll again.
20-23	A pit 10 feet across opens beneath the caster's feet. It is 5 feet deep for every level of the caster.
24-27	The target (or targets) of the spell is pelted with red flowers, leaves, or vegetables, which vanish immediately upon striking. The blossoms or other missiles inflict no damage, but the target will not be able to fire missile weapons or use wands while being attacked this way.
28-31	Spell affects a random target. DM should choose (randomly or otherwise) another target among those available, or set the spell off in a different area 10-60 yards away (use the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide's* Scatter Diagram, found in the Grenade-Like Missiles section of the Combat chapter).
32-35	Spell functions normally, but material components (if any) are not consumed and knowledge of the spell is not lost (it can be cast again). In the case of spell-like abilities, the ability can be used again. Magical items do not lose a charge.
36-39	Spell does not function, but instead everyone within 10 yards of the caster (friend or foe) receives the benefits of the priestly *heal* spell.
40-43	*Darkness* (the priestly reverse of the *light* spell) and *silence* (as the spell) descend on the caster with a 30-yard radius and last for 2-8 rounds. The spell does not function.
44-47	*Reverse gravity* (as the spell) affects all within 30 yards of the caster, including the spellcaster, lasting one round. The spell does not function.
48-51	Shimmering colors appear and swirl around the caster, blinding the caster and all around him within 10 feet for 1-4 rounds.
52-59	Nothing happens. The spell does not function. Spell components, memory of the spell, or charges (if any) are lost.
60-71	Nothing happens. The spell does not function. Spell components, memory of the spell, or charges (if any) are *not* lost.
72-98	Spell functions normally.
99-100	Spell functions with maximum possible effect, full damage, and maximum duration. Saving throws against the spell (if applicable) have a -2 penalty.

Modifiers to the Roll

Modifier	Condition
+1	For every level of the spellcaster or HD of the creature.
-2	For every level of the spell being used (spell-like abilities ignore this modification).
+6	If spell is from a magical Item.
+12	If spell is from an artifact.
+2	If alteration magic.
-5	If invocation magic.

A Timeline of the Forgotten Realms

All times are in Dalereckoning. Year names are given where appropriate. The nascent Present Reckoning timekeeping system uses the Time of Troubles (1358 DR) as 0 PR.

-2637	Mezro, in Chult, is founded by Ubtao.
-2488	Empire of Raurin (Imaskari, Artificers) destroyed.
-2135	Mulhorand founded.
-2087	Unther founded.
-1967	First Mulhorand–Unther War.
-1961	Mulhorand and Unther agree on common border; peace between these nations to the present day.
-1088	First record of trading at the future site of Waterdeep.
-1075	Orcgate Wars in Thay.
-1071	Orc god Gruumsh kills Mulhorand deity Re; first known deicide.
-1069	Orcs in Thay defeated; many flee north and west.
c. -900	Rise of Narfell and Raumathar.
c. -700	The Vastar of the Orcs in the Vast.
-734	Gilgeam becomes king of Unther.
c. -400	Augathra the Mad travels the world.
c. -200	Records indicate that the Tethyrian royal family rules Tethyr.
	Candlekeep founded; calendar of Harptos begun.
	First Dalesmen cross the Dragon Reach to Cormanthor.
c. -150	Narfell and Raumathar destroyed.
-137	The Chultian city of Mezro is sacked.
-52	First permanent farms in Waterdeep area.
1	*The Year of Sunrise*
	The Standing Stone erected; Dalereckoning begins.
	Empire of Shoon in Calimshan.
10	*The Year of Dreams*
20	*The Year of the Fallen Fury*
	The Shieldmeet becomes an important date in Faerûn.
25	*The Year of Many Runes*
	Church of Deneir founded.
26	*The Year of Opening Doors*
	Cormyr founded by Obarskyr family.
75	*The Year of Clinging Death*
	Plague racks the civilized Realms (Empires of the Sands, Vilhon).
	Alaundo the Seer arrives in Candlekeep.
112	*The Year of the Tusk*
	Date of oldest recognized map of Cormyr and the Dales.
163	*The Year of the Screeching Vole*
	Last reported use of the *Ring of Winter,* in Cormyr.
c. 200	Anauria noted as being destroyed by goblins.
	Southern barbarians invade Unther and Mulhorand.
261	*The Year of Soaring Stars*
	Laying of the Mythal at Myth Drannor.
	Myth Drannor created for all races.
c. 300	Asram and Hlondath recorded as having been destroyed by the desert–exact date unknown.
c. 350	Creation of Northkeep.
	Shoonish warriors battle on the Fields of the Dead.
400	*The Year of the Blue Shield*
	Northkeep sunk beneath the waves.
c. 450	Shoon Empire collapses in what is now Calimshan.
500	*The Year of the Flame Tongue*
600	*The Year of Fire and Frost*
640	*The Year of the Fanged Beast*
	First mining and trading encampments at Zhentil Keep.

661 *The Year of the Bloody Tusk*
Death of Lord Eltargrim of the elves.
Height of Myth Drannor.

679 *The Year of the Scarlet Sash*
End of second Untheric Empire.

712 *The Year of the Lost Lance*
Beginning of the nycaloth-led assault on Myth Drannor by the Army of Darkness.

714 *The Year of Doom*
Fall of Myth Drannor.

720 *The Year of the Dawn Rose*
Gathering of the gods at the Dancing Place.
Founding of the Harpers.

756 *The Year of the Leaning Post*
First fisherfolk settle in Aglarond.

796 *The Year of the Gray Mists*
Merrydale becomes Daggerdale following vampiric infestation.

800 *The Year of the Black Fist*
Rise in the power of Bane in the Realms.
Drow influence in the now-Ashaba valley at its height.

834 *The Year of the Leaping Lion*
Castle Greatstead (Grimstead) built on the borders of Shadowdale.

863 *The Year of the Wondrous Sea*
The Chultian city of Mezro disappears.

864 *The Year of the Broken Brunch*
Castle Grimstead destroyed by drow.

882 *The Year of the Curse*
Nimoar's Hold built at Waterdeep's bay.

884 *The Year of the Singing Arrows*
The elves destroy a large mercenary force in Sembia.

896 *The Year of the Empty Hand*
Extensive poverty and famine from here to 900 DR.

900 *The Year of the Thirsty Sword*
Widespread war; strong leaders emerge.

902 *The Year of the Queen's Tears*
The Rotting War in Chondath decimates the country.
Chondath renounces claims on Sembian city-states.
Cult of Dragon creates first draco-liches.

906 *The Year of the Plough*
Drow driven from the Twisted Tower.
Shadowdale founded.

913 *The Year of the Watching Raven*
Sembia founded under the Raven banner.

922 *The Year of the Spouting Fish*
Battle of Thazalhar in Thay.
Red Wizards declare Thay independent of Mulhorand.

929 *The Year of Flashing Eyes*
Chessenta rebels against Unther.

932 *The Year of Fireslaughter*
First Troll War in the North.

934 *The Year of Fell Wizardry*
First Thayvian invasion of Rashemen.

937 *The Year of the Turning Wheel*
Thesk founded along the Golden Way.

940 *The Year of the Cold Claws*
Second Troll War in the North.
Ashaba, first Lord of Shadowdale, merges with river.

974 *The Year of the Haunting Harpy*
Castle Waterdeep built.

975 *The Year of the Bent Coin*
Telflamm established as a royal city-state.

976 *The Year of the Slaying Spells*
Mulhorandi invasion of Thay repelled.

992 *Year of the Watching Helm*
Heralds of Faerûn created.

1000 *The Year of the Wailing Winds*

1001 *The Year of the Awakening*
Many ruins discovered and old magic and undead released.

1018 *The Year of the Dracorage*
Death(?) of Tchazzar, unifier of Chessenta.
Rage of Dragons in Faerûn and the Heartlands.
Peleveran, south of Chessenta, destroyed in Rage of Dragons.

1019 The Year of the Sure Quarrel
Assassin wars in the South; many satraps killed by crossbow-wielding thieves.

1020 *The Year of Smoldering Spells*
Thay develops much of its unique fire magic.

1021 *The Year of the Howling Axe*
Thay strikes against the Harpers—liches walk the Heartlands.
Harpers go underground.

1022 *The Year of the Wandering Wyvern*
Refounding of the Harpers.

1030 *The Year of Warlords*
Zulkirs established in Thay.
Aencar becomes warlord of Battledale.

1038 *The Year of Spreading Spring*
Global warming.
Lands of Narfell, Vaasa, and Damara are fully free of ice.
Large-scale immigration begins to these lands.
Aencar begins to unify the Dales, takes the title "Mantled King."

1044 *The Year of Singing Shards*
Aencar the Mantled King dies.
Dales split up into independent, though allied, communities.

1065 *The Year of the Watching Wood*
Brindor is first king of Aglarond.

1074 *The Year of the Tightening Fist*
Zulkirs quell rebellions and rule in Thay.

1090 *The Year of Slaughter*
The Battle of the Bones.
Followers of Malar mount the Great Hunt.

1095 *The Year of the Dawndance*
Imphras unites cities of Impiltur.

1097 *The Year of the Gleaming Crown*
Imphras crowned king of Impiltur.

1099 *The Year of the Restless*
New trade routes forged.
First modern contact with Kara-Tur and Zakhara.

1100 *The Year of the Bloodrose*

1104 *The Year of the Dark Dawn*
Birth of Zulkir Szass Tam of Thay.

1110 *The Year of the Bloody Fields*
As prophesied, many battles were fought this year.

1116 *The Year of the Empty Scabbard*
The Heralds break from the Harpers.

1117 *The Year of the Twelverule*
Chessenta breaks up into city-states through 1154 DR.

1150 *The Year of the Scourge*
Plague throughout the Sword Coast.
Worship of Talona and Loviatar soars.

1161 *The Year of the Quiet Earth*
Merith Strongbow, eldest of the Knights of Myth Drannor, born.

1164 *The Year of Long Shadows*
Immursk, greatest of Inner Sea pirates, begins his piracy career.
Voonlar founded.

1180 *The Year of Sinking Sails*
Sembia loses fleet in Pirate Isles.

1181 *The Year of the Shieldtree*

1182 *The Year of the Tomb*
Cities of Calimshan recognize the rule of the pasha of Calimport.
The Malaugrym appear in Faerûn.
The Harpstar Wars.

1194 *The Year of the Bloody Wave*
Battle of the Singing Sands, Aglarond beats Thay.

1195 *The Year of the Midday Mists*

1196 *The Year of the Shrike*

1197 *The Year of the Sundered Shields*
Battle of Brokenheads.
Aglarond beats Thay.

1198 *The Year of the Lean Purse*

1199 *The Year of the Baldric*

1200 *The Year of the Buckler*

1201 *The Year of Embers*
Death of Immursk the Pirate.

1209 *The Year of the Blazing Banners*
The (naval) Battle of the Fallen.
Destruction of Urdogen's pirates.

1220 *The Year of the Toppled Tree*

1221 *The Year of the Frozen Flower*

1222 *The Year of the Horn*
The Harpstar Wars end with the destruction of the Harper King.

1223 *The Year of the Trembling Tree*

1224 *The Year of the Swollen Stars*

1225 *The Year of the Winged Worm*

1226 *The Year of the Black Buck*

1227 *The Year of the Wall*

1228 *The Year of the Tattered Banners*

1229 *The Year of the Carrion Crow*

1230 *The Year of the Long Watch*
Elf-maidens setting out for a pleasure outing are never seen again. This becomes the basis for the epic poem "The Long Watch."

1231 *The Year of the Bright Star*

1232 *The Year of the Weeping Wives*
Destruction of Sessrendale by Archendale.

1233 *The Year of Many Monsters*

1234 *The Year of the Full Flagon*

1235 *The Year of the Black Horde*
Largest orc horde in history masses out of the North.
Waterdeep besieged; Calimshan threatened.

1236 *The Year of the Struck Gong*

1237 *The Year of the Grotto*
Thesk and Aglarond enter into alliance.

1238 *The Year of the Lone Candle*

1239 *The Year of the Bloodied Sword*

1240 *The Year of the Bright Sun*

1241 *The Year of the Lost Lady*
A well-respected Tethyrian noblewoman is captured and slain by orcs. In her memory, orcs are wiped out throughout the South in a genocidal slaughter. Orcs call this the Year of Pushing Too Far.

1242 *The Year of the Yellow Rose*
Monastery of the Yellow Rose founded in Damara.

1243 *Year of the Blue Dragon*
Rule of the venerable wyrm Anaglathos in Turmish.
Until 1247 DR, this is the Time of the Worm in that nation.

1244 *The Year of the Defiant Keep*

1245 *The Year of Pain*
Loviatar worship gains great popularity—most of the modern temples in the North are founded at this time.

1246 *The Year of Burning Steel*
First recorded use of bombards by Lantan.

1247 *The Year of the Purple Basilisk*
Anaglathos overthrown in Turmish by popular rebellion and slain by adventurers.

1248 *The Year of the Cockatrice*
Verovan, last king of Westgate, dies.
Guilds are formed in Waterdeep.

1249 *The Year of the Bold Knight*

1250 *The Year of the Riven Skull*

1251 *The Year of the Wandering Winds*

1252 *The Year of the Empty Goblet*
Vine-blight destroys grape crop—no wine!

1253 *The Year of Beckoning Death*
Plague year in Cormyr, Sembia, and the Vast.

1254 *The Year of Silent Steel*
Rising power of thieves' guilds results in many assassinations.

1255 *The Year of the Raging Flame*

1256 *The Year of the Dusty Throne*

1257 *The Year of the Killing Wave*
Tidal wave strikes Calimshan.

1258 *The Year of the Wilted Flowers*

1259 *The Year of the Vigilant Fist*

1260 *The Year of the Broken Blade*
Many peace treaties signed this year.
Halacar of Aglarond is poisoned; his sister, Ilione, tutor to the Simbul, takes the throne.

1261 *The Year of Bright Dreams*

1262 *The Year of the Black Wind*
Killing storm raised by a Calishite mage.
Guild Wars in Waterdeep.

1263 *The Year of the Tressym*
As foretold by Alaundo, these creatures became widespread.

1264 *The Year of the Shattered Altar*
Widespread tomb-robbing and sacrilege.

1265 *The Year of Flowers*

1266 *The Year of the Leaping Frog*

1267 *The Year of the Groaning Cart*
A bountiful harvest year.

1268 *The Year of the Daystars*

1269 *The Year of the Moat*

1270 *The Year of the Tooth*
1271 *The Year of the Shattered Wall*
1272 *The Year of the Shrieker*
1273 *The Year of the Wagon*
Magisters founded in Waterdeep.
Joadath noted as being lord of Shadowdale.
1274 *The Year of the Purple Toad*
1275 *The Year of the Blade*
1276 *The Year of the Crumbling Keep*
The Citadel of the Raven rebuilt.
1277 *The Year of the Beholder*
1278 *The Year of Many Bones*
1279 *The Year of the Snarling Dragon*
1280 *The Year of the Manticore*
Thay nearly conquers Mulhorand before being repulsed.
Old Skull Inn built in Shadowdale.
1281 *The Year of the Cold Soul*
1282 *The Year of the Many Mists*
1283 *The Year of the Crawling Clouds*
1284 *The Year of the Dying Stars*
1285 *The Year of the Blacksnake*
1286 *The Year of the Rock*
1287 *The Year of the Smoky Moon*
1288 *The Year of the Roaring Horn*
Last ogre Tharkul falls.
Human kingdom of Thar established.
1289 *The Year of the Sighing Serpent*
1290 *The Year of the Whelm*
Dragonspear Castle falls.
1291 *The Year of the Hooded Falcon*
1292 *The Year of the Wandering Waves*
1293 *The Year of the Talking Skull*
1294 *The Year of the Deep Moon*
1295 *The Year of the Ormserpent*
1296 *The Year of the Black Hound*
1297 *The Year of the Singing Skull*
First recorded mention of Drizzt Do'Urden.
Massacre on Watcher's Knoll of Tyrists by Joadath.
1298 *The Year of the Pointed Bone*
1299 *The Year of the Claw*
1300 *The Year of the Starfall*
Thieves' guild destroyed in Waterdeep.
Joadath of Shadowdale dies.
Aumry and Sylune become lord and lady of Shadowdale.
1301 *The Year of the Trumpet*
1302 *The Year of the Broken Helm*
1303 *The Year of the Evening Sun*
Fall of the human kingdom of Thar.
1304 *The Year of the Stag*
1305 *The Year of the Creeping Fang*
1306 *The Year of Thunder*
Moonsea War.
Mulmaster vanquished by alliance of other cities.
Vangerdahast of Cormyr founds War Wizards.
1307 *The Year of the Mace*
Azoun of Cormyr born.
1308 *The Year of the Catacombs*
Dungeon exploring comes into vogue.
Lhestyn becomes the Open Lord of Waterdeep.
Construction begins on Lhestyn's (later Piergeiron's) Palace.
1309 *The Year of the Sunset Winds*
1310 *The Year of the Storms*
1311 *The Year of the Fist*
1312 *The Year of the Griffon*
Darkhold seized by the Black Network.
Teziir founded on the Dragonmere.
Red Sashes operating in Waterdeep.
1313 *The Year of the Shattered Oak*
1314 *The Year of the Shadowtop*
The tree of this name flourishes in this year.
Piergeiron becomes the Unmasked Lord of Waterdeep.
Rhigaerd II, King of Cormyr, defeats the border raiders.
1315 *The Year of Spilled Blood*
1316 *The Year of the Gulagoar*
1317 *The Year of the Wandering Wyrm*
Great Plague of the Inner Sea, also called the Dragon Plague.
1318 *The Year of the Tired Treant*
1319 *The Year of the Fallen Throne*
The kingship of Sossal ends in bloodshed.
1320 *The Year of the Watching Cold*
The Simbul becomes queen of Aglarond.
1321 *The Year of Chains*
The Harpers reorganized.
Twilight Hall founded in Berdusk.
1322 *The Year of Lurking Death*
Monstrous attacks at a 50-year high, due to drought.
1323 *The Year of Dreamwebs*
Great Plague declared over.
Thayvian wizards attempt to control others through dreams; they are discovered and destroyed.
1324 *The Year of the Grimoire*
Many old magical tomes were discovered in this year, sparking a renewed interest in magic.
1325 *The Year of the Great Harvests*
Beer and wine of this year are legendary.
1326 *The Year of the Striking Hawk*
1327 *The Year of the Blue Flame*
1328 *The Year of the Adder*
1329 *The Year of the Lost Helm*
1330 *The Year of the Marching Moon*
1331 *The Year of the Leaping Dolphin*
1332 *The Year of the Sword and Stars*
1333 *The Year of the Striking Falcon*
Amnian Trade War.
Founding of the Council of Six and the unification of Amn.
1334 *The Year of the Blazing Brand*
1335 *The Year of the Snow Winds*
The Evereska Charter claims the Greycloak Hills for the elves.
Rhigaerd II dies in the waning days of this year.
1336 *The Year of the Highmantle*
Azoun IV takes the throne of Cormyr.
1337 *The Year of the Wandering Maiden*
Charles Oliver O'Kane becomes mayor of Ravens Bluff.
1338 *The Year of the Wanderer*
Wandering Wyvern built in Sevenecho.
Queen Sambryl takes throne of Impiltur.

1339 *The Year of the Weeping Moon*
Aumry slain; Jyordhan becomes lord of Shadowdale.

1340 *The Year of the Lion*
Battle of the River Rising in Featherdale between Sembian and Cult of the Dragon forces; death of the wizard Mhzentul.

1341 *The Year of the Gate*

1342 *The Year of the Behir*

1343 *The Year of the Boot*

1344 *The Year of Moonfall*
Retreat of the elves from Cormanthor begins.

1345 *The Year of the Saddle*
Jyordhan slain by Khelben Arunsun of Waterdeep.
Time of No Lords (until 1348) in Shadowdale.

1346 *The Year of the Bloodbird*
Bhaal banished from Moonshae Islands.
Kendrick becomes high king of Moonshaes.
The Friendly Arm built.
Naval Battle of Lisen Sands.
Selfaril becomes High Blade of Mulmaster.

1347 *The Year of the Bright Blade*
Zhengyi the Witch-King rises in Vaasa.
Alemander IV dies in Tethyr.
"Ten Black Days of Eleint"—Tethyrian civil war begins.

1348 *The Year of the Spur*
Khelben gives *Pendant of Ashaba* to Knights of Myth Drannor.
Doust Sulwood chosen to be lord of Shadowdale.

1349 *The Year of the Bridle*

1350 *The Year of the Morningstar*

1351 *The Year of the Crown*
Warlock's Crypt discovered.
Plague in Baldur's Gate.

1352 *The Year of the Dragon*
Gondegal the Lost King of Arabel.
Barbarians of the Ride destroy Zhentarim force en route to Glister.

1353 *The Year of the Arch*
Randal Morn kills Malyk of Daggerdale.
Doust Sulwood retires to Arabel.
Mourngrym Amcathra becomes lord of Shadowdale.

1354 *The Year of the Bow*
Prosperous harvest in the Realms.
Mulmaster's "New Fleet" destroyed in battle.
Maalthiir becomes ruler of Hillsfar.
House of the Lady (Tymora) established in Shadowdale.

1355 *The Year of the Harp*
Zhentil Keep takes Citadel of the Raven as its own.
Retreat of elves from Cormanthor reaches its peak.
Yulash falls in civil war.
Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar move troops to Yulash.
Shaerl Rowanmantle sent by Vangerdahast to Shadowdale.
Shaerl and Mourngrym wed.

1356 *The Year of the Worm*
Selfaril of Mulmaster and the tharchioness of the Tharch of Eltabbar in Thay, known as the First Princess of Thay outside of Thay, exchange gifts.
Scardale attempts to take over the Dalelands and is crushed.
Cormyr seizes Tilverton.
Lyran the Pretender attacks Shadowdale.
Flight of Dragons over the Dales and Moonsea.
Death of Sylune of Shadowdale.

1357 *The Year of the Prince*
Aumark Lithyl unifies Ruathym.
King Virdin of Damara killed in battle with Zhengyi.
Horustep III (age 11) takes the throne of Mulhorand.

1358 *The Year of Shadows* (0 PR)
The Time of Troubles; gods walk the Realms.
Destruction of Bane, Bhaal, Myrkul, and perhaps other gods.
Ascendency of Cyric.
Dead magic and wild magic areas appear in the Realms.
Mourngrym and Shaerl have a son, Scotti.

1359 *The Year of the Serpent*
Zhengyi is destroyed.
Damara united by Gareth Dragonsbane.
Tuigan horde united beneath its Khahan.

1360 *The Year of the Turret*
Tuigan horde invades Faerûn.
Crusade against the Tuigan.
King Azoun IV kills Khahan.

1361 *The Year of Maidens*
The Banedeath—holy war in Zhentil Keep.
Orthodox Banite worship driven underground in that city.
The Revelation of the True World of Maztica.

1362 *The Year of the Helm*

1363 *The Year of the Wyvern*
The Way Inn destroyed by hordes from Dragonspear.
The Battle of Daggerford.
Ring of Winter reappears in Chult.

1364 *The Year of the Wave*
The Way Inn rebuilt.

1365 *The Year of the Sword*
Alicia of becomes high queen of the Moonshaes.

1366 *The Year of the Staff*
First Princess of Thay marries Selfaril of Mulmaster.

1367 *The Year of the Shield*
The year just ending.

1368 *The Year of the Banner*

The Future

1369 *The Year of the Gauntlet*

1370 *The Year of the Tankard*

1371 *The Year of the Unstrung Harp*

1372 *The Year of Wild Magic*

1373 *The Year of Rogue Dragons*

1374 *The Year of Lightning Storms*

1375 *The Year of Risen Elfkin*

1376 *The Year of the Bent Blade*

1377 *The Year of the Haunting*

News of The Realms

The following items report the greater and lesser events of the year 1367 DR/9 PR, nine years after the Time of Troubles. DMs may opt to use this as background story for their own adventures in the Realms, or start player characters at Hammer and have them live a year in the life of the Realms as news flows in. These news items and rumors should be used as the hearsay they are; DMs should feel free to modify them to fit their campaigns.

Hammer

- The Hall of Seven Swords in Memnon (Calimshan) has been riven asunder in a great spell battle between Yuthrygg of the Many Miracles and Galthaunt the Grimcloak. Neither archmage was slain, but both spent much of their power; their spell bolts and magical creations waged war in the streets of the city for most of a day while terrified citizens fled. It is said the battle began when Yuthrygg (who has lived in seclusion in the Marching Mountains for almost five decades) declared himself Overking of Tethyr. Galthaunt has been gathering strength in central Tethyr as well, claiming that his magic can bring peace and justice to a land tom by brigandry.
- Myrmeen Lhal of Arabel has refused a request by the church of Helm to establish a temple within the city. The church had cited the nearby presence of the wild magic area known as the Helmlands as a dangerous area which needed to be guarded by the presence of Helm's priests. The lord of Arabel noted in turn that it was called the Helmlands for a reason, and many people still hold the god Helm responsible for the wild magic area. The delegation left the city without further argument.
- An unseasonable plague has erupted briefly in Iriaebor, claiming 20 lives before being contained by the collective actions of local temples. The disease, called the Spotted Plague, is noted by the flushed appearance of the victim, whose flesh is dotted with white pustules. Death comes within 24 hours of first symptoms. The churches of Eldath, Selûne, and Chauntea mobilized their forces to combat it, calling in every available wandering priest to aid their churches.

  The presence of a virulent plague in the heart of winter leads some to believe that the disease was magically sent or the result of godly influence. Tattooed women and men were said to have traveled through town several weeks before the outbreak, and Talona is being blamed.

Alturiak

- A sledge caravan bucking heavy snows west of Priapurl was attacked by drow raiders at dusk a tenday or so ago as it was hurrying towards a sheltered campsite. Only the presence of two minor wizards in the caravan snatched certain victory from the drow, who attacked with sleep-poisoned crossbow bolts and javelins ("at least 40 strong"). After several fireballs were hurled and a handful of drow slain blade to blade, the dark elves fled.

  As proof of their tale, the wizards brought four drow corpses to Priapurl. Several adventuring bands have set out in search of the drow, and all caravan guards in the area have been raised to triple strength.
- A riot has erupted in Mulmaster as city crossbowmen and wizards have fired on rebellious citizens. The cause of the riot was apparently an indiscretion by a member of the Thayvian delegation, a Red Wizard in the service of a tharchioness of Thay (who is also the bride of High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin). The growing resentment against Red Wizards and Thayvians soon grew to a mob scene, as the offending wizard was immolated, other natives of Thay were chased down and beaten, and an attempt was made to bum the

House Built of Gold, the former temple of Waukeen. Local fears are that the temple will be turned over to the Thayvians for use by their dark elemental gods.

During the attempt, city forces backed by both the Cloaks and the Red Wizards defended the building, setting off fireballs amongst the crowd. Damage was heavy throughout the area, and between 100 and 1,000 Mulmasterites died, their blood staining the snow. Several Cloaks and Red Wizards perished as well, and both magical forces have accused the other of traitorous attacks during the uprising.

A full curfew is in effect in Mulmaster, and Thayvian nationals are restricted to their quarters for the next two months. No decision has been made as to the disposition of the temple.

Ches

- The temple of Oghma in Deepingdale reports with grave concern a series of reports out of Zhentil Keep and the Moonsea region. Scribes have been recruited by the Circle of Darkness, the temple of Cyric in Zhentil Keep, for some unknown project. The bulk of these scribes have not been affiliated with any church (such as Oghma or Deneir), though some scribes from these faiths who have enquired have been rebuffed. The recruited scribes have not been seen again.

  Some of this recruitment is involuntary, and kidnapping of scribes and other learned people is on the upswing throughout the Moonsea and the Vast. Wizards, like priests, seem to be exempted. Attempts to pierce the veil of secrecy have proved unsuccessful, and in one case fatal. Learned Father Hasicor Danali of the Temple of Oghma encourages all literate women and men to be wary.
- Rhalaglingalade, a soft-spoken, bearded archmage who recently settled in Neverwinter, has announced an important new creation: the *sphere of summer*. This enchantment is a series of complicated spells that bring into being a sphere of translucent force in which plants can be grown in warmth and controlled damp throughout the winter. Such spheres also allow the farming of tropical fruits and flowers in northern climes.

  Since announcing his discovery, the archmage has thrice been attacked by Calishite assassins (notably Thyruin of the White Flowers, who escaped and is thought to be roaming the North in a savage mood) and survived capture attempts sponsored, it is whispered, by various merchants of Amn, Luskan, and even Thay. Rhalaglingalade has appealed to the Lords' Alliance for protection, and has been assigned a bodyguard of hired adventurers (each of whom is paid 2,000 gp/month). Several of this guard have been slain already while repulsing attacks, but there seems no shortage of ready applicants, even from among the noble families of Waterdeep.

Tarsakh

- Drow have attacked the city of Assam, north of Ormath in the Shining Plains in force and have been beaten back with heavy losses on both sides. The Fellowship of the Spiked Fist, a local mercenary band, was hastily hired by a merchant in neighboring Ormath whose family and goods-warehouses were both trapped in Assam. The Spiked Fist's volleys of fire arrows and charge into the drow forces from the rear routed the dark elves. City rulers in Westgate, the Dragon Coast, and the Vilhon Reach are all said to be worried that this attack represents a new drow invasion of the surface lands, and are arming and making plans for war.
- Bandit activity in the Tunlands (the vale of the Tun River west of Cormyr) has increased over the past trading sessions, resulting in increased Cormyrean patrols from the Bridge of Fallen Men north. Patrols out of High Horn regularly sweep the area, and raids against barbarian tribes have increased. Warlord Thaalim Torchtower has sworn vengeance against Azoun for his country's actions, as apparently one of the raids claimed the life of Thaalim's youngest son.

Mirtul

- In Schamedar (Calimshan), the adventurer-wizard Shond Tharovin has announced his discovery (in the ruins found in the Forest of Mir) of a glowing, faceted ruby as large as a human's head. He found the stone floating in midair in a shattered underground temple, and believes it to be the stone known in ancient texts as the Living Gem. It flies about at his command, and Shond Tharovin has taken it to meetings with the local ruling council.
- Drow have been seen on the streets of Calaunt by night; rumors are spreading that the rulership of that city has entered into a secret alliance with the dark elves. Strange ships are appearing in the city and docking at guarded places, remaining lifeless by day, and becoming the center of bustling activity by night. Some merchants of the Dragon Reach lands claim to recognize some of these ships as vessels belonging to known pirates of the Sea of Fallen Stars. An adventuring band, the Ladies of the Green Shield, was slaughtered near Calaunt recently, and some say they died because they came upon a drow band by night.
- Melvaunt has felt a succession of cold, clear nights that have brought heavy frost, killed birds, and driven up the price of firewood sharply. This intemperate weather is in sharp contrast to the continuing warm spring in neighboring Thentia; some folk believe the cold has been brought on by fell magic or the will of Auril (whose worship is strongly frowned upon in the city).

- King Ghellin of the Iron House is reported to be fatally ill of a wasting disease, which has resisted all medicinal and clerical cures. Reports on the king-in-exile, who is said to be living with the dwarves of the Far Hills, say that he has lost a great deal of weight and has taken on a gray, death-like pallor. The illness has motivated elder dwarves to plan a retaking of Tethyamar from its occupying orcs and goblins and return the ill king to his throne.

Kythorn

- Shond Tharovin has declared himself vizier of Schamedar (Calimshan). The ruling council of the city seems to have disappeared, its members fled or slain. Tharovin conjured up a great mirror before the assembly gathered to hear his proclamation in the vizier's palace. In it could be seen a caravan hastening over sandy hills—and riding wearily with that caravan could be seen former Vizier Artouk Fanzir. Tharovin pronounced Fanzir a traitor to the honor of Schamedar, and hurled a cluster of fireballs into the Living Gem floating nearby. The image of the gem suddenly appeared in the scene on the mirror, hanging in midair in front of Fanzir—and out of it burst the swarm of fiery spheres, incinerating the screaming man in an instant.

  The new vizier of Schamedar then suggested that citizens of Schamedar would do well to kneel and serve him if they'd like to avoid a similar fate. He added with a soft smile that he could see any place in Faerûn and send the Gem there to work his will. The assembled citizens went to their knees, and Tharovin commanded them to serve him in "all things, great and small, while Schamedar rises to rule all of Calimshan!"
- A hunting expedition has returned empty-handed to Arrabar from the Chondalwood, bursting with tales about a huge, two-headed, gray dragon-thing. Mages who were hired by the expedition's sponsors to magically interrogate the hunters affirm that the hunters believe they saw what they're describing: a winged, reptilian monster as long as five ships that had a stabbing bone sting in its tail and glided in from distant mountains to snatch up the hunters' cages, rend their steel bars like so much dry kindling, and totally devour all the captured animals.

  Sages consulted in Arrabar have found no records of such a creature in the lore books of Chondath, and no one has yet been able to identify the monster as any one of the known dragon species.
- Zhentil Keep forces have reported a resounding success in dealing with nonhuman forces raiding Zhentil Keep lumbering operations in the Border Forest. Centaur and satyr forces were said to be destroyed with minimum loss of human forces, as reported by an advisor to Lord Chess.

Flamerule

- Ghalivar Braceltar, a merchant of Selgaunt, is selling a sweet, milky beverage there known as ice wine. He claims—with a smile—it's the milk remorhaz feed to their young (a claim sages ridicule, of course). The drink usually fetches 1 gp for a bottle, or 4 sp per tallglass if drunk in a tavern, and has become very popular in Sembia. Interest in ice wine is growing in cities around the Sea of Fallen Stars, and it has become a very popular deck cargo.
- In Calimshan, Shond Tharovin has promised new greatness for Schamedar if its citizens worship the Living Gem as he does. Rainbow-robed priests have begun to appear on the streets of Schamedar, and work is underway on the House of the Gem, a gem-shaped temple in front of the vizier's palace. Shond Tharovin claims that the gem is his wisest and most trusted advisor, and that it has big plans for "the future might of Calimshan."

  A typical reaction from the citizenry of Calimport—a snort, and the comment, "Worshipping jewelry? Ha! I knew he was crazed, all along—wait until he starts arguing with raindrops!"

  In Zhentil Keep, the largest burning of heretics has occurred since the Banedeath seven years ago. Fifty-three unrepentant Banites were found guilty of heresy against Cyric and treachery against Zhentil Keep, sealed in iron cages, and lowered, one at a time, into the flames in front of a cheering crowd of the faithful. The ceremony was overseen by Fzoul Chembryl, a former priest of Bane and leader of the Zhentarim who now serves the Prince of Lies.

Eleasias

- The countryside east of Schamedar has risen against Shond Tharovin and the cult of the Living Gem. Men calling themselves the Seven Satraps have come to power in the villages and towns along the River of Ice, and they promise to fight to the death against the "evil power" of Shond Tharovin.

  Since the public proclamations of the Seven Satraps, many dark horrors have appeared out of the skies to slay and raid at will. Local wizards and adventurers have destroyed most of these, but there seems no end to the supply. The source is widely believed to be the spells of Shond Tharovin.
- High Queen Alicia of the Moonshae Isles has sent a representative to Waterdeep to establish an official embassy and to pave the way for a visit of the high queen to the city some time in the next year. Despite the cosmopolitan nature of the city, most Waterdhavians are abuzz about the official visit, which should occur sometime next Ches. This will be the first visit of the high queen to the continent in her rulership, and Lord

Piergeiron hailed the effort as bringing the people of Waterdeep and Moonshae closer together. Nobles are already planning fetes, and merchants are looking into producing commemorative items.

- A huge, oily-black monster that a local sage has called a dragon of the deep has been hauled ashore in nets near Luskan. It is said to have wings despite its underwater life, a tail, and a general appearance like unto a black dragon of the largest size. When dragged out into the air, it revived, reaching out its long neck to devour a fisherman who stood too near. Local warriors and wizards were hastily summoned as it wriggled up into the streets of the town, and they battled it with arrows, spears, and spells.

  The monster now lies dead, but plans to cut it open to search for any treasure it might have devoured have been halted because a flock of large carrion-bats have appeared to dine on the stinking corpse. In addition, a strange disease that causes people to grow sleepy and their skin to acquire a green-white glow has now been reported in many places in the city. Most folk believe this strange malady has something to do with the sea dragon's spells (perhaps a death curse), breath, or presence.

Eleint

- Occupying forces in Scardale have increasingly come into direct conflict. The city has been garrisoned by a multiregional force of Zhentil Keep, Daleland, Cormyrean, and Sembian forces. The rivalry is primarily between Cormyrean and Sembian garrisons, and has broken into open skirmishes and brawls between the two groups. Both forces have been confined to their barracks when not on patrol.
- The archmage Yoond Salshymmyr has while died casting a mighty curse on Shond Tharovin of Schamedar, transforming the ruler of the Living Gem into an amorphous creature.

  The archmage was found in his shattered spell chamber by an apprentice, his body transformed into an ever-whirling sphere of detached bones, small fires and lightnings spitting here and there in the wake of the great immolation that took Yoond's life.

  The laying of the mighty curse involved the deliberate sacrifice of Yoond's life—and reports have come from Schamedar that Shond Tharovin has been transformed into an amorphous, screaming thing of many mouths and flowing form—like the horrid monsters known to humankind as gibbering mouthers.

  Satraps and outlander adventurers alike are trying to determine if this has indeed occurred (or if it is merely a rumor or deception practiced by Tharovin).

  The rainbow-hued priests of the Living Gem are very agitated; they have slain at least a dozen folk on the streets of the city, apparently at random, to demonstrate that the Gem retains the power to bring killing spells down on a chosen foe from afar. The priests' cries, as always, are "The Gem Lives!"—but they now seem designed to assure people that whatever has befallen Tharovin, the Cult of the Living Gem will endure. Folk of Calimshan don't generally seem too pleased at the assurance.
- There has been a sudden rash of deaths in Westgate. Folk have been found dead, apparently having met their ends alone and without violence, in vaults and hitherto hidden or tightly locked strong-closets and treasure-storage passages. Bunsilber Wyrldar, a naturalist, has suggested that a large number of lock lurkers, monsters that look like coins, must have been introduced into the supply of coins changing hands in the city. Others fear some sort of fell drow plot to weaken the city and invade, and still others whisper of a wizard's curse that infects everyone who comes into contact with the afflicted person. One thing is certain: Folk are looking over their shoulders a lot in Westgate these days.
- A giant wolf spider of remarkable size and singular magical yellow color has been slain in the woods south of Shadowdale. The glow of the spider has been retained past its death and stuffing, and it now is in residence as a trophy at the Old Skull Inn. The hero who killed the spider traded it for a week's lodging and as much ale as he could drink. Innkeeper Jhaele Silvermane has been quoted as saying, "'Twas a bargain, but not much of one."

Marpenoth

- Shond Tharovin has been trapped, apparently forever, in gibbering mouther form—and the spells and spears of the fearful citizens of Schamedar have driven him into hiding in the crumbling catacombs of the saltwater (tidal-flushed) sewers under the city. He is said to still command many items of magic from afar by strength of will alone—and by these means has blasted or brought down falling blocks of stone on several luckless individuals who have sought to slay him in the sewers.

  In the city above, the Cult of the Living Gem is trying to establish its absolute rule and is running into disorganized but determined resistance from the citizenry. High Priest Ong Thwarba narrowly escaped death at the hands of a knife-wielding mob when he called on the Living Gem to teleport himself away.

  Sages and adventurers note that "priests" of this cult have no spells given from a god, but only what they can directly call on the Living Gem to do—and more than once, a priest has perished because the Gem was busy helping another priest. "This is no true priesthood," said Talask Alamber, a priest of Sune in nearby Almraiven, "but a gang of thugs all scrambling to hide behind a single weapon—if all of them were beset, they'd find its fury too little to share around!" The Seven Satraps who rule

the countryside near the city are organizing armed bands for attacks on the priests of the Gem. In their turn, the priests seem to be hiring mercenaries and organizing work gangs to improve the fortifications of Schamedar.

- The Iron Throne has been banished from operating in Cormyr until winter of next year. The mysterious merchant company has engaged in questionable and sharp dealings since its founding, culminating in the reported hiring of assassins to deal with the Archendale firm of Mirksha, Mirksha, and Mirksha (all three Mirkshas survived the attempts on their collective lives). A proclamation from King Azoun has declared that Iron Throne offices be closed, their goods impounded, and any caravan flying the Iron Throne banner or employing its agents in Cormyr be seized. The Iron Throne claims that it has been a victim of an outrageous smear, and said it will appeal. This last comment led Vangerdahast to guffaw, "Appeal? Do they think this is Sembia, where a bag of gold buys justice in your favorite flavor?"

- In Thay, a Red Wizard has devised an awesome killing spell he calls the red wind, and used it to destroy all life in two villages—one built around the tower of a rival wizard, and the other around the mansion of an autharch. This elimination of two rivals at one stroke has struck fear into the hearts of the Thayvian nobility, and several zulkirs have publicly demanded that the offending Red Wizard—one Rooltasz Tesurpar—surrender the secrets of the spell to them upon pain of death.

  So far, Rooltasz seems in no hurry to comply, and at least three Red Wizards have died trying to get into his spell-trapped tower. Some local folk say that Rooltasz has left his tower, leaving it only as a trap to slay foes. The renegade Red Wizard has remained in hiding since a spectacular midair spell battle in which he recently destroyed a rival Red Wizard with a swarm of flying spheres of acid akin to a meteor swarm. Rooltasz has not been seen since this victory, despite the most probing magical searches of various Red Wizards.

  There is some concern about this news in all high seats in the Realms. Such a spell could be used to devastate any city, castle, or assembled army, making every throne unsafe. As one veteran mercenary in Tsurlagol put it, "It would be best for all if this Rooltasz simply vanished, taking his spell with him. Failing that, all folk in the Realms who wish to remain free must keep him and his spell out of the hands of those who rule Thay—or all Faerûn will become part of Thay!"

  Interestingly, the Simbul, queen of Aglarond, has not been seen since Rooltasz's last appearance.

- outbreak of plague has struck Procampur, slaying hundreds, mostly in the District of the Poor. Slow reaction by the other wards of this divided city is blamed for the deaths. The plague is called *featherlung* from the fact it kills by causing the lungs to fill with dying flesh and asphyxiates the victim. Clerics of Torm and Helm ministered to those who could make it to the Temple District (thereby spreading the plague) but Orn Thavil of Tymora and Baniya Dolester of Lliira set up an auxiliary shrine in the District of the Poor to deal directly with the matter. It is said that their action, and that of the other priests, prevented the disease from spreading further. Both priests have been reprimanded by the thultryl (the ruler of Procampur) for violating customs, and reminded that Procampur and its ways are older than many deities of the Realms.

  During the upheaval, a woman accused of being a priestess of Talona was hanged by a panicked mob. The woman, sporting facial tattoos, claimed to be a sailor from Prespur (that is, a pirate), but this did not dissuade the crowd. Before she died, she cursed the mob to suffer worse in the future.

Uktar

- The harvest in Chessenta has been so great this year that heavily laden ships are plying the Sea of Fallen Stars to sell root vegetables at bargain prices, and a rare cross-Shaar caravan has been attempted to bring the plenty to markets in the Lake of Steam ports. Brigands have attacked this caravan several times, but it is so large that its outriders mass into a small army, and their swords and spells have driven the attackers back with heavy losses. Farmers across the Heartlands are warned that carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, potatoes, and the like will bring only a copper a basket or less in any land easily reached by ship or wagon.

- The great, glowing, yellow stuffed spider of Shadowdale has been put in the possession of Lord Mourngrym following a series of incidents and pranks. Young men have been stealing the spider (nicknamed "Otto") from the inn and throwing it into various bedrooms throughout town, frightening the (previously) sleeping inhabitants. The pranks continued until a group of young men thought it would be ripping to throw Otto down on the Mage of Shadowdale, Elminster. The mage was visibly shaken, and the young men are recovering from their wounds, Lord Mourngrym intends to display the spider far from the eyes and hands of the young.

- In Calimshan, Schamedar is under siege. The Living Gem has been seen often above the walls, hurling bolts of lightning or killing flame down onto the attackers—and in the fray, a new thing has been learned about the giant jewel: If someone hurls himself or herself on it to try and shatter it, the Gem can absorb him or her into itself in about the time it takes a person to draw breath!

  The Living Gem and its cult still survive, but Shond Tharovin's dreams of ruling Calimshan seem lost forever. It is not known if he still survives under the city or if another will arise to use the Gem in an attempted conquest of Calimshan or another land.

- Mongo, Blood of Ghellin, a dwarven warrior, is reported to have entered Ironfang Keep and met its inhabitants. He appeared, beaten and battered, at the Dragon's Jaws tavern in Suzail, claiming to have escaped by means of a teleportation artifact, The dwarf was babbling, but witnesses report he said that Ironfang was filled with chanting fiends who called out the names of those who were to about to die. They offered up the names so that the world itself would not end.

  Mongo became delirious and was put to bed. The next morning his remains were found scattered around the room. The room was otherwise undisturbed, and there was no indication of other violence.

Nightal

- A Flying Hunt out of Nimbral has flown right across the Shining Sea and raided into the Pirate Isles of Nelanther for the first time in living memory. Tribesmen in the Calim Desert reported seeing the glass-armored knights heading northwards, passing in the air overhead along the coast. A heavily armed caravel making the perilous run from Baldur's Gate south to Memnon noted no pirate activity, but did encounter several pirate ships smoking and adrift, with every creature on board dead. This work of the Hunt has been lauded in all the lands about, but with the praise have come the whispers: Where will they strike next? Is any land safe from their raids?

  Since the Hunt, flying ships from the mage-land of Halruaa have been seen sailing the clouds toward Nimbral; perhaps the wizards wish to discuss the future plans of the Hunt face to face with the rulers of the Realm of the Flying Hunt.
- In Calimport, a mage who has been monitoring the situation in Schamedar (where the siege continues) reports that Shond Tharovin has slipped away into the sea and is still lurking in the area.

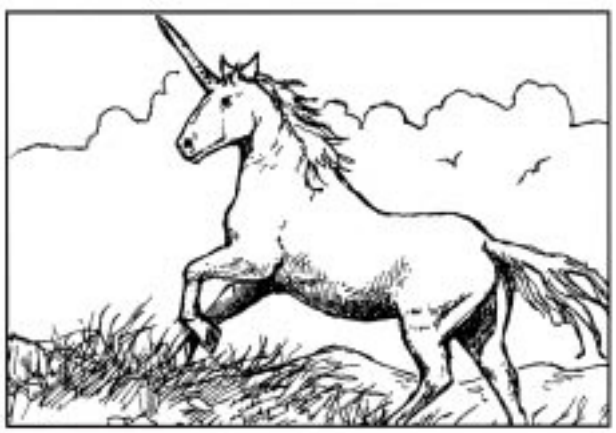
  The wizard Nardulkyn of the East Wind says he's devised a spell that can locate Tharovin when the former vizier is in human form. His observations suggest that Tharovin seems to have mastered the ability to shift back and forth between his human and amorphous gibbering mouther form at will, and that in monster form he can swim, drift, or crawl along the sea floor, surviving in the saltwater depths.

  Nardulkyn says that Tharovin is heading steadily westward, and has already passed Calimport by. Rumors that have sprung up in Calimport on the heels of Nardulkyn's news have Tharovin heading variously to Tethyr, to seize power there; to the Nelanther, to rebuild his power in seclusion; or to Skullport and the dangerous levels of Undermountain under Waterdeep, to work evil in alliance with the beholder who is said to lair there just beneath the busy city streets.
- A huge feathered monstrosity crashed in Arabel shortly after the Feast of the Moon. The creature had the head of a serpent, the body of a great raven, and sweated blood. The creature swooped low over the city several times before losing control, and smashed several buildings as it did, including the warehouse of House Misrim. Repairs are currently being made. It is assumed that the creature died of some unseen magical attack, but so far no mage has stepped forward to claim the credit. The monstrosity came out of the north, and it is likely that the creature's origin was in the hated Helmlands.
- Several travelers on the road south of Waterdeep have reported seeing a glowing, blue-white unicorn that came out of stands of trees to closely scrutinize them and others on the road. Its hooves made no sound—and one report says they never quite touched the ground! Elzund Glimmercloak, a wandering priest of Mielikki then in Waterdeep, was very excited at the travelers' tales. He says the unicorn could only have been a manifestation of Mielikki, and that all faithful of the Lady of the Forest must pray to her for some explanation of this sign.

  Glimmercloak has been sharply rebuked by Mhair Nalath, a wandering priestess of Lurue the Unicorn (one of the many splinter faiths known as the Beast Cults). She says what the travelers saw could only have been Lurue, her goddess, and that her appearance marks a rise in power and importance of the Unicorn in Faerûn.

  The adventuring band known as the Blade of the Unicorn, who share Mhair's faith, agree with her—and have already slain three orc raiding bands and a priest of Malar in the name of the Unicorn to celebrate this sign from the gods.

  In Daggerford, the druid Galass Tholt says the unicorn was merely a friend of his who had fallen afoul of a warding spell that left it aglow with *faerie fire,* and that it was looking for a kindly wizard to remove the condition. Tholt also says that priests are all too apt to make wild claims about happenings in Faerûn before they look about, see, and think—and that much tumult and bloodshed could be avoided if they would all mend their ways, even as the gods did (in the Time of Troubles). Nalath denounced him as just "a crazy old druid," but several merchants who heard his words replied, "Amen to that." The arguments bid fair to continue for some time.



Secret Power Groups

In addition to the various cities, nations, and peoples listed in *A Grand Tour of the Realms,* there are a number of other powers within the Realms, all operating to their own ends, and often ignoring national boundaries. These are secret societies, cults, and adventuring companies that seek to put forward their own agenda and advance the Realms to their own ends. To the DM, they supply a source of adventure hooks, modest villains to challenge the players, and secret allies.

The Cult of the Dragon

This semireligious organization was founded by Sammaster, a powerful wizard favored by the gods with great power, in a manner similar to (reportedly) Elminster and Khelben Arunsun. In Sammaster's case, however, the additional power brought delusions of godhood and madness, and he came to believe in time that "dead dragons shall rule the world entirely" and began to work toward that goal. While Sammaster has died, risen as a lich, and fallen again, his cult lives on, and continues to threaten the Heartlands.

The Cult of the Dragon venerates dragons in general, evil dragons in particular, and specifically dead evil dragons, reanimated as powerful and fell *dracoliches.* The Cult acts as an information network for its draconian "masters," brings gems and riches as offerings, and encourages evil dragons to become dracoliches.

The Cult of the Dragon is active throughout the Realms but is specifically powerful in the Cold Lands and the North, where dragons are particularly populous (if not *popular).* Cult member activities include gathering information on particularly rich caravans to be raided, stealing unique items to be offered to their master, and leading raids against their enemies, who in their minds are all those who might oppose the rulership of the dragons.

Senior members of the Cult of the Dragon are known as Keepers of the Secret Hoard, and to them is given the secret of the creation of dracoliches. Each senior member is also in possession of a *ring of dragons.* The Keepers use these to protect themselves against assailants.

The Harpers

The Harpers are a semisecret society based in the Heartlands. The Harpers have seen a number of incarnations through the years, with rising and falling levels of political power. They are primarily a good-aligned group that is allied with a number of good churches, and are receiving support from powerful neutral individuals, including druidic circles. Their aim is to keep the dangers both of and to civilization at bay, including goblin raids, dragon flights, and the insidious control of other groups such as the Red Wizards and the Cult of the Dragon. They believe in the power of individuals, the balance between the wild and the civilized, and the good of humankind and its allied sentient races. They also believe in preserving the tales of the past, so that one may learn from those tales for the future. The Harpers attract a wide variety of character types, but this society is most attractive to elves, rangers, and bards.

Harpers are spread throughout the North and the Heartlands, often operating in secret. They are by their nature meddlers, and often operate alone or in small groups to achieve their ends. Except when battling long-term foes, it is unimportant to them if their name is connected with their actions (their own tales and songs are another matter).

The Harpers are an amorphous organization, and as such have no main base of operations. Two common

Ring of Dragons

This brass ring, when rubbed in a precise fashion, sends out a signal identifiable by evil dragons, indicating the location of the user. It is used by Cult of the Dragon senior members to summon aid. No control is implied by this calling, and only evil dragons may detect it. The ring also allows the wearer to speak in any dragon tongue and to communicate telepathically with any true dragon within line of sight.

The wearer also has the ability to cast a limited *phantasmal force* of a dragon up to 240 yards away from the caster. This illusion has no substance and can inflict no damage, but appears and sounds like any dragon the wielder has seen. This ability is usually used to preserve senior Cult members' hides, distract enemies, and deliver messages and sermons in a powerful manner.

Harper locales are Berdusk, where they are centered on Twilight Hall, a sprawling complex of buildings under the nominal control of the local temple of Deneir, and Shadowdale, where they have powerful allies. Harper members or allies include such worthies as Khelben Arunsun, Elminster, Mourngrym of Shadowdale, and Lord Piergeiron of Waterdeep.

The Harpers are a force of good in the Realms, and good-aligned characters may find themselves being aided by unseen allies if their business aids the organization. The only hint as to these allies' identity is the harp and moon symbol of the group.

The Heralds

The Heralds are a group of historians and arbitrators who were originally allied with the Harpers but split with them when the latter group's tendency towards good became unbalancing to their own even-handed interest in justice.

The Heralds were nominally established to organize the heraldry of the Realms and record the arms of its noble families. While the older, more established lines of Cormyr, Cahmshan, and Sembia treat heraldry with respect, the nouveau riche of Waterdeep see it as a status symbol, and as such there has been an explosion of various arms, sigils, symbols, and banners in the past few centuries. The Heralds are recognized as being the official arbitrators of precedence and correct armature.

That respect in matters of arms has extended into other areas in courtly life, such that the Heralds are often called upon as nonpartisan judges for contests and legal disputes. In some countries, such as Cormyr and Impiltur, Heralds are incorporated into the government itself as assistants and aides to local rulers. While the loyalty of these aides is considered to be first to their locality, they are responsible for passing information throughout the Herald organization.

The Heralds are led by five High Heralds, with the titles Unicorn, Black Vizor, Crescentcoat, Old Night, and Red Dragon. Of these, Old Night is the best known among the public, for he orders and organizes the heraldry of the Realms and is usually a sage wizard of great age and power. Old Night makes his home in the Savage Frontier in a hidden fortress known as the Herald's Holdfast.

Heralds strive for neutrality to the point of stasis, attempting to maintain the current order as opposed to extending it further in new conquests. They may advise their lords freely, and may be on opposing sides of a conflict and still maintain their power as Heralds as long as they maintain their impartiality. Heralds have in the past served as regents for underaged kings and queens, but are forbidden from holding onto that power once a suitable heir is found and from leading attacks directly against other Heralds. There have been abuses of these restrictions in the past, and the High Heralds have proved powerful enough to punish the guilty.

The Heralds are frustrating in that they are hidden in plain sight—as the scribes, clerks, and advisors of half a hundred petty rulers and barons. They are masters of information, which they pass along to their superiors, though rarely act on their own. They will push an adventurer or two in the correct direction should that meet with Herald goals.

The Iron Throne

Independent merchant generally tend to be individuals who deal on face value and (at least reputed) honesty. They also tend to stay out of politics, other than currying the favor of whoever or whatever is currently in charge of their favorite watering holes and way stops. Merchants trust to their luck but hire mercenaries as protection, and enough of their goods get through to make them profitable. The rulership of the lands they pass through is up to others, including retired members of their craft, whom they trust to give them a fair shake.

An apparent exception to this is the Iron Throne, a mysterious organization which has been operating over the past decade. Despite its long existence, little is known of its purpose or the identity of its hackers.

The Iron Throne operates through agents, mostly low-level thugs and brigands who have only recently taken legitimate employment and entered into the service of the merchant coster. The turnover is apparently high, since Iron Throne agents often seem to lapse into their old ways. The Throne denies all complicity in any criminal acts by their agents, and replaces them regularly. The Iron Throne wishes to maintain a patina of respectability, regardless of how thin.

The veneer has become thin indeed, for the Iron Throne has been charged with attempted assassination of competition, extortion, and thuggery, trading weapons to inhuman tribes, and trafficking in smoke powder, poison, and drugs. There have been frequent reports of conflicts between Iron Throne caravans and agents and those sponsored by the Zhentarim, and reports of Throne disputes with the tribes of

the North and the Goblin Marches. The Iron Throne has recently been banished for a year from acting within Cormyr.

The Iron Throne may enter the adventurers' lives as an agent looking for caravan guards or someone to perform a special mission—though the Throne's actions may well be suspect, since it is perfectly willing to set up people of all races as catspaws in its plans. Throne members may also be foes, in that they are attempting to cut into the Zhentarim's clandestine slave trade, and are much less picky about their victims.

The masters of the Iron Throne are at present unrevealed, and have to this date resisted all attempts to magically divine their identities or intentions. This indicates some level of magical ability or protection on their parts, and rumors are rampant. Some say that the Iron Throne members are secretly agents of the Zhentarim, or of Cormyr, and previous actions against those groups are only to hide their trail. Some mention that some god is involved, such as Cyric or Lliira, or that some dead deity is using the Throne as a stage for resurrection. Some talk of undead beholders, sentient lizards, or pale blue sea giants as the true masters of the merchant company and the secret of it power. The truth remains to be seen.

The Lords' Alliance

This group is also known variously as the Council of Lords, the Lords' Council, and the trade barons, and was formed to oppose the Zhentarim and their agents. It is a lawful and essentially good alliance of the rulers of the cities of the North and the Western Heartlands. These include Waterdeep, Mirabar, Neverwinter, Silverymoon, Baldur's Gate, Elturel, Berdusk, Iriaebor, and Sundabar. The Lords' Alliance is not to be confused with the Lords of Waterdeep (see the Waterdeep chapter in *A Grand Tour of the Realms),* though members of the latter belong to the former.

The Alliance communicates through official envoys by means of the trained pigeons of Piergeiron the Unmasked Lord of Waterdeep and by the magical arts of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. In this way Alliance agents have successfully coordinated military operations against Zhentarim annexation of an exclusive overland trade route, limiting that organization to its base in Llorkh.

The Lords' Alliance is an alliance against the Zhentarim, and while the lords stand firm against the encroachment of the Black Network, they are less cohesive in other matters. The Zhentarim hope to use such differing attitudes towards trade, magic, and treatment of nonhumans to break the alliance, but to date have failed.

The agents of the Lords' Alliance are varied, and usually swear their loyalty first to one particular lord, then to the Lords' Alliance as a whole. Still, there are a number of adventuring companies and paladins who strike against the Zhentarim "in the name of the Lords' Alliance."

The coastal city of Luskan, north of Neverwinter, is not a member of this group, as it receives most of its goods by sea, places a fierce value on its independence that precludes any firm alliances, and is noted for not being above a little trade raiding of its own. The kingdoms of Amn and Calimshan are indifferent to the alliance. It has been rumored that the Empires of the Sands secretly side with the Zhentarim for economic reasons—while there is trade strife in the North, the overland routes within their own borders will be enriched.

The Mages of Halruaa

A rising presence in Faerûn comes from the South, from the mystical and near-legendary land of Halruaa. This land is reputed to be controlled by powerful wizards, and wizardry there is incorporated and standardized into common use. It is a land where castles float on the breeze, water runs uphill to where it is useful, and even the meanest scullery maid knows a few cantrips to make her job go smoother.

The true nature of Halruaa is best described by those who have pierced its mountainous borders. In Faerûn, these mages are best known for their flying ships, which are slung beneath great framed bags filled with volatile gases. These flying ships are the hallmark of the Halruaan mage, and often appear off the coasts of many port cities in the Realms, approaching from over the water, in the manner of standard craft, but remaining "above it all."

The merchant-mages who control these crafts seem above it all as well, dealing in a few items, often of little worth to their owners, and paying extravagant prices. It is said that the mages of Halruaa seek the perfect components for their mighty spells, while others say the act of trading is merely a cover for darker, more sinister acts committed when the ship is in port. What is known is that every sailor on these ships has magical abilities.

It has been increasingly apparent that the mages have a second set of operatives at their command who work more quietly within the great trading cities of the North and the Heartlands. These are shopkeepers, merchants, and common traders who act as the eyes and ears of the Halruaans, keeping them abreast of new developments, particularly the appearance of powerful items of magic. Such artifacts are regularly sought out by the Halruaans, though whether to research them, destroy them, or merely keep them out of the hands of others is unknown. It is known that often after a particularly powerful relic has been unearthed, the city where it appeared receives a visit from the great floating ships of the Mages of Halruaa.

The Red Wizards

The Red Wizards are the rulers of Thay, and the powerful ruling zulkirs of that land are chosen from among their numbers. The

Red Wizards are abroad throughout the Realms as spies and agents of their kingdom. Their actions are supposedly for the good of their home government, but each Red Wizard has his or her own agenda to pursue.

The stated goal of the Red Wizards is to establish Thay as the superior political and magical force in the Realms. The Wizards' chief opponent has historically been Mulhorand, since Thay is a former principality of that ancient country, but in recent centuries their attention has been redirected westwards, towards the cities in Cormyr and Sembia, and in the direction of strong concentrations of magic in the Moonsea, the Dales, Nimbral, and Halruaa.

The Red Wizards encountered in the Realms may be working toward this end, working toward their own ends, or seeking to discredit others, including other Red Wizards. The Byzantine plots of the Red Wizards are so involved that it is often difficult to determine where one ends and another begins.

The Red Wizards are many things, but one of the things that they are not is subtle. Swaggering, boastful, loud, insulting, and dangerous, yes, but never subtle. It takes great personal danger for a Red Wizard to affect personal humility, no matter how slight, and tolerate even the most subtle reproach as to the superiority of the Thayvian people. Despite this, there are always (apparently) new Red Wizards to challenge adventurers.

The Seven Sisters

The most magical and exclusive organization within the Realms is one of (reportedly) seven sisters who share a boon of great godly power, along with a small number of other mortals who serve as their allies. The Seven Sisters are marked by silvery hair, great beauty and wisdom, and remarkably slow aging (perhaps even immortality). Six of the seven have gone on to great matters and fame within the Realms, while the seventh is unknown. The seven are:

- Storm Silverhand, the Bard of Shadowdale.
- Dove Falconhand, ranger of the adventurers' group known as the Knights of Myth Drannor.
- The Simbul, Queen of Aglarond.
- Alustriel, the High Lady of Silverymoon.
- Laeral, consort to Khelben Arunsun.
- Sylune, the witch of Shadowdale (now deceased and judged beyond resurrection, but in the Realms death is not necessarily a career-ending injury).
- An unknown (for the present) seventh. All that has been revealed about her is that she is the black sheep of the family.

The Seven hold great magical powers, which to date have seemed to foil the best attempts of the Red Wizards, Halruaans, Zhentarim, and other factions to discover their true nature. Their power seems to be closely linked with Mystra, and seems not to have been reduced in the slightest by the Time of Troubles.

Each of the sisters has her own personality and life. The Simbul (the wild sister) is known for disappearing for long stretches of time to deal with one crisis or another facing her realm, usually working undercover. Alustriel (the thoughtful one), on the other hand, leads from the battlements, and is devoted to preserving the beauty and knowledge of her Silverymoon. Laeral has recovered from an experience with an evil artifact under the care and tutelage of Khelben Arunsun, with whom she now lives. Sylune perished battling a great dragon in Shadowdale, but her spirit does not seem to rest easy, being spotted regularly near her memorial beneath the Twisted Tower. Storm is in retirement in Shadowdale, coming forth only to deal with the greatest menaces to the Dale, and since the death of her sister has been more withdrawn. Dove still travels with her husband Florin Falconhand, and though many of the other Knights have retired, both are active within the elven forest of Cormanthor.

Other mortals may have received the boon of Mystra, with the names Elminster and Khelben being mentioned most often. The founder of the Cult of the Dragon, Sammaster, is said to have received the wisdom of the gods, but to have had it overpower him, driving him to madness and evil which lives (or survives unliving) to this day.

Many adventurers or adventuring companies fall in with one of the Seven Sisters as an agent or ally, and work towards the stability of the Realms and the peaceful use of magic.

The Shadow Thieves

The Shadow Thieves are a wide-ranging guild of thieves, spies, and assassins who perform particularly dangerous, evil-aligned, and lucrative ventures. Their activities, unlike those of most thieving guilds, are not limited to a single city, and they range the length of the Sword Coast from Luskan to Calimport.

A group directly opposed to the Lords of Waterdeep and all their allies, the Shadow Thieves are based in Athkatla, in Amn, where they have a massive training complex and a testing ground for the assassins they sponsor.

These thieves were once the thieves' guild of Waterdeep, until they were driven out of that city or slaughtered by the Lords of Waterdeep. The Shadow Thieves have sponsored an assassins' guild in Athkatla with the eventual aim of slaying all of the Lords of Waterdeep. In the meantime, this secretive organization appears to have reached some sort of agreement with the merchant-kings of Amn, who would like to see turmoil in their trade rival, Waterdeep (and perhaps also wish to avoid being on the assassins' list of targets themselves). Under this pact the merchant-kings leave the Shadow Thieves alone and are in turn left alone.

The Shadow Thieves operate up and down the Sword Coast; their trademark is a black silk mask impaled upon a stiletto blade (usually used in assassinations, or left behind at the scene if a garrotte or poison is employed instead). No names, levels, or even numbers of Shadow Thieves are known; high-level operators are thought to be few.

The Zhentarim

The Black Network of the Zhentarim is a not-so-secret group of mages, priests, and warriors devoted to the task of dominating trade, and therefore power, throughout the Heartlands region. To that end they work to achieve the downfall of an ever-increasing list of opponents, including the Dalelands, the Harpers, rival Moonsea cities, the Cult of the Dragon, Cormyr, Sembia, and anyone else who gets in their way. That which cannot be infiltrated and controlled must be cowed into obedience or destroyed.

The Black Network is active throughout the Heartlands, but currently has three major bases of operations. Darkhold has been established as a base within the Far Hills, a terminus in the Western Heartlands for caravans from the northern, southern, and eastern Realms. The Citadel of the Raven, hard on the borders of Thar, is a major military base as well. The third headquarters, and birthplace of the organization, Zhentil Keep, has been less influential over the years owing to the rise of the church of Cyric. Despite having a major figure in the church in their employ, the Zhentarim have been less than effective in dominating the new faith, in contrast to the degree of control they had over the church of Bane. As a result, most of the daily deviltry of the Black Network comes from the other two locations, which have the added advantage of having no native civilian population to get in the way (or lead a revolt).

There are three members of the Zhentarim inner circle who oversee all operations within the Network. They are Lord Manshoon (LE hm W19), who operates out of the Citadel of the Raven; Sememmon (LE hm W15), who currently controls Darkhold; and Fzoul Chembryl (LE hm P15) of Cyric, who maintains the organization in Zhentil Keep.

The Black Network activities in the Heartlands include a number of legal and illegal actions. Trade is a major component of the Zhentarim's income, and they are not limited morally to mere transport of ores from the Moonsea area and finished goods from Waterdeep and the North. The Zhentarim also do excellent business in poisons, illicit drugs, weapons, and slaves. Caravans bearing the black banner of the Zhentarim (and not the coat of arms of Zhentil Keep) can be found throughout the Heartlands, particularly in areas far from prying eyes and normal travel (such as the Goblin Marches, the Stonelands, and the plains around the River Tun).

Conquest is also high on the Zhentarim agenda, usually using the forces of Zhentil Keep or some other catspaw such as Voonlar or Llorkh. They also make extensive use of nonhuman tribes and mercenaries, usually promised to be paid with the spoils of pillage after the battle. The chief intent in battle is to punish enemies or weaken rivals, and it is usually implemented after failure to take over the community from within. The attacks on Shadowdale ceased during the reign of Jyordhan, a Zhentarim puppet, and have intensified in the years since then.

Assassination, theft, blackmail, kidnapping, and torture are all acceptable methods to advance Zhentarim goals. Zhentarim have no compunctions about hiding behind aliases or setting up rivals against each other, but usually wish to let their opponents know who is responsible for their downfall.

Player characters will likely earn the ire of the Zhentarim through spoiling one of their many plots. The Black Network maintains a growing list of enemies, and after a few slave caravans are raided or an adventuring group crosses swords with a few flunkies in the service of the Zhentarim, particular agents may be assigned to deal with the problem. The Zhentarim has infiltrated a number of thieves' guilds throughout the Heartlands and the North, and has agents in most major cities. In addition, they have nonhuman monstrous allies, and have an especially good relationship with beholders.

Select NPCs

The Forgotten Realms is a living, growing world, home to literally thousands of beings with names and deeds, natures and histories, of which the player characters are a small but important part. More than anything else, these individuals *are* the Realms. The brief summaries mentioned here are included to give a DM a handful of possible PC tutors, a few people of importance for the PCs to brush up against, a few possible enemies, and biographies of the elder members of one of the most successful adventuring companies of modern times, the Knights of Myth Drannor.

Individuals in this fragmentary list are arranged by their first names. Dates given are in Dalereckoning (current year 1367 DR) and concentrate on that region of the Inner Sea.

Ailoth

(AY-loth)
Red Wizard of Thay
LE hm W6
Moonsea, Dalelands, Sembia

Ailoth is a short, white-haired mage who gathers information in Sembia and Hillsfar for the Red Wizards of Thay. He acts as a moneylender and a buyer of distressed and damaged goods (pawnbroker/fence). As opposed to the standard breed of Red Wizard, Ailoth is almost jovial and good-natured, amused by the desperate straits people get themselves into before availing themselves of his services.

Ailoth's contacts with the Red Wizards are well-known in both Hillsfar and Sembia, but a newcomer to the region (or an adventurer in need of money) may find need of his services and be unaware of his true nature.

In his services as a moneylender, Ailoth can draw on suitable reserves. He is more than willing to let an individual pay off an outstanding debt through a favor or two. The greater the debt, the more dangerous the favor.

Alias

(AY-lee-us)
Alias of Westgate, of the Azure Bonds
NG hf F8
Dalelands, Cormyr

Alias of Westgate appears as a warrior woman with reddish hair, but in reality is a magical construct built by an alliance of evil individuals, who hoped to turn her into the perfect magical servant by means of a set of azure tattoos scrawled across her right arm. Their hopes were dashed when Alias proved to have a will of her own and proceeded to arrange the destruction of each of the individuals who sought to control her.

Alias is in all apparent ways a normal human, save for the fact that she radiates a zone of nondetection around her which no divination magic can pierce. She and those in her immediate vicinity are thereby cloaked from detection by others, making her an ideal agent in a world filled with all manner of magical protections.

Alias can normally be found in Cormyr and the Dales, where she still works as a free-sword, often accompanied by her companion, a saurial paladin named Dragonbait (LG saurial male, Pal9). The pair were last reported to be working with a colony of saurials which inhabits the Lost Dale, but beyond that nothing is known.

Key To Entries

Name
(Pronunciation where needed)
Titles and Nicknames, if any
Summary of Abilities
Base of Operations

Arthagus

(Are-THAY-gus)
Arthagus of the Miracles
CN hm W(I)7
Sembia

This white-bearded, green-eyed old man is kindly until crossed, but he has been crossed often enough that he believes concealment of the truth is necessary in this world. He lives quietly in Yhaunn in Sembia, training illusionists of lesser power occasionally and studying his arts tirelessly, refining this or that illusory effect.

Arthagus also occasionally aids those who govern Sembia. His understanding of the arts of misdirection extends to misinformation spread by rumors, and his expertise in this regard is useful in certain matters of manipulating popular feeling and the tactics of outside powers. Similar to many in Sembia, he has an intense dislike for elves, half-elves, and the allies of the old Elven Court.

Arthagus owns many minor items of magic; they are mainly protective in nature. Perhaps the most unusual of these is an onyx dog

Asbras HLumin

(AZ-braz HLOO-min)
Mage of the Cult of the Dragon
NE hm W6
Moonsea, the Dalelands, the Vast

This mage uses magical means to conceal his alignment and purports to be neutral good. He carries this off by appearing as continually worried about the health, comfort, and safety of those around him, even though he would rather see every nonreptilian thrown off the nearest cliff.

He will willingly train, cast magic for, and even join (for short periods) bands of adventurers operating in the area, trying to learn all he can of their doings. He then betrays them in some dangerous spot, hoping they will be killed, whereupon he robs the dead of all their treasure, keeping a measure for himself and giving the rest to the Cult.

Aurora

(Awe-ROAR-ah)
Aurora of Waterdeep
LG hf W16

An accomplished sorceress who has chosen a novel form of retirement, Aurora has established a series of magical emporiums of common (and uncommon) items throughout the Realms. She has established catalog order stores in many major cities, each equipped with smiling clerks (low-level mages) and copes of her catalog. Items from the catalog are ordered, and the orders are relayed to Aurora and/or her agents at a central warehouse via magic. Then the ordered items are *teleported* back to the ordering station for delivery (sometimes magically *diminuated* for ease of transport).

Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue has been a great success wherever it has debuted, and while standard (nonmagical) merchants have viewed this matter with great suspicion, the bulk of the items Aurora deals in are rarities and small luxury items, not the sort of thing an honest merchant or dishonest smuggler would grow rich on. As a precaution, Aurora moves her warehouse every year or so to keep one jump ahead of the competition (and two jumps ahead of thieves).

Aurora is better known by her work than by her features, and several differing reports have been given on the latter. It may be that Aurora chooses to remain known only through her work (and her catalog) and not by her face, allowing her so seek out new bargains in Faerûn.

Aubaerus

(AWE-bare-us)
The Ravenmaster
N hm D16
Cormyr (Thunder Peaks)

This gruff, private man dwells alone in a remote cave on the eastern side of the Thunder Peaks, far above Lake Sember. He is a hierophant priest among the druid circles, though he maintains no permanent followers or circle himself. He dislikes human company and never joins or aids humans when in his human form, although he will consort with elves and other druids. If approached by druids for training, he will drive a hard

bargain for payment, hoping to discourage them.

Aubaerus spends much of his time as a large black raven, flying all about Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dales, and seems to enjoy the company of ravens. Aubaerus is not a member of the Harpers (although their interests often coincide) or of any other organization or interest group. Aubaerus must be very rich, as he never has any cause to spend or pay for anything, and he has taken in much gold and magic over the years as payment for druidic training.

Azargatha Nimune

(Ahz-zar-GAH-tha Nih-MOON-nee)
CG hf W10
Dalelands (Deepingdale)

Either a member or ally of the Harpers, Azargatha is often seen in the company of rangers thought to be Harpers. A tall woman of flame-red hair and imposing strength of character and of body, Azargatha loves wrestling and once defeated Randal Morn of Daggerdale two falls out of three at a Shieldmeet feast. She currently resides in Highmoon, in Deepingdale, and bears a magic staff of some power (likely a *staff of wizardry).* Azargatha runs a toy shop in Highmoon, where she sells elaborately carved wooden toys made by herself and by the surviving elves of the Elven Court.

Azoun IV

(A-ZOON)
The Purple Dragon, King of Cormyr
LG hm F20
Cormyr

Azoun, the fourth of that name to rule Cormyr, the Forest Kingdom, is a stocky, bearded man of average height and brown hair shot through with silver. He is the possessor of a collection of magical Swords. Azoun is good-natured and just, if sometimes moved to imprudent actions or hot-tempered responses. It often seems to him that even a wrong action is better than no action. His fiery wisdom is tempered by the advice of his chief wizard, Vangerdahast.

Azoun is devoted to his wife Filfaeril Selzair (the Dragon Queen), and the great sorrow of their lives has been the early death of their son and firstborn, Foril. They have two daughters, Tanalesta and Alusair Nacacia, the latter of whom departed her father's court for awhile to adventure on her own in the Realms, but returned to fight by her father's side against the Tuigan horde. Azoun's father was Rhigaerd II, his mother Tanalusta Truesilver, and his sister Sulesta; all are now deceased.

Azoun's reign began peacefully, but has been marked by several major wars. The early rebellion of Gondegal in Arabel gave Azoun his first true taste of life at the head of the army, and since then there have been a wide variety of threats, the most serious being the Tuigan Invasion of 1360 DR. At this time Azoun led a multinational and multiracial alliance against the horse barbarians, slaying their leader in single combat.

Cormyr's neighbors, despite recognizing the gifted talents of Azoun both in the field and at the negotiating table, are concerned that he seeks to expand the borders of his own kingdom and point to the annexation of Tilverton as an example. Within Cormyr, Azoun is widely hailed as a just king, commanding the love as well as the loyalty of his people.

Brandon

(BRAN-don)
"Battlemaster"
CN hm F8
Dragon Coast (Priapurl)

This Jovial, brawling tactical master is a war leader for hire of long and colorful reputation in the Inner Sea lands. Based in Priapurl ("a place small enough to stand me," as he puts it), Brandon hates seafaring and sea combat, but is likely to be found anywhere around the Inner Sea (and along the trade routes west towards the Sword Coast) where there is dry land, fighting for this or that hiremaster.

Brandon's exploits include the slaying of the lich Tharuighagh in the hills near Saerb; the storming of Jhassilm Onespear's citadel (Jhassilm was a bandit lord in the Stonelands), and the forcible removal of the imprisoned mage Rhondethar Windrider from dungeons in Westgate. Brandon will gladly recount these tales and others for those patient enough to listen.

Brandon will undertake almost any task for almost any master as long as the pay is good (20 pieces of gold daily, half refunded if the task is unsuccessful, plus 4 gp/day per man-at-arms Brandon is asked to bring with him, if any). Brandon has his own code of honor and is very shrewd behind his hearty front. He will do nothing sustained to upset the general peace of the region, because if large-scale warfare broke out, his job would become far more dangerous, the competition far greater, and people would generally less able to pay for his services.

He has served alongside Gayrlana in her Mindulgulph Mercenary Company (see Priapurl in the Dragon Coast chapter in *A Grand Tour of the Realms),* but while respecting the Lady Bloodsword greatly, he does not get along well with her nonhuman troops.

Doust Sulwood

(Dowst SUL-wood)
Doust of Tymora
CG hm P8
Cormyr (Arabel), Dalelands

Born in Espar to a retired soldier and his wife (who died in childbirth), Doust grew up lonely and afraid of his drunken father. When old enough to leave, he set out to seek his fortune with others of his age (including Florin Falconhand and Semoor Wolftooth.) Within two years of joining the Knights of Myth Drannor, Doust found himself lord of Shadowdale, chosen by his companions after Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun offered the lordship to one of the party.

Doust married Islif Lurelake shortly thereafter, and has a son by her, Jhaok (see Islif Lurelake). Doust instituted a Lord's Court, or weekly meeting where folk of the Dale could speak openly, and was well liked by the people despite the tumult of his short reign (during which Shadowdale was attacked several times by the forces of Zhentil Keep).

Doust found the responsibilities of ruling hard to reconcile with the philosophy of Tymora, and at length resigned his title (although he remains a "Lord of Shadowdale," as do his companions, a title that was bestowed upon them) in favor of a younger companion, the warrior Mourngrym Amcathra.

Doust retired from the Knights and went with Islif to Arabel, which was recently recovered from the brief rebellion of Gondegal. There he could help rebuild the faith and show more diligence to the church than had been possible when he was a harried lord. Doust knew that freedom from the duties of rule would also allow him the time and relative safety in which to raise his son and enjoy some leisure with his wife, and he is still in Arabel, engaged in such pursuits.

True peace has not seemed to be Doust's lot, for Arabel was rocked during the Time of Troubles by the appearance of his goddess, Tymora herself. Whether the two conversed, and whether the goddess was harsh with him, is unknown—but Doust seemed to be more care-worn after the experience. Today, the former lord of Shadowdale seems to spend most of ha time smoothing the waters roiled by his clerical superior, Daramos Lauthyr, who feels that the Arabellan Church of Tymora, having been blessed by a goddess, should be supreme. Doust needs all the skills he gamed as a lord of Shadowdale to keep the faith united as a result.

Dove Falconhand

CG hf R11
Dalelands, Cormyr

One of the youngest of the Seven Sisters, Dove is an agent of the Harpers and has for many years been a foe at the Zhentarim and the

evil creatures of the Inner Sea lands. Several times her adventures brought her into contact with a certain band of adventurers from Espar, in Cormyr, later known as the Knights of Myth Drannor.

During these times she served as a tutor to their battle leader, the young ranger Florin Falconhand, and was most impressed by him. After the Knights rescued her from imprisonment in Voonlar, Dove joined the band of adventurers, and later married Florin.

Dove temporarily retired to Espar to bear their child, where she yet remains with Florin in semiretirement. Dove remains tall and shapely, calm and firm of speech, kind, and fearless in battle. She is a close ally of the elven peoples and one of the few mortals to have visited Evermeet and returned to tell the tale.

Drizzt Do'Urden

(Drist Doe-URR-den)
Drizzt the Dark Elf
CG e(drow)m R15
The North, Western Heartlands

A renegade drow ranger who has escaped the oppressive regime of his underground homeland, Drizzt Do'Urden is among the most famous of drow in the Realms owing to his deeds on the surface. He currently abides in Mithril Hall with allies King Bruenor Battlehammer and Wulfgar the Barbarian of Icewind Dale. He may be found abroad while engaged in acts of daring, particularly in rolling back the tribes of goblins and other evil humans in the North. His fame and hatred of his former homeland has made him a target of other drow who hope to earn favor with their evil goddess Lloth (also know as Lolth) by killing the renegade.

Drizzt wears mithril *chain mail +4,* a gift of King Bruenor. He wields two magical scimitars simultaneously. These scimitars are Icingdeath, a *frostbrand +3,* and Twinkle, a *defender +5,* which glows when enemies are near. His most prized possession is a *figurine of wondrous power* of an onyx panther. The panther's name is Guenhwyvar.

Elminster

(El-MINN-ster)
Elminster the Sage
CG hm W29
Dales (Shadowdale) and the Known Planes

The exact age of the sage Elminster is unknown and his year of birth unrecorded. From his tales, it is suspected he learned his magical arts at the feet of Arkhon the Old, who died in what is now Water-Jeep over 500 years ago, and he may have been in Myth Drannor near that magical realm's final days. The exact nature of these claims remains unproven, hut most Realms natives who know him consider Elminster an eternal force in the world

The Sage currently makes his abode in the tiny farm community of Shadowdale, living in a two-story house overlooking a fishpond with his aide and scribe, Lhaeo. He is often abroad, both elsewhere in the Realms and in other planes, where he hobnobs with the great and the not-so-great in a relentless pursuit of knowledge.

Elminster may be the most knowledgeable and well-informed individual in the Realms. Though this may be only his own opinion, it is often voiced in his discussions with others. His areas of specialization are the Realms and its people, ecologies of various creatures, magical items and their histories, and the known planes of existence. Elminster no longer tutors nor works for hire save in the most pressing cases. He seems to prize his independence and solitude, but on several occasions has opened his tower to newcomers and visitors. Said visitors usually are in the midst of some harrowing quest (whether they realize it or not).

Many of Elminster's former students and allies include some of the most powerful good individuals in the realms, including the Lords of Waterdeep, the Simbul, ruler of Aglarond, the group known as the Harpers, and many powerful wizards and sorceresses.

Eregul

(AIR-eh-gull)
LE hm W11
Cormyr, the Dalelands, and Sembia

Eregul is a tall, black-bearded mage of sardonic, drawling speech, hard black eyes, and strong personal ambitions. He works for the Zhentarim as a free-stave, serving their interests and his own. He wanders the civilized lands of Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dalelands, seeking what information and useful magic or manpower he can pick up.

Eregul is a perfect foil for mid-level characters, since his plots are many, and it is only a matter of time before one adventurer or another trips up on one of them. Eregul is vengeful and delights in running the good names of his victims before he sees them slam.

Flame

NE hm T7
Sembia

This dark-haired, nondescript young man lives quietly in Selgaunt, where he arranges for certain people to be (willingly) hidden or transported to safety or (less willingly) kidnapped and held for ransom. Flame works with a small band of trusted aides, including at least four with magical powers (3rd-5th-level wizards). Flame can be contacted through the Green Gauntlet inn on Selgaunt's eastern docks.

Flame originally operated as an arsonist in Selgaunt until a combined force of leading mages and clerics in the city convinced him of the errors of his ways (via a series of flame strikes and similar mishaps). After a brief period of self-exile while this heat died down, Flame changed over to a quieter business in town, and stays wary of both wizards and clerics.

Florin Falconhand

(FLOAR-in FAL-con-hand)
CG hm R9
The Dalelands, Cormyr

Florin was born to Hethcanter Falconhand (a retired captain in the armies of Cormyr) and his wife, the half-elven mage Skydusk (Florin himself is human in all respects) in the town of Espar. From his youth, Florin was interested in elves, flowers, and woodland creatures; his mother encouraged him in gardening. His father thought he should learn a useful trade, and apprenticed him to a famous armorer, Hawkstone. Florin preferred the woods to the forge, however, and walked miles in them whenever he could, earning him the nickname "Silent."

