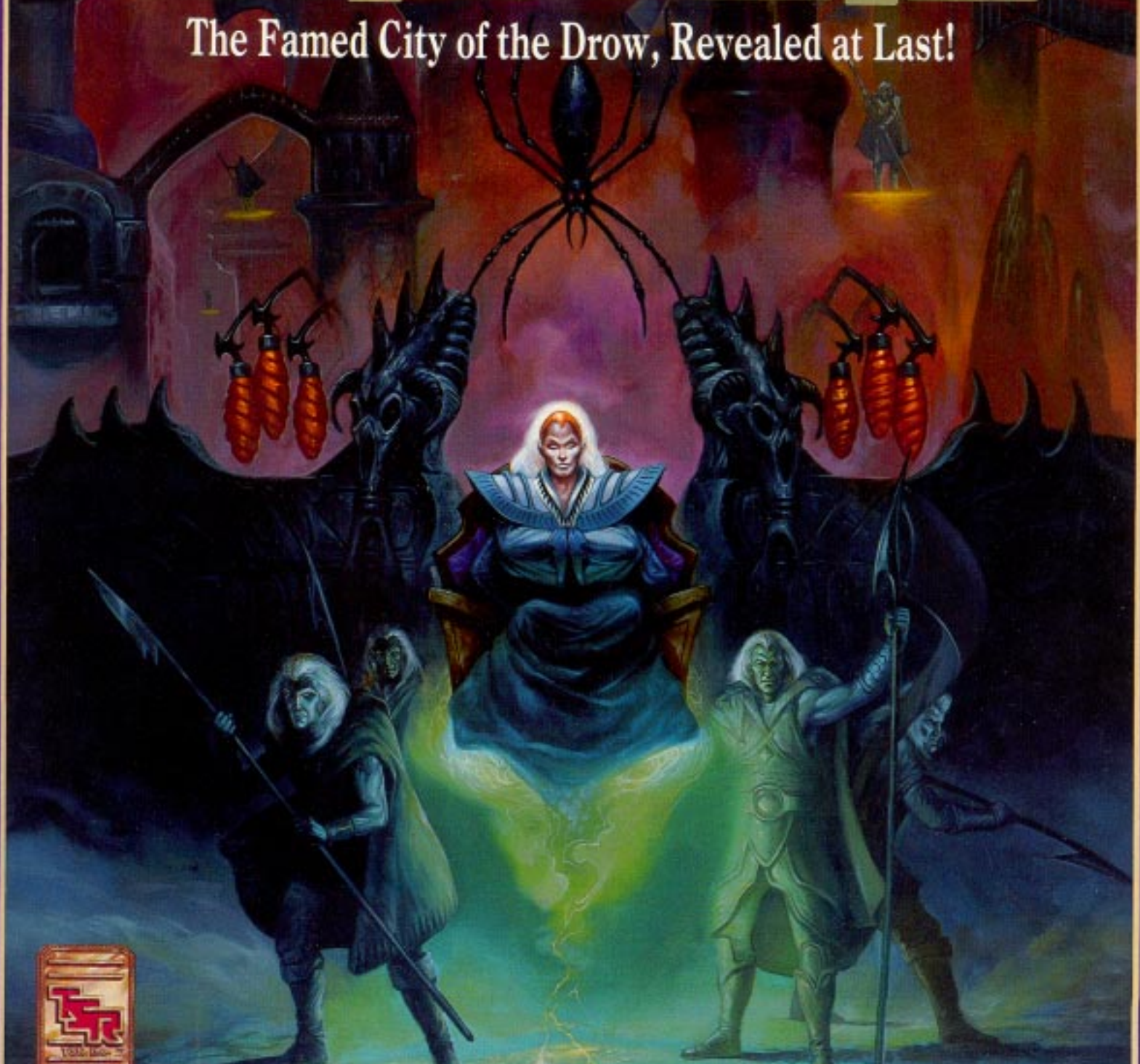


FORGOTTEN REALMS
BOXED SET

MENZOBERRANZAN

The Famed City of the Drow, Revealed at Last!



by Greenwood, Niles, and Selentors

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS

BOXED SET

MENZOBERRANZAN



Book One: THE CITY



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by Ed Greenwood

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1083XXX1503
ISBN 1-56076-460-0
1083

Drow Cities of The Underdark

There is a world beneath the world humans know—a vast, lawless land under The Realms That See The Sun. It is a perilous wilderland of dark caverns, crevices, and labyrinthine passages: The Realms Below, the vast and mysterious Underdark. No surface adventurer has seen all its depths and corners. Beasts that no surface-dweller yet knows of lurk in its lightless depths—and surviving explorers say the known dangers are bad enough!

To the unwary (or merely desperate) traveler in the Underdark, a city may seem a refuge from creeping doom in the darkness. It holds, after all, bustling life—with food, tools, and perhaps aid.

Perhaps not. Even the good beings of the depths, dwarves, gnomes, thaalud, and svirfneblin, tend to be (rightfully) suspicious of intruders. Other city-dwellers include (among merely nasty folk, such as jermlaine) the most evil and dangerous races of the Realms: kuo-toa, duergar, il-lithids, cloaklers, and most far-reaching of all, drow, the dark elves.

The essential guide to this deadly race is the sourcebook *Drow of the Underdark*. A DM familiar with it and the “Elf, Drow” entry in Volume 2 of the *Monstrous Compendium* knows drow “basics.” To understand the unusual power and influence of drow, however, one must see a drow city.

Something of what life is like amid the cruel, ever-warring drow can be gleaned from the FORGOTTEN REALMS® novels *Homeland* and *Exile* by R.A. Salvatore, but bringing a drow city to life needs more: this boxed set.

Of the set’s three books, this tome is a guide to Menzoberranzan, a drow city of middling size and importance that is (thankfully to most surface folk!) a week’s travel from the nearest surface connection. Companion books detail its nobles and suggest adventures.


We’ve explored Menzoberranzan, of the forty or so known drow cities, because it is the birthplace of the famous Drizzt Do’Urden (himself detailed in Book II of this boxed set, his statistics updated from *Hall of Heroes*). A look at the strange, harsh, and at times splendid cesspool of evil from which he sprang shows how drow became a power in the Realms—and unlocks the door to vivid adventures in the drow-ruled Underdark.

This set can be used to create any subterranean drow city by changing the layout, the names and detailed NPCs of the noble Houses, and the trade interests and overall aims of the inhabitants.

Change the all-pervasive worship of Lolth (“Lloth” to Menzoberranyr) to a tense rivalry between worshippers of Lolth, Ghaunadaur, and Vhaeraun, and you have Eryndlyn, a city that trades with the Sword Coast from hidden caves somewhere in The High Moor. Change it to the worship of Ghaunadaur only (with reverence and breeding of slimes, jellies, and oozes) and you have Llurth Dreier, a city of 400,000 drow ruling vast fungi-farm caverns under The Shaar, northwest of The Deep Realm of the dwarves (detailed in *Dwarves Deep*). Let mages rule, reducing priestesses to minor power, and you have the magical item-trading city of Sshamath, somewhere beneath The Far Hills. Read on, and find adventure!



Menzoberranzan The Mighty



Slightly more than 20,000 drow call Menzoberranzan home. This is fewer than most drow cities; most hold 35,000 or more. The bitter, violent rivalries of the city's noble Houses (perpetuated and fostered by the Spider Queen and those who worship her) keeps the population from growing much—but also ensures that the drow of Menzoberranzan are among the hardest and most cunning survivors, and deadliest fighters, of the Underdark. Most surface realms of forty times the city's population would be hard put to assemble twenty warriors who could hold their own for long against twenty Menzoberranyr fighters.

Menzoberranzan's low population makes its ruling Council smaller than those of most drow cities—eight Houses rule, rather than the more usual nine, twelve, fourteen or sixteen. At least one drow city, Guallidurth (deep under Calimshan), has twenty-one Houses in Council.

On the other hand, Menzoberranyr are a more tightly-knit populace than most, because they all dwell in one vast natural cavern. Most drow cities have inherent prejudices and rivalries, as citizens grow up in various caverns and linking passages, and citizens are judged or ranked by where they came from.

The worship of Lolth (called "Lloth" in Menzoberranzan, as in some other drow cities, and as she will be referred to in the rest of this set) dominates Menzoberranyr life. There seems no higher purpose in the lives of most citizens than to rise in the service of the Spider Queen—until she claims each life, in turn. Most drow develop a hobby or interest to call their own (from mastery of a particular weapon to collecting certain gems or fine boots), but these can be weaknesses if a rival can find a way to exploit them.

With Lolth-worship comes female domi-

nance. Males of the city tend to excel in the few things they are allowed to excel in: fighting, wizardry, and dirty jobs related to trade, building, and food.

Males who enjoy home or the worship of Lolth turn their efforts to mastering the arts of sculpture and design (and, if magically talented, glyphs and House defensive traps), and to excelling at songs in praise of the Spider Queen.

Restless or independent males tend to gravitate to study in Sorcere (which can involve being cloistered away from most House politics for their entire lives), or towards life as a merchant traveling through the perilous Underdark to and from other cities and trademoots, sometimes on the surface. (Skullport, under the city of Waterdeep, is one such trademoot. On rare occasions, it is worth the long trip, and the destination's great dangers, for the scarce and wonderful wares—such as spell components—that can be bought there.)

Except for individuals of great beauty, or who show great aptitude in the arts of war, sorcery, or artisanship in a valued field, the preceding notes on choices in life apply almost exclusively to drow nobles: commoners do as they are told, forming the bulk of the drudge labor, House-servant, and common soldiering tasks as servants of the noble Houses.

No drow citizen of Menzoberranzan is ever officially the "slave" of another Menzoberranyr, but a great many drow are slaves in all but name. (Drow battle-captives won from outside the city can be held openly as slaves.)

The commoners' only avenues to freedom lie in escape from the city, or in developing skill and reputation (and thereby, work) as hunters, mercenary warriors, or traveling merchants. As all of these routes to a better life lead into the dangerous

Drow Cities of the Underdark

wild Underdark, few survive long to enjoy any successes.

Commoners with exceptional skills are usually adopted by the noble House they serve, or (more rarely) by the first noble House to notice their skill and seize them. They receive the House name, sponsorship, and a position—a precarious one, based on performance and the whim of the ruling Matron of the House. In the case of male drow of great beauty awarded the position of “patron” (consort to the Matron), this is all too literally true. Some sadistic Matrons take new patrons every night, having the twisted, disfigured remnant of the last consort fed to House animals, slain out of hand, or put to menial labor to be slowly worked to death.

Perhaps the best road to independence for drow lies in sorcery. House wizards (and even more so, House members studying in Sorcere, shielded from daily contact with non-wizards) are treated with some respect by even the most aggressive females. One can never be sure of the power of a drow mage—until it is too late. As shown in *Drow of the Underdark*, under “House Insignia,” drow wizards always look to their own defense first, and are often able to hide powers and magical preparations even from watchful high priestesses of Lloth.

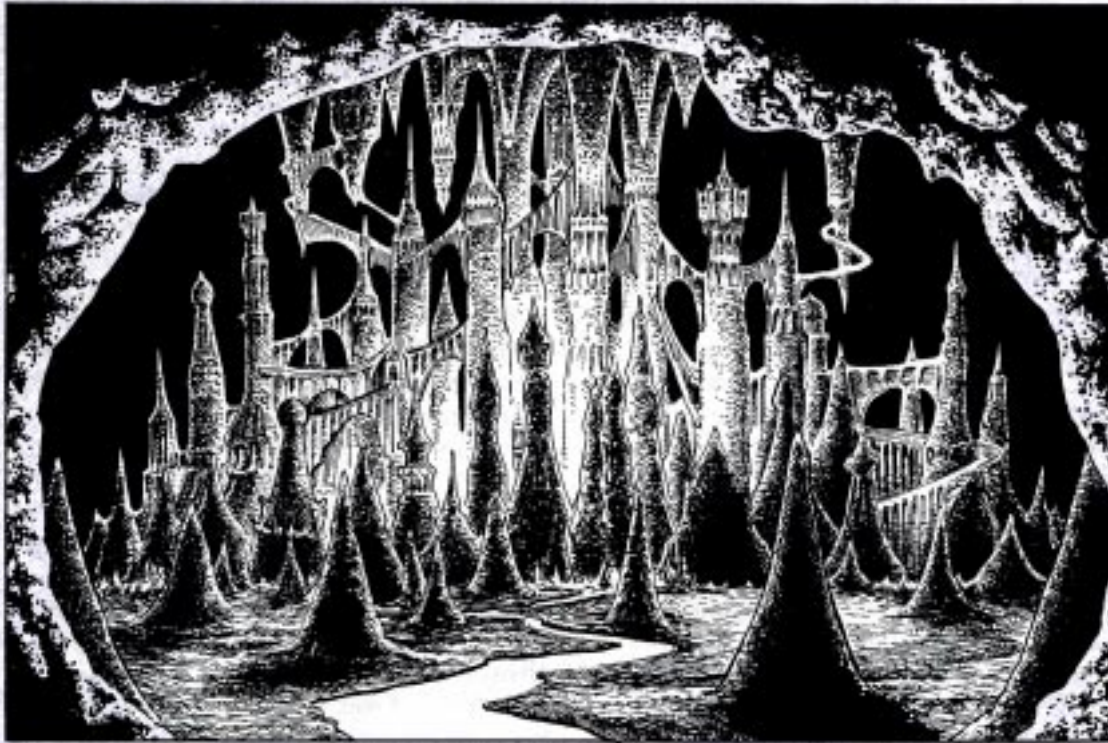
Female drow usually throw themselves with energy and zeal into the endless, vicious intrigue and politics of the city. The bodies of many mark every twist and turn in the fortunes of the Houses, and the everchanging favor of fickle Lloth—but for every drow female who falls, fifteen to twenty males meet doom.

If life is so dangerous, and drow forced into endless strife against drow, how is Menzoberranzan “the mighty?” Why does it survive at all? The answer lies with Lloth. If one believes her faithful, the cru-

el Spider Queen pits drow against drow solely to improve and strengthen her people, making the survivors ever stronger, wiser, and better able to serve her. Lloth also helps her people from time to time (though seldom directly, especially in House-versus-House internal conflicts). Matrons can ask information and aid of her dreaded handmaidens, the yochlol (detailed in FOR2), but any faithful Menzoberranyr drow who calls on Lloth in need may receive a one-time *cure light wounds*, *neutralize poison*, or any spell-power possessed by drow even if the supplicant cannot yet, or never will be able to, wield such powers or has exhausted his or her daily powers of them. (There is a 10 percent chance per level of this happening, minus 10 percent for each time in the last 33 days aid has been called for.) Such aid is always temporary, and accompanied by the arrival of some sort of spider. Lloth always exacts her price later: often a difficult, dangerous mission or service. Alternatively, Lloth may send spiders to attack foes of beleaguered drow; this form of aid does not “cost” anything.



A Walking Tour of the Dark Dominion



Menzoberranzan the Mighty is a seething power-house of Lloth-worshipping, tirelessly evil drow, striving for supremacy in the eyes of the fell Spider Queen. "An anthill of arrogant evil," the archsorceress Laeral once described it. To map every room and passage of a city so busy, and so worked into the stone (with many rising and falling levels, secret ways, and miles upon miles of passages) is an impossibility and a hindrance to the creativity of Dungeon Masters. Even a dedicated, unopposed drow citizen would need most of a lifetime to walk every stone of the city—so here is a brief tour of its highlights.

Menzoberranzan is not a large city by drow standards; only 20,000 drow dwell there. It fills a large cavern, formerly a giant spider lair known by its dwarven name, *Araurilcaurak* (literally, "Great Pillar Cavern"), for a great natural rock pillar at its center, that joins floor and ceiling in a massive shaft.

Narbondel

Known as Narbondel, this pillar has been left unworked by the drow. It serves them, and all visitors with infravision, as a gigantic clock. At the end of each day, the city's ranking Archmage (or a master of Sorcere, in the rare instances when the Archmage is dead, otherwise occupied, or absent from the city) casts a fire spell into its base.

The heat created by the spell is conducted slowly upward through the stone, until to infravision Narbondel glows red from top to bottom. Then it fades rapidly to darkness, "the black death of Narbondel." The time when the wizard casts his fire spell anew corresponds to midnight in the surface Realms, just as the cycle of Narbondel's rising fire equals a surface-world day.

A Walking Tour of The Dark Dominion

The Cavern

Menzoberranzan's cavern is roughly arrowhead-shaped, with the pool of Donigarten at its tip, and two miles across at its widest point. The ceiling rises a thousand feet high, and its floor is studded with many stalagmites and lesser pillars (stalactites and stalagmites that have grown together, to fuse into an unbroken shaft of rock). The cavern floor is broken by three major rifts and many smaller ones, and two areas rise above the rest of the city: Tier Breche, the side-cavern occupied by the Academy that trains all drow citizens for adulthood; and larger Qu'ellarz'orl (House-Loft), a plateau separated from the lower city by a grove of giant mushrooms, home to many of the city's mightiest noble Houses.

From either of these heights, a drow citizen can look out across the city. The view is row upon row of carved, spired stone castles, their salient points and sculpted highlights lit by the soft, tinted flows of permanent *faerie fires*. Except for Narbondel, not a stone of the city has been left in its natural shape—everything has been worked into a smooth, unbroken, unjointed expanse. Adventurers bent on vandalism take note: unless one brings it along, there is no such thing in the better parts of Menzoberranzan as a loose stone, lying around to be snatched up as a weapon!

Many of the city's largest dwellings, especially the compounds occupied by noble Houses, were created by fencing stalagmites together with magically raised and melded stone. The grandest drow feats are the carved, worked, hollowed-out stalactites that hang over much of the central cavern and above Qu'ellarz'orl: "Over-caverns" linked to the main city below by a hundred leaping, railless, stone bridge-

spans, and by spiraling stairs and passages in the cavern walls.

Donigarten


At the smoothest, lowest end of the city's cavern is a natural lake or pond, Donigarten. Its chill waters serve vital food needs for the drow, nourishing fish and eels (taken from the waters by fisher-goblin slaves), flowing into carefully irrigated dungfields (where orcs tend mushrooms and other edible fungi, renewing and expanding the fields with excrement brought in wagonloads from the city proper), and supporting two moss beds.

The large bed on the shore holds moss eaten by drow as delicacies; the second bed covers an island, and feeds a herd of deep rothe (ox-like cattle detailed fully in *Drow of the Underdark*, FOR2) confined there by the waters of the pond and by the diligence of orc slave-shepherds. On the Isle of Rothe, rothe are reared for the tables of Menzoberranzan. Small pens on the shore nearby allow the orcs to tend other animals (notably captured or purchased surface-world delicacies such as mountain sheep, or edible monsters brought back by drow hunting bands), and to breed rothe away from the crowded isle.

The slaves pole rafts about the pond. They are allowed to swim, and even to dive with spears or to tow nets if fish are needed in a hurry, but are forbidden to explore the pond's murky, muddy bottom. Legends of lurking, water-dwelling ropers and worse make the rounds regularly, but most wise orcs suspect that any pond monsters are deliberately-placed guardians, and the real reason for the prohibition is to keep slaves from finding magical items and valuables lost to the drow in



A Walking Tour of The Dark Dominion



long-ago days, when two customs filled the pond waters with treasures.

It was the custom in those times to consign the bodies of Matron Mothers of the eight ruling Houses, and drow heroes favored by Lloth, such as warriors who perished in achieving victories, to the waters of Donigarten. The corpses were dressed and adorned in finery (gems, magic, and all), then lashed to a stone spar of strong adamantite content and dweomer radiations. This made the bodies sink, and concealed the precise whereabouts of the magic from would-be thieves, masking the area with many flickering magical dweomers.

The second custom was unofficially but much more enthusiastically pursued; ambitious drow who murdered friends, rivals, or kin would often sink them in Donigarten, in haste and with all valuables that could be identified as theirs, so that they disappeared tracelessly into the tangle of other corpses below. Something below Donigarten's inky black surface devours drow corpses, and orc and goblin slaves do disappear from time to time, but the slaves who swim and dive do not fear attack; it never comes (at least, not in front of witnesses).

Even drow children have heard persistent, age-old rumors of flooded tunnels that link Donigarten to an underwater kingdom, or a lost temple of a god older than Lloth, or a warren of watery caves inhabited by creatures more powerful than kuo-toa. No sane drow tries to investigate such tales; the magical chaos at Donigarten's bottom hopelessly confuses all scrying attempts, and explorations must be made directly.

Tier Breche

The highest part of the city "floor," this side cavern is home to the Academy that trains drow for adulthood and full status as citizens of Menzoberranzan. From the main part of the city, Tier Breche is reached by a stone stairway. Its upper end is flanked by two giant stone pillars. In the shadow of each, at all times, stands a male drow warrior on guard: last-year students of Melee-Magthere, the school for fighters.

Here twenty-five-year-old drow come for training, and are not allowed to pass back down the stairs into the city until they have been graduated by a Master or Mistress of the Academy.

A male whose aptitude for magic has not been demonstrated during his youth as outstanding (or greater than his battle prowess) goes first to Melee-Magthere, the largest and most easterly of the three structures of Tier Breche. This is the fighters' school, and here the famous Drizzt Do'Urden, like countless drow before and after him, spent nine years training to fight—a schooling that involved many patrols out into the Dominion and beyond, into the lawless Underdark, but no visits to the city proper. The first half of Drizzt's tenth year took him to the sculpted stalagmite-tower of Sorcere, the many-chambered tower of wizardry, closest to the west wall of Tier Breche. Here, many of the most powerful drow males of the city dwell, hidden from much daily intrigue—or as fugitives from the deadly ways of House rivalries and politics, awaiting a chance for revenge.

The northernmost and most impressive building of the Academy is spider-shaped Arach-Tinilith, where the priestesses of Lloth are trained. Males are housed here

A Walking Tour of the Dark Dominion

only for the last six months of their ten-year training.

Drow leave the Academy molded into the treacherous, vicious ways of Menzoberranzan, "The Spite of the Spider Queen" as other drow have called it. Those who fail their training die, or are transformed into driders or worse. More is said of the Academy's dark work in other chapters of this book.

The Dark Dominion

Over a hundred tunnels link the city cavern with the surrounding Underdark— notably with almost two dozen *faerzress* (magic power) spots, where adamantite-laden rock gives off the dark radiations drow value in the making of their best armor, weaponry, and tools. The area around the city patrolled by the drow is known as Bauthwaf (around-cloak), or more grandly as the Dark Dominion. (The word "patrolled" is carefully chosen; only a fool ever refers to an area as "controlled," or "safe.")

Monsters roam the Dominion despite regular drow patrols, and even venture into the city, following the ready food and guidance of merchant traffic. Most are quickly dispatched; such is the drow that strong guards are kept only over the single entrance to Tier Breche. Its sentinels are a pair of magical *jade spiders* (detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, FOR2), over the several tunnels that open out of Qu'el-larz'orl (the guards there are drow with magical items such as *wands of viscid globs*, alarm horns to summon swift reinforcements, and servant giants) and on the Eastways.


The Eastways are three tunnels that open into the eastern end of the cavern of Menzoberranzan, where no drow dwell

and Donigarten's precious water lies. Their mouths are all guarded by scorpion-shaped, poison-shooting *jade spider* statues.

The smallest of these tunnels leads to a chasm at the eastern edge of the Dominion inhabited by driders outcast from the city. They slay and devour all who stray into their clutches, especially hating and prizing the flesh of unaltered drow.



Daily Life in Menzoberranzan



As well as being a battleground for warring drow of rival Houses and a cauldron of willing and unwilling followers of the cruel Spider Queen, Menzoberranzan is a place where people live, laugh, love, and die—arrogant, cruel drow, but people nonetheless.

What, then, is daily life like in Menzoberranzan? This chapter and the one on “Drow High Life” attempt to impart the general “feel” of the place; DMs who plan to use Menzoberranzan as a setting for campaign play are warned that it is on the “bare bones” furnished here that most of their development work must be built, to make the city come alive—and to be truly their own, with secrets that players who read these pages cannot steal before play begins.

The Streets

A typical street scene in Menzoberranzan is dimly and weirdly lit, by the vivid phosphorescent hues of fungi, magical fields of various sorts, and deliberately-placed *faerie fires*. Except for a few ambulatory, slowly-oozing fungi, plant growths tend to be pruned and trained by slaves, to grow in pillars, arches, or shaped clusters, rather than spreading wildly. Underfoot, rocks are similarly scarce (to deprive thieves, rebellious slaves, or angry visitors of ready weapons); adventurers expecting to “just pick up a handy rock” are likely to be disappointed.

Spells have also been applied to the outer walls of House compounds, to prevent their being readily chipped, breached, or defaced. An adventurer who determinedly attacks such a protected area will either discharge a House defense glyph directly (see *Drow of the Underdark*, FOR2), or will eventually trigger a roving “backlash”

spell that protects the entire wall. These spells typically unleash a 6d4-hit-point damage lightning discharge the first time around, and if attacks persist, manifest in the attacked area(s) as an equivalent to *Evard's black tentacles* (duration and precise damage left to the DM, as they vary from House to House with the wizards who applied them).

These comments on wall defenses, lack of rocks, and tidy gardening of fungi are less and less true as one travels toward Donigarten, into the hovels and alleyways of the commoners, and the lodgings of non-drow. There, in the worst areas, shadows a-plenty lurk between the soft radiances, rubble-piles can even be found here and there, and the fungi grow wild. Drow nobles take care never to go drunk or lightly armed into such areas—more than one grand drow has been torn limb from limb by inhabitants who saw a chance to overwhelm a lone target and take out their anger, resentment, and frustration over the cruelties of House rule.

In Menzoberranzan, edible mushrooms for internal House use are grown within compounds (for safety, to avoid poisoning and theft), and the fungi for general consumption in the farm fields near Donigarten. The fungi that remain in clumps along the edges of streets and between houses tend to be guardian shriekers if they flank gates or doors in compound walls, or otherwise inedible (at least to drow) mushrooms.

Typical sights in the streets include slaves, commoner servants, and visiting merchants struggling with many-wheeled carts. The conveyances of those too poor to afford *levitate*-related magic tend to have many independently-sprung axles, to cope with the always uneven rock, mud, and scree floors of the Underdark's passages. In Menzoberranzan, the streets are



Daily Life in Menzoberranzan

of solid, smooth rock—never paving stones. Almost all such carts are drawn by subterranean lizards, although the occasional slug-drawn cart can be seen. The giant spider-carts (and belly-pack carrying spiders) used in the southern Underdark are never seen in Menzoberranzan; to so treat an arachnid is to earn a painful and immediate death, under the fanged-headed whips of the nearest high-priestesses.

Around these knots of carts and their tenders stream many drow on foot, as well as small bands of bugbears, orcs, gnolls, and other hirelings.

In the poorer areas of town near Donigarten, non-drow bands tend to be armed and unsupervised, and the drow move about in families (commoners going shopping or to work) or in armed groups (nobles and House servants with business in the area, such as visiting one of the heavily guarded House warehouses).

In the city's better areas (Qu'ellarz'orl and the streets nearest to the mushroom-clad slope that marks its boundary), non-drow are fewer, and tend to be accompanied by a drow overseer or guide, and the drow on foot tend to go singly, in pairs, or in small, unconcerned groups—lingering to talk, shop, or look about with little fear for their personal safety. Street patrols (detailed in the Bazaar chapter) are common, and open attacks in the streets, as well as the firing of darts and the hurling of spells, except in self-defense, are crimes that demand restitution in the form of very stiff fines, a period of (dangerous, of course) servitude, or worse (see Drow Justice, below).

Through this street traffic, parting it in the same way large ships cleave through many small, moving barges and boats in the crowded harbors of the Sword Coast, are nobles. Male nobles tend to ride liz-

ards, and females either to use lizards with couches instead of saddles, or enclosed litters carried by slaves, depending on their rank and age (litters carry a grander status, can be furnished more luxuriously, and, unless one's slaves are attacked, provide a much smoother ride).

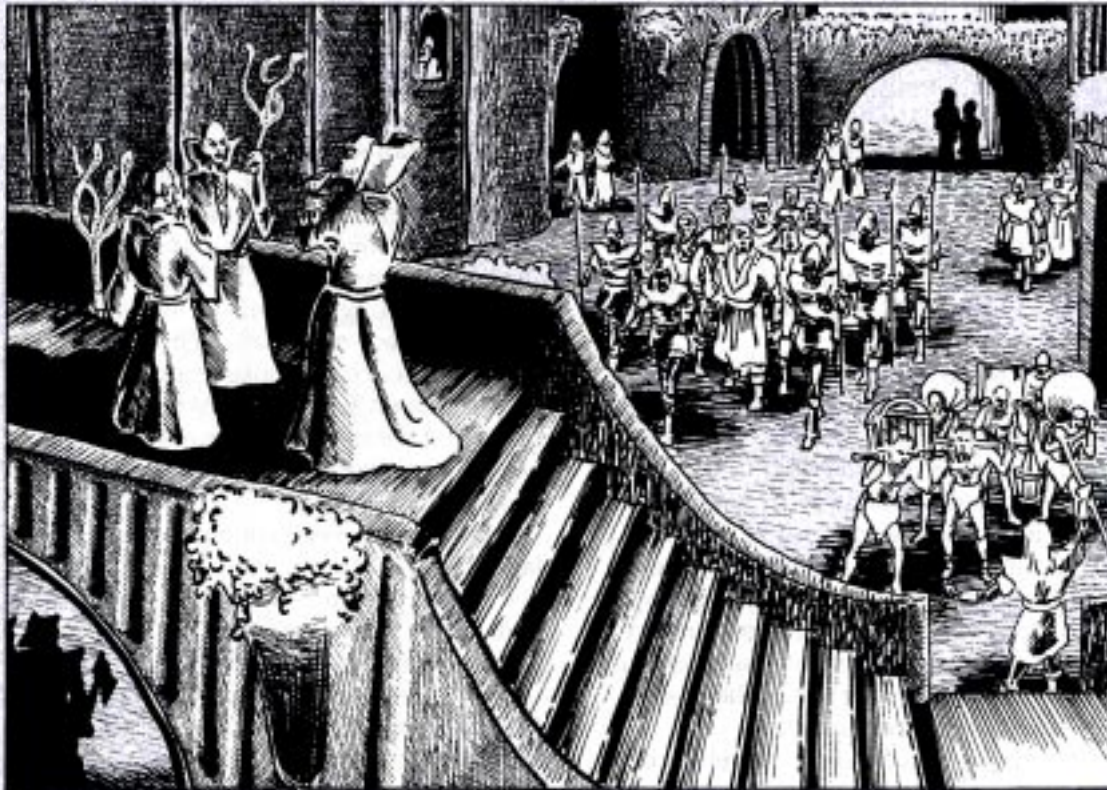
The rarer out-of-doors trips made by House Matrons tend to be by stately and silently drifting drift-discs (detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, FOR2), flanked by heavy escorts of House troops and high priestesses on foot, if the Matron wishes to make a show—and by heavily-guarded, closed litter (borne by House troops, not slaves) if she doesn't.

Non-drow are very seldom seen in Qu'ellarz'orl, where they are not wanted, and are more likely to run afoul of some arrogant drow noble or other, and be punished or slain out of hand. Near the small, unobtrusive entrance to the Cavern of the Ruling Council, and in the entire Tier Breche area, slaves, commoners, and non-drow are not permitted except by the special invitation of a Master, Mistress, or Matron, and under escort in any case. These restricted areas have their own guards, typically drow warriors who can call on a backup wizard, who in turn can alert a high priestess by means of a *sending*, and/or *jade spiders* (detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, FOR2) to keep unauthorized folk out.

The streets of Menzoberranzan tend to be rather hushed—and yet always noisy. This is not the contradiction it seems at first. The echoing of all sounds made in the cavern could form an endless cacophony, so many, many long-term *silence* spells have been placed on various stalactites, spurs, and hollows on the ceiling (drow who know where these are sometimes use them for sleep or study). These have the effect of reducing the noise in



Daily Life in Menzoberranzan



the city to an endless murmur, formed by the impact noises of movement on stone, the drip of water, and the hissing and chatter of speech, highlighted here and there by the soft pipings of drow music—and the occasional high scream of pain.

The great cavern that houses Menzoberranzan tends to be damp at the Donigarten end, and dry elsewhere. The decay of rotting plants and fertilizer tends to create pockets of warmth in the moss bed, rothe-isle, and fungi-farm areas—and the gatherings of warm, living drow bodies, augmented by magically generated warmth and the heat created by various work activities, create a larger pool of warmth at the other end of the cavern. As a result of these warm and cold imbalances, gentle breezes usually waft

around the cavern, and the main trade-passages impinging on the main cavern allow large-scale air transfer.

Visitors tend to find Menzoberranzan pleasantly damp (“alive,” as opposed to the many drier, “dead” stretches of the Underdark), cool but not chillingly so, and its air scented with the spicy, strong but not unpleasant musk of fungi spores.

Spells prevent violet fungi or other harmful spore discharges from remaining “active” longer than 1d4 rounds after their release into the air of any part of the city’s great cavern. Any spores that attack, transform, or enter into symbiosis with drow lungs are automatically neutralized—and the lungs of elves, dwarves, gnomes, orcs, humans, and almost all intelligent air-breathing mammals

Daily Life in Menzoberranzan

are sufficiently protected by the magic. Violet fungi are not permitted in Menzoberranzan, and have been eradicated from the city's great cavern and from the surrounding Dominion, although the wild Underdark around the patrolled Dominion contains a lot of it.

Drow Justice

Menzoberranzan is governed by The Way of Lloth, a code of behavior known in detail to every high priestess. It is administered by the ruling Council of the Matrons of the eight most powerful noble Houses, who meet in a natural cavern heavily guarded by a ceremonial guard of priestesses and wizards from the Academy, bolstered by *jade spiders*, and the bodyguards of the attending Matrons.

When the Council is in session, the cave is lit by hundreds of sweet-smelling candles placed around its edges—and only two guards per Matron are permitted inside (non-magic-using warriors, who do not bear any magical items). The rest of the bodyguards must remain outside the closed ironbound doors of the cavern.

The Matrons meet around a spider-shaped table, sitting in grand chairs. Four plain, smaller chairs can be drawn up from the cavern walls, to seat guests of the Council.

Any member of the Council can call a meeting of this governing body. Typically, Matron Baenre calls the Council together to deal with important business and overall emergencies, and to disseminate the public directives of Lloth, and the other Matrons call meetings only to settle disputes.

The Council is a grand sham; House Baenre has so much power, and controls so many of the other Houses in the city

through alliances, agreements, blackmail, loans, and financial guarantees, that it controls life in the city. (The exception is when one House attacks another; and even then, such attacks are often caused by Baenren manipulation, and their outcomes are decided by Baenren aid or betrayal.) Bregan D'Aerthe exists only at the favor of House Baenre; both Jarlaxle and Matron Baenre know that House Baenre, of all the noble Houses in the city, has the might to hunt down and destroy this mercenary band.

This tension and subterfuge underlie the harsh code of Lloth. It is too long and complex to quote here, but its general tenets are as follows:

- There is no true god or goddess other than Lloth. Any who follow or bow to the dictates of any other power or faith (or its representatives) are to be utterly destroyed, preferably in sacrifice to Lloth: their names forgotten, their works cast down and broken into rubble, and their spawn eradicated (unless such descendants have already served Lloth well, or joined her formal service).
- Ritual worship of any power other than Lloth is forbidden within the city's great cavern. Non-drow who violate this—once—are merely fined heavily, and expelled from the city. They may return on another occasion. Second offenders, those who scorn Lloth, or drow worshippers are slain. Merely uttering another power's name is frowned upon, but no cause for punishment.
- In practice, any drow suspected of following Vhaeraun will be interrogated magically, and if such worship



Daily Life in Menzoberranzan

is proven to occur, they are executed (even if they've never performed any act of worship to the power in Menzoberranzan).

- Anyone who mistreats an arachnid, or any creature (from slave to beast of burden) of a House, is fined and whipped by priestesses of the Spider Queen. Those who kill spiders must die.
- For a slave to refuse any order of a drow of the owning House is a fatal offense. The treatment of slaves is totally the affair of their owners. Slaves have no rights, and there are no strictures on punishments or duties that can be set for them.

A commoner citizen who refuses to follow the order of a high priestess can be punished as the offended priestess sees fit, up to and including instant death. The exception to this requires the commoner to be the property of another House, and a noble of that House must be present and object to the punishment. In this case the priestess and the House Matron must agree on a punishment: usually a flogging delivered by the offended priestess.

A student of the Academy who refuses a Matron or Mistress anything can be punished as the offended officer sees fit, up to and including instant death.

- Any drow who falsely wears the colors or insignia of another House (except by the express permission from that House), or who deliberately alters his or her hairstyle or attire to

appear as a rank different from his or her own (except by the express permission of the owning Matron), must die.

- The penalty of death also awaits any non-drow who uses any means to adopt the disguise of a particular drow, or a drow of noble rank or of a House other than their own.
- If one House attacks another House and fails to utterly exterminate its noble line, the House that perpetrated the attack is itself obliterated, by the gathered might of the city including the Academy.
- If two or more Houses combine to attack another House, all of the Houses who participated in the attack are to be destroyed themselves. House Baenre holds itself exempt from this rule, apparently with Lloth's support.
- Any House attacking another that has just survived an earlier attack (within the same year) loses the favor of Lloth. This means their priestesses lose the use of their spells during the attack and thereafter, until a great deed or service has been performed to regain Lloth's favor; the House is unable to defend itself except by diplomatic and purely physical means, and is surely doomed. Other Houses may attack it with impunity.

Daily Life in Menzoberranzan



Drow law, as Drizzt Do'Urden so clearly saw, is but a cruel facade to cover the chaos of ruthlessly-striving, ambitious drow fighting each other: a mockingly ironic set of rules in which the only ones to be punished are those who get caught.

Drow law enforcers can imprison drow and non-drow alike in cells, the "pit-warrens," roamed at times by carrion crawlers and cave fishers, near Donigarten's moss beds.


The patrol strength of such police is detailed in the chapter on the city's Bazaar. Duty guards are posted at major intersections and trouble areas, such as slave pens and the entrances to tunnels used by merchant caravans, where the possibility of a

surprise attack on the city is highest and predators are most likely to follow the trail of a caravan into a cavern crammed with ready food.





Drow "High Life"



The daily life of most drow may be dominated by hard drudgery and the wanton cruelty of superiors—but there is fun in the city of Menzoberranzan, for those who know how to find it. Among visitors from the surface world, the decadent things noble and wealthy non-noble drow do have become legendary.

Among Menzoberranyr inhabitants, drow and non-drow (slaves, hireling troops, and trading agents) tend to keep separate in their leisure activities. Visitors with money to lose are generally welcome in drow recreational activities, but less so in non-drow gatherings (as they might be spies hired by the drow Houses).

Parties

Drow love parties—affairs of wild music and dancing, much drinking of exotic and powerful beverages, and the inhaling of scented smoke (sometimes primed with magical *illusions*) from braziers. Houses rent sumptuous open mansions as neutral ground in which to entertain, rather than risking the security of their own property.

Drow love to score witty points in barbed conversation (while dancing or dining); a wise host hires wizards to entertain with magic, heading off any drunken (and destructive!) magical competitions among the revelers.

Parties tend to last most of a day. Most end in wild fighting, vandalism, fires, and wanton debauchery, with party-goers being dumped unceremoniously into the street. Wise Matrons send escorts to carry helplessly drunken scions of Houses home.

Drow of different Houses can also get to meet each other at more formal dances, or *illiyitrii* ('promenade'). Both stately and political, these affairs are places to be

seen, in which drow of both sexes dress up in their finest garb. They are very dangerous situations for non-drow who are not conversant in the subtle intricacies of drow manners, House rivalries, and recent happenings among noble Houses in the city.

In sharp contrast to *illiyitrii* are the *ne-deirra* of the younger and wilder drow. Seldom attended by high priestesses, these wild, acrobatic 'sweat dances' usually leave young drow drenched in sweat, dancing to the syncopated, driving rhythms of drumming and piping music. A wizard or two is often hired to create fun: illusions, tickling and slapping cantrips, and so on.

Massage

For drow who live hard, always tense and alert for attack, the ultimate sensuous pleasure in life is a warm bath (or a perfumed oil soak), followed by a "deep-stroke" thorough body massage, typically on a contoured couch (often in a room where others are receiving the same ministrations, so that all present can argue, chat, or do business). A talented body-stroker (*masseuse*) is a highly-valued (and highly-paid) artisan of drow society.

The most popular leisure spots in Menzoberranzan are the massage houses. Massage is a common outlet for the passions of drow of different Houses, for whom courtship is too dangerous.



Drow "High Life"

Hunts

Noble drow, alone of the inhabitants of Menzoberranzan, like to mount hunts out into the Underdark—either of monsters, or of slaves released into the tunnels with some sort of head-start.

Although drow hunters may restrict themselves sharply in terms of weapons, equipments, and steeds used, to give the quarry a chance, it is rare to find a hunting party without a wizard and at least two (usually five or six) priestesses along. The hunters will almost all be well-equipped with magical items useful in combat—just in case the hunters become the hunted, or a rival House is unable to resist a chance to strike at relatively unprotected enemies.

For the same reason, it is rare to find a hunt (except those sent out to find and exterminate or capture intelligent prey, such as adventurers or scouts from other drow cities) composed of members of more than one House—except the rare "Dark Hunts" run by the Academy.

Most of these are training affairs, in which the monstrous quarry is equipped with spells it can cast or magical items it can use against its pursuers. More than one captured adventurer has ended up as the doomed quarry of a "Dark Hunt." Very rarely, one escapes, to die a lonely death, lost deep in the wild Underdark.

The Pits

Drow of all ranks are welcome in the city's "drinking pits," where they must surrender all weapons as they enter, and can get as drunk as they want, shout, argue, talk, and have a good fight. Priestesses often use magic to eavesdrop in such places, lis-

tening for treachery, plans for attacks on Houses, or other business being discussed.

The entertainment in such places is slave-versus-slave and slave-versus-beast fights, in pit-arenas. Establishment patrons wager heavily on these bloody contests.

Plays

Drow theatrical productions always involve slapstick comedy, singing, the use of masks and exaggerated costumes, the passing on (or invention) of sly gossip about city affairs, and imparting the latest news (bought from newly-arrived merchants, who have learned to charge for such news, and not offer it freely to any who ask) of the Underdark—or, especially, the wonders and events of the fabled Lands of Light (the surface world). They are typically the centerpiece entertainments at parties, but are also staged in rented warehouses near the Bazaar from time to time.

At a party, a stage is often defined with a *faerie fire*-glowing rope laid in an oval; larger productions typically take place on a raised stage. Drow audiences always stand and move about during a performance, not sitting down. To discourage thieves, some playhouses hire an expert thief and a wizard. The wizard's magic gives the thief extraordinary means of sight, and also animates a dozen or more glowing skeletal hands (used by drow directors to point out things during performances) above the crowd. If thievery is detected, the thief directs the wizard to bring a glowing, pointing hand down to indicate the guilty party. The crowd around tends to exact justice on the spot.



Drow "High Life"

Wizards AT Play

Drow mages like to play pranks (in massage houses and other places of recreation, where such things are expected, and most likely to escape retaliation or punishment) by creating small, harmless 'oops' spell effects.

A favorite cantrip creates a "second pair" of hands, so a drow being massaged suddenly feels another pair of hands—or, the embracing hands of an amorous dancing couple are suddenly multiplied many-fold.

Wizards in search of more violent and powerful play sometimes *fly* out into the wild Underdark, to the rifts inhabited by driders, and get in some good "drider-blasting" with whatever offensive spells they can muster. This pastime always carries the spice of danger—one never knows when a drider will elude or break through barrier-spells, during a magical attack that disrupts these defenses, and be able to reach its tormentor.



Now: Current News and Rumors

It's always hard for even citizens of Menzoberranzan to separate 'real' news and rumors from the false whispers and tales spread (or simply distorted from a core of truth, and promoted in slanted form) by high priestesses who delight in this sort of thing. Most Houses have one or more dabblers in misinformation, and the ruling Council, Arach-Tinilith, and (to a lesser extent) Sorcere indulge in spreading what a high priestess long ago dubbed archly "false truths."

Behind the city's institutions lies House Baenre, expert in controlling the spread of information and falsehoods, and by those means—augmented by arranged "happenings" such as assassinations, brawls, and patrol clashes—steering the deeds and loyalties of rival Houses and drow commoners alike, year after year.

Residents of Menzoberranzan know this, with varying degrees of perception of its scope and deliberate nature—but visitors must learn this the hard way. The amounts of truth in the current tidings that follow are left to the DM, who should feel free to twist them to suit planned adventures in a campaign.

The News

Here are the tidings a visitor would hear, of what's going on in Menzoberranzan at present:

- Drow from the distant city of Sschindylryn have discovered a *gate* to another plane, apparently of ancient make, in the Underdark not far—nine days of travel, not more—from Menzoberranzan. They have mounted a guard on it, fighting off several caravans that were merely trying to pass the site (which is on a well-used trade-


route), and have kept secret just what plane it leads to.

The Council is upset that a city so far away was scouting Menzoberranzan's Dominion—perhaps planning an invasion, or a good site for establishing a fortified outpost, from which the city could ultimately be raided—and has met several times to argue over what should be done. An attempt to seize the *gate* may be made soon.

- The drow city of Maeralyn, far, far to the south, has invaded the drow city of Jhachalkhyn, a much nearer community where kin (and investments) of House Fey-Branche are—or were; as far as is known, Jhachalkhyn is all but destroyed, and its folk fled or fought in retreat, scattered all over the Underdark. Refugees may come here soon.
- Driders have raided one of the most precious dark caverns, where the radiations that empower the finest weapons and armor are strongest. They were slaughtered by a rescueband of priestesses and wizards armed with much magic—but not before some escaped with nearly-finished long swords and maces of the finest make, and left the cavern-guard of almost twenty dark elves dead. Most of them were torn apart bodily, and the innards taken—to be eaten later, it is feared.
- New routes to the World Above have been discovered, in the northern Cold Reaches of the Underdark. Long blocked by ice, and bounded by areas roamed by purple worms and infested with orc-holds, the ways have re-



Now: Current News and Rumors



cently been opened up by drow exploring bands led by the famous Uuedurnn Valsharn, of the drow city of Duskylyng.

He has reported trade possibilities with surface beings, but has not said what trade, and with whom. Some priestesses of Lloth have condemned this reach to the World Above as unsanctioned by the Spider Queen, and something that could bring disaster on all her People.

- The great shudders that shook the Underdark not long ago were thought to have been caused by some not-yet-agreed-upon force, or forces, employing magic in a region of many small caverns and drainage-passages. Duergar and drow merchants have found large new caverns, still a-swirl with dust, where none existed before. No sign of volcanic activity, water-courses that might carve away rock, life—or recent death—has been found in these areas yet, but it is never wise to go boldly into new ways in the Underdark; explorations continue.
- Mistresses of Arach-Tinilith report that Revered Queen Lloth has reacted with favor to newly developed prayers offered up in her honor—devotions involving new songs of praise to the Spider Queen, sung by males while they render up a sacrifice to Lloth, into bowls held by priestesses.

New spells will undoubtedly be granted to those who devised the prayers—and thence to all Lloth's priestesses in the city, in return for elevated ranks for the favored priestesses.

- The rich ore-lodes discovered in the Dark Dominion by prospectors of House Xorlarrin recently, and dubbed "The Lustrum," have proven to include much silver, and an astonishing variety of gemstones (though not a hint of gold or adamantite). House Xorlarrin has formally protested in Council against the aggressions of other Houses—since the announcement of their discovery, House guards protecting The Lustrum have fought off no less than nineteen raids-in-force, and slain over forty attackers. Some of the bodies have been identified as commoners attached to many of the major Houses in the city—but all of these Houses have so far denied any knowledge of the attacks, saying that these traitors must have been acting independently, out of personal greed.

House Baenre suggested in Council that House Xorlarrin hire Bregan D'aerthe, and there are indications that they have done so. Xorlarrin wizards have also announced that they will be using new and powerful spells in defense of The Lustrum.

The Whispers

Rumors currently making quiet rounds of the city, under the openly-discussed news, include:

- Lloth is planning a conquest of the World Above—and has already chosen certain drow of Menzoberranzan to lead an assault on certain fortresses in the Lands of Light, striking up from below! This will happen soon; already the favored drow war-leaders are secretly recruiting those they

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want to wage war in the World Above.

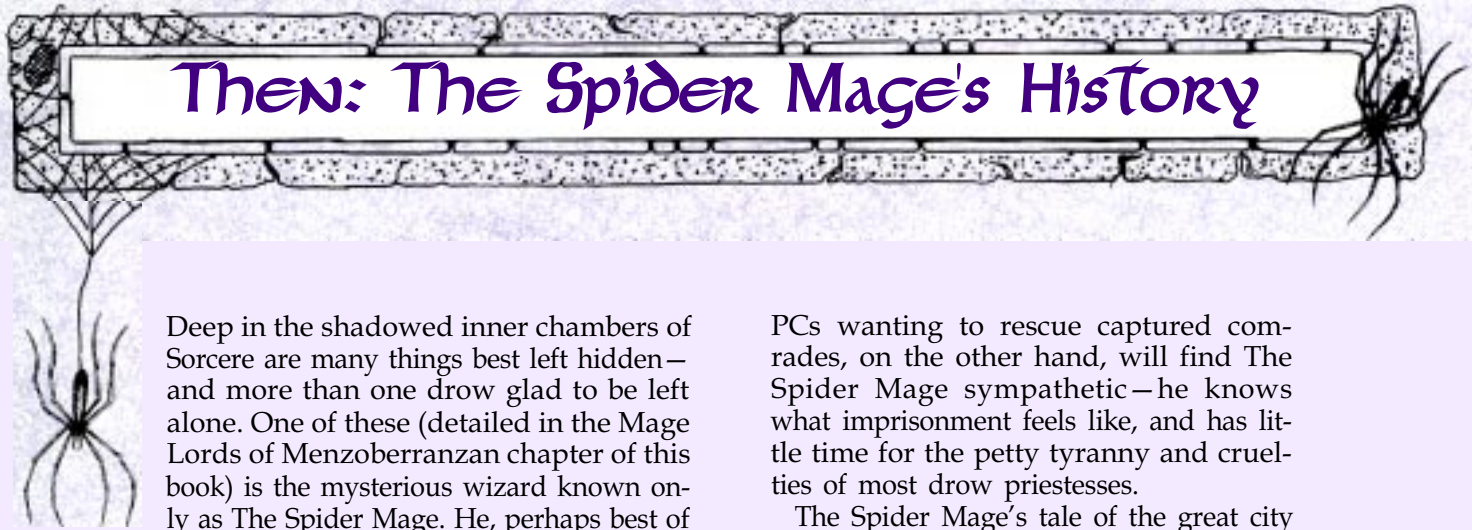
- A male drow corpse has been found in the Underdark, very close to an entrance to the city. It had tentacles instead of arms—three from each shoulder—and wore special armor of rich make! It also bore strange and powerful weapons. They have been whisked away to Sorcere—or, some say, House Baenre—for examination.
- The dangerous alhoon (illithiliches, or outcast mind flayer lichs) are planning to attack Menzoberranzan! Their spies—mind flayers of normal nature, but very rich and well-dressed—have been peering and prying about the city for over a year now, and are growing more numerous. The Council are worried, and the masters of Sorcere have been put to work developing new spells to foil attacks on the mind.
- Someone—or something—in Sorcere is killing wizards. Masters of the Academy, as well as mages in training, have been found dead, reduced to dry, empty husks, as if eaten or burned away from within so that only their outer parts remain. So far, investigations by the Archmage and other senior Masters have failed to discover the cause: a rogue spell, a summoned menace, or even a monster that has wandered in from the wild Underdark, and evaded detection. The worst fear, of course, is that a Master has fallen prey to insanity or outside influence—from beholders, vampires, alhoon, or rival drow—and is doing the killing with a hitherto-unknown spell. This may be just a

first step in weakening the city, launched by some outside power. If the deaths spread to Arach-Tinilith, few other conclusions are reasonably possible.

- House Baenre is controlling the Academy's training directly—not just by holding most of the teaching positions, as has always been the case, but by deliberately arranging the murders of promising drow of other Houses in training “accidents.” There have been angry words in Council, threats of reprisals—and calm denials from Matron Baenre. The deaths—from all Houses but Baenre—continue . . .



Then: The Spider Mage's History



Deep in the shadowed inner chambers of Sorcere are many things best left hidden—and more than one drow glad to be left alone. One of these (detailed in the Mage Lords of Menzoberranzan chapter of this book) is the mysterious wizard known only as The Spider Mage. He, perhaps best of any living drow, can recount the history of Menzoberranzan.

This is his tale; PCs who question other sources or try to piece things together from writings will learn various lesser or distorted versions of this narrative. Recent events are not spoken of, as The Spider Mage takes little interest in the trifling everyday doings of young and foolish drow, and because such details are properly left to individual Dungeon Masters, to let them bring the city to life, and build in secrets for PCs to uncover.

PCs asking around Menzoberranzan about the city's history will hear colorful exploits of the ancestors of whoever they're speaking to, usually glorifying the House of the speaker. If they press for historical details, most drow will direct them to the tower of Sorcere.

It will take a lot of gold (or somewhat less in the way of magical items or scrolls) in payment for a master of Sorcere to disturb his studies long enough to answer the foolish and prying queries of outsiders. None of the masters will dare to answer questions about current doings in Sorcere; if pressed, they'll irritably direct PCs to The Spider Mage, in the shadowed heart of Sorcere.

The Spider Mage has Art enough to spy on things in the city more or less at will. He says little of such matters unless paid well, and will omit or distort answers to protect the city as a whole (but not individual Houses) from external attack, or the plots of others, especially if he senses that the theft of magic may be involved.

PCs wanting to rescue captured comrades, on the other hand, will find The Spider Mage sympathetic—he knows what imprisonment feels like, and has little time for the petty tyranny and cruelties of most drow priestesses.

The Spider Mage's tale of the great city of Menzoberranzan, "The Flower of Lloth," can be summarized as follows:

The Founding

Five thousand years ago, the city was founded here by a great high priestess of Lloth, Menzoberra the Kinless (so-named because she had no surviving family), who had fled from the great drow city of Golothaer.

Golothaer was busily destroying itself in civil war, between drow faithful to the Spider Queen, Lloth, and those who worshipped Ghaunadaur. As warring priestesses turned foes to spiders or entombed them beneath tons of shifting rock, drow mages hurled spells to summon gigantic purple worms to devour their opponents, made huge, many-roomed inhabited stalactites break loose from cavern ceilings to crash down on dwellings below, and caused great cracks to open up in the solid rock, to swallow drow armies and the fortresses they issued from. All over Golothaer there was great death and destruction, no safety or peace or happiness—and in the end, no hope of survival.

The proud and powerful priestess of Lloth, Menzoberra, alone of her sister high priestesses, turned away from the fray. She gathered seven families of wealth and power, telling them she was following the will of Lloth, and bade them accompany her to found a new city loyal to Lloth.

Then: The Spider Mage's History

Leaving the chaos of war-torn Golothaer, Menzoberra's band set forth into the unknown, trusting to Lloth's guidance. They traveled a long, long time through the Underdark, fighting off many fearsome monsters, and braving the perils of waterfalls, cave-ins, and rockslides in the everpresent darkness.

Whenever the band seemed lost, or about to perish from hunger or at the hands of a foe, Lloth sent aid—many easily-slain giant cave bats for easily-gotten food; or a spider leading them on by a hidden route out of an apparent waterless dead-end; or a timely cave-in, bringing down a cave-ceiling atop illithids on the verge of overwhelming the weary drow band.

For all of Lloth's aid, the road was long and hard, and none of Menzoberra's band could have found the way back to ruined Golothaer if they had wanted to.

The Axes of The Dwarves

Several times, the wandering drow (who took the way Menzoberra thought right, as she followed dream-visions sent by the Spider Queen) met and defeated small bands of svirfneblin and dwarves.

At length they came to the caverns of the Black Axe Clan, mines rich in iron but mercifully free of monsters, due to the vigilance of the dwarves. The clan guards fell back before the advancing drow, deeming them too many to defeat, and sent word to their elders.

A handful of clan heroes took a stand in a small cave known as The Cavern of Cloven Heads, seeking to hold off the drow invaders while, behind their shieldwall, the Black Axe Clan fled *en masse*.

The dwarves had little to withstand the spells and numbers of Menzoberra's peo-

ple except bravery and axes—but almost half the drow led by Menzoberra perished at their hands, as those dwarven heroes fell one by one, fighting to the last breath; "The Brave Beards," the drow afterwards called them.

The last dwarf of all to go down, bloody but unbending, his body wracked by spasms brought on by the poison borne by a score of drow bolts that had pierced him, wished on the invaders "the doom of many eyes" before he coughed blood through his beard, and died. Some sort of dweomer must have set upon this hero beforehand, for his body sank slowly into the solid stone of the cavern floor, and was gone.

The Doom of Many Eyes

Exploring on through dark and deserted caverns where stalactites and stalagmites hung and stood like forests of ever-gaping fangs, Menzoberra's band came at last to a huge cavern, all a-glow with the soft radiances of giant, edible mushrooms and lichens—and choked with the bones of those who had fallen prey to the cavern's owner, a gigantic beholder as big around as the base of the largest tower in far Golothaer.

The beholder (called Many Eyes by local dwarves, the drow later learned) had twenty or more eyestalks, and ruled the cavern with the aid of various *charmed* monsters (including younglings of its own kind). The frightened drow hastened to escape the place.

They were fighting their way free of the monsters who served Many Eyes when Lloth appeared to them, floating above the beleaguered band in the form of a beautiful, gigantic female drow head whose tresses trailed away into long, dark arach-



Then: The Spider Mage's History

nid legs.

The Spider Queen told the drow they were her chosen people, and this was the place she had chosen for them—if they were worthy of her, they would find some way to remain, and make it their home.

And so Menzoberra's band turned and fought with all the blades and magic at their command. Many were the beasts they battled, before the great beholder was left alone, and finally came against them, eye-magic against spell.

The Founding of The City

Many drow perished fighting Many Eyes—hurled down from on high or turned to stone, as they hacked at eyestalks, or sunk poisoned darts and bolts into staring eyes as big as their own heads. More than one House perished utterly in that fray.

In the end, Menzoberra herself called upon Lloth and hurled spells into the eye tyrant's gaping mouth that blew it apart from within. As the smoking, writhing ruin drifted towards the cavern floor, Menzoberra the Kinless proclaimed the cavern their new home, in the name of Lloth, Queen Of All Drow.

Left to stand with her at the end of that day of death were the families S'sril, Thae'yalla, Baenre, Masq'il'yr, Nasadra, Tucheth, and Uusralla. They made a home together in the beholder's treasure-strewn lair, a large side-cave in the southern wall of the huge cavern, and raised an altar to Lloth. A yochlol appeared as their first prayers were made, and told them to call their cavern "Menzoberranzan" (= 'Menzoberra's home') in recognition of her efforts and success in the service of the Spider Queen.

The Curse of ALL Dark Elves

All too soon, the curse that plagues all dark elves—the same feuding, born of pride, cruelty, and battle-lust, that destroyed Golothaer—returned to the drow of Menzoberranzan.

The Thae'yalla were a House of proud and accomplished wizards, and almost all the surviving Nasadra were priestesses of Lloth. The Nasadra ordered the Thae'yallan wizards about, questioned their loyalty to Lloth, reserved the right to tell them what to do, and punished those who strayed from such commands "in the name of the goddess." At length, while about such proud games, they put to torture the oldest and wisest mage of Thae'yalla, and he died of it.

In rage, House Thae'yalla appealed to Menzoberra to curb the self-assumed authority of the Nasadra. She took counsel with Lloth, and sided wholly with the Nasadra, giving them whips whose strands were living snake-heads, to enforce the will of the Spider Queen. The triumphant Nasadra gleefully began to flay the Thae'yallan wizards—who fled in despair to gather at a certain spot in the cave.

There they spent their own lives in a great spell that rent the side-cavern asunder, burying most of the drow of Menzoberranzan in a single cataclysmic explosion and roof-collapse that obliterated the Houses of Thae'yalla, Masq'il'yr, Tucheth, and Uusralla at a single stroke, slew Menzoberra herself, and reduced House S'sril and House Nasadra to a few dazed survivors. The explosion transformed the former side-cavern into the great plateau that came to be known as Qu'ellarz'orl, but by some miracle the central pillar of the main cavern, Narbondel, survived.

Then: The Spider Mage's History

The Way of Lloth

The bitter Nasadran survivors sought to proclaim their rule over the surviving drow—but the tattered priestesses of S'sril, the eldest and proudest of the surviving families, defied them. House Baenre, who retained enough might to decide the issue either way, sided with House S'sril—but to prevent further bloodshed that would inevitably leave all the drow too weak to hold the cavern against the perils of the Underdark, the priestesses of House Baenre proposed a compromise: those who accepted the rule of Nasadra would travel on, to found another city to the glory of the goddess, and those who sided with S'sril would remain here.

Lloth appeared in person, and firmly blessed the wisdom and forbearance of House Baenre. The Spider Queen then laid down The Way of Lloth, the basic laws under which both cities would live. She also decreed that the two cities must remain friendly to each other without fail or both face her whole-hearted wrath, and led the Nasadran band into the Underdark, to found Ched Nasad.

The Rebuilding

The rebuilding of Menzoberranzan began slowly, but quickened as homeless drow and refugees arrived from fallen Golithaer and from Cloibbra, a drow city far to the south that had been sacked by dwarves, svirfneblin, and thaalud working together.



House S'sril died out (the only noble House of Menzoberranzan ever to become extinct through non-violent causes), its last elders founding the Academy to train

drow newcomers in the Menzoberranyr way of Lloth-worship. Under their guidance, and amid the stability enforced by House Baenre, mastery of sorcery leaped ahead rapidly, and the city of Menzoberranzan soon became a place of pride and power, of wealth and of soaring castles.

All too soon, rivalries turned violent again—but the city's ruling Council had been proclaimed, and House Baenre held iron-hard to The Way of Lloth. Now there were rules to the feuding of drow Houses, boundaries on the strife that let warring drow grow ever-stronger. As they grew in power, so too did the planar power (and favor) of Lloth the Spider Queen, Dark Mother Of All Drow.



Menzoberranzan's Merchants



The lifeblood of Menzoberranzan is its merchants—House agents and traders, and the more numerous independent commoners. These entrepreneurs (particularly those who travel the Underdark to other cities and trademoots) keep Menzoberranzan vital, important, and rich. Some are loners and eccentrics; others band together to form “companies” (such as Xalyth’s Company, or The Company of Three Black Rings), or cooperate in the use of facilities and in trade agreements as “fellowships” (such as The High Handed, The Black Claw, and The Brown Mushroom).

A Merchant Career

Menzoberranzan’s merchants are chiefly drow males (trade being one of the few outlets for aggressive and creative males), but a current star trader is “Nal” Xalyth (her nickname is an acronym for Not A Lady, a scornful boast she once made at a party, spurning a noble male flatterer). Non-drow traders are becoming more numerous, but tend to be relegated to “corner shop” or “lift and load laborer” roles.

Merchant careers in Menzoberranzan are dangerous, and often short. To anger a Matron or even a proud young House noble is to court death or disaster to one’s trade through “accidental” destruction of one’s goods (or one’s home and family), by spell or “misdirected” House troops on arms practice.

This, plus the restlessness of many merchants (who, at heart, are happiest when traveling), makes the city’s mercantile roster ever-changing. To the other dangers of merchant life must be added rivalries among traders. These tend to be fiercest among drow native to the city; visiting drow, duergar, and other races who don’t

cause trouble tend to be left alone, by unwritten agreement.

House Alliances

Many merchants survive by alliances with noble Houses—but the dangers of angering nobles lead them to keep such relationships secret, except in the face of possibly-fatal threats. (“You should know, as Lloth is my witness, great noble, that to attack me is to attack—House Baenre. Think on this, I ask you, before you act. If I fall, I *shall* be avenged.”) Hints of such alliances can be found in this book, on a case-by-case basis—but only one is noted here: the relationship between House Baenre and the fellowship of The Black Claw.

When merchant alliances and no-blades-bared pacts began to be formalized as fellowships and companies, most commoners saw this as good—a counterbalance to the overwhelming power of haughty noble Houses.

Most Houses didn’t agree. House Baenre, however, was crafty enough to secretly found and sponsor the most powerful and independent (openly defiant of Houses) fellowship of all, The Black Claw. It gained popular support as a rival to the nobles, but House Baenre controlled its policies and actions, and grew rich from it. Over time, Baenren control of the Claw became an open secret, and then common knowledge—until several other powerful houses, led by Fey-Branche, founded The Brown Mushroom as a deliberate counter to House Baenre (to get their own share of riches earned through successful trade).

Menzoberranzan's Merchants



Goods In And Out

Menzoberranzan is largely self-sufficient, if need be (most drow communities must be, or they soon fall under the control of another city, or are destroyed), but trades with others to gain rare goods (especially highly prized surface-world delicacies such as fruit and shellfish varieties), slaves (labor is always in short supply, in a place dominated by sadistic, whip-wielding priestesses), textiles, and anything that is offered at a lower price than it costs to buy or make oneself in Menzoberranzan.



In return, Menzoberranzan exports skilled stone-sculptors, edible mushrooms of very high quality (grown in the rich farms near Donigarten), finely-made

weapons, and obsidian carvings mined from nearby veins—notably “black glass daggers” favored for sacrificial uses in Calimshan, Mulhorand, and certain cults and brotherhoods of the North; the Zhen-tarim, for example, enspell such weapons to create magical *death daggers*, which they leave as their calling card at the scenes of assassinations. These weapons smoke when striking, burning a distinctive hole around the wound, for triple normal damage—and in the process, cause such wracking pains that the victim cannot concentrate to cast spells, and is -3 on all attack rolls.

Menzoberranzan also sells water to long-distance travelers, and breeds and trains lizard-mounts in nearby caverns.

Menzoberranyr hunting bands gain

Menzoberranzan's Merchants



food for city tables, keep nearby training, radiation-strong, and lizard-raising caverns relatively safe, and keep the trade-passages to and from the city open (the city's own exiled driders and natural predators of the Underdark would overrun all if unchecked for long). Wide patrols also raid svirfneblin, cloaker, and duergar holds occasionally, but the days of all-out war are past (unless Menzoberranyr want to harm their own success as a presently-important trading center).

At present, they don't; the city is enjoying a wave of prosperity brought about by a time of relative peace among its ruling Houses (there have been few recent noble family extinctions, with attendant losses of all wealth, servants, talents, and contacts), and by the success of the city's bazaar (The Bazaar has a chapter all its own, in this book).

A "DM's handy selection" of currently prominent city merchants can be gleaned from the "Neighborhoods" chapter. Here one of the most interesting traders is detailed, as a guide for DMs developing merchant NPCs.

Xalyth: drow female F7; AC 4 (drow *chainmail* +1); MV 12; 44 hp; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon (1d8: long sword or *sword of dancing*; 1d4: dagger; 1-3: hand crossbow bolts, 60-yard range, save vs. poison at -4 or sleep for 2d4 hours, 2 bows and 33 bolts carried); THAC0 14; S 15, D 14, C 16, I 18, W 17, CH 16; spell use (innate drow powers); CE.

"Not A Lady" Xalyth rose from humble origins (as a child, she emptied chamberpots—by hand—onto her father's dung-cart, to be taken to the fungus-farm fields) to dominate gem-dealing (and under-the-table fencing of stolen goods) in Menzoberranzan. Her unadvertised sideline is providing material components for

spells.

Xalyth is known as a fair gem appraiser but a hard bargainer, who buys low and sells high (with no discounts for volume or repeated patronage). She doesn't have to compete overmuch; she is the only steady (as opposed to caravan empty-the-cart windfall sale visits) source of spell components in the city (except for 'stiff services' providing corpses to those interested in animating undead).

Xalyth's success in that trade depends on firm relationships with nine far-traveled suppliers, from the Vhaeraun-worshipping drow male Amryyr of Skullport to the duergar Ubelein "Fatreek" Shubelith, of Underspires.

Xalyth never tries to cheat anyone, holding to even casual promises and agreements (unless forced from her at weapon-point). This trustworthiness is the cornerstone of her success, and she cements it with occasional aid (doctoring, hiding, and giving shelter) to her suppliers, if they arrive wounded or in trouble with the authorities or rivals.

On one memorable occasion, Xalyth went out into the Underdark alone, when a magical *sending* told her Amryyr was endangered by zealous priestesses of Lloth. She attacked their patrol from behind, using special bolts (tipped with a poison that puts to sleep even priestesses immune to the usual crossbow-bolt spider venom). Leaving them slumped asleep as a warning to their Houses, she brought Amryyr in safety to the city. Such deeds have made her famous in Menzoberranzan.

Xalyth always puts on a calm front; shrieking rages are for priestesses who think society revolves around them, and have soldiers at their call. At times, her calm is rather icy, and her sharp tongue is famous, but she is always interested in

Menzoberranzan's Merchants

making a deal first, and fighting later.

In fights, Xalyth is known for keeping alert track of foes who work around to attack her from behind, while she confronts those in front of her.

In her shop, Xalyth has several glass vials full of potent sleep-gas; if attacked, she can break one, forcing all within 90' to save versus breath weapon at -4, or fall asleep for 4d4 rounds.

If cornered and fearing death, Xalyth will reluctantly use her secret weapon, bought from a drow wizard for many rare and expensive spell components. If she speaks or whispers a certain word, part of her prominent bust (a magical construct, not her own flesh) vanishes, releasing *chain lightning* that inflicts 12d6 (save for half damage) harm on the first being struck, 11d6 to the second, and so on; Xalyth can control where the first two jumps go, and is herself immune from all burst damage.

This body-weapon is a magical form of last-ditch defense becoming popular among drow able to afford it. Typically the loss of a body part is involved, and the procedure is long, risky, and expensive. Some drow who want such protections (such as Matrons or ambitious high priestesses) can't trust a drow wizard enough to have it done.


Xalyth's chest lightning burst is the simplest, most common sort of body-weapon (for another, see *The Spider Mage* in the chapter on Mage Lords). It was done for her by the aged Past Master Courdh Mizzrym, Archmage Emeritus of Menzoberranzan, who oversees all teaching at the Academy, and is in charge of experimenting with and guarding most powerful magical items held by Sorcere. He is secretly Sorcere's overseer of security — which, unbeknownst to the Matrons, means he is their chief spy on the noble

Houses. In answer to suspicious queries from the ruling Council, Courdh was able to justify working with a commoner merchant (and not reveal precisely what he did for her) on the grounds of "dangerous, but necessary" experimentation if Menzoberranzan was to keep pace with other drow cities in defensive sorcerous arts — too risky to yet perform on any priestess of Lloth.

Xalyth's ultimate aims are to break the power of the ruling high priestesses, so that all drow have a greater say over their lives in the city — or if she can't do that, to leave Menzoberranzan for a more free and equal community near the surface, where she can carry on trade. One day, if drow wizards develop the necessary spells and protective items, she'd like to be able to travel freely between the Underdark and the surface world, to see the wonders of The Lands of Light and to do trade there.



The Neighborhoods of The City



The maps in this set show a proud, sprawling subterranean city. This chapter affords an overview of “what’s where” in its streets. The city can readily be divided up into neighborhoods. To the north of the main cavern is its most sacred area, normally off-limits to visitors and most citizens alike: the upper cavern of **Tier Breche**.

To the south of the main cavern is a larger raised area, a plateau that is itself dominated by a higher plateau occupied by the vast complex of House Baenre. This is **Qu’ellarz’orl**, the Place of the Nobles. Except by invitation or on important business, unescorted visitors and drow not of (or servants of) the noble families that dwell in “the House loft” are not welcome there.

Between these restricted places of danger and power lies bustling Menzoberranzan. If one surveys its areas in order of decreasing power and influence, the next district is an arc-shaped belt curving along the base of Qu’ellarz’orl’s slopes, from the west wall of the main cavern to the east, touching the central pillar of Narbondel, and roughly as wide as the distance between Narbondel and the House-loft, all along its length. This is **Narbondellyn**, also known as “Broad Streets” for its wealth and pretensions; most ambitious, up-and-coming noble Houses live here.

Older, more established noble Houses traditionally inhabit the **West Wall** area. It runs north along the main cavern’s western wall from where Narbondellyn ends (the wide meeting of streets known as Lloth’s Web, or just “the Web”), curving east with the cavern wall, to end at the steps of Tier Breche.

The West Wall curves around the middle-class and mercantile heart of Menzoberranzan, which lies on all sides of Narbondel except the south. This is Duth-

cloim, or **Manyfolk**, home to wealthy non-drow, and well-to-do non-noble drow. It contains **The Bazaar**, detailed in its own chapter.

East of Manyfolk—that is, roughly east of a line formed by the Clawrift, and the flight of a quarrel fired straight from the tip of its easternmost ‘finger’ to the easternmost walls of House Fey-Branche—lies **Eastmyr**, or as young drow tauntingly rename it, “mere East.” In these narrower, shabbier streets dwell commoners, drow not attached to any noble House, or not trusted enough to dwell in a House compound. Here live drow mercenaries and not-so-successful merchants.

East of Eastmyr, in a band stretching north to south from the western end of the Spiderfangs (the east-west line of stalagmites north of House Barrison Del’Armgo), are the dark alleys and hovels of **the Braeryn**, or “the Stenchstreets.” Here dwell the nameless and diseased drow, the lawless, and goblins, orcs, bugbears, and other non-drow hangers-on and occasional hirelings. Drow nobles occasionally go on hunts here for sport, slaughtering all who cannot hide or defend themselves.

East of the Braeryn is a patrolled area, to keep its inhabitants from freely stealing from the farms beyond—for to the east lie the rich fungi farms that feed the city. They stretch to the easternmost end of the cavern, where the small lake of Donigarten lies, with its moss beds and rothe herds. The whole area is referred to as **Donigarten**.

The only other city “neighborhood” comprises the passages and side-caverns within immediate reach of the main cavern—the closest areas of the Dark Dominion. This fringe of the Bauthwaf (“around-cloak”) is known as **the Mantle**, and has always been part of city life.



The Neighborhoods of The City

As we tour these areas (shown on the accompanying City Districts map), some general notes apply.

- It is impossible to show all of the many hollowed-out, inhabited, and sometimes bridge-linked stalactites hanging over the city—or the many passages that enter its cavern walls high up, to form balconies or beckoning cave-mouths (no stairs down from these are allowed, to prevent ready invasion by rival drow, duergar, goblin, or others who could fire missile weapons out over the city to provide covering fire for descending troops). An inventive DM can add many of these, to enliven a campaign set in, or extensively exploring, Menzoberranzan.
- All neighborhoods are patrolled—the more important or wealthy the area, the heavier the patrols. Drow rarely dare to assault or insult other drow (one never knows when one is facing a master of Sorcere out for some fun, or a magically-disguised priestess of Lloth or Matron Mother on important business bent, and armed with a short temper), but obvious non-drow may be challenged almost continuously in the first three areas listed above. Patrol strengths appear in the chapter on “The Bazaar,” but adventurers are warned that when the city is aroused by recent lawlessness, internal strife, or open violence, patrols in the three wealthiest districts and in the trouble spots of Eastmyr and the Braeryn may be doubled or trebled in both numbers and frequency.
- Partly to get some measure of control over merchants, many noble Houses

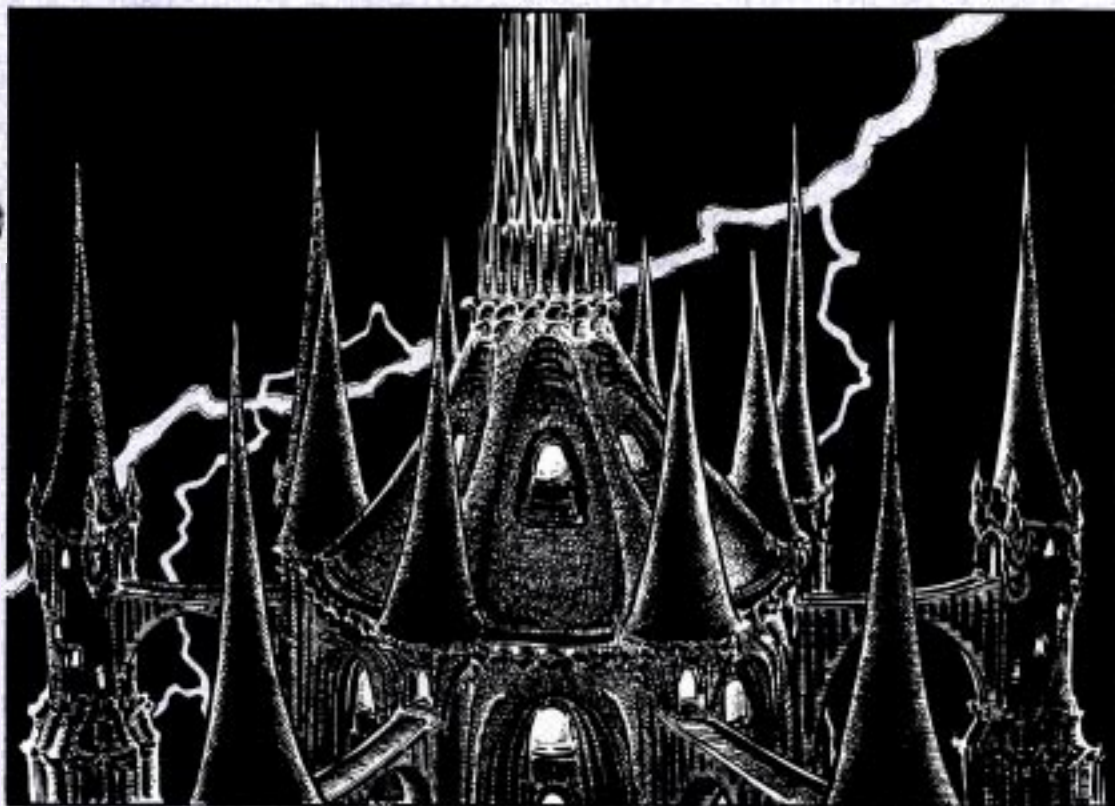
constructed rows of shops along the walls of their compounds, which they rent out. These shops are constructed of stone, to look a part of the central fortress. Anyone trying to tunnel from a shop into the wall of the castle beyond typically finds a grim warning once they pierce the shop’s back wall, furnished by the priestesses of the House: a drow skeleton hung on the revealed castle wall. If touched, it animates and attacks. Diggers who persist in work on such a castle wall will encounter killing defense glyphs (described in *Drow of the Underdark*), typically of the sort that unleash *chain lightning*.

- The visitor will notice several ruins around the city—notably those of the complexes that were once Houses DeVir, Do’Urden, Freth, Hun’ett, and Teken’duis. It is considered defiance of Lloth to rebuild a House (or on the site of a House) eradicated due to drow justice, or that fell because it lost the favor of Lloth. In some cases, a generation or so after a ruin, a House may with the open blessing of Lloth or her priestesses take over a vacant spot and build, but time must pass between the old and the new.

It is lawful to take over the premises of a House that was defeated by another House, but this is rarely done; it is considered unlucky. For the House who conquered, it is dangerously close to arrogance before Lloth, to do so—and any other House moving in faces the rightful wrath of the conquering House. Moreover, who wants a fortress that has fallen, and is known to be pregnable?



The Neighborhoods of the City



- Though all buildings in Menzoberranzan have cellars, the Underways aren't extensive. All digging in the city must be done by hand, and tunneling beyond the surface boundaries of a holding is punishable by death (if a building's outside walls were extended straight down through the ground, they would mark the limits of allowable digging).

These laws are due to widespread digging in the city's early days—mining so prevalent it caused many disasters. Drow dug to cause a wall or tower of a rival House to collapse, or to gain access to the cellars of someone else's building for a theft or raid-in-force. Things became so bad that the wizards of Sorcere worked

together to develop a mighty *contingency field* spell, similar to the mightiest magics of Evermeet and lost Netheril: the *stone curse*. (*Contingency field* spells are very rare because their casting usually involves the sacrifice of the caster's life.)

The *stone curse* governs all of Menzoberranzan, including the Overways, the Underways, and the Mantle. It cannot be dispelled by normal means (short of a *wish* spell), but can be briefly suspended by a *limited wish*. Anyone caught trying to destroy, alter, or suspend the *stone curse* is slain on the spot.

The *stone curse* triggers an immediate *reverse gravity* spell, accompanied by a thunderclap-like sound, wherever casting is performed for a *dig*, *move earth*, *passwall*, or *vanish* spell (or at the location

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of the wielder of any magical item or psionic power activated to duplicate any of these effects).

The by-hand and boundary limitations on excavation in Menzoberranzan keep most digging small-scale. Drow have come to recognize two other dangers linked to underground expansion: the increasing likelihood of triggering a collapse of the structure above, or of breaking into existing passages and caverns (lessening the security of the dwelling).

Please keep in mind that information on noble houses given here mirrors what “most citizens think” rather than being completely accurate. For true details of the noble Houses, consult the book in this set devoted to them.

Tier Breche

The largest single piece of architecture found in Menzoberranzan is the broad stairway that leads up to Tier Breche. Rumor says these stone steps are enspelled with *chain lightning* and other killing magics, under the control of wizards of Sorcere. If such defenses exist, they are rarely used.

The top of the stair is always guarded by two male drow warriors in the final year of their battle training. They wear *rings of spell turning*, and have sleep-venomed longswords, hand crossbows, daggers, and guardhorns.

A note from a guardhorn summons a mid-level “duty” wizard from Sorcere in 1-2 rounds. The wizard can in turn summon a pair of *jade spider* guardians (detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*) and a “duty” priestess of mid-level. In addition to their spells and items (both typically carry wands), these two can call on wizard and priestess reinforcements; storming Tier

Breche from the city below is not likely to be a successful act.

Drow who try to fly or climb past the guards, avoiding the stair, discover—the hard way—that other guardians exist: many hungry, web-shooting spiders lurk on the walls and ceiling where Tier Breche joins the larger main cavern.

The guards challenge all who ascend to Tier Breche, except known masters of the Academy and priestesses of the city. No one leaving Tier Breche is customarily challenged (though the guards may be alerted to prevent a certain departure), and challenges issued to any drow who looks like a powerful wizard or priestess are polite indeed.

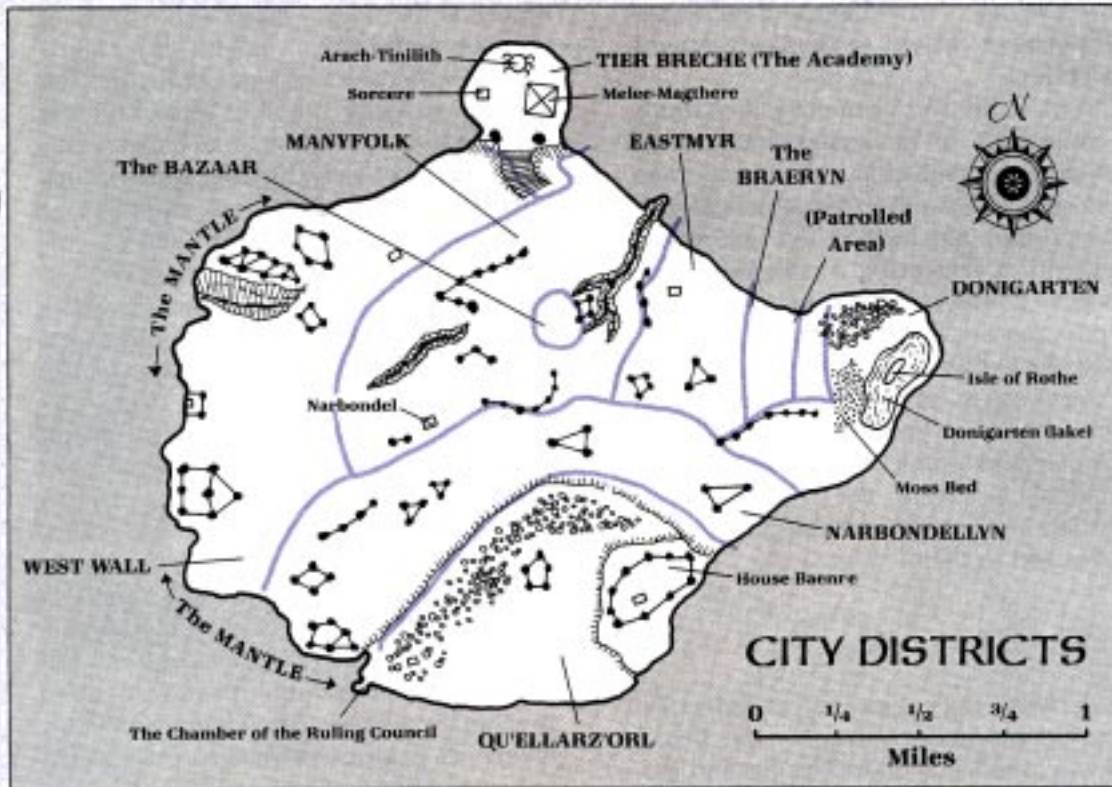
The most famous and distinctive buildings in Menzoberranzan (House Baenre is more hollowed-out, bridge-liked overhanging stalactites than buildings) are the three large buildings found in Tier Breche: the spider-shaped temple of Lloth, where all priestesses receive their initial training, known as “Arach-Tinilith;” the many-spired wizards’ stronghold of “Sorcere;” and the starkly-simple, huge pyramid-fortress where Menzoberranzan’s fighters are trained, “Melee-Magthere.”

There’s no point in mapping any of these in detail. Visitors rarely see anything more of Arach-Tinilith than a few small audience-chambers near the entrance, and the large upper chamber dedicated to summoning rituals of homage and worship to Lloth (where young drow trainees graduate). The rest of the temple is largely shrouded in habitual darkness—and if one is not a Menzoberranyr priestess of Lloth, one is decidedly unwelcome here.

The rooms and passages of Sorcere are so often veiled, distorted, hidden, or altered by the wizards (partly out of paranoia, partly for amusement or



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experimentation, and partly due to a deliberate plan to foil intruders) that any map is useless before it is finished.

Melee-Magthere is vast, with many cellars and lower levels as well as the vast bulk that can be seen from outside. Yet there is little of interest here; after one has seen one armory, spartan sleeping-cell, or sparring-chamber, one has seen them all—and, beyond a few dark dungeon cells and torture chambers, and a handful of trophy-adorned, larger war-council and assembly halls, that is all Melee-Magthere contains (in great numbers).

Qu'ellarz'Orl

Screened from the lower city by its forest of giant mushrooms, the plateau occupied by some of the proudest noble Houses is bare and spacious; there is none of the crowding associated with most other neighborhoods. House Baenre ruthlessly keeps the rabble out. One sees only giant mushrooms—a small forest of them—and noble Houses (as well as the ruined compounds of some extinct Houses); no one else lives here, and no businesses are located here.

Soldiers of all the powerful noble Houses promenade here from time to time, on real or assumed business, just to be seen—and to challenge beings they

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don't think belong here, or just don't like the look of.

The eldest of the city's current noble families, House Baenre, was one of the founding Houses of Menzoberranzan, five thousand years ago. It has not only survived the city's cruel intrigues, but flourished, growing to fill an awesome fortress of thirty linked stalactites and twenty tall and majestic stalagmites, atop a plateau at the eastern end of Qu'ellarz'orl. This complex is girt about with a huge weblike fence—whose most powerful spells, citizens whisper, were spun by Lloth herself. The House is so strong that it can spare a thousand warriors (all it has openly admitted to having, for years) to guard its walls at all times. At the heart of the great fortress is a huge circular, domed temple to Lloth—an amphitheater dominated by an image of the Spider Queen that shifts endlessly from one of her forms to another. Lloth seems well pleased with the "First House" of Menzoberranzan.

Below the watching bulk of House Baenre, three other Houses currently dwell on Qu'ellarz'orl: Xorlarrin, Agrach Dyrr, and Mizzrym. All are among the ruling Houses of the present Council.

House Xorlarrin is reclusive and secretive; its members go veiled or masked in public. It is known for its magical might, boasting at least seven wizards among the masters of Sorcere, some of them very old and powerful.

House Xorlarrin occupies a small, recently-raised stone tower, the Spelltower Xorlarrin, in the center of Qu'ellarz'orl. They moved here from a cluster of unfenced houses in the lower city after their utter destruction of House Hrost Ul-u'ar.

House Agrach Dyrr is an old, haughty House dominated by a handful of powerful male wizards led by the lichdrow Dyrr

himself. It occupies a recently-finished fortress of nine towers, surrounded by a narrow dry moat of sharpened stone spikes. The House hastily moved to Qu'ellarz'orl from the lower city when their wizardly rivals House Xorlarrin arrived in the House loft, to preserve their assumed supremacy in matters magical.

House Mizzrym has become known for the depth and intricacy of its intrigues and interlocking alliances. The treachery and double-dealing of Mizzrym have even led to a Menzoberranyr saying: "Even one side of a Mizzrym's tongue doesn't know what the other is saying—and once it finds out, won't admit to it!" (Mizzrym have been known to attack drow who say such words, but secretly take great satisfaction in such a reputation.) Persistent whispers say House Mizzrym is building its own army, somewhere in the labyrinthine passages southwest of Menzoberranzan.

House Mizzrym occupies an old, large cavern network above Qu'ellarz'orl, reached by a heavily-guarded stair spiraling up from a single massive stalagmite-tower. Among the guardians of the stairway are monstrous foulwings (see "Monsters of Menzoberranzan").

In the southwestern corner of Qu'ellarz'orl is the entrance to The Chamber of the Ruling Council. Its arched, ironbound double entrance doors are closed and guarded by soldiers of House Baenre and an honor guard from Melee-Magthere at all times, opening only to allow Matron Mothers and their bodyguards into and out of the not-so-secret meetings where the ruling Houses decide what befalls in the city.

The Chamber is a small, natural side-cavern dominated by a spider-shaped table. The ruling Mothers sit there in tall, jewelled thrones when Council is in session, the chamber lit by a hundred sweet-



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smelling candles. A single, unadorned chair is provided for guests (only one guest is customarily allowed into the cavern at a time). It is rare indeed for any guest to be non-drow, or male. Bodyguards in attendance on the matron mothers are allowed in, and by custom remain silent, standing around the walls, when Council is in session, speaking and moving only when bidden to. Each matron admits the same number of bodyguards, no more than two except by extraordinary agreement, and never more than six (six each makes the Chamber crowded indeed). Guards are usually clerks or others called to make demonstrations or give evidence; they are rarely needed (or effective) as defenders of a matron's person.

The most striking natural feature of the House loft is its mushroom forest. The maps in this set only show mushrooms the size of an ogre or larger, but among those giants shown are many smaller 'shrooms and fungi, growing in a fantastic labyrinth of soft phosphorescence. This area is used by many nobles for meetings, picnics, and games—but no prudent drow considers it an area to go into unarmed, or a place for words and dealings that must remain secret: House Baenre and others use magic to spy or eavesdrop on drow in the mushroom forest as a matter of course. It is a crime punishable by a heavy fine to willfully damage (or cut, for eating) any growing thing in this forest. Anyone destroying, felling, or harvesting an entire mushroom faces the death penalty. Without these rules (known to all Menzoberanyr), the forest would long ago have vanished—as most of the mushrooms growing in the main chamber did. Hungry drow harvested them for food, and sampled them for use in the making of medicines, potions, and spellcasting, until few were left.

NARBONDELLYN

This wealthy district is dominated by the ruling noble Houses of Fey-Branche, Faen Tlabbar, and Barrison Del'Armgo, and by the lesser Houses of Tuin'Tarl, Srune'lett, Horlbar, and Shobalar. It is also home to many wealthy up-and-coming drow families (the noble Houses of the future), and the most luxurious and profitable of trades: gems, perfumes, moneylending, and the like.

Fey-Branche, a relatively young and aggressive House, has a triangular stalagmite-compound in the center of the city, just south of where drow flying in straight lines from Tier Breche, House Baenre, and Narbondel would meet. From there, neighbors say cattily, they can "spy on everything, with a minimum of real effort."

House Faen Tlabbar is known for its tall, beautiful, and ardent females, who often seek the company of male visitors, and are always developing new spells. Its Matron Mothers created an unusual tradition: open, candid speech among House members, regardless of sex or rank. The House occupies the stalagmite-and-stalactite compound just north and west of the western end of Qu'ellarz'orl.

The dangerous Second House of Barrison Del'Armgo occupies the large, triangular fenced-stalagmite compound lying northeast of Qu'ellarz'orl, between House Baenre and Donigarten.

House Tuin'Tarl is relatively young, risen from common stock through shrewd trading with other drow communities. It occupies the triangular fenced-stalagmite compound due south of Narbondel (east of a larger triangular compound occupied by House Horlbar).

House Srune'lett is known for the short,

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stout drow its bloodlines produce (its priestesses have long been referred to throughout the city as “the fat sisters,” much to their annoyance). It inhabits a recently-constructed, many-pinnacled fortress on the north side of the Darkspires (the stalagmite cluster that runs east to west, between Houses Horlbar and Shobalar).

