



FORGOTTEN REALMS

Official Game Adventure

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



SHADOWDALE

by Ed Greenwood

FORGOTTEN REALMS™

Shadowdale

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PROLOGUE

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

—From the Prophecies of Alaundo the Seer, called “the Wise.”

Notes for The Dungeon Masters

Shadowdale is the first of a trilogy of modules that describe the strife called by some “the Godswar,” in The Forgotten Realms.

These modules loosely parallel the action described in the Avatar Trilogy, published by TSR, Inc. It is not necessary that you or your players read the novels before play, nor are the adventures outlined in the modules identical to action in the novels. Players should use their own characters, though several NPCs will prove to be quite valuable. (The NPC Midnight is an exception—she *must* accompany the party in order for the adventure to be completed.) If the PCs are weak, or run into trouble early on, the DM could well provide aid by using the other NPCs described herein as reinforcements for the party.

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

How The Module Is Laid Out

The adventures in *Shadowdale* are outlined in chapters. Each chapter begins with several Events that occur regardless of what the PCs do. After the Events come the Encounters, representing areas the PCs may visit or situations the PCs may come to be in.

For both Events and Encounters, the boxed portions of text are intended to be read aloud to the players. The remaining information is for the DM, and should only be revealed in

response to PC actions.

The chapters describe the intended flow of the story. PCs have plenty of freedom as to what they actually do in the chaos surrounding the Godswar. Feel free to improvise to make the adventure exciting and enjoyable. If you read the entire module before play to see what will occur, it will be easy to see where there is ample room for your own side-adventures, and where and how the adventure herein can be tailored into an existing campaign set in the Forgotten Realms.

Each chapter also contains random events and encounters. You should adapt each entry used to best suit the PCs’ current situations. “Random” events can be deliberately introduced into play to challenge cautious PCs, or to warn or direct them. It is a time of godly portents, confusion, and dire omens; feel free to “stretch coincidence” to answer PC doubts or queries.

Rumors and legends are also provided in this adventure. PCs can learn these by eavesdropping, questioning NPCs, or investigating written records. You may wish to develop some of these hints into further adventures for the PCs.

Ability Checks

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

The Setting

This adventure is set in the continent of Faerun in the Forgotten Realms, specifically in the Dragonreach lands: Cormyr, the Dalelands, and the cities and wilderlands of the Moonsea. These areas are described in the boxed FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set. DMs who place this adventure in other settings will have to modify the geography, NPC “power groups”, and gods used, but should still be able to use this module.

A Note About 2nd Edition AD&D® Rules

This module is written for the new rules system. The most noticeable change is the reference to “mages” instead of “magic-users.” The class is basically the same, as are the class’s spells. When a character’s statistics are listed within the text, the letter “M” denotes “mage,” as “MU” used to denote “magic-user.”

The other noticeable change is the presentation of the monster statistics. The layout used here is that developed for the new *Monstrous Compendium* series. The information is organized a bit differently, but nothing has been left out. Everything DMs are used to seeing is there.

Running This Adventure

This section explains the steps a DM should follow to best run *Shadowdale*. A lot is going on in the Realms during this adventure. Reading the entire module before play allows a DM to change the order and nature of encounters in response to PC actions.

This module has been designed not only as the first part of a trilogy, but as the foundation of a fledgling campaign. Many of the NPCs introduced can be used in all sorts of adventures, not merely the action outlined in these pages. The DM should be familiar with the overall aims, general knowledge, and “juicy secrets” (if any) of all NPCs introduced in a chapter, before beginning actual play. If keeping track of such things becomes overwhelming, list key NPC facts on a sheet of paper or series of file cards for ongoing use. When one knows what drives a particular NPC, roleplaying that person’s reactions to PC queries and activities is relatively easy.

Events: Note that Events occur in the sequence given and at the times noted no matter where the PCs are or what they are doing. These Events move the adventure onward and give the PCs information, as well as making the Realms “come alive,” rather than merely serving as a static background

PROLOGUE

for PC adventurers to strut around in. A synopsis of the main events of *Shadowdale* is given below.

Time: It is important that the DM keep track of the passing days, and when PC actions and encounters occur. Unless the text gives a specific time of day for an event, you may arrange the time to best suit the needs of your adventure. Alter the order of encounters if desired to best suit the pacing of your adventure as play unfolds.

Synopsis of The Story

The key steps of the adventure are given below. If the PCs stray too far from the intended course of the adventure, the DM should head the PCs in the right direction by introducing forceful events and by providing NPC hints and warnings. Note that events may well occur "offstage," particularly if the PCs are militarily weak. There is no need to lead PCs "by the nose" to drag them through all the encounters in this module.

1) The adventure begins with the "Fall" of the gods, and the physical and Magical Chaos this brings to Faerun. Hints and news of these unsettling occurrences can be worked into other adventures as the DM brings the PCs together in the caravan-city of Arabel, in northeastern Cormyr.

2) Caitlan Moonsong approaches the PCs with a plea to undertake the rescue of her mistress from "an evil power" imprisoning her in Castle Kilgrave. The

DM should introduce Caitlan's appeal in such a way that it is very hard for the PCs to refuse it; perhaps a tutor of one PC could demand it as a service in payment for training, or Caitlan could approach the PCs in a taproom or other public place while the PCs are trying to impress an audience with their bravery or skills. Midnight joins the party—not only is she simply the only wizard left in Arabel (or Cormyr, for that matter), her presence is necessary for events to unfold as they should. Caitlan falls ill and cannot accompany the party.

3) The PCs journey to Castle Kilgrave, perhaps encountering adventures along the way, and battle its dangers to rescue Mystra. If they fail, other (NPC) adventurers will succeed, and the PCs will witness the next step via Midnight's pendant.

4) Mystra asks for, and receives, the pendant she gave Midnight. The pendant's power and value, if not its nature or usefulness, will be readily apparent to avatars and powerful wizards. Mystra brings into being a *gate* to the Ethereal plane, where she confronts Helm. Helm dispatches Mystra, revealing the importance of the Tablets of Fate, and challenging them to rise as heroes to the quest. The DM should use whatever priestly directives, inner voices, omens, and NPC reactions seem necessary to make reluctant PCs undertake the quest for the Tablets. The idea of Elminster the Sage as a source of information crucial to this quest should also be introduced.

5) The PCs journey to Shadowdale,

either in search of Elminster or because of rumors concerning the Tablets' whereabouts. Adventures occur along the way, and PCs come to the attention of the avatar of Bane, the Zhentarim, and the Harpers (and any other avatars and power groups the DM wishes to use in future play).

6) The PCs encounter Elminster, and learn much from him about Helm, what has befallen the gods, and the importance of mortal conduct and the recovery of the Tablets. The DM should give hints of Elminster's own mysterious power and importance in the plans of The One Who Is Hidden. The PCs explore the dale (its important NPCs should be introduced to give later events emotional impact), and Zhentarim-led forces attack Shadowdale. The DM should involve PCs in the battle.

7) The temple of Lathander in Shadowdale is attacked by Bane, who is resisted by Elminster, who inadvertently summons Mystra to aid him in fighting Bane—and all three beings are apparently destroyed in their struggle, demolishing most of the temple.

All wizard player-characters should be involved in this battle, along with any other PCs who wish to fight.

8) The adventure comes to a temporary end with the capture of the PCs by angry inhabitants of Shadowdale. The DM must direct subsequent play according to whether the events of *Shadowdale* will stand alone, or the PCs will go on to the adventures described in the second module of this trilogy, *Tantras*.

Chapter 1: The Coming of the Gods



For if there is storm on high, there must surely be chaos below.

—Saying of the priests of Helm

The adventure can begin anywhere in Cormyr or the areas west or south of it (Westgate, for instance, or as far west as Iriaebor); wherever it best fits an ongoing campaign. The PCs should end up in the caravan-city of Arabel in northeastern Cormyr.

Arabel is detailed in The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set. If the PCs are already in Arabel, run Event 1 during the course of other adventures. If the PCs are elsewhere in the Realms, Event 1 can occur before they reach Arabel. Several mini-adventures set in Arabel are included in this chapter as “warm-up” events for fledgling parties.

Note that a royal charter is required to bear weapons in Cormyr; PCs living in Cormyr will know this. (The DM can attach conditions of behavior to the granting of such a charter; Cormyr is a generally law-abiding kingdom.)

For details of police and soldiery in Arabel, see Encounter 1 in this chapter.

It is a time of great changes, a time of portents, war, and high adventure. The challenges in this adventure are intended to test a party of six to eight characters, including at least two spellcasters, ranging in level from 1st to 3rd. If the party is stronger, or becomes much weaker, the DM should feel free to match the adventure to the characters’

current abilities, for example: provide NPC aid, have some events occur “off-stage,” and weaken PC opponents a trifle. It is a dull adventure in which all the heroes fall within the first half-hour of play. The old saying of the halfling Brandyjack Two-Cask, however, is particularly apt when applied to the events described in this adventure:

“Goes the fray at all a wry?”

Flee! Flee! Run away!

*They grow no older who sudden die
And ne’er adventure another day.”*

Event 1: “A Storm To Shake The Thrones of The Gods”

One morn, no sunrise comes. There is only darkness, and an icy chill. Dust blows on the wind, which grows quickly to a gale. It is no normal storm, but a howling, lashing battle of winds that come from every quarter, and crash together, wrestling over the land. Branches, birds, plants and all are whirled helplessly through the air.

Rain begins, and hail, and snow, all falling impossibly together as lightning crashes and tornadoes form and tear over the land. The ground shakes, and rocks are borne aloft to fall as a killing rain out of the dark-

ness. Folk in the open are crushed against rocks or buildings; roofs fall in or are whittled away. Horses are tumbled helplessly along the ground. Trees topple.

All day long the fury of the storm rages unabated, until nightfall. Night does fall, this day—with a great crash that shakes the earth, throwing all creatures helplessly to their knees. There is a sudden silent calm thereafter as, overhead, the stars come out.

If the PCs are in the midst of an adventure when the great storm hits, the DM may wish to apply damage relevant to the natural hazards they encounter. Lightning, hail, tornadoes; all devastate cities and countryside alike. Creatures of all sizes are slain or badly hurt. Underground, cave-ins occur; in the mountains, landslides are common. At sea, ships founder—and in most cities with a major temple, a great meteor or “star, trailing fire as it falls” strikes the temple at nightfall, destroying it in an explosion that slays the majority of the clergy within and ruins the wealth of the temple. There are no such preeminent temples in Arabel; PCs already in the city may not learn of the temple destruction for a while.

It is suggested that no PC be badly hurt in the storm. Mounts and property, or NPC tutors or allies upon which PCs have become over-reliant, however, could well be destroyed. The sudden damage to vaults, city walls, and many buildings will lead to lawlessness: Looting, and bloody street-fights as folk see a chance to settle old grudges (or, having lost everything, are willing to chance anything). This sudden violence could well lead to other PC adventures.

During the storm, the NPC Midnight will be compelled to go outside and find a secluded garden or grove, where she will meet an avatar of Mystra. Event 2A below describes their meeting and its results, which is crucial to the rest of the adventure. Even though no PCs will be there, it is included here as background for the DM. Also, there may be a time when Midnight tells the adventurers of this meeting...

After reading Event 2A, go on to Event 2B.

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Event 2A: A Mysterious Meeting

There is sudden silence in the darkness all around Midnight. Darker shadows—tree trunks—seem to sway and shift gently, but there is no sound.

Ahead, she sees a glowing form begin to shine; a blue-white radiance, growing stronger amid the trees, approaching. The radiance grows brighter and nearer.

A gentle yet powerful whisper sounds in Midnight's head: "I said I would return when you were ready, little one. Know me now, sister." A dark figure moves out of the trees, surrounded by a nimbus of blue-white light. It is Mystra, Mother of All Magic. Her face is hidden in the shadow of her limning.

"For years you have worshipped me, albeit in your own way. Now, Midnight, you can do me great worship. I shall reward thee, now and in the future. Will you serve me?"

Midnight, of course, accepts. Mystra continues: "Good. I will entrust to you something of mine. Guard it well. You cannot make use of it, but in turn, it cannot harm thee." Mystra raises her hands to her throat, and a blue-white light is kindled there, between her palms. The glow lights her face, that of a beautiful, willful young woman, which hints of a long-borne pain. Then her eyes lift to meet Midnight's, and she smiles.

"Take this of me, Midnight. I shall seek its return, in time." She holds out her hands, and in them is the blue-white radiance, shimmering with unearthly beauty. It is power, the power of Art, trapped in a blue-white star of some clear crystal or gem. It is set on a chain of blue-white metal; Mystra holds it out to her.

When Midnight touches the pendant, she will find the crystal and its chain both silken-soft and warm to the touch. Both can be considered unbreakable, even by the attacks of artifacts and avatars (due to the combined wills of Mystra and The One Who Is Hidden). The initial touch of the chain will cause a painless, exciting tingling in Midnight's body. Mystra will urge Midnight to take the pendant. After Midnight takes it, Mystra says:

"For this service, sister in Art, I will reward you in time to come, and now.

Choose one spell from those you already command. Whenever you cast it, you shall be able to recall it and cast it again thrice more, four times in all, by my grace. Choose now; other matters press me."

The DM should choose a single spell from those already known by Midnight. *Magic missile* is a good choice, because in addition to the extra spells, the missiles created will always do maximum damage—an extra boon from Mystra.

After she chooses, Mystra says, "My thanks, Sister. Receive now Mystra's boon." The glowing form of Mystra steps forward. No longer hidden in darkness, she seems to be clad only in blue-white radiance. She embraces Midnight, and the young woman can feel the power and ecstasy of the Art coursing through her.

The next thing Midnight knows, she is alone with the pendant. Mystra's kiss has conferred upon her the promised powers, and also cured any hit point damage and any diseases Midnight may suffer from or carry. Midnight's skin will glow a bright blue-white from head to toe, and the pendant will be around her neck, grafted to her skin. It cannot be removed by anyone but Mystra, and cannot be broken.

The pendant has five additional powers, not mentioned by Mystra. These automatically operate when the pendant is worn or touched. They are: the pendant confers the abilities of *feather fall* and *pass without trace* (as the spells) upon its bearer.

Anyone who has touched the pendant will know its presence and location thereafter, whenever it is within 6", however disguised or hidden. Substitute or false pendants will instantly be known for what they are.

At will, anyone touching the pendant can cause a blue-white radiance to come into being in the pendant, lasting as long as desired, and varying (or pulsing) in brilliance from a faint glow to a spectacularly bright display (illuminating as per a *continual light* effect), but not when the caster is *held* or affected by magical *sleep* or mental suggestions or commands.

Event 2B should be set in an inn, tavern (or other haven) where the PCs—or the majority of PCs—have taken refuge, late in the evening of the storm. Regard-

less of whatever furniture, bolts, bars, and the like have been used to reinforce the door against the fury of the elements, the door will be suddenly flung open, and Event 2B will occur. It is suggested that the setting be The Pride of Arabel inn (#48 on the Arabel map in the Campaign Set), proprietor Dunlass Tathelkom (LN male F6, 46 hp, genial, fair, and burly). If the DM desires, it may be the only place in the city with a room to let to adventurers.

Event 26: A Dramatic Entrance

In the doorway, winds howling madly at her back, is a raven-haired woman. She wears a black cloak, and dark boots, breeches and tunic beneath, all whipped wildly by the storm. Some power seems to keep the storm from sweeping in through the door behind her. Indeed, she seems to be clad in power: A blue-white star pendant glows at her throat, and her face—her very eyes—glow with the same unearthly radiance. Her hair moves gently in waves, this way and that, as if alive; it too glows.

Her skin glows, too, all down the open front of her tunic, and through a tear in one leg of her breeches. The light she gives off is painfully bright, almost blinding. She looks around the room calmly, even boldly, yet her eyes give the impression her thoughts are elsewhere, somewhere far more glorious than here.

Suddenly the radiance dies away—the lady's skin, the pendant, everything goes dark. She crumples to the floor without a sound. Behind her, the full fury of the storm crashes into the room.

Midnight will be unconscious for 2-12 turns, and then awaken with no ill effects. She will not be hurt in the storm, but the pendant will cause 2d10 points of energy damage, per round, to anyone touching it during this time. When Midnight awakens, the pendant will glow again, and lose this damage-dealing power (Mystra caused it to pro-

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tect Midnight by absorbing storm energies near her, a temporary power).

IMPORTANT NOTE: (NOT TO BE READ ALOUD TO THE PLAYERS)

From the moment the storm ends, magic is unreliable in the Realms. Use the "Magical Chaos Table" whenever magic is unleashed in the adventure from this point on. *Everyone*, including the avatars of the gods and powerful wizards such as Elminster, is affected by the chaos. Magic items without charges (a *ring of protection*, for example) suffer Magical Chaos only once every week, but items with charges or otherwise limited uses risk chaos every time they are used. Clerics cannot gain spells of third level or greater through prayer from the moment the storm begins. These effects include Player Characters, and continue until the end of the adventure.

The DM can (and should) override the Chaos Table to benefit the PCs. This is especially important in the battle at the Temple of Lathander toward the end of the adventure.

Event 3: Stunning News

Run this Event sometime during the day after the storm, whenever one of the PCs is out in the wreckage-strewn streets of Arabel.

A scarlet-robed priest runs past you, stumbling in haste. His face is white, his mouth open in shock. "Father Counselor!" he cries. "Revered One!" The rose-hued disc of Lathander, God of the Morning, bounces at his breast.

Down the street is an old man, grey-bearded and erect. He wears a robe of pale rose, denoting higher rank. He turns calmly. "What is it, brother?," he asks. "Be calm—Lathander loves us all, remember."

"But, Father! His Art has left us! Canon Mieskal prayed for the power to remove curses, and no power came! Canon *Mieskal!* Then the Old One, Patriarch Gurimn, came out of

his hut and wept. He said his prayers, too, had gone unheard! Has the Great Morninglord forsaken us?"

The old man looks around at you and the other folk listening in the street, and puts an arm around the distraught younger priest. "Hush, brother," he says gently, in lower tones. "Do not aid the Dark Ones by spreading panic and dark rumor. Calm thyself in the grace of Lathander. Does not our faith tell us that there is always a new beginning? Look for that new light, then, and be cheerful. True, our greater prayers are not answered. But we are not alone. The brothers of Tymora were as upset as thou, early this morn. And as I came this way, I passed one of the whip-mistresses of Loviatar. She, too, was in tears and hurry. And what does that gain? If the gods do not hear us, 'tis because they are busy, mark ye. Come now, and be once more a man. Lathander needs ye now, more than ever."

Lama Chonszul (the old man) will lead Adept Bronsus (the priest in scarlet robes) away. No one will follow (except, perhaps, the PCs). If questioned, Chonszul will be calm, kind, and secure in the stoic philosophy of renewal common to aged followers of Lathander. He will readily admit that, as far as he has heard, no priests of any clergy in Arabel have had spells of 3rd level or greater renewed by the gods.

Chonszul has just witnessed a *commune* tried by the visiting High Priest Alosar, newly arrived in Arabel from Elturel far to the west. Alosar asked Lathander or his servants (solars) why the god did not answer their prayers and received no answer. Chonszul will freely relate this, and advise PCs to stand forth in such times of trouble to defend what is good in the lands, for in such service lies true glory.

Chonszul, for all his gentle manner, will not hesitate to use his spells if attacked. He is a 7th level Neutral Good cleric with 50 hp, and has among his other prayers (spells) three *hold person* magics and one *dispel magic*. He bears a *rod of smiting*.

Bronsus has a *command* and a *sanctu-*

ary spell, and will summon aid: 20 lay brothers of Lathander if he or Chonszul are robbed or attacked.

Chonszul will remain in Arabel to aid its folk as best he can throughout The Time of Troubles, and may serve to guide or aid PCs with healing or tutelage. He will report the descriptions of PCs to the local Purple Dragons (army garrison, busy cleaning up the streets and restoring order) if they loot or vandalize stores, or slay folk wantonly.

Event 4: Dark Dismay

Run this Event late on the day after the storm, or the next day, whenever the PCs are out of doors.

You come upon a woman sobbing on the ground, sitting with her head buried in her knees and her arms clasped around them. She wears dark robes, open down the back to reveal old, white whip-scars on her skin, and on her forearms are armored wrist-guards inlaid with bone, polished white. She looks up as you approach, revealing a desolate, tear-stained face, and then sinks down to weep again, rocking gently as her shoulders shake.

The woman is Sespetralee, Whiplass (Canon) of Loviatar. A LE 6th level cleric with 36 hp, Sespetralee is devastated at the news that a great temple of Loviatar, far to the south in Turmish (across The Sea of Fallen Stars) was destroyed during the night of the storm. No priestess of Loviatar has received prayer-spells from, or been able to contact, the goddess since then. The Realms must be coming to an end!

Sespetralee is armed with a *whip of frost, fire, and fear* (detailed in the New Magic appendix, p. 42), a non-magical cat-o'-nine-tails barbed whip (2-8 damage, 4-foot reach), a sleep-poisoned mace (its first strike releases venom from a handle cavity onto the ball of the mace, so that any subsequent blows deliver a skin-contact venom effective in 1-2 rounds, save vs. poison or fall into a deep sleep (slapping, etc., will not awaken) for 1d8 +3 turns), and an

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assortment of harmful spells. She will only attack if the PCs attack her in earnest. Bewildered and forlorn, she will allow herself to be comforted or aided without reacting with hatred, betrayal, or rudeness. Her whip-scars are due to ritual worship; she was unshakeably loyal to the Maiden of Pain until now.

Event 5: Anarchy of Art

Run this Event immediately after any PCs discover that their magic sometimes goes wrong when cast, or soon after Event 4, while the city of Arabel is still littered with strewn wreckage (whichever comes first).

You hear a terrific, glassy crash, and then shouts nearby. Angry shouts. "Good gold I gave you, wizard! Call yourself 'Wonderworker,' indeed! Look at this— *ruined!* Can't you manage a simple levitation?" The speaker is a furious potter. He is standing, blood streaming from a gashed forehead, amid a litter of potshards. Broken crockery is all around him. Behind him is a large crate, on its side, top slit open in a splay of broken boards, straw packing spilling out. Behind it is a broken window, behind that a topsyturvy cellar. You've seen many in the aftermath of the storm.

What you haven't seen before is an utterly astonished wizard. Tall, bearded, and distinguished in grey-and-purple robes with an arched collar, many rings glittering on his fingers—and utter bewilderment on his face.

"Mother Mystra!," he gasps. "I—I'll return your money, good sir. That's ...never happened before ...I swear."

The wizard is Antharn, a 12th level LN wizard with 40 hp. For 50 pieces of gold, he agreed to *levitate* a crate of crockery that the storm had driven through a nearby cellar window out, up, and over a busy street to the yard of its owner, the potter Gulthagh Murr. He's the angry one.

The crate contains delicate, ornate vases from Calimshan, and Gulthagh expected about half of them to be shattered, but he'd agreed to shift them

speedily to avoid trouble with the owner of the cellar, a dealer in fine carvings. Antharn had taken the fee, cast the spell—correctly, he swears (and he's right)—and the crate had flown up sharply out of the window, turned a brilliant blue in color, sprouted yellow rootlets all over, returned to its original appearance, and burst open (still in mid-air). It had then gouted forth small pieces of crockery in a series of wild explosions that had littered the street, cut Gulthagh's forehead, and flabbergasted the wizard.

He is shaken. "But I did nothing *wrong*," he says. "Was other magic at work?"

PCs should soon hear other news of spells going wrong in the city. Remember that the Magical Chaos Table should be used for all spellcasting.

Event 6: Clerical Strife

Run this Event a few days after the storm, particularly if the PCs intend to leave Arabel to seek adventures elsewhere. It can occur at any time when one or more of the PCs are in the streets of Arabel.

You are suddenly confronted by a tall, thin man in a dark weather-cloak. His manner is imperious and fearless as he gestures at you to halt. You notice that his other hand, hitherto hidden, grasps a wand. It is levelled at you.

"Stand!," he says coldly. "You look to be lawless swordbearers and the like. Do you worship the One True God? Or shall you be swept away as all worshippers of false gods are fated to, in these days of reckoning?"

The man is Ulgon, a 7th level wizard of the Zhentarim. (The Zhentarim are an evil network of wizards, clerics of Bane, warriors, and beholders based in Zhentil Keep. The Campaign Set of the Realms gives some details of this organization.)

Ulgon is LE, has 22 hp, and is armed with a *wand of magic missiles* (with 12 charges) and a *blink ring* (detailed in the

New Magic appendix, p. 42). He also has a full complement of spells, including *polymorph other*, two *lightning bolts*, and three *magic missiles*.

The "One True God" Ulgon refers to is Bane, The Black Lord (god of strife and tyranny). Ulgon will not menace the PCs; he does not want an open fight with them. Instead, he will behave like a fanatical clergyman, triumphant at the downfall of "false gods." Ulgon will claim that only the true gods—Bane, Myrkul, Talos, and Tempus, Bane being the truly powerful of the four—will survive.

Ulgon will urge the PCs and like folk of action and daring to join "The Cleansing Hand" (of clergy and lay worshippers of the four gods mentioned). The Hand, Ulgon claims, will earn glory and divine reward for its members in preparing the new society to come. Its work now is to slay and cast down "false clergy," seizing their wealth and property, and to resist all other authority. Other adventurers, brigands, the soldiery of the corrupt, doomed kingdom of Cormyr—all must be cast aside to allow the True Gods to ascend to their rightful place.

Ulgon will try to convince the PCs to join him. If they do, he will charge them to seek out and slay a troublemaker known as Garthim "the Black" (actually a Harper, a 9th level CG fighter) in the city. (The Harpers are a good-aligned organization described in the Campaign Set of the Realms.) If they refuse, he will ask where they are staying, and promise to show them signs of the truth of his belief later.

He will actually send seventeen 0-level thugs to attack and rob the sleeping PCs, taking first their mounts, then clothes and weapons, seeking to keep the PCs in Arabel.

ENCOUNTERS

1. The Purple Dragons

Run this encounter if the PCs seek out Watch patrols or the soldiery in Arabel to ask about the sudden, strange erratic performance of magic, rumors of trouble among the gods or clergy, or for any other reason. The PCs will be escorted to an office where this encounter will take place. This encounter will also occur if the PCs run afoul of the law in

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Arabel, or attract official suspicion as a result of their adventuring activities.

You are facing a burly, hard-faced man. He is seated at a desk that bears only a battered war-helm and a naked, battered two-handed sword. Brass rings glint on his hairy fingers. He wears leather armor under a surcoat bearing the Purple Dragon of Cormyr.

"I am Dutharr," he says simply, "officer of his majesty Azoun. I deal with adventurers such as yourselves. These are days of strife, and hence watchfulness, requiring special actions on our part. As you know, arms can be borne by private individuals in Cormyr only by royal charter. By the King's authority, I can—and will—issue or revoke any charters pertaining to yourselves according to the acceptability of your own behavior. Is that understood?"

Dutharr is a tough, streetwise veteran, a LG 11th level fighter who wants the PCs to refrain from slaying or pillaging in these times when the soldiery of Cormyr are spread thin coping with half-mad clerics and wizards and their out-of-control spells. He warns that they will be slain on sight if caught behaving criminally.

What Dutharr would really like the PCs to do is to help keep the peace wherever they go in Cormyr, reporting suspicious doings they observe to the Purple Dragons and aiding the soldiery with a handy sword or threatening charge now and then. He hints that rewards—perhaps even a knighthood or two—await such service when the current strife is over.

If the PCs do report their movements and findings to Dutharr (he will have them watched) and come to the soldiery's aid in any brawls or crowd scenes, Dutharr may aid them in return should they run into trouble. The DM might provide such a rescue if exhausted or badly wounded PCs are unwittingly heading into big trouble.

In Arabel, the city Watch (police) patrol the streets; the city's garrison of Purple Dragons (professional soldiers of Cormyr) patrol a day's ride outside the city walls. The Purple Dragons are always contacted by the Watch in cases of murder within the city. In these

times of strife in the Stonelands and trouble with Zhentarim spies, Dutharr has bolstered all Watch patrols with Purple Dragon soldiers.

Dutharr's spies will be 5th and 6th level LG fighters, veteran Purple Dragons. They will always be in disguise and in teams of two. While within the city, PCs will have a very hard time spotting them. The DM should make two secret Intelligence Checks for each PC per turn. Only if both Checks are successful will any PC notice anything suspicious—and then only if that PC is in a position to do so. (There's nothing suspicious, for example, about a merchant walking down a street full of merchants, unless the PCs have turned a corner or entered a shop so as to reveal individuals following them.) If players state that their characters are watching for spies, allow Checks more often, perhaps once every three rounds. It is recommended that the DM retain the "double secret check" system. Outside the city walls, the DM should adjust chances of noticing spies according to the terrain, light, and PC activities.