Skilled with the longsword and two-handed sword, Florin set out to find his fortune with several companions when of age and quickly emerged as the leader of the band in battle and in matters of diplomacy, a role he still holds today as one of the senior Knights of Myth Drannor. In the intervening years, however, Florin gained a telepathic warhorse, Firefoam, and was personally offered the lordship of Shadowdale by Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun (he declined it and directed that the title

be bestowed on one of his companions by a vote of all the band, who chose Doust Sulwood). Florin is tall, curly-haired, direct of voice and manner—a decent, polite, honest, straightforward person.

Florin served Doust faithfully for a few winters as warden of Shadowdale and its chief diplomat, and finally married the ranger Dove. After gaining priest spells through training by his fellow Knight, Lanseril Snowmantle, Florin recently acquired a faithful companion, a hawk he named Minstrel. He has retired to his ancestral manor in Espar with his wife, Dove, to raise their family, but can still be lured out by the promise of adventure.

Fzoul Chembryl

(Fzool CHEM-bril)
Fzoul of Cyric
LE hm P15
Moonsea (Zhentil Keep)

Fzoul is a member of the inner circle of the Zhentarim, his influence as great as Lord Manshoon. Previous to the Time of Troubles, Fzoul was a major force within the church of Bane and responsible for the growing influence of the Zhentarim within that church. With the death of that god and a deep, personal encounter with the new god Cyric, Fzoul follows the wishes of the new Prince of Lies. To that end, Fzoul has not been seen beyond the borders of Zhentil Keep since the Time of Troubles. It has been assumed that this change of worship on the part of old-line Zhentarim has not been as willing as Cyric would like it, and many Banite Zhentarim have been captured and burned in Fzoul's presence.

Fzoul is wily, glib-tongued, burly, red-haired, and handsome. He wears *bracers of defense AC 4* at all times, and full plate when expecting battle. He bears a *mace* +4 for combat. His loyalty seems to be to Fzoul first, to the Zhentarim second, and to his god third, but he will respond directly to the needs of his lord.

Garth

Garth the Gimble, Snake of Selgaunt
NE hm T4
Cormyr and Sembia

Garth is a blond-haired, frail-looking rogue of nimble dexterity and quick wits who operates in Selgaunt, Marsember, and Suzail in Sembia and Cormyr, drifting from one to another to dodge angry victims, pursuers, and creditors. Garth is reputed to have an excellent covert intelligence service between these towns, and has been consulted by respectable and honest individuals to unearth pertinent facts (for a fee, of course). Garth has also been connected with various recurring swindles in these areas, in particular those dealing with warehouse fires and the resale of slightly fire-damaged goods. Garth is elusive and has many hidey-holes. He has contacts at the Black Stag in Selgaunt, the Roaring Griffon in Marsember, and any dockside tavern in Suzail, so that those seeking his services may inquire at those places.

Gunthor

LG dm F12
Dalelands (Shadowdale)

This dwarven smith first established his name in Hillsfar, and many warriors in the Moonsea area have worn his work. When Maalthiir came to power in Hillsfar, the new ruler imprisoned the dwarf, who was hurriedly packing his tools and goods to leave the city and avoid Maalthiir's rule. Florin Falconhand of Shadowdale purchased Gunthor's freedom from Maalthiir. Gunthor now dwells in the Tower of Ashaba in Shadowdale, and serves Lord Mourngrym as the Smith of the Tower. Gunthor and his assistants now deal extensively with Shadowdale, and have been equipping its forces for the past decade. They will take on additional work only if the town smithy is overbooked (and then only with Mourngrym's permission).

Guthbent Golthammer

CN hm F6
The Moonsea, the Dalelands, Western Heartlands

Physically huge, this 300-pound, 6'5", broad-shouldered man is muscled like an ox, and "has brains not much better," as his father, Elzund Golthammer, has been known to say. Elzund, a noble of Zhentil Keep, was one of that city's war captains until crippled in battle, and out of respect for him, his son took his place in the field. The Zhentarim have taken care that he lead expendable units or forces not in a position to go far wrong by a little well-meant blundering.

Currently Guthbert heads a mercenary force of over 2,000 soldiers based in ruined Teshwave who are battling the rebel forces of Randal Morn in the Daggerdale area. Guthbert's abilities in hand-to-hand

battle are respected (he has 18/36 Strength and 18 Constitution), but as a tactician or quartermaster, he is largely hopeless, and is therefore aided by a mainly veteran staff installed by the Zhentarim, including Asdag (LE hm P6), a high priest of Cyric firmly under the thumb of Fzoul Chembryl. Guthbert is said to be amiable but fearless, and to have his eye on the overlordship of Zhentil Keep some day, oblivious to his own shortcomings.

Islif Lurelake

(ISS-liff LURR-lake)
NG hf F8
Cormyr (Arabel)
Wife to Doust Sulwood and formerly captain of Shadowdale's militia, Islif has retired (at least temporarily) from active adventuring to raise her son, Jhaok Sulwood, who was born Marpenoth 22nd, Year of the Worm (1356 DR). Islif was a stalwart in adventures with her companions, her blade ever-ready, and she emerged as an able leader and savage warrior in the battles with Zhentil Keep and Scardale. Islif is tall, broad-shouldered, of a strong, muscular build, and was born in Espar (in Cormyr) to the traders Buckman and Tesha Lurelake.

Jelde Asturien

(GHEL-deh As-TUR-ee-en)
Semoor Wolftooth, "Stoop,"
Jelde of Lathander
NG hm P9
Cormyr (Eveningstar)
Born Semoor Wolftooth in Espar, Jelde spent much of his early life fishing in the local streams, where his hunched-over, patient posture earned him the nickname "Stoop." He was fascinated by elves from an early age, and learned to speak elvish as best he could from travelers. He joined his companions Florin, Islif, Doust, and the other landless younglings of Espar in a journey eastwards to seek his fortune when he came of age, and over years of adventures found his calling as a follower of the God of the Morning. Upon attaining his priesthood, he took a name (Jelde Asturien) revealed to him by his god, and rose to become a noble of Shadowdale.

Finding that constant adventuring was at odds with diligent service to Lathander, Jelde retired from active adventuring and took up residence at the temple to Lathander in Eveningstar to better serve his god. He has risen rapidly in the ranks of the clergy since then. Jelde retains a *ring of spell storing* from his adventuring days, and sometimes dons armor to defend Lathander's works from the dangers of the Stonelands.

Jhessail Silvertree

(Jes-SAIL SIL-ver-tree)
Jhessail Flamehair, "Two-teeth"
CG hf W8
Dalelands
Jhessail was born to elf-friends and foresters Craig and Lhanna Silvertree in Espar. She displayed an early fascination with magic and a talent for it when the elves tested her gently, and was forthwith trained by Hezom of Espar. Known as "Twoteeth" to childhood friends, she matured into a striking beauty of slim build, green-gray eyes, and fiery orange-brown hair, which earned her the nickname "Flamehair." Her parents urged her to see the world beyond Espar, and she accompanied Florin, Doust, and others of her age in a search for adventure.

Careful tutoring brought out her natural abilities of healing, animal training, and endurance and made her an expert rider, and she grew powerful and respected by her companions. She married Merith Strongbow, giving birth to their daughter, Veluthil Silverbow, on Mirtul 1, Year of the Prince (1357 DR). Unlike many former Knights, one crisis after another has demanded the attention of the most magically powerful Knight of Myth Drannor

Jhessail is not one to stay at home or miss adventures. She is a strong-willed, passionate lady who has undertaken to train young female mages, and is carefully nudging her growing daughter into familiarity with magic as well.

Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun

(KELL-ben AIR-un-sun)
Probable Secret Lord of Waterdeep, Lord Mage of Waterdeep
LN hm W27
Waterdeep and the Known Universe
Khelben is the most powerful and influential archmage of the Sword Coast and IS one of the rulers of Waterdeep (although he does not admit this openly, most in the North suspect him of being so). A Harper who is instrumental in keeping the Lords' Alliance intact, Khelben is always working to influence this or that

occurrence or trend, seeing years ahead. He is a forester and painter, and has tutored many mages of note (including such legendary mages as Malchor Harpell, Savengriff, and Nain). His most important student is Laeral Silverhand (CG hf W25), who has captured both his attention and his heart. Laeral is one of the Seven Sisters, and Khelben forged a strong bond with her when she had been driven mad by an artifact, the *Crown of Horns.* Laeral cares for Khelben as well, though the wizard's prime concern is for Waterdeep, while Laeral cares for the world at large.

Khelben appears as a tall (6'), well-muscled, bearded man with a receding hairline. He has a distinctive streak of gray at the center of his beard and a distinguished manner. He is gravely wise, not pompous, and is fully learned in the history, lore, and traditions of magic as practiced by humans in the North since the rise from barbarism. His actions are those of one who does what he must to protect his city and its populace, and he is willing to put his agents at risk to guarantee it.

Lanseril Snowmantle

(LAN-sair-il SNOE-man-tul)
N hem D8
The Dalelands

Lanseril was born in the tiny village of Snowmantle (whose name he has taken) on the edge of the Border Forest, north of Daggerdale. Lanseril's father, Raunaeril the Rose, was an elf, one of the Lost (the elves who inhabited the Border Forest). Lanseril's mother was a beautiful human maiden of the village who perished at her husband's side on the trampled banks of the River Tesh in a bloody skirmish with forces from the Citadel of the Raven, leaving behind six-year-old Lanseril.

Lanseril loved to play in the forest with the elves and hated what little he saw of cities. A druid, Haemfaest "Holloweye" Sarthun, who lived in the forest near Snonmantle, took a fancy to Lanseril and schooled him in the worship of Silvanus—a god Lanseril found more believable than the elven god Rillifane.

When Lanseril lost his parents, Haemfaest looked after the half-mad, disconsolate boy for a year until the druid himself fell one winter night to a pack of hungry wolves. Pursued by the wolves (Lanseril hates wolves bitterly to this day, the young Lanseril fled southwards, and came eventually through the wilds to Highmoon in Deepingdale. There he found employment as a runner, errand boy, and animal keeper for a local merchant. A ranger, Briadorn of the druidic Circle of Shadowdale, saw Lanseril tending an injured hare with herbs and gentle hands and offered to take him to the Dale. Lanseril accepted and joined the adventurers there, becoming a stalwart of the Knights of Myth Drannor and proving to be a Machiavellian strategist and diplomat, with a phenomenal memory for faces, names, and conversations overheard long ago

Lanseril is still active in the forest of Cormanthor. He wears the *Firecrown,* a circlet whose gems can emit two rays of fire per day (which inflict 18 points of damage each against a single man-sized or smaller target/12 points vs. a larger than man-sized target and half damage if a save vs. spells is made by the target). Lanseril gamed the *Firecrown* from the giants of the Flaming Tower.

Llewellyn the Loquacious

Llewellyn the Loud
NG hm B6
The Dalelands, Cormyr, the Moonsea, Sembia

A boisterous, friendly gentleman with a glib tongue and wicked talent for the turn of a phrase, Llewellyn is a wandering minstrel and rumormonger who sells his information to those who have the interest and the coin. Llewellyn travels from small town to small town, and from city to city, careful never to wear out his welcome or raise the local ruler's ire too much.

Llewellyn will part with his better class of privileged information at cost, and the more that is spent the more detailed (and accurate) the information is. He never lies, but he will pass on information that he knows to be incomplete and inaccurate if paid a paltry sum. "You get what you pay for," is a common maxim of Llewellyn the Loud.

Manshoon

(Man-SHOON)
Manshoon of the Black Network
LE hm W19
The Moonsea (Citadel of the Raven)

This cruel, calculating man heads the Zhentarim; its power and success are largely due to his efforts, and his efforts have made him very rich. Manshoon, a noble of Zhentil Keep, slew his older brother Asmuth and seized control of the city's governing councils by skillful intrigue, staunch allies (such as Lord Chess, a lifelong friend), and the aid of that faction of the priesthood of (then) Bane controlled by Fzoul Chembryl and of beholders such as Manxam. Manshoon's own alliances with dark nagas and his manipulations of the Cult of the Dragon increased his influence and bought him the time necessary to build his personal mastery of the magical arts without allowing stronger rivals to assume control of the city until he was ready to take it.

Take it he has, and he has flourished; his spell library is thought to be the equal of Khelben Arunsun's, and his arsenal of magical devices and weapons the largest held by a single mage anywhere in the Realms (although it is scattered, hidden, and guarded by spells and monsters). He is known to possess a *staff of the magi* and wear black *robes of the archmagi,* and to wear a *ring of spell storing* and a *ring of wizardry* (which doubles 4th- and 5th-level spells).

Despite his armament, Manshoon is quite content to flee danger. Many have tried to destroy him, and none has succeeded; he is careful, never lets his temper master his reason, and is always alert. He seems an unbeatable foe; others face danger to do his bidding, but he is never there to face the music. Even the recent problems in Zhentil Keep have not slowed him down a jot—he long ago moved his personal base of operations to the Citadel of the Raven, far from the warring clergy and angry gods.

Manshoon's symbol resembles a stylized capital M to our eyes, with a loop in its right-hand arm or "tail"; it is really a stylized serpent adapted from his family's crest, the loop being its head, the zig-zags its body.

Manxam

(MANK-Zam)
LE Beholder
Moonsea

Possibly the most powerful eye tyrant in the lands of the northwest Inner Sea, Manxam does deal in the politics of humans, but with a low profile and few servant creatures. Manxam is usually to be found in or about the ruins of Teshwave. He is thought to view the Zhentarim's bold expansionist policies with increasing alarm, thinking that they will lead to an inevitable battle union of all of Zhentil Keep's foes and the resulting defeat and destruction of Zhentil Keep. Still, he sees the Zhentarim as (relatively) trustworthy allies.

Beholders have allied with evil forces such as those within Zhentil Keep for aeons. Manxam is less than pleased with Manshoon's dominance of the inner circle, and prefers Fzoul's firm hand (the beholder misses the old days of the Bane-worshipping priests, who seemed to know how to treat beholders with the respect they deserved). Still, the Zhentarim are preferable to the madmen of the Dales, who always seek to rebel under the eye of the more powerful beholders.

Manxam's powers and abilities are unknown, but a doubling of "normal" beholder hit points would not be unreasonable to begin with.

Maskar Wands

NG hm W21
Waterdeep

The patriarch of the Wands noble house in Waterdeep, Maskar is an imposing figure who values his privacy and the respectability of his household above all. He disapproves of wild and unrestrained use of magic, and thinks it more proper and stylish to use spells for their intended purpose and only when needed. Let Khelben and Elminster and the other outward-looking wizards save the world; he will be as content crafting a new spell or making a new device (and riding herd on his wide and sprawling family).

Maskar has been known to take on pupils, but just as often has encouraged would-be spellcasters to abandon the field entirely and seek other, safer pursuits. From those he does tutor he does not accept money but rather service, usually in the form of rescuing some old spell from a long-dead city or restoring some ancient tomb. As a result students do not flock to his door.

Maskar is reputed to have both a *staff of the magi* and a *carpet of flying.* Whether he possesses other magical items is unknown.

Maxer

(MAYK-ser)
Defender of Suzail
NG hm W(In) 11
Cormyr (Suzail)

This respected mage is a resident of Suzail. After a spectacular youth of mighty feats of magic and great adventures on many planes, including battles against dark nagas, the quasi-deity Gargoth, and the Cult of the Dragon, Maxer settled down to magical studies. The Cult of the Dragon attempted revenge by sending dragons against Cormyr and the Dalelands, and no less than four came against Suzail. Maxer destroyed them all, earning him his present title.

Maxer is now neither an aggressive nor adventurous man. He spends most of his time tutoring mages of lesser power and in his researches; Maxer has devised many minor items of magic in the last few decades. Maxer's abode is a hidden cellar. He prefers to be contacted through the Royal Court in Suzail.

Merith Strongbow

(MAIR-ith STRONG-boe)
CG em F6/W6
Dalelands

Merith, son of Laerune and Lianthorn Strongbow, was born on the banks of the river Duathamper in Cormanthor 194 years ago. Tutored in the ways of fighting by his father (battling humans cutting into the forest, as the Dalelands and the Moonsea cities developed) and in the arts of magic by the Gray Ladies of Semberholme, Merith was bid by the Elven Court upon the death of his parents to join a band of adventureres in Shadowdale and influence them to protect the elven woods and ways.

Merith did so, and remains a member of the Knights of Myth Drannor today. Merith took to wife Jhessail Silvertree of the Knights; their half-elven daughter is Veluthil Silverbow—her first name means beautiful of the evening; her last name is derived from both her parents' surnames.

Since the elves left the Elven Court, Merith has become increasingly reckless in battle, and his hatred of the drow and the Zhentarim has grown. Merith has one blue eye and one green eye and has a black cat familiar named Shadowclaw. His preferred weapon is the longsword (his favorite being a silver *longsword +3* named Sylabra), and he has a black temper when angered.

Miraun

(Mihr-RAWN)
Miraun of Zhentil Keep
CE hm W9
Sembia, Dalelands

Miraun is a young, sneering man of handsome features, fond of richly appointed clothing. Miraun is of a wealthy Zhentil Keep family, the Dannacasters, though Miraun is illegitimate and not entitled to the family name. Miraun has a sly, diplomatic manner, hoping to gain by merit within the Zhentarim what he has lost by birth. Miraun is known to carry a wand of negation.

Mourngrym Amcathra

(MORN-grim Am-CATH-rah)
Lord of Shadowdale
NG hm F6

A young noble of Waterdeep, Mourngrym was an ally of the Harpers who respected and admired Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. Khelben sent him to join Doust Sulwood, Lord of Shadowdale, to be one of Doust's adventuring companions so that he could further the causes of good in the Dragon Reach area and make his own fortune. Mourngrym served ably in many small skirmishes and adventures with Doust and his companions, such that Doust subsequently offered him the lordship of the Dale so he and his companions could retire or return to the adventuring life as the Knights of Myth Drannor. Mourngrym accepted and has proven a cautious, shrewd, diplomatic lord of authority and foresight.

Mourngrym married Shaerl Rowanmantle, and they have a young son, Scotti. After 10 years at the helm of the most famous small town in the Heartlands, Mourngrym understands why Doust was so willing to give up his position.

Naglatha

(Nah-GLAH-thah)
Red Wizard of Thay
NE hf W7
Sembia, Cormyr, the Dalelands

This young, black-eyed, black-haired, and grim-faced woman has risen quickly in the ranks of the Red Wizards due to her fanatical zeal for all Red Wizard causes and her ruthless, reckless furthering of those causes. Naglatha's allegiance and identity are not known to any authorities in the Dragon Reach area. She poses as a merchant dealing in curios and rarities of the South, while in reality recruiting merchants and men-at-arms for the Red Wizards' cause. It is likely that the Red Wizards are planning disruptive raids to set powers that seem likely to aid or reinforce Thayvian enemies against one another.

Neiron

(NEAR-on)
Neiron the Schemer
NG hm R12
The Vast, Western Heartlands, Dragon Coast

Neiron is one of the most powerful rangers in the Dragon Reach area who is *not* part of the Harpers. This loner is a man of mysterious aims

and activities. He has several hidden residences both north and south of the Lake of Dragons and travels quietly about the western end of the Inner Sea, always alone. Neiron has many contacts among druids and foresters, and he is a friend to many whom he has unexpectedly aided in deep woods or bandit-haunted hills over the years.

Neiron's achievements include the singlehanded slaying of the hobgoblin chieftain Gothag and his 42-strong bodyguard and the similarly astonishing killing of the frost giants Gurrl and Kutharr in the Stonelands. Neiron is thought to be planning to settle down somewhere in the area and found a stronghold. He is said to have much magic, including a *necklace of missiles,* a magical blade, and a ring that unleashes various spells.

Osper Linthalam

(AWE-spur Lin-THAY-lamm)
NG hm W9
Sembia

This wealthy and powerful mage devotes little time to his arts these days, preferring to spend his days in political intrigue and merchant dealings. An urbane and witty man who loves fine wine and good feasts, Osper wields much power in Sembia from his mansion in Ordulin. Osper is known to have no fewer than three guardian golems and much treasure in this abode. Osper possesses a *staff of power* and is well remembered in Selgaunt for his use of it to blast and burn the ship of a pirate who attempted a daring evening raid on a warehouse leased by Osper at the same time as the mage happened to be inspecting goods there. Osper is balding, and his beard and bushy eyebrows have gone white; he wears many rings, some of which may be magical.

Piergeiron

(Peer-GEER-on)
Piergeiron the Paladinson, the Golden, the Unmasked Lord of Waterdeep, also "The Thickskull" (but never to his face)
LG hm Pal14

Piergeiron is the only Lord of Waterdeep whose identity is known to all. He governs the great port city ably and with even-tempered justice that has earned him the respect of most who dwell or visit there.

His home is a castle separate from Castle Waterdeep, the seat of government, though no less impressive. From here he serves as the city's chief justice and main diplomat to the outside world; indeed many foreign ambassadors, unnerved by dealing with the faceless Lords, almost collapse in relief when confronted with the smiling, honest face of Piergeiron.

Piergeiron's father was the famous Athar the Shining Knight, the Arm of Tyr—hence his nickname "Paladinson." He has always striven to live up to his father's reputation, and in charting the course of the City of Splendors through stormy seas of state (with a little help from Khelben and others), has done that reputation proud

Rairun

(RARE-un)
Rairun Blackbrow
N hm D7
Dalelands, Sembia, the Vast

The wry, far-traveled Rairun wanders the Inner Sea lands, homeless and poor, seeking to preserve forested land from the worst depredations of humans. He works often with the surviving elves near the Dalelands, the priests of Chauntea in Voonlar and in Sembia, and other druids of the region. Rairun has tutored most of the druids now living in the western Inner Sea region. He uses what influence over them this gives him to achieve some concerted effort in particular matters.

Rairun is the chief champion of the idea of tending and planting trees as well and as diligently as one does gram and vegetable crops so that the woods are not simply cut back and back until they disappear. This idea has caught on in some Dales and in the north of Sembia (which has already exhausted most of its own supplies of timber). Rairun is a charismatic speaker on these matters and has the personal strength and conviction to back up his ideals. Rairun's wide travels and work have given him a wide command of woodland languages. He has something of a feud with the few satyrs in the area.

Randal Morn

Randal Morn of Daggerdale
NG hm F7/T6
Dalelands (Daggerdale)

Ruler of a troubled land beset by the forces of orcs and worse to the northwest, Zhentil Keep's armies to the northeast, and the expanding might of Cormyr to the southwest, Randal Morn is a moody, lonely man. He is of medium build, has long, brown hair and handsome features, and is an accomplished singer and musician.

Randal trusts only his younger sister, Silver Morn, Florin and Mourngrym of Shadowdale, and Mirt, Durnan, and Khelben of Waterdeep. Mirt, Durnan, and Florin helped him free Daggerdale from a usurper, Malyk, many years ago, but the Dale is still overrun by Zhentarim forces such that Randal Morn is little more than a guerrilla leader raiding the invaders more than ruling. Many others whom he has trusted have betrayed him and his comrades to the Zhentarim, which makes him wary of newcomers to his land.

Randal's people are a suspicious, weary, hardened lot; warfare seems a constant in their lives, and they are ever-vigilant (hasty, outsiders often think—quick to draw blade or take offense). Randal Morn was once an untroubled adventurer; he still longs to ride out in search of new lands, and he is desperate for aid against his Dale's enemies

Ren o' The Blade

NG hm R15/T10
Moonsea

A native of Waterdeep, Ren began his career as a ranger, but was quickly swept into the underworld following a young female thief. Rapidly mastering the skills of thievery, Ren left both them and the City of Splendors behind with her death. Drifting east, he returned to his love of nature as a ranger and established himself in the Moonsea area.

When acting as a ranger, Ren wears elven chain mail, but is best known for a pair of magical daggers, which he stores one in each boot. These daggers may be thrown as normal daggers, but whether they hit or miss, they return to his boots and may be thrown again the next round.

Ren is 6'2" tall, with sandy-brown hair and blue eyes. He is very concerned with nature and the treatment of the wild lands by civilized invaders. He is also always looking to the future, and is willing to help newcomers establish themselves and survive in the hostile Moonsea area.

Rhauntides

(RAWN-tee-dees)
Sage of Deepingdale
CG hm W12
The Dalelands (Deepingdale)

This quiet, cultured, kindly man lives quietly in Deepingdale in a small, ornate stone tower that he designed and erected (with magical aid) some 30 winters ago. Here he studies all he can of magic and the history of its practice: the mages of long ages past, with their deeds, feuds, thoughts, spells, achievements, and writings.

Rhauntides is a tall, thin man of handsome features, piercing blue eyes and a small, pointed, white beard. He seldom ventures out of the Dale now, preferring to spend his time in the study of newly acquired writings and in the training of his successor, his ladylove Shaunil Tharm (CG hf W7).

Rhauntides was once a far traveler, an adventurer who explored abandoned cities, old tombs, and ruins with almost feverish haste and hunger, looking for new spells, and he rose rapidly in mastery of the magic arts in the process. Now adventurers bring spell books they have found to him, for they know he will pay well for any books of magic. Rhauntides's wealth (and its guarding) is unknown, but it is certainly considerable, and he is known to possess many powerful items of magic. The acquisitive are warned that he is also known to have destroyed at least 16 (and probably far more) powerful mages and parties of adventurers who have come to his tower to relieve him of such burdensome belongings.

Sememmon

(SEH-mem-mon)
Lord of Darkhold
LE hm W15
Western Heartlands (Darkhold)

This able member of the Zhentarim is a ruthless, haughty mage. He has trained many evil wizards of the Zhentarim over the years and has been slain several times for his troubles. The Sememmon of today is a magical *clone* of the original. He is trusted by Manshoon as fully as Manshoon ever trusts anyone, and he alone is the second rank of power in the Zhentarim network, in the inner circle of power with Manshoon and Fzoul Chembryl, but subordinate to both.

Sememmon has many items of magic and many safeguards and strategies. He is always planning and plotting, and is a formidable foe. Under his command, Darkhold has been made almost impregnable, full of traps and magical defenses. Sememmon leaves it only rarely, in disguise, to learn something for himself that he dare not or will not entrust to his underlings (in other words, to spy on Manshoon's doings). Sememmon's personal sigil is a black equilateral triangle, point uppermost, with its base encircled by an oval.

Shaerl Amcathra

(SHAY-earl Am-KATH-thrah)
The Lhairhavenn, Shaerl Rowanmantle, Lady of Shadowdale
LN hf T6
Dalelands (Shadowdale)

Shaerl is a young lady of Cormyrean noble birth born and bred in Suzail, where, utterly bored, she turned to thievery for amusement. Her doings in Cormyr were detected and observed by guard captains of the city, who reported to Lord Thomdor. Thomdor had a private meeting with Shaerl "the Lhairhavenn" Rowanmantle, without informing her noble parents, and offered something worthwhile and entertaining for her to do with her life. She could go to Shadowdale as an emissary of Cormyr and attempt to ally herself with Mourngrym, Lord of the Dale. She would learn all she could of him and of the Dale, spread something of Cormyr's views and interests in the area, and report back. The alternative was, of course, public disgrace and imprisonment for her thievery.

Shaerl accepted, but came to love Mourngrym and stayed with him. She died to save him from the attacks of fiends, and once raised, she married the lord of Shadowdale. They have a son, Scotti.

Thomdor is well pleased with Shaerl, and she is welcome in Cormyr though her reports are full of general information on plantings and local gossip and light on information that the court of the Purple Dragon can truly use. Shaerl's parents know little of her accomplishments, but are glad that she is of the ruling class somewhere and that she played some important part in the service of Azoun; it enhances the family name.

The Simbul

Queen of Aglarond
CN hf W30
The East (Aglarond, wanders throughout the Realms)

The Simbul is the ruler of Aglarond, a tall, silver-haired lady of awesome magical powers (and an impressive array of magic items, which she rarely uses or needs to use) whose personal power has kept the forces of Thay from overwhelming her kingdom. She is a mysterious, lonely archmage whose proper name is known only to her sisters. Her normal appearance (or the one she chooses as normal) is that of a lithe young woman with a nimbus of silver hair and blue eyes that go entirely white and pupilless when she is angered or using powerful magics.

The Simbul travels widely in many planes, shapeshifting constantly, to work mysterious ends understandable only to herself. She seems to work best behind the scenes, and when some new danger is posed by the Red Wizards, she disappears entirely, returning only when, through happenstance and fate, the danger seems to have been averted. During the Tuigan Invasion, several lesser plans of the Red Wizards ran afoul of her and were uncovered and destroyed.

The Simbul bears some sort of magic that provides immunity to all enchantment/charm magics. The remainder of her magical arsenal is unknown.

Storm Silverhand

The Harper of Shadowdale
NG hf B22
Dalelands (Shadowdale)

Long a resident of Shadowdale, Storm Silverhand has used her home as a base for long, far-traveling adventures for her own gain (particularly when she was young) and to further the ends of the Harpers. Storm has hair of a silvery hue and blue-gray eyes. She wears a silver ring and tiara, and a silver bracer on her right wrist bearing her badge: a silver moon and a silver harp on a black field.

Storm is one of the Seven Sisters, but is now largely retired. Her long-tune companion Maxan was recently destroyed by fiends from the lower planes, and Storm has turned away from the bold and wild adventures she enjoyed with him. The length of this mourning (for both Maxan and Sylune, the Witch of Shadowdale) is unknown.

Temmi Dharimm

(TEH-mee DAH-rimm)
Temmi the Slaver
NE hm F5
Moonsea, the Dalelands, the Vast

Temmi is a native of Tsurlagol who has spent long and hard years as a bandit in the Moonsea area. During this time he acquired a small band of trained monsters that work with him: three dire wolves, two disenchanters, and six bloodhawks.

Temmi has quietly moved into the Elven Court woods near Hillsfar where he is operating as a slaver, selling his captures to the Zhentarim who take them north in covered wagons. Temmi is very discreet in his operations; captured humans and demihumans are manacled, gagged, blindfolded, and then chained by throat collars to a coffle bar, or a long wooden tree trunk which a group of slaves must carry. Temmi has been planning to expand his operation and looking to hire on some like-minded (and aligned) allies.

Thentias

(Then-TAY-us)
CN hm F2
Cormyr (Suzail) and Sembia (Yhaunn)

Well-known in Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dalelands as a prominent merchant of the highest ethics and standards for the care of goods, Thentias is wealthy, and over the years has been quietly and greedily buying up house after house in the streets of Suzail and of Yhaunn, trying to control large blocks (or failing that, connected strips or bands) of buildings in strategic areas of the cities. If he were crippled tomorrow and never led another caravan or made another overland trade deal, Thentias could probably retire in comfort for the rest of his days on his takings as a landlord.

Over the years, the patrician, white-bearded Thentias, always courteous and always tolerant of the different customs and etiquette of others, has built a large, loyal group of merchants who prefer to trade with him over anyone else and a group of extremely loyal servants who will simply not betray him short of magical compulsion to the contrary. The servants include a bodyguard, one Rhair Felsonn (LN hm F5). Thentias dwells in a large mansion in Suzail.

Thurlock

Thurlock the Anagogue
LN hf W(D)12
Moonsea (Hillsfar)

Thurlock makes her home in the nobles district of Hillsfar, maintaining a large townhouse with reportedly extensive underground vaults and passages. She bills herself as a diviner, willing (for a fee) to pierce mysteries and reveal the hidden. To aid her in this business she is constantly on the lookout for magical items that aid in divination magic, and she will often trade information for such items. She is aided in her tasks by Thondar Glimmershield (LN hem P8 of Deneir). The vaults beneath her mansion are rumored to contain many great magics and scrolls laden with old legends and modern gossip, but are protected by all manner of fell magical beasts, pitfall traps, and false vaults.

Vangerdahast

(VAN-gerr-dah-hast)
Royal Magician of Cormyr, Court Wizard of the Purple Dragon, Leader of the War Wizards
LN hm W17
Cormyr

Vangerdahast is the head of Suzail's Council of Mages and chief advisor of King Azoun IV. He is a middle-aged, paunchy, white-bearded man of kindly but stern manner. He owes a lifelong loyalty to the Crown, having served Azoun's father before him. He was one of Azoun's childhood tutors in the history and lineages of Cormyr, and in matters of magic, and still acts as the teacher to his no longer young king. Vangerdahast aided the king in his youth and has supported Azoun's rule throughout his reign. Respected by his fellow mages and the people of Cormyr alike, Vangerdahast is quiet and unassuming, although during court ceremonies he can be very dignified, solemn, and impressive.

Vangerdahast is known to possess many magical wands and to have equipped the king with magical rings (no doubt some of the rings Vangerdahast himself wears are magical, too); much magic gained by the Crown of Cormyr over the centuries is said to be guarded by the Royal Magician's spells in vaults under the palace in Suzail.

Following an unpleasant episode in a dead magic area, Vangerdahast is looking for a way to extend his own life, already at over a hundred years, without recourse to magic.

Volothamp Geddarm

Volo
CG hm W5
Throughout the Realms

A roguish magician known for his neatly trimmed beard, stylish beret and acid tongue, Volo is a feature throughout the Realms—a brief feature, since his honesty in reporting often puts him at odds with the local merchants, constabulatory, and wizards. He has written a number of works, including a popular series of guides to various cities, and *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical,* a suppressed work dealing with magic "for the common people."

Volo is a sage who concerns himself with wizards and with the geography and lore of the Realms. As a result, he is a font of knowledge on the subjects and more than willing to share the juiciest portions with whomever will listen. As a result, Volo must move around a lot in order to stay alive, which adds to his storehouse of information on geography. Heroes may find Volo anywhere in the Realms, usually on the run from this irate wizard or that angry innkeeper.

Yorel

(YOR-el)
NE hm F6
Dalelands, Moonsea

A burly, battered man of ruthless courage and a hearty, jovial (though false) manner, Yorel is a veteran warrior in the service of Zhentil Keep. He has served as a sergeant of the garrison at Voonlar and at Yulash several times for differing guard captains and lords as Zhentil Keep has taken and retaken those places over the years. If Zhentil Keep's war leaders plan a guard-in-force for a valuable caravan or a raiding or reconnoitering patrol in the area and want a cautious veteran warrior rather than a reckless adventurer, Yorel is called upon to lead.

He secretly dreams of founding his own hold, taking a wife and having many daughters and at least one son to be proud of, bearing a coat of arms proudly as he founds a line of lords to stretch down long years, and being loved by his subjects, not feared. Yorel is wise enough to know that this will probably never happen, although he's now on the lookout for a chance to make off with a lot of money to take somewhere far away and a little warmer (such as Tethyr, say, or the lands west of Vilhon), but he's not yet bitter.

Yorel is an expert in the art of warfare with relatively small bands of soldiers, especially at reading an enemy's movements and correctly anticipating future actions from them. He knows the Inner Sea's northern terrain as few people alive do, perhaps as well as the druids and rangers active in the area. Yorel is presently captaining various patrols and special raids for Zhentil Keep in the southern Moonsea/northern Dalelands area.

Zandess Danthirr

(ZAHN-dess DAN-theer)
Zandess, Strong Arm of Tyr
LG hf Pal5
Dragon Coast, Western Heartlands

Born of noble parents in Tethyr, Zandess broke with them and their feuding, decadent ways in her childhood, fleeing to priests of Tyr in Amn who raised and trained her to be "an arm of justice." Upon completion of her training she was sent east to the "lawless" Inner Sea lands to work Tyr's will and aid Tyr's priests there.

Zandess is a lady of the highest zeal and principles who travels alone but for her warhorse, pack horses, and a spare mount, fully armored and equipped as befits her class. She uses the symbol of Tyr as her own: a balanced set of scales, resting on a war hammer. She is more than willing to join up with those of similar attitudes toward justice for short periods, but those who do should operate within both the letter and the spirit of the law.

Leabos

Gatha

Nchasme

Godly Powers

As for all other matters in the Realms, the nature of its deities are wide and diverse. There are more than 30 major deities in the Realms—that is, those powers whose names are readily recognizable, and have established churches and priesthoods throughout the Realms, and had a major role during the Time of Troubles. Add to these noble and worthy beings a plethora of minor gods, local deities, folk heroes immortalized, god-kings, cult figures, and alien gods and one has a veritable onslaught of godly individuals.

The gods (known as *powers)* of the Realms can be broken down into several categories. The first three categories of deities will have the greatest effect on the typical hero or heroine of the Realms. These deities are the ones with established and widespread believers, and have the most temporal and physical power in Faerûn: the greater powers, intermediate powers, and lesser powers.

One thing to keep in mind when dealing with deities is that not even they are immortal and immutable in the Realms. The most recent Time of Troubles, a godly war which altered the nature of the Realms itself, saw the fall of several established deities and the rise of new ones. Many of the greater powers have grown more powerful since then, and many of the intermediate and lesser powers hate suffered. Ancient texts indicate that this is not the first time this sort of thing has happened, nor it there any indication that the present arrangement of deities is the final one for the next few millennia.

Greater Powers: The greater powers are the most powerful deities that interact with and are dependent on the worship of mere mortals. These are the most powerful gods of the Realms, and their portfolios (areas of control and influence) are generally widespread and cover several large areas.

Intermediate Powers: The intermediate powers fall only slightly behind the greater powers in raw ability and number of followers. In general, their portfolios are more limited and specialized, and often an intermediate power will act in the service of a greater power.

Lesser Powers: The lesser powers are weaker still, though it should be noted that even a "weak" god can destroy an entire city without raising a metaphysical sweat. Many of the established lesser powers are in the service of greater and intermediate powers and often act as their intercessors in dealing with mortals.

Dead Powers: The dead powers are gods who are, for all intents and purposes, deceased. Their portfolios have been taken by others, their peoples are scattered or dead, and their influence in the Realms has been reduced to a smattering of deluded followers. Sometimes dead powers' followers may still have their prayers answered by new deities who have taken over their portfolios, but eventually the changeover will be made.

Quasi-Powers: The quasi-powers are a mixed bag of old gods, demipowers, forgotten deities, and local powers. Each is powerful in its own right, but has not entered the fray as an established deity known throughout the Realms. As a rule of thumb, quasi-powers have the same abilities as a lesser power, and a local god on its home turf can manage the feats of an intermediate or greater power. It should be noted that demipowers are weaker than lesser powers, in cases where a quasi-power is identified as a demipower.

Over-Powers: The over-powers are a bit of a mystery. They are the individuals, beings, or ethics that are venerated by the gods themselves—the god's gods as it were. Little is known of these beings, since they have little or no dealings with mortals.

Nonhuman Powers: The nonhuman powers are those deities venerated by the elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes. They have more organized and formalized pantheons than the human deities, as bespeaks their nature.

Alien Powers: Lastly, the alien powers are just that, pantheons and gods whose worship is not native to the Realms. These include the gods of far-off Zakhara and Maztica, and those of the ancient kingdoms of Unther and Mulhorand, among others.

Reading The Portfolios

The main deities presented here have their information broken into three parts: The *Power* section describes the basics of the deity itself—portfolio, power level, other names, relationship with other

deities, and appearance when it manifests or is portrayed in art. The *Ethos* section describes a few of the tenets of the god and its church, as well as who normally venerates the deity. The *Clergy* section talks about the physical church itself: where it is most powerful, how its hierarchy is arranged, and what is expected of its priestesses and priests.

Greater Powers

Chauntea

The Power: Chauntea is the goddess of agriculture, and makes her home in the plane of Elysium. She is of neutral good alignment, and attracts followers who are all of neutral or good moral alignments.

Chauntea has two symbols—the budding flower encircled by a sunburst, and a sheaf of golden wheat on a green field. The former symbol is more frequently used than the latter, which is still found in older churches and more orthodox areas.

Chauntea is known as the Great Mother, and is portrayed as an affectionate woman of middle years, wise by virtue of a long life well-lived. She is on excellent terms with the other nature deities (Silvanus, Mielikki, and Eldath) and is a devoted foe of Auril and Talos.

The Ethos: Chauntea's faith is one of nurture and growth. Agricultural sayings and farming parables dot her teachings. Growing and reaping, the eternal cycle, is a common thread in Chauntea's faith. Destruction for its own sake, or leveling without rebuilding, is anathema to the church.

Chauntea is not usually an adventurer's god, but is instead widely worshipped by farmers and gardeners. She has become more powerful with the establishment of more settled and civilized areas in the North.

The Clergy: Chauntea's church has two wings—one of standard priests who administer to the faith in towns and cities, and a branch of druids who work in more outlying and wild areas. With the success of the town-priests, the druids have been moving further and further afield. Relationships between the two wings are cordial.

Chauntea can have large shrines and temples, but more often her services are held in small caverns and temples surrounded by greenery, or even in open fields. Chauntea is not a goddess of spectacle or pageant, but rather of small acts of faith and devotion. Chauntea's priests, both druid and standard, dress simply and without pretension.

Cyric

The Power: Cyric is the god of death, lies, tyranny, and murder, having wrested these portfolios from three dead gods. He makes his home in the plane of Hades, in the reconstructed Bone Castle belonging to one of his predecessors. His realm is known as the City of Strife. Cyric is evil to his very core (neutral evil), and attracts followers of a similar bent.

Cyric's symbol is a dark sunburst with a jawless skull in its center. He has been called the Dark Sun, but most commonly is known as the Prince of Lies.

Cyric is a new god, less than a decade old, born of the Time of Troubles. He is a mortal raised to the level of godhood. He has gained the followers of many old evil gods, and now fights to retain their loyalty and worship. Cyric is not above masquerading as another deity to gain the worship of mortals and the power derived from that worship. However, 10 years is not enough time to indicate whether he will succeed with his attempts to control his new powers and portfolios.

The Ethos: Cyric's faith is one of control by any means necessary. Force and deception are used in equal measure to spread his word. He (or the masks he wears) is highly venerated by those of black hearts and evil deeds, from petty murderers to evil rulers of empires.

Cyric and his faith will be most often encountered by adventurers as foes. Cyric was a plotter in his mortal life, and now with his godly powers he attracts plotters as well.

The Clergy: Cyric has spent a decade trying to put his house in order. In some areas this has been relatively easy: The Red Wizards of Thay, knowing which way the wind was blowing, scraped off the icons of Bhaal from their temples and began singing the hosannas of Cyric's wise nature. In others, it has been a protracted religious conflict, particularly with followers of Bane in the Moonsea area. A religious rebellion took place in Zhentil Keep in 1361 DR, in which Bane worship was driven underground. Cyric grants the rebels their prayers and their priests their spells because he needs the power, but plots to fully take over.

Cyric's most devoted followers are young evil men and women seeking to make their way in an uncertain world, gathering as much power as possible for themselves. Cyric's power base is immense, and he is one of the three greater powers of evil in the Realms.

Cyric's priests favor robes of black or dark purple, trimmed with silver. They wear silver bracelets to symbolize their enslavement to Cyric (in a symbolic reprise of Cyric's one-time captivity).

Lathander

The Power: Lathander, also called the Morninglord, is the god of the spring, dawn, birth, and renewal, a god of beginning and hidden potential, a deity of conception, vitality, youth, renewal, and self-perfection. He is the Commander of Creativity. A powerful, exuberant god, he is by alignment neutral and good, and attracts the veneration of people of those alignments. His native plane is Elysium, and he is on good terms with Chauntea, another deity of similar alignment.

Lathander's symbol is a simple disk of rosy pink hue. These disks are often cut of rose quartz or similar minerals, or magically enchanted to radiate a pink glow dimly.

Lathander is portrayed in old texts and murals as a golden-skinned

youth of exceeding beauty. More recently, that portrayal has become a mist of glowing, rose-colored swirls, with golden eyes at the center.

The Ethos: Lathander is a god of beginnings, and even individuals who worship other gods still offer a prayer to him at the start of a journey or endeavor. Lathander's name is invoked to seal alliances and start new ventures or companies. As a result, the god is very popular among the merchant classes, and the church has benefitted acccordingly.

Lathander's dogma is filled with stories of optimism and perseverance. It is important to feel good about an upcoming event, or else it will naturally go awry through negative thinking. "Today is the first day of the rest of your life" is a definite Lathandrian teaching.

The Clergy: Wealthy and popular, the church of Lathander has opulent temples throughout the North, some of which push back the borders of good taste. The main room of a temple faces east, and services are normally held at dawn (the exception being funerals, which are held at dusk, followed by a wake that lasts until dawn).

Priests of Lathander favor red, crimson, scarlet, yellow, and pink in their robes—the colors of the dawn. Those of their adventuring brethren are only slightly more subdued.

Mystra

The Power: Mystra is the goddess of magic, which makes her one of the most powerful deities in the Realms. Known also as the Lady of Mysteries, she is said to have taught the first spellcaster of the Realms, and to have enabled many of the races to use magic.

During the Time of Troubles Mystra was destroyed and recreated as a mortal named Midnight who took the mantle of goddesshood and the goddess's portfolio. At this tune Mystra's stated alignment shifted from lawful neutral, maintaining the balance in use of magic, to neutral good, reflecting the mortal's attitudes towards the uses and purpose of magic. She retains her home among the clockwork planes of Nirvana, though whether she will leave for a more goodly plane or find her own attitudes changed to reflect her duties remains to be seen. She is aided in her work by Azuth, the god of wizards.

Mystra's symbol was a blue-white star before the coming of the Avatars, and now is a circle of stars in a ring, with a red mist rising towards (or flowing from) the center. Both symbols are still in use. Unlike Cyric, Mystra seems to be playing a long-term game, for while she is as new a power as he, she has taken all the trappings of her predecessor to keep the peace with her worshippers.

Before the Time of Troubles, Mystra was portrayed only as a prismatic will-o'-the-wisp, capable of using any spell known in the Realms. Since then, her portrayal has been of her human form with radiant skin.

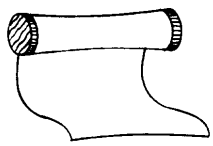
The Ethos: Mystra is the goddess of magic, and with that the goddess of possibilities. She is most venerated by wizards and those who use magic or magical items in their daily use. She is claimed to weigh and judge each new spell or magical item to determine whether it should be permitted into the Realms. Choice, decision, and knowledge, leavened with a healthy dose of good for the most individuals, are the hallmarks of Mystra's faith.

The Clergy: The hierarchy of Mystra includes all forms of spellcasters, including priests, wizards, bards, rangers, and paladins. Only those who gain their spells directly from a higher power gain their spells from the goddess, but all are welcome within the hierarchy. Wizards, and primarily good wizards, hold her name in special veneration, even if they worship Azuth or some other deity.

Priests of Mystra tend towards blue garb, sometimes trimmed with white. They are very tolerant of the older symbology and beliefs in Mystra, as they feel that one may only press forward by learning about the past.

Mystra is said to have had a special relationship with Elminster the Sage as well as the Seven Sisters, seven powerful spellcasters. The full nature of this is unrevealed, but it should be noted that any powerful spellcaster, be he the Sage of Shadowdale or Khelben Arunsun of Waterdeep, is "touched by the Goddess."

Oghma



The Power: Oghma is the god of knowledge and invention, the Binder of What is Known, and Patron of Bards. He is portrayed in many ways, but often as a dark-skinned man in fine, bright clothing. He sometimes travels with a yarting (guitar) made of white snowwood. His home plane is Concordant Opposition, the plane of the truest neutrality. His domain is called the House of Knowledge. Much as Mystra of old was said to sit in judgement of each new spell, Oghma is said to decide whether a new idea would be known to the world or confined to its originator.

Oghma is the most powerful god of knowledge in the Realms (second if you consider magical ability as knowledge, with Mystra at its head). Deneir and Milil both act as intercessors for Oghma, carrying new information both to him and to those whom Oghma favors.

Oghma is on good relations with the artificer god, Gond Wonderbringer, but the relationship has been made more tense by the introductions of new devices throughout the Realms.

Oghma's symbol is a simple scroll.

The Ethos: Knowledge is most supreme, particularly in its raw form, the idea. An idea has no weight but can move mountains. It has no height but it can dominate a nation. It has no mass but it can push aside empires. Knowledge is the greatest tool of humankind, outweighing anything made by mortal hands. Before anything can exist, the idea must exist.

Oghma is venerated by sages, wizards, and the knowledgeable. He is particularly worshiped by bards, who also show their bended knees to Milil. Anyone seeking information, particularly lost or hidden information, sends a few good words in Oghma's direction and asks for his blessing.

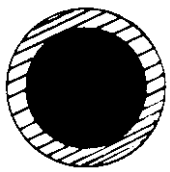
The Clergy: Before the Time of Troubles, Oghma had a very well-organized and established church throughout the Realms. Its patriarch was based in Procampur, and recognized as being the "voice of Oghma."

During the Time of Troubles, the patriarch disappeared, along with most of his immediate clergy. Since that time, the church of Oghma has splintered into a wide variety of factions and subfactions. The most powerful faction (outside of the Orthodoxy) is the Church of Oghma (in Sembia). This faction stresses the fact that knowledge must be used and tested to prove its worth, not hoarded away. Stresses between the factions seem minor to outsiders, but in the decade since the Time of Troubles, the situation between the various individual churches has worsened. The patriarch's house in Procampur has become a shrine to the god.

Priests of Oghma wear white shirts and trousers, with a vest of black and gold braid, topped by a small, box-like hat. The Church of Oghma (in Sembia) adds a harlequin's mask to the garb.

All priests of Oghma are called loremasters.

Shar



The Power: Shar is the goddess of darkness, night, loss, and forgetfulness. Like Cyric, she is neutral and evil in nature and resides in the extradimensional plane of Hades. She is worshipped by those who deal in the night, who hate the light (such as goblin races and their allies). and who feel bitterness and loss.

Shar's symbol is a black disk with a border of deep purple. These colors are also used extensively in her church and among her followers.

Shar is portrayed as a raven-haired beauty dressed in black. She is the mortal enemy of Selûne, and the two fight on a number of levels throughout their immortal lives.

The Ethos: Loss is the nature of Shar, of pains hidden but not forgotten, of vengeances carefully nurtured away from the light, hidden from others. She is said to have the power to make her devout followers forget their pain, yet what occurs is that they become inured to the loss, treating it as a common and natural state of being. The basic inanity of life and foolishness of hope are the cornerstones of Shar's being. She and her followers revel in the concealed, in that which is hidden, never to be revealed (as compared to Leira, who revels in disguise).

The Clergy: Shar's is a wealthy faith, if not one that is commonly found in the temple district, for her successful followers are those whose business is best conducted out of the sight of everyday mortals. The hierarchy of the church is wide-spread but very diverse, with several cells of the faith operating in the same large city at the same time. Should one cell of the church fail, the others will flourish in its absence.

Shar's hatred of Selûne extends to her clergy and their relationships with the church of Selûne. There is a continual war between the two faiths, and jihads against Selûne and her followers are common where Shar is strong.

Silvanus

The Power: Silvanus is the most powerful of the wild nature gods of the Realms, and is of equal power to Chauntea, who represents a more ordered nature. The two are on good terms, as are most of the good and neutral nature deities. Silvanus takes pride in his true neutrality, and can be found on the plane of Concordant Opposition, the plane of true neutrality.

Silvanus is served by Mielikki, and many of the followers of one deity venerate the other as well.

Silvanus appears as a long-limbed young man wearing a suit of scale armor, where the scales are all in the shape of small oak leaves. He carries a great wooden mallet. Silvanus' symbol is the oak leaf.

The Ethos: Nature and its perfect balance is the dogma of Silvanus, who measures out both flood and drought, fire and ice, life and death in the wilderness of the North. His priests tend to see the total situation, to view the macrocosm; their view is not confined to one person or one nation's idea of what is best. A loss of a farming community to goblin raids is a terrible tragedy, but it creates new land to be reconquered and new tests for heroes and heroines.

This is not to say that priests of Silvanus are neutral and take no sides. They are strongly on the side of wild nature, the natural state of matters, over any civilizing force. As a result, Silvanus is venerated by travelers and adventurers, explorers and sages seeking knowledge in nature, and rural communities far from the protection of the local lord.

The Clergy: Silvanus has a strong base among both priests in urban areas and druids in the wilder territories. Like Chauntea he answers both, but in his case the druids are the favored children of the two. Silvanus's priests are are spread throughout the North, favoring small communities over large cities, though there are several large communities of Silvanus worshippers in major cities such as Waterdeep.

Silvanus' clergy is best noted for their leather or metallic scale mail, which mimics the leaf pattern of their god. Adventuring priests may choose to wear less flashy outfits to travel in dangerous areas.

Sune

The Power: Sune Firehair is the goddess of beauty, love, and passion. She is said to be the fairest of the gods, and when represented, she is shown as the most beautiful woman in the Realms, with sweeping, radiant red hair and incredible charms. Her symbol is her face, that of the flame-haired maiden.

Sune is of chaotic and good alignment, and dwells in the plane of Arvandor, home of the elven pantheon. She is said to share the

waters of her sacred pool, the Evergold, with the elven goddess Hanali Celanil, and a friendly rivalry exists between the two over the innate superiority of elven versus human beauty.

The Ethos: Beauty is more than skin deep, say the Sunites; it issues from the core of one's being and shows one's fair (or foul) face to the world. The followers of Sune are believers in romance, true love winning over all, and following one's heart to one's true destination. Fated matches, impossible loves, and ugly ducklings becoming swans are all part of the teaching of Sune.

The Clergy: Sune's followers are at worst viewed as being a little vain and superficial, and at best recognized as knowing how to throw a party. The most charismatic of their numbers are their leaders, and their deep crimson vestments are cut to flatter their forms.

Sune's is the most disorganized of faiths, in that its leadership changes regularly with the whims of its clergy. Little is thought of a priest dropping everything and going bounding off into the wild, particularly if the goal is some beautiful object (or some beautiful individual). If a budding priest wishes to belong to a faith that has few requirements and a lot of potential, the teachings of Sune are highly recommended.

Sune's greatest temple in the North is the Temple of Beauty in Waterdeep.

Talos

The Power: Talos is the destructive force of nature. He is the god of storms, forest fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, and general destruction. He makes his home in the aptly named plane of Pandemonium, and he is both chaotic and evil in his nature. He attracts the destroyer, the raider, the looter, and the brigand among his followers.

Talos' symbol is three lightning bolts, each of a separate color, radiating from a central point. When he is portrayed, it is as a broad-shouldered, bearded young man with a single good eye, the the other covered by a dark patch. He is said to carry a collection of staves, made of the first iron forged in the Realms, the first silver smelted, and the first tree chopped down. He uses these staves to raise the wind, cause the waters to churn, and split the land in rage and anger.

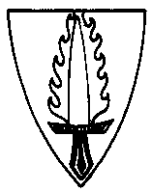
The Ethos: Talos the Destroyer is the dark side of nature, the uncaring and destructive force that lies waiting to strike at any time. The ethos of Talos can be described as "nasty, brutish, and short," terms also used to refer to some of Talos's clergy. Life is a combination of random effects and chaos, so the devout should grab what they can, when they can, as who can say when Talos will strike and bring them into the afterlife?

The Clergy: Talos is more feared than worshipped, which seems to account for his great popularity as much as anything. He does have an established clergy, mostly traveling, which warns of dooms and disasters to come. Frequently they are right, which is why the clergy tends to travel a lot. Such priests are usually dressed in black shot with silver, and are referred to as "doom crows" (but never to their faces).

The church of Talos exults in the wild destruction of nature at its fiercest, trusting to its own luck and the favor (or ill-favor) of the god to protect it. Church members tend to be fatalistic in nature as a result—almost self-destructive. However, priests of Talos wish to take as many others with them as possible.

A holy writ issued from the priests of the church has announced that Talos is also the god of violent death, a portfolio claimed by Cyric. Since that time there has been a rise in the violent deaths of followers of Talos who make this pronouncement. (The new god Cyric is apparently getting the hang of his duties....)

Tempus



The Power: Tempus is the Realms god of war, the Lord of Battle, the Foehammer. He is random in his favors, yet his chaotic nature favors all sides equally. He is chaotic neutral in alignment. Lord Tempus may be on an army's side on one day, and against them the next. Such is the nature of war as embodied by Tempus.

Tempus appears as a human giant, 12 feet tall, his armor battered and bloodied by combat, his face hidden by a massive war helm. His legs and arms are bare and crisscrossed by bleeding wounds, but this does not affect him as he rides into battle.

Tempus may manifest before a battle, appearing to one side or the other. If he rides a white mare (Veiros), then the army will succeed in its battle. If he rides a black stallion (Deiros) then defeat is in the offing. Most often he will appear to be riding with one foot on each, indicating the chaotic nature of battle. Tempus' symbol is a blazing sword on a blood-red field. Tempus is said to be served by the Red Knight (see the Quasi-Powers section).

The Ethos: War is fair in that it oppresses all sides equally, and that in any given battle, a mortal may be slain or become a great leader among his or her companions. War should not be feared, but seen as a natural force, a human force, the storm that civilization brings by its very existence.

Tempus is prayed to most of all on the nights before battles, and regularly venerated by all warriors, regardless of their alignment. As a result, he is a strong, exuberant, robust god—a warrior's god.

The Clergy: The dress of the priests of Tempus is armor, battle-worn and battered. In more civilized regions this has been replaced by a steel skullcap, but the message is the same—these are warrior-priests. Their place is in the trenches with the troops, urging them onwards. Priests of Tempus may be found on both sides of a conflict, as none can ever truly know who the war god will favor.

Tyr

The Power: Tyr Grimjaws, Tyr the Even-Handed, Wounded Tyr, the Maimed God, and Blind, Blind Tyr. All these names represent the nature of the Realms god of justice. He is a latecomer among the deities, appearing not less than a millennium ago. Yet despite his late start, he has become a powerful and respected deity within the Realms.

Tyr appears as a noble warrior missing his right hand, lost in proving his resilience and strength of spirit. In recent years, he has been shown blinded as well, a fatality of the Time of Troubles and the Avatars. He is the only one of the greater powers to be of lawful good alignment, and is said to make his home in the lower slopes of the great mountain that is the Seven Heavens.

Tyr's symbol is the scales resting upon a warhammer, and shows his nature: Justice through the strength to enforce that justice. Tyr is served by the demigod Torm.

The Ethos: Tyr and his followers are devoted to the cause of justice, to the righting of wrongs and the deliverance of vengeance. This is not necessarily equality or fairness, as some make the maimed god out to represent, but rather the discovery of truth and the punishment of the guilty.

Tyr followers tend to be stiff-necked about theology, and see matters in black and white terms. Scoffers point out that this may account for the missing body parts of the god, but such jests are often made out of earshot of the faithful.

The Clergy: Tyr survives very well in the civilized world, and most of his temples are in larger cities. While some paladins preferring a straight black-and-white choice revere Tyr, he is most popular with the bureaucrats, judges, and merchants who make the entire system move efficiently.

The vestments of Tyr are blue and purple robes with a white sash. A white glove or gauntlet is worn on the left hand, a black one on the right, to symbolize the loss of the god's hand. During high mass, thin strips of diaphanous damask are tied over the eyes to remind the worshippers of the god's blindness.

Intermediate Powers

Beshaba

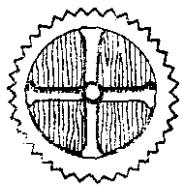
The Power: The Maid of Misfortune is the goddess of bad luck and accident. She is the deity of random mischief, and Tyche's unpleasant daughter. She makes her home in the Abyss, and as would be noted by her portfolio, is evil and chaotic in alignment.

When represented, Beshaba is a lovely maiden with snow-white hair, her features twisted by maniacal laughter. Her symbol is a set of black antlers on a red triangular field.

The Ethos: The ethos of Beshaba is the beliefs of Tymora stood on their head. Bad things happen to everyone, and only by following Beshaba may you (perhaps) be spared the worst of her effects. Too much good luck is a bad thing, and to even it out, the wise should plan to undermine the fortunate. Whatever happens, it can only get worse.

The Clergy: As might be surmised from the ethos, Beshaba is a goddess who is worshipped more out of fear than love. Her followers and priests are scattered throughout the Realms, and can often be found where plots are being hatched and fell actions are foretold. It is said that Beshaba has a secret society of assassins dedicated to her name, but that has yet to be proven or disproven.

Gond



The Power: Gond Wonderbringer is the god of artifice, craft, and construction. He is the god of blacksmiths, woodworkers, and engineers. A native of the truly neutral plane of Concordant Opposition, he is often portrayed as a burly, red-hued smith, with a mighty hammer and a forge and anvil that allowed him to craft the stars themselves.

Gond's symbol is a toothed wheel, in ivory, bone, or metal.

The Ethos: The Gondsman's belief can be summed up as "Actions count." Intentions and thought are one thing, but in the end it is the result, what remains after the sword is forged, the battle is fought, that is the most important. To venerate Gond is to continually question and challenge the unknown with new devices and items. This crosses into Mystra's territory (with magical items) and Oghma's (with new knowledge), and Gond is on fairly good terms with both.

The Clergy: Priests of Gond wander the North dressed in saffron vestments, but are best-known for wearing sashes which contain gears, locks, hooks, and bits of steel, tin, and wood that might prove interesting or useful in a pinch.

The worship of Gond is the official state religion of the island-nation of Lantan, which is also a hotbed of invention and new devices. The new smoke powder arquebuses are of Lantan design, and have the symbol of Gond marked on the stock.

Gond worship is sporadic in the Realms but gaining strength rapidly, particularly in the years since the Time of Troubles. The nature of the new devices issuing from Lantan is troubling to some, in particular those who worship Oghma, god of knowledge. It seems to them that some of the Gondsmen's inventions are not as well thought out as they should be.

Helm

The Power: The god of guardians and protectors, Helm is the epitome of the guardian, the watcher, the guard, and has in years past been greatly venerated by those who need to remain watchful for evil at their doorsteps. Helm is ever-vigilant, and embodies the spirit of lawful neutrality. Helm makes his home on the clockwork plane of Nirvana, in a region separate from Mystra.

Helm was once a much more powerful god, hut has fallen upon hard times through two actions. During the Time of Troubles, Helm was left with his powers when the other gods were stripped of theirs and confined to the Realms and ordered to hold the gates to the outer planes against them. He did so all too successfully, and much of the resulting destruction of the captive gods is laid at his feet.

Helm remained strong in the South, hut experienced a further setback when his priests became deeply involved in an invasion of the True World of Maztica. Their unflinching and often brutal actions counted further against the god's reputation. While still an intermediate power as he was before the coming of the Avatars, his star is fading at a time when Torm and Gond are attracting new followers.

Helm's symbol is an open eye painted onto a gauntlet.

The Ethos: Helm teaches that one must be ever vigilant, ever aware, ever prepared for one's enemies. He also serves who stands and waits and watches carefully. Careful planning will always defeat rushed actions in the end.

The Clergy: Helm's clerics, like Tempus's, prefer armor as their vestments. However, they prefer theirs new and unblemished, and in some regions filigree the armor with gold and set a great golden eye in the center. The helms worn by such priests are open-faced, so that they may be eternally vigilant.

The priesthood of Helm has fallen on hard times in the past decade, and those priests that remain tend to be the most rock-ribbed of supporters. They believe that Helm is the most favored of all gods, for he was chosen to retain his powers to contain the others. Further, it was the priests of Helm who made landfall on the newly discovered shores of Maztica and who battled the savage princes of that far-off land (reports of said battles vary according to the speaker, but this is the accepted Helmish view)

Ilmater

The Power: Ilmater is the Crying God, the god of endurance, suffering, martyrdom, and perseverance. It is he who offers succor and calming words to those who are in pain, oppressed, or in great need. He is the willing sufferer, the one who takes the place of another to heft the other's burden, to take the other's pain. He is the god of the oppressed and unjustly treated.

Ilmater appears as a broken man, his hands smashed but still used. He is allied to Tyr, and aids the blinded god in his travels, teaching him to live without his sight but to rely upon his feelings. Ilmater is lawful good and dwells in the Twin Paradises.

Ilmater's symbol in the early days was the blood-stained rack, but of late a set of white hands bound with blood-red cord is used. The latter symbol has increased Ilmater's popularity in the world at large.

The Ethos: The followers of Ilmater are often perceived as being intentional sufferers, but in reality they offer a great deal along the "pure clerical" nature of healing and recovery to those who have been hurt. They put others ahead of themselves, are sharing, and emphasize the spiritual nature of life over the gross material body.

There are those followers of Ilmater who take a negative view of the world, and the church accepts them as well. This includes those with a dark humor towards living. "Today is the first day in what's left of your life" fits very snugly into Ilmater's dogma.

The Clergy: Ilmater's priests are found where they are needed, which is usually in the worst possible conditions, ministering to the needs of the oppressed, the deceased, and the poor. They dress simply in gray, with gray skullcaps (blood-red for the higher ranks).

Priests of Ilmater may he found among adventuring companies, and—in addition to paladins—are often the ones to go off rescuing this clan of kidnapped halflings or recovering that purloined family heirloom. It is not that they are foolish, but rather that they care for all things to the exclusion of their personal risk.

Mask

The Power: Mask is the god of rogues, thieves, and intrigue. He is the Lord of Shadows, a neutral evil god who makes his home in the Plane of Hades. His domain there is known as Shadow Keep.

Mask appears as a lithe man garbed in dark clothing and a cloak of shadows. He always wears a black velvet mask, tinged with red; this has also become his symbol. The cloak allows him to become invisible, fly, and give the appearance of any illusion he should choose to duplicate.

The Ethos: All that which occurs within shadow is in the purview of Mask. Stealth and wariness, it is believed, are virtues, and the writings of a true follower of Mask can be read in many ways. In addition to thieves and more shadowy individuals, courtiers and diplomats have also been known to evoke the god's name in hope of guaranteeing a smooth negotiation.

The Clergy: The worship of Mask is an underground church, literally. Most of the established shrines and temples of the god are hidden away from prying eyes (and dangerous enemies). In cases where an operating thieves' guild is recognized in a city, there will be likely a temple to Mask associated with or near that location.

Priests of Mask are encouraged to hide their true nature and masquerade as other priests or commoners. In service, the priests wear-

brightly colored garments in the manner of their god, and gray cloaks and masks.

Mielikki

The Power: Mielikki is the Lady of the Forest, the goddess of the woods and those creatures who live within them. She is the patron of rangers in the same way that Oghma is the patron of bards. In the confusion following the Time of Troubles, she also gathered autumn into her portfolio, away from the dead Myrkul.

Mielikki appears as a young maiden with leaves and golden moss for hair, garbed in sheer robes of green and yellow. Her symbol is the unicorn, or in older texts, the white star on the green leaf.

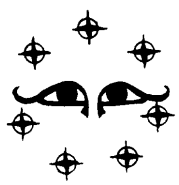
Mielikki is allied with and in the service of Silvanus, and with the growing power of that god is diminished in her own right. Within a generation she may be reduced to demipower status or become a quasi-power. Her followers already have added the name "Daughter to Silvanus" to her other names.

Mielikki is neutral good in alignment, like Eldath, and makes the Prime Material Plane her base of power. Her exact dwelling place is unknown.

The Ethos: Mielikki's followers are close to those of Silvanus in outlook and ethos, save that they stress the positive and outreaching nature of the wild. Intelligent beings can live in harmony with the wild without requiring the destruction of one in the name of the other. Mielikki's outlook matches that of rangers in general, which is why she is their patron.

The Clergy: The priests of Mielikki are scattered and not numerous, and include those rangers who choose to join her faith. The organized church hierarchy (such as it is) is exclusively priests, using rangers as an auxiliary force. Shrines to the goddess are more common than temples, and are found throughout the North in wilderness areas.

Selûne



The Power: Selûne, Our Lady of Silver, is the goddess of the moon, the stars, and those who use them to navigate. She is a calm, placid power, chaotic good in nature, and dwells on the plane of Gladsheim. She is served by a group of female servitors known as the shards. Her eternal foe is the evil goddess Shar.

When she journeys to the Realms, Selûne is said to appear as dusky-hued of skin, with wide, radiant eyes, and long tresses of ivory-white hair. A differing report says that she appears as a fair, but matronly, woman of middling years, and most recently has mixed amid humans in the City of Waterdeep itself, but this has not been confirmed. It can be safely said that as the moon changes, so does the nature of the moon goddess.

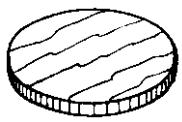
Selûne's symbol is a circle of seven stars around two feminine eyes.

The Ethos: Selûne's ethos seems to be one of acceptance and tolerance over any other overriding principle. She is worshipped, or at least venerated, by a mixed bag of followers—navigators and seamen, but also women, female spellcasters, good-aligned lycanthropes, those who work honestly at night, those seeking protection from Shar, the lost, and the questing. The demands she places on her followers are few, and her churches vary as do the phases of the moon, from opulent temples in Waterdeep to simple shrines in the Dalelands.

The Clergy: Selûne's priesthood is as diverse as her worshippers, with hers being truly a faith that promotes equal access and understanding. Its greatest and most beautiful temple is the House of the Moon, located in Waterdeep.

The enmity between Shar and Selûne carries into the priesthoods, such that open battle often occurs when followers of each faith meet.

Tymora



The Power: Also known as Lady Luck, less frequently as Tyche's fair-tressed daughter, and rarer still as Beshaba's sister, Tymora is the goddess of good fortune, skill, and victory. She is the patron of adventurers in general.

Tymora traditionally appears as a short-haired, boyish woman with crafty looks. However, her appearance during the Time of Troubles was of a more regal, noble figure. Which incarnation is closer to the truth is a matter for debate, and likely both are equally false. She is fickle in her nature, and chaotic good in her alignment. She dwells in Arvandor.

The Ethos: The battle cry of the followers of Tymora is, put simply, "Fortune favors the bold." A brave heart and willingness to take risks will beat a carefully wrought plan nine times out of ten. One must place oneself in the hands of fate (meaning in the hands of Tymora) and trust to one's own luck.

The Clergy: Tymora is an extremely popular goddess among adventurers, and her temples may be found wherever there is a strong adventuring population. Tymora's priests are the first choice of a badly wounded party dragging itself into town, and as a result, the church is relatively wealthy.

With that wealth comes a strong independent nature among the different churches of Tymora. There are no set vestments or service, and like Selûne (another goddess with a wide variety of worshippers) each temple reflects the tastes of its high priestess or priest.

In the face of this independent nature has come an attempt in the past 10 years to unify the church under a grand patriarch, in the manner of the old faith of Oghma. Leading this suggestion is Daramos Lauthyr, High Priest of the Lady's House in Arabel. It was in Lauthyr's temple where Tymora manifested during the Time of Troubles, and she remained there, protecting the city with her power, during the worst of that time. The other churches have been extremely resistant to proclaiming the Arabel church the center of Tymoran faith, but the conflict has not become open squabbling yet.

Umberlee

The Power: Umberlee the Bitch Queen rules from her watery lair in a flooded level of the Abyss, and controls the oceans, the waves, and the sea. She is worshipped out of fear as opposed to adoration, and ship crews offer her gems, tossed over the side, to calm the storm-tossed waters. As her name professes, she is evil and chaotic in the extreme.

Umberlee continually contests with Selûne, in whom navigators trust to guide their ships safely home. Of late, she has also felt the heavy presence of her own patron, Talos, who is picking up violent nature in all its forms as his personal portfolio. Umberlee's fate, whether she rebels or acquiesces and becomes a servant of Talos, has yet to be resolved.

Umberlee's symbol is a forked blue-green wave.

The Ethos: Umberlee has no set ethical outlook, save that the sea is a savage place and those who travel it had best be willing to pay the price of challenging her domain. In this way, the worship of Umberlee is close to many primitive cults, and it is from their ranks that the Bitch Queen may have originally risen. In all other matters, her ethos is very similar to Talos's.

The Clergy: There is little in the way of an organized clergy of Umberlee. Much like the priests of Talos, they roam the coastal cities, warning of doom and demanding free passage on ships to ensure the goddess's pleasure. Umberlee does have a large number of shrines in the coastal cities, and sailors often leave flowers or small candies in hopes that Umberlee will spare them on the next voyage.

Lesser Powers

Auril

The Power: Auril, the Frostmaiden, is the goddess of cold and winter, and is most powerful in those regions that are affected by deep winters or crouch at the edges of the Great Glacier. She is a neutral evil goddess and a native of Pandemonium. Her symbol is a white snowflake on a gray diamond.

When portrayed, Auril appears as a beautiful, blue-skinned woman garbed in a mantle of white.

The Ethos: Auril is similar to Umberlee in many ways. She is worshipped out of fear, she serves Talos, and much of her ethos is similar to that of the god of nature's destruction. Like Umberlee, she has seen much of her personal power eroded by Talos himself, and as a result, the winters have grown colder in the past decade to remind the northerners who still controls the power of cold.

The Clergy: The priests of Auril are scattered throughout the North, though advocates are now being seen more often in the Heartlands. Their robes are ice-white with blue trim, and they are easily identifiable by the dire warnings they proclaim of the wrath of Auril come the winter.

Azuth

The Power: Azuth is the god of wizards and mages (and to a much lesser degree, all who cast spells), as opposed to Mystra, who is the goddess of all magic. Azuth is Mystra's servant, friend, and advisor. This last role has become even more important in the years since the Time of Troubles.

Azuth is known as the High One, the Patron of Wizards. He is lawful and neutral in alignment, and makes his home in Arcadia, He appears as a bearded old man unbent by age, wielding a stout staff and great magical and clerical powers. His symbol is a human hand, pointing upwards, outlined in a nimbus of blue fire.

The Ethos: Followers of Azuth feel that reason is the best way to approach magic, and that it may be examined and reduced to its component parts through study and meditation. Calm and caution are the watchwords of the Azuthian priests, to avoid mistakes that even magic cannot undo.

The Clergy: The priesthood of Azuth includes both clerics and wizards, as befits the god of spellcasters. Sword-swinging barbarians invading a shrine and expecting priests are often surprised by a *fireball* exploding in their midst launched by one of the defending "clerics."

The vestments of the priesthood are shimmering gray.

Deneir

The Power: Deneir, the Lord of All Glyphs and Images, is the god of literature and literacy, the patron of the artist and the scribe. His is the power to accurately render and describe, to write and to read, and to pass on information. He is portrayed as a balding old sage with a huge, flared beard. His home plane is the Beastlands, where it is said he has a library containing all that is known and true. He is neutral and good in alignment.

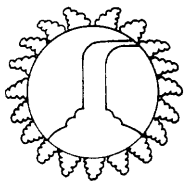
Deneir is in service to Oghma, and is also known as Oghma's scribe. His symbol is a single candle set above an eye.

The Ethos: Followers of Deneir believe that information that is not recorded and saved to be used later is information that is lost. Literacy is an important gift of the gods, and should be spread and taught. Followers of Deneir have taken an oath of charity as well, such that they cannot turn down the request of another to write letters and transcribe information. Information that does not harm should be made free to all.

The Clergy: The priests of Deneir are found throughout the Realms, as are shrines and temples in that god's name. It is reported that the scribes of Deneir keep great hidden libraries in mountain fastnesses such as the Snowflake Mountains, where they hide their great knowledge.

Deneir, with Mystra, has influence on the mysterious group known as the Harpers, and one of their largest churches, the Inner Chamber, in Berdusk, is the front for an extensive Harper organization known as Twilight Hall.

Eldath



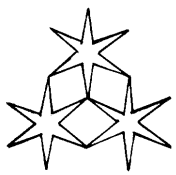
The Power: Eldath is the goddess of waterfalls, springs, pools, stillness, peace, and quiet places. She is the guardian of druid groves. Her peaceful nature has given her the additional names of the Quiet One and the Goddess of the Singing Water. She appears similar to Mielikki, in Eldath's case as a dark-haired woman dressed in shimmering green. Like Mielikki, Eldath makes the Prune Material Plane her home, though her lair is said to be every place where there is calm.

Eldath is completely neutral to the point of extreme pacifism and nonaction, even when threatened. This is one of the reasons that Eldath is almost a forgotten power, in that most worshippers think of Mielikki or Silvanus first. Like Mielikki, Eldath serves Silvanus.

The Ethos: The philosophy of Eldath is highly advanced, but it teaches that peace can only come from within and cannot be taught or imposed, but must be reached through thought and meditation. In a world brimming with evil gods and their servants, orcs, goblins, warring nations, and other hostile forces, it is not surprising that this philosophy has failed to catch on. Still, it is viable and challenging, and legends speak of heroes (such as the elven war hero Telva) who embraced the cause of Eldath and abandoned warfare forever.

The Clergy: The church of Eldath is small and dispersed, the majority of its most ardent priests traveling and preaching or settling by some quiet spot and teaching those who come seeking enlightenment. The priests of Eldath dress simply in green and blue robes, frayed and worn.

Lliira



The Power: Our Lady of Joy is the goddess of contentment, release, joy, happiness, dance. and freedom, and is the patroness of festivals. Her appearance is ever-changing, ever-moving, ever-alive. She is of chaotic good alignment and makes her home in the outer plane of Arvandor. Lliira serves Oghma alongside Deneir, and is also an ally of Milil.

Lliira's symbol is three stars: one of orange, one yellow, and one red.

The Ethos: Lliira's followers are believers in the ability, potential, and talent of the individual, and the celebration of life and its diversity. Often this leads to hedonism that would make a Sunite blush (briefly). With the absorption of the church of Waukeen (see the Dead Powers section), Lliira's church has become wealthier, but taken on a more responsible air, as it attracts more of the merchant class.

The Clergy: Lliira's priests are known as joybringers, and dress in a mixture of orange and yellow. Since the Time of Troubles, the church has attracted many of the former followers and clergy of Waukeen, and many of that faith's old temples have now been reconsecrated to Lliira. With the infusion of new blood, the church has become mildly more responsible and mildly more mercantile. It has also developed a stronger feeling towards personal freedoms.

Loviatar

The Power: Loviatar, the Maiden of Pain, is the goddess of hurt and agony, and the patroness of torturers. She makes her home in the lower plane of Gehenna, and is lawful and evil in nature. She appears as a pale maiden dressed in white, pleated armor, and carries a bone-white wand that she uses as a weapon against her foes.

Loviatar's symbol is a nine-stranded whip, with barbs at the tip of each strand.

The Ethos: Loviatar teaches that the world is filled with pain and torment, and the best that one may do is to suffer those blows that cannot be avoided, and deal as much pain back to those who offend. Loviatar is the chosen deity of those who inflict pain as a matter of course, including torturers and others who need to break the wills of their victims.

The Clergy: The clergy of Loviatar is small in number, but widespread in power. Her priests prefer the pleated scale mail of their mistress, and wear it as a badge of honor and pride. Opponents tend to avoid the priests, since murder is the least that they will do in revenge against insults to their goddess.

The church of Loviatar is relatively independent of the trials and tribulations that affect other deities, though its members will aid other evil churches when it suits them. They particularly hate the church of Ilmater, which teaches than strength comes out of suffering and seems resistant to the pain that Loviatar delivers.

Malar

The Power: Malar, the Stalker, the Beastlord, is a chaotic evil god who makes his home in the plane of Tarterus but often roams the Prune Material Plane, possessing the bodies of his devout in a berserker frenzy. He is the god of marauding beasts, of the savage wild, of bloodlust and the hunt.

Malar appears as a great, black, cat-like beast, its ebony fur matted with blood, and with blood dripping off its talons and fangs. With Umberlee and Auril, he is one of the Gods of Fury who serve Talos. Weakened with the growing strength of Talos, he has found new worshippers among the nonhuman tribes.

His symbol is a taloned, bestial claw.

The Ethos: The hunt is the centerpoint of life and death—the challenge between the hunter and the prey, the judgement of who may live or die. Savagery and strong emotions will defeat reason and careful thought in all things. A brutal, bloody death has meaning—"May

you die an old man" is an insult among Malarites.

The Clergy: The church of Malar is loosely bound and without a central hierarchy. This makes it all the more difficult to counter or remove, for as soon as one den of Malarites is contained, another arises. The leader of the local church may be a priest, mage, or warrior, and is known as the huntmaster. The huntmaster can be identified by his headpiece: usually a bear, great cat, or other creature that the leader has killed with his bare hands.

Milil

The Power: Milil is the god of poetry, eloquence, and song. He is venerated by bards but is considered secondary to Oghma, in a similar manner to Deneir. Milil is on excellent terms with a number of powerful gods, including Mystra and Sune. Milil is neutral good in alignment, and makes his home in the plane of the Beastlands.

Milil appears as a human or elven male with a charismatic manner and a haunting, melodic voice. Milil is said to be welcome in the elven pantheon as well, because of the beauty of his song. Often only the song is heard. When Milil is with a human bard in the throes of inspiration, it is said that he gives off an eerie radiance.

Milil's symbol is the silver harp, but he is not directly connected with the Harpers, who use the crescent moon and harp.

The Ethos: Milil is a god of creativity and inspiration, of the whole song more than just the lyrics or the music. He represents the finished thought, the process that takes an idea from conception to completion. As a result, the ethos of Milil teaches to consider the world in terms of a continuing process, a song that begins at birth and is only silenced with the final chord.

The Clergy: Priests of Milil are found throughout the North, and they run churches, temples, and shrines in most of the major cities. They are ultimately ruled by the Patriarch of Song in Waterdeep, but most churches tend to their own flock in their own fashion.

Clerical vestments of Milil are made of rich, lustrous fabric, usually crimson with golden dragons arching and spiraling across their length.

Talona

The Power: Talona is the Lady of Poison, the Mistress of Disease, and these are her portfolios in the godhead. A chaotic and evil deity, she makes her home in the plane of Tarterus. Talona is represented as a withered old crone with a scarred, tattooed face. Where she walks, misfortune and death follow.

The symbol of Talona is a trio of teardrops in a triangular pattern.

The Ethos: Life and death are in balance, say Talona's priests, but death is the more powerful, and should be paid proper homage and respect. Death is a lesson to be learned by all, and if it falls to the followers of Talona to drive home the point, so be it.

The Clergy: The church of Talona operates underground, as can be expected of a faith that promotes death and disease. It is strongest in those regions where plagues are most rampant, and the faithful of Talona are often accused of creating such situations. Priests of Talona are partial to ritual facial tattoos and scarification.

Talona worship was at its height during the Great Plague of the Inner Sea of 1317-1323 DR.

Torm

The Power: Torm the True and the Brave is the god of duty, loyalty, and obedience, and the patron of paladins and those who face danger for a greater good. His is a lawful and good faith, and Torm makes his home in the Prime Material Plane, much like Eldath and Mielikki.

Torm is the good right hand of Tyr, and works in the service of the greater power of justice. During the Time of Troubles, his physical form was destroyed in battle with Bane, yet he was restored to his form and his place in the pantheon. Some believe Torm was restored because he died for the very ethos he professed, while others believe that, as a native of this plane, he cannot be entirely slain (good news for the followers of Eldath and Mielikki, who have seen their flocks and power decrease over the years).

Torm's symbol is a metal gauntlet.

The Ethos: Torm's is one of the most ethically pure of all faiths, in that it is devoted to loyalty and obedience. This is not a blind obedience, and a servant working for an evil master is responsible to a higher authority in his loyalty. Salvation may be found through service.

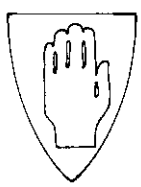
The Clergy: Torm's popularity is increasing, particularly in the wake of the events of the Time of Troubles. He benefits from an enthusiastic following, and number of fighting orders and paladins have devoted themselves to this god.

The center of Torm's worship is in the city of Tantras, where Torm perished in the name of his own cause. The clergy of Torm wear armor in much the same manner as Tempus, but it is clean and battle-ready.

Some uneasy rivalry exists between the followers of Torm and those of Helm. While the former is increasing in popularity, followers, and thereby power, the latter has suffered a number of setbacks and a loss of reputation.

Dead Powers

Bane



The Power: Bane the Black Lord was the god of strife, tyranny, and hatred, areas usurped by Cyric. He was lawful evil and one of the greater powers of the Realms, and his symbol was a black hand on a red field.

The Clergy: Bane's priests have been almost entirely taken over by Cyric, though many still worship Cyric

as the new Bane. The greatest holdouts remain in the Moonsea, where infighting between the old and new religions resulted in the Banedeath—weeks of rampage where all temples and obvious worship of the old dead god were destroyed.

There are isolated pockets of true Banites still in the Realms, and not all priests of Cyric have laid old Bane to rest. Dissenters have also been attracted to the faiths of Talos, Talona, and the quasi-power Iyachtu Xvim, Godson of Bane.

Bhaal

The Power: Bhaal was the god of death, particularly of violent or ritual death. He was an intermediate power. His was a powerful faith in the Realms at one time, and he was known as the Lord of Murder. He had suffered a series of reverses previous to the Time of Troubles, the most vital being his banishment from the Moonshaes. He was destroyed during the Time of Troubles and his portfolio and churches taken over by Cyric. He was lawful evil.

Bhaal's symbol was a skull surrounded by teardrops.

The Clergy: Bhaal's priests who survived the Time of Troubles have switched their allegiance to Cyric, though they retain much of their own independence, symbolism, and dogma. Their faction regards Cyric as the newly risen Bhaal under a new name, and contends against those former Banites who declare that Cyric is Bane risen. Cyric-as-Bhaal has its strongest adherents in the Land of Thay, which moved smoothly over to Cyric's faith. What isolated pockets of pure Bhaal worship still exist are usually in remote areas, presided over by an ancient priest.