House Horlbar has been ruled by sister high priestesses for two thousand years. Their cruel depravity is infamous; if they were ever to fight each other, the House would split apart, making it easy prey for rivals—which is all that keeps these two cold, contemptuous females from tearing each other’s hearts out. Horlbarryn, it is said, make dangerous enemies: they never forget, and their patience for revenge can span a thousand years or more. The House occupies the westernmost of the two triangular fenced-stalagmite compounds south of Narbondel (the smaller, more easterly compound is House Tuin’Tarl).

House Shobalar is almost exclusively female; among its women are wizards of power as well as high priestesses. It keeps to itself, its nobles rarely appearing in public—and there are persistent rumors of strange Shobalarran experiments involving spiders. One possibly exaggerated tale whispers of powerful, living spider-bodies whose legs are equipped with dagger-like blades of bone, that drow don like clothing, and animate by thought. This is unconfirmed, but it is true that Shobalarran prefer to ride about the city on strange, mutated or specially-bred giant spider steeds (regular giant spiders that can “fire” sticky strands at prey, as cave fishers do), rather than using *drift-discs* or riding-lizards. The House also has a history of entering alliances and then simply abandoning them whenever an ally

gets into trouble of any sort.

House Shobalar inhabits the diamond-shaped stalagmite-and-stalactite fortress directly north of House Faen Tlabbar.

Many other drow families of wealth and importance (or self-assumed importance) inhabit Narbondel. These include Urundlet, Balartyr, Tuek’tarm, Hael’lrin, Shunn T’ahaladar, and Klor’lbar.

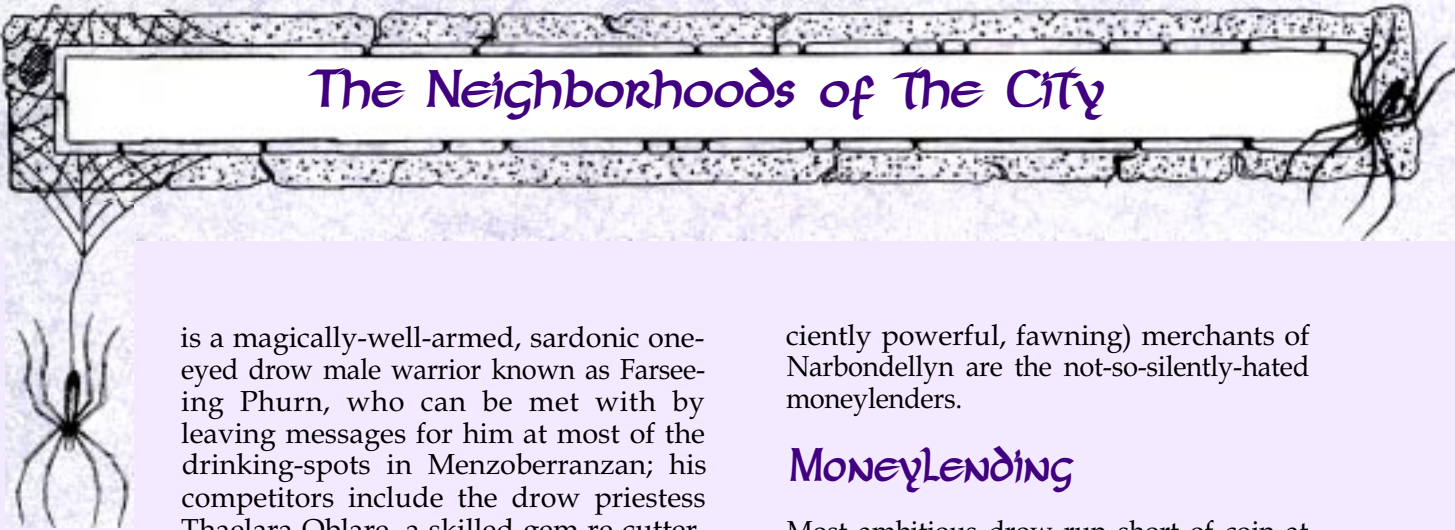
Important merchants dwelling and operating in Narbondel include the most haughty gem-merchants of the city. (Though a wealthy merchant may rent or own a second home to escape business pressures or to use for secret meetings, mistresses, and the like, almost all merchants live in the same fortified building that houses their shop, to better guard their stock and wealth.)

Mritt Shadalun and Hondel Belek’tyr carry on a bitter rivalry for bragging rights to being “the best” gem merchant in the city. Both are known for the variety and high quality of their stock. They may coldly outbid each other for a particularly large or unusual gemstone of a type Menzoberranyr deem valuable (rubies, sapphires, and emeralds are most favored), but on a daily basis tend to specialize. Surface-world oddities and treasures (such as amaratha, king’s tears, and rogue stones, all prized by drow and detailed in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* hardcover sourcebook) are the stock-in-trade of Belek’tyr, while Shadalun sneers at such “foreign” stones, and tends to deal in black opals, fire opals, and other treasures of the known and familiar.

A cluster of lesser gem merchants specialize in one particular stone (amethysts are the field of the Ouol family, and diamonds are dealt in by the rival families of Thadalix and Ryrri), or deal in stolen, seized, or enspelled materials. The most famous of these “dealers in the shadows”



The Neighborhoods of The City



is a magically-well-armed, sardonic one-eyed drow male warrior known as Farseeing Phurn, who can be met with by leaving messages for him at most of the drinking-spots in Menzoberranzan; his competitors include the drow priestess Thaelara Oblare, a skilled gem re-cutter, and the mercenary female drow warrior Infynyl Mestpar.

Narbodellyn is also home to the wealthiest (and most expensive) perfumers in the city. In the crowded, damp underground, perfuming is an art born of necessity. The best drow scents mingle with less desirable smells to mute everything into a pleasurable background—rather than masking stinks with a thick, choking stink of their own. The precise makings of scents are well-guarded secrets, although most drow know (and, if time and needs permit, practice) the basics of making a pleasant, usually spicy masking scent.

The artists of Menzoberranzan perfumery sell scents that purport to capture the fragrance of certain surface-world flowers, or that sway drow into certain emotional states (such as ardent love), as well as personal body-scents and recognition-smell dyes and paints. These preeminent merchants include Mhaershalah of the Flowers, famous far across the Underdark; the halfling Myrip Minstrel-wish, reputed to be half-crazed (or worse), and given to acrobatic dancing and singing while he works; the discreet brothers Dhellorn and Diriziir Jaszarr, “Perfumers to Nobles,” who deal in love-drugs and personal scents for fashion and party use; and the old, lame she-drow Halaera, who walks with a stick, carries powerful magical items on her person, and has a hand in half the kidnappings and slave-deals in the city.

More openly sinister than most of the proud (or, if a customer is noble and suffi-

ciently powerful, fawning) merchants of Narbodellyn are the not-so-silently-hated moneylenders.

MONEYLENDING

Most ambitious drow run short of coin at one time or another. Some are in no position to successfully steal or extort funds, murder and rob, or gain a loan from a patron or House superior. They turn to the moneylenders, who also act as money-changers for outsiders.

Menzoberranyr accept all surface coinages, but prefer metal or gems of intrinsic value. A drow is happier with silver or gold coins than copper pieces, because the metal can be melted and reshaped for use where the coinage is not honored. The moneylenders of Menzoberranzan also deal in trade bars, rare shells, the jarred and jellied eyeballs used by some mind flayers, all known types of gems, perfumes, and even rare foods and plants. The more exotic the currency or collateral, the higher their rates.

A standard loan to a drow of the city is typically in coinage, at an interest rate of 10%, compounded every 20 days. Collateral of written title to items worth 25 gp or 75% of the loan, whichever is higher, is usually required.

To a visiting drow, the standard is 12%, compounded every 40 days, but collateral equal in value to 100% or more of the loan in portable property (or a deed to land or a building in the city) must be left with the lender.

To a non-drow citizen or long-term resident of Menzoberranzan, the terms are the same as for visiting drow, but the rate is 14% or more, compounded every 20 days. Visiting non-drow are also lent money on these terms, but at 16% or more.



The Neighborhoods of The City

High-risk loans (to merchants who must travel the Underdark before they can see profit enough to repay, a fugitive from drow justice, or someone widely known around the city to be in trouble with a powerful drow House) typically are at 20% to 25% or more, and require collateral left in the lender's possession, to the value of 150% of the loan.

Most moneylenders have magic and hired swords and spies to back up their demands and defend their wealth. They are wily, ruthless, and often adopt a powerful House as patron (giving its members cut rates and ready credit), to gain its protection when a noble debtor of another House decides, as some of the younger and more reckless inevitably do, that having a bit of sport and wiping out fast-building debts with a quick swordthrust is easier than paying up.

Moneylenders prominent in the city at present include Nantlel of the Three Fingers (all his others have been lost in swordfights, down the years), a retired warrior (F11) known to be guarded by several servant monsters, including a greater peltast (detailed fully in module FA1, *Halls of the High King*, and described in the Adventures book of the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set). Nantel's competitors include the sinister drow wizard Sheerness of the Many Eyes, a bitter and paranoid female archmage outcast from Sorcere by male wizards who feared her soaring power; the fat, gluttonous drow male warrior Ologh "Gathergold" Ilyri, last of his family (ridiculed by his slimmer, less lazy kin, he poisoned them all to gain their wealth and start his business); and Yuimmith Shulcloak, an elderly drow of quick and cold wits, iron nerves, soft speech, and long patience. Yuimmith employs more than a dozen halflings, and half that number of orphaned drow. They

function as both guards and spies; Yuimmith sells information as well as lending money. Any secret of the city that can be learnt, Menzoberranyr say, Yuimmith has for sale.

West Wall

Aside from the ruins of House Do'Urden, the fortresses along the western wall of the great cavern of Menzoberranzan are wealthy, solid, and long-established—and look it. Among them are the noble Houses of Duskryn, Druu'giir, Symryvvin, and Vandree. Their neighbors include proud old non-noble families, given to gaming, various esoteric hobbies (such as collecting animals of the surface world, or staging gladiatorial combats between captured beings, for private amusement), and dreaming of grander days.


House Duskryn is known for well-equipped, mercilessly-trained troops, led by nobles known for cruel pranks and legendary drinking-bouts. It inhabits the large, long and narrow fenced-stalagmite compound due north of the Westrift.

House Druu'giir is strong in mercantile affairs and moneylending—so strong, folk say, that its influence over actions in the city is often secondary only to House Baenre. House Druu'giir is dominated by elderly male wizards, with coins enough to hire any needed warriors. Rumor holds that Druu'giir maintains a camp of ready warriors somewhere near the city, at its direct call: hirelings that can, some whisper, appear directly in House Druu'giir by means of magical *gates* opened by the House wizards. It occupies a small rectangular fenced-stalagmite compound south-east of the tip of Westrift.

House Symryvvin is known for its pursuit of magical might—devising prayers to



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Lloth (and receiving new priest spells in return) and creating new wizard spells. Its elderly and numerous mages and high priestesses don't appear in public often, but are accorded great respect when they do—they are apt to fell one, or one dozen, drow who displease them (regardless of who their targets are; in the recent past, victims have included masters of the Academy and priestesses of House Baenre), hurling spells as if they held endless reserves of memorized magic! House Symryvvin inhabits the five-sided stalagmite-and-stalactite fortress northeast of the tip of the Westrift (and of House Duskryn).

House Vandree has a reputation for getting into trouble and surviving somehow. It is a family that seems to delight in involved, ongoing internal feuds. Poisonings and stabbings are common, and the nobles see whipping their commoners as enjoyable and frequently necessary recreation. Most House members are very interested in surface-world affairs, and in acquiring trophies from The Lands of Light, from leaves and flower-seeds to human skulls, fine furniture and magical items. From time to time, these collecting propensities extend as far as living humans and other surface-world monsters, which usually end their days (after providing amorous drow females and whip-wielding drow males with sufficient amusement) facing the blades of House Vandree warriors in need of a little practice.

House Vandree inhabits the large walled compound south of ruined House Do'Urdan, whose walls point eastwards into the city in a great prow-shape.

The homes of many cultured, wealthy non-noble drow families can also be found here—among them Ilueph, Llarabbar, Miliskeera, Neereath, Ol'il'isk, Tirin, Vahadarr, Waeth del'tar, and Yulaun'tlar.

There are few shops or massage houses in this neighborhood; the drow who dwell here actively discourage such common establishments, and the traffic they bring, preferring to go into adjacent Manyfolk for such services.

One of the few businesses that does flourish in this neighborhood is Elstearn's Escorts. This "escort service" can provide good-looking drow of either sex to accompany clients, but its principal business lies in providing intelligent, good-looking, well-spoken and connected Menzoberranyr citizens as guides and interpreters to outlanders visiting the city and trying to carry on trade—and as bodyguards to cultured West Wall citizens when they want to visit more dangerous parts of the city, or go on hunts or other excursions out into the surrounding Underdark.

Manyfolk

This large area of the city is home to the common folk, and is where most of the shops and businesses of the city can be found, from the Bluirren family (who make spiced sausages from Underdark creatures whose precise identities and origins are better not investigated too closely) to the Ulaver (whose luminous, sweet green wine is a growing taste among Menzoberranyr).

It also home to the noble House of Oblodra, who have always had a treacherous, unpredictable, even insane reputation. Oblodren are known for fanaticism, reckless battle-rages, and for dabbling in the wildest magic and the most dangerous of the arts of the mind, continually pushing the boundaries of the dictates of Lloth. Such drive brings the House again and again to the brink of extinction—but no one wants to have House Oblodra for an

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enemy; Oblodren attack like mad dogs, throwing their own lives away unhesitatingly to get revenge.

The House's high priestesses command strange, unusual powers of the mind (psionic wild talents, some tutored), and many Menzoberranyr drow whisper that this House sends its daughters to train and even breed with illithid in nearby mind flayer cities! House Oblodra occupies the small compound in the center of the city, between two fingers of the Clawrift.

Around The Bazaar stand too many shops and family homes to list; almost all commoner or "normal drow citizens" dwell in Manyfolk, and even most noble Houses maintain secondary or secretive "safe" residences here. It is the place most Menzoberranyr come from, and (although the ambitious always try to move out of it, to a 'better' area) is the most colorful, interesting, and tolerant neighborhood of the city.

DMs locating businesses, inns, and minor noble Houses of their own invention (or would-be nobles) should place them somewhere in Manyfolk, where most of the buildings have been left unassigned for them to do so.

Visitors seeking the sights of Manyfolk (after The Bazaar, of course) are directed to the many fine massage houses, and to shops such as Faera's Floating Plants (which deals in exotic plants from "All over the Realms, Above and Below," displayed and sold in levitating pots); Viltteern's Fine Chains (where chain can be purchased in lengths up to a thousand feet, ranging in size from wire-thin ornamental links to fortress-gate chain whose links are as long as a full-grown drow stands tall); and The Cathlyre, where surface-world birds of all sorts (including the peacock-like cathlyre) are sold as pets, live targets, or roasted alive before the

customer's eyes, a hot meal seasoned and done to order.

The most wealthy and influential merchants of this area currently include:

- Du'arthe Klendara (drow male F5): textiles
- Uluruela Drael Tuabbar (drow female F3/P3 of Lloth): clothing and travel goods of leather, lizardskin, and carved bone
- Bhaern del'Hluanter (drow male F7): crates, chests, casks, and carts
- Sh'aun Darnruel (drow female F4/P4 of Lloth): personal fashions, clothing, body dyes and augmentations (crests, glued-on manes of hair or wigs, artificial limbs, body padding, etc.)
- Baelaskros Do'Ilisharr (drow male F6, grossly fat): bulk grain, dates, and other foodstuffs
- Tlar Quel'tlarn (drow male F2): fine metal smithing, gemsetting, and locksmithing
- Rhauvais del'Ygana (drow female F6): weapons, exotic and high-quality (speciality: concealed and venomed body-weaponry for nobles)

Eastmyr

Those not successful enough to dwell in Manyfolk live in the poorer, less esteemed neighborhood of Eastmyr. Struggling merchants, outlaws and the penniless, mercenaries, and non-drow of no particular wealth or power dwell here. The noble Houses Hunzrin and Kenafin maintain their fortresses here.

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House Hunzrin is known for stupid arrogance; its folk are quick to wet blades in those who offend them, regardless of the cost. It has survived extinction because of its large numbers; Hunzrin currently dominates farming in Menzoberranzan, and its food supply can support huge numbers of children. House Hunzrin occupies the triangular fenced-stalagmite compound due north of House Barrison Del'Armgo, the closest noble House to the city's farms.

House Kenafin occupies the walled compound that lies between House Hunzrin and House Fey-Branche. Nearby are the houses of several families who pretend to nobility: Asbodela, Dlaen Del'Amatar, and Yune'duis. It remains to be seen whether their pretensions will ever become reality.

Few individuals of prominence dwell in Eastmyr, but one good massage house can be found here: Dylchanta's Furfeathers, which regularly hosts massage-parties for large groups.

Eastmyr also has at least four rooming-houses useful to non-drow visitors to the city wishing to avoid attention, cold treatment, and high prices. Two of these, Narbondel's Shadow and Symeera's, are recommended (both are run by careful, fair human ex-adventurers, who know contacts for the discreet hire or purchase of needed magic, healing, weapons, and other gear within the city). Typical rates are 1 gp/person/day (includes all meals, basic drink, stabling for a mount, and a private room with a *glowglobe* light source).

The Neighborhoods of the City

The Braeryn

Extending north from the western end of the Spiderfangs are the dark alleys and hovels of "the Stenchstreets." This is Menzoberranzan's slum, home to sick and outlaw drow, goblins, orcs, bugbears, and other non-drow who are sometimes hired for odd jobs (such as heavy loading or digging) by Menzoberranyr, or for guard or mercenary pillage-raid duty. Some are even stupid or desperate enough to try their luck in the city as thieves or kidnappers.

Drow hunt here for sport from time to time (often after drinking too much), slaying all who can't hide, escape, or fight off their attackers. Outlaws and others hide here: raiding drow occasionally come to grief when the helpless old orc they attacked turns into a powerful, enraged human wizard or drow priestess on a spy mission or indulging personal tastes for adventure.

No drow of importance or reputation dwell here, but the mercenary band Bregan D'Aerthe maintains contacts here, through which they can be hired. Certain aged drow dwelling here concoct and sell poisons, drugs, and love philtres. Some also sell information, but seldom live long, once they become widely known.

One such crone, city cradle-lore swears, was once revealed as the Spider Queen in disguise—when the Goddess shed her rags to blast a priestess who treated her cruelly. Rumors persist that Lloth keeps watch over (or even, in disguised form, dwells in) the Stenchstreets. Such beliefs gain support from the numerous spiders of all sorts and sizes who scuttle and lurk all about the area, despite many attempts to slay them or drive them off.

Donigarten

The granary of Menzoberranzan, this area is dominated by the lake of Donigarten. It is surrounded by a rich moss bed, a stand of giant mushrooms, and rich fungi farms. On an islet in the lake, orcs and goblins tend a herd of rothe (deep rothe, detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*), watched over by drow patrols sent out from Tier Breche through the Mantle. As well as the patrols, drow with guardhorns and *eyes of the eagle* cusps keep watch from cavern-wall fissures overlooking Donigarten, to prevent food thefts by the orcs and goblins, as well as raids by others. There are 2-5 spies on duty at once, drawn from all three schools in Tier Breche (to teach them patience and vigilance).



The Neighborhoods of the City



The Mantle

The passages and caverns directly around the main city cavern have always played a daily part in the life of the city. Teenagers prove their defiant daring by venturing into the Mantle; bold children play in its entrances; lovers use its dark ways for trysts (particularly forbidden liaisons between drow of rival Houses); and plotters find it handy for dark meetings.

There is no such thing as a safe area of the Underdark, and this is as true of the Mantle as it is of the wild depths of the subterranean realms far from drow rule. Monsters occasionally reach the main cavern—through the Mantle. The Menzo-

berranyr have learned that these menaces are so numerous (attracted by the smells, warmth, and vibrations of so many beings gathered in one place) that establishing permanent, immobile guardposts merely offers ready food to the passing monsters—drow food.

Instead, the Menzoberranyr use mobile patrols. In strategically important areas, drow work-parties excavate defensible firing-hollows. A patrol uses a four-to-six drow star formation to move in and secure the known hollow, as the rest of the patrol provides covering fire. Once the area is secured, the star provides covering fire for the others to join them.

The Bazaar

There is an ever-changing, always busy area of Menzoberranzan; a crowded, untidy labyrinth of stalls and hagglers whose fame has spread across the Underdark. In the city, it is known simply as “The Bazaar.”

A Calishite with rings gleaming on every finger and puffing slaves bringing purchases along behind would feel right at home here—and indeed, Calishite satraps seeking bargains are often to be seen in the Bazaar.

Menzoberranzan’s ongoing trade fair attracts merchants and goods from all Faerun, and even a few items from Kara-Tur and fabled Maztica. Merchants and shoppers of all races and lands are welcome—and it is even whispered that some of the more mysterious traders (who go about masked and cowed, gesturing silently) come from “places beyond the stars, Above the World Above,” or other planes of existence!

Goods And Services

The less lawful and tolerated vices among drow are addressed in the Bazaar—and as long as rebellion is not talked of, and the peace is kept (folk bow, scrape, and get out of the way of House Matrons doing a little shopping), shoppers can get their every desire satisfied in the curtained booths and stalls of the Bazaar without being (so they think) under the watchful eye of a Matron.

Slaves are bought and sold here, surgery (rare in the Underdark), potions and herbal medicines are available, and there are even certain booths where one can arrange to send or receive messages to and from locales and folk in the World Above (surface world).

Other drow flock to the Bazaar to hire outlander mages to work spells, often to

visit revenge on an enemy, or recover from a revenge someone has worked on them. There are also stalls selling wines, cheeses, and exotics (jellied eels, venison tarts, even wyvern pie) from the Lands of Light.

Prices vary with supply (scarcity) and demand—when mind flayer or Calishite visitors arrive in larger numbers, and seem to want to buy everything in the Bazaar, down to the bare boards of the stalls, prices quickly go up.

The businesses that preceded The Bazaar here are still going strong, too: the massage dens. Many drow visit their favorite den at least once a day (for more on the drow taste for massage, see the “Drow High Life” chapter). These places are seldom settings for hired romance. Drow of both sexes and all ages delight in simply relaxing, and often hold business discussions, or simply chat sessions or casual get-togethers, on adjacent massage-couches.

Moving, Always Moving

The Bazaar, by decree of the ruling Council, contains no permanent structures—even long-established and favored booths must be moved around. The longest a stall or booth can remain in one spot is 66 days. This law prevents any proprietor from owning ‘floor-space’ in the Bazaar, and buying more (so as to make the Bazaar ever-smaller, as the desirable space is locked up, until it dwindles away to nothing, and the city loses its riches). It also forces visiting buyers to tour the Bazaar, searching for favored stalls or merchants they’re looking for—so they see everything, and opportunities for impulse-



The Bazaar



buying are as numerous as possible. Proud merchants boast that one can “buy anything at the Bazaar, for coins enough,” and they’re not far wrong—not since wizards took to *teleporting* in fresh surface-world produce and items, for those who can pay enough.

Wise established merchants arrange to trade spots with other established vendors, rotating around the Bazaar-space. Still, fights and covert sabotage are common, as booths of different sizes jostle for space that isn’t really there, or fight to avoid being relegated to a bad location (low-traffic, or sandwiched between larger competitors in the same goods, or someone selling something that clashes with or diminishes one’s own wares). Merchants are not allowed to openly sell their

space—it’s not theirs to sell—but if money changes hands in the sealing of a deal over who moves where, that’s purely the private affair of the traders involved.

Patrols

The Archmage of Menzoberranzan arranges to have the Bazaar patrolled, by warriors-in-training from the Academy (led by an instructor), augmented by trainee priestesses and wizards (these duties are rotating, and paid). The firm intent of such policing is simply to keep the lid on violence, not to muscle in on haggling, arguments, or the fun of shoppers; unobtrusive firmness is the order of the day.



The Bazaar

Menzoberranzan mounts constant street patrols, consisting of a 'hand' (see below), accompanied by a wizard, and led by a priestess.

In the Bazaar, where things can quickly get very wild indeed, patrols are larger. A typical Bazaar patrol, on duty at any given time (the Bazaar is always open), consists of three 'open hands,' or smaller, open-formation groups.

Each group has 8-12 male fighters of 2nd level, armed with +1 long daggers and short swords, and long, black wooden staves with one end equipped with a metal ball, that can do 1d6 + 1 damage, and the other fitted with a snag-hook, for catching fleeing thieves.

They are led by an instructor from the Academy, typically a female F6/P6, armed with a +4 or better adamantine (the most durable adamantite alloy is called "adamantine") mace and a hand crossbow (60-yard range, 22 darts carried, each doing 1-3 hp damage, plus save vs. poison at -4, or sleep for 2d4 hours; the poison is a mixture that affects even drow immune to the usual spider venom darts are tipped with).

The warrior leader instructs at least one, and usually two, fighters to serve as flanking guards to the priestess and the mage on patrol: a female F7/P8, armed with her spells, a mace, and a *wand of viscid globs* (detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*), who also carries 1d4 healing potions; and a male F3/W3, armed with his spells, a sleep-poisoned dagger, and a spider wand (also found in FOR2).

The priestess commands the patrol, but wise priestesses follow the orders of the Academy instructor (the warrior leader), who among other things deliv-

ers reports on the performance of all patrol members—particularly the mage and the priestess, who are not currently her students. Drow students under the eye of an instructor do not generally indulge themselves in reckless, disorganized, or goaded-to-rage behavior; they are trying to impress, and are practicing fighting as an organized unit.

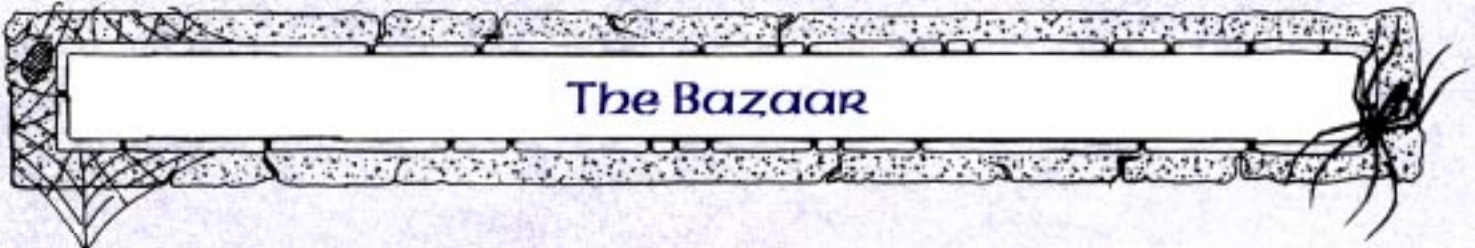
This is not to say the ruling Council always adopts a 'hands-off' or neutral position towards the Bazaar. Someone who breaks their rules, or sells things they don't approve of (such as access to worship services of deities other than Lloth, spells that purport to neutralize House defense glyphs, or female drow slaves guaranteed to be former priestesses of Lloth) will soon meet with an "accident" that destroys their stall, typically with them in it. Then whispers will begin, started by priestesses, that the displeasure of Lloth was involved, and others should take heed.

Meddling occasionally takes a more heavy-handed form (yet always cloaked in the thin disguise of something accidental or unintended, to avoid harming the Bazaar's popularity among visitors). At least one recent and very public spell-battle between rival House wizards, which destroyed many houses and shops adjacent to The Bazaar area, is widely suspected to have been deliberately arranged by the Matrons of the two Houses involved, to clear more space for The Bazaar.

Merchants always grumble about the meddling of the Council, but all of them accept it as necessary—for one thing, if the patrols did not exist, there would be more destructive behavior by Houses or



The Bazaar



individual nobles, just “throwing their pride around” –and for another thing, the patrols (bolstered by occasional undercover surveillance by powerful Academy wizards, who usually want to do a little shopping themselves) were instituted to curtail rampant thievery.

Moreover, whenever Bazaar patrols become smaller or fewer, thievery and drunken brawling (with attendant vandalism) rise sharply, and merchants complain—or resort to a tactic frowned on by the Council: hiring ever-larger numbers of guards (which the Council fears could grow into private armies).

Certain beings (such as beholders, neogi, and githyanki) are not welcome in the Bazaar, and others are tolerated only when they keep a low profile, or appear in small numbers (such as Zhentarim and mind flayers). Some beings are considered just too powerful, too dangerous to the city if they prove treacherous or grow enraged—or are mentally manipulated by the spells of a desperate or mischievous drow mage.

Two fixture Bazaar establishments of interest to visitors are:

Daelein Shimmerdark's Decanter: Named for its handsome, charming (smart-mouthed) young proprietor, this stall stocks rare and fine drinkables from the Realms over—at prices only drow nobles (and desperate or homesick surface-world merchants) can afford.

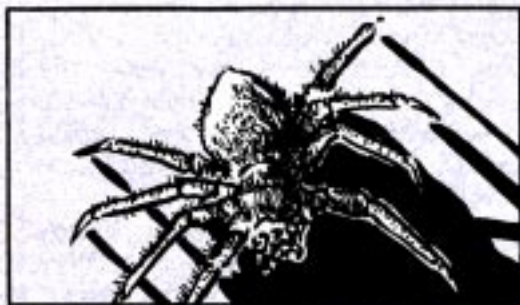
Love- and sleeping-potions, and even liquid poisons, can also be had here, by those who know just how to phrase their whispers, and how much extra to offer. (Daelein also provides directions to those wishing to sell stolen goods discreetly.)

Vhurn Bhaelyndryn's Bestiary: This establishment is heavily-guarded (by a dozen drow and gnoll overseers at a time, armed with snatch-hooks, clubs, weighted throwing-nets, and quarter staves). It provides pack lizards and riding lizard mounts (see the Monsters chapter), and harnesses, goads, lead-lines, and carrying-frames for them.

At least one of each sort of lizard are always harnessed and ready. These cost four times more than the rest of the expensive stock (three times if the buyer throws trade-in mounts into the deal), but this fee includes immediate help from the overseers, in delaying pursuit, patrols, and other forces (short of angry high priestesses) seeking to detain the purchaser and any companions from leaving the city.

The fat, affable Vhurn (an old, scarred drow warrior) also sells “Underdark packs,” containing torches, ropes, grapnels, spikes and a mallet, a tinder box, flasks of lamp oil in a metal carry-box, a hooded signal-eye lamp, a probing pole (10' pole with a reel on one end that releases a weight-tipped, marked plumb line—for measuring drops and chasms), food, and a spare dagger, rock-hammer and prying-bar.

He also knows good places to buy other gear and weapons, and to deal in gems.



Special Occasions



There are many parties and religious rituals in the life of Menzoberranyr, as well as grave and important meetings of the ruling Council—but precious few special occasions. Here we survey the three annual festivities enjoyed in the city; they are spaced evenly around the year.

The Ceremony of Graduation

Students in the Academy, at the end of ten long years, enjoy the Ceremony of Graduation—led by the top-ranking female student priestess, who summons a tanar’ri from the Abyss. It is a time of wanton abandon, enjoyed by students and high priestesses as (temporary) equals. This ritual can be more daunting than pleasant for those whose worship of Lloth is not strong; Drizzt Do’Urden was such a one.

It is traditional for all Houses who have members graduating from the Academy—no matter how lowly in the ranks of the House—to celebrate with a light feast, accompanied by much dancing and drinking. It is forbidden for any House to attack any other House on the day preceding Graduation, the day of the Ceremony, and the day following, and it is usual for Houses to let most of their servants and warriors have three days of leisure, reducing the active staff to bodyguards and cooks. It is also usual for most nobles to stay at home, and the folk of the Academy (non-graduating students, masters, and mistresses) who have kin in the city below Tier Breche, to go down and visit their families at this time.

Visitors are not generally welcome in the city at this time, but those who have somehow got in (usually by arriving days

beforehand and lying low, so that they have become almost trusted, or almost forgotten) will find more drunken or fun-seeking and relaxed drow about than at any other time of the year, fewer guards, and in general, less vigilance. The acquisitive are warned that it is customary for wise House wizards to set magical traps and warnings on all valuables and vulnerable access-points, before the fun begins—as much against drow pranksters as against thieves or would-be assassins.

The Festival of The Founding

Every year on the anniversary of the death of Many Eyes and the formal founding of the city by Menzoberra, the drow of the city celebrate their heritage by going to a strange house or an open picnic in the farm fields to take dinner with a family they do not customarily dine with. At this meal, dignified toasts are made to Lloth, then Menzoberra, and then to the founders of whatever Houses the diners belong to, and then to favorite ancestors or dead heroes of the families involved. Tales are told of their exploits, and it is said that on this day Lloth walks among her people in the form of a mortal drow, of either sex and any age and appearance, listening to and judging her people.

For this reason, no passing stranger is refused hospitality at a meal, but is instead invited to sit down and partake. Lloth, it is said, has been known to reward those who please her with magical powers, minor but permanent transformations of their physical frailties or shortcomings, or gifts of magical items—but she has also been known to strike dead entire families



Special Occasions

who irritate or displease her by turning their food and drink to deadly poison.

If the talk, as she listens or passes near, is of someone she favored, Lloth sometimes causes the real-seeming image of the dead hero spoken of to appear, responding to the speakers with silent gestures and expressions as if they live, and can hear what is being said. She uses such illusions, of course, to sway drow to undertake tasks or make decisions she desires them to.

The entire city takes heart if Lloth herself is definitely seen—and any family who hosted her is honored, as guests for a week or so following the festival, and accorded respect for the entire rest of the year (as folk who enjoy the favor of Lloth, and who should therefore not be crossed or harmed). The festival itself is celebrated in the second half of the day, centering as it does around the main meal that closes the day, but by tradition the entire day is one of leisure, when shops are closed and no trade is done.

Visitors to the city will be hosted at dinner (who knows what form Lloth's whims will cause her to take?), but they will be unable to find any drow—except guards, angered at having to leave their dining!—at their accustomed tasks, or willing to do any business. This state of affairs lasts for only one day; the preceding and following days are life as usual.



The Open Days

The special occasion of most interest to the visitor is an annual stretch of eight days that serve Menzoberranyr as a sort of trade fair.

Visitors (even hungry predatory monsters of the Underdark!) are allowed into the city, to wander freely (even into the compounds of noble Houses). This provides the citizens with as much of a spectacle as it does the visitors, and quite a few Houses dine on exotic fare, such as rock-snake steak, or tunnel worm stew, as a result of a hungry monster's attack coupled with the presence of alert House servants or guards.

The purpose of the event, however, is to encourage trade, and few drow get much sleep. Guards are always alert, shopkeepers keep their establishments always open for business, and House agents are always trying to meet with visiting merchants, to make deals.

To impress such visitors, and to discourage those who might secretly be examining the city for any signs of weakness, drow Houses put on special demonstrations of magic and martial readiness, to awe potential foes and rivals. It is common for House armies to execute precision aerial maneuvers in full battle armor, for high priestesses and wizards to fly grandly through the air while sipping drinks or playing at various games and gambling diversions, and even for staid and dignified masters of Sorcere to engage in spell-hurling competitions, or in spectacular sequences of meant-to-impress *shape changes*.

Priestesses take turns weaving large and elaborate illusions of Lloth in the air above the city, so that she appears in a succession of forms, looking down on the city—

Special Occasions

but from time to time, such clerics have fainted dead away upon discovering that their work was amusing—or annoying!—the real Lloth, who had appeared to watch the fun.

Visitors with sinister intent are warned that most Houses set one or more wizards and priests to the exclusive task of watching for drow of rival Houses, or other enemies, who enter House compounds disguised (or even openly), on dark purposes bent. This is not a time for catching drow unawares amid the apparent chaos—everyone is more alert than usual (and when the Open Days end, and drow know they'll be exhausted, they either close up their shops or houses to sleep things off, or [in the case of Houses] have a

fully-rested contingent of guards, wizards, and priestesses ready to stand guard as everyone else sleeps, to recover).

Unexpected Revels

It is rare for Menzoberranyr to engage in any city-wide celebration for an unexpected or sudden cause. When these do occur, they tend to be wild parties (extending, at times, to brawls and orgies), held because forces of the city have scored a major victory over foes outside the city, or because Lloth herself (her avatar) has appeared somewhere in the city, and not shown any anger or disfavor by issuing harsh decrees or meting out punishments.



What The Future May Hold

Not even the gods can see all that well in to what lies before us, and has not befallen yet. Mortals peering into the future tend to see what they want to see – or fear most.

–Elminster of Shadowdale

Soothsaying, even divination magic, tends to be a less than exact craft at the best of times – and the farther one looks from here and now, the more prone to exaggeration, errors, and wishful thinking it becomes. Accordingly, this chapter does not say what will surely befall. Instead, it tries to outline possibilities to guide DMs in developing long-running campaigns set in Menzoberranzan, and the Underdark around.

The Future of Menzoberranzan

In the city itself, the pressures of trade will continue to loosen the rules, customs, and petty tyrannies of the noble Houses – commoners and visitors alike will be able to move as they please, and less as the whims of various House Matrons and lesser high priestesses force them to do.

At the same time, Lloth's rule over the city will increasingly be challenged by other deities (especially Vhaeraun).

There is also a growing cult in the Underdark: the worship of Malyk, The Dark Mage, who represents wild and evil magic – all that is mysterious and a challenge to authority. Some wild mages will worship him, and folk of the Underdark will encounter more and more wizshades (detailed in Volume 7 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, the first SPELLJAMMER® appendix), believed to be his servants. Apparitions of empty, cowed robes that move and gesture as if filled by an invisible

body, but which collapse into drifting smoke if attacked, will become a feature of the subterranean world – and will be thought to be manifestations of Malyk.

To keep wizards of Sorcere (most of whom have always felt rebellious – if not daring to be actively so – towards the rule of her high priestesses) loyal to her, not turning to this upstart Malyk, Lloth will grant the wizards of Menzoberranzan new and powerful spells. They will grow more able to ignore or thwart the orders and cruelties of priestesses, if not more influential and prominent in Menzoberranzan society.

At the same time, increased trade will bring a secretive trickle of new spells and magical items, which will awaken in the younger and more ambitious drow mages a desire to see the surface world, and perhaps grow in power there. Escape from Menzoberranzan will become a perceived possibility – among commoners, too, as they see more and more riches from the World Above, and hear news of change.

The long-static society of Menzoberranzan will enter a period of uncomfortable, intrigue-filled change. House Baenre, which has always ruled the city in fact if not in name, will move skillfully to keep its power, by gathering the most powerful new spells, magic, and goods under its control, and by manipulating or befriending the most influential and powerful outsiders (adventurers from the surface world, for example) who take any interest or residence in the city.

To avoid offering itself overmuch as a target, House Baenre will employ lesser Houses that it controls or influences to do much of the work involved in keep the city under effective Baenren control. As its stable, loyal, lasting rule has kept Lloth's worship strong in the city, it is unlikely that House Baenre's dominance will

What The Future May Hold

be ended unless a new power or invading force destroys the city or forcibly changes things, at the same time as Baenre loses the favor of Lloth, or the Spider Queen's own power diminishes to the point that she is unable to aid them enough.

Although the unconquerable has been defeated many times before, and the eternal swept away by the winds of change, it seems unlikely that anything short of a military destruction of the city (or a great natural cataclysm, such as the collapse of the entire great cavern, brought on by the sort of spell-battle that might accompany a full-scale civil war, or a last-ditch defense of the city) will end the rule of Lloth (through House Baenre) over Menzoberranzan.

Although details of the customs, rules, and laws of the city will probably change, it is in Lloth's interest to keep the rate of such changes slow. Widespread, accelerating change has a dangerous way of ending in serious to fatal challenges to the status quo—and once commoners, and drow males of all ranks, taste independence, the reign of Lloth's priestesses may well be doomed.

There is a deep-rooted fascination with the surface world among drow, born of the loss they felt at losing a place in it. Many drow, as much as they fear the perils of the Underdark and the unfamiliar, but almost certainly greater dangers of the World Above, secretly dream of returning there, to see the sun. As even ready access (say, from subterranean tunnel homes, or mountain caves) to the surface world will bring opportunities and influences to drow that challenge Lloth's cruel, repressive rule, the Spider Queen is always battling this deep urge of the dark elves.

On the other hand, to wall Menzoberranzan off from the greater world around

it dooms the city to stale ingrowth, and an eventual decadent dwindling of power—and with it, Lloth's own power and influence. Contact with the Underdark, which is 'on the move' again, after an aeon of relative isolation from the surface world, is to inevitably expose Menzoberranyr to surface-world goods, trade, and other influences, and to awaken in them interest in the Lands of Light.

The Days Ahead for The Nearby Underdark

Menzoberranzan's patrols have always controlled a large area of the Underdark immediately surrounding the city (the 'Dark Dominion'), but the very strength and riches of the city have always drawn predators of the Underdark—from hunting beasts to rival intelligent races—to it.


Rival drow and duergar who have respected the overwhelming military and especially magical power of the city of Menzoberranzan, have never dared do more than occasionally raid the rich ore deposits (such as The Lustrum, mentioned in the "Now" chapter that deals with current news of the city) and important radiation-strong areas controlled by Menzoberranyr drow, in the Dominion.

Were the Menzoberranyr to weaken, however, they could expect attacks from these subterranean rivals. The presence of a *gate* to another plane or planes in the nearby Underdark (see the "Now" chapter) makes a Menzoberranyr defense that much more difficult; the city's drow must guard against a surprise attack in force, at all times, by foes of unknown numbers and powers.

The known foes are bad enough. Two



What the Future May Hold



age-old powers of the Underdark are on the rise again: the mysterious cloakers (led, it is whispered, by a powerful “Cloaker Lord”) and the awesomely-powerful beholders. Both races are expanding throughout the Underdark, and if their internal wars do not tear their power asunder again, they may well become rulers of the Underdark, dividing all between them before annihilating each other.

Drow culture may well perish, caught between these rival races and opportunist raids from surface-based powers through increasingly-well-known surface connections and subterranean trade routes.

There is a third rising power in the local Underdark, a new one: the outcast alhoon, or illithiliches. If they ever come to lead or dominate sizable communities of illithids (as opposed to merely small bands of adherents), these fell beings may well outstrip all other subterranean powers. An alliance between them and large numbers of beholders, for example, would be unbeatable by any known community presently active in the Underdark of Faerun. They are already spying out the communities of the Underdark, including Menzoberranzan. Informants and agents loyal to the city fear that some surface-dwelling drow who worship Vhaeraun and trade into the Underdark are already under the sway of the Alhoon; any alliance in force between these two groups could also be disastrous for Menzoberranzan.


It is not enough to be powerful—might enough to impress some, and make others too fearful to attack, always attracts interest in the Underdark. Whenever a time of weakness comes, as it inevitably will, given the numerous enemies and natural perils of the subterranean world, probing attacks will come from all sides. To sur-

vive, Menzoberranzan must be able to defeat not only the first foe to attack it, or become embroiled in a dispute with it—but the next waiting foe, and the next. (If they cannot, two or more such foes may struck at once, and smash Menzoberranzan between them.)

Given Lloth’s aggressive, dominant nature and the increasing traffic between Menzoberranzan and the surface world, it is likely the Spider Queen may soon urge drow of this loyal city to mount attacks on the surface world. She must be careful not to weaken Menzoberranzan too much, however—or the waiting foes will strike, and the drained city fall to them.



The Mage Lords of Menzoberranzan



Far less well-known than the socially dominant priestesses of Lloth, even among drow, are the Mage Lords, the (male drow) mages of power active in Menzoberranzan. They are the mightiest drow, in a one-to-one fight, the city can muster—tough, twisted survivors who have risen to rival human archmages in power, overcoming far greater obstacles on their journey. All began under the harsh schooling of Menzoberranzan's Academy, the cradle of drow wizards.

Drow Wizards

In many ways, drow wizards are the same as human mages—they run the same broad spectrum of eccentric and nasty personalities, the same variety of power and aptitude, and even the same wide difference from spell roster to roster (most human-devised spells useful in the Underdark can be found in a spellbook in Sorcere, and in use by Menzoberranyr mages; consult FOR2, *Drow of the Underdark*, for specialized drow wizard spells).

Like humans, most of the few sorcerously-talented drow who survive long enough to attain any power choose to flee from society. They become recluses, dwelling in fortresses or spell-guarded towers, generally avoiding the company of others. Those drow wizards who dare not, or desire not, to dwell out in the wild Underdark, can go a long way towards achieving seclusion in the city, by taking a teaching position in the Academy, in the tower of Sorcere. There they are nominally under the command of drow priestesses, and are occasionally called upon to take part in the affairs of the city (using their spells to destroy a noble House, for instance). They have students, and set duties within Sorcere, but can, by

and large, remain aloof from the cut and thrust of daily House-versus-House intrigues, if they wish to.

No wizards of note survive for long out in the wild Underdark too close to Menzoberranzan—the high priestesses of all the city's Houses (who constantly see invasions from without, and treachery from within, where no such things have been planned) will not tolerate such risky misfits, and gather forces to root out such rogue males.

House Wizards

Wizards of power can work within the society of Menzoberranzan, as members of a House. If they are accomplished in sorcery, and in favor with the Matron of a House—or merely competent, but a direct relative of the ruling priestess—they may become the head "House wizard," serving as the family's chief instrument of sorcery. This position tends to be risky and time-consuming; like it or not, one is always embroiled in the politics of the city. If one does poorly, one is deemed expendable by a priestess or other, and expended; if one does well, one is seen as an ambitious, treacherous threat—and, sooner or later, when the time is right, expended. Few House wizards ever attain a level higher than 12th (although 16th and even higher have been known, in large, confident Houses such as Baenre).

If one is injured too badly to hold one's own, winds up on the losing side of an internal House battle, grows tired of intrigue, or wishes to grow in power through study, Sorcere always awaits.



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Sorcere

All wizards of Menzoberranzan receive training at Sorcere. It is supervised by the Mistress of the Academy (herself head of Arach-Tinilith) to ensure that it turns out wizards who will not defy the rule of Lloth (or her priestesses), and deals with all possible threats to social stability and authority—such as drow of either sex who get their hands on magical items, and hide them for later rebellious use against their Houses or the priestesses of Lloth—or who exhibit signs of psionic powers.

The Mistress of the Academy (abetted from time to time by other servant creatures of Lloth) spies often on the wizards of Sorcere, just to be sure they're not up to something that could unintentionally—or deliberately!—destroy the city, or its present rulers, or challenge the authority of the ruling Mothers (and behind them, Lloth).

The Masters of Sorcere have orders to watch their students closely—and only the dimmest among them fail to realize that they, too, are being watched. As a result, wizards of Sorcere have developed the habits of concealing what they're really dabbling with by means of many unnecessary gestures, rituals, and incantations (many of which are actually cantrips that evoke minor 'frills' to impress spies and to conceal the true nature—and simplicity—of the spell really being cast).

A typical series of these showy additions might involve a passionate chant, the kissing of frogs held in the hands, circling backwards around a mushroom that has been set a-glow with *faerie fire*, and the addition of a strand of the caster's hair to a lit brazier or candle. They might add (to a *dimension door* spell, say, or an *identify*), a pulsing and flickering radiance swirling



around the caster, a shimmering, hissing nimbus that briefly surrounds the caster, and then fades away, illusory changes to the caster's body that make parts of it seem temporarily transparent, or suffused with rushing blood, and so on.

It is important for adventurers from outside Menzoberranzan, hostile drow citizens confronting a wizard of Sorcere, and even good priestess-spies, all to remember that these frills are just that: a wizard can dispense with them all, to kill with a spell unleashed with a single word or gesture, that lashes out an instant later. Wizards of Sorcere tend to drop the frills when dealing with fellow wizards (who snort or sigh derision at such antics), Matron Mothers in a rage, and others who will know the deception for what it is (and who can do the wizard direct and immediate harm).

No one likes being spied on, and within

The Mage Lords of Menzoberranzan

Sorcere, there is a protocol governing magical prying on fellow wizards—and various factors making surveillance by priestesses, outsiders planning thefts or attacks, or merely rivals within the Academy as difficult as possible. These include interior wall-coverings of overlapped lead sheeting, covered with a stucco which includes gorgon's blood, spellstone-dust, and certain other secret substances—and, atop these, doors, wood panels, and doorcurtains adorned with randomly-migrating magical auras, wards, protective runes, and so on. These defenses prevent anyone *teleporting* or using similar ethereal-travel magics to enter or leave Sorcere; such trips have to be made physically (past wizard doorguards and turretwardens, and the other guardians of Tier Breche), or by using items (such as an *amulet of the planes*), known *gates*, or spells (such as a *gemjump*, described in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook). The defenses also make mind-prying (either magical or psionic) confusing or impossible (depending on what is being attempted), and visual scrutiny only slightly less difficult. Many protective runes (see *Drow of the Underdark* for more on these) await, to punish unwary spies or intruders with their magic.

The Archmage

The head of Sorcere, and the only one of its Masters with a high public profile, is the Archmage of Menzoberranzan. His role is to advise and serve the ruling Council (especially in devising magics for the defenses of the city), and to keep time in the city by casting the spells that light up Narbondel (a duty that incidentally generally keeps him tied to the city, and under the watchful eye of its priestesses). The

Archmage is almost always a wizard of House Baenre, who use their influence to ensure that one of their own occupies the high seat in Sorcere (to keep wizardly acts against House Baenre to a minimum).

The Archmage of Menzoberranzan is seldom of less than 13th level as a wizard, and is usually of 17th to 20th level (the current office-holder, Gromph Baenre, is 19th level). Some drow cities have mages who hold offices—or who rule and lead the city, where Lloth does not hold exclusive sway—who are as powerful as 24th level. More powerful drow wizards are very rare—not surprising, perhaps, given the extreme danger of the society and environment they live in (remember that any wizardly enclave, just as any drow city, has its intrigues, cabals, betrayals—as well as genuine magical accidents and monstrous dangers!).

The Masters of Sorcere

The Masters under the Archmage are a largely mysterious, reclusive group of men with an awesome reputation. They have few ranks or titles, but many differences in power and influence, from the lowliest of the teaching Masters and the Students Aspirant (undergraduate masters- or House wizards-in-training, studying and practicing spells to attain the magical might necessary for a position they covet—or their House Matrons intend for them) to the mighty Mage Lords.

Only one of this last, most powerful group is described here; DMs are urged to add many more, under the cloak of secrecy that guards Sorcere.



The Mage Lords of Menzoberranzan

A Mage Lord

In this entry, spells marked with an asterisk are found in *Drow of the Underdark*; spells marked “#” appear in the *Tome of Magic*; spells marked “!” are in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* tome; spells marked “@” are in this book.

Jalynfein, “The Spider Mage”: drow male W24; AC 1 (see below); MV 12; 51 hp; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (dagger: 1d4); THAC0 13; S 15, D 17, C 14, I 18, W 17, CH 7; AL CN.

Perhaps the most powerful wizard of Menzoberranzan now, “The Spider Mage” cloaks his might behind a carefully-cultivated reputation of insanity and zealous devotion to Lloth. This is false; like Zaknafein (onetime weapon master of House Do’Urden), he hates the tyranny of Lloth, and the twisted, cruel creatures she makes of the drow, who should be truly noble, free of evil manipulations of a heartless, fey goddess.

Jalynfein is far too intelligent (and skilled at magic) to ever betray these inner thoughts. He uses spells to spy on events in the city, often, and will sell information if offered enough magical items, gems, or gold pieces (by the hundreds).

The Spider Mage knows what it feels like to be imprisoned, and opposes slavery of any sort, for all races. If he can thwart a scheme of any priestess and escape detection, he will; he hates the cruelty and wanton destructiveness of most drow priestesses.

In his youth, he spurned a priestess, who in fury slashed open his face and doused the wounds with a corrosive distillate of spider poison. His face became a purplish, bloated ruin resembling a fungus-growth. She imprisoned the now-unrecognizable youth in her chambers, to

be her personal slave.

It was a long time before he found a chance to take his revenge. When he did, it proved fatal for his captor. He fled into the wild Underdark, vowing to return only when he had magic enough to hold his own in cruel Menzoberranzan. Jalynfein returned only a dozen years later, and will not speak of where he went, or how he gained his magic. When he came back, he was an accomplished mage, demonstrating this by besting three wizards at once in spell-combat, for the entertainment of a House Matron.

His nickname (which is what he prefers to be known by) comes from a bizarre spell-like power conferred upon him by a yochlol, long ago: once a day, Jalynfein can perform a *spider summoning* (as the spell, detailed in the wizards’ spells chapter of this book—but for The Spider Mage, it is a natural ability, not requiring rest or study). While he is doing so (and as long as the spiders are present), his disfigured face (which he normally conceals with a featureless gray cloth mask) is transformed into a writhing mass of long spidery legs, and is lit by a flickering purple-and-orange *faerie fire* radiance.

The Spider Mage’s spells are 5,5,5,5,5,5,5,4. When in Sorcere, he typically has memorized: *charm person, identify, magic missile, shocking grasp, spider climb/blindness, detect invisibility, ESP, invisibility, spectral hand/far reaching I#, fly, hand of darkness*, hold person, minor malison#/acid bolt*, backlash*, dimension door, Evard’s black tentacles, spider shape@/cloudkill, feeblemind, hold monster, spidercloak armor@, wonderform@/anti-magic shell, chain lightning, claws of the umber hulk#, lich touch!, turnshadow!/finger of death, forcecage, reverse gravity, ruby ray of reversal!, spell turning/death link!, mind blank, poly-*

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morph any object, prismatic wall, sink/black blade of disaster, imprisonment, time stop, web of shadows* (a spell created by Jalynfein, which he keeps secret and almost always has memorized; it is detailed below). He typically wears a *ring of protection +6 on AC, +1 on saving throws and a ring of free action*, and carries a *rod of absorption* and a *wand of magic missiles*, but has access to many more items when in Sorcere.

The Spider Mage is reluctant to attack anyone until he learns who they are and where they're from. He is particularly interested in surface-world lands and the powerful wizards who dwell there, and will even aid surface-folk in return for information and magical 'shop talk.' On the other hand, he is always alert for traps set by the high priestesses, and will not verbally betray his city, say ill directly against any House or priestess, or reveal his true

feelings and interests.

The Spider Mage's treasure consists of several caches of gems (typically 16,000 gp-worth or so, plus a handful of "spending money" coins), healing potions, and spellbooks, concealed in the Underdark around the city. He has a similar cache above a sliding panel in his bedroom in Sorcere (directly above the bed), and has concealed another inside the body of one of Sorcere's interior guardian *jade spiders* (magically animated guardian monsters, described in FOR2/ *Drow of the Underdark*), which he enchanted.

Over the years, Jalynfein has deliberately imbibed ever-stronger doses of many spider venoms. This has earned him a false reputation for being of sickly health—and rendered him immune to the poisons of most known spider types. He also bears a magical experiment: if he breaks one of his fingers and utters a word, the finger is consumed, but unleashes a burst of 24 *magic missiles* (as the spell).

Ninth Level Spell

Web of Shadows (Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: 40 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 hour/level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 40 sq. ft./level

Saving Throw: Special

This spell fills an area with shadowy grey strands of force, resembling a giant spider web. The strands are not solid, and need not be anchored to anything. Once created, they are stationary, and can be destroyed or moved only by spells; gusts

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of wind (even magical ones) and physical attacks do not affect them.

Creatures in the area in which a *web of shadows* is forming are allowed a saving throw to get out. If it succeeds, they take only 1d4 points of chill damage, and are deemed to have left the web. If it fails (or they elect to stay in the area), they suffer full contact effects.

Contact with a *web of shadows* causes all beings (except the caster, who ignores all effects of his own *web*) to be *slowed* while in the web, and for the rest of any round in which they leave it.

In each round in which contact with the web occurs, a being is chilled, losing $2d4 + 1$ hit points and 1 Strength point (lost Strength points return 2d4 rounds after leaving the web). Creatures who lose all their strength collapse helplessly, losing consciousness; if this occurs before they

reach zero hit points, the *web* stops draining them at that point.

If a spark, fire spell, or open flame of any sort comes into contact with a *web of shadows*, it does not harm the web—but does race all over it: the entire web blazes for 1d4 rounds before the fire vanishes. During this time, all creatures in contact with the web take 1d4 points of fiery damage (2d4 if a save versus breath weapon fails), per round. This damage is in addition to the web's usual chilling damage, which is not impaired.

A *web of shadows* vanishes at the death, unconsciousness, or deliberate will of the caster (who need not concentrate, remain present or refrain from spellcasting to maintain it). Its material component is a piece of spider web, collected in shadow or darkness.



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Items

Magical items used by Menzoberranyr drow are described here, unless they are rare or unique (prepared by the DM as "surprises" for adventures), or have already appeared in the FOR2/ *Drow of the Underdark* sourcebook. In the entries, "XP Value" is experience gained by a being who makes (enchants) an item, not by one who merely comes to possess it.

"GP Value" is a guide for DMs trying to determine a typical market price for the item (to a buyer who does not sense that the sellers are desperate for cash). Keep these values secret from players; PCs in the Realms do not normally know the going market rate for any magical item.

Miscellaneous Magic

Amulet of Phelthong

XP Value: 7,000 GP Value: 30,000

Named for the drow wizard of fabled powers who devised them long ago, these rare, fist-sized obsidian pendants are carved into smiling drow faces. In Menzoberranzan, they are worn only by powerful master mages of Sorcere. Such amulets have the following powers (identical to spells of the same names):

- *comprehend languages* whenever held or worn
- *dimension door* twice per day, by silent will-command of the bearer. Use of this power extinguishes any fires within 30' in the round of its activation
- *obscurement* once/day, activated by the bearer's will
- *timestop* once every 12 days: this power can only be unleashed by speaking a secret word while touching the amulet to a magical item (which is forever drained)

Orb of Radiance

XP Value: 8,000 GP Value: 32,000

These hand-sized globes of polished white quartz are among the most valued items of drow mages, who use them to defend themselves against drow attack (or to sufficiently impress other drow, particularly hostile priestesses, that attacks can be avoided). Any being who knows the command words can use an *orb of radiance*, as long as some part of their skin is in direct contact with it. While they hold it or carry it on their person, they make all saving throws against any sort of magic at -1.

When directed, an *orb of radiance* can emit a:

- *sunray* (once every other round, to a maximum of four times/day): as the spell, command words: "Delather myarra heth!"
- *light* spell (once every other round, remains in globe where cast, not moving with orb, and unless dispelled by other means, lasts exactly 1 day from casting), command word: "Aumrae!"
- *ruby ray* (once per day): effects as the *ruby ray of reversal* (see the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook): melts away one patch of web or *viscid glob*; or: springs all magical and mechanical traps touched (normal effects, if targets in reach); or: unties all knots and opens all locks, breaks all bars, chains, straps, manacles, and opens even *wizard locks* and *held portals*; or: ends the effects of all entangling or imprisoning spells, magical effects, or devices—except *walls of force* and *forcecages*, which it opens a 1-foot-wide hole in; or: dispels all touched illusions; or: reverses effects of a *magic jar* spell; or: returns a petrified or polymorphed being to original form (system shock rolls, if any, still apply).



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Items

Each time the *ruby ray* power is activated, it drains 1d4 + 1 hit points from the *orb-* user; such lost hit points can be regained by normal healing means. The command word for this power is: "Raspra!"

It is whispered that these rare items were first fashioned with the aid of surface-world priests of other faiths. In Menzoberranzan, such items are carried only by wizards of Sorcere, or perhaps as hidden treasures by nobles of one or more of the most powerful noble Houses.

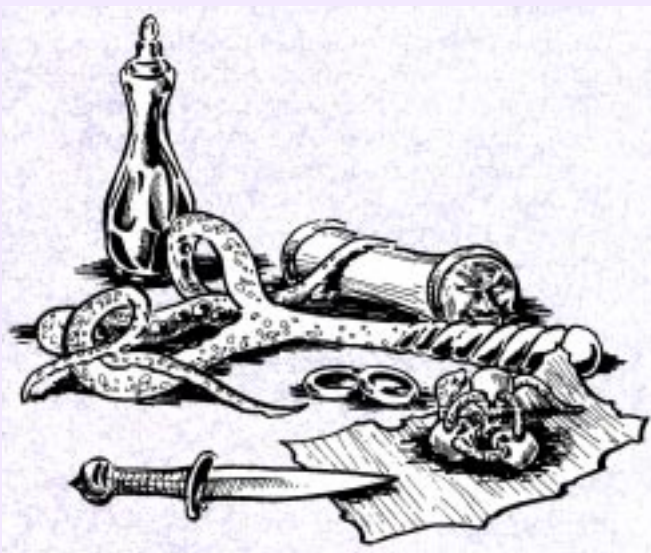
Phandoorl's Bracers

XP Value: 4,000 GP Value: 20,000

Named for the long-ago drow wizard who devised them, these dark, ordinary-looking bracers have been made by many wizards since, because of their extreme usefulness. They automatically protect the wearer against all attacks by arachnids and snakes of any sort (including other beings who have magically assumed such forms), forcing them to attack the wearer of the bracers at -3 to hit, and allowing the wearer a +2 bonus on all saving throws versus webbing (of any sort—even magical *webs* or living web monsters, having nothing to do with arachnids), venom, and acidic or other secretions.

In addition, *Phandoorl's bracers* completely ward off all attacks made by a *whip of fangs*, such as those borne by priestesses of Lloth (and detailed in the sourcebook FOR2/ *Drow of the Underdark*); the fanged heads of such a weapon simply cannot touch the wearer of the bracers.

Phandoorl's bracers may be worn under clothing, and will function unhampered. They may be worn around thighs, biceps, or ankles as well as wrists, and still function normally. If a single bracer, rather



than a pair, is worn, the protection is reduced to -1 on spider, snake, and *whip of fangs* attack rolls, and a +1 bonus on saving throws against poison, webs, and secretions.

Magical Weapons

Death Dart

XP Value: 4,000 GP Value: 16,000

This item is similar to the surface-world guardian magical item known as a *flying dagger*. Few drow mages know how to fashion them (and fewer still will admit to knowing how, for fear of being captured and enslaved by a noble House, and set to making endless *darts* for protection and for sale). They are eagerly sought after by noble and wealthy drow.

In old hoards, 1d8 such weapons are usually found. Sometimes one or more will be set atop or inside a chest, with in-

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Items

structions to attack all living things except the being who placed them there (or someone accompanied by the one who placed them). A *death dart* resembles a nine-inch-long black needle. It has a flared butt-end, tapers swiftly, and then thickens more gradually to a bulge in the center, before thinning down to a long, deadly point (so that the 'bulge' looks like two back-to-back cones, large ends placed together). When constructed, a *dart* is either set to activate at a whispered command word (to be carried about for personal defense), or given activation conditions as specific as the most elaborate triggering conditions of a *magic mouth* spell (q.v.). Once determined, the activation conditions of a given *dart* can never be altered.

Once activated, a *death dart* flies about, silently and point-first. *Death darts* cannot be affected by any sort of mental control.

The spells that enable a *death dart* to swoop, dart, and detect opponents (they are usually set to attack anything within 60' that moves) also prevent rusting and brittleness due to extreme heat and cold.

A *dart* that successfully strikes a moving arrow or thrown weapon, can deflect it, if a DM desires.


Some *death darts* can reflect, or are immune to, certain spells, or have special abilities: e.g. their touch can rust metal items as a rust monster's antenna does. Items struck must save vs. lightning or rust. A *death dart* strikes metal when it is attacking a target being carrying or wearing something metal, and its attack roll misses by only one to three points. A few (22%) *death darts* carry sleep or damaging poison. Poison damage is added to physical damage for the first three strikes of the *dart*: the target saves versus poison normally for the first strike, at +2 for the second, and at +4 for the third (there-

after, the poison has been exhausted). A *dart* can be anointed with poison as often as its activator has the means and desire.

Most *death darts* are AC 4; MV Fl 24 (A); HD 1 + 1; hp 9 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4; and are considered magical weapons for purposes of deciding what it can hit. A few *darts* may differ slightly from this norm, usually being larger, and AC6; MV Fl 20 (A); HD 2; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2-7 (1d6 + 1).



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Mage Spells



Like most mages, drow wizards constantly experiment with magic, and steal, buy, or seize spells from others—seeking always to increase their own mastery of magic, and to keep as many specific details of their powers secret as possible (to better deter rival mages and hostile priestesses from attacking them).

A fair number of surface-realm spells have made the journey to the Underdark over the years, either in stolen or purchased spellbooks or scrolls, or via living mages (captives or highly-paid guests). Some of the more daring drow mages have also become accomplished thieves of magic, venturing up into the surface Realms by night to make off with what they can. Adventurers' spellbooks are particularly attractive prey; weary bands of heroes bunked down in the open, or at an inn, are more easily overcome than a wizard surrounded by apprentices, components, scrolls, items, and guardian spells and creatures, in a well-guarded lair.

A few spells have made the reverse journey, developed in the Underdark and then showing up in use in surface lands—even in other worlds! These, listed alphabetically within ascending levels, include (if the Dungeon Master has access to the *Tome of Magic* hardcover sourcebook): *conjure spell component*, *fist of stone/protection from paralysis/Maximilian's Stony Grasp*, *minor malison/greater malison*, *mask of death/safeguarding/claws of the umber hulk* and *acid storm*.

Some of the 'basic' drow wizard spells that appear in FOR2/ *Drow of the Underdark* have also been seen in use by surface-dwelling mages. The spells given here are not immune from this wizardly borrowing-back-and-forth.

Be warned: most powerful spells developed by the Mage Lords of Sorcere remain secret (adventurers battling a dark

elven master mage may face almost any spell). DMs determining the spell roster of any drow mage should note that dark elves tend to 'go in' for necromancy; necromantic spells from *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures*, the *Player's Handbook*, the *Tome of Magic*, and the various RAVENLOFT® publications can readily be used. Drow mages are not keen on wild magic, due to its tendencies to wreak havoc on nearby cavern walls and ceilings!

The new spells appearing here are presented alphabetically, within ascending levels.

First Level Spells

Cling (Alteration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round +1 round/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster or another touched being to adhere to any surface, regardless of gravity, winds, weight, or slipperiness. This allows a slipping or leaping being who reaches a smooth stone, soapy, icy, or wet surface to stick fast. The caster can end this effect with a word.

The *clinging* being chooses a body area (e.g. back, hand, or the fingers of one hand) as the "holding" surface. As long as the holding surface doesn't move (i.e. unlike a *spider climb* spell, the being cannot move about), the *clinging* effect remains firm, even if the being casts spells, readies weapons, ties knots, drives in spikes, or performs another activity.

Clinging ends instantly, breaking the spell, if the spell recipient moves about, or the surface clung to is shattered. If the re-

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Mage Spells

recipient is struck by, or burdened by, an object of greater weight than its own, a Strength Check is forced; failure also means that the *clinging* ceases. This spell does not lessen falling damage in any way.

Immunity to Adherence (Abjuration, Alteration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round/level

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Saving Throw: None

This spell confers upon the caster or another touched being temporary immunity to magical and natural webs, *viscid globs* (such as those produced by a *wand of viscid globs*), the sticky secretions and natural 'glue-like' properties of quicksand, roper strands, mimic pseudopods, cave fisher filaments, and similar impediments. These perils do not hamper or cling to the spell recipient, who may move and act normally.

The material components for this spell are a milkweed seed or other windborne seed "key" or "puff," and a drop of water, alcohol, tears, or spittle.

Masque Mask (Illusion/Phantasm)

Range: 0

Components: V, S

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: The caster's face

Saving Throw: None

This spell is used by wizards who wish to conceal their identities for a short encounter or momentary sighting. It only works on beings who have faces (although more than one head, if they belong to the same being, may be affected), and only on

living flesh.

The *masque mask* transforms the surface appearance of the caster's facial features into a shifting blur, studded with eyes. The caster's own eyes—however many currently have sight—will appear, in their customary location and with their usual appearance (i.e. a mage blind in one eye will only display the 'good' eye; and one with more than two eyes will show them all, even if trying to conceal the fact with eyepatches or shutting eyes during this spell). This effect cannot foil *true seeing* or any magic that can foil illusions, and in any case lasts only for 2-3 rounds (even roll = 2 rounds, odd = 3 rounds; the caster has no control over duration). The spell does not conceal hair hue or cut, general skin coloration, ear shapes, and so on, and is therefore seldom able to conceal the race of the caster. The spell's name comes from its use at revels, to conceal the caster's identity when unmasked—but it is more often used when fleeing a crime scene, or while perpetrating a crime.

Second Level Spells

Circle Dance (Divination) Reversible

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster to learn something of another creature. A gem or gems of not less than 1,000 gp total value are powdered before spellcasting. The caster sprinkles this powder in a circle of at least ten feet in diameter on any solid surface (it may be temporary), and dances an intricate, weaving pattern within it



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Mage Spells

while concentrating on the target creature and singing a repetitive rhyme ("Reveal to me/For I would see..." or the like) which names the target creature concentrated upon.

This naming is a focusing aid, and need not be accurate (nicknames and descriptions may be used). If the spell is successful, the dance ends with the caster receiving mental images and impressions of the target creature. If the sought-after creature is on another plane, that much is made clear—but which plane, and any details of the current surroundings and state of the target, remain unknown.

If the target creature is on the same plane as the caster, the caster gains a vague idea of how distant the target is from the *circle dance*, and some indication of the target's current surroundings and physical or mental state (e.g. dead, asleep, unconscious, alert, happy, sad, casting a spell, etc.).

The base chance of success is 4% per level of the caster, plus cumulative bonuses as follows:

+25% if target is fairly well known to the caster, or +40% if target is intimately known to caster;

+10 if target is upset or excited;

+15% if target is currently spellcasting or actively using a magical item;

+5% if the target is near (within 1 mile per level of caster).

The total percentile score of the caster determines how much the *circle dance* reveals; a total of 100% will yield a clear mental picture of the target's surroundings and a precise distance and direction to that locale. This is not an *ESP* spell, and does not allow hearing of, or spellcasting at a target (it is not "seeing" the target for purposes of casting a *magic missile* or similar spell, but may well aid the caster in *teleportation*).



The reverse of the spell, *circle charm*, involves the same material component and a reversed dance. It has the effect of hiding the caster (only) and objects on his or her person from all *circle dance*, *locate object*, *ESP*, *know alignment*, and other spells that locate and divine the thoughts or nature of creatures. This protection lasts for 1 day per level of the caster.

Neither form of this spell affects a *sending* or *wizard eye*, or functions as any sort of psionic barrier or protective aid.

Immunity to Spider Venom (Abjuration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 2 rounds + 1 round/level

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Saving Throw: Neg.

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This spell confers upon the caster or another touched creature (who, even if willing, receives a saving throw; if successful, it breaks the spell) absolute immunity to all effects of the venom, internal fluids, digestive juices or secretions, or spilled gore of any arachnid (i.e. corrosive as well as poison effects are negated). Fresh-spun webs will not adhere to the protected being, and the spell recipient is even immune to the blinding effects that would normally result from being sprayed in the face by such fluids.

The spell also confers upon the protected being a +2 saving throw bonus against all other acids, venoms, and poisons (ingested, contact, or insinuated).

The material component of this spell is a whole poisonous spider of any size, alive or dried; it is crushed during spellcasting.

Improved Spider Climb (Alteration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 3 rounds +1 round/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell is an improved version of the first level wizard spell *spider climb*. The recipient can climb on vertical surfaces and hang upside down from ceilings, moving at a rate of 8 (4 if at all encumbered); bare hands and feet are not required, and small objects do not stick to the recipient's body: a recipient can easily cast spells while sticking to a wall with feet and/or back. The caster can end the effect with a word (if this causes a fall, normal damage applies). Sufficient force or impact can also tear the recipient free; the DM must assign a saving throw based on the circumstances.

The material components of this spell

are a drop of bitumen (pitch) or tree gum, and a live spider, both of which must be eaten by the recipient. Unwilling recipients must be touched and must eat the components, and must also fail a saving throw vs. spell, to be affected.

Third Level Spells

Cloak of Insanity (Abjuration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round + 1d4 rounds

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: The caster



Saving Throw: None

This spell temporarily cloaks the caster's mind with wild, insane surface thoughts and images; it can't be read or influenced, even by psionics. A *cloak of insanity* therefore confers short-term immunity to psionic attack and all spells that act on the mind, such as *charm*, *command*, *confusion*, *ESP*, *fear*, *feblemind*, *phantasmal killer*, *possession*, *rulership*, *soul trapping*, *suggestion*, and *telepathy*— and similar influencing or scrying effects created or caused by magical items. *Limited wish* and *wish* spells can penetrate this protection, as can the spells and spell-like powers wielded by demipowers and deities.

While protected by the *cloak*, the caster can't cast another spell (any attempt to do so will force upon the caster instant *feblemind* effects, lasting 1 turn/level of the caster). The caster can use magical items (even those requiring command words, and/or mental control of effects), drink potions, scan spellbooks and scrolls to choose spells (but not study to memorize spells, or be *febleminded*), or ready apparatus for later spellcasting. Combat and other physical activity on the part of



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Mage Spells



the caster, even if it causes unconsciousness or forces a System Shock survival roll, cannot end a *cloak of insanity*.

Each time this spell is used, there is a 12% chance that the caster will become *confused* (totally helpless) when it expires, this state lasting 2d4 rounds. If this occurs, roll 1d8; if a result of 1-3 occurs, the caster will unleash any offensive spell carried (or failing that, hurl any available weapon) at a nearby creature, even if friendly (determine randomly), and then revert to normal mental state.

Venom Bolt (Evocation)

Range: 30 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: One creature

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell creates a burst of black, apparently blazing liquid from the caster's mouth. It gouts towards a target creature chosen by the caster; to hit the desired target with a *venom bolt*, the caster must make a successful attack roll (at a +4 bonus). If the roll fails, the bolt fades; it cannot affect non-living flesh or harm an unintended being.

A *venom bolt*, despite its name, is corrosive in nature. It is not aflame, and can bypass armor or obstacles by acting as a gas or mist of droplets. Its touch deals any living (not undead) victim 4-16 (4d4) points of damage.

The material components of this spell are at least six drops of any sort of poison, and any source of spark or flame (extinguished in the spellcasting).

Fourth Level Spells

Spider Leap (Alteration)

Range: 0

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

This specialized variant of the *dimension door* spell allows the caster to transfer himself to the present location of a previously seen and/or touched arachnid of any sort. The spell is wasted, and does nothing, if no arachnid is within 30' (per caster's level) of the caster.

If the desired arachnid (which the caster concentrates upon) is beyond this range, but another arachnid is within reach, the caster is taken to the other arachnid, even if unwilling (if several arachnids are within range, determine the one arrived at randomly).

This special form of teleportation bypasses all physical obstacles, but can't pass through water or magical barriers. The caster cannot arrive in a spot occupied by anything solid; if this occurs, the caster is simply shifted in a random direction to an open space, not trapped in the Astral plane (but is *confused* for 2 rounds). If the caster arrives without a solid surface under his feet (i.e. the spider is on a wall, and the caster arrives in mid-air), falling damage applies unless further magic is employed.

The spell does not confer any protection against, influence over, or friendship with, the arachnid focus. The caster requires 1 round to recover from the use of this spell (unless *confused* as noted above), and can bring all worn or carried items, up to a weight limit of 500 pounds of non-

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Mage Spells

living matter, or 250 pounds of living matter. If the weight limit is exceeded, the spell “flickers” for 1 round, during which the caster must shed excess items to cause the spell to work (at the end of the round; the caster is still at his initial location, vulnerable to attack, during this time)—or the spell is wasted and will not function at all.

Spider Shape (Alteration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S

Duration: 4d4 rounds + 2 rounds/level

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: Touched creature

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell allows the caster to assume a specialized arachnid form (such as any of the spiders found in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, or in *FOR2/The Drow of the Underdark*). The caster can also confer this spell upon another touched being; if unwilling, the being gets a saving throw vs. spell, at +2. If the save is successful, the spell is broken, and the victim avoids its effects (but is *confused* for 1 round, as they battle its power).

Beings assuming spider form require 1-2 rounds (determine randomly, by odd/even die roll) to become aware of their newly gained abilities, and to learn how to make the arachnid body respond. During this time, they are motionless and vulnerable.

Once acclimatized, the spell recipient commands all the normal abilities of the spider form. This extends (even if a real spider of the same sort doesn't have these powers) to the ability to *spider climb* (as the first level spell) and the power to move along or through natural or magical webs without being slowed down or becoming stuck.

The being in *spider shape* can also leap if a real spider of the same form usually can, and bite for the same damage. Poison effects are not gained. Web-spinning abilities aren't gained, but even if a real spider of the same form can't spin webs, a being in *spider shape* can cast one *web* spell (as the second level wizard spell, but with no material component required). Unless the form chosen is too small, a being in *spider shape* can also carry burdens of up to 600 pounds, including riders, without being torn off walls or ceilings by the weight.

The change to spider shape neither heals existing damage or causes harm; any armor worn is hurled away by the spell. A spell recipient is trapped in spider form until touched by the caster, or until the spell expires; the caster can resume his own form at will (this ends the spell). A slain spell recipient automatically reverts to his normal form.

No System Shock rolls are required for transformation to or from *spider shape*, and beings in *spider shape* are highly resistant (+4 to all saving throws) to hostile *polymorph* spells and magical effects.

Fifth Level Spells

Spidercloak Armor (Conjuration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 4 rounds + 1 round/level

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

This spell surrounds the caster with a floating, swirling, shadowy network of non-sticky webs (of irregular 'scraps' of force) and magical shadows. This magical, partially-solid barrier helps to deflect both physical and magical attacks, raising the



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Mage Spells

Armor Class of even a stationary, pinioned, or attacked-from-behind caster by 3 points, plus 1 or 2 points more (odd or even roll; check each round, as it fluctuates.)

Spidercloak armor also gives a variable aid to saving throws, of either nothing (odd roll) or +1 (even roll; check each round), and its benefits are cumulative with those of other protective spells or items. The *armor* also conceals the caster's alignment aura, and any magical auras carried on his or her person, from magical scrutiny.

The material component of this spell is a bit of spiderweb, or a living spider (crushed during casting).

Wonderform (Alteration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to instantly take on the form of a wingless wonder (q.v., "Monsters of Menzoberranzan" chapter). No System Shock roll is required, and the spell conceals the caster's true alignment with the chaotic neutral aura of a 'wonder,' as well as shielding the caster's mind from all contact: it can't be read, influenced, or attacked. (Drow wizards commonly use this spell to hide from hostile priestesses of the Spider Queen, or intruder-mages unfamiliar with the Underdark).

While in wingless wonder form, a mage can cast any memorized spells desired, purely by force of will. Somatic and verbal components are not necessary; material components are consumed, and a spell will fail without them, but they need not



be brandished (instead, they disappear by themselves from the caster's person, under the concealment of the wonder form).

A wizard can remain in wingless wonder form permanently, though 1 point of intelligence is lost at the end of each full year in wonder form (ignore partial years). At will, the caster can revert to his or her own form, or take on another form by casting another spell that enables a change of shape. In either case, the *wonderform* spell instantly ends; a wizard cannot shift back and forth between normal and wingless wonder form except by casting multiple *wonderform* spells.

Priestesses of Evil

It has been said that the true ruler of Menzoberranzan is the goddess Lloth; she is responsible for the city's nature, customs, laws, and survival. This saying is correct, but it is also true that at least forty other drow communities in (or under) the Realms are known to worship the Spider Queen, and that her divine concerns, aims, and efforts often transcend her attention to mere individual mortal worshippers. In short, she can't (and doesn't want to) spend all of her time nursemaiding and spying on her Menzoberranyr faithful. Although she enjoys being feared and worshipped, and being in the midst of a place where her rule is paramount, spending attention on a "secure" holding is a luxury, when battles and intrigue elsewhere demand far more urgent attention. So Lloth comes to Menzoberranzan all too seldom to please her most dedicated faithful—her high priestesses—and much too often for the comfort of its every other inhabitant.

Lloth maintains her rule over the city by means of those same priestesses; in Menzoberranzan, they speak her will, and act upon it. Through warring Matrons of rival Houses, Lloth sets the drow at war with each other, both for her own amusement and to prevent the onset of complacency, assertion of runaway pride, and a possible decadent turning to other deities. In truth, Lloth fears the underground worship of Vhaeraun and Ghaunadaur, which she knows to be present in Menzoberranzan, and can't seem to eradicate. Her priestesses have firm, zealous orders to tirelessly seek out and destroy all traces of such treacherous, unholy faiths.

At the same time, Lloth's hold over Menzoberranzan is kept secure, and the whole community kept from a perilous plunge into ongoing, open civil warfare, by the overwhelmingly superior strength (and

utter loyalty to Lloth) of the city's First House, the family of Baenre. Lloth keeps a close watch over the minds of not only its aged ruling Matron, but over all of its high priestesses and wizards of note; she knows well that it is among the ranks of the lowly and ambitious—and especially among wizards of Sorcere—that loyalty to her is lowest, and open rebellion often kept down only by stronger fear.

To a lesser extent, Lloth watches over the other Houses of the city for the same things. Though priestesses are taught early that "Lloth has a thousand thousand eyes," it is usually true that she has more valuable (and interesting) things to do than to use them all constantly to spy over the shoulders of her every worshipper—so she uses the vigilance and inquisitiveness of a ready-made network of loyal spies within each House to do most of her work for her: her priestesses. They do Lloth's watching, and she keeps them in check by spying upon them, "watching the watchers" to prevent any splinter faiths from emerging that might lessen her power, and to prevent any other deity from subverting one of her high priestesses to serve a different divine power.

Rival Faiths In Menzoberranzan


Many visitors—both willing merchants and unwilling slaves—come to Menzoberranzan with its passing days, and it is fair to say that almost all of the known faiths of Faerun have been worshipped by someone in the city at some point in time. This holds true for most trading cities of the Realms, and can be discounted in a look at "rival faiths."

Lloth's commands make it a fatal offense





Priestesses of Evil



to openly worship any deity but her within the city (swearing by another deity in a tavern, or during an argument or moment of great emotion, is frowned upon—and tends to get one watched—but is not cause for death; the prohibition is on rituals). In practice, Lloth's priestesses tend to turn a blind eye to hired mercenaries of other races worshipping their own gods, such as orcs, bugbears, gnolls, humans who make offerings to Tempus Lord of Battles, and so on. They are after bigger game: the rival drow faiths of Eilistraee, Ghaunadaur, and Vhaeraun (all detailed in the sourcebook *FOR2/The Drow of the Underdark*).

In Menzoberranzan, the worship of Eilistraee is practically non-existent, as is that of Ghaunadaur (a handful of Menzoberranyr devotees worship "The Eye" only on visits to other drow communities, and do not communicate with each other in any sort of organized, underground cult) and the smaller drow cults (not mentioned here).

The real rival is Vhaeraun, The Masked Lord, who has a small but growing following in the city, particularly among drow who travel the Underdark (and therefore see things as they are outside a city ruled by Lloth's dictates), and young drow dissatisfied with the society as it is or with their own lowly ranking within it. (They are likely to ask such questions as: *why* are things so cruel and divisive? *why* isn't there more harmony, mutual enjoyment, and common growth in power? *why*, after thousands of years, are we still all stuck in this one cavern, at each other's throats all the time—when we could be great, rule a vast part of the Underdark, and all live like surface-world kings?)

The necessarily secretive nature of the faith of Vhaeraun in the city keeps it mysterious, and its worshippers hidden; little is said of them here, to allow DMs to bet-

ter conceal who is and isn't a devotee of Vhaeraun from searching PCs.

The passages of the Underdark all around Menzoberranzan are studded with cleverly-hidden holy symbols of The Masked Lord, which are so constructed as to emit no betraying magical or alignment aura. Priests of Vhaeraun need only be within a mile of their holy symbol to use it in working spells given to them by Vhaeraun; it need not ever be on their person (except when they first wear it to become attuned or linked to it) or brandished in spellcasting or dealing with undead. Another chapter of this book deals with some of their important spells, and the chapter on the spells granted by Lloth herself contains one vital spell used by priests of Vhaeraun: *conceal item*. (They also, of course, can call on any of the "common to all drow priests" spells detailed in *FOR2/The Drow of the Underdark*).

To priestesses of Lloth, priests of Vhaeraun are "the enemy," to be hunted down by any means possible—torture of suspected drow is a favorite tactic—and eradicated on the altars of Lloth, to earn the maximum glory of the goddess, and derive the most personal enjoyment out of one's efforts.

Serving Two Deities

Very rare, but greatly feared in Lloth-fostered drow folklore, and amongst living priestesses of Lloth, is the traitor-priestess (or priest), who serves Lloth and another deity (usually Vhaeraun). It is for this reason that male drow who aspire to be priests in Lloth's service seldom rise very far in levels: even if they overcome the hatred and resentment of any female drow clergy they must work with, the Spider Queen simply does not

Priestesses of Evil



trust them—they tend to end their days quickly, being used as “temple enforcers” or guards. In this role they face many spell-battles with intruders (such as drow trying to settle grudges with enemies in the clergy), or priestesses who are rebellious, or feuding, or who have succumbed to insanity under the pressures of their station or contact with lower-planar creatures.

There are priests, and even more priestesses, who serve Lloth on the surface, and Vhaeraun underneath. The reverse is almost unknown, though the destructive potential of such an individual keeps the idea a dark and secret dream that fires a glint in the eyes of many a high priestess. The glory for training and placing such a one would be very great, but finding suit-

able candidates and steering them alive through the perils of preparation without losing their loyalty to Lloth and to their handler is unlikely in the extreme—and so far, as far as it is can be told from the news of the Underdark, so unlikely as to be unknown.


How can such treachery be tolerated by the Spider Queen? Surely she knows the heart of every worshipper, and could prevail over any influences of a god of lesser power, such as Vhaeraun?

The truth is that Vhaeraun is not so much less powerful than the Spider Queen; he simply uses his power in subtle, hidden, behind-the-scenes ways, not in the tyrannical, exultant, and brutal-naked-force manner so beloved by Lloth.

He also watches over the drow in any



Priestesses of Evil



place ruled by Lloth where he does have worshippers (such as the drow cities of Menzoberranzan, Tlethtyrr, and Waerglarn) often and attentively, looking into their minds for doubts and misgivings. If he finds great hatred or open rebellion against the dictates of the Spider Queen (or against her local high priestesses), and can find an opportunity for a 'private audience' with the wavering Lloth-worshipper, Vhaeraun manifests as a shadowy black face-mask, and telepathically speaks to the individual.

If the individual is discovered or attacked by others, Vhaeraun typically leaves—after using spells to destroy the beings who discover or attack his intended faithful, as a sign of his power over Lloth, and to preserve the intended worshipper for another attempt at conversion later.

Vhaeraun offers a faithful follower additional powers, typically as follows: access to all spells known to his faith (this includes the spells noted in the relevant chapter of this book, in *Drow of the Underdark*, and any desired spells from other rulebooks: notably, from *Tome of Magic*, the spells *chaotic combat* (which will work only when cast by the priestess on herself, or another faithful of Vhaeraun, regardless of class), *create holy symbol*, *divine inspiration*, *mindnet*, *reversion*, and *seclusion*); the use of one additional, "free" *blessing of Vhaeraun* spell per day, in addition to the normal spell roster of the cleric; the use of one *deceive prying* spell at any time in the future, bestowed immediately and carried in addition to the normal spell roster of the cleric (but not replaced by Vhaeraun; if used, any replacement spell must be prayed for, by a priest of sufficient level, and gained as part of the usual, limited complement of spells); the favor of Vhae-

raun, who richly rewards those who do well in his service (sometimes, he will falsely claim, with immortality—and he's still looking for a worthy consort); the personal attention of Vhaeraun, in the form of useful information imparted to the priestess from time to time, in her dreams; and the ability to function without any penalties in full or bright light, in part because the eyes of the faithful are shaded with "the shadow of Vhaeraun's power."

A double agent priest or priestess continues to advance in Lloth's service, and to gain spells normally. If the individual's loyalty to Vhaeraun is ever discovered, Lloth typically alerts nearby drow, and refuses to grant any further spells to the traitor—but does not strip the drow of any presently-memorized spells. If the drow survives long enough to flee Lloth-worshippers and any community they control, he or she continues at the same priest level and spell-power, losing only access to spells specifically and only granted by Lloth (note that the *conceal item* spell is granted by deities other than the Spider Queen, and there may well be other Lloth-granted spells that have been co-opted by rival deities). The double agent becomes a cleric of Vhaeraun (although the dress and manners of a Lloth-worshipper may be retained for use as a disguise), and typically travels to near-surface drow holdings or trading communities used by several races (such as Skullport).

If a DM wishes to make known to players the existence of double agent priestesses in drow society, an effective way of revealing them is to have PCs witness the unmasking and furious destruction of such a priestess at the hands of priestesses loyal to Lloth, who will spit, snarl, lash with their snake-headed whips until one grows tired simply watching them, and af-

Priestesses of Evil

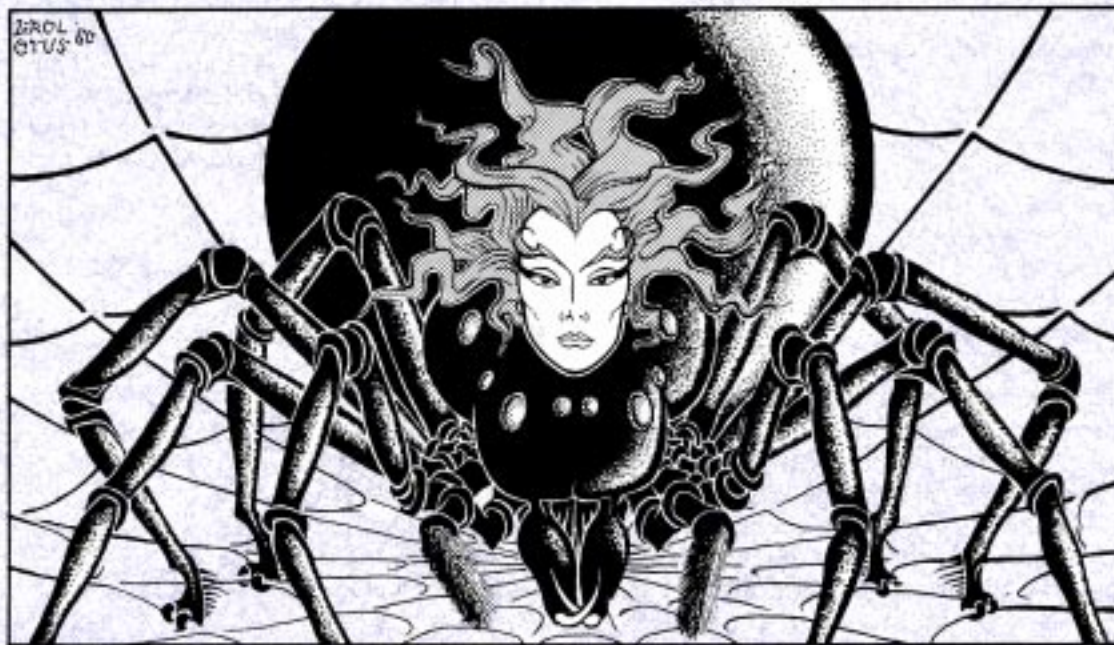
terwards trumpet their victory over “the evil Shadow, the treacherous Masked One,” as they parade the mutilated remnants of the traitor through the city.

This grisly fate has befallen many a devotee of Vhaeraun, particularly before some of the concealment spells now available to his faithful had been devised by the Masked Lord: notably, in Menzoberanzan, the priestesses Ililree Cobranhree, Slylyndrath Dhree, and Myyrin Jalhuus, and the priest Narr Thuirbrynn. Drow tend not to speak the names or want to remember such traitors—their Houses disown them for safety’s sake, and other drow are urged by the yochlol not to remind people of treachery to Lloth by keeping alive names of those who have so sinned.

Priestesses of The Spider Queen

In Lloth-dominated drow society, priestesses of the Spider Queen are owed the hospitality of all drow including those of rival Houses, who may provide guest furnishings at a safe distance from their own residences without giving any offense to the visitors or to Lloth.

Generally, under The Way of Lloth, it is death to any drow or lesser creature (i.e. non-drow) to disobey a priestess—and a punishable offense for any drow of lesser rank than high priestess to disobey a Matron of any House. There are recognized exceptions to this rule: guests have a limited immunity, masters and mistresses holding office in any community are exempt, and certain drow (such as mercenaries) are ‘outside’ The Way of Lloth. Be warned; when in doubt, most priestesses strike to punish first, and ask questions later.



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Priest Spells

Priestesses of Lloth wield many dark and deadly spells; some are shown in the *Player's Handbook* and *Tome of Magic*, and in two sections (the entries for Lloth's clergy and "commonly shared" drow priest spells) in *Drow of the Underdark*.

These pages delve again into the magic of those who pray to Lloth. Her clergy devise fewer spells than some priesthoods, but many of their magics are yet unknown to surface-world folk, and new ones do appear. Spells given here may vary in detail from drow city to city—and may even see use by priests of other deities (and other races).

No priestess of Lloth should be easily overcome in any confrontation; most are harsh, aggressive creatures, quick to strike, and canny in battle. More than most priests (except those of war-gods, such as Tempus), clergy of Lloth are trained and experienced in combat.