2. A Harpist Bold

This encounter can be run in any tavern, ruin, or secluded glade or hollow the PCs venture into, at any time before Chapter 3 begins. If the PCs are very weak, the NPC encountered here could help the party out for a time.

You see a young girl, her hair cascading around her like a silver waterfall, sitting alone. She is bent over a harp, and its silver strings chime faintly under her fingers like faint, far-off water trickling its carefree way over stones. She looks up at you suddenly, and nods at you in greeting, unsurprised. "Well met," she says, and stops playing. The harp plays on faintly by itself for a breath or two before stopping.

The girl is Salreen Shamarsair, a Harper. She is a CG 6th level ranger (ST 17, DEX 17, 41 hp) who has a +1 *long sword* with a silver-plated blade, and 6 knives about her person (two at belt, one in each boot, one strapped to a forearm and one sheathed at the back of

her neck, under her hair), which she is adept at throwing.

Salreen's harp is not magical (although a faint blue *faerie fire* cast upon it makes it radiate a *dweomer*). She is watching adventurers in this area on behalf of the Harpers, looking for signs of the work of the gods or of various evil powers (particularly the Zhentarim). She will join the PCs the better to keep an eye on them—and if they strike her as good or at least working against evil, she will give the PCs her loyalty (to the death, if need be.).

The DM should play Salreen as an utterly honest, shrewd "character judge" of the PCs in the final scenes of this module, keeping track of what she witnesses of the PCs' actions, debates, and intentions. If she does not join the party, she will follow the PCs to spy upon them (and may rescue PCs in a tight spot at the DM's option). For chances of the PCs noticing Salreen or other spies, refer to the encounter above.

If the PCs attack her, Salreen will call for help. It will come in the form of a patrol of twelve Purple Dragon soldiers, five 1st and seven 2nd level fighters, clad in chainmail and armed with long swords, spears, handaxes and daggers.

3. Brothers in Blood

This encounter can occur at any time the PCs are in the streets, taverns, or shops of Arabel, particularly at night.

You see two men in rich purple robes, each bearing a black hand outlined in red flames upon the breast. They swagger fearlessly about, eyeing everyone with contempt. Seeing you, one stops and asks haughtily, "I suppose you have a charter permitting you to bear weapons in this land?"

He extends a hand imperiously. The other priest draws a rod from his belt and eyes you coldly.

The two men are Halaze and Retheel, two priests of Bane. They are 4th and 2nd level respectively, and bear no magical weapons (the "rod" is just that: a bar of black metal, equal in damage to a club). The two are stupid, officious bullies, so obnoxious and corrupt that

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their own fellows have set them to a perilous task in Arabel in hopes of being rid of them.

Halaze and Retheel will “bait” the adventurers, demanding to see their charters. If refused, they will bluster and threaten to report the PCs (and will shortly do so, claiming to have been robbed by these “dangerous brigands” of anything valuable they notice the PCs using or carrying). If the charter is produced, they will make a great show of examining it. They will also attempt to substitute a false document for the real one (so that they can later report the PCs as brigands using a false charter), but aren’t very good at such chicanery.

Any Player Character specifically stated to be watching the two priests closely while they hold the charter will automatically see the pair trying to slip it into a sleeve and substitute another charter, (All such adventuring “Company charters” issued by Cormyr are written on parchment of a particular type and size; the priests’ counterfeit is, at a distance, identical to a real charter.)

All other PCs should be given secret Intelligence Checks by the DM (any thieves being given a 1-point bonus) to see if they catch Halaze and Retheel at it.

If attacked, the two clerics will flee like startled rabbits, crying comically for help, and loudly calling the PCs fiends, brigands, assassins, and worse. (If they are slain by the PCs, there will be no response from the priesthood of Bane.) All the noise is very (86%) likely to attract the attention of a nearby Watch patrol—usually five 0 level LG constables in leather armor, armed with rods (clubs), short swords, and daggers, led by one or two Purple Dragon soldiers in chainmail, with long swords, handaxes, and nets. The patrol leaders are usually LG 2nd level fighters, but may be as high as 4th level (and are 20% likely to be fighter/wizards).

4. Trouble Faith

Run this encounter immediately after Encounter 3. If there are any clerics or paladins with the party, the priest encountered herein will be of the same faith as one of them. If not, he is a cleric of Torm.

A wild-eyed priest runs toward you, robes torn and in disarray, hair tousled. He is white-faced and panting with terror, and hardly seems to see where he is going, slipping and stumbling in frightened haste. “Doom!” he cries. “Flee, all! Doom is come—the gods have abandoned us! We are lost, lost to the darkness, the beasts, and the savages!”

The cleric, a 3rd level devotee named Flindurl, is utterly terrified. He will appeal to the PCs for help and guidance, and advise anyone of his own faith that the god (or goddess) has deserted mortals, and no longer answers their prayers. Thieves and ruffians (individual thieves and a few thugs hired by Ossel Bharauk, a Zhentarim agent) are beating up clerics and stealing temple goods, smashing what they cannot take and setting fires.

Magic no longer works properly! Doom is come! Flindurl is too upset and physically weak to fight or travel with the PCs, but he can tell them how to get to various local temples and other establishments.

5. A Helping Hand

Run this encounter whenever the PCs are gathered together in a tavern, inn, or eatery in Arabel.

A rough-looking woman in leather armor sits nearby, a tankard in her hand. A broad sword swings at her hip; her boots and harness look old and well-worn. She catches your gazes, and says pleasantly, “You look to be adventurers, and my business is guiding adventurers. Anyplace you want to go hereabouts, you let me know, and for a gold piece a day, Jhannath the Huntress” she points lazily to herself, “will show you the way.”

Jhannath is a NE 4th level thief. Although she actually knows the area very well, she will guide the party straight into a brigand ambush. The brigands are her comrades (see Encounter 6 in Chapter 2, p. 17), and Jhannath will aid them against the PCs by using her only magic item, the *smo-*

kespear (It is detailed in the New Magic Appendix, p. 17.) Jhannath is a likeable, easygoing, earthy jokester, and is capable of leading the PCs unobserved around Purple Dragon patrols and most of what she calls “waiting watchers” (Zhentarim agents looking for unusual travelers).

6. Mad Tidings

Run this encounter anywhere and at any time before Chapter 3.

An old man sits on a rickety stool, mumbling and singing unintelligibly to himself. From time to time one of his hands darts out and snatches at the air. Then he brings it to his mouth and smacks his lips in loud satisfaction. He is eating flies.

He looks up at you suddenly, eyes rolling. Then a look of wild recognition—and gleeful cunning—passes over his face, and he speaks to you.

“Yes, ah-hah-ha! You’re the ones, right enough! Saw you clearly, I did, and Old Nolbi never dreams wrong...no, no I won’t tell you! ‘Twouldn’t be fair; ‘twouldn’t be *fun!*” He bursts into shouts of wild laughter, and then hisses, “Mark me! You’ve a great destiny, you lot, if you seize it! Old Nolbi never lies! Well, not all the time, at least...great heroes, you can be, great indeed! Oh, yes!”

Nolbi is an utter madman, and will be of no further use to the party. He is quite spry, and the DM can use him as a “nuisance” NPC throughout the adventure if desired, showing up to suddenly caper and giggle and comment wildly on whatever’s happening at the time. The DM can also drop cryptic hints to the PCs (nudge, nudge, and so on) in the midst of Nolbi’s babbling repartee.

Adventures in Arabel

A few “mini-adventures” are outlined here for the DM’s use when the PCs first arrive or gather in Arabel. These can occur before Chapter 1 begins, or during Chapter 1. Names and details

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should be altered to fit particular campaigns (and to foil players who peek at these pages). Strengths of PC opponents (and the corresponding treasure to be won) should also be adjusted to challenge—but not slaughter out-of-hand—the particular PCs who take part in these adventures.

1. Many Foul Balls

A merchant is found dead, horribly burned and contorted. Scales on his hands and a tail with a scorpion-like sting seem to have grown after death. The merchant, Uirboar Thendel, was found in an inn room in front of a table littered with shards of crystal, evidently from a crystal ball shattered in some sort of explosion. Whispers spread that ill fortune has accompanied the use of specular items (scrying-crystals) in the Dragonreach area before.

A seller of crystals, Luorn Kabarr, approaches the PCs to hire them to discover the source of the fell magic, or misfortune, or faulty Art, or whatever it may be that caused Thendel's death. Luorn's business is hurting badly; he will offer the PCs 3000 pieces of gold and a *pearl of power*, payable when the PCs show him they have ended the problem. Luorn is honest, and will pay.

The PCs, however, may find it difficult to collect. The crystals are the work of a mad wizard of some skill, Norphym, who is trying to destroy or damage as much local competition as possible. Norphym sells each speculum in turn to Guzundul, a vendor of magical components and apparatus (a 0-level CN human). He presently has three for sale. Guzundul has a *wand of magic missiles*, a trained war dog, Syritim, with 13 hp, and a *rope of entanglement* to defend himself and his shop. He is very suspicious, and unless the PCs go to great lengths to calm his fears, he will take them for thieves and vandals, and take swift action. The Watch and the Purple Dragons will react accordingly.

Norphym is a NE 7th level mage with 23 hp who will defend himself with a *necklace of missiles*, a *wand of lightning*, and rings of *spell turning* and *flight*. He is a coward and will use a *teleport* scroll (if possible) to escape, only to stalk them to take "revenge" when they are weak, scattered, or inattentive later.

Norphym's crystals will explode when a spell is cast into them, or when they are thrown as missile weapons. They do 1d4 blast damage (glass shards) and release spores that infect anyone within 2" who fails a save vs. Poison (make a successful Dexterity Check to get out of the active radius before contacting the spores) with brown mold (30%), or (70%) release a *polymorph other* spell that turns one into a "lizard man/scorpion crossbreed" monster (make an Intelligence Check to retain the use of one's own intelligence while in this form).

Norphym has 16 specular in his sanctum, and has a further nine crystals hidden in a cave in the Stonelands (to which he will *teleport* if he can, if things go badly for him).

2. High Hunt

Corpses are found in the streets of Arabel, slain by being transfixed by a lance or other large pointed weapon, from behind and *above*. The Purple Dragons are baffled; certainly no lance-wielding warrior has been heard clattering over the cobbles on a charger in the wee hours.

Either a PC will be attacked (if on the streets at night), or the Purple Dragons will ask the PCs to help them by bolstering street patrols. The hunter is a peryton using a *ring of invisibility* and a specially enchanted +2 *lance* that can absorb what it strikes (in this case, the hearts of victims) for release from a spigot in its butt at a later time. The peryton will strike down 2-5 humans per night, as stealthily and silently as possible.

The peryton lairs with its mate in the stony ridges north of Arabel, on the edge of the Stonelands. It is quite intelligent, and has arranged "trails" of treasure to lure anyone approaching its lair into rockfall and spike-lined pit traps. The peryton's mate also has a *lance of lightning* (works as a *wand of lightning*, activated by depressing a stud rather than by audible command, 26 charges left) that it will use to defend the lair.

3. The Sacred Snake

One of the PC's mounts or pack animals is bitten by a poisonous snake, and dies almost immediately in shuddering

convulsions. Any PC attack on the snake will be prevented (or answered) by an angry cleric of the serpent-god Vaerae. This obscure priesthood is most popular in northern (rural) Calimshan and in the Vilhon Reach, having come from nomadic tribes who are usually to be found on The Shining Plains.

The cleric is Hondrul Meirshin, a CN 6th level cleric with a *staff of the adder* and a *ring of invisibility*; He is sincere and inflexible: The creed of his priesthood demands that no snake be harmed, and that anyone harming a snake be maimed, anyone killing a snake be slain. If the PCs escape his justice and the cleric survives, Hondrul and two fellow priests of Vaerae in the Dragonreach area will pursue the PCs, attacking by stealth at night with *sticks to snakes* spells.

4. Dancing Doppelgangers

Several inn patrons in Arabel simply vanish from their rooms (including, if the DM desires, acquaintances or business contacts of the PCs). Rumor has it that some of the missing travelers entertained tavern dancers on the night they disappeared, but noone believes that the petite, beautiful dancers could do away with large, often fat men and carry their bodies elsewhere without help, and without being seen.

In reality, several tavern dancers were long ago killed and eaten by doppelgangers, who have since steadily killed and eaten amorous clients, robbing them of wealth and weaponry. The DM should adjust the strength (including offensive magical treasure) and numbers of the doppelgangers to challenge investigating PCs.

In human (but not dancer) shape, the doppelgangers will hire thugs and falsely report PC crimes to the Watch once they realize that they are being investigated.

5. The Haunted Teashop

A noted seller of spices and teas (from far-off Tashalar, Tharsult and Calimshan vanishes from his shop. Street-talk has it that Mousomyn Bhuir, his family, and staff are all missing.

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The shop was locked and barred—from inside—for the night. An opened crate in the basement and disarranged bedclothes were the only signs of activity. The shop has a cellar cess-shaft into the sewers, but it is too small for humans to exit by. Mousomyn's valuables and wares are all undisturbed. The Purple Dragons are baffled.

Mousomyn's principal creditor, the moneylender Khossont Nairel, will claim the shop, paying city officials its value in coin above what he was owed, and move in for business. He and an assistant will then vanish, as mysteriously as the Bhuir family did before, leaving behind several readied weapons among all the valuables and wares of the household.

The overworked Purple Dragons will hire adventurers to guard the house and investigate. If the PCs accept the posted task, they will be given free room and board at a Watch barracks by day, and paid 1 gp per person per night spent in the shop, guarding it. (By day the shop is locked and watched by city bailiffs.)

The crate was sent by some enemy of Mousomyn. It contained three lurkers above, which silently slew everyone in the shop when released. The remains were dumped down into the sewers, and the lurkers—in reality, cunning thieves, henchmen of Mousomyn's enemy who have kept their personalities and intellects after a *polymorph other* spell—hid high up against the ceilings of the larger rooms when the shop was being searched. The lurkers (62, 45, and 31 hp) will attack only isolated PCs, trying not to be discovered.

6. Bountiful Bodyguards

A wealthy merchant from far-off Calimport, the dusky-skinned beauty Alestra Thrun Maer, arrives in Arabel to retire from intrigue and the sordid affairs of daily business. Her husband, a creator of exquisite perfumes, died recently, and without him she can bear Calimshan's cruelties and chauvinism no longer. She advertises for bodyguards, and buys a large and grand mansion in the city.

The bodyguards mysteriously disappear, and workers begin to expand the

mansion into a truly opulent pleasure-palace. Alestra posts offers for more bodyguards, at 12 pieces of gold per day, including paid holidays; two days off after every ten of duty!

If the PCs do not join the scramble to take Alestra's service, others will—and again will quietly vanish. Alestra will prove to be a gracious patron, enjoying the arts, collecting fine clothing and jewelry, and parties. She will also, if the PCs have much to do with her, turn out to be a weretiger whose alignment is concealed by the use of magic items, and who is intent upon making Arabel her lair behind the scenes. Alestra intends to rule Arabel in all but name, and will use her charms to manipulate its folk against any who stand in her way or uncover her true nature. In the process, she will go through a lot of bodyguards, as she slays anyone who learns what she is.

Weak PCs could well learn Alestra's identity from a dying NPC adventurer who tried to destroy her, and/or gain necessary magic items from a similar source or from simple theft, DMs can make this a long-term "background" adventure for campaigns set in Arabel.

Rumors in Arabel

The DM should allow the PCs to hear the following rumors while they are in Arabel (after the storm). The first four should be heard by the PCs regardless of events; reward deliberately inquisitive characters with the rest.

1. The temple of Bane in Zhentil Keep lies in smoking ruins, and all of the god's clerics there were killed; Bane appeared there to his followers in the aftermath of the destruction. This happened the night of the great storm.
2. The gods are stripped of their power; clerics can gain only the simplest magic through prayer.
3. Magic doesn't work properly anymore. All across the Realms spells are going awry; many wizards have been injured or slain by their own magics.
4. The temple of Mystra in Saerloon (in Sembial was destroyed the night of the great storm, in great fires and lightnings visible for miles. There was no

sign of the Mistress of Magic herself. Cadellin Firehands was visiting Suzail, and survived.

5. A caravan expected from the east hasn't arrived; no word has come of any misfortune. Its sponsor, the carpet-merchant Jathul Quelnor, has asked the Purple Dragons to contact Castle Crag for news of his wagons. A messenger sent by Commander Dutharr of the Dragons has not yet returned. (False rumor)

6. The gods have arrived in the Realms to destroy unfaithful worshippers directly, and to reward the loyal and true—with gems, gold, honors, and powerful new magic.

7. A plague is spreading from the east, across the Inner Sea lands. The frantic sorceries of Thay and other lands seeking to end it are causing the chaos of elements and Art across Faerun. Many easterners traveling in the Dragonreach now are carrying the disease. Its symptoms include hallucinations, and the exuding of a scent, undetectable by humans and demi-humans, that attracts predatory beasts. (False rumor)

8. Golkont the Hawk-Mage, a solitary wizard who once slew an entire horde of orcs single-handedly with his Art, has been seen in the Stonelands. He was riding a lamia toward Cormyr, and was surrounded by a ring of will-o'-the-wisps that moved with him as he rode. Golkont is known to continually seek new *ioun stones*.

9. Gammeir One-Eye, warrior-priest of Tempus, is gathering faithful worshippers and fighting men of prowess in Selgaunt, for "a great battle to come—soon."

10. Juldoon of Marsember, famous gem-merchant, recently paid 6,000 pieces of gold for a new sort of gem—a type never seen in the Realms before; a gem with magical powers.

11. The legendary blade Sorcryst, "The Tongue of the Elves," stolen from Myth Drannor long ago (before its fall) has been found again! An adventurer bore it in triumph into Hillsfar, where it was identified by the sage Thannaster. The adventurer, a warrior from far-off Neverwinter called Huln Darkblade, has not been seen since.

Chapter 2: A Rescue Mission



This chapter begins in Arabel after the events described in Chapter 1, at least a week (and preferably two weeks) after the great storm.

Event 1: Caitlan's Plea

The DM should run this Event whenever the PCs are all gathered together in one place in the city, probably in a tavern or inn taproom. There should be an audience (bystanders) present.

A young, slim girl approaches you. She has short, blond hair, graceful movements, and large, dark, and serious eyes. She is barefoot, and wears ankle-length, nondescript dark robes. She looks determined—and hopeful.

"I have walked far and long to find you, sirs. I have heard that you are adventurers—and I have need of adventurers. I am Caitlan Moonsong, and I need you to rescue my mistress from cruel captivity." She eyes you, voice quavering.

"I have no gold to offer you, but I can promise you that your reward shall be great, once my mistress is free. You have her word on it, and she does not lie. Nor do I. What say you, sirs?"

Silence has fallen around as the young girl spoke. All eyes are upon you.

"Now we'll see what great adventurers they are," someone whispers loudly.

Caitlan Moonsong is the intended avatar of the goddess Mystra, the "mistress" she refers to. The weakened Mistress of Magic was captured by the more worldly, stronger avatar of Bane shortly after arrival in the Realms. Mystra is imprisoned in Castle Kilgrave, guarded by creatures of Bane. Caitlan acts as if she were under the effects of a *geas*.

If asked about her mistress, Caitlan will say:

"She is a great worker-of-magic, who has done much good in her time. She has fallen captive to an evil one with a few evil tricks of Art, who fears and covets her power."

Caitlan will reveal that her mistress is in "chains, in a high tower in Castle Kilgrave, near Castle Crag in Northern Cormyr" and that she has done no wrong and is not a prisoner of the authorities of Cormyr. Caitlan will only reveal the name of her mistress if pressed; she will give it as Imrue Mirrorstar. Some sages (but not the PCs or anyone in the NPC audience) know this as the name of an avatar of Mystra who walked the Realms long ago, instructing the brightest minds of elves and men in the limits of Art (in the days when Myth Drannor stood proud). Caitlan will describe her mistress as looking like

Caitlan herself, only "taller, and more—ah, beautiful," and reveal that they are not related; Caitlan is an orphan.

It is imperative that the DM manipulate the PCs into accepting the rescue mission. The audience of NPC bystanders can make comments to shame the PCs into agreeing to free Caitlan's mistress, such as:

"Knew they'd just talk big and wave swords around and stay safe. I can tell their sort. The only real "adventure" they've ever known is getting to the bottom of a tankard!"

If Watch officers, Purple Dragon soldiers, and PC acquaintances or tutors are among the watchers, so much the better.

Caitlan will plead with them, to tears and beyond that to groveling, if the PCs are reluctant. She has nothing to offer them beyond her servitude.

Caitlan's words will ring true to magical tests. (Her mind is unreachable, and her alignment will appear to be Neutral Good.)

Any Harpers the PCs may have met earlier (such as Salreen Shamarsair), and any soldiers and Watch officers the PCs may have had dealings with, will hear of Caitlan's plea. Even if the PCs refuse her, these NPCs should encounter the PCs with comments like:

"Heard you're going to help that young girl with that rescue. Good fortune to you; it's work like that as makes all our hearts a little brighter, with all this upset and lawlessness."

Caitlan will promise to meet the PCs at a certain place and time, to lead them out of Arabel to her mistress. She will then stagger away to the ladies' jakes (washrooms) and not reappear. If the PCs inquire, some female patron will say:

"She was *hurt*, poor thing. Blood all down her side. She left with a cleric of Lathander, I think...or was it a lady of Ilmater? I can never keep those saintly sorts of priest-women straight, I'm afraid."

That night, the PCs all have nightmares of cruel laughter in the darkness

Chapter 2: A Rescue Mission

as unseen eyes watch them, as they in turn watch a pair of helpless, female wrists chained together. If any PC awakens, they will find bats (normal, non-magical and harmless bats) flying around their sleeping chamber, even if the room is sealed or windowless.

The DM should describe the shared dream as it unfolds; the laughter-and a sense of chilling cold-will approach menacingly as the PCs seem to “draw near” the chained hands. The cruel laughing voice says: “A few evil tricks of Art, eh? We’ll see...we’ll see!”

At this point, make an Intelligence Check for each PC; those who are successful will awaken suddenly, in a cold sweat.

PCs who fail will see angry red flames outlining a hand so black that they cannot see it, a hand that reaches for their throats but cannot be grappled or pushed away, a hand that is not solid. The “touch” of the hand will cause a excruciatingly painful burning sensation, and then a choking feeling. The PCs will then awaken, unhurt, with the cruel laughter ringing in their ears. (The laughter will be briefly audible to all creatures in the room, not just to the awakening dreamers.)

Any Harpers or Purple Dragons who encounter the PCs will also warn the PCs that they will no doubt need magic they can rely on. Caitlan herself (in Event 2) will urge the PCs to gather “all the Art you can” before they leave. The DM should use tutors, sages, and any other NPCs necessary to repeatedly tell the PCs that they need a reliable wizard.

If the PCs ask around Arabel, they will find that Arabel’s wizards of note—the half-elven beauty Sindyl Sormagh, for instance, or Rithindel of the Seven Stars—have sequestered themselves in recent days. Further inquiries will discover that even the lesser wizards, such as Ormthel the Spellseller and Ghorn the Masked Miracle, have quietly hidden themselves, gone to ponder the crisis. Only starry-eyed novices and bumbling (if eager) apprentices and a few tutoring wizards too old and feeble to travel are left.

There is only one exception, only one *reliable* wizard in Arabel. Her name is Midnight; she is the mysterious woman the PCs saw glowing in the storm. Mysterious and coy, she will readily agree to join the PCs.

If they are unwilling or unable to pay her, Midnight will volunteer her services, “for the fun of it—and whatever wealth may come my way.”

Midnight will flirt and seem serene and unafraid throughout the adventure and, until Chapter 4, will always wear and guard the blue-white star pendant.

If the PCs do not seek magical reinforcements, Midnight will boldly appear wherever they have gathered, mounted on a surefooted black hill pony with a red mane, and say:

“Well met, all. I am Midnight. I work magic, and I’m out to show all the Realms that I’m good at it. You need me, and luck is with you: I’m available. Any objections to my riding with you?”

Midnight’s spell roster is up to the DM; it is suggested that it be varied, substantial, and useful in battle.

Event 2: Ill News

This Event should be run as the PCs gather to leave Arabel. Caitlan will appear looking decidedly ill.

Caitlan is ghastly white of skin; her eyes are sunken, and purple veins stand out on her chin and arms and around her eyes. Sweat stands on her brow; she trembles slightly, and looks thinner than ever.

“M-my friends” she says, teeth chattering, “I have had fever; I am not well enough to go with you. Please, please rescue my mistress; I will follow as soon as I can. This, I swear. Look for her in a tower in Castle Kilgrave. She must be weak, by now. Please go to her in all haste, and free her. Beware the black hand.”

Caitlan looks at you all, wild-eyed, and her face twists in a sob. Then, she repeats, “I *will* follow,” voice trembling with resolve, as she turns and stumbles away, arms about herself, shivering. She reaches a priest of Ilmater, who accompanied her to you, and collapses in a heap at his feet. He kneels by her.

“Go,” he implores you. “Whatever you promised this child, go and do it. If she hears that you have, she will

recover; it is no great thing. If not...,” his voice trails away and he looks bleak. “Go, with the blessings of Ilmater to make your way easy,” he says, and salutes you. “Go, heroes—but come back safe to hearth and home. The lands need you most, now.”

Caitlan’s illness is catalyzed by Mystra’s desperate need of succor, transmitted through the *geas*. As the illness is not natural, *cure disease* and a paladin’s healing touch will be ineffective.

After the PCs leave for Castle Kilgrave, Caitlan will recover enough strength to follow them. She will ride a light warhorse (donated by a concerned cleric of Lathander) and arrive at Castle Kilgrave shortly after the PCs enter. (See Chapter 3 for further details.)

Event 3: The Inevitable Ambush

Run this Event after the PCs are a good ride out of sight of Arabel, in open country. All the PCs will know is that the road northeast out of Arabel leads to Castle Kilgrave, with Castle Crag just a short ride farther, and then on to Tilver’s Gap (where Cormyr recently garrisoned the hitherto-independent village of Tilverton) before running into the Dalelands. What route the PCs take is up to them; if they enter the Stonelands, double the chances of random monster encounters. This Event can happen anywhere, regardless of the PCs’ route.

There is suddenly darkness all about you—utter, impenetrable blackness, where moments before you had been watching the countryside around narrowly without seeing any threat or foe. Magical darkness!

Then something rustles and draws metal across metal ahead...and you are fighting for your lives.

Twelve zombies (all having 12 hp) and 16 skeletons (all with 7 hp) will rise up from where they had been lying motionless in the tall grass to attack the PCs, within the *darkness*. The ambush is led by two minor clerics of Bane, post-

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ed here with the undead to attack anyone passing by.

The clerics will remain aloof from the fray, sitting hidden behind rocks and renewing their *continual darkness* spells if the PCs dispel them. The undead are utterly silent, and will attack all living creatures within the *darkness*.

In the *darkness*, PCs are -4 to hit in combat, or -2 if within 1" of some sort of illumination. PC Armor Classes suffer a +4 penalty, and saving throws and damage rolls are both at -4 (damage rolls never go below 1 point).

In addition, the dexterity of characters in *darkness* is lowered by 2 for the purpose of Dexterity Checks, Climbing Rating is penalized by 10%, and sight-related special attacks (such as thieflily backstabbing) cannot be successful.

If an attack roll is 0 or less after such modifications, the attacker has hit any object or ally within twice weapon length (if more than one, choose randomly) that *wasn't* being aimed at!

The undead suffer no such penalties; nor do PCs employing infravision or magical (glowing) weapons.

The "Blindfighting" proficiency reduces all penalties to half, and removes the Armor Class penalty and the automatic failure of vision-related special attacks.

The undead will ignore the party's mounts, pulling the characters down off their saddles. Treat this as an attempt to overbear, with no modifiers.

The clerics will flee if any PCs survive a dozen rounds and are still fighting. They are Ilisig (LE, 6th L, 33 hp, mace & flail, 1 *potion of healing* in a metal belt flask) and Mhael (LE, 5th L, 39 hp, mace & hammer, 18/51 ST: +2 to hit and +3 on damage, no magic items).

Their superior is the Watcher (7th level cleric) Ensebel Riotharr, based in a Zhentarim camp near ruined Teshwave. Their mission is to defeat or weaken any adventurers entering the vicinity of Castle Kilgrave except those openly displaying the badge of Bane (and knowing a pass-phrase: Challenge: "Who shall rise, as is right?"/Reply: "The Burning Lord").

Event 4: Hope and Renewal

This Event can occur wherever the PCs may be, at any time after the preceding Event. It may be used to aid weakened PCs who run afoul of random encounters, or to rescue PCs who fare poorly in Event 3, above.