Leira

The Power: Leira, the Lady of the Mists, is or was the goddess of deception and illusion, the Patroness of Illusionists and Liars. Her appearance, even her very existence, is in doubt. If she still exists, her home would be in the swirling mists of the plane of Limbo.

Leira is (was?) a chaotic neutral minor lesser power, little worshipped except by illusionists, who credit her with their language of Ruathlek.

Leira is believed to be dead, having perished in mysterious circumstances in the Time of Troubles, with her portfolio and worshippers picked up by another god or goddess. In the time since then, no power has stepped forward to claim Leira's small congregation, or to confirm or deny Leira's passing. The matter cannot rest long, and a definite response is sure to be forthcoming.

Leira's symbol is a triangular plaque, point downwards, painted in cloudy, swirling grays.

The Clergy: Priests of Leira are known for their reflective masks, similar to those worn by the Lords of Waterdeep. They are few and far-between, moreso since the Time of Troubles.

Myrkul

The Power: Myrkul was the god of the dead, as opposed to the god of death, which was the province of Bhaal. The symbol of the old Lord of Bones was a skull or skeletal hand. His portfolio, and his home in Hades, Bone Castle, were both usurped by Cyric. He was a neutral evil greater power.

The Clergy: The priesthood of Myrkul was never very large, since there are few devout followers of the dead. However, the fear of Myrkul inspired much of the veneration he received.

The changeover from Myrkul to Cyric was smooth and without any of the tensions or incidents that plagued followers of Bane or Bhaal. It was, in the words of one wit, "merely changing the name on the letterhead and putting a purple sunburst around the skull." The utter placid neutrality of the change is emblematic of the stoic, unflappable priests of the dead, but may also indicate that the church has gone through this changeover before, and may do so yet again.

Waukeen

The Power: Waukeen was a young goddess of trade, money, and wealth who appealed to the rising merchant class in the Realms. She was a true neutral intermediate power. Her symbol was the gold coin, and her clergy were among the most lavishly dressed, rivaling those of Sune, Milil, and Lathander in their rich robes.

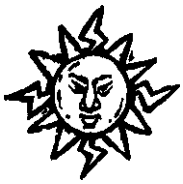
Waukeen died during the Time of Troubles. There is no record of how she perished or if she perished. However, her priests no longer received their spells, and the congregations her blessing. No other deity stepped into the void to answer the supplicants immediately, and pandemonium reigned among her clergy.

Finally, three years ago, a prophet of Lliira appeared with a revelation—Waukeen was dead and banished from the Realms and would not return. The prophet appeared at the gates of each of the temples of Waukeen in the Realms on a series of days, transported by magic or the will of the gods. At each stop, the prophet said that Lliira would hold the portfolio of Waukeen in trust as its regent and grant spells to the worthy. The temples, already battered by a loss of respect and worshippers, readily agreed, and the faith of Waukeen was smoothly folded into the worship of Lliira. Lliira gained extensive power in the move.

The Clergy: Most of the former priests of Waukeen are now Lliiracists, either fully taken with the power of the faith or worshipping Lliira as Waukeen's godly regent. They retain the opulence of their robes, but are chastened by their experience, and seek to work within the hierarchy of the joybringers. At best, they consider themselves to be the wiser heads that will aid Lliira; at worst, they are regarded as bean counters and stick-in-the-muds by the more chaotic Lliiracists.

Quasi-Powers

At'ar



Most of Faerûn venerates the moon goddess, Selûne, but not a sun-based deity. The Bedine tribesmen of Anauroch are an exception. They respect and fear At'ar the Merciless, the Yellow Goddess. Symbolizing the heat of the desert sun, she is a spiteful and faithless woman whose fury in the full day strikes fear into the bravest hearts. Sages have also discovered references to an ancient god of Netheril named Amaunator, who was a male sun god, but any connection between the two is unproven. At'ar is not worshipped so much as cursed and feared.

Baelros

Baelros may be an incarnation of Tales, and shares many of the same attitudes and teachings about the destructive forces of nature. He is worshipped in the South, in the lands of Calimshan, and portrayed there as a great turbaned genie of dusky skin, rising out of a sandstorm. His symbol is a simple curved lightning bolt. Priests of Baelros are on good terms with those of Talos, and there is every reason to believe that Baelros is either a local god of the region who has sworn fealty to Talos, a part of Talos's godly power incarnated in this land, or a separate deity who has resisted the storm god's attempts to absorb his portfolio. Baelros is an intermediate power within his land, but has little power beyond the borders of Amn and Calimshan.

Earthmother

The Earthmother of the Moonshae Islands is an example of a local deity of great power. She has little influence or recognition outside the Moonshaes, but within that area she reigns supreme as the greater power. Thought of as merely a shard or facet of Chauntea, the Earthmother is more of a well-rounded nature goddess, incorporating both agriculture and wilderness, and devoted to the preservation of the balance. The majority of her priests are druids. Earthmother wields her abilities as a greater power within the Moonshaes, and has no effect beyond this area. She is believed to make the Prime Material Plane her home.

Earthmother has three agents who are her children: Leviathan is a great whale who guards the waters of the Moonshaes. Kamerynn is a great male unicorn, the king of the wilderness. The Pack is a gathering of dire wolves melded into a single, unstoppable horde in the service of the goddess. All may be considered demipowers within the bounds of the Moonshaes.

Entropy

Entropy, the Great Nothing, the Swallower of Gods, the Magechill, is more concept than deity, but is worshipped fervently (originally and almost exclusively by a mad family clan called the Karanoks) in the city of Luthcheq in Chessenta, in a large temple enclosed by a hemisphere of black glass.

Entropy is considered to be a gigantic *sphere of annihilation* that no force, godly or mortal, may stop. The priests of Entropy hate mages and magic with a passion, to the degree of seeing them banned or stoned in the streets. The depth of this hatred is unknown, as is its origin. Entropy is little thought of (as a god, at least) outside of Chessenta.

Garagos

Garagos the War God was of old a god of war in the western Inner Sea. He was portrayed as a many-armed giant wielding a different weapon in each of his myriad hands, and is now often portrayed wading through a blood-red sea. One of his other names was Master of All Weapons. His symbol was spiral of five arms ending with swords.

Garagos' greatest worship occurred in the area of what is now Westgate. The sewers and underground passages of that city are rife with his old altars and symbols. Garagos was slain in single combat by Tempus. However, small cults in his name still survive along the southern coast of the Sea of Fallen Stars and the Vilhon Reach. At the height of his power, Garagos would have been considered a greater god. Were he to somehow manifest in these days, he would be little more than a weak lesser power, and less than a match for Torm.

Gargauth the Outcast

An evil god whose foul nature was too much for others of his ilk, Gargauth was cast out of his palace in the lower planes and condemned to wander the Prime Material Plane. He is said to appear as a charismatic, reasonable sage, but as he spends more time in one place, his true nature becomes apparent, as his flesh and clothing rots and twists, horns and jagged shards erupt from his face and back, and his claws and fangs grow. By this time, those under his influence are enspelled so as to be unaware of his deadly nature.

Gargauth plots to recover all his lost lands and followers, seeking for the method by which Toril was sealed from the other planes. Few individuals worship Gargauth, for fear that he will drop in for a visit.

Gwaeron Windstrom

A lesser power in the service of Mielikki, Gwaeron is known as the Tracker, and represents that ranger ability that allows tracking and

understanding woodland signs. Gwaeron serves as Mielikki's intercessor with mortals in the North. He is portrayed as a tall, physically impressive man with a long, white beard and hair that whips in the breeze.

Gwaeron has a few shrines scattered through the High Forest and Cormanthor, but no temples to speak of.

Hoar

Hoar the Doombringer is the lesser power of revenge and retribution, known in the Inner Sea lands as Assuran. He is not worshipped, but his name is invoked by those seeking vengeance, and when a guilty party falls prey to fate (a murderer escapes prosecution, but is then accidentally slain himself), the hand of Hoar is given credit.

Hoar's direct action in the Realms has not been felt since the Time of Troubles, and his sign (three deep rolls of thunder) has not been heard in the Inner Sea lands for a decade. Whether he died in the Time of Troubles, was slain by the rising new god, Cyric, or is hiding out until the time comes to take his own vengeance is unknown.

Iyachtu Xvim

Also called the Godson and the Son of Bane, Iyachtu has served as Bane's instrument in the Realms, carrying out the will of his "father." He appears either as a gaunt, naked man with a great scimitar or a black cloud with glowing eyes.

Iyachtu Xvim apparently declared his independence with the Time of Troubles, though whether this occurred before or after the death of his "father" is unknown. He is strongest in the East, particularly in Thay, but his cultists can be found throughout the Realms. He had no direct part in the Time of Troubles, and has had no relationship with the gods since, but if any of the current quasi-powers could be considered soon to become an intermediate or greater power, the bets are on the Godson (and the Red Knight, see below).

Jergal

The creature, position, or demigod Jergal was the servant of the god of the dead, Myrkul. In the oldest histories, Jergal is mentioned before Myrkul, and may be his predecessor or may have been Myrkul's previous name. Jergal is seneschal of Bone Castle, the Scribe of the Doomed, whose job it was to keep tabs on the final disposition of all the dead spirits.

Jergal is a forgotten god, or god's position, literally fading into Myrkul's shadow in the past millennium. He played no part in the Time of Troubles, and it is unknown if she, he, or it still exists. Jergal's alignment would be lawful neutral.

Moander

An ancient god of rot and decay, Moander was powerful long before humans settled permanently in the Dalelands, but by civilized times his sole temple was in the now-ruined city of Yûlash. His symbol was a palm with a fanged maw in its center.

Moander, the Darkbringer, is an excellent example of how even dead and forgotten gods can sleep lightly. Within recorded memory, Moander was brought physically into this plane, wreaking destruction that resulted in the final abandonment of Yûlash and the creation of Moander's Road in Cormanthor, the elven forest.

Moander was driven back and ultimately defeated by a combination of brave warriors, exiles from another plane, and the Harpers. Since then Moander has lain quiet and dead again, but reports proliferate in the Desertsmouth Mountains of a new lesser power, one representing the rot of Moander and the rebirth and renewal that is bound to come out of that corruption. More has yet to be revealed.

Red Knight

The Red Knight is a lesser power in the service of Tempus, the Lord of War. She is the goddess of planning and strategy, and though there have been occasional fighting orders in her name, she has no established priesthood or shrines. She is portrayed as a dark-haired woman in blood-red armor, with a map of the Realms tightly clasped in her hands.

The Red Knight is venerated within the church of Tempus, but always in a secondary position to the Lord of Battles. With time (and the increasingly complex nature of war), she may gain her own individual following and supporters in the same manner as Torm has done in the service of Tyr. She is neutral but extremely lawful.

Savras The ALL-Seeing

Savras was a god of the South who was once as powerful as Azuth and shared much of the same portfolio: mages in the service of Mystra, goddess of magic. The two contended, according to legend, and Savras fell. Azuth became the one god of wizards.

Today, Savras is worshipped quietly in both North and South as a god of diviners and truth-speakers. He is portrayed as a man with a crystalline face, clear to all who see him. His statements are clear, concise, and rarely what the listener wishes to hear.

Savras's only famous servant was Alaundo of Candlekeep, the one true prophet of the Realms. There is a small shrine to Savras there, the only known shrine in the North to this forgotten god.

Sharess

This strange and radiant demipower is believed to have once been a part of Shar, the goddess of night and loss. She is a chaotic good deity worshipped in large urban areas such as Waterdeep, Calimport, and other cities along the Sword Coast. She is the goddess of hedonism, lust, and sensual fulfillment, the Patroness of Festhalls.

Sharess's faith is still at the cult stage, with long worship services that resemble nothing so much as extended feasts and orgies, heavy on the pleasures of the flesh and light on the teachings of the spirit. Sharess puts even Sune and Lliira to shame with her excesses.

The true nature and identity of Sharess is unrevealed. She may he a direct part of the evil Shar, preparing her following for despair and loss. Or she may be a new thing entirely: a goddess of excess. A goodly number of former followers of Waukeen who have rejected Lliira's teachings have become interested in Sharess.

Sharess's symbol is the image ot feminine lips carved from dark amber or ruby and worn on a golden chain on the wrist or ankle.

Shaundakul

Shaundakul, the Rider of the Winds, was the god of travel and exploration in old Myth Drannor. He was worshipped by humans and half-elves, particularly those who were traders, explorers, and adventurers in the uncharted wilderness. His manifestation is a great, disembodied hand glowing with unearthly radiance, surrounded by swirling winds, pointing the way. This appearance also accounts for Shaundakul's other name, the Helping Hand.

Shaundakul's worship fell with his worshippers when Myth Drannor was destroyed. Mielikki absorbed the rangers, and Waukeen the traders. Shaundakul's clergy has fallen to a mere double handful of priests scattered throughout the North. At his high point, he could have been considered an intermediate power, but now is more at the level of a minor lesser power.

Shiallia

Shiallia is a local nature deity of the High Forest who acts in the service of Silvanus and Mielikki. She appears as a beautiful and voluptuous female korred, and is the midwife to pregnant forest creatures, the planter of seeds, and the nurturer of seedlings.

Shiallia claims to be the sister of the Tree Ghost (the collective spirit of the High Forest) and limits her influence to that region. Within the High Forest she is considered a lesser power. She is unknown beyond its boundaries save for a small temple in Silverymoon.

Siamorphe

Siamorphe the Noble is a lawful neutral deity worshipped primarily among the noble class of Waterdeep, and unheard of outside that area. Siamorphe's ethos is that the noble class has the right to rule and the responsibility to rule in the best manner possible for the people who serve under it. This is a very appealing ethos to some, particularly to the nobles looking for some reason why *they* are in charge.

Siamorphe's symbol is a circlet with a golden sun on the brow.

Tchazzar

A hero promoted to the level of a deity, Tchazzar united the states of Chessenta under his rule. Tchazzar ruled well and long, then, when his days were done, the warrior-king rode north, never to be seen again. His followers believe Tchazzar to be still alive, and hold that he has attained demigod status for his work on this plane. His worship is strong in Chessenta and unknown elsewhere.

Tchazzar's symbol is a red dragon against a black mountain.

Uthgar

Uthgar is the father of the barbarians of the Savage Frontier, and is said in their legends to he the son of Tempus himself. A proud, strong warrior who founded the Uthgardt tribes, Uthgar lived three times a normal human life, then ascended to rule beside his father. The fact that Uthgar is unknown outside of the North, even in temples of Tempus, is proof to the barbarians that these civilized priests are weak and have watered down the true message of the gods. Uthgar has no holy symbol nor does he have temples or shrines in the standard sense. However, the Uthgardt barbarians believe in him, and believe him to be the master of all the Beast Cults, which they also venerate.

Valkur

Valkur the Mighty is a sailor's god, a lesser power who intercedes to protect ships against the cruel whimsy of Umberlee and the destruction of Talos. He is a chaotic good deity, and not always responsive to his followers' prayers. As a result, worship among the northern sailors is more in line with trying to placate the Gods of Fury rather than seek protection from them—protection that many never come.

Valkur appears as a giant sailor, wading through the ocean, which only comes up to his knees. He carries a great shield with which he turns hack the worst of the forces of nature arrayed against him.

Valkur has shrines up and down the Sword Coast and the Sea of Fallen Stars, and his name is used to bless the spirits of dead sailors and lost ships. Umberlee's name, however, is still spoken more, and her shrines are more numerous.

Beast Cults

Also included in the ranks of the quasi-powers are the various powerful creatures, monsters, and godly beings revered by the Beast Cults. These cults are usually relatively small in numbers and domain, and dedicated to one particular monster or class of monsters.

Cultists may have priests, but more often have shamans in their service, and often attract nonhuman worshipers as well. In general, such cults are most powerful in the wilderness and emphasize the destructive power of the creature in question. Many cults have strong ties back to Malar, and serve him in the way that Azuth serves Mystra, or the Red Knight serves Tempus.

The better known examples of the Beast Cults are:

The Blue Bear: One of the best-known and most hated of the northern barbarian tribes is devoted to the worship of the Blue Bear, a demonic creature that lives in close proximity to Hellgate Keep. A thundering, roaring engine of destruction, the Blue Bear cult has followers throughout the North, and its legend has spread further still. Its leader is an annis or night hag (reports vary) known for eating her captives.

The Bright Sword: Not a beast cult *per se,* but rather a cult that venerates an animated magical item, this faith is based in Thentia. The Bright Sword is said to be a flying long sword that makes its way through the dark underpassages of the city of Thentia, through flooded cellars and sewers, to track down those with magical items who come into its path.

Cult of the Singing Skull: This cult, reported to come out of the desert of Anauroch, is led by an animated, talking skull. Followers of this cult have been reported by Zhentarim as interfering with plans to cross the desert.

Elrem the Wise Great Worm: One of the venerated gods of the northern barbarians, the Great Worm is a living, immortal creature, said to have been one of the sons of Uthgar (the legendary forefather of all the northern barbarians). A powerful dragon-like creature, Elrem sleeps through the year, rousing himself only to advise or defend his tribesmen. He makes his lair, and his people their camp, at the Great Worm Cavern.

Kazgoroth: The Beast of the Moonshae Isles was said to be a direct manifestation of Bhaal, but none ever chose to put the question to him. A huge reptilian creature, Kazgoroth had great magical powers, and was served by an army of firbolgs, and loyal undead troops known as the Blood Warriors. He was slain in the manner that was said to render him utterly dead, but death has not proved to be a career-ending injury among the Realms deities.

Lurue: Lurue the Unicorn is the chaotic good goddess of talking beasts and intelligent monsters. Her worshippers are scattered throughout the North, centering around Silverymoon. Lurue also has an adventuring company, the Knights of the Unicorn, dedicated to her name. This group is based in Baldur's Gate.

Nobanion: The Lion God of Gulthmere, Nobanion is viewed as the protector of that woods and the wild natives within it. He is portrayed as a great male lion of twice normal size, with jaws that, once clamped shut, cannot be opened by any force in the mortal world.

Red Tiger: One of the many Beast Cults found among the barbarian tribes of the Savage Frontier, Red Tiger is a bestial, wild creature, at best left alone and to his own private purposes. The followers of the Red Tiger are reclusive hunters who prefer solitude. His worship is most powerful in the Coldwood. His symbol is a red, snarling tiger face. Other powerful cults in the North are Black Lion, Blackraven, Elk, Gray Wold, Griffon, Sky Pony, and Thunderbeast (whose totem resembles an apatosaur from the jungles of Chult), in addition to the Great Worm, Blue Bear, and Tree Ghost cults mentioned here.

Tree Ghost: This northern cult venerates the collective forest spirit of the High Forest, an elemental force that acts as the subconscious for the nature gods that command it. It too has its own tribe, and these tribe members are loyal to High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon.

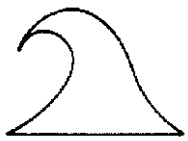
The Cult of the Dragon: The largest and most powerful of the Beast Cults, this organization may be better thought of as a secret society. Founded by an outcast of the Harpers, the Cult believes that dragons will return one day, in the form of unliving monsters, to reclaim their lands. Dracoliches are often used as servants and objects of veneration by this cult.

Elemental Cults

Akadia

Last among the quasi-powers are the Elemental Cults, four faiths that worship the personalized representations and rulers of the four great elements—fire, earth, water and air. These are great and powerful true neutral beings, but for the most part uncaring of (even hostile to) any human attempts to gain their attention. They are placed within the quasi-powers as they do, in general, care about mortal problems and worship, and are not covered by the sanctions that control the major gods.

Grumbar



Ishtishia

Worship of the Elemental Lords is varied and chaotic, with one faction usually stressing completely different ethics and morals from another (and often willing to fight about it). This is one more reflection of the Elemental Lords' complete lack of interest in the matter. Still,

Kossuth

spells are granted to such worshippers.

The Elemental Lords are:

- Akadia, the Queen of the Air, the Lady of the Winds.
- Grumbar, Boss of the Earth, King of the Land Below the Roots, the Gnarly One.
- Istishia, the Water Lord, God-King of Undines.
- Kossuth, the Tyrant Among Fire, the Firelord.

Of the four, the best known (and most feared) are the cults of Kossuth, who are very powerful in Thay and the lands of the East.

Over-Powers

Ao

Before the Time of Troubles, the question of who the gods answered to was a philosophical conundrum better suited to sages than priests. During the coming of the Avatars, however, it was revealed that the gods themselves had a god, or at least a more powerful power who had the ability to chasten and punish them for their actions. This entity was known as Ao. He was present during the Time of Troubles, yet since that time has retreated to his home plane, dimension, or existence, and has not been heard of by mortals since.

Immediately following the Time of Troubles, cults grew up that worshipped Ao directly. These cults were sudden in appearance and equally sudden in their evaporation when it became clear that Ao did not answer prayers, offer protection, or most importantly, grant spells to faithful priests. Direct worship of Ao has therefore subsided, save for a cult in Waterdeep itself. Even this group tends to behave more like a debating society than a regular church.

While the Realms in general is aware of Ao, there is little reason to call on him or seek his words of wisdom (which would be unforthcoming). And the philosophical arguments have merely shifted to the question of whether Ao himself reports to a higher power.

Other Over-Powers

Ao appears to be responsible for the major gods of the Realms (the greater, intermediate, and lesser powers listed earlier in this chapter). In addition, there seem to be other over-powers in other pantheons alien to those commonly found in Faerûn. Far to the East, the godhead is arranged as a church hierarchy or army, with one Supreme Bureaucrat commanding the Celestial Bureaucracy. Far to the South, another unified pantheon traces its teachings back to a being known as Fate, who is not a god but rather something greater and vastly different. And to the West the gods of the True World venerate a founding mother known as Maztica.

The question of whether these over-gods are merely different versions of the same god Ao or are part of a committee of over-gods assigned their mortal parishes in different regions is a matter of theology best suited to sages. And, say the priests, more luck to them.

Nonhuman Powers

The vast array of gods, powers, entities, and extradimensional beings mentioned previously are all human gods—worshipped by humans, and for the most part human in appearance and actions. In addition, a huge horde of nonhuman deities are at work in the Realms. These vary from greater powers to lesser powers, and in general are organized into more recognizable pantheons. They are summarized here for the up and coming young elven priest or the warrior wondering exactly what those symbols on the orcish shields *do* mean.

Elven Deities

Corellon Larethian: Corellon Larethian is the reputed creator of the elves, the banisher of the drow, and the head of the elven pantheon, or Seldarine. He (or she: Corellon manifests as either gender) and his followers make their home in the plane of Arvandor. His symbol is the crescent moon. He is a greater power, as befits his rank.

Aerdrie Faenya: Aerdrie Faenya is the goddess of air and weather, the bringer of rain, and the elven fertility goddess. The most neutral of the elven pantheon, she extends her blessings in the Realms to other aerial creatures, such as aaracokra. Her symbol is a bird silhouetted on a cloud.

Deep Sashelas: Deep Sashelas is the chief god of the sea elves in the Realms, and is venerated wherever this race gathers. His symbol is the dolphin, the ally of the aquatic elves.

Erevan Ilesere: Erevan Ilesere is the elven god of change, and is the god of elven, and some half-elven, rogues. He is a mischievous, creative, and good-natured trickster, and is worshipped by sprites and pixies, as well as elves. His symbol is a star with asymmetric rays.

Fenmarel Mestarine: Fenmarel Mestarine is the outcast god of the elves, a minor god who shuns the company of his brethren. He is often venerated by those elves who break with tradition and do not pass west to Evermeet, but instead remain among human mortals.

Hanali Celanil: Hanali Celanil is the goddess of romance and beauty, and is similar in portfolio to elves as Sune is to mortal humans. The two goddesses share Sune's pool, Evergold (which is called Hanali's Pool among the elves, of course). Hanali epitomizes the ideals of elven beauty. Her symbol is a golden heart.

Labelas Enoreth: Labelas Enoreth is the elven god of time, and more importantly, the god of longevity among the elves. Labelas is considered to be the teacher of the elves, the pantheon's philosopher, and the ideal of elven thought and its superiority over other races. His symbol is the setting sun, and he is often portrayed in the Realms a wearing an eye patch, having traded an eye for knowledge.

Rillifane Rallathil: Rillifane Rallathil is the god of wilderness and wild elves, and is venerated by a number of nonelven forest creatures as well. His appearance and his symbol are as a great oak tree of immeasurably ancient age.

Sehanine: Sehanine is an intermediate power among the elves of the Realms, for they refer to her as an elven version of Selûne, the mortal goddess of the moon. Her symbol is a full moon with a radiant moonbow around it.

Solonor Thelandira: Solonor Thclandira is the elven god of hunting and archery, and is called upon by those attempting to survive in the wilderness. His symbol is a silver arrow with green fletching.

Dwarven Deities

Moradin: Moradin is the Soulforger, the ancestral creator of the dwarven race. He is the ultimate craftsman, and the respected head of the large and diverse dwarven pantheon. His symbol, as might be expected, is the anvil and hammer.

Abbathor: Abbathor is the sole evil dwarven god, the great master of the greed that plagues so many of the dwarven race. He is a hunched, twisted creature, warped by his own greeds and jealousies. Like those of many human gods, his name is mentioned to keep him away from one's treasures. His symbol is a jeweled dagger.

Berronar Truesilver: Berronar Truesilver is the Mother of Safety, the bride of Moradin, and his aide at his Soul Forge. She is the patroness of marriage and love, and she is a common hearth and home goddess. Her symbol is two interlocked silver rings.

Clangeddin Silverbeard: Clangeddin Silverbeard is the Father of Battles, the resolute dwarven war god in the eternal struggles with other races. He is more similar to Tyr and Torm among the humans than the war god Tempus, for Clangeddin teaches that a battle must be just and a triumph obtained through valor or nothing is gained. His symbol is a pair of crossed battle axes.

Dugmaren Brightmantle: Dugmaren Brightmantle is a lesser power in the Realms, being the god of experimentation, invention, and discovery. He is a god of book-learning as opposed to craft, and knowledge as opposed to application. His symbol is an open metal book.

Dumathoin: Dumathoin is the Keeper of Secrets Under the Mountain, the god of mining and underground exploration. He is called the Silent Keeper, for he never speaks, but may guide his faithful through fate and happenstance to the richest veins and the greatest treasures. His symbol is a faceted gem set against a mountainous silhouette.

Gorm Gultyn: Gorm Gultyn is a god little heard of in the North, since he is the protector and guardian of the dwarven race. The shield dwarves of the North believe he has abandoned them for their golden cousins. His symbol is a brass mask with flaming eyes.

Haela Brightaxe: Haela Brightaxe is also called the Lady of the Fray, the Luckmaiden, and Haela the Hard. She is a goddess of dwarven warriors, in particular those who travel far afield (in this manner she serves Marthammor). Her symbol is an unsheathed sword with flaming bolts encircling it.

Marthammor Duin: Marthammor Duin is the Realms god of the wanderers, those dwarves who move among strange and alien peoples as opposed to remaining within the safety of their halls. He is also called the Watcher, the Finder of Trails, and in olden texts, Muamman Duathal. His symbol is an upright mace superimposed over a dwarven boot trimmed with fur.

Sharindlar: Sharindlar, the Lady of Life, is the dwarven goddess of healing and mercy. She works with Berronar as the goddess of courtship, and has a very strong following in the Realms among dwarven priests seeking healing magics. Her symbol is a flame rising from a steel needle.

Vergadain: Vergadain is the dwarven god of luck and wealth. He is the trickster god, the schemer, and the rogue, and is greatly venerated by those who get through life by their wits. His symbol is a gold piece, and the priests of Vergadain have been picking up large supplies of these in the wake of Waukeen's disappearance/death.

Halfling Deities

Yondalla: Yondalla is the provider and protector, the head of the halfling pantheon. She is gentle and kind, yet fiercely protective of her people. She is a greater power, despite her unassuming appearance as a female halfling. Her symbol is the shield.

Arvoreen: Arvoreen the Defender is the halfling war god. Well, close anyway. He is the god of halfling warriors, and believes that the best defense is to take the battle to his foe, cheerful in his eventual success. His symbol is two short swords.

Brandobaris: Brandobaris, the Master of Stealth, is the chosen god of that most common of adventurers, the halfling rogue. An agreeable, friendly rascal, Brandobaris is in legend continually getting himself into trouble, and just as frequently getting himself out through a quick tongue and quicker wits. His symbol is the bare footprint of the halfling.

Cyrrollalee: Cyrrollalee is the goddess of the home and is its protector. She is also the goddess of friendship and trust. Her symbol is the open door.

Sheela Peryroyl: Sheela Peryroyl is the halfling demipower of nature, weather, and agriculture. She also rules feasting, revels, and romance. Her symbol is a daisy.

Urogalan: Urogalan is not mentioned often in tales of the halflings, for he is the halfling demipower of earth and of death. He represents that final return to the ground, that last journey to the afterlife, the reminder that after the party is over, the piper must be paid. His symbol is the head of a black dog.

Tymora: Lastly, a goddess of rising prominence among halflings is Tymora, the human goddess of luck. She is portrayed as a female halfling rogue, and in many tales it is made clear that Brandobaris only escapes a messy fate by her (often unintentional) intervention. Her symbol remains the silver disk.

Gnome Deities

Garl Glittergold: Garl Glittergold is the leader of the small gnomish pantheon. A benevolent and friendly deity, he is by all reports the most approachable of the greater powers of the nonhuman peoples. Mischievous and wise, he will never teach by word when an example

will teach better, and believes life is the best instructor of all. His symbol is a golden nugget.

Baervan Wildwanderer: Baervan Wildwanderer is the gnomish god of travel and nature. He is also venerated by the adventurous and roguish among the gnomish population. His symbol is a raccoon's face.

Baravar Cloakshadow: Baravar Cloakshadow is the gnomish god of illusions and illusionists, as well as deceit in all its forms. He attracts the worship of rogues, but is more of a trickster than a thief. His symbols are the cloak and the dagger.

Flandal Steelskin: Flandal Steelskin is the gnomish god of mining and craftsmanship. It is he who forges the great weapons of the gnomes, and who acts as Garl's advisor. His symbol is the flaming hammer.

Gaerdal Ironhand: Gaerdal Ironhand is the closest thing to a gnomish war god. He is a stern protector of his people, and in their tales acts as judge of the actions of others. His symbol is an iron band. Given his lack of humor, he is little worshipped in the North.

Segojan Earthcaller: Segojan Earthcaller is another nature deity, in this case of forests and plants. His is the gift that supposedly allows gnomes to understand and communicate with burrowing creatures. His symbol is a glowing gemstone.

Urdlen: Urdlen is the sole evil gnomish god, a corrupt, life-hating force of evil and bloodlust. He is called the Crawler Below, and appears as a huge, blind, furless mole of a corpse-white complexion, with claws of steel.

Gond Wonderbringer: Finally, many young gnomes are now being attracted to the human god Gond Wonderbringer (the gnomes always use his full name—it sounds more gnomish). These youngsters have declared that Gond is truly a gnome and the humans have gotten it all wrong (silly humans). This new faction of gnomes is much more interested in artifice and devices than construction and craftsmanship.

Orc Deities

Gruumsh: The orcish pantheon is dominated by Gruumsh, who rules his house with an iron hand. He appears as a great, battle-scarred orc with a single, central eye. This unwinking eye is also his symbol.

Bahgtru: Bahgtru is the son of Gruumsh, and symbolizes loyalty, if not intelligence. He is strong even by godly terms, and his symbol is a broken thighbone.

Ilneval: Ilneval is Gruumsh's lieutenant and the orcish god of war. He symbolizes the combative nature of orcs and their tendency to attack through overwhelming numbers. His symbol is the bloodied broadsword.

Luthic: Luthic is the goddess of caves, caverns, and the orcish home. She is the wise mother, the caretaker of children, and the example of orcish females servile to their mates and superior to their children. Her emblem is the orcish symbol for home.

Shargaas: Shargaas is the Night Lord and the god of thieves, stealth, darkness, and the Underdark. He is the most plotting and intelligent of the orcish gods. His symbol is a red crescent moon with a skull between the moon's horns.

Yurtrus: Yurtrus is the orcish god of death and disease, and is feared by all. He appears as a rotting orcish giant, his skin glowing green as it ruptures with every step. His symbol is a white hand, usually on a dark background.

Other Nonhuman Deities

The list of nonhuman deities goes on, with as many gods and godlings as there are beings to worship them. Add to the list such arcane individuals as Blibdoolpoolp, Demogorgon, Sekolah, Skerrit, and Diinkarazan, known only as names in the texts of the wise, and there are a wide variety of challenges and foes among the gods for any aspiring priest or adventurer. While humanity and their pantheons are supreme at the moment, more than enough other deities are waiting for them to trip up so that they can take their place.

Some of the more noted gods of groups not mentioned above include:

Aboleths and Puddings, Oozes, and Slimes: Juiblex, the Faceless Lord, is a sprawling mass of puddings, oozes, and slimes. Whether he is their lord or merely one of their number is unknown. He is also reputed to be worshipped by certain aboleths. (Juiblex is also reputed to be a tanar'ri lord.)

Bugbears: Hruggek of the bugbears is leader of their small pantheon, or rather first among a brawling group of bugbear powers. His symbol is the morningstar, the weapon of the bugbears.

Dragons: The dragons maintain a large and diverse pantheon.

Not all dragons worship all the dragon gods, as not all humans worship all human gods. Zorquan is the god of "dragonness," the state of being a dragon, and there are gods of justice (Xymor), acquisition (Astilabor Hoardmistress), humor (Hlal the Jester) and other draconian ideals. Most supreme of the dragon gods is Asgorath, who may be similar to Ao as a passionless, all-powerful over-power.

Drow: The most powerful and darkly beautiful race of the Underdark maintains a pantheon of rival faiths which jostle for ultimate control. The best-known of the drow gods is Lolth (also called "Lloth"), the Queen of the Demonweb Pits. Rival deities include Eilistraee (a goddess of good drow!), Ghaunadaur (god of jellies and oozes, and also of rebels), and Vhaeraun (god of thieves and male drow).

Firbolgs of the Moonshaes: Grond Peaksmasher is an ancient god of the giants, in particular the firbolgs of the Moonshaes. Imprisoned in a glacier on Oman's Isle, Grond was freed by the artifact known as the *Silver-Hafted Axe*. Grond is a beneficent deity to his people, and under his command the firbolgs are settling Oman's Isle and rejecting (well, reducing) their raiding ways.

Giants: Annam is the reputed creator of the giant races and their most powerful god. His symbol and the greeting among his priests is two hands, wrists together, fingers pointing downwards. He is served by a large pantheon of gods, the most prominent of whom is Grolantor, the evil god of the hill giants.

Gnolls: Yeenoghu is a powerful god among the gnolls. (He is also a tanar'ri lord.) His symbol is the triple-headed flail.

Goblins and Hobgoblins: Maglubiyet is the patron of goblins and hobgoblins. His trusted lieutenant is Khurgorbaeyag. Maglubiyet's symbol is the bloodied axe; Khurgorbaeyag's symbol is the red and yellow whip.

Kobolds: Kurtulmak of the kobolds is a small, hateful deity who hates all nonkobold life, particularly those races that can be terrorized easily. This is shown by his symbol, the gnomish skull.

Mind Flayers: Ilsensine is one of the chief gods of the mind flayers, and appears as a great, glowing, green brain with two tentacles. Its teachings say that the illithids will one day conquer the surface world and enslave all other races.

Ogres and Trolls: Vaprak is the one-handed god of the trolls and ogres, a rapacious and violent creature who encourages his priests to acts of madness and destruction. His symbol is the taloned claw.

Alien Pantheons

In addition to all of the above, there are lands strange to the Realms that worship differing gods and beings of power. These entities have no less power in their own lands than the deities presented here and should be given the respect due any powerful, city-destroying force. Although most of these deities and pantheons are all-powerful within their own territories, little is heard of or thought of them beyond those bounds. The traveler should take them into account should she or he choose to wander far from familiar paths.

Chult: In addition to the veneration of a creator deity known as Ubtao and the jungle as a force of nature (led by jungle druids), the native peoples of the savage jungles of Chult practice an extensive form of ancestor spirit worship, overseen by powerful priests known as spiritlords.

The Far East: The Celestial Bureaucracy rules the half of the continent to the east of Faerûn, and is an organized, extremely ordered society of deities very unlike the various contending powers in the Realms.

Mulhorand: Mulhorand's gods are continually reincarnated within the royal court, such that the gods continue to rule through mortal incarnations. The pantheon is headed by the incarnation of Horus-Re in the form of Mulhorand's pharoah.

The True World: The True World holds a rather traditional mythology of recognizable gods who still contend and meddle in the affairs of mortals. The pantheon is led by Maztica.

Unther: Unther's pantheon is more direct, with the immortal form of Gilgeam ruling the country through his temples. Yet the members of the pantheon are still unknown foreign of the ancient kingdom. In contrast, many of the outside gods are now being venerated by rebels within Unther.

Zakhara: The Land of Fate, Zakhara, is named after the overgod/principle/theology that unifies its pantheon into a common faith. Its greatest difference from the Realms is that all faiths, regardless of alignment or attitude, may worship in the same temple (a recipe for disaster in the Realms).

New Gods for Old

As a final note, there are deities that are not included in this (far from) exhaustive listing. These are the deities of tomorrow, the gods yet unborn. As the nature of the Realms changes, so too will its powers change. These changes can be sudden, like the shocking shake-up of the coming of the Avatars and the Time of Troubles, or they can be slow and gradual, as one power fades and another becomes dominant.

Perhaps that is the answer to the question of who the gods truly revere and who the over-gods truly report to. They report to Change.

Uttebyn, an elder rune for religious site or object

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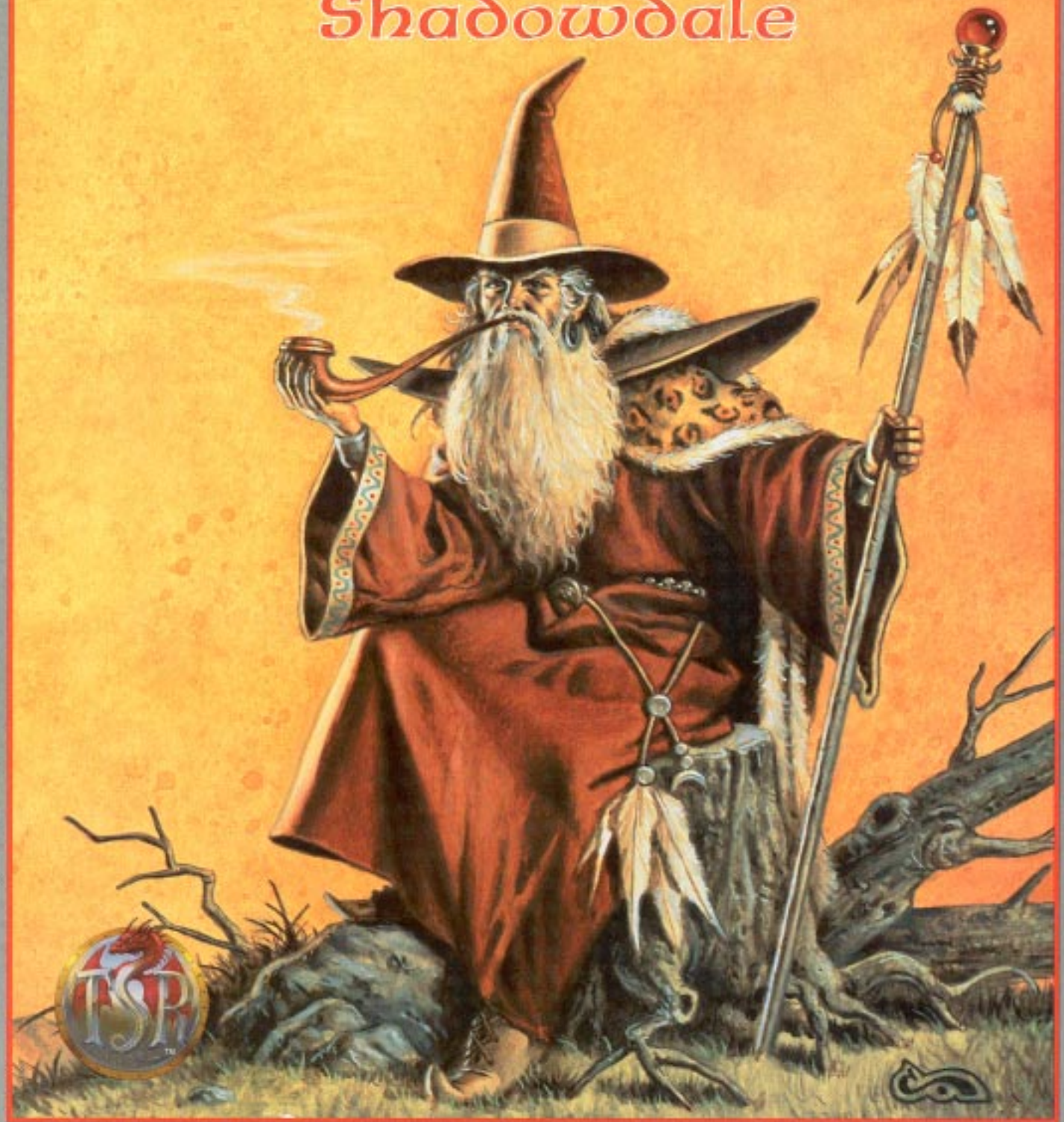
Shadowdale



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Ed Greenwood, Jeff Grubb, and Don Bingle

Credits

Original Realms Design: Ed Greenwood
Project Design and Development: Jeff Grubb
***Shadowdale* Design and Development:** Jeff Grubb, Don Bingle, and Ed Greenwood
Editing: Julia Martin
Product Group Manager: Karen Boomgarden
Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
New Interior Art: James Crabtree and Eric Hotz
Interior Ark: Jeff Easley
Color Cartography: Dennis Kauth and Cynthia Felegy
Interior Cartography: Steve Beck, Diesel, Cynthia Felegy, Dennis Kauth, Dawn Murin, and Dave Sutherland
Color Symbol Cards: Renee Kousek
MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Page Art: Tom Baxa
Poster Art: Clyde Caldwell
Typesetting: Angelika Lokotz
Production: Sarah Feggestad, Paul Hanchette, and Dawn Murin

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Lake Geneva
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USA

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
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United Kingdom

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Shadowdale

Shadowdale is a small farming community located within the heart of the Dalelands (an allied organization of rural communities surrounding the elven woods of Cormanthor, north of the nations of Sembia and Cormyr and south of the Moonsea). Shadowdale is the name for both the cleared area which owes allegiance to the lord of Shadowdale and for the unfortified community which is the heart of this farming territory. Shadowdale is the most famous of the Dalelands, primarily owing to its reputation as a haven for capable and powerful adventurers.

Shadowdale is an attractive community to adventuring companies and heroes. The town straddles the North Ride, the road which runs from Shadow Gap (and beyond to Cormyr) to Voonlar (gateway to the Moonsea), and as such sees a regular trade between these two regions. Within the past decade, the abandonment of Cormanthor by the elves due to the elven Retreat has increased the interest in exploring the formerly forbidden depths of the deep woods. Lastly, the entire area surrounding Shadowdale is riddled with ruins and underground passages, often occupied by foul creatures hostile to humankind. Shadowdale forms a suitable base camp for explorers and adventuring companies working in the area.

The people of Shadowdale also make the area attractive to adventurers. The community is primarily rural, but looks to powerful heroes to protect it from the dangers of the Underdark, the deep woods, and other cities. In the past, the rulers of Shadowdale have been established by acclamation, and usually are chosen from foreign heroes and heroines who have performed some service. This acclamation is usually confirmed by the approval of the current lord or lady, who is looking for a more peaceful line of work than overseeing a town which is regularly visited by powerful heroes, foreign armies, and extraplanar deities.

Finally, Shadowdale is a welcome place for adventurers as it is the home of Elminster the Sage, the Mage of Shadowdale. While this august individual is not home as often as he is, and even when present would rather not talk to passing adventurers, his very presence adds a level of security to the community, and attracts both those seeking knowledge and those with knowledge to pass on. At any one time, adventurers and locals are passing around two or three treasure maps in the common room of the Old Skull inn, and occasionally there is even treasure to be found at the end of them.

This book provides an overview of the Shadowdale area for use as an AD&D® game campaign setting. It includes both a detailed overview of the Dale area and descriptions of many of the important structures in the area (including both the local bar and castle). It also includes a complete adventure by Don Bingle, set beneath the Twisted Tower of Ashaba. The adventure provides an excellent starting point for player characters starting out in the Realms.

Shadowdale has been the start of many an adventurer's career in the Realms. Here now, in one place, is all the information needed to run a campaign in the heart of the Heartlands, in the home town of Elminster, Mourngrym, and all the rest.

Have at it, lads and ladies.

The History of Shadowdale

Shadowdale's origins are relatively recent, at least as a home for humans and passing adventurers. Its first mention is as an evil place controlled by the drow communities who make the Depths Below, the Underdark, their home. The tunnels and caverns of these dark elves, and their evil allies, came close to the surface in the region of the Old Skull, an eruption of granite in the otherwise rounded and wooded hills of the region. Further, the river that flowed at the base of the Old Skull passed through the elven woods to the Dragon Reach and was navigable for its entire length. This made the region an excellent marshaling ground and jumping-off point for raids on the surface.

It was the drow who built the original Twisted Tower as a fortification to protect the major underground highways leading from the Moonsea region to the Storm Horns and beyond. It remains the oldest structure still in use in the area, though it has been expanded and sections have been rebuilt a number of times. With the Twisted Tower as a base of operations, the drow maintained a large surface occupation of small human (and other race) slave communities. The drow were fully driven underground only within living elven memory and still maintain extensive underground holdings. It was at this time that the drow-held region of the Dales was known as the Land Under Shadow, later shortened to Shadowdale.

The Fall of Azmaer, Last Drow Marshall of the Twisted Tower

The drow rule of Shadowdale lasted until the early 900s Dalereckoning, when the increased human population in the area brought the dark elves into conflict with their now more numerous human neighbors. These were the Dalesmen, who a millennium earlier had crossed the Dragon Reach and made peace with the elves of Myth Drannor, settling at the borders of the great woods that was the elven home. The drow soon found themselves under continual attack and most of those who held overground settlements retreated back below before the onslaught. The last powerful drow leader was Azmaer, the marshall of the Twisted Tower in its last drow-held days. Azmaer oversaw the last retreat of the drow holdings in the face of a human uprising, and held the citadel against a year-long siege. With supplies and slaves brought up from the Underdark directly into the tower, the drow could conceivably hold out for forever. However, a human slave (family histories in the Dales indicate a number of possible individuals) poisoned the well in the Tower, and the citadel was easily overrun by human forces. Azmaer's body was not found among the dead, leading some to believe that he escaped back into the Depths Below to rejoin his people. Noting the fact that he would have to explain to his matriarch how he lost Shadowdale, it is much more likely that, should Azmaer have survived, he went into voluntary exile, hiding from both human and drow. Given that this occurred only 400 years ago, it is possible that Azmaer still lives.

Ashaba Becomes First Lord of Shadowdale

Upon taking the Tower and throwing off the drowish yoke upon the people, the Dalesmen fully established the Dale of Shadowdale, with its seat of power in the Twisted Tower. Its first lord was a water wizard who had aided in the final attack—one Ashaba, who was great in age when he ascended, and ruled peacefully for 40 years thereafter. It is said that Ashaba realized he was dying and turned himself to water, merging with the waters of the river. Since that time the river, the ford, and the Twisted Tower bear his name. Before passing on, Ashaba chose one of his trusted

The Pendant of Ashaba

The *Pendant of Ashaba* is a magical device created by the water wizard of Shadowdale shortly before he joined with the river that also bears his name. The Pendant has two known powers:

- The *Pendant,* upon command, will say in the voice of the old wizard, "The bearer of this token be the one and true lord of Shædowdæle."
- The *Pendant* also has the limited ability to know alignment as the spell, but with severe limitations. The pendant will only detect the most extreme of alignments—the glorious good and law of a paladin, the villainy of the most black-hearted scoundrel, the peaceful balance of the most devoted druid. The more common alignments of evil and good, law and chaos found among ordinary people are lost to this device (though they would be revealed by the spell of the same name).
- The *Pendant* may have other abilities, at the DM's option. However, these additional abilities should be limited in nature (no *lightning bolts* or *raise dead* spells), otherwise, their nature would have been revealed previous to this time.

It is thought that this limitation to the *Pendant's* use of the *know alignment* spell is due to the limitations of Ashaba himself, but a minority (including Elminster himself) have put forward the idea that this version of *know alignment* is an improvement, since it bypasses "the everyday humdrum allegiances and petty vices of the people, and thereby prevents the local lord from dividing his people into good and evil camps."

The *Pendant of Ashaba* is a silver crescent moon, with the horns pointed upwards. It was originally hung from a plain thong, but during the rule of Aumry this was replaced with a simple silver chain crafted by the witch Sylune.

lieutenants as the new lord of Shadowdale. He was presented to the people of the Dale, who made him the new lord by acclamation.

Lords Accepted by Acclamation

This acclamation of the people has formed the basis for choosing the lord of Shadowdale since that time. Usually a predecessor will step down as opposed to dying in office, and his chosen successor will be approved by the populace at large. This system has had its drawbacks, as will be shown below, but in general, it has served the independent, self-willed people of the Dale very well. They have avoided the "genetic lottery of which good bureaucracies and bad kingships are made" (Elminster's terms, not mine). The symbol of the lordship is the *Pendant of Ashaba,* a device owned by the original wizard, and used to determine the rightful lord of the Dale.

Joadath and the Tyrist Massacre

The past hundred years have been an example of the best and worst of the lords of Shadowdale. All have been nonnative to the Dalelands, and have made the land their home. A century ago the lord of the Dales was one Joadath, a stiff-necked agnostic who denied the power of any god, good or evil, and used force to back up his beliefs. During this time there was a great deal of religious persecution in the Dale, including a massacre of Tyrists on Watcher's Knoll. Joadath was eventually killed by a beast of the nether planes summoned by parties unknown, which then proceeded to rampage through the town. The beast was killed and Shadowdale rescued by the spellcasters Aumry and Sylune. Aumry was proclaimed lord by acclamation.

Aumry Rules in Peace

The longest period of peaceful rule was by Lord Aumry and his wife Sylune, better known as the Witch of Shadowdale. Both husband and wife ruled over the community for forty years, a period of extended peace with their neighboring dales, nations, and the elven peoples. It was this very peace and power which made the Dale the target for attacks and sabotage by the Black Network, known better as the Zhentarim. The Zhentarim sought (and still seek) to control the trade from the Moonsea to the Sword Coast, and desired to make Shadowdale a vassal state of Zhentil Keep.

Jyordhan the False Lord

Aumry was assassinated by Zhentarim agents, who in turn were captured and killed by the warrior Jyordhan, who presented himself as the new lord (with the Pendant gripped in his hand), and was so acclaimed by the people. Unknown to most of the people at that time was that Jyordhan was also an agent of the Zhentarim, and the entire proceedings were a hoax.

Jyordhan abandoned the Twisted Tower, instead establishing himself in Castle Krag east of Shadowdale. His court was soon overrun with agents of the Black Network. When the people revolted, Zhentil Keep sent peace-keeping forces to maintain Jyordhan's rule. Sylune, now aware of the deception but a firm pacifist, sought to keep the Dale healthy and intact during Jyordhan's evil rule.

Khelben Kills Jyordhan

Jyordhan's rule ended when he encountered Khelben Arunsun, also called the Blackstaff. The story at the time was

that Jyordhan accepted an invitation from Khelben to visit Waterdeep, and there he took ill and died. In reality, Jyordhan ambushed Khelben as the mage was leaving Shadowdale, and the Blackstaff killed him. In either case, Khelben took hold of the *Pendant of Ashaba* and returned to Waterdeep with it, promising to send a suitable candidate for lordship to the Dales. Jyordhan had ruled for five years, and without his advocacy, Castle Krag was abandoned and the Zhentil Keep troops routed. Jyordhan's previously chosen successor was a Melvauntan named Lyran, but without the Pendant this individual was considered a pretender to the throne.

The Time of No Lords

During the period when Khelben held onto the Pendant, Sylune was the de facto ruler of Shadowdale, though these years were known as the Time of No Lords. Sylune and an adventuring company known as Manes' Band were responsible for driving out the Zhentil Keep forces and keeping at bay the monsters in the area. The Twisted Tower remained uninhabited, and neither Sylune nor the companions of Mane's Band wished to assume the mantle of leadership. With time, Mane's Band passed on to other lands and adventures.

Doust Sulwood Becomes Lord of Shadowdale

After three winters, Khelben found a suitable candidate, or rather a group of candidates. They were called the Knights of Myth Drannor to show their interest in the elven territories and their connection with the elven peoples, and Khelben gave them the *Pendant of Ashaba* in return for services rendered to himself and to Shadowdale. Their leader, the ranger Florin Falconhand, refused the honor of the lordship, and it passed to Doust Sulwood, who was made the new lord with the support of Florin and Sylune (and the secret support of Khelben as well).

Doust reoccupied the Twisted Tower, driving out the last agents of the Black Network. He also reinstituted many of Ashaba's democratic ideals, including the Lord's Court where all citizens may speak freely and air their grievances without threat of reprisal. Doust ruled for five years and proved to be a capable ruler, beloved by the people. The regular presence of the Knights of Myth Drannor did much to ensure the protection of the area, particularly against incursions by Lyran Nanther the Pretender.

Elminster Moves to Shadowdale

It was also during this time that Elminster moved into Shadowdale. A semiregular visitor up to that time, he took possession of a low, abandoned tower at the foot of the Old Skull, and declared himself to be officially in retirement. The nature of that retirement varies from active involvement in local affairs to long-term vacations on other planes. The natives of the Dale have come to the understanding that they cannot always count on Elminster to save them in times of need or danger, but that when he is present in these circumstances his aid is usually given.

Doust Chooses Mourngrym Amcathra To Succeed Him

Doust ruled for five years ("Seems like a millennium," he was known to have reported) before the tedium of court life and the lure of adventure caused him to retire his position and rejoin the Knights of Myth Drannor in regular adventuring. He handed the *Pendant of Ashaba* on to one of the younger

Aumry's Staff of The Hulk

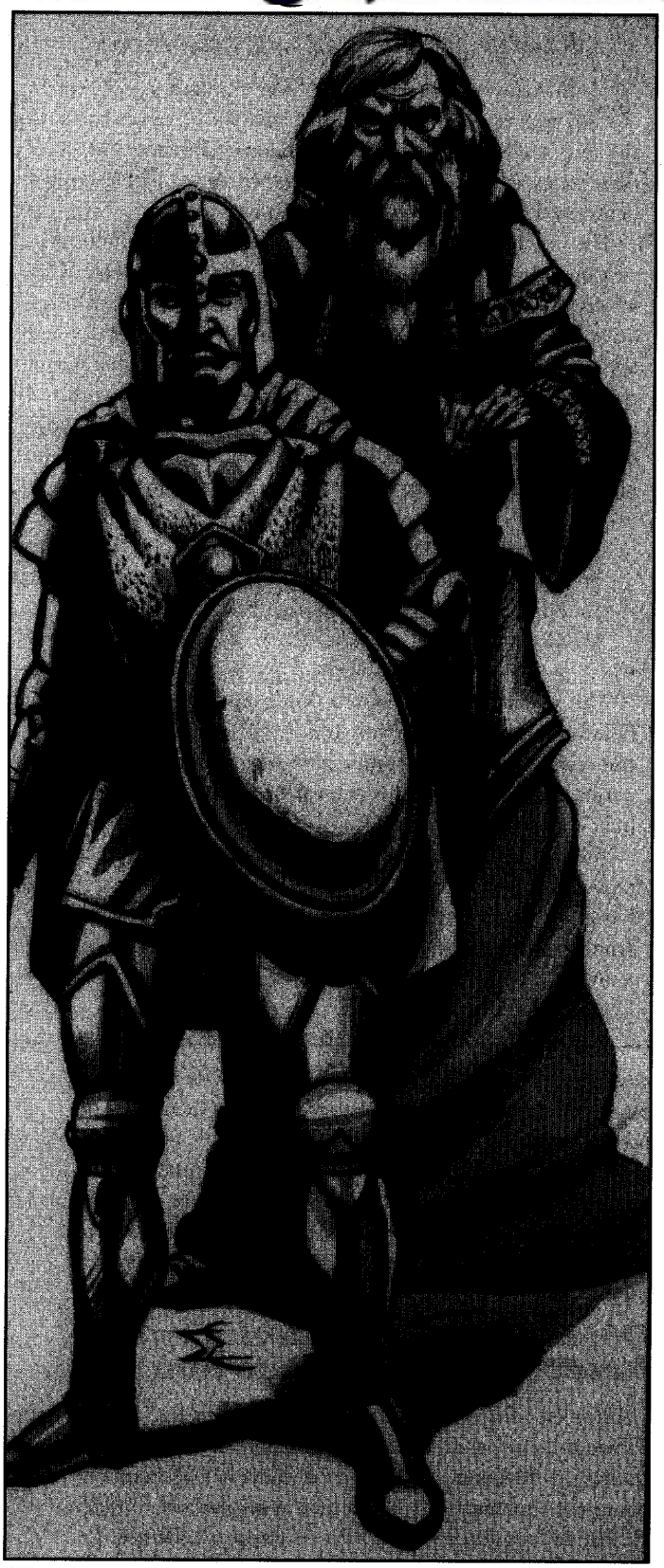
Lord Aumry of Shadowdale, a powerful wizard, had a number of magical items, most of which have since been scattered to the four winds and into other collections. The most unique of these items was the *staff of the hulk,* which Aumry either created or acquired, but in either event bears his name.

The *staff* has the ability to summon an umber hulk (full statistics in Volume 1 of the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®),* which will serve the staff's wielder for up to 20 rounds without question. The umber hulk may be summoned once per day and appears within 60 yards of the summoner, within his or her line of sight. The *staff* allows the user to communicate fully with the creature and direct its actions. The umber hulk fights without checking morale. At the end of the 20 rounds or if it is killed, the umber hulk is returned to where it was summoned from.

Umber Hulk (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, Br 1-6; HD 8+8; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3-12/3-12/1-10; SA Digging, confusion; SD None; SZ L; ML 13; XP 4,000.

The *staff* is made of twisted iron topped with a large claw holding a halved geode with iridescent violet crystals. When the *staff* is used, the crystals glow and shoot a scintillating purple beam which strikes the earth. In this light the umber hulk appears.

Aumry's *staff of the hulk* served him well over the years, but proved to be no protection against Jyordhan's treachery. Sylune buried the staff with Aumry, but during the time following Jyordhan's death the tomb was plundered and the staff spirited away. Its current location is unknown (and therefore up to the DM to determine).



Knights, a Waterdhavian noble named Mourngrym Amcathra. Mourngrym had been dispatched by Khelben from Waterdeep for other purposes, but Doust liked both the young man's straightforward honesty and his willingness to shoulder the burden of protecting the small community from myriad dangers.

Shaerl and Mourngrym Meet and Marry

The implications of Khelben Arunsun "choosing" the last two lords of Shadowdale were not lost on the Dale's powerful neighbor to the south, Cormyr. An agent was sent northward to divine Mourngrym's true intentions and to guarantee the Dale's continued good relationship with the throne of the Purple Dragon. This agent was a rogue named Shaerl Rowanmantle, sent by Vangerdahast (though all paperwork on this matter has been curiously incinerated in Suzail, so all is hearsay and tale). Shaerl discovered more than she intended and fell in love with young Mourngrym. The two married and became the lord and lady of Shadowdale. Shaerl's loyalty is now to her husband and to the land they co-rule. This was probably not the intention of the Cormyreans.

Mourngrym's Rule

Mourngrym's rule has been less peaceful than he had hoped. A First Battle of Shadowdale occurred in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR), and involved Dalelands forces routing the forces of Lyran the Pretender. While significant, this battle pales when compared to the larger battle fought on the same site between Bane-led Zhentil Keep forces and the Dales during the Time of Troubles (1358 DR/0 PR). When the Battle of Shadowdale is referred to (without a number), it usually means this second battle. In addition, Mourngrym has had to deal with a large number of skirmishes, incursions, a possible invasion from below, explosions, and other sundry disasters.

Mourngrym and Shaerl have one child, Scotti, who is now nine winters old. By the customs of the area, he is not considered the heir apparent, and another suitable warrior or mage may take the reins of power of the small community. Most feel that Mourngrym will hold the Pendant until his son has reached his majority, then abdicate in young Scotti's favor once he takes his grown name. If this happens, it will be the first occasion of the lordship of Shadowdale passing down through a family.

Doust Sulwood and Elminster

Shadowdale Timeline

All times are in Dalereckoning, Year names are given where applicable.

Year	Event
c. -200	Future Dalesmen cross the Dragon Reach.
	Dalesmen migrate to the Dalelands from Impiltur and the Vast.
1	*The Year of Sunrise*
	Standing Stone erected. Dalereckoning begins.
112	*The Year of the Tusk*
	Date of oldest recognized map of Cormyr and the Dales.
261	*The Year of the Souring Stars*
	Laying of the Mythal of Myth Drannor.
661	*The Year of the Bloody Tusk*
	Height of Myth Drannor.
712	*The Year of the Lost Lance*
	Beginning of the assault on Myth Drannor by the Army of Darkness.
	Drow operate on the surface in areas of the Dales.
714	*The Year of Doom*
	Fall of Myth Drannor.
c. 800	Drow influence in Shadowdale at its height.
834	Castle Greatstead (Grimstead) built.
864	Castle Grimstead destroyed by drow.
896	*The Year of the Empty Hand*
	Extensive poverty and famine from here to 900 DR.
906	*The Year of the Plough*
	Drow driven from the Twisted Tower.
	Shadowdale founded; its first lord is the water wizard Ashaba.
913	Sembia founded under the Raven banner.
940	Ashaba, first lord of Shadowdale, merges with river.
1018	Rage of Dragons.
1030	Aencar becomes warlord of Battledale.
1038	Aencar begins to unify the Dales, takes the title "Mantled King."
1040	Shadowdale swears fealty to Aencar.
1044	Aencar the Mantled King dies. Shadowdale returns to local rule.
1161	Merith Strongbow of the future Knights of Myth Drannor is born. He is the oldest of the Knights.
1253	*The Year of Beckoning Death*
	Plague year in Cormyr, Sembia, and the Vast.
1273	*The Year of the Wagon*
	Joadath noted as being lord of Shadowdale.
1280	*The Year of the Manticore*
	Old Skull inn built.
1297	*The Year of the Singing Skull*
	Massacre on Watcher's Knoll of Tyrists by Joadath.
1300	*The Year of the Starfall*
	Joadath of Shadowdale dies. Aumry and Sylune become lord and lady of Shadowdale.
1317	*The Year of the Wandering Wyrm*
	Great Plague of the Inner Sea, also called the Dragon Plague.
1323	*The Year of Dreamwebs*
	Great Plague declared over.
1325	*The Year of the Great Harvests*
	Beer and wine of this year are legendary.
1331	*The Year of the Leaping Dolphin*
	Storm Silverhand makes Shadowdale her home.
1339	*The Year of the Weeping Moon*
	Aumry slain; Jyordhan becomes lord of Shadowdale.
1344	*The Year of Moonfall*
	Retreat of the elves from Cormanthor begins.
1345	*The Year of the Saddle*
	Jyordhan slain by Khelben Arunsun.
	Time of No Lords (until 1348).
1348	*The Year of the Spur*
	Khelben gives *Pendant of Ashaba* to the Knights of Myth Drannor.
	Doust Sulwood chosen to be lord of Shadowdale.
1350	*The Year of the Morningstar*
	Elminster retires to Shadowdale.
1353	*The Year of the Arch*
	Doust Sulwood retires to Arabel Moumgrym become lord of Shadowdale.
1354	*The Year of the Bow*
	Prosperous harvest in the Realms.
	House of the Lady (Tymora) established in Shadowdale.
1355	*The Year of the Harp*
	Retreat of elves from Cormanthor reaches its peak.
	Shaerl Rowanmantle sent to Shadowdale by Vangerdahast.
	Shaerl and Mourngrym wed.
1356	*The Year of the Worm*
	Lashan of Scardale attempts to take over the Dalelands and is crushed.
	Lyran the Pretender attacks Shadowdale.
	Flight of Dragons over the Dales and Moonsea.
	Death of Sylune of Shadowdale.
1358	*The Year of Shadows*
	The Time of Troubles
	Shadowdale attacked by Zhentil Keep.
	Mourngrym and Shaerl have a son, Scotti.
1360	*The Year of the Turret*
	Volunteers from the Dalelands join Azoun's crusade against the Tuigan horde.
1367	*The Year of the Shield*
	The year just ending.
1368	*The Year of the Banner*
	The current year.

The Land of The Dale

The Dale of Shadowdale is a broad tract of rolling hills and small, thick young woods pressed hard under the shade of the older parts of Cormanthor, the elven woods, to its east. It is populated by isolated farms and hamlets, but its only metropolitan area is the unwalled community of Shadowdale itself.

Shadowdale is much larger than the area shown on the Shadowdale and Vicinity Map, its farms extending to the north and west. To the west the woods open out into more open terrain. The small family freeholds in this area swear their fealty to the lord of Shadowdale, though, in the tradition of the Dales, they retain their own personal freedom, coming to the aid of the community only when a greater threat menaces them all.

Shadowdale straddles the North Ride, part of a road and trail system running from Cormyr to the Moonsea, and a north–south road. Shadowdale's central community is located where the road crosses the River Ashaba. Most of traffic is along the North Ride, with occasional boats drifting down to Mistledale in the south. The road south soon becomes little more than a trail, but leads to Mistledale. The road north also evaporates when it reaches open country, but it has been used regularly enough by invading Zhentarim forces that a permanent rampart has been erected on the Tower Farm.

Castle Grimstead

Castle Grimstead was built in the 800s Dalreckoning (about 500 years ago) as an outpost against the marauding drow of the Twisted Tower and within a catapult's throw of that imposing edifice. The castle was built by the Glittering Band, an adventuring company given the charter to "domesticate the land and drive back the dark hordes." The outpost lasted for 30 years, a testament to the strong will and strong magics of the Glittering Band. Its original name was Greatstead, but gained its present name over the next 30 years, when continual raids and attacks brought it low.

At length the castle could not withstand the combined assaults of the aboveground drow forces and infiltration from below, and the Glittering Band fell in combat, their treasures and powerful magics spirited away by the drow to their underground homelands. The castle was partially destroyed by explosions during this final battle, and with the passage of time whole sections have decayed.

North of the castle ruins is Cavenauth, a cavern entry to the Underdark beneath Shadowdale. Original maps (made at the time of the Glittering Band) listed this as a "cave mouth," but later editions corrupted the name and gave it its present form. With the taking of the Twisted Tower in 906 DR, portions of the Cavenauth cave complex were sealed off from the rest of the Underdark, and the area secured against further drow incursions.

It is unknown whether the complex remains sealed or if new entrances have been breached into the drow territories. Cavenauth is often used as a lair by wandering beasts of the forests, and wyverns have been reported to live in the area. As for Castle Grimstead, its walls pitch at perilous angles and most of the original wooden beams and roof timbers have rotted away. It has no inhabitants and no heirs to the Glittering Band have laid claim to it, though the townspeople would welcome someone rich enough to effect repairs (and foolish enough to encamp directly above a suspected Underdark entrance).

Castle Krag

Perched on a low rise beneath Watcher's Knoll, Castle Krag was originally a drow outpost in the dark days before the founding of the Dale. Little more than the foundation remained

when Jyordhan came to power and took the area for his own. On these rums Jyordhan raised Castle Krag, his own seat of power, when he abandoned the Twisted Tower.

The original intent of Jyordhan was to raise Castle Krag into an imposing edifice on a par with Darkhold, west of Cormyr. Reality in the form of the limited resources of his Zhentish masters and the rebellion led by Sylune and Mane's Band altered his goal to simply one of maintaining control, and the castle was much smaller than originally intended.

The strongest protection of Castle Krag was Jyordhan himself, and with his disappearance and eventually reported death, the castle lost its greatest support. Jyordhan's minions sought to maintain control, but without Jyordhan himself, the populace rose in open rebellion. Under the command of Mane's Band and Sylune, the castle was stormed and set fire, Jyordhan's minions having abandoned it for more pleasant territories.

Since that time, Castle Krag has been an abandoned ruin. A single tower remains upright, and with massive renovations the building *could* be habitable again. The area around Castle Krag has returned to briar and tangled undergrowth, and the path leading south to the North Ride is mostly overgrown.

The Castle Krag of Shadowdale should not be confused with the similarly named Castle Crag, located south of Gnoll Pass and within the new lands claimed by Cormyr.

Druid's Grove

Nestled in the forest just north of Storm Silverhand's farm, the Druid's Grove is a clearing dotted with large menhirs (standing stones) in a roughly circular fashion. The surrounding oaks of the woods are extremely thick with mistletoe, but whether this is the byproduct of the long druidic presence or the region was chosen for its richness of mistletoe is unknown.

The menhirs of the Druid's Grove were standing long before Shadowdale was founded, and, it is believed, long before the drow themselves took command of this region. They were said to be completely covered in runes and sigils, but now they are worn almost smooth.

The druids of Shadowdale and the surrounding forest in the past have used the grove as a place of both meeting and worship. A group known as the Circle has in the years past been responsible for the grove, the clearing, and the menhirs. A group of neutrals and good-aligned humans, they have lived apart from the community of Shadowdale and interfered only when the forest itself or the existence of the community was threatened. During the fall of Castle Krag, for example, members of the Circle were present not to aid either side, but rather to contain the blaze and keep it from needlessly spreading to the surrounding woods.

The Circle

A group known as the Circle has in years past been responsible for the Druid's Grove. During the Time of Troubles, the members of the Circle were:

Mourntarn "The Master" (N hm P(d)12): Grim and parsimonious with his words, and usually silent in meetings, Mourntarn is one of the nine Druids of Cormanthor, the organization of druids based on the shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Mourntarn is often present at meetings of the powerful in the Dales, but given his quiet nature, his presence rarely noted or remembered. One of his favored forms is that of a great horned owl.

Deltra (N hf D5): Deltra is Eimair's daughter. Her father was said be Jyordhan, but this may be rumor. Neither Eimair nor Deltra will comment on it, and Mourntarn remains as silent as ever.

Eimair (N hf D9): Mourntarn's companion and right-hand woman, Eimair usually speaks for Mourntarn when he decides he must make a statement. She leads the services in the Grove.

Feldel (N hef D5): Feldel is the youngest of the Circle and a companion of Deltra in her adventures.

Orben (N hm D9): Orben disappeared during the Time of Troubles, though the exact nature of this disappearance was unknown. He has not been replaced since then.

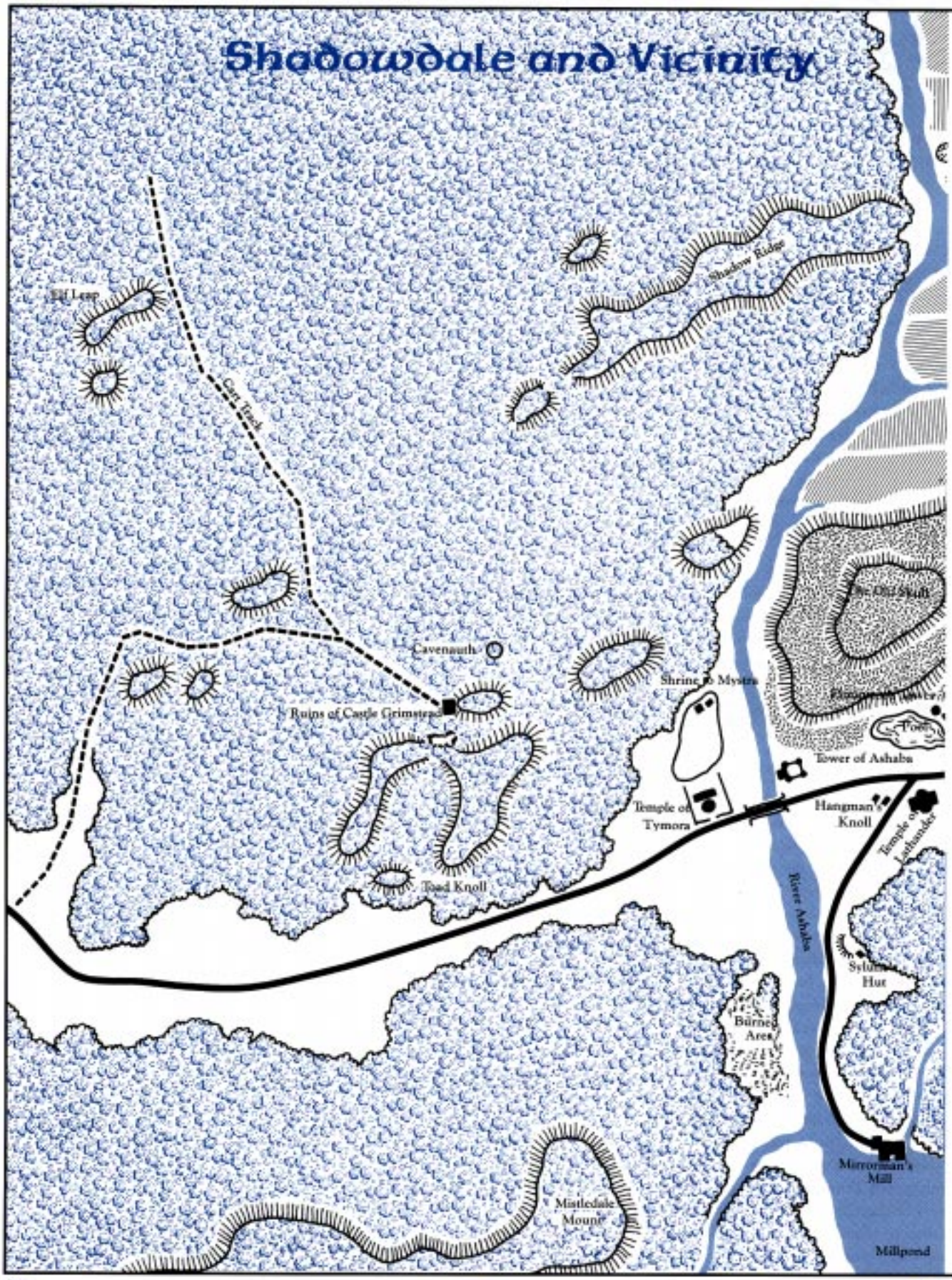
Veshar (N hem D9): One of the eldest of the Circle, Veshar is said to have served under Aencar the Mantled King. Now old and extremely fragile, he seems to often forget whom he is talking to. Unlike Elminster, this is no pose or act.

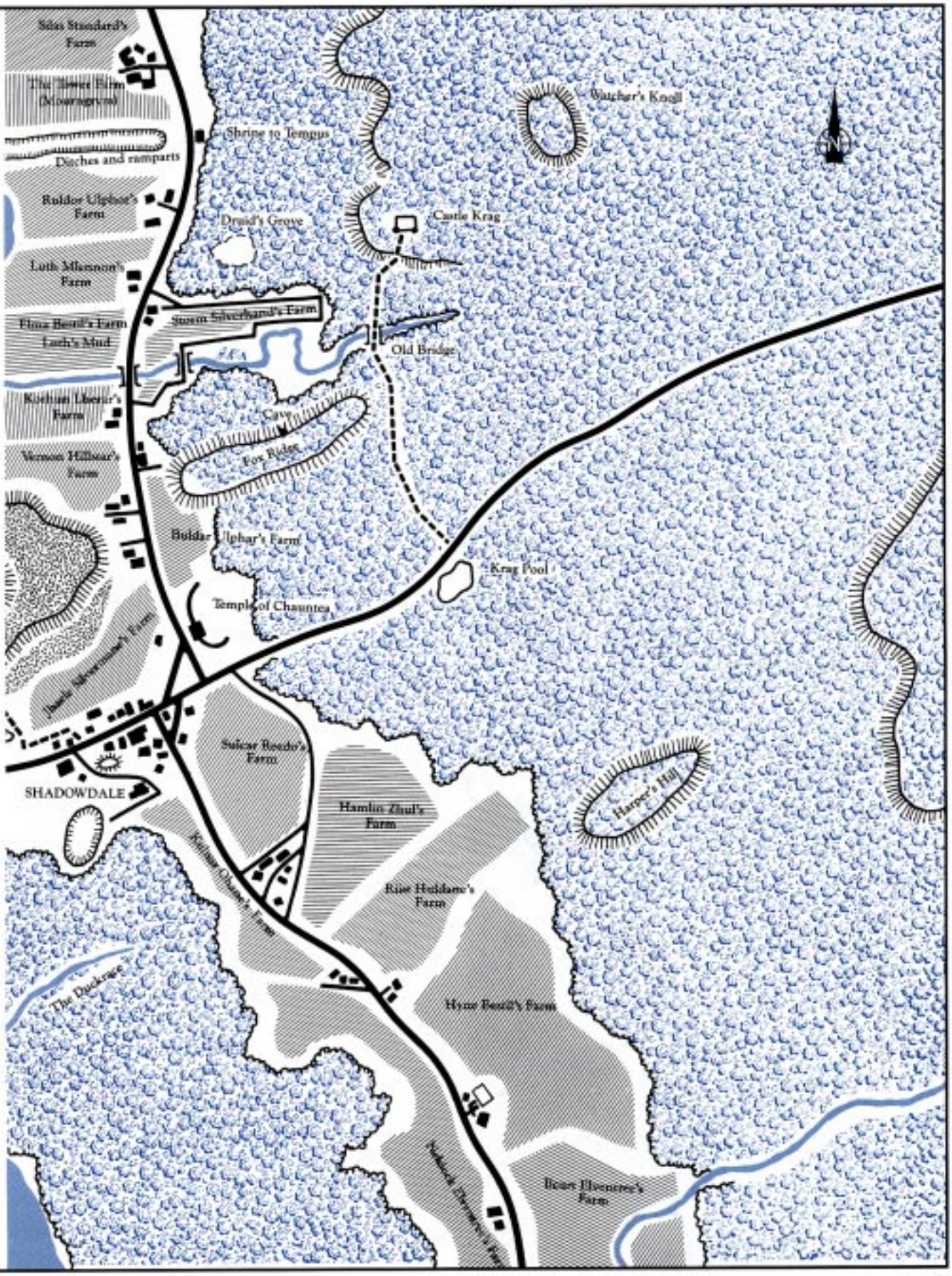
In addition, the Circle contains a number of rangers. They include:

Briadorn (NG hf R9)
Rathagol (CG hm R8)
Reptar (CG em R6)
Selvan (NG hef R5)
Temis (NG hm R5)

In the period following the Time of the Troubles, the Circle has chosen to abandon the Grove and seek out a new, more secluded location. This is in part due to the troubles that Shadowdale has experienced—invading armies, warring gods, and a continual flow of adventurers. It is also in part due to the increasingly civilized nature of Shadowdale itself. In particular, the recent construction of a temple to the nature goddess, Chauntea, in the town has done much to convince the Circle that they should seek a new location.

For the DM, the Circle provides an organization of neutral and neutral good individuals who may be used with ranger and druid player characters, particularly those druid initiates who reach 12th level and must confront a full druid within the hierarchy. The Circle may or may not return to Shadowdale—if it is inconvenient for the campaign, the DM may choose to send its members off wandering or even relocate them in another area where the player characters may seek them out.


Shadowdale and Vicinity
Elf Leap
Cart Track
Shadow Ridge
Cavenauth
Ruins of Castle Grimstead
Shrine to Mystra
Temple of Tymora
Toad Knoll
Tower of Ashaba
Hangman's Knoll
Temple of Lathander
River Ashaba
Burned Area
Mirrorman's Mill
Mistledale Mount
Millpond


Silas Standard's Farm
The Tower Farm
Ditches and ramparts
Builder Ulphar's Farm
Luth Mlannon's Farm
Elma Bentil's Farm
Loch's Mud
Kiethan Lhestir's Farm
Vernon Hillwar's Farm
Shrine to Tempus
Druid's Grove
Watcher's Knoll
Castle Krag
Storm Silverhand's Farm
Old Bridge
Cave
Fox Ridge
Builder Ulphar's Farm
Krag Pool
Temple of Chauntea
Sulcar Reedo's Farm
SHADOWDALE
Hamlin Zhul's Farm
Harper's Hig
Rise Heldane's Farm
The Dickrace
Hyme Bentil's Farm
Beast Elvenrise's Farm

The Dwarven Sinkhole

Originally a small quarry on the property of Beregon Hillstar, this area was the source of much of the stonework in the area. Beregon retained the services of a dwarven family of miners, who lived in the quarry in return for their work.

However, unknown forces (and theories vary—some say drow, Zhentarim, or Cult of the Dragon) burrowed up into the quarry and slew the dwarves. Only quick action by a band of adventurers who were spending the evening at the Old Skull inn prevented an invasion of the city (or so say they). Their actions, however, included free use of fireballs and lightning bolts, such that the entire quarry complex and its attendant mines collapsed in on the supposed invaders. The sinkhole spread, taking with it most of Beregon's farm.

Since that time, the community has used the sinkhole first as a dump and later as just a dumping ground for excavated earth, particularly that moved for the new temples. It is a regular stop on nightly patrols through the settlement, but to date nothing has come out of the pit to challenge the worthies of Shadowdale.

Elf Leap

A rise of ground to the north and west of Toad Knoll and Castle Grimstead, this hillock has steep cliffs to the south and east. It is here that, according to local legend, the last of the Glittering Band met their end. A pair of elven rangers, newly married just hours before by the Band's priest, fled the wreckage of the burning castle to this site, where they were surrounded by drow forces. They were called upon by the drow commander to surrender. The pair kissed, drew their weapons, and leapt to their deaths onto the spears of the drow attackers.

So goes the legend, which was one of the epic tales popularized some 300 years ago (and remains popular to this day). That there are no witnesses who have spoken about this matter is cheerfully ignored in favor of the romance of the tale.

However, there are recurring reports of hauntings on elf leap, and banshees are the listed cause, either being the spirits of the lovers or the drow they killed before falling to the spears of their enemies. The truth of this matter is left to the DM to determine.

Fox Ridge

This low ridge to the north and east of the community is named for its plentiful foxes, a common pest to the

farmers of Shadowdale. The northern face is a cliff face the height of an average human male, and is pock-marked with a series of cavern entrances, ranging from burrows to man-sized caverns.

It is said that the largest entrance leads to an old tomb which dates to before the drow times and has been used by adventurers and others as a hiding place for arms, gold, food, and former comrades. Beyond this region is a great cavern known as the Grinding Gulf, where flying boulders cascade in magical (and destructive) dances. Elminster and Florin Falconhand examined this part of the cave a decade ago, but merely determined that it did not present an immediate threat, and as such did not press past the Grinding Gulf.

Hangman's Knoll

A low rise where the road to Mirrorman's Mill joins the main road, Hangman's Knoll gains its name from the days of Joadath, who had erected a gallows there to execute "thieves, highwaymen, and petty followers of all gods." Joadath is long gone, but the name remains. Lord Mourngrym claims this land, and reserves the right to rebuild the gallows should the need arise.

Harpers' Hill

Situated to the east of the community within the shelter of the elven woods, the hill was a historic and regular meeting place between members of the Harpers and the elves of the Elven Court, and the site of a number of revels before the Retreat of the elves.

In the time since the Retreat, the Hill has taken on an abandoned, eerie beauty. It is still used by Harpers such as Storm Silverhand for practice and meditation. Most of the townsfolk avoid the area, a tendency stretching back to the days when the elves took ill liking to trespassers.

Krag Pool

Situated where the trail from Castle Krag joins the North Ride, the pool was a major defense during the Battle of Shadowdale that took place during the Time of Troubles. It was here that the Zhentilar (Zhentil Keep forces) were decimated by invisible deadfall trees which fell on them once they had moved past the initial defenses.

The area around the pool remains cleared, as the woods have yet to fully reclaim this area. The area around the pool is also littered with rocks and stones pulled from Castle Krag and used to build temporary battlements.

Shadow Ridge

Located on the far side of the River Ashaba across from the farms north of Shadowdale, Shadow Ridge is covered in dense brambles and overgrown with yew, grape, and raspberry bushes. Save for children who sometimes swim or punt across the river to pick berries, it is little visited by the people of the Dale.

Should the DM wish to position a dungeon or underground area of his or her own devising, the Shadow Ridge area is perfect for this task. The underground area could potentially connect with the drow warrens beneath the community or tie in via teleportation devices or gates with destinations far-removed from the quiet nature of Shadowdale.