First Level Spells

Cloak of Dark Power (Evocation, Alteration)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: 0
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a dark aura of coursing, swirling power around the caster. The priest's body and anything worn or carried (by the caster only) are protected by this aura from the effects of full sunlight, even under the open, daytime sky of the surface world (arms and armor imbued with the radiations of the Under-

dark don't begin to lose their power, and the drow caster suffers no "bright light" combat penalties). This magic is specifically fashioned to prevail against a *light* spell.

A priest shrouded in a *cloak of dark power* functions as if of one experience level higher, in all dealings with undead. Arachnids (and others using arachnid forms) attack a *cloak*-wearer at -3.

Undead Battlemight (Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round + round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One undead/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell affects (only) undead zombies and skeletons touched by the caster, giving them the speed and agility of the caster (in peak, healthy state). The undead gain initiative rolls and the same saving throws as the caster, if better than their usual saves. The material components of the spell are three drops of water, sinew or cartilage from any mammal, and a drop of quicksilver.

Second Level Spell

Revenance (Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 1 undead/level
Saving Throw: None

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Priest Spells



This is a clerical version of the wizardly *revenance* spell (see the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures book). The caster affects one touched undead per level, making it immune to an initial attempt to turn, destroy, or command it by a priest, paladin, or other being with power over undead. The spell ends as it prevents that one attempt; later attempts have a normal chance of success (the spell does not protect undead from spells or magical item effects). Protected undead radiate a faint magical aura. Unlike the wizard spell, multiple clerical *revenances* can be cast on a single undead; each turning attempt ends only one spell, leaving the others operating. The material components of the spell are a drop of blood and a pinch of dust per undead to be affected.

Third Level Spell

Conceal Item (Illusion/Phantasm)

Sphere: Protection
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 rounds + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 6
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: None

This magic enables the caster to render utterly undetectable, except to himself, any single non-living item smaller than his total body mass, as long as he is carrying or touching it. The spell conceals even magical or alignment auras, and shows a spy using *true seeing* a blank, shifting-

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Priest Spells

outlines area of white "fog" where the item is.

This spell is usually used to conceal a carried magical item or weapon; priests of Vhaeraun typically use it to hide holy symbols (when cast on any holy symbol, spell duration is tripled). Developed by a priestess of Lloth, this spell has been "borrowed" by all Menzoberranyr priests of Vhaeraun. Its material component is a small handful (about two ounces) of the dust of any powdered gemstone.

Fourth Level Spell

Stone Walk (Alteration)

Sphere: Elemental

Range: 0

Components: S

Duration: 1 round + 1 round/level

Casting Time: 7

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

A development of the *meld into stone* spell, this magic allows a caster to merge into solid stone and travel (short distances) through it. Travel is possible through loose, or broken stone, but not mud, sand, or fine gravel. Movement is always 10 feet/round.

If spell duration permits, a caster can enter stone, leave it, and re-enter it or another mass of stone, without casting a second *stone walk*. While in stone, the caster can sense any ending or edges of stone within 120 feet, as well as the presence, location, and size of any cavities, seepwater, fissures, air pockets, and beings such as digging or *imprisoned* creatures, and those able to pass through stone (such as xorn). The stone blocks all hearing, but some vibrations can be felt. The caster can

walk up or down as well as horizontally, and can tell direction relative to the natural grain of the rock.

The caster is trapped alive, entombed in solid stone (the same as a victim of the wizardly *imprisonment* spell) if not out of stone at spell expiry. A priest within 12 feet of a break in the stone at expiry can struggle onwards at a cost of 1d6 lost hp (2d6 if a system shock roll fails) to break out. In a round of emergence from stone, a caster is unable to use spells or make attacks, has an effective Armor Class of 10, and moves at half rate (rounding down).

Fifth Level Spells

Imbue Undead With Spell Ability (Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: One undead

Saving Throw: None

This is a clerical version of the wizards' spell of the same name described in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures book. The caster can affect one undead, touched with a drop of the caster's own blood (the spell's material component).

The undead (which can be controlled by clerical ability or by spells, without hampering this spell) becomes a spell focus for the caster—who can funnel any chosen, currently-carried spell through the undead. The spell is emitted from the undead, but all casting activity (including component use) is performed by the priest. Distance does not matter, if priest and undead remain on the same plane

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Priest Spells

(but unless other spells are used to “see” the undead’s surroundings, or it is in a known location, spells will be hurled blindly).

Unlike the wizard spell, spells to be cast through the undead can be chosen as needed, rather than at or before *imbue-ment*. A priest can cast multiple spells, one per round, through the undead, until it is destroyed, or a maximum of one spell per level of the priest has been cast (exhausting the spell), or the spell runs out (it can last up to 10 turns per level of the caster).

With this spell, a hidden priest can avoid direct combat, employing an undead as a spellcasting fighting-focus. It can be cast on undead affected by *revenge* and/or *undead battlemight*, and the spells will function simultaneously. A *dispel magic* cast on such an augmented undead will end only one of these spells (choose which randomly).

Spider Summoning (Conjuration/Summoning)

Sphere: Animal
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round +1 round/level
Casting Time: 8
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell calls 1d4 “large” spiders (detailed in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*) per level of the caster, to serve the priest. They ‘fade’ into view within 100 feet of the caster, on the round after casting, and obey the caster’s command on the round thereafter. They have full possible hit points and poison reserves, and fight to death for the caster with utter loyalty, following the caster’s silent mental urgings as to targets, direction to move, and tasks

to do. The caster can cast other spells without ending this spell’s control. At spell expiry, surviving spiders ‘fade away,’ returning whence they came.

Only true arachnids can be summoned by this spell, not similar insect creatures or beings using magic to take arachnid form (such as Lloth, or a wizard using *spider shape*). The spell cannot be used to command or repel encountered spiders; it only allows the caster to command the arachnids it summons. The spell’s material component is a dried arachnid corpse.

Sixth Level Spell

Meld of Lolth (Enchantment/Charm)


Sphere: Charm
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 9
Area of Effect: One being
Saving Throw: Special

Often used by priestesses to link themselves to a powerful drow male before a battle (to control them when necessary), this spell enables the caster to ‘mind-meld’ with another creature. The *meld* allows the caster to see through the other being’s eyes and read its thoughts, and communicate telepathically with the linked being.

The caster can act, speak, and cast spells normally without ending this link, and is able (whenever not casting another spell or using any psionic abilities) to *dominate* the linked being completely, controlling its body regardless of distance (the spell is broken if caster and linked being end up on different planes). The caster can use the linked being as the focus (source of emission) of a currently-memorized spell,



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Priest Spells



casting it *through* the linked being—but this ends the *meld* instantly.

If the linked being's intelligence is less than the caster's, it is allowed a saving throw vs. spells once per turn to break the *meld*. If the linked being is as intelligent as the caster (or more so), and is or becomes (i.e. when ordered into danger) unwilling to be in the *meld*, it gets a saving throw vs. spell once every other round, to escape.

Whenever the linked being suffers damage, the caster must save vs. death. If the save fails, the spell ends, and the pain-wracked caster suffers 1d6 hp of damage. If the linked being dies, the caster must make a system shock roll or die instantly (the caster can willingly end a *meld* 1 round after deciding to do so).

Eighth Level Spell

Cloak of Gaer (Necromancy)

Sphere: Healing

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 11

Area of Effect: One being (usually caster)

Saving Throw: None

This powerful spell surrounds the caster (or a touched recipient being) with a faint magical aura. It takes effect (days or perhaps years later) when the being it is cast on is forced to make a system shock survival roll, or when the being reaches 6 hp or less. It can also be cast on a just-injured being.

A being protected by a *cloak of Gaer* automatically makes a successful system shock survival roll, when one is required. This triggers the spell to act; in the same round it also:

- *regenerates* severed or missing limbs or body extremities;
- *purges* the body of all poisons, diseases, insanity, *charms* and outside mental influences, *curses* and *geas* effects, possession or symbiotic life (even if friendly and desired), *feble-mindedness*, and cancels the effects of any *forget* spells previously cast on the being;
- restores the being to full wakefulness, alertness, sobriety, and pain-free state; and
- heals the being of 4d8 hit points of damage (the being cannot gain "extra" hit points by this means).

If this spell is cast on a hurt being within 2 rounds after the major injury, the spell has the effects noted above, and allows a victim who has failed a system shock survival roll (and "died") a second chance. This roll is made at a +22% bonus; if it fails, death occurs, but the *purge* and *regenerate* effects still occur to the corpse.


If this spell is applied 3 to 9 rounds after a being has been stricken, it allows a second system shock survival roll, but without any bonus; other spell effects occur as noted here. If the spell is applied later, it only *purges* and *regenerates* (even on bodies).

The spell's material components are four drops each of holy water, the caster's blood, and dew. A *dispel magic* cannot end this spell, in its 'waiting' state. This magic has enabled many "known dead" drow to return and hunt down foes. Certain drow wizards are rumored to use a similar spell.

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Priest Spells



Magic of Menzoberranzan: Special Spells



Certain spells are crucial to the daily survival of the few, hidden priests of Vhaeraun in Menzoberranzan. (Most spells of The Masked Lord require his holy symbol to be within 1 mile of the caster, not on the caster's person.) Here are a few of these special spells:

Second Level Spell

Blessing of Vhaeraun (Conjuration/Summoning)

Sphere: Combat
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables any one thiefling ability use or weapon attack of the caster or a touched spell recipient, to be performed with a + 5 attack roll bonus or + 25% ability bonus. Any damage caused by this action (harmful or beneficial to the recipient) will be the maximum possible on a d8 roll of 1-6 (otherwise, determine damage normally). The ability or attack to be augmented is chosen by the spell recipient and stated aloud ("Let the aid be NOW!"). It must be performed within 1 turn of casting, or the magic is lost. It also fails if a *dispel magic* is cast on the recipient before the round in which the *blessing* is used.

Sixth Level Spells

Air Tread (Alteration)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round +1 round/level
Casting Time: 9
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell, a slightly more powerful version of the common *air walk* spell, temporarily alters the body weight of the priest or a touched being (of L-size or less), so that the spell recipient can walk upon liquid or "on air" with normal balance and at normal movement rate. Unlike the third level spell *water walk*, the being's feet do contact any liquid walked upon.

If cast upon a falling person, this spell brings their descent to a stop within a further drop of their own body length (if any surface is struck during this time, base falling damage is halved). Very long falls can be lessened by using the spell duration to walk straight downwards, to lessen the height of the remaining, unavoidable fall. When this spell ends, normal descent (with possible falling damage) occurs.

This spell is customarily used to walk across chasms, or from one rooftop to another, but may be used to cast one additional spell from a stationary midair "standing on nothingness" perch. This use of the spell exhausts it immediately upon the completion of casting the other spell, so that the caster immediately begins to fall. The material components of this spell are a feather, a pinch of dust, and a sandal or shoe of any size.

Deceive Prying (Divination)

Sphere: All
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn +1 turn/level
Casting Time: 9
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

Magic of Menzoberranzan: Special Spells




This spell protects the priest or another touched being from magical and psionic examination (not attack). The alignment aura, faith, and thoughts of the recipient are overlaid by a false alignment and set of beliefs (chosen during casting), and random surface thoughts are supplied by the spell, in response to what the being sees happening and the false alignment and faith chosen. The being can cast spells without breaking this protection, and conduct any mental activity desired (including the use of psionics or *telepathy*) behind the mental screen. A *deceive prying* spell provides no protection against enchantment/charm spells or psionic attacks except to give a +1 bonus to the ini-

tial saving throw against a *charm person* magic (not the more powerful *charm monster*), by making the attacker's mind assault less precise.

Priests of Vhaeraun use this spell to hide from those trying to discover their identities. Its material components are a drop of cranial fluid (from any mammal), and a small cube of iron.

Monsters of Menzoberranzan



Far too many monsters infest the vast, wild Underdark to fit into this book. Many have appeared in various volumes of the *Monstrous Compendium* and in FORGOTTEN REALMS® products, notably FOR2/*The Drow of the Underdark* and *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set. Everything from gargoyles to purple worms can be met, by the unlucky adventurer, within ten days travel of Menzoberranzan. Here, some of the most important monsters are noted, for easy DM reference.

Alhoon: Described later in this chapter, these mind flayer lichs are a growing force in the Underdark. Current news (see the “Now” chapter) suggests they have plans for Menzoberranzan.

Bat, Deep: This collective heading appears in *Drow of the Underdark*, and includes the *azmyth*, *night hunter*, *sinister*, and *werebat*. The first-listed bat type is a whimsical beast that can befriend or bedevil a drow or surface-world adventurer alike, even serving as an adventuring-companion.

The two types listed ‘in the middle’ are hunters, a menace to all in the Underdark, but most dangerous when hunting in large packs.

The last-listed bat is a lycanthrope. It is certain that Menzoberranyr drow, as well as humans and other surface-world folk, can become werebats. They are forced into were-shape when the moon is full in the night sky above the surface world, even though they cannot see it (and may never have seen it!).

Cloaker Lord: The ancient and mysterious subterranean race known as “cloakers” is scattered all over the Underdark. Local cloakers seem to be growing in power (see the “Now” chapter), in part be-

cause of the Cloaker Lord that now leads them. This individual is part of a superior sub-race, not a unique being, and is smart enough to capture and emplace the monster-producing beings known as “Deepspawn” (see below, and the FR11/*Dwarves Deep* sourcebook) to protect cloaker lairs from drow attacks.

Deepspawn: These rare, infamous horrors have the awesome power of generating other, lesser monsters—versions of creatures that the deepspawn has devoured sometime in its past. These other monsters, the “spawn” of the mother deepspawn, are self-willed, but cannot attack their parent deepspawn, even if compelled magically to do so. Deepspawn are fully detailed in the FR11/*Dwarves Deep* sourcebook.

In the vicinity of Menzoberranzan, they are found only in caverns where the cloaker lord (see above) has placed them, their travel restricted by nets, and their feeding controlled by the cloakers.

Any attack or foray in force in the direction of the cloaker lord’s area by the Menzoberranyr drow will be answered by a removal of the nets, and a skillful “retreat” by cloakers, to draw the drow into a confrontation with the deepspawn’s assorted monster spawn.

Dragon, Deep: Detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, this fearsome dragon of the depths can shift its form to resemble a drow, duergar, orc, human, or other intelligent biped of the Underdark, as well as taking a winged snake shape.

Dangerous to drow in the extreme, these silent hunters are hunted down by Menzoberranyr whenever they are found. Although they respect the magical might of the drow gathered in Menzoberranzan too much to reveal themselves, or

Monsters of Menzoberranzan

to try and live in the city in drow-shape, at least four deep dragons regularly visit the city, noting weaknesses of the drow, and opportunities for later prey among fellow visitors to The Bazaar.

Deep dragons don't become intoxicated as humans, duergar, and drow do—so they quite often (in humanoid form) go the “drinking pits” and dances of the drow (described in the “High Life” chapter), to get to know certain drow, hear things let slip by drunken drow, and generally have a good time being amused by the antics of the celebrants.

Foulwing: Described in this chapter, these clumsy fliers are rare in the Underdark around the city; they too easily fall prey to more agile predators. More common in areas of the Underdark that connect with remote clefts, mountainous peaks, and valleys in the surface world, foulwings are used by the more adventurous drow as aerial steeds in the night skies of the surface world. They are included here for instances when Menzoberranyr and other drow venture into the surface world.

Lizard, Subterranean: Described in these pages under this collective heading are two of the most common Underdark reptiles used by intelligent races as domesticated stock: the strong ‘pack lizard’ and the smaller, faster ‘riding lizard.’

Myrlochar: Detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, these servants of Lloth are spiders native to the Abyss. In the hierarchy of Lloth's servitors, they rank below the yochlol (see below, and in *Drow of the Underdark*).

Found in Menzoberranzan only when summoned by the prayers and rituals of Lloth-worshipping drow, these “soul spi-

ders” form hunting packs from time to time, at the request of drow priestesses, and go out into the Dominion to ‘scour’ it for foes of Lloth.

Pedipalp: This collective heading appears in *Drow of the Underdark*, where it details the related *large*, *huge*, and *giant* species of “whip scorpion” monsters. Native to the Underdark around Menzoberranzan, they are used by the city's citizens as pets, guardians, and the equivalent of hunting dogs. In the wild, they are far-ranging hunters, who attack anything fearlessly except groups of drow, arachnids of any sort, and other pedipalpi.

Rothe, Deep: One of three related species of oxen-like herd creatures (the others are the surface rothe, and the white-haired, arctic-dwelling glacier or “ghost” rothe), these creatures have been domesticated by the Menzoberranyr drow. In and around the city, they are found only on the island in Donigarten, under heavy orc guard.

Detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, deep rothe are a crucial staple of the diet of the city's citizens, a large part of the food supply that keeps Menzoberranzan a lasting, independent community. Although they are healthy and hardy, drow patrols and other Underdark predators have rendered them extinct in the Dominion and the nearby Underdark. Elsewhere in the dark realms, they are a plentiful source of food, in the form of wandering herds.

Slithermorph: These “black crawlers” are solitary predators native to the Underdark. Rare in most areas, they are more numerous around Menzoberranzan, seemingly attracted to the high-radiation area—or perhaps merely to the ready



Monsters of Menzoberranzan



food that gathers there (the drow who guard and use these clefts and caverns). Slithermorphs are detailed in *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set.

Solifugid: These “false spiders” are natural predators of the Underdark. They obey drow who use spells to control them, and are wise enough not to attack drow in any event (unless wounded and in small numbers), but are a menace to all creatures they think they can defeat. They are detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*.

Spider, Subterranean: This collective heading appears in *FOR2/The Drow of the Underdark*, where it describes the *hairy*, *hunting*, *sword*, and *watch* subspecies. Sword spiders are unknown in the Under-

dark, but the first two species are common in the wild. Watchspiders, developed in Waterdeep, have been purchased in large numbers (via Skullport) for use as trained guardians, by Menzoberrany drow.

To these subterranean species should be added the flying spider (described in the “UnderMountain Adventures” booklet, in *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set), and the giant spider-variant developed by House Shobalar. Their **spider-steeds** are: Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12 (2 and 10 laden); HD 4 + 4; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + poison; SA adhesive trapline (as cave fisher’s fired filament); SZ L; ML 13; XP 975; q.v. Spider (Giant), MC 1, and Cave fisher, MC 1. They are large, strong giant spiders trained as steeds, and able to car-

Monsters of Menzoberranzan

ry a rider and still stick to walls and ceilings. Spider-steeds are able to “fire” sticky strands at prey, as cave fishers do.

The “basic” Spider entry is found in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*.

Spitting Crawler: Detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*, these small, acid-spitting lizards of the Underdark are often employed as familiars by drow mages—but unwary visitors to the wild Underdark can encounter them as foes. The few that stray into the Dominion are soon captured by drow patrols, for use by the Academy’s tutors.

Steel Shadow: Detailed in the *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set, these worm-like predators can *merge with metal*, and (like the slithermorphs; see above) seem attracted to the radiation-strong caverns in Menzoberranzan’s Dark Dominion.

Wingless Wonder: These strange, comical, sometimes deadly creatures roam the Underdark in and around the Dominion, and appear in this chapter.

Yochlol: The dreaded “handmaidens of Lloth” are native to the Abyss, and appear in Faerun only when summoned by the rituals of Lloth’s high priestesses. They are detailed in *Drow of the Underdark*.

In the pages that follow, the “new” monsters of Menzoberranzan’s vicinity, mentioned above, are fully detailed. They can be used to generate many adventures set anywhere in the Underdark—and to ‘spice up’ adventures included in this set, by adding one or more of the monsters noted above as ‘complications’ into the adventure-plots.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Community or solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (18)
TREASURE:	S, T, V x 3 (x 6 in lair), X
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	8+4
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Mind blast, spell use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	90%
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	9,000

Alhoon look like living mind flayers (mauve-skinned, octopus-headed beings with four mouth-tentacles, and three-fingered hands). The only visible difference between illithid and illithilich is that an alhoon's skin is dry and often wrinkled, never glistening with slime.

Combat: Alhoon attack with four tentacles, as living mind flayers do. Once a tentacle hits, it does 1d4 points of damage per round automatically, as it bores on into the victim's body. Attacks on a tentacle (consider it AC 7) doing it 5 points or more of damage in a single round cause it to recoil, drawing out of the victim's body. It will then always strike at a new spot; an attack roll is required, and boring time to the victim's brain remains 1-4 rounds. Tentacles striking a victim elsewhere than its head do damage for 4 rounds and then withdraw; they are not long enough to reach the brain.

An illithilich retains the psionic powers it had in life, being the equivalent of a 7th level psionist, with 3 disciplines, 5 sciences, and 14 devotions. Alhoon attack with a *mind thrust*, having a Power Score of 18, and 1d100 + 250 psionic strength points. Like all mind flayers, illithiliches always have the abilities of *astral projection*, *body equilibrium* (their only psychometabolic power), *control body*, *domination*, *ESP*, *levitation*, *post-hypnotic suggestion*, *probability travel*, and *teleport*, and possess other abilities varying from individual to individual, as well (consult PHBR5/*The Complete Psionics Handbook*).

In addition to their tentacles and psionic abilities, illithiliches can cast spells as 9th level mages (spells: 4, 3, 3, 2, 1). Typically, they use a wide variety of spells seized from human mages, spellbooks found in tombs, and the like—and always avidly seek more, driven by their hunger for power. An alhoon can use a spell (as well as its tentacle attacks) in any round in which it does not use psionics.

Alhoon gain no special undead attacks (such as a human lich's *chill touch*), but do have "standard" undead immunities to *sleep* and *charm*-related magics. They cannot be turned or dispelled by priests, and are not harmed or impeded by holy water, cold iron, *protection from evil*, sunlight, or silver weapons—but are subject to spells specifically affecting undead.



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Habitat/Society: Alhoon spurn illithid societies ruled by elder-brains, and do not hesitate to take living mind flayers as thought-controlled slaves (just as they took all other creatures as slaves, when alive—a process continued in lichnee state). They usually live alone in the surface world, often slaying a human wizard and taking over his remote tower, but in the Underdark cooperate for mutual survival, sharing spells and aid freely to overcome drow, duergar, cloakers, aboleth, and living mind flayers alike. Alhoon are capable of diplomacy and of loyally adhering to alliances when they see an ultimate benefit—but they consider all other beings cattle, and promises to them merely empty conveniences. Alhoon regard true lichs and beholders as their greatest rivals, and accordingly destroy them whenever prudently possible.

Ecology: Alhoon have no need for sustenance, but their bodies adapt only imperfectly to lichnee state; many magical parts of most lichdom processes used by humans fail on a strongly-magic resistant mind flayer body. Alhoon are plagued by ongoing skin wrinkling and tissue desiccation, which they counteract by bathing, or by drinking water, soup, alcohol, and other liquids. Nutrients need not be ingested, and poisons absorbed in this way will harm a mind flayer (lowering its hit points in the usual way), but cannot "kill" it (it reaches a minimum of 6 hp, and takes no further damage). The lichnee state neutralizes most poisons (healing all damage done by them) in 2d4 turns. Illithiliches enjoy devouring brains just as they did in life, but do not need to do so. Sometimes (3 in 12 chance), devouring a brain gives an alhoon mental "glimpses" of 1d12 thoughts that the brain held, either at random, or (if the alhoon concentrates on a topic, such as magical items, written spells, or treasure locations), thoughts most closely related to a chosen topic.

Essence of alhoon brain is a general ingredient in spell-writing inks, and can be employed with great advantage in the crafting of any magical item concerned with effects of the minds of creatures.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or Community (leading cloakers)
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17-18)
TREASURE:	C, V
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3 (1)
MOVEMENT:	2, Fl 19 (C)
HIT DICE:	9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 + special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-8 + victim's AC/2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Special
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	H (12'+ long)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	2,000

Cloaker lords are a superior sub-race of the feared subterranean race of cloakers. They look just like large cloakers, appearing either as a black cloak, such as an ogre or small giant might wear—or unfurling to reveal their batlike true form, with ivory-clawed black wings, a flattish body whose white underside is inset with a red-eyed, needle-fanged, horned face, and a lashing, whiplike tail.

Combat: Cloaker lords fly at targets and try to engulf them. A successful attack roll means a cloaker lord has wrapped itself around a target's body. An engulfed victim cannot use any weapon longer than the arm wielding it, but automatically hits the cloaker with smaller weapons, at a -3 damage penalty. The cloaker lord also automatically bites the engulfed victim, doing 2d4 (plus the victim's unadjusted Armor Class, ignoring shields) points of damage per round. Cloaker lords absorb blood through their skins, devouring victims until only cleaned bones remain, to spill out of the unfurling "cloak." Attacks against an engulfing cloaker lord inflict half their damage on the monster, and half on the trapped victim. Area effect spells such as *fireball* inflict full damage on both cloaker lord and victim.

While engulfing a victim, a cloaker lord can use its thick-muscled, bone-barbed tail to lash any nearby creature for 2d6 damage. The tail is AC1, and is severed if dealt more than 24 points of damage.

The cloaker lord's moan attack can cause an 90-foot-range unease and numbing, forcing all creatures in range to attack at -2, and suffer a -2 penalty on all damage rolls. Any creature who remains in range, and hears the moaning for six consecutive rounds is forced into a trance that lasts as long as the moaning continues. Entranced victims cannot make attacks or cast spells, and cannot defend themselves (anything attacking them does so at +6 on all attack rolls).

Alternatively, a cloaker's moan can act as a *fear* spell, affecting all beings within 40 feet of the cloaker lord. They must save vs. spell, or flee at full movement rate for 2 rounds.

The third intensity of moaning affects creatures in a conical area, extending 40 feet from the monster, and widening to 30



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feet across at its open end. All beings in the area must save v. poison at -1, or be overcome by nausea and weakness for 1d4 + 1 rounds (during this time, they are unable to take any deliberate action).

The fourth moan strength acts as a *hold monster* spell, affecting only one being, who must be within 50 feet. Its effects last 6 rounds—unless the monster attacks another target with this moan, which instantly frees a previously-held victim.

By means of *shadow shifting*, a cloaker lord can obscure the vision of opponents, raising its own effective Armor Class to 1 by cloaking itself in swirls of darkness. Most often, the cloaker creates duplicates of itself, to draw away enemy attacks; treat this effect as a *mirror image* spell that creates 1d4 + 2 images. A cloaker lord can use only one *shadow shifting* effect per round, but it can moan, attack physically (except biting, which makes moaning impossible), and employ *shadow shifting*, all in the same round.

Habitat/Society: Cloaker lords can elude most mind-communication and -influencing psionics and spells because of their strange thought processes (determine what occurs on a case-by-case basis; attackers will have more success, the more practice they have in using such powers against cloaker lords). Cloaker lords hold a natural *domination* over cloakers, and have recently come to rule their lesser brethren, drawing normally-solitary cloakers together into loose raiding bands, and forcing other monsters (such as deepspawn, subdued by moans) into servitude.

Ecology: A cloaker lord that reaches a certain age or is near death will find a cloaker and devour it. If the cloaker lord survives 2d4 days longer, it splits apart, giving birth to a cloaker lord and 1d6 cloakers, all 'babies' of miniature size. All can moan at birth, but their attacks do only half damage, and they can't yet control their *shadow shifting*. Instinct drives them to fly in different directions, to seek prey and master their powers.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Flock
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 13 (D)
HIT DICE:	6
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	5
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-5/2-5/2-5/1-4/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Ammonia breath, blood drain
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (16-20' long, 40' wingspan)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	975

Foulwings are grotesquely misshapen flying predators, thought to have originated on another plane. Mildly empathic and essentially lazy hunters, these clumsy fliers are often tamed for use as steeds by evil humans and drow hunting in the surface world by night.

Foulwings have black, leathery wings, tailless, toad-shaped bodies, and vaguely horse-like heads. The shapes of their heads and the location and size of the many horn-shaped, wriggling skin growths that cover their black bodies vary from individual to individual. Every foulwing has three needle-toothed jaws set around a single-nostril snout. Their glowing, many-faceted red eyes have infra-vision (range: 9). Foulwings communicate with each other in harsh creakings, conveying identities, basic emotions, urges, and warnings.

Combat: Foulwings prefer to fight in the air, or pounce from it, allowing them use of their wing-claws and the weight of their wings and great bulk, to knock down and pin prey to the ground. Savage and wantonly destructive, foulwings enjoy killing. They twist their heads in battle so as to bite with all their jaws, and their ammonia-like breath causes opponents to temporarily (round of contact and following round) suffer -1 on attack rolls due to the stinging irritation it causes to visual and olfactory senses.

If a foulwing disables or pins prey (a Strength of at least 16 is required to escape pinning unaided; allow one Strength Check per round), it will attempt to leisurely drain blood from the prey by sucking with one of its hollow, tube-like tongues, biting open wounds to do so. The blood drain is equal to 2-5 points a round; pulling free causes prey another 2 points of damage (each time).

When used as a steed, a Foulwing flies at MV 11 (E), and its powerful flight settles (in 1d3 rounds) into a rhythm stable enough to allow riders to cast spells and use missile weapons without penalty. In a pinch, two M-size beings (or up to 4 S-sized creatures) can ride a single Foulwing, but the crowding makes spellcasting impossible, and all weapon uses force both -3 attack roll penalties, and a Dexterity Check (to avoid falling off!) on every rider. A Foulwing this heavily laden is reduced to MV 9 (E).



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Foulwings can be trained to pounce upon running or riding creatures from the air, doing 2d4 points of impact damage and trying to pin the quarry (the target is allowed a Dexterity Check to avoid this fate), and to crush fences, flimsy buildings, and carts by the same means. If there is a chance that the Foulwing could be impaled on a ready-held spear, wooden spar, or similar piercing point, it must make a Dexterity Check. If the check succeeds, the Foulwing takes only half weapon damage (in the case of a deliberately-placed or -wielded weapon), or 1d4 points of damage from a wreckage hazard. If the check fails, full weapon damage is suffered, or 3d4 points is taken from wreckage.

Habitat/Society: Foulwings may be solitary hunters, or flock together in family groups or as unrelated individuals, gathering while courting or to attack strong prey. Every 'flock' (of up to four foulwings) will be dominated by the largest specimen, and will work together to scatter, disable, and herd prey.

Ecology: Foulwings are rapacious scavengers, but will eat carrion or even plant leaves if no other food is available. They have been known to keep a 'larder' of captive creatures for later food. Foulwings hate asperii and griffons, and will attack both on sight.

Foulwings bear live young, typically 1-3 at once, nesting in rocky, mountainous wilderland areas. Young are born with a single hit dice, and only bite attacks (for 1-2 damage, each jaw), but rapidly grow to full size, whereupon the parents abandon them and each other.

Foulwing flesh is heavy, oily, and foul in taste (hence the creature's name). It quickly rots upon the creature's death, and has no known usefulness as armor or in magical practices. Foulwing blood and salivary fluid, however, have both been found to be a mildly caustic cleanser that brings metal to a bright, long-lasting sheen.

Lizard, Subterranean

FRB1

	Pack Lizard
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Common (subterranean); rare (surface)
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or packs
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Q (stomach) + whatever carried
ALIGNMENT:	(Lawful) neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-4 (domesticated: 1-20)
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9, Sw 15
HIT DICE:	8
THACO:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (15' + long, tail an additional 8-12')
MORALE:	13
XP VALUE:	1,400

Pack lizards resemble giant iguanas, except that they are a dull, mottled olive-gray in hue, and are unusually broad of body (averaging 22-24' in overall length, they are always around 10' wide). As their name suggests, they are used as draft animals by all intelligent races traveling in rocky or underground terrain.

Combat: Pack lizards are placid, slow-moving beasts who seldom attack anything unless attacked first. They will eat anything, including carrion, and seem especially fond of snake-flesh and the various yellow-petaled flowers that grow in meadows (such as dandelions, sunflowers, buttercups, and sunstars). Pack lizards have long, sticky probing tongues, and in battle bite down with crushingly-powerful jaws (if their teeth were larger, sharper fangs, they would do far more damage). They have been known to bite through armor and wooden doors, if hungry enough, and given time to think about it. If a pack lizard bites down in such a way that a metal or wooden object is at risk (a flat surface usually is not, but one that sticks up, or has a projecting corner certainly is), the item should make a saving throw vs. crushing blow. If the lizard deliberately attacks the item (i.e. to bite the head off a spear that is jabbing it, or to get through a cell door to food beyond), the saving throw is made at -2.

Pack lizards are immune to most known poisons, and regenerate physical damage at the rate of 1 hit point every 3 turns. Heat- and fire-based attacks inflict only half damage on them, but cold-based attacks do them an extra point of damage per die.

Pack lizards have sticky pads on their splay-toed feet. These flexible, vulnerable digits are covered by claw-like, horny protective sheaths—but pack lizards do not in fact have claws, and cannot rake anything in combat for damage. Their sticky feet allow them to travel on cavern (and room!) walls and ceilings just as they do on floors, retaining their grip even when carrying heavy loads.

Pack lizards able to knock down and put a foot on a M-sized or smaller opponent can hold on, so that bite attacks are automatically successful (no attack roll necessary; roll only for damage).



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On the round that follows, the lizard does not bite, but does 4d4 crushing damage. Allow the pinned victim (who can attack only at -3) a Strength Check (at the usual 4-point penalty) to wriggle free of the crushing weight; success on any round means only half damage is taken. The lizard typically goes on crushing, at 4d4 damage per round, for 6 to 8 rounds (or until it successfully makes another Intelligence Check), when it stops to see what's left—and bite it.

Habitat/Society: Left to themselves, pack lizards tend to be lazy, placid beasts who lie about in grassy meadows devouring grass and carrion at leisure, crawling into burrows or cave-refuges to escape biting winter cold, and who venture down into the depths when breezes bring them the reek of much carrion—after a large battle in the Underdark, for instance.

However, they seldom, if ever, are left to themselves. Faster, more intelligent creatures are always hunting them down for food, or enslaving them. Few are left aboveground, these days, save in the remotest desert areas. Instead, they dwell in burrows and caverns around volcanic areas, basking in the heat of the earth, and eating whatever they can find (such as violet fungi, gelatinous cubes, and other plants or creatures that most beings find poisonous or corrosive). Pack lizards mate seldom, but remain together in stable pairs for years when they do, raising litters of 2d4 young at a time from rubbery-shelled eggs, and having new litters twice or thrice a year.

Ecology: Pack lizards can haul awesome loads in quite cold and damp conditions, so long as they have sufficient time to soak up the heat of the full sun (in surface-world deserts or on sun-baked mountain rocks, for example), or that of deep, close-flowing lava.

Their flesh, which resembles the densest, whitest pork, is eaten by many creatures, including drow and humans, and is especially prized by orcs. Pack lizard ichor is a prized ingredient in *potions of vitality*, and the essence derived from their boiled feet is valued in the making of *sovereign glue*.

Riding Lizard

FRB1

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or pack
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	Nil (except as carried)
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	16, Sw 20
HIT DICE:	5
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-8/2-12/2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (stands 12' high; tail is another 8-10' long)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	975

Riding or "mount" lizards are light, sleek reptiles, able to run swiftly on their hind legs when unencumbered. Unknown on the surface, they take the place of the horse as the general steed of intelligent races in the Underdark.

Combat: Riding lizards are darting, alert beasts who hunt prey aggressively when 'in the wild,' preferring small snakes, centipedes, and—best of all—the small scurry rat of the Underdark. Riding lizards also eat lichens and fungi. Their diets make them immune to the poisons of centipedes, insects, arachnids, and fungi—and also immune to all known fungi spore effects.

In combat, a riding lizard bites for 2d4 damage, and can kick with either or both of its large hind legs in a round, doing 2d6 damage with each one. Those same legs propel it on prodigious leaps, of up to 30' upwards, and 50' horizontally, and it can descend, without harm, up to 80' in a single bound (with a rider mounted on it, reduce these three 'safe' distances by 10'). It uses its leaps, and its ability to cling to any solid surface that it strikes—such as a stalactite, halfway across the roof of a vast cavern—to cross "uncrossable" chasms, or to reach remote rock ledges where prey lairs.

Riding lizards have keen balance and infravision (effective up to 160' away, unless within sight of a fire or magma-flow, when it is reduced to half range). When it has been trained by drow, and is magically compelled (e.g. by the use of spells or house insignia) by a drow who is present, the effective morale of a riding lizard rises to "Fearless" (20).

The movement rate of a riding lizard carrying a single M-sized rider and gear (a drow warrior with weapons and provisions, for example), is reduced to 15. Riding lizards carrying two such beings move at only 13; one equipped with a pack-lizard-style cargo-harness can leap only short distances, and downwards (up to 30'), with out harm, and moves at only 11. Any leaping and clinging movements, encumbered or unencumbered, force a Dexterity Check on the lizard (see below for effects).

Riding lizards regenerate 1 hit point of physical damage every 5 turns. Heat- and fire-based attacks inflict only half damage on them, but cold-based attacks do them an extra point of damage per die.



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Riding lizards have sticky pads on their three-toed feet, exuding an adhesive that they can neutralize instantly with another secretion. These allow them to trot or even run in utter silence along the floors, ceilings, and walls of caverns and structures, retaining their grip even when laden (riders who are not strapped in must take care to hold on, with a successful Strength Check, when their mount leaps or is upside down—or they'll fall out!).

Riding lizards run lightly on their back legs or on all fours, and can scale stone as easily as a spider. Left to themselves, they take an irregular route, using leaps, passage ceilings, walls, and dry, non-slippery stalactites and stalagmites more than floors, to avoid being tracked by predators of the Underdark who possess infravision.

Habitat/Society: Riding lizards are typically captured by means of spells, and trained for most of a year, to make them fully obedient to more than one rider. Most drow communities capture lizards only to acquire new bloodlines; they breed and raise their lizard stock from previously-captured sires.

In the wild, riding lizards run in large, loose packs, the stronger individuals of either sex serving as sentinels and guards for the others. They mate often, but do not form families; the defense and feeding of a pregnant female is the common responsibility of all. Female riding lizards typically give birth to a 'litter' of 1d8 live young once every 7 months or so.

The young are born able to run and leap as their parents do. They run and hunt with their parents from the outset, joining the pack, and are AC 7; MV 16, Sw 16 (unable to carry even a S-size rider); HD 2; THACO 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6; SD poison immunities, regeneration; SZ M (body 4'-6' + tail of up to 4'); ML 13; XP 120.

Ecology: Eaten by many predators, riding lizard meat is a staple of duergar diet. Drow only eat those that perish through misfortune. A good trained mount can fetch up to 1,000 gp (most go for 600–700); untrained young sell for 200-500 gp.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	<i>True</i> Any except arctic	<i>Transformed</i> Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or mated pair	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any	Any
DIET:	Omnivore	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)	As previously possessed
TREASURE:	Q x 4	Any (likely Nil)
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Neutral	As previously possessed
NO. APPEARING:	1-2	1
ARMOR CLASS:	8	8
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 4	6, Sw 4
HIT DICE:	2+2	As previously possessed
THACO:	19	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	10	10
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-8/1 x 10	2-8/1 x 10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Psionic blast, wild magic	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Anti-Magic Shell	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	90%	90%
SIZE:	S (4' tall)	S (4' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)	As previously possessed
XP VALUE:	975	Varies

The alkada, or “wingless wonder,” is a comical beast that resembles a walking egg (which it has also been called). It stands rather unsteadily on two weak legs that end in rubbery, sticky pads, and has two small arms, which it flaps constantly; hence its most popular name. The only sound it can make is a high-pitched chittering.

Wonders are blue-green in color, with purplish undersides. They redden slightly when angry or excited. A wonder’s mouth is atop its head, surrounded by nine tentacles (old tales and records suggest that there was once a related species that had twelve tentacles—and additional powers not possessed by wonders today).

These pitifully clumsy, waddling misfits of nature are often more deadly than they appear. Many of them are in reality far more powerful, transformed creatures—such as high-level wizards.

Combat: Wingless wonders are curious, shortsighted (10’ or so effective vision and infravision), and seemingly fearless. They wander through life feeling along everything they come into contact with, employing their mouth-fringe of nine rubbery, retractile tentacles.

A wonder’s tentacles are 2 to 12 feet in length, extending or shortening as it desires, and serve to handle food and to aid the wonder in moving about. Their ends are rubbery and sticky, able to grasp and hold anything they touch (a Strength of 13 or greater can break a wonder’s grip, as can alcohol and *oil of slipperiness*). Curiously, wonders cannot be held by any sort of webs, or by *sovereign glue* or *viscid globs* (produced by the wand of the same name, detailed in *FOR2/The Drow of the Underdark*), although spells such as *entangle* do affect them.

A wonder can extrude a bony hook from deep within each tentacle, to grasp struggling food or to slash when fighting off a foe. This does 1 hp of damage. In any round of combat, every tentacle can strike at a foe (or multiple foes, if the wonder is surrounded), twice. The first attack does damage (1 hp per successfully-striking tentacle). The second attack is an attempt to grasp the foe: roll d20 for the target, and d10 for the wonder, adding to the

wonder’s total the number of tentacles it’s using (tentacles engaged against another foe, or holding items, cannot participate). If the target’s total is higher, the target tears free of the tentacles; if the wonder’s adjusted total is higher, the target is dragged within reach of the wonder’s mouth, and automatically bitten (for 2d4 damage). The wonder always releases a target after one bite.

Foes attempting to sever a wonder’s tentacles will find that they have an effective Armor Class of 3 (able to suddenly retract from harm), and one can only be severed if it is dealt 7 hp of damage or more in a single round (total hp damage to tentacles does not matter, except to kill the wonder by damage accumulation).

Wingless wonders radiate a continuous, natural *anti-magic shell*, that stops all magical attacks inches from their skins. This aura is visible as a faint purple-white *faerie fire* glow around any wonder that is carrying an egg (developing young inside itself).

This is doubly curious, as wonders seem to be creatures possessing natural “wild” magic. Once per day, a wonder can unleash a random minor magical effect—akin to the powers unleashed by a *wand of wonder*. Such an effect will be at the time of a wonder’s choosing, but it can’t control just what will occur. The magical effect seems to draw power from the *anti-magic shell*, which flickers and pulses visibly. The round in which the wild magic effect manifests is the only time spells can penetrate the shell, to affect the wonder itself, although foes of a wonder will have to discover this for themselves.

Wonders regenerate naturally, regaining 1 lost hit point every 2 rounds. This healing power does not seem to extend to the delicate, fuzz-covered outer skin of an alkada: it does not heal quickly, and many wonders are bleeding copiously when found, leaving a bloody trail wherever they go. Wonders are immune to damage from all forms and sources of fire.

Wingless wonders also exhibit a permanent, seemingly-unbreakable *mind bar*. This functions as the telepathic devotion (detailed in *PHBR5/The Complete Psionics Handbook*), but attempts to engage a wonder in psionic combat always fail; the wonder’s mind seems to ‘slip’ away. In similar fashion, magical

spells that aim to contact or influence the mind fail when used on a wonder; there is a momentary impression of colorful mental chaos, and then the wonder's mind seems to 'slip' away.

The only other psionic activity that a wonder ever exhibits occurs if it is slain: a 'dying scream' directed at its killers. This is similar to the mental blast of a mind flayer: it manifests as a cone, aimed by the dying wonder, 60 feet long, 5 feet wide at the base, and 20 feet wide at its end. All creatures in the area of effect must save versus wands at -4 or be *confused* (as in the wizard spell *confusion*) for 1d10 +2 rounds. They must also save vs. breath weapon or be *feble-minded* (as the wizard spell). A creature who fails both saves is not mentally affected at all, but is "mind-burnt" for a physical loss of 2d12 hp.

Wonders cannot be *stunned* or subdued by magical or physical means, and seem mentally unaffected by disasters or great violence occurring around them, chattering and waddling unconcernedly in the midst of a battlefield, or trotting in the heart of an attacking dragon's breath weapon!

Habitat/Society: Despite its seeming host of immunities and special powers, a wonder is easily killed by purely physical means, and wonders are therefore rare in populated areas.

Wonders are always curious, and are attracted to brilliant red or purple colors and flashy objects. They are fascinated by gems; any treasure a wonder carries are gems it has swallowed. These stomach-stones are typically a wide variety of pretty stones, some nearly valueless. Wonders seem to spend most of their time curiously examining things around them, and sampling them to see if they can be eaten.

Wonders are bisexual. Whenever solitary wonders encounter another of their species, the two entwine tentacles and chatter excitedly in chorus for 2 rounds. This appears to be mating contact. Wonders may wander together in mated pairs, but are usually solitary.

Wonders develop eggs within their bodies, excreting them when they are ready to hatch (gestation seems to take 6 or 7 months). An egg falls to the ground as its parent wonder wanders away, ignoring it, and splits open in 1d4 rounds, to reveal a small and even more clumsy (but otherwise fully-developed, having 1 + 1 HD but all the other statistics of an adult) wonder.

Ecology: Wonders eat mainly fruits and vegetables, although they will devour worms, birds, small animals that stray into the reach of their tentacles, and carrion.

The flesh of a wonder is poisonous (save vs. poison at -1, or take 3d10 points of damage, within 1d4 rounds; if the save is successful, only 1d4 points of damage are suffered, accompanied by a brief, wrenching nausea). Wonders lose their anti-magical properties immediately upon death—and if part of a wonder is cut away from its living body, that part retains no special powers or properties. A Wonder's skin rots away in 3 + 1d4 days, but while still intact, it can serve as a cloak protecting (half to no damage, if saving throw successful) against non-magical fire.

Transformed Wonders: There is a 20% chance that any wingless wonder encountered will not be a 'natural' wonder at all, but a transformed being. Most transformed beings are human mages. Those who encounter a wonder never know if it is merely a curious beast, a helpless victim able to unleash only random small magics—or a disguised magic user, able to cast powerful memorized spells!

Many wizards from Netheril escaped into wonder form when their kingdom fell, using a spell later (and independently) duplicated by drow mages; the *wonderform* spell included elsewhere

in this book. Such transformed folk can speak normally, and work magic, while in wonder-shape, and escape from wonder-form at will. As the being's mind is completely shielded from contact, and the *wonderform* spell masks its true alignment aura with a 'normal' wonder's alignment, this can be a very effective hiding-

place from a foe who is able to probe disguises readily.

Others are not so lucky—and they are the sort most known to surface-world humans, through tales and ballads. Several centuries ago, the notorious 'spell-slinger' Durshult the Mage (who made a career of challenging mages, defeating them in spell-combat, and then seizing all their magic) was turned into a wingless wonder by the sorceress Haleera Shundyl, after losing a sorcerous duel to her in Baldur's Gate. After Durshult's fate became widely known, it was for a time a fad to imprison enemies in wingless wonder form.

The infamous 'Rebel Mage' Phaerl Godeep, a drow male who rebelled against the dictates of the ruling priestesses in his city, was forcibly imprisoned in wonder form—and presumably is still a helpless, ridiculed prisoner. The drow wizard known only as "the Watchspider Wizard" is known to have taken refuge in wonder form to elude a yochlol summoned and sent (by an angered priestess) to slay him. Several human mages, including Auziiyra Twelvestars of Tethyr and Brondeth of the Broken Staff, may still survive somewhere in the Underdark, in the wonder forms they assumed to escape death at the hands of drow attackers who overwhelmed the human mining community they were guarding.

In Menzoberranzan, the drow wizards Thaelrbone Faen Tlabbar and Master (of the Academy) Daethleness Tuin'Tarl are known to have escaped the justice of Lloth by taking wonder form—and Ardreyth Mizzrym, Matron of her House at the time, received a fatal surprise when she casually lashed a chattering wonder out of her path during a hunt—and it snarled and unleashed a *meteor swarm* that fried her and most of her family around her. When the drifting smoke thinned, the blackened wonder was seen, by the astonished drow survivors, standing unconcernedly amid the cooked carnage, having survived the full damage of its own spell. It sighed and shuffled slowly away. That transformed wonder is still out there in the Underdark, somewhere; the drow dared not try to stop it going on about its business.

Surface-world wizards have developed spells that specifically *polymorph* a foe into wonder-form, and drow priestesses of the Underdark also use a spell to work the same effect, which keeps the wizards alive in case their power is needed later, but as vulnerable, helpless, non-threatening things. Beings so entrapped cannot speak (though they can use sticks to write words or draw symbols)—they can only chatter, as 'natural' wonders do.

Lacking any means to work spells or effectively communicate with others, such unfortunates are trapped, although they retain their human intelligence and knowledge. Existence as a wonder may drive a human insane. Check at the end of each year; to avoid insanity, a percentile roll score must exceed a total of 50 minus the character's wisdom. A trapped being can always, by force of will, unleash a wonder's natural random magical effect (as noted earlier), but has no control over what effect occurs.

The only way to free a being trapped in wonder form is during the once-daily round in which they unleash a wild magic effect. During this round, the *anti-magic shell* becomes visible, and flickers visibly. A *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, or properly-worded *polymorph other* spell cast at the wonder during this round will return the being to its true form—although the being must make a System Shock Survival roll.

Some Known Traps of Menzoberranzan

This chapter contains a few magical and physical “booby traps” intruders may encounter in guarded areas of Menzoberranzan, such as Sorcere, House compound perimeters, and vault-caverns. Add these to the common pit- and smash-traps known to the surface world (a handy selection of these appear on the “DM’s hand of cards” included in *The Ruins of Under-Mountain* boxed set), and obvious traps, such as throat- and ankle-height scything blades, weighted webs that fall from above, and “web-tongues” (sticky filaments that shoot out like those of a cave fisher, detailed in its *Monstrous Compendium* Volume 1 entry).

Acid Locks: These are locks trapped with a squirt-bladder of acid. If the main lock is locked, a second, hidden lock is also engaged.

If the main lock is picked but the second is not, or the door is forced open, a bladder of acid within the door sprays directly in front of the door. Any beings within five feet of any part of the door must make a Dexterity Check. Success indicates 1 hp of splash damage is suffered; failure means 2-8 hp is taken.

The second lock counts as a “trap” for use of the Find and Remove Traps ability. There is no way to remove the trap except to successfully pick the second lock—whose hole is the squirting-orifice for the bladder (applying flame to the hole melts the bladder—discharging it anyway!).

A little less than 2 in 10 of such locks fire a jet of poison-gas, not acid. Such a jet forces a poison save on all beings within 10’ of the door. Success means 1 round of nausea (-1 on attack rolls, no further damage); failure means 1d4 + 1 hp of damage and 1-2 rounds of *confusion*. The poison reacts with air to become harmless after the round in which it jets out.

Three in 10 locks (acid or poison) are constructed to fire twice—or more.

Fangs of Lloth: These are jointed clusters of eight poisoned darts, curved and joined by cross-strands to have the shape of the legs of a spider. Points outward, they spin downwards, triggered by trip-wires or pressure-pad descending-stone detectors.

The spinning darts strike at anyone triggering them, at THAC0 7. A struck victim is hit by 1d4 darts, for 1 hp of damage each—plus a single save vs. poison. Such darts carry venom effective against drow as well as other races, doing a further 1d4 points of damage instantly, and bringing on 2d4 rounds of paralysis, onset time in 1d6 rounds.

Hands of Undeath: A rare, secret spell used by some drow Houses creates a glowing skeletal hand that guards a door, window, or archway. Anyone passing is touched, for 1d4 points of chilling damage. A cold white *faerie fire* radiance is also imparted, expanding to illuminate the intruder’s entire body for 2d12 rounds (or until dispelled). As the hand acts, it emits a loud wailing sound. Unless dispelled or dealt 9 points of “damage” (it is AC 4, and MV Fl 14 (A)), it can strike at the next intruder, acting up to 9 times.





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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS

BOXED SET

MENZOBERRANZAN



Book Two: THE HOUSES

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition



MENZOBERRANZAN

Book Two: The Houses

by
Robert A. Salvatore,
Michael Leger,
and Douglas Niles

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ISBN 1-56076-460-0
1083XXX1502
1083

The Law Within The Raging Chaos

Chaos is a predominant trait in dark elves, a fault that has cost the drow potential conquests throughout the Realms. Infighting, backstabbing, and treachery are not reserved for enemies of the drow nations.

There is a framework of law within the chaos, though; there would have to be, else the vicious dark elves surely would have reduced their own numbers to the point of extinction. This framework is very specific and very unyielding; the penalties for overstepping one's bounds are dealt with typical drow mercy—none at all!

Menzoberranzan, like many drow cities, is dominated by family networks, kin bonded together (when it is convenient) for mutual protection. The eight strongest families (houses) rule the city, with the other fifty or sixty (the number fluctuates yearly) scrambling for position behind them. Perhaps nothing in all of Menzoberranzan is important as a house's rank, or an individual's rank within her/his particular house. Only the Matron Mothers of the top eight houses are accorded the prestige of seats on the city's Ruling Council.

As Drizzt Do'Urden, the single drow from Menzoberranzan known to have thrown off the evil ways of his kin and traveled to the surface, explains, station is of utmost importance.

Station: In all the world of the drow, there is no more important word. It is the calling of their—of our—religion, the incessant pulling of hungry heartstrings. Ambition overrides good sense and compassion is thrown away in its face, all in the name of Lloth, the Spider Queen.

Ascension to power in drow society is a simple process of assassination. The Spider Queen is a deity of chaos, and she and her high priestesses, the true rulers of the drow world, do not look with ill favor upon ambitious individuals wielding poisoned daggers.

Of course, there are rules of behavior; every society must boast of these. To openly commit murder or wage war invites the pretense of justice, and penalties exacted in the name of drow justice are merciless. To stick a dagger in the back of a rival during the chaos of a larger battle or in the quiet shadows of an alley, however, is quite acceptable—even applauded. Investigation is not the forte of drow justice. No one cares enough to bother.

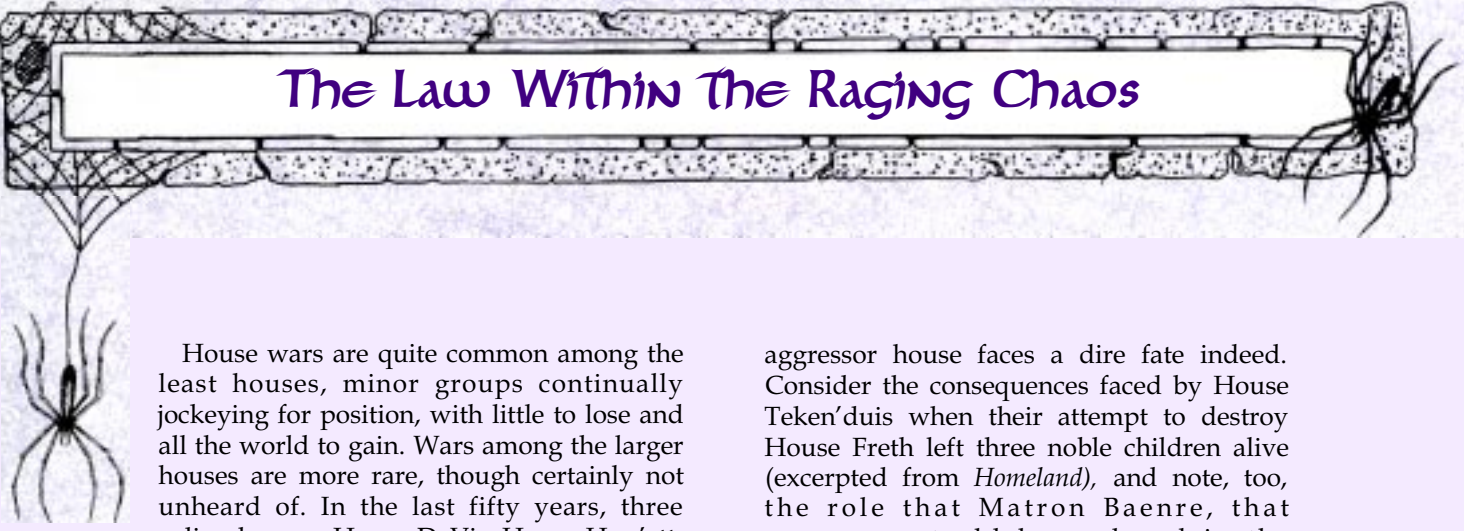
Station is the way of Lloth, the ambition she bestows to further the chaos, to keep her drow “children” along their appointed course of self-imprisonment. Children? Pawns, more likely, dancing dolls for the Spider Queen, puppets on the imperceptible but impervious strands of her web. All climb the Spider Queen's ladders; all hunt for her pleasure; and all fall to the hunters of her pleasure.

Station is the paradox of the world of my people, the limitation of our power within the hunger for power. It is gained through treachery and invites treachery against those who gain it. Those most powerful in Menzoberranzan spend their days watching over their shoulders, defending against the daggers that would find their backs.

Their deaths usually come from the front.
Drizzt Do'Urden
(from *Homeland*)

This “paradox” of station, as Drizzt describes it, is not only the limitation of Menzoberranzan's power, but the chaos inspiring element for adventures by non-drow characters within the drow city. A drow house will stop at nothing to gain an edge over another drow house, even hiring non-drow as spies or mercenaries. (The one exception to this would be the hiring of surface elves. Above the hunt for station in the drow world, all houses seek to maintain the favor of the Spider Queen and associating with surface elves would normally defeat those ends.)

The Law Within The Raging Chaos



House wars are quite common among the least houses, minor groups continually jockeying for position, with little to lose and all the world to gain. Wars among the larger houses are more rare, though certainly not unheard of. In the last fifty years, three ruling houses, House DeVir, House Hun'ett, and House Do'Urden, have been violently taken down. While this activity is a bit extraordinary, even for the chaotic drow, the intrigue among the top houses is certainly not ended.

DM's concerned with the politics of Menzoberranzan should pay particular attention to the tension between the allied houses of Faen Tlabbar and Xorlarrin (ranked 4th and 5th) and either Barrison Del'Armgo (2nd house) or Oblodra (3rd house). Faen Tlabbar and Xorlarrin are both loyal to the first house, Baenre, and, of course, Barrison Del'Armgo and Oblodra are Baenre's only real rivals within the city.

Also, the prestigious seventh and eighth spots in the city might be in jeopardy, with Houses Duskrin (10th house) and Srune'Lett (11th house) firmly allied and eyeing the coveted spots.

Even greater stirrings might be in the works. Many of the houses, great and lesser, have expressed quiet concerns that House Baenre is becoming simply too powerful. It is said in Menzoberranzan that House Baenre could defeat the combined forces of any five other houses together, and Matron Baenre's network might even be more formidable than that!

But such absolute rule has never been a precept of the chaotic Spider Queen's teachings. In Lloth's many eyes, a follower can indeed become too good.

The attempted takeover of another house is most definitely a hit-or-miss proposition. If the coup is completely successful, with not a single house family member left alive to bear witness, then the gains are immediate. But if the attempt fails at all, if any of the Family Nobles escape, then the

aggressor house faces a dire fate indeed. Consider the consequences faced by House Teken'duis when their attempt to destroy House Freth left three noble children alive (excerpted from *Homeland*), and note, too, the role that Matron Baenre, that ever-present old hag, played in the execution of those consequences:

Matron Baenre addressed the guilty house. "House Teken'duis!" she called. "You have broken our laws and have been rightfully caught. Fight if you will, but know that you have brought this doom upon yourself!" With a wave of her hand, she set the Academy, the dispatcher of justice, into motion.

Great braziers had been placed in eight positions around House Teken'duis, attended by mistresses of Arach-Tinilith and the highest-ranking clerical students. Flames roared to life and shot into the air as the high priestesses opened gates to the lower planes.

Denizens of those dark places, huge, many-armed monsters, slime-covered and spitting fire, stepped through the flames. When the signal from Matron Baenre came, they eagerly descended upon House Teken'duis.

Glyphs and wards exploded at every corner of the house's feeble gate, but these were mere inconveniences to the summoned creatures.

The wizards and students of Sorcere then went into action, slamming the top of House Teken'duis with conjured lightning bolts, balls of acid, and fireballs.

Students and masters of Melee-Magthere, the school of fighters, rushed about with heavy crossbows, firing into windows where the doomed family might try to escape.

The horde of monsters burst through the doors. Lightning flashed and thunder boomed.

The first screams of the doomed family

The Law Within The Raging Chaos

rolled out from the house, screams so terrible and agonized . . .

One of the sons of House Teken'duis, fleeing a ten-armed giant monster, stepped out onto the balcony of a high window. A dozen crossbow quarrels struck him simultaneously, and before he even fell dead, three separate lightning bolts alternately lifted him from the balcony, then dropped him back onto it.

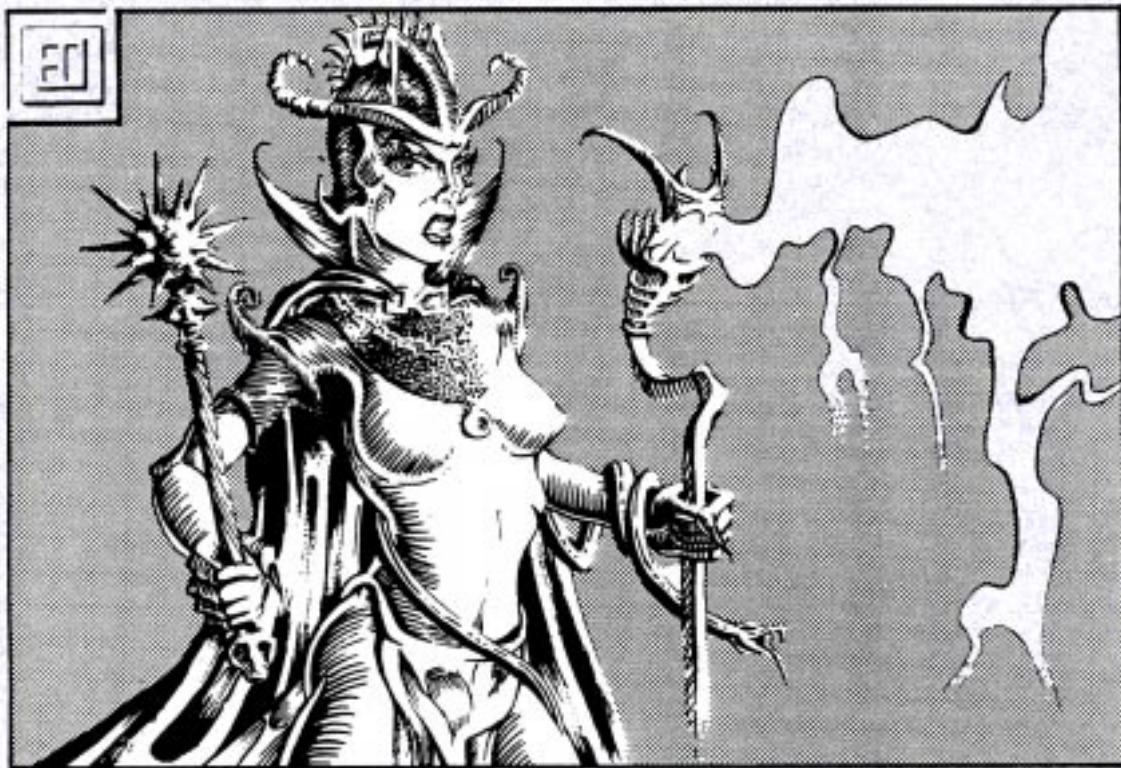
Scorched and mutilated, the drow corpse started to tumble from its high perch, but the grotesque monster reached out a huge, clawed hand from the window and pulled it back in to devour it.

The siege went on for more than an hour, and when it was finished, when the denizens of the lower planes were dispatched through the brazier's gates and the students and instructors of the Academy started their march back to Tier Breche, House Teken'duis was no more than a glowing lump of lifeless, molten stone.

Not a pretty picture, but such is the awful truth behind the faerie-fire enhanced beauty of Menzoberranzan, the awful truth behind the unparalleled physical beauty of the evil drow.

A NOTE ON NOBLES: In the "Dark Elf Trilogy," nobles were described as the Matron Mother and her immediate family, her children only, though sometimes extended to include a favored patron. For purposes of this book, the description has been expanded to include the extended family, the Matron's grandchildren, her great-grandchildren, and in some cases, her great-great-grandchildren. Only the immediate family, though, may bear witness against an aggressor house.

Here, then, are the 18 most important houses forming the loose law within the raging chaos of drow society.



House Baenre

First House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Matron Baenre level 25 priestess
Nobles:	63
Priestesses:	47
High Priestesses:	16
House Males:	16
Fighters:	4
Wizards:	12
Drow Soldiers:	2,600 (known)
Formations:	325 Elite Foot (female) 675 Archers 1,200 Foot 400 Lizriders
Slave Force:	700 (at house proper)
Formations:	200 goblin foot 150 orc spearcasters 100 gnoll archers 150 bugbears 75 ogre boulder-hurlers 25 minotaur foot

Chief Alliances: Gains strong support from House Faen Tlabbar (#4), House Xorlarrin (#5), and House Agrach Dyrr (#6), although the greatest amount of immediate support can be received from the houseless rogues of Bregan D'aerthe.

Chief Rivals: No house would openly reveal enmity for House Baenre, but House Barrison Del'Armgo (#2) and House Oblodra (#3), because of their ranking and because neither has apparently sealed any pacts with Baenre, have been closely watched by the powerful First Matron Mother.

House Baenre is the oldest (5,000 years), the strongest, and the most prestigious house in Menzoberranzan. The story of its ascension to the premier rank in the city is not known; to the drow of Menzoberranzan, Baenre just is, and always has been, the First House. And their power cannot be logically denied.

In addition to the oldest and most powerful Matron Mother in the city, who seems to have a special relationship with the Spider Queen, the house boasts 16 high priestesses, including Triel, holding the crucial and powerful position as Matron Mistress of the drow Academy.

There can be no doubt that clerical prowess is the strength of House Baenre. Their wizard force, while second only to Barrison Del'Armgo's, is not as impressive. Still, Matron Baenre's elderboy, Gromph, is the Arch-mage of Menzoberranzan, the highest ranking wizard in all the city, with access to the finest alchemy shops and the most ancient spellbooks. The powers of the eleven wizards of House Baenre behind Gromph run somewhat thin, but this may be due to the fact that Matron Baenre puts little store in the wizardly arts (and in males, in general), and since she already has one son in the most prestigious and favored position, the others don't really seem to count.

Sheer numbers and the finest equipment gives House Baenre's elite fighting force top honors in the city. Twenty-six hundred drow soldiers stand ready inside the incredible Baenre complex, and, if the rumors are true, that is barely half of the force the First Matron Mother of Menzoberranzan could muster in a crisis.

As First Matron Mother, Matron Baenre has principle say in the disposition of both surviving nobles and surviving soldiers of defeated drow houses. The only other voice in the city which could offer a check and balance to her decisions is that of the Matron Mistress of the drow Academy, and, well, Matron Baenre seems to have that

House Baenre

situation in hand. Baenre does not hoard all of these refugees, though, for she has to keep the appearance, at least, that the power structures within Menzoberranzan present some balance. It is no accident that most of the houses between the ninth and twentieth rank boast of similar numbers.

But Matron Baenre is wily enough to find gains, even in handing out soldiers and nobles. Inevitably, when a house accepts such deposed drow, they take in a spy or two more loyal to Matron Baenre than to the particular house's Matron Mother. Also, some of the lesser houses (see House Symryvvin) are quite willing to exchange unfavorable secret treaties with Matron Baenre in exchange for choice refugees.

Perhaps the strongest and most devious alliance that House Baenre has formed is with the renegade mercenary band of Bregan D'aerthe. The leader of the rogues, Jarlaxle, is a common visitor to the grand house's magnificent complex, and some say that he is more to Matron Baenre than a business partner. Whatever their personal relationship, there can be little doubt that Bregan D'aerthe makes few moves without the knowledge and consent of the First Matron Mother.

Simply put, Matron Baenre, in her millennium as the leader of the first house, has developed an intricate and dominating network throughout the dark elf city, and even beyond. It is said in Menzoberranzan: *Ilharess Baenre uil kernothump a-Menzoberranzan, Ilharess Baenre wuis kernothump a-Menzoberranzan!* which literally means, "Matron Baenre does not have her finger on the pulse of Menzoberranzan, Matron Baenre IS the pulse of Menzoberranzan!"



The Dwelling of House Baenre

House Baenre occupies the highest tier in the main cavern of Menzoberranzan, at the eastern end of the Qu'ellarz'orl. The compound is roughly oval in shape, three-eighths of a mile long and a quarter mile wide, and surrounded by a magnificent and magical fence, appearing as a silvery spider's web around the general blue hues of the Baenre compound. Twenty feet high, this striking barrier is formed of iron-strung strands as thick as a drow's arm, and enchanted so that anything touching it will become stuck fast until the Matron Mother of the house wills it to be freed (Note: the 5th level wizard spell, 4th level cleric spell, *passweb* will not work on this fence, though a *spider mask* will). Even the sharpest of drow weapons could not put a nick in the (rumors say) Lloth-given gift. Entrance is gained through one of several symmetrical web-gates, the principle one being set between the outer compound's tallest two stalagmites, which spiral out, creating a circular gap.

The central structure of House Baenre is a purple-glowing dome, covering a chapel large enough to seat all 2,600 of Baenre's drow. Around its anchoring symmetry, twenty huge stalagmite mounds weave a variety of ways, some tall and slender, others short and squat, and all interconnected with gracefully sweeping and arching bridges and parapets.

Even more striking loom the inverse structures of the thirty stalactites. Not all are hollowed, as are the stalagmite mounds, but all are ringed with balconies, curving like the edging of a screw. Some connect tip-to-tip with stalagmite mounds; others hang freely, except for the inevitable skywalks linking every structure.

A thousand soldiers are always on patrol along these skywalks and balconies,



House Baenre

adorned in their meticulous Baenre silver uniforms, proudly displaying badges distinguishing their house and rank. The largest garrison (45 elite female warriors) patrols the area around the central dome and the immediate two stalagmite mounds flanking it on either side (where reside the noble family—females in the more elaborate structure on the left; males in the lesser mound on the right).

The great mound occupied by Matron Baenre and her daughters also houses its own inner garrison of no less than 50 elite female warriors, 25 per shift, broken down into patrol groups of 5.

5 Guard Captains (9th level fighters):

AC -8 (*chain* +5, *buckler* +3, *Dex* 18 +); MOVE 12"; HD 9; hit points 63-75; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-7 +5; THAC0 7; MR 68%; AL LE

Weapon: *mace* +5 or *handcrossbow* with *darts of stunning*

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *levitate*, *know alignment*, *detect magic*, *clairvoyance*, *detect lie*, *suggestion*, *dispel magic* (all once/day)

20 Drow Guards (6th level fighters):

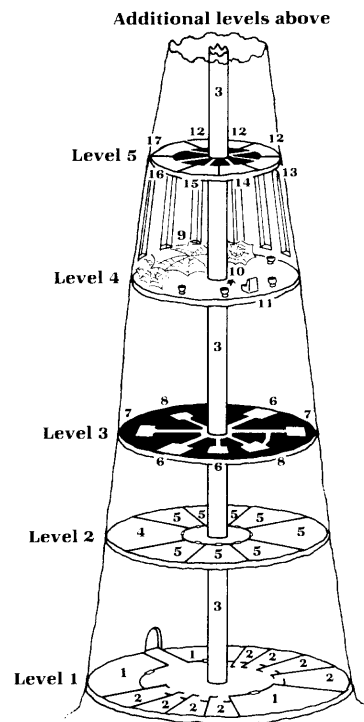
AC -2 (*chain* +3, *dex* 18 +); MOVE 12"; HD 6; hit points 45-55; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6 +3/1-4 +3; THAC0 12; MR 62%; AL LE

Weapons: *short sword* +3, *dagger* +3, or *handcrossbow* with *poison darts*

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: same as captains, above

The lowest level contains dozens of separate chambers, housing both the elite guard and the many slaves and attendants. Here, too, is an enclosed connecting walkway leading to a door in the nearby

House Baenre The Great Mound



1. Slaves' quarters
2. Elite guards' quarters
3. Levitation tube
4. Scribes' quarters
5. Baenre daughters (15), 2 per room
6. Audience chambers
7. Minor treasures and coins
8. War rooms
9. Huge spiders and webs
10. House Baenre mosaic
11. Throne and summoning braziers
12. Matron Baenre's quarters
13. Gromph's quarters
14. Sos-Umtu's quarters
15. Bladen'kerst's quarters
16. Triel's quarters
17. El-Viddenvelp's quarters



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chapel. The second level houses Baenre's daughters, with the exception of Triel (when she is visiting her home), Bladen'Kerst, and Sos'Umptu.

A single circular, nearly translucent crystal stairway ascends to the third level, a series of winding corridors connecting eight widely-spaced rooms. The only permanent occupants, in a single, small chamber are Des'chel and Hingebrew, Matron Baenre's personal scribes. Three other rooms are reserved as private audience chambers for use by Baenre and her most important daughters. Two others are war-rooms, one general, one for secret meetings of the family, discussing dealings behind the dealings. The remaining two rooms contain the coined wealth and minor treasures of House Baenre (the contents of either one outstrip the total wealth of any other house in the city).

The tower's fourth level is dominated by Matron Baenre's elaborate throne room. The throne itself is the most incredible item, carved of pure black sapphire. The souls of all Menzoberranzan drow converted into driders reside within this inky black dimension, and can be seen writhing in torment beneath the First Matron Mother.

A thirty-carat diamond is set into the end of each arm on the throne, magically empowered to provide the room with light. On a command from Matron Baenre, either of these gemstones can shoot forth a line of purplish light, forcing its target to save vs. death magic or be disintegrated.

The fifth and smallest level of the tower resembles a spider in design, with the central area as the lone common room on the level, and each of the eight legs a small private room. Six of these contain extra-dimensional private and permanent mansions (see the 7th level wizard's spell, *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Mansion*). Matron Baenre claims three for her own—one for her private use; one to keep her present patron; and one for the most

private family gatherings, which includes a private and secret extra-dimensional walkway to a secret door atop the crest of the great chapel's dome, directly above the altar area. Another secret door in this area leads to House Baenre's primary treasure room (see below).

Triel, Bladen'Kerst, and Gromph each claim one of the other enchanted areas. The remaining two rooms are normal enough, though undeniably elaborate. One is used by Sos'Umptu, the other by Matron Baenre's favorite non-drow associate, the illithid El-Viddenvelp.

Beneath the lowest levels of Matron Baenre's stalagmite mound lies an intricate tunnel complex, stuffed with stores (including a private rothe herd and mushroom garden) that could allow the prominent house to withstand a siege indefinitely.

The inner area of the great domed chapel resembles a gladiatorial arena, except that the central altar area is raised, affording an excellent view from every seat on the ringing benches. Arches are built along the walls only, leaving the structure as a single, unobstructed open room. The outside of the building is marvelously decorated with bas reliefs and faerie fire and sports a widow's walk around its entire perimeter, a favored guard position among the rank and file.

The southwestern stalactite balconies are also heavily guarded, with Baenre taking no chances from the ceiling-dwelling, double-dealing wretches of House Mizzrym.

All in all, House Baenre seems an impregnable fortress, fortified with powerful magical wards and manned by an army of superbly-trained, superbly armed and armored drow warriors. No house (at least none that anyone can remember, or would dare to mention even if they could) has ever attempted a takeover of Baenre, though there is a fleeting rumor among dwellers of the region outside of Menzoberranzan concerning that rather



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wide crack in the northwestern corner of the cavern's floor . . .

The Baenre House Guard

No force in all of Menzoberranzan, perhaps in all of the Underdark, is as well-equipped as the 2,600 drow soldiers patrolling House Baenre's elaborate compound. Of course, all wear *piwafwi* cloaks and drow boots, but they normally keep their shielding cloaks folded small, openly displaying their Baenre house uniforms.

The 350 elite female foot soldiers are all adorned in *chain mail* +5 and *bucklers* +3, and wield powerful melee weapons (typically of the +3 bonus). All carry hand-held crossbows, with both poison-tipped quarrels and assorted *bolts of power*, preferring the *spider dart* variety. Normal elite foot soldiers range in level from 3rd to 6th. Patrol group leaders (not less than 7th level) are also routinely equipped with a *wand of enemy detection* and a mace befitting a high priestess (+4).

The archers of House Baenre, male and female, typically patrol the higher stations along the stalactite walkways. Levels range from 2nd to 5th, with patrol leaders (almost always female) no higher than 7th, since any female above that rank would either be committed to the command staff or the elite foot soldiers. The archers wear the least armor in the Baenre drow force (*chain mail* +2) with no bucklers, and carry short swords of lesser, +1, quality. Sixty percent of each patrol group wields a light crossbow, the other forty percent using heavy. All utilize quarrels of +3 value, often poison-tipped with either sleep or spider (save 15/0) poison.

The meat of the Baenre drow force, 1,200 male foot soldiers, controls the perimeter of the compound, patrolling both inside and outside of the enchanted web fence and keeping watch over the Baenre slave soldiers. This force, exclusively male, offers

the widest range of levels, from the lowliest novice fighters to Dantrag himself (18th level). Their chain mail varies in magic from +1 to +3; bucklers are typically in the +1 to +2 range.

Berg'inyon Baenre (a classmate of Drizzt Do'Urden's in Melee-Magthere) leads the 400 lizard riders of House Baenre. This force is comprised of both male and female warriors of 5th to 7th level, equipped in chain mail of not less than +3 value and wielding *death lances*, with +3 short swords on their belts, just in case. The lizard riders patrol the ceiling above the Baenre compound, often making excursions in the direction of House Mizzrym (just in case). The House Emblem of each Baenre rider can emit a dim light, similar to faerie fire, of blue, purple, red, green, or orange hue. Nothing in all the Underdark can match the spectacle of the Baenre lizard rider changing of the guard, with streaking riders crossing paths along the thirty stalactite pillars in brilliant formations.

The Baenre slave force is not as numerous as those of other houses, primarily because Matron Baenre does not think much of lesser creatures such as orcs and ogres and does not like them smelling up her fabulous compound. They are quartered in dark holes, usually no more than three-chambered caves, beneath the compound's outermost stalagmite mounds. Their patrolling areas are under the direct jurisdiction of Dantrag and his generals, but rarely are any of them allowed on the walkways above the floor level of the Baenre compound (unless the drow archers need target practice). Still, even the minotaurs wear specially-crafted drow armor (+3) and the bugbears wield +3 halberds.



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House Baenre's Treasures

If any PCs are fortunate enough to stumble among the secret chambers concealed within the apex of the house chapel's great dome, they will be in the area of the greatest single treasure trove of Menzoberranzan. A secret door leads to a two-foot wide corridor, 20 feet long and ending in an ornate, platinum-gilded door (*wizard locked*, triple-locked, and coated with contact poison XX). Before the adventurers get to this point, though, they will be met by a regally-adorned Skeleton Warrior (AC 0; Move 6"; HD 9 + 2; hit points 72; #AT 1; Dmg 1D10 +5; THAC0 3—Matron Baenre has the circlet), brandishing a shining silver two-handed sword (+5). The creature's gem-covered robes and abundant jewelry alone are worth some 10,000 gp, but the real value of the undead is as an escort (this is the legendary skeleton key), for the monster has been specially enchanted so that it can simply open the magically barred door. The warrior seems ready for battle, but will not strike. Any hostile actions towards the warrior or any attempts to take its valuable possessions will begin a fight, but if the adventurers let the creature make the first move, and if they can successfully lie their way through its interrogation (remember, the monster has Exceptional intelligence!), it will open the protected door for them.

Beyond the door is a 10 x 10 chamber with two more doors, one to either side. Note: only one of these three doors can be opened at any time, and the area in between them, though the PCs might not know it, is actually another extra-dimensional pocket. The right door is the wrong door, for opening it will lead to another, separate extra-dimensional pocket, the result being akin to throwing a *bag of holding* into a *portable hole*, opening a rift to the Astral Plane.

The left door, however, leads into the dome-shaped treasure room (40 ft. diameter). Seven chests line the room's perimeter. Six of these contain the house general wealth (Treasure type H), which varies according to pay schedules for house drow and bribes for political intrigue, and the seventh holds 2d10 *time bombs*, also used for political intrigue.

Directly to the left of the door stands an invisible pedestal with an invisible crystal ball atop it. Gromph peers through this device periodically, just to make certain that all is as it should be.

Two black doors stand alone, side-by-side in the center of the room, leading apparently nowhere. They will not move, and actually, both are locked (-20% to a thief's roll). Also, only one of these can be opened at a time. The door on the right leads (you guessed it) to an extra-dimensional pocket, this one a small chamber filled with perfect ebony sculptures of drow elves in various positions (see Vendes below). Matron Baenre trades these unfortunate artifacts (duergar adore them and have been known to pay as much as 50 finely-crafted weapons or 20,000 gps. worth of gems for a single piece). There is nothing else in the crowded chamber.

The door on the left leads to House Baenre's private armory. In here are: 6d12 piwafwi cloaks; 3d4 suits of drow chain (+2 to +4); 3d4 bucklers (+1); 4d6 assorted melee weapons (+1 to +3); and 2d4 hand held crossbows, each with a case of 20 bolts (+1).

The rest of the main treasure room contains assorted magical and otherwise valuable items (roll 20d6 with each result of 1 signifying a magical treasure). Always present, in addition to the random treasures, are: 2d4 potions, including a *potion of elemental control—earth* (in case of deep gnomes), and a *potion of magic resistance*; a *wand of enemy detection*; a *brazier of fire elemental control*; a *brazier*

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of sleep smoke; a figurine of wondrous power (obsidian steed); a Manual of Golems (jade spiders); and a Tome of Mystical Equations.

A mighty haul indeed, but just in case your PCs think that they've gotten away with something grand, there is, set in the center of the curving ceiling, a mirror of retention (fastened with sovereign glue and covered by three permanent outer layers, each the equivalent of a wall of force), which will record all of the events in the room, and which Gromph checks and re-activates at the start of each day (even before he goes to light up Narbondel). Don't doubt for a minute that Matron Baenre and Gromph will stop at nothing to retrieve stolen goods.

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Matron Mother Baenre

ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 87
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (Spider Wand)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: Save vs. Poison/Die
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Poison
SPECIAL DEFENSE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

25th Level Drow Priestess
S:09 I: 18W 19 D: 10 C: 16 CH: 15

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, detect lie, clairvoyance, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *spider eyes, combine, command, fear, invisibility to undead*
Second Level: *augury, charm person, dark fire, messenger, wyvern watch*

Third Level: *telepathy, spellweb, emotion control, animate dead, dispel magic*

Fourth Level: *divination, free action, passweb, mental domination, modify memory*

Fifth Level: *commune, dispel evil, flame strike, mind shatter, summon spider*

Sixth Level: *blade barrier, spiritual wrath, reverse time, word of recall*

Seventh Level: *creeping doom, unholy word*

Physical Description: Matron Mother Baenre is considered to be ancient, even as drow go, and whereas most drow retain their youthful appearance for most of their lives, Matron Baenre has degenerated throughout her long and illustrious one. Her face is criss-crossed with numerous, deep wrinkles and her hair has become thin and stringy, giving her a strange, wraith-like appearance. There are whispers among the masses that the Matron Mother of House Baenre should be dead and there are even quieter whispers that suggest perhaps she already is.

Equipment: Matron Mother Baenre has acquired hundreds of interesting items in her long life, but she has a special place in her heart for a select few and these she carries with her at all times.

On her left hand she wears a large, ornate, gold ring with a huge, shimmering sapphire in its setting. The gold band has been magically enchanted to writhe and squirm on the Matron Mother's finger as if alive and the sapphire contains a magically sustained, live black widow spider. The ring, as a whole, has been enchanted to act as a *ring of arachnid control* (88 charges).

On her right hand she wears a small ring made from the tooth of a mountain dwarf. The ring contains the trapped and tormented soul of a mountain dwarf king whose mining party ventured too near to Menzoberranzan. The party was captured and sacrificed to Lloth and the king's soul was trapped within the ring. The ring now



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functions as a *ring of anti-venom* (18 charges) and with every use the soul is brought one step closer to a final rest, a thought which displeases Matron Baenre immensely.

The Matron Mother also carries a small bag filled with 25 tiny onyx spiders which acts similarly to a *bag of bones*. Upon casting these items and uttering the command word, the onyx spiders become huge spiders fully under the command of Matron Baenre.

Her favorite little toy is her prized *spider wand* (63 charges). Her preferred tactic is to use the web power of the wand to entangle her victim and then poison the hapless captive until either he dies or Matron Baenre grows tired of the game (tired of torment? Not likely).

Personality: Matron Baenre carries herself with an ease that reeks of cockiness; if she ever had any fears they have been long forgotten. Matron Baenre has grown tired of most physical pleasures (see torment, above) so now she devotes her time to the pleasures of political intrigue and psychological web-weaving. She openly promotes strife within Menzoberranzan and seems to draw energy (perhaps life) from the resulting chaos. Feeling confident that she is safely set as First Matron Mother, she encourages ambitious on to great, and sometimes gory, glory.

Motivation: Having lived for such a long time, the First Matron Mother of Menzoberranzan has realized her greatest goals and, for the present, seems content to serve the Spider Queen as well as she can and let the chaotic story unfold around her (with her inevitable nudging). Unfortunately for Menzoberranzan, she still retains her natural drow craving for more and more power, so although the other houses don't have to worry about House Baenre's personal ambitions for ascension, they certainly have to keep wary of Matron Baenre's love of chaos.

Triel Baenre, Matron Mistress of The Academy

ARMOR CLASS: - 3
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 98
NO. OF ATTACKS: 5 (*Whip of Fangs*)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2d4 X 5(QX)
SPECIAL ATTACK: Weakness (Whip)

SPECIAL DEFENSE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 82%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

16th Level Drow Priestess
S:15 I: 14W: 18 D: 17 C: 16 CH: 15

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, detect magic, know alignment, levitation, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *spider eyes, thought capture, command, fear*

Second Level: *augury, hesitation, dark fire, mind read*

Third Level: *spellweb, memory read, telepathy, unearthly choir*

Fourth Level: *passweb, circle of privacy, mental domination, free action*

Fifth Level: *mind shatter, repeat action, flame strike, summon spider*

Sixth Level: *spiritual wrath, reverse time, word of recall*

Seventh Level: *mind tracker*

Physical Description: Triel is a strong and confident female. She is just under five feet tall, but carries herself with such a powerful grace there can be no doubt of her status.

Equipment: With Arach-Tinilith at her command, Triel prefers to be uncluttered by personal items, so she commonly carries few possessions. Her chain mail is of the

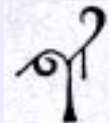
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finest quality (+5), as is her rarely-utilized mace (+5). She wears her house insignia on a heavy gold chain. This item, like all the insignia of the selected Baenre nobles, empowers Triel with a Word of Recall, which will bring her directly to Matron Baenre's throne room.

Her favored weapon is a dreaded five-headed *whip of fangs* which has tasted the flesh of more than a few young drow who have made their way through the Academy. Another toy is her *wand of fear*, a gift from Mother when Triel was appointed to her present, prestigious position.

Personality: Triel is dominating and overbearing, even as drow go, but she is also aware that she is in a very influential position and is careful about taking risks that might jeopardize her station. Although Triel is a demanding overseer, she deals with the Academy Mistresses, Masters, and students as fairly as possible—they know what is expected of them and Triel usually follows the rules that she has set down. But these are drow, after all, and there are exceptions to rules.

Motivation: Triel is content with her life as Matron Mistress of the Academy and has no designs to usurp her Mother as Matron of House Baenre. As Matron Mistress, she wields more power than other Matron Mothers, save those of the very highest houses, and she sees no point in stepping down from her position to foster a lesser house. Besides, there remains the questions of Matron Baenre's age; Triel is unsure that Matron Baenre's position will ever be vacant.



Gromph Baenre, Archmage of Menzoberranzan

ARMOR CLASS: - 2
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 39
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (*Dagger* +5)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4 + 5
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Poison (*Dagger*)
SPECIAL DEFENSE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 95%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

20th Level Drow Archmage
S: 10 I: 19 W: 12 D: 16 C: 9 CH: 8

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *metamorphose liquid, Murduck's feathery flyer, spider eyes, spider climb*

Second Level: *Maximillian's earthen grasp, past life, ride the wind, sense shifting, web*

Third Level: *darkwing, hand of darkness, alacrity, wizard sight, lightning bolt*

Fourth Level: *acid bolt, stop, thunder staff, turn pebble to boulder, dimension door*

Fifth Level: *passweb, lower resistance, mind fog, chaos, domination*

Sixth Level: *summon spider, Bloodstone's spectral steed, disintegrate, Forest's fiery constriction*

Seventh Level: *viper gout (spider gout variation, of course), prismatic spray, suffocate*

Eighth Level: *death spider, demand, symbol*

Ninth Level: *power word kill, time stop*

Physical Description: Gromph, being the elderboy of House Baenre, is older than many of the Matron Mothers of Menzoberranzan. He has aged gracefully



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physically, if not mentally, with flowing and vibrant white hair and shows little of his seven hundred years. He is a perfectionist with few equals and carries himself with a dignity befitting his station in life as the city's revered Archmage.

Equipment: Over the years, Gromph has acquired many fascinating pieces of magic. As elderboy of House Baenre, he had already inherited many items, and as Archmage of Menzoberranzan, he received even more. Now Gromph finds himself with an over-abundance of magical toys, if that's possible.

His most-prized possession, of course, is the celebrated *robe of the Archmage of Menzoberranzan*. This flowing, many-pocketed *piwafwi* is emblazoned with sigils and runes of power highlighted with varying hues of faerie fire, and bestows the following benefits:

1. Armor equal to Armor Class 0
2. +5% Magic Resistance
3. +1 to all saving throws
4. *wraithform*, as spell, 2/day

Two brooches adorn the robe. One acts as a more powerful version of the *amulet of perpetual youth*, halving the effects of natural and unnatural aging for as long as Gromph is accorded the position as city Archmage.

The second brooch enables Gromph to cast the *lingering heat* enchantment into Narbondel at the beginning of each day.

Some other items which Gromph carries with him at all times include an ancient *wand of viscid globs*, which was given to him upon his birth by Matron Mother X'larraz'et of House X'larraz' et'soj. Since that particular house was destroyed by House Baenre just a year later, Gromph has to say that he found the wand while cleaning the attic of one of House Baenre's lesser stalagmite mounds.

A *wand of acidic spheres* rests easy on Gromph's left hip—it seems that he stumbled across that one in the same



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lucrative attic. He wears a *brooch of number numbing* under his marvelous robes. (Gromph is typically House Baenre's bargaining agent—in the world of the drow, having the upper hand is everything.)

Some of Gromph's more important items are kept in his office in Sorcere. His large dwarf-bone desk contain his many *contracts of Nepthas* (to be used only in emergencies, of course!), his *lens of speed reading*, and his *talisman of memorization*. Built into the wall of his office, in a secret compartment, is the *Zhaunil del Faerbol Talinth-Mrimm*, which translates to the *Knowledge of Philosophical (Alchemical) Magics*, and acts as *Nefradina's identifier*. Scattered around the office is a vast collection of *talintu bol'et* (thought bottles), some full, others waiting for an inspiration to fill their void.

In his room at House Baenre, Gromph keeps his prized *spider mask*. Matron Baenre makes him keep it at home, since her wondrous fence is not immune to the item's effects and she fears that another house might get their hands on it and find a way to make copies.

Personality: Gromph is an evil and corrupt old drow, everything a dark elf mother could ask for. He is cold, bitter, calculating, and hoards his information like a miser hoards gold. While it is possible, though rare, to deal with Gromph on a regular basis, be assured that you will leave the relationship with less than you had going in.

Motivation: Gromph is motivated by one thing: hatred. He sees his station in life (as a male in Menzoberranzan) as pointless, and realizes that he cannot, under the strict matriarchal system, rise any higher. With that in mind, he continually strives to improve, to become more and more powerful, in the fleeting hopes that, one day, things will change for the better. As Archmage of the city, Gromph receives a great deal of respect, but not from the most powerful Matron Mothers, who he considers to be an overbearing bunch of

hypocrites who use their goddess as a shield (Matron Baenre excluded, of course). Unfortunately for Gromph, it is a very effective shield.

Because of his traitorous feelings, Gromph is in a tentative position with his Mother. Matron Baenre has chosen to ignore her son's failings as long as he remains ultimately useful to her. And Gromph has found a way, despite all, to find the favor of the Spider Queen. The most extraordinary sight in House Baenre is a permanent, 30-foot-diameter illusion hovering over the central altar in the main chapel. This work of art continually shifts its form, one moment appearing as a gigantic spider, the next a perfect-featured drow female, perhaps the best representation of Lloth in all of Menzoberranzan.




El-Viddenvelp, House Adviser for Extra-Menzobermanian Affairs

RACE:	Illithid
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVE:	12"
HIT DICE:	8 + 4 (level 7 psionicist)
HIT POINTS:	82
THACO:	11
ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Mind blast/psionics
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Psionics
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	90%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius
Psionic Strength:	225
AT/DEF Modes:	MT/M-/TS/MB/ +1
Disciplines:	3
Sciences:	5
Devotions:	14



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El-Viddenvelp, or Methil, as he is known for ease, is the chief adviser to Matron Baenre concerning matters beyond Menzoberranzan's borders, and an important consultant even on matters within the city itself. His mental prowess (though little is known of his specific psionic powers) has proven more than helpful to the First Matron Mother in her dealings with other Matron Mothers, particularly in the meetings of the ruling council.