In the distance you see a line of men and women approaching, walking steadily overland. At the front come hard-eyed men-at-arms, weapons ready, chainmail well-oiled and bearing plain surcoats of rose-red. At the back are more "war-swords"; two dozen in all. Between walk a dozen men and women in maroon and russet robes, at their head an old and magisterial man in a robe of the palest pink. He is balding and kindly-looking but stern. In his hands is a stout rod. He sees you, and calls out in a deep voice: "Hail, heroes! Will you speak to the curious, or must you ride ever in haste?"

If the PCs ignore him, the man will do nothing further, and the column will walk on. If the PCs attack or offer insults, the warriors will instantly menace the PCs, as the robed ones form a defensive ring about the old man. He will then call them off ("There is enough strife, these days—spill no blood in such haste").

If the PCs speak to the old man, they will learn that he is Ansultath, a NG 8th level cleric of Lathander, Lord of the Morning. He has 62 hp, full spells of 1st and 2nd level, and carries three scrolls in leg-sheaths beneath his robes. One is a *flame strike*, one a *blade barrier*, and one a *heal*. His rod is a *rod of resurrection*. Ansultath will instantly avenge any attack upon his entourage, but would rather not fight anyone.

The Wandering Patriarch is a kindly man, saddened by the increasing violence and chaos of the Realms. He wanders the Inner Sea lands working to further the aims of Lathander: growth, renewal, and new beginnings. He will heal PCs in return for donations to the church (i.e. to him, to further his work).

Ansultath will waive his fees for any spells cast upon fellow clerics of

Lathander (including PCs), and charge only half-rate for non-clerical worshippers of Lathander. He will *resurrect* beings of any creed, race, or alignment "on credit" (because it fulfills a basic tenet of his faith, the "new beginning"), but will not otherwise give credit for any spellcasting fees.

If the PCs are willing to talk to Ansultath, he will wave a hand, and the warriors will form a ring around the PCs and the minor clerics of Lathander (the twelve are: two 4th level; four 3rd level; and six 2nd level) while Ansultath sits down for a chat. He will offer the PCs food (simple but good fare of cheese, nut-bread, olives, fruit, and wine), and ask them in a polite, roundabout way about their present ventures. He will not probe. He will, however, volunteer the last message he received from Lathander before the present chaos, in a dream following an evening of prayer.

Lathander spoke of "a coming time of great turmoil," when "renewal will come from new heroes," who must prevail to bring about "a new beginning." If they prevailed, Lathander hinted, humankind and demi-humankind would win a new importance, even as "gods fall."

Ansultath will eye the PCs thoughtfully and suggest that if they run into troubles, they seek out clergy of Lathander for aid. (He will camp with the PCs for one night if the PCs desire it, but will otherwise walk on into southern Cormyr on the morrow. The DM may use him or his followers at any time later in the adventure, to guide or rescue beleaguered PCs.)

Event 5: A Dire Warning

Run this Event when the PCs are in the open, traveling toward Castle Kilgrave. It may occur at any time or place. Wheeling vultures or ravens may lead the PCs to the spot.

Ahead, you see dark patches on rocks and in trampled patches of grass. With them is a litter of broken weaponry and bloody clothing: the wrack of battle. The darkness is

Chapter 2: A Rescue Mission

lood, liberally spilled here in a grisly slaughter of bloody bones, broken blades, and silent chaos.

But something is missing. Good weapons and valuables are gone, yes—the work of looters, perhaps. Something else; corpses. There are bones, cracked and tangled—but they are the long bones and pointed skulls of horses. No bodies lie here—nor are there the marks of the fallen being dragged away anywhere, or the burial or burning of anything.

There is something more. A large, man-shaped bloodstain lies next to a large, flat rock—and on the rock are letters written in blood: “Beware the Hand of Bane.”

There is no treasure here, nor are there any corpses to be found. Bane’s avatar and clerics used the bodies of the men they slew here to make Baneguards (a new form of undead described in this module) and other foul undead, who mindlessly serve the Lord of Tyranny better than any living creature could.

The Journey

The adventurers may take any route they wish after leaving Arabel. The DM should use the encounters provided hereafter to make PC travel exciting and dangerous, using the random Physical Chaos Table at least once every six turns.

Northeastern Cormyr is rolling hill-country, used as pasture land. Fields are large enclosures, the walls being high ramparts of tumbled, jagged stones turned up in earlier plowing, often overgrown with brambles, trees, and berrybushes. Further to the north-beyond Gnoll Pass—the land rises into crags, bare rock, slopes of scree, and a high plateau broken by many ravines and gullies: the Stonelands.

Castle Kilgrave is commonly known to be long-abandoned, picked over by adventuring parties for the last century or so, until everyone was certain that Kilgrave’s wealth had been exhausted. The flocks of sheep grazing in the stone-walled fields near Castle Kilgrave are untended; these may be readily slain for food. Within a mile or so of Castle Kilgrave’s outer walls such easy

food has already been harvested by wandering predators (see Chapter3); the sheep are all gone.

If the PCs follow the road to Castle Kilgrave, they can’t get lost. Off-road night travel is likely to result in the party getting lost. The DM should refer to the rulebooks for methods of handling such PC risks.

ENCOUNTERS

The DM should check for encounters at least once every two turns (a 1 in 6 chance on the road or in open country south of it; a 2 in 6 chance in the Stonelands or Shadow Gap, where the PCs will be headed eventually), using the random encounter tables and the following “special” encounters as desired. The adventure will be most memorable if these special encounters are used to promote roleplaying on the part of players, rather than simply challenging the PCs with a gauntlet of monster after monster. Many of these NPCs can be used in later adventures if the DM desires.

1. PHANDURN

A stout, wheezing man in silk and furs appears suddenly over a ridge ahead, mounted on a mule. He sits uncomfortably, legs sticking out unsteadily on either side of the saddle. Behind him mules pull two small, high wagons that creak and groan loudly with every turn of their massive, cracked-and-mended wheels. Two weary-looking men in studded leather ride grey ponies with heavy crossbows loaded and ready. They look at you steadily, bows levelled.

The stout man waves a many-ringed hand at you and calls, “Well met, travelers! Interested in purchasing fine scents or cordials? Butterfly essence? Brindleberry wine? Any news of the road, by the way?”

The cheerfully bustling merchant is Phandurn the Phenomenal, a traveling dealer who hails from Procampur and covers much of the Dragonreach in his trading. He is a NG 3rd level mage of 11 hp who wears a *ring of regeneration* (normal form) and has 312 gp, 44 sp, and 12 cp. His wagons (full of wares) are

guarded by his two 0 level men-at-arms, Orlin and Fentesh, who are unshakably loyal to the loquacious merchant.

Phandurn will cheerfully camp with, eat with, and talk with the PCs. Unless attacked, he will pass on the news that the Zhentarim seem to be moving armies south into the Dalelands; Sembia and Cormyr are also stirring; and that no clergy anywhere seem able to regain spells of greater than 2nd level through prayer: The gods do not answer.

Phandurn has also heard rumors of horrible monsters roaming the lands, overrunning Tilverton and nearby villages. He himself has seen little out of the ordinary, however, while coming by way of old trails and farm lanes overland from Highmoon. Unsettled times lie ahead, he fears—but he is not too worried; Elminster of Shadowdale, the sage, will know what to do if any man does, or if there’s anything that should be done.

Phandurn is headed for Arabel, Marsembler and Suzail with his wares; he will cheerfully bid the PCs adieu after mentioning Elminster.

2. TANLATHYN

A grey horse rises suddenly up out of a gully ahead. On its back is a thin, weatherbeaten-looking man in leather armor. He looks grim, and travels light, with only one saddlebag. A long sword and dagger are at his belt, and a longbow is slung across his back. He says nothing as his mount trots toward you, but lays his hand on his sword.

The man will ride silently past the PCs if not challenged or attacked. If addressed, he will reveal himself as Tanlathyn, a ranger, and ask the party their business. He will warn the party of the dangers of the lands around.

“There are many beasts abroad in the land...some who ride horses and sing tavern-songs among them. Bide close and careful, blades ready. If you let your guard drop hereabouts, now, it’s a grave you’ll soon be finding.”

Tanlathyn is a CG 6th level ranger, with 42 hp (ST 16: + 1 on damage; CO

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17). He is a Harper, keeping an eye out for brigands, Zhentarim agents, and other evil beings. He is armed with a *sword +4, defender* and 20 silver-tipped arrows, as well as an *arrow of magic-user slaying* and an *arrow of dragon slaying*. He also has a quiver of 22 normal arrows, and can fire without penalty from horseback at full gallop.

Tanlathyn will follow the PCs for a time to learn their aims (stalking them from cover), and will aid them if they fight brigands, Zhentarim, or agents of Bane and appear to need his help. He will not join the party unless, at the DM's option, his presence is needed to enable weak or inexperienced PCs to survive the adventure.

3. Veltar

A large black raven flaps overhead, a slim, tapering stick in its talons. It circles over you and then swoops behind nearby trees, unleashing a bolt of lightning at you as it disappears!

The raven's *wand of lightning* has 22 charges; its wielder, a Lawful Evil wizard of the Zhentarim called Veltar, will use it once a round to produce forked bolts of lightning as he dodges in and out of the trees in raven-shape. The *wand of lightning* has no command word; instead, it sports three copper bands, and is triggered by the wielder touching the first and third bands, but not the second. Veltar has orders to destroy, scatter, or turn back any non-Zhentarim bands of humans or elves moving into northeastern Cormyr.

If Veltar (who is 7th level, and has 22 hp and a full roster of offensive and escape spells) encounters strong opponents, he will fly northeast to Daggerdale, to report them to Xantilan (a beholder). His superiors will then send out a battle-band of orcs to deal with the PCs.

Veltar is a coward, and will prefer to repeatedly strike from ambush and then fly away into hiding, rather than taking a stand to fight the gathered PCs face-to-face.

4. Dorn Blackhammer

A faint, echoing whistling is suddenly heard, coming up out of the earth beneath you! It grows louder, and then breaks off into a gruff, masculine grunt and the ringing sound of metal on rock. Thrice great hammerblows are heard, and then the turf ahead humps upwards sharply and is flung aside, as a large, flat rock beneath is pushed upwards and flipped aside.

A grit-covered, bearded face rises sourly into view, squints at you suspiciously, and then descends again with an audible sniff. When it rises again an instant later, it is covered with a sinister-looking, many-horned helm. A massive two-handed war hammer follows, and then the entire creature clambers into view: a furl-clad, gauntleted dwarven warrior.

"Well," a gruff voice issues hollowly from within the helm, "Let's get it over with, then. Attack me, if you must. I'm in a bit of a hurry, so it'll be quicker if you all charge at once—if you don't mind. Well?"

Dorn Blackhammer, the dwarf, is a 9th level fighter with 70 hp, 18/78 ST (+ 2 to hit, + 4 on damage) and 17 CO. He carries a *hammer +3, dwarven thrower* and a (normal) handaxe which he can throw ably if necessary. Dorn is gruff and cynical, possessed of a black sense of humor and a stubborn fearlessness. He has just investigated an old dwarven delve, searching for some sign or message from the gods—for the dwarven gods, too, have not been heard from recently, and the "Deep Folk" are worried.

Dorn will not retreat from a fight; if the party attacks him, fine—he'll knock them all down and be on his way. If befriended, Dorn will advise the party of the general lay of the land (although he's better acquainted with subterranean ways and features than surface details), suggest they ask a sage what's going on—perhaps this Elminster; he's not such a high-nosed youngling as most of them—and take his leave. If the DM wishes, Dorn might encounter the PCs later, perhaps appear-

ing from underground when they are in the midst of a tough fight to calmly draw off the PCs' foes.

5. Warthendel The Watcher

From far away the PCs will be able to see a pinnacle or tor of bare rock, and standing atop it a lone human (or at least human-shaped) figure. The figure will not move, except to turn to watch them. If they approach, read the following encounter.

Atop the tor stands a lone robed figure: a bearded man in a tall hat, who leans upon a staff. He looks down at you silently, but says nothing. He stands alone, without mount or gear. A steep track leads up the tor to where he stands.

The man will not respond to shouted queries or challenges. If any PC ascends to the top of the tor to question him, however, he will respond politely and unhesitatingly. He is Warthendel the Watcher.

Warthendel is a sage who tries to learn as much as he can of the nature of life in the Realms by watching the endless passage of events in the lands about the tor. A former wizard, he bears with him a *ring of warmth*, a *decanter of endless water*, and a magical skillet which is filled with a fresh, hot pork pie, omelette, or fried fish once every 30 turns.

Warthendel is a pacifist, who will not defend himself if attacked or launch any attacks of his own. He still has two spells in his memory, with which he can escape: *invisibility* and *fly*. Warthendel is a Lawful Good 6th level wizard with 18 hp. He likes to act mysterious and powerful—and this manner has in the past scared several orcs and brigands into leaving him alone. Warthendel's staff is a non-magical weapon, but it has been the focal object of many *light* spells in the past (an apprentice's practice casting, before Warthendel was given it), and still radiates a faint dweomer.

Warthendel knows the locations of various nearby settlements and land features, and of important NPCs, temples, and roughly what goods are available in what places (good armorers in

Chapter 2: A Rescue Mission

Hillsfar, Ordulin, and Suzail, for example). He has seen strange weather recently, but has not heard of trouble among the clergy or gods.

6. The Night Brothers

"Help!" comes a ragged cry from ahead. "Aid! A rescue!"

If the PCs investigate, they will see a man clutching one leg, lying against a rock. He will tell them that it is broken. In reality, he is fit and able, and lying on his sword. He is Zelbert, a member of "The Night Brothers," a band of brigands. There are fourteen in all, 0 level Chaotic Evil fighters with 7 hp each. Once the PCs advance to aid Zelbert, they will have moved into a circle of brigands, who will attack silently from all sides. Each has a spear (which he will throw while charging), and each has a dagger, a short sword, and a club or handaxe.

The Night Brothers will try to slay or disable PCs, and then rob them. Their names are Belogh, Elimier, Indreth, Yoss, and Quorl. They have, collectively, 11 silver pieces and 32 copper pieces of their own.

Random Encounters

In addition to the preceding special encounters, the DM can roll percentile dice and consult the following table. Reroll or modify encounters that are not appropriate to PC location or circumstances. An asterisk denotes creatures likely to be flying when encountered.

Overland Encounter Table

d100

Roll Encounter

01-25	Brigands, band of 5-20 (5d4); varied weaponry	37-50	Merchant(s), 1-12 in number, with pack train and mules. Most merchants will have 3-6 (2 + 1d4) guards/assistants, with varied weaponry.	95	Peryton, 2-8 (note: if PCs have no magic weapons, roll again).
26-36	Cormyrean soldiers; patrol of 25 1st level fighters, all chain (AC5), mounted on medium war-horses. 18 armed with lances, and 6 armed with light cross-bows. All have long swords, battleaxes, and daggers. Patrol has one 3rd level "Lancer" armed with a +1 mace and a long sword. The Lancer also carries	51-55	Adventurers, band of 3-11 (2+1d8), varying in levels, weaponry, and alignment (suggestion: challenge the PCs with an evil band of adventurers of similar strength, who will become long-term foes if the PCs defeat them).	96	Skunk, Giant (solitary)
		56-58	*Evil wizards, 1-4 in number, working as a team. This is a Zhentarim patrol seeking to slay or rout adventurers. They will have no magic items except—25% chance, each—a <i>potion of healing</i> , no spellbooks, and little knowledge of the Zhentarim organization. A sample group: Inthras, 6th level; Jorm, 4th level; Lentyl Murr, 3rd level; Torlin, 2nd level.	97	Sphinx: Hieracosphinx 1-6 in the Stonelands, 1-2 elsewhere.
		59-60	Ankhegs, 1-4	98	Spider, Huge, 1-12
		61-62	Beetle, Giant (DM's choice of type and number)	99	Troll, 1-12 in number (rare in the area due to heavy hunting).
		63-66	Boar, Wild (1 boar, hunting; these creatures are hunted too heavily in these parts to be found traveling in family groups)	00	DM's choice of monster (or roll twice; the second encounter will arrive 1-2 rounds after the first).
		67-69	Bugbears; war band of 12 or fewer		
		70-72	Bull (wild, defending herd, or escaped) + Cattle		
		73-74	Centipede, Giant, 2-24		
		75-76	Dog, Wild: pack of 4-16		
		77-81	Doombats: 3-8, hunting out of doors due to Bane's disruption of Castle Kilgrave, their former lair.		
		82	Eagle, Giant: 1 hunting		
		83-84	Goblins; war band of 10-15 (9 + 1d6), all armed with short sword and sling.		
		85	Griffon, 1-2 in number, hunting (lair in the Stonelands only)		
		86-88	Leucrotta, 1-4; will imitate human speech (greedy brigands discussing booty) to lure PCs.		
		89	Ogres, 2-5 in number		
		90-94	Orcs, raiding band of 6-17 (5 + 1d12) armed with swords,		
			four <i>potions of healing</i> (in metal flasks) and a war-horn, audible up to a mile away (other Cormyrean soldiers will come to aid).		
			four <i>potions of healing</i> (in metal flasks) and a war-horn, audible up to a mile away (other Cormyrean soldiers will come to aid).		
			flails, and battleaxes.		

Those encounters marked with an "*" are magic-using enemies; remember that they will be subject to Magical Chaos, as well.

Chapters End: Castle Kilgrave From Afar

If the PCs approach Castle Kilgrave in daylight, it is a smallish walled fort atop a large hill. The road runs around the eastern flank of this hill, beneath the outer walls of Castle Kilgrave.

Upon closer inspection, there is something clearly wrong about the castle. This place does not look like a ruins! It is a box-like place, 100 yards on a side, with walls 30 feet high, and made of some well-repaired seamless material, jet-black except for large brick-red marbling that slowly moves over the surface.

The place sprouts proud towers at the four corners, each 50 foot high, capped flat, and featureless. From the center of the west wall, an obelisk, huge and silent, stands. A doorway ten foot wide and twice that high waits patiently for visitors.

There is no sign of human life or activity. Livestock and equipment has been abandoned. There are, however, many beasts moving about. Refer to the next chapter for a monster encounter table.

Near the fort, there is a 3 in 6 chance of an encounter every turn during twilight or daylight hours. Whenever an encounter occurs, roll again immediately to see if scavengers or other monsters are attracted to the noise. In darkness, encounter chances are 5 in 6 each turn, but no scavengers will come looking for trouble—until daylight.

For what waits inside Castle Kilgrave's walls, refer to Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: The Castle of Darkness



This chapter begins as the PCs enter Castle Kilgrave. The obelisk in the western wall is untrapped, but radiates both magic (of Alteration and faintly of Necromantic scents), and evil (powerful, malignant, and completely confident), but not life.

Both the obelisk and the walls are made of an otherworldly substance, immune to damage made by weapons of less than +3 enchantment. They have 100 Structural Dawizard points, and they enjoy 5% magic resistance as well.

Moreover, the walls enjoy certain protections present in Kilgrave's walls before Bane had come. Gorgon blood baked into the bricks makes *teleportation* through the wall impossible (characters attempting to do so will arrive just outside the walls, at whatever elevation the intended destination is), and any attempt at scrying from outside the walls is only 50% reliable, even after the Magic Resistance and Magical Chaos effects are taken into account.

Into The Castle

Whether the PCs enter through the walkway in the obelisk or make their way over the walls, read the following description to them.

The inner courtyard is paved with the same black-and-red surface as the walls. Mist, thick and white and carrying the smell of fresh blood, covers the courtyard, occasionally revealing

buildings in the distance before veiling them once more. You can hear scuffles from beyond sight, and your own sounds seem spans distant.

At once, a long, bristle-haired worm, with bright yellow faceted eyes and huge mandibles bears down upon you through the fog, missing the center members of your party by inches!

This is the first *shadow monster* that Castle Kilgrave sends the party. Roll a d20, and wait for the PC's to decide upon an action. Then continue:

The creature turns sharply and vanishes back into the mists. You hear a crashing to your left, followed by five rapid clicks. Off to the right, you hear a loud snap, and the ground shifts, pulling you forward and to the left.

Roll a d6 for each Player Character. The semi-illusory effects of Castle Kilgrave have acted to separate the party, and the DM must now follow suit by isolating the players.

Each character is to be tested by semi-real illusions, personalized to the individual. Some role-players might have the skills to separate what they know from their characters' observations, but many players cannot. The DM is advised to separate the players until they overcome this test.

Hearts' Ease Doorway

After you have isolated your players begin each test by reading the following.

You pause a second, to catch your breath and take your bearings. You have been separated from your companions. Your own footfalls seem faint and distant, and no others can be heard.

On the other hand, you do seem to be close to an interior building, a couple of yards ahead and to your right. It has but one level above ground, and it is made of the same black stone as the walls and flooring.

If the PC investigates, inform him or her that the building is about 40 feet in one dimension, half-again as much in the other, with a door left of center (by 20 feet) on one of the long walls. This door is flat black marble, with only an occasional flare of red-orange lights.

If the character decides to wait outside and look for the rest of the party, the door opens suddenly, and a laugh bellows forth. The ground tilts, dropping the character through the hungry doorway, which closes with a satisfied smack of its jambs.

Through all of this, the character might express a desire to disbelieve much of Kilgrave's experiences. In fact, the only illusion the characters have encountered as yet is the *shadow monster* worm. The other effects, odd as they might be, are the product of Bane's will in this, the god's lair. And things don't get much more real than that.

Too Good To Be True

Once a character has crossed the portal into the buildings, however, the boundaries between what is real and what is illusion break down. Bane intends to break the heroes with illusions of their fondest desires. By means of doppelgangers, mimics, curst (a new monster detailed in this adventure), and *shadow monsters*, he intends to lay traps the PCs cannot resist.

The DM's first step must be to decide

Chapter 3: The Castle of Darkness

what these “fondest desires” might be.

It would be nice if all characters had such clear-cut motivations, but some players don't make their characters' goals as obvious, particularly when the characters are still low-level and getting their feet under them.

In these cases, the DM has little choice other than to make an educated guess: A thief might be swayed by the thought of great riches, a fighter with an unexceptional strength attribute might wish for it to be increased. A character of a rarely-seen race might long for some companionship.

The second step is to decide the form in which these desires might be manifested. A cup labelled “Drink Me if You Want to be Stronger” is less convincing a lure than, say, a startled band of orcs, one of whom wears what can only be a *girdle of giant strength*.

The third decision the DM must make is the way Bane's minions might best produce this manifestation. The doppelgangers would use their *ESP* to determine what the PCs would most like to see, and then use their own powers, the services of a mimic or two, and the spells of *shadow monsters* and *spectral forces* to convincingly recreate those images.

The final decision facing the DM is the hoped-for effect. If a PC gives in to the illusion and goes for his or her heart's desire, the character ought to find himself or herself in danger. For example, a “lost loved one” might be a doppelganger, waiting for a chance to gain surprise; or an illusory pile of gold could hide an open pit dropping the character into an enclosed space with four cursts.

Whatever the specifics, a PC who succumbs to the lure will find his or her vision clearing as the trap is sprung. If a character surrenders to his or her desires, that character has failed this important test, and the consequences ought to be serious and life-threatening, but not a certain death. A character ought to be able to fight his or her way out of the trap, but it shouldn't be easy.

Too True To Be Good

If a character attempts to disbelieve the illusions, allow normal chances. Such spells as *detect illusion* and *true*

seeing also work normally, after considerations of *Magical Chaos*. If a character successfully disbelieves, he or she might still be in danger (doppelgangers will revert to their normal form for an assault, and shadow monsters will still put up a fight), but the peril ought to be considerably reduced.

Moreover, characters who have shaken off the illusions will see that they are in a very large, black room, lit by swirling orange lights near the ceiling 20 feet above. Their companions will be visible, still entranced, several yards away. Once the freed PC escapes his or her peril, the character can help other party members attempt to disbelieve.

Each round, a freed character may help one ally. To the spellbound character, the freed character appears as a ghostly image, arguing or taking action as appropriate, in the context of the illusion.

The freed character might expound upon the illusory nature of the scene. This will allow the spellbound character an *automatic* chance to disbelieve, whether he or she wishes to do so or not, with a +1 bonus.

The freed character fares better if he tries to distract the spellbound character, rather than encourage him or her to dwell on the illusory image. For example, the helping character might call for help in rescuing a third PC, or Caitlan's mistress. This would allow for a +3 bonus on the enraptured character's chance to disbelieve.

Best of all, but dangerous, the helping PC may allow himself or herself to be attacked by the creatures in the illusion, by stepping directly in their path. The freed PC will certainly be attacked, and this will automatically free the spellbound character.

The mechanics of this intercession are tricky. The process is much simpler if the DM resolves each of the PC's illusions one-round-at-a-time, so that, if a character frees herself, she can assist any of the others the following round. Once a character is safe from his or her own trap, that player may accompany the DM around to the others until all the illusions are lifted.

Two rounds after the last of the illusory threats are dispatched, read the following to the players.

A doorway swings open several dozen yards away, and an explosion of mocking laughter fills the room. Caitlan tumbles through the opening, landing badly on her shoulder. The door closes again.

This is indeed Caitlan, captured after following the party. She is injured (down 2 hit points from her maximum), but the ill-effects of the *geas* seem to be reduced. She smiles weakly at the PCs and then stares at the wall behind them. There is an electrum door there, a door that was not visible before.

“That way,” says Caitlan. “Through that door waits my mistress.”

To Serve Mystra

On the door has been burned the black hand of Bane, melted right through the chased electrum plating into the wood beneath. The hand is three feet high, and within it Bane has placed his own *symbol of death*.

Bane's *symbol* will flash into visibility only as the door is touched, and it will take effect instantly. The effects of the *symbol* are as follows:

*Any character within a 1" radius must save vs. death magic or be slain (any character touching the door, even if using a tool to do so, saves at -2).

*Any character within a 2" radius must save vs. paralyzation or suffer a chilling *withering* which causes a 1-12 hp loss (there is a 30% chance that 1 hp of such a loss will be permanent).

*Any character within a 4" radius must save vs. breath weapon or be wracked by fierce stabbing pains for 2-20 rounds. These will cause -2 penalties to both Armor Class and attack rolls.

These effects are cumulative. A PC touching the door will have to save versus all three effects, each time the *symbol* is activated.

The door is locked and must be picked. Shattering it (cumulative hp damage total of 30 required) or prying at it (total of 35 Strength points required in simultaneous application for success) will cause Bane's *symbol* to act with each touch, and if the door is broken open before the *symbol* is exhausted, it will explode outwards in

Chapter 3: The Castle of Darkness



an energy blast doing 3d8 damage to all within 1") 2d8 to all 1"-2" distant, 1d8 to all 2"-3" distant, and 1d4 to all 3"-4" distant.

IMPORTANT: The DM should take any steps necessary to insure Caitlan's survival during this break-in, as she is vital to the continuance of the adventure.

The room beyond is filled with a strange, red smoky mist. Within it you can see someone struggling vainly, flailing her arms and legs against eldritch chains binding her. She seems to be elemental-like, a being of pure magical energy. White, hand-size things that look like skeletal spiders circle the misty area. As you look, they move, scuttling slowly toward you...

The room is bare of furnishings, and entirely filled with a hakeashar, or "Dweomer-Devourer," which Bane has magically imprisoned within the room. Its body is the "red mist," and its presence prevents any magic functioning within, or from outside into, the room;

all such effects will be instantly absorbed. The hakeashar has 70 hp; it is detailed on p. 47. Bane's special deathwards prevent it from leaving the chamber.

If it is slain, a deep, hollow male voice will be heard in the chamber, fading away slowly. "No! No! My power! . . . Curse you! Beware, 'heroes'—beware the Hand of Bane!"

Within the mist writhes the goddess Mystra, her wrists and ankles chained with bonds of Bane's conjuration.

All around the hakeashar are skeletal human hands (gained from slain inhabitants of the Castle), animated by Bane's magic into crawling claws (detailed on p. 45). All of these claws have 4 hp, and will attack and pursue any living creature (except Caitlan, who is protected by Mystra's *geas*) within 3" of any of them. There are 20 claws in all.

Any sound of battle in the room or entryway will bring three curst into the room.

Three netherbirds (another new monster, detailed in this adventure—see p. 48) will swarm to attack the PCs, except for one bird, through the eyes of

which Bane (from another part of the castle) watches the fray.

IMPORTANT: Under no circumstances should the party be allowed to fight Bane, even though he is present in another part of the castle. He is merely toying with them at this time.

Once the dust has settled, or during the battle if the fight is going against the PCs, Caitlan will move forward toward the woman in the mist. Caitlan is the intended avatar of Mystra, and has been called to complete her apotheosis.

Once Caitlan touches Mystra, the goddess fades from her bonds. She now possesses Caitlan. Mystra knows about the effects of the hakeashar, and will urge the PCs to kill the thing. Once she is free of its magic-damping force, she can employ her powers.