Millpond and Mirrorman's Mill

Located to the south of Shadowdale, this small mill operates under the flow of the Duck Race, a swift stream that flows into the River Ashaba to form the Millpond, a natural lake formed by the widening of the Ashaba.

The mill was built by the original Mirrorman, a hearty, boisterous man who founded it during the time of Aumry and Sylune at the request of the Witch of Shadowdale. Upon his death he was succeeded by his son, who was an evil young man who served as a spy for Jyordhan and the Zhentarim. With Jyordhan's fall, young Mirrorman disappeared, though he was said to have died at the hands of the Knights of Myth Drannor.

The mill is currently unoccupied, and the community lacks a regular miller. When the mill is needed, Mourngrym assigns troops to guard and mill the corn and wheat raised in the Dale. This he does for free as a service to the people, which is one reason that there has been no rush to replace the Mirrorman monopoly. Old millstones dot the banks along the side of the Millpond.

Mistledale Mount

Mistledale Mount takes its name from the local legend that on a clear day, one can see the smoke rising from the hearth fires in distant Ashabenford, the seat of Mistledale, from it. This region has seen a number of small fires and sporadic clearings and lumbering. It provides an excellent view of the crossroads of Shadowdale as well.

The burned area at the base of the mount marks the death of Sylune six winters ago at the hands of a red dragon. The beast was slain in the battle, but Sylune "died Aencar's

Mills in The Realms

There are four types of grinding mills in the Realms. Which one is used depends on the type of natural resources available. In all of the below cases, the farmer having his corn, oats, or wheat ground pays the miller with a percentage of the take. Most of the millers from the Dragon Reach to the Sword Coast use the rule of one in seven: For every seven bags of flour ground, the miller takes one (rounding upwards). Some may take one in eight with long-standing customers, and some, with a lock on the process, may take one in five. As the official owner of Mirrorman's Mill, Mourngrym offers its use free of charge to the farmers of the Dale, though he is looking for someone to occupy and maintain the mill year-round.

Watermills: Watermills are usually located at natural falls or cascades of streams, though there are some located adjacent to large rivers that run off a diverted part of the flow. The flowing water turns the waterwheel either by flowing over the top (favored at fails) or turning the wheel as it passes beneath it. The waterwheel in turn moves grinding stones which reduce the wheat and corn to flour.

Windmills: Windmills are similar to waterwheels, save that they operate under wind power as opposed to water. The wind is caught in great vanes that spin, driving the internal grinding stones. Windmills are used in areas with strong, steady breezes, including along many coastlines.

Wheelmills: The wheelmill is a third type of mill, working off human or animal power to turn the stones. The power source pushes or drags large beams fixed to the upper stone, causing the grinding. Given the limitations of living motive forces, this type of mill is used for small operations, such as a handful of farms, or in situations where a large number of potential workers (read: slaves) are available.

Magicmills: The fourth type of mill is a magicmill. There are several types of these, ranging from stones with permanent animate object spells placed upon them to those manipulated by golems. Such mills are used in areas where no other option is available and the community is blessed with a resident, patient mage of sufficient power. They are most commonly found only in tales of far away places, like Thay and Halruaa.

death"—perished while killing her opponent. While other fires and clearings have been overgrown quickly, this region remains bare and blackened.

The Old Skull

The Old Skull is a granite promontory that crouches overlooking the community from the north, nested between the town proper and the River Ashaba. Compared with the fertile region around it, the Old Skull is a spur of gnarled volcanic rock covered with lichen and thick tufts of grass that find purchase in the many cracks and fissures along its surface. The hill's whitish rock (visible in most locations), sparsely-covered nature, and dome-like quality account for its name.

The Old Skull is used as a sheep pasture, a laundry drying area, and an occasional trysting ground—it has little use as anything else. Its most notable contributions are in giving its name to the local inn in town and being blessed with the presence of Elminster the Sage, who moved into an abandoned windmill on its south flank. The only other building on the Old Skull was a hut on the north side used as shelter by the shepherds. This hut has since caved in.

Also located atop the Old Skull is the tomb of Joadath, the stiff-necked ruler of the land from a century ago. The tomb is said to be solid rock worked by magic to encase his body, and is located somewhere in the southwest quadrant of the area. Joadath was entombed unmourned with nothing of value to tempt tomb-robbers using Aumry's magic, and as such has been undisturbed since that time. Most natives of Shadowdale would be hard pressed to point out the exact location of the tomb, save for a shallow depression at its location and a lichen-cover inscription listing (as briefly as possible) the major happenings of the community during his reign.

Sylune's Hut

This empty, roofless hut is not much to look at now, but once was the home of the Witch of Shadowdale, Sylune, wife of the late Lord Aumry and sister to Storm Silverhand. The hut and the surrounding forest were considered Sylune's territory, and later lords such as Doust and Mourngrym gave her a broad leeway since to their minds she could have reclaimed the title of lord for herself.

Such was the nature of Sylune that she was not interested in such earthly matters, being concerned with the nature of magic itself. It has been assumed that her modest hut had a number of interdimensional gates that allowed her to come and go as she pleased within it.

Sylune perished the year before the Time of Troubles, killing an ancient red dragon and in turn being killed by it. Her (presumed) ashes were laid to rest on Watcher's Knoll with those of her husband, Lord Aumry.

Ownership of the land of Sylune's hut, like that of Mirrorman's Mill, has passed to Lord Mourngrym. His lordship has refused numerous attempts to claim, build, or farm on the land, which remains in the blasted condition it was after the dragon's attack. Mourngrym gives no reason for this other than that when the owner of the land returns, he will return it to her. Beyond that he says nothing more.

Toad Knoll

Located a half mile to the west of the bridge over the Ashaba, Toad Knoll takes its name from an upwelling of an intermittent natural spring that makes the ground marshy at its base and accounts for a bumper crop of toads and frogs in the spring months. At one time most of the trees were cleared from this area when the region was inhabited.

Watcher's Knoll

Watcher's Knoll is a good-sized hill with a open clearing at the top. The clearing is dominated by a large pillar or plinth that has settled severely, so much so that it leans dramatically to the north. This plinth is easily scaled, and as such has served as a watchtower since the times of Aencar the Mantled King.

Seventy years ago Watcher's Knoll was the site of a religious massacre of a scope not seen in the Dale since. This was during the reign of Joadath, who was a stiff-necked and inflexible agnostic. During his reign all public forms of religion were outlawed, and his edicts were enforced by like-minded men and women in his guards. The followers of Tyr would meet and hold services on Watcher's Knoll in secret until they were found out by Joadath's spies. At least 20 and perhaps 40 individuals died on the snowy drifts of the Knoll that winter morning. For Joadath, it was the beginning of the end, in that his actions eventually led to his own destruction.

Watcher's Knoll is also the burial site of Lord Aumry, Joadath's successor, and his wife Lady Sylune. When Aumry was slain (by Jyordhan), so great was the respect for Lord Aumry that his tomb was carved out of the solid rock by a combined force of elves, dwarves, and humans. His body was burned, as was his wish, and the ashes were placed in a stone coffin, over which were laid his magical staff and cloak. During the reign of Jyordhan, the tomb was broken into, and the staff removed. However, if the rumors of a powerful curse placed upon the tomb against robbers were true, the staff could not have traveled far before coming into the hands of a new owner. With the death of Sylune seven years ago at the claws of a flaming red dragon, her ashes were interred alongside her beloved.

Watcher's Knoll is today a quiet curiosity visited by elves, members of Tyr's faith (who leave flowers) and young lovers looking for a quiet meeting spot. Only in times of great danger (such as an invasion from the North) is it used for its earlier purpose.

Aencar The Mantled King

Despite the independent nature of the Dalelands, they *have* been under the rulership of a single individual once in the past 500 years. This ruler was Aencar, also called the Mantled King, who united the Dales (or at least most of them) 300 years ago.

Aencar was a noble warrior lord who came to rule in Battledale. At the time there were continual threats from monstrous forces that threatened to overwhelm the Dales from all sides, such that most of Aencar's 15-year rule was spent moving from one battle to another, protecting the people of his native Dale from incursions and extending that protection to any Dale that would recognize his sovereignty and be willing to contribute manpower and funds to help the other Dales. Much of the modern cooperation between the Dales dates back to this remarkable leader. His lieutenants were installed in most of the Daleland governments, either as the local lord or as a military advisor to the immediate head of government. A Dalesman by nature and deed, he did not seek to usurp the power of the other Dales so as to lead a cohesive union of independent communities.

Indeed, Aencar could have forged the Dalelands into a cohesive nation similar to Cormyr and Sembia had it not been for unkind fate. In his travels and battles Aencar fell prey to either a wasting disease or a magical curse (the songs vary on this point) that reduced his body and visage to the appearance of a corpse. It was during this time that Aencar began to retreat beneath a red hood and mask that covered most of his face. From this practice he gained the title, the "Mantled King." All but his most trusted lieutenants were unaware of Aencar's affliction, and it was during this time, the last six years of his life, that Aencar brought most of the Dalelands under his control (the exceptions being Archendale and High Dale).

The deception was revealed during a feast in Essembra, the seat of Aencar's rule. Evil agents accompanied by wizards and summoned undead creatures (including a dracolich) attacked the gathering, hoping to slay the Mantled King and his lieutenants. In the battle, Aencar's mask was tom away, revealing to all (including his horrified fiancee) the grim, tattered flesh of his face. Many fled, but Aencar's lieutenants rallied behind their master and defeated the invaders. The victory was not without cost, though, for the dracolich had the power to rend the Mantled King's flesh and leave him permanently dead.

All attempts to raise or cure Aencar failed, and his lieutenants burned his body along with his castle and dispersed to their native Dales. The songs say that Aencar's fiancée stood at the flames and cast red roses into the pyre, but this may just be a romantic fantasy.

Aencar's legacy remains within the Dales to this day. The cooperation between the Dales is reflected in its current council. Battledale does not recognize any seat of power since the burning of Aencar's castle, and its leader, the war chancellor, is a direct descendent of Aencar's right-hand man. And Aencar's dream, that of a unified Dalelands, still lives, and is seen occasionally in the dreams of many petty rulers, including (most recently) Lashan Aumersair of Scardale.

The Farms

The area around the Old Skull is blessed with rich farmland. In far distant times the flow of the river may have been different, or a blockage may have flooded the area with a shallow lake or swamp, but the thick soil of the region is now perfect for a wide variety of crops—corn, wheat, and oats, as well as vegetables, including pumpkins, gourds, beans, berries, and grapes. Apples and other orchards are rare in this part of the Dalelands.

The farmers of Shadowdale come in two varieties—Dalesmen and retirees. The Dalesmen are the descendants of the first Dalesmen who crossed the Dragon Reach and made their agreement with the elves of Myth Drannor. They are self-reliant, strong-willed, and independent by nature, but also have a strong sense of community and the need to pitch in to help their compatriots. They are taciturn around strangers, if polite, and know enough to clear out should adventurers start swinging swords madly in the area. Given the nature of Shadowdale and its recent turbulent past, all the farmers are proficient with both sword and spear, and can be considered to have 2-12 hit points.

The retirees are former adventurers who have decided to settle in the area and take up a quiet life. Unfortunately for player characters who bully around townspeople, they are often indistinguishable from other farmers, save for perhaps a unique feature such as unusual hair or eye color, or a favorite memento of the past kept on hand. Most of the retirees choose to stay that way unless Shadowdale itself is threatened. A mere lure of gold would not be enough to pull these worthies from their beds. While they might (and the word is might) be willing to part with the knowledge and experience of their lifetime, it would be in exchange for service, as opposed to gold (that service being helping to repair the roof or bring in the harvest as opposed to any monetary award).

Visitors to Shadowdale are advised to be polite to the natives. This is because a good relationship with the area is instrumental to success in trading or adventuring, and because the dirt-splotched farmer one shoulders aside in the bar may have been 20 years ago a dragon-slaying wizard who has lost none of his former power.

The farms in the immediate vicinity of Shadowdale and the Twisted Tower are:

Buldar Ulphar's Farm

An influential farmer in the area, Buldar manages his farm with his wife Neena, son Marest, and daughter April. He has an ongoing competition with his brother Ruldor.

Elma Bestil's Farm

Borst Bestil, Elma's husband, died in the Second Battle of Shadowdale, leaving her alone in the world. Refusing the offer of her brother-in-law Hyne to move in with her, she manages the farm on her own. Self-reliant and capable, she has made the farm much more profitable than Borst ever did on his own. She is helped by three full-time hired hands—Moran, Guentar, and Breegar—but also hires on additional women and men for the harvest.

Hamlin Zhul's Farm

The young Hamlin Zhul, with the help of a hired man, Thurl, raises wheat and a thriving vegetable garden on his field. He has a wife, Blena, and two boys, Casron and Polimar.

Hyne Bestil's Farm

Hyne Bestil was once an angry, whining man, an irritant to his neighbors and family. However, the Time of Troubles seems to have wrought a change in him, such that now he is open-handed,

friendly, and willing to help out people he knows who have trouble. He is one of the best-liked people in the community and frequently serves as a father-confessor for all the small gossip in the town—chiefly because he does not pass any of it on. Hyne lives with his wife, Merna, and his three sons, Britaria, Huld, and Krayan. Hyne's sister-in-law Elma Bestil once said, "I know that the gods coming down to earth caused a lot of problems, but if they were responsible for Hyne acting like a human being, so much the better."

Ilcurt Elventree's Farm

Ilcurt is Neldock's brother, and cut of the same cloth. He is married to a Tenthian woman named Lasha. They have one living son, Brennan, and two daughters, Demeira and Illistyl. Illistyl Elventree has proved to have magical aptitude, and after some tutoring (by a traveling mage seeking a favor from Elminster), has proved to possess some capable abilities (LG hf W2).

Jhaele Silvermane's Farm

Jhaele operates the Old Skull inn; her farm is run by her eldest son, Durgo. The rest of the Silvermane brood have scattered to the four winds as adventurers and merchants, including daughters Belestar and Raith and sons Purn and Braun (her youngest). For more information on Jhaele herself, check the entry on the Old Skull inn in the "Places of Interest in Shadowdale" chapter.

Korhun Lherar's Farm

Korhun Lherar was a sour, cynical man who fought well and died in the First Battle of Shadowdale. His land was taken as property of the Dale and awarded to Turst Rhellogar, one of Korhun's hired hands. Turst was killed in the Second Battle of Shadowdale. The land is currently being managed by Vernon Hillstar, Korhun's southern neighbor. Vernon is looking for someone to buy the land and reoccupy the old farmhouse.

Kulnar Ohane's Farm

Kulnar is a Dalesman's Dalesman—taciturn, intelligent, smart enough to know when trouble is coming, and wise enough to get out of the way. He is second only to Beregon Hillstar in the respect of his fellows. He has a wife (Lest), one daughter (Riita) and two living sons (Chruce and Arnblas). Kulnar is aided in his farming by Blaesgard, a powerful, blond-haired fighter (LG hm F6). Blaesgard looks like an everyday farmer as well, which indicates the danger of assuming all such farmers are weak.

Luth Mlennon's Farm

A semiretired farmer who spends much of his time in town trading stories and visiting the Old Skull inn, Luth grows herbs, cabbages, melons, and potatoes, but otherwise leaves his fields fallow. He is known, to be a championship tale-spinner (if not an outright liar), and is more than willing to trade his knowledge for a few drinks. The large, muddy patch of Elma Bestil's land known as Luth's Mud gains its name from one particular evening of drinking and tale-telling that resulted in Luth awakening in the mud without any idea how he came there. Luth is also an excellent glazier and glass-blower.

Neldock Elventree's Farm

The Elventree brothers are recent arrivals, which for Dalesmen means they showed up about 30 years ago. They were originally from the city of the same name and cleared the land south of Shadowdale village where Neldock and Ilcurt's farms now are. Both men are considered to be straight-talking, honest, and valiant individuals. Neldock's wife passed on over 20 years ago, but he has two grown sons, Meltan and Neld, who manage the farm. Neldock has a daughter, Imura, who has since the Time of Troubles sought out her own fortune as a warrior in the south. (Imura, if encountered, would be a LG hf Pal2.)

Riist Huldane's Farm

Riist is a happy, good-natured Dalesman cursed with the reactions of a stone golem— there are always tales circulating of this mishap or that accident befalling Riist and those around him. There incidents are rarely fatal or even damaging, but it seems that Riist just summons bad luck from every quarter—windows shatter, roofs cave in, animals get loose, and mud puddles appear whenever he is around. Fortunately, Riist's wife Liliphar seems immune.

Ruldor Ulphor's Farm

One of the influential farmers in the Shadowdale community, Ruldor is in constant disagreement with his brother Buldar (even to the way they spell their last names). Ruldor is pushy and loud, a trait shared by his family—wife Lana, and sons Ulman, Jalnar, and Bertil.

Silas Standard's Farm

This farm was formerly the farm of one Belomuth, who departed (with his family) in the advance of the Zhentarim armies during the Time of Troubles. Soon afterwards, Silas Standard, a refugee from Archendale, took claim on the property and swore allegiance to Lord Mourngrym. A newcomer to the area, Silas is more than a little amazed by the

high number of powerful adventurers in the area, and the bizarre and wondrous things which occur when they are around. Silas has a wife, Marga, and two teen-aged sons, Golta and Drenn.

Storm Silverhand's Farm

Storm Silverhand (NG hf B22) is the most powerful of the retired adventurers who have chosen Shadowdale as their home, with the possible exception of Elminster (possible only if you can say that Elminster has truly retired). As a powerful force in the secret organization known as the Harpers, she is often away from her farm, but always returns to its relative peace and quiet. Her chief overseer, Lular, takes care of the place in her absence, which includes the care and feeding of a small pack of wolfhounds she has been raising. These wolfhounds tend to guarantee Storm's privacy when she is home. Storm's complete statistics and abilities may be found in *Running the Realms.*

Sulcar Reedo's Farm

Sulcar is described with his family below in the "Village of Shadowdale" chapter, since his farm is adjacent to Shadowdale proper.

The Tower Farm

The Tower farm is traditionally the estate of the occupant of the Twisted Tower, and used as a retreat from the pressures of court life. Beregon Hillstar oversees the crops on the Tower Farm for the lord of Shadowdale. The southern portion of the Tower Farm's land has been uprooted and formed into a ditch-and-rampart redoubt. This redoubt was used by the Dalesmen as a defensive position in the Second Battle of Shadowdale.

Vernon Hillstar's Farm

Vernon is Beregon Hillstar's younger brother. He seems to have avoided the misfortune that has plagued his elder brother for the most part. His family farms the land immediately north of the Old Skull, and he offers the land of the Old Skull to shepherds to raise their flocks. Vernon's wife is Adlma, and he has two daughters, Selence, and Mara. Mara established her heroism in both Battles of Shadowdale (LG hf F2). Vernon has one son, a black sheep named Helmark (CN hm T3), who left the Dale for the north after his thieving activities were discovered and made public.

The Village of Shadowdale

The civic center of Shadowdale is nothing more than a triple handful of buildings scattered along the main road (the North Ride) east of the Tower of Ashaba. Here are found the local inn and boardinghouse, the trader and the festhall, as well as a smattering of tradespeople who balance their clientele between native farmers and travelers along the road.

Most of the buildings in the village of Shadowdale are of wood and built on a stone foundation. Cellars are common, though some are prone to floods in the spring. The structures are wooden frames daubed with mud and clay as patching, with one or two brick or stone houses. Fireplaces are common, and the smoke hangs thick in the vale on cold days. Ceilings are slate on the older and more important buildings (such as the Old Skull inn), and tightly wound and knotted thatch on more recent arrivals. In general, the buildings are constructed with an eye towards the long cold winters. Windows are common, but so too are heavy shutters that are securely fastened even in early summer.

The community provides a quiet, tranquil lifestyle for those who are not regularly involved with dragon-slaying and orc-hunting. Many adventurers are lured from their active lives into retirement (temporary or not) in quiet communities such as this. The most important day of the week is market day, when the areas in front of the Old Skull and in the shadow of Hangman's Knoll are packed with stands and merchants, both of the local and traveling varieties.

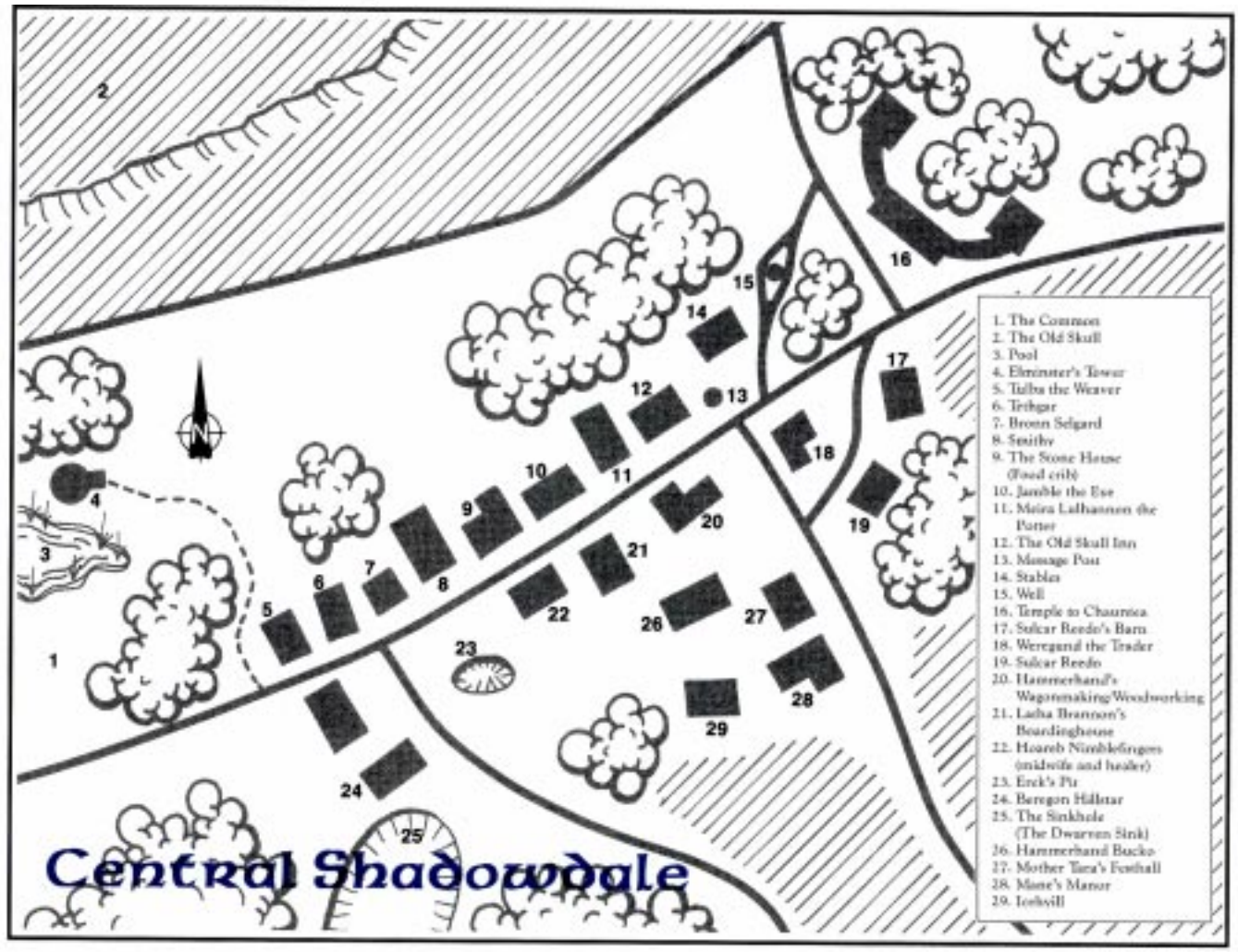
The buildings and individuals described here occupy the sites mentioned on the Central Shadowdale map. Refer to the map while reading to have an idea of who lives where. All individuals are 0-level humans unless otherwise noted (or the DM decides otherwise).

Beregon Hillstar: Beregon is a retired farmer who has had a long bout of misfortune. He has handled with a quiet manner that has earned him the respect of his fellow villagers, such that Beregon is often the spokesman for delegations of townspeople to Mourngrym's court. Beregon's wife died in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR). His son Lhurt was killed in the Battle of Shadowdale. Beregon lives with his sister Milda and his daughter Pelda, and both help him farm the Tower Farm. Beregon sold part of his lands to the Temple of Lathander and abandoned the remainder when the Dwarven Sink collapsed in on itself. Beregon also holds the title to the land that was Erek the Alchemist's house.

Beregon's Barn: Still part of the Beregon estate, the barn has been unused since the Time of Troubles. Beregon is thinking of selling this property as well.

Bronn Selgard: The town smith for nearly a generation, Bronn is renowned for his great strength (18/00, though he has no level or other character abilities). He maintains a very profitable and active business seeing to both the needs of the Dale and those travelers who pass through. He and his wife, Leath, have a large brood of children, many of whom have been trained in the family business. Bronn has three journeyman smiths—daughter Aleena, his eldest, and sons Surd and Doans—as well as a batch of apprentices, including daughter Traith, and sons Berr and Janth. Two other sons, Silmur and Helve, were slain in the First Battle of Shadowdale, and daughter Maela died in the Second Battle. Bronn has taken on two unrelated apprentices, Flakil and Mera, to maintain his business. Bronn and the tower smith, Gunthor, have an understanding—he doesn't go out of the way to take Tower business, and Gunthor leaves the local trade to him.

Crossroads and the Message Post: Situated at the crossroads in front of the Old Skull inn, the message post is a standard feature of most small communities which see regular out-of-town traffic. Personal messages, warnings, and offers of hire may be found here.



Erek's Pit: This hole was formerly the home and shop of Erek the Alchemist, a minor mage whose sign read "Philters, Potions & Physics, Purveyor & Maker." One of the philters, potions, or physics got away from him a few years back. The resulting explosion rained the remains of his house down on the surrounding countryside. An investigation of the remains found precise identification of what occurred impossible, but a few unsmashed examples of Erek's work were claimed by Moumgrym and passed on to Elminster. His land is officially held by Beregon Hillstar.

Hammerhand Bucko's House: Hammerhand Bucko, the local carpenter, is a sarcastic, intelligent, mulish, and strong-willed individual capable of calling a fool what he is and willing to back it up. His wife Leeta and he are childless, but Hammerhand has taken on a large number of apprentices over the years whom she mothers. Current apprentices include Skulp, Fennir, Tulpas, Naith, and Typyas. All are young men except for Typyas, who is a young woman who was masquerading to learn a trade from the staunchly chauvinist Hammerhand. When Hammerhand discovered the deception, he was livid and would have thrown her out if she were not his best student. Typyas is currently Hammerhand's head journeyman, and will likely take over the business when he retires.

Hammerhand's Wagons & Woodwork: This is Hammerhand's place of business and where his apprentices sleep (except for Typyas, who has her own quarters with the Buckos). Most carpentry and wagon repairs are done at reasonable prices.

Hoareb Nimblefingers: A pleasant, short, middle-aged woman, Hoareb serves as midwife, surgeon, and healer to both man and beast in the Dale. She has the healing proficiency, backed up by those healing magics and potions as are made available by Lord Mourngrym. Though the increasing number of churches has made priests and their healing magics more plentiful, most of the people of Shadowdale trust Hoareb's steady hand and practiced eye.

Icehyill: Another retiree, Icehyill (NG hf F6) made her

fortune on the Waterdeep to Cormyr caravan lines, first as a guard and later as mistress of her own coster. She is knowledgeable in the area of trade and business, but has no desire to leave Shadowdale or to even risk her skin in any way. She keeps her life savings (about 1,000 gp in gems) cached away under her chimney hearth

Jamble the Eye: A slick character who describes himself as a "former criminal who now steals legally," Jamble (CN hm T7) is a merchant who speculates in interesting and odd items from Suzail to Hillsfar. He claims to have left his thieving ways behind him, but most individuals watch their purses with him around. He is married (his wife's name is Leel) and has a son, Serbon. Jamble has a manservant named Boorga who lives in the house with his own wife, daughter, and son. Jamble is reputed to have his life savings tucked away in some hidey-hole out beyond the borders of town.

Latha Brannon (Boardinghouse): Latha oversees the boardinghouse, a place for individuals seeking long-term lodging in the town. He charges 1 gold piece a week, which is cheaper than the Old Skull inn, but the accommodations are not as nice as those of the Old Skull. Latha's wife died over a decade ago in the Year of the Arch (1353 DR), leaving him to raise his three daughters Ester, Emra, and Ilil (the last two are known for their beauty). Latha seems to be continually bedraggled and exhausted, a state brought about my his aunt, Uda, a crusty old matriarch that keeps Latha and his daughters hopping.

Mane's Manor: Mane's Manor is a two-story house located just to the west of Mother Tara's. Mother Tara holds the deed on it—it was left to her by Mane in his will, and she occasionally rents it out for large parties or adventurers staying long periods of time (15 gp a month or fraction thereof—visitors provide their own food and can't do anything to make the neighbors complain). If offered sufficient cash, she will gladly part with it, since occupants have complained about strange noises. (These are more an indication of the building needing a new roof than anything else.)

Miera Lulhannon: The village potter as well as the town's baker, Miera is renowned for his talents in both areas. He is married to Sulatha, and has three daughters, Betra, Jassa, and Mari. Jassa is spoken of as a great beauty in these parts.

Mother Tara (Festhall): This two-story dwelling specializes in fine wines, good food, gaming, and sundry other "divertissements" for the traveler and the merchant. Prices are 10 gold for the evening, which includes a sumptuous banquet, dancing and singing, and the opportunity to lavish additional money on the gaming tables and the hired help. Mother Tara operates an aboveboard, straightforward operation, and is proud of her reputation, unsullied since that one time eight years ago one of her girls turned out to be a weretiger and had to be slain by Florin Falconhand. Mother Tara herself is a cheery halfling from the Vilhon Reach, with dark, curly hair going gray. She is backed up by Briig, who is said to be a flesh golem with an illusion spell placed upon him (a lie, but one that Mother Tara uses to her advantage).

Stables for the Old Skull: These stables are separated from the Old Skull inn to limit the danger of fire (see the "Places of Interest in Shadowdale" chapter for a description of the Old Skull inn). The Old Skull's stablemaster and hostler,

A Guide To Services

The adjoining text aids DMs in getting the feeling and flavor of Shadowdale and its people, fleshing out the area to be more than just a few buildings for tavern brawls and healing up. However, DMs may need a quick reference on who to see about particular matters. In this case, please refer to this table to determine who is the best person to contact and buy from:

Armor: Bronn Selgard, smith

Boardinghouse: Latha Brannon

Ceramics: Meira Lulhannon

Cloth and Clothing: Tulba the Weaver, Weregund the Trader

Employment, Adventuring: Old Skull inn, Twisted Tower

Employment, Honest: Elma Bestil (farmwork)

Farrier (Horse-Shoeing): Bronn Selgard, smith

Festhall: Mother Tara

Fresh Bread: Meira Lulhannon

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: Any of the farmers, but Luth Mlennon in particular

Glass and Glass-Blowing: Luth Mlennon

Healing: Hoareb Nimblefingers

Healing, Raising from the Dead: Temples of Chauntea and Lathander

Healing, Serious: Temples of Chauntea, Lathander, and Tymora

Horses: Bardag Shultu, Old Skull inn stables

Information: Elminster*, Meeting Post, Old Skull inn (ask for Jhaele or Luth)

Magical Items: Not readily available with the death of Erek the Alchemist

Masonry: Tethgar (large jobs include subcontracting to dwarves)

Merchandise, Exotic: Weregund the Trader; Jamble; Icehyill; the Twisted Tower

Merchandise, General: Weregund the Trader; Jamble

Taverns: Old Skull inn

Wagons: Hammerhand Bucko

Weapons: Bronn Selgard, smith; Weregund the Trader

Woodworking of All Types: Hammerhand Bucko; Durman Hilesta, Old Skull inn

*By appointment only (good luck).

Bardag Shultu, looks after the horses and wagons of those who stay at the Old Skull. Bardag also sells horses, and always has a regular supply.

The Stone House: This is a large, stone building used as a food crib for the surrounding businesses. Wheat and corn flour is stored here in bags to be exported elsewhere, supplies brought in but as yet unpacked are stored here also. It is only guarded when something of value is within.

Sulcar Reedo's Barn: Part of Sulcar's property.

Sulcar Reedo's House: Sulcar is a sarcastic and irritating old man who has seen Shadowdale grow in his lifetime to the borders of his farm and is not particularly happy about it. He has a wife and two grown sons who will take over the farm on his death. A third son perished in the First Battle of Shadowdale, which may account for part of Sulcar's reserved and sharp manner.

Tethgar's House: Tethgar lives here with his wife, Senma. Tethgar is the local mason, and more than sufficient to take care of local patchwork in the community. For large projects, he contracts supplies and labor from a community of dwarves in the Stonelands. A grim, graying man, he is proud of his work and particularly irritated that his services were not called upon to rebuild the temple of Lathander following the Time of Troubles (though he did get the chance to work on the Chauntean temple). Tethgar speaks dwarvish fluently and is frequently in the company of the dwarven smith Gunthor.

Tulba the Weaver: Tulba is a fat, tubby, genial man, who lives and works with his equally wide and genial wife, Lella. Tulba makes good, warm cloth, but his other work is as a spy for the Merchant's League, a semisecret society working out of Amn. Tulba's work involves noting the new arrivals and caravans passing through, along with any local tales and legends, and then sending the information via travelers to Amn for reporting to his superiors. Tulba has hired a young woman from Battledale, one Sarinda, as a woolwasher.

Weregund the Trader: Running the general supply store of the Dale, Weregund is the chief active merchant in town and regularly deals with traders and costers which pass through. Most equipment listed in the *Player's Handbook* costing less than 100 gp can be found in his shop. There is a 10% chance that an item costing more than 100 gp but less than 500 gp may be found there. Nothing that costs more than 500 gp is normally found there. Weregund can order items from Cormyr and Hillsfar and expect delivery within two weeks. He is also a purveyor of the Aurora's of Waterdeep catalog chain. Weregund is a uncompromising coward, his cowardice being only exceeded by his greed. He has a son (Dabragund), a daughter (Dletagund), and a wife (Meershand).

Temples and Shrines

Religion in the Realms is for the most part a private matter. A woman or man may call upon the gods to witness a statement or deliver a curse, or have a household shrine to a patron deity. It is common for individuals to worship (or at least attempt to placate) a number of gods in their everyday lives.

In addition to private worship, there are often locations which have been noted as being favored by the gods, or where the intervention of those gods (real or imagined) resulted in a great adventure or discovery. The home of a powerful (and usually deceased) alchemist may be considered to be favored by Gond Wonderbringer, or a battle site thought to be under the gaze of Tempus. Followers of these gods establish *shrines* in these locations. Such shrines have no established clergy, though they are considered hallowed ground the followers of the deity the shrine is dedicated to.

As communities grow, religion grows with them, such that large and populous faiths need gathering places for their increasing congregations. These gathering places are overseen by the priests of the various gods, their representatives in this plane. Such places are *temples,* and are not only a source of spiritual healing and peace, but are often sought out by adventurers for more material relief and healing.

There are two shrines and three temples in the Shadowdale area. All are relatively recent, given both the nature of Shadowdale's small community and the earlier regime of an agnostic lord, Joadath, who drove out most of the established faiths, good and evil.

Shrine to Mystra

Situated on the low rise behind the Temple of Tymora, the shrine to Mystra is a low step pyramid of three wide steps, 20 feet by 20 feet at the base and 10 feet by 10 feet at the top. The topmost step is inscribed only with the symbol of Mystra in silver against the dark stone.

The shrine has no priesthood or assigned caretaker and is tended to by its worshippers, These include townspeople hoping for a good result from some magical divination or healing, as well as passing travelers (primarily wizards). It is assumed, as with all shrines in populated areas, to have some form of magical protection against desecration. Such protection usually takes the form of a curse against those who seek to damage the shrine.

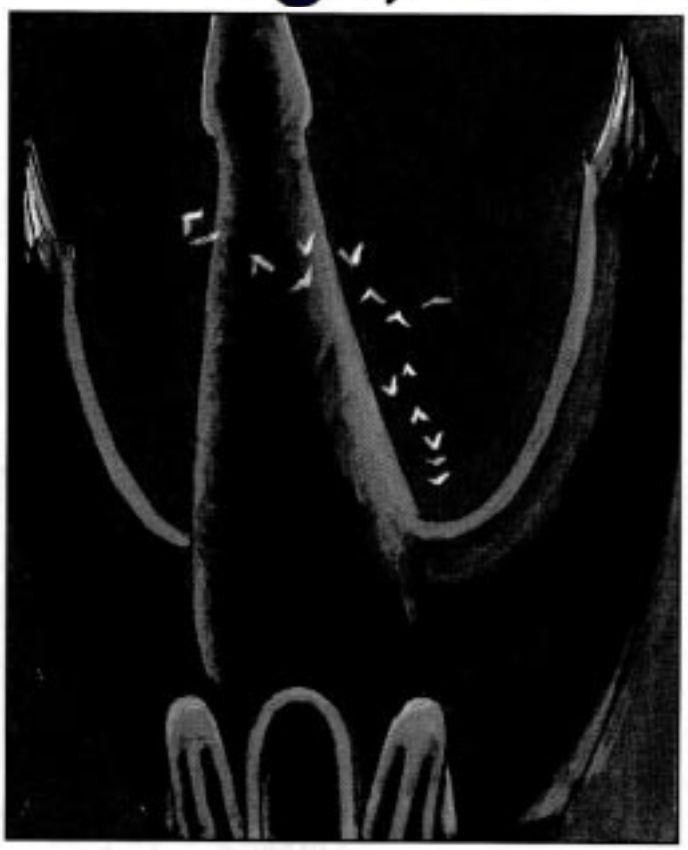
The faith of Mystra wished to establish the shrine on the ruins of Sylune's hut, but was prohibited from doing so by Lord Mourngrym. As a compromise, the shrine's current location allows a view of both Sylune's hut and the topmost level of Elminster's Tower.

A local legend has sprung up (spread by Luth Mlennon, it is believed) that anyone standing on the shrine and talking conversationally will be heard by Elminster in his tower. There is no indication if this is true or not.

Shrine to Tempus

Located across the northern road from the ditches and ramparts built to contain the invading Zhentarim forces in the Second Battle of Shadowdale, the shrine to Tempus commemorates both that battle and those individuals who have laid down their lives throughout the years to protect the Dales.

The shrine consists of two iron pillars framing an altar of black basalt. The front of the altar is



marked with the symbol of Tempus in gold. Flowers are left at the temple to commemorate fallen warriors, and on the anniversary of the battle, bright ribbons are tied to the pillars.

The shrine is unattended, but is hallowed ground for followers of Tempus. It can be assumed that the shrine has a number of powerful curses placed on it to prevent its desecration and robbery.

A second shrine to Tempus exists in the Tower of Ashaba itself. That shrine is used primarily by the fighters who act as guards there.

Morningdawn Hall

The most visually, ah, stunning building in Shadowdale is Morningdawn Hall, the temple to Lathander. It rises from the surrounding countryside in the shape of a great phoenix, facing west. Its wings become two great turrets which command a view of the surrounding area. The head and neck of the great bird contain sleeping rooms and offices. Its back is translucent. It is made of rose-tinted glass, magically strengthened and unbreakable, and faces the east. Morning is the time for services at the temple of Lathander, and the congregation greets the morning rays in the great hall below this glass edifice.

As Lhaeo once diplomatically noted, "This building shows what can be done with magically enhanced materials." (To which Beregon Hillstar added, "It also shows why we shouldn't do it.") The great phoenix of Lathander is at odds with most of the other structures in Shadowdale and is treated with amusement by the (nonpracticing) members of the community.

Surprisingly, this is the second temple of Lathander on this site. The first was destroyed by the god Bane during the Time of Troubles (at that time, a celestial staircase, one of the few ways to the godly planes, was located here). The second temple is reportedly every inch the exact replica of the first (say the Dalesmen, trying not to crack a smile).

The temple is overseen by High Dawnlord Munro Cassimar (LG hm P10). Cassimar is from Sembia originally, sent by the church to spread the word in what Cassimar calls "This Barren Wilderness." (Cassimar is the type of individual to talk in capital letters.) Cassimar is vain, proud, and more than a little overzealous in his pursuit of both the truth and of pretty baubles to send to his home church. If he shows his superiors he can produce, he hopes to be transferred closer to civilization. Cassimar is capable of raising the dead, and charges heftily for it. He is also not above sponsoring adventuring companies who seek out new treasures "for the greater glory of Lathander."

High Dawnlord Cassimar is aided in his work by his assistant Rewel Thunderstorm (NG hm P3) who held the position of religious leader in Shadowdale briefly and oversaw the rebuilding of the church after the Time of Troubles. Rewel is a good, faithful Lathanderian, and well liked by the community. He seems to spend his time trying to head off Cassimar's wild schemes and dreams. He secretly also hopes that Cassimar impresses his superiors so that he will be called to leave Shadowdale. This event would probably help the local opinion of the faith.

In addition to Cassimar and Rewel, there are seven priests of 1st-2nd level and 11 lay followers who live and work in the temple complex.

The House of Plenty

The Temple of Chauntea was founded in Shadowdale immediately following the Time of Troubles. It originally operated out of Beregon Hillstar's barn for its early services, but soon gained sufficient support (and money) to build its own temple complex.

The Temple of Chauntea is built on an area known earlier as the Bog. It was always a swampy marsh, and several buildings erected in its confines fell quickly into ruins. The last major structure on the site was a manor house built by Jyordhan for his lieutenants (agents of Zhentil Keep, including Lyran the Pretender). When Castle Krag fell, the manor house was burned to the ground as well, and its foundations were gone within two winters.

With the aid of the Circle (who have since moved on), the followers of Chauntea drained most of the bog and stopped the natural spring beneath it. (They also destroyed a number of undead creatures who had made the wreckage their home.) They erected a low temple surrounded by columns in the same manner as the menhirs that occupy the Druid's Grove. Services are held outdoors in a comfortable amphitheater, rain or shine. Given the agrarian nature of the community, Chauntea is a very popular goddess.

The grounds of the House of Plenty are made up of the Gardens, a well-ordered area of vegetable and flower gardens, including topiaries (sculpted trees), a small orchard, and a garden maze. Here most of the lay followers and priests work during the day. Not only do they raise enough food to feed themselves and many of their neighbors, but they also experiment with new breeds of plants which can withstand the cold Daleland winters.

The leader of the Chaunteans in Shadowdale is High Harvestmistress Glamerie Windbough (NG hf P9), a calm, introspective woman who sees all things as passing in cycles, like the seasons of the year. She is capable of raising the dead, but unwilling to do so in most cases, as death brings life, just as the dead plants may be composted and used to nurture new growth. Adventurers with dead companions may not be willing to listen to gardening advice, so they often go elsewhere for healing, unless the party has been in the service of protecting Shadowdale and the surrounding forests.

Harvestmistress Windbough has two assistants of 6th level, and the remaining 14 priests are of 1st-3rd level. None are druids. In addition, there are 36 women and men who serve as lay followers and help in the garden. Most of these are refugees from other parts of the Dales who were uprooted by the Time of Troubles.

The House of The Lady

The temple to Tymora is the oldest temple in the Shadowdale area and is built on the same site as an earlier temple (listed as being to Tyche) abandoned and burned during the reign of Joadath. Just as Chauntea (and earlier, the druids) represents one of the major forces in the Dale with the farmers, Tymora represents the other in adventurers.

The temple of Tymora is established on the far bank of the Ashaba and is surrounded by a low wall to protect it against wild beasts and the more blatant marauders. It is dominated by the golden dome of its main temple, beneath which services are held. The temple is a frequent goal of adventurers seeking information, quests, and healing—particularly healing.

The ranking priest of the House of the Lady is Preceptress Eressea Ambergyles (CG hf P8), who has held the position for a surprising and eventful 10 years. Assigned in the Year of the Bow (1354 DR) from her native church in Arrabar far to the south, Ambergyles assumed she would soon be replaced once the temple was established. However, her successor disappeared at se, and was not replaced, leaving Eressea, by nature a wandering priest, with the task of maintaining the faith in Shadowdale.

The preceptress has succeeded in her task to a great degree, making the faith a very popular one in the area and the temple one of the stronger pillarss of the faith in the region, rivaled only (and perhaps exceeded) by the Tymoran church in Arabel.

Preceptress Ambergyles has seen her faith go through some very tough times, including a massacre at the hands of Bane's forces in the Time of Troubles. The temple recovered well from the damages inflicted and was reconsecrated, but a new matter from that time has vexed Ambergyles. When the gods returned to earth, Tymora appeared in Arabel. The church in Arabel has as a result declared itself to be the central church of the faith, with all others being subservient. This is against the independent nature of the Tymoran faith, and as one of the closer sister churches, Ambergyles has been leading the argument against Arabel. As a result, relationships between the two temples and attendant organizations are strained.

Ambergyles is unable to raise the dead, having not risen far enough in her knowledge of the church. Her supporters are recommending that she take a leave of absence and gain sufficient experience to make that step, which will put the temple here on the same footing with those of Chauntea and Lathander. As it stands now, Tymora's faith in Shadowdale can handle lesser healing, and occasionally do more, depending on who is in town among Tymora's followers.

In addition to the preceptress, the church has three 5th-level priests. The remaining 18 acolytes are priests of 1st-3rd level. In addition there are 28 lay followers of the church who live and work in the temple complex.

Places of Interest in Shadowdale

The Old Skull Inn

The Old Skull inn was built almost 90 years ago by Buldo Silvermane, father of the present proprietor, Jhaele Silvermane. Before that, another building stood on this site, noted in local diaries and histories as the Twisted Tower Inn. Little other than its name and the fact it existed for 100 years is noted. The nature of its demolition is unrecorded and unmourned, as the impression remains that it was less than sterling quality.

The Old Skull is far removed from that earlier inn, such that its reputation is known throughout the Dalelands, and—Jhaele would venture —around the Moonsea and into Cormyr and Sembia as well. It is a common stop of adventurers, merchants, and travelers along the main road and is known for the honesty of its staff, the quality of its mead and drink, and its relative safety in the heart of Shadowdale.

Jhaele Silvermane (NG hf F5), daughter of Buldo, maintains the inn. A powerful, no-nonsense woman, Jhaele is a fine judge of human nature and more than capable enough to distinguish between those in need and those who are playing on her sympathy. She has seen just about everything in her taproom, from powerful bards reducing the assemblage to tears, to extradimensional monsters reducing the furniture to splinters. Jhaele usually wears a leather apron over a white blouse and a leather skirt when working (in this she is AC 7, including a Dexterity bonus). She has also specialized with the thrown dagger, such that she gains a +1 to her attack roll and a +2 to damage when using a thrown dagger or knife (and in her work, one is always close at hand). She uses this ability most frequently in business, though, not self-defense—to bury a blade with the tab attached into the door ahead of fleeing deadbeats. This action usually needs to be done only once (to the applause of the tap room) to carry its message across. Jhaele had a large family, but all her sons and daughters have moved elsewhere to seek their fortunes. The exception is her eldest, Durgo, who runs the family farm north of the Old Skull.

Staff of The Old Skull Inn

Jhaele's staff is extremely competent and have been with her for years. They include:

Bardag Shultu: Bardag Shultu is Jhaele's hostler and stablemaster. He is usually in or about the Old Skull's stables (described in the "Village of Shadowdale" chapter). Bardag always has a number of horses of average quality available for sale. These animals include both regular drop-offs from merchant caravans and those left by adventurers who failed to pay their bills.

Dora Leen and Sasha Baddja: Dora Leen and Sasha Baddja are chambermaids for the Old Skull, and tend to the rooms and cleaning up. They are quiet, efficient, and know to keep their mouths shut about what they see in the rooms. Only when activity appears to threaten the inn or the community (such as summoning extraplanar creatures after supper) do they inform Jhaele.

Durman Hilesta: Durman Hilesta is Jhaele's carpenter and bouncer. Durman operates a small woodworking operation in competition with Hammerhand Bucko, but the bulk of his work is to repair damage to the taproom and upper rooms caused by adventuring companies that got out of hand. Durman is a normal human (8 hit points), but wears under his leather smock a *girdle of*

stone giant strength. This girdle, a gift of a grateful adventuring company two years earlier, makes both of Durman's jobs easier. With it Durman has an effective Strength rating of 20. It grants him +3 to his attack rolls and +8 to his damage rolls. He may heft up to 535 lbs., and throw rocks of up to 198 lbs. up to 16 yards, for 2-12 points of damage. When wearing this belt, Durman can bend bars/lift gates with a 50% chance of success.

Turko Breem: Turko Breem is both the cook and waiter of the Old Skull. A native of the Vilhon Reach, he believes his cooking is an art form well worth waiting for. Only Jhaele's strong will (and strong arm) guarantees that orders arrive on the same day they are placed. The good news is that once they arrive, the meals are delicious. Turko is more than a little vain about his abilities, and no amount of praise may convince him he is better than he already thinks he is. Mother Tara has a number of times sought to lure Turko away, but to no avail.

The Rooms of The Old Skull

The rooms of the Old Skull are each uniquely furnished and priced. Their ornate nature is a testament to the hands of Durman Hilesta and their rates to Jhaele's merchant skills. Prices are listed by the day and, when available, by the week (10-day ride). Unique rooms tend to acquire their own stories over time, and they are included in this key:

A. The Rooms of Honor: These are Jhaele's and her family's (when they visit) private quarters. They are rented out by her invitation only. She is willing to let them free to those who have aided the inn. Otherwise, she charge the maximum amount for any room at the inn (10 gp/night) for those who can afford them. When she rents the rooms, Jhaele stays elsewhere in the inn or on her farm. These are the most richly sumptuous rooms in the inn.

B. The Teak Room (9 sp/night).

C. Wayfarer's Suite (9 sp/night).

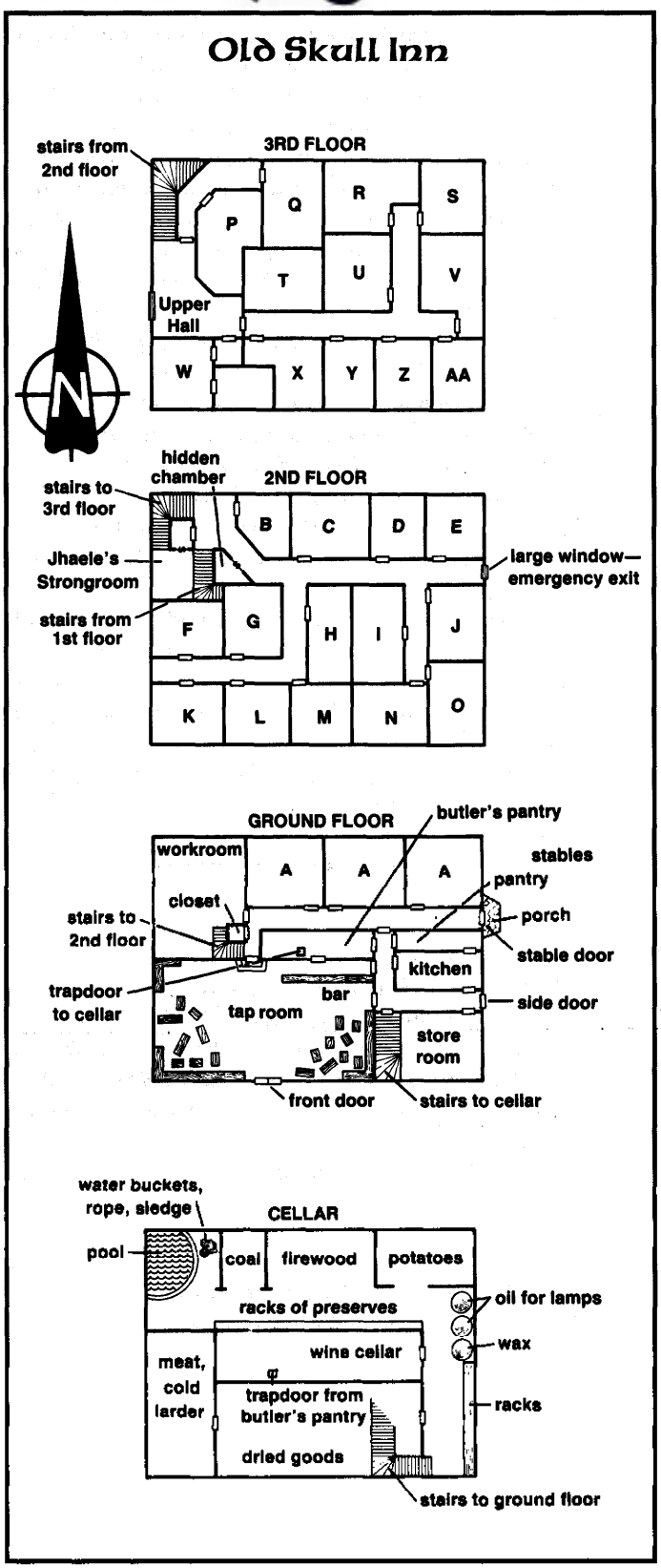
D. Bowgentle's Room (9 sp/night): This room is named after the powerful mage who used the room as a base shortly after the construction of the Inn. This individual was a fraud, since the real Bowgentle had perished years earlier, but the name has stuck.

E. The Horns (9 sp/night).

F. Dalesman's Rest (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

G. The Halfling's Burrow (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week): A sunken tub in the Blue Room (T) directly above this room necessitated the lowering of the ceiling here. While the room is still habitable by human-sized individuals, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings appreciate the cozy surroundings.

H. Journey's End Suite (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week): This is usually the room taken by Llewellyn the Loquacious (also



known as Llewellyn the Loud) when he is staying in Shadowdale—its central location accounts for many strategically planned "chance meetings" in the hall on his part.

I. The Bramraska (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

J. The Wizard's Study (9 sp/night): This room is lined with books and atlases full of general knowledge—nothing that can be found out beyond the overviews given in this boxed set. The room can provide background information on old matters (such as Aencar the Mantled King), as well as a being a springboard for new adventures. Copies of *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue* and the *Volo's* series of guidebooks are available here if the DM chooses to make them so.

K. The Steading (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

L. The Purple Room (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

M. The Petticoats (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

N. Elvenholme (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week): A subdued and tasteful room done in rich woods from the heart of the Elven Court, this room is the choice of elves and half-elves in the area.

O. The Huntsman's Room (1 gp/night): This room is dominated by hunting trophies. None of them are magical. Jhaele may put the head of some large monster on display here if it is donated to the inn. The bed is made of deer antlers fused together.

P. The Ferns (2 gp/night): This spacious room has a (fixed shut—won't open) skylight and a large number of potted ferns and forest plants.

Q. Three Couches (5 sp/night; 2 gp/week).

R. Warm Fires (9 sp/night; 25 sp/week): Dominated by three hearths, Warm Fires is the most comfortable room in the inn (except for Jhaele's, of course).

S. The Onyx (9 sp/night; 25 sp/week).

T. The Blue Room (1 gp/night): The Blue Room is decorated in blue, as its name implies, and has a sunken tub.

U. The Green Room (5 sp/night; 2 gp/week): Olive Ruskettle, noted halfling bard, makes this room her own when staying in Shadowdale.

V. The Red Room (2 gp/night).

W. The Emperor (5 gp/night): The Emperor is a suite, and includes a small private hall, a reception area/study, and a private bedroom.

X. The Ivory (5 sp/night; 2 gp/week).

Y. Five Nails (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

Z. Numpkin's Rest (2 sp/night; 15 sp/week).

AA. The Cedar (1 gp/night).

The Cellar: The cellar of the Old Skull is as shown in the map, with most of the supplies for the tavern located here. One note of importance is the pool in the northwest corner. This pool connects with the underground river which flows beneath the Twisted Tower, and a hidden quay may be found past a secret door in the western wall of the cellar at the DM's option. This option can provide the player characters with an alternate entrance to the Underdark if the PCs have offended the local lord. The secret entrance and quay are up to the DM to exclude or include. The pool in the cellar is downstream of the underground area of the Tower of Ashaba (it connects to the stream below the bridge at 3A on the Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted Tower (Part 1) Map).

Elminster's Tower

An unpretentious small tower located at the foot of the Old Skull, Elminster's Tower appears to be little more than a silo or an abandoned windmill, rather than the home of one of the most powerful wizards in the Realms. It is made entirely of flagstones, with a peaked circular roof, and it is covered with vines. The structure has no outbuildings, but numerous lean-tos have been slapped onto the side and rear of the building.

Elminster's Tower lies off the main road, close up against the Old Skull. It is accessible only by a flagstone path which skirts beside the house of Tulba the Weaver. The first part of the path seems well-used, but the path grows sparser and less well trodden as it continues toward the modest fieldstone tower.

The reason for this gradual change in the path's degree of usage is probably the many warning signs and runes along it that hint at danger (though they are often couched with a "please" or "thank you"). Examples include:

- Trespassers could die a quick and certain death or they could be invited in for stew. Thank you for thinking better of disturbing my privacy.
- An archmage often can react poorly to interruption. Please reconsider before it is too late.
- No Trespassing. Violators should notify next of kin. Have a pleasant day.
- Rumors of spike-filled pits along this path are almost totally false. Thank you for your caution.
- This ancient path/Is cracked and paved/With visitors who/Could not behave. — *Elminster*

The warning runes and signs disappear and reappear from time to time in no clear pattern. One set of sigils that is always in use is several special *glyphs of warding* that warn those in the tower of the approach of outsiders. As a general rule of thumb, it is impossible to sneak up on Elminster's Tower without alerting those within. The path forks, with one fork leading to the door of Elminster's Tower and the other accessing a small pond known as Elminster's Pool.

The interior of the aboveground section of Elminster's Tower is of a modest size and a disorganized nature. The topmost of the three levels is a small combination study/bedroom,

and is used by the Mage of Shadowdale both for his own work and as a safe place for people Elminster is trying to protect. Elminster's own quarters are on the middle level. The ground floor contains Lhaeo's outer office and anteroom in which the wizard's scribe entertains (and frustrates) guests seeking an audience with the wizard. The ground floor also holds the kitchen, which doubles as Lhaeo's bedroom as well.

The tower is magically guarded and warded to protect against the effects of lightning and fire as well as incursions, invaders, and unwanted guests. The precise nature of these protective devices are left to the DM's whims, but should be nondestructive in nature. Examples include:

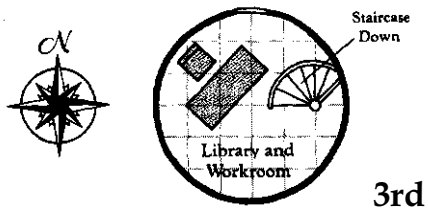
- A *distance distortion* spell placed upon the anteroom or the spiral staircases which run between levels, creating the illusion that the rooms are much larger and farther apart than they are.
- A *time stop* spell that may be activated in the anteroom, to which Lhaeo and Elminster are immune.
- A rune that when pressed by Lhaeo or Elminster sends all the other living creatures in a room or in the tower to a random location in the Realms or to another plane entirely.
- Magical items at easy reach for one who knows where to grab (for example, an invisible rack of wands next to the knife rack in the kitchen).
- For those who prefer a violent solution, Elminster keeps an iron golem in the cellar. The golem can have an illusion of Lhaeo placed over it and forcibly eject individuals. Elminster will not hesitate to slay those who threaten himself or Lhaeo, though both would prefer a calmer solution.

Every flat surface in the tower is covered with paper—books, scrolls, notes, memos, little yellow sticky things, correspondence from both living and long-dead individuals, atlases, tomes, metal plates carved with runes, rubbings, charts, sketches, and all manner of other paperwork such that entire tables and chairs disappear beneath the press. Lhaeo and Elminster are both aware of where everything is, however, regardless of the apparent disorder and declarations to the contrary.

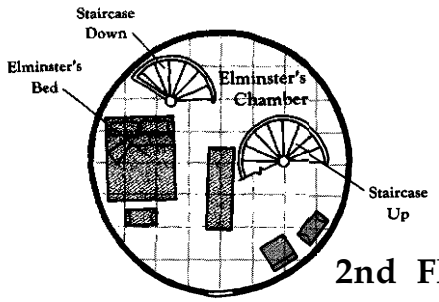
Given its modest size, there would seem to be more to Elminster's Tower than meets the eye, and this is true. Numerous extradimensional spaces exist for tools, equipment, magical items, and, of course, more books. In addition, the tower has extensive cellars beneath it that are patrolled by Elminster or his magical minions.

Lhaeo and Elminster are the sole official occupants of the tower, though Elminster may (rarely) take in a student of the Art to tutor and instruct. However, most of Elminster's time is taken up with his research into the nature of reality and the myriad planes. He is often abroad in these planes—collecting,

Elminster's Tower

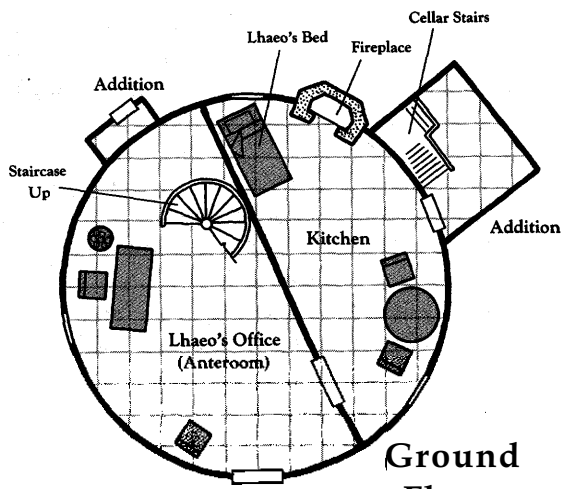


3rd Floor



2nd Floor

2 squares = 5 feet



Ground Floor

Warning: The above is assembled from common reports from a variety of sources. Individual experiences within Elminster's Tower vary widely, and personal discretion is advised.

discussing, and adventuring in fields far from those of Shadowdale. He is often not present when the Dalelands are in dire need, such as the red dragon attack that claimed the life of Sylune. He has been present often enough, however, to engender the respect of the Dalesmen.

Adventurers, mages, and scholars often seek out Elminster for advice. They are usually disappointed, frustrated by an endless wait and an endless series of forms that Lhaeo demands be filled out. Those who lose their patience usually depart or get violent and are then forcibly ejected.

Send In The Guards!

Q: How many guards are there in the Twisted Tower?
A: How many do you need?

There are officially 90 soldiers in the Twisted Tower, and about half of them are on duty at any time. Sixty of these soldiers are men-at-arms under the command of Sergeant Yothgdim, and 30 archers are under the command of Yeoman Helduth. Both Yothgdim and Helduth report to Thurbal, Captain-of-Arms and Warden of Shadowdale.

In game terms, there are enough warriors to station all the guard posts, towers, and ballistae, and still have some guards left to rush to protect any inhabitant of the tower. The DM should feel free to raise (or lower) the number of available men-at-arms and archers as need be.

The warriors of the Twisted Tower have seen a number of decisive battles, and are tougher than most guards and soldiers. The men-at-arms are all 2nd-level fighters (with a few 3rd-level ones). The archers are all 1st level, but have specialized in bow weapons. In times of emergency, every member of the tower staff from Mourngrym on down contributes to the fight, such that chambermaids will load ballistae and the butler will lead charges and rally troops.

Men-at-Arms (50 2nd-Level Fighters): Int Average; AL Varies, but usually NG; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 2; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg l-8 (sword); SA None; SD None; SZ M; ML 14.

Men-at-Arms (10 3rd-Level Fighters): Int Average; AL Varies, but usually NG; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 3; hp 20 each; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8 (sword); SA None; SD None; SZ M; ML 14.

Archers (30): Int Average; AL Varies, but usually LG; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 1-6(+2) (bow); SA Weapon specialization: short bow; SD None; SZ M; ML 13.

The guardsmen of the Twisted Tower are not adventurers by nature—they would prefer to leave to others the life of breaking into long-dead tombs and looting. They are no less valiant for this attitude, as their abilities attest. In their case, the trouble has come to them as opposed to them looking for it, and they have acquitted themselves well in these matters.

The Twisted Tower

The oldest and most prominent building in Shadowdale, the Twisted Tower is the traditional home and seat of power of the lord and lady of Shadowdale, who are, at the present time, Lord Mourngrym and Lady Shaerl Rowanmantle. It was originally built by the drow over a millennium ago, though it has been continually rebuilt, and and has been retrofitted for its present occupants.

The history of the Twisted Tower is the history of the Dale itself and its lords, and is covered in the "History of Shadowdale" chapter of this book. The Twisted Tower takes its name from its off-balance appearing main tower, which is used as a landing platform for flying steeds.

The Key to the Twisted Tower covers this historic Realms monument. The DM may feel free to move around individuals and rooms and to use the Tower as a model for other castles which the PCs may discover and take possession of.

In addition to the keyed areas, the castle has four turreted towers, one at each of its four corners. There towers reach the third level of the castle complex, and consist of nothing more than a spiral staircase running the entire length to a top floor reached by a lockable trap door. These are used as regular duty posts for the guards. The smaller towers are accessed from the ground floor—areas 2 (the forecourt), 27 (storeroom), 7 (scullery) and 8 (pantry). The staircase in the southwestern tower continues belowground, exiting at area 14 on the Twisted Tower of Ashaba (The Dungeon Level) Map.

The Tower cannot be magically seen into (scried), but can be teleported into and out of.

Key to The Twisted Tower

These entries cover the rooms found on the Twisted Tower of Ashaba (Aboveground Levels) Map.

1. Grand Entry Hall: Wood-paneled and hung with tapestries, this high-ceilinged hall is lit by torches and guarded at the front door by two men-at-arms in times of peace, eight when the alarm has been sounded.

2. Forecourt: This high-ceilinged (120') room is empty except for a few sturdy chairs and tables. Here the gear of guests can be unpacked under cover from rain, extra guards can wait, visitors wait to get into area 3, parties from area 5 can spill over into this area, or the doors to area 3 can be opened to allow larger audiences for important matters. This

room extends up into the second story; a balcony there (area 39) can also serve as an archer's gallery. It is here the archers report to if called into battle.

3. Lord's Court/Audience Chamber: This chamber is full of long wooden seats facing a dais upon which stand the high seats of the lord and lady. Here the lord holds court and receives distinguished visitors.

4. The Room of the Well: A secondary guard post at times, this ornate room contains the wellhead of the Tower's drinking water. The lord can meet visitors here informally, and during feasts the room serves as an entry chamber, and later, a retiring lounge. The well is covered by a large stone lid which pivots easily on well-oiled hinges to allow water to be drawn.

5. Feast Hall: This huge chamber is dominated by a grand hammerbeam (a rich, strong, dark wood) ceiling and long rows of massive, smooth-polished wooden tables. Here the folk of the Tower eat and much of the daily life of the Tower goes on. Decorated with tapestries, arms and armor (much of it battle trophies), the hall has several hearths for warmth.

6. Kitchen: The kitchen for the tower is a warm, crammed room dominated by the hearth (which is guarded by an iron grate), butcher-block tables, and overhead beam hooks for hanging food and cookware. It is here that Lalym, the master cook, can usually be found.

7. Scullery: Here the meat is cut, and the food scraps and refuse collected. The floor slopes to drain out under the Tower's back door. It is here that all the washing up is done, and the everyday diningware is stored.

8. Pantry: Here are row after row of shelves, mesh bags and sacks hanging from hooks and pegs, and barrel upon barrel crammed into this passage. Together they contain enough food to feed the folk of the Tower for a winter. The smell of salted fish and old cheese mingled together dominates this room, whose keys are kept by Lalym, Shaerl, and Mourngrym. A stone upon which. a *continual light* has been cast rests on a shelf near the entrance and is used to guide those seeking supplies in this long, dark storage room. In the southeast comer of the room is a loose paving stone, beneath which is a spare key to the chest in area 11. A secret panel in the southwest corner leads to the wine cellar (area 9). Most of the court staff know of this secret panel.

9. Wine Cellar: A secret panel in the southwest corner of area 8 gives entry into a room filled with many casks of wine stacked in a rack on their sides. Three large casks fill the bottom row; the centermost one is hollow, and its front can be swung open to allow passage {by crawling through it) into area 10, beyond.

10. Closet of Cordwood: This room is reached by a secret door from area 5 or through the swinging rear of the false wine cask in area 9. In it is a store of emergency firewood that has been cut and shaped for easy assembly into sloped, spiked barricades to enable defenders to hold the doorways of the feast hall against attack. The existence of this room and the northern and eastern secret doors are known to the court staff, the Knights of Myth Drannor, and the lord and lady. Only the Knights, Mourngrym and Shaerl know of the secret door to the west (to area 11).

11. Emergency Cache: In this chamber is a chamberpot, a blanket, a large sealed ewer of drinking water, a tinderbox, a hooded lamp, a long sword, two daggers, and a locked wooden chest. Mourngrym and the Knights all have keys to this chest, and one is hidden beneath a loose flagstone in the southeast corner of area 8. In the chest is a *ring of free action,* a *rod of smiting* (17 charges), a *cloak of the bat,* a *robe of useful items,* 60 feet of waxed, black-dyed rope, and six *potions of healing* in sealed steel vials. Hanging on a hook near the ceiling of the chamber, hidden in cobwebs, is a *ring of spell turning.* This cache is to be used in the event the castle is overrun, so that the finder may fight his or her way clear and escape.

12. Stairs: These stairs are *very* steep, and lead to the dungeon level of the complex. There are always a pair of men-at-arms at the top and bottom, as well as gongs to sound the alarm if something comes out of the depths.

13. Ladies' Antechamber: This room contains a number of jakes (toilets) curtained off for privacy with hangings, a number of hanging lamps, and a long table with sitting stools and a full-length floor-glass (a cheval glass) for arranging one's appearance during feasts and dances. Large wash basins are available with clean, warm water.

14. Men's Antechamber: This antechamber is the same as area 13, only it is for the use of males. The hangings are more masculine in appearance, but the furnishings are identical.

15. Secret Passage: A secret panel in the men's antechamber leads to this darkened hall that exits into area 1 by a one-way secret door. It is customarily used by the lord and other menfolk of the Tower to slip out of functions which have become boring or to attend other rendezvous.

16. Spyhole Chamber: This room allows a guard to cover guests in the feast hall with a crossbow or a secret observer to eavesdrop on a supposedly private meeting. Its existence is well-known to all the folk of the Tower. A ribbon stretched across its secret door and tacked on with wax tells guards as they patrol if anyone has entered it.

17. Secret Chamber: Here spare loaded crossbows, daggers, and torches are stored on wall racks.

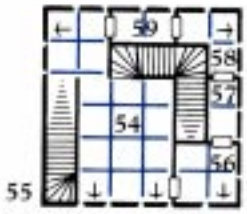
18. The Back Hall: Most of the grand dishes at a high feast are brought into the feast hall from this passage. The useful flow of kitchen servants is through area 6, instead.

19. Stairs to the Second Floor: The radiance of a *continual light* spell illuminates this stairway, the only public way to the upper levels of the Tower. Two guards are posted at both the

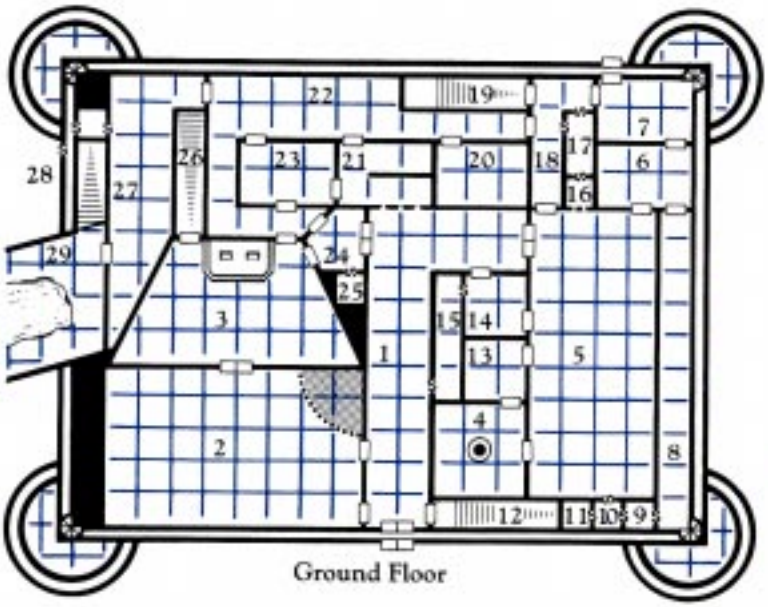
The Twisted Tower of Ashaba

(Aboveground Levels)

Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Ground Floor

One Square = 10 Feet

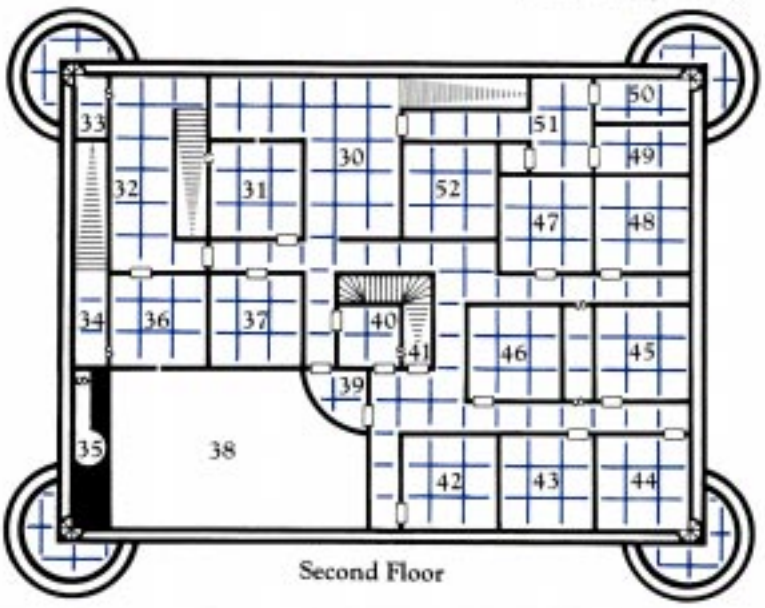
Fifth Floor

Sixth Floor

Seventh Floor

71-

Eighth Floor
(Observation Level)



Second Floor

top and bottom of this stair at all times, and pages are stationed here too when the lord has distinguished visitors to aid the infirm or long-gowned in ascending or descending the stairs.

20. Duty Room: Here linens are stored, and servants who are on ready duty wait for bell or gong signals. Servants may also change, bathe, or sleep here (or slip away for quiet games of chance among themselves).

21. Guards' Ready Room (the Watch Room): Here guards coming on or off duty store and ready their gear, and the guard's captain takes his ease between rounds. An inner partition separates the everyday part of the room from the firing-port area, where crossbows are kept ready on racks and a large mechanical triple crossbow mounted on a swivel is kept loaded. Ordinarily pointed at the ceiling, this fearsome weapon can be lowered by means of a pull cord and fired through the ports directly down the grand entry hall. Its shafts do triple normal heavy crossbow damage (3d4+3/3d6+3) each. Normally six men-at-arms are found here.

22. Servants' Common Room: Here the servants live and dine. Old, sturdy furniture retired from other duty in the Tower crowds this room, which is always hung with drying aprons and uniforms that dangle from lines which crisscross the room from torch bracket to torch bracket. It is a comfortable, cheery place.

23. Guards' Quarters: This is a rather Spartan guardroom lined with triple-tiered bunk beds and crowded with arms chests used as tables. Weapons are always ready in this room, and here the guards sleep, oil and sharpen their weapons, and gamble stiff sums back and forth. About a dozen guards will be found here at any time.

24. Chamber-of-State (Guards' Court): This court is a dark, wood-paneled, tapestry-hung room where a detachment of four duty guards are always waiting to reinforce other guard posts as needed or to run to their lord's bidding. A secret panel to the south leads to the armory.

25. Armory: This closet is lined with racks containing all manner of polearms and is largely filled with a gift from Elminster: a magically animated suit of armor known as a helmed horror, which will attack as Mourngrym, Elminster, or Lhaeo, or Shaerl directs. It is build to respond only to the commands of those four. The helmed horror is activated if the tower, is under direct threat. It is armed with a *bastard sword +1.*

Helmed Horror (1): Int High; AL N; AC 2; MV 12, Fl 12 (A); HD 13; hp 54; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+1/2d8+1 *(bastard sword +1)* or 1-4; SA None; SD Immune to *fireball, heat metal,* and *lightning bolt;* immune to mental control or influence and illusions; *magic missiles* heal it of damage; SZ L; ML Fearless and unbreakable; XP 2,000.

26. Lord's Stair: This private stairway leads from area 3 to area 32. Part of the way up it, a secret door fitted with a spyhole (the spyhole is concealed in a relief carving on the other side) opens into area 31. Through this, a lord (or other inhabitant of the Tower who knows of the spyhole) could spy upon (or communicate or enspell) a guest who was lodged in area 31.

27. Storeroom: In this room are kept goods held in the Tower for later loading into boats to go elsewhere and goods brought in by boat that haven't yet been dispersed into their customary storage places around the Tower. It may vary from being filled with supplies to being empty. Its sole permanent occupant is Tohsgnol, a lazy, black-and-white cat who rarely seeks out the field mice that infiltrate the room.

28. Secret Stairs: This hidden staircase connects a secret room on the second floor (area 34) with the outside and with area 27. Traditionally, this was the lord's secret way in and out. Once, long ago, it led on down to the dungeon level in the northwestern comer of the Tower (now filled in with rubble) by means of a circular staircase descending from this landing. This route lasted until things from the depths started using it to get up into the Tower. Now weeks of digging would be required to reach the dungeons. Mourngrym keeps an old cloak and a spare sword here, and has the only keys to these two locked secret doors.

29. Boathouse: A crowded, low-beamed shed built of wood, this ramshackle structure is used to load and unload barges heading to and from Mistledale. It also provides a handy escape route for those seeking to flee the tower without saying good-bye. Ropes, boards, mallets, and nails to spare can be found here, as well as tar, paint, canvas, wax, and a thousand other useful things. A single guard is usually stationed here.

30. Parlor: This luxuriously furnished chamber provides lounging space for all who live in the Tower or who are visiting. Its westernmost arm always contains two watchful guards (they command a spyhole into area 31, if they desire), and it usually contains Bracegar, the tower butler, or a footman, ready to assist or to serve the drinkables kept ready here.

31. Grand Guest Bedroom (the Murder Room): Most opulently furnished of the apartments of the Tower, this room is also usually vacant. Reserved for the most noble guests, it boasts a magnificent canopied bed, a private bathtub, and so on—and is a place designed for easy spying on the guest within. More than one lord of Shadowdale, history whispers, has used its secret door to murder or spend the night with an occupant.

32. Lord's Chamber: This chamber is the opulent lounge, office, and sitting room of the lord of Shadowdale, furnished with sofas, paintings, carvings, a desk, a large dining table for private meals or meetings, and similar items of the well-to-do noble lord and his lady.

33. The Lord's Wardrobe: This is a walk-in clothes clos-

The Haul of Heroes

The amount, type and protection of the treasure found in the Twisted Tower is up to the DM. The DM may choose one of the below options, or ignore them all and make original preparations. All of this does not negate the fact that Mourngrym, Shaerl, and Turnal have enough walking around money to handle regular expenditures and castle upkeep (as well as decent parties). This represents the hidden cache within the castle.

Poor as Churchmouse: Mourngrym is a very wise and benevolent lord, and pours the bulk of the taxes and monies he gathers back into the community, both for protection and expansion, keeping a minimum amount on hand. As a result, there is not a lot in the lord's cache. The adventurers will find five locked chests, each chest containing 1,000 platinum pieces. Mourngrym and his seneschal, Turnal Rhestayn, hold the keys.

It's Good to Be Lord: Mourngrym and Shaerl were adventurers before they settled down and retain much of the wealth they gathered then. Double the number of chests to 10 (each containing 1,000 platinum pieces), and add five chests of 20-gp trade bars (500 trade bars each). In addition, there are five art objects and a miscellaneous magic item, such as a *carpet of flying* or a *figurine of wondrous power.* The chests are locked (Mourngrym and Shaerl have the keys) and the room is protected by a glyph which silently tells Mourngrym, Shaerl, Turnal, and Thurbal, the captain-of-arms, that individuals are within.

The Grand Haul: Mourngrym has not only his own riches, but uses his cache to hold the loot of the Knights of Myth Drannor. In addition, he is squirreling away a good chunk of his taxes through modest living and investment. There are 10 metal chests full of 1,000 platinum pieces each, 10 metal chests of 20-gp trade bars (500 each), and five large, sealed urns, each urn containing 50 assorted jewels. There are 10 cabinets along the wall, each cabinet made of *glassteel,* and each containing 10 art objects and five magical items, one of which will be cursed. The silent alarm *glyph* that contacts Mourngrym, Shaerl, Turnal, Thurbal, and Elminster is in operation. In addition, every urn, chest, and cabinet is trapped (explosive runes, contact poison, poison gas, poison needles, hidden knives, curses, and magically teleporting in a random monster ail are possibilities).

Far and Away: Nothing is in the room except a silver circle inscribed on the floor. Stepping into it and speaking a magic phrase whisks all those within the circle to a similar circle deep beneath the earth in a sealed cavern. Any of the above treasures may be found there, along with a magical guardian (such as an iron golem) which recognizes Mourngrym, Shaerl, the Knights, and Elminster. Speaking a different phrase brings one back. Mourngrym, Shaerl, and Elminster know both phrases. Thurbal and Turnal know only the one to send.

It's All a Sham: There is nothing in this room; the treasure of the Twisted Tower is hidden elsewhere. A few empty chests or a nonmagical circle of silver will be found. It is up to the DM to determine where the loot is hidden.

et that is illuminated by a *continual light* rock and crammed with clothes, boots, cloaks, swords, and costumes. Mourngrym keeps a couple of disguises in here (Shaerl has made him a beautiful gown, just his size), as well as Shaerl's professional (thieving) gear.

34. The Hidden Chamber: This secret room is connected by stairs to area 28, which has access to the outside and the level below. The room offers the lord an escape route. Mourngrym keeps a *long sword* +2 hanging here and a little box containing 6 gp, 4 pp, a bloodstone worth 50 gp, an opal worth 2,000 gp, and a *ring of invisibility.*

35. Treasure Cache: This hidden room contains whatever riches the DM desires the lord to have (with whatever guardian traps or creatures deemed appropriate). For examples, see the sidebar.

36. Lord and Lady's Bedroom: This large room is comfortably furnished with a canopied bed of great size and a private bathtub. It also features a spyhole allowing the lord to see and hear what is going on in area 2, below. This spyhole comes with a cork plug and cloth flap to stop telltale sounds and light when the lord does not wish to use it.

37. The Daughter's Room: This bedroom gained its name from a time when a long-ago lord had only one heir—a daughter. It is currently the second-best guest bedroom, a cheerfully furnished place.

38. An Empty Space: This space is the upper part of area 2, the high-ceilinged forecourt. Long brass poles, fitted with pulleys and cords and hung from the ceiling here permit banners to be hung from area 39. On more than one occasion in the past, grisly trophies of the hunt have been hung from these poles down into the forecourt. An intrepid knave can swiftly descend from area 39 safely to area 2 by means of these pulley-cords, but the guards usually stationed in area 39 discourage such activities.

39. Minstrels' Gallery: This ornate, tapestried balcony is usually called simply "the balcony," and is used either by guests watching new arrivals or by two guards armed with crossbows (and also watching those below). A long brass trumpet (suitable for blowing fanfares and warnings) hangs on the wall here.

40. The Bower: This cushioned, curtain-hung courting chamber is faintly lit by the pale red radiance of a permanent *faerie fire* spell and gently scented with herbs and flowers (in summer) and incense (in winter). It is a cozy chamber, usable by anyone and made use of by many. A secret door leads to area 41.

41. The Stairs Aloft: This stairway leads up from the main living floors of the Tower to its more military upper levels (traditionally known as "aloft" because of the Tower's off-center spire).

42. Bedroom: Formerly used by Jelde Asturien of the Knights, this room is currently home to Aseel, chatelaine of the Tower.

43. Bedroom: This room is formerly that of Islif Lurelake (before her marriage to Doust Sulwood, the then-lord of

Shadowdale), and is now shared by Sammeth (cellarer), Bracegar (butler), and whoever is newest to the Tower staff (whom they train and watch for a time).

44. Bedroom: Since first decreed so by Sylune (lady of Shadowdale in the time of Lord Aumry), this room has always been reserved for the sage Elminster (and Lhaeo, or any current apprentice), whether he chooses to use it or not. Mourngrym maintains the decree, but has put up other individuals in it.

45. Bedroom: Formerly that of Lanseril Snowmantle of the Knights, this chamber is currently used by Lalym, Sedros, Massim, and Purk (the four male cooks—Purk having graduated from kitchen-boy status). At least one cook is always on duty at any given time down in the kitchen.

46. Bedroom: Formerly home to Florin Falconhand of the Knights, this room is currently occupied by the herald Essen, and the pages Samal and Heth.