Matron Baenre even secretly created a small chamber right beside the council cave, so that El-Viddenvelp could be out of sight, but not out of mind.

The reasons for the illithid's dealing with the house are shady at best. Perhaps it is due to the fact that El-Viddenvelp's illithid community is located only a few weeks' march to the west of Menzoberranzan. While mind flayers do not normally fear the drow, they do respect them, especially when dealing with a city of 20,000! El-Viddenvelp's community, by contrast, numbers a scant one or two hundred (and half the time, half of those are off gallivanting in the Astral Plane).

Matron Baenre has nothing personal against double-agents, as long as she benefits from the relationship. At present, she needs El-Viddenvelp to help her understand the mysterious powers of House Oblodra (#3).

Other Important House Baenre NPCs

Quenthel Baenre, Level 10 high priestess: The newest member in Baenre's high priestess collection, Quenthel is seen as being the most ambitious of Baenre's lot. She became a high priestess in record time (to the envy of all her peers, family included) and if it were not for the fact that she is favored by Lloth, she would have been killed years ago by a prudent Triel. Quenthel knows that the best she can hope for is for

Matron Baenre to allow her to assume the title of Matron Mother of some lesser house and then spend centuries building that house to prominence. She has openly declared, however that she wishes to rule the Academy and has also alluded, very dimly, that perhaps Triel has been getting lax in her duties.

Vendes Baenre, Level 11/14 cleric/thief: This small and vicious female is known as 'Duk-Tak' or the Unholy Executioner. Vendes is so uncontrollably volatile that Matron Baenre would not give her a room in the highest tier of the family stalagmite. Of course, this fact, especially since an illithid is allowed to reside up there, only shortens the fuse. The slight does not mean that Matron Baenre has no use for her fourth daughter. Often when Matron Baenre has a problem with a lower ranking drow, she calls upon Vendes to meet out her punishment. Vendes wields a special seven-headed *whip of fangs* which transforms the skin of her victims into ebony (save vs. death magic; drow magic resistance does not apply). Matron Baenre then deposits the statue in a room for future sale.

Vendes has also made her mark in Arach-Tinilith. When a would-be priestess is seen, or even thought to be, deviating from the Way of Lloth, Vendes puts her whip into action. These special statues are put on display in front of Arach-Tinilith for all to see, for a period of one year.

Bladen'Kerst Baenre, Level 14 high priestess: If sadistic behavior were a virtue, this high priestess would be a goddess. Bladen'Kerst is the oldest in-house daughter (second behind Triel) and she aspires to heights of greatness that Matron Baenre would never allow her to achieve. Even in savage drow culture, there is a time for cruelty and a time for, well, *less* cruelty, but Bladen'Kerst never quite grasped that

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idea and as a result has become a problem for the family. Matron Baenre fears that Bladen'Kerst would fail miserably if she attempted to form a house of her own, and fears even more the possibility that Bladen'Kerst would succeed. With her lack of civility and understanding of drow protocol, the second daughter would certainly disgrace House Baenre. For now Matron Baenre is happy just to let her terrorize the house males and believe that she is doing the family proud.

Sos'Umptu Baenre, Level 12 high priestess: Sos'Umptu has been managing the Baenre chapel for over 200 years, reaching a level of perfection in her work that has astounded even her ancient mother. After finishing her studies in Arach-Tinilith she assumed the role of caretaker for the huge worship place, and since that time she has taken great pains (some of them even her own) to see that the chapel remains in perfect shape. It was Sos'Umptu who suggested the great spider/lady work of art, even going over Bladen'Kerst's head in prompting her brother to create it. This has caused a major rift between the two sisters, especially considering Matron Baenre's delight at the birthday gift. Because of Bladen'Kerst's obvious scorn and dangerous mannerisms, Sos'Umptu is now seldom seen outside of the huge domed chapel, a place where even her elder sister would not dare to strike out at her.

Dantrag Baenre, Level 18 fighter: With Zaknafein Do'Urden out of the way, Dantrag Baenre is reputed to be the finest weapon master in all of Menzoberranzan. (You'd never convince House Barrison Del'Arngo of this, however.) Whether or not he is the city's finest fighter remains to be seen, for few would dare to challenge any drow of the city's First House in combat. Dantrag is the secondboy of the house behind Gromph,

but has no usurper's aspirations (i.e., he's not stupid). He wears *bracers of the blinding strike* and fights with two swords, neither of drow make. One is a *sword of sharpness* (+3), and the other a *defender* (+5). Rumors say that the *sword of sharpness* is an intelligent blade, evilly aligned and quite thrilled with its present possessor.


Dantrag is about as honorable as a Lloth-worshipping drow can be, preferring not to attack unarmed foes or strike from behind. This should not be confused with honor, though, for it is merely the result of Dantrag's sick pride; in his eyes, no one can beat him in melee combat.

Dantrag desires the position as Principle Master of Melee-Magthere, but Matron Baenre will not allow it since he is too valuable to her in the role of house weapon master.



House Barrison Del'Armgo

Second House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL: 

Matron Mother: Mez'Barris Armgo
level 13/13
priestess/fighter

Nobles: 48
Priestesses: 11
High Priestesses: 3
House Males: 37
Fighters: 20
Wizards: 17

Drow Soldiers: 1,000 total

Formations: 50 Elite Foot (female)
200 Elite Foot (male)
200 Archers
350 Foot
200 Lizriders

Slave Force: 1,100 total

Formations: 300 goblin foot
200 goblin archers
150 orc spearcasters
250 ogrillons
(home-bred)
150 bugbears
50 ogres

Chief Alliances: Tentative agreement with House Oblodra (#3), since both are under House Baenre's ominous shadow. Otherwise, House Barrison Del'Armgo has no known allies within Menzoberranzan.

Chief Rivals: House Oblodra (#3), quietly, and House Baenre (#1), even more quietly, seem to be Barrison Del'Armgo's principle

rivals. No other house really poses any threat to the superbly trained forces of the second house, though they do fear a conspiracy between Faen Tlabbar, Xorlarrin, and Agrach Dyr, the 4th, 5th, and 6th houses respectively, all allies of House Baenre. Also, House Vandree (17th) seems in line for trouble.

Barrison Del'Armgo, the second house of the city is, in a drow elf's twisted perception of time, just a newborn babe. How they came to achieve their number two ranking is shrouded in suspicion and envy, but no one has yet to express their feelings openly or with purpose.

The house is led by Matron Mez' Barris Armgo and her five daughters. Early on they realized that they could never hope to become a force in Menzoberranzan without a sizeable number of high priestesses. For many years they prayed and sacrificed to Lloth in the hope that she would answer their prayers and bring them to greatness.

In the meantime, they wisely spent their time making treaties and forming alliances with the lesser noble houses—treaties designed to preserve their very existence as a minor house.

For years they had been quietly fostering a staff of house wizards second to none, producing almost twice as many competent wizards as even the larger houses. The Matron Mother discarded numerous patrons in the hope that she could give birth to the daughters that are so essential to life in the Underdark. Unfortunately, her attempts were futile and she gave birth to only five daughters, of whom only three were destined for greatness.

As their wizard population began to grow, Barrison Del'Armgo became more and more useful to the larger houses as an alternative to the outrageously priced mercenaries of Bregan D'aerthe. Consequently, with even House Baenre continually calling, the house

House Barrison Del'Armgo

developed a reputation as an up and coming force. Unfortunately, not all of the greater houses took heed of these rumors and, in the end, their ignorance proved to be their undoing.

With their list of alliances growing at an incredible rate, Mez-Barris turned her thoughts toward conquest. In their 550th year, Barrison Del'Armgo was ranked 47th and the Matron Mother decided that it was time for a drastic change. The great Barrison Del'Armgo wizards concocted a spell that would move them up the ladder.

Barely a year later, the mages began their evil work. At the waning of Narbondel, the dark hour reserved for dark business, the 27th house, Bron'tej, quite simply disappeared, leaving in its stead a pool of murky sludge. The sludge solidified in a few days, forming a "natural" ridgework that curiously resembled the insignia of Barrison Del'Armgo. Very few knew any specifics about the attack, but for many days afterward a glowing disc was seen floating from House Baenre to Barrison Del'Armgo and all the houses, great and small, took heed.

When things were at last sorted out, by decision of the Ruling Council, Barrison Del'Armgo was awarded the 16th rank in the city, and, curiously, not a single house offered the slightest word of open complaint. But of course, this unprecedented jump of 31 ranks would not go unchallenged for long.

Over the ensuing years, Barrison Del'Armgo was assaulted by a number of houses, including noble ones, and they survived each attack and slipped inevitably toward a seat on the Ruling Council. Still, Mez'Barris realized that her house was being tolerated and pandered to, but the treatment was condescending. Eventually, Barrison Del'Armgo would ascend too high, and the greatest houses, Baenre included, would turn against them.

Mez'Barris, long considered a renegade for her catering to the predominant house males, decided then to stop fighting against her nature, to stop resisting the unique graces Lloth had bestowed upon her house. Mez'Barris realized that she, and her off spring, would forever bear male children, and understood that Lloth wanted it this way. Of all the drow cities, Menzoberranzan, with their slavish dedication to matriarchal rule, was probably the weakest in terms of wizardly magic. And the lopsided favors extended to females certainly diminished the other half of the city's drow population.

Mez'Barris found a new patron, an exceptionally large and strong male, and began with him a line of physically and emotionally superior males.

And so Barrison Del'Armgo, using their unique (to Menzoberranzan) gifts, continued to thrive, continued their inevitable ascension. Their open acceptance of males beamed out as a beacon of welcome for unhoused rogues—rumors say that even Jarlaxle, mercenary leader of Bregan D'aerthe, has found the secret favor of Mez'Barris. Jarlaxle, of course, pragmatic and wise, and considered by Matron Baenre to be her exclusive property, denies these claims bitterly.

There was also once a rumor that Gromph Baenre, Archmage of the city, spent some private moments with Mez'Barris Armgo on more than one occasion. This cannot be confirmed, though, since everyone who spoke the rumor, and nearly all of those who heard it, have since been sold as ebony statues to a distant duergar community.

Another major benefit of Barrison Del'Armgo's attitude towards males is that the house males are undyingly loyal to their Matron Mother (where else in all the city could they go and receive as much respect?). Mez'Barris, therefore, does not have to worry, as do so many other Matron

House Barrison Del'Armgo

Mothers, about sinister plots from within.

No house other than Baenre would dare to strike out against Barrison Del'Armgo alone, and even Baenre, so smug and mighty, understands that the cost of taking on the city's second house would be far too high. (This is why Barrison Del'Armgo rightfully fears a conspiracy between Baenre's most powerful allies.) The house has bred not only the finest wizards in all the city, but the most elite warrior group as well, males big and strong—unnaturally so, whisper the jealous other houses.

Note that they whisper.

The Dwelling of House Barrison Del'Armgo

Barrison Del'Armgo occupies a triangular compound east of the Qu'ellarz'orl, literally (and fittingly) in the shadow of House Baenre. While the compound is not small by Menzoberranzan standards, the 1,000 drow of Barrison Del'Armgo find it uncomfortably tight. For this reason, and the fact that Mez'Barris has outgrown the motherly eye of Matron Baenre, Barrison Del'Armgo is apparently planning a move.

Three former noble houses, Do'Urden, DeVir, and Hun'ett, are presently either unoccupied or housing very minor families, but Barrison Del'Armgo, as second house, desires an even grander compound than any of these. House Baenre possesses the grandest, there can be no argument to that, but behind it, the compounds of House Duskryn (10th) and House Vandree (17th) seem the most promising. Duskryn, powerful beyond their rank and, by all expectations destined for the ruling council, could prove a formidable foe. Vandree, on the other hand, with merely 150 drow warriors and no worthwhile alliances, could be easy pickings.

House Barrison Del'Armgo is nearly as impregnable as House Baenre, when you consider the size of the contingent held within its relatively small walls. While half of the garrison is sleeping, the other half spends its time patrolling every square inch of the fifteen foot walls that surround the complex. To make living arrangements even worse, the cavern ceiling is exceptionally low above the compound, sporting dozens of stalactites, too thin to be hollowed for living quarters, but strong enough to support guard stations and excellent archery positions.

House soldiers typically range from level 2-7, with guard captains in the 7-10 range. Patrol groups consist of 15 fighters plus captain, accompanied by 2 fighter/mages of not less than level 5/8. Guard captains are outfitted in the finest chain (+5) and typically fight with battle axe and hand axe of the finest quality. Wizard spells are typically offensive and brutal in nature (*magic missile*, *lightning bolt*, *acid bolt*, and *Evard's black tentacles* are favorites).

The chapel of House Barrison Del'Armgo is located in the large, easternmost stalagmite mound that also houses the family nobles, male and female. While having the most important building anchoring one end of the compound gate might seem dangerous, even foolhardy, the mighty house is not overly concerned at the present, relatively unthreatening, time.

This enormously thick stalagmite has two distinct (and unconnecting) sections, the small inner area used as the chapel and noble quarters, and the outer, circling tunnels, wherein reside nearly a third of the Barrison Del'Armgo lizard riders and their mounts, leaving the important mound crawling with lizards every moment of every day. Also, the many stalactites above this area form the stations for dozens of the house's most skilled archers, and dozens of deadly wizards. There is even an area on

House Barrison Del'Armgo

the walkways reserved for spell research and alchemical mixing, allowing the wizards to continually work toward improving their craft, even while guarding the noble family.

House Barrison Del'Armgo NPCs

Matron Mother Mez'Barris Armgo

ARMOR CLASS: 1
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 80
NO. OF ATTACKS: 4 or 5 (*Whip of Fangs*)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-7 +5 or 2d4 x 5
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Weakness (*Whip*)
SPECIAL DEFENSE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

13/13 Level Drow Priestess/Fighter
S: 15 I: 15 W: 18 D: 17 C: 11 CH: 14

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, detect lie, clairvoyance, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *spider eyes, personal reading, cause light wounds, ring of woe*
Second Level: *draw upon unholy might, hesitation, idea, charm person, hold person*
Third Level: *summon insects, spellweb, emotion control, meld into stone, cause disease*
Fourth Level: *giant insect, cloak of fear, undetectable lie, poison, passweb*
Fifth Level: *plane shift, flame strike, insect plague, summon spider*
Sixth Level: *blade barrier, word of recall*
Seventh Level: *mind tracker*

Physical Description: Matron Mother Mez'Barris Armgo is a hulking, brutish female, with piercing red eyes. She has a curious red streak of hair that runs down the center of her head—some say it was a gift of the Spider Queen and a mark of greatness.

Equipment: Matron Mez'Barris wears arm-length, open fingered evening gloves that, though appearing delicate, function as *gauntlets of ogre power* and *bracers of defense* (AC 2). Her *piwafwi* is also deceiving, functioning as a *cloak of arachnida*. For disciplining unruly slaves or unruly drow, she typically uses her five-headed *whip of fangs*, but her preferred method of battle is to fight with twin *maces* +5, *Qu'ilth* and *Qu'unte* (literally Blood and Guts), swinging twice each round with each of them.

She wears a golden *necklace of the retriever* with four large gems (ruby, diamond, blue sapphire, and obsidian), each valued at no less than 2,000 gold pieces. The first three gems can emit, once/day, 60' long rays of fire, cold and lightning respectively, striking a single target and delivering damage equal to Mez'Barris' current hit points (half with a successful save vs. breath weapon). The obsidian stone fires a ray of transmutation, which turns the victim into mud, stone, gold, or lead (determined randomly) unless a successful save vs. petrification is made, in which case there is no effect.

Personality: Mez'Barris is a fierce, battle-hungry warrior, the only Matron Mother known to actually engage enemy drow warriors in melee combat. It was not always this way; Mez'Barris' love of battle only came about after she realized her special place in Menzoberranzan.

Motivation: Like most successful drow, Mez'Barris is motivated by desire for power and the favor of Lloth. She seeks greater glories (and a bigger compound) for her



House Barrison Del'Armgo



house and believes whole-heartedly that House Baenre nears the end of its reign.

Another immediate concern is House Oblodra (#3), the unpredictable and reckless mad dogs coveting Barrison Del'Armgo's station. Believing that the fighting garrison of Barrison Del'Armgo will have little trouble eliminating the Vandree family, Mez'Barris has her wizards concocting a mighty dweomer that will extend the huge, claw-shaped ravine east of Tier Breche around the unfortunate house and drop them into oblivion. If this attack plan is ever executed, Mez'Barris is confident that it will defeat the potential conspiracy between the 4th, 5th, and 6th houses before they ever even formulate plans against Barrison Del'Armgo.

Uthegentel, Patron and Weapon Master of House Barrison Del'Armgo

ARMOR CLASS: -7 or -9
MOVE: 24"
HIT POINTS: 122
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 or 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-7 + 8
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Skewer, Entrapment
SPECIAL DEFENSE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

20th Level Drow Fighter
S: 18/33 I: 10 W: 12 D: 18 C: 17 CH: 12

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Physical Description: Standing near to six feet, with shoulders broad and sturdy, and weighing nearly 200 pounds, Uthegentel is one of the largest drow ever seen in Menzoberranzan. He wears his white hair short-cropped and spiked, and often paints his face with zig-zagging lines of red and yellow. A mithral ring adorns his nose, a golden pin protrudes through each cheek, and Uthegentel's blood-red eyes seem forever locked in a furrowed, angry glare. If your PCs have a worst nightmare, it probably resembles Uthegentel.

Equipment: Uthegentel wears black plate mail (+5) and *boots of speed*, which he typically uses for only one direction—straight ahead. He fights with a black trident (+5) which Uthegentel can use to skewer, much like a lizard king (doing double damage), and a *net of entrapment*.

Though not truly of the noble family, his special house emblem, pinned to his bare neck, functions as a *girdle of giant strength* (storm) once/day for 3D10 rounds.

House Barrison Del'Armgo

Personality: Savage and merciless, Utthegentel has been aptly tagged with nick-names such as Streeaka Dro'uh (Mad Dragon), Elgg-hor (the Destroyer), and Ultrin Sargtlin (Supreme Warrior), the last one of particular disliking to Dantrag Baenre.

Utthegentel growls more than he speaks, spits readily, and has been known to arrange battles between himself (weaponless) and six armed goblin slaves. He even gives the goblins first swing, and allows at least one of the blades to land a wicked hit. Then he summarily rips the lesser creatures limb from limb and has their choicest parts prepared for his supper.

Motivation: Utthegentel lives to fight and to breed, and serves as House Patron and as sire to the majority of the other house females (which explains the unusual size of Barrison Del'Armgo's warriors). He is completely loyal to Mez'Barris and the family and will remain so as long as the fierce Matron Mother retains her zeal for war.

On a personal note, Utthegentel wants nothing more than a fight against Dantrag Baenre. With Zaknafein Do'Urden out of the picture, only Dantrag presents any real challenge. Dantrag welcomes the fight—publicly—but because Matron Baenre, evoking the name of Lloth, has forbidden it, it is commonly believed that Dantrag is wiser than he sounds.



House Oblodra

Third House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	K'yorl Odran level 16 priestess
Nobles:	32
Priestesses:	22
High Priestesses:	6
House Males:	10
Fighters:	4
Wizards:	6
Drow Soldiers:	450 total
Formations:	300 Elite Foot 75 Archers 75 Lizriders
Slave Force:	600 total
Formations:	600 kobold

Chief Alliances: Tentative (phony) alliance with House Barrison Del'Armgo (#2).

Chief Rivals: House Baenre (#1) has little use for the unpredictable Oblodren. Likewise, Matron Mez'Barris Armgo of the second house does not trust (simply despises) Matron K'yorl Odran. House Faen Tlabbar (#4), with a larger force, views the rank of House Oblodra as the most likely next step in its quest for ascension.

House Oblodra has been tagged (rightfully so!) with a treacherous and unpredictable reputation. They are the most secretive of houses, and Matron K'yorl often flashes a wicked smile at meetings of the Ruling Council, a grin that tells the other Matron Mothers that she is undoubtedly lying. She

knows that they know—she ENJOYS that they know!

Somehow, even so obviously outside the accepted practices of Menzoberranzan, Matron K'yorl has remained in the favor of Lloth, as evidenced by House Oblodra's solid standing in the city's hierarchy (and this despite the fact that their garrison numbers far less than the forces of Faen Tlabbar, the next house in line). At one council meeting, it was even quietly suggested, by Matron Baenre, that the two houses should consider a reversal of rank. K'yorl laughed at her, and promptly warned Matron Ghenni'tiroth Tlabbar that if she ever claimed the position of third house, the Oblodren would set upon House Tlabbar openly, to the ultimate destruction of both houses. Matron Baenre has not made a similar suggestion since.

Oblodren are known for fanaticism, reckless battle rages and outright frenzy, and for dabbling in the wildest magic, pushing the boundaries of accepted magical practices as casually as they push the boundaries of Lloth's unwritten dictates. Such recklessness has brought the house seemingly to the verge of extinction again and again, but no other house has actually dared to attack them. Perhaps this is due to Matron K'yorl's supreme confidence, the feeling that she always has some hidden wild card left to play, but more likely it is because the Oblodren have left more than a dozen obliterated houses in the wake of their ascension—obliterated beyond even the expectations of drow warfare.

The priestesses of House Oblodra are known for possessing unusual powers of the mind (psionics—mostly wild talents), and many in the city whisper that they train with a community of illithids. Perhaps it is no coincidence that since the illithid El-Viddenvelp has come to serve as Matron Baenre's consult, the First Matron Mother has afforded the wild Oblodren a great deal more respect.

House Oblodra

By all sensible measures Faen Tlabbar (#4) is a stronger house than Oblodra, as were many of the houses ranking below the third house. Matron K'yorl's uncanny understanding of drow politics is credited for this.

Using this understanding, the Matron Mother of House Oblodra has become the principle overseer of the many patrol groups scouting the tunnels outside of Menzoberranzan's cavern, and she always places many of her finest warriors in the ranks of those patrols. This would seem yet another reckless move for a house with so few drow to spare, but through this tactic K'yorl always seems to have noble children of rival houses in a vulnerable and closely watched position. As with everything else in her frantic life, K'yorl is walking a fine and dangerous line.

One of the reasons House Oblodra's garrison is so small (and why so few lower level drow survive in the house), and also an example of the renowned insanity of the Oblodren, is a game called simply, Khaless (Trust). Khaless is played above the Clawrift, at the widest and deepest known point, at the base of the chasm's "thumb." In preparation for the game, a globe of darkness is hung in the open air above this drop, and the area is also enchanted with a magical *silence 15' radius*. The challenging drow levitate themselves and are pushed into this dark and quiet globe by the referees, using long catch poles called kheal.

The rules are simple: the first drow to come out of the darkened area, either by floating down and calling for a pole, or by hanging beyond the duration of her/his levitation abilities (thus falling to her/his death) loses. A drow willingly coming out of the globe does not automatically lose, however. If the challenging drow, in the darkness and silence and thus oblivious to the other's surrender, remains in the area too long and falls, the survivor wins.

Two or more drow can play Khaless (it gets really wild when a dozen or more go up into the globe!) and even the younger drow are invited and given *levitation* spells by the house mages. (Of course, these ignorant young drow have no idea at all of how long the wizard's spell might last.) Winners are accorded a vacation of pleasure (the female of their choice included) in the luxuries of the first family's house; losers (if they survive) must spend a month cleaning the kobold caverns. Of course, there is often no winner. If one drow plummets from the globe, the other would not know it.

The Dwelling of House Oblodra

House Oblodra occupies the small stalagmite and stalactite compound in the center of the city, between two 'fingers' of the Clawrift. The house is protected on three sides by the Clawrift, and the west face of the house is guarded by a contingent of no less than 25 (2nd - 3rd level) warriors, armed with bows and short swords (+2).

The Oblodren keep their kobolds in an extensive network of tunnels and walkways that extend deep into the rift. The tunnels are ancient and while House Oblodra admits to having 600 kobolds, it is rumored that the tunnels are capable of holding 100 times that number. This simple rumor has stopped more than a few ambitious houses from attempting a move into Oblodra's position.

The soldiers of House Oblodra typically range from levels 4 to 8. While their defensive equipment is not of the finest drow make (typically +2 or +3), their weapons are as powerful as those of even House Baenre.

Half of the Oblodren drow warriors and at least one noble daughter are out of the house at any given time. Matron K'yorl has



House Oblodra

openly declared that should any house attack the Oblodren compound, this force will bring the battle to its gates (while the noble daughter convenes the Ruling Council).

House Oblodra NPCs

Matron Mother K'yorl Odran

ARMOR CLASS: 10
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 37
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d3 + 1 (knife)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Psionics
SPECIAL DEFENSE: Psionics
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

9/15 Level Drow Priestess/Psionist
S: 08 I: 17 W: 18 D: 14 C: 11 CH: 13

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, detect lie, clairvoyance, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *spider eyes, command*
Second Level: *enthrall, augury*
Third Level: *emotion control*
Fourth Level: *cloak of fear*
Fifth Level: *slay the living*

Psionic Strength: 210

Defense Modes: All

Psionic Disciplines: *telepathy, psychokinesis, clairsentience, psychoportation, metapsionics*

Psionic Sciences: *mindlink, domination, mass domination, switch personality,*

telekinesis, detonate, teleport, empower
Psionic Devotions: *contact, invincible foes, awe, false sensory input, id insinuation, psionic blast, inflict pain, psychic messenger, molecular agitation, control body, inertial barrier, animate object, danger sense, combat mind, astral projection, time shift, dimensional door, convergence, psychic drain, stasis field*

Physical Description: Matron K'yorl is a small, seemingly weak female drow. She wears simple, unadorned robes and carries no visible weapon. She is, all in all, totally unremarkable.

Equipment: K'yorl wears no armor and carries no weapon. In fact, when Detect Magic is cast upon K'yorl, nothing registers as magic! She walks around apparently undefended but acting as if she is invincible.

Personality: This mysterious Matron Mother offers no pretense of friendliness towards anyone outside of House Oblodra. Cocky, arrogant, even openly hostile, it seems amazing that K'yorl has survived, particularly since she appears so very vulnerable. In Menzoberranzan, this is whispered derisively as K'yorl's Bluff, but so far no one has found the courage to call that bluff.

Motivation: K'yorl is dedicated to the pleasures of life, particularly the pleasures of the mind. She uses her psionic powers more to heighten the intrigue around her and to anger her rival Matron Mothers than for any real gains. K'yorl has been known to show up (*psychic messenger*) uninvited to a House Baenre family dinner, or even a war conference, and Mez'Barris Armgo simply cannot get the witch out of her dreams.



House Faen Tlabbar

Fourth House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Ghenni'tiroth Tlabbar level 16 priestess
Nobles:	40
Priestesses:	22
High Priestesses:	5
House Males:	18
Fighters:	12
Wizards:	6
Drow Soldiers:	750 total
Formations:	100 Elite Foot (female) 200 Archers 300 Foot 150 Lizriders
Slave Force:	800 total
Formations:	400 goblin foot 100 goblin archers 100 orc spearcasters 100 bugbears 100 trolls

Chief Alliances: Strong supporter of House Baenre (#1); has longstanding truce with House Xorlarrin (#5)

Chief Rivals: Faen Tlabbar covets the position of House Oblodra (#3); and worries most paranoically about attack from Houses Agrach Dyrr (#6) and Mizzrym (#7).

House Faen Tlabbar is a clan known throughout Menzoberranzan for the wanton nature of its priestesses—who also have a reputation for the utmost loyalty to Lloth. The priestesses venture forth in small

groups, two to five of them together. When a group of Faen Tlabbar females sets out for a night of such celebration, the whole city often discusses their exploits the following day. Males are often slain by other jealous males in the course of these ribaldries, and entire dens of debauchery are given over to the whims of a few high level priestesses.

The matron mother of the House is Matron Ghenni, who is six hundred and forty years old. She has spent nearly three centuries as matron mother, and during that time her house has climbed from ninth to fourth in status—though it has never made an attack on another house!

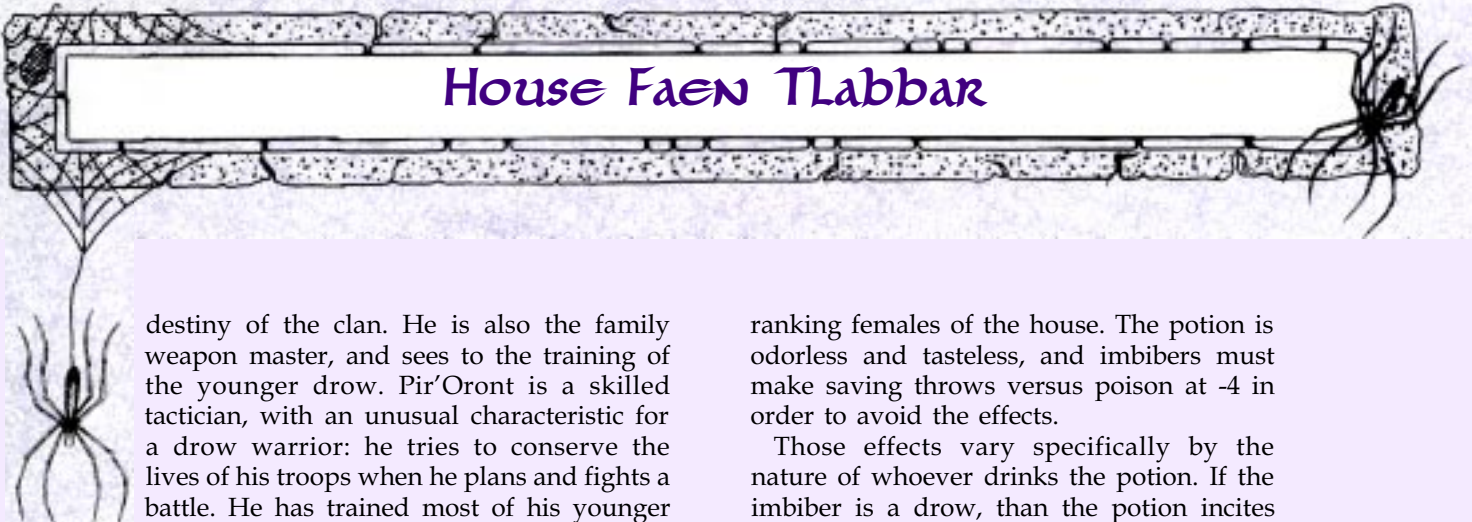
The children of the matron have included 11 daughters (eight of whom still live) and 11 sons, of whom all but five have been killed. The high priestess of the house, after the matron of course, is Fini'they. This powerful cleric (level 13) is a refugee from a lower-ranking house that was destroyed in war; Matron Ghenni recognized her potential when she begged Tlabbar protection. The matriarch promoted the newcomer over all of her own daughters.

The bitterness of this elevation, in fact, led the eldest Faen Tlabbar daughter to an attempt on Fin-the'y's life. (Up until this event, Ghenni still had eleven living daughters.) The net result of the arrangement is that House Faen Tlabbar has a high priestess of more advanced rank than most matron mothers in Menzoberranzan. Fini-the'y assists Matron Ghenni in her ceremonies. Many observers anticipate a bloody fight between the adopted drow and the family's natural daughters when the time comes for a younger female to take over Matron Ghenni's position.

The elderboy of House Faen Tlabbar is Pir'Oront Tlabbar, a fighter of no minimal accomplishment (level 14). He is content to remain in the background—setting the example for the rest of the house males—while the priestesses guide the



House Faen Tlabbar



destiny of the clan. He is also the family weapon master, and sees to the training of the younger drow. Pir'Oront is a skilled tactician, with an unusual characteristic for a drow warrior: he tries to conserve the lives of his troops when he plans and fights a battle. He has trained most of his younger brothers, and defeated challenges from more than one of his mother's patrons. In fact, family legend claims that he killed his own father, the former weapon master, as the means of ascending to his post.

The priestesses are the key to House Faen Tlabbar's power and its eminent rank as fourth house among all the clans of Menzoberranzan. They are a potent band of females, well-augmented by the fighting qualities of the males. Though the females, and Matron Ghenni specifically, exercise typical iron-fisted drow matriarchal rule, the clan is unusual in that open dialogue and a free exchange of ideas and opinions is encouraged—including input from the males! Of course, the females make the ultimate decisions, but all clan members are given the opportunity to voice their opinions.

The high priestesses of House Faen Tlabbar do great and continuous honor to Lloth, and the Queen of Spiders, in return, has granted the clan some specific favors. Most notably, she has granted the priestesses of the house the skill to create new spells of dark magic. These spells are only rewarded after a rigorous period of prayer and ritual performed by all the clan's priestesses.

When new incantations are granted, however, Matron Ghenni or one of her daughters demonstrate the spell for the benefit of all Menzoberranzan, and so the family's status in the favor of their dark goddess is widely known.

The priestesses of House Faen Tlabbar are also famed for a potent potion, the brewing of which is a secret reserved for the highest

ranking females of the house. The potion is odorless and tasteless, and imbibers must make saving throws versus poison at -4 in order to avoid the effects.

Those effects vary specifically by the nature of whoever drinks the potion. If the imbiber is a drow, than the potion incites within that character a passionate hunger for the company of Faen Tlabbar females—an effect that lasts a year. Such smitten drow will stretch the bounds of good taste and convention in their determination to win the favors of the house females, but they will not change their alignments or betray their own houses (unless given very unusual circumstances indeed). If one who is not a drow, but is still a humanoid of some type, drinks the potion, the potion will render that person into the physical image of a drow elf of the same sex—i.e. shockingly white hair and indigo black skin. The drow appearance will still carry some traits of the original—a transformed ogre, for example, will be larger than any drow, and unusually broad of girth. Humans will retain their wide eyes, or rounded ears, but all other characteristics become quite like a dark elf.

The dwellings of House Faen Tlabbar are located in a walled compound of stalactites and stalagmites. Battle platforms occupy many different elevations of this great pillars, and walls of adamantite protect the great family compound, as well as the inner keep. The walls around the latter location are fully thirty feet high, and only breached by a single gate. The house itself is detailed on pages 31-33.

Much of Faen Tlabbar's power comes from its influence as a major trading house. Because it has so many friends—or, at least, so many drow who owe some debt of gratitude to the Matron Ghenni—the house has access to great amounts of information. Thus, Faen Tlabbar agents are among the first to learn when a new caravan of

House Faen Tlabbar

duergar dwarves, for example, is due in Menzoberranzan with a shipment of diamonds and high-quality weapons and blades. The merchants of the house use information such as this to conclude deals with traders before much of the rest of the city even knows that there's anything for sale.

House Faen Tlabbar has a reputation as a fair-minded and relatively non-treacherous clan (within the context of drow society, of course). They have never, so far as is known, gone to war with any other house. Indeed, they tend to be very non-belligerent in negotiation and discussion—the matron will not even employ the threats that are the meat and bread of most drow conversation. Of course, Lloth's favorable impression of the house is enough protection—and enough of a threat—to keep most detractors silent.

This house is a favorite refuge for those survivors of the common inter-clan wars in Menzoberranzan. Such houseless renegades need a place to live, a clan to protect them from the cruel ravages of Menzoberranzan society—and House Faen Tlabbar is only too willing to welcome new, and often powerful, members into the circle of its family. Several of its most proficient warriors have come to the house in such desperate fashion. Now, they fight as loyally for their adopted family as they ever did for their native clans.

The soldiers of the clan are equipped with a wealth of enchanted armaments. Drow chainmail armor is standard for all the dark elf contingents of the force, and the average enchantment of the Faen Tlabbar melee weapons is a +3. The troops are exceptionally loyal, regardless of how long they have served—Matron Ghenni tends to inspire such unusual (and un-drow-like) reactions in her subordinates.

The lizard-mounted cavalry is among the finest of such troops in the city. On those

rare occasions when Menzoberranzan musters an army to challenge another populace's forces, the Tlabbar riders have often proved their worth.

The Dwelling of House Faen Tlabbar

The residence of this highly-regarded clan fits the house's status in this city which is always so aware of station. The expansive compound is very grand indeed, but not quite so grand as the dwellings of the second and third houses—and nowhere near the extravagant opulence of House Baenre.

The fortified residence is located in the easternmost alcove of Menzoberranzan's great cavern. The outer compound is a large courtyard, enclosed by high, adamantite-reinforced walls. Within that compound dwell most of the house slaves, and the common drow troops of the family garrison. Here, too, are the great warehouses of the family's trading concerns.

This portion of the compound is guarded by shriekers outside the walls themselves, as well as a series of mechanically concealed pit traps at the base of the wall. These traps are thin screens of webbing supporting a dusting of gravel—identical to the ground around the house. They have absolutely no magical enhancement, and consequently will not be revealed by a *detect magic* spell.

Atop the wall are posted drow guards at 60' intervals. In addition, a patrol of 10 guards, led by a fighter/mage of level 5/5, is continuously on duty, patrolling the ramparts of the wall. They will arrive at any disturbance within 2-12 rounds of an alarm—but they will not leave this section of the compound.

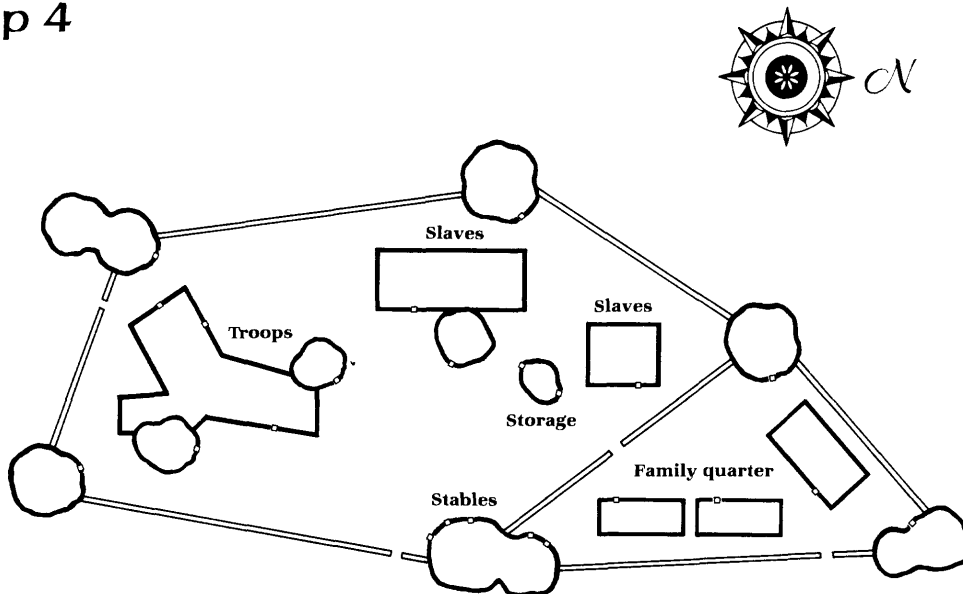
Faen Tlabbar Drow Guards (2nd level fighters): AC 2; Move 12; HD 2; hit points 11



House Faen Tlabbar

House Faen Tlabbar

Map 4



(average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 16; MR 54%; AL LE

Weapons: *long swords* +3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (all once/day)

Guard Captain (fighter/mage level 5/5): AC 0; Move 12; HD 5; hit points 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 5; THAC0 12; MR 60%; AL LE

Weapon: *Long sword* +4

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).

Spells Known:

First Level: *alarm, magic missile, light, charm person*

Second Level: *invisibility, web*

Third Level: *haste*

The gatehouse, the only entrance to the clanhold, occupies a great stalagmite anchored to the ground. The sides of the pillar have been carved out to support battle platforms, and wizards and archers will hasten to garrison these in the event of an attack, where they can command the situation both outside of the walls and within the main compound. A taller, more narrow pillar rises from the ground at one corner of this compound, and this, too, has been constructed into a defensive bastion.

Each warehouse is guarded by a drow patrol (equivalent to the wall patrol, above, including the captain). Also like the wall patrol, these guards are trained to stay at their stations. They will not move to reinforce their comrades in the event of trouble.

Each of the barracks houses half of the

House Faen Tlabbar

drow soldiers of the house. All troops within those barracks will be armed and armored, pouring out the door into the courtyard, within 2-12 rounds of an alarm.

The slaves are kept in two much dingier, smaller barracks buildings—each of which is guarded by a typical patrol. In the event of an attack, the slaves will arm themselves, but will not be ready for battle until 6-16 rounds have passed (2d6 + 4).

The stables for the lizard mounts of the elite Faen Tlabbar cavalry are also located here. The lizards are guarded by a double patrol of guards, and the beasts themselves are loyal to the house and will resist any attempts to abduct them.

But the true heart of the household is the great keep, occupying the higher terrain in the rear of the compound. A veritable forest of cave-pillars—stalactites and stalagmites, both, as well as solid columns where the two have grown together—walls in this secluded compound, providing a defensive perimeter as well as framework for the dwellings of the Faen Tlabbar nobles and their attendants.

The floor of the caverns slopes upward considerably near the back of the compound, close to the great pillar of Narbondel, and this has placed the Tlabbar household on high, commanding terrain. The ground level of the main family compound, as a matter of fact, is higher than most of the walltops of the lower compound. Thus, it provides good observation across the city, as well as forcing any attackers to ascend a treacherous surface.

A great central pillar holds the house proper, with the sacred chapel and the altar of Lloth near the column's summit, and the sleeping chambers of the priestesses and their consorts occupying the lower floors of the great central stalagmite. The matron's throne room is in the bottom room, a great, circular chamber large enough to hold a

gathering of many hundred dark elves.

Around the periphery of the house's upper compound are many narrower, but often taller columns. These are given to the males for their living quarters, and also have been prepared as ultimate defensive positions, in case the outer compound of the house should fall.

These walls are garrisoned with two guards every thirty feet, and three patrols of house guards—one ready to respond to trouble at each of the tree main walls. One of these patrols will reach a disturbance within 1-6 rounds of any alarm. Guards and patrols are the same as listed above.

Patron Rinnill has established himself in one of these columns, surrounding his quarters with sycophants and courtiers. Graceful, curving bridges of crystal connect the pillar with the compound walls and with the central tower of the priestess. (The bridges can be disintegrated with a single command word, and would be destroyed at the beginning of any battle.) The outside of the pillar is decorated in intricate and unusual patterns of faerie fire, and is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful constructs in Menzoberranzan.

The clan elderboy, Pir'Oront, has claimed another of the great columns—the one farthest from the house gate—and has turned the pillar into the most strongly fortified portion of the entire compound. Traps both magical and mundane protect every door, every window of the place. He has an elite squad of personal guards, all fighters of exceptional courage and loyalty, pledged to protect the elderboy unto death.



House Faen Tlabbar

House Faen Tlabbar NPCs

Matron Mother Ghenni Tirzoth Tlabbar

ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 85
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (*dagger* + 6)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4 +6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *poison*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 82%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

16th level drow priestess
S: 11 I: 17 W: 19 D: 15 C: 12 CH: 16

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *command, detect snares and pits, invisibility to undead, magical stone, fear*

Second Level: *augury, flame blade, silence 15' radius, slow poison, wyvern watch*

Third Level: *feign death, meld into stone, prayer, pyrotechnics, speak with dead*

Fourth Level: *abjure, free action, imbue with spell ability, spell immunity, tongues*

Fifth Level: *animal growth, control vapor, summon spider, transmute rock to mud, wall of fire*

Sixth Level: *aerial servant, animate object, word of recall*

Seventh Level: *repulsion*

Physical Description: Matron Ghenni is exceptionally tall for a drow. She is also extremely slender, and this has occasionally

caused others to suspect that she is frail. In truth, her slender limbs are well-muscled. She enjoys wearing white gowns which match her hair and contrast sharply with her indigo-black skin.

Equipment: Matron Ghenni always carries her dagger, which she calls "Scrag-tooth". The weapon is exceptionally poisonous (-4 to saving throw) if the proper command word is used within 6 turns before the wound is inflicted. The + 6 enchantment remains whether or not the poison is employed. In addition, the weapon can be used out to a range of 60', by use of a different command word. It will fly outward, attack, and return to the wielder's hand in a single round. Calculate the chance to hit as if the weapon was wielded in melee combat.

Another cherished device of Matron Ghenni is her platter of communing. This is a platinum plate upon which her priestesses serve the sacrificial remains offered to Lloth when they beseech a new spell. The symbols for the spells appear in blazing light on the plate after the sacrifice (usually a heart) is consumed.

She also carries—as do all the females of the family—a small vial of the special potion brewed by the Faen Tlabbar females.

Personality: Matron Ghenni is, outwardly, extremely calm and dignified for a drow female. She rarely raises her voice in the screeching displays of temper that are so commonplace among her peers. Though she does feel rage, the same as any drow, she has learned to channel that fury into internal power.

Also unlike most drow, Matron Ghenni can be genuinely pleasant and concerned when in conversation with those of lesser status. It is this apparent sincerity that draws so many refugees to the protective arms of House Faen Tlabbar.

Motivation: Here, the matron is typical of virtually all powerful drow females: she

House Faen Tlabbar

desires more power, and she desires to see her enemies perish before her eyes—in as much agony as is physically possible. Although she carefully nurtures her reputation as an unusually fair-minded and trustworthy drow, she is not above sticking the knife in the back of some trusting underling—if the act will provide a concrete benefit. Because her reputation is so important, however, the matron makes sure that her tracks are very well covered when she resorts to such messy tactics. This thoroughness has been known to extend to ranks of tens or scores of victims who are only peripherally related to the indiscretion—but who pay for their minimal knowledge with their lives, in order to preserve Matron Ghenni's precious name!

Patron Rinnill Tlabbar

ARMOR CLASS: - 2
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 64
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

9th level drow fighter
S:16 I: 9 W: 12 D: 18 C: 13 CH: 17

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Physical Description: Patron Rinnill is exceptionally handsome for a drow male. His features are finely chiseled, and his snow-white hair is kept long and free-flowing. He is large of frame, but well-proportioned.

Equipment: Rinnill favors a combination

of *buckler +3* and *shortsword +4* for melee combat. He wears the traditional *piwafwi* of the drow, as well as the drow equivalent of *boots of elvenkind*.

Personality: Rinnill is a smooth-talking, unusually pleasant individual (for a drow, of course!) He has wooed Matron Ghenni with far more romance than is usually employed in dark elf courtship, and knows how to use flattery to cajole and win favor. Although he is patron of the matron mother, in the free-wheeling relationships of this house his companionship has been enjoyed by more than one of the matron's daughters—Ghenni doesn't mind, as long as he's available when she wants him.

Rinnill has tried to form friendships—or at least, bases of mutual trust—with the house males, but here he has been less successful. The elderboy, Pir'Oront (who is also the weapon master), has gone so far as to challenge Rinnill to a duel. Since the patron could not hope to win, he politely declined—but since that time, he has maintained a watchful eye on the house's eldest son.

Motivation: Rinnill is a refugee from a destroyed house, and in consequence is grateful for the protection offered him by Matron Ghenni. On the other hand, he knows that all of her patrons were slain when the female tired of them, and he would prefer to avoid this fate.

Thus, he has made secret contacts with both House Agrach Dyr (#6) and Mizzrym (#7), the two chief rivals of House Faen Tlabbar. If either (or both) of these houses should ever move against the Tlabbar clan, Rinnill will weigh the odds very carefully. Since his status will be greatly increased in any victorious house that successfully defeats Faen Tlabbar, he will be willing to take significant risks at the moment of his treachery.



House Xorlarrin

Fifth House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Zeerith Q'Xorlarrin level 15 priestess
Nobles:	36
Priestesses:	14
High priestesses:	5
House Males:	22
Mages:	21
Fighters:	1
Drow Soldiers:	250 total
Formations:	60 Elite Foot (female) 100 Archers 80 Foot 20 Lizriders
Slave Force:	500 total
Formations:	200 goblin foot 100 goblin archers 100 orc spearthrowers 100 bugbears

Chief Alliances: Has been known to aid the activities of House Baenre (#1); has longstanding truce with House Faen Tlabbar (#4)

Chief Rivals: The Xorlarrins worry most about attack from Houses Agrach Dyr (#6) and Mizzrym (#7).

House Xorlarrin wields power far beyond that indicated by mere numbers of nobles or warriors. The true strength of this house emerges from two characteristics: one, the Matron Mother (and, hence, all the females)

allows the males to live on a more or less equal basis; and two, every male child is rigorously (and ruthlessly) screened, to ensure that his life is employed to the most efficient purposes of the house.

Xorlarrin is a house that, even among the fanatically secretive drow, must be considered paranoically reclusive. All of the nobles of House Xorlarrin, whether wizard or priestess, conceal their identities when they venture into public. A veil or mask covers the face, and loose, flowing clothing is favored, to disguise the overall size, physique—and even the sex!—of the noble. The family badge, inscribed with the Xorlarrin symbol, is still displayed prominently on such a costume, however.

Matron Mother Zeerith Q'Xorlarrin is the matriarch of this clan, but she exercises a more democratic rule than any other powerful matron in Menzoberranzan. Lively arguments are tolerated, wherein the males—at least the elderboy, patron and weapon master—speak up as loudly as any high priestess. Indeed, so unusual among her peers is Matron Zeerith that many of her ex-patrons still live, serving the house in some fashion or another.

The current patron is the ancient, bald, and decrepit-looking drow wizard known as Horroodissimoth Xorlarrin. He is also the leader of the council of wizards who oversee Sorcere—the second most influential position for a Menzoberranzan wizard, after the archmage Gromph, who ignites the daily fire of Narbondel. Though he is physically repulsive, Matron Zeerith shows him most un-drowlike respect, and even affection. The wizard has fathered none of the matron's children (though three have been born during his tenure as patron). He and Zeerith have a relationship based purely upon ambition, and have found each other to be most useful tools.

Weapon master Jearth Xorlarrin is the only fighter of note among the clan's nobles,



House Xorlarrin

though he is not a formal member of the family. He has, however, sired several of the matron's children during the last century and a half. He is an extremely accomplished warrior, but is used more as an assassin and bodyguard than as a teacher of the Xorlarrin male offspring.

Of these, the elderboy is the most powerful. He is Brack'thal Xorlarrin, a wizard of level 14. He is jealous of the other two influential males, and has often considered plots for the removal of one or the other of them. These plots have always been discarded as too risky, but he would be a willing conspirator in any such endeavor that seemed practical and relatively secure.

The high priestesses are all daughters or granddaughters of Matron Zeerith, and have been very loyal to their mother. None of them is truly powerful (the most experienced, Kiriya, being a mere 10th level) enough to challenge their mother's station—and also, they recognize the prosperity that the current matron has brought to them all. If there is a point of contention with the daughters, it is that their mother shows the males of the clan too much respect and tolerance. Kiriya is the eldest daughter, and most vocal on this point—but never when the matron mother is around.

The family center is the Spelltower Xorlarrin, an elegant spire located in the center of the raised platform known as Qu'ellarz'orl. Given the elevation of the tower and its strategic position on the flank of House Baenre, the family occupies one of the most commanding locations in Menzoberranzan.

The structure itself is deceptively small. Though it rises like a spire from the rocky floor of the cavern, the tower is relatively narrow in girth, and this lends the lie to the illusion of towering height. Nevertheless, the place is one of the most defensible houses in all the great drow city.

The key to the house's relative invulnerability is found in the potent magic wielded by the Xorlarrin wizards—all of them male, and numbering among the group the most accomplished sorcerers in all Menzoberranzan. Fully seven of them are counted among the masters of the mage-school Sorcere, and these include the leader of that august council, Horroodissimoth Xorlarrin.

Matron Mother Zeerith and her daughters have consistently given birth to male offspring of high magical ability. The purpose of the aforementioned screening of youths is to determine, at a very young age, the exact level of aptitude exhibited by the boy toward the arcane arts. Only those youths who demonstrate a significant level of potential are retained by the family, to begin immediate schooling as a mage's apprentice.

All other male children are disposed of. Some are sacrificed in family ceremonies. Others are sold to Bregan D'aerthe to serve as warriors in that mercenary legion. Those who display some physical proficiencies are sometimes spared the deadly kiss of Lloth, instead being sold into slavery. This procedure ensures that even "useless" sons contribute to the house in the form of the riches or the favors of Lloth gained from the youth's sacrifice.

Of the 22 mages currently listed on the family record, a full 12 of them are wizards, with the most powerful of these (Horroodissimoth Xorlarrin) a physically decrepit but deceptively mighty level 18. He is discussed in detail among the NPCs of House Xorlarrin.

The other 10 mages cover the range of apprentice and journeyman (through about levels 1-7); all of these have shown promising aptitude in the arcane arts. At least seven wizards of the house are listed among the masters of Sorcere, and several of these are extremely powerful (though not



House Xorlarrin

quite as mighty as Horroodissomoth).

The wizards of House Xorlarrin have raised the art of magical wand creation to its highest level in drow history. All sorts of wands have been designed by these drow sorcerers, many of which have been bestowed upon important personages of other houses as gifts, bribes, or other payments. In fact, the possession of a Xorlarrin wand is considered a mark of high status in Menzoberranzan.

Many of their wands are unique, and a couple of them are described here. Even the more "standard" types of wands, such as wands of lightning bolts and fireballs, or a wand of cold, are superior when crafted by the Xorlarrin wizards. As a general rule, if a Xorlarrin wand is a damage-inflicting device, it will inflict +1 hit point per die of damage. (Example: if the normal damage of a wand-cast spell is 6d6, a Xorlarrin wand will deliver 6d6 + 6 of damage.) Also, victims suffer -2 penalties to their saving throws when they are saving against the effects of a Xorlarrin wand.

The following are two wands unique to House Xorlarrin. Several of each have been made, but they are rare, and each example is a highly treasured item in Menzoberranzan.

Wand of Lloth: This is a tiny device, no more than eight inches long. It can be employed for several different purposes:

Web. The wand can launch the equivalent of 1 web spell per round, creating the effect up to 120' away from the wielder.

Rope. The wand will launch a thin, but very strong, rope. The rope will travel up to 240', to a secure location indicated by the user (or, alternately, it can hang straight down without being attached to anything). Once fastened, it remains affixed until the wielder commands it to release. The rope cannot be affected by fire or normal weapons; if attacked by magical weapons, it

is assumed to have an AC of -4, and 12 hit points. However, it can be cut by the wielder of the wand with any knife or blade, by the use of a command word.

The wand, when new, contains a full 240' of rope. If the rope is saved after each use (drawn back into the wand) the full length is available the next time. If any is lost, however, it is lost permanently.

Sting. The wand extends into a scorpion-like scimitar that functions in all respects as a poisoned longsword, +4. The user needs no proficiency in sword use; but must know a command word to activate the stingsword. Damage is inflicted normally (1d8 +4 against man-sized foes), but anyone struck with the weapon must also make a saving throw versus poison. If the save fails, the character is paralyzed for 3-18 turns.

Wand of the Underdark: This wand can be used once per turn, to perform one of the following effects:

Darkness, 30' radius. This expanded sphere of darkness will remain for a time period (up to permanent) specified by the caster at the time of the casting. It can be cast up to 120' away.

Silence, 30' radius. This effect works within the same parameters as darkness, above.

Detect Magic. The wand can be used to indicate an object or area (up to a medium-sized room or 60' section of corridor). It will indicate whether the item is under any sort of enchantment, though it will not provide any further definition.

House Xorlarrin has long fostered a good relationship with House Baenre. Indeed, the matron mothers of the latter have often employed Xorlarrin wizards when they need extra magical capability for some task.

The root of House Xorlarrin's financial wealth comes not from trade or even craftsmanship (though, occasionally, a



House Xorlarrin

Xorlarrin wand is sold by bid). Instead, the house exploits the diplomatic ability of its matron mother to serve as agent and arbiter for the business transactions of many other houses. For a small fee, the priestess and wizards of House Xorlarrin will adjudicate the squabbles of two or more other houses.

The Dwelling of House Xorlarrin: The Spelltower

This elegant spire is, as mentioned, a prominent feature of the Qu'ellarz'orl. Located on a raised portion of the cave floor, the tower is far removed from any hanging stalactites or other natural means of approach. It is outlined in a steady circle of diagonal stripes, etched in faerie fire, that rotate around the pillar, giving it the appearance of constant motion.

The walls of the tower are iron, reinforced with adamantite. A single, arched gateway allows access into the base of the tower. There are arrow (and magic) slits located around the periphery of the tower, beginning at 20' above ground level, but these are too narrow for a normal-sized drow to fit through. They are designed to give the defenders, in the tower, a wide field of view; yet at the same time to restrict the line of sight granted to an enemy outside.

The approaches to the tower are steep, but deceptively smooth. Although, from a distance, the sloping terrain looks rough, pocked with multiple hand- and footholds, it has in fact been smoothed to an almost metallic finish by the magic of Xorlarrin wizards. Any character attempting to cross the slopes here (unless climbing the smooth steps leading to the gate) should be subjected to multiple Dexterity checks, with failure forcing a fall and potential backsliding of 0-50'.

There are many spouts located around

the base of the tower. In the event of a full scale attack, these spew a steady drain of oil, which quickly spreads across the already slippery slopes around the tower. The oil makes the surface impassable except to those who can employ exceptional means (levitation, thief climbing ability, spikes or crampons, etc.) to retain their balance. Even then, the obstacles are not entirely negated—the house wizards are willing to ignite the entire oil-spill in an attempt to incinerate overly tenacious attackers. The walls of the tower have been designed to withstand this heat, and the slits in the walls can be closed against smoke and heat.

A pair of platforms provides commanding defensive positions from the outside of the tower. The first of these is a wide parapet, about halfway (75') up the tower. From here, ranks of archers can shower arrows and darts onto attackers massed below. Near the very top of the tower is a smaller rampart. This one is designed for wand-wielding mages, and serves as a base from which a half-dozen or so of the house mages (usually apprentices or journeymen) keep a watch against attack from above. Should any enemy attempt to descend against the top of the tower, a combination of frost-cones, fireballs, and lightning bolts will try to blast them from the air.

The ground floor of the tower is always garrisoned by an elite company of 24 drow guards and six captains.

Guard Captains (fighter/mage level 6/5): AC -1; Move 12; HD 6; hit points 28; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +5; THAC0 11; MR 62%; AL LE

Weapon: *Long sword* +5, or hand-crossbow with poison darts

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).

Spells Known:

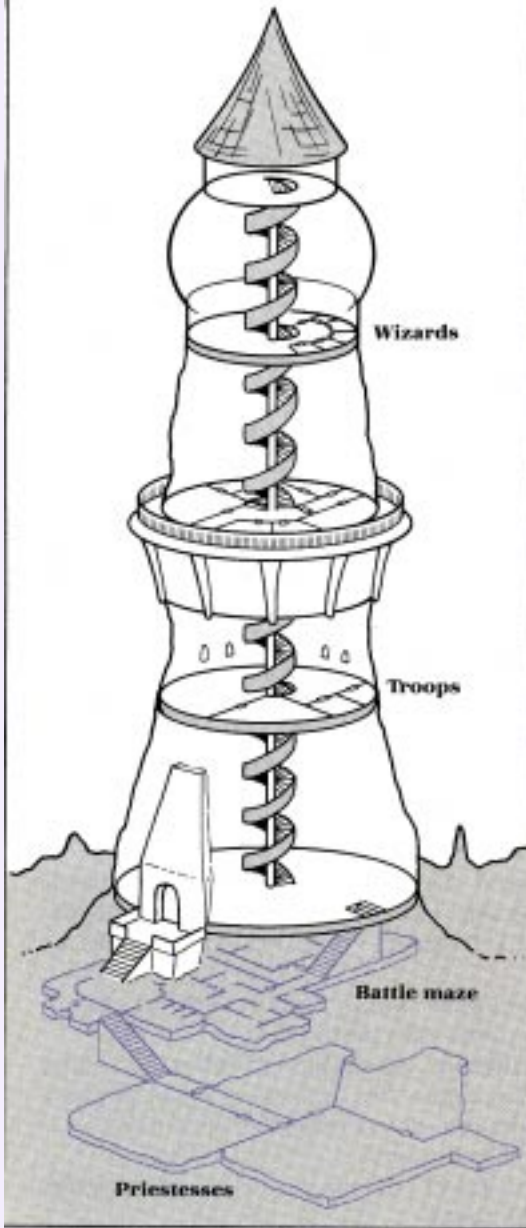
First Level: *detect magic, magic missile, light, taunt*



House Xorlarrin

Spelltower Xorlarrin Map 5

← = 10 feet



Second Level: *invisibility, protection from paralysis*

Third Level: *spirit armor*

Drow Guards (3rd level fighters): AC 1; Move 12; HD3; hit points 18 (average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 12; MR 56%; AL LE

Weapons: *long swords* +3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (all once/day)

The ground floor of the great tower is the audience chamber of the matron mother, and a general council and gathering place for the clan. Several great thrones are placed on a raised platform in the center of the room (a huge chair for the matron mother; six lesser ones for the three highest ranking priestess and three most highly-regarded house males). The rest of the group stands, or sits on the hard floor, during large gatherings.

The three floors immediately above the throne room are given over to the family quarters. Unlike most drow households, these are not segregated, with males and females in different parts of the dwelling. Here, the apartments of a priestess may just as likely neighbor those of a wizard as another priestess.

The highest levels of the tower are the laboratories of the mages. Here are kept the ingredients and the libraries which have made Xorlarrin such an influential power in the realm of arcane accomplishments in Menzoberranzan. A host of magical traps protect the spiral stairway leading up to this sanctum, and the approach is constantly (and jealously) guarded by an invisible drow wizard of at least 9th level.

Wizard Guard (mage level 9): AC 0; Move 12; hit points 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 5; THAC0 12; MR 68%; AL LE

Weapon: *dagger* +4

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know*

House Xorlarrin

alignment, detect magic (all once/day).

Spells Known:

First Level: *alarm, magic missile, light, fist of stone*

Second Level: *invisibility, ride the wind, improved phantasmal force*

Third Level: *slow, invisibility 10' radius, fly*

Fourth Level: *acid bolt, minor globe of invulnerability*

Fifth Level: *passweb*

The clerical heart of the house lies underground, in a secret chamber whose very existence is not even suspected beyond the walls of the house. Indeed, the excavations were constructed magically, with the greatest secrecy, and now these chambers represent the last refuge of the clanhold in the event of a nearly successful attack.

The caverns are designed in two levels. The upper, entrance chamber, is designed as a battle maze, wherein an attacker gets confused and disoriented, all the while subjected to deadly attackers by the Xorlarrin defenders. Several battle mazes are presented on the cards included in the box set—any one of these can be employed to represent the Xorlarrin network.

The final bastion, and most sacred altar, of the house is found in the deep chamber. This huge, cavelike expanse, has been dedicated to the greatness of Lloth. Indeed, a giant statue of the spider queen is the dominant feature of the room.



House Xorlarrin NPCs

Matron Mother Zeerith Q'Xorlarrin

ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 77
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (*dagger + 4*)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4 +4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *poison*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

15th level drow priestess

S: 11 I: 17 W: 19 D: 16 C: 10 CH: 15

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *curse, detect good, detect poison, invisibility to undead, protection from good, fear*

Second Level: *augury, charm person, silence 15' radius, slow poison, snake charm, trip*

Third Level: *continuous faerie fire, meld into stone, prayer, spellweb, speak with dead, water breathing*

Fourth Level: *control temperature 10' radius, divination, free action, passweb, spell immunity*

Fifth Level: *atonement, flame strike, transmute rock to mud*

Sixth Level: *animate object, spider bite*

Seventh Level: *regenerate*

Physical Description: Matron Zeerith is an unprepossessing drow female of indeterminate age. She carries herself with

House Xorlarrin

a very dignified, almost regal, bearing—and this, more than any specific aspect of her appearance, is how other drow remember her.

Equipment: Matron Zeerith has a flying carpet that she employs for its dramatic effect whenever the matrons of the council gather. She also possesses a russet *tentacle rod*, and is never encountered without her *wand of viscid globs*.

Personality: Perhaps more than any other matron mother in all of Menzoberranzan, Matron Zeerith has learned the value of listening to those around her. She can be as cruel and ruthless as any drow, but employs the tactics for the fear they induce, not for the sense of pleasure that most drow derive from pure, unadulterated malice.

She is also unusually diplomatic in her approach to discussion, and has been very successful in getting other drow to see matters from her point of view. This utilization of speech instead of threats and intimidation, naturally, is regarded with a great deal of suspicion by other drow. Rumors persist that she is actually using a subtle form of charm magic that is merely disguised as persuasion.

Motivation: Matron Zeerith is determined to hold her house's position in Menzoberranzan for many centuries, even millennia, to come. This is the root of the clan's secretive nature, and also explains the care with which the spelltower's defenses have been designed. A key feature in the matron's diplomacy has been the cultivation of a relationship with House Baenre. It is well known throughout the city that House Xorlarrin wizards have been known to act in causes favored by House Baenre, and such a reputed connection can go a long way to insure a house's safety from attack. The matron is not eager to claim the position of a higher house, feeling that it is a much more useful tactic to remain constantly alert

against any threat from a lower ranking clan.

House Wizard Horroodissomoth Xorlarrin

ARMOR CLASS: 0
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 55
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (dagger + 6)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4 +6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 86%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

18th level drow wizard

S: 11 I: 19 W: 13 D: 16 C: 7 CH: 11

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *Affect normal fires, alarm, cantrip, magic missile, unseen servant*

Second Level: *Blindness, detect invisibility, knock, strength, web*

Third Level: *clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, fly, lightning bolt*

Fourth Level: *acid bolt, backlash, improved invisibility, wall of fire*

Fifth Level: *animate dead, cloudkill, passwall, teleport*

Sixth Level: *Anti-magic shell, globe of invulnerability, summon spider*

Seventh Level: *delayed blast fireball, finger of death, power word: stun*

Eighth Level: *airboat, death spider*

Ninth Level: *glorious transmutation*

Physical Description: Horroodissomoth is a grotesque caricature of the generally handsome dark elves. His head is completely bald, and lined with multiple

House Xorlarrin

levels of wrinkles. This represents the ravages of his craft more than the toll of time, for the wizard is but six centuries old. Nevertheless, his form is frail, his posture stooped, and his whole appearance utterly decrepit.

However, when Horroodissomoth ventures into the city in disguise (as all Xorlarrins disguise themselves in public) he also disguises his physical frailties. One seeing his robed, masked figure striding along the street will naturally mistake him for a much younger drow, probably a fighter.

Equipment: The wizard has a deadly dagger, enchanted to +6, which responds to the commands of its owner. When held, the dagger functions like a dagger; however, if the wizard names a victim who is within 120' and then concentrates on the task, the dagger will float to the target (at 60' per round). When it reaches, it will attack as if it is being wielded by the caster. It attacks for five rounds; at the end of this time (or if the caster breaks concentration) it returns to the wizard.

Horroodissomoth also has a magic wand for every occasion, and is usually decked out with no less than four of them (all Xorlarrin wands, naturally!) in his belt. These will include a *wand of frost* and a *wand of Lloth*, with two other wands selected for the task at hand.

Personality: The wizard Horroodissomoth is totally consumed by his work. The only time he displays any interest or animation in conversation is when the use of magic is the topic. This total detachment has allowed him to remain patron of the family even as children have been sired by other males.

Horroodissomoth spends much time teaching in Sorcere, where he is a ruthless but only marginally effective instructor. Although his knowledge is immense, he finds the students' lack of expertise

annoying, and often shortcuts lessons and procedures in his scorn for the young drow.

Motivation: The wizard's motivations are divided between the desire to immerse himself in his studies and meditations—his true, innermost wish—and the necessity of worldly involvement. This is illustrated by his lackadaisical approach to teaching, for example, but even more profoundly in his relationship to Matron Zeerith.

Because of her, he devotes considerable attention to the investigation of other houses, and in the maintenance of House Xorlarrin's defenses at the peak of efficiency. His network of spies is the greatest in Menzoberranzan (though the spies are never able to identify the one to whom they provide their information). The mage likes to select nondescript commoners for his espionage duties, employing them to observe activities in other houses without attracting attention to themselves. (Spying is an inherently deadly task in the drow city because of the mind-reading abilities possessed by so many priestesses of Lloth.)

However, Horroodissomoth has prepared an ultimate refuge for himself—and in the event that House Xorlarrin should perish, he does not intend to perish with it. He has outfitted a cave in a distant portion of the Underdark with all the luxuries a drow could desire, as well as a complete library of tomes he hasn't had the time to read. He intends to *teleport* there if things become too dire.



House Xorlarrin

Weapon Master Jearth Xorlarrin

ARMOR CLASS: - 3
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 61
NO. OF ATTACKS: 4
THAC0: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d8 + 7 (x4)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 76%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

13th level drow fighter
S: 18/42 I: 12 W: 13 D: 18 C: 12 CH: 13

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Physical Description: Jearth Xorlarrin is a stocky and extremely muscular drow. His legs are bowed and his shoulders almost unnaturally broad. His eyes are small, but when he fixes them upon someone they seem to stare with a paralyzing intensity. Jearth is a very dangerous dark elf, and he wants everyone to know it.

Equipment: The weapon master of House Xorlarrin is famous for his twin long swords, a pair of ink-black, adamantite blades that are more than 2,000 years old. The weapons, enchanted to +4, were crafted by Yerri'thal Baenre himself, the most accomplished swordsmith in all Menzoberranzan's legendary history.

The swords bestow upon their wielder an automatic proficiency with two weapons when both are used together, allowing an attack with each and no penalty for the use of a weapon in each hand.

Personality: Jearth Xorlarrin is unusually passionate for a drow elf, particularly a male. Indeed, in nearly any

other house, his aggressive statements and argumentative postures undoubtedly would have cost him his tongue by now, if not his life. He is fortunate to have found a home with House Xorlarrin, where he has made himself an asset to the matron mother and the clan.

Jearth is the military authority of the family, and prides himself on his familiarity with all matters violent and combative. He commands the house companies, and has designed the mechanical and military aspects of Spelltower Xorlarrin's defenses (the oil-chutes, for example, and the smooth outside approaches).

Motivation: Jearth is determined to prove himself a master in every art of battle and assassination that the fiendish drow mind can concoct. He has been responsible for a number of killings in Menzoberranzan, each performed in a different disguise. Secretly, he wishes that some other clan would attack House Xorlarrin, so that the effectiveness of his defensive preparations could be proven beyond doubt.



House Agrach Dyrr

Sixth House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Auro'pol Dyrr
Nobles:	19
Priestesses:	12
High Priestesses:	4
House Males:	7
Fighters:	2
Wizards:	5
Drow Soldiers:	400 total
Formations:	100 Elite Foot 100 Archers 150 Foot 50 Lizriders
Slave Force:	600 total
Formations:	200 goblin foot 200 goblin archers 100 orc spearcasters 100 bugbears

Chief Alliances: Supporter of House Baenre (#1); has longstanding truce with House Mizzrym (#7)

Chief Rivals: House Agrach Dyrr covets the position of House Faen Tlabbar (#4); it tries to remain ready for an attack from any quarter.

Agrach Dyrr is one of the oldest houses in Menzoberranzan. In fact, only House Baenre can prove that it predates Agrach Dyrr's reign of more than five millennia, though House Mizzrym is known to have appeared at approximately the same time as

House Agrach Dyrr.

The house occupies a sprawling palace in Qu'ellarz'orl, anchored like a spiderweb upon nine natural towers in the cavern. From here, the wizards and priestesses of the house command the respect (and/or fear) of all Menzoberranzan. House Agrach Dyrr is known as a very warlike clan, responsible for the destruction of numerous other houses, and the brutally successful defense of its own domain on many different occasions.

The secret of this success is the wizard Dyrr. This powerful mage was one of the patriarchs of the clan—an unusual character for Menzoberranzan in any time period. Dyrr, however, was born more than two thousand years ago! Yet he is still seen at the family gatherings, or, less frequently, in the streets of the city. He goes about veiled, but he speaks to those he knows—and all are convinced, as they have been convinced for many centuries, that they have spoken with Dyrr, himself. More details on Dyrr are provided under the NPCs of House Agrach Dyrr.


The matron mother of the house is Matron Auro'pol Dyrr. She has presided over the clan for four centuries, the fourth in a series of matriarchs during the reign of Dyrr. The mage is not the family patron, however—Matron Auro has entertained a typical selection of these, as have her predecessors. She has had several children—not a lot, by the standards of the larger clans, but a talented and capable brood nonetheless. Indeed, the sorcerous power of the Agrach Dyrr mages is justly famed throughout Menzoberranzan. Other drow often refer to them as “The Wizards of Dyrr.”

Matron Auro shares a characteristic with the matrons of Houses Xorlarrin and Faen Tlabbar: she grants the males in the family an unusually large share of independence and respect. In part, this is due to the





House Agrach Dyrr



reliance she is forced to place on her wizards—they are the cornerstones of the clan's power. But to a greater extent, this is due to the influence of the wizard Dyrr. Dyrr, by the same token, keeps the clan mages under tight control, seeing that they are devoted totally to the service of the matron mother.

The current patron of the house is Curacc Dyrr, a young drow of renowned physical attributes (in all arenas, so to speak). He has entertained the matron for some thirty years, but his lack of intellect is beginning to tell as Matron Auro becomes more and more frustrated with him.

House Agrach Dyrr has exploited its ancient status with a kind of haughty arrogance that other drow find annoying, but nonetheless at least partially believable. Thus, despite the pompous nature of some Dyrr nobles, others will hesitate to correct or defy them in public—simply because of this reputation of superiority.

The military record of the house bears out this dominance as well. Three powerful houses (Celofraie, Mlin'thobbyn, Syr'thaerl; all of them one-time members of the ruling council of the city) have been annihilated in attacks perpetrated by House Agrach Dyrr during its climb to its current high station. (Of course, though this fact is well known in Menzoberranzan, to speak of it publicly would be a gross breach of the peace, likely to trigger recriminations, council-sanctioned punishment, or war.) Numerous other houses of lesser status have also perished due to Agrach Dyrr aggression.

More recently, the house has not made any attacks—and yet, its reputation for warlike competence has not suffered. Within the last forty years, three separate houses have attacked Agrach Dyrr. All of them have been soundly defeated. Indeed, the most recent of these—an attack by then-tenth ranked House Elec'thil—was vanquished so completely that not a single

noble of the attacking family remained after the battle. This annihilation deprived the ruling council of the necessity—or perhaps the pleasure—of ordering the destruction as a lesson in justice. Nevertheless, House Agrach Dyrr has been accorded the greatest respect by the members of the other ruling families, and the lesser nobles of the city as well.

The Dwelling of House Agrach Dyrr

The sixth house of Menzoberranzan has built an elaborate palace in the Qu'ellarz'orl, completed within the last few years. Previously, they dwelled in the lower cavern, in a small cluster of houses without even a proper wall for defense!

Their current location is quite the opposite, and rival houses, knowing the effectiveness of Agrach Dyrr's defenders in their previous lair, are quite reluctant to attack the current, highly fortified dwelling.

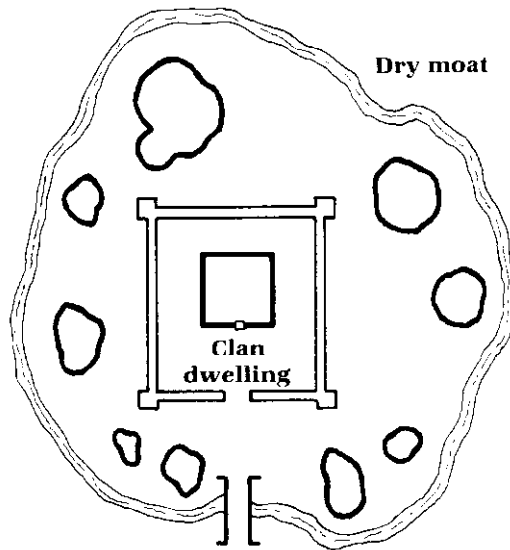
The house has three features to its defense: a deep moat, a network of nine towers enclosing the fortress, and a high, adamantite wall surrounding the entire compound. A single gate, reached by a narrow bridge (with no protective railings) provides access to the house.

The moat itself is 40' wide, and has been excavated by *dig* spells to a uniform depth of 50'. Its sheer walls offer no handholds nor footholds. The bottom is littered with jagged-edged rocks and rubble, so that anyone falling there suffers 10d6 hit points of damage—double the normal dice of falling damage.

The bridge and fortress gate are guarded by a complement of drow fighters, commanded by a fighter/mage. The same garrison is placed in each of the nine towers, maintaining a constant watch

House Agrach Dyrr

House Agrach Dyrr Map 6



around the fortress.

The inner sanctum of the house is large, with quarters for commoners and nobles alike in one palatial structure. The building has no doors nor windows, and the interior is crisscrossed by secret doors known only to the nobles of the family and the captains of the house troops.

Guard Captains (fighter/mage level 6/5): AC -1; Move 12; HD 6; hit points 28; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 5; THAC0 11; MR 62%; AL LE

Weapon: *Long sword* +5, or hand-crossbow with poison darts

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic, light, magic missile, spider eyes*

Second Level: *detect invisibility, skyhook*

Third Level: *darkwings*

Drow Guards (3rd level fighters): AC 0; Move 12; HD3; hit points 21 (average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 12; MR 56%; AL LE

Weapons: *long swords* +3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (all once/day)

The temple to Lloth lies at the heart of the fortress, which is also where the Lichdrow Dyrr spends most of his time. (He has no apartments, since he neither sleeps, nor eats.)

House Agrach Dyrr

House Agrach Dyrr NPCs

Matron Mother Auro'pol Dyrr

ARMOR CLASS: 3
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 67
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (dagger +3)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4 +3
SPECIAL ATTACKS: poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 76%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

13th level drow priestess
S: 13 I: 14 W: 18 D: 11 C: 15 CH: 13

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *curse, detect good, detect poison, detect snares and pits, spider climb*

Second Level: *charm person, darkfire, silence 15' radius, mind touch, wyvern watch*

Third Level: *animate dead, continual faerie fire, giant spider, speak with dead, curse*

Fourth Level: *atonement, free action, passweb, tongues*

Fifth Level: *summon spider, transmute rock to mud*

Sixth Level: *spider bite, word of recall*

Physical Description: Matron Auro is relatively youthful, for a matron mother in any event. Her features are attractive, her figure lissome. She wears her white hair long, and unencumbered—an unusual fashion among the always-battle-ready dark elves.

Equipment: Matron Auro is never encountered without her poisoned dagger, enchanted to +3 magic. She also has a *staff of the serpent*, granted to one of her predecessors by Lloth. Whenever the matron is encountered she will also be wearing her *ring of arachnid control* and a brooch mounting a *fire elemental gem*.

Personality: This matron mother is relatively frivolous, at least by the standards of Menzoberranzan society. She enjoys life, and if this enjoyment has a cruel streak (torment being one of her favorite entertainments), it is nevertheless marked by her ability to laugh and display her delight.

This frivolous nature has extended to her patrons, all of whom have had relatively short tenures of less than a century. She has already grown bored of her current paramour, Currac Dyrr, and has been casting about for a replacement. The gruesome disposal of Currac will be one of the high points of the coming decade for Matron Auro and her high priestesses.

Motivation: Matron Auro is currently motivated by the desire to find a replacement patron for Currac. In the longer term, however, she accepts the burden of responsibility inherent in the custody of an ancient house: she will see that the family not only survives, but prospers.



House Agrach Dyrn

The Lichdrow Dyrn

ARMOR CLASS: - 4
MOVE: 6"
HIT POINTS: 108
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-10
SPECIAL ATTACKS: paralysis
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better magical
weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 86%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil)

18th level drow wizard, now undead lich

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *Dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, animate dead*

Immune to: *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity, or death spells*



Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *alarm, cantrip, chill touch, light, sleep*
Second Level: *blind, deafness, forget, invisibility, wizard lock*
Third Level: *blink, clairaudience, clairvoyance, fireball, slow*
Fourth Level: *charm monster, dig, massmorph, monster summoning, wizard eye*
Fifth Level: *advanced illusion, airy water, cloudkill, sending, teleport*
Sixth Level: *death spell, invisible stalker, true seeing*
Seventh Level: *control undead, delayed blast fireball, shadowcat*
Eighth Level: *mass charm, polymorph any object*
Ninth Level: *black blade of disaster*

Physical Description: The lichdrow has suffered the effects of more than a thousand years of undeath, but this has not



House Agrach Dyrr



resulted in the rotting of his body so much as its petrification. Those few who get a look at Dyrr receive an impression of a shell-like drow, dry skin supported by nothing. The effect is quite misleading, for the adamantite strength of the lich's body is obvious to anyone who has suffered the creature's physical wrath.

Dyrr is generally masked even when among the members of his own family; only the high priestesses, wizards, and matron mother have seen the lichdrow's actual face.

Equipment: The lichdrow Dyrr has access to an incredible variety of magical items, since the House Agrach Dyrr armory is exceptionally well-stocked in that area. However, his favorite personal item is a *staff of withering* which he carries at all times, using it in the deception that he needs it for support when he walks.

Personality: Dyrr is completely immersed in the dynasty of his family and his own (hopefully eternal) role within that dynasty. To this end, he is a pleasant-voiced arbitrator in the constant tension between the males and females of the house. Dyrr insures that the wizards receive the best training and the finest equipment that Menzoberranzan can offer. With the lich as their leader, the wizards of Dyrr form the most formidable team of mages in the city—with the possible exception of those of House Xorlarrin. Dyrr, himself, reserves a great deal of lore for the exclusive knowledge of his own clan. No one in Menzoberranzan has been around for so long, or seen as much, as has the lichdrow Dyrr.

Indeed, the wizards of the house have gained so much power that they, as a group, are a match for any family of priestesses in the cleric-dominated city. Only the powerful will of the undead thing who is their leader has held the wizards back from taking control of their own house.

Dyrr also maintains and elevates the

power of the priestesses. The undead wizard derives his power directly from Lloth, and his consistent dedication to the Spider Queen has insured her favor both for himself and for the matron mothers and high priestesses of the clan. Like the wizards, the priestesses recognize the debt they owe to Dyrr, and consequently allow themselves to be reconciled to a more equal status for the house males.


Motivation: Dyrr's motivations regarding his family involve the maintenance of high tension and rivalry between the males and females. This emotional equilibrium contributes greatly to the warlike nature of Agrach Dyrr, for it is a lethal force when unleashed against a rival house.

Dyrr seeks to encourage battle among other drow houses whenever possible. The lich has even taken the extreme risk of intervening, in a battle between houses, to favor the one whose victory most benefits House Agrach Dyrr. Such intervention is always done in the form of an invisible teleportation, a quick barrage of spells into the heart of the victim's defensive position, and then a teleportation back to his own house. Even if his robed figure is witnessed, briefly, the dynamic, blazing figure at the scene of the war bears no resemblance to the hobbling, decrepit figure of Dyrr that hobbles about the city, leaning on his staff.



House Mizzrym

Seventh House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL: 

Matron Mother:	Miz'ri Mizzrym
Nobles:	14
Priestesses:	8
High Priestesses:	3
House Males:	6
Fighters:	3
Wizards:	3
Drow Soldiers:	300 total
Formations:	150 Archers 100 Foot 50 Lizriders
Slave Force:	400 total
Formations:	200 goblin foot 100 orc spearcasters 100 bugbears

Chief Alliances: House Mizzrym has pacts of alliance with all seven of the other ruling houses; it intends to honor those with House Baenrae (#1) and House Xorlarrin (#5). It has also cultivated relationships with many of the minor houses; however, these might be dissolved at any moment it seems convenient for the Mizzrym interests.

Chief Rivals: House Mizzrym is envious of the position of House Faen Tlabbar (#4), and is working toward its destruction.

House Mizzrym is famed as the most duplicitous, double-dealing, treacherous, back-stabbing group of negotiators in a city full of black-hearted betrayals. For example,

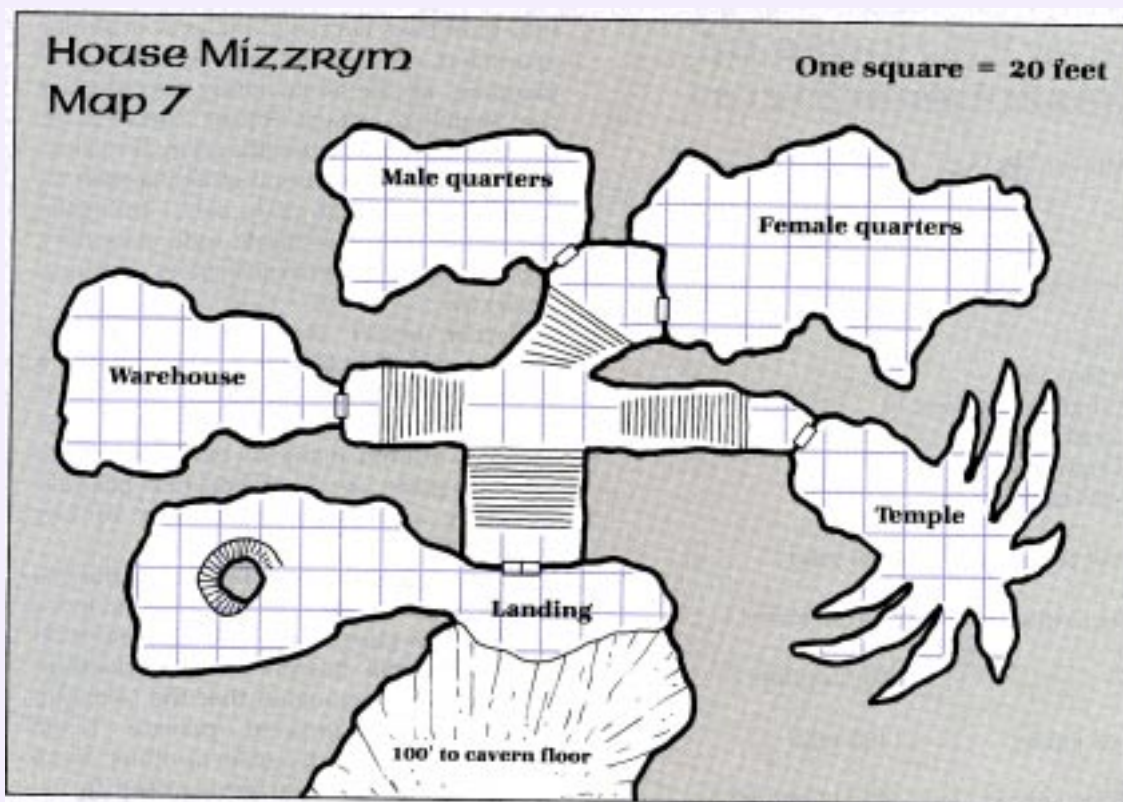
they have been currying the favor of House Srune'lett (#11) with gifts of gold and platinum, all the while subtly encouraging the Srune' to attack House Xorlarrin in conjunction with House Mizzrym. However, Mizzrym has no intention of aiding such an onslaught, though it might subtly influence the outcome of the battle with treachery directed against vulnerable parts of House Xorlarrin.

Matron Miz'ri, the matriarch of this relative upstart (2,000 years old) house, is a cruel and wanton leader in the finest traditions of Menzoberranzan femininity. She has offered many of her sons to the Spider Queen, and guards her position jealously against the ambitions of her daughters.

A great deal of the Mizzrym influence comes from trade, for the clan is more willing than most other drow to deal with creatures from beyond Menzoberranzan. Rumors have insinuated that the Mizzrym have even negotiated private trade arrangements with unscrupulous deep gnomes. This is a treacherous deed in the eyes of both nations, since all interaction between these mortal enemies has traditionally been relegated to the Market of the Underdark, Mantol-Derith. (It is detailed in the adventure accompanying this boxed set.) The secret trade is performed in order for the Mizzrym to gain access to exceptionally rare gems. In exchange, the treacherous Mizzrym usually provide the gnomes with information about drow operations near the svirfneblin territory.

The wealth of the house has led it to be one of the major employers of mercenaries in the city. Indeed, the sponsorship of House Mizzrym was instrumental in the rise of the Bregan D'aerthe band of hired soldiers, and—though the clan has not employed the mercenaries in more than two decades—the matron mother still maintains regular communications with the mercenary leader,

House Mizzrym



Jarlaxle.

The Mizzrimyr are accomplished in the uses of illusionary magic, which they use to deceive allies and enemies alike. These uses include the simple disguise of appearances to the creation of elaborate ambushes and horrifying spectacles.

The Dwelling of House Mizzrym

House Mizzrym is the only clan to occupy a dwelling in the ceiling of the great Menzoberranzan cavern. It is reached via a spiraling stalagmite that reaches to within 100' of a hanging stalactite. The open space in between is traversed by a winding, crystal stairway that is outlined clearly in faerie fire—one of the high and glittering

sights in the great cavern of Menzoberranzan. Two great foulwings stand guard at the base of the stairway.

The top of the staircase is guarded by a guard patrol of a captain and 10 second level drow. The captain, and two members of the patrol, know a command word that requires a full round to utter—but when spoken aloud will cause the bridge to vanish.

Another guard patrol garrisons the top of the pillar, which is the only way into the caverns of House Mizzrym. There is a landing open to the air here, where those who can teleport or fly can rise straight to the portals of the house from the cavern floor. A pair of strong adamantite doors separates the landing area from the house proper. The landing is about 1000' above the cavern floor.

House Mizzrym

The dwellings themselves are organized into three great caverns, each of which rises from the central pillar entrance so that it has at least a 60' thickness of solid rock for a floor. The chamber to the right is dedicated to the worship of Lloth. The central, and largest, cavern is the dwelling of the family—spacious and airy for the noble females; cramped and stuffy for everyone else. To the left is a small, relatively open cavern that houses the warehousing stock of this clan which deals in so much trade. Small loads of very valuable objects will be stored in the family quarters; bulk goods such as coal, iron, sand, obsidian, and so forth are all stored in here.

House Mizzrym NPC

Matron Mother Miz'ri Mizzrym

ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVE:	12"
HIT POINTS:	61
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>dagger +4</i>)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4 +4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	74%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil

12th level drow priestess
S: 11 I: 15 W: 18 D: 9 C: 14 CH: 15

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *Dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *curse, detect good, detect poison, detect snares and pits, sanctuary*

Second Level: *chant, charm person, silence 15' radius, produce flame, wyvern watch*
Third Level: *animate dead, prayer, speak with dead, curse, stone shape*
Fourth Level: *abjure, divination, free action, tongues*
Fifth Level: *flame strike, transmute rock to mud*
Sixth Level: *animate object, word of recall*

Physical Description: Matron Miz'ri is a cruel female with a hard edge to her face. She smiles only to relish the suffering of another, and when she does so a fiendish light gleams in her eyes. She is moderate in age and build, unremarkable in other respects.

Equipment: The matron mother possesses a fleet of six flying carpets, ranging in size from exceptionally small and nimble to a huge (12" x 20") and lumbering rug that can carry several tons of weight. She uses these for her own transportation, but she also shares them with the family merchants, who use the larger ones to carry cargo from the cavern floor to the house landing.

She also carries a six-headed *whip of fangs* and a purple *tentacle rod*. She wears a pair of magical rings at all times: a *ring of anti-venom* and a *ring of free action*.


Personality: Matron Miz'ri is domineering, arrogant, and cruel. She enjoys causing discomfort among those who anger or disappoint her, and relishes the use of her whip on the house males and all commoners.

Motivation: The matriarch is devoted to the furtherance of her house's aims through diplomacy and double-dealing. She often works a deal with some other house or agent, simply for the pleasure she derives from her ultimate betrayal of the poor saps.



House Fey-Branche

Eighth House of Menzoberranzan

SYMBOL: 

Matron Mother:	Byrtyr Fey
Nobles:	12
Priestesses:	7
High Priestesses:	4
House Males:	5
Fighters:	2
Wizards:	3
Drow Soldiers:	300 total
Formations:	50 Elite Foot 100 Archers 100 Foot 50 Lizriders
Slave Force:	400 total
Formations:	200 goblin foot 200 goblin archers

Chief Alliances: House Fey-Branche has long practiced fawning adulation for the houses of higher status; it has no formal alliance, but is recognized for lackey potential by Houses #1-7.

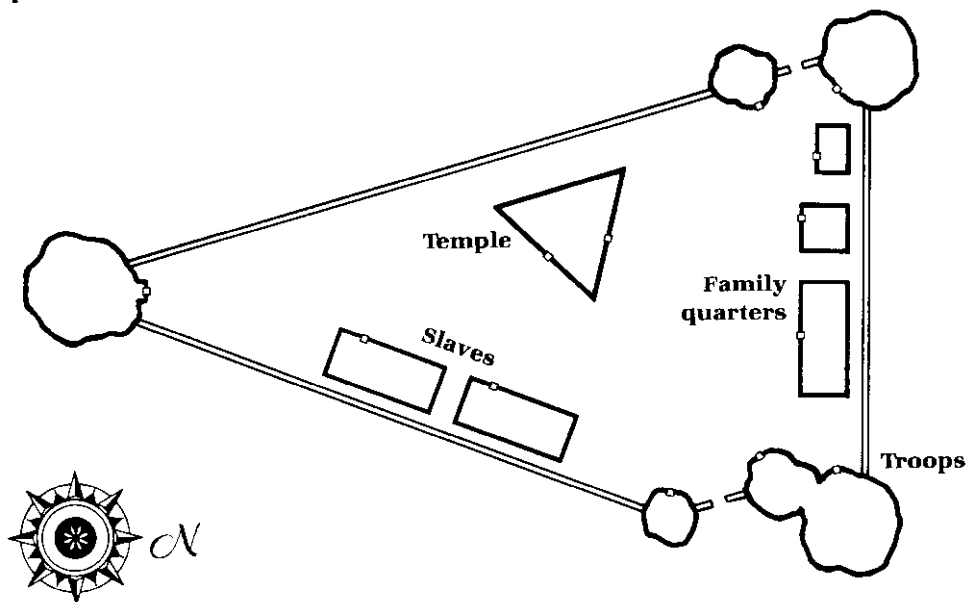
Chief Rivals: As the eighth house, Fey-Branche fears attack from many lower-ranking houses who desire a position on the council. Most particularly, House Duskrin (#10) is perceived as a threat.