Once Mystra is free, Bane knows better than to stay around. Because he respects Mystra's power, he departs, taking with him the changes to Castle Kilgrave. In the span of a minute, the black marbled walls, the mist, and the fell creatures all vanish, and the PCs are left in the old ruins of a long abandoned fort.

Chapter 4: Mystra's Doom

This chapter begins after the PCs rescue Mystra from Castle Kilgrave. The DM should have the details of Mystra's avatar at hand.

Event 1: A Return, and an Invitation

Caitlan Moonsong approaches you. She seems somehow taller. Her short blond hair moves about as if with a life of its own. She is graceful, and her black robes shimmer with tiny winks and sparkles of ever-shifting light—a gleam that is mirrored in her eyes. She makes no sound as she comes, and her feet do not seem to touch the ground, but float inches above it. She smiles.

"You have my thanks," she says, "and that is no small thing—for though you know me as Caitlan, I am known to most as Mystra." She approaches Midnight, and extends a hand, smiling.

"Sister," she says softly, "I must now ask for the return of that which I entrusted to you, some little time ago. May I now have it back?"

Caitlan, having revealed herself as Mystra, the (Lawful Neutral) Goddess of Magic, worshipped by wizards across the Realms, asks Midnight for the return of her pendant.

When Mystra touches the pendant, it will glow brightly, blue-white, and both the hand she touches it with and her eyes will glow in answer. In triumph Mystra will raise the pendant high, and exert her will in silence to open a *gate* into a place of purple, roiling mists and shifting darkness.

Mystra will then smile and beckon the PCs toward the gleaming opening.

"Watch!," she says. "Pay heed, if you would see beauty and greatness the likes of which your eyes will never see again! See what you have wrought, and learn of the true nature of all that is! My power will keep you quite safe...behold!"

Event 2: The Guardian

All around is darkness—a deep, chiming void of blackness, lit by faintly luminescent purple mists, which roil and drift aimlessly about, and by drifting, winking lights. There strides Mystra, grown somehow taller. She glows with a blue-white aura, and walks confidently forward, treading on nothing, toward a yellow glowing light in the distance. Gradually the glowing light in the distance grows larger.

You can see that the golden glow surrounds a man-like figure clad in full plate armor. His visor is down, and his armor glows with a blue sheen; the glow around him brightens from gold to white as you draw near. Mystra stands perhaps 12 feet in height now, the figure in armor perhaps 20.

"Mystra," he says suddenly, his voice deep and rolling, "You come not alone. Have you then the Tablets?"

"No," Mystra replies, "but I see no need for them. I know who stole them and I wish to speak to Lord Ao. Let me pass."

The figure in armor remains unmoving. "That was *not* what was decreed," he says, almost gently. "Without the Tablets, I cannot let you pass. Go back, and gain the Tablets. Advance, cloaked in pride, at your peril. I will not abandon *my* duty."

"Duty?," Mystra demands, angrily. "I have no duty—and you have a most strange way of following yours. The Tablets themselves are nothing to me. Stand aside, and let me pass!"

"Nay," the figure answers. "I will not. Turn back, for the sake of your safety—and that of these mortals you have brought to witness. Ill done, that. Work no greater ill, Mystra, for I would not harm you, if you leave me a choice."

"Choice?," Mystra replies. "You leave *me* none! If I must prove my worth to regain my rightful place, I will! Stand aside, Helm, or I shall force past, and harm will be visited upon you!"

Helm shakes his head. "I will not move, nor will I be moved. Be warned,

Mystra." He stands motionless, and with a sudden snarl of fury, Mystra raises her hands and lets fly with blue-white lightning—not a crackling bolt, but a humming, searing continuous beam!

In an instant, Helm's hand is raised. The beam strikes it, and vanishes into it, seemingly absorbed. Mystra gestures angrily. Nine huge balls of fire burst into being and roll through the void at Helm. The armored giant stands unharmed amid the flashing flames and the rain of ice, explosions, hammerblows of giant fists and mystic blades that follow.

Mystra weeps with anger and frustration. Her tears gleam and flare like tongues of blue flame, but she does not cease her assault. Gigantic winged snakes and disembodied fanged maws form out of nothingness, but as they strike Helm, to nothingness they return. Tentacles lash the armored colossus, and axes, spears, and great hammers of shimmering force attack him. He stands firm.

At last Mystra leaps forward and hurls herself upon him, spitting flames from her mouth. Her fiery tears course down over them both, as Helm calmly holds her at bay, ignoring her blows and grapplings, and opens his visor.

Mystra screams as their gazes meet, a horrible shriek that is heard across the Realms. Helm draws back a gauntleted fist, and smashes it *through* Mystra's chest. At this, the body of what was once Caitlan explodes in a devastating flash of light, heat, and power.

The energies of Mystra's parting burst through the *gate*. Even shielding your eyes, you are blinded by the naked power of the goddess, loosed from human form. Then your vision clears. The ruins of Castle Kilgrave have been leveled, turned into fine powder. The land is charred and wasted for nearly a half-mile in all directions, and the air carries a peculiar odor. You are standing, unharmed, on a pedestal of stone, all that remains whole from the bricks of Castle Kilgrave. They form a smooth circle, 30 feet in radius, centered at Midnight. Silence falls. Helm's face cannot be

Chapter 4: Mystra's Doom



seen, for he lowers his visor again as he turns toward you.

Mystra has completely vanished. Helm will not attack the PCs, nor retaliate if they attack him. Neither magical nor physical attacks can harm him. Helm will answer any PC queries; If asked about Mystra's fate, he will not confirm that she has been destroyed, but will use phrases like "She no longer exists as you know existence" or "Not all answers are freely given—or should be."

Regardless of what the PCs say or do, Helm will eventually tell them the information below. Helm can control the physical reactions of PCs; if necessary, he can literally force anyone to hear him (holding them silent and motionless, etc.).

Event 3: Helm's Message

"Those you know as gods now walk the Realms among you," Helm says.

"The reasons for this are many, and better unsaid and unremembered. Know this: in some ways, the gods are no greater than men. They all, great and small, are now much lessened in power, and they all seek something that is missing, something hidden."

"Men did not hide them, but men—or elves, or dwarves, or orcs, or any creature of Faerun—may find them. They are of great power: the Tablets of Fate.

"They have many other names, as they have manifested themselves in many forms: A golden orb roiling with wisps of fire; a gem of glowing white-trapped fire as big as a man's head; a quill-pen of misty force; a pair of human-seeming lips that move and speak in mid-air, but boast no face or body beyond them...there are other manifestations besides.

"But now they appear as stone tablets, as long as a man's arm on each side. On them is inscribed the names of all the gods, and their duties, which so many of them seem to have forgot-

ten. Their recovery is crucial to the survival of the Realms as you know them.

"If you are heroes, seek them. If not, tell those who are of what I say. Great glory awaits, in the seeking as well as the finding. Go now, in safety. Think, and grow wiser than the one you came with."

And with that, the gate is closed. If any of the PCs were wounded, maimed, diseased, or disabled at the time of the confrontation, they will discover that they are now healed, well and whole (lycanthropy, curses, *geas* magics and the like will *not* be removed).

At this time, Midnight will find Mystra's pendant, lying at her feet. The pendant will not allow anyone other than Midnight to touch it (see Chapter 1 for details). When Midnight picks it up, the pendant shines brightly, and Midnight knows that she now carries a shard of Mystra's broken power. And she knows one thing more: that she must seek out Elminster, the historian of Shadowdale.

Chapter 4: Mystra's Doom

ENCOUNTERS

1. As the Party Text Returns

An old man in tattered grey robes stands looking at you in awe. He is bald but bright-eyed, and leans on a gnarled oaken staff that is taller than him by a head. He steps forward eagerly. "Such power! Art that works true! Are you the heroes Alaundo spoke of, then? Have you found the Tablets of Fate?"

Run this encounter if the PCs seem confused by Helm's message, or if they decide that the Tablets are none of their business and they'd be better off doing more profitable (or safer!) things.

The old man is Dannath Redlorn, an 8th level druid, and a Harper. Dannath will not fight the PCs; if attacked he will change to raven form and try to escape. His staff is non-magical. Dannath carries a Harper brooch (a silver harp within a circle of nine stars; minor enchantments prevent tarnishing or easy breakage), mistletoe, a flask of water and a pouch containing 1 gp, 3 sp, and a hand-wheel of cheese—and nothing else of value.

Dannath can explain Alaundo's prophecy and that the Tablets of Fate are of little use to The One Who Is Hidden, Master of the Gods—so that the quest for it must be a test of character for both gods and men. He can also explain who Helm, Mystra, and the other gods are to anyone ignorant of the portfolios and usual powers of the gods. Dannath has never heard of Ao, but will frown and say, "That word means 'One' in the tongue gold dragons use, called by some sages the 'Old Tongue'... I wonder."

The old man will be very eager for news of what happened to the PCs with Mystra (he saw her open the *gate*, and recognized her), and will try to trade information with the PCs if they are reluctant to talk. He will also try to persuade any dubious PCs of the importance of the quest for the Tablets; "The survival of the Realms themselves hangs in the balance!"

2. AN UNREFUSABLE OFFER

A tall, slim elf with silver hair and eyes of deep blue-green watches you from a distance. He is clad in a well-worn grey cloak that covers him from throat to booted feet. There is probably a sword at his belt, beneath the cloak. He drifts closer, raising an open hand in greeting.

"Well met," he says in a low, almost whispering voice. "I am a seeker after knowledge. I will pay well for news of the gods and their doings. Have you such?"

The "elf" is really a minor wizard of the Zhentarim, Belemos Hawklyn (M-U 4th, L, dagger, DM's choice of nasty offensive spells). His disguise is an *illusion* cast on him by his superior, Ilithar Soond (M-U 6th, armed with a *necklace of missiles* which has only one 2d6 and two 1d6 globes left). Ilithar waits out of sight, but within range of a yell for help from Belemos. If the PCs seem strong, he will not aid Belemos, but will watch what occurs (using *invisibility* and fly spells if necessary) and follow the party.

Belemos will approach the PCs only when they are alone. He will give his name as "Aithlin Nightleaf," and pretend to be a sage from Everlund. Without actually saying so, he will intimate that he is friendly with Alustriel, High Lady of Silvermoon, and with the Harpers in general.

Belemos is not interested in attacking the party, much as he is prepared to do so. He really is after information and nothing more. He will offer as much as a bag of 12 cut and polished moonstones (worth 50 gp each) for the party's information—starting with an offer of six moonstones and allowing himself to be bargained upwards. He will pay without treachery if not menaced by the PCs.

The DM should make secret Intelligence Checks for all PCs (with a bonus of 1 for half-elven PCs, and a bonus of 2 for elven PCs). Any successful result means that the PC in question has noticed something not quite right about Aithlin's appearance. Anyone experienced with magic will realize that the

elf's appearance is due to an illusion, but not what or who he really is.

3. AN APPARITION

A sudden twinkling of small, winking lights silently and suddenly springs into being ahead, perhaps 20 paces away. The glowing sparks scatter slowly into a ring. Within it is visible the shadowy outline of a hooded, bearded man in robes. His face is hidden; his hands are moving. They open to reveal a single blue-white star.

Then the silent apparition, sparks and all, fades away. Only the luminous star is left, floating in midair. It rises, slowly and silently, into the sky, dwindling from view as it ascends, until it is gone.

The star is immediately recognizable in appearance as the symbol of Mystra. The hooded man is the demigod Azuth; his message is that Mystra cannot be found; she may, indeed, be gone for good. "Azuth" is silent, and is actually a *projected image*; he will not respond to PC queries, spells, or attacks. He looks very much like Elminster, the sage of Shadowdale (though the PCs won't know this until they actually meet Elminster).

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

1. Dragon Spy

A very young, small green dragon, fearful of the Magical Chaos of the Realms, spies on the PCs. The dragon's name is Alghazh, and he has a *gem of invisibility* (a fist-sized diamond that turns the bearer invisible, by command, once per day). Alghazh has no other hoard left, and has no allies or special knowledge. He will try to learn all that the PCs know of the gods, by eavesdropping, and then steal away. If discovered, he will fight to the death, and cannot be subdued. Alghazh is insane, and cannot be successfully mind-read, *charmed*, or otherwise mentally influenced. If not detected, he will follow the party, devouring isolated humans for food whenever he can.

Chapter 4: Mystra's Doom

2. A Dark Agent

A handsome man who leans on a crutch and wears unadorned robes of purple approaches the PCs and offers to show them a clue left by "the one god above all gods" as to the true nature of the Tablets of Fate.

"You look to be heroes," says the man. "Perhaps you can succeed where others have failed." If the PCs go with the man, he will lead them to a small wayside shrine to Lathander. Its altar has been shattered and desecrated.

The man is able-bodied and well; his crutch is a *staff of the adder*. He is Quenel, a 3rd level cleric of Bane, junior agent of the Zhentarim. Out of cover around the shrine will come 21 0-level men-at-arms, each bearing a dagger, club, and short sword.

These hired thugs will attack, seeking to rob, slay, or drive off most of the PCs, capturing one for Quenel to question. Quenel wants to know what the PCs learned when they met with Mystra; he saw the *gate* open and is eager to gain important news for his superiors.

3. Storm Winds

A howling, sky-rending windstorm will strike the skies above the PCs. Lightning will crash, felling trees and rending encampments. On the winds will come a litter of items; scraps of cloth, stricken birds, leaves, and shreds of parchment. One such will slap right across a PC's face. If examined before being tossed away, it will be found to be a scroll containing the wizard spells *dispel magic* and *fly*.

If the DM wishes, the winds could well bring other items of interest or value, as well as ghostly whisperings, far-off cries or singing, or eerie clues, perhaps the voices of sages or avatars speculating aloud about the words of Helm or the long-dead seer Alaundo about this Time of Troubles. If the PCs are beginning to deal calmly with encounter after encounter as if this is just another adventure, it is recommended that a few chills and puzzles be sent their way.

4. A Lonely Voice

A *magic mouth* appears near one of the PCs on a gravestone, stone pillar or

large rock, or tree trunk.

"I must speak before I die," it gasps hoarsely. "Whoever hears: Know that Ao is The One, the Absolute, Ruler of the Gods! He watches from hiding!"

The *mouth*, and the voice, will then vanish forever, identity unknown. Aside from Elminster, only the archmages Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun of Waterdeep and The Simbul, ruler of Aglarond, have ever heard of "Ao," as an ultra-powerful being of the Outer Planes.

5. The Cult Strikes

Maerhindor, a NE 7th level fighter loyal to The Cult of the Dragon, will confront the PCs with sword drawn. "Your foul sorcery has caused this upheaval of magic!" he says angrily. "Followers of Mystra! Lay down your arms, or be slain!"

Maerhindor has only a normal sword and a *potion of healing*, but he also wears a *ring of dragons* given to him by the Cult, which he will use to *summon* an evil dragon before challenging the PCs.

Maerhindor knows that the PCs are not to blame for any foul sorcery or the chaos affecting the Realms. He is trying to goad the PCs into revealing useful information about their identities and intentions. If attacked, he will defend himself as he retreats, waiting for the dragon to come. He will command the dragon to attack regardless of the PCs' reactions to his charges.

In these troubled times, all that answers Maerhindor's *summons* is an average-size (6 HD) adult black dragon, Ulhundos. The black dragon is vain, purring, and disdainful. Ulhundos speaks but knows no magic. She will arrive in 12 rounds, diving to attack without hesitation.

Ulhundos is easily bored, and will leave if unable to corner and slay a creature in any six-round period. The dragon will also flee if dealt more than 14 hp damage in a round, or more than 20 hp in total.

If any neutral- or good-aligned creature touches a *ring of dragons*, it will burn them for 2-5 hp of damage (per contact or round of continual contact) as it begins to burn, with a blackish-green, oily smoke. It will continue to burn no matter what is done to it, consuming itself utterly in 3-12 rounds. If any evil-aligned creature puts

on such a ring without instruction in its use, any attempt to activate it will have only one result: An evil dragon will be *summoned*, arriving in 11-16 rounds, and will attack the ring-wearer.

6. Brighteyes

A young, beautiful maiden in grey robes approaches the party rather hesitantly.

"Are you adventurers?" she asks. If the answer is yes, she will ask eagerly, "Do you need an apprentice? I'm—I've never been in much of a fight, but I'm willing to learn!"

The maid is Beluane "Brighteyes" Alkath, a CG 1st level wizard who is exactly what she claims to be. She has a dagger, a weeks rations, and a spellbook containing six 1st level spells in a backpack. She also carries an iron rod she mistakenly believes to be magical. (She found the rod in a cellar in Hillsfar, when she was kitchen drudge and cook—a good one, too—for her tutor, the now-dead wizard Anthagar "the Blind.")

Brighteyes is eager and dextrous (17 DEX), but incredibly naive, always doing the wrong thing or falling into obvious traps. She'll do her best, however, if the PCs let her. She will be awe-struck by any news of the party's contact with Mystra.

If the PCs refuse her, Beluane will accept their decision meekly and leave. She should turn up every so often, however, entirely innocently; staying at inns the PCs do, arriving in the same towns, taking the same roads or tracks. She will *not* be deliberately following the PCs, but merely wandering the same way they do, by coincidence.

Or is it coincidence?

Although she doesn't know it, Brighteyes is under the protection of the demigod Azuth—she is one of the candidates who might someday become the Magister. Every time Brighteyes fails a saving throw, allow her a second one. A tiny blue-white star will wink momentarily into existence above Brighteyes when this occurs; the DM should secretly make an Intelligence Check for every PC in a position to see Brighteyes at such times, to see if the PCs notice the star. (It is clearly visible; characters staring at Brighteyes will automatically see the star.) Azuth will take note of how the PCs treat Brighteyes.

Chapter 5: The Quest for the Tablets

This chapter begins whenever the PCs enter into a discussion or “war council” on what to do after encountering Helm, or when they begin to travel to Shadowdale, whichever comes first.

If the PCs are undecided, or have decided to ignore Helm’s message, run Event 1. If they have decided to seek the Tablets, skip Event 1 and go directly to Event 2.

Event 1: Darviathar the Just

You hear a thunder of hooves in the distance, fast approaching. A moment later, a large white charger canters into view, ridden by a tall man in full plate armor. He carries a long lance, and the shield strapped to his saddle displays a silver gauntlet holding golden scales, with a sword in one balance and a white-and-silver star in the other, all on a dark gray field.

The horse comes to a sudden, powerful halt without command. The man leans forward, raising his visor, and says in a deep, rolling voice, “Are you the heroes to whom the Great Guardian spoke? Seek you the twin Tablets of Fate?”

Darviathar the Just, the speaker, is a 14th level paladin. He has 88 hp (17 CO), and is armed with a *sword +5*, *holy avenger*. He carries three *potions of extra-healing*, and rides Tempest, a paladin’s warhorse with 33 hp.

Darviathar is a stern upholder of justice who believes that adventurers have a social duty to battle great evils that threaten the Realms. He feels the PCs must seek the Tablets of Fate because Helm suggested that they do. To Darviathar, a suggestion from Helm is a divine command—and the disobedient must be shown the error of their ways, by defeat in a challenge-duel if necessary.

The paladin is fearless but not inconsiderate or rash. He will not attack the PCs until he is fully aware of their thoughts on searching for the Tablets, if they are against doing so. He knows Helm’s message as though he was there

when it was delivered (in fact, Helm’s solars have visited several paladins of Faerun, including Darviathar, to report Helm’s words and the descriptions of the PCs present). Darviathar is also aware of an old prophecy of Alaundo concerning heroes striving for right after “the Godswar.” He will speak honestly and politely with the PCs, giving them what information he can.

Darviathar’s advice is to seek out Elminster the Wise, Sage of Shadowdale, for information on the Tablets’ present form and whereabouts. He suggests following the road to Shadowdale, being very watchful in the Shadow Gap and when passing Daggerdale, and traveling as fast as possible “before things get much worse.” Darviathar can suggest possible PC tutors in Hillsfar and Ravensbluff for all characters of good alignment (if the DM desires), and will warn of the “servants of evil” walking the Dragonreach lands with “ready blades and traps.”

By this, Darviathar means that the Cult of the Dragon (based in Sembia), the Zhentarim (based in Zhentil Keep and Daggerdale) and those priests of Bane under the personal control of the avatar of Bane—rather than the Zhentarim—are active. Followers of Bhaal, Myrkul, Talos, and other evil gods are also on the move. Clerics of all faiths are frightened and baffled by the apparent abandonment by—or destruction of—their gods, and are desperate to gather followers and magical power now that they cannot receive powerful magic by prayer.

Darviathar will aid and heal PCs as much as he can if they convince him they will seek the Tablets; he will fight them if they seem evil, dishonest, or set against his arguments to take up the quest.

Event 2: Warning from on High

Run this event whenever the PCs are moving across country. Allow one of the PCs to notice something approaching the party from behind, high in the sky.

A lone flying creature can be seen behind you, high up and approaching swiftly. It soon grows large enough for you to see that it is a woman in dark leather armor riding a pegasus. The woman needs no reins, and has a sword but no helm or other gear. Her long hair streams behind her in the wind of her passage; upon seeing you she leans forward to urge her mount down.

The pegasus swoops, and the woman calls, “Ride hard! On, east! The wraiths of the Dark Gods follow behind you!”

The woman is Laerlee, a CG 7th level fighter who is a Harper. She will not tarry or fight, but will fly on as soon as possible to warn other Harpers. She has a *+1 sword* and 50 hp, and wears a *ring of spell turning*. She has met and fought “at least thirty” wraiths created by the avatars of Bane and Myrkul. These wraiths (who do exist) are moving eastwards, chasing the PCs and destroying all life in their path.

Laerlee cannot stay with the PCs; she hopes to gather enough strength to destroy the wraiths before they reach the Dales. If she stands with the PCs and they fall or are by-passed by some wraiths, no warning will come to the Dales before cold death arrives.

If the PCs tarry or turn back, the DM should let them see a dark cloud moving over the land. If it is stared at, the viewer can dimly see armored, silent warriors, striding tirelessly forward with drawn swords and cruel eyes of white flame.

Each wraith carries with it a sword upon which *continual darkness* has been cast. The spell effect is very localized (barely covering the attendant wraith), serving to protect the undead things rather than act as a weapon in combat. If these wraiths are exposed to full sunlight, they will recoil for a few rounds, and cannot drain or chill by their attacks. They can still do physical damage with weapons (the swords), but can in turn be struck by all sorts of weapons. There are 32 wraiths, and each has 36 hp.

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Event 3: Journey Overland

The PCs can choose any route they wish from Castle Kilgrave to Shadowdale. The Great Desert, Anauroch, and the Stonelands that lie between it and Cormyr, are extremely inhospitable places. The Stonelands harbor strong goblin tribes, troll bands, brigands, and any solitary monsters a DM desires; the desert has lamia (with leucrotta infesting the Desertsedge) and sandstorms.

Daggerdale has orc patrols (each led by a single ogre) directed by the Zhen-tarim; there is a 40% chance that any such patrol will be accompanied by either a cleric of Bane or an evil wizard of 4th -6th level, armed with wands and other offensive magic items.

The Shadow Gap and the open country around the roads are well-traveled; the DM should use the Random Encounters from Chapter 2 or (better) devise specific encounters to occur at certain locations.

In the Hullack Forest and the mountains, the principal danger is a stirge encounter. 1d8 +2 (3-10) will appear, attacking together; such a flock is known as a "thirst" of stirges.

In the Elven Court woods around Shadowdale, the DM should adjust monster encounters to include brownies, pixies, satyrs, sprites, and even quicklings; elves will not be randomly encountered, but all sorts of wild woodland creatures have moved into the area since the elves withdrew.

In the Spiderhaunt Wood, increase the chances of evil woodland encounters, and replace all humanoid encounters with various sorts of spiders. Note that spiders in this area will stalk PCs tirelessly, seeking to lure them into pit traps and roper-infested ruins, attacking when the party stops for a rest. If the DM has access to the FIEND FOLIO® Tome, include encounters with ettercaps; these creatures are numerous along the edges of the Wood.

Event 4: Darkness Reaches for Midnight

Run this Event at least one day after the PCs leave Castle Kilgrave, while they are traveling.

Off to the left you hear a sudden howl, followed by an angry barking. The howl is answered from nearby on your right, and from farther off dead ahead. The barking grows louder, and then dogs burst into view: large, snarling, wearing spiked collars, charging you, teeth bared.

There are eight war dogs, all with 15 hp. They will attack all male members of the party, but not any females. Six rounds after the war dogs attack, their masters will appear out of cover: five LE 2nd level fighters, in chainmail, all with 17 hp, maces, handaxes, and short swords. The dogs were trained by the fighters, and cannot be *charmed* or otherwise compelled to attack them.

The short swords are envenomed with a sticky substance effective for three turns after the encounter. Upon contact with flesh or tissue, it causes paralysis, beginning in 1-4 rounds, and lasting 1-3 turns.

If the target saves vs. Paralysis at +3, the effects will not occur (and that particular target cannot be affected by such venom that day).

At the end of each turn after paralysis sets in, allow the target another saving throw, this time with normal chances. If successful, paralysis ends (in 1-4 rounds), and the target cannot be affected again that day by the venom.

If a character overcomes the venom, his opponent may (50%) take the time to switch weapons to either mace or hand axe.

The fighters (Belarin, Chaddath, Elferel, Ssuntar, Yethan) are commanded by two clerics of Bane. The clerics are Felsath (LE, 5th level, 31 hp) and Guthel (LE, 4th level, 24 hp). Each wears chainmail and carries a shield, wielding a mace in the other hand. They have no magic items, but command the following spells:

Felsath: *cause light wounds* x2, *cure light wounds*, *slow poison* x2, *resist fire*.

Guthel: *cause fear*, *command* x2, *hold person*, *silence* 15' radius.

The clerics' spells are not immune to the chaos of magic prevalent in the Realms, and they know this-but they won't hesitate to *try* to use their magic against the PCs. The clerics have orders (passed on to the fighters, and thence to the dogs) to capture Midnight and destroy the other PCs. Midnight's capture is paramount. She is to be taken unharmed, and hurried to a certain grove in the forest several days distant, where Bane himself will be waiting. (If the PCs are too strong to slay, the clerics are to grab Midnight and run.)

The clerics are armed with maces and hammers, and have a "capture hood" (canvas bag that goes over a victim's head and belts at the waist, with wristmanacles and a crotch strap to prevent it being wriggled out of) for Midnight.

This ought to be a serious fight for the PC's, but Bane should not be able to steal Midnight away at this point. If the clerics do make off with her, Midnight ought to escape (perhaps aided by the timely intervention of some of the NPCs the party has previously met).

Event 5: Sage Advice

This Event can occur whenever the PCs are traveling in a lightly-settled area.

Ahead, you hear a faint rising and falling noise. It seems to come from one spot, and as you approach, you can hear that it is a peculiar sort of droning whistle. It seems to be voiced by a living creature, and to have some sort of rolling, endless melody you've not heard before.

If the PCs investigate or continue to advance, one or more of them will eventually view the following:

A stooped, middle aged man wearing tattered russet robes and large, clumsy-looking leather boots is sitting on a rock, peering at the woods around him in a relaxed sort of way, and whistling

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as he puffs on a pipe—the source of the curious sound you hear.

The man is Mathal Durshavin, a sage. His field is plants and the small insects and creatures that live among them, specifically in the Dragonreach area. He is a 5 hp, 0-level human whose treasure consists of a pouch of pipe tobacco and knowledge; he hasn't a single copper piece with him. Mathal lives about ten miles away in a hut in the forest, which contains nothing more valuable than three weeks' supply of food for one man. Mathal is not an adventurer, and not interested in danger, but he can tell the PCs where all the forest trails in the area lead, and where mistletoe grows in the wild.

Mathal has little interest in wars and politics and the doings of men, but is friendly with the local druids and rangers, most of whom are Harpers. Some twelve days ago he met a ranger, Moongentle Lharinn, whom (he says blushing) "is very beautiful-and very, very nice."

Moongentle is a Harper. She told him that the wild weather and strange natural happenings of recent days were part of a great upheaval in the Realms. There was nothing to be done to stop the growing chaos, she added; the gods themselves were involved.

Moongentle prayed on her knees one whole night through to the Lady of the Forest for guidance. In the cold, misty dawn of her vigil the goddess came to her-in person, seeming "as human as you or I." Mielikki told the ranger that the gods now walked Faerun, much lessened in power. They had been banished from the planes where they had dwelt by "one who is greater."

That one, Mielikki said, "is displeased with us-our pride, and willful ways." All the gods came to Faerun in a "terrible storm," charged to "win their way back, past the Faithful Guardian." Moongentle learned that the god Helm was the guardian. Mielikki said sadly that most of the gods will probably try to defeat or trick Helm. Of all the gods, only "The Gentle Sisters": Selune, Eldath, Sune Firehair, and Mielikki herself (who are not really sisters at all, only called that by less gentle beings) prayed to "The One Who Is Hidden to

Mortals" for guidance as to how the gods should conduct themselves. All the Sisters were cast out with the others, and Mielikki saw them no more.