47. Bedroom: Once home to Merith Strongbow of the Knights, this room now serves as a guards' bunkroom.

48. Bedroom: Once home to Jhessail Silvertree of the Knights, this room is shared by the constables and more of the Tower guards. It has a fireplace in the northeast corner.

49. Bedroom: This room is usually home to the serving girls.

50. Bedroom: This room is used by the chambermaids.

51. Maids' Common Room: In this room, clothing is constantly being made, altered, or repaired. The maid's jakes are to the southeast.

52. Bedroom: This bedchamber is home to the seneschal, Turnal Rhestayn, and Thurbal, now captain-of-arms. There are beds for both here, but the two are never both asleep at the same time; if one is sleeping, the other is on duty.

53. Guardroom/Conference Room: Customarily Thurbal's office and Mourngrym's place to hold private and confidential discussions, this room becomes the center of the Tower's defense if the Dale is under attack.

54. Defense Level: This floor is the center of long-range castle defenses. A trio of ballistae are set up in this area. All rooms on this level are of bare stone with stone doors (to keep fire damage to a minimum in the event of fireball attacks), and contain firing ports that can be shuttered from within for safety or winter warmth.

55. Stairs to the Fifth Floor.

56. South Guardroom: Known as the sun room to the guards (and a favored post for a two-man patrol). Holds a single ballista.

57. Shooting Gallery: This chamber overlooks the Tower meadow, also called the common.

58. Guard Post: This room contains a ballista, identical to all others in the Tower's arsenal.

59. Shooting Gallery: The guards call this room the cold gallery, due to its northern location and the cold winter winds that find it.

60. Guard Room: A half-dozen guards on duty in the aloft section of the tower usually use this area as their base.

61. Stairs to Sixth Floor.

62. Pen: In small cages in this pen are kept a few live birds destined for the Tower pots (such as pheasants and pigeons) and a few messenger-pigeons. This pen has a full, heavy-duty barred gate like the others (63-65), and can be used for larger aerial steeds.

63. Pen: Home to a hippogriff.

64. Pen: Home to another hippogriff.

65. Pen: Home to another hippogriff.

Hippogriffs (3): Int Semi-; AL N; AC 5; MV 18, Fl 36 (C, D); HD 3+3; hp 23, 21, 18; THAC0 16; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-10; SA None; SD None; SZ L; ML 9; XP 175 each.

66. Flight Deck: This large landing deck that gives the Twisted Tower its name is guarded by a ballista (behind a parapet). Hooked to the parapet is a wooden frame that can be raised and attached to chains on the rear wall of the deck to create a row of menacing stakes facing any creature trying to ram or charge at the larger door leading from the deck into the Tower proper.

67. Shrine to Tempus: A larger shrine to the war god has been established out near Tower Farm, and Mourngrym is considering using this space for other purposes. The men-at-arms are uneasy with the idea of this shrine being removed, given that Shadowdale has been fortuitously victorious in its battles with it present in the tower.

68. Stair to the Seventh Floor.

69. Meditation Area: The meditation area is tastefully furnished with a bedding mat and quilt, a chamber pot, and a clay jug of water.

Ballistae

Ballistae in the Dragon Reach area are made of wood and are no more than huge crossbows mounted on swivels and cocked by use of a windlass. They fire spear-like metal shafts (or even normal polearms, in a pinch) to a maximum distance of 320 yards, inflicting 2-12 points of damage to man-sized and smaller targets, and 3-18 points of damage to larger creatures. A ballista can fire once every other round when crewed by two people; its rate of fire falls to every fourth round if one person loads, aims, and winches it. The ballistae in the Twisted Tower are too heavy to carry and use unaided, and cannot readily fit through the doorways and passages of the Tower if removed from their mounts.

70. Ladder (Wall Rungs) to Eighth Floor: This ladder leads to a barred trapdoor hung with an alarm gong.

71. Tower Roof: This area is an open platform surrounded by a low parapet and surmounted by a flagstaff. This area is used occasionally as an observation deck.

The Dungeon Level of The Twisted Tower

This level of the Tower is very old, as it was built long ago by the drow of the depths. Area 1 is noticeably more recent than the rest; the exposed, irregular faces of its rocky walls are brighter and less dusty than everywhere else. This level is reached by a very steep flight of stone steps from the ground floor, which drop over 80 feet in about 35 feet of run.

1. Blast Cavern: This large cavern (caused by a recent explosion) contains six guards playing thabort and other games of chance at a table. Behind them are stacked crates of bottled beer, barrels of pickled fish, and other foodstuffs sufficient to see the tower through the coldest winter or the most resolute siege. The area is lit by a *continual light,* but there are also torches thrust into holes carved in the rock wall: two of the six torches are lit.

2. Cellarer's Stores: In this room, several large beer casks stand on end against the east wall. Atop one is a pile of slates. Atop another are some lumps of chalk, an oiled wooden box containing needles, and a small chest containing four balls of waxed thread wound around sticks. The third barrel holds a tinderbox and an iron cage-lamp. On the floor beside it is a stoppered earthen jar. If the wax seal is broken and the cork removed, flammable lamp oil will be revealed.

Thabort

Thabort (THAH-bort) is a dice game using two six-sided dice that is popular in the Dragon Reach area. The dice-caster and his or her companions all ante in a few coins (usually a few coppers). The dice-caster then has six throws of the dice to roll every number from one to six (the dice are counted individually, not added together). Should the dice-caster do so, she or he collects half the pot.

The other players bet on how many rolls the caster will take to make a "spread" (get all 1-6), and declare the number of rolls after the second roll. The individual or individuals who succeed in divining how many rolls it takes divide the other half of the pot.

If the caster makes all six rolls without gaining the spread, the pot is carried over into the next roll. A new caster is chosen, and all players ante in again.

The game continues until most of the players decide they have lost enough money or other activities gain their attention. It is a favorite game with those who have a lot of time on their hands, like guards.

3. Wine Cellar: Many huge barrels (rolled into place by two people, and hauled up the stairs by six people with rope cradles—no less will do) are crammed into this unlighted chamber.

4. Storage: Old furniture, much of it in disrepair, is stored here. Chairs are stacked seat-to-seat, tables stacked three high, and iron lamp-standards lean in an untidy bundle against the wall.

5. Lighted Steps: A *continual light* radiance has been cast on this rising curve of worn stone steps. A niche in the wall contains an unlighted torch, a full, unlighted oil lamp, and a tinderbox.

6. Dungeon—Southern Cells: At the eastern steps is a guardstool, with a chamber pot and a tall copper water flask beside it. Seven unlighted torches hang in brackets around this chamber, which is covered by a row of firing-ports cut long ago by the drow (to defend the entrance to their tunnels). Fifteen dungeon cells (with stone walls and iron-bar front walls and doors) line the south wall of the corridor.

7. Rubble Chamber: This chamber is choked with stone rubble, the remains of an earlier battle in the depths. Rather than remove the rubble, Mourngrym plans to eventually wall this section fully shut. This area contains firing-ports commanding the antechamber to the southern dungeon cells at area 6. However, the rubble blocks their use.

8. Intersection: This intersection is empty save for some stone rubble half-heartedly moved here from area 7.

9. Private Library: The keys to this chamber are kept by Elminster, Lhaeo, and Mourngrym The doors are guarded by the DM's choice of *glyphs* and *symbols;* if they are forced, a spell set by Elminster will cause the bookshelves in the room, the easy chair and table there, and the rug beneath them all to vanish into the Ethereal Plane (temporarily), leaving only a smudged chalk circle (from a long-ago summoning) on the floor in the room.

10. Crypts of Lords of Shadowdale and Shrine to Sylune: A corridor lined with crypts containing the stone caskets of the past lords of Shadowdale leads to a chamber illuminated by a continual light radiance. The wide chamber at the end, once used as a torture room and before that as a drow temple is now a shrine to the memory of Sylune.

The shrine appears as a large stone casket, inscribed with the following dedication:

Lady Sylune
Witch of Shadowdale,
Wife of Lord Aumry,
Lived to protect the Dales
and perished in that manner;
Year of the Prince.

Sylune's remains are not within, but are rather laid with those of her husband in a crypt on Watcher's Knoll.

From time to time a *phantasmal force* image of Sylune (a kindly, smiling woman in a plain, silver-gray gown, beautiful, slim, and tall) will appear here, sitting calmly atop the casket or striding gracefully about. If intruders enter these depths, and reach as far as the corner outside area 9, Sylune's image will charge in terrifying silence down the corridor towards them, but will pursue no further than that same corner (consider the PCs as intruders). At this time, the image will glow silvery-blue. It will be unaffected by magic or attacks, but in turn has no effect on anything solid. The side tombs are all sealed. The Knights of Myth Drannor destroyed many undead here, and believed that they had "cleaned the place out."

11. Dungeon—North Cells: Fifteen dungeon cells with stone walls and iron-bar front walls and doors line the northern wall of the corridor.

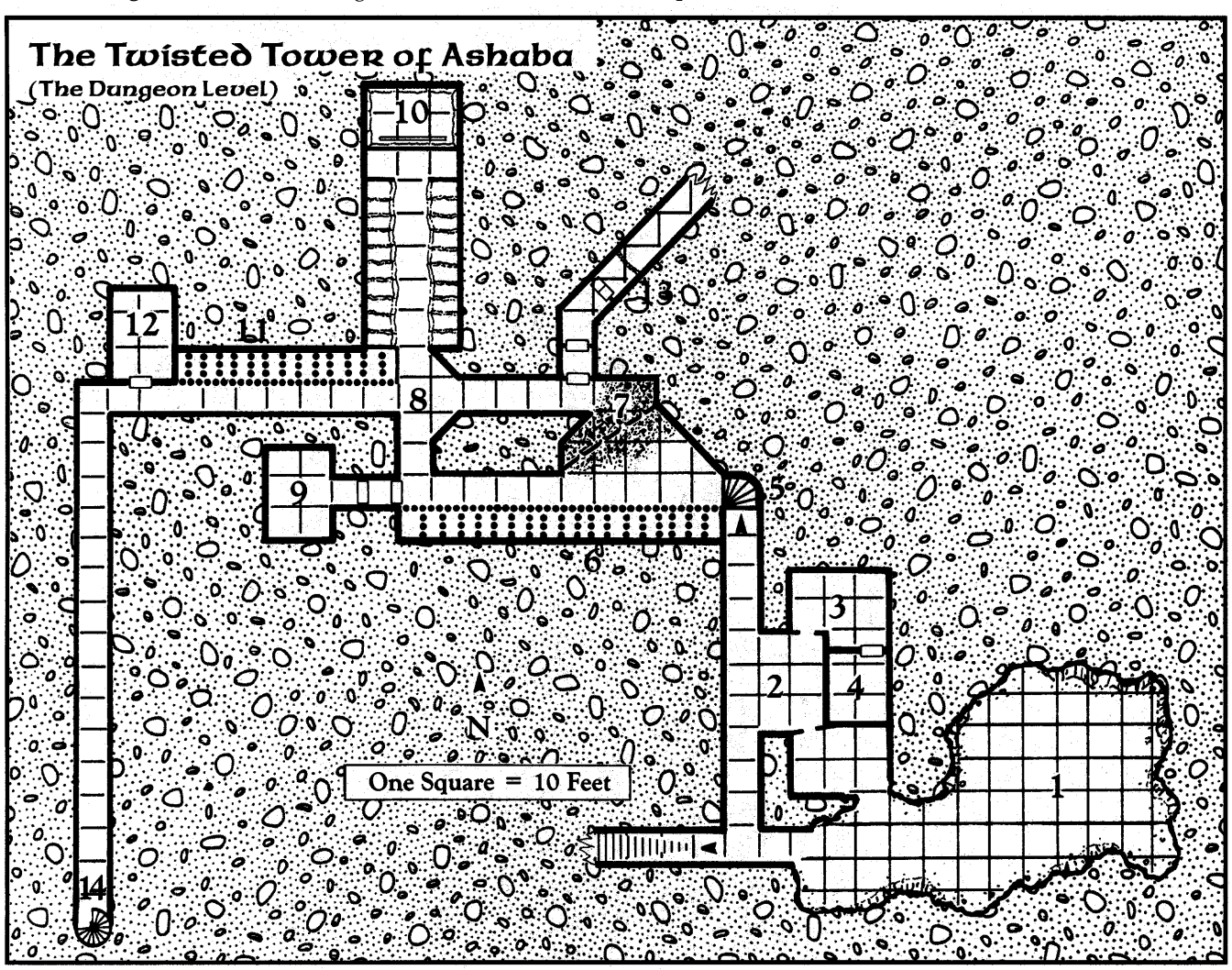
12. Underground Barracks: This guard room contains sufficient supplies and weapons to gather and stage a counter-attack in the event that something unpleasant comes out of the depths and threatens the Tower. Two guards are stationed here, and if there are prisoners in the north cells, another pair will be found here as well (four total).

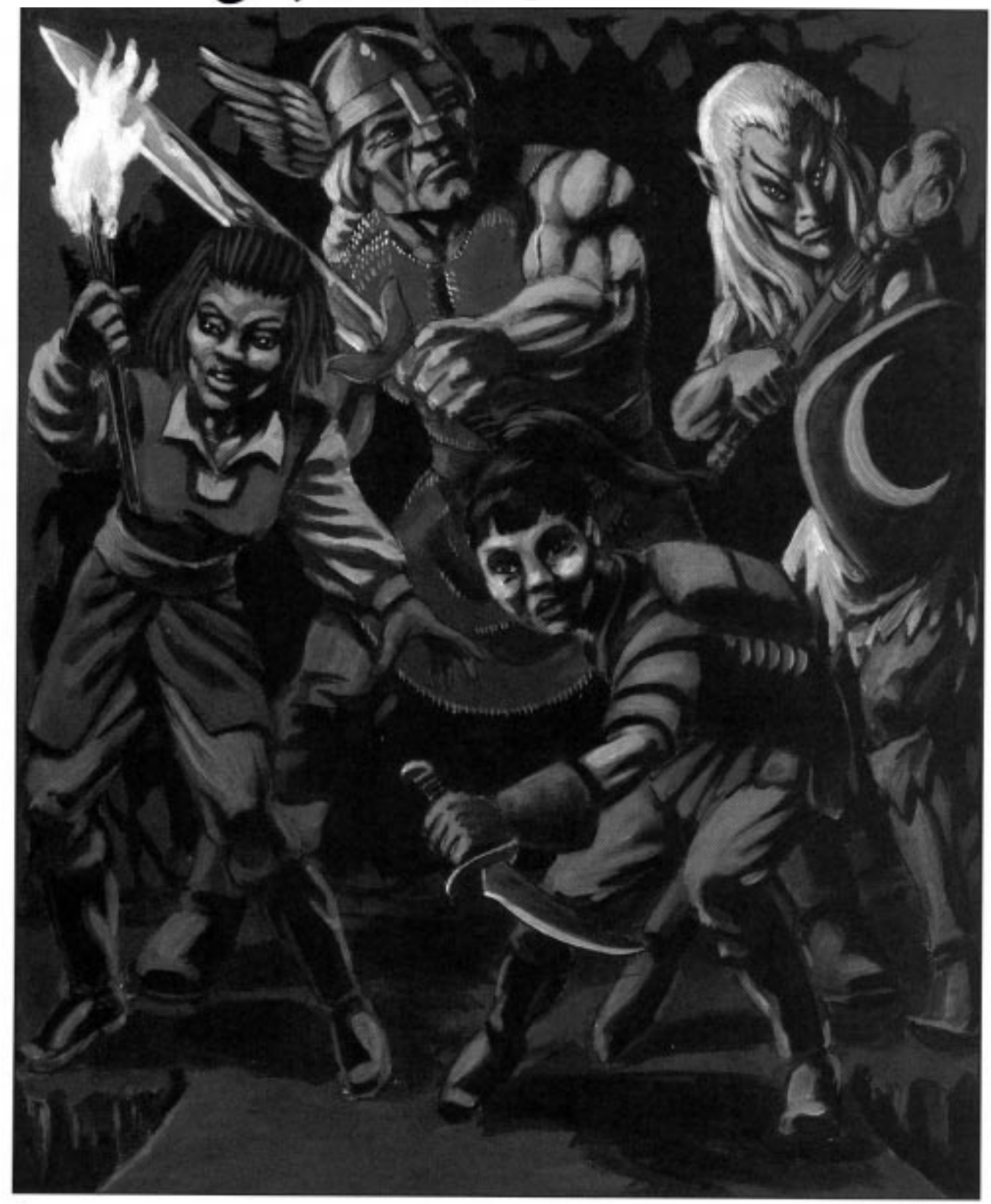
13. Dark Wood Defensive Doors: Here are a set of impressive doors carved of dark wood. They are unlocked and can be swung easily on their hinges. Cut into the doors is the following inscription in common: "Here of old humankind defeated the dark ones and drove them back under the earth. The drow built this place to defend their tunnels. If we do not watch, they will yet make it our tomb."

The doors are not locked, as the true entrance to the Underdark is found further down the hallway. They can be secured if danger does come up the hallway.

Beyond this stage is the Underdark found beneath the Old Skull. It is detailed fully in the next chapter.

14. Spiral Staircase to Southwestern Corner Turret.





Beneath The Twisted Tower

A door is a mystery, it is. Though most would think 'tis a mystery to find what lies on the other side, the fundamental question is always whether 'tis there to keep something out—or to hold something in.
—Elminster the Sage

Notes for The DM

Beneath the Twisted Tower is an adventure for parties of 1st-3rd level set in and under Shadowdale after the Time of Troubles. The subject of the adventure is the tunnels connecting to the Tower of Ashaba (otherwise known as the Twisted Tower) that are rumored to connect to the kingdom of the drow, who once occupied the Tower. The Tower itself is currently occupied by Mourngrym, Lord of Shadowdale, and his various retainers and servants. **The information that follows is for the use of the DM only.** The players will have to discover it one encounter at a time.

How The Adventure is Presented

This adventure is divided into numbered sections (1-10) and subsections. Each section or subsection contains encounters and NPCs relevant to the location of the PCs at that point in the adventure. If the PCs enter that location or seek out that NPC, the encounter takes place.

Any text which appears set off from the main text by being indented from both sides can be read aloud verbatim to the players or can be given to them in summary form or expanded upon as the DM ad libs character interactions or responses to player questions. All other information is formatted for the sole use of the DM, though much of it will become known to the players during the play of the adventure.

Getting Started

New characters may be generated for playing this adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, either by first-time players or individuals more experienced in the ways of the AD&D® game system. The "Setting Up a Campaign" chapter in *Running the Realms* deals with many of the challenges to first-time players and Dungeon Masters in the Realms.

This adventure assumes that the DM has access to the AD&D 2nd Edition game *Player's Handbook,* the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide,* and the first two volumes of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® or the new *Monstrous Manual.*

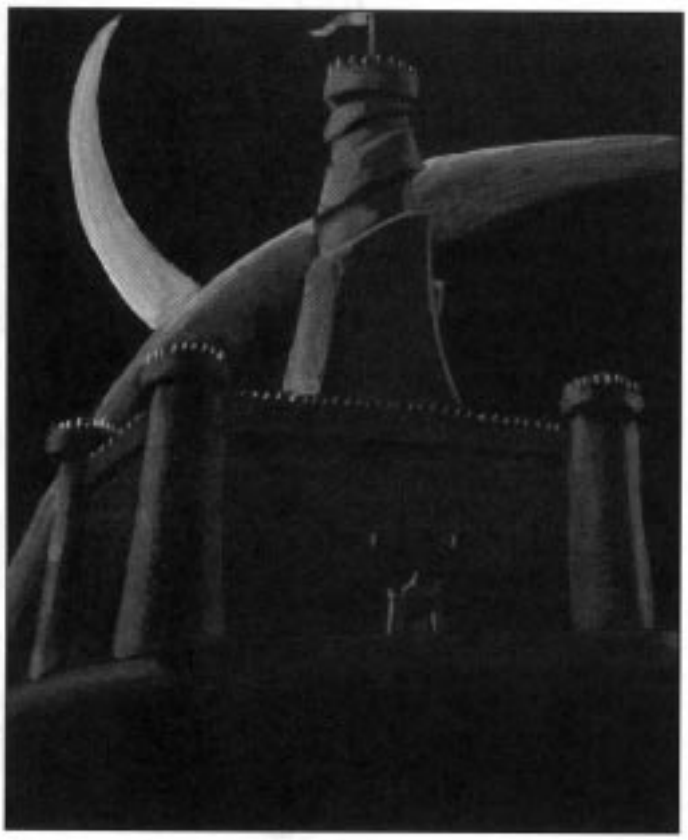
It is also useful to have on hand a large number of different-sided dice, blank sheets of paper, and pencils. Full details on how to play the AD&D game system are in the core books. Where information not available in those books is presented in this adventure, it is summarized either in the text, or in the case of new monsters, in the new MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM pages that are included within in this boxed set. Also, statistics and information on certain nonplayer char-

acters that appear in this adventure can be found in the *Running the Realms* book in this set.

Characters are generated for this adventure as for the AD&D® 2nd Edition game system without further modification. Characters may be natives of Shadowdale (the second sons and younger daughters of farmers whose holdings are to the north (off the map)) or they may be newcomers to the area, just leaving a merchant caravan (since departed) from Voonlar or Cormyr. A good place to hail from is Suzail, in Cormyr, a large city with a goodly number of adventurers. The player characters (also called PCs, adventurers, and heroes in this text) are considered to have equipped themselves as noted in the Player's Handbook. Once play starts, the player characters will have to rely on their own monetary resources and the vagaries of Weregund's stock.

For New Players

If *Beneath the Twisted Tower* is being played alone with first-time players in the Forgotten Realms, use this section to give the players a feeling for what the Realms and Shadowdale are all about. If the players are already familiar with the geography and history of Faerûn, you can skip ahead to the 1. Room for Rent, Rumors for Sale section.



Many regard Shadowdale as the heart of the Realms, even though it is neither the largest of the Realms' many cities nor a centrally located hub of commercial activity. The Realms are vast and varied, with many cultures and customs. But Shadowdale, though only a modest-sized village in the midst of the Heartlands of the Realms, is known to all. It is famous because of the great Battle of Shadowdale, when thousands of attacking Zhentilar were defeated by a true combination of cleverness and bravery. It is also known for an excellent inn. But most of all, Shadowdale is well-known because of its most famous resident, Elminster the Sage.

Though certainly not modest in his abilities, nor trifling in the services which he has performed in the history of Shadowdale and the Realms, Elminster leads a fairly solitary existence in a modest tower made of fieldstone across an open meadow from the Tower of Ashaba, an impressive stone fortress that is currently the seat of power of Lord Mourngrym, the ruler of Shadowdale. You have heard tales of the Tower of Ashaba, called by some the Twisted Tower because of the spiral aerial landing platforms around the main turret.

In addition to being unfamiliar with the people and places of the Realms, new players may also be unfamiliar with the odd magical effects which have existed in the Realms since the Time of Troubles. If so, the following can be used to explain these effects:

Magic itself seems twisted in these Realms. You have heard that in some places magic disappears into the void, with no effect at all resulting from its casting. Sometimes too, the magic runs wild, twisting to its own bizarre purposes and ends or backfiring upon the caster without reason or warning. There are surprises aplenty in an adventurer's life, without the laws of magic themselves perverting the intent of the caster who called the magic forth.

Some say that there is only one constant in life and that is that death waits for all—the fighter and the maiden, the powerful and the timid, the thief and the king. An adventurer does not wait for death, but rather seeks life in adventure. It has been said that true adventure can be found in the modest village of Shadowdale and the surrounding Dales.

1. Room for Rent, Rumors for Sale

The the events of this section begin whenever the player characters arrive in Shadowdale. The section is set up to allow the player characters to discover their quest to determine what lies in the tunnels beneath the Twisted Tower. While this section is not meant as an exhaustive compendium of the places and people of Shadowdale, it is organized by location and covers the most likely places new adventurers are prone to visit when they arrive in town. In addition, the non-player character (that is, DM-run) Llewellyn the Loud should be appear in one of the locations visited by the PCs in order to allow them an opportunity to obtain the information he has for sale.

The best place to start characters is outside the Old Skull inn, newly arrived to town, at the crossroads. This way they have the option of visiting the inn's taproom, checking the message post, or wandering off in an odd direction (and immediately into the waiting arms of Llewellyn the Loud).

Old Skull Inn

The Old Skull inn lies on the main road through Shadowdale, near the base of the Old Skull, a granite crag covered with lichen and tufts of hardy grass that constitutes one of the few topographic features of note near the town. The Old Skull is so called because of the visage its bare and pitted surface seems to have on bright, moonlit nights, but there are some who claim the name has nothing to do with appearance, but with an ancient legend of stone dragons who once visited the Dale. In any event, nothing mysterious has happened on the Old Skull for a very long time, but it made a fine landmark for an inn to establish itself nearby.

The inn is a three-story stone and timber structure with 29 separate and somewhat unusually decorated rooms for travelers and the usual kitchen, pantry, storage rooms, and taproom. Stables are behind and to the northeast of the inn in a separate structure.

Adventurers can obtain food and lodging of above-average quality, at only slightly above-average prices at the inn. The staff is courteous (without being unctuous), hard-working, and honest. A number of other guests are staying at the inn, and they and a few locals can be found at the taproom during evening hours or mealtimes.

> The taproom of the Old Skull inn is alive with the bustle of a thriving business. The innkeeper, Jhaele Silvermane, a motherly woman with graying hair, and her waiter, Turko Breem, are kept busy serving food and refilling mugs.
>
> A quartet of men wearing tunics bearing the arms of Mourngrym, the local lord, share beers and stories in one comer. In another, two stem-looking shepherds are talking to an equally stem-faced merchant. At a booth table a pretty young woman is listening intently to a young man in a smith's smock.
>
> At the central table is another apparent merchant, nervously fingering his purse and watching the young couple. A pair of men in hunting leathers are a few tables over, talking in low tones. Lastly, a trio of strangers dressed in the robes of the desert are at a side table, toasting each other with glasses of clear liquid and talking in excited, heavily accented tones.

The locals include several off-duty men-at-arms of Lord Mourngrym (Fessel, Bork, Nat, and Berkley) relaxing after their regular patrol around the village perimeter, two shepherds (Thymen and Kartula) talking business with a traveling wool merchant, and an apprentice smith (Flakil), who is entertaining Tala, one of the chambermaids from the Tower of Ashaba.

Travelers include the wool merchant, Pfinster, of the sea-trading city of Calimport, three nomads (Kazeel, Saurunal, and Finon) of Anauroch, the Great Desert to the northwest of the Dale, an amber trader (Blivin) from east of Thay, near the Lake of Mists, and Quoin and Biggs, two hunters (actually thieves) commiserating with one another about the lack of success on their latest hunt (but actually keeping an eye open for easy prey—their horses are loosely tethered just outside near the front entrance).

Depending on with whom and how they interact, the PCs may find out the following information:

Fessel, Bork, Nat, and Berkley: Good-natured and festive, but by no means drunk or disorderly, these men-at-arms (LG hm F2; 12 hit points each, AC 7, armed with swords) guardedly answer any direct questions about their duties or the Tower of Ashaba and will report any suspicious prying to their superiors when they report for duty at midmorning the next day. They do, however, let it be known that they are on the lookout for any cattle drivers who may stop by town, as they came across a 20-foot-wide path of trampled destruction across farmers Vernon Hillstar's and Silas Standard's fields during their rounds on the north side of the Old Skull. The damage, which they believe was caused by driven cattle or wild horses, was significant, and Vernon and a few of the other farmers have complained that patrols should be increased during those months when cattle drivers sometimes pass through the Dale. The men did not attempt to follow the

trail of destruction as it did not appear newly made and obviously extended for some considerable length, but they expect that Sergeant Yothgdim may send out a long-range reconnaissance patrol to find the perpetrators and assess damages.

Thymen and Kartula: Sturdy and hard-working, these men (0-level humans, AC 10, 6 hp) are pressing hard for a high guaranteed price for the next quarterly shearing of their flock. Their negotiations are neither clever nor subtle, but they ring honest in their descriptions of the risks and dangers of proper shepherding. Thymen, the obvious leader of the two, emphasizes the quality of the wool of the Dale's sheep and the care that is taken to keep the flock from straying into brambles and thorn bushes, where the wool can be damaged or made more difficult to work. Kartula single-mindedly focuses on the dangers of protecting the flock from wolves, bears, poachers, and other predators, telling how a friend of his once lost his entire flock to a pack of wolves one moonless night.

Pfinster: A shrewd but honest trader, Pfinster (0-level human, AC 9, 5 hp) has heard it all before, but feigns a genuine interest in the discussions of wool quality and predators because he knows that paying attention to the herdsmen will make them more likely to do business with him. He also badly wants to secure as much of the next shearing as practical at a reasonable price, as flocks to north have been severely beset by predators of late and he foresees rising prices for quality wool. Pfinster does not, of course, reveal his concerns in front of Thymen and Kartula, but will do so if he is paid for his information by the PCs.

Tala: A simple peasant girl of fair looks who has secured a job in the Tower of Ashaba as a chambermaid, Tala (0-level human, AC 10, 4 hp) is very pleased by the attention she is receiving from Flakil, an apprentice smith. Tala brushes off attempts to direct her attention elsewhere or to take up a conversation with the PCs, but participates in the event that Flakil engages in conversation with the PCs, just to make sure he does not ignore her. Tala lives in the servants' area in the Tower and spends most of her time cleaning guest quarters and helping with the peeling and slicing in the kitchen. She has never been in either the main turret or in the lower reaches under the Tower, but has been severely cautioned not to wander about in the lower levels because of ancient dangers and traps. She has asked Flakil about these and he has confirmed to her in vivid detail that many an adventurer has lost his life attempting to penetrate the secrets beneath the Tower.

Flakil: Flakil is an apprentice to Bronn Selgard, the town smith. A moderately skilled maker of fine weapons, Flakil (0-level human, AC 8, 6 hp) is an extremely skilled salesman, prone to tales of danger and adventure, the better to sell equipment to young and foolhardy adventurers. Flakil will seize upon almost any story or suggestion and confirm it and expand upon it, working in that only the best-equipped parties can succeed against the dangers that abound in this world. It does not hurt, of course, that Tala seems quite impressed with his tales, and a perceptive PC may notice that in telling them he speaks more to her than he does to the PCs.

Kazeel, Saurunal, and Finon: This is a rather quiet and fierce-looking trio (CG hm F3; AC 6, 15 hp each, armed with scimitars), intent upon their food and drink (primarily water, which they are astonished to find is merely given away to patrons of the inn and passersby alike). Their knowledge of common is limited, but it is clear that their references to the Great Desert have an odd nautical quality about them ("oceans of sand," "rivers of salt," "whirlpools of death," and "rising fog of doom"). Their legends speak of the desert as a former great salt sea that was swallowed up by the earth in a battle between the sun and the forces of evil. They have ventured out of the desert in search of silver goods for trade. They will barter for silver with spices, including curry, pepper, and rock salt. They are friendly and nonhostile.

Blivin: A very matter-of-fact person, Blivin (0-level human, AC 9, 8 hp) does not believe the various superstitions about lycanthropes associated with amber, but realizes that such superstition can be good for trade. He specializes in ornamental amber suitable for use as jewelry and has been surreptitiously watching Tala and Flakil for some time, waiting for an opening that will allow him to purvey a small ornamental necklace to Flakil as a gift to Tala. His supply of goods is dwindling, and his purse is heavy as he is beginning to make his way back east to his homelands, where he will rest and resupply before starting on a trading run to the eastern Realms. He has heard of increased incidents of robbery along the road to the east and is tarrying a day or two in hopes of joining up with a caravan or military party traveling his direction. Having grown up east of Thay and experienced the dangers to simple, common folk caused by the constant strife and machinations of the shifting factions among the evil Red Wizards of Thay, Blivin is naturally cautious. He is also cheap, however, and will be unwilling to hire the PCs to protect him.

Quoin and Biggs: These men (NE hm T2; AC 8; 7 hp each) have noticed Blivin's heavy purse, as well as the fact that he always seems to keep one hand on it. They prefer to act by subtlety and stealth, rather than brute force, so they are biding their time and listening. They will almost immediately pick up on any statement made by Blivin as to his desire to find traveling companions heading east and find an excuse to become such companions. They deflect questions concerning themselves with vague stories of being huntsmen who are living off the land as they search for a lost companion. The lies come to them easily, but lack any useful specifics. They are clever enough to agree with their questioners about most

things and keep their own conversation to a minimum. In the event that an opportunity should arise, they snatch the purse, but flee, rather than fight, if they are seen.

If the PCs do not encounter or interact with the above NPCs at the Old Skull inn, the information and personalities set forth above can be encountered at other appropriate locations in Shadowdale.

The Crossroads

Just outside the Old Skull inn is the crossroads of the main trading routes that pass through Shadowdale. In the center is a large wooden post on which it is the custom to tack any notices or messages to others who may pass this way, as well as general news of the Realms. Some of the notices are personal and are tacked to the post in paper sleeves or folded to conceal their contents to all but the intended recipient, whose name appears on the visible portion of the paper or parchment. Most of the notices, however, are public advertisements seeking or offering goods or services. The notices include the following:

- **Reward:** *20 Silver Pieces for anyone who brings to justice the unknown cattle drivers who have wrecked crops and fences. See Silas Standard at grain booth on Market Day to collect.*

  Silas lives in one of the northern farms in the Shadowdale community. Many farmers report something that looks like cattle tracks and damage over their farms, but Silas was particularly hard-hit. The tracks are in all directions, and seem to have no particular beginning or end, should the PCs investigate. Tracking (even by rangers and those with the proficiency) is made more difficult by recent rains that have obliterated the tracks, but not the damage.
- **Personal to Zeke.**

  If opened, it reads: "Must work tonight. Postpone 'til tomorrow, at the usual place." Zeke is one of the guardsmen at the Tower. He and Sarinda, a wool washer for Tulba the Weaver, are romantically involved.
- **Wanted:** *Adventuring party to perform reconnaissance. 100 Gold Pieces, plus percentage of any booty found. Inquire with the Captain-of-Arms and Warden of shadowdale.*

  This notice has been badly overwritten in some places with smudged and barely legible pencil markings to read: "Wanted: Adventuring party to perform suicide mission. 100 gold pieces, plus burial of your body, if found. Inquire with Captain-of-Harms and Worrier of Shadowdale."
- **Rumors for Sale.** *Inquire of Llewellyn the Loquacious. Also available to sing at weddings, funerals, and other celebratory affairs.*

Trader's Shop

Weregund the Trader's shop is just across the main road from the Old Skull inn and features most of the items that could be found at a general store in any farming community, with a few exceptions. It does not attempt to compete with the smithy, the weaver, or the woodworking shop in town, though it may carry a few of the more generic of such items for the sake of convenience. Prices are average and quality is generally fair to good. Local herders have made a bit of a run on steel traps for wolves and other predators, leaving none immediately in stock, a fact that Weregund, the proprietor, may casually note in conversation.

Also available for passing travelers (the locals would not be inclined to such a purchase) are several artist's renderings of the Twisted Tower, some with imaginary winged beasts alighting on the twisted ledges that circle as they ascend the Tower. The imaginary beasts are generally of the dragon and griffon type, but with a sometimes amusing and silly combination of animal parts (head of a panther, tail of a phoenix, body of a serpent, and wings of a hawk, etc.).

Elminster's Tower

Elminster's Tower lies off the main road, closer up against the Old Skull. It is accessible only by a flagstone path that skirts behind the house of Tulba the Weaver. The first part of the path seems well-used, but the path grows sparser and sparser as it continues toward the modest fieldstone tower of perhaps 60 feet in height.

As the PCs approach the door, they may notice a small sign tacked to it which reads: "Gone gathering spell components—Elminster." Careful scrutiny of the sign will lead clever PCs to conclude that it has been posted for years and is a ruse to discourage visitors. Knocking on the door is unsuccessful. Although the PCs may notice light (if they approach after dark) escaping from the crack at the bottom of the door and, if they make special attempts, can hear the sound of movement and smell stew cooking in the kitchen, no one will respond to their knocking on the door on the first or second attempt.

Only if the PCs knock on three or more occasions, will they hear the muffled sounds of approaching feet and the quiet, but firm, voice of Lhaeo (scribe to Elminster the Sage) saying "There's no one home, we're not interested, I'm busy, and Elminster has no advice to give, so please go about your business." With that, the footsteps begin anew, receding back into the kitchen. If the PCs again knock at least three separate times, the footsteps will return and the door will open to

reveal Lhaeo, doing his best to look stem and menacing in an apron, but being entirely unsuccessful in the attempt. He will deny that Elminster is present or expected and will, in general, encourage the PCs to go about their business so that he can get back to his.

If the PCs are extremely persistent, Lhaeo will allow them to leave a message for Elminster, with no assurance that it will be answered. To assure that any message left is both important and concise, he indicates that the message, of course, must be in triplicate and be written in each of common, Thorass, and dwarvish. Lhaeo will, upon request, supply ink, pens, parchment, and a common/Thorass dictionary. Once any message is written, he will read it, drop it into the pocket of his apron, and send the PCs on their disappointed way.

Elminster will not return any message and the only information that the PCs can glean from Lhaeo is that the Sage is chronicling events in the far reaches of the Realms.

Rumormonger

Whenever and wherever convenient to the actions of the PCs in the Dale, they will come across Llewellyn the Loud, part-time bard and full-time professional rumormonger. Read the following description to the players:

Before you, gesticulating grandiosely as he finishes a bizarre tale of gladiatorial combat between a small boy with a sling and a fearsome half-orc, stands a man of flamboyant style and little color sense. Wearing an oversized coat of many colors (and even more numerous pockets), a large, plumed ranger's hat of maroon, ballooning orange pantaloons, knee-high eel-skin boots, and a bandolier of small scroll cases, trinkets, knives, and tiny, flutish instruments, he appears to be a bard, intermittently strumming a mandolin to punctuate his tale. Without pausing for a breath or to collect the thoughts that apparently spew forth unencumbered from his mind, he turns enthusiastically to greet you.

"Cousins, friends, and compatriots in the great circus of life, I am most certainly the man you seek, or the man you would seek if you only knew the treasures I possess. Not the mere mundane treasure of cold metal and gleaming rock, but one more precious and made more precious still depending on who possesses it. Facts, figures, information, and innuendo are mine. Paths, directions, tales, and explanations bow to my command of language and explication, for I am Llewellyn the Loquacious, rumormonger and bard par excellance, and I have rumors for sale. Occasionally known as Llewellyn the Loud (for reasons that quite escape me) and, by jealous and petty detractors, as Llewellyn the Liar, you see that I am nothing if not completely honest, and it is quite clear that I am most definitely something."

Llewellyn will listen intently to any introductions or information which the PCs choose to impart and respond enthusiastically and bombastically to all inquiries concerning himself. If the PCs show any interest in his rumors or information, read the following:

Producing a small crystal ball from one of his many bulging pockets, Llewellyn strides towards you, twirling the end of his waxed mustache with the practiced fingers of one hand as he adroitly presents the crystal ball with a flourish before your startled eyes. "Rumors of all sorts have I: petty gossip, cheap in nature and price; scintillating tales of the misadventures of the heart, as exaggerated as the price paid; muttered murmurings of the happenings and dangers of places known and unknown, not nearly so dear as the life they may save; and sighs and ciphers of portent and guidance, invaluable to some, valueless to the common throng. Copper, silver, gold, and platinum. Prices, like the rumors, run from the base to the best. Buy a rumor? Rumors for sale."

Llewellyn will press with his glib sales banter as long as there is any indication that the PCs may be interested in making a purchase. His prices are entirely nonnegotiable and any attempt at haggling will be met with a shocked expression and the exclamation:

> "For sale, I said for sale. Not rent. You can't rent a rumor, though roomers often rent. A rumor sold is a rumor gone, passed on from one to another for free because once free it has no value. I have prime quality, secret rumors for sale, not rent."

If any of the PCs should determine to purchase a rumor, Llewellyn will whisk a small folding stool from inside his cloak, snap it open and sit upon it in single, fluid movement. He will begin to stare intently into the small crystal ball he holds before him in the fingertips of one hand. The crystal ball is a magical ball of crystal that has the ability to cast *phantasmal force* within itself an unlimited number of times each day (its triggering phrase is "Let me see"). Llewellyn uses the crystal's ability to illustrate his rumors with tiny vignettes within the sphere. All those viewing the sphere are -4 to save against the illusion as they are expecting, even attempting, to see it. Those who make their saving throw see nothing in the sphere but the shifting patterns of colors caused by simple refraction and Llewellyn's (cleverly) multicolored coat and adornments.

The rumors that Llewellyn will relate are entirely dependent on the type (price) of rumor requested and the subject which the PC indicates he wishes to hear a rumor about. As an accomplished traveler, bard, and rumormonger, Llewellyn gathers considerable information in his conversations with townspeople and is a shrewd judge of appearances, allowing him to seem to have uncanny knowledge of the occupations and endeavors of those about him. He plays such information to the hilt with the addition of some interesting conjectures on his own part, insisting, should he be caught in an inaccuracy, that he imparts rumors, not fact, and that what he has said is, accurately, a rumor, but whether it is an accurate rumor he cannot say.

If the PCs seek, now or (more likely) later, any rumors concerning the Twisted Tower, the tunnels beneath it, or the Old Skull, the following will (depending on price paid) be included in the rumor:

Copper: Mourngrym is afraid of the tunnels beneath his own Tower and will not descend beyond ground level because of a mysterious, ghostly portent. The more disrespectful and cynical of the various guards, librarians, servants, and quartermasters who regularly work in the lower reaches sometimes call their lord "Moan-Grim" in derision of his supposed fear. The dungeon guards sometimes do not bother to reset locks and traps set up in the lower regions because they know their lord will never inspect their work. (Although this rumor is false—Mourngrym is brave and well regarded by the guards and the populace—Llewellyn is a salesman and knows that those with the least coin to spend are often jealous and critical of those in power. Thus, the rumor is fashioned to please the likely audience. Those who attempt to ingratiate themselves with Tower denizens by bad-mouthing their lord will get a chilly reception at best.)

Silver: The chambermaids of the Tower sometimes whisper about the Legend of Lost Lovers: repeated tales of young women who have returned alone and frightened from what was to be a secluded flirtation with a handsome, young member of the guard in the dim passageways beneath the Tower. The stories vary, but usually the two become separated briefly and the young member of the guard is never seen again. Because it is strictly forbidden to be in such passageways, the disappearance is unreported and uninvestigated, though the more knowledgeable members of the Tower staff often shake their heads knowingly when a notice is posted of a guardsman "lost on routine patrol."

Gold: Old Skull, itself, was the real fortress of the drow. The Tower is nothing but outer trappings. Great wealth and magic still reside in the Old Skull, and they can be accessed from the tunnels beneath the Tower. Lord Mourngrym has sent hired parties to try to retrieve that wealth, which he claims for himself as Lord of the Twisted Tower. Other groups, working to retrieve the treasure for themselves, have gone into the tunnels beneath the Twisted Tower, but not returned. The dungeon guards did find one dying adventurer, badly clawed and bruised, who muttered "Leap, do not look. The spring is death."

Platinum: The tunnels beneath the Tower are once again active after a long period of quiet. Infrequent expeditions no longer return when sent, and now have been discontinued altogether. Where once the gates to the tunnels were kept locked to keep the foolhardy from entering the dangerous tunnels and caves, now the gates are locked to prevent access to the Tower from whatever lies on the other side. Some whisper in the dark that the drow have returned and seek vengeance against those who drove them from the Twisted Tower, and others whisper that the Cult of the Dragon is behind the recent increase in unexplained deaths and disappearances in the communities of this area and in the mountains nearby. Supposedly, Lord Mourngrym has sought portents for those who may adventure into the tunnels to find out the truth, but those attempts have revealed nothing but cold blackness and the words: "Grasp at straws in the wind" and "Ignore he who speaks and follow that which spoke."

2. Towering Above

This section deals with what the PCs encounter before arriving at the entrance to the tunnels beneath the Twisted Tower, depending on whether they respond to the captain-of-arms' notice for an adventuring party or whether they determine to sneak in to adventure under the Tower on their own. Going in with the sanction of the captain-of-arms is considerably quicker and easier. Going in without sanction is more difficult and more dangerous, but looks to be decidedly more profitable in the event that significant treasure can be retrieved from the tunnels.

Entering The Tower as Hirelings

If the PCs simply approach the Tower at the gated entrance thereto, they will be hailed by one of the guardsmen who heads the squad of four guarding the gate. Other squads of four soldiers guard each of the four comer towers surrounding the main "twisted" tower. Two squads patrol the walls between the comer towers. If the PCs indicate that they are responding to the notice of the captain-of-arms or otherwise indicate that they are adventurers looking for work, Heth, a page, is sent to fetch Thurbal, captain-of-arms and warden of Shadowdale.

Thurbal arrives about six minutes later. He eyes the PCs appraisingly for 30 seconds, grunts approvingly, and motions for them to follow him in the gate and along the wall to one of the corner towers. A squad of guardsmen falls in in front and behind of the PCs as an escort. After entering the comer tower, Thurbal and the PCs ascend a long, spiral staircase, exiting at the turret, where there is a single table and chair. Thurbal sits in the chair behind the table and addresses the PCs.

> "Simple job, simple arrangement. What with the farmers and shepherds all clamoring for increased patrols around the countryside because of increased predator attacks and trampling herds of wild horses and all, we're a bit short-handed, not that you should get the idea that we're not fully capable to handle any defense of the Tower should it be needed. I don't want any mistakes or rumors being made about that. Anyhow, we need a routine reconnaissance of some abandoned tunnels beneath the castle. Pays one hundred gold each, plus 20% of any loot you find in the course of your patrol. It's your job to investigate all of the passable passageways."

Thurbal claims that the tunnels are normally only afflicted with wandering monsters which have taken refuge there, though sometimes local bandits use the tunnels as a hideout or stash for stolen loot, though he has no idea how or where they access the tunnels. He is willing to increase the PCs' pay to 200 gold and 50% of the loot after considerable haggling. If requested, he also supplies torches or a small rock on which a *continual light* spell has previously been cast (useful as a bright, portable light source which can easily be shut off by simply pocketing the small rock), but does not volunteer these items. If anyone asks for special magical items, he provides the PCs with one vial containing an *elixir of health* and one vial containing a *potion of extra-healing,* but insists that they return the vials if they are unused on the patrol.

Thurbal is unable to give the PCs a map of the area they are to explore. Unfortunately, the original copy of the map was sent along with the last patrol three weeks ago, and that patrol never returned. Even more disturbing, however, is that the extra copy previously made of the map was destroyed, along with several other maps, in a fire of mysterious origin in the Tower itself. Thurbal believes that the fire was set by one of the Tower's guests, but the guest disappeared before he could be questioned. Thurbal does not, in any case, regard the map as very important or useful, given the general unreliability of maps made by patrolling soldiers and the frequent shifting of passages caused by cave-ins and water erosion, especially given the recent heavy rains this year. Besides, part of the PCs' job is to find new passages, not merely patrol the known ones. Thurbal is seeking to discover what is unknown, not what is already detailed.

> "By the way," says Thurbal, "you needn't explore the gorge on this side of the locked doorway to the drow realms. We keep it well mapped and cleaned out of monsters."

If the PCs accept the job, Thurbal lets them gather those supplies they need (and perhaps encounter Llewellyn the Loud, if they have not already done so, at Weregund's). Thurbal then takes them down the spiral staircase, continuing belowground to the dungeon area, past the guardroom and north bank of cells (four of which are occupied with prisoners—two human thieves, an elven assassin, and a captured minotaur), past the cross-passage to the crypts, and to a door next to a rubble-filled area. He unlocks a single heavy oak door, walks forward 10 feet, unlocks another heavy oak door, and stops in front of a double set of dark wood doors. Cut into the doors is an inscription that reads: "Here of old humankind defeated the dark ones and drove them back under the earth. The drow built this place to defend their tunnels. If we do not watch, they will yet make it our tomb." Thurbal swings the double doors open. Beyond the double doors, the diagonal passage is dust-covered and a chain stretches across it to prevent mistaken travel down it.

Thurbal hands the party leader a key, indicating that it is

for the gate to the tunnels, and hands a wizard or cleric in the party a small scrap of paper with magical writing on it.

> "You'll need that to get past the magical lock. Good luck. You'll be paid when you report back. It shouldn't take you more than a few days to investigate the passable tunnels, but remember, if it is passable by people or dangerous beasts, your job is to reconnoiter and report on it."

Turning abruptly about, he leaves before the PCs can begin to traverse the diagonal hallway, shutting the double doors behind him.

Entering The Tower Surreptitiously

If the PCs decide to investigate the tunnels beneath the Tower without official sanction, they will need to breach the Tower defenses (described in the Twisted Tower section of the "Places of Interest in Shadowdale" chapter and at the beginning of Entering the Tower as Hirelings, above) by stealth, force, or subterfuge, then access the lower levels. Guests, servants, guards, and inhabitants abound in the upper levels and the protection of Lord Mourngrym is serious business, so any attempt by the PCs to search or loot the aboveground sections of the Twisted Tower will quickly be discovered.

The lower levels may only be accessed by the spiral staircase in the (southwest) comer turret to the left of the main gate as it is entered or by the staircase to the right of the main gate on the first level.

Spiral Staircase: This descends to the dungeon level and accesses a hallway that leads to the hall outside the guardroom for the north bank of dungeon cells. The staircase is, itself, unguarded, although a simple and fairly obvious wire on the fourth to last step will cause a small bell to ring in the guardroom if the PCs are not attentive. A squad of four 2nd-level fighters mans the guardroom and patrols the dungeon cell areas. A rope hanging from the ceiling of the guardroom sounds a magical alarm (the noise of a large bell ringing) heard by everyone in the aboveground portion of the Tower when it is pulled. It is used primarily to give warning of escapes from the dungeon cells and calls two squads of four guards to descend each of the stairwells accessing the dungeon level to quell the escape or other trouble.

Main Dungeon Staircase: This staircase is protected by a pair of guards at the top and bottom. Each pair has an alarm gong in easy reach. Surreptitious access to the staircase is also difficult as it is in constant use in the hour before, during, and the hour after each mealtime. Since it is used extensively by kitchen staff and servants, intruders are quite obvious to anyone who encounters them. If servants do encounter the PCs, there is a 70% chance that they will appear to go about their business normally, but sound an alarm once out of sight. Otherwise, they will ask who the player characters are and demand they leave if not satisfied with the PCs' response.

Proceeding Into The Tunnels

By stealth or honest employment, the player characters proceed beyond the doors as described in area 13 of the Twisted Tower of Ashaba (The Dungeon Level) Map. It is here that we take up the narrative of what lies beyond.

2A. Diagonal Access Hall

A single chain is draped across the diagonal hallway about 10 feet past the doors at area 13 on the Twisted Tower of Ashaba (The Dungeon Level) Map. The floor beyond the chain is quite dusty, although it is possible to discern that people occasionally stoop under or jump over the chain and go down the hallway. The hallway and area beyond are unlighted.

The hallway contains no actual dangers, although there are a few small heaps of miscellaneous items (blankets, cloaks, remains of candles and food items, etc.) which might spook the PCs, but are actually only the leavings of those youthful lovers who use the hallway as a shadowed rendezvous. If the PCs go down the hallway outside of normal daylight hours, there is a 20% chance of encountering a guard and a serving girl kissing in the dark. If they see the PCs coming, they will hide under their cloaks or scurry quietly around the corner (where the hallway leads to a open ledge) to avoid detection. They can easily be frightened away and will not raise an alarm (after all, they're not supposed to be there) unless the PCs act threatening toward the inhabitants of the Tower.

Just a Note Before You Go...

The players may attempt to take the challenges of the Twisted Tower in one adventure or over several adventures, returning to the Tower of Ashaba for rest and recuperation. If their return occurs before they complete the adventure (the drow over-mage is defeated), Thurbal will come to meet them at the chain beyond the double doors, tend to their wounds as best available, and debrief them, making a copy of the map to date. He will gruffly ask if they wish to press on the next day (or two), and not hold them responsible if they choose to seek adventure elsewhere (of course, all the benefits described in the 10. Epilogue section will not come to pass, but that is the fate of the faint of heart).

Past a certain point, it will make sense for the PCs to continue to press on as opposed to returning to the Tower's safety. Notes about overnight camping underground are noted at those points when it seems likely that player characters will find "resting spots."

3. Entrance Examination

This section covers the PCs' approach to and passage through the gate to the drow tunnels. It is here that the PCs will encounter the first denizens of the tunnels, a gambado and two quaggoths. In addition, the PCs must deal with the locks on the gate between the realm of Lord Mourngrym and the realm of the drow; there are physical and magical locks.

3A. A Ledged Bridge

The hallway opens out onto a ledge in a large, natural cavern. Immediately opposite the hallway is a bridge over a narrow chasm to another ledge.

> Directly ahead is a 20-foot-long, single-span, unrailed, stone bridge. It appears well-used, but of sturdy construction, narrowing from 10 feet wide to two feet wide as one crosses from the Tower side to the far side. The stone on the bridge is worn smooth and is wet with water which drips intermittently from above. The bridge spans a 12-foot-wide chasm to another wide ledge on the far side of the chasm, with a large, steel-banded wooden door inset in the far wall. The chasm has steep, sheer sides, falling away about 20 feet to what appears to be a shallow stream bed. The slope near the bottom of the chasm has a light littering of bones, weapons, coins, and items apparently too small to be swept away by the lazy water flow, even when the stream is deeper.

The coins are mostly copper, with only a few gold or silver. The weapons include a short sword and an hand axe. The items include a medium-sized flask. The bones include some obviously human remains, including a human skull only slightly on the downstream side of the bridge.

If the party attempts to cross the bridge, PCs should make a Dexterity check to see if they slip on the smooth, wet stone and are pitched off the narrowing, unrailed bridge into the ravine (2d6 points of falling damage).

Of course, the party may in any event choose to avoid the bridge by attempting to leap over the ravine. (PCs of 1st-6th level can only jump 1d4+5 feet with a 20-foot running start, with a -1 foot modifier if they are halflings or moderately encumbered and a -2 modifier if they are dwarves or heavily encumbered. Player characters with the jumping proficiency can jump 2d6+their level in feet with a similar running start.) The adventurers can also climb down the ravine and back up the other side, though the sheer sides make this extremely difficult without secured ropes.

An added complication, should anyone fall or choose to climb down to the bottom of the ravine, is that a gambado has made his home on the downstream side of the bridge, uphill slightly on the far bank of the stream at the bottom of the ravine. If any of the PCs land within four feet or approach to investigate the human skull or the short sword or silver coins lying near to the skull, the gambado leaps to the attack:

> Suddenly, the human skull on the floor of the ravine and the ground near it seem to spring upward and toward you, as if a geyser or volcanic eruption were impelling them explosively in a ballistic arc at your startled face. You realize, with terror, that this springing skull of doom is actually a beast—a hook-clawed apparition of deadly muscle and sinew.

The gambado attacks three times (bite, claw, claw) per round. It will attempt to flee if wounded for more than 12 hit points. It can not jump high enough to get onto the ledge, but will flee farther downstream and out of sight. Once it has dealt with any PCs in the chasm, it will retreat to its lair, which provides it with effective cover from missile fire from the bridge or ledge.

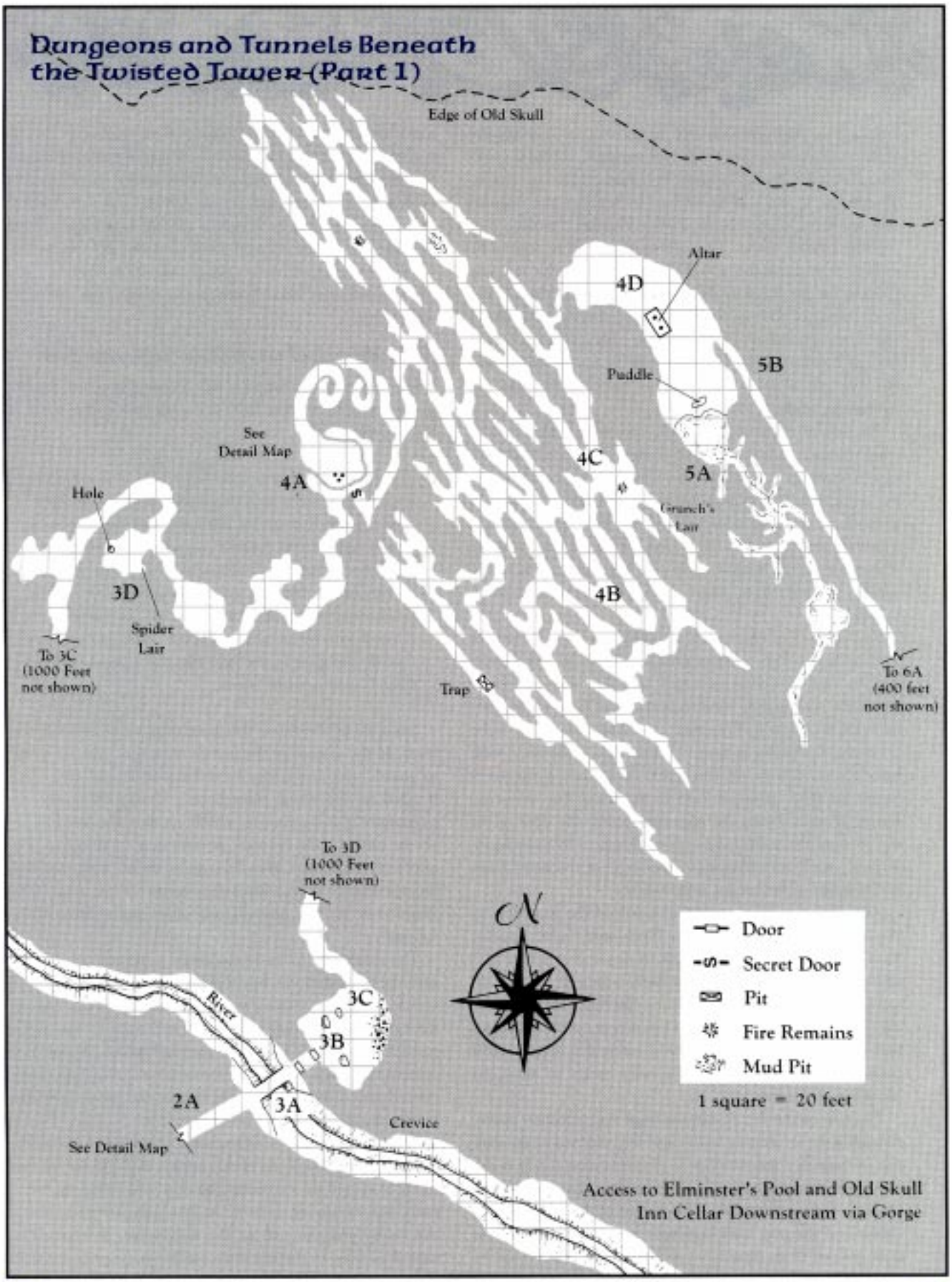
> **Gambado** (1): Int Low; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12 (8 vertically); HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-4/1-4; SZ M; ML 11; XP 175.

3B. Lock Step

As the adventurers approach the gate inset in the wall at the back of the far ledge, two runes suddenly begin to glow with a fierce, blue light. The first, on the gate/door itself, is the warning rune for "magic here." The second, on the floor directly in front of the gate/door is the elven rune for "turn back." The light suddenly becomes more intense, then disappears in a bright flash which leaves an after-image of yet a third rune. This is the elder rune for "decision."

The gate/door is an arched, steel-banded, oaken door, with a heavy oaken bar locked into place across it. If the PCs have obtained the key from Thurbal, it will fit the lock, allowing the extremely heavy oaken timber to be lifted up from its steel retaining rods and set to one side.

In addition to this locked bar, however, the door has been magically locked from this side, which can be determined from Thurbal's information, a detect magic or similar spell or ability, or careful investigation of the cracks at the bottom and edges of the door, which are magically force-


Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted Tower (Part 1)
Edge of Old Skull
Altar
4D
5B
Puddle
See Detail Map
4A
4C
5A
Hole
Grunch's Lair
3D
4B
Spider Lair
To 3C (1000 Feet not shown)
Trap
To 6A (400 feet not shown)
To 3D (1000 Feet not shown)
N
Door
Secret Door
Pit
Fire Remains
Mud Pit
1 square = 20 feet
River
3C
3B
2A
3A
Crevice
See Detail Map
Access to Elminster's Pool and Old Skull Inn Cellar Downstream via Gorge

sealed. This seal prevents any air circulation through the cracks and prevents anything (for example, a blade, crowbar, etc.) from being inserted or wedged into the cracks. This magical seal can be broken by reading the magical phrase on the paper obtained from Thurbal ("stoleco") or casting a *dispel magic*. This allows the door to simply be pulled open using the attached iron ring on the left side (hinges are on the outside right of the door), though the deep creaks of the unoiled hinges reverberate throughout the chamber. Otherwise, the player characters are forced to beat the door down (the door may be forced by incredible strength or takes 15 points of hacking and bashing damage to render it to splinters).

As soon as the door is opened, there is a sudden rush of wind, extinguishing any lit torches and having a 50% chance of extinguishing any lit lanterns. The wind is actually nothing more than the air pressure inside the cave adjusting to that outside the cave, as occurs naturally in all caves, through whatever openings they may have, as barometric pressure changes with the weather. Do your best to make it sound spooky and ominous to player characters with no spelunking experience.

The open door reveals an extremely truncated chamber leading to another, smaller door less than 10 feet inside. The second door, approximately five feet wide and eight feet high, is similar in construction to the first, except that no bar is set across it. Wind rushes through the cracks of the door. An iron pull ring again is on the left of the door, with heavy, rusty hinges on the right. In actuality, the rusty hinges are fake, mounted flush to the wood, but not penetrating it, thus giving the appearance that the door opens out (toward the puller), when it really opens by pushing in. In fact, on close examination, the wood of the door is not nearly so old as the hinges appear to be.

The door is trapped such that a pull of the iron ring on the left will cause a heavy stone block only slightly smaller than the chamber itself to begin to descend at a rate of 5 feet per round from the 20-foot-high ceiling. If the PCs do not get out of the way by the time the block drops all the way down, they will suffer 1d6+1 points of crushing damage and the PCs will have to make a successful bend bar/lift gates roll or some other extraordinary means to move the block out of the way.

The trap can be detected by the usual trap detection means, through a detect shifting walls capability directed at the ceiling, or through a specific effort to discern airflow (as air is also rushing in through the cracks in the ceiling above, where the crushing stone is mounted). The descent of the stone block is halted and the trap reset by simply pushing on this second door to open it, an especially counterintuitive move once the block has descended to block the top of the far door.

Going through the far door, the PCs enter a 60-foot-diameter, irregularly shaped chamber, with several large boulders lying amid loose rock and gravel. A well worn path leads to an irregular opening back and to the left (northwest). From this side it is apparent that the second door (and trap mechanism) is a recent addition to these tunnels. A recent cave-in blocks a path that formerly traveled southeast from the entryway cavern.

3C. Well-Trained Servants

Before the party can assemble fully or investigate further, two quaggoths rush out from behind the boulders to the north of the well worn path.

> A blur of movement from behind the largest boulder to the north of the path draws your attention and your eyes attempt to focus on the furry, pale forms moving rapidly towards you. As your eyes adjust to the light and the movement, you realize that two large, shaggy, humanoids are charging at you, bastard swords clenched two-handed and raised for the attack. The swords are covered with blood, ichor, or some other substance, as they do not glint in the light like the hideous teeth of these fearsome, furred beasts.

Servants of the drow, the quaggoths were drawn to the room by the sounds of the party's entrance. Trained to act as guards, the quaggoths have been equipped with two-handed swords which have been coated with the drow's customary special poison, which renders victims unconscious unless they save vs. poison at a -4 penalty. The effect of the poison lasts 2d4 hours unless counteracted. Note that drow poison loses its potency 60 days after being exposed to air and immediately upon exposure to direct sunlight.

The quaggoths move immediately to attack two-handed with the bastard swords, but, if disarmed of their weapons, will attack with claws twice per round. They are unaffected by their own or any other poison and will fight to the death, going into a berserk rage once they fall below 25% of their original hit points. The quaggoths wear no clothing over their matted and dirty, white-furred bodies and, aside from the swords, the quaggoth have no items to loot.

Although the player characters can spend considerable time searching the loose rocks, nooks, and crannies of this room, they will find nothing else of interest save the worn path, the extensive cave-in on the right (south) side of the room, and the exit to the northwest. It is possible, with difficulty, to discern some partial and confused tracks

on the path, including human, drow, quaggoth, dwarf, and the minute tracks of cave vermin (rodents, spiders, and the like). Knowledgeable adventurers may also realize that the quaggoths are sometimes trained as guards by the drow and that the quaggoths are not capable of fashioning either the swords they used or the poison contained thereon. Experienced player characters may also realize that the quaggoths sometimes act as spider handlers for the drow and be on the alert for spider attacks.

Quaggoths (2): Int Low; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1 (two-handed bastard sword); Dmg 1-4/1-4 or 2d4 (bastard sword); SA Berserk rage (+2 to attack and damage rolls once below 25% of hit points); SD Immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; XP 15.

3D. Welcome To My Parlor

About 1,200 feet down the path through twisting and jumbled tunnels is an irregularly oval-shaped opening near ground level that has a few tufts of dirty white fur caught on the protruding edge of a rock. The hole opens up into an irregularly shaped room 30 feet by 40 feet. The room is messily littered with some bones, scraps of the last meal (rat), and a few other items (15 feet of half-rotted rope, 9 iron spikes, a flattened lantern, and 3 wooden clubs). A hole in the wall near the floor in the northwest corner seems to contain a glint of metal. The glint is caused by coins in the treasure cache of the two quaggoths (16 copper, 19 silver, 1 electrum, and 4 gold).

These quaggoths were, however, spider trainers as well as guards (there being not much to guard against), and anyone entering the lair attracts the immediate attention of a huge spider, which lives in a camouflaged hole along the southeast wall of the lair. The huge spider waits until it has a clear leap, then springs across the room onto a PC's back (-6 on his surprise roll if he even sees the attack) and attempts to bite. The huge spider is apparently young (better for training), as it is only about two and a half feet in diameter. A 50-gp ruby can be found in the spider's lair if the webbing in the hole is probed very carefully or burnt.

Huge Spider (1): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6, plus save vs. poison (Type 1) at +1 bonus; SA Leaping attack of up to 30 feet, with opponents -6 on surprise roll; SZ S; ML 8; XP 270.

4. Feat, Fight, Faux, Fun

This section deals with the PCs' exploration of the first, less-dangerous portion of the limestone caverns beneath Old Skull, primarily a difficult "chimneying" climb through trapped passages, an encounter with a drow patrol, and the discovery of a supposed escapee of the drow.

The worn path and the main tunnel continue on in lazy, meandering curves, through several small (30 feet in diameter) chambers. The path itself is treacherous, consisting of semipacked gravel, with occasional sharp protuberances or loose rocks. The area off the narrow path (certainly no more than one person may pass at a time and remain on the path) is downright dangerous, a jumble of loose rocks, jagged edges, and partially covered crevices. PCs attempting to run or push past other party members must make a successful Dexterity roll or fall and suffer 1-2 points of damage.

> While the path is obvious, it is difficult to tell if it has been used extensively in the recent past or whether it is an ancient thing, used only by the monsters that lurk in the deepening gloom of the cave. No one appears ever to have made the effort to clear the path of sharp rocks, loose gravel, or other dangers or impediments. The path is simply somewhat more packed and level than the loose and jumbled rocks and crevices of the rest of the cave floor. The walls suggest the rounding effect of waterflow at some time in the distant past, though numerous cave-ins and shifts in the rock have greatly disturbed the smooth contours that must have once existed.

Have each of the PCs roll a d20 and save the results, letting the players think that their characters are just making a Dexterity check because of the uncertain footing.

Although the PCs may go off the path to investigate holes, passages, crevices, or the like and can find an expended torch or two or an old piece of adventuring equipment, there are no treasures or monsters to be found here, just the dangers of the uncertain footing.

4A. Feat of Clay

As the PCs enter the next area, surreptitiously check the results of the d20 roll done in the previous section to see if each succeeds at a saving throw vs. spell at a -4 penalty. Those who do save will be unaffected by the permanent illusion of a cave-in *(illusionary wall)* which appears in the next cavern.

Read the following to those who save against the illusion:

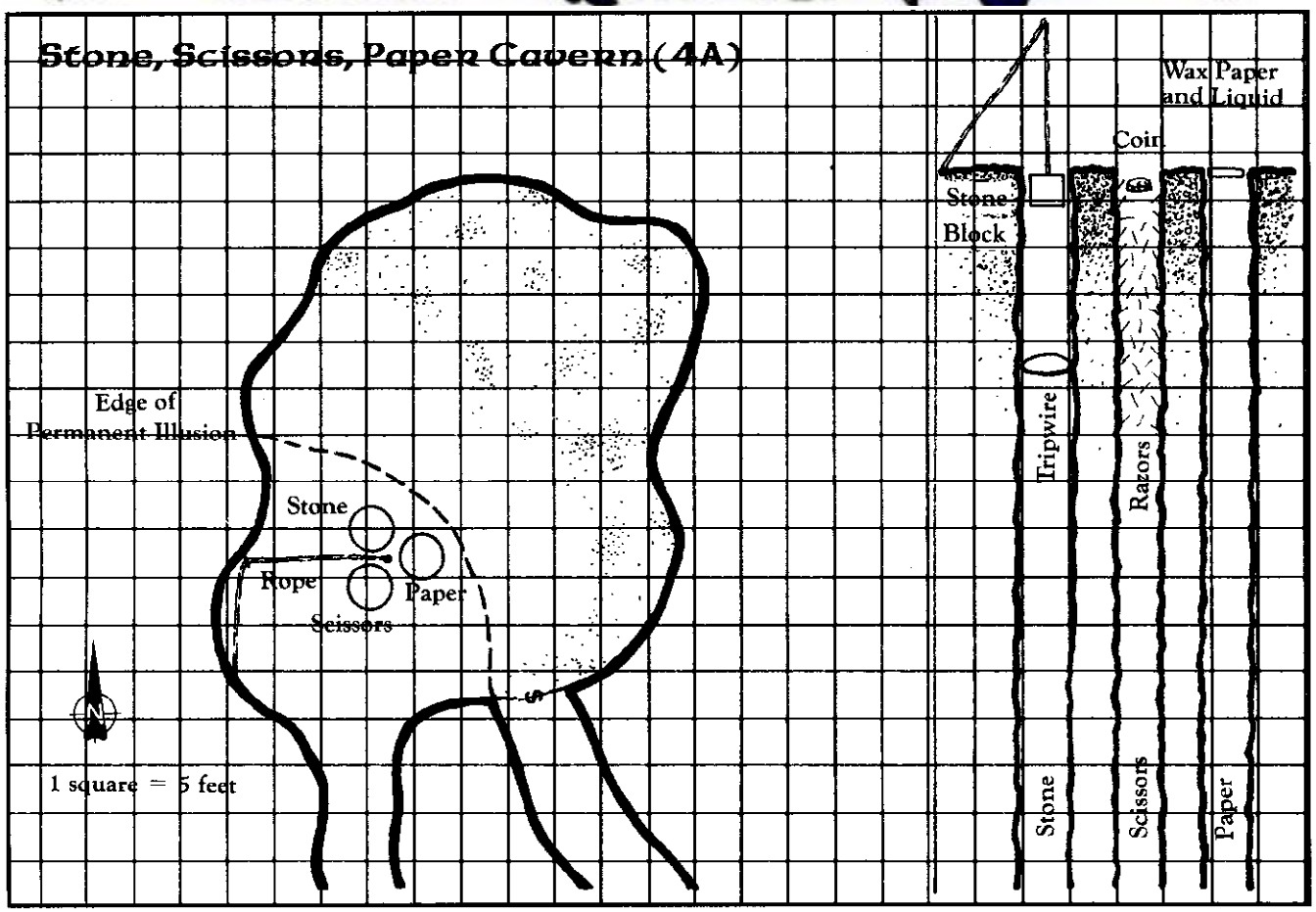
> The footing seems even more uncertain and the slope of the floor slightly uphill as you go around the last curve of this section of the cave into a somewhat larger cavern. The only apparent exit is three holes on the ceiling centered around a rope which runs along the ceiling to the near wall.

Read the following to those who do not save against the illusion.

> The footing seems even more uncertain and the slope of the floor slightly uphill as you go around the last curve of this section of the cave into a somewhat larger cavern (50 feet in diameter) that has obviously been affected by a seismic shift or some other disturbance which has caused a massive cave-in of boulders, rocks, and large quantities of fine red clay silt from the ceiling of the cavern.

Careful investigation by those who believe the illusion will reveal only that the cave-in is of fairly recent origin and much too huge and unstable to attempt to dig through. Those properly checking against their tracking nonweapon proficiency will find that the various tracks seem to all end suddenly at a single spot about a third of the way into the cavern (precisely where the effect of the illusion begins, by the way; those unaffected by the illusion will, if they have made a successful check against their tracking skill, see that the tracks continue somewhat farther, until they disappear on the bare rock floor; no exit is apparent underneath the illusion, although a successful find secret doors roll by someone unaffected by the illusion will reveal a secret door just inside the area of illusion, along the southeast wall).

Investigation of the ceiling above the spot where the tracks seem to end will reveal three roughly circular holes, which are actually vertical tunnels about three feet in diameter surrounding a small iron hook which holds a dirty rope. The rope extends back along the ceiling to the wall to the west of the entrance to the cavern. It is held flush to the ceiling by another L-shaped iron spike and then extends down the wall to the floor, where it is similarly affixed to an iron hook to keep it from dangling straight down where it would be easily seen. It is obvious that the rope has been streaked with clay and dirt, either from constant use by untidy creatures or in an attempt to camouflage it from uninvited guests. It can be easily unloosed from the retaining hooks on the wall to dangle free from the ceiling. Both the rope and the holes in the ceiling are real, not illusionary.



Because the rope is streaked with moist red clay, climbing it is more difficult than usual. PCs with climbing ability should make their rolls (once per 10 feet) at a 5% penalty and others should roll against their Dexterity at -2. Once at the top of the rope, a PC must determine which of the three tunnels to take, with no apparent guidance from their appearance (each has sufficient handholds to allow the awkward transition from the rope to the vertical tunnel with but one more climbing or Dexterity roll) and it is obvious from this vantage point that each will have to be climbed in the same manner, namely by "chimneying" up them.

One chimneys by pressing one's back against one side of the rocky cylinder and pressing one's feet on the opposite side, sliding the body up and repositioning the feet one at a time. This slow and exhausting process is well known to climbers and spelunkers. It may, however, require some adjustments in wardrobe and equipment as some items (for example., backpacks, chain mail, plate mail, slung bows, etc.) can too easily be damaged or catch on protruding rock edges in the course of the chimneying effort. Hauling such items below one on a short tether is a simple solution to this problem.

Each of the tunnels will involve chimneying for almost 100 feet. While this is slow, exhausting work and should be made to seem so in your descriptions to the PCs, it is not terribly technically difficult. Checks should be made each round (10 feet) against climbing ability at a bonus of 15% and against Dexterity at plus 4, with a Strength roll every fourth round. Falling can be stopped with a successful second Strength check in combination with a second climbing or Dexterity check (without any bonuses).

Two of the vertical tunnels are nothing but traps, while the third leads to a cavern connected to a passage that connects back to the secret door exit beneath the illusionary cave-in. The three tunnels can be labeled (in your own mind, not for the players!) as "stone," "paper," and "scissors" and are virtually indistinguishable from one another from the PCs' perspective, although, if anyone specifically asks, a small airflow can be detected downwards through "scissors." If anyone specifically listens carefully at the top of the rope, a very soft and very occasional "flap" sound can be heard in the distance through "paper."

"Stone": A large, smooth boulder is positioned at the top

of this tunnel. Although it does not fit snugly in the tunnel where it is currently positioned (it is dangling on a stout rope as a trap; see below), it cannot be passed by and is much too heavy to lift out of the way. About 20 feet short of the boulder (i.e., about 80 feet up the passageway) a looped tripwire circles the inside circumference of the tunnel. Unless detected and specifically avoided by a base climbing roll or base Dexterity check, there is, because of the nature of chimneying, a 90% chance of tripping this wire. Tripping the wire will immediately release the large boulder above, which will begin crashing down the tunnel with considerable noise and commotion. Despite the boulder's head start in the acceleration derby, the bouncing and ricocheting of the large stone off the sides of the tunnel saps considerable kinetic energy, slowing it somewhat. Thus, the boulder can be avoided if the PC in its path immediately lets himself or herself fall freely down the tunnel.

The boulder will continue to fall, sparks and chips flying as it batters the tunnel in its free-fall flight downward, until the midpoint of the tunnel, where it will wedge itself because of a imperceptibly slight narrowing of the tunnel. Anyone hit in its careening path down the tunnel will be pushed ahead of it, suffering 1d6 points of damage from the boulder and 2d6 points of falling and battering damage (although also slowed by careening off the sides of the tunnel, the careening is, itself, not painless), unless his or her fall is stopped or cushioned in some manner. PCs who avoid the boulder by letting themselves free fall will only suffer the 2d6 points of falling and battering damage. The boulder cannot be moved by the PCs from its lodged position, either upward or downward.

"Scissors": This tunnel is also a dead end, with only a fist-sized opening in the solid granite slab at the top through which air from the tunnel to which "paper" connects flows downward toward the PCs. A bright and shiny platinum coin lodged in the fist-sized hole will reflect a distant glint of light to any climber with a light source, in effect beckoning him or her upwards to the slicing traps above.

Beginning about 70 feet up the tunnel, occasional sharpened stones, razors, and pieces of glass are set into the clay and rock wall to cut and slice the feet or back of any PC who slides himself or herself over them in their chimneying effort. The sharp objects are set at an angle upward and outward from the wall so that they will slice as one slides upwards over them and catch on the out-thrust barb or edge if one attempts to slide downward over them. Each sharp edge does slicing damage sliding upward and ripping damage coming downward (unless leather or some other heavy material, such as a bedroll or cloak, protects the wearer, in which case the leather or other item is so damaged).

The razor barbs become much more numerous and difficult to avoid at the top of the chimney. Chimneying from the 70-foot level to the 80-foot level there is a 15% chance of encountering razor barbs for 1d4 points of damage sliding up, 1d8 points of damage coming down. From the 80-foot level to the 90-foot level there is a 50% chance of encountering razor barbs for 2d8 points of damage sliding up and 2d12 points of damage coming down. From the 90-foot level to the platinum coin there is an 85% chance of encountering razor barbs for 3d8 points of damage sliding up and 3d12 points of damage coming down.

"Paper": Although the chimneying itself is arduous, PCs going this route will not encounter any traps or special dangers during the course of their climb. As they approach the top of the tunnel, they will notice, however, that it appears to be blocked by a smooth slab of stone that looks much like the granite slab at the top of "scissors," although intent listening or staring at the slab will allow them to notice that it very occasionally quivers slightly, making a minute "flap" sound. In fact, the top of the tunnel has simply been covered with a thick layer of waxed paper, which, although held fairly taut over the entrance, flexes slightly with air pressure changes to make the "flap" sound. The underside of the paper is streaked with dirt and clay to camouflage its appearance.

To exit the top of the tunnel, a PC need do nothing more than tear or break the waxed paper and pull himself out, although careful or observant PCs may notice, through a *find traps* or special observational attempts, that the waxed paper is trapped; it bulges slightly downward in the center and seems to be bearing a slight weight. In fact, the top of the waxed paper contains a small puddle of phosphorescent liquid, which, while it does no damage whatsoever itself, will make the PCs visible throughout the rest of their caving adventure (+1 to creatures or enemies attempting to strike a phosphorescently stained PC when fighting in dim light) and cause quite a startle. The trap cannot be disarmed, as such, because there is no trigger or mechanism, but simply the laws of physics at work, although the liquid could be carefully drained by a controlled puncture near the edge (if attempted, give the same probability as for a remove traps roll, with failure indicating that the paper tore lengthwise when the puncture was made).

> As you break through the barrier, a bright, fiery blue, translucent liquid shape leaps downward at you and your companions below, shifting and breaking up into tiny globules as it falls and spatters on you and the others, with a sparkling, fiery, glow. What do you do?

There is a good chance that the PCs will jump to the wrong conclusion (and possibly to their death or grievous injury) in the fear that the phosphorescent liquid is alive or some kind of dangerous acid, poison, or fire to be avoided at all costs. Make the most of the confused scene of panic and colliding bodies as PCs fall or attempt to remove tainted articles of clothing. Assess 2d6 points of falling and battering damage for those who fall or "jump," except that an extra 1d6 points of damage should be assessed if the fall is from the top 20 feet of the tunnel.

Once at the chamber above the three vertical tunnels, the PCs will be able to disarm the "stone" trap if it has not been triggered, recover the glinting platinum coin from the hole in the "scissors" tunnel, and clearly discern the bright phosphorescent glow from the "paper" trap. The passage leading from this chamber leads in a steep, but unevenly spiraling path downward to meet up with the pathway leading outward from beneath the illusionary cave-in in the cavern below (which is also visible as an illusion from this side). The spiral tunnel is obviously of new, probably dwarven, construction.

4B. A Fight! A Fight!

The path gets more confused and the tunnels more complicated in the area ahead, with multiple paths and tunnels branching off from the main trunk and rejoining it after a brief run parallel to it. Since these are natural, waterway-created caverns, it is not surprising that these parallel concourses exist. In addition, all of the passages basically go the same direction and to the same place, aside from an occasional passage which drops abruptly or narrows sharply so as to become impassable before joining the others again. Thus, the PCs cannot really get off track here, although they may foolishly separate from one another, making them more vulnerable to attack. Footing is worse than earlier, however, and progress is slowed to half of normal movement rate.

If the PCs take the time and effort to investigate all the nooks, crannies, crevices, and attics that they find along these paths, there is a 5% chance of discovering a bag of ancient, hidden thieves' treasure: 42 silver coins, a topaz brooch (20-gp value), and a plain gold ring (actually a magical *ring of delusion).* Those searching also have a 10% chance of encountering 1-3 moray rats.

This rodent is about the size and has the same basic statistics as a giant rat, but has sharp, inwardly pointing teeth which allow it to automatically hold on to a victim and inflict additional damage once it has bitten him or her. The moray rat delights in living in dark holes in caves, sewers, dungeons, and crypts and grabbing those who poke their nose or hand into its lair.

Moray Rat (1-3): Int Semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1-4 hit points; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Biting hold automatically inflicts 1-3 points of damage per round until killed or removed, 5% chance of inflicting disease; SZ T; ML 6; XP 15.

After several hundred feet of slow travel down these constantly separating and rejoining passageways, alert PCs notice movement ahead. Unobtrusive investigation reveals a group of six creatures: a half-orc and five larger, shaggy, orc-like creatures. All appear to be carefully searching as they progress down the tunnels toward the PCs. The half-orc leader and two of the other creatures carry bastard swords. All of the swords are coated with drow poison, as outlined above in the encounter with the quaggoths (3C).

The shaggy orc-like creatures are in fact half-orcs, half-quaggoths, known as boogins—proof, once again, that orcs will mate with almost anything humanoid. The boogins are more intelligent than quaggoths and thus better able to coordinate their attacks and follow orders. Those not carrying two-handed swords fight with spiked clubs.

If the PCs listen and any of them speak orcish, they are able to understand the constant mutterings of the half-orc leader, who is saying: "Don't worry, we'll find the dwarven scum and then it's mealtime for everyone. He can't get away. No one ever has."

Given the fairly thorough search the half-orc and the boogins are conducting, there is a slim chance that the party can avoid encountering them by hiding or backtracking. Given the nature of half-orcs and boogins, there is also little hope of parlay or friendly negotiations and mutual assistance. Thus, the most that can be hoped is that the party decides to encounter their searchers at a place and in a manner of the PCs' choosing. This must be done quickly and quietly, however, because the searchers are likely to notice any light, noise, or unhidden movement and immediately move to attack. The phosphorescent glow from the "paper" trap is a sure giveaway if the PCs did not manage to avoid it. The half-orc, Grunch, is a 3rd-level fighter, who gives the boogins simple attack orders and positions himself to force the PCs to deal with the boogins first.

In the event that Grunch and at least two of the boogins fall, those of the remainder who have not entered into a berserk rage must make a morale check or flee to their nearby lair, where they will make a last defense. The PCs may only pass through the lair opening one at a time. In the event that four of the boogins fall, Grunch will quickly take refuge in the lair. After all, he knows that the "search" was merely a ruse and has no desire to

die just to set up the PCs for further drow treachery.