House Fey-Branche is one of the most ancient of all of Menzoberranzan's long-lasting noble houses. At last count, the house had been in existence for more than 3,900 years. Unfortunately for the drow of



House Fey-Branche

House Fey-Branche Map 8



the clan, they are not exactly forty centuries of triumphs and accomplishments. Indeed, considering the bad luck that has plagued this house through the years, it is amazing that it is still around at all.

However, the house has not only withstood the vagaries of fortune, it has successfully defended itself against more than a dozen attacks to destroy it. Its walled compound is quite defensible and dominates a large section of the Narbondellyn section of the city.

The dark cloud that has long-daunted this clan has been reflected most often in the untimely deaths of its noble members. Some of these have fallen to freak accidents, while others have been slain in the course of duels or by assassination attempts.

However, Matron Mother Byrtyne Fey has collected a great deal of information over

the years, and this knowledge has become the family's greatest trump. With reams of information that could bring at least embarrassment and in many cases outright doom upon the exposed house, the matron is able to deter most potential enemies from any outright action against Fey-Branche.

The Dwelling of House Fey-Branche

The compound of this house is surrounded by an unusually high wall of adamantite, penetrated by a single reinforced gate. The three towers that anchor the corners of the triangular fortress have been hollowed out on many levels, to offer a variety of defensive positions.

The compound within the walls includes a

House Fey-Branche



great temple where the females live, and where the worship of Lloth is also consummated; and small buildings that serve as quarters for the male nobles, the commoners, and the house slaves. The whole area is dotted with shriekers that are set off by the approach of anyone not wearing the house insignia. Also, the wall is dotted with sporadic *lightning bolt* spells, set to blast anyone who approaches within 30' of the wall (except in the area around the gate).

House Fey-Branche NPC

Matron Mother Byrty'n Fey

ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 55
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (*mace* +3)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d6 +3
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 72%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

11th level drow priestess
S: 10 I: 15 W: 18 D: 15 C: 7 CH: 14

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *combine, command, detect magic, sanctuary*
Second Level: *charm person, find traps, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer*
Third Level: *animate dead, curse, remove paralysis, water breathing*

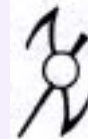
Fourth Level: *divination, detect lie, passweb*
Fifth Level: *commune, cure critical wounds, undead regeneration*

Physical Description: Matron Byrty'n is an extremely attractive drow female with an unusually well-rounded figure. She wears garments that highlight her sensual appeal and favors robes and shawls of filmy gauze that do little to preserve her modesty.

Equipment: The matriarch possesses a six-headed *whip of fangs*. Her favored weapon, however, is a violet *tentacle rod*. She also brews her own potent version of the *potion of magic resistance* (which she carries in several small vials wherever she goes). The matron is additionally armed at all times with a *spider wand*.

Personality: Matron Byrty'n is famed throughout Menzoberranzan for her passionate affairs and ribald exploits. She uses her physical attractiveness to seduce an assortment of males. She has not maintained a regular patron for more than a century.

Motivation: This drow is motivated by hedonism as much as by the desire to better her family. Indeed, some of the elder daughters secretly despise their mother for her wanton behavior, and desire very much to claim her position as mistress of the clan. None of them is as yet powerful enough to make such a move, however.



Lesser Houses

House Tuin'Tarl

Ninth House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother: Prid'eesoth Tuin

Nobles: 11
Priestesses: 5
High Priestesses: 4
House Males: 6
Fighters: 2
Wizards: 4

Drow Soldiers: 400 total

Slave Force: 400 total

Chief Alliances: House Tuin'Tarl is known to be weak, and thus no other house is willing to recognize an alliance with it.

Chief Rivals: As the ninth house, Tuin'Tarl fears attack from many lower-ranking houses, most particularly House Duskryn (#10).

House Tuin'Tarl is a relatively new house, having arisen within the last millennium. Its original strength came from trade, and that still forms the basis of Tuin'Tarl power. The clan is willing to send expeditions into the far reaches of the Underdark, even trading with distant drow communities. (Indeed, one of the clan priestesses was brought to Menzoberranzan from distant Ched Nasad.)

House Duskryn

Tenth House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother: Berni'th Duskryn
(level 12 priestess)

Nobles: 33
Priestesses: 15
High Priestesses: 13
House Males: 18
Fighters: 6
Wizards: 12

Drow Soldiers: 600 total

Slave Force: 500 total

Chief Alliances: House Duskryn has formed a solid alliance with House Srune'Lett (#11).

Chief Rivals: Because of its numerous troops, House Duskryn fears no house beneath its station; it has many offensive desires, including attacks against House Fey-Branche (#8) and House Tuin'Tarl (#9).

House Duskryn has a reputation for savage cruelty for nothing other than the perverse amusement of the nobles. Arising more than 3,000 years ago, the house has consistently trained some of the best armies in all Menzoberranzan. Advancement in this company is rewarded for performance, not noble ranking. The house's most famous victories have all been defensive, however. About seven centuries ago, several houses tried and failed in successive attempts to destroy House Duskryn. It has long been whispered that House Baenre was behind those attempts.

Lesser Houses

House Srune'Lett Eleventh House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Srune'Lyris Lett
	(level 11 priestess)
Nobles:	32
Priestesses:	15
High Priestesses:	11
House Males:	6
Fighters:	2
Wizards:	4
Drow Soldiers:	250 total
Slave Force:	400 total

Chief Alliances: Srune'Lett has tried to form several alliances recently, including a bond with House Faen Tlabbar (#4), and House Duskrin (#10). None of these initiatives has met with success. The Srune'lett have accepted peace initiatives from House Mizzrym (#7), but have been rightfully suspicious of their sincerity.

Chief Rivals: Srune'Lett attracts the interest of many ambitious, lower-ranking houses, including Druu'giir (#14) and Hunzrin (#15). The house is cautiously going along with House Mizzrym with plans to strike against House Xorlarrin (#5).

This clan comprises many powerful female priestesses, but few skilled wizards or fighters. It has a decent-sized force of hired troops, but their loyalty has long been suspect.

The priestesses of Srune'Lett tend to be

short and stocky—they are often referred to as the “fat sisters”—though if the priestesses hear someone use the term, the phrase often becomes the last words of the incautious speaker.

Recent rumors have passed around the city, alleging that Srune'Lett has acquired the services of a non-drow wizard. This is partially true—the matron mother has persuaded a mind flayer to join ranks with the family, a fact which considerably improves its military standing.

House Horlbar Twelfth House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Ker Horlbar
	(level 13 priestess) and Jerlys Horlbar (level 12 priestess)
Nobles:	13
Priestesses:	8
High Priestesses:	7
House Males:	5
Fighters:	1
Wizards:	4
Drow Soldiers:	200 total
Slave Force:	400 total

Chief Alliances: House Horlbar has long had a cooperative relationship with House Kenafin (#13).

Chief Rivals: The house is one of the chief plotters against House Tuin'Tarl (#9)—though that fact is not known to the Tarlyn.

Lesser Houses

The twin matron mothers of this clan are its distinguishing feature. This has been the clan structure for 2,000 years, with the pair being either sisters or first cousins in every case. When one falls for any reason, the other is also replaced by a female of the next generation.

The two matrons traditionally hate each other almost as much as they hate everything non-Horlbaryn in nature. The clan has gained its power through productive agriculture and ambitious trade. Though Horlbaryn only rarely initiate a war, they never forget a slight, and vengeance against another house may be carried out generations later.

House Kenafin Thirteenth House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Kyrnill Kenafin
	(level 13 priestess)
Nobles:	14
Priestesses:	8
High Priestesses:	6
House Males:	6
Fighters:	3
Wizards:	3
Drow Soldiers:	225 total
Slave Force:	500 total

Chief Alliances: House Kenafin has long cooperated with House Horlbar (#12).

Chief Rivals: House Kenafin is a secret plotter against House Fey-Branche (#8).

House Kenafin is a house where the domination of the priestesses has completely subjugated the males. Under the ambitious and cruel reign of the matron mother, the females exact terrible vengeance for any infractions against their rigid code of behavior.

In public, House Kenafin is known as a busy trading house. It performs most of its trade within Menzoberranzan itself, moving products around the city instead of importing them from outside sources.

The priestesses are working a grand appeal to Lloth, for which they are creating a giant image of the goddess out of wax—a project that has lasted 10 years. The image will be consumed during the ceremony, and then, hopefully, the favor of the spider queen will be clear.

House Druu'giir Fourteenth House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Carrolloc Giir
	(level 11 priestess)
Nobles:	11
Priestesses:	4
High Priestesses:	3
House Males:	7
Fighters:	2
Wizards:	5
Drow Soldiers:	250 total
Slave Force:	300 total

Chief Alliances: This house has no formal alliances, but its role as moneylender

Lesser Houses

insures that its can exert pressure on most any other clan.

Chief Rivals: House Druu'Giir desires to execute an attack against House Srune'Let (#11).


House Druu'giir has a direct influence over other houses in the city that is second only to the power wielded by House Baenre. This is because the clan controls nearly all of the moneylending that occurs in Menzoberranzan.

The clan is dominated by elderly male wizards, and can quickly augment its troops by hiring the Bregan D'aerthe or another mercenary band if necessary.

The ultimate fear inspired by the house's reputation is the notion that the house wizards can employ *gate* spells to bring their quickly-reinforced armies to virtually any house, any room, in Menzoberranzan!

House Hunzrin

Fifteenth House

SYMBOL: 

Matron Mother:	Kintuere Hunzrin (level 11 priestess)
Nobles:	12
Priestesses:	4
High Priestesses:	1
House Males:	8
Fighters:	7
Wizards:	1
Drow Soldiers:	200 total
Slave Force:	1,850 total (handles general city farm slave force)

Chief Alliances: House Baenre (#1) is a strong supporter of Kintuere; as long as House Hunzrin continues to provide the agricultural needs of the city without getting presumptuous.


Chief Rivals: House Shobalar (#16).

House Hunzrin has control of the farming in Menzoberranzan, a fact which has led to their being viewed as a bunch of "stone head" farmers. Of course this is never mentioned in public, for the warriors of Hunzrin are reputed to be the best pitchfork (magical) wielders in the Underdark.

Matron Mother Kintuere Hunzrin has, on many occasions, consulted with Mez' Barris Armgo about Hunzrin's inability to produce females, a trait which both houses share.

House Shobalar

Sixteenth House

SYMBOL: 

Matron Mother:	Hinkutes'nat Alar (level 11 priestess)
Nobles:	12
Priestesses:	5
High Priestesses:	3
House Males:	1
Fighters:	1
Wizards (female):	6
Drow Soldiers:	150 total
Slave Force:	100 total

Chief Alliances: None.

Lesser Houses

Chief Rivals: Though not a weak house by any means, without allies, the house is a prime candidate for elimination by an ambitious lower-ranked house.

House Shobalar is a house dominated by females, having only one noble son, the weapon master, Pu'Nel. This house also showcases six wizards, which isn't unusual, until you realize that they are all female. House Shobalar is seclusive and the family is seldom seen in public, but when they are seen, they are usually accompanied by enormous spiders which have been bred for riding. These spiders can spew forth sticky strands of webbing to catch prey, not unlike that of a cave fisher. The house is also rumored to be using spiders in strange and wondrous experiments, one involving a "live" spider cloak which can be animated merely by the thought of its wearer.

House Shobalar has very few alliances, due to their double-dealing reputation.

House Vandree

SEVENTEENTH HOUSE

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother: Troken'ther Vandree
(level 10 priestess)

Nobles:	13
Priestesses:	5
High Priestesses:	2
House Males:	8
Fighters:	6
Wizards:	2

Drow Soldiers: 150 total

Slave Force: 120 total

Chief Alliances: Trying to forge an alliance with House Baenre (#1).

Chief Rivals: Barrison Del'Armgo (#2) covets Vandree's huge compound.

House Vandree is, at present, in perhaps the most tentative position of any house in Menzoberranzan. Their numbers are few, their compound grand, and packed House Barrison Del'Armgo has made it known that they covet the Vandree compound. In lieu of that, Matron Troken'ther Vandree is trying to either win the protection of House Baenre, or get First Matron Mother Baenre to demand a civilized swap of compounds. It is not known how Matron Baenre will react. On the one hand, there has been perhaps too much chaos among the leading houses in the last few decades, and an orderly process might seem attractive, but on the other hand, Matron Baenre is eager to see Barrison Del'Armgo, her principle rival, get into a fight and show what it can do.

The situation does not look good, but House Vandree has a long-standing tradition of getting into trouble and somehow finding their way back out. Troken'ther and her offspring seem to delight in internal feuding and dangerous political ploys. The house even dabbles in surface-world affairs, and in acquiring all sorts of trophies and useful magical items. (Human skulls, fashioned into drinking goblets are a favorite.)



House Symryvvin Eighteenth House

SYMBOL:



Matron Mother:	Hesken-P'aj Symryvvin
	(level 20 priestess)
Nobles:	11
Priestesses:	5
High Priestesses:	5
House Males:	8
Fighters:	0
Wizards:	8
Drow Soldiers:	100 total
Slave Force:	160 total

Chief Alliances: House Baenre (#1) and House Barrison Del'Armgo (#2) have alternately wooed the favors of venerable Matron Hesken-P'aj Symryvvin.

Chief Rivals: None.

House Symryvvin is an anomaly in Menzoberranzan in many ways. Matron Hesken-P'aj is the second highest ranking priestess of Lloth in all the city, yet she does not sit on the Ruling Council. The house has held its position (#18) for centuries without even the threat of attack from any other house. Both Matron Baenre and Matron Mez'Barris Armgo often visit Hesken-P'aj—on several occasions they even went to the Symryvvin compound together! The house shows no ambition to climb to a higher rank.

The family Symryvvin is known for its

studious pursuit of creating new prayers to the Spider Queen (and in receiving new priest spells in return). Likewise, their mages live hermit-like, fanatically dedicated to the pursuit of higher magic. The house nobles, on those rare occasions that they are seen outside their compound, are accorded great respect, for House Symryvvin commands Lloth's highest favor and for any house to go against them would surely put that house on the wrong side of the volatile Spider Queen. Secretly, Symryvvin has been called the "eyes of Lloth," watching over the city inconspicuously, detached from the chaos.





Bregan D'aerthe

Not a house, but a mercenary society of rogue drow, Bregan D'aerthe is one of the most respected (though unlawful—even by drow standards) organizations in the city. Little is known about the assassin band, except that they maintain close ties with House Baenre, have been intricately involved in the last two disasters concerning ruling houses (House Hun'ett and House Do'Urden), and are led by a swashbuckling, unusual drow elf who goes by the name of Jarlaxle.

Well over a hundred of Bregan D'aerthe's roughly 150 members are male, and many of these reputedly are nobles of fallen houses. Typically, noble female survivors of destroyed houses would be grabbed up by other powerful houses, invited into the family (many of House Baenre's priestesses started out as princesses in other drow houses), but males, noble or not, have always been a less desirable commodity in a city so dedicated to the Spider Queen.

The members of Bregan D'aerthe are almost exclusively fighters or fighter/thieves, with a few fighter/mages sprinkled in. Noamuth Lil (The Wanderer), formerly Vierna Do'Urden, is the only known priestess in the band.


The mercenaries are very well equipped, and very well trained. They operate both inside of Menzoberranzan, usually with the unspoken consent of the First Matron Mother, and outside the city. Their most valuable potential, and thus the probable reason this rogue band is allowed to thrive, comes in the role of scouts for outer-Menzoberranzan affairs. Jarlaxle even has contacts in Blingdenstone, the deep-gnome city!

The band has also been known to serve in house armies during takeovers of other houses. Their ferocity cannot be underestimated, but one would be wise not to overestimate their loyalty. When House Hun'ett attacked House Do'Urden, the

Hun'ett force was supplemented by Bregan D'aerthe, though Jarlaxle was at the time holding court with Matron Malice Do'Urden. Malice made a better offer, and in the middle of the fray, the mercenary band simply switched sides, to the swift demise of the aggressor house.

Menzoberranzan is a city of intrigue and double-dealings, and no one plays those games better than Jarlaxle.

Jarlaxle



ARMOR CLASS:	-5 to -10
MOVE:	12"
HIT POINTS:	99
NO. OF ATTACKS:	9/2 or 5 (throwing daggers)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-7 + 3, 1d4 +2 or 1d4 +4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Wounding, Life-stealing
SPECIAL DEFENSE:	Disarming
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	84%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil

17th Level Drow Fighter
S: 13 I: 18 W: 15 D: 20 C: 15 CH: 18

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Physical Description: Perhaps no drow in Menzoberranzan cuts a more dapper picture than Jarlaxle.

Jarlaxle, arrogant and brash, followed few of the customs of Menzoberranzan's inhabitants. He was most certainly not the norm of drow society and he flaunted the differences openly, brazenly. He wore not a cloak nor a robe, but a shimmering cape that showed every color of the spectrum, both in the glow of light and in the infra-red spectrum of heat-sensing eyes.

BREGAN D'aerThe

Jarlaxle's vest was sleeveless and cut so high that his slender and tightly-muscled stomach was open for all to view. He kept a patch over one eye, though careful observers would understand it as ornamental, for Jarlaxle often shifted it from one eye to the other.

(from Exile)

His boots are high and hard, his jewelry is abundant, and a wide-brimmed hat, overly plumed with the monstrous feathers of a giant diatryma, completes the swashbuckling image. Jarlaxle is not a large drow, slender, but finely-toned. Unlike other drow, he keeps his head clean-shaven.

Equipment: By most accounts, Jarlaxle is covered head to toe by magical items. The specifics are vague, though: his large, many-stoned necklace might be a *necklace of missiles*; his eye patch reportedly gives him powers similar to those exhibited by a dreaded Eye of Fear and Flame (12HD Fireball and Fear, as the wand); his rings and bracelets seem to offer some armor-like protection (certainly he's not an easy one to hit); his boots can be as silent as the best of drow make, or as clunky as a hook horror in a tight passage; his cape (rumors say) acts much like a *robe of scintillating colors*; and he can pull more than a rabbit from that wondrous hat.

More is known about this odd drow's weapons. Jarlaxle specializes in a two-handed combat style, with a *rapier of wounding* (+1) as his primary weapon (+1 to hit, +2 to damage, 5/2 attacks due to specialization), and a main gauche (rumored to be a blade of *life stealing*) +2. Like his eye patch, he shifts these weapons from hand to hand, sometimes leading with his left, sometimes his right. Under the sleeve of his left wrist, he keeps a strange bracer, from which he can remove and hurl five throwing daggers (+4) in a single round (once/turn).

On his belt Jarlaxle wears the most-hated of all magical items in Menzoberranzan, a *wand of illumination*. He also keeps a *pouch of holding* on his jewelled belt, filled with *light pellets* and *time bombs*. (It is believed he got the devious bombs from Gromph Baenre.)

Personality: Always graceful, always calm, none in Menzoberranzan ever remembers seeing the crafty Jarlaxle angry. He is a lover of comfort, of pleasure and the finer things in life, and always seems to find a way to over-indulge himself. Jarlaxle smiles and jokes more than a drow ought to, but the results of his off-beat actions always seem to please Lloth, or at least, to please the priestesses of the Spider Queen—Jarlaxle openly reveals no religious calling.

Motivation: More than anything else, the leader of Bregan D'aerthe is a survivor, and a thriver. His wealth is considerable, and official station seems totally unimportant, since every Matron Mother in Menzoberranzan affords him the deepest respect. The only place in the city where the mercenary is scorned is the Academy. Bladen'Kerst Baenre cannot stand the male, but whenever Jarlaxle is asked about the eldest daughter of House Baenre, he only smiles and flashes a devious wink from whichever eye happens to be, at that time, uncovered.





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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS
BOXED SET

MENZOBERRANZAN

Book Three: THE ADVENTURE



Book Three: The Adventure

by
Douglas Niles

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1083XXX1503
ISBN 1-56076-460-0
1083

Menace in Menzoberranzan

An Adventure for Extremely Brave PCs

Introduction

Menace in Menzoberranzan is a dangerous adventure that will take player characters far beyond the comforting light of the sun, plunging them into the seething chaos of drow society. Treachery and betrayal are the bywords of negotiation, and the dark elves demand subservience from all who dare intrude into the subterranean empire of evil.

Of course, there are great rewards waiting to be won among the labyrinths of the Underdark—but many, too, are the adventurers who will answer for their risk-taking with the ultimate payment . . . life itself.

Though much of this tale is set in Menzoberranzan, the adventure can be played by a party of non-drow characters. Indeed, one primary purpose of the adventure is to provide a means to introduce surface-dwelling characters and other Realms PCs into the dark elf city. They are introduced into the Underdark by the vehicle of a merchant's caravan, carrying surface commodities to the secret marketplace of Mantol-Derith.

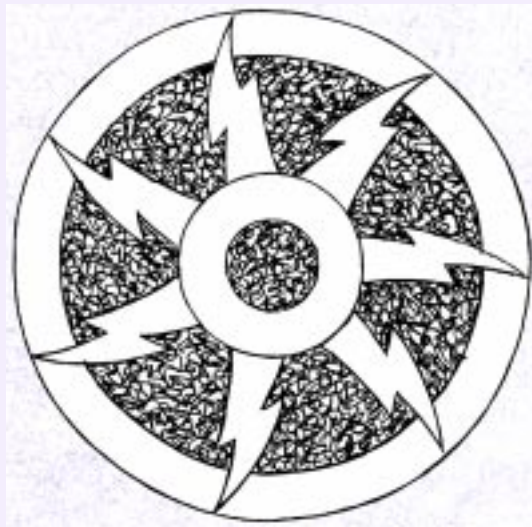
Alternately, the module can utilize drow characters from Menzoberranzan or other realms of the dark elves, who are also drawn into the adventure through Mantol-Derith, mercantile crossroads of the Underdark. These PCs hail from House Millithor, an up-and-coming clan currently ranked 25th in the city hierarchy.

Two sets of pregenerated characters are included. Of course, if the PCs begin on the surface world then their own characters may well be appropriate. The party should

include a balance of classes, and ideally consist of 6 characters of around levels 5-6 of ability. Fewer characters of higher levels, or larger parties of less experienced PCs, are both viable alternatives. A typical assortment of magical weapons and items will be useful, but it's not required that the characters have any specific object.

Although the essential rules of the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are all that are required to play the module, some of the magical items and spells listed are detailed in the *Tome of Magic* sourcebook or the *Drow of the Underdark* game accessory.

In particular, *Tome of Magic* is useful for its introduction of wild magic—since the development of this new and powerful sorcery is a major plot element in this story. However, if your campaign does not utilize this book—or you, the DM, are not familiar with it—this does not mean that you can't play the adventure. The wild magic is of particular use to one NPC, and there is no need to use it against the players. Instead, the DM can make up some good pyrotechnic effects for the final battle scene, and simply make sure the wild magic is used in areas where the PCs are not involved.



Menace in Menzoberranzan

Adventure Outline

The characters will begin by joining a supply caravan transporting goods to the underground marketplace. Once they arrive at the Mantol-Derith, they are drawn into the political intrigues of Menzoberranzan. Unknown to the PCs, the merchant who hired them is bringing potent new spells—wild magic spells—into the Underdark. Though he has tried to keep this information secret, at least one potential customer knows what's going on. Several other groups, including rival drow houses and other denizens of the dark, suspect the truth, and will take steps to gain the magic for themselves—or at least to insure that it does not fall into rival hands.

The PCs will be offered the opportunity to come to the city of the drow (or return there, if it is the PCs' home), to serve the mercantile interests of House Millithor. This house ranks only 25th in the city, yet its influence in the Mantol market makes it a promising upstart.

The characters will have a choice of three different routes into Menzoberranzan, each of which will set them up with certain allies and enemies. They will be wooed and threatened by agents of House Baenre, and that clan's greatest rival—House Barrison Del'Armgo. They will even meet the famed mercenary captain, Jarlaxle, who offers them some hope of avoiding the deadliest traps that lie in their path.

Depending upon how they deal with treachery and opportunity, triumph and failure, the PCs will find themselves in the midst of a war of annihilation against one of the city's clans.

Finally, as House Millithor is drawn into a desperate struggle for survival, the player characters will be faced with the choice of flight, betrayal, or the joining into a final, desperate stand.



Chapter One:

Starting The Adventure

The first step is to create or select the player characters that will take part in the adventure. The PCs will run through one of the two encounters (1A, the “One-Eyed Merchant” or 1B, the “Covert Caravan”) presented in this chapter; either one will bring them into the mainstream of the story.

If the PCs are already in existence, the DM will probably want to begin the adventure on the surface (unless those characters are all or primarily drow), with 1A, the “One-Eyed Merchant” encounter, below. Alternately, if the players choose the surface-dwelling party of pre-generated player characters (see the player card included in this box), the adventure also begins with this encounter.

If the player characters are drow that have been generated by the players or used previously, they can also begin with the “One-Eyed Merchant” encounter; or, if you wish, you can arrange a starting encounter for them in Menzoberranzan. You can, for example, modify the structure of House Millithor (introduced in 1B) so that the player characters are members of that family; alternatively, you can create jobs for them in Menzoberranzan that will bring them sooner or later to the marketplace of Mantol-Derith.

If the players choose to use the pregenerated drow characters of House Millithor, then begin the adventure with Chapter 1B, “The Covert Caravan” encounter. In either case, once the encounter runs its course, you should find yourself ready for “Chapter Two: Journey into the Underdark.”

Chapter One-A: The One-Eyed Merchant

This meeting can occur in any part of the eastern Realms, along the Sword Coast or many miles inland—even to the shore of the Sea of Fallen Stars or beyond. Since Menzoberranzan is not specifically located in its relationship to the surface world, the point of entrance into the Underdark can vary from campaign to campaign. If your player characters happen to be somewhere on the surface of the Realms, that place makes a splendid location to start the adventure.

If you use the pre-generated player characters, or you have the freedom to place the characters anywhere you want, begin the adventure in the upper city of Baldur’s Gate.

Regardless of where the PCs are—an inn, a marketplace, a city street, or even an outdoor camp—they will encounter the following character.

An old man hobbles toward you, moving quickly despite the stooped posture of his age. His hair is white, his figure small.

He wears a silvered tunic of fine silk, covered with a gold-embroidered cape. A diamond gleams at his neckclasp. A patch covers his left eye, but his right gleams as he looks you over, cackling with apparent pleasure.

“Well met, my hearties! You look like a lot that knows the meaning of good treasure when you see it—I’m talkin’ rubies, folks, and diamonds in heaps higher than yer heads!”

The old fellow is Hadrogh Prohl, a merchant of the Underdark. His wealth is apparent in every one of his garments, and he will freely drop a few platinum pieces if

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the PCs give him the chance to speak with them.

The merchant is physically unprepossessing, and takes care to offer no threat—in fact, he is interested in the services of the PCs. However, he is quite capable of taking care of himself.

Hadrogh Prohl (half-drow)

Mage/thief (level 8/10)
ARMOR CLASS: 0
MOVE: 12"
Hit Points: 43
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (*long sword* +5)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d8+5
SPECIAL ATTACKS: poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *gem of spell deflection*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

S:13 D:16 C:10 I:18 W:12 CH:14

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *faerie fire, darkness, levitate, detect magic*

Thief Abilities: PP 64%; OL 50%; F/RT 25%; MS 80%; HiS 25%; DN 65%; CW 60%; RL 80%

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *featherfall, light, magic missile, sleep*

Second Level: *blind, invisibility, stinking cloud*

Third Level: *fireball, haste, lightning bolt*

Fourth Level: *hallucinatory terrain, polymorph self*

Equipment: Hadrogh wears a *cloak of protection* +4 that also functions as a *piwafwi*. In addition, his *gem of spell deflection* is a powerful device that adds another -4 to his armor class against all attacks. In addition, it gives him a bonus of +4 to all saving throws he is required to make (after, of course, his magic resistance is taken into account).

His long sword is another weapon of unusual nature. The weapon appears to be a battered dagger that he wears carelessly through his belt, the blade no more than 12" long. If examined, it will reveal a faint aura of magic, and it assumes its full size and appearance when held by the hilt. The blade is black steel, clearly of drow enchantment, and strikes with a +5 bonus to attack and damage rolls. In addition, upon the shouting of a command word, the blade glistens with a deadly venom. Anyone struck by the blade must save vs. poison or die (save at -2).

Hadrogh also carries a *folding boat* in his personal backpack.

He has a highly personalized set of gold-handled lockpicks (worth about 500 gp).

Hadrogh always carries a good amount of cash with him, mostly in gold pieces concealed in a pouch at his side; but also a good number of platinum pieces—just in case. The platinum pieces are divided between false soles in each of his boots, and a concealed band that runs around the inside of his belt.

Hadrogh's manner is affable, and he is relaxed and friendly in speaking with strangers. He seems to be very unobservant; actually, the opposite is the truth. Hadrogh takes great pains to notice everything going on around him. In fact, his eyepatch is fitted with a small silver mirror (he has two good eyes, after all). The mirror allows Hadrogh to see what's going on directly behind him,



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as well as to his left rear.

Although he is an accomplished thief, he avoids practicing his trade on acquaintances—nor will he jeopardize a business transaction by utilizing his illicit skills amid the towns or establishments of his trading partners.

Hadrogh's Offer

The merchant attempts to hire the PCs as escorts for a caravan of goods that he intends to take on an expedition that he promises, up front, will prove to be dangerous. However, he claims that the pay will make the journey more than worthwhile.

He will pay each loyal guard joining his caravan 5 gold pieces for each day of the journey (which he suspects will last about fifty days). He also offers a bonus to be paid at the end of the trip—it will be based upon his profits, but he anticipates an amount of at least 500 gp per guard. If the journey is especially lucrative, that amount could triple—or more!

If the PCs hold out for more money up front, Hadrogh will go as high as 10 gold pieces per day; the bonus remains the same.

He can also sweeten the pot with the offer of a few magical items—things that will prove useful where the expedition is going. He won't offer these things right up front, but again if the PCs seem to be reluctant, he will give each of them a choice of one of the following items.

Potion of extra healing

Potion of flying

Potion of gaseous form

Potion of in visibility

a scroll containing up to 7 levels of spells from Hadrogh's spell list

(commonly remembered spells, above)

a *ring of protection* +1

a *cloak of elvenkind*

If the player characters agree to accompany the merchant, he leads them to a nearby (relatively nearby, if the adventure begins at a wilderness camp) warehouse. (And if they don't agree to accompany him, the DM should have a couple of videos ready to help pass the evening!) Here he has gathered one dozen mules and a trio of muleskinners. The latter are three disreputable humans who are not much use for anything except keeping the mules under control:

Muleskinners (2nd level fighters): AC 8; Move 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 19; AL N

The mules are loaded with bulging saddlebags, and though Hadrogh makes no attempt to explain his cargo, he doesn't try to conceal it from anyone who cares to ask. Each mule wears a large pair of saddlebags that are lashed shut and bulge with goods. It is obvious to anyone who sees the mules move that they carry heavy loads.

About half of Hadrogh's goods are loaded in stout casks, two per each mule. The casks contain brandy, whisky, and rum—substances that cannot be manufactured in the Underdark, and have come to be regarded as prized imports by certain decadent members of the subterranean societies.

Other goods carefully packed into the saddlebags include large bundles of parchment; boxes containing a hundred candles; bundles of hardwood boards (used for carving objects of art in the Underdark—it's too rare for practical purposes); perfumes and spices from all across the Realms; feathers and down; and dried delicacies of surface foods, including beef and various breads.

The most valuable portion of this cargo is something that Hadrogh *does* keep a secret: in the bottom of the saddlebag of the eighth

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mule in line, concealed in a bundle that looks like blank paper, are a dozen scrolls inscribed with magical spells. These spells are examples of powerful wild magic, previously unknown in the Underdark. Hadrogh assumes that they will make the merchant enough money to allow him to retire in luxury.

The scroll book is protected by a *wizard lock*, and by a mechanical trap that must be disengaged before opening the cover of the leather volume. The trap is triggered by a hair-thin piece of thread connecting the front and back covers; one end or the other must be disconnected from the book. If the thread is broken in the middle (as when the book is opened), oil splatters outward, followed by a cascade of sparks from a minuscule flint scraping against a thin strip of steel. Unless it is raining or otherwise

wet, ignition is certain. The person opening the book suffers 2d6 hit points worth of fire damage the first round, and 1d6 hit points per subsequent round until the fire is extinguished—or until it burns out after 6 rounds, total. An initial saving throw versus breath weapon is allowed—a successful save halves the damage each round (with fractions dropped).

Incidentally, the scrolls on are flame-proof pages, so they will be unaffected by the blaze—though objects around the affected character might not be so lucky, subject to the DM's discretion. For example, this is a bad book to open in a hayloft.

The powerful spells on these scrolls are:
Chaos Shield (2nd level);
Fireflow (3rd level);
Unluck (4th level);
Vortex (5th level);

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Wildshield (6th level);
Wildzone (8th level);
Wildwind (9th level)

Journey To Dark's Gate

Hadrogh follows a route that he knows very well, which begins with 3-18 days of travel on the surface. Hadrogh provides horses for himself and the PCs; the merchant rides at the front of the caravan, and the PCs' positions will vary—one or two riding at Hadrogh's side, at least two in the rear, and the others protecting the flanks or perhaps riding ahead.

If your players seem ready for a little action, the caravan gets attacked by a large band of robbers—men who figure to easily overcome the outnumbered PCs.

Rugdard Crain, Bandit Leader (7th level fighter): AC 2; Move 24"; HD 7; hp 55; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 +6; THAC0 10; AL CN

Equipment: *scimitar* +3; *leather armor* +4; *boots of speed*; 10 *arrows* +3; *spectacles of infravision**

* These are glasses that will fit a human-sized head, and allow the wearer to benefit from infravision to a range of 90'. However, they can only be worn for 12 hours, after which the character must spend another 12 hours not using them before they will benefit him again. If he tries to wear them for more than 12 hours in a row, he will be *blinded*, effectively losing both the infravision and normal vision for 1-12 hours—after which the 12 hour rest period starts.

8 Bandits (2nd level fighters): AC 6; Move 12; HD 2; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 19; AL CE

8 Bandits (1st level fighters): AC 8; Move 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; #AT 2 or 1 (shortbows/shortswords); Dmg 1d6; THAC0 20; AL CE

The bandits strike on a wooded stretch of road, with Rugdard shooting a non-magical arrow at Hadrogh or another character in the lead. The bandits then appear to either side of the caravan, with four archers lurking at the edge of the woods to the right and left; five swordsmen approaching the rear of the caravan; and three more swordsmen standing with Rugdard in the forefront.

The muleskinners try merely to retain control of the mules. Hadrogh helps them (after all, that's why he hired guards); but if the PCs seem to fare badly he reluctantly joins the battle.

If their leader is slain, the bandits lose heart. If the battle starts to go badly, Rugdard abandons his men and flees on foot (through the woods, where a horse cannot follow).

The bandit camp is a six-hour trek through the woods; there is little of value there, though a chest with 900 gp is buried in the woods nearby. Only Rugdard knows where it is, though the other bandits know of its existence.

When the caravan finally reaches its destination, the group finds itself before a large cave, with a concealing screen of brush piled before its mouth. Hadrogh asks the player characters to remove this brush while he goes to speak with the muleskinners—he's paying them off, since they haven't signed on for the underground portion of the trip.

After the party files into the cavern—which proves to be quite large and spacious—the PCs are asked to restore the screen. Then, with darkness closing around the party, the merchant announces that

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they are starting into the cave, and asks the PCs to take up the halters of the mules. Hadrogh informs any reluctant player characters that they won't have to guide the mules for the whole trip—just until their underground handlers meet them, not far from here.

The beasts are stubborn and extra-ornery underground—PCs who don't make a point of being careful are kicked or bitten (1-4 hp damage).

Then Hadrogh leads the group into the depths of the cave, descending slowly along a smooth pathway for about a mile. He has one of the PCs hold a lantern in the forefront (the mules won't move in pitch darkness). Then the cave seems to end, in a large, circular chamber filled with stalactites and stalagmites.

Here, Hadrogh goes to one of the stone pillars and bangs on it with an iron hammer. The sound reverberates through the cavern, seeming to echo for hours.

"Now, we wait," he announces.

The cavern has several pools of clear water, and a variety of beautiful natural features. The only unnatural feature is the secret door concealed amid a nest of pillars at the end of the cavern opposite the entrance. The door is extremely difficult to detect, and even if detected it is impossible to open from the outside—it is a plug of stone and, if bashed, only sets more firmly into its narrowing socket. (If the PCs do discover the door, Hadrogh congratulates them on their acumen and informs them that the portal will open in a matter of hours.)

A full twelve hours pass before the subterranean guides arrive. When they do, the secret door slips open so silently that, unless one is observing it directly, the movement is not detected.

A shape stands in a greater darkness even than the cavern's shadow. It moves forward without sound, gliding like an incorporeal form—but the dark skin, the shocking white hair and dark, gleaming plate mail are very much real.

The features of the drow are beautiful, in an icy sort of way. A female dark elf stands there, her high cheekbones highlighting a narrow face and almond-shaped eyes.

"Greetings, Hadrogh Prohl," she says, bowing formally. Her voice is as cold as her eyes.

"Greetings, Dwillisith Millithor," replies the merchant, bowing more deeply than the drow.

The dark elf looks at the mules and the humans skeptically. Then she turns with a shrug and gestures into the dark hole revealed by the secret door.

"Let us set off," she barks. "Mantol-Derith is far away."


At this point, it's time to go to "Chapter Two: Journey Into the Underdark."

Chapter One-B: Starting In Menzoberranzan

House Millithor is the twenty-fifth house in Menzoberranzan's rigid hierarchy of social station. It has been a loyal servant of House Baenre in the past, and this willingness has caused Matron Baenre to remember Millithor with favor. Because of this, the members of the house shall be given the chance to prove their courage and skill—and if they do so successfully, they will gain the opportunity for significant advancement of their station.

The pregenerated player characters, found on the adventure cards included in the Menzoberranzan box, all are members

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of this unique house. A description of the house and the matron mother are also included on those cards. The dwelling of the house is detailed in Chapter 6 of this adventure.

Although they have been as evil as necessary to survive in the dark elf world, the matron mother of House Millithor possesses an unusual level of neutral attitudes. She deploras bullying and brutality against subordinates as a counterproductive tactic; she prefers to foster loyalty—and even a remote sort of affection—rather than fear in those who serve her.

The DM should acquaint himself with the house as much as possible before beginning the adventure—even though its initial stages occur beyond Menzoberranzan.

Matron Millithor gathers a select group of her family and retainers (the PCs). They are summoned to her audience chamber for the following encounter.

Matron Millithor sits upon her high throne, with the great spider's eye gleaming at you from the back of the chair, over the slender female's head. She has been absent from the house lately—rumors claim that she has found a new patron, but if this is the case no one in the family has met the fellow.

"Greetings, my children. . . my obedient servants," she begins, pausing to allow her eyes to sweep the room with regal command.

"I summon you for the commencement of an important mission—a task which, if you perform it successfully, shall elevate our house in the eyes of Menzoberranzan such as nothing has before!

"It will be necessary for you to depart the city for many cycles of Narbondel—seventy, perhaps even a hundred of them. You will journey almost

to the surface, where you will meet another of my faithful servitors."

She smiles at you all, but there is no humor in the expression—if there is pleasure at all, it is derived from the matron's knowledge of how thoroughly her subjects are held in her thrall.

"His name is Hadrogh Prohl, and he is human. Yes, I see you expressions of disgust—but *this* human has a thing of great value to me. You are to accompany him through the Underdark, seeing to his safety—for there are those who would like to see him dead."

If the PCs ask questions, she tells them what she can about the mission. She does *not*, however, reveal the nature of the thing of value carried by Hadrogh, nor where he is concealing it or carrying it. Her patron is the drow magic user most accomplished in the use of wild magic—it is to him that the spells will eventually be delivered, if all goes well.

Other than this, however, she can inform them of the following procedure.

- The PCs must follow a map (which she gives them) that leads through the Underdark to a high cave more than a hundred miles away. The journey will take about 25 days, and the PCs must move with absolute secrecy, taking great care that they are not followed.

- The group must take 12 pack lizards with them, for the purpose of loading the goods that have been brought by muleback to the gates of the Underdark.

- There they must wait for the signal—a rhythmic tapping in the ceiling of the chamber—that indicates the merchant has arrived above them. The plan calls for the signal to be made in another 30 cycles of Narbondel.

- The map shows the location of a secret passage; they are to follow it up to the



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merchant, where they will meet him.

- They are to obey the human in all things, and follow the route he shows them, which will take them to the underground market of Mantol-Derith. This is the most dangerous part of the journey—there may be attempts against the life of the merchant.

There, Matron Millithor herself—or one of her agents, known to the PCs—will meet the characters and inform them of the next stage of their mission.

You and the players can roleplay the journey to the gate with as much or as little detail as required. If the PCs are careful, they'll have little difficulty slipping out of Menzoberranzan undetected. However, agents of two of House Baenre's greatest rivals—House Barrison Del'Armgo (#2) and House Oblodra (#3)—are aware of the connection between their traditional enemy and the otherwise innocuous House Millithor. Therefore, they will be very interested in the activities of the player characters.

If the party takes no particular precautions when they depart, they are observed, and discreetly followed, by a group of these agents. The drow do not attack—they are interested in gathering intelligence—and they remain some distance (a mile or two) back from the PC party. Once the PCs make contact with Hadrogh, the agents of House Barrison Del'Armgo will attack.

The Del-Armgo Strike Team is detailed in Chapter 2. However, if the PCs take exceptional precautions, it is possible that they will encounter it here—possibly even wiping it out, which would cancel the encounter described in Chapter 2.

Other than this possible surveillance, the journey to the meeting proceeds without undo incident (except for such random encounters as the devious dungeon master might care to devise). If the PCs make a

reasonable effort to make time (even if they keep a careful watch for pursuit), they will arrive there in plenty of time. In the event they are late, Hadrogh has agreed to remain at the meeting place for 10 days, repeating the signal once per day. Actually, he has so much of his future tied up in this venture that he will remain in place for at least 15 days.

Hadrogh is described fully earlier in this chapter (1A). When encountered here, he is leading a string of 12 mules, each burdened by a pair of bulky saddlebags.

The merchant will be cheerful and glad to see the PCs, though his human (and other surface dwelling) guards are less cordial. Nevertheless, they obey their leader, who seems quite comfortable with the drow (he even speaks the language reasonably well!)

He is accompanied by several human and dwarven veterans—ruffians, all, but not threatening to the PCs. Indeed, before he comes through the secret door to join them, Hadrogh dismisses these surface dwellers, paying them off from a jingling pouch of coins. After they disappear, he turns to the drow PCs with a broad grin.

“Well,” he says—his voice smooth, his words spoken clearly in the language of the drow. “Let’s get going! You folks will have to load the lizards—I’ll be busy trying to remember the way. Now, let’s move—there’s money to be made in Mantol Derith!”

After the rendezvous is made, proceed to Chapter 2.

Chapter Two:

Journey Into The Underdark

From now on, the adventure runs pretty much the same with either drow or non-drow PCs—although there will be occasional notes that relate particularly to one type of player character or the other.

The pathway followed by Hadrogh winds along a confusing network of tunnels—the only map of which, apparently, exists in the mind of the strange merchant. He guides the party with a sure sense of confidence along the twisting and mazelike route.

The PCs notice a couple of things about Hadrogh.

He can see in the dark quite well—a fact that he doesn't bother to hide, but does not explain.

The underground seems to suit him; his mood is cheerful, and his senses seem attuned to the surrounding darkness.

The journey to Mantol-Derith takes twenty days. Though it does not cover more than about 80 miles of distance in a straight line, the winding path and gently descending corridors necessary for travel by lizard train more than double the distance that the party must travel.

Much of the route follows long, straight passageways excavated from the rock over years of labor—any dwarf PCs recognize the work as duergar. In other places, gracefully arched stone bridges—screened only by 1' high railings to each side—span bottomless depths. These deep cracks in the world are sometimes 40'-100' wide, occasionally as much as 200'. On the latter spans, the stonework seems to sway alarmingly as the party passes the center of the bridge.

Still other parts of the route wind their way through natural caverns, where water has seeped through layers of limestone and formed long channels. Though these pas-

sages are naturally formed, smooth pathways—always at least 6' wide, and never graded through a terribly steep descent—have been cleared through the center.

After about 8 or 10 days of this trek, the caravan runs into an ambush prepared by the agents of House Barrison Del' Armgo (unless those NPCs were dispatched in Chapter 1). The purpose of the ambush is the death of Hadrogh Prohl and the hijacking of his cargo.

The precautions of the party are left up to the player characters. The circumstances are arranged carefully, but good scouting or advance patrolling will afford a decent chance at aborting the attack.

During the course of this expedition, two other encounters are described—one likely to be harmless, even useful to the PCs; the other somewhat dangerous. They should be played in the order that they are presented, since there is a (slim) chance that the characters will gain some warning about the upcoming dangers from the first encounter. The DM should employ the third encounter as he sees fit—if the PCs have been weakened by the ambush, feel free to skip encounter 3 and move on to the market.

Encounter 1: Sinister Deep Bats

The sinisters appear near the caravan's camp at some point during the trek. They find the party in a large chamber, where there's a lot of overhead space for them to fly into. They use their pinpoint *levitate* ability to hang motionless in the air, forming a ring around the camp.

The creatures resemble flying manta rays, and thus their appearance is quite menacing.

Sinisters (12): AC 3; Move 2, FL 21 (A); HD 4 + 4; hit points 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; THAC0 17; MR 70%

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Special Defenses: *wall of force* type energy field, making them immune to normal missiles and missile type spells (but not other spells or melee attacks)

The sinisters are merely curious about this intrusion into their Underdark domain. They will remain around the party for as long as eight hours, if they are not attacked or molested. They communicate *telepathically* among themselves. If a PC has a means of telepathic communication, the bats will respond to those messages—and even warn the PC that other drow are lurking ahead.

Alternately, if any of the PCs makes any attempt to produce music while the bats are present, the bats will hover around the party for much of the rest of the journey. (Then they will signal, via agitation, the presence of the ambushing drow in Encounter 2.)

If attacked, the sinisters angrily swarm in with their own attacks—but as soon as three of their number have been slain, they fly away and will not return.

Encounter 2: Drow Ambush

The actual drow ambush is detailed on Map 1. The caravan moves onto the map from the north, traveling down a narrow and winding passage. The terrain that the caravan encounters here is among the roughest on the trip, with frequent small rockfalls littering the path, and shoulders of rock often pressing close to the right and the left. They will be forced to descend through these tight quarters, often down some relatively steep stretches of trail, for several hours.

Then, shortly before the ambush, the trail widens as it enters and begins to follow the bottom of a subterranean cavern. The dark walls climb steeply away to the right and left, and though a relatively smooth path still leads along the center of the floor, the

areas near the bottom of the cliffs are piled high with rubble.

The ambushing drow have been commissioned by House Barrison Del'Armgo—indeed, the leader (found at location C) is a noble member of that powerful house. The attackers are positioned in four different locations (A-D). If the PCs and Hadrogh barge right into the ambush, it will develop like this:

First, the drow in location D (who are concealed among the shadows at the edge of the floor, and also blanketed by a *darkness* spell) will emerge from their concealment to attack the front of the caravan, first with a volley of darts and then closing in to use their melee weapons.

Second, in the round after the frontal attack, the drow in locations A and B will drop off of their ledges 80' above the passing trade caravan. Using their levitation abilities, they will slowly descend (20' per round), seeking to shoot Hadrogh with their darts (and the *magic missile* spell from the magic user). If the merchant has not been slain by the time they reach the floor, they will join in the general melee.

Third, the reserve drow in location C will wait until the attack is in full swing (5 rounds). Then they will emerge to hit the rear of the column, or to pick up the pieces if the battle is over (as the Barrison Del'Armgo drow anticipate it will be).

Drow Attack Party A (five 3rd level fighters): AC 2; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 16 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +3 or 1d6; THAC0 15; MR 56%

Weapons: *Long swords* +3; handheld crossbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

Ambushing Drow B (fighter/mage level 5/5): AC 1; Move 12; HD 5; hit points 21; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +4 or 1d6; THAC0 12; MR 60%



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Weapon: Long sword, handheld crossbow
Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Spells Known:

First Level: *alarm, detect magic, magic missile, sleep*

Second Level: *invisibility, web*

Third Level: *haste*

Ambushing Drow C (two 7th level fighters): AC 0; Move 12; HD 7; hit points 34, 42; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 6; THAC0 10; MR 64%

Weapon: *long sword* +5

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Del'Armgo Noble and Bodyguards D

Pharius Del'Armgo, Noble Priestess (level 8): AC 1; Move 12; HD 8; hit points 39; #AT 3; Dmg 3 (x 3), + possible *slow*; THAC0 16; MR 66%;

Weapon: Purple Tentacle Rod

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *curse, detect good, cause fear*

Second Level: *chant, hold person, silence 15' radius*

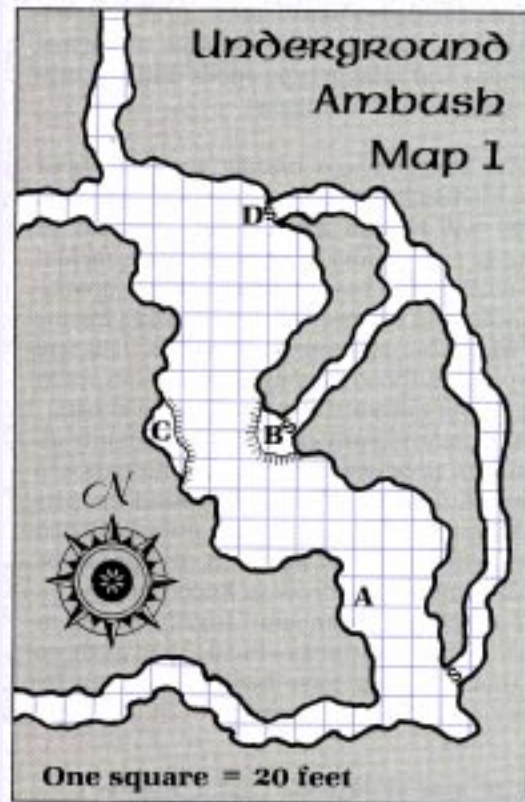
Third Level: *dark wings, animate dead, stone shape*

Fourth Level: *acid bolt, free action*

6 fighters (2nd level): AC 3; Move 12; HD 2; hit points 10 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +2; THAC0 16; MR 54%

Weapons: *Long swords* +2

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (all once/day)



If the ambush ends in the death of Hadrogh, the drow persevere in trying to kill the PCs (they're dark elves, after all). However, if the battle goes badly, Pharius commands that her lackeys maintain the assault while she uses her *dark wings* spell to fly up and away. (There is a secret passage near the roof of the canyon where she will exit, and make her way back to Menzoberranzan). Of course, if a PC manages to stop her, than the rulers of Barrison Del'Armgo will have no means of knowing the results of their ambush.

The second and third level drow are ruffians and mercenaries, caring little (and knowing less) about the identity of those who hired them. If any of the higher level drow can be forced to talk, or if Pharius is slain and her body searched, proof of Barrison Del'Armgo's involvement can be ob-

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tained. (The priestess wears the House insignia on a medallion under her armor, and her high level drow assistants have seen it.)

Only Pharius, however, knows the true goal of the mission: it is to find the powerful spells that Hadrogh has brought into the Underdark—for whichever house gains access to that magic will have gained a commanding advantage in the seething tension of the dark elf city.

Encounter 3: Putrid Pedipalpi

These huge whip scorpions are drawn to the smell of the mules. They creep up against the rear of the caravan, where they can remain as far from the lantern glow as possible. It is this succulent prey that has drawn the exceptionally large band (of four creatures) together.

Giant Pedipalpi (4): AC 2; Move 6; HD 4 + 4; hit points 18 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-8; THAC0 17; MR Nil

Special Attacks: grip, poison gas

The monsters attack by first releasing their clouds of noxious gasses (save versus poison or fight at -3 on all combat rolls for 1-6 rounds). They charge for the lizards, but even their dim intellects realize that PCs standing in their path are more dangerous. Thus, they attempt to attack the characters first.

If Hadrogh perceives that his second-to-last lizard (as they are in line) is in danger, he becomes quite hysterical, demanding that the PCs protect the beast—or retrieve it, if it has been dragged off by the scorpions. However, the wily merchant quickly recovers his wits, explaining that the vintage of wine in that lizard's casks is the most priceless anywhere in Toril. (Actually, however, the casks contain a whiskey so cheap and vile that its

rough nature is immediately apparent to anyone so unfortunate as to catch a whiff of its “bouquet.”)

If Hadrogh Perishes during The Journey:

If he is brought to 0 hit points or less, the DM should let him live long enough to gasp out a few last words. He will try to sketch out the rest of the route for the PCs. He even shares the command word that opens the secret door into Mantol-Derith (“Erakasyne”).

He warns them to “Beware the Mercenary—but you must meet him, for he is the one who will pay for your treasures!”

Even in death, Hadrogh does not mention the secret scrolls hidden in the saddlebags of his eighth lizard.





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The Marketplace of Mantol-Derith

Located more than three miles beneath the surface of the earth, this network of caverns is nevertheless a crossroads of commerce, news, and even migration among the denizens of the Underdark. It is a place where creatures of different races—often peoples separated by a long history of bloodfeud and racial war—come together in uneasy truce, trading for goods that would otherwise be unobtainable in the lightless passages snaking their way through the rock and dirt of the world.

Mantol-Derith is located equidistant from Menzoberranzan and Blindingstone, and is one of the few places where members of two underground races—the drow and the svirfneblin—will meet without coming to blows. And even here, in the market, the relations between these two ancient enemies are maintained with as much distance as possible, each group having a separate cave for use as a warehouse.

Two other cultures are represented in Mantol-Derith, and if they do not share as much mutual hate as the deep gnomes and the drow, their members enter Mantol-Derith with weapons close at hand, and eyes searching for the first indications of treachery. No law here is greater than the sword—though there is a tradition of negotiation and discussion that often overrides initial tendencies toward violence.

The latter two groups are the duergar—the dark dwarves—hailing from caverns even below those of the drow and the deep gnomes, and brave surface dwellers who challenge the darkness in search of the tremendous profits that can be gained here—for those who come back alive.

The Market of the Underdark is not a well-known gathering place. Its exact location is known to only a select few, and its

very existence is a closely guarded secret. Rumors exist among the homelands of all four of the groups using the market—strange, obscure tales of mysterious merchants and menacing transactions. Yet it is common knowledge that these transactions yield exotic goods that would not otherwise be available to the folk of the surface or the depths—therefore, the rumors are not vigorously challenged or pursued.

Those members of each culture who have access to the markets of Mantol-Derith have an advantageous position regarding wealth and status within their respective societies. For this reason, “membership” in the exclusive bazaar is hard to come by—and closely guarded, once it is possessed. Those who know the password that provides access to the private cavern complex guard that knowledge jealously, and pass it along only to those on whom they wish to bestow a great gift—or valuable bribe.

The caverns of the market can be approached from above (by surface dwellers) through dry, dark tunnels, or via a winding and rapid underground stream; those dwelling below Mantol-Derith (primarily the duergar) can reach it only by crossing the waters of a deep and deceptively placid subterranean lake. Routes for the drow and the svirfneblin reach the marketplace via any of the three routes, though the merchants of both races prefer the dry, overland route.

The start of this adventure provides for an approach to the market in the company of the surface-dwelling trader, Hadrogh Prohl. He is one of about a half dozen surface dwellers who know of the bazaar’s existence. The racial makeup of his bodyguards will not draw any unusual remarks or notice, regardless of whether he has recruited his team from Menzoberranzan, Baldur’s Gate, or anywhere else.

Note: In this chapter, the market is presented in some detail. Though the PCs might not

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have cause to visit the entire area during the course of this adventure, it is a setting that might prove useful for future adventures in the Underdark. It is particularly well suited for use as an avenue to introduce surface dwellers to the chaos of Menzoberranzan—and give them a plausible reason for being there.

Entering The Marketplace

The network of Mantol-Derith is displayed on Map 2. The caravan approaches down the “Black Chasm” in the northwest portion of the map. Hadrogh makes no indication that they are approaching the journey’s destination, though astute characters may notice that he is paying extra careful attention to their surroundings during the last twenty-four hours. Then, finally, he claps his hands with glee and announces “We made it!” He asks the PCs to wait for him at the base of the chasm while he scrambles up a narrow, twisting trail that leads to a ledge about forty feet overhead.

Taking care that the PCs do not eavesdrop, Hadrogh approaches a narrow slit in the stone wall and softly speaks the command word: “*Erakasyné*.” The secret portal softly and magically slides open, revealing a dark tunnel leading into the labyrinth that makes up the underground bazaar.

The secret doors at all three entrances to the Mantol-Derith are identical; they will open to the same command word. Without that command, they do not budge. Each can absorb a full 100 hp of damage before collapsing—and when it does collapse, the door explodes, inflicting 10d6 hp of damage on anyone within 30’ of the outside of the door. Saving throws versus breath weapons reduce the damage by half; anyone on the inside of the door is not affected.

However—though the battering is heard

within the bazaar—there is no attempt to defend this entrance against illicit intrusion. That defense is saved for later, at the doors barring the two entrances to the actual cavern itself.

Within the outer door, a cavern winds toward the bazaar, meandering through a number of twists and turns. At one point it branches, with an aisle moving off to the north, and another continuing straight ahead. The straight ahead route leads to another door. Beyond lies the riverside landing that is sometimes used by subterranean boatmen.

The path to the north leads to doom. If the PCs for some reason head down this corridor, and one of them successfully examines the walls or floor for traps, they notice tiny holes at irregular intervals—beginning 30’ down this diverging corridor. The holes continue for a full 200’, up to the point where the corridor ends in a cave-in.

However, as soon as an intruder has traveled past 120’ of the trap (i.e. is a 150’ into the corridor) the trap is magically activated. Each hole spews hellish flame into the corridor, inflicting 6d6 hp of damage initially, and an equal amount on every round that the target remains in the area of effect. Saving throws versus breath weapon must be made with a -4 penalty because of the pervasive nature of the effect; if a save is successful, the character suffers half damage for that round.

The real entrance to the market, naturally, lies through another secret door—concealed in the wall opposite the northern path to doom. The route beyond the concealed portal is the true path to the Mantol-Derith complex. This secret door works with the same command word (or explodes with the same damage) as the outer door. (The same applies to the door leading into the southern end of the marketplace cavern.)

When one of these portals is opened (or is

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destroyed), a straight corridor is revealed, leading into the darkness ahead.

The Inner Sanctum of Mantol-Derith

Even here, having gained access to the inner sanctum, the PCs will not find their advance easy if they are not accompanied by the merchant. If Hadrogh is present, however, he is boisterous and cheerful at the knowledge that the destination lies just ahead. He even shouts "Ahoy!" down the passage before the party.

The corridor goes straight, with a ceiling 10' overhead and smooth walls a good 12' apart. Then, abruptly, the ceiling soars away and the merchant caravan finds itself walking along the bottom of a deep, stone-lined trench. The sides are 50' high and made of sheer stone that has been chipped free of all but the most minimal hand- and foot-holds.

A pair of bridges span the trench at the top, and each of these is garrisoned by a party of guards; roll a d4 for each group to determine which type.

- 1) 3 drow
- 2) 6 svirfneblin
- 3) 4 duergar
- 4) 3 ogres

Pertinent game statistics for these sentries can be found under **Guard Patrols**, below.

If the party has used violence to gain access to the market, they will still only see the bands of guards noted above; three additional groups will be lurking just out of sight beside each bridge, however, so that all four groups of guards are present to guard each bridge.

The best way to get up to the floor level of the chamber is for the entire caravan to gather in the 60' section of corridor below and between the two bridges. Though this looks like the stone floor throughout the

rest of the corridor, it is in reality a huge *flying carpet*.

It can carry tremendously heavy loads, but it can only rise up and drop down in place—it cannot be used to fly around the market cavern, for example. The command word "*aurosythe*" sends it upward; "*durrastyn*" sends it back down again. It takes two rounds to make the 50' journey, regardless of direction.

Guard Patrols

In addition to the guards at the bridges, patrols of the same composition as the bridge garrisons are present in the central cavern of the market—three patrols, each, of 1-4 above.

Drow (three 4th level fighters): AC 0; Move 12; HD3; hit points 21 (average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 11; MR 56%

Weapons: *long swords* + 3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

Svirfnebli (six 3rd level fighters): AC 2; Move 9; HD 3 + 6; hit points 20 each; #AT 1 (or 2, w/ darts); Dmg 1d4 + 2 (or 1-3 + special); THAC0 17; MR 20%

Special Darts: +2 to hit; 40' range; save versus poison if struck—failure *stuns* a victim for 1 round, slows for 4 more rounds

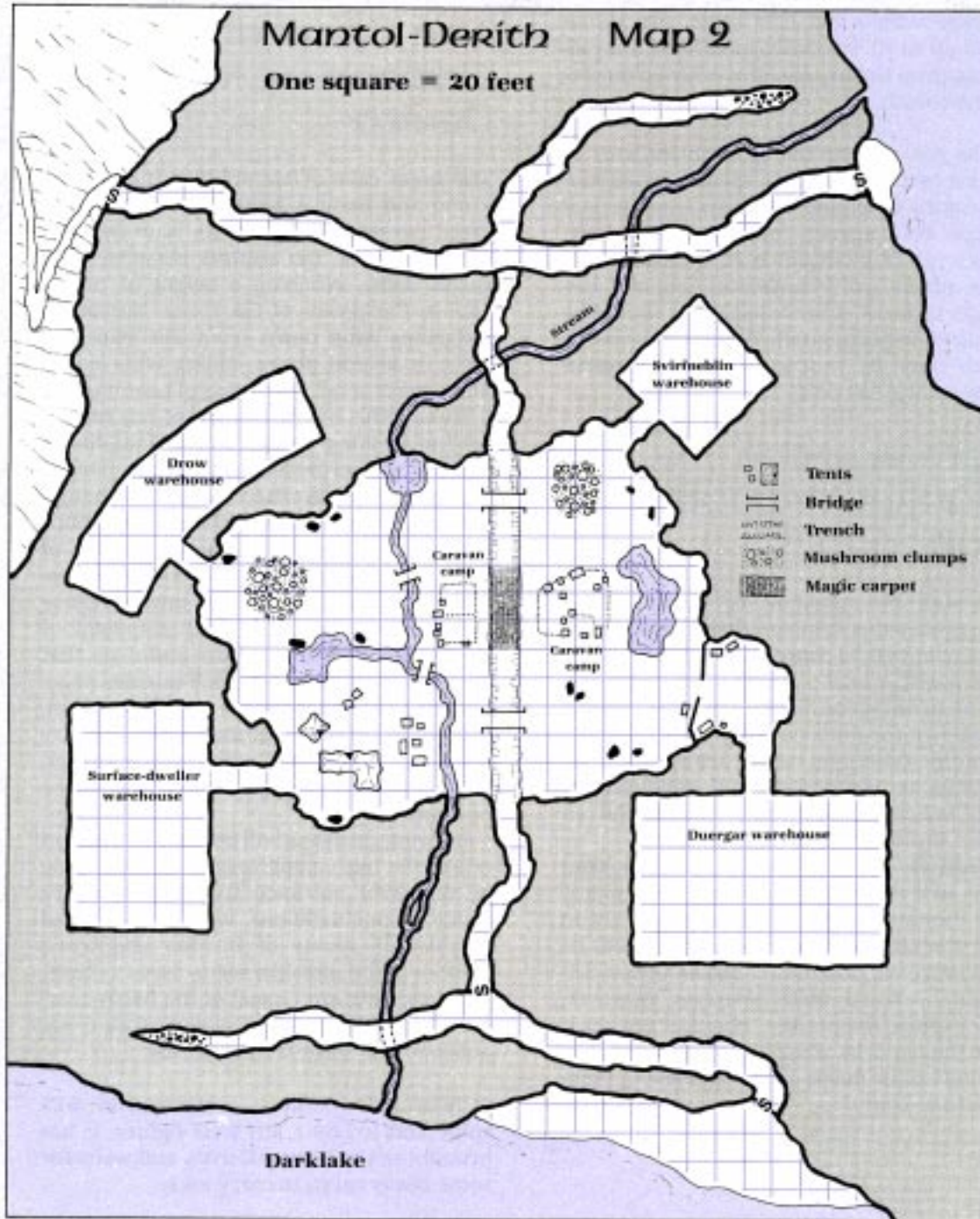
Spell-Like Abilities (illusionist): *blindness*, *blur*, *change self* all once/day; radiate *non-detection*

Duergar (10): AC 4; Move 6; HD 2 + 4; hit points 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 1 with short crossbow (range 30/60/90') or shortsword; THAC0 17


Ogres (3): AC 5; Move 9; HD 4 + 1; hit points 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 17

Each ogre has a satchel containing 12 rocks, each of which inflicts 1-10 points of

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damage with a hit. The ogres can throw them up to 30' (no range modifiers); they also can drop them quite effectively on targets in the trench.

The guards, and the other inhabitants of the subterranean bazaar, speak a crude mixture of the Common tongue and the sign language tradespeech of the Underdark. Creatures of intelligence 10 or higher will have no difficulty understanding the language; those of lesser intelligence should be required to make Intelligence Ability checks when they try to grasp complex explanations or negotiations.

Entering The Market Without Hadrogh

Although the denizens of Mantol-Derith take great pains to insure their privacy, they are a commercial concern. Thus, if someone enters with a load of goods, and seems prepared to do some bargaining, the powers that be (in the persons of the four Chief Negotiators, described below) are willing to let bygones be bygones—even if some of their own henchmen have perished in the attempt to stop the PCs illicit entrance.

Hadrogh Prohl is well-known and liked here, so if the PCs can convince a negotiator that they served Prohl faithfully, and are in fact executing his last request, they will be well-received. If the party can be persuaded to throw down their weapons, however, and explain themselves, chances are good that they will be able to talk someone into raising up the magic carpet and giving them a place to camp.

The Central Cavern of Mantol-Derith

The great cave of Mantol-Derith itself is a grand and natural grotto, with four excavated caverns nestled in its four corners. The ceiling of the central chamber is a grand dome, reaching a height of nearly 100' in the center of the room. Numerous stalactites hang down from this sweeping roof, in several places joining with stalagmites to form tall and graceful columns.

Though this is in fact a market, it is not the kind of bustling bazaar that one might encounter in a crowded surface city. This is the kind of place where deals take hours, even days, to close—and where negotiations are conducted privately, beyond the view of those who have no business knowing. (A notable exception to this is the buying frenzy that occurs when a duergar shipment of steel weaponblades arrives—and even that involves relatively subdued, if intense, negotiations.) Though there are more than a hundred individuals in the marketplace at any one time, their voices are muted and even their movements are planned so as to make no sound.

Arriving caravans will be offered space in one of the two camps, located to either side of the deep entrance trench. These are crude accommodations, with loosely-roped corrals for beasts of burden and worn patches in the mosslike soil to serve as beds. The following are typical of the hardy merchants who brave the Underdark to carry goods to and from Mantol-Derith.

- 1) Svirfneblin caravan, comprised of 3-24 rothe and led by a 5th level fighter. It has brought salt to Mantol-Derith, and waits for some heavy cargo to carry away.
- 2) A drow courier, perhaps a fighter/magic



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user of levels 5/5. He carries a portable hole, and is completely secretive about his purpose.

3) A group of duergar spider-riders (5 gray dwarves, each riding a huge tarantula). They have captured a young cave fisher and have the thing in a cage. They are looking for a buyer.

4) A human priest of 11th level, devoted to an evil god and seeking to exchange a high level spell (in scroll form) for a great deal of cash—or perhaps a powerful magical item of evil from the drow.

There is only a 75% chance that a merchant will be here at any given time—the DM should check whenever a new caravan arrives. On a 25% or lower roll, there is more than one additional merchant here.

A tax is assessed on all departing merchants, equalling 5% of the total funds exchanged by that merchant during his stay in the market. The merchant is not searched to determine how much he has, but the amount is determined by the best estimates of two of the four Chief Negotiators (see below); one of whom is selected by the merchant, the other by the remaining three negotiators.

Pools of water are scattered about the chamber, and in several places waterfalls spill from high up the walls—and once even from a chute in the ceiling—to feed these pools, and the small stream that leads from the southwest corner of the chamber. The trickling and splashing of these narrow rivulets is the constant background noise in Mantol-Derith.

The walls of the cavern glitter in any kind of light, reflecting brilliant crystals and myriad semi-precious stones. In places on the floor, sheets of quartz have been smoothed into a marble-like sheen, and these stones are used to pave wide walkways throughout

the chamber—as well as to make up the bridges across the central trench.

Four large groves of fungus-forest also flourish in the moist cavern. Each of these grows before one of the four side caverns—and each has become a network of selling stalls for the goods of that particular group. Beneath the overhanging canopy of giant mushroom caps—among the forest of dense, woody stalks that supports that canopy—the sellers have prepared small booths, private rooms (carved into the mushroom stalks), and ornate displays of some of their more unique or popular items.

Each of the artificially-excavated caverns is claimed by one of the four groups using Mantol-Derith: the drow, svirfnebli, duergar, and surface dwellers. Though none of them is sealed by a door or gate, each is watched by an alert patrol of guards, rotated every few hours to insure alertness. The individual contents of each of the warehouse caves—together with the goods offered for sale by each of the four trading groups—are explained below.

The Covenants of Mantol-Derith

Even in the Underdark there is honor among thieves—and this might be the motto of Mantol-Derith. There are only a few prohibited acts here, but they are *rigidly* prohibited. Anyone who attempts to violate one of these tenets will most likely be caught; and if caught, he will be shown no mercy. (He will be shown the lake, however, including its bottom—which the offender will be sent to visit, wrapped in heavy iron chains.)

The prohibited acts:

Overt thievery. The goods in Mantol-Derith are carefully watched by their guards. In addition, each of the mushroom grove stalls is studded with shriekers; if anything is removed from a display by someone



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not attuned to that market, the shriekers will shriek.

Disguise of goods for barter. The use of illusions or phantasms to improve the apparent worth of objects sold, or used to purchase—or even simple counterfeiting, such as plating copper pieces with gold, is considered as bad as outright theft.

Use of magic or psionics to aid negotiation. Again, this is considered the same as robbery, and there are enough magic detections, proofs against charms, and the like to insure that this is a very risky proposition.

As far as lies spoken during the course of negotiation, the rule is “Let the buyer beware!” A merchant can make any kinds of claims he wants to, without being held to them. Those who deal in the Mantol-Derith are advised to carefully examine any purchased items before the deal is closed.

Violators of the actual covenants will, as mentioned, be wrapped in chains and thrown into the lake. If the powers-that-be in the market decide that the thief and his party entered the market for the purpose of violating the covenant, then all the companions of the sentenced one may face a similar punishment. The burden of proof, incidentally, rests on the convict’s companions—they are assumed to be guilty, and must prove their innocence.

By tradition, all transactions take place at the stall of the seller. If a trade is involved—for example, drow trading gems to the svirfnebli in exchange for salt—then the party that wishes to initiate the deal goes to the stall of the other. Though it has little practical effect, it is considered a matter of some status in the marketplace to draw the customer to you instead of you going to him.

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Market of The Svirfnebli

The deep gnomes maintain a steady commerce in Mantol-Derith; rumor has it that the market was originally formed by the gnomes, though its origins are lost in antiquity so it is doubtful that the truth will ever be known.

The gnomish portion of the market is known for several things: gems (of course); magical items that are made of, or affect, stone and earth; and, finally, salt. Ironically, it is the latter product that has given the svirfnebli their important status in the bazaar—for they have cornered the market on salt in this portion of the Underdark. Whenever the gnomes excavate the stuff, they keep its location a carefully guarded secret (indeed, none of the gnomes in Mantol-Derith knows the location of the mines; gnomes who do know are forbidden to go to places where they could conceivably be captured by enemies.)

The Stalls

The deep gnomes do their business in a cluster of giant mushrooms outside the mouth of their warehouse cavern. The overhanging ceiling of spongy fungus is a good 7' high, out of consideration for the taller customers. However, the stems of three of the larger fungi have been hollowed out with 3' high niches for the merchants. Rugs are placed on the spongy moss outside, making comfortable sitting for the customers.

The three big mushrooms containing the stalls are very woody in nature, not easily broken into or smashed (AC 8; 40 hp each). Each can hold two gnomes comfortably, and has a tiny escape tunnel in the floor. If necessary, the gnomes can quickly drop out of sight and scurry back to the warehouse; the tunnels are too narrow for any creature

larger than a gnome to follow.

The largest of the stalls is used for sales of salt. It contains several small portions of the valuable substance; larger orders are brought from the warehouse as needed. The other stalls are used to sell gems and magical items—however, those items remain in the warehouse until a deal is close. Then, they are brought out individually (by the chief negotiator only).

The chief negotiator and merchant of the svirfneblin contingent is Kassawar Plickentint—a shrewd wheeler and dealer with a keen eye for value and a poker face that guarantees whoever sits across the mat from him will not know what he is thinking.

Kassawar Plickentint, Chief Negotiator for the deep gnomes (8th level priest): AC -4; Move 9; HD 8 + 6; hit points 42; #AT 1 (or 2, w/ darts); Dmg 1d4 + 4 (or special); THAC0 13; MR 45%; AL LN

Special Acid Darts (6): Range 40'; 2-8 hp Dmg or eats 3" hole in solid metal armor.

Crystal Caltrops (8): These will be crushed if stepped on; also they can be thrown or dropped. Creates 10' wide gas cloud (save versus poison or lose consciousness for 1-12 turns); cloud dissipates in 2 rounds.

Spell-Like Abilities (illusionist): *blindness*, *blur*, *change self* all once/day; *radiate non-detection*; summon creatures from the Elemental Plane of Earth once/day

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *detect magic*; *emotion read*; *light*

Second Level: *mind read*; *silence 15' radius*; *zone of truth*

Third Level: *dispel magic*; *invisibility purge*; *water breathing*

Fourth Level: *detect lie*; *thought broadcast*

Magical items: amulet of proof against ESP

Kassawar has several lower level assistants working in the fungus-grove stall, but those gnomes are mostly devoted to the selling of salt. Deals involving the selling of



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more valuable items, or any transaction involving the purchase by the svirfneblins of the goods of others, will be handled by Kas-sawar himself.

Salt is dispensed in blocks, or crushed, in leather sacks, and will fetch approximately 5 gp per pound; twice that much for small quantities (under 20#) and half that much for bulk shipments (500# +).

Gems, though a svirfneblin trademark, are not the best deal in Mantol-Derith—primarily because the deep gnomes will not part with any truly fine stones, and they cherish even the mediocre examples so much that they can't help but ask exorbitant prices (two or three times what the stone might be worth in a typical surface market, or even in the darkened streets or crowded bazaar of Menzoberranzan). Conversely, however, those who offer to pay the gnomes in gems will find their currency welcomed by the svirfnebli, and may find themselves getting a better deal than if they had tried to pay with gold.

The magical items of the svirfnebli form a category of goods that brings customers from all over the Underdark (and beyond). The objects do not come cheap—indeed, ten or twelve sales a year is the typical exchange of these goods, and this is quite satisfactory to the gnomes.

Several items that are available at this point in time are listed here. The prices listed are the asking price, followed by the very minimum that the object will be sold for. (The latter figure will only be reached by truly skilled negotiation on the part of the player character.)

Figurines of wondrous power: Those present include each of the three types of *ivory goat* (10,000/4,000 gp); an *ebony fly* (40,000/18,000 gp); and an *onyx dog* (10,000/3,500 gp)

Ioun stones: (2,500/1,500 gp) All types are available; the player will not know what he's

getting until the purchase is made; however, it will not be a burned out stone.

Stone of controlling earth elementals (6000/2500 gp)

Stone of good luck (12,000/5,000 gp)

Pick of earth parting (20,000/16,000 gp)

Brooch of number numbing (30,000/21,000 gp)

*Key of entrance** (20,000/9,000 gp)

*Oil of stone passage*** (4,000/3,000 gp)

* This is a unique device that can be used to open any door made of stone, when the key is placed against the door and a command word is spoken. It will work on doors weighing up to 800 pounds; it will not, however, swing open a huge fortress gate (nor the gates to Blindingstone, for that matter). The key will overcome all magic and mundane locks; however, it has a total of 25 charges, and after these are used it becomes useless.

**This oily paste allows passage through stone, much the way that a *potion of gaseous form* allows a solid being to enter the realm of air. An object coated with this oil can be literally pushed into an area of solid stone, with no more difficulty than it could be pushed into water, for example. A living being coated with the oil can move freely through stone at a speed equal to half its swimming or flying speed (whichever it chooses). On a living creature, the oil will last for 3-18 turns; on an inanimate object it is permanent. An individual who senses the oil beginning to lose its potency (after the 3-18 turns are up) has 3-18 rounds to emerge from the stone. If he cannot, he perishes, and is treated as if slain by a *disintegrate* spell.

The Warehouse

This large cavern is where the deep gnomes keep their valuable objects for barter, as well as the goods and gold that they take in

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trade. It is similar in floorspace to the other four warehouses—but its ceiling is a little more than 3' above the floor!

Most of the warehouse is full, mostly with salt. Blocks of the stuff are stored in huge masses, forming narrow and winding corridors between them. In places, loose salt is mounded on the floor, and in others it is stored in the leather sacks that are used to sell it in smaller quantities.

Beyond all the salt—and, in fact, screened by a secret door of salt blocks that must be moved out of the way—are several chests containing the magical items, gems, and cash reserves of the mercantile. The magical items listed above are here, as are some 500,000 worth of gems, cut and uncut—though few of them are really exceptional examples—and several chests containing upwards of 40,000 gp worth of platinum and gold pieces.

The long access tunnel is 20' wide and 40' long but, like the cavern itself, it is only 3' high. A party of guards maintains constant position at the inner end of the tunnel, prepared to challenge (and, if necessary, attack) anyone daring to enter. With very rare exceptions, the only ones allowed in here are those deep gnomes who are officially part of the Mantol-Derith garrison.

The guard party numbers 14; 12 of whom are typical guards. The last two are more powerful, however; one is the commander of the fighters, and the other is a specialist, able to summon an earth elemental upon his command.

Svirfnebli (12 3rd level fighters): AC 2; Move 9; HD 3 + 6; hit points 20 each; #AT 1 (or 2, w/ darts); Dmg 1d4 +2 (or 1-3 + special); THAC0 17; MR 20%

Special Darts: +2 to hit; 40' range; save versus poison if struck—failure stuns a victim for 1 round, slows for 4 more rounds

Spell-Like Abilities (illusionist): *blindness*,

blur, *change self* all once/day; radiate *non-detection*

Badrock Feerayton, Earthmaster: AC -1; Move 9; HD 6 + 6; hit points 46; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 +3; THAC0 14; MR 35%

Spell-Like Abilities (illusionist): *blindness*, *blur*, *change self* all once/day; radiate *non-detection*

Once per day Badrock can summon a 16 Hit Die Earth Elemental; the elemental arrives the following round, and will attack without Badrock's concentration.

Earth Elemental: AC 2; Move 6; HD 16; hit points 80; #AT 1; Dmg 4-32; THAC0 7; Special Defense: + 2 weapon needed to hit

Horriwart Tlinglicken (9th level warrior): AC -4; Move 9; HD 9 + 6; hit points 51; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 +4; THAC0 8; MR 40%

Spell-Like Abilities (illusionist): *blindness*, *blur*, *change self* all once/day; radiate *non-detection*

Equipment: *short sword* +3

Crystal Caltrops (5): These will be crushed if stepped on; also they can be thrown or dropped. Creates 10' wide gas cloud (save versus poison or lose consciousness for 1-12 turns); cloud dissipates in 2 rounds.


The deep gnomes will fight courageously to keep intruders from entering their warehouse. The entire cavern is protected by *anti-magic* barriers that prevent spells (including *clairvoyance* and so on) from penetrating into the chamber. Passage by magical transport (such as *teleportation*) is also blocked by this barrier.

If the defense seems to be failing, however, the svirfnebli will still try to prevent their treasures from falling into the attackers' hands. A backup force of 4 deep gnomes guards the treasure, remaining ready in the warehouse in the event of this. When commanded to do so, they will quickly pour the





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contents of several bottles over the chests—these contain *oil of stone passage*. Once the chests are coated, they will be pushed downward, sinking approximately six or eight feet below the surface of the solid stone floor. The flasks will be emptied, so there will be no further oil in the room.

The treasure guards can be given the command to send the chests under by either Gardock or Horriwart; if both of these gnomes are slain, and an enemy makes it into the warehouse, the gnomes will decide on their own to hide the treasure (1-6 rounds after of the warehouse is entered).

Duergar Quarter

The gray dwarves maintain a vigorous presence in Mantol-Derith, cantankerously bartering with traveling merchants and squabbling with residents of the other quarters about such things as water use (a steady bone of contention with the deep gnomes), excessive noise, smoke and odors (especially the drow incense) and anything else that serves as an excuse for a fight.

Indeed, the duergar make such obnoxious neighbors that the other races would be tempted to drive them from Mantol-Derith—except for one important fact: The gray dwarves make the finest steel blades in the Underdark.

Duergar blades are the starting component of the finest drow swords, and many enchanted weapons on the surface have begun with the silvery cold, razor-sharp product of a gray dwarf forge. Blades long and short, broadsword and rapier, axe and dagger—all are brought to Mantol-Derith in well-defended caravans. As a result, the market is one of the premier locations in the Underdark for the trading of such rare acquisitions.

The duergar are ruthless auctioneers, and will exploit the existing demand as much as possible before selling their weapons, playing off drow against human, ogre against

deep gnome. In this way they sell their goods quickly, and gain the maximum profit.

The duergar here represent an outpost from their distant realm of Gracklstugh, a teeming city located even deeper in the earth than Menzoberranzan and Blingdin-stone. The gray dwarves travel a portion of their journey by boat, crossing the Darklake in narrow barges to landings ten miles away. From there, Gracklstugh is still a hundred miles of rough passage away—indeed, no drow, deep gnome, or human knows precisely where the city of the duergar lies.

The Stalls

Unlike the other markets, the duergar quarter is open for business only on a sporadic basis—based on the arrival of the weapons and the speed with which they are dispersed to the various purchasers. When there are no goods available, Gradroc Gant—the Chief Negotiator for the duergar—and his personal bodyguards lounge around outside of the cavern, conversing (albeit truculently) with anyone who happens by.

Gradroc will know when the next shipment is expected, and this information can usually be pried out of him for a price. If the curious visitor is crude enough to pay in cash, the duergar holds out for about 100 gp. He is more intrigued, however, with liquor and exotic foodstuffs—and will often part with the information for considerably less value than the cash price.

Once someone learns about the arrival of the duergar caravan, naturally, the information becomes a closely guarded secret by that person—he expects everyone else to go and find out for themselves.

Gradroc Gant, Gray Dwarf Chieftain (9th level fighter): AC -2; Move 12; HD 9 + 18; hit points 72; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6 + 6; THAC0 8; AL LE

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Equipment: *vorpal short sword +4*; *boots of speed*; *amulet of magic resistance 30%*, against spells levels 1-6 only.

Duergar (10): AC 4; Move 6; HD 2 + 4; hit points 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 +1 with short crossbow (range 30/60/90') or shortsword; THAC0 17; AL LE

The 10 duergar are always on duty in the duergar quarter. Gradroc is always present if there are goods for sale; if not, he must be summoned from the cave. On the average, he is 50% likely to come out—and rudely demand why his important work has been interrupted, though most likely he was napping or drinking.

The shipments from Gracklstugh arrive about 6-8 times a year. Usually, they are sold out within a few days of their arrival (1-6 days). If a randomly-determined arrival is required, the next caravan will arrive in 2d20(-4) days, with a zero or less meaning that the shipment is just around the bend.

The caravan will consist of 11-30 huge spiders, each burdened with a leather-wrapped bundle of steel. The blades are polished and sharp, but have not been fitted with hilts, pommels, or other attachments—they are just the bare steel, with a framework for the attachment of accessories. (Indeed, in the case of the drow especially, the enchantments wrought upon the blade will be performed before a hilt is woven to the steel.)

The caravans vary in the amount and type of goods that are delivered, but several generalizations are possible. The following is a typical inventory for about 10 spiders; multiply appropriately for larger caravans. Prices listed are for individual weapons, and indicate where Gradroc will start the bidding; he may ask even more if there are relatively few samples of that item in the current shipment!

30-180 longsword blades	(200 gp)
30-180 shortsword blades	(100 gp)
10-120 rapier blades	(120 gp)
10-80 broadsword blades	(150 gp)
101-200 dagger blades	(50 gp)
200-1200 pike heads	(30 gp)
1000-6000 arrowheads	(10 gp)
10-60 axeblades	(200 gp)

A strong contingent of fighters arrives with each caravan, remaining in Mantol-De-rith until the sale is over. They include, typically, the following warriors:

Gray dwarf captain (7th level fighter):

AC -1; Move 6; HD 7 + 14; hit points 52; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 5; THAC0 11; AL LE

Equipment: *short sword +4*

Duergar veterans (10): AC 4; Move 6; HD 2 + 4; hit points 14 each; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6 +1 (shortsword) or 1d6 (short bow); THAC0 17; AL LE

Young duergar warriors (20): AC 4; Move 6; HD 1+2; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 with shortswords or small crossbows (range 30/60/90); THAC0 19; AL LE

Spider-mounted outriders and mounts (10 each):

RIDERS: AC 4; Move 12; HD 2 + 4; hit points 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 1 with shortsword or lance; THAC0 17; AL LE

MOUNTS: Giant Tarantulas: AC 4; Move 12; HD 4; hit points 21 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 17; AL N; spiders can walk along walls or ceiling at full movement; can leap 240' in any direction (with rider); 50% likely, on a successful attack, to stick to victim, allowing automatic hit on each subsequent round





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The Warehouse

The duergar warehouse is a messy and dirty place, fully in keeping with the messy and dirty nature of its occupants. Like the warehouse of the svirfnebli, it is protected by magical wards and barriers to guarantee privacy—no one can *teleport* into the chamber, or use spells or items of scrying to spy upon the area.

Not that there's much to see, in this case. Some thirty or forty duergar live here permanently, squabbling and brawling among themselves when they have no external rivals to focus upon. They keep relatively little treasure here—the spiders of a caravan wait around until after the sale, so that they can take the proceeds back to Gracklstugh when they depart.

Drow Quarter

The drow contingent in Mantol-Derith is controlled by Menzoberranzan, which is the nearest dark elf city. Still, that great metropolis is some 25 miles distant, and so the drow who control the markets maintain a good deal of independence from their cousins in the city. The dark elves are recent additions to the market—though they have been here for more than a thousand years, both the duergar and the svirfnebli had traded in Mantol-Derith for centuries before then.

The market represents several opportunities for the hateful and chaotic dark elves—the chance to trade for items that would otherwise be completely unavailable to them.

In return, they offer several types of treasure, available for barter. These include enchanted weapons and armor—useful primarily in the Underdark, of course, though in certain instances such treasures can be taken onto the surface—as well as objects of art, and various types of magical

treasures and spells created by the mages of Menzoberranzan.

The Pavilion

The mushroom market in the drow quarter crouches like a huge spider over the trickling stream coursing through the cavern. Entrance can be gained through any of four doors, one at each point of the compass. No portals guard these entrances, nor are they guarded—anyone in Mantol-Derith is welcome to enter the sweet-smelling den within.

Incense, made from powdered fungus, burns in several niches around the large, circular central room. Unlike the deep gnomes, the drow stall is centered in this one area, where all purchases are resolved. One enters this sanctum through a low arch of mushroom caps; within, the ceiling rises to a little more than 6', so most visitors can stand upright.

All is darkness, at first, but then the faint outlines of faerie fire become apparent, outlining the floor of the central chamber with a shimmering image that first portrays a giant, hideous spider-shape; and then gradually shifts into the outlines of a beautiful female drow. The process is repeated endlessly, alternating every round.

Amid the smoke of the incense, the selling stall is lined with plush moss, forming comfortable couches and chairs around the roughly circular chamber.

The chief negotiator for the drow—in fact, she must approve all sales and purchases—is Yyssidiryl H'tithet, a drow priestess who is attached to no house officially (yet who is very much a creature of Matron Baenre's).

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Yyssisryl H'tithet, Chief Negotiator for the Drow

ARMOR CLASS: 3
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 67
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (dagger + 3)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4 +3
SPECIAL ATTACKS: poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE 76%
SIZE: M
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:
13th level drow priestess
S:13 I:14 W:18 D:11 C:15 CH:13

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *curse, detect good, detect poison, detect snares and pits, sanctuary*
Second Level: *chant, charm person, silence 15' radius, produce flame, wyvern watch*
Third Level: *animate dead, prayer, speak with dead, curse, stone shape*
Fourth Level: *abjure, divination, free action, tongues*
Fifth Level: *air walk, transmute rock to mud*
Sixth Level: *animate object, word of recall*

Yyssisryl is an extremely attractive drow female, unusually voluptuous in shape when compared to the normally slender dark elves. She wears her long white hair free flowing, and is fond of shaking her head to send it cascading around her shoulders and her body. She wears little else beyond her hair—she finds it advantageous to distract those across the negotiation mat from her.

The merchant is unusually lawful for a drow—a fact which is almost a prerequisite for maintaining the drow presence in the

rigidly-governed Mantol-Derith. (The covenants of the market, after all, apply to those who sell there as well as those who buy.) She has commanded the drow presence here for more than a century. She finds the duty enjoyable, being one of the drow who did not care for the seething intrigue and constant savagery of Menzoberranzan.

Not that she doesn't like savagery, however—she is as evil as any drow. It's just that she likes viewing it from a position of control, and in Menzoberranzan—regardless of her achievements in Station—her life and future would always remain subject to the whims of others more powerful.

She is attended in her mercantile center by several guards. These young drow (all males) view the proceedings in the chamber through narrow slits in the hollowed-out bases of some of the mushrooms forming the walls of the negotiating chamber. They will rush out at the sight of a subtle hand signal from Yyssisryl—or on their own initiative, at the sight of trouble.

Guard Captain (fighter/mage level 6/5): AC -1; Move 12; HD 6; hit points 28; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +5; THAC0 11; MR 62%

Weapon: Longsword +5, or handcrossbow with poison darts

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).

Spells Known:

First Level: *sleep, magic missile, light, charm person*

Second Level: *invisibility, web*

Third Level: *fireball*

Drow Guards (four 3rd level fighters):

AC 0; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 17 (average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 12; MR 56%; AL LE

Weapons: *long swords* +3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (all once/day)



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Objects available from Mistress Yyssidiryl include the following. Prices are not subject to negotiation—however, the value assigned to the objects offered the drow in compensation can be haggled over for quite some time, as a means of equalizing the exchange (or maximizing the profit, from Yyssidiryl's point of view.)

Drow Weapons and Armor:

long sword +3 10,000 gp
long sword +4 50,000 gp
long sword +6 100,000 gp
dagger of venom +4 65,000 gp
(this device contains 20 doses
of virulent poison, save at -4)
hand crossbow +3 25,000 gp

adamantite mace +3 12,000 gp
adamantite mace +5 80,000 gp
buckler +2 10,000 gp
buckler +3 35,000 gp
chain mail +3 50,000 gp
chain mail +5 100,000 gp

Magical items:

piwafwi (drow cloak) 10,000 gp
drow boots 10,000 gp
ring of anti-venom 12,000 gp
purple tentacle rod 20,000 gp
red tentacle rod 20,000 gp
jade tentacle rod 30,000 gp
spider wand 25,000 gp
bracers of blinding strike 25,000 gp
driftdisc 20,000 gp
floatchest 5,000 gp
spider mask 8,000 gp

In exchange, Yyssidiryl is interested in a number of things. Most coveted are powerful spells that have not been previously introduced into the Underdark—she will pay great sums for these. Many of them she sells to Matron Baenre for the latter to distribute to deserving mages; a few of the most potent, however, she keeps, or sells secretly in

Menzoberranzan for vast sums.

Other things, more mundane, that intrigue the drow merchant include anything of paper or wood, wine and other alcoholic beverages, sugar, and exotic foodstuffs and spices. She is also responsible for all the salt delivered to Menzoberranzan—typically, the drow make payments in gemstones for the precious preservative. Indeed, Yyssidiryl purchases more than two tons of salt every fortnight—she is Kassawar's best customer.