Mielikki arrived in her grove near the headwaters of the Unicorn Run, wracked by the burning pain of her Fall. She landed alone, the grove a ruin around her, but the voice of the One sounded in her ears as she lay, stunned, upon Faerun: "Know true mercy, kindness, and humility. Find the Tablets of Fate that divine hands stole away from Helm's guardianship. Hope, and pray, and show lesser beings help and compassion."

The Lady of the Forest told Moongentle that she did not really know what the Tablets of Fate looked like, nor had she ever investigated the desert and icy mountainous areas of Faerun, or walked the larger cities. She therefore decided to consult the most learned living human sage known to the Harpers (many of whom worship Mielikki and thereby inform her of Faerun): Elminster of Shadowdale. She was on her way to Shadowdale when she heard Moongentle praying in the forest, and has told Moongentle all this, she said, "So that more may search for the Tablets and know the whys of the chaos upon the land, and the Tablets may be found."

Moongentle was told to spread this information freely to all "good and gentle creatures," and so told Mathal. He in turn will tell the PCs all of the preceding information, apologizing for what he can't explain or describe more fully due to its secondhand nature.

If Mathal is attacked by the PCs, or becomes convinced by their speech and behavior that they are essentially evil in nature, he will try to destroy them all—if they don't cease after his initial protests that it's all a mistake, he's a man of peace—by flinging a medallion he wears at them. It's really a 9d6 *fireball* blast sphere from a *necklace of missiles*. Mathal will not mention or offer this to friendly PCs. Mathal can tell PCs where nearby edible plants and healing herbs grow; the DM should allow a weakened party of PCs to benefit from this, but he should hurry along a strong party that carries to get a little extra help; surprise attacks by wraiths of Bane (as described in Event 2 in this chapter) should do the trick.

Event 6: The BlackHand

Run this event when the PCs are traveling through a wooded area.

You are crossing an empty clearing when you notice something small and black hanging motionless in mid-air ahead, invisible amid the trees from afar. It looks like a black, long-fingered human right hand. A needle-fanged mouth suddenly appears in its palm as it floats fingers uppermost, palm open toward you. It speaks, in a hissing whisper.

PCs who attack the Hand will not stop its speech, nor cause it to disappear. It is an image, not a solid object. Bane created this image by a spell known only to himself; it cannot move from its location, because it rises from a real buried, skeletal human hand. The speech delivered by the Hand follows.

"Turn back, fools. Turn back while you still can! Bane is not kind to mortals who have the gall to think they can challenge the gods. Your utter destruction awaits you if you proceed. It will take but a moment, and require almost no effort at all. Turn back, mighty heroes, and fear Bane to the end of your days.

"All except Midnight. Ride on, Midnight, and I shall reveal myself to you in time. Come alone, and leave these fools."

If the PCs turn back, the Hand will do nothing, remaining where it is. If they proceed, or any PC except Midnight passes the Hand or goes around the clearing, the Hand will appear to catch fire, burning in a black flame until only bones are left. They will appear to break apart and fall to earth, vanishing as they "touch" the ground.

Silently, skeletons will rise up from the ground all around the clearing, bursting up out of the damp forest earth, scattering old leaves, moss, and grass as they stride forward to attack the PCs. There are 14 skeletons in a ring around the clearing: all are AC7 and have 6 hp.

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ENCOUNTERS

1. The Rift

Run this encounter if the PCs encounter brigands or any group of monsters while traveling in the wilderlands. The opponents will suddenly flee, at the sight of something that has appeared in mid-air when someone (either a PC or Midnight) tries to cast a spell:

Filling the sky overhead, looming huge and darkly dangerous over the landscape, is a cloud, the likes of which you've never seen before. It casts purple and red rays of light in all directions, and roils disturbingly, as if something inside were seeking release.

Then the cloud parts, to reveal a portal of sorts, an ugly tear in the fabric of the sky, but this is in one way very different from the *gate* that Mystra opened. There is profound blackness beyond this opening, and that dark realm seems to be pouring out of the rift.

Your enemies have fled, but the mere sight of that dark rift has left you awestruck and stunned. Out of the sky, hungry death comes for you all.

The tear will easily cover the sky above the PCs before any mount or human can get away (at normal movement rates). Just before the energy-draining effects of the portal overwhelm the character! read the following.

The air just above you crackles as many tiny white stars appear, parting in a ring to reveal a gentle blue-green light—and within it, a bearded human head. The head of a man whose kindly, weathered face is lit by eyes of sparkling intelligence. He looks at you, swift and hawk-like, flashing a smile, and then flicks his gaze skyward.

"Ah! There ye are! Bit of a naughty tear, eh? Repair y'self, rift to decay—away with you!"

The man's hands move in deft, intricate weavings of the air; Power crackles about him as he hums absent-mindedly and stares at the sky-filling blackness.

You see the cloud behind it growing rapidly, pulsing brighter. Its purple light bathes you all, and a sudden hissing, burbling roar of anger thunders overhead. If the blackness were to have a face, it would cast a long and angry look at the gentle man as it shrinks back into the boiling vortex.

"Ah, there we are..." says the old man, as the skies clear once again. He looks at you. "Well met. Elminster of Shadowdale at your service, briefly. A lot of that going around, I fear. I must be off—Shadowdale needs me!"

He peers at Midnight, tilting his head. "Interesting," he says absently, and then vanishes, amid stars, and the air above you is once again clear.

Elminster will ignore any PC attempts to talk to him, and will not tarry. PC spells intended to trace, stop, or attack him will have no effect, or will go awry.

2. TILVERTON

This encounter will occur if the PCs approach Tilverton, a small town built around a temple to Gond, a good inn, deep wells, and a large breeding and livery stable. It also has two competent smiths and a good carpenter. Cormyr recently garrisoned Tilverton, which up until then had been independent. Shortly thereafter, the High Priest of the temple, Gharri, "the Wonderworker," vanished—and has not been heard of in Tilverton since. The temple was not damaged in the recent storm; Gond came to Faerun in a larger temple far to the south.

You see men in the distance; men in armor, on horseback, with long lances in their hands. They see you, too, and advance in a thunder of hooves. You see shining helms, stern moustaches, gleaming chainmail, and surcoats proud with the Purple Dragon.

One red-moustachioed giant spurs to the front, a stout rod in his hand. "Halt!" he calls to you, "In the name of His Imperial Majesty, Azoun of Cormyr. State your names and business—and present your charter or surrender those weapons!"

Your challenger is Captain Thardock, a LG 7th level fighter (62 hp) armed with a bastard sword, a short sword, and a *rod of cancellation*.

He heads a patrol of 22 Cormyrean soldiers. All are AC5 (AC4 if they use the shields hung behind them on the high backs of their saddles), and are armed with horsemen's lances, long swords, hand axes, and daggers.

Fourteen are 2nd level fighters (14 hp each), and also carry morning stars. Eight are 3rd level fighters (25 hp each), and have heavy crossbows (which they are adept at firing from horseback), with three 21-quarrel quivers each.

(All Cormyrean patrols in this area are of approximately this strength and composition. Other captains are Orberl, 6th level (54 hp) and Pripyn, 5th level (ST 18/36, 36 hp). The DM should use them whenever combat occurs in or within a day's ride of Tilverton; they are unneringly vigilant.)

Thardock will arrest any PCs who flee or offer violence to him, his patrol, or any citizen of Tilverton. He will confiscate the weapons of anyone lacking a royal charter to carry them (required by Cormyrean law, within lands claimed by Cormyr), returning them to persons leaving Cormyr's territory to go north or east.

Thardock knows that something really out of the ordinary is afoot in the Realms, but doesn't know what—yet. Magic has unpredictable effects, adventurers of all sorts ("brigands, some of them") are riding hither and yon, and stranger things have happened, too—weather and priests going crazy, and the like.

There are two NPCs of note living in Tilverton: Huntileir the Weaponsmith and Sandyrina the Sensual.

Huntileir is a LG 8th level dwarven fighter (ST 18/04, 60 hp) who runs a weapons shop in the center of town. About three feet tall and three feet wide, Huntileir has biceps like beer kegs, a fringe of white beard all along his jaws, and deadly accuracy with throwing axes (which he is never without at least four of). He makes axes and swords, and sells just about everything (at standard prices).

Sandyrina is a dancer in one of Tilverton's taverns, *The Winking Moon*. Posing as a lady of the evening, the scantily-clad, beautiful CN 4th level thief (CO 16, DEX

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18, 24 hp) meets many merchants and adventurers in their inn chambers late at night. There she fences stolen or dangerous goods and treasure, offering good money for things that their traveling owners want to get rid of quickly. Sandyrina is fair, close-mouthed, and protected by two pseudodragons, Silp and Tannath (hp 14 and 11, respectively) whom she has raised from tiny, abandoned young. They are utterly loyal to Sandyrina; *charms* or other magics that try to turn them against her will always fail.

The folk of Tilverton are suspicious and ready-armed. The temple of Gond was ransacked only a few days ago, by unknown brigands (Zhentarim agents), and the god did nothing to defend it: His disfavor must lie upon them and their town. More than this hangs upon their hearts, however.

Something is killing Tilvertonians. Something strong enough to tear its victims limb from limb. Something that eats humans.

It hunts by night, always slaying those who are out-of-doors, and alone. First to fall were young girls: ladies of the evening and lovers going to meet their young men. Then hunters and guardsmen fell—all alone, and all slain in places where rock or cobbles underfoot make tracking difficult, some within walls or enclosures. Townsfolk expect that a panther or similar beast able to spring upon and bring down human-sized prey is to blame.

If the DM desires, the PCs could be attacked by the beast (which is a jackal-were with 22 hp).

If Kelemvor is in the party, he will encounter the monster, try to save a potential victim, and involuntarily shift to panther-form. Townsfolk who witness Kelemvor's transformation will be hostile, pressing the PCs to leave town immediately (even if Kelemvor saves the lives of townsfolk by doing so). Zhentarim agents are the prime movers behind Tilvertonian hostility, and will organize townsfolk to chase the PCs regardless of how they behave or how speedily they leave. Such pursuit will be half-hearted, and will soon break off.

If the PCs turn to defend themselves, their pursuers will mill about, making a lot of noise, and then flee back to Tilverton—whereupon a patrol of Purple Dragons will appear between them and the PCs, and begin to question the towns-

folk, allowing the PCs ample time to ride away.

3. Shadow Gap

This encounter will occur if the PCs enter Shadow Gap. If they take another route, it can happen whenever the PCs are traveling in open country.

Suddenly you notice something small and white shining in the air ahead. It floats, unmoving—and as you get nearer, you can see that it is a human skull, looking at you steadily.

PC attacks and spells will not harm or move the skull; it is an *illusion*. "Touch" will not affect it.

The skull begins to speak, in a high, thin whisper. "You will never find the Tablets. Tremble, mortals, before Myrkul the Mighty. In the end, I rule you all. Despair, and turn back. The Tablets are not for such as you, and you will never find them."

The skull will then fade away, silently. Whenever any party member, PC or NPC, is wounded or slain for three days thereafter, the image of the skull will silently appear to leer at them (visible to all).

4. Spiderhaunt Wood

This encounter can occur in the Wood or nearby, if the PCs avoid the wood itself. It will follow a monster encounter, in which eight ravenous huge spiders (14 hp each) pounce upon the party, and while the party is embattled, six stirges (9 hp each) appear. Before the PCs can dispatch all of the spiders or stirges, read the following:

There is a sudden thunder of hooves, and the snorting of a belligerent, irritated horse. Then you hear cold, care-free laughter.

Into view among the trees comes a man in chainmail, riding a charger in full gallop. He has the look of a man who has seen a great number of battles, and his warrior senses take in the scene instantly. He swings his long sword at a stirge, gutting it.

Behind him rides another man, younger but no less a warrior for that. Between them, they carve up two spiders in as many minutes. The older fighter pulls his horse up to you. "Well met!" he calls.

The man in chain is Hawksguard, (who bears dagger, handaxe, and long sword, and is LG, ST 17, 5th level, and 38 hp). Next to him is Yarbro (bearing long sword, short bow, and dagger, LG, 3rd level, with 22 hp). Hawksguard will explain that he has ridden from Shadowdale, tracking a band that he believes to be Zhentarim assassins, heading south. In fact, these assassins were sent by Bane to slay the party, but were themselves killed by spiders only a few hours ago.

Yarbro is nervous to get back to Shadowdale. He will be easily convinced to accompany the PCs to Elminster, and his opinion might well sway the more cautious Hawksguard as well.

5. A Fowl Huntress

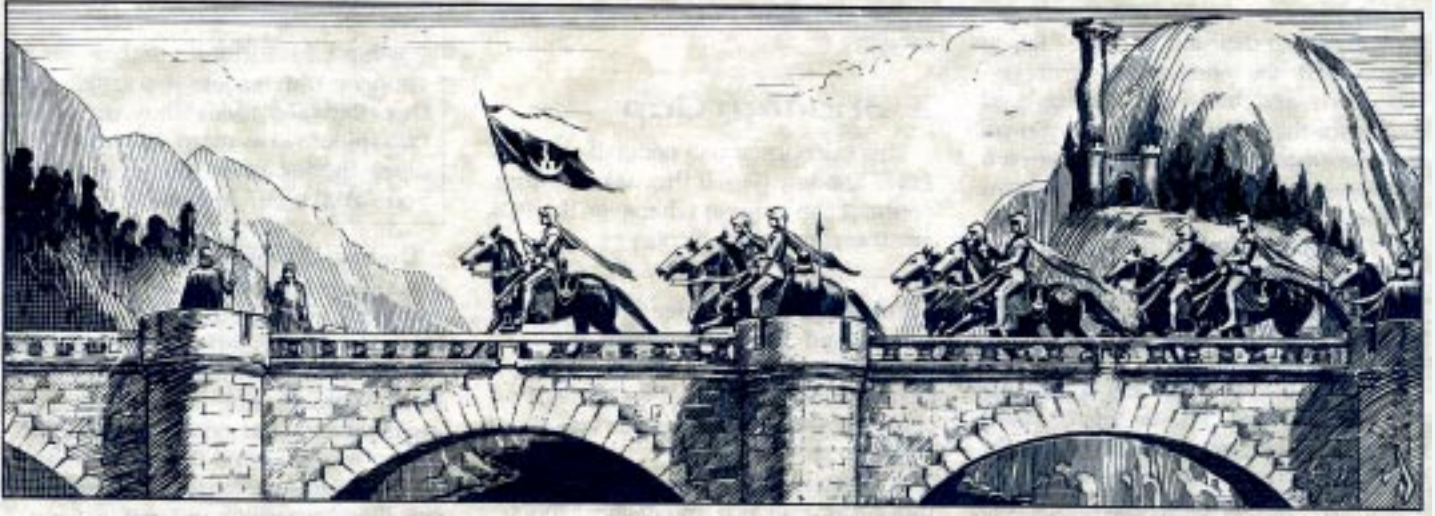
Run this encounter before the PCs reach Shadowdale, or if they decide to go elsewhere. It will occur in the lengthening shadows of twilight.

Out of the trees behind the party swoops a harpy, flying low and quiet to attack. She will seek to slay Midnight, attacking with her claws and with a spear. The harpy, Uithgel, will fight to the death, showing no fear. She has 22 hp.

Divination, mind-reading, or questioning magic (even if she is dead) used on the harpy will bring only the cold laughter and skull image of Myrkul. Uithgel bears a satchel strapped to her belly, containing a cloth bag with 14 sp, a freshly-severed human hand wearing a brass ring (a *ring of fire resistance*, and two steel vials (*potions of extra-healing*: each will heal 6-27 hit points of damage).

Uithgel has several brood-sisters; Nairgel, Sezimmer, and Ioghil. Myrkul will inform them if the PCs slay Uithgel, and from then on they will hunt the PCs, seeking to strike when the PCs are split up, injured, or tired, or otherwise at a disadvantage. They will not be able to reach the PCs for nearly a month, and will hunt them for years, if need be. The harpies will use any magic items or other weapons they can obtain in their mission.

Chapter 6: Storm in Shadowdale



This chapter begins as the PCs reach the westernmost guardpost of Shadowdale. The road is flanked by dense woods on the north, and rolling hills and scrub woods to the south. The stone walls—and within them, towers—of a temple dedicated to Tymora rise to the north of the road; where its track joins the main road, a company of guardsmen stand.

Beyond them can be seen the bridge which carries the road over the River Ashaba, and beyond that the grey granite bulk of the Old Skull (the bare, hard rock root of a mountain stripped and smoothed by glaciers, ages ago) rises above the trees. Just visible at its base, beyond the river, is one edge of the squat, massive Tower of Ashaba.

Event 1: Shadowdale Guard

The spiral outline of the Twisted Tower is visible on the surcoats of the guards; depicted in silver, superimposed on a silver crescent moon floating horns up, on a field of royal blue. The arms of Shadowdale; you have reached it at last. There are 14 guards, bearing spears and clad in gleaming silver-blue chainmail. One, who bears an iron rod, steps forward to confront you, his manner

not unfriendly.

“Well met, travelers,” he says. “What brings you to Shadowdale?”

The guardscaptain, Riothar Irontongue, will ask the PCs their names as well. He is polite and even-tempered, but very shrewd.

The guards are all 1st level fighters, AC 5 in their chain, and armed with daggers, maces, short swords, and spears. If challenged, three will blow horns to alert the soldiery of Shadowdale (some 60 soldiers will come from the bridge, the Tower and the crossroads by the inn, arriving six rounds after the alarm except for eight lancers from the bridge, who will arrive in three rounds).

If the PCs are peaceful, however, Riothar will bid them welcome, and direct them to The Old Skull Inn.

Mourngrym, Lord of Shadowdale, is not holding court when the PCs arrive, and is unavailable until Evenfeast (supper), although the PCs will be welcome as guests at that meal if they “discover themselves” to the Seneschal of the Tower (Turnal Rhestayn), by asking for him at the Tower gates.

Elminster, the Sage of Shadowdale, is most likely to be found in his tower, a small, slightly leaning building beside a small pond, across the meadow from the Tower of Ashaba, on the edge of the village proper. If the PCs ask about him, Riothar will send them on to the bridge, to “ask the warrior Hawksguard to

accompany them thither.” (Yes, the same Hawksguard from a previous encounter.)

Hawksguard is the veteran of the bridge-guard. They total 16, and are armed as Riothar’s guard except for their captain, Elassa Thintrel (she is CG, ST 17,4th level, has 36 hp, and is armed with a battleaxe and a long sword), and Hawksguard himself.

One of Hawksguard’s roles is that of guide to important visitors (such as bands of adventurers); he is considered stout enough to survive while keeping an eye on such potentially dangerous guests, at least long enough to sound his belt-horn if trouble erupts. He will conduct the PCs between the inn, Tower of Ashaba, Elminster’s Tower, and on any tour of Shadowdale they may wish to make (the DM should refer to the CYCLOPEDIA OF THE REALMS book in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set for details of Shadowdale). Hawksguard is kindly, shrewd, and quiet. He will give few details of Shadowdale to the PCs, directing them to ask Elminster or officers of the Court.

Event 2: An Audience with Elminster

If the PCs go to see Elminster, run this Event. The order of this Event and the Events in The Old Skull Inn and the Twisted Tower depends entirely on

Chapter 6: Storm in Shadowdale

where the PCs want to go; let the players decide.

As you approach Elminster's Tower, you see an old, bearded man in robes sitting on a rock near the flagstone path you're following—Elminster himself. He raises his eyebrows, takes a pipe from his mouth, and says, "Ah, *there* ye are. I expected all of ye to be along some time ago. What took ye?"

Elminster speaks in whimsical, occasionally gruff, cultured tones. He is good-humored, if sometimes testy, and will freely answer PC queries. He can readily identify the signs of the various gods, and if asked about the chaos affecting both Art (magic) and the natural workings of the lands, he will reply as follows:

"It is a source of entertainment to some, and a great burden and upset to others, to live in a time of some trouble and change—trouble and change rather greater than usual, I mean. This time—ah, that is, right now, if ye're wondering—the trouble involves the gods. Aye, as no doubt ye've heard or noticed these days past, the gods walk Faerun among us, right now.

"Somewhat lessened in power, they be—for they have been punished by one who is even greater, a being whom we know only as Ao, or as the oldest sages write it, "The One Who Is Hidden" from mortals. This great being has stripped all the gods, great and small, of much of their power, and cast them down among us. They must win back their former places in the planes.

"Without their presence, the evils of the outer planes seek to expand their dominion. This brings chaos to us, here, and keeps Ao busy. Greater chaos is visited on us because the particular strengths of the gods—their portfolios, if ye will—are unadministered. The gods are among us, now, preoccupied with petty matters of power, and finding these two rocks called the Tablets of Fate. Only with the Tablets, Ao has decreed, will

the gods be allowed to ascend again, past the guardian—the god Helm—that Ao has set to keep the gods here.

"All so much grand talk, to trouble only priests? Nay, I fear not so. The longer the gods are not keeping the balance, the greater the chaos grows. Some gods may be destroyed while reduced to weak avatars here—and then what of their spheres of influence? There is worse: The most evil gods, those whose sport is domination and destruction, are at last let loose here in Faerun to do as they will—Bane, Myrkul, Talos, Beshaba and all the rest. Even a kindly god can in ignorance and power wreak great havoc in the land; wherefore much entertainment will ensue. If it ensueth too long, the Realms will at last be destroyed, and chaos will claim us all."

If asked what he is doing about all this, Elminster will reply:

"Thinking. To do the wrong thing, ere I see my way clear to the proper course, could well be the greatest ill Text of all."

Elminster may appear to be just a mild-mannered old man, but the DM should bear in mind that he is far more powerful than he seems. He is a CG 26th level mage, with 96 hp, AC7, has 18 IN, WI, and DEX, and 17 Charisma.

His staff and pipe are non-magical at the time the PCs encounter him, but he does wear a +3 *ring of protection* and a (non-vampiric) *ring of regeneration*. He cannot be *charmed* or otherwise mentally influenced by any being, due to multifold enchantments. An *Elminster's Evasion* spell will whisk away his body upon "death" to a hidden, other-planar safehold, where The Simbul (a 27th level wizard, who is Elminster's lover and the Mage-Queen of Aglarond) will be alerted to come to his aid. Elminster carries a full complement of spells (two *meteor swarms*, for instance, and four *magic missile* spells—each such spell creating 13 separate missiles).

Elminster is over 500 years old. This longevity is due in part to the fact that

he—as well as The Simbul and Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun of Waterdeep, and perhaps a few others—holds a part of the divine power of Mystra.

This is why Mystra was not destroyed outright when she fought Helm. This sharing of power was a deliberate act of Ao's, to prevent any one being holding too much of the greatest power of all: The nature, workings, and power of all magical processes in the multiverse. **Do not reveal this to the players!** Much of the fun of this trilogy of adventures lies in their learning bits and pieces of this and other "Cosmic Secrets" as events unfold, not beforehand.

Elminster believes that more knowledge of what exactly the gods are up to here in Faerun is to be found in Tantras; that's where he thinks one of the Tablets of Fate is, and he will tell the PCs this. He will also reveal that of more immediate importance is the need to defend Shadowdale against attack.

Zhentil Keep has always threatened the dale. Now, its armies will be commanded by perhaps the worst of the gods: Bane, The Black Lord. The Knights of Myth Drannor are nowhere to be found at present, and Shadowdale's pitifully weak armies need help. Are the PCs available?

Elminster is not above horse-trading training for wizard PCs and aid for other party members in return for a bit of sword-swinging here in the dale when it's needed. He will be very persuasive, willing to *identify* any mystery items the PCs may have acquired, lecture them on any arcane topics they may wish to know about (oh, yes, including treasure). The DM can use Elminster's mouth to lecture players, feed them information leading to later adventures or about rules-queries, or anything else desired. Elminster will hint that defending the temple of Lathander, just across the road from his tower, is the most important thing that mortals can be doing in Faerun just now.

He will not, by the way, let any PCs except Midnight into his tower—nor will any beings, including avatars, be able to get into it during the adventure.

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Event 3: The Old Skull Inn

Run this Event whenever the PCs first visit the Old Skull Inn. It stands on the northwest corner of a crossroads, with its yard, well, and stables behind it. Its layout, rooms, and other details are given on page 76 of the CYCLOPEDIA OF THE REALMS. If the PCs agree to help defend the dale, their expenses at the inn are covered by Mourngrym.

Within the wide, plain, and heavy front door is a dark, cozy taproom. Massive beams low overhead bear the upper floors of the inn. Below them are many polished wooden tables, stretching back to a bar.

A middle-aged, gray-haired, plump but still regally beautiful woman stands behind it, rubbing pewter tankards to a high shine with a blackened cotton rag. She wears a leather low-bodice vest over a plain cotton gown, and below that warriors' boots. She looks up at you and smiles.

"Well met, travelers," she says in a lilting, husky voice. "Welcome to my house. You have found The Old Skull Inn, and I am Jhaele Silvermane, at your service."

Jhaele is a kindly, motherly woman, a widow wise in the ways of the world. She is very hard to scare, and very good at healing arts. She is tolerant of all religious beliefs (so long as they do not extend to harming her property or upsetting other guests) and most personal habits. She is also a mean card-player and a prodigious drinker, able to hold more while appearing sober than many a warrior twice her size.

Jhaele stands five feet high, is in her fifties, and is a NG 4th level fighter with double specialization in the use of a thrown dagger. She is +3 to hit with daggers, can hurl three in a single round, and can do 1d4 + 3 damage per strike.

Jhaele is never without a dagger at her belt, one in either boot, and one whose sheath hangs on a chain down the front of her bodice. Her other weapons, behind the bar, are a handaxe

and a long sword.

The Drow realms can be reached from a cellar of the Old Skull Inn (Jhaele will *not* volunteer this information), and from there, as a trophy from the Knights of Myth Drannor, Jhaele has acquired a handgun-crossbow. She is not proficient in its use (-1 to hit except within the taproom, in which she has practiced firing it for hours, when business is slack), but has it behind the bar, ready-loaded, with an additional fourteen darts at hand. The darts do 1-3 damage, and have a range of 6"; their poison long ago ceased to be effective.

Jhaele will be as helpful as Elminster in listening to PC problems and imparting desired information about life, the dale, and everything; but her knowledge is far less than the Old Mage's.

Event 4: The Twisted Tower

Run this Event whenever the PCs visit the Tower of Ashaba. Space does not permit full detailing of the home of Mourngrym, Lord of Shadowdale, but the PCs will see that the Tower is a huge, square stone building two lofty stories high. It has no moat, but does have docks on the nearby Ashaba (it was built by drow, long ago, at the farthest point upriver that the Ashaba could be navigated by trade-barge). It sports an off-center, seven-story tower (the source of its nickname), which contains ballistae and a clearly-visible landing deck for aerial steeds.

The huge double front doors of the Tower are guarded by six men with halberds outside, and four men within, as well as the butler, Bracegar, whose rod of office is actually a *wand of paralysis*. (The Tower's staff is detailed in the CYCLOPEDIA OF THE REALMS, under "Shadowdale.")

The doors open into a high-ceilinged, tapestried and shield-hung hall, which leads down to a right-hand turn into the Great Hall (feasting-hall) of the Tower, a vast chamber of soaring hammer-beams, long tables, and hearths.

Doors in the hall just inside the outer doors lead, on the right, into a chamber with a well, the traditional waiting-room for guests, which opens in turn

into the Great Hall. On the left, the doors lead into the Entry Hall, a large chamber where guards wait, mounts are kept ready, there is seating for guests and supplicants to the Court beyond, and much of the daily living of the Tower staff takes place, with officers of the Tower available to the public.

The Entry Hall in turn opens into a grand Audience Chamber, the Lord's Court, which contains two rows of smooth-carved wooden seats flanking a central aisle. The aisle leads to a raised dais, on which stands a throne, backed by ornate tapestries. A minstrel's gallery (used more often by guards, posted with ready crossbows) hangs over the dais high to the right, reached from the second floor.

That is all of the Tower outsiders normally get to see. It is suggested that PCs get no further; the dale is hurriedly preparing for war, and conscious of security. PCs may be welcome additions to the defensive forces, but need not be invited into the inner areas of the Tower, just in case (most "war councils" take place in the three large rooms described here).

Bracegar will ask the PCs their names and business. If they wish to see Mourngrym, he will courteously take them (accompanied by four guards from the Entry Hall, which contains a further 20 armed and ready soldiers) into the Audience Chamber, and announce them. Mourngrym will be on the throne, regardless of the time of day or what the PCs may have been told of his whereabouts by others in the dale.