The lair contains 26 silver pieces and 12 gold pieces, a large vial of drow poison, and the pulsating, but unguarded, egg sac of a huge spider (50 XP for destroying it; it is valued at 85 gp for use in spell components if not destroyed and delivered before the sac breaks, releasing a huge spider). Grunch has 14 gold pieces and an unmarked vial with clear fluid in it (an *elixir of health).*

Half-Orc (1, Grunch, 3rd-Level Fighter): Int Avg; AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 9 (12); HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (two-handed bastard sword); SZ M; ML 11; XP 65.

Boogins (5): Int Avg; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (two-handed bastard sword) or 1d6 (spiked club); SA Berserk rage at will adds +2 to attack and to damage rolls, but must fight until death or no enemies in sight; SD Immune to poison; SZ M; ML 14; XP 100.

4C. Friend or Faux?

Immediately upon the PCs' successful conclusion of the foregoing battle, when no more foes are within sight (or after the searchers have successfully passed out of sight if the PCs somehow managed to avoid them), the PCs encounter Simon Stonebreaker, supposed dwarven refugee and actual drow agent.

There is a sudden movement in the loose rocks off to the side of the main path and a filthy dwarven face, beard caked with mud and dirt, cautiously pokes out from beneath a rock. "Are they gone?" he asks, and, without waiting for a reply, continues: "And who be you and what's your business?" The dwarf continues to extricate himself from his hidey-hole, being sure to keep hold of a large rock in his right hand. He wears no armor and carries no weapons, save the rock. He is unwashed and pitifully underweight.

Though he poses as an adventuring dwarf captured by a small band of drow several weeks ago while traveling alone on one of the trade roads to the north of Shadowdale and the Old Skull, Simon Stonebreaker is, in fact, a decoy sent by the drow to lure the PCs to a potentially deadly encounter with an aballin. If only his life were at risk, Simon might otherwise be tempted to escape or warn the PCs of what lies ahead for them, but his family is held by the drow yet deeper under the Old Skull and he is true to his role as traitor. If interrogated by the PCs, he gives them the following information (most of it false):

- **True.** He was captured by a group of three drow, traveling with an orc and five quaggoths as their brute squad. They took all of his money, weapons, and magical items, including his magical *battle axe +1* and a *potion of extra-healing.*
- **False.** The drow kept questioning him about the defenses of his home near Tilver's Gap. He believes that they plan to attack it and he must continue his escape so as to warn his friends and family.
- **False.** He traveled after his escape in the dark, with only his infravision as a slight aid. He became lost and despaired several times, but finally came to a lighted area near an underground pool of clear water. He heard pursuers approaching and hid, watching them jump into the water and pull themselves along a submerged rope. After many hours, he finally screwed up his courage and attempted to follow them through the underwater passage. It was thankfully short, but he does not want to go near water or swimming for the rest of his life.
- **False.** He has seen no other inhabitants of the caves, except for occasional small vermin and rodents.
- **Mostly False.** He will take the PCs as far as the pool of water in exchange for a weapon to protect him in the remainder of his escape. He will not go with the PCs further, although he is hopeful that their efforts might also help forestall the attack on his home.

Simon's alignment is chaotic neutral. Although he did not, in fact, go through the cool pool of clear water to arrive here, he does know where it is and was careful to wet his clothes thoroughly at the drow fortress before his mission of treachery began in order to better play his role. He takes the PCs to the cavern with the pool of water and guide rope, which they otherwise may have missed, as the entrance to it is a tight fit through the bottom of a fissure ending two feet above the floor level of the tunnel in which they are traveling.

Dwarf (1, Simon Stonebreaker, 2nd-Level Fighter): Int Very; AL CN; AC 10; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg By weapon; SZ S to M; ML 14; XP 175.

In the event the PCs wish to finish investigating the tunnels in which they were traveling before finding this offshoot cavern of Simon's, they will find little of note: a few caverns in which fires have been built at some time in the distant past, a poorly camouflaged, spiked, lo-foot-deep pit, and a somewhat moister section of the cave, complete with stalagmites, stalactites, and curtains of crystalline formations. A three-foot-long piercer lurks among the stalactites. In addition, a pool of muddy water under one of the most spectacular crystalline formations contains a mud-man, which attacks

with thrown mud that slows the victim. See the symbols on the Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted Tower (Part 1) Map for the precise locations of these encounters.

Eventually, the PCs discover on their own that the cavern Simon directed them to, or at least volunteered to direct them to unless they attacked and killed him when he first appeared, is the only apparent access to the rest of the cave. Although the entrance to the pool cavern described below is fairly easy to miss—a gradually widening fissure that extends almost 30 feet and ends on a ledge almost two feet above what the PCs would consider to be floor level—there is a definite airflow through the crack which occasionally whistles mournfully as the air rushes over the rough edges of the crack. This mournful whistle can be used to lure the PCs to this location if Simon has failed in his mission. The fact that considerably more cave remains can be verified from the breeze through the entrance to the pool cavern—air pressure which has to be adjusting from somewhere, a somewhere of a measurable volume of airspace.

Piercer (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 3; MV 1; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12, with the usual corrosive acid that does 1 point of damage to exposed flesh; SA Surprise; SZ S; ML 9; XP 65.

Mud-Man (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg see SA; SA Thrown mud slows victim by 1 movement point, mud-man may envelop victim, slowing it by 4 movement points (stopped victims lose 1d8 hit points per round through suffocation damage); SD Immune to poison, immune to mind-affecting spells; SZ S; ML Special; XP 175.

4D. Are We Having Fun Yet?

The pool cavern is huge, almost 180 feet long and 70 feet wide, and shaped roughly like a huge kidney bean. There has obviously been activity here, some of it recent, as the walls and ceiling of the cavern, ranging up to 35 feet high, bear the evident smoky markings of torches, although keeping one lit in the brisk breeze currently passing through the large cavern must be difficult. The cavern is wet and crystalline structures cover the walls, ceiling, and floor with a splendor of caramel ribbons, curtains, and other formations. A rune or marking of some sort once appeared on the wall near the entrance fissure, but it seems to have been deliberately obliterated with covering paint or smoky grime at some time in the distant past.

Three items in the large room draw your immediate attention. First, near the middle of the inside arc of the kidney bean shape is a large slab of rough-hewn granite, almost level and almost rectangular. in shape. Dark liquid once flowed here and dried, whether blood, the drow poison, or some other substance, you cannot tell. Second, on the outside of the arc, about two-thirds of the way into the cavern is a small hole through which the wind seems to be blowing at a tremendous velocity. Third, in the far distance, at the opposite end of the cavern, is a large, calm pool of water.

Altar: Careful examination between the apparent altar and the wall nearest it for secret doors and compartments will reveal a secret compartment about 3 feet above floor level. The secret door to this compartment is approximately 1 foot high and 4 feet wide. Unfortunately for the PCs, however, it appears to be magically trapped, which can be determined by a simple *detect magic* or *find traps* or by attempting to open the secret compartment without taking such precautions and receiving 1d4 points of electrical shock damage. The compartment can only be opened by spilling wine on the altar—no matter how little, no matter what kind. If this is attempted or should happen to occur for any reason, the compartment will open itself.

In the compartment lies a gleaming sword, with a black hilt formed into a gargoyle head design. This is *Flesh Slayer,* a lost drow sword of evil origin, which was once used in drow rituals here before the Twisted Tower of Ashaba fell and the drow retreated, with the clerics who knew of its hiding place dying in the Tower battle. Although the sword's properties will not be immediately apparent to the PCs, it is a *long sword* +2, magically imbued with the essence of drow poison. However, the sword will only cut flesh; any covering of fabric, armor, or the like (no matter how thin or pliable) renders the sword's hits totally ineffective in terms of damage.

Like all other drow artifacts, of course, the special properties of *Flesh Slayer* are destroyed 2d6 days after exposure to sunlight. Even if protected from sunlight, the special properties are lost 1d20+30 days after removal from the drow realms, unless returned there one week in four. Thus, although Mourngrym would happily pay a bonus of 50 gold pieces for turning over such an accursed weapon, it has little value to surface dwellers beyond that of a nonmagical sword. Of course, a denizen of the drow realms would readily barter (up to 500 gp in value) for such a powerful artifact, although, depending on the situation, there is also a good chance she or he would attempt to slay the bartering PC to avoid having to pay up.

Any character of good alignment who willingly touches the sword receives 1d4 points of electrical shock damage. Characters of neutral alignment are seemingly unaffected, although they lose 2 hit points each day they retain the weapon in their personal possession. Evil creatures, of course, do not suffer ill effects from the sword.

Wind Tunnel: Investigation with a magical or shielded light source of the tunnel through which the wind is rushing so vigorously (it is impossible to keep a torch lit in or near the tunnel) reveals it to be a long and narrow passageway through which a humanoid could only barely fit, and then only if pack items were dragged behind and plate or other encumbering armor removed. The entrance to the tunnel and the wall near it are black, with a slight, sticky greasiness to them. Spelunkers may realize this means that the crystalline wall here has often been touched by passing creatures. Upon extremely close investigation, the long and narrow tunnel bears the minute scars and scratches of having been traversed recently. Wind is being sucked through the tunnel like a giant straw and it is difficult to converse with others if the tunnel is entered.

Pool of Water: The water level in the pool is quite high, with a large puddle of water apparently having recently overlapped onto a shallow depression in the floor near the pool, between the PCs and the pool. In fact, the puddle is not a puddle at all, but an aballin. Also known as "living water," this creature senses any movement through it to the pool or any attempt to take a drink of water from it, and rear up in the form of a gelatinous pseudopod that attempts to envelop the nearest person. An enveloped victim immediately begins to suffocate at the normal rate. The aballin can effectively suffocate only one victim at a time, though an unconscious victim dropped into the water may drown.

The pool does have a rope secured in it, as Simon said it would. The rope leads down and under an outcropping of rock, past some scattered coins (5 gold pieces, 3 silver pieces, and 19 copper pieces) and a jewel-hilted dagger (20 gp value) on the bottom of the clear pool.

If it seems at all feasible, Simon takes off during any battle with the puddled aballin. If it is not possible for him to escape safely, Simon cowers uselessly during this encounter, babbling in dwarvish about "living water" and the horrors of drowning.

Aballin (1): Int Avg; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, Sw 15; HD 3; hp 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg see SA; SA Envelopes victim, who begins suffocating; SD Immune to edged weapons (except 25% chance to harm enveloped victim), immune to fire, cold, electricity, poison, paralysis, and vision-based attacks; SZ L; ML 14; XP 270.

A Hard Day's Work Ends with Night

Unlike many areas in the underground realms, there is a reasonable amount of cleared space here, which makes this a prime location for overnight camping, although the wind and the lack of fuel will make it difficult to keep a fire going. The overwhelming darkness of underground caverns and the incredible silence make for difficult watches. Have each PC on watch make a successful Constitution check to avoid falling asleep during watch. In addition, Simon will attempt to escape during the night (if he is not already gone).

Although Simon will have done his best to persuade them not to do so (by argument and by refusal to accompany them), it is also possible that the PCs will return to the Tower, either to heal themselves and recharge or simply to avoid overnight camping in the tunnels. An early return will not be looked on favorably by Thurbal, unless the PCs are grievously injured or have located a clearly overwhelming force which they require assistance in overcoming. In addition, Simon, convinced that he has failed on his mission, continues to endeavor to escape for home before he is either caught by the drow or his attempted treachery is discovered by the PCs.

While the PCs will be healed and put up overnight, they will not be paid unless Thurbal is convinced that they have explored all available passages, a task which he believes will take at least several days. Some muttered grumblings from guardsmen about how "they don't make adventurers like they used to" should get the party back on its trek.

5. Wet or Dry

This section deals with the two alternative exits from the pool cavern, the clear pool at the end of the room and the long, narrow, and extremely windy tunnel exiting along a tangent of the outside arc of the room. The pool is about 12 feet deep at this location, but it is, of course, unknown how deep it may go before the rope leads one to a resurfacing location. It is not known how long the windy tunnel is, whether it continues to be barely passable, and whether it will lead to the same location as the underwater rope pull.

5A. The Wet-Head is Dead

The clear pool is a false exit and deathtrap, which is why Simon was given instructions to direct the PCs to it. The first risk is the puddled aballin which attacks immediately upon anyone touching or passing by the puddle. The second risk is that the rope by which the PCs can supposedly pull themselves to another aired chamber is, in fact, a rope to nowhere, installed simply to lure the PCs to their deaths.

Given Simon's description of his escape, the PCs may simply take a deep breath and plunge in. If so, remember that, since they will be exerting themselves in the swim along the rope, they can hold their breath only a maximum of the number of rounds equal to one-sixth of their Constitution score (rounded up), before they are required to make a Constitution check each round (at a cumulative -2 penalty for each check after the first). If a Constitution check is failed at any time, the PC immediately begins to gulp for air, loses half his or her available Strength and becomes disoriented. The next round such stricken PCs automatically lapse into unconsciousness underwater and begin to drown if they do not reach air.

Of course, the PCs may attempt to extend their ability to breathe underwater by using magical or nonmagical means to breathe during their swim (a *water breathing* spell, ring, or potion, or a makeshift underwater breathing apparatus constructed by filling a large leather sack with air and breathing from it as needed).

If the PCs attempt the rope and water exit, figure their available air and read the following, interspersing comments about their dwindling supply of air and Constitution checks where appropriate to their breathing method:

> The water is cool and refreshing and crystal clear all the way to the rocky bottom, on which you can see some coins and minor treasure scattered about. The rope is securely attached to a thick iron hook mounted just above the water level at the far side of the pool. Although the hook has a thin layer of orange rust, it remains strong. The rope itself is stout climbing rope, four braids strong, and slightly abrasive to the touch, there being no sufficient light source in this cavern on a continuous basis to allow the growth of any algae or moss.
>
> The current here is negligible and you have no difficulty pulling yourself along the rope (or swimming next to it) at a normal pace. The rope goes under an outcropping of rocks at the end of the cavern and light from sources other than any you carry goes away entirely. The rope goes fairly straight and somewhat deeper.

If the PCs indicate that they continue swimming for a second round, read the following:

> The tunnel narrows somewhat amidst large boulders and rock walls in the water, with more than a dozen alternate route choices facing you in the event that you were to choose to ignore the clear path indicated by the rope. You are still in fairly narrow confines at least 10 feet underwater.

If the PCs indicate that they continue to swim along the rope for a third round, read as follows:

> The alternate routes end as you enter a 6-foot-wide tunnel that leads off at an angle downward. There is current here assisting your progress. Although it would slow someone passing the other direction markedly, it is not so swift as to prevent headway back, with or without the assistance of the rope. You are now approximately 20 feet underwater.

After making any necessary die rolls, depending on the breathing capabilities of the swimming PCs, read the following to a PC who continues swimming for a fourth round:

> You break free of the confines of the tunnel, but the rope angles upward only slightly as you swim through a large pool of water. Suddenly you encounter something hanging on the rope itself, the skeletal hand of a humanoid, possibly dwarven. Investigating, you find that the hand is attached to a virtually complete skeleton, still with tatters of clothing and buckles about the body. The feet still have the leg irons and chain of a slave attached, although some effort was apparently made to remove them, as the chain is somewhat battered from being hit repeatedly with a rock or other hard, blunt instrument.

Obviously, the aballin has been feasting on this fairly recent dwarven escapee. That he got this far and drowned rather than being suffocated back at the cavern pool is merely

due to the fact that the aballin was puddled elsewhere at the time he entered. The skeleton might persuade a swimming PC to turn back; certainly Simon would have mentioned something like this (and, of course, he made no mention of the aballin).

In the event that the swimming PC or PCs persist onward, keep taking them through underwater tunnels, deeper, then shallower for two more rounds, then read the following:

> The rope angles sharply upward and you can tell from the decreased water pressure that you are finally nearing the surface. But as you go to surface, you realize, with a shudder of panic and dismay that the surface is merely the underside of a large rock slab, with no opening or air pocket in sight. It suddenly comes to you in terror that you have literally come to the end of your rope; it is securely attached to the underside of the underwater rock slab. A frantic search of the surrounding area indicates no place to surface and nowhere to go for air.

Unless the swimming PC or PCs have at least 40% of their time or air supply left, they are in deep trouble. There is no place to surface for air short of the cavern pool, and it is upcurrent at least eight rounds away (swimming faster will just use up the same air in less time). If a frantic swimmer specifically tries to locate his own previous exhaled air on the underside surface of a rock in a fairly open area of the underwater trek, such as the area near the end of the rope or the deep, open area after the 6-foot-diameter tunnel, and leaves the rope to do so, give him or her a 30% chance of finding an air bubble large enough to access and a 60% chance of accessing it for a shallow breath without taking in water.

5B. The Blow-Dried Look

The long, narrow, windy tunnel, or "straw," as it will be referenced for purposes of convenience, is a tight fit for the PCs. Although you should vary the exact dimensions as necessary to allow all of the PCs in the adventuring party to just barely fit, an approximate indication of the tightest portions of the straw can be garnered by picking up any three-panel gatefold screen commonly used as a DM's screen and opening it up flat. That is the size opening that the PCs must traverse for almost a quarter of a mile if they are to continue on to the second half of the cave.

In order for the players to get the proper feel for what the PCs are experiencing, it is important not to zip through this crawl as if it were a nonevent. Like the rope to nowhere in the previous section, the PCs do not know exactly what they are getting themselves into here. Read the following as the PCs enter the straw:

> It is, perhaps, the smallest hole you have ever crawled into, save for an occasional trapdoor to a cellar, except there you knew exactly where you were going, the journey was exceedingly short, and there was plenty of light. Here the darkness and howling wind envelop you as soon as you begin to crawl in. Thousands of tons of earth, stone, and clay hover above you like a tightening vise and sharp loose stones and outcropping rocks tear at your body as you arduously attempt to crawl forward. You rapidly realize that once you have entered the tunnel the confines are so tight that you cannot turn around, you cannot shift your arms from above your head to below or vice versa, you cannot readily access or wield any weapons you do not have in your hands throughout the tedious and tiring crawl, and you cannot converse readily with your companions because of the fierce wind. Bulky equipment must be dragged along on a tether behind you. Given the limited sources of light possible in this windswept "straw" and the blocking and shadows caused by your bodies and equipment, you are crawling virtually blind to no one knows where.

By doing the crawl round by round, the players will get some notion of the incredible length and difficulty of this arduous crawl and may choose to role-play any claustrophobic tendencies their PCs may have. Be sure to be as descriptive as possible about the darkness, the tight fit, and the seemingly unending nature of the crawl, to make the journey as spooky and vivid as possible. For example:

> The buffeting of the fierce wind at your face forces your eyes almost completely shut. The darkness conceals yet another sharp rock, and you hear ripping cloth as the rock scrapes along the side of your leg. The flickering shadows in the tunnel spin around you as you continue pulling your body forward one arm's length at a time for an eternity. You lose all track of time and distance as the crawl continues laboriously on. When will it end? Where will it end?

Given the limited space in the straw, weapons which require a significant backstroke (axes, broad swords, two-handed swords, and the like) or breadth of space (long bows, etc.) are largely useless, except to poke at anything ahead (nonproficiency penalty applies, half-damage). Daggers and thrusting weapons (rapiers, spears, etc.) and low-trajectory missile weapons (slingshots, crossbows, and the like, but not slings or short bows) operate normally, though any miss when shooting past party members results in a hit on the party member immediately in front of the attacking PC.

6. Blind Fighting

During their long, long, crawl through the "straw," the PCs must not only battle boredom, fatigue, darkness, and claustrophobia, they must battle a horde of flea-infested rats and the monster from which the rodents are fleeing in panic, a vicious and aggressive cave badger, which fights the PCs to the death. They also encounter a strange room in which they may, if they are clever, both rest and get a clue to the sinister forces at work under the Old Skull.

6A. "Fleaed" of Foot

The oppressive crawl through the narrow, rocky, darkness continues on, it seems endlessly. Your muscles ache and your shoulders scream desperately from the unceasing effort in cramped quarters. You long for light, air, and a good stretch. Should this tiny tunnel prove to end at a impassable chasm or simple dead end too small to traverse, you shudder to think of reversing your trek and arduously crawling backwards for the incredible distance you have already come.

Suddenly, your senses, dulled by the dark sameness of your surroundings for so long, become alert. A small skittering sound and the uncertain reflection of a tiny pair of eyes in the gloom ahead causes a surge of adrenaline to course through your body, and you involuntarily tense for whatever danger lies ahead. The skittering sounds increase, and you see more than one pair of beady little eyes focus on you before the edge of your light reveals rats—dozens of common rats, swarming towards you in a veritable frenzy. And then they are upon you, crawling over and about you, biting at your ears, face, and hands as they attempt to swarm over and past you.

The rats only do one point of damage per bite, with only the capacity for one attack apiece per round, though if left to swarm past the party relatively unimpeded, only one in four of the rats will attack at all. Although dirty, smelly, and quite flea-infested (have the PCs begin itching somewhat later in the adventure unless precautions are taken later to check for and remove any unwanted flea guests), the rats seek to move past the PCs, not attack them. Although this should give the PCs some pause, they will not have time to avoid the next encounter.

Rats (30): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1/4; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA 5% chance to inflict disease; SZ T; ML 4; XP 7.

6B. Badgering The PCs

The last of the flea-ridden rodents has barely passed, when the passage widens to almost twice its former width, allowing a brief stretch of the arms or the opportunity for a companion to move up to you. Although the fierce wind in the tunnel carries a considerable stench that seems to increase as you move forward, the breathing room is a welcome relief. The chance to maneuver, even slightly, almost distracts you, however, from what caused the rats to stream past your party in such haste: a plump, gray-and-black furred beast about three feet long, with long, curving claws, fearsomely sharp teeth in its long, wide, snout, and a white stripe down its back, is charging at you or the rats—it hardly matters which—at blinding speed.

The cave badger attacks the PCs unless they are able to quickly get out of its way and allow it to pursue the horde of rats unimpeded. Cave badgers are vicious and stupid, attacking three times per round (claw, claw, bite) heedless of danger or odds. They are larger than a common badger, but smaller than a giant badger, and have speed and burrowing ability superior to either. They exude a considerable stench and make for a greasy and unpalatable meat dish. A cave badger

hide can fetch as many as 30 gold pieces, if you can kill the beast without hacking up the pelt too much. After the obligatory comments about how the PCs "don't need no stinking badgers," the party may move on.

Cave Badger (1): Int Semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 9, Br 6; HD 2; hp 11; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-4 SZ S; ML 8; XP 50.

6C. Whirling Dwarvish

Crawling fewer than 20 feet farther ahead, the PCs enter into a circular cavern, about 50 feet across and six feet high, in which the winds are howling in a counterclockwise motion from the exit from the cavern (above and behind the party as it enters), around the circumference of the cavern to the tunnel through which the PCs enter. The cavern has been swept clean of dirt and small pebbles by the constant wind, but has a floor of loose rock, except in the center, where, strangely enough, there is a clear area, in which the remnants of a campfire can be found. The remnants are cold and do not seem to be of particularly recent origin. Investigation by the PCs will allow them to realize that a campfire is possible at that location because the circling winds form a calm in the exact center of the room, much like the eye of a hurricane. Here the PCs may gather, talk, eat, heal themselves, reorder their forces, and plan ahead in relative safety.

Careful searching of the room will reveal no treasure save a small throwing dagger, but if the PCs spend any considerable time here, they will be able to pick up the faint, garbled sounds of voices. The source of the sounds is a hand-sized hole on the floor near the southern wall of the cavern. The hole twists considerably and the bottom of it cannot be discerned.

The voices are quite indistinct, reverberating and echoing upon themselves through a very long distance, and the comprehensible snatches of conversation are only occasional, with the PCs being unable to make anything out at all unless they are careful to shelter out the sounds and dissipating effects of the swirling winds at the edge of the circular cavern. If they do so, the PCs will be able to discern that the voices are speaking dwarvish, although at least one of the speakers—the one speaking in a firm voice of command—is not a dwarf, although it too is speaking dwarvish. If the PCs make a successful hear noise roll after taking precautions to lessen the impact of the wind on their listening capacity, they can make out the words "We must escape before we too..." and "They can kill me, but I'll not work. . ." followed by a firm voice saying ". . .can do worse than. . ."

The small hole connects, through a very considerable distance and a natural amplification chamber, to a large lake-filled cavern, far below, where the drow are transporting dwarves which they have imprisoned and enslaved. See section 8. Rights of Passage and section 9. Plot Device, below. The large cavern is not easily accessible through this small, winding tunnel. The stiff breeze through it into the circular room would prevent access by the PCs even if they were to transform into a mist or gaseous state by some magic. Even if passage is possible, the tiny tunnel opens out in the vaulted ceiling above a huge lake and, thus, does not allow easy circumvention of the regular cavern routes.

Both the dwarves and the drow are unaware of the tiny hole's presence. Dropping objects into the hole accomplishes nothing as coins or other small objects are bound to get hung up before the go the length of the shaft. The natural amplification does not work in the reverse direction. Thus, the PCs may not communicate back to the dwarves or their drow enslavers.

6D. A Stab in The Dark

The exit shaft is much like the one through which the PCs entered this cavern: small, narrow, and extremely windswept. The winds will howl and buffet the PCs as they climb up into it to continue their journey into the depths of Old Skull, beyond and behind the Twisted Tower of Ashaba, Unknown to the PCs, as they crawl along the tunnel, they will enter an area of *continual darkness.* All normal and magical light (including that from any *continual light* rock made or obtained earlier) is nullified, plunging the PCs into total darkness. The casting of a *continual light* spell on the area will negate the effect so as to allow normal lights to function, although it will be impossible to keep torches lit in the constant, howling winds.

About 5 feet into the area of *continual darkness,* the rocks and stones over which the PCs have been crawling will begin to be somewhat smaller and looser. In fact, the PCs are approaching a slope of extremely loose gravel. Unless special precautions are taken, anyone who moves at least 10 feet into the area of loose gravel will have to make a Dexterity check at a -4 penalty each round to stop from sliding down the slope of loose gravel into a lo-foot-deep, spiked pit near the opposite edge of the area of *continual darkness.* Falling into the pit will do 1d6 hit points of damage, with a 30% chance of hitting one of the pointed spikes driven into the hard clay at the bottom of the pit for an additional 1d4 points of damage.

The spikes are, of course, covered with the special drow poison, and anyone who is damaged by the spikes must save vs. poison at a -4 penalty or suffer the usual effects (unconscious for 2d4 hours, unless counteracted). If the PCs want to take the time and help out others who may come this way, including themselves should they exit by this route, they may carefully remove the spikes and shovel the loose gravel into the pit, rendering it a minor inconvenience instead of a potentially lethal trap.

7. Spelling Relief

Depending upon the level, luck, and equipment of the PCs and the intelligence, cooperation, and caution of the players, the encounters of this adventure, particularly those in section 8. Rights of Passage and section 9. Plot Device, below, can be quite hazardous to the health and well-being—even the life—of the PCs. This can be especially true because of the significant use of poisons by the drow and their cohorts and thralls, particularly giant spiders.

While important lessons of teamwork and wariness can and should be learned by players by having their PCs come up against significant and potentially lethal challenges, and while heroic PC deaths in defense of the party can be appropriate and even fun, you as DM should use the usual means of adjusting the contours of the adventure to the party passing through it—adjusting the number of ambushing monsters (and treasure!) downward for a weaker party, adjusting poisons to be paralyzing rather than lethal to prevent the party from being decimated, or being generous on bonuses to saving throws or ability checks in ambiguous situations. This is not to say that the adventure should be turned into a giveaway or that the party should feel and act invincible or indestructible; rather the party should always feel that it is running at the risky edge of destruction and that, if it is destroyed, it is because of the consequences of their overly risky approach, not the random roll of the dice.

It happens from time to time, however, that the DM does not see the party's destruction coming in time to easily shape it into survival, by misjudging the party's capabilities, misremembering the extent of their injuries or healing capacity, or simply by a series of die rolls the results of which are already known. Fortunately, this is the Forgotten Realms, a place where a distracted sage named Elminster wanders, sometimes it would seem randomly, over the Realms assisting, in his own indirect and usually unfathomable fashion, those who act for the good of the Realms. This assistance, which is frequently life-saving, is almost always unexpected, as the Sage of the Realms studiously avoids those adventurers who actively seek his guidance and help.

Should such a situation arise, in which you feel extraordinary help to the party will foster the fun and proper adventuring spirit of the game, read the following paragraph and adjust PC statistics accordingly. Do not use this method of assistance more than once or to prevent a foolhardy and ill-considered plan or action from having its natural consequences (actions do have consequences in fantasy adventuring).

> Suddenly you see an elderly man wearing a mage's robe wandering toward you with a small dog scampering along at his feet. The mage has a full, flowing white beard. He is chewing on an apparently unlighted full-bowled pipe of gnomish make and carries a small, pale white, wooden wand in one hand. The dog, a small, black and white-furred beast of uncertain parentage, yaps and wags its long tail as it scurries along, first ahead, then behind, then underfoot of the old gentleman.
>
> The old man seems to be muttering to himself or to the unruly and overly friendly animal. As you lean forward to listen, you hear him say: "No distractions here. That's much better for training for such a young pup. Now, let's try again. Heel, I say—heel, *heel.*"

His arms wave randomly during his instructions, while the dog scampers along, unheedful of its master's voice. Each time, the mage says the word "heel," the wand flickers with a brief blue light and one of the members of the party is healed of all wounds (and the effects of poison).

Elminster's wand is merely performing its appointed function upon use of the command word "heal." Elminster will stay and continue to use the command word until as many of the party are healed as you, as DM, think is appropriate to the case, although any party members quick enough on the uptake to encourage the dog, Rufus, to misbehave long enough to get an extra "heel" uttered by the old mage should be rewarded for their effort. Any attempt to attack Elminster or Rufus, or to interfere or engage them in conversation in any manner, will result in a befuddled look from the Sage. With a muttered, "Oops, crowded here. Didn't mean to get in the way. Let's go back to the. . . ," followed by a brief flash, the Sage and his beast will be gone.

8. Rights of Passage

This section details the rooms and dangers of the second, more dangerous portion of the caverns beneath the Old Skull, the region of greatest drow presence.

The PCs exit the tunnel past the pit trap into an extremely large cavern, almost 150 feet across in either direction. As the airflow is no longer funneling through a small opening, the breeze here is noticeable, but not significant. The cavern has been cleared of loose rocks and bears obvious signs of significant use, from the abundance of tracks and the aggregation of soot at the ceiling level, to the marks indicating the working of tunnels, entrances, and exits to make them larger and more comfortable for nonburrowing creatures.

The PCs have a formidable task ahead of them if they are to fully explore these caverns, as there are a total of six exits from the cavern, aside from the small tunnel through which they entered. Five of the exits (8A-8E) are obvious upon entry. The sixth (8F) is a secret passage which can be detected by the usual means. Consistently choosing the passage to the immediate right will take the PCs to the scene of the drow's enslavement of the dwarves and the sinister plan they have to ravage the Dales. Other paths will lead through a dungeon-crawl, encountering various monsters and some treasure, but avoiding the final encounter—unless, of course, you wish to allow the PCs to locate the secret passage on their return to this room by the drow patrol (see below) having left it open when they last passed through or, perhaps, allowing the PCs to witness the gibberlings streaming through it when the daily gibberling exit occurs (see below).

Rather than describe all of the possible routes in linear fashion, reference should be made to the Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted 'Tower (Part 2) Map for information on the particular locations, their descriptions, and their inhabitants. In addition, the PCs may have up to four nonlocational encounters during their search of the many twisting, turning passages and caverns of this section of the Old Skull: (a) a drow patrol, (b) a mute dwarven escapee of drow enslavement, (c) a gelatinous cube, and (d) a horde of gibberlings.

For plot reasons, it is useful for the PCs to encounter the dwarven escapee and the gibberlings. The drow patrol can be used to provide extra action for more action-oriented gamers or higher level PCs in need of an extra challenge. The gelatinous cube is confined to the area of the multitudinous caverns separated from the tunnel to the drow by barriers past which the gelatinous cube is incapable of passing, such as a height barrier. See the Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted Tower (Part 2) Map for details.

Drow Patrol

The patrol consists of three drow fighters. The drow fighters wear the typical drow cloaks and boots which have the properties of *cloaks of elvenkind* and *boots of elvenkind* (except they give only a 75% chance to remain hidden in shadows). Each also wears the special black mesh adamantine alloy armor and uses an adamantine shield of the type that drow seem peculiarly fond. Two of the drow fighters carry *short swords +2,* one of whom also carries a small crossbow with darts (1-3 points of damage) coated with the drow poison. The third drow fighter carries an *adamantine mace +3.* All of the drow items lose their magical abilities if exposed to sunlight or taken from the drow realms, as explained earlier.

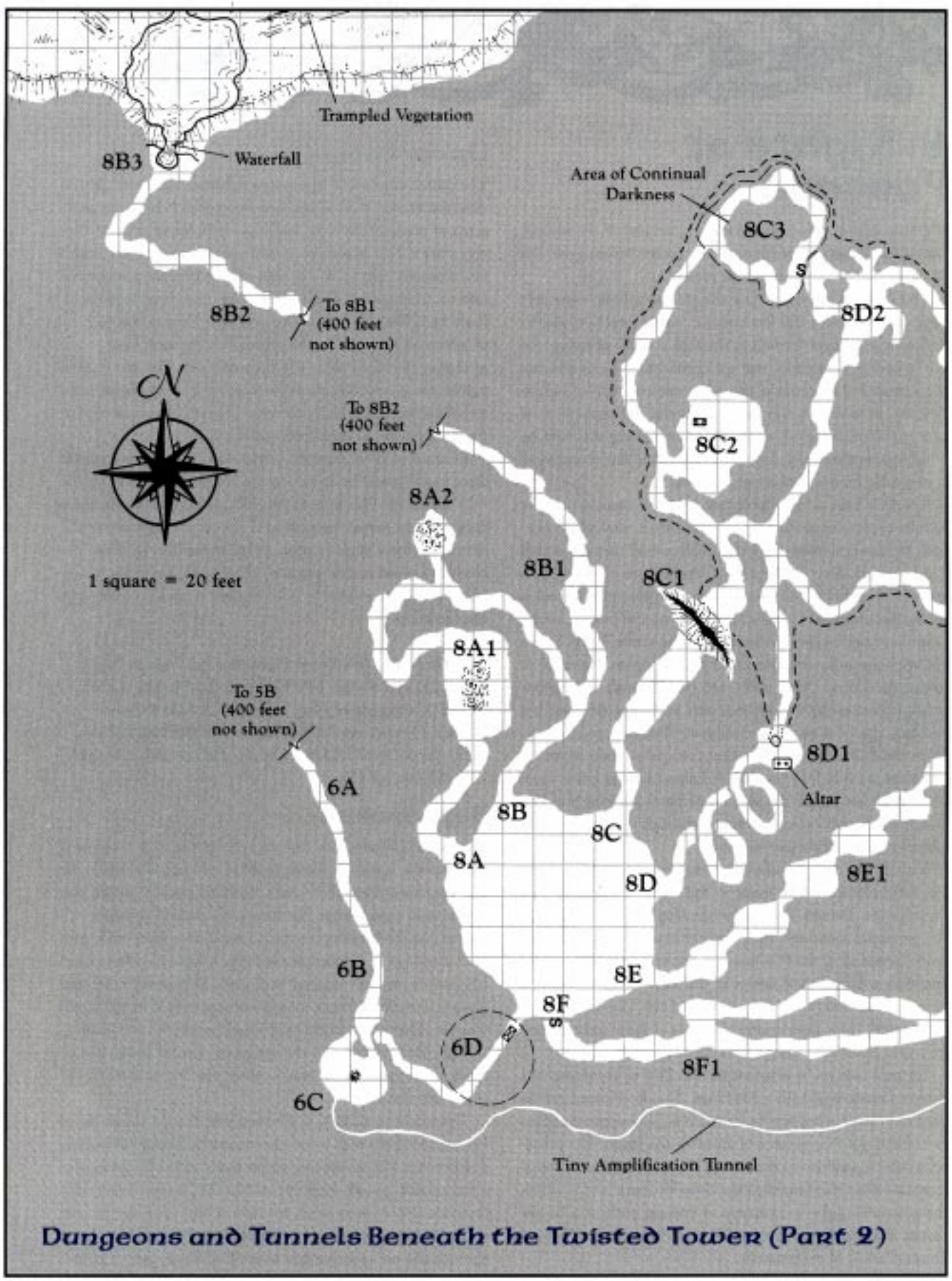
Because of their superior infravision, it is likely that the drow patrol would be able to locate and set an ambush for the PCs, unless the PCs were extremely careful. If captured, these drow will not reveal the path to the drow encampment or the details of their sinister plot, even under duress. They are recently arrived at this location, know little, and are attempting to prove their value by holding their tongue on what little they do know.

Drow (3, 2nd-Level Fighters): Int High to Supra; AL CE; AC 4 (10); MV 12; HD 3; hp 14; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 *(short sword +2)* or 1d6+4 *(footman's mace +3);* SA per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™; SD per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM; MR 52%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 650.

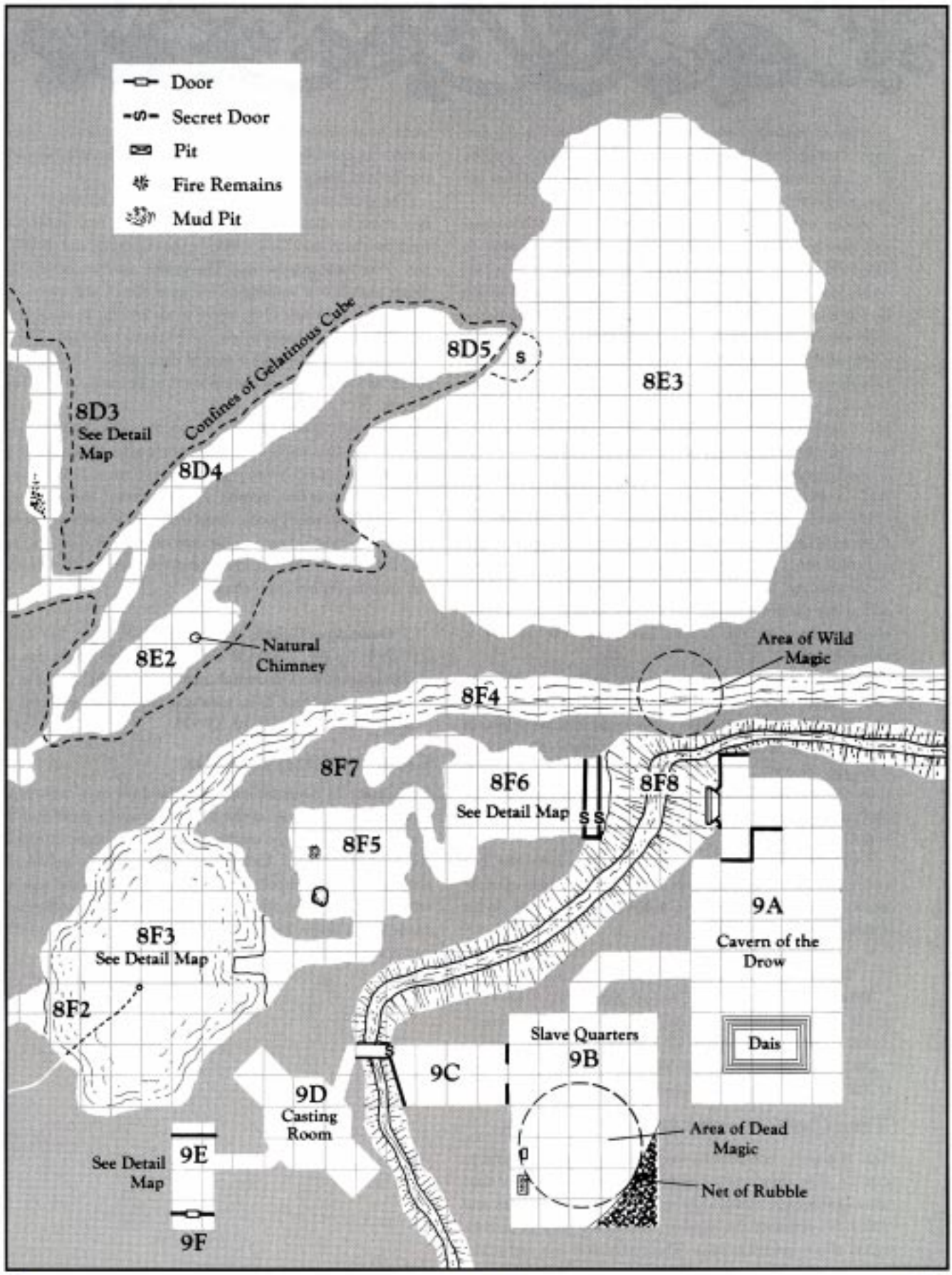
Soft Spoken

Tirrendale Talltales is a true escapee of the drow's enslavement of the dwarves. Thin, bedraggled, and wounded, the PCs encounter him unconscious behind a boulder just off one of the main passageways. He apparently passed out while hiding behind the boulder, hitting his head on a sharp rock-edge and dropping his rudimentary weapon, a big stick. His severed leg-iron chains are wrapped with cloth to prevent noise and chafing. His throat bears an ugly red scar from a sharp, jagged weapon. The injury appears to be some weeks old and healing, though the likelihood of the recipient thereof being able to speak is not high, as magical healing was not used when the injury first occurred.

Tirrendale is, in fact, a dwarven priest, now incapable of casting any spells with a verbal component because of the loss of his voice. His throat was cut as punishment for an earlier, unsuccessful, escape attempt, and he will never forgive the drow for this atrocity upon his person and upon his priestly magic. If brought back to consciousness by the PCs (either through the use of a *cure light wounds* or better spell or potion



Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted Tower (Part 2)


Door
Secret Door
Pit
Fire Remains
Mud Pit
Confines of Gelatinous Cube
8D5
8E3
8D3
See Detail Map
8D4
8E2
Natural Chimney
Area of Wild Magic
8F4
8F7
8F6
See Detail Map
8F8
8F5
9A
Cavern of the Drow
8F3
See Detail Map
8F2
Slave Quarters
9B
Dais
9C
9D
Casting Room
Area of Dead Magic
See Detail Map
9E
Net of Rubble
9F

or through binding of wounds, splashing of water, or the passage of time), Tirrendale is suspicious of his rescuers until the PCs demonstrate that they are good or, at least, that they are opponents of the drow who enslaved him.

While unable to talk to verbalize his priestly magic, Tirrendale is capable of a hoarse and raspy whisper in dwarvish, common, gnomish, or halfling. Although he is currently lost in the multitudinous caverns and passages in which he was found, he will be quite able to retrace the route to the drow encampment if he makes it back to the large cavern which the PCs entered when they finally exited the "straw," though he will not know the room until he sees it and does not, in any event, know how to get back to that room from his current location, as he wandered the tunnels in total darkness to avoid detection by his captors.

As Tirrendale escaped by crowding in with a gibberling horde as they were herded out of the drow encampment, he knows nothing of the traps or dangers that might exist for those traveling surreptitiously. (For example, he knows nothing of the skum or the aboleth.) If given a weapon he is capable of wielding, Tirrendale will fight to free his fellow dwarves and to slay the drow, though his effectiveness, given his weakened condition and his general lack of fighting prowess, is quite limited.

Tirrendale currently has no priestly spells at his bidding, given his unconsciousness and his inability, in any event, to verbalize, though he will make a sincere effort to be helpful in any way in which he is still capable. He is able to pray for new spells requiring no verbal component *(invisibility to animals* is the only one available at his level). He also has healing and lip reading as nonweapon proficiencies and will use them to benefit the party.

Depending on where the DM chooses to have the PCs encounter Tirrendale Talltales, he should be given sketchy knowledge of what places he must have passed through on his dark flight to freedom.

Dwarf (1, Tirrendale Talltales, 3rd-Level Priest): Int Very; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 3; hp 13 (at 1 when found); THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon; SA per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM; SD per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM; SZ S to M; ML 14; MR +4 on saves against magical attacks; XP 250.

The Cube and Missile Crisis

This encounter is especially useful if the PCs are careful to explain that they are trying to stick to the pathway that appears the most traveled or most free of loose stones and debris, for certainly the regular route of the gelatinous cube meets those qualifications. The encounter can only take place, however, within the range of the gelatinous cube's wanderings as indicated on the Dungeons and Tunnels Beneath the Twisted Tower (Part 2) Map.

The gelatinous cube is extremely difficult for the PCs to see, given its clear appearance and the dim and uncertain light by which the PCs are likely to be traveling, and the PCs are -3 on their surprise roll. The gelatinous cube attacks by touch and moves immediately toward the PCs at its maximum movement rate of 6, instinctively seeking to overcome those who fall or foolishly choose to stand and fight. Those who it touches suffer 2d4 points of damage from its digestive juices and must save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 5d4 rounds.

Obviously, given the nature of the gelatinous cube's attacks, missile attacks from a distance are the most effective party strategy. Even loose rocks thrown from a distance can eventually defeat this monster. If it is defeated, the party can retrieve 4 platinum pieces, along with two unmarked potion bottles (one containing a single draft of an *extra-healing potion* and the other an *elixir of health)* and the skeleton of a dwarf, still wearing leg irons and chains.

Gelatinous Cube (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA Paralyzation for 5-20 rounds, surprise at -3; SD Immune to electricity, fear, *hold,* paralyzation, polymorph, and *sleep* attacks; SZ L; ML 10; XP 975.

Gamboling Death

Once every 24 hours, at midnight, the drow over-mage conjures up and sets loose in the cavern passages a gambol of at least 30 gibberlings, the results of the hideous magic in which the drow are engaged. Each is armed with a crude, unmarked, short sword. The gibberlings will not be found in the area in which the gelatinous cube makes its deadly rounds, as they are herded with bright lights toward their primary exit (see 8B3, below).

Some PCs may simply break and run from the horrible sight of this writhing mass of furred death in a headlong rush toward them. The gibberlings, which appear to be an insane cross between a lion and an ape, lunge forward unceasingly to attack with their short swords. Unmindful of any personal danger, they will always press forward, not stopping to engage a particular opponent, but moving on to attack the next if that is at all possible. Only if a victim is killed or falls will they slow long enough to grab and consume a portion of the unfortunate fallen soul.

The gibberlings are not particularly strong or capable creatures, but their numbers and their lack of concern over their own self-preservation make them unnerving to deal with. Their only fear is bright light, particularly fire. While they will easily trample down an adventurer with a single torch, they will turn from or skirt around even an unarmed adventurer with a continual light rock or similarly bright flaming light source.

The PCs may either fight the gibberlings, get out of their way, or detour them by the use of bright light. If the PCs choose, they can easily track the path from whence the gibberlings came. The path winds through the caverns for some time before going back to the entrance cavern, through a now-closed secret door, and down the path on the immediate right as the PCs entered from the "straw" (behind the secret door). The tracks of the gibberlings were not there when last the PCs were in that entrance cavern, as one of the duties of the mongrelmen guards in these caverns is to camouflage such tracks the next time they pass through the room.

8A1: Hot Springs Eternal

The air seems more and more humid as you continue forward and you soon find it to be warm and oppressive. Water drips from the ceiling and flows in thin sheets and rivulets along the calcium- and crystalline-encrusted walls. The tunnel in which you are traveling opens up into a large room, perhaps 70 feet across. A large, terraced crystalline structure rises to the ceiling in the center of the room. The terraces of crystallized calcium carbonate form large pools of clear water, mist rising slowly from them.

The structure is a natural hot spring, with heavily mineralized water flowing up from the heated depths. While inviting, the pools contain water that is between 185° and 200° Fahrenheit—just short of boiling hot and certainly sufficient to cause 2d8 points of scalding damage per round in the event

some PC is foolhardy enough to jump in for a quick, hot bath.

Close inspection of some of the larger pools show a scattering of bones, mostly small rodents, but also an occasional humanoid skeleton, resting 10 to 20 feet below. A rusted iron helm, a steel buckler, and a silver dagger also rest on the bottom of one pool, along with a glint that may be a golden ring caught 15 feet down in a crevice of the rock wall forming a funnel to the hot depths below. The ring is unmarked, but is actually a *ring of swimming.* A low passageway leads out from the lefthand side of the cavern.

8A2: In The Mud

This chamber is circular, about 15 feet across, and is dominated by an 8-foot-diameter pit of bubbling mud, blurping, glooping, and splocking away. The bursting bubbles of mud spatter small globlets of hot (195° Fahrenheit) goo randomly about the room, with the result that the room is encrusted with dried and caked mud on the walls, floor, and ceiling.

A rune on the far wall, behind the mud pit, has been almost entirely covered by the thick remains of the splooshing and galumphing of the mud pit. Actually the elvish rune for "turn back," it is illegible unless the PCs do something to knock the dried mud off of it, which they can do by hand, with a long pole, or through careful placement of sling bullet shots or the like,

The ground here is heavily encrusted with dried mud also, and unless the PCs test it (perhaps by attempting to drive a staff deep into the dried mud somewhat in front of them), the PCs may not notice that a large portion of the floor of the room is actually a shelf of dried mud which has built up over a good portion of the real dimensions of the mud pit. This shelf of dried mud looks perfectly steady and safe, but cannot support any substantial weight. In reality, the only solid ground in the room is a ledge at the entrance to the room, around two feet wide.

If the PCs venture farther in, there is a significant chance that the mud shelf will collapse and throw them into the hot mud. Those rushing to help their companions may cause even more of the shelf to break off if care is not taken. The chance of the mud shelf collapsing increases with the number of PCs venturing onto the mud shelf and the distance from the ledge that they venture out, as follows:

- One PC within four feet of ledge=20% chance of collapse.
- Every additional PC on mud shelf increases the chance of collapse by 15%.
- Every PC who ventures more than four feet away from the ledge increases the chance of collapse by 15%.

PCs falling into the two-foot-deep hot mud immediately take 1d8 points of scalding damage per round; 2d8 points if they fail a Dexterity check, in which case they lose their balance when the mud shelf collapses and are completely immersed in the hot mud. Once removed from the thick liquid, the mud continues to do scalding damage unless washed or scraped off, though this damage will decrease each round, amounting to 1d6 points and 1d4 points of damage (half if the PC was not completely immersed), respectively, in the two subsequent rounds.

8B1: Mongrelman Lair

Because this room is in the path that the gibberlings use to escape and might provide access from the outside into the caverns, although that possibility is extremely unlikely given the nature of the exit (see 8B3, below), the drow have installed guards in this room. Since the guards must also be able to avoid the gibberlings when they come swarming through, the guards needed to have certain qualities of camouflage, as well as a necessary subservient obeisance and nasty disposition. This is why the drow chose some enslaved mongrelmen as their guards.

The four mongrelmen are able to hide themselves quite effectively from the gibberlings and the wandering PCs (80% chance of successful camouflage with one turn's notice, increasing 5% for each additional turn's notice), but have the intelligence to guard and attack or harass groups of adventurers.

Loyal to their drow slave masters, the mongrelmen use their mimicry and pickpocketing abilities to scare the PCs by mimicking fearsome monsters and by stealing small items as the PCs pass through the room where they stand guard. Should the PCs come back through the room to reenter the caverns, the mongrelmen attack from a camouflaged rear ambush position with nonmagical, drow-poisoned long swords supplied by the drow.

As the PCs have little chance of discerning the mongrelmen or their items as they pass through the room, read the following description to them as they enter:

> The passage opens up into an irregular (30 feet by 20 feet) room that has apparently been formed partly by collapse into lower regions. A large slab of broken granite dominates the center of the room, with a packed pathway passing on either side. There is an exit opposite the entrance. There is also considerable loose rock and dirt on either side of the pathway. Dirt sifts lazily down over the exit across the room.

The mongrelmen hide along the walls and the front side of the granite slab and attempt to pickpocket what they can

with relative ease as the PCs pass through heading outwards. If the PCs pass through heading inwards, the mongrelmen attack from behind as the PCs exit the room.

Mongrelmen (4): Int Low to Avg; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or 1-8 (long sword); SD Camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 65.

8B2: Go On. No, I Dare You.

The passage slopes steadily upward and it becomes apparent to you that you would be well above ground level were you not within the Old Skull itself. There is a foul smell here, and you are glad that the breeze is to your back as the tunnel widens yet farther, the ceiling stretching away into the distance. The ceiling is dark and appears to be swaying slightly. The floor is dark and the loose rocks you have encountered elsewhere seem here embedded in a dark, black clay.

The pathway here is actually leading up to a small exit below the rim of the Old Skull, and bats have taken up nesting on the high ceiling of this cavern. The dark, black clay is bat guano. Almost a thousand bats have taken up residence here and the swaying black ceiling is nothing more than their slow, flapping wings as they adjust their perch or seek increased ventilation during their perch. The bats are quite harmless and will not bother the PCs unless the PCs go out of their way to disturb the bats and rile them up to attack.

Bats (1,000): Int Animal; AL Nil; AC 8 (4 when swarming); MV 1, Fl 24 (B); HD 1/4; hp 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Sonar; SZ T; ML 4; XP 15.

8B3: What a Dive!

The passageway levels somewhat, and the ceiling drops to only about 10 feet high as you continue onward. After a short dip downward, the passage widens into a room. The room bears the evident signs of having been worked and dug out. A pool of water is the central feature of the room, with the overflowing water forming a small stream which flows to the far wall of the room and out a hole into the outside. You can hear the faint sound of falling water in the far distance.

Although this passageway leads to the outside and is the passageway through which the bats perform their nocturnal migrations in search of food and through which the gibberlings escape to the outside to terrorize the Dales, it is not an exit that can be reentered from below short of flight, and an overhanging ledge makes entry from above quite tricky. If the PCs investigate the hole through which the stream flows to the outside, they will find that the hole is in the midst of a sheer cliff face partway up the Old Skull. The falling water forms a deep, clear pool more than 220 feet below.

A jump from the hole will land one in the pool, in relative safety, if one is lucky. Looking down, it is clear that someone or something has jumped from this place unsuccessfully as several dark corpses and short swords litter the ground nearby. The corpses are gibberlings who have not survived the jump.

PCs who look out of the hole in the daytime or in full moonlight will also notice spokes of beaten down weeds, grass, and crops, emanating from the pool in several different directions. Most are razor straight for as far as the eye can see, while others veer sharply and randomly in several spots, with straight lines between the unexplained veering.

8C1: A Fine Line

The passage widens sufficiently for three to walk abreast, continuing in this manner for 40 feet, at which point a deep crevice crosses it at almost a right angle. The crevice is at least 150 feet deep and more than 15 feet across at the top, narrowing as it drops to only a few feet across at what appears to be the distant bottom, but which could be only a ledge leading to greater depths. Two ropes are tied to iron stakes pounded deep into the hard rock wall on the left side of the passageway: one at floor level and the other about four feet above floor level. Both stretch tautly across the crevice to similar spikes on the other side. The upper rope is offset about a foot to the left of the bottom rope.

This, of course, is the most rudimentary form of rope bridge, allowing one to walk on the taut rope below and steady oneself by holding on to the higher rope. A simple Dexterity check determines whether a crossing PC maintains his or her footing on the bottom rope while crossing. Should the PC fail, a Strength check determines whether the PC is able to hold on to the balance rope when the slip occurs, although extremely cautious or paranoid PCs may belt themselves in some manner to the upper rope. (When doing rolls for the crossing, also surreptitiously have each player make an extra roll on a d20 for use in the next section.)

Should PCs fall, allow a second Dexterity check at a -4 penalty to see if they catch the bottom rope as they pass and a second Strength check at a -4 penalty to see if they are able to hang on to it. Should a PC still manage to fall, use standard

falling damage (1d6 points per 10 feet) for the fall, giving him or her a 40% chance at each of 30 feet and, if necessary, 70 feet to hit narrow ledges on the way down.

There is no trap or danger here, though the PCs are free to take whatever precautions they desire or utilize other means to cross the deep crevice. Only if the drow learn of the presence of the PCs in this area of the caverns (through the drow patrol or such) will the ropes be partially severed on the side of the entrance cavern after the PCs have crossed to the other side. In such event, the ropes have a base 60% chance of breaking with the weight of one PC on them, increasing 10% for every additional PC on the ropes simultaneously. Note, of course, that there is little to no weight on the balance rope unless and until the bottom rope breaks or someone falls off the bottom rope.

This crevice prevents the gelatinous cube which wanders on the far side from escaping into other areas of the cavern.

8C2: Illusions of Grandeur

The drow over-mage has cast a *permanent illusion* in this room of a small hoard of treasure. No actual traps or dangers exist within or beneath the illusion. The drow simply know that the existence of treasure of this magnitude is enough to distract and delay many of their enemies for a considerable length of time. The treasure is not so large as to be noncredible, but not so small that it will be easily ignored while the mission of investigating the tunnels and caverns is pursued.

Secretly roll (or use the extra d20 roll made in the last section) a saving throw vs. spell for each of the PCs at a -4 penalty. Those saving see nothing of interest in the room but a small scattering of copper pieces and a small gold ring among the loose piles of rock on the floor of the cavern and, no doubt, wonder why their companions are making such a big fuss about the wonderful treasure they have found.

The gold ring carries a minute inscription on the inside in elvish identifying it as a *ring of detect invisibility.* In fact, there is no such thing as a *ring of detect invisibility* (and, if there were, it would be too powerful to merely be lying about here). The misleadingly labeled ring is actually a *ring of believe illusion,* which causes its wearer to see and believe any illusion, without a save. Thus, anyone who saves against the illusion in this chamber and puts on the ring immediately sees and believes the illusion.

Those failing their save see both the real and the illusionary treasure as if real. The treasure seems real to the touch, the coins clink satisfyingly when poured upon one another, and the gems glisten and cast prismatic rainbows when looked at in bright light. The illusionary treasure includes a number of magical items and potions, all of which are illusionary and will simply disappear when they are removed from the area of effect of the spell of *permanent illusion.*

Read the following description to the players as the PCs enter the room:

> A golden glint reflects the first faint rays of light to reach into this chamber, for it is littered haphazardly with booty of all sorts. Gold, silver, and copper coins lie scattered along the uneven floor. A small chest with semiprecious topaz and a few precious stones (primarily sapphire and emerald) is open on the floor. A golden ring, several potion bottles, and various bladed weapons are also strewn carelessly among the piles of coins. You have certainly heard of many larger treasures, especially in the songs the bards sing in the taverns late at night, but here is a modest fortune, apparently unguarded, free for the taking.

If the PCs ask about the magical weapons, potions, or golden ring, use the following descriptions to make the treasure seem real to the players as well as to the PCs:

- **Large Diamond Gem:** Valued at 1,200 gold pieces or more for the quality of the stone itself, the diamond has a magical aura about it should the PCs check via a *detect magic.* Hint to the PCs that it could be a *gem of true seeing.* Of course, it is not even an illusion of such, but rather an illusion of a fake *gem of true seeing.*
- **Two-Handed Axe:** This two-handed axe sized for dwarven use bears the inscription "Drow Slayer" on the oaken handle, along with ornate carvings depicting a battle scene between drow and dwarves in an underground setting.
- **Ebony Potion Bottle:** This contains a pearly luminescent liquid.
- **Silver Potion Bottle:** This contains a thin, caramel-colored liquid, in what appears to be an alcohol base.
- **Golden Ring:** Inscribed on the inside are the words "ring of detect invisibility." This is actually the *ring of believe illusion* mentioned above. It causes the wearer to believe any illusion encountered while wearing it, without a save.
- **Shining Short Sword:** This short sword is gleaming steel with a golden hilt. The blade is unpitted and razor sharp. The sword glows blue if a *detect magic* is used.
- **Silver Flask:** Finely crafted. Contains dwarven ale.
- **Coinage:** 137 gp, 346 sp, and 86 cp appear in the illusion. Thirty of the copper pieces are real.
- **Gems:** 6 sapphires, 8 emeralds, 1 ruby, and 34 pieces of topaz.
- **Silver Candlesticks:** 2, each valued at 20 gp.

8C3: Dark Circles Under Your Eyes

This entire area of the caverns has a *continual darkness* cast upon it. Although the floor is uneven, there are no hidden traps or dangers in this area (unless the gelatinous cube happens to be in this portion of the caverns at the moment), save that the darkened tunnel forms an irregular circle, with the entrance to the circle at such an oblique angle from behind a rock slab that parties who are unable or unwilling to dissipate the darkness may unknowingly wander through the circle a number of times before they begin to recognize the turns and contours of their dark path.

Have the PC leading the party make an Intelligence check on the third pass through (with a +2 bonus each additional pass through) if the players don't figure it out on their own. In addition, there is a secret door in the dark circle that is a back entrance to the drider lair described in 8D2.

8D1: Spiral Bound

The passage narrows somewhat so that no more than one can pass through it at a time. In addition, it begins a steady and fairly steep slope upward as it curves in at least two full circles clockwise at an increasingly sharp angle. The passageway ends in a 12-foot-diameter room, obviously carved out of the solid granite of Old Skull.

A flat piece of obsidian forms a crude altar or table of some kind at the one side of the roughly circular room. Cobwebs and dirt are prevalent in the room and on the table, indicating that neither has seen much use in recent times. In the center of the room is a four-foot-diameter hole that drops approximately 15 feet to what appears to be a tunnel below. A search of the room reveals nothing more of interest, unless the obsidian table/altar is moved. Underneath, in a small recess, is a single magical scroll. The scroll is fragile and old, but, if carefully unrolled, proves to be a scroll of *invisibility.*

8D2: Drider Lair

> The moderately sized (40 feet by 25 feet) cavern you have entered is unremarkable, except that the floor has been largely cleaned of loose rock and obviously leveled and filled in some places to make it more even. A few wisps of cobweb cling to the rocks, especially at the upper reaches. There are several openings in the cavern well above floor level. The passage continues onward out the opposite side of the cavern.

Most of the openings along the upper reaches of the irregular wall in this cavern are nothing but alcoves formed by swirling water in the dim past of the cavern's formation, but one, above a large rock slab on the west side of the cavern, has been expanded and worked to become the lair of a lone drider. The drider is able to view the PCs without showing himself by the use of a small natural hole in the cavern wall, connecting to the back portion of its lair.

Though now an outcast from ordered drow society and not acting as a guard under the orders of the drow leaders, the drider is no friend of passing adventurers and will take the opportunity to ambush some or all of the PCs, if possible. It will certainly protect its lair from incursion at all costs. The drider fights with a *long sword +3,* attacking once per round. The drider can also bite, with bitten PCs being required to save vs. poison at a -2 penalty or be paralyzed for 1 turn.

Hidden in the drider's lair, in a hole under a webbed lid covered with camouflaging dirt and rock are 9 platinum pieces and 2 rubies (30-gp value each). A secret door in the back left of the drider lair leads to the darkened corridor described in 8C3, above.

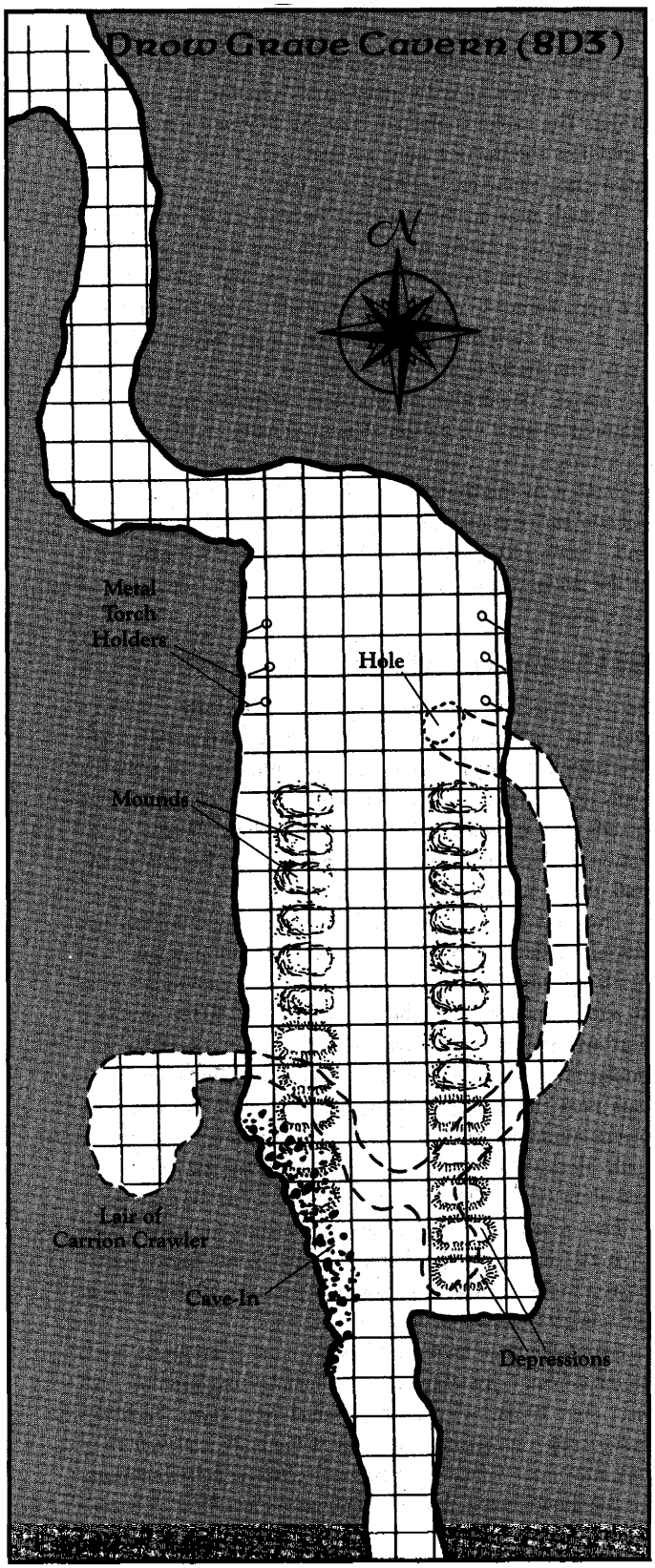
8D3: Grave Mistake

After a long, winding passageway, the PCs finally come to a wide, low cavern with a clay floor. The cavern is only eight feet high in the center, sloping in a gentle curve to meet the walls on either side about four feet from the clay floor. The cavern is 30 feet wide and almost 100 feet long. Careful observation reveals that there are six metal torch holders in the wall, three on each side.

The cave floor is completely free of loose rock, but not absolutely flat. In addition to unevenly sloping down, from north to south, there are slight mounds, well packed down, in an almost regular line in the area about 20 to 40 feet from the northwestern entrance passageway. Shallow depressions in a similar pattern can be discerned on careful observation in the area near the southern entrance, 80 to 100 feet from the northwestern entrance passage. The southern entrance is partially blocked by a minor cave-in of rock and clay at the far end of the cavern. There is a faint fetid odor to the cavern.

This cavern is used as a burial ground by the drow. More than 20 drow lie buried here, with the most recent burials nearest to the northwestern entrance passage and the oldest at the southern reaches of the burial cavern.

All of the drow were buried with their adamantine mesh armor on. Six carry weapons, one a magical *long sword +2.* All wear drow boots, two wear the special drow capes. Each was buried atop a spring trap such that if the body is picked up or rolled over, for example to remove a cloak or belted scabbard for the drow's sword, four drow-poisoned darts fling up in randomly determined directions (doing 1-3 points of damage



regardless of the effects or noneffects of the drow poison with which they are tipped).

In addition, a carrion crawler has been feeding on the bodies in this cavern from beneath. Thus far, it has fed upon the oldest of the bodies in the cavern, which explains the shallow depressions at those grave sites. The tunneling of the carrion crawler was also the cause of the minor cave-in at the southern end of the burial cavern. Should the PCs dig up one of the older graves, they break into the tunnel of the carrion crawler, which immediately moves to attack. In addition, the carrion crawler's tunnel extends up the side wall on the east to an opening in the ceiling of the cavern.

If the PCs linger in the cavern a full turn, the carrion crawler is attracted by their movement and lingers near the hole in the ceiling, waiting for an opportunity to pick off one of the PCs as she or he passes below it. The carrion crawler attacks with its eight 2-foot-long writhing tentacles, each of which receives a separate attack each round and which paralyzes the unlucky victim within its reach for 2-12 turns, unless the target makes a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation. The paralyzed victim is pulled to the carrion crawler, which then begins to bite the motionless meal. If the tunnel and lair of the carrion crawler are thoroughly searched, 235 silver pieces, 356 gold pieces, 79 platinum pieces, and 4 sapphires (300 gp value each) can be found, effects of its former mealtime victims.

Carrion Crawler (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 3 (head and tentacles), 7 (body); MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 8; Dmg 1-2 biting; SA Paralysis; SZ L; ML per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM; XP 270.

8D4: Declining Returns

If any of the PCs has tracking proficiency and uses it, large spider tracks can be seen in the soft, wet clay. These are principally from the drider, who utilizes this passage to access water and the giant spider web, described in 8E3, below. Although traction for the drider and his giant spider compan-

ions is no problem, the increasing steepness of the descent should begin to give the PCs difficulty, with each being required to roll against Dexterity each turn to keep from falling down.

PCs who fall will immediately begin a fast, comical slide down the ever-steepening path, bowling over any companions in front of them unless they make a Dexterity check at a -4 penalty. If the PCs progress safely to an even steeper portion of the path, Dexterity checks should be made by each PC at a -3 penalty, with those dodging falling compatriots checking Dexterity at a -6 penalty. The likely result of all of this is a slide down the slick and slippery slope into the dead pool described in 8D5, below.

Damage from the slide is minimal (1d4 points, none if cushioned by a companion). Ascending this slope is very difficult unless ropes or mountaineering equipment is utilized.

8D5: The Dead Pool

This oval-shaped, 30-foot by 20-foot room consists of little more than a deep pool of cool, crystal clear water. A few items lie on the bottom and can be easily recovered if the PCs are willing to dive down 40 feet to retrieve them (6 copper coins and two dull, pitted short swords). A few unconcerned rats drink from a puddle of water to the south of the deep, clear pool. There is the faint sound of trickling and dripping water from the cave wall on the north in a tiny rivulet into the pool. There is no apparent exit to the room.

Should the PCs attempt to leave the room by means of the pool of water, they will find that it drains through an opening too small to allow humanoid passage. Though there is an obvious current through this opening, it is not so strong as to endanger any PC who has a basic swimming nonweapon proficiency or a *ring of swimming* or a *potion of swimming*.

Investigation of the walls and ceiling in the room with the deep pool with a successful locate secret doors check will reveal that there is, indeed, a secret door in the ceiling above the pool itself. Although located in a place which is most awkward for the PCs and other humanoids, the secret door's upside down orientation and its location above a pool of water present absolutely no difficulty for the drider that constructed it. Adroit use of spikes, ropes, and frequent successful Dexterity checks, when combined with a successful open doors roll can, however, allow the PCs access through this panel, which accesses the area at the bottom of the web room of the giant spiders, described below in 8E3.

The door, used only by the drider, is not guarded or locked from the other side, though the opposite side of it is heavily covered with sticky web, which the PCs would be wise to avoid. Because it is also connected to the main web by a long, sticky strand, the door's movements will be noted by the giant spiders occupying the web room.

8E1: Razor Thin

The tunnels in this area were obviously formed in ages past by quickly coursing water, for the sides of the passageway are well-worn curves of varying widths, depending on the hardness of the particular layer of sedimentary rock through which the water passed, eroding more or less of the rock. Because of the extensive and powerful whirlpools and eddies of the strong aquatic current that once passed this way, the walls of the passage seem to undulate in and out, in a regular and soothing pattern of nature.

Occasionally one of the outward undulations will form a circular room of sufficient size for the entire party of PCs to camp or rest, with only narrow entrances on either end to guard. These entrances can be quite narrow, though their width varies somewhat by height, with the tendency being for the narrowest point to be about waist high on the average human male.

The PCs must occasionally wiggle or squeeze through these narrow openings if they are unwilling to crawl through the somewhat wider space below on their hands and knees on the rock floor, but the trip through this area, with the variegated sandy browns and clay reds of the undulating cave walls and the relative lack of danger, is reasonably pleasant.

In the course of this pleasant passage, however, is one unpleasant trap. Amidst the many narrow passages through which the PCs must squeeze is one in which razor sharp blades have been imbedded in the red sediment of the narrowest part of the passage. The red hue of the nearby rock hides the bloody stains of others who have located this simple, but extremely sharp set of blades in eons past, and the PCs have only a 20% chance of noticing the well-disguised blades prior to going through the narrow opening, unless a *find traps* spell or similar ability is actively utilized by the PC first going through the opening.

Those in back need not worry about locating the trap, as the blades will be more than apparent to the first passing PC. The blades will do 1d6 points of slicing damage to the PC and may also damage any equipment (for example, a pouch or scroll kept in the PC's belt or such) which comes into contact with the extremely sharp blades. The blades have also been salted to add extra pain, though no extra harm, to the injury, although the white, grainy residue on the blades may lead PCs who carefully examine the blades to wonder about slow-acting poisons.

There is an abrupt five-foot drop at the northeastern end of the undulating, narrow passageways, which does not allow the gelatinous cube to pass through this area.

8E2: Skylight

The passage here widens considerably and the undulating due to the coursing water of the cavern's formation is less apparent. There has been some sort of shifting or schism in this area since last the water eroded these passages, as there are slabs of fallen rock, piles of sifting silt, and deep fissures in the rock surfaces. The ceiling lifts ever higher above the relatively smooth walkway below, though it narrows into a deep crevice some 100 feet above the pathway. The pathway darkens perceptibly in color and there is a musty smell permeating the area.

There are thousands of nesting bats here if it is daytime and the PCs will be able to perceive, from the shaft of golden sunlight streaming through it into the depths of these foul caverns, a small entrance, most probably atop the Old Skull, through which the bats have gained entry to the caverns. Located hundreds of feet above the PCs, the narrow crevice does not provide for humanoid access to and from these caverns.

If it is night when the PCs pass this way, the bats will not be present and the PCs are unlikely to notice the small and distant entrance, although the DM may have a little fun by having one of the PCs catch a glint of the moon through the hole at just the right angle from just the right place. If the DM is lucky enough or clever enough to have the PCs arrive here anywhere near dusk, read the following:

> There is an abrupt loud flapping noise which is joined almost instantly by more and more of the same, until there is a kind of muted roar throughout the entire passageway, as thousands of nesting bats wheel and screech in the narrow vaults of the ceiling above you. Only an occasional errant loner heads your way, however, as the others turn in large wheeling phalanxes to make their way up and ahead.

The bat guano is not particularly thick here despite the presence of many, many bats. Clever PCs may wonder about this and, conceivably, even be on the lookout for the gelatinous cube which scours up the foul residue as it passes this way on its rounds.

8E3: Web Room of The Giant Spiders

This is a huge room (350 feet by 300 feet by 280 feet) in which a nest of giant spiders has formed a huge web to catch errant bats and other creatures foolish enough to roam this way. The drow occasionally toss dead or condemned prisoners into the web room in order to keep the giant spiders well fed and contained in this relatively useful and harmless place. Unless approached from the drider's secret doorway from above the dead pool (see 8D5, above), the cavern is suddenly encountered after a sharp turn in the passage leading from the vaulted skylight (see 8E2, above), with the pathway dropping off into nothingness in an abrupt manner which has caused more than one inattentive adventurer to fall headlong into the middle of the web, which forms a huge, angled plane of sticky death across almost the entire cavern.

A group of four giant spiders have taken up residence here, two adults and two adolescent males. The giant spiders will not move into the passageway to attack the PCs, being content with the pickings from their web and with the advantage they have when battling creatures which are entangled in its gluey strands. If, however, the PCs move into the web room, become entangled in the web, or take action to destroy their web, the giant spiders will move to attack. Given the deadly nature of their Type F poison (save vs. poison or die; save vs. poison at a +2 bonus if bitten by the not fully mature males), this is one encounter that may prove exceptionally risky, as well as unnecessary, for the PCs.

If the PCs do decide to fight the giant spiders and defeat them or bum the web, they will find a scattering of treasure (including 2,463 copper pieces, 1,187 silver pieces, 421 gold pieces, 37 platinum pieces, and a *potion of water breathing)* from former victims of the giant spider in a cache on the floor of the room. A diligent search of that area, which is heavily overlaid with sticky web if the web has not been burnt away, may reveal the drider's secret door to the dead pool room, discussed above in 8D5.

> **Giant Spider (4; 2 adult and 2 adolescent):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12; HD 3+3; hp adults 28, adolescents 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Poison (Type F: if bitten by adult, save vs. poison or die; if bitten by adolescent, save vs. poison at a +2 bonus or die); SZ L; ML 13; XP 650.

8F1: Dropping In

The drow have left a number of mongrelmen as guards of the route to their slave encampment, the first of which is positioned above the approach tunnel, where he can sight down the tunnel for interlopers and quickly move into position to begin an avalanche of small boulders and gravel which has been assembled in an easily tripped deadfall for just such situations. The mongrelman will easily sight the party if the party is using any light source whatsoever and may hear the party if it is traveling without light, but not moving silently. Read the following to the players:

You hear an abrupt, loud creak, then a snap, followed by a crashing and rumbling noise from almost directly above you. What do you do?

PCs who are directly below the falling debris and who do not make a successful Dexterity check at a -4 penalty suffer 1d6 points of damage from the falling boulders, stones, and rocks, which also cause a considerable ruckus (so much for the element of surprise) and kick up a fair cloud of fine dust and dirt. PCs failing a Constitution check spend the next round coughing and wheezing from the filth in the air.

The cave-in does not block the passage fully. The PCs can either try to squeeze through a narrow passage which remains or spend two rounds clearing debris to allow for a more comfortable passage and a speedier route of retreat should one become necessary. In the meantime, the mongrelman on cave-in patrol has run back to join his fellow mongrelmen in a planned ambush of the party as it moves forward.

8F2: Ambush of The Mongrelmen

The mongrelmen use their natural camouflaging capabilities to blend in with the walls and rocks along the passageway some 150 feet past the avalanche point. See the discussion of their camouflage capabilities in 8B1, above. This time there are a total of six mongrelmen, and their orders are not to steal or harass; their orders are to kill the intruders.

The mongrelmen wait until the PCs are halfway past them and make their first attack silently, using blowguns and darts tipped with the usual drow poison. As the PCs react to the unseen dart attack, the mongrelmen move out of their camouflaged positions along the wall and attack from the front, back, and sides using clubs and long swords. All fight to the death, with no morale check or surrender under any circumstances.

The mongrelmen do not speak to one another in any known language during the attack, although they do make various grunts, whistles, and groans. They are also excellent mimics of all sorts of animal noises and may imitate the growl of a tiger or the snort of an attacking wild boar or such in an effort to frighten or distract the PCs.

If the mongrelmen bodies are searched after they are defeated, the PCs can find the following treasure:

- 1d6 gold coins on each searched body
- 2d6 silver coins on each searched body
- 1 blowpipe and 3 poison darts on each searched body
- 1 dagger on the first body searched
- 1 *continual light* rock on the first body searched
- 1 key (this fits the leg irons and manacles of the dwarven slaves) on the second body searched
- 2 potion bottles (unmarked, but containing *elixirs of* health) on the second body searched
- 1 emerald (value: 20 gp) on the third body searched
- 1 mustache comb on the third body searched
- 1 note which reads "two, then one" in common on the fourth body searched
- 1 tinder box on each of the fourth and fifth bodies searched
- 1 silver mirror on the sixth body searched
- 1 small pouch of white granular material (salt) on the sixth body searched

What with their various whistles, growls, and animal shrieks, the mongrelmen tend to be rather noisy fighters. There is no doubt that the battle, and thus the presence of the PCs, will be heard by anyone or anything that is nearby down the exit passageway.

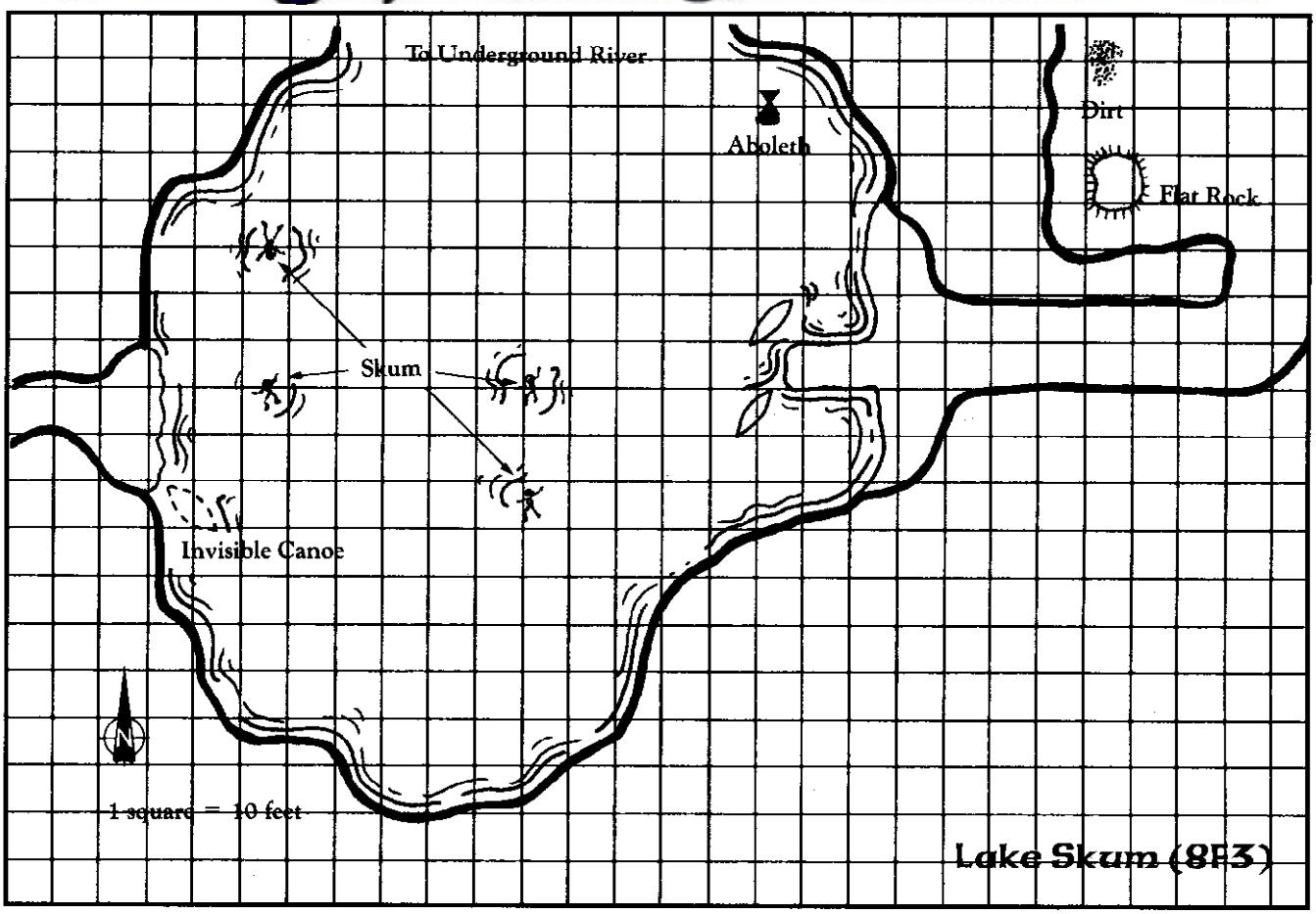
Mongrelmen (6): Int Low to Avg; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or 1-8 (long sword) or 1-6 (club); SD Camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 65.

8F3: Pond Skum

The passage takes an abrupt dip downward, and the air is tinged with moistness and the smell of mildew. Suddenly, you enter an extremely large, low, oval cavern covered almost entirely by an underground lake. The near shore laps gently up against the dripping wet rock wall on the near side, except for a small, rock-strewn landing at the entrance to the tunnel from which you came. On the far side is a much more significant rocky "beach," from which a sort of pier has been constructed from piled rocks. The pier juts out into the water approximately 20 feet and has two broad, flat-bottomed canoes tethered to it. An underground river flows slowly away from the lake through a large gash in the rock wall on the north side of the lake.

The lake is huge; over 200 feet wide and more than 150 feet across to the rock pier. If Tirrendale has been brought to here, he tells the PCs about a magical bridge used by the gibberlings to cross this lake. However, no such bridge exists now. (The magical bridge is formed by a wand wielded by the drow overmage and lasts only 9 rounds before dissipating. Due to the limited number of charges on the wand, the bridge is used for gibberlings, but not for normal access by patrols and others.)

Unknown to the PCs an invisible, flat-bottomed canoe lies tethered to the far right of the landing area on their side. This was used by the drow patrol to cross the lake for their regular



rounds and was made invisible to prevent its use by unwanted intruders. Unless the PCs use a *detect invisibility* or similar spell or ability, the canoe can only be detected by attempting to step out onto the relatively calm surface of the water at the farthest right side of the landing on which they stand. The only clue which might give the PCs the idea to attempt this is a very occasional and barely discernible bumping of the canoe bottom on a shore rock, which can be heard only on a successful hear noise roll.