The Warehouse

The drow warehouse is more of a fortress and living quarters than a storage facility. Since the goods sold by the drow require little space—but a lot of protection—this emphasis is natural. Like the other warehouses, this vast chamber is bounded by wards that prevent the use of *screying* spells into the area, and also that bar magical entrance to, and egress from, the warehouse.

Large and messy cargoes are not kept in the warehouse. Salt, for example, is only purchased (from across the cavern) when a train of rothe has arrived in Mantol-Derith. After the purchase, the beasts are loaded and immediately depart for Menzoberranzan.

Occasionally the drow purchase large amounts of oil, or candlewicks, or pure ores from a caravan arriving in the market. These cargoes will be held outside the warehouse, under the watchful eyes of a drow patrol (use the stats of the patrol guarding the trench, above) until transport can be arranged. Most commonly, such large loads are taken by rothe; occasionally more exotic transport, such as a *flying carpet* or *portable holes* carried by fleet lizard riders, is employed.

Much of the cavern is given over to the luxurious apartments, draped off from each other by fine tapestries or, rarely, a wall

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constructed of wooden boards. Yyssidiryl has the largest, of course, though there are two other apartments that almost equal hers in splendor.

One of these is used by Reftael Jerritril, Yyssidiryl's most regular escort—though he is not her exclusive partner. Reftael is Overlord of the drow warriors in the market cavern—he is a master warrior, and could easily earn a place as weaponsmaster of a high-ranking house if he chose to dwell in Menzoberranzan.

Reftael Jerritril, 14th level drow fighter: AC -4; Move 12; HD 9 + 15; hit points 62; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 + 7; THAC0 2; MR 78%; AL LE

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic*

Equipment: Reftael wields an ink-black *long sword* +5. Instead of a *piwafwi*, he wears a *cloak of invisibility*, and *boots of silence*.

In addition, he keeps in his chambers a drow handbow with several powerful arrows; these include six *bolts* +3, two poisoned bolts (save or die), two bolts with a disabling poison (save at -3 or fall, stunned, for 3-18 rounds), and two *lightning bolt bolts*. The latter will duplicate the effects of a *lightning bolt* spell, inflicting 6d6 of damage.

Reftael is a treacherous partner to Yyssidiryl, for the male is actually in the service of House Barrison Del'Armgo—dread rival of House Baenre. He has been alerted to the arrival of the precious cargo, and has been ordered to insure that the goods (he doesn't know what they are) fall into the hands of his owning house. He will try to arrange for the caravan to proceed to Barrison Del'Armgo's mercantile company, the Brown Mushroom.

The second plush apartment is maintained for the infrequent visits of Jarlaxle, the captain of the Bregan d'Aerthe band of mercenaries. Jarlaxle finds the market to be a comfortable distance from Menzoberranzan—for those occasions when he wishes to arrange a meeting far from the prying eyes of the city.

Of course, he knows that Yyssidiryl has achieved her post through the influence of Matron Baenre; and consequently, he knows that she is a source of information for the matron. Since Jarlaxle's own business is also often performed in the service of Baenre, this arrangement works well. (And, in fact, there have been a few occasions where Jarlaxle has bought the silence of Yyssidiryl with a hefty bribe; he never works for the outright betrayal of House Baenre, but sometimes he takes a job that Matron Baenre would frown upon.)

Despite the fact that they have cooperated in the past, Jarlaxle and the female merchant are bitter and spiteful enemies. The priestess resents the requirement that she provide accommodations for Jarlaxle, and a space for him to do his business; the mercenary, on the other hand, realizes that Yyssidiryl is as greedy and ambitious as any drow, yet she is beyond even such chaotic law as exists in Menzoberranzan. He takes care never to turn his back on her, nor to sample any food or drink that she offers.

If one of them could prove something that would ruin the other, they would not hesitate to use that knowledge; both realize, however, that any such political attack would have to have fast and fatal consequences—else the requisite counterattack might prove even more damaging to the one who initiated the contest.

Other quarters in the drow cavern are used by the drow warriors who are not on duty elsewhere in Mantol-Derith. These are commons rooms, each of the four rooms holding bunks for eight drow. At any given

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them, there will be these drow in each of two rooms (roll a d4 to determine randomly):

In first room: **Drow guards (seven 3rd level fighters):** AC 0; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 17 (average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 12; MR 56%; AL LE

Weapons: *longswords* +3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

In second room: **Drow warriors (six 4th level fighters):** AC 0; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 21 (average); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 11; MR 58%; AL LE

Weapons: *long swords* +3; handbows

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

The drow goods for barter are kept in a locked vault of a room. Only Yyssireryl (of the drow in the market) possesses the key to this chamber; however, she was forced to give one to Jarlaxle upon the Matron Baenre's command.

The treasures located in this room include all of the things listed for sale, above, as well as chests of gems and coins. The latter total something like 250,000 gp worth of gems or jewelry, 50,000 gp worth of platinum pieces and 20,000 gp.

It is protected by several defenses. First, the huge door (weighing 2,000 lb) can only be opened by one of the keys. If the lock is picked, fully three traps must be disarmed — a poison needle, save at -2; a 10' x 10' ceiling block, falling for 6d6 of damage (save versus breath weapon for ½ damage); and a 10d6 *fireball* that will extend in a 30' diameter semi-circle outside the vault door.

Within, the vault is protected by a number of guardians:

Giant spiders (10): AC 4; Move 3, Wb 12; HD 4 + 4; hit points 22 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 17; SA poison (save or die); AL N

The huge arachnids have lined the walls and ceiling of the chamber with their webs, though the floor is clear of the sticky barrier. The spiders will automatically attack any non-drow entering the vault; drow are allowed one round to make the secret hand signal that protects them against attack — any drow not making the signal will be attacked.

The final protection is a magical barrier: Each chest is enchanted with a permanent *detect alignment* spell. If any intelligent being approaches within 3' of a chest, it examines the alignment of that individual. If the alignment is other than chaotic evil, the chest immediately *teleports* to the central chamber of House Baenre, in Menzoberranzan.

Surface-Dwellers' Quarter

This is the most raucous and bustling portion of Mantol-Derith — for this is the area of those who long for the sun, and for the most part have not fully reconciled themselves to life below the surface.

Of all the quarters of the market, this is the one that most resembles a marketplace in a city of humans — a wide variety of goods is offered here, and the negotiations are performed out in the open, often in loud debate. Though very few surface dwellers know of the existence of Mantol-Derith, those who do take advantage of that fact to bring an assortment of goods here, and they invariably depart with a hefty profit to show for their efforts.

The goods from the surface are unique and, often, otherwise unobtainable to the creatures of the Underdark. Items brought down from above include alcoholic beverages of all kinds (with whisky preferred), perfumes, spices, paper and wood, cloth of cotton or silk, and spells that have been de-



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veloped by surface wizards, far removed from the eternal darkness.

The Stalls

The stalls of this quarter almost resemble the tents and pavilions of a city bazaar. Indeed, with its position nearest the waterfall, the rickety structures of this quarter are draped by canvas to keep the interiors dry. Three crude shelters have been formed, each screened from outside view. Two of them contain plank tables, benches, and candles; the third is nicer, with sitting mats, a polished wooden table, a pair of comfortable chairs, and a buffet with decanters of wine and bottles of whiskey.

A group of the ruffians listed below will usually be found in one of the low-class tents, griping and gambling. One of them will be willing to get the Chief Negotiator if someone stops by on official business:

Chief Negotiator Loral Kroul, half-orc and fighter/thief (levels 8/9): AC -2; Move 12; hit points 42; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 5; THAC0 8; AL NE

Equipment: *long sword* +5 (of drow enchantment); *Bolts of Power*—*dart of silencing*; *dart of stunning*, *spider dart*; *drow chain mail* +4; *ring of jumping*; small vial containing 2 doses *dust of disappearance*

Loral is one of the few creatures of the surface world who actually prefers living out of sight of the sun. His disposition, as one might expect, matches this tendency—he is rude, surly, and suspicious to the point of paranoia. For example, he maintains a constant guard outside his bedroom door when he sleeps. Also—and although he does not violate the market's covenant about overt thievery—he has been discovered on more than one occasion rummaging through the belongings of others, convinced that they have stolen something from him. These en-

counters have sometimes resulted in violence, but fortunately for Loral he has a faithful ally in:

Saarduel, human mage (11th level): AC -3; Move 12; hit points 31; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 6 (+ poison); THAC0 15; AL NE
Commonly Remembered Spells:

*First Level: *cantrip*; *charm person*; *magic missile*; *read magic*

*Second Level: *detect invisibility*; *levitate*; *mirror image*; *stinking cloud*

*Third Level: *dispel magic*; *fireball*; *fly*; *suggestion*

*Fourth Level: *detect scrying*; *ice storm*; *wall of fire*

*Fifth Level: *domination*; *passwall*; *transmute rock to mud*

The types of muscle employed in this quarter varies a lot. Humans are preferred, but very few of them want to spend more than a few months in the lightless oppression of the Underdark. Thus, ogres, orcs, and half-orcs have all found gainful employment in Mantol-Derith.

Typical of the bands that might be encountered in the stalls area are:

Ogres (5): AC 5; Move 9; HD 4 + 1; hit points 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 17; AL CE

Each ogre has a satchel containing 12 rocks, each of which will inflict 1-10 points of damage with a hit. The ogres can throw them up to 30' (no range modifiers);

Orcs and half-orcs (10): AC 5; Move 9; HD 2; hit points 11 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 1; THAC0 17; AL NE

Human bullies (seven 5th level fighters): AC 2; Move 9; hit points 33 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 14; AL NE

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The goods currently available from Laral's mercantile include dozens of casks of whiskey and a lesser number of wine. Each sells for 1,000-2,000 gp, depending on the quality (the wine casks are bigger; the price per cask is equal).

Also this quarter of the bazaar maintains a variety of dried peppers and other spices—all of which are foreign to the Underdark. A little seasoning goes a long way, so these items are often sold in small packets for anything from 10 to 100 gp. Perfumes, too, are popular goods from the surface, and a small vial can cost anywhere from 50 to 500 gp.

Laral also keeps a good supply of parchment on hand, in bundles of 10 sheets that he sells for 50 gp. This is another material that underground mages have not been able to make for themselves—yet the ease of writing upon it far exceeds the pages of leather or beaten moss that are used when nothing else is available.

A great portion of Laral's business is the trade of spell components—all sorts of things derived from surface plants and animals that are otherwise unavailable in the Underdark. Though he has limited stockpiles of any single item, he has hundreds of different components. He also has a small selection of scrolls, inscribed with magical spells that are rare in the Underdark. He negotiates the price of these on an individual basis, but always gets at least 5,000 gp per spell level on the scroll. Currently, he has scrolls containing the following spells:

Wizard:

- Fist of Stone* (first level)
- Deepockets* (second level)
- Chaos Shield* (second level)
- Ride the Wind* (second level)
- Alacrity* (third level)
- Dilation I* (fourth level)
- Minor Spell Turning* (fourth level)
- Stoneskin* (fourth level)
- Turn Pebble to Boulder* (fourth level)
- Lower Resistance** (fifth level)

*This spell has never been used in the Underdark, and Laral is biding his time before revealing its existence and trying to sell it—when he does, however, he will try to get 100,000 gp for it.

Priest:

- Weighty chest (first level)
- Mystic Transfer (second level)
- Astral Window (third level)
- Emotion Control (third level)
- Magical Vestments (third level)
- Miscast Magic (third level)
- Compulsive Order (fourth level)
- Control Temperature, 10' Radius (fourth level)
- Mental Domination (fourth level)

The Warehouse


Like the other three private quarters, the warehouse of the surface dwellers is screened by the enchanted barriers insuring privacy and preventing magical intrusions. Here, however, there's not a lot of motivation for someone who doesn't have to enter.

Most of the warehouse is a large, rubble-strewn cave—it's an orc and ogre lair, after all. Extra stockpiles of goods will be carelessly stacked around the walls—except for the whiskey and wine. These casks are stacked in the middle, and since Laral has amusing punishments for those caught raiding the inventory—as well as attractive rewards for those who turn their comrades in for the crime—the rate of pilferage is remarkably low.

The only private room in here is a chamber shared by Laral and Saarduel—it is also where the cash reserves of this mercantile are stored. The door is heavy, made of wooden timbers soaked in creosote and strapped together by iron bars. It has only one lock, but it's a good one—thieves suffer -25% probabilities to their chances to dis-



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cover and remove the poison needle trap there (save versus poison or turn to stone), as well as to open the door. The poison, incidentally, Lalar purchased from the assassin Krecil Treak—it is a less potent version of the stuff that Krecil himself uses. The venom used by Lalar does not poison the victim at the same time it petrifies him!

A pair of ogres stand guard at the door to the chamber whenever Lalar is within; otherwise it is not specifically posted, but it can easily be seen from much of the cavern.

Within the room are several chests, locked but not trapped. They contain a total of 15,000 gp in platinum and gold pieces, and a few bits of jewelry. Lalar has a stash of another 100,000 gp (mostly in gems) but it is buried in a remote passageway, several miles from Mantol-Derith.

The Adventure In Mantol-Derith

After the PCs have arrived, and the mules of the caravan have been raised by the magical elevator to the floor of Mantol-Derith, the party will be given a place in the camp on the western side of the trench—the side shared by the surface-dweller and drow quarters. Here they will be pretty much left alone, since the custom in the market is for the caravaniers to go up to the various quarters and state their business.

However, that is not to say that the PCs will be unobserved. Representatives of each of the quarters will stroll by, conversing with the new arrivals and discreetly examining the lizards and their saddlebags. More than one covetous pair of eyes—whether gray dwarf, deep gnome, drow, ogre, or human—will caress the telltale shape of the casks carried into the Underdark by the lizards.

Most interested in the mission is Yyssiry, Chief Negotiator for the drow. She has been warned, by Matron Baenre, that a hu-

man merchant would be bringing an object of considerable importance into the market. She suspects that this is that mission, and she finds it very difficult to be patient.

Yet Hadrogh (if he's alive) chuckles to the PCs and tells them it's best to let the customers anticipate for awhile. He'll go and talk to them after he's rested. At that, he'll pull out his bedroll and settle down to sleep.

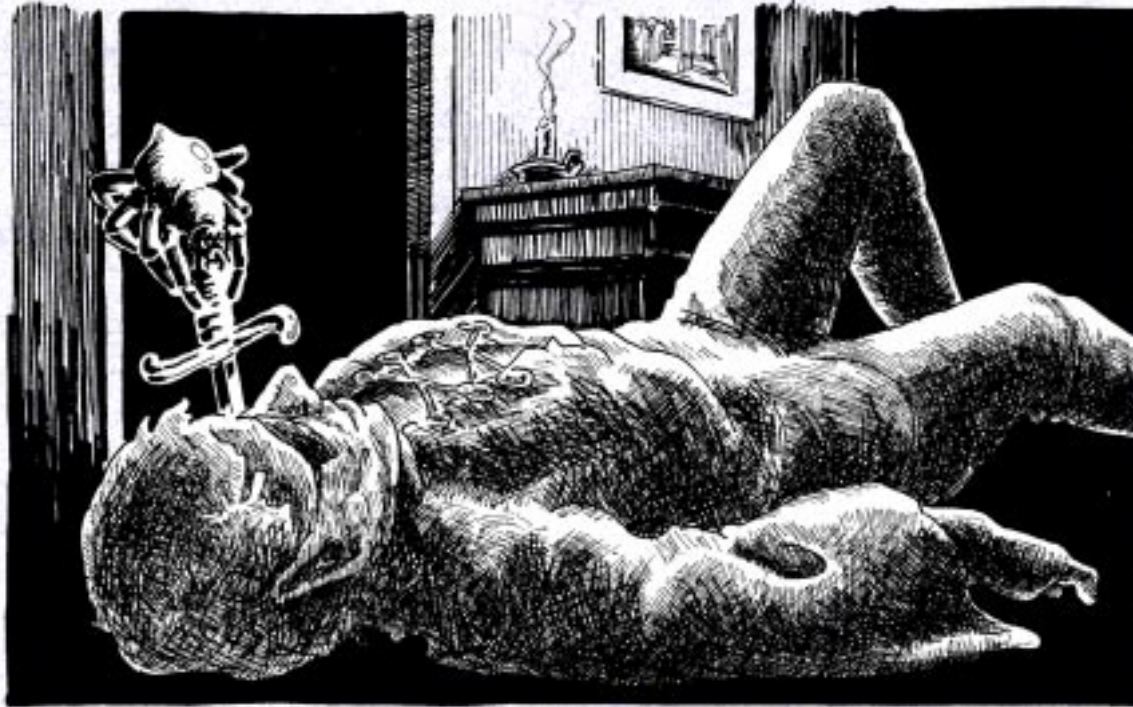
This is the last you, the DM, will roleplay the doughty merchant, since it is regrettably necessary at this point to kill him off in his sleep. He should be discovered after the murder by the PCs, slain by a black-bladed dagger. The weapon is inscribed with a drow glyph on the handle—the sigil displays a black spider with the image of a red dagger thrust through its abdomen. It is not recognizable, even by characters familiar with Menzoberranzan.

The weapon is jutting from Hadrogh's unpatched eye. Apparently it killed him with a single stab, and even if Hadrogh slept in plain sight, no one sees the murderer. Most odd, however: the body is petrified. Hadrogh is a solid stone statue, including his clothing and pillow (but not the dagger).

For the future of the adventure, it's best if his killer goes undetected for the moment—except for the clue of the dagger, which is in fact a red herring. This is what happens:

Krecil Treak is the most feared magic user/assassin in Menzoberranzan, and serves Jarlaxle and the Bregan d'Aerthe. Through a spy serving in the drow quarter of Mantol-Derith (using a messenger bat to send the message), he learns of Hadrogh's arrival. Using his *ring of teleportation*, he travels to the bazaar; behind the screen of his *invisibility* spell (and cloaked in *silence*) he approaches the sleeping merchant. If necessary, he uses *darkness* as a screen or last-minute diversion (blinding someone keeping watch, for example). The dagger

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has been envenomed by a poison of his own invention—it petrifies the victim as it kills. After the murder, he *teleports* away.


At this point, the players will be confronted with several choices by several NPCs—choices that are viable for both drow and non-drow PCs. All of them will eventually place them on the road to Menzoberranzan—and each, too, will involve them in the depths of a plot that could shake the city to its foundations.

The encounters can occur at the PCs instigation, if they go and visit Yyssidiryl or Laral. If they don't, these two NPCs will bide their time for 3-6 days. At this point, one will head over to the PCs followed shortly thereafter by the other. In the case of Jarlaxle, of course, the PCs will have to wait for his arrival—which occurs after Yyssidiryl speaks with the party.

Yyssidiryl represents House Baenre's interests. She knows that Hadrogh brought an extremely important treasure to the market—but she doesn't know what it is! Matron Baenre (who does know) has been very vague on that point—it could be potions concealed as wine, spell components . . . anything. But she has been threatened with dire consequences if it does not reach Menzoberranzan. She had been instructed to send Hadrogh and his bodyguards to the Black Claw Market. There, she promises that the PCs will be paid double the best offer they can obtain in Mantol-Derith.

She is determined to see that the goods arrive in the city safely—and shrewd enough to realize that it was not House Baenre that arranged for the merchant's murder. Her best guess is to trust the PCs, and try to hurry them on their way with the promise that

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the Black Claw will pay generously for their cargo. She doesn't want them to leave anything in Mantol-Derith.

Reftael Jerritrel will approach the PCs as surreptitiously as possible—especially taking care to avoid the attention of Yyssidiryl. The male drow will make no overt statement of his beliefs and alliances. However, he suggests that if the PCs can bring their cargo to the Brown Mushroom Mercantile in Menzoberranzan, the rewards will be far beyond what they can expect from the Black Claw, or from any buyer in Mantol-Derith. He will request that the characters say nothing about his visit, though he will avoid making threats about consequences. Instead, his appeals will be toward the players' greed.

Laral has made a careful guess about the caravan of Hadrogh Prohl. His sources on the surface (which are extensive, and encompass much of Toril) have told him about the shipment of spells destined for the Underdark. He makes a shrewd guess that the spells have been carried by Hadrogh—which makes him the only one in the market who knows what the treasure is, but he's not certain that it will be found in the caravan.

Still, he will watch the drow quarter very carefully, because he suspects that Yyssidiryl will also be very interested in the spells. In fact, he would not be above selling them to her—but first he will try to gain possession of them for himself.

If the PCs depart the market with the caravan, he will send a team of bandits after it—the covenants, after all, apply only within the confines of Mantol-Derith! The thugs will attack from ambush shortly after the muletrain leaves the Market of the Underdark—see Chapter 4 for details.

The svirfnebli and duergar will not be left out of the action, either. The origins of their involvement hail from the auguries of the High Priest of Blindingstone, who foresaw the arrival of sinister powers borne from the surface world on the backs of animals. These powers, in the prophecy, have been tied to the treacherous drow—thus, the connection of the caravan and the interest of Yyssidiryl will not be overlooked. The svirfnebli will make plans to annihilate the caravan at the earliest opportunity.

In this they will enlist the aid of the duergar. Normally the two races would have little interest in cooperative actions. In this case, however, the common enemy—both diminutive races consider the drow to be the bane of the Underdark—and the fact that Mantol-Derith has given the two negotiators a chance to develop a relationship allows a joint attack team to be assembled. They will pursue the caravan and create an ambush in the isolated depths away from the bazaar—this attack, too, is detailed in Chapter 4.

The final party interested in the shipment of Hadrogh Prohl is none other than Jarlaxle, the powerful leader of the Bregan d'Aerthe. Through his spy in the drow quarter, he will keep tabs on the caravan, and only approach after Yyssidiryl has gone to speak with them.

In fact, if the PCs depart quickly (after speaking with Yyssidiryl), Jarlaxle will meet them in the labyrinths of the Underdark. In that case, this encounter with him occurs after they have left Mantol-Derith.

Jarlaxle warns the PCs that plans have been laid to kill them, ambushing them on the way to Menzoberranzan. He encourages the players to trust him, promising to get them to the city more quickly and more safely than if they follow Yyssidiryl's route. (He does, in fact, know a far superior route. If the PCs take his advice they will avoid a

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nasty encounter with the minions of Laral.)

If the PCs agree to accompany him, Jarlaxle informs them that they will have to travel light. He encourages them to leave the lizards and most of the cargo in Mantol-Derith, bringing along only the truly valuable treasure that is concealed in one of the saddlebags. (He doesn't know exactly what that treasure is, but the chorus of interest has

convinced him that it is something magical, and very powerful.)

Following the appeals by these various NPCs, the players should be given a little time for discussion and to make up their minds. With one ally or another, then, they should embark for Menzoberranzan.



Chapter Four

To the City of Dark Elves

The trek from Mantol-Derith to Menzoberranzan is the next stage of the adventure for the PCs. The difficulties of that journey will be determined by the choice of advice the PCs have selected. The Encounters in the chapter are numbered from 1-5; but no party should experience all 5 of them. To determine which ones to use, consult the following list:

If the PCs take Yyssideryl's advice and head for the Black Claw Mercantile, they will have encounters 1, 2, and 3.

If the PCs listen to Reftael, and decide to try and take the goods to the Market of the Brown Mushroom, they will have encounters 1, 2, and 4.

If the PCs decide to trust Jarlaxle's advice and slip into Menzoberranzan undetected, trying to lose themselves in the city, then they will have encounters 2 and 5.

The Journey

The course of the march is a typical trek through eternal darkness. Much of it will pass through natural caverns, along smoothly graveled or eroded pathways for long distances, though occasionally a steep descent or climb becomes necessary. The PCs don't change altitude nearly as much as they did on the march from the surface to Mantol-Derith.

If they are accompanied by the lizard train and destined for one of the mercantile houses, they will follow a route mapped out clearly by whichever drow they listened to. The trip will take 7-10 days. Those PCs who follow Jarlaxle's lead, however, will work

their way over rougher terrain—often wedging through narrow passages or using ropes to scale short, steep cliffs—and require 11-14 days for the journey.

Both routes have a couple of things in common, however:

Random Encounters can be employed at the DM's discretion—use any of your favorite monsters that inhabit the sunless reaches of the Underdark.

The PCs will pass near a large lake—the route actually drops down to the lakeshore, and meander along a flat stretch of sand.

Encounter 1

These brutes are sent against the party by Laral, and will initiate the attack against the rear of the column with a barrage of stones, after which they will charge and try to close, overcoming the party by brute force. The attack occurs in a wide and high-ceilinged (30' x 15') cavern with no branching tunnels in the vicinity. The floor and walls are pitted by erosion, except for the 8' wide track of crushed rock running roughly down the middle. There are plenty of places where a character can duck behind a stalagmite or drop into a shallow depression in the floor for cover.

The attack team will include the following thugs:

Ogres (12): AC 5; Move 9; HD 4 + 1; hit points 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 17; AL CE

Each ogre has a satchel containing 12 rocks, each of which will inflict 1-10 points of damage with a hit. The ogres can throw them up to 30' (no range modifiers).

Ogre mage (1): AC4; Move 9, Fl 15 (B); HD 5 + 2; hit points 26; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; THAC0 15; AL LE

Spell-like Abilities: *fly* for 12 turns; *invisibility*, *darkness* 10' radius; *polymorph*, *regen-*

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erate 1hp/round; charm person, sleep, assume gaseous form, create a cone of cold (60' long, 20' wide at end; 8d8 damage)

NOTE: The ogre mage will not use its *cone of cold* in an area where it could get the lizards caught in the area of effect—it does not want to risk ruining the wine in the saddlebags! However, the main goal of the attack is to gain the spellbook or sheaf of parchments suspected by Laral to be here. Any of the ogres or the ogre mage will know this, and reveal the information of interrogated.

Avoiding the Encounter: If the PCs have taken Jarlaxle's advice, the route he selects for them will easily outwit the ogres' pursuit. The mercenary captain will inform the party of the monsters, and let them know that the ogres have been diverted to a false trail.

Encounter 2

Finally the PCs' route will bring them to the wide, sandy shore that circles around the darkened waters of the subterranean lake. If they are following a map, their guide has scribbled 'Beware Aboleth!' for this part of the journey. If instead they are accompanied by Jarlaxle, he will inform them that the lake is known to contain those horrific beasts.

This ambush is the result of the svirfneblin high priest's prophecy, and the fear that the portents of the caravan bode extreme ill for the Underdark—a not unrealistic concern, given the potency of the spells carried by the PCs. This is the one unavoidable encounter of the journey—since the tracking skills and spying network of these peoples, combined, makes it very tough for anyone trying to elude attention.

However, if the PCs travel with Jarlaxle, his own network of scouts and spies informs him of the impending ambush. He

will warn the PCs to expect attack (even telling them that they might have to face a charge). Then he abruptly departs—to summon reinforcements, he explains impatiently if questioned.

The attack occurs on a large, flat expanse of sand at the shore of one of the great lakes of the Underdark. The flat expanse is chosen because the spider-mounted duergar can employ their steeds to the maximum effect. Also, though the sand itself is featureless, it is blocked by (presumably) impassable features to the right and left:

1) To the party's left, a cliff rises 100' to the ceiling of the cavern. It is pitted and cracked enough to allow good hand- and footholds, with many wide ledges.

2) To the right is the lake, known to be a lair of the aboleth. These bloated and repugnant horrors dwell in great numbers in the depths, and will quickly strike out against any who enter the water or attempt to sail atop it.

The encounter is initiated by the charge of a line of "steeders"—duergar mounted on giant tarantulas—against the front of the PCs' party. These creatures will spring out of the darkness, using their powerful leaps to charge into the characters for full charge benefits on the first round of battle.


On the second round of melee, as many of the spiders as possible will use their sticky secretions to seize a character (one spider per PC) and thus inflict automatic damage on future turns.

Two rounds after the spiders attack, the svirfnebli will rush forward from their places of concealment at the base of the cliff. The deep gnomes have screened themselves with rubble to avoid detection—treat the screens as secret doors.

Duergar (8): AC 4; Move 6; HD 2 + 4; hit points 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 1 with short crossbow (range 30/60/90') or shortsword; THAC0 17; AL LE



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Spider Mounts (8): AC 4; Move 12; HD 4; hit points 21 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 17; AL N

Svirfnebli (12 level 3 fighters): AC 2; Move 9; HD 3 + 6; hit points 20 each; #AT 1 (or 2, w/ darts); Dmg 1d4 +2 (or 1-3 + special); THAC0 17; MR 20%; AL NG

Special Darts: +2 to hit; 40' range; save versus poison if struck—failure *stuns* a victim for 1 round, *slows* for 4 more rounds

Spell-Like Abilities (illusionist): blindness, blur, *change self* all once/day; radiate *non-detection*

If Jarlaxle is not helping the PCs, this encounter has no set time limit—the battle continues until more than 75% of both the duergar and svirfnebli have been slain or neutralized.

If the characters have the aid of the mercenary captain, however, he proves as good as his word: 10 rounds after the first attack, a silent company of around two dozen dark elves rushes up the shore from ahead of the party. The drow attack the duergar and svirfnebli with crossbows, and the first devastating volley will be enough to send the attackers on their way.

Encounter 3

This encounter results from the fear of the houses aligned against House Baenre—primarily Fey-Branche and Barrison Del'Armgo—and the failure of their agent, Reftael Jerritrel. Since he could not convince the PCs to turn their precious cargo over to the Brown Mushroom Mercantile Company, he is driven to this desperate encounter in an attempt to redeem his reputation—and, very probably, his life.

As a lone operative, Reftael can call on few aids beyond his own (admittedly formidable) abilities. However, he has managed to hire two drow renegades to help in this ven-

ture. They will serve to create diversions, while the great drow warrior makes his own deadly attacks with crossbow and sword.

The attack will occur in a narrow cavern, tangled with pillars, stalactites and stalagmites. It is portrayed on Map 3. (Note that the same map is used for Encounter 4—indeed, that battle will take place in the same location, though no group of PCs will suffer both encounters.)

The two henchmen will initiate the attack by shooting their crossbows at the party as it passes, from the almost point-blank range of 20'. (They're in location "A".) The drow will remain firmly behind the cover of their pillars, shooting every round until the PCs come after them and then defending themselves with swords.

Drow (two 3rd level Warriors): AC 4; Move 12; hp XX each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or 1-8 + 3; THAC0 16; MR 56%; AL LE

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

Equipment: handbows, *long swords* +3

Reftael himself is concealed in the shadows in front of the caravan (at location B). He will shoot one of his *lightning bolt* bolts at the range of 40' to start the battle, attempting to strike as many PCs as possible with the first attack. After this, he will use his poisoned bolts to try and pick off healthy PCs.

(Reftael's attributes and equipment are listed in Chapter 3.)

The warrior will fight without regard to the lives of his henchmen. However, if it becomes clear that he will not be able to defeat the PCs, he himself will try to flee on foot. He has a *potion of speed* carried on his person for just such an eventuality.

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ENCOUNTER 4

If the PCs choose to betray House Baenre, their treachery will not pass unnoticed—or unpunished. This encounter will be the result—an ambush that is backed up by much greater muscle than can be mustered by poor, treacherous Reftael Jerritrel (see Encounter 3).

On the flip side, this ambush will be discovered by Jarlaxle, since he has a good network of informants in the House Baenre circle of families. The mercenary captain has not given up on converting the PCs to his own purposes. Thus, he will come to them during their journey, several hours before they reach this deadly passage. He will warn them of the ambush, and try—once more—to persuade them to throw in their lot with him. If they agree, they will have to leave the lizards and the heavy cargo—but he will be able to lead them around the ambush, and bring them to Menzoberranzan in secrecy.

If they choose not to accompany the drow veteran, however, they will have to pass through this ambush. The mercenary will prove truthful in his warnings about where the ambush will take place, and in the rough strength of the attacking drow. He will not be able to furnish the player characters with tactical advice, however.

The following drow form the attacking parties.

Location A: These drow will lurk in the shadows, waiting for the barrage of missiles (from Location B) to start the battle. After that attack, these dark elves will rush at the PCs to attack with their swords.

Drow (six 4th level warriors): AC 3; Move 12; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +3; THAC0 15; MR 58%; AL LE



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Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

Location B: These are the missile troops, and they will begin the ambush with a volley of arrows and magic missiles directed at the PCs. These drow will not close for melee combat, instead shooting missiles whenever a good target presents itself.

Drow (five 3rd level warriors): AC 5; Move 12; hp 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THACO 17; MR 58%; AL LE

Weapons: hand crossbows, 3/#/#

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* (all once/day)

Location C: The final (and hopefully fatal) blows will be delivered by this trio of young drow nobles. At the start of the encounter, they are using their *levitation* abilities and the concealment provided by their *piwafwi* to hide among the stalactites on the ceiling, 40' over the PCs' heads. After the attack begins, they will watch the drow in the other locations attack the PCs. After the battle is fully joined, they will drop to the floor (still in location C) and attack the PCs with spells and longsword.

Drow fighter/mage (level 7/6): AC 1; Move 12; HD 5; hit points 24; #AT 1; Damage 1d8 + 4; THACO 11; MR 64%; AL LE

Weapon: *Long sword* +3; handheld crossbow

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *levitate*, *know alignment*, *detect magic* (all once/day)

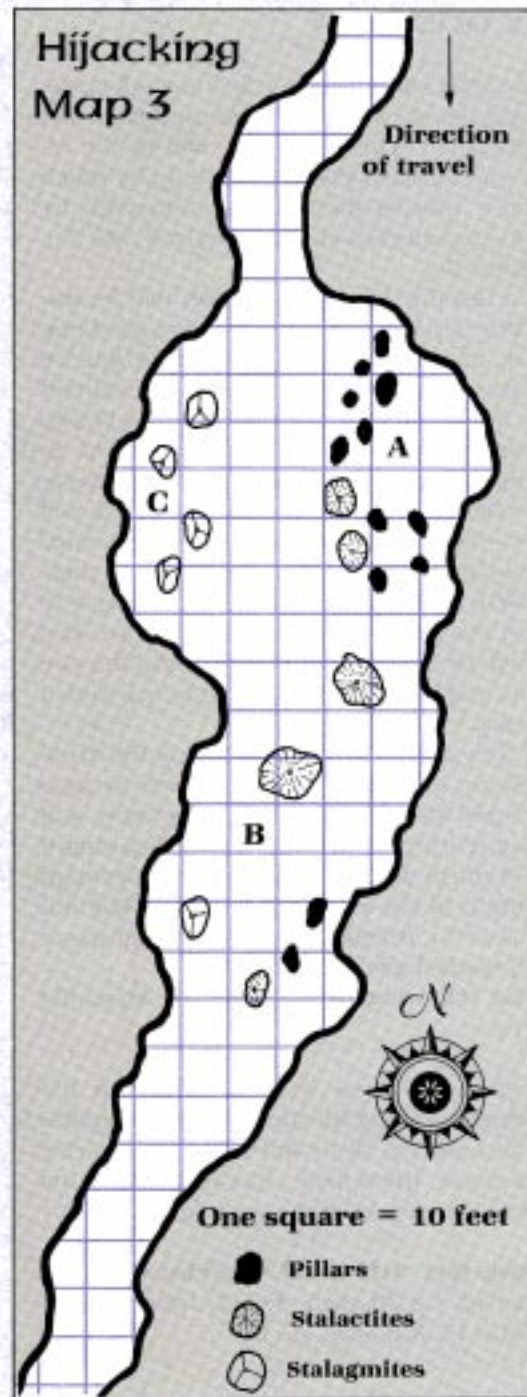
Spells Known:

First Level: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *read magic*

Second Level: *detect invisibility*, *web*

Third Level: *lightning bolt*, *slow*

Ambushing Drow Fighter (level 7): AC 0; Move 12; HD 7; hit points 38; #AT 1; Dmg



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1d8 + 8; THAC0 10; MR 64%; AL LE

Weapon: *long sword* +5

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Noble Priestess (level 8): AC 2; Move 12; hit points 42; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4 (x3); THAC0 16; MR 66%; AL LE

Weapon: *whip of fangs*

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect good, detect magic, magical stone*

Second Level: *charm person or mammal, hold person, silence 15' radius*

Third Level: *dark wings, dispel magic, feign death*

Fourth Level: *free action, spell immunity*

Encounter 5

This encounter is reserved for those PCs wise enough to follow Jarlaxle's advice, thus avoiding the entanglements with rival houses provided in encounters 3 and 4. However, even the mercenary captain is not able to avoid all threats in the Underdark—particularly those posed by the Spider Queen herself, Lloth. It occurs when the PCs are camped for a rest break.

None other than that dread goddess is behind this final encounter—when one or more revenants emerge from the Underdark to attack the PCs.

These horrific undead are created from the bodies of drow slain by the PCs during the adventure.

The exact number of revenants is up to the DM's discretion—but it will not exceed the number of drow slain by the PCs during the course of this adventure. (Thus, if they have somehow made it this far without killing any

drow, they will avoid the encounter.)

Each revenant will seek out the specific PC who killed that drow—the one who administered the final blow, if several attackers combined their efforts. Other PCs interposing themselves will be attacked by the undead only in order to get them out of the way.

Revenant: AC 10; Move 9; HD 8; hit points 44; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; THAC0 13; AL N

Regenerates 3 hp/round (except fire damage); immune to gas and acid; reunites if dismembered

The monster can cause *paralysis* for 2-8 rounds; it must look into the eyes of its original killer, and that character must save versus spells or suffer immobility.



Chapter Five

Menzoberranzan— The Heart of Darkness

The arrival of the PCs in this dark elf city signals the end of their travels, for the time being—but not the end of their adventure. Indeed, the number of individuals who wish to recruit (or to destroy) them rises dramatically. Treachery waits around every turn, and it will take careful planning and alert senses just to insure survival!

But there is more than any individual character's survival at stake—and these stakes have been created by the wild magic spells brought into the Underdark by Hadrogh's caravan.

This chapter can result in a lot of (or a little) running around in Menzoberranzan, while the PCs try to sort out their friends from their enemies. In either case, by the end of Chapter five they should be firmly entrenched (in one side or the other) for the climax of the adventure—the attack on, and attempt to destroy, House Millithor.

The plot of these last two chapters has a lot of variables, because the PCs could have arrived in the city with one of several different destinations. Also, it is possible that they still may not know of the secret cargo—or that they may have discovered the spells, and possibly even tried to open the spellbook.

The adventures in the city, however, can develop with less specific detail than provided for Mantol-Derith. After all, the rest of this boxed set contains descriptions of locations in the dark elf city! Thus, the DM will need to refer to areas described in the other two books while he referees the final encounters described in the last two chapters.

Entering The City

With Jarlaxle's aid this is accomplished easily. The mercenary joins the characters for the last leg of the journey, and leads them into the city via a narrow cavern with no permanent guard. In his wake the PCs simply emerge from this tunnel, which is near the Stenchstreets and pass unremarked into the maze of alleys and decrepit structures.

If they arrive with the full caravan of lizards, they will have to declare their mercantile intent with one of the guard captains at the entrance tunnel for the trade route into the Eastvale. The guard will provide them with directions to their destination if it is a noble house of the city or one of the known markets (including the Black Claw and Brown Mushroom).

Observation

If the PCs have brought the full caravan, they will once again have assured that their enemies will quickly learn about their arrival, and their destination. They will not be molested during this period, but characters near the rear of the caravan who announce that they're looking for anything suspicious should be allowed to make Wisdom Checks—success means that they notice someone following them.

That one will be a low-level drow fighter/thief. He is alert and watchful, and if he senses that the PCs are on to him he'll try to disappear into the Stenchstreets. If the characters are clever enough to catch him, though, he can be made to reveal his employer: whichever mercantile company the PCs are not traveling to.

Chapter Five

Mercantile House

Regardless of which merchant company the PCs take their packlizards to (the Black Claw or the Brown Mushroom), this description will serve to set the scene.

The merchant house hides behind a 20' high encircling wall of smooth black stone. No stalls or structures are attached to the outside of this particular wall—the company desires very much to squash potential competition before it can get started.

The gate is barred on the inside, and watched by a captain and two warriors who stand at attention outside of the entrance. Any reasonable explanation of why they're here will serve to admit the PCs, as long as they're obviously traveling with goods. If, for some reason, they're not, they will have to bribe the guard or mention the name of an important contact inside the house in order to gain access.

If they should try to get over the wall, they will find that it is perfectly smooth. The top is only 6' wide, and flat—however, any pressure on the top of the wall causes sharp spikes to shoot upward to a height of 6'. Anyone in the area of effect suffers 2-24 hp of damage, with a successful saving throw versus breath weapon reducing the damage by half.

The trap even extend up in the air to this extent: anyone flying over the wall (but not more than 60' above the top of the wall) triggers a different trap. *Magic missiles* shoot from several different apertures. The flying character will be struck by 2-12 of these, for 2-5 hp of damage apiece.

Within the wall, the company consists of a large courtyard, open to Menzoberranzan's "sky", and an equally large building with an outer shape of a smooth and rounded dome. The structure is made from the living rock of the cave, shaped by drow magic, and the faerie fire outlines of the company symbol (either a claw or mushroom, as the case may

be) gleam in a constantly changing pattern of colors over the entire face of the dome.

The merchant, called Tolokoph, is himself is a old drow, slightly feeble in appearance but very sharp mentally—and no slouch physically, either, despite his looks. Tolokoph uses an exaggerated stooped posture, and the tremors in his hands are totally feigned—but he acts the part from within, and employs no magical aids to his disguise. Thus, a *detect magic* spell will not reveal his charade.

Tolokoph, drow magic user/thief (levels 5/7): AC 2; Move 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 14; MR 64%; AL LE

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Spells Known:

First Level: *audible glamer, detect magic, sleep, Tenser's Floating Disc*

Second Level: *detect invisibility, ESP*

Third Level: *item*


The merchant will greet the PCs formally, although with unusual friendliness for a drow. Tolokoph has followed the reports of the PCs progress with interest, and is delighted and amazed that they have made it to his mercantile house. He graciously invites the characters into his offices to discuss details of price. He will direct several goblin slaves to take the lizards into the stable.

A single door grants access to the mercantile company's dome, which contains the warehouse, stable, and offices of the merchant company. The door is magical, and opens only upon Tolokoph's command.

Among the stocks currently held here are exotic foods and drinks, and also a valuable trove of perfumes. The musty scent of these rare oils and ointments permeates the halls and rooms of the company's offices—even riding over the inherent smells of the stable.



Chapter Five



This is too good to last, of course—indeed, the PCs are on the verge of making an honest dollar, so something has to be done! The interference occurs in the form of the skilled assassin, Krecil Treak (who probably slayed Hadrogh earlier in this adventure). This time, he will strike with the aid of wild magic, and his goal is nothing less than the theft of Hadrogh's spellbook.

The PCs may choose to take several precautions as they enter the mercantile. The assassin's attack will take these precautions into account.

If the PCs send the packlizards into the stable while they go to negotiate with Tolokoph, the encounter will occur offstage: they hear a thunderous boom, as wild magic is used to explode a portion of the ceiling dome. When they get to the stable, they will find the goblins dead (and turned to stone, with the same type of dagger stuck in each one as the weapon used to kill Hadrogh). The saddlebags concealing the spellbook are torn open, and the book is gone—but nothing else has been touched.

If, on the other hand, some of the PCs keep an eye on their goods—either in the stable or by bringing them into the office with them—they will have to deal with the attack more directly.

Krecil Treak, drow mage/assassin (wild magic; level 9/15): AC -4; Move 15; hit points 85; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 +6, 1d4 + 6 + poison; THAC0 13; AL LE

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic, light, magic missile, sleep*

Second Level: *continual light, detect invisibility, rope trick*

Third Level: *alternate reality, foolspeech, wraithform*

Fourth Level: *dimension door, hallucinato-*

ry terrain

Fifth Level: *waveform*

Equipment: *long sword +4; two daggers of stone death*. These are *daggers +4*, with a highly virulent poison of Krecil's invention. Though saving throws suffer only a -2 modifier, victims of the poison must save both versus poison and petrification. If a save fails, the victim suffers that effect. (Note that the two effects are not redundant—if a character benefits from a *stone to flesh* spell, it's very important to know whether or not he was dead from poison when he became a statue!)

He also has a *ring of teleportation* and a *cloak of silence*.

Krecil is a skilled and cautious assassin. His primary goal is to steal the spellbook, not to kill—though he will not hesitate to use ruthless violence to facilitate his crime. Indeed, he will show mercy only if it seems to further his chances of gaining the spellbook or escaping—or of recruiting the PCs to aid the cause of his house. He will not identify that clan, however.

If the PCs are negotiating with Tolokoph, the attack will occur when that unfortunate merchant is examining the spellbook. Krecil has taken a *potion of speed*, so the following attack occurs at a whirlwind pace. First, he *teleports, invisibly* into the room. His *cloak of silence* muffles any sound of his arrival. In the next instant he snatches the book from poor Tolokoph's hands and then slays the merchant with a cut from one of his petrifying and poisonous daggers.

Before he disappears, Krecil will try to communicate with at least one of the PCs, if he has a chance. There is no mercy—just pragmatism—in the offer he will make just before he teleports out of sight. It is motivated by the knowledge that the PCs are resourceful adventurers, or else they would never have made it this far. Also, Krecil realizes that he and his comrades will need addi-

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tional allies in the struggle that his theft has just made inevitable.

“You’ll be blamed for this attack,” warns the assassin, his eyes steady, the gold ring winking on his finger. “Flee to the Stenchstreets—you’ll have your best chance of escape there!”

“My matron will welcome your aid, should you choose to fight with us against the true bane of Menzoberranzan—flee to the Stenchstreets, and we shall find you there!”

In the next instant, the ring on his finger flares brightly, and the drow assassin blinks out of sight.

A quick investigation will show that the dome of the mercantile house has been shattered by a huge explosion—the drow and goblins in the vicinity of the blast were all killed.

Whichever of the mercantiles suffers this indignity, the powerful houses backing it will begin swift retribution. If this was the Brown Mushroom Company, then the combined might of Barrison Del’Armgo and Fey-Branche will unite to send enforcers after the troublemakers. If, on the other hand, it was the Black Claw that Krecil attacked, then the awesome might of House Baenre will throw itself into the pursuit.

In either case, considerable forces will soon be arriving at the smoldering mercantile company, bent on vengeance—and they will be inclined to seize any and all potential witnesses for interrogation. Once back to the house torture chambers, the drow will allow the whips of the house priestesses to separate the plotters from the mere innocent bystanders.

Thus, Krecil’s advice was good—the PCs had best beat a hasty retreat, or else they will face a tough fight against a foe who steadily increases in strength.

Arrivals on the scene occur in the following order, and begin 1-6 rounds after Krecil disappears. Each time a new enforcer (or group) arrives, roll a d6 again—the next bunch comes that many rounds later.

FIRST: Drow warriors on lizard mounts (four 5th level): AC 2; Move 15; hit points 31 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +3; THAC0 12; MR 58%; AL LE

Weapons: lance, long sword +3

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate*

SECOND: 2 drow high priestesses (levels 6 and 8) on driftdiscs

Priestess (level 6): AC 2; Move 12; hit points 31; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 2; THAC0 17; MR 62%; AL LE

Weapon: *adamantite mace* +2

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic, detect snares and pits, sanctuary*

Second Level: *charm person or mammal, slow poison, spiritual hammer*

Third Level: *dispel magic, cause blindness or deafness*

High Priestess (level 8): AC 0; Move 12; hit points 40; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4 (x 2); THAC0 16; MR 66%; AL LE

Weapon: *whip of fangs*

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect good, detect magic, cause fear*

Second Level: *augury, chant, silence 15’ radius*



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Third Level: *dispel magic, feign death, meld into stone*

Fourth Level: *cause serious wounds, neutralize poison*

THIRD: Drow warriors (10 3rd level): AC 3; Move 12; hit points 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 +3; THAC0 15; MR 58%; AL LE

Weapons: hand crossbows, *short swords* +3

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (all once/day)

FOURTH: 2 House wizards, of level 6 and 8, arriving on foot

Drow mage (6th level): AC 4; Move 12; hit points 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 +5; THAC0 13; MR 62%; AL LE

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic, magic missile, sleep, wall of fog*

Second Level: *invisibility, web*

Third Level: *haste, hold undead*

Drow mage (8th level): AC 0; Move 12; hit points XX; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 5; THAC0 12; MR 66%; AL LE

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic, jump, light, read magic*

Second Level: *detect invisibility, ESP, web*

Third Level: *fly, hold person, slow*

Fourth Level: *fumble, minor globe of invulnerability*

More reinforcements will continue to arrive if these forces cannot handle the initial resistance. If the PCs elect to flee, however, they will not be (immediately) pursued for a

great distance. After all, flight is the expected response of an honest drow citizen when confronted with a situation such as this.

Within a few hours, patrols of the offended house will be combing the streets of the city, looking for a number of potential suspects—including some who match the PCs' description pretty well. They will travel arrogantly, with their house banner prominently displayed, so the characters should have little difficulty figuring out who's after them.

These patrols will consist of the same types of forces as listed above, although typically the first and second groups operate together, and the third and fourth do as well. They will penetrate most areas of the city with a fair degree of thoroughness, with the exception of the Stenchstreets—where they won't go at all. If the characters seek shelter in any other district, however, they will eventually find a group of curious drow checking for them.

If they're in a common room or public hall, they will see the enforcers come in. However, if they rent a private room and don't remember to watch the proprietor (who will almost certainly take a bribe from the searching drow) they will find the house troops at the doors and windows of their room, ready for trouble.

But in the Stenchstreets they'll be safe from the drow of the vengeful house. They won't be clean or comfortable, of course—nor will they be safe from all the other drow, not to mention the gnolls, ogres, orcs, duergar, bugbear, and goblins that add spice to the low-class part of Menzoberranzan. The PCs should realize by now, of course, that you can't have everything!

The characters should be able to find cheap lodging with little difficulty. They may have encounters with as many of the aforementioned ruffians as the DM deems appropriate. Certainly, in any Stenchstreets communal house or inn, characters will

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have to demonstrate a certain capacity to take care of themselves just to insure that they are left alone.

The Braeryn neighborhood, commonly known as the Stenchstreets, is described in the “Neighborhoods” chapter of *Book One: The City*.

Stenchstreet Contacts

Compounding the chaos of survival in this rough district is the fact that vigorous enemies seek the PCs—and that search will eventually come to the Braeryn. It will manifest itself in teams of young nobles and their veteran assistants hunting through the streets and alleys of the district in the age-old hunting ritual of Menzoberranzan—for the inhabitants of the Stenchstreets are considered little better than game animals in the vicious culture of the drow.

However, the eventual goal of this chapter is for the PCs to join forces with one side or the other as the preparations for a great attack are made. The target of the attack will be House Millithor, and if that is the PCs house it shouldn't be too difficult to get them home for the fight. If the PCs are surface dwellers, however, they will be bribed (by Krecil) to help defend the house.

If they decline this task, they will have the opportunity to join up with the forces of the mercantiles, acting through House Nurbonnis, the 21st ranked noble house. House Nurbonnis is an ally of Oblodra and Barrison Del'Armgo. Neither of those powerful houses will risk an overt attack against Millithor. (Despite their fear of wild magic, they will not take a blatant action with such potential to anger House Baenre). Thus, they have found an ambitious and lower-ranking ally to do the dirty work.

The drow that seek to punish or capture

the fugitive PCs will come into the Stenchstreets about 36 hours after the player characters themselves. By this time, they will represent the forces of the Black Claw company and the houses backing the Brown Mushroom—i.e., Oblodra and Barrison Del'Armgo. However, there are no more House Baenre troops in the hunt! This is an important detail that is best described to the PCs by omission. (The DM describes in detail the houses that are asking about the PCs, and lets the players figure out who's missing.)

The search (without Baenre) will maintain its pressure on the other neighborhoods, and all known exits from the city will be watched. The parties of drow that enter the Braeryn will be stronger than those searching the other districts—in total, they will include the equivalent of all four groups of drow listed on the previous page. Refer to those stats if combat becomes necessary.

However, at the same time as this is occurring, the assassin Krecil will be driven to locate the PCs for this reason: the attack on House Millithor is imminent, and the PCs can make a valued addition to its defense. Because of their entry into the city, Krecil will feel confident that the PCs are accomplished fighters, and not attached to the rival houses.

Krecil will begin trying to contact the PCs 24 hours after they enter the Stenchstreets. He will make his search by, first of all, placing symbols bearing his seal—the black spider pierced by the red dagger—behind the bars of many Stenchstreets social establishments. The bartender will be able to arrange a meeting, if a character asks about the symbol. There is a 10% chance that any establishment the PCs enter will have such a symbol.

The following list suggests the names of establishments in this quarter—the DM can use them as necessary, and create additional places of his own.



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The Purple Wurm— a spice-incensed place, popular with duergar and unusually ugly drow.

Eye of the Beholder— a huge place, a raucous mixture of all the intelligent races found in Menzoberranzan.

Black Stalactite— a den of thieves, famed for the illithid entertainer who performs mental tricks with willing or unwilling customers.

The Web— a favorite habitat of arrogant drow, who commonly rob, assault, or kill patrons of other races.

Lair of the Lizardking— this is a favorite habitat of non-drow, particularly gnolls and ogres. They are prone to beat up on drow who wander in.

Well of Darkness— this is an actual pit in the stone floor of the city, and features numerous private booths cloaked by permanent *darkness* spells.

Krecil will maintain this procedure for 6 days (i.e. until a full week has passed since the PCs came to the Stenchstreets). However, if one of the searching bands of nobles described above should discover the PCs, Krecil will hear about it quickly. He will *teleport* to the fight within 4-24 minutes, and lend his talents to getting the PCs away—not to the killing of all the drow antagonists. Fortunately, he knows enough secret doors, concealed alleys, and private tunnels in the Braeryn to virtually insure a clean getaway.

If the week passes with no contact, however, he will begin seeking them actively. After another 2-12 days, he will be given accurate information, and come to see them wherever they can be found.

Once the wild magic user makes contact with the PCs, he will offer them a lot of gold, on the spot, to serve in the forces of House Millithor. He starts at 2,000 gp apiece, but will go as high as 10,000 if the characters hold out. If they accept, he brings them to that house, where they will join in the prep-

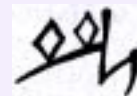
arations for defense that are occurring steadily during this period.

If the player characters decide to reject the approaches of Krecil, and the party does not include members of House Millithor among them, it is possible that they will not make their way to that clan's holdings. In this case, they will eventually be cornered by one of the searching drow parties. They will have to fight for their lives, or try and talk their way out of the long-odds battle. The latter tactic is recommended—the nobles of House Nurbonnis will pause to listen to the PCs' entreaties, even during the course of a fight. In fact, they have been told that the characters would make valuable allies in the coming attack.

The only deal they will strike is this: The PCs will be granted their freedom if they agree to join the leading wave of the attack against House Millithor. They will not be paid, but if their side is victorious they will be allowed a share of the spoils. Otherwise, they are informed, they will be tracked down and killed.

In this case, they will have the chance to experience the end of the adventure from the attacker's point of view instead of the defender's. (Of course, in true drow fashion, they will be free to choose or change sides pretty much up until the end of the battle.)

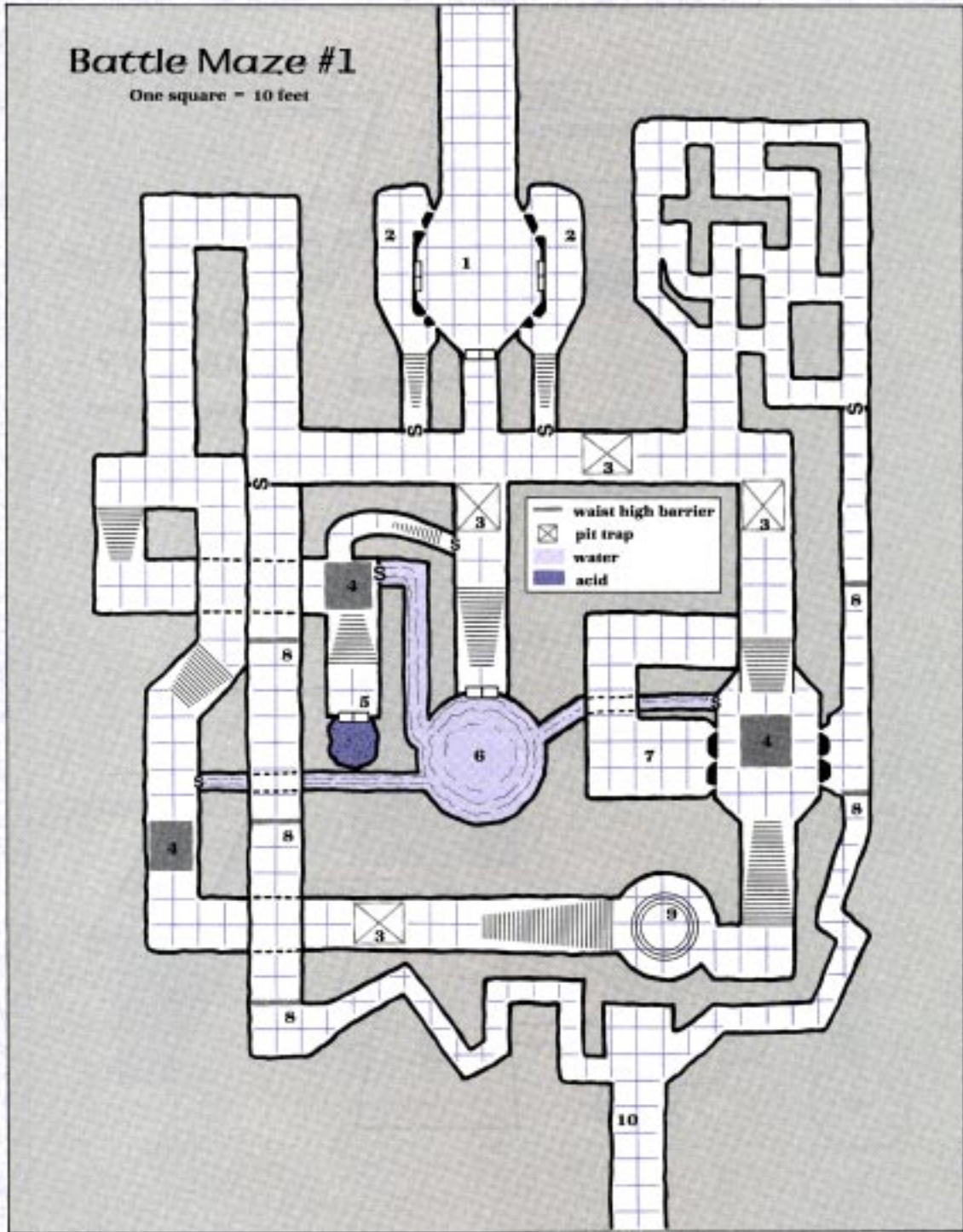
In any event, this chapter lasts until the PCs reach House Millithor, join forces with House Nurbonnis—or, possibly, slink out of Menzoberranzan with their tails between their legs (chickens!). Once they have determined their role, proceed to the final showdown.



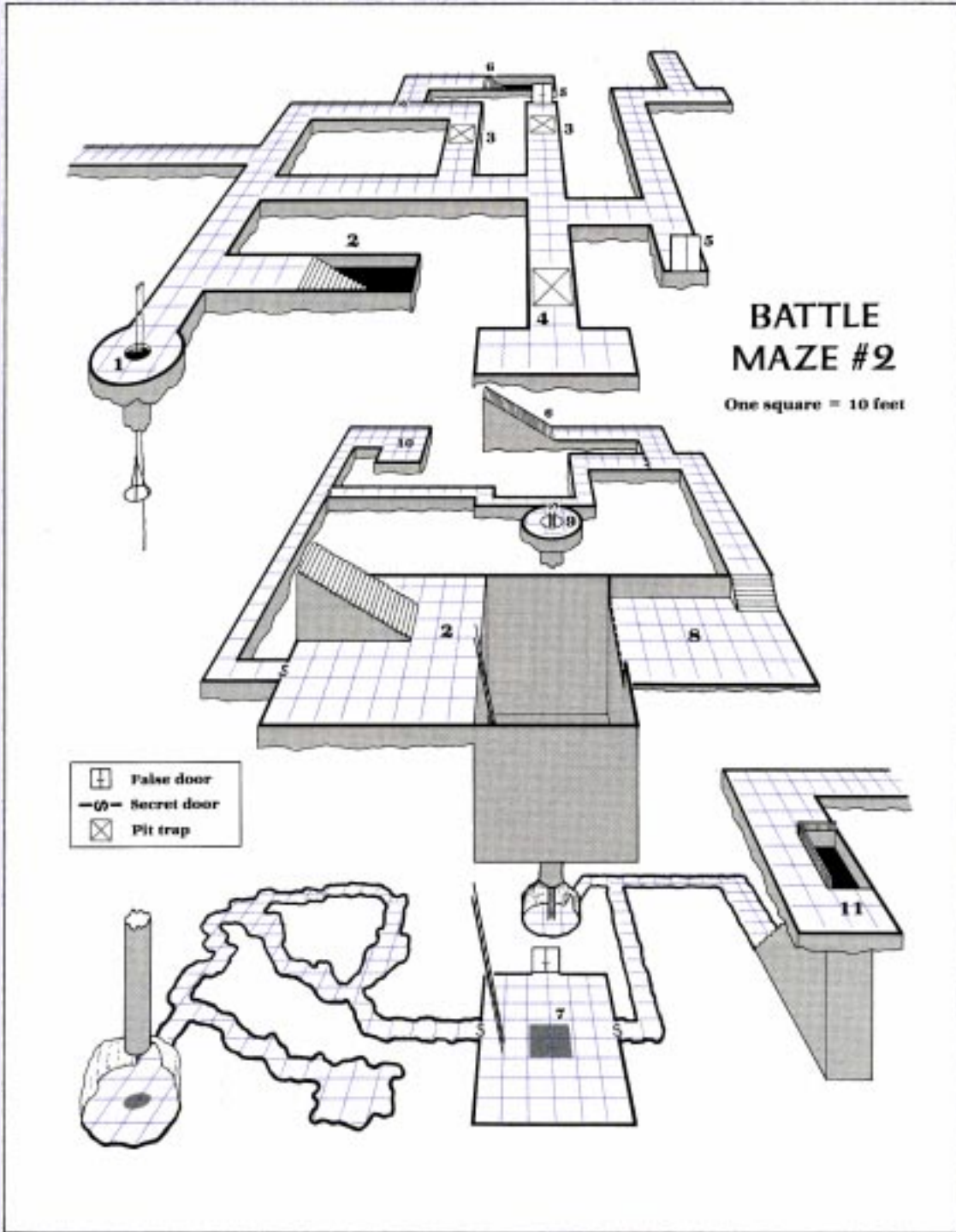
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Battle Maze #1

One square = 10 feet



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The Stand of House Millithor

This chapter depicts a conflict that lies at the center of Menzoberranzan's harsh concept of "Station"—for this is nothing less than the attempt of one house to totally exterminate another. The attacking forces are stronger, but the defending forces have the advantages of a strong and well-fortified house, and the potential of wild magic (in the powers of Krecil). The encounter should be balanced so that the presence of the PCs swings the odds in one direction or another.

The battle is written as a roleplaying adventure, so the bulk of the fight will occur as background confusion. However, for those players who may wish to resolve this as a miniatures scenario, a modicum of statistics conversion and some wholesale invention of armies will make for an entertaining setup. The building of the battlefield will take some care, but miniatures players will give themselves a tense and highly magical conflict to resolve.

The Rival Houses

The battle itself is an attack against House Millithor under the auspices of House Nurbonnis. The real motivations for the war are the fears of House Barrison Del'Armgo (and other anti-Baenre families) about the potential of wild magic—especially if the city's first house gains control of that new and unpredictable sorcery. Since, now, House Millithor is the primary center of wild magic in Menzoberranzan, they see a chance to nip the problem in the bud.

Matron Baenre is a shrewd enough judge of the city's mood to make no overt move in this conflict. If the wild magic is as good as she believes, House Millithor will be able to take care of itself—and then Baenre will make her approval known. If House Mil-

lithor fails, then the wild magic was overrated and its loss is no great catastrophe. As usual, House Baenre finds itself in a win-win situation.

Not so for the lower-ranking clans, however, that will actually fight the war. The standard rules of the city apply—if all House Millithor nobles are slain, House Nurbonnis has accomplished a great victory. But if one or more of them remain alive, Menzoberranzan justice will be dealt to the Nurbonnis clan.

The two houses are outlined here:

House Millithor

Twenty-fifth House

SYMBOL:

Matron Mother: Ki'Willis Millithor

Nobles: 8

Priestesses: 4

High Priestesses: 2

House Males: 4

Fighters: 2

Wizards: 2

Drow Soldiers: 140 total


Formations: 20 Elite Foot
50 Archers
50 Foot
20 Lizriders

Slave Force: 200 total

Formations: 100 goblin foot
100 goblin archers

Chief Alliances: House Baenre is House Millithor's chief sponsor—but during these times of careful diplomacy the matron of that great house will make no overt show of support. Thus, for the time being, House Millithor stands pretty much alone.

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Chief Rivals: House Millithor has been a long-standing (2000 + years) rival of House Nurbonnis (#21). Now, however, House Millithor has also attracted the enmity of House Barrison Del'Armgo (#2) and House Oblodra (#3).

House Nurbonnis

Twenty-First House

SYMBOL:

Matron Mother: Nadallas Bonnine

Nobles: 10

Priestesses: 5

High Priestesses: 3

House Males: 5

Fighters: 3

Wizards: 2

Drow Soldiers: 200 total

Formations: 30 Elite Foot
80 Archers
40 Foot
30 Lizriders

Slave Force: 400 total

Formations: 150 goblin foot
150 goblin archers
100 bugbears

Chief Alliances: House Nurbonnis is a major crony of House Barrison Del'Armgo, the #2 clan of Menzoberranzan. Indeed, for the purposes of this attack, House Nurbonnis is pretty much following the instructions of its master. The clan also has good ties with House Oblodra (#3) and several other houses that waste no love on House Baenre.

Chief Rivals: House Nurbonnis has contributed much to the rivalry with House Mil-

lithor (#25). Now that rivalry has come to a head, and when it passes only one of the two will remain.

The Dwelling of House Millithor

This house is located in the Narbondellyn section of Menzoberranzan, the wealthy district near the great pillar of time that dominates the drow cavern. Millithor stands in the shadows of many of the influential houses of the city—indeed, after the Qu'el-larz'orl, the Narbondellyn is the finest quarter of the city.

Refer to the maps on Card 2 for the floor-plan of House Millithor. The numbered locations on the map are keyed to descriptions in this section.

The Defense

The defenses of House Millithor includes its physical defenses (walls, traps, etc.); its troop defenses; and its NPC and PC defenses. The first two categories will remain constant; the third, of course, depends heavily on the actions of the player characters.

The physical defenses have been covered in the keyed description of the house. The troops will be assigned, most typically, to the locations listed for them—though they may rush to reinforce a nearby area at the DM's discretion, or as a result of the actions of PCs.

The prominent NPCs, include the matron mother and the assassin Krecil, as well as either PCs who are members of the house, or these NPCs: 2 high priestesses, 2 fighters, and 2 wizards; plus any PCs who are present, but are not members of the family. Their locations will be suggested after the house is described.

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1. The House Wall

The wall is adamantite-surfaced stone, raised into shape by the efforts of drow mages in millennia past. The surface of the wall is inscribed with defenses against personal intrusion—anyone touching it is struck by a short range blast of lightning that inflicts 6d6 worth of damage. It is 30' high and 10' thick at its base, with a 6" thick shell of adamantite surrounding the stone.

The gates are pure adamantite, and remain barred unless the guards release them. They can absorb 300 hp of damage before giving way, but are only vulnerable to magical weapons and attacks.

Lightning bolt spells (6d6 damage) are permanently placed in the wall, aimed to shoot both out and upward. Anyone flying over the wall (within 180' of its top) is 90% likely to trigger the lightning—unless he knows the location of the gaps in coverage. (They shift on a daily basis). In addition, any magical attack against the wall will trigger a rebound of 0-3 *lightning bolts* against the source of the magical attack, up to a maximum of 180'.

Garrison: 100 goblin footsoldiers stand just inside the gate. They have orders to counterattack any breach in the wall, but they'll have to pass a morale check before they will follow that command.

2. Battle Tower

This giant stalagmite extends 100' from the floor of the cave. The lower 60' of it has been hollowed out to form 3 battle platforms (at 20', 40', and 60' heights). Each platform has 24 arrow slits placed around its walls, and stockpiles of more than a thousand arrows per platform.

The platforms are connected by spiral stairways carved from the living stone of the stalagmite. Iron-banded doors of wood secure the entrance and exit to the stairway

on each floor.

The battle tower has one door—a solid metal slab on the ground level, inside the walled compound. The door is treated as AC 0, 100 hp, if someone tries to bash it in.

Garrison: There are 10 goblin archers and 5 drow archers on each platform of the tower. In addition, 10 drow footsoldiers stand inside the door at ground level.

3. Pool

This pool of water serves as a well and a bathing pond for House Millithor. It insures that the clan can control its own water supply, and also provides a private location for bathing and swimming.

In addition, a permanent enchantment has been placed upon the pool: a water elemental has been imprisoned here, and can be released upon the command of any of the family nobles. The creature will join in the defense of House Millithor against any and all attackers—it requires no concentration from the noble.

Water Elemental: AC 2; Move 6 SW18; HD 16; hit points 92; #AT 1; Dmg 5-30 (-5 out of water); THAC0 5; SD +2 needed to hit

The elemental's 60 yard range from the pool can reach all portions of the family compound except for the outer wall (between locations 2 and 4) and the battle tower.


When no more attackers are present—regardless whether it is a lull in the battle or the fight is over—the creature will depart for its own plane, having fulfilled the obligations of its long servitude.

4. Sky Column

The sky column is like a more grand version of the battle tower, but it also includes the garrison space for the house soldiers and



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slaves, as well as stables and the supply warehouse. Each of the two towers making up the column has battle platforms at 30', 60', 80, 100, and 140' heights. In the larger (west) tower, there are 64 arrow slits per platform; in the eastern tower, 48.

A single door leads into the combat platforms of the tower—it is identical to the door of the Battle Tower. Several doors lead into the stable area (A), described below—though more numerous, these too are the same type of solid metal barrier as found at the Battle Tower.

On the ground floor of the western tower, in the space marked "A" on the map, is the complex of caverns containing many important parts of the compound. The ground floor is devoted to stables, and contains some 20 lizard mounts and 10 rothe. The second floor contains the dining hall and commons room for the drow troops of House Millithor, and the third floor holds their great barracks-halls. Each company lives in one huge room with its officers.

Slave quarters are underground, below the stables. Here the humanoid troops live in squalor and darkness, pent up and angry—so that when they are used in the city, they fight with all the rage festered by their benighted status.

The fourth floor of area A is connected to the lowest battle platform in this column, and also to the drow barracks below. It is a battle maze, designed to force attackers through a convoluted series of maneuvers, many of which make them vulnerable to attack. See a detailed layout of this maze on one of the player cards included in the Menzoberranzan accessory. At the end of the maze is the beginning of a tall and narrow bridge, 60' above the courtyard of the house. The span leads to another readily-defensible location—the Spire.

Garrison: There are 20 lizardriding drow just inside the double doors of the stable. They will charge into the courtyard to coun-

terattack any enemies who've made it through the wall.

Three of the five platforms in each column will be garrisoned. These will be the lowest three, unless the attackers include forces flying at the higher altitudes. Each garrisoned platform has 10 goblin archers and 5 drow archers. In addition, 10 drow footmen stand inside each of the three doors leading into the structure at ground level.

5. The Spire

This structure (like #s 2 and 4) is constructed from the natural rock of the cave—in this case, a stalagmite towering some 200' into the air. It is windowless, and the only entrance is the one at the end of the bridge connecting the Spire to the Sky Column. The purpose of the spire is to form a final bastion for the drow troops of House Millithor. It contains plentiful food and water stockpiles, a complete arsenal of enchanted weaponry, fresh arrows, oil, *potions of healing* and a host of other supplies that make an extended siege a possibility. Although rumors, even among the house's own troops, speculate that the house nobles will make their last stand here, this is not the case—still, Matron Millithor would like any attackers to believe this.

A magical linkage supports the bridge connecting the spire to the sky column. That linkage can be broken by the speaking of a command word at the spire end of the bridge, which will cause the bridge to collapse immediately—and totally. The command is known to all house nobles, and to the captains of all the house companies of drow troops.

The spire includes successive levels of platforms, climbing ever higher into the tower. None of the five platforms opens to the outside—in fact, the walls are 12' thick stone, with a 2" plate of adamantite on the

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interior surfaces of walls, floor, and ceiling. The first (lowest) of the levels can be entered from the spire's outer door, which connects to the bridge. It is identical to the metal doors of #2 and #4.

The central stairway climbs through a hollowed-out column in the middle of the spire, so anyone climbing the steps is completely exposed to murderous fire from above. There are five different platforms. Each of these is blocked from the stairway by a metal door; however, a dozen arrow slits open from each room into the stairwell. Targets are visible from the time they leave the next lower level until (and including when) they stand before the door to the shooter's level. In the event of fire, smoke, or gas attacks, however, the arrow slits can quickly be closed and sealed.

Garrison: The Spire is protected by 10 drow footmen, inside the door, and 10 goblin and 5 drow archers just beyond them. However, the Spire will also be the destination of drow troops driven out of the Sky Column, so this number can swell considerably before the bridge is dropped.

The Great Hall of The Family

This is the central structure of the House, and it has been raised and shaped by the powers of drow magic over the years. The structure is vaguely mushroom-shaped, since the upper level is larger than the lower. The walls are 15' thick stone, lined with 6" of adamantite.

The only passages connecting the inside of this house to the outside are the front doors, and a secret tunnel leading downward from area 8 and leading through the streets of the city to a concealed exit nearly 1000' feet beyond the house wall.

6: Entry Hall

This wide corridor sweeps through a full circle and more, following the coiling outer wall of the house towards the sanctum of its center. It is blocked on the outside with a pair of adamantite gates as strong as the gates in the outer wall. Several secret doors are placed on the interior wall, allowing the house troops to emerge and attack illicit intruders in the flank or rear.

Garrison: There are 20 elite drow warriors stationed in this hallway. They will try to counterattack the enemy in the rear, while the wizards and priestesses meet the attack head on.

7: Council Chamber and Great Hall

This huge oval is the public heart of House Millithor. Here Matron Millithor keeps her great throne, where she sits when she entertains visitors. Long banquet tables line the walls – they can be pulled into the center of the room when necessary. A wide staircase follows one wall of the room, leading up to the second floor. It has no railing on the side away from the wall.

8: Upper Floor Antechamber

This is the entrance to the private quarters of the Family Millithor. It is a plain chamber, with heavy wooden doors leading to the priestesses quarters, the male quarters, and the kitchen and servants quarters.

Also, well concealed in the wall of the chamber (-1 to "find secret doors" attempts) is the secret door leading to a dark shaft that leads downward. A narrow ladder is bolted to the wall, leading downward for 50'. There, it reaches the end of a nar-



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row tunnel, which eventually comes up through a secret trapdoor in a narrow alley.

9. Matron Mother's Quarters

These sumptuous apartments represent the pinnacle of depraved drowery. Upon entering, one is immediately confronted by a full-length mirror. Upon all creatures except Matron Millithor, the glass acts as a *mirror of petrification* – those seeing their own reflection in it must make a saving throw versus spells, or turn to stone. A black drapery hangs beside the mirror and can be used to screen it; however, members of the noble family itself simply cast *darkness* over the glass when they enter the room.

The rest of the apartments include a huge bedroom; a large meeting/massage chamber, with a sunken pit that can be filled with water or oil; a private dining chamber, generally limited to dinners for two or three; and a library containing the matron's tomes of magic, family histories, and notes and schemes.

10. High Priestess Quarters

The two high priestesses, daughters of the matron, share these apartments. They are not so elegantly furnished as their mother's, nor do they have the space for entertaining visitors.

11. Young Priestess Quarters

This is little more than a rude barracks, where a dozen young female drow are trained in the arts of Lloth. About half of these are granddaughters of the matron mother, while the others are promising non-nobles taken under the family wing.



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Besides the beds, the chamber contains a large space for exercise, and several tables and benches for study.

A small, stone image of the Spider Queen rests opposite the door. The statue is imbued with the ability to *detect alignment* on all individuals in the room. If an alignment other than chaotic evil is discovered, the statue spits out a bolt that hits exactly like a *magic missile*; however, those struck suffer 1d6 of damage from the impact. On the following round they must make a saving throw versus poison; failure means that they suffer 1d4 of poison damage that round. Repeat the save attempt (and suffer additional damage) each round until a saving throw is successful or the victim dies. The statue will only shoot a given individual once, regardless of how many times she returns to the room.

12. The Sons of Millithor

This cramped apartment contains the rooms of the four sons of the matron mother. Two wizards and two fighters crowd into the chambers, leaving little room for personal effects other than a trunk of clothing, a wardrobe, and a bed. Thus, the drow males keep their equipment and valuables in the training room across the hall.

13. Quarters of The Patron

This apartment is not bad, by male standards—after all, Krecil gets as much space as all the sons combined. He has a hard wooden bed, a workbench and a small library, as well as the heads of several of his kills as trophies—a cave fisher, an aboleth, even a drow wizard who had once aspired to the mastership of Sorcere.

He keeps a trunk in here containing all of his poisons and special effects. The trunk is very thoroughly trapped. If it is not opened

with a single key (worn around Krecil's neck), and if a string of command words are not spoken at the same time, the chest will explode. All of its contents will be destroyed, and anyone in the room will suffer 12d6 of explosion damage, and will also be thoroughly poisoned (save at -6).

14. House Armory and Practice Room

This chamber is where the males develop their fighting skills. Although each of the wizards also has space here—a desk, and several shelves of scrolls and tomes—the room's overriding theme is combat. Weapons hang along the length of the room's curved outer wall, including halberds, pikes, spears, axes, long and shortswords, rapiers, throwing daggers, and handbows. At least one example of each type is enchanted to a level of +2; one more of each is a +1.

Also present are the fine mesh of drow chainmail, in several full suits that will fit a drow or a small human. The armor is also of +1 enchantment.

A small footlocker contains the personal treasures of each of the four drow males who frequent this room. They contain valuables in gems and platinum coins totalling 300-1800 gp apiece. Each is bolted to the floor, and trapped with a poison needle trap.

15. Servants' Quarters

These unremarkable chambers house the several dozen servants and slaves who work in the Millithor house, including cooks and maids, valets and armorers. Each has a small room, little more than a cubby, and very few valuables.



Chapter Six

16. Dining and Kitchen Area

The most commonly-used family dining room is here, sumptuously furnished with silver plates and chalices, and—a real rarity—a wooden table! Faerie fire images line the walls, shifting through scenes of Menzoberranzan. The most striking image is a glorious impersonation of House Baenre that lights up the whole wall and remains for ten minutes; other scenes are less spectacular, and shift after a minute or two.

The kitchens and pantries are clean and well stocked, but mostly unremarkable.

House Millithor NPCs

These characters will most likely take up the following positions; only discussions with the PCs will be likely to change this:

The Matron Mother, the 2 high priestesses, as well as 2 priestesses (5th level) and 10 apprentices (1st-3rd level) will all have gathered before the altar of Lloth, in the family sanctum (#7).

The 2 wizards and 2 fighters will patrol the inside of the wall and the towers, directing the outer defense. If the wall is breached, however, and the courtyard falls to the attackers, these males will retire to the main house. There they will stand before the doors to the sanctum, meeting the charge of any enemy troops who make it into the house.

The Attack

The House Nurbonnis attack will be a multi-pronged assault designed to quickly penetrate Millithor's outer layers of defense, and then to methodically eliminate any pockets of resistance that remain. The attacking

house will use its goblin slaves for the most deadly attacks, conserving its bugbear and drow forces until a breach is made in the wall and the battle begins to approach its climax.

The Troops of House Nurbonnis

The attackers are organized into several wings:

FIRST WING: This is the "cannon fodder" wing, and includes the goblin footsoldiers and half of the goblin archers. They will attack the wall under the cover of *darkness* spells, and seek the gaps that will hopefully be blasted by the mages.

Goblins (150): AC 7; Move 6; HD 1-1; hit points 5 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 20; AL LE

Goblin archers (75): AC 8; Move 6; HD 1-1; hit points 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6, Range 30/60/90; THAC0 20; AL LE

SECOND WING: This is the main body of the attackers. It will remain in the background while the holes are blasted in the walls (and the first wing is annihilated). Then this force will pour into the courtyard of the house, seeking to battle the Millithor troops that make a stand there. When the courtyard is secure, these troops will pursue the defending warriors that make a stand in the Spire, the Battle Tower, or the Sky Column.

Goblin archers (75): AC 8; Move 6; HD 1-1; hit points 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6, Range 30/60/90; THAC0 20; AL LE

Bugbears (100): AC 5; Move 9; HD 3 + 1; hit points 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 1; THAC0 17; AL CE

Drow lizardriders (30): AC 2; Move 15; HD 3; hit points 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d12 +2 (lance) or 1d8 +2 (sword); THAC0 15; AL LE

Chapter Six

Drow archers (40): AC 2; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 16 each; #AT 2; 1d6, Range 50/100/150; THACO 16; AL LE

THIRD WING: This elite force will enter the house after the battle in the courtyard has passed its peak. They will drive for the Family Hall, and will be entrusted with the mission of securing the family quarters and seeing to the elimination of all Millithor nobles.

Drow archers (40): AC 2; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 16 each; #AT 2; 1d6, Range 50/100/150; THACO 16; AL LE

Drow footsoldiers (40): AC 2; Move 12; HD 3; hit points 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +2; THACO 15; AL LE

Elite drow warriors (30): AC 0; Move 12; HD 4; hit points 24 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +4; THACO 12; AL LE

House Nurbonn's NPCs

These NPCs are listed on one of the cards included in the Menzoberranzan Boxed Set. Their powers will be reserved, almost exclusively, for the confrontation with the House Millithor nobles.



Chapter Seven

Aftermath

Menzoberranzan society will most likely continue to flourish after the adventure is concluded. However, the actions of the PCs and NPCs can have some profound effects—most significantly, of course, as regards the standings of Houses Nurbonnis and Millithor. In addition, the players might have earned for themselves niches in the dark elf city, as servitors of one of the great houses. Or they may be—even as the last rumbles of the war rumble through the streets—fleeing for their lives into the trackless realms of the Mantle and the Underdark. In either case, the adventure has just begun!

In the event that House Millithor is destroyed by the attack against it, surviving PCs will not necessarily face exile or death. Even if the characters are young Millithor nobles, the other drow will assume that they will take a pragmatic approach to survival. (Remember, only the matron mother and her children must be slain to destroy the house—the grandchildren, which include the PCs, will be left without a house, but they will not face execution unless they bring it upon themselves.)

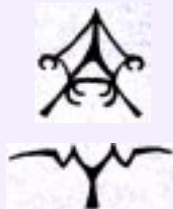
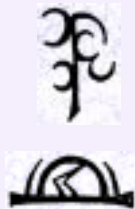
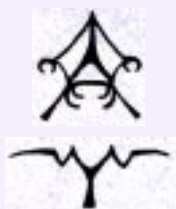
In fact, surviving Millithor characters may find potential employment from House Baenre or House Barrison Del'Armgo. Skilled drow warriors, priestesses and mages can always benefit a powerful sponsor. Alternately, if the characters are familiar with the surface world, this gives them a different use for either of these houses—the drow can always use intermediaries for their dealings with the races that live under the light of the hated sun.

Of course, if House Millithor successfully withstands the attack, then the combined might of the city's ruling council will come down upon House Nurbonnis. The matron mother and other nobles of that house will be blasted in their clan's dwelling, inevitably to perish. In this case, House Millithor climbs a rung on the ladder of Station, and is accorded a great deal of attention by the nobles of the ruling council. Matron Baenre will favor the house with a visit, and will try to learn as much as she can about the wild magic (if that powerful brand of sorcery played a role in the fight.)

Of course, the accomplishments of the PCs might have been successful and daring—but that doesn't mean that everyone will be happy with them. Given the nature of the drow, it is almost certain that, somewhere or another, the PCs will have made themselves a few enemies. The DM might want to make a few notes about these, for the purpose of future gaming.

The adventure, additionally, can serve as an avenue for those players and DMs who would like to campaign amid the chaotic wonders of Menzoberranzan. Perhaps, in addition to their newfound enemies, the PCs may have found a few allies. With a little ingenuity, the DM should have no trouble converting these relationships into the bases for many future adventures.

In any event, the wonders of Menzoberranzan have been presented to the player characters, for better or worse. As with any good, open-ended roleplaying setting, where you go from here is very much up to the players and their Dungeon Master.





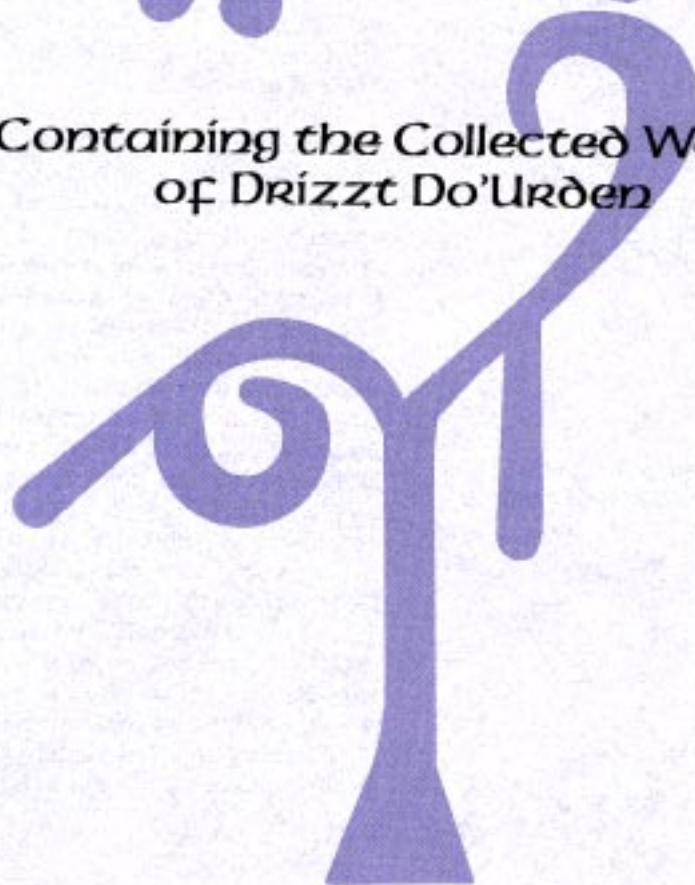
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The House Do'Urden Retrospective

Containing the Collected Works
of Drizzt Do'Urden



From The Seeds of Chaos



House Do'Urden, at the height of its glory (if not its true power), achieved the rank of Eighth House of Menzoberranzan, always a desired, and thus a tentative, position in the chaotic drow city. It was not a rival house's hunger that brought this drow house down, though, but the remarkable actions of the family's remarkable youngest son, one Drizzt Do'Urden.

The complete stories of both House Do'Urden and Drizzt can be found in R.A. Salvatore's *Icewind Dale* and *Dark Elf* trilogies (*The Crystal Shard*, *Streams of Silver*, and *The Halfling's Gem; Homeland, Exile, and Sojourn*) and in the newest of Drizzt's tales, *The Legacy*. For purposes of this supplement, we'll detail House Do'Urden's NPCs in the Year of the Singing Skull (1297 DR), perhaps the height of Matron Malice Do'Urden's power. The NPC information about her renegade son, Drizzt, though, will be up-to-date.

House Do'Urden

Ninth House of Menzoberranzan (1297 DR)

SYMBOL:

Matron Mother:	Malice Do'Urden (level 15 priestess)
Nobles:	21
Priestesses:	12
High Priestesses:	4
House Males:	9
Fighters:	7
Wizards:	2
Drow Soldiers:	350
Formations:	250 Elite Foot

75 Archers
25 Lizriders

Slave Force: 350 total

Formations: 200 goblin foot
100 orc foot
50 bugbears

Chief Alliances: Strongly supported by House Baenre (#1), which further invites question about the house's standing with the Spider Queen.

Chief Rivals: With the fall of House DeVir (#4), House Hun'ett (then #5) became bitter rivals with House Do'Urden. (Their covert war would begin in Year 1338, lasting ten full years.) Also, House Fey-Branche (then #10) had inklings that trouble might be brewing in the Do'Urden household and prepared to spring upon the house at the first opportunity.

It has never been truly decided whether House Do'Urden was a favored house of Lloth, or simply a pawn in the Spider Queen's unending game of chaos and perverted pleasure. Whatever the case, the house seemed on the fast track to ascension, climbing to the number nine spot in Menzoberranzan with one of the finest eliminations ever known in the city. House DeVir (#4) fell out of the Spider Queen's favor, and ambitious and opportunistic Matron Malice was quick to strike.

On the very day that House DeVir was destroyed, a child, Drizzt, was born to Malice, a child that would seal the fate of the Do'Urden family and even unintentionally shake the foundations of Menzoberranzan itself. As the third living son, Drizzt was supposed to be sacrificed to Lloth, but his oldest brother, Nalfein, was killed in the DeVir assault (by his other brother Dinin) and the babe was allowed to live.



From The Seeds of Chaos

The might of House Do'Urden lay in the unquestioning fealty to Lloth of Matron Malice and her three daughters, Briza, Vierna, and Maya, and the unrivalled training of the Do'Urden drow soldiers. Every move Malice and her daughters made was carefully weighed by the most pertinent of all drow questions: Would it please Lloth?

Malice also knew how to play the intrigue within the city. Often she got her children placed in important positions at the Academy or in patrol groups. Matron Baenre usually nodded her approval whenever Matron Malice's name was mentioned, and there could be no doubt, with Lloth and the First Matron Mother's approval, that House Do'Urden would continue its climb.

Even more to the Spider Queen's pleasure was the way in which Malice handled Zaknafein, her weapon master (arguably the finest fighter in all of Menzoberranzan), who was not so loyal to drow ways—in fact, Zaknafein despised Lloth, despised his race in general, and best served Malice when he was slicing his swords through the hearts of drow priestesses. Malice played her former patron well, though, using Zaknafein's incredible skills to convert her drow soldiers into a crack, elite unit.

Perhaps no better example of this can be found than when House Do'Urden summarily eliminated the city's Fourth House, DeVir.

With DeVir destroyed, Matron Malice was only one rank away from her coveted seat on the Ruling Council. Over the next few decades, as Drizzt grew into an exceptional fighter, the house's reputation grew, too, and it seemed as if that seat would soon be assured. But those ensuing decades also signalled the inevitable doom for the ambitious house, for Drizzt, amazing with weapons, was akin to Zaknafein in temperament. The young drow had no

heart for the ways of the Spider Queen, and his sacrilegious actions continually placed Malice out of Lloth's favor.

One disaster led to another for House Do'Urden. They would ultimately win their war with House Hun'ett (thanks to the double-dealings of Bregan D'aerthe), but only because Hun'ett was as much out of Lloth's favor as was Do'Urden. The single hope for Malice's ambitions, even her survival, lay in the Lloth-decreed death of Drizzt, who had fled the city, but, for all of Malice's attempts, they could never accomplish the task, never lift themselves back to glory.

The Dwelling of House Do'Urden

House Do'Urden is one of the Qu'ellor'weil houses in Menzoberranzan, one of the houses whose residence is primarily within the great cavern's wall (as opposed to the usual stalagmite-stalactite arrangement). Two huge stalagmite pillars serve as the house's anchoring posts for the gate and also house the slave and commoner drow garrisons, but the bulk of the house, and all of the nobles, reside in the two-levelled cave complex within the wall.

The first level is a virtual maze of tunnels and small residence halls, a large common dining area, and a large training area. At the back end looms the house chapel, two stories high, and of similar design to House Baenre's (though certainly not nearly as large or as well-decorated!).


The upper level can only be reached through the chapel balcony or the outer balcony overlooking the Do'Urden compound, and neither place has any type of staircase. The family drow get up to the level through levitation.

A long corridor leads in (straight west) from the outer balcony. Seven side passages





From The Seeds of Chaos



to the north lead to the small room complexes of the ruling family, the last belonging to Malice herself, and the one before that serving as the Matron Mother's alchemical area wherein she creates her renowned salves.

The southern side of the upper complex features a large dining hall, a common war room, a two-chambered area for Rizzen (the present House Patron), and a three-chambered complex occupied by Weapons-Master Zaknafein, including a private room, a smaller, private training area (complete with weapons rack), and the house's private war room.

At the end of the central corridor on this second level rests the chapel anteroom, a most important place. Here is where Malice and her principal priestesses gather in time of war, sending out their powers at the enemy house. Beyond the anteroom, of course, is the chapel proper.

House Do'Urden NPCs

Matron Malice Do'Urden (15th level drow priestess) is best known for her ability at making salves. Her most common unguent is similar to *Keoghtom's ointment*, healing 1d4 +8 hit points of damage, and serving as an antidote for all types of poison. The importance of this unguent for House Do'Urden's soldiers in time of war, particularly against other poison-using drow, cannot be underestimated.