You see a tall, slim, young-looking man lounging on his throne. He is sporting a thin moustache, and is handsome and dark-haired. He is richly but informally dressed, and wears a slim long sword and dagger at his belt. He looks at you with interest, and says politely, "Welcome to Shadowdale. I am Mourngrym, Lord of this place. I would know what brings you here, and share feast with you, if you will. What say you?"

Mourngrym is a 4th level NG fighter, with 32 hp. He is just 30, the youngest

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son of the noble Amcathra family of Waterdeep. An ally of the Harpers, he is a junior member of the Knights of Myth Drannor, who left him the dale to rule when they sought to guard and rebuild Myth Drannor. Mourngrym is kind, sensitive, just, and level-headed. He has a wife, Shaerl Rowanmantle, of noble Cormyrean blood, who is with child and will not be seen at this time.

Mourngrym will urge the PCs to help in the defense of Shadowdale, offering them gold (20 gp per day, each) and glory. He expects an attack by Zhentilar soldiers within a tenday.

He will answer PC questions as best he can, and he knows the people and landmarks of Shadowdale (and far-off Waterdeep) very well. He knows very little, however, about the gods and the current troubles. He worships, among other gods, Lathander, and is concerned about protecting the Morninglord's temple here in the dale.

Mourngrym will be friendly to the PCs, and will grant them, in effect, the rank of "Sword" in his forces—that is, above guardscaptains, but below himself, the other Knights, and Thurbal, Captain-at-Arms of Shadowdale. PCs will have no authority over Tower staff, nor over Elminster or any Harpers they may meet in the dale.

Event 5: War Comes To The Dale

This Event will occur the day after the PCs arrive in Shadowdale. Harpers riding through the woods have brought word of Zhentarim-led armies approaching from the north, and along the roads from Daggerdale and Voonlar.

Signal fires and lookouts are posted atop the Old Skull, on Harpers' Hill, and on Watcher's Knoll. Barricades of stout timber are dragged into place on the roads, the militia is summoned, and valuables and provisions are shifted into the Tower in case of siege. Guardposts are established at the Ashaba bridge (to the west of the dale), at the Mill Bridge (at the south end of the dale, guarding the narrow track through the woods to Mistedale), at the crossroads, on the road to the east at Krag Pond,

and all along the earthworks (ditch and embankment) at Tower Farm. Harper scouts move to Shadow Ridge to watch for attackers.

Midnight and any spellcasting PCs will be hurried to Elminster's Tower, where they will find the sage sitting outside, beside his peaceful pond. He will inform them that the greatest task of their lives awaits them: To defend the Temple of Lathander from "attacking evil." They are not to take part in the coming battle, or sneak out of the dale, either, for that matter.

"Great glory awaits, for those mortals who do what must be done. Fate, if ye like, has set ye the task. The Tablets of Fate are important, aye, but there'll be time enough tomorrow to worry about that. To Tantras, its trail leads...aye, Tantras. But, mark ye, the Tablets will mean nothing if we fail here, now. Ye would be heroes? Then come! Come, and earn thy glory!"

The Old Mage springs to his feet, fixing you with a gimlet-eyed glance, and strides off down the path toward the road, barehanded. "Come!" he calls back to you, as he turns toward the Temple. "Time enough for seeing the sights later—'tis time to save the Realms again!"

If any PCs refuse, Elminster will shrug, say, "Be nothing, then," in tones of cold scorn, and turn them *invisible* by means of a spell of his own—invisibility that does not wear off for 3-12 days, and cannot be removed by other magic short of a *limited wish*, except by Elminster himself.

If PCs press Elminster for information as to what they should do, and why, he will hurry on toward the temple, smiling, and say, "All in good time, all in good time...save the world first; ask questions later!"

If any PC should attack Elminster, or try to sneak away, they will find themselves *levitated* sixty feet straight up in the air, helpless to move or undo this magic (despite any spells they might try). They will be a helpless witness to the battle and all that goes beneath them until the next morning or until Elminster "dies," whichever may hap-

pen first—whereupon they will float to earth thanks to Elminster's use of a *contingency*, taking no damage. If shot at during the battle, they will discover that Elminster's magic confers no protection against any sort of missiles.

Midnight will be exasperated by the Old Mage's failure to tell them what exactly they'll be doing, and why, and she will catch up with him (at the Temple) to tell him so.

Elminster sighs, and stops just outside the Temple doors. "Ye won't mind," he asks in ironic tones, "if an old man sits down while ye harangue him, do ye?"

Without waiting for a reply, the Old Mage turns, tucks his robes under him with one hand, and sits down on empty air.

Midnight sneers at the sage. "A cute work of Art, indeed, Old Mage, but—"

And then her eyes widen, and she gasps, "A Stairway!"

Elminster grins, and slaps the air beside his behind. "Aye," he says, expression grim again. "A Celestial Stair. Invisible, permanent, and usable by all of great will and Power. A way out of Faerun for gods too cruel to care what destruction they cause in doing so. One known to and available to Mystra, Lathander, Mielikki and others, these past days—but one they would never defy Ao to use, for love of Faerun below. Others are not so kind. Wherefore the Realms need heroes...such as thee."

"Enough talk...time for laughs later." Elminster rises. "The Stair is within the sacred ground of the Temple. Indeed, the Temple was built here because of it. From within, access to the Stair can be controlled by those who have the Art and knowledge. The Stair itself can be destroyed, if one has the strength and resolve." He sighs, and then stirs himself. "But enough clack; there's work to be done, and it's past time for some tea!"

Elminster will hustle the PCs into the temple, and dismiss the minor clerics of Lathander.

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"Thy Lord teaches you to work new beginnings—well, then, stand aside. Precious few new beginnings ye'll be able to work, if ye're naught but burning meat on a temple floor!"

Eliminster hustles the clerics out, and bars the Temple doors, lifting a long, heavy brass bar with easy strength. "Now," he says to the PCs with a grin, "we wait."

Meanwhile, Mournngrym rides from post to post, checking that everything is in order and heartening his men. The faint, far-off throb of Zhentilar marching drums can be heard, north of the dale. War has come to Shadowdale again.

The DM can describe the battle as a backdrop to PC roleplaying, or play it as a BATTLESYSTEM™ scenario.

If the PCs play the defenders, the DM should direct the attacking forces, and try to make the battle follow the Outline of Battle that follows the descriptions of the forces involved, below.

Defending Forces

Shadowdale Guardian Unit

Regular/Infantry

AC 4 4 figures (10:1) Human

(Lawful Good)

HD/fig.: 10 MV: 12"

M-sized 0% MR F1

AR20 ML 11 DL12

Wpn/Dmg: Longsword (1-8, 1-12)

Spear (1-6, 1-8)

Dagger (1-4, 1-3)

Crossbow, heavy (2-5, 2-7)

AT #1/2 S 8" M 16" L 24"

There are nine such units, deployed as follows: two at the Ashaba bridge (commanders: Riothar Irontongue, F4; Elasa Thintrel, F4; a PC will be placed in overall command of this unit if the PCs have agreed to help defend the dale); one at the Tower (commander: Turnal Rhestayn, F2); one at the Mill Bridge (commander: Essen, F2); two on the east road by Krag Pond (commander: Thurbal, F5); and three at Tower Farm (commander: Hawksguard, F5). PCs will be welcome as vice-commanders at any of these posts. All commanders have a Command Radius of 12", except for Hawksguard, whose CR is 14".

Shadowdale Archer Unit

Regular/Archers

AC 7 4 figures (10:11) Human

(Lawful Good)

HD/fig.: 20 MV: 12"

M-sized 0% MR F2

AR 20 MR 10 DL 11

Wpn/Dmg: Long sword (1-8, 1-12)

Halberd (1-10, 2-12)

Dagger (1-4, 1-3)

Bow, Long (1-6, 1-6)

AT #2, Rng: 7"-14"-21"

There are three such units, deployed as follows: one atop the Old Skull (commander: Yeoman Helduth, F4); one in the Tower (commander: Shaerl Rowanmantle, Th6); and one at Tower Farm (commander: Durgo Silvermane, F2). While in Shadowdale, neither archers nor crossbowmen will run out of ammunition; Mournngrym has laid in two man-poles of sixty quivers each, ten poles per unit, and has a further 300 ready poles at the Tower as replacements. All the unit commanders have a Command Radius of 10".

Shadowdale Cavalry Unit

Regular/Cavalry

AC 2 4 figures (10:1) Human

(Lawful Good)

HD/fig.: 30 MV: 15"

L-sized 0% MR F2

AR20 MR11 DL 12

Wpn/Dmg: Lance, Heavy (3-9, 3-18)

Flail, Horse. (2-5, 2-5)

Longsword (1-8, 1-12)

*Mounts: 3 attacks, 1-8, 1-8, 1-3

There is one such unit, initially deployed in the meadow east of the Tower. Its commander is Thorbok (F5), Mournngrym's Master of the Stables.

Shadowdale Militia "Mob"

AC 8 14 figures (10:1) Human

HD/fig.: 10 MV: 12"

M-sized 0% MR F0

AR 21 MR 9 DL 9

Wpn/Dmg: Flail (2-7, 2-8)

Short sword (1-6, 1-8)

Dagger (1-4, 1-3)

There is one such unit, initially at the crossroads. It will be led into battle by Mournngrym, and then turned over to a PC or other commander in the area.

Harpers "Skirmish" (Elite unit; can operate as a Regular unit)

AC 4 5 figures (5:1) Human

(Neutral Good, High intelligence)

HD/fig.: 25 MV: 12"

M-sized 0% MR F5

AR21 MR 13 DL 14

Wpn/Dmg: Bastard Sword (2-8, 2-16)

Longsword (1-8, 1-12)

Battleaxe (1-8, 1-8)

Dagger (1-4, 1-3)

Bow, Long (1-6, 1-6)

AT #2 S 7" M 14" L 21"

There is one such unit, initially deployed along Shadow Ridge. It represents those Harpers who have come to Shadowdale to aid Elminster. Harpers are solitary, peaceful folk, not military in outlook; this is extraordinary behavior for them. Their commander is Selmavra Elsee, a 7th level ranger, with a Command Radius of 15".

The Knights of Myth Drannor & the Mistedale Lancers

The Knights will arrive on the 12th Game Round, followed by the Lancers a round later. They will come up the road from the Mill Bridge.

The Knights who will appear in this adventure are as follows: Florin Falconhand, R9; Dove Falconhand, R11; Jhessail Silvertree, W8; Lanseril Snowmantle, half-elf D8; Merith Strongbow, elf F6/W6; Rathan Thentraver, CL6 (Tymora); Torm, Th6; Illistyl Elventree, W4.

Treat them as commanders for BATTLESYSTEM™ game purposes. The rangers both wield *long swords* + 1, Merith has a *long sword* +3 which is silver-bladed, Lanseril wears the *fire-crown* (able to produce two 19-hp damage, no save *flame strikes* during the battle, at up to 11" distant), Rathan has a *ring of the ram* (detailed in the UNEARTHED ARCANA tome), and both lady magic-users have *wands of magic missiles* of 16 or more charges. All magic-using Knights have full spells, ready for battle, but neither they nor their magical items are immune to Magical Chaos.

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Mistledale Lancers

Regular/Cavalry
AC 7 6 figures (10:1) Human
(Lawful Good)
HD/fig.: 18 MV 24"
L-sized 0% MR F3
AR 18 ML 11 DL12
Wpn/Dmg: Lance (1-6, 1-8)
Mace, Horseman's (1-6, 1-4)
Longsword (1-8, 1-12)
Dagger (1-4, 1-3)
*Mounts: 2 attacks (1-4, 1-4)

There is one such unit, under the command of Dairanatha Shieldstone (F5). The Lancers are equally adept at fighting afoot or mounted, and can call their horses (light warhorses) back to them by name in battle; horses and men can fight separately if desired.

Dairanatha is well-loved by the soldiery and folk of Shadowdale; they will recognize her as a commander (CR 13") in battle.

Note on the Defense of Shadowdale:

Within Shadowdale, all defending units have good communications due to established signals and the magic of defending forces. The Tower staff, and the villagers not in the militia, can be considered "Mob" units with 5 and 18 figures respectively (10:1), but will only come into the battle if the Tower or the buildings at the crossroads are invaded by the attacking forces. The defenders have no aerial units, despite the Tower's "landing deck," only a messenger riding a hippogriff, who will be sent to warn Mistledale before the attack begins.

"Castle Crag" (shown on the Shadowdale map included in the CYCLOPEDIA OF THE REALMS) is a gutted ruin. It is not garrisoned—and is unrelated to the Cormyrean fortress of Castle Crag featured in Chapter 3.

The elves under Alok Silverspear are elsewhere at the time of this battle, as are the remnants of Mane's Band, the bard Storm Silverhand, The Simbul, and the Circle of Shadowdale, who have been missing for some time (present whereabouts unknown). The sage Elminster will take no direct part in the battle, remaining instead within the Temple of Lathander, whose defense he considers of paramount importance.

Attacking Forces

Avatars: Bane is the only god who will take a direct hand in the battle (outside the Temple of Lathander, at least). The DM should refer to the avatar descriptions when handling the battle.

No extra-planar beings will take part in the actual attack on Shadowdale, nor will Bane use any Zhentarim wizards; he knows their magic is unreliable, and mistrusts their loyalty. The Zhentilar armies will be led by Zhentarim clerics of Bane.

The Claw of Voonlar

Regular/Infantry
AC 5 36 figures (10:1) Human
(Lawful Evil)
HD/fig.: 20 MV: 12"
M-sized 0% MR F2
AR20 ML 12 DL 13
Wpn/Dmg: Bill (2-8, 1-10)
Javelin (1-6, 1-6), 4 each
Flail (2-7, 2-8)
Broad sword (2-8, 2-7)

There is one such unit; it will attack down the road from Voonlar, not leaving the road for fear of elves, pit traps, and deadfalls, depending on sheer numbers to break through the defenders. It will begin the battle in Closed Formation. It is divided into "Talons" of 60 men, each led by a 5th level cleric of Bane (CR 12" 1 with full offensive spells, excepting third level spells. These officers (called "Battlelords") are: Ilthanas, Klamaer, Sundath, Tilvaer, Unthras, and Vespryn. The overall commander of the Claw is Thomaer, F8 and Command Radius 5", an old, now indecisive coward who will remain with the unit of his lover, the she-cleric Vespryn, unless calamity strikes (whereupon he will probably flee).

Each Talon contains with it three creatures known as Baneguards (see the New Monster section, p.44, for details). These creatures will not take part in any mass combat, but serve to intercept and attack any opposing hero or commander.

Bane will begin the battle with the Claw. The Claw will drive straight toward the Temple of Lathander as long as he is with it, regardless of what else occurs on the field of battle.

The West Fang

Regular/Infantry
AC 5 16 figures (10:1) Human
(Lawful Evil)
HD/fig.: 30 MV 12"
M-sized 0% MR F3
AR 18 ML 12 DL 13
Wpn/Dmg: Battleaxe (1-8, 1-8)
Javelin (1-6, 1-6), 4 each
Flail (2-7, 2-8)
Dagger (1-4, 1-3)

There is one such unit, assembled from Zhentilar troops in Daggerdale and from Zhentarim agents in the Tilverton area. It will attack the Ashaba bridge and seek to seize it, isolate the Tower of Ashaba, and take the road through the dale at least as far as the Temple of Lathander, striking the Shadowdale defenders in the rear if the Claw has not yet broken through them. The Fang is divided into "Triumphs" of 40 men, each led by a 4th level cleric of Bane (CR 12") 1 with full offensive spells. These officers (Battlelords) are: Dorosze, Manlathyr, Nairmel (one of the very few female clerics of Bane; she is determined to rise in the ranks of the priesthood, and will not retreat—her fanaticism is so awesome that her Triumph's Discipline is modified by +3 while she is with them; other Triumphs do not know her and are not so impressed in the heat of battle), and Tuatharn.

The Fang's overall commander is the High Priest of The Black Altar of the Dark Shrine, the 13th level cleric Fzoul Chembryl (who has full offensive spells (of first and second level) and the items given in his entry in the DM'S SOURCEBOOK OF THE REALMS: *bracers of defense* AC2, a *mace +4*, a *morning star +1*, a *ring of free action*, a special high-level *ring of spell storing* containing the spells *heal x2*, *flame strike*, and *blade barrier*; and a *rod of cancellation* in his left boot). Fzoul has used *incense of meditation* before the battle (its effects will last for 22 hours after Game Round 1, but do not make him immune to Magical Chaos). If Fzoul is badly wounded, he will flee rather than risk death.

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The Bloody Doom

Regular/Infantry

AC 6 16 figures (10:1) Orc
(Lawful Evil)

HD/fig.: 10 MV: 9"

M-sized 0% MR F1

AR20 ML10 DL11

Wpn/Dmg: Battleaxe (1-8, 1-8)

Bill (2-8, 1-10)

Dagger (1-4, 1-3)

There is one such unit, assembled from orc allies of the Zhentarim who have been happily pillaging Daggerdale. Led by a gigantic four-armed orc, Ruaugh, who is AC5, 5 HD (40 hp), CR: 18", and attacks for 5-14 or by weapon type +4 x4, this unit will assault the Tower Farm earthworks. Their objective is to fool the defenders into thinking that they are the main attacking force (the broad northern front of Shadowdale is the traditional Zhentarim attack route) and hold the defenders at the wall, not necessarily to break through. If they can have some fun, however, they will. Ruaugh is utterly loyal to Fzoul Chem-bryl; if Fzoul is slain and Ruaugh hears of it, he will flee, taking his force with him. If Ruaugh is slain, his troops will fight on for three Game Rounds in reckless hatred as a mob, and then make a Fighting Withdrawal northwards, leaving the battle entirely.

It can readily be seen that Shadowdale's forces are so puny that Bane has mustered only a little of the Zhentarim field strength to assault the dale. Even so, the defenders must be skillful (and lucky) to withstand the Zhentarim numbers for long.

The attack begins shortly before dawn; Bane commands his lieutenants to press the attack throughout the day and into the night. The Zhentarim will withdraw around midnight (earlier if they are clearly beaten), too fatigued to continue. Bane has made a deal with Myrkul in which Bane gets the souls of all killed in this battle, so he's not all that concerned with heavy casualties—even on his own side.

If the defenders lose, the survivors will try to retreat northwest through the woods (by Shadow Ridge), due east into the woods from Fox Ridge, and south from the Mill Bridge. In all cases, they will head for Mistedale, to rally

there. Mourngrym will not hesitate to abandon the Tower if the rest of the dale seems lost; he has more concern for his people than for land.

The DM should freely modify the forces if the battle moves too quickly to favor one side or the other; however, try to follow the Outline of Battle below. Cormyrean reinforcements or relief from Mistedale or Hillsfar should sweep in after the battle at the temple, to leave Mourngrym still the ruler of Shadowdale. (A Zhentarim army on the move threatens all three areas, in their eyes, not just Shadowdale—if the dale falls, they'll be next.)

Outline of Battle

This Outline of Battle assumes that NPCs are making all the important command decisions on both sides of the battlefield. If the PCs wish to direct the defense of Shadowdale themselves, Mourngrym will remind them that he is in charge. There's still plenty of room for individual heroics, rallying routed troops, and replacing fallen NPC leaders, however—if the PCs do something that radically changes the flow of the battle as outlined below, it is up to the DM to adapt.

Game Round 1: The Bloody Doom attack the Tower Farm earthworks, making a lot of noise. Defenders see the Claw advancing westwards to the attack, near Krag Pond.

Game Round 2: The Claw attacks the eastern defenders.

Game Round 3: The Fang is seen marching east to the Ashaba bridge.

Game Round 4: The Fang charges the bridge. (If PCs are not playing the defenders, Shadowdale's cavalry will ride east to charge the Claw, the defending infantry diving aside to allow them to do so, in a long-practiced tactic. The Harpers will split up, most moving south to attack the Fang from the rear, and a few crossing the river to attack the Bloody Doom from behind.)

Game Round 5: If PCs are not playing the defenders, the archers atop the Old Skull will move down to Tower Farm to take on the Bloody Doom, and the guardian unit in the Tower will issue forth to bolster the Ashaba bridge defenders,

Game Round 6: If the PCs are not directing the defense of Shadowdale, the Harpers will arrive to strike at both the Fang and the Bloody Doom on this round. Mourngrym will pull back any surviving cavalry, and throw the militia into the battle to bolster the eastern defenders.

Game Round 7: If the PCs are not directing the defense, the Shadowdale cavalry will regroup, and begin moving back toward the Ashaba bridge.

Game Round 8: Unless the PCs are directing things, the Tower archers will emerge to attack the Fang ranks behind those engaged with the defenders. The ballistae in the Tower (4 able to attack the bridge, 3 able to strike the meadow and the road south of it if any attackers reach that area) will begin to strike the Fang accurately: striking as if the target is AC10, 2d6 damage, AR 18, Range: S 11", M 22", L 32".

Game Round 9: Unless the PCs are in charge of the defending forces, the Shadowdale cavalry will charge into the attacking Fang, as the defending infantry retreat to either side. The cavalry will try to wheel about toward the lower, so that the archers and ballistae can fire into the gap left by the charge, as the defending infantry advances.

Game Round 10: Unless the PCs are directing the defenders, signal-messages flashed from the Old Skull will direct the Tower Farm defenders to fall back, abandoning the northern dale, to aid the eastern defense. There will continue to be no sign of attackers at the Mill Bridge, and the commander there will commit most of his force to bolstering the defenders near the crossroads.

Game Round 11: Unless the PCs are directing things, the Old Skull and the Tower will be stripped of all but the Tower staff and ballistae crews, to hurl everyone that's left into the battle. If the Claw has reached the crossroads, the untrained Mob of villagers will join the battle.

Game Round 12: The Knights of Myth Drannor appear! They will advance from Mill Bridge as fast as possible, moving individually to wherever most needed in the battle.

Game Round 13: The Mistedale Lancers also join the fray, charging up the road from Mill Bridge. Elminster's scribe, Lhaeo (M 6), is with them as a

Chapter 6: Storm in Shadowdale



guide; they are fresh (having had to walk their mounts on the narrow forest trail).

Event 7: To Battle Gods

Myrkul has been feeding Bane with the souls of all the soldiers slain in the battle. His avatar grows ever more powerful (see the description on p. 41), and he *teleports without error* into the Temple of Lathander, into a huge, cavernous vaulted chamber where Elminster and the PCs wait, Elminster gathering candles, bits of wire, and less describable items, chanting pleasantly all the while. Any magic-using character recognizes that the Old Sage is beginning an impressive but unknown summoning.

In the battle outside, the surviving Claw warriors realize that Bane has fled or been slain, and will begin to flee back east, toward Voonlar.

There is a sudden peal of cold laughter in the temple, and a smell of smoke. Read the following to the players:

A tall, menacing figure stands facing you, where there had been only empty air a moment before. It is jet black from head to foot, with eyes and mouth of deep red, coiling flames.

"So—you defy me still, mortal long-fingers? Then perish! Perish utterly—you are not worthy even to kneel before the might of *Bane!*"

Long-fingered black hands move intricately; Elminster, too, is working magic. From the Black Lord's mouth streak nine spheres of flame, expanding quickly into gigantic fireballs as they come. Elminster throws up his hand; from it spring a handful of silvery spheres of radiance, over two dozen in all. Nine flash up to strike the balls of fire, which halt in mid-air, acquire a silver halo, and then begin to dwindle away. The Old Mage grins at The Dark God.

"It's been awhile, Vile One," he says pleasantly. "Shall we dance?"

Battle is joined. While both Bane and Elminster are subject to the forces of

Magical Chaos just like all other spellcasters in the Realms, the DM is encouraged to "fudge" a few die rolls so that the battle between Bane and Elminster can unfold essentially as described below. The DM should prepare beforehand both Bane's spells, and those of the NPCs (Elminster and Midnight) who stand against him. PCs can also freely cast spells, still subject to the effects of chaos; a careful round-by-round account of who is doing what must be kept by the DM.

Bane will not hesitate to physically battle anyone; he is armed with a mace, long sword and dagger whose touch does their usual damage plus a further 2-5 points of fiery damage. These weapons are non-magical, and will slowly crumble under the stress of Bane's fire magic, each collapsing after a total of seven rounds of actual use.

If the DM has access to UNEARTHED ARCANA, Elminster can employ at least two *volley* spells. He also carries another of his special ninth-level spells (not detailed here) that creates one silver sphere per level of the caster, able to *negate* magical effects, such as the

Chapter 6: Storm in Shadowdale

fireballs of Bane's *meteor swarm*. Three spheres will drift toward each PC and NPC in the chamber, and will move to protect them against Bane's magical attacks. Each will absorb (100%) one harmful magical effect, being itself consumed in the process; *dispel magic* will also destroy a silver sphere. Elminster can mentally shift up to nine spheres per round, unless he foregoes spellcasting in that round (whereupon he can shift up to 20 spheres). A blackboard or similar aid may be helpful to the DM in determining where these spheres are; if figures are being used, represent the spheres with dimes.

The DM should run this climactic magical battle carefully, but keep up a fast pace, both for excitement and to prevent players having overmuch time to plot and plan intricate attacks beyond the speed with which their characters might reasonably be expected to react.

Regardless of what the PCs do, the battle should follow this general outline. Bear in mind that PCs have no idea of the precise powers and abilities of the avatars, or of Elminster; the DM can easily explain away failures or unusual results of PC attacks.

Elminster surprises Bane with the strength and variety of his magic. Eventually The Lord of Tyranny will physically attack Elminster, in frustration. Elminster resists, with the strength and agility of a much younger man—and in the struggle, the conjuration circle Elminster had been preparing is scattered about.

The characters will notice a white glow, growing brighter, at one side of the chamber. It is the Celestial Stairway, its image shining through the wall as if the stones were air.

Suddenly, Mystra stands revealed. No longer the proud regal woman the PCs met earlier, she is now a wild-haired misty being of shifting blue-white star-motes, raw anger, and terrible power.

The room is quiet for a heart-beat, and the sounds of war outside can be heard for a moment. Then, Bane recovers and strikes down Elminster. The Old Mage reels, smoke rising from him, at the onslaught of Art.

Mystra screams in anger, and hurls herself upon Elminster, her body glowing as she heals or at least shifts energy

to him in some manner. Bane attacks them both, and Mystra, with a snarl of triumph, works some magic that binds him to them, as a fish is hooked by an angler. She pulls The Black Lord, raging and struggling helplessly, toward her. He unleashes his greatest Art yet, in an awesome blast that envelops Mystra and Elminster—but he cannot break free, and Mystra smiles as all of Bane's power is by her Art flung back at him. Her smile is the last thing the PCs see before a great explosion occurs.

The PCs should be stunned or knocked senseless by the blast. When the smoke clears, the Celestial Stairway is gone, the wall of the Temple closest to it and much of the roof have been blasted to nothingness—and Bane, Elminster, and Mystra are nowhere to be seen. Blood spatters much of the fallen stones, now exposed to the sky above the shattered temple.

Suddenly there are grim-faced warriors all around you, clambering through the dust and smoke with drawn swords. You see the silver moon-and-harp badge of the Harpers gleaming on more than one breast, as swords point your way.

A grim woman in tattered leather armor, tears gleaming on her cheeks and a bloody blade in her hand, strides toward you. "I am Sharantyr," she says in a raw, tired voice. "Lay down your weapons—*now*—or perish. You will stand trial on the morrow for the murder of Elminster, Sage of Shadowdale."

the Temple, unless the PCs can prove their innocence by some means. This is unlikely, though, as magic is too unstable to be trusted as evidence, and the facts seem to show irrefutably that the PCs killed the sage of Shadowdale.

The Harpers, supported by Mourngrim (who must above all respect law and order in the dale, or weaken the stability of his own rule), will prevail. The PCs who were in the temple will face a grim and unmerciful trial—unless they can escape, perhaps with the help of other PCs.

If a happy ending is desired, the DM must be creative. Perhaps the avatar of Lathander could show up at the trial to give evidence (Mourngrim reveres this deity, remember), or The Simbul (Elminster's lover) may appear, and demand that the PCs serve her in a quest or other dangerous task.

The direction and character of your own campaign must be considered in determining what happens next. If you'd like to see the rest of this trilogy before deciding, have the PCs escape from the Realms temporarily by *gate* or kindly aid, to wander in other worlds or planes for a time. They can be returned to the Realms right where (and perhaps when) they left if a later decision is made to follow on with the trilogy.

Whatever happens, your players can be proud even to have survived their brush with the gods! If they come out of Shadowdale looking good, and the Time of Troubles leaves survivors in Cormyr and the Dales to attest, the bards of the Dragonreach may well sing of their deeds, in years to come!

Ending The Adventure

The fate of the PCs depends upon their actions at this point, and whether or not the DM continues on to the second module in the trilogy, *Tantras*.

The Harpers are furious. Elminster is one of their oldest, dearest friends, and a valued, even revered ally. They will want to see his slayers die—but they will insist on a trial, as the "right thing" to do.