The bottom of the lake drops steadily as one moves from shore until it is more than 100 feet deep near the center channel. The water is clear and fresh, although an odor of decay pervades the air in the room.

If the PCs find the invisible canoe or otherwise contrive to retrieve one or both of the quite visible flat-bottomed canoes on the other side of the underground lake without going into the lake itself, their crossing of the lake will be a bit spooky, but ultimately uneventful. If they attempt to swim or otherwise enter the lake, they are immediately noticed by the guardians of the underground lake, a bevy of 4 female skum.

The skum are horrible breeding experiments of the aboleth, a plump, fish-like abomination of evil that lives only to enslave land-dwellers and feast upon them and their knowledge. Bred as cannon fodder and beasts of burden, the skum have only an animal level of intelligence, but are quite formidable fighting machines, especially in their natural element. Somewhat resembling a cross between a giant frog and a hairless pit bull, their four appendages are long, with a webbed paw of two fingers and an opposable thumb, all viciously clawed. They are gray-green in color, with red and purple spherical eyes and no external ears. They have 18/50 Strength and can attack with their bite and each of their appendages each round when in water.

The skum, telepathically instructed by their aboleth master, have been commanded to guard the lake and prevent passage over it by anyone or anything not using one of the flat-bottomed canoes (including the invisible canoe, which they can perceive as such and allow to pass because of the distinctive wake it leaves in the water). They will fight to the death, as that is what they were bred and trained to do.

In addition to fighting the lethally efficient skum, be sure to keep in mind that the PCs must deal with the inherent difficulties of fighting in water.

Skum (4): Int Animal to Avg; AL LE; AC 7; MV 6, Sw 15; HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 5; Dmg 2-16/1-6/1-6/1-8/1-8; SZ M; ML 11; XP 175.

The aboleth, which is the master of the skum, stays in the lake, but maintains a safe distance from the fray. As it is able to telepathically communicate with the skum, it can direct the battle and perceive the outcome from relative safety deep underwater. If the battle ends with the skum all dead or incapacitated and a majority of the PCs grievously wounded and in disarray, the aboleth moves in for a physical attack of its own, using the four 10-foot-long tentacles extending from its bulbous, blue-green head to attack.

Each tentacle attacks separately, with any victim being forced to save vs. spell or have his or her skin (where struck) turn into a clear, slimy membrane in 1d4+1 rounds. This membrane must be kept moist with cool water or the victim will suffer an additional 1d12 points of damage per turn. Those attacking the aboleth first encounter a murky cloud of mucous surrounding it in the water. If this cloud is inhaled and the victim does not save vs. poison, she or he will be able to breathe water for 1-3 hours, but will lose the ability to breathe air for a similar period of time unless the mucous is dissolved from the throat by the use of wine or soap.

If the aboleth loses half its hit points in battle with the PCs or if a majority of the PCs remain standing after the battle with the skum ends, the aboleth decides that physical attack would put it at undue risk of death or serious injury. In such a case, it keeps its distance from the PCs and instead attempts to telepathically enslave one or more of the PCs. The aboleth can do this up to three times per day on any creature within 30 feet of it. Once the victim is selected by the aboleth, the combat is purely mental, with the aboleth attempting to enslave the mind of the victim by mental attack. Unless the victim makes a successful saving throw vs. spell, she or he will follow all of the telepathic commands of the aboleth, except those to attack party members.

In this instance, the aboleth is content to merely have the enslaved PC stop in this lake cavern room, knowing that such will delay, hinder, or prevent the party of PCs from attacking its allies, the drow. If the rest of the party attempts to force the enslaved PC to move on, the aboleth will make the enslaved PC leap and run randomly about, babbling and singing incomprehensibly. Not only does this amuse the aboleth and befuddle the rest of the members of the party, but it also again slows the party's progress out of this cavern.

Aboleth enslavement can be negated by a *dispel magic, remove curse,* or the death of the aboleth. In addition, if the enslaved PC is separated from the controlling aboleth by more than a mile, she or he gets one additional saving throw per day to break the enslavement and once again control his or her own actions.

Aboleth (1): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 3, Sw 18; HD 8; hp 32; THAC0 12; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-6/1-6; SA Membrane transformation; SD Slime; SZ H; ML 13; XP 2,000.

8F4: Downing Dwarven Spirits

Although it is unlikely, the PCs may choose to utilize the flat-bottomed canoes to travel down the underground river exiting the underground lake to the north. The current in the river is noticeable, but not strong, and it is clear that the PCs could easily paddle back upstream to the lake when they decide to do so. The passage of the river is dark and eerie, with many long, slow curves and turns. Sometimes the ceiling above the river dips quite low, forcing the passengers in the canoe to duck their heads or have them banged by a protruding rock.

After a 400-foot float downriver, the PCs will perceive a slight rippling of the water ahead and, if the aboleth from the cavern lake still lives, see that a giant spider web is stretched across the airspace above the water from edge to edge of the underground river. Actually, the giant spider web is an illusion created by the aboleth to trick the PCs into jumping in panic into the water, where the aboleth and any remaining skum can more easily deal with them.

Just beyond the illusion is a specialized type of *wall of force* across the entire airspace and barely extending into the river. Whether or not the web illusion is present, this barrier will prevent the PCs from passing abovewater unless the command word of passage is spoken. This command word, the drow word for "dwarf," is, of course, unknown to the PCs.

The PCs may pass by going underwater, but must deal with the aboleth and any remaining skum if they do so and will be unable to bring along the flat-bottomed canoes unless they sink and retrieve them. As an additional impediment, the illusionary web and the *wall of force* lie just on the far side of a spherical area 60 feet in diameter of wild magic, with the usual results should the PCs attempt any magical casting.

The underground river continues for many, many miles through the Underdark, acting as a highway connecting drow outposts with other evil forces of these realms (mind flayers, etc.) not the subject of this adventure. Eventually, the river connects with the River Tesh, near its confluence with the deadly lands of the Moonsea. The drow have been using the river to ferry dwarven slaves from the Moonsea to their underground lair beneath Old Skull.

If the PCs do pass this way, they may encounter several flat-bottomed canoes loaded with dwarven slaves and several drow

guards paddling upstream. The drow will not be expecting any trouble, given that the underground river and lake are patrolled by the skum and the aboleth. Thus, the waterway slave caravan can easily be surprised and taken, with the dwarves joining in on the melee to the extent their chains and their natural fear of water allow.

If questioned, the dwarves can explain about their capture, like others of their village before them, by drow slaving parties and their belief that they were being taken to an underground slave colony. This should be enough to get the PCs back to the underground lake cavern and beyond if they have not yet traveled there. Roll percentile dice to see what percentage of the dwarves may be willing to accompany them on the quest to free the remaining dwarven slaves. In addition, saving the dwarves from slavery is the type of act that may allow the PCs to recruit a henchman from the group of dwarves. See the Henchman section of the "NPCs" chapter in the *Player's Handbook* for details concerning this process.

8F5: Breathing Room

> Leaving the lake cavern, you progress down a fairly broad natural passageway which has been cleared of loose rocks and other debris. The passage takes a sharp northerly turn and enters a 50-foot by 65-foot natural cavern, with a 30-foot-high ceiling. A small pile of dirt in one corner, a large, flat rock suitable for use as a table for cards or dining, and an exit at the far right comer are the only significant features of the room.

There is nothing of interest in the room, although you should let the PCs distract themselves as much as they want searching the flat rock, poking at the random pile of dust, and looking for secret doors and traps. This may especially be the case if the PCs decide (wrongly) that the rooms beyond are a dead end.

8F6: The Rain of Pain is Mainly on The Plane

After a relatively short passageway, the PCs enter another room much like the last one they entered (see 8F5), at least superficially. Aside from a few boulders and a small cobweb in one corner, the room has no significant features, except for an exit straight across from the entrance. The exit leads to 8F7.

If the PCs take the time and trouble to locate secret doors or detect shifting walls along the eastern wall of this room successfully, they find that the entire wall slides silently to the north, revealing a 10-foot-deep alcove along the entire width of the wall. After opening completely, it springs back to a half-closed position unless held open. A second successful locate secret doors or detect shifting walls reveals that the back of the revealed alcove slides away to the north also.

If, however, the first shifting wall is closed (fully or partially) at the time the second shifting plane is opened, a trap is sprung. The trap, detectable by a successful find traps roll, but not by a *detect magic* spell (as it is completely mechanical in nature), consists of a simple mechanism strung to upset a large vat of strong acid in a chamber above the ceiling of the alcove if the secret doors are not properly opened, with the first being opened completely and held fully open while the second is opened.

The spilled acid rains slowly down on the PCs in the alcove through small holes drilled in a random and difficult to perceive pattern precisely for such purpose, inflicting 1d4 points per round of burning damage on exposed flesh and burning through leather in 1 round and metal in 1d6 rounds of contact. Glass and stone are impervious to the acid. The rain of acid continues for one hour after the door is opened, and after 5 rounds begins to puddle in the alcove such that standing or walking in the area becomes quite harmful to the boots and excruciatingly painful to the feet of those passing through.

8F7: End Game

> A brief passage leads to a 20-foot-diameter cavern. The ceiling stretches up into a deep fissure, which quickly becomes too narrow to climb. A rat scurries into a small hole along the floor as you enter.

No treasure, clues, monsters, traps, items of interest, or exits or entrances to this room are to be found, aside from the entrance the adventurers came in by.

8F8: Drawbridge/Draw Fire

> The sliding wall opens up into a wide cavern split asunder by an immensely deep crevice in the floor, from which rises a dull red glow and a ghastly sulfuric smell. At the other side of the chasm is an exit tunnel almost entirely blocked at the moment by an immense slab of flat stone, hinged at the bottom into the bedrock of the far ledge and held nearly perpendicular by large metal chains that go into the far wall next to the exit tunnel—in effect, a large stone drawbridge, now up, which could be lowered to span the deep lava chasm which divides the room. Narrow horizontal slits can be barely discerned on either side of the blocked exit. A small horn dangles from a post on the entry ledge on which you stand.

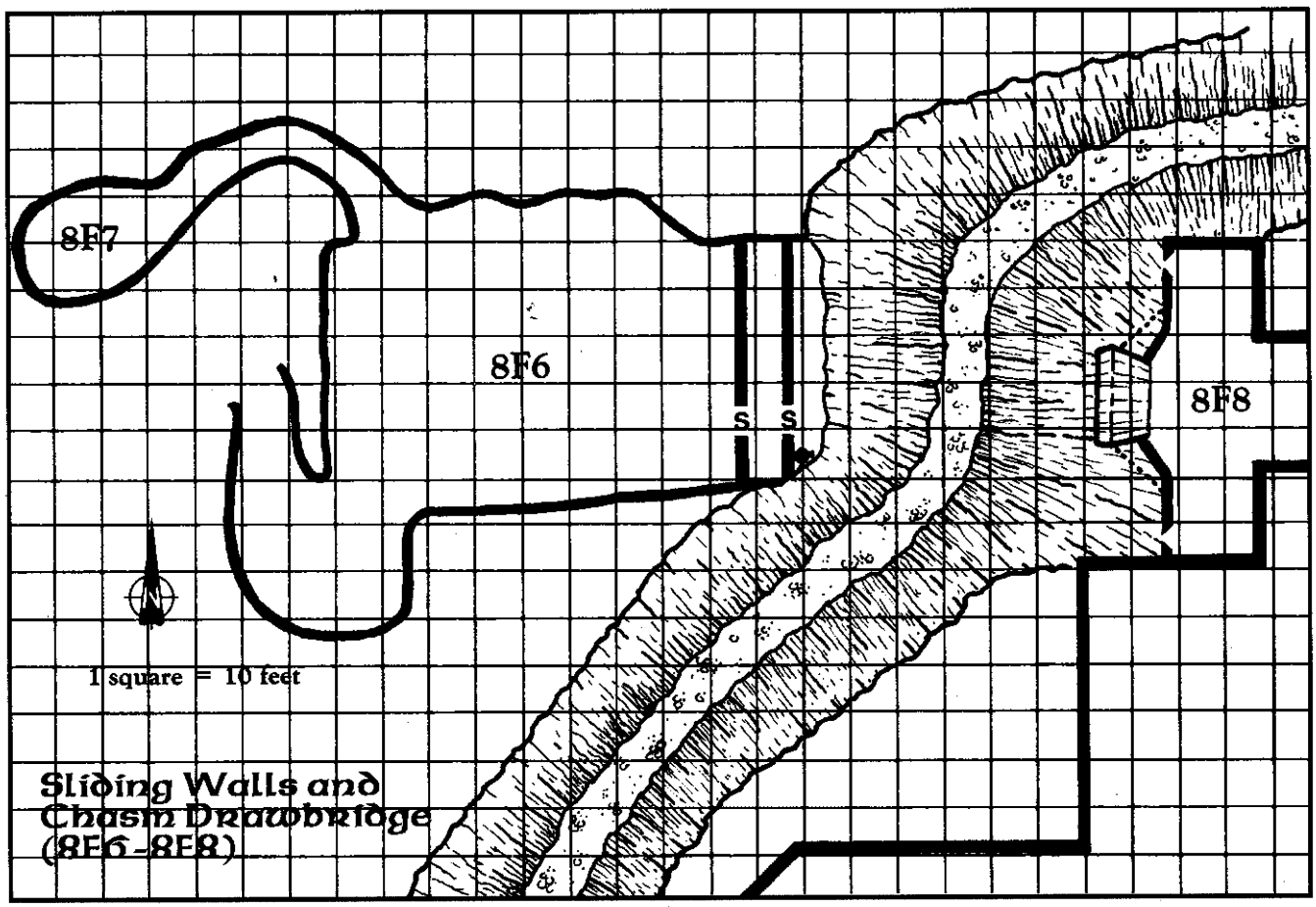
The narrow horizontal slits are the equivalent of arrow slits for the blowpipes of the mongrelman guards. These four mongrelmen have 12 darts each and will shoot at the PCs as long as the PCs stay in range and their ammunition holds out. The mongrelmen have been instructed not to lower the drawbridge unless a trumpeted passcode (two blasts of a horn, then one) is given. Being literal in following their instructions, the mongrelmen will not lower the bridge without the passcode unless affected by a successful *charm* or similar effect.

DMs should try to be reasonable if the PCs attempt other, more complicated, means of getting across the chasm and through the entrance to the drow fortress, and reward ingenuity if they see it. If the PCs have not found the note with the passcode on it or haven't figured out what it is, give them a chance to stumble onto it by hiding and watching a returning drow patrol use the passcode to gain entrance or by capturing a lone drow on his way to the fortress.

Note also that should the PCs choose to return to the Tower for reinforcements after having discovered the whereabouts of a drow fortress and slave camp, Thurbal and Mourngrym will not hesitate to supply troops (one to three squads of four 2nd-level fighter guards depending on the nature of the description given to Thurbal) and equipment (none of which can be too large to pass through the straw), though it would be several days before the troops would reach this spot.

In any event, once inside the entrance to the drow fortress, the PCs (and any reinforcements) will encounter the mongrelmen guards. The mongrelmen, unfortunately for the PCs, have been ordered to kill any who pass without drow escort (regardless of their use of the passcode) and will fall upon the PCs when they gain entry. Each of the mongrelmen carries a long sword as his chief melee weapon. In addition, these mongrelmen are somewhat tougher than those sent on patrol.

Mongrelmen (4): Int Low to Avg; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1, Dmg 1-8 or 1-8 (long sword); SZ M; ML 12; XP 120.



9. Plot Device

In this section, the PCs close to their final encounter with the drow, discover the drow's hideous plot of gibberling generation, and free a group of grateful dwarven slaves. Once having entered through the drawbridge and dispatched the mongrelmen guards by the entryway, the PCs will find themselves in the underground fortress and slave encampment of the drow. Unless the PCs have been much luckier or much more successful than average, however, the drow are well aware that there are intruders in their domain. Naturally they act to protect what is theirs and what they have taken from others in the course of their evil plot to destroy the Dales.

The drow have returned to the caverns underneath the Old Skull as a preliminary step in a push to retake the Twisted Tower of Ashaba. Their first efforts were to establish their base of operations here in their underground fortress and to trap and populate the passages and tunnels leading to it so as to discourage curious adventurers and so as to defeat the patrolling guards of Lord Mourngrym. In an effort to destroy the lands surrounding Shadowdale and distract and diminish the force of guards and other armed people holding the Twisted Tower and surrounding community, they also sought to loose the random, destructive power of packs of gamboling gibberlings. In these efforts they had the assistance of an unusual ally, the aboleth.

Although the aboleth is a hater of all land-based creatures, its evil is compatible with the deep-seated evil of the drow and their hatred for the surface-dwelling humanoids of the Forgotten Realms. In return for delivery to the aboleth of all humans (a particular culinary treat for the aboleth and useful in the creation of skum to serve it) captured by the drow in their raids in these parts of the Realms, the aboleth telekinetically instructed the drow over-mage on the creation of *permanent illusions* and on the transforming magic used by the aboleth to create skum. This latter instruction contained a variation from the process used by the aboleth, however. The revised process was meant to be used by the drow to turn dwarves, a constant enemy of the drow and competitor for control of underground territories, into gibberlings. These gibberlings would then be released on the surface to scour the farmlands near the Dales of all things living and good.

Each night at midnight the drow over-mage works his hideous and evil incantation, transforming some of the dwarven slaves brought to this place downriver from the north into gibberlings. Each of the gibberlings is given a short sword smithed by other dwarven slaves at a forge in the slave compound, and the gibberlings are driven by the use of bright lights out through the lowered stone drawbridge, across a magical bridge formed over the cavern lake, and into the tunnels beyond, where they eventually make their way to the opening on the far side of Old Skull, leap down to the pool below, and scramble out to bring mayhem, destruction, and random death to whoever and whatever may lie in their path of violence and chaos. (As mentioned earlier, the magical bridge is wand generated by the drow over-mage and only exists at the time gibberlings are being herded across.)

The PCs have the opportunity to stop the increasingly destructive actions of the gibberling hordes by freeing the dwarven slaves used by the drow to create the gibberlings, killing the drow over-mage and, with him, drow knowledge of this hideous process (the aboleths still know and occasionally practice this evil and abhorrent transformation), and returning to tell Lord Mourngrym of the drow slave trade in dwarves in the northern regions along the Moonsea, if, of course, they can survive the task.

Although, as mentioned earlier, the PCs could choose to return to the Twisted Tower and seek (and receive) reinforcements from Thurbal, the captain-at-arms, their greatest chance of glory and wealth is by accomplishing the task on their own. In addition, because the drow know of the penetration of their world by the PCs, they would surely reinforce their guard and military capabilities (and, perhaps, slaughter or transform into vile gibberlings the rest of their dwarven slaves) before Lord Mourngrym's forces could arrive to do battle. In the event that the PCs were to convince Thurbal to mount a very large force to clear out the drow fortress and move downriver against the slave trade, the drow spies learn of the expedition and retreat out of this area temporarily. After several months in refuge deep in the drow realms, the operation here will be begun again.

The drow fortress consists of only six areas: (1) the cavern of the drow; (2) the slave quarters; (3) the barracks of the drow fighters; (4) the casting room of the drow over-mage; (5) the drow throne room; and (6) the treasure chamber.

9A. Cavern of The Drow

As you clear the guard rooms adjacent to the drawbridge, you enter a huge cavern, obviously expanded from its natural size by skilled dwarven craftsmen and miners. The walls of the cavern of the drow carry strange drow runes, seen in the dim and uncertain light of a smoldering fire of coals. Five drow and four quaggoths rise up from behind a huge stone dais at the far reaches of the cavern.

There is one drow mage, one drow priest, and three 2nd-level drow fighters. All are capable of casting *dancing lights, faerie fire,* and *darkness* once per day. The drow mage and drow priest (each 5th level) also have the inherent ability to cast *levitate, know alignment* (hardly very useful in this situation), and *detect magic* once per day. The drow priest has the inherent ability of casting *clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion,* and *dispel magic* once each day.

In addition to these inherent capabilities, the drow mage can cast each of the following spells once on the day the PCs enter the cavern of the drow, subject to normal casting times and the possibility of disruption: *magic missile, phantasmal force, chill touch, shocking grasp, blindness,* and *scare.*

The drow priest also can cast each of the following spells once on the day the PCs enter the cavern of the drow, subject to normal casting times and the possibility of disruption: *command* (×2), *magical stone, heat metal, hold person, silence, 15' radius,* and *meld into stone.*

Both the drow mage and the drow priest are wearing the usual drow cloaks, boots, and adamantine black mesh armor. The drow mage also carries three throwing daggers covered with the usual drow poison. The drow priest carries a magical *staff of striking* (a +3 weapon doing 1d6+3 points of damage when using a single charge; 11 charges left).

The three 2nd-level drow fighters are each wearing adamantine black mesh armor and carrying *adamantine bucklers +3.* They each carry a *dagger* +2 and a *short sword* +2. The swords and daggers are *not* covered with drow paralyzing poison.

The four quaggoths each attack twice per round with their claws and go into a berserk rage if they fall to a quarter or less of their original hit points making them +2 to their attack and damage rolls. The drow will be more than happy to let the quaggoths draw first blood and take the brunt of the PC attacks at the beginning of the battle.

If the drow capture the PCs, they are stripped of weapons and items. Any dwarven PCs join the other dwarven slaves smithing swords, with a 25% chance each night of being taken and transformed into a gibberling. Any human PCs are held for several days, then delivered one a day to the lake cavern for enslavement by the aboleth. Once enslaved, they are taken downstream to the aboleth's hidden lair to be used in its hideous experiments. Other **PCs** are held three days and then thrown into the web room of the giant spiders.

Drow (5, 1 5th-Level Mage, 1 5th-Level Priest, 3 2nd-Level Fighters): Int High to Supra; AL LE; AC 6 (mage and priest), 4 (fighters); MV 12; HD 6 (mage and priest), 3 (fighters); hp 12 (mage), 20 (priest), 13 (fighters); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975 (priest), 650 (mage and fighters).

Quaggoths (4): Int Low; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-4/1-4 or by weapon; SA Berserk rage; SD Immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; XP 175.

9B. Slave, To Work

A terrible sight greets you in this dismal place. Almost 40 dwarven slaves are held at bay in the far corner of the slave quarters near a red-hot forge and stacks of steel ingots. The dwarven men appear to have been working the forge, their sinewy backs sweaty and sooty from the arduous task of forging short swords. The legs of the workers are manacled and chained to prevent any rapid movement toward the guards. The women and children are separated, somewhat to the left, beneath a heavy rope mesh holding what looks to be several tons of heavy boulders and iron ingots. A grinning drow fighter stands with a knife against the taut rope holding the heavy mass above the heads of the dwarven women and children. Another drow fighter has grabbed one of the older dwarven boys and is cutting off his short beard as the boy screams in terror and despair.

The drow fighters have the same weapons and capabilities of those encountered in the cavern of the drow (they're 2nd-level fighters, see 9A), but are younger and, ultimately, crueler and more cowardly by nature.

Although the dwarven women and children look severely threatened, the rope holding the boulders and ingots is extremely thick and would take at least two rounds (more if the drow fighter fails his Strength roll (14) on any round) to cut through, giving the PCs an opportunity to stop him by magic or a sudden attack, perhaps a called shot to the knife hand.

Unfortunately, unknown to the PCs, this slave area was purposely fashioned around a sphere of dead magic to prevent magical means of escape, with the result that most magic cannot successfully be cast here. If either drow fighter falls, the other will break and run for the relative safety of the drow barracks and the rest of the drow fortress.

The dwarves are usually guarded by most of the force which the PCs defeated in the cavern of the drow and are practically twitching with anticipation to make a break for it if they can do so without undue risk to the women and children. If the drow fighters are driven off, the dwarves will quickly take up the stacks of barely cooled short swords which they have been crafting and join the PCs in an assault on the rest of the fortress. Their manacles can be unlocked if the PCs have obtained a key in their earlier searches of dead bodies of their foes or the chains can be battered off at the forge and anvil.

The dwarves do not know all of the details of the sinister drow plot against the Dales. They simply know that each night some of them are herded through the entrance to the barracks to an unknown place, never to return or be seen again. Instead, they hear strange magical sounds, thumps, and screams of agony, before a horde of hideous lion-like apes (gibberlings) are herded through the door, pick up short swords, and leave through the cavern of the drow. They can; however tell the PCs of the gibberlings' fear of bright light as an effective means of avoiding and controlling the vile and loathsome beasts.

All of the drow in the fortress do know the entire details of the drow/aboleth conspiracy to turn dwarves into gibberlings should any of the drow be persuaded to talk to the PCs, though they may leave parts of the story out (like the existence of the skum and the aboleth if the PCs do not indicate they are already aware of them) if they feel it will endanger the PCs and give them an opportunity to escape.

9C. Fall In

The drow barracks are empty of drow fighters and contains little but cots for sleeping and an assortment of spare weaponry: four daggers, three long swords, and a spare set of adamantine black mesh armor. The far wall appears to have a simple door, somewhat ajar at the moment, for access to the rest of the drow fortress. The back wall is, however, an *illusionary wall* cast by the drow over-mage even before he obtained his new found aboleth magical knowledge. In fact, the entrance to the rest of the drow fortress is over a narrow span at the far right comer of the back wall, with the rest of the illusion covered back wall being nothing but a sheer cliff-edge over another deep fissure in the bedrock, more than 120 feet deep and almost 20 feet across at the top.

Those PCs who fail to a saving throw vs. spell will simply see those charging forward go through the entrance with the door now flung aside and those using the actual narrow span simply disappear in the dim gloom of the far corner of the room. Even if some or all of the PCs save against this trap, at least several of the enraged dwarves are likely to fall into the fissure before a general hue and cry is sounded, heard, and believed as to the treacherous and lethal nature of the illusionary doorway.

9D. Cast in Stone

The narrow span from the corner of the barracks leads up a narrow passage about 5 feet wide for 30 feet, then into an octagonal room carved from solid bedrock. The room is 60 feet across and 30 feet high, with a black velvet drapery hung along two opposing octagonal sides. A stone door exits from the side of the octagon directly opposite the entrance and strange runes and magical signs surround the central area of the floor. It is here that the drow over-mage works his foul magic, transforming dwarves into the mindlessly violent gibberlings. The center of the floor is scratched from the fingernails of the dwarves during the painful writhing of the transformation process and it is dark with dry blood from the even more hideous failed transformations.

Both of the curtained areas have been trapped. The curtain over the southeastern area, the over-mage's living space, has been simply trapped to tip a vat of acid of the type used in the earlier shifting walls trap (see 8F6, above) on the floor of the casting area, burning the shoes and bodies (1d4 points of damage per round exposed to the acid) of any there as it is spilled.

Investigation of the second (northwestern) curtain reveals the drow over-mage's workshop, piled high with all sorts of chemicals and components, evil potions, and mysterious objects (including the wand for creating magical bridges). A *wall of force* prevents entry into the workroom, however. The drow over-mage is not here, but he has left a message, which flares up in a phosphorescent blue shimmer on the wall of force as the curtain is drawn back. Appearing first in elvish, the letters reshape and form themselves into common, then dwarvish:

> Know ye this, that all shall be turned to stone, shall ye enter this place of the over-mage.

The warning is correct, though it leaves much unsaid. Should the *wall of force* be disrupted or the workshop entered by other means (tunneling or the like), all of the over-mage's items, potions, and evil objects shall turn to stone, though those entering and their clothing and objects will not be affected by this strange magic. It will, however, prevent looting of the magic of this evil place. A *dispel magic* will not alter the rocky nature of the items. Casting of *stone to flesh* or *transmute rock to mud* works to create flesh or mud, as the case may be, but does not bring the magical items back to a usable state.

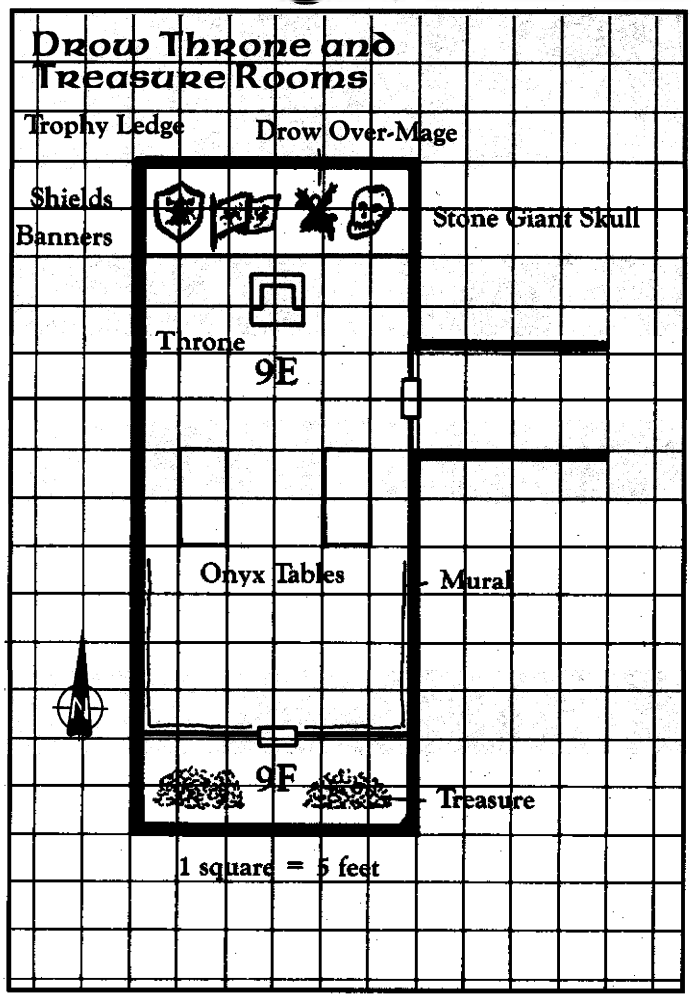
9E. Over-Mage/Over Throne

Over-Mage Kurastan has taken refuge from the attacking PCs and dwarves in the drow throne room, whence he rules this small throng of drow. The room is 50 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 20 feet high. It contains a large, stone throne (encrusted with six black pearls with a value of 50 gp each) and two onyx tables with drow runes carved upon them. A giant mural covering the three walls of the chamber facing the drow over-mage's throne shows dwarves being captured by the drow, carried in boats on an underground river, working in a slave camp, and being magically and painfully transformed into gibberlings, which are then shown stampeding away through tall fields of ripe wheat. The mural works around a small door in the wall directly opposite the throne.

Having clambered up onto a ledge which holds various souvenirs and trophies of past triumphs (dwarven banners, shields, and the skull of a stone giant) over and behind the throne, Kurastan prepares for the PCs' assault. A 9th-level mage, he has these spells on the day the PCs attack, in addition to his inherent spells (see the cavern of the drow, 9A, above): *change self, hold portal, grease, shield, blindness, improved phantasmal force, Melf's acid arrow, feign death, illusionary script, vampiric touch, fear, illusionary wall,* and *teleport.*

Kurastan prepares for the arrival of the PCs by casting his *hold portal* on the door into the throne room and *grease* on the floor in the area just inside the door. He casts an *illusionary wall* in front of his position on the trophy ledge behind the throne and casts a shield to protect himself in the event of discovery. If discovered he uses *fear* to cause his enemies to flee, then *Melf's acid arrows* and *blindness* to attempt to drive them away or escape. If engaged in hand-to-hand melee, he attempts to use his *vampiric touch.* If things look to be going badly, he *teleports* back to his former home deep in the drow Underdark, far from this place.

Although Kurastan is a very powerful foe for the PCs to encounter and defeat, they will have the aid of the dwarves, and Kurastan will only use his magical capacity for destruction if threatened with death. Otherwise, he simply hides for now and rebuilds this drow effort to destroy the Dales and



rake over the Twisted Tower at his leisure. After all, Kurastan still has the knowledge of the gibberling transformation magic. As very low-level parries are less likely to discover Kurastan and threaten him severely, there should nor be too much likelihood of more power than the party can handle. If it seems overly difficult, simply have Kurastan *teleport* away much earlier in the combat with a hideous and evil laugh on his thin lips.

Drow (1, Kurastan, 9th-Level Wizard): Int Supra; AL CE; AC 7 (plus benefits of *shield* spell); MV 12; HD 9; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™; SD per MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM; SZ M; ML 14; XP 6,000.

9F. Spoiling The Divide

The small door in the throne room leads to a small treasure chamber. As the drow were still in the process of completing their fortress here and it was to be only temporarily used until the raking of the Twisted Tower, none of the accumulated drow treasure from their home in exile has been transported to this place. The treasure here, such that it is, consists mostly of weapons, coins, and only a few artifacts and potions taken from captured dwarven slaves. Since most of the dwarves were captured while working deep in the dwarven mines or traveling through little-used passages underground and nor by raids of entire dwarven settlements, the drow did not liberate great quantities of treasure. Since that was nor the purpose of their raids, they did nor mind, although the PCs might be somewhat disappointed at the meager quantity of useful valuables.

The treasure room contains 39 platinum pieces; 836 gold pieces; 2,298 silver pieces; 2,219 copper pieces; 62 battle axes, 2 of which can be determined to be magical *(battle axes +1)* if the PCs use a *detect magic* or similar means of discerning their quality; 15 daggers (4 *daggers +1,* 1 *dagger +2);* 5 rubies (75-gp value each); 6 unmarked potion bottles (4 *potions of extra-healing* and two containing dwarven ale); 2 potion bottles marked "levitation"; 3 wine skins filled with dwarven ale; 6 emeralds (5 of 60-gp value, 1 of 300-gp value); and 1 shield *(shield +1).*

A complicating factor with regard to the treasure is that almost all of it came from captured dwarves, and standing about are former dwarven slaves who can identify some of the items as belonging to themselves or others that they know. In addition, the dwarves are obviously destitute and far from their various homes. While many of them are quite willing to forego any treasure in favor of their liberators, there will be some grumbles if the PCs merely grab everything for themselves. A subtle reminder of this situation, should the PCs nor notice it, will be an enterprising dwarf who generously offers the PCs "first pick of the dwarven treasure for their brave saving of the dwarves from the drow slavers." In the end, however, let the PCs' consciences (and character personalities) be their guides. The dwarves will tolerate any decision the PCs make.

Homeward Bound

The adventurers and their dwarven refugees must, of course, make their way out of this place. Although the dwarves are aware of the river exit, they have no fondness for water or for reliving their last journey upriver and are happy to follow the player characters out the way the PCs came in, although the long trek through the narrow "straw" elicits many comments about how the place needs the fine hand of dwarven reconstruction and widening. Care should also be taken as to whether traps or creatures avoided during the trip to the drow fortress are tripped or encountered by the adventurers and the dwarves on the way back.

10. Epilogue

Upon arriving back at the lower levels of the Twisted Tower of Ashaba, the first member of the guard to encounter the PCs politely inquires as to their status, health, and needs, then asks them to wait while he gets assistance. If the PCs quibble about waiting, he simply calls out for aid for the returning "patrol" and some "refugees." All will be accompanied or assisted to the guest quarters in the main building of the Tower itself and supplied warm food, cool drink, clean clothes, and a soft bed by sympathetic and efficient servants.

After the PCs have had an opportunity to clean up, rest, and refresh themselves, they will be invited to the desk of the captain-of-arms to report on what they found and whether the tunnels are free of threats to Shadowdale, the Tower, and Lord Mourngrym. Thurbal also mentions to the PCs that he will be similarly interviewing several of the dwarven leaders to elicit whatever additional information they may have concerning this insidious drow incursion.

Thurbal is polite, complimentary, but professional and efficient in his manner. He asks the adventurers to list the treasure recovered, but will make no mention of the percentage to be remitted to the treasury of Shadowdale unless asked. In that event, he will simply say that he is not a "tax collector" and that they can talk about that with "his lordship." Thurbal asks for a detailed map of the tunnels, rooms, traps, and creatures in the drow underground and promises to send further patrols to dismantle or deal with any items the heroes were unable to take care of themselves.

At the end of the debriefing, Thurbal explains that Lord Mourngrym wishes to speak with them personally the next morning, after breakfast. He then inquires as to whether their needs are being properly attended to by the servants and sends them back to their respective rooms for an evening of quiet rest.

An Appreciative Audience

The next morning a patrol of guards in full dress regalia arrives to escort you to your audience with Lord Mourngrym in the Lord's Court on the main level of the Tower of Ashaba. A trumpeted fanfare sounds out as you enter the main door and Lord Mourngrym stands as you approach the dais from which he governs the happy and hard-working folk of the Dales. Briefly stroking his full mustache absentmindedly, he waits for you to come to a halt, then moves off the dais to greet you each personally, shaking your hand briskly and firmly as he gives each of you a brief and genuine word of praise and thanks.

Stepping back and up one step of the dais, he looks at the group of you with a gleeful grin on his face: "It is with a lightened heart that I give to each of you the official thanks of Shadowdale and the inhabitants and keepers of the Tower of Ashaba for your excellent performance of your hired task in reconnoitering and clearing the tunnels beneath us of dangers to the good people of the Dale and to the serenity and safety of these environs. Thurbal, captain-of-arms of the guard of the Tower of Ashaba, has spoken most highly of your ability, daring, and conscientiousness in performing your task. He is a good and honest man, whose judgment I trust in matters of fighting and administration."

A brief frown comes over the lord's countenance: 'There is one matter on which I disagree with good Thurbal, however. He recommended that your base pay for the performance of services be doubled, but I believe that that would not be nearly enough." Lord Mourngrym breaks into a broad smile again. "When you leave here, you may each stop by the Office of the Exchequer and receive a base payment of three times the agreed amount. As for the bounty that you may have recovered from your adventures, the government makes no claim at all, save for normal taxes, especially as much of the recovery appears to originally have been appropriated from those poor dwarven slaves, with whom I am sure you were most generous and giving. Again, my official and my personal thanks to you all."

After chatting briefly and informally with the PCs should they wish it, the audience ends. The PCs are escorted to their rooms, where they are invited to stay another night if they so desire.

Upon leaving the Tower, the PCs find that news of their exploits have preceded them into town. Many &rangers amble up to give thanks and congratulations as they pass, their cups are filled with wine with no payment asked, and the adolescent womenfolk wink and giggle, then scamper off as they approach. Market day is in full swing, and as they pass by a grain booth, a weathered, sunburned man of about 50 years of age approaches the PCs respectfully, a small pouch (with 20 sp in it) in his hands.

"Silas Standard is my name. I believe I have something that belongs to you." He hands over the small pouch, which clinks with the distinctive sound of silver coin. "They weren't cattle drivers after all, but I understand that you're the one's that a'stopped 'em and that's good enough for the reward by my account." He doffs his cap and nods. "Thank ye, for all the farmers and workers in the sun." He turns and goes back to his booth to resume bargaining.

A brief recount of the PC's debriefing with the captain-of-arms is tacked up on the post at the crossroads just outside of the Old Skull inn. The notice is signed "Adieu. Llewellyn the Loquacious. Rumors for Sale. Returning someday soon."

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The following is a complete listing of the publishing history of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting line. Some of these products are no longer in print. This listing is accurate through December of 1993.

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FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures (1990) by Jeff Grubb & Ed Greenwood.

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FR4 *The Magister* (1988) Ed Greenwood and Steve Perrin.

FR5 *The Savage Frontier* (1988) by Paul Jaquays.

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H1 *Bloodstone Pass* by Douglas Niles and Michael Dobson.

H2 *The Mines of Bloodstone* by Michael Dobson and Douglas Niles.

H3 *The Bloodstone Wars* by Michael Dobson, Douglas Niles, and Ed Greenwood.

H4 *The Throne of Bloodstone* by Douglas Niles and Michael Dobson.

FRC1 *Ruins of Adventure* (1988) by Mike Breault, David Cook, Jim Ward, and Steve Winter. Tie-in with computer game of same name from SSI.

FRC2 *Curse of the Azure Bonds* (1989) by Jeff Grubb, George MacDonald, and others. Tie-in with computer game of the same name from SSI (based on the novel of the same name).

FA1 *Halls of the High King* (1990) by Ed Greenwood.

FA2 *Nightmure Keep* (1991) by Rick Swan.

FRQ1 *Haunted Halls of Eveningstar* (1992) by Ed Greenwood.

FRQ2 *Doom of Daggerdale* (1993) by Tim Beach.

FRM1 *The Jungles of Chult* (1993) by Jim Lowder and Jean Rabe.

13-15 *Desert of Desolation* collection (1987) Tracy and Laura Hickman, Phillip Meyers, Peter Rice and John Wheeler. Earlier modules collected and further developed for use in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting.

Knight of the Living Dead (1989) by Allen Varney. A solo Catacombs™ adventure book, taking place within the walls of Waterdeep.

Kara-Tur

Kara-Tur, the Eastern Realms, a boxed set by Batista, Christian, Nephew, Swan, and Pondsmith is designed for the original AD&D system, but contains a great deal of useful information on the lands to the far east of the Realms. Adventures supporting this set include:

OA1 *Swords of the Daimyo* by David Cook.

OA2 *Night of the Seven Swords* by Pickens, Cook, Johnson, Swan, Carmien, and Ritchie.
OA3 *Ochimo the Spirit Warrior* by Jeff Grubb.
OA4 *Blood of the Yakuza* by David Cook.
OA5 *Mad Monkey vs. the Dragon Claw* by Jeff Grubb, who denies responsibility for the title.
OA6 *Ronin Challenge* by Rick Swan and Curtis Smith.
OA7 *Test of the Samurai* by Rick Swan.
FROA1 *Ninja Wars* by Nigel Findley.

Maztica

The *Maztica* boxed set (1991) by Douglas Niles and Tim Beach details the True World lying to the west of the Realms. Adventures and accessories supporting this set include:
FMA1 *Fires of Zatal* (1991) by Jeff Grubb and Tim Beach.
FMA2 *Endless Armies* (1991) by Jeff Grubb.
FMQ1 *City of Gold* (1992) by John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet.

Hordelands

The *Horde* boxed set (1990), by David Cook, details the lands between the Realms and Kara-Tur, the home of the Tuigan horde. The Empires adventure trilogy (1990) by Troy Denning further explores this region:
FRA1 *Storm Riders.*
FRA2 *Black Courser.*
FRA3 *Blood Charge.*

Zakhara

Though playable without the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting box, the *AL-QADIM® Arabian Adventures* (1992) by Jeff Grubb & Andria Hayday can be set to the south of the established Realms in the land of Zakhara, detailed in the Lund of Fate boxed set (1992) by Jeff Grubb. Supporting sourceboxes include:
ALQ1 *Golden Voyages* (1992) by David Cook.
ALQ2 *Assassin Mountain* (1993) by Wolfgang Bauer.
ALQ3 *A Dozen and One Adventures* (1993) by Steven Kurtz.
ALQ4 *Secrets of the Lamp* (1993) by Wolfgang Bauer.
City of Delights boxed set (1993) by Tim Beach.

Atlas and Maps

The *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Atlas* (1990) by Karen Wynn Fonstad.

Two large-scale trail maps (1989) of the pre-Avatar series Realms were also published. *Waterdeep* covers the entire western Realms (though not Maztica or Zakhara) while *Kara-Tur* covers the entire eastern Realms.

Boardgame

The Great Khan Game (1989) by Tom Wham, set in the Whamite Isles in the Sea of Fallen Stars. The game is not horribly "true" to the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting "feel," but a heckuva lot of fun.

Novels and Short Story Collections

In addition to the (huge) amount of game material in the Realms, the land is the setting for a great number of independent novels, trilogies, and a short story collection:

The **Moonshae Trilogy** by Douglas Niles.
Darkwalker on Moonshae (1987)
Black Wizards (1988)
Darkwell (1988)

The **Icewind Dale Trilogy** by R. A. Salvatore.
The Crystal Shard (1988)
Streams of Silver (1989)
The Halfling's Gem (1990)

The Finder's Stone Trilogy by Kate Novak and Jeff Grubb.
Azure Bonds (1988)
The Wyvern's Spur (1990)
Song of the Saurials (1991)

The Avatar Trilogy by Richard Awlinson, a pseudonym for two authors.
Shadowdale (1989) by Scott Ciencin
Tantras (1989) by Scott Ciencin
Waterdeep (1989) by Troy Denning

The Dark Elf Trilogy by R. A. Salvatore.
Homeland (1990)
Exile (1990)
Sojourn (1991)

The Heroes of Phlan Series.
Pool of Radiance (1989) by James M. Ward and Jane Cooper Hong
Pools of Darkness (1992) by James M. Ward and Anne K. Brown
Pool of Twilight (1993) by James M. Ward and Anne K. Brown

The Empires Trilogy.
Horselords (1990) by David Cook
Dragonwall (1990) by Troy Denning
Crusade (1991) by James Lowder

The Maztica Trilogy by Douglas Niles.
Ironhelm (1990)
Viperhand (1990)
Feathered Dragon (1991)

The Cleric Quintet by R. A. Salvatore.
Canticle (1991)
In Sylvan Shadows (1992)
Night Masks (1992)
The Fallen Fortress (1993)

The Druidhome Trilogy by Douglas Niles.
Prophet of Moonshae (1992)
The Coral Kingdom (1992)
The Druid Queen (1993)

The Harpers Series.
The Parched Sea (1991) by Troy Denning
Elfshadow (1991) by Elaine Cunningham
Red Magic (1991) by Jean Rabe
The Night Parade (1992) by Scott Ciencin
The Ring of Winter (1992) by James Lowder
Crypt of the Shadowking (1993) by Mark Anthony
Soldiers of Ice (1993) by David Cook

Other novels, not belonging to a series (at this time):
Realms of Valor, (1993) a collection of short stories edited by James Lowder
Spellfire (1988) by Ed Greenwood
Prince of Lies (1993) by James Lowder
The Legacy (1992) by R. A. Salvatore
Starless Night (1993) by R. A. Salvatore

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Aballin ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate or tropical/ Wilderness or subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (9)
TREASURE:	I
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 15
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Drowning
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (10′)
MORALE:	Very steady (14)
XP VALUE:	270

Also known as living water, aballins are fluid monsters that entrap and drown creatures unfortunate enough to venture within their reach.

Aballins in their passive state present the appearance of large puddles of seemingly normal water, devoid of fish or other living creatures. However, those looking down at the aballin often notice coins, jewelry, or other metal effects of the monster's past victims resting beneath the surface of the water, apparently awaiting recovery. Though they resemble an elemental creature of water, aballins are actually comprised of a weak acid, which over the course of three weeks digests organic matter, leaving behind items made of metal. Because of this, spells such as water breathing offer no help in surviving the effect of drowning in their fluids.

Combat: In its passive state, the aballin is indistinguishable from fresh water, and cannot be harmed by attacks which would otherwise prove harmless to that element. Such an unthreatening appearance often results in potential prey attempting to take a refreshing drink or trying to simply move through the monster or reach in to recover tempting valuables. Any of these actions arouse the aballin to attack, and the creature instantly alters its molecular structure into a gelatinous pseudopod that lashes out and tries to envelop a victim. If its attack roll succeeds, a man-sized or smaller creature is drawn within and begins suffocating (see "Holding Your Breath" in the *Player's Handbook* for the effects of drowning).

While in this gelatinous state, the aballin becomes susceptible to attacks by blunt weapons of +1 or greater enchantment. Edged weapons have no effect whatsoever, and actually have a 25% risk of instead striking any person trapped within the aballin's amoeboid form. Those within the form may attack, but cannot escape the suffocation attack or use items requiring normal speech (such as spells). An aballin will only attack one individual at a time.

Aballins are immune to fire, cold, electricity, poison, and paralysis. A *transmute water to dust* spell will cause an aballin to make a save vs. death; if it fails, it will perish. A *lower water* spell will force the creature to make a save vs. spells or release its victim immediately.

Aballins have no eyes. Instead, they keep track of their victims through scent and vibration. For this reason, they are immune to all spells or attacks that alter vision or that affect the subject through vision. These include *invisibility, color spray, hypnotic pattern,* most illusions, *fire charm, blindness, blur,* and many others.

Habitat/Society: While sometimes seen outdoors masquerading as a puddle, small pond or fountain—or even a drainage ditch—an aballin is most often encountered in damp cavernous areas with an abundance of water, which permit it to blend in with its surroundings. While in the element of water, the monster is naturally invisible, and so it prefers to rest within the shelter of pools or other small bodies of water.

The aballin is able to propel itself through water with amazing speed, and occasionally traverses lakes, rivers, or streams in search of food. It may also move slowly upon land by oozing, or by laboriously extending its gelatinous pseudopods and inching itself forward, much like a slug. (In fact, like the slug, the aballin leaves a faintly discernible slimy trail when traveling upon land.) Due to its semi-liquid composition, the creature is incapable of ascending surfaces with greater than a 30° slope.

Aballins can be encountered either singly or in families of up to four individuals. Mated pairs occasionally function as a single entity, with doubled size and Hit Dice, particularly if there are any young present.

Ecology: These monsters occasionally prove useful in keeping down the population of other harmful creatures or plants which might be found in or near water. They also function as scavengers, digesting any remains they happen upon in their travels.

Baneguard ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (guardian)
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	V
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-10
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	4+4
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	By weapon or 1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Magic missile
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Blink
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	As for skeleton type
SIZE:	M (5′-6′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	975

Baneguards are skeletons, usually but not always human, animated by clerical spells to serve as guardian creatures. The *create baneguard* spell was originally researched by priests of Bane, but in the years since the demise of that deity the secret of the spell has been spread throughout the Realms, such that many other evil (and not so evil) deities allow their priests to use it.

Usually found as guardians, baneguards are identical in appearance to normal skeletons, but have additional deadly powers which they reveal once they are in combat.

Combat: All baneguards are silent but intelligent, wholly evil servants, capable of independent, reasoned, malevolent behavior. A baneguard can *blink* (as in the 3rd-level wizard spell) once every turn. This effect lasts for up to four rounds and must be continuous. It cannot be stopped and then resumed; once ended, a full turn must pass before the baneguard can *blink* again.

Baneguards can also cast one *magic missile* spell every three rounds. Each spell creates two missiles causing 2-5 points of damage, which come into being from a baneguard's bony fingertips (or what is left of any extremity, if the fingers are missing), and can be directed at separate targets up to 70 yards away.

Baneguards can use all normal weapons, inflicting normal weapon damage rather than a straight 1-6 points damage. Most are armed with swords or maces. Baneguards can employ all magical items that do not require verbal commands, living flesh or organs (for example, ointments and potions), and the like.

Baneguards suffer damage from edged weapons, fire, spells, and holy water as normal skeletons do. They may break off combat if their orders permit. Baneguards are turned as wights.

Habitat/Society: As baneguards are created, they have no societal organization. They go where commanded, and do as commanded. They are used primarily by evil faiths as guardians, but neutrally aligned faiths with a ready supply of skeletal remains use baneguards as well, particularly those who venerate gods of death.

Ecology: Baneguards eat nothing. They do not contribute to the natural ecosystem in any way. As manufactured creatures, they cannot be said to have a natural habitat. They are guardian creatures, and are found wherever they have been placed by their creators.

Direguards ™

Some baneguards appear to be wearing black, shadowy armor, which is semitransparent so that their bones show through, and red flames burn in their eye sockets. These direguards are AC 6, and can see invisible objects and creatures. Direguards are used by the clergy of Cyric, and are turned as wraiths. The *create direguard* spell is as the *create baneguard,* but is 7th level and guarded jealously by the clergy of Cyric. Direguards have an XP value of 1,200 each.

Create Baneguard (Necromancy)

6th-level Priest Spell
Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 9
Area of Effect: 1 skeletal body
Saving Throw: None

The casting of this spell transforms an inanimate skeleton of size M or smaller into a baneguard, gifted with a degree of malicious intelligence. Only one baneguard may be created at a time using this spell. The baneguard is capable of using its abilities the round following creation, and needs no special commands to attack. The material components of this spell are the holy symbol of the priest and at least 20 drops of the blood of any sort of true dragon.

The *create direguard* spell is similar, save that it is a 7th-level spell and has a casting time of 1 round.

Dracolich ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	See below
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	As per individual dragon
TREASURE:	B, H, S, T
ALIGNMENT:	Evil (Any ethos)
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	See below
MOVEMENT:	As per individual dragon
HIT DICE:	As per individual dragon
THAC0:	As per individual dragon
NO. OF ATTACKS:	As per individual dragon
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon and spell use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spell immunities and spell use
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	As per individual dragon
MORALE:	See below
XP VALUE:	As per individual dragon, plus 1000 (both dracolich and its host must be destroyed)

The dracolich is an undead creature resulting from the unnatural transformation of an evil dragon. The mysterious Cult of the Dragon practices the powerful magic necessary for the creation of the dracolich, though other practitioners are also rumored to exist.

A dracolich can be created from any of the evil dragon types. A dracolich retains the physical appearance of its original body, except that its eyes appear as glowing points of light floating in shadowy eye sockets. Skeletal or semiskeletal dracoliches, their flesh worn away, are also common.

The senses of a dracolich are similar to those of its original form; it can detect invisible objects and creatures (including those hidden in darkness or fog) within a 10-foot radius per age category and also possesses a natural *clauraudience* ability while in its lair equal to a range of 20 feet per age category. A dracolich can speak, cast spells, and employ the breath weapon of its original form. It can cast each of its spells once per day and can use its breath weapon once every three combat rounds. Additionally, a dracolich retains the intelligence and memory of its original form.

Combat: Dracoliches are immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph,* cold (magical or natural), electricity, *hold,* insanity, and *death* spells or symbols. They cannot be poisoned, paralyzed, or turned. They have the same magic resistance as their original forms; only magical attacks from wizards of 6th level or higher, or from monsters of 6 or more Hit Dice, can injure a dracolich.

The Armor Class of a dracolich is equal to the Armor Class of its original form bettered by -2 (for example, if the AC of the original form was -1, the AC of the dracolich is -3). Attacks on a dracolich, due to its magical nature, do not gain any attack or damage roll bonuses.

Initially, a dracolich has the same morale rating as its original form. However, after a dracolich is successful in its first battle, its morale rating permanently becomes Fearless (19 base); this assumes that the opponent or opponents involved in the battle had a Hit Dice total of at least 100% of the Hit Dice of the dracolich (for instance, a 16-HD dracolich must defeat an opponent or opponents of at least 16 total HD to receive the morale increase). Once a dracolich receives the morale increase, it becomes immune to magical fear as well.

The dracolich has a slightly stronger ability to cause fear in opponents than it did in its original form; opponents must roll their saving throws vs. spell with a -1 penalty (in addition to any other relevant modifiers) to resist the dracolich's *fear* aura. The gaze of the dracolich's glowing eyes can also paralyze creatures within 40 yards if they fail their saving throws (creatures of 6th level (or 6 Hit Dice) and greater gain a +3 bonus to their saving throws). If a creature successfully saves against the gaze of a dracolich, it is permanently immune to the gaze of that dracolich.

The attack routine of a dracolich is similar to that of its original form. For example, a dracolich that was originally a green dragon will bring down a weak opponent with a series of physical attacks, but it will stalk more formidable opponents, attacking at an opportune moment with its breath weapon and spells.

All physical attacks, such as clawing and biting, inflict the same damage as the dracolich's original form, plus 2d8 points of chilling damage. A victim struck by a dracolich who fails a saving throw vs. paralyzation is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. Immunity to cold damage, temporary or permanent, negates the chilling damage but not the paralyzation. Dracoliches do not drain life levels.

All dracoliches can attempt undead control (as per a potion of undead control) once every three days on any variety of undead with 60 yards. The undead creature's saving throws against this power suffer a -3 penalty; however, if the undead control is successful, it lasts for one turn only. While undead control is in use, the dracolich cannot use spells. If the dracolich interrupts its undead control before it has been used for a full turn, the dracolich must still wait three days before the power can be used again.

If a dracolich or protodracolich is slain, its spirit immediately returns to its host (the host is a *magic jar* for the dracolich's spirit—see below). If there is no corpse in range for it to possess, the spirit is trapped in the host until such a time—if ever—that a corpse becomes available. A dracolich is difficult to destroy. It can be destroyed outright by *power word, kill* or a similar spell. If its spirit is currently contained in its host, destroying the host when a suitable corpse is not within range effectively destroys the dracolich. Likewise, an active dracolich is unable to attempt further possessions if its

host is destroyed. The fate of a disembodied dracolich spirit—that is, a spirit with no body or host—is unknown, but it is presumed that it is drawn to the lower planes.

Habitat/Society: The creation of a dracolich is a complex process involving the transformation of an evil dragon by arcane magical forces. The most notorious practitioners of this process are members of the Cult of the Dragon. The process is usually a cooperative effort between the evil dragon and the wizards of the Cult, but especially powerful wizards have been known to coerce an evil dragon to undergo the transformation against its will.

Any evil dragon is a possible candidate for transformation, although dragons of old age or greater with spellcasting abilities are preferred. Once a candidate is secured, the wizards first prepare the dragon's host, an inanimate object that will hold the dragon's life force. The host must be a solid item of not less than 2,000 gp value that is resistant to decay (wood, for instance, is unsuitable). A gemstone is commonly used for a host, particularly ruby, pearl, carbuncle, or jet. It is often set in the hilt of a sword or other weapon. The host is prepared by casting enchant an item upon it and speaking the name of the evil dragon; the item may resist the spell by successfully saving vs. spell as an 11th-level wizard. If the spell is resisted, another item must be used for the host. If the spell is not resisted, the item can then function as a host. If desired, *glassteel* can be cast upon the host to protect it.

Next, a special potion is prepared for the evil dragon to consume. The exact composition of the potion varies according to the age and type of the dragon, but it must contain precisely seven ingredients, among them a *potion of evil dragon control,* a *potion of invulnerability,* and the blood of a vampire. When the evil dragon consumes the potion, the results are determined as follows (roll percentile dice):

Roll	Result
01-10	No effect.
11-40	Potion does not work. The dragon suffers 2d12 points of damage and is helpless with convulsions for 1-2 rounds.
41-50	Potion does not work. The dragon dies. A full *wish* or similar spell is needed to restore the dragon to life; a *wish* to transform the dragon into a dracolich results in another roll on this table.
51-00	Potion works.

If the potion works, the dragon's spirit transfers to the host, regardless of the distance between the dragon's body and the host. A dim light within the host indicates the presence of the spirit. While contained in the host, the spirit cannot take any actions; it cannot be contacted nor attacked by magic. The spirit can remain in the host indefinitely.

Once the spirit is contained in the host, the host must be brought within 90 feet of a reptilian corpse; under no circumstances can the spirit possess a living body. The spirit's original body is ideal, but the corpse of any reptilian creature that died or was killed within the previous 30 days is suitable.

The wizard who originally prepared the host must touch the host, cast a magic jar spell while speaking the name of the dragon, and then touch the corpse. The corpse must fail a saving throw vs. spell for the spirit to successfully possess it; if it saves, it will never accept the spirit. The following modifiers apply to the roll:

- -10 if the corpse is the spirit's own former body (which can be dead for any length of time).
- -4 if the corpse is of the same alignment as the dragon.
- -4 if the corpse is that of a true dragon (any type).
- -3 if the corpse is that of a firedrake, ice lizard, wyvern, or fire lizard.
- -1 if the corpse is that of a dracolisk, dragonne, dinosaur, saurial, snake, or other reptile.

If the corpse accepts the spirit, it becomes animated by the spirit. If the animated corpse is the spirit's former body, it immediately becomes a dracolich; however, it will not regain the use of its voice and breath weapon for another seven days (note that it will not be able to cast spells with verbal components during this time). At the end of seven days, it regains the use of its voice and breath weapon.

If the animated corpse is not the spirit's former body, it immediately becomes a protodracolich. A protodracolich has the mind and memories of its original form, but has the hit points and immunities to spells and priestly turning of a dracolich. A protodracolich can neither speak nor cast spells; further, it cannot cause chilling damage, use a breath weapon, or cause fear as a dracolich. Its strength, movement, and AC are those of the possessed body.

To become a full dracolich, a protodracolich must devour at least 10% of its original body. Unless the body has been dispatched to another plane of existence, a protodracolich can always sense the presence of its original body, regardless of the distance. A protodracolich will tirelessly seek out its original body to the exclusion of all other activities. If its original body has been burned, dismembered, or otherwise destroyed, the protodracolich need only devour the ashes or pieces equal to or exceeding 10% of its original body mass (total destruction of the original body is possible only through use of a *disintegrate* or similar spell; the body could even then be reconstructed with a *wish* or similar spell, so long as the spell is cast in the same plane as the disintegration). If a protodracolich is unable to devour its original body, it is trapped in its current form until slam.

A protodracolich transforms into a full dracolich within seven days after it devours its original body. When the transformation is complete, the dracolich resembles its original body. It can now speak, cast spells, and employ the breath weapon of its original body, in addition to having all of the abilities of a dracolich.

The procedure for possessing a new corpse is the same as explained above, except that the assistance of a wizard is no longer necessary (casting *magic jar* is required only for the first possessions). If the spirit successfully repossesses its original body, it once again becomes a full dracolich. If the spirit possesses a different body, it becomes a protodracolich and must devour its former body to become a full dracolich.

A symbiotic relationship exists between a dracolich and the wizards who create it. The wizards honor and aid their dracolich, as well as providing it with regular offerings of treasure items. In return, the dracolich defends its wizards against enemies, as well as assisting them in their schemes. Like dragons, dracoliches are loners, but they take comfort in the knowledge that they have allies.

Dracoliches are generally found in the same habitats as the dragons from which they were created. Dracoliches created from green dragons, for instance, are likely to be found in subtropical and temperate forests. Though they do not live with their Cult wizards, their lairs are never more than a few miles away. Dracoliches prefer darkness and are usually encountered at night, in shadowy forests, or in underground labyrinths.

Ecology: Dracoliches are never hungry, but they must eat to refuel their breath weapons. Like dragons, dracoliches can consume nearly anything, but prefer the food eaten by their original forms (for instance, if a dracolich was originally a red dragon, it prefers fresh meat). The body of a destroyed dracolich crumbles into a foul-smelling powder within a few hours; this powder can be used by knowledgeable wizards as a component for creating *potions of undead control* and similar magical substances.

Bonebat ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Flock
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil (may be used as guardians)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	3, Fl 18 (C)
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	2-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5′-6′)
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	975

Bonebats are undead bats that serve as messengers, guardians, and battle allies to evil priests and wizards and to powerful undead (such as liches, archliches, and vampires). They appear as skeletal giant bats with dark, empty eye sockets and attack in eerie silence, never emitting cries. Some (known as *battlebats)* possess strange skeletal appendages as described below.

Combat: Bonebats have a chilling bite that inflicts 2-8 hit points of damage to all creatures except other undead, who suffer only its 1-3 hit points of damage of physical effects. A bonebat's bite also paralyzes all creatures except elves for 3-8 (1d6+2) rounds, unless a successful save vs. paralyzation is made. Bonebats themselves are immune to all forms of paralysis.

Bonebats are turned as ghouls and always attack fearlessly, only withdrawing when brought to 3 hit points or less. They will, however, fight to their destruction if ordered to do so by their creator or undead master.

Bonebats have 120-foot infravision, and can see invisible creatures and objects within 60 feet. They never sleep and are never surprised.

Bonebats are immune to sleep, charm and hold spells and may be mentally controlled only by their creator or a powerful undead. Once one being controls a bonebat, no other being may ever control it—even if the controlling being is slain or absent. Typical commands are simple—attack (specified target), cease, come, stay, wait (place), and fetch (specified object)—but obedience is absolute.

Like skeletons, bonebats suffer normal damage from fire and blunt weapons, but only half damage from piercing or edged weapons. Holy water has no effect on bonebats.

Habitat/Society: Bonebats are most frequently encountered in the lairs of their masters—ruins, caverns, tombs, or evil temples. They prefer darkness, but light does not harm them. Bonebats may be encountered anywhere if their creator sends them forth or is slain.

Requiring no food or water, bonebats are often shut into closets, coffins, or chests to serve as guardians, attacking thieves and other beings who open or enter their hiding place.

Bonebats can carry single objects of up to three pounds in weight that they can get a good grip on. They often fetch keys, wands, and the like for their masters. Bonebats cannot trigger magical items, but are sometimes fitted with wired-on protective devices to strengthen them as guardians.

Ecology: Bonebats are not thought to ever occur naturally, but the secrets of their making have been known in the Realms for a very long time, and many have gone feral. Bonebats slay living bats whenever they encounter them.

Bonebats seem to enjoy killing. Indeed, if uncontrolled, they will from time to time go on killing flights. During such flights, they will fight all creatures of their own size or smaller that they encounter until they have killed at least twice. Bonebats never fight other bonebats.

Bonebats are usually constructed by evil priests and wizards working together. An intact giant bat skeleton, or a skeleton assembled from the bones of several bats, is required. A spell known as *Nulathoe's ninemen* is cast on the skeleton. In the case of a bonebat, this spell links the skeletal wing bones with an invisible membrane of force to allow flight. *Fly, detect invisibility, infravision,* and *animate dead* spells complete the process. Further spells may be necessary to train the bonebat to serve as an obedient aide, but the spells listed here must be cast within two rounds of each other, and in the order given, or the process will fail.

Battlebat™

Battlebats are bonebats onto which other bones—usually claws, talons, stings, or spurs—have been grafted.

Battlebats are in all regards identical to bonebats except that they turn as wights, gain one additional Hit Die, are Armor Class 8, have two or three additional attacks (typically 1-4 hit points of damage from claw rakes or 2-5 hit points of damage from sting jabs, either of which may be temporarily tipped with poison by a battlebat's controller), and fly at only 15 (Class D). Their XP value is 1,400 each.

Deepspawn ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17-18)
TREASURE:	K, L, M, Qx2, Vx2, X
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 8
HIT DICE:	14
THAC0:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	6
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	3-12 (×3)/2-5 or by weapon type (x3)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	77%
SIZE:	H (14′ diameter, tentacles to 20′)
MORALE:	Elite (15-16)
XP VALUE:	12,000

Deepspawn are infamous horrors that give birth to many other types of monsters, such that a single deepspawn can make a large area perilous to even alert, well-armed adventurers. Deepspawn look like large, rubbery spheres of mottled gray and brown. Six limbs project from their bodies; three are tentacle arms, and three are jaw arms, ending in many-toothed mouths. A deepspawn also has over 40 long, retractable, flexible eyestalks.

Combat: A deepspawn attacks by casting hold spells at intruders, casting one every three rounds. Victims under a hold spell are then grasped by tentacle arms and constricted, as other tentacles fight with wielded weapons (including any magical items usable by fighters gained from earlier victims). Deepspawn often engage prey with weapons and then bite them from behind with a jaw arm. A tentacle arm can slap for 1d4+1, grasp items or beings and move them about (with 17 Strength), or constrict.

Constriction requires a successful attack roll (automatic if the victim is under a hold spell), and inflicts 1-4 points of damage plus 1d4+1 points per round thereafter. Constricted victims can be swung about by the deepspawn as bludgeons (inflicting 1-2 points of damage on others, ruining spellcasting, and forcing saving throws for fragile carried items). This causes the constricted being no extra damage.

Victims may only escape constriction by severing the tentacle arm holding them or tearing free. Tentacle arms let go if severed. Each arm has 2 HD; severing occurs if damage equal to half a tentacle arm's hit points is dealt in a concentrated area by edged or pointed weapons. To tear free, roll a d20 for both victim and deepspawn on each round of constriction, adding their respective Strengths (17 for the deepspawn). If the victim has the higher total, she or he wins free.

Deepspawn can also cast *ESP* and *water breathing* at will, and may employ a heal spell (self only), once a day. If a deepspawn's life is threatened, it hurls caches of seized weapons as missiles (1-6 damage per weapon, regardless of type, all in a single round), unleashes any magical items it has, and tries to escape. Deepspawn are immune to poison (perhaps because they are able to create many poisons in their offspring), and regenerate lost arms and stalks, though slowly, healing 2 hit points of damage day.

When found, deepspawn are usually half-buried in a pile of slippery, shifting treasure. This may conceal their arms, so that tentacles and mouths may seem at first to be the attacks of separate creatures. The treasure may hamper opponents and even shield the deepspawn from some damage (as a rule of thumb, increase AC to 4).

Habitat/Society: Deepspawn prefer to let their offspring fight for them, lairing in caverns, dungeons, or ruins amply protected by traps and guardian monsters (their spawn). If these defenses are penetrated, the deepspawn is usually found in a readily defended room or area, always with at least one or more escape routes.

Deepspawn are native to the Underdark, and have successfully resisted the attempts of dwarves, drow, duergar, cloakers, illithids, and aboleth to exterminate them. Deepspawn seldom lair within 30 miles of each other.

Ecology: Deepspawn eat anything organic, but prefer fresh meat. By some as-yet-unexplained natural means, a deepspawn can grow and give birth to any creature native to the Prime Material Plane it has ever devoured (but not undead or other creatures which exist in multiple planes). The spawn have the natural attacks, including spell-like powers, and intelligence of their forebears, but class abilities and other learned skills are not gained. A spawn grows in 1-4 days within a deepspawn, which must ingest meat, vegetable matter, and water or blood to fuel the birthing. The deepspawn then splits open to emit a fully active spawn. Spawn are never hostile towards their parent, and cannot be made to attack them, even by magical means. Spawn can attack or defend themselves within one round of emerging, though they are at -2 to hit the first round after emergence.

Gambado ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate and subtropical/ Plains and subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or family
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	R
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-8
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	See below
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1-8/1-4/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	175

Known by the folk name of Springing Skulls of Doom, these strange creatures construct a lair and patiently wait to ambush passersby. Gambados are completely amoral, caring only for their own survival, their next meal, and their personal treasure.

These extraordinary-looking creatures are man-sized, with a powerful human torso and two arms, each ending in three curved claws. Supported on the strong, flat neck is what appears to be the creature's head, but which is actually a skull of another creature. Gambados use found skulls to house their heads, similar in principle to the hermit crab. They have special muscles that secure the placement of the skull and work its jaw. Skulls of horned or long-toothed beasts, or other interesting animals, are favored by plains gambados, while those with subterranean lairs prefer humanoid skulls. A gambado's torso narrows downward into a 3′-long cylinder of cartilage and muscle which can be compressed, spring-style, and suddenly released for springing up and forward. This columnar leg ends abruptly in three long and flat single-toed feet.

Gambados are generally pale gray in color. They will often camouflage themselves with soil and clays found in the course of digging their pit lairs.

Combat: The gambado moves by a series of springs; jumping vertically, it can just reach a 14′-high ceiling with its head, and it moves horizontally at a rate of 12. The radially arrayed and retractably clawed feet allow the gambado to rapidly shift direction or stop suddenly, and provide good traction during its springing travels.

A gambado's normal form of attack is to stand upright in its lair, which is a pit dug by it some 6 feet deep, with its head just at ground level and its leg contracted for springing. The gambado goes to considerable effort to construct a cover for its pit out of rock, wood, rags and old bones, with only a small hole in the center through which its skull head pokes out. An approaching adventurer will see only the skull, apparently simply lying on the ground. The cover will not support the weight of any creature larger than a wharf rat, and will not encumber the outward spring of the gambado when it strikes.

If a living creature comes within 4 feet or so of the skull head, the gambado will spring out and attack, first biting with its ersatz head for 1-8 points of damage. Thereafter it will also attack with the claws on its hands, each of which inflicts 1-4 points of damage The gambado will flee rather than fight to the death.

Habitat/Society: If a gambado kills a victim, it will ignore all booty on the victim except coins, gems, and small pieces of jewelry. These are compulsively sorted by type and color, grabbed back up to be fondled and held up to the light, then compulsively resorted again. Finally, the objects are taken into the pit and stored, although sometimes artifacts are scattered about or left on the ground in order to attract curious future victims. The gambado eats its victim, then laboriously reconstructs the cover for its lair, retreats into its lair to digest its meal, and awaits further prey. Gambados can go for several months between major meals. At least once every 10 days, the gambado will uncover its hoard and compulsively sort and admire the various objects again.

Though once thought to be solitary creatures, gambados are now often found in groups. Apparently, if a location is successful in terms of food and booty, a gambado will return to its former lair to collect its family to dig lairs in the immediate vicinity. In places where bones are common, as many as eight gambados may be found to have dug pits close together. Some believe that gambados communicate with one another through a quiet strumming of the ground, using extremely rapid and minute movements of their springing leg, although this may be nothing more than a means of keeping the leg muscles exercised and ready for action during long periods of waiting.

Ecology: The hide of the gambado's springing leg is naturally somewhat elastic. This elasticity makes cylinders of the hide useful as connectors to lengths of pipe and in similar applications. Gambado lairs are relatively easily noticed and avoided by those who have previously been victims of their traps. If left undisturbed, they may have the effect of guarding the rear of a passing party from less intelligent wandering monsters.

Gibbering Mouther ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any/swamp, underground
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi (2-4)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	3, Sw 6
HIT DICE:	4+3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	6+
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1 (×6) +1/round
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spit, babble, bite
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Ground control
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	4 HD: 650 8 HD: 3,000

The gibbering mouther is an amoeboid form of life composed entirely of mouths and eyes. Its favorite tactic is to lie in wait with its eyes and mouths closed so that it appears to be a lump of earthy material, hoping to surprise creatures stumbling across it. Its only motive is to eat whatever is edible within reach, regardless of whether the food is animal, vegetable, or mineral.

Gibbering mouthers prefer to inhabit swampy or underground regions. They propel themselves by oozing forward, fastening several mouths to the ground and pulling themselves along. A mouther may move faster over fluid and viscous terrains, such as mud and quicksand, by swimming through the muck. Given time, mouthers alter the ground with their special ground control talent to allow this faster form of movement.

Combat: The brain of a mouther is located in its midportion, and its gelatinous body makes it difficult to strike this spot. The mutable nature of the monster gives it a high Armor Class.

The mouther attacks in three ways: babbling, spitting, and biting. When any edible object is sighted by a mouther, it may begin an incoherent gibbering that causes *confusion* (as per the spell) to all within a 60-foot radius unless a saving throw vs. spell is made. For each round that the gibbering is heard, those within range must roll another saving throw. Roll 1d8 for each confused character or being:

1 = wanders aimlessly for one round,
2-5 = stands stunned for one round,
6-7 = attacks the nearest living creature for one round,
8 = runs away in fear for two rounds.

The spittle of a gibbering mouther will burst into a bright flare if it strikes any hard surface. The resulting flash will blind characters looking at it if they fail to make a saving throw vs. petrification. The blindness lasts 1-3 rounds. The mouther may attempt to bite blinded opponents with a +2 bonus to its attack rolls. Blinded victims make attack rolls with a -4 penalty.

A mouther's best attack comes from reaching out and biting with six mouths per round. Each mouth that hits on a die roll of 2 more than needed to hit attaches to the victim and drains an additional 1 hit point per round while attached; the next round, six new mouths attack the victim. When 3 or more mouths are attached to a single victim, that character must make a Dexterity ability check each round thereafter or slip. A failed roll indicates the character has fallen. The gibbering mouther will flow over the victim and bite with 12 more mouths, gaining a +4 bonus to strike its prone and held opponent. If given the opportunity, once it has pulled down one victim, a mouther will try to trap other prey.

When victims reach 0 hit points, they are absorbed into the mouther, giving it another mouth and pair of eyes per victim. Each time a victim is absorbed, the mouther also gains 1 hit point permanently, up to the maximum for its HD. Only living flesh can be absorbed like this—dead, unliving, or undead creatures are not affected.

A mouther always liquefies the ground and stone within a 5-foot radius of itself and can control the consistency of this material by changing it to doughy, tarry quicksand. It requires 30 seconds to alter earth to quicksand, and a full round to mutate stone to earth.

Habitat/Society: Like other amoeboid life forms, gibbering mouthers reproduce by asexual fission. When a mouther has absorbed enough victims to gain its maximum hit points, it splits into two mouthers. Each mouther is a 4+3 HD monster; one has 17 hit points, the other 18 hit points. Because this process takes about four hours, the mouther usually retreats to some small dark den before the fission begins. When the two new mouthers recover at the end of the dividing process, which takes 7+3d12 turns, each seeks its own new territory.

Gibbering mouthers not only avoid each other's hunting territories, they avoid all physical contact with one another and never fight one another over territory or food. It is believed that bringing two mouthers in physical contact forces them to merge, creating a larger creature with twice the size, HD, and number of attacks, but half the already slow movement of the parent monsters. These great beasts strip the land of anything edible so quickly that they generally die of starvation as soon as prey becomes scarce.

Ecology: Gibbering mouthers are unnatural creatures, usually created by foul sorcery and kept as guards by mages or obscene cults. Although they can survive in the wild, they are more scavengers than hunters, and rarely establish reproducing populations in any but the lushest swamps.

Gibberling ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate/forest and subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	40-400
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1-8 (weapon)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Mass assault
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (4' tall)
MORALE:	Irregular (5)
XP VALUE:	15

The first impression one has of gibberlings is of a writhing mass of fur and flesh in the distant moonlit darkness. This pandemonium is actually a mass of pale, hunchbacked humanoids with pointed canine ears and black manes surrounding their hideous, grinning faces. Their eyes are black, and shine with a maniacal gleam. They carry short swords in their overly long arms as they lope ever faster forward. They have no thought of safety, subtlety, or strategy, leaving others with no hope of stopping their mass assault.

Combat: Gibberlings attack in great numbers, uttering ghastly howls, clicks, shrieks, and insane chattering noises which cause even the boldest hirelings to check morale each round. PCs need only make a morale check if it is appropriate to their characters. The screaming mob is completely disorganized in form and random in direction.

The gibberlings attack with common swords, but such is their skill and practice in using these weapons that they are +1 to hit. Their forward motion slows only long enough to kill anything moving, then continues onward, their bloodlust apparently unabated. They always fight to the death. All food in their path is devoured, including the fallen among their own number, and any unfortified building or objects in their way are generally wrecked.

The only true hope of survival, should a herd of gibberlings be encountered, is to take strategic advantage of their fear and detestation of bright light. The gibberlings generally frequent only dense forests and subterranean passages, loathing bright light of all kinds, and are particularly afraid of fire. Although their mass attacks would quickly overwhelm someone wielding a torch, a bright bonfire or magical light of sufficient intensity will hold them at bay or deflect their path.

Habitat/Society: It is difficult to imagine a gibberling social structure. It can be roughly compared to the social structure of lemmings throwing themselves into the sea or of a school of piranhas in a feeding frenzy. There is no sense, no organization, and no individuality. Though they clearly have a primitive means of communicating among themselves, they have no discernible language.

Gibberlings traveling aboveground invariably burrow into the ground to hide during the daytime, and it is at such times that they are most vulnerable. They can easily be tracked by the path of chaos and destruction they leave, and can be quickly dispatched while they lie dormant just beneath the surface of the ground. If uncovered, they awake, but generally cower in fear at the bright light surrounding them, and so are easy prey. Subterranean gibberlings may burrow into the ground or may simply lie down in a curled, fetal posture at times of rest. They awake suddenly as a group and burst in unison out of the ground, howling and gibbering in a most frightful way.

If captured, these strange creatures speak only their own incomprehensible gibberish, and show neither the patience nor the inclination to learn other languages or communicate whatsoever with their captors. Instead, they beat against their cages and fling themselves at barred windows and doorways in pitiful attempts to escape their captivity.

It is unclear how or when or even if gibberlings procreate.

Ecology: Attempts to find gibberlings' lairs have inevitably led to subterranean passages where the trail is eventually lost in the deepest rock-floored recesses of the caverns.

Gibberlings require a prodigious amount of food to support their manic nocturnal existence, stripping to the bone anyone or anything that should fall in their path. Their fur is commonly infested with lice and other pests picked up during their burrowed slumber. Their hides are vile and worthless. Gibberlings carry no treasure or other useful items. Their swords are of the commonest variety, with no markings or decoration, and are often pitted and dull. In short, gibberlings serve no purpose and no known master, save random death in the night.

Helmed Horror ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Special
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	V
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-20
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 12 (A)
HIT DICE:	4+1 per level of creator
THAC0:	12
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	By weapon type, or 1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Special
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	2,000

Often found as guardians, these automatons usually appear as warriors completely clad in plate mail. A horror is merely animated, empty armor, linked by magical forces. The process of creating a helmed horror results in silent, intelligent guardians, capable of independent reasoning.

Combat: Helmed horrors (also called shadowguards™) can use all weapons allowed to fighters and employ all magical items that do not need verbal commands or contact with living flesh to function (ointments and potions, etc.). Horrors cannot cast spells or conduct magical research.

Helmed horrors are not undead or summoned creatures and cannot be turned. Horrors can see invisible creatures and objects up to 120 feet away and have infravision effective to the same range. The senses of a horror permeate its entire form; a "de-helmed" horror can fight on.

Portions of a horror's body that are separated from the main suit of armor cease to move and cannot fight. If brought back into contact with a horror, they will reattach. A horror can never collect lost pieces after a battle and hold them for reattachment, although others can. A horror heals lost hit points at the same rate as a living, resting human does by restoring linking energies and mangled armor.

Helmed horrors are able to stand through magical *levitation.* Thus, they can walk on air or above surfaces, or function without any legs at all. This levitation allows flight at the movement rate given in their statistics, but does not allow riders. A falling horror is always protected as if by a *feather fall* spell. Horrors can carry up to up to 200 lbs. of living or nonliving matter when on foot, but only 100 lbs. of nonliving matter if "flying."

A helmed horror is fearless and cannot be mentally controlled or influenced by magical or other means that work on the mind or senses. A horror can be contacted by means of *ESP* or similar spells, but it cannot be affected by illusions or enchantment/charm magics.

Any mental contact with a horror allows it to read the current surface thoughts and emotions of the being contacting it, despite any defenses. This ability has allowed horrors to anticipate treachery and attacks and always allows them to unerringly judge the sincerity of an encountered creature.

Magic missile spells cast at a horror serve to heal it of any damage by restoring its bonding energy. Excess hit points are not gained by a horror, but instead are always reflected back 100% at the caster.

Habitat/Society: Created to have iron-strong loyalty, helmed horrors are seldom self-willed wanderers. Instead, they serve as guardians long after the death of their creators or masters, tirelessly manning posts in crumbling rums, tombs, or forgotten tunnels. Some have been known to avenge a slain creator, following orders instilled in them. Some revenant horrors have traveled across the Realms to fulfill their duty.

In some cases, however, the orders of a horror allow it autonomy in the absence of commands, or are simply silent on the subject of a horror's freedom. If not specifically commanded to cease existence at the death or behest of their creator, horrors will continue operating until destroyed.

Ecology: The process of creating helmed horrors remains secret, but is known to require a priest of at least 7th level, some assistance from a wizard, and physical, nonmagical armor of any sort.

The creator of a horror instills in it a set of orders or commands that govern its freedom, behavior, and limitations. These vary considerably from horror to horror. The orders of a specific horror cannot be changed once given. Dangerous loopholes in a horror's orders may bring its loyalty into serious jeopardy; instilling orders in a horror is as delicate as wording a wish spell.

Preceding its orders, a horror can be made immune to the effects of three specific spells when created (typically *fireball, heat metal,* and *lightning bolt).* These spells must be named by the creator (who need not be able to cast them or have access to them) and cannot be changed thereafter. A horror's orders can newer increase its spell immunity beyond three specific magics and their equivalent magical item effects.

Horrors do not sleep, eat, or speak, and cannot feel pain. They are ideal guardians, for their loyalty is total and devoid of ambition or emotion. If commanded by a being possessing telepathy, they can communicate, and a garrison of horrors can be coordinated into a well-organized fighting band.

Battle Horrors™

A few modified helmed horrors with magical powers have been encountered. These battle horrors are identical in appearance to helmed horrors, but have the following magical powers: *dimension door* up to 60 yards distant, once per day: *blink* for up to 1 turn, once per day (a horror cannot cease blinking and start again, even if it has not used a full turn); and cast *magic missile.* A horror can unleash two 2-5-hp *magic missiles* every 3 rounds with a range of 70 yards. Battle horrors have a lawful evil alignment and a typical XP value of 4,000.