Physically, Malice was a handsome drow female who carried her long years well. Her amorous exploits are well-known in the Do'Urden compound, particularly since one of her former patrons, Zaknafein, was allowed to live after his time of servitude to her.

Fiercely ambitious, conniving, loyal only to Lloth, ruthless in the extreme, Malice was, by all accounts, the perfect Matron

Mother. If not for fate (spell that D-R-I-Z-Z-T), Malice would have no doubt been a worthy addition to the Ruling Council.

Zaknafein Do'Urden, weapon master (24th level drow fighter), earned a reputation, both for skill at arms (and arms' training) and for love of killing drow, that sent shivers along the spines of the rival Matron Mothers. Wearing *chain mail* +5 (AC -4) and wielding two *long swords* +5 (#AT 4, Dmg 1-8 + 6), this master feared no drow – in hand-to-hand combat. His respect for the powers of Lloth's evil priestesses kept him a virtual prisoner in House Do'Urden, serving Malice, whom he hated, in exchange for the occasional opportunity to slaughter the priestesses of rival houses.

Other than his fine armor and weapons, Zaknafein kept little magic (*light pellets* being the only notable exception). Quite simply, he didn't need magic. Rumors say that Uthegentel, weapon master of House Barrison Del'Armgo, once secretly challenged Zaknafein to a duel. Always willing to oblige, Zaknafein met the crazed warrior in private, outside the city's boundaries. Both returned alive, but Uthegentel, once sporting a marvelous shock of hair, ever-after kept his head shaved. Whispers (VERY soft whispers) say that this was the price Zaknafein demanded to accept Uthegentel's surrender.

Briza Do'Urden (13th level drow priestess) was Malice's oldest daughter, a lumbering, vicious female who grew increasingly intolerant of her Mother's blunders. Her favorite pastime was whipping slaves (or male drow, who she considered no better than slaves) with her six-headed *whip of fangs*. Never a diplomat, Briza lived to kill and to torment, by her warped standards the most pleasurable experiences of existence.

From The Seeds of Chaos

Vierna Do'Urden (11th level drow priestess), the second daughter of the house, is also the only female still alive, now living with Jarlaxle and the underground band of Bregan D'aerthe. Due to her even temperament and tendency toward mercy, Vierna was always known as the weakest of the Do'Urden daughters. She is Drizzt's only full sister, and Malice wondered if their common father was responsible for their common traits.

Things have changed for the beleaguered survivor, though. Vierna never found the strength to abandon the ways of Lloth, as did her brother, and eventually, the dark side won her over. Now she dreams of glory for Lloth, of the favor of the Spider Queen, and of one day finding her way to the Matron position in a ruling house.

Dinin Do'Urden (12th level drow fighter) survived the demise of his house, falling in with Jarlaxle's mercenary band. Dinin's greatest fear concerns his brother, Drizzt. He was among those of the house sent out to find their renegade brother, and he met Drizzt once in combat. Once was enough. Dinin fosters no hopes of ever seeing his

purple-eyed brother again, and openly admits this, which has, of late, put him out of increasingly ambitious Vierna's favor.


Dinin fights with the weapons and armor that used to belong to Zaknafein, and also favors the handcrossbow. His favorite method of attack is from behind, making him a perfectly suitable member of Bregan D'aerthe, a band that holds no pretense of honor.

Little is known about **Maya Do'Urden** (9th level drow priestess), Malice's youngest daughter. Maya always played the proper, subservient role in family business, attendant to her Mother's every whim, never questioning Malice's word. Briza and Vierna constantly vied for their little sister's attention, probably so that the drastically different siblings could exert influence over moldable Maya's development.

Rizzen (8th level drow fighter), the last Patron of House Do'Urden, was a handsome but otherwise unremarkable drow. Not too clever, not too dangerous, he served Malice as a plaything, nothing more.



Drizzt Do'Urden



He is, perhaps, the most famous drow on the surface of Faerûn, an honorable warrior who accepts the cards fate has dealt him, accepts the taunts and threats of ignorant surface dwellers, and has learned, through sometimes bitter experience, what is truly important in his life. Drizzt sits at the right hand of Bruenor Battlehammer, dwarven King of Mithril Hall, along with the barbarian, Wulfgar, Bruenor's adopted human daughter, Catti-brie, and the halfling, Regis, returned from his downfall as a Guildmaster in faraway Calimport.

Times are good now for the beleaguered drow renegade, better than Drizzt has ever known. He has left a long legacy, though, a trail of defeated, if not dead, enemies that includes the survivors of his fallen house, other ambitious drow who know that to kill Drizzt is certainly to gain Lloth's highest favor, and one Artemis Entreri, a ruthless assassin who wants nothing more than to kill Drizzt in single, honest combat.

For a look at some specifics of this unusual drow's past, see the entry in the *Hall of Heroes* (FR7). Readers of the *Icewind Dale* and *Dark Elf* trilogies will no doubt spot several minor discrepancies in that entry, but at that time little was widely known about Drizzt. Not until the release of the *Dark Elf* books was his story known, and that story, we now know, is still far from complete.

What follows, then, is an updated version of that *Hall of Heroes* entry, including new equipment the drow has acquired.

ARMOR CLASS: -3 to -8
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 92
NO. OF ATTACKS: 5
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d8 +7(x3)
1d8 +5 (x2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Critical hits, Stealth
(see below)
SPECIAL DEFENSE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil

SIZE: M (5'4")
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Good

15th Level Drow Ranger
S:13 I:17 W:17 D:20 C:15 CH:14

Remaining Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *Dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness*

Physical Description: Drizzt is handsome, even by drow standards. His white hair is long, flowing, and silky smooth, his features sharp, but perfectly proportioned. Most striking of all are the drow's eyes, violet in hue even when Drizzt is looking in the infrared spectrum of light. Fiery orbs of passion, their sparkle is strikingly visible, even within the shadows of a low-pulled cowl.

Drizzt stands 5'4" and weighs 130 perfectly toned pounds. He wears a forest-green cloak, fur collared, and high black boots.

Equipment: Drizzt wears mithral *chain mail* (+4) given to him by his dearest friend, Bruenor Battlehammer. Though forged by dwarves, the mail is as graceful and fine as the best elven chain, and hardened under a dwarf-pumped forge, it can turn aside mighty blows indeed.

In combat, Drizzt wields two whirling scimitars, specializing in the blades (this is left over from his days as a straight fighter class; though his class has changed, he retains the ability). One of the scimitars, found in the lair of the white dragon, Icingdeath, is a *frostbrand* +3, and the other, given to Drizzt by the famed wizard, Malchor Harpel, is an even mightier blade. Twinkle by name, the scimitar was forged by the surface elves and glows with an eerie bluish light when enemies are near. The weapon is a *defender* +5, and when Drizzt puts Twinkle into a mesmerizing dance with his *frostbrand*, enemies would be wise to turn tail and run!

Drizzt Do'Urden

Drizzt's most prized item (some say also his best friend) is a *figurine of wondrous power*, an onyx panther, with which the drow can call upon Guenhwyvar.

Guenhwyvar: AC4; HD 6 + 6; hp 45; Move 15"; 3 attacks: 1D4/1D4/1D12, plus rear claw rake for 2D4/2D4 if both paws score a hit; Move Silently and Hide in Shadows at 95%; Never surprised. The figurine can be used for ½ day every other day.

Personality and Motivation: Drizzt had attained 18th level as a drow fighter under Zaknafein's tutelage, but when he came to the surface world, he found his true calling under the instruction of a blind ranger named Montolio DeBrouchee.

Since that time, Drizzt has become a ranger in the purest sense of the word. Where goblinoids and other evil humanoid creatures are concerned, no fight is unnecessary. He is a perfectionist, in combat and in everything he does, striving to attain the highest standards within his code of morality and self-discipline. Yet Drizzt is careful not to impose his personal standards upon others. Kindly and compassionate, he remains a valuable ally to all the good races, despite the harsh treatment he usually receives from people who can't see his worth for the color of his skin and the reputation of his heritage. Drizzt believes in the brotherhood of the goodly races and always views the world with sympathy and empathy for the other person's viewpoint. Thus, he accepts his lot in life without complaint.

But Drizzt's outward calm and composure are only half of his dichotomous personality. He is the peacemaker, the level head in any situation, always willing to avoid an unnecessary fight if possible. But when all of the options have been exhausted and a fight is unavoidable, a battle-lust burns within the

drow that makes even his closest friends step back and shudder. Wulfgar is fully convinced that Drizzt's daring will one day get them into a situation from which they cannot escape, and even Bruenor Battlehammer, fearless and stone hard, shrugs in amazement at his drow friend's daring.

The eager gleam in Drizzt's eye gave Bruenor the impression that the drow had more in mind than watching. "Crazy elf," he said under his breath. "Probably'll take on the whole lot of 'em by himself!" (Bruenor) looked around curiously again at the dead giants. "And win!"

(from The Crystal Shard)

Because of his heritage, keen ears, and agility, Drizzt can hide in shadows (99%), move silently (99%), climb walls (99%), and hear noise (60%) as well as most thieves. This stealth allows Drizzt a backstab attack as a thief of similar level (x5 damage), adding to Drizzt's already enormous fighting advantages.

Also, so accurate are Drizzt's wicked cuts, that if his attack roll exceeds the minimum required for a hit by more than 5, he scores double weapon damage (this also applies to the backstab) and has a base 10%, plus or minus 3% per level difference between him and his opponent, chance of killing the foe instantly.

Perhaps the best measure of this unusual drow's personality, the best understanding of Drizzt's motivations and desires, comes from his own essays, words sometimes grim, often dark, but always honest and always revealing the ever-present undercurrent of determination that allowed Drizzt to survive the terrible world of the drow.

The collected essays of Drizzt Do'Urden are presented here for the first time in one booklet, along with one never before printed: "On Vows" from *The Legacy*.



Collected Essays of Drizzt Do'Urden

On Station: *(Homeland)*

Station: In all the world of the drow, there is no more important word. It is the calling of their—of our—religion, the incessant pulling of hungry heartstrings. Ambition overrides good sense and compassion is thrown away in its face, all in the name of Lloth, the Spider Queen.

Ascension to power in drow society is a simple process of assassination. The Spider Queen is a deity of chaos, and she and her high priestesses, the true rulers of the drow world, do not look with ill favor upon ambitious individuals wielding poisoned daggers.

Of course, there are rules of behavior; every society must boast of these. To openly commit murder or wage war invites the pretense of justice, and penalties exacted in the name of drow justice are merciless. To stick a dagger in the back of a rival during the chaos of a larger battle or in the quiet shadows of an alley, however, is quite acceptable—even applauded. Investigation is not the forte of drow justice. No one cares enough to bother.

Station is the way of Lloth, the ambition she bestows to further the chaos, to keep her drow “children” along their appointed course of self-imprisonment. Children? Pawns, more likely, dancing dolls for the Spider Queen, puppets on the imperceptible but impervious strands of her web. All climb the Spider Queen’s ladders; all hunt for her pleasure; and all fall to the hunters of her pleasure.

Station is the paradox of the world of my people, the limitation of our power within the hunger for power. It is gained through treachery and invites treachery against those who gain it. Those most powerful in Menzoberranzan spend their days watching over their shoulders, defending against the daggers that would find their backs.

Their deaths usually come from the front.

On Memories: *(Homeland)*

Empty hours, empty days.

I find that I have few memories of that first period of my life, those first sixteen years when I labored as a servant. Minutes blended into hours, hours into days, and so on, until the whole of it seemed one long and barren moment. Several times I managed to sneak out onto the balcony of House Do’Urden and look out over the magical lights of Menzoberranzan. On all of those secret journeys, I found myself entranced by the growing, and then dissipating, heat-light of Narbondel, the time-clock pillar. Looking back on that now, on those long hours watching the glow of the wizard’s fire slowly walk its way up and then down the pillar, I am amazed at the emptiness of my early days.

I clearly remember my excitement, tingling excitement, each time I got out of the house and set myself into position to observe the pillar. Such a simple thing it was, yet so fulfilling compared to the rest of my existence.

Whenever I hear the crack of a whip, another memory—more a sensation than a memory actually—sends a shiver through my spine. The shocking jolt and the ensuing numbness from those snake-headed weapons is not something that any person would soon forget. They bite under your skin, sending waves of magical energy through your body, waves that make your muscles snap and pull beyond their limits.

Yet I was luckier than most. My sister Vierna was near to becoming a high priestess when she was assigned the task of rearing me and was at a period of her life where she possessed far more energy than such a job required. Perhaps, then there was more to those first ten years under her care than I now recall. Bierna never showed the intense wickedness of our mother—or, more particularly, of our oldest sister, Briza. Perhaps there were good times in the solitude of the house chapel; it is possible

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that Vierna allowed a more gentle side of herself to show through to her baby brother.

Maybe not. Even though I count Vierna as the kindest of my sisters, her words drip in the venom of Lloth as surely as those of any cleric in Menzoberranzan. It seems unlikely that she would risk her aspirations toward high priestesshood for the sake of a mere child, a mere male child.

Whether there were indeed joys in those years, obscured in the unrelenting assault of Menzoberranzan's wickedness, or whether that earliest period of my life was even more painful than the years that followed—so painful that my mind hides the memories—I cannot be certain. For all my efforts, I cannot remember them.

I have more insight into the next six years, but the most prominent recollection of the days I spent serving the court of Matron Malice—aside from the secret trips outside the house—is the image of my own feet.

A page prince is never allowed to raise his gaze.

On Falsehood: *(Homeland)*

The Academy.

It is the propagation of the lies that bind drow society together, the ultimate perpetration of falsehoods repeated so many times that they ring true against any contrary evidence. The lessons young drow are taught of truth and justice are so blatantly refuted by everyday life in wicked Menzoberranzan that it is hard to understand how any could believe them. Still they do.

Even now, decades removed, the thought of the place frightens me, not for any physical pain or the ever-present sense of possible death—I have trod down many roads equally dangerous in that way. The Academy of Menzoberranzan frightens me when I think of the survivors, the graduates, existing—reveling—within the evil fabrications that shape their world.

They live with the belief that anything is acceptable if you can get away with it, that self-gratification is the most important aspect of existence, and that power comes only to she or he who is strong enough and cunning enough to snatch it from the failing hands of those who no longer deserve it. Compassion has no place in Menzoberranzan, and yet it is compassion, not fear, that brings harmony to most races. It is harmony, working toward shared goals, that precedes greatness.

Lies engulf the drow in fear and mistrust, refute friendship at the tip of a Lloth-blessed sword. The hatred and ambition fostered by these amoral tenets are the doom of my people, a weakness that they perceive as strength. The result is a paralyzing, paranoid existence that the drow call the edge of readiness.

I do not know how I survived the Academy, how I discovered the falsehoods early enough to use them to contrast, and thus strengthen, those ideals I most cherish.

It was Zaknafein, I must believe, my teacher. Through the experiences of Zak's long years, which embittered him and cost him so much, I came to hear the screams: the screams of protest against murderous treachery; the screams of rage from the leaders of drow society, the high priestesses of the Spider Queen, echoing down the paths of my mind, ever to hold a place within my mind. The screams of dying children.


On Friendship: *(Homeland)*

What eyes are these that see
The pain I know in my innermost soul?
What eyes are these that see
The twisted strides of my kindred,
Led on in the wake of toys unbridled:
Arrow, bolt, and sword tip?

Yours . . . aye, yours,
Straight run and muscled spring,
Soft on padded paws, sheathed claws,
Weapons rested for their need,



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Stained not by frivolous blood
Or murderous deceit.

Face to face, my mirror,
Reflection in a still pool by light.
Would that I might keep that image
Upon this face mine own.
Would that I might keep that heart
Within my breast untainted.

Hold tight to the proud honor of your spirit,
Mighty Guenhwyvar,
And hold tight to my side,
My dearest friend.

On Loss: (*Homeland*)

Zaknafein Do'Urden: mentor, teacher, friend. I, in the blind agony of my own frustrations, more than once came to recognize Zaknafein as none of these. Did I ask of him more than he could give? Did I expect perfection of a tormented soul; hold Zaknafein up to standards beyond his experiences, or standards impossible in the face of his experiences?

I might have been him. I might have lived, trapped within the helpless rage, buried under the daily assault of the wickedness that is Menzoberranzan and the pervading evil that is my own family, never in life to find escape.

It seems a logical assumption that we learn from the mistakes of our elders. This, I believe, was my salvation. Without the example of Zaknafein, I, too, would have found no escape—not in life.

Is this course I have chosen a better way than the life Zaknafein knew? I think, yes, though I find despair often enough sometimes to long for that other way. It would have been easier. Truth, though, is nothing in the face of self-falsehood, and principles are of no value if the idealist cannot live up to his own standards.

This, then, is a better way.

I live with many laments, for my people, for myself, but mostly for that weapon

master, lost to me now, who showed me how—and why—to use a blade.

There is no pain greater than this; not the cut of a jagged-edged dagger nor the fire of a dragon's breath. Nothing burns in your heart like the emptiness of losing something, someone, before you truly have learned of its value. Often now I lift my cup in a futile toast, an apology to ears that cannot hear:

To Zak, the one who inspired my courage.

On Self-Understanding: (*Exile*)

I remember vividly the day I walked away from the city of my birth, the city of my people. All the Underdark lay before me, a life of adventure and excitement, with possibilities that lifted my heart. More than that, though, I left Menzoberranzan with the belief that I could now live my life in accordance with my principles. I had Guenhwyvar at my side and my scimitars belted on my hips. My future was my own to determine.

But that drow, the young Drizzt Do'Urden who walked out of Menzoberranzan on that fated day, barely into my fourth decade of life, could not begin to understand the truth of time, of how its passage seemed to slow when the moments were not shared with others. In my youthful exuberance, I looked forward to several centuries of life.

How do you measure centuries when a single hour seems a day and a single day seems a year?

Beyond the cities of the Underdark, there is food for those who know how to find it and safety for those who know how to hide. More than anything else, though, beyond the teeming cities of the Underdark, there is solitude.

As I became a creature of the empty tunnels, survival became easier and more difficult all at once. I gained in the physical skills and experience necessary to live on. I could defeat almost anything that wandered into my chosen domain, and those few



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monsters that I could not defeat, I could sure flee or hide from. It did not take me long, however, to discover one nemesis that I could neither defeat nor flee. It followed me wherever I went—indeed, the farther I ran, the more it closed in around me. My enemy was solitude, the interminable, incessant silence of hushed corridors.

Looking back on it these many years later, I find myself amazed and appalled at the changes I endured under such an existence. The very identity of every reasoning being is defined by the language, the communication, between that being and others around it. Without that link, I was lost. When I left Menzoberranzan, I determined that my life would be based on principles, my strength adhering to unbending beliefs. Yet after only a few months alone in the Underdark, the only purpose for my survival was my survival. I had become a creature of instinct, calculating and cunning but not thinking, not using my mind for anything more than directing the newest kill.

Guenhwyvar saved me, I believe. The same companion that had pulled me from certain death in the clutches of monsters unnumbered rescued me from a death of emptiness—less dramatic, perhaps, but no less fatal. I found myself living for those moments when the cat could walk by my side, when I had another living creature to hear my words, strained though they had become. In addition to every other value, Guenhwyvar became my time clock, for I knew that the cat could come forth from the Astral Plane for a half-day every other day.

Only after my ordeal had ended did I realize how critical that one quarter of my time actually was. Without Guenhwyvar, I would not have found the resolve to continue. I would never have maintained the strength to survive.

Even when Guenhwyvar stood beside me, I found myself growing more and more ambivalent toward the fighting. I was secretly hoping that some denizen of the

Underdark would prove stronger than I. Could the pain of tooth or talon be greater than the emptiness and the silence?

I think not.

On Friendship: (*Exile*)

Friendship. The word has come to mean many different things among the various races and cultures of both the Underdark and the surface of the Realms. In Menzoberranzan, friendship is generally born out of mutual profit. While both parties are better off for the union, it remains secure. But loyalty is not a tenet of drow life, and as soon as a friend believes that he will gain more without the other, the union—and likely the other's life—will come to a swift end.

I have had few friends in my life, and if I live a thousand years, I suspect that this will remain true. There is little to lament in this fact, though, for those who have called me friend have been persons of great character and have enriched my existence, given it worth. First there was Zaknafein, my father and mentor, who showed me that I was not alone and that I was not incorrect in holding to my beliefs. Zaknafein saved me, from both the blade and the chaotic, evil, fanatic religion that damns my people.


Yet I was no less lost when a handless deep gnome came into my life, a svirfneblin that I had rescued from certain death, many years before, at my brother Dinin's merciless blade. My deed was repaid in full, for when the svirfneblin and I again met, this time in the clutches of his people, I would have been killed—truly would have preferred death—were it not for Belwar Dissengulp.

My time in Blingdenstone, the city of the deep gnomes, was such a short span in the measure of my years. I remember well Belwar's city and his people, and I always shall. Theirs was the first society I came to know that was based on the strengths of community, not the paranoia of selfish individualism. Together the deep gnomes





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survive against the perils of the hostile Underdark, labor in their endless toils of mining the stone, and play games that are hardly distinguishable from every other aspect of their rich lives.

Greater indeed are pleasures that are shared.

On Life: (*Exile*)

To live or to survive? Until my second time out in the wilds of the Underdark, after my stay in Blingdenstone, I never would have understood the significance of such a simple question.

When first I left Menzoberranzan, I thought survival enough. I thought that I could fall within myself, within my principles, and be satisfied that I had followed the only course open to me. The alternative was the grim reality of Menzoberranzan and compliance with the wicked ways that guided my people. If that was life, I believed, simply surviving would be far preferable.

And yet, that "simple survival" nearly killed me. Worse, it nearly stole everything that I held dear.

The svirfnebli of Blingdenstone showed me a different way. Svirfneblin society, structured and nurtured on communal values and unity, proved to be everything that I had always hoped Menzoberranzan would be. The svirfnebli did much more than merely survive. They lived and laughed and worked, and the gains they made were shared by the whole, as was the pain of the losses they inevitably suffered in the hostile subsurface world.

Joy multiplies when it is shared among friends, but grief diminishes with every division. That is life.

And so, when I walked back out of Blingdenstone, back into the empty Underdark's lonely chambers, I walked with hope. At my side went Belwar, my new friend, and in my pocket went the magical figurine that could summon Guenhwyvar,

my proven friend. In my brief stay with the deep gnomes, I had witnessed life as I always had hoped it would be—I could not return to simply surviving.

With my friends beside me, I dared to believe that I would not have to.

On Strength: (*Exile*)

There have been many times in my life when I have felt helpless. It is perhaps the most acute pain a person can know, founded in frustration and ventless rage. The nick of a sword upon a battling soldier's arm cannot compare to the anguish a prisoner feels at the crack of a whip. Even if the whip does not strike the helpless prisoner's body, it surely cuts deeply at his soul.

We all are prisoners at one time or another in our lives, prisoners to ourselves or to the expectations of those around us. It is a burden that all people despise, and that few people ever learn to escape. I consider myself fortunate in this respect, for my life has traveled along a fairly straight-running path of improvement. Beginning in Menzoberranzan, under the relentless scrutiny of the evil Spider Queen's high priestesses, I suppose that my situation could only have improved.

In my stubborn youth, I believed that I could stand alone, that I was strong enough to conquer my enemies with sword and with principles. Arrogance convinced me that by sheer determination, I could conquer helplessness itself. Stubborn and foolish youth, I must admit, for when I look back on those years now, I see quite clearly that rarely did I stand alone and rarely did I have to stand alone. Always there were friends, true and dear, lending me support even when I believed I did not want it, and even when I did not realize they were doing it.

Zaknafein, Belwar, Clacker, Mooshie, Bruenor, Regis, Catti-brie, Wulfgar, and of course, Guenhwyvar, dear Guenhwyvar. These were the companions who justified my principles, who gave me the strength to



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continue against any foe, real or imagined. These were the companions who fought the helplessness, the rage, and frustration.

These were the friends who gave me my life.

On Spirit: (*Exile*)

Spirit. It cannot be broken and it cannot be stolen away. A victim in the throes of despair might feel otherwise, and certainly the victim's "master" would like to believe it so. But in truth, the spirit remains, sometimes buried but never fully removed.

That is the false assumption of Zin-carla and the danger of such sentient animation. The priestesses, I have come to learn, claim it as the highest gift of the Spider Queen deity who rules the drow. I think not. Better to call Zin-carla Lloth's greatest lie.

The physical powers of the body cannot be separated from the rationale of the mind and the emotions of the heart. They are one and the same, a compilation of a singular being. It is in the harmony of these three—body, mind and heart—that we find spirit.

How many tyrants have tried? How many rulers have sought to reduce their subjects to simple, unthinking instruments of profit and gain? They steal the loves, the religions, of their people; they seek to steal the spirit.

Ultimately and inevitably, they fail. This I must believe. If the flame of the spirit's candle is extinguished, there is only death, and the tyrant finds no gain in a kingdom littered with corpses.

But it is a resilient thing, this flame of spirit, indomitable and ever-striving. In some, at least, it will survive, to the tyrant's demise.

Where, then, was Zaknafein, my father, when he set out purposefully to destroy me? Where was I in my years alone in the wilds, when this hunter that I had become blinded my heart and guided my sword hand often against my conscious wishes?

We both were there all along, I came to know, buried but never stolen.

Spirit. In every language in all the Realms, surface and Underdark, in every time and every place, the word has a ring of strength and determination. It is the hero's strength, the mother's resilience, and the poor man's armor. It cannot be broken, and it cannot be taken away.

This I must believe.

On Sunlight: (*Sojourn*)

It burned my eyes and pained every part of my body. It destroyed my piwafwi and boots, stole the magic from my armor, and weakened my trusted scimitars. Still, every day, without fail, I was there, sitting upon my perch, my judgment seat, to await the arrival of the sunrise.

It came to me each day in a paradoxical way. The sting could not be denied, but neither could I deny the beauty of the spectacle. The colors just before the sun's appearance grabbed my soul in a way that no patterns of heat emanations in the Underdark ever could. At first, I thought my entrancement a result of the strangeness of the scene, but even now, many years later, I feel my heart leap at the subtle brightening that heralds the dawn.

I know now that my time in the sun—my daily penance—was more than mere desire to adapt to the ways of the surface world. The sun became the symbol of the difference between the Underdark and my new home. The society that I had run away from, a world of dealings and treacherous conspiracies, could not exist in the open spaces under the light of day.

This sun, for all the anguish it brought me physically, came to represent my denial of that other, darker world. Those rays of revealing light reinforced my principles as surely as they weakened the drow-made magical items.

In the sunlight, the piwafwi, the shielding cloak that defeated probing eyes, the garment of thieves and assassins, became no more than a worthless rag of tattered cloth.



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On Guilt: (*Sojourn*)

Does anything in all the world force a heavier weight upon one's shoulders than guilt? I have felt the burden often, have carried it over many steps, on long roads.

Guilt resembles a sword with two edges. On the one hand, it cuts for justice, imposing practical morality upon those who fear it. Guilt, the consequence of conscience, is what separates the goodly persons from the evil. Given a situation that promises gain, most drow can kill another, kin or otherwise, and walk away carrying no emotional burden at all. The drow assassin might fear retribution but will shed no tears for his victim.

To humans—and to surface elves, and to all of the other goodly races—the suffering imposed by conscience will usually far outweigh any external threats. Some would conclude that guilt—conscience—is the primary difference between the varied races of the Realms. In this regard, guilt must be considered a positive force.

But there is another side to that weighted emotion. Conscience does not always adhere to rational judgment. Guilt is always a self-imposed burden, but is not always rightly imposed. So it was for me along the road from Menzoberranzan to Icewind Dale. I carried out of Menzoberranzan guilt for Zaknafein, my father, sacrificed on my behalf. I carried into Blingdenstone guilt for Belwar Dissengulp, the svirfneblin my brother had maimed. Along the many roads there came many other burdens: Clacker, killed by the monster that hunted for me; the gnolls, slain by my own hand; and the farmers—most painfully—that simple farm family murdered by the barghest whelp.

Rationally I knew that I was not to blame, that the actions were beyond my influence, or in some cases, as with the gnolls, that I had acted properly. But rationale is little defense against the weight of guilt.

In time, bolstered by the confidence of trusted friends, I came to throw off many of

these burdens. Others remain and always shall. I accept this as inevitable, and use the weight to guide my future steps.

This, I believe, is the purpose of conscience.

On Deity: (*Sojourn*)

To all the varied peoples of the world, nothing is so out of reach, yet so deeply personal and controlling, as the concept of god. My experience in my homeland showed me little of these supernatural beings beyond the influences of the vile drow deity, the Spider Queen, Lloth.

After witnessing the carnage of Lloth's workings, I was not so quick to embrace the concept of any god, of any being, that could so dictate codes of behavior and precepts of an entire society. Is morality not an internal force, and if it is, are principles then to be dictated or felt?

So follows the question of the gods themselves. Are these named entities, in truth, actual beings, or are they manifestations of shared beliefs? Are the dark elves evil because they follow the precepts of the Spider Queen, or is Lloth a culmination of the drow's natural evil conduct?

Likewise, when the barbarians of Icewind Dale charge across the tundra to war, shouting the name of Tempus, Lord of Battles, are they following the precepts of Tempus, or is Tempus merely the idealized name they give to their actions?

This I cannot answer, not, I have come to realize, can anyone else, no matter how loudly they—particularly priests of certain gods—might argue otherwise. In the end, to a preacher's ultimate sorrow, the choice of a god is a personal one, and the alignment to a being is in accord with one's internal code of principles. A missionary might coerce and trick would-be disciples, but no rational being can truly follow the determined orders of any god-figure if those orders run contrary to his own tenets. Neither I, Drizzt Do'Urden, nor my father, Zaknafein, could



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ever have become disciples of the Spider Queen. And Wulfgar of Icewind Dale, my friend of later years, though he still might yell out to the battle god, does not please this entity called Tempus except on those occasions when he puts his mighty war hammer to use.

The gods of the realms are many and varied—or they are the many and varied names and identities tagged onto the same being.

I know not—and care not—which.

On Purpose: (*Sojourn*)

I now view my long road as a search for truth—truth in my own heart, in the world around me, and in the larger questions of purpose and of existence. How does one define good and evil?

I carried an internal code of morals with me on my trek, though whether I was born with it or it was imparted to me by Zaknafein—or whether it simply developed from my perceptions—I cannot ever know. This code forced me to leave Menzoberranzan, for though I was not certain of what those truths might have been, I knew beyond doubt that they would not be found in the domain of Lloth.

After many years in the Underdark outside of Menzoberranzan and after my first awful experiences on the surface, I came to doubt the existence of any universal truth, came to wonder if there was, after all, any purpose to life. In the world of drow, ambition was the only purpose, the seeking of material gains that came with increased rank. Even then, that seemed a little thing to me, hardly a reason to exist.

I thank you, Montolio DeBrouchee, for confirming my suspicions. I have learned that the ambition of those who follow selfish precepts is no more than a chaotic waste, a finite gain that must be followed by infinite loss. For there is indeed a harmony in the universe, a concordant singing of common weal. To join that song, one must find inner harmony, must find the notes that ring true.

There is one other point to be made about that truth: Evil creatures cannot sing.

On Hope: (*Sojourn*)

How different the trail seemed as I departed Mooshie's Grove from the road that had led me there. Again I was alone, except when Guenhwyvar came to my call. On this road, though, I was alone only in body. In my mind I carried a name, the embodiment of my valued principles. Mooshie had called Mielikki a goddess; to me she was a way of life.

She walked beside me always along the many surfaceroads I traversed. She led me out to safety and fought off my despair when I was chased away and then hunted by the dwarves of Citadel Adbar, a fortress northeast of Mooshie's Grove. Mielikki, and my belief in my own value, gave me the courage to approach town after town throughout the northland. The receptions were always the same: shock and fear that quickly turned to anger. The more generous of those I encountered told me simply to go away; others chased me with weapons bared. On two occasions I was forced to fight, though I managed to escape without anyone being badly injured.

The minor nicks and scratches were a small price to pay. Mooshie had bidden me not to live as he had, and the old ranger's perceptions, as always, proved true. On my journeys throughout the northland I retained something—hope—that I never would have held if I had remained a hermit in the evergreen grove. As each new village showed on the horizon, a tingle of anticipation quickened my steps. One day, I was determined, I would find my home.

It would happen suddenly, I imagined. I would approach a gate, speak a formal greeting, then reveal myself as a dark elf. Even my fantasy was tempered by reality, for the gate would not swing wide at my approach. Rather, I would be allowed guarded entry, a trial period much like the one I endured in Blingdenstone, the svirfneblin city. Suspicions would linger



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about me for many months, but in the end, principles would be seen and accepted for what they were; the character of the person would outweigh the color of his skin and the reputation of his heritage.

I replayed that fantasy countless times over the years. Every word of every meeting in my imagined town became a litany against the continued rejections. It would not have been enough, but always there was Guenhwyvar, and now there was Mielikki.

On Vows: (*The Legacy*)

What turmoil I felt when first I broke my most solemn, principle-intentioned vow: that I would never again take the life of one of my people. The pain, a sense of failure, a sense of loss, was acute when I realized what wicked work my scimitars had done.

The guilt faded quickly, though—not because I came to excuse myself for any failure, but because I came to realize that my true failure was in making the vow, not in breaking it. When I walked out of my homeland, I spoke the words out of innocence, the naivete of unworldly youth, and I meant them when I said them, truly. I came to know, though, that such a vow was unrealistic, that if I pursued a course in life as defender of those ideals I so cherished, I could not excuse myself from actions dictated by that course if ever the enemies showed themselves to be drow elves.

Quite simply, adherence to my vow depended on variables completely beyond my control. If, after leaving Menzoberranzan, I had never again met a dark elf in battle, I never would have broken my vow. But that, in the end, would not have made me any more honorable. Fortunate circumstances do not mean high principles.

When the situation arose, however, that dark elves threatened my dearest friends, precipitated a state of warfare against people who had done them no wrong, how could I, in good conscience, have kept my scimitars tucked away? What was my vow

worth when weighed against the lives of Bruenor, Wulfgar, and Catti-Brie, or when weighed against the lives of any innocents, for that matter? If, in my travels, I happened upon a drow raid against surface elves, or against a small village, I know beyond any doubts that I would have joined in the fighting, battling the unlawful aggressors with all my strength.

In that event, no doubt, I would have felt the acute pangs of failure and soon would have dismissed them, as I do now.

I do not, therefore, lament breaking my vow—though it pains me, as it always does, that I have had to kill. Nor do I regret making the vow, for the declaration of my youthful folly caused no subsequent pain. If I had attempted to adhere to the unconditional words of that declaration, though, if I had held my blades in check for a sense of false pride, and if that inaction had subsequently resulted in injury to an innocent person, then the pain in Drizzt Do'Urden would have been more acute, never to leave. . . .

I now make a new vow, one weighed in experience and proclaimed with my eyes open: I will not raise my scimitars except in defense, in defense of my principles, of my life, or of others who cannot defend themselves. I will not do battle to further the causes of false prophets, to further the treasures of kings, or to avenge my own injured pride.

And to the many gold-wealthy mercenaries, religious and secular, who would look upon such a vow as unrealistic, impractical, even ridiculous, I cross my arms over my chest and declare with conviction: I am the richer by far!



Marckarius Millithor,

Elderboy of House Millithor

Drow Warrior, Level 7

ARMOR CLASS:	-1
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	55
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>longsword</i> +4)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 +6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	64%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:18/52 D:12 C:15 I:12 W:11 CH:13	

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights; faerie fire; darkness; levitate; know alignment; detect magic*

Physical Description: Marckarius is somewhat shorter than the average drow, and slightly more heavyset. His physique is muscular, and his arms are unusually long. He wears his white hair short, finding this useful for combat—and also because he likes to be a little different from the typical Menzoberranyr drow.

Marckarius wears clothes of undeniably fine quality, as befits his idea of his own status. Silver and platinum threads are embroidered into his cloaks, shirts, and leggings—not, however, into his *piwatwi*. He is careful of his appearance at all times.

Equipment: The elderboy of Clan Millithor possesses a *longsword* +4, which is his favorite weapon. He wears *chain mail* +3, and carries a small *buckler* with a +1 enchantment. As secondary weapons, he wears a *shortsword* +2, and conceals a pair of *daggers* +2, one in each of his sleeves. He is skilled at throwing the daggers up to 60' (Range 30/45/60).

In addition, of course, Marckarius wears the standard *piwatwi* and *boots of elvenkind* common to the drow. He wears around his neck an *amulet of proof against detection and location*, keeping this concealed beneath his tunic. He also carries three metal flasks in a pouch nestled in the small of his back. These flasks contain single doses, each, of a *potion of extra-healing*, a *potion of invisibility*, and a *potion of flying*.

On the more mundane side, Marckarius possesses about 7,500 gp worth of fine jewelry—ruby and emerald rings, a diamond amulet (which he wears in plain sight), and earrings bedecked with an assortment of gems. Though he does not wear these into battle, they are common accoutrements whenever he ventures out socially. The elderboy also has a personal stash of about 2,000 gp in ready cash.

Personality: Marckarius is more sociable and fun-loving than the typical drow. He possesses the nasty alignment of most of his kin, but is unusually willing to cooperate with others in pursuit of a common task. He has been very loyal to his mother, and she, in turn, recognizes his value. He has been given an unusual amount of freedom for a drow male.

Motivations: Marckarius wants his house to survive and prosper, and he wishes to grow to a ripe old age—free to do what he wants. He is extremely wary of involvements with other clans or priestesses, but confident enough to be assertive when dealing with the priestesses of his own family.



Narcelia Millithor,

Elder Daughter of House Millithor

Drow Priestess of Lloth, Level 7

ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	34
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>mace + 2</i>)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 + 2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	64%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:12 D:10 C:11 I:15 W:17 CH:14	

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights; faerie fire; darkness; levitate; know alignment; detect magic; clairvoyance; detect lie; suggestion; dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *cure light wounds; detect poison, light*
 Second Level: *charm; heat metal; hold person*
 Third Level: *dispel magic; telepathy*
 Fourth Level: *cure serious wounds*

Physical Description: Narcelia is a remarkably somber-appearing drow, not prone to the cackling displays of vicious humor that characterize so many drow high priestesses. She is lithe and attractive, but tends to wear modest and unadorned garments that conceal her body and the back of her head. Her hair is exceptionally long, but she usually keeps it bound at the base of her neck.

Equipment: Narcelia has a choice of favorite weapons. Her *mace + 2* is a potent combat weapon that has this additional effect: anyone who is struck with it must make a saving throw versus death magic or be *blinded* for 1-6 rounds. Alternately, Narcelia has a *whip of fangs*, with two heads.

She also wears the usual *piwafwi* and *boots of elvenkind* employed by the drow. Her shirt is *chain mail + 2*, and she usually does not carry a shield. She does, however, have three metal flasks of *potion concealed* in a pouch at the small of her back; these contain a *potion of extra-healing*, a *potion of diminution* (single dose of each), and *oil of impact*—enough for 4 uses.

Though not prone to ostentatious displays, the priestess has several rings and a brooch (worth a total of 3,000 gp) that she wears for ceremonial occasions. Also, Narcelia has access to her own source of funds, totaling about 10,000 gp worth of coins.

Personality: Narcelia is careful and thoughtful far beyond the normal standards of the drow. She is considered by many to be a little slow—this is a mistake, however. In reality, she is a precise planner and, if she takes her time to develop a plan, that plan is likely to have few flaws. She does not enjoy cruelty for cruelty's sake, and even recognizes the uses of kindness in earning the loyalty of underlings and allies.

Motivations: Narcelia is curious about the world beyond Menzoberranzan. She is very loyal to her mother, and intends to become the next matron mother of House Millithor—but not for a century or two. She is suspicious of the schemes of others, and carefully examines suggestions and directives, looking for weaknesses.



Torrellan Millithor

Secondboy of House Millithor

Drow Warrior/Mage, Level 5/4

ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	35
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>longsword + 3</i>)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 + 4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	60%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:17 D:14 C:12 I:15 W:10 CH:8	

Innate Spelllike Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).

Spells Known:

First Level: *magic missile, light, wall of fog*
Second Level: *invisibility, wizard lock*

Physical Description: Torrellan is a dashing, handsome young drow. He is larger than his older brother, which makes him about average in size. He wears he white hair long and unbound (except when combat might be expected). He spends a lot on his wardrobe, and is usually encountered with a cloak outlined in *faerie fire*, often with some kind of exotic hat on his head. He is much sought after by the females of the city.

Equipment: Torrellan carries a *longsword + 3* as his weapon of choice. The blade has a special characteristic—if it strikes with a roll of 19 or 20, the victim must make a saving throw against paralysis (with a - 4 modifier if the creature is man-sized or smaller). Failure means that the victim is paralyzed for 3-18 turns. He also carries a hand *crossbow + 2*, with one each of the following special darts: *spider dart* and *dart of blinding*. He also has four *darts + 3*.

Torrellan wears *chain mail + 2* and carries a *buckler + 2* for protection. He carries three *light pellets* in his pocket at all times, and keeps a *dagger + 3* in his sleeve. His most prized possession is a *turker cloak*.

Personality: Torrellan is famed as a practical joker. He delights in situations that are embarrassing to others—but he has an ability, very rare in drow, to also appreciate jokes directed against himself. He is easygoing and talkative, though he sometimes stretches the bounds of good taste in order to make a point.

However, the Millithor Secondboy is also quite sensitive to the pain of those he cares for. He will not forgive any slight directed against his family, and his more vocal about his desire for revenge than most drow are comfortable with.

Motivations: Torrellan is unusually devoted to his family—perhaps because they have not treated him with the cruelty that is the norm among drow society. He is loyal to his older brother, and will stick his neck out for anyone of his steady companions who might need his help. Torrellan wants to have some fun with his life, and he's not afraid to take a few risks.



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Dariel Kront'tane

Adopted son of House Millithor

Drow Warrior, Level 6

ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	51
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>longsword + 4</i>)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 + 5
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	62%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:16 D:13 C:17 I:14 W:10 CH:12	

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights; faerie fire; darkness; levitate; know alignment; detect magic* (all once/day)

Physical Description: Dariel is a thin, nervous drow. He survived his original house's slaughter (House Kront'Tane)—since he was a second generation noble, his life or death was irrelevant once the matron mother and her offspring had perished. As such, he appealed for and was granted the protection of House Millithor.

Dariel dresses simply, in unadorned black—except for the small silver pin, in the shape of a miniature dagger, he wears on his collar. His hair is long, but he carefully binds it behind his head. He is tall enough that his lanky nature appears almost gaunt.

Equipment: Dariel employs a *longsword + 4* as his major weapon of choice, though he also possesses a pair of hand *crossbows + 1* that he is very proficient with. (In fact, he can shoot once per round with each, without incurring a multiple weapon penalty.)

He has the typical *piwafwi* and *boots of elvenkind* worn by the drow. In addition, the pin he wears on his lapel is in fact a *brooch of shielding*. He has a pair of metal vials in his pockets, each contains three applications of magical dust: *dust of appearance* and *dust of disappearance*. He also routinely carries a flask of *liquid road* and wears a *ring of anti-venom*.

Since he is not of pure Millithor blood, Dariel does not have access to as much of the family fortune as do his adopted siblings. Still, he has stashed away some 1,200 gp.

Personality: Because of the disastrous fate of his original house, Dariel tends to be a worrier. He is cautious, suspicious, and meticulous. More than any of his family-mates, Dariel is careful to examine every side of a situation for potential traps and pitfalls.

On the other hand, when a course of action has been determined, Dariel puts his energies behind it to the maximum of his abilities. This tenacity has drawn the admiration of the Matron Mother, and assures that he will have a place in House Millithor for as long as he wants.

Motivation: Dariel is determined to do everything in his power to insure the survival of House Millithor. In fact, so thoroughly has he been adopted that he places the house's survival above his own.



Carcelen Millithor

Second Daughter of House Millithor

Drow Priestess of Lloth, Level 7

ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	34
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	62%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:15 D:12 C:9 I:11 W:16 CH:12	

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

First Level: *command, detect magic, magical stone*
 Second Level: *barkskin, find traps, resist fire/resist cold*
 Third Level: *meld into stone, speak with dead*

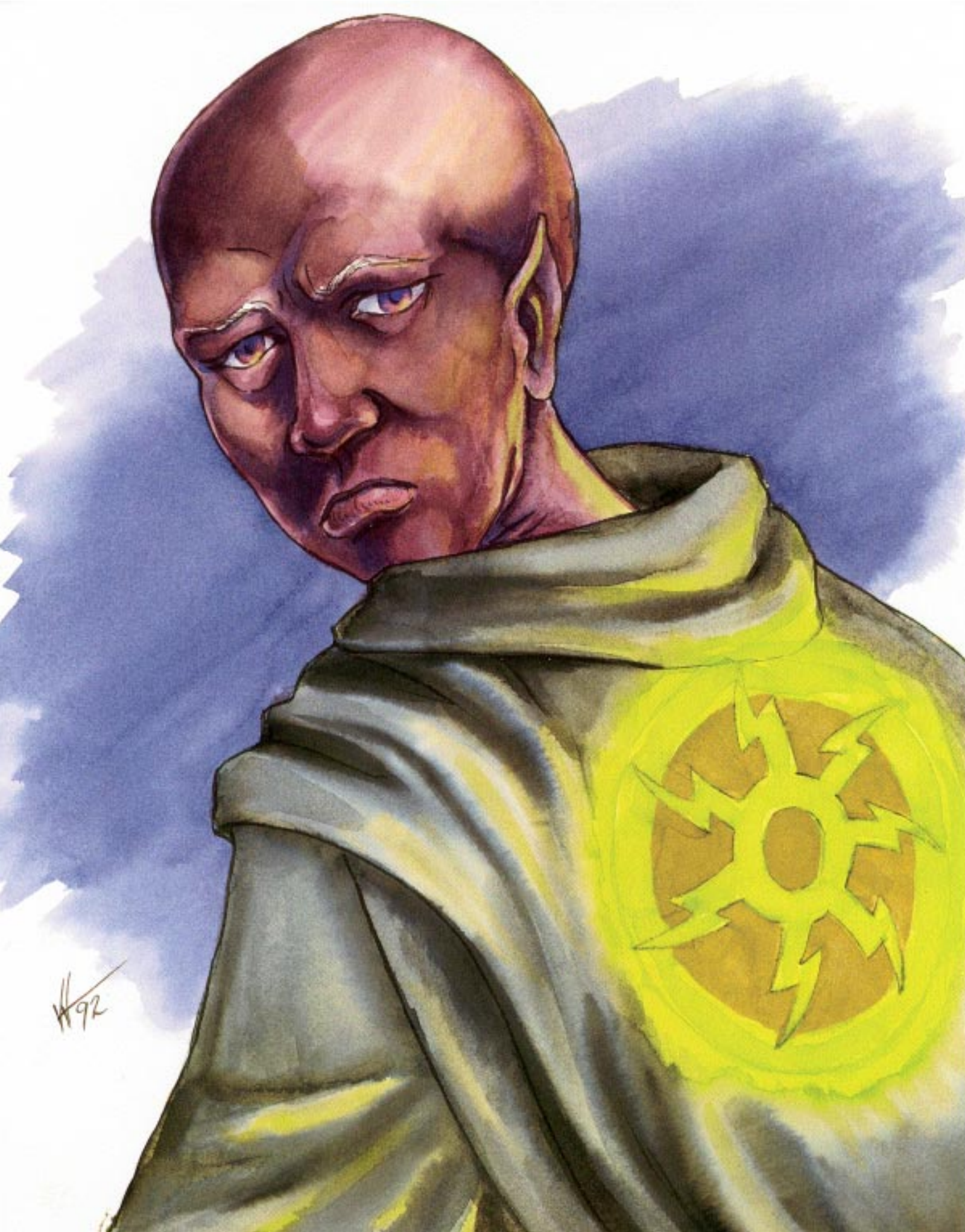
Physical Description: Carcelon is quite the opposite of her serious and dignified older sister. The younger daughter of Millithor is humorous and social—a natural leader among females, and very attractive to males. Carcelon wears bright colored garments, often bedecked with patterns faerie fire, silver, and platinum. Her clothes do not always serve the interests of modesty, but other drow are guaranteed to find them interesting. Her hair is very long, and usually unkempt—swirling about her shoulders and back, hanging past her waist when it is unbound.

Equipment: Carcelon relies upon her three-headed *whip of fangs* as her primary weapon. She also carries an assortment of powders and potions, tiny glass vials stored in her belt. Unless noted, there is one dose of each: *powder of the black veil, powder of magic detection, potion of magic resistance, potion of delusion, potion of clairvoyance, potion of growth, potion of healing, and oil of slipperness*. She also wears a *ring of blinking*, and has a magical scroll inscribed with six *cure light wounds* spells.

Carcelon is not frugal with her money, though she has jewelry worth some 10,000 gp. Most of this is in chains of various types (gold, silver, and platinum) that she wears around her neck, wrists, waist, and ankles. She has a cash stockpile of around 3,000 gp.

Personality: Carcelon is extraordinarily carefree for a drow. She delights in adventure and new experiences, and is curious to the point of rashness. Though she understands the treacherous nature of drow society, she herself tends to remain aloof from double-crosses and betrayals. She enjoys that stuff as much as the next drow, but its fine with her to observe the squabbles between other dark elves, rather than to try and create her own.

Motivation: For all her spontaneity, Carcelon is a loyal member of House Millithor. She is devoted to her mother and will not hesitate to follow the matron's instructions. She is courageous and steady in times of crisis, and willing to take great chances—if the reward is worthwhile.



Quertus Millithor

House Wizard

Drow Mage, Level 7

ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	27
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>dagger</i> +5)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4 + 5
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	64%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:9 D:15 C:10 I:17 W:12 CH:9	

Innate Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).

Spells Known:

- First Level: *burning hands, change self, enlarge, magic missile*
- Second Level: *continual light, invisibility, locate object*
- Third Level: *haste, lightning bolt*
- Fourth Level: *wall of ice*

Physical Description: Quertus Millithor is a pale and exceptionally youthful-looking drow—a fact that has caused more than one dark elf to assume that he is a weakling and target for abuse. Such bullies always find out differently, though often the fact is the last thing they learn in their lives. He dresses well, but cannot quite conceal his stooped shoulders or pinched, narrow face. His hair is naturally fine, but it looks so stringy on his head that he has taken to shaving his scalp. He wears a cloak with the House Millithor emblem emblazoned on the back in faerie fire—though he can quench the display with a command word, should stealth be required.

Equipment: Quertus keeps his hands free when he goes about Menzoberranzan or the Underdark, but he has a number of items in easy reach. His *dagger* +5 is concealed in his sleeve—he can drop it into his hand with a quick twitch of his elbow. He wears a *ring of jumping* and a *ring of shocking grasp*. His robe, described above, is a *piwafwi* and also a *cloak of shielding* +5. On his left forearm he carries a *wand of acidic spheres*. He also has a scroll containing 10 spell levels of spells (maximum of 5 spells; maximum level 4th). The player can select these spells, subject to DM approval.

Quertus owns about 2,000 gp worth of jewelry. He also has a private cache of some 12,000 gp.

Personality: Quertus is sensitive about his looks, and quick to take offense at someone who insults him. When this is not the case, however, he can be sociable. He enjoys conversations about all manner of topics, and seeks whenever possible to learn things from those he talks to.

Quertus is a cousin of the Millithor noble family—he is not a descendant of the Matron Mother. He goes out of his way to make sure that everyone treats him like a true member of the family—he resists any suggestions to the contrary.

Motivations: Quertus is very determined to prove that he is a full-fledged member of the Millithor clan. He always does his part, and regularly exhorts his fellow family members to do the same. He aspires to wizardly greatness, and will gladly sacrifice wealth or possessions for things that he thinks will bring him greater magical abilities.



Matron Mother Ki'Willis Millithor

Matriarch of House Millithor

Drow Priestess of Lloth, Level 11

ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVE:	12"
Hit Points:	67
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (<i>dagger + 3</i>)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	72%
SIZE:	M
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
PSIONIC ABILITY:	
S:13 I:14 W:18 D:11 C:15 CH:13	

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Commonly Remembered Spells:

- First Level: *anti-vermin barrier, detect good, detect poison, know age, thought capture*
 Second Level: *calm chaos, darkfire, mindtouch, produce flame*
 Third Level: *animate dead, prayer, spellweb, telepathy*
 Fourth Level: *attunement, free action, mental domination*
 Fifth Level: *transmute rock to mud, undead regeneration*
 Sixth Level: *reverse time*

Physical Description: Matron Ki'Willis Millithor is a cruel female with a savage glint in her extra-large eyes. She is alluring and youthful in appearance, though she is more than 600 years old. She is capable of presenting an extremely attractive and pleasant impression to those in her presence—she can turn this charm on and off at will, and it bears little relation to her actual feelings toward the target of her attentions. Indeed, when exposed to the full force of her pleasantries, a male of any humanoid species might be required to make a Wisdom Check in order to avoid falling under the influence of her charms. While one who fails this check is not as totally enthralled as by a *charm person* spell, he is rendered willing to give the matron mother the benefit of the doubt in any form of conflict.

Equipment: The matron mother carries a four-headed *whip of fangs*, which she uses for amusement as much as combat. She also has a large *driftdisc* which she prizes greatly. It is inscribed with the House Millithor *insigna*, conferring upon it the abilities of *shield*, *hold person*, and *comprehend languages* upon the rider, as well as allowing her to cast a *web* spell once per turn while she rides it.

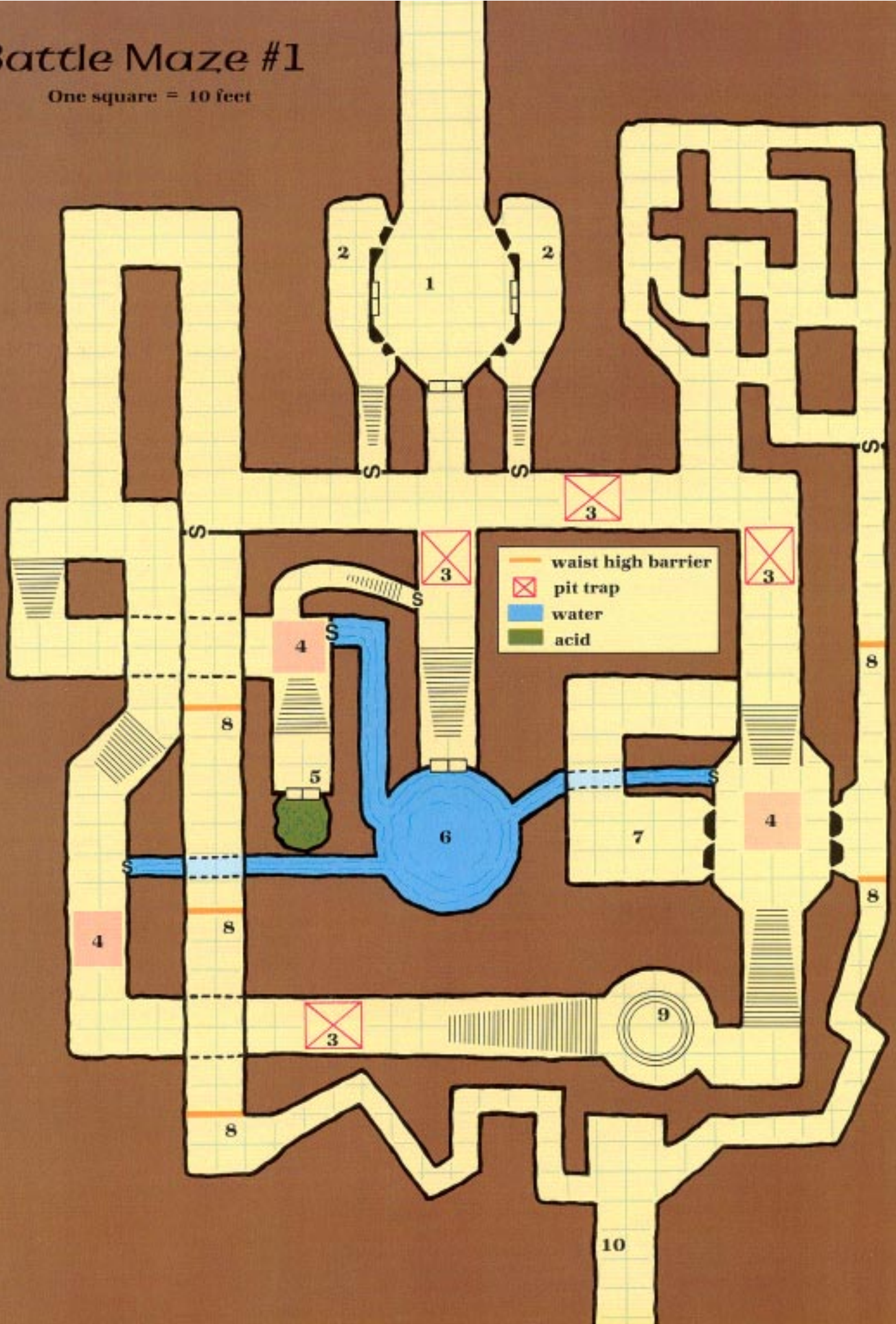
She also wears a *ring of arachnid control* and *bracers of defense* giving her an AC of 2.

Personality: Matron Millithor's personality suits the occasion, pleasant or domineering, conciliatory or cruel as the situation demands. She is a splendid actress, but in situations of great stress she has been known to lose her temper.

Motivations: The matriarch is devoted to the furtherance of her house's aims. She greatly enjoys her current patron, Krecil Treak, because she believes that he can benefit the house. Indeed, he became her patron after he assassinated his predecessor (on the orders of Bregan Daerthe, whom he had betrayed). Krecil did such an impressive job of the task that Ki'Willis took him as her new patron.

Battle Maze #1

One square = 10 feet



BATTLE MAZE #1

Dungeon Masters are encouraged to insert this maze into Menzoberranzan wherever it might be useful. For example, battle mazes are often used to screen the last route of retreat of a powerful noble house, or one may be employed to guard the vault of a wealthy merchant or moneylender.

1. Entry

This large room has a ceiling twenty feet above the floor, and three pairs of double doors in the walls. Two of these portals are false—if any attempt to open them or to pick their locks is made, they explode outward as a 6d6 fireball, filling all the room with the effect.

Along the ceiling are eight slits, four on each side, allowing drow in rooms numbered 2 to shoot arrows or darts at anyone entering this chamber. The doors that lead to the maze are barred; attempts to bash them open suffer a -20 percent penalty to the open doors roll.

2. Ambush Room

These chambers are reached via secret doors and steep stairways. Their sole purpose is to allow bombardment of intruders in room 1.

3. Pit Traps

These nasty surprises are located throughout the maze. They resemble the floor perfectly in appearance, though they sound hollow if someone taps the floor. Falling causes 4d6 points of damage from the 20' fall and the spikes at the bottom.

4. Water Trap

Intruders stepping on these areas trigger a flow from the cistern (#6), which fills the hallway from floor to ceiling between this location and the nearest stairways leading up.

5. Acid Trap

Anyone trying to open these doors or pick the locks opens a vat of acid, which strikes those directly in front of the doorway for 8d6 points of damage, and soaks the characters and their possessions. Anyone standing more than five feet away takes only 4d6 points of damage, and is not affected above the knees.

6. Cistern

This is a spring-fed tank, so regardless of how many of the water traps are sprung, the cistern remains full.

7. Second Ambush Room

This chamber allows up to three drow defenders to shoot darts of arrows into the adjacent room.

8. Barrier Walls

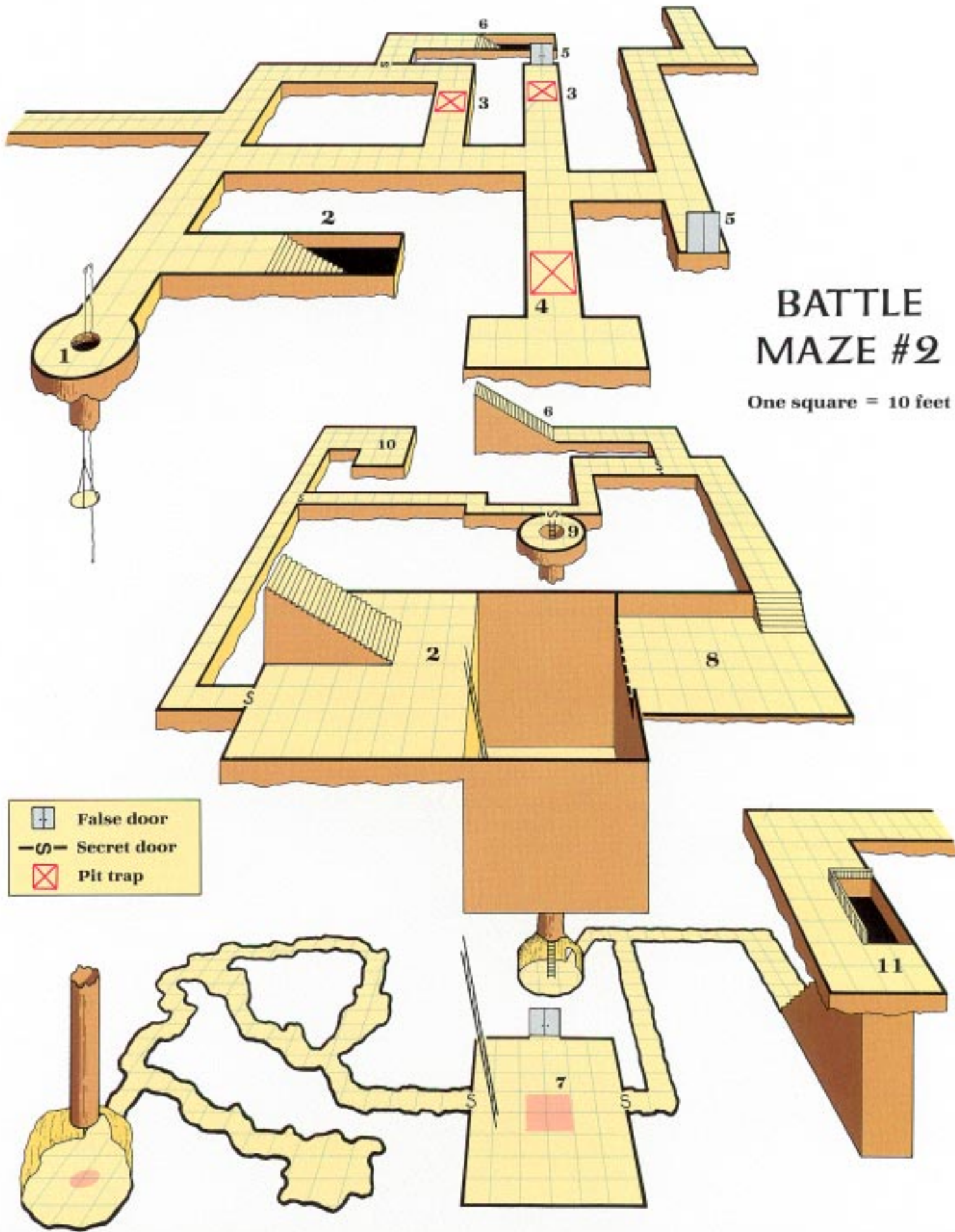
These are adamantite walls, about 4' high, with passages only wide enough to accommodate one elf at a time. They provide good cover for defenders who wish to shoot at attackers; any character shooting from behind one of these walls has the equivalent of AC 3.

9. Monster Trap

The DM can place a monster of his or her choice here, encased within the three-tiered altar. When the room is entered, the stone shell breaks, sending fragments throughout the room (2d6 points of damage to all present). The monster then attacks.




10. Exit

This wide corridor connects with whatever the maze was designed to protect.



BATTLE MAZE #2

One square = 10 feet

-  False door
-  Secret door
-  Pit trap

BATTLE MAZE #2

Dungeon Masters are encouraged to insert this maze into Menzoberranzan wherever it might be useful. For example, battle mazes are often used to screen the last route of retreat of a powerful noble house, or one may be employed to guard the vault of a wealthy merchant or moneylender.

1. Elevator

This shaft supports a small, circular platform that can be raised and lowered by its passengers, or by someone at the top or bottom of the elevator, by cranking a block and tackle mechanism. The total drop is 80', and requires 4 rounds of cranking. The elevator can carry a maximum of 8 passengers.

2. Stairway to the Vault

This wide stairway descends 30', and leads to a large room with walls on three sides. The fourth side drops 50' to the floor of area #7. A narrow ladder leads to the bottom of the larger chamber.

3. Pit Traps

These nasty surprises are located throughout the maze. They resemble the floor perfectly in appearance, though they sound hollow if someone taps the floor. Falling causes 4d6 points of damage from the 20' fall and the spikes at the bottom.

4. Mother of All Pit Traps

This treacherous plunge takes characters the full 80' down, dropping them in the middle of area #7, and inflicting 8d6 points of damage from the fall.

5. False Doors

This portal will explode outward on any attempt to push or smash open its doors or pick their locks. A *lightning bolt* blasts from each, down the full length of the corridor facing the doors. Anyone in that corridor is subject to 6d6 points of damage.

6. Back Stairs

This stairway, accessible only by secret door, leads down 30' to a network of chambers (numbers 8,9, and 10) though some of them require still more successful detections of secret doors.

7. Ambush Room

This large chamber exists solely as a danger to those unknowing intruders who find themselves here. Any attempt to open the double doors visible on the walls results in the same *lightning bolt*, detailed in #5: twin bolts that strike straight out from the doors, covering the full length of the room. Also, targets in this room can be showered with missile fire from area 8.

8. High Ground

This chamber has eight slits along the wall adjoining room 7, allowing characters to shoot into the latter from 40' up, and retain the equivalent of AC 2 from the protection of the walls. The room is well stocked with arrows, flasks of oil, and even rocks.

6. Secret Shaft

This narrow shaft conceals a ladder that leads down 50 feet.

10. Monster Room

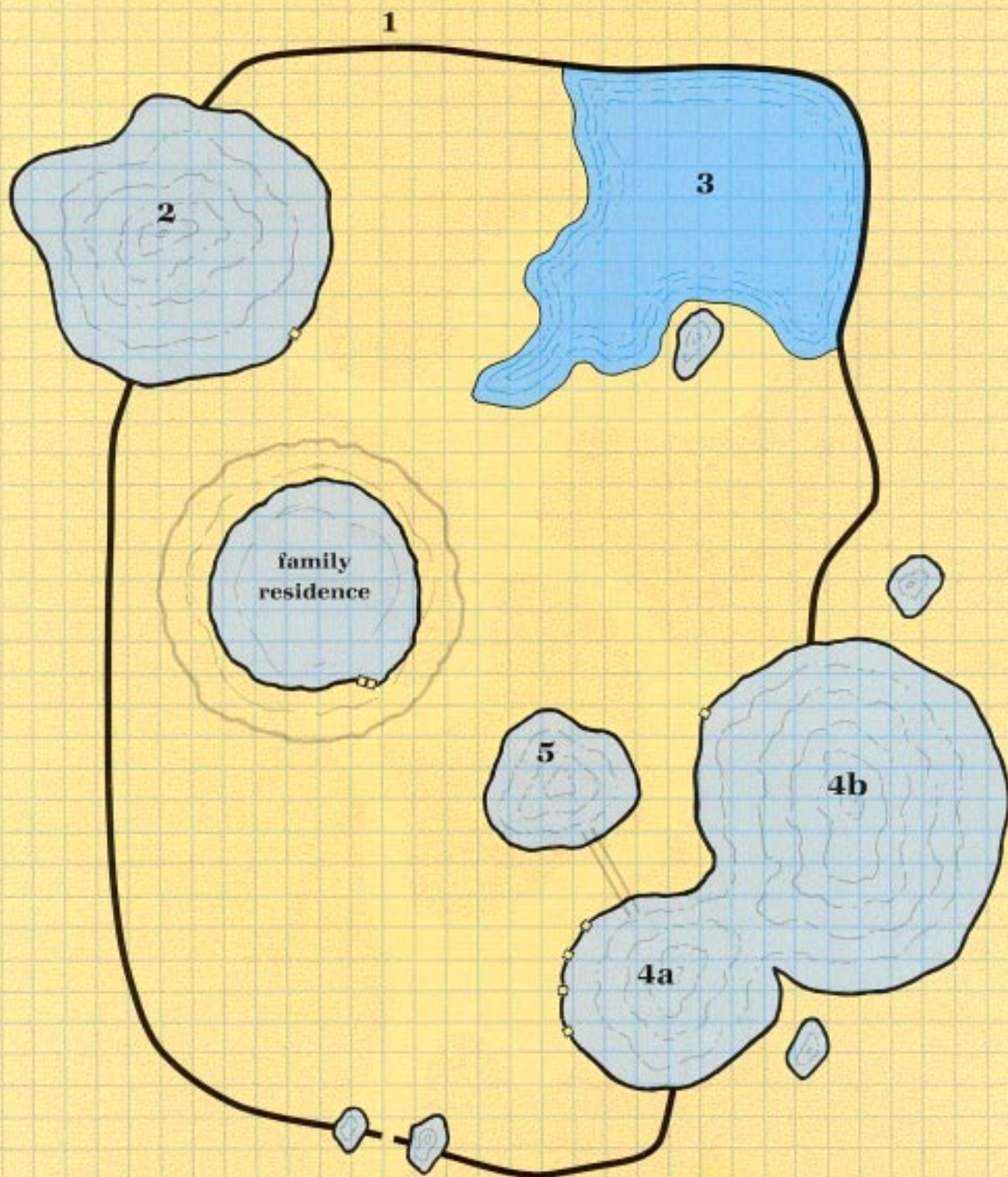
The DM is encouraged to place a large monster in here, keyed to attack any intruders.

11. Exit

This stairway is exposed to fire from above for its entire length; but those who make it out have reached the end of the maze!

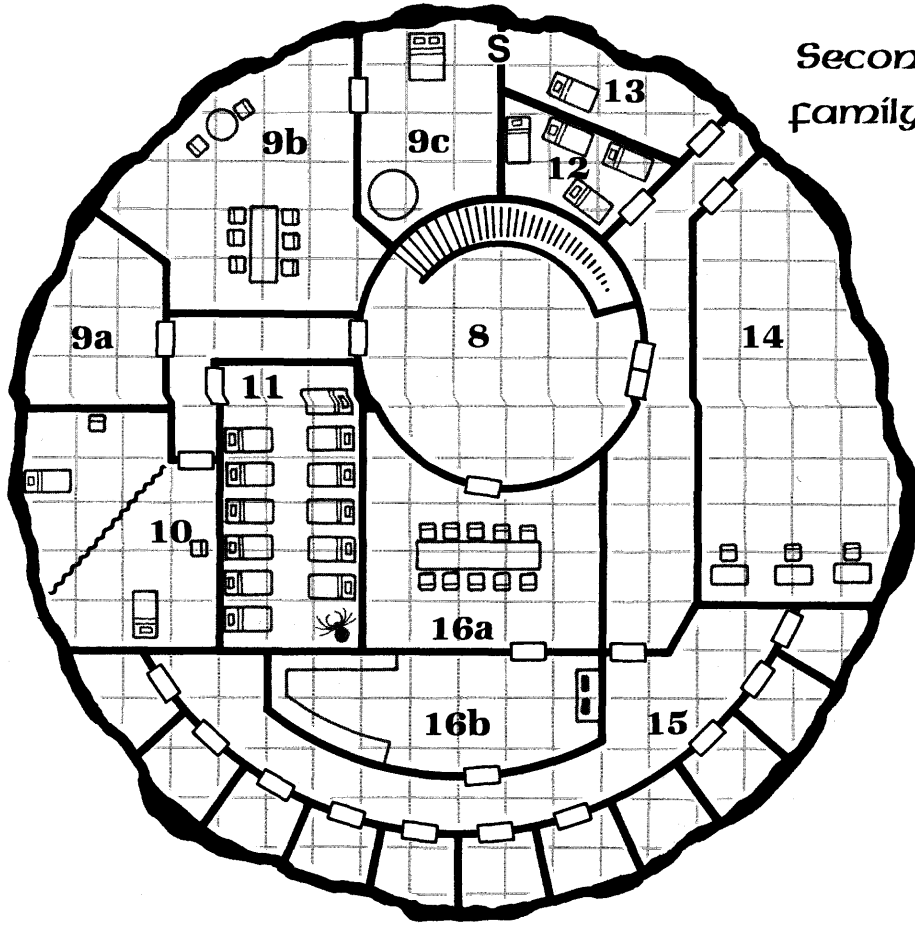
House Millithor Dwelling

One square = 20 feet

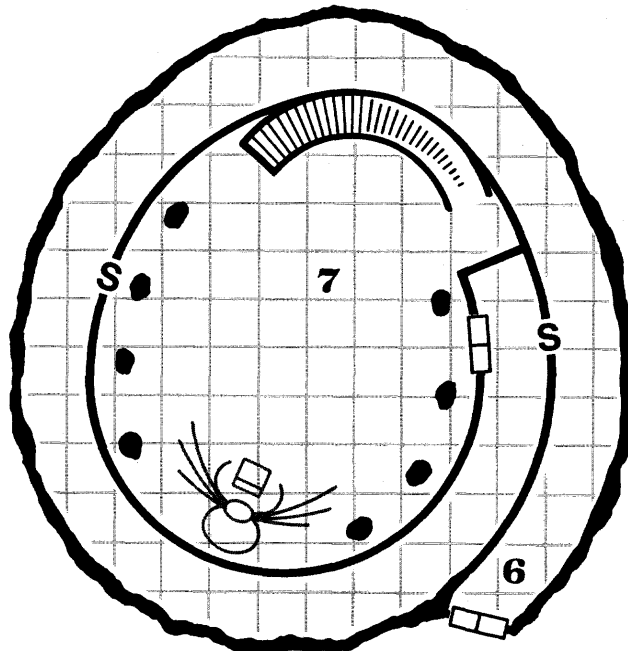


House Millithor Dwelling

One square = 10 feet



Second floor of family residence



First floor of family residence



Carri'pol Nurbonnis

Drow Priestess of Lloth, Level 6

AC 2; Move 12; hit points 31; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 2; THACO 17; MR 62%

Weapon: *adamantite mace +2*

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic, detect snares and pits, sanctuary*

Second Level: *charm person or mammal, slow poison, spiritual hammer*

Third Level: *dispel magic, cause blindness or deafness*

Rynn'qynnil Nurbonnis

Drow High Priestess of Lloth, Level 8

AC 0; Move 12; hit points 40; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4 (x 3); THACO 16; MR 66%

Weapon: *whip of fangs*

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect good, detect magic, cause fear*

Second Level: *augury, chant, silence 15' radius*

Third Level: *dispel magic, feign death, meld into stone*

Fourth Level: *cause serious wounds, neutralize poison*

Lynn'qynnos Nurbonnis

Drow High Priestess of Lloth, Level 7

AC 3; Move 12; hit points 30; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4 (x 2); THACO 17; MR 64%

Weapon: *whip of fangs*

Inherent Spell-Like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic*

Spells Known:

First Level: *curse, detect magic, shillelagh*

Second Level: *chant, find traps, spiritual hammer*

Third Level: *dispel magic, cause blindness or deafness*

Fourth Level: *spell immunity*

Karelist Nurbonnis*Drow Mage, Level 8*

AC 0; Move 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 5; THAC0 12; MR 66%

Inherent Spell-like Abilities: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day)**Spells Known:**First Level: *detect magic, jump, light, read magic*Second Level: *detect invisibility, ESP, web*Third Level: *fly, hold person, slow*Fourth Level: *fumble, minor globe of invulnerability***Daevion'lyr Nurbonnis,**

Secondboy

Drow Guard Captain (Fighter/Mage), Level 6/5

AC -1; Move 12; HD 6; hit points 28; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 5; THAC0 11; MR 62%

Weapon: *long sword +5*, or handcrossbow with poison darts**Inherent Spell-like Abilities:** *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).**Spells Known:**First Level: *sleep, magic missile, light, charm person*Second Level: *invisibility, web*Third Level: *fireball***Pernictal Nurbonnis,**

Elderboy

Drow House Wizard (Mage), Level 9

AC 0; Move 12; hit points 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 5; THAC0 12; MR 68%

Weapon: *dagger +4***Inherent Spell-like Abilities:** *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (all once/day).**Spells Known:**First Level: *alarm, magic missile, light, charm person*Second Level: *invisibility, web, improved phantasmal force*Third Level: *slow, fireball, fly*Fourth Level: *ice storm; minor globe of invulnerability*Fifth Level: *Bigby's interposing hand***Adlictin Lot'ttl***Drow Warrior, Level 5 (on lizard mount)*

AC 2; Move 15; hit points 31 (each, warrior and mount); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 3; THAC0 12; MR 58%

Weapons: *lance, long sword +3***Inherent Spell-like Abilities:** *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate***Caraf'nir Pron'nonnis***Drow Warrior, Level 6*

AC -1; Move 12; hit points 38; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 5; THAC0 12; MR 62%

Weapon: *long sword +4***Inherent Spell-like Abilities:** *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate*

Donnelt A'Daragon

Human Priest, Level 6

S 10; D 15; C 12; I 14; W 18; Ch 14

AC 3; Move 9; hit points 25; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 3;
THACO 16; AL LN

Weapon: quarterstaff + 2
Special equipment: chain mail, shield, candle of invocation, four doses of *potion of extra-healing*; *ring of protection + 1*; two doses of *potion of gaseous form*; a scroll containing these spells: *speak with dead*; *stone shape*; 55 gp

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic*, *light*, *faerie fire*
Second Level: *chant*, *heat metal*, *slow poison*
Third Level: *glyph of warding*, *pyrotechnics*

Donnelt is a young adventurer who has traveled extensively, exploring with bold companions—most of whom have met untimely fates. Undeterred (and not to mention, nearly broke), Donnelt is ready to try something new.

Brigantyna Dane

Human Priestess, Level 7

S 13; I 14; W 17; D 11; C 13; Ch 13

AC 1; Move 9; hit points 41; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 4;
THACO 13; AL CG

Weapon: mace + 3
Special equipment: chain mail + 1; shield + 1; two doses of *potion of extra healing*; *staff of the serpent*; a scroll containing free action and *stone shape* spells; 80 gp

Spells Known:

First Level: *cure light wounds*, *light*, *shillelagh*
Second Level: *charm person or mammal*, *find traps*, *produce flame*
Third Level: *dispel magic*, *prayer*
Fourth Level: *cure serious wounds*

Brigantyna is a free spirit who is always seeking new sights and fresh experiences.

Parkadius Bantium

Human Wizard, Level 7

S 9; D 13; C 11; I 17; W 13; Ch 12

AC 7; Move 12; hit points 22; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 3;
THACO 15; AL N

Weapon: dagger of throwing + 3
Special Equipment: cloak of displacement; *ring of protection + 3*; an *eversmoking bottle*; two doses each of *potion of climbing*; *potion of levitation*; *potion of speed*; *polymorph self potion*; a scroll containing these spells: *fear*; *slow*; *rope trick*; *unseen servant*; 23 gp

Spells Known:

First Level: *detect magic*, *spider climb*, *magic missile*
Second Level: *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow*
Third Level: *fireball*, *fly*, *infravision*
Fourth Level: *phantasmal killer*, *minor globe of invulnerability*

Parkadius looks like a very studious fellow, but he has an outlandish sense of humor and a great love of adventure and danger.

Kophyn Wistnell

Elven Fighter/Mage, Level 6/5

S 16; D 11; C 12; I 14; W 9; Ch 10

AC - 1; Move 9; hit points 21; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 4; THACO 11; AL CN

Weapon: *Long sword + 4*

Special Equipment: *plate mail + 2; shield + 1; four doses of potion of fire breath; ointment of permanent disguise**; *elven boots that are also boots of speed; 36 gp*

Spells Known:

First Level: *sleep, magic missile, light, charm person*

Second Level: *stinking cloud, web*

Third Level: *lightning bolt*

* This ointment alters the appearance of one character into the image of another similarly sized and shaped individual. The alteration is permanent, unless a *remove curse* spell is employed, or another vial of the ointment is used.

Kophen lost his tribe to an attack of drow elves, centuries ago. Normally he is a carefree adventurer, but secretly he desires to avenge his clan.

Gareth Tellmacher

Human Fighter, Level 7

S 15; D 17; C 12; I 12; W 11; Ch 11

AC - 2; Move 9; hit points 44; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 8; THACO 9 (or 10); AL LG

Weapons: *long sword + 2, longbow + 1*

Special equipment: *gauntlets of ogre power; plate mail + 1; shield; 3 arrows of light**; 2 doses of potion of invulnerability; 2 doses of potion of speed; 3 gp*

** These magical arrows are flight arrows with a + 1 bonus to hit and damage. In addition, whatever object or creature the arrow hits is immediately illuminated as if it were the recipient of a *light* spell. Up to a 10' x 10' area is so lit if the arrow hits a wall or other large surface.

Gareth is a kind-hearted and generous soul who has been rich several times in his life. This isn't one of those times, but he knows that his life isn't over yet, either.

Zarin Tallstout

Halfling Fighter/Thief, Level 5/5

S 13; D 18; C 9; I 9; W 11; Ch 14

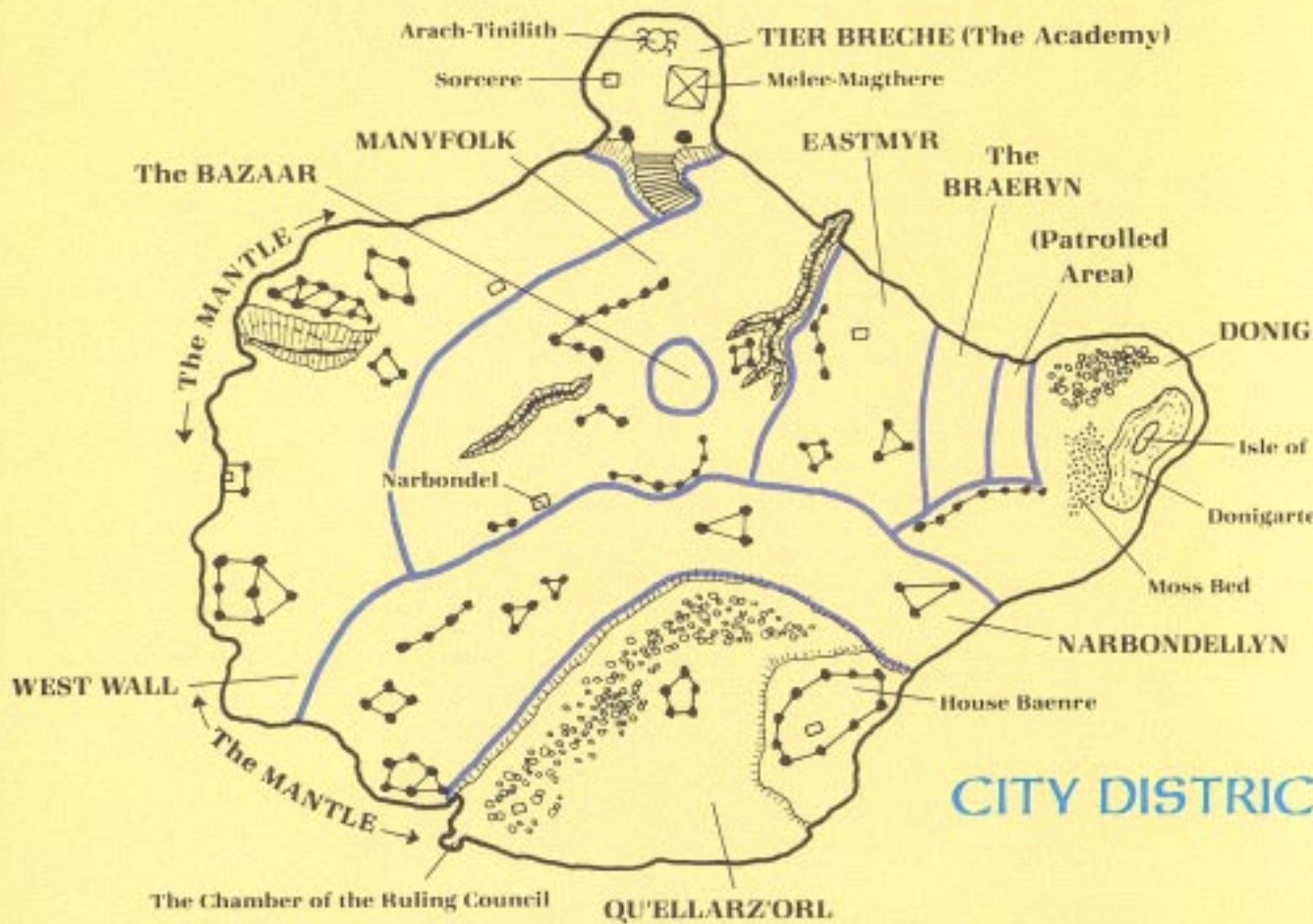
AC 1; Move 12; hit points 22; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 2; THACO 14; AL CG

Weapons: *shortsword + 2, shortbow*

Special Equipment: *bracers of defense (AC 5); 10 arrows + 2; three arrows of light**; ring of free action; one dose each of *potion of ESP*, *potion of heroism*; and *potion of gaseous form*; 87 gp*

Zarin is a tricky little rascal who likes the company of his friends, but is just a little bit of a loner. His funds are running low right now—he would like to get his hands on some more cash.