The folk of Shadowdale, including the Knights of Myth Drannor, will simply want to slaughter any PCs who were in

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

This section details four major non-player characters who could accompany the party, rounding it out to the six to eight characters recommended for this adventure.

Of the four NPCs listed, only Midnight is absolutely essential to the adventure-somehow, she *must* come along. The other three characters are featured in *Shadowdale*, the first novel of the Avatar Trilogy that this module accompanies.

For more detail on all four of these NPCs, we also recommend the new *Hall of Heroes* supplement for the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game system.

"MIDNIGHT" ARIEL MANX

Human Magic-User, Level 7

Str 6
Int 16
Wis 10
Dex 11
Con 10
Cha 17
HP 19

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Worships: Mystra, Goddess of Magic

Armor Class: 10

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

Midnight is a thin woman in her late 20s, with a slim but cat-like body. She has jet black hair and deep ebon or scarlet (depending on her mood) eyes, a sharp contrast to her pale ivory skin.

Her hair reaches down to her waist, but Midnight usually keeps it in braids.

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

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

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

KELEMVOR LYONSBANE

Human Fighter, Level 5

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

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Worships: Torm, Lord of Loyalty

Armor Class: 4

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

Kelemvor is a fierce fighter whose natural fighting skills are more than a match for most foes. He does not shy away from attacking foes who outnumber him tenfold. He is a were-panther, and his lycanthropic abilities, such as immunity to normal weapons, apparently extend in a weakened form to his human shape. While he takes damage from normal weapons, he *regenerates* from their effects at the rate of 2 points per round.

Due to a twisted permutation in the "family curse," Kelemvor must be paid to perform any deed not in his own best interest. (The original lycanthrope

could not take money for any such altruism.) Otherwise, he becomes a panther until he draws blood.

Since Kelemvor cannot control his transformation into a panther, his lycanthropy rarely works to his advantage. In battle, however, Kelemvor's panther form is terrifyingly vicious. The werepanther attacks as a 5 Hit Die monster, striking with the claws on its two front paws for 1d4 each, and biting for 1d8 damage. Moreover, the werepanther is considered to have 18/94 Strength, for the purposes of hitting and damage bonuses (+2, +5).

The werepanther can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons of at least +1 bonus. It possesses keen night vision that enables it to see in near-lightless conditions, acute hearing, and a precise sense of smell.

In appearance, Kelemvor is a muscular and ruggedly attractive man in his early 30s with long black hair.

Kelemvor is a mercenary who has grown restless and come to Arabel in search of something—what, he's not sure, but something more than senseless killing. Born into a military family, Kelemvor grew to hate his father, and ultimately slew Kendrel Lyonsbane when he first became a werepanther in a moment of extreme rage.

CYRIC

Human Fighter/Thief: Character with Two Classes: 3rd-level Fighter, formerly 5th-level Thief

Str 17 (+1 to hit, +1 on damage)

Int 11
Wis 10
Dex 15
Con 15
Cha 15
HP 14

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Worships: Mask, Tempus (not devout in either faith)

Armor Class: 1(9) Equipment: Plate mail, small shield, long sword, short sword, dagger, handaxe, coil of 100' of black, waxed rope, grapnel, 1 set of thieves' picks & tools hidden in a hollowed-out wooden crutch, 16 empty canvas sacks with leather thong drawstrings, 3 flasks of oil, 6 iron spikes, mallet, dark-lantern, 12,000 gp in gems.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



Adon

Born in the back alleys of Zhentil Keep, Cyric never knew the names of his parents (although he suspects his father was someone of influence in the Zhentarim). One morn his mother was found in the street with her throat slit, his father nowhere to be found, so Cyric, still a babe, was sold to slavers.

He ended up with a wealthy family in Sembia, but always felt different. Cyric was always curious about far-off lands and customs. After causing his Sembian parents a great deal of grief, he ran

His love of traveling took him onward in the end. He stole to support himself as he went, journeying about the Dragonreach and the ports of the Inner Sea. He returned to Zhentil Keep to research his family. He may have found his father, but that man was killed before Cyric had a chance to learn more about him. It was then that Cyric decided he must abandon his life of thievery. He became a fighter and worked for causes he thought were just. He now works as a guard in Arabel, friends with Adon and Kelemvor, desperately afraid that someday his past might resurface.



Cyric

ways of the world. On the night of his 15th birthday, Adon had a sudden revelation. He revealed to his parents his incredible belief that Sune Firehair would raise him to divine power to be her consort upon his attaining manhood. On the spot, he primly resolved to become a cleric.

Adon sees himself as a crusader, fighting injustice and indecency wherever he goes. He always has a cause, and reveres women to the point of quickly exasperating most of those he meets.

ADON

Human Cleric, 5th Level

Str 11

Int 9

Wis 15

Dex 12

Con 12

Cha 13

HP 25

Alignment: Neutral Good

Worships: Sune Firehair

Armor Class: 2

Equipment: Plate mail, large shield, mace, war hammer, 2 vials of holy water, 3 flasks of oil, a pack containing a wooden rack in which are six glass vials (all *potions of healing*), and a scroll containing the prayers (spells) *command*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *protection from evil* and *purify food & drink*, and a notebook of mediocre love poems.

An only child, Adon was born to wealthy and beautiful parents, Abrasax and Phylicia, both devout worshippers of Sune. Vain but plain, Adon lacked ambition—but enjoyed idle luxury all too much. Seen as weak-willed and overly concerned for his appearance, but too little concerned with spending money wisely, Adon did little in his youth.

His father, increasingly angered, tried to educate his son in the ways of the world with the company of women, and travels to far-off cities to learn the



Midnight

away, and nearly starved in the wilderness. Forced to steal to survive, Cyric reached a city and eventually fell into the hands of its Thieves Guild, where he stayed for four winters.



Kelemvor

Adon would like everyone in the Realms to care more for others, and has come to Arabel to see if he can begin to make a difference in this cruel, confusing world.

AVATARS OF THE GODS

This section details a few of the much-weakened avatars of the gods cast down to Faerun in this adventure. They are far less powerful than "usual" avatars assumed by divine beings, and are the result of possessing human bodies. These *are* the gods: No god has multiple avatars or a simultaneous existence on other planes during the time covered by this series of modules.

The DM can freely modify the minor powers of avatars used in play to explain spectacular magical effects, physical feats, powers, and so on. Magic may have (temporarily, at least) ceased to be reliable, but most deities are still the equivalent of at least a 12th level wizard, able to unleash fell magic.

Avatars can be slain, but unless *Energy Drain*, *Wish* spells, or similar magics are employed to drain the avatars of their divine energy, magical safeguards prepared beforehand by most deities enable them to survive a "death" that destroys their physical form. On the other hand, the scattering of their energies may prevent them taking another avatar for at least 1-6 weeks, or longer if the dispersal were particularly efficient.

The DM should note that no *truename*, *glyph*, or symbol magics have any effect on avatars (except to attract their attention). All avatars can hear any of their names spoken anywhere in Faerun, and the next nine words spoken by the speaker, along with the speaker's voice-likeness, distance, and direction (they usually ignore the ceaseless babble this creates). All sorts of weapons can affect these weakened avatars.

For space reasons, only avatars likely to be directly involved in combat in this adventure are included here. Destroying an avatar may or may not destroy the being; some deities will survive apparent death in avatar form, existing as entities akin to ghosts. Such ghost-like "anima" forms cannot be turned, and can become *invisible* at will. They can work magic, have a ghost's attacks, and have half the lessened avatar's hit points.

It is recommended that a DM use direct appearances in play by avatars sparingly; it is hard to excite or awe players whose characters are battling the thirteenth or fourteenth avatar of the day.

Abbreviations

AL: Alignment. Indicates the deity's behavior. A second listing in parentheses after the alignment indicates a deity's tendency to stray from the primary alignment.

Symbol: The sign by which the deity is known; an avatar may or may not choose to display it.

HD: Hit Dice. The number of hit dice the avatar has.

THAC0: Acronym for "To Hit Armor Class 0": the score needed on a 20-sided die to hit an opponent who has an Armor Class of 0. The score needed to hit other Armor Classes is easily calculated from this number. Note that THAC0 does not take into account "to hit" adjustments due to strength, skills, or magic.

SpA: Spell Ability. The class and level at which the avatar casts spells (M = mage; CL = cleric).

AC: Armor Class. This is the avatars' frontal armor class, taking into account dexterity, magical protections, and innate durability. The AC may be worse if the avatar is attacked from behind or from the flank.

hp: The avatar's hit points (always less than those of the deity at full powers).

MR: Magic Resistance. The chance of a spell failing when used against the avatar. In this adventure, this factor should be applied *in addition to* Magical Chaos. The deity's normal MR is usually about twice as high as that of its weakened avatar.

SZ: Size. An avatar can cause its possessed body to grow (or shrink) by 50% of its normal size.

The LEGENDS & LORE tome gives details of the increased powers and abilities conferred by ability scores above 18. Here we note only that high Intelligence confers immunity to believing illusion/phantasm spells, as follows: 19 INT results in automatic disbelief of 1st level spells; 20 INT results in disbelief of 1st and 2nd level spells, and so on.

High Wisdom also confers the ability to throw off the effects of certain charm-like magics and magical effects as follows:

19 WIS: *cause fear, charm person, command, friends, hypnosis*

20 WIS: *forget, hold person, ray of enfeeblement, scare*

21 WIS: *beguiling, domination, fear*

22 WIS: *charm monster, confusion, emotion, fumble, suggestion, telepathic projection*

23 WIS: *chaos, feeblemind, hold monster, magic jar, mass domination, quest*

24 WIS: *geas, mass suggestion, rulership*

Note that this list assumes immunity to lesser versions of similar spells.

The avatars likely to be faced by the PCs are detailed below.

BANE (Greater Power)

AL: LE; **Symbol:** A black human hand, open but with thumb and fingers aligned together, sometimes on a red field or surrounded by a nimbus of red flames.

Bane, The Black Lord, is a thoroughly evil and malicious being, who revels in strife and tyranny. His actions were a major cause of the Fall (although he does not realize that The One Who Is Hidden knows the full extent of his deeds), and he sees the Fall as a rare opportunity to enforce his will upon humans and gods alike, slaying those he can and enslaving or duping the rest.

Bane appears as a handsome, black-haired man of oily looks and a derisive, even cruel manner. He can change his appearance at will to any other human form, but will always favor black garments, hair or adornment. When angry, his eyes flicker as red as fire. He is familiar with the Realms because of his love of meddling with affairs there, and will use this knowledge to full advantage as he seeks a military Ascension to seize power from The One Who Is Hidden. After all, who better than Bane should rule all? And who stands to stop him?

HD 19; THAC0 10; SpA W 21, CL 18; MV 16"; AC -3; hp 96; #AT 1; Dmg (note Str bonus to be added) 1d6 + 2-12 tissue burn at any direct flesh-to-flesh contact; MR 40%; SZ M; Str 17 (+1, +1), Int 24, Wis 21, Dex 17, Con 19, Cha 16, regenerates 2 hp/round.

AVATARS OF THE GODS

MYSTRA (Greater Power)

AL: LN (CN); Symbol: A blue-white star, or a ring of nine such stars.

The Mistress of Magic presently appears to the PCs as a slim, young woman with blonde hair and dark eyes. Willful and powerful, she is able to see all dweomers and spell effects and instantly know them for what they are. By force of will she can turn spells and spell-like effects (including those discharged by items and artifacts) that occur within 9", functioning as a *ring of spell turning*.

Mystra can *shape change* at will, and can unleash any one defensive spell per round and any one offensive spell per round (unless she uses *wish*, *time stop*, *gate*, or *alter reality*, which cannot be thrown in combination with another spell in one round). Mystra can cast

spells of all classes, but behaves as a wizard in all cases of spells duplicated from class to class. She casts all spells for maximum effect, so that her *fireball* would cause 240 points of damage, rather than a random roll of 40d6, but her target would still get a saving throw for half damage. Mystra is still subject to Magical Chaos.

Unbeknownst to the Goddess of Magic, Ao long ago took some of her power and divided it up between other entities—the demigod Azuth and several humans (including Elminster, The Simbul, and Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun). This both kept Mystra from becoming too powerful, and prevented any other being from gaining too much power from controlling her. Ao's actions incidentally granted the humans immortality.

Mystra can impart spell knowledge to

other beings by touch, and controls the spread and advancement of the Art in the Realms by what success she grants to the researches of mortals.

The importance of her portfolio has made her a popular target for the attacks and schemes of many powerful beings over the ages. Mystra has grown tired and bitter; only her pride, and the kindnesses of those who do not worship or aid her for magical gain, keeps her going. Perhaps it is time for a new Mistress of Magic to rise, allowing Mystra to slumber, her essence scattered throughout many beings and items of the Realms, in quiet support of a new goddess of the Art.

HD 16; THAC0 11; SpA W 40, CL 22; MV 14"; AC - 7; hp 99; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; MR 77% (note *spell turning* power); SZ M; Str 14; Int 25; Wis 24, Dex 19, Con 22; Cha 17, regenerates 2 hp/round.

NEW MAGIC

Many new or unique spells, powers, and items are mentioned in this adventure. Details of three items that may pass into the possession of PCs are given here.

Whip of Frost, Fire, and Fear:

ep value: 10,000 gp value: 50,000

This wand is a powerful rechargeable item favored by evil clerics in the Realms. Nine four-foot-long flexible electrom tentacles are attached to a "rod"-size steel shaft. Whenever grasped and unsheathed, it is active: Any strikes on an opponent will drain it of charges and confer damage.

Roll 1d10 to determine strike effects, if a successful hit occurs. On a result of 1,4, or 7, the target suffers (no save) a *frost* result, or "Lash of Cold," of 3d6 damage. On a result of 2,5, or 8, *fire* burns the target (no save) for 3d6 damage. On a roll of 3, 6, or 9, *the victim* suffers *fear* as a *wand of fear* (save negates). On a roll of 0, two tentacles (determine types randomly) strike a single target; both deal their usual damage.

Blink Ring

ep value: 7,000 gp value: 25,000

This normal-appearing brass ring has four functions, each usable once within any turn. It can cause the wearer to *blink* (as the 3rd level magic-user spell), become *invisible* (as the wizard *invisibility* spell), or create *mirror images* of the wearer (as the 2nd level spell, creating 1 or 2 images, as the wearer desires). It can also function as a *cloak of displacement*, but this function will end if any other ring powers are activated, and cannot be called into being again until a full turn has elapsed.

Blink ring powers can only be newly activated every other round. There must be at least one round of inactivity between ceasing use of one power and activating such a ring again.

Smokespear

ep value: 4,000 gp value: 20,000

This rare weapon appears as a brass or copper-plated spear, entirely of metal. It may be ornately worked, and

is most often encountered as ceremonial regalia. It does normal weapon damage, and when grasped and a command word spoken, its tip can produce a 3" radius, globular cloud of smoke (as in the *smoke* power of a *pyrotechnics* spell), lasting for 2-5 rounds. This power can be used as often as desired; it will continue regardless of whether the spear is released by its wielder or not, and will move with the weapon.

Once per turn, the butt end of a *smokespear* can, upon command, cause *sleep* in any one creature touched. Creatures immune to a *sleep* spell are immune to this effect; all other creatures receive a saving throw vs. spell to avoid *sleep*. A successful attack roll is required to touch and cause a creature to *sleep*.

Once in every seven-turn period, a *smokespear*, while grasped and ordered, can allow one being of M size or smaller to *fly*. Such flight is Maneuverability Class A, and must be continuous, lasting up to a maximum of 12 rounds.



The remaining pages of this module contain five new monsters from the Forgotten Realms. They are presented in a new format, that used for the *Monstrous Compendium* series for 2nd Edition ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules. A bit of explanation will help DMs get the most use from these new entries.

Following the name of the monster, there are two sets of statistical data. The first set describes the social and behavioral characteristics of the creature. The second deals with combat attributes. Each heading is followed by either an entry or the word "Nil" (in those cases where no information is applicable). After these listings come the nitty-gritty descriptive paragraphs on appearance, combat approaches, social structure, and ecology.

Statistics unfamiliar to users of the *Monster Manuals* and the FIEND FOLIO® tome include these, with examples or explanations:

- * Climate/Terrain: Tropical, temperate, arctic, swamp, forest, plains, mountains, lake, river, subterranean
- * Organization: Solitary, tribal, pack, herd, school
- * Active Cycle: Day, night, dusk, dawn, any
- * Diet: Carnivore, herbivore, omnivore, scavenger
- * Morale: This is a base rating of 2-20, suitable for BATTLESYSTEM™ rules use. If a morale check is required, an individual or group must roll this number or less to remain. Morale entries use both words and numbers, e.g. "Steady (11-12)".

In the descriptive paragraphs, DMs (and players, with DM discretion) can find useful information organized in the previously mentioned fashion. Here, a short explanation of that organization:

First comes a short, one- or two-sentence paragraph describing the monster.

Then follows a more detailed paragraph concerning the appearance, color, dress (if any), preferred weapons, scent, and so on.

Next come combat abilities, special offensive and defensive tactics. This may be several paragraphs, depending on the monster.

Fourth are society and habitat, including dwelling place, family units, daily habits, territoriality, treasure types, individual or group goals, and behavioral quirks.

The final paragraph(s) explains the monster's place in the overall ecosystem, including useful products or byproducts, pelts, secretions, magical components, and so on.

Once the *Monstrous Compendium* is a part of your game library, you may photocopy these pages and insert them in the appropriate places in your binder. These monsters can be made a part of the integrated whole, at your fingertips whenever you want to use them.

Baneguard



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any (guardian)
FREQUENCY: Rare
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: None
INTELLIGENCE: Average (8-10)
TREASURE: V (Magical weapons possible)
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

NO. APPEARING: 1-10
ARMOR CLASS: 7
MOVEMENT: 12"
HIT DICE: 4 + 4
THAC0: 15
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 + special
DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon or 1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Magic missile*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Blink*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: As skeleton
SIZE: M
MORALE: Steady (11-12)
LEVEL/XP VALUE: 975

Baneguards are skeletons, usually human, animated by the power of Bane.

Usually found as guardians, these sinister undead are identical in appearance to normal skeletons, but have two additional deadly powers (see Combat, below). Some baneguards appear to be wearing black, shadowy armor, semi-transparent such that their bones show through, and red flames burn in their eyesockets. These baneguards are AC6, and can *see invisible objects and creatures*.

Combat: All baneguards are silent but intelligent, wholly evil servants of the Black Lord, capable of independent, reasoning, 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 launch one *magic missile* spell every three rounds. Two missiles causing 2-5 points of damage 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 7" away.

Baneguards can use all normal weapons, doing normal weapon damage rather than a straight 1d6, and can employ all magical items that do not require verbal commands, living flesh or organs (e.g. ointments and potions) and the like. Baneguards suffer damage from sharp weapons, fire, spells, and holy water as normal skeletons do. They may break off combat if their orders permit.

Habitat/Society: As baneguards are created, they have no societal organization. They go where commanded, and do as commanded.

Ecology: Baneguards eat nothing. They are guardian creatures, and are found wherever they have been placed by their creators.

Crawling Claws



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any (guardian)

FREQUENCY: Rare

ORGANIZATION: Solitary or group

ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any

DIET: None

INTELLIGENCE: Non-(0)

TREASURE: All (guardians)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1-20

ARMOR CLASS: 7

MOVEMENT: 10"

HIT DICE: 1-1

THAC0: 20

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4 blow, 1-6 grip (grip on unarmored target only)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Magical weapons have normal weapon effects

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Immune to all mind-related and *polymorph* spells

SIZE: T (human hand)

MORALE: Average (10)

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 65

Crawling claws are severed hands or claws of Prime Material plane creatures, animated by magic to serve as guardian monsters.

They move by scuttling on their fingertips, and can leap up to 1½" to strike or clutch. They are said to be the invention of the necromancer Nulathoe. To create one, first the spell Nulathoe's ninemen (detailed in the *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms*) is cast upon the severed hand, to preserve it against decay and destruction, and to strengthen its joints, even if they are skeletal. Within four turns an *animate dead* spell must also be cast on the hand, and a final incantation spoken. This incantation determines whether a claw is programmed or controlled directly, a decision that cannot be reversed. For the results of this decision, see Combat, below.

Combat: The programming of a claw is the order, in 24 words or fewer, that states what action the claw is to take under specified conditions, in the same way a *magic mouth* spell is set to activate. For example, a claw can be made to attack only when "a bearded man in black and silver approaches the altar."

Directly controlled claws do nothing unless directed to do so by concentrated mental will of their controller, who must be identified in the final incantation. Such ongoing concentration prevents spellcasting on the part of the controller, and cannot be maintained for more than three consecutive turns without a 1-turn rest. Maximum range of control is 1" + ½" per level of the controller. The controller must be a spellcaster of some sort, and may maintain control if injured but still conscious. Claws will continue to enact their last command if their controller withdraws control or is slain.

Claws may be commanded to seek specific targets (eyes, jewelry, throat, etc.) and can drag small objects about. Groups of claws can move spears, swords, and even larger objects, but cannot lift or wield them. Claws cannot be turned by clerics, but a *resurrection* spell renders them immobile for 1 turn per level of the caster. *Death* and *raise dead* spells do not affect claws. Edged weapons do them half damage, and magical weapons do only the damage of a non-magical equivalent. Magical *cold* makes claws brittle; 1 point is added to each die of damage they suffer.

Habitat/Society: Crawling claws have neither habitat nor society.

Ecology: Crawling claws eat nothing, and have no ecological niche to fill.

Curst



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Prefer subterranean

FREQUENCY: Uncommon

ORGANIZATION: Solitary

ACTIVITY CYCLE: Prefer night

DIET: None

INTELLIGENCE: See below

TREASURE: All possible, usually nil

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 2-11 (1d10 + 1)

ARMOR CLASS: 7 (or as clad)

MOVEMENT: 12"

HIT DICE: 1-10 + (as prior to curse)

THAC0: as prior to curse

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: See below

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 85%

SIZE: M (rarely, L or S)

MORALE: Average (8-10)

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 120-2,000, depending on pre-cursed form

Curst are unfortunate humans, trapped under a curse that will not let them die.

They favor leather armor, cloaks and boots. Their garb is always dark in color. Rot grubs infect 15% of all curst, which when so afflicted have 1-6 fewer hit points but unimpaired fighting abilities (see Combat, below, for details). Note that the grubs will be seeking a better meal.

Curst are created by touching a victim while casting a *bestow curse* spell, and within four rounds adding a properly-worded *wish* spell—a rare process. When becoming curst, a victim's alignment becomes Chaotic Neutral. His skin grows very white, and his eyes glitter darkly; he develops 90' infravision, and comes to prefer darkness to light. Curst tend toward silence, and do not age.

Combat: Curst retain any ability bonuses and non-magical skills (e.g. thieving abilities and non-weapon proficiencies) possessed in normal life. They become immune to mind-related spells such as *charm*, *ESP*, *hold*, and *sleep*. Curst are unaffected by cold- and fire-based attacks of all sorts, and by life-energy draining attacks.

Curst can be struck by any weapon. Holy water does them no damage. They use all weapons, and will seize weapons better than their own when available. If unarmed, curst can kick, bite, and claw savagely for 1-4 points of damage per round.

When reduced to zero hit points, curst are not slain. They fall to the ground, paralyzed, and lie there until whole again. Curst regenerate 1 hit point per day, regrowing lost limbs and organs. They can be healed by *cure* magics.

Habitat/Society: Curst are in no way controlled by their creator, and seldom serve that being except to attain the mercy of death by means of a *remove curse*. Often, coming to know their cruel doom, curst will attack their creator, hoping he will destroy them in self-defense. In rare cases they cooperate with unfamiliar beings to this end. Once destroyed, curst cannot be resurrected or animated to become undead. Their bodies crumble rapidly into dust, which may be of value to wizards or alchemists.

In the process of becoming curst, humans lose any magical abilities, their sense of smell, and usually their minds (if not their cunning). Curst retain their original intelligence only 11% of the time. There is a 5% chance every turn (non-cumulative) that a curst will act irrationally—e.g. breaking off a fight to caper, sing, draw with a finger on a nearby wall, or merely stare at something.

Ecology: Curst eat nothing and have no ecological niche to fill.

Hakeashar



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Alternate Prime Material plane
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: 3"
HIT DICE: 9
THACO: 12
NO. OF ATTACKS: 0
DAMAGE/ATTACK: Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Absorb magic
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below
SIZE: L (12-foot-diameter sphere)
MORALE: Elite (16)
LEVEL/XP VALUE: 2,000

A hakeashar appears as a red misty sphere.

Relatives of the nishruu, these weird, thankfully rare creatures are believed to come from an alternate Prime Material plane. Within the red mist comprising the body of a hakeashar are hundreds of grasping hands, probing eyes, and gaping, hungry mouths.

Combat: Hakeashar have no attacks. Fire and physical attacks affect them normally; hits are automatic if the attacker is enveloped by a hakeashar. Cold does half damage; magical fire and cold cannot form within a hakeashar, and do it no damage. If magical fire or cold contact one from outside its body area, they will be absorbed harmlessly after dealing the hakeashar one round of damage.

Hakeashar move fearlessly and relentlessly toward sources of magic, taking full damage from physical attacks. Mind-control spells and illusions have no effect on them.

Spells cast at a hakeashar are absorbed by it, having no effect except to give the creature hit points of life energy equal to the damage the spell normally does. A non-damaging spell gives a hakeashar extra hit points equal to its spell level.

Chargeable magical items are drained of 1-4 charges on contact with a hakeashar. If contact is continued, the 1d4 drain occurs at the end of every second round.

Artifacts become non-operational for 1 round after any contact with a hakeashar ceases, and at all times while in contact with a hakeashar. Non-chargeable magical items have their powers negated for 1-4 rounds after contact. If a potion or scroll is used while in contact with a hakeashar, it will not take effect until 1-4 rounds after the contact is broken.

Spellcasters of all classes who are enveloped by a hakeashar lose one memorized spell, determined randomly, at first contact and one per round of contact thereafter. Each time a loss occurs, the spellcaster must save vs. breath weapon or be *feble-minded*.

When a hakeashar is slain, its body dissipates, losing luminosity and hue, seeming to sink to the ground and drift away. Any magic item within its body area when it is slain, or any magical weapon slaying it, even if no longer in contact with the body, receives a magical bonus of 1d6 additional charges, or a second use in the case of a one-shot item like a scroll or an arrow. Potions, memorized spells, artifacts, and items that do not have charges are not augmented.

Habitat/Society: Hakeashar are not native to this Prime Material plane. They are solitary creatures.

A hakeashar has the ability to give 20% of the number of spells or charges absorbed to a person, as it chooses. This is done very unwillingly, usually in exchange for being brought to this Prime Material plane.

Ecology: Hakeashar feed on magic. Their bodies pulse and glow as they drift about. They can seep through finger-width cracks, always moving toward the greatest concentration of magic within 60".

Netherbird



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Crag, moors
FREQUENCY: Rare
ORGANIZATION: Flock
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Day
DIET: Flesh and carrion
INTELLIGENCE: Low (5-7)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

NO. APPEARING: 3-30 (3d10)
ARMOR CLASS: 8
MOVEMENT: 4"/15"
HIT DICE: 2
THAC0: 16
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil
SIZE: S to M
MORALE: Average (8-10)
LEVEL/XP VALUE: 35

These black, dusty-feathered birds have grotesquely large talons and razor-sharp beaks.

Combat: Netherbirds attack with talons and beak. When attacking, they scream and hiss at their prey.
Netherbirds are Maneuverability Class D in the air.

Habitat/Society: Netherbirds may have come from Avernus originally, and now serve the power Bane. They are always found in flocks, and can be trained as message-carriers. They lair in desolate areas of crags and high, rolling moorland. Their eggs are black and leathery, and they hatch untended.

Ecology: These birds eat all manner of flesh, living or dead, and usually stink of blood and decay.

MAGICAL CHAOS TABLE

Employ the table below whenever spells are cast or magic items and artifacts are activated in the Realms, at any point after the storm (see Chapter 1 of the adventure).

The DM should decide on a case-by-case basis whether the spells of avatars, Elminster, and Midnight are affected (do whatever best suits play as it unfolds, but don't reveal this to the players).