Lock Lurker ™

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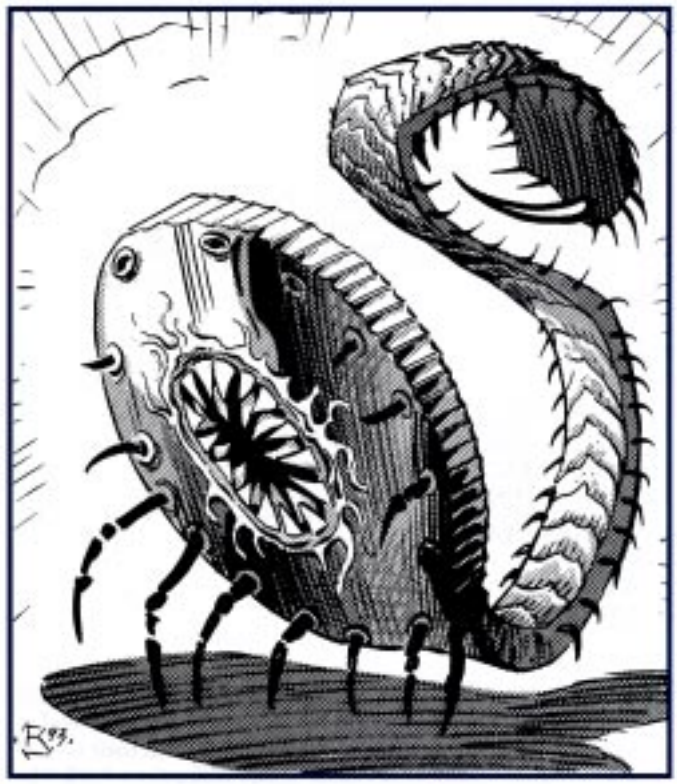
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	8
HIT DICE:	1+3
THAC0:	17 (sting), 19 (bite)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1 (bite) or 6-9 (sting)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Paralyzing venom
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Partial etherealness
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (1" diameter, tail 1' long)
MORALE:	13
XP VALUE:	175



The tiny lock lurker is the bane of thieves, and is often placed as a guard against such infiltrators. Lock lurkers look like coins—cold, hard, coppery or bronze discs (25% are silver or golden in hue). A lock lurker has two rows of tiny, retractable legs on its underside, surrounding a razor-sharp iris of teeth. It has a lightning-fast stinger that can be up to a foot long, but this stinger is usually on the Ethereal Plane, invisible to observers on the Prime Material.

A human handling a lurker often thinks he has picked up a smooth, heavy coin. A sting advises him otherwise. Lurkers have been known to be carried with other coins until reaching a place where easy targets will come near. Unless it strikes metal, the lurker's bite and sting are silent.

Combat: A lurker's teeth can bite through hide, hair, skin, or leather armor, but not metal. Its bite causes 1 point of damage.

A lurker's stinger strikes as if the creature were a much more powerful monster. The stinger can attack creatures in the Ethereal Plane, and materializes on the Prime Material plane only when the lurker launches an attack. The strike is powerful enough to pierce any armor and to stun opponents of less than man size for 1-2 rounds. It causes 1d4+5 points of damage and injects a venom into the victim's bloodstream.

The venom reacts with blood to *slow* a victim (effects as per the wizard spell) on the round following the sting's strike. During that round, the victim's body reacts to the poison. She or he must make a saving throw. If the saving throw is successful, the victim is slowed for a second round, then recovers fully.

If the saving throw fails, the victim is immediately paralyzed for 1-6 hours, passes into a 1-2 round slowed state, then recovers. This paralysis is a rigid muscle lock affecting all limbs and extremities. A victim cannot be posed or easily dressed or undressed, and can easily be hurt if moved.

A lurker can sting 40+2d4 times per day without exhausting its poison. Venom and any food ingested by a lurker are both held in expandable body sacks on the Ethereal Plane, transferred to and from the Prime Material portion of the lurker in a way not fully understood.

A lurker's stinger can be attacked on the Prime Material Plane only if materialized there. On the Ethereal Plane, all parts of a lurker can be attacked unless it pulls itself fully into the Prime Material plane. This requires an entire round, allowing an ethereal attacker one unchallenged attack at it.

A lurker can transfer body material between the two planes despite any physical or magical restraints placed on it, but can never fully withdraw into the Ethereal Plane. Lurker attacks and venom have the same effects on both planes, and lurkers have 60'-range normal and infravision on both planes. Lurkers can slowly regenerate lost or damaged body parts.

Habitat/Society: Lock lurkers are so named because they are often placed as guards on chests and doors to strike unwary interlopers through keyholes. Assassins have placed them under inkwells and pillows, in boots, and in other places convenient to a strike (so that the paralyzed target can be slain easily with no alarm being raised).

Lurkers are hermaphroditic; whenever two adults meet, they mate and go their separate ways. One to four months later, each lurker lays an egg sack of 1d12x10 tiny eggs, 60% of which are fertile. Untended, these hatch in 1-6 weeks, typically producing 3d6 offspring. These eat the unhatched eggs (and sometimes each other) until they are fully mobile, then wander off in search of food. They never fight other lurkers and mature within seven years.

Ecology: Lurkers are usually placed as guards, but when one does escape into the wild, it does not so much hunt as, well, lurk. Like some spiders, lurkers seem to prefer lairing in civilized habitations and preying on insects, rodents, and other small creatures.

Lurker venom is valued as an ingredient in inks, potions, and processes concerned with *slow* effects. Their bodies are a preferred ingredient in *oil of etherealness.* A largely intact body is worth 2 gp (6 gp if the stinger is intact). Lock lurker venom (a clear, gummy fluid that smells like seaweed) brings about 10 gp per flask (from the few alchemists who recognize it). Lurker egg sacks bring about 25 gp on the open market.

Naga, Dark ™

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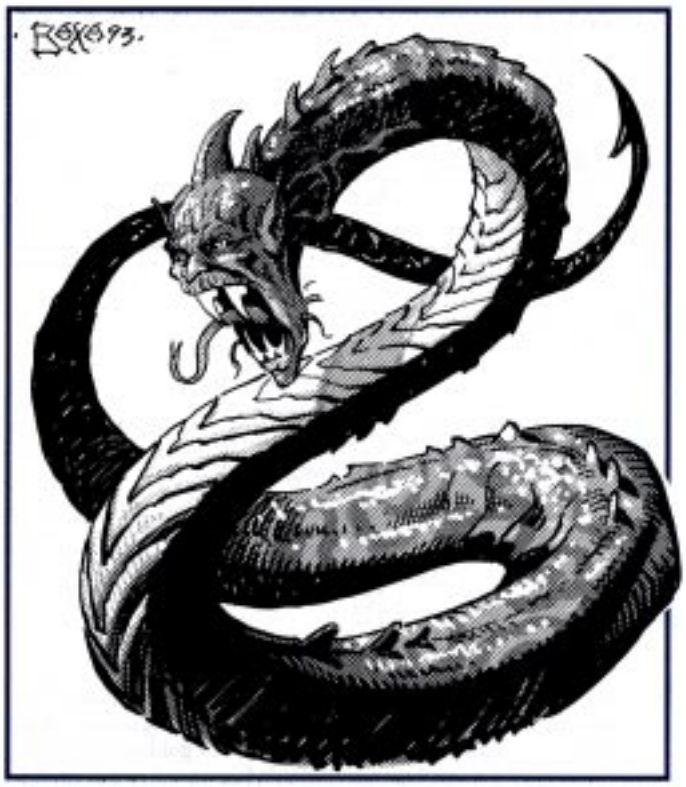
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land except arctic
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Works for others
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (16)
TREASURE:	S T W
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-3 (usually 1)
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	13
HIT DICE:	9
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1-4/2-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (up to 12′ long)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	4,000



Dark nagas are fey creatures who have human-like faces (with fanged mouths) on leathery, snake-like bodies. Dark nagas tend to be black, purplish-black, or very dark blue in hue, and their crested heads and smooth, almost invisible scales make them look like gigantic eels more than snakes.

Combat: Dark nagas have natural *ESP* powers (80′ range), and use this ability constantly. Dark nagas have a (nonpoisonous) bite and a poisonous tail sting; the barbed stinger does physical damage, and any being struck must save vs. poison or take 1-2 points of additional damage and fall into a drugged sleep (onset time 1 round, sleep lasts 2d4 rounds).

The most feared ability of dark nagas is their power to wield magic. A dark naga casts spells as a 6th-level wizard (4, 2, 2) and employs spells which only require a verbal component, or spells which they have modified so that the somatic component can be used by their serpentine bodies. The cost of acquiring or developing such spells can often force dark nagas into servitude to a stronger evil creature or into the life of an adventurer.

Dark nagas are immune to the effects of all known (normal and magical) acids, venoms, and poisons. Some have been known to swallow poisons and act as a courier, spitting up the dangerous liquid when they deliver it to its destination, They can spit poison that they are so carrying up to 10′ distant at any opponent; this requires a successful attack roll, and takes the place of their bite, though a naga can elect to bite and then release the poison as it does so, combining the damage.

In battle, a dark naga may use its sting and either a spell or a bite in the same round. If space permits, the naga can direct its sting and bite against the same foe, but it is readily intelligent enough to direct attacks at multiple opponents.

Dark nagas cannot have their mind's read; their *ESP* ability somehow renders them immune to the *ESP* - like probes of others. They are subject but resistant to *charm, sleep, hold* and similar enchantment/charm spells, receiving a +2 bonus to all saving throws against this school of magic.

Habitat/Society: Dark nagas lair in rocky places, such as caverns or ruins; they like to have a home where they can hide things (such as treasures and spell books), that has more than one entry or exit, and that has at least one place narrow enough that they can block it with their body and single-handedly fight off intruders. Dark nagas are fond of traps and will devise these or hire other creatures to install them whenever possible.

Dark nagas tend to be loners, but can form stable family groups of two or three. They are hermaphroditic, and give birth to a squirming mass of many wormlike young which they promptly abandon to fend for themselves. Since they are intelligent enough to know they can prevail against few creatures in the Realms alone, dark nagas work with other evil creatures, such as orcs, hobgoblins, drow, beholders, and the like. They like to fill the role of commander and magical strike force, perhaps in a sergeant-like intermediary rank under a more powerful ruler. They are wise enough to adopt (at least superficially) the beliefs and rules of whatever group they join.

Ecology: Dark nagas do not willingly eat other dark nagas, but they will eat just about anything else, both alive and dead. They eat a few lichens and the occasional green plant, but their main diet is meat. They especially prize hot, still-fresh blood.

Dark nagas spend their lives outwardly working with or serving others. Whenever possible, however, they also pursue private goals, which may be as whimsical and odd as some human goals (to cover a desert valley with trees, for instance), but always include increasing their personal power by acquiring new spells and magical items. Dark nagas are quick to plunder fallen foes, swallowing items, scrolls, and spell books to spit forth later—for all dark nagas have a bag-like internal organ that they can use to carry things. This organ has thick, rubbery air-sac walls to protect the naga against sharp points and the like. It also protects the cargo against digestive juices, and has the unusual side effect of shielding magic inside it from all detection spells.

Nishruu ™

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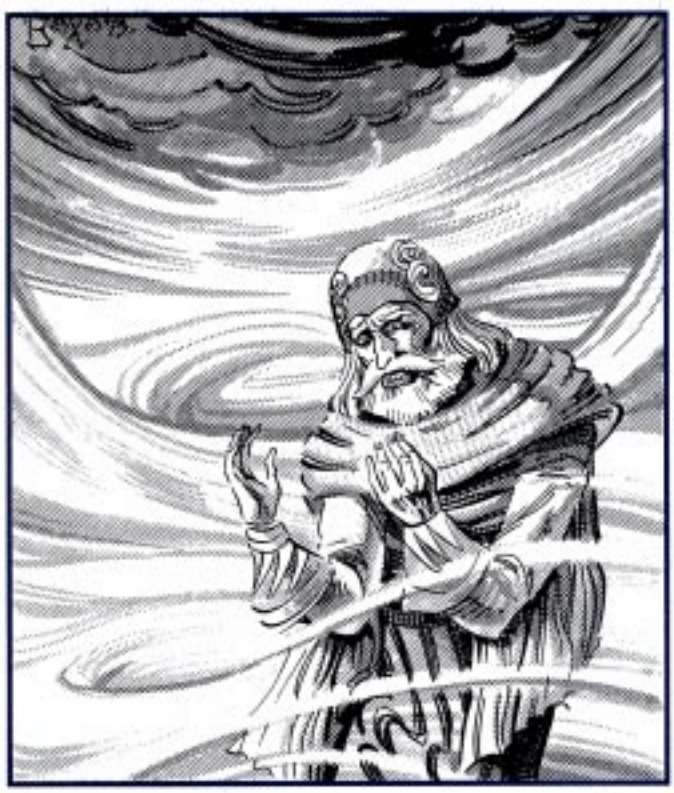
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Magic
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	6
HIT DICE:	9
THAC0:	12
NO. OF ATTACKS:	0
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Absorbs magic
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	L (12'-diameter sphere)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	2,000



These weird creatures are believed to come from an alternate Prime Material Plane. Known to sages of old as Eaters of Magic, they feed on magical energy and are greatly feared for the damage they can do.

Nishruu appear as silent, amorphous bodies of red, breathable mist, lacking visible organs or features. Nishruu glow, pulsing regularly as they drift about, and can seep through finger-width cracks. They will always move towards the greatest concentration of magic within 60 feet.

Combat: Aside from their effects on magic, nishruu do no damage to objects or beings. Fire and physical attacks affect them normally; hits are automatic if an attacker is enveloped by a nishruu. Cold does half damage, but magical fire, heat, and cold cannot form within a nishruu. If magical fire or cold contacts a nishruu from outside its body area, it is absorbed harmlessly after dealing one round of damage.

Nishruu ignore physical attacks, moving fearlessly and relentlessly towards sources of magic. Mind control spells and illusions do not affect nishruu.

Any spell cast at a nishruu will be absorbed by it, having no effect except to give the creature life energy equal in hit points to the damage the spell normally does. A nondamaging spell gives a nishruu extra hit points equal to its spell level.

Chargeable magic items are drained of 1-4 charges on contact with a nishruu; if contact is continuous, the drain occurs again at the end of every second round. Nonchargeable magical items have their powers negated for 1-4 rounds after contact; if used when in contact with a nishruu, potions and scrolls suffer a delay of 1-4 rounds after contact ceases in taking effect.

Artifacts become nonoperational at all times while in contact with a nishruu and for 1 round after contact with a nishruu ceases. Spellcasters of all classes who are enveloped by a nishruu lose one memorized spell (determine randomly) at first contact and one per round of contact thereafter. Each time a loss occurs, the spellcaster must make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or be feeble-minded.

Habitat/Society: Nishruu are solitary creatures that are not native to this Prime Material Plane. They cannot voluntarily transfer magical spells or charges to another being. Salt, both rock salt and sea salt, is deadly poisonous to nishruu. A handful of flung salt typically does a nishruu 2d10 damage. Salt can therefore be used to confine or herd such creatures, for they will not willingly come into contact with it.

Ecology: Nishruu feed on magic, drifting endlessly and relentlessly about in seemingly aimless searchings for it. These creatures can actually detect the presence of magical energy within 600 feet or so, and will always move towards the most powerful, plentiful, or nearest source of magical energy. No upward limit for energy absorption is known, nor is a nishruu known to have starved from lack of magic. Most sages believe that sunlight and moisture may also sustain these beings.

When a nishruu is slain, its body will dissipate, losing luminosity and hue and appearing to sink into the ground. Any magical item within its body area when it is slain, or any magical weapon slaying it, even if no longer within the body will receive a magical bonus of 1-6 additional charges or a second use in the case of items that can normally be used but once (such as arrows and scrolls). Potions, memorized spells, artifacts, and items that do not have charges will not be augmented. When a nishruu is released, it proves a menace to all magic-using beings of the Realms until destroyed. It will drift along after those who released it, hoping they will lead it to one source of magic after another.

Quaggoth ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Underdark
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil (O, R)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-24
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	2+2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1-4/1-4 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Berserk rage
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (7′+ tall)
MORALE:	Elite (15-16)
XP VALUE:	175 Jald: 270 Thonot: 1,400

Quaggoths are humanoids with long, shaggy, white hair covering their entire bodies. They wear no clothing. Warlike and vicious, they roam the Underdark looking for prey. Drow sometimes enslave them and use them as guards and spider handlers.

Quaggoths speak a halting form of undercommon and can grasp only simple concepts. More intelligent quaggoths may also speak a few words of duergar, drow, or common.

These aggressive beasts have infravision with a range of 120′. They are immune to all poisons.

Combat: Quaggoth tribes claim a certain territory as theirs and patrol it, hunting for food. Any detected animals or creatures (such as a party of adventurers) invite certain attack. Most tribes (70%) of quaggoths do not carry weapons, and inflict 1-4 points of damage with their claws. The remainder of quaggoth tribes carry stone clubs or axes. Those quaggoths that are or have been drow slaves carry superior weapons, such as steel battle axes or two-handed swords.

If a quaggoth is reduced to 25% or less of its original hit points, it enters a berserk fury and receives a +2 bonus to its attack and damage rolls. This rage lasts until the quaggoth dies or all enemies are dead or out of sight.

For every 12 quaggoths encountered, there will be a leader, or jald. Jalds have 3+3 Hit Dice and wear leather or skins, making them AC 5. In addition, they gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls. Jalds direct combat; if no jald is present, the quaggoths will fall upon their prey, whatever it is, in an unorganized manner. Any quaggoth tribe has a 20% chance of having one or two thonots. A thonot is the quaggoth equivalent of a shaman. Thonots use psionics if the DM is using psionic rules within his or her campaign, priest spells as if they were 3rd-level clerics if not. A thonot will use its abilities to aid the tribe in combat, to escape, or to heal.

If quaggoths win combat, they take all bodies, including those of other dead quaggoths, to their lair and devour them.

Habitat/Society: Quaggoths are nomadic hunters. They change territories periodically. In each new territory, they claim a central cave as a lair, leaving treasure with a few guards. The rest of the tribe hunts, returning periodically to rest and change guards.

Females are equal to males in numbers and abilities in a quaggoth tribe. For every adult quaggoth, there will be one young. Half of these young are unable to attack or defend; the other half have 1+1 HD and the same AC and attacks as adults.

Thonots control what passes for religious life among quaggoths. They oversee what few rituals there are. Those rituals which are known include the daily preparation for hunting, coming of age, and death (a brief whistling to send the spirit away before the rest of the quaggoths eat the body).

Quaggoths can mate at any time of the year. They are not known to have any courtship or mating rituals. Young are born about 10 months after mating. Births are usually singular, but twins are not uncommon.

The origin of quaggoths is unknown. Some sages claim that they were once a semicivilized race which dominated much of the Underdark through conquest and ritual sacrifice until the drow, duergar, and other races broke their power. Others speculate they had some sort of civilization on the surface and were driven underground. This theory is supported by the quaggoths' hatred for surface-dwelling dwarves and elves.

Ecology: Quaggoths produce a few artifacts, for the most part crudely carved stone items. A few seem to be talented at making necklaces with wooden, bone, or stone beads. Quaggoths fear no creature. Though they are dangerous hunters, they are just as often prey for other predators of the Underdark. Quaggoths can be trained as servants and guards if captured early in life.

Skum ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/temperate subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Brood
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal to average (1-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 15
HIT DICE:	2+2
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	5
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	2-16/1-6/1-6/1-8/1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	M (4′-6′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	175

Skum are a race bred by the aboleth from human, demihuman, and other humanoid genetic stock as beasts of burden. Skum do not resemble their ancestors. They have an aboleth-like tail and four extremely strong limbs, each ending in a webbed paw which has two fingers and an opposable thumb. Each digit ends in a retractable claw. A skum's body is covered with a clear, slimy, hairless, gray-green membrane. While skum have no external ears, they are not deaf. In the water, they can hear twice as well as a human can in air. A skum's eyes are much like an aboleth's—an eerie shade of purple-red—but are more spherical. Having been bred to function in the Underdark, skum have 60-foot infravision.

Combat: Skum are pure fighting machines and can attack three opponents at a time, though they usually choose to attack a single enemy. Skum males have an effective Strength of 18 and females have 18/50 Strength. Water is the skum's natural element, and when in water they can attack with their bite and all four limbs. On land, skums' large, buoyant bodies are clumsy, and they suffer a -2 penalty to their attack roll and can use only their arms and bite in melee. While in the presence of an aboleth, skum fight until they are victorious, slain, or ordered off by the aboleth. Skum can be trained to use weapons, but only awkwardly; skum fighting with a weapon suffer a -2 penalty to their attack rolls.

A female skum can carry as much as a heavy warhorse in water if the load is strapped to her back. Males can carry as much as a medium warhorse. On land, a skum can carry as much weight as a human with the same strength.

Habitat/Society: Skum are the end result of at least a millennium of careful breeding. They no longer resemble humanity in body or mind. The aboleth have removed what they regard as unnecessary parts—vocal cords, lungs, external ears, hair etc. The aboleth added what features they thought would be necessary for their servants, such as the tail for swimming and claws and teeth for fighting.

Most skum who still are controlled by the aboleth have low intelligence, but some have been bred to be even less intelligent. These individuals have only animal intelligence.

Skum tend to be as coldly logical as their limited intelligence allows. They have almost no emotions. They communicate with their aboleth masters and with each other through a limited form of telepathy (range 30 yards) that allows them to understand simple commands. Skum telepathy does not allow communications with races other than skum or aboleth. Skum minds are very susceptible to mental domination. They get no saving throw vs. the aboleth's enslavement power and save vs. all other enchantment/charm spells at -4.

Ecology: Skum breathe through the skin, but their outer membranes must be moist to do so. A skum out of water can breathe normally for half an hour before drying out; afterward, the skum suffers 3d4 points of damage each turn until it dies or returns to the water.

A skum female lays one egg at a time after a gestation period of about six months. The egg must incubate on land for four to six weeks, and the female usually buries it in sand. If possible, the parents remain nearby to guard the egg. Once hatched, the baby skum is nursed like a human infant and reaches maturity in three years. Skum can live to be about 30, but most die in combat much sooner than that. Only about 25% of the eggs laid mature into adults.

Skum have no natural enemies, but most land dwellers in the Underdark despise them. A skum unlucky enough to be captured by drow or duergar is in for a long and painful death. Svirfneblin usually take pity on skum captives. Kuo-toa are not known to hate skum, but no skum servant ever has been observed in a kuo-toa city.

Skum will eat anything they can catch, and the aboleth are not above letting them scavenge.

Although the aboleth cannot transform captive humans, demihumans, or humanoids into skum, they can change them so that their offspring will be skum. This practice has set many lurid tales circulating in the Underdark.

Tressym ™

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate land
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-4)
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 16 (A)
HIT DICE:	2
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1-2/1-2/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	T (2′ long, 3′ wingspan)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	270

Tressym are beautiful, fluffy, winged cats, closely related to the small, feral cats native to the woodlands of the Heartlands of the Realms—the cats domesticated by many in the Dales, Sembia, Cormyr, the Moonsea cities, and the Sword Coast. Tressym vary in the hues and fur-lengths of their coats as much as normal (wingless) cats do. Most resemble a short-haired gray, tabby, or black cat, with two batlike wings at their well-muscled shoulders.

Tressym wings have feathers. The leathery membranous wings are divided into arc-segments by hollow bones, rather like the elongated fingers of a bat divide up its wings, but the leathery membrane is covered in feathers.

Combat: Tressym stalk and pounce on prey, scratching and biting much as normal cats do, but with the added ability of flight, which makes them far more deadly to birds (and insects) of all sorts. They do not, however, seem to attack nestlings or despoil eggs. In battle, they are cunning—scratching at the eyes of opponents, for example, and learning danger quickly, so that a tressym that sees a wand fired by a wizard knows about the danger of sticks of wood held by humans for the rest of its life.

In addition to their 120′ infravision, tressym can detect invisible objects and creatures up to 90 feet away. Tressym can also detect poison; through scent, taste, or touch, they recognize substances that are deadly to the intelligent races of the Realms. Tressym themselves seem to be immune to all known forms of poison.

Habitat/Society: Tressym are found on occasion in Eveningstar's streets and trees. Northern Cormyr is the only place where they seem to breed and gather, although individual tressym, both wild and domesticated, may be found all over the temperate Realms.

Villagers in Eveningstar feed tressym and try to prevent the worst of their vandalism and aerial catfights. At the same time, they try to prevent any large-scale or magically-assisted trapping and capturing of them. The locals value tressym for their owl-like rodent control in the fields. Most of the flying cats lair in nearby Starwater Gorge and hunt the farm fields night and day, avoiding local cats and dogs rather than fighting or tormenting them.

Ecology: These cute, mischievous little terrors are semiwild and thought to be the result of some long-past wizardly experimentation. They are known to live 20 years or more if they do not meet with misadventure, and are free to take shelter from, or fly away from, the worst winter weather. Tressym mate as often as normal cats and do not mate for life. They sometimes mate with normal cats, with whom they are fertile, but only 10% of such young will be tressym; the rest will be wingless. Tressym are quite intelligent and have been known to form strong friendships (and hatreds) with creatures of other races, such as humans and elves. Tressym have even been known to sacrifice themselves for those they love.

A few mages have sought these creatures as familiars. At least two wizards of Eveningstar (Lord Tessaril and Maea Dulgussir, who still conceals her magical skills from locals and visitors alike) have done so successfully. As familiars, tressym combine the sensory advantages of a cat and an owl, and have additional benefits: they are intelligent enough to carry and manipulate complex and delicate items (to an extent—they don't have opposable thumbs); they can observe and report events diligently; they can concentrate on a task at hand even when hormones or instincts provide strong distractions; and they can communicate to their masters the identifications of poisons—even harmful gases not intended as an attack. Tressym cannot confer or transmit any immunities against poison to another creature. They are not strong enough to fly with even a halfling aloft. They can fly hard enough to slow a halfling's fall to a 2d4 damage affair in descents of 90′ or more, but can't lessen the damage suffered by any larger or heavier creature.

Tressym tend to get along with others of their kind when they meet, but they rarely lair or hunt together. They also peacefully ignore bats, griffons, and the like, but are the deadly foes of stirges and manticores (against whom they will gather with other tressym to fight). Some tressym enjoy teasing dogs, but usually not to the point where either animal could be truly endangered.

Manshoon™ of the Zhentarim

19th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

One of the Inner Ring of the Black Network, Manshoon is a dangerous and evil wizard, unwilling to let anything stand in his way in his quest for dominion over the Heartlands.

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Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun™

27th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

Suspected to be one of the supposed secret lords of Water-deep, Khelben is a cold-blooded, scheming plotter, willing to let his high-minded ends justify his often bloody and dangerous means.

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Vangerdahast™ of Cormyr

17th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

The chiefmost wizard of Cormyr and the advisor to King Azoun IV, Vangerdahast is devoted to the protection of both his native land and its most illustrious leader.

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Elminster™ of Shadowdale

29th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

Elminster is among the most powerful wizards of the Realms. He masks his power behind the façade of a good-natured, dotty old wizard, but is not an individual to trifle with.

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The Simbul™

30th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

The ruler of Aglarond and the sister of Sylune and Alustriel, the Simbul is a powerful wizardess and a sworn enemy of the Red Wizards of Thay and their allies.

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Sylune™ of Shadowdale

22nd-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

Also known as the protectress of Shadowdale before her tragic death at the hands of a red dragon, Sylune's symbol can still be seen in her old haunts, and is known as a mark of safe haven in the Dalelands.

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Volo™ of Faerûn

5th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

Volothamp (Volo) purports himself to be an expert on all the lands of the Realms, and has published a number of texts on various areas. An untrustworthy reporter, Volo has often been asked to leave said areas soon after publishing his works.

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Aurora™ of Waterdeep

16th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

An accomplished wizardess, Aurora is best known throughout the realms for her business in retirement-the establishment of a long-distance mail order operation which bears her name.

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Alustriel™ of Silverymoon

24th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

The ruler of the city of Silverymoon and sister to both Sylune and the Simbul, Alustriel is an ally of the Harpers and a foe of all the dark races of the North.

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Ashemmi™ of Darkhold

8th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

Ashemmi is a female elf as beautiful as she is evil, and she is very evil indeed. Sememmon's pupil and partner, she controls Darkhold in his absence, working towards the day when she will become a powerful force in the Zhentarim.

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Sememmon™ of Darkhold

15th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

The Master of Darkhold and the junior member in the Inner Ring of the Black Network; Sememmon is often abroad in the Heartlands, working fell magics and conspiring to destroy the Harpers.

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Maskar Wands™

20th-Level Wizard
Mage Sigil

Patriarch of the prestigious Wands family of Waterdeep, Maskar is a cultured, refined mage, more devoted to research and investigation than fireworks and explosions.

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Mind Flayers

Goblin Marking
Underdark Symbol

Used by all races of the Underdark, this rune warns of activity in the area by the brain-sucking illithids, one of the most deadly races of the underground world.

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Entrance Nearby

Kobold Marking
Underdark Symbol

Found both underground and on the surface, this glyph means a suitable passage exists within 100 feet ahead. The suitability of the passage is relative to kobolds and other small humanoids, and larger creatures may find the passage a squeeze.

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Safe Trail

Orc Marking
Underdark Symbol

Used by the orc nations found in the Underdark, this sigil means only that the footing is solid, the passages have sufficient room, and the creatures found within are either neutral to goblinkind or can be bribed. Other races should proceed with caution.

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Food Cache

Svirfneblin Marking
Underdark Symbol

A symbol used by the deep gnomes, this rune means that a hidden store of food is nearby. That food is suitable by deep dwarf standards (it is usually pressed mushroom bread) and it will sustain surface life, but many races and cultures find its taste and texture repugnant.

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Ravens Bluff

The City of Waterdeep

Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

The City of Splendors, located just north of the Heartlands on the Sword Coast, is the largest and most prestigious city in the North. This shield is used by its wardens and servants abroad.

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The Lords of Waterdeep

Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

This is the symbol of a secret society which runs the most powerful city of the North. The size and number of the Lords is unknown, and save for Lord Paladinson, all are masked physically and magically to protect their identities. Lord Paladinson takes the arms as his own.

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Cormyr

Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

The purple dragon rampant is both the symbol of the Heartland nation of Cormyr and the personal coat of arms of its kings. Its current leader is the able and powerful Azoun IV.

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Shadowdale

Heraldic Symbol
Heraldry and Badges

The best-known of the Dalelands, Shadowdale is the home of both Elminster and Lord Mourngrym, as well as a regular watering hole for adventurers of all stripes. The badge shows an idealized version of the Dale's famous Twisted Tower of Ashaba.

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Zhentarim

Badge
Heraldry and Badges

This badge is the symbol of the infamous Black Network, which seeks to dominate the Heartlands from the Moonsea to Waterdeep. It numbers among its members a group of powerful evil wizards, priests, and warriors, and operates out of Zhentil Keep, Darkhold, and the Citadel of the Raven.

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Ravens Bluff

Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

The Living City of Ravens Bluff is located on the eastern shore of the Dragon Reach. It is a popular spot for those with adventuring blood, rivaling Shadowdale and Waterdeep for its hidden secrets and intrigues.

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The Moonshae Isles

Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

The family device of the Kendrick household, the bear's head is now the symbol of the united Moonshae Isles under its restored high king. The bear's head appears on both shields and banners where the high king holds sway.

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Sembia

Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

The raven and silver of Sembia is the device of the collected merchant cities to the east of Cormyr. Ruled by a council of its wealthiest merchants, Sembia has never let ethics conflict with the pursuit of the best deal and the finest bargain.

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Red Wizards of Thay

Badge
Heraldry and Badges

The symbol of the nation and the evil magical elite which rules it, the golden-touched flame of Red Wizards is hated and feared throughout the lands of the Inner Sea. The agents of the Red Wizards are common in most major cities, and are usually up to some evil plan for their masters.

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Halruaa

Badge
Heraldry and Badges

Halruaa is a nation of powerful wizards located far to the South, where magic reigns supreme. The wizards are best known for their magical airships, but their more subtle agents may be found throughout the North.

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Citadel of The Raven

Heraldic Device
Heraldry and Badges

Nestled in the Dragonspine Mountains, the Citadel of the Raven has long served as a base of operations for the Zhentarim. Both Manshoon and the evil priest Fzoul Chembryl use the citadel as a base for their more dangerous plots.

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The Cult of The Dragon

Badge
Heraldry and Badges

The eyed black flame and dragon's claw is the symbol of an insidious secret society found throughout the Heartlands of the Realms. The Cult is controlled by evil mages and powerful, undead dragons, and devoted to the destruction of the civilized nations and towns of the region.

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Lord Mourngrym Amcathra

Personal Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

The Lord of Shadowdale's personal arms are a minor variant on the arms of his family, the Amcathras of Waterdeep. In the Dalelands, they are better known than his sire's.

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House Amcathra

Family Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

One of the many noble houses of Waterdeep, house Amcathra is locally known for its good horses, fine wine, sharp swords, and well-trained warriors. The household, has a number of young members aching to follow in the footsteps of Lord Mourngrym.

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House Cormaeril

Family Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

One of the most far-flung and extensive noble houses in the land of Cormyr, the Cormaerils are related to most of the rest of the nobility in Cormyr (and beyond) by blood, marriage, or alliance. The household has numerous young adventuring members.

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House Wyvernspur

Family Coat of Arms
Heraldry and Badges

This is the coat of arms of one of the noble families of Cormyr. The household is best known for its young scion, Giogi Wyvernspur, who has restored much of the family's old reputation as the home of heroes.

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Oghma

Greater Power of Knowledge
Holy Symbol

Oghma the Binder is venerated by mages, sages, and bards, and all who seek knowledge and information. Oghma is served by Deneir and Milil, and is an ally (not always comfortably) with Gond.

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Mystra

Greater Power of Magic
Holy Symbol

Mystra, the Lady of Mysteries, is the goddess of magic, and one of the most powerful entities in the magical Realms. Mystra's followers in the past decade have become more vocal and outgoing, following changes which occurred in the goddess herself.

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Milil

Lesser Power of Song & Poetry
Holy Symbol

The Lord of All Song is particularly venerated by bards and other musicians, and is known to provide direct support to devout followers in trouble. Milil is particularly supportive of the Harpers.

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Mielikki

Intermediate Power of Forests & Rangers
Holy Symbol

The Lady of the Forest is a strong ally of both Eldath and Silvanus. Most of her most fervent followers are rangers, as well as those forest creatures such as dryads who have no other deity.

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Sune

Greater Power of Love & Beauty
Holy Symbol

Sune Firehair is a vain goddess, and her followers follow that vanity, choosing the best-looking of their numbers as their leaders. She is a popular deity in the cities of the North.

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Silvanus

Greater Power of Nature
Holy Symbol

The Oak Father is particularly venerated by the druids of the North as an embodiment of nature in its original state, untouched by civilization. He is the balancer of Chauntea and Malar, Eldath and Talos, the settled and the savage. His high priests are druids.

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Shar

Greater Power of Darkness & Loss
Unholy Symbol

The Mistress of the Night, the Lady of Loss, Shar is Selûne's enemy, and rules the dark places between the stars and the shadows so deep even Mask shuns them. Her followers have been gaining power over the years, and many thieves worship in her warm, dark shadows.

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Selûne

Intermediate Power of the Moon
Holy Symbol

Selûne, our Lady of Silver, shares the name of the great moon of Toril, and has come to symbolize the night sky and those who steer by it-caravan drivers and seafarers and adventurers. She is opposed by Shar.

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Torm

Lesser Power of Duty & Loyalty
Holy Symbol

Torm the True is the god of the faithful servant, the protector, and the good soldier. He is particularly venerated by paladins, and warrior oaths are sworn in his name. He is the servant of Tyr, but his own bravery in the Time of Troubles has brought his faith great respect.

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Tempus

Greater Power of War
Holy Symbol

Tempus, known as the Lord of Battles, is the warrior's god, and turns his favor from one group of warriors to another as a war progresses. He rewards the brave and valiant, and many fighters swear by him.

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Talos

Greater Power of Storms & Destruction
Unholy Symbol

Talos the Destroyer, the Raging One, is a fickle and vengeful god, ready to smite his followers as well as his doubters. His priests tend to be violent, short-tempered women and men, ready to call the curses of their god down upon unbelievers.

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Talona

Lesser Power of Disease & Poison
Unholy Symbol

Talona is an ancient, withered goddess who chooses to attract followers not through worthiness of ideas but through fear of her reprisals and plagues. She is a foul, evil deity, and her priests are similarly unpleasant.

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Waukeen

Intermediate Power of Trade & Money
Holy Symbol

The goddess Waukeen disappeared during the Time of Troubles, and for several years her priests received no spells. Now they gain them again, but most priests are worshipping Lliira as well as Waukeen, and followers of the Goddess of Trade are dwindling.

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Umberlee

Intermediate Power of the Ocean
Unholy Symbol

Umberlee the Bitch-Queen is worshipped more out of fear than love, for she has the power of the ocean beneath her and at her command. Those who spurn her power soon find their ships destroyed. She is most powerful in seacoast towns.

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Tyr

Greater Power of Justice
Holy Symbol

Tyr Grimjaws is a recent god, one increasing in popularity among warriors seeking justice. His priests wear a black right glove and a thin strip of damask over the eyes.

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Tymora

Intermediate Power of Good Fortune & Adventurers
Holy Symbol

The most popular deity among adventurers and heroes, Tymora is also know as Lady Luck. She is known to be fickle but never cruel (that is the province of Beshaba). Successful adventurers have made her church very popular.

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Chauntea

Greater Power of Agriculture
Holy Symbol

Chauntea is a good-aligned deity, the farmer's goddess and the gardener's patroness, and attracts many worshippers from those close to the land. She is the bitter opponent of gods of natural destruction, such as Talos and Auril.

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Beshaba

Intermediate Power of Bad Luck
Unholy Symbol

Evil Beshaba is known by many names: the Maid of Misfortune, Black Bess, and Lady Doom. She is the beacon of bad luck, and her name is invoked by those who have felt her fury. Her priests delight in mischief and the misfortune of others.

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Azuth

Lesser Power of Mages
Holy Symbol

Mystra's servant is Azuth the High One, the god of those who wield magic, as opposed to the god of magic itself. There are both priests and wizards in the clergy of Azuth. Azuth is a servant of the ultimate law, a being of order and organization.

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Auril

Lesser Power of Cold
Unholy Symbol

Auril is the evil Mistress of Ice, the Snowmistress, the Frostmaiden. Her domain is the cold, and she is strongest in the lands of the North, particularly those lands which border the Great Glacier. She is much less powerful elsewhere, and is almost unknown in the South.

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Gond

Intermediate Power of Artifice & Craft
Holy Symbol

The Wonderbringer is the god of discovery, of invention, and of construction. With each new creation, magical or mechanical, dedicated in his name, he grows more powerful. His priests are now seen throughout the North, speaking of wondrous new things.

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Eldath

Lesser Power of Peace & Streams
Holy Symbol

A quiet goddess, Eldath, the Goddess of the Singing Water, attracts those druids, rangers, and forest creatures who prefer solitude and harmony with their world. Eldath acts in the service of the more powerful Lliira.

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Deneir

Lesser Power of Literature & Art
Holy Symbol

The Lord of Glyphs and Images works in service to Oghma in seeing that what is thought is then properly rendered. The patron of artists and scribes, his followers strive for beauty and accuracy.

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Cyric

Greater Power of Death, Murder, & Lies
Unholy Symbol

The Prince of Lies is a relative newcomer, having swallowed the powers of three elder evil gods. A schemer and plotter, Cyric has sought to consolidate his power among many factions and schisms, but has proved to be very popular among the Red Wizards of Thay.

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Leira

Lesser Power of Deception & Illusion
Holy Symbol

The Lady of the Mists is worshipped primarily by illusionists and rogues, and her priesthood wears silvered masks which obscure its members' faces. Little has been heard of this goddess since the Time of Troubles, but her clergy are still active.

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Lathander

Greater Power of Dawn, Spring, & Youth
Holy Symbol

A very popular god with the people of the North, the Morninglord is the god of beginnings, and his name is invoked at the start of journeys and the binding of contracts. His priests are both eloquent and relatively wealthy.

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Ilmater

Intermediate Power of Endurance & Perseverance
Holy Symbol

Called upon by those suffering and hurt, Ilmater is a peaceful god who encourages others to endure pain and abuse, for rewards come to those who wait. He is a popular god among the poor in the cities.

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Helm

Intermediate Power of Guardians
Holy Symbol

He of the Unsleeping Eyes is venerated by those who choose to be vigilant and watchful, and his shrines may be found near dangerous locations. Both the god and his followers are regarded with suspicion, as their recent actions in Faerûn have brought them into conflict with many believers of other gods.

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Mask

Intermediate Power of Thieves & Intrigue
Unholy Symbol

The Lord of Shadows is venerated by thieves, rogues, spies, and other blackguards who live in the shadows of society. His priests often work in connection with local thieves' guilds and assassin groups.

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Malar

Lesser Power of Wild Beasts & Hunting
Unholy Symbol

The Beastlord is the patron of the savage wilderness, and is worshipped by those who delight is slaughter and the thrills of the hunt. A wild, savage god, his priests are similarly savage and dangerous.

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Loviatar

Lesser Power of Pain & Injury
Unholy Symbol

Loviatar is known as the Patroness of Tortures and the Maiden of Pain. Hers is a faith devoted to the inflicting of agony on others. Her priests are masters at cruelty and oppression.

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Lliira

Lesser Power of Happiness & Freedom
Holy Symbol

Our Lady of Joy is a popular minor goddess, and she is becoming moreso among people throughout the Realms. She is a goddess of revelry and festivals, and her priests stress the advantages of a good life well lived.

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Hidden Cache

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

A previous Harper has stored away food, weapons, or other supplies, and left this mark to tell those who follow of its location. Usually the cache is nearby.

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Dangerous Magic Here

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

This rune resembles a lightning bolt, and holds that same threat associated with lightning in it: of sudden, deadly, magical force being released in the area. The symbol is usually used when marking magical traps or cursed areas.

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Grave/Tomb

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

This symbol indicates that a tomb or grave is present. What is implicit in the placement of such a marking is that people should not disturb this grave or tomb, if they know what is good for them.

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The Harpers

Badge
Heraldry and Badges

A secret society based in Berdusk and Shadowdale, the Harpers are known for their musical bent, powerful members, and even more powerful allies. They are devoted to the protection of the Heartlands from such enemies as the Red Wizards, the Cult of the Dragon, and the Black Network of the Zhentarim.

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Here Be Dragons

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

This is one of the strongest warnings in the Harper's script, second only to that which warns of dangerous magics. This sigil indicates the presence of dragons, or worse still, the presence of the Dragon Cult in the area.

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Harper Refuge

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

This device is one step above the safe haven mark in that an individual is present who can offer aid and is sympathetic to the Harpers' cause. This script is found in the Underdark, Zhentil Keep, Thay, and other regions where individuals are unfriendly to the Harpers.

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Safe Haven

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

This device indicates to Harpers that the area is relatively safe for themselves and those aligned with them. Used underground, it indicates an area is safe from monsters and can be easily secured to keep it that way.

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Dangerous Place

Script Marking
Harper's Mark

This script indicates a dangerous, if nonmagical, threat nearby, such as a large monster, a hostile local lord, a deadly trap, or a regular gathering spot for the Zhentarim or Red Wizards. The exact nature of the threat is not mentioned, so caution is advised.

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Safe Refuge

Script Marking
Elven Rune

This rune indicates the area is safe and can be easily secured against enemies. Further, the area may harbor allies or contain foodstuffs. Note that this safety is in elven terms—orcs may find the area definitely unsafe, and they tend to treat these runes as warnings of danger to goblinkind.

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Turn Back

Script Marking
Elven Rune

This rune contains the strongest warning of any of the elven runes, in that it warns of danger ahead which is so severe that avoidance is the best possible course. Of late, it has also been used to designate dead ends and other caved-in areas.

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Hidden Water

Script Marking
Elven Rune

Used on maps and by travelers, particularly in arid climes, to mark the source of potable water for the elven adventurer. If a horizontal line is drawn through the rune, it means the water is poisoned or unsafe.

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The Elven Court

Script Marking
Elven Rune

This rune is found primarily in the old woods of Cormanthor, which once covered Sembia, Cormyr, and the Dales. Its literal meaning is *elven land* and it can sometimes be found in old growth elsewhere in the North. It is a claim marker warning travelers that elves are present.

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Caravan Route

Dark Elf Marking
Underdark Symbol

This carving is used throughout the Underdark to show the caravan trails of the drow. In more heavily populated areas, the trails are marked with *faerie fire* or luminous markers. All other races should be warned of the presence of the drow.

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Safe Place

Dwarven Marking
Underdark Symbol

This rune is used to denote areas safe for dwarvenkind—low passages that are easily defended and relatively clear of monsters. Used extensively along passages of the Underdark once inhabited by the dwarven nations.

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Warning-Magic Present

Goblin Race Marking
Underdark Symbol

This rune is common among goblins, orcs, ogres, and other nonmagically inclined races to designate the presence of (potentially dangerous) magic and individuals. It also used to warn against mysterious areas where strange occurrences are common.

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Horns of Evil

Ranger Marking
Underdark Symbol

Used for thousands of years both aboveground and belowground, this symbol is used warn of the presence of evil beings or magic in the area.

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Laebos

"Fire"

Elder Rune

Laebos is used to mark a place of fire or where fire is commonly used. It designates molten earth and lava ahead, as well as fire-breathing or fire-using creatures. Proceed only which proper protection. In less dangerous circumstances, it can be used to denote firewood or kindling.

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Gatha

"Fey"

Elder Rune

The rune Gatha is a complex and dangerous glyph, for it warns of extradimensional magic or creatures from other planes. It can be usually inferred that said creatures are hostile to the area.

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Lammath

"Safety and Shelter"

Elder Rune

The rune Lammath resembles a house, and says that the area it is marked with is safe, free of traps, and easily protected. Versions of this rune have been picked up by others to show safety or safe caches.

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Angras

"War and Danger"

Elder Rune

The rune Angras warns the viewer that there is conflict in the area, whether from warring tribes or raiding monsters. Physical danger is present. Those seeking safety should proceed in other directions.

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Korombos

"Chaos"

Elder Rune

Korombos warns of chaos, though whether that chaos is good or evil is unknown. It is also used as a warning to travelers to proceed no further, and that grave consequences would be the result of pressing on or opening the door it guards.

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Bairemuth

"Death"

Elder Rune

Bairemuth is the rune of ending, of the grave and the tomb, and of death. It is also the rune of sleep and rest. When used, it usually represents the presence of the undead. It is also used in constructing symbols of death and sleep.

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Savaros

"Goblins"

Elder Rune

The rune Savaros is used by goblins and nongoblins alike. For the former, Savaros is used as a marking of territory and welcome to other goblins. For the latter, it is a warning that kobolds, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins are in the area.

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Nchasme

"Decision"

Elder Rune

In writing, Nchasme implies a choice, in maps it designates several branching passages, mazes, or other options. Some action must be taken at this point to proceed. It is sometimes used to indicate that a hidden passage or mechanism which will activate on a particular word or action is present.

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Uttebyn

"Religious Site"

Elder Rune

Uttebyn is the symbol of the dead gods, of forgotten powers venerated by long-dead people. If the symbols of a deity have passed away, Uttebyn is used to mark the deity's holy sites and magical devices, and the unknown potential power within.

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Retniw

"Camping Place"

Elder Rune

Found throughout the Inner Sea region, Retniw is a variant of Lammath, but usually designates a pre-existing campsite or building which can provide a safe place to spend the night.

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Ullathar

"Safe Passage"

Elder Rune

Ullathar is most commonly seen as a trail mark. It indicates the safest trail through a swamp, cavern, or other perilous operation. It is also used to designate a concealed entrance to a building or cavern.

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Anarath

"Guardian"

Elder Rune

The guardian rune of Anarath is used to signify a watcher or guardian (of physical or magical nature) or of the need for reason, caution, or care. It is used as part of the creation of a *glyph of warding* and similar spells.

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Qualos

"The Water"

Elder Rune

Qualos represents the natural state of water and all that is contained within-including both elemental creatures and natural beings such as fish and sahaguin. It is also used to warn of areas prone to flooding.

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Tergara

"The Earth"

Elder Rune

Tergara is the symbol of the earth and all that dwells beneath it, including both extraplanar creatures, such as xorn, and underground inhabitants, such as the drow. Tergara is also used to describe treacherous peaks or caverns prone to rock slides.

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Ingolth

"The Sun"

Elder Rune

Ingolth is the symbol of heavenly fire, as opposed to Laebos, which denotes natural or extraplanar fire. It represents bright light, such as sunlight or even a full moon. Ingolth is also often invoked to represent the punishment of the gods.

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Vakaros

"The Air"

Elder Rune

Vakaros is the elder symbol of the air, referring not only to the plane of the same name, but the natural element in this plane and all that comes from it (including rain, birds, clouds, and lightning). Its presence often means high winds or flying creatures in the area.

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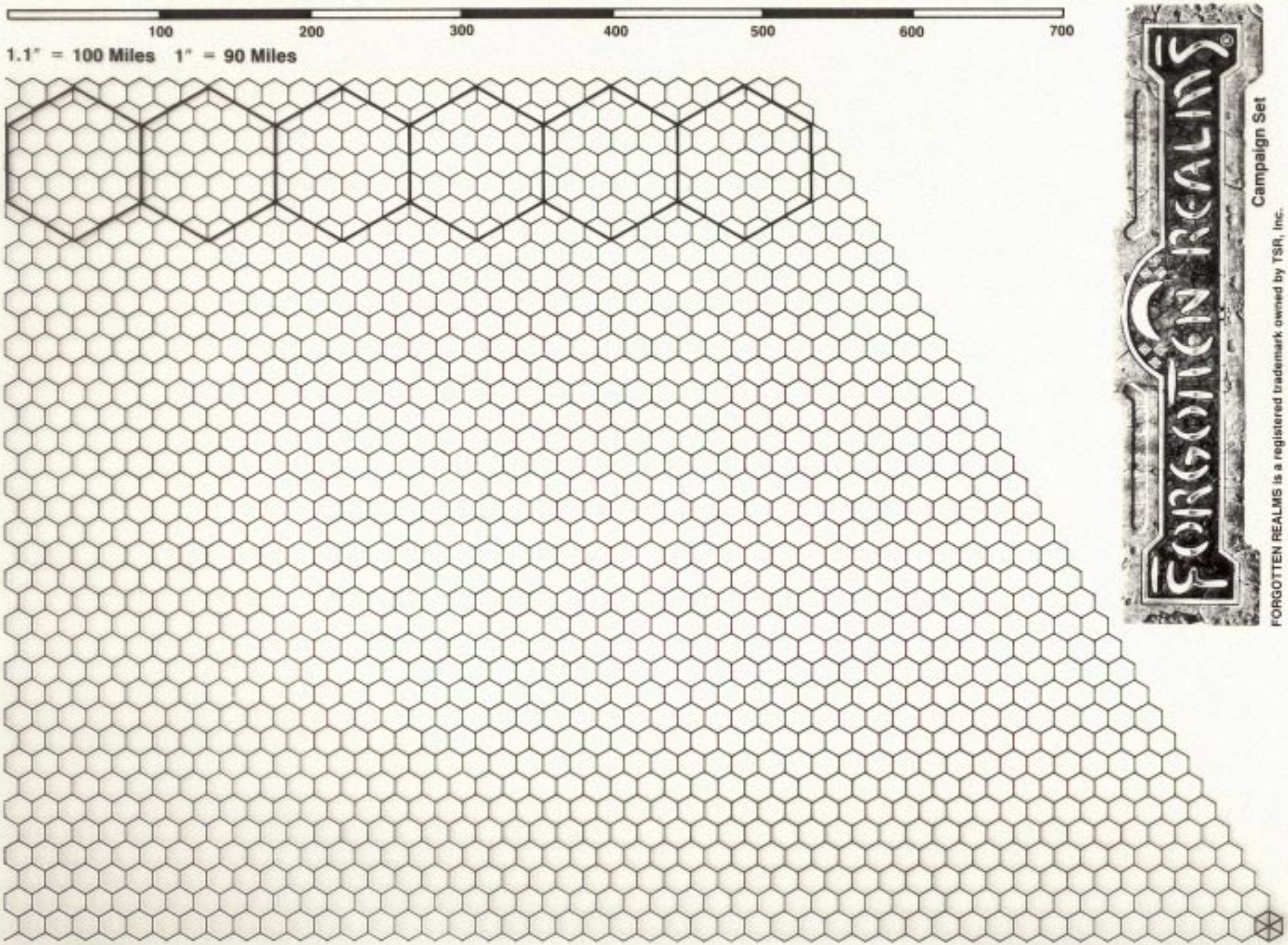

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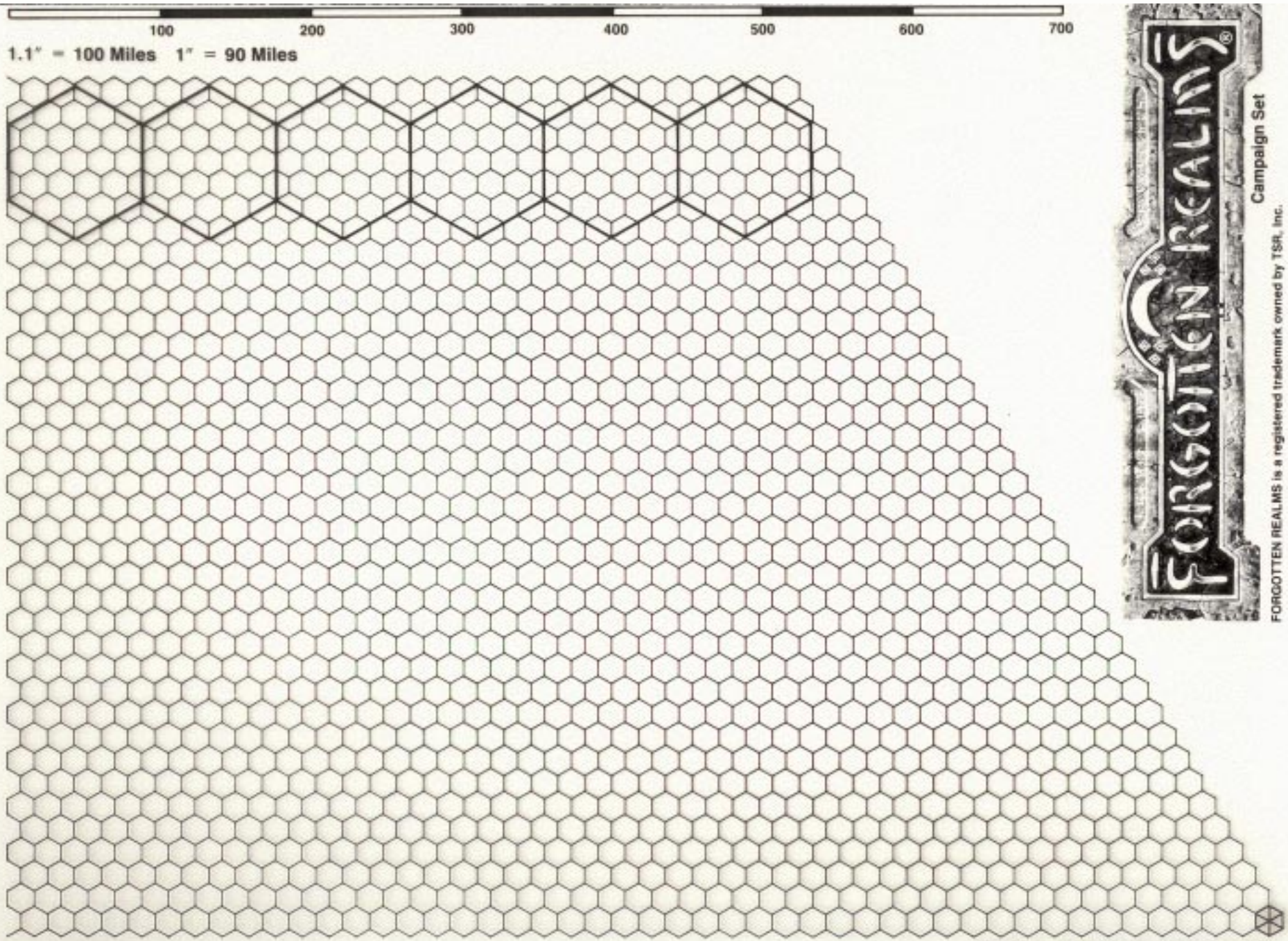

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Tuern
Sea of Moving Ice
Icewind Dale
Mirabar
The Icefloe
The Ice Lakes
The Icepeak
Luskan
R. Mirar
Neverwinter Wood
Neverwinter
Gundarlun
The High Road
Leilon
Trackless Sea
Mere of Dead Men
The Whalebones
Ruathym

Korinn Archipelago
Wave Rocks
Moonshae Isles
Norland
Sea of Moonshae
Caer Callidyrr
Alaron
Oman's Isle
Mintarn
To Evermeet
Moray
Gwynneth
Snowdown
Flamsterd Isle
Caer Corwell
Gull Rocks

Gull Rocks

Carcathen

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Ioma

Sea Tower
of Nemesser

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Trackless
Sea

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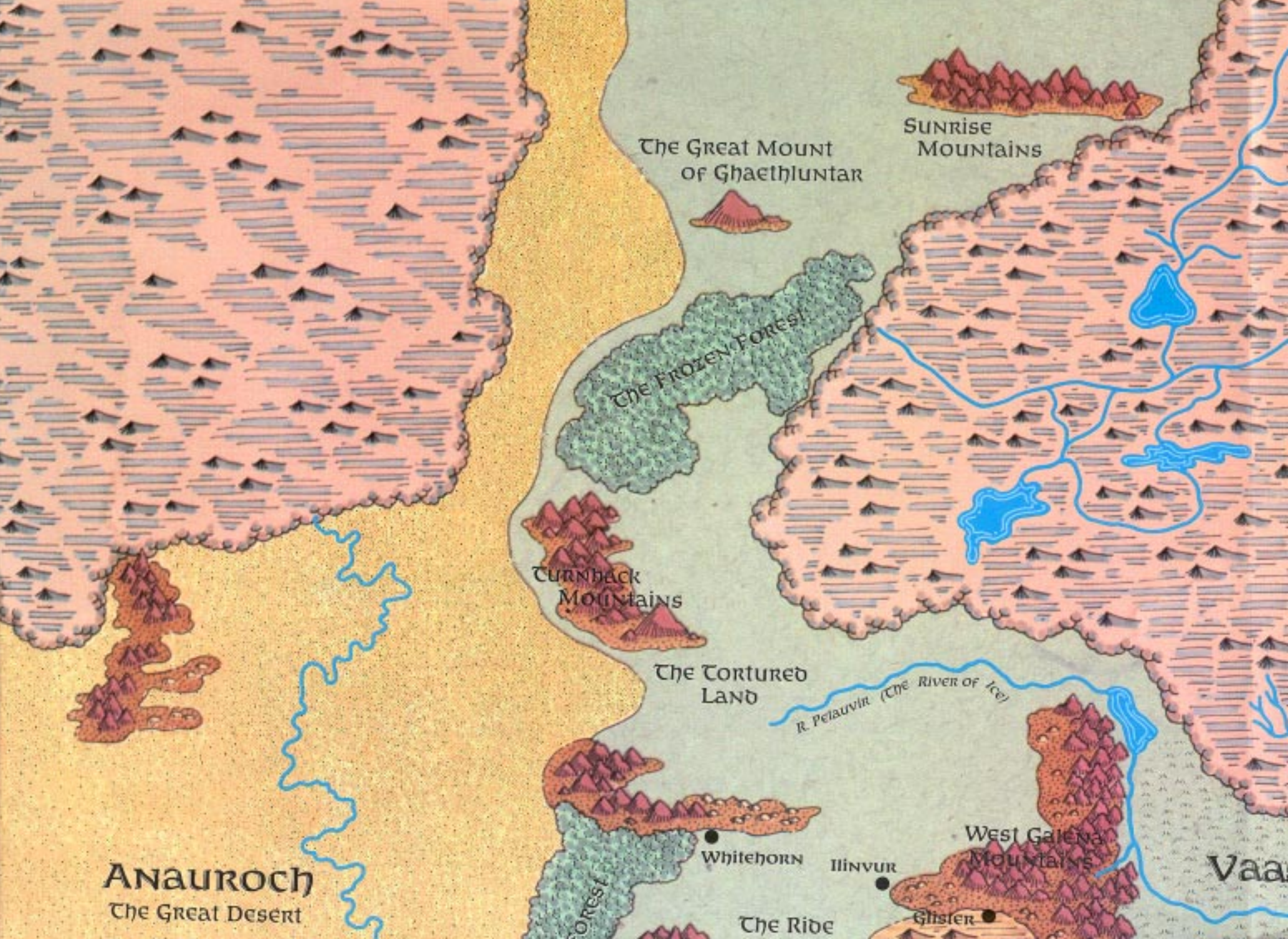
The Spine of the World (The Wall)
Coldwood
Ice Mountains
Citadel Adbar
Valley of Kedrus
Lurkwood
The Moonwood
Shining Cr.
Goblinbeck
R. Surbrin
R. Rauvin
Silverymoon
Sundabar
The Evermoors (The Trollmoors)
Nether Mountains
Everlund
Longsaddle
The Laughing Flow
Hellgate Keep
The Lost Peaks
The Far Forest
Yartar
The High Forest
Triboar
Long Road
The Star Mounts
Kryptgarden Forest
Westbridge
The Sisters
The Fallen Lands
Red Larch
Westwood
Unicorn Run
Greenpeak Mountains
R. Dessarin
Ardeep Forest
(The River Shining)
South Wood
Weathercote Wood
Waterdeep
The Laughing Hollow

The Laughing Hollow
Illefarn
Lizard Marsh
Misty Forest
The High Moor
Trade Way
Lonely Moor
Forgotten Forest
Marsh of Chelimber
Greycloak Hills
Evereska
The Serpent Hills
Orlumbor
Trollbark Forest
Dragonspear Castle
Serpent's Tail Stream
Troll Hills
Hill of Lost Souls
The Battle of Bones
The Forest of Wyrms
The Winding Water
Soubar
Remains of the Reaching Woods
The Fields of the Dead
Trade Way
Sunset Mountains
The Far Hills
Marsh of Tuir
Sword Coast
Sea of Swords
R. Chionthar
Elturel
Scornubel
Baldur's Gate
Cloak Wood
The Wood of Sharp Teeth
Berdusk
Proskur
Iriaebor
Candlekeep
Beregost

The Green Fields
The Cloud Peaks
Troll Mountains
The Snakewood
Nelanther
(Pirate Isles)
Lake Neng
Athkatla
Amn
Eshpurta
R. Esmel
Esmeltaran
Lake Esmel
Sea Tower of Irphong
The Small Teeth
Velen
Murann
Asavir's Channel
Brost
Riatavin
Forest of Tethir
Firedrake Bay
The Race
Starspire Peninsula
Starspire Mountains
The Shining Stream
Zazesspur
R. Suibuskoon
Gorge of the Fallen Idol
Castle Tethyr
The Purple Hills
Ilhmong
Tethyr
Myratma
Saradush
R. Ilh
Memnon
R. Agis
Forest of Mir

The Calim Desert
Calimshan
Calim R.
The Marching Mountains
Mir
Calimport
Schamedar
The River of Ice
Almraiven
The Shining Sea
Tharsult
The Dawn Warrior


Sunrise Mountains
The Great Mount of Ghaethluntar
The Frozen Forest
Turnback Mountains
The Tortured Land
R. Pelauvir (The River of Ice)
Whitehorn
Ilinvur
West Galena Mountains
Glister
The Ride
Anauroch
The Great Desert

The Great Desert
(Also the Great Sand Sea)
The Ride
Border Forest
Citadel of the Raven
Dragonspine Mts
Thar
Glister
Phlan
Melvaunt
Zhentil Keep
R. Tesh
Voonlar
Moonsea
(The Sea of Dragons)
Hillsfar
Mulmaster
Shadowdale
The Ruins of
Myth Drannor
Misttledale
Cormanthor
Desertsmouth Mountains
Ashabenford
Harrowdale
Iliverton
Farsea Marshes
Storm Horn Mts
Scardale
Calaunt
Tantras
Ravens Bluff
High Horn
Arabel
Hullack Forest
Thunder Peaks
Arch Wood
Ordulin
Yhaunn
Cormyr
Waterwater
Saerb
R. Arkhen
Sembia
Procampur
Tsurlagol
Wheloon
Vast Swamp
Mulhessen
Suzail
Marsember
Daerlun
Selgaunt
Saerloon
Lake of Dragons
(Dragonmere)
R. Cun
Urmlaspyr
Westgate
Teziir
Trader's Road
Isle of
Prespur
Dragonisle
Pirate Isles
Elversult
R. Redban
Lake of
the Snake

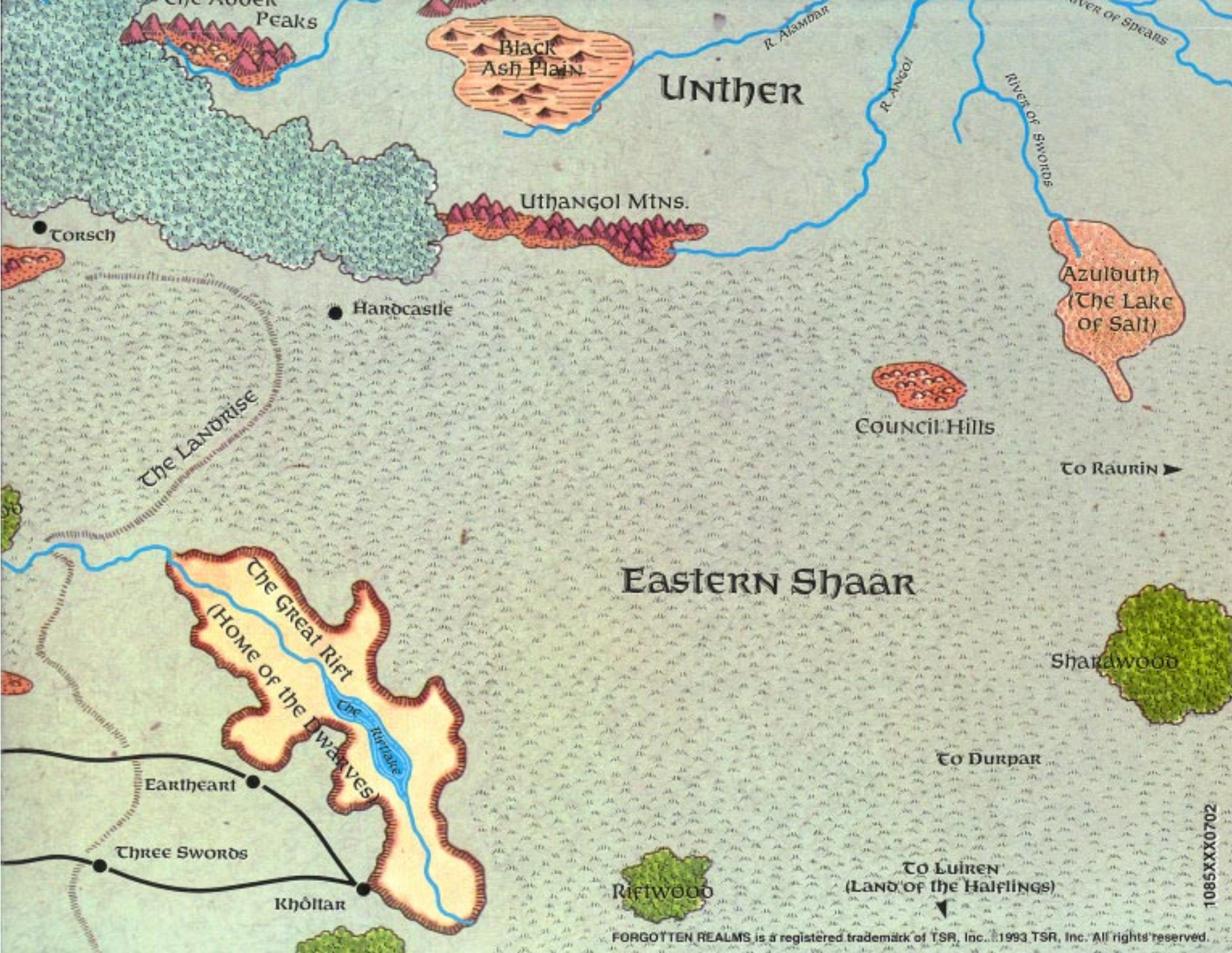
R. Reddan
Lake of the Snake
Giant's Run Mountains
Giant's Plain
Starmantle
Starmantle Bay
Lake of the Long Arm
Guilthmere Forest
Nathlekh
Whamite Isles
Alaghôn
Ilighôn
Turmish
Orsraun Mountains
Snowflake Mountains
The Welwoods
The Shining Plains
The Anbrawn Mtns
Hlath
Ormath
Lheshayl
Hlondeth
The Vilhon Reach
R. Nun
Chondath
Nimpeth
Iljak
Arrabar
Lachom
Surkh
Shadow Lake
The Deepwash
Mountains
The Winterwood
The Nightglow
Sespech
The Chondalwood (Satyrwood)
The Wintercloak R.
Ormpetarr
R. Arran
Nadawaer
The Cloven
The Thornwood
The Golden

Ankhwood
Mintar
Saelmur
Ankhapur
R. Ankhapur
The Nagaflow
Lake of Steam
Arnrock
Yhep
Innarlith
Derlusk
The Duskwood
The Firesteap Mtns.
Themasulter
Suldolphor
Border Kingdoms
Theymarsh
Yallasch
R. Sceptar
The Shaar
Shaarmid
The Shaarwood
R. Shaar
Lake Lhespen
Lhespenbog
Rathgaunt Hills
Sebben
Ormpur
Kormul
Sheirtalar
The Wormbones
Shaareach
Reithmar
Channathwood
Shaareach Forest
Channathgate
Lushpool
Cliffs of Talar
Dun Hills
Misty Vale
R. Talar
R. Channath
To Halruaa
Ithmong
N

Ulffest
Armitage Mtns
Dharvil
Shannath
Sundice
Sossal
Mt. Sundabar
Heroes' Height
The Great Glacier
Icelace Lake
Icelace River
Snake

Icelace River
L. Mereth
The Teardrops
Giantspire Mountains
Peltarch
Muirenon Lake
L. Musker
N'Jast
Huta Lake
Falls of Erech
Narfell
Heliogabalus
Damara
Bilboobaris
Firward Mtns.
Rawlinswood
Immilmar
Mulptan
Kront
Bezentil
The Great Dale
Ilmwatch
Uthmere
The Forest of Lethyr
Ashanath
Rashemen
Shevel
Impiltur
Nyth
Two-Stars
Tammar
Surthay
Firur
Sarshel
Hlammach
Dilpur
Telflamm
Lyrabar
Phent
Thesk
Plateau of Thay
Thay
Thaymount
Dragonfang Mtns.
Milvarune
Nethentir
Emmech
Elabhar
Lake Thayflambar
The Wayrock
(The Inner Sea)

Spandeliyon
Velprintalar
Emmech
R. Umber
Aglarond
Altumbel
Yuirwood
Umber Marshes
Delthuntle
Laothkund
Escalant
Amruthar
River of Sorrows
R. Lapendrar
Tyraturos
Pyarados
The Priador
Bezantur
R. Chazarim
Ellabhar
Reth
Airspur
The Yuirwood
Akanaderks
Cimbar
Soorenar
Bay of Chessenta
Mordulkin
Mt. Thulbane
Threskel
The Alaor
Sullim
Rauthgor (The Rainbow Falls)
R. Rauthenrow
Alamber Sea (Sahuagin Sea)
Messemprar
Luthcheq
Adderswamp
The Akanaderks
The Akanal
Chessenta
The Riders to the Sky Mountains
Melvaunt
Shussel
Skuld
Mulhorand
Oslin
Adder R.
Methwood
Dalath
The Winding R.
Unthalass
Neldorild
River of Shadows
To Semphar
Gheldaneth
The Smoking Mountains
The Adder



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To Waterdeep
Orlumbo
Mintarn
Scale: 1 inch = 30 Miles

Daggerford
Lizard Marsh
Misty Forest
The Way Inn
The Trade Way
Ruins of Dragonspear Ca
bor
Trollbark Forest
Warlock's Crypt
Troll Hills
Trollclaw Ford
Sword Co

The Halls of the Hammer
Hammer Hall
Mt. Hlim
The High Moor
Serpent Hills
Serpent's Call stream
ar Castle
The Dungeon of Swords
The Crabe Way
The Forest of Wyrms
Lyran's Hold
Crollclaws
The Winding Water
Boareskyr Bridge
Soubar

Greypeak Mins.
Ruins of Dekanter
Lonely Moor
The Forgotten Forest
Marsh of Chelimber
Greycloak Hills
Evereska
The Winding Water
Hill of Lost Souls
The Battle of Bones
Skull Gorge

← To The Moonshaes

Scale: 1 inch = 30 miles

Mountains (High)	Clear	Cliffs
Mountains (Medium)	Forest (Heavy)	Snow
Mountains (Low)	Forest (Medium)	Glacier
Foothills	Forest (Light)	City
Rolling Hills	Jungle (Heavy)	Castle
Barren	Jungle (Medium)	Town / Important
Volcano	Swamp	Ruins
Desert (Sand)	Marsh	Road
Desert (Rocky)	Sea / Lake / River	Trail
Plains & Grasslands	Falls Line	Bridge

Sea of Swords

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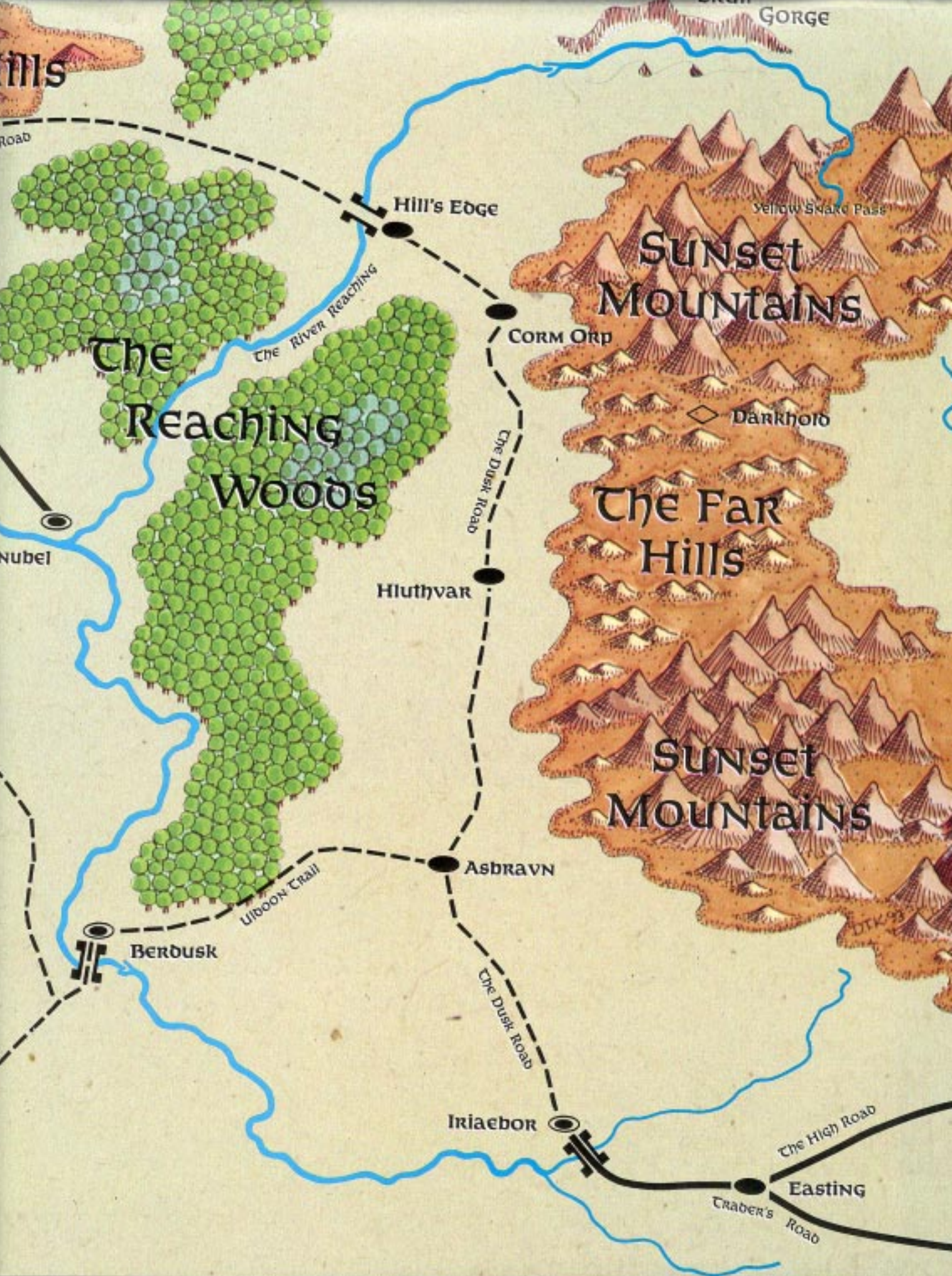
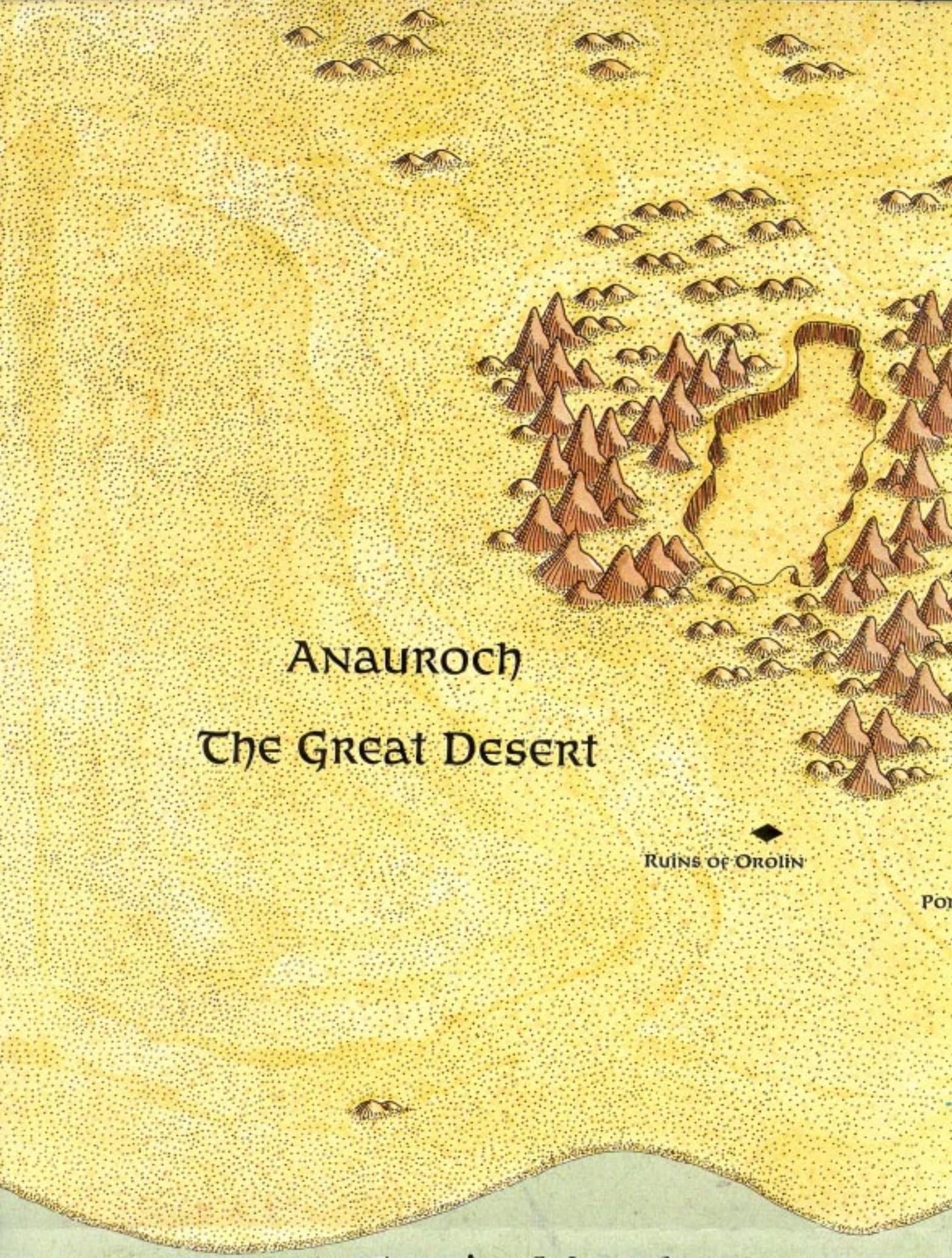
Coast
The Coast W
Thunda
Baldur's Gate
Cloak Wood
The Friendly Arm
The Coast Way
Candlekeep
The Way of the Lion
Beregost

Fields of the Dead
Trielta Hills
The Dusk Road
Triel
Chundar's Ride
Skulbask Road
The Dusk Road
The Trade Way
River Chlonthar
Elturel
Scornubel
Skulbask Road
The Wood of Sharp Teeth
Durlag's Tower
Ulbodn Trail


Gorge
Hill's Edge
Yellow Snake Pass
Sunset Mountains
The River Reaching
Corm Orp
The Reaching Woods
Darkhold
The Dusk Road
The Far Hills
Nubel
Hluthvar
Sunset Mountains
Asbravn
Ulboon Trail
Berdusk
The Dusk Road
Iriaebor
The High Road
Easting
Trader's Road


Anauroch
The Great Desert
Ruins of Orolin
Por

Border Forest
Snowmantle
Mines of Tethyamar
Flaming Tower
Dagger Falls
Daggerdale
Tethyamar Trail
Dagger Hills
Castle Daggerdale
Lost Vale
Serpentsbridge
Aghazstamn's Lair
Spiderhaunt Wood
Shadowdale
The Northride
Port Mir
Desertsmouth Mountains
Shadow Gap
Thunder Peaks
Stoneboll Trail
Tilver's Gap
The Moonsea Ride
Tilverton
The

The Ride
The Citadel of the Raven
Dragonspine Mtns.
Mt. Tesh
Sorcerer's Isle
Phlan
Zhentil Keep
Teshwave
The Tesh Trail
The Bowshaft Way
The Throat
The Northride
Shind Road
Ruins of Yulash
Yoonlair
Hillsfar
Shadowdale
Ruins of Myth Drannor
The Standing Stone
Mistledale
Ashaben Ford
Cormanthor
Battledale
Hap
The Cormanthor Forest

The Great Gray Land of Thar
Vaasa
West Galena Mtns.
East Galena Mtns.
Melvaunt
Sulasspryn
Hulburg
Thentia
oonsea
The Bell in the Depths
Mulmaster
Ironfang Keep
White River
Elmwood
R. Dalton
Maskyr's Eye
Earthspur Mtns.
River Lis
The Flooded Forest
Beltar's Hunt
Rurith
Cavilar
Cross Road
Pass Trail
Yhraphon
Blanaer
The Mage's Tower
Crollcrag Mtns.
King's Reach
Viperstongue Ford
River Vesper
Chindilar
Hammer Ford
Harrowdale
Harrowdale (Village)
Calaunt
Wandering Trail
Centaur Trail
Sendrin
Swords Pool
The Dragon

Goblin Marches
Sto
The High Moors
Farsea Marshes
Castle Kig
Horns
The Helmlands
High Horn
The Haunted Halls
Tyriuk
Eveningstar
High Road
Eagle Peak
Storm
Cormyr
Espar
Dhedluk
Marsh of Cun
Cun River
Skull Crag
Waymoot
Immersea
Hilp
Way of the Manticore
Starwater R.
Suzail
Marsember
Lake of Dragon
(Dragonmere)
The Bridge of Fallen Men
Proskur
High Road
Overmoor Trail
The Plunge
Turnstone Road
Ilipur
Pros
Teziir
Elversult
Traber's Road
Priapuri

The Moonsea Ride
Lake Sember
Thunder Peaks
Gnoll Pass
Castle Crag
Immerflow
Hullack Forest
Thunder Gap
The East Way
Arabel
The Immer Trail
Wyvernwater
Hooknose Crag
Thunderstone
Hultail
The High Dale
Saerb
The Vast Swamp
Kulta
The Dawnpost
Dornsar's Ride
Wheloon
Way of the Manticore
Daerlun
Huddagh
The Wyvernflow
Shalass Road
Urmlaspyr
The Neck
Westgate
The Grand Ride
Traber's Road
R. Thunn
Reddansyr
Traber's Road

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old
Field
The Reach
The Dragon Reach
N
Hlintar Ride
Cross Road
Centaur Trail
Wandering Trail
North Road
Hlintar
Bambryn
Fallentree
Dead Tree Hollow
Hlintar Ride
Cross Road
Highbank Forest
Tantras
Dark Hollow
Lion's Walk
Trail
Scardale (Village)
Dragon Falls
Mosstree
Fire River
Mossbridges
Ravens Bluff
Elvenblood Pass
Sarbreenar
The High Trail
Glorimne Pass
Brenwood
Aohe Wood
High Haspur
Sevenecho
Helve's Trail
Maerstar
Stormcrest Trail
North Road
Procampur
Tsurlagol
Lone Rock
Pirate Isles
Alpha I.
The Windrace
Kelthann
Fang Rocks
The Spoon
Isle of Prespur
The Dragonisle
Ilthan
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By Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb

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