Menzoberranzar



1. ruin of House Han'ett
2. ruin of House DeVir
3. Warmfires (open mansion; rentable for parties)
4. Pride of Menzoberranzan (open mansion; rentable for parties)
5. Daelethwaf ("Pampercloak") (open mansion; rentable for parties)
6. Gemstars (open mansion; rentable for parties)
7. House of family Urundlet (non-noble)
8. House of family Balartyr (non-noble)
9. House of family Taek'tharm (non-noble)
10. House of family Hael'Irin (non-noble)
11. House of family Shann Tahaladar (non-noble)
12. House of family Klor'Ibar (non-noble)
13. House of family Ssh'starm (non-noble)
14. House of family Iith'uir (non-noble)
15. House of family Chueth'dais (non-noble)
16. Mrit Shadalan, Master Jeweller [male drow F3] (gem merchant; home and shop)
17. Hondel Belek'tyr, Grand Gem Merchant [male drow F4] (gem merchant; home and shop)
18. Ouol family (amethyst merchants; home and shop)
19. Thadalix family (diamond merchants; home and shop)
20. Ryrri family (diamond merchants; home and shop)
21. Thaelara Oblare [female drow P5, Lloth] (gem dealer and re-cutter; home and shop)
22. In'ingl Mestpar [female drow F9, mercenary] (gem dealer; home and shop)
23. Maershala of the Flowers [female drow F2/P2, Lloth] (perfumer; home and shop)
24. Myrip Minstrelwish [CN male halfling T5,

- whimsical and thought by the drow to be insane] (perfumer; home and shop)
25. Dhellorn and Dirizilr Jaszaar, "Perfumers to Nobles" [brothers, male drow F4] (perfumers; shared home and shop)
26. Halaera [elderly female drow F6/P6, Lloth] (perfumer; home and shop)
27. Nantiel of the Three Fingers [male drow F11] (moneylender; fortified, monster-guarded home and shop)
28. Sheerness of the Many Eyes [female drow W12] (moneylender; fortified, sp. guarded home and shop)
29. Ologh "Gatbergold" Ilyri [male drow F7] (moneylender; fortified home and shop)
30. Yaimmith Shalcloak [elderly male drow F7] (moneylender; fortified home and shop, shared with his gang of 14 halflings and 7 drow)
31. ruin of House Teken'dais
32. ruin of House Do'Urden
33. house of family Ilaeph (non-noble)
34. house of family Iarabbar (non-noble)
35. house of family Miliskeera (non-noble)
36. house of family Neereath (non-noble)
37. house of family Ol'il'isk (non-noble)
38. house of family Tirin (non-noble)
39. house of family Vabadarr (non-noble)
40. house of family Waeth del'tar (non-noble)
41. house of family Yalaan'tar (non-noble)
42. Elstearn's Escorts (escort service offices)
43. Railath's Rental Coaches (shop)
44. Faera's Floating Plants (shop)
45. Vilteern's Fine Chains (shop)
46. The Cathlyre (shop)
47. Blairren's Fine Sausages (family home)

WEST WALL

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The DARK DOMINION

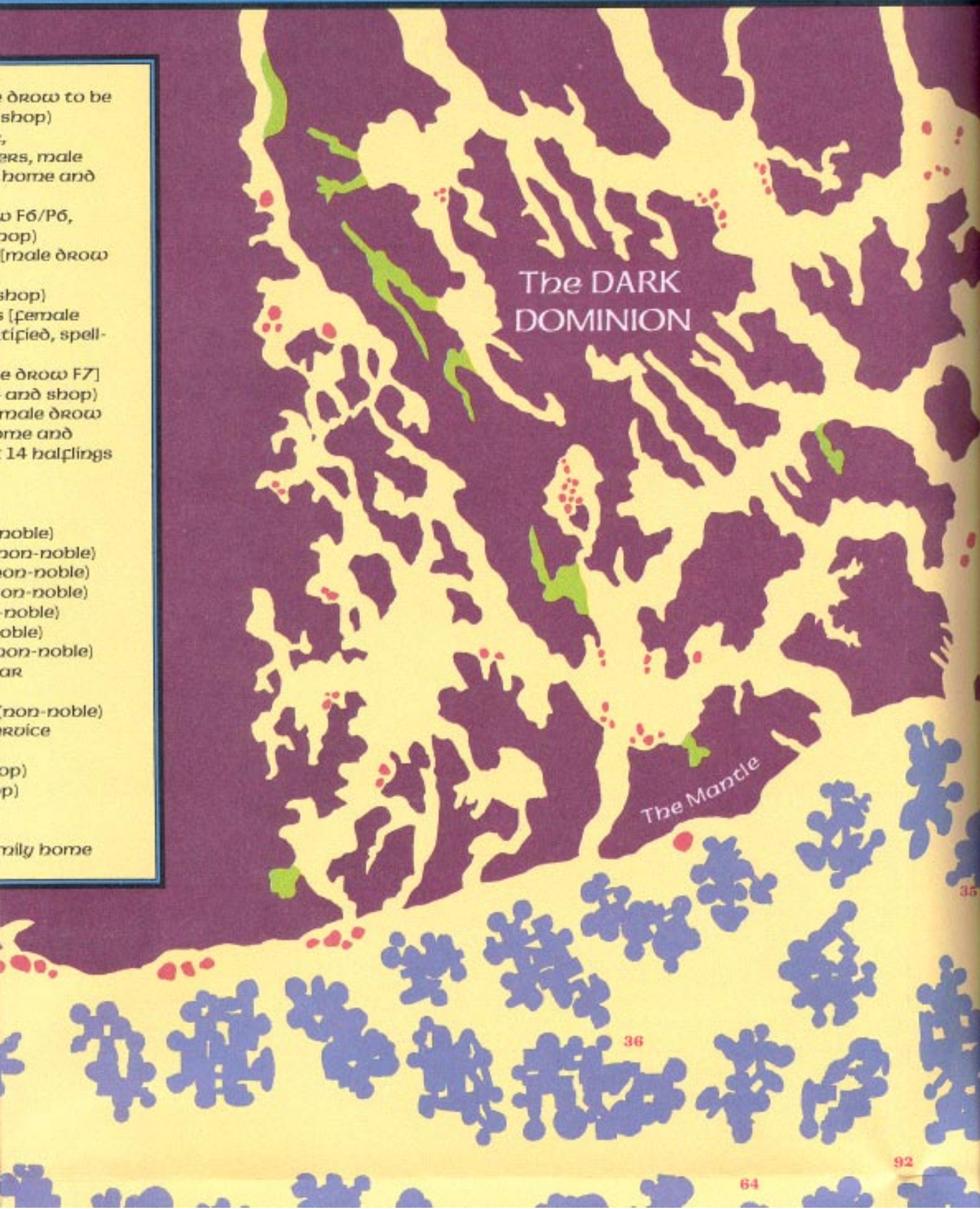
The Mantle

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SORCERE



Arach-Tirilich

Melee-Magthere

TIER BRECHE

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The Mar'ee

House Daskryn

The West

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House
Symryovin

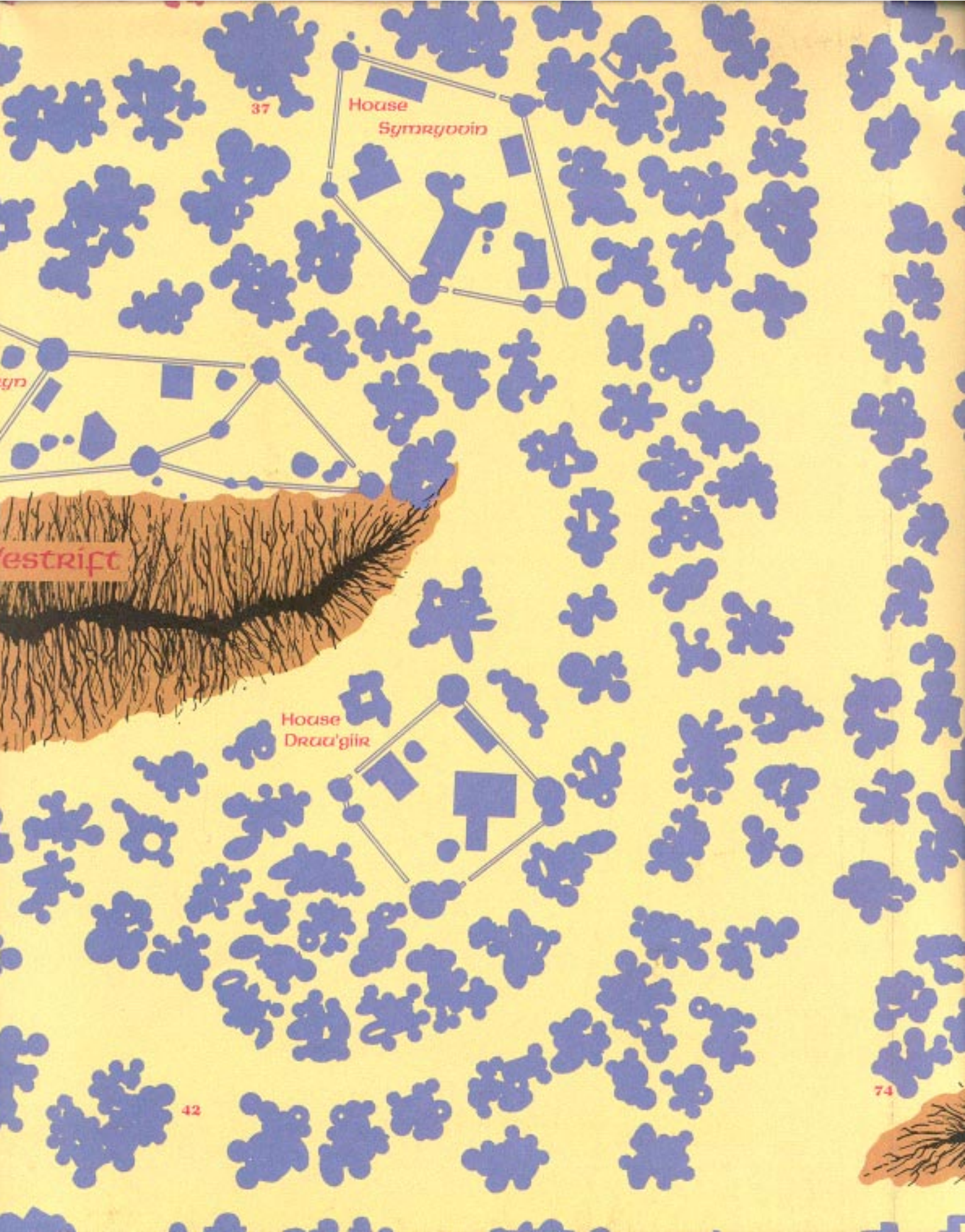
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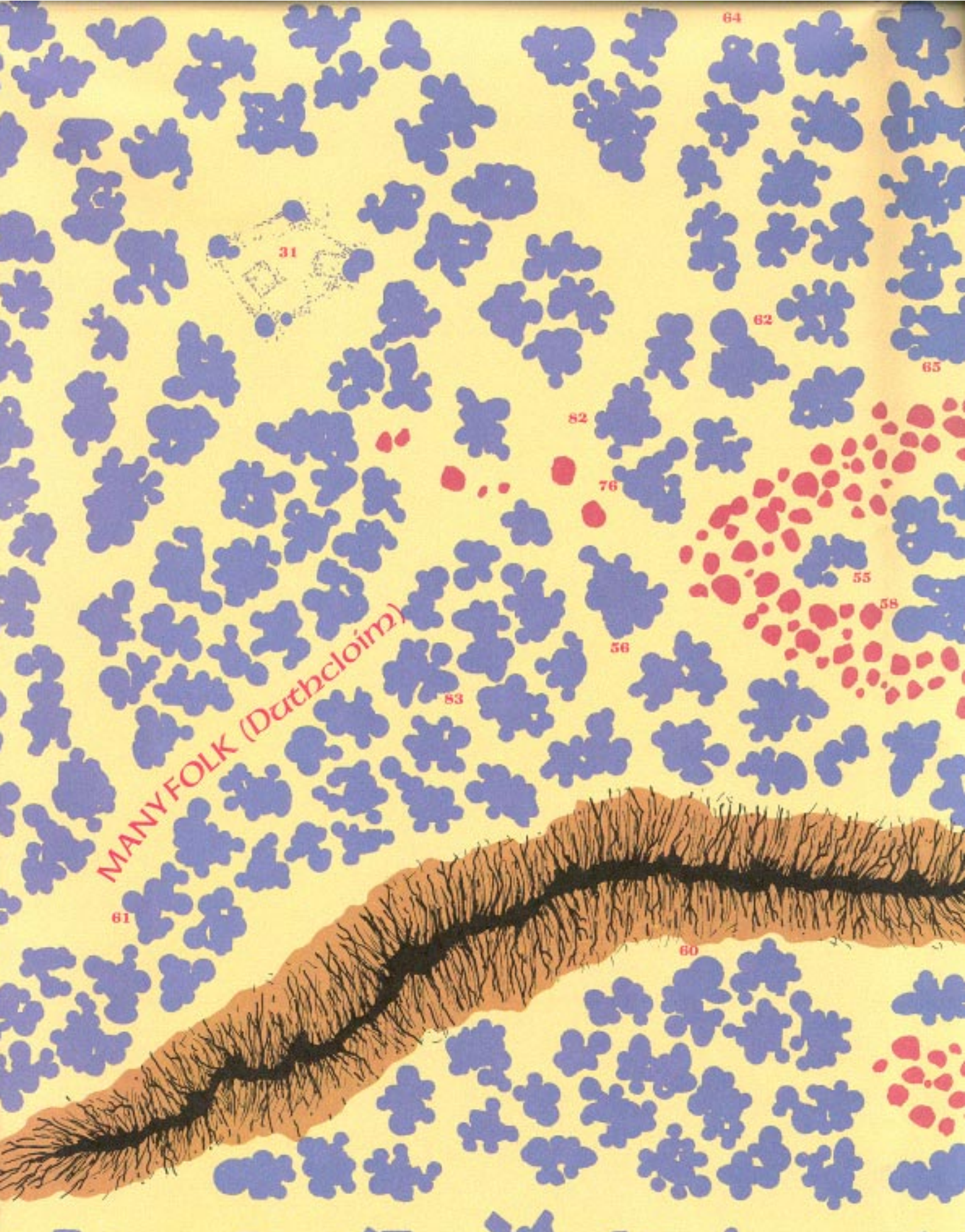
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House
Draa'giiir

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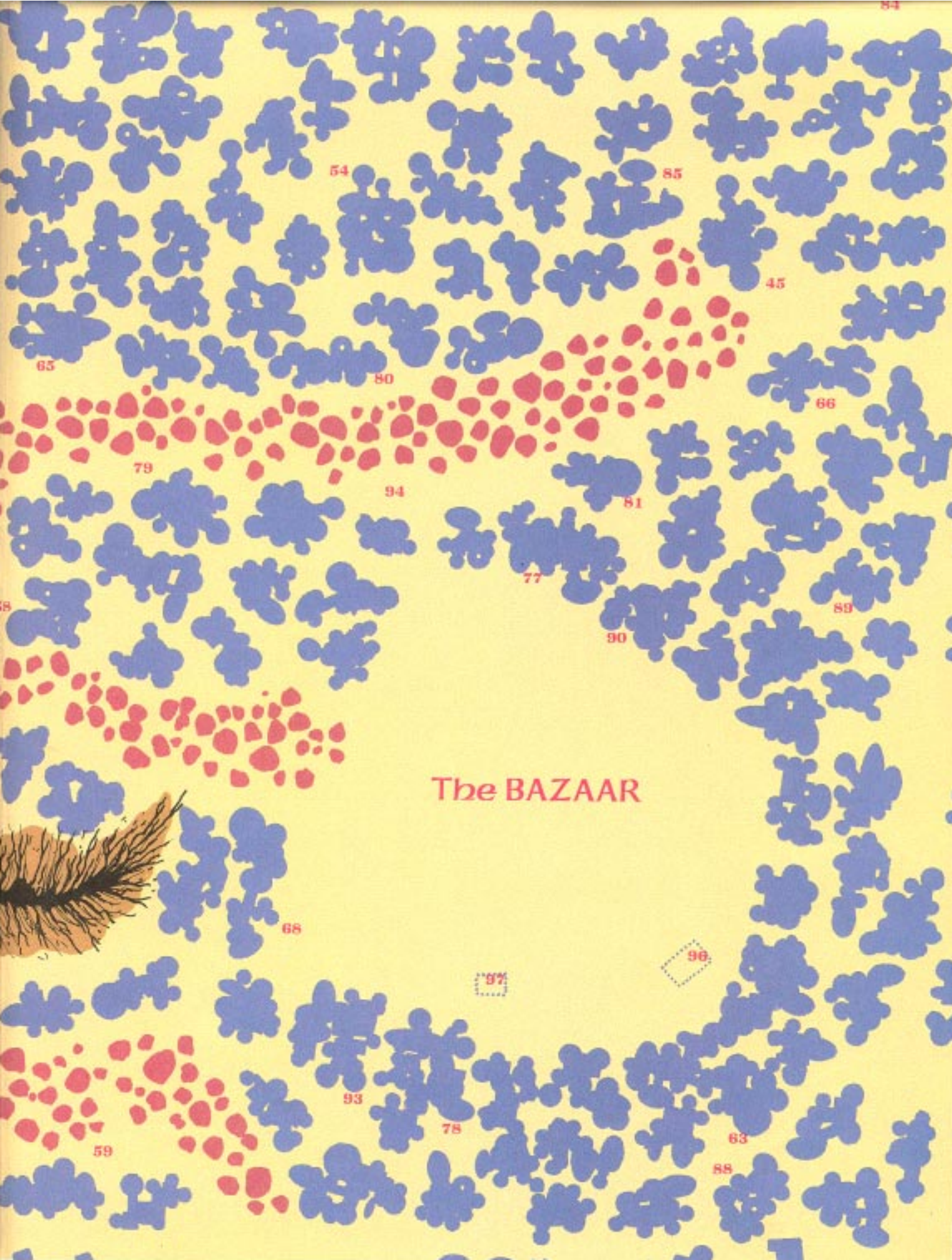
MANYFOLK (Dorset, England)

56

83

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The BAZAAR

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The BAZAAR

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The Bathway
("Around-Cloak")



123

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The M...



The DARK DOMINION

127

- and shop)
48. Ulaver's Winego winery, and shop
luminous, sweet,
49. Da'arthe Klendā [male ðrow F5] (b warehouse)
50. Uaruela Drael T F3/P3, Lloth] (mer and travel goods and carved bone
51. Bhaern del'Hlaan (merchant selling crates, chests, co factory/home/sh
52. Sh'aan Darnrae Lloth] (personal p home and shop)
53. Baelaskros Do'lii ðrow F6] (mercha dates, and other warehouse/hom
54. Tlar Quel'tarn (merchant; fine gemsetting, and lo shop)
55. Rhaavals del'Yga (merchant and m quality weaponry concealed and ve for nobles; fortif
56. Amcrgyl's (masso fine/expensive)
57. Lloth's Laughter fine/expensive)
58. The Black Glove good/expensive)
59. Shairsteel's (ma good/expensive)
60. The Pampered L good/expensive)
61. The Three Lamp fair/expensive)
62. Maelchgra's Ma good/reasonable
63. Sheern Tlabryn house; good/reas
64. Tolkar's Copper good/reasonable
65. Jhalage's Legend house; fair/reaso

- Winegoblet (family home, and shop; noted for the sweet, green wine made here)
- Klendara, Cloth-merchant (row F5) (home and textiles)
- Drael Tuabbar [ðrow female] (merchant dealing in clothing and goods of leather, lizardskin, and bone; home and shop)
- del'Hlaanter [male ðrow F7] (selling, repairing, and making chests, casks, and carts; home/shop)
- Darnrael [female ðrow F4/P4, personal fashions merchant; home/shop]
- Dros Do'llisharr [grossly fat male] (merchant dealing in bulk grain, and other foodstuffs; home/home/shop)
- del'tlarn [male ðrow F2] (gold; fine metalsmithing, jewelry, and locksmithing; home and shop)
- del'Ygana [female ðrow F6] (goldsmith and maker; exotic and high-quality weaponry, specializing in enchanted and venomed body-weaponry; fortified home and shop)
- del'Ygana's (massage house; expensive)
- del'Ygana's daughter (massage house; expensive)
- del'Ygana's Black Glove (massage house; expensive)
- del'Ygana's (massage house; expensive)
- del'Ygana's Hammered Drow (massage house; expensive)
- del'Ygana's Three Lamps (massage house; expensive)
- del'Ygana's Myra's Massages (massage house; reasonable)
- del'Ygana's Tabryn's Couches (massage house; good/reasonable)
- del'Ygana's Copper Door (massage house; reasonable)
- del'Ygana's Legendary Caresses (massage house; fair/reasonable)
66. The Scented Lanterns (massage house; good/cheap)
67. Nanszryn's (massage house; fair/cheap)
68. Alabaeyr's Massages (massage house; fair/cheap)
69. Orlarbryn's House (massage house; fair/cheap)
70. Shandearyn's Sash (massage house; fair/cheap)
71. The Scented Slaves (massage house; fair/cheap)
72. Vhaudryl's (massage house; poor/cheap)
73. Alessra's Couches (massage house; poor/cheap)
74. Filaril's Firewine Flagons (drinking pit; fine/expensive)
75. Shondarl's (drinking pit; fine/expensive)
76. The Dancing Dwarf (drinking pit; good/expensive)
77. The Cockatrice's Claw (drinking pit; good/expensive)
78. Shimryl's (drinking pit; good/expensive)
79. Ormyth's Tankard (drinking pit; good/expensive)
80. The Deep Dragon's Lair (drinking pit; good/expensive)
81. Myrinzar's Chasm (drinking pit; fair/expensive)
82. The Spiderdrink (drinking pit; fair/expensive)
83. The Quartzstone Pit (drinking pit; fair/expensive)
84. Shadowcloak Pit (drinking pit; fair/reasonable)
85. Maaryn's Deep (drinking pit; fair/reasonable)
86. The Emerald Pit (drinking pit; fair/reasonable)
87. The Cap and Lizard (drinking pit; fair/cheap)
88. Droblyn's (drinking pit; fair/cheap)
89. The Sign of the Azmyth (drinking pit; fair/cheap)
90. The Spider's Kiss (drinking pit; poor/cheap)
91. Tier Lloch (drinking pit; poor/cheap)
92. Six Black Rings (drinking pit; poor/cheap)
93. The Winesong (drinking pit; poor/cheap)
94. Arachar's Pit (drinking pit; poor/cheap)
95. The Rothe Rampart (drinking pit; poor/cheap)
96. Daelein Shimmer ("fixture" bazaar)
97. Vharn Bhaelgndar (bazaar stall)
98. ruin of House Fre...
99. house of family...
100. house of family (non-noble)
101. house of family (non-noble)
102. house of family
103. house of family
104. house of family
105. house of family
106. Dylchanta's Fair (drinking pit; house; good/reasonable)
107. The Battered Bell (drinking pit; Olosk Dhaalbin, CN (hardware and weapons); emergency food and weaponry and for questions asked; a monster-guarded)
108. Calask's (proper NG male human P; cosmetic and other and Underdark m; spell-guarded home)
109. litree's (rooming; fine/expensive, dr...)
110. Lylar's Helm (rooming; fair/reasonable; h...)
111. Narbondel's Sho (rooming; good/expensive; h...)
112. Symeera's (rooming; good/reasonable; h...)
113. Home of Dzurra (male ðrow F4) (workshop for the Bregan d'Aerth band)
114. Home of Blind Al (male ðrow F3) (potter and sculptor for the Bregan d'Aerth band)
115. Home of Black B (male ðrow YOC; orphan ðrow YOC; male ðrow F6/W4) (workshop for the Bregan d'Aerth band; building is partially destroyed)

e Rampant (drinking pit;
 ap)
 Shimmerdark's Decanter
 bazaar stall)
 baelyndryn's Bestiary ("fixtate"
 call)
 House Freth
 of family Asbodela (non-noble)
 of family Dlaen Del'Amatar
 e)
 of family Fael Olyphar
 e)
 of family Ilgstrygh (non-noble)
 of family Ulutar (non-noble)
 of family Yane'dais (non-noble)
 of family Zalzyryn (non-noble)
 nta's Farfeathers (massage
 od/reasonable)
 ttered Beholder [proprietor:
 alvin, CN male dwarf F12]
 re and weapons shop,
 y food and healing potions,
 y and fencing of goods, no
 asked; fortified home and
 guarded shop)
 [proprietor: Myrlyth Calask,
 aman P7, Lathander] (healings,
 and other surgery, hairstyling,
 rdark map sales; fortified,
 ded home and shop)
 (rooming house;
 nsive, drow only)
 Helm (rooming house;
 onable; humanoid preferred)
 del's Shadow (rooming house;
 ensive; humans welcome)
 a's (rooming house;
 sonable; humans welcome)
 of Dzarren the Weaver [aged
 w F4] (weaver; known contact
 regan d'Aerthe mercenary

 of Blind Alyss [aged female drow
 r and sculptor; known contact
 regan d'Aerthe mercenary

 of Black Balaeryn's Band [gang of
 row youths led by Balaeryn,
 w F6/W4; known contacts for
 n d'Aerthe mercenary band;
 partially burnt]

116. Home of Rhaaldryn "the Old" [ancient
 male drow F14; retired swordsmith, still
 active as a weaponsmith/trainer; known
 contact for the Bregan d'Aerthe
 mercenary band]
 117. Spellguarded home of Malaric
 Darkstar [male drow W7 with
 mysterious psionic powers, left to DM]
 (spellcaster for hire; known contact for
 the Bregan d'Aerthe mercenary band,
 and also an agent for local illithid
 interests—perhaps even the alhoon)
 118. Home of Phaeril "One-Hand" [female
 drow F9, one hand severed long ago;
 throws daggers at +4 to hit due to long
 practice] (guide, weaponmaster, and
 vendor of poisoned weapons; known
 contact for Bregan d'Aerthe mercenary
 band)
 119. Monster-guarded home of Dhaangthe
 Blaer'dais [aged female drow F4/P4,
 Ghaanadar in secret] (vendor of poisons,
 love philtres, and magical potions)
 120. Home of Calauthe Mez'talgth [female
 drow F6] (vendor of poisons, drugs, and
 information)
 121. Home of Blaethiira Dath Del'Ammyth
 [aged female drow F9/P9, lloth] (vendor
 of poisons, potions, and information)
 122. Home of Drythaera Bryn'Tereth [aged
 female drow T11] (fence, vendor of
 information and Underdark maps)
 123. Orlaryn's Lake (safe drinking water)
 124. The Wanderways (permanent maze
 spell cast in this area by a long-dead
 mage)
 125. The Cavern of the Masters (spell
 testing area used by wizards of Sorcere)
 126. The Fallen Stalactites (well known
 meeting place)
 127. Glowstones (naturally luminescent
 rocks light this area; a widely known
 meeting place)
 128. Ablonsheir's Cave (meeting place)
 129. Heldaeryn's Pool (safe drinking water)
 130. Cavern of the Severed Tentacles
 (named for a long-ago victory over mind
 players, fought here; well known meeting
 place)



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The Cladrifc

51

House Oblodra

72

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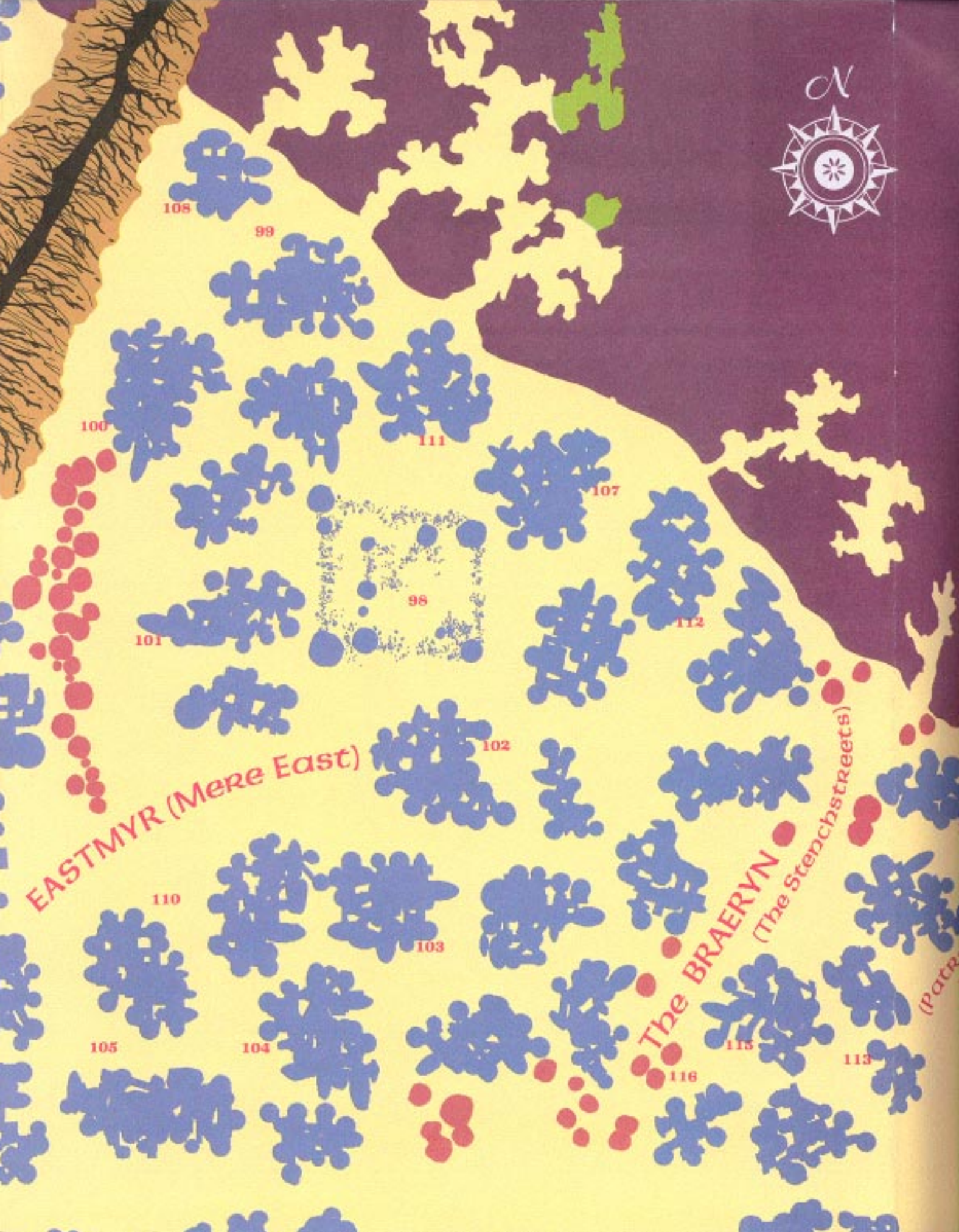
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EASTMYR (Mere East)

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The BRAERYN
(The Stenchstreets)

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(part)

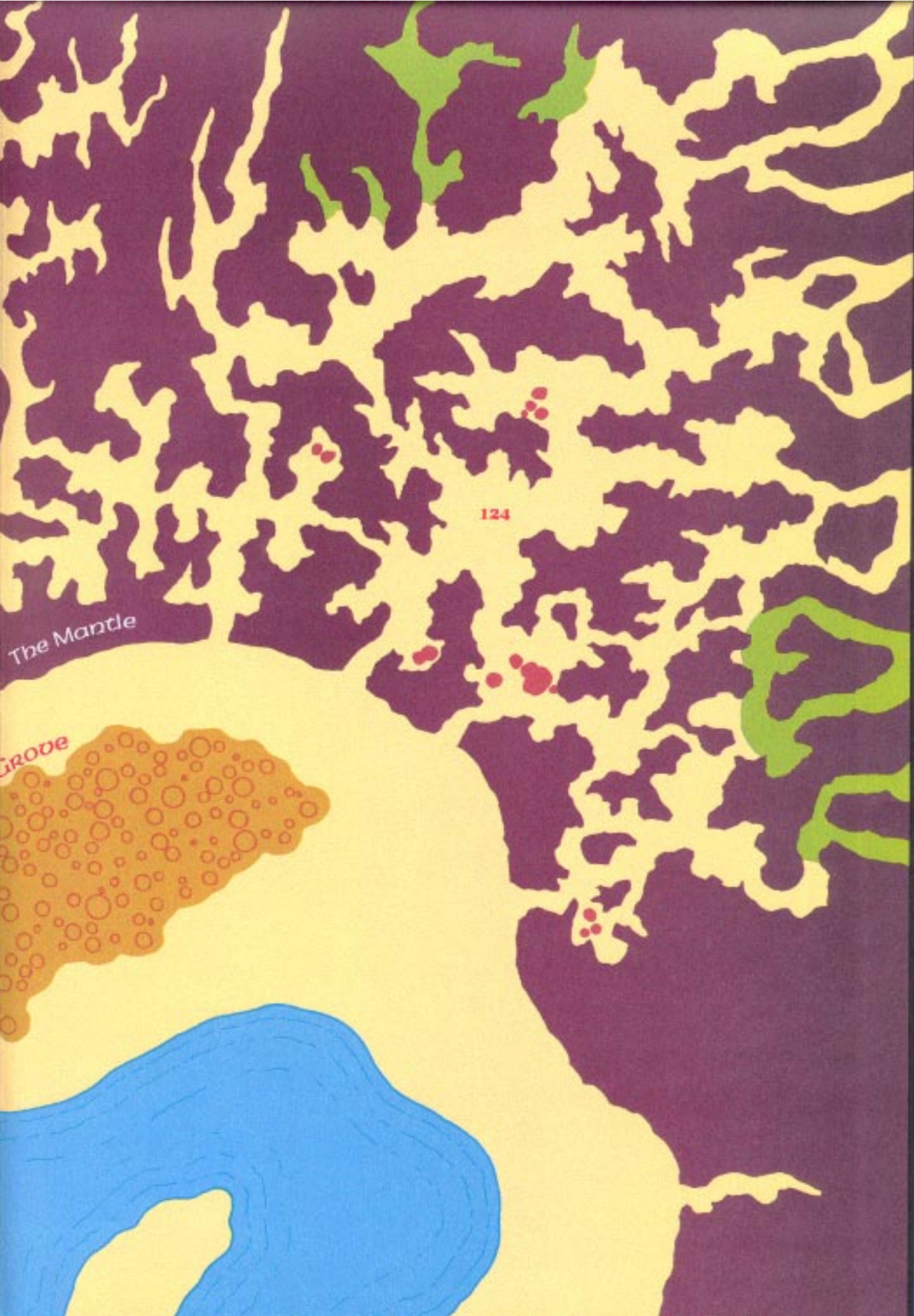


The M...

Mashroom Groves

Fangi Farms

(Patrolled Area)



The Mantle

Groove

124



House Vandree

41

32

Lobby

both's Web ("the Web")

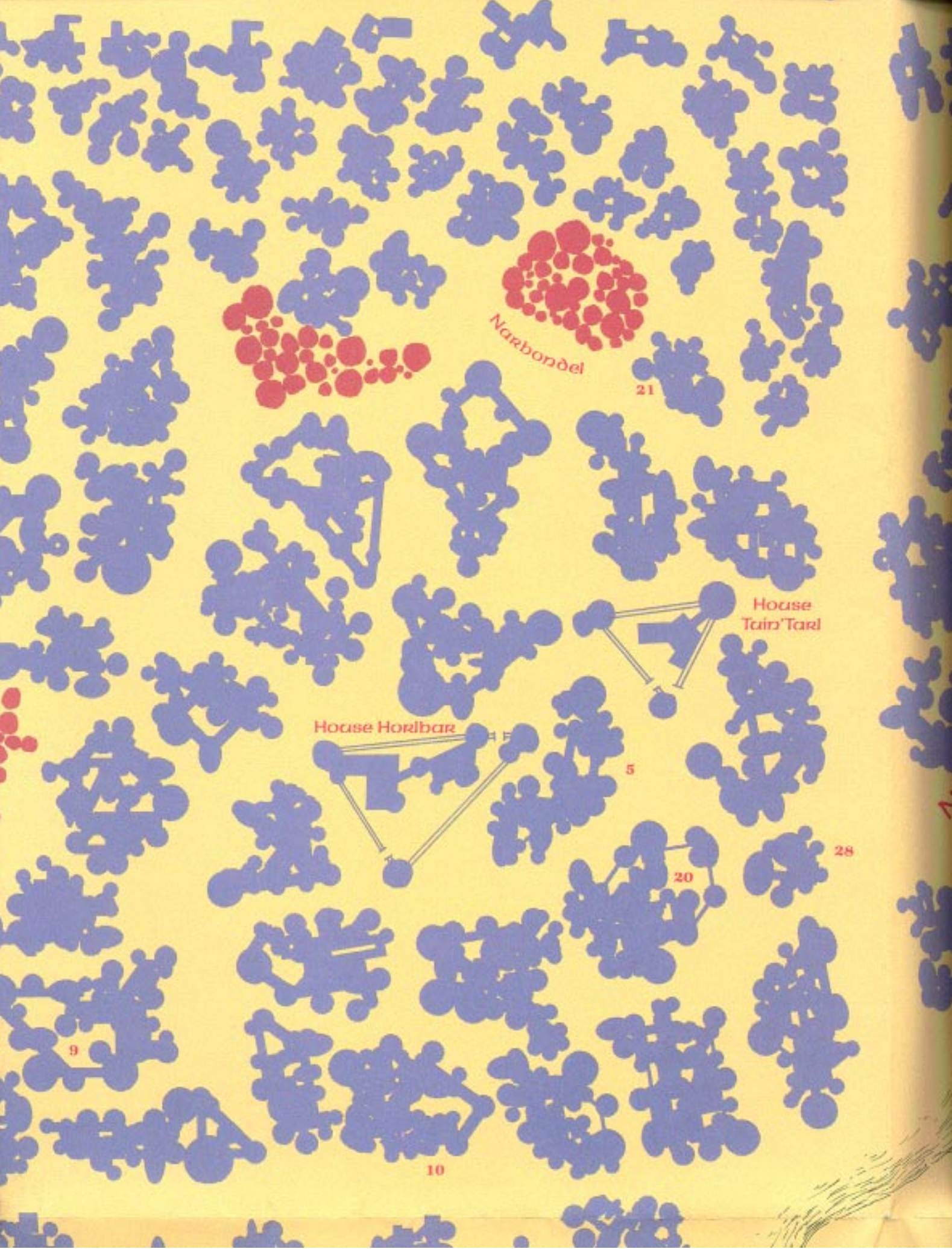
24

House Scrabble



27

The Darkspires



Narbondel

21

House
Tair'Tarl

5

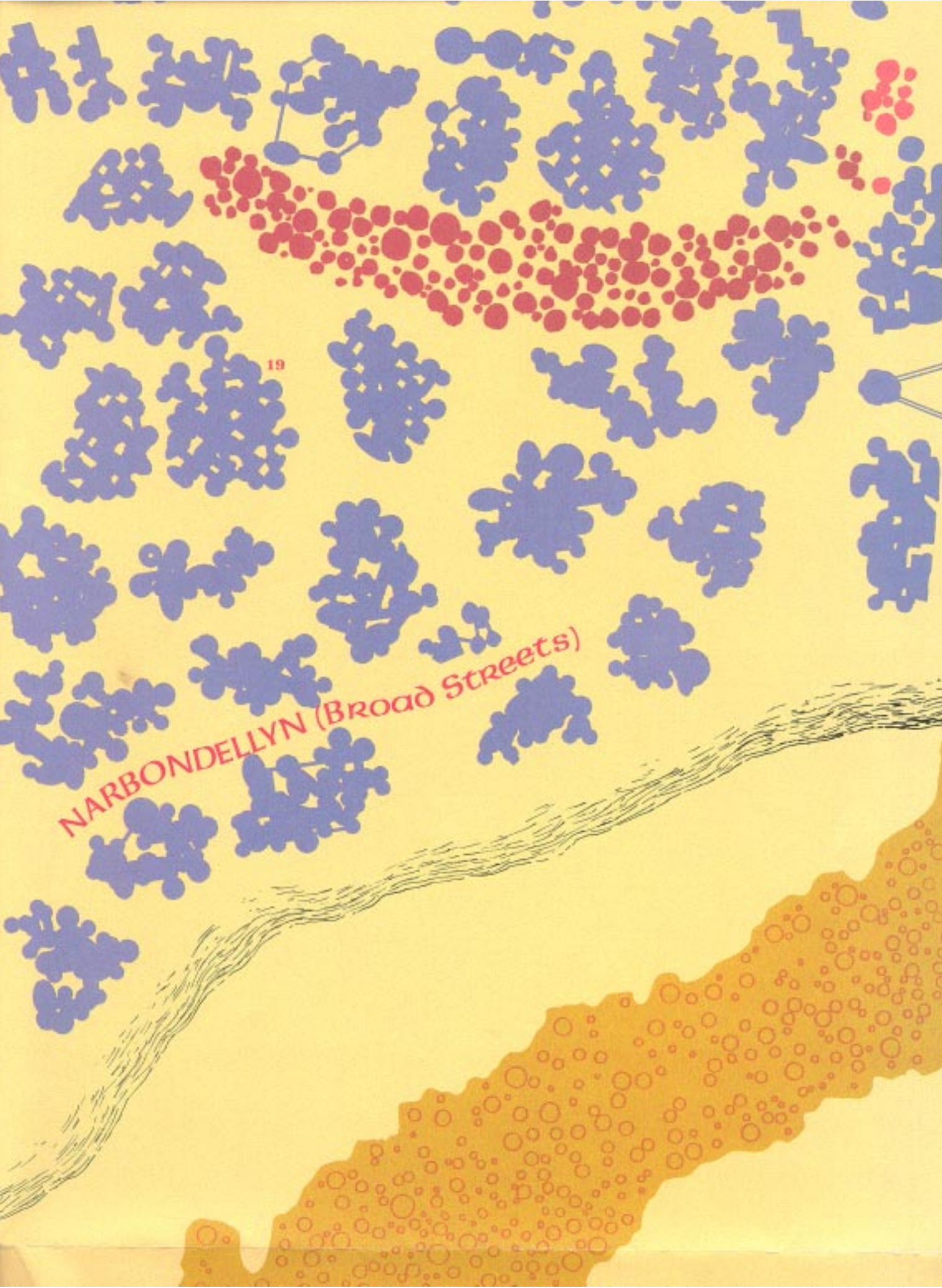
House Horlbar

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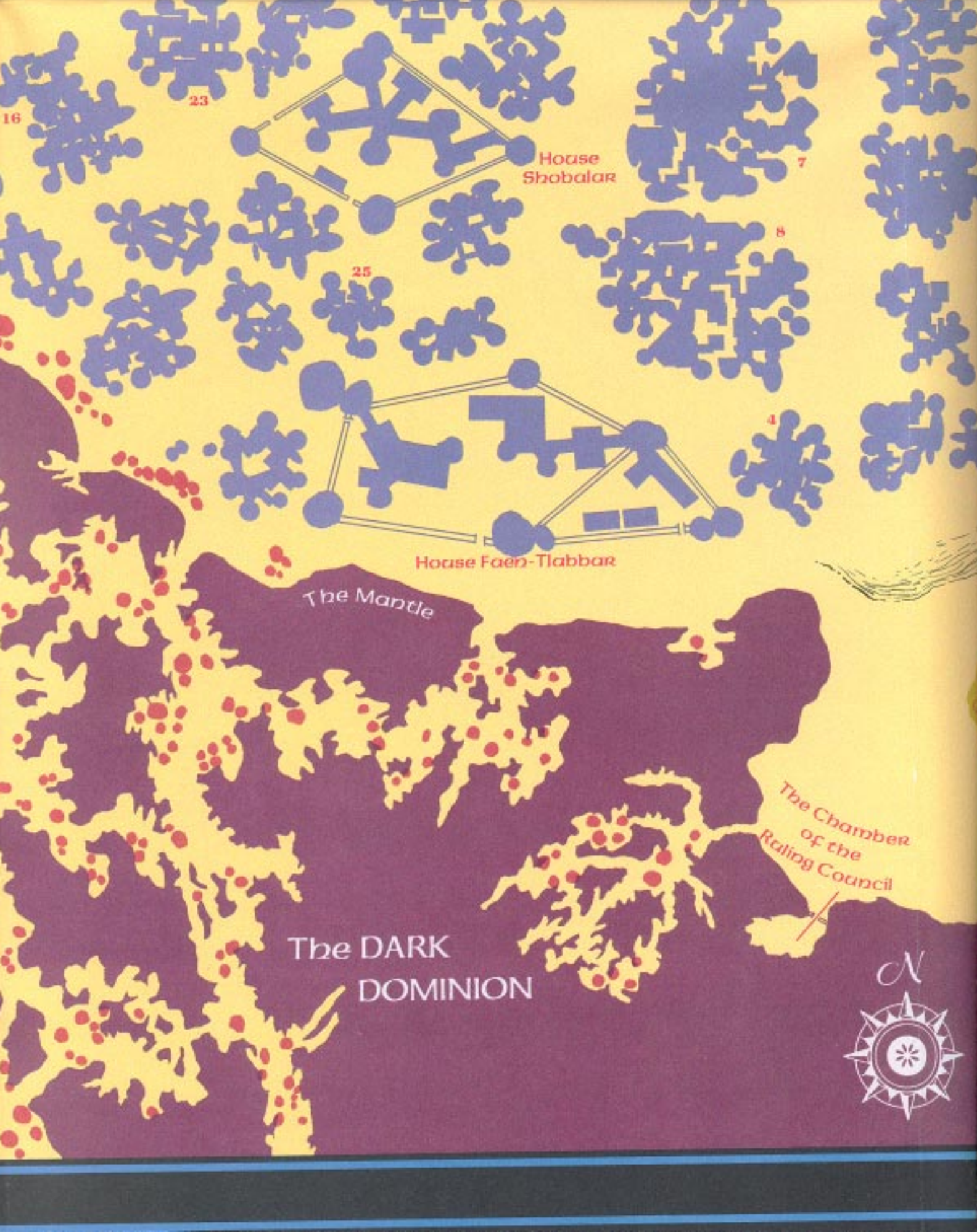
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19

NARBONDELLYN (Broad Streets)





16

23

House Shobalar

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House Faer-Tabbar

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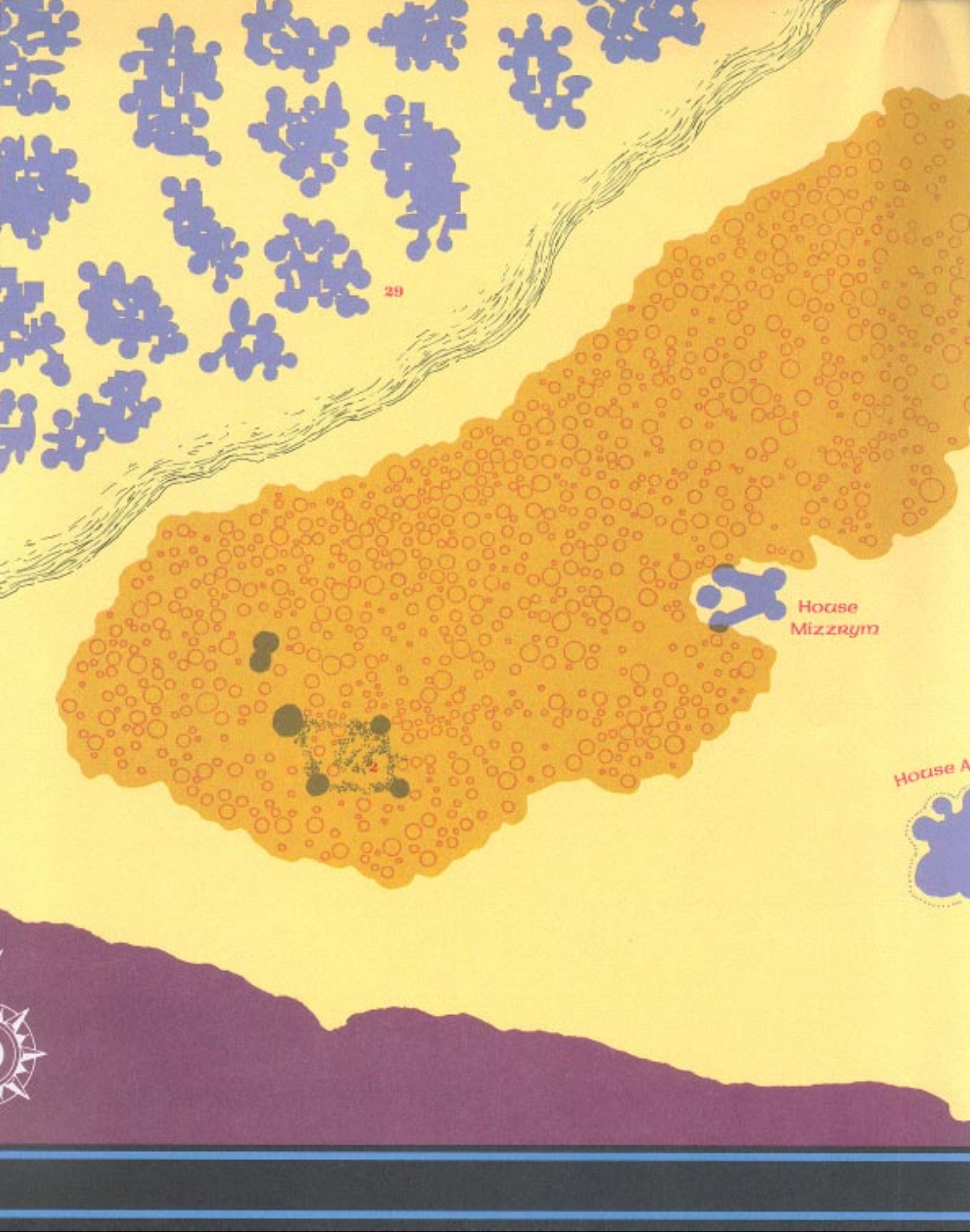
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The Mantle

The Chamber of the Ruling Council

The DARK DOMINION

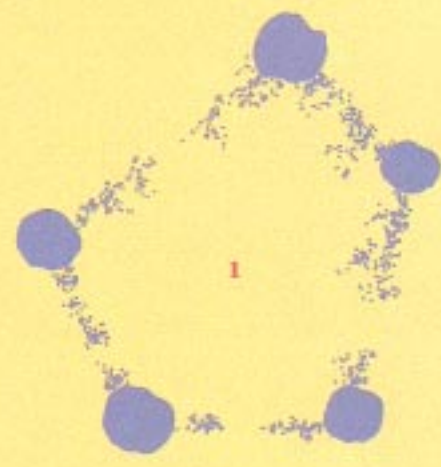
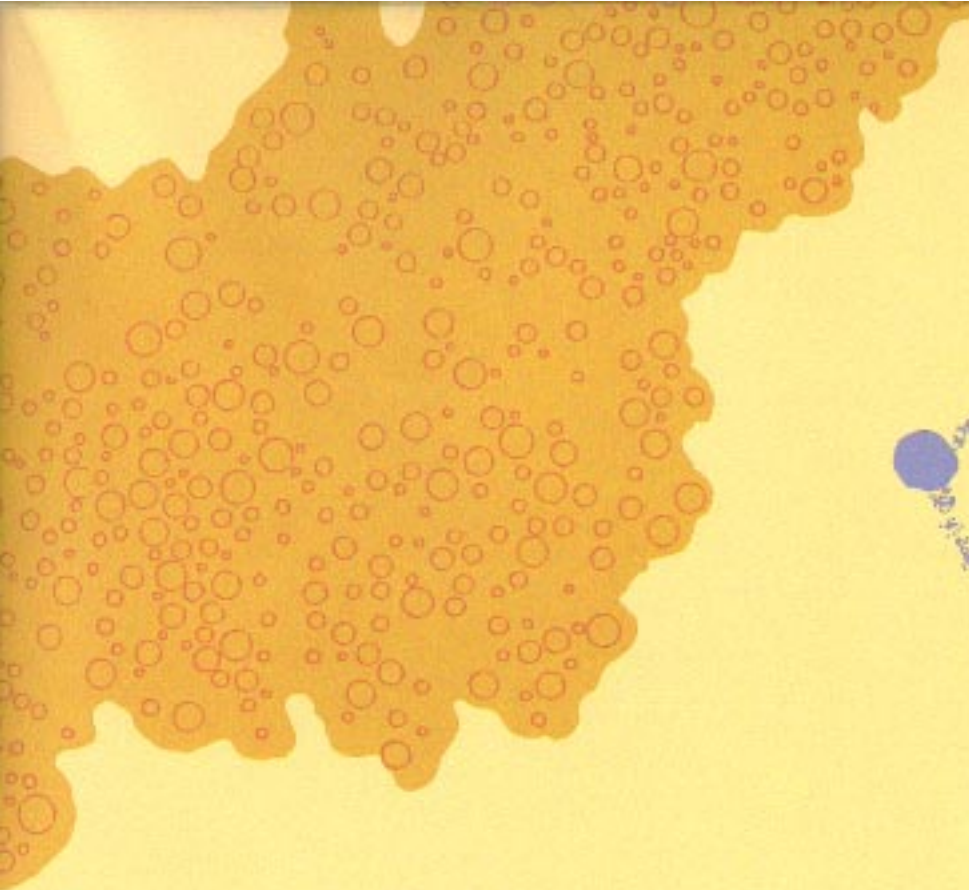




29

House
Mizzrym

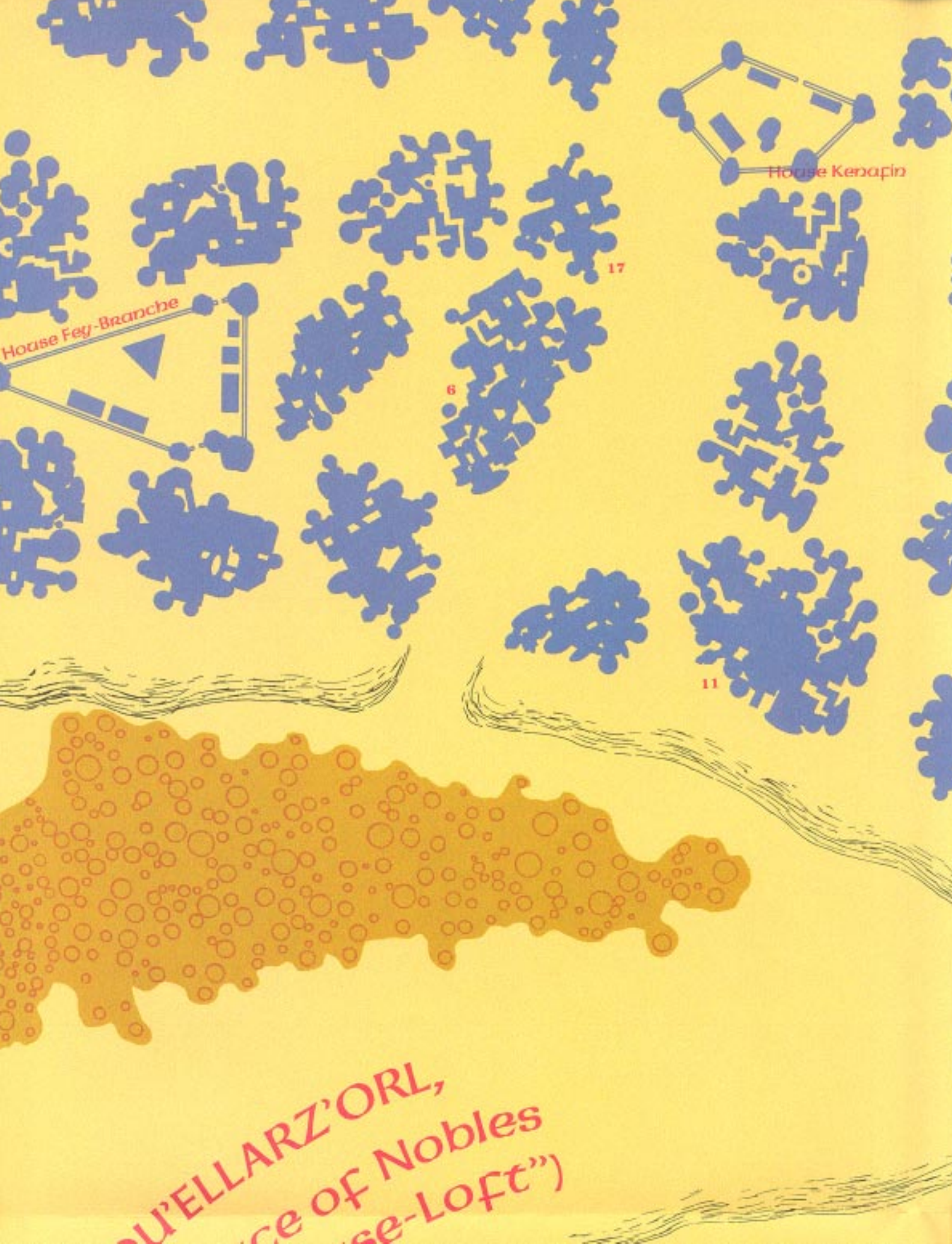
House A



The
Spelltower
✕orlarrin

House Agrach Dyrn





House Fey-Branche

House Kerapin

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U'ELLARZ'ORL,
ce of Nobles
se-Loft")

House Hanzrin

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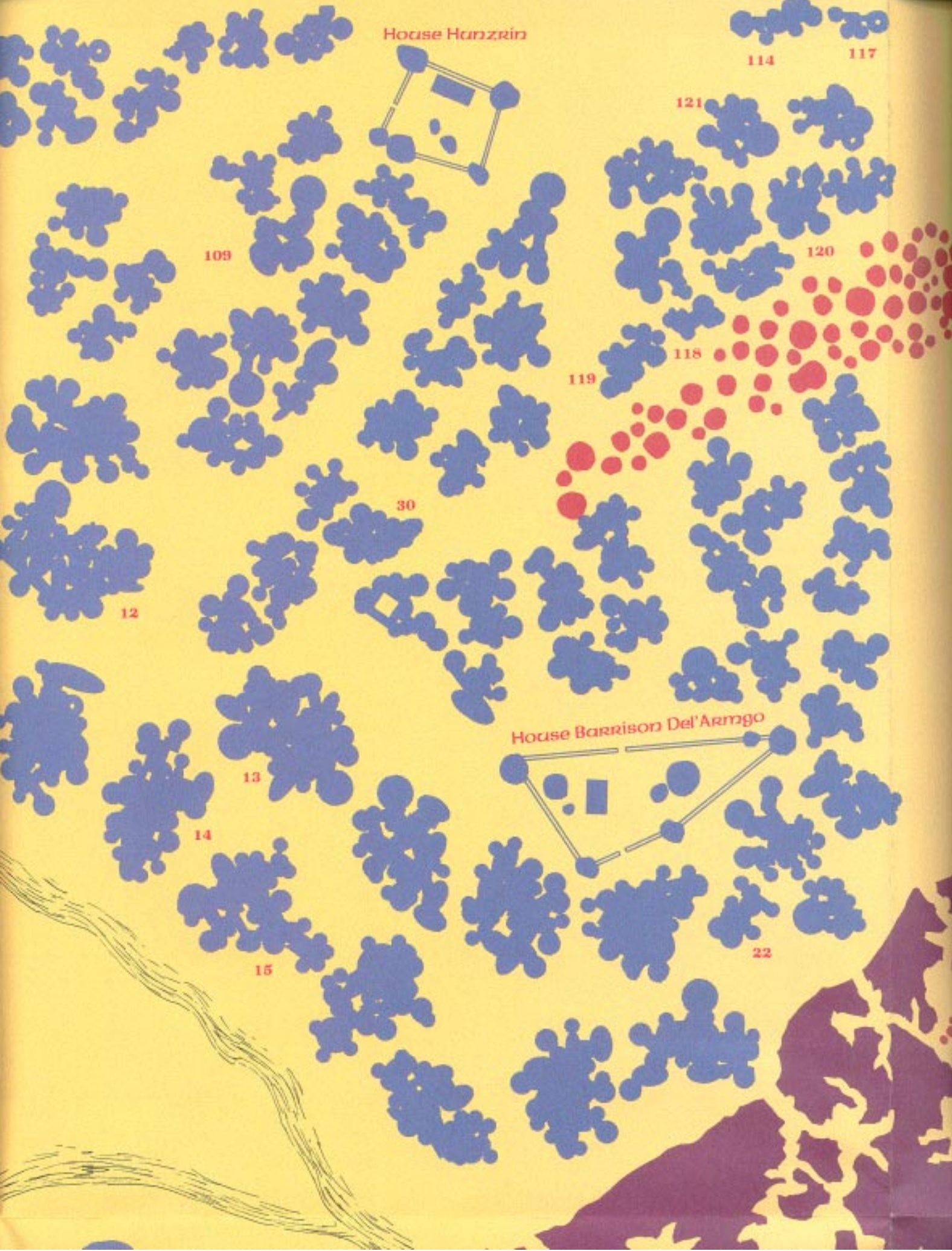
House Barrison Del'Arngo

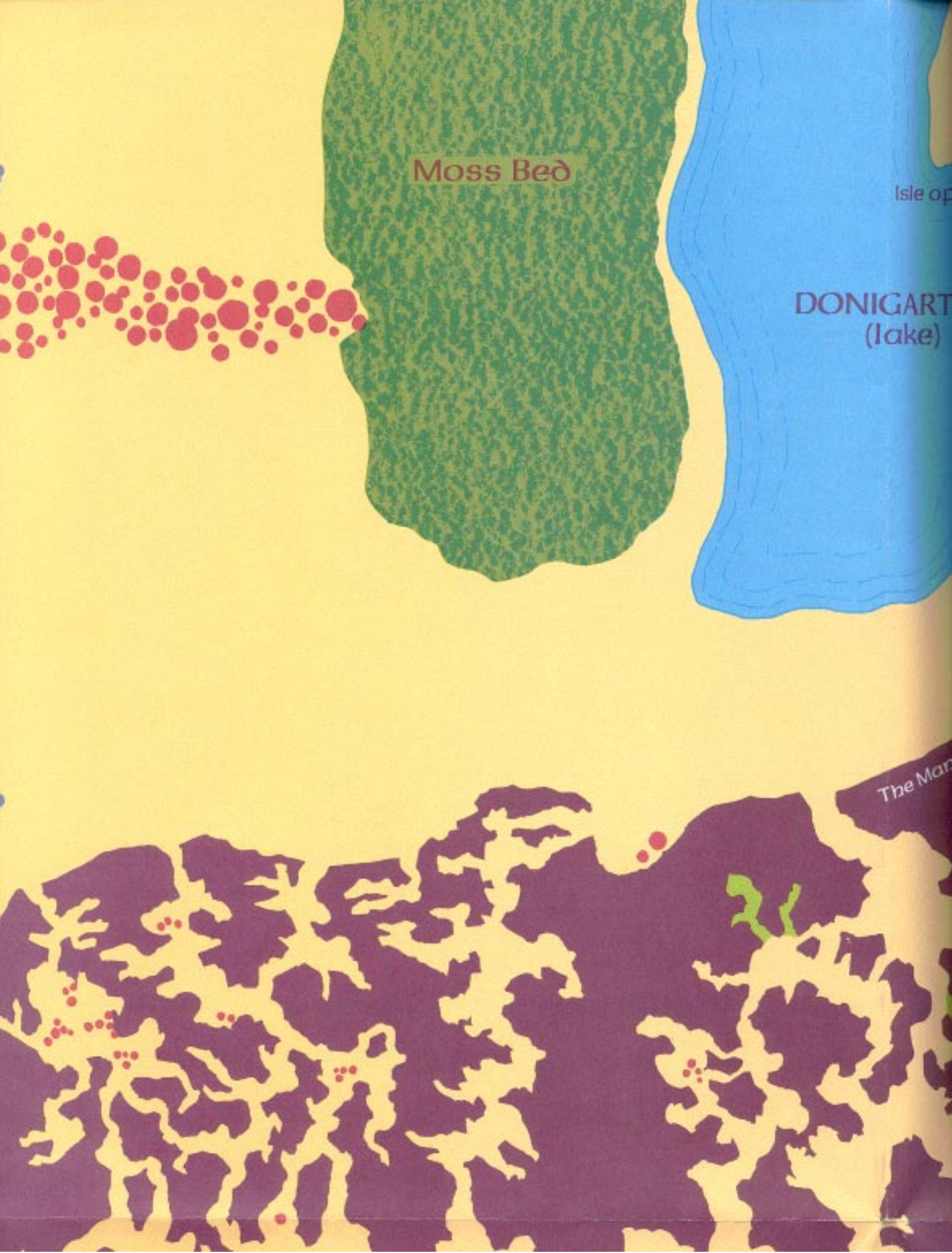
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Moss Bed

Isle of

DONIGART
(lake)

The Mar

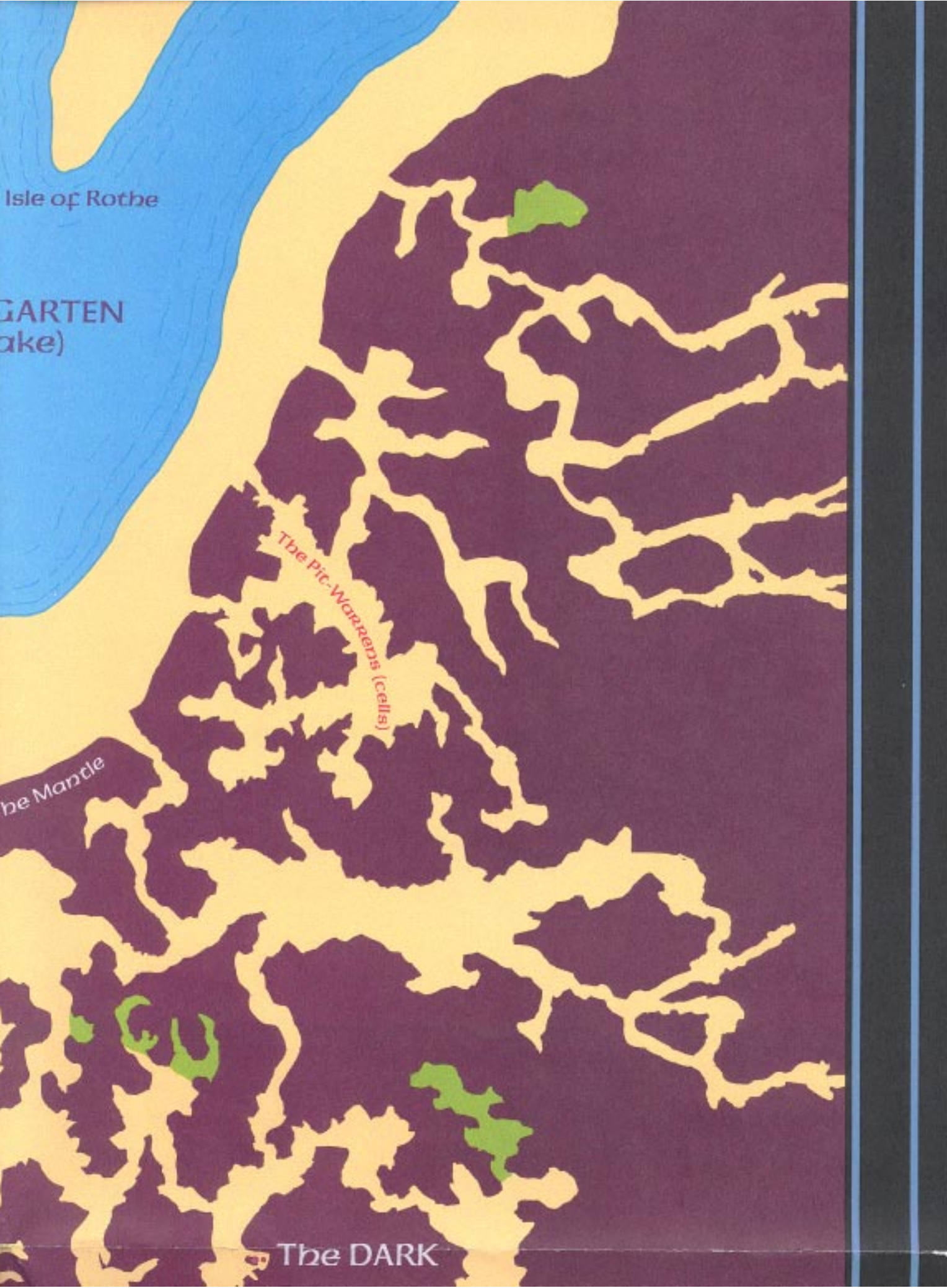
Isle of Rothe

GARTEN
(lake)

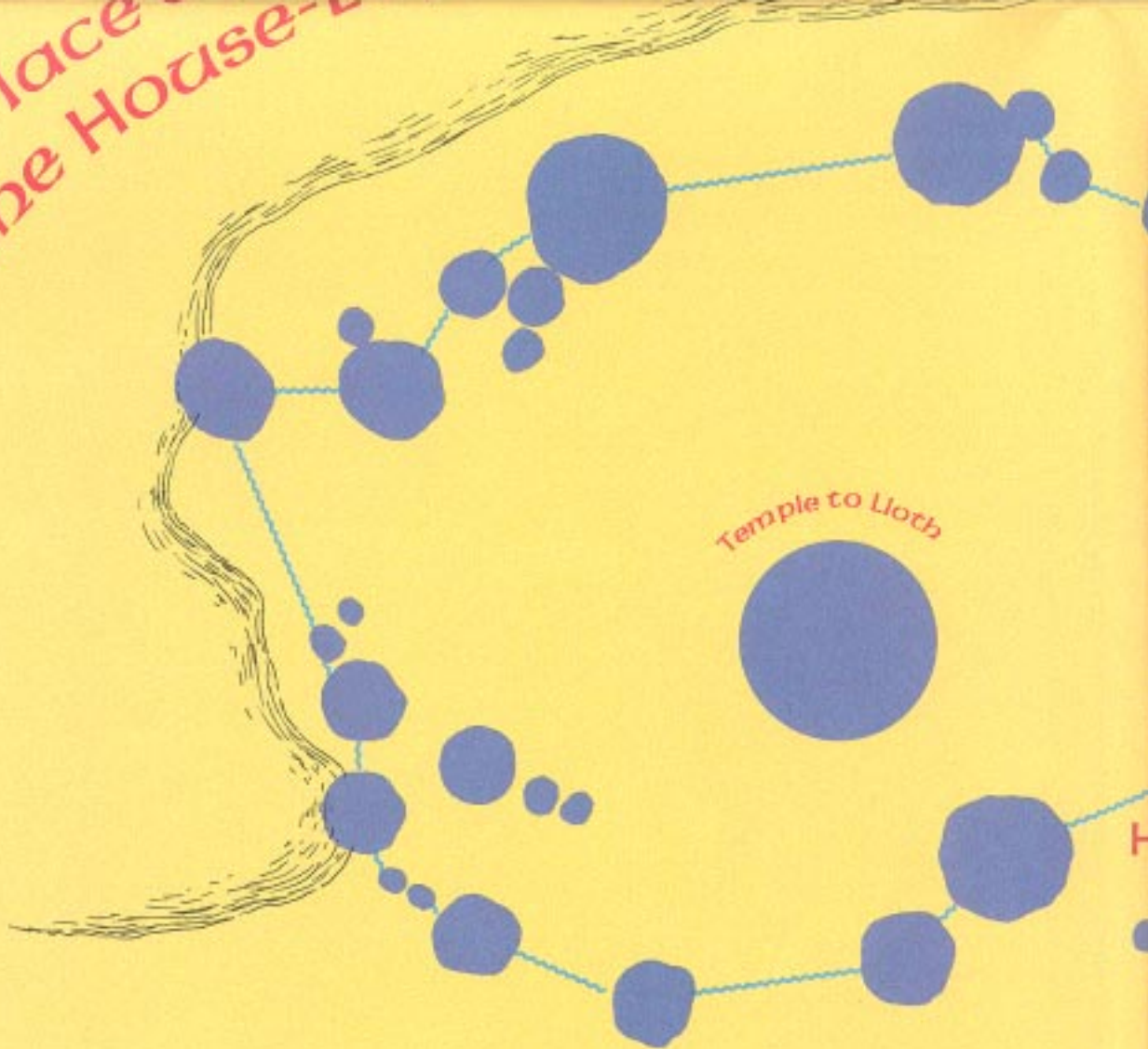
The Pit-Warrens (cells)

he Mantle

The DARK

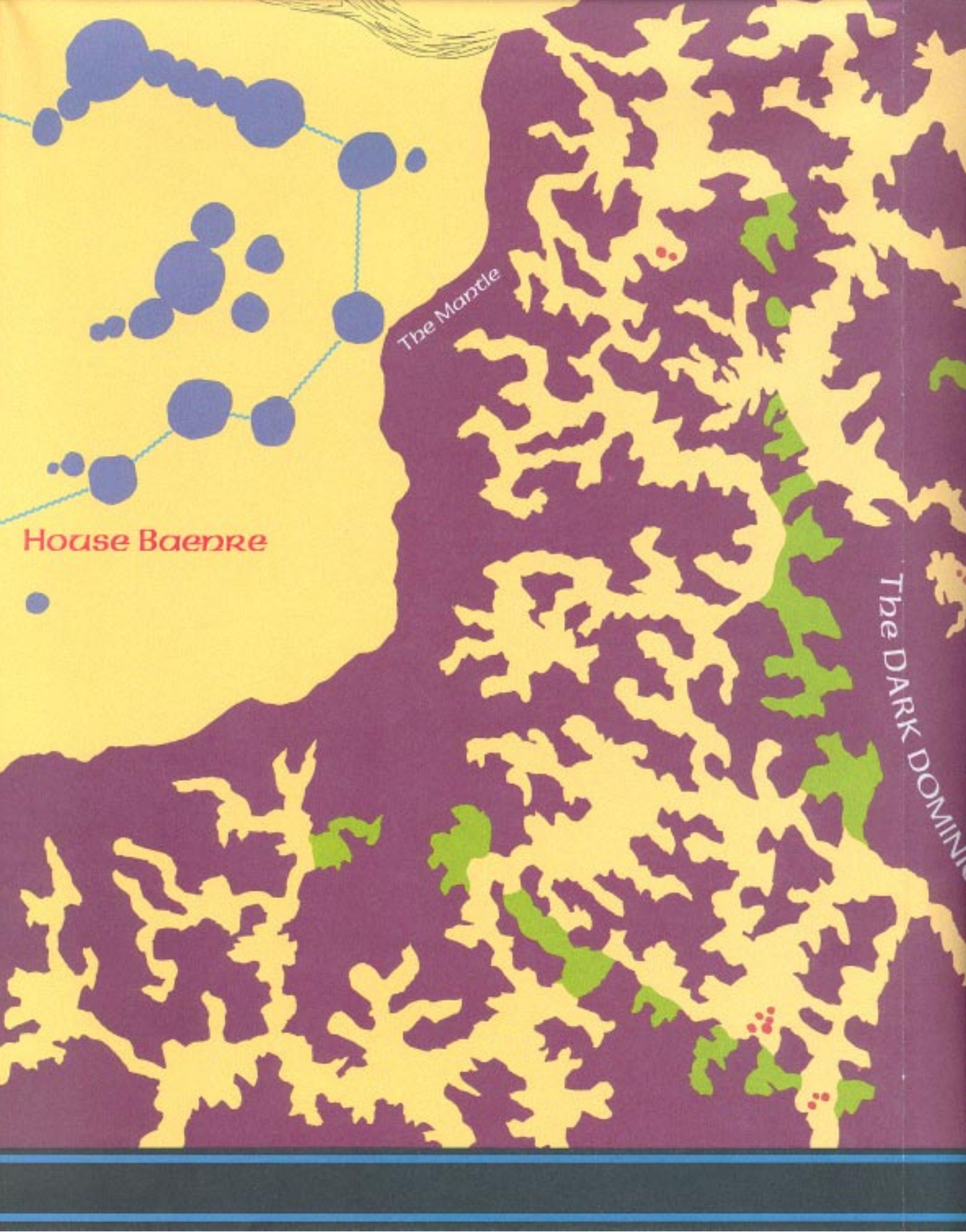


Qu
The place
("the House-")



Temple to Lloth

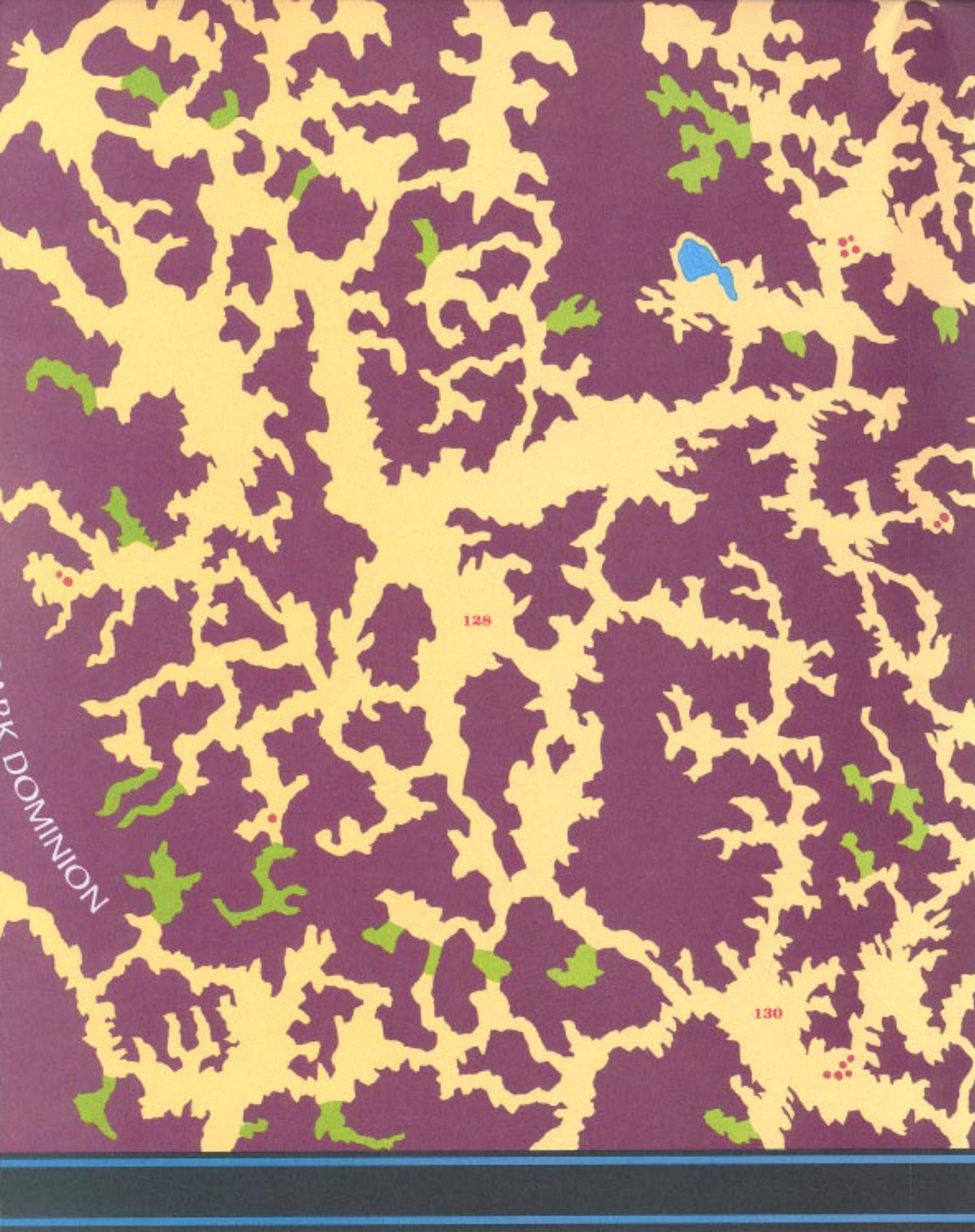




House Baenre

The Mantle

The DARK DOMINION

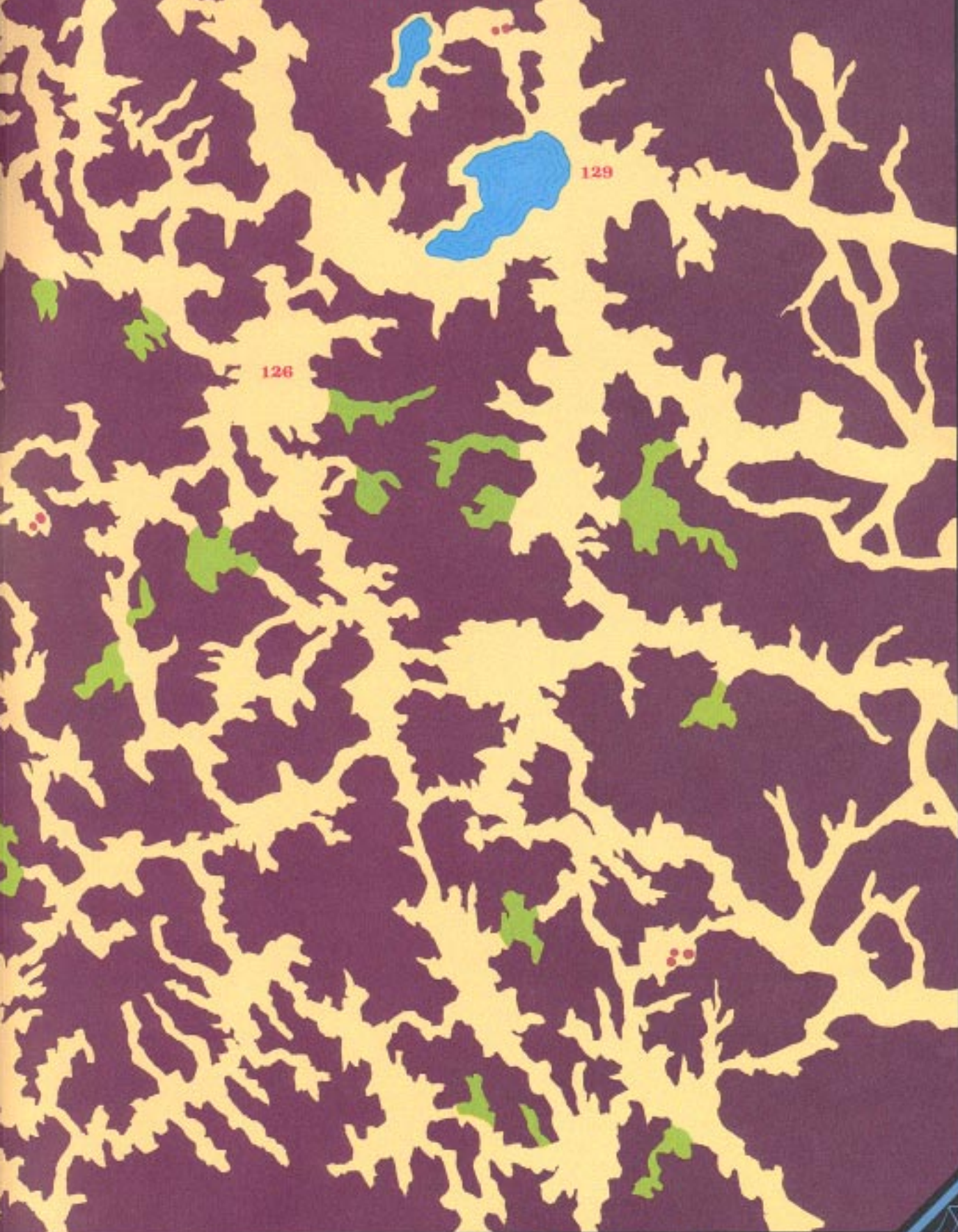


ARK DOMINION

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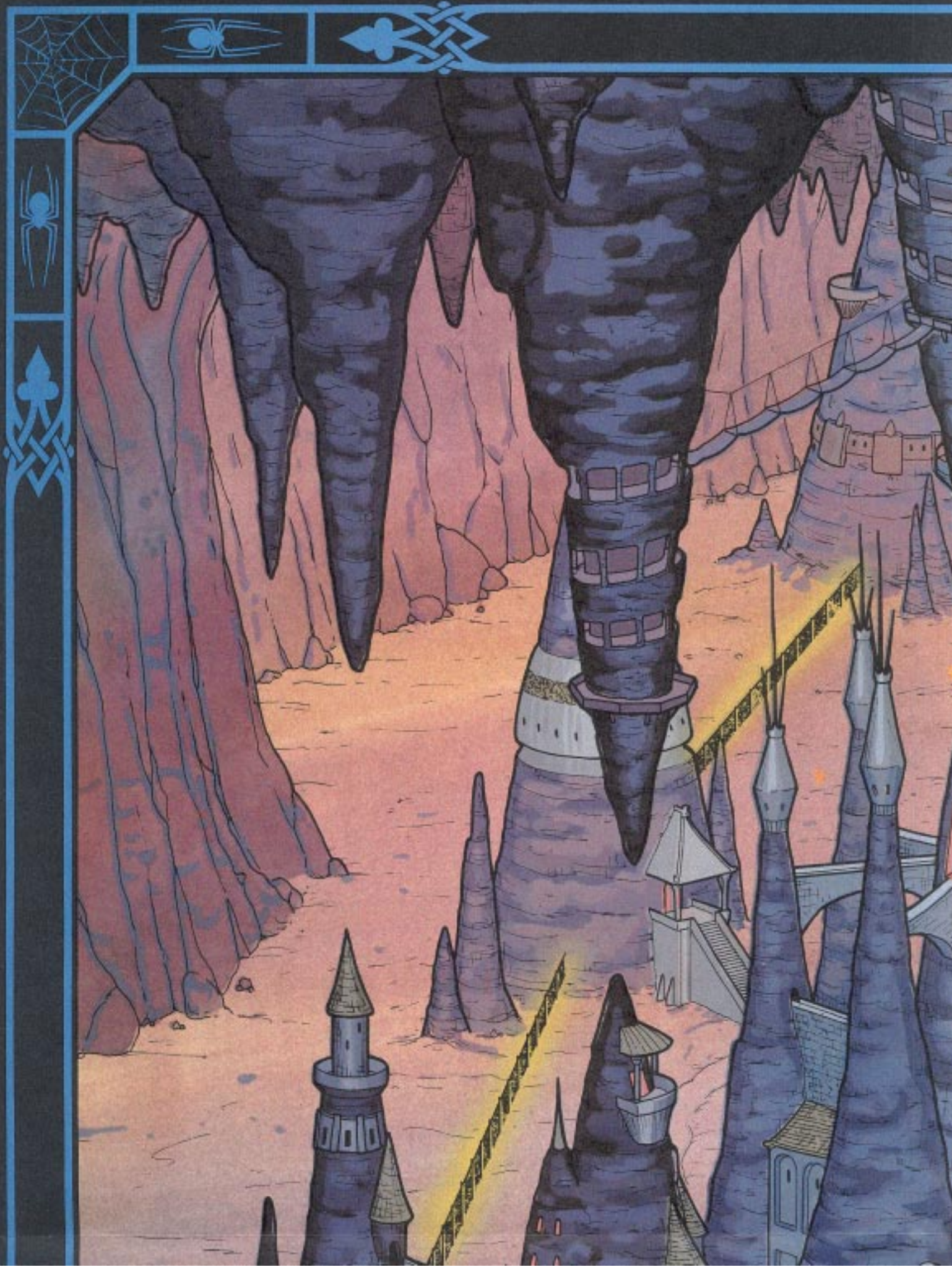
The DARK
DOMINION



126

129











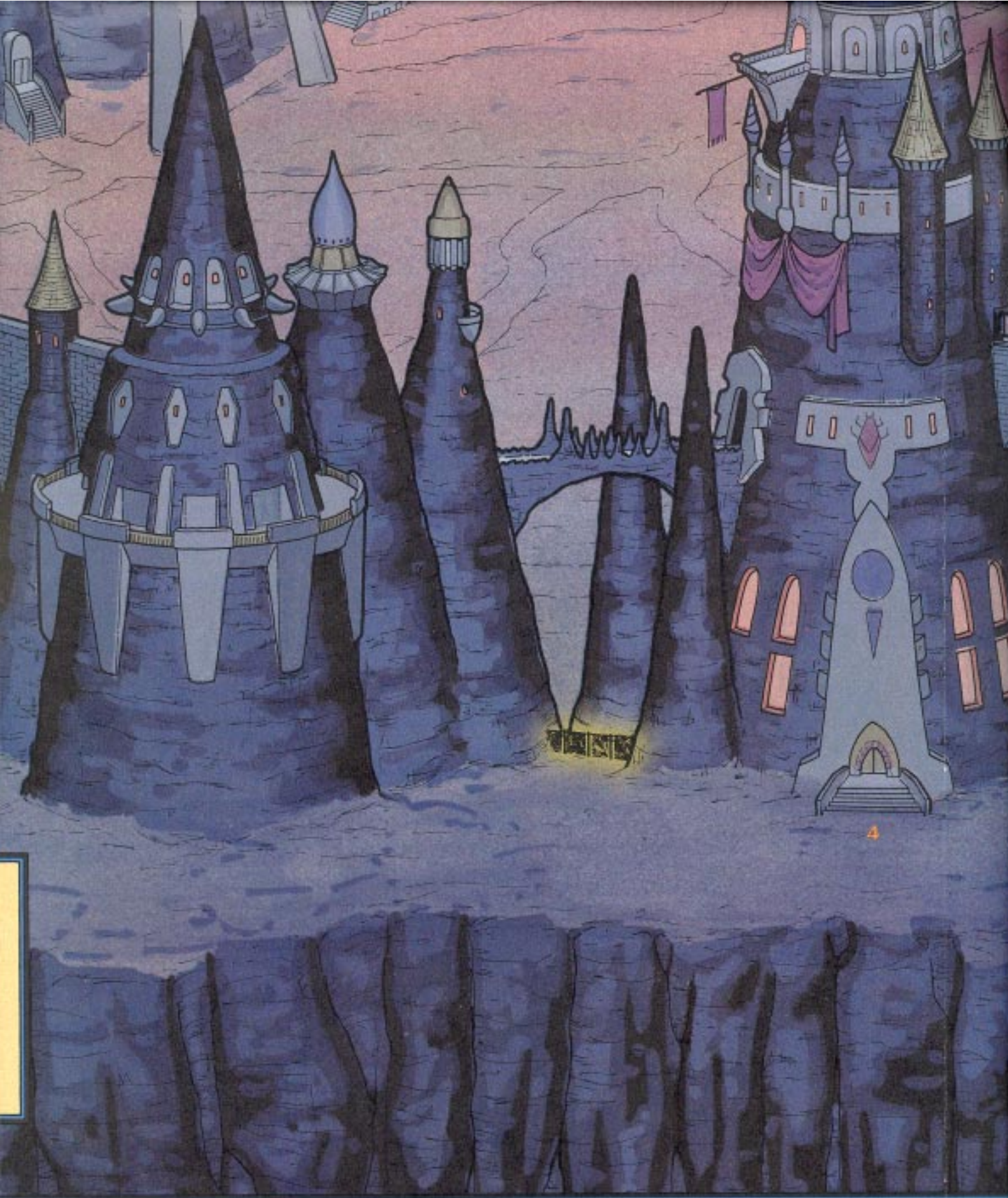


House Baenre

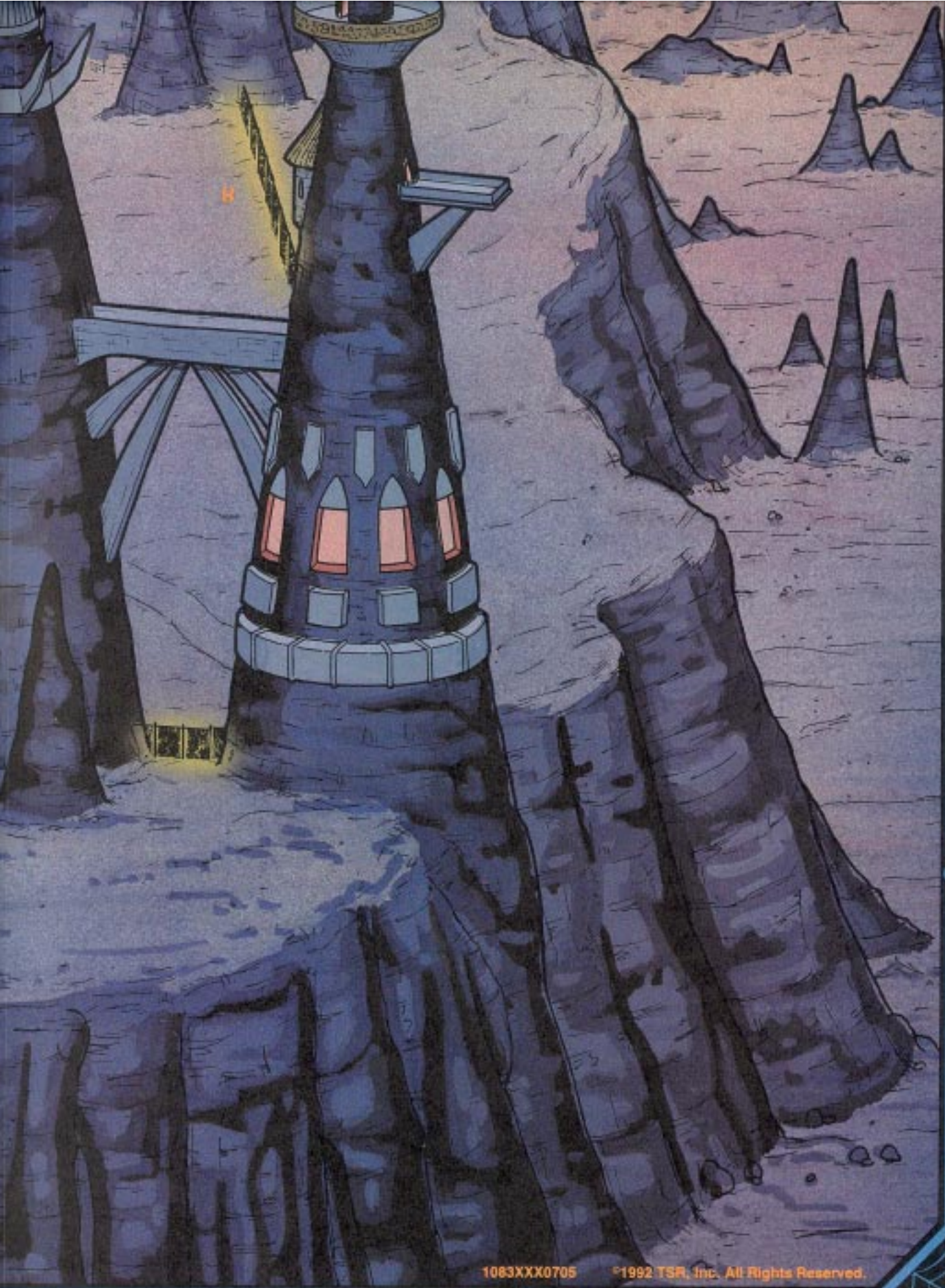


First House of Menzoberranzan

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Slave Barracks | 5. Temple of Lloth |
| 2. Females' Quarters | 6. Males' Quarters |
| 3. Great Mound | 7. Stables |
| 4. Drow Troop Barracks | 8. Barrier Fence |







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Hoase Sbobalar



Hoase



Hoase Hanzrin



House Vandree



House Xorle



House Tair-Tarl



House Baer



House Faen Tlabbar



Xorlarrin



House Daskryn



Baerre



House Ag



House Barrison Del'Arngo





House Symrgobin



House Agrach Dyrre



House Srane'lett





House
Dracl'gair



= Allies



= Rivals

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Oblodra



House Mizzrym



Kerabfin









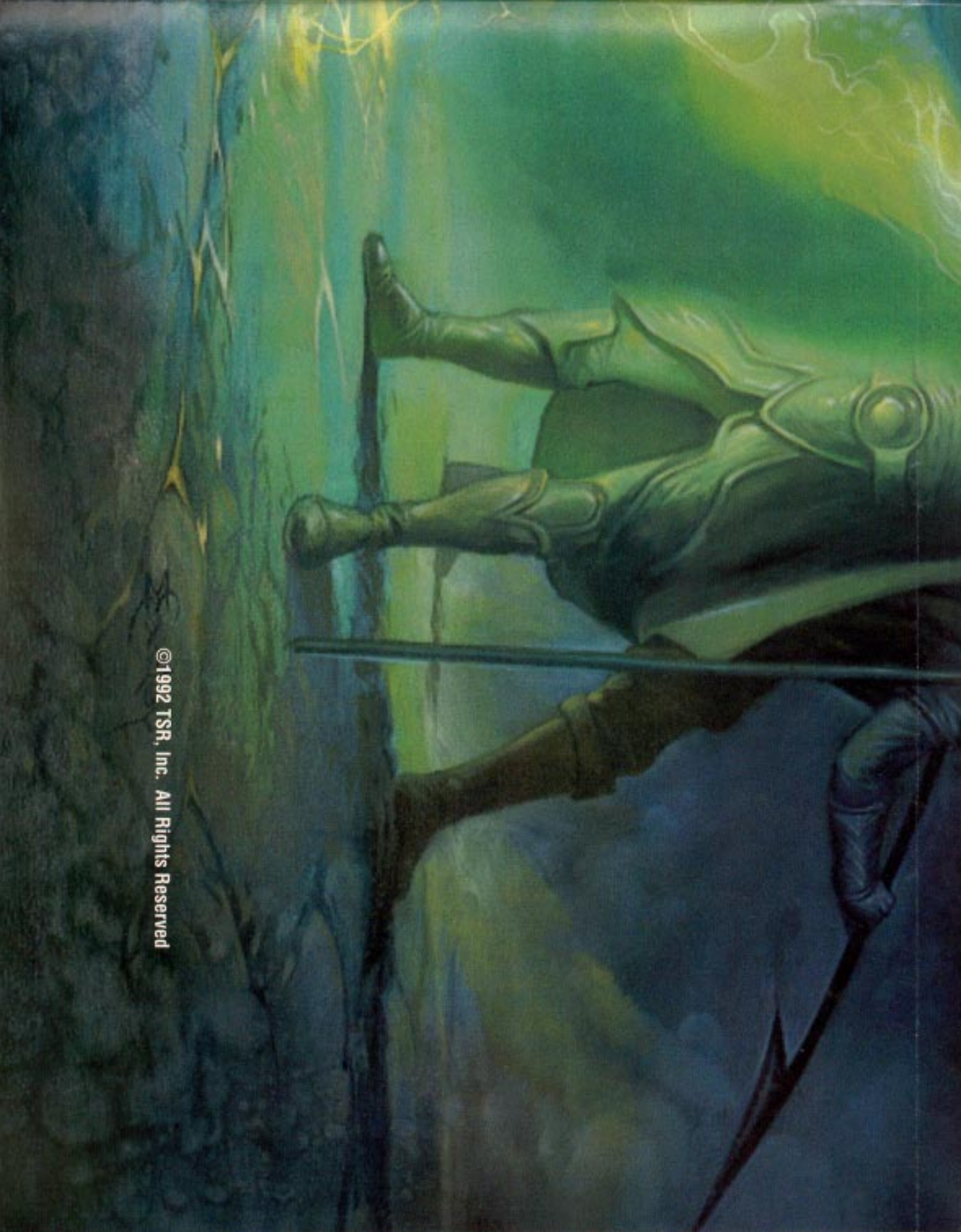












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BOXED SET

MENZOBERRANZAN

Home of Drizzt Do'Urden and famed city of the drow of the Underdark. . .

Ruled by the feared and respected Houses and their Matron Mothers, Menzoberranzan is a place of great nobility and great treachery. The priestesses of Lloth, the Spider Queen, demand (and receive) complete respect from the citizens of this mighty city. But what of the common folk—the drow of non-noble birth, the humans, and others? What is their lot in life, in this magnificent den of intrigue?

Three books in this boxed set explain the ways of Menzoberranzan in detail. **Book One: The City** gives the reader a tour of the streets and districts, a wealth of information on various practices and customs, and an overview of daily life for each class of citizen (and non-citizen). **Book Two: The Houses** presents all eighteen major and minor Houses of the city, including the Matron Mothers and their immediate families, as well as any important advisers and associates. **Book Three: The Adventure** gives players a chance to take their characters into the web of deceit and intrigue woven by the denizens of this famed city.

Additionally, this boxed set includes:

- four connecting poster-size maps of the city proper;
- one poster map of the House Baenre compound;
- a poster showing the rivalries and alliances among all eighteen major and minor houses;
- a 16-page House Do'Urden retrospective and the collected essays of Drizzt;
- twelve cardsheets containing in-depth statistics on main characters from Houses Nurbonnis and Millithor, and small maps for use in the adventure; and
- a full-color poster of the stunning box cover art by Jeff Easley.

*This boxed set is suitable for
all levels of play.*

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