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

Percentile Score	Result
01-19	Spell rebounds on caster, with full effects (if impossible due to nature of spell, re-roll).
20-23	Pit opens instantly beneath the caster (depth varies at DM's option); there is no other spell effect.
24-27	Target of spell (or caster, if spell has no target) is instantly pelted with fiery red flower blossoms that materialize and vanish again 1 round later. Blossoms do no damage, but prohibit accurate aiming of wands or missile weapons, and prevent reading of books, scrolls, inscriptions, and the like.
28-31	Spell affects random creature or area (DM's option) rather than the intended target area.
32-35	Spell functions normally, but any material components are not consumed, and spell knowledge is retained by the caster or the charge is retained by the item.
36-39	Spell functions normally, but magical energy is released around the caster, healing any injuries of any beings within 1" of the caster (includes <i>fatigue</i> , <i>feble-mindedness</i> , etc.).
40-43	Total darkness and silence occur in a 3" radius about the caster, and last 2-8 rounds.
44-47	<i>Reverse gravity</i> (cf. spell) effect occurs in a 3' sphere about the caster, lasting 1 round; caster included in the effect.
48-51	<i>Shimmering colors</i> dance and play in a nimbus around the caster, blinding caster and all creatures within 2" for 1-4 rounds.
52-59	Nothing happens; no spell effect occurs.
60-71	Nothing occurs; no spell effect, but spell knowledge or charge is not lost.
72-98	Spell functions normally.
99-00 +	Spell functions with maximum possible effects, full damage, maximum duration.

Special Effects SubTable

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

- 01: Earth tremor underfoot (minor, with rolling echoes).
- 02: Sun dims and then brightens again or a star falls.
- 03: Violent roaring or screaming sound.
- 04: Intense wave of heat (no damage) felt in the vicinity.
- 05: Non-harmful, oily green slime forms on everything within 12".
- 06: Maniacal, echoing laughter is heard. Flowers fall from the sky.
- 07: Old, brittle bones (3-60) rain down for 2 rounds, in a 2" radius.
- 08: Caster and everything within 6" lose all hair; plants grow hair.
- 09: Harmless yellow-green and purple smoke rises from the ground.
- 10: Boulders rise, swirling in mid-air like leaves (2-24 impact damage).
- 11: Nearby tree is uprooted (indoors, rock or furniture moves by itself).
- 12: Whispering voice is heard, murmuring a random character's name—and—a prediction about that character's future (the DM can make it as specific as he wants; given the PCs' circumstances, portents of danger and doom would probably not be too far off . . .)

PHYSICAL CHAOS TABLE

The effects described on this table are suggestions only; the DM should feel free to make up alternatives and substitute freely. Bear in mind, however, that play will have to go on in the “new” environment afterwards; consider the impact of widespread or long-lasting changes to the landscape beforehand. Roll percentile dice, and consult the table below; the frequency with which the DM consults the table is a matter of choice (generally, the presence of avatars or large-scale magical activity increases chaos, and the presence of large populations or mountains decreases chaos). The use of this table should make travel strange, exciting, and occasionally dangerous, not an exhausting, neverending obstacle course.

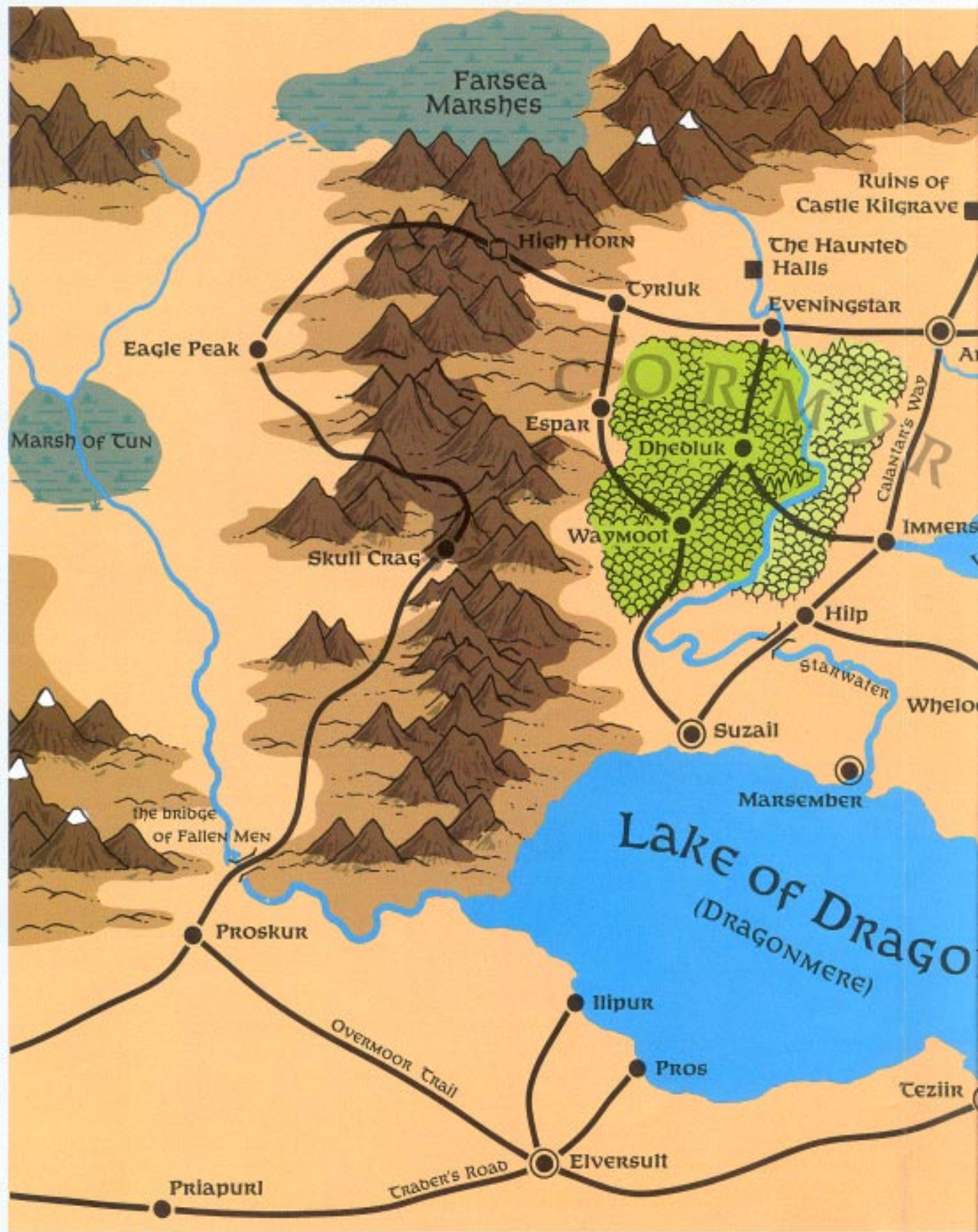
Percentile

Score	Result
01-10	Natural fireworks effect (as in the <i>pyrotechnics</i> spell) occurs. The air is filled with a ringing, chiming sound that dies away (with the fireworks) after 1-4 rounds.
11-24	Undergrowth sprouts into sudden, frenzied life (if no foliage underfoot, it will grow, even from bare rock or atop water), equal to an <i>entangle</i> spell, which lasts 7 rounds in a 6" diameter area (save equals slowed, not held; held creatures can fight and cast spells, but not change location). Musk-like plant scents and floral bouquets will waft (harmlessly) in the air.
25-30	Insects appear with a menacing buzzing sound, a swarm equal in effects to an <i>insect plague</i> , (priest spell), lasting for 1-4 turns.
31-44	The air turns violet and luminous (lasting 1-12 rounds). During this time, all within the area (a 40" diameter sphere extending into any buildings, the ground beneath, etc.) are slowed, affected by <i>feather fall</i> and <i>neutralize poison</i> , and are <i>cured</i> of 1-4 points of damage if injured. All invisible creatures and objects, and all dweomers (but not alignment auras) can be clearly seen in the violet field.
45-52	There is a menacing crackle, and a strong smell of ozone. Lightning bolts (damage 1d6 through 4d6; determine randomly) form spontaneously from rocks or exposed wood of any sort, leaping in a straight line to the nearest bit of rock or exposed wood (rock to rock or wood to wood, never one to the other). Save vs. Breath Weapon to avoid if possible (contact with any part of a bolt's destination (such as climbing elsewhere on the same cliff) makes a saving throw impossible). Bolts and discharges will veer away from and avoid large concentrations of pure metal; fully armored characters will automatically make their saving throws, if allowed any.
53-62	Lashing rain begins, though the air grows warm. This precipitation lasts 1-10 rounds, affects a small (8" diameter cylinder from ground to upper air) area, and within it, all creatures can understand the speech of all other creatures, as if a <i>tongues</i> spell were in operation.
63-70	All small, light (roughly 10 lbs) objects within a 1" radius that are not held or secured will <i>animate</i> (as the priestly spell <i>animate object</i>). They will fly about aimlessly; make Dexterity Checks each round to avoid being hit. Any hit does 1-2 points of damage. Any being concentrating on a moving object for at least 1 round will discover that he can influence its course, perhaps employing it as a weapon. A maximum of 1 object at a time can be so controlled by a being; if two beings try to control the same object, the creature with the higher Intelligence will ultimately prevail. The DM must adjudicate the ongoing results of such wrestling contests. This effect will last for 1-2 turns.
71-88	The ground begins to rise and fall as if it were waves on the open sea. Charging or springing accurately becomes impossible, as does riding other creatures. Writing and spellcasting takes twice as long (but are not ruined). There is a 1 in 6 chance each round that this condition exists that a rift will open in the earth and swallow a rock, tree, or being up, spitting them out unharmed (unreachable by magic or physical means during their entombment) 2-5 rounds later. There is also a 2 in 6 chance that a <i>shooting star</i> (as in the missile released by a <i>ring of shooting stars</i>) will appear overhead, and burst. All creatures must save versus Spell to avoid suffering damage. These conditions last for 1-3 turns, moving with any traveling creatures.
89-96	All creatures within a 9" radius area, from earthworms to dragons, are enshrouded in a <i>faerie fire</i> radiance for 1-6 turns thereafter. The radiance will shift color slowly but constantly; it will also act as a <i>ring of spell turning</i> , and as a <i>regeneration</i> field: all damage, however caused, suffered by a creature within a radiant field, is not suffered but gained as <i>healing</i> . Creatures at full hp can increase their hp by this means, such increased hp being lost at the rate of 1 per day (24-hour period), or through injury. Creatures augmented substantially in this way save at their “new” Hit Dice total, but still attack and function at their original level or hit dice.
97-00	A <i>reverse gravity</i> effect occurs. All creatures take damage as per the spell, but upon landing find that they have permanently gained 1-4 hp, and 2" -range <i>infravision</i> (if they already possess <i>infravision</i> , its range is extended by 2"). A strange, flickering golden radiance flashes here and there; <i>arrows of direction</i> and similar devices will not function. Tracking is impossible. These latter effects fade away in 1-2 turns.

MONSTER SUMMARY TABLE

Some of the "vital statistics" of monsters featured in this adventure are presented in this table for handy DM reference during play. It is recommended that the DM refer to the original rulebooks and the New Monsters Appendix of this module (* = a new monster) for full monster descriptions.

Name	AC	HD	#AT	Damage	MV	Remarks
Ankheg	2(4)	3-8	1	3-18(+1-4)	12"	burrows, acid
Badger	4	1 + 2	3	1-2x2/1-3	6"	
Baneguard*	7	4 + 4		weapon or 1-6	12"	spells
Beetle, Stag	3	7	3	4-16/1-10x2	6"	Hungry
Boar	7	3 + 3	1	3-12	15"	fights at 0hp
Brownie	7	1/2	1	1-3	12"	spells, unsurprisable
Bull	7	4	2	1-6x2	15"	charges: 3-12 + 1-4
Cattle	7	1-4	1	1-4	15"	stampede
Crawling Claw*	7	1-1	1	1-4	(1-6)	10" leap
Curst*	7	1-10+	1	weapon	12"	can't be turned
Dog, War	6	2 + 2	1	2-8	12"	wear spiked collars
Dog, Wild	7	1 + 1	1	1-4	15"	hungry
Doppelganger	5	4	1	1-12	9"	ESP, change form
Dragon, Black	3	6	3	1-4x2/3-18	12"/24"	acid
Dragon, Green	2	7	3	1-6x2/2-20	9"/24"	gas
Eagle, Giant	7	4	3	1-6x2/2-12	3"/48"	dive: 2-12x2
Ghoul	6	2	3	1-3x2/1-6	9"	touch paralyzes
Gnoll	5	2	1	weapon or 2-8	9"	
Goblin	6	1-7hp	1	weapon or 1-6	6"	
Harpy	7	3	3	1-3x2/1-6	6"/15"	sings, charms
Herd A. (Sheep)	8	2	1	butt: 1-4	15"	stampede
Horse (light war.)	7	2	2	1-4x2	24"	
Jackalwere	4	4	1	2-8	12"	can turn to human form
Kobold	7	1-4hp	1	weapon or 1-4	6"	
Leucrotta	4	6 + 1	1	3-18	18"	1-6x2 kick, mimicry
Lurker Above	6	10	1	1-6	1"/9"	smothers
Mimic	7	7-10	1	3-12	3"	glue
Mule	7	3	1 or 2	1-2 bite or 1-6x2 kick	12"	
Naga, Spirit	4	9-10	1	1-3	12"	gaze, spells
Netherbird*	8	2	3	2-5x2	1-4	4"/15" spy for Bane
Hakeashar*	10	9	0	-	3"	absorbs all magic
Orc	6	1	1	By weapon or 1-8	9"	
Peryton	7	4	1	4-16	12"/21"	+1 wpn. to hit
Pixie	5	1-4hp	1	By weapon	6"/12"	spells
Pseudodragon	2	2	1	1-3	6"/24"	poison, telep.
Quickling	-3	1½	3	dagger	96"	spells
Rat, Normal	7	2hp	1	1	15"	disease
Raven	7	2hp	1	1	1"/36"	attack eyes
Satyr	5	5	1	2-8	18"	pipes, charm, etc.
Skeleton	7	1	1	1-6	12"	edged wpns do 1/2d.
Sphinx, Hieraco-	2	9	3	2-8x2,1-10	9"/36"	
Spider, Huge	6	2 + 2	1	1-6	18"	leaps 3"
Spider, Large	8	1 + 1	1	1	6" *15"	poison
Sprite	6	1	1	By weapon	9"/18"	spells
Stirge	8	1 + 1	1	1-3	3"/18"	blood drain
Troll	4	6 + 6	3	5-8x2,2-12	12"	regenerates
Weretiger	3	6 + 2	3	1-4/1-4/1-12	12"	
Wolf	7	2 + 2	1	2-5	18"	
Wraith	4	5 + 3	1	1-6	12"/24"	energy drain
Zombie	8	2	2	1-8(strike last)	6"	





Gnoll Pass

Castle Crag

Immerflow

Hullack Forest

Thunder Gap

Thunder Peaks

Hooknose Crag

The High Dale

Immersea
Wyvernwater

Hultail

The Vast Swamp

Kulta

Hubb

Daerlun

Urmlaspyr

The Neck

Westgate

Rebdansyr

GONS

Cezlir

Arabel

Wheloon

City of Arabel

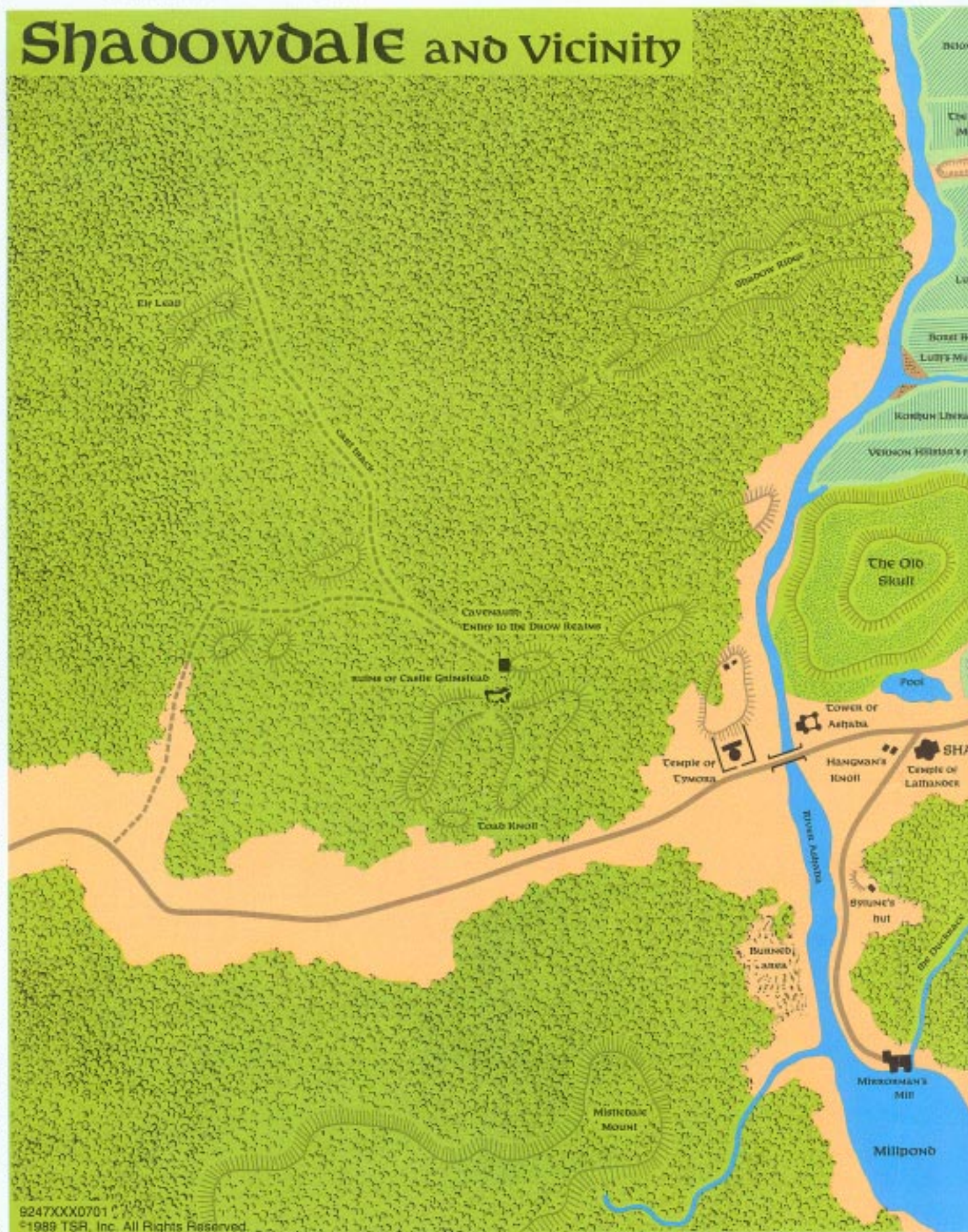
1. Citadel (and jail)
2. Palace (count, assembly hall)
3. House Marllin (noble family)
4. The Weary Knight (inn of good quality)
5. The Lady's House (temple of Tymora)
5. The Lady's House (temple of Tymora)
6. The Dragon's Rest (guesthouse & barracks, owned by the crown for quartering of its guests)
7. The Whistling Wheel (inn)
8. The Traveler's Banner (inn)
9. The Lamps (handware store)
10. "The Bazaar" (market area)
11. Eastgate
12. The Eastwatch (inn)
13. The Iron Throne (merchant company) yards
14. Milzar's Yards (rental stockyards)
15. Thousandheads Trading Coster (merchant company) yards
16. Dragoneye Dealing Coster (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 (merchant company) yards
22. The High Horn Gate
23. The Night Wolf Inn
24. Mother Lahamma's House (boarding house)
25. Rasputa's Kiss (feethall)
26. Six Coppers Market Priakos (merchant company) yards
27. Gelzunbuth Warehouse
28. Gelzunbuth Warehouse
29. House of Gelzunbuth (local merchant)
30. Rhalseen's (boarding house of good quality)
31. House of Kraligh (local merchant)
32. House of Bhela (local merchant)
33. Well
34. House of Mistrin (local merchant)
35. House Hilloax (local merchant)
36. Shasska's (boarding house of good quality)
37. Falcon's Rest (inn of good quality)
38. House of Nyarkil (local merchant)
39. The Watchful Shield (rental bodyguards)
40. Dulbira's (rental costumes & finery, escort service)
41. Mulkaer Lombard, fine tailor
42. The Silver Tankard (avern)
43. Mhaer Czintin, moneylender-changer
44. Eighlar's Fine Wines
45. Jhamma's Silks and Furs
46. Dhetthaen (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)



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- 101. Daglar Maermeet (armorier)
 - 102. Orphast Ulbanath (scribe, cartographer, genealogist)
 - 103. The Moonlit Couch (nightclub, festhall)
 - 104. Quezzo's (rental) Warehouse
 - 105. Dhalima's (boarding house)
 - 106. The Chyee Sisters (pawnshop, used & damaged clothes and goods)
 - 107. Nuirove Dornar, Potter
 - 108. Fillaro's Overland Food (barrels of fish, etc., from the Sword Coast on Inner Sea)
 - 109. The Blue Mace (inn)
 - 110. House of Baerlear warehouse

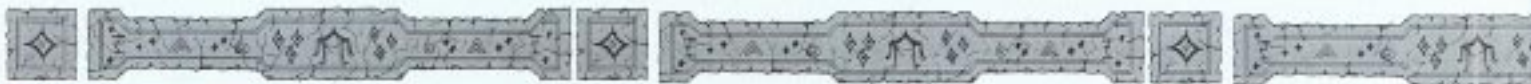
- 111. House of Lheskar Bhalit (owner of the Dancing Dragon and the Dancing Dracolisk taverns, fence of stolen goods)
- 112. The Dancing Dragon
- 113. The Open Casket (pawnshop, used goods, caravan liquibations, fence of stolen goods)
- 114. Ghastar Ulvarinn, Stonecutter
- 115. Baalmit Selmir, Carpenter
- 116. Daznir Reltharphin, Wheelwright
- 117. Chyeth Zalbat, Purveyor of fine perfumes, soaps, lotions, dyes, and cosmetics
- 118. Bracerim Chabbold, Bebbuilber
- 119. The Lamp, Lantern, and Candle Shop of Nphneg Jhanos
- 120. Tamthlir's Leather Shop (fine clothes made to order)
- 121. Psammas Durvirr (tailor)
- 122. Elhazir's Exotica (rare and unusual gifts and treasures)
- 123. "The Baths" (bath house, wrestling gym, and beauty parlor)
- 124. Waycross Inn
- 125. The Ivory Jack (inn)
- 126. Phaasha's (boarding house)
- 127. Vonbon'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 Kralligh 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 (merchant company) warehouses
- 145. The "Pork Market" (yards)
- 146. Dragoneye Dealing Coster (merchant company) warehouse
- 147. Ssantusas's (rental) Warehouse
- 148. Dhalgrim's Yard (fuel: wood, charcoal, oils, kindling)
- 149. The Copper Cockatrice (hardware shop)
- 150. Irriphar's Inn
- 151. The Murbereb Manticore (inn)

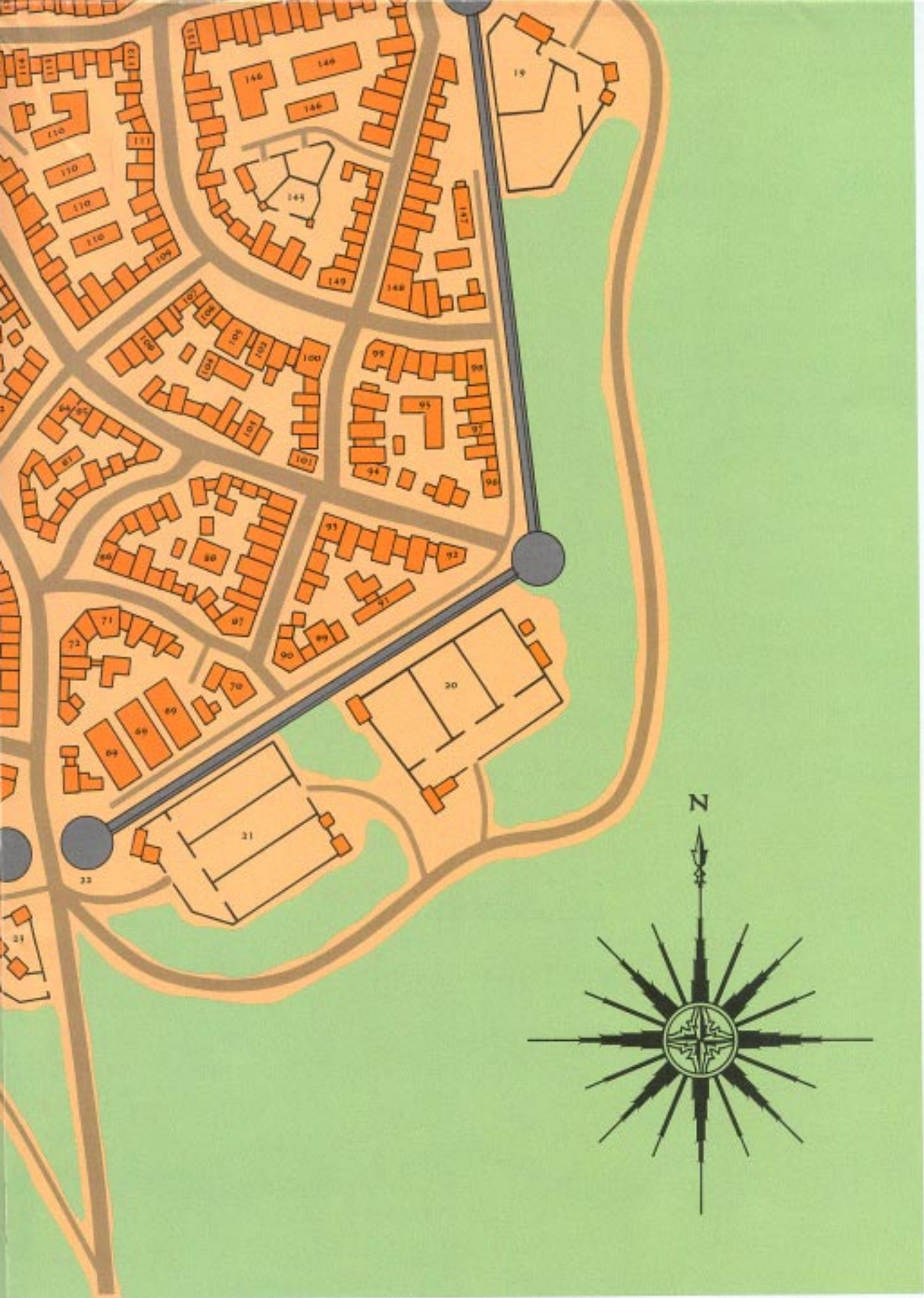
Shadowdale and Vicinity





49. Oubou's FINE CARVING & FURNITURE
50. KHAMMATH'S Crystal (shop)
51. The Black Mask (Tavern)
52. House of THOND (local merchant)
53. Hawk's Perch Crabbing House (pawnshop)
54. Szantel's Ropes, Corbs, 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 Baenteak (local merchant)
61. The Black Barrel (Tavern)
62. Hunbar's Fine Carpets, Perfumes, and Lanterns
63. Jardon's Hiredlings (rental servants, escorts, loaders & 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. Mhaee's (festhall)
68. House of THOND rental warehouse
69. Six Coppers Market Priakos (merchant company) warehouse
70. The Bent Bow (Tavern)
71. Laebuth's (boarding house)
72. The Red Sword (Tavern)
73. Vaethym Oloran, rental Falconer
74. Saerbar's Silks and Flowers
75. The Hungry Man (restaurant)
76. The Chalice (fine brass & metalworks)
77. The Net of Pearls (gowns, jewelry, and lingerie)
78. Nelzara's (boarding house)
79. Bulbo 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 and game birds)
82. Ssanna'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 Mierim 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 & used goods)
97. Naneatha's (festhall)
98. The Dancing Dracolisk (Tavern)
99. Chael Dikim's Parchment and Proclamations
100. The Roll Roast (INN)





Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
2nd Edition



Official Game Adventure

SHADOWDALE

by Ed Greenwood

The Gods walk the Realms.

Cast out from their heavenly domain, the gods of the Forgotten Realms wander the land as mortals—extremely powerful mortals, to be certain, but mortals nonetheless. They seek the lost Tablets of Fate, key to their return. But as the good and evil gods of the Realms bring their fight down to earth, the people and lands are caught in between. Nature itself revolts: Strange creatures stalk the countryside, and even magic becomes unpredictable.

When a band of adventurers are hired by a young apprentice to rescue her sorceress-mentor, little do they realize the size of the stakes they will soon be playing for. Caught up in a power struggle that will determine the fate of the Realms themselves, the first step is to find the only mortal who may know what's going on—the legendary sage Elminster. And that means going to Shadowdale.

Shadowdale is the first of a three-part series of modules for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 2nd Edition roleplaying game. Set in the popular FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game world, this module features the same settings and many of the same characters of the first novel of the Avatar Trilogy, *Shadowdale*, by Richard Awlinson. This AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure is for four to six characters of levels 5-8.

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